



National Centre for Guidance in Education
Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas

National Centre for Guidance in Education

EUROGUIDANCE Ireland

Request for Tender:

Development of Cloud- based solution for interconnection of national datasources to PLOTEUS II

12th June 2014

PLOTEUS II CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) that was established in 1995. NCGE operates under the aegis of Léargas, the Exchange Bureau. The Centre aims to support and develop guidance provision in all educational settings and to inform the policy of the Department pertaining to guidance. The NCGE acts as a focal point for the development of guidance across the educational sector and advises on policy and strategies for the promotion of a continuum of guidance in the context of lifelong learning.

The mission of the NCGE is to develop and support quality guidance provision in the education sector as part of lifelong learning in accordance with national and international best practice. NCGE develops guidance materials, provides advice on good practice, supports innovation and pilot projects, disseminates information to practitioners, organises continuing professional development, carries out a range of surveys and related research on guidance practice and needs, and advises the Department of Education and Skills (DES) on policy development. NCGE is also the Irish designated representative at the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). Further information of the role and remit of NCGE is available on www.ncge.ie

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for the NCGE clarify that the aims of the NCGE include to: "advise on policy and strategies for the promotion of a continuum of guidance in the context of lifelong learning" and to: 'contribute to the exchange of information on guidance counselling provision and practice with other guidance and employment services, through the National Resource Centre, (Euroguidance Centre) both in Ireland and in other Member States of the EU.'

EUROGUIDANCE CENTRE www.euroguidance.ie

In line with this remit, NCGE hosts the National Euroguidance Centre for Ireland. This Centre forms part of the Euroguidance network, comprising 66 Centres throughout the EU. The Network aims to support guidance practitioners in promoting European mobility and the European dimension within education and training and is funded by the Erasmus+ programme, 2014.

The Euroguidance Centre within NCGE develops guidance materials on mobility for practitioners, students and the general public. It also develops and maintains online resources on mobility through its Digital Marketing Strategy, including an online blog, Facebook page and website, and promotes and shares international good practice and supports innovation and pilot projects. It also answers specific queries and disseminates information to practitioners, students, other Euroguidance Centres and the general public. The Euroguidance Centre co-ordinator organises and hosts international study visits, designs and edits the Euroguidance Network newsletter, co-ordinates the provision of guidance to students of the European Schools, is actively involved in two of the Network's working groups and organises continuing professional development.

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One of the activities of the Centre includes participating with other Euroguidance Centres in the development of the European dimension of guidance provision. As part of this remit, the European Commission has appointed the Euroguidance Centres to manage the national data feed in to the PLOTEUS II project.

PLOTEUS

PLOTEUS (a Portal on Learning Opportunities Throughout Europe) was set up in order to respond to the conclusions of the Lisbon and Stockholm European Councils (March 2000 and March 2001), which invited the European Commission and Member States to create a Europe-wide service providing information on jobs and learning opportunities. The purpose of PLOTEUS, just like that of EURES, its counterpart, is to put into effect the right to freedom of movement for European citizens by providing the necessary information.

In its present form, PLOTEUS aims to facilitate navigation among existing information resources on learning opportunities. The work of identifying and classifying the information resources is carried out by the Euroguidance Network) - a European network funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

The aim of the second phase of the PLOTEUS project, PLOTEUS II, is to make it possible to query the content of national databases directly through the interface of the European portal, and to obtain direct answers to specific queries about education courses throughout the EU.

RATIONALE

NCGE Euroguidance has applied for and has been successfully awarded funding by the European Commission in order to develop the national data feed from the national data source/s to the PLOTEUS II site. The EU funding allocated to this role is €28,500 for each of the two years of the project.

Euroguidance Ireland and NCGE and the IT expertise involved in the pilot project believe that the federation model which has proven to work well at the NDS-PLOTEUS II interface will also work at the Regional/Departmental-National level allowing member states to federate several national sources into a single NDS feed.

Euroguidance at NCGE proposes that by designing and testing a cloud-based solution to integrating departmental or regional data sources into a single national data source, a model for member states where information may be drawn from diverse national sources, will be developed. This will help to provide a more complete feed to PLOTEUS II.

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SCOPE

NCGE Euroguidance Ireland requires a collaborative approach to the provision of a data feed from Ireland which will encompass all required fields and a significant number of the optional fields for connection to PLOTEUS II. A working group will be set up to include the main stakeholders including Euroguidance Ireland, NCGE and other relevant stakeholders identified within the initial research phase.

This project will be informed by the pilot project undertaken by NCGE in 2011 and focus on the further development, designing and testing of a cloud-based solution to integrating departmental or regional data sources into a single national data source. The project will also provide documentation and recommendations for the replication and dissemination of this process across Member States.

SPECIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS

The tender is for the provision of the following systems and services:

1. Identification and investigation of the candidate's knowledge of potential national data sources which exist in Ireland in the guidance space.
2. Production of a report setting out the relative merits of each identified source in the interconnection to a national and/or a European portal.
3. Identification and proposal of the collaborative activities required with national stakeholders as identified in 1, above.
4. Design and implementation of a system for the interconnection of existing NDS(s) in Ireland and other member states to the PLOTEUS II System.
5. Design and implementation of a system to integrate diverse NDS(s) into a single national portal.
6. Development of documentation and processes to inform the future interconnection of new and existing NDS(s) to PLOTEUS II and other EU portals.
7. Development of guidelines for NDS(s) in performing the mapping from existing data schemas to those of the European Commission systems.
8. Development of guidelines for member states in the development of new national or regional database systems in the guidance space.
9. Liaising with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on the maintenance or development of the existing Qualifax system as a contributor to national and European portals on guidance education.
10. Design and implementation of all software systems as a cloud based solution which will support the cost-effective replication of a single design across and within member states.
11. The successful candidate will be required to work and attend meetings with NCGE and national stakeholders at Dublin based meeting venues.
12. Outline of expected outcomes and milestones for the project

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FORMAT OF TENDER

Tender will outline and demonstrate:

- Understanding of the context of the project, including the main stakeholders involved at national and EU level;
- Description of current learning databases in Ireland and their suitability for inputting into a national data source/s for PLOTEUS II;
- Description of proposed developments – software and hardware requirements and cloud based systems, as set out in Specification of Requirements Section above;
- Description of the individual/organisation applying, along with its available resources to for this project;
- A draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) outlining the main milestones to be achieved throughout the course of the project.

TIMESCALE

The timescale for undertaking the PLOTEUS II project, in collaboration with NCGE and Euroguidance Ireland, is 2 years – from 1st June 2014 to 31st May 2016

This timeline will include the following phases within the 2 year timeframe:

research; stakeholder collaboration; design; pilot; implementation; review; reporting; recommendations.

SUCCESSFUL SUBMISSION

The successful submission will be from a qualified and experienced applicant/ organisation satisfying the following criteria:

- **The quality of the submission:** Applicants should demonstrate a strong understanding of the education and guidance space both nationally and on a European basis ; an understanding of the requirements of the PLOTEUS II project and include an overview of the proposed methodology stating how the PLOTEUS II project objectives will be met.
- **Previous experience:** Understanding and experience of developing software systems for use at national and European level is a requirement. Applicants should demonstrate evidence of previous experience of successful engagement and working with public service agency clients similar to NCGE.
- **Qualifications:** Applicants should include details of their ICT qualifications and software and cloud solutions development experience in relation to undertaking a project of this nature.
- **Availability** Successful applicants will demonstrate availability to work in close collaboration with and attend meetings with NCGE and national stakeholders (i.e. within the Dublin area).
- **Cost** Applicants should provide a cost proposal for the project. Costs of vouched travel expenses and ancillary equipment required for the delivery of the project should not be included.



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MONITORING

The Director of NCGE and the Euroguidance Co-ordinator will oversee the implementation of the PLOTEUS II project in Ireland. The contracted consultant will be required to work closely with the Euroguidance Co-ordinator for up to two days per week over the lifetime of the project. Project outcomes will be reviewed as per agreed milestones.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Submissions should be submitted via etenders no later than 12pm (GMT) on Thursday 26th June, 2014.

APPENDIX

PILOT Project 2011

Euroguidance at NCGE developed a pilot project to integrate a national data source for Ireland to the PLOTEUS II site. Euroguidance invited collaboration from the then National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) as a national data source provider (i.e. Qualifax) .

The NDS integration pilot led to the development of a flexible sustainable and scalable solution which allow a member state to contribute relevant data to the PLOTEUS II and European Qualifications Framework (EQF) systems. This development also prompted the re-design of the PLOTEUS II software responsible for accepting data connections from NDSs.

The model for the connection of NDSs to the PLOTEUS II system is one of federation of diverse data sources from across the member states. This same model, if applied within member states, particularly if applied in situations where no single national data source exists, would support the interconnection of several diverse sources at a national level to provide a single NDS feed to the PLOTEUS, and later EQF systems.