



# TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

Call for tenders ETUC Project 2021-06

## ETUC Call for tenders to subcontract an expert to draft a study on the impact of the EU fiscal rules revision on social spending

This is a call for a subcontractor to provide expertise with a view to support the activities of the Social Protection team under the ETUC project *SociAll – Enhancing social protection for all through the implementation of the EPSR*. More specifically, this call for tenders relates to the drafting of an expert study on the impact of the EU fiscal rules' revision on social spending and specifically on States' expenditure for pensions, health and long-term care.

The ETUC will publish the call on its website, on 14/02/2024, and keep it online for 15 calendar days. **The deadline for submission of bids is 28/02/2024.**

### 1. Background information on the project

The SociALL project aims at reversing the approach to the public expenditure for pensions, healthcare and long-term care from mere “costs of ageing” towards the valorisation of the “**dignity** of ageing” deserved by workers and EU residents in their elderly years. This approach is rooted in the fact that population ageing is not a negative aspect, but rather the positive result of the widespread well-being that social Europe has been able to ensure across decades. Workers' and people's rights must be implemented and their needs met when in old age, the most fragile phase of the life. This is in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights, the solemn engagements of the Action Plan for its implementation, the Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed, the conclusions of the high-level group Report on the Future of Social Protection and the Welfare State in the EU (which provided evidence-based recommendations for the EC and the Member States).

Giving concreteness to these evidence-based, political and legislative outcomes will entail solidarity and equality-based design of social protection systems at Member State level, but also to shape the EU economic governance rules in a more socially-oriented and ultimately fairer manner.

In the context of the right to “age in dignity” for all generations, adequate pensions play a crucial role. The ETUC SociAll affirms that the fiscal sustainability of adequate pensions is enhanced via more inclusive and fairer labour markets, more and better jobs before a reasonable retirement age, more equality and equal opportunities in access to work and employment and better working conditions, fairer wages and contributory policies. The pressure on public expenditure of the demographic trends must not be offloaded onto workers and individuals. If demographic change must be fair and just for all, it is also crucial to achieve a balanced social and economic governance, where fiscal rules serve the social rights and needs of the EU ageing population (see the SociAll study: [Pensions Policy at the European Level - ETUC SociAll](#)).

Public spending is crucial to achieving social objectives. The economic governance rules currently being negotiated (in a triologue phase) will have serious implications for the ability of governments to spend to satisfy needs of dignity and social inclusion and invest in people as recommended by the HLG Report on the Future of Welfare. As such, these rules may constitute a major threat to realising the social objectives of the European institutions. Binding rules also hinder national governments from even



having the possibility of making necessary investments to achieve those objectives, which would render this project priority impossible.

## 2. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor

With this call for tender, the ETUC *SociAll* aims at gathering a research paper that can provide an overview of the implications that the review of the Economic governance rules as resulting from the recent triologue would have on public spending for ageing-related policy (health, pensions and long-term care) and especially on pension policy. The purpose of the study is

- to analyse the approach to social expenditure (especially for old-age rights) in the current and new arrangements
- analyse the risk that social spending will be used as an adjustment variable between the constraints of lowering public debt ratios and the necessary increase in spending for productive transitions and economic security
- to recall the role of social spending both in terms of the well-being of populations and in supporting inclusive and sustainable growth, drawing in particular on the report "The future of social protection and of the Welfare State in the EU".

Taking stock of commonly identified social objectives in line with the ETUC *SociAll* policy, the research should

- very briefly sketch the major lines of the reformed European Economic Governance (EEG) rules, highlighting substantial changes with respect to the set of rules enforced so far;
- focus on how the reformed EEG rules impact the approach to social protection and welfare state;
- focus on the impact the reformed EU economic governance framework will have on Member States' social spending – especially pensions (and if possible also health-care, long-term care, unemployment, dependence, education, family policies, etc.);
- analyse if and how the EEG review allows the protection/enhancement of social investments relative to the achievements of the objectives of the principles in chapter 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights – with a focus on principles 12 Social Protection and 15 Old-age income and pensions;
- in the context of the regime for Member States on fiscal trajectories, public investment and reforms ensuring debt reduction and long-term sustainable growth, highlight the emerging risks (restrictive policies, underestimation of the conjunctural situation, ambiguity of the concept of “prudent level”);
- explain the methodological approach to costs of ageing (pensions in particular) within the DSA analysis; focus on how the costs of an ageing population and the need to ensure a high level of social protection are considered within the framework of the debt sustainability analysis;
- evaluate the pressure that reformed fiscal rules will have on social spending in general and on pension expenditure in particular, providing some country-specific analyses of its constraints on the evolution of social expenditure;
- examine and conclude whether the new rules incentivise/disincentivise public social expenditure and social investment or allow/protect them.



The study will consider the approach promoted by the High-Level Group report on the Future of Social Protection and the Welfare State in the EU (2023), in moving from the assumption that a satisfactory level of social spending should be a priority for the EU and the European budgetary framework should allow this. In the current context, there is still a risk that social spending will be reduced because of the constraints of reducing public debt ratios and the necessary increase in spending for the ecological transition. On the contrary, the role of social spending both in terms of the well-being of the population and in supporting inclusive and sustainable growth is of utmost importance and the new rules should protect social investment expenditure.

The study will serve to provide high-level inputs also to the economic and fiscal governance demands for social protection reforms.

The subcontractor will ensure the proof-read version of the **finalised study of maximum 40 pages**, in French or English, while the ETUC will take care of the translation, layout and publication of the study.

The subcontractor will also produce **some slides or other interim material**, to discuss with the ETUC Steering Committee of the project, 1 month **ahead of the finalisation of the study**, so as to ensure that inputs from the grassroots are taken into consideration and trade union questions are addressed in the paper.

### 3. Expertise, experience and skills required

Sound expertise is required on the following issues:

- Expert knowledge of social protection policy, pension policy and EU fiscal rules
- Experience in working on European level projects
- Good understanding of the European trade union movement.

Sound experience is required in the following areas:

- Carrying out in-depth research;
- Producing practical/pragmatic and comprehensible material for a non-research related public;
- Successful track record of delivering case studies for similar projects, with EU institutions and/or European stakeholders (social partners, NGOs, etc.).

Skills required:

- Proven research, drafting and presentation skills in English or French;
- Ability to work within specified deadlines and to respect budgetary limits;
- Ability to work in a multicultural context and understanding of different industrial relations systems, cultures & traditions;
- Good administration and project management skills.

### 4. Time schedule and reporting

The subcontractor will be asked to perform the above-mentioned tasks by 10/05/2024 – with the material for the exchange on the interim paper by 15/04/2024

The progress and development of the study will be closely followed and monitored through collaboration with the project's Steering Committee composed of the ETUC Social Protection team and the ETUC Social Protection and Pensions Committee. The latter will give feedback on the draft study prior to the final publication.



## 5. Payment

The total maximum budget available for the fees of the subcontractor is as follows:

<b>Contract with ETUC</b>	
<b>Main activities and meetings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Produce a study of maximum 40 pages, touching on the points listed in paragraph 2 of this call, and containing among other elements:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ An introduction</li><li>○ A chapter on the European Economic Governance reform assessing its approach to welfare, including the role of population ageing and need for an adequate level of social protection in it</li><li>○ A chapter assessing the impact of the new framework Member States' social spending, especially on pensions, providing some country-specific examples</li><li>○ A final chapter with inputs on economic and fiscal governance demands and social protection reforms</li></ul></li><li>• Participate in meetings with the Steering Committee to discuss the evolution of the study</li></ul>	
<b>Total budget for the Expertise</b>	<b>€25,000 (VAT and all taxes included)</b>

The subcontractor will be remunerated in various instalments (advance and final payment). This amount covers the fees but does not include the travel and subsistence costs incurred for attending project meetings (such as Steering Committee meetings and workshops, ETUC Committee meetings). These will be covered by ETUC on the basis of EU rules & thresholds (see the EC table of maximum amounts per EU member state).

## 6. Selection criteria

The selection criteria are in particular:

- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills, as required and described in part 3 of this call;
- Quality of the methodology proposed in the offer;
- 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 of Social protection and fiscal policy

## 7. Form, structure and content of the tender

Tenders must be written in English. They must be signed by the tenderer or his/her duly authorised representative and be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures. Tenders must be clear and concise and assembled in a coherent fashion.

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:

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 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 listed in part 2 of this call.

ii) 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.

Prices must be fixed amounts and shall not include travel expenses and daily allowances for the attendance to the Steering Committee meetings and other project events which will be covered by ETUC on the basis of EU rules & thresholds.

The maximum amount available for this contract is EUR 25,000 (VAT and all taxes included).

## 8. Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money, taking into account the specific objectives, requirements and selection criteria of the tender. The principles of transparency and equal treatment will be respected with a view to avoiding any conflicts of interest.

## 9. Content and selection of the bids

**This call for tenders will be published on the ETUC website on 14/02/2024. Offers must be sent at the latest on 28/02/2024.** Offers must be sent to ETUC, in electronic format (by e-mail to [amartin@etuc.org](mailto:amartin@etuc.org)), and refer to our “Call for Tenders – SociAll - Impact of the EU fiscal rules revision on social spending”.

As Steering Committee, the ETUC Social Protection team will assess the bids received. One member of this committee will confirm the date and time of receipt of each bid. The committee members 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.

The 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 Steering Committee and kept for future reference.



This report will include:

1. The name and address of the contracting authority, the purpose and value of the contract;
2. The names of any excluded candidates and the reasons for their rejection;
3. The names of candidates selected for consideration and the justification for their selection;
4. The names of candidates put forward and justification of their choice in terms of the selection or award criteria.