

Open Call for Tender for translation services

Starting date: 2025-10-06

Deadline for tenders: 2025-11-10 (= publication date + 35 calendar days)

1 Introduction

CEN and CENELEC (often referred to jointly as CEN-CENELEC) are a pair of associations that bring together the National Standardization Bodies and National Committees of European countries, collectively called the “Members”. We provide a platform for the development of European Standards and other technical documents in relation to various kinds of products, materials, services and processes. They support standardization activities in relation to a wide range of fields and sectors including air and space, chemicals, construction, electromagnetic compatibility, accumulators, primary cells and primary batteries, insulated wire and cable, etc.

This tender is being run in the context of a project that will, amongst other things, support the European Commission in its conformity with Regulation 1049 regarding citizen access to documents.

2 Objectives

The objective of this tender is to select a contractor who will be responsible for:

- Translating documents supplied by CEN-CENELEC into specified languages
- Development, support and maintenance of IT interfaces to support document exchange

CEN-CENELEC has not used commercial translation services before, so several of the requirements are specified with options. Candidates are requested to indicate which options they can support and the impact of the choice (e.g. on price) so that CEN-CENELEC can make an optimal balance between services and budget. CEN-CENELEC requires automatic translation at a minimum, within their budget constraints. Additional options such as human correction and translation memory operated by CEN-CENELEC using the contractor’s tools, will only be considered if they fit within CEN-CENELEC’s budget constraints. If a candidate does not provide a pricing option that fits within budget constraints, it will not be considered; therefore, all candidates are strongly encouraged to also include their lowest-cost option alongside any other options.

3 Execution

3.1 General tasks of the contractor

The contractor will be responsible for delivering a solution that meets the requirements described in §9 Annex B: Detailed requirements.

3.2 Timeframe

Milestone	Date
Deadline for tender submission	2025-11-10
Sample source documents sent to shortlisted candidates	2025-11-21
Deadline for sample translated document submission	2025-11-28
Selection of contractor	January 2026
IT developments expected to be deployed to a test environment	May 2026

IT development expected to be deployed to the production environment	June 2026
First documents sent from CEN-CENELEC to contractor for translation	July 2026
Last translated documents received by CEN-CENELEC from contractor	March 2029

4 Financial support

The European Commission has decided to provide financial support for the provision of translation services for harmonized standards-related documents for the benefit of CEN and CENELEC Members. The financial support from the European Commission is based on the Single Market Programme Regulation (SMP) (including its Financing Decision) and the Multi beneficiaries Grant Agreement (MGA). In this case, costs of external subcontractors are funded at 100%, with 95% being borne by EC and 5% by CEN-CENELEC. Costs have to qualify as eligible as defined in MGA N° 101225485 and also in compliance with [EC Financial Regulation](#), and be justified. The payment is usually divided into several instalments after completion of defined milestones and approval of the interim/final reports and the justification of costs. The subcontractors shall fulfil the conditions of the MGA N° 101225485, including those relating to liability, ownership of results, confidentiality, conflict of interests, publicity, evaluation, assignment, checks and audits.

The subcontractors' costs shall be justified with copies of the relevant invoices. All relevant evidence shall be kept in view of future payments (reports, work, drafts and deliverables, contracts & invoices, time sheets, purchase orders, etc).

Costs incurred before the selection procedure is finalized shall not be considered as eligible for EU financial support.

5 Selection criteria

The applicants shall comply with the following requirements which are scored as shown:

Requirement	Maximum points
Conformity with §9 Annex B: Detailed requirements	40
Price as per §8 Annex A: Cost template	30
Respect of §3.2 Timeframe	10
Documented skills and experience, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT interfaces for document exchange Translation tools Experience translating comparable technical documents 	20
Total	100

The candidate/offer with the highest score and which fits within CEN-CENELEC's budget constraints will be considered the best value for money and hence selected to perform the activities (except in case of force majeure).

6 Eligibility criteria

The following candidates will be excluded:

- Candidates whose offer does not meet all requirements in §9 Annex B: Detailed requirements
- Candidates who were the subject of a non-likely judgment of recourse for a professional infringement
- Candidates who are in an irregular tax situation or in an irregular special taxation situation

- Candidates who provide (non-editorial) incomplete or erroneous information
- Candidates who submit their application after the submission deadline
- Candidates with any potential conflict of interest that is not suitably disclosed on time and managed to ensure fairness

7 Tenders

Tenders shall be submitted as soon as possible, to be received at the latest by **2025-11-09**. The tender shall be in English and contain:

- For the translation services, for translation memory initial setup and operation activities, a profile of the contractor's human translators, including:
 - Contractual arrangements – e.g. freelancers versus permanent employees and average duration of engagements
 - Required expertise with translation and translation memory software
 - Required expertise with relevant subject matter – e.g. different types of engineering, translation
 - Required linguistic expertise – e.g. a masters degree in source and/or target language
- For the IT interfaces, the Curriculum Vitae of each relevant person participating in the project, demonstrating the necessary expertise for the work to be done;
- A schedule and a description of the execution of the tasks which will be carried out in the project as described in §9 Annex B: Detailed requirements;
- A response to each point in §9 Annex B: Detailed requirements
- Three tables in the formats given in §8 Annex A: Cost template with detailed information on the costs;
- Appropriate documentation to prove economic and financial capacities;
- Any further documents to prove the qualification required in §6 Eligibility criteria;
- A signed declaration, by which the candidate(s) certifies not to be subject to one of the exclusion criteria as described in §6 Eligibility criteria and the veracity of the adjoining documents.

Please note that, to ensure equal treatment of all tenders, it is not possible to modify offers after their submission in relation to the technical and financial proposals. Therefore, incompleteness in this section can only result in negative impact for the evaluation of award criteria. Please note also that proposals deviating from the technical specifications may be rejected for non-conformity.

Tenders should be sent by a legal representative, i.e. to be considered, any possible association has to be formalized according to the local legislation before submitting the tender. Working teams, partnerships and other groups of people, particularly under the aegis of an institute qualify as contractors for the service contracts awarded in the context of this CfT (Call for Tender). Partnerships or joint ventures and other legally binding co-operations regardless of their organizational form qualify as well, provided they are recognized entities under the applicable national laws. Potential candidates may come from the public sector as well as from private industry. It is essential however that the qualifications and experience of the individual fulfilling the tasks are properly described.

For questions concerning the information provided in this call for tender or in case of need for clarification or additional information please contact Shannon Kiernan, Account Manager – Project Management Office, skiernan@cencenelec.eu. Interested candidates are highly encouraged to take this opportunity before submitting their tender. All relevant questions and answers from any such session, as well as any relevant information due to queries or other reasons, will be published on the website ([link](#) to news article) (without referring to the identity of the candidate asking questions) to ensure equal access to information for all interested candidates.

Please submit your tender to:

Shannon Kiernan

Account Manager – Project Management Office

skiernan@cencenelec.eu

Wetenschapsstraat 23, 1040 Brussels, Belgium

8 Annex A: Cost template

8.1 Translation

Please add as many rows as relevant to describe all the combinations that you can provide. An example row is included for illustration which you should remove.

Language	Human correction	Translation memory	Unit	Price per unit (€)
Bulgarian	Operated by CEN-CENELEC	Operated by contractor	Page	1,00

8.2 IT interfaces

Please complete the columns which you can provide, leaving the others blank. Do not add or remove columns.

Please add as many rows as relevant to describe the roles that you will use. An example row is included for illustration which you should remove.

Role	Daily rate (€)	APIs option 1: developed by contractor		APIs option 2: developed by CEN-CENELEC		Permissions option 1: standalone		Permissions option 2: integrated	
		Effort (person-days)	Total (€)	Effort (person-days)	Total (€)	Effort (person-days)	Total (€)	Effort (person-days)	Total (€)
Project manager	100	2	200	2	200	2	200	2	200

8.3 Service fees

Please add as many rows as relevant to describe all the costs associated with providing service. Some example rows are included for illustration which you should remove.

Item	Unit	Price per unit (€)
Helpdesk	Year	1
Hosting	Year	1
Software licence	Year	1

9 Annex B: Detailed requirements

9.1 Translation

9.1.1 Subject matter and vocabulary

The documents to be translated will be derived from harmonised standards. Harmonised standards are technical documents (for example, various kinds of engineering) which therefore use technical vocabulary. The contractor will therefore require knowledge of technical (e.g. engineering) vocabulary.

In addition, documents use a vocabulary specific to the standardisation industry, described in detail in the CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations Part 3, available publicly at <https://boss.cen.eu/reference-material/refdocs/pages/> and <https://boss.cenelec.eu/reference-material/refdocs/pages/> in English, French and German. For example, “shall” implies requirement while “should” implies recommendation. These need to be translated according to the conventions of the standardisation industry in each language. For example, in French, “should” is translated as “il convient de” and not as “doit” or “devrait”. The contractor will therefore require knowledge of the conventions of the standardisation industry in each language – not only for English, French and German, but for all target languages.

9.1.2 Languages

Source documents will always be provided in English.

Must-have target languages are:

1. Bulgarian
2. Croatian
3. Czech
4. Danish
5. Dutch
6. Estonian
7. Finnish
8. French
9. German
10. Greek
11. Hungarian
12. Irish
13. Italian
14. Latvian
15. Lithuanian
16. Maltese
17. Polish
18. Portuguese
19. Romanian
20. Slovak
21. Slovenian
22. Spanish
23. Swedish

Candidates are requested to indicate which languages they can provide and any aspects that may be different between languages (e.g. price).

The following target languages are out of scope for this tender but may be of interest in the future. Candidates are encouraged to indicate whether they are able to provide them:

- 24. Icelandic
- 25. Macedonian
- 26. Norwegian
- 27. Romansh
- 28. Sámi
- 29. Serbian
- 30. Turkish

9.1.3 Volumes

Each source document will be derived from one homegrown harmonised standard.

Each source document will be approximately 3 pages long.

Each page will contain approximately 200 words.

Each source document will need to be translated into all target languages.

There are currently approximately 3000 homegrown harmonised standards in the existing catalogue, and approximately 230 more are produced each year.

Source documents will not all necessarily be translated. It is estimated that an initial batch of approximately 600 to 800 documents will be requested, and then smaller volumes of approximately 2 to 20 per week after that, until the end of the contract period. The maximum volume is the entire catalogue. There is no minimum volume.

9.1.4 Machine translation

It is a must-have requirement that machine translation is used as the first step of translation in order to keep costs down.

Candidates are requested to confirm that they meet this requirement and describe the technologies they propose to use, and their type (e.g. rule-based machine translation, statistical machine translation, neural machine translation, hybrid machine translation).

9.1.5 Human correction

It is a nice-to-have requirement that the contractor provides tool support for CEN-CENELEC humans to correct the automatically generated translations.

#	Option	Description
1	No human correction	No human correction is made.
2	Human correction tools provided by contractor and operated by CEN-CENELEC's staff	Humans make corrections to the automatically generated translations. This would be done before the translated document is sent back to CEN-CENELEC. Both the automatically generated and the human-corrected version would be sent back to CEN-CENELEC simultaneously. This means that the contractor needs to provide a tool for humans (in this case, CEN-CENELEC's staff) to progressively draft, save and submit corrections.

9.1.6 Translation memory

It is a nice-to-have requirement that humans interact with the software to improve translations of key terms and that the machine translation uses this to improve future automatic translations. Several options are possible:

#	Option	Description
1	No translation memory	No translation memory is used.
2	Translation memory tools provided by contractor and operated by the contractor's staff	Translation memory is used by the machine translation software. The humans who interact with the software to improve the translations are engaged by the contractor, so that this process occurs without any interaction from CEN-CENELEC. No specific software needs to be made available to CEN-CENELEC, however the contractor will be expected to provide regular hit rate statistical reports as hit rates will be expected to increase over time.
3	Translation memory tools provided by contractor and operated by CEN-CENELEC's staff	Translation memory is used by the machine translation software. The humans who interact with the software to improve the translations are engaged by CEN-CENELEC. This means that the relevant software needs to be made available to CEN-CENELEC's staff or delegates so that they can "teach" the software within the contractor's environment. The contractor will need to assist with initial setup including preliminary translation memory entries in each language pair and provide initial training/material to CEN-CENELEC's staff or delegates to enable them to operate the tools.

Candidates are requested to indicate which option(s) they are willing to support, and in the case of option 3 a description of what training/material would be provided, and what impacts the choice has on other aspects (e.g. turnaround time, price, helpdesk).

9.1.7 Quality

High quality is required in the standardisation industry and CEN-CENELEC will perform spot-checks. If documents are found not to meet expected quality levels, pricing penalties will apply for all documents for that target language which were sent to the contractor for translation during that quarter. Low quality may also be grounds for contract termination. Quality level is defined as 100% minus the percentage of characters that a trained human translator needs to manually modify to make a perfect translation (~ 100% minus the % of tracked changes).

Shortlisted candidates may be invited to process some sample documents to demonstrate quality prior to a selection decision.

9.1.8 Turnaround time

Turnaround time for automated translations is expected to be under 1 hour. The contractor is requested to indicate their expected turnaround time.

The contractor will not be responsible for human corrections, so no requirement applies.

The translation memory maintenance is asynchronous to operational delivery, so no requirement applies.

9.1.9 File formats

Files may contain a variety of content types, including text, images, formulas, etc. The contractor is only expected to translate text because the other content types are expected to be language-agnostic (e.g. images are not expected to contain words).

CEN-CENELEC will provide documents in PDF, Microsoft Word or XML format. The contractor is expected to return the translated document in the same file format, e.g. if XML is provided then XML will be returned. The contractor is expected to preserve all non-translated aspects of the file, including:

- Non-text content (images, table structures, etc)
- For Microsoft Word files, styles, white-space characters, etc
- For XML files, field structure, etc, and the corresponding XLIFF file

Candidates are requested to indicate whether they can handle PDF, Word, XML or all of these file formats, and any impact the choice may have.

9.1.10 Intellectual property

Protection of CEN and CENELEC's intellectual property is paramount. All legal frameworks, procedures and IT tools must conform with GDPR. Content must not contribute to any other party's database (including that of the contractor), i.e. any AI or LLM tool must be installed in a safe, isolated environment. All source content, translation memory records and resulting content is the sole property of CEN and CENELEC.

9.2 IT interfaces

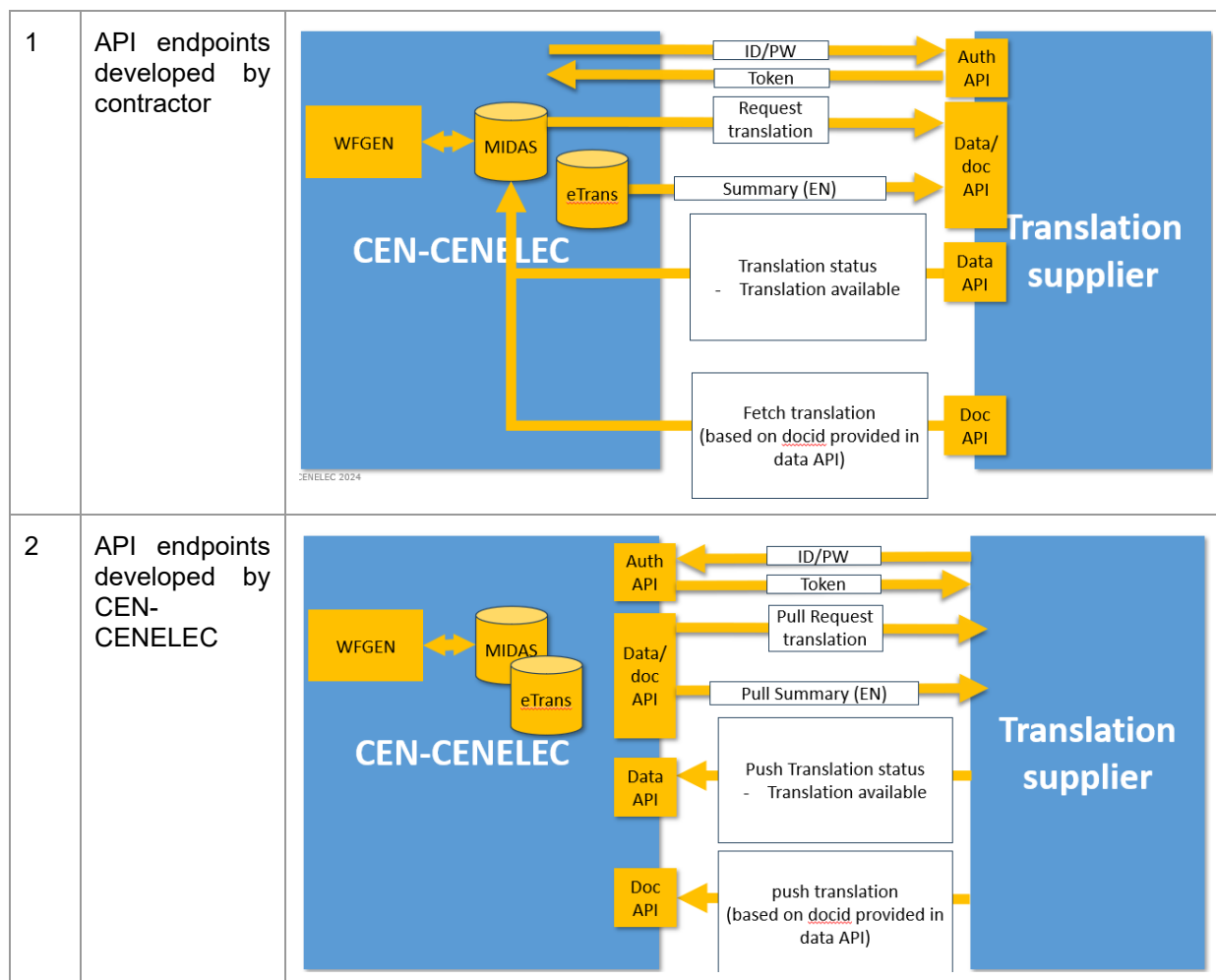
9.2.1 APIs for document exchange

APIs will be used to pass both metadata and content between CEN-CENELEC and the contractor. Several API endpoints are envisioned:

#	Purpose	Direction	Indicative content
1	New document for translation	PUSH/PULL (depending on the option selected below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request ID • Request date • Source document ID • Translation deadline • Source document (Word or XML)
2	Translation status update	PUSH/PULL (depending on the option selected below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request date • Source document ID • Translation deadline • Language • Status • Status date • Translated document ID
3	Translation delivery	PUSH/PULL (depending on the option selected below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source document ID • Translated document (Word or XML)

Two possible options for division of responsibilities are envisioned:

#	Option	Description
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Candidates are requested to indicate whether each option is acceptable and/or desirable for them, and any impact the choice might have (e.g. price, go-live date).

9.2.2 Permissions management for translation memory

In case humans appointed by CEN-CENELEC operate the translation memory feature, a permissions management approach will be required. Different options are envisioned:

#	Option	Description
1	Standalone	The contractor provides a standalone tool in which CEN-CENELEC administrators are able to create and modify users and assign role(s) to them.
2	Integrated	Integration with the CEN-CENELEC Single Sign On solution, where the authentication would be managed via a cross-organisation single sign-on system, and the roles for authenticated users would be retrievable via API. This will allow authentication and return one or more roles.

Regardless of option selected, the contractor will need to convert the resulting role into a set of appropriate permissions in the translation memory feature, including the ability to restrict users to:

- View only vs modify
- Specific language pairs

Candidates are requested to indicate whether each option is acceptable and/or desirable for them, and any impact the choice might have (e.g. price, go-live date).

9.2.3 Admin interface

A handful of individuals at CEN-CENELEC will require access to an administrative graphical interface which must allow them to:

- Manage other administrative users (must have, if an admin interface is used at all)
- View all translation requests, including metadata, source content and translated content (nice-to-have)
- View and modify all translation memory data (must-have, if translation memory is used)

9.3 Service level

All services are required to be hosted and maintained from the agreed go-live date to the end of the contract period.

A helpdesk will be required during European business hours in English for contact from the CEN-CENELEC administrators only. This will encompass both translation and IT topics.

An account manager will be required as a main contact point for topics other than helpdesk.

Candidates are requested to indicate the system availability (as a %) that they are willing to commit to.