

FurnSERVICE PROJECT

CALL FOR TENDER

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

- Circular Business Models (CBM)

able to contribute to the implementation of the **FurnSERVICE** project of the 2024 European Sectorial Social Dialogue call (SOCPL-2024-SOC-DIALOG (Ref. 101197666)). 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 the expert.

1) **THE FurnSERVICE PROJECT**

The FurnSERVICE project focuses on supporting European furniture manufacturers in improving their environmental performance, not only from the perspective of the eco-design of their products, but also by promoting the adoption of new business models based on product servitisation. This approach allows the sector to align itself more deeply and strategically with the principles of the circular economy.

The project will also contribute to promoting and strengthening social dialogue at regional, national and European level, providing key analyses and recommendations to adequately address the challenges of the transition to circularity in the sector. In addition, FurnSERVICE will equip companies and workers with the knowledge, skills, guidelines and tools necessary to facilitate an effective transition, while also addressing the growing problem of low talent attraction in the sector.

The partners are:



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



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

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 FurnSERVICE project in the field of **Circular Business Models (CBM)**.

The expert will be required to properly contribute to the activities and objectives of the FurnSERVICE 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 CBMs 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 Business Models.

The overall FurnSERVICE goal is to tackle challenges related to the provision to furniture sector companies with guidelines and tools that support them to adopt circular business models in a practical way and to have Green Skills/Knowledge identified for the circular transition of companies for the main occupations of the sector. The transition of the sector toward CBMs, 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 related 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 FurnSERVICE expert will be constantly guided by FurnSERVICE AMBIT team and supported by other project partners and other specific external thematic experts that will be hired by the FurnSERVICE consortium.

These External Thematic Experts (Leading expert in CBMs and experts in other fields, for example: one expert in internal vision of furniture companies, one expert in re-design for circular products, one expert in sectoral OHS, one expert in sectoral 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.

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

We expect that her/his **contributions** will require a commitment of 50 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: 28.000 €.

3) APPLICATION RULES AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Experts are required to present their application by sending an email to max.rumignani@ambitcluster.org and julio.rodrigo@ambitcluster.org 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 20th of September 2025**, and feedback will be sent by the **25th of September 2025**.

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 Circular Business Models 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 CBM in the furniture sector (30%).
- Previous publications related to CBM in the furniture sector (20%).
- Capacity of working within a team in a collaborative and constructive way (10%).
- Specific and sound 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 consider 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 FurnSERVICE 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 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 FurnSERVICE 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 invoices, once the tasks have been performed and the results of the work have been accepted by the steering group.

ANNEX I

FurnSERVICE - Guidelines and tools to implement Circular Business Models through product servitization in the EU furniture sector

The context and the challenges

The EU furniture sector NACE 31 (more than **200.000 companies**, **>1.165.000 workers**, **>140B turnover** and is growing) is a **labour-intensive** sector mainly composed of SMEs & micro firms (99%). 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. The Sector **Circular Economy (CE) transition** has already started. It implies a set of additional challenges and significant changes for the EU Furniture sector, pushed by both new legislation and market/customers pressure.

The European Union is pursuing the ambitious goal of **achieving circularity and climate neutrality by 2050**. Since the publication of the [European Green Deal](#) in 2019 and the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) in 2020, the EU has developed continues to develop a series of policies and measures to drive investments and efforts towards a sustainable, just and inclusive transition.

In the area of sustainability in the furniture sector, the **recent publication in the Official Journal of the [Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation \(ESPR\)](#)** is more than noteworthy, which will set requirements for sustainable products. This new regulation will introduce new requirements such as product durability, reusability, upgradeability and reparability, rules on the presence of substances that inhibit circularity; energy and resource efficiency; recycled content, remanufacturing and recycling; carbon and environmental footprints; and information requirements, including a digital product passport.

All indications are that **furniture will be one of the first product families of products to be regulated under the ESPR framework**, which will be confirmed in the Work Programme to be published by the European Commission before the spring of 2025. According to the [Joint Research Center draft report on new product priorities under the ESPR](#), Furniture is one of the priorities because of the large scope for environmental improvement that lies in extending its useful life and reducing the waste is currently generating.

The application of ecodesign in the EU furniture sector, promoted by ESPR and other legislative and voluntary instruments, will mean a significant environmental improvement in the sector's products. To help make this a reality, the same partnership is running the [FurnCIRCLE](#) project (2023-2025), developing resources to help the EU furniture sector implement the Circular Economy through ecodesign, i.e. acting on the design of furniture products and improving their environmental performance.

However, in order to transform the EU furniture industry for a more sustainable future, companies need to look beyond products and not only assess how they can improve their environmental performance through ecodesign, but also work on their current and future business models. This is because some ecodesign strategies are against the basic principles of the traditional business model of many companies, which is based on the manufacture and sale of furniture and whose objective is to sale as many product units as possible. An example of this is design strategies to increase the durability of the products, as a longer product life of the product would mean a decrease in sales for the manufacturer and would put its business model at risk.

The introduction of new business models for a more circular economy will bring about a fundamental change in the EU furniture industry, and some jobs will have to be redefined or created, while others will have to be replaced. At the same time, the sector's circular transition must ensure a high level of occupational health and safety (OHS) protection for workers. The [European Skills Agenda](#) emphasises that the green transition requires investment in people's skills and the definition of a taxonomy of skills for the green transition. This taxonomy has recently been developed and implemented in the [ESCO v1.2 database](#) (European Skills, Competences,

Qualifications and Occupations) database. The transition to a green EU furniture industry is a challenge and an opportunity for the European labour market that needs to be addressed at the skills level.

Expected concrete results

FurnSERVICE aims to provide practical tools and guidelines to enable companies in the furniture sector to move towards new, more circular business models through product servitisation. In particular, it will develop:

- An **online self-assessment tool** for companies to analyse their readiness to adopt circular business models based on servitisation.
- **Practical and validated guidelines** for employers, workers and industry stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of circular business models.
- The **identification of the green knowledge and skills** that employers and workers need to successfully implement this transition.
- **Three international webinars** on circular business models and three international study visits.
- An **online self-assessment tool** for companies to analyse their readiness to adopt circular business models based on servitisation.
- **The organisation of a pilot test of the self-assessment tool** with at least 18 European companies to identify their key priorities in implementing new business models.
- Organization of a **final conference**

ANNEX II

TASKS, REQUIREMENTS and TIMING

1. SUBCONTRACTOR TASKS AND REQUIRED DELIVERIES / CONTRIBUTIONS

The **Expert** in Circular Business Models 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 New Circular Business Models in Furniture companies**. This task aims to deliver a Guide to facilitate sector professionals to adopt and implement successfully new Circular Business Models. It will be presented as a set of guidelines, good practices and business cases helping workers, employees, managers, employers and professionals in general from the furniture sector in this task. **(Initial version M11-Feb. 26 and final version M16-July 26)**.
- Contribute to the **preparation of the FurnSERVICE survey for the guide validation (T3.2)**. It will involve at least 50 different professionals among experts with different and complementary expertise, that will be selected and invited by all partners. AMBIT will involve the respondents, which will evaluate the appropriateness of the Guide and its good practices. They will be also required to suggest additional practices and business cases of furniture companies that successfully deployed CBMs and related strategies and activities. **(by M13-Apr. 26)**.
- Participate to the **FurnSERVICE Survey (by M13-Apr. 26)**.
- 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 M13-Apr. 26)**.
- Participate to the **Online workshop for survey results validation (T3.3), (2nd Milestone)** which is intended to provide key feedback and inputs about the D1 Guide **(by M14-May 26)**.
- 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 M16-July 26)**.
- Contribute to the delivery of the **D4.1 Online tool for companies self-evaluation**. Through it, companies SMEs to identify their level of maturity, readiness and capacity to deploy circular business models and to identify the strategy and priority actions they should implement. 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 M19-Oct. 26)**.
- 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 deploying the new CBMs identified in D3.1 Guide and identify company priorities **(by M21-Dec. 26)**.
- Contribute to the preparation of the **D5.1 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 CBMs within companies. It will be prepared by AMBIT with the support of all external experts and the specific inputs of VET expert. It will also serve to increase project outcomes use at all levels, with special attention for Social Partners of the ESSD Committee on Furniture. **(by M18-Sept. 26)**.
- Participation and contribution to the project **Final online Conference (MS4) (by M23-Feb. 26)**.

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 CBM 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 CBM in the furniture industry.
- Previous publications related to CBM and 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 expert contributions will be carried out by the FurnSERVICE Steering Committee.

The subcontractor will be required to participate to the **FurnSERVICE online final conference** foreseen for February 2027.

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



FurnSERVICE

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