



European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training
Procurement Service

Thessaloniki, 16/08/2007
PRO/2007/429

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER

AO/B/TB/Quality-approaches-in-SMEs/009/07

“Quality approaches in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food processing, retail and tourism sectors – the case of some new Member-States”

Dear Sir/Madam,

We thank you for the interest you have shown in this tender.

The purpose of this tender and additional information necessary to present a tender can be found in the attached Tendering Specifications. You should note however the following important points concerning the submission of a tender and its implications.

1. Tenders should be submitted in one of the official languages of the European Union.
2. Tenders may be submitted:
 - (a) either by post or by courier service to be dispatched not later than 21/09/2007 in which case the evidence shall be constituted by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip, to the following address:

**European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop),
Procurement Service
For the attention of Mr G. Paraskevaïdis
PO Box 22 427
GR – 55102 Thessaloniki
Greece**

Important:

*Tenderers shall inform Cedefop by e-mail (c4t-services@cedefop.europa.eu)
or fax (+30 2310 490028)*

- ✓ *that they have submitted an offer in time, and*
- ✓ *that they request Cedefop to confirm receipt of the e-mail or fax.*

- (b) delivered by hand not later than 17:00 on 21/09/2007 to the following address:

**European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop),
Procurement Service
Attention of Mr G. Paraskevaïdis
Europe 123,
GR-57001 Thessaloniki-Pylea
Greece**

In this case, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the above mentioned Service who took delivery. Cedefop is open from 9.00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday. It is closed on Saturday, Sunday and Cedefop holidays.

3. Tenders must be submitted strictly adhering to the following:

The outer envelope or parcel should be sealed with adhesive tape and signed across the seal and carry the following information:

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER

CEDEFOP No: AO/B/TB/Quality-approaches-in-SMEs/009/07

**“Quality approaches in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
in the food processing, retail and tourism sectors – the case of some new
Member-States”**

Name of tenderer

NOT TO BE OPENED BY THE INTERNAL MAIL SERVICE

The outer envelope must contain three inner envelopes, namely, **Envelope A, B and C**. The content of each of these three envelopes is described in point 6 of the attached tender specifications.

4. Tenderers must ensure that their tenders are signed by an authorised representative and that tenders are legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures.
5. Submission of a tender implies acceptance of all the terms and conditions set out in this invitation to tender, in the specifications and in the draft service contract and, where appropriate, waiver of the tenderer’s own general or specific terms and conditions. It is binding on the tenderer to whom the contract is awarded for the duration of the contract.
6. The opening of tenders will take place at Cedefop on 03/10/2007, 11.00 hours (local time). Each tenderer may be represented at the opening of tenders by one person. The name of the person attending the opening must be notified in writing by fax (Fax No +30 2310 490 028) or by e-mail (C4T-services@cedefop.europa.eu) at least two working days prior to the opening session.
7. Contacts between the contracting authority (Cedefop) and tenderers are prohibited throughout the procedure save in exceptional circumstances and under the following conditions only:

Before the final date for submission of tenders:

- At the request of the tenderer, the Cedefop Procurement Service may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the contract. Any request for additional information must be made in writing by fax (fax No +30 2310 490 028) or by e-mail (C4T-services@cedefop.europa.eu).

Request for additional information received less than five working days before the closing date for submission of tenders will not be processed.

- The contracting authority may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or any other clerical error in the text of the call for tender.

Any additional information, including that referred to above, will be published on Cedefop’s website. Please ensure that you visit regularly the site for updates.

After the opening of tenders:

- If clarification is required or if obvious clerical errors in the tender need to be corrected, the contracting authority may contact the tenderer provided the terms of the tender are not modified as a result.
8. This invitation to tender is in no way binding on Cedefop. Cedefop's contractual obligation commences only upon signature of the contract with the successful Tenderer.
 9. All costs incurred in preparing and submitting tenders are borne by the tenderers and cannot be reimbursed.
 10. Up to the point of signature, the contracting authority may either abandon the procurement or cancel the award procedure, without the candidates or tenderers being entitled to claim any compensation. This decision must be substantiated and the tenderers notified.
 11. All tenderers will be informed in writing of the results of this tender procedure.

Yours sincerely,

G. Paraskevaïdis

Head of Finance and Procurement

Attached: tendering specifications

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER

AO/B/TB/Quality-approaches-in-SMEs/009/07

“Quality approaches in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food processing, retail and tourism sectors – the case of some new Member-States”

Tendering specifications

Table of contents

Introduction to CEDEFOP	1
1 Overview of this tender	2
1.1 Description and type of the contract.....	2
1.2 Place of delivery or performance	2
1.3 Value or quantity of purchase.....	2
1.4 Validity of tenders	2
1.5 Duration of the contract.....	2
1.6 Main terms of financing and payment.....	2
2 Technical specifications	3
2.1 Introduction: background of the invitation to tender.....	3
2.2 General purpose.....	6
2.3 Description of the tasks	6
2.4 Deliverables, reports and timetable (outcome).....	7
2.5 Meeting.....	8
2.6 Travel expenses.....	8
3 Specific information concerning participation to this tender	9
3.1 Exclusion criteria.....	9
3.2 Selection criteria.....	9
3.3 Legal Position.....	11
4 Additional information concerning participation to this tender	11
4.1 Participation of consortia.....	11
4.2 Subcontracting/Subcontractors.....	11
5 Award of the contract.....	11
5.1 Technical evaluation.....	12
5.2 Technical proposal	12
5.3 Financial evaluation	13
5.4 Financial proposal	13
6 Information on presentation and content of tender.....	13
6.1 Envelope A - Supporting documents.....	14
6.2 Envelope B – Technical proposal.....	14
6.3 Envelope C – Financial proposal.....	14

ANNEXES:

Annex A:	Contract Notice
Annex B:	Draft contract
Annex C:	Declaration on exclusion criteria
Annex D:	Legal entity form
Annex E:	Financial Identification Form
Annex F:	Check list of mandatory documents

Introduction to CEDEFOP

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is an agency of the European Union. Created in 1975 with a tripartite Governing Board, it provides services for the European Commission, the European Union Member States and the social partners as well as for the associated countries of Norway and Iceland. The candidate countries are also associated with its activities.

As the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, Cedefop provides policymakers, researchers and practitioners with information to promote a clearer understanding of developments and so enable them to take informed decisions on future action. Cedefop assists the European Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational education and training.

The main tasks of Cedefop as defined in its founding Regulation are to:

- compile selected documentation and analysis of data;
- contribute to the development and coordination of research;
- exploit and disseminate useful information;
- encourage and support a concerted approach to vocational training development issues;
- provide a forum for a wide and diverse audience.

Cedefop's medium-term priorities for 2006-08 concentrate on the priorities set out in the Maastricht communiqué, which has been agreed by 32 countries, the European Commission and the European social partners:

- a) 'promoting the image and attractiveness of the vocational route for employers and individuals to increase participation in VET;
- b) achieving high levels of quality and innovation in VET systems to benefit all learners and make European VET globally competitive;
- c) linking VET with the knowledge economy's requirements for a highly skilled workforce and especially, because of the strong impact of demographic change, the upgrading and competence development of older workers;
- d) addressing the needs of the low-skilled (about 75 million people aged between 25 and 64 in the EU) and disadvantaged groups so as to achieve social cohesion and increase labour market participation.'

More information about Cedefop can be found on its website: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu>

1 Overview of this tender

1.1 Description and type of the contract

a) Title of the contract:

“Quality approaches in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the Food processing, Retail and Tourism sectors – the case of some new Member States”

b) Short description of content`

With this tender, Cedefop is seeking to commission a comparative analysis on the quality approaches (QAs) in training followed by SMEs (up to 50 employees) in three-four new Member States in the Food processing, Retail and Tourism (hotels and restaurants) sectors, and a comparison of its findings to the outcomes of the previous Cedefop study in the same sectors in Germany, Ireland and Greece.

c) Type of contract:

Service contract

1.2 Place of delivery or performance

The tasks must be completed externally. The place of performance of the tasks shall be the Contractor’s home office or premises of team members.

1.3 Value or quantity of purchase

Maximum budget available for this activity is 70.000 EUR.

1.4 Validity of tenders

Tenderers must maintain the validity of their tender for at least 6 months following the tender submission date.

1.5 Duration of the contract

The contract shall enter into force on the date of signature of the last contracting party, i.e. Cedefop and shall be valid for a period of 12 months. The period of performance will be 10 calendar months from the date of signature of the contract.

1.6 Main terms of financing and payment

Payments will be made within 30 days after submission of invoices and at the conditions set out in the draft contract.

2 Technical specifications

2.1 Introduction: background of the invitation to tender

Small enterprises

With competition becoming increasingly fierce owing to globalisation of markets, the introduction of the euro and EU enlargement, sectors and individual enterprises need to respond effectively to constant changes.

The widespread use of new technologies has transformed production and distribution processes, work organisation and job profiles. Employers and employees face now an almost permanent need for continuing learning.

Knowledge and competences are acquired not just in formal education and training systems but also in the workplace and throughout life.

Lifelong learning is considered essential if Europe is to achieve a strong and sustainable position in the world and become a knowledge-based economy by 2010, as envisaged by the Lisbon Council in March 2000.

Although investment in education and training is an essential precondition, it is not in itself sufficient to guarantee satisfactory results. The quality of the training provision and of the learning process becomes critically important in today's highly versatile learning environments.

This situation makes all actors involved – tutors, teachers, learners, students, schools, enterprises, etc. – interdependent in the way they perform and interrelate. More than ever before, learning depends on the way knowledge and skills are transmitted.

Where stakeholders adopt a systematic quality approach (covering planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement based on the evaluation results), they achieve a better understanding of what they actually do and what they should do, and they can then act accordingly.

It is well known that enterprises do not operate in a vacuum; they either belong to sectors/branches or are related to them.

On the other hand, sectors vary: some are old and others are new; some consist of large enterprises and others primarily of small ones; some are mainly knowledge-intensive and others are labour-intensive; some sectors depend so much on others 'upstream' or 'downstream' that we consider them to be chains, such as food production, which depends on agriculture or animal-breeding to such an extent that we now speak about the agro-business sector.

Moreover, one of the effects of globalisation is the integration of the markets in which the production of goods depends on wholesale and retail commerce. In other words, in some sectors production and services build on each other. This interrelation has a major impact on the way the sectors understand, plan and implement all their activities, including continuing vocational training. In these sectors, the skills and competences of the workforce are also interrelated. Therefore, in parallel to production chains, networks of small enterprises supply often the necessary vocational training, with the help of training providers and/or large enterprises active in the relevant sector.

By the latest estimates, the nearly 99% of the 20 million enterprises in the European Economic Area, are small employing less than 50 persons out of which the 92% are even defined as "micro enterprises" employing less than 10 persons.

Small and micro enterprises are also an important provider of jobs and in 2003 they accounted for 57 % of total employment in Europe-19. The quality of work in SMEs is generally poorer than in large enterprises, with lower wages, longer working hours, low career perspectives, a lesser

degree of skill utilisation and a frequent recourse to ex-unemployed, mostly older people and family members.

Despite the fact that SMEs are seen as the main source of dynamic development and innovation, they tend to carry out little training. When they do train, they prefer apprentices/young people rather than higher skilled young workers. In 1998, their participation rate in continuing vocational training (CVT) was almost of 25% in sectors like construction, retail trade, hotels/restaurants and car-repair, where they are over-represented. SMEs opt for learning at the workplace. In other words, they give priority to on-the-job learning. Nevertheless they may provide training in cooperation with other small enterprises in the same sector and in the same region, or they may rely on the cooperation with VET providers and with big enterprises in their sector.

This makes the issue of the quality of learning in small enterprises crucially important not only for the economic activity and competitiveness of the enterprises but also for the interests of the workforce they train. Taking into account the significant turnover of employees in such enterprises, which are often considered as 'transitional labour markets' between training, employment, unemployment and work at home, the quality of competences, skills and knowledge acquired and their transferability to other settings force us to focus our attention on whether or not the enterprises in question have a quality approach.

A quality approach contributes to a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of enterprises and improves their potential to respond to opportunities and risks in both domestic and international markets. The nature of those opportunities and risks differs according to the home country and its cultural environment, the line of business, the degree of cooperation with other – small and/or big – enterprises, and the personalities and personal preferences of those in charge, the owners of small enterprises. This final factor, the crucial role of the owners in all important aspects of the structure and performance of the small enterprises, is a clear characteristic of them.

These are some of the characteristics of SMEs – by no means a homogeneous group – that represented the underlying reasons for the Conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises, which took place in Luxembourg on 15 and 16 June 2005. The Conference focused on how to make the life of small enterprises easier and to boost their economic activity. The question of education for entrepreneurship and skill shortages in the European small enterprises were issues that received special attention.

We believe that a good quality training provision can make life easier and safer for small enterprises in medium term because it helps them to operate more effectively.

Quality in VET

In the last six years, Cedefop has been providing the European Commission with technical and scientific assistance in implementing its programme to promote quality in VET through the European Forum on quality in VET (2001-02) and the Technical Group on Quality in VET - TWG (2003-2004, extended to 2005). In October 2005, the TWG was substituted by the European Network on Quality in VET, ENQA-VET.

The European Commission (DG EAC) has been coordinating the overall process involving participants from Member States, social partners, EEA-EFTA countries and candidate countries, with which the European Training Foundation (ETF) also liaised.

In conformity with the Copenhagen Declaration and the Council Resolution on enhanced cooperation in VET ⁽¹⁾, the TWG's work programme provided for the development of a common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) designed to support the development of quality in VET at system and provider levels while fully respecting the responsibility and autonomy of Member States to develop their own quality assurance systems.

⁽¹⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) of 12 November 2002.

The CQAF constitutes a European reference framework building on the key principles of the most relevant existing quality assurance models. It may be considered as an instrument for “cross reading” training activities that can help policymakers and practitioners to obtain better insight into how existing QA models work, to identify areas of provision that need improvement, and take decisions on how to improve them based on common quantitative and qualitative references. It also provides for identification and classification of best practice within and across Member States.

The CQAF can be applied at both the system and VET-provider levels and can therefore be used to assess the effectiveness of VET. It lays a particular emphasis on improving and evaluating the VET ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes’ in terms of increasing employability, improving the match between demand and supply, and promoting better access to lifelong training, in particular for disadvantaged people.

The CQAF comprises:

- a model to facilitate planning, implementation, evaluation and review of VET provision at the appropriate levels in Member States and/or sectors;
- a methodology for assessment and review of VET-providers: the emphasis has been given to self-assessment combined with external evaluation;
- a monitoring system: to be identified as appropriate at national or regional level, and possibly combined with voluntary peer review at European level;
- a measurement tool: a set of reference indicators aiming at helping Member States to monitor and evaluate their own systems at national or regional levels.

A series of studies contributing to detailed definition of the various aspects of the CQAF has been produced by the TWG, namely: *A European Guide on Self-assessment for VET providers*, November 2003, *Quality standards and norms in European VET*, October 2003, and *A limited set of coherent quality indicators*, October 2003.

So far, work on quality in VET has been geared mainly to the system and provider levels.

Following the Council Conclusions on future priorities for enhanced European Cooperation in VET (October 2004) and the “Maastricht Communiqué” (December 2004) to consolidate the priorities of the Copenhagen process – quality in VET included – and to facilitate implementation of concrete results, Cedefop launched in 2006 a pilot study on quality approaches (QAs) in training followed by SMEs in three important for the economic growth and employment sectors: the Food processing, Retail and Tourism industry (hotels and restaurants included) in Ireland, Germany and Greece.

In the Helsinki Communiqué (December 2006), Member States were invited to improve the image, status and attractiveness of VET and to further develop, test and implement common tools by 2010, among which the CQAF/ENQA-VET. It is in this policy framework that Cedefop considered extending to the new Member States the pilot study mentioned above.

The above documents can be consulted in the Virtual Community under the title ‘Quality Assurance in VET’ (<http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/quality>), in the ‘Documentation’ section and in the folders on Quality Indicators, Quality standards and norms, Self-assessment and Sectoral developments. Interested tenderers can download the above-mentioned documents once they have registered, free of charge, in Cedefop’s Electronic Training Village (ETV).

New Member States

The last two enlargements of the EU (2004 and 2007) have had an important impact on the twelve new Member States’ people, cultures and economies, and represent a major challenge for their adaptability to both the European single market and to the industrial globalisation.

In such a highly competitive environment, the SMEs of the new Member States cannot expect of being totally insulated from the effects of the above two developments which accelerate the

economic integration of the markets and the sectors. SMEs need to respond appropriately and timely. For the SMEs recently set up in the new Member States with a previous planned economy, the risks and challenges of this process are even greater.

Cedefop decided therefore to focus on the approaches of the SMEs to the qualitative development of the human resources in the Food processing, Retail and Tourism (hotels and restaurants) sectors in 3-4 new Member States.

Definitions of terms used

For the purposes of the present work, the following terms and definitions apply:

Small enterprises may be enterprises with up to 50 employees. The contractor should make a clear distinction between enterprises with up to 10 employees and enterprises with up to 50 employees.

Quality Approaches (QAs) may be any systematic approach to ensure the quality of training which takes place either inside or outside the enterprise. For the purposes of this study, only QAs in training related to, and/or initiated by, and/or provided by sectors, sectoral funds, employers and/or unions, chambers, associations/networks of enterprises or production/supply chains should be analysed. In other words, QAs introduced by the training market itself are excluded. Concerning public/semi-public initiatives, only those with a strong sectoral element should fall within the scope of the present analysis.

Systematic approaches may be any structured activities designed to ensure the quality of training. Those should have been planned, implemented and assessed (in any way) at least twice, so that feedback and change on the basis of past experience is possible. Those approaches may have led to certification, in which case emphasis should be given to sectoral certification and standards.

Sectors: To facilitate comparisons, interested tenders should investigate the Food processing, Retail and the Tourism industry, consisting of both hotels and restaurants sub-sectors in the Member States they propose to study.

New Member States: Countries that have joined the European Union in 2004 and 2007. Emphasis should be given in assuring as much institutional and socio-economic diversity as possible.

2.2 General purpose

The purpose of this call is to obtain a better insight of the European SMEs strategies and problems in developing their human resources to better cope with globalisation and to propose actions to meet this challenge through the provision of qualitative training/retraining activities tailor-made to the needs and specificities of the sectors under investigation.

2.3 Description of the tasks

The contractor shall carry out the following tasks:

- 1) to investigate how and under what conditions QAs are introduced in or for small enterprises in the 3 sectors and in some new Member States and to draw a comparison between them, with particular emphasis to the 'sector logic' and national cultural and institutional environment. Relevant examples may encompass:
 - in-house solutions in small enterprises,

- networking between small enterprises in certain sectors in order to assure the quality of the training they need. Those networked approaches between small enterprises might also include VET providers and large enterprises which are active in the relevant sector.
- 2) to ‘read’ the findings in the light of, among other things, the above mentioned CQAF, i.e. to see:
- how small enterprises plan human resource development for their workforce,
 - how the relevant training is implemented,
 - how the results and outputs of training are assessed and evaluated,
 - how conclusions are drawn from the evaluations and fed back into new planning activities aimed at improving the provision of training for the workforce of small enterprises.
- 3) to make comparisons between countries and sectors:
- to identify examples of good practice,
 - to determine QA models for VET in small enterprises,
 - to formulate proposals on how to support small enterprises in achieving quality in training,
 - to identify open questions and conclusions for further work,
 - to formulate proposals on dissemination.
- 4) to compare the outcomes of the present study to those on “Quality Approaches in Vocational Education and Training in European Small and Medium Enterprises: the case of Food processing, Retail and the Tourism industry in Ireland, Germany and Greece”, currently under publication.

The contractor shall compare the findings of the present study to the ones of the study mentioned in point 2.1, fully analyse similarities and differences between the skill needs, training practices and priorities of SMEs in the same three sectors but in different socio-economic environments and provide a thorough analysis of the role of all stakeholders involved.

2.4 Deliverables, reports and timetable (outcome)

The contractor shall deliver to Cedefop:

- an interim report within 4 months of the date on which the contract is signed by the last contracting party;
- the final study report within 10 months of the date on which the contract is signed by the last contracting party;
- a PowerPoint presentation of the main findings and conclusions of the study will be equally submitted, accompanied by a synthesis of the final study report of up to 10 pages, within 10 months of the date on which the contract is signed by the last contracting party;
- a report on a meeting with representatives of the sectors under investigation and the associations of SMEs in order to present the outcomes of the study.

The layout and format of the text should comply with Cedefop’s style manual. A copy of this manual will be delivered to the Contractor following the signature of the contract.

2.5 Meetings

The contractor may be requested by Cedefop:

- to attend and monitor jointly with Cedefop three coordination meetings foreseen between the Centre, the contractor and the team of experts,
- to participate with Cedefop in the ENQA-VET meeting to present the outcomes of the study,
- to participate in a meeting foreseen to discuss the outcomes of the study with the sectors, as mentioned in point 2.4. The contractor should assist Cedefop in the organisation of this meeting,
- to participate in another two/three meetings to present the study.

2.6 Travel expenses

All costs incurred in performing the tasks as described in point 2.3, have to be included in the financial offer (see point 5.4).

Travel and subsistence expenses for participation at the meetings requested by CEDEFOP (see point 2.5) will be reimbursed separately by the Centre according to its rules and should not be included in the cost calculation for this contract (see Annex II of the draft contract in Annex B).

Other extra travel expenses for meetings that might be needed in performing the tasks related to the contract, shall be subject to Cedefop's prior approval and shall be reimbursed by Cedefop separately, according to its regulation (see Annex II of the draft contract in Annex B).

3 Specific information concerning participation to this tender

Tenderers must meet the exclusion and selection criteria and have the legal position to allow them to participate in this tendering procedure.

3.1 Exclusion criteria

Participation to this tender is only open to tenderers who are not in one of the situations listed below:

- a) 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) have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a definitive court judgement;
- c) have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- d) 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) have been the subject of a definitive court judgement for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization 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 a serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

In addition to the above, contracts may not be awarded to tenderers who, during the procurement procedure:

- are subject to a conflict of interest;
- are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

Means of proof required

The tenderer shall provide the self-declaration found in Annex C which states that none of the aforementioned grounds for exclusion applies to the tenderer.

Cedefop reserves the right to check the situation described in points c) and f).

3.2 Selection criteria

The tenderer must submit evidence of their economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to perform the contract.

Economic & Financial capacity

Requirement

- The tenderer must be in a stable financial position and have the economic and financial capacity to perform the contract.

Proof of economic and financial capacity may in particular be furnished by one or more of the following documents:

- appropriate statements from the banks or evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance;
- balance sheets or extracts from balance sheets for at least the last two 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);
- a statement of overall turnover and turnover concerning services covered by the contract during the last three financial years.

In case tenderers are unable to furnish such documents they are required to provide justification for non provision.

Technical and professional capacity

Tenderers must provide evidence of technical and professional capacity. Tenders 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 tenderer must comply with the following criteria:

- qualifications, knowledge and ability of the tenderer and the research team members to perform the tasks outlined in the technical specifications;
- extensive professional experience in the field of SMEs, with particular reference to human resource development;
- experience in the field of quality enhancement in sectors;
- proven experience in working in international contexts;
- linguistic ability to communicate and draft to a high standard in English.

The following documents or information must be presented as evidence of compliance with the above criteria:

- detailed CVs of the tenderer and research team members with a brief description of professional experience in the fields above mentioned, research publications related to the above fields, including evidence of experience in comparative studies, language qualifications;
- a list of major contracts/studies performed in the last three years similar to those described in this invitation to tender (indicating the subject, amounts, dates and commissioning authorities);
- description of the technical equipment and the measures employed to ensure the quality of supplies and services, and, *if applicable*, a description of the firm's study and research facilities;
- an indication of the proportion of the contract which the service provider/contractor may intend to subcontract (see also point 4.2).

3.3 Legal Position

Tenderers are requested to complete the Legal Entity form found in Annex D and to provide the documents requested in the form. Tenderers must ensure to include the name and function of the individual(s) entitled to sign on behalf of the organisation in the case of contract award.

4 Additional information concerning participation to this tender

4.1 Participation of consortia

Groupings of suppliers (or consortia), irrespective of their legal form, may submit a tender on condition that it complies with the rules of competition. Such grouping (or consortium) must specify the company or person heading the project and must also submit a copy of the document authorising this company or person to submit a tender.

In addition, each member of the consortium must provide the required evidence for the exclusion and selection criteria. Concerning the selection criteria 'technical and professional capacity', the evidence provided by each member of the consortium will be checked to ensure that the consortium as a whole fulfils the criteria.

If awarded, the contract will be signed by the company or the person heading the project who will be vis-à-vis Cedefop, the only contracting party responsible for the performance of this contract. Tenders from consortia of firms or group of service providers, contractors or suppliers, must specify the role, qualifications and experience of each member or group.

4.2 Subcontracting/Subcontractors

Any subcontracting/subcontractor must be approved by Cedefop, either by accepting the tenderer's tender, or, if proposed by the Contractor after contract signature, in writing by an exchange of letters. The subcontracting/subcontractor will be accepted only if it is judged necessary and does not lead to distortion of competition. If awarded, the contract will be signed by the Tenderer, who will be vis-à-vis Cedefop the only contracting party responsible for the performance of this contract.

The tenderer must indicate clearly, which parts of the work will be sub-contracted, and the identity of all subcontractors undertaking more than 10% of the work by value.

All subcontractors must provide the required evidence for the exclusion and selection criteria.

Where no sub-contractor is given, the work will be assumed to be carried out directly by the bidder.

5 Award of the contract

Only the tenders meeting the requirements of the exclusion and selection criteria will be evaluated in terms of quality and price.

The contract shall be awarded to the tenderer submitting the tender who offers the best-value-for-money (best quality-price ratio).

A quality-price ratio will be calculated for each tender by dividing the total points for quality by the price, thus indicating which tender represents the best value for money.

5.1 Technical evaluation

The quality of the tender will be assessed on the basis of the ability of the tenderers to meet the purpose of the contract as described in the technical specifications.

The following technical award criteria will be applied to this tendering procedure:

- Award criteria 1

Level of understanding of the nature of the assignment, its context and results to be achieved (35 points)

 - Conceptual approach, scope and form of the proposed study in line with the objectives and purpose of the tender (15 points);
 - Demonstration of an in-depth knowledge and understanding of policies, developments, challenges and research issues related to the subject of the contract (20 points).
- Award criteria 2

Quality and appropriateness of the approach proposed to carry out the analysis: Relevance and appropriateness of the method proposed, e.g. methodology for data collection and analysis, terminology issues, envisaged steps and data sources to be used to meet the requirements outlined in the technical specifications (40 points).
- Award criteria 3

Effectiveness of the work plan proposed to achieve all the outcomes defined in the technical specifications (25 points).

Tenders scoring less than 60 (of a maximum of 100) points against the technical criteria, will not be considered acceptable and will therefore not have their financial proposal evaluated.

5.2 Technical proposal

The assessment of the technical quality will be based on the ability of the tenderer to meet the purpose of the contract as described in the technical specifications. To this end, the tenderer must provide the following documents and/or information to allow evaluation of their offer according to the technical criteria mentioned above:

- brief discussion of the subject and approach of the study demonstrating in-depth understanding of the concepts, methodologies and research issues;
- description of the required analysis, the issues to be addressed and the nature of outcomes to be achieved;
- detailed description of the envisaged approach and methods for the required analysis, the countries to be selected, potential data sources, classifications to be used, etc.;
- preliminary assessment of likely difficulties in carrying out the work and proposed actions; a detailed workplan illustrating intended organisation and management of the study, including the time-table and relevance of risk assessment.

In addition to the above the tenderer must clearly specify which parts of the work will be sub-contracted (if any) and the identity of all subcontractors undertaking more than 10% of the work by value as requested in point 4.2 (second paragraph).

5.3 Financial evaluation

Only tenders scoring 60 points or more (of a maximum of 100) points against the technical award criteria will have their financial proposal evaluated. The evaluation will be made on the basis of the **total price (a+b)** offered in table 1 – Price schedule table (see point 5.4). Where a maximum budget is mentioned in these tender specifications, any tenderer submitting a financial proposal exceeding this budget will be rejected.

5.4 Financial proposal

The financial proposal should indicate the total price in order to carry out all the activities indicated in the technical specifications. The tenderers must fill in the following table 1 - price schedule table and present a detailed breakdown of the price offered.

Table 1: Price schedule table (all fields are mandatory)

	Services	Price
a)	Total price to carry out all the activities	(1) Number of person-days : (2) Price per person- day : Total amount = (1) x (2) :
b)	Attending meetings (see point 2.6) (indication of total amount for all the meetings)	
	Total price (a+b) :	

Information concerning price

- The prices quoted must be fixed and not revisable.
- Prices must be quoted in euro and include all expenses.
- Any extra travel expenses, that might be needed to perform the tasks related to the contract, shall be subject to Cedefop's prior approval and shall be reimbursed by Cedefop separately, according to its regulation (see Annex II of the draft contract in Annex B).
- Under article 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Communities, Cedefop is exempt from all charges, taxes and dues, including value added tax (VAT). Such charges may not therefore be included in the calculation of the price quoted. The VAT amount must be indicated separately see point 5.4.

6 Information on presentation and content of tender

It is extremely important that tenderers present their tender in the correct format and provide all documents necessary to enable the evaluation committee to assess their tender. Tenderers should note the instructions indicated in the invitation letter of this tender.

In addition, below you will find details of the required documentation.

6.1 Envelope A - Supporting documents

One original and one copy of:

- the checklist found in Annex F
- the exclusion criteria declaration as requested in point 3.1 and standard template found in Annex C
- the selection criteria documents as requested in point 3.2
- the legal entity form found as requested in point 3.3 and found in Annex D
- a statement containing the name and position of the individual(s) entitled to sign the contract
- the financial identification form as found in Annex E

6.2 Envelope B – Technical proposal

One original signed unbound copy and four bound copies of:

- the technical proposal providing all information requested in point 5.2 including information relevant to subcontracting as requested in point 4.2.

6.3 Envelope C – Financial proposal

One original signed unbound copy and four bound copies of:

- the financial proposal containing all information requested in point 5.4

ANNEX A

CONTRACT NOTICE

ANNEX B

DRAFT CONTRACT

DRAFT CONTRACT HERE

ANNEX C

DECLARATION ON EXCLUSION CRITERIA

I hereby declare that neither I nor the company:
(*Company Name*).....
that I am representing are in any of the situations mentioned below:

- a) is bankrupt or being wound up, is having his/her affairs administered by the courts; has entered into an arrangement with creditors; has suspended business activities; is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters; or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) has been convicted of an offence concerning his/her professional conduct by a definitive court judgement;
- c) has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which Cedefop can justify;
- d) has 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 he/she is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) has been the subject of a definitive court judgement 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, he/she has been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with his/her contractual obligations.

I, the undersigned, understand that contracts may not be awarded if during the procurement procedure the individual/company/organisation mentioned above:

- is subject to a conflict of interest;
- is guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

Signature:

Date:

ANNEX D

LEGAL ENTITY FORM

(to be downloaded, depending on the nationality and legal status of the tenderer, from the following website)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/execution/legal_entities_en.htm

ANNEX E

FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION FORM

(to be downloaded, depending on the nationality of the tenderer, from the following website)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/execution/ftiers_en.htm

ANNEX F

CHECK LIST OF MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

The checklist must be used to ensure that you have provided all the documentation for this tender and in the correct way. This checklist should be included as part of your offer.

Please Tick ✓ the boxes provided

<u>Mandatory</u> documents to be included as part of the tender	Reference paragraph	Included		If the document is not included, please provide an explanation for the reason
		Yes	No	
<u>Envelope 'A' must contain</u> One original and one copy of: This checklist		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
exclusion criteria declaration (If applicable, including those of consortia and subcontractors)	3.1, 4.1 & 4.2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
selection criteria documents (If applicable, including those of consortia and subcontractors)	3.2, 4.1 & 4.2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
legal entity form	3.3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
name and position of the individual(s) entitled to sign contract	3.3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
financial identification form	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>Envelope 'B' must contain</u> one original and four copies of:				
the technical proposal.	5.2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>Envelope 'C' must contain</u> one original four copies of:				
The financial proposal	5.4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

You should also ensure that:

<input type="checkbox"/>	your offer is formulated in one of the official languages of the European Union.
<input type="checkbox"/>	both the technical and financial proposals of the offer are signed by you or your duly authorised agent.
<input type="checkbox"/>	your offer is perfectly legible in order to rule out any ambiguity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	your offer is submitted in accordance with the envelope system as detailed in the invitation to tender point 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	the outer envelope bears the information mentioned in the invitation to tender point 3.