

FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT SERVICE

 RS/PRO/YSIRAK/RB(2015)02188
 Thessaloniki, 25 August 2015

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER

AO/DSI-RS/PHT-ASIA/EuropassServices/007/2015
"Support and Development services for Europass web resources"

 REFERENCE: **Contract notice – 2015/S 127-231313**

CLARIFICATION (4) – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dear Madam/Sir,

In regards to the above mentioned Open Tender Procedure please find below the answers of Cedefop to the requested Clarifications, raised by two potential tenderers:

Question No 1

Please provide specifications for the current website hosting.

Do the technologies mentioned in Section 2.1 of Annex X1 apply here? If no, what is the

- a) *Operating System,*
- b) *Web Server,*
- c) *Application Server?*

Cedefop's answer to question No 1

Yes, the same technologies are used, i.e.

- a) *Ubuntu Linux ,*
- b) *Apache,*
- c) *Apache Tomcat.*

Question No 2

Could we have more details on the current "custom CMS" system used?

Cedefop's answer to question No 2

The current "custom CMS" is a Java application, developed through the last 10 years. Tenderers do not need to know or have understanding about it. They can count that the data of the current CMS can be extracted in any format indicated/necessary for the purposes of the new CMS implementation, further to the assistance of the incumbent contractor.

Question No 3

What are the versions used for the following:

- a) *Apache Web Server,*
- b) *Apache Tomcat,*
- c) *SQL Server,*
- d) *LibreOffice,*
- e) *JDK?*

Cedefop's answer to question No 3

- a) Apache Web Server 2.2
- b) Apache Tomcat 7.0.29
- c) SQL Server 2012
- d) Libre Office 4.0.3
- e) JDK/JRE 1.7.0_09

Question No 4

What Servers are used for the hosting of the database, both for the website and the EWA?

Cedefop's answer to question No 4

Two VM servers in cluster mode run Microsoft SQL Server 2012, servicing both the website and EWA. The servers have 15GB RAM, but serve also other Cedefop applications. The Europass DBs require about 4-5 GB RAM on average.

Question No 5

The Europass web site (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>) and the CV editor application (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/en/cv/compose>) appear to be hosted on the same server.

It is our understanding that this is not actually the case and that the editor is actually of the 4 "EWA Editors" mentioned in chapter 3.2 of Annex X1.

- a) *If our understanding is correct, does this mean that there is no communication between the website and the EWA?*
- b) *If our understanding is not correct, how is the communication between the website and the EWA handled?*

Cedefop's answer to question No 5

As described in Annex X1, 3.2, there are 10 VM servers, 4 running the Website and the EWA front-end (editor) and 6 running the EWA back-end (API). There is no communication between the website and EWA. These are two separate applications.

Question No 6

In Annex X1, Section 3.2, it is mentioned that “All Editors instances are connected with all API instances via Apache (i.e. requests to APIs are sent using <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/api>)”. Also, in Section 2, it is mentioned that “Few operations, such as document generation, are done by calling a RESTful API on the server side”. This implies an Apache server between the first (194.26.23.51, 194.26.23.52, 194.26.23.65, 194.26.23.66) and the second layer of the EWA topology graphic. However, in the graphic this is not shown.

Could you please clarify the following:

- a) *Where is this Apache hosted?*
- b) *Why are the “EWA REST API” (4 instances) mentioned in a different context from “EWA API” (8 Instances)?*
Is there some other protocol (apart from rest) for the 8 EWA API servers?
- c) *How are the requests to <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/api> balanced between the 8 instances of the EWA API?*

Cedefop’s answer to question No 6

- a) The same Apache web servers that serve all the incoming traffic for both the Europass website and the EWA Editors, are also used for the “EWA API” requests. There are no other Apaches used.
- b) As mentioned in 2.2.4 of the tender document “*Europass also offers programmatically accessible RESTful web services for automatic generation of documents by other sites*”. This is the “EWA REST API (4 instances)” and it is openly accessible for any interested third-party. See also <http://interop.europass.cedefop.europa.eu/web-services/rest-api-summary/#services-summary>. As mentioned in Annex X1, section 2, point 3, “*it relies on the EWA APIs to provide online generation of documents to external systems.*”

The “EWA API (8 instances)” is the private, low-level back-end for the EWA Editors application.
- d) Load balancing is achieved using standard Apache – Tomcat connector (mod_jk).

Question No 7

In Annex X1, Section 3.2, it is mentioned that “All API instances are connected with all Office instances directly, not via Apache (i.e. load-balancing is handled by the API app)”.

Assuming that the EWA API is a Java Web Application running on any of the 8 servers of the EWA API:

- a) *How is load balancing handled?*
- b) *What communication protocol is used for communicating with the Office instances?*
- c) *Apart from acting as an intermediary to the Office instances, what other - if any - functionalities do the EWA API applications have?*

Cedefop's answer to question No 7

- a) The load balancing in this case is established programmatically. An available Office instance is search for, and the first one available serves the request. If an instance is not available, the next one is tried out. The Office instances are actually Java applications running under Tomcat, see Annex X1, 3.1-3.
- b) A simple HTTP REST call is sent directly to the Office instance.
- c) See Annex X2, 3.1-2

Question No 8

What exactly is meant by “Each Office instance is connected with 15 LibreOffice binaries”? Are these 15 LibreOffice processes? How is the Office instance connected to these processes (which protocol)?

Cedefop's answer to question No 8

The Office instances are actually Java applications running under Tomcat, see Annex X1, 3.1-3. Each Office instance sends the request for the actual conversion to a pool of 15 LibreOffice binaries (different set for each Office instance).

For this communication, the LibreOffice API is used (<http://api.libreoffice.org/>).

Question No 9

Can we please have the ODT templates currently used for document production?

Cedefop's answer to question No 9

You can download the Europass ODT templates from our public procurement web page: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/public-procurement/support-and-development-services-europass-web-resources>

Question No 10

Where is the OSCache that is mentioned to be currently used (website, backend)?

Cedefop's answer to question No 10

It is used at the Tomcat application serving the main Europass website (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>), caching the texts of the website in 27 languages.

Question No 11

*We assume that the statistics architecture is not to be changed in this project.
Can you please confirm that our understanding is correct?*

Cedefop's answer to question No 11

There is no specific task included in the scenario(s) of the C4T which has to do with the Statistics architecture. However, the take-over, maintenance and further development of Europass Statistics should definitely be considered to be part of the tasks of the successful contractor (further to appropriate Order Forms issued), who is expected to assume full responsibility for the entire Europass Statistics Architecture (outlined in Annex X1, section 5).

Question No 12

Is the transition to Google Analytics from AWStats part of this project?

Cedefop's answer to question No 12

There is no specific task included in the scenario(s) of the C4T which has to do with the Statistics architecture. The specific task about Google Analytics is planned to be concluded by the incumbent contractor. However, the take-over, maintenance and further development of all Europass Statistics modules and its architecture should definitely be considered to be part of the tasks of the newly selected contractor out of this tender procedure (further to appropriate Order Forms issued).

Question No 13

*We assume that the existing EWA REST API must remain unchanged.
Can you please confirm that our understanding is correct?*

Cedefop's answer to question No 13

There is no specific task included in the scenario(s) of the C4T which has to do with the EWA REST API. However, the take-over, maintenance and further development of all Europass modules and their architecture, including the EWA REST API, should definitely be considered to be part of the tasks of the newly selected contractor out of this tender procedure (further to appropriate Order Forms issued).

The EWA REST API is often being updated with new functions, improved or amended, further to requests by Europass partners and the development community.

Question No 14

As part of solving the problem mentioned in Annex X1, Section 4.2.2, would you have a preference for a solution that would use an open source library compared to one that would use a proprietary library?

Cedefop's answer to question No 14

Europass is by a large percent based on open-source technologies. However, if a proprietary library would offer an advantageous value-for-money solution, it would definitely be of interest to us.

Question No 15

Where is the current Europass site and its associate applications hosted and by whom?

Cedefop's answer to question No 15

The Europass site is hosted and managed at Cedefop premises, Thessaloniki, by Cedefop's IT team and by the incumbent contractor.

Question No 16

We understand that the current version of Europass site (and its associated applications) will continue to be hosted until the end of March 2016 by Cedefop or the incumbent Contractor.

Can you please confirm that our understanding is correct?

If our understanding is not correct, when does the current hosting contract ends?

Cedefop's answer to question No 16

Yes. The current version of Europass site (and its associated applications) will continue to be hosted by Cedefop until the infrastructure is migrated to the cloud by March 2016, as stipulated in the current Technical Specification of this Tender.

Question No 17

Is the Tenderer supposed to assume full service responsibility of the Main Europass Statistics Database and in this case propose the preferred database server, etc., or does Cedefop wish to continue fully owning and managing this database

Cedefop's answer to question No 17

There is no specific task included in the scenario(s) of the C4T which has to do with the Statistics architecture. However, the take-over, maintenance and further development of Europass Statistics should definitely be considered to be part of the tasks of the newly selected contractor out of this tender procedure (further to appropriate Order Forms issued), who is expected to assume full responsibility for the entire Europass Statistics Architecture (outlined in Annex X1, section 5).