



Fact Sheet 5 – Contracting External Experts and Services

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Version 1	27.04.15	

Core message: External experts and services can be an important part of many projects. It is necessary to define in the application which contracts the project intends to offer. During implementation it is essential to ensure that all of the correct tendering procedures are followed and documented.

Background

Many beneficiaries make use of external assistance when implementing a project. This fact sheet provides guidance on the principles and rules for purchasing external services.

Definition

Any costs for external expertise and services provided by a public or private body or an individual outside of the beneficiary organisation belong in this cost category. These rules also apply to costs for first level controllers where these are paid by the beneficiary. All external expertise and service payments must be made on the basis of contracts or similar written agreements and supported by invoices or requests for reimbursement linked to the tasks carried out.

General Principles

- Unless participating in the programme as part of an approved State Aid scheme, all beneficiary organisations, both public and private, are responsible for ensuring that EU and national public procurement rules are respected and that all contracts comply with the basic principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. More information on this issue can be found in Fact Sheet 12 - Tendering Procedures.
- The work carried out by external experts and service providers must be directly related to the project. Examples might include technical experts, communications support, First Level Controllers and project management support
- The costs of the services must always be proportionate to the value added to the project



- If as part of a project, a beneficiary provides a service to another beneficiary for payment; all such transactions must be based on non-profit and can only reflect the actual costs incurred by the service provider. Additional information about this can be found in the FAQ section of the programme website: <https://northsearegion.eu/project-information/faq/trading-between-partners>
- Beneficiaries or ex-beneficiaries of a project are **not permitted** to bid on contracts offered by that project.
- Where there are relevant framework contracts in place for a beneficiary organisation, these may of course be used provided that there was a satisfactory procedure for the original procurement.

Detailed rules for different budget lines

- All costs related to external experts (including for example their travel and accommodation expenses) must be recorded under the budget line “External Experts and Services”.
- Costs for experts provided in-house or by affiliated companies are eligible but all such costs must be reported under the staff budget line. It is a condition that affiliated companies are already listed as beneficiaries in the application form.
- Any contract extensions or offers of additional contracts to the same supplier must also comply with all European Union, national and organisational procurement rules.

References

- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European Territorial Cooperation Goal (ETC-Regulation), Article 18
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) no 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 Articles 5 & 6