Market consultation Revision of Level Crossing Controllers (English translation (only the Dutch version is legally valid))

ProRail has an installed base of approximately 1,600 protected level crossings comprising a total of 4,500 level crossing controllers. These are robust installations that operate 24/7. Level crossings ensure the safe intersection of road traffic and rail traffic and are therefore a safety-critical asset for ProRail. Both road users and railway operators must be able to rely completely on their safe operation and high availability.

1.1 About ProRail

ProRail B.V. is responsible for the Dutch railway network, including its construction, maintenance, management and safety. Every day, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, ProRail employees ensure that 1.2 million passengers and 100,000 tonnes of freight reach their destinations, facilitated by approximately 6,550 train movements across more than 7,000 kilometres of railway infrastructure. The railway network is rightly regarded as the beating heart of mobility in the Netherlands.

ProRail contributes to the accessibility of the Netherlands by ensuring an optimal railway network. We allocate railway capacity, manage all train traffic, build and manage stations, and construct new railway infrastructure. In addition, ProRail maintains existing infrastructure, including tracks, switches, signals and level crossings.

To ensure the continued availability and safe operation of level crossings, ProRail is seeking one or more parties capable of carrying out the refurbishment of level crossing controllers in the future.

1.2 Ambitions

One of ProRail's ambitions is to acquire, maintain and keep its assets available in the most sustainable and efficient manner possible. Refurbishing existing level crossing controllers aligns well with this ambition and results in a significant reduction in the use of new raw materials compared with replacing old controllers with new ones.

1.3 Scope

Approximately 4,500 AY81 level crossing controllers are installed throughout the Dutch railway network. A level crossing controller has an expected service life of approximately 12 to 13 years, after which replacement is required to continue guaranteeing safe operation. This results in an annual refurbishment demand of approximately 200 to 600 level crossing controllers.

ProRail's maintenance contractors replace old level crossing controllers with refurbished units. Controllers requiring refurbishment are supplied to the refurbishment contractor sought by ProRail. This contractor ensures the availability of sufficient refurbished controllers to facilitate these replacements. ProRail provides an annual forecast of the controllers expected to require refurbishment.

At present, the level crossing controllers are refurbished by VRS Railway Industry (hereinafter "VRS"), based in Houten, the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) of the level crossing controllers currently used on the Dutch railway network. The existing agreement between VRS and ProRail has a maximum duration until the end of 2030. Before this agreement expires, ProRail wishes to contract one or more suppliers in a timely manner who will be capable of carrying out the refurbishment of these level crossing controllers.

1.4 Description of the Service

The technology of the level crossing controller currently used by ProRail is relatively straightforward and dates back to the late twentieth century. The controller itself is a safety-critical asset. It must operate reliably and must not fail. Any malfunction of a level crossing has an immediate impact on the safe and efficient operation of both railway and road traffic.

ProRail has a license for the complete refurbishment specifications and refurbishment protocols. Based on these documents, any competent and suitably qualified organisation can perform the refurbishment of the level crossing controllers in the future.

For this market consultation:

Annex 2 contains a description of the functional operation of the level crossing controller;

Annex 3 contains a representative, though non-exhaustive, description of the activities, components and instructions involved;

Annex 4 contains the complete work instruction for one of the process steps.

These annexes are intended to provide interested parties with a clear understanding of the nature and scope of the service.

ProRail considers it disproportionate, for the purposes of this market consultation, to share all available technical information relating to the refurbishment process.

The assignment consists of providing refurbishment services for AY81 level crossing controllers in accordance with the prescribed refurbishment specifications and protocols. The activities described must be carried out as specified. Any deviations must be agreed with ProRail in advance. Examples include the use of alternative components or tools, or proposed optimisations to the refurbishment process.

1.5 Intended Contracting Approach

1.5.1 Contract Structure

ProRail considers the refurbishment of level crossing controllers to be a service. ProRail intends to formalise and procure this service through a dedicated service agreement of a similar nature to the current arrangement.

1.5.2 Procurement Procedure

Based on current insights, ProRail intends to organise a European Restricted Procedure to appoint one or more contractors that will perform the refurbishment of level crossing controllers for an extended period of up to eight years.

The restricted procedure will consist of a selection phase, during which interested parties can demonstrate that they possess the required suitability and capabilities, followed by the tender phase. During the tender phase, the specific contract documents and other relevant information will be made available to the selected candidates.

The successful tenderer and the second-ranked tenderer will be given the opportunity to demonstrate that they can successfully refurbish a level crossing controller. The refurbished controller will be assessed by ProRail with regard to functionality, safety and the refurbishment processes applied by the contractor. ProRail will supervise the process to ensure that refurbishment activities are carried out in accordance with the prescribed refurbishment instructions.

If this process is completed to ProRail's satisfaction, so-called system acceptance will be granted and the agreement will commence with the first-ranked tenderer. The second-ranked tenderer will enter into a stand-by agreement that may be activated if the first-ranked tenderer fails to achieve successful system acceptance.

2 Questions

2.1 General Information

This chapter contains the questions that ProRail would like to have answered in order to gain a clear understanding of potential suppliers interested in providing the “Refurbishment of Level Crossing Controllers” service. The responses will help ProRail prepare a procurement procedure that maximises market participation and competition.

All questions are also included in Annex 1 to this market consultation. You are requested to provide your responses in the column entitled “Interested Party Response” and submit the completed questionnaire by email to the contact person for this market consultation. The numbering in Annex 1 corresponds with the numbering of the questions in this document.

General

We would like to get to know your organisation better. To that end, responses to Questions 1 through 4 are particularly relevant:

1. Please provide your organisation name (including contact person, head office location, number of employees, and your industry/business sector, e.g. international, national, SME, other).
2. Which certifications does your organisation hold (ISO, NEN, VCA, Safety Culture Ladder, CO_2 Performance Ladder level, etc.)?
3. What makes this specific assignment attractive to your organisation?
4. Do you have any ideas or suggestions that would make the assignment even more attractive to your organisation?

The Procurement Procedure

The following questions relate to the procurement procedure:

5. Based on the information provided, are you interested in participating in the procurement process for the refurbishment of level crossing controllers?
6. Based on the information provided, are you considering submitting a tender independently, or would you prefer to participate through a partnership or consortium arrangement? Please explain.
7. Which qualifications, capabilities and relevant experience does your organisation already possess to act as a service provider for the refurbishment of level crossing controllers?
8. How could ProRail make this assignment more attractive in order to encourage your organisation to participate in a future procurement procedure?
9. What risks do you foresee that might prevent your organisation from participating in a procurement procedure for this service?
10. Have you carried out comparable assignments and/or do you have experience refurbishing similar assets of greater or lesser complexity for third parties?
11. What types of references (nature, size, characteristics) do you believe ProRail should request in order to ensure an effective pre-selection of competent suppliers?
12. Based on the responses received through this market consultation, ProRail intends to organise an appropriate procurement procedure. Do you already have suggestions regarding the procurement approach, timeline or the procedure described in this document?
13. What additional recommendations would you like to provide to ProRail for the preparation of this procurement?

14. Which differentiating factors should ProRail include in the procurement and award model to ensure an optimal ranking of tenderers? Examples may include sustainability, planning, innovation, risk management, etc.

2.2 Execution of the Assignment

The following questions relate to the execution of the assignment:

15. Which qualifications do you consider important for the execution of this assignment, and to what extent does your organisation already meet these requirements? Consider workshop facilities, personnel, quality systems, reference projects, etc.
16. Are there any specific conditions or topics that are particularly important for your organisation in order to perform this service?
17. How much preparation time do you estimate would be required from contract award until commencement of the service? Consider mobilisation, staff training, and completion of an initial refurbishment following contract award.
18. What would be the ideal duration of a service agreement that appropriately reflects the investments and training efforts you expect to undertake? Consider, for example, recruitment of personnel, acquisition of workshop facilities and equipment, staff training, and similar investments.
19. Are you capable of redesigning or redeveloping components of the level crossing controller in the event of component obsolescence, and what experience do you have in this area?
20. Are you interested in the full scope of the assignment, or would you prefer a segmented approach through multiple lots? If so, how should those lots be structured?
21. Do you have expertise and/or experience in supporting fault analysis and troubleshooting activities?
22. How would you demonstrate that the refurbishment has been carried out correctly and that the resulting product will function properly and safely?

2.3 We Are Looking for Your Ideas!

In preparation for the intended procurement procedure, ProRail wishes to gauge market interest and gather input from organisations that may wish to participate in a future procurement for the refurbishment of level crossing controllers. ProRail also aims to test the feasibility of the approach described in this market consultation with potential market participants.

We would like to exchange views with market parties on the practical feasibility of this project within the stated framework, as well as on the proposed procurement process and contract structure.

Through this market consultation, ProRail expects to gain insight into the suppliers available in the market and the expertise and capabilities that exist within the sector.

2.4 Procedure

This market consultation has been published on TenderNed as an open market consultation. This means that all interested market parties have the opportunity to participate.

The market consultation will be conducted in writing. Participants are requested to submit the completed questionnaire by email before the date specified in Section 2.5.

Should any submitted responses be unclear or raise follow-up questions, ProRail may request additional clarification.

A summary report of the market consultation will be prepared containing the main conclusions. No commercially sensitive information will be included in this report. The report will be shared with all participants and may, where applicable, be included in the procurement documentation of a future procurement procedure. Conclusions may be incorporated into the procurement documentation and/or procurement strategy where ProRail considers this appropriate and beneficial.

The market consultation consists of the following stages:

1. Information session and technical demonstration at Railcenter in Amersfoort;
2. Written questions regarding the content of the market consultation;
3. Written responses to the questions contained in this consultation document;
4. Optional individual meetings with all or selected responding market parties.

ProRail will first facilitate a non-mandatory information meeting and technical demonstration at Railcenter in Amersfoort on 20 November. Participants will have the opportunity to inspect a level crossing controller. This will provide insight into the size, complexity and technology of the equipment.

Interested organisations may attend with a maximum of two representatives. Attendance requests should be submitted to the contact person identified in Section 2.6, after which a formal invitation will be provided.

Participants may subsequently submit questions regarding the market consultation. ProRail will provide written responses to all interested parties. Following this, participants are requested to submit the completed questionnaire by the deadline specified in Section 2.5.

ProRail will then analyse the responses and may decide to organise individual follow-up meetings with all or a selection of participants.

Minutes will be prepared for each individual meeting and submitted to the participant concerned for approval. Subsequently, ProRail will prepare one consolidated and anonymised report containing the key conclusions derived from both the written responses and the discussions. No commercially sensitive information will be included. The draft report will be distributed to all participants for review and comment. After all participants have had the opportunity to provide feedback, the report will be finalised by ProRail. The final report may be included in the procurement documentation of a future procurement process. Where appropriate and beneficial, the conclusions will be incorporated into the procurement strategy and/or procurement documents.

2.5 Schedule

Date	**Activity**
02 November 2026	Publication of and invitation to participate in the market consultation by ProRail
20 November 2026	Information session at Railcenter Amersfoort
26 November 2026	Deadline for submitting questions regarding the provided information
10 December 2026	Publication of responses to submitted questions and any amended documentation
23 December 2026	Deadline for submitting completed responses to the market consultation questionnaire
January 2027	Optional individual discussions, at ProRail’s initiative

February 2027	Distribution of draft market consultation report
February 2027	Distribution of final market consultation report

2.6 Contact

For questions regarding, or registration for, this market consultation, please contact:

Wouter de Blocq van Scheltinga

Email: wouter.deblocq@prorail.nl

Telephone: +31 (0)6 2830 7531

2.7 Open and Fair

Participation in this market consultation is entirely voluntary and will not result in any preferential treatment in subsequent procurement procedures. Similarly, non-participation in the market consultation will not lead to exclusion from any future procurement process.

By participating in this market consultation, participants agree that the information they provide may be used by ProRail in the preparation of a future procurement procedure. Any commercial or financial information provided will be treated confidentially by ProRail.

ProRail attaches great importance to a transparent process. It is not ProRail's intention to provide participating organisations with any advantage or to place non-participating organisations at a disadvantage. Accordingly, all relevant information arising from the market consultation will be made available to all potential tenderers upon publication of the future procurement procedure or included in the procurement dossier.

Any costs incurred in participating in this market consultation will not be reimbursed by ProRail.

Appendices

TN619240 Annex 1 – Market Consultation Questionnaire

TN619240 Annex 2 – Description of the Functional Operation of the Level Crossing Controller

TN619240 Annex 3 – Description of Activities, Components, Protocols and Instructions (non-exhaustive, for illustrative purposes only)

TN619240 Annex 4 – Complete Instruction for One Process Step (example)

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