The Left Group in the European Parliament

Call for Tender
18/10/2024

Invitation for candidates to provide

Software maintenance and Development services for the "iLeft" application

in accordance with the specifications outlined in this tender document.

Introduction

The Left Group in the European Parliament (The Left Group) core activity is legislative work in the European Parliament. The EP carries out the bulk of its work through specialised committees, which draw up, amend and adopt legislative proposals and reports. The Left Members are represented in these parliamentary committees in proportion to our Group's size.

The Left Group secretariat (central administration) is based in the European Parliament in the heart of Brussels. Our 100 staff of multicultural backgrounds are committed to providing dedicated support for the work of the Members and for the overall functioning of The Left Group in the European Parliament.

The secretariat of The Left Group has three key roles:

- to offer political advice, information and research to support political decision-making
- to assist in policy development and negotiation
- to provide logistical support and technical assistance for Group activities

In view of this last key role, the Left Group is seeking a qualified and experienced firm to provide comprehensive maintenance and ongoing development services for our custom-built software system. This system is integral to our operations and consists of multiple modules, such as an HR module for staff management, a leave management module, a module overviewing MEPs and APAs of the Group, a speaking time management module, an organogram module and several others.

We look forward to reviewing your proposals and potentially collaborating with a firm that can help us maintain and enhance our critical software infrastructure.

Background

The software is a tailor-made solution designed to meet the specific needs of The Left Group. It operates on a Windows server with an MS-SQL database and includes a web server component as well as a client application written in C#, installed on multiple Windows workstations.

This document aims to provide a general guide for the support, maintenance and development of this application of The Left Group. It gives a general description of the current services and a list of requirements that must be met by the developers.

The **target audience** of this application are the staff and Members and will be administered by HR staff (Leave and a staff management) and Policy managers (Speaking time).

Scope of Work

The selected firm will be responsible for:

1. **Maintenance Services**:

   o Regular monitoring and troubleshooting to ensure the software operates smoothly.
   o Maintaining the integrity and performance of the desktop application and its modules.
   o Applying necessary updates and patches to the server applications, database, and client applications.
   o Ensuring data integrity and security within the MS-SQL database.
   o Providing technical support to resolve any software-related issues promptly.

2. **Development Services**:

   o Implementing enhancements and new features as required by our evolving business needs.
   o Ensuring seamless integration of new modules and functionalities within the existing system.
   o Collaborating with our internal team to gather requirements and provide expert recommendations.
   o Testing and deploying updates to ensure they meet our quality standards and business objectives.

Technical Requirements

- Proficiency in C# programming and experience with client-server architecture.
- In-depth knowledge of Windows server management and MS-SQL database administration.
- Experience with IIS web server technologies and web application development.
- Proven record of accomplishment of maintaining and developing complex software systems.

Submission Details

Interested firms are asked to carefully read these submission details and to ensure that all needs and requirements are included in their proposal, so that the LEFT Group can clearly see that the firm has understood them correctly.

Specifically:

- Applicants must be able to provide all listed services (the list is not exhaustive - other similar and related services may be requested), and be available for swift intervention in case of emergency.

- Applicants are asked to quote a price per hour for maintenance / modifications / development to the software. Night hours fees could be included in the quote (intervention requested after 6 pm).
  A breakdown of the costs of separate services and products should be provided as following specified.

- Applicants have to take into account that the validity of the contract is foreseen until the end of the current legislation in July 2029, from the date of acceptance.

- Applicant should also be aware remote access to the application, the server, the database and the workstations is not possible.

- The tender proposal should allow the LEFT Group to accurately assess how well applicants understand the group's requirements and should show how they would propose to carry out the work involved. It should contain all necessary information to allow the group to make a final selection based on the tender proposal documents (maximum proposal's length is 20 pages).

- Please send a detailed description of your firm's experience and qualifications relevant to this project to facilitate the group's assessment of the proposal.

Ownership: All intellectual property rights, including copyright, patents, and trademarks, of the entire iLeft application, and its contents, shall belong to THE LEFT group. The developer shall not have any ownership rights in the software or its contents, including any source code, design elements, or content.

Selection criteria include: technical aspects, expertise of the team, quality of service and maintenance, price.

In examining the tenders received, for the awarding of the tender, the Left Group will take account of:

- PRICE proposed by the tenderer (30%)
- TECHNICAL and PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY of the tenderer to provide the services described in this call for tender (30%)
- RESPONSIVENESS and ABILITY to offer customer service and support at technical level, including very short deadlines (20%)
- CHARACTERISTICS (quality of design; corporate values; innovative characteristics) (20%)

The tender proposals can be submitted in English or French. The successful applicant must be able to communicate with the LEFT staff responsible through English and/or French.

Payment of the invoice(s) will be done following the signing of the contract, specifying the services provided and the receipt of the original invoice together with the necessary documents by the accounting office of The Left Group in Brussels, Belgium.

The awarded company must be able to invoice the Left group following specific rules concerning the VAT exemption. For the purpose of justifying VAT exemption to the competent national authorities, a VAT exemption certificate will be issued.

The Left Group must receive additional documents to show the contractors legal entity (a copy of official documents from the national authorities) and bank account (a copy of a document from the bank, showing the company's name and address and bank account details).
All questions relating to the call for tenders should be sent by e-mail with the mention " The LEFT Group in the E.P. - Call for Tender for software maintenance and development services 2024-2029 " in the subject line

> to : left.tenders@europarl.europa.eu
> cc : bart.roeyen@europarl.europa.eu

The deadline for the submission of written questions is 4/11/2024 at 12:00 noon. All candidates will receive a reply at the same time by 8/11/2024 at the latest, in order to provide all participants with the same information and in the interest of equal treatment.

The price quotation shall be submitted excluding VAT.
A breakdown of the costs of separate services and products should be provided

The deadline for submission of proposal is 22/11/2024 at 12:00 noon, Brussels time.

Please send your offers by e-mail, with the mention "The LEFT Group in the E.P. - Call for Tender for software maintenance and development services 2024-2029" in the subject line

> To: left.tenders@europarl.europa.eu
> cc : bart.roeyen@europarl.europa.eu

Applications will be assessed shortly after the submission of proposals deadline, and information about the finalisation of the evaluation and awarding procedure will be given to the applicants during December 2024.

Data protection

The Left Group ensures that personal data are processed in line with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, particularly as regards their confidentiality and security and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC.

Specification

Description of the iLeft application

The iLeft application is the combination of a desktop application, a local MS SQL database, a small website and a server service.

The desktop application, also called "iLeft", is a collection of several modules. These modules are ensuring smooth data flow and operational synergy and are therefore essential to our operations

The central database, supporting all modules, is stored in one central MS-SQL database on a local MS Windows server.

On this server, a windows server service synchronises nightly this MS SQL database with a central EP database ensuring data consistency. This synchronisation process is a one-way direction; data is only downloaded into the local MS SQL database.
The synchronisation process is to update any changed staff information and organizational details.

MS IIS is also located on this server providing a website.
A webpage is accessible to staff of the secretariat enabling them to request for leave.
Another webpage provide access to staff, Members and assistants and for speaking time requests.

Detailed Description of Software Modules

By understanding the detailed functionality and technical setup of each module within the integrated system, the selected firm will be better equipped to meet our maintenance and development needs, ensuring the ongoing success and reliability of our software system.

1. Leave Management Module

Description:

- This module handles all aspects of employee leave management, including leave requests, approvals, leave balance tracking, and reporting.
- It integrates seamlessly within the single desktop application to ensure up-to-date leave balances and accurate record-keeping.
- This module meticulously adheres to The Left's internal leave policies and regulations.
- All staff members can submit leave or absences requests via a web page.

- Types of absences managed include not only vacation but also sickness, training, missions, etc.
- HR managers must be able to configure and create these different types of absences.
- Absences can be calculated differently on a monthly or weekly basis.
- Absences can or cannot be limited to a maximum per year or per week.
- Absence requests may or may not have a maximum number of days per year or per week. Once the maximum is reached, a request is automatically refused. This can be configured individually for each absence type in the Settings module.
- The system allows for half-day leave requests.
- Absence requests may or may not be automatically approved for a certain maximum number of days. This can be configured individually for each absence type.
- Official holidays are entered into the system by HR managers.
- Management-imposed collective vacation periods can be entered by HR managers. with the option to have this count towards everyone's individual balance or not.
- Overlapping absences are not allowed.
- Approval or rejection of leave requests is managed by department heads or only by the central HR manager, depending on how the specified absence type is configured.
- An email is generated:
  - To the department head when a leave request from one of their staff members is submitted.
  - To the HR manager if the leave type is only managed by the HR manager.
  - To the requester when the leave request is approved or rejected.
- On the web page, the requester can view and download an overview of their absences as well as the annual summary of their leave requests.
- The system accounts for seniority, age, and rank of the requester in the calculation of vacation days. Start and end dates of the current contract of the requester are included in this calculation.
- A month overview report, showing all leaves of all staff for the HR manager . For the head of department this report shows only the staff of his department.
- An end-of-contract leave report is available for leaving staff providing a balance of all leave. This is only for HR as it is for administrative purposes. This report is available even if the concerned staff member has already left.
- In the 'Settings' module, some sub-modules are foreseen for managing the parameters of the leave application per year;
  - Leave Types; creation and management of parameters of each absence types
  - Pay Grades; management of extra leave days in relation to grades
  - Days for Age; management for entitlement to seniority days
  - Holidays; introduction of the national holidays
  - Closing Days; configuration of collective leave

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL, storing leave records, employee data, and approval workflows.
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by HR staff and heads of departments for direct management and reporting functionalities.
- **Synchronization**: Leave data is not synchronized with the EP's database.

2. Staff Management Module

Description:

- This module manages staff information, including personal details, job roles, etc. It is, in fact, the Group's HR module.
- It is an integral part of the single desktop application, maintaining comprehensive and up-to-date employee records.
- most of the data comes from the EP central database;
  - name and surname
  - employee ID
  - birthdate
  - contract type
  - nationality, language
  - grade, seniority
  - office, building, phone number and email address
  - contract start- and end date
- additional data can be added per staff member for local administrative purposes;
  - name of the head of department
  - part-time
  - option to not visible in listings
  - name of MEP (optional)
  - function (head of department)
- in the 'Settings' module, some submodules allow the creation and management of;
  - Units; for managing the different departments
  - Staff roles: management of the different existing functions (also used in the modules 'Political bodies'and 'Organigram'.)
- staff not existing in the central EP database;
  - can be added manually
  - with the same data as the above mentioned staff
- multiple and configurable reports are available
  - extra columns can be added
  - choices in sorting and grouping options
- staff leave can be viewed and managed via this module

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL, maintaining employee records,
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by HR staff only for in-depth employee management and report generation.
- **Synchronization**: Ensures all HR data is kept current from the central EP database through nightly updates. One way only, towards the local MS-SQL database.

3. Speaking Time Management Module

Description:

- The Left Group has assigned for each session and for each debate, a certain amount of speaking time to be distributed among the Group MEPs.
- This module is a custom tool managing The Left Group's attributed speaking time
- The desktop application, accessible by the speaking time managers, includes features for organizing, scheduling, timing, granting or denying requests and generating reports on speaking times.
- Through an internal webpage, MEPs request for speaking time for a debate, for one or multiple MEPs.
- Submitted requests can be reviewed and eventually deleted by the requester only.
- Every request has a limited motivation text (with certain key words).
- Manage author minutes; holding assigned minutes to a speaker for a specific sitting.
- President minutes; counting the President(s) separately.
- A report available in the Desktop application collects all requests in a specific order in order to prepare the decisive meeting where requests are granted, changed or denied.
- Another report can be generated at any stage to see the requests submitted for a particular session even before the time has been allocated.
- Advanced reporting with multiple filters:
  - a period (start and end date)
  - per session
  - per delegation
  - per person
  - minutes per author (on/off)
- Reports need to continue to show the speaking time for MEPs that leave The Left Group at a certain moment during the legislation.

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL, storing speaking time requests, speaker details, and attributed speaking times.
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by speaking time managers.
- **Webpage**; IIS with aspx pages
- **Synchronization**: Ensures all MEP, APA and staff details are kept current from the central EP database. No synchronisation to the central EP database, only downloading and updating towards the local MS-SQL database.
  All speaking time data is kept in the local database and not uploaded to the EP central database.

4. MEP/APA Management module

Description:

- This module provides an list of The Left Group's MEPs and their APAs.
- It lists
    - Last name
    - first name
    - phone number
    - office number
    - mail address
- First part of the list are the MEPs in alphabetical order, followed by all the APAs in alphabetical order.
- Clicking on an MEP's name brigs an new window with more detailed information of this MEP;
    - nationality
    - functions in all existing bodies in the European Parliament (see 'political bodies module for more details)
    - an lists of accredited and local assistants with some details;
        - Last name, First name,
        - Contract start and end date
        - phone number
        - office
        - mail address
- All this information is read-only; no data is to be modified nor added.
- a report can be generated, with or without APAs, with different sorting criteria's.

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by all staff
- **Synchronization**: Ensures all MEP and APA details are kept current from the central EP database. No synchronisation towards the central EP database, only downloading and updating towards the local MS-SQL database.
  No need to modify data.

5. Political Bodies module

Description:

- In the European Parliament (EP), political bodies play a crucial role in its functioning and decision-making processes.
  These bodies work together to ensure the functioning of the European Parliament, prepare and approve legislation, and represent the interests of EU citizens.
- MEPs of all political factions are member of multiple of these political bodies, with different functions (chair, member, substitute,).
- Here are some examples of political bodies in the European Parliament:
  - The Bureau
  - Political Groups (Factions)
  - Parliamentary Commissions
  - Delegations
  - etc...
  -
- This module allows visualizing the functions of all the MEPs of The Left Group in all these political bodies.
- Some staff of The Left Group works for MEPs in some bodies (ex in Committees)
- This staff can be attributed in this module to specific bodies, with or without a specific function (ex: coordinator)
- Reports can be created for one or multiple bodies.
- in the 'Settings' module, three sub-modules are foreseen to facilitate and personalise the working of the Political Bodies for The Left Group;
  - ManagePoliticalBodies allows in and excluding bodies.
  - ManagePoliticalBodiesOverwrite allows assigning MEPs to another body (existing or custom added) as originally configured in the central EP database.
  - Staff Roles; management of the different functions of the Staff in the bodies (also used in the modules 'HR' and 'Organigram'.)

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL, storing MEP, staff and political bodies' data downloaded from the central EP database, the customized bodies, and its memberships.
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by some specific staff.
- **Synchronization**: Ensures all MEP and political bodies details are kept current from the central EP database. No synchronisation towards the central EP database, only downloading and updating towards the local MS-SQL database.
  No need to modify data.

6. Staff Organigram module

Description:

- The staff organigram module allows creating the organogram, the visual representation of the Left Groups' secretariat structure.
- This organogram shows the hierarchy and relationships between managers, staff and units.
- The units are created in the 'settings' module, where they also get a hierarchy ranking number.
- In the 'Organigram' module, these units can then be populated with staff, where they optionally get a role attributed.
- These roles are created in the 'settings' module.
- The final and visual organogram is a PDF file created automatically after each modification.
- The PDF file is exported in a specific folder on the same server as database.
- The visual representation of this organogram is well specified. On request, an example of the current organogram will be provided.

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL, storing the organogram's data
  Requires no downloaded data from the central EP database.
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by some specific staff.
- **Synchronization**: No synchronisation with the central EP database

7. Groupings module

Description:

- The Groupings module allows creating groups of staff.
- The groups are created in the 'settings' module.
- This has no impact on the Organogram.
- This information is visible on each staff details page in HR module.

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL, storing the grouping's data
  Requires no downloaded data from the central EP database.
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by HR on staff detail page.
- **Synchronization**: No synchronisation with the central EP database

8. Staff List

Description:

- The Staff List module only shows a list of all staff in The Left Secretariat.
- This list is an up-to-date employee records with e few columns;
    - Gender (M; - Mme)
    - name and surname
    - office
    - phone number
    - email address
- no other functionalities nor details are available in this module
- Main goal is everyone has access to this list, allowing a quick lookup of colleague details.

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS-SQL, maintaining employee records,
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by all staff only for viewing.
- **Synchronization**: no synchronising

9. Settings module

Description:

- This module it is the collection of setting and parameters for the entire iLeft application; for the desktop application, the website, the database and the installed server service
- most of the parameters have been mentioned in the above modules
    - o Units
    - o Groupings
    - o Staff roles
    - o Political Bodies
    - o Political Bodies Overrides
    - o all the specific leave settings
- Some general settings like:
    - o HR mail address
    - o SMTP server address and port
    - o end of leave transfer date
    - o email addresses for some specific warnings to be sent
    - o central EP MEP group ID for the Left Group
    - o etc

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: All parameters are stored in local MS SQL database,
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by IT staff only.
- **Synchronization**: no synchronisation with central EP database.

10. Security modules

Description:

- 2 extra modules will handle the access to the application
- 1 module allows to create security groups
- the other module allows to give different accesses to the different groups
- it allows to give or not access to some or more modules
- in the detail screens, in the modules, view or modify access can be given to all details and/or reports

Technical Details:

- **Central Database**: MS SQL database,
- **Desktop Application**: Accessible by IT staff only, by the IT group created in this modules.
- **Synchronization**: no synchronisation