

Questions RFP-2025-012 – Central platform for exchange of accounting forms among postal operators

1. In the event that the infrastructure is provided by UPU, could you please clarify what type of hosting environment is planned for the solution? Specifically, would it be deployed on a public cloud? If so, which cloud provider is expected to be used?"

If hosting is not provided, we will look for a solution, possibly internal or could, with assistance from our internal IT department. So, we do not want to set some limitations at this stage.

2. If the infrastructure is managed by UPU, could you please clarify which CI/CD and collaboration tools will be available or recommended for use during development and deployment activities?

We prefer if during the development phase it is not integrated in the UPU environment, so even if hosting is eventually with UPU, we would like a temporary hosting solution to be provided by the IT company during the development phase

3. The proposed solution will include an identity management system that supports federation. Could you please confirm whether integration with an existing identity provider is expected? If so, we would appreciate receiving any available technical documentation regarding the systems to be integrated (via OAuth, SAML, LDAP...), particularly in relation to identity and access management.

It is not expected

4. To ensure encryption in transit, the system will rely on TLS encryption. Could you please clarify whether the resolution of the domain name and the provision of the corresponding TLS certificate will be under UPU's responsibility?"

This can be done.

5. Should the application be fully responsive, and therefore optimized for use across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices?

No need for mobile devices and tablets. Desktop is enough.

6. Could you please confirm which web browsers (and versions) should be officially supported for validation and testing purposes?

We prefer if it is not too limited (because users are in different countries and postal companies, with different internal rules), but we understand the technical challenges. Please mention the limitations in your offer.

7. Could you please share your expectations regarding service continuity from a business perspective, particularly in terms of acceptable downtime, expected Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and expected Recovery Point Objective (RPO) in case of service disruption?

Sorry, this is missing in the document. Our expectation is 99.2% uptime SLA, and the acceptable maximum downtime per month is 6 hours.

8. Could you please clarify the expected service levels and response times for the help desk or user support service? In particular, we would appreciate details on the required availability (e.g., business hours, 24/7), response and resolution time expectations, and the preferred communication channels (e.g., email, ticketing system, phone). If the service availability is based on a calendar different from the standard Italian working days (e.g., international or UPU-specific holidays), we would also appreciate clarification on the applicable schedule"

Yes, sorry this is also missing in the document.

Critical issues: response within half day, to be resolved in 2 working days

Major issues: response within 1 day, to be resolved in 4 working days

Minor issues: response within 3 days, resolution according to agreed release cycle

Service time coverage is 9:00 to 16:00 Swiss time on business days. Support to end users will be done by UPU, so support from the provider is only with UPU.

We do not need a ticketing system but if you have one and want us to use it, it is fine."

9. The document (paragraph 3.4 Handling accounting documents sent/received) mentions that users should be able to edit received documents. Given the potentially heterogeneous nature of the documents being exchanged, could you please clarify what is meant by "edit"? For example, does it refer to modifying the content of the document, or simply to adding comments and/or changing the status of the document exchange? "No need to edit inside the document. Typically, we do not need a solution to modify contents of PDF documents.

We only need the possibility to add comments, change status, etc. as you wrote."

10. Could you please confirm whether the mail server will be provided by UPU, or if it is expected to be part of the solution to be delivered?

I assume this is for the daily notifications. If the solution is hosted by UPU, connecting to our mail server should not be a problem. If hosting is outside UPU, this may be challenging and if it is, a mail server may be required.

11. For DOs using an automated email sending system, is there a standardized and unique formatting convention in place for such emails? If not, how many different formatting conventions are currently in use for automated email messages?"

I propose that we put one formatting convention in place that all must follow. UPU will provide details, based on our experience with systems in place.

12. If multiple formatting conventions are in use, how should customization and template management be handled? Should the system support dynamic templates per sender, predefined mappings, or a centralized configuration approach?"

We want to avoid all this complexity, therefore the proposal to have a single convention.

13. Are there specific development standards we need to follow during the implementation? Are there mandatory requirements in terms of technology stack?

No specific development standards, no mandatory requirements in terms of technology stack

14. Do you also request a User Experience and User Interface study (UX/UI) to be validated before start development for the frontend of web application?

This is not a requirement but putting in place a sort of visual prototype can be helpful for both parties and avoid misunderstandings later on. So, we are happy with such approach.

15. Section 3.1 specifies that the appearance and functionality should be "similar to an e-mail management solution" and that the platform must be "user-friendly". Are there specific examples of email clients that the UPU prefers as a reference model for the User Interface (UI)? Additionally, are there any UPU branding guidelines, color schemes, fonts, or design systems that we should follow to ensure visual consistency across the application?"

We will provide some guidelines but they will not be very rigid.

16. Are there any preferences regarding the technical stack used in the solution?

No preference

17. Do we need to include adaptive design and/or mobile clients to access platform from mobile/tablet?

No need

18. Is it preferred to have cloud-based or on-premise hosting?

No preference. The system does not have to be linked to anything on premise. But if a cloud-based approach is expensive to maintain, we may prefer on-premise hosting.

19. Is it assumed that platform should be complied with some particular security standards or pass certifications?

It is not a prerequisite, but it is a plus if you can provide this. If you do, do not hesitate to mention it in your response.

20. Where are users created? Do we need to include in our proposal some kind of Admin panel with functionality to create and configure users, filters etc.?

Yes please. We want each post to manage their own users. Central administrators at the UPU will create one DO administrator per post. So, a management function is definitely needed.

21. We assume that most part of attached documents are PDF or images. Do we need to provide functionality to edit them inside the platform or by means of 3d party software (e.g., Adobe Acrobat)?

No need, nice-to-have feature.

22. Are there any requirements for the tool which provides virus check on attached documents?

Not required but it would be good to have this covered.

23. What should happen with the document which status has been changed to Cancelled?

Good point. In order to handle this properly, we need one more status: 'deleted'. Once a document has been marked as deleted, it does not appear anywhere (but it is still in the database, for auditing purposes, just in case). Recipient can change a 'cancelled' document to 'deleted'. The sender can mark a document as deleted if it is in state 'sent' (i.e., if it has not been read by the recipient yet)

24. Are document statuses changed automatically or manually?

Manually, at least in the initial version. Depending on user feedback, we may later ask for an automatic acceptance (there are rules on this, to consider documents as accepted after an acceptance period)

25. When proof of delivery should be generated and how it should be stored/displayed?

It can be in two steps: (1) user edits a document and displays the history of actions/events. (2) from this display, it is possible to print the history of actions. The printout can be used as the proof of delivery. No need for more here. The request for proof of delivery is based on current issues, but most likely they will not exist anymore with the central platform anyway.

26. As soon as we have no information about IT solutions used by DOs can we assume for now that we just take files produced by these systems from the specified folder?

A post could generate a certain accounting form to all partners from their accounting system. There will be one PDF per partner post, all stored in the same folder, and containing the code of the partner post as part of the file name. We would like the possibility to upload all these documents and send them to each partner correctly.

27. Could you please give more information about IT solution used by UPU International Bureau to plan possible integration with it?

It is an internal solution that we can adjust relatively easily and replace the email generation with an export to the central accounting platform.

28. Do you have any technology preference for the development of the said central platform?

No preference.

29. Is there any warranty to be provided for this platform post launch?

Yes please, to be indicated in the offer.

30. Is there any hosting specific requirement for this platform?

No specific requirement, but we would like it to be both safe and at reasonable cost

31. Does UPU have preferences for programming languages, frameworks, databases, or cloud providers?

No preference

32. What protocols (REST, SOAP, SFTP) are required for DO system integration? Are real-time sync or webhooks needed?

Not required. The requirement is the possibility to upload files from a chosen folder semi-manually, and, assuming the file names contain the 3-char code of the partner DO, then mark it as sent to the partner. We can imagine an upload function in two steps with (1) folder selection, (2) preview of how it is going to be uploaded and injected in the solution and showing errors.

33. Beyond PDF, which formats (Word, images) are mandatory vs. optional?

Only PDF is a must. Among other formats, the handling of images would be good. Word and other formats are optional.

34. Does the UPU use an existing system for form generation that requires direct integration?

We have an internal system that generates accounting forms that we want to be able to inject. We can adjust our solution quite easily. We think it is enough to have a dedicated upload function in the system that only UPU will have access to and that will work very similarly to what is described above in line 3, but a bit more sophisticated and with a precise file naming convention. The file name will contain the sender DO, receiving DO and form name.

35. Is 2FA or SSO required? Must public email domains (e.g., Gmail) be blocked?

2FA and SSO are not required. Yes, we want to block public email domains.

36. Is antivirus integration (e.g., ClamAV) mandatory? What level of malware detection is expected?

Not mandatory but most welcome. Not sure what possibilities are for the level detection options but since it is a closed environment and files are generated by trusted partners, it is probably not necessary to go too far in this area.

37. Are ISO standards (e.g., 27001) or GDPR/regional data laws required?

No

38. What level of detail (metadata vs. full history) and retention period are needed?

We want to keep full history for 10 years.

39. Are load/penetration tests or third-party audits required?

Not required

40. Are advanced features (drag-and-drop, real-time updates) required for document/action views?

Nice to have

41. Can users combine multiple filters (e.g., DO + year + form type), and how complex should this logic be?

We want it as shown in 3.5 section iv: a combination of a pre-defined filter (shown as 'filter' in the screen mock-up) and additional 3 filters shown on screen

42. Is WCAG compliance (and at what level) required?

Not required

43. Are dynamic locale formats (dates, currencies) needed for English/French, or only static translations?

Not needed. Static translations are enough.

44. Is there an expected annual growth rate beyond the estimated 3TB/10 years?

No

45. How should partial deletions (e.g., retaining pending actions) be handled?

The automatic deletion of old data should not delete data associated to an action that is still pending

46. What RTO/RPO thresholds apply? Are automated backups required?

A recovery in max 24 hours is acceptable and 48 hours for RPO. This probably implies backups

47. Should older data be moved to cold storage, or remain accessible online?

Cold storage is enough.

48. What peak usage (e.g., end-of-quarter) and concurrent user loads are anticipated?

We do not expect real peak usage because end of quarter does not mean that accounting is done immediately. There are various reasons and some flexibility to delay. We do expect accountants to open the website when they arrive in the morning (local time) and keep it all day to check and perform actions every now and then. We expect a few hundred such active users in parallel.

49. Is upload throttling or API rate limits required?

No

50. Are health checks or uptime dashboards expected?

No, but probably nice-to-have

51. How will DOs with limited IT infrastructure or regulatory constraints (e.g., restricted internet access) be onboarded? Are there fallback mechanisms (e.g., manual uploads)?

No fallback mechanism required; we expect almost all posts to be able to access the website. There may be a couple of posts who will not be able to access, but those posts exchange international mail with only a few partners so the associated accounting will be done outside the central system, it is okay.

52. How are financial errors due to platform issues handled?

The platform is a tool to help exchange files. Payment and financial discussions are outside the scope and the tool cannot be considered the cause of any financial error.

53. Are uptime/availability guarantees (e.g., 99.9%) required?

Indeed, this is missing in the call for tender. Do not hesitate to mention what you can offer.

It is acceptable to have some down-time every now and then. 99.9% uptime seems good, with a mechanism to announce in the login page a planned down period in the near future for maintenance

54. The platform will serve 192+ countries. Are there specific legal frameworks (e.g., data sovereignty laws, financial regulations) from all UPU member countries that the system must comply with? How will conflicts between regional laws (e.g., EU GDPR vs. non-EU data laws) be resolved?

No because it will be a UPU solution

55. How should the platform accommodate future changes in international or national regulations (e.g., new data privacy laws)? Is there a process for periodic compliance reviews or updates?

We do not expect any issue here

56. Given the diversity of DOs' IT systems and legal environments, does the UPU provide standardized guidelines or tools to ensure uniformity in document formats, workflows, or security practices?

I would say that this is covered by UPU Convention, Regulations and standards. In particular, the documents exchanged are UPU forms. Not in scope of the platform anyway.

57. If discrepancies or financial errors arise due to conflicting national laws, how is liability assigned? Are there UPU dispute resolution protocols to follow?

This is not in scope. The platform only helps with the exchange.

58. Is there a requirement for automated compliance checks (e.g., auditing data storage locations for sovereignty) or third-party legal audits post-deployment?

No requirement

59. How will UPU regulatory updates impact the platform? How will UPU manage approval processes for platform changes (e.g., feature updates, legal adjustments) involving 190+ member countries?

The main future change impacting the platform is the creation of new accounting forms. This would be a new entry in a ref table and it does not need a management screen because it does not occur more than once a year. So, nothing complex expected.

60. Should the platform allow country-specific customizations (e.g., data retention rules, document fields) to comply with local laws?

No

61. Are there restrictions on where data can be stored (e.g., regional data centers) to comply with sovereignty laws?

No

62. Must the platform support multiple protocols (SFTP + REST) for diverse DO IT environments?

No

63. How are DO-specific domains enforced (e.g., DNS checks)?

No specific requirement here

64. Should the architecture accommodate future feature changes without major rework?

Not required

65. Beyond English/French, are there plans to support additional languages (e.g., Arabic, Spanish) to accommodate regional DOs?

No. Users interact with other posts in English or French anyway, so they are comfortable with these two languages

66. Is there a definition of a milestone to be accepted as completion of the project?

We will want a pilot test involving a few posts for a few weeks and if they are comfortable with the system then we will consider it can go live and the project is completed.

67. Without transferring any of the vendor obligations, we anticipate working with a subcontractor for hosting and on-site maintenance support services. Please confirm if acceptable and inform what we should state on proposal regarding this subject.

This is acceptable. Please mention it in your offer, with no need to provide full details. We will ask later if we need more.

68. Would you like to see the pricing for the 4-year maintenance period after delivery as an all-inclusive annual fee or would you like to see it with an hourly fee table?

We prefer an all-inclusive annual fee.

69. What specific participation requirements or eligibility criteria apply to companies?

The conditions are outlined in the call for tenders.

70. Is it possible for companies based outside Germany – for example, in Estonia – to participate in the tender process?

Companies from any country worldwide are welcome to participate.

71. Our first intention was to propose a solution enabling the DOs to input (manual, automatic, download...) their data in the platform rather than to download PDF files. The rest of the process being the same and the document (CN xx and CP xx) still being certified in all aspects. Nevertheless, in the Business Requirements document, in the chapter 2 Overview, it is stated about the "exchange of accounting documents" that "the content of the accounting documents is not relevant to this work." Therefore, we understand that loading the data into the platform to create the documents is not an option.

Would you please be kind to elaborate a bit on this requirement?

What you are proposing is very interesting and corresponds to something already partially in place for some accounting forms among a subset of posts.

But the platform subject of this call for tender will be limited to document exchange management, not document contents. It is a very different scope, with different complexity level (there are quite many accounting forms, some of them have extensive contents, possibly complex calculations, etc.). We do not want to enter into these complexities here.

Our objective is to offer something easy to use, useful for ALL posts, for the exchange of ALL accounting forms. It is a sort of file exchange user-friendly platform dedicated to a very specific type of documents being exchanged.

72. Do you have any preferences regarding the technology stack or programming languages to be used?

No preference.

73. Is there a preferred file naming convention for the batch uploader, or should the vendor propose one?

Ideally the system should have some flexibility. We expect the file names to contain the partner operator code (3-characters) somewhere in the name and this is key for an efficient upload and treatment. A mechanism able to guess where the operator code is in the name would be perfect, or asking for the file naming structure/grammar.

74. Are any integrations with other internal or external systems expected as part of the solution?

No. The only integration is that the UPU generates and distributes a few accounting forms on behalf of some posts. We want to be able to inject those, but it can be with a specific batch uploader working more or less the same as above.

75. Could you clarify any data residency or backup requirements?

We want a safe solution, so please mention your approach to guarantee that.

76. Are any import/export operations expected—such as importing historical data previously exchanged via email?

No

77. Should this be a cloud-based solution or deployed in UPU's own infrastructure?

We are open to both approaches. If it is the second one, we will have to ensure compatibility so we will need to discuss details.

78. Do you have any preferences regarding how the application should be hosted (e.g., specific cloud providers, geographic location, or hosting model)?

No preference. We would like a good balance between reliability and costs.

79. How many users do you expect at the launch of the solution, and what level of growth should we anticipate over the following years?

We want to start with a pilot involving a few posts for a couple of months before we open to all in full production.

Once it is in full production, our ambition is that the solution will rapidly become the platform used by all or almost all postal operators, so around 200. "rapidly" means over a few months, maybe 6 months.

Since we want to keep 10 years online, data will grow steadily over the first 10 years of usage.

We will start from scratch with an empty database: no import from any other solution since it is replacement of bilateral email exchanges.

80. Is the delivery of the application's source code required as part of the project deliverables?

Yes please, we consider that we will own the source code.

81. Is there a defined budget or budget ceiling for this project, either for development or for ongoing maintenance and hosting?

Yes, of course, with a bit of flexibility

82. It is not entirely clear to us why the total available points are stated as 70, while 15 points are allocated to the development price and 15 points to the maintenance/hosting costs — which appear to correspond to the 30 points attributed to the pricing structure. Could you kindly clarify how the total scoring is calculated?

You spotted a mistake in the document, sorry about this. There are 70 points in total, with 40 points for the functional and technical solution combined, and 30 points for the costs.

83. My last question was actually to know if on your side you have a maximum budget for this project.

Yes, we do, with a bit of flexibility, since we booked an amount based on a vague estimate we made a while ago, without being sure of what bidders can offer.

84. Please clarify the confirmed start date for the engagement, as the RFP documentation mentions both July and September.

Sorry about this mistake. The correct expected (conservative) starting date is September. But if things go well and all parties are ready before, the project may start earlier.

85. Given the project's start date, we understand that the consultant CVs provided now might not represent the final project team due to potential personnel changes. Can you confirm that?

Yes indeed, this might happen.

86. Please provide clarification on the expected format for the confirmation of requirements, as described in section 3 of the document "Central-platform-for-exchange-of-accounting-forms-among-postal-operators." An illustrative example would be appreciated. Specifically, regarding section 3.1 Cover Letter, is it sufficient to simply indicate it as "covered," considering that the requirement for examples/case studies may not be applicable? Alternatively, is a more detailed confirmation necessary for each section?

Here is a proposed table:

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Covered?</i>
Posting an accounting document	
Posting multiple accounting documents	
Handling accounting documents sent/received	
Monitoring of exchanges	
Security	
Automatic notifications	
Technical interface to facilitate the sending of documents	
Accounting documents generated by the UPU	
Data deletion	
Languages	

87. Are you specifically looking to build a fully custom solution from scratch, or you'd consider deploying an existing, out of the box solution, and then building on top of that?

No issue to build on top of a market solution if it meets requirements.

88. What are the projected future augmentations and advancements for the built solution?

We could imagine linking the solution to a centralized payment system in place (UPU*Clearing), or with a system allowing the edition of a subset of accounting statements/accounts.

All this can be envisaged if the platform is successful, meaning all or almost all posts use it and are satisfied with it.

89. As a company bidding on this tender, can we submit CVs, diplomas, and motivation letters for our proposed team members (domain experts/technology experts) along with a description of our methodology and approach for the project?

Yes, of course.

90. In which section of the provided structure should we present our references and consultants? How many references would you like to see in order to assess our experience and expertise?

It can be in a separate document put in annex, if you like. It is true that this is not listed in section 3.3 (bidder information).

91. Are parent/sister companies classified as subcontractors, or can we present ourselves as a corporate group?

We recommend that you present the complete picture and indicate if you intend to involve a parent/sister company in the work.

92. Does your organization currently hold a Microsoft 365 license, specifically for SharePoint Online?

Yes

93. If yes, which licensing models (e.g., E3, E5, Business Premium) are in use?

E3

94. Are there specific use cases or scenarios where SharePoint Online is deployed within your organization (e.g., document management, collaboration platform)?

No SharePoint online used, only SharePoint on premise

95. Is the Microsoft Power Platform (e.g., Power BI, Power Automate, Power Apps, Power Virtual Agents) actively utilized in your organization?

Yes, a little

96. If yes, which specific components of the Power Platform are in use, and which licensing models apply?

PowerBI only

97. Have these technologies been integrated into specific business processes, and if so, what measurable benefits have been achieved?

Not sure how to answer this, because of the limited usage. It does not seem directly linked to the call for tender anyway. Sorry.

98. If your organization is not currently utilizing Microsoft technologies (e.g., SharePoint Online, Power Platform):
Are there any concrete plans or considerations to adopt these technologies in the future?
What strategic objectives are you aiming to achieve through the introduction of such technologies (e.g., improving efficiency, optimizing business processes, enhancing collaboration)?

We are using Microsoft technologies.

99. Are you open to a part of the team working remotely from a nearshore Service Center?

Yes

100. Will you provide a requirement matrix to be filled by Bidders, or are we free to create our own requirement matrix based on Annex 1?

You are free to create your own, thank you.

101. Bidders are supposed to accept UPU General Terms and Conditions for Provision of Services. This document was not attached. Could you please provide this document?

Apologies for not providing the document or link in the package. You can find this document here: https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/TPC_CAA/Reference%20Documents/generalTermsServicesCallForTendersEn.pdf

102. Do you have a preference in terms of technological stack (front-end, back-end, database, APIs...)?

No preference

103. Do you already have an existing identity provider (e.g., Azure AD, Okta, Keycloak), or should identity and access management be delivered as part of the proposed solution?

Please include identity and access management as part of the proposed solution

104. The solution should also provide the option to generate proof of delivery with the exact date and time, which can then be used between DOs as proof that an accounting form was sent through the central platform." Is there an expectation of an active receipt confirmation by the receiving user or would a proof of delivery consisting of information about the file and when it was uploaded / made available is enough?

Information about the file and when it was uploaded is enough.

105. Can the vendor define the file naming convention for mass upload? If not do you have specifications that you could share?

This is a bit tricky because different posts may have different naming conventions in place and it may be challenging for them to change it. We will provide details about a convention used in a system that many posts use, so this can be used as a starting point. Ideally, the system could guess the naming convention from file names in the folder to be uploaded. The file names will have to contain the 3-character operator code, but the position may not always be the same depending on the sending post.

106. Are you expecting to be able to visualize the documents within the web application or is correct to assume that users should download the documents to view them?

This is not required, but if it is provided and makes the system easier to use, then it is a welcome nice-to-have additional feature

107. "Users should be able to edit documents received" is it correct to assume that the edition can only be done on the document attributes (metadata) and not on the content of the attached documents. If not, is it correct to assume that edition is done outside of the platform and file must be then be re-uploaded by the user?

Sorry for the confusing wording. Your assumption is correct: it is about the document attributes, not the contents.

108. Amended status - is this to cover a use case of one user uploading a modified version of the attached document before assigning back to another user? If not correct, could you please describe the use case?

Your understanding is correct.

109. For email notifications - would it be acceptable to send a generic email with a link to a dynamic daily action report (the view by action) built within the application or is it critical for the actions status update to be part of the email content?

This email would only be sent when matching with filtering criterias. Yes, it is acceptable, since it is sent only to users of the system, so they have credentials to connect and get the details.

110. AV Scanning of documents: do you have a solution of choice, licenses already available or should it be fully delivered by the solution?

To be delivered as part of the solution please.

111. Regarding technical integration with 3rd party IT platforms, would a simple rest-based API with OAuth2 authentication be enough as a standard integration method (at least for the scope of this offer)?

We are flexible here. The interface is with an internal solution that we can adjust. Or the solution might also be a derived version of what is described in 3.3 (see point 7 above): an upload mechanism, only accessible to UPU managers and allowing sending of documents with multiple origins and destinations, with the file name containing both, and a grammar to be agreed.

112. Is it correct to assume that there is no historical data migration as part of the scope?

Correct. It is to replace bilateral email exchanges, so we do not have historical data, we start fresh.

113. How do you anticipate the migration from the email-based operation to the new platform: big-bang migration, step-by-step onboarding?

Step by step onboarding. We will proceed with a pilot involving a few posts for a couple of months, then we will consider that the platform is in full production and will invite operators to start using it. We will probably provide online training with a Zoom session around that time. We then expect posts to join little by little over a few months and are hoping that all or almost all will join, but we will not make it mandatory. We will have to think more about the details for the launch to maximize efficiency: we may want to gather registrations for a few weeks before fully opening the site so that when posts connect, they already see quite many partners. These are details to be discussed later and the final decision will also take into account what is easily feasible technically, so I would say it is not something to consider for now.

114. Do you have any requirement regarding cloud providers selection (location, partners, regulatory/ legal etc....), for example AWS, Azure ...?

No requirement, it is up to you.

115. Could the solution be 100% cloud based? Are there any constraints / requirements on data storage localization?

No problem. One concern is that the running costs are reasonable.

116. Would the following technical stack be acceptable: Backend Java Spring Boot, Frontend Angular, Terraform for IAC, Postgre DB, Kubernetes, Docker?

Yes

117. Do you have any tooling-related requirements (code hosting repositories, static analyzers for example Sonar Cloud, Snyk, CICD etc.?)

No

118. Do you have any requirements regarding delivery process, tooling & documentation (for example Jira, confluence etc....)?

No

119. What is the expected Uptime SLA (%) or acceptable Maximum Downtime per Year?

Sorry, this is missing in the document. Our expectation is 99.2% uptime SLA, and the acceptable maximum downtime per month is 6 hours per month.

120. Do you have SLA for application support (response time, resolution, service time coverage etc....)?

Yes, sorry that it is missing in the document.

Critical issues: response within half day, to be resolved in 2 working days

Major issues: response within 1 day, to be resolved in 4 working days

Minor issues: response within 3 days, resolution according to agreed release cycle

Service time coverage is 9:00 to 16:00 Swiss time."

121. Could you clarify the level of support (who will interact with the support team, the type of users involved in raising tickets), do you have a first level of support that will interact with the end users of the platform?

The selected company will interact only with us, UPU. The UPU will handle support to end users (therefore the limited-service time coverage in the previous answer).

122. Do you have requirements regarding support tooling (for example Jira Service Management etc....)?

No specific requirement

123. Could you please clarify whether the UPU has already identified or evaluated any existing market solutions for this project? Does the UPU have a preference between leveraging a commercial off-the-shelf solution versus developing a custom system from scratch? "

We had a look and did not find anything we considered fit for purpose, but it does not mean there is no such solution. In order to be successful (=used by all or almost all postal operators), the solution must be easy to use and tailored to the needs. So, if it is a market solution, it would require some possibility to adapt it to the needs. Typically, we want the solution to list what UPU accounting form is being sent. We

want it to refer to a closed list of partners, identified by the postal operator 3-character code and name, etc. We have no issue with a market-based solution if it covers the above."

124. Could you please confirm whether the technical and financial proposals should be submitted as part of the same document, or provided separately in distinct files or envelope?

Distinct files in the same envelope are best, thank you.

125. Could you please clarify how the pricing proposals from different bidders will be evaluated and compared? Are there specific criteria or weighting factors that will be considered during the assessment?

We are still in the process of defining the precise criteria. I can mention a few obvious ones: price, adequation to the requirements, company background...

126. Could you kindly clarify whether the procedures for ensuring service continuity, backup, retraining, project management, and communication should be included within the main response, or if this information should be submitted as a separate document? Additionally, should the cost coverage and any other related details be integrated into the proposal, or presented separately for clarity?

You can provide all this information as separate documents for clarity.

127. Could you please confirm whether on-site presence of the Consultants will be required during the implementation or throughout the duration of the project?

Not required.

128. Could you kindly confirm whether a cover letter template is provided in the appendix by the UPU, or should Bidders prepare their own cover letter incorporating the required information?

We do not have a template, sorry.

129. The project was initially published in May 2024 as RFP-2024-007-DOP. Could you please explain why the call for tender was suspended?

Very sorry about this. It was because of internal reasons now resolved. The project is fully back on track and it will not be put on hold again.

130. In section 3.4 of the Annex, regarding "edit documents received": Our understanding is that only the sender can amend a document (table in section 3.4), not the recipient. What information listed in the table in section 3.2 can the recipient edit?

We have to consider

131. The tentative schedule in section 2.20 indicates a project start date of 1 September 2025. However, sections 3.7 and 4.5 mention a start date of July 2025. Could you please clarify the effective start date for the project?

Sorry about this mistake. The correct is September. But in case all parties are ready before, an earlier start is of course fine.

132. Section 3.7 states that implementation of the solution should be completed by the end of March 2026 at the latest. Is this the date when testing of the full functionality begins, or is it the productive go-live date?

This is delivery for pilot testing.

133. Section 3.8 refers to the UPU General Terms and Conditions for the Provision of Services. Does this refer to the following document:
https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/TPC_CAA/Reference%20Documents/generalTermsServicesCallForTendersEn.pdf

Yes, absolutely.

134. Who is responsible for managing the e-mail whitelists: the DO supervisor or the UPU central administrator? (Section 3.6 of the Annex)

The UPU will create one DO supervisor per post when they join. After that, DOs will manage themselves, with the restriction on public email addresses (no Gmail for example).

Maybe a good way of handling what email domains are allowed is to let UPU manage this, with a list of allowed domains that UPU maintains.

For example, if Swiss Post decides to use the solution, we know that their email addresses end with '@post.ch' so we add this domain as allowed.

The UPU central administrator should be able to also maintain any user, not just the DO supervisors, as a backup and to assist in case of any issue/difficulty reported by a post.

135. Can the UPU central administrator view the DO monitor pages on behalf of a DO? (Section 3.5 of the Annex)

Yes, this will be useful for support. But the central administrator must not be allowed to perform any action. Only viewing.

To ensure that our proposal fully meets the UPU's requirements, we would be grateful if you could kindly clarify the document-editing functionality described in Annex 1. In particular, section 3.4 states that "Users should be able to edit documents received, and view and download attachments". Could you please advise whether the UPU envisages?

136. An inline editing capability within the platform (e.g., track-changes or form-field edits),
or

137. A mechanism for uploading a revised version of the original file marked as "Amended"?

We need option 2 only. Sorry for the confusion, there is no real editing of the embedded document expected within the platform.

138. Additionally, are there any specific format or version-control conventions you wish us to support for edited documents?

If a document is revised, the requirements for revised version are the same as for the initial version: PDF format is required, handling of other formats such as images nice-to-have.

We note that the deadline for submission of participation notifications is 7 May 2025 and that any queries on the call for tenders must likewise be submitted by that date. We look forward to receiving your guidance at your earliest convenience so that we may proceed accordingly.

Thank you for your assistance. We remain at your disposal for any further information you may require and look forward to the opportunity to contribute to this important UPU initiative.

139. Annex 1: 3.1. <.> exchanges are to be conducted only with clearly defined partners <.>
Should each DO see the same list of DOs, or should each DO see only a specifically predefined list relevant to them?

Each DO will be able to send accounting forms to all other DOs.

But some users may have visibility limited to a subset of partner DOs, based on filters and security settings put in place by the DO supervisor.

For example, the DO supervisor may create different 3 profiles, say one for Europe + North America, one for Asia, one for rest of the World, then attach users to these profiles so that a user only has visibility on one region, not all partner DOs.

140. Annex 1: 3.3 Posting multiple accounting documents
Would the file naming convention be the same across all DOs, or would it differ for each DO?

Ideally, we would like a mechanism that has some flexibility. The file name must include the 3-character DO code, but some posts may have it in different positions in the name (prefix, suffix, or maybe in the middle?). A mechanism that guesses the position or asks for the “mask” would be good.

141. Annex 1: 3.5 <.> Users should be able to edit a document, so the document attributes should be displayed, and it should be possible to view the attachments <.>
Do we understand correctly that, in this context, only accounting document data — i.e., the data required in the “3.2 Posting an accounting document” table — should be editable (and not the uploaded document files)?

Yes, your understanding is absolutely correct. We do not need a mechanism to update a PDF.

142. Annex 1: 3.6 Security
We recommend not allowing DO supervisors to delete users, but only to disable or block them (in order to avoid losing accounting documents connected to those users). The UPU central administrator would have the ability to delete all accounting documents and deactivate or delete all users. The Portal would also be able to automatically delete accounting documents after a set period. Is such an approach suitable?

Yes, absolutely.

143. Annex 1: 3.7.1 Automatic notifications We recommend sending notifications immediately when a new accounting document is received and DO action is required, rather than accumulating them until the evening to send a single email notification. The notification

email would include a direct link (URL) to the specific accounting document to simplify and speed up login and work in the Portal. This approach would help accelerate the review and acceptance process of accounting documents, reduce delays, and distribute the workload more evenly throughout the day. Is such an approach suitable?

We prefer one notification per day, because some days a post may receive accounting documents from many partners within a few minutes. This will be particularly true for forms sent by the UPU on behalf of posts. For a specific flow, a DO may be the debtor with 50 partners and the 50 accounts will be sent within minutes. If the debtor post receives 50 notification emails, it is not very nice.

But maybe we could agree on something in between immediate and once a day. We are definitely open for discussion.

144. Call for tenders document: 3.6 Pricing structure

Do we understand correctly that the bidder needs to provide the annual maintenance fee and the annual solution hosting fee for four years?

Yes please.

145. Are there any specific hosting requirements for the solution?

No specific requirements. But we will look at the combination of costs and robustness.

146. Clause 3.8 of the Call for Tenders states: "Bidders shall include in their tender a statement of acceptance of the UPU General Terms and Conditions for the Provision of Services, attached hereto for reference." However, we were unable to locate the referenced attachment. Could you please provide the UPU General Terms and Conditions document or indicate where it can be accessed? Alternatively, did you mean Section 2 "Terms and Conditions" of the Call for Tenders document?

Apologies. Here is the link to get this document:

https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/TPC_CAA/Reference%20Documents/generalTermsServicesCallForTendersEn.pdf

147. Response Format – Scope of Applicability

Section 3, "Tender structure – Response format," requires that bidders respond to each requirement using one of the following statements:

- covered
- covered with limitations (explaining relevant limitations)
- not covered

148. Could you please clarify whether this requirement applies exclusively to the business requirements listed in Annex 1, or if it also applies to other sections such as Clause 4.2 "Bidder requirements"?

It refers to the business requirements in annex.

You could use a table like this:

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Covered?</i>
Posting an accounting document	
Posting multiple accounting documents	
Handling accounting documents sent/received	
Monitoring of exchanges	
Security	
Automatic notifications	
Technical interface to facilitate the sending of documents	
Accounting documents generated by the UPU	
Data deletion	
Languages	

149. Response Format – Presentation

150. Could you also confirm whether the responses using the statements “covered,” “covered with limitations,” or “not covered” should be presented in a specific format, such as a table?

Hopefully the proposed table above also covers this question.

151. In the event that the infrastructure is provided by UPU, could you please clarify what type of hosting environment is planned for the solution? Specifically, would it be deployed on a public cloud? If so, which cloud provider is expected to be used?"

If hosting is not provided, we will look for a solution, possibly internal or could, with assistance from our internal IT department. So, we do not want to set some limitations at this stage.

152. If the infrastructure is managed by UPU, could you please clarify which CI/CD and collaboration tools will be available or recommended for use during development and deployment activities? We prefer if during the development phase it is not integrated in the UPU environment, so even if hosting is eventually with UPU, we would like a temporary hosting solution to be provided by the IT company during the development phase

"The proposed solution will include an identity management system that supports federation.

153. Could you please confirm whether integration with an existing identity provider is expected? If so, we would appreciate receiving any available technical documentation regarding the systems to be integrated (via OAuth, SAML, LDAP,), particularly in relation to identity and access management."

It is not expected

154. To ensure encryption in transit, the system will rely on TLS encryption. Could you please clarify whether the resolution of the domain name and the provision of the corresponding TLS certificate will be under UPU's responsibility?"

This can be done.

155. Should the application be fully responsive, and therefore optimized for use across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices? No need for mobile devices and tablets. Desktop is enough.
156. Could you please confirm which web browsers (and versions) should be officially supported for validation and testing purposes? We prefer if it is not too limited (because users are in different countries and postal companies, with different internal rules), but we understand the technical challenges. Please mention the limitations in your offer.
157. Could you please share your expectations regarding service continuity from a business perspective, particularly in terms of acceptable downtime, expected Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and expected Recovery Point Objective (RPO) in case of service disruption? Sorry, this is missing in the document. Our expectation is 99.2% uptime SLA, and the acceptable maximum downtime per month is 6 hours.
158. Could you please clarify the expected service levels and response times for the help desk or user support service?
159. In particular, we would appreciate details on the required availability (e.g., business hours, 24/7), response and resolution time expectations, and the preferred communication channels (e.g., email, ticketing system, phone).
160. If the service availability is based on a calendar different from the standard Italian working days (e.g., international or UPU-specific holidays), we would also appreciate clarification on the applicable schedule" "Yes, sorry this is also missing in the document.

Critical issues: response within half day, to be resolved in 2 working days

Major issues: response within 1 day, to be resolved in 4 working days

Minor issues: response within 3 days, resolution according to agreed release cycle

Service time coverage is 9:00 to 16:00 Swiss time on business days. Support to end users will be done by UPU, so support from the provider is only with UPU.

We do not need a ticketing system but if you have one and want us to use it, it is fine."

161. The document (paragraph 3.4 Handling accounting documents sent/received) mentions that users should be able to edit received documents. Given the potentially heterogeneous nature of the documents being exchanged, could you please clarify what is meant by "edit"? For example, does it refer to modifying the content of the document, or simply to adding comments and/or changing the status of the document exchange? "No need to edit inside the document. Typically, we do not need a solution to modify contents of PDF documents.

We only need the possibility to add comments, change status, etc. as you wrote."

162. Could you please confirm whether the mail server will be provided by UPU, or if it is expected to be part of the solution to be delivered?

I assume this is for the daily notifications. If the solution is hosted by UPU, connecting to our mail server should not be a problem. If hosting is outside UPU, this may be challenging and if it is, a mail server may be required.

163. For DOs using an automated email sending system, is there a standardized and unique formatting convention in place for such emails? If not, how many different formatting

164. conventions are currently in use for automated email messages?"

I propose that we put one formatting convention in place that all must follow. UPU will provide details, based on our experience with systems in place.

165. If multiple formatting conventions are in use, how should customization and template management be handled? Should the system support dynamic templates per sender, predefined mappings, or a centralized configuration approach?"

We want to avoid all this complexity, therefore the proposal to have a single convention.

166. Are there specific development standards we need to follow during the implementation? Are there mandatory requirements in terms of technology stack?

No specific development standards, no mandatory requirements in terms of technology stack

167. Do you also request a User Experience and User Interface study (UX/UI) to be validated before start development for the frontend of web application?

This is not a requirement but putting in place a sort of visual prototype can be helpful for both parties and avoid misunderstandings later on. So, we are happy with such approach.

168. Section 3.1 specifies that the appearance and functionality should be ""similar to an e-mail management solution"" and that the platform must be ""user-friendly"". Are there specific examples of email clients that the UPU prefers as a reference model for the User Interface (UI)? Additionally, are there any UPU branding guidelines, color schemes, fonts, or design systems that we should follow to ensure visual consistency across the application?"

We will provide some guidelines but they will not be very rigid.

169. Ref. Doc. Central-platform-for-exchange-of-accounting-forms-among-postal-operators Point 4.4: is the table correct? Our understanding is that the score can reach up to 100 points, of which 70 based on functional requirements and 30 on the pricing of the solution. In the table related to the 70 points of functional requirements, though, there are some elements related to the pricing of the solution.

Are the CVs required for the internal company staff who will work on the project?

Sorry, there is indeed a mistake in the document. The total is 70, with 40 on requirements and 30 on pricing.

Yes, we would like to see the CVs of the main staff who would work on the project.

170. Ref. Doc. Central-platform-for-exchange-of-accounting-forms-among-postal-operators_Annex1
Point 3.4: is the editing of the content of the PDF attachment itself considered useful?
Authentication/authorization: should the provided solution be completely standalone, or does it need to integrate with other existing systems? Is integration with any Single Sign-On (SSO) system required?

Standalone, no SSO required.

171. Which type of user is in charge of managing the list of allowed email domains for user creation? Is the list managed by each DO supervisor for their own organization, or solely by the UPU administrator?

Solely by the UPU administrator.

172. Are there any expectations towards where the application is hosted (i.e., Public Cloud, Private Cloud, OnPrem)?

All options are possible. Please mention in your offer.

173. Are there any specific requirements for a hypercare period after implementation (with extended care comparing to the 4-year support period)?

No need.

174. What are the expectations for SLA in the 4-year support period?

Critical issues: response within half day, to be resolved in 2 working days

Major issues: response within 1 day, to be resolved in 4 working days

Minor issues: response within 3 days, resolution according to agreed release cycle

Service time coverage is 9:00 to 16:00 Swiss time on business days. Support to end users will be done by UPU, so support from the provider is only with UPU.

175. Are there any requirements for availability, disaster recovery, availability, maintainability?

Our expectation is 99.2% uptime SLA, and the acceptable maximum downtime per month is 6 hours.

176. Are there any expectations for accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.0 AA)?

No specific expectations.

177. Appendix 1. Section 3.4. What would be the scope of edits the receiving DO could do? (e.g., changing the document type or period, adding additional attachments, modifying existing attachments) It consists in some text in the body of the message to explain what is changed and usually a new attachment showing the changes.

178. Appendix 1. Section 3.5.ii View by action - should this view be based on: the most recent action performed on the document, all actions performed on the document so far, or all available actions for the document?

The view should be based on the most recent action performed on each document.

179. Appendix 1 Section 3.7.2 Technical interface to facilitate the sending of documents, is it enough that one such interface will be created and the existing solutions will be adjusted to it, or is it necessary to integrate to each existing solution separately?

Yes, it is enough to put an interface in place, then each system will adapt if they want to benefit from it.

180. Are there any requirements for MFA for any of the users, or is a single step login and password enough?

Single step login and password is enough.

181. Should the application be accessible from anywhere, or limited to specific networks? (i.e., should the users be in the office or connected via VPN to use the app)

It must be accessible from anywhere.

182. Should the loading speed of older files, e.g., over a year old, be the same as for the most recent ones? Archiving them may help reduce storage space and lower costs, but it will also slow down access.

It is fine to have an archiving mechanism in place. To be efficient and minimize negative impact, archiving should be based on a combination of period and status.

183. Will the application provide a preview of attachments, like Outlook does, or will they only be available for download?

There is no requirement for a preview. It could be a nice-to-have feature possibly limited to PDF, if it is technically easy. No problem if it is not provided.

184. What metric will prove the project is a success? What will be one of the signs that it's working?

the number of DOs requesting access, then their active usage or not

185. Who will be involved in this project on your side? Which functions? Where will the project teams be located?

Mainly one person, in charge of centralized accounting services to DOs, with IT background. Our internal IT will be involved if/when necessary.

186. How do you plan to organize testing activities on your side? Will there be designated stakeholders for validation, feedback, and user acceptance testing phases?

We will involve a few DOs for testing, then for a pilot phase, before opening the platform to all.

187. What is planned for user onboarding and training? Will the vendor be expected to provide materials or sessions, and for which user groups?

UPU will handle all training of end users, we do not expect anything from the vendor.

188. What type of project management reporting do you expect from the vendor, and at what frequency?

See section 4.7 of the call for tender: we expect weekly progress reports.

189. Do we need to follow some specific design guidelines for the project?

No

190. "On which type of screen / device will the application be used?"

Should we plan the design of a responsive design allowing adaptation to mobile devices?"

Desktop only is fine

191. Can you confirm that the generation of accountings forms is outside the scope? Only the secure exchange of forms between DOs is to be covered.

Yes, we confirm. Your understanding is fully correct.

192. Can you detail the functionalities required in the platform to cover these complex scenarios?

Scenarios where a postal item is handled in transit through an intermediary DO before reaching the receiving DO, thus generating the need to remunerate the transit DO)

193. Nothing to worry about: the complexity is in the accounting process, not in the exchange of forms. With 3 posts involved A, B and C, there will be an accounting form from C to B and another from B to A. For the platform, all we need is to allow these communications.

194. Users should be able to edit documents received""
Can you describe the need for DOs to edit documents within the platform?"

They must be able to download the attached form, they must be able to change the status of the form, and possibly to respond with some text in the communication.

195. How many different document formats are currently in use for accounting flows? Are these formats standardized across DOs?

It is mostly PDF

196. Can you confirm that the central system will not be required to parse, read, or display the content of uploaded accounting documents?

Yes, confirmed.

197. Should the platform perform calculations based on the accounting forms (e.g., determining what country owes what to whom)?

No

198. In the case of a document marked with the status 'Refusal', are there specific business processes or workflows that must be integrated into the tool?

We acknowledge that more work is needed from our side on the status flow, to make sure all cases are covered properly. After a refusal, it may be best to allow the initial sender to re-send an adjusted form.

At this stage, hopefully the mechanism is clear and it will be driven by some coded rules"

199. Is there a need for built-in statistics, analytics, or KPI tracking within the tool? If so, what kind of indicators or metrics are expected?

No need

200. Can you describe your hosting requirements for the platform, including any preferences for cloud providers or on-premise solutions?

We do not have any preference and no specific requirements for the platform.

201. Some DOs may have an IT solution in place to automate the generation and sending of accounting documents to other DOs via e-mail. A solution must therefore be provided to enable such solutions to be interfaced with the new central system, in order to avoid manual entry in the central solution."
Can you provide more details on the existing IT solutions used by DOs to send accounting documents, are these ERP systems, custom scripts, or third-party applications?

The platform is for around 200 DOs and they each work a bit differently. So, the idea is to provide one solution then DOs will adapt to it if they want.

202. What kind of interface do you expect between local systems and the central platform (e.g., API, file-based exchange, email parsing, etc.)?

File-based exchange may be enough.

203. Will each DO be responsible for developing its own integration, or do you expect the vendor to provide tools/templates/connectors to support this process?

Each DO will be responsible for developing its own integration.

204. For certain accounting flows, the UPU International Bureau generates accounting forms on behalf of DOs and distributes these forms to all DOs."
Is there an existing system used by the UPU International Bureau to generate and distribute accounting forms, and if so, should the central solution interface with it?

The interface mentioned above may also work here. It is an internal solution that we can adjust.

205. Recently, several fraud attempts have been detected whereby false accounts were sent by e-mail with a request for payment."
Was that the only type of threats you detected? Do we need to ensure other protection to other specific threat (DDos, etc.)?

No other protection required.

206. a virus check should be performed as part of the upload process"
Do we need to do the check client side and server side? Can we use an external service?

It can be serverside. Yes, usage of an external service is fine.

207. The solution should also provide the option to generate proof of delivery with the exact date and time, which can then be used between DOs as proof that an accounting form was sent through the central platform."

Can you provide more information about the type of proof needed (PDF generation, notification, acknowledgment of receipt, ...)?

The fact that the information is in the central system is actually the proof. We want the post to be able to print the information so that they can use it for bilateral discussions in case of disputes.

208. Supervisors should also indicate whether or not an accountant can remove all filters. It should be possible to assign multiple filters to an accountant, whereby the latter can select one of the filters, or combine or remove all of them, if allowed."

Can you detail what will be shown when the user removes all filters? Can you give some examples about filters and how they need to merge when they are combined?

If a user removes all filters, (s)he will see all forms sent or received with all partners. The only filter that will always be active is the accounting year. Visibility will always be limited to that year.

Very small posts may have a single user having full visibility and it will work fine.

Larger posts have a team and different people work on different things. Sometimes they split per region, sometimes per type of accounts, and sometimes a mix.

We want the system to allow the creation of filters to cover the above. A user is then associated to a filter or several filters, so that users see what concerns them.

If a user is associated to several filters, (s)he can choose which one to apply. But the filters do not apply together. It is one or the other.

For example, there could be a filter ""Asia, terminal dues"" and another filter ""Asia, parcels"". user cannot select both at the same time.

The filter is defined with 2 parts: list of DOs and list of forms."

209. Is it correct that the relationship between the sender and the receiver is always a 1-to-1 relationship?

Yes. An accounting form is always between one creditor post and one debtor post

210. Is there already an identity and access management system (IAM) for authenticating users / DOs? If so, what IAM will be used?

No

211. What type of documents must be supported? Security wise it makes sense to limit the amount of different document types in use. Can we restrict documents to type PDF formats only?

OK to limit to PDF

212. Shall there be a notification mechanism once new documents / states are entered?

Yes. Details are provided in section 3.7.1

213. Can the proof of delivery document be created as a PDF document?

Yes, absolutely

214. How are the partners (receiving DO) identified when uploading multiple account documents at once? By receiving country? Derived from the filename-pattern?

DOs are each identified by a 3-char unique identifier (derived from ISO 2-char country code)

We expect this 3-char code to be somewhere in the file name. The system must be able to use this, possibly with a pre-defined grammar. Each post is consistent in their naming convention but different posts have different conventions. A solution is expected to handle this.

215. Is document editing & viewing foreseen to be part of solution or would actual viewing & editing of documents happen outside the platform (and then be re-uploaded again)?

Outside the platform.

216. In order to support automatic upload of form document to the system, existing email channels must be changed from the sending party. A new interface must be implemented for this, e.g., a REST API. Is our understanding correct?

An API is a possibility, yes.

217. Can we use licensable products for certain functions, such as user authentication, and add these recurring costs to the pricing structure?

Yes

218. Can the system be developed in an agile way, e.g., according to Scrum? Are periodic reviews / user feedback with UPU employees possible?

Yes, no problem

219. Does the UPU provide a product owner who can represent and prioritize the requirements from a user perspective?

Yes

220. Are there technological preferences for implementation?

No

221. Should we, as non-independent consultants, propose a development team, e.g., consisting of a project manager, solution architect and user experience architect, or would you like us to make several proposals for a project manager / consultant who fulfills the requirements according to 4.2 Bidder requirements?

The first approach please: one project team

222. What challenges are encountered with the current system of exchanging accounting forms via email?

See the bullet points in section 2: obligation to know and maintain email contacts, size limitation, security, no proof of receipt + emails are mixed with others, so it is not user friendly

223. Are there urgent pain points or limitations that need to be addressed?

I would say not really, it is the combination of all limitations/issues that drive this project, but it is not something super urgent

224. What are the primary objectives and goals of the new web-based IT solution?

Obviously first to address all current limitations/issues. But the platform will offer more, being a central point with all information on accounting exchanges. This will hopefully make it a very useful tool for postal operators. From the UPU perspective, if the platform is successful, it will also help us develop other services/solutions in the area of accounting.

225. What are the key success criteria for this project?

Number of posts using it (we hope all or most) and their positive feedback

226. Can you describe the process of transferring and handling accounting forms?

For mail sent to a foreign country, the sender pays (traditionally via the stamp) the post in the sending country, so there is a complex mechanism to ensure the destination post is paid on the receiving side for its inbound and delivery process. Calculations and rules differ depending on the type of mail and several other factors. So, there is more than one account between two partners. What also makes this challenging for posts is that each post acts both as sender and receiver of international mail, and this is repeated with many partners. The accounting process consists in most cases in first agreeing on volumes, often quarterly, then converting to an amount yearly. At each step, there is a form sent by the creditor, to be agreed by the debtor. The exchange of all these forms is what we want to facilitate with the platform."

227. What is the purpose and content of the accounting exchange?

Hopefully the answer above also covers this.

228. Is master data sharing with ERP systems required?

no

229. How many users will the system have (both external and internal)?

We can expect up to 100 concurrent external users but without intensive usage. We expect many users will keep the platform opened and will check it regularly, a bit similarly to an email platform.

230. Do you prefer a time and material or fixed price proposal?

We need fixed price

231. Can you provide specific functional requirements for the web-based solution?

Not sure what is meant here. The annex of the call for tender is supposed to provide the functional requirements.

232. Are there critical features or functionalities needed?

As described in the annex of the call for tender

233. What technical specifications and standards must the solution adhere to?

No specific technical requirements

234. Are there preferred technologies or platforms for development?

No

235. Should the system be developed in English only, or should other languages be considered?

See 3.7.5 in the annex

236. Can you share the full landscape of technologies currently used by UPU?

No, we believe this is not required to answer the call for tender.

237. What existing systems and databases are used by postal operators for accounting purposes?

Each postal operator may have something different.

238. How should the new solution integrate with these systems?

For the interface, the proposal is to put something in place and posts wishing to use it adapt on their side.

239. Should the solution scope include integration activities with other systems?

See 3.7.2

240. If so, how many systems should be considered?

Same as above

241. Do these systems expose APIs?

An API is a possible approach

242. Is data migration from the current system to the new platform required?

no

243. What types of data need to be migrated, and what are the volumes?

no data migration

244. What are the specific data security requirements for the new solution?

no specific requirements

245. Are there compliance standards or regulations that must be adhered to?

no

246. How should user access and permissions be managed within the new platform?

login and password. One management function for UPU admin, one local management function for DO supervisor

247. Are different levels of access required for different types of users?

See 3.5.iii and 3.6

248. What types of reports and analytics are required from the new solution?

No need identified

249. Are there specific metrics or KPIs that need to be tracked?

No

250. Can you provide examples of the actual reporting needed?

Not relevant

251. How important is real-time visibility into the status of accounting forms?

Very important.

252. What specific information should be visible to users at any given time?

See section 3.5. iv. It gives an idea of what we want users to be able to see/filter

253. Are offline capabilities required in case of internet connectivity challenges?

no

254. What are the expectations for ongoing maintenance and support of the solution?

"The expected support on issues is the following:

Critical issues: response within half day, to be resolved in 2 working days

Major issues: response within 1 day, to be resolved in 4 working days

Minor issues: response within 3 days, resolution according to agreed release cycle

Service time coverage is 9:00 to 16:00 Swiss time."

255. What is the current system setup and number of tickets?

The platform will replace email exchanges

256. Are there specific service level agreements (SLAs) that need to be met?

Yes.

Our expectation is 99.2% uptime SLA, and the acceptable maximum downtime per month is 6 hours per month."

257. What are the plans for training postal operators on the new system?

UPU will handle end-user training and support

258. Will UPU be responsible for Change Management, or will the vendor handle training only?

UPU will be in charge.

259. Are you looking for train-the-trainer sessions or vendor-led training for final users?

should not be necessary

260. Is UPU open to considering Microsoft Power Platform (Power Apps, Power Automate, Power BI) or Dynamics 365 F&O as part of the solution?

yes

261. Are there specific use cases where Power Platform could add value, such as automating workflows or enhancing reporting capabilities?

No, we do not see such need

262. How important is the ability to customize and extend the solution to meet evolving needs?

not so important. We want a solution tailor made to current needs, not generic that does not properly answer current needs but is open for future changes

263. Is UPU looking for an out-of-the-box solution or open to customization?

we want end users to have a dedicated solution. We are open to any approach leading to this

264. Is there a plan to evolve the platform?

no plan for now

265. Would a low-code/no-code platform like Power Platform be beneficial for enabling quick adjustments and enhancements?

The answer two cells above are relevant here too. From experience, tools with a very broad scope tend to not answer all needs adequately and are not super user-friendly, showing too many options to users and confusing them. If that is the case, then it is not a good option, not what we are looking for.

266. What are the specific archival requirements to be fulfilled (e.g., integration with an external document management provider)?

No need to archive, purge after 10 years. But indeed, there is a challenge with document storing and a good solution must be found.

267. Is SharePoint already in use at UPU, or is there another solution implemented for document management?

SharePoint is used

268. How is the UPU team sized to support this implementation?

Not relevant here

269. Is there a Project Manager and/or Product Owner available?

On SharePoint? Yes, if it was the chosen approach, we would involve our specialists.

270. Is there a dedicated resource responsible for the platform?

Once the platform is in place, we will have dedicated resources to monitor it, provide support, etc.

271. Should the project costs be quoted as a fixed price or as time and material? Background of this question: clause 4.7 is asking the vendor the UPU with weekly reports (i.e., time sheets), which is not very common in fixed price projects.

Fixed price please

272. Change request process during the 4-year support period. Will there be a formalized process and pricing model for scope changes during the support contract?

Yes, if needed

273. Is there a preference or mandate for hosting within a specific jurisdiction (e.g., EU, Switzerland)?

No preference

274. In this chapter it is stated that 70 points can be obtained for the technical and functional proposal. However, in the table in this section, only 40 points can be obtained from functional and technical aspects (only from the first two criteria; criteria 3 and 4 refer to price). Can you please explain?

This is a mistake in the document, sorry. There are 70 points in total and 40 only for functional + technical proposal

275. Shall the vendor comply to the same weekly reporting schedule for both the active development phase (September 2025-March 2026) and the following maintenance phase (the rest of the contract)?

No, it is only for the development phase. Sorry for the lack of clarity on this in the document.

276. Do you have an active directory? Or a central management platform to which the newly develop system must be interfaced to?

No need to interface with active directory or other platform

277. Should there be any single-sign-on capabilities with another system?

Not required

278. What form should take the Proof of receipt? (e.g., an email, a trace in the system?)

A trace in the system + display and possibility to print.

279. Should the proof of receipt be signed? Is there any requirement wrt? spoofing such proof of receipt?

No need, see the previous response

280. Should any historical documents from the current bilateral email system be imported into the new platform?

No, we start fresh with no import of any historical data.

281. What are "supplementary accounts"?

Let's say we have an account for a certain type of mail and period, between two postal operators A and B, A being the creditor and B the debtor.

It may happen that an additional account needs to be created for the same type of mail, same period also with A as creditor and B as debtor. This is a supplementary account.

It happens usually when mail is delayed and arrives very late in the destination country."

282. What is the meaning of "potential duplication"? Do two different documents (different types) for the same DO and period count as duplicates?

No, if it is a different document type it is not a duplication.

It is a duplication only if it is the same (1) document type, (2) period, (3) sending operator and (4) destination operator."

283. Posting multiple accounting documents (3.3) seems incompatible with entering the information described in (3.2) and the duplication mechanism. Please explain in more details how entering the information is supposed to work when sending multiple documents to many operators?

Each operator works with many others. At the end of a quarter, an operator can prepare a certain type of account to many partners. The accounting system generates the accounts, with individual PDF documents, one for each partner. We want a mechanism to upload these PDF documents and send each to the correct partner. The PDF file names will normally include the destination operator code (3-char).

284. Does the sentence "sending to multiple documents, possibly to multiple partners, in one action" imply that the same documents are sent to many partners in that action?

continuation of the above: once user has selected the folder containing the files to be uploaded and transmitted, we would like the system to analyze the file names to find who each file is destined to. Each file is for a single destination operator.

285. "System picks the files matching the naming convention" - is there a fixed set of naming patterns or a user can configure these patterns himself?

Different posts use different IT solutions to generate the accounts so we want something configurable, or even better a mechanism that guesses and proposes an interpretation based on file names. The key component is the presence of the 3-character operator code in the file name. But the position may vary.

286. users select the folder containing the files to be sent"". For security reasons, not all browsers have access to a client file system, but must use a drag and drop mechanism. Is drag and dropping an option?

If drag and drop is not an option, please specify the technical mechanism (library) which you considered to give access to a folder and its content from a web browser.

If drag and drop is not an option, are we allowed to limit the browsers to support?"

Drag and drop is okay.

287. "Users should be able to edit documents received, and view and download attachments." Is the idea to edit document content directly in the web app? (i.e., be able to edit PDF documents in the browser?)

If yes, what document types are supported for editing in the browser?

No, sorry for the confusing wording. "To edit" here just means to open the pseudo email, see if there is some text attached to the form, then download the document (probably PDF). Absolutely no need to edit the PDF.

288. Document marked as Read cannot transition to any other status but cancelled - is this correct? What about a scenario - a document was Read but a Question was raised for its content?

Yes, the logic is wrong/incomplete in the table. All statuses allowing status "sent" also allow status "read". Sorry about this mistake.

289. If document editing is required, instead of editing documents in the browser can a receiving operator download a document locally, edit it and upload an updated version?

No document editing

290. Shall the platform support multiple versions of the same document (for tracking/monitoring purposes as mentioned in the section 3.6)? Shall a user/administrator view/download an older version?

No need.

291. Shall the solution support action (Read, Accept) for multiple documents (batch actions?)

No, it will be individual actions, at least in the initial version. Maybe in the future users will have more complex requirements, but we do not want to provide this feature at the start.

292. Is the status 3,4,5 and 8 final, and cannot have "pending actions"?

For this too, the logic is incomplete in the table. We will provide a definitive list later. Hopefully the current list is enough to evaluate the size of the solution.

293. "Users should be able to edit documents received, and view and download attachments". Does it mean that no such action is available for "sent" documents, and only receiver have access to the documents?

Good point. On the sending side, it is important to be able to view what has been sent.

294. How shall multiple filters be combined? With AND or OR? For example. An accounting year filter and the not accepted documents filter - shall the combination result in the not accepted documents for a selected accounting year or the documents for the accounting year or all not accepted documents?

The combination is always AND.

295. "It must be possible to amend the order of the list according to each column" - does this mean that the list must be sorted by the columns?

Must the sorting be done for multiple columns simultaneously (e.g., status first ascending, then last action date descending) or only by a single column (only status, only last action date)? Single column sorting is enough

296. Is the security (username, password) sufficient, or is Two-Factor Authentication 2FA (multi-factor authentication MFA) required?

username and password are sufficient.

297. "All actions performed in the system should be tracked and recorded in the system for security purposes." Who can access these audit logs?

UPU administrators

298. Is UPU expecting integration with any identity provider (e.g., LDAP, SSO), or will user/privilege management remain internal to the platform?

No

299. "It is proposed "public" e-mail addresses (e.g., Gmail) should not be permitted." Shall the vendor maintain a list of such domains or will UPU provide it?

UPU can provide it

300. "The filtering of which actions are relevant to a user is based on the filters assigned by supervisors." Will a supervisor assign the same filter to all users or individually?

Normally the filters will differ from one user to another. The supervisor will managers users individually and assign each user to some filters.

301. Some DOs may have an IT solution in place to automate the generation and sending of accounting documents to other DOs via e-mail."

Should the application provide an API to let existing systems interface with the application? Or should the application offer an e-mail address to which the external systems can send documents to? If an API is required, do you have some additional information about this API (protocol, performance and security requirements)?"

An API that lets existing systems interface with it is okay. Email approach is also okay. You can pick the one easiest for you. And there is no need to adapt to existing systems here, we will inform posts about the interface and it will be up to them to develop their side to be able to connect.

302. What are requirements to secure the technical interface?

No specific requirements, but feel free to propose what believe is best

303. What operations are available via the technical interface? (Upload is requested, download(?), get a list by filter(?), read details(?))

only upload

304. What are the protocol requirements for the technical interface?

no specific requirements

305. Shall the solution support action (Read, Accept) via the technical interface?

No

306. Not clear how to attribute documents sent by UPU - please elaborate what does it mean "sent on behalf of the operator"? Can it be one operator or many?

Traditionally, posts have been handling all the accounting on international mail themselves, each communicating bilaterally with many postal partners, sometimes for very small amounts.

In recent years, thanks to the electronic exchange of operational information among posts, we have been able to centralize some calculations and today for one specific postal flow, the associated accounting is done centrally. It means that the accounting forms for this flow are generated centrally at the UPU, then distributed to all postal operators. We generate accounting statements and accounts on behalf of each creditor post, then send to debtor posts for them to verify. Today we do this by email and we want to use the platform for the distribution. So, it is the UPU feeding the system with forms, each sent on behalf of one post to another post. Just to give an idea, we distribute this quarterly + one annual summary, so 5 times per year. Each time, it is around 4'000 forms being sent, in PDF format (size around 60KB each). The trend is to centralize more, so there will be more forms generated this way in coming years."

307. The platform currently imposes no limit on the retention period for documents with pending issues, potentially resulting in uncontrolled storage growth. How does the solution address this risk—through administrative policies, technical mechanisms, or both?

We know that cases of accounts not settled after 10 years are VERY rare. These are really exception cases, so keeping them means insignificant additional data. We do not see a risk here.

308. What are performance requirements for the platform? Are there any specifications regarding reaction times etc.?

We expect a reaction time of 2 seconds maximum.

We understand that the upload of a large document will take some time. We expect maximum 5 seconds for a file below 200 Kb. "

309. What are availability requirements (maintenance, downtime, SLA etc.) for the platform?

Our expectation is 99.2% uptime SLA, and the acceptable maximum downtime per month is 6 hours per month.

310. Does the notion of "country" have a significance for the application, or are e.g., all exchanges among postal operators, and the countries themselves do not play a role? If yes, is there a default postal operator per country?"

Everything is based on postal operators. We will provide the reference data for this. We have a 3-char unique identifier for each postal operator.

The first 2 letters of this postal operator are the ISO 2-letter country code.

In most cases, there is one designated postal operator per country, but there are a few exceptions.

311. What is the number of the UPU standards code list in which the countries to be used in the application are defined? If no such list exists, how are the countries defined?"

UPU code list 211 lists the official designated operators. The operators available in the system will be a subset: those using the system.

312. What is the meaning of the word "Post" in the sentence "each Post can exchange accounting forms with all others"?

Post = designated postal operator

313. Is the word "Post" in the whole document synonym for "postal operator"?

Yes

314. It is it synonym for "postal operator and postal sector player"? In the rest of the document, should we consider that "operator" means "postal operator and postal sector player"? Or are there occurrences of the wording "operator" that does not include the other postal sector players? If yes, in these sections are these occurrences?"

We limit to designated operators in the initial version. We will see later if there is a need to expand to larger postal players

315. "What is the list of browsers that the application should support?
Are we allowed to limit the version of these browsers (e.g., last two major versions of Chrome)?
If not, what is, for each browser to support, the minimum version to support?"

It is acceptable to limit to some browsers and relatively recent versions. Please mention this in your offer.

316. What are the devices onto which the solution must work? (e.g., must it be possible to access all functions of the application on a mobile phone?)

No need to handle mobile devices and associated small/vertical screens.

317. What are the required support and maintenance parameters (e.g., reaction time, resolution/patch deployment time, backup/disaster recovery times, SLA levels) for incidents, including both critical and non-critical issues?

We expect the following on issues, depending on their severity:

Critical issues: response within half day, to be resolved in 2 working days

Major issues: response within 1 day, to be resolved in 4 working days

Minor issues: response within 3 days, resolution according to agreed release cycle

Service time coverage is 9:00 to 16:00 Swiss time."

318. Will UPU handle end-user onboarding and training, or is this expected from the vendor?

UPU will handle this

319. In "3.7.2 Technical interface to facilitate the sending of documents", are there more details of these existing systems and what might be required on the side of the platform? Are we looking at an API endpoint, an E-mail server endpoint, UPU based email address, or something else?

We do not want to adapt to any existing system because there are many. We want to have a solution and provide the technical requirements to interface for posts interested.

The solution can be an API or E-mail based. If it is e-mail based, we prefer not UPU based.

320. Can you specify which financial statement regarding our company would you like to receive?

What we are interested in is reports showing data proving the financial situation of the company (reflected in, among others, indicators such as profit). These can be either purely internal (such as reports prepared for the purpose of internal management or for the information of shareholders) or external (such as documents prepared for the purpose of taxation, for example).

321. Can UPU provide detailed specifications or templates for accounting forms (e.g., file format, data fields, validation rules) to align with the platform? Are there specific annexes in the UPU Convention Regulations to refer to form standardization?

We will provide the list of UPU forms for accounting, with their code, name and acceptance period. This is all that is needed for the platform, because the platform does not care about the contents of the forms.

322. Should existing UPU systems (e.g., International Postal System (IPS), Letter Post Compendium Online) be integrated with this platform? If so, are there APIs or technical documentation available for those systems? Are there specific data exchange protocols (e.g., EDI message types) that should be prioritized?

No integration with these systems.

323. How many concurrent users are expected (targeted), and what is the estimated volume of form exchanges per year (e.g., number of forms per DO, per period)?

We can expect 100 concurrent users.

Estimated volumes are provided in section 4: each post sends to 50 partner posts in average, and 10 documents per partner post and year.

324. Beyond GDPR and UPU's own data protection standards, are there additional security certifications or compliance requirements (e.g., specific encryption standards for data in-transit & at rest) that the platform must comply with?

No

325. Will UPU provide hosting for the solution, or is the vendor expected to handle it? If hosting is required, are there preferred cloud providers or geographic regions (e.g., must data be hosted in Switzerland)?

We are open to both approaches.

No preferred provider if hosting is provided by the vendor.

326. Can UPU provide a sample or template for the weekly reports (e.g., time sheets) mentioned in the tender? Are there specific metrics or data points (e.g., form exchange status, error rates) that should be included in the reports or on the dashboard?

The UPU will propose a template to the vendor at a later stage. What we expect is a simple summary, in a few lines, of progress made during the week.

Something like this:

“14-18 July. The following activities were carried out: (...) Result: Proof of receipt feature fully operational”

327. How many DOs are expected to be implemented in the initial phase, and what is the estimated training time for their personnel? Does UPU expect the vendor to provide training materials, online training, or remote training for DOs (across more than 192 member countries)?

All training of end-users will be done by UPU. We do not expect the vendor to provide any training material.

328. To what extent is each DO allow to customize form templates or workflows to meet local requirements (e.g., additional data fields, specific accounting rules)? Are there customization limits to maintain platform standardization?

This is not in scope of the required platform: the platform is only about the exchange of forms, not about their contents.

329. What is UPU's plan to transition from the bilateral email-based system to the new platform? Are there specific requirements for data migration (e.g., historical forms, past exchanges) or a phased approach to minimize disruptions for DOs?

No data migration. We will have a pilot involving a few posts and once everything is okay, we will open to all.

330. How should the platform handle error in form submission (e.g., incorrect data, missing or incomplete fields) or disputes between DOs regarding forms? Are there predefined workflows or escalation processes the platform must adopt?

Since the platform does not care about the contents of forms, there is no handling of errors in contents.

Disputes are part of the process flow, with exchanges back and forth.

331. Are there specific performance metrics or Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the platform, such as maximum downtime, form processing response time, or user support resolution time, that vendors must comply with?

Sorry, this is missing in the document.

Our expectation is 99.2% uptime SLA, and the acceptable maximum downtime per month is 6 hours.

For support:

Critical issues: response within half day, to be resolved in 2 working days

Major issues: response within 1 day, to be resolved in 4 working days

Minor issues: response within 3 days, resolution according to agreed release cycle

Service time coverage is 9:00 to 16:00 Swiss time on business days.

332. What level of technical proficiency is expected from DO personnel who will use the platform, and does UPU expect vendors to provide user support (e.g., helpdesk, guidance) as part of initial training? If so, what support channels are preferred and what is the expected response time? The technical proficiency of DO personnel varies a lot.

Support to end users will be done by UPU, so support from the provider is only with UPU.

Initial training will also be done by UPU.

333. Does UPU anticipate future enhancements for the platform, such as new form types, integration with new technologies, or additional postal process requirements?

New form types will be handled by adjustment to reference data.

Additional features may be envisaged in the future, such as a link to the payment process. But we do not want to take this into account now, so it does not impact the current requirements and technical solution to be implemented.

334. The tender document states that travel and accommodation expenses for work at the UPU headquarters in Berne, Switzerland require written approval. Can UPU clarify the scope of on-site activities and whether there is a budget or reimbursement process for such activities?

This paragraph in the tender is mainly to cover cases when we would need the vendor to visit a post in a specific country. For a web platform, there is no such need. Travel is only to Bern, Switzerland and must be covered in the total price offered by the vendor.

335. If a DO requests additional features (e.g., custom reports, advanced analytics, integration) outside the initial scope, how will these be priced? Does UPU expect a fixed price for such features or a time/material-based approach?

We do not expect DO specific features. Requests coming from users may be integrated as new features for all in a future version.

336. The tender mentions monthly payments in arrears, typically within 30 days. Is there an opportunity to negotiate milestone-based payments (e.g., upon prototype delivery or implementation)?

Section 3.7 indicates that the bidder proposes the payment schedule and pricing structure. So, you can propose what is suitable for you.

337. The tender states that annual maintenance fees are required for updates, bug fixing, and minor enhancements. Can UPU clarify the scope of what constitutes minor versus major enhancements?

What we have in mind here is something very small, normally simple to implement, that users would really benefit from, but that is not a bug.

For example, it could be something as simple as changing the alignment of a column in a table, changing some static text, etc.

The idea is not to take advantage of the provider, but to make sure we can have very minor adjustments made to the solution rapidly and without the complexity of a new project, for the benefit of end users.

338. At the end of the 4-year contract for maintenance and hosting, what is UPU's expectation regarding contract renewal or termination? For example, does UPU plan to transfer hosting to its own infrastructure? If so, what are the vendor responsibilities related to data migration or knowledge transfer?

We may consider renewal or termination.

In case of termination, we expect professional contribution from the vendor and try to minimize their time and efforts.

339. What is the business model? License based or subscription model?

This is between UPU and its members.

340. How is the maintenance / support structure for the solution?

Skip this if this is the same as above

341. What is the timeline for transition period and the implementation for other sites?

The platform is central for all postal operators, so there is no other site.

342. is there a roadmap for solution for this UPU requirements? For 4 - 5 years?

We want all designated operators to use the platform. This will define success of the platform. At this stage, it is difficult to estimate how difficult it will be to attract all.

343. Can UPU share the current architecture / topology or drawings of the current process?
The platform will replace email exchanges.

Details on what happens with accounting forms can be discussed with the selected vendor.

344. How are the license costs for supporting technologies (OS, Security license, encryption, etc.)? Shall we put addons to the budget?

Please include all costs in the offer.