

**Request for Tenders for design, development and delivery of a
North West Tourism International Marketing Programme**

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Introduction

Donegal Tourism is working in collaboration with Sligo County Council and Mayo County Council on this collaborative partnership project to implement the International Marketing Plan Mayo 2021 for Donegal, Sligo and Mayo, and is inviting suitably qualified service providers to tender for the design, development and delivery of a North West Region International Tourism Marketing Programme.

(Applicants are advised that this tender forms part of an application for funding to the LEADER programme and the awarding of a contract is dependent on approval and subject to funding being available.)

Context

Introduction:

The North West Region International Tourism Marketing Programme is being developed as a Cooperation project under the Transitional LEADER Programme 2021-2022 and is being commissioned by a group of three Local Authorities:

1. Donegal County Council
2. Sligo County Council
3. Mayo County Council

Donegal Tourism is the lead partner in this application and Inishowen Development Partnership will act as the main point of contact.

Project Background:

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 virus is having a major impact on tourism businesses in the North West. Faced with significant reductions in revenues, many businesses within the tourism sector, small and large, have been forced to cease trading for long periods of time and lay off a significant portion of their workforce.

This project also comes at a time of significant economic uncertainty as the impacts of Brexit begin to be understood, compounded by a slow recovery of the international travel market as a result of the Covid-19 virus.

With Tourism Ireland forecasting a gradual return of overseas visitors to Ireland from 2022 onwards, and heightened competition from destinations and regions seeking to attract these visitors, it is paramount that the counties of the North West come together in promoting the region and stimulating economic recovery across the region.

The North West region is particularly vulnerable to economic risk in this regard, as the tourism industry in Ireland is heavily weighted in favour of the East and South West. Pre-pandemic, Sligo, Donegal, and Mayo succeeded in attracting 6% of the overall number of tourists visiting Ireland, while our southern counterparts along the Wild Atlantic Way in Galway, Clare and Limerick attracted over 20%. With tourism revenue generating over €2.6bn annually, the combined South West counties of Galway, Clare and Limerick generated 30% of this revenue, while the North West counties of Mayo, Sligo and Donegal generated just 8% of this sum.

Despite this, the North West region is heavily dependent on the industry as a key driver of economic development and job creation. At least one in every ten people in employment in the North West is engaged in the tourism and hospitality sector pre-pandemic. The opportunity for economic development is more likely to be linked with tourism and hospitality enterprises than any other economic activity and the economic challenges facing the sector have left it in need of additional supports to regain momentum and international marketing capacity.

The Cooperation fund offers the partner Local Authorities the opportunity to work on a collective front in promoting the North West, with the specific objective of increasing tourism numbers north of Galway and stimulating the region's post Covid-19 international tourism marketing campaign. The counties of the Wild Atlantic Way have worked together in promoting the wider western region and this opportunity would facilitate the three partner counties of Donegal, Sligo and Mayo in promoting the North West region within this existing structure.

Donegal, Sligo and Mayo have met regularly over the past number of years to discuss the challenges facing the tourism industry in the North West. The relationship between these partners has been strengthened by their work on the Eurovelo EU tourism infrastructure project, providing a proven track record of collaboration and delivery.

It is proposed that this project will develop and deliver an international marketing programme of scale to draw overseas visitors to and around the North West region and support the tourism trade in the region to develop compelling saleable experiences showcasing the region's broad offering, increasing dwell time and extending the tourist season. It will also support the local travel trade to develop meaningful working relationships - through regional collaboration - with international travel trade, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland in bringing the region to the target markets.

Programme Objective

The objective of this marketing programme is to deliver international marketing services for the North West Region by delivering the services outlined below here as part of the implementation of the North West Tourism Region International Marketing Plan (see Appendix 1).

The International Marketing Plan has the following objectives:

- To grow the number of international tourists visiting Donegal, Sligo and Mayo within the Wild Atlantic Way brand.
- To achieve a rebalancing of tourists between the North West region and counties further south on the Wild Atlantic Way.
- To outline an international marketing strategy that has scale and longevity.
- To maximise the considerable advantages that the North West has as a tourist destination.
- To complement existing marketing strategies by Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland and the upcoming Tourism Strategy from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and the Media.

The plan includes a series of recommended marketing actions that will form the basis of the international marketing programme, identifying priority target markets and market segments to deliver meaningful economic returns for the tourism trade in the North West region. A series of region-wide itineraries will be developed, showcasing the region's appeal to identified target markets and a databank of digital assets will be collated and produced as required, accessible to all for the promotion of the region.

The plan also includes a series of trade engagement, familiarisation and collaborative marketing opportunities, designed to establish and build relationships between the trade in the region, and with key identified overseas trade. A regional sustainability audit will establish best practice in sustainable tourism in the region to support the region's marketing as a sustainable tourism destination.

All elements of the project will be agreed in advance of execution with Donegal Tourism, Sligo County Council and Mayo County Council, and a cross-county Steering Group comprising key stakeholders in the project will facilitate this and will oversee all elements of the project delivery.

Services Required

A suitably qualified and experienced destination marketing contractor or agency is required to deliver the following services for the North West region as part of the implementation of the North West Tourism Implementation Plan.

This will be the first of two consecutive two-year regional international tourism marketing plans. This plan covers the time period 2022-2023. A further plan will be delivered at a later date to build on this, expanding to additional target markets, add to the marketing assets created and widen the inbound and outbound sales opportunities for the region.

The specific activities to be delivered within this plan are outlined below here, as recommended in the International marketing of Donegal, Sligo and Mayo implementation plan (See Appendix 1).

NW REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL TOURISM MARKETING PLAN
Develop a two-year international marketing action plan for the North West region of Ireland (2022-2023).
This plan should focus on target markets including Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Germany and USA.
Develop a series of regional itineraries for these markets, linked to Tourism Ireland’s target market analysis and in partnership with Tourism Ireland/Fáilte Ireland. These itineraries should be presented as high quality digital magazines, easily accessible and updated regularly.
In partnership with Fáilte Ireland, deliver regional collaborative marketing workshops to support regional itinerary building and cross-selling, that will build on and enhance existing or planned future Fáilte Ireland/Tourism Ireland initiatives.
Familiarisation briefings for the tourist facing workforce to ensure a high level of awareness of the hospitality and activity offerings throughout the region, delivered in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, building on and enhancing existing or planned future Fáilte Ireland initiatives.
Develop library of digital marketing assets showcasing the North West region and its key visitor experiences, to be hosted on www.irelandscontentpool.com .
Provide digital support for hospitality and activity centres to generate consistent, high quality content, enabling the creation of a bank of new digital content for their shop window to allow for individual marketing.
Use this material to create regional content for international digital marketing, with particular focus on sample itineraries created.
Develop and deliver a regional digital marketing campaign on social media and in collaboration with identified industry partners and aligned to Tourism Ireland campaigns in target markets.
Conduct market research targeting those leaving the region.
Target overseas travel trade & online travel agents with market specific industry toolkits, inbound familiarisation visits and online familiarisation briefings. Work with Fáilte Ireland to bring a series of tour operators into the region with a view to them developing new tour series for the region with a focus on extending the season.
Outbound familiarisation, participating in Tourism Ireland or other relevant platforms overseas, with those who can contract business as a priority.

Sustainable tourism best practice audit and workshops, in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and building on or enhancing planned and future Fáilte Ireland workshops.

On completion of this plan, prepare a final measurement and evaluation report on contract completion detailing outcomes, main learnings and achievements, and make recommendations for the next regional international marketing plan.

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and budget management.

Develop an international marketing action plan for Ireland's North West region

- Develop a two-year international marketing action plan for the North West region of Ireland, to be delivered in 2022-2023.
- This plan should focus on target markets including Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Germany and USA.
- Develop the messaging and appropriate taglines around the regional campaign. The campaign should utilise existing tourism brands within the region (Go Visit Donegal, Sligo Tourism, Sligo: Visit and Wild Mayo), as well as the Wild Atlantic Way brand, rather than creating a new regional brand. Existing digital media platforms for each county (such as dedicated landing pages on the counties' existing tourism websites and social media platforms) will be utilised in lieu of creating a standalone website and/or social media platforms.
- Key market sectors as identified by Tourism Ireland, such as the great escapers, adventurers, culturally curious and diaspora should form the broad focus of interests.

Within this, outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, water sports, heritage and archaeology are important market segments, as are niche demographics such as surfers and golfers. The demographic characteristics of each of these segments, their desires and wants, their behaviours, product appeals, independent traveller or via tour operator/travel agent and most effective way of reaching each of these markets segments. The tenderer should be requested to undertake this analysis at the outset of this assignment so as to develop a strong and solid proposition for the region allowing for a good targeted approach and increased opportunities for success.

- The marketing plan should clearly identify the series of marketing activities to be undertaken within the scope of this project. It should include a detailed breakdown of the implementation actions required to deliver the plan.
- An end of plan review should be incorporated, measuring and evaluating the success of the plan. The review should include a high level summary of actions required to deliver a further two year regional international marketing plan and priority actions for this second plan.
- The implementation proposals should be in line with the strategies developed locally by Donegal/Mayo/Sligo in this regard and Fáilte Ireland policies at national level and Tourism Ireland overseas marketing plans.

This international marketing plan should include an appraisal of international travel restrictions at the time of writing and make recommendations based on the likely recovery of international travel from source markets. Change to the market priorities identified above may be considered to meet market conditions at the time.

Regional Itinerary Development

- Working with the Steering Committee, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and industry in the region, develop 10 three and five day regional itineraries to suit specific, agreed demographics, linked to Tourism Ireland's target market analysis. These itineraries should be presented as high quality digital magazines, easily accessible and updated regularly.
- Create dedicated North West regional tourism marketing landing pages on each of the Local Authorities' tourism websites to host these digital itineraries and related content.
- Where possible, itineraries must be developed with accommodation partners and providers, who will be encouraged to form agreements to allow tourists to book recommended itineraries paired with the accommodation partners.
- Collaborative Marketing workshops – in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, deliver 3 collaborative marketing workshops with at least 10 tourism businesses per county participating (30 in total, 10 per workshop). These workshops should bring together complementary businesses who can collaborate in itinerary building and cross-selling and build on and enhance existing or planned future Fáilte Ireland/Tourism Ireland initiatives.

Regional Familiarisation Briefings

- Familiarisation briefings for the tourist facing workforce to ensure a high level of awareness of the hospitality and activity offerings throughout the region, delivered in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, building on and enhancing existing or planned future Fáilte Ireland initiatives. This will focus on the development of cross-selling in the region and have regard to Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland and other initiatives in place.
- Consideration should be given to identifying the most practical and cost effective ways to roll out this familiarisation briefing, such as pre-recorded, self-guided online videos. Target 150 tourist facing workers per county, total 450.

Develop library of digital marketing assets showcasing the North West region and its key visitor experiences

- Undertake a review of digital assets owned by Fáilte Ireland, the local authorities and their tourism marketing groups that are or can be made available as a digital download library for the tourism trade in the region, to be hosted on www.irelandscontentpool.com.
- This review should identify gaps in digital content available and plan for creating the digital content required, prioritised to meet the digital content requirements of the marketing action plan roll out. Deliver a new suite of 100 digital assets per county, to include a mix of mostly photography, with drone footage and video content.
- A central online database of publicly owned and copyright free digital assets (imagery, video, marketing and branding assets) should be made available to the tourism industry in the North West and project stakeholders for access no later than the end of this marketing plan, via www.irelandscontentpool.com.
- Provide digital support for hospitality and activity centres to generate consistent, high quality content, enabling the creation of a bank of new digital content for their shop window to allow for individual marketing. This should deliver a digital media package of 3 videos (one 2 minute and 2 30 second social media videos) and 20 images for 20 businesses per county, a total of 60 tourism businesses in the region. This will also be used to create a joint piece of regional narrative (10 short videos as outlined below). To ensure consistency and quality, a content writer, photographer and videographer will be engaged and models will be hired as required. Content will be translated into German and French where required.
- Create 10 short videos related to the regional itineraries created that promote the North West region, focusing on the key market segments of outdoor activities, culture and heritage, festivals, golf, surfing and walking. Edit 15 short social videos from footage for social media. Content will be translated into German and French where required.

Digital Marketing

- Develop and deliver a strong and engaging social media campaign and in collaboration with identified industry partners and aligned to Tourism Ireland campaigns in target markets.
- This campaign will promote new regional itineraries and digital marketing materials, etc to identified international target markets.
- Engage in collaborative digital marketing activities with Tourism Ireland and relevant accommodation partners and hotel groups.
- Digital marketing activities should give equal focus to each county in the region and include clear and compelling calls to action.
- The budget allocation for digital marketing in this marketing action plan should be €100,000.

Market research

- Commission and coordinate external research targeting those leaving the region annually. Target 600 international respondents on their final day in the North West region each year in a range of settings, including accommodation providers, attractions, activity operators, airports, train and bus stations (200 peak season, 100 off-peak season each year for 2 years).

Target overseas travel trade & online travel agents

- Develop 4 market specific industry toolkits (GB/NI, Germany, USA) to include 4 regional itineraries, video, photography and digital content that showcase these itineraries with practical tourist and travel information, in consultation with Fáilte Ireland/Tourism Ireland. The toolkits should be suitable for use by overseas travel trade in developing saleable experiences and sample itineraries for their client base. Content will be translated into German.
- Coordinate Inbound familiarisation trips to educate and familiarise 6 key international buyers on the services and products in the North West region. Work with the Steering Committee, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to identify operators, who will be hosted by the North West Tourism partnership, with a view to them developing new tour series for the region or bringing small tour groups and FITs to the region, with a focus on extending the season.
- These familiarisations should offer 10 key tourism operators per county in the region the opportunity to present their product and/or to meet international buyers.
- Deliver online familiarisation briefings to educate and familiarise an additional 15 key international buyers on the services and products in the North West region. This will build confidence, build relationships and facilitate deals. These familiarisations should offer 10 key tourism operators per county in the region the opportunity to present their product and/or to meet international buyers.

Outbound Familiarisation

- Destination groups in the partnership will participate in Tourism Ireland or other relevant platforms overseas, with those who can contract business as a priority. Target 3 travel industry representatives at each of 7 travel shows over 2 years, with each county having an equal opportunity for representation. Familiarisation trips should be to key source markets UK, France, USA, Germany, and may include more than one trip to a key market if required.

Sustainable Tourism

- Via an online survey, audit best practice in sustainable tourism across the region. Target 30 participants per county.
- Deliver 3 sustainable tourism workshops to share findings and showcase best practice within the industry, in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, and building on or enhancing planned and future Fáilte Ireland workshops.
- Have regard to best use of integrated digitisation and climate change agenda.

Monitoring & Reporting

- Present plans to the Steering Committee for approval.
- Develop monthly/quarterly milestones.
- Attend regular Steering Committee meetings and update on all aspects of contract activity as required. Meetings will be held face-to-face or virtually as dictated by public health guidelines at the time.
- Prepare monthly progress reports and annual report for review.
- Present and report at regional tourism industry networking events, campaign launches, working groups, etc.
- Prepare a final measurement and evaluation report on contract completion detailing outcomes, main learnings and achievements, and make recommendations for the next regional international marketing plan.
- The contractor will be required to present at respective council/committee meetings.

Budget Management

- Manage the outlined programme of activities within the approved project allocated budget.
- Present any budget amendments or proposals to the Steering Committee for approval as necessary.
- Interim monthly reporting or as required to the steering committee.

In addition to delivering the marketing programme, the contractor is expected to:

- Ensure appropriate logos and messaging and branding usage throughout marketing activities, including funder accreditation and logo placement on marketing, communications and promotional activities as required by the funder and 3 partner Local Authorities.
- The contractor should not deviate from the programme of work outlined in this contract.
- To ensure all financial records are maintained as per the requirement of the public spending code and LEADER programme.

From time to time, additional related activities may require contractor's input and involvement.

Additional notes:

Tenderers should include in their proposal how they will demonstrate innovation and value in delivering this project in order to achieve best results for the region, maximising the marketing spend this project entails.

Indicative budget

The estimated value of this contract is six hundred thousand Euro 600,000 including VAT.

Contract Management

The Contracting Authority requires tenderers to nominate a dedicated contract manager who will act as the main point of contact for the duration of the contract. This person shall have the authority to deal with all matters in relation to contracts and be responsible for the satisfactory delivery of the supplies/services required. The duties of the contract manager will include the following:

- Overall responsibility for a good working relationship with the Contracting Authority;
- Provide regular reports on performance as agreed with the Contracting Authority;
- Meet as and when required reviewing and examining performance;
- Deal with disputes, complaints or concerns that cannot be adequately resolved;
- Proactively discuss with the Contracting Authority ways of improving efficiency regarding service delivery in general and provide a template to that can be provided for other tourism businesses

NOTE: Tenderers will note that contract management activities will be non-billable.

Compliance with the Terms and Conditions

In order for the tender to be considered for assessment, the tenderer must successfully pass the Pass/Fail criteria incl. Financial Information, Declaration of Personal Circumstances, Declaration of the Statutory Obligations, Health and Safety as well as provide details of 3 Reference contracts. If any of these details are missing, the tender will not be assessed.

Award to Runner Up

If for any reason, it is not possible to award the contract to the designated successful tenderer emerging from this competitive process, or if having awarded a contract, the successful tenderer fails to deliver the contract in accordance with the terms and conditions, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award the contract to the next highest scoring tenderer based on the terms advertised at any time during the tender validity period. This shall be without prejudice to the right of the Contracting Authority to cancel this competitive process and/or initiate a new contract award procedure at its sole discretion.

Anticipated Timeline

The following indicative timeline is envisaged for this procurement:

Issue RFT	20/12/2021
Closing date for Queries	15/01/2022
Closing date for Receipt of Tenders	31/01/2022 at 5pm

The dates provided above are estimates at the time of publication of the Invitation to Tender. The Contracting Authority will endeavor to run the process to this timetable but this cannot be guaranteed.

General, Legal and Financial Requirements

Tenderers are required to provide information on the following in the Tender Response Document. The criteria and rules outlined below are assessed on a pass/fail basis. Failure to comply with the requirements will result in your tender being considered inadmissible.

General Information

Provide contact and general information on the tendering organisation - company name, address and contact details for individual responsible for this tender and company overview as well as information on sub-contractors and consortium members if applicable.

Legal Compliance

- Complete the Declaration of bona Fides as per Art. 57 of Directive 2014/24EU as implemented by SI 284 of May 2016 as contained in the Tender Response Document.
- Complete the Declaration regarding compliance with relevant statutory obligations as contained in the Tender Response Document. Where tenderers are established and operating outside of Ireland compliance with equivalent legislation as applicable in the country of establishment/operation is required.

Financial

Tax: Confirmation that the tenderer / all parties associated with the tenderer are fully tax compliant in accordance with the rules of the Irish Revenue Commissioners.

Turnover: Confirmation that the tendering party turnover exceeded €200,000 during one of the last three years or pro-rata if more recently established firms are tendering – however the firm must have been in existence for at least 6 months.

Insurance: Confirmation of the following insurances being in place:

- Employers Liability - €13 million
- Public Liability €6.5 million

Criteria

Only tenders which meet the Selection Criteria and are confirmed as valid and responsive to the specifications set out in this document will be evaluated against the Award Criteria. Tenderers should ensure that they have submitted sufficient relevant information to allow their tenders to be assessed under each of the award criteria set out below.

The contract will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous compliant tender taking into account the following award criteria and weightings.

Criterion A	Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks Required
	10%	1000	N/A
Title	Cost		
Description	Please complete Quotation Response Document.		
Criterion B	Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks – 60%
	50%	5000	3000
Title	Methodology for the delivery of all requirements set out in the specification of this Request for Tender document.		
Description	<p>Tenderers must demonstrate in a clear and comprehensive manner their proposed approach and methodology for delivering the project and ensuring that the services are delivered in a timely and effective manner including demonstrating strategic and innovative thinking. Tenderers must explain how their response meets or exceeds the requirements of the RFT and demonstrate a clear understanding of the client’s needs</p> <p>Candidates should refer to instances within the last three years which demonstrate that they have successfully delivered mentoring services of a comparable nature and scale on three (3) occasions. The contracts referenced for consideration should provide comprehensive information to determine their comparability to the requirements of this contract.</p>		
Criterion C	Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks – 60%

	25%	2500	1500
Title	Quality and Expertise of the Proposed Resources		
Description	Tenderers should provide comprehensive information on the proposed personnel clearly indicating each member's strengths to meet all the requirements. Tenderers must provide biographical summaries for each of the Key Personnel who it is proposed will be directly involved in delivering the required contract and highlight who will be responsible for each part and their relevant experience and qualifications of the individual(s) conducting the services (each CV/ biographical summary provided should be a maximum of two A4 pages).		
Criterion D	Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks –
	15%	1500	60%
Title	Innovation and Value Add		
Description	Tenders should demonstrate how they might apply innovation of value add to the contracting authority with no additional cost.		

Tenderers should ensure in their tenders that they provide detailed information in respect of all aspects of the contract award criteria as stated above. This will enable the awarding authority to assess fully the extent of their offers.

Methodology for Calculating the Cost Score

The following formula will be applied to the cost score:

The lowest cost tender that also meets all the minimum requirements of the qualitative award criteria will receive the maximum score achievable under this criterion. The scores of the other valid tenders will be calculated using the following formula:

Lowest Cost from a Bona Fide Tender	A
Cost for the tender being evaluated	B
Maximum Points available for Cost	1000
Formula employed	$\frac{1000 \times A}{B}$

NOTE 1: Tenderers should note that they must achieve a minimum rating of 60% for each of the individual qualitative criteria (B), (C) in order to avoid elimination from the competition. For cost criterion (A) and award criterion (D) there is no minimum score.

Methodology for Calculating Scoring of Qualitative Criteria

Score	Meaning	Interpretation
90 – 100%	Outstanding	A very comprehensive response demonstrating extensive understanding offering full assurance to client – fully supported with no reservations.
80 – 89%	Excellent	An excellent response demonstrating excellent understanding offering assurance to client – strongly supported.
70 – 79%	Very good	A very good response demonstrating very good understanding offering assurance to client – fully supported.
60 – 69%	Good	A good response demonstrating good understanding offering assurance to client – well supported.
Less than 60% is unacceptable		
50 – 59%	Average	Average response demonstrating a minimum understanding
25 – 49%	Mediocre	Response demonstrates limited understanding with insufficient or no detail and a risk of non-delivery. This is unacceptable and a fail.
1 – 24%	Poor	Response demonstrates very limited understanding of the requirements and has fundamental flaws and lacks credibility with a significant risk of non-delivery. This is unacceptable and a fail.
0%	No response	Response completely fails to address the criterion under consideration. This is unacceptable and a fail.

Instructions for Tenderers

(a) Submission of Tenders via www.etenders.gov.ie

The Contracting Authority is using the Tender Postbox facility and tenders must be submitted electronically via the etenders postbox facility on www.etenders.gov.ie only. Only Tenders submitted to the electronic postbox will be accepted. Tenders submitted by any other means (including but not limited to by email, fax, post or hand delivery) will not be accepted.

Tenderers must ensure that they give themselves sufficient time to upload and submit all required tender documentation before the Tender Deadline. Tenderers should consider the fact that upload speeds vary.

To submit a document to the electronic postbox, please note that you must click “Submit Response”. After submitting you can still modify and re-send your response up until response deadline. Tenderers should be aware that the ‘Submit Response’ button will be disabled automatically upon the expiration of the response deadline.

Tenderers not familiar with uploading on eTenders should ensure they familiarise themselves with the process.

(b) Closing date for Tenders

The closing date for tenders	is 31/01/2022 at 5pm
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It is the responsibility of the tenderer to ensure that their tender is complete and is uploaded by the designated deadline.

(c) Queries

The closing date for queries	is 15/01/2022
Process for submitting queries	Via www.etenders.gov.ie only

Process for submitting queries via www.etenders.gov.ie only

In circulating responses, queries will be edited to avoid disclosing the identity of the querist, and will be circulated to all parties who have expressed an interest in the procurement on the etenders website.

(d) Extension of Tender Period

The Contracting Authority reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to extend the closing date for receipt of tenders by giving notice in writing (by post or electronic means) to all parties who have expressed an interest in the notice via eTenders no later than six days before the original closing date.

Tenderers will be responsible for any costs incurred by them in the event that they are required to attend clarification or other meetings or make a presentation of their proposals.

(e) Tender Validity Period

To allow sufficient time for Tender assessment a Tender Validity period of 12 months is required, this period commencing on the closing date by which the Tenders are to be returned.

(f) Amendment of Tender Documentation

Tenderers are prohibited from amending any text or content of forms or declarations or templates provided as part of this tender competition in their tender responses. Where amendments have been identified, the Contracting Authority may at its discretion eliminate the tenderer from further consideration.

(g) Collusive Tendering

If any Tendering Party is found to have, at any time, offered to give or to have agreed to offer or give to any person, any bribe, gift, gratuity, commission or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for taking or forbearing to take any action in relation to the obtaining of its Tenders, or for showing or forbearing to show any favour or disfavour to any person in relation to its Tenders, the bid submitted by such Tendering Part shall be automatically disqualified and the circumstances surrounding such action shall be referred to the appropriate authority.

(h) Confidentiality

The distribution of the tender documents is for the sole purpose of obtaining offers. The distribution does not grant permission or licence to use the documents for any other purpose. Tenderers are required to treat the details of all documents supplied in connection with the tender process as private and confidential.

(i) Conflict of Interest

Any conflict of interest involving a tenderer (or tenderers in the event of a consortium bid) must be fully disclosed to the Contracting Authority. Any registrable interest involving the tenderer and the Contracting Authority or employees of the Contracting Authority or their relatives must be fully disclosed in the tender submission or should be communicated to the Contracting Authority immediately upon such information becoming known to the tenderer, in the event of this information only coming to their notice after the submission of a bid and prior to the award of the contract. The terms 'registrable interest' and 'relative' shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may disqualify a tenderer or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of interest comes to light.

(j) Anti-Competitive Conduct

Tenderers attention is drawn to the Competition Act 2002 (as amended, the "2002 Act"). The 2002 Act makes it a criminal offence for Tenderers to collude on prices or terms in a public procurement competition.

(k) Freedom of Information Acts

Tenderers should be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2014, information provided by them during this Competition may be liable to be disclosed.

Tenderers are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their Tender should not be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. If Tenderers consider that certain information is not to be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, Tenderers must, when providing such information, clearly identify the specific sections of their Tender containing such information and specify the reasons for its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. For the avoidance of doubt Tenderers may not assert confidentiality or commercial sensitivity over the entire Tender but must clearly identify the specific section containing such information. If Tenderers do not identify information as confidential or commercially sensitive, it is liable to be released in response to a request under the above legislation without further notice to or consultation with the Tenderer. The Contracting Authority will, where possible, consult with Tenderers about confidential or commercially sensitive information so identified before making its decision on a request received. The Contracting Authority accepts no liability whatsoever in respect of any information provided which is subsequently released (irrespective of notification) or in respect of any consequential damage suffered as a result of such obligations.

(l) Data Protection

“Data Protection Laws” means all applicable national and EU data protection laws, regulations and guidelines including but not limited to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (the “General Data Protection Regulation”), the Data Protection Act, 2018 and any guidelines and codes of practice issued by the Data Protection Commission or other supervisory authority for data protection in Ireland from time to time.

The Contracting Authority will be a Controller (where Controller has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) in respect of any Personal Data (where Personal Data has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) required to be provided by the Tenderer in response to this Request for Tender.

The Tenderer, as Controller in respect of any Personal Data provided by it in its Tender, is required to confirm by way of statement in the “Declarations” section of the accompanying Tender Response Document that all Data Subjects (where Data Subject has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) whose Personal Data is provided by the Tenderer have consented to the processing of such Personal Data by the Tenderer, the Contracting Authority, the Evaluation Team and the supplier of the etenders.gov.ie website, for the purposes of the participation of the Tenderer in this Competition or that the Tenderer otherwise has a legal basis for providing such Personal Data to the Contracting Authority for the purposes of its participation in this Competition.

(m) Publicity

Tenderers shall not undertake (or permit to be undertaken) at any time, whether at this stage or after the award of the agreement, any publicity activity with any section of the media in relation to this tender/agreement other than with the prior written consent of the Contracting Authority. Such consent shall extend to the content of any publicity. For the purposes of this paragraph, the word “media” includes (but is not limited to) radio, television, newspapers, trade and specialist press, the Internet and e-mail accessible by the public at large and the representatives of such media.

The Contracting Authority will have the right to publicise or otherwise disclose to any third-party information regarding this process and the agreement.

(n) Correction of Errors

Detailed pricing of all tenders will be examined for errors that might alter the tender pricing as determined from the figures on the tender form or as between the hard copy and electronic versions of the tender. Where a discrepancy arises between any figure submitted on the pricing element of eTenders versus the content of the Tender Submission, the Tender Submission figures will be used in the assessment.

In the case of manifest errors - where there is a discrepancy between the unit price and the total amount derived from the multiplication of the unit price and the quantity, the unit price as quoted will normally govern.

The amount stated in the tender form will be adjusted by the Contracting Authority in accordance with the above procedure and, with the agreement of the tenderer, shall be considered as binding upon the tenderer. Without prejudice to the above, a tenderer not accepting the correction of their tender as outlined may have their tender rejected.

(o) Notification of Tender Evaluations

All tenderers will be informed of the outcome of their tenders following tender evaluation and any necessary clarifications.

General Information Relevant to Successful Tenderers

(i) Currency and Payments

The currency and invoices in which all prices and rates shall be tendered, and which payments under the contract will be paid, shall be Euros (€). All prices and rates quoted should be exclusive of VAT.

Invoices shall be submitted in accordance with the terms agreed with the Contracting Authority.

(ii) Withholding Tax

Where applicable, payments shall be subject to Irish 'Professional Services Withholding Tax' at the prevailing rate (currently at 20%) as laid down by the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland. Non-residents may be able to reclaim such deducted Tax from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland, International Claims Section located currently at Government Buildings, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Ireland (Tel: +353-67-63400).

(iii) Irish Legislation and Law

Tenderers should be aware that national legislation applies in other matters such as Employment, Working Hours, Official Secrets, Data Protection and Health and Safety. Tenderers must have regard to statutory terms relating to minimum pay and to legally binding industrial or sectoral agreements in the Contracting Authority tenders and in delivering contracts awarded to them. The contract[s] awarded on foot of this tender process will be governed by Irish law.

(iv) Dignity at Work

The successful tenderer(s) shall comply with all relevant legislation relating to dignity at work. As a public body and employer, the Contracting Authority is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for all personnel.

In line with the Disability Act 2005, accessibility requirements should be clearly stated in request for tenders / quotations where applicable. Under Section 27 of the Act the Contracting Authority is required to ensure that both the goods supplied and services provided to it are accessible to persons with disabilities.

(v) Change in Law

As a condition of award, it shall be the sole responsibility of the tenderer (in the event of success in this competition) to fulfill the obligations under the Contract, notwithstanding any changes in circulars, laws, regulations, taxation, duties or other factors which might arise following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from membership of the EU.