

Call for tenders for subcontracting an expert for the ETUC project on

“The future of EU Funds for Cohesion and a Just Transition: with or without workers?”

This is a call for a subcontractor to provide expertise as part of the implementation of the ETUC project on “The future of EU Funds for Cohesion and a Just Transition: with or without workers?”.

The ETUC will publish the call on its website, on 23 May 2022, and keep it online for 21 calendar days. Deadline for submission of bids is **13 June 2022**.

1. Summary of the project : context

The EU Funds continue playing a fundamental role in fostering cohesion across regions and member states. This role is even more crucial within the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, reshaped in the attempt to mitigate consequences of COVID-19 pandemic and to support recovery.

Additional pool of resources in NextGenerationEU, such as Recovery and Resilience Facility, will have an impact on funding priorities and will provide opportunities for the Cohesion Policy action that should support the implementation of an investment programme for a recovery in the EU economy and to create quality jobs within the EU, in particular the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). In addition to this, newly established Just Transition Fund (JTF) will be available to carbon intensive regions to support their transition towards climate neutrality in a way that is socially fair.

However, cohesion policy is also showing critical issues under several aspects: the effectiveness of the Funds is often jeopardized by management problems; the use of the funds is not fully exploited and their potential weakened by poor interventions where they are most needed. The 8th Cohesion Report shows that many regions are still trapped in under-development.

Among the remarkable issues, the governance of the Funds at all levels remains a major one. For the ETUC and its members, it is clear that workers are part of the solution to the lack of cohesion that jeopardize the economic, territorial and social situation across the EU. Trade unions are structured, have on-the-ground perspective, and democratically represent the people most affected by the lack of cohesion and the consequences of the upcoming change. They can help identify and anticipate challenges that people face on the ground as well as propose adequate measures regarding the workers and their well-being. They will be essential actors when it comes to the programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the structural funds. For these reasons, the ETUC fights for the effective and capillary implementation of the partnership principle as a key to guaranteeing the

successful operation of structural funds measures. High-quality partnerships should be pursued, involving the social partners in every phase of funds intervention.

The increase of EU financial efforts towards recovery and innovation, along with the high level of technical contents implied, may represent a further obstacle for Trade Unions to access and make the best use of the funding, as well as to have a say in the coordination and assessment of the use of the overall EU resources.

The ETUC, in cooperation with its members, is therefore committed to deliver a project that would provide well formulated and clear guidance for national and sectorial trade union organisations and enhance their capacity to access the funds as well as to engage in dialogue with national managing authorities – ultimately contributing towards improving the implementation and evaluation of these funds.

2. Objectives and priorities of the project

In this context, the key **objectives and priorities** of the project are the following:

- 1) To define ETUC key priorities and demands regarding the new ESIF Regulations for the programming period 2021-2027 (including the Just Transition Fund) and the implementation/revision of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership on the basis of concrete experience
- 2) To assess the involvement of trade unions in all the steps of the management of the ESIF (including in the development of Just Transition Territorial Plans), identify the challenges and formulate recommendations for all actors involved – via a questionnaire and a series of workshops - see below
- 3) To enable ETUC affiliates to understand the different aspects of EU funding and participate in the monitoring committees of the respective Funds – via the Trade Union Guide
- 4) To provide ETUC affiliates with recommendations and advice to help them design and implement the Just Transition Territorial Plans (JTTPs) as part of the procedure to access the Just Transition Fund.

3. Activities and methodology of the project

The project will consist of a series of activities that will be carried out with the support of the team of experts in total (2-3 experts). The ETUC can already count on the collaboration of 1 expert from the Just Transition Centre (JTC), who will focus on the work related to the Just Transition Fund and Territorial Plans. The external experts who will be selected as subcontractors based on selection criteria specified in this call (more specifically in point 5 and 8 of this call) will collaborate closely with an expert from Just Transition Centre with the objective to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to all project deliverables and activities.

The team of experts will work on the following project activities:

1. **A questionnaire** will be sent to the ETUC affiliates in order to take stock of what has been done so far, in their respective countries/sectors, to involve social partners into the debate on the use of ESIFs and of the Just Transition Fund. The aim of this first assessment phase is to get the sense of the maturity of the debate within the trade union movement and to identify priorities as well as possible best practices and experiences that may be shared. In particular it will help:

- to identify challenges and existing situation among TUs members in relation to their involvement in the overall management of ESIFs and JTF at national and local levels;
- to define the topics of the Workshops
- provide a basis for identifying priorities and good practices that can be highlighted in the project workshops and/or project deliverables
- on JTF, the questionnaire should provide a basic overview of how TUs have been involved in EU countries so far (building on the work the ETUC has already done in 2021)

The questionnaire will be prepared by the team of experts - with the participation of the ETUC staff and then revised and approved by the project's Steering Committee - and circulated to all ETUC affiliates.

2. **The second step** of the project will consist of a series of **5 decentralized workshops (1,5 day each)** organised in different member states. Each workshop will concern a specific region of the EU/a group of MS, to be identified *also* in the light of the responses to the questionnaire. Experts from Trade Union organisations (ETUC affiliates) and from relevant institutions will present their views on how to deal with the issues at stake while showcasing how to concretely make the best use the funds. The workshops will provide opportunity for participants to engage in the **dialogues with managing authorities** as well as to **exchange the best practice** when it comes to the implementation and the monitoring of the funds and **formulate concrete recommendations**.

The concrete and more detailed topics of the workshops will be decided on the basis of the assessment of the questionnaire.

3. Out of 5 workshops, 1 will focus on Just Transition Fund (JTF) and in particular on the development of Just Transition Territorial Plans (this workshop will be organized by JTC expert). The preparation and the results will be integrated in the overview.

The outcome of each workshop should be: to take stock of the situation, to identify best practices, challenges and concrete recommendations – thus **to point out elements to be included in the TU Guide**.

The project will also foresee **2 webinars (each of half a day max) specifically focusing on Just Transition Territorial Plans. They will be organized mainly by the JTC expert.**

The contents of both workshops and webinars (points 2. and 3.) will be prepared by the team of experts in collaboration with the ETUC team and the members of the project Steering committee.

The events should serve to hold a discussions on the situation in host MS/group of MS/region in reference to 2014-2020 programming period (inputs from EU experts), should include examples of practices/challenges regarding ESIFs, ECCPs (input from TU experts) and the development of Just Transition Territorial Plans.

In each workshop, the discussion will be framed by taking stock of the situation through presentations made by experts (from institutions and stakeholders having a recognized leading role in the previous financial period). It would then move to more concrete and specific discussions by inviting a sample of experts from trade unions – with a specific attention to sectors – to present existing use of the project and state of play of the European Code of Conduct for partnership - to try to see concretely how trade unions can engage in designing and implementing the ESIFs by presenting best practices but also challenges and difficulties related to the different topics.

4. The main deliverable/output of the project will be a **Guide for Trade Unions to foster their involvement in the ESIFs** – in line with the **Trade union Guide European Structural & Investment Funds 2014-2020**, available online in different languages: <https://www.etuc.org/en/publication/european-structural-investment-funds-2014-2020>. The guide will be divided into sections, *inter alia* illustrating the structures of the ESIFs and ways Trade Unions can engage in preparation, implementation and evaluation; including best practices and case studies showcasing successful involvement of the TUs in ESIFs; setting policy recommendations targeting national and European policymakers to improve the implementation of the Code of Conduct for partnership and to make ESIFs more accessible to social partners; indicating training material that can be used by TUs on national level to further build capacity of its members to interact with ESIFs.

The Trade Union Guide must include a series of training materials.

The team of experts will conceive and draft the training material also with the support of the ETUI training department.

*The ETUC permanent Committee on Social, Economic and Regional Cohesion Policy has elaborated a **possible draft outline** reflecting the aspects the guide has to focus on, among other. The draft outline, reported below, has to be revised with the team of experts and the project Steering Committee:*

1. *General overview of MMF – priorities and objectives for investments*
2. *Cohesion policy – aims and priorities, thematic focuses*
3. *The Common Provision Regulation*
 - 3a. *Main conditionalities*
 - 3b. *Partnership principle - Overview of the implementation of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP) in relation to TUs; Involvement of stakeholders and Social Partners – focus from the CPR, Code of Conduct – GOOD AND BAD PRACTICES*
4. *ESIFs: structure and objectives of ESIFs and JTF and how TUs can be involved*
 - 4a. *Dedicated focuses on (European Social Fund Plus) ESF+ and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)*
 - 4b. *Focus on JTF: in particular overview of the development and implementation of Just Transition Territorial Plans and involvement of TU so far*
 - 4c. *TU priorities and their funds: EURES (Easi); AMIF; ERASMUS; Horizon*
5. *Cohesion Policies and ESIFs within the main EU policy frameworks*
 - 5a. *European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR);*
 - 5b. *(renewed) EU Semester;*
 - 5c. *Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and National Recovery and Resilience Plans (nRRP)*
6. *Enhanced Cohesion, Upward convergence and trade union priorities*
JTF; social rights; inequalities; youth; mobility; regional and territorial future; green, digital and demographic challenges; Partnership principle and involvement at all levels

The guide will have to include:

- *training material to strengthen capacity of TUs in their interaction with ESIFs and Just Transition Fund*
- *examples of good practices showcasing successful involvement of TUs in ESIFs and Just Transition Fund as well as challenges*

- *illustration of structures of the ESIFs and ways Trade Unions can engage in preparation, implementation and evaluation*
 - *recommendations on how to improve the involvement of TUs in ESIFs (also in relation to ECCP)*
5. **A final conference (1 day)** will be organized to present the key project results (the Trade Union Guide) and the key recommendations of the trade union movement in this field.

The direction of the project is in the responsibility of the project Steering Committee, chaired by Claes-Mikael Stahl, ETUC deputy general secretary in charge of the dossier, under the management of the ETUC project staff.

*The team of experts will regularly report to and be supported by the Steering Committee via the ETUC staff: to discuss project progress, to discuss the preparation and outcomes of the workshops and webinars, the final reports of the events and the final conference. In the course of the project, synthesis seminars will be held, as well as **1 evaluation talk at the end of the project** (on the final conference and on the advocacy strategy-final recommendations to policymakers).*

4. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor

The sub-contractor will have to perform (in collaboration with an expert from Just Transition Centre) the following tasks:

- **Prepare the questionnaire on main issues including the involvement of social partners in the ESIFs** and in the development of Just Transition Territorial plans ,which will be sent to ETUC affiliates;
- **Analyse the data collected through the questionnaire**, notably in the view to identify interesting case studies to take stock of for the 4 workshops + ensuring an integrated framework to the 1 workshop and 2 webinars focusing on Just Transition Territorial Plans;
- Prepare a **discussion paper (approx. 5 pages) prior to each workshop** that will give a preparatory overview of the rationale of each workshop (focus, topic, good practices ...)
- **Provide inputs to and collaborate** with the ETUC staff and the Steering committee **for the agenda of the events**
- **Take an active part in the workshops and draft a synthesis document (approx. 5 pages)** after each workshop and webinar that will take stock of the challenges and solutions (best practice) identified during the event.
- **Produce a draft report of project outcomes (15 pages approx.)** and present it to the members of the Steering Committee during the online synthesis seminar. The subcontractor will take into account the remarks and suggestions put forward by the participants of the synthesis seminars to update the report accordingly.
- **Produce the final guide for Trade Unions (in English, around 60 pages)**, which will include:
 - An overview of the ESIFs including JTF and ways the Trade Unions can get involved in their implementation and monitoring
 - An overview of policy priorities and processes at the EU level that are relevant for the use and monitoring of the ESIFs including JTF (European Semester 2022,

European Pillar of Social Rights) with guidelines on how Trade Unions can be supported by these policies and processes in their work on ESIFs

- An overview of the awareness and implementation of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership among trade unions
 - A set of policy recommendations targeting national and European policymakers to improve the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Partnership and to make ESIFs including JTF more accessible to social partners
 - Training materials and blueprint for raising awareness among trade unions and enhancing their involvement/use of the ESIFs including JTF on the national and regional level (material to be designed also in collaboration with the ETUI and according to the ETUI active learning methodologies).
- **Intervene and present the final report (approx. 15 pages) and the Trade Union Guide** in the final conference of the project.
 - **Coordinate with the ETUC project staff** (holding meetings when planned)
 - **Participate in the online meetings of the Steering Committee**

5. Expertise, experience and skills required

Sound expertise is required on the following issues:

- High level expert knowledge of the EU funds, especially ESIFs, especially knowledge about ESF+, Cohesion Fund, and ERDF, JTF and of their governance (programming, monitoring, implementation, and evaluation)
- Experience in the relations between trade unions and funds Managing Authorities as well as with EU institutions;
- Expert knowledge of the EU policy priorities and processes in the social and employment field (European Semester, European Pillar of Social Rights) and how these priorities and processes interact with the governance of ESIFs
- Expert knowledge of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership and understanding of its relevance for the involvement of trade unions in the ESIFs ;
- Expert knowledge of industrial relation structures in EU Member States;
- Expertise in designing Trade Union guides and Training courses (knowing the ETUI training department will support)
- Good understanding of the trade union movement and ETUC.

Sound experience is required in the following areas:

- Designing a questionnaire adapted to target audience
- Qualitative and Quantitative analysis of the questionnaire results
- Formulating a tailored methodology for identifying case studies and for undertaking transnational case study research;
- Writing research reports containing sound analysis and meaningful policy recommendations;
- Designing Trade Union Training material (with the support of the ETUI training department)
- Running and animating seminars on the themes of Social Partner involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of cohesion funds – ESIFs and JTF;
- Successful track record of delivering in similar projects run over a 12+ month period, with EU institutions and/or European stakeholders (social partners, NGOs, etc.).

Skills required:

- Proven research and presentation skills (in English);

- Proven skills in drafting study reports;
- Proven skills in qualitative and quantitative data analyses
- Skills in designing training material
- Ability to work within specified deadlines and to respect budgetary limits;
- Ability to work in a multicultural context and understanding of different industrial relations culture & traditions;
- Good administration and project management skills.
- Good command of computer software programmes (Word, Excel, Power-point).

6. Time schedule and reporting

The subcontractor will be asked to perform the above-mentioned **tasks by May 2023**.

Please note that the exact dates of the above-mentioned events will be decided upon by the steering committee.

7. Payment

The total maximum budget available for the fees of the subcontractor is as follows:

Contract with ETUC	
Main activities and Meetings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting desk-research (producing the questionnaire, analysis of the responses), • Providing examples of case studies for and participating in 5 thematic workshops (1,5 day each) and 2 half a day webinars • Drafting 1 preparatory discussion paper (approx. 5 pages) per each workshop and webinar • Drafting 1 summary report (approx. 5 pages) of each workshop and webinar • Producing the project final report (approx. 15 pages) • Producing the Guide for Trade Unions (including training material) (approx. 60 pages) • Participating in steering committee meetings + synthesis seminar + final conference (1 day each) • Contributing to the evaluation of the project 	
Total budget for the Expertise	37000 € (VAT and all taxes included)

The subcontractor will be remunerated in various instalments (advance and final payment). This amount covers the fees but **does not include the travel and subsistence costs incurred for attending project meetings (such as the workshops and Final Conference)** and for conducting the country visits (if necessary). **These will be covered by ETUC** on the basis of EU rules & thresholds (see the EC table of maximum amounts per EU member state).

8. Selection and award criteria

The selection criteria are:

- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills, as required and described in part 5 of this call;

- Proven track record of ensuring the quality of written materials produced, both in terms of content and format (i.e. previous publications), in the relevant subjects specified in this call for tenders;
- Methodology and overall quality of the technical proposal submitted;
- value for money and quality of the financial proposal submitted;

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money, taking into account the specific objectives, requirements and selection criteria of the tender. The principles of transparency and equal treatment will be respected with a view to avoiding any conflicts of interest.

9. Form, structure and content of the tender

Tenders must be written in English. They must be signed by the tenderer or his duly authorised representative and be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures. Tenders must be clear and concise and assembled in a coherent fashion.

Since tenderers will be judged on the content of their written bids, they must make it clear that they are able to meet the requirements of the specifications.

All tenders must include at least two sections:

i) **Technical proposal**

The technical proposal must provide all the information needed for the purpose of awarding the contract, including:

- Specific information covering the technical and professional capacity, as required and listed in part 5 of this call, in particular:
 - Description of relevant professional experience with emphasis on the specific fields covered by the invitation to tender;
 - Detailed curriculum vitae
 - A selection of the main works and/or articles published by the expert, in relation to the relevant subjects specified in this tender.
- Specific information concerning the proposed methodology for delivering the tasks listed in part 3.

ii) **Financial proposal**

Prices of the financial proposal must be quoted in euros, including if the sub-contractor is based in a country which is not in the euro-area. As far as the tenderers of those countries are concerned, they cannot change the amount of the bid because of the evolution of the exchange rate. The tenderers choose the exchange rate and assume all risks or opportunities relating to the rate fluctuation.

Prices must be fixed amounts and shall not include travel expenses and daily allowances for the attendance to the Steering Committee meetings and other project events (such as the workshops or Final Conference) which will be covered by ETUC on the basis of EU rules & thresholds.

The maximum amount available for this contract is EUR 37000 (VAT and all taxes included).

Prices shall be fixed and not subject to revision during the performance of the contract.

10. Content and selection of the bids

This call for tenders will be published on the ETUC website on and kept online for 21 calendar days. Offers must be sent at the latest on 13 June 2022. Offers must be sent to ETUC, in electronic format (by e-mail to mmonaco@etuc.org and amartin@etuc.org) and refer to the “ETUC project on ESIFs” in the email subject line.

A committee will be formed comprising of 3 representatives of the ETUC. The committee members will evaluate the tenders that have been deemed admissible and produce a tender evaluation report / grid, which will include their evaluation of all the bids received. The ranking of bids will be drawn up in this tender evaluation report, dated and signed by all the members of the evaluation committee and kept for future reference.

This report/grid will include:

- The name and address of the contracting authority, the purpose and value of the contract;
- The names of any excluded candidates and the reasons for their rejection;
- The names of candidates selected for consideration and the justification for their selection;