

Request for Proposals

EIT Water: Securing Europe's water future

Project Management tool

Type of procedure	Opening date	Closing date	Estimated budget
Open	12/10/2026	27/10/2026	50 000 €

For any enquiry, please address it to procurement@eitwater.eu

<https://eitwater.eu/>

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1. Introduction to EIT Water

Who we are EIT Water is Europe's innovation community for water, marine and maritime (WMM) sectors and ecosystems. We connect industry, innovators, researchers, educators and policymakers to tackle the most urgent WMM challenges from scarcity, drought and flooding to pollution and ecosystem decline. By bringing together the right ideas, ingenuity and investment, we build real-world solutions that strengthen Europe's water resilience, support the blue economy and protect ecosystems from source to sea.

EIT Water is part of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. Together with the EIT Community, Europe's largest innovation network, we strengthen resilience, sustainability and competitiveness.

Our Mission We will accelerate Europe's transition to sustainable, resilient and inclusive water systems by enabling coordinated, place-based systemic innovation across regions and sectors.

Our Vision A Europe where healthy water ecosystems drive economic opportunity, environmental protection and social wellbeing.

Why we exist Europe's water, marine and maritime (WMM) systems face urgent challenges - from ecosystem degradation and pollution to climate risks and resource scarcity. To secure a sustainable future, we must close skill gaps, drive innovation, and scale impactful solutions across sectors. EIT Water connects Europe's best minds to tackle these critical issues and accelerate the transition to resilient, circular and thriving water ecosystems.

How we operate Through a network of 8 strategically located regional hubs across Europe, we build a connected and collaborative community across the WMM sectors and ecosystems that identifies needs, and develops the skills, solutions, and consortia required to respond. Through our diverse programmes, we support WMM sectors and ecosystems skills growth and the development and validation of new ideas, projects and commercial ventures. We then enable their deployment and scaling by connecting them to funding, potential partners, and real-world testing, piloting and implementation opportunities across Europe.

2. Purpose of the RFP

2.1. General objectives and scope

The total estimated budget for this procurement is 50 000 EUR, covering the period from early November 2026 to December 2028.

EIT Water invites selected suppliers to submit a proposal for a project management platform that will support its operations as the organisation grows from 15 to 58 users by the end of December 2028.

The platform must be flexible, quick for new users to adopt and versatile enough to serve different functions (programme delivery, finance, operations, communication, community). Its core purpose is to capture EIT Water's processes, so knowledge and information are not lost as the team expands and turns over.

EIT Water operates as a non-profit organisation. Proposals should therefore reflect how the platform fits non-profit activities, including related pricing conditions.

2.2. Objectives & detailed scope

Objectives and Volume:

EIT Water is looking for a project management platform that can:

- Enable rapid onboarding, for new users to become productive with minimal training;
- Bridge varied needs (project delivery, document review, approvals and reporting) together in a single tool;
- Allow internal processes to be modelled and recorded in the system, safeguarding knowledge as the organisation grows.

The number of users is expected to grow as follows.

Period	Expected # of users
Nov – Dec 2026	~15
Jan – Jun 2027	~30
Jul – Dec 2027	~ 45
From 2028	58

Final number of users may change; suppliers should confirm that their licensing model accommodates adjustments.

Detailed Scope:

EIT Water is looking for a project management platform to structure and secure its operations through a subscription-based software service (SaaS), supported by implementation and onboarding services. The iCOO will oversee the service delivery and expects the supplier to deliver:

1. Platform configuration and workspace architecture

- Set up separate workspaces and boards by team or function, with restricted visibility for selected users (role-based, group-based and item-based permissions).
- Support structured permissions for internal staff and external collaborators.

2. Core project management functionality

- Task allocation, ownership, due dates and dependencies.
- Document review and approval workflows, with comments that can be addressed and tracked to closure.
- Status updates and workload review across team members.
- Multiple views: Kanban, Gantt/timeline, list and calendar.

3. Process modelling and templates

- Capture recurring EIT Water processes as reusable templates, so that practice is documented in the system and is not dependent on individuals.

4. Automation and notifications

- Automated emails, reminders and status-driven rules, configurable by non-technical users.

5. Forms

- Forms that feed directly into projects or boards, accessible to both internal users and external respondents (any email domain).

6. Reporting and data extraction

- Dashboards and reports, and data export in standard formats (e.g. CSV, Excel) and via API.

7. Integrations

- Connection with the ERP, the newsletter tool and SharePoint, through native connectors, an open API or integration platforms. Suppliers should state which are native and which require third-party tools.

8. AI features and automation

- Description of AI capabilities that accelerate work (e.g. summaries, drafting, task creation, workflow automation), and which plans include them.

- Safeguards for the use of AI, including whether customer data is used to train AI models (by the supplier or any third-party model provider); data processing locations and sub-processors; the ability to disable AI features at organisation or workspace level; respect of access permissions by AI features; and human oversight of AI outputs.

9. Security, data protection and hosting

- GDPR compliance, hosting location, encryption, authentication (SSO, MFA), audit logs and data retention and deletion conditions.

10. Onboarding, training and support

- Onboarding approach for new users at each growth stage, training materials, admin training and support levels.

11. Non-profit conditions

- Proposal tailored to non-profit organisations, including discounts, pricing grid by user number and price-protection over the 2026–2028 period.

The work is expected to be completed fully remotely. Every task is expected to be conducted in close collaboration with the EIT Water team that will provide continuous feedback and organise working sessions to review the ongoing work and validate or reject the completed tasks.

EIT Water is committed to remain involved at every stage of the service delivery and expects a high degree of transparency from the selected supplier during the execution of the tasks.

2.3. Illustrative cases

The following use cases illustrate how EIT Water expects to use the platform. Tenderers are invited to explain, for each of them, how the requirements would be met, and which configuration would be proposed.

Use case 1 – Employee register

A confidential register holding sensitive and personal information on staff, such as contracts and employment status.

- Access is restricted to authorised users only.
- Staff update their own information through a form; the user completing the form cannot access any other person's data and sees only their own record.
- An alert is triggered whenever a recorded value is changed.

Use case 2 – Coordination workspace

A shared workspace tracking the organisation's main planning.

- A Gantt view presents the main planning, with milestones, critical tasks, clear ownership and sequencing of actions.
- Documents and links can be attached, and comments added, to document the completion of each task.
- Emails and reminders are automated.
- An alert is raised when a significant deviation from the planning is detected.

Use case 3 – Budget tracking

A budget follow-up in which information is segmented by team and/or by individual.

- Each team or user has its own view of the budget available per cost category (travel, subcontracting, other goods & services and equipment).
- Spending requests are submitted through a form or by entering a value.
- On submission, the manager is notified; depending on the amount, the request is for information only or requires approval.
- Teams can see at any time their budget available against their budget committed.

Use case 4 – Risk tracker

A risk register enabling the organisation to identify, assess and monitor risks over time.

- Risks are recorded through a form, directly in a table or via an Excel import, with category, description, likelihood, impact, an overall rating and a named owner.
- Mitigation actions are assigned to owners with due dates and linked to the relevant projects or tasks.
- A risk matrix or dashboard presents the risks by rating and status, and the register can be filtered by team or category.
- Notifications and reminders are sent to risk owners for periodic reviews, and an alert is raised when a risk rating increases or a mitigation action is overdue.
- Visibility can be restricted to selected users, and changes to a risk are traceable.

2.4. Optional features – CRM

EIT Water would like to receive a proposal to implement its CRM process on the same platform. Suppliers should explain how each contact cycle would be configured (pipeline stages, trackers, automations and links to other tools). Suppliers are invited to submit a CRM proposal only if the combined cost of the platform and the CRM module remains within the total estimated budget for the period November 2026 to December 2028.

EIT Water anticipates at least four contact cycles, described below, for the core relationships it expects to manage in the CRM, from first contact to follow-up.

Cycle 1 – From lead to Member

Lead → Invitations & events tracker → Discussion tracker → Status → Conversion to Member → Acceptance of member terms → Invoice sent → Access rights updated in the community platform (API needed with Innoloft) → Follow-up action items

Cycle 2 – New beneficiary (recipient of EU funding)

Beneficiary (prospect) → Contract signed → Invitations & events tracker → Discussion tracker → Status → Follow-up action items

→ This cycle may feed into Cycle 1 when the organisation becomes a paid Member.

Cycle 3 – Concluding a partnership (national authorities or other strategic entities better suited as Partner than Member)

Lead → Invitations & events tracker → Discussion tracker → Status → Agreement and documents → Follow-up action items

Cycle 4 – EU officials

Type of contact → Context & sensitive information → Invitations & events tracker → Discussion tracker → Status → Follow-up action items

→ Sensitive information in this cycle requires restricted visibility; suppliers should explain how access can be limited to named users.

Contact Management:

The CRM is intended to be the primary entry point for contact data and to feed the other platforms: the newsletter platform, the community platform and the ERP. It must therefore allow labels or statuses to be assigned to any contact, across all cycles, in order to flag potential opportunities and

risks. It must also identify contacts who have unsubscribed from the EIT Water mailing list, so that they are excluded from all future mailings.

Integration:

The CRM is intended to connect with:

- Newsletter platform: Kit or Mailchimp
- Community platform: Innoloft
- ERP potentially NetSuite

The supplier should explain how contact data, including unsubscribe status, would be synchronised between the CRM and these platforms.

2.5. Timeline and limitations

The supplier is expected to deliver the work following this planning:

- Project Management platform: 1 December 2026
- CRM features (if selected by EIT Water): 11 December 2026

During the execution of the contract the timeline might be reviewed, any deviation in the delivered work should be approved in writing.

2.6. Methodology and Data Management

The supplier is expected to demonstrate proven knowledge, practical expertise and a robust execution methodology for the implementation and onboarding of project management platforms in organisations of comparable size and nature, including non-profit organisations. The proposal must outline a clear, actionable work plan showing how the supplier's technical approach addresses EIT Water's strategic objectives and operational requirements.

The supplier must demonstrate that its technical systems, data architecture and operational practices provide sufficient safeguards to ensure full compliance with all applicable European Union regulations, including the EU GDPR, the EU AI Act and the EU cybersecurity framework (NIS2 Directive, where applicable).

The supplier must state where EIT Water's data will be hosted and processed, including backups and sub-processors. Hosting within the EU/EEA is required; any transfer of data outside the EU/EEA must be disclosed and justified and must comply with the GDPR.

The proposal must also state clearly whether EIT Water's data is used to train AI models, by the supplier or by any third-party provider, and which controls allow AI features to be restricted or disabled.

Exit and data portability

At the end of the contract, for any reason, the supplier must allow EIT Water to retrieve all of its data, including projects, tasks, comments, attachments, forms and history, in a structured, commonly used format (e.g. CSV, Excel, JSON) and via API.

The supplier must provide a migration plan for the transfer of EIT Water's data to another platform and must allow a minimum period of 60 days after the end of the contract to complete this transfer. After this period, and once EIT Water has confirmed the transfer is complete, the supplier must delete all EIT Water data and confirm the deletion in writing.

Tenderers must describe their exit procedure, including the export formats available and any associated costs.

2.7. Deliverables

The supplier is expected to provide the following deliverables:

- Configured **project management platform**, with workspaces, boards, access restrictions, views, forms, automations and integrations as described in section 2, ready **by 1 December 2026**.
 - For this deliverable, the selected supplier is expected to onboard the EIT Water team and to build the first workspaces and boards together with it, validating at least two processes: the employee register and the coordination workspace.
- **CRM configuration** covering the four cycles, **if the optional module is selected**, ready by **11 December 2026**.
- **Training materials** (user and administrator guides, onboarding material and recorded sessions), usable by EIT Water to onboard future users independently, no later than **30 January 2027**.

2.8. Payment terms

The supplier will propose its payment terms, which cannot be shorter than 30 days. Please note that if the payment is to be made to a non-EU account further administrative checks might be requested.

3. Proposal process

3.1. Proposal timeline

All interested parties are invited to respond to this Request for Proposals, following the defined timeline:

Procedural item	Date
Publication of the RFP document	12/10/2026
Online Demonstration (1 hour) *	19/10/2026 - 26/10/2026
Deadline for the submission	27/10/2026, 5 pm CET
Evaluation of the offers	28/10/2026 - 30/10/2026
Notification of the result	02/11/2026
Standstill period	3 days
Final award notification	06/11/2026
Intended contract signature and start of the service	09/11/2026

**Tenderers book a one-hour online demonstration, at a time of their choice between 19 and 26 October 2026, contacting procurement@eitwater.eu. The demonstration and the written proposal are independent: the written proposal is not required at the time of the demonstration, and it must be submitted by 27 October 2026, 5 pm CET.*

EIT Water reserves the right to update the above timeline and will update this document accordingly. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be evaluated.

3.2. Proposal requirements

Tenderers are expected to submit a proposal demonstrating how they will address the tasks listed above. Every tenderer must include in its proposal:

- The proposed methodology and workplan, explaining how their approach will support EIT Water in a timely manner, including:

- A response to each of the use cases described in section “2.3 Illustrative cases” and “2.4 Optional features – CRM”, stating whether the platform can address it and how it would be configured and implemented. Tenderers are encouraged to use a clear, visual presentation that is easy for non-technical users to understand, using screenshots, diagrams or workflow illustrations to show how each use case would work in practice;
 - If applicable, a presentation of the CRM features and how it addresses the needs of EIT Water;
 - A roll-out plan with milestones for each deliverable.
- The CV of the team, highlighting their skills and how they can contribute to supporting EIT Water;
- An online demonstration please reach out via email to procurement@eitwater.eu to book a meeting showing at least two of the use cases, how it covers the requirements of this RFP and if fits the CRM features;
- The price in EUR, excluding VAT, broken down by user tier (15, 30, 45 and 58 users) to reflect the ramp-up, with non-profit conditions. If applicable, indicate the additional cost for the CRM module.

Documents to be provided

- Service Level Agreement (SLA)
- Onboarding and support plan for the set-up
- Additional pricing for further support beyond the initial set-up
- At least two client credentials (references and client testimonies, preferably from non-profit or comparable organisations)
- Declaration of honour
- Tender form

The proposal submitted must not exceed 20 pages, excluding the CV of the team and the SLA.

Please note that tenderers must explicitly state in their offer if Generative AI tools were used to draft substantive content (e.g., technical methodology, strategic plans, creative concepts). The use of AI for minor administrative or editing tasks (formatting, spell-checking, grammar correction) does not need to be declared.

Please note that no costs incurred by the tenderers in preparing and submitting the proposal are reimbursable. All such costs must be borne by the tenderer.

3.3. Submission process

The proposal should be submitted electronically via email to procurement@eitwater.eu. All questions related to the proposal preparation, the submission process, the evaluation or other RFP related topic must be done in writing via this email communication channel, EIT Water will share a QA document for transparency and equal treatment of all tenderers. Please note that questions sent less than 24 hours before the closing date and time will not be answered.

4. Evaluation of proposals

4.1. Award criteria

The below listed criteria will be used to assess the offer received from the tenderer:

Criterion	Description	Weight
Cost efficiency	Evaluates whether the proposed price is realistic, follows standard market practice, and is proportionate to the expected solution (neither underpriced nor overpriced). <i>In line with EU procurement rules, EIT Water reserves the right to request formal justification for any tender deemed abnormally low or abnormally high before taking an award decision.</i>	35%
Technical excellence	Assesses the quality, clarity on how the use cases are addressed. The quality of the online demonstration is evaluated under this criterion.	35%
Team expertise	Assesses the professional qualifications, relevant client credentials and overall availability of key personnel proposed for delivery.	15%
Integration & data privacy	Assesses the interoperability of the proposed IT systems/software, alongside	15%

	data protection mechanisms, hosting compliance within the EU/EEA, system safeguards, and adherence to EU cybersecurity standards	
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4.2. Evaluation process

The proposals received by the due date and time will be assessed by an evaluation committee composed of three EIT Water appointed reviewers. Every criterion will be scored individually by every member of the evaluation committee.

- Every criterion will be scored from 0 to 10:
- 0–3 (Poor): Fails to meet requirements or contains severe weaknesses.
- 4–6 (Fair/Satisfactory): Broadly addresses requirements but lacks detail or contains minor weaknesses.
- 7–8 (Good): Demonstrates sound understanding, robust methodology, and minor, non-critical limitations.
- 9–10 (Excellent): Exceptional quality, fully detailed, directly addresses all objectives, and offers clear added value.

Every reviewer proceeds to the evaluation of all proposals received and assigns a score (0–10) per criterion. This score is multiplied by the corresponding criterion's weight percentage (%) to determine the weighted sub-score for that specific criterion.

The final total score for each proposal is calculated by averaging the overall weighted scores across all individual reviewers. The tenderer achieving the highest total average score (out of 10 maximum possible points) will be ranked first.

4.3. Selection of suppliers

The final selection of the supplier will be based on the best price-quality ratio principle. The tenderer with the highest total average score will be recommended for award. The final award decision will be made by the CEO upon the recommendation from the review committee.

5. Conflict of interests

The conflict of interest is defined as all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the service could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, personal economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest ('conflict of interests').

Tenderers must formally notify EIT Water without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

The tenderers and EIT Water must ensure to collaborate and exchange information respecting fairness, transparency and equal treatment for all parties engaged. It is expected that:

- The tenderer confirms to EIT Water that it is not engaged in a EIT Water funded project, nor engaged in the preparation of an EIT Water proposal;
- The tenderer is not an EIT Water Member;
- The tenderer has no link with any of the persons within the EIT Water organisation and cannot access material or information on an exclusive basis;
- The tenderer has no unfair advantage given by a current employee of EIT Water;
- The tenderer will not contact, nor approach any member of the selection committee, nor employee of EIT Water to obtain additional information and/or exclusive information;
- The tenderer will answer the RFP with fairness
- The tenderer, or employee of EIT Water must inform immediately the contact person of the RFP if any irregularity is identified.

6. Suspicion of Fraud or EU breach

EIT Water 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 Water may refrain from concluding the Contract.

7. General terms and conditions

- **Confidentiality:**
 - **Proposal Confidentiality:** All proposals, supporting documentation, and data submitted by tenderers will be treated in confidence by EIT Water and will not be disclosed to third parties, except as required for evaluation, audit, or legal compliance.

- **Procurement Information:** Any information, whether written, verbal, or visual, provided by EIT Water in connection with this procurement procedure are provided solely for the purpose of preparing and submitting a proposal. Tenderers shall not misuse, adapt, or share non-public or proprietary aspects of this material for any other purpose without EIT Water's prior written approval.
- **Visibility and Funding Acknowledgement:** The Tenderer acknowledges that EIT Water is supported by the EU's Horizon Europe programme and agrees that any future public communication regarding this procurement must accurately reflect this support without implying exclusive EU funding; furthermore, the Tenderer confirms that no EU or EIT logos will be used in their proposal or future deliverables without prior written approval.
- **Data Protection (GDPR):** All personal data (and general data) collected or processed during this procurement procedure and any subsequent contract execution will be handled in full compliance with applicable data protection legislation, including the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679).
- **Sustainability Policy:** EIT Water is dedicated to minimising its environmental footprint. Tenderers must prioritise carbon reduction, eliminate hazardous chemicals, and avoid single-use plastics, when and if applicable. By submitting a Tender, the Tenderer confirms compliance with these baselines and agrees to fulfil all contract-specific green criteria.
- **Standards of Conduct & Good Faith:** Both EIT Water and the tenderer(s) are expected to act in good faith and adhere to the highest standards of fairness, integrity, and loyalty throughout the procurement process and for the entire duration of the contract.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** If AI tools will be used in executing and delivering the final contract outputs, tenderers must explain their approach. AI cannot be the sole author of critical outputs, all final deliverables must be thoroughly reviewed and validated by a human.
- **Audit & Oversight Rights:** The potential or actual supplier acknowledges and agrees that, during contract performance and for five (5) years following its completion, EIT Water reserves the right to transmit the supplier's proposal, contract, and related documentation to internal audit services, the EIT, the European Court of Auditors, the Financial Irregularities Panel, or the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) to safeguard the European Union's financial interests.
- **Contract Negotiation & Execution:** Submission of a proposal does not bind EIT Water to award a contract. The final Agreement may be subject to further clarification or minor negotiation at the sole discretion of EIT Water prior to formal execution.

8. Appeal procedure

Tenderers may submit an appeal request only if they believe there was a procedural error or breach of rules during the procurement evaluation process.

Admissible grounds encompass procedural irregularities, failure to follow the published evaluation criteria, factual errors, or technical failures in the submission system caused by EIT Water.

Inadmissible grounds include appeals challenging the individual scores, technical merits, or scientific judgment of the evaluators and will not be considered.

If the tenderer identifies admissible ground to appeal, they should submit an appeal within 3 days from the award notification.

- **Step 1: Filing the appeal**

The tenderer must submit a formal, written request for redress via email to procurement@eitwater.eu. The appeal must include the procurement reference number, proposal title, a clear description of the alleged procedural error, and supporting evidence.

- **Step 2: Acknowledgment & administrative check (within 3 business days upon receipt)**

EIT Water will acknowledge receipt of the appeal. The Operations Manager overseeing the process will perform a preliminary check to confirm the request meets the deadline and admissible grounds. Late or incomplete submissions will be dismissed without further review.

- **Step 3: Independent Review (within 10 business days)**

If deemed admissible, the case will be submitted to an independent Appeal Committee (comprising designated EIT Water officers not involved in the original evaluation process) to review the case files and evaluation records.

- **Step 4: Final Decision & Outcome (within 15 business days of filing)**

The Appeal Committee issues a final binding administrative decision:

- Rejected: The procedure was followed correctly; the original award decision stands.
- Upheld: A procedural error was identified that impacted the evaluation. EIT Water will re-evaluate the proposal under the correct procedure or take appropriate corrective action.

The decision will be communicated to the tenderer in writing and concludes EIT Water's internal appeal process.