Tender specifications for subcontracting external expertise

Project title and number:

Digital Upskilling For All! - VS/2020/0011

1. Background

ETNO has been awarded a grant from the European Commission to launch a project called Digital Upskilling For All!

2. Summary of the project

Digital Upskilling For All! is a 2-year social dialogue project that aims to develop best practices and create recommended pathways for **digital upskilling, inclusion and diversity** within the workforce of the European Telecoms sector.

The final report of the 'Filling the ICT skills gap in the Telecommunications sector of the future (FITS)' project published on 14th November 2014 (See Annex 2) identified that skills requirements in the Telecoms sector are rapidly changing due to constant technological innovation and market developments. The number of vacancies for highly skilled ICT roles is increasing exponentially and the sector cannot meet this demand by recruiting from the traditional ICT talent pool alone. In order to bridge this skills gap, **Telecommunication companies are seeking to upskill their existing workforce and recruit new talent from a much broader diversity group.**

For this reason, the European social partners in the Telecom sector - the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (**ETNO**) and the European trade-unions federation **UNI Europa**, have jointly decided and undertaken to review sectoral and academic best practices and develop a package of recommended initiatives that will enable digital upskilling to be embedded within the diversity group of their work population.

This action seeks to bridge the growing digital skills gap among the 1 million strong telecoms workforce in Europe[1], with a particular focus on developing upskilling pathways to ensure gender equality in ICT roles and creating new opportunities through the retraining of older workers with new digital skills. It also aims to recruit new talent into the sector from the broader diversity group within the European labour market, enabling access to highly skilled ICT roles for young women, women returning to work and older workers trained for other professions.

It is hoped that the outcomes and learnings from this project can also be applied to a broader diversity group in future, encouraging the upskilling and inclusion of vulnerable groups such as migrants, young unemployed and people with disabilities.

3. Key Project Activities

Digital Upskilling For All! Is a 24-month social partner project including the following activities:

1. **Project Steering Group** - Create a Project Steering Group of key experts from ETNO and UNI Europa to coordinate and organise the project activities, facilitate discussions between stakeholders, collate successful digital upskilling pathways and disseminate the results to the widest possible audience. 6 steering group meetings will be organised, 4 physical meetings and 2 virtual meetings.

2. **Best Practice Identification** - Research and identify digital upskilling initiatives, tools, projects and best practice examples among ETNO and UNI Europa members and within Europe as a whole. To this end the project partners will recruit external expertise for the desk research process and questionnaires will be used to capture primary data.

3. **Defining Upskilling Pathways** - Profile skills needs of new ICT roles and selecting recommended upskilling pathways for members of the Diversity group.

4. **Roundtable Discussions** - 2 x workshops with a broad panel of key stakeholders to convert the research and best practice examples into defined and actionable digital upskilling initiatives that empower women and older workers to access new ICT job opportunities within the Telecoms sector. Each roundtable will have 35 participants.

5. **European Conference -** High level social partner conference gathering ICT stakeholders, European and national social partners and European institutions with the aim of presenting the digital upskilling initiatives and toolkits developed during the roundtables, discussing how these best practices can be promoted within the ICT industry, and how they can be expanded to encompass the whole diversity group in the future. The conference is expected to have around 80 participants from across Europe.

6. **Promotion of Results –** Communication strategy to create awareness of the digital upskilling pathways and initiatives developed during the project and encourage adoption throughout the UNI Europa and ETNO membership including Trade Union Organisations at European and national level, European telecom operators, and other relevant stakeholders from across the European ICT industry.

4. Project Schedule

	Purpose	Place	Month	Date?
Meeting 1	Steering Group Meeting No.1	Brussels	1	18 Feb 2020
Activity	Desk research		2-3	March -April 2020
Meeting 2	Steering Group Meeting No.2	Brussels/BT	4	28 May 2020
Activity	Preparation of first round table	Virtual	5	June
Meeting 3	Roundtable Discussion No.1	Poland /Warsaw?	9	Sept 10 2020
Activity	Preparation of pilot testing of the best practice; prepare next round table		7-10	August-November 2020
Meeting 4	Steering Group Meeting No.3	Ireland CWU Dublin	9	22 October 2020
Meeting 5	Roundtable Discussion No.2	Portugal	11	10 December 2020
Activity	Organise pilot test best practice; Plan conference		12-16	January- May 2021
Activity	Interim report		14	March 2021
Meeting 6	Steering Group Meeting No.4	France	13	23 March 2021
Meeting 7	European Conference	Brussels	17	3 June 2021
Meeting 8	Steering Group Meeting No.5	Virtual -14-16h	18	15 June 2021
Activity	Prepare best practice guidelines booklet and package, translation		18-21	July-Oct 2021
Activity	Joint declaration on DUFA		21	Oct 2021
Activity	Promotion of materials		22-24	Nov 2021- January 2022
Meeting 9	Steering Group Meeting No.6	Germany	24	25 Jan 2022

5. Project Team

As this is a joint social partner project, ETNO will be the lead applicant for this project supported by UNI EUROPA as co-applicant. ETNO staff members will be involved in the project implementation at several levels.

Moreover, a steering group will assist ETNO & UNI Europa in the implementation of the various activities of the project. The group will be composed of:
- Trade union representatives from UNI Europa affiliate organisations;
- ETNO affiliates representing European telecom operators;
- The UNI Europa project manager;
- The ETNO staff involved in the project;
- External expertise

6. Purpose of the Contract

We are recruiting external consultants to undertake the desk research phase to identify the best practice digital upskilling initiatives and resources and collate the results.

They will also participate in the Steering Group meetings, Roundtable Discussions and the Conference. They will compile the output of the research, Roundtables and Conference and draft the Best Practice Guidelines Booklet.

The researchers will be required to liaise with UNI Europa and ETNO staff and the project steering group and will also attend the project steering group meetings and main event to present the research findings. The two researcher roles are:
· Project Manager/Senior Researcher
· Consultants/Junior Researchers specialised in Gender/Ageing workforce/Digital upskilling/ Diversity & Inclusion.

7. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

7.1. Description of tasks

Tasks involved:
The tasks of the external expert are to

- Carry out a desktop research to identify best practices meeting the scope of the project (successful, Digital Upskilling, successful gender equality, high integration of ageing workforce, successful diversity)
- Prepare a questionnaire based on the research results and conduct interviews in selected companies with management and employee representatives to offer a more comprehensive view of the best practices
- Prepare and participate to the sectoral consultation (roundtables and conference)
- Based on the research findings and the identified best practice, elaborate a draft version of the dissemination brochure to be presented to the steering group (followed and agreed format, ensuring the information is complete, relevant and up-to-date)

- Participate in the steering group meetings and the project workshop; liaise regularly with the steering group via email and conference calls.

Guidance and indications on tasks execution and methodology
During each stage of the project, the contractor will work in close collaboration with the project steering group composed of both ETNO & UNI Europa representatives. Based on the grant agreement of the European Commission, ETNO and UNI Europa will give guidance on tasks and methodology as required.

Expertise required
The successful contractor will be required to demonstrate knowledge and expertise in the following areas:

- A sound understanding of industrial relations
- Good knowledge and experience of the issue of the topics Gender/Ageing workforce/Digital upskilling/ Diversity & Inclusion.
- An understanding of the ICT sector and its development and challenges in Europe, especially in the context of digitalisation
- Experience of writing high quality reports, specifically for European projects
- A record of other similar work
- A proven ability to present to a social partner audience

Time schedule and reporting
According to the grant agreement of the European Commission, the timetable looks as follows: The project is scheduled to run for 24 months, between February 2020 and February 2022. We anticipate choosing the successful external expert application by the beginning of March of 2020 in order to start the research phase immediately.

Payments and standard contract
The payments for this work will be made as follows:
- 30% upon signing the contract.
- 30% upon the end of desktop research phase.
- 20% upon the end of consultation phase.
- 20% upon the end of dissemination phase.

Price
The maximum price will be 40 000 Euros (VAT included) for this work, in the proposal bid entailing funding for the commission of a Project manager/senior researcher and Consultant/junior researcher, details outlined below. The below price includes the daily cost and number of days that each researcher will work on the project. However applicants are free to suggest an alternative allocation, whilst keeping within the 40000 Euros budget, if they wish so.

Desktop research phase:

- Identify best practices that meet the scope of the project (successful Digital Upskilling, successful gender equality, high integration of ageing workforce, successful diversity)
- Help the Steering Group to define the concepts
- Help the Steering Group to identify the 5 best practices of digital upskilling that will help make the difference in gender equality
- Help the Steering Group to identify the 5 best practices of digital upskilling that will help make the difference in the digital upskilling of the ageing workforce
- Development of a questionnaire, interviews in selected companies to illustrate the 10 best practices:

>   Project manager: 6 days * 1000 € = 6 000 €
>   Consultants: 12 days * 800 € = 9600 €

Consultation phase

- Help prepare the roundtable on digital upskilling to promote gender equality
- Participate to the RT Digital upskilling to promote gender equality
- Help draft the report & final recommendations to promote gender equality
- Help prepare the Round table on digital upskilling in Gender
- Participate to the RT Digital upskilling of the Ageing workforce
- Help draft the report & final recommendations Digital upskilling of the Ageing workforce
- Help prepare the final conference on digital upskilling for all by reviewing and merging the best practises that help the diversity and inclusion by digital upskilling of the workforce
- Participate to the final conference on Digital upskilling for all!
- Help draft the report & final recommendations

>   Project manager: 6 days *1000 € = 6 000 €
>   Consultants: 12 days * 800 € = 9.600 €

Dissemination phase

Develop a brochure to communicate the combined results of the desktop research & the consultation to the ICT sector and beyond**:**

>   Project manager: 4 * 1000 € = 4000 €
>   Consultants: 6 * 800 = 4. 800 €

Note : Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by means of the project's budget by ETNO , according to the European Commission's reimbursement rules (economy class for air travel, first class for train travel, taxi costs are not reimbursed).

8. Selection criteria

The work will be awarded to the contractor that best meets the following criteria:
- · Their expertise, knowledge and experience in the areas mentioned under point 4
- · Their record of producing similar guidelines
- · Their track record demonstrating experience of supporting similar projects

9. Award criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the highest quality and best value for money - taking into account the following criteria:
- · Proposed methodology
- · Evidence of experience in working in similar projects
- · Report writing and presentation
- · Best coverage of EU countries (experience, languages etc.)

10. Presentation of the bids

Interested parties must submit their proposals to the ETNO / DUFA! Project Manager (address below) in a sealed envelope as well as per email to valles@ETNO.EU

The tender representing best value for money will be selected. If there are two or more selected, then invitations to attend a selection panel will be sent to the appropriate tenderers. The invited tenderers will then be expected to meet with the project coordinators for further discussions. Interested parties should send their tender as soon as possible, but no later than 17:00 on March 17 2020, to:

ETNO
c/o Anne Valles Meunier
Address: Boulevard du Régent 43/44, 1000 Bruxelles Belgium
Phone: 02 219 32 42

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.

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