Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF WEBSITE REDESIGN SERVICES TO THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

1. About the National University of Ireland

The National University of Ireland (NUI) is a unique organisation in Ireland. Established under charter and statute in 1908, the University was re-structured under the 1997 Universities Act. NUI is a federation of four autonomous constituent universities (UCC, UCD, University of Galway, Maynooth University), their associated colleges, and two recognised colleges, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - University of Medicine & Health Sciences (RCSI) and the Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

The overall governing authority of the University is the NUI Senate, which is headed by the Chancellor. The National University of Ireland is also an important cultural organisation in Ireland and seeks to make a worthwhile contribution to Irish civic society. Academic and non-academic events (conferences, symposia, and seminars) are a central part of NUI's annual activities.

In 2023, NUI launched a new strategic plan with four key pillars:

- Education & Research
- People & Culture
- Engagement & Partnership
- Sustainability.

Further information on the organisation and its priorities can be found in our Strategic Plan https://www.nui.ie/publications/docs/2023/NUIStrategicPlan2327.pdf

2. Background & Scope

NUI seeks to partner with an experienced website development company to lead the redesign and redevelopment of the current www.nui.ie website. The current NUI website, whilst functional and operational, would benefit from a redesign that showcases NUI in a positive light and demonstrates best practice in terms of user experience and accessibility.

The scope of the contract extends to website design and development services and NUI would expect the project to be delivered over the timeline outlined in Section 3. Once

completed, NUI would have an accessible website which is contemporary and comparable to those of other higher education bodies, with the ability to manage its own content.

3. NUI's Requirements

The broad objectives of the website redesign from an NUI perspective are:

- ❖ An enhanced and cohesive visual appearance of www.nui.ie
- ❖ Development in line with universal design principles and full compliance with the requirements of the EU Web Accessibility directive
- ❖ Strong cyber-security features
- ❖ A dynamic, interactive, device-responsive website with increased functionality
- ❖ Integration of existing features, functionalities and content
- ❖ Securely linking to existing online payment portals and applications (ie. NUI Exemptions database)
- ❖ Intuitive layout and structure
- ❖ Content management system that enables multiple users to update their own content, with oversight from the ICT department
- ❖ Website content to appear more contemporary
- ❖ Bi-lingual website with option to read each page in Irish as well as English
- ❖ Ability to integrate databases
- ❖ Ability to avail of technological support if required
- ❖ To own the code and have the ability to make enhancements in-house if needed, and for the site to be hosted using NUI's hosting provider

One of the NUI website's current main functions is as an information hub on our various services such as:

- ❖ Document Services
- ❖ Admission requirements and the exemptions process
- ❖ Awards
- ❖ Publications
- ❖ Higher Doctorate degree application process.

More detailed specifications are provided in Appendix A.

The timeline of the job would be:

- ❖ Assess candidates and select delivery partner by 7 May (4 weeks from submission deadline)
- ❖ Research phase, consultation and scoping to conclude at the end of June (6 weeks)
- ❖ Design phase to conclude mid-July (6 weeks)
- ❖ Development phase to conclude at the end of August (6 weeks)
- ❖ Testing phase to conclude at the end of September (4 weeks)
- ❖ Launch in October

4. Assessment Criteria

The tender will be assessed on the following criteria.

A. Approach & Methodology (25%) 250 Marks

- ❖ Tenderers should provide a comprehensive description of their methodology for managing the contract, including a project plan and timeline for completion, client meetings, stakeholder consultation, management of internal resources, reports, user training and response times for the services required.
- ❖ Tenderers should refer to their sustainability practices, such as use of energy-efficient technologies, sustainable content management such as a flexible content management system and facilitation of socially sustainable features such as inclusivity through design and user interface.
- ❖ Tenderers should use coding languages and IT architecture and frameworks that are contemporary and will ensure the smoothest futureproofing for any potential migrations or updates.

B. Project Team & Relevant Experience (25%) 250 Marks

- ❖ Tenderers must demonstrate that they have delivered three contracts of a similar nature and scale to the NUI's requirements under this tender during the previous three years. Work in the third level and public sector will be particularly useful. References will also be helpful.
- ❖ Tenderers should be able to show at least one website of a similar nature on which they have worked to provide insight into how their web design experience can align with NUI's requirements.
- ❖ Tenderers will be assessed on the quality, quantity and balance of human resources allocated to ensure effective delivery of the project. Curricula vitae for relevant key personnel should be provided.

C. Compliance & Accessibility (20%) 200 Marks

- ❖ The design should be cognisant of, and facilitate, compliance with the most recent and relevant website accessibility requirements. As such, the tenderer should have regard to the WCAG 2.1 guidelines and the EU Website Accessibility Directive and, in particular, accessibility requirements placed on Irish public bodies.
- ❖ The proposed solution must provide the ability for bi-lingual content to be displayed and published.
- ❖ The proposed solution should incorporate best practice in terms of ICT security and GDPR compliance.

D. Cost (30%) 300 Marks

- ❖ Tenderers must submit costs in euro (€) exclusive of VAT, and inclusive of all expenses including, without limitation, equipment, software, travel, accommodation, administration support and all organisational overheads for

the provision of the Services. This will not include hosting as NUI has a hosting provider with a dedicated server.

- ❖ Costs should be divided into these stages:
  - Research, consultation and scoping phase
  - Design phase
  - Development phase
  - Testing phase
- ❖ Tenderers should also provide their hourly technical support rate should any future need arise.

5. Assessment Methodology

A panel assembled by NUI will assess the tenders submitted in line with specified criteria.

The tender process will be conducted via a competitive dialogue process to include the steps below:

- ❖ Tender submission
- ❖ Review of tenders by NUI and selection of a shortlist
- ❖ A dialogue meeting between NUI and shortlisted tender respondents
- ❖ An opportunity to refine tender submissions
- ❖ Final assessment by NUI

Items A – C above will be assessed in line with the criteria specified and the scoring matrix defined below.

	Meaning
81%- 100%	A response with very few or no weaknesses that fully meets or exceeds requirements, and provides comprehensive, detailed, and convincing assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to an excellent standard.
61%- 80%	A response that demonstrates real understanding of the requirements and assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to a good or high standard.
41%- 60%	A response which demonstrates a reasonable understanding of requirements and gives reasonable assurance of delivery to an adequate standard but does not provide sufficiently convincing assurance to award a higher mark.
21%- 40%	A response where reservations exist. Lacks full credibility/convincing detail, and there is a significant risk that the response will not be successful.
1%- 20%	A response where serious reservations exist. This may be because, for example, insufficient detail is provided, and the response has fundamental flaws, or is seriously inadequate or seriously lacks credibility with a high risk of non-delivery.
0%	Response completely fails to address the criterion under consideration

Cost will be evaluated by the lowest cost bid receiving maximum marks (i.e. 300 marks) with all other tenders scored relative to this cost using the following formula:

Cost Score = (Lowest Tendered Cost / Tendered Cost under evaluation) x (Number of marks Available)

6. Tendering

Tenderers must achieve at least 50% of the total marks available for each award criteria A to C. Failure to achieve the minimum mark in any of these non-cost criteria will result in the tenderer being eliminated from the competition.

6.1   Conditions of Tendering

i.   Communications relating to the tender can be addressed by email to clenihan@nui.ie

ii.   NUI reserves the right to communicate supplementary information, including any amendment to the timetable during the period up to and including 4 April 2025. Any changes in the original tender document will be circulated to the entire original distribution list.

iii. Tenderers may seek further information or clarification about the tender, during the period up to and including 4 April 2025. If any information provided constitutes a change to the original tender document, this information will be circulated to the entire original distribution list.

iv.   Contract means the contract for the supply and acquisition of the Services.

v.   Services means the services described in the invitation to tender.

vi.   Tenders can be submitted in English or Irish only.

vii. NUI reserves the right not to award the tender if it deems that none of the bids meets its requirements.

viii. NUI does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender and reserves the right to accept a portion of the tender unless the applicant expressly stipulates otherwise in the bid.

ix.   NUI reserves the right to seek clarification or verification of any information supplied by tenderers, within the specified timetable. Information supplied by successful Tenderers shall be treated as contractually binding.

x.   During the assessment process, the highest scoring tenderers will be invited to present their services to the tender evaluation group and respond to queries.

xi.   Following the completion of the assessment process, tenderers will be notified in writing as to whether they have been successful.

xii. The successful tenderer(s) will be commissioned subject to satisfactory service levels.

xiii. The award of a contract to a successful tenderer shall be conditional on the production to NUI of a current compliant Tax Clearance Authorisation Number (TCAN) for the organisation. A successful non-resident contractor will be required to

produce the requisite Tax Clearance Certificate from the Irish Revenue Commissioners.

xiv.   The successful tenderer will be required to demonstrate that an appropriate level of Professional Indemnity Insurance is in place prior to any contract being agreed pursuant to this request for tenders.

xv.   All payments under the contract will be conditional on the contractor having required insurance certification; a compliant Tax Clearance Authorisation Number (TCAN) and may be subject to deduction of Professional Services withholding Tax (PSWT) as specified in Chapter 1, Part 18 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

xvi.   NUI will not be liable for any costs incurred by organisations or individuals in the preparation of quotations or any associated work effort.

xvii.   Any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest on the part of a Tenderer, Subcontractor or individual employee(s) or agent(s) of a Tenderer or Subcontractor(s) must be fully disclosed to NUI as soon as the conflict or potential conflict is or becomes apparent.

6.2   Confidentiality and Data Protection

NUI undertakes to hold any information provided to it by organisations or individuals on a confidential basis, subject to NUI's obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act, 2014; the Data Protection Act 2018 and the European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

NUI's Data Protection Policy is available on the NUI website:
http://www.nui.ie/about/data_protection.asp

7. Submission of Tenders

Completed tenders should be sent (by email) to:

Cora Lenihan

Manager, Registrar's Office

clenihan@nui.ie

to be received not later than 12 noon on **9 April 2025.**

Late applications cannot be considered.

Appendix A: Specifications

These should be read in conjunction with the proceeding information.

1   Project Deliverables

- Design, develop and implement a website according to the specification documentation agreed with NUI which present a clear vision and message regarding the role and remit of NUI.
- Provide documentation on the new site including technical and user (staff) manuals.
- Provide training to NUI staff to enable them to support the website.
- Provide other services as required by NUI as detailed below.
- The successful tenderer is expected to work closely with NUI's appointed project lead and IT staff during this process, attending meetings as required.
- All intellectual property associated with the project including design, graphic content, video, sound and developed software will become the property of NUI. The tenderer must itemize these in tender response and any intellectual property including design, graphic content, video, sound and developed software that will not become the property of NUI.

2   Project Requirements

2.1   Information Architecture

- The design of the information space must allow the audience quick and easy access to website content. The overall design of the site hierarchy should incorporate NU's objectives and audience goals. The successful Tenderer will be required to work with the team to implement a strategy that supports both.

2.2   Logical Grouping and Organisation

- The different sections of the site should be grouped in a way that audiences will intuitively use.
- Labelling system: Information and content should be labelled in an accurate, concise and informative way using terminology that the audience is familiar with.
- Metadata: Areas of content should be tied together for improved searching and browsing.
- The site should be made search engine friendly by using titles, descriptions and keywords to reflect the content of the page and should not be artificially manipulated for improved search engine ranking. A sitemap page should be included for search engine crawling.

2.3   Design

- The design of the website interface should conform to best practice. An understanding of the user's context and goals should inform all design decisions.
- Responsive design: design should respond to work seamlessly across all device interfaces (e.g. tablet, desktop and mobile).
- Colour contrast: Contrast in text-rich content for usability and ensure that the website conforms to accessibility requirements.
- Consistent presentation: The design should be consistent with NUI's brand guidelines to ensure consistency of presentation between offline and online channels.
- All content will be optimised for quick page loading speeds and mobile first design.

2.4   Website Search

- The development of a robust and intuitive search function
- The search controls should be designed to be accessible.
- Placement of the search box is consistent throughout the site.
- The search controls should be optimised for mobile searching.
- Use of auto-suggest/auto-complete and recommended search terms to help audiences define their searches.
- The presentation of each individual search result should enable audiences to quickly understand what lies on the other side of that link and whether the material is relevant to them.
- Audiences should be able to navigate through search returns pages easily and reformulate or refine a search from the search returns page.

2.5   Accessibility

- The website should be usable by the widest audience possible, including people with additional needs.
- Accessibility Guidelines: The design should be informed by the latest accessibility guidelines and techniques including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and should be in compliance with the European Accessibility Act 2025.
- Cross-platform compatibility: Presentation should be consistent, irrespective of the audience's platform or browser.
- Multiple user agents: The front end should be compatible with a wide range of devices including desktops, laptops, tablets and mobile phones.

2.6   Standards Compliance

- The new website should be designed according to the latest W3C web design and application standards (https://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign).
- The new website must have bi-lingual capability.

2.7 Technology

- Integration of social media channels (Vimeo, LinkedIn, X, BlueSky Social, Facebook)
- Asset management capabilities including media storage, organisation and management.
- Through the use of appropriate third party plugins, the ability to embed maps (e.g. Google Maps) within website pages.
- The website will be based upon a user-friendly content management system (CMS).
- The Contractor will provide integrated Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and user analytics functionality within the website (e.g. reports showing pages visited, downloads, click paths through the website, difficult to find pages).

2.8 Security

- Ensure the system will work with the most modern TSL/SSL security standards and will be able to implement SSL on the entire front-end website.
- All data including data at rest and connections to the website, CMS, media library, images, assets etc. must implement HTTPS to ensure a secure, encrypted connection for users. Users can be reassured with web browsers such as Chrome, Firefox and Microsoft Edge displaying a padlock icon in the address bar to visually indicate that a HTTPS connection is in effect.
- Forms management – including design, creation and use of CAPTCHA – without the need for specialist skills.
- Enable security, firewall monitoring, backups, and disaster recovery. The successful tenderer will be expected to advise NUI on ensuring strong security regarding using the NUI hosting solution that is already in place.
- Ensure data protection legislation compliance for GDPR, cookies and online tracking.

2.9 User (staff) Management Capabilities

- Roles – provide multiple user roles including administrator, content approver and content creator.
- Permission – have configurable permissions capabilities.

2.10 CMS Editing Capabilities

- WYSIWYG editor including spell checking, code view editor.
- Content editors which do not require programming or design expertise
- Editing available via a web browser including Chrome, Edge, Firefox and Safari
- Ability to generate navigation automatically as content is published
- Ability to easily reorganise navigation
- Ability to simulate preview of website at different screen sizes

2.11   Support, Training, and Documentation

- User support and training for users (staff) including documentation for routine operations such as page creation, posting a new content embedding an image in a story, etc.
- Ongoing support patches for CMS plugins limited to 12 months from website completion.
- Provision of documentation which will enable NUI staff to continue the upkeep of the website, including CMS and plugin updates, and full site backups.
- NUI seeks to provide an uninterrupted service to its customers and expects the successful Tenderer to support this effort. Tenders should supply a service level agreement (SLA) with their submission. The (SLA) should also cover support and maintenance of NUI's website for the term of 12 months from the start of the contract.
- Technical support hours available should needs arise.