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Call for Tender

Project research – Innovation4Education: Strengthening the capacity of European education employers through the promotion of innovation in education institutions in a post-Covid-19 era

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>1. Background</u>	<u>2</u>
1.1. The organization	2
1.2. The project	3
1.2.1. The purpose	3
1.2.2. The timeline	4
1.2.2.1. Advisory Group meetings	5
1.2.2.2. Interactive peer learning activities	5
1.2.2.3. Final Conference	5
<u>2. The expert</u>	<u>6</u>
2.1. Tasks to be performed by the successful candidate	6
2.2. Requirements to be a successful candidate	7

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3. Payments and standard contract	8
4. Price	9
4.1. Agreed amount	9
4.2. Other arrangements	9
5. Selection criteria	10
5.1. Award criteria	10
6. Content and presentation on the bids	11
6.1. Content of the bids	11
6.2. Presentation of the bids	12

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 “*Innovation4Education*” supported by the European Commission under the European Social Fund + (ESF+) Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SocPL).

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 in total 61 education employers’ organisations in 27 European countries of all sectors of education, from pre-school to higher education, research, and VET. Including ministries of education, local government associations, school boards’ and school heads’ associations, non-public and private school associations, Conferences 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. 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 by making the voices of our members heard. 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.

Against this background, one of our declared 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

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learning and exchange on current challenges and opportunities in 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. 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 will also draft Policy Recommendations on the commitment of education employers in promoting innovation in education institutions in a post-Covid19 era, based on the outcomes of the project. EFEE's General Secretary Daniel Wisniewski will be the project manager and he will be assisted with the implementation of the project by EFEE Policy Officer Emma Traoret.

1.2. The project

1.2.1. The purpose

In 2022, EFEE will kick-off the project *Innovation4Education: Strengthening the capacity of European education employers through the promotion of innovation in education institutions in a post-Covid-19 er*. This project aims to address the challenges and opportunities for innovation in the education sector. This two-year project coordinated by EFEE intends to promote innovative teaching and learning practices within European education institutions while reflecting on the potential impact on industrial relations within the sector. By facilitating an exchange of knowledge, practices, and challenges during the project meetings (four interactive case study visits and one final conference), the project aims to strengthen the capacity-building efforts of the European education employers as well as find answers to the following question: **“How can education employers as social partners in education strengthen their capacity in order to promote innovation in education institutions in a post-Covid-19 era?”**. The project's implementation will be guided by a Project Advisory Group, who will work in close collaboration with the external research expert on this topic.

The sudden COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has substantially disrupted the learning and teaching environment and has abruptly introduced a variety of innovative learning opportunities into European education systems. Due to social distancing, many European states have been forced to close school facilities and other education institutions and suspend face-to-face activities; forcing children and students of all ages out of the physical classroom as well as forcing teachers, academic staff and other education personnel to adapt to remote teaching, often without the adequate skills or available equipment. This immediate response and willingness of the education sector to adapt to this new reality

has underpinned the specific nature of this sector in that it cannot be put on hold despite unprecedented conditions.

While the pandemic has laid bare many of the inherent challenges that have plagued European education systems during the last couple of years, it would be remiss not to mention the positive outcomes that have sprung from this global emergency. Within a relatively short period of time, the education sector has been able to realise a digital transition, whose possibilities and dangers have been heavily discussed for the past years. As we move towards a post-Covid19 era, it is therefore safe to say that the disruption caused by this sudden and unpredictable pandemic will have long-term impacts on European education systems at all levels. Therefore, education employers will need to find sustainable ways to implement the innovative practices that were introduced regarding teaching and learning. Against this background, the EU Next Generation and Recovery and Resilience Fund, which will make a historic recovery budget available to member states, can play a pivotal role in providing this sustainable support. Furthermore, in order to deliver on the objectives set out in the recent Porto Declaration, which aims to “build back better” by “putting education and skills at the centre of our political action”, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of these innovative methods at a European level. Following these ambitious European policy agendas in education, training and employment, we see growing opportunities for EFEE and its members to contribute to these developments by actively promoting innovation in education institutions in a post- Covid19 era.

The general overall objective of the project proposal is twofold. Firstly, the project aims to contribute to the education, employment, social and economic needs as identified in the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular the principles related to education, training, lifelong learning, employment, social dialogue (fair working conditions) and support to children. Principle 1 states that “Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.” Furthermore Principle 8 underlines the importance of strong social dialogue for fair working conditions. The latter point is also reflected in the Communication of the European Commission on a strong social Europe for just transitions, in which it is underlined that “Fair working conditions are also about strong social dialogue: workers and employers can find joint solutions that best fit their needs. Strong, representative organisations and their timely involvement in policymaking both at national and European level are extremely important.”

Education employers have an important role to play in contributing to the implementation of the Porto Declaration as well as the European Pillar of Social Rights, on which it is based, in particular the principles related to education, training, lifelong learning, employment, social dialogue and support to children, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4. As recognised European Social Partner for the Education sector, we are moreover committed to strengthening our efforts to build and to reinforce the capacity and potential of our social dialogue both at national and at European level, to connect the dialogue at local, regional, and European level, and to explore how social dialogue could contribute to co-create new policy directions and to fully contribute to the European social and economic governance mechanism so that the voice of education employers, representing the

management of education institutions at all levels of education, as well as education authorities' voices are heard in the policy sphere.

Secondly, the project aims to actively promote the Work Programme of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education (ESSDE) for 2020-2021. The project will contribute to advancing our work on the selected themes of "Social dialogue promotion and capacity building" on the one hand and "Innovation in Education" on the other hand. These elements are of course identified as priorities for joint work between EFEE, representing education employers, and our ESSDE partner at European level: the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE). Nevertheless, we realise that in order to have a strong and representative social dialogue it is crucial to have a balanced representation of both union and employer organisations. Currently, as also described in the EUROFOUND Representativeness study of the European social partner organisations in the education sector (2020), EFEE has a much lower membership number than ETUCE. According to the results of the study, EFEE has been positively verified as the only education employers' organisation that represents the entire sector. However, it has been stressed that extensive capacity-building is necessary in order to invite a wider group of organisations to the European Social Dialogue. By means of this project we aim thus to strengthen our internal capacity by enhancing our local, regional and national membership base. Herewith, our project is expected to make a strong contribution to the priorities and activities of European social dialogue as reflected in the June 2016 Statement of the Presidency of the Council, the European Commission, and the European social partners on "a new start for social dialogue" as well as the new impetus that social dialogue has been given at the EU level through the recent adoption of the Porto Social Commitment.

1.2.2. The timeline

In order to deliver on the project's objectives, we will organize four events: three of them are peer learning activities (hereafter, PLAs) taking place in Belgium, Portugal and Slovenia in the timeframe of 2022 to 2023. The project will close with a final conference in Brussels devoted to the sharing of the results obtained in each case-study visit. Please find the preliminary timeline, to be adopted during the 1st Advisory Group meeting by project members, as follows.

Date/Month/Time (CET)	Activity	Location
23 May 2022	1st Advisory Group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (online)
September 2022	1st PLA	Brussels, Belgium
February 2023	3rd PLA	Lisbon, Portugal
2023	2nd Advisory Group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (online)

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June 2023	4th PLA	Ljubljana, Slovenia
July 2023	3rd Advisory Group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (online)
October 2023	Final Conference	Brussels, Belgium
November 2023	4th AG meeting	Brussels, Belgium (online)

1.2.2.1. Advisory Group meetings

The Advisory Group meetings will bring together representatives from the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) to provide guidance, monitor the project developments and to promote an 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, four meetings will take place during the course of the project.

1.2.2.2. Interactive peer learning activities

The objective of these PLAs, taking 1,5-days respectively, is to provide Advisory Group Members, and other National Social Partner representatives with a platform to exchange, peer learn, and discuss the topics identified during the preceded Advisory Group meetings in greater depth. Moreover, the peer learning activities will include local school visits, allow participants to gain in-depth practical on-site knowledge on the implementation of innovative tools and practices in the respective school contexts and therewith bound challenges and opportunities by engaging in a dialogue with school related representatives.

1.2.2.3. Final Conference

The Final Conference will take place in Brussels. The conference is devoted to sharing the results of the case study visits on “How can education employers as social partners in education strengthen their capacity in order to promote innovation in education institutions in a post-Covid19 era?”: the result of the survey and research report, the outcomes of the case studies, examples of best practices uncovered in the course of the project, the conclusions drawn, and foreseen follow-up actions. Participants will also be invited to discuss the outcomes of the project and provide their input to the final draft of the policy recommendations of EFEE. These inputs will in turn be discussed during the last AG Meeting

that is set to evaluate the overall planning and implementation of the topic. EFEE will subsequently produce a project report, evaluating its planning and implementation, as well as the project outcomes.

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 innovative teaching and learning methods throughout the EU. The external expert 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 impact of innovative practices of teaching and learning on the working conditions of education personnel 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 EFEE Recommendations promoting sustainable and innovative teaching and learning methods.

We expect thus the external research expert to have proven (research) experience and extensive knowledge of innovation in education practices. Preferably, the expert 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 €20.000 (about 40 working days at the rate of €500 euros) 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 May 2022 to December 2023:

1. **Participate** in a pre-project meeting with EFEE, three meetings with the Project Advisory Group, four Peer Learning Activities as well as a closing conference.
2. **Conduct** desk research to map innovative teaching and learning methods throughout the EU and investigate the impact of innovative practices of teaching and learning on the working conditions of education personnel. A substantial research report and outcome document analysing and comparing the theoretical framework from the literature study with the practical knowledge gained through the peer learning activities with expert knowledge.
3. **Investigate** the impact of innovative practices of teaching and learning on the working conditions of education personnel, and comparing this with the knowledge gained through hands-on experience in the host countries.

4. **Develop**, with the input from the project advisory group, the online survey to be carried out amongst EFEE member organisations to get first insight into their current knowledge, practices and challenges when it comes to innovative methods of teaching and learning.
5. **Develop**, with the input from the project advisory group, interview questions for the case studies at local level to identify practical and concrete ways to enhance education employers' involvement in implementing innovative practices of learning and teaching.
6. **Prepare** training modules for the seminars on actions on how to strengthen the involvement of social partners with regards to fostering innovative methods through learning, teaching, and school management in education institutions. On the basis of these developed modules, conduct trainings in the framework of the case study visits.
7. **Scientifically accompany** the peer learning visits in Belgium, Portugal and Slovenia and subsequently, **draft** a reflection report based on the evaluation and analysis of the findings gained after each visit against the backdrop of the question of "How can education employers as social partners in education strengthen their capacity in order to promote innovation in education institutions in a post-Covid-19 era?". The reflection reports will be presented to Advisory Group members for input and approval.
8. **Draft** a final project report (including Executive Summary), summarizing the outcomes of all project activities (incl. survey, desk research, peer learning activities) and drawing conclusions on How education employers as social partners in education can strengthen their capacity in order to promote innovation in education institutions in a post-Covid-19 era.

2.2. Requirements to be a successful candidate

EFEE requires the external expert (hereafter, Contractor) to provide an objective and scientific perspective with his 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 innovation in education practices.
2. Significant 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/interviews 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 verbally and in writing fluently in English (C1 level). Additional European languages such as French, Portuguese and Slovenian will be considered an asset.

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 (01/03/2022 – 31/12/2023) will be of maximum 20.000,00 € (about 40 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.

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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 two-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 innovation in education practices (and preferably of social dialogue structures in education as well).
2. Proficient capacity in the English language (additional European languages such as French, Portuguese, and Slovenian 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 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 his/her 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 external expert 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 **30 May 2022 at the latest** to:

emma.traoret@educationemployers.eu

Subject: External Research Expertise for “*Innovation4Education*”.

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