



Invitation to Tender for the web development of the EARTH Hub; an online platform for environmental education and action in Northern Ireland

Invitation to Tender Letter

25th October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Invitation to tender for the web development of the EARTH Hub; an online platform for environmental education and action in Northern Ireland.

You are hereby invited by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and Northern Ireland Environment Link (working in collaboration via the Education for Sustainable Development Forum) and supported by National Lottery Dormant Accounts Fund NI, to submit a tender for the provision of the above services.

The Invitation to Tender (ITT) contains the instructions and information on how to provide a tender, budget, timeframes and evaluation framework. The supplier questionnaire is included in Appendix 1.

If you wish to submit a tender you are required to return an electronic copy to rachael.thomas@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org **and** claire.irwin@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

If you wish to register your interest to undertake this project ahead of submitting a tender, please contact Rachael Thomas (rachael.thomas@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org). Questions relating to this Invitation to Tender must be received by 4pm on Wednesday 8th November 2023. Questions received after this deadline will not be answered. Questions and responses will be circulated to all interested bidders. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder to register your correct email address to ensure receipt of tender questions and responses and to check their emails regularly during this period.

Please submit your proposal via email, in PDF format, entitled 'Web Development of the EARTH Hub' by 5pm on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 to rachael.thomas@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org **and** claire.irwin@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

Submissions received after this deadline will not be considered.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful will acknowledge receipt of your tender submission via email. If email acknowledgement is not received, please contact rachael.thomas@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

Yours faithfully,

Rachael Thomas (EARTH Hub Project Manager, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful)



Additional Instructions for Bidders

The date and time for return of tenders is shown on the Invitation Letter. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that their tender is received on time.

A full price schedule must be provided and be inclusive of all agency fees. Prices shown must be exclusive of VAT and be in Pounds Sterling.

All responses to this Invitation to Tender must be in English.

All tender submissions must remain valid for a minimum period of 90 days following the deadline for receipt of tender submissions.

Background Information

The EARTH Hub Partnership:

This initiative is part of a wider collaborative project between Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and Northern Ireland Environment Link, specifically the Education for Sustainable Development Forum, for which NIEL provides the secretariat function.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is a charity working towards the vision of a world where people and nature thrive, by running environmental-education programmes and awareness-raising campaigns, increasing volunteering opportunities and reporting on local environmental quality. Programmes include the national civic-pride campaign Live Here Love Here, Tackling Plastic NI, Tackling Textiles, Carbon Literacy training, environmental education programme, Eco-Schools NI and local environmental quality programmes, such as Blue Flag Award, Seaside Award, Green Flag Award, Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Marine Litter surveys. For more information, visit www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the networking and forum body for organisations interested in the environment of Northern Ireland. NIEL helps members understand complex issues and presents a unified voice by bringing together a wide range of knowledge, experience and expertise which can be used to help develop policy, practice and implementation across a range of environmental fields. For further information on NIEL go to <https://www.nienvironmentlink.org/>

The EARTH Hub (Environmental Action for Resilience, Transformation and Health) is a digital infrastructure transformation project for the environmental sector in NI. The EARTH Hub will be a way to bring together all of the fantastic work that is going on within the environmental sector and make it more accessible for not just those already interested in taking action but more importantly, for a wide variety of new local audiences. Put simply, this is a digital transformation and enablement project that will enable the environment sector to fully embrace the opportunities and efficiencies of IT to positively address the climate crisis.



The first phase of the project (funded by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Challenge Fund), which ran from August 2022 until March 2023, was a consultation process to identify the key wants and needs of the sector in relation to the functionality of the Hub, as well as beginning to build an identity for the project. The second phase of the project (funded by the National Lottery Dormant Accounts Fund NI) is the actual build and launch of the online platform.

The EARTH Hub:

This project is an ambitious, interactive website. Below is a **suggested** priority list of EARTH Hub functionality. This is something we hope to discuss further with the successful bidder.

- 1. Taking Action:** Primarily, we want to incentivise environmental action and empower individuals and organisations to measure their environmental impact. The EARTH Hub should be a place where anyone can:
 - Find opportunities for environmental action that are right for them
 - Collect and engage with these opportunities
 - Submit data on the actions they've taken
 - The primary focus is on developing the Eco-Schools Action Cards, followed by the wider Action Card list (see Project Specification, Appendix 1 for examples)
 - All actions and resources relating to each Delivery Partner (the organisations that create Action Cards, eg. Woodland Trust) should be viewable in once place
- 2. Understanding Impact:** We would like users to be able to view the collective and individual impact of volunteer action using metric visualisation.
- 3. Knowledge & Resources Library:** We are also aiming to provide free approachable science communication and accessible resources for educators, individuals, and organisations for the long-term. This should have good searchability and use analytics to reinforce engagement with EARTH Hub features.
- 4. Policy, Funding and Jobs:** We would like to direct our users to topical information and opportunities, particularly funding and job opportunities across the sector.
- 5. Donations:** We would be interested in being able to receive donations on this website, so we can do even more to support the environment.
- 6. Grant Funding:** As part of the Policy, Funding and Jobs section, we would like to integrate with an existing grant platform, so that EARTH Hub can be the 'go-to' place for environmental education and action opportunities within NI.

In the future, we may wish to create versions of the website in other languages.



Due to the scale of this project, we're open to following an Agile approach to deliver the highest priorities of our objectives, with potential to commission further work in the future.

There is some data migration involved in this project, the full scope is to be confirmed, but at minimum will involve migrating some user data from our existing platforms.

Project Specification

The full project specification is outlined in a separate document entitled 'EARTH Hub Project Specification.'

Budget and Timeframe

As this project will be delivered through grants and public sector funding, please submit estimated costs for the development of the project with your tender application. We have a fixed initial budget of £150,000 over the next two years (up to June 2025). This budget envelope will resource the build of the EARTH Hub platform, incorporating key functionality and feature development, to include support and maintenance from project start date until June 2025.

Please also include any and all running costs and projected long term or recurring costs (such as hosting fees) beyond the project end date, and detail what long term support and maintenance services you offer, if any, and associated fees.

Please provide an estimated timeline for delivery within the timeframe of a project start date of January 2024 through to a project end date of June 2025 (or earlier), including target launch date. We are open to working with Agile methodologies and processes, such as an initial launch followed by further milestone releases. We understand that a proposed milestone timeline might change during the development process, as our priorities and needs evolve in light of feedback.

We would invite you to provide your recommendation of what you would deliver within budget and timeframe, and an estimate of costs associated with the elements for subsequent work. Please reference the priority list above when suggesting deliverables and timelines.



Submitting a Tender

Tenderers must not make assumptions that Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful has experience of their organisation or their service provision even if on a current or previous contract. Shortlisting assessments will solely be based on the tender submissions received.

Submissions may be rejected if the complete information requested is not provided. For readability, we recommend that all submissions are in Arial font, size 11.

Submissions should include the following (please see next section for further detail):

1. **Introduction/ cover letter**, including an overview of your organisation, structure and size, as well as telling us about **why you're the right organisation** to deliver this project.
2. **Supplier questionnaire** (including an Environmental policy/ statement, Equal Opportunities statement and Safeguarding policy where applicable)
3. An outline for the **plan/ methodology** you intend to use for the work. Please include a description of how you will work with us to gather requirements, and to gather feedback on design and implementation, as well as a summary of the technologies you will use to build this project
4. An outline of your **pricing structure** and a clear breakdown of costs
5. A short **portfolio of relevant experience**, from which you currently/ previously have provided similar services

Please submit your proposal via email, in PDF format, entitled 'Web Development of the EARTH Hub' by 5pm on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 to rachael.thomas@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org **and** claire.irwin@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

Submissions received after this deadline will not be considered. Recipients of tender submissions will acknowledge receipt. If you do not receive acknowledgement, please follow up to ensure it has been received.

Evaluation of Tenders

Tenders will be shortlisted and shortlisted bidders will be invited to present their proposals to a selection panel during the week commencing 4th December 2023. A summary of the key dates for the tender process are outlined in the table below.

Please note, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful reserves the right to amend the timetable below if deemed necessary.

Key Dates:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Tender opens	Wednesday 25 th October 2023	-
Closing date for questions	By Wednesday 8 th November 2023	4 pm
Tender closes	Wednesday 22 nd November 2023	5 pm
Interviews (in-person)	w/c 4 th December 2023	-
Appointment	w/c 11 th December 2023	-
Project start date	January 2023	-
Project end date	June 2025 (or earlier)	-

Applicants will be evaluated using the following criteria and weightings:

<u>#</u>	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Commentary</u>	<u>Page Limit</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
1.	Introduction/ Cover letter	Please provide an introduction/ cover letter to give us an overview of your organisation, structure and size. Additionally, please tell us why you think you are the right organisation to partner with us for the web development of the EARTH Hub.	2 x A4 sides (Arial, size 11)	10%
2.	Supplier Questionnaire (see Appendix 1 for questionnaire)	<p>2.1 – Organisation Details – For information</p> <p>2.2 – Bidder status – In/ Out</p> <p>2.3 – Management and Delivery – In/ Out</p> <p>2.4 – Sustainability and Environment – 10%</p> <p><i>Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is committed to sustainable procurement and would wish to see tenderers adopt a positive environmental approach. An environmental</i></p>	N/A	15%

		<p>policy or statement should therefore be included with your tender submission.</p> <p>2.5 – Financial and Economic Capability – In/ Out</p> <p>2.6 – Equality and Diversity – 5%</p> <p><i>Please provide a copy of your organisation’s Equal Opportunities Policy or any other details you have of equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives or policies you have in place.</i></p> <p>2.7 – Safeguarding – For information</p> <p>2.8 – Conflicts of Interest – In/ Out</p>		
3.	Plan/ Methodology	<p>3.1 – How will you gather requirements from us, as well as feedback on design and implementation</p> <p>3.2 – What will the design process look like</p> <p>3.3 – What technologies and software will you use</p> <p>3.4 – Can you provide user testing and if so, what is the process for this</p> <p>3.5 – What are the key milestones and timelines</p> <p><i>We would invite you to provide your recommendation of what you would deliver within budget and timeframe. Please reference the priority list above when suggesting deliverables and timelines.</i></p> <p>3.6 – What are your development methodologies or change management procedures</p> <p><i>We are open to working with Agile methodologies and processes, such as an initial launch followed by further milestone releases. We understand that a proposed milestone timeline might change during the development process, as our priorities and needs evolve in light of feedback.</i></p>	<p>8 x A4 sides (Arial, size 11)</p>	<p>25%</p>

4.	Pricing Structure	<p>Please provide a breakdown of fees, costs and any other associated costs-based specification of requirements up until project end date of June 2025. Prices contained within the proposal must be exclusive of VAT and be in Pounds sterling, and must remain valid for the duration of the project.</p> <p>Please also include any and all running costs and projected long term or recurring costs (such as hosting fees) beyond the project end date, and detail what long term support and maintenance services you offer, if any, and associated fees.</p> <p><i>Pricing schedules will be evaluated on the basis of value for money.</i></p>	N/A	25%
5.	Portfolio of Experience	<p>Please include a short portfolio of relevant experience, with three examples/ case studies from which you currently/ have previously provided similar services within the last five years.</p>	N/A	25%
Total				100%

Appendices

Appendix 1: Supplier Questionnaire (please find a Word copy as part of the ITT pack)

The purpose of this document is to determine the suitability of your organisation to deliver the web development of the EARTH Hub.

Please complete and send this questionnaire as part of your tender response to:

rachael.thomas@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org and

claire.irwin@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

If the question is not applicable, please put 'N/A'.

If you do not know the answer to a question, please put 'Not Known'.

Supplier Questionnaire	
Section 1: Organisation Details	
Name of organisation	
Contact name	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Company registration number	
VAT registration number	
Website address	
Section 2: Bidder Status	
(Please select a or b as applicable)	
(a) Your organisation is bidding to provide all the services required	Y/N
(b) Your organisation is bidding in the role of prime contractor and intends to subcontract some of the services to third parties to deliver the services	Y/N
Section 3: Management and Delivery	
Please confirm that your organisation has a procurement policy	Yes/No (You may be asked to provide a copy at a later date)

Please confirm that an initial launch of the EARTH Hub can be completed by 30 th June 2025.	Yes/No
Section 4: Environment and Sustainability	
<p>Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is committed to sustainable procurement and would wish to see tenderers adopt a positive environmental approach.</p> <p>Please provide details of your policies and procedures relating to environmental and sustainability issues (max 250 words).</p> <p><i>A copy of your environmental policy (if available) should be included with your tender submission. If you have supporting evidence, we would love to see it.</i></p> <p>(Weighting: 10%)</p>	
Section 5: Financial and Economic Capability	
Please provide a copy of the most recently filed accounts for your organisation	
Section 6: Equality and Diversity	
<p>Please provide a copy of your organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy or any other details you have of equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives or policies you have in place</p> <p>(Weighting: 5%)</p>	
Section 7: Safeguarding	
Please confirm that your organisation has a safeguarding policy/ guidelines	<p>Yes/No</p> <p><i>If yes, please provide a copy.</i></p>
Section 8: Conflicts of Interest	
Please identify any conflicts of interest which might arise if you were selected to undertake the work and if such a conflict were to arise, an indication of how this conflict would be addressed. Where you	



tender as part of a consortium, all members of the consortium should be considered.	
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