



Open Call for Tender
Ref. SDA/CfT/2019/01/CFS
Questions & Answers

1) *Does the single cost base pertain to the costs incurred only by the SDA or also of the project partners who signed the FPA?*

Yes. The scope of the audits and CFSs only relates to costs incurred by the SDA AISBL (as from 1 January 2018) and does not include costs incurred by Implementing Partners or Members of the SDA AISBL.

2) *Will all documentation for the audits/CFS be located in Brussels, or across Europe at the Partners' premises?*

Since the scope of the audits and CFSs only relates to costs incurred by the SDA AISBL, all relevant documentation is located in Brussels.

However, please note that a number of contracts (not SGAs) which the SDA AISBL is a party of were initially tendered and awarded by its Members and then novated to the benefit of the SDA AISBL as from 1 January 2018. Indeed, the SDA AISBL was incorporated only on 1 June 2017 (and became operational on 1 January 2018 with the signature of Programme Support Action (PSA) Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) No 04) and, before 2018, as the SDA was a de facto Association, it did not have any Legal personality and could not, hence, enter into contracts on its own.

Therefore, the procurement procedures relating to those novated contracts were already subject to external audits and CFSs under previous PSA SGAs (No 01, 02 and 03) and are not foreseen to fall within the scope of the audits and CFSs which are the subject of the Open Call for Tender at hand.

3) *The tender Invitation to tender provides details on how to submit the tender via post. Wold it also be possible to submit the tender via hand delivery, and if so what would be the address and procedures for this?*

Please note that, given the relatively short deadline set in the Invitation to Tender, the SDA AISBL has issued a corrigendum which now foresees that tenders, including all of their supporting documents, must be sent to the SDA AISBL premises on 14 June 2019 at the latest (the date on the postal stamp will serve as a proof).

Therefore, hand deliveries will not be accepted but tenders will not have to be actually received by 14 June 2019.

- 4) *We understand the audits to pertain to the audit of the single cost base at the level of the SDA. How many of such audits need to be performed under this framework contract, and how many by August 2019?***

Given that the SDA AISBL is, currently, a beneficiary of nine Specific Grant Agreements (SGAs) concluded under the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), it is foreseen that 15 Certificates on the SDA AISBL's Financial Statements (CFSs) will be required over a period of four years. Please note that this is a rough figure, especially considering the number of payment requests (see Article II.23.2b of the FPA) and as more Calls for Proposals are expected to be launched which could lead to the conclusion of other SGAs and, hence, of more audit and CFS needs.

Given that the SDA AISBL will lodge payment requests relating to three SGAs (two IP SGAs and PSA SGA 4), the SDA AISBL will need three CFSs in total by early August 2019, hence one single audit.

All CFSs will, indeed, relate to a single cost-base, which is then subject to a set of distribution keys, i.e. a first distribution key allocating costs between PSA SGA 4 and the IP SGAs, and a second distribution key allocating costs across all IP SGAs.

Therefore, even though the number CFSs are to be provided per SGA, the number of audits would be one at each payment requests cycles (end of August for IP SGAs and, currently, end of May 2020 for PSA SGA 5), totalling 6-7 audits over a period of four years. Please note that the audit to be carried out by early August 2019 will also serve as a basis for the CFSs which will be needed by early August 2020 (for the payment requests relating to other IP SGAs). Please also note that the number of audits can change should the SDA AISBL become a beneficiary of multi-annual PSA SGA(s), which is the case of the IP SGAs.

- 5) *Could you please clarify how many Certificates of Financial Statement will be required under this framework contract, and how many by August 2019?***

Please refer to point 4) above.

- 6) *The Terms of Reference mentioned in the Tender Specifications do not pertain to audit (p.5, 2.1). Could you please clarify which Terms of Reference apply to these audits?***

The applicable Terms of Reference (ToRs) are the ones which are annexed to each of the SGAs (PSA or IP SGAs). Please refer to Annexes 03d and 03e of the Call for Tender.

Please note that the ToRs are mandatory as they form an integral part of the SGAs.

For instance, you can find the ToRs applicable to IP SGAs on the website of INEA at the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/useful-documents-and-forms>

- 7) *Please could you confirm that the total framework contract value is 200.000 EUR?***

The figure of EUR 200 000 mentioned in the Technical Specifications is only a maximum figure. Given that the Framework Contract (FwC) will be awarded to the tender offering the best price/quality ratio (4/6), the value of the FwC could be for less depending on the tenders and the outcome of their evaluation.

8) Please could you confirm the duration of the framework contract?

The duration of the FwC will be for 12 months with automatic renewals three times. A further extension is not excluded. The reason for this is that, as mentioned above, the SDA AISBL is only a beneficiary of, currently, 12-15 months PSA SGAs and not of multi-annual PSA SGAs (even though IP SGAs are concluded until end of 2023).

9) When are the results of this tender expected to be communicated?

The outcome of the evaluation procedure is currently foreseen to be completed by end of June 2019.

10) How many staff members on average are reported under personnel costs in a financial report?

The SDA AISBL only has contractors which for some of them were assimilated to personnel (so-called in-house consultants) pursuant to Article II.19.2(a), second indent of the FPA. However, the SDA AISBL does not have any employees.

11) Have you got an advanced electronic time registration system including authorization of project hours or do you use for example paper/Excel sheets?

The SDA AISBL does indeed have a time registration system which includes authorizations.

12) Do you use the unit costs calculation for personnel rates or individual hourly rates?

The SDA AISBL does not apply the *décision de forfaitisation* No C(2016) 478-Final on the reimbursement of personnel costs of CEF beneficiaries according to units.

13) Which method do you use for the productive hours for the personnel reported (1.720 hours, total number of hours worked or the standard number of hours)?

The method of calculation of productive hours does not seem relevant since the SDA AISBL does not have any employees and that contractors are paid against invoices.

14) How many contracts on average are included in the financial report (check of procurement rules) and on how many of these contracts the public procurement procedures are applicable?

The SDA AISBL's Individual Financial Statements will count roughly 60 contracts, with roughly 45 contracts to be checked against the applicable procurement provisions.

Please note that the SDA AISBL is not subject to public procurement rules. However, the SDA AISBL is subject to a set rules foreseen in the FPA (see Article II.9 and II. 10 of the FPA, as well as the general conditions of eligibility of costs foreseen in Article II.19 of the FPA).