

B-Brussels: creation of a database of test forms in 3 lots containing test items on professional skills for assistants for use as part of the personnel selection procedures for the EU institutions

2009/S 240-342542

CONTRACT NOTICE

Services

SECTION I: CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

I.1) NAME, ADDRESSES AND CONTACT POINT(S):

European Personnel Selection Office, Task Force Development Programme, avenue de Cortenbergh 107, Attn: M. Fransi, B-1049 Brussels. Tel. +32 22962507. E-mail: admin-contrats-marches@ec.europa.eu. Fax +32 22991924.

Further information can be obtained at: As in above-mentioned contact point(s).

Specifications and additional documents (including documents for competitive dialogue and a dynamic purchasing system) can be obtained at: As in above-mentioned contact point(s).

Tenders or requests to participate must be sent to: As in above-mentioned contact point(s).

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:

Creation of a database of test forms in 3 lots containing test items on professional skills for assistants for use as part of the personnel selection procedures for the EU institutions.

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 delivery on EPSO's premises in Brussels, BELGIUM.

NUTS code: BE10.

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):

Creation of a database of test forms in 3 lots containing test items on professional skills for assistants for use as part of the personnel selection procedures for the EU institutions:

— lot 1 — accuracy: this test shall aim at measuring the candidates' ability to concentrate on details by detecting errors in given information. This test shall also reflect the repetitive aspect of such a task,

— lot 2 — IT literacy: this test shall aim at measuring the capacity of candidates to learn and use software. IT skills were identified as one of the most important skills for the AST entry grades,

— lot 3 — prioritising and organising: this test shall aim at measuring the candidate's ability to organise and prioritise their own work.

The professional skills tests will be introduced for candidates in the assistant function group, in the first stage of the selection process: the preselection/admission phase. By professional skills it is meant skills or competencies that are specific to the AST profile (assistants: secondary or post-secondary education level, accomplishing executive, technical or clerical duties), and that are derived from EPSO's established competency framework. The future preselection/admission phase using the computer-based testing regime (hereafter CBT) will generally consist of up to 3 pillars: cognitive, situational/behavioural, and professional competency. Language testing will complement where necessary.

The preselection/admission tests under the first pillar (cognitive) will be taken in the candidates' first language, i.e., 1 of the 23 official languages of the EU.

The tests under the other 2 pillars (behavioural and professional) will be taken in the candidates' second language, i.e., English, French or German. As from 2011, the use of the 23 languages may be extended to all preselection/admission pillars.

The expected results to be achieved by the contractor for all lots are:

- items must not contain pure verbal or numerical reasoning,
- items must be clear and must provide a basis for an objective and fair evaluation,
- each item must be of an equivalent level in all 3 languages concerned,
- all 3 linguistic versions of each item have to be thoroughly reviewed (and amended, if deemed appropriate) by native speakers to ensure the idiomaticity as well as the correctness of each language version. The tenderer shall ensure that the adaptation process takes full account of linguistic differences across the different language versions,
- all items must be pre-tested successfully before delivery to EPSO. The contractor has to present evidence that for each linguistic version the items have been pre-tested on a population of at least 100 people. This population shall be as representative as possible in terms of an equal gender distribution also taking into account a sufficient diversity in terms of the EU-27 citizenships and age,
- test content shall offer a realistic job preview to the candidates,
- test items must be free from any form of gender, citizenship, cultural and age bias,
- test forms must be automatically corrected,
- in the context of an AST testing population in CBT of roughly 20 000 candidates per year (2010 estimates), the tenderer shall outline the measures proposed to ensure a sufficient diversity of test content in order to pre-empt the overexposure of test content. These measures shall be based on sound psychometric principles,
- workshops to familiarise EPSO personnel with the new tests must be provided,
- comprehensive statistical analysis and reports on the performance of test items following every competition, based on data supplied by EPSO,
- following the findings in the analysis of test items performance, implementation of corrective measures, must be produced.

Candidates may apply for 1, 2 or all 3 lots.

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:**

Yes.

Tenders should be submitted for: one or more lots.

II.1.9) **Variants will be accepted:**

No.

II.2) **QUANTITY OR SCOPE OF THE CONTRACT**

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

Given an annual candidate population at AST level of about 20 000 (for the year 2010), the initial requirement from EPSO is estimated at around 20 fixed test forms for each lot to start with. The candidates who will be invited to tender shall, by means of psychometric principles, confirm the soundness of this estimate in their proposal.

Statistical analysis and reports on the performance of the test questions must be delivered after each testing/selection procedure or competition (it is estimated that there will be around 25 AST competitions in 2011).

Workshops/training: up to 3 workshops or training sessions foreseen per lot.

Meetings in EPSO's premises: up to 2 meetings per year foreseen per lot.

EPSO reserves the right to make use of a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice for additional contracts involving services similar to those assigned to the party awarded an initial contract by the same contracting authority. That procedure may be used only during the 3 years following conclusion of the original contract.

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).

INFORMATION ABOUT LOTS

LOT NO 1

TITLE: Lot 1: Accuracy

1) **SHORT DESCRIPTION:**

Lot 1 — accuracy: creation of test forms containing test items to assess the candidates' accuracy/sense of detail. Using different types of tables the items will test the candidates' ability to identify mistakes in a series of data.

2) **COMMON PROCUREMENT VOCABULARY (CPV):**

79635000.

3) **QUANTITY OR SCOPE:**

Given an annual candidate population at AST level of about 20 000 (for the year 2010), the initial requirement from EPSO is estimated at around 20 fixed test forms for each lot to start with. The candidates who will be invited to tender shall, by means of psychometric principles, confirm the soundness of this estimate in their proposal.

Statistical analysis and reports on the performance of the test questions must be delivered after each testing/selection procedure or competition (it is estimated that there will be around 25 AST competitions in 2011).

Workshops/training: up to 3 workshops or training sessions foreseen per lot.

Meetings in EPSO's premises: up to 2 meetings per year foreseen per lot.

4) **INDICATION ABOUT DIFFERENT DATE FOR DURATION OF CONTRACT OR STARTING/COMPLETION:**

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

5) **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT LOTS:**

LOT NO 2

TITLE: Lot 2: IT literacy

1) **SHORT DESCRIPTION:**

Lot 2: creation of test forms containing test items to assess the candidates' ability to learn and use office-based IT tools, by giving them short and clear instructions to reach a specific result.

2) **COMMON PROCUREMENT VOCABULARY (CPV):**

79635000.

3) **QUANTITY OR SCOPE:**

Given an annual candidate population at AST level of about 20 000 (for the year 2010), the initial requirement from EPSO is estimated at around 20 fixed test forms for each lot to start with. The candidates who will be invited to tender shall, by means of psychometric principles, confirm the soundness of this estimate in their proposal.

Statistical analysis and reports on the performance of the test questions must be delivered after each testing/selection procedure or competition (it is estimated that there will be around 25 AST competitions in 2011).

Workshops/training: up to 3 workshops or training sessions foreseen per lot.

Meetings in EPSO's premises: up to 2 meetings per year foreseen per lot.

4) **INDICATION ABOUT DIFFERENT DATE FOR DURATION OF CONTRACT OR STARTING/COMPLETION:**

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

5) **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT LOTS:**

LOT NO 3

TITLE: Lot 3: Prioritising and organising

1) **SHORT DESCRIPTION:**

Lot 3: creation of test forms containing test items to assess the candidates' ability to organise and prioritise their own work, by placing them into specific work-related situations. This test will not be an interactive e-tray exercise.

2) **COMMON PROCUREMENT VOCABULARY (CPV):**

79635000.

3) **QUANTITY OR SCOPE:**

Given an annual candidate population at AST level of about 20 000 (for the year 2010), the initial requirement from EPSO is estimated at around 20 fixed test forms for each lot to start with. The candidates who will be invited to tender shall, by means of psychometric principles, confirm the soundness of this estimate in their proposal.

Statistical analysis and reports on the performance of the test questions must be delivered after each testing/selection procedure or competition (it is estimated that there will be around 25 AST competitions in 2011).

Workshops/training: up to 3 workshops or training sessions foreseen per lot.

Meetings in EPSO's premises: up to 2 meetings per year foreseen per lot.

4) **INDICATION ABOUT DIFFERENT DATE FOR DURATION OF CONTRACT OR STARTING/COMPLETION:**

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

5) **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT LOTS:**

SECTION III: LEGAL, ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

III.1) CONDITIONS RELATING TO THE CONTRACT

III.1.1) Deposits and guarantees required:

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:

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 6/32, 1049 Brussels, BELGIUM,

— 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, 1140 Brussels (Evere), BELGIUM.

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 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 (individuals or groupings) must: (NB: groupings must furnish the documents and information requested for each member separately):

— quote reference EPSO/TF/PR/2009/122 in their request to participate,

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

— enclose identity details (groupings shall provide these separately for each member and state which is the lead company) 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 documents evidencing this under law in their country of residence (groupings shall provide separate documents for each member). The 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 shall be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if:

(a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

(b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of 'res judicata';

(c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;

(d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

(e) they have been the subject of a judgement 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) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

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 one of the cases of exclusion provided for above, in accordance with Articles 93, 94 and 96 of the Financial Regulation (Council Regulation No 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 group 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: — appropriate statements from banks or evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance,

— 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 last year for which accounts have been closed. 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,
— if, for some exceptional reason which the contracting authority considers justified, the candidate is unable to provide the references requested by the contracting authority, he may prove his economic and financial capacity by any other means which the contracting authority considers appropriate.

III.2.3) Technical capacity:

Information and formalities necessary for evaluating if requirements are met:

candidates' technical and professional capacity for providing the services described in this call for tender will be assessed with regards to their know-how, experience and reliability.

In the case of tenders from consortia, these selection criteria apply to the aggregate of the different partners.

It is necessary, however, to identify clearly the lead contractor, who will also be responsible for signing the contract, and to provide with the tender written confirmation from each member of the consortium that they would be ready and willing to participate in the work, and briefly describing their role.

a) To this end, candidates must comply with the following criteria:

- 1) have previous experience in designing items and fixed test forms on accuracy, learning ability and organising ability;
- 2) have previous experience in producing or adapting fixed test forms on accuracy and learning ability for computerised delivery, also taking special needs of candidates into account (e.g. colour blindness);
- 3) have appropriate technical competencies and resources to deliver test material to EPSO electronically by means of a secured file transfer protocol;
- 4) have adequate resources to validate items prior to delivery to ensure quality, accuracy and absence of bias.

The team proposed by the tenderer will demonstrate, as a whole, all the skills and experience as described below. Each of the members of the team must justify a minimum of 3 years' experience in at least one of the following requirements:

- professional experience in personnel selection test item development, including experience in item writing, review and selection as well as test form design,
- competence in test item sensitivity review and in standard setting,
- knowledge of classical test theory and item response theory analysis,
- a perfect command of the language in which test items instructions and other relevant communications are to be delivered (English, French or German),
- experience in adapting test forms for computerised delivery and competence in presenting items in appropriate electronic format,
- expertise to analyse statistical information concerning performance of test forms and individual test item performance,
- experience in delivery of training.

Documentation:

the following documents must be presented for each lot as evidence of compliance with the above technical and professional criteria. Candidates should make sure that the evidence provided fully and clearly demonstrates the technical and professional capacity as set out above.

— The CV must clearly demonstrate 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 and description of the linguistic competence of the personnel to be involved in drafting the test items must also be provided,

- 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,
- a description of the technical equipment, including hardware and software systems, to be employed by the candidate for performing the contract; including the solutions proposed to exchange data between EPSO and the contractor, and measures in case of data corruption, power and other computer or system failures to ensure business continuity,
- an indication of the proportion of the contract which the service provider intends possibly to subcontract.

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.1.2) **Limitations on the number of operators who will be invited to tender or to participate:**

IV.1.3) **Reduction of the number of operators during the negotiation or dialogue:**

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/TF/PR/2009/122.

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:**

18.1.2010.

IV.3.5) **Date of dispatch of invitations to tender or to participate to selected candidates:**

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

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

IV.3.7) Minimum time frame during which the tenderer must maintain the tender:

IV.3.8) Conditions for opening tenders:

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) Applications have to be submitted separately per lot. Interested parties will specify clearly in their applications the number and title of the lot for which they apply.

(3) 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.

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

(5) Data protection: the appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure a level of security of personal data shall be agreed between the successful tenderer (and each individual member of consortia and each subcontractor) and EPSO in writing or in another equivalent form.

VI.4) PROCEDURES FOR APPEAL

VI.4.1) Body responsible for appeal procedures:

Court of First Instance of the European Communities, rue du Fort Niedergrünwald, L-2925 Luxembourg. E-mail: CFI.Registry@curia.europa.eu. Tel. +352 4303-1. URL: <http://curia.europa.eu>. Fax +352 4303-2100.

VI.4.2) Lodging of appeals:

Precise information on deadline(s) for lodging appeals: within 2 months of the notification to the plaintiff, or, in absence thereof, of the day on which it came to the knowledge.

VI.4.3) Service from which information about the lodging of appeals may be obtained:

VI.5) DATE OF DISPATCH OF THIS NOTICE:

30.11.2009.