

## **furnCSR PROJECT**

### **CALL FOR TENDER**

This **call for tender** aims to select **one expert** (consultant or consultancy) in:

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

able to contribute to the implementation of the **furnCSR** project of the 2020 European Sectorial Social Dialogue call. In this document, you will find:

- 1) a short description of the project;
- 2) a detailed description of the services required (purpose, type of expert, 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](http://www.cenfim.org) // **CENFIM** - Furnishings Cluster and Innovation Hub;



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



[www.efbww.org](http://www.efbww.org) // **EFBWW** - European Federation of Building and Woodworkers;



[www.ueanet.com](http://www.ueanet.com) // **UEA** - European Furniture Manufacturers Federation

See **ANNEX I** for more details.

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#### **2) PURPOSE OF THE CALL**

This is a call for a **consultant or consultancy** to provide expertise as part of the implementation of the furnCSR project in the field of **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**.



The expert will be required to properly contribute to the activities and objectives of the furnCSR project. S/he will be **subcontracted by CENFIM** for contributing to the preparation of the later-on described i) reports and to the ii) survey, the iii) project workshop and iv) final conference.

The key aim of the Expert 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.

The furnCSR expert 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.

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

We expect that her/his **contributions** will require a commitment of 40 working days

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**.

**The total maximum budget** available is related to the number of days we estimate are needed to implement all their tasks: 24.000 €.

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

300 € flights

250 € daily allowance



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### **3) APPLICATION RULES AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

Experts are required to present their application by sending an email to [info@furncsr.eu](mailto: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 30<sup>th</sup> of September**, and feedbacks will be sent by the **8<sup>th</sup> of October**.

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

- through their academic and professional CV
- mentioning their experiences related 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.

Each candidate expert will be evaluated based on the following criteria (weight):

- Evidence of strong and relevant academic background and past professional experiences in CSR (20%).
- Proven research skills (studies, evaluations, diagnoses) in CSR (10%).
- Previous publications related to CSR (10%).
- Experience in working within teams in collaborative manner (5%).
- Knowledge of the main international standards in CSR (10%)
- Experience in real application of the main international standards – national & international consulting activities (15%).
- Experience in teaching activities - university - and training -in-company - (10%).
- Experience in promoting public / private initiatives/activities in CSR (10%).
- Knowledge of EU or national Furniture sectors will be a plus (10%).

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

The **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 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 applicant selection, CENFIM will sign with her/him 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 expert 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 development of the D2 Online tool for company self-evaluation
- 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 Union<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/sites/default/files/news\\_attachment/eocic\\_3rd\\_newsletter.pdf](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

### **Contacts:**

Julio Rodrigo ([julio.rodrido@cenfim.org](mailto:julio.rodrido@cenfim.org)) // R+D+i & Sustainability

Massimiliano Rumignani ([max.rumignani@cenfim.org](mailto:max.rumignani@cenfim.org)) // Innovation Area

**CENFIM - Furnishings Cluster and Innovation Hub (Catalonia, Spain)**

PO BOX 181 // 43560 La Sénia (Tarragona) / Spain - Tel. +34 977570122 / Fax +34 977576179



## ANNEX II

### TASKS, REQUIREMENTS and TIMING

#### 1. SUBCONTRACTOR TASKS AND REQUIRED DELIVERIES / CONTRIBUTIONS

The **Expert in Corporate Social Responsibilities** will contribute to different project activities:

- Take part to the **project Experts Panel** (along the whole project length).
- Contribute to the preparation of the **Deliverable 1 - Guide for deploying CSR / Shared Value practices in companies (1<sup>st</sup> 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)**.
- Contribute to the **preparation of the furnCSR Survey**. This survey will be filled in by at least 50 different experts that will provide feedbacks on the Guide content and contributing to its improvement and validation **(by M9-Dec. 21)**.
- Participate to the **furnCSR Survey (by M10-Jan. 22)**.
- Looking at the survey results in collaboration with CENFIM experts and contributing to properly interpret the outcomes. Based on these, contribute to prepare the presentation of the **Survey results** for the project Workshop **(by M11-Feb. 22)**.
- Participate to the **Project Workshop, (3<sup>rd</sup> Milestone)** which is intended to provide key feedback and inputs about the D1 Guide **(by M12-Mar. 22)**.
- Together with CENFIM team s/he will **interpret and report the workshop outcomes** and identify the **changes that should be implemented in the guide** to make it more useable and effective for sector different types of stakeholders **(by M13-Apr. 22)**.
- Contribute to the delivery of the **D2 online tool for company self-evaluation**. 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)**.
- Provide inputs during the implementation of **D3 Pilot Assessment** of the online self-evaluation. At least 18 companies will self-evaluate their level of readiness for adopting and implementing those CSR / Shared Value practices identified in D1 Guide and identify company priorities **(by M21-Dec. 22)**.
- Revision of the **D4 Recommendations for Furniture Sector Stakeholders**. This 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 with the support of all external experts and the specific inputs of the VET expert. 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)**.
- Participation and contribution to the project **Final dissemination conference (by M23-Feb. 23)**.



## **2. EXPERTISE, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS REQUESTED**

### **The prerequisites 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.

### **Knowledge, skills and expertise that will be evaluated for each candidate expert:**

- Evidence of strong and relevant academic background and/or past professional experiences in CSR.
- Proven research skills (studies, evaluations and diagnoses) in CSR.
- Previous publications related to CSR.
- Experience in working within teams in collaborative manner.
- A sound knowledge of the main international standards in CSR.
- Experience in real application (national and international consulting) of the main international standards in CSR.
- Experience in teaching activities (at University) and training in CSR (in-company).
- Promoter of public / private initiatives in CSR.
- Knowledge of EU or national Furniture sectors will be a plus.
- A specific knowledge on CSR in relation to the furniture industry will be a plus.

Please, remember that expert will be provided with documents and information helping her/him to link the research field with specific aspects of the furniture sector.

## **3. TIME SCHEDULE AND REPORTING**

The subcontractor will liaise closely and report to CENFIM as project Lead Partner. 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 subcontractor 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.

