



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Director-General

Brussels,  
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Dear Ms Ferguson and Mr Wynrock,

As you wrote in your letter, the coronavirus (COVID-19) is developing very quickly and the pandemic has been unfortunately spreading fast around the world. This is impacting the way in which the European Commission is operating at all levels. Your industry has also profoundly been impacted, not only from a health and safety point of view, but also from a logistical point of view.

We are aware of the issues and challenges you have raised. In this regard, we can assure you that our services, both at Headquarters and in Delegations, have been provided with clarifications and guidance in order to be able to continue to operate under these exceptional conditions within the limits laid down in the Financial Regulation.

In order to develop a harmonised approach, guidance has been provided on:

- the exchange of signed and scanned copies of contracts in pdf format by email;
- the acceptance of invoices and accompanying reports and supporting documents sent via email in PDF format;
- the submission of applications/tenders/offers by email through dedicated functional mailboxes to which only members of the evaluation committee have access to guarantee the confidentiality of the procedure. Special attention is drawn to respect the use of the double-envelope system.

Further guidance is currently being developed on the basis of additional questions raised by our services. Once the guidance has been consolidated, it is our intention to publish it on our website for external stakeholders.

These measures are temporary for the duration of the exceptional situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the European Commission operates globally and the situation varies from country to country, the respective authorising officers will have the responsibility in deciding if the exceptional working methods should be applied.

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When the members of your industry are confronted with challenges during procurement procedures or contract implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their first contact point should always be the responsible authorising officer, as indicated in the tendering documents or in the provisions of the contract.

We would like to express our gratitude to you and your industry members for your readiness to tackle the current challenges despite these difficult conditions.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]  
Koen DOENS

c.c.: L. Bagur (DEVCO R), K. Komninos (NEAR), R. Mac Aongusa (FPI)