

OJ S 98/2026 22/05/2026
**Call for tender : MAA-010008 - Innovation and Digitalisation Advisory
Programme**

**Clarifications to the Instructions to tenderers and Assignment Terms of
reference**

QUESTION 1:

Question 1: Reimbursable Expenses Cap

Section 8.3.1 of the ToR establishes a maximum of EUR 100,000 for expenses eligible for reimbursement, covering both (I) workshop and event organisation costs across all activities and (II) ancillary costs related to the development, hosting and maintenance of the advisory web-based products. Given the potential scale of market development activities under Activity C (training events, webinars, roundtables and awareness campaigns across EU Member States) combined with IT infrastructure costs under Activity A, please clarify:

- (a) Is the EUR 100,000 reimbursable envelope a hard contractual ceiling, or may it be revised upwards via a duly justified Task Order proposal subject to Contracting Authority approval?
- (b) Is there an indicative breakdown of how the EUR 100,000 is expected to be allocated between event-related costs (Section I) and IT/web product costs (Section II)?

Reference: ToR Section 8.2 and Section 8.3.1

CLARIFICATION

- a) The EUR 100,000 reimbursable envelope is a hard contractual ceiling. ., This amount will be repeated in the Contract.
In the Financial Offer to be included in the Tender's Offer, this figure must remain (see Financial Offer template).
- b) No indicative breakdown is provided for the allocation of the reimbursable expenses envelope. The envelope will be used in line with the concrete needs arising during implementation. As mentioned in the ToRs those expenses will be reimbursed for the eligible activities indicated by the EIB activity responsible. Before undergoing any expense in relation with an activity, the Service Provider will submit a request for approval for such expense to the EIB Activity responsible, together with a detailed estimated budget. Only expenses which will have been approved in advance by the EIB Activity responsible will be eligible for reimbursement.

QUESTION 2:

Question 2: AI Chatbot

The ToR requires the Service Provider to develop and operate a generative AI assistant chatbot as part of the ID webtool (Activity A, Section 4.2.1.A), which "may rely on external Large Language Model (LLM) APIs." The ongoing operational costs of LLM API usage (e.g. per-token or per-query charges from thirdparty providers) for a publicly accessible tool serving EIBG financial intermediaries over a 24-month contract period could be material, potentially exceeding EUR 100,000 depending on usage volume. Please clarify:

(a) Are LLM API operational costs (ongoing inference/usage fees) considered eligible for reimbursement under Section II of Section 8.3.1 (ancillary costs for web-based products)?

(b) If yes, would such costs be subject to the EUR 100,000 reimbursable expenses cap, or would they be approved separately on a Task Order basis outside the cap?

(c) What is the EIB's expectation regarding the volume of webtool users (number of FIs and average query frequency) that the Service Provider should plan for in dimensioning the chatbot and estimating API costs?

Reference: ToR Section 4.2.1.A (A.2 Development Support – AI chatbot) and Section 8.3.1.II

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CLARIFICATION 2

- a) LLM API operational costs (ongoing inference/usage fees) are considered eligible for reimbursement under Section II of Section 8.3.1.
- b) LLM API operational costs will fall within the EUR 100,000 envelop.
- c) Considering the narrowly defined, niche focus of the website, the EIB expects a relatively low web-traffic, with a slow, gradual increase. Average number of unique visits per month could be expected in the range of 250-500x/month during the first year after the launch, rising to 500-1000x/month during the second year. Bounce rate could be expected in the range of 20-40%. The share of unique visitors to the site resulting in the chatbot usage could be expected in the range of 25-50%. Considering the relative simplicity of the chatbot guidance envisaged, chat length and duration are expected to be considerably below industry standard, resulting in low tokens per conversation. The EUR 100,000 cap is considered sufficient by EIB.
Should the necessity to increase the amount spendable under the envelop become necessary to the completion of the Assignment arise, the EIB reserves the right to amend the contract and to increase such amount in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Contract and of the procedures of the EIB.

QUESTION 3:

Question 3: Webtool Hosting and Infrastructure Costs

The ToR requires the Service Provider to provide external EU-based hosting for the ID webtool throughout the contract period (Activity A, Section A.3), including scalable server capacity. Recurring hosting infrastructure costs (monthly server fees, bandwidth, storage, security monitoring) are a predictable and ongoing expense. Please clarify:

- (a) Are recurring hosting and infrastructure costs for the ID webtool eligible for reimbursement under Section II of Section 8.3.1, or are they expected to be embedded in the expert fee rates?
- (b) If reimbursable, would these costs fall within the EUR 100,000 cap or be approved separately via Task Order?

Reference: ToR Section 4.2.1.A (A.3 Post-deployment support) and Section 8.3.1.II

CLARIFICATION 3

- a) Recurring hosting and infrastructure costs for the ID webtool will be eligible for reimbursement under Section II of Section 8.3.1
- b) Yes, these costs will fall within EUR 100,000 envelop.

QUESTION 4:

Question 4: Non-Key Expert Experience Requirements

The Terms of Reference state that Senior Non-Key Experts must demonstrate at least 10 years of professional experience, and Junior Non-Key Experts at least 3 years of professional experience.

Could you please clarify whether these experience thresholds refer to:

- (a) General professional experience relevant to the project (i.e., total years of

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professional activity regardless of field), or
(b) Specific professional experience directly relevant to the position for which the expert
is proposed?
Reference: ToR Section 6.1.2 and Section 8.3

CLARIFICATION 4

Under this Contract, Senior Non-Key Experts shall demonstrate at least 10 years of
professional experience in consultancy assignments and/or in advising financial
institutions

Under this Contract, Junior Non-Key Experts shall demonstrate at least 3 years of
professional experience in consultancy assignments and/or in advising financial
institutions

QUESTION 5:

Question 5: Travel Costs and Geographic Scope of Missions
The TOR distinguishes between services performed from the Service Provider's
professional premises/home office and services performed on Site, with different daily
rates applicable accordingly. However, the TOR does not appear to specify the
geographic scope of potential mission locations.
Could you please clarify whether expert missions will be limited to the EIB headquarters
in Luxembourg, or whether missions to EU Member States and/or other locations should
also be anticipated?
Reference: ToR Section 8.3

CLARIFICATION 5

According to the provisions of the ToRs, section 5.1 Location: "For certain tasks, the EIB
will request the Service Provider's experts to perform the related services from the
premises of the Beneficiary or from any such other location(s) as the Bank may
reasonably indicate to the Service Provider (hereafter on "Site")."

Thus, in addition to the EIB premises in Luxembourg, missions to EU Member States and
to any of the participating countries eligible under the InvestEU Advisory Hub (IEU-AH)
mandate shall also be anticipated.

QUESTION 6:

Question 6: Use of EIB Facilities During Missions in Luxembourg
The TOR provides for on-Site working arrangements, with a specific daily rate applicable
when experts perform services on Site. Could you please clarify whether experts
performing services on Site in Luxembourg will have access to EIB office facilities (e.g.
desk space, meeting rooms, IT infrastructure), or whether the Service Provider will be
expected to arrange and bear the cost of independent workspace for its experts during
Luxembourg-based missions?
Reference: ToR Section 8.3 and Section 6.1.1

CLARIFICATION 6

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Whenever required to perform services within the EIB premises of Luxembourg, the EIB will ensure that the experts can access working spaces and the meeting rooms.

Within the EIB premises of Luxembourg, the Service Provider's staff will have free and unlimited internet access (same as in cyber cafés, airports, hotels etc.). Access will be valid for only one day at a time (login ID and password will be available from EIB reception desks).

All other costs relating to the Service Provider's experts shall be borne by the Service Provider.

QUESTION 7:

Question 7: Proof Documentation of Project References

We seek clarification on two points regarding documentary evidence for project references:

1. To evidence the value of the consultancy service, does the tenderer always need to provide invoices accompanied by bank statements, or is e.g. a completion certificate from the client that explicitly states the contract value sufficient to evidence the value of services, without requiring additional bank statements?
2. Can you confirm our understanding that a not-yet-completed project can be used as a reference if the invoiced and paid amount already exceeds EUR 200,000, evidenced by invoices with accompanying bank statements confirming payment?"

CLARIFICATION 7

1/ As specified in the Instructions to Tenderers, a completion certificate, a letter or an e-mail issued by the client including the required information will be accepted, provided that it also clearly identifies the client, the name of the project (as mentioned in the reference fiche included in the application file). Ideally, the document shall also include information on the nature of the services performed.

2. As specified in the Instructions to Tenderers, the tenderer may refer to a part of a project/service contract which is not yet completed, but only in so far as that part is successfully completed and its date of completion, its value, and tenderer's % contribution may be clearly identified and proven through adequate documentary evidence (such as certificates from the beneficiary) which need to be provided together with the Tender submission form.

A not-yet-completed project can **only** be used as a reference if the specific task of the said contract related to activities related to the development of IT / software solutions (Technical capacity: 3.a) **have been completed**

A not-yet-completed project can **only** be used as a reference if the specific task of the said contract related to the delivering of training and/or awareness raising events and/or capacity building to financial institutions (Technical capacity: 3.b) **have been completed**

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QUESTION 8:

Question 8: Professional Capacity – Definition of "Permanent Staff"

Section 5, criterion 2(a) of the Instructions to Tenderers requires the tenderer to demonstrate a minimum of 10 permanent staff working in fields related to this contract for each of the years 2023, 2024 and 2025. However, the tender dossier does not define the term "permanent staff."

Many international development consultancies maintain their operational capacity through a combination of directly employed staff and consultants engaged under long-term retainer agreements, contractual arrangements under which consultants work exclusively or predominantly for the tenderer on a sustained basis.

Please clarify: does "permanent staff" for the purposes of criterion 2(a) include consultants engaged under long-term retainer agreements who work exclusively or predominantly for the tenderer, or is it limited to individuals holding direct employment contracts with the tenderer's legal entity?

Reference: Instructions to Tenderers, Section 5, criterion 2(a) - Professional capacity of tenderer

CLARIFICATION 8

For the purpose of criterion 2(a), "permanent staff" is limited to individuals holding direct employment contracts with the tenderer's legal entity.

QUESTION 9:

Question 9: Evidence of value for the references :

We seek clarification regarding the criteria of the minimum value of 200K for references projects. For the projects starting before 2021, does the tenderer need to prove payment of min. 200,000€ *after* 2021, or can part of the minimum value also have been invoiced before 2021?

Reference: Instruction to the Tenderer Section 5 & 7

CLARIFICATION 9

The minimum value is the value of the project reference that was completed within the reference period, i.e. from 01/01/2021 up to the deadline for the receipt of tenders, even if the project started earlier. The timing of the related payments is not relevant. Payments to the Service Provider can have been made before 2021.