

#### **II.21.4. Costs of transfer**

The costs of the transfer are borne as follows:

- (a) the contracting authority bears the costs of dispatch charged by its bank;
- (b) the contractor bears the costs of receipt charged by its bank;
- (c) the party causing repetition of the transfer bears the costs for repeated transfer.

#### **II.21.5. Pre-financing, performance and money retention guarantees**

If, as provided for in Article I.6, a financial guarantee is required for the payment of pre-financing, as performance guarantee or as retention money guarantee, it must fulfil the following conditions:

- (a) the financial guarantee is provided by a bank or a financial institution approved by the contracting authority or, at the request of the contractor and with the agreement of the contracting authority, by a third party; and
- (b) the guarantee shall have the effect of making the bank or financial institution or the third party provide irrevocable collateral security, or stand as first-call guarantor of the contractor's obligations without requiring that the contracting authority has recourse against the principal debtor (the contractor).

The contractor bears the cost of providing such guarantee.

Pre-financing guarantees must remain in force until the pre-financing is cleared against interim payments or payment of the balance. Where the payment of the balance takes the form of a debit note, the pre-financing guarantee must remain in force for three months after the debit note is sent to the contractor. The contracting authority must release the guarantee within the following month.

Performance guarantees cover compliance with substantial contractual obligations until the contracting authority has given its final approval for the service. The performance guarantee must not exceed 10 % of the total price of the specific contract. The contracting authority must release the guarantee fully after final approval of the service, as provided for in the specific contract.

Retention money guarantees cover full delivery of the service in accordance with the specific contract including during the contract liability period and until its final approval by the contracting authority. The retention money guarantee must not exceed 10 % of the total price of the specific contract. The contracting authority must release the guarantee after the expiry of the contract liability period as provided for in the specific contract.

The contracting authority must not request a retention money guarantee for a specific contract where it has requested a performance guarantee.

#### **II.21.6. Interim payments and payment of the balance**

The contractor (or leader in the case of a joint tender) must send an invoice for interim payment, as provided for in Article I.6 or in the tender specifications or in the specific contract.

The contractor (or leader in the case of a joint tender) must send an invoice for payment of the balance within 60 days of the end of the period of provision of the services, as provided for in Article I.6, in the tender specifications or in the specific contract.

Payment of the invoice and approval of documents does not imply recognition of the regularity, authenticity, completeness and correctness of the declarations and information they contain.

Payment of the balance may take the form of recovery.

#### II.21.7. Suspension of the time allowed for payment

The contracting authority may suspend the payment periods specified in Article I.6 at any time by *notifying* the contractor (or leader in the case of a joint tender) that its invoice cannot be processed. The reasons the contracting authority may cite for not being able to process an invoice are:

- (a) because it does not comply with the FWC;
- (b) because the contractor has not produced the appropriate documents or deliverables; or
- (c) because the contracting authority has observations on the documents or deliverables submitted with the invoice.

The contracting authority must *notify* the contractor (or leader in the case of joint tender) as soon as possible of any such suspension, giving the reasons for it. In cases b) and c) referred above, the contracting authority shall notify the contractor (or leader in case of a joint tender) the time limits to submit additional information or corrections or a new version of the documents or deliverables if the contracting authority requires it.

Suspension takes effect on the date the contracting authority sends the *notification*. The remaining payment period resumes from the date on which the requested information or revised documents are received or the necessary further verification, including on-the-spot checks, is carried out. Where the suspension period exceeds two months, the contractor (or leader in the case of a joint tender) may request the contracting authority to justify the continued suspension.

Where the payment periods have been suspended following rejection of a document referred to in the first paragraph of this Article and the new document produced is also rejected, the contracting authority reserves the right to terminate the specific contract in accordance with Article II.18.1(c).

#### II.21.8. Interest on late payment

On expiry of the payment periods specified in Article I.6, the contractor (or leader in the case of a joint tender) is entitled to interest on late payment at the rate applied by the European Central Bank for its main refinancing operations in euros (the reference rate) plus eight points. The reference rate is the rate in force, as published in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Union*, on the first day of the month in which the payment period ends.

Suspension of the payment period as provided for in Article II.21.7 is not considered as giving rise to late payment.

Interest on late payment covers the period running from the day following the due date for payment up to and including the date of payment as defined in Article II.21.1.

However, when the calculated interest is EUR 200 or less, it must be paid to the contractor (or leader in the case of a joint tender) only if it requests it within two months of receiving late payment.

#### II.22. REIMBURSEMENTS

**II.22.1** If provided for in the special conditions or in the tender specifications, the contracting authority must reimburse expenses directly connected with the provision of the services either when the contractor provides it with supporting documents or on the basis of flat rates.

**II.22.2** The contracting authority reimburses travel and subsistence expenses on the basis of the shortest itinerary and the minimum number of nights necessary for overnight stay at the destination.

**II.22.3** The contracting authority reimburses travel expenses as follows:

- (a) travel by air: up to the maximum cost of an economy class ticket at the time of the reservation;
- (b) travel by boat or rail: up to the maximum cost of a first class ticket;



- (c) travel by car: at the rate of one first class rail ticket for the same journey and on the same day;

In addition, the contracting authority reimburses travel outside Union territory if it has given its prior written approval for the expenses.

**II.22.4** The contracting authority reimburses subsistence expenses on the basis of a daily subsistence allowance as follows:

- (a) for journeys of less than 200 km for a return trip, no subsistence allowance is payable;
- (b) the daily subsistence allowance is payable only on receipt of supporting documents proving that the person concerned was present at the destination;
- (c) the daily subsistence allowance takes the form of a flat-rate payment to cover all subsistence expenses, including meals, local transport including transport to and from the airport or station, insurance and sundries;
- (d) the daily subsistence allowance is reimbursed at the flat rates specified in Article I.5.3;
- (e) accommodation is reimbursed on receipt of supporting documents proving the necessary overnight stay at the destination, up to the flat-rate ceilings specified in Article I.5.3.

**II.22.5** The contracting authority reimburses the cost of shipment of equipment or unaccompanied luggage if it has given its prior written approval for the expense.

**II.23. RECOVERY**

**II.23.1** If an amount is to be recovered under the terms of the FWC, the contractor must repay the contracting authority the amount in question.

**II.23.2. Recovery procedure**

Before recovery, the contracting authority must *formally notify* the contractor of its intention to recover the amount it claims, specifying the amount due and the reasons for recovery and inviting the contractor to make any observations within 30 days of receipt.

If no observations have been submitted or if, despite the observations submitted, the contracting authority decides to pursue the recovery procedure, it must confirm recovery by *formally notifying* a debit note to the contractor, specifying the date of payment. The contractor must pay in accordance with the provisions specified in the debit note.

If the contractor does not pay by the due date, the contracting authority may, after informing the contractor in writing, recover the amounts due:

- (a) by offsetting them against any amounts owed to the contractor by the Union or by the European Atomic Energy Community or by an executive agency when it implements the Union budget;
- (b) by calling in a financial guarantee if the contractor has submitted one to the contracting authority;
- (c) by taking legal action.

**II.23.3. Interest on late payment**

If the contractor does not honour the obligation to pay the amount due by the date set by the contracting authority in the debit note, the amount due bears interest at the rate indicated in Article II.21.8. Interest on late payments will cover the period starting on the day after the due date for payment and ending on the date when the contracting authority receives the full amount owed.

Any partial payment is first entered against charges and interest on late payment and then against the principal amount.

#### II.23.4. Recovery rules in the case of joint tender

If the contract is signed by a group (joint tender), the group is jointly and severally liable under the conditions set out in Article II.6 (liability). The contracting authority shall send the debit note first to the leader of the group.

If the leader does not pay by the due date the whole amount, and if the amount due cannot be offset or can only be offset partially in accordance with Article II.23.2 (a), then the contracting authority may claim the amount still due to any other member or members of the group by respectively *notifying* them with a debit note in conformity with the provisions laid down in Article II.23.2.

#### II.24. CHECKS AND AUDITS

- II.24.1 The contracting authority and the European Anti-Fraud Office may check or require an audit on the *implementation of the FWC*. This may be carried out either by OLAF's own staff or by any outside body authorised to do so on its behalf.

Such checks and audits may be initiated at any moment during the provision of the services and up to five years starting from the payment of the balance of the last specific contract issued under this FWC

The audit procedure is initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the contracting authority. Audits are carried out on a confidential basis.

- II.24.2 The contractor must keep all original documents stored on any appropriate medium, including digitised originals if authorised under national law, for a period of five years starting from the payment of the balance of the last specific contract issued under this FWC.
- II.24.3 The contractor must grant the contracting authority's staff and outside personnel authorised by the contracting authority the appropriate right of access to sites and premises where the FWC is implemented and to all the information, including information in electronic format, needed to conduct such checks and audits. The contractor must ensure that the information is readily available at the moment of the check or audit and, if so requested, that information is handed over in an appropriate format.
- II.24.4 On the basis of the findings made during the audit, a provisional report is drawn up. The contracting authority or its authorised representative must send it to the contractor, who has 30 days following the date of receipt to submit observations. The contractor must receive the final report within 60 days following the expiry of the deadline to submit observations.

On the basis of the final audit findings, the contracting authority may recover all or part of the payments made in accordance with Article II.23 and may take any other measures which it considers necessary.

- II.24.5 In accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspection carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against *fraud* and other *irregularities* and Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office, the European Anti-Fraud Office may carry out investigations, including on the spot checks and inspections, to establish whether there has been *fraud*, corruption or any other illegal activity under the contract affecting the financial interests of the Union. Findings arising from an investigation may lead to criminal prosecution under national law.

The investigations may be carried out at any moment during the provision of the services and up to five years starting from the payment of the balance of the last specific contract issued under this FWC.

- II.24.6** The Court of Auditors and the European Public Prosecutor's Office established by Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939<sup>6</sup> ('the EPPPO') have the same rights as the contracting authority, particularly right of access, for the purpose of checks, audits and investigations.

---

<sup>6</sup> Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office