

## TERMS OF REFERENCE CLARIFICATIONS • v1.0

# IACT Web Platform

## Frequently Asked Questions

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Clarifications on the Terms of Reference for the Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Toolbox web platform development.

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## 00 How to Read this Document

This document compiles responses to questions on the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Toolbox (IACT) Web Platform. It should be read alongside the ToR and includes both clarifications in response to applicants' questions and answers to anticipated additional queries.

## 01 Platform Vision and Scope

### Q1. What is the core purpose of the IACT platform?

The platform is a curated knowledge hub for anti-corruption resources serving four user groups: investors, private sector stakeholders, public entities, and civil society. It complements the OECD IACT Handbook by incorporating dynamic, stakeholder-specific risk mapping and mitigation guidance.

The platform will route users through a guided intake mechanism that captures their stakeholder group, and priority risks, then surfaces relevant resources from a resource and case library.

### Q2. Is the IACT platform a publication tool for OCDS or OC4IDS data?

No. The IACT platform is not an OCDS or OC4IDS publisher and does not require catalogue-level references, deep links, or live API integration to retrieve data fields from external sources.

The IACT platform is standards-aware in the sense that infrastructure related standards, such as the OC4IDS and other transparency standards appear inside the resource library. References to these sources are provided through URLs to guide users to the original materials.

Live API integration with external OCDS or OC4IDS sources, schema validation, and live field fetching are not in scope.

### Q3. What does the heat map actually measure?

The heat map displays aggregated user inputs collected through the guided intake. The IACT platform aggregates the stakeholder group, and self-identified priority risks that users report at session entry.

This is a demand-side signal. It shows what users are concerned about and seeking guidance on, segmented by stakeholder group, geography, risk category, and time period. It does not show measured incidence of corruption in any geography or sector. But the signal has analytical value: it highlights the risks users are most concerned about and the mitigation approaches most in demand.

### Q4. Where will the platform be hosted (which server)? Will the platform integrate with existing CoST infrastructure website? What hosting model is preferred: subdomain, standalone domain, or integrated section of the main website?

Not yet decided. The Phase 2 Domain and Hosting Strategy deliverable asks the applicant to recommend an option with technical justification, considering SEO, branding, maintenance overhead, the user journey, and existing CoST infrastructure. Sign-off on hosting model rests with CoST.

Whether the IACT platform operates as a subdomain of [infrastructuretransparency.org](https://infrastructuretransparency.org), a standalone domain, or an integrated section of the main CoST website, integration with existing CoST infrastructure will be through hyperlinks rather than API integration or data exchange.

**Q5. Does the platform replace or duplicate any existing CoST websites?**

No. The IACT platform serves a distinct purpose. It does not replace the main CoST website, the Infrastructure Transparency Index website, or any CoST member portal.

**Q6. Are there any existing datasets or external repositories that the platform must connect to via API?**

No. Integration is by hyperlink, not by API or data exchange.

**Q7. Will the platform ingest external datasets via ETL processes (for example, the World Bank debarred firms list) to regularly import and update data?**

No. The IACT platform is a curated knowledge hub, not a data integration platform. ETL processes for external datasets are not in scope. References to live external datasets are handled by hyperlink: the platform displays the link with appropriate editorial context, and the user follows the link to the authoritative source. Where periodic updates to embedded content are required (for example, when a resource is replaced by a newer version), CoST staff will manage the update through the CMS.

**Q8. Are there existing designs, wireframes, functionalities or mockups for the platform?**

No. Information architecture, user journeys, content taxonomy, and clickable prototypes are Phase 1 deliverables produced by the applicant in collaboration with CoST. The ToR annex contains a working draft risk map; these are content scaffolds, not platform designs. The CoST team has preliminary ideas for the platform design, based on existing webpages, which will be shared at the start of the project.

## 02 Content and Editorial Workflow

*These questions cover content provision, classification, the CMS workflow.*

**Q9. How will content be provided to the applicant for upload?**

All content is structured in Excel workbook format, including risk and mitigation mappings, and URLs for supporting resources and cases. These files will be shared with the web development team as ZIP folders in the beginning of the project.

**Q10. Does the scope include reusing, cleaning, and classifying existing data (e.g. CoST independent review reports, the draft risk map)? Or will all content be provided by CoST in a publication-ready format?**

CoST is responsible for editorial preparation of content and all content will be provided by CoST in a publication-ready format. The applicant's responsibility is to apply the agreed taxonomy structure to the metadata at upload and to implement the structures (tags, categories, relationships, search index) that hold the content cleanly.

**Q11. How many resources should we expect at launch?**

Indicative range: 42 risks have been mapped across 7 stages of the project cycle. As each risk is tailored to the four different stakeholder groups, this expands to 168 tailored risks, supported by around 140 resources and 50 cases.

This is an indicative figure for proposal sizing. The final number will be confirmed by CoST content leads during Phase 1. After launch, CoST staff continue to add and update resources via the CMS without applicant involvement.

**Q12. Will CoST require staging access during build to populate content?**

If possible, yes. This reduces the risk that launch slips because content needs updating and validates that CMS workflows function correctly with real content rather than placeholder data.

Staging access requirements (number of named users, role-based permissions, staging-to-production deployment mechanics) should be addressed in the Phase 1 Content Management Workflows deliverable.

**Q13. What editorial workflow does the CMS need to support?**

At minimum: draft, review, publish, and retire states; role-based access (content contributor, editor, publisher); content versioning with rollback to previous published versions; scheduled publishing with future date support; and an audit trail of who changed what and when.

Bulk import and export tools for resource metadata are required to support migration from the launch spreadsheet and ongoing back-up. Approval workflows beyond a single editor reviewing a contributor's draft are not required at launch but the CMS should not foreclose adding multi-step workflow if needed.

## 03 Multilingual Operation

*The platform must operate in English and Spanish from launch, with architecture for additional languages over time.*

**Q14. What does multilingual mean in practice?**

The base language of the platform will be English. The platform will use an automated translation service to provide a Spanish version of the site, excluding downloadable content. No downloadable resource will be translated, either manually or automatically. Downloadable resources will be presented in their source language with language metadata, allowing users to filter by language.

**Q15. Who is responsible for translation, and is translation cost in scope?**

No downloadable resource will be translated, either manually or automatically. The applicant's responsibility is to deliver a CMS architecture that handles multilingual content cleanly: parallel content models, language-aware URLs and metadata, language switcher in the UI, language filters on search and library views, and the ability to add languages without rebuild.

**Q16. Will additional languages be added after launch?**

Possibly, depending on funder priorities and user geography. The ToR requires architecture that accommodates additional languages as the platform scales. Adding a third language post-launch should not require structural changes to the database, search, or routing logic. It should be a content and configuration task. There is no commitment in the current scope to add a third language during the Phase 1 to Phase 4 engagement.

## 04 Guided Intake and AI

*These questions cover the design and implementation of the intake mechanism, the role of large language models, and ongoing AI service cost ownership. CoST prefers guided intake than LLMs.*

### **Q17. Is the guided intake a chatbot, a structured questionnaire, or something else?**

The ToR refers to 'a chatbot or a guided intake mechanism' and intentionally leaves the implementation choice to applicants. CoST's preference is for a structured questionnaire (decision tree, no large language model in the routing path) as the primary mechanism.

Applicants may propose a conversational chatbot architecture as an alternative if they can justify the choice against total cost of ownership, the maintenance burden post-handover, and the implications for output quality assurance.

Proposals using a large language model in the routing path must include an estimated annual operating cost over five years, a documented mechanism for handling model bias and hallucination on anti-corruption guidance, and a fallback for users without internet access to commercial AI services.

### **Q18. Is the chatbot expected to use a third-party AI service (e.g. OpenAI), or a custom-built solution?**

Not by default. The structured questionnaire intake described above does not require any LLM. Phase 4 may include refinement of intake question logic based on observed usage patterns, which is content work, not AI work.

Where applicants propose any LLM-backed feature (conversational chatbot, semantic search beyond keyword matching, automatic content tagging), the proposal must specify the service used, the data shared with the service, the contractual terms applicable to that data, and the estimated annual operating cost.

### **Q19. Who pays for ongoing LLM API costs if an applicant proposes an LLM-based feature? Does CoST have a preference or a budget allocation for ongoing AI service costs?**

The structured questionnaire intake described above does not require any LLM. Where applicants propose any LLM-backed feature, the all-in proposal price by applicants should cover any LLM API costs incurred during build and a transition period of 12 months from launch. After the transition period, ongoing LLM API costs are CoST's responsibility and must be disclosed in the proposal as estimated annual operating cost.

Applicants are expected to design for cost containment: caching, retrieval-augmented patterns, model selection appropriate to task, rate limiting, and graceful degradation when the service is unavailable. Proposals that rely heavily on premium-tier models without justification will be assessed less favourably on value for money.

### **Q20. Are self-hosted large language models on GPU infrastructure permitted?**

Self-hosted LLMs on GPU infrastructure are not preferred. GPU hosting introduces significant ongoing operational cost, maintenance burden, and lock-in to specialised infrastructure. CoST values solutions

that are maintainable by non-specialist staff and transferable to a different provider without substantial reconfiguration.

Applicants proposing self-hosted LLM architectures must justify the choice against alternatives, including total cost of ownership over five years, a documented handover path, and the implications for the CoST in-house team's ability to operate the platform.

## 05 Privacy, Security, and Compliance

*The platform serves a global audience under multiple regulatory frameworks. These questions establish the baseline privacy, security, and compliance obligations.*

### **Q21. What data privacy frameworks apply to the platform? Are there specific frameworks (e.g. GDPR) that must be complied with?**

The platform must comply with UK GDPR (CoST is a UK-registered charity, charity number 1152236). Data subject rights to access, rectification, erasure, and portability must be supported even where collected data is minimal. The platform must implement data minimisation principles, lawful basis for processing, transparent privacy notices, and procedures for handling data breach notifications under the applicable timeline.

### **Q22. What data is collected at the guided intake? What level of data privacy and user consent management is required for the intake data collected to generate heat maps?**

The guided intake is anonymous. The platform collects categorical inputs only at intake: stakeholder group, geographic focus, priority risk categories and resources, and timestamp. No personal data (name, email, IP-derived identification beyond aggregate analytics) is collected at intake. Users can complete the intake and access resources without registering.

### **Q23. Will heat map analytics be publicly visible, restricted to CoST staff, or configurable by admin?**

Aggregated level data should be publicly visible, with specific methodology indicating that the displayed metric is user-reported priority risks, not measured corruption incidence.

CoST staff will have full granular access through admin views, including time-series breakdowns, cross-tabulations, and drill-downs not available in the public view. Visibility settings may be adjusted post-launch based on observed usage patterns and stakeholder feedback. The CMS must support changing visibility per heat map dimension without code changes.

### **Q24. Are there specific compliance requirements (any licensing restrictions, security requirements, or data residency obligations) that would limit the choice of hosting provider or third-party tools?**

For the purposes of proposal preparation, applicants should assume the following baseline: CoST is a UK legal entity and the website is to be hosted in the UK. The platform should follow UK GDPR compliance, CC-BY-4.0 data handling, standard cloud security practices appropriate to a public-data

knowledge platform, and no use of components prohibited under common Western government supply chain rules (Section 889-listed Chinese telecommunications and surveillance applicants).

**Q25. What security requirements apply to the platform?**

At minimum: HTTPS across all endpoints, secure authentication for CMS access (multi-factor authentication for administrator accounts), parameterised queries and standard protections against the OWASP Top 10, security patching commitment for any open-source dependencies during the engagement, and a documented vulnerability disclosure process.

Penetration testing of the production platform before launch is required. The applicant may conduct this internally or commission a third party; evidence of testing and remediation is part of the Phase 3 launch acceptance pack. Bug bounty programmes are not required.

**Q26. What backup and disaster recovery provisions are required?**

Recovery point objective (RPO): no more than 24 hours of content loss in a recovery scenario. Recovery time objective (RTO): platform restored to full operation within 48 hours of a major incident. These are reasonable for a knowledge platform; applicants proposing tighter RPO or RTO without justification will be assessed on cost-effectiveness.

Backup mechanism, retention period, and restoration procedure are documented in the Phase 3 Hosting and Maintenance Review. The mechanism must allow CoST to restore the platform with a different hosting provider in case of provider failure.

## 06 Technology and Architecture

*These questions cover technology stack, hosting, server provisioning, and architectural choices that shape the cost and maintainability of the platform.*

**Q27. Will CoST prescribe a technology stack?**

No. CoST does not prescribe specific technologies. The applicant proposes a technology stack based on the requirements established in Phase 1, justified by fitness for purpose, long-term maintainability, hosting cost efficiency, and CoST's capacity to manage the platform post-handover.

Phase 2 includes a technology recommendation deliverable: a documented assessment with at least two viable alternatives, hosting requirements, estimated annual operating costs, and rationale for the recommended choice. The recommended stack must avoid applicant lock-in and must be transferable to a different technical team if needed.

**Q28. Who provides development, testing, and production environments?**

The applicant provides development and testing environments at their own cost as part of build delivery. These environments are included within the all-in proposal price and are not separately reimbursable.

CoST owns and pays for the production hosting account from launch onward. The applicant is expected to recommend a production hosting model (cloud provider, instance specifications, estimated annual cost) as part of the Phase 2 Hosting Strategy deliverable. Production hosting costs are not part of the applicant's proposal budget.

**Q29. What search functionality is expected?**

Full-text search across all platform content, with filtering capabilities such as stakeholder group, phase of the project cycle, resource type, and geographic tag.

Search infrastructure choice (database full-text, dedicated search service such as Elasticsearch or Meilisearch, or a managed alternative) is the applicant's recommendation. Search must be performant on the launch corpus and remain so as content grows to more resources over time.

**Q30. What analytics and reporting infrastructure is required?**

Two layers. First, standard site analytics (page views, traffic sources, search terms, content popularity) using a privacy-respecting analytics tool of the applicant's recommendation. Google Analytics is acceptable subject to GDPR-compliant configuration; privacy-first alternatives such as Plausible or Matomo are encouraged.

Second, intake analytics feeding the heat map visualisations described in Section 01 and Section 05. Both layers must be visible in CoST admin dashboards. Public-facing analytics displays are limited to the heat map.

**Q31. What performance and uptime targets apply?**

Page load time: 95th percentile under 3 seconds on a standard broadband connection for the platform's main pages (homepage, intake start, search results, resource detail). Uptime: 99% on a rolling 12-month basis, excluding scheduled maintenance windows announced at least 48 hours in advance.

Performance benchmarks are part of the Phase 3 launch acceptance pack. Applicants should design for these targets from Phase 1 information architecture decisions through Phase 2 build choices.

**Q32. What devices and browsers must be supported?**

Responsive across desktop, tablet, and mobile. Modern evergreen browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge in their last two stable versions) and mobile equivalents (iOS Safari and Android Chrome). Internet Explorer and legacy browsers are not in scope.

A separate mobile application (iOS or Android native) is not in scope. The platform must be functional on mobile via the responsive web interface.

**Q33. What accessibility requirements apply?**

WCAG 2.1 AA compliance across the live platform. Accessibility is not a Phase 4 retrofit. It must be designed in from Phase 1 (information architecture, navigation patterns, form design, content structure) and built in throughout Phase 2.

Accessibility audit evidence (automated tooling output, manual testing notes for keyboard navigation and screen reader compatibility) is part of the Phase 2 acceptance pack.

## 07 User Features and Engagement

*These questions cover user-facing features beyond the core intake and resource browsing experience.*

### **Q34. Will user accounts be available, and what features require an account?**

Core platform functionality (intake, browsing, search, downloading resources) is available without registration. Optional registration is available for users who want to subscribe to CoST newsletter.

Single sign-on integration with external identity providers is not required at launch. The architecture should not foreclose adding SSO later if a partnership justifies it.

### **Q35. Are user-generated content features (comments, ratings, forums) in scope?**

No. Comments, ratings, public reviews, and forum-style discussion features are not in scope.

### **Q36. Are newsletter integration and email subscription management in scope?**

Yes. The platform should support a newsletter signup form that integrates with CoST's existing email service provider (to be confirmed; assume Mailchimp or similar for proposal sizing). Full email campaign management is outside the platform's scope. Email notifications triggered by user actions on the platform (for example, a registered user receiving a notification when a resource matching their interest is published) are optional Phase 4 features, not Phase 1 to 3 requirements.

## 08 Project Management and Governance

*These questions cover the operational mechanics of how CoST and the applicant collaborate during delivery.*

### **Q37. Who has phase sign-off authority and what is their availability?**

Phase transitions require formal sign-off from CoST's designated project lead. The applicant cannot proceed to the next phase without written acceptance of current-phase deliverables.

The project lead and CoST's content and technical leads will be confirmed at contract award. The 'technical lead' referred to in Section 12 of the ToR refers to the dedicated CoST technical person working on the project. During active development phases, the CoST's content and technical leads will be available for weekly coordination calls and dedicated time at each phase boundary for structured review meetings. Fortnightly written progress updates are expected from the applicant.

### **Q38. Will CoST convene users for prototype testing?**

Yes. CoST will convene a group of representative users from each of the four stakeholder groups (investors, public and private sector, and civil society monitors) to form a consultation group for prototype validation in the end of Phase 1 and during Phase 4 advanced features review.

The applicant designs the testing protocol, prepares prototypes, facilitates testing sessions, and synthesises findings into the Phase 1 deliverables. CoST's communications and programmes teams coordinate scheduling.

**Q39. What communication and project management tools will be used?**

CoST does not prescribe specific tools. The applicant can propose a working arrangement at project initiation. At minimum: a shared written communication channel (email or chat tool), a project management board for tracking deliverables and decisions, and a versioned document repository.

Meeting cadence is weekly during active development phases. Time zone considerations: CoST International Secretariat operates primarily in UK time. Applicants in significantly different time zones should confirm meeting availability windows in their proposals.

**Q40. What documentation is required at handover?**

Technical documentation of the platform architecture, codebase, deployment procedures, CMS configuration, and maintenance requirements, sufficient for a different technical team to assume maintenance if needed. CoST values the ability to transfer the platform to another provider; documentation must support that.

The Phase 3 Hosting and Maintenance Review documents annual hosting costs, performance benchmarks, uptime evidence, and recommended maintenance schedule. CMS user documentation for non-technical staff (publishing workflows, taxonomy management, troubleshooting common issues) is part of the Phase 3 training pack.

## 09 Commercial Terms

*These questions cover the financial structure of the engagement, including currency, taxes, and the boundary between build budget and ongoing operational costs.*

**Q41. Is the budget envelope in USD or another currency?**

The ToR budget of USD 40,000 to USD 50,000 is the indicative envelope for the full scope across all four phases. Applicants should present financial proposals in USD for comparability. Proposals from non-US suppliers may include a note on preferred contracting currency.

**Q42. Is the budget inclusive or exclusive of VAT?**

It is exclusive of VAT.

**Q43. How is payment scheduled across phases?**

Payment is linked to phase-specific deliverable acceptance. The indicative split is: Phase 1 (20%) on approved wireframes and prototypes; Phase 2 (40%) on functional platform delivered; Phase 3 (25%) on launch and training completion; Phase 4 (15%) on heat maps and chatbot operational. Final allocation by phase is confirmed at contract award based on the proposal evaluation outcome.

## 10 Intellectual Property, and Post-Launch

*These questions cover ownership of work, the handover of operational responsibility, and the ethical and integrity expectations applicable to a applicant delivering an anti-corruption platform.*

### **Q44. Where will the source code be stored, and who owns the repository?**

All source code is the property of CoST and will be hosted in a CoST-owned repository (GitHub or GitLab, organisation account managed by CoST). The applicant is granted contributor access for the duration of the engagement. Repository access is revoked or modified at handover per the documented handover plan. Public repositories are preferred for transparency unless specific components must be private (for example, for pre-launch or for security-sensitive configuration). The decision is made per-repository at the start of Phase 2.

### **Q45. Who owns the IP at the end of the engagement?**

All deliverables produced under the engagement (designs, code, documentation, prototypes, intermediate artefacts) are the property of CoST. The applicant may reference the work in their portfolio subject to CoST's prior approval.

The applicant must not use proprietary tools or libraries that create applicant lock-in or restrict CoST's ability to maintain, modify, or transfer the platform to a different provider in future. Where third-party tools or plugins are proposed, the applicant must disclose licensing terms and any recurring costs.

### **Q46. What post-launch support is in scope?**

Phase 3 includes a defined window post-launch for bug resolution, user-reported issue handling, and minor refinements. The applicant proposes a clear process for reporting, triaging, and resolving issues within agreed response times.

Ongoing maintenance beyond Phase 3 is not in the current scope. The Phase 3 Hosting and Maintenance Review informs CoST's decision on whether to retain the applicant for ongoing maintenance, transfer to internal capacity, or engage a different provider.

### **Q47. Is there a Phase 5, and what does it cover?**

There is the potential for a fifth phase focused on data analytics and visualisation refinement, yet to be fully defined. Any agreement on a fifth phase will be discussed with the successful applicant after Phase 4 and is subject to performance in the initial phases. Phase 5 is a separate agreement with separate budget.

Applicants do not include Phase 5 effort or pricing in the current proposal. They may indicate the kinds of analytics work they could deliver in Phase 5 based on Phase 1 to 4 outputs. This is informational only.

*End of document*