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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Partner countries

The partner countries of this project are the countries of the Eastern Partnership: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova¹ and Ukraine.

1.2. Contracting Authority

The Contracting Authority is the European Commission, DG ESTAT (Eurostat).

1.3. Regional background

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries share a common past and their administrative systems, although having evolved independently in the recent years and despite numerous differences, still have many commonalities. All of the countries, to a varying degree, face a number of political, economic and social challenges in their struggle to modernise their societies and economic systems. The impact of the recent global economic crisis can still be felt, and the region faces territorial disputes with neighbouring countries, high migration flows, social unrests and political tensions.

The profound societal and economic challenges, faced by the countries, require sound policy-making and awareness both of the government and public at large regarding the impact of particular policies on various aspects of life. In the context of the ongoing public administration reforms in the EaP countries, there is a growing awareness of the need for statistics and demand for data to inform policy making. In addition, international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and trade relationships also highlight the need for diversified data, including gender statistics, in a wide range of sectors.

Countries are increasingly open to the external world and seek partnerships with various international organisations. The relationship between the EU and the EaP countries is governed by the Eastern Partnership which was launched in 2009 and revised in 2017.

Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are committed to develop closer political and economic bonds with the EU manifested by signing Association Agreements (which include specific chapters on statistical cooperation) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus express their interest in cooperation on the basis of partnership agreements. EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement has been signed in November 2017 and negotiations are ongoing with Azerbaijan and Belarus. Cooperation between the EU and the countries takes place both at regional and bilateral levels and concerns various domains. There are frequent contacts between the EU institutions and the public administration bodies in those countries. The national statistical institutes (NSI) of all six countries cooperate actively with Eurostat.

Increased availability and quality of statistical information to serve better transparency and quality in the decision-making is amongst the 20 deliverables of the Eastern Partnership for 2020. This regional statistical programme is designed to assist the partner countries to improve the availability and quality of their official statistics. It is based on long experience gained by the EU/Eurostat in

¹ In continuation called Moldova

working together with those countries in the context of implementing bilateral and multilateral/regional statistical cooperation programmes through TACIS (past regional programmes) and statistical cooperation activities undertaken within the framework of the ENP policy. It also builds on ongoing cooperation implemented by the Commission through dedicated projects and using such instruments as TAIEX and Twinning.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

In recent years Eurostat, supported by EFTA and UNECE, carried out a number of assessments of the national statistical systems (NSS) and selected statistical domains in the region. These assessments (global assessments, peer reviews, sectoral assessments) include the country's own recommendations for improvements and therefore form the basis for cooperation actions going forward.

All six countries are committed to bringing their NSS in line with the European model by applying the EU standards in statistics, increasing their capacity to produce internationally comparable data and achieving professional independence of statistics. One of the Eastern Partnership's deliverables (11 – Public administration reform) is the consolidation of the legislative frameworks for statistics of the EaP so that these are based on the Generic Law on Official Statistics (GLOS), developed jointly by Eurostat, UNECE and EFTA. Moldova and Armenia already aligned their national statistical legislation with the GLOS. Azerbaijan is currently working on the revision of its statistical law, using the GLOS as a reference.

This is manifested in the countries' willingness to follow and implement the European Statistics Code of Practice, which is the guiding document for the development of the institutional environment for official statistics. They were also involved in the work on the Generic Law on Statistics which is a template for the national laws on statistics covering all crucial legal elements for setting a sound and modern legal framework for statistics in those countries.

As a result of their shared past, the NSS of the EaP countries are organised in a similar way. Human and financial resources are scarce in most of the NSIs in the region and need to be managed in a more efficient way. The scarcity makes it difficult to meet current required demands, adapt to new ones such as the data needs of SDGs, and its ambitious indicators regarding sex and age disaggregated data or modernise their data collection systems through the use of new technologies. For example, new methodologies may require more extensive electronic reporting by respondents.

There may be scope for the NSIs to optimise their statistical systems, potentially by rationalising regional structures and corresponding staff. Another aspect is the need to develop an appropriate human resource policy to accompany the modernisation of statistical practice and to prepare the NSIs for future demands.

Annual High Level Seminars (HLS) for the heads of the NSI of the EaP countries provide an opportunity for the EU and the countries to take a strategic view of developments in the statistical sector, to take stock of regional progress so far and to identify common regional priorities. It also allows countries to exchange current practice and for the EU to share its own practice and standards. In addition to the HLS, opportunities to move forward regional work on statistical domains exist through the expert working groups, set up under the Eastern Partnership umbrella.

Although over the past years the countries have made progress in modernising their statistical systems they still have a number of challenges (e.g. access to the latest methodology, resources to implement pilot surveys) which hamper their further modernisation. For further information, please refer to the Global Assessment/peer reviews reports (see point 1.5. below).

Further information about the current situation regarding statistics is available in the project Action Document.

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

In addition to yearly HLS, Eurostat has a small number of on-going statistical projects in the region that provide resources for the provision of training, meetings and quality assessments of national statistical systems. These will continue during the lifetime of the regional programme and will complement it by focusing on supporting activities not provided for by this programme such as the participation of Central Asian countries in selected project activities, further global assessments of statistical systems in the region or by promoting EU practice in horizontal activities including corporate topics such as institutional quality.

EU supported activities of relevance across the EaP region include:

- **Global assessments / peer reviews:**

Eurostat, together with UNECE and EFTA, carries out global assessments (GA) of the statistical systems of EaP countries. The GAs are carried out on the basis of the methodology refined over the years in consultation with the EaP countries. The goal of these exercises is to support the countries in their efforts to develop capacity and to align their systems with European and international standards. All approaches involve assessing the state of play of their national statistical systems against internationally accepted standards (e.g. European Statistical Code of Practice (ESCoP), United Nations Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics (UNFPOS) or other international practice. At the end of the GAs, recommendations for improvement are formulated. Generally countries incorporate the recommendations into their statistical master plans, long-term strategies and programmes. Eurostat annually monitors the implementation of the GA recommendations with a view to supporting countries in their continuous efforts to develop statistical capacities in the region.

A first round of GAs in all EaP countries was carried out between 2008 and 2013. In 2014, a second round started with a light peer review conducted in Armenia². To date two GAs were implemented in Ukraine³ and Azerbaijan⁴. A GA in Moldova started in 2017. Belarus and Georgia have indicated their interest to organise GAs in their countries in the course of 2018.

- **Technical meetings:**

Within the framework of the Eastern Partnership and its 20 deliverables for 2020, the EU and the EaP countries regularly discuss statistical topics given their relevance to economic integration, and the convergence of sectoral policies, through expert (at high level) and related technical workshops.

Since 2015, discussions with EaP countries have been launched on business statistics, labour market statistics, the European Statistical Code of Practice and Generic Law; price, research and innovation, and living conditions.

- **Training courses for EaP and Central Asian countries:**

Since 2013 Eurostat has been organising 2-3 training courses per year in the region, on statistical concepts, EU legislation, methodology, and international standards specifically for the experts from EaP and Central Asian countries.

² <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/52535/52745/LPR+Armenia+2014/7dbd6451-afc7-4803-86e0-5030cb2ead6c>

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/52535/52745/Ukraine+GA/dfaf8f9c-4d33-49ed-a9ae-57528dc56e47>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/52535/52745/Azerbaijan_GA+report+Final.pdf/a9da3699-29c3-43ff-880b-e5ebe212c661

The training courses for the ENP-East/Central Asian countries are similar to those of the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP)⁵, but with course material adapted to the context.

On a sub-regional level, Eurostat, through a separate project helps Georgia and Ukraine to produce Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs) for both countries for the reference year 2017, for the purpose of the 2017 round of the International Comparison Programme (ICP). The EaP countries also have access to the resources of the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX) of the European Commission and a number of small projects are financed through this instrument on an annual basis. In addition, some countries in the region have implemented Twinning projects in the area of statistics.

Furthermore, the NSIs and their international cooperation departments are aware that donor coordination is one of their main tasks and all of them keep good track of donor projects in statistics in the country. Some of them have even established a donor coordination committee. Effective coordination with EU Delegations is ensured through the above mentioned donor survey and by the NSIs of the countries together with Eurostat.

Currently, there are national programmes to assist the NSIs in several EaP countries, supported by the EU and also directly by some EU and/or EFTA Member States. These programmes are complementary to the regional programme as they target specific needs of the country at a larger scale, while the present regional programme will focus on common problems and challenges.

The complementarity will also be ensured with the existing regional programme notably on Environmental Statistics in the Eastern Neighbourhood (Shared Environmental Information System - SEIS, 2016-2020) and the EU4Energy cooperation programme (2016-2020) which focuses on evidence-based energy policies with a specific component on enhancing energy data management and use in policy design.

All EaP countries benefit from the assistance of other donors active in the region with IMF tackling issues related to national accounts, and the World Bank, UNICEF and other UN agencies focusing mainly on general horizontal issues and demographic and social statistics. The non-exhaustive list includes UN agencies, OECD, World Bank, IMF, EFTA, Sida, DFID, USAID, Norway etc. The World Bank and the Government of the Russian Federation established a multi-donor trust fund, ECASAT, to support statistical capacity building in CIS countries. Most of this assistance is addressed to specific countries, not regional activities.

In order to formally coordinate all these activities and donors, Eurostat implements an annual donor coordination survey. The results of this survey are widely disseminated among the donors and beneficiaries so that all actors are informed of activities in the countries. The results are used by all donors to avoid duplication and use the resources efficiently. The donor survey also demonstrates that the EU is the largest donor for statistical capacity building in the six EaP countries and based on this, Eurostat's role of coordinating various donor activities is widely recognised and accepted.

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-statistical-system/training-programme-estp>

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall objective

The overall objective of the regional cooperation programme is to strengthen the statistical evidence base through more and better quality official statistics, produced by the NSS of the EaP countries, in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice and the goals of the Eastern Partnership. Both the availability and better quality statistics are essential for improved policy-making at regional and country level.

2.2. Purpose

The purpose of this contract is:

- To improve the production and dissemination of good quality statistics in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine
- To increase the level of harmonisation of methodology both between the countries, and with the EU
- To strengthen the institutional capacity of the NSIs of the region along the principles set out in the European Statistical Code of Practice
- To support evidence-based policy-making, ensuring that statistical evidence substantiates policy choices, through improved cooperation and coordination between the National Statistical Institutes, policy-makers and line institutions

2.3. Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The contractor will implement a number of activities at regional, sub-regional, and country level, including the provision of technical assistance by European experts, preparation and implementation of pilot surveys, organisation of meetings, seminars, workshops and trainings, and production of statistical publications. A particular attention will be paid by the contractor to avoid overlapping of activities, implemented under this contract, with recent/ongoing activities (e.g. surveys, trainings) implemented in the region.

- Technical assistance will be provided in priority areas (e.g. SDGs, migration, SMEs, business, economy, trade, competitiveness, poverty, employment etc.) focusing on increasing data availability (and data quality) for beneficiaries, namely on collection of data (including, using administrative data sources) that are compliant with EU requirements and will be published by Eurostat.
- Support for the preparation and implementation of pilot surveys will be provided with a view to enhancing statistical data collection from the countries, through improved survey tools and methods. At regional level, support will be towards better coordinating the data collection between countries, for example in terms of harmonising the reference periods, release dates and presentation standards.

- Trainings, seminars, workshops will be provided to contribute to improving the statistical knowledge of staff from the countries on many statistical domains and horizontal issues (e.g. governance of NSSs, management of resources, quality etc.). Training courses facilitate the passing of European standards on to all ENP East countries, thereby ensuring that all of them know and apply consistently the same standards. The national authorities in charge of training for civil servants and public employees will be kept informed and, where relevant, they will be involved in the organisation of planned training sessions.
- Support for the production of statistical publications for the region providing harmonised regional data. The experience of the EU Member States shows that already the work on a joint publication constitutes a good opportunity to improve data comparability, the quality of data and metadata and the presentation standards. The result in this case would be both the skills developed during on-the-job practical training in preparing a publication and the publication itself including validated data.

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

The prerequisite for reaching the project goals is continuous support from the NSIs, the other stakeholders involved in the NSSs as well as the governments of the Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, a pro-active attitude towards the realisation of project activities and to the selection of appropriate project participants will be necessary. It also requires efforts in coordination between the different institutions involved. This is likely to be the case, as the heads of the NSIs take part in an annual High Level Seminar organised by Eurostat.

The assumptions underlying the project are:

- Commitment of EaP National Statistical Institutes, and wider national authorities, to the process, and to achieving results.
- Cooperation of official statistics producers in the beneficiary countries. Parallel implementation of necessary national projects in the area of statistics. Sufficient support to NSI provided by the Government.
- Availability of experts and good cooperation between all stakeholders. The necessary human and technical resources are provided by the national authorities.

It is assumed that the NSIs contribute with the necessary staff, as well as financial and institutional resources to support the successful implementation of this programme.

3.2. Risks

The risks associated with the project are:

- Limited human and financial resources available to NSIs in EaP countries.
- Professional independence of the NSI is impacted by different outside factors.
- Inefficiencies in action implementation because of lack of coordination between donors active in the region.
- Weak or insufficient political will and engagement of the beneficiary countries.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Project description

The project is developed within the current programming framework, namely the ENI East Regional Strategy Paper and Multiannual Indicative Programme for the period 2017-2020. One of the priorities of this framework is evidence-based decision-making based on increased availability and quality of official statistics. Under the new Eastern Partnership architecture, an Expert Workshop on statistics exists (formerly known as a Panel). The Expert Workshops are intended for strategic discussion on statistical topics between the EU and the ENP East.

The need to enhance statistical capacity is mentioned in the Single Support Frameworks (2014-2020) of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, and in the SSF for Belarus (2014-2017). No SSF currently exists for the Ukraine.

This project aims to strengthen the statistical capacities for the National Statistical Systems of the EaP partner countries by supporting their ability to produce high quality statistics (including, using administrative data sources and if necessary supporting their quality improvement), as well as the professional independence and institutional capacity of the EAP NSIs. It will strengthen and stabilise the NSIs' institutional set-up and reinforce the management and planning capacities of the National Statistical Systems.

This programme aims at increasing the quality and availability of data, compliant with EU requirements in the following priority domains: poverty, employment, migration, economy, trade, competitiveness, SMEs and business etc. The project will also pay particular attention to supporting the countries to meet the new data needs placed on them as a result of the SDGs and the related sex and age disaggregation of data, and the development of national mechanisms to monitor progress and results. The EU best practices, norms and standards in statistics will be the preferred reference for the project.

The project will start with an inception phase which shall last no longer than 4 months. As a result of the inception phase, the Contractor will deliver an inception report, containing a proposal for the work programme by each statistical and institutional topic as well as by country, including proposed working modalities, activities and related human resources, financial breakdown, implementation plan and expected results. This report will also include a communication and visibility plan for the period of the project including an updated log-frame with precise verifiable indicators.

Eurostat will approve the inception report.

Integration of production of gender statistics will be integrated in this project. In addition, equal participation of men and women to the projects' events will be sought.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

This project covers 6 Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

4.1.3. Target groups

National statistics institutes and other national producers of official statistics within the national statistics systems, including the National Banks and Ministries, and users of official statistics.

4.2. Specific work

The maximum available budget is EUR **5,000,000**, of which incidental costs account for EUR **3,000,000** and expenditure verification for EUR **20,000**.

The scope of the work of the Contractor comprises the provision of expertise in selected statistical domains with the aim to improve the production, collection and dissemination of high quality statistics.

The support will be dedicated to the following specific domains (for each of the domains and resulting data it is assumed that data availability will differ from country to country depending on the current state-of-play in each country):

- macro-economic statistics (leading to the production and dissemination of annual and quarterly GDP according to ESA 2010 and possibly sector accounts, government finance statistics in accordance with the ESA 2010, external trade statistics comparable with the EU Member States data, employment/unemployment data in line with the EU acquis;
- SDG, gender and social statistics leading to the production and dissemination of data for various aspects of social policy including migration statistics, labour market data in line with EU standards, the availability of earning and labour cost data, data on poverty and other demographic indicators;
- business statistics leading to the introduction of the European concept of business statistics (short-term and structural business statistics), data on SMEs and possibly data for innovation, research and development, and the use of ICTs;
- agriculture statistics, leading to the production and dissemination of basic agriculture data in line with EU standards;
- energy and transport statistics leading to the production and dissemination of basic data on energy efficiency and production/balances as well as on transport, in line with EU standards.
- other areas identified during the inception phase and approved by Eurostat.

In all these domains, support will also be provided to countries so that all collected official statistics, related to individuals, are disaggregated by sex, unless there are special reasons for not doing so.

Preparation and implementation of pilot surveys will further enhance and help to coordinate statistical data collection from the countries. This should allow harmonising the reference periods, release dates and presentation standards. As a result a wide range of users may have access to data not only at the national, but also the regional and European levels.

Furthermore, the next world-wide round of population and housing census will take place in 2020. While the implementation of the census itself in the countries is not within the reach of this regional programme, advice on methodology and survey tools will be provided. Support on national level will be needed in this context.

Finally, there is also increasing demand for sustainable development indicators in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

More specifically, the technical assistance activities will include the following elements:

- Management of the provision of expertise with a focus on the selected statistical domains but also covering expertise in other statistical domains related to the data on the SDGs and gender equality.
- Carrying out evaluations, assessments and analyses of data availability and quality and the compliance of methodology and procedures with the EU requirements.

- Making proposals for short and medium term improvements.
- Preparing and organising workshops, training courses, consultancies and study visits to explain the EU requirements in detail.
- Providing technical assistance for data collection, treatment, analysis and dissemination via missions and help desks.
- Reporting regularly on the implementation including technical and financial reporting.

In addition, the Contractor will sign service contracts with the partner countries and cover the costs of tasks the partner countries are required to carry out in relation to the set-up of new data collections/surveys.

Finally, the Contractor will offer general technical assistance to the partner countries by organising and covering the costs of participation in workshops, seminars, meetings at European and international levels to increase the awareness of EU/international methodology and standards, study visits, consultancies, training courses and similar activities, if needed and requested.

Drafting of the inception report (including initial work programme)

The inception report should be delivered 4 months after the beginning of the contract. It will:

- Carry out a gap analysis of the data available/not available and of the quality of the data.
- Propose tasks specific for each individual country within the priority areas for assistance (SDGs, migration, SMEs, business, economy, trade, competitiveness, poverty, employment etc.) that are achievable within the time-frame of the project and which will contribute to the required results.
- Identify tasks at regional level within the priorities areas for assistance (SDGs, gender statistics, migration, SMEs, business, economy, trade, competitiveness, poverty, employment etc.) that are achievable within the time-frame of the project and which will contribute to the required results and bringing practice closer to the EU, and further in line with the ESS Code of Practice.
- Propose, where possible and as necessary, sub-regional tasks that build on common interests in a subset of the countries, that also will lead to concrete deliverables contributing to the required results as set out in the log-frame.
- Suggest optimal mix of modalities which will be required to deliver on these tasks within a process and a due date for delivery into a first work programme.
- Propose the share of assistance between regional activities - for all six countries - and country specific activities in the form of work programmes.
- Set out a timetable for these tasks.
- Propose new working modalities between the countries that can support physical meetings and expert visits.
- Collect data on the identified statistical domains as a baseline for the future measurement of progress/assessment of results.

To prepare the inception report, the Contractor will review existing information, documentation available online or provided by Eurostat at or before the kick off meeting. The Contractor may also propose dedicated country visits and require the Contracting Authority's prior approval. A kick off meeting for the project with Eurostat shall be foreseen, to make an assessment of the tasks to be undertaken within each relevant statistical domain, or cross cutting issue, and their appropriate timing, with an emphasis on the project results that need to be achieved. Key inputs will be the reports of the latest global assessments, peer reviews or sector reviews carried out in the EaP which

provide an analysis of the current status of a country's statistical system, as well as recommendations for how they can be strengthened.

Through consultation with Eurostat, this review will also take into account current and/or planned activities of Eurostat in the region (expert meetings, trainings) to avoid overlapping of projects/activities, and to build synergies if possible.

On the basis of the inception exercise, the Contractor will draft work programmes and submit them for approval to Eurostat. The work programmes will be annexed to the inception report.

Regional Publications

The experience of the EU Member States shows that working together on a joint publication (electronic and, if justified, printed) is a good opportunity for countries to improve data comparability, the quality of data and metadata and the presentation standards. In addition to the production of publications, the contractor will also carry out actions to support the development of harmonised approaches across the region with regard to release calendars, and other aspects of the cycle of data production.

Different types of activities

All these activities should be coordinated with the Eurostat's Enlargement, neighbourhood and development cooperation unit (B3). These activities should be organised either in one of the EaP partner country or in an ESS Member State. The number of activities is indicative.

10 training courses

Training courses covering techniques and methods to compile official statistics in accordance with EU acquis are part of the horizontal activities. The training courses last on average 4 days. The participation of up to 2 participants per each EaP country (exceptions can be accepted by Eurostat upon justification) in multi-country training courses will be covered.

Trainings will contribute to improving the statistical knowledge of staff from the countries on many statistical domains and horizontal issues (e.g. governance of NSSs, management of resources, quality, the use of common tools, harmonised approaches to the cycle of data production etc.).

Training courses will also facilitate the transfer of European standards to all EaP countries, thereby ensuring that they know and apply consistently the same standards. The national authorities in charge of training for civil servants and public employees will be kept informed and, where relevant, they will be involved in the organisation of planned training sessions.

The tasks of the Contractor:

- logistics arrangements for the participants (venue, travel, per diems, insurance, visas, etc.);
- providing 1-2 qualified trainers per course;
- providing general support before and during the activity;
- reporting on the activities (gathering reports, checking them, etc.);
- communication with Eurostat, partner countries and/or participants;

30 Study visits

Study visits will be organised as initiative of the beneficiary or other stakeholders. A study visit takes place in the premises of the expertise provider and lasts on average 3 days. The participants might be accompanied by a member of the project team to coordinate the event.

Expertise providers may be NSIs or other bodies responsible for the production of official statistics in EU Member States and EFTA countries. Other responsible bodies are for example the Central Bank, Ministries or other public agencies. All partner countries of the programme may also provide expertise but are not allowed to charge for expertise they provide to the other partner countries.

The participation of 1 person per each EaP country (exceptions can be accepted by Eurostat upon justification) in study visits may be covered.

The tasks of the Contractor:

- gather requests from the partner countries and propose the list of possible study visits, which will be approved by the Contracting Authority;
- assist Eurostat in selecting participants (checking their profiles, the justifications, etc.);
- organising events (finding hosting institution, booking premises, in cooperation with the hosting institution preparing agenda and content of the meeting, preparing and printing material, contracting experts, etc.);
- logistics arrangements for the participants (travel, per diems, insurance, visa, etc.);
- organising interpretation, if necessary;
- providing general support before and during the activity;
- reporting on the activities (gathering reports, checking them, etc.);
- communication with Eurostat, the partner countries and/or participants;

20 Workshops and seminars

These are events organised by the Contractor and related to institutional and governance issues as well as statistical domains identified as priority by Eurostat. The participation of up to 2 participants per each EaP country (exceptions can be accepted by Eurostat upon justification) in workshops and seminars specifically organised for the partner countries will be covered. The workshops last on average between 2 and 3 days.

The tasks of the Contractor:

- assist Eurostat in selecting participants (checking their profiles, the justifications, etc.);
- organising event (booking premises, preparing agenda and content of the meeting, preparing and printing material, contracting experts, speakers, etc.);
- providing 1-2 experts per event;
- logistics arrangements for the participants and experts (travel, per diems, insurance, visas, etc.);
- organising interpretation, if necessary;
- providing general support before and during the activity;
- reporting on the activities (gathering reports, checking them, etc.);
- communication with Eurostat, all partner countries and/or participants;

Technical assistance in country (300 days)

The programme offers a possibility of ad-hoc expert assistance in areas, which are important and urgent for the partner countries.

An ad-hoc consultancy can be requested by any of the 6 partner countries. The duration of an ad-hoc consultancy may vary between 2 and 10 working days. The duration is defined based on terms of reference and work programme.

The tasks of the Contractor:

- gather requests from the eligible partner countries for in country technical assistance needs and propose the list of possible ad-hoc consultancies;
- organising event (booking premises (if required), preparing agenda and content of the activity, preparing and printing material, contracting experts, etc.);
- logistics arrangements for the experts (travel, per diems, insurance, visas, etc.);
- organising interpretation, if necessary;
- providing general support before and during the activity;
- reporting on the activities (gathering reports, checking them, etc.);
- communication with Eurostat, grant countries and partner countries and/or participants;

Other events/meetings

This implies participation in meetings, seminars and task forces organised by Eurostat alone or jointly with international organisations such as UNECE, OECD, IMF, UN, etc. The participation of one person per EaP country (exceptions can be accepted by Eurostat upon justification) for each selected activity may be covered. The duration of a multi-country activity is on average 2 days.

The tasks of the Contractor:

- assist Eurostat in selecting partner countries' participants (checking their profiles, the justifications, etc.);
- logistics arrangements for the participants (travel, per diems, insurance, visas, etc.);
- providing general support before and during the activity;
- reporting on the activities (gathering reports, checking them, etc.);
- communication with Eurostat, partner countries and/or participants;

Pilot surveys

The Contractor will support the development of pilot surveys in selected statistical domains by the partner countries in order to:

- confirm the possible data sources;
- set up the most suitable data source which can fulfil the main targeted objectives including good data quality, low response burden and low costs;
- establish the statistical system which will be used in the future for statistical production.

The Contractor may propose other activities or events that contribute towards achieving the results for the approval of the Contracting Authority.

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The Contracting Authority is the European Commission, DG ESTAT. DG ESTAT B3 – (Enlargement, neighbourhood and development cooperation) will be responsible for the implementation of the programme.

4.3.2. Management structure

As regards activities, terms of reference for the organisation of each activity (workshop, training, technical assistance, study visit etc.) will be submitted to and validated by the contracting authority in advance (purpose, agenda, place, dates, duration, participants and experts.) A report with a maximum length of two pages will be submitted to the EC within one month of the end of the activity.

Venue: Events may take place in either the EaP region or in the EU MS. The contractor should explore the possibility to organise several events at the same venue, in order to reduce costs and simplify the organisation, for example at a training institute, or to benefit from potential free of charge venues proposed by participating institutions, providing they are adequate for the purpose.

Coordination with delegations: The relevant EU Delegation (contact information to be obtained from EC Task Manager) must be informed about any activity taking place in an EaP country, especially technical assistance missions, prior to the activity taking place. In case of technical assistance missions, experts should arrange a briefing with the EU Delegation as one of their first meetings. Likewise, they should try to arrange a debriefing at the EU Delegation prior to departure. The EC Task Manager will be in copy of all correspondence. For all other activities, EU Delegations should be invited to take part to events taking place in the corresponding country.

Language: The working languages for all regional events will be English and Russian as necessary. For events or activities involving one country there may be interpretation between English and the language of this country. The Contractor will provide appropriate interpretation facilities and translation of documents for the events.

Logistics: The Contractor is responsible for all logistical arrangements related to these events, for example travel, accommodation, payment of per diems, room booking etc. Backstopping staff shall be physically present at all major regional events. A timely planning and issue of invitation must be ensured to allow for sufficient planning.

Evaluation: Each event shall be rated by the participants via a questionnaire approved in advance by the Contracting Authority. The Contractor shall summarise the results of each event and attach them to the six-monthly report.

In addition to physical meetings, the Contractor shall consider alternative ways to put in place virtual meeting spaces in order to allow specialists within the region to network, or to connect trainers to training participants.

The Contractor shall set up and provide an effective and efficient mechanism to identify and develop synergies between various levels:

- between the different horizontal and thematic sectors of the project
- between the different stakeholders of the NSSs within a given horizontal or thematic sector
- between this project and other EU funded bilateral and regional initiatives (section 1.5)
- between this project and other relevant national or international institutions and their projects

The Contractor must also comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Action concerning acknowledgement of EU financing of the project (see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm.)

Ad-hoc meetings between the European Commission and key experts will be organised if necessary. In principle, these meetings will take place in Luxembourg and will be fixed on the request of the Contracting Authority according to a calendar suitable to all the parties involved.

The Contractor will be responsible for compiling all the relevant information needed for these meetings and will send it to the Commission at least one week in advance of the meeting. The Contractor will produce minutes of these meetings and submit them to Eurostat for approval within two weeks of the meeting.

The formal steering committee structure that will ensure participation and ownership of the beneficiary countries will be set up under the High Level Seminar, involving the Director Generals of the EaP National Statistical Institutes, representative(s) of Eurostat and of other relevant European Commission services (e.g. DG NEAR) that meets at least once a year. At working level, activities are coordinated with the international departments of the EaP NSIs.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

Where possible, Eurostat and the beneficiary countries will provide the Contractor with documents/studies/reports/etc. considered as being of use or relevance for the work carried out by the Contractor under this project.

Preference should be given to the use of facilities put at the disposal of the programme by the partner countries and institutions for any event, whenever appropriate.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

The activities of the project can take place in the EU, the Neighbourhood East or any other country where activities would be pertinent.

The Contractor shall establish one office located in one of the EU or Neighbourhood East countries, this office being considered the base of operations. The project office shall be functional within eight weeks of the project start date.

Key experts of the project may be located outside the base of operations subject to the condition that this is not to the detriment of the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the project. Key experts of the project shall, when needed, visit all Neighbourhood-East countries.

The location of the office/experts shall be defined and justified in the organisation and methodology parts of the offer.

5.2. Start date & period of implementation

The intended start date is 1 January 2019 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 34 months from this date. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the Special Conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

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 experts' profiles

The tenderer shall submit the CV and Statement of Exclusivity and Availability for the following key experts.

Key expert 1: Team leader (660 Working Days)

The role of the Team leader will be to ensure the overall co-ordination of the contract activities, the identification and communication of results, the planning and implementation of the events (trainings, workshops, etc), identification and recruiting of experts, visibility and information dissemination actions, and the preparation and submission of the periodic reports to the European Commission services. The Team Leader will be responsible for the co-ordination and liaison with the concerned Commission officials and with high-level statistical representatives in the EU and in the EaP countries.

General co-ordination will involve regular contact with Eurostat, the EaP countries and territories and EU Member States, either in person or remotely. This will entail the supervision and control of the work of experts, so as to ensure the quality of the Contract performance. It also involves quality control of the deliverables envisaged in the contract and of content of the events, and managing the dissemination and visibility strategy of the statistical cooperation between the EU and the EaP countries.

General co-ordination involves a proactive attitude to problem solving, and adaptability when faced with requirements from the stakeholders, provided these are within the scope of this contract. Modern technologies should be actively implemented to share knowledge, and communicate with stakeholders.

In addition to overarching programme management, the Team Leader will take responsibility for following horizontal topics such as the modernisation of the statistical sector, for example as relates to the use of new data sources, and institutional modernisation and quality issues, results and visibility and for ensuring their active uptake, with a common approach, across the statistical domains being supported.

Qualifications and skills of the Team Leader:

- University Degree, preferably completed by post-graduate studies at Master's or PhD level in economics, statistics or related field.
- Written and spoken English at level C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁶
- Knowledge of Russian will be an asset
- Proven managerial skills of complex multicultural teams, especially in the domain of mid-size and large EU projects.

General professional experience of the Team Leader:

- Minimum of **15 years overall experience** in project-related management and implementation required
- Experience in a management/team leader position or equivalent, in a cooperation project of similar size and complexity required,
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in EU cooperation projects required

Specific professional experience of the Team Leader:

- Minimum of **5 years of professional experience** in official statistics is required,
- Experience in gender statistics will be an asset.
- Experience in the EaP region will be an asset

Key experts 2 and 3: thematic key experts (330 working days per expert)

Working under the direction of the team leader, the thematic key experts should be made available to ensure a proper implementation of the development of two broad categories of statistics:

⁶ <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>

- Macro-economic statistics (include business statistics, ICT, energy, transport)
- Social statistics (in particular migration, labour statistics)

A different way of dividing the domain activities will be considered, if well justified by the tenderer, and depending on the expertise of the proposed thematic key experts.

Each thematic key expert will cover one broad priority sector that comprises a number of statistical domains. The thematic key experts could be supported by senior non-key experts, so that both sectors are adequately covered.

Each thematic key expert will contribute to the identification of meaningful results for the programme and the inputs needed to achieve these results (e.g. short term expertise, pilot surveys, workshops and their organisation (including agendas and contents of papers/presentations), training courses, and technical assistance missions to individual countries). Each thematic key expert will work closely with the NSI of the EaP countries, coordinated by the international departments, and ensure synergies with other working groups.

Qualifications and skills of key experts:

- University Degree, preferably completed by post-graduate studies either at Master's or PhD, or equivalent in economics, statistics or related field.
- Proven professional experience of **at least 5 years** in a national or international statistical institution.
- Written and spoken English at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁷
- Knowledge of Russian will be an asset.

General professional experience of key experts:

- Proven experience of **at least 5 years** in the design of statistical frameworks (methodological guidelines, manuals, recommendations, etc.) in, at least one, of the broad statistical domains in question.

Specific professional experience of key experts:

- Proven experience of **at least 2 years** in providing consultancy and/or supervision of methodological work in official statistics related to the broad domain(s) in question.
- Experience in providing consultancy in statistical development projects will be an asset.
- Work experience with one of the institutions of the EaP Partner Countries will be an asset

All key experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

6.1.2. Non-key experts

Senior non-key experts will assist the team leader and thematic key experts by providing expertise and assistance in the sectors not covered by the key experts. The names of non-key experts should not be included in the tender proposal.

The Contractor should be able to have access to a pool of experts in various statistical domains, relevant to this programme (see 4.2.), to be able to identify and recruit the best suited expert for a specific task (e.g. training courses, publications, etc.). The general profile for the non-key experts is as follows:

⁷ <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>

All non-key experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

6.1.3. Support staff & backstopping

Backstopping and support staff costs must be included in the fee rates and include: quality control of the project deliverable, administrative management of the project office, accounting, computer management, secretariat support, logistics support for project experts.

The Contractor will be responsible for back-stopping activities, in particular for ensuring adequate co-ordination amongst all staff activities and logistical organisation of project events. Backstopping staff shall be physically present at all major regional events.

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.

Translation and interpretation linked to the project implementation such as reports, letters or any other means of communication related to project activities must be provided by the Contractor. Translation and interpretation linked to Technical Assistance missions must also be provided by the Contractor.

All necessary equipment for the team of experts as for example computers, printers, fax, project-related local and international telecommunications charges and office running costs must be covered by the Contractor within the fee rates of its experts.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract that is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

6.5. Incidental expenditure

The maximum available budget is EUR **5,000,000**, of which incidental costs account for EUR **3,000,000** and expenditure verification for EUR **20,000**.

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.
- Costs related to the organisation of events as for example: renting of meeting rooms, renting of equipment (microphones, audio-visual media, flip-charts), copies of event documents, coffee breaks, interpretation, translation of event documents.
- Travel costs and subsistence allowances for participants to workshops, trainings courses, study visits or any regional meeting as agreed with the EC project manager.
- Costs for editing, printing, and dissemination of publications.
- Costs for interpretations during events.
- Costs for translation of publications.
- Cost of the work to be carried out by the recipient institutions of the partner countries for pilot project related activities
- Security costs.

The provision for incidental expenditure for this contract is EUR 3,000,000.00. This amount must be included unchanged in the Budget breakdown.

Daily subsistence costs may be reimbursed for missions foreseen in these terms of reference or approved by the Contracting Authority, and carried out by the contractor's authorised experts, outside the expert's normal place of posting.

The per diem is a flat-rate maximum sum 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 by the contractor's authorised experts for missions carried out outside the expert's normal place of posting. The per diem is payable if the duration of the mission is 12 hours or more. The per diem may be paid in half or in full, with 12 hours = 50% of the per diem rate and 24 hours = 100% of the per diem rate. 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 - at the start of each such mission.

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 approval by the Contracting Authority for the use of the incidental expenditure is not needed except when :

- For a given activity, the incidental budget exceeds EUR 10,000.

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 charged with verifying the expenditure of this contract in order to proceed with the payment of any pre-financing instalments and/or interim payments.

The provision for expenditure verification for this contract is EUR 20 000. 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 six 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 the 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 summarise, 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	Analysis of existing situation and work plan for the project including logical framework	No later than 4 months after the start of implementation
6-month Progress Report	Short description of progress (technical and financial) including problems encountered; planned work for the next 6 months accompanied by an invoice and the expenditure verification report. Additional section on an annual basis (every other 6 monthly report): progress	No later than 1 month after the end of each 6-month implementation period.

	towards results including assessment as to whether project is on track	
Draft Final Report	Short description of achievements including problems encountered and recommendations, and the extent to which results have been achieved	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 1 month of receiving comments on the draft final report from the Project Manager identified in the contract.

7.2. Submission & approval of reports

Three copies 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.

Electronic copies will be provided in parallel.

At the end of the project, the Contractor should send to the contracting authority a USB stick containing all the activities' terms of reference and reports, publications and reports of the programme.

The Partner countries will have the chance to comment on the reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

In the Consultant must state quality standards and indicate how these standards will be measured in the course of performing the contract (logframe).

In particular, the Consultant will identify indicators and sources of verification for the intended project objective, purpose and results. Activity deliverables cannot be used as result or objective indicators.

The Consultant is expected to put in place an internal project monitoring system to assess the progress made against the stated indicators and targets.

In addition, the European Commission may launch one or several Result-Oriented Mission(s) (ROM) of the project, which provide an external assessment of the project against the DAC criteria for project evaluation. The EC may also decide to have a mid-term, final and/or ex-post evaluation of the project. The Contracting Authority may appoint a third party to conduct a monitoring and evaluation of the activities performed by the Contractor.

The Contractor shall include in the final report an assessment of the results. This final report shall mention all implementation difficulties and include a critical study of any major problems that arose during the performance of the contract. Evaluation criteria to be taken into account are, for example:

- Progress in the development of methodological frameworks and tools in priority areas and other areas
- Progress in the production/availability of EaP countries' data in priority (and other) areas
- Progress in the production/availability of EaP countries' key national or regional indicators, including those needed for SDGs, and their accessibility
- Progress made in the availability and dissemination of statistical information at regional level (data, tools and frameworks)
- Impact of the project on sustainable institutional and statistical capacity building of beneficiaries
- Quantitative indicators on the progress towards results

8.2. Special requirements

Confidentiality

The Contractor and the experts/ reviewers will have access to confidential information about the NSIs and other producers of official statistics. The Contractor and the experts have to sign a statement confirming that they will respect the confidential nature of the information, which must not be disclosed to other parties than the NSIs and the other producers of official statistics concerned and Eurostat.

Publications

Some of the results of the project might lead to the development of a final publication at the end of the project. Before conceiving and formatting such publication, the Contractor is required to consult the competent service of Eurostat, via the Statistical Cooperation unit and to follow the guidelines given.

Data bases and informatics systems

In case any of the results of the project requires the production of a data base or any other informatics system, the Contractor is required to consult the competent service of Eurostat, via the statistical cooperation unit, and to follow the guidelines given. This provision applies where and insofar as the informatics system of Eurostat is concerned directly through any installation. It is mandatory to consult, via the Statistical Cooperation unit, the competent Eurostat unit even before any conception of such system, including the choice of software to be used.

Use of language

All reports and deliverables required under this contract must be provided in proof-read English, unless otherwise indicated

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