

Request for Proposal (RfP)

EIT Manufacturing Website Support Services
April 2024

The deadline for the applications was extended until May 3rd, 2024

1. Context

EIT Manufacturing is one of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) focused on promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and education in the domain of Manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together leading organisations along the entire value chain from smaller companies to larger industry, excellent academic and research institutions, as well as public sector organisations, to promote the transformation of manufacturing towards a sustainable, people-centric, resilient European industry, by removing barriers to innovation, promoting talent and education, leveraging enabling technologies and exploiting big data.

EIT Manufacturing is an association under the law 1901 created in 2019. Along with the EIT Manufacturing there are 8 (eight) other Knowledge Innovation Communities (“KICs”) with the aim to lead the action and create services across Europe, improving the competitiveness of European companies.

With this Request for Proposal (RfP) EIT Manufacturing is seeking corporate website www.eitmanufacturing.eu annual support and maintenance, as well as further development of the website in line with best practices.

Website specifications:

- CMS: WordPress (6.4.2 version)
- Database: MariaDB 10.4.21 (MySQL)

- Hosting Provider: LMS
- Server specs:
 - Location: Greece
 - Machine: Windows NT 10.0 AMD64
 - Web server: Apache
 - PHP version: 8.1
- Version control: Bitbucket
- Monitoring: Pingdom, New relic
- Main plugins used:
 - Advanced Custom Fields PRO
- Editor in use: Gutenberg (with custom blocks powered by ACF PRO)
- Dev environment setup for testing new features.

2. Work Scope & Deliverables:

EIT Manufacturing is looking for supplier(s), agencies, or freelance consultants, to provide website maintenance, annual timebank and further development of the website.

The scope of work includes:

1. Maintenance and Support

- Expected timebank estimation to be provided
- Tasks include:
 - i. Web core vitals & performance monitoring
 - ii. Technical support to EIT Manufacturing IT hosting provider during outages, cyber-attacks and related.
 - iii. WordPress and plugins updates, with security and performance checks before implementation. Expected 3 – 4 times a year.
 - iv. Bug fixing, to comply with performance, security and accessibility (WCAG 2.1 AA) standards
 - v. Updates to comply with best practices provided from GDPR on EU level, and country specific regulations. This will therefore include Cookie Management.
 - vi. SEO analytics and strategy consultancy support, within Matomo (ex Piwik) or/and Google Analytics (if future implementation will require).
 - vii. Pixels management support in Google Tag Manager

2. Yearly timebank for ongoing improvements

- Timebank (the number of hours) to be proposed by a service provider.
- Tasks include:
 - i. UX/UI improvements, impacting the website navigation

- ii. Updates to post types
- iii. AI search integration
 - So far, we selected Algolia with its WordPress Plugin to empower the search engine on the website. We welcome proposals for different solutions.
- iv. AI chat box integration
 - So far, we spotted Intercom as the most advanced and all-round service, which will allow us to implement AI, and setup process for human-backed responses when needed. We would like, therefore, to intervene manually in a conversation started from the AI. We welcome proposals for different solutions.

Reporting and project and project management

3. Monthly meetings.
4. Expected timebank estimation: 4 hours per month
 - Tasks include:
 - i. 1 hour long Monthly meeting with EIT Manufacturing Corporate Communications Manager, Webmaster and IT Department (+1 hour for preparation)
 - Review of performances (server-side, client-side, SEO focused)
 - Follow-up on improvements and ongoing activities
 - General monthly timebank report
 - Task-related timebank report
 - Provisional timebank for next month
 - ii. 2 hours a month for ad-hoc meetings for specific improvements discussion, alignment or training

The supplier(s) are expected to work collaboratively with EIT Manufacturing Webmaster, Corporate Communications Manager and the extended Communications team to align and effectively achieve the project goals within the indicated scope and deliverables.

3. Budget

A provider should estimate the number of hours required per each task, including the reporting and project management, and provide an overview of hourly rates.

The Supplier must also provide an estimate for the maximum budget for one year of contract.

4. Timeline

The deadline to submit the offer was extended until May 3rd, 2024. The indicative timeline for the Request for Proposals is as follows:

Activity	Responsible	Date
RfP Opening	EIT Manufacturing	16 th April, 2024
Submission of proposal (Extended)	Suppliers	3rd May, 2024
Evaluation and notification of award	EIT Manufacturing	16 th May, 2024
End of the Standstill	EIT Manufacturing	21 th May, 2024
Contract Signature	EIT Manufacturing/ Suppliers	22 th May, 2024
Project Start	EIT Manufacturing/ Suppliers	23 th May, 2024 (to allow for transition before June 1st)

All offers shall be submitted within the above-mentioned deadline to the following link: <https://eit-manufacturing.prioritize.linksquares.com/new-task?token=eqfghK7TdyCO3ZdVaPfVqgS5gx2LiEf2ImaueYxnGfUzCJhpKHMNjUwW1oN-KF7i>

To start your application, please click on the link above and then click on "Procurement". Then, please, fill in the fields with the description/data of the RfP you are applying for. Note that the Requester's name and email should be your name and email.

After completing the information, upload your proposal in the "attachments" option at the bottom of the screen, and click "Submit Task" to finalize your application. Please notice that you will not receive any confirmation on your e-mail. However, you should ensure that this message appears to you on the screen after submitting your proposal: "Task created successfully".

If you have any questions, please contact us at the following email address: procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu

Proposal Requirements:

Proposals should include the following:

- a) A portfolio showcasing examples of similar works (without disclosing brand/client information).
- b) A budget proposal and a plan for resource allocation, specifying level of expertise per each resource.
- c) A list of previous clients (with references) and the roles fulfilled in those projects.

5. Evaluation Criteria and Award Notification

Timely received proposals submitted by the tenderers will be examined, evaluated, and compared in accordance with the following criteria and the contract shall be awarded to the highest ranked tenderer. The decision will be made according to the "Best Value for Money" principle. The award criteria will be the following:

Selection criteria:

(1) Concept and creative proposal 30%

- Website design for audience based, outside-in approach within existing WP based site. Main focus on SEO data improvement.
- UX, including chat box functionality and/or more powerful search.
- Project plan, resources.

(2) Presentation of references, meaning previous clients and the roles/scope fulfilled in those projects 30%

(3) Budget proposal 40%

- For chat box functionality and more powerful search
- On-going timebank
- On-going maintenance, incl. cooperation with LMS for hosting topics

An Evaluation Committee of at least 3 people will be established. Each bid will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria above.

The compliance with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, and absence of conflict of interest will be ensured.

The successful and unsuccessful tenderers will be informed in writing (via email) about the result of the award procedure. In case the winning tenderer is unable to enter into the contract, EIT Manufacturing may decide to contract the supplier receiving the second highest ranking.

Upon request from the tenderer concerned, EIT Manufacturing will as quickly as possible, and in any event within 15 calendar days from receipt of a written request, inform:

- any unsuccessful candidate of the reasons for the rejection of its request to participate,
- any unsuccessful tenderer of the reasons for the rejection of its tender, including, if this is the case, its decision that the works, supplies or services do not meet the performance or functional requirements,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the characteristics and relative advantages of the tender selected as well as the name of the successful tenderer or the parties to the awarded contract,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the conduct and progress of negotiations and dialogue with tenderers.

Information referred to above may be withheld where the release of such information would be contrary to the public interest, would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of an economic operator, or might prejudice fair competition between economic operators.

Should there be a suspicion that the provider will not be able to perform according to the price offered, EIT Manufacturing has the right to ask for explanations and may reject the tender where the evidence supplied does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or cost proposed.

Complementary Note on the Evaluation Process:

After the initial evaluation of submitted proposals, it is possible that the potential top-ranked suppliers may be shortlisted for participation in a Pitch Session or in a set of interviews. It is important to emphasize that the evaluation will be conducted in strict accordance with the criteria outlined in the published Request for Proposal (RfP).

The primary objective of the Pitch Session or Interviews is to facilitate a deeper understanding of the received proposals, provide an opportunity to elaborate on specific details, and allow the EIT Manufacturing to get to know the team of professionals better. During this session, the shortlisted suppliers will have the chance to present their proposals, clarify any questions, and discuss how your firm can best meet the needs of EIT Manufacturing.

Further details regarding the Pitch Session or Interviews, including dates and logistics, will be communicated to the shortlisted suppliers following the initial evaluation of proposals.

6. Complaint procedure

Tenderers believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. Appeals shall be addressed to EIT Manufacturing only via the following email address procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu. The tenderers have **5 (five) days** to file their complaints from the date of receipt of notification of the results.

In your application to EIT Manufacturing the complaint shall explain what procedural aspects they consider having been violated along with any recommendations or remarks. Such charges need to be supported with data and facts and, if possible, – documentation. An appeal whose sole purpose is to obtain a second evaluation for no reason other than that the complainant disagrees with the final award decision is to be rejected.

7. Negotiations & Clarifications

Negotiations can be held in the following cases:

- if it is identified that the scope of services issued by EIT Manufacturing is not detailed enough, incomplete or some areas are lacking crucial information to complete the procedure for direct awards;

- if EIT Manufacturing has the intention to reduce the offered prices to find the best value for money;
- if all submitted prices are above the planned budget and it is everyone's interest to finish the procedure with success – in that case, price negotiation can take place. During a price negotiation, all tenderers are called to lower their prices by the same deadline in a written form.

EIT Manufacturing can organize as many rounds of negotiation as are needed during the procedure in order to reach the highest quality of proposals and the best price.

Whenever possible, the negotiations should be carried out in writing, however, in special cases, video conference or even live negotiations can be organized. EIT Manufacturing also reserves the right to invite the tenderers to an individual meeting before the final award of the contract in order to clarify details and ambiguities.

In case of obvious or perceived errors or omissions in the RfP, Tenderers can request additional information or clarifications by the deadline provided in the above timeframe through email at procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu.

Upon receipt of the bids, they will be reviewed, and additional details will be requested from the tenderers as needed. The requests as well as the answers are to be submitted written by e-mail. Where information or documentation to be submitted by tenderers is incomplete or erroneous or where specific documents are missing, EIT Manufacturing staff may request the party concerned to submit, supplement, clarify or complete the relevant information or documentation within 2 day(s).

Bid preparation costs are not reimbursable and must be borne by the tenderers.

EIT Manufacturing owns all bids received in this RFP. Proprietary information of vendors in the bids will be kept strictly confidential. The offers as well as the contract may be submitted for audits.

8. Contract

The final award does not yet constitute the Contract. The Contract will be concluded at the time of signature by the Supplier and EIT Manufacturing. The winning supplier will be sent the contract to be signed (indicating the deadline by which the signed contract should be returned to EIT Manufacturing).

The invoicing will be based on a mutually agreed schedule; it will be detailed in the contract. The contract is estimated to be signed by May 2024, and will have a maximum duration of **1 (one) year with the possibility of renewal by mutual agreement between the parties.**

The tenderer agrees that the total value of the contract to be signed with EIT Manufacturing for the mentioned period will in no way exceed the bid (the amount contained in the offer) of the tenderer.

The awarded supplier will be requested to sign Standard Contractual Clauses (SCC) if no other GDPR compliant safeguards exist, and the supplier is located in a country for which the EU commission has not issued an adequacy decision.

9. Confidentiality Obligation

All information, whether written or oral, exchanged between the parties involved in this Request for Proposals (RfP) process, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties" shall be considered confidential and proprietary.

The Parties agree not to disclose, provide access to, or otherwise make available any confidential information to any third parties, including but not limited to individuals, companies, or organizations, who are not directly involved in the RfP process, without the express written consent of the disclosing Party.

"Confidential Information" shall encompass, without limitation, all data, documents, proposals, discussions, designs, specifications, financial information, technical data, trade secrets, and any other information disclosed by one Party to the other during the course of the RfP process.

The obligations of confidentiality shall not apply to information that is:

- a) Publicly available at the time of disclosure or subsequently becomes publicly available through no fault of the receiving Party.
- b) Already in the possession of the receiving Party prior to disclosure and not subject to an existing confidentiality obligation.
- c) Disclosed to the receiving Party by a third party with the legal right to do so without breaching any confidentiality obligations.
- d) Required to be disclosed by law, court order, or governmental regulation, provided that the disclosing Party is promptly notified and given the opportunity to seek a protective order.

Any Party found in breach of this confidentiality clause shall be subject to legal measures, including but not limited to litigation, injunctive relief, and monetary damages, as deemed appropriate by the disclosing Party.

The obligations of confidentiality as set forth in this clause shall survive the termination or completion of the RfP process and shall remain in effect for a period of 5 (five) years, unless both Parties mutually agree in writing to terminate this confidentiality agreement.

This confidentiality clause shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of France. Any legal action arising out of or in connection with this clause shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Paris, France.

10. Cancellation of the proposal procedure

In the event of cancellation of the proposal procedure, EIT Manufacturing will notify tenderers of the cancellation. In no event shall EIT Manufacturing be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of a proposal procedure, even if EIT Manufacturing has been advised of the possibility of damages.

The tenderer shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). The tenderer should inform the EIT Manufacturing team immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

The supplier cannot be an EIT Manufacturing Partner or Activity Partner. Any bid from such an economic operator will be rejected.

Tenderers will be excluded if:

- a) they are being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations; they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata.
- b) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which EIT Manufacturing can justify.
- c) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or any other country of the EU.
- d) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity detrimental to the EU' financial interests.
- e) following a procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the EU budget, they have been declared in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

The tenderers must not be in a situation of a conflict of interest, and they have sufficient economic and financial capacity, technical and professional capacity and legal and regulatory capacity to perform the requested services. Additional evidence or declarations might be requested by the contracting authority.

EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud. If substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud are discovered after the award of the tender, EIT Manufacturing may refrain from concluding the Contract.



This RfP confers no entitlement or expectation for tenderers to enter into a contract with EIT Manufacturing. Consequently, EIT Manufacturing is not obliged to sign a contract with the chosen supplier, whether at present or in the future.