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PISA Strategic Development Group

PISA 2015- 3RD STAGE CALL FOR TENDERS

Meeting of the Strategic Development Group

**23 October 2011
Herzliya, Israel**

**Mr. Michael Davidson; E-mail: michael.davidson@oecd.org; Tel: +33.1.45.24.92.25;
Fax: +33.1.44.30.61.77**

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PISA 2015- 3RD STAGE CALL FOR TENDERS

Background

1. The third stage of the PISA 2015 call for tenders will be issued by the middle of November 2011. This will seek bids for the instrument development, scaling and analysis (Core 3), survey operations (Core 4), sampling (Core 5) and oversight and management (Core 7). This paper sets out the plans for evaluating the bids and also discusses options for the specification of the Core 7 tasks.
2. The SDG is asked to:
 - **REVIEW** and **COMMENT** on the evaluation criteria for Cores 3, 4, 5 and 7 and the plans for evaluating the bids and **SUGGEST** nominations for experts who could serve on the Technical review Panels.
 - **ADVISE** on specification of Core 7 tasks for oversight and management and the role that the OECD Secretariat should take.

Evaluation criteria

3. Annex A sets out the proposed technical criteria that will be used to assess the technical merits of the bids received for each of Cores 3, 4, 5 and 7. As for stages 1 and 2 of the PISA 2015 call for tenders, there are three broad criteria on which the bids will be evaluated, with the weightings as indicated in the following table:

Criteria	Maximum number of points	
	<i>Cores 3, 4 and 5</i>	<i>Core 7</i>
Technical quality	45	25
Organisational and management capabilities	25	45
Staff qualifications and previous experience	30	30

4. As shown in Annex A, the specific factors that will be considered within these three criteria differs for each Core component, in line with the different responsibilities of the Cores. Differences are greatest within 'Technical quality'. The SDG is asked to review these criteria and their weightings and suggest changes where appropriate.

Evaluation process

5. Annex B sets out the proposed evaluation process, which follows the procedures for earlier PISA call for tenders, with the bids being assessed by Technical Review Panels. The April 2012 meeting of the PISA Governing Board comes too late for the Panels' recommendations to be reviewed there. So, in order not to lose time in selecting and appointing preferred bidders, it is proposed that the recommendations of the Technical Review Panels will be reviewed by the PISA Strategic Development Group, whose recommendations will then be sent to the PISA Governing Board for its review. In summary, the proposed timeline is:

Event	Date
Call for tenders issued	18 November 2011
Deadline for bids	10 February 2012
Technical Review Panels meet	Week beginning 20 February 2012
Panel reports with recommended preferred bidder	5 March 2012
Meeting of PISA SDG (open to PGB also)	9 March 2012
Recommendations to PGB	12 March 2012
Deadline for PGB replies	26 March 2012
Procurement Board	Mid- April 2012
Signature of contract	Early May 2012

6. The PISA SDG is asked to review and agree this process and to make nominations for external experts who might serve as members of the Technical Review Panels.

Responsibilities of the Core 7 contractor for oversight and management

7. The draft role and task description for the contractor for oversight and management (Core 7) of PISA 2015 is set out in Annex C. An issue arising from this description is how these tasks are best shared between an external entity and the Secretariat, given that the contractor for Core 7 would not have formal contractual ties to the other core contractors and given that past experience suggests that it is likely that this will involve resolving of conflicts/disputes that have contractual and budgetary implications. Indeed, many of the decisions arbitrating between the positions of different core contractors are unlikely to be resolved easily without reference to the OECD Secretariat at some point. This is already evident with only the contractors for Cores 1, 2 and 6 in place.

8. It is difficult to estimate the resource requirements at the OECD Secretariat for such a model but on the evidence of the first months coordinating the work of Cores 1, 2 and 6, this would easily amount to a full time post at A4 level, with a corresponding reduction of around one third in the budget available for the Core 7 contractor. The SDG is asked to comment on such a model for sharing Core 7 responsibilities between the contractor and the OECD Secretariat.

ANNEX A EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR CORES 3, 4, 5 AND 7

This Annex contains the technical criteria that will be used to assess the technical merits of the bids that are received for each of Cores 3, 4, 5 and 7. The maximum score points assigned to each criterion is given in brackets.

CORE 3: INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT, SCALING AND ANALYSIS

Technical Quality (45 points)

- The extent to which the bid responds to all of the issues raised in the bid.
- Clear, convincing and feasible proposals for each of the tasks in the Statement of work.
- Proposals for a test design of PISA 2015 that is in keeping with PISA's aims and philosophy and with the longer term aims of PISA.
- Convincing proposals for how the item pool to be developed will be well aligned to the framework definitions and specifications; cross-culturally and cross-nationally valid; efficient in its measurement of the intended constructs; in keeping with the PISA philosophy of assessing a student's capacity to deal with future challenges; a well argued balance between different item types and response formats.
- Convincing and innovative ideas for maintaining trend in PISA, while considering the potential that computer based assessment can provide to improving the quality (e.g. innovative items) and efficiency of the survey; sound proposals for an equating study to link paper and pencil to computer based results.
- Well articulated views on adaptive testing and the suitability of certain models for PISA 2015, including the further development of the UH booklet for students with special educational needs.
- Well argued proposals for a suitable model on which the scaling of PISA data will be based.
- Should proposals of equal technical quality be submitted, the proposal offering more innovation and efficiency gains shall be rewarded.

Organisational and management capabilities (25 points)

- Proven capacity to develop a collaborative working relationship with the other actors, including other contractors, and to promote consensus-building activities through effective communication and management. Proven ability to put effective management and financing structures in place.

- Clarity of how Core 3 interconnects with other parts of the PISA 2015 work and concrete proposals for how to capitalise on these interconnections through effective collaboration with the other PISA 2015 contractors, including a commitment to working flexibly and in partnership with others.
- Clear and convincing proposals for how the contractor will work with the Subject Matter Expert Groups and National Project managers to develop and select items for the item pool. For the former, sound proposals are sought for managing the transition of the work of the SMEGs from framework to instrument development.
- Convincing description of how the Core 3 contractor will satisfy accountability for the Core 3 work to the contractor responsible Oversight and management (Core 7). [Even if the bidder is also bidding for Core 7].

Staff qualifications and previous experience (30 points)

- Past experience and track record in the tasks specific to the Core 3 work, preferably in an international context and in a timely manner.
- Capacity to enlist the best expertise in instrument development, scaling and analysis as well as translation, adaptation and verification of test instruments.

CORE 4: SURVEY OPERATIONS

Technical Quality (45 points)

- The extent to which the bid responds to all of the issues raised in the bid.
- Clear, convincing and feasible proposals for each of the tasks in the Statement of work.
- Clear and convincing proposals for quality monitoring and quality assurance of the survey operations, identifying where efficiencies in quality assurance may be achieved without added risk to the quality of the results..
- Clear and convincing proposals for working and communication with National Project Managers so as to ensure efficient and effective implementation of PISA 2015, including use of modern communications technologies to facilitate flexible and effective communications.
- Innovative proposals for meeting arrangements that are as inclusive as possible in terms of participation and can generate efficiency gains.
- Should proposals of equal technical quality be submitted, the proposal offering more innovation and efficiency gains shall be rewarded.

Organisational and management capabilities (25 points)

- Proven capacity to develop a collaborative working relationship with the other actors, including other contractors, and to promote consensus-building activities through effective communication and management. Proven ability to put effective management and financing structures in place.
- Clarity of how Core 4 interconnects with other parts of the PISA 2015 work and concrete proposals for how to capitalise on these interconnections through effective collaboration with the other PISA 2015 contractors, including a commitment to working flexibly and in partnership with others.
- Clear and convincing proposals for how the contractor will work with the National Project managers.
- Convincing description of how the Core 4 contractor will satisfy accountability for the Core 4 work to the contractor responsible Oversight and management (Core 7). [Even if the bidder is also bidding for Core 7].

Staff qualifications and previous experience (30 points)

- Past experience and track record in the tasks specific to the Core 4 work, preferably in an international context and in a timely manner.
- Capacity to enlist the best expertise in providing the deliverables required under the terms of reference.

CORE 5: SAMPLING

Technical Quality (45 points)

- The extent to which the bid responds to all of the issues raised in the bid.
- Clear, convincing and feasible proposals for each of the tasks in the Statement of work.
- Clear and convincing proposals for a sampling plan for PISA 2015, which identifies possible improvements on current PISA practices; sets out an inclusive approach for students with special educational needs; demonstrates an awareness of the possible sampling requirements necessary for the assessment of collaborative problem solving.
- Sound proposals for assessing the adequacy of the sampling frames of participating countries and the representativeness of their samples.
- Convincing proposals for sampling standards, with consideration of the extent to which response rates should be the main focus of the adequacy of the achieved samples.

- Convincing assessment of the analytical potential of the optional sampling modules *e.g.* grade-based samples.
- Should proposals of equal technical quality be submitted, the proposal offering more innovation and efficiency gains shall be rewarded.

Organisational and management capabilities (25 points)

- Proven capacity to develop a collaborative working relationship with the other actors, including other contractors, and to promote consensus-building activities through effective communication and management. Proven ability to put effective management and financing structures in place.
- Clarity of how Core 5 interconnects with other parts of the PISA 2015 work and concrete proposals for how to capitalise on these interconnections through effective collaboration with the other PISA 2015 contractors, including a commitment to working flexibly and in partnership with others.
- Clear and convincing proposals for how the contractor will work with the National Project managers.
- Convincing description of how the Core 5 contractor will satisfy accountability for the Core 5 work to the contractor responsible Oversight and management (Core 7). [Even if the bidder is also bidding for Core 7].

Staff qualifications and previous experience (30 points)

- Past experience and track record in the tasks specific to the Core 5 work, preferably in an international context and in a timely manner.
- Capacity to enlist the best expertise in providing the deliverables required under the terms of reference.

CORE 7: OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

Technical Quality (25 points)

- The extent to which the bid responds to all of the issues raised in the bid.
- Clear, convincing and feasible proposals for each of the tasks in the Statement of work.
- Extent to which the proposal demonstrates an understanding of the project design and assessment domain.
- Should proposals of equal technical quality be submitted, the proposal offering more innovation and efficiency gains shall be rewarded.

Organisational and management capabilities (45 points)

- Proven capacity to develop a collaborative working relationship with the other actors, including other contractors, and to promote consensus-building activities through effective communication and management. Proven ability to put effective management and financing structures in place.
- Clarity of how Core 7 interconnects with other parts of the PISA 2015 work and concrete proposals for how to capitalise on these interconnections through effective collaboration with the other PISA 2015 contractors, including a commitment to working flexibly and in partnership with others.
- Sound proposals for project monitoring and reporting, risk assessment and risk management, responsiveness to the Secretariats and PISA Governing Board.

Staff qualifications and previous experience (30 points)

- Past experience and track record in the tasks specific to the Core 5 work, preferably in an international context and in a timely manner.
- Capacity to enlist the best expertise in providing the deliverables required under the terms of reference.
- Experience that demonstrates relevant and successful coordination of large-scale assessments and/or projects involving multiple countries; a strong partnership ethos and a commitment to work within a fixed price envelope, whilst seeking innovation and improvement in PISAs methods and operations.

ANNEX B PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSING THE BIDS

Technical review process

9. The bid deadline will be set for 10 February 2012. The proposals received in response to the call for tenders for Cores 3, 4, 5 and 7 of PISA 2015 will first be assessed against the technical criteria that the PISA Governing Board established (see Annex A).

10. This assessment of each of the Cores will be carried out by separate Technical Review Panel's to which the PISA Governing Board will appoint both representatives from the PISA Governing Board and outside experts. Members of this panel will participate in this evaluation as experts, independently and without instructions from any national or any other public or private authority. Panel members will have no involvement in any of the bids to this call for tender. It may be desirable to have some common membership between the panels for the respective cores.

11. Each panel will meet towards the end of February 2012. Prior to the panel meetings, the OECD Secretariat will distribute each technical proposal (but at this stage without cost information) to each member of the Technical Review Panel. Members will then individually rate each part of each bid according to the established technical criteria, specified in Annex A. This can begin prior to the meeting of the panels but can continue in the first session of the meeting.

12. In scoring the proposals, panel members will be asked to evaluate each part in each proposal on its own merits against the evaluation criteria and not to compare the proposals to one another. A comparative evaluation of the proposals will follow as a second stage.

13. In deducting points from proposals, panel members will be asked to use measures that are relatively equal within each scale. In other words, the points (if any) deducted from the maximum allowable for a specific item in the proposal, should be proportional to the size of the scale. For example, a deduction of 3 points from the maximum allowed (15 points) for the project director's qualifications, would represent the same relative ranking as a 2-point reduction from the maximum allowed (10 points) for management capabilities. Panel members will be asked to carefully document the criteria that they have used for deducting points from proposals.

14. While reviewing each proposal, panel members will be asked to keep a written record of comments, both positive and negative (*i.e.*, explanations for point deductions and the evaluation of the strength and weaknesses of the proposal). This will facilitate the discussion when the group convenes as well as the preparation of the report. All deductions of points must be qualified and the criteria for deductions must be documented.

15. Once the panel members have completed their individual assessment, the panel will convene and the OECD Secretariat will record the panel members' ratings on a master scoring matrix. Once all the scores have been recorded, the average will be taken to provide a rank order of the proposals. Each panel member will then explain their evaluation of each proposal.

16. Following the presentation of the expert reviews, the Technical Review Panels will undertake a comparative evaluation of all proposals. This evaluation will be organised by the review criteria established in the terms of reference.

17. After the technical review and questions have been completed, the OECD Secretariat will distribute the cost proposals. The cost proposals will be evaluated in relation to the accompanying technical proposals. The emphasis is on finding an appropriate balance between quality and price.

18. The Secretariat will forward any technical or cost-related questions from the Technical Review Panels to the bidders and the Technical Review Panels will evaluate the responses and consider any revisions to their scoring of the bids.

19. Afterwards, the Technical Review Panels will agree on the main lines of argument for the concluding reports, which will seek to rate each bid according to the evaluation criteria that are stated in the terms of reference which had been sent to participants earlier, describe the strengths and weaknesses of the bids in each aspect described in the statement of work, provide a comparative evaluation of trade-offs between costs and technical quality, provide a comparative description of differences in approach, management and organisation of the proposals and list technical questions that need to be clarified with bidders. Once an outline has been agreed on, the panel will distribute the work of drafting the report among its members. The concluding report will also contain the individual panel members' ratings.

20. The Technical Review Panels' recommendations will be considered by the PISA Strategic Development Group at a meeting to be organised for around 9 March 2012.

Proposal for establishing a decision on contract negotiations

21. The Secretariat will provide the PISA Strategic Development Group with the concluding report from the Technical Review Panels immediately after this becomes available, at the beginning of March 2012.

22. The Secretariat will also ask bidders to identify those parts of their proposals that can be shared with the PISA Strategic Development Group on a confidential basis. These materials will be made available to the PISA Strategic Development Group prior to its consideration of the panel reports.

23. Afterwards, designated members of the Technical Review Panels will report to the PISA Strategic Development Group on the outcomes of its evaluation for each part of the call for tender. The panels will explain which of the proposals it considers technically acceptable and why. It will also present its views on the cost-effectiveness of the respective proposals. Delegates will have an opportunity to assess the outcomes of the review with members of the panel.

24. The outcomes of the PISA Strategic Development Group will be reported to the PISA Governing Board, who would then have two weeks to raise objections to the outcome of the procurement process.

ANNEX C CORE 7 (OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT) ROLE

25. In its broadest sense the role of the Core 7 (oversight and management) contractor encompasses the following elements:

- Provide project management and coordination for all aspects of the PISA 2015 development and implementation, coordinating the work of all contractors to ensure an effective and efficient development and implementation of PISA 2015.
- Establish tools and mechanisms for effective communication between all contractors involved and enable progress monitoring with the contractors responsible for other components.
- Provide regular progress reports to the OECD Secretariat, anticipating deviations in budget or timeline for the main deliverable.

26. This in turn will involve the following:

- Providing the intellectual leadership of the project among the contractors.
- Applying a project management approach to monitoring the project against the plans and budget, flagging conflicts and deviations and resolving these.
- Develop and maintain an integrated project plan that joins the work of the multiple contractors in a coherent and cost-efficient way.
- A central source of advice to the OECD Secretariat and PGB on the feasibility and impact of changes to the scope of PISA 2015 or its implementation (*e.g.* countries joining the cycle late).
- Establish communication protocols between the Core contractors and oversee their implementation.
- Establish a regime for reporting against the project plan- from the Core contractors to the contractor for Core 7 and from the Core 7 contractor to the OECD Secretariat and PGB. Responds to requests for updates from the OECD Secretariat and the PGB.
- Assessing and managing risks and putting in place procedures for escalating issues, where necessary, to the appropriate higher authority in the project.
- Providing a central point for resolving conflicts/disputes between the other contractors over responsibilities (including assigning previously unspecified responsibilities), workflow and timelines; negotiating with the contractors to resolve these.