

Call for expressions of interest

CEDEFOP/2026/CEI/0001

**Scientific and Technical Support to Assist
Cedefop research and policy analysis in the
areas of VET, skills, and qualifications**

Specifications

1. INTRODUCTION

Cedefop is one of the EU's decentralised agencies established in 1975 and governed by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

Based in Greece since 1995, Cedefop supports the promotion, development and implementation of the Union policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET) as well as skills and qualifications policies by working together with the Commission, Member States and social partners. To this end, it enhances and disseminates knowledge, provides evidence and services for policy-making, including research-based conclusions, and facilitates knowledge sharing among and between EU and national actors.

Successful European cooperation in VET depends on information and insights on developments in VET, qualifications, skills and labour market trends and understanding their interrelationships. Cedefop's work on EQF/NQF, skills intelligence and governance, VET policy monitoring, apprenticeships and upskilling pathways for adults, helps shape a comprehensive perspective on VET which has become the Agency's unique value proposition. Cedefop's multi-annual objectives aim to help partners to construct an informed evidence-based policy agenda that continuously develops VET and skills in response to the changing needs of people, economies and societies.

Cedefop's objectives include policy learning between countries, social partners, VET providers and other stakeholders and supporting implementation of EU policies and measures. The expertise Cedefop has generated through its wide spectrum of analyses and research informs EU VET, skills and qualifications initiatives.

Further information about Cedefop is available on its [web portal](#).

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

As per the legal basis in Art 242 of the EU Financial Regulation, the objective of this call for expressions of interest is to establish a list of experts (natural persons) with scientific and methodological expertise and/or with knowledge of policies in fields relevant to Cedefop's activities to assist the centre in carrying out its work.

Tasks will be carried out in most of the cases remotely and delivered using electronic communication tools. In certain cases, Cedefop may request that specific tasks are carried out in Cedefop premises or other sites that will be mentioned in the contract specifications. In such cases, the travel and subsistence **expenses** will be reimbursed under the conditions set out in the contract according to the conditions stipulated in Annex IV, outside of the threshold mentioned under 5.4.

If the work of the expert would normally imply travel, but the work is performed at distance through videoconference, the **expenses** incurred by the expert for the participation to the videoconference may be reimbursed, upon receipt of relevant supporting documents, if the videoconference took place and if Cedefop approved those expenses beforehand.

3. EXPERTISE AND SERVICES REQUIRED

The services required are related to the Centre's broad range of focus, as shown by the wide spectrum of **research areas** listed below. Applicants may apply for up to **three research areas** from the list in the table below. Next to the column containing the list of research areas there is a column containing a list of related fields for each research area. These lists of fields are non-exhaustive descriptors of the topics within the research areas. Applicants apply to research areas, providing

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/what-we-do/cedefop-regulation>

supporting information/documents regarding the chosen research areas (e.g. applicants for research area 1 should have at least 2 authored publications relevant to the research area, but not to each field of the area). Then applicants must choose the fields for which their expertise is particularly relevant. The information about the fields shall be used to create future field specific lists of experts.

List of research areas:

	Research areas	Fields (Non-exhaustive)
1.	Initial vocational education and training (IVET)	Early leaving from IVET, NEETs, inclusive IVET, excellence in IVET, Centres of vocational excellence, teachers and trainers professional development, IVET-industry cooperation and/or partnerships.
2.	Experiential learning	Work-based learning, workplace learning, apprenticeship, internship, project-based learning, community of practice.
3.	Qualifications and credentials	Microcredentials, digital badges/credentials, European Qualifications Framework and National Qualifications Frameworks.
4.	European VET tools and principles	Quality assurance in VET, Validation of informal and non-formal learning, Recognition of qualifications, Credit systems for education and training, Mobility of learners and workers
5.	Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes design and assessment, Modularisation, Occupational and educational standards, Curriculum, Key/transversal competences in IVET
6.	VET policies and systems monitoring and analysis	Monitoring VET policies, tracking progress on policy targets, policy analysis and evaluation.
7.	Guidance and counselling	Lifelong career guidance, educational guidance, guidance and school to work transition, guidance for reskilling and upskilling of adults, labour market information for guidance
8.	Continuing training and skills development for adults	Continuing training, adult learning, reskilling and upskilling of adults, learning and skills utilisation in workplaces, training as human resource practice, skills sourcing, learning organizations, financial and non-financial incentives for learning for individuals and/or companies.
9.	Labor market and skills intelligence	Forecasts, foresights, scenario analysis, web intelligence data analysis, sectoral analysis, matching skills demand and supply, outcomes and impact analysis and evaluation.
10.	Qualitative methods	Case studies, narrative interviews, ethnographic studies, grounded theory, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, structured and semi-structured interviews
11.	Quantitative methods	Data analysis, structural equation modelling, causal analysis, policy evaluation, instrumental variables, data mining, neural and social networks, machine learning, big data

12.	Survey methodology	Sampling methods, probability and non-probability sampling, questionnaire design, vignettes, experiments
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The Centre will seek support from external experts based on their expertise in the research areas listed above. The selected individuals will provide to the Centre the following three **types of services**:

1. **Scientific and technical advice**, including methodological support on specific projects and research activities, input to problem solving and sharing of good practices.
Examples: providing support in project development (for instance, by supporting in the development of a conceptual framework or a methodology for a study), advising on the suitability of methodological solutions (for example, evaluation of sampling schemes, advising on questionnaire development, the applicability of empirical approaches, selecting the appropriate methodology to perform a qualitative research and analysis), advising on how to rationalize or make sense of outcomes produced by the Centre.

2. **Third party verification**, namely peer review and/or scientific advice to enhance the quality of specific Cedefop pieces of research and publications.
Examples: review of reports written by the Centre, review of country-specific information produced or gathered by the Centre.

3. **Knowledge transfer**, namely sharing of knowledge and expertise to support the Centre build or strengthen its capacity to autonomously carry out high quality analyses. The transfer may concern knowledge related to advancements in the research areas of knowledge concerning the use of specific methods and tools relevant for Cedefop research and policy analysis activities.
Examples: transfer knowledge regarding scientific advancements in the research areas in which Cedefop operates, help expanding knowledge of software and empirical methodologies, transfer knowledge regarding legal and policy developments in the research areas in which Cedefop operates, especially when they are only available in the national language.

4. REQUIREMENTS OF THE CALL

4.1 HOW TO APPLY

The call for expression of interest shall be read in conjunction with its annexes which contain essential additional information.

Submission of an application implies acceptance of the terms and conditions laid down in this Call for the Expression of Interest and all relevant annexes.

Expenditures for preparing and submitting expressions of interest will not be reimbursed by Cedefop.

Applications should be submitted preferably in English, but in any case, in one (or in any) of the official languages of the European Union.

Applicants are requested to fill in the application form found in Annex I (protected Excel form) either selecting from existing options or typing in free text as required and indicated on the form. Parts 1 to 4 contain personal information, declaration of the applicant, and a field to fill in name, location and date of application. Part 5 requires the applicant's information on studies, professional experience, and authored publications in each research area.

Applicants may withdraw their application at any moment by written notice to Cedefop.

The Annex I shall be submitted in Excel format, without changes in its format or formulas, without adding any features such as macros, by email to CEI-applications@cedefop.europa.eu. Experts are invited to fill in the application form, and type in Part 4 of the form their full name, location (city of residence) and date of application.

Substantial changes to the form (insertion of formulas, macros etc) may lead to rejection of the application.

4.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Cedefop can accept applications from and sign specific contracts with applicants, who are citizens from the following countries: the 27 EU Member States, 3 EEA Countries (Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland), 6 countries - North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo - which have signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, and Georgia which is under an Association Agreement with the EU.

Staff in service at Cedefop is not eligible for inclusion in the list and cannot be selected for appointment for specific assignments.

Applicants shall provide a declaration on honour in the application form (Part 4 - Annex I), stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed therein, that they are not subject to professional conflicting interests and that they fulfil the selection criteria. In case of doubt, they may be requested to provide supporting evidence of non-exclusion. Supporting evidence related to the selection criteria shall be provided with the declaration on honour.

Applicants shall be excluded from participation in the award where they are in one or more of the exclusion situations described in the application form.

4.3 SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants to be placed on the list shall be selected based on their professional and technical capacity to perform the type of services described in point 2.2.

(i) Education

A level of education which corresponds to completed university studies of **at least 3 years**, attested by a diploma in at least one of the following knowledge fields:

1. Sociology
2. Organizational Psychology
3. Psychology and social psychology
4. Educational studies
5. Vocational education and training (VET)
6. Economics
7. Behavioural Sciences
8. Statistics
9. Econometrics
10. Psychometrics
11. Data Science
12. Data Mining
13. Survey Methodology
14. Qualitative Data Analysis
15. Management studies

- 16. Political sciences
- 17. Teacher education

(ii) Professional experience & Competencies

In addition to the above, the expert must have:

- **at least 5 years of proven professional experience after their university studies** in each area of expertise that the expert will have declared, as mentioned in above point 3, List of research areas. A remunerated PhD degree acquired in a field relevant to these areas can be counted as professional experience up to 3 years. Paid traineeships and post-doc contracts are counted as working experience. Part time work will be counted according to the ratio of part-time (i.e. 50% part time for 12 months is accounted for 6 months working experience);
- **demonstrable experience in each research area that the expert will have declared, as mentioned in point 3, List of research areas**, as evidenced by **at least 2** relevant authored publications published in scientific journals or on EU institution, Member State public authority (including ministries and governmental agencies) or research institute, or international organisations' websites;
- **an excellent ability to communicate clearly and effectively in both spoken and written English**, evidenced by at least level C.1 in all dimensions of the [Common European Framework of References for Languages](#);

The applicants are requested to fill in the "Questionnaire on Eligibility and selection criteria" in Annex II, which is a form assimilating a CV focused in experience, qualifications and competences relevant to the CEI subject matter.

4.4 PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION and CONFIDENTIALITY

As an EU Agency, Cedefop is subject to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, forming the primary legal basis for measuring the lawfulness of personal data processing. The applicability of this Regulation in the context of this call has the following implications:

- As data Controller, Cedefop shall ensure that personal data contained in your application (e.g. names of individuals, their CVs, contact details, financial details, declarations of interest) is processed in compliance with the Regulation. More detailed information on the processing of personal data in the context of procurement procedures of Cedefop is available in the Privacy Statement on our website²;

- The selected individual (expert) acts as a processor of Cedefop in case any personal data should be handled under the contract in the sense of Article 29 of the Regulation. In such case and in accordance with this provision, the individual:

- shall only process the personal data on documented instructions of Cedefop as the data Controller,
- shall commit him/herself to confidentiality,
- shall undertake appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the confidential and secure processing of the personal data needed for the implementation of the contract,
- shall delete or return to Cedefop all personal data after the end of the provision of services,
- shall make available to Cedefop all information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the obligations pursuant to the Regulation and shall allow for or contribute to audits and inspections by

² <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/public-procurement>

or on behalf of Cedefop,
• shall notify any personal data breaches to Cedefop.

The expert must comply with the confidentiality standards set out in the contract.

Before signing a contract (Order Form) with Cedefop, the expert will be requested to submit duly filled-in and signed both the Data Protection Agreement (DPA), found in Annex III, and the Undertaking of Confidentiality for natural persons (and Code of Conduct) found in Annex VI.

5. PROCEDURAL ASPECTS

5.1 HOW THE LIST IS ESTABLISHED

Experts are appointed “ad personam” and will not be considered as representatives of their organisation or affiliation they are employed with.

Experts included in the list do not act or speak on behalf of Cedefop and Cedefop cannot be held responsible for their actions and expressions.

Remunerated external experts are not considered as Cedefop staff. Their tasks cannot include executive powers of the institution and cannot lead them to exercise discretionary power.

5.2 LIST DURATION

The list resulting from this call for expression of interests and any further updates are valid for maximum 5 years from the first publication of the open call for expressions of interest (CEI). Cedefop reserves the right to close the open call for expressions of interest (CEI) at any time.

The list resulting from this call for expression of interests will be used exclusively for execution of the tasks such as those described at point 2.2 above. Inclusion on the list entails no obligation on the part of Cedefop to award a contract.

5.3 HOW EXPERTS ARE SELECTED FOR PARTICULAR ASSIGNMENTS

Where a particular task is to be carried out by an expert, Cedefop as the contracting authority will assign experts to the task on the basis of the skills, experience and knowledge necessary and in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and absence of conflict of interests.

The authorising officer (by delegation) draws up a list (or sub-lists) of experts who meet the selection criteria. This list will be updated continuously, as any person interested may express an interest by submitting an application at any time during the period of validity of the list with the exception of the last three months. At the end of this updating phase, and each time a new selection takes place, the candidates in question shall be informed of the results of the procedure (i.e. whether or not they have been placed on the list).

For each particular task, the competent authorising officer (by delegation) shall choose an expert or draw up a list of experts in descending order of priority on the basis of pre-established criteria. These may include the level of expertise in the individual field of the task to be carried out and the required level of skills. Other criteria may also be used, e.g. a reasonable balance between academic and industrial expertise, sufficient geographical representativeness. At this stage, when the precise nature of the task to be accomplished is known, the exclusion criterion relating to conflicts of interests is re-examined.

Once the expert or the definitive list of experts retained for a particular task (including a reserve list if necessary) has been drawn up by the competent authorising officer, the selected expert(s) shall sign an individual contract (or Order Form).

Cedefop will request a duly signed Undertaking of confidentiality and absence of conflict of interests as well as a Code of Conduct to be signed upon the signature of an Order Form (see also above point 4.4). Individual declarations will be assessed by Cedefop before and as a condition of the contract signature. The successful applicant will also be required to complete a Business Partner Identification Form in their own name, as a 'natural person'.

Ownership and use of the results — Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): The results produced (including copyright and other intellectual or industrial property rights) will belong to the contracting authority. The rights will be obtained for the full term of intellectual property protection, from the moment the results are delivered and approved. Delivery and approval are considered to constitute an effective assignment of rights. This transfer of rights is free of charge. The expert shall be requested to submit a duly filled in and signed Declaration on IPR together with the request for payment.

5.4 REMUNERATION

Experts shall be remunerated at a **fixed fee of 450 euros per day worked**. Payments shall be executed within 30 days from an eligible payment request form (Annex V) submission, which shall be accompanied by the relevant deliverables mentioned in the signed Order Form.

The experts shall commit to respect applicable national legislation, including taxation, social security and labour law with regard to any payment received from Cedefop.

Maximum amount that can be paid to an expert during the whole duration of the call (5 years) is 75.000 € (with a maximum of 15.000 € per year), excluding possible reimbursements of travel and subsistence allowances.

Where applicable, the travel and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed under the conditions set out in the contract according to the conditions stipulated in Annex IV, outside of the above-mentioned threshold.

- Annexes:
- Annex I – Application Form (Excel)
 - Annex II – Questionnaire on eligibility and selection criteria
 - Annex III – Data Protection Agreement
 - Annex IV – Cedefop Guidelines on reimbursement of travel expenses
 - Annex V – Payment request form
 - Annex VI – Undertaking of Confidentiality (natural persons) and Code of Conduct