

## Tender Specifications

Expert work to support the project:  
“Ensuring Future-Proof Jobs in the Paper Sector: Navigating Just Transition and attractiveness of Sustainable Pulp and Paper industries in the European Union”

Call for tenders for subcontracting an expert in the framework of the EU project “Ensuring Future-Proof Jobs in the Paper Sector: Navigating Just Transition and attractiveness of Sustainable Pulp and Paper industries in the European Union”

The project partners will publish the call on their respective websites ([IndustriAll European Trade Union](#) & [Cepi](#)) on the 23/06/2025. The deadline for submission of bids is 23/07/2025 (EOB).

### 1. Context of the project

IndustriAll European trade union (industriAll Europe) and Cepi have engaged in an EU funded project aiming at Navigating Just Transition and attractiveness of Sustainable Pulp and Paper industries in the European Union.

The European Pulp and Paper sector is a frontrunner in the European industrial energy transition, having made substantial investments in green technologies, clean energy, and recycling. It provides essential products while facing transformation related to the green and digital transitions and new challenges for the workforce, which in most cases will need to constantly re-skill and upskill through lifelong learning programs. It also represents a challenge for companies in Europe, especially SMEs. Apart from both transitions, the demographic change, and the lack of attractiveness of the sector pose a obstacle to bring new workers into the industry. The sector directly employs over 180.000 people, while the European forest-based value chain employs 4 million workers.

Social dialogue and the creation of good jobs are crucial elements for building a better society, paving the way to a more just, peaceful, sustainable, and forward-looking transition. For workers, maintaining secure, autonomous, and expressive jobs, given the transition, matters for constructing their life trajectories with their families, building a career, and participating democratically in the challenges their workplace and their communities may face. For employers, enhancing good quality jobs and retaining workers, ensure the attractiveness of the sector, their ability to organise work productively, their employee’s adhesion to organisational goals, and the communities’ acceptance. Furthermore, employers recognise the challenges posed by demographic changes and the need to attract new talent. Enhancing the attractiveness of the sector is vital for sustaining the workforce. All these aspects are essential for confronting the transformation effectively. Cepi and IndustriAll Europe support the project's aim to place employers, workers, and institutions at the center of the transition. Ensuring social sustainability and fairness in the transition process is critical for long-term industry stability.

The project aims at communicating about the potential of the sector, sharing resources, expertise, capacity-building activities, and best practice examples, the project is an example of collaboration between employers’ organisations and trade unions, who share certain common goals in view of the twin transition.

The project will devise a strategy for social partners to manage the transformation, assess the impact on working conditions, and empower stakeholders to discuss these changes. The paper sector will also be significantly impacted by the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, shifting from plastic to single-use paper packaging.

Additionally, the project aims to meet the needs of social partners expressed during the Sectorial Social Dialogue Committees of the paper and pulp industries at the EU level. It seeks to define a Just Transition Pathway for the sector, implementing demands highlighted in the 2022 [Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality](#), and the [EEESC's 2023 Opinion \(NAT-915\)](#), calling for an EU Just Transition Directive. It also seeks to discuss other topics such as the effects of the EUDR, PPWR and 2025 EU Bioeconomy Strategy.

The focus on quality jobs is especially relevant following the Antwerp Declaration, signed in February 2024. This declaration emphasized the industry's commitment to Europe and its transformation, outlining urgent needs to make Europe competitive, resilient, and sustainable amid challenging economic conditions. Around seven associations of paper and pulp industries, along with several industrial trade unions, have signed the declaration, underscoring the transition's importance to various stakeholders. For us, the reference in its statement number 2 to the creation of quality jobs in Europe is further proof of the goodwill of employers, industries, and institutions in supporting a transition that yields positive outcomes for workers and citizens.

Moreover, this project builds on the EU Pact for Skills for Energy Intensive industries which brings together industry representatives, associations, regional clusters, social partners and education and VET providers, in providing concrete solutions for skills forecasting, upskilling and reskilling programs. Through skills forecasting, it supports collective anticipation of the skills gaps Europe will face, considering industry skills needs and demographic skills forecasts for the next five to ten years. It aims to upskilling and reskilling programs to make them more attractive by better engaging and developing talent and improving the retention of skilled individuals.

Furthermore, new green and industrial initiatives and regulations will affect the structure of companies in the sector. This may lead to a new round of restructuring and potential layoffs. Reinforcing social dialogue, anticipate changes, prepare job to job transition and building capacity for social partners is then, fundamental.

#### Outline of the overall project in which the work of the expert will be included

The project will be implemented over 2 years, starting on 1st May 2025 and ending on 31<sup>st</sup> April 2027.

The project will be carried out with the financial support by the European Commission, DG EMPL, under the contract number 101197559 — FUPROJOB4PAPER — SOCPL-2024-SOC-DIALOG.

The project aims to highlight the challenges and benefits of social dialogue in the European Paper and pulp industries' activities towards more sustainability. Therefore, there is a clear need to have an updated diagnostic report on the initiatives and best practices for social dialogue on pulp and paper across Europe, which will also identify the main challenges. There will be a need to discuss the findings with the relevant stakeholders (social partners) and to use an appropriate tool to disseminate these in order to strengthen the capacity of the social partners to intervene in public debates on these matters.

The project will consist of the following elements to achieve its objectives:

- A report to identify all relevant current and future initiatives and best practices of social dialogue on sustainable paper and pulp materials in specific areas that are the most important for social dialogue discussions: working conditions (including skills), attractiveness and job transition. All these areas will also be approached with a gender perspective. This report will be based on desk research who will assess the current state of play of sustainable paper and pulp materials and biorefineries in Europe, mapping and collection of examples via desk research, qualitative interviews, and complemented by the workshops.
- A kick-off event and two workshops in two different regions, which will help to feed the report and also strengthen the capacity of European and national social partners to benefit social dialogue in improving sustainable pulp and paper materials. The workshops will focus specifically on three topics: 1) working conditions (including reskilling and upskilling) 2) attractiveness of the sector 3) job transition that will be further investigated and developed. The workshops will gather the social partners from the regions, but also from other identified regions, to exchange the different challenges.
- A thematic training, where employers and Unions can discuss separately how to address the transition, and the role of the paper and pulp industry as driver of the green transformation.
- The conception of a toolkit and communication materials based on the report to create a tailor-made toolkit and a website (on a participant's website) to communicate, disseminate and promote social dialogue actions for sustainable paper and pulp materials to policy makers, social partners and company representatives (from large to small), in order to equip them to be able to take part in the debate
- The final dissemination based on the presentation and dissemination of collection and analysis of best practices in paper and pulp materials. Final conference aims to present and discuss the outcomes of the project with policy makers. It will contribute to the European debates and policies on sustainable practices in the European paper and pulp industries.

The project is expected to generate positive changes to the role of social dialogue to improve sustainable paper and pulp in Europe, as follows:

- Promoting and strengthening the role of social partners in the paper and pulp industry. Strengthening synergies and exchanges between national and European social partners
- Tracing a path for a Just Transition in the paper and pulp sector.
- Increase in the cooperation between employers and employees' organisations with the focus on the development of sustainable activities.
- Transfer of knowledge from large to small companies and vice-versa
- Reinforcement of the image and public perception of the industry in the circular economy and the bioeconomy.
- Promotion of the attractiveness of the sector, especially directed at the youth.
- Enhancement of the understanding of the challenges of sustainable pulp and paper industries in Europe (including the role of social dialogue)
- Building of a European database of social dialogue best practices, challenges, and opportunities for sustainable raw materials at European, national, sectoral and company level.

## **2. Work plan for the overall project in which the work of the expert will be included**

The project will be implemented in five stages:

- 1) The first stage will start with the kick-off activities: setting up of the Steering Committee and first meeting to pave the way for the implementation of the project. It will be followed by the tendering for external expertise and the selection of the expert for data collection and analysis.
- 2) The second phase is dedicated to the collection of examples of best practices of social dialogue in European paper and pulp industries and the analytical work of the expert.
  - A kick-off event will be held to present the project and its orientation and launch the research on good practices.
  - The external consultant will begin the data collection via desk research and interviews.
  - The Steering Committee will discuss and prepare the two workshops and the training session.
  - The two workshops will be held to examine the role of social dialogue in sustainable and responsible domestic extraction and collect data and present some concrete examples in the different regions.
- 3) The third phase consists of the development of a toolkit of best practices and communication materials based on the findings of the report.
- 4) The fourth phase is dedicated to dissemination and the final conference. The conference will be the occasion to present findings and tools with a wider audience: participants from the social partners' organisations, representatives of the EU institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, national authorities, etc.).
- 5) The fifth stage will see the compilation of all the communication materials and reports, dissemination via different channels, evaluation with the Steering Committee and decisions on follow-up activities.

### **3. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor**

Given the information around the project outlined above, the subcontractor is required to develop a research and deliver a report to identify the social pillar of sustainable paper and pulp industries, what is a just transition in the paper and pulp sector and how social dialogue help to achieve this. The report will map relevant initiatives and best practices of social dialogue on paper and pulp in three specific areas that are the most important for social dialogue discussions: working conditions (including skills), attractiveness of the sector, the job transition, each time at the European, national, sectoral and company level. This report will be based on desk research to assess the European paper and pulp industry work towards more social sustainability, mapping and collection of examples via desk research, qualitative interviews, and complemented by the workshops.

More specifically, the tasks of the subcontractor will be the following

- Establish a global assessment of the current and future trends of the paper and pulp industry in Europe as a background for the report
- Establish a global assessment of the social dialogue and industrial relations in the sector
- Identified, with the help of the project's team, relevant areas of "just transition" and trace a just transition pathway, and how social dialogue can help to achieve this
- Collect, map, analyse and report on examples and good practices of social dialogue initiatives at the company and sectoral level using background information on the role of social dialogue in "paper and pulp industries" (desk research and examples/best practices and collection of initiatives)

- These collection and analysis will be based on
  - Desk research
  - Interviews
  - 2 workshops and one training session that will be co-organised with the project's team
- **Draft a preliminary report** based on this collection and analysis of examples and good practices of social dialogue initiatives. (in English)
- **Draft a final report** taking into consideration the review of the preliminary report by the project's team and the steering committee. Approximate number of pages: 60. **Deadline:** Final report to be published by Month 21 of the Project- January 2027. (in English)
- **Draft a short and accessible guideline** with the recommendations will be provided in a range of languages which will be distributed to paper and pulp workers, employers, and relevant stakeholders: around 6 pages on Recommendations on Just Transition for the sector. **Deadline:** Final guidelines to be published by Month 21 of the Project- January 2027. (in English). Contribution to the development of a toolkit of best practices and communication materials on the findings of the report.
- Participate and co-organize the kick off meeting (9<sup>th</sup> of October 2025) 2 workshops, the training session and the final conference
- Participate in the steering committee (3 online meetings by updating steering committee members on the drafting of the report, collecting inputs and updating the report)
- Participate in the sectoral social dialogue committee for paper and pulp industry meeting if needed (potential dates in 2025 are 16 September and 24 November)
- Work in close coordination with industriAll Europe and Cepi throughout the project
- Potential identification of recommendations to improve social dialogue practices in the sector

#### **4. Guidance and indications on tasks execution and methodology**

The research and report have to be produced taking into consideration the aims of the project. For this, the subcontractor will work under the supervision and guidance of the industriAll Europe and Cepi's project team and the project's Steering Committee.

Task execution shall be in direct and constant contact with industriAll Europe and Cepi ; drafts of the research and reports shall be revised jointly by Cepi and industriAll Europe before being published.

#### **5. Expertise, experience and skills required**

The drafting of the report requires sound and proven expertise in the following fields:

- Expertise on European paper and pulp industry and its social dialogue and industrial relations
- Experience in working on European level projects;
- Experience in working with trade unions and employers' organisations at both European and national level.

Skills required:

- Proven ability to carry out in-depth research

- Proven ability in collecting best practices, analyse them and compile them with good communication style
- Proven research skills, including identifying stakeholders and conducting interviews and collecting good practices;
- High proficiency in English: ability to draft documents and make presentations in English;
- Ability to work within specified deadlines and to respect budgetary limits;
- Availability to participate to meetings of the Steering Committee (online meetings);
- Availability to travel across Europe (travels for 2 workshops, interviews, training and final conferences)

#### **6. Payments and standards contracts:**

The contract will be drawn up between industriAll Europe and the contractor. A regular contract will be signed, including the description of the activities and conditions included in the present invitation to tender. Terms of payment will be similar to those provided by the European Commission. They will be specified in the contract to be signed.

#### **7. Price:**

The maximum funding for this work is EUR 61 500 euros (all taxes and charges included).

Travel and accommodation costs for the major activities (workshops, final conference and travels for the research) will be reimbursed separately by industriAll Europe, upon presentation of justification documents (invoices, boarding passes, tickets) and following EU reimbursement rules. Any logistical costs that occur in the framework of the research are included in the price for expertise.

#### **8. Selection:**

The selection of experts will be made on the basis of the following:

- As a basic principle the contract will be awarded to the tender offering best value for money
- CV of the tender that demonstrates relevant experience in the project (expertise in social dialogue and just transition, expertise in paper and pulp and industrial relations in the sector)
- Knowledge of the European paper and pulp industry sector
- Knowledge of social dialogue and industrial relations at all levels
- Demonstration of expertise including a presentation of a study approach to be included in the bid
- Previous experience and familiarity with the work of (European) Social Partners and European Social Dialogue Committees
- English language proficiency/ability to deliver the project outcomes in proficient English.

#### **9. Award criteria:**

The contract will be awarded on the basis of the contractor that submits the bid demonstrating the best value for money taking into account all the selection criteria and no award will be made if the bidders fail to achieve 70% in the evaluation of the bids against the selection criteria.

#### **10. Content and presentation of the bids:**



The bids should contain 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, in particular:
  - Description of relevant professional experience with emphasis on the specific fields covered by the invitation to tender;
  - Detailed curriculum vitae of key coordinator and of the other team members;
  - 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. Links to publications and previous projects/works sustaining experience are strongly encouraged and appreciated.
  - The detailed list of international partners/networks the applicant is used to work with and the references of the specific related achievements
- Specific information concerning the proposed methodology for delivering the tasks listed in part 4.

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.

**11. Presentation of the bids:**

The bids should be submitted in English to industriAll Europe, Juan Jose Luis Delgado [juanjose.luisdelgado@industriall-europe.eu](mailto:juanjose.luisdelgado@industriall-europe.eu) and Cepi, Giulia Fadini [g.fadini@cepi.org](mailto:g.fadini@cepi.org)

The short-listed candidates may be invited to present their bids to the project's team composed of the secretariat of Cepi and industriAll Europe.

**12. Deadline for submission of the bids**

The complete bid should be sent to the above-mentioned e-mail address with a request for confirmation of receipt at the latest on **23 July 2025** at **EOB**.