

Call for Tender n° 01/2019

Specialised Support Services for Communication

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1. EPOS ERIC General Information

EPOS, the European Plate Observing System, is a long-term plan to facilitate integrated use of data, data products, and facilities from distributed research infrastructures for solid Earth science in Europe.

EPOS will bring together Earth scientists, national research infrastructures, ICT (Information & Communication Technology) experts, decision makers, and public to develop new concepts and tools for accurate, durable, and sustainable answers to societal questions concerning geo-hazards and those geodynamic phenomena (including geo-resources) relevant to the environment and human welfare.

EPOS mission is to integrate the diverse and advanced European Research Infrastructures for solid Earth science and build on new e-science opportunities to monitor and understand the dynamic and complex solid-Earth System.

EPOS vision is that the integration of the existing national and trans-national research infrastructures will increase access and use of the multidisciplinary data recorded by the solid Earth monitoring networks, acquired in laboratory experiments and/or produced by computational simulations. The establishment of EPOS will foster worldwide interoperability in the Earth sciences and services to a broad community of users.

EPOS will identify existing gaps and promote implementation plans with environmental, marine and space science to help solve the grand challenges facing the Earth and its inhabitants.

On October the 30th 2018, the European Commission granted the legal status of European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) to EPOS. The ERIC legal framework provides EPOS with legal personality and capacity recognised in all EU Member States and with the flexibility to adapt to the specific requirements of each infrastructure.

Based in Italy, EPOS ERIC is currently joined by thirteen countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, and Iceland and Switzerland participating as observers.

By linking up hundreds of individual research infrastructures located in the European countries, EPOS ERIC will provide open access to a large pool of integrated data, data products and facilities for researchers.

The EPOS ERIC legal seat is hosted in Rome, at the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV) headquarter. The ICS Central Hub (ICS-C) is hosted in the United Kingdom (BGS) and France (BRGM) with technical operational support from Denmark (GEUS).

2. Purpose of the tender

The purpose of this tender is to select a professional company specialised in communication activities and services to be engaged in the design and elaboration of an integrated and articulated Communication Plan for the EPOS ERIC.

This Call for Tender includes a description of the required services and instructions to be followed to take part in the tendering process.

EPOS ERIC procurement policy shall respect the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and competition. According to the provisions of article 24 of the EPOS ERIC Statutes, EPOS ERIC shall treat procurement candidates and tenderers equally and without discrimination.

3. Award of contract

The price fix for this tender is EUR 40.000,00 (forty-thousand).

The contract will be awarded to the most economically advantageous tender. This will be determined on the basis of the price and the quality of the tender by means of computation of the final score according to the following formula:

After evaluation of the quality of the tender, the tenders are ranked using the formula below to determine the tender offering best value for money.

Score for tender X =
 (cheapest price / price of tender X * 20)
 +
 (total quality score (out of 100) /100 * 80)

EPOS ERIC benefits of VAT exemption. Prices must be quoted in Euro and will not be subject to revision. Costs incurred in preparing and submitting tenders are borne by the tenderers and cannot be reimbursed.

The tenderer will submit the tender and carry out all necessary activity related to the tender process including supporting any due diligence requirements entirely at its own cost. EPOS ERIC will not be liable for any bid costs, expenditure, work or effort incurred by a tenderer in proceeding with or participating in this procurement, including if the procurement process is terminated without an award.

4. Description of the services

The assigned contractor is required to design, elaborate and present a Communication Plan for EPOS ERIC. The Plan should enable the EPOS ERIC Executive Coordination Office to promote the ERIC activities and services, targeting specific stakeholders in the relevant countries and ensuring effective objectives and results dissemination towards the widest possible audience by using the appropriate channels and tools.

The Communication Plan should provide guidelines for future activities and include strategic objectives, messages, publics, selected media, responsibilities and organisation chart, the budget.

The communications planning process concerns defining the type of information to deliver, who will receive it, the format for communicating it, and the timing of its release and distribution.

The Communication Plan will at least:

- Provide clear information to about and raise awareness of EPOS ERIC activities
- Disseminate results and good practice emerging from the EPOS ERIC community
- Increase interest in and raise awareness by the involved research infrastructures and innovation communities (businesses, research, students, etc.)
- Manage and enhance the reputation of the EPOS ERIC in Europe.
- To increase awareness on the EPOS ERIC activities and achievements
- Better integrate content from all participating European Research Infrastructures
- Improve and engage more strongly using social media and other media
- Reach a large audience and achieve and maintain greater interest and engagement among the specific target groups.

The following steps will be followed to ensure the elaboration of an effective Communication Plan:

- Perform a situation analysis. To better understand where the EPOS ERIC stands in terms of communication, the awarded contractor will work closely with the EPOS ERIC Executive Director and the Executive Coordination Office (ECO) gathering and analysing all relevant information. Brainstorming with the ECO staff is foreseen, as well as collection of external inputs and contributions.
- Define the communication objectives and goals. The overall communication objectives should be clearly set, as well as the results to be achieved. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-focused.
- Identify the target audience, the recipients of the messages to be delivered, by categories of actors and stakeholders.
- Define activities and tools for communication and dissemination.
- Select the most appropriate and effective methods of communication and media channels.
- Establish the schedule, a calendar for the communication strategy, a time for the subsequent steps and the frequency of communication.



- Evaluate results. It is always important to measure results of a planned activity in terms of tasks accomplished and results achieved to monitor the implementation, make the necessary adjustments and re-align the strategy. Progress reports should be foreseen during the Communication Plan implementation and a set of specific Key Performance Indicators should be established.

The Communication Plan should also include the description of the structure and organisational chart with responsibilities and tasks of the Communication Office, plus a training plan for the Communication Office staff.

A kick-off meeting is foreseen at the start of the contract. At least one-day meeting per month at the EPOS ERIC headquarters in Rome at INGV is foreseen with the participation of two experts from the service provider and representatives of the ECO.

Remote assistance is also requested, plus part time on-site collaboration with the assigned contractor.

A Final Report and a Communication Plan written in English are the final deliverables to be submitted as major outcomes of the supplied support.

5. Duration of the contract or time limit for completion

The required services will be provided over a period of six months according to the following phases:

As required by the European Commission, the EPOS ERIC Communication Plan will be strongly based on the principle of Open Science and Responsible Research and Innovation-RRRI, and as such it will build on governance and participation, public engagement, education and gender equality as fundamental pillars.

1. Analysis of the current state and identification of needs (month 1)
2. Planning (month 2)
3. Elaboration of the Communication Plan (3-6).

6. Minimum eligibility criteria for applicants

Participation in this tendering procedure is open on equal terms to legal persons fulfilling the below mentioned eligibility criteria.

a. Technical and professional criteria

1. Applicants must have excellent knowledge in understanding, speaking and writing of the English language;
2. At least n. 1 professional journalist and n. 1 senior science communicator with experience in institutional communication and risk should be involved in the work;
3. At least three similar works conducted;
4. Letters of references should be provided.

7. Exclusion criteria and evidence

Contracts may not be awarded to tenderers who, during the procurement procedure:

- a) Are subject to a conflict of interest; the verification of conflicting situations giving grounds for exclusion concerns tenderers, subcontractors, but also any person of the tenderer (or subcontractor) with powers of representation, decision-making or control in relation to the tenderer (or subcontractor). A conflict of interest exists where the impartial and objective exercise functions – in the present case, the impartial and objective implementation of the contract – is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest.

As a result, the tender that is found to be in conflict of interest shall be excluded. The tenderers shall note that having found the tenderer itself, and/or one or more subcontractor(s) in conflict of interest will lead to the rejection of the whole offer.

- b) Are guilty of misrepresenting the information required by EPOS ERIC as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information;
- c) Find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion for this procurement procedure.

The tenderers shall certify that they are not in one of the situations listed above by completing and signing the 'Declaration of Honour' (Annex 1).

8. Participation to the tendering procedure

The language of the submitted tenders shall be English.

Tenders should be dispatched no later than 05/07/2019 by using the following means of submission:

Means of submission	Time limit	Evidence of dispatch	Address for delivery
Post	17:00 CET	Postmark	EPOS ERIC c/o INGV - Via di Vigna Murata n°605 00143 Rome - ITALY
Courier	17:00 CET	Deposit slip of courier service	

Tenders must be submitted using the double envelope system – i.e. one outer envelope and two inner envelopes – in order to guarantee the confidentiality and the integrity of data. The outer envelope should indicate the number of the procurement procedure and should be marked as it follows: **“Call for Tender - Provision of specialised support services for Communication”**. If self-adhesive envelopes are used, they must be sealed with adhesive tape and the sender must sign across this tape.

The two inner envelopes shall be indicated as:

A. *Administrative and Technical Offer*

B. *Economic Offer*.

The envelope A. “Administrative and Technical Offer” shall contain:

- The Declaration on Honour duly signed (Annex 1)
- The completed Submission Form duly signed (Annex 2);
- A description of the offered services and the proposed methodology in a word document, including a summary table of main expertise of the persons responsible for providing the services.
- Curriculum Vitae of the team members involved in the provision of services in *Europass Format*. CVs should include information on work experience, qualifications and language ability of team members.
- A list of previous similar works conducted, services provided or projects participating in (at least three) with letters of references enclosed.

The envelope B. “Economic Offer” shall contain:

- The offered price quoted in Euro provided on the tenderer’s headed notepaper.

The tender must be:

- Signed and dated by the tenderer or the duly authorised representative (i.e. the Declaration on Honour, the Submission Form, the technical offer and the economic offer);
- Perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures.

The period of validity of the tender, during which tenderers may not modify the terms of their tenders in any respect, is 3 months from the date indicated in point 11.

9. Accuracy of proposal

The tender must be clear, concise and complete. Tenderers are advised to check the accuracy of their submission prior to return, paying particular attention to clerical errors and omissions. Tenderers will not be permitted to amend proposals after the proposal return date except as part of any proposal clarification process initiated by EPOS ERIC. EPOS ERIC reserves the right to mark a tenderer down or exclude them from the procurement if its tender contains any ambiguities, caveats or lacks clarity. Tenderers should submit only such information as is necessary to respond effectively to this call. Tenders will be evaluated on the basis of information submitted by their tenders only, before the deadline for submission of tenders.

10. Tender evaluation

EPOS ERIC may, in its discretion, extend the closing date and time of the tender. The selection procedure will be based on the principles of equal treatment, fairness and transparency. An evaluation team will be established made up of the Executive Director and two people within the staff of the Executive Coordination Office.

EPOS ERIC Executive Director is responsible for this procedure.

Tenders fulfilling the minimum criteria, will be evaluated against the following award criteria:

Award Criteria		Points
Qualitative Criteria 80/100	1) Demonstrated quality of the technical and professional capacity proposed by the Tenderer. The Tenderer is requested to provide at least three examples of previous work as well as a list of references.	30
	2) Demonstrated experience of working within European projects, in particular under the FP7 and H2020 schemes will be considered an advantage.	30
	3) Coherence of the proposal with the EPOS framework and the tender's request	20
Economic Criteria 20/100	4) The price proposal.	20
Total		100

In delivering the services the tenderer shall ensure the highest quality standards on which EPOS ERIC will be the sole judge.

The most economically advantageous tender fulfilling criteria stated in point 5 by weighting the score obtained in the technical and qualitative evaluation will be selected.

All applicants will receive acknowledgement of receipt of their tender and will be informed of the outcomes of the selection process by e-mail only within two weeks following the evaluation procedure conclusion. Tenderers should provide a valid e-mail address together with contact details in the tender and check this e-mail address regularly.

EPOS ERIC is not obliged to provide reasons for its decision to shortlist, accept or reject any tender.

Preference will be given to companies specialised in different areas of science communication, including institutional communication and marketing.

EPOS ERIC reserves the right to conclude or not the tender process and select the successful tender.

EPOS ERIC will not be contractually bound in any way to a bidder for this tender until EPOS ERIC and the successful winner have entered into a written contract.

The following offers will be excluded from the tendering procedure:

- those received after the deadline;
- those missing information about the economic operator or lacking the requested requirements;
- those submitted by economic operators whose position is inconsistent with the law or the procedure;

- those submitted by economic operators who are subject to one of the exclusion criteria at point 6;
- those submitted by economic operators who are subject to one of the causes of exclusion according the Italian law.

11. Tender procedure schedule

The tender is open from the 20th of June to the 5th of July, 2019. Tender submission and schedule of the work are as follows:

Launch of the Tender	20/06/2019
Close of the Tender	05/07/2019
Evaluation of received tenders and selection of the awarded Tender	15/07/2019
Signature of the contract / Briefing session with ECO to agree on the objectives, the methodology, and the process	31/08/2019
Start of the assignment	01/09/2019
End of the assignment	28/02/2020

12. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

The tenderers undertake that they will not at any time, either before or after the termination of the service contract, use or disclose or communicate to any third parties confidential information relating to EPOS ERIC. This restriction shall continue to apply after the termination of the contract without limit in point of time. To ensure the independence of terms of the contract, the winning tenderer will sign a declaration certifying that it has no conflict of interest in relation to the tasks to be undertaken and that it will inform EPOS ERIC should this status change.

13. Terms and conditions

This invitation to tender is in no way binding on EPOS ERIC. Its contractual obligation commences only upon signature of the contract with the successful tenderer.

EPOS ERIC may cancel the award procedure up to the point of signature without the candidates or tenderers being entitled to claim any compensation. This decision must be substantiated and the candidates or tenderers notified. Similarly, EPOS ERIC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to advertise for new proposals, to abandon the need for services, or amend this Call for Tender at any time prior to the execution of the written contract. EPOS ERIC reserves the right to waive any formalities in the call for tender process.

EPOS ERIC shall not be liable for any compensation with respect to tenderers whose tenders have not been accepted. Nor shall it be liable if it decides not to award the contract.

By submitting a tender the Tenderer accepts all the terms and conditions set out in this Call for Tender. The Tenderer agrees that:

- EPOS ERIC may copy the proposal for purposes of facilitating the evaluation of the proposal and agrees that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party.
- It will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against EPOS ERIC based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided or concerning EPOS ERIC’s failure, neglect or otherwise, to provide the bidder with pertinent information as intended by this Call for Tender.

The agreement for services provision will be completed by signing a contract between the two Parties. It will include the terms and conditions for the services provision, the terms of delivery, invoicing and payment modalities.

14. Privacy Statement

Once EPOS ERIC has received and opened the tender, it becomes its property and it shall be treated confidentially. If processing the reply to the invitation to tender involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as names, addresses and CVs), such data will be processed pursuant to Article 13 of the REGULATION (EU) 2016/679 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) [1].

We will treat your data with respect. You can contact us at any time to cancel the consent to store and use your personal data, by sending an email to epos-eric@pec.it. For more information about our privacy practice please read our EPOS Privacy Statement in the EPOS web site (www.epos-ip.org/content/privacy-policy-summary).

Unless indicated otherwise, the replies to the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the tender in accordance with the specifications of the invitation to tender and will be processed solely for that purpose by EPOS ERIC.

15. Contact Person

Information and any question regarding the tender should be submitted to:

EPOS ERIC Executive Director Mr. Massimo Cocco (epos-eric@pec.it or massimo.cocco@ingv.it)

and in copy to

EPOS ERIC Scientific Officer Ms Carmela Freda (carmela.freda@ingv.it)

EPOS ERIC Head Secretariat Ms. Diana Piras (diana.piras@ingv.it)

Questions shall be submitted in English only and solely for the purpose of clarifying the procurement documents and procedure. EPOS ERIC may respond to questions or provide information from tenderers, but is under no obligation to provide such responses or information to all the other tenderers.

16. Contracting organisation

EPOS ERIC

Via di Vigna Murata n° 605

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The Executive Director

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