

furnCSR PROJECT

Invitation to experts candidature for the furnCSR project

This is an invitation to different fields experts to propose themselves as candidate to cover different types of expertise needed for the implementation of the furnCSR project, which is a project of the 2020 European Sectorial Social Dialogue call.

In this document, you will find:

- 1) a short description of the project;
- 2) a description of the services required (purpose, type of experts, dedication and budget required); and
- 3) the application rules and selection criteria.

In the **ANNEX I** (pg. 5) there is a complete project summary and, in the **ANNEX II**, (pg. 7) a detailed description of the tasks, requirements and activities timing for each expert.

1) THE furnCSR PROJECT

The **furnCSR project** - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) guidelines and tools to enhance the furniture labour market attractiveness - funded by the EC through the call Support for Social Dialogue VP/2020/001, aims to provide EU furniture sector employers and employees a set of theoretical and practical guidelines to define, customize and implement different activities for the deployment of the Corporate Social Responsibility or Shared Value and enabling to bring their specific and highest benefits. FurnCSR will provide them an action plan template guiding them toward an innovative management model able to strengthen companies' attractiveness and employees retention capacity. In addition to employees and companies, it will benefit as well other sector stakeholders, such as suppliers, customers, community and public administration. Special attention will be put on Furniture SMEs that represent 99,5% of the sector companies.

The partners are:



www.cenfim.org // **CENFIM** - Furnishings Cluster and Innovation Hub;



<http://www.federlegnoarredo.it/> // **FLA** – FEDERLEGNOARREDO



www.efbww.org // **EFBWW** - European Federation of Building and Woodworkers;



www.ueanet.com // **UEA** - European Furniture Manufacturers Federation

See **ANNEX I** for more details.

2) PURPOSE OF THE CALL

This is a call for **consultants or consultancies** to provide expertise as part of the implementation of the furnCSR project. The experts will be required to properly contribute to the activities and objectives of the furnCSR project. They will be **subcontracted by CENFIM** for contributing to the



preparation of the later-on described reports and to participate to the survey, project workshop and final conference.

The key aim of experts' participation is to contribute to increase the knowledge related to CSR within the European furniture sector and to identify possible solutions and actions to tackle the following sector challenges: the ageing of the current workforce and the lack of its renewal; the lack of vocations in the sector (attract and retain new and/or young people) and the poor attractiveness of the sector for highly qualified professionals.

Dealing with all these challenges require to look into new models of the work organization and management and working conditions within companies, or at least new more constructive mindset of employers, managers and workers. Finding the appropriate possible solutions is essential to ensure industry's mid and long-term competitiveness.

Solutions can be found in the deployment of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices and the creation of more "Shared Value" in a synergic manner between employers (or companies) and workers and other stakeholders (e.g., customers, suppliers, community and administration). These practices will clearly help to create stronger and fairer connections among workers and companies, make more attractive these companies for both youngest and more experienced professionals, increase the retention capacity of these companies. In summary, sharing more value with employees, makes companies more competitive and workers more satisfied.

furnCSR experts will be constantly guided by furnCSR CENFIM team and supported by other project partners and other specific and national experts that will be hired by the furnCSR consortium.

These External Thematic Experts (CSR, Work Organization (internal & external), Human Resources management, VET, circular economy), the 6 Furniture Regional/National Experts entities will form the **project Expert Panel**, which will be led by CENFIM (project coordinator) that will coordinate the work of the panel under the Steering Committee guidance. All consortium partners and Associate Organizations will provide their support to properly link the experts work with the EU furniture sector perspective and with the priorities of the Work Programme of the European Social Dialogue Committee on Furniture in relation to the challenges related to aging of the workforce and sector poor attractiveness.

The fields of expertise of the professionals invited to send their candidature are the following:

1. Internal processes vision of the sector company (Work Organization-1)
2. Strategic vision of the sector company (Work Organization-2)
3. Sectoral VET within the EU
4. Sectoral Circular Economy
5. Human Resources in relation to CSR

Experts' main tasks are detailed in **ANNEX II** - Tasks, Requirements and Timing.

We expect that their **contributions** will require a commitment of the following working days and the related total maximum budget:

Internal vision of the company	Around 8 working days	(Appr. budget: 5.000)
External vision of the company	Around 6,5 working days	(Appr. budget: 4.000)
VET	Around 13 working days	(Appr. budget: 8.000)
Circular Economy	Around 13 working days	(Appr. budget: 8.000)
Human Resources	Around 6,5 working days	(Appr. budget: 4.000)



Performance of the tasks will have to be carried out within the contract period specified in the contract to be signed and with due regard to the tasks and the schedule of the project activities included in **ANNEX II**.

These amounts **do not include the costs of travel and subsistence** that the experts will incur for attending the project workshop (max. 1 day) and final conference (max. 1 day). These costs will be reimbursed separately, by delivering proves of the costs paid. The limits for the travel reimbursement are the following:

300 € flights

250 € daily allowance

3) APPLICATION RULES AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Experts are invited to present their application by sending an email to info@furncsr.eu containing:

- The academic and professional CV
- Presentation and motivation letter
- An economical offer based on tasks foreseen and the maximum amount earlier presented.

Applications need to be sent **by the 30th of September**, and feedbacks will be sent by the **8th of October**.

Through these documents, experts shall **present and prove their expertise, past experiences and skills**:

- through their academic and professional CV
- mentioning their specific experiences in their field of expertise and in relation to CSR
- confirming participation in other related projects and initiatives
- giving details of related publications
- level and reasons of interest for the participation in the project

Applications from organisations/companies have to include information on:

- Entity mission and mandate
- If applicable, the role that social partners play in the organisation/company

Please, refer to **ANNEX II** (points 1 y 2) to properly understand the call requirements.

The common **knowledge and skills that will be evaluated** for each candidate expert are the following (weight):

- Evidence of strong and relevant academic background and past professional experiences in the topic of expertise (30%).
- Proven research skills (studies, evaluations, diagnoses) in the field of expertise (20%).
- Previous publications related to the target area/issues (20%).
- Experience in working within teams in collaborative manner (10%).
- Knowledge of EU or national Furniture sectors (20%).

Specific expertise required to the different experts are detailed in **ANNEX II** (point 2)

All these values will count for the 70% of the whole weight, while the economic offer will count for the remaining 30%.



Each **contract will be awarded** to the expert that, based on the previous selection criteria, will get the highest number of points. If the call collects only one candidate in a field of expertise and this is considered appropriate for implementing the foreseen tasks, there is no need to look for additional candidates. In the eventuality that s/he is not considered appropriate, a new call with a wider dissemination will be implemented by the Partners and a special support will be required to the EC officers in charge of dealing with furnCSR project.

The **selection process** will be based on principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. Any possible conflict of interest will be avoided. The members of the selection committee of CENFIM will evaluate the different proposals and prepare a report containing an evaluation report and classification of participation. Based on this document the project partners (CENFIM, FLA, EFBWW and UEA) will take a decision.

Following the applicants selection, CENFIM will sign with them a **standard contract** taking into consideration the financial regulations of the European Commission. Consultants will have to respect all the obligations laid down in the Grant agreement between the European Commission and CENFIM for the furnCSR project. The contracts will be signed asap, immediately after the experts selection is done in order to speed-up the starting of their work.

Payments shall be made based on the invoices sent by the expert to CENFIM according to the following payment plan:

- 40% following the signature of the contract
- 40% following the delivery of contributions/inputs related to the workshop outcomes preparation
- 20% following the delivery of all the foreseen outputs

Travels reimbursements will be paid following the provision by the expert of the appropriate signed claim form and the related travels receipts.



ANNEX I

furnCSR - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) guidelines and tools to enhance the furniture labour market attractiveness

The Challenge

During the last decades, the EU furniture sector has been undergoing different market, technological, environmental and financial challenges putting pressure on companies' competitiveness and capacity to overcome the difficulties they represent.

But a tricky and key challenge that has been affecting the whole furniture sector and in particularly SMEs is the poor capacity of the furniture sector to attract and retain new and/or young workers. The related sector challenges are:

- i) the aging of the current workforce and the lack of its renewal;
- ii) the lack of vocations in the sector (attract and retain new and/or young people) and
- iii) the poor attractiveness of the sector for highly qualified professionals.

Reducing the impact of these challenges is greatly needed not only to support sector companies' competitiveness, but even to ensure their survival.

A Possible Solution

In spite of several studies and initiatives implemented in different EU countries, no one have delivered yet a complete and effective solutions collection and their possible results in relation to these challenges threatening the furniture sector. So, the idea is to have a new and integrated approach both toward workers and companies.

This solution can be found in the deployment of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices and the creation of "Shared Value" in synergic manner between companies and workers.

According to Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer, the central idea behind the creation of shared value is that the company competitiveness and the health and well-being of the communities around it (e.g. employees, customers, suppliers, society, public administration, etc.) are mutually dependent, meaning that sharing more value with employees makes companies more competitive and workers more satisfied. This is in line also with the Freeman's "Stakeholder approach" theory, a key pillar of CSR concept.

These practices can clearly reduce the poor "attraction and retention of new and young workers" in furniture manufacturing companies and thus decrease the negative impact of the aging workforce challenge. Among other benefits, this would allow companies to retain and motivate good employees, attract talent, establish sustainable and responsible supply chains with customers; in short, being more competitive.

The strategy and activities foreseen by the project are perfectly aligned with the main priorities of the Work programme for the European Sectoral Social Dialogue of the Furniture Industry 2019-2024 and more specifically with its priority: 3. Labour market - Durable employment and demographic changes: taking account of an ageing workforce & fostering youth employment and quality of apprenticeships. Shared Value is also one of the topic priority of EU clusters as it was confirmed during the European Cluster Conference 2019 "[Connecting Ecosystems - Bridge. Inspire. Change](#)" organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs and the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union¹.

¹ https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/sites/default/files/news_attachment/eocic_3rd_newsletter.pdf



Sector SMEs Needs

During the last years, within the European Social Dialogue Committee on Furniture we have been working on the development of different projects (e.g. BOLSTER UP II and 2, DIGIT-FUR, SAWYER, etc.), workshops (e.g. Wood Dust Conference), guides and tools (e.g. Less Dust) for the EU SMEs of the furniture value chain. Through these, we aim to integrate the new legal, VET, OHS, technological, environmental, etc. aspects into their management and decision-making processes, from a strategic and operational perspective, and thus facilitate that our companies are simultaneously more attractive for employees and more competitive on the market. But we currently lack this in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) and Shared Value practices with employees and other stakeholders.

All SMEs have economic and resources limitations to implement CSR practices. Moreover, looking at the furniture sector, currently, there are no practical CSR guides or supporting tools specific for the sector SMEs. Therefore, it would be interesting for sector SMEs to have at disposal such instruments supporting them to deploy Shared Value practices in a compatible and synergetic manner with their business processes and thus have and implement “fresher and more attractive” environment and managerial practices, making companies more attractive for new and young workers

Moreover, workers new generations can bring into the sector new knowledge and skills related to sector technological, VET, OHS and environmental challenges, highly needed for securing both companies survival and long-term competitiveness. Retain them is a key need for companies.

Concrete Results

- A model of Action Plan with practical guidelines for deploying CSR / Shared Value practices in EU furniture SMEs.
- Deliver a Self-assessment online tool to identify the CSR / Shared Value maturity level of SMEs, suggesting as well appropriate and priority improvement options (available in 10 EU languages).
- Implement pilot case-studies by adopting the online self assessment this Action Plan model and tool in SMEs across different countries
- Publication of the Action Plan model, self-assessment tool and case-studies in 10 EU languages
- Organization of a final conference

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ANNEX II

TASKS, REQUIREMENTS and TIMING

1. SUBCONTRACTORS TASKS AND REQUIRED DELIVERIES / CONTRIBUTIONS

All Experts will be part of the project Experts Panel (along the whole project length) and they will be required to contribute to different project activities, depending on the activity their contributions will be of different level.

Main concrete contributions:

- Contribute to the preparation of the **Deliverable 1 - Guide for deploying CSR / Shared Value practices in companies (1st Milestone)**, containing a set of theoretical and practical guidelines to define, customize and implement different activities for the deployment of the Corporate Social Responsibility or Shared Value and enabling to bring their specific and highest benefits **(by M9-Dec. 21)**.
- Participate to the **furnCSR Survey (by M10-Jan. 22)**.
- Participate to the **Project Workshop, (3rd Milestone)** which is intended to provide key feedback and inputs about the D1 Guide **(by M12-Mar. 22)**.

Inputs in the form of comments during content revision processes:

- Revise the **furnCSR Survey** and provide comments on its questions and content. This survey will be addressed to at least 50 different experts that will provide feedbacks on the Guide content and contributing to its improvement and validation **(by M9-Dec. 21)**.
- Comment on the outcomes of the workshop identifying the **changes that should be implemented in the guide D1** to make it more useable and effective for sector different types of stakeholders **(by M13-Apr. 22)**.
- Comment on the furnCSR **online tool for company self-evaluation (D2)** and its functioning. Through it, companies will be able to evaluate and identify their maturity level in relation to CSR / Shared Value practices and their readiness to adopt and implement any of those ones identified in D1 Guide. Moreover, based on Workshop outcomes, this instrument will suggest in a customized manner which should be the company priorities and the most appropriate options for improvement **(by M18-Sept. 22)**.
- Comment the **Recommendations for Furniture Sector Stakeholders (D4)**, which will include two different types of recommendations, one related to those knowledge and skills needed by employers and employees to successfully implement CSR and Shared Value practices and another part with recommendations for Furniture and other sectors stakeholders to promote and facilitate the deployment of these practices in companies. This will be prepared by CENFIM and the VET expert with the support of all external experts. This document aims to increase the usability of all project outcomes and outputs at all levels, but a special attention will be given to the needs and aims of ESSD Committee on Furniture Social Partners **(by M21-Dec. 22)**.
- Participate to the project **Final dissemination conference (by M23-Feb. 23)**.

1.1 Specific tasks for VET and Circular Economy experts

The **Expert** in the **EU VET provision system** will:

- Contribute to the preparation of the part of the **Recommendations for Furniture Sector Stakeholders (D4)** related to those **knowledge and skills needed by employers and employees** to successfully implement CSR and Shared Value practices. S/he will be



required to provide key contributions in identifying implication of these practices on sector key occupations, based on ESCO profiles database and their specificity for the furniture sector. Knowledge and skills new needs will have to be identified for workers and companies. S/he shall also provide recommendations to all sector stakeholders for facilitating the deployment of CSR practices within the sector.

Expert in Circular Economy will:

- Provide a greater contribution to the preparation of the **Deliverable 1 - Guide for deploying CSR / Shared Value practices in companies (1st Milestone)**, for which s/he is expected to provide key inputs in identifying and detailing CSR practices related with circular economy approach and transition for the furniture sector.

2. EXPERTISE, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS REQUESTED

The prerequisites of experts to be subcontracted are:

- Proven ability to have English language working proficiency.
- Communication capacities that enable to draft documents, make presentations and actively participate in meeting and brainstorming sessions.
- Past experiences of joint research activities and report drafting.
- Possibility and ability to work respecting deadlines and budget limits.
- Any interests that he/she has, which may prejudice her or his independence.
- Being nationals of one of the EU 27 Member States, or of one country of the European Economic Area or Switzerland.

The common knowledge and skills that will be evaluated for each candidate expert are the following:

- Evidence of strong and relevant academic background and past professional experiences in the topic of expertise.
- Proven research skills (studies, evaluations, diagnoses) in the field of expertise.
- Previous publications related to the target area/issues.
- Experience in working within teams in collaborative manner.
- Knowledge of EU or nationals Furniture sectors.

Specific expertise required to Experts:

Knowledge and skills required to the **Expert in Internal vision of the sector company:**

- A specific knowledge on furniture industry will be a mandatory requirement.
- A sound knowledge of products design, manufacturing, logistic and planning processes, within furniture companies.
- Good knowledge of the state of art in Europe of these Industrial Processes.

Knowledge and skills required to the **Expert in Strategic vision of the sector company:**

- A specific knowledge on furniture industry will be a mandatory requirement.
- A sound overall knowledge of company strategic and marketing planning within furniture companies.

Knowledge and skills required to the **Expert in the EU VET provision system:**

- State of art and functioning of VET provision systems across Europe.
- A sound knowledge of the sector key occupational profiles, their tasks and the related knowledge and skills needs.
- VET systems expected changes.



Knowledge and skills required to the **Expert in Circular Economy**:

- A sound knowledge of the principles and instruments of the Circular Economy and their relation with CSR and the deployment of its practices
- Good knowledge of the Industrial Processes related to Circularity and the related state of art in Europe.
- A specific knowledge on the Circularity of the furniture industry.

Knowledge and skills required to the **Expert in Human Resources**:

- Experiences in human resources management.
- Knowledge of CSR practices related to human resources management.
- Direct/indirect experience in HR CSR practices deployment in companies.
- A specific knowledge of the furniture industry will be a plus.

Please, remember that all experts will be provided with documents and information helping them to link their research field with specific aspects of the furniture sector.

3. TIME SCHEDULE AND REPORTING

The subcontractors will liaise closely and report to CENFIM as project Lead Partner, but they will be as well invited to collaborate among them within the experts' panel. In spite of this, the general supervision and evaluation of the experts' contributions will be carried out by the furnCSR Steering Committee (CENFIM, FLA, EFBWW and UEA).

The subcontracted experts will be required to participate to the **furnCSR Workshop** in Brussels (March 2022) and the **final conference** foreseen for February 2023 in Barcelona.

The deadline to deliver the contribution or reports will be the ones detailed at point 1.

