



**“AMBIENT ASSISTED LIVING” abbreviated “AAL”
International non-profit Association
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TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

**IT tools for the implementation and administration
of the AAL Joint Programme**

AAL IT 2010

This tender specifies demands for functionalities delivered to the AAL Joint Programme for a period of two years, starting in spring 2010.

Part 1: Technical description
Part 2: Administrative details

Part 1: Technical description

1. Introduction: The AAL Joint Programme

The Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme – see www.aal-europe.eu – started in 2008 as a joint research and development (R&D) funding activity by 23 European Member States and Associated States. The programme receives a financial support of the European Community of max. 25 Million € p.a. granted on the basis of article 169 of the EC treaty.

The overall objective of the programme is to enhance the quality of life of older people and strengthen the industrial base in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The most important activity under the AAL Joint Programme is the regular, so far annual, publication of a AAL Call for Proposals. A first call was published with a deadline in August 2008, a second call with a deadline in May 2009.

The legal body of the AAL Joint Programme is the AAL Association (AALA), an international, non-profit association according to Belgian law with its official seat in Brussels. Full membership in the AAL Association is open to organisations representing States (i.e. public bodies as e.g. ministries) from the European Union and countries associated to the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community.

The AAL Joint Programme is implemented at parts from the central level, represented by the Central Management Unit, (AAL CMU). The AAL CMU cooperates intensively with representatives of national programme managing funding agencies (these representatives are called AAL NCP for National Contact Persons hereafter) participating under the AAL Joint Programme, i.e. 25 organisations at this moment. Administrative work related to a funded project partner remains in the hands of the AAL NCP.

With the actors spread all over Europe and a lack in the number of personnel at the central level, the management of the AAL Joint Programme requests sophisticated IT tools and systems for all aspects of the programme management. The programme management consists of the operation of central websites for electronic proposal submission and remote evaluation, project administration and reporting, and the distribution of the EC financial contribution to the national programme managing funding agencies.

2. Scope and description of the IT services

The AAL CMU makes heavy use of web based IT services for the management of processes under the AAL Joint Programme. Most of them are available as of today, few under construction as indicated in the following list:

Available (but subject to adaptations)

- Public AAL programme website
- Internal project document repository
- Management for AAL mailing lists
- Bringing together proposal partners
- Submission of AAL proposals
- Evaluation of AAL proposals
- Eligibility check of AAL proposal partners
- Registration of participants at AAL information days
- AAL Newsletter management

Under construction

- Support of the proposal negotiation
- Support to the project administration

These processes are described in further detail hereafter.

2.1 *Public and restricted website*

The public website of AAL Joint Programme is used to host all call related information. The AAL website contains a newsletter service for which a standard self-registration by interested parties is be offered.

The successful bidder must provide the technical infrastructure to host the website and grant the AAL CMU access to directly manage contents of the website in life modus.

Internal repository and mailing lists: The AAL Joint Programme involves close to 100 persons with various functions and located all over Europe. An internal repository shall be offered to which documents of importance can be uploaded with access for the AAL members. A proper management of editing and viewing rights needs to be implemented.

In order to manage the various groups, the tool must also support the creation and management of mailing lists (i.e. adding and deleting members and lists as a whole). Sent mails shall be archived.

2.2 *Partnering platform*

The AAL JP offers a web-based partner search service that is designed to support the identification of partners for AAL proposals. The service shall enable two functions:

- The publication of an activity profile of an organisation. The profile shall describe the capabilities of the organisation to contribute to the scope of the launched call for proposals.
- The submission of a short project idea in order to find additional project partners. The uploaded information should specify the rough project idea, as well as the current and the missing expertise that together will form a convincing consortium.

All profiles must be searchable by any user of this tool. A time management system must support actual entry and automatic disappearance of outdated entries. The tool shall support self-management of entries by externals to the highest extent.

2.3 Proposal submission

Proposal submission under the AAL Joint Programme is done via a web based interface only. The details of the submission of an eligible proposal are described in actual call publication documents (see <http://www.aal-europe.eu/calls/Published/aal-2009-2/aal-2009-2-call-text>). At this moment, but eventually subject of change, the conditions are as such

- A proposal must be submitted by a consortium of between 3 and 10 partner organisations residing in minimum 3 AAL Partner States
- The proposal must be submitted in the English language
- The proposal must have been submitted at the stated deadline of the AAL call for proposal
- A complete proposal consists of formal, administrative and financial data – called Part A – and a description of the proposed activities – called Part B.
- Information for part A is compiled by the consortium partners by filling in pre-defined online forms. The information comprises address details, funding details (e.g. total costs, requested funding, person months) and information supporting the later compilation of call statistics, e.g. type of organisation, country of origin, etc.
- Part B is the project description (a pdf-file at the moment) that was written by the consortium on the basis of a proposal template provided at the time of the call publication.

The proposal submission system must allow access for all proposers to individually edit their data at any time. The system shall give good guidance to the users and include an easy to read online support. It shall be made (almost) impossible to enter any information that is in conflict to any national or central eligibility criteria. Plausibility checks shall give feedback to the proposers on successfully entered and missing input requests.

Currently, Part A contains about 80 different templates (3 to 4 differing funding templates for each participating funding programme) with information on the applied national funding categories from all 25 AAL partner organisations. Prior to the opening of the submission tool, the contracted beneficiary has to ensure that correct and holistic information is incorporated in the system to avoid any problems at the time of filling in Part A information. The successful bidder shall request a check of this information to be made directly by the AAL NCP organisations – in close coordination and after approval of the AAL CMU.

The collected information, especially the entered figures, shall be automatically processed by the tool to generate quick management summary information to the AAL CMU staff. The staff shall easily access interim and final status information, e.g. all requested funds as this is important information for selection and funds distribution over AAL countries. The system shall safely store all submitted proposals in a way that gives restricted but easy access to all members of the association and/or their authorized programme managing agencies.

Proposers shall receive automatic feedback with each successfully and complete upload of a proposal version. The feedback can be displayed online but preferably is send as an email to the project coordinator.

The submission tool must have sufficient capacities to cope with huge processing demand just before the deadline of a call. For both calls so far more than 100 proposals were registered, about 10 to 20 having worked until the last minutes of the deadline.

2.4 Proposal evaluation

The evaluation of AAL proposals is based on a web tool which has complete information of all submitted proposals. The evaluation criteria and the range of possible scores with minimum thresholds and weightings are published with the call publication. This information must be reflected within the evaluation tool.

The AAL CMU manages independent experts, i.e. registers evaluators to the tool and assigns proposals to each of them. The evaluation tool must cope with varying numbers of evaluators (depending on the total number of proposals with up to 80 experts for 100 proposals) and the number of proposals assigned to each evaluator (typically between 4 and 10).

Once evaluators receive their personal login data, they may login any time and from any place they wish to do so. Before starting their evaluation, the experts must first give a declaration of “No conflict of interest”. For this, they must be able to spot the name of organisations that are involved in the proposals that were assigned to them. In case of no conflict, the experts shall find the proposals that were assigned to them. The evaluation itself is performed by filling in online masks with scores and justification texts.

The evaluation tool must support the drafting and editing of Evaluation Summary Report for each proposal. This is a short report that is submitted to the proposers and gives feedback on the assessment by the evaluators against the evaluation criteria.

The evaluation tool shall provide comprehensive management interfaces and download options for the AAL CMU, i.e. overviews of different aspects of the evaluation at any stage of the process (actual performance indicators, ranking lists of proposals, open issues). The CMU must be in a position to easily spot any evaluators failing to deliver their work. The tool must ensure highest IT security standards as proposals contain sensitive information.

2.5 Eligibility check

Under the AAL Joint Programme, both, central as well as national eligibility criteria are applied. In principle, the proposal submission tool (see above) shall hinder the submission of any ineligible proposals through its application templates. As the national eligibility criteria are comprehensive and sometimes impossible to be represented within the submission tool, an eligibility check is performed by the AAL CMU on the level of the full consortium (this refers to the central eligibility criteria) and the AAL NCP on the level of a single proposal partner (this refers to national eligibility criteria). The system shall give overviews to the AAL CMU for all proposals and proposal partners and for the AAL NCP for their national proposal partners only.

2.6 Support to the proposal negotiation

With the approval of the funding list by the General Assembly negotiations start between proposal partners and their responsible AAL NCP. Following parameter should be fulfilled by a tool to support the process:

The tool shall give access to AAL CMU and AAL NCP only. Requested information on the level of the whole consortium, e.g. consortium agreements and the descriptions of work, must be submitted by the lead AAL NCP, i.e. the NCP of the project coordinator.

At the starting point of the negotiation, following information is available from all submitted proposals:

- address and contact details for all proposers
- all financial project data as submitted by proposers, according to the national templates and incl. total costs, subcontracting and requested funding
- a written proposal for the project
- additional documents as requested by single AAL partners.

At the end point of the negotiation, following information must be available for all projects that were selected for funding:

- address and contact details for all project partners,
- financial project data as accepted and approved by the AAL national funding organisations in grant agreements (electronic versions forwarded to CMU)
- the common project start date for all partners

- a description of work, i.e. the project description
- the electronic version of the consortium agreement.

An IT negotiation tool shall allow AAL NCP to

- correct address and contact details of project partners incl.
 - o deletion of single partners and/or
 - o addition of new partners as partners changes during the negotiation process are supported by the AAL JP
- correct financial project data
- upload requested project files (description of work, consortium agreement)
- check progress of the negotiation process, i.e. to indicate “open” tasks.

CMU is interested in overviews presenting condensed information on all selected projects of a single call. The overviews shall support reporting on this process, incl. the duration of single process steps. When marked "final", the information constitutes the beginning of the project administration phase.

2.7 Support to the project administration

An AAL funded project has an administrative lifetime of between 1.5 to 3.5 years. The main function of the AAL Joint Programme is to administer the European co-funding for partners of funded AAL projects.

Payments are solely forwarded to the participating national funding organisations (so not directly to project partners). Payments are prepared by the AAL CMU if the CMU approves completeness of documents (e.g. reports or documents related to the funding) are available. All data and documents shall be provided by the national funding organisations.

This process shall be supported by web-based tools and they shall be available for both groups, the project partners (outsiders) and the representatives of the AAL Joint Programme (insiders, i.e. AAL CMU and AAL NCP) with distinct roles and rights in the system.

The web based tool shall support the administrative requirement, i.e. collection of information, production of status reports with easy identification of shortcomings after certain deadlines have passed. If possible, and accepted by the national funding organisations, interfaces shall be developed for an automatic data transfer from the project administration tool to the programme management systems of the national funding organisations.

The tool must enable the tracking of all major changes in the project after approval of the CMU. "Major changes" in the project include:

- changes in the global objectives of the project.
- changes in the composition of the consortium.
- changes in duration of the project.
- changes in the resources.

The AAL CMU (with the cooperation of the AAL NCPs) needs in particular to verify whether the project is still eligible as an AAL project. All changes will be documented and archived in the project files at the AAL Association.

The project administration tool shall support the reporting requirements of the AAL Joint Programme by easily identifying the running projects on an actual and up-to-date basis with the names and types of participating organisations, the same per country of origin and the distribution of funds on all levels (EC, national, own co-funding).

2.8 AAL event management

The AAL Joint Programme frequently organises central information days. A web based registration tool shall be offered for this purpose in order to facilitate the registration and management of attendees, e.g. by sending automatic confirmation mails to successfully registered persons and the production of participants lists.

2.9 AAL newsletter management

The AAL Joint Programme has started to send newsletters (html style). Registrations and cancellations shall be automatically managed by the system in place.

3. Technical specifications

Following technical specifications shall be applied while implementing the IT tools:

- The successful bidder sets up and maintains all necessary hardware as its own property and at its preferred operation basis. The AAL Association is not capable to hosting the infrastructure. Thus, the bid may include rent or depreciation costs for hardware.
- The hardware equipment shall include all required devices to guarantee a safe, stable and scalable service (e.g. backup, uninterruptible power source, redundancy of data, etc.).
- The solution must support the highest IT security standards as throughout sensitive information is stored and processed by the tool.
- All hardware, software and data shall be set up and maintained in such a way that supports an easy transfer to the physical site of a successor contractor for the IT tools provision.
- The management of access, viewing and editing rights for the many users of the system is of utmost importance.
- The successful bidder guarantees remote access to the IT tools and services via Internet for persons that are administered by the CMU. The tools have to be implemented under the AAL URL www.aal-europe.eu, i.e. easily accessible with links to this site.
- The implementation of the IT tools (software applications) shall either make use of widespread standard software or open source software. Proprietary solutions shall not be contracted. Software license costs shall be clearly outlined in the offer.
- The IT tools shall be offered as a "service package" or rented to the AAL Association until the time of termination of the contract. This is due to the expected high part of labour involved in the set up and maintenance of the IT tools. A licensing model is not preferred.
- It is up to the decision of the bidder to offer the IT tools (as described under 2.2. to 2.7 above) in one or several applications. It must be ensured that exchange and transfer of data is secured and access and viewing rights are properly managed.
- The IT tools shall have a high openness for adaptations. The described processes under the AAL Joint Programme are subject of constant changes.

At this moment, many of the IT services are implemented already with a number of applications based on Plone (<http://plone.org/>). In case, that the successful bidder is different from the current service provider, it is intended to transfer the existing tools, and the hardware infrastructure to the place of the successful bidder.

4. Deliverables / Milestones

The successful bidder and the AAL CMU will intensively cooperate under this contract. It is foreseen to regularly meet, either at the seat of the Association of at the seat of the successful bidder.

For the first two years under this contract, following deliverables are due:

No.	Deliverable	Due date
D1.1 To D1.8	Quarterly implementation and performance reports (accompanying the payment requests)	M4 and continuing in three months intervals
D2.1 D2.2	Report on call statistics (see below for more details) (two calls for first two years of contract) - the total number of formally correct submitted proposals - indications on any failed or incomplete submissions (immediate feedback at latest 2 days after call deadline)	2-14 days after the call deadline
D3	Specifications of the implemented technical system(s)	With the operation of the tools
D4	Public user guidance (Guidance documents, FAQ, etc.)	With the operation of the tools
D5	One or two training sessions for CMU and other members in Brussels	On request by the CMU

The IT tools put in place shall easily support to deliver the following information:

A complete set of statistics about the submission, evaluation, selection and funding of projects by country and aggregated at programme level:

- Foreseen call budget (national budget and EC co-funding budget)
- Requested budget (the requested budget may be wrongly indicated by proposers as they may fail to get acquainted with the valid funding quota; if this is identified, no further action shall be taken for the projects that are not recommended for funding).
- Number of applications
- Total cost
- Number and type of applicants (SMEs, Large enterprises, Universities, Research Organisations, user organisations, other) in total and per country/funding organisation
- Number of eligible applications
- Number of applications above the threshold in the ranked list
- Time between closing date of the call and AAL General Assembly funding decision
- Time between closing date and communication of results to applicants
- The list of projects in the ranked list as approved by the AAL General Assembly (GA), indicating any deviations from the ranking introduced by the GA
- The final list of funded projects, the total project budget, the grant received, abstract
- A detailed breakdown of the use of the Community contribution by participating country, as well as of the national funding contributed to AAL. These figures should be compared with the initial commitments made for that year.
- Outcomes of annual reviews and acceptance of costs and deliverables.

Following milestones are expected under the service contract:

No.	Milestones	Due date
M1	AAL Public Website incl. AAL newsletter service	M1
M2	Internal repository and mailing lists	M1
M3	Partnering platform	2 months prior to call publication date
M4	Proposal submission tool	2 months prior to call publication date
M5	Proposal evaluation tool	2 months prior to call deadline
M6	Proposal eligibility check tool	2 months prior to call deadline
M7	Proposal negotiation support tool	1 month after call deadline
M8	Project administration support tool	M3
M9	AAL event management tool	2 months prior to the AAL event

Part 2: Administrative details

1. Contracting, payments

This tender specifications and the successful offer will be subject of a contract that will be closed between the successful bidder and the AAL Association.

The contract shall be awarded for two years from the award of the contract and the option of two renewed appointments.

The AAL Association will pay in quarterly instalments. Payments will be made upon receipt of a written bill, which details the costs for the period in Euro. This bill shall be accompanied by an implementation progress report. No advance payments will be made. The annual payment intervals of the agreed annual value are:

- 25% after 3 months
- 25% after 6 months
- 25% after 9 months
- 25% after 12 months.

The Ambient Assisted Living International Association is a non profit entity located in Brussels and governed by the Belgian law. Services under this contract are deemed to take place in Belgium according to article 21 §3,7° b of the Belgian VAT Code (article 56,1° c of the VAT-Directive) when these services are supplied to taxable customers established in the Community but not in the same country as the supplier. Services covered by the article include:

- services of consultants, engineers, consultancy bureaux, lawyers, accountants and other similar services, as well as data processing and the provision of information (= 'intellectual services')
- electronically supplied services.

The implication of the above is that the AAL Association shall receive net invoices, as it is itself fully liable to apply the Belgian VAT rate to the amount stated and to transfer this VAT amount to the Belgian tax authority.

2. Tender process

2.1 **Tender form**

It is recommended to structure the tender as to allow an easy check against the award criteria as shown in chapter 2.4. As such, following structure is proposed

Part 1 - Experience of the tenderer and the proposed team

- Experience of the tenderer(s) in the last 3 years in providing IT tools or programming software applications for the management of research and development programmes.
- Experience and credibility of proposed team

Concise but informative curricula vitae of all professional team members, showing relevant experience in the specific domain of this study for the last 3 years, must be included with the tender.

- Project management capabilities

Experience in similar complex projects, problem solving approach, interaction with the contractor, interaction with external users of the IT tools (All of equal relative importance)

Part 2 - the detailed description of the technical and service solutions offered

- Detailed description of the proposed solutions for the processes and requested functionalities as specified in chapter 2 of the technical description of this tender specification.

- Description of the technical specifications of the proposed technical infrastructure (hardware/software)

- Description of the innovativeness of the approach

Part 3 - detailed work plan, deliverables, milestones and financial offer

- This chapter shall present in a concise form the essentials of the bid in relation to the work, the response to the deliverables and milestones and finally present the financial offer.

Annex: Details of the tenderer and any declarations as requested in this tender documentation (e.g. as stated in the following chapter)

2.2 Eligibility requirements

This tender documentation is published on the AAL website <http://www.aal-europe.eu>.

The tender must be submitted by registered post or by private courier services or by hand delivery **no later than 19.11.2009** (16.00 hours deadline that day for hand delivery). In this case the post office stamp or the date on the slip issued by the courier service will constitute proof of compliance with the deadline given above.

The envelope with the offer must be sealed and visibly mention “Tender AAL IT 2010”.

The offer must be sent to the following postal address

AAL Association
c/o IWT
Bischoffsheimlaan 25
B-1000 Brussels

The tenderer must be identified with full name of organisation/company, copy of legal status, registration number, address, person to contact, person authorised to sign on behalf of the organisation (copy of the official mandate must be produced), telephone number, VAT number, banking details: bank name, branch address, IBAN and SWIFT, address of bank.

Pursuant to Art. 45(2) of Directive 2004/18/EC candidates or tenderers may be excluded from the award procedure for reasons such as being bankrupt, having been convicted of an offence concerning professional misconduct, not having paid taxes or not having contributed to social security systems. Tenderers must certify that they are not in anyone of the situations mentioned.

Tenders must be submitted individually. If two or more applicants submit a joint bid, one must be designated as the lead contractor and agent responsible.

Tenders must be signed by the tenderer's authorised representative or representatives (preferably in blue ink).

A total fixed price expressed in Euro must be included in the tender, using, where necessary, the conversion rates published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Communities on the date of the request for services.

The contract prices shall be firm and not subject to revision. The total amount allocated to this contract will not exceed 200.000 € (excl. VAT). The price offer will include all costs incurred for the execution of the task and be broken down into

- professional fees
- travel costs
- other costs.

2.3 Tender process

Contact between the contracting authority and tenderers during the contract award procedure may take place, by way of exception, under following conditions

- Before the closing date for the submission of tenders the contracting authority may – at the instance of tenderers, communicate additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the contract, such information to be communicated on the same date to all tenderers who have asked for the specifications. Requests for additional information received less than five working days before the closing date for submission of tenders will not be processed.
- at its own instance, if it discovers an error, a lack of precision, an omission or any other type of clerical defect in the text of the contract notice, invitation to tender or specifications, inform the persons concerned on the same date and in a manner identical with that applicable in respect of the original invitation to tender.

If, after the tenders have been opened, some clarification is required in connection with a tender, or if obvious clerical errors in the tender must be corrected, the contracting authority may contact the tenderer, although such contact may not lead to any alteration of the terms of the tender.

This invitation to tender is in no way binding on the AAL Association. The contractual obligation commences only upon signature of the contract with the successful tenderer.

Up to the point of signature, the contracting authority may either abandon the procurement or cancel the award procedure, without the candidates or tenderers being entitled to claim any compensation. This decision must be substantiated and the candidates or tenderers notified.

Opening of the tenders: The opening of received tenders will take place on 23.11.2009 at 14.00 at the seat of the AAL Association in Bischoffsheimlaan 25, B – 1000 Brussels. At this occasion, solely the information on the name of the tenderer(s) will be announced to the present persons.

One authorised representative of each tenderer may attend the opening of the tenders. Tenderers who plan to attend the opening session have to inform the AAL CMU by e-mail to cmu@aal-europe.eu, fax +49-30-310078225 or letter at least 24h in advance.

Negotiation will start presumably in December 2009, with the intention of contract closure by February or March and a contract start by 1 April 2010 at the latest.

Processing your reply to the invitation to tender will involve the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001.

Changes to tenders will be accepted only if they are received on or before the final date set for the receipt of tenders.

Expenses incurred in respect of the preparation and presentation of tenders cannot be refunded.

All bidders will be informed whether or not their tender has been accepted. The successful bidder and the contract value will be published on the AAL website: www.aal-europe.eu.

2.4 **Award criteria**

Tenders will be evaluated following the award criteria outlined below producing a total score out of 100%.

a) Relevant expertise	Weighting
Experience of the tenderer(s) in the last 3 years, in providing IT tools or programming software applications for the management of research and development programmes.	20%
Experience and credibility of proposed team: concise but informative curricula vitae of all professional team members, showing relevant experience in the specific domain of this study for the last 3 years, must be included with the tender.	10%
Project management capabilities: Experience in similar complex projects, problem solving approach, interaction with the contractor, interaction with external users of the IT tools (All of equal relative importance)	10%
b) Technical quality of the proposed tools	
Degree to which the described processes and requested functionalities are covered by the proposed IT tools. Credibility, control and understanding of the work to be carried out. The tenderer should explain the way in which he intends to implement the various requirements described in the technical specification of this call for tenders.	40%
Degree to which the technical specifications are met by the proposed technical infrastructure (hardware/software)	10%
Degree of innovation of the approach	10%
Total	100%

2.5 **Contract Award**

The contract with best quality-price ratio will be awarded, with weighting the award criteria (see previous chapter) with 70% and the financial proposing with 30%, using following method:

$$TQ = (\text{Score of the technical offer} / \text{score of the best technical offer}) * 70$$

$$P = (\text{Lowest proposed price} / \text{price of the bid}) * 30$$

$$\text{Final score} = TQ + P$$

2.6 **Ownership of results**

The results of the service belong to the AAL Association in Brussels. The copyright belongs to the AAL Association and the AAL Association will in particular have the right to publish the results.

2.7 **Applicable Law and Jurisdiction**

The contract will be governed by Belgian law. Any dispute between the AAL Association and the service provider(s) or any claim by one party against another under any contract arising from this call for tenders that cannot be settled by the contracting parties out of court shall be brought before the Brussels Courts.

AAL Association - Central Management Unit
Contact email: cmu@aal-europe.eu.