



**An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála**
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

CFT8418817: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Evaluation Consultancy Services Framework

Clarification Questions and Answers – Updated on 3rd July 2026

Please see additional questions Q13 to Q33

Ref No	Question	Contracting Authority Response
Q1.	Framework operation and call-off mechanism The procurement notice, section 5.1.15 “Techniques – Framework agreement”, appears to describe the Framework Agreement as being without reopening of competition. Appendix 5 of the RFT, Article 5 “Procedure for Award of Contracts”, states that on each occasion DFAT proposes to award a contract under the Framework Agreement, DFAT shall issue a Supplementary Request for Tenders to all Framework Members in accordance with a mini-	A Change Notice has been issued for publication to amend the reference in Section 5.1.15 (Techniques – Framework Agreement) of the Contract Notice for Lot 1, 2 and 3. The amendment involves changing from “Framework agreement, without reopening of competition” to “Framework agreement, with reopening of competition” The terms of the competition are as set out in the tender documents. All Framework Members will be invited to participate in each mini-competition under their respective Lot.

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	competition procedure. Appendix 5, Article 6, also refers to award criteria for mini-competitions. Could the Contracting Authority please clarify the intended mechanism for awarding contracts under the Framework Agreement, including whether: a. Contracts will be awarded without reopening competition; b. Contracts will be awarded through Supplementary Requests for Tenders / mini-competitions; c. The mechanism may vary by lot, assignment type, value, urgency or other circumstances; or d. A clarification or amendment will be issued to align the procurement notice and RFT documentation. If Supplementary Requests for Tenders / mini-competitions will apply, could the Contracting Authority also confirm whether all Framework Members appointed to the relevant lot will be invited to each such competition?	
Q2.	Pricing, travel and subsistence Appendix 2 states that quoted daily rates should be inclusive of all costs, including travel and	For the purposes of the proposed Daily Rates, Tenderers are requested to complete the TRD for each Lot tendered for, 'Travel' refers to domestic travel undertaken within the country in which the tenderer

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	subsistence, and also states that the required services will not be delivered in person. However, the requirements for Lot 3 indicate that assignments may include a fieldwork component averaging approximately two weeks per project. Could the Contracting Authority please clarify whether tenderers should price on the basis that: a. All services under the Framework Agreement will be delivered remotely and no travel or subsistence costs will arise; b. Fieldwork under Lot 3 may be required in person, where specified in a future Supplementary Request for Tenders; c. Travel, accommodation, subsistence, visas, security-related costs, vaccinations, insurance extensions, local transport, interpretation, venue hire or other fieldwork-related costs should be included in the daily rates submitted at framework stage; or d. Such fieldwork-related costs, where applicable, may be priced separately, reimbursed separately, or specified separately at Supplementary Request for Tenders stage.	resides. Any such domestic travel costs are expected to be included within the proposed professional fee rate. International Travel and Subsistence costs associated with the provision of services are not to be included within the proposed Daily Rates. All international travel costs, subsistence, and related travel expenses incurred for the purposes of external professional services, subsequent to winning a mini-competition under the applicable Lot, will be payable at normal Irish Government Civil Service Departmental rates (Subsistence Allowances Abroad). Such costs will be discussed and agreed in advance between the winning Tenderer and the Department's contract manager. In particular: a. No. Depending on the Lot and the projects under each, there may be in-person meetings/engagements. Lot 1 projects are expected to be primarily undertaken remotely; Lot 2 projects are expected to have some in-person engagement; and Lot 3 projects are expected to involve travel. b. International fieldwork may be required under Lot 3; however, the international travel and subsistence costs for this travel should not be included in the daily rate. c. Please note above text in bold and subsequent paragraph on International Travel and Subsistence costs. Please see response to Q7 and Q8 regarding travel insurance and other project related costs.

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		d. No; please note above text in bold and subsequent paragraph on International Travel and Subsistence costs. A Tender Amendment Notice will be issued confirming this change.
Q3.	Applicability of framework daily rates to future assignments Could the Contracting Authority confirm whether the daily rates submitted at framework stage will operate as maximum ceiling rates for all future assignments under the relevant lot? If Supplementary Requests for Tenders / mini-competitions will apply, could the Contracting Authority confirm whether Framework Members may propose assignment-specific rates at that stage, provided they do not exceed the maximum daily rates submitted at the framework stage?	As set out in Appendix 2 (Pricing Schedule) of the RFT and Section 6 (Award Criteria 4) of the TRD, “The quoted rates are the maximum permissible for the term of the framework. Tenderers should note that these rates may be adjusted for inflation only.” Framework members will be permitted at mini-competition stage to submit Daily Fee Rates below the rates quoted at Framework stage.
Q4.	Evaluation of cost The TRD states that the total of the Senior Consultant and Junior Consultant daily rates will be used for evaluation purposes. Could the Contracting Authority confirm whether the Senior Consultant and Junior Consultant rates will be weighted equally for the purposes of the cost evaluation, or whether any weighting will be applied to reflect anticipated usage of senior and junior inputs under each lot?	The Total figure (the daily rate of the Senior Consultant plus the daily rate of the Junior Consultant) will be used for financial evaluation purposes as set out in Section 6 (Award Criteria – Criteria 4) on page 11 of the TRD.

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Q5.	Junior Consultant rate Could the Contracting Authority confirm whether tenderers must provide a Junior Consultant daily rate where the tenderer proposes to deliver the relevant lot using only senior personnel? If a Junior Consultant rate is mandatory, could the Contracting Authority confirm whether inclusion of such a rate creates any obligation to provide junior personnel during the framework term?	The response provided to Q4 above also applies to Q5.
Q6.	Lot-specific pricing Could the Contracting Authority confirm whether the same Senior Consultant and Junior Consultant daily rates must apply across all lots tendered for, or whether tenderers may submit different daily rates for different lots, reflecting the different nature, complexity, risk profile and delivery requirements of each lot?	There are three individual Lots under this framework. Each Lot will be evaluated separately. Tenderers are required to submit a separate TRD for each Lot tendered for. It is acceptable for Tenderers to propose different rates for each Lot tendered for.
Q7.	Expenses and direct project costs at specific assignment stage Where a future assignment requires international travel, in-country fieldwork, local research support, interpretation, translation, venue hire, transcription, survey administration, data collection platforms or other direct project expenses, could the Contracting Authority confirm whether such costs will be:	In relation to costs regarding International Travel and Subsistence, please refer to the response to Q2 above. In relation to other fieldwork-related costs, Tenderers are expected to include any Tenderer-managed general administration costs relevant to the provision of their services as part of their stated Daily Rate.

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	a. Included within the daily rates submitted at framework stage; b. Priced separately as reimbursable expenses at a specific assignment stage; c. Included as a separate cost line in any Supplementary Request for Tenders response; or d. Provided directly or arranged by DFAT.	Successful Framework members will be given specific details for each mini-competition under their respective Lot as they arise. Please note the response to Q3 above regarding maximum rates. a. Please see above and response to Q2. b. Please see above. DFAT will provide reimbursement for project-related travel, subsistence, and relevant expenses incurred, which must be accompanied by receipts and other supporting documentation. c. No. Please see response to Q2. d. Please see response to Q2. DFAT will provide reimbursement for project-related travel, subsistence, and relevant expenses incurred, which must be accompanied by receipts and other supporting documentation. This will be discussed and agreed in advance between the winning framework member and the Department's contract manager.
Q8.	Insurance requirements and overseas fieldwork The RFT indicates that insurance requirements will be specified in the relevant Supplementary Request for Tenders and that the likely insurance levels include Employer's Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity. Could the Contracting Authority clarify whether, where overseas fieldwork is required, any additional insurance requirements, territorial extensions, security cover, medical evacuation	The standard general insurance requirements are detailed in Section 2.21.1 on Page 13 of the RFT. International travel insurance may be required and should be included in the all-inclusive professional daily fee rate. The consultant is responsible for securing international travel insurance proportionate to the requirement. Please refer to the response to Q2 above regarding travel requirements. A Tender Amendment Notice will be issued confirming this change.

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	cover or country-specific requirements will be specified at a specific assignment stage rather than required to be priced at the framework stage?	
Q9.	Sample reports and confidentiality The TRD requests a sample evaluation report or equivalent prepared for one of the reference clients. Could the Contracting Authority confirm whether tenderers may submit a redacted, anonymised or confidential version of a sample report where the original report contains client-sensitive, commercially sensitive, security-sensitive or personal data?	Yes. Please refer to Section 2.16 (Freedom of Information) on page 12 of the RFT.
Q10.	Reference contracts Could the Contracting Authority confirm whether the same two reference contracts may be used for more than one lot where the references are relevant to each lot, or whether two distinct reference contracts are expected for each lot tendered?	As stated in Section 3.2 (b) (Technical and Professional Ability) on Page 16 of the RFT: <i>“Tenderers must demonstrate in the TRD that they have the technical and professional requirement(s) set out below in Appendix 1, both overall as well as specific in respect of each Lot tendered for. Two comparable and relevant reference contracts completed in the past five years must be provided...”</i> A separate TRD is required for each Lot tendered. Each Lot will be evaluated separately. It is possible to use the same two references for each separate Lot tendered for.

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Q11.	Key personnel and availability The TRD requests CVs of all personnel who will be involved in delivering the services under the lot being tendered and confirmation of availability for the duration of the contract term. Could the Contracting Authority confirm whether tenderers may propose a wider panel of named personnel, with final team composition to be confirmed at a specific assignment stage, depending on assignment scope, timing, availability and subject-matter requirements?	As stated in Section 6 (Award Criteria) Page 10 of the TRD: <i>“Tenderers should submit the CVs of all the personnel that will be involved in delivering the services under the lot being tendered.”</i> Please note that the Department will expect a CV for <i>the key personnel</i> who would be involved in providing the professional services. These CVs will form part of the evaluation of submissions as set out under Award Criteria 2 in the RFT and TRD. For successful Tenderers placed on the Framework, if it becomes necessary over the course of the Framework duration to replace personnel, then a person with comparable experience and skills must be proposed. Acceptance of the proposed personnel onto the Framework will be at the discretion of the Department.
Q12.	Short-notice activation Appendix 1 refers to limited notification of mini-competitions and potential engagement at short notice. Could the Contracting Authority provide an indicative minimum expected response period for future assignment requests and/or an indicative mobilisation period for assignments, particularly for Lot 3 assignments involving fieldwork or specialist personnel?	The reference to <i>‘potential to be engaged at short notice’</i> in Appendix 1 (page 23) refers to indicative response periods of approximately 10 working days’ turn-around for proposals for consideration in a mini-competition. The indicative mobilisation period will vary from project-to-project, but could take place within 10-to-30 working days of confirmation of successful Tenderer for the mini-competition. The mobilisation period will be confirmed in the mini-competition tender documents.

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Q13.	If applying as an individual consultant solely for Lot 1, is it necessary to have a turnover of €100,000 as specified under Selection Criteria 32 (a)?	The minimum turnover threshold requirement for Lot 1 has been reduced to €75,000 per annum over a three-year period. A Tender Amendment Notice will be issued to confirm this change and the TRD template will be updated to also reflect the change.
Q14.	Consortium composition, roles and nominated lead entity Paragraph 2.5 of the RFT provides that, where a group of undertakings submits a Tender, DFAT will deal with all matters relating to the Competition through a single nominated entity authorised to represent all members of the group. It also states that the Tenderer must provide details of all members of the group and their role in the Tender, and clearly identify which consortium member is performing which element of the Services. Could the Contracting Authority please clarify in what sections of the Tender Response Document and/or supporting attachments tenderers should present the following information: a. The composition of the consortium, including the legal names and details of each consortium member;	The requirements relating to Consortia and Prime/Subcontractors are set out in Section 2.5 of the RFT. The documentation necessary to detail a Consortium's proposal must take into account the requirements set out in the following sections of the RFT: • Section 2.5 (Consortia and Prime/Subcontractors) • Section 2.2 (Compliant Tenders) • Section 3.1(Compliant Tenders) • Section 3.2 (Selection Criteria) The details required in relation to a consortium should be included in the relevant TRD sections, per the following: a. Section 1. Tenderer's Profile. Tenderer can copy/paste new tables in this section for each profile member in the proposed consortia. b. Section 1. Tenderer's Profile. The first profile listed should indicate it is the single nominated entity authorised to represent the consortium for the purposes of the Competition.

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	b. Confirmation of the single nominated entity authorised to represent the consortium for the purposes of the Competition; c. The respective roles and responsibilities of each consortium member in delivering the Services for the relevant lot; and d. Any supporting authorisation or commitment letter from consortium members confirming the nominated lead entity and the availability of their resources. In particular, could the Contracting Authority confirm whether this information should be included in the Tenderer's Profile section, the Technical and Professional Ability section, the qualitative award criteria responses, or submitted as a separate attachment?	c. Please include this information in Section 6. Award Criteria, response to Criteria 2. d. Any supporting documentation can be submitted separate to but accompanying the TRD.
Q15.	Appendix 4 – Declaration as to Personal Circumstances of Tenderer Appendix 4 contains the Declaration as to Personal Circumstances of Tenderer. Section 3.3.2 of the RFT indicates that this declaration may be requested from the successful tenderer as part of the evidence required prior to appointment. In the case of a consortium tender, could the Contracting Authority please clarify: a. if each consortium member will be required to complete and execute the Appendix 4 declaration	It is only successful Tenderers who will be requested to complete Appendix 4 – Declaration as to Personal Circumstances of Tenderer. a. All members of a Consortium would need to complete Appendix 4 if successful. b. Internal staff would not be required to complete an Appendix 4, and neither would an individual expert if they are contracted by the Tenderer; however, if they are a direct party to the Consortium then they would need to complete Appendix 4, if successful. c. As above, if the individual experts are part of a team either as staff or external contractors, then they are not required to complete a separate

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	or if a declaration from the nominated lead entity / proposed Prime Contractor will be sufficient; b. Are we right to understand that the declaration is intended to cover the tendering entity, its internal staff and also individual experts proposed in the tender response? c. Please confirm that individual experts proposed as a part of the team do not need to fill Appendix 4.	Appendix 4; however, if they are a party to the Consortium in their own right then they will need to complete an Appendix 4, if successful.
Q16.	Selection criteria evidence for consortium members and relied-upon entities Section 3.3.2 refers to evidence demonstrating that “each entity concerned” meets the Selection Criteria. In the case of a consortium tender, could the Contracting Authority please clarify whether “each entity concerned” means: a. The consortium collectively assessed on the basis of the combined financial, technical and professional capacity of the consortium members; b. Each individual consortium member separately; c. The nominated lead entity / proposed Prime Contractor only; or	Please see Section 3.1 (Compliant Tenders) in the RFT. A consortium comprises members with one member nominated to be the focal point of contact (‘entity’) on behalf of the consortium. A consortium’s members will be collectively assessed (as a whole) against the stated selection criteria. In particular, this means that a consortium’s members must together have the minimum turnover as required per Lot. Please refer to Q13 and the associated Tender Amendment Notice.

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	d. Each entity whose capacity is relied upon for meeting the Selection Criteria. In particular, could the Contracting Authority confirm whether the €100,000 annual turnover requirement and the requirement for two comparable reference contracts may be satisfied by the consortium members collectively, or whether each consortium member is expected to satisfy these requirements individually?	
Q17.	CVs and availability of named experts The CV template in the TRD asks tenderers to confirm availability for the duration of the contract term. Could the Contracting Authority please clarify how the partial availability of a proposed expert will be treated in the evaluation of the tender response? For example, where an expert is available for the duration of the framework term but may be subject to assignment-specific scheduling constraints, should this be stated in the CV, and would this affect scoring under the resources, knowledge and expertise criterion?	Confirmation should be provided that the relevant person is available to participate, if successful, for the duration of the Framework. Framework members will be given details at mini-competition stage that will allow them to assess availability for the specific assignment.
Q18.	Number of CVs to be submitted Could the Contracting Authority please clarify whether there is an expected minimum or maximum number of CVs to be submitted for each lot? Could the Contracting Authority also confirm whether the number of CVs proposed will be assessed as part of the scoring, or whether	The CVs of the Tenderers key personnel are requested as part of a demonstration of evidence that the Tenderer has the necessary resources, knowledge and expertise to meet the Department's requirements. CV details are to be included in the table set out on page 10 of the TRD; additional tables can be included as required.

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	scoring will focus primarily on the relevance, quality, seniority, availability and lot-specific expertise of the named personnel proposed?	It is a matter for the Tenderer to ensure that a sufficient number of CVs are provided to adequately resource the requirement set out for the particular Lot.
Q19.	Flexibility to propose additional experts at assignment stage For Lot 3 in particular, assignments may vary by country, thematic area, methodology, language requirement and fieldwork context. Could the Contracting Authority please clarify whether Framework Members may propose additional suitably qualified experts at a specific assignment stage, where this would be appropriate for the specific assignment, even if those experts were not named in the original framework tender response? If this is permitted, could the Contracting Authority confirm whether such additional experts would be subject to approval by DFAT and required to demonstrate equivalent or relevant qualifications, experience and availability for the specific assignment?	Please refer to our response to Q11.
Q21.	Insurance: In the UK the standard industry limit for Employers Liability provided by most insurers is £10 million which converts to approx. EUR11.606,000. Would this be acceptable to DFAT?	No, it is not acceptable. We would refer you to the insurance limits required, as set out in Section 2.21.1 of the RFT.

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Q22.	References: Can we provide references from previous DFAT projects?	Yes. Tenderers are permitted to provide references from previous DFAT projects.
Q23.	Fee rates: The RFT states that 'the required services will not be delivered in person' and that rates should be inclusive of travel and subsistence. However, Lot 3 describes an average fieldwork component of approximately two weeks per project. Could DFAT clarify whether the 'not in person' statement refers specifically to attendance at DFAT premises, and how tenderers should treat international fieldwork costs when setting their daily rates?"	Please refer to our response to Q2 and associated Tender Amendment Notice, which is available in the 'Contract Documents' Section on eTenders.
Q24.	Fee rates: Please advise if the rates quoted will be the set ceiling rates for the duration of the framework, per role level? For example, will the senior rate be the highest amount DFAT will pay under any future call down?	Please refer to our response to Q3. The rate set for each role will be the maximum applicable rate.
Q25.	Evaluations commissioned: Approximately how many evaluations do DFAT commission per annum?	Based on recent years' work plans, the Evaluation and Audit Unit in DFAT has commissioned approximately three-to-four evaluations, with approximately three other evaluation-related assignments such as quality assurance support, per annum. With the Framework Agreement in place, this number is expected to increase.
Q26.	Future commissioning through the framework: Approximately how many assignments does DFAT intend to commission through the framework for each Lot over the four years?	Please refer to the response to Q27 below.

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Q27.	Total Days Lot 3: Are the 760 days across the Lot 3 framework to be split across all suppliers or is this for each supplier?	A Tender Amendment notice has been issued correcting the reference in Appendix 1 of the RFT (page 23) to the maximum number of days required over the term of the Framework. To confirm the correct maximum number of days is 1,760. This is the maximum number of consultancy days assigned to the Framework over the total duration of 48 months. The number of days will be divided between each mini-competition that is run under the Lots. The Evaluation and Audit Unit estimate that the breakdown of the total number of days for each Lot during the 48-month Framework to be: Lot 1: 225 Lot 2: 85 Lot 3: 1,450 Please note that the estimated total number of days (reflecting multiple project assignments) for each Lot during the 48-month Framework is an approximation only, as DFAT is subject to annual governmental budget provisions that may affect anticipated project assignments. • Lot 1 – <i>“Assignments would ordinarily be discrete tasks of between one and 10 days, potentially over a period of time.”</i> • Lot 2 – <i>“Assignments will be discrete tasks each requiring between two and 20 days, which may not be consecutive.”</i>

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		Lot 3 – <i>“Assignments are ordinarily expected to be of 50–80 days’ duration and could include a field work component averaging ~two weeks (per project)”</i>
Q28.	We note that the specification seeks up to four individual consultants, Lot1, up to three individuals/firms Lot 2 and up to five individuals/firms Lot3. As a consultancy firm with access to a wide range of suitably experienced professionals, we would like to clarify the selection process: if multiple suppliers each present four, three and five CVs respectively, how will the final four, three and five consultants be selected? Will they all be drawn from a single supplier, or could one or two be drawn from different suppliers?	Each Tenderer must submit the CVs of their key personnel proposed to deliver services for each Lot tendered for. Please also refer to the response to Q11. and Q17.
Q29.	We also note that Tenderers should submit the CVs of all the personnel that will be involved in delivering the services under the lot being tendered. Again, as a consulting firm we have wide range of access to suitable consultants and the CVs that we present many not be the most appropriate depending on the particular call down for example in Lot 3. Are you looking for a selection of CVs that represent the calibre of consultants that we can provide? If so, how many CVs do you require?	Please refer to the response to Q11.

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Q30.	Is there a page limit per CV?	A table has been included on page 10 of the TRD for Tenderers to complete CV details. An additional table can be added for each CV.
Q31.	Do the individuals (CVs presented) have to have been involved in the delivery of the two project references given (in response to Section 5. Comparable Experience).	The table included on page 10 of the TRD for CV details requests the following information: <i>“Role and responsibilities in delivering the reference contracts”</i> At least one, if not more, of the key personnel proposed should have been involved in at least one if not both of the project references provided.
Q32.	We note that question 1 in the Tender Response document is the same for all three lots. It seems to most appropriately geared to lot 3. Could DFAT provide indicative prompts or sub-questions for Lots 1 and 2 to assist tenderers in structuring their approach and methodology responses for those lots?"	DFAT will not be adding any further information to Award Criteria 1 in the TRD. It is a matter for Tenderers to structure their response and methodology based on the applicable Lot requirements.
Q33.	Sustainability criterion — The RFT states that services will not be delivered in person. Given this, can DFAT clarify what factors it will consider under the sustainable delivery criterion (criterion 3), and whether this extends beyond carbon/travel to organisational sustainability or social value considerations?	Please see response to Q2 in relation to travel requirements and the associated Tender Amendment Notice, which is available in the ‘Contract Documents’ section on eTenders. Tenderers should demonstrate in a clear and comprehensive manner how they would propose to deliver services from an environmental and sustainable perspective, setting out details of any environmentally friendly or sustainable initiatives that the company adheres to, or they propose to adopt in the provision of the services. Examples may include, but are not limited to: eBilling systems to reduce paper waste; prioritising virtual communication to minimise climate impact through travel, etc.

