

ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Partner parties

The Signatory Parties of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) 2006 ("Agreement") ("CEFTA Parties").

1.2. Contracting Authority

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

1.3. Background

The Central European Free Trade Agreement ("CEFTA") 2006 provides the legal and institutional framework for regional trade integration among its Parties and supports their progressive integration into the European Union ("EU") Single Market.¹

The CEFTA Joint Committee is the highest decision-making body of CEFTA and is responsible for administering the Agreement and supervising its implementation. The Joint Committee is supported by the Committee of Contact Points, the Committee of Trade Facilitation, the Subcommittee on Agriculture including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues, the Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin, the Subcommittee on Non-Tariff Measures, the Subcommittee on Trade in Services, and specialised working groups established under or reporting to these bodies.²

The CEFTA Secretariat, based in Brussels, is the permanent administrative structure supporting the operation of CEFTA. Its overall function is to provide technical and administrative support to the Joint Committee and the bodies established by it, including by facilitating their work, supporting the preparation and implementation of CEFTA legal instruments and work programmes, monitoring and reporting on implementation, and coordinating relevant technical assistance and cooperation with external partners.³

In parallel with the EU accession process, the CEFTA Parties contribute to the implementation of the Common Regional Market Action Plan 2025–2028 ("CRM 2.0"), a regionally driven initiative aimed at deepening regional economic integration, promoting digital transformation and accelerating convergence with the EU Single Market. Within the CRM 2.0 governance framework, CEFTA is responsible for implementing trade-related activities under the pillars on the Free Movement of Goods, Free Movement of Services and Horizontal Trade Measures.⁴

The implementation of Additional Protocol 6 to the CEFTA Agreement on Trade in Services ("AP6") represents one of the key priorities under the Free Movement of Services pillar.⁵ In particular, Article 18 of AP6 provides for regulatory dialogue and cooperation on electronic commerce, including the recognition of certificates of electronic signatures issued to the public and the facilitation of inter-Party certification services. Building on these commitments, the CEFTA Parties have identified the regional recognition of electronic trust services as an important enabling measure for cross-Party trade in services, paperless trade, digital public services and secure electronic transactions.

¹ Central European Free Trade Agreement 2006, CEFTA Legal Documents: <https://cefta.int/legal-documents/>

² CEFTA Joint Committee Decision No.1/2015 on the Establishment of CEFTA Bodies, as amended: [Decision-No-1_2015-on-Establishment-of-CEFTA-Bodies-1.pdf](#)

³ CEFTA Joint Committee Decision 1/2018 on the Functioning of the Secretariat, as amended by Joint Committee Decision No.10/2024: https://cefta.int/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/1_Decision-1_2018-on-CEFTA-Secretariats-Functions.pdf

⁴ Common Regional Market Action Plan 2025–2028, CEFTA Legal Documents: <https://cefta.int/legal-documents/>

⁵ Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services, CEFTA Legal Documents: <https://cefta.int/legal-documents/>

To operationalise these commitments, the CEFTA Joint Committee adopted Decision No. 10/2025 on Digital Cooperation, establishing the Working Group on Digital Cooperation (“WGDC”) under the Subcommittee on Trade in Services as the specialised body responsible for cooperation and exchange of information on digital services, including electronic identification and trust services.⁶ Subsequently, on 16 December 2025, the Joint Committee adopted Decision No. 11/2025 on the Recognition of Advanced Electronic Signatures and Advanced Electronic Seals and Decision No. 12/2025 on the Recognition of Qualified Trust Services.^{7 8} Together, these Decisions establish the CEFTA legal framework for the recognition of advanced electronic signatures, advanced electronic seals and qualified trust services among the CEFTA Parties.

Under both Decisions, the WGDC is required to determine the applicable Recognition Requirements and develop the corresponding Recognition Methodology. The WGDC is to endeavour to prepare these instruments within one year of the entry into force of the respective Decisions. The Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology are expected to define the common regulatory, institutional, supervisory and technical conditions, as well as the relevant application, assessment, recognition, monitoring, suspension and revocation procedures. They are to be based on the requirements of Regulation (EU) No. 910/2014, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 establishing the European Digital Identity Framework, adapted as necessary to the CEFTA legal and institutional context.⁹ Their preparation constitutes one of the principal digital-cooperation deliverables under the CEFTA 2026 Work Programme. Against this background, the CEFTA Secretariat intends to engage specialised external expertise to support the preparation, consultation and finalisation of the Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology. The assignment will be carried out under the overall guidance of the CEFTA Secretariat and in close consultation with the WGDC, with a view to ensuring timely, legally coherent and technically robust implementation of Joint Committee Decisions No. 11/2025 and No. 12/2025.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

Electronic identification and trust services are essential components of the digital economy. They provide the legal and technical assurance necessary for secure electronic transactions, electronic public services, digital trade and paperless cross-Party administrative cooperation. Within the EU, the principal legal benchmark is Regulation (EU) No. 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (“eIDAS”), as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 establishing the European Digital Identity Framework.

This framework is complemented by relevant implementing acts and European technical standards and specifications, including those developed by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (“ETSI”).¹⁰

Regional cooperation in this field has developed progressively. The Regional Cooperation Council publication *Regional Interoperability and Trust Services in Western Balkans – Methodology, Implementation Vision and Action Plan* (2021) assessed the state of play and set out a common regional vision and actions for advancing the interoperability and recognition of electronic

⁶ CEFTA Joint Committee Decision No. 10/2025 on Digital Cooperation, CEFTA Legal Documents: <https://cefta.int/legal-documents/>

⁷ CEFTA Joint Committee Decision No. 11/2025 on the Recognition of Advanced Electronic Signatures and Advanced Electronic Seals, CEFTA Legal Documents: <https://cefta.int/legal-documents/>

⁸ CEFTA Joint Committee Decision No. 12/2025 on the Recognition of Qualified Trust Services, CEFTA Legal Documents: <https://cefta.int/legal-documents/>

⁹ Regulation (EU) No. 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 as regards establishing the European Digital Identity Framework: [EUR-Lex - 02014R0910-20241018 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹⁰ European Telecommunications Standards Institute: [Welcome - ETSI](#)

identification and trust services.¹¹ The CRM Action Plan 2025–2028 subsequently identified the regional recognition of electronic signatures and trust services as a priority action¹². In addition, the *Joint Statement on Achieving WB6 Interoperable Digital Identity Wallets and Trust Services*, endorsed at the Western Balkans Digital Summit in Skopje in October 2025, reaffirmed the commitment of the Western Balkans participants to develop interoperable identity wallets, harmonise trust services and strengthen regulatory and technical capacities in alignment with the European Digital Identity Framework.¹³ These initiatives provide important policy and technical foundations for the CEFTA Recognition Framework, whose legal scope and conditions are governed by the relevant CEFTA Joint Committee Decisions.

Notwithstanding this progress, the level of regulatory approximation, institutional capacity and operational maturity differs among the CEFTA Parties. Relevant differences may concern, *inter alia*, the alignment of domestic legislation with the EU framework; the mandates and capacities of supervisory bodies; accreditation and conformity-assessment arrangements; procedures for granting and withdrawing qualified status; the establishment and maintenance of trusted lists; the application of relevant technical standards; and the maturity of Party trust-service markets and supporting infrastructure. The Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology must therefore establish a common and verifiable level of legal certainty, technical assurance and mutual trust, while providing workable recognition procedures for Parties at different levels of preparedness.

Joint Committee Decisions No. 11/2025 and No. 12/2025 provide the legal basis for two related components of the CEFTA Recognition Framework: the recognition of advanced electronic signatures and advanced electronic seals, and the recognition of qualified trust services, respectively. The Decisions require the WGDC to determine the applicable Recognition Requirements and develop the corresponding Recognition Methodology. The framework is not yet operational, as these implementing instruments and the related assessment, recognition, monitoring, suspension and revocation procedures remain to be developed and agreed.

To support the initial implementation of the Decisions, the CEFTA Secretariat prepared an internal Discussion Note entitled *Implementation of Joint Committee Decisions No. 11/2025 and No. 12/2025 – Policy Options for the Development of a CEFTA Recognition Framework for Advanced Electronic Signatures, Advanced Electronic Seals and Qualified Trust Services* and an accompanying presentation in June 2026.¹⁴ These materials were considered at the second meeting of the WGDC on 7 July 2026. The WGDC took note of the preliminary policy architecture and provided initial guidance on the overall framework, the content of the Recognition Requirements and the Recognition Methodology, possible recognition pathways and the indicative timetable.

The internal Discussion Note, accompanying presentation and relevant WGDC guidance constitute preparatory inputs rather than final or binding positions. They will be provided to the contractor at the inception of the assignment. The contractor will be expected to review, validate and further develop these inputs in light of the applicable CEFTA legal instruments, the relevant EU regulatory and technical framework, the circumstances of the CEFTA Parties and the consultations conducted under the assignment.

The immediate priority is therefore to translate the legal mandate established by Decisions No.11/2025 and No.12/2025, the relevant EU requirements, the preparatory work already undertaken and the WGDC's policy guidance into comprehensive and operational draft Recognition

¹¹ **Regional Cooperation Council, Regional Interoperability and Trust Services in Western Balkans – Methodology, Implementation Vision and Action Plan** (2021): [Regional Cooperation Council | Regional Interoperability and Trust Services in Western Balkans - Methodology, Implementation Vision and Action Plan](#)

¹² **Action 2.6.3. of CRM 2.0** “Agreement on CEFTA Framework for recognition of electronic signatures for trade documents and other trust services for trade documents in line with EU *acquis* (e.g., eIDAS Regulation)”.

¹³ **Joint Statement on Achieving Western Balkans Six Interoperable Digital ID Wallets and Trust Services**, endorsed on 2 October 2025: [Regional Cooperation Council | Joint Statement on Achieving Western Balkans Six Interoperable Digital ID Wallets and Trust Services](#)

¹⁴ Internal CEFTA Secretariat working documents. These documents are not publicly available and will be provided to the contractor at the inception of the assignment.

Requirements and Recognition Methodology suitable for consideration with the CEFTA Parties and subsequent consideration by the relevant CEFTA Bodies.

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

Implementation of the assignment will be coordinated, where appropriate, with relevant regional initiatives and EU-funded actions supporting digital transformation, interoperability, electronic identification and trust services, in accordance with the CEFTA Bodies' Work Programme and under the guidance of the CEFTA Secretariat.

In particular, coordination and exchange of information may be maintained with:

1. Regional Cooperation Council activities supporting CRM 2.0, including the RCC Platform on Regional Digital Identity Wallets and Interoperability of Trust Services and related work on electronic identification, interoperability and trust services;
2. EU4Digital activities supporting approximation with the EU digital acquis, electronic identification, trust services and interoperability;
3. the programme *Support to Trade Facilitation and Trade in Services*, funded under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by GIZ, insofar as it supports implementation of the CEFTA Work Programme and Free Movement of Services activities; and
4. relevant European Commission and other donor-supported initiatives relating to the European Digital Identity Framework, the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and regulatory approximation in the area of electronic identification and trust services.

The assignment is specifically concerned with the preparation of the instruments required by CEFTA Joint Committee Decisions No. 11/2025 and No. 12/2025. Coordination with other programmes shall be aimed at preventing duplication, promoting synergies, facilitating the reuse of relevant analysis and technical evidence, and ensuring consistency with ongoing regional and EU-supported activities.

2. OBJECTIVE & EXPECTED OUTPUTS

2.1. Overall objective

The overall objective (Impact) to which this action contributes is:

To strengthen secure regional digital trade and cross-Party electronic transactions through the recognition of electronic signatures, electronic seals and qualified trust services, in alignment with the EU Digital Single Market.

2.2. Specific objective(s)

The specific objective (Outcome) of this contract is to enable the WGDC and relevant CEFTA Bodies to advance the implementation of Joint Committee Decisions No.11/2025 and No.12/2025 on the basis of a common legal, technical and procedural framework.

2.3. Expected outputs to be achieved by the Contractor

The expected outputs of this contract are as follows:

- **Output 1 – Initial Draft Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology**

An initial draft of the Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology shall be prepared and submitted, taking into account: the CEFTA legal and institutional framework; Joint Committee Decisions No. 11/2025 and No. 12/2025; the preparatory work undertaken by the Secretariat; applicable EU legislation, including the eIDAS framework; relevant implementing acts and

internationally recognised technical standards; guidance provided by the WGDC; and the regulatory and institutional circumstances of the CEFTA Parties.

The output shall constitute a comprehensive first draft suitable for technical consultation with the CEFTA Secretariat and the CEFTA Parties.

Indicative submission: October 2026

- **Output 2 – Revised Draft Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology**

A revised draft shall be prepared and submitted following technical consultation. It shall appropriately address comments received from: the CEFTA Secretariat; the CEFTA Parties and their competent authorities; the WGDC; and where appropriate, other stakeholders identified by the Contracting Authority.

A concise comment matrix recording the treatment of substantive comments shall be provided where requested by the Contracting Authority.

Indicative submission: beginning of November 2026.

- **Output 3 – Final Draft Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology**

A final draft of the Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology shall be submitted, incorporating agreed revisions and ensuring: internal consistency between the two instruments; legal and technical coherence; consistency with the CEFTA legal and institutional framework; appropriate alignment with the applicable EU acquis and relevant international standards; clear, transparent and practicable recognition procedures; and suitability for consideration by the relevant CEFTA Bodies.

The output shall be accompanied by:

- a final comment matrix recording the treatment of substantive comments; and
- a concise explanatory implementation note summarising the framework, principal drafting choices, implementation implications and any issues requiring subsequent consideration by the CEFTA Bodies.

Indicative submission: November 2026

- **Output 4 – Final Report**

A concise Final Report shall be prepared and submitted, summarising: the work undertaken; consultations supported; principal legal, regulatory and technical issues addressed; contractual outputs produced; lessons learned; and recommendations concerning subsequent implementation activities, where appropriate.

Indicative submission: March 2026

The service will be paid on the basis of the Interim payment (upon acceptance of Outputs 1–2) and Final payment (upon acceptance of Outputs 3–4). Payments might be totally or partially withheld if the contractual result(s) have not been reached in conformity with the detailed terms of reference. Partial payment has to be determined according to the partial implementation of the output(s).

3. ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

Successful implementation is based on the following assumptions:

- the legal mandate established by Joint Committee Decisions No. 11/2025 and No. 12/2025 remains applicable during the assignment;

- the CEFTA Parties continue to support implementation of the Decisions and participate in the work of the WGDC;
- the CEFTA Parties and their competent authorities provide comments, technical information and clarifications within the consultation periods established by the Secretariat;
- the Secretariat provides the Contractor with the relevant background documentation, consolidated comments and institutional guidance necessary for delivery of the outputs;
- the Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology can be prepared primarily on the basis of existing CEFTA and EU legislation, recognised technical standards, existing supervisory and conformity-assessment evidence and information made available by the Parties; and
- material developments in the relevant EU legal or technical framework can be taken into account without fundamentally changing the scope of the contract.

3.2. Risks

Implementation of the assignment may be affected by the following risks:

- Changes in policy priorities, unresolved policy issues or delays in relevant decisions affecting timely convergence on the CEFTA Recognition Framework on Trust Services.
- Delays in receiving comments, information or technical input from the CEFTA Parties.
- Divergent legal, institutional or technical positions among the CEFTA Parties.
- Changes in relevant staff, limited staff availability or insufficient administrative and technical capacity affecting continuity and timely participation in consultations.
- Limited availability, quality or comparability of information on the CEFTA Parties' trust-service frameworks.
- Material developments in the EU Digital Identity Framework, related implementing acts or applicable technical standards during the assignment.
- A compressed timetable for consultation and finalisation, particularly where additional policy guidance or sequential consideration by CEFTA Bodies is required.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Description of the assignment

The Contractor shall provide specialised legal, regulatory and technical expertise to support the CEFTA Secretariat in preparing, refining and finalising the Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology required under Joint Committee Decisions No. 11/2025 and No. 12/2025.

Under the guidance of the CEFTA Secretariat and in consultation with the CEFTA Parties through the WGDC, the Contractor shall translate the legal mandate established by the Joint Committee Decisions and the guidance provided by the WGDC into a coherent and operational framework for the regional recognition of advanced electronic signatures, advanced electronic seals and qualified trust services.

The assignment shall build on the preparatory work undertaken by the Secretariat, including the June 2026 Discussion Note, related technical presentations, the outcomes of the first and second meetings of the WGDC. These materials, together with other relevant background documents, will be made available to the Contractor by the Contracting Authority at the inception of the assignment.

The Contractor shall prepare the Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology as interrelated draft instruments. Taken together, these instruments shall set out:

- the substantive regulatory, institutional, supervisory and technical conditions applicable to recognition;

- the evidence and documentation required to demonstrate compliance;
- the applicable assessment and verification procedures;
- the respective institutional responsibilities and decision-making steps;
- arrangements for trusted-list coordination;
- procedures for recognition, monitoring, suspension, withdrawal and restoration, as applicable; and
- any other legal, supervisory or technical arrangements necessary to make the CEFTA Recognition Framework operational.

The draft instruments shall be legally coherent, technically sound and sufficiently mature for consideration by the WGDC and the relevant CEFTA Bodies. The Contractor's work shall not prejudice or constrain the powers of the CEFTA Parties or CEFTA Bodies to determine, amend or adopt the final Recognition Framework.

Subject to the requirements, deliverables and deadlines established by these Terms of Reference, the Contractor shall determine the methodology, sequencing of activities, allocation of resources and internal quality-assurance arrangements necessary to deliver the contractual outputs within the implementation period and the agreed global price.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

CEFTA Parties

4.1.3. Target groups

The principal target groups and beneficiaries are: the CEFTA Secretariat; the WGDC; the Subcommittee on Trade in Services; competent authorities of the CEFTA Parties responsible for electronic identification and trust services; supervisory authorities; authorities responsible for Party trusted lists; and where relevant, bodies involved in conformity assessment and technical validation.

Indirect beneficiaries include public administrations, trust service providers, businesses, professionals and citizens expected to benefit from improved legal certainty, interoperability and acceptance of electronic transactions across CEFTA.

4.2. Specific work

The Contractor shall provide all services necessary to achieve the contractual outputs. The Organisation and Methodology submitted with the tender shall describe the proposed approach, sequencing, allocation of expertise and quality-control arrangements. The work shall comprise the following components.

Work Package 1 – Inception and review

The Contractor shall review the relevant CEFTA legal and institutional framework, Joint Committee Decisions and WGDC documents, the Secretariat's preparatory materials, the applicable EU acquis and implementing acts, relevant ETSI and other technical standards, regional studies and commitments, and available information on the legal, institutional and technical frameworks of the CEFTA Parties. On this basis, the Contractor shall identify any material legal, technical or information gaps and set out the proposed approach, work plan and consultation arrangements in the Inception Report referred to in Section 7.

Work Package 2 – Preparation of the Initial Draft

Drawing on appropriate legal, regulatory and technical expertise, the Contractor shall prepare the Initial Draft Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology as coherent and interrelated instruments.

The Initial Draft shall address, as relevant, the scope, terminology and principles of recognition; the applicable regulatory, institutional, supervisory, conformity-assessment and technical requirements; requirements concerning trust service providers, trust services, trusted lists, validation and technical standards; the evidence and assessment procedures required for recognition; the roles of the competent authorities and CEFTA Bodies; and the procedures for decision-making, publication, monitoring, suspension, withdrawal and restoration. It shall also address, where necessary, existing bilateral arrangements and transitional or phased implementation.

The drafting shall be consistent with the CEFTA legal framework and the applicable EU acquis, make appropriate use of recognised European and international arrangements and standards, and promote technological neutrality, interoperability, proportionality and transparent and verifiable recognition procedures. Matters requiring a policy or institutional decision by the CEFTA Parties or CEFTA Bodies shall be clearly identified.

Work Package 3 – Consultation and revision

The Contractor shall support the CEFTA Secretariat in consulting the WGDC and other relevant CEFTA Bodies on the Initial Draft. This shall include presenting and explaining the proposed instruments, providing necessary technical clarifications, assessing comments received and distinguishing technical drafting matters from issues requiring policy guidance. Following the consultation, the Contractor shall prepare the Revised Draft and an accompanying comment matrix.

The Contractor may be required to participate remotely or onsite in up to 1 (one) meeting(s) of the WGDC or other relevant CEFTA Bodies during the assignment.

Work Package 4 – Finalisation

Following the second consultation stage and instructions from the Contracting Authority, the Contractor shall finalise the Recognition Requirements and Recognition Methodology. The Final Draft shall undergo legal, technical and editorial quality assurance to verify the consistency of the two instruments, the accuracy of legal and technical references, the coherence of the proposed procedures and its suitability for consideration by the relevant CEFTA Bodies.

The Contractor shall also prepare the explanatory implementation note, final comment matrix and Final Report specified in Sections 2 and 7.

General requirements

Throughout the assignment, the Contractor shall maintain close coordination with the CEFTA Secretariat, provide timely and reasoned advice relating to the contractual outputs, ensure consistency and quality across all deliverables, protect confidential and non-public information, and prepare all outputs in clear and precise English.

The Contractor shall support the presentation and dissemination of the outputs to the WGDC and relevant CEFTA Bodies. Any communication and visibility activities undertaken under the contract shall comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded External Action, and their implementation shall be recorded in the relevant contractual reporting.¹⁵

¹⁵ [Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions - International Partnerships](#)

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 contract shall be managed by the CEFTA Secretariat through a Project Manager designated for this purpose.

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 assignment shall principally be implemented remotely from the Contractor's or expert's normal place of work.

Coordination meetings and technical consultations shall normally be conducted online. Where requested by the Contracting Authority, the Contractor shall participate onsite in up to 1 (one) meeting in Brussels or elsewhere within the CEFTA region. The travel and accommodation costs associated with this meeting shall be borne by the Contractor and shall be deemed included in the offer price.

Should the Contracting Authority request the Contractor's onsite participation in any additional meeting(s), the related travel and accommodation costs shall be covered separately by the CEFTA Secretariat.

5.2. Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is beginning of October and the period of implementation of the contract will be 6 months from this date. Please see point 3 of the main conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Staff

The Contractor shall ensure that the assignment is implemented by personnel possessing the qualifications and multidisciplinary legal, regulatory and technical expertise necessary to achieve the contractual outputs. The assignment is expected to be performed principally by one senior expert. The Contractor may provide limited specialist input or internal backstopping where necessary, provided this does not alter the global price or the Contractor's responsibility for the outputs.

Civil servants and other staff of public administrations or international or regional organisations may provide expert input only where duly justified and in accordance with the applicable procurement rules. The tender shall include information on the added value of the proposed expert, potential conflicts of interest and, where applicable, evidence of secondment, authorised leave or another legally permissible arrangement.

Selection of personnel shall be transparent, non-discriminatory and free from professional conflicts of interest. All persons engaged under the contract shall be independent in the responsibilities assigned to them.

6.1.1. Key experts

The Organisation and Methodology should demonstrate how the contract will comply with these requirements to accomplish the desired output(s). The Organisation and Methodology may include the name of one or more experts and their profile.

Below are minimum requirements defined for the expert who will be responsible for the assignment.

Education

A university degree corresponding to at least Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework, or equivalent, in law, information technology, computer science, information systems, electronic communications, public administration or another discipline relevant to the assignment.

General professional experience

At least 10 years of relevant professional experience in digital regulation, electronic identification, electronic trust services, ICT law, digital public administration, interoperability, electronic transactions or a closely related field.

Specific professional expertise

The expert shall demonstrate practical experience in several of the following areas:

- interpretation, application or implementation of Regulation (EU) No. 910/2014 and/or Regulation (EU) 2024/1183;
- legal, regulatory or technical aspects of electronic signatures, electronic seals and electronic trust services;
- trust service providers and supervisory frameworks;
- trusted lists and list-of-trusted-lists arrangements;
- conformity assessment applicable to trust services;
- relevant ETSI standards and technical validation requirements;
- public-key infrastructure and related cryptographic trust arrangements;
- preparation of legal, regulatory, methodological or technical instruments concerning electronic identification or trust services;
- regulatory approximation with the EU digital acquis; and
- advisory services to governments, public administrations, EU institutions, regional organisations or international organisations.

Experience concerning EU candidate countries, potential candidate countries or regional economic-integration frameworks shall be considered an asset.

The tenderer's *Organisation and Methodology* shall demonstrate how the proposed expert meets these requirements and how the necessary legal and technical competencies will be combined throughout the assignment.

6.1.2. Other experts, support staff & backstopping

The Contractor shall provide adequate legal, technical, administrative and quality-assurance backstopping.

All costs relating to internal coordination, administrative support, specialist input, peer review, document production, communication and backstopping shall be included in the global price.

6.2. Office accommodation

The Contractor shall provide appropriate office accommodation and working facilities for its expert and any supporting personnel.

No office accommodation shall be provided by the Contracting Authority.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contractor

The contractor shall 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.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the CEFTA Secretariat as part of this service contract or transferred to the CEFTA Secretariat at the end of this contract.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in English in one original and 1 copy(ies):

- **Inception Report** of maximum 12 pages to be produced after 10 days from the start of implementation. In the report the contractor shall describe e.g. initial findings, progress in collecting data, any difficulties encountered or expected in addition to the work programme and staff travel. The contractor should proceed with his/her work unless the contracting authority sends comments on the inception report.
- **Draft final report** of maximum 10 pages (main text, excluding annexes). This report shall be submitted no later than one month before the end of the period of implementation of tasks.
- **Final report** with the same specifications as the draft final report, incorporating any comments received from the parties on the draft report. The deadline for sending the final report is 5 days after receipt of comments on the draft final report. The report shall contain a sufficiently detailed description of the different options to support an informed decision on following up on implementation of the CEFTA framework on recognition of trust services. The detailed analyses underpinning the recommendations will be presented in annexes to the main report. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

7.2. Submission & 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

The Contractor's performance shall be assessed against the following indicators:

- all reports and contractual outputs are submitted within the agreed deadlines;
- the outputs comply with these Terms of Reference and are approved by the Contracting Authority;
- comments and guidance received during consultations are appropriately addressed; and
- the Contractor provides timely technical support and participates in the consultations and meetings requested by the Contracting Authority.

Performance shall be verified through the submitted reports and outputs, comment matrices, meeting records, correspondence and written approvals issued by the Contracting Authority.

* * *