



Thessaloniki, 20/08/2008
RS/PRO/2008/878

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER
AO/ECVL/TB/Quality-in-VET/021/08
“Quality approaches for assuring the quality of training and services provision”

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 exclusively in one of the following ways:
(a) by post to be dispatched not later than 06/10/2008, 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
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.***
- Do not attach your offer to the confirmation e-mail or fax.**

or

(b1) by courier service to be dispatched not later than 06/10/2008, in which case the evidence shall be constituted by the date of dispatch, or the date of the deposit slip,

or

(b2) delivered by hand not later than 17h00 on 06/10/2008, in which case a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the above mentioned Service who took delivery,

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
Tel: +30 2310 490111 / 490 064**

Please note that Cedefop is open from 09h00 to 17h30, Monday to Friday. It is closed on Saturday, Sunday and Cedefop holidays.

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

Tenders must be submitted in a sealed envelope itself enclosed within a second sealed envelope. If self-adhesive envelopes are used, they must be sealed with adhesive tape and the sender must sign across this tape.

The **outer envelope**, addressed simply to Cedefop (address depending on the means of submission, see point 2 above), should only bear additionally **the name and address** of the sender.

The **inner envelope**, addressed to the Procurement Service as indicated under point 2 above, must bear a self-adhesive label with the indication **“Open Invitation to tender – Not to be opened by the internal mail service”** and all the necessary information, as shown below:

<p style="text-align: center;">OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CEDEFOP No: AO/ECVL/TB/Quality-in-VET/021/08</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘Quality approaches for assuring the quality of training and services provision ’</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Name of tenderer:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOT TO BE OPENED BY THE INTERNAL MAIL SERVICE</p>
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The inner envelope must also contain three sealed envelopes, namely, Envelope A – “Supporting Documents”, Envelope B – “Technical Proposal” and Envelope C – “Financial Proposal”. 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 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 16.10.2008, 11h00 (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 tender documents. 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).

Any request for additional information/clarification deemed necessary should be received by 24/09/2008 at the latest. No such requests will be processed after that date.

▪ 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/ECVL/TB/Quality-in-VET/021/08

“Quality approaches for assuring the quality of training and services provision”

Tendering specifications

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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 European Quality in VET context

This tender with its two lots falls within the priorities of the Copenhagen Declaration of 2002 to promote quality assurance in VET, the Maastricht Communiqué of 2004 to address the needs of groups at risk and the Helsinki Communiqué of 2006 to improve good governance, to take all stakeholders on board and to develop further the common European frameworks and tools (EQF, ECVET, CQAF, Europass) aimed at enhancing transparency and quality of competences and qualifications, and facilitating mobility of learners and workers.

It should be noted that quality in VET has gained a new policy momentum and by the end 2007, the European Commission drafted a proposal for a *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training* to help Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement of their VET systems based on European common references, in particular the CQAF successively developed by the TWG and ENQA-VET. The Recommendation is expected to be adopted early 2009.

Concerning quality assurance in VET, over the last eight years Cedefop has provided 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), the Technical Working Group on Quality in VET (2003-05) and, since October 2005, with the European Network on Quality Assurance 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, 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.

In this context, Cedefop launched in 2006 and 2007 two pilot studies on quality approaches (QAs) in training followed by SMEs in three important sectors for the economic growth and employment: the Food processing, Retail and Tourism industry (hotels and restaurants included) in Ireland, Germany and Greece on one hand and in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, on the other. In this way, Cedefop enlarged the scope of the CQAF model to sectors, filling a gap not addressed so far by the TWG or ENQA-VET. It is within this priority that Cedefop considers extending its work on quality in sectors to the Social care sector which concerns one of the two lots of the present call for tenders. In this way, Cedefop contributes also to one of the main current policy objectives of the Member States to promote equity and social inclusion through VET.

Quality contributes to VET transparency and effectiveness since it is directly related to VET outcomes.

Quality in VET has to be measured against pre-defined standards to evaluate the effectiveness of the training provision and to increase its relevance. Taking into consideration that in general there are less standards related to output than to input and process, Cedefop commissioned a cross-country analysis of the use of output standards for quality assurance in VET in France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands.

Since output standards, both national and international, are introduced to measure the intended effects of VET at system, VET-provider and individual levels, Cedefop decided to further

investigate the issue of the quality assurance of VET-providers by means of accreditation. This concerns the second lot of the present call for tenders.

1.2 Description and type of the contract(s)

Lot 1

- a) Title of the contract for Lot 1: Quality assurance in the Social care sector: the role of training
- b) Short description: The study aims at investigating the skill needs within the Social care sector, how they can be better addressed through training and what the role of quality assurance in preparing the working force could be to better serve its “end users”, the vulnerable groups. The study is based on the “skill gaps” approach; it should cover the whole sector and focus on the service providers
- c) Type of contract: service contract.

Lot 2

- a) Title of the contract for Lot 2: Assuring the quality in VET: the role of accreditation of VET providers
- b) Short description: The study aims at analysing the different approaches on accreditation of VET-providers in 6 to 8 Member States and 4 to 6 sectors in view of defining their common elements and differences so as to propose a set of guidelines and criteria for accreditation in view of establishing national/regional/sectoral frameworks and of helping VET-providers who wish to apply for accreditation
- c) Type of contract: service contract.

1.3 Place of delivery or performance

The tasks must be completed at the contractor’s premises.

1.4 Division into lots

This invitation to tender is divided into the following 2 Lots.

Lot 1: Quality assurance in the Social care sector: the role of training

Lot 2: Assuring the quality in VET: the role of accreditation of VET providers

Tenderers may submit tenders for one or both lots. Please note that in the case where you tender for both lots, a separate tender must be made for each lot. Each individual lot will be examined separately.

1.5 Variants

Tenderers may not offer variant solutions to what is requested in the technical specifications.

1.6 Value or quantity of purchase

Maximum budget available for this call for tenders is 226,000 EUR, spread out as follows:

Maximum budget available for Lot 1: 103,000 EUR

Maximum budget available for Lot 2: 123,000 EUR

1.7 Validity of tenders

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

1.8 Duration of the contract(s)

The contract(s) 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.

1.9 Main terms of financing and payment

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

2 Technical specifications

2.1 General background for Lot 1 and Lot 2

2.1.1 Definitions of terms used

For the purposes of the present call for tenders, the following terms and definitions apply:

- i. *CQAF* constitutes a European reference framework which builds 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.

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. Cedefop published in English and French the *Indicators for quality in VET: to enhance European cooperation, 2007*, an extended and revised version of the work on indicators.

- ii. *Quality Approaches (QAs)* may be any approach to ensure the quality of training taking place either inside or outside a training centre or a work place provided it is systematic.
- iii. *Systematic approaches to VET* may be any structured activities designed to ensure a training of quality. 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.
- iv. *Accreditation*: formal recognition that a body or a person is competent to carry out specific tasks (Cedefop, Glossary on Quality, 2003).
- v. *Accreditation of VET provider or training programme*: process of accrediting an institution of vocational education or training, a programme of a study, or a service, showing that it has been approved by the relevant legislative and professional authorities by having met predetermined standards (Cedefop, Glossary on Quality, 2003).
- vi. *VET-provider*: any organisation (or individual) providing training services. Comment: training providers may be organisations specifically set up for this purpose, or they may be others, such as employers, who provide training as part of their business activities (Cedefop, Glossary on Quality, 2003).
- vii. *Disadvantaged groups*: People who are excluded from social rights or from social life or whose situation is precarious, e.g. the handicapped, disabled people, immigrants, ethnic minorities, (long-term) unemployed, low skilled, welfare recipients, drug addicts. (European training thesaurus). Those groups are to be considered as *vulnerable groups* for the purpose of the study under Lot 1.

- viii. *TWG: Technical Working Group on Quality in VET set up on a voluntary basis following the Copenhagen Declaration to promote European co-operation in quality development in VET. It worked between 2003-2005 as the predecessor of ENQA-VET.*

2.1.2 Documentation to be used

Both for Lot 1 and Lot 2, the analysis as well as the formulation of proposals should take into consideration the quality model (planning, implementing, reviewing and change), criteria and indicative descriptors at system and VET-provider level (Annex 1) and the 10 quality indicators (Annex 2) of the *“Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET”*.

The above documents can be consulted in the Quality Assurance in VET Virtual Community (<http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/quality>), in the ‘Documentation’ section and in the folders on:

- Quality Indicators;
- Quality standards and norms;
- Self-assessment;
- Sectoral developments;
- European Policy Background related to VET - The Recommendation on QA.

The documents can be downloaded free of charge by the tenderers, in Cedefop’s Electronic Training Village (ETV), once they have registered.

2.2 Lot 1: Quality assurance in the Social care sector: the role of training

2.2.1 Introduction

The EU labour market faces the double challenge of the intensified international competition (resulting in the need to increase productivity), and of combating social exclusion.

Social exclusion represents a major challenge for the EU as a whole and for every Member State individually, as it threatens the European social model in which all citizens should share the wealth created and be able to participate fully in society.

Exclusion may take a lot of forms, most often an economic one and is generally caused by poor (or inexistent) access to employment, education, housing, health care and culture, despite the fact that our modern societies are characterised as open and participative.

Although there is no universal definition of vulnerability, long-term unemployed, disabled, older workers, homeless and ethnic minorities are some of the groups particularly vulnerable to socio-economic exclusion. Once people in vulnerable groups become unemployed, they are at an even higher risk of long-term unemployment.

The Nice European Council of December 2000 concluded that employment is the best protection against social exclusion and the emphasis is being placed not on employment alone but also on job quality.

The social care sector, public, private and NGOs are called to alleviate the effects of economic and social exclusion. By providing support services, the social care sector facilitates the integration/reintegration of the vulnerable groups into main stream work and allows them to lead an as independent as possible life. Research proved that action should be early, intensive and targeted, at the risk of seeing these groups alienated.

Nowadays, the social care sector faces two major constraints; an economic and a demographic one. National budgets concerning public health and social security (unemployment benefits and pensions) suffer from severe cuts. These restrictions in the public budgets put the sector under enormous pressure, potentially damaging the quality of the services it provides.

Demographic changes, notably the increase in the average age of the EU's population have implications on dependency rates and pressures on pension and health systems. By 2030, the overall population within the EU is expected to grow by almost 14 million older people, while the number of young people will drop by 9 millions causing the labour market to rely more on older workers, and on new migrants.

Social and health services constitute a booming sector in terms of both economic growth and job creation. In many EU regions, the social service provision sector is the fastest growing sector and this trend is only expected to become stronger because of the demographic change in Europe (this has been confirmed by a recent OECD study): more and more people will be in need of social (and health) care. Due to the above mentioned demographic changes, many countries rely already on foreign workers to fill the existing employment gaps in the social and health care sector and these gaps are only expected to grow.

It is remarkable that, although European employment rates rise in general and we are expecting over 13 millions additional new jobs by 2015, the number of working people with a disability is static or even diminishing. People with disabilities and chronic health conditions represent today over 15% of the EU population. The current initiatives on Active Inclusion, Flexicurity and the upcoming block exemption regulation on state aid should create a lever rather than a barrier for employers to be able to hire persons with disabilities. There is also a clear need to emphasize more the importance of the quality of VET systems for people with disabilities.

The above mentioned constraints place the issue of the quality of the services provided at the centre of the EU Social Policy Agenda. Indeed income schemes have to be complemented by a series of re-integrative actions like retraining, work mediation, patient guidance, residential care, housing and rehabilitation.

The social sector, and especially the social care one, is expected to carry out the abovementioned actions in order to meet the multi-faceted needs of the specific vulnerable groups by providing good services at a good price. At the same time, vulnerable groups claim a greater visibility than before and a participation in the measures and schemes concerning them. In other words from "assisted people" they gradually become "clients". This important cultural shift has an impact on the workers within the social care sector. Since they are situated between the policy makers and the vulnerable groups, they are called to work and meet the expectations of both, which is a highly demanding situation.

But too often, staff supporting groups at risk of poverty and exclusion are in danger of being marginalized themselves. Even though the situation may differ very much from country to country and from service to service, health and social service workers often receive low salaries, work in difficult circumstances including irregular working hours and short-term contracts and they have no access to lifelong learning opportunities. As the majority of workers in the health and social services sector are women, this state of affairs can also be considered as a threat to achieving gender equality in the workplace in Europe.

At the same time, and in the light of the EU regulations favouring market opening and competition, the social care sector has to face restructuring and modernisation.

Services for people in vulnerable groups primarily depend on the performance of frontline staff but also of those administrators, coordinators, advisers etc. supporting them. Although training and investment in skills are not sufficient in solving the complex problem of social exclusion, they are nevertheless important factors to be addressed. At the same time training is not sufficient

by itself to guarantee satisfactory results; the quality of the training provision and of the learning processes is a critical factor for qualifying people successfully. Besides, the important presence of a migrant workforce in the sector renders urgent the issue of skill needs and qualification.

2.2.2 General purpose

In order to respond to the above mentioned critical situation, Cedefop decided to launch the present study whose aim is to investigate:

- i) the skill needs of the service providers, how these needs are/could be met through training and
- ii) the role of quality assurance in preparing staff to deliver better services to the end users, the vulnerable groups.

2.2.3 Description of tasks

Taking as a starting point the fact that education and training are not always adequately preparing the professional activities within the Social care sector, Cedefop wishes to address the issue of skill gaps between the demands of a sector under rapid changes and the qualification profiles of the staff in a Lifelong learning perspective. Cedefop hypothesis is that internal quality management and (external) certification are ways to ensure the quality of both the training and the provision of the social care services.

In particular, Cedefop would like to analyse issues referring to:

- the identification of the most important qualification/skill gaps in all/several staff categories (managers/services leaders and frontline staff) dealing with some/all categories of the socially disadvantaged/vulnerable groups;
- the identification of cases of good practice for bridging the above mentioned gaps and help staff adapt itself to new needs (such as increase in administrative tasks, in outpatient care, in integrated care etc.), new roles and new forms of work organisation (within the sector (for instance through cooperation between training providers, service providers, municipalities, community services, professional bodies etc.);
- the connection between new technologies and skilling/up skilling of the service providers;
- the relation between training/retraining and polyvalence of the workforce;
- the connection between skills transferability and professional mobility,
- the role of the various vulnerable groups in defining and promoting skilling /up skilling of the service providers;
- the role of quality approaches of the service providers;
- the role of quality of the staff training/retraining etc. activities to meet the (quality) standards of the sector.

In case of reporting on such systematic quality approaches (the last two bullets), the contractor will have to refer to the following:

- how the relevant approach is implemented and assessed;

- how the results of this assessment are evaluated and taken on board to feed back into new planning activities to improve the provision of services and/or training for the sector's work-force.

QAs in training related to, and/or initiated by, and/or provided by the sector, sectoral funds, employers and/or unions, chambers, associations/networks or the training market could be analysed. Concerning public/semi-public/NGOs initiatives, only those with a strong Social care sectoral element shall fall within the scope of this study.

The study shall include a short description of the sector at EU level. Attention shall be paid to the drivers for change. Particular emphasis shall be given to the employment structure (long/short term contracts, turnover, migrant presence, women participation etc. and if available, rates/estimations per professional category); to labour demand and supply and to how the sector plans its human resource development. Information on the industrial relations and working conditions, the growth of the private sector; as well as on the social partners and social dialogue at EU level shall also be included.

The study shall formulate proposals for actions to develop the human resources through the provision of qualitative training/retraining activities tailor made to the needs and specificities of the sector. It shall also identify open questions and conclusions for further work and formulate proposals on dissemination.

The study may refer to all forms of training / retraining, initial or CVT and to as many professional categories within the social care sector as possible. Consequently, Cedefop is interested in addressing the care needs of all or most of the vulnerable groups. The study shall not be country-based.

2.2.4 Deliverables, reports and timetable (outcome)

The contractor shall deliver to Cedefop:

- an inception report, which should be presented 1 month after the date of signature of the contract outlining methodological approach, existing research and theoretical issues/challenges. This report will provide for a dialogue with Cedefop on the main body of research and analysis to be conducted;
- an interim report within 5 months of the date on which the contract is signed by the last contracting party;
- the final study report within 11 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, accompanied by a synthesis of the final study report of up to 10 pages, within 12 months of the date on which the contract is signed by the last contracting party;
- a report on a meeting with representatives of the Social Care sector and the vulnerable groups to present the outcomes of the study to be organised by Cedefop with the contractor's contribution.

Cedefop will provide comments on both the interim and the final reports. The contractor will take these comments into account, liaising closely with Cedefop's project managers.

The contractor will submit the deliverables in English, in hard copy and in electronic format (Word). The electronic files should correspond fully to the hard copies. Any Tables, figures, graphs created should also be made available as separate files and include the data used in order to reproduce the figures.

The layout and format of the text – in particular rules for citation, bibliography, tables and figures – should comply with Cedefop’s style manual (see attached Annex F).

2.2.5 Scheduled meetings

The contractor will be requested to:

- attend three scheduled meetings between Cedefop, the contractor and, in case of a consortium, the team of experts; one to discuss the inception report (1 day) and two follow-up meetings (4 days in total);
- participate upon Cedefop invitation in an ENQA-VET general assembly meeting.

The contractor may also be invited by Cedefop to participate in meetings of the relevant European bodies on this theme.

2.2.6 Reimbursement of travel expenses

All costs incurred (travel, accommodation etc) related to the three scheduled Cedefop’s meetings (point 2.2.5 above, first bullet) have to be included in the financial offer, point b) of Table 1 (see also point 5.4).

Any other travel, accommodation etc. expenses that may occur in performing the tasks as described in points 2.3 and 2.4, have also to be included in the financial offer, point a) – sub total (2) of Table 1.

The meeting to take place in an ENQA-VET general assembly as well as the ones of the relevant European bodies shall be reimbursed by Cedefop separately, according to its relevant rules (see Annex II of the draft contract in Annex B).

Any extra travel, accommodation etc expenses besides those mentioned above, 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 relevant rules (see Annex II of the draft contract in Annex B).

2.3 Lot 2: Assuring the quality in VET: the role of accreditation of VET providers

2.3.1 Introduction

In accordance to the European objectives set up by the Lisbon Council and the ensuing Bologna and Copenhagen processes to implement them at the higher education and VET level respectively, many national education and VET systems are in the middle of a reform process also triggered by the adoption of the European Qualifications Framework. The systems are being reviewed and modernised with emphasis towards outputs and recognition of achievements. Quality assurance is the means to steer this transformation process and accreditation is the tool to assess compliance and to examine regularly the progress made.

Therefore accreditation is a widely used method to assure quality and credibility of study programmes, titles and/or institutions and thus the legitimacy of the education and VET provision.

Accreditation can be defined as the formal recognition that a body or a person is competent to carry out specific tasks. **The present study focuses exclusively on the accreditation of bodies/organisations, the VET providers, delivering training.**

Accreditation is made by the relevant authorities who certify the conformity to predetermined standards. In accreditation, reference is always made to standards (and this differentiates it from

evaluation where the use of standards is optional). Those standards may be either minimal or standards of excellence.

Accreditation is the end of a process which includes self-assessment, external assessment and site visits by an external body recognised to perform and award an accreditation as result of a positive evaluation, which often takes the form of a recognised quality seal or quality label. These are used in communication with customers and they support their orientation and the transparency of the education/training offer.

In recent years accreditation in higher education has known a particular development as a consequence to the Bologna process and refers more to programmes than to institutions serving as an external monitoring mechanism.

Accreditation in VET is less wide-spread than in higher education. Since neither the TWG on Quality in VET (2003-04) nor the ENQA-VET, first phase (2005-07) included the issue of accreditation of VET-providers in their work, Cedefop decided to launch the present study.

2.3.2 General purpose

This study aims at analysing the different approaches on accreditation of VET-providers in various Member States and sectors in view of defining their common elements and differences so as to provide a set of guidelines and criteria for accreditation for the establishment of national/regional frameworks and for VET-providers applying for accreditation.

2.3.3 Description of tasks

Taking as a starting point the fact that VET is a more complex than the education area with more stakeholders involved and less regulated, Cedefop wishes to investigate:

- the various approaches/frameworks to accreditation of VET-providers developed by Member States, both new and old ones, at national/regional levels (i.e. rational, institutional set up, key actors involved);
- the approaches to accreditation developed by various sectors, both economic and social ones, often resulting in a quality seal or label;
- the initiatives to this effect undertaken by VET-providers themselves.

The study shall answer to the following:

- types of external assessment in relation to VET-providers carried out in the Member States (i.e. ex-post/ex-ante);
- minimum requirements for the accreditation of VET-providers (i.e. general management, infrastructure, health and safety, staff characteristics, financial situation etc);
- relation between internal quality management/self-assessment of VET-providers and external accreditation (organisation and enactment of the latter);
- definition of the contribution of the different approaches to accreditation of VET-providers to quality assurance of VET.

Reporting on the accreditation approaches shall cover the following:

- implementation of the relevant approaches at VET-provider level (i.e. time-span of the validity of the accreditation, re-accreditation, self-assessment of the VET-providers, visits in situ, reporting, reviewing, use of criteria and standards, staff participation, involvement of trainees etc);

- role of the accreditation bodies (i.e. monitoring the process, carrying it out, counselling function etc);
- recognition and quality assurance of the accreditation bodies (i.e. by whom and through which mechanisms including their quality management system etc);
- social partners involvement (i.e. participation in the recognition of accreditation bodies/VET-providers, consultation function etc);
- assessment and updating of the accreditation approaches to keep up with developments in the training sector and the labour markets.

The study shall cover the whole VET sector both initial and CVT; public and private, profit and non-profit making. The study shall cover 6 to 8 Member States (national approaches/systems to accreditation). It shall also cover 4 to 6 sectors, particularly active in this field (sectoral approaches). The selection of both countries and sectors is to be duly justified by the tenderer in his proposal (see also point 5.2) The sample of countries and sectors to be covered should be however representative with regard to VET systems (i.e. centralised/decentralised, school-based/work-based, initial/CVT etc) and to accreditation policies (i.e. state monopoly, state/private, private, national/EU level, sectoral etc.).

The study shall define both the common and diverging elements of the approaches analysed and propose a typology of them in relation to the role of the stakeholders involved (i.e. policy makers: governmental, regional, sectoral, accreditation bodies and experts both public and private, VET providers etc). It shall also reflect on the trends and tendencies in the field in view of establishing national/regional accreditation frameworks and of encouraging VET-providers to initiate an accreditation procedure.

It shall finally identify open questions and conclusions for further work and formulate proposals on dissemination.

2.3.4 Deliverables, reports and timetable (outcome)

The contractor shall deliver to Cedefop:

- an inception report which should be presented 1 month after the date of signature of the contract outlining methodological approach (including the sample of countries and sectors), existing research and theoretical issues/challenges. This report will provide for a dialogue with Cedefop on the main body of research and analysis to be conducted;
- an interim report within 5 months of the date on which the contract is signed by the last contracting party;
- the final study report within 11 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, accompanied by a synthesis of the final study report of up to 10 pages, within 12 months of the date on which the contract is signed by the last contracting party.

Cedefop will provide comments on both the interim and the final reports. The contractor will take these comments into account, liaising closely with Cedefop's project managers.

The contractor will submit the deliverables in English, in hard copy and in electronic format (Word). The electronic files should correspond fully to the hard copies. Any Tables, figures, graphs created should also be made available as separate files and include the data used in order to reproduce the figures.

The layout and format of the text – in particular rules for citation, bibliography, tables and figures – should comply with Cedefop’s style manual (see attached Annex F).

2.3.5 Scheduled meetings

The contractor will be requested to:

- attend three scheduled meetings between Cedefop, the contractor and, in case of a consortium, the team of experts; one to discuss the inception report (1 day) and two follow-up meetings (4 days in total);
- participate upon Cedefop invitation in an ENQA-VET general assembly meeting.

The contractor may also be invited by Cedefop to participate in meetings of the relevant European bodies on this theme.

2.3.6 Reimbursement of travel expenses

All costs incurred (travel, accommodation etc) related to the three scheduled Cedefop’s meetings (point 2.2.5 above, first bullet) have to be included in the financial offer, point b) of Table 1 (see also point 5.4).

Any other travel, accommodation etc. expenses that may occur in performing the tasks as described in points 2.3 and 2.4, have also to be included in the financial offer, point a) – sub total (2) of Table 1.

The meeting to take place in an ENQA-VET general assembly as well as the ones of the relevant European bodies shall be reimbursed by Cedefop separately, according to its relevant rules (see Annex II of the draft contract in Annex B).

Any extra travel, accommodation etc expenses besides those mentioned above, 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 relevant rules (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 in a position to subscribe in full to the declaration on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest in Annex C. Therefore all tenderers, all consortium members (if any) and all subcontractors (if any) shall provide the self-declaration found in Annex C duly signed and dated.

3.2 Selection criteria

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

Economic & Financial capacity

Requirement

- The tenderers must be in a stable financial position and have the economic and financial capacity to perform their 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 their 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 bidding for one or both lots must provide evidence of technical and professional capacity and comply with the following criteria:

- qualifications, knowledge and ability of the tenderer and the key expert(s)/research team members to perform the tasks outlined in the technical specifications (for LOTS 1 & 2);
- extensive professional experience in the field of the social care sector, with particular reference to human resource development (for LOT 1);
- extensive experience in the field of quality enhancement in VET (for LOTS 1 & 2);
- extensive experience in the field of quality assurance/accreditation in VET (for LOT 2);
- proven experience in working in international contexts (for LOTS 1 & 2);
- linguistic ability to communicate and draft to a high standard in English (LOTS 1 & 2).

For each Lot, the following documents or information must be presented as evidence of compliance with the above criteria:

- detailed CVs of the tenderer and key expert(s)/research team members including a brief description of professional experience as well as research publications in the fields of the social care sector for Lot 1, quality assurance/accreditation in VET for

Lot 2 and quality enhancement in VET for both Lots, evidence of experience in comparative studies and language qualifications;

- a list of major relevant contracts/studies performed by the tenderer in the last three years in the relevant fields of research (indicating the subject, dates and commissioning authorities);
- description of the measures employed to ensure the quality of services including a description of the tenderer's study and research capacity to carry out the required tasks.

Tenderers should pay attention to the provisions made for sub-contracting (see point 4.2) and provide an indication of what proportion, if any, of the contract the contractor may intend to subcontract.

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 groupings (or consortia) 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, each of the two contracts 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 each 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 bidder'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.

In addition, each subcontractor must provide the required evidence for the exclusion and selection criteria. Concerning the selection criteria 'technical and professional capacity', the evidence provided by the subcontractor(s) will be checked to ensure that the tenderer with the subcontractor(s) as a whole fulfil the criteria.

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

5 Award of the contracts

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

The contract(s) shall be awarded to the tenderers submitting the tender that 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 for Lots 1& 2

The quality of each tender will be assessed on the basis of the tenderers' ability to meet the purpose of the contract as described in the technical specifications of Lots 1 & 2.

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 context and results to be achieved (15 points);
- Demonstration of an in-depth knowledge and understanding of policies, developments, challenges and research issues related to the subject of the studies (20 points).

- Award criteria 2

Quality and appropriateness of the methodological approach proposed to carry out the work: relevance and appropriateness of the methods 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

Relevance and appropriateness of organisation and management of the work to be carried out: composition of the research team, allocation of tasks, type and degree of involvement of the proposed research team members; capacity to perform the required tasks within the deadline given (clarity, coherence and feasibility of the work programme and timetable); preliminary assessment of likely difficulties (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 for Lots 1 & 2

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

- brief discussion paper on the subject and approach of the studies demonstrating in-depth understanding of the concepts, methodologies and research issues to be addressed and the nature of outcomes to be achieved;

- detailed description of the envisaged approach and of the methods used for the required study analysis including a duly justified proposal for the selection of the countries and sectors (Lot 2), potential data sources to be used;
- a list of team members together with an explanation of the nature and extent of their participation in the work, a detailed work plan illustrating intended organisation and management of the studies, including the time-table with deliverables and preliminary assessment of likely difficulties in carrying out the work and proposed actions.

In addition to the above the tenderers 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 (sum of sub totals 1+2+3)** offered in table 1 – Price schedule table (see point 5.4). Any tender containing a financial proposal exceeding the maximum budget mentioned in these tender specifications (see point 1.6) 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 two 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)	Price to carry out all the activities described in the technical proposal All estimated travel, accommodation, etc. expenses related to performance of the tasks (<i>indication of total amount</i>)	(I) Number of person-days: (II) Price per person-day: Sub Total (1) = (I) x (II); Sub Total (2) =
b)	Attending 3 meetings at Cedefop premises (5 days in total) (<i>indication of total amount for all three meetings</i>)	Sub Total (3) =
	Total price: sum of sub totals (1+2+3):	

Information concerning price

- The prices quoted must be fixed and not revisable.
- Prices must be quoted in euro and include all expenses.
- Under Articles 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 fully respect the instructions indicated under points 2 and 3 of this open invitation to tender.

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

6.1 Envelope A - Supporting documents

One original and one copy of:

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

6.2 Envelope B – Technical proposal

One original signed unbound version 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 version and four copies of:

- the financial proposal containing all information requested in point 5.4.

ANNEX A

CONTRACT NOTICE

ANNEX B

DRAFT CONTRACT

ANNEX C

Declaration of honour with respect to the Exclusion Criteria and absence of conflict of interest

The undersigned.....*[name of the signatory of this form, to be completed]*:

- in his/her own name..... *(if the economic operator is a natural person or in case of own declaration of a director or person with powers of representation, decision making or control over the economic operator)*
or
- representing..... *(if the economic operator is a legal person)*

official name in full *(only for legal person)*:.....

official legal form *(only for legal person)*:.....

official address in full:

VAT registration number:

declares that the company or organisation that he/she represents / he/she:

a) is not bankrupt or being wound up, is not having its affairs administered by the courts, has not entered into an arrangement with creditors, has not suspended business activities, is not the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, and is not in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

b) has not been convicted of an offence concerning professional conduct by a definitive court judgement;

c) has not been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authorities can justify;

d) has fulfilled all its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions and the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established, with those of the country of the contracting authority and those of the country where the contract is to be carried out;

e) has not been the subject of a definitive court judgement for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;

f) is not the subject of administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the procurement procedure or failing to supply an information, or being declared to be in serious breach of its obligation under contract covered by the budget.

In addition, the undersigned declares on their honour that:

- g) they have no conflict of interest in connection with the contract; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest;
- h) they will inform the contracting authority, without delay, of any situation considered a conflict of interest or which could give rise to a conflict of interest;
- i) they have not made and will not make any offer of any type whatsoever from which an advantage can be derived under the contract;
- j) they have not granted and will not grant, have not sought and will not seek, have not attempted and will not attempt to obtain, and have not accepted and will not accept any advantage, financial or in kind, to or from any party whatsoever, constituting an illegal practice or involving corruption, either directly or indirectly, as an incentive or reward relating to award of the contract;
- k) that the information provided to Cedefop within the context of this invitation to tender is accurate, sincere and complete;
- l) that in case of award of contract of a value greater than 133,000 Euro, they shall provide the evidence that they are not in any of the situations described in points a), b), d) and e) above. Specifically:

For situations described in (a), (b) and (e), production of a recent extract from the judicial record is required or, failing that, a recent equivalent document issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance showing that those requirements are satisfied. Where the Tenderer is a legal person and the national legislation of the country in which the Tenderer is established does not allow the provision of such documents for legal persons, the documents should be provided for natural persons, such as the company directors or any person with powers of representation, decision making or control in relation to the Tenderer.

For the situation described in point (d) above, recent certificates or letters issued by the competent authorities of the State concerned are required. These documents must provide evidence covering all taxes and social security contributions for which the Tenderer is liable, including for example, VAT, income tax (natural persons only), company tax (legal persons only) and social security contributions.

For any of the situations (a), (b), (d) or (e), where any document described in the two paragraphs above is not issued in the country concerned, it may be replaced by a sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance.

By signing this form, the undersigned acknowledges that they have been acquainted with the administrative and financial penalties described under Article 134b in conjunction with Article 133a of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23/12/2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, which may be applied by analogy by Cedefop if any of the declarations or information provided prove to be false.

Full name

Date

Signature

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

PLEASE NOTE:

Please indicate the BIC (Bank Identification Code) in the REMARKS box of the downloaded form.

ANNEX F
CEDEFOP STYLE MANUAL

ANNEX G

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	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- name and position of the individual(s) entitled to sign contract	0	<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 and 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.