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Invitation to Tender for the Development, Design and Hosting of the new Access Europe Partnership Platform

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APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY 23 APRIL 2021 @5PM

PLEASE NOTE: ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RETURNED BY 5PM TO christina@wheel.ie

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Access Europe is a three-year programme, led by The Wheel and funded by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, to provide a support and capacity-building programme for Irish civil society organisations to better access EU funds and engage in EU policy.

The Wheel is Ireland's national association of charities, community, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. The Wheel's vision is to see a thriving community and voluntary sector at the heart of a fair and just Ireland.

2.0 ACCESS EUROPE PROJECT OVERVIEW

Our vision: An Irish civil society that is highly engaged in EU funding and policy development programmes and processes.

Our mission: To deliver a support and capacity-building programme for Irish civil society organisations to better access EU funds from 2021 – 2023.

Key objectives have been identified to deliver on our mission and achieve this vision:

1. Raise awareness of the value of strategic involvement in EU programmes and share information on EU funding opportunities.
2. Build the capacity of Irish civil society organisations to apply for and win funding from EU programmes.
3. **Support the development of partnerships between Irish civil society organisations and potential European partners**, as well as national agencies, contact points and other institutions that promote participation in EU programmes and relevant social economy and civil society-related policymaking.

A **series of activities** are proposed below that each connect with one or more of the strategic objectives:

- **Information and awareness activities** includes keeping accurate and up-to-date information and educational materials on EU programmes available to Irish civil society, as well as overall communications, including branding, website, social media, and email marketing.
- **Events** can be summarised as informational or capacity-building.
- **Helpdesk support** will be provided to those who learn about opportunities through our information and events, but need ongoing support to make an application. It will include general support over phone and email, one-to-one consultations, and application review.
- **Network building** includes building our own relationships with EU funding agencies and partners and social-economy civil-society policymaking processes, so that we can communicate updates and opportunities more efficiently; developing our current EU Project Managers network; and partnership brokerage between Irish civil society and potential project partners around Europe.

The new Partnership Platform falls under the fourth activity: Network building.

2.1 THE CURRENT ACCESS EUROPE WEBSITE

The programmes website www.accesseurope.ie was created and launched in November 2020. It provides information on:

- Resources, advice and guides on getting started with EU funding
- Available EU funding sources with a description of the funding programmes and current application deadlines
- The possibility to sign up as a member and receive a monthly newsletter
- A contact section to reach out to the European Programmes team for individual support

The current website was built using the Wix.com website builder software, and is hosted by Wix.

Additional to this website, Access Europe would like to build a Partnership Platform. The Partnership Platform's goal is to showcase Irish civil society organisations who are interested in setting up partnerships for EU-funded projects and promoting them as potential partners to civil society organisations from other EU countries.

We are looking for the services of a company that can build an additional website to digitally present Irish civil society organisations and connect this platform to the current Access Europe website, which is lacking the specific functionalities needed for that.

2.2. PURPOSE OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM

One of the key characteristics of EU funding and setting up an EU project is **Partnership Building**. For a vast majority of EU funding opportunities there is always a requirement for a consortium of at least three partners from three different EU member states.

Although, finding reliable partners is one of the biggest barriers to engage in EU funded projects. Access Europe's goal is to support this matchmaking process by showcasing Irish civil society organisations on a unique Partnership Platform.

With the help of this platform Irish civil society organisations will be able to create a profile for their organisation, sharing e.g., the topics they are working with, their mission and goals, field of expertise and contact information. Civil society organisations from other EU member states can easily access the showcased profiles, search and filter them and, if interested, contact the individual organisation for future collaboration.

Our goal is to build a simple, easy-to-use, graphically modern designed platform.

2.3 TARGET AUDIENCE

We foresee the following target groups:

1. **Irish civil society organisations** looking for partner organisations in other EU member states. They are able to create a profile for their organization and showcase their work.
2. **Interested organisations from other EU member states** looking for English speaking partners to set up an EU funded project together. They are not able to create a profile but can easily contact the showcased Irish organization via the platform.

3.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES

This document outlines the broad specification of requirements for the new Access Europe Partnership Platform to be developed. We invite interested web development companies to present their proposals for developing a suitable website solution as specified in this document.

The current [Access Europe informational website](#) is supported by Wix, which is sufficient for its current purposes. However, we request that tenderers present in their response both:

1. Their processes and estimated cost for the development of a separate and independent Access Europe partnership platform (functionalities necessary are described below in 4.0 Functionalities) that should connect seamlessly into the Wix website, ensuring user experience switching between the Wix website and the new partnership platform is uninterrupted.
2. An option for also overhauling the [Access Europe informational website](#), moving it away from Wix, and rebuilding it on the same software as the partnership platform so that both the [Access Europe informational website](#) and the new partnership platform can be managed through a single content management system.

Tenderers should provide both options in their response and should clearly present the cost of a partnership platform connected to the existing Wix website, and the optional extra of also including an overhaul of the [Access Europe informational website](#). For both options the same timeline applies as described in 7.0 Timeline.

The Wheel will assess both options, and if the cost of Option 2 is not deemed too prohibitive, or if the value add of a single content management system is significant enough, we may decide to also include the overhaul of the current website in this project.

We anticipate that the information provided here will be sufficient to enable prospective suppliers to understand the scope of the site and to be able to cost their services, but we will want to work closely with the supplier during the design and development of the site to ensure that our aims and requirements are met in the best way possible.

4.0 FUNCTIONALITY

The Access Europe Partnership Platform is a website for the following reasons:

1. **Showcasing:** The platform is our primary way to present the profiles of Irish civil society organisations to Europe. We aim to present them in a modern, easy-to-use style.
2. **Matchmaking:** The profiles and the search and filter functionalities are allowing interested organisations from other EU member states to easily find the perfect match to their work and for their project.
3. **Contacting:** The process to contact an organization should be easy and for both sides without bigger technical challenges.

4.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SITE

The purpose is to create a Partnership Platform that:

- a) is user-friendly. We are aiming for a simple interface that is intuitive and easily navigable for the user. This should be applicable for both target groups, the ones setting up a profile for their organisation and filling out the form and the ones searching for and reaching out to an Irish organisation.
- b) Is flexible and scalable for potential future expansion. It should therefore bring a technology and design that could be easily extended and used for further and more complex purposes.
- c) A secure website that is built on up-to-date technology.
- d) Cross browser support: The pages must be viewable in all major web browsers as of the completion date. (Internet Explorer, Chrome, Opera, Firefox and Safari).
- e) Website must be optimised and accessible on all smart phone platforms and mobile devices, tablets, PC's, laptops, Macbooks and Apple computers.
- f) Speed: Load times must be acceptable for users.
- g) A website that can be future proofed (i.e as far as practicable avoids the need for major rebuilds to update to future versions of CMSes used etc)
- h) The website should be accessible to search engine spiders and be coded with the very latest on-page search engine optimization.
- i) Website must comply with the latest web content accessibility guidelines.
- j) With regards to IP, we intend that the site to be developed should remain the property of The Wheel. Please confirm your acceptance of this in your bid.
- k) The bid should include hosting options.
- l) We will welcome options for ongoing support / maintenance by the developer, in a monthly contract or pay-as-you-go option, after the website has launched. However, we would also need to be able to edit / maintain the website in-house also.
- m) The supplier should be able to make the site secure.

4.2 USERS OF THE SITE

- Non-registered users can browse all published profiles, with full social sharing options available to them.
- Members/ registered users can manage their account and fill out, change and delete a public profile for their organisation
- Editors (internal)
- Admins (internal)

4.3 HOMEPAGE

We want our homepage to present a clean and uncluttered reception to visitors. The navigation system should take all visitors to their destination in the fewest clicks possible across all content types.

4.4 ABOUT SECTION

Access Europe needs to be able to present itself, the project outlines and the purpose of this Partnership Platform.

4.5 MEMBER ACCOUNTS

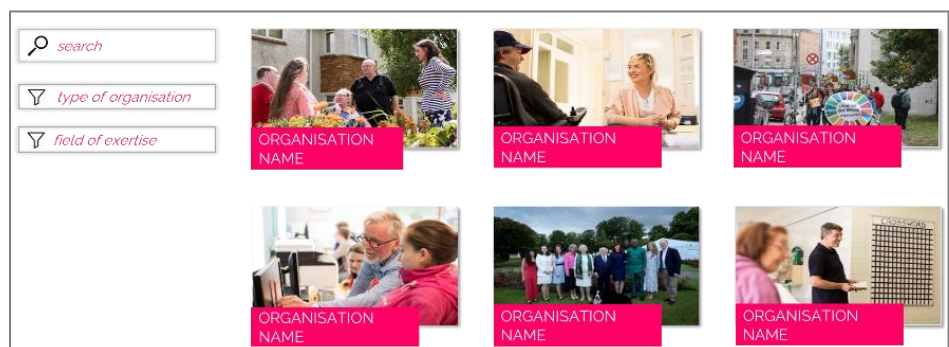
Irish civil society organisations should be able to sign-up to the website. Logged in users are then able to fill out a profile form and upload multiple pictures of their organisation and publish the content online. They are able to change or delete the content of their profile any time after uploading it. They are able to delete the content of their profile and user account.

Before the profile is published, it is a must that Access Europe approves the profile for publishing online.

Access Europe needs an easily accessible database to enter with Admin rights to see all profiles and content and to be able to download all entries via an excel spreadsheet.

4.6 ORGANISATION PROFILES (OVERVIEW PAGE)

Mock-up:



In this section all published profiles are visible in a clean and easy navigable way. The section should deliver a good overview. We would prefer a tile style where every organisation is a tile and every tile is a preview, showing the name and a picture of the organisation (or more information). Once you click on the tile you enter the single page of the organisation with full information.

We would prefer an overview page that has a sorting mechanism. Users are able to sort all displayed profiles from A-Z, newest to oldest and random. Random should be the default to create an equality among the uploaded profiles and to assure that the website looks differently every time a user enters.

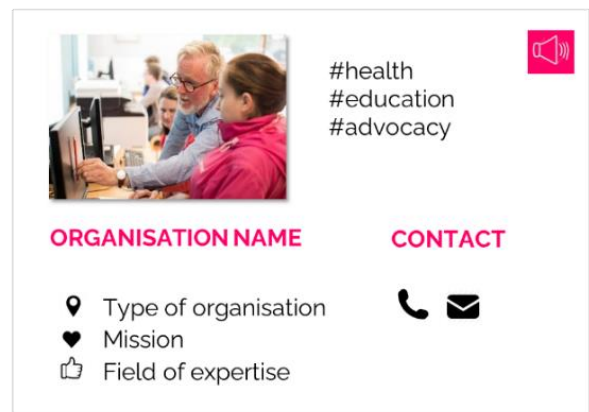
The section should include a search option (all profiles, all content) and filters. The filters are to be specified, please find below a list of possible filters:

- by topic
- by type of organization
- by type of activities
- by field of expertise
- by call for partners (1. Already have project/2. Interested in building a partnership but no project yet)
- EU funding programmes

The Wheel will supply the full list of terms (for topics, field of expertise etc.) to the developer.

4.7 ORGANISATION PROFILES (SINGLE PAGE)

Mock-up:



In the backend as in the frontend, this **organisation profile** should contain the following fields (to be specified):

- About your organization
 - o Organisation name
 - o Location (city, county)
 - o Website
 - o How many staff members do you have?
 - o Year of organisation's establishment
 - o Legal form/sector (type of organization)
 - o About your organization
 - o Current and/or past projects
 - o EU Partnerships

- Key words (topics), e.g. health, education, elderly, sustainability
- Topics (tbd)
- Field of expertise (tbd)

- Contact Person
 - First name, last name
 - Job title
 - Email

- Call for Partners
 - Looking for partners to collaborate on an existing project/idea...
 - Interested in building a partnership, no project yet
 - Possibility for short description

- EU funding programmes

The Wheel will supply the full list of terms to the developer.

In the contact section, the email address of the organisation should not be shown directly but be connected to a “contact” button on the organisations profile. The reason for this is that one of our primary goals is to track if and how often a contact with an organisation was made and from whom. There is no need of a whole communications or messages system, communication should indeed be as simple as possible.

The possibility to fill out a first draft profile is possible already now. We did set up a Microsoft form for the profile with a reduced amount of fields and are actively communicating it. [You can find the first version here](#). These profiles are not published yet. We are collecting the content to start with the platform right away as soon as it is set up. A precondition is that these first version profiles can easily be migrated into the new Partnership Platform.

4.8 CONTACT SECTION

This section of the platform contains contact information to the European Programmes Team at The Wheel.

5.0 DESIGN

Visual identity Access Europe

The design of the Partnership Platform should match the style of the existing Access Europe website (www.accesseurope.ie). The general style and colours should be maintained to make sure that the user has a seamless experience.

The Access Europe team will provide logos and a colour scheme. Furthermore, the communications team of The Wheel can provide additional support in regard to design and branding, if needed.

General style approach

We are aiming for very simple interface that is intuitive and easily navigable for the user. We require the style to:

- Must be up to date with the latest web content accessibility guidelines
- All buttons/calls to action clearly stand out on each page
- Forms are simple and use progressive disclosure and/or are on pop-up forms that fade out the background content and de-clutters the user's visual field

These considerations should be incorporated in the information architecture and graphic design.

6.0 INFORMATION FOR THE SITE

Access Europe can provide the content for the website, except for the part that is user generated content (all of which will have to be pre-moderated by us prior to publication, requiring a new content alert system). We will include pictures and images where appropriate. We will need to incorporate logos of partners/ funders, which will all be provided. We need to be able to update our website, using non-IT staff. Therefore, we need a content management system.

7.0 TIMELINE

The suggested timeframe for delivery is the following:

- First version: June 2021
- Testing phase: July and August 2021
- Launch: September 2021

8.0 PRICE

For the provision of the specified services we offer a price range of 8,000-12,000€ inclusive of VAT.

9.0 YOUR SUBMISSION

Application deadline is **FRIDAY, 23 APRIL 2021, 5pm**. All applications must be returned to christina@wheel.ie by 5pm. Late submissions will not be considered.

Mock-Ups or demos are welcome along with links and/or testimonials of similar or previous work.

Notes:

- The winning tenderer will work with the team in The Wheel and will receive more information about the site and more detailed specification of requirements in each section as we go through the project.
- As part of your submission, you should include two references and insurance details.
- In relation to costs please note that The Wheel is a registered charity and is therefore not registered for VAT so **all prices quoted must be inclusive of VAT** where applicable.

- Also note under 'Value for Money' that as a charity The Wheels requirements are extensive but our budgets are prohibitive so we are interested in proposals that suggest ways to pay for our extensive requirements over a period that our budget allows.
- If you have any questions in relation to this tender, please address them to christina@wheel.ie before Friday 23 April 2021.