

FURN5.0 PROJECT

CALL FOR TENDER

Thematic Experts for the FURN5.0 Guide and Skills-Needs Contributions

This document presents all aspects of this call for tender for a set of thematic experts 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:



"LIVING SPACES CLUSTER"

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



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



European Furniture Industries Confederation

<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 set of thematic experts (consultants or consultancies) to provide specialised technical inputs, from their respective fields of expertise, into the preparation and validation of the FURN5.0 Guide, and — for the one of them in sector VET — into the identification of sector skills needs and the preparation of stakeholder recommendations.

This call seeks to subcontract five thematic experts, each covering a distinct field of expertise, who will support AMBIT and the consortium in implementing the tasks listed in the table below:

Type of Expert	Tasks and Contributions	Budget Foreseen (VAT excluded, if applicable)
Expert in Human Resources	S/he will provide specific expertise and contribution in T3.1, T3.2, T3.3 – AMBIT.	4.500€
Expert in Circular Economy	S/he will provide specific expertise and contribution in T3.1, T3.2, T3.3 – AMBIT.	4.500€
Expert in CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility	S/he will provide specific expertise and contribution in T3.1, T3.2, T3.3 – AMBIT.	4.200€
Expert in sectoral VET – Vocational Education and Training	S/he will provide specific expertise and contribution in T3.1, T3.2, T3.3, T5.1, T5.2 – AMBIT.	5.000€
Expert in Occupational Health and Safety	S/he will provide specific expertise and contribution in T3.1, T3.2, T3.3 – AMBIT.	4.000€

Each expert will provide specific technical support within their field of expertise for implementing the tasks indicated above. More details on the requirements, activities and timing for each task are provided in ANNEX II.

The primary objective of these experts' involvement is to enrich the FURN5.0 Guide and, where applicable, the skills-needs analysis and stakeholder recommendations, with specialised, cross-cutting perspectives (Human Resources, Circular Economy, Corporate Social Responsibility, Vocational Education and Training, and Occupational Health and Safety) 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. Each 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 experts' 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 each expert's tasks are provided in ANNEX II – Tasks, Requirements and Timing.

Budget

- The maximum budget foreseen for each expert profile is indicated in the table above (VAT excluded, if applicable). Candidates may apply for one or more profiles, provided they demonstrate the relevant expertise for each profile applied to.

Timing

- Experts are expected to start working on the project in **January 2025**, and their contribution is expected to be finalised by **April 2025**.

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 submit their application by email to julio.rodrido@ambitcluster.org and admin@ambitcluster.org. The application could include:

- The academic and professional CV;
- A presentation and motivation letter, clearly indicating the expert profile(s) applied to;
- An economic offer based on the tasks foreseen and the maximum amount indicated for the corresponding profile(s).

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

Applications must be sent by **10 December 2025**. Feedback on the selection outcomes will be communicated a few days thereafter.

Through these documents, each expert could present and prove their expertise, past experience and skills:

- through their academic and professional CV;
- mentioning experience related to their specific field of expertise (Human Resources, Circular Economy, CSR, VET or Occupational Health and Safety), possibly within the furniture or manufacturing 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 in the specific field of expertise applied to (30%).
- Proven experience providing technical input to guides, studies or reports for industry (especially manufacturing or furniture sector) (20%).
- Proven experience in the specific area of expertise (Human Resources, Circular Economy, CSR, VET, or Occupational Health and Safety, as applicable) (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, for each profile, 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 for a given profile and this candidate is considered appropriate for implementing the foreseen tasks, there is no need to seek additional candidates for that profile. Should a 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 for each profile. The project partners will take the final decision based on this document.

Following selection, AMBIT will contract the service directly or through signing a standard contract with each successful candidate, taking into account the financial regulations of the European Commission. Experts will have to respect all obligations laid down in the Grant Agreement between the European Commission and the consortium for the FURN5.0 project. Contracts 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 sector, as a relevant part of it) is a key driver of the economic and societal transitions currently underway. To remain the engine of prosperity, industry must lead the digital and green transitions.

The EU is currently pushing to enlarge and upgrade the Twin Transition (green and digital) toward the concept of Industry5.0. This approach provides a vision of industry that goes beyond efficiency and productivity as sole goals and reinforces the role and 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. Industry can play an active role in providing solutions to societal challenges, including the preservation of resources, climate change and social stability.

The EU Industry of the Future (Industry5.0), in this new paradigm, must pay attention to specific Key Enabling Technologies which, in addition to Artificial Intelligence, include Human-Machine Interaction, Smart Materials, Digital Twins and data transmission/storage technologies, and Energy Efficiency. Proper adoption of these technologies, along with other actions, should bring benefits for companies, workers and society — empowering workers, addressing evolving skills and training needs, increasing industry competitiveness and talent attraction, favouring circular production models, and making industries more resilient against external shocks.

The EU furniture sector (NACE 31) comprises over 209,277 companies and more than 1,166,385 workers, with a turnover exceeding €140 billion, and continues to grow. It is a labour-intensive sector composed mainly (99%) of SMEs and micro firms. It faces specific challenges such as an ageing workforce, poor attraction of young talent, growing costs and supply shortages of timber and wood-based materials, innovation costs, international protectionist measures, weak IPR protection, and growing competition from low-labour-cost countries.

Now, the EU furniture industry needs to go a step further and integrate the concepts of the Twin Transition with those newly identified by the Industry5.0 approach, working systemically for the wellbeing of workers and the resilience and environmental/social sustainability of the industry. In this framework, companies in the EU furniture sector — mainly SMEs — need guidelines and supporting tools to help them face future challenges and successfully deploy an appropriate Industry5.0 strategy and related practices.

General objectives of the project

The European Union supports the adoption of Industry5.0 principles, facilitating industry development and transition that go beyond efficiency and productivity as unique economic objectives, and strengthening the role and contribution of EU industry to a fairer and more sustainable society. To support this transformation, companies need clear guidelines and workers need the necessary skills and knowledge to carry it out effectively.

Overall, project outcomes will facilitate the design of sectoral strategies putting a worker-centred approach at the centre of the further development and transition of sectoral companies toward stronger digitalization and circularity, making them more resilient while ensuring the wellbeing of workers along the whole value chain. This will also benefit the reduction of the industry's environmental footprint, increase industry resilience, and improve 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 in defining their Industry5.0 strategy and, in a practical manner, identifying

and deploying the practices that can successfully lead them to implement this strategy. Moreover, based on the ESCO v1.1 taxonomy, it will help 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, FURN5.0 will provide:

- An analysis of the situation and level of development of Industry5.0 within the manufacturing industry across the EU. **WP2**
- Key information for sector stakeholders (especially social partners) about the level of understanding, take-up and progress of Industry5.0 in furniture companies across EU countries. **WP2**
- Guidelines to design and implement actions and activities to deploy Industry5.0 practices in furniture companies and integrate them into company management models and production processes. **WP3**
- An online tool enabling companies to understand in detail their level of maturity in Industry5.0 practices, identify priority actions and needs, and facilitate progress in deployment. **WP4**
- A validation process of the guidelines (through a survey and a workshop) and of the online tool among sector companies, ensuring that these deliverables properly respond to sector actors' needs. **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, and industry progress 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. **WP6**
- A follow-up plan to properly exploit the project outputs and outcomes after the project ends. **WP6**

ANNEX II

TASKS, REQUIREMENTS and TIMING

1. **Subcontractors TASKS AND REQUIRED DELIVERIES / CONTRIBUTIONS**

All five expert profiles will contribute, from their respective field of expertise, to the following common tasks:

- **T3.1 – Preparation of the Guide for deploying Industry5.0 practices in Furniture companies (D3.1).** Provide specific technical input, from the expert's field of expertise, to the content of the FURN5.0 Guide, ensuring that relevant practices, actions and recommendations in that area are properly integrated.
- **T3.2 – Survey for the Guide validation.** Contribute, from the expert's field of expertise, to the preparation and/or review of the FURN5.0 survey aimed at validating the Guide, and to the interpretation of the relevant survey results.
- **T3.3 – Online workshop for the FURN5.0 Guide validation (Milestone MS2).** Contribute, from the expert's field of expertise, to the online validation workshop, providing input on the feedback gathered and on the changes to be implemented in the Guide within their specific area.

Additional Tasks for Specific Profiles

In addition to the common tasks above, the Expert in sectoral VET will also contribute to:

- **T5.1 – Digital, Green and soft knowledge and skills needs identification.** Contribute, from the expert's field of expertise, 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, from the expert's field of expertise, to preparing recommendations for furniture sector stakeholders to promote and facilitate the deployment of Industry5.0 actions and practices.

Expert Profiles, Tasks and Budget

Type of Expert	Tasks	Budget Foreseen
Expert in Human Resources	T3.1, T3.2, T3.3	4.500€
Expert in Circular Economy	T3.1, T3.2, T3.3	4.500€
Expert in CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility	T3.1, T3.2, T3.3	4.200€
Expert in sectoral VET – Vocational Education and Training	T3.1, T3.2, T3.3, T5.1, T5.2	5.000€
Expert in Occupational Health and Safety	T3.1, T3.2, T3.3	4.000€

2. **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.

Specific profile requirements:

- **Expert in Human Resources:** sound expertise in Human Resources management, including workforce attraction/retention, organisational development and worker-centred practices in industry.
- **Expert in Circular Economy:** sound expertise in Circular economy principles and practices applied to manufacturing/industrial sectors, including circular production models and resource efficiency.
- **Expert in CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility:** sound expertise in Corporate Social Responsibility, sustainability strategy and social/environmental accountability frameworks for industrial companies.
- **Expert in sectoral VET – Vocational Education and Training:** sound expertise in Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems in the manufacturing/furniture sector, including training needs analysis and occupational skills frameworks.
- **Expert in Occupational Health and Safety:** sound expertise in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in industrial/manufacturing environments, including risk prevention and workplace wellbeing frameworks.

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

- Evidence of strong and relevant academic background and/or past professional experience in the specific field of expertise.
- Proven experience providing technical input to guidelines, studies or reports for industry transformation processes.
- Previous publications or projects related to their field of expertise, Industry5.0, digital/green transitions or skills development in industry will be a plus.
- 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 each Expert will be provided with documents and information to help link the technical work with specific aspects of the furniture sector.

Time Schedule and Reporting

Each 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 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.