

B-Brussels: delivery of computer-based tests (CBT) in EU staff selection process

2008/S 228-302459

Contract notice

Services

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name, addresses and contact point(s):

European Commission, European Personnel Selection Office — Unit 02 — e-Selection, attention: M. Fransi, avenue de Cortenberg 107, C-107, 8/59, B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel. Tel. (32-2) 296 25 07. Fax (32-2) 299 19 24. E-mail: admin-contrats-marches@ec.europa.eu.

Further information can be obtained at:

European Commission, Directorate-General for Personnel and Administration, Directorate D — Resources, rue de la Science 11, SC 11 6/28, B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel. Contact: M. Fransi. Tel. (32-2) 296 25 07. Fax (32-2) 299 19 24. E-mail: admin-contrats-marches@ec.europa.eu.

Specifications and additional documents (including documents for competitive dialogue and a dynamic purchasing system) can be obtained at:

As in abovementioned contact point(s).

Tenders or requests to participate must be sent to:

European Commission, Directorate-General for Personnel and Administration, Directorate D — Resources, rue de la Science 11, SC 11 6/28, B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel. Contact: M. Fransi. Tel. (32-2) 296 25 07. Fax (32-2) 299 19 24. E-mail: admin-contrats-marches@ec.europa.eu.

I.2) Type of the contracting authority and main activity or activities:

European institution/agency or international organisation.

General public services.

The contracting authority is purchasing on behalf of other contracting authorities: no.

Section II: Object of the contract

II.1) Description

II.1.1) Title attributed to the contract by the contracting authority:

Delivery of computer-based tests (CBT) in EU staff selection process.

II.1.2) Type of contract and location of works, place of delivery or of performance:

Services.

Service category: No 27.

Main place of performance: contractor's own premises with tests delivered at test centres in all Member States of the European Union.

II.1.3) The notice involves:

The establishment of a framework agreement.

II.1.4) Information on framework agreement:

Framework agreement with a single operator.

Duration of the framework agreement: Duration in year(s): 4.

II.1.5) Short description of the contract or purchase(s):

EPSO wishes to enter into a framework service contract to be able to continue with computer-based test delivery to candidates participating in open staff selection procedures for the EU Institutions. The general requirements can be summarised as follows:

- provision of a modern network of easily accessible test facilities for computer-based testing throughout the EU territory,
- provision for efficient capacity planning of test appointments of candidates, including an online scheduling and rescheduling tool,
- delivery of tests to candidates (currently usually in multiple choice format), each test comprising a series of questions randomly selected from a database provided by EPSO; support of other test forms to be included in the future,
- provision of professional candidate support centre,
- provision of online access for candidates to a non-invigilated test environment, where candidates could familiarise themselves with the CBT testing environment and where they could practice or conduct their self-assessment,
- provision of secure transfer of candidates' test results to EPSO,
- provision of UTF-8 data support and for exchanging data in XML format,
- provision of a secure web-based dynamic item bank management tool to be used by EPSO,
- provision of expertise on test development, including psychometric analysis of item performance,
- compliance with relevant rules when accommodating handicapped candidates,
- possibility to run CBTs in all official languages of the EU (test items translations would be provided by EPSO), including provision of adequate IT equipment where needed (keyboards),
- all forms of interaction with candidates to be done in English, French or German.

II.1.6) **Common procurement vocabulary (CPV):**
79635000.

II.1.7) **Contract covered by the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA):**
Yes.

II.1.8) **Division into lots:**
No.

II.1.9) **Variants will be accepted:**
No.

II.2) **Quantity or scope of the contract**

II.2.1) **Total quantity or scope:**

For indicative purposes and without any commitment, the current volume of test delivery is 36 500 candidates on average per annum in all EU Member States combined. Currently, 1 basic test usually consists of 3 tests (verbal, numerical, EU) with an individual testing appointment lasting 90 minutes; extended tests include also a field or situational/behavioural test with a total testing appointment of 120 minutes per candidate. The CBT testing is usually done in consecutive testing periods, each lasting 2–5 weeks, depending on the number of candidates. In 2007 the number of testing events (competitions/selection procedures) was 10. In 2008 the number of testing events (including planned ones) is 20. It is foreseen to include by 2010 more tests to be done via CBT (competence tests, essay type test, translations/interpretations, e-tray exercise, etc.), and to move to testing done in several major cycles through the year. In 2007, for 36 447 candidates, the breakdown was as follows (countries with * had more than 1 test centre):
Belgium: 47 %, Bulgaria: 2,5 %, France*: 4,6 %, Germany*: 4,3 %, Greece*: 4,6 %, Italy*: 8 %, Luxembourg: 8,3 %, Romania: 3,4 %, Spain*: 3,1 %, Others: 14,2 %.

During the 3 years following conclusion of the contract, the contracting authorities will be able to use the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice for additional contracts involving services similar to those assigned to the party awarded this contract by the same contracting authority.

II.2.2) **Options:**

No.

II.3) **Duration of the contract or time limit for completion:**

Duration in months: 48 (from the award of the contract).

Section III: Legal, economic, financial and technical information

III.1) **Conditions relating to the contract**

III.1.2) **Main financing conditions and payment arrangements and/or reference to the relevant provisions regulating them:**

Financing conditions and payment arrangements will be detailed in the tender specifications.

III.1.3) **Legal form to be taken by the group of economic operators to whom the contract is to be awarded:**

All members of the grouping must be jointly and severally liable for performance of the contract.

III.1.4) **Other particular conditions to which the performance of the contract is subject:**

No.

III.2) **Conditions for participation**

III.2.1) **Personal situation of economic operators, including requirements relating to enrolment on professional or trade registers:**

Information and formalities necessary for evaluating if requirements are met:

Requests to participate must be submitted using 1 of the following methods:

— registered post, as evidenced by the postmark, to the following address: European Commission, Personnel and Administration DG, Unit ADMIN.D.1, Office SC-11 6/28, B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel,

— delivery (in person or by any party representing the candidate, or by courier) to the following address: European Commission, Personnel and Administration DG, Unit ADMIN.D.1, Office SC-11 6/28, avenue du Bourget 1, B-1140 Bruxelles/Brussel (Evere). This department is open from 8:00 until 17:00, Monday to Thursday, and from 8:00 until 16:00 on Fridays. It is closed at weekends and on Commission holidays. For deliveries by courier, the valid date of dispatch will be the date on the courier's delivery note. For deliveries made in person or by any party representing the candidate, delivery will, in this case, be confirmed by a receipt dated and signed by an official from the Commission's Central Mail Department who takes delivery of the documents.

Candidates may make use of the capacities of other bodies irrespective of the legal nature of the connection existing between themselves and said bodies. In such an event, they must provide the contracting authority with proof that they will have the resources needed to carry out the contract by, for example, producing a written commitment by said bodies to make such resources available.

Candidates must:

— quote reference EPSO/02/PR/2008/104 in their request to participate,

— enclose the documents and information required in points III.2.1 to III.2.3,

— enclose identity details as follows: name, legal status, nationality, address, telephone and fax numbers, contact name and e-mail address, VAT number, official registration number (where applicable) and bank details.

Legal position — means of proof required:

name of the country in which candidates have their head office or are domiciled, enclosing the documents evidencing this under the law in their country of residence.

Candidates' requests to participate must include a solemn declaration, duly signed and dated, stating that they are not in any of the situations listed hereafter which would disqualify them from participating in a contract. Groupings must furnish separate declarations for each member.

Candidates will be disqualified from taking part in the contract if they:

- (a) are bankrupt or being wound up, if their affairs are being administered by the court or if they have entered into an arrangement with creditors, if they have suspended business activities, if they are the subject of proceedings of this nature or if they are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national laws or regulations;
- (b) have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (c) have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authorities can justify;
- (d) have not fulfilled their obligations to pay social security contributions or taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of their country of residence or with those of the country of the contracting authority, or those of the country where the contract is to be carried out;
- (e) have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations, following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget.

Moreover, interested parties are informed that candidates or tenderers will not be awarded the contract if, during the procurement procedure, they:

- are subject to a conflict of interests,
- are guilty of misrepresentation in furnishing the information required by the contracting authority in order to take part in the contract, or have not furnished said information.

Administrative or financial penalties may be imposed by the contracting authority on tenderers who are in 1 of the cases of exclusion provided for above, in accordance with Articles 93, 94 and 96 of the Financial Regulation (Council Regulation 1605/2002 of 25.6.2002) and Article 133 of the Implementing Regulation (Commission Regulation 2342/2002 of 23.12.2002). Candidates invited to tender must include a solemn declaration with their tenders, duly signed and dated, stating that they are not in any of the situations which would disqualify them from being awarded a contract.

The tenderer to whom the contract will be awarded must furnish, within the time limit indicated by the contracting authority and before the contract is signed, the following documents in support of the solemn declaration with regard to the situations which would disqualify him from participation in the contract:

- a recent extract from the judicial record or, failing this, an equivalent document recently issued by the appropriate judicial or administrative body in the country in which tenderers reside, stating that they are not in any of the situations described in (a), (b) and (e) which would disqualify them from participating in a contract,
- a recently-issued certificate from the appropriate body in the country in which tenderers reside, stating that they have fulfilled their obligations in respect of payment of social security contributions and taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they reside. Where no such document or certificate is issued in the country concerned, it may be replaced by a statement under oath or, failing that, a solemn declaration made by tenderers before a judicial or administrative body, a notary or a qualified professional body in their country.

Tenders submitted by a consortium, grouping or association of companies must contain:

- (a) a document detailing the composition and constitution of the entity or legal form of this cooperation should they be awarded the contract;

(b) a letter signed by each grouping member stating that they undertake to carry out the work and specifying their role, qualifications and experience. Tenderers failing to provide this document may be automatically excluded.

III.2.2) Economic and financial capacity:

Information and formalities necessary for evaluating if requirements are met:

Candidates must provide evidence of economic, financial, technical and professional capacity. Candidates who do not provide the documentation specified, or who are judged, on the basis of the documentation provided, not to have fulfilled the criteria specified below, will be excluded.

— The candidate must demonstrate sufficient economic and financial resources to be able to execute the tasks summarised in this contract notice.

— Where the candidate wishes to subcontract or otherwise rely on the capacities of other entities, it must in that case prove that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for performance of the contract, for example by producing an undertaking on the part of those entities to place those resources at its disposal.

The following additional documents must be provided in evidence of economic and financial capacity:

— the presentation of balance sheets or extracts from balance sheets and profit-and-loss accounts for at least the last 2 years for which accounts have been closed, where publication of the balance sheet is required under the company law of the country in which the economic operator is established. The balance sheet shall show before tax profits for the past 2 years for which accounts have been closed,

— if the balance sheets or the statement show an average loss over the past 2 years, then candidates must furnish another document as proof of their financial and economic standing, such as appropriate statements from the bank or evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance,

— in the case of entities established less than 2 years ago, the relevant documents should be provided for the period of its existence only,

— a statement of overall turnover and turnover concerning the services covered by the contract during the last 3 financial years.

Should the application be submitted by a grouping, the aforementioned information must be submitted to the contracting authority in the form of a separate document for each grouping member and a document summarising the consolidated data for the grouping as a whole.

III.2.3) Technical capacity:

Information and formalities necessary for evaluating if requirements are met:

Technical capacity:

The candidate, as a whole, must comply with the following criteria:

1.1. have previous experience with delivery of computer-based tests in an international environment;

1.2. have experience with test items management (item bank);

1.3. have the organisational infrastructure to organise testing in all EU countries (with the possibility to expand to other European countries);

1.4. have at its disposal premises in all EU Member States for the delivery of computer-based tests, providing an appropriate testing environment, ensuring equal treatment of all candidates; in particular, premises to be used must be easily accessible by public transport, provide ease of access for disabled candidates, have sufficient sanitary facilities including for disabled candidates, the testing room(s) must have adequate lighting/heating/cooling and insulation against outside noise; moreover, and on a case by case basis, particular testing measures for candidates with special needs, including disabled ones, must be provided;

1.5. have at its disposal experienced managerial staff, with a proven track record in organising complex pan-European operations, having an extensive multi-annual experience in test delivery;

- 1.6. be in a position to provide appropriate software and hardware at all test centres for efficient, reliable delivery of different types and formats of tests, guaranteeing equal test conditions for all candidates;
- 1.7. have an effective quality-control system in place and ensure full security of data transfer;
- 1.8. have the ability, corresponding expertise and adequate staffing to communicate with or provide professional support to candidates;
- 1.9. have experience and be able to advise on test development and on test items performance;
- 1.10. have the ability to support the delivery of CBT tests in all the official languages of the EU (presently 23 languages — see point IV.3.6), including provision of corresponding keyboards/adapted software;
- 1.11. have the ability to exchange booking and testing data in XML format and to provide the relevant DTD or XML schema to validate those data;
- 1.12. have the ability to support UTF-8 data when communicating with EPSO and candidates.

Professional capacity:

All experts having a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of key experts will meet at least the requirements set out below. It is not necessary that each of these profiles correspond to a single individual. 1 expert may have the skills and experience required to cover more than 1 role in the project. Equally, 1 role may be divided between 2 or more experts if the candidate believes that this will be the most effective way to achieve the desired results.

Key expert 1 — team leader:

- strong organisational ability, to respond appropriately and efficiently to EPSO's needs,
- professional experience in organising computer-based tests,
- experience with multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment.

Key expert 2 — technical and support manager:

- experience in tailoring technical resources to best implement computer-based testing,
- professional experience in organising computer-based tests,
- ability to ensure efficient IT services to meet all the technical requirements of the tasks.

Key expert 3 — item bank management:

- extensive item bank management experience,
- experience in adapting test items for computerised delivery,
- statistical and psychometric expertise on test development and test items performance.

Key expert 4 — candidate care and test centre staff management:

- multi-annual experience with computer-based delivery of tests,
- competence to resolve any technical problems as they may occur during testing,
- excellent customer care skills,
- appropriate language skills.

Documentation:

The following documents must be presented as evidence of compliance with the above technical and professional criteria:

- (i) the professional qualifications of the candidate and/or those of the firm's managerial staff providing the services; CVs of key experts participating in the process must also be provided;
- (ii) references: list of the principal contracts carried out over the past 5 years, which were similar in nature to the contract in this invitation to tender. Candidates must give a detailed description of the 3 references in this list which they feel are the most relevant with regard to their application. Said description must give details of the nature and volume of services provided, the beneficiary, the start and end dates of the contract, the staff resources used (including their qualifications) and the organisational structure set up. For these 3 references,

candidates will provide the full name and particulars of the person responsible for the contract at the customer company;

(iii) a description of the technical equipment, including hardware and software systems, to be employed by the contractor for performing the contract; including the solutions proposed to allow testing in different languages, to exchange data between EPSO and the contractor using technical standards indicated under point 1.11 and 1.12 above, and measures in case of data corruption, power and other computer or system failures to ensure business continuity;

(iv) a description of existing test centres to be used by the contractor for performing the contract, covering the presence of technical infrastructure (see point 1.4. above), accessibility, including disabled candidates;

(v) a description of the measures employed to ensure high quality of services including procedures to guarantee integrity and competence of staff;

(vi) an indication of the proportion of the contract which the service provider intends possibly to subcontract.

Should any misrepresentation be discovered following contract award, the contract will be cancelled.

III.2.4) **Reserved contracts:**

No.

III.3) **Conditions specific to services contracts**

III.3.1) **Execution of the service is reserved to a particular profession:**

No.

III.3.2) **Legal entities should indicate the names and professional qualifications of the staff responsible for the execution of the service:**

Yes.

Section IV: Procedure

IV.1) **Type of procedure**

IV.1.1) **Type of procedure:**

Restricted.

IV.2) **Award criteria**

IV.2.1) **Award criteria:**

The most economically advantageous tender in terms of the criteria stated in the specifications, in the invitation to tender or to negotiate or in the descriptive document.

IV.2.2) **An electronic auction will be used:**

No.

IV.3) **Administrative information**

IV.3.1) **File reference number attributed by the contracting authority:**

EPSO/02/PR/2008/104.

IV.3.2) **Previous publication(s) concerning the same contract:**

No.

IV.3.3) **Conditions for obtaining specifications and additional documents or descriptive document:**

Payable documents: no.

IV.3.4) **Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate:**

7.1.2009.

IV.3.6) **Language(s) in which tenders or requests to participate may be drawn up:**

Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

Section VI: Complementary information

VI.1) This is a recurrent procurement:

No.

VI.2) Contract related to a project and/or programme financed by EU funds:

No.

VI.3) Additional information:

(1) The attention of interested parties is drawn to the aim of this notice, i.e. to select candidates who will receive the specifications and be invited to tender.

(2) NB: interested parties are requested to observe strictly the conditions stated in point III.2 when submitting their request to participate, namely:

— to send their application by post before the deadline in point IV.3.4,

— to enclose all the documents and information requested in points III.2.1 to III.2.3. Incomplete applications may be automatically discarded.

(3) Interested parties are requested to refrain from seeking further information at this stage.

VI.4) Procedures for appeal

VI.4.1) Body responsible for appeal procedures:

Court of First Instance of the European Communities, boulevard Konrad Adenauer, L-2925 Luxembourg. Tel. (352) 43 03-1. Fax (352) 43 03-2100. E-mail: CFI.Registry@curia.europa.eu. URL: <http://curia.europa.eu>.

VI.4.2) Lodging of appeals:

Precise information on deadline(s) for lodging appeals:

within 2 months of the plaintiff being notified or, failing this, of the date on which he became aware thereof. A complaint made to the European Ombudsman will neither suspend this period nor open a new period for lodging appeals.

VI.5) Date of dispatch of this notice:

11.11.2008.