

Questions and answers on the tender: Website development (Horizon Europe projects MERGE and MAPS)

as of May 9th, 2025

In this document, we list all questions received about this tender, as well as our replies to them for all bidders to have access to them.

Q1: The example simulator contains authentication functionality, which is currently not present on the Sustainable Prosperity website. Is this functionality required, and do you plan to implement it in the main app? Or should the Simulator be considered a separate app with its own login? Alternatively, is login functionality not needed, and will the Simulator be integrated as just another "Page" on the website, as in the previous development?

- A: This cannot be answered as of now. The login functionality mentioned is needed as part of the current version hosted by University of Pisa. However, the development needs that are part of the scope refer to an updated policy simulator. As mentioned in the call for proposals, an updated version of the existing simulator based on new research outputs will need to be integrated into the Sustainable Prosperity website. We expect a collective decision as to whether the integration will involve rebuilding the simulator and/or leveraging the existing technical base to be based on a common analysis between you as the subcontractor and our project team.

Q2: In the scope of work, under "Conceptual development" and "Development," we would like to better understand what is included in "Conceptual development." Does this involve deliverables such as research, simulator logic prototyping (sketches), case studies added to the policy database, user journeys, and a written document of user stories (documentation), without the actual development?

- A: Yes, this is a correct understanding; and the mentioned elements are illustrative of what is included in conceptual development. Our project team will provide the research content inputs from the projects, while we expect you to lead the thought process as to the concept of displaying the contents, designs, prototypes, user journeys, etc.

Q3: Will the development work and UI/UX design be part of the "Development" phase? We would appreciate your clarification on this.

- A: No, this is not the case per se. With the development we are referring to the actual coding and technical implementation work of UX-prototypes and design drafts, as can also be seen from the separate columns on the financial offer table, for example.

Q4: Is the existing policy simulator fully functional and documented?

- A: Yes, it is functional. Technical documentation about the existing simulator exists and can be made available upon successful application to the tender and contract agreement in compliance with the existing agreements between its developer and agency.

Q5: Who decides whether the simulator will be newly developed or adapted?

- A: We expect you as the subcontractor to inform the collective decision on this made between you and the project team with your technical expertise. Research and modeling inputs will get content updates as part of the research conducted in the project, which might require individual pieces/data points to be newly added. Please also see Q 1 and call for proposals on this.

Q6: Which technical resources are available at STRATO (CPU, RAM, Docker, etc.)?

- A: STRATO currently offers a fully functional dual server set-up with a staging and a production server. Further technical details can be provided upon successful application to the tender as part of a technical intro/handover.

Q7: Which features are specifically included in the €70,000 budget?

- A: Please refer to the scope section of the [call for proposals](#) for this.

Q8: Are budget increases possible?

- A: Due to our project structures, there is a hard limit in terms of the maximum budget.

Q9: Which services will the client provide themselves?

- A: The project teams will be available for regular meetings and provide content inputs from the projects. We will also be able to do basic content edits on the back end as the client. Also see QQs 1, 2, and 42.

Q10: How frequently do you expect meetings and workshops with the agency?

- A: This will vary according to the project timelines and deliverables. We do expect regular exchanges and meetings to discuss progress updates, collective decision-making on design and development directions, etc.

Q11: To what extent is existing documentation available?

- A: Existing documentation can be made available on the technical base of the existing policy simulator and the server set-up of the sustainable prosperity website upon successful application to the tender (see other Qs in this document as well).

Q12: Are user groups clearly defined, and are user-testing data already available?

- A: The ZOE and project teams have a clear understanding of target groups and user needs based on needs assessment processes conducted for the initial launch of the sustainable prosperity website, and for the research project contents as well. There is no (recent) specific user-testing data available, but general web analytics based on Matomo are.

Q13: Are there binding design and branding guidelines?

- A: The sustainable prosperity website has an established visual identity, colour scheme, etc. that should be respected. Beyond that, the project contents for MERGE and maps need to be

displayed in accordance with the respective project guidelines and visual identities where applicable.

Q14: Which Django and Wagtail versions are currently in use?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q15: Which React/Next.js version is currently in use?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q16: What does the existing infrastructure look like in detail (PostgreSQL, media storage, app-server setup)?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q17: Is there a git code repository?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q18: Are there deployment pipelines implemented?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q19: Is the app dockerized?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q20: Is a container registry used? Which one?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q21: What is the current architecture?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q22: How is server access controlled?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q23: Are there unit/integration tests?

- A: We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q24: Can you give us an idea of the complexity of the online policy design toolbox?

- The new online policy toolbox will be developed in the course of the project work, and its level of complexity and functionality will be determined through discussions between the project team and the contractor.

Q25: We have looked at <https://ecoessione-tool.cartif.es/> but are unsure of what's going on under the hood

- A: This refers to updating the existing footer design including an updated newsletter sign-up form and ensuring continued privacy compliance of the site's set-up. Also see Q31.

Q26: Does "Update footer, newsletter, privacy section" refer to adding that functionality to the CMS, or manual updates for the latest version of the app?

- A: This refers to updating the existing footer design including an updated newsletter sign-up form and ensuring continued privacy compliance of the site's set-up. Also see Q31.

Q27: Does "add case studies to the policy database" refer to adding that functionality to the CMS, or manual updates for the latest version of the app?

- A: We will require additional CMS functionality for case studies to be made accessible and linked to individual entries of the policy database.

a. If the latter, how many case studies need to be added?

- A: n/a

b. Would this imply a new type of page or will it use the current "Policy Database" Design?

- A: The current Policy Database Design should largely remain the same, with the additional case-study functionality as described above.

c. Will there be a mobile version for the policy toolbox? It currently seems to hide on our side/can be seen only by resizing the window.

- A: To clarify: We are not planning any changes to the current policy toolbox on the website, but as can be seen on the conceptual development section of the call for proposals; An online policy design toolbox to either build on or complement our existing policy database and policy design tools with development and design of a coherent user journey that merges new

and existing material consistently together. This toolbox will also integrate guidance materials for policymakers that have been developed by the contracting agent.

For this, the contents should be accessible on the mobile version of the site, although the desktop version will have priority.

Q28: Will keycloak be the only way to access the policy simulator or will we use a classic login system, too?

- See Q 1. We cannot provide further information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q29: Will you as a customer provide your own keycloak server?

- We cannot provide information on this at this stage. Further details on the technical set-up can be provided upon successful application to the tender (i.e. as part of a technical briefing/handover).

Q30: On the policy simulator excel import: Should we also show errors in case the excel file is not formatted correctly or does not have correct data?

- If you are referring to the back-end view when uploads are done, yes. This would be appreciated to guarantee data accuracy and optimize usability.

Q31: In the following line: "Updates for the footer, newsletter sign-up and privacy set-ups for compliance and visual improvements": What do you refer to as "privacy set-ups"?

- A: By the privacy set-up, we refer to the installation of a cookie consent tool if necessary, upon further analysis, updates to the privacy policy depending on any technical updates made to the site, etc.

Q32: Is it possible for independent freelancers to come together and submit an application? We don't have a registered company or organization and will all be working as individual consultants.

In such case an consortium must be created, and the contract will be signed with consortium leader where roles, responsibilities and amounts of each consortium member will be distributed. We do not foresee to sign many individual contracts with individual consultants.

Q33: Is it fine for the consultants working on the project to be outside of Europe - India, USA, Canada?

- A: Yes, there are no restrictions in this regard; other than service and contact availability within our CET business hours.

Q34: Detailed description of the three main work areas expected under this framework, including specific technical or functional requirements.

- A: Please refer to the call for the call for proposals for any information and the other Qs on this document for any information on these that we are able to provide at this time.

Q35: Clarification on the scope and expectations related to the handover from your previous web development and design team.

- A: As mentioned on the call for proposals, the handover should entail elements such as onboarding and technical handover of server set-up, past activities, etc., and should not take more than a full day.

Q36: Information on your anticipated volume and frequency of tasks during the 2.5-year timeframe.

- A: Please refer to the call for the call for proposals for any information and the other Qs on this document for any information on these that we are able to provide at this time.

Q37: Expectations around ongoing support and maintenance, including required service levels or response times.

- A: Please refer to the call for proposals regarding the needs for maintenance. There are no explicit response times foreseen, but you are free to indicate these as part of the offer.

Q38: Criteria and weighting that will guide your evaluation and selection of a suitable provider.

- A: Please refer to the call for proposals for this.

Q39: You say your current website is built with Wagtail CMS. Would you be open to moving to a new CMS, e.g. WordPress, or are you hoping to continue with your existing CMS.

- A: We would prefer continuing with the existing CMS, given the and potentially high transaction costs of a move; although we would not totally discard it should there a convincing case.

Q40: Leaving aside the policy simulator, can you clarify if you are seeking a redesign of the main Sustainable Prosperity website within this project, more of and adoption and general management, or something else?

- A: As can be seen from the scope section of the call for proposals, we are not seeking a fully-fledged redesign of the sustainable prosperity website from scratch, but rather specific updates. We are looking for additions that are consistent with current webpage design and ensure a smooth user experience.

Q41: Would you consider moving to a new hosting provider or are you looking to retain your existing hosting? We ask as this would have implications for our standard development pipeline and require some adaptations.

- A: The existing hosting set-up has been working fine for the current set-up of the website. In a similar vein as our response to Q1, we would expect you to recommend a new provider in case of a clear technical need for it. We do not seek to change providers per se.

Q42: Do you currently put up new content yourselves, or are you expecting your provider to manage the day to day content updates too? For example, as part of an ongoing support budget.

- A: We currently manage minor content updates on individual pages ourselves. For mass uploads to database components of the site, we will require the technical support of the subcontractor (as mentioned on the call for proposals). The latter could be part of the ongoing support budget as you mention.

Q43: General maintenance and support (e.g. for security updates): are costs for this until Dec 2027 to be included in the budget or is there a separate budget available?

- A: These costs should be included in your budget calculations (as part of general maintenance mentioned under scope in the call for proposals).

Q44: Is the maximum total budget inclusive or exclusive of taxes e.g. VAT?

- A: As mentioned under ‘application procedure’ in the call for proposals: The financial offer (as modelled in Annex 2) needs to contain 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.