ACADEMIC SERVICE

Open procedure for the provision of external quality assurance services to the European University Institute

Ref: **OP/EUI/AS/2026/001**

YEAR 2026

Contents

CHAPTER I – SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE

Article 1. Definitions

‘candidate’ means an economic operator that has sought an invitation;

‘contract’ means a public contract awarded by the EUI for the procurement of services/supply;

‘EUI’ or ‘the Institute’ means the European University Institute, which is the contracting authority entrusting the services that are the subject of these tender specifications to the contractor;

‘contractor’ means to the successful tenderer awarded with the contract;

‘economic operator’ can refer to a ‘work contractor’, ‘supplier’, or ‘service provider’ and means any natural or legal person or public entity or group of such persons and/or entities which offers the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services on the market;

‘joint tenders’ means a situation where a *tender* is submitted by a group (with or without legal form) of economic operators regardless of the link they have between them. The group as a whole is considered a *tenderer*[1];

‘subcontracting’ means the situation where the *contractor* enters into legal commitments with other *economic operators* which will perform part of the *contract* on its behalf. The *contractor* retains full liability towards the *EUI* for performance of the *contract* as a whole;

‘tender’ / ‘offer’ defines the terms upon which the supplier is willing to be bound, which normally include price, date of delivery, payment terms and a description of the services/supplies/works;

‘tenderer’ means an economic operator that has submitted a tender;

‘tender specifications (TS)’ means any documents describing the needs and requirements of the EUI for the purposes of the relevant tender.

Article 2. Contracting authority

This procurement procedure is launched and managed by the *EUI*, that is the contracting authority for the purposes of this procurement procedure, through the **Academic Service**.

Article 3. Subject

Subject of the contract	The subject of this procurement procedure is the **provision of external quality assurance services to the European University Institute.**
Lots	This procurement procedure is **not divided into lots**.
Type of contract	The procedure will result in the conclusion of a **single framework contract**. *Tenderers* need to take full account of the provisions of the draft *contract* as the latter will define and govern the contractual relationship to be established between the *EUI* and the *contractor*.

[1] References to tenderer or tenderers in this document shall be understood as covering both sole tenderers and groups of economic operators submitting a joint tender.

Duration of the contract	The framework *contract* to be awarded shall have a duration of **5 years**. The details of the initial *contract* duration and possible renewals are set out in Article I.2 of the draft *contract*.
Estimated value of the contract	The estimated value of the framework *contract* to be awarded for the whole duration of **5 years** is **€160.000,00** (one hundred sixty thousand/00). These volumes are estimates only and there is no commitment as to the exact volume of the services to be ordered. The actual volumes will depend on the services the *EUI* will order through specific *contracts* or *order forms*.
Place of performance	The services will be undertaken at the ***EUI*'s premises** with **preparatory work** to be carried out **online**.

Article 4. Conditions for participation to tender

If you are interested in this *contract*, you should submit a *tender* in one of the official languages of the European Union (with preference for the use of English) provided you comply with the conditions for participation to tenders as set out in Article 3.4 of President's Decision n. 24/2025 of 6 May 2025 implementing title V concerning procurement of the EUI's Financial Rules (Public Procurement Regulation), available for consultation at: https://www.eui.eu/en/public/about/procurement/tenders-regulatory-framework.

Article 5. Joint Tenders

Joint tenders are not allowed for this procurement procedure.

Article 6. Subcontracting

Subcontracting is not allowed for this procurement procedure.

CHAPTER II – TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Article 7. Description of the technical specifications

The services that are the subject of this procurement procedure, including any minimum requirements, are described in detail below:

The European University Institute (EUI) is an international higher education institution and inter-governmental organisation having legal personality on the basis of the Convention signed in Florence on 19/4/1972 by the Member States of the European Community with legal address in Badia Fiesolana, Via dei Roccettini 9, 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), Italy.

The EUI operates in higher education and research in the field of social sciences and humanities. Currently, the EUI has twenty-four Member States that all belong to the European Higher Education Area. The EUI hosts an international community of more than 1,100 members, between Masters' students, early-stage researchers, fellows, professors and professional staff. The EUI operates outside of any national higher education system.

The EUI is looking for a quality assurance agency to carry out programme accreditation of existing and any new academic programmes of the EUI. The programme accreditation must result in a clear decision on accreditation. Where deemed appropriate, the scope of the contract may be extended to include other evaluation or accreditation procedures, as considered necessary by the EUI.

The first programme to be accredited in this framework contract would be the EUI Global Executive Master Programme (GEM). The GEM is designed for public policy professionals working both in the public and the private sector, as well as in civil society, seeking upskilling opportunities to advance their careers. Its two-year part-time structure allows professionals to keep working while they learn and design their own professional development journey. Participants learn from leading academics and policymakers who provide them with advanced skills and a unique global outlook on cutting-edge policy issues, specialising in energy & climate, economy & finance, tech & governance, and geopolitics & security.

The re-accreditation of the Master in Transnational Governance (MTnG) is expected in 2029. The current accreditation by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) is valid until December 2030. The MTnG is a two-year programme offered by the EUI's Florence School of Transnational Governance (STG). The curriculum empowers students to go beyond traditional perspectives and to design and implement innovative, effective, and sustainable public policy solutions for a globalised world. This residential programme is taught at the STG's headquarters in the heart of Florence. Students can also participate in academic activities offered by other European University Institute departments. In a truly international environment and embedded within a network of partner institutions, the programme includes a compulsory curricular internship and a wealth of opportunities to spend a semester studying abroad.

The Master in Economic Research is a one-year programme. It is predominantly research-based and focuses on the acquisition and practice of research skills. The programme is taught by eminent academics, including professors of the EUI, as well as world-renowned guest professors and experts. The programme is attended by an international body of researchers, selected with highly competitive admission criteria. The EUI's Department of Economics (ECO) brings together scholars from all over Europe in a stimulating and innovative research environment. It focuses on a wide range of topics in the fields of microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics.

Possible procedures and their indicative timeline include:

2027	Accreditation of the Global Executive Master Programme (an estimated range between €25.000,00 and €40.000,00)
2028	Accreditation of the Master in Economic Research (an estimated range between €25.000,00 and €40.000,00)
2029	Re-accreditation of the Master in Transnational Governance (an estimated range between 25.000,00 and €40.000,00)
2030	Ex ante accreditation of any new master or joint master programme (an estimated range between €20.000,00 and €40.000,00)

CHAPTER III – EVALUATION AND AWARD CRITERIA

The evaluation of the *tenders* that comply with the submission conditions will consist of the following elements:

- Check if the *tenderer* has access to procurement (see Article 4);
- Verification of administrative compliance (if the *tender* is drawn up in one of the official EU languages and signed by duly authorised legal representative(-s) of the *tenderer*);
- Verification of non-exclusion of *tenderers* on the basis of the exclusion criteria;
- Selection of *tenderers* on the basis of selection criteria;
- Verification of compliance with the minimum requirements defined in the tender specifications;
- Evaluation of *tenders* on the basis of the award criteria.

The *EUI* will evaluate the abovementioned elements in the order that it considers to be the most appropriate. If the evaluation of one or more elements demonstrates that there are grounds for rejection, the *tender* will be rejected and will not be subjected to further full evaluation. The unsuccessful *tenderers* will be informed of the ground for rejection without being given feedback on the non-assessed content of their *tenders*. Only *tenderer*(*s*) for whom the verification of all elements did not reveal grounds for rejection can be awarded the *contract*.

The evaluation will be based on the information and evidence contained in the *tenders* and, if applicable, on additional information and evidence provided at the request of the *EUI* during the procedure. If any of the declarations or information provided proves to be false, the *EUI* may impose administrative sanctions (exclusion or financial penalties) on the entity providing the false declarations/information.

For the purposes of the evaluation related to exclusion and selection criteria the *EUI* may also refer to publicly available information, in particular evidence that it can access on a national database free of charge.

Article 8. Exclusion criteria

The *tenderer* must not be in one of the exclusion situations listed below:

a. is bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

b. has been convicted of an offence concerning their grave professional conduct by a final judgment of a competent judicial authority or administrative decision or decisions of international organisations;

c. is not in compliance with the obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of Italy being the country of establishment of the *EUI* or those of the country where the contract is to be performed. This breach needs to have been established by a judgment or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which the economic operator is established or of those of Italy being the country of establishment of the *EUI*;

d. has been the subject of a final judgment for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorist-related offences, child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the *EUI*'s financial interests;

e. has been in serious breach of a contract financed by the *EUI* or have been the subject of an offense of serious irregularity established by a final judgment of a competent judicial authority or administrative decision;

f. is subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of grave professional misconduct, or of having made substantial errors or committed irregularities or fraud or have been declared to be in breach of their obligations under contracts covered by the *EUI*'s budget (Article 41 of the *EUI*'s Public Procurement Regulation (President's Decision No.24/2025 of 6th May 2025).

In addition to the above, *contracts* cannot be awarded to a *tenderer* who, during the procurement procedure, is proven to be:

g. subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the *contract* which cannot be effectively remedied by other less intrusive measures;

h. guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the *EUI* as a condition of participation in the *contract* procedure or fail to supply this information;

i. has created a shell company;

j. is a shell company.

Evidence requested:

The *tenderer* must certify that it is not in one of the exclusion situations by providing in the *tender* a signed and dated Declaration on Honour available in Annex II A.

In addition, the successful *tenderer* shall provide, within 15 days following notification of award and preceding the signature of the *contract*, the following documentary proofs to confirm the declaration referred to above:

- for points (a), (b), (d), (e), (i) and (j): a recent extract from the judicial record of the legal representative of the *economic operator* that submitted the *tender* or, failing that, an equivalent document recently issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance showing that those requirements are satisfied;
- for the situation described in point (c) above, recent certificates or letters issued by the competent authorities of the State concerned are required. These documents must provide evidence covering all taxes and social security contributions for which the *tenderer* is liable, including for example, VAT, income tax (natural persons only), company tax (legal persons only) and social security contributions.

For any of the situations (a), (b), (d), (e), (i) or (j), where any document described in the paragraph above is not issued in the country concerned, it may be replaced by a sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance.

The *EUI* reserves the right to verify the information and to request further supporting evidence prior to the signature of the *contract*.

In the event that the successful *tenderer* does not promptly execute the fulfilment of the above, fails to present all documentation requested or does not provide proof of possession of all requirements declared in the *tender*, as well as if any checks reveal failure of compliance with the declarations submitted during the tendering period, the *EUI* reserves the right to declare a compliance failure and to award the procedure to the following *tenderer* in the list or to launch a new procurement procedure.

Article 9. Selection criteria

General requirements:

The *tenderer* must have the following minimum requirements to perform the *contract*:

a) being compliant with obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions for workers, according to the current legislation, and application of employment conditions envisaged in the sector's national collective labour agreement.

b) being compliant with the current labour laws and regulations.

c) being compliant with the current health and safety laws and regulations.

d) being compliant with the current environmental laws and regulations.

Economic and financial capacity:

e) providing the financial statements the last three years for which accounts have been closed (2023-2024-2025).

Technical and professional requirements:

f) being listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

g) having established, documented and transparent existing criteria for at least programme accreditation.

h) having experience in providing external quality assurance procedures outside of their national educational system, since the EUI is an international entity, and it is not tied to any national higher education system.

i) having experience in providing external quality assurance procedures in English language, since the procedure will be carried out in English, which is the EUI working language.

j) having experience in working with international evaluation panels in their accreditation procedures and organising the requested procedures including international panel members.

❖ **Evidence to be submitted with the tender as part of Envelope n.1 – Administrative Documents (please, for more details on the submission process, see point 3 of the letter of invitation to tender):**

- a signed and dated Declaration on Honour available in Annex II A;
- a copy of the financial statements of the last three years for which accounts have been closed (2023-2024-2025);
- evidence that the *tenderer* is included in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) (e.g. copy of enrolment).
- evidence that the *tenderer* has existing criteria for at least programme accreditation
    - Please include in your tender the criteria or indicate where they are publicly available.
- evidence that the *tenderer* has experience in providing external quality assurance procedures outside of their national educational system
    - Please, refer in your tender to at least a procedure conducted outside your national educational system.
- evidence that the *tenderer* has experience in providing external quality assurance procedures in English language

  - Please, refer in your tender to at least a procedure conducted in English language.
- evidence that the *tenderer* has experience in working with international evaluation panels
  - Please, refer in your tender to at least one procedure that involved working with international evaluation panels.

The *EUI* reserves the right to perform sample checks in order to verify the accuracy of the statements submitted by *tenderers*.

Tenderers that are not compliant with the applicable minimum requirements shall be rejected.

Article 10. Award criteria

Only the *tenders* submitted by *tenderers* meeting the requirements of the exclusion and selection criteria will be evaluated in terms of quality and price. The *contract* shall be awarded according to the "**most economically advantageous tender**" criterion following the assessment of the best quality/price ratio made by the competent evaluation committee which will assign a score to each *tender* to a maximum of 100 points, based on the following parameters:

MAXIMUM SCORE	
Technical and quality evaluation	80/100
Financial evaluation (price)	20/100

The total score of the *tender* shall be the sum of the technical and financial score obtained.

The *tenderer* obtaining the highest overall score shall be awarded with the *contract*.

1 - Allocation of points for technical and quality evaluation criteria

To each criterion will be assigned a certain weight, with the maximum amount being equal to 80 points, which, multiplied by the coefficient of quality assigned at the discretion of the evaluation committee (between 0 and 1, as shown in Table II), will determine the score assigned to each *tender*, as indicated in the following Table I.

The *tenderer* shall submit technical *offer* using the form Annex II B.

TABLE I				
DESCRIPTION				**MAXIMUM SCORE**
A	**Quality and relevance of the proposed approach to accreditation**			**45**
	A1	**A proposal demonstrating relevance and added value considering the specific nature of the EUI as an international higher education institution**	**30**	
	A2	**Suitability of the methodology for an international higher education institution**	**5**	
	A3	**Means to support the recognition of the programmes after a successful accreditation (e.g., publication of accreditation outcomes on DEQAR)**	**10**	
B	**Quality and relevance of the evaluation panel**			**20**
	B1	**Access to a pool of relevant international experts**	**10**	
	B2	**Demonstration of relevant training of experts**	**10**	

C	**Project management, organisation and timetable**			**15**
	C1	**Clarity and feasibility of the work plan including timeline, management of meetings, interviews and documentation**	**5**	
	C2	**Risk management**	**5**	
	C3	**Transparency and integrity of the decision-making process**	**5**	

The minimum score for technical and quality criteria is 48/80. *Tenders* who fail to achieve this minimum score for the technical *offer* shall not proceed to the point of assessment for the financial *offer*.

In the case of award, the entire technical *offer* shall complete the *tender specifications* and shall form part of the *contract*.

It should be noted that the coefficients of quality will be attributed on the basis as set out in Table II:

TABLE II		
EVALUATION	**JUDGMENT**	**COEFFICIENT**
EXCELLENT	Well-structured technical *offer* that develops the requested service in a clear, precise, and in-depth manner, adding additional value in respect to the expectations of the *EUI*.	1.00
GOOD	Well-structured technical *offer* that develops the requested service in a clear, precise, and in-depth manner, NOT adding additional value in respect to the expectations of the *EUI*.	0.80
SUFFICIENT	Acceptable technical *offer* in line with the contracting authority's expectations.	0.60
LOW	Mediocre technical *offer* that is under-developed compared to the contracting authority's expectations.	0.40
INSUFFICIENT	Insufficient technical *offer* that is generic and inadequate.	0.00

2 - Allocation of points for financial evaluation criteria

The maximum points available for the price (**P**), 20 points, shall be assigned to the *tender* proposing the best price (including travel costs) for each of the following criteria:

P1 - One ex ante accreditation of a master programme (8 points);

P2 - One accreditation or re-accreditation of an existing master programme (12 points).

The score per each criterion shall be assigned in accordance with the following formula:

$$P1 = 8 \times \frac{\text{Best price offered}}{\text{Price offered}}$$

$$P2 = 12 \times \frac{\text{Best price offered}}{\text{Price offered}}$$

P = P1+ P2.

The other *tenders* shall be given scores (rounded to two decimal places, if necessary) proportional to the ratio between the best price offered and that offered by each *tenderer*.

The price considered for evaluation will be the total price of the *tender*, covering all the requirements set out in these *tender specifications*.

The *tenderer* shall submit a financial *offer* using the form Annex II C.

CHAPTER IV - FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 11. Requirements for the signature of the contract

The successful tenderer, within the date to be communicated by the EUI, must submit the following documents before the signature of the contract:

- a copy of the full criminal record of the legal representative of the successful tenderer.

Please note that should the successful tenderer fail to submit the documents outlined above in due time or, upon testing, is found not to be in compliance with the declarations submitted in the tender, the EUI reserves the right to award the contract to the following tenderer in the ranking or to launch a new call for tender.

Article 12. Contract management

For the *EUI*, the reference person for the *contract* management is the following:

- the Director of Academic Service.

Article 13. List of tender documents

The tender documents of the present procurement procedure are composed of the draft contract, the invitation letter, these *tender specifications* - TS (Annex I) and the contractor's *tender* (Annex II), including the following annexes:

- Annex II A – Declaration on honour;
- Annex II B – Technical *offer*;
- Annex II C – Financial *offer*.