

V

(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Call for proposals — Timely high-frequency indicators for global and regional trade*(2012/C 93/09)***1. CONTEXT**

The European Commission is launching a call for proposals (ref. ECFIN/D/12/004) for the construction and monthly production of timely indicators of global and regional trade developments. The global indicators are constructed bottom-up from regional indicators. The regional level includes all EU Member States, as well as the candidate countries.

The indicators of global trade will be essential elements in the timely assessment of the global cycle. The project will also improve the assessment and forecast of the trade and GDP forecasts of non-EU countries and regions in the Commission's full-fledged and interim forecasting exercises.

The regional indicators will be used by the Commission to calculate timely monthly measures of export performance for the EU, the euro area and each individual Member State. Such measures will be very useful tools in the EMU economic surveillance process, for present as well as future euro-area Member States.

This cooperation shall take the form of a framework partnership agreement between the Commission and one institute over a period of four years.

2. PURPOSE AND SPECIFICATIONS OF THE ACTION**2.1. Objectives**

The purpose is to construct a fairly homogenous and exhaustive set of regional trade variables that together cover the whole world. The set needs to be available at short notice, in order to signal to European policy-makers possible changes in the strength of the external environment or possible competitiveness problems of specific Member States. The set of variables are not statistics in a strict sense, as many missing data will need to be estimated.

2.2. Technical specifications**2.2.1. *Timing and reporting of results***

The results must be sent (by e-mail) to the Commission every month, at the latest on the 25th of the month. The results will be an updated set of monthly time series, which should start, preferably, in January 1991. The end date of the time series to be delivered on the 25th of the month *t* has to be the month *t-2*. For example: results up to September must arrive at the Commission at the latest on 25 November.

2.2.2. *Content of the results*

The results should contain, for the countries and regions detailed below, the following variables:

- export and imports values (current euro),
- export and imports prices (euro prices),
- export and imports volumes (constant euro),
- an index of industrial production,
- (optional) GDP in volume.

When missing, trade values and prices will have to be estimated. Trade volumes have to be calculated on the basis of trade values and prices. On the use of price variables: when available, preference should be given to true price indices instead of unit value indices, which suffer from composition bias. All series have to be seasonally adjusted and, as much as possible, working-day adjusted.

The countries and regions to be included are:

- each EU Member State and each candidate country (a flexible definition must be used: upon a new admission as candidate country, that country has to be added to the sample),
- flexible aggregates for euro area and EU,
- the world,
- each third country or region as listed in Table 56 of the Statistical Annex to the Commission's forecast document:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2011/pdf/ee-2011-6_en.pdf

To this list should be added:

- 'other Asia' = Asia excluding Japan, Middle East countries, China, Hong Kong and Korea,
- 'other Latin America' = Latin America excluding Brazil and Mexico.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS AND DURATION

3.1. Administrative provisions

The institute is to be selected for a maximum period of four years. The Commission wishes to establish a long-term cooperation with the successful applicant. For this purpose a four-year framework partnership agreement will be concluded between the parties. Under this framework partnership agreement, which will specify the common objectives and the nature of the actions planned, four specific annual grant agreements may be concluded between the parties. The first of these specific grant agreements will concern the period from June 2012 to May 2013 (which implies delivery of the first set of results on 25 June 2012, and delivery of the last set of results on 25 May 2013).

3.2. Duration

Each grant agreement will cover the production of 12 monthly sets of indicators.

4. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Sources of Union funding

The operations selected will be financed from budget heading 01 02 02 — Coordination and surveillance of economic and monetary union.

4.2. Estimated total Union budget for this call

The indicative total budget available over the four periods for this action is EUR 200 000 or EUR 50 000/year. Subject to budgetary resources available, amounts for the following years could be increased by about 2 % per year.

4.3. Percentage of Union co-financing

The Commission's share in the joint financing may not exceed 50 % of the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary on the production of the data set. The Commission determines the percentage of the co-financing.

4.4. Funding of the action by the beneficiary and eligible costs incurred

The beneficiary will be requested to submit a detailed budget for year 1 containing an estimate of the costs and funding of the action, expressed in euros and exclusive of VAT. A detailed budget, respectively for year 2, year 3 and year 4 under the framework partnership agreement will be provided on the basis of an invitation by the Commission to the partner.

The budgeted grant amount requested from the Commission should be rounded to the nearest ten. The budget will be incorporated as an annex to the specific grant agreement.

Eligible costs can be incurred only after signature of the specific grant agreement by all the parties, save in exceptional cases and, under no circumstances, before submission of the application for a grant. Contributions in kind are not regarded as eligible costs.

4.5. Payment arrangements

Within 45 days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the specific agreement, a pre-financing payment shall be made to the partner, representing 40 % of the maximum amount of the grant specified in Article 3 of the specific grant agreement.

A request for payment of the balance together with a final financial statement of actual costs incurred and a detailed list of costs for the whole period of the action will be submitted within two months after the closing date of the action.

The request for payment of the balance shall be preceded by the timely submission of the required set of data.

The amount of the final payment shall be determined on the basis of the eligible costs actually incurred, which must be traceable and identifiable in the beneficiary's cost accounting system.

The Commission may carry out an audit of the use made of the grants awarded.

4.6. Subcontracting

No subcontracting is allowed.

4.7. Joint proposals

In all cases of joint proposals, the tasks and financial contribution of all members participating in the proposal must be clearly identified. All members must provide all the necessary documents for assessing the proposal as a whole with regard to the exclusion, selection and award criteria (see points 5, 6 and 7 below) related to their tasks.

One of the participating members will take the role of coordinator and shall:

- assume the overall responsibility for the partnership vis-à-vis the Commission,
- monitor the activities of the other participating member(s),
- ensure the overall coherence and timely submission of the data set,

- centralise the signature of the agreement and deliver the agreement duly signed by all participants to the Commission (proxy is possible),
- centralise the Commission's financial contribution and disburse payments to participants,
- collect supporting documents of expenditure incurred by each participant and present them in a single submission.

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

5.1. Legal status of applicants

The call for proposals is open to bodies and institutes (legal entities) with legal status in one of the EU Member States. Applicants must show that they exist as a legal entity and provide the required documentation by means of the standard legal entity form.

5.2. Grounds for exclusion

Applications will not be considered for a grant if the applicants are in any of the following situations (in compliance with Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union):

- (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 judgment 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 agreement is to be performed;
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- (f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Union budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations;
- (g) they are faced with a conflict of interest;
- (h) they have been guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required or have failed to supply this information.

Applicants must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed under point 5.2 by means of the standard declaration form of honour with respect to the exclusion criteria.

5.3. Administrative and financial penalties

- 5.3.1. Without prejudice to the application of penalties laid down in the contract, candidates or tenderers and contractors who have made false declarations, have made substantial errors or committed irregularities or fraud, or have been found in serious breach of their contractual obligations, may be excluded from all contracts and grants financed by the Union budget for a maximum of five years from the date on which the infringement is established, as confirmed following an adversarial procedure with the contractor.

That period may be extended to 10 years in the event of a repeated offence within 5 years of the date referred to in the first subparagraph.

- 5.3.2. Tenderers or candidates who have made false declarations, have committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud, may also be subject to financial penalties representing 2 % to 10 % of the total estimated value of the contract being awarded.

Contractors who have been found in serious breach of their contractual obligations may be subject to financial penalties representing 2 % to 10 % of the total value of the contract in question.

That rate may be increased to 4 % to 20 % in the event of a repeat infringement within five years of the date referred to in the first subparagraph of paragraph 1.

- 5.3.3. 1. In the case referred to in point 5.2(c), the candidates or tenderers shall be excluded from all contracts and grants for a maximum of five years from the date on which the infringement is committed or, in the case of continuing or repeated infringements, the date on which the infringement ceases.
2. In the cases referred to in points 5.2(b) and (e), the candidates or tenderers shall be excluded from all contracts and grants for a maximum of five years from the date of the judgment having the force of *res judicata*.

Those periods of exclusion may be extended to 10 years in the event of a repeat offence within 5 years of the dates referred to in points 1 and 2 above.

- 5.3.4. The cases referred to in point 5.2(e) shall be the following:

- (a) cases of fraud as referred to in Article 1 of the Convention on the Protection of the European Union's Financial Interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
- (b) cases of corruption as referred to in Article 3 of the Convention on the Fight against Corruption involving Officials of the European Union or Officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997;
- (c) cases of participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2(1) of Joint Action 98/733/JHA of the Council (OJ L 351, 29.12.1998, p. 1);
- (d) cases of money laundering as defined in Article 1 of Council Directive 91/308/EEC (OJ L 166, 28.6.1991, p. 77).

6. SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out. They must have the professional competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action or work programme.

6.1. Financial capacity of applicants

Applicants must have the financial capacity to complete the proposed action and must provide their balance sheets and profit and loss accounts for the last two financial years for which the accounts have been closed.

This provision does not apply to public bodies and international organisations.

6.2. Operational capability of applicants

Applicants must have the operational capability to complete the proposed action and should provide the appropriate supporting documentation.

The following criteria will be used to assess the applicant's ability:

- at least three years of proven experience in preparing a similar set of indicators,
- proven experience in the construction of international trade indicators and addressing methodological questions (seasonal adjustment, working-day adjustment, aggregation, estimation methodology for missing values and missing deflators, ...)

7. AWARD CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals and receive marks (see points hereafter) in order to rank the proposals and to award the grant agreement to one successful candidate, taking into account the cost-effectiveness of the proposals and the budget available for the call:

- adequacy of resources assigned to the construction of international trade indicators, incl. qualified staff, arrangements for monitoring, supervisions and risk management (maximum 20 points),
- the quality of the proposed methodology, including aspects of seasonal adjustment, working-day adjustment, deflation, aggregation and estimation methodology for missing values and missing deflators (maximum 60 points),
- the efficiency of the candidate's work organisation, in terms of flexibility, infrastructure and facilities for carrying out the work, reporting the results and liaising with the Commission (maximum 20 points).

8. PRACTICAL PROCEDURES

8.1. Drawing-up and submission of proposals

Proposals must contain the completed and signed standard grant application form and all supporting documents referred to under point 8.2.

The proposals must be presented in three sections:

- administrative proposal,
- technical proposal,
- financial proposal.

The following standard forms can be obtained from the Commission:

- standard grant application form,
- standard budget statement,
- standard financial identification form,
- standard legal entity form,
- standard declaration form of honour with respect to the exclusion criteria,

as well as documentation regarding the financial aspects of the grant:

- model of the framework partnership agreement,
- model of the specific annual grant agreement,

(a) by downloading them from the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/procurement_grants/grants/proposals/index_en.htm

(b) in case the previous option is not possible, by writing to the Commission (e-mail only) at:

e-mail: ECFIN-CALL-2012-TRADE-INDICATORS@ec.europa.eu

Please always mention 'Call for proposals — ECFIN/D/12/004' in the subject line of the e-mail message.

Proposals must be submitted in one of the official languages of the European Union, however preferably in one of the working languages of the Union: English, French or German.

One signed original proposal and three copies, not stapled, must be supplied by the applicant. This would facilitate the administrative work when preparing all the necessary copies/documents for the evaluation committee.

Proposals must be sent in a sealed cover contained in another sealed envelope.

The outside envelope must bear the address given at point 8.3 below.

The sealed inner envelope containing the proposal must be marked 'Call for proposals — ECFIN/D/12/004, not to be opened by the internal mail department'.

The Commission will notify candidates that their proposal has been received.

8.2. Content of proposals

8.2.1. Administrative proposal

The administrative proposal must include:

- a duly completed and signed standard grant application form,
- a duly completed and signed standard legal entity form and the requested supporting documentation proving the legal status of the institute,
- a duly completed and signed standard financial identification form,
- a duly signed standard declaration form of honour with respect to the exclusion criteria,
- the organisation chart of the institute, showing the names and positions of the management and of the operational service responsible for the construction and delivery of the required results,
- proof of sound financial situation: balance sheets and profit and loss accounts from the previous two financial years for which the accounts have been closed.

8.2.2. Technical proposal

The technical proposal must include:

- a description of the activities of the institute, enabling the assessment of its qualifications and the scope and duration of its experience in the requested areas under point 6.2. This should mean any relevant studies, service contracts, consultancy work, surveys, publications or other work previously carried out, indicating the name of the client and stating which, if any, were done for the European Commission. The most relevant studies and/or results should be attached,
- a detailed description of the operational organisation for producing the data set. Relevant documentation should be attached regarding the infrastructure, facilities, resources and qualified staff (concise cv's of the staff the most involved in producing the data set) at the applicant's disposal,
- a detailed description of the methodology: sources of the data, seasonal adjustment, working-day adjustment, deflation, aggregation, estimation methodology for missing values and missing deflators.

8.2.3. Financial proposal

The financial proposal must include:

- a duly completed and detailed standard budget statement (in euros and exclusive of VAT), covering a period of 12 months, containing a financing plan for the action and a detailed breakdown of the total and unit eligible costs for producing the data set. For non-public bodies this budget may exceptionally include VAT, provided that a certificate issued by the appropriate tax authorities certifies that the beneficiary is unable to recover VAT. For public bodies, VAT is never eligible,
- a document certifying the financial contribution from other organisations (co-financing), if applicable.

8.3. Address and closing date for submission of proposals

Applicants interested in these grants are invited to submit their applications to the European Commission.

Applications must be submitted:

- (a) either **by post or delivery service** postmarked no later than **30 April 2012**. The evidence of the date of dispatch shall be constituted by the postmark or the date of the deposit slip of the delivery service at the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs
Call for Proposals Ref. ECFIN/D/12/004
Unit ECFIN/R2 — Financial Management
Office BU24 — 4/13
Avenue du Bourget/Bourgetlaan 1-3
1140 Bruxelles/Brussel (Evere)
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

- (b) or by **delivery by hand** to the central mail service of the European Commission (personal delivery or delivery by any authorised representative of the applicant, including delivery services) at the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs
Call for Proposals Ref. ECFIN/D/12/004
Unit ECFIN/R2 — Financial Management
Office BU24 — 4/13
Avenue du Bourget/Bourgetlaan 1-3
1140 Bruxelles/Brussel (Evere)
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

no later than **30 April 2012** by 16.00 (Brussels time). In this case, proof of submission will be by means of a dated and signed receipt issued by the receiving official in the abovementioned department. The department is open from 8.00 to 17.00 Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

9. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED?

All applications will be checked to assess whether they meet the formal criteria of eligibility.

Proposals considered eligible will be evaluated against the selection criteria and subsequently given marks according to the award criteria specified above in order to identify the candidate who may receive EU funding for the action, taking into account the cost-effectiveness of the proposal and the budget available for this call.

The process of evaluating the proposals will take place during April/May 2012. An evaluation committee is to be set up for this purpose under the authority of the Director-General for Economic and Financial Affairs. Successful and unsuccessful candidates will be notified individually. A framework partnership agreement will be signed with the successful candidate, followed by signing a specific grant agreement for the first year.

10. IMPORTANT

The Commission may inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or any other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals as well as any additional information by means of posting the information on its web address:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/procurement_grants/grants/proposals/index_en.htm

Applicants are invited to regularly check the website.

At the request of the applicants, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying aspect of the call for proposals. Any requests for additional information must be made, in writing only, to ECFIN-CALL-2012-TRADE-INDICATORS@ec.europa.eu mentioning clearly in the subject line of the e-mail the following reference: 'Call for proposals — ECFIN/D/12/004'. Requests for additional information received less than five working days before the final date for submission of proposals may not be processed.

This call for proposals does not constitute any sort of contractual obligation on the part of the Commission towards any institute submitting a proposal on the basis of it. All communication regarding this call for proposals must be in writing.

Applicants should take note of the contractual provisions which will be obligatory in the event of award.

For the purposes of safeguarding the financial interest of the Union, your personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, to the Financial Irregularities Panel and/or to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

Data of economic operators which are in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93, 94, 96(1)(b) and 96(2)(a) of the Financial Regulation may be included in a central database and communicated to the designated persons of the Commission, other institutions, agencies, authorities and bodies mentioned in Article 95(1) and (2) of the Financial Regulation. This refers as well to the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control over the said economic operators. Any party entered into the database has the right to be informed of the data concerning it, up on request to the accounting officer of the Commission.
