Call for Expression of Interest

European Digital Academy

Consultancy on developing learning pathways and business cases for SMEs

26 August 2021
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1. BACKGROUND

Digital technology has changed the way we work, interact, and do business, opening new opportunities, boosting productivity, and potentially bringing closer the different sectors of society. However, it can also increase inequality between those who can access digital technology and have at least basic skills to use it and those who lag behind – in a Europe where 43% of adults lack basic digital skills\(^1\) such as searching for information online or sending emails.

To address this gap, the Digital SkillUp (DSU)\(^2\) initiative has been launched in early 2020, funded by the European Commission with the support of the European Parliament. Coordinated by European Schoolnet (a network of 34 ministries of education), DSU brings together organisations representing a large segment of industry and citizens organisations in Europe (DIGITALEUROPE, European DIGITAL SME Alliance and Public Libraries 2030) and the Finnish tech-company Reaktor, experienced in online learning technologies.

The core aim of the project is to make basic knowledge about emerging technologies (for example, artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity, blockchain) available and accessible to citizens and SMEs. DSU seeks firstly to meet the needs of citizens of all ages and educational background, fostering understanding on how digital technologies are – and will increasingly be – part of daily life, such as health services, financial transactions, leisure, and shopping. Second, the project will address the needs of SMEs in different sectors and contexts, whose employees face significant challenges in the process of digital transformation and making the most of digital technologies for most business processes, including communication, commerce, security and automation.

One of the core actions of the DSU are to develop innovative training modules on topics such as AI, Blockchain, robotics, cybersecurity and IoT for everyone, etc., which are to be hosted on the Digital SkillUp online training space. Furthermore, the project will build a core community representing key actors (citizens, civil society organisations, SMEs, training providers and content experts).

It is within this context that the European Digital Academy consortium has launched a call for expression of interests for experts to support the consortium with the development of learning pathways (for re-skilling and upskilling) and SME business cases and testimonials. The SME business cases and

\(^1\) Digital Skills for All European, European Union, 2019

\(^2\) Digital SkillUp is the brand name of the outputs created under the European Digital Academy project, funded by the European Commission with support of the European Parliament. The project is dedicated to making basic knowledge on emerging technologies available and accessible to all citizens and SMEs. Its aims to create an online training space that will offer learning content and opportunities on topics like AI, Blockchain, robotics, cybersecurity and IoT for everyone. Website: www.digitalskillup.eu
testimonials will cover the area of emerging technologies and their adoption within SME activities and business processes.

2. THE SERVICES TO BE SUPPLIED

EUN Partnership is looking for experts to provide consultancy on the development of learning pathways (processes/framework for SME to upskills and reskills their staff) and business cases (examples and good practices on both: upskilling and reskilling SME in the area of emerging technologies, as well as the adoption of emerging technologies as a part of their business model and within their workflow, activities, and business processes). The business cases should also be completed with short testimonials from the companies that will be identified together with the contractor / project consortium.

All materials will be licensed under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) and will be freely and openly available on the Digital SkillUp website. The learning pathways and business cases will be also connected with the topics and content of the Digital SkillUp courses: www.digitalskillup.eu/digital-skillup-courses

The experts will be involved in the following activities:
- definition of the final concept for learning pathways and business cases (scope, structure, format etc.).
- development of the learning pathways (guidance, input, and revision).
- identification, selection, and description/presentation of up to 10 business cases and testimonials.

The experts will work in close collaboration with the project team overseeing these activities.

The content development work is planned to take place in the period September 2021 - November 2021. The work is to be delivered between October and November 2021. Exact duration of engagement would depend on the availability of experts and will be negotiated at the contract preparation stage.

More specifically, this call of expression of interest aims to engage field and subject experts in the area of business digitisation, implementation of emerging technologies and upskilling and reskilling processes in SMEs.

3 https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
Upon availability, experts will be involved in a kick-off meeting on scope and work plan with the project team – in September 2021. The experts selected shall have substantial experience in the activities to be carried out, they should be able to work in English, and work during standard office hours.

For all outputs:

- The contractors are expected to do the work themselves.
- Experts will be required to waive IPR of content provided to EUN Partnership AISBL.

The method of appointment of the experts and the contractual conditions are more particularly described in section 3 of this Call.

## 3. THE CONDITIONS

In order to reply to this call, the applicants should express their interest via email, providing the following information and details:

- A Curriculum Vitae in English, including:
  - Information on the expert’s education background and work experience.
  - Experience and examples of work carried-out, similar to the type of tasks and activities, outlined in this call for expression of interest.
- Brief description of the reason why you are responding to this expression of interest, mentioning relevant work, such as:
  - References to work developed on subjects and activities of relevance (projects, publications etc.).
  - Training/pedagogical work on upskilling and reskilling activities for companies/SME and on the subjects of relevance.
  - Business mentoring, advising or other voluntary experience supporting innovation and technology uptake in companies.
  - Public speaking experience on the subjects and activities of relevance.
- Daily rate in Euros.

The selection of the successful applicant will be based on the following criteria:

- The experience of the expert in relation to the services to be performed.
- The cost of the services concerned and the timeliness of the delivery of outputs.
The project Evaluation Committee may decide, at its entire discretion, to give a weighting to the various selection criteria.

In terms of the fees and charges they must be comparable with market prices and values.

Please note that the Evaluation Committee is not bound to make a selection if the offers received are not of sufficient quality or the prices quoted are not within the budget allocated by the funding body. In such circumstances, the consortium may re-issue this Call or cancel it completely.

The project Evaluation Committee may, at its entire discretion, decide to call the highest scoring candidates for an online interview, in order for them to present their offer directly to the Evaluation Committee and to resolve any outstanding issues or questions.

Upon completion of the process of evaluation the results of the selection will be communicated to all the applicants both successful and unsuccessful. Individual contracts will be signed with the successful applicants. No legal obligation will arise until the expert concerned has signed a contract with EUN Partnership.

4. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants will be automatically excluded for selection and from an award if it falls within one of the situations listed below:

(a) They are subject to a conflict of interest.

(b) They are bankrupt or 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;

(c) They have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata.

(d) 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.

(e) They have made false declarations in supplying information required by any public organization as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or grant award procedure or fail to supply this information.

(f) They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which can be justified.
The applicant shall also be automatically excluded if the application together with attached CV is not received by EUN by the deadline listed in the section, Timescales and Deadlines.

5. TIMESCALE AND DEADLINE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The deadline for receipt of applications is 17.00 CET on 15 September 2021 by e-mail.

Interested suppliers may send questions until 02 September 2021 17.00 CET to the address below and answers will be provided by email by 06 September and will be published on the page of the call here: http://www.eun.org/about/vacancies

Following evaluation of the submitted expressions of interest, the decision will be communicated via e-mail to the experts which have submitted their expression of interest.

Interested applicants are invited to send their expression of interest with the information requested in section ‘Conditions’ by e-mail to EUN Partnership at the following address:

Galina Misheva - galina.misheva@eun.org