

Call for Tender

Expert researcher for Education Employers capacity building project in supporting experienced professionals in accessing the teaching profession in vocational education and training – Teacher Acquisition project

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Deadline to apply: January 31st, 2024

The [European Federation of Education Employers](#) is pleased to announce a call for a subcontractor to provide research expertise for the implementation of the project “*Teacher Acquisition – supporting experienced professionals in accessing the teaching profession in vocational education and training (VET)*”. This 2-year transnational project is supported by the European Commission under the ERASMUS+ LSI.

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1. Background

1.1 The organisation

The European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) is a recognised European social partner organisation for education employers. EFEE represents a total of 61 education employers' organisations distributed across 27 European countries covering all sectors of education. EFEE's partners include ministries of education, local governments associations, non-public and private school associations, school boards' and school heads' associations, Conference of University Rectors, and Networks of Private Universities.

Our mission is to improve the quality of teaching and school management through European cooperation and dialogue. As an officially recognised European social partner in education, we, thereby, are in constant dialogue with EU institutions as well as other European partners such as trade unions and various educational networks.

One of our core tasks is project management. EFEE continuously runs a great number of projects throughout the year. The aim of these projects is to foster mutual learning and exchange on current challenges and opportunities in the education sector. There are two core features characterising 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. Regarding the latter, an external expert is hired for every project to ensure the high scientific quality of our project results (*Please find a more detailed description of the expected tasks of an expert in section 2.1*). EFEE is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project. This includes the project coordination (organisation of activities), supervision related to the project objectives (producing outcomes), and the administrative and financial tasks that come with it. EFEE's Project Manager Marie-Céline Falisse is the project coordinator, and she will be assisted with the implementation of the project by EFEE Project Manager assistant Mariana Bernardes.

1.2 The project

1.2.1 The purpose

EFEE is about to start the project *Teacher Acquisition – supporting experienced professionals in accessing the teaching profession in vocational education and training (VET)*. This project's aims are to identify and share relevant practices, investigate current legal frameworks and propose effective methods to boost teacher acquisition in vocational education and training (VET) in Europe. In addition, the project pursues to actively enhance cooperation between VET providers and employers.

This project will give particular attention to two main systems of teacher acquisition: hybrid teaching schemes and initiatives encouraging second-career teaching. The first system refers to teachers who work both in businesses and schools, while the second system addresses professionals fully transitioning to the teaching profession. This approach aims to tackle

shortages of teachers in VET, enhance the quality of teaching, and encourage further cooperation between industry and education.

These objectives will be achieved through:

- qualitative and quantitative research
- the identification of necessary teaching competences for skilled workers
- the development of a curriculum proposal for an induction programme
- the preparation of practical guidelines for school leaders
- the creation of policy recommendations
- four main events: three peer learning activities (PLAs) in several EU countries, and one final conference.

1.2.2 The research

The Teacher Acquisition research phase will ensure a deeper understanding of the current situation when it comes to teacher acquisition in vocational education and training in the EU. A particular focus shall be put on researching legal frameworks enabling or hindering vocational teacher acquisition and at identifying common challenges along with innovative practices and possible solutions to be upscaled at the European level. The expert researcher shall develop a detailed analysis of necessary teaching competences for professionals transitioning to teaching in VET. The research should include an online survey targeting VET providers and professionals, which will be designed by the expert researcher (to be recruited through this call).

In addition, qualitative data input shall be gathered during the three programmed peer learning activities (PLAs). The 2-day PLAs should allow the expert researcher space and opportunities for collecting good practices, ideas, and perspectives on the topic at stake. Furthermore, input from participants and speakers shall be gathered during each PLA and directly feed into the research report. The peer learning activities will take place in three different European countries: Ireland, Portugal, and Lithuania. Lastly, a final conference will be organised in Utrecht (the Netherlands), the findings from the project shall be disseminated to project partners and other education interested parties. These findings should include guidelines, a curriculum proposal, a detailed analysis of necessary teaching competences for professionals transitioning to teaching in VET and policy recommendations. All findings shall be developed by the expert researcher and the consortium members throughout the project's lifespan.

The practical guidelines to be developed for school leaders should include information on legal frameworks, good practices gathered and possible ways to tackle challenges identified throughout the project. Regarding the curriculum proposal, its aim is to recommend a relevant and transferable training programme which could be further developed for professionals willing to transition to the teaching profession. This curriculum proposal will be accompanied by a roadmap aiming to facilitate the implementation and upscaling of such curriculum in various EU countries.

The detailed analysis shall be held on the necessary teaching competences for professionals transitioning (either as hybrid teachers or as second-career teachers). This analysis should

investigate teaching competences that vocational teachers commonly require. Moreover, it should pay particular attention to the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that such professionals are more likely to lack taking their specific career paths into account. Finally, a set of policy recommendations addressing educational leaders and policy-makers should be developed. These recommendations must consider both the research results and the input gathered during the peer learning activities. The various project outputs will then be disseminated through online channels as well as during a final conference.

As previously mentioned, the researcher is expected to develop a research survey in order to collect relevant data and to carry out desk-research. The research questions of this project are still to be drafted together with the expert researcher. Nevertheless, at this stage, it is possible to infer the topics which the questions will address:

- the current situation when it comes to teacher acquisition in vocational education and training in the EU;
- legal frameworks that enable or hinder vocational teacher acquisition;
- common challenges, innovative practices and possible solutions to be upscaled across European countries.

The expert researcher is also expected to take the lead in the development of the policy recommendations.

1.2.3 The timeline

As mentioned, three events will be organised to deliver the project's objectives:

- Three peer learning activities taking place in Ireland, Portugal, and Lithuania in the timeframe 2024-2025.
- Project closure with a final conference in Utrecht devoted to the sharing of the results obtained in each peer learning activity.

Below you can see an estimation of the timetable:

Time period	Activity	Location
Last week of May 2024	1st Peer Learning Activity	Ireland
Last week of May 2024	1st Advisory Group meeting	Ireland
October 2024	2nd Peer Learning Activity	Portugal
October 2024	2nd Advisory Group meeting	Portugal
April-May 2025	3rd Peer Learning Activity	Lithuania
April-May 2025	3rd Advisory Group meeting	Lithuania
October-November 2025	Final Conference	Netherlands
October-November 2025	4th Advisory Group meeting	Netherlands

1.2.4 Advisory Group meetings

The Advisory Group meetings will bring together representatives from the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) to provide guidance and monitor the project developments. In addition, these meetings should promote an active involvement in the project and the dissemination of actions among the advisory group affiliates. The focal point of Advisory Group meetings is to agree on general concepts, set concrete goals, select specific peer learning topics, and prepare groundwork for other project meetings. Four in-person advisory group meetings and a yet to-be-defined number of online meetings will be held throughout the project.

1.2.5 Peer Learning Activities

The peer learning activities, which will each last 1 day and a half, aim to provide the Advisory Group Members, other education employers representatives and education actors with a platform for exchange of ideas, peer learning, and discuss the topics identified during Advisory Group meetings in greater depth. The peer learning activities will also include local school visits, allowing participants to gain in-depth practical on-site knowledge on the topics at stake in the respective school contexts and therewith bound challenges and opportunities by engaging in a dialogue with school representatives.

1.2.6 Final Conference

The Final Conference will take place in Utrecht (the Netherlands). The conference is devoted to sharing the results of the different peer learning activities, the result of the survey and research report, examples of best practices uncovered during the project, the conclusions drawn, and foreseen follow-up actions. Participants will also be invited to discuss the outcomes of the project and to provide input to the final draft of the policy recommendations. These inputs will in turn be discussed during the last Advisory Group Meeting that is set to evaluate the overall planning and implementation of the project.

2. The expert researcher

To ensure that our project has a strong evidence base, we deem it crucial to invite an external expert researcher. Her/his/their role is to assist us with the desk-research and with the development and analysis of a comprehensive study on the teacher acquisition in vocational education and training (VET) throughout the EU in order to collect and analyse best practices. The researcher is expected to write a substantial research report and outcome document analysing and comparing the theoretical framework from literature study with the practical knowledge gained through the peer learning activities. By investigating the topic and comparing it with the knowledge gained through hands-on experience, the research report should provide a concrete and well-covered outline for all the relevant actors. This research report will feed into the final project report and add substantial information and support to the EFEE Policy Recommendations.

Therefore, we expect the expert researcher to have proven research experience and extensive knowledge of the topics at stake. Preferably, the expert researcher will furthermore showcase a significant understanding of social dialogue structures in education in order to identify the

most pressing challenges and opportunities accordingly. The total budget for subcontracting these tasks is €30.000 (about 60 working days at the rate of €500) based on previous experiences with external experts.

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 2024 to December 2025:

1. **Participate** in an initial online pre-project meeting with EFEE, attend four confirmed in person meetings and a yet-to-be-determined number of online sessions (usually max 2 hours) with the Project Advisory Group. The in person meetings will be integrated with other in person events. Furthermore, the project also encompasses three peer learning activities, and concludes with a final conference.
2. **Develop**, with the input from the project advisory group, an online survey to be carried out amongst EFEE member organisations to get insight into their current knowledge, practices, opportunities and challenges when it comes to teacher acquisition in vocational education and training (VET) in the EU.
3. **Conduct** desk research to map teacher acquisition in vocational education and training (VET) in the EU in order to develop a substantial research report. The research report should address the need for concrete actions when it comes to teaching competences in VET and possible lack thereof among professionals willing to transition to the teaching profession. Furthermore, the report should present results from the survey and input from the PLAs along with relevant conclusions.
4. **Investigate** the EU teacher acquisition situation in VET, identify and analyse the necessary teaching competences for craftspeople who are transitioning to teaching in VET. Compare this with the knowledge gained through hands-on experience in the host countries of the PLAs, while looking for a redefinition of the concept of teachers working time.
5. **Scientifically accompany** the peer learning activities and subsequently, **draft** a reflection report based on the evaluation and analysis of the findings gained after each activity. The reflection reports will be presented to the Advisory Group members for input and approval.
6. **Draft** a final research report (including Executive Summary), outlining the outcomes of all project activities (incl. survey, desk research, peer learning activities) and drawing conclusions on the teacher acquisition in vocational education and training (VET) in the EU.

2.2. Requirements to be a successful candidate

EFEE requires the expert researcher (hereafter, Contractor) to provide an objective and scientific perspective along with expertise on the issue at stake while carrying out the tasks outlined above. Therefore, the Contractor is expected to display the following competences:

1. Proven (research) experience and extensive knowledge of teacher acquisition in vocational and education training (VET)
2. Understanding of social dialogue structures in education is preferable in order to identify the most pressing challenges and opportunities accordingly.
3. Experience in conducting surveys in the education sector.
4. 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).
5. Ability to communicate fluently verbally and in writing in English (at least C1 level). Additional European languages such as Dutch, Lithuanian, and Portuguese will be considered an asset.

The Contractor contributes to the successful development of the project as a whole by actively participating in various project activities and meetings. The Advisory Group is the body entitled to guide the project/research implementation as concerns its organisation and evaluation.

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 outputs.

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 EAC 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 (01/01/2024 – 31/12/2025) will be of maximum €30.000 (about 60 working days at the rate of €500/day) of including all taxes (such as, e.g. VAT).

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 their participation in the in-person Advisory Group meetings, peer learning activities, and final conference.

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 modernised 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.

5. Selection criteria

Aside from the above stated requirements, the selection process will be based 1) on acceptance of the tender offering the best price-quality ratio and 2) on the availability during the duration of the 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 research experience and extensive knowledge of teacher acquisition in vocational education and training (VET) in Europe (and preferably of social dialogue structures in education as well).
2. Proficient capacity in the English language (additional European languages such as Dutch, Lithuanian, and Portuguese will be considered 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 allowances
7. Availability to attend activities and meetings

6. Content and presentation on 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 their experience and capability to succeed in performing the tasks as set out in section 2 of this tender.

The bids should include a detailed description of the methodology and tools applied to implement a project plan with detailed time and cost planning. The potential contractor is also 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 (if more than one researcher would be involved).

6.2. Presentation of the bids

Applications must be presented by the **31st of January 2024** to marieceline.falisse@educationemployers.eu and mariana.bernardes@educationemployers.eu

Subject: Expert Researcher for Teacher Acquisition