

Date of publication on the EFEE, ETUCE	1 March 2021
Deadline to respond	24 March 2021

Call for Tender for subcontracting external expertise for the project

European sectoral social partners in education promoting quality of academic teaching and management

Agreement number: VP/2020/001/0003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background	2
1.1. The organization	2
1.2. The project	2
1.2.1. Description	2
1.2.2. Timetable	3
1.2.2.1. Advisory Group meetings	3
1.2.2.2. Interactive Peer Learning Activities (PLAs)	4
1.2.2.3. Final conference	4
2. The expert	4
2.1. Tasks to be performed by the successful candidate	5
2.2. Requirements to be a successful candidate	5
3. Payments and standard contract	6
4. Price	6
4.1. Agreed amount	6
4.2. Other arrangements	6
5. Selection criteria	7
5.1. Award criteria	7
6. Content and presentation of the bids	8
6.1. Content of the bids	8
6.2. Presentation of the bids	8

The European Federation of Education Employers is pleased to launch a call for a subcontractor to provide research expertise in the framework of the implementation of the project “*European sectoral social partners in education promoting quality of academic teaching and management*” supported by the European Commission under the Call VP/2020/001/0003.

1. Background

1.1. The organization

The European Federation of Education Employers (hereafter, EFEE) represents education employers in all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education and research. As a growing network, we currently represent over 50 diverse institutions from 26 countries. These include different national organisations, such as education councils and ministries of education, associations of VET colleges and universities and local and regional authority employers’ organisations.

Our mission is to improve the quality of teaching and school management through European cooperation and dialogue. On the basis of the European Pillar of Social Rights, we raise awareness on and increase commitment to the European policy agenda and influence European policy, making the voices of our members heard. As an officially recognised European sectoral social partner in education (hereafter, ESSDE), we are in constant dialogue with EU institutions as well as other European partners such as trade unions and various education networks.

Against this background, one of our core tasks is the management of European education projects. EFEE continuously runs a great number of projects throughout the year, whose aims are to foster mutual learning as well as the exchange of current challenges and opportunities within the education sector. There are two core features characterizing our projects: firstly, their transnational character and secondly, their strong evidence base. Regarding the former, participants are provided with the opportunity to travel to other European countries and to have exchanges with our members from all over Europe through the facilitation of peer learning activities. Regarding the latter, an external expert is hired for every project in to ensure the high scientific quality of our project results. (Please find a more detailed description of the expected tasks of the external expert *infra*, section 2.1).

1.2. The project

1.2.1. Description

In 2021, EFEE will kick off five new projects complementary to four already running ones. One of these projects, entitled “*European sectoral social partners in education promoting quality of academic teaching and management*”, aims to continue on the work laid out by the ESSDE Work Programme 2020-2021 and its overall goal to realize quality education for all by improving the quality of teaching and school management through European cooperation and dialogue. Quality of teaching and learning in higher education has gained significant momentum on a European level mainly due to the emphasis placed on relevant and high-quality education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as well as the progress made by the Bologna Process regarding structural reform in higher education.

Nevertheless, emerging mass trends including digitalization, migration, adult learning, sustainability and even recent global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, will affect quality in higher education in unprecedented ways and needs to be addressed. Moreover, there remains substantial confusion around the exact definition of quality of learning and teaching as well as quality of management within the higher education sector. These issues will be addressed on a preliminary basis with the publication of the Bologna Follow-up Group's Ministerial Communiqué of Rome (Rome Communiqué), which was adopted in November 2020 during the Ministerial Conference of the EHEA in Rome. In doing so, the Rome Communiqué will lay the groundwork to establish Principles for Quality of Teaching in Higher Education. Nevertheless, while the Rome Communiqué entails a significant step forward regarding the quality of learning and teaching in the EHEA, the social partners in education lament the document's lack in discussing the impact this new reality has on working conditions, working environment and work organization.

Against the backdrop, this 18-months project aims at finding answers to the following key question: "How can social partners in education contribute to the quality of teaching and management in higher education?"

1.2.2. Timetable

In order to deliver on the project objectives, we will organise three events. Two of them are peer learning activities (hereafter, PLAs) taking place in Portugal (for Southern European countries) and the Netherlands (for Northern European countries). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all activities scheduled for the first half of 2020 are foreseen to take place online.

Please, find the preliminary calendar of activities as follows:

Date /Month/Time	Activity	Location
26 March 2021	1 st Advisory Group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (online)
April 2021 (TBD)	1 st meeting external expert	Brussels, Belgium (online)
May 2021 (TBD)	1 st PLA	tbc, Portugal (online)
June 2021 (TBD)	2 nd Advisory Group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (online or on-site)
October 2021 (TBD)	2 nd PLA	tbc, The Netherlands (online or on-site)
May 2022 (1-day) (TBD)	Final conference	Brussels, Belgium (on-site)
May 2022 (TBD)	3 rd Advisory Group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (on-site)

1.2.2.1. Advisory Group meetings

The Advisory Group meetings will bring together representatives from both the European sectoral social partners in education to provide guidance and monitor the project developments and to promote active involvement in the project meetings and dissemination actions among their affiliates. The focal point of these meetings is to agree on basic concepts, setting concrete goals, selecting specific peer learning topics, and preparing groundwork for project meetings. In total, three meetings will take place during the course of the project.

1.2.2.2. *Interactive Peer Learning Activities (PLAs)*

The backbone of the project are the two peer learning activities to Portugal and the Netherlands as well as the desk research performed by the external expert. Both PLAs will be devoted to exchanging knowledge, experiences and challenges between education employers and trade unions representatives on the quality of teaching and management at different higher education institutions. We foresee presentations by BFUG specialists to provide participants with concrete information and tips regarding the quality of teaching and management in the EU as well as presentations by the hosting countries on their specific good practices with regards to this topic. Moreover, we will organize a study visit to the host university as well as plan several working groups throughout the PLA in order to gain as much input from the participants. Envisaged participants are education employers (members of EFEE and potential members) and teacher trade unions (members of ETUCE) from all higher education institutions, including both academic institutions and institutions of applied science, as well as broader employer organisations responsible for higher education, such as Ministries of Education and Science, from diverse geographical backgrounds, more particularly from southern Europe as well as northern Europe.

Ahead of the peer learning visits, the PAG in collaboration with the external expert will send out a survey to all EFEE and ETUCE to get a first insight into their current knowledge, practices and challenges when it comes to the quality of teaching and management in higher education. This survey will feed into the research report as well as shape the programme for the peer learning visits. Consequently, the survey will contribute to the recommendations for improvement for further work in this area by EFEE and ETUCE.

1.2.2.3. *Final conference*

As a final highlight to the project, we will organise one larger dissemination conference in Brussels devoted to sharing the findings of the project (from the PLAs and survey) on the several methods used throughout European higher education institutions regarding quality of teaching and management. During the conference we will explore together the possibilities for a Joint Statement in which the European Sectoral Social Partners in Education further commit themselves to the promotion of quality of academic teaching and management in higher education. The targeted audience for this closing conference consists of European policy makers (including officials of DG EMPL and DG EAC, and representatives of BFUG, the European Parliament and European Economic and Social Committee), representatives of the European cross-sectoral social partners (SGI Europe, SMEUnited, BusinessEurope, ETUC), and other European stakeholders in the field of quality of teaching and management, including EURASHE, EUA.

2. The expert

In order to make sure that our project has a strong evidence-base, we deem it crucial to invite an external expert to assist us with the mapping of quality of teaching and management methods throughout the EU. The external expert is expected to write a substantial research report and outcome document analyzing and comparing the theoretical framework from the literature study with the practical knowledge gained through the peer learning activities with expert knowledge. By investigating the impact of innovative policies on quality of teaching and management on the working

conditions of higher education staff and management, and comparing this with the knowledge gained through hands-on experience in the host countries, the research report aims to develop a concrete and well-covered outline for all the relevant stakeholders. This research report will feed into the final project report and add substantial information and support to the joint ESSDE statement promoting quality of academic teaching and management.

2.1. Tasks to be performed by the successful candidate

The expert is expected to perform the following tasks in the time framework from February 2021 to June 2022:

1. Participate in a pre-project meeting with EFEE, three meetings with the Project Advisory Group, two Peer Learning Activities as well as a closing conference.
2. Conduct desk research: investigate the impact of innovative policies on quality of teaching and management on the working conditions of higher education staff and management, and comparing this with the knowledge gained through hands-on experience in the host countries.
3. Develop, with the input from the Advisory Group, the online survey to be carried out amongst ESSDE member organisations and analyse the thereout resulting outcome.
4. Scientifically accompany the case study visits in Portugal and the Netherlands: After each seminar draft one report on the thereout gained results and insights regarding the question of how social partners in education can contribute to the quality of teaching and management in higher education as compared to the available theoretical framework.
5. Draft a final project report (including Executive Summary), summarizing the outcomes of the project activities and draw general conclusions on how innovative policies in quality of teaching and management influence the working conditions of higher education staff and management. The report is to be presented to the Project Advisory Group as well as in the framework of the final conference.

2.2. Requirements to be a successful candidate

EFEE requires the external expert (hereafter, Contractor) to provide an external and objective scientific perspective and expertise on the issue at stake, to carry out the case studies in the target countries for the need of the following skills:

1. Proven (research) experience and extensive knowledge of the European higher education and research landscape.
2. Experience in conducting surveys/interviews in the education sector.
3. Understanding of the role of employers and social partners in the education sector as well as an overall understanding of the education sector (both on the European and national level).
4. Significant understanding of social dialogue structures in education is preferable.
5. Ability to communicate both in speaking and writing in English fluently (C1 level). Additional knowledge of other European languages, such as Dutch or Portuguese is preferable.

The Contractor contributes to the successful development of the project as a whole by actively participating in various project events. The Advisory Group is the body entitled to guide the project/research implementation as concerns its organisation and evaluation (see *supra*, section 1.2.2.1).

3. Payments and standard contract

The contract signed between EFEE and the Contractor is subject to the Grant Agreement signed between EFEE and the European Commission for this project initiative. Payment of the fees defined in the contract will be made in two instalments dependent on the Contractor carrying out the relevant stages of work as listed above:

1. A first instalment amounting to 50 %, issued after signature of the contract during the second month of the action;
2. A second instalment for the remaining payment issued after completion, delivery and approval by EFEE of the final outcome.

Payments will be done by bank transfers to a bank account for which the Contractor will communicate the full details.

The contractual agreement is based upon and regulated by the European Commission's rules, provisions and requirements as set out in the project agreement with the European Commission, DG EMPL and applicable Belgian law. The Contractor is obliged to fulfil the described tasks and duties of work to receive the final payment according to the contract.

EFEE has the right, based on Belgian Law, to terminate the contract when the Contractor cannot perform the agreed tasks and duties accordingly. Any conflicts of interests or disputes concerning the validity of this arrangement, the construction of its terms, and the interpretation of the rights and duties of the parties in the contract shall be governed by Belgian Law.

The contract may not be transferred without the parties' written agreement.

4. Price

4.1. Agreed amount

Subject to the final Grant Agreement established between the European Commission and EFEE for the purpose of this project, the total amount available for the tasks described here above during the project lifetime (01/01/2021 – 30/06/2022) will be of maximum 15.000,00 € (about 30 working days at the rate €500 euros) of including all taxes (such as, e.g. VAT). The final salary amount will be paid dependent on the previous experience of the Contractor with regards to the above-mentioned tasks.

4.2. Other arrangements

Expenses: The Contractor is reimbursed, on receipt of full documentation according to the European Commission's requirements with regards to travel – economy flight and train tickets -, accommodation expenses, and transfer to and from the airport (by public transportation, taxis not reimbursed) for his/her participation in the preparatory meeting, Advisory Group meetings, case study visits, and the final conference as project expert. These tasks are those previously set up in the Description of the Action only subject to the changes that may be decided by the Advisory Group.

Processing personal data: The contracting party accepts that the Contractor is free to use the data collected and the reports written in this project as part of their own academic reports and articles, as long as they include the relevant references to the project.

However, in order to fulfil or respect the modernized Convention 108 (the regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000) and EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data:

1. The Contractor must process personal data under the agreement in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements);
2. The Contractor may grant its personnel access only to data that is strictly necessary for implementing, managing and monitoring the agreement;
3. The Contractor must adopt appropriate technical and organisational security measures having regard to the risks inherent in the processing and to the nature of the personal data concerned.

5. Selection criteria

Aside from the above stated requirements, the selection process will be based on:

1. The acceptance of the tender offering the best price-quality ratio;
2. The availability during the one-year project for the requested tasks.

The Contractor is selected according to the standards of selection that have been developed by EFEE. Main selection criteria are the expertise and capacity to deliver the work tendered for, the price-quality relation, the methodological quality and the tenderer's work experience.

It should be noted that the Contract will not be awarded to a tenderer who receives less than 70% on the award criteria.

5.1. Award criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the best value for money, taking into account the following criteria:

1. Evidence track record of proven scientific research experience and extensive knowledge of the European higher education and research landscape (and preferably of social dialogue structures in education as well).
2. Proficient capacity of the English language (additional European languages such as Dutch and Portuguese are an asset).
3. Understanding of the nature of the assignment.
4. Capacity to work in a team project.
5. Ability to meet deadlines.
6. Ability to meet budget allowance.
7. Availability to attend meetings.

6. Content and presentation of the bids

6.1. Content of the bids

The bids should contain a detailed explanation of the qualifications and the expertise of the potential Contractor, e.g. information on references from the Contractor on similar projects already handled, to demonstrate his/her experience and capability to succeed in performing the tasks as set out in section 2 (see *supra*).

The bids should include a detailed description of the methodology as well as a project plan with detailed time and cost planning. The potential Contractor is requested to send a budget listing the costs by task including a fair estimation of the number of working days and the number of people participating in the tasks.

6.2. Presentation of the bids

Replies have to be presented by 24 March 2021 at the latest to:

isaline.ossieur@educationemployers.eu

Subject: External Research Expertise for “*European sectoral social partners in education promoting quality of academic teaching and management*”.