



Call for Tender for Expert Researcher

TeachProgress

Empowering Tomorrow's Educators: Education employers supporting the teaching profession through career progression structures

Deadline to respond:	5 February 2025
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Description

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 2-year project '*Empowering Tomorrow's Educators: Education employers supporting the teaching profession through career progression structures*', supported by the European Commission under the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SocPL).

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Background

The organisation – EFEE

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 of all sectors of education from pre-school to higher education, research, and VET, in 27 European countries. EFEE's membership includes 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 of 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 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 'Tasks to be performed by the successful candidate' of this document – page 10).

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 based on the outcomes of the project. EFEE's General Secretary Daniel Wisniewski will be the project coordinator and he will be assisted with the implementation of the project by EFEE's Head of Unit for Projects and Capacity Building Silvia Pesini Escartín.

The project – TeachProgress

Purpose of the project

Europe is experiencing a significant shortage of teachers, particularly in key subject areas and regions. According to the European Commission's 2023 Education and Training Monitor, this issue has been aggravated in the last few years and a dramatic increase in reported teacher shortages is expected in the near future. This trend is worrying as it impacts the quality of education provided to students across the continent.

There are several reasons contributing to the teacher shortage in Europe, but we can pinpoint the unattractiveness of the teaching profession as the root cause of this crisis. As a result of this negative perception of the teaching career, there is a visible declining interest in joining the profession, as well as a high turnover of teachers, especially in the initial years of their careers. Furthermore, low job satisfaction and motivation among teachers increase the levels of teacher turnover.

This 2-year project, in which a diverse range of education stakeholders will participate, is an education employers' capacity-building project oriented to strengthen the position of this social partner in the social dialogue with regard to the subject at stake.

Summary of the project

The ambition of this project is to tackle teacher shortages in Europe by increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession with a special emphasis on the reformation of the teacher career structure. These two factors have been identified as the root causes for teacher dissatisfaction and low motivation in the job, which carry with them other negative consequences such as teacher absenteeism and poor performance, high turnover of teachers, and declining interest in joining the profession, which ultimately affect student learning outcomes and the overall quality of education.

This project will explore the best ways that education employers can create a more supportive and rewarding environment for teachers by contributing to initiatives such as:

- Creating clearer and more flexible career progression structures and pathways that offer opportunities for both vertical and lateral career advancement,
- Implementing performance-based incentives and recognition programmes to reward outstanding teachers and encourage ongoing professional growth,

- Investing in professional development to offer relevant and accessible opportunities for teachers to acquire new skills, specialise in areas of interest, and prepare for leadership roles,
- Streamlining administrative processes and reducing bureaucratic barriers to career advancement to make it easier for teachers to progress in their careers,
- Ensuring equality and inclusiveness in access to career advancement opportunities,
- Establishing partnerships with local, regional and national teaching training centres to ensure a steady supply of well-trained teachers.

Main objectives of the project

Through this research-oriented project, we aim to identify, share and upscale successful practices and initiatives to promote teacher satisfaction and motivation in the job, with a special emphasis on teacher career progression and career pathways at school, and to address the causes of teachers' dissatisfaction and demotivation in the profession.

In addition, this project will serve to:

- explore the role of education employers in providing solutions for the specific issues of lack of specialisation and recognition for teachers,
- identify best practices for implementing diverse performance-based promotion programmes tailored to the context of different national systems and schools,
- compare different national frameworks and school practices that offer professional development opportunities for teachers looking at topics such as opportunities for professional growth, bureaucratic barriers, and ensuring that CPD programs are accessible and relevant to teachers' needs,
- identify different career pathways for teachers at school level for attaining leadership positions, and reduce bureaucratic and inequality barriers hindering their advancement.

Outputs of the project

The TeachProgress project will produce:

Desk research about different factors that influence job satisfaction and motivation for teachers with a special emphasis on the effects of career progression and professional development opportunities for teachers on their professional satisfaction and motivation. The desk research will touch upon topics

such as systems of specialisation and recognition, salary scales, CPD programmes, leadership-oriented career pathways, and bureaucratic processes.

Online questionnaire to map existing legal frameworks in the European Union concerning vertical and horizontal teacher career progression. The questionnaire will allow the expert researcher to gather first-hand knowledge from the different countries on what are the opportunities, challenges, barriers and needs for the development and progression of the teaching career.

Peer learning activity on the ever-evolving roles of teachers in the constantly changing educational landscape with a focus on leadership and career pathways to be hosted by project partner TÖZOK in Istanbul, Turkey, over 1,5 days. The event will include presentations about the diverse opportunities for teachers at school level such as becoming school heads, mentor teachers, or instructional specialists, for example. These will be followed by discussions concerning the requirements and training needed to access such positions.

Peer learning activity on best practices of career progression for teachers at school level such as recognition programmes, performance-based promotion, continuous professional development, and other incentives that increase teacher motivation and job satisfaction to be hosted by AFIS, in Finland over 1,5 days. Participants will discuss the sustainability and transferability of such practices to different contexts and the opportunities and challenges for implementation in their national and local contexts, such as legal and financial structures. Building on the data collected from the online questionnaire about the different career progression models existing in Europe, participants will look at best institutional practices for supporting career advancement (standards for advancement, specialisation, leadership opportunities, allocation of resources, etc.).

Webinar ‘Policy Lab’ to discuss the different administrative barriers and budget allocation needs for implementing programmes and initiatives that support teacher career progression across Europe and ensure equality and inclusiveness in access to opportunities and excellence in performance.

Final research report on the role of education employers in building and promoting flexible career pathways for teachers. The report will also include a **collection of best practices and lessons learnt**.

Guidelines targeted to schools and policymakers for the creation and enactment of national and local initiatives that support teacher career progression and career advancement to leadership positions.

Final dissemination conference hosted by partner PS in Greece for 1 day with the purpose of dissemination of the project results and receiving feedback on the draft policy recommendations.

Policy statement with clear priorities and recommendations for the EU budget distribution in different fields within the education sector.

Timeline of the project

In order to deliver on the project’s objectives, we will organise three cornerstone events in the timeframe of 2025-2027. The two peer learning activities will take place in Turkey and Finland respectively, with duration of 1,5 days each. The ‘Policy Lab’ will take place online during a half day. Lastly, the final dissemination conference will take place in Greece during 1 day.

In addition, the Project Advisory Group and selected expert researcher, will meet four additional times online to steer the direction of the project.

Please find the preliminary timeline below:

Date	Activity	Purpose	Location
February 2025	Kick-off meeting	Selection of expert researcher and approval of project management and dissemination plans	Online
March 2025	1 st PAG meeting	Feedback for research plan and online questionnaire	Online
10-11 April 2025	1st PLA	Explore the ever-evolving roles of teachers with a focus on leadership and career pathways	Istanbul, Turkey
September 2025	Launch online questionnaire	Map existing legal frameworks in the European Union concerning vertical and horizontal teacher career progression	Online
October 2025	2 nd PAG meeting	Evaluate outcomes of 1 st PLA and responses to the online questionnaire	Online
November 2025	2 nd PLA	Identify best practices and of career progression for teachers at school level increase teacher motivation and job satisfaction	Helsinki, Finland
January 2026	3 rd PAG meeting	Evaluate outcomes of 2 nd PLA and begin preparations for Policy Lab	Online
March 2026	Webinar ‘Policy Lab’	Discuss the different administrative barriers and budget allocation needs for implementing programmes and initiatives that support teacher career progression across Europe	Online

September 2026	4 th PAG meeting	Feedback on draft final research report and draft guidelines	Online
November 2026	Dissemination conference	Present the final research report and guidelines and receive feedback on draft policy recommendations	Athens, Greece
January 2027	5 th PAG meeting	Debrief on final conference and discuss sustainability of the project	Online

Advisory Group meetings

The Advisory Group meetings will bring together the expert researcher, and representatives from all the official consortium partners to provide guidance, monitor the project developments, and promote active involvement in the project meetings and dissemination actions among their affiliates. The focal point of these meetings is to agree on general concepts, set concrete goals, select specific peer learning topics, and prepare the groundwork for project events. In total, four advisory group meetings will take place during the course of the project.

Peer learning activities and Policy Lab

The objective of the peer learning activities, which will each last one day and a half, is to provide Advisory Group Members, other education employers representatives, and education stakeholders with a platform to showcase, exchange, 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, and therewith bound challenges and opportunities by engaging in a dialogue with school representatives. In addition, the online Policy Lab will allow for a greater group of experts and diverse stakeholders to discuss and work together towards the reduction of bureaucratic barriers and inequality in access to teacher career progression opportunities.

Dissemination period

The dissemination period will be devoted to sharing the results of the project, including the outcomes of the peer learning activities, examples of best practices uncovered in the course of the project, the research report and guidelines, policy recommendations, and foreseen follow-up actions. The aim of the dissemination period is to promote the project outcomes and to ensure the sustainability and impact of the project beyond its lifespan.

As part of these efforts, an in-person Final Conference will be hosted in Athens, Greece, during one full day. The aim of this event is to bring together relevant stakeholders to present them the findings of the project in the form of a final research report, and guidelines targeted to schools and policymakers for the creation and enactment of national and local initiatives that support teacher career progression and career advancement to leadership positions. Attendees will have the opportunity to network and to provide input for the policy recommendations of this project, with a special emphasis on the EU budget distribution.

The expert researcher

In order to ensure that our project has a strong evidence base, we deem it crucial to invite an external expert researcher to assist us with the desk-research and with the development and analysis of a comprehensive study on the vertical and horizontal teacher career progression frameworks in Europe. In addition, they will further explore the factors that influence job satisfaction and motivation for teachers.

The expert 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 online questionnaire and cornerstone events. By investigating these factors and with the knowledge gained through hands-on experience in the host countries, the research report will aim to develop a concrete and well-covered outline for all the relevant stakeholders on the role of education employers in building and promoting flexible career pathways for teachers. The report will also include a collection of best practices and lessons learnt. This research report will feed into the final guidelines and 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 €45.000 (about 70 working days at the rate of €640/day) based on previous experiences with external experts.

Tasks to be performed by the successful candidate

The expert is expected to perform the following tasks in the time framework from February 2025 to January 2027:

1. **Conduct** desk research about different factors that influence job satisfaction and motivation for teachers with a special emphasis on the effects of career progression and professional development opportunities for teachers on their professional satisfaction and motivation. The desk research will touch upon topics such as systems of specialisation and recognition, salary scales, CPD programmes, leadership-oriented career pathways, and bureaucratic processes.
2. **Participate** in a pre-project meeting with EFEE (online), and five meetings with the Project Advisory Group (online), as well as in all cornerstone activities: two in-person peer learning activities, one webinar, and one in-person dissemination conference.
3. **Scientifically accompany** the peer learning activities and conference in Turkey, Finland, Greece, and online, 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.
4. **Develop**, with the input from the project advisory group, an online questionnaire to map existing legal frameworks in the European Union concerning vertical and horizontal teacher career progression. The questionnaire will allow the expert researcher to gather first-hand knowledge from the different countries on what are the opportunities, challenges, barriers and needs for the development and progression of the teaching career.
5. **Evaluate and analyse** the data received through the responses to the online questionnaire both quantitatively and qualitatively, and prepare a short analysis report based on the results.
6. **Draft** a final project research report (including Executive Summary), outlining the outcomes of all project activities (incl. online questionnaire, desk research, workshops) and drawing conclusions on the role of education employers for increasing teacher satisfaction and motivation through the reform of teacher career advancement structures.
7. **Develop** practical guidelines for the creation and enactment of national and local initiatives that support teacher career progression and career advancement to leadership positions. The guidelines will be addressed to three levels: micro (teachers, individuals), meso (schools, institutions) and macro (policymakers, public bodies).

8. **Provide input** on the policy recommendations developed by the Project Advisory Group and for the sustainability plan on implementation of these.

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:

- Proven (research) experience and extensive knowledge on career progression frameworks and pathways.
- Significant understanding of social dialogue structures in education is preferable in order to identify the most pressing challenges and opportunities accordingly.
- Experience in conducting surveys/interviews in the education sector.
- 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).
- Ability to communicate fluently verbally and in writing in English (at least C1 level). Additional European languages 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.

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.

Price

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 (01/02/2025 – 31/01/2027) will be of maximum €45.000 (about 70 working days at the rate of €640/day) of including all taxes (such as, e.g. VAT). The final salary amount will be paid depending on the previous experience of the contractor with regards to the above-mentioned tasks.

Other arrangements

Expenses: The Contractor is reimbursed on their travel, up to the amount stipulated in each in-person event's registration form, upon receipt of full documentation according to the European Commission's requirements – signed reimbursement form, invoice and boarding passes-. Accommodation and subsistence will be provided by EFEE in the form of a booked hotel room and breakfast for up to two nights per event, and catering and dinner as part of the event activities.

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.

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.

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 career progression frameworks and pathways (and preferably of social dialogue structures in education as well).
2. Proficient capacity in the English language (additional European languages 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

Content and presentation of the bids

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.

Presentation of the bids

Replies have to be presented by **5 February 2025 at the latest** to silvia.pesini@educationemployers.eu

Subject: Expert Researcher for TeachProgress