



European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training
Procurement Service

Thessaloniki, 27/02/2006
PRO-2006-041

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER
CEDEFOP No: AO/A/AZU/Skillsnet-ScientificSupport/003/06
**‘Early identification of skill needs:
provision of scientific expertise and support’**

TENDER CONDITIONS

Dear Sir/Madam,

1. With reference to the Open invitation to tender “*Early identification of skill needs: provision of scientific expertise and support*”, published in the Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union No 2006/S 39-041360 on 25.02.2006, please find enclosed the necessary documents.

The purpose of this invitation to tender is to conclude a service contract in accordance with the attached Tendering Specifications.

If you are downloading these documents from our website, kindly send us an e-mail (C4T-services@cedefop.eu.int) notifying us.

2. If you are interested in this contract, you should submit a tender *in triplicate* in one of the official languages of the European Union (preferably in English).
3. You may choose to submit the tender:
 - a) either by post or by courier not later than **10.04.2006** in which case the evidence shall be constituted by the date of despatch, 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 C. Lettmayr
PO Box 22 427
GR – 55102 Thessaloniki
Greece

(b) delivered by hand not later than 17:00 on **10.04.2006** to the following address:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop),
Procurement Service
Attention of Mr C. Lettmayr
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's holidays.

4. Tenders must be placed inside two sealed envelopes. The inner envelope, addressed to the service indicated above, should be marked as follows:

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER
CEDEFOP No: AO/A/AZU/Skillsnet-ScientificSupport/003/06
‘Early identification of skill needs:
provision of scientific expertise and support’
Tender from (name of Tenderer):

NOT TO BE OPENED BY THE INTERNAL MAIL SERVICE

If self-adhesive envelopes are used, they must be sealed with adhesive tape and the sender must sign across this tape.

5. All the documents that must be produced in order to tender are listed in the attached Tendering Specifications. The draft contract is annexed to the Tendering Specifications.
6. Tender must be:
 - Signed by the Tenderer or his duly authorised representative;
 - Perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures.
7. 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.
8. The opening of tenders will take place at Cedefop on 19.04.2006 at 11.00. 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.eu.int) no later than 17:00 on 18.04.2006.
9. Period of validity of tenders, during which Tenderers may not modify the terms of their tenders in any aspect: 6 months from 10.04.2006.
10. 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.eu.int).

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 sent simultaneously to all Tenderers who have requested the specifications (candidates invited to tender).

- 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.

12. 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.

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.

13. You will be informed whether or not your tender has been accepted.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Christian F. Lettmayr
Deputy Director

Attached: tendering specifications

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER

NO. AO/AZU/Skillsnet-ScientificSupport/003/06

**Early identification of skill needs:
provision of scientific expertise and support**

Tendering specifications

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Annex I : Contract Notice

Annex II: Draft contract

Annex III: Legal entity form

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ABOUT CEDEFOP – General introduction

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.'

1. OBJECT OF THE CONTRACT

1.1 Description of the contract

- **Description of the object and purpose of the contract**

Cedefop is seeking scientific expertise and support of a qualified research body or research expert to contribute to its activities in the field of skill needs analysis, identification and anticipation in Europe including its network on early identification of skill needs 'Skillsnet'.

- **Site or location of works, place of delivery or performance**

The tasks can be completed intra and extra muros, with prior consent of Cedefop.

- **Division into lots**

This invitation to tender is not divided into lots.

- **Variants**

Variants will not be accepted.

- **Total quantity or scope**

Quantification of the contract in terms of estimated resources: 100 person-days per year.

1.2 Duration of the contract

The contract shall enter into force on the date of signature and shall be valid for a period of 12 months. On expiry of the initial term, the contract may be renewed three times, each time for a period of 12 months.

2. LEGAL, ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

2.1 Conditions relating to the contract

- **Main term of financing and payment**

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

- **Legal form to be taken by the grouping of suppliers**

Not applicable.

- **Subcontracting**

Any subcontracting must be approved by Cedefop. The selection and exclusion criteria must be applied not just to the Tenderer but also to any subcontractors proposed by the Tenderer. If awarded, the contract will be signed by the Tenderer that will be the only contracting party responsible for the performance of the contract.

2.2 Condition for participation

2.2.1 Conflict of interest

The Contractor shall take all necessary measures to prevent any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective performance of the Contract. Such conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest. Any conflict of interests which could arise during performance of the Contract must be notified to Cedefop in writing without delay. In the event of such conflict, the Contractor shall immediately take all necessary steps to resolve it.

2.2.2 Legal position – means of proof required

Tenderers must indicate in which State they have their headquarters or domicile and present the supporting evidence normally acceptable of that country law. In addition, they should provide evidence of their inscription in the professional/trade register, if applicable. Tenderers are therefore requested to complete the Legal entity form in annex III and provide the requested documents.

2.2.3 Exclusion of Tenderers

- **Grounds for exclusion**

To be eligible for participating in this contract award procedure, Tenderers must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed below:

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning

- those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of *res judicata*;
 - c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
 - d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
 - e) they have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal 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.

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**

Cedefop will accept, as satisfactory evidence that the Tenderer is not in one of the situations described in point a), b) or e) above, production of a recent extract from the judicial record 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.

Cedefop will accept, as satisfactory evidence that the Tenderer is not in the situation described in point d) above a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned. Where no such certificate is 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.

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

2.2.4 Selection criteria

Tenderers are required to prove that they have sufficient economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to perform the contract.

- **Economic and financial capacity – means of proof required**

Proof of economic and financial capacity may in particular be furnished by 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 or overall turnover and turnover concerning services covered by the contract during the last three financial year.

In case Tenderers are unable to furnish such documents they are required to provide justification.

- **Technical and professional capacity – means of proof required**

The Tenderer must comply with the following criteria:

- academic background in economics or social sciences;
- previous experience of at least 5 years in providing similar services: participation and contribution to activities related to the analysis, anticipation and forecasting of skill needs, including own research in this or closely related fields, publication of research studies, organisation and moderation of scientific workshops and networks;
- experience in working in a Community/multi-cultural environment;
- capacity to speak and write fluently in English and to communicate with researchers and high-level stakeholders;
- competence in writing scientific papers and scientific editing;
- relevant ICT skills (MS Office, Internet).

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

- presentation and description of the Tenderer;
- detailed CV(s) of the person(s) in charge of the execution of the tasks, including:
 - a resume of research profile, background and experience relevant to the subject of the contract;
 - a list of publications and projects relevant to the subject of the contract;
- list of principal services provided and/or major contracts performed during the past three years similar to those described in this invitation to tender (indicating the subject, amounts, dates and recipients, public or private);
- an indication of the proportion of the contract which the service provider may intend to subcontract.

- **Evaluation of tenders**

Only the tenders meeting the requirements of the selection stage will have their offers evaluated.

2.3 Other documents to be provided

- **Individual(s) entitled to sign the contract**

Tenderers should submit a statement containing the name and position of the individual(s) entitled to sign the contract.

- **Financial identification form**

The financial identification form in annex IV must be sent, duly completed and signed, with the tender.

3. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

3.1 Background

This invitation to tender is being issued in the context of growing interest in the field of early identification of skill and competence needs which is reflected in Cedefop's Medium-Term Priorities 2006-08. New and changing skill needs have strong implications for the provision of appropriate and future-oriented education and training. They constitute challenges for policy, practice and research in their attempt to achieve wider social and economic goals, particularly cohesion and competitiveness of the European Union and to improve the links between education, training and the labour market. Hence, interest in early identification of skill and competence needs is growing.

The lack of information about future skill needs has been a long-standing concern in Europe. The need to anticipate skill and occupational needs is reflected in the *Maastricht Communiqué*, in the *European Council's integrated guidelines for employment for 2005-2008* (guidelines no 19, 20 and 24), and is a priority in the *Social partners' framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications*. European integration and EU enlargement makes the provision and availability of information about trends in the development of skills and competences even more important. Relevant findings could support both the development of a European knowledge-based society and the achievement of objectives set out in European employment and lifelong learning strategies.

Cedefop's work in the field of analysis, anticipation and identification of skill needs

In 2002, Cedefop, together with a number of EU and future Member States researchers and stakeholders, started an initiative on the 'Early identification of skill needs in Europe', documented by conferences and publications. The main aim was to achieve more transparency on related European activities and to present and discuss these with representatives of research, policy and practice. In the medium term, its aim was to foster cooperation and to establish a network. As a result, the international network on early identification of skill needs 'Skillsnet' was launched by Cedefop in 2004.

Skillsnet – International network on early identification of skill needs

Skillsnet brings together experts to present and discuss methods and outcomes of research and analysis on new and changing skill needs as well as medium to longer-term prospects of skills on the labour market. Particular attention is paid to skill needs in regions, sectors, companies, occupations and target groups. The network provides a forum where new activities and projects to identify skill needs at an early stage can be generated in a multidisciplinary cross-country perspective. As transferring findings into policy and implementing reforms are of central importance, Skillsnet actively involves policy-makers, social partners, practitioners and researchers in the discussion of research outcomes. This is to ensure acceptance and legitimacy of reforms and to foster their implementation. The network has an electronic platform on Cedefop's European Training Village (http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/skillsnet/).

Skillsnet has managed to create a useful platform for dialogue and information exchange among stakeholders. This platform helps to verify different skill needs anticipation and identification methods and approaches. The network discusses the results of research and summarises the main trends and developments in skill needs in Europe including those in particular sectors. It also seeks to identify and disseminate examples of good practice and to transfer research results into policy and practice. In addition, Skillsnet organises thematic workshops and conferences (e.g. on innovative approaches and methods and initiatives in different sectors) and publishes and disseminates research results.

Furthermore, during its feasibility workshop on skill needs forecasting in Europe held in October 2005 participants agreed to launch a European skill needs forecasting exercise asking Cedefop to carry on its initiative and coordinate further steps. This project will constitute a challenging activity in the future work of Skillsnet.

Skillsnet activities planned for 2006 and 2007

- workshop on innovations in agri-food and forestry-wood chains (September 2006)
- expert workshop on European skill needs forecasting – follow-up (October 2006)
- workshop on skill needs in biotechnology (January 2007)
- expert workshop on harmonisation of enterprise surveys (1st half of 2007)
- conference focused on transfer of results into policy and practice (2nd half of 2007)

3.2 Purpose of the contract

Cedefop is seeking scientific expertise and support of a qualified research body or research expert to contribute to its activities in the field of skill needs analysis, identification and anticipation in Europe including its network on early identification of skill needs 'Skillsnet'.

The tasks listed below shall be carried out in close cooperation with Cedefop, in particular with the responsible project manager in Area A 'Developing Research'.

3.3 Tasks of the Contractor

The Contractor's main tasks will be to provide scientific expertise and support in:

- developing Cedefop's activities within the field of skill needs analysis, identification and anticipation in Europe and beyond;
- further developing 'Skillsnet'.

Specific tasks associated with the provision of scientific expertise and support to Cedefop's activities in the field of early identification of skill needs will include, but not be limited to:

- (a) disseminating information with the aim to establish or maintain close cooperation with other related networks at national and international level as well as other experts and stakeholders worldwide inviting them to join the network;
- (b) identifying researchers or research organisations, projects, events and political issues in the field of skill needs analysis, identification and anticipation;
- (c) establishing and moderating specific working groups within Skillsnet on particular areas of interest and expertise of network members (e.g. on sectors: tourism, nanotechnology; or on the planned European forecasting system);
- (d) providing scientific support to the development of concepts and preparation of workshops and conferences on specific issues; activities will include mapping specific research gaps, defining problem areas in methods and instruments, identifying research interests of network partners, and negotiating with relevant experts, stakeholders and partner organisations (please refer to activities planned for 2006 and 2007 in section 3.1);
- (e) assisting with the publication of proceedings of workshops and conferences.

The tasks can be completed intra and extra muros, with prior consent of Cedefop, for approximately 5-10 days per month till the successful completion of the tasks and necessary amount of person-days as indicated in 1.1.

Within the person-days allocated under this contract, Cedefop may also request the Contractor to undertake missions in connection with the above tasks. Related mission costs will be reimbursed by Cedefop separately and are not subject of the present contract.

3.4 Outcomes

The Contractor shall deliver the respective results based on the tasks outlined above. He/she shall liaise and closely collaborate with the responsible person(s) in Cedefop on a regular basis and participate in any meeting organised by Cedefop that is necessary to carry out this contract.

Participation in events and other travel costs

Cedefop will reimburse travel and accommodation costs for journeys to Thessaloniki in accordance with its regulations (see the draft contract).

Cedefop will also reimburse travel and accommodation costs for requested missions in accordance with these rules.

3.5 Reports

An activity report should be delivered after each 3 months of the service with clear indication and description of work done and days spent. Activity reports will be reviewed by Cedefop and serve as the basis for payment of the invoice.

4. AWARD OF THE CONTRACT

4.1 Awarding procedure/method

The bids which meet the selection criteria will be assessed in terms of quality and price.

The contract shall be awarded to the Tenderer submitting the bid which offers the best-value-for-money (best quality-price ratio).

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

Tenders scoring less than 60 (of a maximum of 100) points on quality, will not be considered technically acceptable.

4.2 Award criteria

4.2.1 Quality Evaluation of the tender

- **Quality criteria**

The following criteria will be applied:

- Relevance of the proposal to the objectives of the contract, its context and the work to be carried out, the level of understanding of the overall purpose of the contract **(20 points)**;
- Demonstration of an in-depth understanding of the concepts, methodologies and research issues based on a written brief discussion of the subject, i.e. the area of skill needs analysis, anticipation and forecasting and the identification of new and changing skills **(30 points)**;
- The efficiency, quality and usefulness of the proposed approaches, concepts and methods to the tasks foreseen under the contract **(35 points)**;
- Creativity and flexibility of approach to the tasks of different nature at a high-quality level **(5 points)**;
- Access to the relevant networks and sources **(10 points)**.

- **Evidence to be provided**

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 1.2 above. To this end, the Tenderer must present the following documents:

- a brief discussion of the subject demonstrating in-depth understanding of the concepts and research issues;
- a description of the concepts and approaches for undertaking the work to be carried out and nature of the results to be achieved;
- concrete suggestions and propositions for execution of each specific task foreseen under the contract;
- a list of potential and relevant contacts and sources related to the subject.

4.2.2 Financial Evaluation of the tender

- **Evidence to be provided**

The financial offer will be assessed on the basis of the price of the tender, i.e. the total price (no of person-days multiplied by the unit price(s)). The Tenderer must present a full breakdown of prices.

- **Information concerning price**

- The prices quoted are revisable during the validity of the contract as specified in the draft contract in annex II.
- Prices must be quoted in euro and include all expenses.
- 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.
- All costs incurred in preparing and submitting tenders are borne by the Tenderers and cannot be reimbursed.