



# Situational Competency-Based Interview

**Open Competition  
EPSO/AST/151/22  
Assistants (AST 4)  
in Information and  
Communication Technology**

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**Time allowed: 25 minutes**

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## ASSIGNMENT

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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

**This document presents a fictitious scenario. It has been produced solely for the purpose of this exercise. All references to existing countries, international organisations, private companies, departments and their representatives, etc. have been invented purely as examples. Any views expressed should not be taken to represent the opinions of those bodies or persons. When dealing with the assignment, participants should therefore rely solely on the information presented in the exercise and not on any prior expertise in the field.**

For this exercise, you will be asked to take on the role of an advisor who is participating in a working group that has been tasked with advising the European Commission on the new Efficient Procurement Decree and making the necessary preparations for its implementation. All the documentation that you need to prepare yourself for your interview is included in this information brochure. It comprises a number of documents, reports and other information that you need to analyse in order to be able to deal properly with the situations presented to you during the interview.

It is important that you accept the scenario as it is presented. You may print the documents, rearrange them in any order you wish and add comments or make notes as necessary. You may consult the notes you have prepared in advance during your interview. However, you cannot record your interview or take further notes during your interview. Also, please note that there is no preparation time on the day of the interview.

Neither your knowledge in the field nor your knowledge on the topic of this exercise will be assessed during the interview; therefore, conducting any additional research is unnecessary. This Situational Competency-Based Interview is designed to assess the following general competencies: Learning & Development, Resilience and Working With Others.

You will have until the day of the interview to go through the information individually in order to prepare for the interview. The interview will last 25 minutes.

**Please note that for the purpose of this exercise:  
the interview will take place on Tuesday 9 June 20XX  
Last year was 20XX-1, next year will be 20XX+1**

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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### The Efficient Procurement Decree

For many years now, the European Union (EU) has followed standard public procurement laws and practices to purchase services from contractors. These specific rules and guidelines were designed to ensure value for money for the EU and the fair and consistent treatment of all contractors, but they have grown somewhat outdated over time.

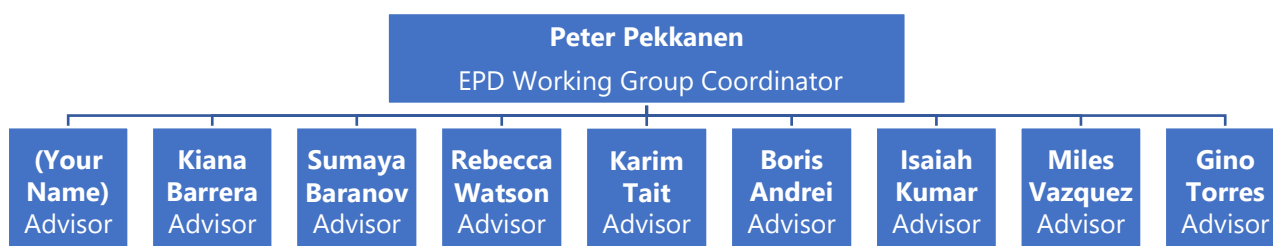
In response, the European Commission (Commission) has been preparing a new Efficient Procurement Decree (EPD), the general objectives of which are to increase the accessibility, transparency, and accountability of the use of public funds. The EU also hopes that the new EPD will help improve its public image and strengthen working relationships with both existing and future contractors. All negotiations relating to the regulation have been completed and the text is now being finalised. The new EPD will be adopted by the Commission on 15 July 20XX.

One of the main changes that the new EPD will bring about is a reduction in the current payment deadlines. Historically, the deadline for making payments to contractors has always been 90 days; however, as this figure is no longer in keeping with current business practices, it will be reduced to 60 days.

Furthermore, procedures for requesting and then checking bank guarantees from contractors hoping to work for the EU have also been reviewed. Currently, the project managers from each department are free to decide for themselves whether a contractor needs to provide the relevant EU institution with a bank guarantee, i.e. a document ensuring that potential losses (caused by the non-delivery of services, for example) will be covered by a financial institution. An analysis by Rachel Ferreira, lead analyst at the Commission's Department of Finance, showed that this currently results in approximately 70% of all contractors being asked to provide such guarantees. In many cases, this is the result of project managers adopting a 'better safe than sorry' attitude, which leads to a lot of unnecessary guarantees being requested. While these guarantees protect the EU from bad debts and financial losses, processing and checking them is very time consuming for the Finance Department. The Commission has therefore changed and restructured the way in which bank guarantees will be handled in future.

### The EPD Working Group

The Commission established a working group of representatives from its different departments to provide support during the preparation of the new EPD. This team is tasked with carrying out all necessary preparations for the final steps and announcement of the EPD, and with advising relevant stakeholders and bodies on its practical implementation.





## EPD WORKING GROUP STATE OF AFFAIRS AND FOLLOW-UP

## MEETING MINUTES

<b>Date and time:</b>	01/06/20XX – 14:00 - 15:30
<b>Attendees:</b>	All EPD Working Group Members

### AGENDA TOPICS

EPD ANNOUNCEMENT	
◆	The fact that the new EPD will be adopted on 15 July has not yet been made public. Therefore, the EPD's major objectives and the changes affecting contractors will all have to be fully addressed at a press conference. After this conference, other ways of disseminating information on the EPD should also be implemented.
◆	Publishing an advertisement in specialist trade magazines would be the best way to target specific contractors. Additionally, a push across several social media channels would be a good way to engage a broad, already interested audience; moreover, it might help create a more modern image of the EU. Finally, given its capacity to provide a lot of information to a large audience, the central EU website would also be a valuable resource.
PUBLIC OPINION	
◆	In the past, the EU has been accused of providing unclear information and of not giving the public enough insight into new procedures. Moreover, recent polls indicate that some contractors regard the EU's administrative processes as rather complicated. Consequently, we must strive for greater transparency and clear decisions, which can then be publicised unambiguously.
◆	In order to achieve this renewed objective, all Commission colleagues are invited to participate in an in-depth webinar on the three main principles at the heart of the EPD – transparency, accountability and accessibility. This webinar will immediately follow the workshop on budgeting and resource planning, which takes place at the end of next week. Registrations for both are still open on the Commission's intranet.
◆	The changes contained in the new EPD will have a major impact on the way of working with contractors, and therefore care must be taken to prevent any information from being disclosed to the public prematurely, in order to prevent the spread of false rumours.

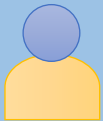


## EPD WORKING GROUP FORUM

## DISCUSSION FORUM

### > CENTRALISATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Isaiah 02/06/20XX

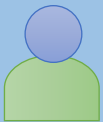


Hi all. While documentation on applying for tenders and becoming a contractor has long been available, these documents are spread across the different EU departments. I believe that the time has come to create a new, single document that brings together information from all departments into one central document. This would not only create a clearer structure and more uniform style, it would also send out the positive message that the EU wants to move forward. What do you think?

[QUOTE](#)

[REPLY](#)

Karim 02/06/20XX

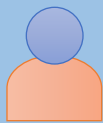


Very good point, Isaiah. According to Alexander, a colleague from the Legal Department who helped define the underlying principles of the EPD, a centralised document would be a major step in the right direction towards ensuring more accessibility and greater transparency.

[QUOTE](#)

[REPLY](#)

Gino 03/06/20XX



Hi Isaiah. Based on discussions I had with several contractors some time ago, I can confirm that they would greatly appreciate the more structured and centralised availability of information. However, we need to ensure that our working group's schedule will allow us to take on such a project. Maybe you could check with Miles, as he has considerable experience in optimising our planning.

[QUOTE](#)

[REPLY](#)

### > BANK GUARANTEE CHECKS

Kiana 03/06/20XX



Hello everyone. The EPD aims to revise the bank guarantee procedures, and rightly so. Currently, project managers can arbitrarily decide whether a contractor has to provide a bank guarantee or not. However, under the new EPD, they will need to base their decisions on the results of an objective risk analysis that they conduct during the tender review process. This should reduce the number of bank guarantees they request and in turn the amount of time that the Finance Department needs to spend checking such requests.

[QUOTE](#)

[REPLY](#)

Sumaya 04/06/20XX



I agree, Kiana. We have all been under a lot of pressure lately, but our colleagues from the Finance Department have been crying out for major reductions in their workload for some time now. I am quite certain that performing these analyses will lead to fewer requests being made. For your information, the Commission's intranet has some solid documentation on how such risk analyses were conducted during previous projects.

[QUOTE](#)

[REPLY](#)