

FURN5.0 PROJECT CALL FOR TENDER

Technical Expert for supporting AMBIT in the Furn5.0 project implementation

This document presents all aspects of this call for tender for a Technical Expert who shall be able to contribute to the implementation of the FURN5.0 project, funded under the 2023 European Sectorial Social Dialogue call SOCPL-2023-SOC-DIALOG (Project 101145616). 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, tasks, dedication and budget); and
- 3) The application rules and selection criteria.

1) The FURN5.0 Project

FURN5.0 project will focus on Furniture sector Industry5.0 transition, providing key analysis, tools and recommendations to promote and strengthen social dialogue at regional, national and EU level to properly address this topic. It will also provide EU furniture companies and workers with knowledge, skills, guidelines and tools to facilitate a successful transition, as this sector greatly need to tackle problems related with workers and talents attractiveness.

In this framework, EU furniture stakeholders need to:

- know the maturity level of EU furniture companies toward Industry5.0 transition.
- identify their priority lines of action for facilitating this transition and make them more competitive and resilient.

FURN5.0 tackles the challenge of providing sector companies with practical guidelines and tools to support them to implement this transition and aims to develop:

- an online survey to collect and analyse data on the general situation of companies across the EU
 - practical, validated guidelines to integrate companies existing management models with actions and activities to deploy Industry5.0 practices
 - an online tool for self-evaluating their level of maturity and real readiness to deploy Industry5.0 practices
- The project will also identify managers' and employees' knowledge and skills needed to successfully implement Industry5.0 practices and create a set of recommendations for furniture and other sectors stakeholders to foster and support the deployment of these practices.

The partners are:



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



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



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

See **ANNEX I** for more details.

2) Presentation of this Call

The purpose of this call for tender is to identify and select a **suitable Technical Expert (consultant or consultancy) to provide specialised technical support across several core FURN5.0 activities**: the development and validation of the FURN5.0 Guide, the design and development of the online self-evaluation tool, and the identification of sector skills needs together with the preparation of stakeholder recommendations.

This call seeks to subcontract one Technical Expert who will support AMBIT and the consortium in implementing the following tasks:

Task	Description
T3.1	Preparation of the Guide for deploying Industry5.0 practices in Furniture companies – Deliverable D3.1
T3.2	Survey for the Guide validation
T3.3	Online workshop for the FURN5.0 Guide validation – Milestone MS2
T3.4	Final version of the FURN5.0 Guide
T4.1	Design of the self-evaluation online tool
T4.2	Development of the online tool for companies' self-evaluation – Deliverable D4.1
T5.1	Digital, Green and soft knowledge and skills needs identification
T5.2	Recommendations for Furniture Sector Stakeholders

The Technical Expert will provide specific technical support for implementing these tasks, including contributing to survey creation and acting as a workshop facilitator. More details on the requirements, activities and timing for each task are provided in ANNEX II.

The primary objective of the Technical Expert's involvement is to support the consortium in producing robust, practical and validated project outputs — the FURN5.0 Guide, the self-evaluation online tool, and the skills-needs analysis and recommendations — that properly respond to the needs of EU furniture companies and workers in their Industry5.0 transition.

The content produced will be subject to consistent validation by the FURN5.0 consortium. The Expert will benefit from ongoing guidance and support from the FURN5.0 AMBIT team and the other project partners, who will ensure a collaborative working environment throughout the assignment.

All consortium partners and associate organisations will provide their support to ensure the proper linkage of the Expert's work with the EU furniture sector perspective and the priorities of the Work Programme of the European Social Dialogue Committee on Furniture.

More details about the Expert's tasks are provided in ANNEX II – Tasks, Requirements and Timing.

Budget

- The maximum budget foreseen for this Technical Expert assignment, covering all tasks listed above (T3.1, T3.2, T3.3, T3.4, T4.1, T4.2, T5.1 and T5.2), is **20.000€** (VAT excluded, if applicable).

Timing

- The Expert will start working on the project in **May 2024**, and the contribution is expected to be finalised by **April 2026**.

It is imperative that the tasks are completed within this specified period, as outlined in Annex II. Should the implementation stage require additional time, this can be arranged with the AMBIT team, following consultation and agreement.

3) Application Rules and Selection Criteria

Experts are required to present their application by sending an email to julio.rodrido@ambitcluster.org and admin@ambitcluster.org containing:

- The academic and professional CV;
- A presentation and motivation letter;
- An economic offer based on the tasks foreseen and the maximum amount indicated above.

Please refer to ANNEX II to properly understand the requirements for each task.

Applications must be sent by **10th of May 2024**. Feedback on the selection outcome will be communicated shortly thereafter.

Through these documents, the Expert shall present and prove their expertise, past experience and skills:

- through their academic and professional CV;
- mentioning experience related to Guide development, survey design, workshop facilitation, online tool design/development, and skills-needs analysis, possibly within the furniture sector;
- confirming participation in other related projects and initiatives;
- giving details of related publications, if any;
- outlining their level of and reasons for interest in participating in the project.

Evaluation criteria

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

- Evidence of strong and relevant academic background and past professional experience (25%).
- Proven experience in developing practical guides, tools or self-evaluation instruments for industry (especially manufacturing or furniture sector) (25%).
- Proven experience in survey design, workshop facilitation and skills-needs/training-needs analysis (20%).
- Previous publications or projects related to Industry5.0, digitalisation, sustainability or skills development in industry (10%).
- Capacity to work within a team in a collaborative and constructive way (10%).
- Specific and sound knowledge of the EU furniture sector will be a plus (10%).

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

The **contract will be awarded to the expert (consultant or consultancy)** who, based on the above selection criteria, obtains the highest number of points. If the call collects only one candidate and this candidate is considered appropriate for implementing the foreseen tasks, there is no need to seek additional candidates. Should the candidate not be considered appropriate, a new call with wider dissemination will be launched by the Partners, with special support requested from the EC officers in charge of the FURN5.0 project.

The **selection process** will be based on the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. Any possible conflict of interest will be avoided. The members of the AMBIT selection committee will evaluate the proposals received and prepare an evaluation report with a ranking of candidates. The project partners will take the final decision based on this document.

Following selection, AMBIT will sign a **standard contract** with the successful candidate, taking into account the financial regulations of the European Commission. The Expert will have to respect all obligations laid down in the Grant Agreement between the European Commission and the consortium for the FURN5.0 project. The contract will be signed as soon as possible after selection, to speed up the start of the work. Payment shall be made based on invoices, once the tasks have been performed and the results of the work have been accepted by the steering group.

ANNEX I

Furn5.0 - Industry5.0 guidelines and tools with a worker-centred approach for the EU furniture sector digitalization

General context and specific background

European industry (including the furniture one, as a relevant part of it) is a key driver in the economic and societal transitions that we are currently undergoing and in order to remain the engine of prosperity, industry must lead the **digital and green transitions**.

The EU is currently pushing to enlarge and upgrade the current vision of the Twin transition (green and digital) toward the concept of **Industry5.0**. Confirmation of this can be seen in different EC website and initiatives, among others we would like to mention: the Industry5.0 EC central webpage: <https://shorturl.at/cuxDM>; the launch of the "Industry 5.0 Award 2023" <https://shorturl.at/cdBQ5>; the launch of the initiative "Industry 5.0 Community of Practice (CoP 5.0)" <https://shorturl.at/dfDNO>; the "Industry 5.0 roundtable" publication <https://shorturl.at/muxMU>; and finally the publication "Industry 5.0, a transformative vision for Europe" <https://shorturl.at/aerDI>. All these initiatives and publications, reinforce the concept that Industry5.0 approach can provide a vision of industry that aims **beyond efficiency and productivity** as the sole goals, and **reinforces the role and the contribution of industry to society**.

It places the **wellbeing of the worker** at the centre of the production process and **uses new technologies** to provide prosperity beyond jobs and growth while **respecting the production limits of the planet**. Industries can play an active role in **providing solutions to challenges for society** including the preservation of resources, climate change and social stability.

The EU Industry of the Future (Industry5.0) in this new paradigm, is required to pay attention on some specific **Key Enabling Technologies** which in addition to **Artificial Intelligence** (that is getting a growing attention from all industries and that within our project will play a relevant game changer role) includes **Human machine interaction, Smart materials, Digital Twins and data transmission, storage, technologies and Energy Efficiency**. The **Industry5.0 transition**, through the proper adoption of these technologies and many other actions/activities, should bring **benefits for companies, for workers and for society**. It should **empower workers**, as well as address the evolving skills and training needs of employees. Increasing **industry competitiveness** can help to attract the best talents. It should be good for our planet as it should **favour circular production models and support technologies** that make the use of natural resources more efficient. It should revise existing value chains and energy consumption practices and thus, it can also **make industries more resilient against external shocks**, such as Covid-19 crisis.

The EU furniture sector NACE 31 (**209.277 companies, >1.166.385 workers, >140B turnover** and is growing) is a **labour-intensive** sector mainly composed (99%) by SMEs & micro firms. It is affected by specific challenges such as an **ageing workforce, poor attraction of youngsters, a growing cost of timber and wood-based materials** and their supply shortages, **innovation costs**, international protectionist measures and at the same time **weak IPRs protection, growing competition** from low labour costs countries.

For the last decade, the EU furniture sector has been affected by its digital and green transitions (Twin transition), which have been requiring big efforts by all sectoral stakeholders (especially companies and workers/employees) to face the challenges and to exploit the opportunities posed by the transitions progress.

Now, the EU furniture industry should go a step further and integrate the concepts of Twin transition with the ones newly identified and highlighted by the **Industry5.0 approach**, taking into consideration in a systemic approach working for the **wellbeing of workers, the resilience and the environmental and social sustainability of this industry**. This approach should provide a new vision of industry that aims **beyond efficiency and productivity** as the sole goals, and **reinforces the role and the contribution of industry to society**. It complements the existing "Industry 4.0" approach by specifically putting research

and innovation at the service of the **transition to a sustainable, human-centric and resilient European industry**.

In this framework, companies in the EU furniture sector, which are mainly SMEs, **need guidelines and supporting tools** helping them **facing the huge future challenges to successfully deploy their an appropriate Industry5.0 strategy and deploy the related practices**.

General objectives of the project.

The European Union is supporting the adoption of Industry5.0 principles, which will facilitate that EU industry development and transition going **beyond efficiency and productivity** as unique economic objectives, and **strengthen the role and the contribution of EU industry for a more fair and sustainable society**. To really support this transformation, companies need clear guidelines and workers need to possess the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively carry it out.

Overall, project outcomes will facilitate the **design of sectoral strategies** putting at the centre a worker approach for the further development and transition of sectoral companies **toward stronger digitalization and circularity**, making them **more resilient** to the current challenges and the ones to come while ensuring the **wellbeing of workers** in all processes along the whole value chain. This will happen while outcomes will benefit the **reduction of the industry environmental footprint**, the increase of **industry resilience** and a better **conservation of natural resources**.

In short, **this project tackles the challenge of providing companies in the furniture sector with guidelines and tools that support them to define their Industry5.0 strategy** and in a practical manner, **to identify and deploy those practices that can successfully lead them to the implementation of this strategy**.

Moreover, based on ESCO v1.1 new taxonomy, it will help to **properly identify the Skills and Knowledge needs** required for this transformation for each of the main and relevant occupations within the sector.

In this framework, the FURN5.0 will provide:

- An **analysis of the situation and level of development of Industry 5.0** within the manufacturing industry across the EU. **WP2**
- **Key information** to the different sector stakeholders (especially to social partners) about the level of **understanding, take-up and progress level of Industry5.0** in furniture companies across the different EU countries. **WP2**
- **Guidelines** to design and implement actions and activities to deploy Industry 5.0 practices in furniture companies and integrate them in company's management models and production processes. **WP3**
- **An online tool** enabling companies to understand in details their level of maturity of Industry5.0 practices and the identification of priority actions, their needs and how they can facilitate their progress in its deployment. **WP4**
- A **validation process** of the guidelines (through a survey and a workshop) and of the online tool among sector companies, which will ensure that these project deliverables will properly respond to sector actors' needs and greatly benefit the target groups and stakeholders in general. **WP4**
- Identification of the **knowledge and skills** needed by employers, managers and employees to successfully design and deploy Industry5.0 actions and practices. **WP5**
- **Recommendations** for furniture sector stakeholders to promote and facilitate the deployment of Industry5.0 actions and practices within companies and the progress of the industry toward a more competitive, resilient, sustainable and worker-centred system. **WP5**
- A **comprehensive dissemination strategy** enabling project partners to reach a higher number of relevant stakeholders across the EU and spur them to exploit the project outcomes and stimulate stronger and better prepared social dialogues at regional, national and European level. **WP6**
- A **follow-up plan** to properly exploit the project outputs and outcomes after the project end and how to involve in these processes a greater number of social partners and stakeholders willing to facilitate the sector transition from across the EU. **WP6**

ANNEX II

TASKS, REQUIREMENTS and TIMING

1. **Subcontractor tasks and required deliveries / contributions**

The Technical Expert will contribute to the following project activities, organised by task:

WP3 – FURN5.0 Guide development and validation

- **T3.1 – Preparation of the Guide for deploying Industry5.0 practices in Furniture companies (D3.1).** Contribute to the drafting of the FURN5.0 Guide, providing content on Industry5.0 practices, actions and activities that furniture companies can integrate into their existing management models and production processes.
- **T3.2 – Survey for the Guide validation.** Contribute to the preparation of the FURN5.0 survey aimed at validating the Guide. This involves collaborating with other experts and AMBIT to design the survey instrument, and later reviewing the survey results in collaboration with AMBIT experts to properly interpret the outcomes, contributing to the preparation of a presentation of the survey results for the project workshop.
- **T3.3 – Online workshop for the FURN5.0 Guide validation (Milestone MS2).** Act as workshop facilitator for the online validation workshop, which is intended to gather key feedback and input on the D3.1 Guide. Together with the AMBIT team, interpret and report the workshop outcomes and identify the changes to be implemented in the Guide to make it more usable and effective for different types of sector stakeholders.
- **T3.4 – Final version of the FURN5.0 Guide.** Incorporate the survey and workshop findings into the Guide and contribute to the preparation of its final version.

WP4 – Self-evaluation online tool

- **T4.1 – Design of the self-evaluation online tool.** Contribute to defining the structure, logic, indicators and user experience of the online tool that will enable companies to self-evaluate their level of maturity and readiness to deploy Industry5.0 practices.
- **T4.2 – Development of the online tool for companies' self-evaluation (D4.1).** Provide technical support during the development phase of the tool, ensuring it properly reflects the Guide's content and produces actionable outputs (priority actions, needs identification) for companies.

WP5 – Skills needs and stakeholder recommendations

- **T5.1 – Digital, Green and soft knowledge and skills needs identification.** Contribute to identifying the digital, green and soft knowledge and skills needed by employers, managers and employees to successfully design and deploy Industry5.0 actions and practices, building on the ESCO v1.1 taxonomy.
- **T5.2 – Recommendations for Furniture Sector Stakeholders.** Contribute to preparing recommendations for furniture sector stakeholders to promote and facilitate the deployment of Industry5.0 actions and practices, and support industry progress toward a more competitive, resilient, sustainable and worker-centred system.

Across all tasks, the Technical Expert will liaise closely with the AMBIT team and other project partners, contributing to team meetings, brainstorming sessions and the collaborative review of deliverables.

2. Expertise, experience and skills requested

Expertise, Experience and Skills Requested

The prerequisites are:

- Proven working proficiency in the English language.
- Communication skills that enable drafting documents, making presentations and actively participating in meetings and brainstorming sessions.
- Past experience in joint research activities and report drafting.
- Ability to work respecting deadlines and budget limits.
- Disclosure of any interests that may prejudice independence.
- Being a national of one of the EU 28 Member States, or of a 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 experience.
- Proven experience in developing practical guidelines/guides for industry transformation processes, including:
 - a sound knowledge of Industry5.0 / Industry4.0 principles and Key Enabling Technologies;
 - experience in survey design and data collection/analysis methodologies;
 - experience in facilitating stakeholder workshops and validation processes;
 - experience in the design or development of digital/online self-assessment tools;
 - specific knowledge of skills-needs analysis and occupational taxonomies (e.g. ESCO).
- Previous publications or projects related to Industry5.0, digital/green transitions or skills development in industry.
- Capacity to work within a team in a collaborative and constructive way, and to guarantee the quality of the written materials produced, in terms of content and format.
- Knowledge of the EU furniture sector will be a plus.

Please note that the Expert will be provided with documents and information to help link the technical work with specific aspects of the furniture sector.

3. Time Schedule and Reporting

The subcontracted Expert will liaise closely with and report to AMBIT as the contractor. Notwithstanding this, general supervision and evaluation of the Expert's contributions will be carried out by the FURN5.0 Steering Committee.

The Expert will be required to participate in the FURN5.0 online final conference foreseen for March 2026.

The deadline to deliver each contribution or report will follow the task timing detailed above and will be agreed with the AMBIT team for each specific task.