

CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

RFT: 2026-ClimSA-002
File: AP_3/35
Date: 1 April 2026
To: Interested Service Providers
Contact: Procurement Unit (procurement@sprep.org)

Subject: Request for tenders (RFT): Samoa Meteorological Service (SMS) Website Development for the European Union Intra-ACP Climate Services and Related Application (ClimSA) project.

Question 1:

Mobile app status and architecture

Could you please confirm whether the SMS mobile application is already live, currently under development, or in finalisation? It would also be helpful to understand whether the backend services, APIs, data models, and CMS layer for the mobile application have already been established.

Response:

The Samoa Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MEWS) mobile application is already live and has been publicly launched on both the Google Play Store and Apple App Store [<https://apps.apple.com/vu/app/vaaitau-o-samoa/id6746432784>]. The Vaaitau-o-Samoa App has been formally handed over to the Samoa Meteorology Division (SMD) and is currently in its 5-year sustainability and support phase.

Regarding the technical infrastructure for the mobile application:

- **Backend Services & APIs:** These have been established and are fully functional. The system includes a full-featured admin dashboard for creating and managing alerts, as well as live integration for 7-day and 48-hour forecasts, warnings, and satellite imagery.
- **CMS Layer:** A CMS layer (Payload CMS) is established and in use. It allows SMD administrators to build out and maintain content for climate product templates (such as Climate Outlook and EAR Watch) and manage user-submitted disaster reports.
- **Data Models:** Data models have been established to support a comprehensive suite of modules, including Climate Information & Observations, Ocean Outlook, and Fisheries.

Question 2:

Expected website architecture boundary

Should the website be proposed primarily as a public-facing digital platform integrated into an existing mobile app backend and CMS environment, or is SPREP expecting the selected developer to establish a new shared backend and administrative layer to serve both the website and mobile application?

Response:

The strategic roadmap for the Samoa Meteorology Division (SMD) explicitly recommends a to redevelop the main SMD website by integrating it with the established Payload CMS used for the mobile application. This approach is intended to:

- Create a "single, unified source of truth": Integrating the website with the existing CMS would allow SMD administrators to publish weather warnings, alerts, and climate products to both the app and the website simultaneously.
- Reduce Operational Workload: By using the same administrative layer, the staff workload is dramatically reduced as they would no longer need to manage disparate systems.
- Ensure Data Consistency: A shared backend ensures that the information provided to the public remains consistent across all digital channels.

The existing infrastructure for the mobile app—including the full-featured admin dashboard, Payload CMS, and cloud-based hosting—is already established and is currently being maintained under a five-year sustainability and support plan (2025–2030). Therefore, the expectation is to align the website development with this pre-existing technical ecosystem rather than establishing a new, separate administrative layer

Question 3:

Unified administration requirement

With reference to the requirement for a centralised administrative dashboard, could you please confirm whether SPREP expects a single shared CMS/dashboard across both the website and mobile application, or whether coordinated but separate administration layers would be acceptable provided interoperability is maintained?

Response:

The expectation is to align the website development with this pre-existing technical ecosystem rather than establishing a new, separate administrative layer. See response above.

Question 4:

Technology stack flexibility

The RFT references React.js or Vue.js for frontend, Node.js or PHP for backend, and Drupal or Payload CMS as possible CMS options. Would SPREP accept alternative open-source architectures of similar capability where the proposed solution demonstrably delivers the required interoperability, scalability, API integration, and long-term maintainability?

Response:

There is room for alternative open-source architectures, the most critical factor for SPREP is the solution's ability to align with and integrate into the existing Payload CMS and backend infrastructure to ensure data consistency and reduce staff workload.

Question 5:

Payload CMS alignment with mobile app

As the RFT notes that the mobile app uses Payload CMS, is there an expectation that the website must also use Payload CMS, or is this presented as a recommendation rather than a mandatory requirement?

Response:

The integration of the website with Payload CMS is presented as a strong strategic recommendation rather than a strictly mandatory technical constraint, though it is the preferred path for achieving the project's core operational goals.

The following details clarify this distinction:

- **Strategic Intent:** The sustainability plan explicitly recommends redeveloping the website by integrating it with the existing Payload CMS established for the mobile app. This is intended to create a "single, unified source of truth," allowing staff to publish updates to both platforms simultaneously.
- **Operational Efficiency:** A primary driver for using the existing CMS is to "dramatically reduce staff workload" and ensure data consistency. Since the Samoa Meteorology Division (SMD) has a small staff base with no dedicated IT support for this specific application, maintaining two separate administrative layers is viewed as a significant "operational challenge" to be avoided.
- **Directional vs. Prescriptive:** The project's technical framing is "directional, not prescriptive" and is designed to "inform, not restrict" the technical execution. The focus is on ensuring the "value outlined in the user story is achieved" rather than mandating specific coding languages.
- **Preference for Open-Source:** There is a general preference for open-source solutions to reduce long-term costs and ensure technical independence.

In summary, while the sources allow for flexibility in technical execution, any alternative to Payload CMS would likely need to demonstrate how it could achieve the same level of interoperability and workload reduction as the recommended single-CMS model

Question 6:

Scope of backend development

Could you please clarify whether the website developer is expected to build or extend backend business logic for weather alerts, notifications, reporting workflows, and synchronisation, or whether these services will already be exposed through existing APIs and data services managed elsewhere?

Response:

The website developer is expected to integrate the new website into the existing backend and administrative environment established for the mobile application, rather than building these services from scratch.

The core backend business logic, workflows, and data services have already been established as part of the live Samoa MEWS mobile application. Key details regarding these services include:

- **Established APIs and Data Services:** The system already features live integration for 7-day and 48-hour forecasts, warnings, and satellite imagery.
- **Existing Workflows:** A full-featured admin dashboard is already in use for creating and managing tiered push notifications and weather alerts. It also includes a reporting workflow where admins can manage and revise user-submitted disaster reports.

- Centralised CMS: The mobile app uses Payload CMS, which is currently used to manage climate product templates like EAR Watch and Climate Outlook.
- Expectation for Integration: The strategic roadmap explicitly recommends redeveloping the website by integrating it with this existing Payload CMS. The goal is to create a "single, unified source of truth" so that staff can publish alerts and products to both the website and app simultaneously.

Therefore, while the developer may need to extend the frontend to consume these existing APIs or ensure the website's UI aligns with the backend's data structures, the foundational business logic for alerts, reporting, and synchronization is already managed within the established MEWS infrastructure. This approach is specifically intended to "dramatically reduce staff workload" and maintain consistency across digital channels

Question 7:

Notification orchestration across app and website

The RFT states that alerts or notifications should be pushed once and made available on both platforms. Could SPREP clarify whether there is already an existing notification service in place, or whether the website developer is expected to design and implement this shared notification orchestration layer?

Response:

An existing notification service is already in place as part of the Samoa MEWS mobile application infrastructure. The website developer is not expected to build a new orchestration layer but rather to integrate the new website into this established system.

Key details from the sources regarding the current notification capabilities include:

- Existing Alerts System: A "full-featured admin dashboard" has already been delivered for the mobile app, specifically designed for creating, managing, and issuing tiered push notifications for all hazards.
- Centralised Administration: This system allows administrators to trigger alerts that currently reach mobile users immediately. It includes specific logic for push notifications, lock screen notifications, and location-based tagging.
- Shared CMS Strategy: The mobile app's backend is built on Payload CMS. The strategic recommendation for the website redevelopment is to integrate it directly with this existing CMS to create a "single, unified source of truth".
- Simultaneous Publishing: By integrating with the established Payload CMS, Samoa Meteorology Division (SMD) staff will be able to publish weather warnings and alerts to both the app and the website simultaneously from the same dashboard.

Therefore, the website developer's primary task regarding notifications is to ensure the website can consume and display the alert data generated by the existing backend services.

Question 8:

Disaster reporting workflow

For the disaster reporting feature with geotagging and image upload, could you please confirm whether this is intended purely as a public submission interface, or whether the selected developer is also expected to build the moderation, internal review, routing, and case management workflow behind it?

Response:

The moderation, internal review, and management workflow for disaster reports is already an established part of the MEWS technical infrastructure. The website developer is primarily expected to build the public submission interface and integrate it into the existing system.

Key details regarding the disaster reporting workflow include:

- **Established Admin Dashboard:** A "full-featured admin dashboard" has already been delivered and handed over to the Samoa Meteorology Division (SMD). This dashboard includes the functionality for administrators to receive, view, browse, and manage user-submitted reports.
- **Existing Moderation Features:** The administrative layer already supports the ability to categorize reports, remove duplicates, and revise submitted information. The dashboard also includes role-based access control to ensure only authorized personnel manage these reports.
- **SMD Operational Responsibility:** Under the current sustainability plan, SMD is already responsible for the day-to-day monitoring, reviewing, and managing of disaster reports via this admin dashboard.
- **Integration vs. New Build:** The strategic goal for the website redevelopment is to integrate the new platform with the existing Payload CMS and backend. This allows reports submitted via the website to flow into the same centralized system used by the mobile app, ensuring a "single, unified source of truth".
- **Case Management Context:** While "routing" to other agencies (like the Disaster Management Office) is noted as a purpose for these reports, the emergency responders currently use the app-generated reports from the existing system to coordinate their response.

The website developer is expected to implement the frontend submission features (including geotagging and image upload) on the website, while leveraging the existing moderation and management workflows already functional within the MEWS administrative dashboard.

Question 9:

Meteorological and scientific data integration

Could SPREP clarify the expected level of "scientific programming" within this assignment? For example, is the selected developer expected only to consume and present outputs from existing meteorological systems, or also to perform transformation, processing, or modelling logic on incoming datasets?

Response:

The expected level of "scientific programming" is focused primarily on consuming, integrating, and presenting data from existing meteorological systems, rather than developing core scientific models or complex predictive algorithms.

The developer is expected to perform the following types of data transformation and processing:

- **Integration with Existing Systems:** The platform must integrate with existing meteorological systems to provide live 7-day and 48-hour forecasts, warnings, and satellite imagery.
- **Verification and Threshold Logic:** The system includes logic to verify forecast accuracy against observations. For example, it tracks if an Automatic Weather Station (AWS) reports data that aligns with issued warnings (using specific thresholds like 100mm in 24 hours) and marks these as a "miss/hit".
- **Dynamic Template Processing:** The developer is expected to build "dynamic templates" for complex climate and ocean products, such as the EAR (Early Action Rainfall) Watch and Climate Outlook. This involves mapping various data sources (e.g., drought index, ENSO status, sea surface temperature) into specific display formats.
- **Manual Data Override:** Rather than the system performing automated scientific modeling, it provides a feature for SMD administrators to manually override weather model data. This ensures that scientific accuracy remains under the control of qualified meteorologists rather than being purely algorithmic.
- **Data Mapping and Flow:** A "visual requirements flow" was established to map the ecosystem of data sources and their display logic and interdependencies, ensuring that information shows up correctly across the platform.

The developer is not building the underlying weather or climate models but is responsible for the processing logic required to fetch, verify, and display those scientific outputs in a user-friendly and operationally useful manner.

Question 10:

GIS and mapping data sources

For the interactive cyclone, tsunami, and other hazard mapping requirements, will SPREP/SMS provide the required GIS layers, feeds, and source services, or is the selected developer expected to source, structure, and publish these independently?

Response:

The selected developer is expected to integrate the platform with existing meteorological systems and data services provided by the Samoa Meteorology Division (SMD) and SPREP, rather than sourcing, structuring, or publishing these hazard mapping layers independently.

The following details clarify the responsibilities regarding GIS layers and data feeds:

- **Integration with Existing Systems:** The project requirements explicitly mandate that the system "must integrate with existing meteorological systems and government agencies". This includes "live integration" for weather forecasts, warnings, and satellite imagery that are already operational within the MEWS technical environment.
- **Existing Mapping Functionality:** The mobile application already includes "integration with affected area maps" as well as "satellite images and surface maps". The future website redevelopment is intended to "align with the mobile app's functionality and data integration," utilizing these same established feeds.

- **Scientific Accuracy and Control:** The system includes a "Manual Data Override" feature, which allows SMD administrators to manually override weather model data to ensure accuracy. This confirms that the scientific data and models originate from the client's existing meteorological infrastructure rather than being sourced externally by the developer.
- **Developer Responsibility:** The developer's role is focused on the technical execution of the integration, such as finalising the "tech stack" and building "phased design, development & QA stages" to ensure these existing feeds are displayed correctly.

SMD provide the meteorological feeds, satellite data, and hazard source services, while the developer is responsible for the technical integration required to consume and present this information on the digital platform.

Question 11:

SPREP Virtual Library and Data Portal integration

The TOR identifies integration with the SPREP Virtual Library and Data Portal as highly recommended and optional. Could you please confirm whether this integration will be evaluated as a material technical advantage, or whether it is entirely optional and outside the core scoring expectations?

Response:

This is entirely optional and outside of the core scoring expectations.

Question 12:

Hosting commercial structure

Regarding the 10-year advance hosting requirement, could SPREP confirm whether bidders are expected to:

- include a full upfront 10-year hosting cost in the financial proposal,
- provide a 10-year total cost of ownership estimate only, or
- present a managed hosting structure covering the full term with annualised assumptions?

Response:

Yes, these costs must be included in the financial proposal. The expectations in the new website re-development RFT:

- **Financial Responsibility:** The consultant is responsible for the "full payment and management of all hosting services" for the dashboard and backend systems throughout the commitment period.
- **Hosting Scope:** This includes hosting for the dashboard, backend systems, and all approved cloud services required to run the application.
- **Hosting Standards:** Hosting must be cloud-based and approved by the Samoa Meteorology Division (SMD).

- **Technical Support Integration:** The hosting commitment is bundled with a broader sustainability plan that includes minor bug fixes, security patches, and performance tuning to ensure the platform remains functional throughout the term.

Question 13:

Third-party and variable cloud costs

For the required 10-year hosting and security costing, should bidders also include variable and pass-through items such as CDN/WAF services, map service usage, notification service costs, storage growth, backup growth, SSL renewals, and other cloud consumption variables?

Response:

Yes, the developer needs to include these costs, and to assume full financial and management responsibility for all cloud services necessary to keep the platform operational, secure, and scalable

Question 14:

Security managed services scope

Could SPREP please confirm the expected scope of the 10-year security fee, including whether this should cover only infrastructure and application hardening, patching, and monitoring, or whether it should also include incident response, vulnerability assessments, penetration testing, and compliance review activities over the 10-year period?

Response:

Scope to cover only infrastructure and application hardening, patching, and monitoring.

Question 15:

GitLab and CI/CD expectations

The RFT refers to code being pushed to SPREP GitLab and CI/CD testing on pull requests and merge requests. Could SPREP confirm whether GitLab repositories, branching standards, deployment pipelines, and coding/security policies will be provided to the selected developer?

Response:

Yes. SPREP will provide these to the selected developer.

Question 16:

Delivery dependency with mobile app team

Could SPREP please clarify whether the website project timeline is dependent on milestones from the mobile app development team, and if so, whether those milestone dates can be shared to assist bidders in preparing realistic implementation schedules?

Response:

The mobile app is already live and available on Google and Apple App Stores. The website development will start immediately upon award of contract.

Question 17:

Travel expectations

The RFT asks bidders to separate travel costs. Could SPREP confirm whether any in-country travel is mandatory for delivery, training, or workshops, or whether remote delivery with virtual coordination sessions would be acceptable where practical?

Response:

Travel to Samoa is not mandatory, remote delivery with virtual coordination is acceptable.

Question 18:

Support and warranty period

Could SPREP clarify the expected duration and scope of the post-launch warranty and support period to be included in the proposal?

Response:

Post-launch warranty and support period is 12 months.

Question 19:

Would you also consider providing the budget range in the RFT as the scope has a number of dependencies on the existing mobile application, thus we can create assumptions and submit a clear proposal and fixed budget if we understand your needs.

Response:

Budget is approximately USD 27,000.