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Concept note: ASPHER's role in the framework contract for DG SANTE

24 March 2025

1.0 Background

Ecorys is preparing for the upcoming **DG SANTE Framework Contract (FWC)**, which will support the work of the **Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)**, the **European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)**, and the **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)** in the areas of **health and food policies**. This FWC will facilitate studies that contribute to economic and regulatory analysis, impact assessments, evaluations, and policy monitoring.

The results of these studies will directly inform EU policymaking in line with the **Better Regulation principles**, supporting:

- ▶ **Impact assessments** for the design and preparation of policies, programmes, and legislation.
- ▶ **Evaluation and evaluation-related studies** to assess effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and added value.
- ▶ **Monitoring of policies and programmes**, including the design of monitoring systems and legal analysis of national transposition measures.

All studies under this FWC will follow methodologies aligned with the **Better Regulation guidelines and its toolbox**, ensuring robust, evidence-based policymaking.

Ecorys has been a leading contractor in the current FWC, delivering high-quality studies and applying a strong methodological approach. To continue this work, we are assembling a consortium with organisations that bring in-depth expertise in key areas of public health and food policy.

2.0 Role of subcontractors

We are seeking to collaborate with expert organisations such as ASPHER as subcontractors. This role would allow ASPHER to contribute to specific studies while maintaining flexibility in its level of involvement.

Consortium agreement

All subcontractors will sign a **framework consortium agreement** at the start of the contract. This agreement will define the terms of collaboration, including **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance**, data protection, and confidentiality. The agreement will also set expectations regarding the involvement of subcontractors in different assignments.

Request for Services process

When a new assignment (Request for Services; RfS) is published under the FWC, **Ecorys will share it with subcontractors**. Subcontractors will have the opportunity to express their interest, indicating their availability, expertise, and specific areas of contribution. If there is a strong match between ASPHER's expertise and the requirements of a particular study, we will define the scope, agree on specific contributions and the budget before confirming participation in the bid. This process allows for **flexibility and targeted engagement**, ensuring that subcontractors can participate in assignments that align with their strengths.

To facilitate this process, subcontractors will be asked to submit an **Expression of Interest (EoI)** for each assignment they wish to participate in. This EoI should outline the relevant expertise available within the organisation and the availability of key experts. If an RfS requires highly specific knowledge or skills, subcontractors will have the opportunity to highlight their suitability for the study. While subcontractors can express interest in multiple assignments, they are not obligated to participate in all projects under the FWC.

Contract management and data protection

Ecorys will oversee all interactions with subcontractors and manage project coordination. This includes ensuring compliance with **GDPR and stringent data protection guidelines**. Subcontractors will be required to follow Ecorys' data handling policies, which include specific measures to safeguard personal data and ensure compliance with EU regulations. All consortium members, including subcontractors, will sign agreements outlining their responsibilities regarding data protection and security. These measures provide clarity and legal assurance while minimising administrative burden for subcontractors.

3.0 Benefits for ASPHER

We believe that participating in the Ecorys-led consortium for the upcoming DG SANTE FWC presents a great opportunity for ASPHER to engage in EU health policy studies in a more structured and funded capacity. This collaboration would not only provide financial support for ASPHER's contributions but also strengthen its influence, networks, and research capacity in line with its strategic objectives.

We see the following benefits:

1. Paid participation in EU health policy research

Through this FWC, ASPHER would shift from being an unpaid stakeholder consulted for expertise to a funded research partner. This ensures that ASPHER's contributions to European health policy studies—such as impact assessments, evaluations, and regulatory analyses—are **recognised and financially supported**, rather than provided on a voluntary basis.

2. Greater influence on EU health policy

By taking part in studies commissioned by the European Commission, HaDEA, and EFSA, ASPHER will have a **direct role in shaping European health policy**. This includes contributing expertise on public health education, workforce development, and regulatory matters—areas that align with ASPHER's mission.

3. Early access to policy developments

Participation in the consortium will provide ASPHER with **early insights into emerging EU health priorities** and policy discussions. This position allows ASPHER to anticipate regulatory trends, align its research and advocacy efforts with upcoming policy changes, and **strengthen its role as a thought leader in European public health**.

4. Strengthening networks and expanding collaboration beyond the FWC

As a network of public health institutions and universities, ASPHER is well-placed to **leverage the FWC to enhance collaboration across Europe**. This contract offers a structured opportunity to work closely with leading research and consultancy organisations, reinforcing partnerships that **extend beyond the FWC itself**.

5. Flexibility and administrative support

ASPHER's role in the consortium is designed to be **low-burden and flexible**, ensuring that participation is aligned with its capacity and interests. Ecorys will manage the administrative and contractual aspects of the studies, including compliance, reporting, and financial processes. This allows ASPHER to **focus on contributing expertise** while avoiding the complexities of managing EU-funded contracts.

We would be delighted to further discuss ASPHER's potential involvement in this FWC and answer any questions. Please let us know if you require further details. **Contact:** Rana Orhan Pees, Senior Consultant in Health and Wellbeing, Rana.OrhanPees@ecorys.com