

Searching data geek to help finalise EU lobbying transparency website

We have been working on lobbyfacts.eu, an open source and open data web application that will make it easy for any interested person to find out who is lobbying the EU institutions on whose behalf, what they are lobbying for, how much money is behind their lobbying and what issues they are lobbying on. The launch of a first (beta) version of the lobbyfacts.eu website (web interface developed in Drupal by an external agency) is planned for July 2013.

We're urgently looking for a data geek with good Python skills who can help us finalize our lobby database and its API so that we can launch the web interface in the second half of July.

Technical background

In this first phase, lobbyfacts.eu is primarily using data from the EU's "Transparency Register" (TR). On a daily basis, data is being automatically collected from the register via the daily XML files provided on the TR website and incorporated into our own database.

At a later stage we want to integrate data from other open data sources (e.g. EC expert groups register, social media, wikipedia etc.) into our database. As lobbyfacts.eu is an open source project, you can find all technical information on where we are right now at <http://api.lobbyfacts.eu> and <https://github.com/pudo/lobbyfacts>.

The database and API have been developed by Friedrich Lindenberg at OKFN Labs. As they have to step back out as the main developers of lobbyfacts.eu, we are looking for a coder who can take over finalising the last bits and pieces of the database/API and who would also be interested to become the main developer for the project in the longer term. We estimate that this would take between 5-10 working days before mid July 2013. The scope and timing of follow-up work will depend on the results of additional fundraising for the project, but we think that this is a very 'fundable' project.

The web interface for lobbyfacts.eu is being built in Drupal by [Curve Agency](#). The web interface functions as an independent layer built on top of the database API.

Specific tasks

- de-duplication and normalisation of entries in the database
- verification of the data in the database, spot checks
- developing a system to allow users to tag industry sectors
- developing a simple method to add unregistered entities (lobby firms) to the database
- improve the full text search

Essential requirements

- technical solution is based on Python, PostgreSQL, SQLAlchemy and Flask, experience with XML parsing and API design would be desirable
- ability to manage own workload without close supervision

We offer

40-80 hours on a free lance basis in June/July 2013. Depending on skills and expertise we offer between 30 - 50 euro per hour. If funding for follow-up work can be secured, we may be able to offer additional work in the longer term as well.

Interested?

If you find this an exciting challenge and if you are available to work 40-80 hours on it in the next 4-6 weeks, please send your CV or a link to your portfolio page and a short cover letter to erik@corporateeurope.org before Friday 31 May 2013, 12:00 CEST. Your letter should highlight

your skills, experience and everything else that makes you the right person to do this job for us.

Lobbyfacts.eu – who, what, why and how

The lobbyfacts.eu project is initiated and run by three non-governmental organisations who run campaigns on lobbying transparency and rolling back corporate power: [Corporate Europe Observatory](#), [Friends of the Earth Europe](#) and [LobbyControl](#). Our aim is that lobbyfacts.eu becomes the place where European citizens, journalists and decision-makers go first when they are looking for hands-on information on the role of lobbying in EU decision-making.

We plan to launch the website with a workshop for journalists in Brussels later this summer. On the website we will also publish short, interesting articles that highlight the website's potential for uncovering the role of lobbying in policy-making. This will encourage journalists, civil society groups and others to make use of the website. It will be a powerful tool for citizens, journalists and decision-makers to gain access to information about who is lobbying to influence EU decisions. This will help enable more media coverage, stimulate debate and contribute to the creation of a more informed public. For decision-makers, it will enable them to be better informed about who is trying to influence the issues they are working on, resulting in better decisions. By putting the spotlight on industry lobbies outnumber and outspend public interest groups, the lobbyfacts.eu website will help create awareness and scrutiny of EU decision-making and thereby make industry capture less likely.