

# National Education Commission



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

**Website Design, Develop, Deploy and Maintenance of the  
National Education Commission (NEC) Website**

<http://nec.gov.lk/>

Issued by **National Education Commission**

**August 2021**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Overview

The National Education Commission has issued this Request for Proposal (RFP) in order to select and contract with a service provider (“vendor”) to create a new website <http://nec.gov.lk/> that is a modern, highly attractive and built with responsive web design.

The National Education Commission (NEC) is seeking proposals from highly qualified, experienced website development service providers to design, develop, deploy and maintain its public-facing official website. The chosen strategic partner must be a service provider that has experience in managing government website design projects, and expertise with best practices regarding:

- 1.1.1. successful website design
- 1.1.2. user experience and usability testing
- 1.1.3. information architecture
- 1.1.4. website development and deployment
- 1.1.5. content strategy
- 1.1.6. social media integration
- 1.1.7. search engine optimization
- 1.1.8. Responsive design.

This RFP does not obligate the “vendor” to award a contract or complete the project and the NEC reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

### 1.2. About National Education Commission

The National Education Commission is located in 1st Floor, Block 5, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7. The current population is 35 with approved cadre of 45. The NEC’s organizational structure consists of following divisions.

- i. Policy Analysis and Research Division
- ii. Standards and Certification Division & Council for Educational Standards and Certification (CESC)
- iii. Information and Publication Division
- iv. Administration and Finance Division

The current website was developed in 2013 by Cyber Concepts (Pvt) Ltd and particular entity do the maintains.

### 1.3. Project Timeline

Project Timeline Dates	
RFP Release Date	15 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Written Questions Due	30 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Response to Vendor Questions	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Proposal Deadline	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Completion of Proposal Evaluations	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Presentations by Selected Vendors	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Final Vendor Selection	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
Anticipated Website Launch	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022

#### 1.4. National Education Commission (NEC) Contact Information

This RFP is issued by NEC, 1st Floor, Block 5, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7. The points of contact for all questions or requests for additional information are:

##### Technical Inquiry Contact

Mrs.Dumani Jayasinghe  
Programme Officer (Information),  
National Education Commission  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Block 5  
Bandaranaike Memorial International  
Conference Hall (BMICH)  
Bauddhaloka Mawatha  
Colombo 7  
Email: dumznec@gmail.com

##### Contracting Contact

Mr.Champika Fonseka  
Administrative Officer  
National Education Commission  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Block 5  
Bandaranaike Memorial International  
Conference Hall (BMICH)  
Bauddhaloka Mawatha  
Colombo 7  
Email:[sponec@slt.lk/](mailto:sponec@slt.lk/)  
[champika.fonseka@gmail.com](mailto:champika.fonseka@gmail.com)  
Phone: 0112662064 / 070-5629292

All contact with personnel employed by the NEC except for the contact persons named above with respect to this RFP shall be prohibited. Improper contact may constitute grounds for rejection of your proposal.

#### 1.5. RFP Inquiries

All inquiries regarding this RFP including requests for additional information or clarification and proposed modifications or amendments to the RFP must be submitted in writing in accordance with 1.4 above. All inquiries must be received no later than 2.00 p.m. on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and must be labeled “NEC Website Design, Develop, Deploy and Maintenance” Each inquiry must include the inquirer’s name, service provider, telephone number and email address. Each inquiry should begin by referencing the RFP page number and section to which it relates.

The NEC will attempt to provide any assistance or additional information of a reasonable nature that may be requested by interested vendors. Telephone calls **will not** be accepted regarding this RFP.

Inquiries received after 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021, 2.00 p.m. deadline **will not** be considered. All inquiries received before the deadline will be compiled.

Responses to inquiries will be emailed.

#### 1.6. Terms of Service

The NEC wishes to engage a vendor for the duration of this project and regular maintenance services and on-call services. Specific deliverables related to the scope of work for this project will be included in the final agreement.

## 2. Goals and Background

### 2.1. Project Objectives and Goals

The primary objectives and goals of the website development are as follows:

- 2.1.1 **Interactive and Engaging Website** – We are seeking to develop our website to include an intuitive, easy-to-use interface that allows residents, other stakeholders to complete their tasks quickly and easily regardless of the device they are using. The solution should be also be easy to maintain for our administrators and content creators and increase productivity.

2.1.2 **Purpose of our New Website** – Our new site should:

- Project/improve the image of the organization through the website by disseminating education policy documents, research articles and reports along with up-to-date upcoming events/news
- Serve the needs of stakeholders by letting them easily find what they are seeking in pleasant and delightful experience, providing them with access to key services on a 24x7 basis, allowing them to share information and interact with our staff.
- Promote transparency of our government by making it easy for us to share and post information, and for our users to find and interact with the information.
- Be strategic and nimble, and focus on making our content useful, interactive and engaging. Up To Date information should be available for all the stakeholders.

2.1.3 **Target audience** – We consider all the users of our web site are very important stakeholders. Our website is our digital front door and our goal is to focus on the needs of our stakeholders, and on improving our interactions and engagement with our stakeholders. (please refer 2.2)

2.1.4 **Strategic Partnership** – We want a vendor partner who understands the government policies and needs, who will help guide us to where we want to be today, and provide ongoing services and support to keep us there in the future.

2.1.5 **Research Based Design** – We want a site that meets the unique needs of our community, and are not looking for a cookie-cutter or templated solution. Our vendor should employ a strategic research-based and data-driven process to gather input, define expectations and design a consistent, user-friendly navigation framework for the website that meets the needs of all users.

2.1.6 **Responsive Site** – Visitors to our site will utilize a wide variety of devices to access our website, including computers, tablets and mobile smartphones. Our new website should automatically detect the screen resolution of any device and respond with a view of the site that is optimized specifically for that screen. This will ensure that all users will be able to view our site, no matter what device they are using.

2.1.7 **Conformation to the standards** - Our new website should comply with

- World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C)
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and
- The vendor should follow best practices, voluntary standards and guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), and train our users in creating accessible content.
- In addition, should be aligned with government policies and web standards.

[https://www.icta.lk/icta-assets/uploads/2016/03/Government\\_web\\_standards.v3.pdf](https://www.icta.lk/icta-assets/uploads/2016/03/Government_web_standards.v3.pdf)

2.1.8 **Flexible Solution** – The new site should build upon proven and accepted website development standards while maintaining flexibility to easily grow and add new functionality over time and with minimal cost. The solution should also accommodate existing auxiliary department sites to maintain a unique look and feel, but share overall infrastructure and features.

2.1.9 **Robust Hosting Environment** – we are seeking a hosted website solution that should include:

- Hosting in reliable data centers
- Guaranteed uptime of 99.9% backed by a Service Level Agreement (SLA)

- Full disaster recovery to a backup data center with less than 60 minutes site restoration and less than 15 minutes data replication.
- Complete Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) mitigation solution to detect and mitigate malicious cyber-attacks.

2.1.10 **Evolutionary SaaS Solution** – The vendor’s hosted Software as a Service (SaaS) content management solution (CMS) should be in a state of constant evolution and improvement. The annual subscription fee should cover ongoing support plus regular monthly updates and improvements to existing features of the CMS and incorporate new enhancements and features over time. This will enable us to adapt to an evolving marketplace and for our site to continually meet our stakeholder’s needs.

2.1.11 **Simplify and Streamline Administration** – The solution should:

- Simplify website administration, allowing users of all skill levels to update assigned sections of the website.
- Streamline business operations and reduce the amount of time that IT spends on enhancing and maintaining the site.

## 2.2. Target Audiences

Audiences served by the website will include:

2.2.1 Educationists

2.2.2 Specially the government organizations as Ministry of Education (MOE), National Institute of Education (NIE), University Grants Commission (UGC), Technical and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), children secretariat and other relevant agencies/departments, and etc.

2.2.3 Government and private universities, faculties, departments and students.

2.2.4 Collage of Educations (NCoE) and students

2.2.5 Provincial, zonal, divisional educations departments.

2.2.6 Policy making institutes and researchers.

2.2.7 Non-Government Organizations (NGO’s) and Donor Agencies.

2.2.8 Community members and organizations

2.2.9 Local, international institutes and media

2.2.10 All the schools, teachers and students

NEC website should be designed mainly to project the national level education policy making responsibility thereby increase its inquiries through a strong internet presence. Yet, it will act as an information dissemination portal on education policy to the prospective stakeholders in an accurate and updated manner.

## 2.3. Our Current Environment

This is a summary of our existing website environment:

2.3.1 **Existing Website** – The existing website was launched in 2013

2.3.2 **Content Management** – The website consists of web pages managed by any number of admins, editors and authors can be created using the admin panel

2.3.3 **Content Strategy** – Approximately 15 pages are managed through the content management system.

We anticipate a significant number of pages on the new website and would like vendors to provide best practices and possibly, additional training or consulting services, for content strategy. Vendors should also provide best practices and suggestions for developing content with plain language standards.

2.3.4 **Website Documents** – The site contains approximately 234 documents (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and PDF).

- 2.3.5 **Website Platform** – The site has been developed with using Wordpress (php, js, mysql and HTML)
- 2.3.6 **Website Hosting** – The site is hosted on a shared server platform owned by Cyber Concepts and it is located Dallas, USA

### 3. Scope of Work

#### 3.1. Vendor Experience and Development Criteria

Preference will be given to vendors with experience developing government websites, with special attention given to vendors' breadth of experience, references, number of years of experience and expertise of staff.

Additional development criteria include:

- 3.1.1 **Collaborative Effort** – The website will be developed through the cooperation of the NEC and the vendor, and facilitated under the supervision of a dedicated project management professional in the direct employ of the vendor.
- 3.1.2 **Skilled Team** – Vendor will supply a team of user experience, design and development professionals to supplement the development process led by the project manager. This team should include staff members skilled in government website user experience, navigation and information architecture, government website design, accessibility, and support and training of the content management system.
- 3.1.3 **Proven Development Process** – Vendor should have a proven development process and flexible timeline structure that favors the availability and time commitment of the NEC.
- 3.1.4 **Proven Content Management System** – The proposed content management software must be a proven platform for website development and government website architecture. Development that is requested and approved by the NEC should be performed by the vendor utilizing agile software development methodologies that encourage collaboration between the developer and the NEC.
- 3.1.5 **Internal Development Staff** – The NEC prefers a vendor utilizing its own development staff rather than subcontracting pieces of the project development to additional vendors.

#### 3.2. Design Guidelines and Qualifications

The design of the website should be welcoming, attractive and created by a member or members of the vendor's professional design staff. The final version of the design should be a collaborative effort between the NEC and the vendor, incorporating elements that effectively represent the NEC's brand and image through a data- driven and consultative development process.

The vendor should utilize a data-driven design process to gather information to complete a comprehensive design of our website. The techniques should include the best practices of usability and user experience:

- 3.2.1 **Stakeholder survey** – NEC will organize stakeholder discussion forum with the purpose of identifying stakeholder requirements, validating goals and tasks for the new website.
- 3.2.2 **Accessibility validation** – the vendor should analyze the accessibility of the current site and make recommendations for the new site.



- 3.2.3 **Site analytics** – the vendor should utilize historical site analytics to understand patterns and information useful to the development of the new site.
- 3.2.4 **Mobile usability** – the vendor should analyze the current site for mobile usability and review the mobile site statistics to understand the needs of the current visitors.
- 3.2.5 **User usability testing** – usability testing allows vendor to conduct user research with participants in their natural environment to test interaction and identify issues with navigation and layout.

The result of the usability design study should be a written report with design recommendations and a wireframe version of the proposed new website that will be used to develop homepage and interior page design concepts.

Specific design guidelines include:

- 3.2.6 **Accessibility** – Website design and associated elements should comply with international standards
- 3.2.7 **Consistent Website Design** – Website design must remain consistent throughout all pages to maximize usability, except where differentiating between departments or sections of the website as requested by the NEC.
- 3.2.8 **Design Overview** – Website design must be visually appealing, incorporating the NEC’s colors and logo where appropriate.
- 3.2.9 **Design Process** – The vendor shall develop an original design for the NEC and over a period of time during the development of the website, consult with key members of the NEC’s website development committee to make revisions and alterations to the vendor’s original design submission.
- 3.2.10 **Easy Updating** – Design elements should include background images, photographs, logos and buttons that are easily updated or swapped out by our staff at any time and without incurring any additional implementation or update charges.
- 3.2.11 **Website Design and Content Ownership** – Ownership of the website design, copyright and all content should be transferred to the NEC upon completion of the project.

### 3.3. Responsive Website

The vendor is expected to produce a responsive website for the NEC to meet the needs of users accessing the site on a variety of devices, including computers, tablets and smart phones. Vendor must have proven success in previous responsive design projects. The solution should automatically detect the screen resolution of any device and respond with a view of the site that is optimized specifically for that screen. This will ensure that all users will be able to view our site, no matter what device they are using.

### 3.4. System Functionality

The vendor’s proposed content management system (CMS) should be a web- based application that provides the core of the entire development process, being both the platform for development and the tool by which system administrators and contributors can update the new website. The CMS may feature plug-in applications or modules that enhance the functionality of the website, though core features should center around ease-of-use, flexibility and, for ongoing stability, an established information architecture and hosting environment.

The CMS must allow non-technical content contributors the following abilities:

- 3.4.1. **User Dashboard**
- 3.4.2. **Automatic Sitemap**
- 3.4.3. **Content Expiration**
- 3.4.4. **Content Management**
- 3.4.5. **Content Preview**
- 3.4.6. **Content Scheduling**
- 3.4.7. **Hyperlinking**
- 3.4.8. **Menu Updates**
- 3.4.9. **Page Templates**
  - 3.4.9.1. Content publishers must have the option to use pre-created page templates to assist in the formatting and development of new content.
  - 3.4.9.2. Content publishers should have the ability to place widgets or content blocks on page templates that serve specific purposes and streamline the template building process. Widgets can represent any key function such as calendars, directory, e-notification, FAQs, search, etc. Widgets should have settings to customize their look and function to meet specific needs.
  - 3.4.9.3. Content publishers must have the option to share templates with and use templates from a wider community pool which shares consistent page development.
- 3.4.10. **Facility for document uploading and downloading**

The system shall also include uploading and downloading features for the use of administrative users.
- 3.4.11. **CMS Activity Reporting** – A report detailing all changes and activity taking place on the website through content contributors and administrators, which can be filtered by start and end dates, times, by content type and by action taken, and exportable.
- 3.4.12. **Content Categories** – Administrators shall have the ability to create content categories within CMS applications and modules and edit the parameters for categories.
- 3.4.13. **Emergency Live Support** – Designated administrators shall have access to live support for emergencies. Please specify the timeframes for emergency support.
- 3.4.14. **Graphics Administration** – Administration of on-site banners and graphics, with the ability to add new banners and on-site graphical elements and assign those elements to specified areas of the site
- 3.4.15. **Login History** – A separate history report detailing user login history, including the user type, the date and time of the attempted login, the IP address of the user and whether or not the login attempt was successful.
- 3.4.16. **Menu Administration** – Administrators shall have the ability to add, edit, update and move menu items, affecting overall site structure and organization.
- 3.4.17. **Permissions** – The permission system shall be divisible into both user administration and group administration, allowing permission levels to be attributed to groups to which users can be added.
- 3.4.18. **Site Search Statistics** – Access to site search statistics, including the ability to filter searched terms by date and time, which can also be exported.
- 3.4.19. **User-friendly URLs** – System should allow for creation of user-friendly URLs

### 3.5. System Administration

- 3.5.1. **Broken Link Review** – An administrative center for reviewing quality assurance, including detailing broken links on the website, including the referring page location so that links can be corrected.
- 3.5.2. **SSL Certificate** – If necessary, one or more SSL certificates to encrypt data contained in site transmissions.
- 3.5.3. **Website Analytics** – An administrative center for reviewing, filtering and exporting overall website statistics, including the ability to view statistics by page or section and presenting the information in a graphical representation.

### 3.6. System Features

- 3.6.1. **Accessibility Add-ons** – Accessibility software embedded in the website that offers users access to larger fonts and audible content
- 3.6.2. **Advanced Site Search** – Provide an internal site search that:
  - 3.6.2.1. Users should be able to sort search results by date, content, title or relevance; users should be able to filter by type of content and easily apply advanced search techniques, such as Boolean, if desired.
  - 3.6.2.2. Administrators should be able to tune the search results by using synonyms for common words or terms, and promote pages through the use of keywords.
  - 3.6.2.3. Search functionality should search web content as well as the contents of files (PDFs, Word Documents, etc.)
  - 3.6.2.4. Is contained exclusively within the NEC's site and not outsourced to an external page hosted by a search provider such as Google.
- 3.6.3. **Apply for certificate validation** - Users should be able to submit their application requesting for validation of certificate and obtain the certificate for the final decision and also they should be able to track the status of their application.
- 3.6.4. **Contact Us Form** – Capability for citizens to contact NEC staff through the use of a “contact us” form on the site for each division and department.
- 3.6.5. **Department/Division Pages** – A-Z Guide and Department/Division pages for navigating the site will be available, but as a secondary option; primary site organization will be citizen centric and function based.
- 3.6.6. **Document Archive** – A document archive for specified categories of documents with built-in filtering abilities and search capabilities.
- 3.6.7. **Document Storage** – An on-site document storage application with unlimited levels of folders, providing centralized storage of any type of file.
- 3.6.8. **E-Notifications** – Want a tool that provides a sign-up box allowing users to add their email addresses to receive important notices. Users should be able to set their preferences and should have their sign-up validated via a confirmation email. Functionality should be integrated with calendar, job postings, news, and RFP postings.
- 3.6.9. **Embedded Audio/Video/Media and Social Media** – Easy embedding of audio, video, media and social-networking applications. Disable the feedbacks and

comments.

- 3.6.10. **Event Calendar** – An event calendar application that allows an unlimited number of calendar categories or types to be added to the site, with an unlimited number of items allowed to be added within each individual category. The following features should also be available:
  - 3.6.10.1. Capability to set up calendar events as single or recurring events, with options for daily, weekly, monthly or annual recurrences.
  - 3.6.10.2. Calendar events shall provide space for full descriptions including the ability to post images, tables and video within the description.
  - 3.6.10.3. The site visitor shall be able to view calendars by a list of events, a week view or a month view.
  - 3.6.10.4. Calendars shall be filterable by category, a start date and an end date, with the ability to search for keywords.
  - 3.6.10.5. Ability for site visitors to subscribe to updates from individual calendar categories through e-mail (HTML or plain-text) or SMS text messages.
- 3.6.11. **Event Registration** – Capability for citizens to easily register for events, and/or make appointments on the website. Registration for appointments must be secure so that registrant information is not publicly available.
- 3.6.12. **FAQ Tool** – Solution should have a FAQ application that allows an unlimited number of FAQ categories or types to be added to the site, with an unlimited number of items allowed to be added within each individual category.
- 3.6.13. **Language Translation** – Solution should have functionality to have multiple language translations. Specifically, we would like to include the following languages in our solution: Sinhala, Tamil & English
- 3.6.14. **Mapping** – Solution should include image mapping tools to create clickable maps or images with multiple hyperlinked points
- 3.6.15. **News Posting** – The solution should have the ability for use to post press releases, features stories and “what’s new” content on the site. News content should have an auto archiving functionality to archive posts after a certain time frame. The News should also have RSS feeds automatically available if desired by website visitors.
- 3.6.16. **One-Click Social Media** – Provide the ability to cross-post content from the CMS to the NEC’s social networking accounts.
- 3.6.17. **Online Polling** – The solution should have the ability to create and provide a poll on the website. Depending on the poll settings, the poll will appear on the public website inside a polls widget. The functionality should include the ability to add, edit, import, export and copy the poll. The admin should be able to define poll categories and capture/display poll results.
- 3.6.18. **Surveys**-System should facilitate conducting online surveys through the website defined by NEC time to time
- 3.6.19. **Photo Slideshows** – Creation of slideshows using multiple images and common tools found in the image management portion of the website CMS. This includes the ability to alter the order, speed, transition type, duration and layout of on- site slideshows.

- 3.6.20. **Remote Login and Update** – Secure access for employees to work remotely and/or update the site through the use of a mobile device.
- 3.6.21. **RFP Posts** – Should include an RFP postings where RFPs can be posted along with amendments and updates. RFPs should be schedulable and should have the capability to automatically expire on a certain date to ensure that the site is always up-to-date.
- 3.6.22. **RSS Feeds** – Solution should have feeds to keep users and subscribers up-to-date on important events, news and announcements from the website. Users should be able to subscribe from any RSS reader.
- 3.6.23. **Service Directory** – A service directory organizes the functions of an organization instead of departments. This is key to serving the needs of the community by letting users search by topic or services. The service directory should allow users to search by keyword and should filter by category.
- 3.6.24. **Single Sign-on** – Should have a component where registered users can log in, view and update their information, all from their dashboard. Registered members can be added through the CMS, imported from a spreadsheet or users can add themselves via the frontend user interface.
- 3.6.25. **Staff Directory** – A staff directory with unlimited levels of divisions, departments and groups, with options for expanded staff biographies and images; e-mail addresses associated with directory listings shall be automatically obscured from automated methods e-mail collection.
- 3.6.26. **User-centered Content** – Organization of the site content will be functional and user-centered for ease of use by citizens and business.

### 3.7. Ongoing Services

We are interested in understanding the ongoing services that you provide to all customers, such as:

- 3.7.1 **Access to On-Demand Training Library** – Do you have an on-demand library of training videos and materials?
- 3.7.2 **Annual Consulting Hours** – Do you offer a certain number of consulting hours as part of the base annual fee? Can these consulting hours be used each to help us keep our website fresh and engaging? For example, we may have some mini-projects such as creating or redesigning buttons, etc.
- 3.7.3 **Free Website Re-Design** – Do you offer a free site refresh at the end of the contract period? What is included in the free re-design?
- 3.7.4 **Training and Best Practice Webinars** – Do you offer regular training and best practice webinars? Are these webinars recorded and viewable at a later date?

### 3.8. Optional Services

We are also interested in understanding other additional professional services available with your solution:

- 3.8.1 **Accessibility Consulting** – Do you offer any assistance with helping us comply with accessibility issues and creating accessible content?
- 3.8.2 **Advanced Website User Experience Analysis** – Do you offer any advanced services to provide an in-depth analysis of our user's needs and expectations?
- 3.8.3 **Advanced Training** – Do you offer any advanced training or onsite training

options beyond the base package? Or do you offer an annual refresher training for existing and new users who may have missed the original training?

- 3.8.4 **Content Strategy** – Do you offer any advanced training or assistance to help us with managing our content, working with users to write in the plain language style or review our existing content?
- 3.8.5 **Dedicated Account Manager** – Do you offer an option to have a dedicated account manager to contact for any support issues?
- 3.8.6 **Health Check Analysis** – Do you offer any ongoing services to help us monitor the health and usefulness of our site?
- 3.8.7 **Monthly Office Hours** – Do you offer monthly office hours where we can call in during a set time to get answers to non-critical issues?
- 3.8.8 **New User Training Webinars** – Do you offer scheduled or periodic training webinars for new users?
- 3.8.9 **Premium Disaster Recovery** – Do you offer a premium disaster recovery solution beyond your base package that would give us 99.99% uptime guarantee and less than 5 minute recovery time?
- 3.8.10 **Site Analytics Reporting** – Do you offer ongoing assistance with helping us analyze our site statistics and recommending changes to make sure our website continues to meet our users' needs?

### 3.9. Technology/Platform Requirements

- 3.9.1 **Browser Support** – The NEC is looking for the new website to support mobile and desktop versions of Apple Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Edge, and Mozilla Firefox. The site should support all versions of the browsers that have been released within the last 5 years.
- 3.9.2 **DDoS Mitigation** – The hosted solution should protect the website against Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) and other cyberattacks, and should be able to detect and mitigate malicious traffic within seconds. The solution should have smart- detection technology that can identify the source and analyze the behavior of the attack.
- 3.9.3 **Disaster Recovery** – In the event of any outage impacting the primary data center, the hosting solution must have a disaster recovery or backup data center where our website visitors will continue to be able to access our site. The Recovery Time Objective (RTO) should be 60 minutes or less and the data replication (Recovery Point Object or RPO) should be 15 minutes or less.
- 3.9.4 **Hosting Data Center and Backup Data Center** – The hosting platform must be in a certified data center with multiple layers of security access, redundant ISP providers, backup power and redundant generator, and firewall protection (should comply with ICTA guideline)
- 3.9.5 **Page Load Time** – The solution should ensure that pages load on an average of 1.5 seconds or less.
- 3.9.6 **Programming Experience** – Explain your service provider's experience with other programming capabilities that would be useful in developing websites.
- 3.9.7 **Responsive CMS Recommendation** – The NEC is looking to have the vendor recommend a content management system. Explain your service provider's

experience utilizing recommended CMS in designing responsive websites.

- 3.9.8 **System Uptime Guarantee** – The hosting platform should have a guaranteed uptime of 99.9% and be backed by a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- 3.9.9 **Web and Database Servers** – Preference will be given to vendors that split website management between web servers and SQL database servers in order to optimize load time and efficiency in the hosting environment.

### 3.10. Maintenance and Support

The vendor's CMS, including all features and modular applications associated with the CMS, must have qualified and available support included as a part of ongoing services to maintain the CMS, using guidelines, structures and materials meeting the following criteria:

- 3.10.1 **Support** – The vendor shall provide access to live support available via e-mail or phone during vendor's normal business hours. The support team must be fluent in the functionality and uses of both the content management system's features and associate applications and modules.
- 3.10.2 **Support Materials** – 24/7 access to support materials including, but not limited to: online training manuals, support FAQs, instructional videos.
- 3.10.3 **Support Service Level Agreement** – In all submitted proposals, vendors shall be able to produce a Service Level Agreement that details guarantee of customer support as well as a service escalation process.

While website content updates are to be managed by the NEC through the CMS, vendor must commit to regular maintenance and updating of the CMS and associated applications for the purposes of keeping the existing software up-to- date as well as introducing new functionality and applications.

Vendor shall commit to:

- 3.10.4 **CMS Development Process** – An internal process dedicated to reviewing new technologies and implementing development projects in order to provide a more robust CMS with additional features and applications.
- 3.10.5 **CMS Improvements** – Regular maintenance of the CMS to improve existing functionality and, when appropriate, take the NEC's requests into consideration.
- 3.10.6 **CMS New Features** – Rolling upgrades of the solution that strengthen and update the CMS's functionality and associated applications.
- 3.10.7 **Ongoing Maintenance/CMS New Releases** – No down time of the website with new releases.
- 3.10.8 **Software Service Level Agreement** – In all submitted proposals, vendors shall be able to produce a Service Level Agreement that details guarantees of upgrades and the dedicated process for improving the software purchased by the NEC.

### 3.11. Additional Options

Although the NEC has these specific requirements, it is also interested in your ideas for the approach of redesigning the style of the NEC's website. We encourage respondents to consider and propose alternative solutions and recommendations. We are particularly

interested in specific web functionality that the service provider may have already developed and deployed for other customers.

## 4. Evaluation of Proposals

### 4.1. Evaluation of Submitted Proposals

The NEC intends to conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. All proposals that are properly submitted will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed below. All proposals that are properly submitted will be evaluated by the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) that will make recommendations for the award.

### 4.2. Evaluation Criteria

This set of criteria will be used to evaluate each vendor's proposal. A contract will be awarded to the vendor that best satisfies the overall requirements of the RFP. Each proposal will be evaluated based on the level of creativity, differentiation and measurability.

4.2.1 Long-term Stability of the vendor and Partnership **(15%)**

4.2.2 Experience and Capacity **(20%)**

- Government websites
- Other domain related websites
- Any other related experience
- Proven Capacity of the service provider

4.2.3 Features and Function of CMS **(20%)**

4.2.4 Technical Expertise **(15%)**

4.2.5 Client List and References **(10%)**

4.2.6 Pricing **(20%)**

NEC expect 50% out of 80% (40 marks out of 80) marks on technical competencies (4.2.1 to 4.2.5) and relative mark on pricing will be offered to each successful bid based on the other quoted prices.

### 4.3. Evaluation

Proposals will be distributed to the members of the TEC for evaluation utilizing the criteria set forth above.

### 4.4. Interviews and Demonstrations

Only qualified vendors are invited for an interview and a demonstration of the proposal in front of the TEC.

#### **Evaluation criteria of the interview**

- *Compliance with the NEC objectives*
- *Openness to collaboration*
- *Confidence with the deadlines*
- *Work readiness of the service provider*
- *Design and the creativity of the required features*
- *Communication compatibility*
- *How well-prepared and organized to the interview*



#### 4.5. Recommendation for Award

After the interviews have been conducted, the TEC shall recommend to the procurement committee the Successful Vendor, based on the outcome of the interview process.

The procurement committee reserves the right to make an award, not to make an award or to cancel this RFP either before or after the date of the RFP response deadline.

#### 4.6. Contract Discussions

Upon approval by the committee, the NEC shall enter into contract discussions with the Successful Vendor. If the terms and conditions of a contract cannot be successfully established within a reasonable amount of time (as determined by the procurement committee), then contract discussions will be terminated and contract discussions with the next highest-ranking Vendor will commence. Negotiations shall continue at the sole option of the procurement committee until a contract is signed and approved or all proposals are rejected and the RFP is withdrawn.

#### 4.7. Notice of Award

The award of contract will be made in written. For the purposes of this RFP, an award shall be deemed to have been made upon the completion of contract negotiations.

### 5. Vendor Qualifications and Obligations

All questions contained in this RFP must be answered. Failure by a vendor to answer all questions may result in the proposal being rejected.

#### 5.1. Documents to be Submitted

Vendor must submit the following information to be considered (include the corresponding item number with each response):

##### 5.1.1 Executive Summary

5.1.1.1 Summarize on one page or less the key products and services you are proposing. Explain which RFP requirements these products are intended to meet and the benefits if we use these products and services.
5.1.1.2 Summarize your overall strategy and approach for delivering web design and development projects.

##### 5.1.2 Corporate Profile

5.1.2.1 Provide a brief overview of the service provider's history and philosophy.
5.1.2.2 State the year the service provider started in the business of selling CMS solutions and web design services.
5.1.2.3 Where is the service provider's registered office located?
5.1.2.4 Describe the process of how your company (Vendor) works with remote customers

5.1.2.5	Provide the total number of employees and the number of employees in user experience and web design.
5.1.2.6	List the company (Vendor)'s sales in the previous four years
5.1.2.7	Specify the number of public sector vs. private sector clients.
5.1.2.8	Indicate whether the business is a parent or subsidiary.
5.1.2.9	What percentage of revenues does this offered product represent to your company (Vendor) versus other products and/or services?
5.1.2.10	Indicate if the company (Vendor) incurred an annual operating loss in the last 5 years.
5.1.2.11	Has the company (Vendor) had a workforce reduction during the past 5 years?

**5.1.3 Vendor System Information**

5.1.3.1	For hosted solutions, describe your hardware and software configuration
5.1.3.2	Describe the architecture, languages and tools used to develop your proposed solution.
5.1.3.3	Provide details on the licensing requirements and a copy of software license agreements in your response.
5.1.3.4	Describe your DDoS Mitigation solution.
5.1.3.5	Describe your disaster recovery solution, including Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO)

**5.1.4 Services and Implementation**

5.1.4.1	Provide an in-depth list of your service provider's capabilities.
5.1.4.2	Explain your service provider's experience in developing responsive websites.
5.1.4.3	Describe your organization's experience with implementing multi-lingual websites.
5.1.4.4	Identify what uniquely distinguishes your offering from your competitors.
5.1.4.5	Describe your experience in implementing public sector and government market solutions.
5.1.4.6	Describe your implementation approach, project management tools and methodologies for the proposed solution.
5.1.4.7	Submit a detailed implementation plan which will address requirements, customizations, content migration, implementation schedule, delivery milestones and responsibilities for each party in your response.

5.1.4.8

Describe any optional services that could be included with our solution:

- Advanced training
- Content strategy
- Departmental branding
- Site health checks
- Site analytics reporting and etc.

**5.1.5 Client Examples**

5.1.5.1

Provide three examples of responsive websites the company (Vendor) has developed. Clearly explain the design objectives, the outcome and whether your service provider managed the entire site or specific modules or applications within the site

5.1.5.2

Provide three client references in your proposal, including a current contact name, organization name, phone number and email.

**5.1.6 Project Team**

5.1.6.1

The success of the design and implementation depends on several factors including experienced project management, a planned approach and coordination of content population. The selected vendor must provide an experienced project manager to lead the implementation process.

5.1.6.2

Define the process, project management and team structure that would execute this type of solution.

5.1.6.3

Define and describe the team members that would execute a project for the NEC. Identify their experience, roles and length of time with your organization. Specify the primary point of contact.

**5.1.7 Documentation**

5.1.7.1

Provide a list of the technical documentation the vendor will provide prior engaging to an agreement.

5.1.7.2

How often is documentation updated?

5.1.7.3

Is online assistance available with your system?

**5.1.8 Training**

5.1.8.1

Describe the training that accompanies the system implementation.

5.1.8.2

What types of training materials are provided?

5.1.8.3

Do you offer on-site training?

**5.1.9 Software Support and Maintenance**

5.1.9.1

Describe the software support/maintenance programs available.

5.1.9.2 Does the maintenance program include all future software upgrades?
5.1.9.3 Describe the hours of support you provide? Where is it located? Is it staffed by your own employees or is it a third-party facility? Briefly discuss technical support staffing numbers, staff experience, etc.
5.1.9.4 Describe your service call escalation policy.
5.1.9.5 What are recommended client staffing requirements for ongoing support of the proposed solution? Discuss in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs).
5.1.9.6 Do you have a guaranteed uptime? Describe your service level agreement for uptime.

**5.1.10 Warranty**

The NEC requires that a warranty be included with the proposed solution.

5.1.10.1 Describe the warranty offered with your proposed solution.
5.1.10.2 Do the same support commitments apply during the warranty period as during the maintenance contract period?

**5.1.11 Costs**

The NEC prefers a service provider quote on the full website design, development and hosting. Given that statement, we also want to ensure a competitive bid from each potential vendor.

It is required that each vendor provides a budgetary proposal for the full scope of the work described in this RFP.

Provide detailed pricing information for the proposed solution. Include list prices and discounted prices. Break pricing down by project phases if appropriate.

**Services and Support Costs**

5.1.11.1 Implementation of Web Site Design. Cost breakdown with deliverables of main features.
5.1.11.2 Implementation Services
5.1.11.3 Training Services (if Applicable)
5.1.11.4 Software Support and Maintenance
5.1.11.5 Hourly billing rates for each job classification that will or could be utilized during the project and/or post “go-live”.
5.1.11.6 Other Services and Costs (Specify)

**Ongoing Costs**

5.1.11.7 Annual Hosting or Subscription Fee
5.1.11.8 Hourly Rates for Custom Development

5.1.11.9  
Other Ongoing Costs

**Optional Costs**

5.1.11.1  
Provide a brief description and cost associated with options provided under Section 3.8.

**5.1.12 Payment Schedule**

5.1.12.1. Provide an expected payment schedule against deliverables.

**5.2. Pending Litigation**

Vendors must list and summarize all pending or threatened litigation, administrative or regulatory proceedings or similar matters. The Successful Vendor shall have a continuing obligation to disclose any such actions during the period of this RFP process and any contract resulting from this RFP.

**6. Submission Format and Delivery Requirements**

**6.1. Proposal Response Delivery**

2 separate sealed copies of the proposals (original and duplicate) shall be sent, via by hand or registered post. Final proposal should be consists with two separate sealed proposals respectively, technical proposal and financial proposal. Each proposal should be indicated the name of the proposal on the top of the envelope.

**6.2. Date and Hour of Submission**

Response must be received on or before 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 2.00 p.m. Any proposal that has not been received at the above address by 2.00pm on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021 shall be disqualified from further consideration.

**6.3. Acceptance or Rejection of Submissions**

The Procurement Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities or irregularities and to accept any proposal it determines to be in the NEC’s best interest. The acceptance of any proposal submission shall not in any way cause the NEC to incur any liability or obligation to vendor, financial or otherwise.

The Procurement Committee may cancel the RFP in whole or part without making any award at its sole discretion, without any liability being incurred by the NEC to any vendor for any expense, cost, loss or damage incurred or suffered by the vendor as a result of such withdrawal.

**6.4. Costs for Document Development**

Costs for developing the response to this RFP are entirely the responsibility of the proposing party and shall not be chargeable in any manner to the NEC. All Vendors agree to provide all such additional information as, and when, requested at their own expense. No vendor in supplying such information shall be allowed to change the pricing or other cost quotations originally submitted.

## 6.5. Proposal Validity

A proposal submitted in response to this RFP is irrevocable. The Procurement Committee reserves the right to withdraw a bid acceptance at any time if in the opinion of the TEC the vendor is unwilling or unable to enter into a form of contract satisfactory to the NEC. Acceptance will be defined as the NEC selecting you as our provider of service for the intent of negotiating a contract for services.

## 6.6. Contract Evaluation and Award

The Procurement Committee reserves the right to execute any of the following options:

- Issue no contract award for any of the services described within this RFP.
- The Procurement Committee is not obligated to accept the lowest price or most technologically advanced proposal.

## 7. Contract Negotiation and Execution

It is the intent of the NEC that after the successful vendor has been selected, the NEC and the selected vendor will enter into contract negotiations containing all terms and conditions of the proposed service. Any acceptance of a proposal is contingent upon the execution of a written contract and the NEC shall not be contractually bound to any bidder prior to the execution of such written contractual agreement. The contents of the bid submitted shall become part of the contractual obligation and incorporated by reference into the ensuing contract. The contract with a successful vendor will include penalties for non-performance and failure to meet the proposal implementation schedule.

Contract execution is contingent upon approval by the Procurement Committee.

### 7.1. Proposal Submission Certification

By submitting a proposal, vendor certifies that he or she has carefully examined all the documents for the project and has carefully and thoroughly reviewed this RFP, and understands the nature and scope of the work to be done and the terms and conditions thereof. The vendor further agrees that the performance time specified is a reasonable time.

### 7.2. Performance Bond

The acceptance of a bid proposal is contingent on vendor providing satisfactory proof that the vendor has adequate insurance coverage. It is in the NEC's sole discretion the amount of insurance coverage required for the period of work under this contract.