Request for Proposal (RFP): E-Commerce Platform Development for Amideast

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Amideast is an international education and training organization delivering professional certification programs, workforce development courses, and capacity-building solutions to individuals and institutions. Headquartered in Washington D.C., Amideast is a U.S.-registered 501(c)3 with offices in 11 countries across the Middle East and North Africa. We operate across both B2C and B2B markets, serving learners, corporate clients, and public sector partners delivering online, hybrid, and in-person products and services.

1. Project Overview & Strategic Context

Amideast is seeking a qualified vendor to design, build, and implement a scalable e-commerce platform to support the global sale of online training and testing programs. Currently, Amideast lacks a unified system to sell courses and other learning products (standardized tests, advising/mentorship sessions, etc.) globally, issue compliant invoices, and integrate with LMS and CRM systems.

The overall project goal is to grow Amideast's online sales, improve profitability, and provide a consistent, accessible, and high-quality customer experience across markets by:

- Expanding reach in both existing markets with physical offices and new markets without a physical presence
- Creating an optimal customer experience in browsing, purchasing, and accessing products and services
- Reducing time and effort currently devoted to responding to simple requests for information, generating confirmation of purchases, enrolling new learners in the Moodle LMS, etc.
- Creating a consistent Amideast customer experience across the primary website and e-commerce platform, from product discovery through purchase, confirmation, and enrollment
- Facilitate optimal online and in-person payment experiences across Amideast's global operations and country offices.

Target launch: approximately 6-9 months following project kickoff (see Section 5), reflecting the full scope of this RFP. Vendors should propose a realistic timeline based on their proposed approach; Amideast will confirm a specific target date once kickoff timing is set.

2. Scope of Work

The following requirements outline the functional and technical capabilities expected for the proposed e-commerce platform. They are organized by priority to guide vendors in structuring their approach, solution design, and pricing. While some requirements are essential for the MVP launch, others represent enhancements that may be included based on feasibility, timeline, and cost. Amideast has a general preference for configuration-based implementations using proven, well-supported components over extensive custom development, but this is a preference to be weighed against completeness, timeline, and total cost of ownership, not a fixed mandate. Vendors should propose the architecture they believe best meets the requirements below and explain their reasoning.

Customer Experience, Brand & Accessibility

The e-commerce platform is a customer-facing extension of Amideast and must provide a user experience that is consistent with the organization's primary website and brand. This includes visual design, navigation, content hierarchy, responsive/mobile experience, accessibility, and continuity of the customer journey between the primary website and e-commerce platform. Vendors should describe how their proposed solution will support implementation of Amideast's design system and how design and UX decisions will be coordinated with the agency developing the primary website. Customer-facing pages and transactional experiences must meet WCAG 2.2 Level AA accessibility standards. Vendors should describe their approach to accessibility testing, including testing of navigation, forms, checkout, error handling, mobile experiences, and multilingual/Arabic RTL experiences. Accessibility issues identified through testing must be remediated prior to launch. Vendors are invited to propose the hosting and technical architecture best suited to achieve this outcome, along with performance, security, and scalability.

Critical Technical Requirements:

- Ability to display and process prices in local currency or USD as configured per market, including geolocation-based defaults, manual currency selection where enabled, and configurable exchange rates.
- Ability to calculate and apply applicable GST/VAT and other transaction taxes based on relevant country requirements, and generate compliant invoices including required tax IDs and tax breakdowns.
- Flexible pricing options: one-time payments, subscriptions, bundles, discounts, coupon codes, early-bird pricing, vouchers, bulk purchases
- Integration with payment gateways covering all active Amideast markets, including existing local gateway relationships already in place (e.g., Kashier, PayTabs, MyFatoorah, CMI) as well as global options in chosen locations or as an option between the two.
- Admin bypass / voucher system enabling offline payments, manual staff registration, voucher- or coupon-based enrollment, and the use of vouchers directly as a form of payment; ability to associate and distribute product-specific codes upon purchase.
- Ability to limit availability of certain products to certain countries or a combination of countries.
- Ability to configure products, classes, tests, and services independently by country or combination of countries, including country-specific confirmation letters, terms and conditions, custom fields, and client/location setup (including multiple locations and rooms under a single client).

- Ability to configure class and test scheduling, including fixed, variable, and open dates and meeting days/times, and display session times in the relevant time zone.
- Ability to transfer registrations to other dates or types of registration.
- Ability for an account holder to register multiple participants with individual details, for administrators to correct and resend registration or confirmation information, and to route purchase confirmations to multiple designated recipients.
- Ability to tag products with accounting and project codes, configure which fields appear in reports, support multiple tiers of admin access and permissions, and perform bulk operations through file import.
- Adding/editing products and inventory can be done in-house.
- Products filterable on multiple criteria (delivery modality, language of instruction, product type, etc.)
- Integration with existing Moodle LMS (auto-enrollment) and Creatio CRM (currently in development)
- Integration with TOEIC Link system.
- Ability to integrate with other platforms, enterprise systems, and identity providers through publicly documented RESTful APIs.
- Migration or replication of Amideast's existing local payment gateway relationships (e.g., Kashier, PayTabs, MyFatoorah, CMI) into the new platform, without disruption to active country configurations. Vendors are also invited to recommend one or more additional compliant and compatible payment options for Amideast's active markets, to expand support for local cards and payment methods beyond the current provider set.
- Built-in workflow enabling designated staff to review and approve new product or content listings before they go live, addressing accuracy and completeness issues identified on Amideast's current platform
- A migration and cutover plan that preserves active, revenue-generating country configurations and in-progress registrations without service interruption during transition from the current platform

Security and Data Protection Requirements:

- The platform/solution must provide industry-standard security practices and administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect organizational data from unauthorized access, alteration, disclosure, or destruction as applicable based on the proposed solution.
- Must meet GDPR and secure payment standards, PCI DSS
- Encryption of data in transit (TLS 1.2 or higher) and AES 256 for data at rest
- Role-based access control
- Audit logging of user and administrative activities
- Secure software development lifecycle (SDLC)
- Session management controls
- Vulnerability testing and remediation including preventing SQL Injection, Cross-Site Scripting (XSS), command injection, insecure authentication, sensitive data exposure, etc.
- Data masking for sensitive data
- SSO integration with O365 through SAML 2.0

High Priority:

- Role-based admin interface for regional teams
- Structured CSV/Excel export with user-selectable fields, including a format compatible with the Costpoint accounting system (manual import acceptable for MVP).

- Reporting dashboards (sales, enrollments, regional performance)
- Multi-language support (especially Arabic and French)
- Enables pre-requisites for certain purchases (e.g., a person cannot purchase an English class without a valid placement test result, or must complete another step before registering for a program)

Nice-to-Have:

- Marketing tools (discount logic, bundles, upsells, abandoned cart)

MVP Success Criteria:

- The MVP will be considered successful if it enables:
- End-to-end purchase flow (browse → checkout → payment → LMS enrollment)
- Accurate invoice generation
- Successful data transfer to LMS and CRM
- Admin ability to manage products and orders independently
- Customer-facing pages reflect Amideast's approved brand and design and meet agreed accessibility and UX standards
- Product/content listings can be created, reviewed, approved, and published through the defined governance workflow

3. Current Environment

Amideast is currently in the process of modernizing its digital ecosystem, with several core systems already in place or under active development. The proposed e-commerce platform will need to operate within this evolving environment and integrate pragmatically with existing tools.

- **Website & Front-End Experience:** A new WordPress primary website is being developed separately, with an estimated launch of December 2026. The e-commerce solution will be designed concurrently and must align with this front-end experience and integrate from a user journey perspective (branding, navigation, and UX consistency). Currently, online sales run through Amideast's existing eShop platform; this request is part of Amideast's evaluation of whether to replace or substantially extend that platform.
- **Learning Management System (LMS):** Amideast uses Moodle to deliver online live instructor-led courses (not self-paced or on-demand courses). Users who purchase courses through the e-commerce platform must be enrolled automatically and granted access with minimal delay and friction.
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** Amideast is implementing Creatio as its CRM system. This system is currently under development. The e-commerce platform should support the capture and synchronization of customer and transaction data to maintain a unified customer record.
- **Finance & Accounting:** Amideast uses Costpoint for financial management. For the MVP phase, the platform must accommodate assigning financial data to the appropriate records and financial data (transactions, invoices, etc.) can be exported in a structured format (e.g., CSV/Excel) for manual import into Costpoint.
- **Commerce Maturity:** Amideast currently operates an in-house-built eShop platform, primarily developed to serve testing registration and payment needs, which several country offices have also begun using for other products. This project represents Amideast's evaluation of whether to replace or substantially extend this platform with a unified, cross-country commerce system (see Section 2 for migration and continuity requirements).

4. Collaboration Model

Amideast will take a cross-functional, business-led approach to this project, with clear roles across internal teams and the selected vendor.

- **Process Coordination:** This procurement process is coordinated by Amideast's Deputy Vice President of Operations, in partnership with the Deputy Vice President for Academic and Professional Programs and the Director of Strategic Communications, who together will define requirements, set priorities, and ensure alignment with organizational goals, user needs, and market strategy.
- **Decision Authority:** Final platform selection will be made by Amideast's Senior Leadership Team, informed by the evaluation committee's recommendation. Amideast is concurrently assessing an internal development option against the same requirements as part of this decision.
- **Technical Input & Support:** Amideast's in-house IT team will provide technical input and support throughout the project lifecycle, including reviewing architecture decisions, supporting integration discussions, and ensuring alignment with internal systems and standards. The IT team will also be responsible for hosting (if not SaaS), ongoing maintenance, basic troubleshooting, and system administration post-launch.
- **Vendor Responsibilities:** The selected vendor will be responsible for solution design, configuration, development (where required), integration setup, testing, and deployment, and is expected to provide clear documentation and knowledge transfer to enable Amideast's IT team to manage the system effectively after launch.
- **Design Coordination:** The vendor must align with Amideast's web design agency to ensure a consistent user experience across the main website and the e-commerce platform, including branding, navigation, and UI/UX standards, coordinated by the Director of Strategic Communications. Vendors should identify any dependencies and propose mitigation strategies to ensure alignment with the target launch timeline.
- **Working Model & Communication:** The project will follow a collaborative, iterative approach, with regular check-ins, milestone reviews, and feedback loops. Vendors should propose a project management approach (e.g., Agile or hybrid) that supports transparency, timely delivery, and adaptability.
- **Post-Launch Support:** Vendors should outline options for post-launch support, including short-term stabilization support and any optional longer-term support or maintenance arrangements.

5. Timeline

- This request issued: October 22, 2026
- Vendor Questions Due to cbiliyar@amideast.org: October 29, 2026
    - Use the subject line: "Amideast E-Commerce RFP: [Company Name]."
- Written Responses to Vendor Questions Circulated: November 4, 2026
- Submission Deadline: November 13, 2026
- Project Kickoff: To be confirmed; on/around January 11, 2027
- MVP Launch: Target 6-9 months after kickoff

6. Budget

Vendors should propose a budget that reflects the technical needs expressed in this RFP. Amideast encourages a lean, configuration-driven approach that prioritizes speed to market and minimal custom development where feasible.

Vendors should propose pragmatic solutions that minimize custom development and clearly distinguish between MVP deliverables and any recommended future enhancements. Vendors should specify assumptions regarding initial product/catalog setup and content entry responsibilities.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a committee comprised of the Project Leadership team and selected business segment directors. Scoring will be based upon:

- **Approach:** Quality and clarity of the proposed implementation approach, including quality of any recommended revisions to Amideast's stated requirements (see Submission Requirements): 20%
- **Experience and Institutional Understanding:** Evaluated through review of comparable technical or domain experience, such as relevant past projects, platforms built, and integrations delivered, as well as understanding of Amideast's specific environment, including existing systems, data structures, country-specific compliance requirements, and the stakeholder landscape: 15%
- **Technical Solution:** Soundness and completeness of the proposed technical architecture and integrations: 20%
- **Customer Experience, UX, Brand & Accessibility:** 15%
- **Pricing (Total Cost of Ownership):** Evaluated on total cost of ownership over a three-year period following MVP launch (see cost worksheet below): 20%
- **Team and Capacity:** Evaluated based on the capability and available capacity of the specific individuals assigned to this work: 10%

Please provide a cost breakdown for your proposed solution reflecting a 3-year horizon following MVP launch. Payment gateway transaction fees (Stripe, PayPal, local gateways) should be excluded, as these are pass-through costs that apply regardless of platform. Structure your cost categories in the way that best reflects your proposed solution (for example, license or subscription fees may not apply to a custom-built solution, while ongoing maintenance costs apply to either approach); state the assumptions behind each estimate (e.g., support hours per week, renewal terms).

Cost Category	Year 1 (MVP)	Year 2 (Ongoing)	Year 3 (Ongoing)
Implementation / MVP build cost			
Ongoing licensing, subscription, or maintenance costs (as applicable)			
Total estimated cost			

8. Submission Requirements

Amideast encourages vendors to prioritize clarity over volume. As a general guideline, proposals are typically expected to be in the range of 15–20 pages (or equivalent slides), excluding appendices.

Vendors must submit proposals (in PDF or PPT format) including:

- **Executive Summary:** Overview of proposed solution, approach, and key differentiators

- **Understanding & Approach:** Understanding of requirements and proposed implementation approach, including architecture and integrations. Please also identify any requirements in Section 2 you would recommend revising, adding, or removing based on your experience with comparable organizations, explaining your reasoning.
- **Customer Journeys & Demonstration:** Vendors should describe and, during the shortlist process, demonstrate how the proposed platform supports representative Amideast customer and administrative journeys, including: an individual learner discovering and purchasing a course; a regional office creating and managing a product; a staff member manually registering a participant or processing an offline payment; and a corporate or institutional customer purchasing or registering multiple participants.
- **Requirements Matrix:** A completed matrix indicating, for each requirement in Section 2, whether the proposed solution Fully Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Requires Custom Development to meet it, with brief notes as needed.
- **Solution Overview:** Key technical components, hosting, development stack, integrations, and approach to security, reliability, and data handling
- **Project Plan & Delivery:** Timeline, milestones, and handover and training
- **Team & Experience:** Key team members and relevant project experience
- **Pricing & Assumptions:** Detailed pricing breakdown, including any assumptions regarding scope, hosting, or content setup; see the cost worksheet referenced above
- **Risks & Considerations (optional but encouraged):** Key risks, dependencies, or recommendations
- References (minimum 2)

Vendors should clearly distinguish between MVP deliverables and any recommended Phase 2 enhancements.

Proposals should be submitted no later than 11:59pm ET Friday, November 13, 2026 to cbiliyar@amideast.org with the subject line “Amideast E-Commerce RFP: [Company Name]."

9. General Terms

- **No obligation:** This RFP is a request for proposals only and does not commit Amideast to award a contract. Amideast may reject any or all proposals, request clarifications or revisions, or cancel or modify this RFP at any time.
- **Costs:** Each respondent bears all costs of preparing and submitting a proposal. Amideast will not reimburse any such costs.
- **Pricing validity:** Pricing and terms in a proposal should remain valid for at least 90 days after the submission deadline.
- **Confidentiality:** Amideast will treat proposals as confidential and will use them only to evaluate this procurement. Respondents should likewise keep non-public information about Amideast’s systems, operations, and requirements confidential.
- **Conflicts of interest:** Respondents must disclose any existing relationship with Amideast or its staff that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.
- **Equal information:** Answers to questions will be shared with all respondents. Amideast may issue written addenda, which become part of this RFP.
- **Next steps:** Amideast expects to notify respondents of its decision in December 2026. Final selection will be made by Amideast’s Senior Leadership Team.