



Request for Proposals (RfP)

Consultancy Services for Advisory Board Members
March 2024

1. Overview

1.1. The EIT Manufacturing

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

EIT Manufacturing is an association under the law 1901 created in 2019. Along with the EIT Manufacturing there are 8 (eight) other KICs with the aim to lead the action and create services across Europe, improving the competitiveness of European companies.

EIT Manufacturing (EITM) invites proposals from qualified experts to join the Advisory Board for the project DTTI (Deep Tech Talent Initiative). The selected experts will provide advice, consult on strategic aspects of the project, and participate in the Advisory Board and / or team meetings related to strategic topics within the project scope. Interested professionals can submit a proposal containing the requirements described in this RfP within the specified timeframe.

1.2. The DTTI initiative

The Deep Tech Talent Initiative is a pioneering program led by the European Institute of Technology and Innovation (EIT) that will skill one million people within deep tech fields. Deep tech innovations – cutting-edge technological solutions combining fields of science and engineering in the physical, biological and digital spheres – are indispensable in addressing the most pressing global challenges.

The Deep Tech Talent Initiative (DTTI) aims to skill one million people within deep tech areas over the next three years (beginning 2023 – end 2025).

To leverage new technologies, enable green and digital transition, and maintain competitiveness and technological sovereignty, Europe needs access to skilled talent. However, given the speed of technological changes, the demand for skills has been increasing in various industries across Europe, creating the proverbial “skills gap”.

The EIT aims to address this skills gap, in line with the European Commission’s New European Innovation Agenda by developing a strong deep tech talent pool across all Member States. The European Commission has entrusted the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) with the mission of training one million individuals in Deep Tech between 2023 and 2025. As Europe’s largest innovation ecosystem, the EIT is well placed to mobilise its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), as well as its network of 3 400+ partners and 70+ hubs across Europe to develop state-of-the-art deep tech education programmes.

The main objective of Deep Tech Talent Initiative (DTTI) is to attract and engage stakeholders, pledgers, and resources to train one million deep tech talents in three years. The DTTI specifically targets the following categories: (a) Young people and pupils not yet in higher education; (b) Students in higher education; and (c) Adult professionals in organisations and job markets. The DTTI project was launched in October 2022, became operational in January 2023, and is planned until the end of December 2025.

More information available on the initiative’s website: <https://www.eitdeeptechtalent.eu/the-initiative/>

2. General objectives and scope of work

2.1. General objectives

The Advisory Board will consist of a **maximum of 10 experts** nominated by various Knowledge Innovation Communities (KICs) to assist with community outreach, strategic planning, and related activities.

The selected experts will be compensated for their services **at an hourly rate of EUR 170 (one hundred seventy euros), not exceeding the maximum amount of EUR 1.700 (one thousand seven hundred euros) per year**, inclusive of meeting attendance and yearly report production. Additionally, travel expenses for in-person meeting participation will be reimbursed.

The Services contract will have maximum duration by the end of December 2025.

The Board members will be expected to attend 3-4 meetings a year, mostly online. They might be invited to join the DTTI team for relevant events. They would be asked to help the DTTI team to reach out to potential partners within their network or ecosystem.

At the end of the year, they will be required to provide a brief report on their activities.

The contract to be awarded shall be understood as a service agreement for the provision of deliverables and shall not, under any circumstances, establish an employer-employee with EIT Manufacturing.

2.2. Detailed scope of work

The consultants will be responsible for:

- Providing expert advice and insights on matters related to deep tech areas of their expertise, innovation and education.
- Participating in 3-4 meetings per year, primarily conducted online on the dates to be agreed upon and set by EIT Manufacturing.
- Assisting with community outreach and strategic planning activities.
- Acting as ambassadors of the Deep Tech Talent initiative.

2.3. Proposal Requirements

Interested candidates are required to submit a Commercial Proposal containing:

1. A comprehensive CV (for natural persons), including Details of prior experience with activities related to the scope of work and a link to their LinkedIn profile
 - 2. Information regarding the candidate's location (city) and physical workspace.
 - 3. A one page cover letter, detailing their interest, ability and capacity to contribute to the Advisory Board activities, such as outreach and strategic planning.

The documentation of the Supplier must be submitted in: (i) proper (legible) scanned and non-editable PDF; (ii) English language; (iii) respecting the deadline mentioned in this RfP; (iv) respecting a concise and clear manner and (v) must be submitted along with the documentation required in this RfP including its Annexes.

2.3. Eligibility Requirements

Candidates must:

- Have their place of business in the European Economic Area (EEA).
- Demonstrate fluency in English.
- Possess previous experience relevant to the activities outlined in the RfP.
- Not being currently employed by EIT or any of the KICs of the Initiative.
- Not be involved in any conflicts of interest or other disqualifying scenarios.

3. Proposal Process

3.1. Estimated Timeline

The deadline to submit the offer is **21st March, 2024**. The **indicative** timeline for the call for proposals is as follows:

Activity	Responsible	Date
RFP opening	EIT Manufacturing	1 st March, 2024
Offer submission deadline	Supplier	21st March, 2024
Selection of candidates	EIT Manufacturing	22 th -29 th March, 2024
Notification of selected and non-selected candidates	EIT Manufacturing	3 th April, 2024
Contract signature	EIT Manufacturing	8 th April, 2024
Kick-Off	EIT Manufacturing & selected supplier	9 th April, 2024

All offers shall be submitted within the above-mentioned deadline to the following link: <https://eit-manufacturing.prioritize.linksquares.com/new-task?token=eqfghK7TdycO3ZdVaPfVqgS5gx2LiEf2lmaueYxnGfUzCJhpKHMNjUwW1oN-KF7i>

To start your application, please click on the link above and then click on "General request- Make a request to the legal team for work".

Then, please, fill in the fields with the description/data of the RfP you are applying for. Note that the Requester's name and email should be your name and email.

After completing the information, upload your proposal in the "attachments" option at the bottom of the screen, and click "Submit Task" to finalize your application.

Please notice that you will not receive any confirmation on your e-mail. However, you should ensure that this message appears to you on the screen after submitting your proposal: "Task created successfully".

If you have any questions, please contact us at the following email address: procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu

4. Evaluation of Proposals

4.1. Selection Criteria and Award Notification

Timely received proposals submitted by the applicants will be examined, evaluated, and compared in accordance with the following criteria and the contract shall be awarded to the highest ranked applicant.

The decision will be made according to the “Best Value for Money” principle. The award criteria will be the following:

- a) Willingness and ability to contribute to the scope of work (50%).
- b) Good knowledge on the activities of the DTTI project (20%).
- c) Prior experience to the activities related to the scope of the project (30%).

An Evaluation Committee of External Evaluators containing at least 3 (three) members, one representing EIT Manufacturing and another two coming from another KICs of the project or from EIT, will be established. Each bid will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria outlined in this RfP.

The 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 may decide to contract the supplier receiving the second highest ranking.

In duly justified cases, however, no later than 1 (one) calendar day before the original deadline, the submission deadline can be extended.

Upon request from the tenderer concerned, EIT Manufacturing will as quickly as possible, and in any event within 15 (fifteen) 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 candidate of the reasons for the rejection of its proposal, including, if this is the case, its decision that the works, supplies or services do not meet the performance or functional requirements,
- any candidate that has made an admissible proposal of the characteristics and relative advantages of the proposal selected as well as the name of the successful candidate or the parties to the awarded contract,
- any candidate that has made an admissible proposal of the conduct and progress of negotiations and dialogue with candidates.

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 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.

4.2. Exclusion criteria

The candidate will be excluded from participation in the current procedure, if him/her or the entity which is represented by him/her:

- a) it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;
- b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the Tenderer is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;
- c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the Tenderer is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the Tenderer belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - i. fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract;
 - ii. entering into agreement with other Tenderers with the aim of distorting competition;
 - iii. violating intellectual property rights;
 - iv. attempting to influence the decision-making process of the contracting authority during the procurement procedure;
 - v. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the procurement procedure; it has been established by a final judgment that the Tenderer is guilty of fraud, corruption or money laundering.
 - vi. The proposal does not meet the requirements described of this Request for Proposals.
 - vii. **Any evidence of a conflict of interest discovered during the evaluation process will render the candidate's application invalid. Candidates are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest that may compromise the fairness and integrity of the selection process. Failure to provide accurate and complete information regarding conflicts of interest may result in disqualification from consideration for the project or opportunity outlined in this Request for Proposals (RfP). The EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to assess and determine the impact of any conflicts of interest on the impartiality and objectivity of the selection process.**

4.3. Conflict of Interest and Evaluation Process Clause:

All applicants are prohibited from engaging in any situation that may configure conflict of interest throughout the entire Request for Proposal (RfP) process.

Evaluators responsible for assessing the received offers shall be external to the EITM to ensure impartiality and eliminate any potential bias. These external Evaluators will be appointed to objectively evaluate the offers and select the most suitable candidate(s) based on merit and compliance with the RfP requirements.

The Partners of EIT Manufacturing are allowed to participate in the bid process, provided they adhere to the conflict of interest rules and instructions outlined by the European Institute of Technology – EIT (please see the Annotated Grant Agreement, rules of the MGA set out in Articles 6.1 and 6.2 and the specific rules for KIC Partners set out in Annex 5 of the HE MGA). This includes ensuring a clear separation of tasks implemented under a grant agreement and the provision of services. The entity/candidate should not engage in similar projects that may compromise the impartiality and fairness of the selection process.

To be eligible to sign the contract for the provision of services with the EITM, the selected entity/candidate must demonstrate a clear division of tasks implemented as a sub-contractor or recipient of financial support. Compliance with the rules of sub-contracting or procurement is crucial for maintaining eligibility.

Applicants that have any current employment and/or work relationship with Knowledge Innovation Community (KICs) that implement the Deep Tech Talent Initiative are now allowed to participate in this Bid.

Failure to adhere to the conflict of interest rules and instructions may result in the cancellation of the services contract between the parties involved.

4.4. 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 only via the following email address procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu. The tenderers have **5 (five) days** to file their complaints from the date of receipt of notification of the results.

In your application to EIT Manufacturing the complainant shall explain what procedural aspects they consider having been violated along with any recommendations or remarks. Such charges need to be supported with data and facts and, if possible, – 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.

4.5. Negotiations & Clarifications

Negotiations can be held in the following cases:

- if it is identified that the scope of services issued by EIT Manufacturing is not detailed enough, incomplete or some areas are lacking crucial information to complete the procedure for direct awards;
- if EIT Manufacturing 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 everyone's interest to finish the procedure with success, in that case, price negotiation can take place. During a price negotiation, all tenderers are called to lower their prices by the same deadline in a written form.

EIT Manufacturing can organize as many rounds of negotiation as it is needed during the procedure in order to reach the highest quality of offers and the best price.

Whenever possible, the negotiations should be carried out in writing, however, in special cases, video conference or even live negotiation can be organized. EIT Manufacturing also reserves the right to invite the tenderers to an individual meeting before the final award of contract in order 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 email at procurement@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 staff may request the party concerned to submit, supplement, clarify or complete the relevant information or documentation within 2 (two) calendar days.

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

EIT Manufacturing 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.

4.6. 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. 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).

The invoicing will be based on schedule of payments provided in this RfP; it will be detailed in the contract. The contract that will have its maximum duration **by December 2025 with the possibility of renewal** upon request of the EIT Manufacturing.

The contract to be awarded through this RfP shall explicitly be understood as a service agreement for the provision of deliverables and shall not, under any circumstances, establish an employer-employee relationship. The parties involved acknowledge and agree that this contractual arrangement is solely for the purpose of delivering specified services and does not imply or create any form of employment relationship between the contracting parties. The obligations and responsibilities outlined in the contract are strictly limited to the scope of services and deliverables detailed in the RfP, and no employment benefits or rights are conferred or implied by the contractual agreement.

In the event of the need for replacement of the initially selected suppliers, the pre-selected applicants of this Request for Proposal (RfP) hereby acknowledge and agree that EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to contact them for potential engagement in the project. This communication may occur to assess their availability, interest, and ability to fulfill the requirements outlined in the RfP.

The tenderer agrees that the total value of the contract to be signed with EIT Manufacturing 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.

4.7. Additional causes for cancellation of the proposal procedure

In the event of cancellation of the proposal procedure, EIT Manufacturing will notify candidates of the cancellation. In no event shall EIT Manufacturing 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 has been advised of the possibility of damages.

The candidate 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 team immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

Candidates 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 can justify;

c) They have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with 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 organization or any other illegal activity detrimental to the EU' 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.

f) They are or become involved in any of the conflict of interest situations mentioned in this RfP and its Annexes.

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 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 tender, EIT Manufacturing may refrain from concluding the Contract.

This RfP confers no entitlement or expectation for tenderers to enter into a contract with EIT Manufacturing. Consequently, EIT Manufacturing is not obliged to sign a contract with the chosen supplier, whether at present or in the future.

Annexes List

Annex 1 – Tenders Declaration of Honor

Annex 1. Tenders Declaration of Honor

[Place and Date]

[Name of the Legal Entity and Signatory]

I, [Full name of the applicant], hereby declare the following in connection with my application for the “Consultancy Services for Advisory Board Members” - Request for Proposal (RfP):

a) I will commit to 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'). I will inform the EIT Manufacturing immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

b) I accept that during the implementation of the contract and for five years after the completion of the contract, the supplier must keep confidential any data, documents or other material that is identified as confidential at the time it is disclosed ('confidential information').

c) I accept that during the implementation of the contract and for five years after the completion of the contract, the EIT Manufacturing has the right for the purposes of safeguarding its financial interests, the offer and the contract of the supplier may be transferred to internal as well as external audit services.

d) I confirm that I or the entity represented by me is not currently experiencing any of the following situations. If any situation applies, details are provided in an annex to this declaration along with a brief explanation.

- The entity is not bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, and its assets are not being administered by a liquidator or by a court. It is not in an arrangement with creditors, and its business activities are not suspended, nor is it in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national legislation or regulations.
- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing a breach of obligations related to the payment of taxes or social security contributions.
- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing guilt of grave professional misconduct, including but not limited to fraud, violation of applicable laws or regulations, ethical standards, distorting competition, violating intellectual property rights, attempting to influence EU Bodies' decision-making processes, attempting to obtain confidential information, or any other wrongful conduct impacting professional credibility.
- There is no final judgement establishing guilt of fraud, corruption, participation in a criminal organization, money laundering or terrorist financing, terrorist-related offences, child labor, or other forms of trafficking in human beings.
- The entity has not shown significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement, or a grant decision financed by the European Union's budget, leading to early termination, application of liquidated damages, or other contractual penalties, discovered through checks, audits, or investigations.
- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing that the entity has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95.
- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing that the entity has created an entity in

a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social, or any other legal obligations.

- In the absence of a final judgement or final administrative decision in the cases mentioned above, or in the case of point (e), I acknowledge that the Applicant may be subject to:

- i) Facts established in the context of audits or investigations by EPPO, the Court of Auditors, OLAF, or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit, or control performed under the responsibility of the authorizing officer.
- ii) Non-final administrative decisions, including disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics.
- iii) Facts referred to in decisions of persons and entities implementing Union funds.
- iv) Information transmitted in accordance with the Financial Regulation.
- v) Decisions of the Commission or national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

I hereby declare the accuracy and truthfulness of the above statements.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature of the applicant]

