

Questions and answers on the tender:

Website development (Horizon Europe project WISE Horizons)

as of May 17th, 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: If the implementation remains within budget and the vendor has a proven track record with Wordpress, would proposing alternative, more suitable technologies for this project negatively impact the evaluation?

- A: For this, the answer depends on what is meant by 'more suitable technologies'. As for the CMS, as mentioned on the call for proposals, the existing project website is built on Wordpress; specifically using the Gutenberg and Classic Editors. We could imagine adjustments within currently used technology (i.e. using a different pagebuilder, etc.), as long as they are still compatible with currently used one. Therefore, an entirely different CMS that will not be compatible with existing solutions would not be reasonable economically for ZOE.

Q2: Is there an opportunity for a preliminary hearing call between the vendor and ZOE before submitting our proposal to get a detailed briefing and overview of the open call?

- A: Unfortunately, we cannot offer this possibility for multiple reasons. There will, however, be the possibility to get a more detailed briefing on more specific aspects of the project needs when starting the collaboration. If there are additional questions you would like to ask, please file them in writing.

Q3: Are there specific format or structural requirements for the submission of the participation documents? For example, should they be provided in a particular file format (e.g., PDF, Word) or follow a predefined template?

- A: There are no specific requirements as in terms of the exact format of the files submitted. A merged pdf files would be desirable but is not mandatory. Please submit at least all elements listed under the "application procedure" section of the [tender document](#).

Q4: Regarding the "Technical Offer," could you clarify what exact information should be included? Are there specific criteria, documentation, or technical specifications that should be addressed? Additionally, are there any formatting or length requirements we should be aware of?

- A: A description of how plan to fulfil the criteria is sufficient here. There are no specific requirements with regards to formatting or length (i.e. we do not need

specific contracts to be attached, stating that you delivered service X with value Y for Z services is sufficient).

Q5: Do you have any preferences about the tech stack that will be used to create a website?

- A: also see Q1. As mentioned, the solution should be compatible with existing publication pages built on Gutenberg/Classic editors and improve the back-end handling. As indicated on the [tender document](#), there will be a need to build new sections/modules – which might require transitioning to a different page-builder or not; we expect the subcontractor to make an informed decision about this in collaboration with us.

Q6: Are we going to add all the functionalities on the existing WordPress app or should a completely new website be created?

- A: The functionalities will be added to existing WordPress set-up of the project website, which uses Gutenberg and Classic Editors. We expect the partner to make suggestions on the potential need of adjusting the technical set-up (i.e. WP page-builder) based on the development needs outlined in the call for proposals. We do not envision a completely new website from scratch.

Q7: In what kind of database is WISE research data stored at?

- A: As mentioned on the call for proposals, the WISE research data on [Beyondgdp.world](#) is stored on University of Leiden's servers and built on PowerBI. The data can also be exported to excel.

Q8: Could you please explain what does it mean "Data-driven online version of the WISE Horizons Global Report".

- A: The online version of the Global Report is envisioned to be an interactive, digital version of the data/information from the Reports. It should include data visualisations that steer the user through the main findings/data in a user-friendly way and making its findings accessible (i.e. storytelling elements, adaption of graphics). We encourage you to take a look at the WISE Horizons Global Report Publication including data dashboards for further information: [A Novel History of Societal Progress and its Key Drivers | WISE Horizons](#)

Q9: Are we as subcontractors responsible for pushing the application in production and if so, where do you want for the application to be deployed? (AWS, GCP, private servers...)

- A: For both beyondgdp.world and the WISE Horizons project website, existing hosting set-ups are in place. As far as the project website is concerned, it uses a Web-hosting package provided by the German provider All-inkl.com. We expect you as subcontractors to guarantee the technical workings of this set-up, and to cover additional costs that may incur if development needs require adjustments of the existing set-up (i.e. moving to staging/production set-up).

Q10: Should we add costs for hosting to the offer?

- A: Yes, if you anticipate these based on the development needs (see Q9).

Q11: Can you confirm the delivery timeframe from April 2025 – December 2026? (or is this December 2025?)

- A: We can confirm the delivery timeframe is from May 2025 to December 2026. End of 2026 is when most work packages of the WISE Horizons project will end and as indicated on the call for proposals, we will have an event launching the main updates of the website then.

Q12: Who will be responsible for technical maintenance after April 2027?

- A: Those costs should not be part of your offer. It's not decided who will be responsible for technical maintenance beyond contract timeframe and this might be subject to separate call/contract or stay within ZOE responsibility.

Q13: Is the additional support supposed to be covered by the budget of 65k€?

- A: Yes (see Annex 1 – Maintenance).

Q14: Can UK-based organisations submit offers for this project?

- A: Yes, UK-based organisations can apply for this tender. Please remember though that the offer should include all costs, including VAT, which in this case will be reversely charged.

Q15: WISE Database API: Is there an API or structured access layer for the WISE database (beyondgdp.world)? If so, could you share any existing documentation, schemas, or data specifications? We noticed that the WISE Database is currently integrated via a Microsoft Power BI iFrame. Could you confirm whether this form of integration is intended to remain in place for the final version of the website, or if you are planning a transition to a more customized or embedded solution?

- A: We cannot speak to the technical details of API and structured access layer at this time but could provide more insight upon successful application to the tender.
- The Power BI iFrame-integration is likely to remain in place on beyondgdp.world. For the integration into the WISE Horizons project website and customisation in this context, we would expect a decision on the technical approach to emerge from our collaboration with you.

Q16: User insights: *Have any user analytics, usability studies, or heatmaps been collected from the current website that could inform UX decisions?*

- A: We have not conducted in-depth user research on the existing project website wisehorizons.world, but we can provide analytics insights based on data from our WPStatistics plugin (page views, traffic, etc.), and Matomo.

Additionally, have also conducted a Needs Assessment based on a survey and interviews to map the needs of key stakeholders (e.g. policymakers, journalists, civil society) that will be available to lend more insight to inform UX decisions.

Q17: Multilingual considerations: *Given your diverse European audience, is multilingual content foreseen in later phases, or should internationalization be planned from the start?*

- A: There is no multilingual content foreseen; we will keep the website contents in English only.

Q18: Participatory features: *Do you envision future enhancements involving stakeholder participation (e.g. interactive policy tools, comment features, submission portals)?*

- A: No, this was not envisioned.

Q19: Product governance: *Will a dedicated Product Owner or technical point of contact be available for sprint planning and feedback throughout the iterative development phase?*

- A: We aim for a close collaboration with the subcontractor and other project members, and we have a main point of contact for the website development within ZOE. Given ZOE's role as lead on communication, dissemination and exploitation, we will collaborate with whole WISE Horizons project consortium to ensure the development of the work aligns with the vision of our project partners and our key users' needs.

Q20: Prioritization framework: *In light of the defined budget ceiling, are there specific features already designated as "core deliverables" versus "nice-to-have" elements?*

- A: The technical display of the WISE Database, the online version of the Global Report, the technical update of the publications section, and the user-tailored modules are core features. The Global Report Online Version as well as the user testing workshop also equal project deliverables/milestones. Further prioritisation is not available at this time, and we would expect this to be done between you as the subcontractor and our project team.

Q21: Interoperability: *Are there any cross-project requirements, such as aligning with other Horizon Europe communication platforms or shared data infrastructures?*

- A: No.

Q22: *"The upcoming website development phase will build on the project's existing project website, expand its functionalities, technically connect it to WISE research data...": To which data are you referring to, where is it stored and in which format?*

- A: As mentioned, WISE research data is hosted by the University of Leiden on the [WISE Database - Beyond-GDP](#) and additional research data written into the [WISE Global Report](#). Also see Qs & AAs 7, 8, 15.

Q23: How will we receive the Needs Assessment analysis from the project team, and in which format?

- A: The Needs Assessment is a written report in pdf format that can be provided upon successful application.

Q24: Is the expected deliverable from this phase a first concept paper?

- A: No, it is not a deliverable. The intention behind this phase is rather to develop a common foundation regarding the web development activities between project team and subcontractor.

Q25: Will we be working with the existing analysis conducted by the project team, or is there an expectation to conduct additional interviews and gather new insights?

- A: There is no expectation to conduct additional interviews other than the elements mentioned in the call for proposals (see “Online user testing workshop” and “survey”, mentioned therein).

Q26: Will the Power BI data represent the full dataset used on the final WISE website, or will there be other data sources involved?

- A: The PowerBI data is continuously being updated and displayed on Beyondgdp.world. This module should be synchronised with display on the WISE Horizons project website. The technical way to get there

Moreover, there will be data sources involved as part of the scope, namely for the online version of the Global Report, which contains data and findings that will be translated into an interactive online version (see Q & A nr 8).

Q27: The briefing mentions "further tailoring to the needs of different user groups"—does this refer to tailoring the data specifically, or more broadly to the content and modules within the site's conceptual framework?

- A: The tailoring refers to the content and modules in the site's framework—in other words, the design and development of new elements should be tailored to users' specific user experience based on the insights gathered in the user testing workshop and the online form.

Q28: Are there any specific requirements for the publication backend and related modules? For example, is it expected that your team will be able to create publication pages using a selection of predefined modules? Specifically, is there any expectation to include data in these publications in formats beyond text and images (e.g., interactive elements, charts)?

- A: Yes, see Q1, Q5, Q6. We are currently able to create publication pages but need improvements. We envision including elements beyond text and images, but no interactive elements for publication pages (in contrast to the online Version of the Global Report mentioned elsewhere).

Q29: Does the "WISE Global Report" refer to the Power BI tool, or is it a separate product scheduled for launch in September 2026?

- A: The WISE Global Report does not refer to the Power BI tool. It is a separate project output for which an online version will be developed (see answers to Q8 and Q20, as well as the existing publication page on the project website: [A Novel History of Societal Progress and its Key Drivers | WISE Horizons](#))

Q30: Is the 3-hour user testing workshop intended for planning the testing or for conducting it?

- A: The workshop is intended for conducting the testing.

Q31: Could you elaborate on the objectives of this 3-hour workshop, especially considering it takes place before the Development and Interface Design phase?

- A: The workshop will take place in tandem with the development and interface design phases, not before. The goal is to gather user feedback on the development process pre-launch to further refine the website development, identify potential issues, etc.

Q32: Will the test users be selected from your existing user pool?

- A: This is a possibility that can be discussed within the project team and does not influence the offer.

Q33: Will the Microsoft Power BI App require styling or redesigning?

- A: See Q15.

Q34: Approximately how many interactive infographics are planned, particularly those that fall outside the scope of the existing Power BI App?

- As a point of orientation, we suggest considering the need of adaptation/development of graphics and data for the online version of the Global Report (see Q8, Q20), and any graphics being part of new modules. We do not expect further infographics outside the scope indicated in the call for proposals.

Q35: Should the features of the App be recreated or reimagined, or will it simply be embedded as-is within the new WISE2026 website?

- A: It should be embedded; also see Q15.

Q36: What are the data sources for the interactive infographics?

- A: The WISE Global Report and the WISE database.

Q37: Will we have direct access to the Power BI App, or will we treat it as a completed external widget?

- A: We are unable to confirm direct access at this stage but would clarify this question together with Leiden University (hosts of Beyondgdp.world and WISE Horizons Project Lead), and make a collective decision on this upon successful application to the tender.

Q38: Do we have the flexibility to propose a timeline running from May 2025 to April 2026?

- A: Yes, as long as it adheres to the milestones listed in the call for proposals.

Q39: Is there a specific reason for the months mentioned in the timeline provided in the briefing?

- A: The contract milestones deadlines are in line with the WISE Horizons project timeline and its associated deliverables (not relating to this tender). ZOE being bound by this timeline must obey the deadlines.

Q40: Overall Scope: from the CfP document, it is clear that new website areas, modules and pages are to be built. Could you specify the exact website areas you expect to be built? Or alternatively a rough number of modules or pages? This would help us immensely provide you with a budget, as we usually calculate module- or feature-based.

- A: Unfortunately, we cannot provide more detailed information at this time. Q49 of this document and the tender document give some indication, though.

Q41: User Numbers: Can you estimate how many users (i.e. unique monthly visitors) the site currently has? Do you have a goal as to how many users you want to have after the project was successful?

- A: The site currently has between 2,5-3k visitors per month, but we do not have data on the number of users. No, we do not have a goal set for the number of users by the end of the project.

Q42: Long-term maintenance, hosting: Do you have an existing web host that you would like us to use, or would you be open to use our preferred WordPress hosting solution?

- A: Maintenance beyond April 2027 falls beyond the scope of the tender (see answer to Q12). Our website is currently built on WordPress.

Q43: Pre-Existing Design: Do you have an existing design system in place, and do you expect us to build upon that system? If yes, what type of design assets do you have available (e.g. Figma file etc.) and will you be able to provide that file to us ahead of submission of the proposal?

- A: We cannot provide a Figma file or any equivalent ahead of submission.

Q44: Existing Tech Stack and Codebase: Is the tenderer expected to extend an existing codebase, or do you prefer us to start using our own codebase or from scratch? If an existing codebase needs to be used, would you be able to grant us access to it in order to prepare the

proposal? Can you share details on the current WordPress setup (what editing solution is being used and which plugins are installed)?

- A: The subcontractor is expected to expand our existing codebase (see answer to Q1). We cannot grant you access to prepare the proposal, but our current WordPress setup includes Gutenberg and Classic editor with basic plug-ins (Yoast, WP Statistics, Matomo...).

Q45: Timeline and milestones: Could you clarify on the milestones you expect between May 2025 and April 2026? Are there specific workshops, research/strategy presentations or deliverables (e.g. Wireframes or High-Fidelity Prototypes) that you wish us to deliver during that period?

- A: The precise timeline of task delivery will be determined in collaboration with the project team upon successful application.

Q46: English Language Level: In Evaluation Criteria 4 you request proof of the level of English language spoken. Despite our location in Germany, our language of operation is English and most references submitted will be international projects published in English. The CVs of multiple proposed team members include employments in English-speaking countries. A C1 or equivalent English level is a hiring criteria for us. Would this be a sufficient qualification to match your criteria? If not, kindly let us know what specific proof you wish us to submit.

- A: Yes, C1 or equivalent is sufficient. You don't need to present any proof of English level apart from your declaration. Please bear in mind though that this being selection criteria might result (at implementation stage) in request to substitute team member with someone holding same qualifications but better English skills, in case those prove to be insufficient.

Q47: Are there any eligibility criteria or restrictions regarding the geographic location of participating teams (e.g., Middle East, Ukraine, Central Asia)?

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

Q48: Will content management be handled internally by your team, or would you expect our support in this process?

- A: Regular content inputs and edits (i.e. uploading new publications, news pieces) will be handled internally by our team. We do expect you as the subcontractor to enable our team to be adequately able to do so technically on the back-end in the context of updated modules (i.e. publications pages, see Q20 and Q28). Content inputs would only be expected with major one-time-additions to the project website, such as the Global Report Online Version (see Q8).

Q49: What are the key types of content modules that should be developed to support the platform's structure and user needs? Examples may include: – Blog or news section –

Publication or research repository – Interactive data visualizations or infographics – Specialized page types such as events, team profiles, or contact forms. Are there any additional content modules or functionality that should be considered?

- A: The listed modules should indeed be developed, along with the interactive Global Report and integrated WISE database.

Q50: Are there any existing design systems or component libraries currently in use?

- A: Yes.

Q51: What level of integration with the WISE database is required? (e.g. static embedding, live filtering, comparison tools, data download, interactive visualisation).

- A: See Q 15 and Q 55. We cannot fully answer this at this time but expect a decision on the technical way forward to emerge from our collaboration. We would expect full, visual customisation/adjustments will be likely.

Q52: Are there any expectations for user interaction with the WISE Global Report content? (e.g. scrolling storytelling, filters, embedded data views).

- A: Yes, these examples mentioned reflect our expectations in bringing the key insights from the WISE Global Report to the online version with an interactive user journey (also see Qs 8 and 20).

Q53: In what format will the WISE data be provided? (e.g., API, CSV, JSON).

- A: See Q7.

Q54: Are there any restrictions or limitations regarding data access – such as volume limits, frequency of access, or API rate limits?

- A: No, none that we are aware of.

Q55: What is the preferred approach for data synchronization between the website and the WISE database? Should it be based on real-time updates per user request?

- A: As of now, we cannot speak to a preferred approach on this. From our perspective, technically seamless synchronization and adequate display are important, and we would expect a decision on the technical approach to emerge from our collaboration with you.

Q56: Will the website need to support multiple languages? If yes, which languages should be included? Should this include right-to-left language localization?

- A: No (see Q17).

Q57: Should content be managed and edited independently for each language within the admin panel?

- A: Not applicable (see Q56).

Q58: Are there any specific browser or device compatibility requirements we should be aware of? (e.g., desktop vs. mobile priority, specific browsers in use by target audiences).

- A: Not at this stage. There will be complementary information on the Needs Assessment document (see Q 23). Very broadly speaking, desktop tends to have priority over mobile for our audiences.

Q59: Does the current site already support WCAG 2 standard, or should accessibility be implemented from scratch up across all pages?

- The WCAG 2 standard is currently not supported. Improving accessibility is generally very desirable for us where feasible, but it is not expected as part of the scope to do a fully-fledged update from scratch (see call for proposals).

Q60: Could you clarify the intended objectives of the upcoming online testing workshop?

- A: See Q31.

Q61: What flow and results of the workshop do you envision for it?

- A: See Q31.

Q62: What kind of involvement do you expect from the subcontractor for the workshop?

- A: See QQs 25 and Q31.

Q63: Will the project team provide access to relevant user groups for the planned user testing workshop and feedback activities (e.g. policymakers, researchers, civil society representatives)?

- A: See Q32.

Q64: Is the redesign related to an expansion of the data being displayed?

- A: The data sets are continuously being updated by the research team at Leiden University. The redesign/modifications on the project website are related but not a result of this. See Q32.

Q65: Are there plans to expand the dataset that will be visualized?

- A: See Q26 and Q64.

Q66: Should the design be optimized for the current dataset only, or should it be more universal to accommodate potential future use cases?

- A: See QQ 15 and 51.

Q67: What are the expectations regarding accessibility and mobile version support? (Visualizing charts and data on mobile can be particularly challenging.)

- The WCAG 2 standard is currently not supported. Improving accessibility is generally very desirable for us where feasible, but it is not expected as part of the scope to do a fully-fledged update from scratch (see call for proposals).

Q68: You mention: “This involves introducing more functionalities and modules, such as improvements of the publications page.” Does this mean integrating elements from the updated WISE database into these new pages, or do these pages also need to be redesigned?

- A: Yes, integrating elements from the database will be necessary for the online version of the Global Report (see other Qs about the Global Report). Regarding the publications and other pages/modules, see Q 20, Q28 and Q48.)

Q69: Do you plan to keep the current approach with a rather complex interface for configuring data views, or would you prefer a more user-friendly approach—e.g., showing multiple charts with different metrics in a feed-like format, without requiring manual configuration?

- A: A more user-friendly approach would be desirable, but implementing it will depend on several variables including the data inputs, and should therefore be discussed in detail as part of the planning process, and in exchange with our project team as part of the initial collaboration phase.

Q70: Are there any websites or applications that you consider close to what you ultimately want to achieve?

- A: One example that has been mentioned in the project and could serve as inspiration is [Our World in Data](#). As a project, the World [Inequality Database by PSE](#) is another important resource we look at as a project; alongside [Beyond-GDP.world](#)

Q71: The timings for the project’s milestones delivery seem to be generous (at least at this proposal stage), would there be any penalties if we can deliver in a quicker work schedule, as long as the same quality is ensured?

- A: There will not be penalties for this. However, please note that the milestones refer to project deliverables involving project reporting obligations; and that the

internal development timeline for implementing the activities mentioned in the scope can and should be more detailed. Also See Q 20.

Q72: The RFP does not include any specific team requirements, solely the firm's experience. Are there any preferences regarding the team's size or qualifications that we should keep in mind?

- A: There are no specific formal requirements for team size. The only formal evaluation criterion to keep in mind, as per the call for proposals, is C1 level as indicated on the call for proposals.

Nonetheless, we welcome indications about the team set-up you plan to assign to carry out the work required as part of your submission.

Q73: In Annex 1: Financial tender template, what do you consider as a unit (person-hour, monthly rate for the team, ...)?

- A: In the explanation at the bottom of the financial tender template, it is stated: "Estimated number of units: units can be hours or days".

Q74: Please would you specify whether the maximum budget for aforementioned call for applications is 65k gross or net?

- A: As stated in the Call for Proposals, the financial offer must be presented as gross price including VAT.

Q75: Will the subcontractor have access to representatives of user groups (policymakers, research communities, interested public) for user research?

- A: See Q32.

Q76: Can you provide benchmarks of interactive infographics you want on the website?

- A: See Q34.

Q77: Importantly, we will also develop a data-driven online version with insights from the WISE Horizons Global Report – is creating an online version of the report part of the scope?

- A: Yes, the online version of the Global Report is part of the scope.

Q78: Can you provide a structure and roles of the project team the subcontractor will work with?

- A: The project team is comprised of two partners within WISE Horizons, ZOE Institute and the University of Leiden. The subcontractor will work mainly with the CDE lead from ZOE Institute, but additional meetings are foreseen with other team members from the University of Leiden (Project Coordinator) and from ZOE Institute.

Q79: What version of WordPress are you using, what plugins/addons are used?

- The current wordpress version in use is 6.8.1. A few plug-ins for analytics, cookie- and newsletter-set-up (cookie tool) and ACF fields are in use. More details can be given upon successful application to the tender. See Q1 and Q44.

Q80: Can you deliver architecture diagram of WP instance?

- No, this cannot be provided at this time.

Q81: Can you list custom features/modules used in current WP instance?

- See Q20, Q40 and Q79.

Q82: Where is the WP instance hosted right now and do you plan any changes to that setup?

- The project website is currently hosted at All-Inkl.com using a web hosting package. The Beyondgdp.world database is hosted by Leiden University. We only seek to make changes if the technical implementation of the scope requires this. See Q9.

Q83: Timeline: if the start is scheduled for May 2025, why the online testing workshop is to take place in April 2026? Are you open to the supplier doing additional user testing on top of that workshop?

- The testing workshop can take place before the April 2026 deadline if the contractor and project team agree this is suitable. The date mentioned on the call for proposals is based on project deadlines. If more than one testing workshop is considered necessary, these should be included in the budget.

Q84: What level of SLA do you need for maintenance, e.g. 24/7 support or working day hours support?

- We do not envision a high-demand maintenance: Working day hours support would suffice.

Q85: Shall we consider any marketing automation integrations?

- No.

Q86: Should the maximum amount of 65k EUR include reverse charge VAT in Germany?

- Yes. Regular VAT rate in Germany (19%) applies. Also see Q74.

Q87: If yes, what is the applicable VAT rate in Germany?

- 19% (see Q86 above).

Q88: Will infrastructure (both hosting and additional software licenses) costs be covered by the ordering party?

- No, they should be included in the offer if you anticipate these costs based on the development needs (see Q9, Q10, Q82).

Q89: Evaluation criteria: 2c - Research-/science-/data-based communications – can you elaborate on what kind of experience you are looking for?

- We expect our partner to have prior experience working in developing websites which help make research and scientific content accessible, understandable, and engaging for our target groups (i.e. policymakers).

Q90: Can you please link to Annex 1 you refer to in the .pdf document?

- Annex 1 (“Financial offer”) is included in the PDF document (see [Call-for-Proposals-WISE-Horizons-Website-Development.pdf](#) - page 6)