

Request for Proposal

Deep Tech Training Initiative Course Platform Provider

September 2023, Paris, France

1. Context

EIT Manufacturing Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) is focused on promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and education in the domain of Manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together leading organisations along the entire value chain from smaller companies to larger industry, excellent academic and research institutions, as well as public sector organisations, to promote the transformation of manufacturing towards the digital economy, the circular economy and the decarbonization of industry, by removing barriers to innovation, promoting talent and education, leveraging enabling technologies and exploiting big-data.

EIT Manufacturing is regulated and funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) located in Budapest, which is a body of the European Union. Within Europe, there are 8 (eight) other KICs where we can actively engage to lead and drive the creation of services across the continent, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of European companies.

EIT Manufacturing is an association under the French law 1901 created in 2019. Headquartered in Paris area, it has six Co-Location Centres (CLC) across Europe, responsible for the delivery in the different geographies. It also has a commercial arm created in 2021, Manufacturing SASU, also located in Paris.

About the Deep Tech Training Initiative

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology's Deep Tech Talent Initiative (EIT DTTI) has the objective of training 1,000,000 innovators and experts in Europe between 2023 and 2025 in deep tech areas (see Annex 1). As part of the New European Innovation Agenda adopted on 5th July 2022 by the European Commission, the EIT DTTI combines the forces of education and training institutions, companies, research institutes, start-ups, and other stakeholders in realising this important goal.

Four kinds of stakeholders will be engaged through pledges for actions towards this goal: education and training providers, enterprises and enterprise associations, financing entities, and institutional members. They will commit and support in identifying deep tech training needs and trainees; identifying training providers; identifying training courses; and identifying the financial resources to support the training. While these commitments are expected to start from the EIT ecosystem, it will include partners from the wider deep tech ecosystem to leverage participation and reach the ambitious target of one million deep tech talent. These talents will create a pool of future innovators as a basis for Europe to address the complex challenges it faces.

The EIT has entrusted EIT Manufacturing, one of its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) to coordinate and manage the implementation of the EIT DTTI. Seven other EIT KICs are also participating in the initiative and partially managing key aspects of EIT DTTI.

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to define the overall scope and terms and conditions for the provisioning of services to enhance and maintain the existing functionality of the DTTI platform as well as to implement and/or integrate additional functionality to better serve existing and attract new stakeholders. The individual work packages that will be required to achieve this purpose will be defined in specific statements of work.

2. Description

The current version of the DTTI platform (www.eitdeeptechtalent.eu) implements the public website of the initiative, providing basic information on it and a catalogue of deep tech courses. It is based on WordPress and developed, maintained, and hosted by IN THE COLD AB, Sweden.

Through the Platform, organisations can submit their pledge via an online form. Approved pledgers get access to the extranet part of the platform where they can manage their organisations data and users. Certain data on pledgers is synchronised with the DTTI CRM system (based on Pipedrive). Pledgers can also submit detailed information on courses, which when approved will appear on the website course catalogue.

The approval of courses by the DTTI team is supported by a workflow making sure the relevant aspects are checked and the decision logged and documented. The courses catalogue is openly accessible, with no log-in required. Users are able to browse through the content, filter according to various criteria like deep-tech field, course duration and level, location, etc.

As an additional feature, website visitors can access a radar of technologies. This will be significantly enhanced in the future. Also, apart from courses, additional pledge actions will have to be supported by the platform, e.g., similar catalogues for DTTI training needs by enterprises and enterprise institutions and information about all pledger categories will be required.

A further important functionality will be the matching of skills of learners with job openings and job profiles with courses providing the skills required for those profiles, connecting training needs and interests (of enterprises as well as private learners) with the courses on DTTI skills. A skills matching tool will be provided by a third party but must be integrated into the platform by the contracted service provider. To support the skills matching function, log-in by students and the possibility for them to upload CVs and/or provide further information will be required. Similarly, for enterprises, the possibility to search for talents (via the skill matching function or otherwise) and provide information on job openings (subject to discussion with stakeholders).

Invoicing and payment functionality for the education and training providers may be required, for charges that may be associated with the onboarding of education and training providers and quality control of

courses. This may be a periodic subscription or through ad hoc fees connected to service provision. Decisions on the payment model will be made in 2024.

Enhancements to the back-office functions accessible to administrators are also expected, e.g., related to reporting and statistics.

Providers will be expected to base their solutions also on the WordPress platform, closely integrating with the existing functionality. When proposing a different technology base, they need to define how they will manage the additions to and integrations with the existing platform. A list of risks associated with the integration and operations and corresponding mitigation measures should be part of the proposal.

EIT Manufacturing is seeking the services of an experienced platform provider to supply the following:

1) Maintenance of Existing Platform Features

1.1. Reporting Services:

The Service Provider shall maintain and provide the following reporting services:

1.1.1 Reporting by learning providers, including the capability to upload lists of course completions in Excel or csv format and store them in a simple database table.

1.1.2 Quality approval workflow, involving notification emails to specific administrators when a new course is entered into the system and flagged as "submitted" by the course provider.

1.1.3 Data transfer of course provider registration data to the EITM ERP/CRM system using an appropriate connector.

1.1.4 CRM system services, including generating newsletters and automated reminders to users for completing reporting.

2) Implementation of New Platform Features

2.1 Learner Login Services:

The Service Provider shall implement new learner login features, including:

2.1.1 Capability for users to upload their CV.

2.1.2 Career path tracking for learners.

2.1.3 Recording and display of skills already attained by learners.

2.2 Statistical Dashboard:

The Service Provider shall implement a statistical dashboard for administrative use only, providing insights into:

2.2.1 The number of pledgers categorized by type, country, and age.

2.2.2 Talent pledged and talent trained, sourced from reporting data.

2.2.3 Gender distribution of trained talents, derived from reporting data.

2.3 Community Pages:

The Service Provider shall implement community pages with the following functionalities:

2.3.1 Pledgers can submit news items, calls to action, and job postings.

2.3.2 News items submitted by pledgers must be subject to approval by DTTI administrators.

2.3.3 Implementation of an alumni community section.

2.4 Website structural changes

2.4.1 The provider shall enhance the structure of the DTTI website according to requirements provided by EIT Manufacturing. In 2023 this task is expected to be in the region of 30 hours.

3) Optional Time Bank

3.1 Quote by Hour:

The Service Provider may offer optional time bank services, billed on an hourly basis, for the following optional integrations:

3.1.1 Integration of the SkillsMatch tool using an API, which matches learners to courses based on CV and course data.

3.1.2 Integration of the Deep Tech Radar, including the cataloging of training and upskilling needs of enterprises, which may require the creation of an additional user role.

3.1.3 Implementation of a financial system for charging membership fees.

Please, note that, the above-mentioned list represents the currently expected deliverables which are subject to modification. Additional deliverables may be required within the project as well as the listed ones may not be necessary.

Location, start date and period of implementation

The project will be coordinated from EIT Manufacturing's DTTI project team. Remote work is expected, supplier staff are not expected to travel to the EIT Manufacturing office. Video and telephone conferences are preferred options for team meetings.

The intended start date for implementation is October 2023. For the planned timeline see below.

Requirements

EIT Manufacturing is seeking an experienced supplier to enhance, implement, and maintain the platform, provide initial staff training and launch support, for the duration of the contract.

Look and Feel

The platform needs to be customized with brand themes and colours specific to the DTTI and provided by EIT Manufacturing, aligned with the current look and feel of the DTTI web site. EIT Manufacturing will provide the relevant graphic materials.

Responsiveness

The platform must feature a responsive design so that it is easily accessible on a mobile device or tablet, at minimum with a mobile-friendly responsive interface, but preferably with a corresponding mobile application.

Accessibility and GDPR

Platform design must be according to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 as well as compliant to GDPR and other European privacy protection regulations.

The supplier may propose alternative milestones and deadlines and changes which in his/her expert opinion may render the platform more functional, attractive and easy to use.

User roles and related functions

The user roles for the platform are:

- Administrator: configure and govern the platform. More than one admin will be needed, with different permissions and responsibilities.
- Pledgers: upload content. Each course provider may upload content in its own dedicated administration page.
- Reviewer: is in charge of reviewing content, can also be an Administrator.
- Learner: create profile and upload certificates of completed courses and CV
- End-user: prospective client who can browse (freely, no login required). All users can see all contents from any catalogue.

Security

To facilitate adoption and build trust among the community, security will be of utmost importance. The supplier is expected to provide certificates and/or other guarantees regarding adherence to security best-practice, including:

- Data security certification, i.e. SecNumCloud or similar
- Overview of latest penetration testing results
- Evidence of compliance with GDPR (and where relevant, other privacy/spam laws)

The supplier will be expected to provide continued, timely troubleshooting support to EIT Manufacturing throughout the contract, and to provide the benefit of frequent updates and maintenance to improve platform functionality and uphold high security standards.

Critical and uncovered requirements

EIT Manufacturing asks the supplier to highlight eventual critical requirements that may make the solution inefficient and/or ineffective. A cost-benefit analysis would be appreciated.

Overall, the supplier must explicitly determine whether any of the requirements are partially or not covered by the suggested solution.

Ownership rights and independence from proprietary software

Custom source code must not depend on any components, libraries, or modules that are proprietary to the provider. Upon completion of the Agreement, EITM will own the final website design, the custom code, and the content of the website. Moreover, the supplier will make sure that the Client will have admin rights to the website and will provide it in a form and manner that will make possible for another service provider to make changes, updates, alterations or any other necessary action on the website in the future.

Proposal structure

The Proposal should include the description of the proposed approach, its technological base, and a table with the relevant cost positions. Optionally, alternative solution approaches (including the cost and timeline implications) can be provided.

Regarding the cost structure, the supplier is asked to detail costs for the various categories of services required for the provisioning of the services as well as recurring costs related to the upcoming years, as EIT Manufacturing intends to keep running the platform.

3. Deliverables

EIT Manufacturing requires the vendor to include in its quotation:

- Approach of providing enhancements as described above, fully integrated in the DTTI web page
- Purchase/provision of software licences (if any)
- For each statement of work defined by EIT Manufacturing a requirement review (together with EIT Manufacturing)
- Software sub-licenses, if needed
- Training to administrators
- Support material
- Testing
- Support to users
- Maintenance, including eventually integrated plug-ins
- Content import or support for bulk uploads by EITM
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Testing

EIT Manufacturing intends to test the developments on the platform by performing:

1, Operational and non-functional acceptance tests:

- People involved: EIT Manufacturing, Supplier.
- Test: performance, usability, reliability.

2, User Acceptance test:

- People involved: EIT Manufacturing, user, Supplier.

Supplier needs to support the go-live phase by close monitoring of the platform performance and taking corrective actions in case of functional or performance issues.

4. Timeline

The deadline to submit the offer is **09/10/2023** and the awarded tenderer shall provide legal services on the monthly basis as described earlier until the expiration date of the contract.

The indicative timeline for the call for proposals is as follows:

Activity	Responsible	Date
RFP opening	EIT Manufacturing	29/09/2023
Offer submission	Supplier	09/10/2023

Evaluation and notification of award	EIT Manufacturing	16/10/2023
Contract signature	EIT Manufacturing & selected supplier	26/10/2023

All offers shall be submitted within the above-mentioned deadline to the following email: procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu

5. Evaluation Criteria and Award Notification

Timely received proposals submitted by the tenderers will be examined, evaluated, and compared in accordance with the following criteria and the contract shall be awarded to the highest ranked tenderer. The decision will be made according to the “Best Value for Money” principle.

Criteria	Weight
Proposal addresses expected deliverables	25%
Perceived ability to carry out the work according to the requirements set out in this document	10%
Competences match requirements	20%
Experience in similar projects	20%
Private/Public organisation experience	10%
Price	15%

An Evaluation Committee of 5 (five) people will be established. Each bid will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria above.

The compliance with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, and absence of conflict of interest will be ensured.

The successful and unsuccessful tenderers will be informed in writing (via email) about the result of the award procedure. In case the winning tenderer is unable to enter the contract, EIT Manufacturing may decide to contract the supplier receiving the second highest ranking.

Proposals must be submitted by e-mail within 10 days of the date of notification of the request for proposal. All proposals received after the deadline will be rejected.

In duly justified cases, however, no later than 2 calendar day before the original deadline, the submission deadline can be extended.

Upon request from the tenderer concerned, EIT Manufacturing will as quickly as possible, and in any event within 15 calendar days from receipt of a written request, inform:

- any unsuccessful candidate of the reasons for the rejection of its request to participate,
- any unsuccessful tenderer of the reasons for the rejection of its tender, including, if this is the case, its decision that the works, supplies or services do not meet the performance or functional requirements,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the characteristics and relative advantages of the tender selected as well as the name of the successful tenderer or the parties to the awarded contract,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the conduct and progress of negotiations and dialogue with tenderers.
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Information referred to above may be withheld where the release of such information would be contrary to the public interest, would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of an economic operator, or might prejudice fair competition between economic operators.

Should there be a suspicion that the provider will not be able to perform according to the price offered, EIT Manufacturing has the right to ask for explanations and may reject the tender where the evidence supplied does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or cost proposed.

5. Complaint procedure

Tenderers believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. Appeals shall be addressed to EIT Manufacturing **only** via the following email address procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu. The tenderers have **10 (ten) days** to file their complaints from the date of receipt of notification of the results.

In your application to EIT Manufacturing the complainant shall explain what procedural aspects they consider having been violated along with any recommendations or remarks. Such charges need to be supported with data and facts and, if possible, – documentation. An appeal whose sole purpose is to obtain a second evaluation for no reason other than that the complainant disagrees with the final award decision is to be rejected.

6. Negotiations & Clarifications

Negotiations can be held in the following cases:

- if it is identified that the scope of services issued by EIT Manufacturing is not detailed enough, incomplete or some areas are lacking crucial information to complete the procedure for direct awards;
- if EIT Manufacturing has the intention to reduce the offered prices to find the best value for money;
- if all submitted prices are above the planned budget and it is everyone's interest to finish the procedure with success – in that case, price negotiation can take place. During a price negotiation, all tenderers are called to lower their prices by the same deadline in a written form;

EIT Manufacturing can organize as many rounds of negotiation as it is needed during the procedure in order to reach the highest quality of proposals and the best price.

Whenever possible, the negotiations should be carried out in writing, however, in special cases, video conference or even live negotiation can be organized. EIT Manufacturing also reserves the right to invite the tenderers to an individual meeting before the final award of contract in order to clarify details and ambiguities.

In case of obvious or perceived errors or omissions in the RfP, Tenderers can request additional information or clarifications by the deadline provided in the above timeframe through email at paola.fantini@eitmanufacturing.eu.

Upon receipt of the bids, they will be reviewed, and additional details will be requested from the tenderers as needed. The requests as well as the answers are to be submitted written by e-mail. Where information or documentation to be submitted by tenderers is incomplete or erroneous or where specific documents are missing, EIT Manufacturing staff may request the party concerned to submit, supplement, clarify or complete the relevant information or documentation within 7 days.

Bid preparation costs are not reimbursable and must be borne by the tenderers.

EIT Manufacturing owns all bids received in this RFP. Proprietary information of vendors in the bids will be kept strictly confidential. The offers as well as the contract may be submitted for audits.

7. Contract

The final award does not yet constitute the Contract. The Contract will be concluded at the time of signature by the Supplier and EIT Manufacturing. The winning supplier will be sent the contract to be signed (indicating the deadline by which the signed contract should be returned to EIT Manufacturing).

The invoicing will be based on a mutually agreed schedule; it will be detailed in the contract. The contract that will be awarded will have a maximum duration of 1 year with the possibility of renewal. The tenderer agrees that the total value of the contract to be signed with EIT Manufacturing will in no way exceed the bid (the amount contained in the offer) of the tenderer.

The awarded supplier will be requested to sign Standard Contractual Clauses (SCC) if no other GDPR compliant safeguards exist, and the supplier is located in a country for which the EU commission has not issued an adequacy decision.

8. Confidentiality Obligation:

All information, whether written or oral, exchanged between the parties involved in this Request for Proposals (RfP) process, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties," shall be considered confidential and proprietary.

The Parties agree not to disclose, provide access to, or otherwise make available any confidential information to any third parties, including but not limited to individuals, companies, or organizations, who are not directly involved in the RfP process, without the express written consent of the disclosing Party.

"Confidential Information" shall encompass, without limitation, all data, documents, proposals, discussions, designs, specifications, financial information, technical data, trade secrets, and any other information disclosed by one Party to the other during the course of the RfP process.

The obligations of confidentiality shall not apply to information that is:

- a) Publicly available at the time of disclosure or subsequently becomes publicly available through no fault of the receiving Party.
- b) Already in the possession of the receiving Party prior to disclosure and not subject to an existing confidentiality obligation.
- c) Disclosed to the receiving Party by a third party with the legal right to do so without breaching any confidentiality obligations.
- d) Required to be disclosed by law, court order, or governmental regulation, provided that the disclosing Party is promptly notified and given the opportunity to seek a protective order.

Any Party found in breach of this confidentiality clause shall be subject to legal measures, including but not limited to litigation, injunctive relief, and monetary damages, as deemed appropriate by the disclosing Party.

The obligations of confidentiality as set forth in this clause shall survive the termination or completion of the RfP process and shall remain in effect for a period of 5 (five) years, unless both Parties mutually agree in writing to terminate this confidentiality agreement.

This confidentiality clause shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of France. Any legal action arising out of or in connection with this clause shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Paris, France.

9. Cancellation of the proposal procedure

In the event of cancellation of the proposal procedure, EIT Manufacturing will notify tenderers of the cancellation. In no event shall EIT Manufacturing be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of a proposal procedure, even if EIT Manufacturing has been advised of the possibility of damages.

The tenderer shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). S/he should

inform the EIT Manufacturing team immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

The supplier cannot be a EIT Manufacturing Partner or Activity Partner. Any bid from such an economic operator will be rejected.

Tenderers will be excluded if:

- a) they are being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations; they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- b) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the EIT Manufacturing can justify;
- c) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or any other country of the EU;
- d) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity detrimental to the EU' financial interests;
- e) following a procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the EU budget, they have been declared in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

The tenderers must not be in a situation of a conflict of interest, and they have sufficient economic and financial capacity, technical and professional capacity and legal and regulatory capacity to perform the requested services. Additional evidence or declarations might be requested by the contracting authority.

EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud. If substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud are discovered after the award of the tender, EIT Manufacturing may refrain from concluding the Contract.

Annex 1: Deep Tech Areas

- Advanced Computing / Quantum Computing
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Advanced Materials
- Aerospace, Automotive & Remote Sensing
- Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning
- Biotechnology & Life Sciences
- Communications & Networks, 5G
- Cybersecurity & Data Protection
- Electronics & Photonics

- Internet Of Things, W3C, Semantic Web
- Robotics
- Semiconductors
- Sustainable Energy & Clean Technologies
- Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Metaverse
- Web 3.0, Blockchain, Distributed Ledgers, NFTs
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship