

Request for Proposal (multiple private tender)

for preparing a
‘Roadmap and outlook for exoskeleton adoption
in the North Sea Region’

for InnovationQuarter as Lead Partner
of the NSR Interreg EXSKALLERATE consortium

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Inhoud

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1 Introduction

This is a Request for Proposals in a multiple private tender procedure for preparing a 'Roadmap and outlook for exoskeleton adoption in the North Sea Region', as part of the Work Package 6 in the NSR Interreg project EXSKALLERATE

(<https://northsearegion.eu/exskallerate/>)

2 Background information on the project

Across Europe, manufacturing and construction workers undertake physically strenuous activities which increase their risk of health problems, disability and sick leave. This leads to lower job attractiveness and job candidate scarcity, resulting in unfilled job openings that slow growth and competitiveness. This is particularly true for many North Sea Region SMEs, who are unaware of available solutions via exoskeleton adoption as solution developers tend to target large corporates.

As many as 44 million workers in the European Union (EU) are affected by workplace-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), at a total annual cost in excess of €240 billion to the European economy. Exoskeletons have the capacity to decrease the number of musculoskeletal injuries and increase quality of life at work, thereby reducing costs for a company in the long run.

The overall objective of EXSKALLERATE is to accelerate the adoption of exoskeletons into construction and industrial manufacturing SMEs, where heavy physical work leads to severe health issues, and thereby, strengthen SME competitiveness in the North Sea Region.

EXSKALLERATE contributes to SME competitiveness and occupational health of workers by making the North Sea Region a leading exoskeleton ecosystem. The consortium of business support organisations, clusters, and research institutes, will do this through 3 main activities:

- 1) Identifying SME challenges to influence the co-design of field labs where next-generation exoskeletons integrate improvements. Improved exoskeleton benefits are validated in end-user pilots sites.
- 2) Informative workshops for SMEs where exoskeleton experts present and receive feedback on tools to support SME decision making in exoskeleton adoption, a key challenge limiting adoption.
- 3) Transnational benchmarking to accelerate industrial exoskeleton standardisation (Needed for SME decision making).

The project is implemented by a partnership of 13 partner from 6 NSR countries

(<https://northsearegion.eu/exskallerate/meet-the-team/>):

- ✓ The Netherlands: InnovationQuarter, TNO Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, University of Twente
- ✓ Belgium: VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), KUL (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), POM - West Flanders
- ✓ Germany: MoWiN - Regionalmanagement Nordhessen, HAWK University of Applied Sciences and Arts,
- ✓ United Kingdom: Built Environment - Smart Transformation (formerly Construction Scotland Innovation Centre), National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland (NMIS) at the University of Strathclyde
- ✓ Sweden: University of Gävle
- ✓ Denmark: Aalborg University, Centre for Information Technology and Architecture (KADK)

InnovationQuarter (NL) is the Lead Partner.

3 Background on contracting authority

InnovationQuarter is the lead partner of Exskallerate and acts as purchaser (contracting authority) on behalf of the consortium.

InnovationQuarter is the regional economic development agency for the Province of Zuid-Holland, also known as the greater Rotterdam – The Hague area. Its mission is to strengthen the regional economic structure by stimulating the innovation potential of this unique delta region. In close collaboration with all major corporations and many SME's, educational and research institutes as well as government organisations, InnovationQuarter aligns the efforts required to design a brighter tomorrow.

Within an international entrepreneurial ambiance, InnovationQuarter offers opportunities for doing business in the greater Rotterdam – The Hague area. InnovationQuarter connects you with our tailor-made know-how and key networks especially in the sectors in which our region excels, such as: Maritime & Harbor, Horticulture, Aerospace, Life Sciences & Health, High Tech Systems & Materials, Energy, Circular, ICT and Cybersecurity.

To achieve its mission, InnovationQuarter is organised around three key activities:

- ✓ Internationalisation: supporting Dutch businesses on expanding to foreign markets and supporting foreign businesses on settling in our region.
- ✓ Investing: companies need capital to grow and scale-up. As a proactive and committed lifecycle financier, InnovationQuarter increases access to capital for innovative companies in the greater Rotterdam – The Hague area, at various stages of growth.
- ✓ Innovation: InnovationQuarter facilitates (international) collaboration between innovative entrepreneurs, knowledge institutes and government. The Business Development team acts as independent process directors which provide knowledge and expertise and facilitates network opportunities.

In the innovation team, InnovationQuarter initiates, and in selected cases manages, projects that enhance digitalization and working conditions in manufacturing. Exskallerate is one of those projects.

4 Assignment details

4.1 Motivation for multiple private tender

Based on the estimated value of the Contract, the composition of the market and the required expert knowledge for the scope, the Contracting Authority decided to apply the multiple private tender procedure. The expected cost for this Commission lies between 50.000 and 65.000 euro and may not exceed the latter. A multiple private tender is required in this case conform both the NSR Program Guidelines on Procurement as well as the internal procedures of InnovationQuarter.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to contract one Supplier for delivering the services specified in section 5.2. Candidates are requested to make an offer based on the information and conditions in this document and its Annexes.

4.2 Scope

This commission is aimed at delivering the basis for Work Package 6 (Long-term effects) of the NSR project EXSKALLERATE. Work Package 6 focuses on how key activities and knowledge continue after project end, as well as on reaching to new regions and stakeholders. In particular, we request the three following parts of WP6 to be executed.

A. *Roadmap/foresight study*

The study will identify which issues need to be solved by which party in the ecosystem in the coming decade to ensure faster and wider adoption of exoskeletons in the NSR Region and in the EU; and in construction and manufacturing as well as in other industrial sectors. Wider adoption of exoskeletons will deliver societal benefits and SME growth and competitiveness. The work needs to build on results and developments as accomplished in EXSKALLERATE with a focus on major barriers for adoption of exoskeletons.

Deliverable: Infographic-rich foresight study

Activities: Desk research, Interviews (with manufacturers and other relevant industry players), Evaluation and processing of the information based on proven foresight methodologies

B. *Exoskeleton ecosystem*

Map and engage with the complete innovation ecosystem of exoskeletons. Important stakeholders such as Insurance companies or the labour unions need to be included to get a full representation. This needs to be performed on the geographical scale of the NSR area as well as beyond its borders for the EXSKALLERATE consortium to benefit from new connections.

Deliverable: Report and online clickable map sketching the exoskeleton ecosystem

Activities: Stakeholder analysis, Interviews, Ecosystem mapping

C. *Follow-up collaborative project opportunities and business models*

The NSR project EXSKALLERATE requires a framework for long-term effects. This can be defined in such a way that it also serves as a basis for shaping one or more future opportunities and initiatives, building on EXSKALLERATE. Each such opportunity will be documented on the level of an initial 10-page slide deck.

Deliverable: Slide-deck for each of the follow-up collaborative project opportunities and business models

Activities: Future opportunity scan, Concept development

The three objectives will be complementary and synergetic to the work already done or planned to be done in the EXSKALLERATE project. For each of the three tasks, the Supplier will produce a draft report that will be commented by one or more partners of the EXSKALLERATE project within 5 working days.

4.3 Duration

We expect the project to start early December 2022. It must be finished in May 2023, so that it can be used in the final project meeting. No extensions are possible.

4.4 Award procedure

The project will be awarded to the Supplier that offers the best price-quality ratio.

We will only accept offers that are complete and consider all three elements, as these are closely interrelated. The criteria for awarding this commission are detailed in section 12.

5 Formal requirements for offers

By submitting a proposal, the Tenderer declares that he has taken note of and accepts explicitly and unconditionally the regulations, requirements, conditions and reservations included in this Request for Proposal and its Annexes. InnovationQuarter reserves the right to exclude offers that do not comply with one or more regulations, requirements or conditions.

5.1 General conditions

InnovationQuarter explicitly rejects the general terms and conditions, branch conditions or other terms and conditions of the Tenderer. If you do refer to these in your offer, InnovationQuarter will regard this as a conditional offer and reserves the right to set it aside.

5.2 The option to withdraw or not to award the contract

Although the Contracting Authority intends to award the contract, it is not obliged to award the contract. InnovationQuarter reserves the right to discontinue the Tender Procedure in whole or in part, temporarily or permanently. In such a situation, Tenderers are not entitled to reimbursement of any costs incurred in the context of this Tender Procedure.

5.3 Costs of participation

All costs involved in drafting and submitting a proposal are at the expense of the Tenderer; for InnovationQuarter there are no costs involved under any circumstances.

5.4 Contact person InnovationQuarter

Contact person of InnovationQuarter for the Request for Proposal is:

InnovationQuarter

Anton Duisterwinkel

Anton.duisterwinkel@innovationquarter

Tenderers refrain from contacting employees of InnovationQuarter, or any other organisations or persons involved in this procedure, other than the aforementioned contact person, in the context of this Tender procedure. Violation of this provision may result in exclusion from the procedure.

5.5 Planning

This Request for Proposal is sent to three potential Suppliers on 11 november 2022 and published on the website of SMITZH on the same date. The planning is as follows:

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Planning</i>
Initiation	▪ Sending and publishing	11-nov-2022
Offering	▪ Submission of questions to Purchaser ▪ Sending Information Note ▪ Final date for sending offers	16-nov-2022 18-nov-2022 28-nov-2022 10:00
Rating	Rating of the Offers received	28/29-nov-2022
Awarding	▪ Decision ▪ Sending provisional letters on (non) awarding	30-nov-2022 30-nov-2022
Contract	▪ Contracting ▪ Start date contract	5-dec-2022 5-dec-2022

5.6 Questions and clarifications

Candidates that wish clarification, additional information, or have comments about the request for proposals, may submit their questions and comments via e-mail to the contact person. Questions and comments received in any other way (i.a. by phone) will not be processed. You can ask questions up to the deadline indicated in the planning. Each question / comment should state explicitly which section of which paragraph or which annex it concerns.

Although this request and its Annexes have been prepared with the greatest possible care, it is possible that they contain incomplete or incorrect information. In that case, Candidates are expected to be proactive. InnovationQuarter requests Tenderers to notify it as soon as possible of any ambiguities, incompleteness, contradictions, irregularities or unlawfulness. After the expiry of the deadline for submitting questions, Tenderers lose their right to object to this. By submitting a proposal, you agree to the above legal clause.

Of the answers to questions, one Information note is drawn up and sent to the tenderers. If InnovationQuarter sees reason to do so, it may decide to extend the period for submitting the Tenders. By submitting their proposal, Tenderers unconditionally agree to the Information note and any documentation provided therewith.

5.7 Language

The documents are drafted in English. In addition, during the tender process and the execution of the Contract, communication, both verbally and in writing, will be in English.

5.8 Request for clarification by contracting authority

InnovationQuarter is authorised to ask Tenderers for clarification of their proposal and, if desired, to verify the information provided. The explanation may not result in a (substantive) addition to or amendment of the proposal. It is emphasised that this is not a second chance. When requesting an explanation, InnovationQuarter respects the principle of equality and will give all Tenderers an equal opportunity to supplement and/or clarify their proposal.

5.9 Period of validity of proposals

Proposals must be valid for a period of 90 days after the submission deadline. Proposals are irrevocable during this period. By submitting a proposal, Candidates agree to this.

5.10 Confidentiality

All information relating to this tender procedure, the EXSKALLERATE project, InnovationQuarter and other Project Partners is strictly confidential and should be treated as such. This means that the Tenderers are not allowed to provide the information to third parties. On the other hand, InnovationQuarter also treats all documents, data and other information submitted by Tenderers in the context of this Tender procedure as confidential: these will only be disclosed to employees directly involved in the tender procedure.

5.11 Changed circumstances

Tenderers must (permanently) comply with all the requirements laid down in this Request for proposals and its Annexes at the time of Tender, of the Award and during the performance of the contract. If, after the award of the contract, it appears that the tenderer does not (or no longer) meet one or more of the requirements, InnovationQuarter reserves the right to declare the Tender invalid or to dissolve the agreement without prior notice of default or judicial intervention.

6 Submission of proposals

6.1 Requirements

A proposal needs to meet the following requirements:

- it is submitted before the deadline,
- it is accompanied by an cover letter that is signed by an official who is demonstrably legally authorised to act on behalf of the Tenderer,
- it is submitted by e-mail,
- it is written in English,
- it identifies the Tenderer by professional standards,
- it answers the award criteria,
- it contains a total fixed price of or under € 65.000 excl. VAT.

6.2 Date and time of, and e-mail adress for submission

Tenderes must submit their proposal no later than:

Monday 28 November 2022, 10:00

By e-mail to:

Savannah.halter@innovationquarter.nl

Proposals submitted after this time, or in any other way will not be accepted.

7 Award criteria

InnovationQuarter will grant the contract based on the award criterion 'Best price-quality ratio'. Below you will find an overview of the applicable (sub) award criteria and associated weighting factors.

7.1 Criterion Price

The price of the proposals must be between € 50.000 and € 65.000 excluding VAT. Offers below € 50.000 are considered not to suit the complexity of the matter and the scope of the contract. Offers over € 65.000 are not suitable to the available budget.

The weight of the criterion price is 20% (20 points). The score of a tenderer is calculated by the formula:

$$\text{Score} = \left(1 - \frac{(\text{price of offer}) - (\text{lowest offered price})}{(\text{lowest offered price})} \right) \times 20 \text{ points} = \text{score}$$

The proposal with the lowest offered price will score 20 points.

7.2 Criterion Quality

The quality of the service is defined on the basis of four sub-criteria. InnovationQuarter acknowledges that the scope of the contract in 4.2 is defined on a detailed level with deliverables and activities. The further implementation of the contract will be in close dialogue with InnovationQuarter. The sub-criteria on Quality are therefore aimed mainly at identifying the best suitable partner to deliver the requested services.

Nr.	Sub-criterion
1	Proven knowledge of, and contacts in the exoskeleton ecosystem
2	Proven experience with preparing roadmaps
3	Proven experience with mapping ecosystems
4	Applicant has proven experience with EU financing of projects

The sub-criteria 1, 2 and 3 have a weight of 20% (20 points). Sub-criterion 4 has a weight of 5% (5points). Each proposal is rated as follows:

Quality criterion 1: Ecosystem Knowledge (20 points)

- no proven relations with companies* or knowledge institutes** exclusion
- less than four relations with either companies or knowledge institutes 4 points
- contacts with either companies or knowledge institutes in several countries 8 points
- contacts with several companies AND knowledge institutes in 1-3 countries 12 points
- contacts with >10 companies AND knowledge institutes in >3 countries 16 points
- contacts with the majority of European companies AND knowledge institutes 20 points

In the offer, each contact mentioned must be given including contact person and phone number. Contacts should be categorized to:

- Company: supplier of exoskeleton(s),
- Knowledge institutes: Universiteit, educational institute, contract research organization.

Quality Criterion 2: Experience in preparing roadmaps (20 points)

- None ground for exclusion
- Once 4 points

- 2-4 times 12 points
- 5 of more times 20 points

In the offer, roadmaps must be added as appendix or open reference.

Quality Criterion 3: Experience in mapping ecosystems (20 points)

- None ground for exclusion
- Once 4 point
- 2-4 times 12 points
- 5 of more times 20 points

Ecosystem maps must be added as appendix or open reference.

Quality Criterion 4: Experience in EU-programmes (20 points)

- None ground for exclusion
- One programme (e.g. Interreg, H2020, DEP) 4 points
- 2-3 programmes 12 points
- 4 or more programmes 20 points

Include the titles of awarded projects in the offer, including websites.

7.3 Total score

The total score of each proposal is calculated by summarizing the five scores; the one score on criterion price and the four scores on the sub-criteria quality.

7.4 Award of the contract

InnovationQuarter awards the contract to the tenderer who has achieved the highest score for the award criteria.

If two or more Tenderers finish in first place with an identical overall score, the following applies:

- I. InnovationQuarter will award the Contract to the Tenderer with the highest overall score, who has also obtained the highest score for the Quality criterion 1: Ecosystem Knowledge);
- II. If the above procedure does not lead to an outcome, InnovationQuarter will award the Contract to the Tenderer with the highest score on Price;
- III. If the above procedure does not lead to an outcome, a draw will decide to whom InnovationQuarter will grant the Contract.

InnovationQuarter sends an Award notice by e-mail to all Tenderers. If a Tenderer does not agree with the Award decision, the Tenderer must respond within 3 calendar days after the Award notice was sent by e-mail in compliance to our complaints procedure.

If you believe that you have been or are treated incorrectly during this procedure, or if your questions have not been answered properly, we request you to first report this to the internal complaints desk of InnovationQuarter. In accordance with the complaints procedure on the website (<https://www.innovationquarter.nl/klachtenprocedure/>, in Dutch), you can contact us by email: info@InnovationQuarter.nl

InnovationQuarter processes questions and complaints about tenders as quickly as possible. Your complaint or question will be handled by the Management of InnovationQuarter. It will confirm in writing that the complaint has been received and within which period the complaint is expected to have been handled substantively.

Submitting and handling any complaints has no suspensive consequences. This means that it does not affect the terms as stated in the Tender Documents, unless InnovationQuarter deviates explicitly from this, in writing.

In the event of not responding, or in the opinion of the complainant not adequately responding, or late response by InnovationQuarter to a complaint, the complainant has the option to turn to the independent Commission of Tender Experts. Any advice provided the

Commission is regarded weighty, but not binding for InnovationQuarter. For more information, see the committee's website: www.commissievanaanbestedingsexperts.nl .