**Technical specification**

**Environmental, Social, and Governance Evaluation Tool (ESG Tool)**

**platform development**

**1. Context**

This document outlines the technical specifications for the procurement of services for the development of the Environmental, Social, and Governance Evaluation Tool (ESG Tool). The ESG Tool is a crucial component of the project “#C012 Sustainability Reporting Tool” (#C012 Sus Tool) consortium's efforts to promote sustainability and facilitate the adoption of European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (further - organizations). The project is financed by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region program contributing to EUSBSR PA Innovation Action 2 'Digital Innovation and Transformation. The project consortium consists of the sector ministries of the countries of the region and leading ICT associations/organizations:

* Estonia: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication (lead partner), Ministry of Finance, Let’s Do It Foundation (Teeme Ära Sihtasutus) and Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications (ITL);
* Latvia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and LIKTA;
* Lithuania: association INFOBALT;
* Finland: DIMECC.

Duration of project implementation: January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

**2. Project Background**

The development of the ESG Tool (web-based platform in languages – English, Estonian, Finnish, Latvian, and Lithuanian) is a part of the broader initiative aimed at enhancing digital innovation and transformation in the Baltic Sea Region. The tool will serve as a practical resource to raise awareness and guide organisations in implementing ESRS, fostering sustainable business practices across the participating countries. The tool helps organisations to initiate the first steps of stakeholder mapping and materiality assessment, as well as provides a knowledge database and supporting materials for possible future ESRS in-depth evaluation.

**3. Objectives of the ESG Tool**

3.1 The primary objectives of the ESG Tool are as follows:

3.1.1 Information point for organisations to educate and raise awareness on the ESRS standards and their application

3.1.2 Guide organisations in aligning with European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS).

3.1.3 Facilitate the initial evaluation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance by organisations (stakeholder mapping, materiality assessment) via creating and updating their profiles and entering organisation-specific data

3.1.4 Provide calculated evaluation based on the organisation’s provided data following the developed ESG evaluation methodology.

3.1.5 Provide examples from various companies regarding best practices of activities that align with ESRS requirements and objectives.

**4. Task description**

The ESG tool (a web-based platform) is primarily aimed at companies and organisations in four countries: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. During the initial phase, the tool should be developed and piloted (user-tested) in English, and after testing and improving the platform, the contractor must ensure the possibilities for tool replication and localization in 4 languages (translation is not under the scope of this procurement). Possible changes can be applied to tool structure and methodology during the development and testing phase.

**4.1. Strategy development**

4.1.1. Development of the time plan and concept of the ESG Tool development.

4.1.2. Development of detailed description, prototype and IT architecture of the technical solution of the system. The software structure of the platform to be developed, as well as software components, relationships, and implementation phases.

4.1.3. Development of the risk mitigation plan.

4.1.4. Development of the quality assurance plan.

4.1.5. All corresponding documentation must be handed over to the project consortium at the finalization of the project before signing the Acceptance and Transfers Act.

**4.2. ESG Tool organization profile**

Provide organizations with the possibility to register and store their profile data on the platform, including the following fields:

1. Name of the organization
2. Fiscal registration number (VAT or equivalent) (code validation with business register databases of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Finland, possibility to entry data manually)
3. Contact person and authorized persons who can access and edit Organization data
4. Role in the enterprise (drop down)
5. Email address
6. Organisation staff size (drop-down - micro, small, medium)
7. Organisations foundation year
8. Organisation operation sector (drop down based on NACE)
9. Country where the Organization business unit is located (Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Estonia and other)

4.2.1. Organization profile update, editing, and deleting

4.2.1.1. Organizations can access, update, edit, and delete their profile.

4.2.1.2 In total the estimated number of registered organizations will be up to 1000 by the end of 2025.

4.2.2. ESG Tool-related data and results for Organization

4.2.2.1. Organizations can fill in the information and compile measurements for the following Organization data:

* Stage 1 – Organizations stakeholder analysis and mapping
* Stage 2 – Principal awareness of materiality importance for standard topics and subtopics – Shortlist of sustainability matters
* Stage 3 – Double materiality - evaluation
* Stage 4 - Double materiality results analysis
* Stage 5 – Results and suggestions

4.2.2.2. Organization data results are stored in the platform. With new calculations, the history versions could be assessed (up to 20 versions). Data is stored within EU, with the possibility of ensuring data division based on user countries.

4.2.2.3. The organization can retrieve the data in the following formats:

* Send to registered e-mail as attachment (PDF, Word or Excel) files
* Download as PDF, Word, and Excel reports
* Edit and add comments to defined fields within the platform

**4.3. ESG Tool evaluation tool organization journey**

ESG Tool allows organizations registered to the platform to make the initial stakeholder mapping and materiality assessment. The 5 Stage process has to follow the methodology guidelines and approach fully explained in the ESG Tool methodology, the full Methodology document can be found in Annex E. The full methodology of Stages 3 and 4 is under the subject of a separate outsourced expert procurement. The contractor will work closely with the methodological provider and the outsourced experts to establish a well-functioning evaluation algorithm and integration in a five-step process (see Figure 1 Visualization of the ESG Tool web page structure):

1. Stakeholder identification
   1. A list of predefined stakeholder types is provided for companies to evaluate them with a Likert scale. Based on the company-provided evaluation, results are calculated to distinguish importance and impact (low, medium, high) to stakeholder groups upstream, midstream, and downstream. Results of the process are shown in PDF format with visualizations, as a separate report and included in the joint report of all stages. Additional description for stage 1 enclosed - Annex F.
2. Shortlist sustainability matters

A questionnaire with predefined questions with multiple choice answers to shortlist the Step 3 sustainability sub and sub subtopics. Number of questions up to 100. Additional description for stage 2 enclosed- Annex G.

1. Assess impact, risks, and opportunities
   1. From the shortlisted materiality aspects of step 2 a full evaluation form with an assessment of risks, impact, and opportunities and calculation of their materiality. The full methodology is provided to the contractor by the methodology providers. Additional description for stage 3 enclosed Annex H - Additional methodology will be procured separately and during the development of the phase close collaboration with methodology experts should be planned)
2. Determine material sustainability matters
   1. The result page displays the results of the identified stakeholders and matrix of sustainability matter materiality assessment. Visualization of the results and interactive presentation of the result display. Text description of the results and suggestions on further steps. Links to the public part of the web page with further resources for evaluation. Additional description for stage 4 enclosed Annex H
3. Further suggestions for developing a full company ESRS assessment.
   1. Results are available for each separate step and as a joint report. After finalization results are available in the company profile and sent as a pdf file to the registered email address. Company representatives can return to any stage of the evaluation process at any time and correct the data input. Additional description for stage 5 enclosed Annex I.

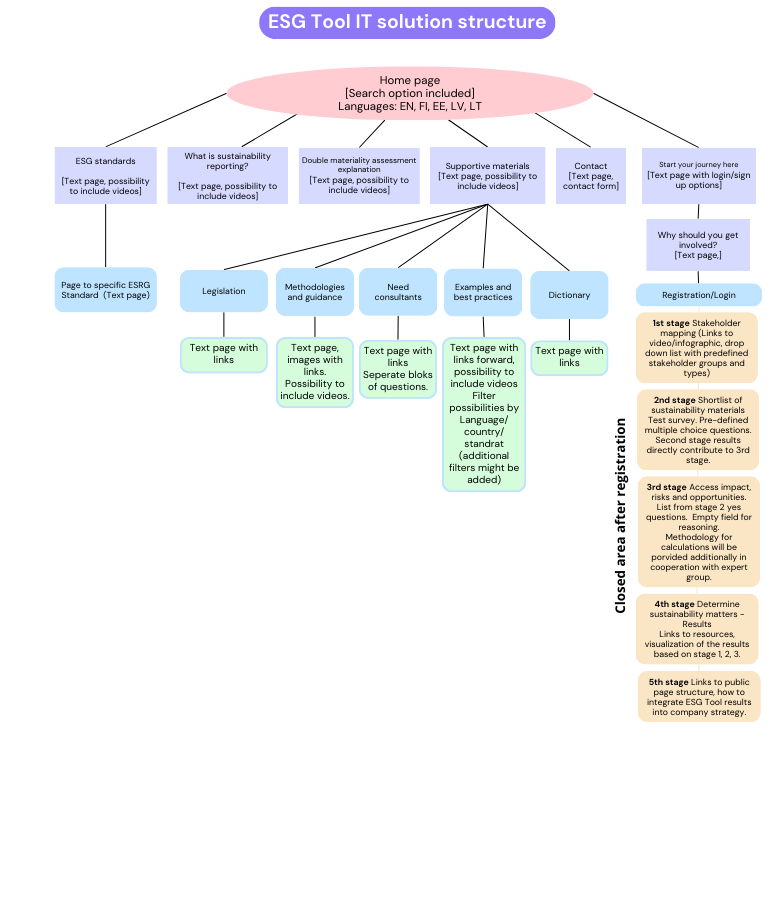
**4.4. ESG Tool public part**

The ESG Tools public part guides SME representatives to the ESRG standards, their application in the respective organization, best-case examples, and other supporting materials. Users have the possibility to use search functionality in any stage of the ESG Tool.

The public part consists of the main home (landing) page and links to the following subsections and sub-subsections:

* ESG Standards
  + Subpages for 12 standards
* What is sustainability reporting?
* Double materiality assessment explanation
* Supportive materials
  + Legislation
  + Methodologies and guidance
  + Need a consultant?
  + Examples and best practices
  + Dictionary
  + Where to get help?
* Why should you get involved?
* Contacts
* Start your journey here (Registration and possibility to access the restricted company evaluation)

The content and information blocks of the landing page (including sections of the website) are detailed and coordinated throughout the website development process, possible changes may be applied.



*Figure 1 Visualization of the Suggested ESG Tool web page structure*

4.4.1. Design for localization

4.4.1.1. Develop the web design of the English language version – provide 2 web design concepts - final selected after consortium agreement.

4.4.1.2. Customize web design for national languages (LT, EE, FI, LV) after the user testing phase.

4.4.1.3. Develop the web design and images of the English language version.

4.4.1.4. Adapt web page design to national languages (LT, EE, FI, LV)

1. **User role levels and permissions:**

**5.1. Website administrator:**

5.1.1. Oversee and manage the ESG evaluation process.

5.1.2. Monitor ESG performance data and trends of the submitted organization inputs, the possibility to view, edit and extract company results and categorize them by country.

5.1.3. Website user management – registration, activation, deactivation, email change; ability to create user groups, access levels that can be applied to articles and sections;

5.1.4. Unlimited rights to manage the website's content design (the website administrator must be able to create a category of articles and a menu tree);

5.1.5. Performing configuration work on the website (the website administrator should be able to easily change the content, menus, and page objects, enable/disable objects on the page, and create new menus, placing existing ones in the necessary position according to the website design template)

5.1.6. Rectifying errors and inaccuracies in the operation of the website

5.1.7. Maintenance of the website content system (for example updates) and setting up maintenance message

5.1.8. Adapt changes to applied algorithms within the ESG Tool.

5.1.9. Possibility to configure SMTP server settings and integration with Google Analytics.

**5.2. Web site Content Editor:**

5.2.1. Oversee and manage the ESG evaluation process.

5.2.2. Monitor ESG performance data and trends of the submitted organisation inputs.

5.2.3. Collaborate with administrators on system configuration.

5.2.4. Possibility to generate reports

5.2.5. Access to CMS and content input and localization

5.2.6. Access all sections of the ESG Tool public part

**5.3. Organization representative users:**

5.4.1. Access all sections of the ESG Tool public part

5.4.2. Input and update ESG performance data for the respective Organization

5.4.3. Access guidance and resources for aligning with ESRS.

5.4.4. View and download ESG performance reports specific to their organization.

5.4.5. Collaborate with ESG country Administrator for data accuracy and completeness.

5.4.6. Receive ESG reports for the respective organization as a PDF, Word, and Excel file to registered e-mail.

5.4.7. Possibility to add additional users to a company

1. **Technical requirements**

**6.1. General requirements**

6.1.1. Develop a modular and scalable architecture to accommodate future updates and enhancements. The applications are designed and developed following the principles of domain-driven design and microservices architecture

6.1.2. Enable ESG performance evaluation based on predefined metrics and benchmarks – cooperate with the experts of methodological development to ensure proper integration.

6.1.3. Working with testing (low-fidelity wireframes/prototype and UX testing MVP) partner organisations and adjusting in accordance with the feedback

6.1.4. Administrator should be able to set up Google Analytics for webpage via settings section. Statistics should be visually accessible, and there should be summarized information available (countries, intensity, page sections). The statistics are only accessible to the website administrator.

6.1.5. Provide comprehensive user documentation to guide users through the tool's functionalities. Include tutorials, FAQs, and troubleshooting guides.

6.1.6. Deliver training to the tool Managers and experts to ensure successful administration and localization of the ESG Tool to Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian.

6.1.7. Deliver detailed technical documentation for administrators and developers covering installation, configuration, and maintenance procedures.

6.1.8. Ensure SEO for the web page following industry best practices.

6.1.9. Ensure the search option within the web page is based on keywords within the web page content, the search option has to be intuitive and adapted to the design.

6.1.10. Develop web page structure and functionality according to the provided structure of ESG Tool (changes may be applied during the development process)

6.1.11. Ensure the possibility to add to the public part different content types (text, images, links, downloadable files, tables, lists, video, audio files, and interactive visualizations)

6.1.12. Ensure the functionality of the web page according to the industry's best practices.

6.1.13. Maintain open and transparent communication channels between the development team and project stakeholders ensuring an electronic communication/project management platform. The communication channels should be agreed upon at the during the strategy development. (See also – Clause 9)

6.1.14. When possible ensure the project utilizes Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) to mitigate licensing costs and dependencies on proprietary software. Description and foreseen possible future costs to be included in the strategy.

6.1.15. Option to protect against robots, such as "captcha" or similar.

6.1.16. System security has to comply with OWASP Latest.

6.1.17. Cookies policy has to comply with the latest EU requirements, Google consent mode v2 and industries best practices.

6.2. **Content management system (CMS) development**

6.2.1. CMS has to be developed in English and all functionality works identically in the following Internet browsers (latest intermediate versions): Microsoft Edge, Firefox, Opera, Safari, and Google Chrome.

6.2.2. The CMS system has to support the type of content administration, and the possibility to add text, images, links, downloadable files, tables, lists, and video, and audio files.

6.2.3. The public website should be built on an existing web content management system, it has to be adapted and customized to the needs IT solution.

6.3. **User testing and piloting**

6.3.1. Develop 1st stage UX test scenarios and ensure test delivery in English.

6.3.2. Analysis of the UX testing and implementations of the test results accordingly.

6.3.3. Work together with the consortium to ensure 2nd phase pilot testing with the end users in all 4 countries. Technical adjustments according to the user feedback received.

6.3.4. Online participation in user testing round tables and informative events to provide training upon request online or if requested in partner countries.

6.4. **Localization**

6.4.1. Ensure unified templates for each of the supported languages LV, EE, LT, and FIN

6.4.2. Ensure proper training to country managers to deliver localization

6.4.3. Support through the testing phase of country localizations

6.4.4. Rectifying errors and inaccuracies through the process of localization

6.5. **Hosting**

6.5.1. The contractor ensures the operation of the website on a stable server located in a modern data center, ensuring website availability on the internet of not less than 99.8% (virtually without interruptions) (the previously agreed maintenance time is not counted in the availability), and the website is accessible from any country, it also has a dedicated VPS.

6.5.2. The contractor ensures web page hosting for 1 year after finalizing the ESG Tool project (End of project - December 2025) and ensures availability 3 years after the project.

6.5.3. The installation of software in environments must be automated (using deployments scripts),

6.5.4. Contractor ensures web solution migration if needed after the hosting/availability period.

1. **GDPR and security requirements**

7.1. All data transmitted in the tool should be encrypted using industry-standard protocols to ensure confidentiality.

7.2. Define and implement role-based access controls to restrict access to specific functionalities based on user roles.

7.3. Follow the industry's best practices and standards regarding data security.

7.4. Conduct regular security audits and vulnerability assessments to identify and mitigate potential threats.

7.5. Clearly articulate data handling practices and ensure compliance with data protection and privacy laws including GDPR, ensuring secure data handling and storage.

7.6. Adherence to relevant legal and regulatory requirements in the participating countries.

7.7. Data are hosted in EU servers, and it’s not allowed to be hosted by third parties outside the EU.

7.8. Data must be logged in accordance with EU regulations.

7.9. System security has to comply with OWASP Latest.

7.10 Applications must issue log entries in JSON format.

1. **Accessibility requirements**

8.1. Design an intuitive and user-friendly interface to cater to users with varying levels of technical proficiency and ensure compatibility with different devices (desktops, tablets, and smartphones)

8.2. Ensure multilingual usability (ENG, LV, LT, EE, and FI) to the platform to accommodate users in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

8.3. Comply with accessibility standards (minimum WCAG 2.1) to ensure the tool is usable by individuals with disabilities.

8.4. Follow the best practice examples in similar tool development.

8.5. Ensure the rendering of tools and the identity of all functionality in the following Internet browsers (latest intermediate versions): Edge, Firefox, Opera, Safari, and Google Chrome, and ensure compatibility with different devices (desktops, tablets, and smartphones)

1. **Requirements**

The contractor is expected to provide regular biweekly progress reports in online meetings and milestones as outlined in the project plan. The contractor is expected to use project management software to inform the project consortium about development progress. The forms of communication and software usage will be agreed upon during the strategy planning phase.

1. **Annexes:**
   1. Timetable
   2. Methodology of the tool
   3. Stage 1 Excel
   4. Stage 2 Excel
   5. Stage 3 -4 Excel
   6. Stage 5 Excel