

## EXPLORATORY NOTICE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

### Exploratory notice for requesting expressions of interest in participating in the selection for the implementation of the EPOS ERIC website

#### 1. Brief Description of the EPOS Research Infrastructure

EPOS (European Plate Observing System, [www.epos-eu.org/](http://www.epos-eu.org/)) is the pan-European research infrastructure dedicated to integrating data, services and facilities of the solid Earth science research communities in Europe. Its mission is to ensure the sustainable use and re-use of multidisciplinary solid Earth science data and products, fostering state-of-the-art research and innovation. EPOS is committed to establishing and underpinning sustainable and long-term access to solid Earth science data and services, integrating diverse European research infrastructures under a common federated framework. EPOS ERIC is the legal entity established by the European Commission to coordinate and integrate national and international research infrastructures, forming the EPOS Delivery Framework. Based in Rome, Italy, EPOS ERIC comprises 19 Members: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, and 1 Observer: Germany. The governing body of EPOS ERIC is the General Assembly.

#### 2. Purpose of this Exploratory Notice

The European Plate Observing System—European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EPOS ERIC), under the EPOS ERIC Procurement Rules and in compliance with the principles of transparency, adequate publicity, non-discrimination, equal treatment, mutual recognition, and proportionality, is exclusively finalising this notice to request expressions of interest from potentially interested economic operators interested in implementing the new website of the EPOS European Research Infrastructure.

It is not binding for ERIC, which reserves the right to identify, at a later date, the number of suitable subjects to whom a letter of invitation will be sent to present their offers. The expression of interest is only finalised to communicate to EPOS ERIC their availability to present an offer.

EPOS ERIC reserves the right to suspend, modify, or cancel, in whole or in part, the initiated procedure and to refrain from proceeding with the tender for the service award without allowing applicants to claim any rights or expectations.

For the expression of interest, the following information is provided:

1. **Procuring Entity:** EPOS ERIC, Via di Vigna Murata 605 – 00143 Rome (RM), Italy.
2. **Description of the Service:** design and implementation of the new website of the EPOS ERIC Research Infrastructure. In particular, the system shall include the following:



### 3. Features and main functionalities

The website to be supplied shall be implemented by customising an Open-Source CMS (Content Management System) selected from those most widely used and supported by a large development community (e.g., Wordpress, Drupal, Joomla! etc.). It shall be designed to be fully compatible with all the main browsers and maximise usability across different platforms (laptop, PC, mobile, tablet, etc.) through dynamic and responsive technologies.

The website shall include the following functionalities:

- Display of multimedia materials (videos, galleries, interactive documents e.g. flipbooks, document repositories);
- Provision of RSS feeds;
- Aggregation and presentation of RSS content from other sites;
- Generation of easy-to-remember addresses, enabling better indexation for search engines (URL rewriting);
- Integration with other applications, services and systems in use within EPOS, through the management and publication of content by exploiting web services and REST APIs;
- Creation of forms and surveys, allowing users to review and modify their entries, and present the results.
- Collection and presentation of detailed site statistics (Matomo or equivalent).
- Robust, adjustable SEO features and functionalities;
- Integration with social networks.
- AI agent integration for website search and basic Q&A.

#### **AAI, security, data protection and prevention of data loss**

- The website will allow a secure (encrypted) SSL connection. It shall be provided with an Authentication and Authorisation system with at least three levels: Administrator, Content Manager and user, according to the roles and functionalities required.
- The system provided shall be designed to ensure that appropriate security measures are in place to prevent or mitigate the risks of inappropriate or unlawful behaviours, such as identity theft or the theft of confidential data, in accordance with the “privacy by design” criterion, also through the constant and timely updating of the infrastructure and the provision and implementation of certificates.
- The system shall be configured to execute daily automated backups and ensure the recovery of data entered up to the day before the event that caused the data loss.
- Redundancy on a second machine indicated by EPOS will also be foreseen to minimise the disruption in the event of the central server being unavailable.

#### **Usability, accessibility and visual identity**

- The interface design shall adhere to all standards and best practices recommended by the W3C and existing or emerging accessibility legislation, at least fulfilling the requirements for PA websites and portals. It shall also consider usability best practices, including executing beta tests with end-users to gather input to optimise layout and navigation and deliver high levels of user experience satisfaction.



- The website design shall also adhere to best practices for machine-readable web pages to maximise the visibility and reusability of all content.
- Both the front-end and back-end shall be designed so that EPOS staff authenticated on the system can autonomously create web pages based on layouts approved during the design stage, and that suitably trained EPOS staff can easily evolve the site by adding new functional sections and software modules. Consequently, the supplier shall pay particular attention to compliance with usability criteria and best practices for both the front and back end.
- All design and graphical elements, as well as the website's general layout, shall comply with EPOS's visual identity, particularly the guidelines set out in the EPOS visual identity manual and ensure a visual representation consistent with the infrastructure's identity, particularly its mission and vision.
- The website content shall be organised based on the content tree diagram provided by the EPOS ERIC communication unit, without prejudice to the possibility of the proposer suggesting improvements or agreeing on changes with EPOS ERIC during the design and implementation phase.

#### **Services included in the supply**

- The customised CMS shall be supplied with a perpetual user licence for an unlimited number of user accounts, encompassing all essential software, libraries, operating systems, and Database Management Systems that may be necessary for operating the provided portal.
- The service shall include porting part of the existing content and information that will be considered relevant to the new website. It will not include web writing/text editing activities.
- The service shall include the optimisation of the content to make it highly visible and highly findable by search engines (Search Engine Optimisation).
- The service shall include the provision of complete and detailed documentation (user manual, software documentation), training of the appointed EPOS staff, and a support service for at least one year, during which any malfunctions will be managed and support will be offered to EPOS ERIC staff in routine and extraordinary maintenance.

#### **Organisation of the work and supervision by the EPOS Staff**

- The website shall be supplied in turnkey mode and installed on a server indicated by EPOS. Once installed and tested, the switch-off from the old site will be carried out in continuity of service or minimising disruption.
- The EPOS ERIC staff shall supervise the design and implementation, with special reference to the communication and IT units, and adhere to their guidance, including the initial content tree attached to this document and the identified user personas. EPOS ERIC remains the only entity that can approve the designs according to the communication strategies outlined within the organisation.
- The EPOS ERIC staff, and in particular the communication and IT units, shall supervise the design and implementation, and the supplier shall adhere to their instructions and guidance, including the initial content tree and the identified user personas. EPOS ERIC remains the only entity that can approve the designs according to the communication strategies outlined within the organisation.
- In their offer, tenderers shall provide for the development of an all-inclusive schedule that includes the activities of conception, design, development, project management, graphic and technical implementation, data migration, and testing. The successful tenderer shall be responsible for all activities relating to the production of the layout, CMS components, and content, including data



migration and loading activities. The timetable may be further detailed during the work, and modifications may be agreed upon with EPOS Staff.

- Agile methodologies should be applied to the development and management of this project. Constant coordination and progress tracking shall be ensured through both remote collaboration tools, to be agreed upon with the EPOS Team (e.g., Slack) and the organisation of regular meetings.
- Tenderers may propose further services or communication measures, in addition to those indicated in these specifications, that form a coherent and improved system with them.

#### **4. Cost Estimate**

This service is estimated at € 40.000,00 (forty thousand/00).

For economic operators with an Italian fiscal position, the transaction is exempt from VAT under Article 72, paragraph 1, letter f) of DPR 633/72, as it is performed on behalf of EPOS ERIC, an international organisation.

#### **5. Eligibility Criteria**

All subjects participating will be required to demonstrate the following:

- An annual turnover of no less than EUR 100.000,00 (Excluding VAT) for the previous three financial years;
- The execution, in the years 2022, 2023, and 2024, of a similar service for public and private entities, which must have been carried out regularly and successfully without any serious breaches formalised through definitive contract termination decisions, subject to verification through client references;
- A corporate purpose relevant to the subject of the contract. It is understood that the expression of interest constitutes proof of the possession of the general and specific requirements solely to be admitted to the subsequent negotiated procedure. Therefore, the interested party must renew and confirm these requirements through a specific additional declaration during the awarding procedure. This exploratory notice is not intended to create a list of trusted companies but is a market survey aimed at executing the service in question.

#### **6. How to submit the interest**

Interested economic operators must submit their signed expression of interest, accompanied by a copy of the signatory's identification document, as per Annex A, no later than 11:59 PM on 18/04/2025 via e-mail to [administration@epos-eric.eu](mailto:administration@epos-eric.eu), with the subject: "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST—IMPLEMENTATION OF WEBSITE."

#### **7. Invitation to the tender procedure**

Selected economic operators who satisfy the eligibility criteria established in Article 5 will be invited to participate in any subsequent tender procedure. Based on their company profile and experience, EPOS ERIC will select those most closely aligned with the specified criteria.

#### **8. Publication**

This Notice is published on the EPOS ERIC website <https://www.epos-eu.org/epos-eric/calls-for-tenders> and social media channels.



## 9. Data Protection

EPOS ERIC will process personal data arising from the execution of this notice in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and the Council of 27 April 2016 ("GDPR"), Legislative Decree 196/2003 (the "Personal Data Protection Code"), as amended by Legislative Decree 101/2018, and relevant rulings issued by the Data Protection Authority.

The Data Controller is EPOS ERIC. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) may be contacted at the following e-mail address: [dpo@epos-eric.eu](mailto:dpo@epos-eric.eu).

## 10. Additional Information

Please contact Diana Piras (Chief of the Administration Unit) at [diana.piras@epos-eric.eu](mailto:diana.piras@epos-eric.eu) for information and clarification about the procedure. Questions shall be submitted in English.

