

## **TENDER SPECIFICATIONS**

**External expertise for the project  
“DESOCO 3” – Continuation of Decentralized Thematic Social  
Dialogue for the Construction Industry**

*(Project ref. 101197494)*

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## 1. Introduction

This tender call seeks a dedicated and skilled **External Expert** to contribute to the “*Continuation of Decentralized Thematic Social Dialogue for the Construction Industry*” (DESOCO3) EU-funded project. The DESOCO3 project is an initiative of the recognised social partners for the construction sector, the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) and the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW). The objective of the project is to strengthen cooperation and communication among national social partners in the construction industry, enhance social dialogue, increase their participation in the European Social Dialogue, address key sector challenges (such as labour market modernisation, digitalisation, AI, and the green transition), promote best practices and innovation, and deliver a study on national legislation limiting subcontracting chains.

The project will last 24 months starting on 1 March 2025.

### 1.1. Background of DESOCO3 project

The project builds on a long history of social dialogue initiatives in the construction industry, taken by the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) and the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW). These organisations were among the first to establish a European Social Dialogue Committee, reinforcing their commitment to improving industrial relations at both EU and national levels. Since 2018, FIEC and EFBWW have formalised their collaboration through a long-term cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening industrial relations and coordinating joint research on the European social dimension of the construction industry. Previous EU-funded projects, such as the DESOCO 1 and DESOCO 2 projects, focused on addressing key labor market challenges, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Building on these efforts, the current project aims to expand its geographical reach, engage national social partners more actively, and tackle emerging issues such as digitalisation, the green transition, and subcontracting regulations. By strengthening social dialogue structures, the project seeks to improve working conditions, address labor market fragmentation, and enhance the overall resilience of the construction industry.

### 1.2. Role of External Expert in the Project

The External Expert will be instrumental in assisting the project partners in understanding the European framework and national legislation related to subcontracting in the construction sector in the EU – including existing limitations applied to subcontracting chains – focusing on the analysis of the laws and customs across the EU. This role requires in-depth examination of national labour laws. The External Expert will contribute to the development of a comprehensive mapping study, providing valuable insights into legal provisions across the EU.

## 2. Objectives of the DESOCO3 project

The project has the following objectives:

- **Strengthen social dialogue** – to improve cooperation and communication among national social partners in the construction industry.
- **Enhance participation in European Social Dialogue** – to encourage national partners to engage in EU-level discussions and decision-making.
- **Address key industry challenges** – to tackle labor market modernisation, digitalisation, AI, the green transition, and employment issues.
- **Encourage best practices exchange** – to support the exchange of effective strategies and innovative solutions in industrial relations.
- **Improve industrial relations at the national level** – to help national social partners establish stronger and more autonomous social dialogue structures.
- **Conduct a study on subcontracting legislation** – to analyse national regulations limiting subcontracting chains to provide insights for policy development.

## 3. Tasks of the External Expert

The External Expert in the DESOCO3 project will focus on a thorough analysis of EU and national legislation related to subcontracting in the EU construction sector.

### 3.1. Description of the Tasks to be Performed

- To deliver a mapping study of national legislation related to subcontracting in the construction sector, including existing limitations applied to subcontracting chains and/or to the use of temporary work agencies or other types of intermediaries. As an introduction to the mapping, the External Expert is expected to look into EU legislation on public procurement, posting of workers, etc... to provide background information. The mapping of the national legislations should cover all EU Member States and EEA.
- To present the results of the study in one of the meetings of the project (i.e. planned for February 2026 – to be confirmed).
- The study should entail a maximum amount of 15-20 pages.
- The deadline to provide the study is end October 2025.

### 3.2. Required Expertise

The External Expert for the DESOCO 3 project should have a deep understanding of EU and national labour laws and other relevant legislation. They must be adept in legal research, analysis, and the presentation thereof. Experience in the construction sector or similar industries is desirable. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to communicate

complex legal concepts clearly to non-legal stakeholders and work collaboratively with a multi-disciplinary team. Strong analytical skills, attention to detail, and the capacity to foresee and mitigate legal risks are essential.

#### 4. Contract Details

A contract will be formed between the FIEC and the chosen External Expert, in compliance with the financial regulations of the European Commission.

The chosen External Expert must not form any subcontract without the FIEC's written prior approval. Any such subcontract must contain equivalent ("back-to-back") obligations and forbid any further subcontracting.

FIEC will submit to the chosen expert a draft contract that includes "back-to-back" obligations from the agreement between the European Commission and the FIEC. This will also apply to relationships between the External Expert and any approved subcontractors.

#### 5. Time Schedule and Reporting Requirements

The time schedule for the DESOCO 3 project's activities is defined within the project description. It is the responsibility of the External Expert to ensure that its tasks are completed within the given timeframe.

The External Expert is also expected to maintain consistent communication with the FIEC's project manager on the following key issues:

- a) Progress of the mapping study
- b) Resolution of any issues or concerns and ensuring the steady progress of the project.

#### 6. Payment Terms

Payments for the services rendered will be executed in accordance with the European Union's Financial Guidelines. The External Expert will receive remuneration once the assigned tasks have been performed satisfactorily and approved by the FIEC and the EFBWW. This approval will be confirmed through the submission of invoices by the service provider after the completion and acceptance of the tasks. The invoices should detail the services provided.

## 7. Selection Criteria for the External Expert

The External Expert will be chosen based on the following criteria, in line with the provisions of the Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU, Article 58:

- a) Eligibility to perform the professional activity;
- b) Economic and financial stability;
- c) Technical and professional competence.

Please note, any tenders failing to meet all the above criteria will not proceed to the next stage of the selection process. Furthermore, bids exceeding the defined maximum budget for this project will be automatically excluded. It is crucial that tenderers ensure their submissions are compliant with these requirements to be considered for the role.

## 8. Award Criteria

The contract will be conferred to the applicant whose tender offers the most economically advantageous solution, considering the following factors:

- Expertise in legal environment related to the construction industry (30%)
- Expertise in EU law (20%)
- Prior experience working with social partners (20%)
- Quality and breadth of the network of national experts (15%)
- Language (EN) and communication skills (10%)
- Price (5%)

Given the project's co-funding by the European Commission, contracts will not be awarded to any bidder whose tender surpasses the amount endorsed by the European Commission for this task, i.e., 40 000 euros (amount is inclusive of VAT and all social charges).

## 9. Content of the tenders

We invite all interested parties to submit their tender which should include the following elements:

- a) The proposed structure and methodology for achieving the project objectives and carrying out the anticipated tasks.
- b) A detailed pricing structure or offer for the project.
- c) The curriculum vitae of the individual(s) who will be involved in the project, demonstrating relevant expertise and experience.

d) Examples of similar projects or initiatives that the tenderer has undertaken previously, to illustrate their ability to deliver on the project requirements.

All tenders must align with the specifications laid out in the previous sections of this call for tender.

## 10. Tender Evaluation Procedure

The economically most advantageous tender will be identified by the evaluation of each award criterion on a scale between 0 and 10. These results will be counted using the relative ponderation indicated in % behind the award criteria.

## 11. Instructions for Submission of Tenders

Interested parties should send their bid via one of the following methods:

- a) via e-mail to [c.leforestier@fiee.eu](mailto:c.leforestier@fiee.eu) not later than 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025, or,
- b) by registered mail posted no later than 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (date as postmark), to the following address:

FIEC  
Mrs Christine Le Forestier  
Avenue des Arts 20  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

or,

- c) delivered by hand, i.e. by delivery in person or by an authorised representative (including private courier services) no later than 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 4 p.m. at the same address. Late delivery may lead to the exclusion of the tender from the award procedure for this contract.

For tenders submitted by private courier services and hand delivered requests, the FIEC secretariat will sign a receipt stamped on the date of reception, which will serve as proof of delivery.

## 12. Additional Information

Any request for additional information must be sent in writing to FIEC at the following e-mail address: [c.leforestier@fiee.eu](mailto:c.leforestier@fiee.eu)

The response(s) will be sent to all tenderers by electronic mail.