



31 March 2010

Clarification No 4 for open call for proposals

For the award of Framework Partnership agreements concerning four European Topic Centres on

1. Air Pollution and climate change mitigation 2011-2013 (EEA/ACC/10/001 – ETC/ACM),
2. Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation 2011-2013 (EEA/NSV/10/001 – ETC/CCA),
3. Inland, coastal and marine waters 2011-2013 (EEA/NSV/10/002 – ETC/WTR), and
4. Spatial information and analysis 2011-2013 (EEA/NSV/10/003 – ETC/SIA)

Question 1:

What are the procedures for having subcontractors in the consortium at the stage of the submission of the proposal and then later while the work programme is under way?

Answer 1:

Please refer to Article II.10 of the standard Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) attached to the Terms of reference (ToR).

Subcontracting may only cover the execution of a limited part of the action. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with the conditions set out in Article II.10 of the standard FPA. In summary this means that subcontractors should be selected on transparent grounds, to the best offer taking into consideration price and quality (best value for money). In a very simplified procedure, three different offers should be obtained and evaluated against common criteria to ensure that each of them is treated fairly and equitably.

When work is subcontracted it must be identified in the Description of the work programme (Annex 1 to the Specific Agreement). Note that according to Article II.10.2 (d) any subcontracting during the course of the work programme, which was not foreseen or identified in the Description of the work programme (Annex 1 to the Specific Agreement), is subject to prior written approval by the Agency.

Partners must ensure that their agreements with subcontractors mention in particular that the Agency and/or any authorized representative may at any time during the FPA and up to five years from the date of payment of the Agency contribution, arrange for audits to be carried out by the Agency and/or any authorized representative as well as by the European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF).

Question 2:

A question was received as to the minimum funding granted to each partner and to the possibility to recourse to 'associated partners' (section 4.A of the Terms of Reference (ToR)).

Answer 2:

Please refer to section 1.1 of the ToR, last paragraph, which provides an indication of the estimated total annual budget for Specific Agreements (SAs) to be concluded on the basis of the FPA to be concluded following the call for proposals.

The reference to the amount of EUR 50.000 under section 4.A first bullet point of the ToR is meant merely to illustrate the possible difficulty associated with the management of a large number of small partners; however this figure is neither the minimum nor the maximum budget for each partner, as actually a partner may have a lower budget depending on the tasks and role he is entrusted with in the consortium.

From a legal and contractual standpoint, all partners within the consortium will be on an equal footing towards the Agency. As such, there are no separate categories between full partners and associated partners; however, partners may obviously play a role more or less important within the consortium which will be reflected in the budget allocation among the partners.

Question 3:

A question was received as to the indication of the minimum time contribution of key experts to the ETC (Annex 1 to the ToR – Model Proposal).

Answer 3:

Applicants are requested to provide an executive summary of the proposal (not exceeding 10 pages) including inter alia the names and abstracts of CVs of the key experts expected to contribute at least 100 days/year to the ETC for each partner. In summary this means that the executive summary shall provide key information on the core team of the consortium coordinator and of the experts deemed the most relevant for all other consortium partners. However, as stated under section 4.A last bullet point, the consortium needs to be structured in a way to ensure the necessary flexibility; hence the applicant may also list in his proposal other experts for each partner who can provide support and assistance to the key experts for specific projects and whose contribution could be less than at least 100 days/year.

Question 4:

A question was received with respect to the letters of intent to be provided by the consortium partners with a view to assess the consortium's technical and professional capacity (section 6.4 (c) 1. of the ToR).

Answer 4:

Please refer to the reply to question 1 in the Clarification No 2 for the open calls for proposals, available at the following address: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders/call-for-proposals/cfp-docs/clarification>.

With a view to perform a relevant and meaningful assessment of the technical and professional capacity of the consortium as a whole, each consortium partner shall provide a signed letter of intent stating their willingness to participate fully in the work of the future ETC by making available the relevant experts (whose name shall be listed and the detailed CVs attached to the proposal) at least 100 working days/year.

Question 5:

A question was received as to the necessity for the coordinator (ETC Manager) to have at his disposal a data manager.

Answer 5:

It is of great importance that the core group within the consortium be able to rely on some expertise for data management; as stated under section 4.A. of the ToR and based on EEA experience with earlier ETCs, it is preferable that the core group be located at the coordinating organization and be supported by partners with specific competences. However the partners may certainly devise another structure for the consortium and choose to locate the data management at another partner with regular meetings with the core group located at the coordinating organization.

