

26 August 2021

REVISED VERSION: DEADLINE EXTENDED

CALL FOR PROPOSALS (CfP) for consultancy services as “Digital Euro High Level Consultant (Infrastructure)” – PRO-007415

1. Introduction

The Directorate Market Infrastructure & Payments (DG-MIP) of the European Central Bank (ECB) through this Call for Proposals (the ‘CfP’) seeking proposals from senior consultants to provide consultancy services for supporting the digital euro project investigation phase as a High Level Consultant (Infrastructure).

2. Scope of Services

The ECB envisages concluding one contract with a senior consultant with substantial experience in retail payment schemes, solutions, and financial market infrastructures. The consultant will act according to the modalities outlined below. The consultant shall advise in domains relevant for the digital euro investigation phase and promote the project with key stakeholders.

Therefore, the ECB invites senior consultants who have the qualifications described in Section 3 and meet the eligibility and selection criteria laid down in Sections 6.3 and 6.4, to submit a proposal in accordance with the conditions set forth in this CfP.

The consultants will be selected based on the requirements and criteria stated in Sections 3 and 6 below, and in compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment.

Upon request of the ECB, the successful consultant (the ‘Contractor’) shall provide consultancy services to the ECB on digital euro project matters, as further specified in Section 2.1 (the ‘Services’). The contract between the ECB and the Contractor will have initial duration of 24 months until 30/09/2023, in line with the duration of the digital euro investigation phase.

The contractual relationship shall be based on the attached draft contracts (**Annex 3**). Any consultant submitting a proposal accepts thereby the terms and conditions of this Contract.

2.1 Service modalities

The senior consultant shall provide the ECB with high-level advice, support, and represent the project's interest towards key market players on several selected topics. Specific activities will be assigned to the consultant by mutual agreement with the DG-MIP digital euro management team. Typical activities for the consultant include:

- a) Advise digital euro project steering bodies and the DG-MIP digital euro management team on high-level policy, technical and functional scope and propose solutions for the Digital euro concept and business model.
- b) Advise on issues of project governance.
- c) Represent the project's interest with key market providers and stakeholders (including international fora, relevant consumer and industry associations, EU institutions, etc.).
- d) Contribute to and participate in high-level discussions with senior management and board members of market players and stakeholders, high-level public policy makers and project governance bodies.
- e) Offer advice to digital euro project steering bodies and DG-MIP digital euro management with regards to the overall digital euro program and its IT set up
- f) Assist DG-MIP digital euro management in selecting and evaluating technical IT solutions for the digital euro project

The number of days of consultancy to be provided and the dates of performance are subject to agreement between the Contractor and the ECB and shall be defined by written confirmation after the conclusion of the Contract. The ECB estimates that the Contractor will be requested to perform around 100 working days per total duration of the contract, including meetings through online channels (e.g. MS Teams, WebEx, Zoom), meetings at the ECB.

The Contractor shall be ready to perform the Services at ECB premises in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, including participating in meetings, conferences and other work activities. The ECB may request the Contractor to perform (part of) the Services at a workplace subject to the discretion of the contractor and participate in meetings remotely. The ECB will issue further instructions on the place of performance of the Services.

The Contractor shall perform the Services using hers/his own technical resources (hardware, software and internet access).

Unless otherwise agreed, the work shall be performed in English.

2.2 Remuneration

The ECB shall pay to the Contractor for the provision of the Services:

- (a) a remuneration calculated on time and material basis, at a daily rate of EUR 1,500.

- (b) In addition, if the Services are performed on the ECB premises, the ECB shall also reimburse travel, accommodation, and other cost as specified in Annex 5: Reimbursement of expenses incurred by contractors.

In case of remote work, the Contractor will be entitled to the pro-rata remuneration on the basis of eight working hours per day for the provision of services, but shall not be entitled to the accommodation, subsistence and subsidiary costs or any reimbursement for travel or transportation expenses.

3. Qualifications (expertise and experience) of the Senior Consultant

The senior consultant shall have the following qualifications and experience, whereas for essential qualifications ECB reserves the right to exclude consultants who do not meet said qualifications. Expected qualifications contribute to a positive evaluation of the consultant, but do not constitute pass/fail criteria. For the purpose of this section, the end of the “relevant experience” must date back no longer than 3 years.

Essential qualifications:

- a) Experience with a significant focus on retail payment issues (at least 10 years) as senior manager, member of the managing board (or equivalent body), or similar of a commercial bank, an e-money institution, a payment institution, a financial market infrastructure or similar institution.
- b) Proven relevant experience (at least 10 years) related to the conceptualisation of (retail payment system) IT infrastructure, governance of IT infrastructure, and IT/cyber security assessment.
- c) Proven relevant experience and successful track record (at least 10 years) translating business or policy decisions into technical requirements and assessing and improving the fit of market infrastructures to the needs of the “front-end” business.
- d) Proven experience in one or more domains relevant for the digital euro investigation phase (e.g. modern retail payment solutions, IT infrastructure, IT security, pan-European legislation).
- e) English language skills of at least C1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages.¹
- f) Knowledge of key design considerations concerning Central Bank Digital Currencies.

Expected qualifications:

- g) Involvement in the management of payment settlement systems in various countries relevant for the digital euro’s infrastructure.

¹ The application shall demonstrate at least C1 level of English language skills according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages, based on the European Language Passport which is available with instructions at: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/documents/european-skills-passport/language-passport/templates-instructions>

- h) Involvement in the management of retail payment schemes and solutions.
- i) Author of academic papers on the design and/or implementation of Central Bank Digital Currencies.
- j) Experience in large-scale and complex projects (at least 5 years) in a managerial and/or steering role.

4. Structure of the documentation

4.1 Elements of this call for proposals

This Call for Proposal consists of the following documents

Call for Proposal

this document

- Annex 1 - Confirmation letter:
a document to be filled and returned by the tenderer
- Annex 2 - Supplementary Procurement Rules:
underlying rulework for the conduct of this Call for Proposals
- Annex 3, 3.1, 3.2 Draft contract and underlying Specific and General ECB contract terms:
contract that will govern the contractual relation after awarding the contract
- Annex 4.1 - Introduction to Security Clearance:
at this point in time sent for information only to explain, which documentation needs to be provided in the course of the onboarding of ne consultant
- Annex 4.2 - Security Clearance Self-Declaration non-Staff:
at this point in time sent for information only to explain, which documentation needs to be provided in the course of the onboarding of ne consultant
- Annex 5 - Reimbursement of expenses incurred by contractors.docx:
see chapter 2.2 of this document
- Annex 6 - Hypothetical scenario description and answer sheet.docx:
a document to be filled and returned by the tenderer

4.2 Preparation of the proposal

The proposal shall contain the following information and documentation in English:

- a) A signed Confirmation letter (**Annex 1**).
- b) The filled-out **Annex 6** describing the consultant's approach to the stated questions.
- c) A detailed curriculum vitae, including the consultant's relevant expertise and practical experience (maximum 10 pages or European CV format).

Please note that the ECB may request copies of relevant diplomas, certificates, reference letters, names of referees, etc., to be submitted within 10 days in order to verify the information provided in the CVs. Such request(s) may be made on an ad-hoc basis.

The proposal shall fulfil the requirements set out in this CfP and should also include anything that may be considered necessary for the performance of the requested Services, even if this is not explicitly mentioned in this CfP.

Due to the evolving corona virus disease, the ECB had to temporarily adjust the way proposals are submitted and processed. On an exceptional basis, the ECB will accept email submission under the following conditions. Consultants shall submit their proposal via e-mail no later than 17:00, Frankfurt local time, on 16 September 2021 (extended deadline, initial deadline 09 September 2021) by attaching their full offer to the following e-mail address DigitalEuro-procurement@ecb.europa.eu and adding procurement@ecb.europa.eu in CC. The contact person for the procurement is Nico Schmidt. Inquiries shall be sent via e-mail to nico.schmidt@ecb.europa.eu.

- The consultants shall title the e-mail: **PRO-007415 Call for Proposal for High Level Consultant (Infrastructure)**.
- The consultants shall password-protect their tender documentation against unintended reading, before submitting it to the ECB.
- The consultants shall NOT submit the corresponding password together with the proposal submission. They shall submit it in a separate email to: DigitalEuro-procurement@ecb.europa.eu one day after the tender submission deadline, i.e. on **17 September 2021 (extended deadline, initial deadline 10 September 2021)**.
- If the proposal file is **bigger than 20 megabytes**, the consultant shall zip the attached file and/or send their tender documentation in two/three separate e-mails thereby ensuring that each e-mail submission will not exceed 20 megabytes. The consultants shall clearly identify the chronological and total number of separate e-mails in all the emails that they submit (e.g. part 1/(2) of the proposal submission and part 2/(2) of the proposal submission). For administrative reason, the ECB reserves the right to exclude consultants that have submitted their proposal by way of submitting more than 3 separate e-mails.

Important:

Please note that the consultant bears the responsibility

- to proof, if necessary, the timely dispatch and arrival of their tender via e-mail and
- that the submitted proposal documentation is password protected and that they provide the password to the ECB only after the deadline for tender submission has expired. Proposals received after tender submission time-limit shall be excluded.

5. Legal framework

This procurement procedure shall be governed by Decision ECB/2016/2 of 9 February 2016 laying down the Rules on Procurement² and the supplementary rules attached as **Annex 2**. The procurement procedure is carried out as a negotiated procedure without publication of a notice in accordance with Article 35 of Decision ECB/2016/2. The ECB will invite at least five suitable consultants.

6. Evaluation of proposals and award

6.1 Evaluation process

6.1.1 The evaluation process will take place in three stages (Article 29 of Decision ECB/2016/2), namely:

- (a) the verification of the formal requirements laid down in this CfP in accordance with Section 6.2.
- (b) the verification of the consultant's eligibility in accordance with Section 6.3.
- (c) the evaluation of the proposals against the award criteria listed in Section 6.5.

The stages of the evaluation process will be carried out in no particular order. Only the consultants meeting all the mandatory/minimum requirements of each stage above shall be considered in the final qualitative and/or financial evaluation.

6.1.2 Following the evaluation of written proposals, the ECB may invite the best ranked consultant(s) for an interview and/or a presentation via video conferencing in order to verify compliance with the ECB's requirements and to clarify open questions.

6.2 Formal tender requirements

The ECB shall exclude proposals that:

- (a) were dispatched or received after the expiry of the time-limits for the submission of proposals; or
- (b) are substantially incomplete; or
- (c) were not submitted in English.

The ECB may, at its own discretion, exclude proposals that do not comply with other substantial formal requirements laid down in this CfP.

² OJ L 45, 20.2.2016, p. 15-43, as amended by Decision ECB/2016/17 (OJ L 159, 16.6.2016, p. 21–22) and Decision ECB/2020/10 (OJ L 69, 6.3.2020, p. 41-45), all published on: <http://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/proc/tenders/html/index.en.html>.

6.3 Eligibility criteria

- 6.3.1 The ECB shall exclude consultants that are in one of the situations described in Article 30(4) of Decision ECB/2016/2 (e.g. conviction for fraud or corruption) or put on a blacklist in accordance with Article 30(8) of Decision ECB/2016/2.
- 6.3.2 The ECB may exclude consultants that are in one of the situations described in Article 30(5) of Decision ECB/2016/2 (e.g. insolvency, grave professional misconduct, misrepresentation).
- 6.3.3 Consultants shall declare in the confirmation letter (**Annex 1**) that they meet the eligibility criteria. Consultants shall inform the ECB without undue delay if any circumstances arise after the submission of their proposal that may affect their eligibility.
- 6.3.4 The ECB reserves the right to request from consultants documentary evidence in support of the statements made in the confirmation letter.

Before signing the Contract, the ECB may request a successful consultant to reconfirm the statements provided in the confirmation letter.

6.4 Selection criteria

The ECB reserves the right to exclude consultants if it becomes aware that they do not have the economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to perform the Contract.

6.5 Award criteria

The ECB shall offer a contract for the provision of Services to the consultant that the ECB considers as providing the most valuable contribution for the scope of this procedure in view of the consultant's qualifications (expertise and experience) and in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment. For this purpose, the proposals shall be evaluated based on the documentation submitted by the consultants according to Section 4.

6.5.1 The proposals shall be evaluated on the basis of the following **quality related** award criteria:

Award criteria	Weighting
Quality of the offer	100 %
a) The description of how the consultant would approach hypothetical scenarios as attached to this call for proposals as Annex 6 (see Section 4.2, point b of the call for proposals)	50 %
i. Question 1 on key challenges	15%
ii. Question 2 on achievement of a balance	15%
iii. Question 3 on infrastructure	20%
b) Curriculum Vitae to prove experience, qualifications and expertise relevant to carrying out the assignment (see Section 2.1)	50%

6.5.2 The ECB shall evaluate all proposals using a scoring system with a maximum of 100 points. The maximum number of points achievable per award criterion is equivalent to the percentage weightings allocated to the award criteria.

6.5.3 The quality of the proposals shall be evaluated as follows:

- (a) the quality related award criteria listed in section 6.5.1 shall be assessed one by one against the ECB's requirements set out in this CfP and evaluated on the basis of a scoring system from zero to five points as follows:

Score	Definition
0 point	No evidence/Total failure: The proposal totally fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be assessed due to missing evidence.
1 point	Very Poor: The criterion under examination is addressed in an incomplete and unsatisfactory manner; serious concerns.
2 points	Poor: The criterion under examination is partly addressed but with a few major gaps or issues.
3 points	Fair: The criterion under examination is generally addressed with minor issues.
4 points	Good: The criterion under examination is fully addressed.
5 points	Excellent: The criterion under examination is fully addressed and the proposal offers some added value.

- (b) proposals which do not obtain at least 3 points (out of a maximum of 5) for each of the award criteria may be considered to be of an unacceptably low quality and rejected and not further evaluated.
- (c) the score obtained for each award criterion will be multiplied with its allocated weight to calculate the weighted score per criterion. All the weighted scores will be added together ("added scores") and hereafter converted into points as detailed in section 6.5.2 above. The proposal with the highest added scores will, for the purpose of the ranking of the proposals, obtain the maximum points as indicated in section 6.5.2 above and the other proposals will receive proportionally less.

6.5.4 The most valuable proposal is the proposal with the highest final score.

7. Outcome of the procurement procedure

7.1 Notification of award

7.1.1 Following the award decision, the ECB shall inform the consultants in writing and without undue delay of the outcome of the procurement procedure.

7.1.2 Consultants may within 15 calendar days of receipt of the notification request the ECB to provide the main reasons for rejecting their proposal. Such requests shall be submitted by e-mail (indicating PRO-007415 in the e-mail subject) to DigitalEuro-procurement@ecb.europa.eu. The ECB does not assume any responsibility for queries which are not submitted accordingly. In case of doubt, the consultant shall demonstrate the ECB's receipt of such request. The ECB may decide to withhold certain information where the release of such information would affect

other consultant's legitimate interests, would hinder application of the law or would otherwise be contrary to the public interest.

Annexes:

Annex 1	Confirmation letter
Annex 2	Supplementary Procurement Rules
Annex 3	Draft contract
Annex 3.1	Services Specific Terms
Annex 3.2	General Contract Terms
Annex 4.1	Introduction to Security Clearance (<i>for information purposes</i>)
Annex 4.2	Security Clearance Self-Declaration non-staff (<i>for information purposes</i>)
Annex 5	Reimbursement of expenses incurred by contractors
Annex 6	Hypothetical scenario description and answer sheet