



CALL FOR TENDER

For the selection of a contractor to administer the Keymark System as "Keymark Management Organisation" (KMO) on behalf of CEN and CENELEC

Launch: Friday 4 April 2025

Deadline for tenders: Monday 2 June 2025

CONTENT

1.	BACKGROUND	2
1.1	Context	2
1.2	Keymark Schemes and Financial Parameters	3
2.	THE SERVICES	4
2.1	Core Activities	4
2.2	Marketing and Promotional Activities	5
2.3	Protection of the Keymark	6
2.4	Reporting to the Co-owners	6
3.	KMO REQUIREMENTS	6
4.	SELECTION CRITERIA	7
4.1	Criteria for Exclusion	7
4.2	Award Criteria	8
4.3	Evidence of Technical and Professional Capacity	9
5.	REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST	10
6.	CONFIDENTIALITY	10
7.	ENQUIRIES	11
8.	DETAILS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THE TENDER	11



1. **BACKGROUND**

1.1 **Context**

The Keymark system is a pan-European certification system demonstrating conformity with certain European Standards developed by CEN and CENELEC. It was established in the context of a resolution of the European Council, inviting the European Standards Organizations to “*continue their discussions on a possible harmonized expression of conformity with European standards*”. It is a fully-fledged third- party certification scheme Type 5, as defined in ISO/IEC 17067 “*Conformity assessment - Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*”.

CEN and CENELEC are the two co-owners of the Keymark system, which is also a registered trademark, but the certification schemes are operated by professional and qualified certification bodies, who are all accredited against ISO/IEC 17065 by members of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA).

The Keymark was successfully developed for some product groups through Keymark schemes, especially in the construction sector, and offers opportunities for market penetration in other sectors (see also next section).

The Keymark system is described in the CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations Part 4: Certification (currently available at: <https://boss.cenelec.eu/reference-material/refdocs/pages/>), as revised from time to time (hereinafter: the “**Internal Regulations - Part 4**”).

Since November 2013, the co-owners outsource the operation and daily management of the Keymark system to an external organization which acts as the Keymark Management Organisation (“**KMO**”). The KMO operates as a contractor for the Keymark co-owners.

The current contract with the organization acting as the KMO will be coming to an end on 31 December 2025. This call for tender (the “**Call**”) is therefore launched:

- 1) to select a contractor to be the KMO under a new contract for an initial term of two (2) years starting 1 January 2026, renewable automatically on a yearly basis for a one-year term, and for a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms (i.e. until 31 December 2029) unless either party terminates the contract with a 12 months’ prior written notice, and also
- 2) to assess the interest of tenderers in potentially acquiring the Keymark system (excluding the standards) (see section 5 below).

The activities (“**KMO Services**”) which will be subcontracted to the KMO can be summarily described as follows:

1. Proposing and implementing a marketing/communication plan to implement the strategy defined by the co-owners, to support:



- a) the growth of the Keymark in new sectors;
 - b) further improve and strengthen the position of the Keymark in existing sectors.
2. Authorizing and monitoring of the certification bodies (so-called "**Empowered Certification Bodies**") which are allowed to grant Keymark licences, in accordance with the strategy.
 3. Approving proposed Keymark schemes (for more details see next section), appointing the Keymark scheme secretariats and coordinating the Keymark scheme secretariats, in accordance with the strategy.
 4. Managing the Keymark database and dedicated Keymark website www.keymark.eu.
 5. On behalf of the co-owners, collecting the Keymark Licence Fees (as further detailed in section 1.2.2 below) collected from the clients via the Empowered Certification Bodies.
 6. Protecting the Keymark system (including the Keymark trademark) against any misuse and/or mishandling, including legal actions in consultation and coordination with the co-owners.
 7. Performing all of the above Services in line with the Internal Regulations - Part 4 (as amended and updated from time to time) and regularly report to the Keymark governance of the co-owners on the progress of its activities.

1.2 Keymark Schemes and Financial Parameters

1.2.1 Existing and potential future schemes:

As already alluded to above, the Keymark system includes *Keymark schemes* focused on the certification of specific products. Each Keymark scheme is developed and managed by a *Keymark Scheme Group*, which is composed of stakeholders. The KMO approves and coordinates the Keymark Schemes.

There are currently 5 active Keymark schemes (and the related Keymark Scheme Groups):

- Solar thermal products
- Thermal insulation products for building and industrial applications
- Thermostatic radiator valves
- Heat pumps
- Security products

5 further Keymark schemes are in pre-development:

- Fireplaces
- External thermal composite systems



- Construction products
- Ventilation
- Refrigeration

In 2023, 3.561 Keymark certificates of conformity were issued for the 24 European standards which serve as the basis of the existing Keymark schemes. 36 certification bodies are authorized to issue a certificate (2023).

1.2.2 Financial aspects

The KMO Services are remunerated through a revenue-sharing model.

A "**Keymark Licence Fee**" is charged to the client receiving a Keymark certification. It is a flat-rate annual fee for the right to use the Keymark trademark and system that is collected by the Empowered Certification Bodies from the clients. The level of the Keymark Licence Fee is set by the co-owners of the trademark and can be amended from time to time after consultation with the KMO.

The Empowered Certification Bodies are also allowed to charge additional fees to the clients covering certification, testing and inspection services.

As consideration for the KMO Services, the KMO will be paid an annual fee corresponding to 30% of the total Keymark system revenues (i.e. the Keymark Licence fees) collected annually.

The co-owners are open to agreeing on additional sources of income for the KMO, such as, service fees for authorization and renewal of the authorization of the Empowered Certification Bodies, provided these are compatible with the strategy, mission and purpose of the co-owners.

2. THE SERVICES

The KMO shall perform services comprising the following activities:

2.1 Core Activities

- 2.1.1 Handling applications from organisations wishing to become Empowered Certification Bodies and signing agreements with the accepted Empowered Certification Bodies (which agreements shall include the conditions of use of the Keymark trademark and Keymark system by the Empowered Certification Bodies and the end-user clients).
- 2.1.2 Examining and deciding on requests for new Keymark schemes and proposals for revision of existing Keymark schemes.
- 2.1.3 Monitoring and coordinating the work of the Keymark Scheme Groups. This includes participation of the KMO in the individual Keymark Scheme Group's plenary meetings and in extraordinary meetings related to specific cases (i.e. complaints, strategic activities) upon the invitation of the Chair or/and Manager of the Keymark Scheme Group.



2.1.4 Ensuring that all Empowered Certification Bodies taking part in a Keymark scheme:

- i. operate in accordance with the Keymark system rules and the rules of the related Keymark scheme,
- ii. properly implement the Keymark licensing requirements, including as regards the use of the Keymark trademark, with the clients,
- iii. maintain confidentiality of matters discussed or reviewed in the Keymark Scheme Groups,
- iv. recognize and accept the validity of Keymark licences issued by other Empowered Certification Bodies,
- v. comply with the rules set under the Internal Regulations Part 4 (as amended and updated from time to time).

2.1.5 Ensuring the continued integrity and technical competence of the Empowered Certification Bodies, including but not limited to, the maintenance of the accreditation of Empowered Certification Bodies and their peer assessment.

2.1.6 Collecting the Keymark Licence Fees via the Empowered Certification Bodies.

2.1.7 Upgrading and maintaining the Keymark database and website www.keymark.eu including statistics on e.g. suppliers and their licences, certified products and related European standards, Empowered Certification Bodies and testing laboratories, etc.

2.1.8 Handling appeals of clients in accordance with the Keymark dispute resolution mechanisms set out in the Internal Regulations – Part 4 (section 7.4),.

2.1.9 Liaising with the co-owners on all matters of principle related to the Keymark.

2.1.10 Supporting scheme groups to create acceptance and recognition of the Keymark.

2.1.11 Carrying out marketing and public relations activities to raise awareness for the consumer and the authorities to accept the Keymark as a basis for subsidies and as acceptance criteria for other programs.

2.2 Marketing and Promotional Activities

Developing and implementing a go-to-market plan of active marketing and promotion activities in accordance with the strategy defined by the co-owners (the "**Marketing Plan**"), thereby encouraging growth of the system, to be discussed with - and approved by - the co-owners, including a proposal for a dedicated budget for promotional and marketing activities.

The KMO shall share the approved Marketing Plan with the Keymark scheme secretariats and set up information sessions to explain the Marketing Plan.



2.3 Protection of the Keymark

The KMO shall be responsible for defending the value and the reputation of the Keymark trademark and the Keymark system by handling issues relating to the misuse and protection of the Keymark trademark and/or the Keymark system, in close cooperation with the co-owners, and external law firms where relevant.

2.4 Reporting to the Co-owners

The KMO shall:

- 2.4.1 Provide the co-owners with a quarterly KMO activity report on new applications by candidate Empowered Certification Bodies and the result of the evaluations, as well as revision of existing Keymark schemes and the development of new schemes (in close coordination with the Keymark scheme secretariats).
- 2.4.2 Liaise with the co-owners' Technical Committees and follow their advice on technical matters related to the standards.
- 2.4.3 Advise, assist and cooperate in good faith with the co-owners on all aspects of the KMO Services and the related activities, complying with related requests and directions of the co-owners.
- 2.4.4 Share the report on KMO activities with the Keymark scheme secretariats, including specific Key Performance Indicators to be defined and agreed with the co-owners and the scheme groups on new markets and promotional activities.

3. KMO REQUIREMENTS

The candidate KMO or tenderer shall meet the following requirements:

- a. The tenderer must be a (profit or not-for-profit) legal entity, in good financial and legal standing (going concern), with registered office in one of the European Union's 27 States.
- b. The tenderer is a conformity assessment body or an association with members active in conformity assessment and has been running active operations in the field of conformity assessment in Europe for at least the last 3 years.
- c. The tenderer has proven experience in management of certification schemes or product certification. Experience in accreditation processes is an asset.
- d. The tenderer has good knowledge of European standardization.
- e. The tenderer is able to manage the Keymark independently and impartially, and to avoid any conflict of interest between the KMO Services and other activities of the KMO (or those of affiliated or parent entities). The KMO shall not, directly or indirectly (through affiliated or parent entities), engage in activities that would materially interfere with or present a conflict of interest with its role as KMO during the contract period.



- f. The tenderer is able and committed to defending the value and reputation of the Keymark trademark and the Keymark system.
- g. The tenderer has the organizational structure and governance that ensure its capacity to administer the Keymark system.
- h. The tenderer has the means and ability to market and promote the Keymark, thus supporting its sustainable development.
- i. The tenderer has the means and ability in terms of economic/financial, human and technical resources, to ensure continuous and effective performance of the KMO Services throughout the envisaged lifetime of the contract and to support the long-term continuity of the KMO System.
- j. The tenderer has an open, transparent and effective appeal procedure for clients (see section 7.4 of the Internal Regulations -Part 4), or has a proposal for an open, transparent and effective appeal procedure.
- k. The tenderer has experience in database and website management.

4. SELECTION CRITERIA

4.1 Criteria for Exclusion

A tenderer will be excluded if:

- a. The tender is received by the co-owners after the deadline.
- b. The information provided is manifestly incomplete, misleading or erroneous in relation to their skills (experience and overall competences) and/or financial aspects.
- c. The tenderer fails to meet the eligibility requirements set out in this Call.
- d. The tenderer subcontracts or expresses the intention to subcontract all or part of the activities set out in section 2.1 (core activities) and 2.4 (reporting) to a third party. (For the avoidance of doubt, the KMO may work on the activities set out in section 2.2 (marketing) and 2.3 (trademark protection) with expert subcontractors, it being understood that KMO shall remain fully liable towards the co-owners for the proper performance of those activities.)
- e. The tenderer is/was the subject of a final judgment on grounds of a serious violation of criminal law or another law or regulation of particular relevance to the performance of the KMO services.



4.2 Award Criteria

The suitability of tenderers will be verified according to the following criteria:

Technical competence	Weight
a. Scope of products, services and activities in which the tenderer is operating as a conformity assessment body or association today.	5%
b. Level of knowledge and experience of the tenderer in the management of certification schemes or product certification (at least the last 3 years).	5%
c. Level of knowledge and experience of the tenderer's human resources assigned to the matter in the management of certification schemes or product certification (minimum 3 years).	5%
d. Level of knowledge and experience of the tenderer in (European) accreditation processes.	5%
e. Level of knowledge of and experience with (European) standardization.	5%
f. Level of knowledge of and experience with database and website management.	5%
g. Quality of the indicative action plan (and other information provided) describing how the tenderer intends to market and promote the Keymark.	10%
Total:	40 %
Organizational capacity	Weight
h. The tenderer has provided detailed information on the number of staff assigned to the Services overall, distinguishing technical and other capabilities, their expertise, experience in the field and seniority and explained why the proposed staffing is optimal to provide the KMO Services.	10%
i. The tenderer has provided a clear and complete overview of its organizational structure (including ownership structure) and governance, and said organizational structure and governance support the tenderer's ability to perform the Services.	5%

j. If the tenderer (or an affiliated entity of the tenderer) is the owner of or manages another certification mark, system or service which may compete with the Keymark system, the tenderer shall provide satisfactory clarification on how the Services will be organized so as to avoid a conflict of interest between the Services and the competing mark, system or service.	5%
k. The tenderer has provided a description of the appeal procedure that is currently in place or that it would put in place to address client complaints (see section 7.4 of the Internal Regulations - Part 4).	5%
l. General description of previous experience (if any) of the tenderer's actions undertaken to defend the value and reputation of their business and how they would apply this to the Keymark system.	5%
Total:	30 %
Financial Capacity	Weight
m. Proof of sufficient economic and financial capacity to guarantee continuous service quality and performance throughout the envisaged duration of the contract.	30%
Total:	30 %
TOTAL SCORE:	100 %

4.3 Evidence of Technical and Professional Capacity

4.3.1 Technical competence

The technical and professional capacity of the tenderer to perform the Services may be provided on the basis of, at least, the following information and documents:

- ✓ General description of the main domain of activity (core business) and other products and services.
- ✓ List of specific activities and services delivered in the past three years that may be directly related to the KMO Services in terms of knowledge and experience.
- ✓ The educational and professional qualifications and experience of the person(s) who will be responsible for and operating the Services (CVs).



- ✓ An indicative action plan describing how the tenderer intends to market and promote the Keymark.

4.3.2 Organizational capacity

The tenderer is expected to provide, at least, the following evidence:

- ✓ Statutes (articles of association or bylaws) of the tenderer, extract from the corporate registration, VAT number, etc.
- ✓ Description of the ownership of tenderer, as well as the activities of the parent entities and affiliates in the same group as tenderer, including potentially competing marks, systems or services offered by such other entities.
- ✓ Description of the functioning and composition of the governing bodies of the tenderer, and the reporting lines of the staff entrusted with the performance of the contract.
- ✓ Description of the overall organizational structure of the tenderer (departments, units, staff, offices, etc.), highlighting the parts entrusted with the performance of the contract.
- ✓ A statement of the average annual manpower and the number of managerial staff of the tenderer in the last three years, and which of those would be entrusted with the performance of the contract.
- ✓ Documentation about the existing appeal procedure, if any, or about the proposed appeal procedure.

4.3.3 Economic and financial capacity

The tenderer shall provide evidence of its financial capacity by submitting a full copy of the legal entity's audited annual financial statements (including auditors' report, if applicable) of the last two years, as audited and/or published.

5. REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The co-owners are evaluating different options for the Keymark system including the option to transfer the entire Keymark system (excluding standards and standard development) to another entity. In addition to providing the co-owners with the information set out in the previous sections, please also indicate whether the tenderer would be open to exploratory talks about a potential complete transfer of the Keymark system to the tenderer.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

All proposals when received, including personal data contained in the proposals, will be handled confidentially, shared only with the members of the selection panel, for the purposes only of the selection process. A copy of any proposals received will be kept in the records of CEN and CENELEC for as long as is necessary for CEN and CENELEC to



comply with their legal obligations.

This Call, as well as any information contained herein or shared with recipient of the Call in the context of the Call shall be deemed to constitute "Confidential Information". Recipient of the Call shall protect the Confidential Information with the same degree of care to prevent unauthorized use and/or dissemination or publication as it uses to protect its own confidential information and shall use the Confidential Information only for the purpose of evaluating and/or responding to this Call.

7. ENQUIRIES

In case of questions, the tenderer may contact governance@cencenelec.eu

8. DETAILS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THE TENDER

The submission structure shall at minimum include the following items:

1. Description of how the tenderer meets each the KMO requirements set out in section 3 above.
2. Written confirmation that the criteria for exclusion as described in section 4.1.e do not apply.
3. Description and evidence of the technical and professional capacity as described in section 4.3 above.
4. Expression of interest per section 5 above.

Tenders shall be sent ELECTRONICALLY ONLY to the co-owners by midnight on the deadline date indicated on the first page of this Call at the following e-mail address: governance@cencenelec.eu.

A tender will be considered as validly received only if received by co-owners before the indicated deadline.

The tender should be valid for at least 3 months after the indicated deadline. If selected, the candidate KMO should expect to sign a service agreement with CEN and CENELEC. A template of the agreement will be shared in the first week of May 2025.

The contract will be awarded after consideration of the specific objectives, requirements and selection criteria of this call. The selection of the service provider will be conducted by a CEN and CENELEC selection committee. Should no proposal submitted meet the desired criteria, CEN and CENELEC reserve the right to withdraw the Call and reformulate the project, in which case candidates may be invited to make an offer again.

* *

*