ZOE. Institute for future-fit economies gUG
Norbertstr. 31
50670 Cologne

Call for Proposals: Website development (Horizon Europe project WISE Horizons)

Who we are

ZOE, the Institute for Future-fit Economies, is a non-profit and independent think & do tank. We are dedicated to research for a future-fit economy. At the interface of politics, science and civil society, we develop trend-setting impulses for the fundamental questions of economic development.

About the project and existing web set-up

The WISE Horizons project is a multiannual EU-funded research project. It seeks to accelerate systemic change towards a new economic paradigm with wellbeing, inclusion, and sustainability at its core. The project will create a synthesis of WISE indicators – presented in a special database – and WISE models for evidence-based modelling and policymaking. It also seeks to create a unifying theoretical framework and synthesise the current beyond-growth initiatives through a novel and open access WISE accounting framework. More information about the project can be found here and here. The international target audiences of the project include researchers and experts, policymakers, stakeholders in international organizations, as well as civil society actors.

The upcoming website development phase will build on the project's existing project website, expand its functionalities, technically connect it to WISE research data, and help communicate and disseminate research findings adequately to our audiences. While individual modular updates can be done flexibly, the large-scale launch of the updated WISE Horizons website (including an event) is scheduled for end of 2026.

Scope of work

As part of the work on this project, we are looking for a partner that can help us scale up the current Wordpress-based project website (Home | WISE Horizons), integrating more holistically new developments from the project. This particularly concerns establishing the technical connection and display of the WISE database on beyondgdp.world), as well as further tailoring to the needs different user groups (policymakers, research communities, interested public). This involves introducing more functionalities and modules, such as improvements of the publications page, social media integration, as well as modules to adequately display contents such as blog posts, interactive infographics, etc. Importantly, we will also develop a data-driven online version with insights from the WISE Horizons Global Report.

Specifically, the scope involves the following tasks:

- **Research and analysis**: This initial phase involves gathering and revisiting insights from the project, its audiences and contents to develop a vision of the updated website. In this phase, the subcontractor is expected to combine the learnings from the Needs Assessment analysis we have conducted as part of the first project stage

Funded by the European Union
WISE Horizons #101095219

with additional bilateral exchanges with the project team. As a result, the subcontractor is expected to develop a long-list of elements for the website and to gather ideas for the website to be developed (in particular, on how to best incorporate the WISE database, and how to update the publication section technically).

- **Strategy:** With a solid understanding of the goals and the users' needs, the strategy for web development shall involve defining project objectives based on the project timelines, revising user personas, and defining steps to achieve the project's key performance indicators (KPIs). This sets the direction for the collaboration between subcontractor and project team and outlines a clear plan to achieve described outcomes.
- **Concept and information infrastructure:** the subcontractor's design team creates wireframes, prototypes (click-dummies), and user flows to map out the structure and functionality of the website updates. UX design emphasises usability, accessibility, and intuitiveness to ensure a seamless user experience.
- **Online user testing workshop and form:** the project planning foresees a 3 hour-user testing workshop in April 2026, as well as an additional online form to gather feedback from users on prototypes. The subcontractor is expected to plan and co-host the workshop together with the project team.
- **Interface design:** Building upon the UX design, the UI design focuses on the visual elements of the WISE Horizons experience. This shall include high-fidelity mock-ups, incorporating the existing branding, typography, colour schemes, and interactive elements to enhance the aesthetic appeal and usability of the final updated interface.
- **Development:** Once the designs for new modules and architecture are finalised, developers begin coding and building the updated elements of the WISE Horizons website. This involves translating design specifications into functional code, integrating back-end systems, and implementing front-end components to bring the project to life.
- **Technical Maintenance:** ongoing technical support is crucial to address any issues, implement updates, and ensure continued functioning and security of the website 5throughout the time of collaboration. Bug-fixes are expected to be covered by standard quality guarantee. The subcontactor is expected to be able to cover additional support when requested until April 2027 on a basis of the respective hourly rate presented in the offer.

Throughout this process, we expect the developers to prioritise user testing and feedback, and to collaborate closely with the project team. The web development process should be designed to be iterative and agile, prioritising flexibility, collaboration, and continuous improvement to deliver the best possible output at each stage of the collaboration. It involves analysing the current status quo, defining the objectives and users' needs, designing (and prototyping), developing (and testing), deploying (and iterating), as well as technical support. We aim for a close collaboration with regular exchange between the contractor, and the project's partners to deliver on the objectives described above.

Due to the project structure and regulations, there is a hard limit in terms of budget, so that prioritisation may have to take place between the project team and subcontractor within the above-mentioned scope based on the unit costs provided in your financial offer.

Who we are looking for

We are looking for a partner who is specialised in the above-mentioned activities, with a proven record on delivering high-quality website development, preferably in the context of EU-funded projects such as Horizon Europe or LIFE. We are looking for organisations that share our core principles: value orientation, sustainability, agility and self-responsibility.

Evaluation criteria and conditions

Evaluation criteria:

1. Price – weight 0.4

2. Experience and technical background – weight 0.3

   Proven track record of providing services under at least two contracts within the last 3 years, dealing globally with the topics listed below:

   a. Data visualisation (i.e. Power-BI)
   b. Wordpress-based web development
   c. Research-/science-/data-based communications
   d. Targeting different users through a single website
   e. Storytelling experience

   As evidence of fulfilling this criterion the tenderer shall submit a description of the work done under the contracts (specifying also the contracting authority, timeframe and value) along with a sample work portfolio.

3. Public sector/EU-level project experience – weight 0.1

   Experience in visual communication/public relations work for public sector or EU-funded projects [Horizon Europe/LIFE] within the last 3 years, defined as proven track record of providing services under at least 1 contract with a budget of at least 10,000 EUR.

   As evidence of fulfilling this criterion the tenderer shall submit the description of the work done under the contract (specifying also the contracting authority, title of the EU funded project, contract timeframe and value), along with the sample work portfolio in the technical offer.

4. Language – weight 0.1
   Given the international nature of the project, at least one team member of the assigned team should have a high English level (C1 or equivalent; proven through an internationally recognised test certificate, completion of a university degree in English language, or similar experience) and/ or be a native speaker.

   As evidence of fulfilling this criterion the tenderer shall submit the name of the person dedicated along with information on the English level.

5. Inclusive and Barrier-free design – weight 0.1

   With inclusion being a core part of the project, we value previous work on barrier-free design, such as a website, graphic illustration. As evidence for fulfilling this criterion, the tenderer shall submit a content example along with the proof that it has been developed within contract awarded to the bidder.

The Total Score for an offer will be evaluated based on the following equation:

TS = C1 *0.4 + C2 * 0.3 + C3 * 0.1 + C4 * 0.1 + C5 * 0.1

TS - Total Score of the tender under consideration

C1 – C5 – Criteria listed above

Price points (under C1) of the tender under consideration = lowest price of all compliant tenders / price of the tender under consideration

Conditions:

The final website must comply with regulation (see: The Equality Act 2010, WCAG 2 – minimum level 2 - awareness of BS 8878).

Max. Budget: 65,000€

Delivery Timeframe:

May 2025 - December 2026

Important milestones include:

- April 2026: Online testing workshop
- July 2026: Silent Beta launch
- September 2026: Launch of the online version of the WISE Global Report
- November 2026: Official website launch
- December 2026: Launch event

Additional information

We may negotiate the terms of the tenders, but we are obliged not to discriminate against any tenderer in doing so. This procedure shall be carried out in compliance with the principle of competitiveness and the principle of economical and expedient spending of funds.

Application procedure

Please send your offer describing your organisation's profile, proofs of meeting criteria 2 - 5 and track-record with the above-mentioned tasks to wise@zoe-institut.de by **April 27th/2025, 23:59 at the latest**.

ZOE. Institute for future-fit economies gUG
Norbertstr. 31
50670 Cologne

Please state "WISE Horizons website development proposal" in the subject line.

The offer should include:

- The full name, address or registered office of the supplier, telephone number and register number (if applicable),
- Full name and position of the legal representative
- Full name, position and contact details of the main contact person
- Technical offer providing all information how the tenderer fulfils the above criteria of the tender
- Financial offer (see Annex 1 for a template) with the full price presented as a gross price, including VAT, which the contractor is obliged to calculate in accordance with the applicable regulations, and include all costs related to the scope of work. Please include unit costs per work area and number of hours allocated in your financial offer.
- portfolio with previous projects

Offers shall be prepared in English only. Offers submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Please send any questions related to this call to wise@zoe-institut.de no later than April 11th, 2025.

The bidder shall be bound by their offer for a period of 30 days from the date of submission.

A bidder may, before the deadline for submission of bids, change or withdraw their bid.

During the examination and evaluation of offers, we may request clarification from bidders regarding the content of their offers. We will contact the chosen contractor only.

Annex 1: Financial tender template

Tasks & Price categories	Unit price	Estimated number of units	TOTAL [EUR]
Research and analysis			
Strategy			
Concept and information infrastructure			
Online user testing workshop and survey			
Interface design			
Development			
Maintenance			
OTHER			
Optional additional item 1			
Optional additional item 2			
TOTAL:			**€0,00**

Explanations:

- Unit price: please provide the **gross** amount. You are allowed to use more than 1 unit price per task. To do this, please add additional rows and explain the difference between different units
- Estimated number of units: units can be hours or days.
- OTHER: In this category, only non-personal costs should be included (e.g. travel costs or other types of costs that the bidder anticipates including in the total offer).
- TOTAL: This will be the maximum contract value and shall be presented as gross amount (including all relevant taxes, VAT included).