

**Social dialogue and the sustainable recovery strategy post-Covid19
in the food and drink industry
Call for tenders for subcontracting expert studies in the framework of the
FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT project SOCPL-2021-SOC-01
Food and Drink Social Dialogue**

This is a call for a subcontractor to provide expertise in the framework of the implementation of the FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT social dialogue project. The call will be published on the websites of both organisations. The deadline for submission of bids is Wednesday 21 September, at noon (12:00).

1. Objectives and context of the expert study: the FoodandDrinkSD project

The project aims to research the role of the Social Dialogue and the sustainable recovery strategy in the food and drink industry when the sector has to function in “crisis mode”, whether this is due to a pandemic such as Covid19, due to the Ukrainian war that led to high energy and raw material prices, or other crisis occurring. This project is performed in the context of the social dialogue of the food and drink sector for the European social partners FoodDrinkEurope, which represents employers, and EFFAT, that represents workers. The project will on the one hand support the European social partners and their committees in their contribution to policymaking on European level; on the other hand it will allow the social partners to conduct social dialogue at European level focusing on the needs and added value to the member organisations and to develop the future social dialogue work programme for 2023-2025.

When the project was initially proposed the social partners had set the priority of the project on the Covid19 pandemic and its link to the social dialogue in different countries of Europe. Currently with the war in Ukraine taking place, the increase of prices on energy, raw materials and ingredients; summed up to the general inflation in all Europe, there is a big impact on the food sector and the supply chain. Therefore the focus of the project has shifted to a more holistic perspective of the food and drink industry in times of crisis. The following sections describe the requirements for the call for tender, whenever it refers to Covid19 crisis, should be understood as crisis in a wider perspective. This is not to say, however, that direct learnings and examples could not be taken from the management of the Covid19 pandemic.

1.1 Objectives

The project has the following main objectives:

- To explore further the crisis impact socially and economically on the food sector looking into the market disruption and its impact on jobs, employment conditions, trade, business models and consumer behavior;
- To evaluate the actions and good practices taken in each Member State;
- to develop the overall recommendations in the frame of the social dialogue in order for the food and drink industry to develop sustainably in the coming years, taking into account the economic, environmental and social pillars.

On the social side, the project will look into the impact of the crisis in the workplaces and for the workers by analysing changes to working conditions and health and safety measures. It should be analysed why in some subsectors/companies a lot of Covid19 outbreaks took place and less in others. What have been the procedures put in place and how have the social partners reacted. Particular attention will be paid to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which were some of the most affected by the policies applied.

The research should look into changes in the sector and the trends and developments due to Covid19, consumer behaviour and innovation/digitalisation. It should finally analyse what this means for employment, working conditions and the skills needs.

The target is to gather the appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure the impact of Covid19. The quantitative data can be based on the trade parameters at global and local scale (imports, exports, sectors), number of companies affected etc through available data at Eurostat and other public data resources. However, the input from the intended workshops should feed much of this information with qualitative data (working conditions, social issues, consumer behaviour, etc.), personal interviews will also be used.

1.2 Context

The food and drink industry is the biggest manufacturing employer in half of the member states of the European Union, employing an estimated quantity of 4.72 million jobs without taking into account indirect employment from suppliers and clients (transport, packaging materials, HoReCa and tourism sectors for example).

The food and drink industry is a highly diversified sector both in terms of sub-sectors (product types and resources) and size of companies. Today, an estimated 99% of food and drink companies in Europe are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), providing two thirds of the total employment. Overall, the food sector is the largest manufacturing sector, reaching a turnover of €1.1 trillion.

However, the agri-food sector is challenged by a transformation of the overall food system. Some of the drivers of this century are the continued growth of the global population, climate change, water scarcity, an increased urbanization, and political instabilities in third countries fueled by income inequality as a result of globalization. Some of those developments have produced changes that required new skills of the workforce, that is why FoodDrinkEurope, representing the employers, and the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) representing the workers, have dedicated the last decade to provide guidance and a toolbox on the required skills for the current and future workforce.

The latest of these reports highlighted the relevance of the appropriate instruments related to the development of skills for the incoming era of digitalisation and factory/work 4.0 .

The most recent events have put further pressure to the economic sustainability of the food and drink companies in Europe, mainly to SMEs. The pandemic of SARS Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) has affected the whole economy most acutely the hospitality, tourism and leisure

sectors, but also the food industry and agricultural sector, creating economic damage, threatening jobs, and also the way work is performed. The workers in the food sector worked throughout the pandemic, as working from home was/is not an option in processing industry. They had to live with the risks of Covid19 every day. But nevertheless, they ensured the food supply for all Europeans. There have been good practices in the food sector using the social dialogue as a tool for facing this challenge. As soon as the pandemic hit Europe, there were agreements signed by employers and trade unions finding consensus all along Europe as different compromises were found in countries such as France, Spain, United Kingdom and at European level.

In the meanwhile, the European Commission has published the Farm to Fork Strategy as a key component of the EU Green Deal, focusing on the challenges of sustainable food systems and proposing an Action Plan. The EU's ambition is to make the EU food system a global standard for sustainability. Thus, facing these challenges, social dialogue within the food sector will contribute to the sustainable recovery in the next coming years.

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The external expert(s) will conduct the research, produce the report and the recommendations and present the findings to the workshops, the mid-term and the final conference; the expert(s) will as well draft the minutes after the workshops and the mid-term conference.

The role of the experts is multifunctional, they will manage the project timeline, input into the meetings of the Steering group, organise and input into the workshop workflow, and do the quality checks for deliverable conformity, as well as act as a third party if needed to prevent conflicts between the social partners.

Research:

- Overview and outlook of the socio-economic situation of the sector;
- Collect information on the impact of Covid-19 and beyond on production, trade, jobs and working conditions;
- Mapping exercise identifying the activities performed at regional, national and EU level

In the context of Social Dialogue and Covid19;

- Collect possible pathways of innovation and roadmap for sustainable recovery, including skills;
- Set out the different funds and how they can be used in the sector for the benefits of the companies and the workers;

The research will be conducted through desk research, literature review but as well through interviews with both sides of industry. The interviews can be conducted through online means.

2.1 Recovery and future of the Sector

The social partners wish to better understand what the recovery and with it the future of the sector will look like. It should be looked into previous crisis and if any parallels can be drawn or if this Covid19 crisis on the contrary is very specific in the answers given during and after. Can we for example expect the same trends in digitalization and automation as in the past.

This work on recovery and sustainable growth has three angles, the economic, the social and the environmental. Therefore, the joint work needs to be linked to sustainable policies (Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy) but as well to the recovery policies on European and national level, as well as innovation (R&I funds).

The Covid19 pandemic highlighted the different impact in the different sectors of the food and drink industry. Whilst companies and industries serving the HoReCa sector suffered most of the impact, suppliers to the retail distribution channel faced an increase in sales. Thus, the report shall take into account this regional and sub-sectoral differences. One approach could be to study the case scenarios where specific subsectors suffered greatly (e.g. meat sector, brewery sector) in comparison to sectors that saw their sales increasing (e.g. rice and pasta sector, snacks, etc.). The project shall take this polarization into consideration when researching the specific cases, as examples of different developments during the crisis. It will be particularly interesting to look into the answers found by the social partners to the different difficulties encountered. This aspect will be brought to the workshops regarding regional discussions. The target of this work is to gather relevant information from countries and better understand regional and sectoral issues.

2.2 Social dialogue as a crisis tool in the food and drink industry

The project will collect and build on the already existing examples of social dialogue in some countries during the times of the Covid19 pandemic. The project intends to compile the social dialogue statements at national and EU level to address the challenges and good practices during the Covid19 pandemic.

The expert(s) should:

- Analyse the social dialogue developments on the different levels
- Look at the different actors on national/sectoral/European level
- Evaluate the use which was made of the joint statements of the European level during the crisis on sectoral level

2.3 Develop joint strategies and recommendations on sustainable growth of the industry post Covid19

Based on the research and the workshops the experts together with FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT will develop recommendations to be used by the Secretariats and their members. The recommendations should be very short, concise and hands-on. This document is the final output of the research and the workshops to provide social partners with guidance for their joint lobbying work as well as joint activities in the social dialogue committee and on national level. It should comprise issues like: best practices, possible solutions, possible hurdles and needed skills; ways of working; recommendations and sustainable recovery recommendations in the context of the use of recovery funds, innovation, new needed skills, and implementation of 'Farm to Fork' in this context.

3. Expertise, experience and skills required

The tenderer must have a sound understanding of the food and drink sector and the industrial relation systems in Europe. The tenderer should prove his/her expertise with examples of his/her work.

The contract will only be awarded to tenderers that fulfil the following criteria:

- Experience with carrying out research in an European context;
- Thorough and up-to-date theoretical and practical knowledge of the food and drink sector;
- Knowledge and experience in industrial relations in Europe;

Knowledge and experience with employment matters, labour relations and working conditions in the food and drink industry;

- Knowledge and experience to work with social partners in Europe;
- Ability to deliver pedagogic reports, solid conclusions and practical recommendations in a clear and concise English;
- Capacity to coordinate the work in a multicultural and multi-language environment.

4. Guidance and indications on tasks execution and methodology

Apart from attendance at a number of specified meetings (steering group, workshops, final conference) in Brussels and abroad, the tasks will take place at the contractor's offices.

All reports must be submitted in an electronic version. Electronic files must be in Microsoft Word for Windows format. All reports must be written in clear and concise English. They should also be well structured and drafted in a style suitable for wider dissemination.

The final materials must be fit for publication and revised by a native English-speaker. The work of the contractor will be supervised and advised upon by the steering committee.

5. Selection criteria

The tenders will be assessed by the FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT Secretariats and the Steering Committee against the following criteria:

- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills, as required and described in this call;
- Necessary knowledge and experience concerning industrial relations and social partners in the food and drink industry;
- Proven knowledge of the food and drink sector and its structural elements according to the task description;
- 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;
- Price/Quality ratio;
- Previous research/work undertaken in the field.

6. Award criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the best value for money, taking into account the following criteria:

- capacity to understand and achieve the objectives of the project;
- quality and coherence of the proposed research methodology;
- proof of compliance with required expertise and qualifications in the field of research (please attach references and similar studies carried out in the field);
- ability to deliver within project deadlines and budgetary limits.

The respect of the principles of transparency and equal treatment with a view to avoiding any conflict of interest will be undertaken.

7. Timeframe

The contractor appointed will be expected to work from October 2022 to June 2024, which is the intended duration of the project. The work will be expected to be distributed in different workloads in time, depending on the tasks and the timeline of the steering group meetings, workshops and a mid-term and final conferences.

8. Payment

The maximum budget available for the expertise is € 50 000 (incl. VAT).

The Contractor will receive an advance and a final payment upon receipt of the requested material.

This amount covers the fees but does not include the travel and subsistence costs incurred for attending project meetings (such as Steering Committee meetings, workshops and conferences). These will be covered by the FoodDrinkEurope budget for the project on the basis of EU rules & thresholds for travelling and accommodation.

9. Legal obligations

The basis of the contract is the grant agreement between the European Commission and FoodDrinkEurope. The terms of this grant agreement are also applicable to the Contractor.

10. Form, structure and content of the tender

Tenders must be written in English. They must be signed by the tenderer or his/her duly authorized representative and be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures. 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:

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, in particular:
 - Description of relevant professional experience with emphasis on the specific fields covered by the invitation to tender;
 - Detailed curriculum vitae of tenderer and of the other team members if applicable;
 - A selection of the main works and/or articles published by all the experts involved, in relation to the relevant subjects specified in this tender.
- Specific information concerning the proposed methodology for delivering the tasks of this call.

Financial proposal

The prices of the financial proposal must be quoted in Euros, including if the subcontractor 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.

11. Content and selection of the bids

This call for tenders will be published on the websites of FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT. Offers must be sent at the latest by 21 September 2022 at noon (12:00).

Offers must be sent to FoodDrinkEurope, in electronic format (by e-mail to Jonas Lazaro Mojica info@fooddrinkeurope.eu) and refer to the "FoodandDrink Social Dialogue project".

The Steering Committee of the project will make the selection of the bids and take the final decision. One or more members of this committee will initial the documents, confirming the date and time of each bid. FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT will sign the report on the bids received, which will list the admissible bids and provide reasons for rejecting bids owing to their failure to comply with the stipulations of the tendering process.

This committee will also evaluate the tenders that have been deemed admissible. An evaluation report and classification of participation requests will be drawn up, dated and signed by all the members of the evaluation committee and kept for future reference.

This report 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;

- The names of candidates put forward and justification of their choice in terms of the selection or award criteria.