

SERVICE CONTRACT NOTICE

Preparation of the CEFTA Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology for Electronic Trust Services

1. Reference

CEFTA 2026-10

2. Procedure

Simplified procedure

3. Programme title

Support to the Secretariat of the Central European Free Trade Agreement 2025-2028

4. Financing

Co-financed by the CEFTA parties and the European Commission

5. Contracting Authority

Secretariat of the Central European Free Trade Agreement 2006 (“CEFTA Secretariat”)

CONTRACT SPECIFICATION

6. Nature of contract

Global-price

7. Contract description

The Contractor will provide specialised legal, regulatory and technical expert support to the CEFTA Secretariat in preparing, consulting upon and finalising the **Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology for Electronic Trust Services** required under:

- CEFTA Joint Committee Decision No. 11/2025 on the Recognition of Advanced Electronic Signatures and Advanced Electronic Seals; and
- CEFTA Joint Committee Decision No. 12/2025 on the Recognition of Qualified Trust Services.

The assignment will build upon the preparatory work already undertaken by the CEFTA Secretariat and the guidance provided by the Working Group on Digital Cooperation. It will support the development of technically robust and operational draft instruments governing, inter alia, the regulatory and institutional requirements, supervisory and conformity-assessment arrangements, trusted lists, technical validation, recognition pathways, assessment procedures, monitoring, suspension and withdrawal of recognition.

8. Number and titles of lots

N/A

9. Maximum budget

EUR 30,000

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

10. Eligibility

The legal basis for this procedure is CEFTA Secretariat Mandate, CEFT Agreement and CEFTA GRANT 2025-2028 under IPA III (2021-2027).

For this contract award procedure, participation is open to all natural persons who are nationals of and legal persons (participating either individually or in a grouping – consortium – of candidates/tenderers) which are effectively established in a Member State of the European Union or in an eligible country or territory mentioned as eligible in the Eligibility programmes 2021-2027-Annex A2a1¹ as defined under the Financial instrument IPA III (2021-2027).

11. Number of tenders

No more than one tender can be submitted by a natural or legal person whatever the form of participation (as an individual legal entity or as leader or member of a consortium submitting a tender). In the event that a natural or legal person submits more than one tender, all tenders in which that person has participated will be excluded.

12. Grounds for exclusion

As part of the tender, tenderers must submit a signed declaration, included in the tender form, to the effect that they are not in any of the exclusion situations listed in the Annex VIII. Where the tenderer intends to rely on capacity providing entities or subcontractor(s), he/she must provide the same declaration signed by this/these entity(ies).

Tenderer included in the lists of EU restrictive measures² at the moment of the award decision cannot be awarded the contract.

13. Sub-contracting

Subcontracting is not allowed.

¹ <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/Annexes>

² <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main>

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

14. Provisional commencement date of the contract

October 2026

15. Implementation period of the tasks

6 months

SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA

16. Selection criteria

Capacity-providing entities

An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for the performance of the contract by producing a commitment by those entities to place those resources at its disposal. Such entities, for instance the parent company of the economic operator, must respect the same rules of eligibility - notably that of nationality - and must comply with the selection criteria for which the economic operator relies on them. Furthermore, the data for this third entity for the relevant selection criterion should be included in the tender in a separate document. Proof of the capacity will also have to be provided when requested by the contracting authority.

With regard to technical and professional criteria, an economic operator may only rely on the capacities of other entities where the latter will perform the services for which these capacities are required.

With regard to economic and financial criteria the entities upon whose capacity the tenderer relies become jointly and severally liable for the performance of the contract.

The following selection criteria will be applied to the tenderers. **In the case of tenders submitted by a consortium, these selection criteria will be applied to the consortium as a whole.** The selection criteria will not be applied to natural persons and single-member companies when they are sub-contractors.

The tenderer shall not use previous experience which caused breach of contract and termination by a contracting authority as a reference for selection criteria.

1) Economic and financial capacity of the tenderer (based on item 3 of the tender form). In case of tenderer being a public body, equivalent information should be provided. The reference period which will be taken into account will be **the last 3 financial years for which accounts have been closed.**

- The tenderer's average annual turnover of the last 3 financial years for which the accounts have been closed must be not less than 30,000 EUR equivalent to the budget of the tender.

2) **Professional capacity of candidate** (based on item 4 of the tender form). The reference period which will be taken into account will be **the last three years preceding the submission deadline**.

- The tenderer has at least **one person** directly employed or otherwise legally contracted and available to perform services in one or more fields relevant to the contract, including electronic identification, electronic trust services, digital regulation, ICT law, interoperability or regulatory drafting.
- The tenderer is not subject to professional conflicting interests which may negatively affect contract performance. The presence of professional conflicting interests shall be examined on the basis of the statements made through the Declarations on Honour and, where applicable, the statements and other documents submitted.

3) **Technical capacity of candidate** (based on items 5 and 6 of the tender form). The reference period which will be taken into account will be the last three years preceding the submission deadline.

- The tenderer has completed services under at least **1 contract** implemented in the fields described below and with the budget/contract value equivalent to this contract (30,000 EUR) within last three years.
- The completed services implemented in last 3 years, concerned one or more of the following fields: electronic identification, electronic signatures, electronic seals or trust services, implementation or approximation of the eIDAS framework, digital regulation or ICT law, trusted lists, supervisory arrangements or conformity assessment, interoperability or digital public administration, preparation of legal, regulatory, technical or methodological instruments in a closely related field.

This means that the service contract the tenderer refers to could have been implemented at any time during the indicated period but it does not necessarily have to be completed during that period, nor implemented during the entire period. Tenderers are allowed to refer either to service contracts completed within the reference period (although started earlier) or to projects partially implemented during, but not yet completed within the reference period.

Only the part completed during the reference period will be taken into consideration. This part will have to be supported by documentary evidence (approval of report or deliverable, proof of payment, statement or certificate from the entity which awarded the contract) also detailing its value.

If a tenderer has implemented the project in a consortium, the percentage that the tenderer has successfully completed must be clear from the documentary evidence (approval of report or deliverable, proof of payment, statement or certificate from the entity which awarded the contract) also detailing its value.

If a candidate has implemented the project in a consortium, the part that the candidate has successfully completed must be clear from the documentary evidence (such as consortium agreement and bank transfers between consortium members), together with a description of the nature of the services provided.

17. Award criteria

Best price-quality ratio.

TENDERING

18. Deadline for receipt of tenders

The deadline for receipt of tenders is specified in Point 8 of the Instruction to Tenderers.

19. Tender format and details to be provided

Tenders must be submitted using the Tender Submission Form, the format and instructions of which must be strictly observed. The tender must be accompanied by a Declaration on Honour on exclusion and selection criteria using the format in Annex VIII to the draft contract and all other Annexes and supporting documents (to establish compliance with economic, financial, professional and technical capacities).

Any additional documentation (brochure, letter, etc.) sent with a tender will not be taken into consideration.

20. How tenders may be submitted

Tenders must be submitted in English exclusively to the CEFTA Secretariat, using the means specified in Point 8 of the Instructions to Tenderers.

Tenders submitted by any other means will not be considered.

By submitting a tender, tenderers accept to receive notification of the outcome of the procedure by electronic means.

21. Alteration or withdrawal of tenders

Tenderers may alter or withdraw their tenders by written notification prior to the deadline for submission of tenders. No tender may be altered after this deadline.

Any such notification of alteration or withdrawal shall be prepared and submitted in accordance with Point 9 of the Instructions to Tenderers. The outer envelope (and the relevant inner envelope if used) must be marked 'Alteration' or 'Withdrawal' as appropriate.

22. Operational language

All written communications for this tender procedure and contract must be in English.

23. Legal basis

CEFTA Secretariat Mandate³

³ [Decision 1/2018 Functioning of Secretariat](#)

CEFT Agreement⁴

24. Additional information

Financial data to be provided by the candidate in the standard application form must be expressed in EUR. If applicable, where a candidate refers to amounts originally expressed in a different currency, the conversion to EUR shall be made in accordance with the Info Euro exchange rate, which can be found at the following address: <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/graphs/infoeuro.html>.

⁴ <http://cefta.int/legal-documents/#1463498231136-8f9d234f-15f9>