

## **FurnCIRCLE PROJECT**

### **CALL FOR TENDER**

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

**- Circular Economy (CE)**

able to contribute to the implementation of the **FurnCIRCLE** project of the 2022 European Sectorial Social Dialogue call. In this document, you will find:

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

In the **ANNEX I** (pag. 4) there is a complete project summary and, in the **ANNEX II**, (pag. 6) a detailed description of the tasks, requirements and activities timing for each expert.

#### **1) THE FurnCIRCLE PROJECT**

The **FurnCIRCLE project** – Circular Economy Guidelines and Tools for Application in the EU Furniture Sector - will contribute to promote, strengthen, develop social dialogue at regional, national and EU level within the furniture sector, as it will provide key up-to-date information, tools and recommendations for social partners to address the debate and challenges of the furniture industry circular and climate-neutral transition, including the analysis of implications and changes for employment and work and the new skills needs for workers that this transition will entail.

The partners are:



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



<https://ambitcluster.org/en/> **AMBIT** – Living Spaces Cluster



<https://www.efic.eu/> **EFIC** – European Furniture Industries Confederation

See **ANNEX I** for more details.

## 2) PURPOSE OF THE CALL

This is a call for a **consultant or consultancy** to provide expertise as part of the implementation of the FurnCIRCLE project in the field of **Circular Economy (CE)**.

The expert will be required to properly contribute to the activities and objectives of the FurnCIRCLE project. S/he will be **subcontracted by AMBIT** 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 CE and ESGs within the European wood furniture sector and to identify possible solutions and actions to tackle the sector challenges related with the transition toward a more Circular sector. The overall FurnCIRCLE goal is to tackle challenges related to the provision to furniture sector companies with guidelines and tools that support them to implement their circular transition strategy in a practical way and to have Green Skills/Knowledge perfectly identified, in [ESCO v1.1](#) taxonomy, for the circular transition of companies for each of the main occupations of the sector. The circular transition of the sector, in addition to being a future legal requirement, is a great opportunity to improve the competitiveness of EU companies through: i) make them and the supply chains more resilient and less dependent on scarcity and high prices of raw materials (by implementing cascade use of wood strategies and by reusing and recycling products/materials); ii) the optimization of processes (saving raw materials, energy, waste, etc.) and iii) the manufacture of more customer-oriented products (more adapted to the needs of customers with environmental requirements). The circular transition will also entail other positive externalities for the sector, such as the improvement of the attractiveness of the sector for young workers and the attraction of talent, all this helping to address the lack of vocations that the sector suffers and contributing to the well-being of workers and the rest of stakeholders.

The FurnCIRCLE expert will be constantly guided by FurnCIRCLE AMBIT team and supported by other project partners and other specific and national experts that will be hired by the FurnCIRCLE consortium.

These External Thematic Experts (Expert in Circular economy and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), Expert in internal vision of the company, Expert in strategic vision of the company, Expert in furniture sector VET) will form the **project Expert Panel**, which will be led by AMBIT 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 companies transition toward more circular models and processes.

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: 23.000 €.

These amounts **do not include the costs of travel and subsistence** that the expert will incur for attending the project final conference. These costs will be reimbursed separately, by EFIC partner paying a lump sum of 500€.

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

Experts are required to present their application by sending an email to [info@furncircle.eu](mailto:info@furncircle.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 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2024**, and feedbacks will be sent by the **17<sup>th</sup> of January 2024**.

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 CE in the furniture sector
- confirming participation in other related projects and initiatives
- giving details of related publications
- level and reasons of interest for the participation in the project

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 (30%).
- Proven research skills in CE in the furniture sector (30%).
- Previous publications related to CE in the furniture sector (20%).
- Capacity of working within a team in a collaborative and constructive way (10%).
- Knowledge of EU 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 FurnCIRCLE 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 AMBIT will evaluate the different proposals and prepare a report containing an evaluation report and classification of participation. Based on this document the project partners (FLA, AMBIT and EFIC) will take a decision.

Following the applicant selection, AMBIT 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 the consortium for the FurnCIRCLE project. The contracts will be signed asap, immediately after the expert selection is done in order to speed-up the starting of their work.

**Payment** shall be made based on the invoice, once the tasks have been performed and the results of the work have been accepted by the steering group.

## ANNEX I

### **FurnCIRCLE - Circular Economy Guidelines and Tools for Application in the EU Furniture Sector**

#### **The context and the challenges**

The European Union is pursuing the ambitious goal of achieving circularity and climate neutrality by 2050 (European Green Deal). **To transform the EU furniture industry for a more sustainable future, companies need clear guidelines and workers need to possess the necessary skills to effectively carry out the circular transition.**

Since the release of the [European Green Deal](#) in 2019 and the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) in 2020, the EU has developed and is still developing a set of policies and measures to drive investments and efforts towards a just and inclusive transition. Such policies aim at deeply transforming the economy across production and consumption.

There are many legislative challenges that Furniture companies have to face on the short and medium term, but there are also many and varied voluntary instruments that companies can also apply.

The circular transition of companies also entails the deployment of some technological and non-technological innovations to face the following challenges:

- how to improve the environmental performance of products in their multiple perspectives and throughout their life cycle and increasing their durability, dismantlability and reparability- remanufacturability.
- how to manufacture smart products that are respectful of the environment at the same time (functionality of materials surfaces, IoT, etc.)
- how to reduce the environmental impact of the manufacturing processes by using new technologies (e.g. for improving energy efficiency, waste reduction, raw material optimization, etc.).
- how to deploy new business models and/or shift from products to services (virtualisation, dematerialisation, servitisation, etc.).
- how environmental information about products (e.g. hazardous substances content, reusable parts, recyclable materials, etc...) has to be collected and communicated, truthfully and effectively, along the supply chain, until the customer or recycler is reached – Digital Product Passport – DPP).

Companies in the EU furniture sector, mainly SMEs, need guidelines and supporting tools to help them facing the huge future and under development legislative and voluntary challenges in terms of sustainability and, above all, to be able to successfully deploy their circular transition strategy. First, companies need to know their current and future level of legal compliance with regard to circularity, as well as their maturity level to start or continue their circular transition. Next, they need to identify their priority lines of action. Finally, they need guidelines and references that inspire and guide them on how to implement the circular economy in a practical way in the company's processes and throughout the complete value chain.

### Expected concrete results

- Develop an online tool that allows the massive **collection and analysis of sustainability data on the general situation of companies** in terms of sustainability at the **regional/national level**.
- Develop practical and validated **guidelines** to implement actions and activities for deploying Circular Economy practices in furniture companies and integrate them in company's management models. Develop and provide companies with an **online tool for the self-evaluation** of their level of maturity and real readiness to deploy Circular Economy practices and to identify the appropriate and priority improvement options.
- Implement a **pilot assessment** of the online tool for self-evaluation by European companies.
- Identify employers' and employees' **green knowledge and skills needed** (update-upgrade of SAWYER results to the new taxonomy ESCO v1.1) to successfully implement Circular Economy practices.
- Publication of the Action Plan model, self-assessment tool and case-studies in 10 EU languages
- Organization of a final conference

## ANNEX II

### TASKS, REQUIREMENTS and TIMING

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

The **Expert** in Circular Economy in the furniture sector 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 3.1 - Guide for deploying Circular Economy practices in Furniture companies**. This task aims to deliver a Guide to facilitate sector professionals to deploy Circular Economy practices. It will be presented as a set of guidelines, good practices and business cases helping workers, employees and professionals from the sector in this task. **(Initial version M8-Apr 24 and final version M14-Oct. 24)**.
- Contribute to the **preparation of the FurnCIRCLE survey for the guide validation (T3.2)**. It will involve at least 50 different professionals among experts with different and complementary expertise, who will evaluate the appropriateness of the Guide and its good practices. They will be also required to suggest additional practices and to report case studies of companies that successfully deployed Circular Economy actions and activities. **(by M11-Jul. 24)**.
- Participate to the **FurnCIRCLE Survey (by M11-Jul. 24)**.
- Looking at the survey results in collaboration with AMBIT 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 M12-Aug. 24)**.
- Participate to the **Workshop for the Guide validation (T3.3), (2<sup>nd</sup> Milestone)** which is intended to provide key feedback and inputs about the D1 Guide **(by M13-Sept. 24)**.
- Together with AMBIT 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 M14-Oct. 24)**.
- Contribute to the delivery of the **D4.1 Online tool for companies self-evaluation**. Through it, companies will be able to evaluate and identify their maturity level in relation to CE practices and their readiness to adopt and implement any of those ones identified in D3.1 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-Febr. 25)**.
- Assist in the implementation of **Pilot Assessment of the online self-evaluation (MS3)**. At least 18 companies will self-evaluate their level of readiness for adopting and implementing those CE identified in D3.1 Guide and identify company priorities **(by M21-May 25)**.
- Contribute to the preparation of the **D5.2 Recommendations for Furniture Sector Stakeholders**. This document will contain two different types of recommendations, one related to KSCs needs identified in T5.1 and another part targeting Furniture and other sectors stakeholders to promote and facilitate the deployment of CE practices within companies. This will be prepared by AMBIT 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 M18-Febr. 25)**.
- Participation and contribution to the project **Final dissemination conference (MS4) (by M23-Jul. 25)**.

## **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 28 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.
- Proven research skills in CE in the furniture sector, including:
  - a sound knowledge of the principles of Circular Economy.
  - a sound knowledge of the instruments of Circular Economy.
  - a specific knowledge on CE in relation to the furniture industry.
- Previous publications related to CE in the furniture sector.
- Capacity of working within a team in a collaborative and constructive way and capacity of guaranteeing the quality of the written materials produced, in terms of content and format.
- Knowledge of EU Furniture sectors 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 AMBIT as her/his contractor. In spite of this, the general supervision and evaluation of the experts' contributions will be carried out by the FurnCIRCLE Steering Committee (FLA, AMBIT, EFIC and EFBWW).

The subcontractor will be required to participate to the **FurnCIRCLE final conference** foreseen for July 2025 in Brussels.

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