



Supporting e-learning  
and capacity building  
for Natura 2000 Managers

## LIFE e-Natura2000.edu

**“Supporting e-learning and capacity building for Natura 2000 managers”**

**LIFE Preparatory project (Ref. LIFE17PREDE003)**

**Invitation to Tender (\*)**

**Procurement - External Service Contract for project evaluation**

**Issued by: The EUROPARC Federation**

**Prepared by: Neil McIntosh**

**Date: 05/03/2021**

[neil.mcintosh@europarc.org](mailto:neil.mcintosh@europarc.org)

**(\*) THIS INVITATION TO TENDER AND THE ANNEXES IT CONTAINS ARE PROVIDED AS “COMMERCIAL & IN CONFIDENCE”. NEITHER THE INVITATION TO TENDER NOR THE ANNEXES CAN BE SHARED OR USED WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY, The EUROPARC Federation**



*The project and all actions are made possible with support from  
the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community*



## **INDEX**

- 1. Summary**
- 2. Purpose of the tender**
- 3. Contract aims & objectives**
- 4. Required outputs**
- 5. Contract deliverables & timescale**
- 6. Key relationships & contract management**
- 7. Tender submission & return process**
- 8. Award criteria**
- 9. Intellectual property rights**
- 10. Data protection & confidentiality requirements**

### **Additional notes:**

- Overview of the project**
- LIFE Programme – end of project reports description**

## 1. Summary

This call for tenders is issued within the scope of the LIFE Preparatory Project, 'LIFE e-Natura2000: supporting e-learning and capacity building for Natura 2000 managers'. For the purposes of this tender, acting on behalf of the project partners, the contracting authority is The EUROPARC Federation. Their address is: Waffnergasse 6, D – 93047 REGENSBURG, Germany.

The project is led by the EUROPARC Federation, with the support of the project partners: the European Landowners' Organization, FUNGOBE, TESAF, KULLABERG, and ProPark. On behalf of the project partners, but with their close involvement, the external assistance contract for the project's evaluation will be co-managed by the EUROPARC Federation in collaboration with TESAF.

The primary aim of the external services to be provided is to enable the project's digital platforms and tools to continue to be available for a minimum of 5 years post-project end on 31 July 2021. These digital products of the LIFEedu project must continue to be accessible by partners, participants, observers, contributors and funders to understand the project's impacts and the progress achieved towards the goals and objectives of the project.

The indicative budget for this external assistance contract is €15,000 maximum, inclusive of VAT. As a minimum, all bidders must have demonstrable experience of working with EU based NGOs or institutions. In particular, they should provide evidence of delivering comprehensive digital learning (e-learning) tools and platforms which have focussed on capacity building for international users: this must include evidence of the types of digital tools and e-learning platforms developed, as well as as well as how these have been rolled-out. Ultimately, those bidding for this contract, must demonstrate how such evidence and their expertise will be applied within the scope of this contract and benefit the longer term impacts and post-LIFE period of the LIFE e-Natura2000.edu project.

Previous experience of delivering similar work as an external service contractor is required. Specifically, those bidding for this contract should be able to demonstrate familiarity with EU funded project terms and conditions, including in relation to required publicity.

The issue date for the invitation to tender is 5 March 2021 with bids due to be received by 12.00 noon on 17 March 2021. A contract will be awarded by 26 March at the latest.

## 2. Purpose of the tender

This external service contract is in two inter-related parts: it includes reviewing the technical functions of the online digital platform (the LIFEedu Moodle) and the smartphone app which have been produced during the project.

First, the contracting authority is looking to engage an experienced external service provider to produce a consultancy advice that will underpin the long-term legacy of the LIFEedu project. The consultancy advice required will be represented by the appointed contractor in the form of a concise, informative and visually appealing report: it should be 'light' on text and provide clearly presented visual and graphic information, specifically to be accessible to non-technical audiences. The report will inform the formally

required LIFE Programme reports: Guidelines for Replicability, the After-LIFE Plan and the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Report. Where relevant and as part of the post-LIFE reporting legacy, the content of the consultancy report will be incorporated in to the final version of these required project documents to assist with the reporting and dissemination of the project actions and results.

Second, the contracting authority is looking to secure technical development expertise, support and advice that can be delivered to consolidate and link the project's technical tools (the LIFEedu Moodle and smartphone app) to establish an integrated digital learning environment for users and trainers alike. This part of the contract will require the contractor to provide an element of training support for the contracting authority's staff (and that of one other partner). The training should focus on enabling the contracting authority (and partner) to be able to further develop and easily upload content and visuals as the app continues to be maintained post project. In addition, an essential further element of the integrated technical development of the project's tools to be delivered by the external service contractor will be to result in the integrated management of content for the two project tools. This will include:

- Evaluation of the current Moodle and existing smartphone app data results<sup>1</sup>.
- Recommendations of alternative moodles/ learning platforms that could be used in place of the current moodle, as well as recommendations about how the current moodle could be changed and improved.
- Essentially, the recommendations of other learning platforms must also take into account technical issues - for example, these should include but are not restricted to:
  - Storage capacity
  - Ability to make content translatable and available in multiple languages
  - Flexibility and ability to accommodate increased numbers of users
  - How to issue access permissions and registration processes for users
  - Administration requirements, rights and procedures etc.
- An analysis of the project Moodle's current reporting elements in order to build a more streamlined (mini-) data platform.
- Creating ways to structure new and more accessible data reports for integrated management of the project's Moodle and smartphone app.
- Some technical development of the app to improve its functionality and links with other digital platforms – for example, a plug-in function for webinars organised by the contracting authority.

The outputs required from this external service contract and the two areas of work described must be complementary and enhance the digital experience of all users, in particular, project participants and project staff. The results should provide for an enhanced and personalised data-driven experience for all users.

The additional notes at the end of this invitation to tender are provided to support the preparation of bids.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that access to the LIFEedu project moodle will only be granted once the contract has been awarded. This is necessary to protect the content and registered users' privacy.

### 3. Contract aims & objectives

The contract aims and objectives are to:

- Produce a consultancy advice report that will ensure the legacy of the LIFEedu project's results and accessibility of content through the project's two technical tools, the LIFEedu Moodle and the smartphone app.
- A brief overview of alternative digital platforms and a clear recommendation about future development opportunities – for example, alternatives to the current Moodle and reasons why the alternative recommended platform would be better.
- Provide inputs and necessary data analyses to be incorporated into the required end-of-project reports specified in the additional notes at the end of this specification (Point 2 - Deliverables 16 & 17) – for example, support reporting of:
  - The evaluated impacts of the project based on existing Moodle data to illustrate participants learning activities.
  - Socio-economic data modelled using the existing moodle data and reports – for example, calculations of average time investments per student and per tutor on the basis of average daily rates (to be proposed and agreed with the contracting authority in due course).
- Further technical enhancements to the LIFEedu Moodle & smartphone app designed, developed and installed – for example:
  - Improved ways to incorporate visuals and graphic images in content
  - Features that will enhance the users' digital experience – for example, webinar and podcast plug-ins.

The outputs of the successful contractor's work must be produced and provided according to the timeline specified in this tender specification.

### 4. Required outputs

To meet the contract objectives, two main outputs are required in this external service contract – 1) Consultancy advice; and, 2) Technical refinements to the project's digital tools. In more detail, the following outputs are required to be produced by the contractor:

1. A consultancy advice report (as described above) which must include:
  - a. A concise comparative review of three to five online learning platforms including a SWOT analysis of typical features and functions – for example:
    - User capacity
    - Flexibility of use (for both trainers and users)
    - Automated translations
    - Ease of incorporating digital tools and integrating digital services
    - Learning assessments
    - Data management and reporting
    - Visual appearance

- Content structuring that facilitates use and access to content
- b. Creation of an interactive Data Platform by automating the process of data collection/aggregation/visualization from the project’s Moodle and smartphone app. . The aim is to re-present standard data and user activity statistics for non-technical audiences – for example, adapt the current ‘off the shelf’ template activity data reports in Moodle into more accessible and informative KPIs.

The Interactive Data Platform should have the following functionalities

- Easily join/blend data from different sources
- Web-based dashboards with easy filters and drill down functionalities
- Build relationship between data
- Cloud-based - accessible anytime, anywhere
- Highly secure
- Backup and recovery
- Easy ways to manage the platform for non-IT users
- On-demand report generation
- Different levels of access depending upon the profile of logged-in users
- Sharing options
- Download in png/pdf format of charts and graphs
- Visualization with diverse sets of charts/graphs/maps

- c. A set of clear data-driven recommendations, based on the analyses of users’ and trainers’ experiences of using the Moodle and the smartphone app, that can be implemented to ensure the continued legacy of the LIFEdu project and prolonged dissemination of the results.

2. Technical development enhancements to improve the integrated functionality of the LIFEdu project’s digital tools and users’ experiences of using them.

## 5. Contract deliverables & timescale

The contract is organised in three distinct stages – inception, interim and final. The following table sets out the timescales for the delivery of this contract and summarises the main outputs aligned to relevant deliverables of the project.

| Inception stage |                            |                          |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1               | Tender issued              | 05/03/21                 |
| 2               | Tender submission deadline | 17/03/21<br>(12.00 noon) |

|   |  |                                     |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
|   | Internal assessment  | 18/03/21                            |
| 3 | Contract awarded   | 19/03/21                            |
| 4 | Contract start date (date from which eligible expenditure may be incurred)   | 22/03/21                            |
| 5 | Kick-off meeting Monday 29 March 2021: contractor to present a contract delivery plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working methods proposed for the contract</li> <li>• Types of analyses to be produced (for both qualitative information &amp; quantitative data)</li> <li>• A timed plan for contract outputs.</li> </ul> | 29/03/21<br><br>(Time TBC)          |
| 6 | Contractor to provide & present an interim update in a meeting in the week beginning 10 May (date TBC)   | Wk beg. 10 May 2021<br><br>Date TBC |
| 7 | Final deliverables to be produced and provided by no later than Friday 4 June  | By 04/06/21                         |

## 6. Key relationships & contract management

The service contract will be managed on behalf of the project partners by the contracting authority, EUROPARC. To ensure delivery of the contract and the quality of outputs, the successful contractor will liaise with and report to the LIFEedu Project Manager, Neil McIntosh, EUROPARC.

## 7. Tender submission & return process (required format for submissions, conditions to be adhered to etc.)

### 7.1 Submissions

Bids must be submitted in English and sent by email to Neil McIntosh ([neil.mcintosh@europarc.org](mailto:neil.mcintosh@europarc.org)) by or before 12.00 noon on Wednesday 17 March 2021.

Tenderers must demonstrate within their proposal assurances that they have the necessary capability and capacity to meet the contract requirements within the timescales indicated. Bids must include the following:

- A short narrative introduction to your organisation
- Your understanding of the brief
- Evidence of previous work of a similar scope and scale
- A detailed description of your proposed approach to meet the requirements of the contract

- Experience of writing insightful and coherent reports, which identify clear recommendations that can be used to inform decision making processes and/ or future project development ideas: in addition, reports produced must be written so they can be shared with a variety of (non-technical) audiences.
- Evidence of partnership working, engaging with a variety of partners to deliver shared aims and objectives.

As a minimum, tenderers must provide the following details within their proposals:

- A detailed description of your proposed approach, including timescales for delivery – limited to 2 pages.
- Project management and risk assessment associated with delivering the contract and how these would be managed – limited to 1 page.
- Skills, expertise and experience of your proposed team. This would include a breakdown of the contracted team by their role, experience and expertise. Short form CVs for each member of the team must be submitted as appendix.
- Two examples of similar work and scope should be provided.

## 7.2 Conditions

All interested parties wishing to submit a bid must adhere to the following conditions:

- Bids must be sufficiently detailed with clear descriptions and costs for services to be provided.
- Bids must include a clear reference to the LIFE project (short title & reference as stated on the cover page to this invitation to tender).
- All prices must be stated in EUROS, inclusive of VAT, which must be shown separately.
- Prices will be fixed for the period of the contract.
- The costs of your bid broken down by each element and team member, time allocations for each team member and day rates.
- Prices should include any anticipated travel and expenses, but these must be separately detailed.
- In preparing a bid, potential contractors must note that one day is equal to 8.0 hours.

At no point following the submission of the bids will potential contractors be allowed to make changes to the substance of their proposals. Post-submission, any attempt to contact the contracting authority with a view to influencing the outcome will result in the immediate disqualification of that bid from consideration in the tendering process.

All bids received will be treated as being submitted as 'commercial in confidence'. All bids will be assessed for completeness, quality and cost. To ensure transparency and equal treatment of bids received, all bids will be opened and assessed on the same day and a confidential written record of the procedure used to assess the bids and the decisions reached will be maintained as part of the tendering procedure.

The outcome of decisions reached following the conclusions of the tendering process will be communicated individually to the proposer of each bid received. The decisions reached will be final and, at no point, will the contracting authority enter in to further discussion about the outcome.



## **8. Award criteria**

The contract will be awarded to the most economically advantageous tender evaluated by the contracting authority to demonstrate value for money, added value for the project and quality. Note here that added value means the capacity of the tenderer as external assistance provider to complement the expertise and experience already available within the project with specialist professional knowledge and skills required for the project.

Indicatively, the maximum value of the contract will be €15,000 inclusive of VAT.

The scoring criteria are weighed as follows:

- Price 30%
- Added value 40%
- Quality 30%

Subject to satisfactory performance and delivery of external assistance services specified in this invitation to tender, payments will be made as follows:

- Inception Stage – 30% of the contract value by end April.
- Interim Stage – 30% of the contract value by end May.
- Final stage – 40% of the contract value subject to satisfactory completion.

## **9. Intellectual property rights (for products & services to be provided)**

All feedback, information and data gathered during the performance of the contract and production of the evaluation plan and reports, including the intellectual property rights, will belong to the project.

At no point will the contractor use contact details of project participants or project partners other than for the purposes of information and data gathering directly required for the delivery of the contract and production of the required outputs.

All proposed contact with project participants and other contributors to the project evaluation will be pre-discussed with the Project Manager. Any ad hoc or supplementary contact with project consultees will require to be approved by the contracting authority.

## **10. Data protection & confidentiality requirements**

All data management must comply with GDPR requirements - all reasonable precautions to protect user data security must be ensured.

The contractor must treat all contract data in strictest confidence. Consultees and partners' contact data must be safeguarded to prevent misuse by malicious third parties. At no time will the contractor be able to use the data provided, gathered or analysed for any other purpose outside the scope of the external service contract.

The contracting authority, as the project Coordinating Beneficiary, retains sole responsibility for the implementation and delivery of any external service contract which may be awarded as a result from the invitation to tender. At all times though, lead responsibility for the performance of the contract and quality of evaluation findings and reports to be produced are the sole responsibility of the contractor, including the quality of all contract outputs.

Data will be shared with the project partners for data archiving purposes by the contracting authority.

All data used and produced via the contract must be handed over to the contracting authority on request and certainly by the end of the contract.

It is expressly stipulated that any external service provider, which may be awarded a contract within the scope of this LIFE project, have no rights vis-à-vis the European Commission or any of its agencies.

## **Additional Notes**

### **1. Overview of the project**

LIFE e-Natura2000.edu, or LIFEedu for short, explores the potential of building new approaches and methods to improve knowledge and build capacity amongst Natura 2000 site managers in both public and private land, across the EU. The project aims to develop ways to counter the cost and increase the environmental sustainability of traditional training by creating a blended learning approach to capacity building using a mix of online tools and face-to-face methods: new, cost-effective ways of accessing information, practical learning, exchanging experience and connecting to peers are to be made available and tested through the project. The project addresses both the knowledge and skills required by Natura 2000 site managers, promoting a competence-based approach to what a manager needs to know and be able to do, and develops (as far as possible) new methods that can positively influence the attitude of individuals involved in Natura 2000 management.

Following the project's main planning and production phases in 2019, the project's cohort of c.72 participants will be selected from applicants and confirmed by end January 2020. The project will enter the main delivery phase from March 2020 and run until end June 2020. Coordinated by EUROPARC, three core competence courses will be delivered by FUNGOBE, ProPark and EUROPARC. The three course focus on:

- How to work and collaborate effectively with local communities and respect cultural traditions: led by FUNGOBE for 20+ participants, mainly from Spain (in Spanish)
- Biodiversity conservation, policy, planning and project management skills: led by ProPark for 20+ participants, mainly from Romania (in Romanian)
- Competent, inclusive communication: led by EUROPARC for 25 participants from across Europe (in English).

Each course will comprise of a series of 7 to 8 online learning modules and include a face-to-face workshop – an example of how the EUROPARC course will be organised is provided in Annex 5 to this invitation to tender. Whilst each course will stand alone, there are several online learning 'mini-modules' which will be provided in all three courses – for example, on personal communication competencies.

Other project actions that will be relevant for the evaluation include:

- The project applicants and information analyses (done already) to facilitate the selection process.
- The online Training Needs Analysis (TNA) tool to be used by the project cohort of participants.
- The Moodle platforms used to provide access to the digital learning content.
- The range and variety of online tools used to deliver content – for example: webinars, video demonstration clips and online presentations.
- As part of the blended learning approach, the three face-to-face workshops that will complement the online digital content delivered.
- One Summer School hosted by TESAF in Italy.
- The dedicated project sections on the EUROPARC website and on all partners' websites.
- Social media used including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.

- Videos and gifs being created as ‘tasters’ about the learning experiences and to promote the project.

A further description of the project is provided in Annex 6, which also includes descriptions of the deliverable reports mentioned in this invitation to tender.

## **2. LIFE Programme - After-LIFE deliverable reports**

The experience gains being realised through implementation of the LIFEedu project have significant potential to be of value to other engaged in LIFE Preparatory projects. Cumulatively, the project impacts will be reflected in three end-of-project reports formally required to be produced as a condition of LIFE Programme funding – these are:

- The Evaluation Report
- The Guidelines for Replicability Report
- The Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Report

These three reports will reflect the development work of the project and the lessons learnt. Together, these will be used to help shape and positively influence EU policies and process for practical capacity building amongst Natura 2000 site managers. For example, based on the evaluation results, a set of key recommendations for future capacity building will be produced and the work of this external service contract will be central to those recommendations.

### **Additional notes on the project reports**

#### **Report of the evaluation of learning experiences**

This report is a key deliverable of the project and is a direct output from this invitation to tender. evaluation report of the learning experiences will be produced after the three core competence courses have all been completed and the feedback of participants has been gathered and analysed. In addition, building on the experiences gathered during the delivery phase of the project, a scientific paper on capacity building for Natura 2000 site managers will be produced analysing the results generated and data gathered through the project.

Based on the evidence gathered and experiences reported, the external contractor will produce an overall report for the project based on the evaluation results and corresponding analyses of the cohort participants’ learning experiences. This will be further informed by the feedback and experiences of the project partners and also other project contributors, including external experts recruited as tutors for the three core competence courses. Although the feedback and data gathered from the project’s ‘casual users’ may also be useful to inform elements of this report, the focus is on the experiences of the project’s cohort participants.

### **Guidelines for Replicability (including recommendation for future capacity building)**

This project aims to increase the effectiveness of N2000 management in order to have an effect on halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe. To do so will require increased knowledge and capacity across all level in the involvement of N2000 management, most specifically N2000 managers. What can be achieved in a small project is to design pilot and test a set of hypothesis, mechanisms and tools. These, once tested and shown to be effective, will need to be utilised by a wide audience. But too the gaps in provision will need to be highlighted for future work.

In order to facilitate the replicability of the project outcomes and the main lessons learned, it is important to identify clear messages and provide practical guidelines which help both all involved in N2000 management. A report utilising the evaluations and tests conducted throughout this project, will contain guidelines and recommendations for N2000 capacity building and will be produced as a pdf and a Summary in English in paper form will be published.

Therefore, these guidelines will contribute to raising awareness about the opportunities offered through a training needs analysis tool, and providing of accessible tools to learning opportunities throughout all organisations managing Natura 2000 sites.

### **Socio-economic impact assessment report**

This report focuses on implementing a socio-economic impact assessment of the project, with particular emphasis on the communities within or near the project areas, given that these communities have direct interests and are principally influenced. To do so, both qualitative and quantitative methods will be utilized. A context analysis will be performed for the local communities including the use of quantitative indicators such as employment change of local economic sectors, number of visitors in the areas, birth and death enterprise rate changes. This study will contribute to better understand and capture the economic impact of the project in the local economy and society.

The advice of the external contractor appointed to conduct the project evaluation will be required in order to ensure that, as and when appropriate, relevant data and information can be gathered as part of the evaluation process. This should not detract from the main purpose of the evaluation contract but should be considered as the project is expected to have positive socio-economic impacts on local communities that live in the areas within or near the Natura 2000 site.

These impacts are not easily perceived by the local population; therefore this action will identify, analyse and disseminate the socio-economic benefits of the project and help to facilitate greater acceptance of Natura 2000 as a key element of EU policy to protect biodiversity in ways that are economically and socially sustainable. This report will consolidate the other data and results over the project's lifetime and will be delivered with the project's Final Report (Aug 2021).