

Request for Proposal

Freelance Communication Manager – Innovation Pillar
May 2023

1. Context

EIT Manufacturing is a leading European innovation community that aims to strengthen the global competitiveness of the manufacturing sector through collaboration and innovation. As one of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities established by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), EIT Manufacturing brings together a diverse network of partners, including industry leaders, research institutions, and educational organizations. By fostering cooperation and knowledge exchange, EIT Manufacturing strives to drive sustainable growth, technological advancements, and societal impact in the manufacturing domain.

The Innovation Pillar plays a pivotal role within EIT Manufacturing by actively driving the development and implementation of cutting-edge innovations in the manufacturing industry. As the driving force behind technological advancements and novel solutions, the Innovation Pillar focuses on identifying key challenges, fostering collaboration, and supporting the creation of innovative projects and ventures. By leveraging the collective expertise of its partners, the Innovation Pillar aims to accelerate the adoption of breakthrough technologies and promote a culture of continuous innovation, enabling European manufacturers to thrive in an increasingly dynamic and competitive landscape.

To ensure the effective execution of its strategic objectives, the Innovation Pillar at EIT Manufacturing seeks the support of a part-time, freelance Communications Manager. The Communications Manager will be responsible for defining the communication strategy of the Innovation Pillar, aligning it with the overarching communications team of EIT Manufacturing. Moreover, the Communications Manager will work closely with various innovation groups to create editorial plans and provide support in implementing the strategy. This includes generating high-quality content for different channels, such as articles, social media posts, and multimedia materials, to enhance the visibility and impact of the Innovation Pillar's activities. The successful candidate should possess strong communication and coordination skills, as well as a solid understanding of the manufacturing sector and innovation ecosystem. Previous experience working with EIT knowledge and innovation communities (KICs) would be a plus.

2. Description

The selected Communications Manager will be responsible for providing comprehensive support in the definition and implementation of the communication strategy for the Innovation Pillar of EIT Manufacturing. This entails working closely with the Innovation Pillar team to understand its objectives, target audience, and key messages. The Communications Manager will contribute to the development of a robust communication strategy that aligns with the broader goals of EIT Manufacturing and effectively communicates the impact and value of the Innovation Pillar's initiatives.

In terms of operational framework, the Communications Manager will collaborate closely with the communications team of EIT Manufacturing, ensuring a coordinated approach and harmonization of messaging across all channels. This includes participating in regular meetings with the communications team, exchanging information, and aligning efforts to optimize the visibility and impact of the Innovation Pillar's activities. The Communications Manager will also work directly with the various innovation groups within the pillar, providing guidance and support in implementing the communication strategy at the group level.

To successfully fulfil these services, the Communications Manager will be expected to create editorial plans, which outline the key content themes, formats, and distribution channels for effective communication. The manager will proactively collaborate with the innovation groups to create engaging and informative content, including articles, blog posts, social media updates, videos, and other relevant materials, to showcase the Innovation Pillar's achievements and disseminate valuable knowledge within the manufacturing community. The maximum budget for the requested services for each three years is 60,000 EUR, meaning 20.000 EUR per year with no binding obligation to purchase for the maximum amount.

3. Deliverables

The Communications Manager will be responsible for delivering the following key items tailored to each service within the Innovation Pillar:

- Strategic Plan: Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that aligns with the objectives of the Innovation Pillar, outlining the key messages, target audience, and channels to effectively promote the general pillar activities, including call for proposals, events, and other relevant initiatives.
- Timeline: Create a detailed timeline that maps out the communication activities and milestones for each service within the Innovation Pillar, ensuring timely and coordinated delivery of communication materials and campaigns.

- Editorial Plans: Develop specific editorial plans for services developed by the Innovation Pillar, identifying the content themes, formats, and distribution channels that will best showcase them. The current services are: Thought Leadership, AGORA (the innovation community's platform for collaboration), Business Intelligence, and Innovation Funding Catalyst (service to support the identification of and application to other European funding schemes). These plans should consider the unique characteristics and objectives of each service to maximize their impact and engagement.
- Contents: Create compelling and informative content tailored for each service within the Innovation Pillar. This includes writing articles, blog posts, social media updates, videos, and other relevant materials that effectively convey the value, achievements, and opportunities associated with the general pillar activities, Thought Leadership, AGORA, Business Intelligence, and Innovation Funding Catalyst. The content should be tailored to the target audience and aligned with the communication strategy.

The communications Manager will contribute to the communication of the following services of the innovation pillar:

- General Pillar Activities: This service encompasses the promotion of various events and initiatives within the Innovation Pillar, including flagship events such as the EIT Manufacturing Summit and the calls for proposals. The Communications Manager will be responsible for creating compelling and informative content that highlights the importance, goals, and outcomes of these activities.
- Thought Leadership: The Communications Manager will play a vital role in promoting thought leadership within the manufacturing domain. This involves showcasing the "Fixing your Future" and "New Manufacturing System" papers, which are strategic publications that provide insights, trends, and recommendations for the industry. The Communications Manager will develop and implement a communication plan that amplifies the significance and key messages of these papers, positioning EIT Manufacturing as a thought leader and driving awareness and engagement within the manufacturing community.
- AGORA: As the innovation community's social network, AGORA serves as a platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and networking among EIT Manufacturing partners. The Communications Manager will support the growth and engagement of AGORA by creating content that promotes the platform's features, benefits, and success stories. By effectively communicating the value and opportunities offered by AGORA, the Communications Manager will encourage participation, interaction, and collaboration among partners, fostering a vibrant and supportive community.
- Business Intelligence: The newly introduced Business Intelligence service provides partners with relevant information tailored to their specific needs. The Communications Manager will work closely with the Business Intelligence team to develop communication materials that effectively communicate the value, benefits, and functionalities of this service. The content will highlight how the Business Intelligence Service enables partners to make informed decisions, capitalize on market opportunities, and enhance their competitiveness in the manufacturing sector.
- Innovation Funding Catalyst: The Innovation Funding Catalyst service plays a critical role in connecting different stakeholders to access public funds for manufacturing innovation projects. The Communications Manager will develop communication materials that showcase the

importance and benefits of this service, emphasizing how it enables partnerships, facilitates funding opportunities, and accelerates the realization of innovative projects. By effectively communicating the value and impact of the Innovation Funding Catalyst service, the Communications Manager will promote engagement and collaboration among stakeholders seeking funding support.

4. Timeline

The selected Communications Manager will be engaged on a part-time, freelance basis until the end of the year. During this period, the Communications Manager will work closely with the Innovation Pillar team, the communications team of EIT Manufacturing, and various innovation groups to define and implement the communication strategy, create editorial plans, and develop content. The Communications Manager will ensure the timely delivery of all agreed-upon deliverables and actively contribute to enhancing the visibility and impact of the Innovation Pillar's initiatives within the manufacturing community.

Deadline to submit the offer: 07/06/2023.

Estimated starting date: 21/06/2023.

Duration of the contract: Up to 3 years.

The indicative timeline for the call for proposals is as follows:

Activity	Responsible	Date
RFP opening	EIT Manufacturing	30/05/2023
Offer submission	Supplier	07/06/2023
Evaluation and notification of award	EIT Manufacturing	14/06/2023
Contract signature	EIT Manufacturing & selected supplier	19/06/2023
Project start (Kick off meeting)	EIT Manufacturing & selected supplier	20/06/2023

5. Evaluation Criteria and Award Notification

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. Price (30%)
- b. Profile background and expertise
 - a. Communications expertise (40%)
 - i. Communication strategy
 - ii. Implementation of strategy
 - iii. Editorial plan
 - iv. Content development.
 - b. Experience with EIT KICs (15%)
 - c. Previous experience in Manufacturing (15%)

An Evaluation Committee of 3 people will be established. Each bid will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria above.

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.

Proposals must be submitted by e-mail within 7 days of the date of notification of the request for proposal. All proposals received after the deadline will be rejected.

In duly justified cases, however, no later than 2 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 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.

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.

5. 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 innovation@eitmanufacturing.eu. The tenderers have three (3) 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.

6. 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 proposals 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 innovation@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 3 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.

7. 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 a mutually agreed schedule; it will be detailed in the contract. The contract will be awarded for one year with the possibility of renewal up to three (3) years. The successful bidder will sign a framework contract with the EIT Manufacturing (A template of this contract is Annexed in this RfP). The tenderer agrees that the maximum amount that can be spent under this framework contract will not exceed 60,000 euros for total duration of framework contract which will be three (3) years. Suppliers will sign specific contracts (a template of which is also annexed to this RfP), each time their services are needed.

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.

8. Cancellation of the proposal procedure

In the event of cancellation of the proposal procedure, EIT Manufacturing will notify tenderers 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 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 team immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

The supplier cannot be a 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 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.

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.