

CLARIFICATION N° 1

TO SERVICE CONTRACT N° CEFTA 2026-01

**Legal Expertise on Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA)
Negotiations and Implementation**

Clarification request received on 12 February 2026:

Covington's standard billable rates mean that 60,000 Euro represents c. 80 hours' advice over the course of the year, depending on the seniority of the colleagues involved, and based on the split between junior and senior time envisaged in Part VI of Annex II to the tender document. This represents no more than three to four discrete pieces of advice. I note that this is significantly below the 115 working days you envisage in that Annex. Assuming a working day to be eight hours, such a level of support would come to over €700,000 on our standard hourly rates.

CEFTA Secretariat reply

You have understood the tender correctly: Annex II foresees an indicative maximum of 115 working days over the duration of the contract, based on the standard "expert day" methodology used in EU funded technical assistance projects, where a minimum of 7 hours worked equals one full day.

This represents a planning ceiling rather than a guaranteed volume and is split between the Key Expert (25 days) with a strong legal background, and a pool of non-key experts (90 days). As specified in Section 6.1.2 of the Terms of Reference, non-key experts are not required to have a legal background but must demonstrate relevant professional experience in the specific areas covered by the assignment, as well as the required level of seniority and expertise. We also confirm that the overall maximum contract value remains EUR 60,000 for the entire implementation period.

Concerning the level of support needed, the tasks required under this contract relate primarily to ongoing regulatory drafting of CEFTA legal instruments (decisions, recommendations, protocols), legal scrubbing, coherence checks and technical advisory support on specific fields in the context of the CEFTA body of law and its alignment with EU acquis. While these tasks require solid and specialised legal expertise, generally suited to experienced legal counsellors and regulatory drafting specialists, a substantial part of the work is expected to be carried out by senior and junior non-key experts with relevant sectoral or technical experience in the fields identified in the Terms of Reference.