



Members Management System ITT – Replies to questions asked by potential bidders

Contents:

Pg. 1 - Replies to queries received up to 28.04.2016

Pg. 4 - Replies to queries received up to 02.05.2016

Pg. 6 - Replies to queries received up to 06.05.2016

Replies to queries received up to 28.04.2016

1. The gap between the present system and the proposed system is admirably large. Is the MIA intending to launch the new system in one phase 1 or is the project intended to be a multi-phased approach with feature prioritisation?

Answer > Considering the size of the new system we intend to contract for the full replacement application but deploy in mutually agreed phases according to a project plan which the successful supplier will propose and with which we agree.

2. Every project generally is characterised with two parameters: (I) a desired launch date, and (II) a maximum budget/effort allocation. Could MIA supply data on this?

Answer > It is the intention of the MIA to launch as soon as is technically and logistically possible. MIA has not set a fixed budget for this system but it will of course be guided accordingly by its advisors and internal team once the different proposals are evaluated.

3. Could the MIA provide a 'dummy' account to the member section to allow the bidder to analyse the present logged-in experience and workflows?

Answer > A dummy account would mean unrestricted access to the live system so this question needs to be assessed within the current security environment. Supervised access only from MIA offices can be considered for the successful bidder.

4. Following registration (presently <http://www.miamalta.org/Register.aspx>) is the applicant automatically added as a user to MIA's backend system or does the MIA perform any additional steps (such as manual, offline KYC) prior to manual acceptance?

Answer > No there are strict rules governing the acceptance of member in terms of qualifications and experience. These are vetted internally and the approved by Council. The members are then added to the system.

5. Is MIA intending to sell banner-space to third parties (as a source of revenue) or are banners only used for internal communication/notices? If the former should the bidder quote for a advertising management system?

Answer > It is the intention of the MIA to use banners both as a means for member communication, recruitment and other advertising by member firms, as well as MIA advertising as a revenue generator. It will help the bidder if an integrated advertising function is included as part of the banner management process. MIA banner sales and related prices can accompany the products list for sale (such as books) as made available for retail and that is already contemplated within the specifications of the portal.



6. In order to determine the level of infrastructural resilience required, could the MIA share some basic traffic data about the site? Example: (I) averaged monthly user count, (II) peak concurrent users, (III) averaged concurrent users, (IV) bandwidth consumer per month, and so on. Without this data providing a hosting quote is almost impossible.

Answer >

- i) averaged monthly user hit count = 6000**
- ii) peak concurrent users per hour = 80**
- iii) averaged concurrent users per hour = 15 (day times)**
- iv) bandwidth consumer per month = Not available.**

7. The present site doesn't seem to use encryption via SSL (at least not at Registration stage). Is it safe to assume that the bidder should provide for this?

Answer > MIA intends to have SSL or equivalent encryption for the new system to secure links between the web server and the user browsers. The site needs to be built with SSL in mind, irrespective of where the system will be hosted.

8. The system will need to send transactional email (e.g. password reminders). At present what mail server is being used for such? Should the bidder recommend a new system? Note this question does not refer to bulk emails (or newsletters) which we understand are being sent via Dmax e-Paper (page 38). Such emails are currently going through the local exchange server.

Answer > We will eventually be moving to Office 365 and a hosted email solution for both MIA and AIM.

9. Does the MIA envisage that any data is to be acquired from third party sources via API/XML? Example: (I) the 'APS Student loan Scheme' requires any data interchange, (II) the AIA form requires integration to an AIA database?

Answer > Although it may be likely that third party interfacing may be required such interfacing is outside the scope of this bid unless stated specifically otherwise as this will be in the remit of the third party concerned and outside the scope of this request for proposals.

10. In this vein can MIA provide additional detail relating to the SAGE integration and specifically how this is to occur (ref. sub-bullets in page 17 and ambiguity on this process on page 60).

Answer > MIA wishes to integrate all financial transactions generated by the various options within the portal to link in a seamless or batch mode according to the methods preferred by the SAGE support agents locally.

11. For the Professions Directory, is the member expected to allow/disallow public listing of some (or all) of his/her data? Thus allowing some details not to be shown in the public domain? Or is all data submitted here expected to be, by default, public?

Answer > Members can indicate that they can opt to protect certain aspects of their data to be held solely for restricted use between other members of the MIA and not be published to public domain.

12. It is understood from page 26 that MIA does not already have a preferred Electronic Payment Gateway supplier. Should this be recommended by the bidder or will it be determined by the MIA through a separate ITT or process?

Answer > Prospective bidders are encouraged to indicate their preferred payment gateway and relative charges thereto; however MIA is not limited to select the gateway that has been recommended by the winning bidder.



13. Some logic described on the document (e.g. page 29: Overseas members are given a 50% discount...). Is this logic fixed (i.e. An immutable percentage) or variable (may change over time to a different percentage or an altogether different discount method)? If the latter, would a change affect presently running subscriptions or will only have a future effect (i.e. New memberships from the point of change forward)?

Answer > These percentages are semi static and are changed only through council approval. It is obvious that the bidder will gain more versatility in the system if these percentages are maintained by the MIA system administrator. Changes in rates should be value dated so that these changes apply from the date given. Changes to these rates from a date do not affect previous calculations made.

14. Page 60 briefly discusses Data Migration. Can the MIA provide a data schema of the data set which is expected to be migrated? Is this data sanitised and thus ready for migration?

Answer > This data is absent. Bidders should pencil in a budgeted ballpark figure for transferring membership data from one portal to another.

15. Has MIA identified any project risks (and mitigation strategies related thereto)? If so can these be shared with the bidder?

Answer > MIA does not identify any particular risk(s) other than normal project related risks that need to be mitigated by both parties for a successful deployment.

16. Would the MIA prefer a waterfall or Agile/Scrum approach? In either scenario will the MIA dedicate sufficient technical project-management resources to support the successful bidder in the implementation of the project? Can details about such resources be made available?

Answer > Software Development technologies and methodologies are the prerogative of the bidder as long as the bidder can present costs related to the development of the total solution in their bid. MIA has limited internal resources typically suitable for such a deployment. It intends to follow the requirements as suggested by the successful supplier and use both internal and external professional support that is needed for a successful deployment following a project plan as agreed with the successful bidder.

17. Does the MIA have a specific technology preference (e.g. open source vs. proprietary or off-the-shelf vs. custom built)?

Answer > MIA does not have a platform preference.

18. What version of SAGE are you using so that we can investigate its integration?

Answer > Sage evolution version 7.00.209.

19. On Page 62 you are asking for "Vendor financial profile and viability", what exactly do you mean?

Answer > The objective is to ascertain the vendor's corporate financial standing.



Replies to queries received up to 02.05.2016

20. In Page 17, the ITT includes payment management. Can the MIA confirm that all purchases done online will need to be fully paid online (through credit card) and not in a mixed mode (eg. part online and part offline, or entirely offline).

Answer > It is aimed that where possible all payments are made online but the MIA will also need to be able to cater for offline payments. In this way a hybrid payment system is supported.

21. In Page 18, the ITT briefly discusses the functionality relating to job vacancy uploads. Can the MIA confirm whether it expects such adverts to be first manually reviewed and approved (by MIA personnel) or whether these will be published without review?

Answer > All adverts for recruitment made by approved employers are scrutinised by the MIA prior to publication.

22. In the response to Q&A 10 (relating to SAGE integration) can MIA specify whether beyond writing to SAGE (i.e. batch mode upload of transactions created on the site) the supplier is also to extract data from SAGE (such as to obtain user balance or show a more extensive transaction history contained in SAGE)? Specifically can MIA clarify which data sets are to be written TO (or extracted from) SAGE. The bidder would like to ensure that there's a clear demarcation in the data handled by the proposed software products (i.e. SAGE and the new system) so as to avoid data replication or data inconsistency.

Answer > The new system will need to write into and read from the accounting package. The system will write into SAGE all the financial transactions for Debit and Credit posting that are generated from the various functions of the system as specified. Additionally the system will need to read balances and individual account details relating to outstanding balances etc. The MIA are thinking on the lines of middleware that will most likely be the interface to/from the accounting package.

23. If precise data about SAGE integration is not available to the bidder prior to submission (as is the case with data migration) can the MIA confirm that the bidder may supply an indicative price (or effort estimate) which will be further clarified following full technical analysis with the successful bidder?

Answer > Yes the MIA can accept the budgetary estimate for this interface which will need to develop during implementation.

24. In the response to Q&A 14 (relating to data migration) although MIA can't provide a data schema, can MIA specify: (I) what is the average file-size of data per user (eg. 10Mb) which will need to be migrated? (II) what is the type of data attachments included in this user profile (eg. PDFs, Videos etc.)?, and (III) how many users presently exist which need to be migrated (e.g., 4000 profiles composed of 2,500 accountants and 1,500 students)?

Answer > As of 04.05.16, MIA members amount to 2,666 and students to 1,799. The fields containing their details need to be migrated along with any uploaded files in their account. Not all members/students have files allocated to their account. Such documents are normally scans in word or pdf formats and may also include outlook messages. For Members and non-member warrant holders, details pertaining to the previous and current year cpe activity needs to be migrated for monitoring purposes. For all registered users, accounting data will need to be migrated. Other documents which may need to be migrated include e-library items, forms etc.



25. Should the new system handle automatic data archiving of profiles (containing data of user profiles) or generic data (e.g. transactions) after a set period of time? If so what is this time frame? If so, and assuming that the new system will be continuing more data per user, what is the estimated size (in Mbs) of each member profile to be eventually archived?

Answer > All archiving will be made in a conscious administrative effort by the system administrator and not part of an automated process. Data volumes are difficult to anticipate as the MIA will encourage various data elements to be associated with the members as the portal grows. The bidders are to assume that various data elements and large objects may need to be stored down to member level if necessary. Besides there are General MIA data objects of considerable size that may involve lectures, social events etc which objects will be considered voluminous but which will need to reside on the portal.

26. With reference to page 21 (Section 3.4.9) of the ITT a discussion on the Intranet application occurs. Can the MIA specify: (I) whether the bidder is being asked to quote for a new Intranet or whether the information on such is being put forward for our information, (II) what tool is presently being used for the Intranet, and (III) whether any integration requirements with such are foreseen.

Answer > As indicated on page 21 (Section 3.4.9) of the ITT, The MIA will be retaining the use of a third party application (my committee.com) to cater for these functionalities. No specific integration requirements are envisaged at the moment however future developments may request these ad-hoc and separate from this ITT.

27. With reference to the SLA requested can MIA confirm that it shall handle the first line of support (i.e. Manage support requests from members and staff through an MIA help-desk) and that the bidder will offer second line support (i.e. Support to MIA's help-desk)?

Answer > The SLA being requested is one that will support the software system deployed. From an operational perspective, the MIA will always manage the first line support with its members with the strength of the software tools that are deployed.

28. In the case of online sale of books through the proposed system can MIA clarify how it will handle inventory? That is: will the book stock be manually updated in the CMS by a clerk to ensure no out of stock book are sold or is the system expected to integrate via API with a stock management system?

Answer > It is not contemplated to include inventory management as part of the new system; however the new system will assist operations if a simple reducing balance of inventory can be maintained. The bidder, according to the proposed system design will need to elaborate how this will be achieved in the proposed system without necessitating the full scope of typical inventory management being required.



Replies to queries received up to 06.05.2016

29. With reference to SAGE (MIA backend accounting system) updates (Page 60), can the Contracting Authority advice at a high level the suggested methodology (e.g. Rest API, DLL class libraries) to securely interface with the accounting package whilst keeping into consideration that the new MIA portal might be hosted on a cloud server. Such cloud server will be on a different domain/network where the MIA accounting package is hosted.

In continuation to the above, shall we safely assume that the current infrastructure managing the sage hosting environment is redundant hence no transactions will be impacted should maintenance on the application or hosting environment will be on done on the accounting system?

Answer > We are limited to the interfacing subject to the format allowed by the SAGE support team. We can allow the deposit of the debit and Credit posting into a middleware repository and updates can be done in periodic batch mode. Should however the current infrastructure for SAGE permit other types of interfacing then we will update accordingly.

We are not aware of the redundancy for the SAGE infrastructure so we have no information to answer the second part, however we do not think that the interface to be used would be one that needs the SAGE system to be up and running at all time as it will not be in real time but in periodic batch update mode and so we can use the middleware concept and batch mode updates to and from SAGE.

30. With reference to the "Data Migration" (Page 60) Can the Contracting Authority confirm that no data migration is required from the current Intranet functionality which is currently serviced by a third party application (Page 21).

Answer > The current third party application (my committee.com) is adequately covering this intranet functionality that does not need to be replicated or replaced for the foreseeable future and therefore no migration is envisaged.

31. 'Etc...' is mentioned 16 times. Sometimes it is obvious however sometimes it creates problems in not have a clear specification if the item is say, one dashboard report, 5 or a 100!

Answer > One needs to be more specific here. This question cannot be answered if we do not know what specific section is being queried.

32. 3.4 (item 1,2) p17 VAT, G/L Analysis. I assume that this is required at a later stage to export to Sage as G/L data with Vat Code rather than as Tariff Code.

Answer > All transactions passed on to SAGE need to be analysed by the GL account(s) that make up the entry as well as by the VAT group that facilitates the VAT return compilation.

33. 3.4 (item 6,7) p17 Management of List of Employer Firms' employees. Should this be a backend function only, or also a front end too? In which case are employees just entered without the facility to approve/disapprove this linkage?

Answer > This needs to be a backend administrator functionality.

34. 3.4 (item 13,14) p17 AIA/MIA. Application forms to be managed at BE only?

Answer > Assuming by 'BE' the question is referring to the backend then the management of applications is a backend administrator functionality.

35. 3.4 (item 21) p17 SMP business advisory interviews. Please elaborate, what is required?



Answer > Simply uploading and posting these videos.

36. 3.4 (item 26) p18 CPE Events. Are these similar to courses done to members on which hours done are redeemable against their CPE?

Answer > Yes these hours are claimed by the attendees in fulfilment of their annual mandatory CPE hours requirement.

37. 3.4 (item 27) p18 Books/Publication for Sale. Should system keep also a stock control, availability of these publications?

Answer > It is not the intention at this level.

38. 3.4 p19 Copy/Paste. Just a note: While most CMS editors allow copy/paste functionality this is never recommended. Applications like Word add too much rubbish-html which will increase the size of your HTML as well as often make it unusable for view in different browsers (especially in responsive mode) and in subsequent amendment of that page.

<http://stackoverflow.com/questions/9303812/clients-want-to-copy-paste-from-word-processors-rich-text-editors-will-make-it>

<https://www.realstorygroup.com/Blog/2169-CopyPasting-Word-to-Your-Web-CMS>

Answer > It is being acknowledged that the mere 'copy paste' as it was written can create compatibility and legibility issues and text need to be filtered out from unwanted control characters that will make it difficult to assume cross browser compatibility.

39. Invoicing. Always from 01/01 to 31/12 or depends on date of entry?

Answer > The invoice date needs to cover the whole calendar year range from 01.01 to 31.12 of any particular year.

40. Which browsers are targeted?

Answer > As wide a range as possible on PC's, Laptops, Tablets and mobile phones. Unfortunately some users still run older browsers although we should not penalise ourselves to encourage use of older browsers.

41. In what format will the legacy data be provided?

Answer > Legacy data will be provided through Microsoft SQL server database.

42. Does the mail system use any track activity – if so, will it need to be pulled back into the CRM?

Answer > The current third party mail system tracks the email campaign activity. This is a separate system and is not required to be inputted in the CRM.

43. Page 10: Are the Blogs and Polls within the same system or is traffic sent outside this system to separate systems?

Answer > The blogs and basic polls are to be included in the system.

44. Page 11: Is there a specific advertising provider or is this only advertising from MIA internally?

Answer > The advertising so far is contemplated to be managed by the MIA.

45. Page 18: Will the third parties have access to the back end to upload adverts?

Answer > Only MIA will have access to the backend besides the successful developers.



46. Page 21: Are there any limitations as to where documents can be stored? Is cloud storage out of the question?

Answer > No storage repository option will be excluded at this stage.

47. Page 22: Could you clarify what is meant by 'upload multiple documents under one title' please?

Answer > The system should allow for the upload of multiple images/videos/documents under one heading.

48. Page 36: Where is credit data get stored? Is such data within sage or the proposed system?

Answer > All accounting related data is to be stored within the accounting system – SAGE.
