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Request for proposals

Managed IT Services

EIT Food – Making Food Innovation Happen

Knowledge & Innovation Center on Food,
part of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

<http://www.eitfood.eu>

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1. Overview of EIT Food

EIT Food is Europe's leading food innovation initiative, working to make the food system more sustainable, healthy and trusted.

The initiative is made up of a consortium of key industry players, startups, research centres and universities from across Europe. It is one of nine Innovation Communities established by the European Institute for Innovation & Technology (EIT), an independent EU body set up in 2008 to drive innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe.

EIT Food aims to collaborate closely with consumers to develop new knowledge and technology-based products and services that will ultimately deliver a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle for all European citizens.

For more information about our company please visit the following website: www.eitfood.eu

2. Scope of work

EIT Food seeks a partner in the domain of Information Technology that can provide qualitative Managed IT support for the next 3 years.

EIT Food requires a stable, secure, standardized and easily manageable collaborative working environment (cloud), across its European hubs where all software and hardware can be managed from a remote location. Hence we are looking for a partner who can make a proposal to help us fully migrate to and maintain such an environment. In addition, EIT Food requires a partner that will also give end user support on a daily basis like maintaining our hardware & software patches, policies and security. We want the line between our partner and EIT Food ivzw to be short so do not want to work with subcontractors.

The company we like to partner up with should at all times guarantee EIT Food's Staff ability to work in an uninterrupted and secure IT environment and should make sure we have a disaster recovery system in place. Currently we have about 150 users on our tenant of which approximately 80 are linked to our Headquarters in Leuven. They all have access to the cloud.

We are currently using 2 servers a print server and a DC server that need to be phased out.

If deemed necessary by EIT Food, the partner should be able to provide 1 day per week on-site support in our Leuven office, should be able to do so in the English language and should show the necessary flexibility to deviate from the fixed schedule and/or place whenever the need arises. Limited travel may be required.

As we cannot rely on the knowledge of one person, EIT Food expects its IT partner to free up enough resources to guarantee continuous support and employ staff who are trained regularly to keep up with the latest trends in a fast paced IT environment and specific requirements from EIT Food. Upon request the partner will submit the proof that their staff has received proper training to meet our technology needs.

The partner should work with a team specialized in Network Administration, Cloud services, Server Management, Cybersecurity and Patch management and proactively give feedback to improve our network. In addition this team should also have enough specialists in house to help with specialized questions pertaining to – but not limited to – the Microsoft suite and various office softwares such as Adobe, AI tools, etc...

The partner should use an English ticketing system and provide EIT Food with monthly qualitative reports on ticketing and progress reports in network, software and security governance in a format that allows us to analyze this quickly.

The partner should be able to setup and maintain links between different systems.

The invoicing of the partner should be transparent, fair and in a timely manner meaning ideally 30 days but maximum 45 days after completion of the services. Software license costs should be maximum at market price. The partner agrees not to make any profit on the selling of software unless the partner receives preferential tariffs from the software provider.

We need a partner who can take a lead and proactively makes recommendations to guarantee all the above and has a hands-on approach to also implement the recommended changes when approved.

In addition the partner needs to propose and assist with the development and implementation of IT related policies and procedures and the full management of new hardware setup (purchased under a separate agreement with BECHTLE) and keeping track of our IT inventory in collaboration with our Office Manager(s) and also proactively manage licenses essential for our corporate activity.

Device & Asset Management, including:

- **Installation & Replacement of networking equipment (routers, switches, WAPs, etc.)**
- **Server & Storage Setup, including on-premise and/or cloud-based resources**
- **Inventory Management:** Track hardware/software assets under guidance of EIT's Office Manager and Head of Tech Team, and be able to report about it
- **Device Provisioning:** Setup/configuration of laptops, desktops, accessories, and mobile devices so that they are user ready
- **Mobile Device Management (MDM):** Secure and manage mobile endpoints
- **Hardware Lifecycle Management:** Procurement, maintenance, and disposal of devices upon request
- **Software Licensing Compliance**

End user support (Help Desk Services)

- **Support Hours:** 8x5 standard, with optional 24x7
- **Tiered Support (L1–L3):** From basic to advanced technical issues
- **Multi-channel Access:** Email, phone, chat, and a English ticketing system
- **Remote Assistance:** Secure remote desktop troubleshooting
- **User Lifecycle Support:** Onboarding/offboarding, account and access rights
- **Application Support:** MS Office Suite and other company-approved software
- **Language & Time Zone:** English-speaking agents operating in EIT Food ivzw time zone with the ability to provide on site support up to max 2 days a week when requested.

24x7x365 Monitoring and Management Services

- **Infrastructure Monitoring:** Servers, workstations, network devices, ISP, connectivity
- **Performance & Health:** Storage, event logs, workstation/server maintenance
- **Automation:** Auto-restarts, scripts, PowerAutomate, routine maintenance
- **Dashboards & Reporting:** Real-time performance, incident logs, SLA tracking

MDR, Security & Compliance

- **24x7x365 Threat Monitoring:** Logs, telemetry, M365 services
- **Endpoint Protection:** Antivirus, anti-malware, EDR

- Incident response and management
- Patch Management: OS and application updates
- Firewall & Network Security: Configuration and monitoring
- Access Control: Role-based access, MFA, SSO
- Security Awareness: Quarterly phishing simulations and training
- Compliance Monitoring: GDPR, ISO 27001, etc.
- Advanced Protection: DNS filtering, malware protection
- Audit Support & Readiness: Assist with internal and external IT audits, including preparation of documentation, system logs, compliance reports, and remediation of findings.
- Backup Services:
 - Office 365 (Email, OneDrive, SharePoint/Teams)
 - Weekly workstation backups with cloud replication
 - Exchange mailbox backups

Recovery/restoration services

- **Disaster Recovery:** Server/cloud data restoration

IT Strategy & Consulting

- **Technology Roadmap:** Align IT with business goals
- **Vendor Management:** In collaboration with Office Manager and Head of Tech Team
- **IT Budget Planning:** Forecasting and cost optimization
- **Project Management:** Support for migrations, upgrades, and rollouts
- **Policy Development & Implementation:** Propose, document and help enforce IT policies (e.g. acceptable use, data retention, remote work, security protocols) aligned with industry best practices and organizational needs
- **Continuous Learning & Innovation:** Ensure IT staff are regularly trained and certified in emerging technologies (e.g. AI, cybersecurity, cloud platforms). Providers must supply upon request evidence of ongoing education, such as training logs, certification records, or participation in relevant conferences and workshops
- **Direct Service Delivery:** The provider must deliver all services directly with in-house staff. The use of subcontractors or third-party service providers is not permitted. A short and transparent reporting line is required to ensure accountability and responsiveness.

Transparent Reporting, Invoicing & Cost Management

- Detailed and timely Billing: invoices should clearly itemize:
 - Hours worked (by task and support tier) or fixed price
 - Licenses and subscriptions
 - Hardware/software purchases
 - Project based work
- Usage-based reporting: monthly reports showing actual usage vs. contracted services
- Monthly Executive & Service Reports
- SLA Penalty Clauses: if service levels are not met, credits or discounts should be applied automatically
- No hidden fees: all costs should be pre-approved and documented

3. Proposal Process

3.1. Participation

Participation in this proposal procedure is open to all. No supplier is excluded a priori and equal access is guaranteed.

3.2. Submission of proposal

	Date
Publication of RFP	Friday, 27/02/2026
Q & A	Friday, 27/03/2026
Deadline for requesting clarification from EIT Food	Friday, 27/03/2026
Deadline for submitting proposals	Friday, 10/04/2026
Intended date of notification of award	Thursday, 16/04/2026
Intended date of contract signature	Wednesday, 22/04/2026

Proposals must be emailed in **English** to the following address to:

Contact name: for the attention of Mrs. Marija Kovacevic

E-mail: Marija.Kovacevic@eitfood.eu and support@eitfood.eu

The proposal shall contain:

- **the technical response to the service requested**
- **the financial offer (the price for the services.)** The Financial offer shall be expressed in Euros, VAT shall be indicated separately.

Responses should be concise and clear. The tenderer's proposal will be incorporated into any contract that results from this procedure. Tenderers are, therefore, cautioned not to make claims or statements that they are not prepared to commit to contractually. Subsequent modifications and counter-proposals, if applicable, shall also become an integral part of any resulting contract.

The tenderer confirms that the individual submitting the natural or legal entity's proposal is duly authorized to bind its entity to the proposal as submitted. The tenderer also confirms that it has read the instructions to

tenderers and has the experience, skills and resources to perform, according to conditions set forth in this proposal and the tenderers' proposal.

3.3. Validity of the proposals

Tenderers are bound by their proposals for 90 days after the deadline for submitting proposals or until they have been notified of non-award.

The selected winner must maintain its proposal for a further 60 days to close the contract.

Proposals not following the instructions of this Request for Proposal can be rejected by EIT Food.

3.4. Requests for additional information or clarification

In case the tenderers require additional information or clarifications, these should be addressed to the person indicated below. All communication between EIT Food and tenderers is only possible in writing, all requests will be done and answered by e-mail only. All questions should be sent prior to deadline for requesting clarification as specified in Section 3.1. In case of complex or high value procurements, EIT Food may arrange a clarification session of which it will inform all tenderers.

Contact name: for the attention of Mrs. Marija Kovacevic

E-mail: marija.kovacevic@eitfood.eu and support@eitfood.eu

EIT Food has no obligation to provide clarification.

3.5. Costs for preparing proposals

No costs incurred by the tenderer in preparing and submitting the proposal are reimbursable. All such costs must be borne by the tenderer.

3.6. Clarification related to the submitted proposals

After submission of the proposals, they shall be checked if they satisfy all the formal requirements set out in the proposal dossier. Where information or documentation submitted by the tenderers are or appears to be incomplete or erroneous or where specific documents are missing, EIT Food may request the tenderer concerned to submit, supplement, clarify or complete the relevant information or documentation within an appropriate time limit. All communication between EIT Food and tenderers is only possible in writing, all requests will be done and answered by e-mail only.

3.7. Negotiation about the submitted proposal

After checking the administrative compliance of the tenderers, EIT Food reserves the right to negotiate the contract terms with the tenderers. In this negotiation EIT Food may ask all tenderers to adjust the proposal or specific sections of the proposal within an appropriate time limit. In case of negotiation, EIT Food shall provide further information about the proceedings and timing.

EIT Food reserves the right to negotiate contract terms with tenderers **provided that:**

- all tenderers are treated equally and fairly;
- the subject matter of the contract is not altered;
- negotiations are limited to clarifications and permissible optimisations.

These negotiations will fully comply with Section 2.2 of the EIT Food Procurement Manual

3.8. Evaluation of Proposals

All proposals received within the deadline and meeting the formal submission requirements shall be evaluated by EIT Food in accordance with the award criteria set out below.

The evaluation shall be based on the **best value for money** principle, taking into account both **technical quality** and **financial aspects** of the proposals.

The evaluation process shall consist of the following stages:

1. Administrative compliance check
2. Technical evaluation
3. Financial evaluation

Only proposals that successfully pass the administrative compliance check may be considered for technical and financial evaluation.

3.8.1 Technical Evaluation (Maximum 60 points)

The technical quality of each proposal shall be assessed against the criteria listed below. Points shall be awarded based on the clarity, completeness, relevance, maturity, and robustness of the proposed solution, as well as its alignment with the requirements set out in Section 2 (Scope of Work).

1. Relevant Experience and References (Maximum 10 points)

Assessment of the tenderer's demonstrated experience in providing managed IT services in environments comparable to EIT Food, including but not limited to international, non-profit, EU-funded, or otherwise regulated organizations.

The evaluation will take into account:

- Proven experience with multi-country and multi-site organizations
- Experience managing Microsoft 365-based environments
- Relevance and quality of provided references, including scale and complexity

2. Service Delivery Model and Staffing (Maximum 10 points)

Assessment of the proposed service delivery model and staffing approach, including:

- Structure and effectiveness of the proposed support model (L1–L3)
- Availability, coverage, and continuity of support services
- Use of in-house staff only, with no subcontracting
- Language capabilities and on-site support capacity
- Training, certification, and continuous professional development of staff

3. Scope Coverage and Technical Capability (Maximum 20 points)

Assessment of the tenderer's ability to deliver the full scope of services described in Section 2, including but not limited to:

- Device and Asset Management
- End-User Support (Help Desk Services)
- Monitoring, Automation, and Management Services
- MDR, Security, and Compliance
- Backup, Recovery, and Disaster Recovery
- IT Strategy and Consulting

Evaluation will consider the quality of tools, platforms, methodologies, processes, and the tenderer's proactive approach to continuous improvement.

4. Security, Risk Management, and Compliance (Maximum 8 points)

Assessment of the robustness and maturity of the proposed cybersecurity and compliance approach, including:

- Security architecture and controls
- Threat detection and incident response procedures
- MDR and endpoint protection capabilities
- Compliance with applicable regulations and standards (e.g. GDPR, ISO 27001)
- Security awareness training and phishing simulations

5. Governance, Reporting, and Account Management (Maximum 7 points)

Assessment of the proposed governance and reporting framework, including:

- Ticketing system and incident management processes
- Quality and usability of operational and executive reports
- Account management structure and escalation procedures
- Transparency of service performance monitoring and SLA tracking

6. Transition and Continuity Plan (Maximum 5 points)

Assessment of the tenderer's proposed approach to transition and continuity, including:

- Migration from the current IT environment if needed
- Phasing out of existing on-premise servers if needed
- Knowledge transfer and onboarding processes
- Business continuity and risk mitigation during transition

Maximum Technical Score: 60 points

3.8.2 Financial Evaluation (Maximum 40 points)

The financial evaluation shall be based on the **total cost of ownership (TCO)** over the proposed **three-year framework agreement**, calculated for an estimated user base of **150 users**.

The financial offer shall be assessed on:

- Completeness and transparency of pricing
- Inclusion of all applicable costs (fixed, variable, licenses, and optional services)
- Reasonableness and sustainability of pricing

The tenderer offering the **lowest total evaluated cost**, provided the offer is compliant with the requirements of this RFP, shall receive the maximum financial score of **40 points**.

All other compliant financial offers shall be scored proportionally using a linear scoring method, according to the following formula:

Financial score = (Lowest total evaluated cost / Tenderer's total evaluated cost) × 40

Maximum Financial Score: 40 points

3.8.3 Final Ranking and Award

The final score of each proposal shall be calculated as the sum of the technical score and the financial score.

Maximum total score: 100 points

The contract shall be awarded to the tenderer whose proposal achieves the **highest total score**, subject to successful completion of any clarification or negotiation phase as described in this RFP.

EIT Food reserves the right not to award the contract if none of the proposals meets the required quality or value for money standards.

The results of the award procedure will be communicated in writing (via e-mail) to the successful and unsuccessful tenderers.

3.9. Appeals/complaints

Tenderers believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. Appeals should be addressed to EIT Food. The tenderers have 10 calendar days to file their complaints from the dispatch of the award notification e-mail.

Appeals shall follow the process established in the EIT Food Procurement Manual and must be submitted in writing to procurement@eitfood.eu.

3.10. Signature of contract

Please refer to Annex 1 for the template contract that shall apply to this procedure. Any changes desired by the tenderer in the provisions contained in the body of this Service Agreement must be communicated to EIT Food as part of the proposal of such tenderer. Any such changes will be considered as part of the evaluation of the proposal of each tenderer

Note: Should the tenderer insist on using their own template, a draft contract needs to be submitted along with the tender proposal. Use of supplier template is only possible after review and approval from EIT Food's Procurement and Contracts Officer.

Within 5 days of receipt of the contract from EIT Food, the winning tenderer shall sign and date the contract and return it to EIT Food. Upon receipt, EIT Food shall countersign and return one signed copy of the contract to the winning tenderer.

3.11. Cancellation of the proposal procedure

In the event of cancellation of the procurement procedure, EIT Food will notify tenderers of the cancellation. In no event shall EIT Food be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for

loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of a proposal procedure, even if EIT Food has been advised of the possibility of damages.

3.12. Ethics clauses / Corruptive practices

EIT Food reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial errors, irregularities or fraud. If substantial errors, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the Contract, EIT Food may refrain from concluding the Contract.

The supplier shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). The supplier should immediately inform EIT Food if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

3.13. Annexes

Annex 1: Contract Template. The Contract Template is provided for information purposes only and might be subject to considerable modifications.

Note, for all procedures above €15K the extended/framework contract templates applies. Use of supplier template is only possible after approval from the Procurement and Contracts Officer or if said template has attached EIT Food General Purchase T&C.

Annex II: Declaration of Honour

Annex III: Tender submission templates (Technical and Financial) – if using.

Annex IV (If Applicable): detailed Terms of Reference / Specification for the required services/goods – if put in a separate annex document.

This procurement will be carried out in accordance with the EIT Food Procurement Manual (version V.03, 28.05.2025) and the EIT Guidelines. All principles of transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination, proportionality, and best value for money fully apply.

If the estimated value of the contract is equal to or exceeds EUR 221,000, publication on TED (Tenders Electronic Daily) in addition to the EIT Food website is mandatory.