

Request for Proposal

Social Media management and employee advocacy tool

July 2023, Darmstadt, Germany

1. Context

EIT Manufacturing is focused on promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and education in the domain of Manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together leading organisations along the entire value chain from smaller companies to larger industry, excellent academic and research institutions, as well as public sector organisations, to promote the transformation of manufacturing towards the digital economy, towards the circular economy and the decarbonisation of industry, by removing barriers to innovation, promoting talent and education and leveraging enabling technologies.

EIT Manufacturing Central gGmbH is a non-profit limited liability company under German law (Register No HRB 99846, Amtsgericht Darmstadt) created in 2019 and responsible for EIT Manufacturing activities in Germany, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland and Ukraine.

Since its foundation, the company, and the communication team specifically, has grown considerably and currently has five full-time employees focused on communication and dissemination. Participation in funded projects is one of the reasons for this growth, as EIT Manufacturing Central leads communication and dissemination work packages in several funded projects. Social Media activities in a variety of channels are an integral part of these funded projects which all start from scratch and seek to amplify any activity to reach maximum impact. Additionally, the communication team contributes to the EIT Manufacturing social media channels as well as providing content for several colleagues to post.

Currently, the team lacks overview of all social media activities from EIT Manufacturing and the projects, thus missing opportunities to create synergies. Processes to create content for the social media channels are diverse, and processes to post fully manual, as no social media management tool is in place for the projects. If content is created for colleagues, double work ensues as they have to do the posting and the tagging of profiles themselves after the communication team has researched correct links themselves. In case of absence from work, stepping in – especially if needed spontaneously – is time-consuming and prone to mistakes. And last but not least, involvement of partners in sharing content is laborious, involves alerting them via email and often simply generates a like or a share without any comment- not ideal in terms of visibility.

In a nutshell, EIT Manufacturing Central seeks to

- create synergies between projects to better leverage their audiences
- streamline social media processes
- make sure that colleagues can step in for one another in case of absences

2. Description

This Request for Proposals (RfP) aims to collect offers for the use of a social media management and employee advocacy platform. EIT Manufacturing Central invites offers for a pilot period of one year within its organisation. If the pilot phase is successful, the solution may be rolled out to the entire EIT Manufacturing group. This roll-out will be covered by a separate RfP and will be subject to an open competition among other potential suppliers.

Success of the pilot depends on usability of the platform (measured by feedback from the communication team and advocacy platform users) and the impact on the development of social media channels (measured by engagement rate of the official channels and amount of content shared). Assessment shall ensue after nine months of the usage of the platform so that the continuation of the service can be assured.

The maximum budget that can be allocated to this RfP is 45,000 EUR net of VAT. EIT Manufacturing Central gGmbH does not have an obligation to allocate the maximum amount.

3. Deliverables

We expect a social media management and employee advocacy tool that allows to unite as much of the social media content planning, generation, approval, posting and analysis process as well as the option to offer content to share to people external to the communication team.

The social media management tool should enable

- Editorial planning for several audiences
- Visual creation via Canva integration and image upload
- Text creation
- Integration of artificial intelligence to diversify content
- Content creation for different channels in one step
- Set-up of approval processes
- Tagging of profiles (LinkedIn)
- Scheduling of posts for LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook
- Support scheduling through analysis of user behaviour
- Analysis of campaigns for improvement of social media activities

The employee advocacy tool should enable

- The communication team to provide content to project partners and EIT Manufacturing in a way that they can pick and post the content without the need to customise or alter it
- The communication team to set filters for the posts according to project or/and interest so that partners are only shown posts of interest to them
- Project partners and EIT Manufacturing to pick content so that it is posted from personal accounts, not shared
- Project partners and EIT Manufacturing employees to easily access content that they can share through a web and a mobile application as well as Microsoft Teams integration
- Project partners and EIT Manufacturing to easily modify and individualise content they want to share

It is mandatory that all requirements are covered by one platform with one login required for social media management and the employee advocacy platform and that content does not have to be created twice.

Access requirements

- Five persons (the communication team) will access all functionality of the tool from content planning to analysis
- At the start, 100 project partners and EIT Manufacturing employees should be able to pick content
- There needs to be flexibility to allocate licenses – if persons leave a project and are replaced, the license should be transferred, but not deduced from the full number of licences
- Upgrade needs to be possible at any time, adding licenses for project partners and employees, in case new projects start or projects gain new partners

4. Timeline

Activity	Responsible	Date
RFP Opening	EIT Manufacturing Central	24 July 2023
Submission of Proposals	Suppliers	4 August 2023
Evaluation and notification of award	EIT Manufacturing Central	11 August 2023
Stand still period	EIT Manufacturing Central	18 August 2023
Contract Signature	EIT Manufacturing Central / Supplier	21 August 2023
Project Start	EIT Manufacturing Central / Supplier	1 September 2023
End pilot phase	EIT Manufacturing Central / Supplier	31 August 2024

5. Proposal submission procedure

Please send your proposal to central@eitmanufacturing.eu by 4 August 2023.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Timely received proposals submitted by the tenderers will be examined, evaluated, and compared in accordance with the following criteria and the contract shall be awarded to the highest-ranked tenderer. The decision will be made according to the “Best Value for Money” principle.

- a. Quality of the proposal regarding implementation (40% of decision weight)
- b. Price (30% of decision weight)
- c. References (30% of decision weight)

Each bid will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria above. Compliance with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, and absence of conflict of interest will be ensured.

The successful and unsuccessful tenderers will be informed in writing (via email) about the result of the award procedure. In case the winning tenderer is unable to enter the contract, EIT Manufacturing Central may decide to contract the supplier receiving the second-highest ranking. Proposals must be submitted by e-mail within the opening period of the request for proposal. All proposals received after the deadline will be rejected. In duly justified cases, however, no later than 1 calendar day before the original deadline, the submission deadline can be extended.

Upon request from the tenderer concerned, EIT Manufacturing Central will as quickly as possible, and in any event within 15 calendar days from receipt of a written request, inform:

- any unsuccessful candidate of the reasons for the rejection of its request to participate,
- any unsuccessful tenderer of the reasons for the rejection of its tender, including, if this is the case, its decision that the works, supplies or services do not meet the performance or functional requirements,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the characteristics and relative advantages of the tender selected as well as the name of the successful tenderer or the parties to the awarded contract,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the conduct and progress of negotiations and dialogue with tenderers.

The information referred to above may be withheld where the release of such information would be contrary to the public interest, would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of an economic operator, or might prejudice fair competition between economic operators.

Should there be a suspicion that the provider will not be able to perform according to the price offered, EIT Manufacturing Central has the right to ask for explanations and may reject the tender where the evidence supplied does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or cost proposed.

7. Complaint procedure

Tenderers believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. Appeals shall be addressed to EIT Manufacturing Central only via the following email address legal@eitmanufacturing.eu . The tenderers have 3 days to file their complaints from the date of receipt of notification of the results.

In your application to EIT Manufacturing Central the complainant shall explain what procedural aspects they consider having been violated along with any recommendations or remarks. Such claims need to be supported with data and facts and relevant documentation. An appeal whose sole purpose is to obtain a second evaluation for no reason other than that the complainant disagrees with the final award decision is to be rejected.

8. Negotiations & Clarifications

Negotiations can be held in the following cases:

- if it is identified that the scope of services issued by EIT Manufacturing Central is not detailed enough, incomplete or some areas are lacking crucial information to complete the procedure for direct awards
- if EIT Manufacturing Central has the intention to reduce the offered prices to find the best value for money
- if all submitted prices are above the planned budget and it is in everyone's interest to finish the procedure with success – in that case, price negotiation can take place. During price negotiation, all tenderers are called to lower their prices by the same deadline in written form

EIT Manufacturing Central can organise as many rounds of negotiation as needed during the procedure to reach the highest quality of proposals and the best price.

Whenever possible, the negotiations should be carried out in writing, however, in special cases, video conferences or even live can be organised. EIT Manufacturing Central also reserves the right to invite 5 of the tenderers to an individual meeting before the final award of the contract to clarify details and ambiguities.

In case of obvious or perceived errors or omissions in the RfP, tenderers can request additional information or clarifications by the deadline provided in the above timeframe through an email to central@eitmanufacturing.eu.

Upon receipt of the bids, they will be reviewed, and additional details will be requested from the tenderers as needed. The requests as well as the answers are to be submitted written by e-mail. Where information or documentation to be submitted by tenderers is incomplete or erroneous or where specific documents are missing, EIT Manufacturing Central staff may request the party concerned to submit, supplement, clarify or complete the relevant information or documentation within 2 days.

Bid preparation costs are not reimbursable and must be borne by the tenderers.

EIT Manufacturing Central owns all bids received in this RFP. Proprietary information of vendors in the bids will be kept strictly confidential. The offers as well as the contract may be submitted for audits.

9. Contract

The final award does not yet constitute the Contract. The Contract will be concluded at the time of signature by the Supplier and EIT Manufacturing Central. The winning supplier will be sent the contract to be signed (indicating the deadline by which the signed contract should be returned to EIT Manufacturing Central).

The invoicing will be based on a mutually agreed schedule; it will be detailed in the contract. The contract will be awarded until the beginning of 2024. The tenderer agrees that the total value of the contract to be signed with EIT Manufacturing Central for 12 months will in no way exceed the bid (the amount contained in the offer) of the tenderer.

The awarded supplier will be requested to sign Standard Contractual Clauses (SCC) if no other GDPR-compliant safeguards exist, and the supplier is located in a country for which the EU commission has not issued an adequacy decision.

10. Cancellation of the proposal procedure

In the event of cancellation of the proposal procedure, EIT Manufacturing Central will notify tenderers of the cancellation. In no event shall EIT Manufacturing Central be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of a proposal procedure, even if EIT Manufacturing Central has been advised of the possibility of damages.

The tenderer shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). S/he should inform the EIT Manufacturing Central team immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

The supplier cannot be an EIT Manufacturing Partner or Activity Partner. Any bid from such an economic operator will be rejected.

Tenderers will be excluded if:

- a. they are being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations; they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- b. they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the EIT Manufacturing Central can justify;
- c. they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes by the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or any other country of the EU;
- d. they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the EU's financial interests;

- e. following a procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the EU budget, they have been declared in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

The tenderers must not be in a situation of a conflict of interest, and they have sufficient economic and financial capacity, technical and professional capacity and legal and regulatory capacity to perform the requested services. Additional evidence or declarations might be requested by the contracting authority.

EIT Manufacturing Central reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud. If substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud are discovered after the award of the Contract, EIT Manufacturing Central may refrain from concluding the Contract.