

Call for tender

Representation of ICT SMEs in the European standardisation process

Deadline for applications: 7 September 2020

Please send your application to: president@sbs-sme.eu

The appointment of the selected SME entity is contingent on the approval of the 2021 Work Programme and budget as well as the signature of the annual Action Grant by the European Commission.

A. Background

Small Business Standards (SBS) has been selected by the European Commission to represent small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the standardisation process, motivate them to get involved and raise their awareness about standardisation. In this framework, SBS is launching three public calls for tender to collect applications from sectors where SME interests need to be voiced in the standardisation process. ICT is one of these sectors. The objective of this call is to select an entity to represent SMEs in the ICT sector on behalf of SBS. The selected entity will carry a series of activities as described below to represent and defend the interests of SMEs in the development of ICT standards at European level in close cooperation with the SBS Secretariat.

The contract will cover activities in the field of ICT, all of which fall under the SBS Work Programme for 2021. SBS will select, through this tendering procedure, the entity that demonstrates the best technical and professional capability to perform activities to represent SMEs operating within the ICT sector in the standardisation process.

All SBS activities, including the activities described in this call, are co-funded by the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

B. Description of the work to be performed

The selected entity will lead all the activities on ICT related standardisation issues included in the SBS Work programme 2021 and be responsible for them, including their conception, setting up, planning, implementation and follow-up. In addition to the ICT related activities described below, the selected entity will participate in coordination meetings organised by SBS and, if required, take the lead or participate on ad-hoc issues or activities where ICT expertise is needed.

SBS is launching the present call for tender to carry out the following tasks:

B.1. Engagement with SMEs and development of sectoral positions

The selected entity will engage the SME community into discussions on ICT standards to stimulate feedback and elaborate consensus-based SME positions on ICT standardisation. These sectoral positions will cover various ICT-related subjects, such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Digital Skills, Blockchain and Cybersecurity. Topics will vary depending on the ongoing public consultations and/or on specific requests by the membership.

B.2. Management of a Working Group to coordinate SBS members and experts' positions in the ICT field

The selected entity will be responsible for managing and providing the Secretariat of a Working Group to offer SBS members and experts a means to collaborate and exchange information on issues related to ICT standards, policy and the work in relevant technical committees. This group will also be involved in the development of sectoral opinions and positions (see B.1). The selected entity is expected to organise at least three Working Group meetings in 2021. Whenever possible meetings will be organised virtually. The Working Group will also provide expertise in the ICT field to other SBS working groups when required.

B.3. Elaboration and dissemination of technical information on ICT standardisation

This activity concentrates on the elaboration and dissemination of specific information relevant for SMEs in the ICT sector. The selected entity will monitor, analyse and provide information about ongoing work on standards in the different groups and committees at the European Standardisation Organisations. As well as relevant information from the European Commission on areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Digital Skills, Blockchain and Cybersecurity. The information will be provided in the format set out by SBS and will be used to inform SBS members, provide input to meetings, elaborate articles on the latest news of interest to SMEs etc.

B.4. Multi-stakeholder Platform on ICT standardisation (MSP)

The selected entity will adequately represent SBS in the Multi-stakeholder Platform on ICT standardisation to monitor, contribute and inform SMEs about the activities carried out by this advisory group. It will also monitor activities related to ICT standardisation in sub-committees such as the Rolling plan on ICT standards. The selected entity will prepare a written report to be sent to the SBS Secretariat after each of the MSP meetings.

B.5. Linking SBS with international ICT standards bodies and initiatives

Under the condition that the project is extended to 2021, the selected entity will monitor the activities of the project InDiCo - International Digital Cooperation- and participate in the meetings of its Stakeholder Group to inform and represent digital SMEs. InDiCo is an ETSI led EU funded initiative that aims to strengthen the European Union's position as a world leader in the digital economy with a view to becoming a global hub for ICT standardisation. Moreover, this activity will also establish links with international ICT standards developing organisations such as IEEE-SA, whose ICT specifications are recognised according to the processes set out in Regulation 1025/2012. The selected entity will do a written report after attending any of the above-mentioned meetings.

B.6. Monitoring of the use of AI-related standardisation activities

The selected entity will establish a group of SMEs active in AI to monitor the use of AI standards. The group will consist of SMEs from different EU member states, which are developing AI solutions or strongly rely on AI for their business processes. The group will elaborate recommendations regarding possible standardisation needs to support the development and uptake of AI technologies by SMEs.

B.7. Upgrade competency and knowledge level of SMEs in ICT Standards

New technologies, such as IoT or 5G pose significant cybersecurity challenges. The purpose of this task is to upgrade the competency and knowledge level of SMEs through developing a practical guide on ICT standards related to technologies such as AI, IoT, 5G, cybersecurity, and Software Engineering aimed at helping SMEs to understand, assess, get certification, and implement ICT standards to strengthen their business.

B.8. SBS ICT Forum

The selected entity will organise the SBS Forum on ICT standards for SMEs. The event is a platform for discussion and sharing of information about ongoing SME relevant activities on ICT standards and raising SMEs awareness of standards enabled technologies e.g. IoT, 5G, cybersecurity and Software Engineering.

B.9. Cooperation with other sectoral approaches

The selected entity will be required to cooperate and eventually organise a joint activity with one or several of the other SBS sectoral approaches. In addition to the ICT sector, the SBS sectoral approaches cover textile and personal protective equipment, lifts and construction. The purpose of such an activity would be to deepen the inter-sectoral relations and exchange about standardisation and the adoption of digital technologies in the above-mentioned sectors.

C. Estimated total value

All proposals in the range of €100 000 VAT included will be considered. The allocation of the budget is subject to the approval of the SBS Board as well as the signature of the annual Action Grant by the European Commission.

The selected entity shall commit to co-finance 11% of the total cost of the action by paying SBS the relevant amount.

D. Evaluation of proposals and award criteria

D.1. Selection criteria

Representativeness

Applying entities must show that they are based in an EU or EFTA member state and demonstrate the SME representativeness of their membership.

Technical and professional capacity to carry out the activities

The implementation of the tasks described in this call for tender requires expertise on ICT, standardisation and SMEs.

The tenderer must demonstrate its capacity to technically and professionally carry out the activities by submitting:

- The CVs of each team member involved in the activities and
- a description of the role of each team member in the implementation of the activities and how their experience fits into the areas of expertise needed.

D.2. Award criteria

The contract will be awarded based on the best value for money principle.

Tenderers shall include in their bids, a technical proposal addressing the aspects detailed in the technical specifications in the point B “description of the work to be performed”. The following aspects should be included when drafting the tender:

- a. Methodology for implementation, including the reasons for the methodology (2,5/10)
- b. Organisation of the work and resource allocation (7,5/10)
 - Assessment of technical and professional expertise (ICT, standardisation and SMEs) of the proposed team (2,5/10)
 - Assessment of the plan of action with a description of activities and their timing (2,5/10)
 - Assessment of the distribution of roles, responsibilities and time allocation of the proposed team (2,5/10)

The tenderers will be ranked based on the points obtained in the award criteria. Entities replying to this tender do not need to be a member of SBS.

E. Submission of tenders

Tenders must be sent by e-mail (president@sbs-sme.eu) by 7 September 2020 midnight (CET) at the latest. Tenders will not be accepted after this deadline.

F. Award of the contract and duration

Tenderers will be notified of the outcome by email. SBS will prepare the service contract to be signed by representatives of both contractual parties. The duration of the contract will be one year from January to December 2021.

For more information, please contact the SBS Secretariat (info@sbs-sme.eu, Tel +32 2 285 07 27)

G. Data protection

The invitation to tender involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed according to 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 (GDPR). Any personal data will be processed solely for evaluation purposes under the call for tenders.



The information provided by applicants to SBS is necessary to process the application which, if successful, may lead to the signature of a contract. Applicants will have to declare that they have taken note of our Privacy Policy. By applying you agree with our use of your personal information as described in our Privacy Policy available [here](#).