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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Beneficiary

CEFTA Parties.

1.2. Contracting Authority

The Secretariat of the Central European Free Trade Agreement 2006 on behalf of the CEFTA Parties (“Secretariat”).

1.3. Background

CEFTA framework is composed of multiple bodies made of representatives of the CEFTA Parties, supported and coordinated by the CEFTA Secretariat.

- ***CEFTA 2006 Secretariat***

Implementation of CEFTA 2006 is supported by a permanent Secretariat located in Brussels established in accordance with the Article 40.2 of CEFTA 2006. The overall function of the Secretariat is to provide technical and administrative support to the Joint Committee and anybody established by it, as defined by its mandate set out in the JC Decision 1/2018. The functions of the Secretariat can be summarized as follows:

- Support the supervision of the implementation of the CEFTA 2006 by deploying implementation monitoring mechanisms and recommending to the Joint Committee how to enhance the effectiveness of implementation and;
- Facilitate the administration of the implementation of the Agreement by: preparing the initial drafts of all documents discussed and adopted by the CEFTA Bodies; supporting the Chair in Office of CEFTA in the organisation and follow-up of all meetings of the Joint Committee and of other CEFTA Bodies; preparing and presenting technical opinions to the corresponding agenda items of the meetings of CEFTA Bodies or the ones organised by CEFTA Parties, other Regional or International Organisations; negotiating, co-ordinating, and reporting on donor funded assistance for regional trade related activities; acting as contracting authority by implementing procurement rules in tendering procedures; maintaining the official archive of the Agreement in liaison with the Depository/Acting Depository; supporting the implementation of the trade related components of the SEE 2020 strategy and the Consolidated Multi-Annual Action Plan for the creation of a Regional Economic Area, and all other regional actions in the context of any other economic initiatives or in trade related international organisations related to CEFTA; liaising with the European Commission and other relevant partners and donors to secure and manage technical and financial assistance on behalf of the CEFTA Parties in the implementation of any regional strategy or plan which involves CEFTA Bodies and informing regularly the Joint Committee thereof.

- ***CEFTA Bodies***

Joint Committee (CEFTA 2006, Article 40) is the only decision-making body established in accordance with Article 40 of CEFTA 2006 which supervises and administers the implementation of the Agreement. It is composed of the ministries in charge of trade from each Party and it is entrusted to supervise and administer implementation of the agreement. The JC meets at least once a year and can adopt decisions and recommendations. The JC is chaired by one of the parties and this function revolves on an annual basis in alphabetical order.

Committee of Trade Facilitation (JC Decisions 7/2014 and 1/2015) is tasked to develop and broaden cooperation among CEFTA Parties and to address the issues which are related to facilitation of the regional trade in CEFTA with a view to reduce trade costs, while balancing trade facilitation with increasing requirements for safety and security measures in international and regional supply chain.

Committee of Contact Points (JC Decision No. 1/2015) is tasked to support the smooth functioning of the Agreement and the fulfilment of the decisions, conclusions and recommendations of the Joint Committee both within the Contracting Party concerned and with all CEFTA stakeholders.

- ***Subcommittees***

- The Sub-committee on Non-Tariff Measures is tasked to identify non-tariff measures that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods, changing quantities traded, or process or both, review those identified measures and propose measures for their elimination;
- The Sub-committee on Agriculture is tasked to contribute the promotion and facilitate trade in agricultural products within the region and to discuss and coordinate to the maximum extent the policies on agriculture and protection of plant health, animal health and food safety and other relevant areas in accordance with articles 11 and 12 of CEFTA 2006;
- The Sub-committee on Customs and Rules of Origin is tasked to simplify and facilitate customs procedures and to coordinate implementation of common rules of origin in CEFTA (in accordance with article 14.4 of CEFTA 2006); and
- The Sub-Committee on Trade in Services is tasked to strengthen and deepen the intra-regional cooperation in the field of trade in services by facilitating the implementation of the commitments stipulated in Articles 26–29 of the CEFTA 2006.

- ***Working groups***

- Working Group on Technical Measures is tasked to provide working level forum to address exclusively non-tariff measures stemming technical measures in particular sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical barriers to trade, and discuss at the expert level the methods and tools to eliminate the discriminatory measures constituting non-tariff barriers to trade. The group is also to initiate exploratory talks to conclude mutual recognition agreements in the relevant areas of technical measures conditional upon the full alignment with the relevant EU *acquis*, and implementation of the aligned legislation in line with the EU, WTO Agreements and other international agreements.
- Working Group on Risk Management is tasked to develop and broaden cooperation among CEFTA Parties particularly with a view to propose the possibilities of taking joint actions related to the management of public authorities and agencies involved in clearance of goods at the regional level, as far as possible, aiming at facilitating the regional trade while improving the overall quality and deterrence of customs, security, and safety controls and inspections.

- Working Group on Electronic Exchange of Information is tasked to develop and broaden cooperation among CEFTA Parties, particularly to address the issues related to the functioning and sustainability of the existing or new IT capacities and tools to be created between the CEFTA Parties in the framework of CEFTA and CEFTA Management Information System, and propose solutions for the CEFTA Region with an aim to facilitate the regional trade while improving the overall quality and deterrence of customs, security and safety controls and inspections.
- Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics is tasked to improve the quality of international trade in services statistics across the CEFTA Region and harmonise statistics with those of the European Union. Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics holds at least one meeting a year and in average two meetings per year.
- Joint CEFTA-RCC-ERISEE Working Group on Recognition of Professional Qualifications is tasked to deepen the cooperation between CEFTA Subcommittee on Trade in Services, Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERISEE) and RCC Social Agenda Working Group (SAWG) in the area labour mobility, building on the mandates and previous activities of each structure.
- Joint CEFTA-RCC Working Group on Investment Policy and Promotion is established in the context of the SEE 2020 Strategy and the legal basis for cooperation on investment from the CEFTA 2006 (Articles 30-33), with the main purpose deepen regional trade and investment links, and support policies that are non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable and that enhance the flow of goods, investment, services and people within the region.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

CEFTA Parties are working on enhancing transparency of all types of trade measures. CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal, available at <https://transparency.cefta.int/>, are the two key tools to this end. CEFTA Transparency Pack is currently composed of the following modules: Trade Portal, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Database, Technical Barriers to Trade Database, Market Access Barriers Database, Binding Tariff Information Database, and Services Regulatory Database. Statistical Portal is composed of four modules: trade in goods, trade in services, foreign direct investment, and foreign affiliates trade statistics.

During the implementation of the projects CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal under CEFTA 2021-01 and SEED+ 2021-02 (May 2021 – September 2022), the Transparency Pack was rebuilt on modern technological platform, non-structured data were remodelled to support search and export, new modules were included to the SRD database, user experience was improved, data from the old system were migrated and new data supplied by Parties have been updated and entered. The data migration from the old system was performed for the Statistical Portal. All data that existed in the old system were successfully migrated to the new system. In addition, new data received by CEFTA Parties were uploaded to the system and are available for end users. In addition to existing categories in the Portal, three sections on raw data export, macroeconomic indicators, generation of reports (new section) were reviewed and improved.

- ***CEFTA Trade Portal***

The CEFTA Trade Portal provides information on the most important trade regulations concerning trade with the signatories of the CEFTA 2006. It provides orientation and information to businesses for trade within the CEFTA Parties. The information is entered in the CEFTA Trade Portal in a form of a post with several attributes enabling search functions. The main categories of information presented on the portal are customs regulations, licensing procedures, technical requirements, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and veterinary controls, trade regimes, public procurement procedures and the regulations for border controls applied in all CEFTA signatories. Information is presented in English and local language of respectable CEFTA Party.

- ***CEFTA Sanitary and Phytosanitary Database***

The CEFTA SPS Database provides transparency of a relevant legislative framework that supports environment for the smooth flow of agricultural goods across the CEFTA region. The SPS Database includes documents as laws, bylaws and measures in the sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary field. The SPS Database offers browsing through documents and also documents retrieval based on search via metadata. The module provides information as list of accredited laboratories and border crossing contact details, food and feed producers / importers / warehouses, food export establishments, agricultural support, certificates in use, bilateral and international agreements and customs tariffs (import / export taxes).

- ***CEFTA Technical Barriers to Trade Database***

The CEFTA TBT Database provides transparency of information on unnecessary technical barriers to trade as well as on quality infrastructure across the region, supporting the free movement of goods across the CEFTA region. The module provides information such as quality infrastructure in general, accreditation, standardisation, conformity assessment, and metrology and market surveillance. The information is accessible in English and in local languages.

- ***CEFTA Market Access Barriers Database***

The CEFTA Market Access Barriers Database (MABD) is a dispute settlement tool used for systematically identifying and solving barriers in trade in goods and services. The methodology applied is internationally comparable while applying the UNCTAD classification of non-tariff measures. The module provides possibility for the CEFTA Parties to report cases related to barriers in trade in goods, services, or both. Reporting party creates a case by filling in all relevant data and uploading supporting documents. MABD supports tracking of the case through its life cycle states: new, pending, pending response, solved, denied, conformed, and providing all relevant parties to edit the case. Relevant parties are Reporting Party, Party Applying Measure and CEFTA Secretariat. MABD enables browsing through the cases and search via case attributes. MABD module includes graphical presentation of statistics on MAB cases. The current version provides graphical presentation for absolute and relative/normalised number of cases with respect to total trade volume and other relevant trade indicators.

- ***CEFTA Binding Tariff Information Database***

CEFTA Binding Tariff Information (BTI) database is a regional platform that aggregates all the information related to the Advance Rulings from all seven CEFTA Customs administrations. CEFTA BTI guarantees the predictability of business and the equal treatment of traders in their dealings with the CEFTA Customs authorities. It is available to traders and customs for searching, consulting, and viewing. Solutions for regional and national databases are compatible in a sense that entry of the newly issued AR in the national databases at the same time appears in the regional database.

- ***CEFTA Services Regulatory Database***

CEFTA Services Regulatory Database is a functional exchange information platform at regional level, which increases transparency and ensures smooth supply of services across the region. The creation of such a mechanism aimed to make information on relevant regulation in number of service sectors such as technical requirements, procedures and licensing user-friendly, easily accessible as well as more responsive to the needs of business. It consists of the public web application and database for search and preview of data on applied measures and of restricted part for the CEFTA Secretariat and authorised persons from CEFTA Parties for adding of new / update of existing measures.

- ***Statistical Portal***

Statistical portal provides sets of raw data and selected forms of data presentation (charts) available on the CEFTA website. All data is saved in a database. The input from CEFTA Parties is provided directly by competent authorities, i.e. their authorized representatives, i.e. statistical offices, in case of trade in

goods and central banks for trade in services statistics. Representatives of these institutions are meeting regularly in the framework of the Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics. The Working Group convenes at least once a year to discuss data sets to be exchanged, methodology applied in data collection, data processing and representation on the website and the other relevant issues in regard to statistics. The Working Group report to the Subcommittee on Trade in Services. The project will support activities related to maintenance and expanding the statistical database and representation of data, according to the needs of CEFTA Parties. The maintenance of the database involves technical adaptation of software, technical IT support to the Parties in uploading the data, resolving issues regarding presentation of data, etc.

Statistical portal is full-fledged solution, which enhances transparency through user-friendly dissemination of data related to CEFTA implementation, processing international indices related to CEFTA. It consists of a database of statistical data related to trade in goods and services (including: cross border trade in services, foreign direct investment and foreign affiliates trade statistics) and a platform for presentation of data with interactive charts including but not limited to line, spline, area, column, bar, pie scatter, etc., schematic interactive maps in web application linked to geography etc.

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

GIZ Open Regional Fund Foreign Trade /Support to regional economic integration

The project started in June 2020 and will run until July 2023. The aim of the Project is as follows:

- Improved operationalization of the Additional Protocol 5 (AP5) so as to capitalize on trade reforms already undertaken and facilitate cross-border trade for businesses
 - Thematic focus is on: implementation of Mutual Recognition Programmes (Authorised Economic Operators and border documents) and implementation of Joint Risk Management
- Operationalization of Additional Protocol 6 (AP 6) so as to create a more conducive business environment for trade in services
 - Thematic focus is on: intra-governmental cooperation for improving compliance of domestic regulations and procedures with AP6; interregional regulatory cooperation to address trade barriers identified by private sector
- Enhanced private sector engagement to derive the greater benefits from the facilitated framework conditions for trade in goods and services
 - Focus is on: evidence-based monitoring to track the implementation of trade-related reforms; public-private dialogue at regional level; promotion of benefits and opportunities to be gained from trade related measures and reforms supported under the project

USAID – Trade Facilitation Project

The aim of the Project is to enhance the CEFTA WB 6 Parties in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement on the national level. The activities in the establishment of the NTFC, are complemented with the different activities for the fulfilment of obligations rising from the AP 5.

The World Bank Group’s “Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP)”

The World Bank Group’s Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP) was launched in June 2014. The Program provides implementation support for countries seeking assistance in aligning their trade practices more closely with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA), which entered into force in February 2017. The work program for the upcoming two years includes:

- Collection of trade related fees and charges
- Support of joint border controls North Macedonia/Serbia and North Macedonia/Albania

- Repeat of the Time Release Studies implemented in previous years
- Support to selected national implementation of Authorized Operator Programs
- Capacity Building with selected national SPS agencies related to the development of risk-based border controls
- Likely some automation support (advanced tariff rulings, software for phytosanitary agencies)

The World Bank Group’s “National Single windows project”

The World Bank Group is planning a regional project on the national single windows (NSW). The NSW will encompass the processing of trade transactions from the start of regulatory requirements up to the clearance of goods into/out of the country and will: streamline and automate relevant front office processes at key government agencies; include a facility for electronic payment; provide access to information sources relating to trade regulations and procedures and provide increased information sources for the Government to improve its administration of international trade. In 2020, the project will start with preparation of blueprints for introduction of NSW in Albania, Serbia and North Macedonia. The blueprint will be concise, action oriented and will serve for rapid transition to implementation.

Overall, this project should continue to work on the results already achieved and work closely with all on-going projects to avoid overlaps and ensure complementarity in all its activities.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall objective

The project will seek to contribute (i) increasing socioeconomic growth in the region thanks to increased trade and investment; (ii) fostering the implementation of the EU acquis pertaining to the EU Single Market in order to accelerate accession to the EU; and (iii) enhancing good neighbourly relations (overall objective) through supporting the creation of Regional Trade Area based on CEFTA 2006, as part of the CRM AP (specific objective).

2.2. Purpose

The purpose of this contract is to support the proper functioning, preventive and adaptive maintenance and further improvement of the CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal which are currently composed of 7 databases, but will be expanded in 2023 with 2 more databases (database on AEO and database on unsafe/non-compliant products detected on the CEFTA market)

2.3. Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The following results are expected to be achieved by selected Contractor:

1. Functioning of the secured ICT cloud infrastructure that hosts CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal is ensured.
2. The existing modules of CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal are operational and aligned with the existing and future business requirements of CEFTA. Improvements are introduced both from technical and content point of view, and new business functionalities are added as needed.

3. Regular report on CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal data accuracy and usage provided.
4. Technical assistance, support and adaptive and preventive maintenance provided throughout project implementation period.

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

- CEFTA Parties remain committed to actively use and improve the Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal to support the implementation of CEFTA priorities.
- Continuous interaction and effective communication between all stakeholders relevant for the implementation of CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal.
- CEFTA Parties remain committed to provide relevant data and information in a timely manner to enhance the Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal.

3.2. Risks

- Political instability at the level of Governments of the CEFTA Parties and management level of the Beneficiaries concerned.
- Low participation, lack of commitment and insufficient interaction between all stakeholders relevant for CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal.
- Risk of institutional resistance to change and new technology.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Description of the assignment

The Contractor will be tasked to assist the CEFTA Secretariat and CEFTA Parties in providing technical support to ensure proper functioning of the CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal which are currently composed of 7 databases under the changing business environment. The contractor will further take over the maintenance of two additional databases as of November 30, 2023. Those databases will be developed in the course of 2023, namely database on AEO and database on unsafe/non-compliant products detected on the CEFTA market. The contractor will actively engage and provide advices on further improvements of the databases, from the technical, content and functional point of view, ensuring overall security of data and platform, and providing continuous support and maintenance.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

Brussels and CEFTA Parties.

4.1.3. Target groups

Target groups are CEFTA Secretariat, CEFTA Structures and Beneficiary Administrations.

4.2. Specific work

The indicative list of activities is as follows:

1. Activities related to Result 1: Functioning of the secured ICT cloud infrastructure that hosts CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal ensured
 - Provide support to ICT cloud infrastructure/platform maintenance and ensure overall security of platform and data.
2. Activities related to Result 2: The existing and future databases of CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal operational and aligned with the existing and future business requirements of CEFTA.
 - The Contractor will actively engage and provide advices on further improvements of the databases, from the technical, functional and content perspective and will upgrade the selected databases accordingly.
 - The Contractor will periodically revise the content and its accuracy and assist the data owners to keep the data accurate.
 - The Contractor will ensure that all modules are tested and fine-tuned and support the CEFTA Secretariat and Beneficiaries in conducting the acceptance testing, document the results and remediate any problems encountered. This will include, but will not be limited to, recovery, security, usability, functional and user acceptance testing.
 - The Contractor will establish Source Code Management (SCM) System and make it available to the CEFTA Secretariat and Beneficiaries, providing unlimited and perpetual software license, and upload the updated source code and documentation materials. The Contractor is obliged to keep the latest source code and documentation updated in the SCM during the entire Contract Term.
3. Activities related to Result 3: Regular report on CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal usage provided.
 - The Contractor will maintain a tool to enable tracking statistics on the level of utilization of CEFTA Transparency Pack and Statistical Portal (Google Analytics, internal system reporting) and feedback mechanisms for further improvements.
4. Activities related to Result 4: Technical assistance, support and adaptive and preventive maintenance provided throughout project implementation period
 - The Contractor will provide support and maintenance throughout project implementation period:
 - o Technical assistance to the CEFTA Secretariat and the Beneficiaries to support smooth use of the Portal (including uploading and retrieving data, usage of application, manuals, trainings, answering questions).
 - o Regular monitoring of the systems, including security maintenance of the overall infrastructure and modules, tracking statistics on the level of utilization and feedbacks for further improvements.

- o Data synchronization from national applications to regional application.
 - o Corrective maintenance - modifying software to resolve issues discovered after initial implementation.
 - o Adaptive maintenance - changing the software solution to enable it to remain efficient in a changing business environment.
 - o Perfective maintenance - improving or increasing the software solution to improve overall performance.
 - o Improvement maintenance – providing constant innovation.
- The Contractor will have remote access to the CEFTA ICT infrastructure to enable support and maintenance interventions. The Contractor will also set up a fault reporting toolset to track the issues experienced. Issues experienced will be received by the Contractor via telephone, email or directly through the fault reporting toolset. All support issues entered into the fault reporting toolset shall have a severity level associated shown in the table below. The issues shall also have a ticket number that can be used to query the status.

Severity Level	Description
1	An error that has a critical impact on the development, deployment, or operational use of the software, resulting in the inability to continue to deploy or use the software as required or intended. A Severity 1 error does not have a reasonable workaround, cannot reasonably be corrected by adding to or changing the documentation.
2	An error that causes a severe restriction on the development, deployment, or operational use of the Software, resulting in the restricted ability to continue to deploy or use the Software. A Severity 2 error does not have a reasonable workaround, cannot reasonably be corrected by adding to or changing the documentation
3	An error that causes limitations that is not critical or severe to the development, deployment, or operational use of the Software. A Severity 3 error has a reasonable workaround.
4	An error that causes a slight inconvenience to the development, deployment, or operational use of the Software. A Severity 4 error has a reasonable workaround.

- When entering an issue into the helpdesk system, the users will assign the appropriate Severity Level category, which, in their reasonable judgment, accurately describes the impact to the operating environment. The Contractor reserves the right to reclassify the error if determines, in its reasonable judgment, that such reclassification is appropriate. Where the parties disagree on the classification, the Contractor will review the error with the user to attempt to agree on a mutually acceptable classification.
- The Contractor will provide users with telephone or email assistance by a qualified representative between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. CET time. If a defect in the Software cannot be fixed remotely, the Contractor will make resources available by telephone or on-site to work with the users to solve the issue in the shortest time possible.
- The Contractor will make reasonable efforts to solve reported problems in accordance with the severity level classifications and the response times listed below, through the changes in the System or will suggest workarounds.

Severity Level	Response Time
1	Acknowledge within 4 (four) Business Hours; response within one (1) Business Day
2	Acknowledge within 4 (four) Business Hours; response within two (2) Business Days
3	Acknowledge within 1 (one) Business Day; response within seven (7) Business Days
4	Acknowledge within 2 (two) Business Days; response at the discretion of contractor Software

- Once issues are resolved, they shall be marked as closed in the helpdesk software and details of the resolutions will have to be entered. The helpdesk software will contain a knowledge base that has to be made accessible to all users to support solution of common problems.
- The Contractor will engage in the work of CEFTA Bodies whose work is underpinned with developed tools with a view of demonstrating the use, providing assistance and discussing possible improvements.

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The Secretariat of the Central European Free Trade Agreement 2006 will be responsible for the management of the contract.

4.3.2. Management structure

The Technical Expert - Cross-cutting Issues will be responsible for the management of the project in close coordination with the technical experts responsible for the specific sectors of the databases. The Director of the CEFTA Secretariat will oversee the implementation of the contract.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

No facilities will be provided by the Contracting Authority.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

The Contractor will implement this assignment home based. Travel to CEFTA Parties and CEFTA Secretariat in Brussels may be required.

5.2. Start date & Period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is April 2023 and the period of implementation of the contract will be until 31 March 2025.

Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

The Contracting Authority may, at its own discretion, extend the project in duration and/or scope subject to the availability of funding. Any extension of the contract would be subject to satisfactory performance by the Contractor.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

6.1.1. Key expert

Key expert has a crucial role in implementing the contract. These terms of reference contain the required key experts' profile. The tenderer shall submit CVs and Statements of Exclusivity and Availability for the following key expert:

Key expert 1: Team Leader/IT Business Analyst (minimum 90 working days)

Qualifications and skills

- A university degree (Bachelor or equivalent) in the field of computer science, engineering, technical sciences, information technology or management. A Master in the respective field is considered as an advantage.

General professional experience

- Minimum 10 years of professional experience in the area of ICT.
- Minimum 3 years of professional experience in managing software development projects.

Specific professional experience

- Experience in at least two projects in the last five years dealing with designing and developing of trade transparency databases, tools, portals and/or supporting information systems in thematic areas associated to this contract.
- Working experience in the CEFTA Parties with the beneficiary institutions would be an asset.
- Excellent English communication and reporting skills.
- Knowledge of one or more of the languages used by the CEFTA Parties would be an asset.

Experience will only be counted as of the day the relevant qualification was obtained. In the description of her/his experience, the expert will have to specify her/his role, if she/he was external technical assistant or employee of the institution implementing the project and the number of working days provided. Any qualifications, skills and experience stated in the respective CV of an expert must be substantiated by supporting documents (with accurate translation into English) such as copies of degrees or diplomas and employers' certificates, mentioning/indicating the duration of the assignment and the tasks performed. The Key Experts' CVs should clearly indicate the start date and the end date (month and year) of each assignment. Each assignment in the CV should be numbered and the same number should be written on the respective signed supporting document. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

6.1.2. Other experts, support staff & backstopping

The profiles of the non-key experts for this contract are as follows:

Pool of non-key experts – minimum of 110 working days (30 working days for Senior non-key experts and 80 days for Junior non-key Experts) - It will have to be divided by results and between Senior and Junior experts, according to the Organization and Methodology submitted by the Contractor. The distribution of number of working days between the different categories of experts should be clearly laid out on the proposed budget and reflected on the proposed fee rates.

The non-key experts, who will be recruited to carry out those assignments, should have as a minimum the following profile:

- have excellent communication and analytical skills,
- have excellent team working abilities,
- be fluent in both written and spoken English,
- have proven specific professional experiences in the area relevant to their assignment.
- For Senior experts, a proven minimum of 5, but preferably 8 years of general professional experience in areas relevant to their assignment.
- For Junior experts, a proven minimum of 3, but preferably 5 years of general professional experience in areas relevant to their assignment.

CVs for non-key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles, such as **trade experts, customs experts, export/import expert, statistical expert, cloud expert, IT security expert** or any other field of expertise that the Contractor may consider important for the success and sustainability of the project.

The contractor must select and hire other experts as required according to the profiles identified in the organisation & methodology and these terms of reference. It must clearly indicate the experts' profile so that the applicable daily fee rate in the budget breakdown is clear. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts must be transparent, and must be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience. The findings of the selection panel must be recorded. The selected experts must be subject to approval by the contracting authority before the start of their implementation of tasks.

The contractor will provide support facilities to their team of experts (back-stopping) during the implementation of the contract. Backstopping and support staff costs must be included in the fee rates.

6.2. Office accommodation

Office accommodation of a reasonable standard and of approximately 10 square metres for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the Contractor. The costs of the office accommodation are to be covered by the fee rates.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contractor

The contractor must ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

The Contractor shall provide all required supplies, services, documentation, logistical support, etc. for the implementation of the contract, and all the costs should be included in the fee rates of its experts.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority.

6.5. Incidental expenditure

The provision for incidental expenditure covers ancillary and exceptional eligible expenditure incurred under this contract. It cannot be used for costs that should be covered by the contractor as part of its fee rates, as defined above. Its use is governed by the provisions in the general conditions and the notes in Annex V to the contract. It covers:

- Travel costs and subsistence allowances for missions, outside the normal place of posting, undertaken as part of this contract. If applicable, indicate whether the provision includes costs for environmental measures, for example CO2 offsetting.

The provision for incidental expenditure is EUR 5,000. This amount must be included unchanged in the budget breakdown.

Per diem are daily subsistence allowances that may be reimbursed for missions foreseen in these terms of reference or approved by the Contracting Authority, carried out by the contractor's authorised experts outside the expert's normal place of posting. The per diem is a maximum fixed flat-rate covering daily subsistence costs. These include accommodation, meals, tips and local travel, including travel to and from the airport. Taxi fares are therefore covered by the per diem. Per diem are payable on the basis of the number of hours spent on the mission. Per diem may only be paid in full or in half (no other fractions are possible). A full per diem shall be paid for each 24-hour period spent on mission. Half of a per diem shall be paid in case of a period of at least 12 hours but less than 24 hours spent on mission. No per diem should be paid for missions of less than 12 hours. Travelling time is to be regarded as part of the mission. Any subsistence allowances to be paid for missions undertaken as part of this contract must not exceed the per diem rates published on the website - http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-calls-tender/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems_en - in force at the time of contract signature.

The contracting authority reserves the right to reject payment of per diem for time spent travelling if the most direct route and the most economical fare criteria have not been applied.

Prior authorisation by the contracting authority for the use of the incidental expenditure is not needed.

6.6. Lump sums

No lump sums are foreseen in this contract.

6.7. Expenditure verification

The provision for expenditure verification covers the fees of the auditor in charge of verifying the expenditure of this contract in order for the contracting authority to check that the invoices submitted are due. The provision for expenditure verification is EUR 3,000. This amount must be included unchanged in the budget breakdown. This provision cannot be decreased but can be increased during execution of the contract.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

Please see Article 26 of the general conditions. Interim reports must be prepared every eight months during the period of implementation of the tasks. They must be provided along with the corresponding invoice, the financial report and an expenditure verification report defined in Article 28 of the general conditions. There must be a final report, a final invoice and the financial report accompanied by an expenditure verification report at the end of the period of implementation of the tasks. The draft final report must be submitted at least one month before the end of the period of implementation of the tasks. Note that these interim and final reports are additional to any required in Section 4.2 of these terms of reference.

Each report must consist of a narrative section and a financial section.

The financial section must contain details of the time inputs of the experts, incidental expenditure and expenditure verification.

To summarize, in addition to any documents, reports and output specified under the duties and responsibilities of each key expert above, the contractor shall provide the following reports:

Name of report	Content	Time of submission
Inception report	Review of the current situation and work plan for the project	No later than 2 months after the start of implementation
8-month progress report	Short description of progress (technical and financial) including problems encountered; planned work for the next period accompanied by an invoice and the expenditure verification report.	At the end of 8-month implementation period
Draft final report	Short description of achievements including problems encountered and recommendations.	No later than 1 month before the end of the implementation period.
Final report	Short description of achievements including problems encountered and recommendations; a final invoice and the financial report accompanied by the expenditure verification report.	Within two weeks of receiving comments on the draft final report from the project managers identified in the contract.

7.2. Submission and approval of reports

One hard copy and one electronic copy of the reports referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The reports must be written in English. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

In Annexes III - Organization & Methodology of the tender document, the Contractor shall identify objectively verifiable indicators and sources of verification for each of the activities described in Section 4, where possible. Indicators will be refined and finalized in the Inception Report and agreed by the CEFTA Secretariat.

The contractor will ensure internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards before sending them to stakeholders for comments. All deliverables shall be reviewed by the staff of the CEFTA Secretariat. The approved final report (output) will be subject to a quality assessment by the CEFTA Secretariat.

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