

# JIC & NRPDTP WEB 2026 Tender - Questions and Answers

Thank you for expressing an interest in this project. Due to the large number of enquiries and questions asked, we have collated and organised these into key topics, and aimed to answer as many as possible in the following document.

To support development of proposals we can provide a downloadable OVF instance of our websites and underlying servers for you to use. Please contact Richard Horler ([richard.horler@nbi.ac.uk](mailto:richard.horler@nbi.ac.uk)) to request a copy of this resource which will be available in the week commencing Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April.

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## Context, scope and rationale

We received lots of questions about why the tender is taking place, what problem the rebuild is solving (particularly around server upgrades and security), and whether the work is a true like-for-like rebuild or allows for evolution in design, UX and functionality.

The website rebuilds are required because the current JIC and NRPDTP websites have become outdated, falling behind updates to the infrastructure they were built upon. A rebuild is necessary to ensure our teams can actively manage the servers, providing the required level of security. This project ensures that both sites are compatible with the current and future NBI Computing-managed hosting environment.

The current sites are running on an old version of WordPress (v4.9.9). We believe that it is not possible to upgrade this to a version that is compatible with our servers that are running on CentOS7, PHP 7.2.34 and 5.5.68-MariaDB.

This means that we are currently hosting our websites on older servers that will be taken offline towards the end of 2026.

We would like to restore these websites to supported platforms and while we do so take advantage of the opportunity to provide some small changes. We'd also like to build a relationship with a web developer so we can upgrade and evolve our websites over the coming years.

We do not have any major requirements for changes to the design or functionality, but would love to hear from you about areas where we could make improvements both within the initial rebuild and for more longer-term investments in the websites.

**Q. Could you provide more detail on the specific server upgrade issue driving the rebuild? Understanding the technical constraint will help us ensure our proposed stack is compatible from the outset.**

In house we do not have the resourcing required to undertake the website upgrade needed to align with the current versions of the software deployed on the servers. Our research computing team offer support with core infrastructure only, and the communications team do not have the technical expertise to do this. The JIC and NRPDTP sites have this same issue.

**Q. Are there specific security concerns with either site that suppliers should be aware of that make upgrading a necessity?**

We require all components of the LAMP stack and WordPress to be supported versions, that are supportable by the third-party support contract.

## **Rebuild v redesign**

There were several questions asking for clarity as to whether the rebuild is strictly like-for-like or whether suppliers are encouraged to propose improvements, UX refinements, or selective redesign where beneficial.

For both JIC and NRPDTP, the intention is a like-for-like rebuild of the existing design, structure and core functionality. However, our tender explicitly states that:

- Minor usability, accessibility and design tweaks are expected, and
- Suppliers are welcome to propose advice and suggestions where these improve accessibility or functionality.

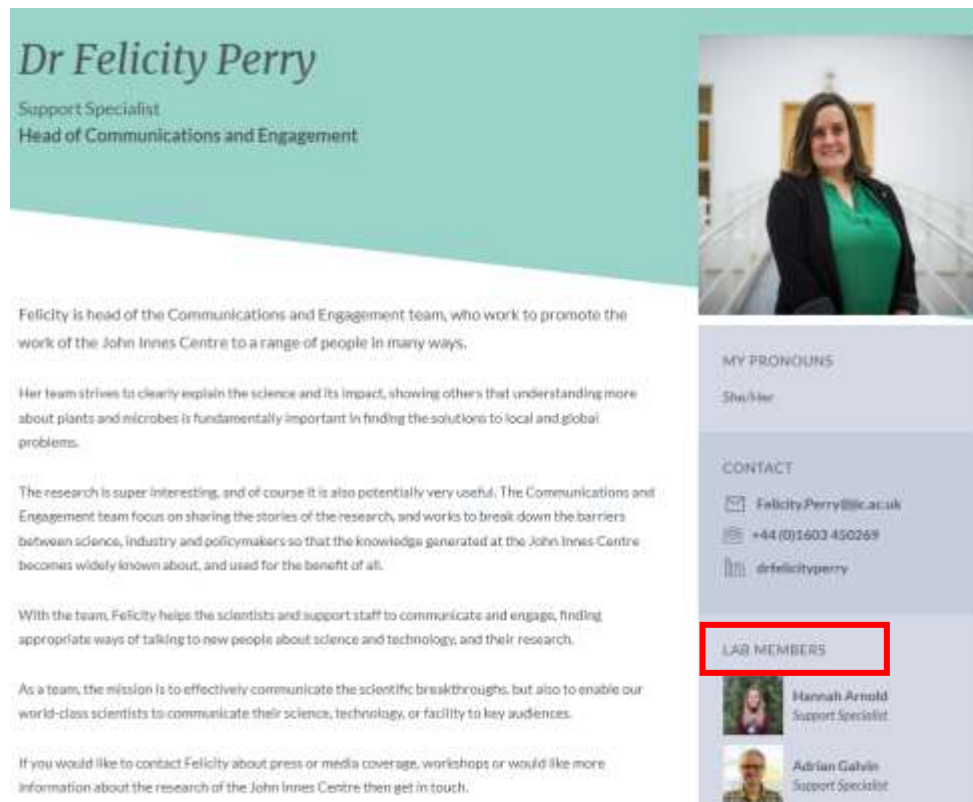
A wholesale redesign (and/or rebrand) is not expected or required.

**Q. What small design tweaks do you envisage for the JIC site?**

There are some small tweaks that we already know we want to make, for example some of the templates work well, but some are not so functional – so we would like to make changes to ensure that we can use all the templates effectively.

We know that we'd like to update some of the terminology and the way that pages and sections link. As an example, we would like to change some of the side bar details – see below – where connected people are all under the title Lab Members, which is an out-of-date term. We would

also like to explore improving the way that groupings of staff and students can be managed on the website. E.g, how they are linked/group together, and how we can showcase these groups.



**Dr Felicity Perry**  
Support Specialist  
Head of Communications and Engagement

Felicity is head of the Communications and Engagement team, who work to promote the work of the John Innes Centre to a range of people in many ways.

Her team strives to clearly explain the science and its impact, showing others that understanding more about plants and microbes is fundamentally important in finding the solutions to local and global problems.

The research is super interesting, and of course it is also potentially very useful. The Communications and Engagement team focus on sharing the stories of the research, and works to break down the barriers between science, industry and policymakers so that the knowledge generated at the John Innes Centre becomes widely known about, and used for the benefit of all.

With the team, Felicity helps the scientists and support staff to communicate and engage, finding appropriate ways of talking to new people about science and technology, and their research.



As a team, the mission is to effectively communicate the scientific breakthroughs, but also to enable our world-class scientists to communicate their science, technology, or facility to key audiences.

If you would like to contact Felicity about press or media coverage, workshops or would like more information about the research of the John Innes Centre then get in touch.

**MY PRONOUNS**  
She/Her

**CONTACT**  
✉ Felicity.Perry@jic.ac.uk  
☎ +44 (0)1603 450269  
📱 @felicityperry

**LAB MEMBERS**

-  Hannah Arnold  
Support Specialist
-  Adrian Galvin  
Support Specialist

**Q. NRPDTP: The brief references a rebuild but also mentions you are happy with the current design. Can you confirm whether this is a like-for-like rebuild or whether a degree of redesign is expected (and welcomed)?**

We are looking for a rebuild of the current site with some minor updates. These updates include the moving around/removing of pages, updating menu options, image updates and restoration of broken functionality.

Our current Projects page is currently broken and is not shown on the live site. The page pulls through advertised projects, lists them on the page and provides a search function box at the top of the page where projects can be filtered by organisation/supervisor/research area/keyword etc.

We are open to suggestions for this particular page and how the projects are shown etc.

We are also looking at merging Student Stories and News into one page, we are looking to remove the interactive map and “Send a message” section on the Contact Us page.

We are also looking at alternatives for the NRPDTP Hub part of the website, including making this a link to an existing database system on the UEA network, which will therefore mean we do not need to migrate these internal pages to the new site.

## **Budget**

### **Q: What is the total budget?**

- JIC website: £30,000 inc. VAT
- NRPDTP website: £20,000 inc. VAT
- Total combined budget: £50,000 inc. VAT, inclusive of all costs.

### **Q: Is this budget for build only or does it include support?**

The stated budgets are for full delivery, including design/build, content migration, testing and go-live. Ongoing support is not included and would need to be quoted in your tender as an additional ongoing cost.

A 12-month post-launch maintenance package, and options and pricing for ongoing support and maintenance up to 5 years should be costed outside this budget.

### **Q: For the 12 month and 5-year support period, what are your requirements for response times, hours of cover, bug fixes and inclusion of any ongoing design/dev work?**

At this point we don't have fixed ideas about our requirements for support. However we would anticipate a non-critical response time of next day Monday to Friday for the websites.

For bug fixes and ongoing design this would again be categorised as non-critical, and would be something that we would like to discuss with a potential web developer. We require a responsive developer to work collaboratively with us, for most of our requirements we can be flexible so long as we understand the constraints and the costs.

### **Q: What do your current support arrangements look like? Do you anticipate requiring a specific amount of time per month/annum?**

We currently do not have a support package, and we are unlikely to require a specific amount of development time each month. We would like to understand costs of future development projects, and thus would like to understand the cost of a day's work to making changes to the site.

### **Q: Is there a separate budget for migration of content?**

There is no separate budget for migration.

Given the scale of content migration for JIC you are welcome to include options for phased or prioritised delivery approaches. If you feel that it is unfeasible to migrate these web pages within the budget and/or timescale, please provide options within your tender return for the team to assess.

We will be able to support migration of content in house if required, and we will be undertaking a content audit over the coming weeks and months to ensure that all content is required for migration.

Since issuing the tender we have reviewed the page/posts on the site, it seems that there are fewer than the originally estimated 5,500 (which is a relief). We now think that the total pages and posts is around 2,220.

- Pages – 450

- Posts (News, Blogs, Events etc) – 1200
- Advances Magazine (posts) – 120
- People – 450
- TOTAL – 2,220

It is believed that there are also a large number of autogenerated pages e.g. [www.jic.ac.uk/tag/microbe/](http://www.jic.ac.uk/tag/microbe/) and the pages that host [our publications](#), there is also a large number of media items in the library (~ 3,400).

## **Hosting environment, infrastructure and server compatibility**

### **Q: Where will the sites be hosted?**

Both websites must be hosted on servers managed by NBI Computing, in line with the NBI Partnership Computing Hosting Policy. Third party hosting is not being considered at this time.

### **Environments**

#### **Q. Has a staging environment already been provisioned with NBI Computing, or will this need to be arranged post-contract award?**

- Staging environments will be set-up post contract award. We will also discuss the process of linking local development servers to a staging and production server for each site at NBI after the award of a contract.

#### **Q. Can you confirm the environment includes distinct staging and development alongside production? Will these environments be available post go-live?**

It is expected that NBI Computing will create 2 virtual machines per website (4 in total). This would allow for a production environment and a testing/staging environment for each site.

These environments will be available for both sites both pre and post go-live.

#### **Q. What do the hosting environments at NBI look like, e.g. public cloud/private cloud, dedicated resources/shared resources?**

Environments would be hosted on internal VMWare hypervisors. This will likely move to Proxmox or other technology within 2 years.

### **PHP**

The current sites are running on WordPress (v4.9.9). We believe that it is not possible to upgrade this to a version that is compatible with our servers that are running on CentOS7, PHP 7.2.34 and 5.5.68-MariaDB.

### **VPN**

#### **Q. Will a persistent VPN be provided for the duration of the 6-month rebuild to allow for remote development and testing directly on your servers?**

We would expect this would be provided either as Fixed supplier source IP address or forward DNS resolution rules in the firewall or NBI third party VPN account (subject to annual review).

**Q. Remote access is VPN-only. What is the onboarding process and typical lead time for a supplier to gain VPN access?**

The lead time to access our VPN is less than 1 week, and typically we provide this within 24 hours.

**Communications**

**Q. How do you envisage the successful supplier liaising with the respective infrastructure teams on hosting matters?**

Our infrastructure team (known as Research Computing) are integrated into the tender process and we work closely across functions to ensure that communications are clear and transparent. Our leads for Research Computing and Core Computing would be involved in communicating directly with awardee with regards to hosting matters.

## **Current Technical Stack and CMS Architecture**

**CMS choice:** We are only looking to rebuild the site using WordPress, or potentially another widely available and supported CMS. There are several reasons why we are unlikely to consider bespoke systems, the key one is because we are a charitable organisation primarily funded by the UK taxpayer. This means we need retaining the ability to maintain and upgrade our site long-term. The ability to shop around for future web projects is very important to us, thus we are unlikely to opt for a CMS that ties us to working with a small, or restricted number of suppliers.

**Q. What version(s) of WordPress is your site currently running?** WordPress v4.9.9

**Q. How many regular CMS editors will you have in total? Will they require different access levels for different users?**

- JIC will require approximately 7 CMS editors, with two levels of users. Standard site editors and editors who are restricted to editing certain sections.
- NRPDTP will require 5 CMS editors.

**Q. Please provide a list of plugins and/or commercial licences and their active versions used on your site.**

We can provide a downloadable OVF instance of our websites and underlying servers for prospective tenderers to use to support the development of the tender. Please contact Richard Horler ([richard.horler@nbi.ac.uk](mailto:richard.horler@nbi.ac.uk)) to request a copy of this resource which will be available from the 27<sup>th</sup> April.

**Q. How many page templates are available across your site?**

- [www.jic.ac.uk](http://www.jic.ac.uk) has ~ 10 page templates, 5 post types (press release, news, blog, directors blog and event).
- NRPDTP has ~ 5 page templates.

**Q. Of the 5,500 pages on your site, how many of these are posts, pages, pages using custom post types etc?**

Having reviewed the page/posts on the site, it seems that there are fewer than the originally estimated 5,500 (which is a relief). Using the JIC CMS figures gives us a substantially lower number which looks like -

- Pages – 450
- Posts (News, Blogs, Events etc) – 1200
- Advances Magazine (posts) – 120
- People – 450

## Micro-sites and Sub-sites (JIC)

We received some clarification around the JIC requirements and expectations around micro- and sub-sites, including the expected technical approach, autonomy, scale over time, shared content and whether this is core scope or optional.

### **Q. Would micro/sub-site be hosted within the same WordPress installation, or hosted separately? Or would they just be separate sections, but hosted on the main site?**

This question hits the nail on the head, because we have the same questions! We are unsure about how to deliver this most effectively. Hence why we need a developer to work through the options and the business requirements with us to come up with a solution that is fit for purpose. We are pretty sure that we'd like these sites to be included within the same WordPress installation, and they could be separate sections if we could ensure that it was manageable to include them in this way.

The business need is that when we lead or co-lead a national or international research programme we must ensure that external partners are represented equally, and that the project can build a set of webpages that describe the project, and where they can host resources and advertise opportunities separately.

An example of how we have done this in in-house the past is the [BRIGIT project](#) – where we hosted this as a section within the JIC website. Using the link above you'll be directed to the 'BRIGIT homepage', which uses a "hub" template. After the header and intro, there are a number of blocks below with the content describing the project and advertising opportunities and resources that are available. This worked fairly well but the recurring feedback we get is that the partnership element of the project gets lost because you can only see the JIC branding/logo and that the top menu directs you back to the main JIC site.

For some projects this 'internal' approach is not acceptable and those sometimes chose to build their own stand alone websites (e.g. <https://pcgin.org/>). In an ideal world we would love to be able to offer projects like this one a place on the JIC website where we can support them to develop and share content and ensure that their sites are updated regularly, GDPR compliant and accessible.

### **Q. How many micro or sub sites do you realistically expect to create over the next 3–5 years, and what kind of functionality do they need?**

Somewhere in the region of 2 - 4 sub-sites over the next 5 years. The functionality is very similar to the main site, however we would like to give them a distinct look and feel and be able to include logos and branding from partner organisations.

### **Q. Apart from micro site functionality, are there any potential future improvements you may have planned?**

No, nothing specific at the moment.

### **Q. Are sub/micro-sites a must-have within the fixed price, or an option we can cost separately?**

Given that this is an additional functionality that we are interested in exploring we would be open to costing this separately. However if we could solve this without additional cost that would be advantageous.

## **Search, Integrations and External Data Sources**

**Q: Is the intention to continue with Algolia for internal search, or is this open for recommendation?**

You are asked to recommend the best product for our needs, within our budget. The Algolia fees for the JIC website cost approximately £25 per month.

**Q. Will the developer be provided with existing Algolia API credentials and index configurations, or should the proposal account for a fresh implementation?**

For the JIC site, we have access to the Algolia account, so we should be able to access the credentials and configurations.

**Q. NBIROS publications feed. Is there documentation for the XML feed (schema, endpoints, update cadence, volume), and someone on the NBIROS side we can talk to?**

NBIROS is an internal system to manage scientific publications and outcomes, used primarily for our reporting to funders. It is supported by our Apps team, but also will eventually be replaced.

The XML feed from NBIROS pulls through to the website once a day.

## **Questions specific to the NRPDTP Site**

**Q. Does the restricted Hub area utilize a specific protocol (such as SAML or OpenID Connect) for the UEA login, or is it managed via a specific WordPress plugin?**

The login for the NRPDTP Hub uses a specific protocol set up through UEA Computing. We do not manage this within the website or manage the authorisation list in the website.

**Q. Regarding the current display issues on the Advertised Projects page—is the project data managed locally within WordPress, or is it pulled from an external XML or API feed?**

The project data is managed locally within WordPress. There is a project page type, which is manually populated. Once a project has been completed and is advertising within the time period specified it will pull through to populate on the project list on the main project page. There are a number of fields to complete of a project page which then drive the search functionality on the main project page.

**Q. The brief says the NRPDTP Hub may be removed. Would you like bidders to help shape that decision, or do you need it scoped in or out before submission?**

We are currently looking at the feasibility of holding the information based on these pages on an internal database system based at UEA, which we would link to from the main NRPDTP website. If this is not feasible we will consider options for these pages.

## Content Migration, Audit and Rationalisation

Given the scale of content migration for JIC you are welcome to include options for phased or prioritised delivery approaches. If you feel that it is unfeasible to migrate these web pages within the budget and/or timescale, please provide options within your tender return for the team to assess.

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**Q: Is there a budget allocated specifically for migration, or should this be included within the overall £30k? Will a client-side resource be available to support the content stage?**

We will be able to support migration of content in house if required, and we will be undertaking a content audit over the coming weeks and months to ensure that all content is required for migration.

**Q: What proportion do you expect to migrate as is, what proportion to be revised, and what can be archived or removed?**

JIC – We are currently auditing all our pages and will be revising and reviewing these over the next two months.

- Posts (News, Blogs, Events and Advances magazine ~ 1320) around 90% will need to be migrated as is.
- People - 99% of our people pages will need to be migrated as is.
- Pages – between 75 and 80% will need to be migrated as is.

**Q: Would you be open to a supplier's support with auditing site content to determine suitability for migration?**

Yes

**Q: Given the existing WordPress basis, we imagine the migration would be mostly scripted at the database level, with editorial review rather than wholesale manual re-entry. Does that match your expectations?**

We would love for the migration to be coded or scripted in some way. Manual re-entry should be minimised.

**Q: Of the JIC pages, roughly how many are actively maintained versus archived or legacy?**

- Posts – not actively maintained.

- People – actively maintained.
- Pages – a mix of actively maintained and legacy

## Accessibility Standards, Compliance and Auditing

WCGA AAA standard is our ambition, however we realise that this is extremely challenging to achieve. The AA standard is acceptable, however where possible we would like to explore accessibility beyond this.

- There are no existing up-to-date audits. Older audits did not raise significant issues.
- Third party accessibility testing/auditing is not required - it will this be handled internally.

## User Testing and Stakeholder Involvement

Q. Do you have an existing pool of users available for testing, or would we be expected to recruit participants? How many rounds and participants do you have in mind? Who will recruit users? Would you like the developer to propose and run it?

We would love to work with you to develop a suitable protocol for user testing. We don't have fixed ideas for numbers of rounds.

We can source and recruit internal and external stakeholders to be involved in user testing. At JIC there will be a website development group who can be called upon to support this, and we can recruit from our existing partners, and via our social media if required.

## Penetration Testing

Our hosting policy requires a penetration test before go-live. This is usually run through an in-house process, and the preferred testing standard is OWASP Top 10. A 1-week lead time should be built into the schedule for penetration testing.

## Procurement process and timelines

- **What time on Thursday 14th May are submissions due in?** We would like all tender documentation to be with us by 5pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> May.
- **How many suppliers will be invited to present/interview?** A minimum of 3 suppliers will be invited to interview.
- **Are specialist inputs (e.g. independent accessibility audits) acceptable if declared upfront?** Specialist suppliers may be used if confirmed with written approval of Felicity Perry and/or Mark Meehan.
- **Are there incumbent suppliers who have worked on either site previously?** We are not in contract with any suppliers at the current time.