[Unless otherwise indicated, the redactions in this document are made under Art. 4.1(b)]

Ref. Ares(2014)7707 - 06/01/2014

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Trade

Directorate A - Resources, Information and Policy Coordination
Information, Communication and Civil Society

Brussels, 05/12/2013
TRADE/SN/CA/(2013)3906403

COFFEY INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT LIMITED Ltd.
03799145
The Malthouse
1 Northfield Road, Reading,
Berkshire
RG1 8AH
United Kingdom

Subject: Specific contract Nr 15 implementing Framework Contract nr RTD-L05 2010-Impact Assessment

Dear [redacted],

Please find enclosed two copies of the contract (Nr 15 implementing Framework Contract nr RTD-L05-2010-Impact Assessment).

Please sign and return both copies of the contract and send it back to the following address: [redacted], European Commission, DG Trade, Rue de la Loi 170, CHAR 7/103, B-1049, Brussels.

Please note that the contract needs to be signed by both parties still this year.

Kind regards,

p.o. [redacted]

[redacted]

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL TRADE

Directorate Resources, Information and Policy Coordination
Unit Information, Communication and Civil Society

SPECIFIC CONTRACT N° 15

implementing Framework Contract n° RTD-L05-2010-Impact Assessment

The European Union (hereinafter referred to as "the Union"), represented by the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission"), which is represented for the purposes of the signature of this contract by Peter Sandler, Director, Directorate "Resources, Information and Policy Coordination",

of the one part,

and

COFFEY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LIMITED
Ltd.
03799145
The Malthouse
1 Northfield Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8AH, United Kingdom
GB 7245309 45

("the Contractor"), represented for the purposes of signing this contract by [redacted]

of the other part

HAVE AGREED

ARTICLE 1: SUBJECT

1.1 This specific contract implements Framework Contract n° RTD-L05-2010-Impact Assessment signed by the Commission and the Contractor on 19 January 2012; updated on 25 October 2012 by amendment n° 1 and on 24 December 2012 by amendment n° 2.

1.2 The subject of this specific contract is the evaluation of DG Trade's civil society dialogue in order to assess its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.

1.3 The Contractor undertakes, on the terms set out in the Framework Contract and in this specific contract and the annexes thereto, which form an integral part thereof, to perform the tasks specified in Annexes A and C.

ARTICLE 2: DURATION

2.1 This specific contract shall enter into force on the date on which it is signed by the last contracting party.

2.2 The duration of the tasks shall not exceed 7 months. Execution of the tasks shall start from the date of entry into force of this specific contract. The period of execution of

the tasks may be extended only with the express written agreement of the parties before such period elapses.

ARTICLE 3: PRICE

3.1 The total amount to be paid by the Commission under this specific contract shall be EUR 129 725 (one hundred twenty-nine thousand seven hundred twenty-five euro) covering all tasks executed.

3.2 In addition to the price, no reimbursable costs are foreseen.

ARTICLE 4: PAYMENTS

4.1 Interim payment

The contractor shall submit an invoice for an interim payment of EUR 51 890 (fifty-one thousand eight hundred ninety euro) equal to 40 % of the total amount referred to in Article 3.1.

Invoices for interim payment shall be accompanied by an interim report. The contracting authority shall make the payment within 60 days from receipt of the invoice. The contractor shall have 30 days in which to submit additional information or corrections or a new interim report or documents if required by the contracting authority.

4.2 Payment of the balance

The contractor shall submit an invoice for payment of the balance.

The invoice shall be accompanied by the final report. The contracting authority shall make the payment within 60 days from receipt of the invoice. The contractor shall have 30 days in which to submit additional information or corrections, a new final report or other documents if it is required by the contracting authority.

ARTICLE 5: ANNEXES

Annex A –Contractor's proposal of 26 November 2013 (Ares(2013)3611521)
Annex B – Contact Details form
Annex C – Terms of reference
Annex D – Quality assessment form

SIGNATURES

For the Contractor,
Coffey International Ltd (trading as the Evaluation Partnership), [redacted]

signature: [redacted]

Done at Reading, [date] 17|12|2013

[redacted]

signature: [redacted]

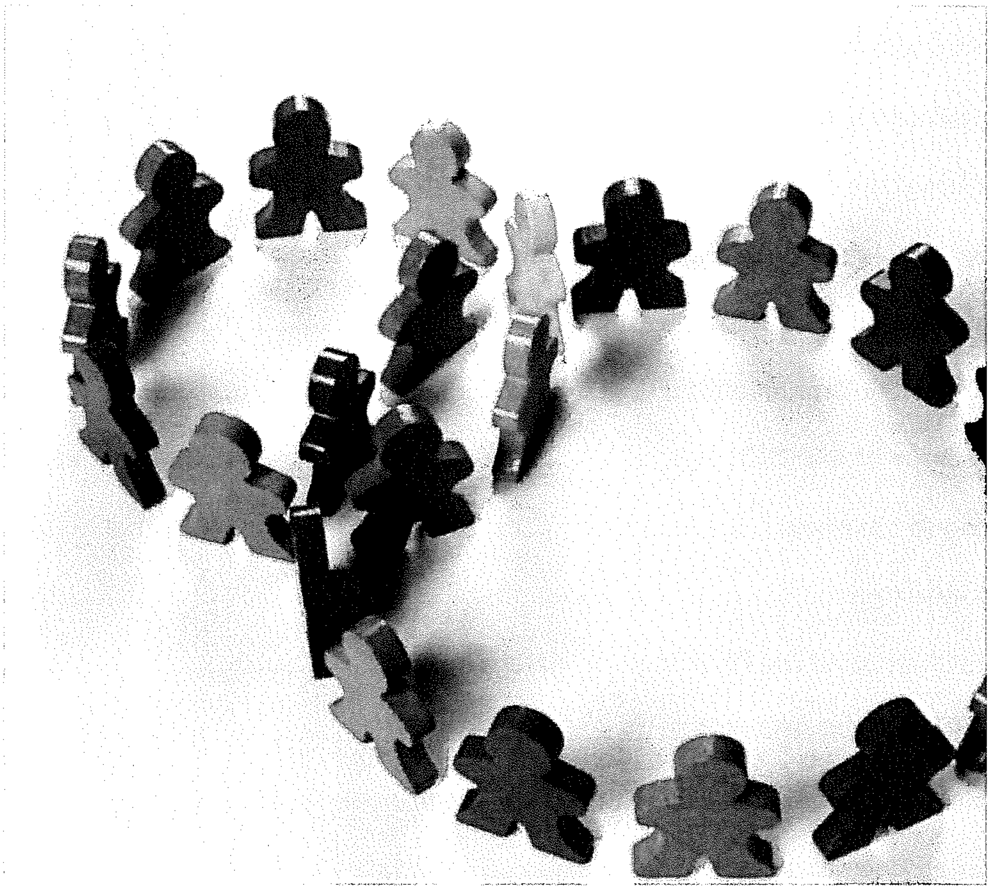
Done at Brussels, [date] 17/12/2013

In duplicate in English.

[redacted]

the evaluation partnership

Deloitte.



PROPOSAL

Evaluation of DG TRADE's Civil Society Dialogue in order to assess its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance

25 November 2013

The Evaluation Partnership
109 Baker Street London W1U 6AG United Kingdom
T +44 20 7034 7026 F + 44 20 7034 7100 evaluationpartnership.com

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Acronyms

CSD: Civil Society Dialogue
CSO: Civil Society Organisation
EQ: Evaluation question
EU: European Union
EC: European Commission
MS: Member State/s
QA: Quality Assurance

1 INTRODUCTION

The Directorate-General for Trade's (DG Trade) Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) is intended to allow civil society to contribute its opinions and expertise to ensure a broad debate on the development of trade policy. The dialogue also helps to ensure that this policy, and the knowledge base that it draws from, remains up-to-date with today's main concerns. Established some 15 years ago, DG Trade has decided to carry out a second external independent evaluation of the Dialogue. A first evaluation was conducted in 2006.

This **Proposal** has been prepared in response to the Request for Services from DG Trade of the European Commission, for an evaluation of DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue. The goal of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the dialogue process.

The Evaluation Partnership (TEP) (part of the Coffey International Development) took responsibility for preparation of the proposal and will take the lead role in implementing the evaluation. TEP will work together with its Framework Contract partners Deloitte to deliver the outcomes described in this document, according to the proposed methodology.

The Proposal is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Background describes the context and setting of the Civil Society Dialogue and provides an initial description of the way that it is managed. Reference is also made in this section to the outcomes of the 2006 evaluation, where this is considered to be relevant.
- Chapter 3: Describes the request for services, including the objectives of the evaluation and the evaluation questions. This information is complemented by a draft evaluation question matrix, which is presented in Annex 1 to show how the methodology proposed would correspond to the evaluation questions.
- Chapter 4: Presents our proposed methodology and tools. This section provides a step-by-step overview of the activities that will be undertaken by the evaluation team.
- Chapter 5: Provides our approach to the management of the work. The team put forward for this assignment is presented and the details of project and quality management are described. The section also includes a detailed work plan, timetable and budget.

The proposal is complemented by the following three Annexes:

- Annex 1: Draft Evaluation Questions Matrix
- Annex 2: Overview of the portfolio of the team
- Annex 3: CVs of the proposed team.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

This chapter outlines our understanding of the background, context and the main objectives of this assignment. It starts with briefly outlining the key features of EU's trade policy, followed by contextualising the Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) of DG Trade within the wider communication policy, and presenting the most important characteristics of how DG Trade engages in the CSD. This section concludes with an overview of the key conclusions and recommendations from the 2006 external evaluation of the CSD at DG Trade.

2.1 Overview of trade policy

The European Union's trade policy is based on a fundamental premise, stipulated in Article 131 of the EC treaty: to "contribute, in the common interest, to the harmonious development of world trade, the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade and the lowering of customs barriers". DG Trade plays a central role in the EU's efforts to promote the liberalisation of world trade.

DG Trade is responsible for managing trade and investment relations with non-EU countries through the EU's trade and investment policy, also referred to as common commercial policy. This policy has been exclusively under the EU's mandate since the Rome Treaty, which means that only the EU as such –and not individual Member States– can legislate on trade matters and conclude international trade agreements. The trade policy is set down in Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Apart from trading goods, the trade policy also encompasses the trade of services, commercial aspects of intellectual property and foreign direct investment.

DG Trade services are responsible for negotiating bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, ensuring that the rules agreed upon are applied and maintaining close working relationships with the WTO and other multilateral institutions[1].

Trade negotiations

The Commission negotiates with trading partners on behalf of the EU. Negotiations are conducted in close cooperation with the Council and the Parliament who formally agree the outcomes and prepare the way for signature and ratification of deals with trading partners. Trade agreements enter into force once they are fully ratified; however, parts of an agreement can be provisionally applied if the Member States agree to do so.

In the early stages trade negotiations, in order to guarantee the transparency of the process, the EC engages in the process of information exchange with the wider public through:

- Public consultations
- **Civil society dialogue**
- Sustainability impact assessments
- Dialogue with the Council and European Parliament

[1] Civil Society Dialogue leaflet, Directorate-General for Trade, 2011.

2.2 Evolution of the Dialogue

DG Trade created the Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) in 1998. Trade was the first DG to organise ad hoc meetings with civil society (at that time represented by NGOs), which soon became a more structured dialogue, including not only general meetings, but also sector-specific meetings.

The creation of the CSD by DG Trade came at a time when NGO activity and social movements caught the attention of the media with the manifestations first at the global trade and WTO summits (in Seattle, Sidney, and Davos), and subsequently also at the European summits (in Nice and Göteborg)[2]. The protests were parallel with the widely perceived issue of "democratic deficit" in the EU.

Since the early 2000s, a number of policies were put in place to highlight the need of closer engagement of civil society stakeholders.

The ***White Paper on Governance***[3] (2001) highlighted the need for better involvement of civil society in consultation processes. In December 2002, the EC adopted the ***General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission***[4]. They require, in particular, that (1) the content of consultation is clear; (2) relevant parties have an opportunity to express their opinions; (3) the Commission publishes consultations widely in order to meet all target audiences, in particular via the web portal "Your Voice in Europe", which is the Commission's single access point for consultation; (4) participants are given sufficient time for responses (8 weeks for open public consultations); and (5) acknowledgement and adequate feedback is provided.

In addition to the policy of open governance, the Commission has identified Communication as one of its key strategic objectives. In 2005 the ***Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe*** was published. Its key objective was to ensure more effective communication about Europe and one of the Plan's actions was to enhance dialogue and transparency by promoting consultation procedures and making sure that the results and feedback from the Commission's public consultations are widely publicised. The same year saw the publication of the ***Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate***[5] which was followed by the 2006 ***White Paper on European Communication Policy*** that emphasized the importance of an enhanced debate and dialogue, a "citizen-centred communication" through which the EU citizens can "be confident that the views and concerns they express are heard by the EU institutions"[6].

The **Lisbon Treaty** (Art. 11 (1 & 2), Title II 'Provisions on democratic principles') introduced the general principles that interested parties should be consulted and that a dialogue be maintained with civil society and representative organisations. It establishes that the work of the European institutions must be transparent and in particular that their activities should be fully publicised.

[2] Stijn Smismans: *European Civil Society: Shaped by Discourses and Institutional Interests*, European Law Journal, Vol. 9, No. 4, September 2003, pp. 482–504.
[3] COM(2001)428
[4] COM(2002)704, p. 19-22
[5] COM(2005)494.
[6] COM(2006)35, p.4.

The **European Transparency Initiative**[7] (2008) and the establishment of the **Transparency Register** (2011)[8] further reinforced these principles.

DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue is one of a number of dialogues supported by different DGs of the European Commission. Examples include the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health launched in 2005 by DG SANCO and the Social Dialogue between the fishing industry and European seafarers facilitated by DG MARE in 2013.

2.3 The Civil Society Dialogue

This section describes the objectives of the Civil Society Dialogue, the Civil Society organisations that participate in the dialogue and then goes on to describe the shape of the CSD and its different channels and tools. This section is based on the evaluation team's initial understanding of the CSD. During the inception phase of the project and through the subsequent data gathering actions, this overview will be deepened. The evidence gathered will facilitate answering of the evaluation questions and more precise insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the Civil Society Dialogue.

2.3.1 Objectives

The Commission recognises that global trade negotiations can have far reaching implications for wider society, including in relation to growth, employment, the environment and development. This reality drives the need for account to be taken in the evolution of trade policy. Yet the DG's overarching goal is to ensure that trade policy is based on consultations with all parts of European civil society, and that this process is both transparent and accountable.

Taking this into account, DG Trade has set four main objectives for its Civil Society Dialogue (CSD). The objectives are described below[9]:

1. **Consult widely in the framework of a confident working relationship**

   In line with the provisions of the Transparency Register, the EC is committed to consulting interested parties when drafting policy and proposing action. DG Trade holds regular, structured meetings on trade policy issues of interest to a wider audience. Though this process, DG Trade aims to promote an active and inclusive participation of civil society.

2. **Address civil society concerns on trade policy**

   The Commission tries to ensure that the dialogue process takes into account current concerns, for example regarding issues such as environmental protection, labour rights,

[7] COM(2008)323

[8] *Agreement between the European Parliament and the European Commission on the establishment of a transparency register for organisations and self-employed individuals engaged in EU policy- making and policy implementation, OJ L 191/29.*

[9] http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/csd_proc.cfm

competitiveness, poverty, or animal welfare and their possible impact on the trade policy. DG Trade organises meetings on such issues in order to maintain an ongoing debate, answer questions where possible, and take up relevant suggestions for action. The process of selecting the topics for debate is facilitated by the CSD Contact Group.

3. **Improve EU trade policy-making through structured and qualitative dialogue**

   Debating the questions that shape public opinion is critical to allow the Commission to update and strengthen its knowledge base, given that such questions have an influence on public understanding and acknowledgement of trade policy. Thus the Commission tries to be responsive to the big issues of concern and taken them into account in the formulation of policy. The Commission intends the CSD process to be transparent to allow inputs to be handled effectively, and the DG is committed to improving policy through this process.

4. **Improve transparency and accountability**

   The EC acknowledges that compliance with high standards of transparency is important for the legitimacy and accountability of its actions. Engaging in the CSD and making documents available on the website are ways to facilitate greater transparency and accountability.

The evaluation is tasked with assessing whether the Civil Society Dialogue is currently meeting the objectives set, as described above. Through this assessment, it is also possible that the evaluation could identify other possible objectives that could be added to the list or make suggestions for modifications to the above list to enhance the dialogue process so that it is more finely tuned to all participants' needs.

2.3.2 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

There is no commonly agreed or legal definition of the term "Civil Society Organisation". The 2002 *General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission10* emphasize the specific role of CSOs as in closely linked to the fundamental right of citizens to form associations in order to pursue a common purpose, as highlighted in Article 12 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights[11]. It must be noted, however, that in its consultation policy the Commission does not make a distinction between CSOs or other types of interest groups. The Commission consults ***"interested parties"***, which comprises all those who wish to participate in consultations run by the Commission.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) that wish to participate in DG Trade's CSD must be trade-related, not-for-profit and based in the EU. They are required to enlist in the **Transparency Register (TR),** which has been set up and is operated by the Secretariat General of the European Commission and the European Parliament. The TR serves the purpose of registration and monitoring of organisations and self-employed individuals engaged in EU policy-making and

[10] COM(2002)704

[11] "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association at all levels, in particular in political, trade union and civic matters"

policy implementation; it is a part of the commitment of EU institutions to the integrity and openness of their activities with civil society. In signing up to the register, organisations are asked to accept the *Code of Conduct*[12] and to provide information about their activities (incl. mission, sources of funding and representation).

Taking into account the provisions of the Transparency Register, all organisations and self-employed individuals engaged in "*activities carried out with the objective of directly or indirectly influencing the formulation or implementation of policy and decision-making processes of the EU institutions*" are expected to register in the TR and hence can be understood as CSOs. However, for the purpose of this evaluation, the definition of a CSO that meets DG Trade's requirements will be used. In order to participate in the DG Trade CSD, apart from being **registered in the TR**, a CSO must be trade-related, **not-for-profit** and **based in the EU**.

Examples of typical CSO organisations include:

- Social, development and environmental NGOs
- Research institutes and academia
- Trade unions, employers and associations
- Chambers of commerce
- Consumer, business and trade associations

In terms of numbers of CSOs engaged in the Civil Society Dialogue, as of November 2013 there were:

- 333 CSOs were members of the CSD database.
- 174 CSOs had participated in meetings in the previous 12 months;
- 300 representatives of CSOs had participated in meetings in meetings in the previous 12 months.

It is interesting to note that prior to the introduction of the compulsory registration with the TR, 863 organisations were registered in DG Trade's CSD database.

2.3.3 The shape of the CSD

The CSD process is managed by the Information, Communication and Civil Society Unit A3 of DG Trade. The CSD is essentially organised around a set of meetings to facilitate discussion on a wide range of topics to be taken into account in trade negotiations and policy development. Up and running for a period of 15 years, the dialogue is a continuous process to facilitate flows of information and discussion into the evolution of policy, rather than to support the drafting of specific pieces of legislation.

The goal is to allow different viewpoints and positions to be expressed by representatives from civil society and DG Trade, as well as other DGs that may take the opportunity to provide inputs in relation to their specific policy area. Topics for discussion can be put forward by the Commission and its CSO partners, via the 'facilitation' group of the CSD; the CSO contact

[12] http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/info/about-register/codeOfConduct.do?locale=en

group. The actual process for defining topics will be investigated in more detail through the evaluation.

The **CSD contact group** plays an important role. It is essentially an informal steering body, which acts as a facilitator for DG Trade. The group helps to ensure that the CSD is not driven from the top down. It contributes to transparency in both directions and helps to circulate information to the wider group of constituencies. The contact group's members operate on a personal basis and are mandated by their 'constituencies'. DG Trade does not intervene in this selection.

At present the CSD contact group consists of 13 members. The contact group meets 3 to 4 times a year and proposes topics for discussion and advises on organisational matters. Each contact group member circulates information to his or her constituents in their sector cluster of organisations. The Commission's goal is to ensure that the CSD involves organisations outside those CSOs that are represented in Brussels, for example those operating at national level. One of the challenges of the evaluation will relate to the assessment of the extent that this is the case and what can be done to increase this participation.

2.3.4 Dialogue channels

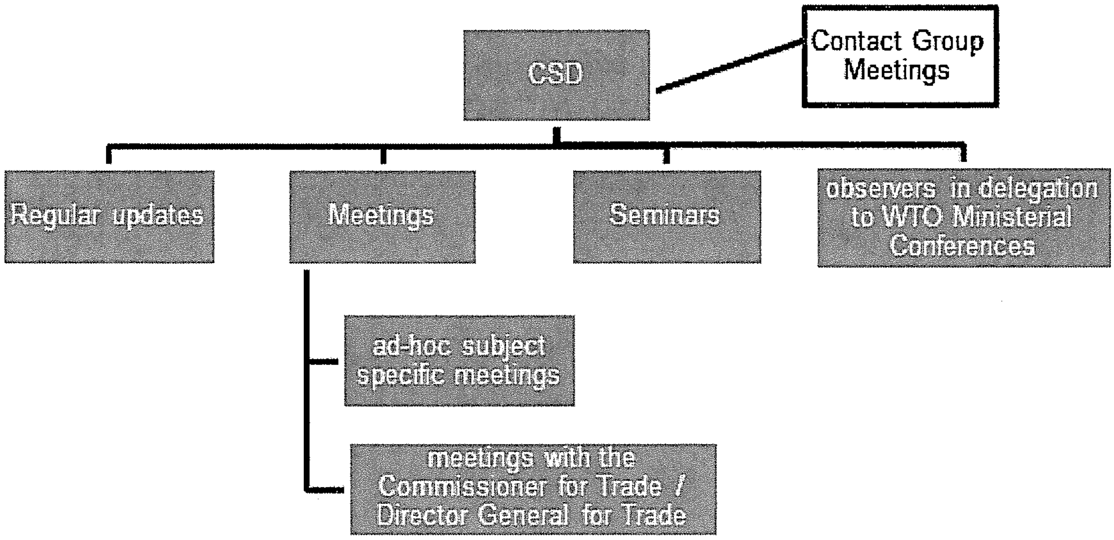
The dialogue process consists of a number of different channels, which allow information flows to, from and between the participants. The main channels are essentially regular updates, meetings and seminars. Specific tools that are used to push information through the channels include the CSD website, position and briefing papers. Support is provided to the dialogue process through the payment of travel expenses for participants based outside Brussels. Meetings are planned in advance and participants are required to register their interest in attending on the CSD website.

The EU engages with civil society to ensure transparency and dialogue in trade policy making, consistent with overall objectives of transparency in European policy making. The CSD fits in well with this policy of openness and is thus part of the more general strategy at Commission level.

Timing is a distinctive element in understanding the CSD process. The overall process is an on-going feature of DG Trade's relationship with the CSOs. The website provides continuous and accessible support to this process. As explained below, meeting are held at different levels of frequency.

The TEP's understanding of the main mechanisms through which the CSD is implemented is presented in Figure 1. This figure will be updated as necessary in the inception stage.

Figure 1:The main mechanisms through which the CSD is implemented



Source: TEP's elaboration based on http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/meetlist.cfm

Ad-hoc subject specific meetings are the most frequently organised type of meeting. To date 12 ad hoc meetings have taken place or are planned for 2013. The meetings ensure that a range of specific issues come to the table for discussion, for example the Plurilateral Trade in Services Agreement (April 2013) or the meeting on the Modernisation of Trade Defence Instruments (May 2013).

Regular updates[13] take place in Brussels (DG Trade reimburses the travelling costs for attendees coming from outside Brussels) and are devoted to general trade policy issues. In 2013, 6 of such meetings took place.

Meetings with the Commissioner or Director General for Trade take place once or twice a year. These high-level meetings with the most senior members of the Commission serve to engage with civil society on current trade policy issues, as well as on future priorities of EU trade policy. The last meeting (with Mr Jean-Luc Demarty, the Director General) was held in October 2013; the meeting with the Commissioner took place in 2012. These meetings help to ensure a level of political engagement with the CSD.

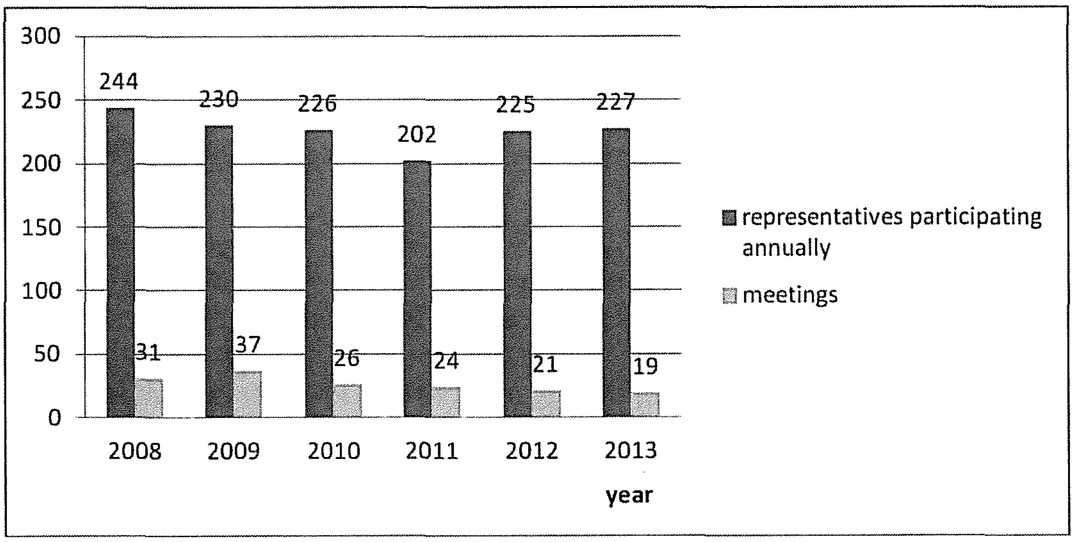
Although not included in the diagram above, it is noted that the within the CSD a number of **other meetings** may also be included. These meetings are dedicated to issues such as presentation and discussion of the findings of the report produced by the WTO's 'Panel on Defining the Future of Trade' (October 2013). The assessment of the CSD process will need to identify the full range of dialogue mechanisms, including these other meetings that are not specifically referred to in the Terms of Reference.

[13] It is noted that there is variable terminology in use to describe these updates. For example, the TOR describes regular updates and the CSD website describes regular meetings. The evaluators have assumed that these two elements are the same.

In addition to trade policy meetings, DG Trade organises **seminars** on specific topics in order to promote an in-depth discussion with a wider audience. In the last years, the seminars have taken place in Budapest (2006), Sophia (2007), Brussels (2009), Prague (2010) and Warsaw (2011) and covered the topics of the role of trade in the economic crisis, the impact of trade agreements, trade and sustainable development, and the role of the WTO in global trade. These seminars have been put on hold temporarily due to financial constraints. It has been envisaged to organise seminars in Brussels on topics of particular interest to civil society in the future.

The below provides an overview of the total number of meetings held and participants over since 2008.

Figure 2. Number of meetings and participants in the meetings since 2008.



Source: TEP's elaboration based on http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/statistics.cfm

The table below presents an overview of the types of meetings that took place in from January to November 2013, as well as the topics that were discussed during these meetings.

Table 1. Overview of meetings held to date in 2013

Type	Date	Subject
Regular update	21/01/2013	Bilateral Trade Negotiations: State of Play
Regular update	31/01/2013	WTO work for the preparation of the 9th Ministerial Conference, including the Doha Development Agenda
Ad hoc meeting	04/03/2013	Final Report of the EU-US High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth
Regular update	14/03/2013	EU-ASEAN Trade Relations: State of Play
Ad hoc meeting	09/04/2013	Trade SIA in support of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between the EU and respectively Morocco and Tunisia, Draft Inception Report

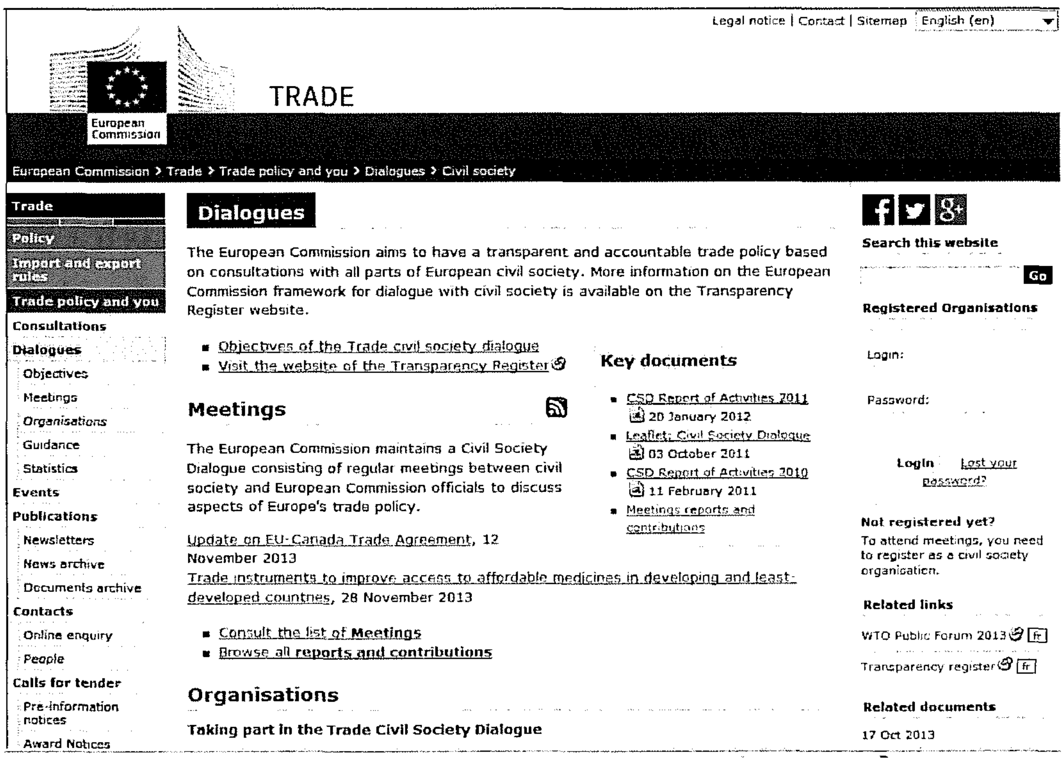
Regular update	15/04/2013	Investment Protection: State of Play
Ad hoc meeting	25/04/2013	Plurilateral Trade in Services Agreements
Ad hoc meeting	17/05/2013	Intellectual Property provisions in forthcoming US and Japan negotiations
Ad hoc meeting	21/05/2013	Modernisation of Trade Defence Instruments
Ad hoc meeting	11/06/2013	Commission services' Annex on Vietnam to the Position Paper on the Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment of the trade agreement between the EU and ASEAN
Ad hoc meeting	14/06/2013	Trade SIA in support of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the EU and Armenia, Draft Final Report
Ad hoc meeting	24/06/2013	Services provisions in forthcoming US and Japan negotiations
Ad hoc meeting	16/07/2013	Update on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) - First Negotiation Round
Regular update	26/09/2013	Bilateral trade negotiations: state of play
Other meeting	03/10/2013	WTO Public Forum - Panel session on " Looking beyond MC9 – how to deal with reciprocity and flexibility in moving forward on the DDA?" organised by the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade
Regular update	08/10/2013	Civil Society Dialogue Meeting with Jean-Luc Demarty on trade policy
Ad hoc meeting	17/10/2013	Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) in support of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) between the EU and respectively Morocco and Tunisia, Draft Final Report

2.3.5 Dialogue tools

The CSD is supported through the continuous on-line presence of information, provided by the **CSD website**. As well as acting as an information repository and on-line record of discussions and supporting information materials, the website provides other functions, including the registration of participants for meetings and the signposting of the Transparency Register. The site also attempts to ensure that the CSD objectives are visible to all interested parties. Making the objectives clear can, at first sight, be considered to be good practice. This increases the chances of a common understanding of the purpose of the activities pursued, which increases the likelihood of their achievement.

The evaluation is tasked with an assessment of the way that information and communication aspects of the CSD support the dialogue process. It is clear that the website is an essential strand of this support.

Figure 3. Screen shot of DG Trade's CSD website



Source: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/index.cfm

There is a wide range of **information and data** made available on the CSD website, including meeting reports and contributions, activity reports, frequently asked questions and an explanatory leaflet on the CSD. If done well, these materials should contribute to the flow of information and discussion between participants. These elements will also need to be taken into account in the evaluation.

Position papers are another key information tool. CSOs are invited to send position papers on trade issues, which can be publicly accessed through DG Trade's website. The position papers are reports that explain, justify or recommend a course of action on a policy or on a particular trade related issue. The number of documents each organisation can contribute is one document per month per organisation and the papers are independent of the meetings and dialogues the organisations attend. However, in order to submit a position paper, an organisation must be registered in the Trade Civil Society Dialogue and the Transparency Register.

2.4 2006 Evaluation of the Civil Society Dialogue

This evaluation is the second evaluation of the Civil Society Dialogue. The first evaluation was carried out in 2006[14]. This section summarises the key conclusions stemming from the previous external evaluation in consideration that some of the issues raised may still be relevant today. It is noted that the previous evaluation identified lower levels of satisfaction among non-members of the contact group, lower levels of participation of newer Member States and non-Brussels-based organisations. In addition, questions were raised about perceptions of lowering commitment to the process within the DG and the barriers posed by distrust between NGO and business participants.

Key conclusions

Governance issues: The evaluation found that DG Trade's CSD met most of the EC minimum standards for consultation, as formulated by the Commission in 2003, with the exception of feedback, which was considered by participants to be limited and inadequate. The openness of the process was highly appreciated;

Organisation: The general organisation of the process and available facilities were deemed to be good. The website was considered to be user friendly and to facilitate the process. The number and types of meetings were found to be adequate. The participation of non-Brussels based organisations, especially from the new Member States was, however, limited[15].

Ownership and representativeness: DG Trade's commitment to the process was perceived by civil society to have decreased over the years. The role played by civil society stakeholders in terms of organisation and preparation was also judged to be limited. The evaluation concluded that the distrust between business representatives and NGOs affected the dialogue process in a negative way. Overall, the composition of the Contact Group seemed to reflect all major sectors in civil society. However, its role and composition was questioned by organisations, which were not participants of the Contact Group.

Dialogue vs. information exchange: The majority of participants perceived the objectives of the dialogue as clear. The main reasons that participants alleged for attending CSD meetings were: *"to gain a better understanding of the policy process at DG Trade"* and *"to gain a better understanding of the main issues at play in trade (negotiations)."* DG Trade officials saw the dialogue process as part of their job and wanted to inform participants about their position in trade policy making and negotiations, but also to learn more about the views of civil society and take these into account.

Attainment of objectives: Attainment of the CSD's overall objective (*to develop a confident working relationship between all of the civil society actors interested in trade policy, enabling civil society actors to make known their views directly to policymakers and contributing to a better understanding of the issues at stake on both sides*) was rated as **satisfactory**. With regard to specific objectives the results varied: *1) To consult widely* – **good**; 2) *To address CS*

[14] A Voice, Not a Vote – Evaluation of the Civil Society Dialogue at DG Trade, Final report, ECORYS Nederland BV, February 2007.

[15] In 2006 there were 300 registered organisations from Belgium, compared to only 26 organisations registered from the NMS (Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta and Poland).

concerns – **satisfactory**; 3) *To improve policy* – **unclear**; 4) *To improve transparency* – **satisfactory.**

Resources and efficiency: The evaluation found that the (limited) budget for this process was underutilised. It was also concluded that human resources were stretched, which was related to the limited role of civil society stakeholders in organisational issues. Efficiency of the process was considered good in terms of organisations & logistical aspects, but weak with regards to involving non- Brussels based organisations, utilisation of travel reimbursements and monitoring.

Participation of organisations from new Member States: The level of participation of CSOs from new MS in the meetings was very low. The main constraints for participation were grouped in three categories: 1) capacity constraints; 2) knowledge and awareness constraints; and 3) institutional constraints at national level;

Dialogue fatigue: The interviews of the CSD participants as well as an analysis of the attendance list of the meetings made it clear that there was a danger of consultation fatigue or "death by consultation." More active engagement of all stakeholders to regain momentum was recommended.

3 THE REQUEST FOR SERVICES

3.1 Rationale, scope and objectives of the request for services

The need for evaluation arises from the Commission requirement to evaluate policy activities on a regular basis, with the objective of improving openness and accountability.

Given that the CSD is now in its 15th year of operation, the evaluation is intended to allow DG Trade both to take stock of the Dialogue process and to identify ways to improve the transparency and communication between its actors. With this in mind, the overall aim of the evaluation is to assess whether the Civil Society Dialogue's strategy and purposes remain adequate. The evaluation should provide feedback on how the CSD is working in practice and what could be done to further improve the process.

Directorate General Trade has set four specific objectives for the evaluation to be carried out:

1. **To evaluate the extent to which the civil society dialogue process addresses the objectives that have been set for it and delivers results.**
2. **To evaluate the relevance of the process, and the effectiveness of the current implementation procedures.**
3. **To assess the efficiency of its organisation, use of resources, and monitoring mechanisms.**
4. **To make recommendations with a view to improving and renewing the approach and process**.

3.2 Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions have been set by the DG TRADE, under the headings of information and communication, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

a) **Information and Communication**:

- How does the CSD fit into DG Trade's overall commitment to transparency and good governance?
- How does CSD fit in and contribute to DG Trade's information and communication on trade policy? (CSD was integrated in DG Trade's communication unit in January 2012, before that it was in DG Trade's sustainable development unit)

b) **Relevance**

- Do the objectives of the CSD remain relevant?
- How is the process perceived within DG Trade and by the participants: number of meetings, topics, quality of information and exchange of views, involvement of Commission representatives?

- In what ways do CSOs find the process useful? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Has it fulfilled stakeholders' expectations?
- In what ways is the CSD relevant for DG Trade?
- Does the CSD process play a role in raising public awareness on trade issues and policies and in encouraging CSOs and their constituencies to participate in discussions with the European institutions?

c) Effectiveness

- To what extent is the information provided by DG Trade at the CSD meetings perceived as new and useful in keeping CSOs informed about the development of policies and progress and state of play in trade negotiations?
- Is the CSD reaching its target audience adequately? Are the tools and channels used appropriate?
- How do participants rate the feedback offered by DG Trade about the ways in which their views are taken into account?
- How effective is the process in providing participants with a forum in which to present their expertise and position papers for influencing trade policy?

d) Efficiency (resources, organisation and monitoring of the process):

- Are the resources allocated to the process commensurate with its objectives?
- To what extent do the existing organisational and administrative procedures result in an efficient consultation process?
- Are there administrative aspects that act as a barrier to participation?
- To what extent is the way DG Trade's input and participants' contributions are recorded adequate?
- Is the information provided by existing monitoring tools useful? How can this information be fed into the process?
- How is the information provided by DG Trade through the CSD and CG disseminated by CSOs to their constituencies?

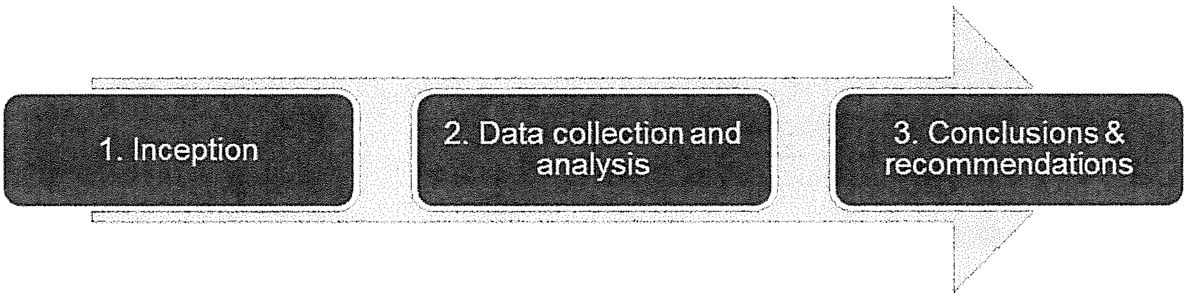
3.3 Challenges of the evaluation

The evaluators have developed a draft evaluation questions matrix (presented in Annex 1) to describe the way that the proposed methodology and tools will answer the above questions. However, research is not a perfect process and the timeframe available for the evaluation has dictated the type of methodological approach that can be followed.

As required by the Terms of Reference, during the inception phase of the assignment the evaluation team will elaborate the main risks and challenges to the evaluation, together with a mitigation strategy to overcome these possible limitations. This analysis will be discussed with the Commission in the Inception Report meeting.

4 PROPOSED METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS

The following sections describe the main methods and tools that we propose to use. These are presented in accordance with the three main phases of the project, namely:



4.1 Phase 1: Inception

The first phase (duration four weeks) will be dedicated to reviewing and finalising the structure of the evaluation. For this purpose, we will engage in a series of activities to fully familiarise the team with the evaluation subject, context and purpose, finalise the approach and methods, develop the necessary tools, and document the results in the inception report.

Familiarisation
Finalise approach, method and tools
Inception Report

4.1.1 Familiarisation

In order to further develop our understanding of **DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue (CSD)**, including its objectives and strategy, its implementation mechanisms, organisation and resources, monitoring tools and requirements, etc., we will undertake the following main activities:

- **Kick off meeting**: Early after the signature of the contract, a kick-off meeting with the evaluation steering committee is to take place. This will be an opportunity to engage in an open exchange of views and ideas, and for the Commission to provide feedback on the proposed approach, make suggestions for improvements, clarify requirements and expectations, provide any relevant documentation, etc.

- **Familiarisation interviews**: We propose to conduct a small number of interviews with officials working within DG Trade with an in-depth knowledge of the CSD. The interviews will help the evaluation team to further our understanding of the CSD, of different internal views and experiences and of available data sources. These first interviews will provide valuable input and avoid misunderstandings during the later phases. We propose to conduct a total of approximately 5 to 6 interviews with Commission officials responsible for managing the process, for example in the Information, Communication and Civil Society unit (Trade A3). If agreed with the Commission team the interviews could also be extended to include senior members of staff with key interests or insights in other parts of the DG. Where feasible, the interviews will be held on a face-to-face basis. Broadly speaking, these interviews should help to further the team's understanding of the points:

Figure 4. Initial questions during project familiarisation

• Vision and objectives of the CSD	✓
• Internal decision-making processes	✓
• Efficiency questions (resource, monitoring and organisation)	✓
• Identification of recent or planned modifications	✓
• Outcomes of the 2006 evaluation	✓
• Internal perceptions of strengths and weaknesses	✓
• Approach to provision of information and communication about the CSD	✓
• Expectations for the evaluation exercise	✓
• Existing sources of data and information	✓

- **Desk research**: Building on the work undertaken for the proposal preparation, we will undertake an initial in-depth review of available relevant documentation, with a view to fully understanding the state of play in relation to the implementation of the dialogue and the potential use of different data sources during the latter phases of the evaluation. This will include key documents available on DG Trade's website, as well as other sources of information provided by the steering committee at the outset of the project. The desk research will begin immediately after contract signature. In addition, this initial desk research will be used to explore the proposal for the three case studies to be conducted as part of this evaluation.

4.1.2 Finalise approach and methods

Based on the further research and the information received from DG Trade officials interviewed and the steering committee, we will be in a position to review, expand, amend where necessary, and finalise the evaluation methodology. This will involve the following main steps:

- **Reconstruct intervention logic**: In order to clarify the concrete ways in which the CSD is intended to reach its overall objectives, as well as any other (expected or unexpected) impacts, we will reconstruct the dialogue's intervention logic in an appropriate visual format. The review of the intervention logic will be developed using information gathered from DG Trade regarding the thinking behind the CSD and its implementing mechanisms. This framework will be used to structure the evaluation and show how the different elements fit together.

- **Review evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators**: Preliminary evaluation questions and sub-questions, success criteria and indicators are developed in the proposal (see Annex A). During the structuring phase, we will review and further refine these questions and criteria. This will result in a consolidated evaluation questions matrix, which will ensure that the evaluation methodology is fit for purpose and that the evidence can be mapped in a systematic and transparent way to the different issues and questions to be answered.

- **Finalise methods**: Based on the finalised questions, judgment criteria and indicators, we will review the appropriateness of the methods proposed, and make any necessary adjustments. This will also include concrete proposals for the sample of organisations to be assessed as part of the benchmarking.

- **Develop tools**: We will develop all data collection tools (including survey questionnaires, interview guides, benchmarking and reporting templates) that will be required for the ensuing data collection and analysis.

- **Definition of the proposal for 3 case studies**: the evaluators will develop a rationale for the further exploration of three organisations with comparable processes. The proposal will be discussed with the Commission during the Inception Report meeting. With EC approval the evaluators will carry out the case study investigations during the second phase of the evaluation.

- **Identification of risks to the evaluation methodology**: the team will also highlight any potential risks that could act as barriers to the effective completion of the evaluation and will describe strategies that will be used to mitigate these risks.

4.1.3 Inception report

The results of the inception phase will be summarised in the **Inception Report**, which will be submitted to the Commission four weeks after contract signature in line with the requirements outlined in the TOR. A meeting with the steering committee will be held two weeks after submission of the report, in order to discuss any pending issues or questions.

4.2 Phase 2: Data collection

The second phase will last approximately four months, and be dedicated to the collection and processing of relevant data and information. The goal of this phase is to provide the evidence that will allow the evaluation team to answer the evaluation questions and make a detailed assessment of the CSD.

Desk research and analysis
In-depth qualitative interviews
On-line surveys
Meetings assessment
Benchmarking
Interim Report

The main data collection effort will be divided into five elements:

1. Desk research to review and analyse relevant quantitative and qualitative data on the CSD;
2. In-depth qualitative interviews with key stakeholders, including members of the CSD contact group and Commission officials in other DGs involved in the dialogue or in other analogous processes;
3. Collection of feedback from (i) CSD registered participants; and (ii) DG Trade officials via two online surveys;
4. Attendance, observation and assessment of a sample of 5 CSD meetings;
5. A benchmarking exercise of three organisations with comparable civil society dialogue processes;

The data collection phase will be concluded with an Interim Report, which will provide DG Trade with the detailed findings from the data collection. The following sections expand on each of these methods in turn.

4.2.1 Desk research

The evaluators will now conduct a more in-depth research of available quantitative and qualitative information relating to the period 2006 to date. This will allow the full running period of the CSD to have been assessed, as the former evaluation was carried out in 2006. The research will take into account position papers on the CSD website in terms of their format, comparability and relevance, but will not make any assessments of the thematic content of the reports.

The evaluators will design a template to allow a structured and consistent approach to the desk research. The team will draw from data already available on the DG Trade website, but will also seek to gather documentation and statistics relating to earlier periods during the inception phase. An example of the template that will be used to allow an assessment of available information will be provided during the Inception Report to allow discussion with the EC team prior to its use.

The goal of the desk research is to allow the evaluation team to gain a detailed understanding of the CSD process. This understanding will supplement any information that will be sourced via interviews and is critical to answering evaluation questions related to the relevance of the CSD.

The evaluators will attempt to categorise the process, identify similarities and differences year-on-year, as well as to identify possible gaps and blockages to the flow of information, in so much as this can be detected.

4.2.2 In-depth qualitative interviews

Using the semi-structured interview guides that will have been developed and approved during the inception phase, the evaluators will set up and conduct one-to-one interviews. The draft evaluation questions matrix that is provided in Annex A provides an overview of the types of issues that will need to be explored to answer the evaluation questions.

Figure 5. Examples of possible questions

Possible questions for the **Contact Group** could include:

- How effective do you think the Contact Group is and why? ✓
- What are the pros and cons of involvement in the group? ✓
- Could the functioning of the group be improved? Are there any alternatives? ✓

Possible questions on the **CSD process** could include:

- What do you think of the objectives of the CSD? ✓
- How satisfied are you with the CSD process and why? ✓
- How useful is the CSD to your organisation, please explain? ✓
- Do you have any views on how improvements could be made to the CSD? ✓

Typically in-depth interviews are structured around broad lines of question. This approach allows the interviewees to present their views in a relatively free format and to add detail where this is necessary. The interviewer will continue questioning on a specific issue until the interviewee has provided all relevant feedback, after which the interviewer will move on to the next question. Thus the interview is a fluid discussion of the issues rather than a question and answer session, which would carry the risk of not providing sufficient detail to allow the evaluators to interpret the evidence. Interviews usually last circa 45 minutes. The duration depends on the time available to the interviewee and the insights that he or she is prepared to provide.

The list of interviewees will be drawn from the following:

1. The CSD contact group (a sample of 10 organisations);

2. A small random sample of other CSOs (two business organisations, two trade unions and two NGOs)[16];
3. A sample of other DGs that make use of the CSD, most likely including: SANCO, AGRI, DEV, etc.

Interviewees will be invited to take part in the evaluation process via email. They will be provided with a draft of the questionnaire in advance. This will enable the interviewee to understand what is expected during the interview, which allows for a more efficient use of the interview time. Each interview will be written up as an individual record and synthesized to provide key qualitative findings to the European Commission. During the data analysis phase, these qualitative insights will be triangulated with data and insights via other data collection tools, including the surveys and case studies, to allow the evaluation team to answer the evaluation questions.

4.2.3 On-line surveys

The evaluators will launch two on-line surveys to allow structured feedback to be gathered from officials in DG Trade (middle and senior managers) and registered CSO members. The surveys will be comprised of mainly closed ratings questions, requiring respondents to make a selection of the response which best reflects their experience or viewpoint. A small number of open questions will be included to allow further interpretation of the responses and also to allow unusual examples or responses to be provided.

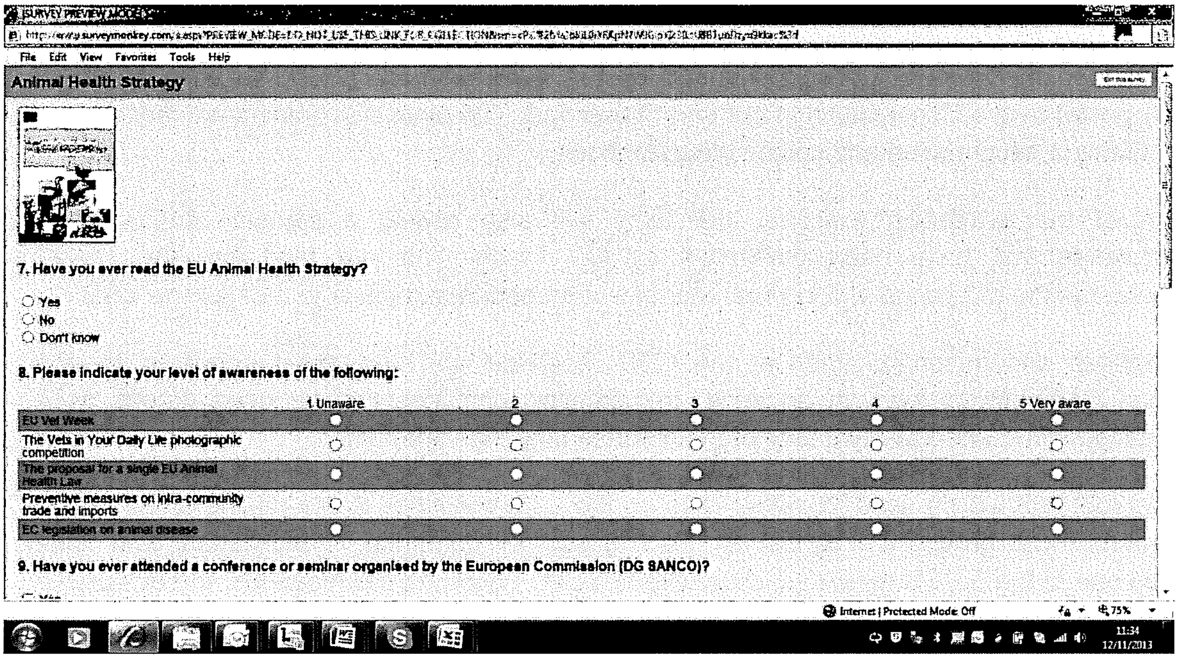
It is suggested that it would be useful to repeat some of the questions that were posed in the previous evaluation, to allow comparisons to be made between responses given in 2006 and in 2013. This could help to see whether any key aspects in the appreciation of the CSD have evolved over time. In addition, it is suggested to include a number of new questions to explore additional areas for the purposes of this evaluation.

The goal is to achieve the highest possible response rates. It is understood that there are circa 330 CSOs registered in the CSD database and circa 900 valid email addresses. Based on this population size, it will be necessary to generate 269 responses to the survey of CSOs to allow a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of +/- 5%. Similarly, it will be important to ensure that high numbers of DG senior and middle managers also engage with the planned staff survey.

It will be necessary to promote the surveys to ensure that high participation rates are achieved. It is anticipated that DG Trade will send the invitations to the DG staff and CSO members for data protection reasons. The surveys will remain on-line over a maximum period of 4-5 weeks. During this time, the evaluators will launch two reminders to encourage further responses to the survey. Based on experience, most responses will be logged after the initial launch of the survey and following any subsequent reminders.

[16] Non-members of the contract group are included here to provide an alternative view. However, a small sample is included given that CSOs will be included via the on-line survey and brief interviews at the 5 CSD meetings to be observed by the evaluators.

Figure 6. Example of an on-line survey[17]



Both surveys will be anonymous. This will be particularly important to allow respondents to feel able to provide an honest account of their views. However, the survey of CSOs registered members will ask respondents to indicate their country of operation and sector to allow comparisons to be made between responses from different types of organisation. The survey for DG Trade officials will be conducted in English. The survey of registered CSO members will be made available in English, French and German to facilitate greater participation by CSOs.

The two surveys will not be identical. Surveys will contain some standard questions and some more specific questions which take into account the context and knowledge of the respondent. The possibility to link the surveys will be explored in the inception phase. Responses to the on-line survey will be downloaded and analysed by the evaluation team. A specific report on the surveys will be developed, which will present the data in chart format. The reports will be included in the Interim Report to the Commission.

4.2.4 Attendance, observation and assessment of CSD meetings

A more in-depth view of the actual workings of the CSD will be provided when members of the evaluation team attend 5 meetings of the CSD in an observer status. One evaluator will attend each meeting. Prior to the meetings, the evaluation team will review any materials that will be tabled or distributed to participants in advance and will briefly discuss the goals of the meeting and desired outcomes with the organiser. The selection of meetings will be agreed with the Commission, but will be limited by the timeframe of the evaluation.

The evaluation team will make use of a template, established during the inception phase, to capture observations in a structured manner. It is understood that DG Trade uses a

[17] Example of an on-line survey of stakeholders to assess Animal Health Communications for DG SANCO

questionnaire to allow meeting participants to assess the meeting that they attend. It is suggested to insert a small number of additional questions into this questionnaire. This will allow the evaluation to capture on-the-spot / real time assessments of the meetings. Experience suggests that the types of questions posed by the evaluation team tend to differ to those typically posed by the Commission in this sort of exercise. The evaluator present will then collect a copy of the questionnaires and collate the responses.

As part of the evaluation exercise, the team will also review a sample of monitoring questionnaires that have been developed by DG Trade. This will feed into the overall assessment of the relevance and appropriateness of procedures in place to monitor the CSD.

All templates and questions used at the CSD meetings will have been approved by the European Commission team in advance. In addition, templates will be used across all 5 meetings to allow comparability between the different meetings attended.

The final tool that will be used to gather data on the CSD meetings is the on-line focus group. Two on-line focus groups will be set up. Each group will comprise 10 individuals who have attended one of the 5 CSD meetings under examination. Following the meetings, the evaluators will seek to recruit participants for one of the two on-line focus groups that are foreseen.

The on-line focus groups usually last circa 1.5 hours and will be held in English. Each session is moderated by two members of the evaluation team and takes the form of a real-time chat around a series of issues and questions that are posed by the moderator. One moderator poses questions and the other moderator observes the session and makes suggestions for additional areas of exploration. Participants are anonymous to each other with the result that they sense freedom to give their spontaneous reactions. The mixture of experiences from a series of meetings will allow rich insights into the meeting process and its effectiveness. The focus group software allows the full transcript of the session to be captured and saved for later analysis.

The advantages of the on-line focus groups relate to their flexibility. Participants can take part from their work place and are not required to invest additional time in travelling to a focus group venue. Yet this format facilitates a group discussion, which will allow the evaluators to dig deeper into reasons for perceptions. The focus groups will also be used to allow testing of responses to monitoring questions and observations of the meetings made by the evaluation team. The results of the focus groups will be presented to the Commission in the Interim Report.

4.2.5 Benchmarking of three organisations with comparable processes

As required by the Terms of Reference, the evaluation team will review three analogous processes in operation in three other organisations to identify possible areas for best practice. The three organisations will have been agreed in advance with the Commission and will most likely include an example of a similar process managed by the European Commission and examples of processes managed by other international and possible national organisations.

For the external organisations, the evaluation team will attempt to identify organisations with recognised good practice in this area as the intention is to use this work to further improve the

DG Trade process. For example, it is noted that some organisations have publically available documents on their stakeholder consultation processes and have drafted good practice guidelines. It is noted that the first evaluation, conducted in 2006, focused on the World Bank, DG SANCO and Sweden.

Each case study will involve an in-depth view of the process under investigation. This will most likely require the review of background information provided by the chosen organisations and available via the internet, as well as in-depth interviews with the key managers of the process, including for example those responsible for stakeholder interactions and those responsible for communications. For organisations located in Europe, one member of the evaluation team will visit the selected organisation for face-to-face interactions. This will help to engage the interviewee more fully in the discussion and should be more efficient in terms of gathering supplementary information.

It may be difficult to engage external organisations in the evaluation process. Therefore, the evaluation team suggests drafting a letter, which could be sent by the Commission to validate the request for involvement and ask for collaboration in the exercise. To allow access to information about external organisations' processes, it is suggested to offer participating organisations a copy of their case study report and the evaluator's assessment of their dialogue process.

Case study interviews will be conducted using a pre-defined interview template. Where possible, the evaluators will search for specific examples in the benchmark organisations to highlight actual good practices. The evaluators will explore the difficulties and limitations of the defined processes and the mitigation strategies employed by the organisations to overcome any limitations. The evaluation team will also seek to explore how issues identified in the previous evaluation, including for example distrust between NGOs and business organisations, as well as issues identified during the present evaluation.

The case studies will be the last strand of the data gathering exercise. This means that they will take place following the in-depth interviews with internal staff and members of the CSD contact group and once initial responses to the on-line surveys have been gathered. Based on this first evidence the initial interview guides will be adjusted to allow for exploration of the handling of specific issues identified in the CSD process, where relevant.

Each case study will be written up as an individual report, which will be inserted into the Interim Report. A draft version of the report will be sent to the benchmark organisation prior to being sent to the Commission. Time allowing any additional feedback will then be taken into account prior to submission. This will ensure that an accurate picture of the process is achieved.

4.2.6 Interim Report

The Interim Report will be submitted to the European Commission within 5 months of the signature of the contract. The report will present the findings from each strand of the evidence gathering described above. The report is intended as a progress report, but it will also attempt to provide some initial suggestions for ways that the CSD could be improved. These suggestions will be very preliminary at this point, as it will not have been possible to carry out an integrated analysis of the data. The report will be discussed in a steering group meeting with the Commission.

4.3 Phase 3: Analysis, Judgement and Final Reporting

The purpose of the final phase of the evaluation is to compile all the findings and results from the different sources of qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered by the team. The evaluators will then construct an analytical framework to allow the evidence to be triangulated and considered against the set of evaluation questions that have been defined in the Terms of Reference. This phase will be completed with the drafting of final reporting deliverables to the European Commission.

Final data analysis
Draft Final and Final Reports

4.3.1 Final data analysis

For the final data analysis, the evaluation team will first conduct analyses for each of the individual data collection tools. Subsequently, as explained below, it will map the data according to the evaluation framework and triangulate the main findings.

- **Initial data analysis:** for the final data analysis, we will use a range of appropriate qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods, depending on the nature of the respective data collection tools and their intended use.

- **Mapping of data:** we will structure the data gathered through the desk research, online surveys and in-depth interviews according to the evaluation questions set out in the evaluation framework. This will provide us with a series of findings that relate to each of the individual evaluation questions and sub-questions.

- **Triangulation of data:** finally, the team will synthesise, triangulate and analyse the data gathered from the individual data collection tools to arrive at robust evidence-based results that can be confirmed from multiple sources. In particular, a *comparative analysis* of the evidence regarding the *intended*, *actual* and *desired* target audiences, communication messages, and communication tools and activities will form a core part of the final data analysis.

The final data analysis will lead to a definition of the integrated findings of the evaluation with regard to all of the areas under assessment and the key questions to be answered, as regards the CSD process and the outputs and outcomes of this process in relation to:

- Information and communication
- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency (resources, organisations and monitoring of the process)

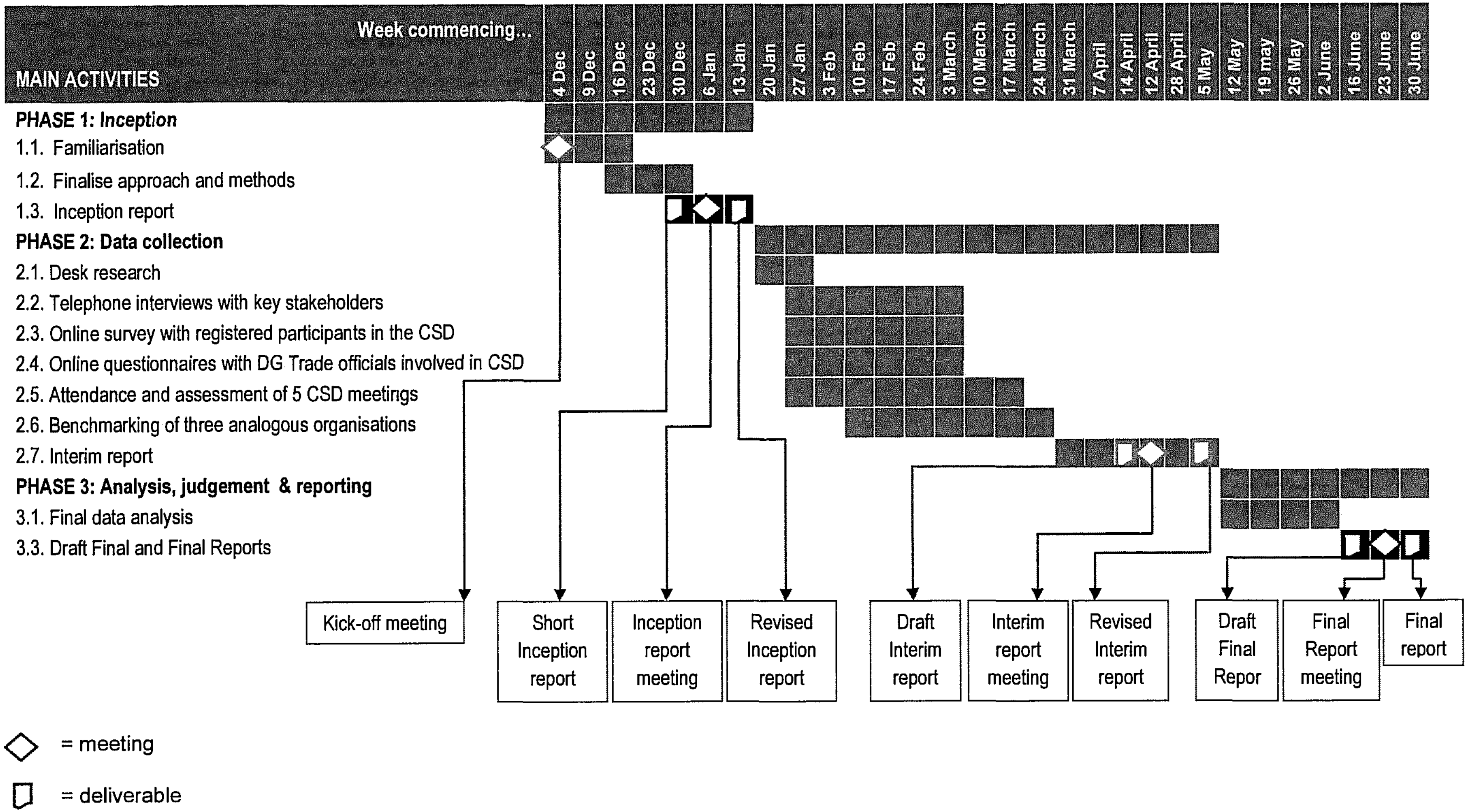
4.3.2 Draft Final and Final Reports

The Draft Final Report will be submitted within 6.5 months of contract signature. This version of the Final Report will contain a draft of the results, analysis and conclusions and recommendations for future action. In addition, it will include a short reflection on the appropriateness of the evaluation approach, any limitations which may affect the results of the exercise and lessons that have been learned that may be used in the future.

A final meeting will be an opportunity for the Commission to convey comments and feedback to the evaluation team, who will then address those comments and submit the final report within seven months of contract signature. It will be accompanied by a presentation that can be used by DG Trade or others for the dissemination of the key results.

The project timeline (Figure 7.) presents the duration and sequencing of the different tasks. It is based on the assumption that the project will start in December 2013, and end in June 2014. Should the start date be brought forward or delayed, the timing of certain tasks will have to be adjusted accordingly.

Figure 7. Project timeline



5 APPROACH FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE WORK

[Art. 4.2 first indent]

5.2 Team members

[redacted] [Art. 4.2 first indent]

[redacted] [Art. 4.2 first indent and 4.1(b)]

Summary profiles of team members are presented below.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

For full CVs, please refer to **Annex C.**

[redacted]

[Art. 4.2 first indent and Art. 4.1(b)]

[Art. 4.2 first indent and Art. 4.1(b)]

[Art. 4.2 first indent]

[Art. 4.2 first indent]

6 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

The implementation of the assignment is expected to require a total of **143 staff days**. The respective tasks of each expert and the number of person/days is described in detail in the work plan presented overleaf (Table 5).

6.1 Financial Budget

This section provides a breakdown of the costs that would be involved in delivering this work for DG Trade. All fee rates are those described in the Framework Contract. The total price for the work to be undertaken is €129,725.00.

CSD2: Evaluation of DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue in order to assess its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance	Quality Assurance	Project Manager	Communications Expert	Senior Consultants	Consultants	Totals
Days						
Fee rate per day						
Total fees						

[Art. 4.2 first indent and Art. 4.1(b)]

The payments should be in-line with the terms specified in the Framework Contract, which foresees two payments.

- The first payment of 40% of the total value of the contract will be made upon acceptance of the Interim Report
- The final and balance payment of the remaining 60% of the contract will be made upon acceptance of the Final Report.

Table 5. Work plan

CSD2 - Evaluation of DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue in order to assess its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance	Travel	Target month	Quality Assurance	Project Manager	External Experts	Senior Consultants	Consultants	Total days
			PERSON DAYS					Total days
Phase 1: Inception								
1.1 Familiarisation								
Kick off meeting	Yes	Dec-13						
Familiarisation interviews with DG Trade officials	Yes	Dec-13						
Initial desk research	No	Dec-13						
1.2 Finalise approach and methods								
Reconstruct intervention logic	No	Dec-13						
Refine EQ matrix, finalise methods and work programme	No	Dec-13						
Develop data collection tools	No	Dec-13						
1.3 Inception Report								
Draft and submit short Inception Report	No	Dec-13						
Meeting with the Commission to discuss Inception Report	Yes	Jan-14						
Revised Inception Report	No	Jan-14						
Total								

[Art. 4.2 first indent]

Table 5 - continued

CSD2 - Evaluation of DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue in order to assess its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance	Travel	Target month	Quality Assurance	Project Manager	External Experts	Senior Consultants	Consultants	Total days
Phase 2: Data collection								
2.1 Desk research								
Review and analyse quantitative and qualitative data sources on the CSD	No	Jan-14						
2.2 Telephone interviews with key stakeholders								
Confirm sample of contacts and schedule calls	No	Jan-14						
Carry out telephone interviews with members of the Contract Group (10) other CSOs (5)	No	Feb-14						
Carry out telephone interviews with officials in other EC DGs (5-7)	No	Feb-14						
Analysis and write up of responses	No	Mar-14						
2.3 Online survey with registered participants in the CSD								
Finalise survey questionnaire, set up online and promote	No	Jan-14						
Follow up actions to increase response rates	No	Feb-14						
Analysis and write up of responses	No	Mar-14						
2.4 Online questionnaires with DG Trade officials								
Finalise questionnaire and set up online	No	Jan-14						
Send and administer questionnaires	No	Feb-14						
Analysis and write up of responses	No	Mar-14						
2.5 Attendance and assessment of 5 CSD meetings								
Assessment of materials and short brief with organisers (before each meeting)	No	Jan-14						
On the spot observation of meetings & design of questions	No	Feb-14						
Develop discussion guide, set up and run 2 on-line focus groups	No	Mar-14						
Write up short reports for each meeting	No	Mar-14						
2.6 Benchmarking of three analogous organisations								
Finalise materials for benchmarking	No	Feb-14						
Desk research and telephone interviews	No	Mar-14						
Analysis and write up of benchmarking reports	No	Mar-14						

[Art. 4.2 first indent]

Table 5 - continued

CSD2 - Evaluation of DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue in order to assess its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance	Travel	Target month	Quality Assurance	Project Manager	External Experts	Senior Consultants	Consultants	Total days
2.7 Interim Report								
Draft and submit Interim Report	No	Apr-14						
Meeting with the Commission to discuss Interim Report	Yes	May-14						
Revised Interim Report	No	May-14						
Total								
Phase 3: Analysis, judgments and final reporting								
3.1. Final data analysis								
Mapping and aggregation of data and findings	No	May-14						
Triangulation and final analysis	No	May-14						
Draft overarching conclusions and recommendations	No	May-14						
3.2. Draft Final and Final Reports								
Draft and submit Draft Final Report	No	Jun-14						
Meeting on the Draft Final Report	Yes	Jun-14						
Draft and submit Final Report	No	Jun-14						
Total								
Total days								

[Art. 4.2 first indent]

ANNEX A: DRAFT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation questions	Evaluation sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Methods/ Data sources
Evaluation area: Information and communication				
EQ1: How does the CSD fit into DG Trade's overall commitment to transparency and good governance?	How is the DG's commitment to transparency and good governance defined? Is the CSD transparent in its objectives, process and outputs? Is the CSD aligned to DG TRADE's commitment to good governance? Does the CSD fulfil the EC criteria for good governance18?	Extent that it is possible to define the DG's commitment to transparency and good governance. Extent that CSD objectives, process and outcomes are transparent to participants and non-participants? Extent that the CSD is aligned with DG's commitment. Extent that the CSD fulfils the criteria of good governance?	Definition of the DG's commitment Perceptions of transparency of the CSD among participants Evidence of information objectives, processes and outcomes in the public domain Perceptions and evidence of alignment with DG's commitment Evidence of alignment with EC criteria	Desk research Online questionnaire In-depth interviews with EC staff In-depth interviews with sample of reps of CSOs.
EQ2: How does CSD fit in and contribute to DG Trade's information and communication on trade policy? (CSD was integrated in DG Trade's communication unit in January 2012, before that it was in DG Trade's sustainable development unit).	What is DG Trade's information and communication policy? What are the communication objectives, channels and tools of the CSD? Is the CSD aligned with this I&C policy? Are there any areas where this could be reinforced or modified to increase alignment?	Extent that it is possible to define DG Trade's I&C policy Extent that it is possible to define the communication objectives, channels and tools of the CSD. Extent that EC staff perceive the CSD to be aligned and evidence that the CSD is aligned. Extent that there are gaps or modifications required to increase alignment.	Definition of DG Trade's I&C policy Definition of the CSD's communication objectives, channels and tools Perceptions that the CSD is aligned Evidence that CSD actions are aligned. Identification of gaps or possible modifications	Desk research In-depth interviews with EC staff

[18] According to the Eurostat's Indicators explained: Good governance issues are addressed in the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) The objective is to promote coherence between local, regional, national and global actions in order to enhance their contribution to sustainable development.

Evaluation questions	Evaluation sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Methods/ Data sources
EQ3: Do the objectives of the CSD remain relevant?	How are the objectives perceived by participants in the CSD? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the objectives? Are the objectives consistent with the needs and problems they were meant to address in the views of stakeholders?	Extent that participants are aware of the objectives and perceive them in a positive light Perceptions of participants and other stakeholders on key strengths and weaknesses of objectives Extent that objectives are consistent with the needs and problems they were meant to address in the views of stakeholders	Levels of awareness and satisfaction with objectives Stakeholder's perceptions on if objectives reflect needs and problems of the process	Desk research In-depth interviews Online questionnaires On-line focus groups
EQ4: How is the process perceived within DG Trade and by the participants: number of meetings, topics, quality of information and exchange of views, involvement of Commission representatives?	How does the CSD work in practice (number of meetings, topics, quality of information and exchange of views, involvement of Commission reps)? Are DG Trade representatives and participants satisfied with: - the number and frequency of meetings - the topics discussed - the quality of information and exchange of views - the involvement of Commission Reps.	Extent to which the DG Trade representatives and participants are satisfied with: - the number and frequency of meetings - the topics discussed - the quality of information and exchange of views - the involvement of Commission Reps.	Analysis of the CSD process Levels of satisfaction with: - the number and frequency of meetings - *the topics discussed* - the quality of information and exchange of views - the involvement of Commission Reps.	Desk research In-depth interviews with EC staff In-depth interviews, including with other DGs On-line surveys

Evaluation questions	Evaluation sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Methods/ Data sources
Evaluation area: Relevance				
EQ5: In what ways do CSOs find the process useful? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Has it fulfilled stakeholders' expectations?	How is the process perceived by CSOs? What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the process, as identified by CSOs? What were participants' expectations when joining the process, and have these been fulfilled? Are there any pending gaps that the current process is not seen to fulfil, and how can these be addressed?	Extent that CSOs consider the process to be useful. Identification of key strengths and weaknesses, as perceived by CSOs Extent to which participants' initial expectations have been fulfilled by the process Pending gaps identified by participants, and ways to address them	Levels of satisfaction of CSOs with the usefulness of the process Key strengths and weaknesses identified by CSOs Initial expectations of participants and views on how these have /have not been fulfilled Perceived gaps and strategies to address them	In-depth interviews with the sample CSOs Online questionnaires for the CSOs On-line focus groups with meeting participants
EQ6: In what ways is the CSD relevant for DG Trade?	What are the benefits of the CSD for DG Trade? How does the CSD contribute to the work of the DG? Why is the CSD Is a dialogue an appropriate mechanism to allow the DG to meet its wider goals?	Extent that it is possible to identify benefits of the CSD for DG Trade. Extent that it is possible to identify the way that the dialogue contributes to the work of the DG? Extent that the dialogue approach can be defined as fitting with the overall goals of the DG.	Identification of CSD benefits for the DG. Identification of contributions to work of the DG. Perceptions of extent of fit with wider DG goals.	Desk research In-depth interviews with EC staff. On-line questionnaire with EC staff
EQ7: Does the CSD process play a role in raising public awareness on trade issues and policies and in encouraging CSOs and their constituencies to participate in discussions with the European institutions?	Have there been any changes in public awareness on trade issues and policies since 2006? Have there been any changes in the number and profile of CSOs participating in discussions with the Commission since 2006? Can these changes be attributed to the CSD?	Extent that public awareness on trade issues and policies has increased since 2006 Extent that there have been changes in the number and profile of CSOs participating in discussions with the EC Extent to which the CSD has contributed to (i) raising awareness among the general public; and (ii) encouraging the participation of CSOs and their constituencies	Eurobarometer data on public awareness of trade issues and policies since 2006 Evolution of numbers and profiles of CSOs engaged in the process since 2006 Views of participants and stakeholders on the role played by the CSD in bringing changes at general public and participants levels.	In-depth interviews with EC staff In-depth interviews with CSOs Online questionnaires for CSOs (potentially disseminated in their constituencies?)

Evaluation questions	Evaluation sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Methods/ Data sources
Evaluation area: Effectiveness				
EQ8: To what extent is the information provided by DG *Trade at the CSD meetings* perceived as new and useful in keeping CSOs informed about the development of policies and progress and state of play in trade negotiations?	Is the information provided by DG Trade considered to be new and useful? Are there any gaps in the information provided by DG Trade? Are there other sources that participants consult to stay abreast of policy developments and progress on trade negotiations?	Extent to which the information provided by DG Trade is considered to be new / useful. Extent to which participants identify any gaps in the information that they receive Comparison of information provided by DG Trade and that provided by other organisations / sources	Levels of satisfaction of participants with the information provided by DG Trade Perceived levels of usefulness / novelty of the information Gaps identified in the information Other sources / organisation judged to provide new / useful information	In-depth interviews with CSOs Online questionnaires with CSOs On-line focus groups
EQ9: Is the CSD reaching its target audience adequately? Are the tools and channels used appropriate?	Are the target audiences satisfied with communication and interaction via the CSD? Does the CSD ensure sufficient coverage of the target audience? Which channels and tools are currently used? Are there alternative channels and tools that could be used to better effect? Could improvements be made to the way the channels and tools are used?	Extent that target audiences are satisfied. Extent of coverage of the target audience. Extent that channels and tools are defined Identification of alternative channels and tools and extent that these are perceived to be /are more effective. Extent improvements could be made.	High level of satisfaction of target audiences. Target audience and DG perception that target audience is covered. Quantitative data confirming this coverage. Definition of channels and tools. Evidence of perceptions that other channelsand toosl would be / are more effective. Identification of potential improvements.	In-depth interviews with EC staff and sample of representatives from CSOs Desk research On-line survey of CSOs Evaluator observation in CSD meetings Case studies
EQ10: How do participants rate the feedback offered by DG Trade about the ways in which their views are taken into account?	How satisfied are participants with how their views are taken into account?	Extent that participants are satisfied with how their views are taken into account.	Levels of satisfaction with the way that views are taken into account.	In-depth interviews with sample of CSOs On-line survey of CSOs. On-line focus groups.

Evaluation questions	Evaluation sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Methods/ Data sources
EQ:11: How effective is the process in providing participants with a forum in which to present their ideas and position papers for influencing trade policy?	Is the CSD a good way to facilitate the presentation of ideas and position papers to influence trade policy? Which aspects of the process work best? Are there any improvements that could be made and what would these achieve? Are there any alternatives, for example used elsewhere, that could be considered?	Extent that EC staff and CSOs consider that the CSD is a good mechanism. Extent that it is possible to identify specific good practice elements. Extent that improvements and their potential impacts are identified. Extent that better / appropriate alternatives exist.	The CSD is highly rated as a dialogue process. Good practice elements are identified within the CSD. Improvements are identified. Identification of better / appropriate alternatives.	In-depth interviews with EC staff and sample of CSOs On-line surveys Case studies Desk research
EQ12: How is the information provided by DG Trade through the CSD and CG disseminated by the CSOs to their constituencies?	Which channels are used to disseminate information? Which information provided by DG Trade is disseminated by CSOs to their constituencies?	Extent that it is possible to identify the channels used to disseminate information. Extent that it is possible to determine whether all or some of the information is disseminated.	It is possible to define the main channels used to disseminate information. It is possible to define which information is disseminated	On-line survey In-depth interviews with sample of CSOs and the contact group.
Evaluation area: Efficiency				
EQ13: Are the resources allocated to the process commensurate with its objectives?	What is the level of human and financial resource that is allocated to the CSD / specific activities by DG Trade / other DGs (since 2006). Is this level of resource considered to be necessary /justified by those in the DG? How does this compare on a year-on-year basis How does this compare with other dialogues managed by the	Extent of human resource for the CSD as a whole and by activity. Extent of financial resource for the CSD as a whole and by activity. Extent that the levels of resource are considered to be necessary / justifiable. Extent of comparability between human and financial resources used on a year-on-year basis. Extent of comparability with other	Levels of human and financial resource by activity and for the whole CSD since 2006. Perceptions that levels or resources are necessary / justifiable. Levels of comparability between costs of the CSD year-on-year. Levels of comparability between costs of the CSD and other EC dialogues.	Desk research In-depth interviews with EC staff. Case studies.

Evaluation questions	Evaluation sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Methods/ Data sources
	Commission? Are there any efficiency gains that could be made?	dialogues managed by the EC. Extent that it is possible identify efficiency gains.	Identification of possible efficiency gains.	
EQ14: To what extent do the existing organisational and administrative procedures result in an efficient consultation process?	What are the organisational processes and procedures in place for the CSD? Have there been any changes to these procedures in recent years and why? Do the procedures enhance the consultation process and in what way? Are there any relevant alternatives that could be considered and why?	Extent that is possible to define the organisational processes and procedures in place for the CSD. Extent that it is possible to identify recent changes and the rationale for change. Extent that it is perceived that procedures enhance the process. Extent that it is possible to identify relevant alternatives.	Definition of organisational processes and procedures. Indemnification of recent changes and the rationale for change. Perceptions that procedures enhance the process. Identification of relevant alternatives.	Desk research In-depth interviews with EC staff Interviews with CSO contact group
EQ15: Are there administrative aspects that act as a barrier to participation?	Are there any administrative / organisational barriers that limit the CSD? If so, why do these aspects act as barriers? Is it possible to overcome these barriers?	Extent that barriers / limitations exist. Extent that how and why these elements are barriers is identified. Extent that it is perceived to be possible to overcome these barriers.	Evidence of barriers and limitations. Identification of rationale for barriers and their impact. Perceptions of how to overcome barriers.	In-depth interviews with EC staff Desk research In-depth interviews with CSO contact group
EQ16: To what extent is the way DG Trade's input and participants' contributions are recorded adequate?	How satisfied are EC staff and participants with the way that the DG's inputs and participants' contributions are recorded? Are other DGs also satisfied? Is the record of inputs and contributions considered to be	Extent that EC staff and participants are satisfied. Extent that other DGs are also satisfied. Extent that those involved perceive the record of inputs to be accurate, useful and serves the intended	High levels of satisfaction of EC staff and participants. High levels of satisfaction of other DGs. Perceptions that the record of inputs and contributions is accurate, useful and serves the	Desk research In-depth interviews with EC staff In-depth interviews with sample of CSOs On-line survey of CSOs

Evaluation questions	Evaluation sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Methods/ Data sources
	accurate and useful? Are there any alternatives or improvements that could be considered?	purpose. Extent that it is possible to identify other alternatives or improvements.	intended purpose. Identification of alternatives or improvements.	On-line focus groups.
EQ17: Is the information provided by existing monitoring tools useful? How can this information be fed into the process?	What type of information is provided by existing monitoring tools? How is monitoring information used and by whom? How useful is the information considered to be? Could any improvements be made to the monitoring system and the way that monitoring information is used? Are there any alternatives that could be considered?	Extent that it is possible to identify the type of monitoring data provided. Extent that the use of monitoring information and the users can be defined. Extent that perceptions of the usefulness can be identified. Extent that improvements to the systems and its use can be identified. Extent that it is possible to identify alternatives.	The type of monitoring data is identified. The use and users of monitoring data is defined. Levels of usefulness of monitoring tools and data. Improvements to the system and its use can be identified. Alternatives are identified.	Desk research In-depth interviews with EC staff Evaluator assessments based on evaluation experience

ANNEX B: EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS WORK

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ANNEX C: CVS OF THE PROPOSED TEAM MEMBERS

The CVs of the proposed team members will be provided in a separate file.

Curricula Vitae
redacted under
[Art.4.1(b)]

ANNEX B - CONTACT DETAILS FORM

Specific contract n° 15 - Evaluation of DG Trade's civil society dialogue

The purpose of this form is to indicate whom the Contractor should contact, within the Directorate-General, concerning various aspects of this project. This will greatly facilitate the management of this project.
This form must be completed and returned together with the signed specific contract to:

DG:	Trade

"Technical" contact: dealing with the content, overall co-ordination and day-to-day communication

Name:	[redacted]
Unit:	A.3 – Information, Communication and Civil Society
Office address:	[redacted]
Tel:	[redacted]
E-mail:	[redacted]@ec.europa.eu

"Administrative" contact: dealing with issues about the Framework Contract, specific contracts, invoices and reports

Name:	[redacted]
Unit:	A.1 – Resources and strategic planning
Office address:	[redacted]
Tel:	[redacted]
E-mail:	[redacted]1@ec.europa.eu

Head of Unit

Name:	[redacted]
Unit:	A.3 – Information, Communication and Civil Society
Office address:	[redacted]
Tel:	[redacted]
E-mail:	[redacted]@ec.europa.eu

[redacted]

EVALUATION OF DG TRADE'S CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE IN ORDER TO ASSESS ITS EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND RELEVANCE.

1. CONTEXT / INTRODUCTION

The Directorate-General for Trade in the European Commission develops and implements EU trade and investment policy. Along with the EU's Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht, it aims to shape a trade and investment environment that is good for growth. Its purpose is to secure prosperity, solidarity and security in Europe and around the globe. Trade policy is set down in Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The overall purpose of an EU trade policy that helps revitalise Europe's economy is set out in the Communication "Trade, Growth & World Affairs". The EU aims to play a key role in keeping markets open worldwide and helping Europe to overcome the economic crisis.

Turning challenges of the ongoing globalisation process into opportunities for people, DG Trade assumes a wide range of responsibilities. It is DG Trade's task to negotiate bilateral and multilateral trade policy, to ensure that rules agreed upon are applied and to maintain close working relationships with the WTO and other multilateral institutions.

In order to deliver a coherent EU trade policy and to strengthen Europe's voice worldwide, DG Trade works closely with other Commission services. Due to increased levels of global interaction and internationalisation, Europe is connected to its international trading partners, both in the developed and developing world. Therefore, DG Trade pursues a comprehensive trade approach including sustainable development and general development policy.

Through the Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) DG Trade engages in a structured dialogue with its stakeholders with the purpose of strengthening communication and mutual understanding.

DG Trade's Civil Society Dialogue fits into the general policy framework within the EU on consultation and civil society dialogue. The EU engages with civil society to ensure transparency and dialogue in trade policy making, consistent with overall objectives of transparency in European policy making.

Relevant information, details and background sources can be found at DG Trade's website: http://ec.europa.eu/trade/

OBJECTIVES and SCOPE of the evaluation are to:

1. To evaluate the extent to which the civil society dialogue process addresses the objectives that have been set for it and delivers results.
2. To evaluate the relevance of the process, and the effectiveness of the current implementation procedures.
3. To assess the efficiency of its organisation, use of resources, and monitoring mechanisms.
4. To make recommendations with a view to improving and renewing the approach and process.

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess whether the CSD's strategy and purposes remain adequate. It should provide feedback to DG Trade on what the EU is doing right and recommendations about what might be done to adapt or improve the process.

MOTIVES of the evaluation:

It is a Commission requirement to evaluate policy activities on a regular basis with the objective of improving openness and accountability. The last evaluation of the CSD process was conducted in 2006. This evaluation report is available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/october/tradoc_130551.pdf

The CSD is now in its 15th year of operation and an assessment will allow DG Trade and stakeholders to take stock of the process, as well as providing an opportunity to find ways to improve transparency and communication between its actors.

2. THE PROJECT FOCUS OR CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Description

The CSD on trade engages in a structured dialogue between the Commission and stakeholders with the purpose of strengthening communication and mutual understanding. Its objectives are to consult civil society widely (in particular social partners & NGOs represented at EU but also national level), to address its concerns on trade policy, to improve EU trade policy-making and to promote transparency and accountability. DG Trade aims to promote an active and inclusive participation of civil society through this process. The political decision to organise the dialogue is based on the acknowledgement that there may be questions on which civil society organisations and the Commission have diverging views, which can be discussed and clarified.

DG Trade was one of the forerunners in establishing a structured dialogue with civil society in 1998. That year anti-globalisation groups rallied at the WTO Ministerial in Seattle; and there seemed to be an increasing feeling of alienation among EU citizens regarding the work of policy makers, as well as frustration about their perceived lack of influence. DG Trade decided that it could not ignore these actors.

The dialogue aims to give a broad perspective on key trade policy issues through:

- Regular updates on specific topics, which cover WTO issues, ongoing bilateral trade negotiations and specific sectors (e.g. services, IPR, investment, raw materials).
- *Ad hoc* subject-specific meetings that reflect DG Trade's agenda (e.g. in 2013 on the final report of the EU-US High Level Group, on the modernisation of Trade Defence Instruments, a debriefing on the first round of TTIP negotiations).
- Meetings with the Commissioner for Trade and/or the Director-General for Trade taking place once or twice a year on trade policy.
- Seminars have been organised in the past years in the new EU Member States to inform civil society stakeholders from these countries on trade policy and CSD activities.
- The Commission also includes CSO representatives as observers in its delegation to WTO Ministerial conferences.

There are 20 to 25 meetings organised per year, i.e. 2 to 3 per month. The meetings take place in European Commission conference rooms (SCIC).

The topics of the meetings reflect thus both DG Trade's most recent trade initiatives and policy-making, and subjects on which civil society has expressed an interest, either through the Contact Group or individually. Civil society consultations also accompany Trade Sustainability Impact Assessments (TSIAs).

Stakeholders

Civil society organisations (CSOs) that participate in DG Trade's CSD include traditional NGOs, employers' organisations, trade union organisations, environmental and consumer associations, business associations, faith-based groups as well as representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). At present, around 330 organisations are registered in the CSD database.

The requirements for CSOs to participate in the CSD are:

1. They must be based in the EU.
2. They must be not-for-profit.
3. They must be registered in the EU Transparency Register. All CSOs that contact the Commission and the European Parliament are invited to sign up in the Transparency Register (TR) set up by both institutions and managed by the Commission's Secretariat General.

The CSD Contact Group, an informal steering body composed of ten to fifteen organisations that represent the different CSD constituencies, acts as the interface between DG Trade and CSOs. Its composition is decided by the CSOs themselves. It meets 3 to 4 times a year and proposes topics for the CSD agenda.

All CSOs participating in the CSD are integrated in a database with the contact details of their members, history of their participation and a direct link to the Transparency Register, which provides information on their constituencies and financial status. With this information DG Trade can disseminate information to targeted groups and organise meetings at short notice.

To facilitate the participation of organisations that are not based in Brussels, there is a limited budget for the reimbursement of travel expenses.

Legal framework of the CSD

The White Paper on Governance (2001) highlighted the need for better involvement of civil society in consultation processes. The European Transparency Initiative (COM(2008)323) and the Transparency Register reinforced these principles.

The Lisbon Treaty (Art. 11 (1 & 2), Title II 'Provisions on democratic principles') introduced the general principles that interested parties should be consulted and that a dialogue be maintained with civil society and representative organisations. It establishes that the work of the European institutions must be transparent and in particular that their activities should be fully publicised.

Information available:

Information on the Civil Society Dialogue is available on DG Trade website at the following address: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/index.cfm

The website provides background information on CSD and its procedures, registered organisations, position papers from CSOs and a list of meetings together with their minutes. It also offers the possibility to register online in the database and for meetings. Forthcoming meetings are published in the website and invitations are sent to registered organisations, as well as reminders a few days before each meeting.

3. DESCRIPTION OF TASKS

(A) Evaluation questions

In particular, the contractor will have to answer the following questions:

a) **Information and Communication**:

- How does the CSD fit into DG Trade's overall commitment to transparency and good governance?
- How does CSD fit in and contribute to DG Trade's information and communication on trade policy? (CSD was integrated in DG Trade's communication unit in January 2012, before that it was in DG Trade's sustainable development unit)

b) **Relevance**

- Do the objectives of the CSD remain relevant?
- How is the process perceived within DG Trade and by the participants: number of meetings, topics, quality of information and exchange of views, involvement of Commission representatives?
- In what ways do CSOs find the process useful? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Has it fulfilled stakeholders' expectations?
- In what ways is the CSD relevant for DG Trade?
- Does the CSD process play a role in raising public awareness on trade issues and policies and in encouraging CSOs and their constituencies to participate in discussions with the European institutions?

c) Effectiveness

- To what extent is the information provided by DG Trade at the CSD meetings perceived as new and useful in keeping CSOs informed about the development of policies and progress and state of play in trade negotiations?
- Is the CSD reaching its target audience adequately? Are the tools and channels used appropriate?
- How do participants rate the feedback offered by DG Trade about the ways in which their views are taken into account?
  How effective is the process in providing participants with a forum in which to present their expertise and position papers for influencing trade policy?

- How is the information provided by DG Trade through the CSD and CG disseminated by CSOs to their constituencies?

d) **Efficiency (resources, organisation and monitoring of the process)**:

- Are the resources allocated to the process commensurate with its objectives?
- To what extent do the existing organisational and administrative procedures result in an efficient consultation process?
- Are there administrative aspects that act as a barrier to participation?
- To what extent is the way DG Trade's input and participants' contributions are recorded adequate?
- Is the information provided by existing monitoring tools useful? How can this information be fed into the process?

(B) Research method for data collection and analysis

Considering the limited budget and short time frame, the evaluators should limit the evaluation to: a review of the civil society's position papers included on DG Trade's website[1]; a literature review covering the period since the last evaluation in 2006; individual and group

[1] http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/positionpapers.cfm

interviews; online questionnaires; and participatory observation at civil society dialogue meetings.

4. DETAILS ABOUT DELIVERABLES

The project must deliver a draft outline of the evaluation (inception report) at the end of the inception phase; a progress report (following the data collection phase); and a final report. All documents must be submitted in English.

All reports must display the following statement on the inside title page:

This report was commissioned and financed by the European Commission. The views expressed are those of the consultant, and do not represent an official view of the Commission.

The draft outline (inception report), due **4 weeks** after the start of the project, should include an executive summary. It should consist of an account of how the evaluators intend to achieve the project objectives. In particular, it should include:

- An overview of the project's key features; a description of the project's objectives and how these will be met; an account of the project's key risks and how these will be managed; a clear explanation of the research method that will be used and of how the work will be structured into phases; a clarification of the scope of work (after consultation with the Commission); a summary of the resources required at each phase of the project; a statement of the main organisational roles and responsibilities within the project team; a schedule of the project's phases, activities, resources, milestones, outputs, and expected delivery dates; a statement of any assumptions that have been relied upon in preparing the plan; and a description of the evaluators' procedures and methods for quality control and assurance.
- A draft of the descriptive account of the underlying policy activity to be included in the final report *(see below).*
- A detailed description of the research method to be used for evaluating the effectiveness of the CSD. Copies of survey tools, questionnaires, interview plans that the evaluators intend to use (presented for approval by the Commission in advance). With regard to surveys, proposals of how to deal with non-response bias should be included.
- A proposal for case studies of 3 organisations with analogous processes for consultation with civil society and representative organisations; focusing on innovative aspects of their outreach to civil society, and looking for examples of good/best practice. These examples could include other DGs at the European Commission and might include processes operating within international organisations; and at national level in Member States.
- The consultant will propose three case studies and will provide an explanation of their choice at the kick-off meeting. The final selection of the case studies must be agreed with DG Trade at the latest as part of the inception report.

The inception phase will include the following:

- Kick-off meeting
- Preliminary interviews and desk research
- Methodological fine-tuning and inception report

The progress report, due **5 months** after the start of the project, should include an executive summary. It should respond to all the substantive requirements of the terms of reference. All issues concerning the assessment of DG Trade's dialogue with civil society will need to be analysed. It should also include tentative recommendations for realistic and feasible ways of improving the effectiveness of the CSD. The progress report will form the basis for the quality assessment to be performed by the evaluation steering committee. However, the specific requirements relating to form and presentation that apply to the final report will not need to be implemented fully for the purposes of the progress report. The data collection phase will include the following:

- Defined desk research
- Web-based questionnaires and surveys
- Interviews with CSD stakeholders
- Progress report

The final report, due **7 months** after the start of the project, should be submitted in a form suitable for publication that

- includes an executive summary;
- introduces the report with a succinct account of the process and the context in which it operates for the benefit of those not familiar with it;
- addresses the objectives of the evaluation;
- satisfies the performance standards and quality assessment criteria in the Quality Assessment Form enclosed to the present terms of reference;
- includes, as an annex, a table or chart that maps each specific research question/issue identified in the terms of reference to the place(s) in the final report where that particular question/issue has been answered;
- identifies, analyses and summarizes the lessons learnt from the case studies;
- makes practical and relevant recommendations for improving the effectiveness of DG Trade's CSD; as well as recommendations and suggestions for how such changes might be implemented.

The report must demonstrate the link to the aims of the evaluation. It should have structure and signposting that usefully guide the reader through the commentary. Key messages should be highlighted and (where necessary) summarised.

The descriptive account must be written in a style that is readily accessible to "lay" readers, and that enables them to understand the evaluative judgements that follow;

The report should provide accessible information for intended target audiences (namely the Commission services and all the different stakeholders), and clearly demonstrate the evaluators' understanding that the final report is addressed to different audiences with potentially different needs and interests.

The final report should contain an abstract of no more than 200 words; and as a separate document, an executive summary of no more than 6 pages, in EN, FR, and DE.

It must include specific identifiers (which should be incorporated in the cover page), provided by the European Commission.

In addition to the reports mentioned above, a **briefing document** (summary report) of no more than 2 pages should be prepared. This should summarise, in very succinct form: (i) the subject and scope of the evaluation; (ii) the purpose of the evaluation; (iii) the main findings and recommendations; (iv) the sources of evidence and the evidence-gathering methods employed; (v) limitations in the design or the execution of the evaluation in meeting the evaluation aims and objectives; and (vi) suggestions (where relevant) of issues or aspects for further investigation. The summary report should be delivered together with the final report.

The following must also be foreseen:

- meetings with the steering committee
    - a kick-off meeting as soon as possible after the signature of the contract;
    - a meeting within two weeks of receipt by the Commission of the inception report to discuss the draft outline;
    - a progress review meeting (updating) **five** months after signature of the contract;
    - a meeting within two weeks of receipt of the progress report;
    - a meeting within three weeks of receipt of the final evaluation report.

The contractor will prepare the agendas for these meetings and validate them with the project officer. The contractor will also draft the minutes of each meeting and shall submit them to the Commission for approval not more than 10 working days after each meeting (in conformity with the framework contract stipulations).

- an audit trail of the evaluator's fieldwork consisting of
    - a diary showing those consulted, when, where, how and by whom;
    - a chart of actual work performed against the work programme indicated in the draft outline of the study;
    - the survey tools, questionnaires, and interview plans (submitted for approval in the draft outline of the evaluation). Accurate reports/raw data/transcriptions of all interviews (not to be included in the final report) which should nonetheless respect interviewees' requests for anonymity.

5. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The evaluators' portfolio

The scope of the study calls for a broad portfolio of experience and expertise. The offer should contain the portfolio of evaluators' expertise as well. The evaluators must be able to demonstrate proven expertise and experience in evaluation and their knowledge of consultation processes such as this dialogue with civil society.

Publicity and accountability

The contractor should be aware that the final report will be made public. If only parts of the requested document are covered by any of the exceptions, the remaining parts of the document shall be released, so the contractor should be aware that public access will be the norm rather than the exception.

However, under Article 4 of Regulation 1049/2001 (regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents), particular information produced in the context of the evaluation, such as preliminary findings, simulation results, and suggested policy recommendations may be kept from disclosure if disclosure of the information would seriously undermine the Commission's decision-making process, – unless there is an overriding public interest in disclosure. Such cases must be evaluated on *ad hoc* basis.

Evaluation standards

The Contractor will be expected to perform the work in a way that ensures that the applicable Evaluation Standards of the European Commission are complied with. In particular:

- The evaluation must be conducted in such a way that the results are supported by evidence and rigorous analysis.
- All actors involved in evaluation activities must comply with principles and rules regarding conflict of interest.
- Evaluators must be free to present their results without compromise or interference, although they should take account of the steering group's comments on evaluation quality and accuracy.
- The final evaluation reports must as a minimum set out the purpose, context, objectives, questions, information sources, methods used, evidence, and conclusions.
- The quality of the evaluation must be assessed on the basis of the pre-established criteria throughout the evaluation process; and the quality criteria must as a minimum relate to relevant scope, appropriate methods, reliable data, sound analysis, credible results, valuable conclusions and clarity of the deliverables.

Quality assessment criteria

The quality assessment of the study shall be undertaken in conformity with the framework presented in the Quality Assessment Form enclosed.

Annex D – Evaluations: Quality Assessment Form[1]

<table>
<tr><td>Title of the evaluation</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>QA performed against ….
(select just one)</td><td colspan="2">Draft final report</td><td>Final Report</td></tr>
<tr><td>DG / Unit</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Project Officer responsible</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>EIMS Technical Manager (Unit: TRADE/01)</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Evaluator (contractor)</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>QA performed by….</td><td>Steering committee</td><td>Evaluation function</td><td>Other (please specify)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date of QA</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
</table>

[1] Refer to the *Guide on Scoring the Criteria* (attached below) for how to assess each criterion

(1) Relevance

Does the evaluation respond to information needs – in particular, those set out in the terms of reference?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: **Contextual** (such as deficient terms of references) and **contractual constraints** (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

(2) Appropriate design

Is the design of the evaluation adequate for obtaining the results needed to answer the evaluation questions identified in the terms of reference?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: **Contextual** (such as deficient terms of references) and **contractual constraints** (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

(3) Reliable data

Are the data and evidence collected adequate for their intended use, and has their reliability been ascertained?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: **Contextual** (such as deficient terms of references) and **contractual constraints** (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

(4) Sound analysis

Are the data and evidence analysed systematically in order to answer the evaluation questions and meet other information needs in a valid manner?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: Contextual (such as deficient terms of references) and contractual constraints (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

(5) Credible findings

Do findings follow reasonably from, and are they justified by, an analysis and interpretation of data/information based on pre-established criteria?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: **Contextual** (such as deficient terms of references) and **contractual constraints** (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

(6) Valid conclusions

Are conclusions unbiased and fully based on the findings?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: **Contextual** (such as deficient terms of references) and **contractual constraints** (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

(7) Helpful recommendations

Are the areas highlighted for improvements coherent with the conclusions? Are the suggested options realistic and impartial?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: **Contextual** (such as deficient terms of references) and **contractual constraints** (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

(8) Clarity

Is the report well structured, balanced, and written in an understandable way?

Scoring	Abysmal	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Arguments for scoring:

If relevant: **Contextual** (such as deficient terms of references) and **contractual constraints** (such as lack of time, insufficient resources)

<u>Overall assessment of the final evaluation report</u>

Is the overall quality of the report adequate? In particular:

- Does the study fulfil contractual conditions?

- Are the findings and conclusions of the report reliable, and are there any specific limitations to their validity and completeness?

- Is the information in the report potentially useful for designing or improving interventions, setting priorities, and allocating resources?

Given the contextual and contractual constraints encountered:

- What lessons can be learnt from the process which delivered this evaluation report?

NB <u>This section of the report is replaced by the *Project Execution Lessons Learnt* questionnaire</u> (internal).

GUIDE ON SCORING THE CRITERIA

This list of indicators aims at helping to score each criterion and it can also assist in the process of developing the argumentation underpinning the score.

The indicators may be adapted according to the specificities of each evaluation and some indicators may be omitted and others added when appropriate.

The indicators are, roughly speaking, presented in order of importance (i.e., those at the start of the list are crucial even for a moderate score while the concurrent accomplishment of those at the end of the list may suggest a higher score).

(1) Relevance

Does the evaluation report respond to information needs – in particular, those set out in the terms of reference?
This criterion concerns how well the evaluation responds to the terms of reference. • The evaluation deals with and responds to the research questions identified in the terms of reference • A justification is provided for any evaluation question that has not been answered • The scope covers the requested scenarios, periods of time, geographical areas, target groups, parts of budget, regulations, etc • Limitations in scope are discussed and justified • Effects on other policies, programmes, groups, areas etc are considered • Unintended effects are identified • The evolution of the intervention is taken into account, and possible changes in the problems and needs compared to the situation at the start of the intervention have been addressed • The evaluation broadens the scope or enlightens the approaches in the policy cycle • The evaluation adds value to existing policy knowledge • Other

(2) Appropriate design

Is the design of the evaluation adequate for obtaining the results needed to answer the evaluation questions identified in the terms of reference?
This criterion concerns the inception phase. The inception phase operationalises and possibly complements the terms of reference. In some cases, because of unforeseen events, it may also relate to a subsequent reorientation of parts of the evaluation work.

- The rationale of the intervention, cause-effect relations, outcomes, policy context, stakeholder interests, etc have been studied and taken into account in the design of the evaluation
- The evaluation method chosen is coherent with the needs expressed in the terms of reference, and with requests and instructions given to the contractors
- The evaluation method is clearly and adequately described in sufficient detail that its quality can be judged, and that in principle the evaluation could be re-performed
- Information sources and analysis tools are adequate for answering the evaluation questions
- Judgement criteria to help answer the evaluation questions are pre-defined
- Weaknesses of the evaluation method chosen are pointed out along with potential risks
- Other methodological alternatives are considered; their pros and cons are explained
- The research design has been validated with experts or relevant stakeholders if appropriate (eg, experts on related policies, specific evaluation know-how)
- Ethical issues are properly considered (confidentiality of sources of information, potential harm or difficulty caused by participation of stakeholders, etc)
- Other

(3) Reliable data

Are the data and evidence collected adequate for their intended use, and has their reliability been ascertained?

This criterion concerns the relevance and correctness of both primary and secondary data.

- Available information and sources are well identified
- Relevant literature and previous studies have been sufficiently reviewed
- Existing monitoring systems were used
- Data and information are free of error; data gathered are appropriate and sufficient
- The data collection rationale is explained; and it is coherent with the design of the study
- The quality of existing or collected data was checked and ascertained
- The amount of qualitative information and quantitative data is balanced and appropriate for a valid and reliable analysis
- The tools and means used to collect and process data (e.g. surveys, case studies, expert groups, etc…) were: selected in relation to criteria specified in the inception phase; appropriate and sufficient for answering the research questions; used appropriately so as to guarantee the reliability and validity of results

- Limitations in the effectiveness of data collection (missing coverage, non-participation or non-attendance of selected cases) are discussed and explained.
- Correcting measures have been taken to avoid any potential bias arising from such limitations; or if not, the report discusses the implications for the study evidence and effectiveness
- Other

(4) Sound analysis

Are the data and evidence analysed systematically in order to answer the evaluation questions and meet other information needs in a valid manner?

This criterion refers to the correct interpretation of data and to the adequacy of the method applied.

- There is a clear, solid and coherent deductive analysis (e.g. controlled comparison, experimental research, inferential statistics, etc…)
- The analysis is well focused on the most relevant cause/effect relations and influences underlying the intervention logic, and alternative explanations have been considered
- The analysis uses appropriate quantitative or qualitative techniques, suitable to the context of the evaluation
- Cross checking of findings has taken place. The analysis relies on two or more independent lines of evidence
- Explanatory arguments are explicitly (or implicitly) presented
- The context (historical, socio-economic, etc…) is well taken into account in the analysis
- The report reflects an appropriate range of stakeholders consulted
- Inputs from important stakeholders are used in a balanced way
- The limitations of the analysis, and exceptions to the general explanations, or contradictory evidence, are identified, discussed and presented in a transparent manner
- Other

(5) Credible findings

Do findings follow reasonably from, and are they justified by, an analysis and interpretation of data/information based on pre-established judgement criteria?

This criterion concerns the coherence of the findings with the preceding analysis and data.

- Judgements are based on transparent criteria
- Findings are supported by evidence and reinforced by sound analysis and/or plausible interpretation
- Generalisations or extrapolations, when made, are justified (e.g., through the sampling or selection of cases)
- Findings corroborate existing knowledge; differences from or contradictions with existing practice and received wisdom are highlighted and explained
- Stakeholder opinions are considered and reflected when appropriate
- Main findings are replicable
- Limitations on validity are pointed out; trade-offs between internal and external validity are identified and discussed
- Results of the analysis reflect an acceptable compromise of the perceptions of stakeholders and those derived from observed or estimated facts and figures
- Other

(6) Valid conclusions

Are conclusions unbiased and fully based on the findings?

This criterion concerns the extent to which conclusions flow logically from the findings, and are based on impartial judgement.

- Conclusions are properly addressed to the evaluation questions and other information needs
- Conclusions are coherently and logically substantiated by the findings of the evaluation
- There are no relevant conclusions missing on the basis of the evidence presented
- Conclusions are interpreted in relation to the policy context
- Conclusions are free of personal or partisan considerations; the potential influence of the values and interests of the evaluation team on the research method and outcome is openly discussed
- Conclusions are presented and related in an orderly fashion (categorised, ranked, prioritised, sequenced)
- Controversial issues are presented in a fair and balanced manner
- Other

(7) Helpful recommendations

Are the areas highlighted for improvements coherent with the conclusions? Are the suggested options realistic and impartial?
This criterion concerns the soundness and realism of the recommendations • Recommendations stem logically from conclusions • Plausible options for improvements are identified • Recommendations covers all relevant main conclusions • They are realistic, impartial, and potentially useful • Relations among recommendations are taken into account (e.g. priority ranking, sequencing, etc) • Recommendations provide certain guidance for action planning • Where feasible, the cost of recommendations is estimated • Other

(8) Clarity

Is the report well structured, balanced, and written in an understandable manner?
This criterion concerns the clarity of the presentation and the appropriateness of the content of the evaluation. • The content of the report describes the policy being evaluated, its context, the purpose of the evaluation, contextual limitations, method, findings, etc in a neat and well structured manner • The report is well structured and signposted in order to guide and facilitate reading • Key messages are summarised and highlighted • There is a clearly linked and presented sequence between data, interpretation and conclusions • The report includes a relevant and concise executive summary, which includes the main conclusions and recommendations in a balanced and impartial manner • Specialised concepts are used only when necessary and if used, are clearly defined • Tables, graphs, and similar presentational tools are used to facilitate understanding; they are well commented with narrative text • the length of the report (excluding appendices) is proportionate (good balance of descriptive and analytical information) • Detailed information and technical analysis are left for the appendix; information

overload is avoided in the report

- The report provides a proper focus of truly relevant issues
- Written style and presentation is adapted for the various relevant target readers; the evaluator show awareness of potentially different needs and interests
- Other

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE REPORT

The overall assessment of the evaluation report is not a self-standing criterion. Instead it summarises key elements and consequences of the eight preceding criteria. Moreover, the overall assessment needs to consider the concerns of the potential users of each specific evaluation:

- Does the evaluation fulfil contractual conditions? *(certain internal users);*
- Are the findings and conclusions reliable, and are there any specific limitations to their validity and completeness? *(most internal and external users);*
- Notwithstanding intrinsic weaknesses, is the information in the report – or parts of it – a useful input for designing or improving interventions, setting priorities, and allocating resources? *(certain internal users).*