



With funding from
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Development
Cooperation



Request for Proposal (RFP) for Maintenance and Enhancement Services for SOLTRAIN Website

1. Introduction

Project Overview:

SOLTRAIN+ (Southern African Renewable Heating and Cooling Training and Demonstration Initiative) is seeking proposals from qualified **service providers** to manage, enhance, and oversee cloud services for its project website in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Objective:

The objective of the soltrain.org website is to inform our target groups on the activities of the SOLTRAIN initiative with various forms of media and to manage internal decision making for various purposes. The increase of visibility, connectivity to social media and online presence is important.

2. Organisation Background

Organisation Overview:

SOLTRAIN is a regional initiative on capacity building and the demonstration of solar thermal systems in the SADC region. SOLTRAIN aims to support target countries in changing from a largely fossil-based energy supply system to a sustainable supply structure based on renewable energy in general, and on solar thermal in particular.

The project is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and implemented by AEE INTEC an Austrian based research and development institute. The project consortium consists of AEE INTEC and 9 regional partners including SACREEE who is responsible to coordinate dissemination activities of SOLTRAIN.

Current Digital Presence:

The website soltrain.org is established for many years.

3. Project Scope

Website Type:

The website is project website to inform the public and target groups on the activities of SOLTRAIN. Secondly, website has an established internal area that allows project internal management and coordination activities.

Geographical eligibility:

SOLTRAIN is implemented in the following 5 countries of the SADC region: Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Service providers who have their business registered in one of these countries are eligible for offering their services.

The selected service provider will be responsible for the following tasks:

| Scope A – Continuous Website Management | | | |
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| The website should run efficiently, securely and cost-efficiently. Content should be created by SOLTRAIN members but support by the service provider is also expected. | | | |
| Requirement | Description | Acceptance Criteria | Validation Method |
| Website Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance and monitoring of the website infrastructure running on Django Python web framework, Gunicorn Python HTTP server, Nginx, and Postgresql with PostGIS extension. - Regular updates, patches, and security enhancements to ensure optimal website performance and security. - Monitoring and managing server resources to ensure efficient website operations. - Management of static files hosted on Amazon S3. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website is operational throughout the project duration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by-monthly test of all website functionalities |
| Basic Content Management System (CMS) | The CMS provides tools for non-technical users to manage website content. This includes adding, editing, and deleting web pages through a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor, allowing users to format content as it will appear on the website. Additionally, it includes a media library for uploading, storing, and organizing images, videos, and other media files. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Users can efficiently create, edit, and delete web pages without technical issues. - Media library supports smooth uploading, management, and retrieval of media files. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform regular tests of CMS functionalities, including the creation, editing, and deletion of content. - Verify media uploads, management, and retrieval processes within the CMS. |
| Training on Basic CMS | Conduct training sessions for AEE and SACREEE employees to ensure they can independently use the CMS to manage website content. Training covers essential CMS functions, including creating, editing, and publishing web pages, as well as managing media within the CMS. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training sessions are conducted, and employees demonstrate proficiency in managing content through the CMS. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-training assessment where 1 AEE and 1 SACREEE employee successfully create, edit, and manage content independently. - Collect feedback on training effectiveness and provide follow-up support if needed. |
| Content Management Support | Provide ongoing support for content management tasks that may be too complex for AEE and SACREEE employees. This includes handling more technical content updates, such as embedding videos, integrating logos, and managing external links, ensuring that these elements are implemented correctly and maintain the website's quality standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All content is updated and published online within agreed timelines, maintaining high-quality standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track the timeliness and accuracy of content updates, ensuring support requests are handled within predefined SLAs. - Review content after publication to ensure it meets SOLTRAIN's standards. |

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| Responsive Design | Website must be fully functional on desktop, tablet, and mobile devices. | - Website displays and functions correctly on various devices and screen sizes. | - Use responsive design testing tools. - Test on actual devices and screen sizes. |
| Branding Guidelines | Adhere to specific colours, fonts, and logo placements. | - Design aligns with provided branding guidelines. | - Review design against branding guidelines. - Ensure logo and color placements are accurate. |
| Performance | Website must load within 3 seconds. | - Page load times are within the 3-second limit. | - Test load times using tools like Google PageSpeed Insights. |
| Security | Implementation of SSL and GDPR compliance. | - SSL certificates are correctly implemented. - GDPR compliance is verified. | - Check SSL installation. - Review privacy policies and compliance measures. |
| Analytics Tools | Integration with (e.g. Google Analytics.) | - e.g. Google Analytics tracks and reports data correctly. | - Verify analytics tracking and reports in e.g. Google Analytics. |
| Accessibility | Compliance with accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1). | - Website meets WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards. | - Use accessibility testing tools. - Manual accessibility reviews. |
| Mailing list | Regular update of SOLTRAIN mailing list of existing contact database with new entries. Maintain existing mailing list services. | - Mailing list is updated within 1 week of providing new contact details | - Test mailing lists with test e-mails |

| Scope B – Various Website Features | | | |
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| The website should be enhanced with a variety of new features, while existing features need revision or updates. | | | |
| Requirement | Description | Acceptance Criteria | Validation Method |
| B1 – System installation | - Update the system installation database https://soltrain.org/systems/ with solar installations of the last 3 years and reconfirm all existing entries including pictures, locations and technical data based on data provided by AEE INTEC. - Allow filtering by country, application, collector type, size, date, circulation, supplier, installer, storage, backup and others. Google Add-In for seeing location. All installations visible on a georeferenced map. | - System installations are completely documented - System installations can be filtered - System installations are visible on a georeferenced map | - Verify if all systems are documented, filterable and geo-referenced. |
| B2.1 - User Registration and Login | Users can register and log in using email and password. State-of- the-art safety standards need to be implemented. Users can edit password and profile. <i>Note: Existing User Registration and Login needs to be adapted</i> | - User registration and login functions correctly. | - Perform registration and login tests. |

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| B2.2 – User Role Management | <p>Users can be assigned to different roles with defined access rights and functionalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steering Committee Member - National Contact Point - Team Member - Bursary applicant - Demo funding applicant - Beneficiary - Quality inspector - Admin - Others <p>One user may have various roles <i>Note: Existing User Role Management needs to be adapted</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - User assignment by admin works correctly. - User have the correct rights and can perform all required work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform user assignment tests |
| B2.3 User Dashboard | <p>Users have individual dashboards in the internal section seeing their respective features. <i>Note: Existing User Role Management needs to be adapted</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - User dashboard works correctly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform dashboard test with each test-user-account |
| B3 – Bursary Tool | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Bursary Tool should allow for application, registration and reporting on SOLTRAIN bursaries by <bursary applicants> ii. Rating functionality of bursary for <Steering Committee members> must be implemented iii. Autonomous session initiation by the <Admin> must be possible. <p><i>Note: The bursary tool is operational but needs to be maintained.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bursary tool works correctly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform test of bursary application, rating and session initiation |
| B4 – Newsletter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admin can initiate newsletter distribution via the Mailing list. - Investigate functionalities of proof-reading add-ins - Add section with events incl. dates to the newsletter - Connectivity with LinkedIn and other social media platforms. - Cooperation in the communication strategy of SOLTRAIN. <p><i>Note: <Steering Committee Members> and <Team Members> can already create articles on the website (internal area) including picture upload.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles can be added, edited - Newsletters can be sent out by SOLTRAIN team members - Newsletters can be published / sent out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test newsletter features |
| B5 – Event management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a concept for event management (e.g. trainings, workshops, webinars) - Implement registration tool for various activities - <Steering Committee Members> and <Team Members> can create an event. - Online registration with defined form - E-Mail contacts are connected to the mailing list - Investigate connectivity with webinar tools of MS Teams and Zoom and define interface between the website and those tools. - Documentation of the event with picture upload, participants and supplement files can be downloaded for reporting purposes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events can be created and the public can register - Documentation meets the requirements of SOLTRAIN reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full mock test of 2 events |

Scope C – Demonstration Application Website Feature

This new feature should allow the application for demonstration funding via the soltrain.org website. The current offline forms are downloadable here: <https://soltrain.org/systems/system-funding-application>

| Requirement | | Acceptance Criteria | Validation Method |
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| C1 Application Phase | Dashboard Visualization | Dashboard displays all demo applications in various stages (e.g., initiated, submitted, approved). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verify that the dashboard updates in real-time as applications change stages. - Test with multiple applications to ensure correct stage tracking. |
| | Initiate Application Process | <i>Applicants</i> can start the application process, fill in online forms, and upload drawings and annexes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test form initiation, data entry, and file upload functionalities. - Check if all technical data fields are correctly saved. |
| | Funding Calculation Tool | The tool calculates funding amounts based on SOLTRAIN rules. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input sample data and verify that calculations follow the funding rules provided. - Cross-check with manual calculations for accuracy. |
| | Exchange Rate Integration | OANDA or similar exchange rate service is integrated and calculates funding based on current rates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test exchange rate calculation with sample currency data. - Ensure rates are up-to-date and accurate. |
| | Application Management | Users can add, edit, delete, and submit applications. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verify all CRUD (Create, Read, Update, Delete) operations work smoothly. - Test submission process, ensuring all mandatory fields are checked. |
| | Multiple Applications | Users can submit multiple applications. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit multiple applications and ensure each is treated as a separate instance. - Test for any conflicts or data overwriting. |
| | Mandatory Fields & Entry Types | All mandatory fields must be filled for submission; entry types are correctly enforced (e.g., string, date). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit forms with missing mandatory fields to ensure errors are flagged. - Test entry type validation for correct data types. |
| | Document Upload Fields | Specific upload fields are available for required documents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upload different file types to ensure compatibility and correct categorization. - Test file size limits and error handling. |
| | Access for National Contact Point & AEE INTEC | Both can view and comment on applications at any stage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check access permissions for these roles. - Test commenting features within forms and generated documents. |

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| | Signature Functionalities | Investigate and, if possible, implement online signature functionalities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test online signature process for demo applicants and beneficiaries. - If online signatures aren't possible, verify the re-upload process of signed PDFs. |
| | PDF Generation & Re-upload | Applications can be downloaded as PDFs and re-uploaded if necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate a PDF from the form and ensure data integrity. - Test re-uploading of signed PDFs and confirm they are linked to the correct application. |
| C2 Contracting Phase | Steering Committee Voting | Steering Committee members can vote on applications and leave comments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct voting tests with multiple committee members. - Ensure comments are visible and associated with the correct application. |
| | Contract Transmission | AEE INTEC can send contracts to applicants; online signature capability is explored. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test contract transmission process. - Verify online signature functionality or re-upload process for signed contracts. |
| | Invoice Transmission & Tracking | Applicants can upload invoices; payments are tracked, including payments by beneficiaries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test invoice upload and ensure correct data entry in tracking forms. - Validate that payment tracking reflects real-time updates. |
| C3 Quality Inspection Phase | Online Quality Inspection Form | The form is fully accessible and processable on mobile devices. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test form access and functionality on various mobile devices (e.g., tablets, smartphones). |
| | Photo Upload | Users can upload photos as part of the inspection process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upload different photo formats and sizes to ensure compatibility. - Check for proper display and attachment to the correct inspection record. |
| | Signature Functionalities | Signature functionalities are available during the inspection phase. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test electronic signatures on mobile devices. - Validate signature placement and storage. |
| | Pin-Point Location | Users can input exact coordinates for the inspection location. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test location input with GPS coordinates. - Verify accuracy by cross-referencing with mapping tools. |

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| C4 Documentation Phase | Publication to Database | Data from the application phase is copied to the system installation database. | - Test data transfer from application to documentation phase. - Verify data integrity post-transfer. |
| | Add/Edit Information | Users can add and edit information about the demonstrator. | - Test the edit functionalities for adding or modifying information. - Ensure all changes are saved correctly. |
| | Publishing and Hiding Demonstrators | Users can choose to publish or hide demonstrators in the database. | - Test the publish/hide toggle for demonstrators. - Verify that the status change is reflected in the public view. |

4. Budget

Budget Range:

For Scope B and C we expect offers between 3,000 EUR to 8,000 EUR **one-time costs**.

For Scope A we expect offers of 200 EUR to 500 EUR **per month**.

Please note that proposals will be evaluated based on a comprehensive set of criteria, including but not limited to cost (see evaluation criteria).

Offers must indicate VAT.

Payments will be made on a quarterly basis throughout the year based on invoices issued by the service provider.

5. Timeline

Project Timeline:

- RFP submission deadline: [~~13.09.2024~~] **extension to [04.10.2024]**
- Interviews with short-listed suppliers: [~~19.+20.9.2024~~] **08.+09.10.2024**
- Vendor selection date: [~~24.09.2024~~] **11.10.2024**
- Project kick-off: [~~30.09.2024~~] **target date [18.10.2024]**
- Scope B
 - Expected launch date: [30.11.2024] to be defined
- Scope C
 - Expected launch date: [28.02.2025] to be defined
- Bi-Monthly meetings until the end of the service [31.12.2026]

6. Proposal Requirements

Submission Guidelines:

Please send your proposals to w.gruber-glatzl@aee.at by [04.10.2024]

Proposal Format:

- Executive summary
- Company profile and experience
- Project approach and methodology
- Timeline and milestones
- Budget breakdown per scope
- Case studies or examples of similar work
- Team bios and expertise
- References

Evaluation Criteria:

The proposals will be evaluated with the following criteria:

- experience and past performance,
 - clarity and feasibility of proposed approach,
 - cost-effectiveness,
 - quality of previous work
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7. Selection Process

Selection Process:

- Proposals will be reviewed and shortlisted by AEE INTEC and SACREEE
 - Interviews will be conducted to clarify open questions
 - Service providers will be selected based on the evaluation criteria
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8. Questions and Clarifications

Contact Information:

Service providers can direct questions to w.gruber-glatzl@aee.at

9. Legal Information

Confidentiality:

-All information and Materials provided by AEE INTEC or SOLTRAIN partners are confidential and must not be disclosed to any third party without prior written consent from SOLTRAIN.

- The selected service provider is required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement to ensure confidentiality throughout the project.

Terms and Conditions:

- The selected service provider will be required to enter a formal contract with AEE INTEC, which will outline the specific terms, conditions and deliverables agreed upon.

-The service provider must comply with all applicable local, national and international laws, including data protection and privacy regulations.

- Intellectual Property: AEE INTEC reserves the right to terminate the contract with the service provider for non-performance, breach of contract, or other valid reasons.

10. Submission Deadline

Proposal Submission Deadline: [~~13.09.2024~~] **extension to [25.09.2024]**

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