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## CEER Public Website Design and Development Project

### Terms of Reference for the design and development of a new public website as well as its subsequent hosting, and maintenance

07 November 2023

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## 1. Introduction

The Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) is seeking a company to design and develop its new public website, ensure the migration of the site to a new server, as well as annual website maintenance and upgrade services as set out in a separate service level agreement (SLA).

## 2. CEER background information

CEER represents the collective voice of Europe's energy national regulatory authorities (NRAs) on both the European and global stages. Our 39 Members and Observers are the independent statutory national energy regulatory authorities from all of Europe. They work together to promote an investment-friendly, harmonised regulatory environment and to foster the development of a single, competitive, efficient and sustainable Internal Energy Market.

Through expert working group meetings, training, workshops, and events, CEER facilitates cooperation among national regulators, sharing best practices and building capacity. CEER is committed to shaping the energy regulatory framework and policy to ensure that European energy markets operate in the interest of consumers.

On the international stage, and in support of Europe's external policy objectives, CEER has a long history of cooperation with its neighbours, including regulators from the Energy Community, ERRA, MEDREG, and the six countries of the Eastern Partnership.

CEER is a legally established not-for-profit association under Belgian law.

## 3. CEER website background and objectives

### 3.1 Why the need for an upgraded website?

The current website was developed in 2017 and is seriously outdated. It was built using the Liferay 6.2 content management system (CMS) which, despite being a powerful tool, is not being used to its full extent. Adjustments and upgrades have always been too costly because they require the involvement of specialised developers, which has limited CEER's capacity to improve its website on a regular basis with rich and diverse content (CEER has no in-house IT manager).

Additionally, the mobile version malfunctions and the new constraints due to GDPR has forced CEER to remove all Google Analytics trackers under the advice of the IT company currently in charge of the website. As a result, CEER cannot evaluate its own website's performance, apart from a built-in publications downloads tracking system.

However, appreciated features from the current website are its solid framework, a highly secure system and the back office of the publications section, which includes a download tracking system.

### 3.2 Purpose of website

CEER seeks to develop a highly effective and interactive website that uses modern marketing methods in conjunction with other digital platforms (such as Mailchimp, HubSpot and variety of social media platforms), to help implement its new communications strategy.

The primary objective is to enhance the visibility and reputation of CEER. The website should communicate the unique value that CEER brings to the energy sector within Europe and internationally, showcasing its expertise, contributing individuals, and advocacy efforts. It must serve as a lynchpin in positioning CEER as a prominent player in the energy field in Europe and internationally, strengthening CEER's online influence, converting visitors into regular users, building its database and increasing traffic.

Secondly, the website should cater to its primary stakeholders, namely the Brussels energy community, by providing easy access to CEER's publications as well as information and registration to events.

Lastly, the website should serve a broader audience by offering accessible information on the European energy system, providing clear and concise explanations of complex concepts, enabling the lay public to grasp important aspects of the European energy system and market regulation.

In short, the CEER website should serve as a powerful tool to showcase CEER's expertise, encourage stakeholder engagement, establish CEER's presence in the media and provide non-technical information to the public.

### 3.3 Objectives of the website

The CEER public website will aim to:

- Highlight CEER's purpose, values, objectives, and achievements;
- Provide information on CEER's internal organisation (governance, work structure);
- Highlight CEER member NRAs as a far-reaching stakeholder network;
- Showcase CEER's expertise and experts to generate media attention;
- Highlight CEER's key topics and priorities;
- Provide commentary on current energy related issues on the European stage;
- Promote CEER's work: publications, events and webinars and participation in external events;
- Facilitate registration to CEER's flagship events (Annual Conference and Customer Conference);
- Promote the organisation's international partnerships and initiatives (EU4Energy, programme) and collaborations with leading global networks;
- Share information on the work of energy regulators and the basics of energy markets;
- Highlight key figures, statistics and facts on the energy system;
- Have a user-friendly, easy-to-learn and efficient content management system; and
- Build a network of internal and external stakeholders, harvest emails, and increase its online reputation and visibility, enhance online engagement.

## 4. Scope/Nature of the project

- Architecture design, development and delivery of a fully tested and functional public website including features and functionalities as specified in Chapter 5 - Deliverables and technical requirements.
- Provide marketing advice and creative solutions to organise the information of CEER's broad range of activities (see information available on the current website).
- UI page design while collaborating with the CEER designer to remain in line with the CEER visual identity.
- Provide advice on design and content building.
- Ensure optimal website architecture and user-friendly navigation on all devices, in line with modern SEO requirements.
- Propose solutions for the website's CMS based on CEER's requirements in terms of security, and compatibility with the existing HubSpot database.
- Provide solutions for website hosting.
- Collaborate with CEER's external contractor in charge of the extranet and contact database of CEER to find the best solutions for the display of data from the extranet (HubSpot) and for a seamless display of dynamic information. The contractor will also provide the system for event registration.
- Provide advice on how to transfer data/documents from the old to the new website.
- Provide advice and solutions for the preparation of content in view of optimised search engine results and in line with current digital marketing best practices.
- Accompany CEER in the migration of content to the new platform.
- Accompany CEER in the drafting of Privacy Policy, Cookie policy and Terms and conditions depending on technical solutions developed.
- Organise meetings and workshops as needed.
- Provide necessary upgrades.

## 5. Deliverables and technical requirements

### 5.1 Public website architecture, design, development, functionalities, features

- Website architecture and UX design
- Wireframes and UI design of at least 5-10 templates, including home page, publications section (list, item), events section (list, item), news section (list, item), our people (list, item) – see 5.2-Specific sections
- Multiple-level menu system – see 7.2-Benchmarks
- Dynamic display of relevant content (e.g. upcoming events on the homepage, relevant publications related to a topic)
- Social sharing features
- Inclusion of videos (from YouTube) and photo galleries with captioning
- Inclusion of data from the CEER database (HubSpot) managed by a third-party contractor.
- Responsive website for mobile platforms and tablets

- Disclaimers/opt out system in compliance with GDPR requirements
- Search engine optimisation (SEO): Enhanced content to increase visits and ensure high, relevant traffic from the main global search engines. It is worth noting that CEER currently benefits from a good positioning in main search engines. The Service provider will need to ensure that this positioning is not lost.
- Search system
- Plug-ins as required
- Flexibility in use of various features individually
- User-friendly tracking of publications downloads and participation in CEER events
- High-level cybersecurity

## 5.2 Specific sections development

Depending on the solutions of reorganisation of content as defined in chapter 4, specific sections should include but are not limited to the following:

- Home page with CTAs linking to sections About, Latest news, Publications, CEER Priorities, Members, Upcoming events, as well as key figures, subscription to newsletter, etc.
- News: list and individual news pages, with dynamic display of relevant content (publications and work activities)
- Resources<sup>1</sup>: fact sheets, press releases, videos, position papers, articles, etc.
- Publications repository<sup>2</sup>: list with search system (type, year, topic, keywords) and individual page including relevant info (presentation, type, date of publication etc.). Link to several pdfs (main publication, annexes, Citizen's Q&As etc.) Possibility of including a form to register contact details to have the pdf sent directly to mailbox (advice required). Some publications are multiple and/or annual such as the market monitoring report.
- Public consultations: upcoming and past (until 01/2013)
- Events: Filter on CEER/external, upcoming/past (until 01/2015), themes, types of events (CEER flagship, webinar, external). CEER flagship events and webinars (CAC, CCC etc.) pages must include description, date, location (maps), programme, speakers (if possible, from peoples' database), outcomes (key take aways, videos, photos), relevant CEER work (publications or other events) and links to registration page.
- People: Display of all CEER active members; filters on their roles within the organisation (Board, WG) and expertise; link to individual page (or popup) with bios, photos, LinkedIn/Twitter handles with dynamic display of related content (publications, articles, videos).
- Members Directory: Display of all member NRAs – either through list of logos, country flags or map with logos from HubSpot database, page of each member details: presentation, contacts, web and social media links etc., possibly through a map of Europe as well as a list?
- Activities: in Europe and internationally
- Topics: CEER's key topics explained (to be defined – e.g. EU energy regulation, gas, electricity, markets, consumers)
- Newsletter registration page: development of this section is underway with a contractor.
- Training Academy: development of this section is underway with a contractor.

<sup>1</sup> Depending on the website architecture, the Resources and Repository sections can be merged.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote (1).

- **Blog:** to share self-published Op-Eds and articles on various topics. It may be combined with the news section.

### 5.3 Back Office

- The solution provided should be highly user-friendly and allow autonomy of CEER's teams to easily create new and innovative content, add new sections, modify page content and include page features within existing pages.
- The chosen CMS should not jeopardise security standards.

### 5.4 Website hosting

- The website is currently hosted by Ebcont<sup>3</sup> and must be moved to a new hosting system.
- The web design and hosting company will provide remote support to CEER's focal person throughout the duration of the contract.
- The hosting solution should provide excellent page speed performance.
- The server should support the technologies used which currently includes PHP, MySQL.
- Monthly server costs [rental fees] are not included in this contract, but the tenderer should include a proposal for an economic and appropriate server solution to host this system. The server fees could be included in a separate SLA, such that CEER would only pay one fee and the host includes server fees in the SLA (to be discussed separately).

### 5.5 Transition phase

- The migration from the current server/website will need to be covered by the contract. CEER will be in charge of downloading and archiving data from the previous website and will be counting on some support in the preparation of the process to ensure a smooth transfer of the data.

### 5.6 Handover and training

- A handover phase including training for the use of the chosen CMS should be included.
- Full technical documentation (system code and system design) to enable smooth deployment, handover and ongoing maintenance and updates by the CEER.

### 5.7 Support, maintenance and upgrades

- Support should be included to fully cover the transition and handover phases, including maintenance for troubleshooting issues.
- Solutions should include security upgrades and their timely implementation (asap).
- Continuing post-go-live support should be a minimum one month within the financial parameters of this ToR and a proposal for additional months of support should be given both inclusive of this ToR and a monthly estimate beyond the financial terms of this ToR which would be for the separate SLA.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ebcont.com/en/>

## 6. Indicative timeline

The delivery of a fully functional and content rich website should be completed by July 2024, which leaves 6 months from the date of inception, which is estimated on 1 January 2024.

- Early November 2023: Finalisation of ToR by technical experts
- 6 November 2023: Issue of call for tenders, with approximately five weeks for completing the bid (due 11 December 2023).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> half of December 2023: Decision on the service provider provided by CEER and contract is signed.
- Early January 2024: CEER and selected service provider meet to discuss details and clarify any elements of the ToR that might be necessary.
- Mid-January 2024: Work begins, with regular meetings and progress updates in February-April
- May 2024: Testing of new website to commence
- Mid-July 2024: Go-live of new CEER website with all content migrated
- July-September: Post-go-live support to be agreed with the company

## 7. Selection of the service provider

Submission of a bid by the service provider implies acceptance of the conditions stipulated in this document. However, CEER's invitation to submit a bid imposes no obligation on CEER to award the contract. CEER shall not be liable for any compensation with respect to tenderers whose bids have not been accepted. Nor shall CEER be so liable if it is decided not to award the contract. This Terms of Reference document shall not be interpreted as an exhaustive set of instructions/parameters for completing the project, but rather, information for attracting accurate bids. The selected service provider shall confer with CEER on details as the project is elaborated.

### 7.1 Requirements for the consultant

#### 7.1.1 Eligibility

The service provider must declare itself to be independent from the interests of the gas and/or electricity industry and that it does not entertain any legal and/or corporate relationship with an undertaking in these industries. The declaration shall encompass a statement that the Service provider can fulfil the contract independently, free of conflict of interest of any other client-related work and sufficient resources. This is not to say that the service provider cannot have clients in the energy sector.

Bidding consortia are eligible, subject to general competition rules. Such consortia must specify the company or person responsible for the project (joint representative for conclusion and execution of the contract). The division of work between the members of the consortium shall be outlined in the proposal. If the bidder uses subcontractors to fulfil the contract, the division of work between the bidder and the subcontractors shall be outlined in the proposal also.

#### 7.1.2 Relevant Experience



Bidders (and their subcontractors if applicable) must provide evidence of expertise and experience in the field of customised website development. This experience and expertise shall be outlined by project references including detailed scope, client, timing and volume of services executed. Additionally, the relevant qualification of the bidder's or subcontractor's staff (at least primary managers) assigned to the project shall be provided through CVs.

### 7.1.3 Project Outline

The service provider shall prepare – as an integral part of its bid – a project outline that summarises at least:

- A general response to the ToR, demonstrating familiarity with developing websites for similar types of non-profit organisations, ideas for showcasing CEER's activities, work and members and highlighting key issues for consideration in the work;
- A detailed work plan including a detailed timetable with methods, sequence and timing of activities (so that all topic areas in Chapter 5 of this ToR are taken into account) and a proposed approach demonstrating feasibility of the assignment, the website framework and tools that will be used for analytics, and work methodology;
- Information on the proposed team and their roles;
- Detailed information on the compliance with cybersecurity standards;
- A breakdown of expected services (including new features, designs and a migration option), and associated costs, with VAT for the completion of all deliverables;
- An assurance of complete delivery of the requirements in this ToR;
- An assurance on cost overruns;
- A detailed Service Level Agreement (SLA) with continuous website maintenance and foreseen backup/restore mechanisms (including response time) with an estimate of how many months of additional support can be included within the budgetary framework of this contract after go-live and approximate monthly costs after that date.
- The tendering company's fixed price for additional usual changes not included in the SLA: adding a new template, change of banner style, menu reorganisation or others left to the discretion of the company depending on their experience, temporary upgrades on capacity when heavy traffic is foreseen;
- A proposal for an economic and appropriate server solution to host this system; and
- Optionally respond to the small side project described in Annex 1 or explicitly decline interest in that side project.

## 7.2 Some benchmarks

Effective websites convey authority and thought leadership, while offering simplicity in use and minimalistic style. Navigation must be instinctive and self-explanatory. Content must be clear and consistent.

- <https://www.acer.europa.eu/>
- <https://erranet.org/>
- <https://www.medreg-regulators.org/>
- <https://fsr.eui.eu/event/the-revision-of-remit-making-it-future-proof/>
- <https://www.eurogas.org/>
- <https://www.iea.org/>
- <https://www.wareg.org/>
- <https://ifs.org.uk/>
- <https://euneighbourseast.eu/>
- <https://www.bruegel.org/>
- <https://www.chathamhouse.org/>

- <https://www.euroconsumers.org/>
- <https://www.beuc.eu/>
- <https://www.unep.org/>
- <https://www.eccnet.eu/publications>
- <https://www.hydropower.org/>

### 7.3 Selection Process

The contract will be awarded based on the following criteria and weighting:

Criterion	Weighting
Relevant experience of the applicant, including demonstrated competence for web design and development in the EU non-profit sector	15%
Qualification of applicant/applicant's employees	20%
Provided project outline, approach, and specifications	35%
Price (financial proposal)	30%

**On price, the assignment shall be carried out at a fixed price of not more than (€30,000), not including VAT.** VAT is a non-recoverable cost to CEER (including on non-Belgian contracts). Given Belgian VAT of 21%, this would mean inclusive of VAT the maximum amount would be (€36,300). This amount shall cover all costs for the service provider related to this project (e.g. travelling for in-person discussion, IT software and licenses needed, office supplies, telephone bills and any other costs), as well as a period of support after 'go-live' as specified in section 5.7. It does not include ongoing server usage fees. It should also be noted that divergences from the project outline resulting in delays of final delivery could result in financial penalties within the terms of the agreed-upon contract.

## 8. Confidentiality

All commercial and business secrets, information and data as well as company related matters, data, material, reports, etc. especially all information about the contracting entities retrieved within this tender procedure and obtained within the contract for works and deliverables to be concluded with the Service provider must be handled as strictly confidential by the Service provider.

The Service provider accepts full liability and shall protect CEER against any prohibited disclosure or use of the confidential information by employees or subcontractors of the contractor.

The Service provider undertakes to use the confidential information solely and exclusively for this project. Any other use is expressly prohibited, except subject to the prior written consent of CEER.



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## 9. Ownership and Copyrights

The commercial and intellectual property rights in the materials developed as part of the services delivered by the Service provider shall be transferred without limitation to the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER), except where ownership of software systems is already the intellectual property of others.

## 10. Applicable Law and Jurisdiction

The contract between CEER and the consultant selected according to section 7.3 shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Belgian law.

## 11. Contact and Bid Deadline

All communication with regards to the tender procedure, submission of bids, and awarding of the contract shall be made in writing and transmitted via email. The relevant contact person in the contracting authority shall be:

Ms Martina Schusterová  
CEER Acting Secretary General  
Council of European Energy Regulators  
Cours Saint-Michel 30a, Box F  
1040 Brussels, Belgium  
E-mail: [martina.schsterova@ceer.eu](mailto:martina.schsterova@ceer.eu)  
Tel. +32 (0)2 788 73 31

**A valid bid must be submitted to the above email address by 11 December 2023 COB.**

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## ToR Annex I: Content migration

The tendering company is optionally asked to propose a cost estimate for the for the content migration of:

- ca. 1400 publications and annexes (with metadata from the current website including title, description, date of publication, reference number and area);
- 80 events (including title, date, location, description, area, visual, photos and links to relevant publications, agenda, presentations, video recordings, press release); and
- 130 public consultations (including title, description, and if applicable links to public consultation document, Citizens' Q&As, responses and evaluation of responses as well as related reports)

If this task can partially or fully be included in the overall estimate for this project, that shall be considered as a favourable in the selection process, but estimates to carry out this task as a separate contract are also welcome.