



Call for papers

Abstract and CV due: 18 January 2021

Focus on: Towards European standards for monitoring and evaluation of lifelong guidance systems and services

Cedefop invites leading experts to submit papers for a reference publication on monitoring and evaluation of lifelong guidance systems and services for adults, in a lifelong learning perspective. Contributions will be used for developing a methodological proposal for European standards in monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services for adults. This addresses the overall issue of assuring quality in guidance provisions.

The papers will also expand the evidence base on the outcomes and impacts of career development support, developing new insights regarding methodological options to monitor and evaluate lifelong guidance systems and services in Member States, while documenting key experiences in policy and career services.

The reference publication, which will be widely disseminated, will be one of several outputs planned in an ongoing Cedefop project on support and incentives to learning and careers.

Background

The 2008 Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies, through defining guidance in broad terms¹, paved the way for the further development of lifelong guidance systems and services in Member States. Development of quality assurance in guidance provision, is one of the four priority areas.

The importance of career guidance and counselling is increasingly emphasised in EU and national skills strategies and policies, which underline the relevance of national and regional capacitation in individual career development support. The 2020 European Skills Agenda acknowledges the need to support all individuals in their lifelong learning pathways and puts guidance at the core of three of its actions: the EU support for strategic national upskilling actions, the initiatives on individual learning accounts and the initiative on micro-credentials.²

Monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services remains an area to develop in EU countries. There is a lack of standardised monitoring and systematic evaluations

¹ ...'a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management skills'. Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies (21.11.2008), https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf

² European Commission (2020). European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223>.



of guidance activities in most Member States.³ A consensus still needs to be achieved regarding minimum shared standards and the most adequate methodology to meet them. Moreover, current practices for evaluating labour market policies tend to weakly differentiate these services and measures, preventing an understanding of the level of expenditure allocated to them and their relative results on the benefits for individuals and society. This makes it difficult to achieve an integrated vision of results of individual-based career support along the life path. Additionally, a systemic vision is lacking.

In particular, the outcomes and impacts of career guidance and counselling are seldom monitored and evaluated and there is lack of agreement on what are relevant results of the interventions, ranging from variations in employment status or in qualifications earned, learning outcomes or satisfaction levels or a combination of all. Empirical research rarely considers longer term outcomes or economic benefits.⁴ Studies using counterfactual quantitative evidence using findings from large datasets are scarce⁵. Challenges also arise when complementarity with other measures aiming at skills development and employability are not considered.

To establish sustainable systems for monitoring and evaluation and an integrated vision of results in a lifelong perspective, administrations must allocate dedicated resources, create appropriate methodologies and mechanisms and sound ways of analysing and reporting the data, and using it to improve services. This can pose challenges to established perceptions and expectations for the services.

In order to fill the knowledge gaps in the field, Cedefop invites submissions that will expand and consolidate the knowledge base on the state-of-the art in monitoring and evaluation in lifelong guidance, with a specific focus on the methodological options available for monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services for adults, in a lifelong perspective. A systemic approach is welcome. Findings from papers will inform the development of a methodological proposal and minimum shared standards for monitoring and evaluating career guidance systems and services for adults in Member States. This will include proposed methods and techniques to gather data, monitoring and evaluating outputs, outcomes and impacts in lifelong guidance services.

What is Cedefop?

The objective of the Agency is to support the promotion, development and implementation of the European Union policy in the field of vocational education and training as well as skills and qualifications policies by working together with the Commission, Member States and social partners. Cedefop should enhance and disseminate knowledge, provide evidence and services for policy-making, including research-based conclusions, and facilitate knowledge sharing among and between Union and national actors.

Cedefop's research in lifelong guidance is concerned with the changing needs of all individuals through their lives and careers, and how to ensure access to quality services and develop effective guidance

³ Barnes, S. A., Bimrose, J., Brown, A., Kettunen, J. and Vuorinen, R. (2020) Lifelong guidance policy and practice in the EU: trends, challenges and opportunities. Institute for Employment Research. European Commission. <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/lifelong-guidance-policy-and-practice-eu-trends-challenges-and-opportunities>

⁴ Percy, C. & Dodd, V. (2020). The economic outcomes of career development programmes. In Robertson, P., Hooley, T. & McCash, P. (Eds.) The Oxford Handbook of career development. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵ Cedefop (forthcoming). Support and incentives to learning and careers: Individual support to careers and learning.



systems. Cedefop has developed extensive work related to policies on ensuring quality in lifelong guidance systems in Member States, such as reference research into standards for guidance professionals' competences, system development, and improving cooperation between stakeholders. Reinforcement and updating of policies on practitioner professionalism, services and systems in the current digital context – including digital platforms, are also in focus. Cedefop is currently carrying out research on monitoring and evaluation of lifelong guidance systems, towards creating a proposal for shared European standards that can be adapted to suit contextual variations in Member States.

The project maintains the [EU+ inventory on lifelong guidance systems and practices](#), which features information on monitoring and assessment in European countries, and its [CareersNet network](#) of independent experts in lifelong guidance and career development contribute content for the inventory, while the network also produces knowledge to support policy development and exchange information on country and regional practices. .

More recently, Cedefop focuses on supporting adults through systematic, coherent and integrated support through [validation](#), [financing](#) and incentives for learning, recently investigating how [coordination of guidance and validation](#) of non-formal and informal learning can make support services more effective in opening access for individuals.

The outcomes of Cedefop research on ICT and LMI in careers information and advice contribute to the effective use of ICT with related [policy recommendations](#) and [resources for practitioners and managers of guidance services](#), such as the [LMI toolkit](#). The [handbook of transferability of ICT practices](#) and forthcoming interactive version of the [decision-making tool \(DMT\) for policymakers](#) provide additional resources aimed to improve transfer and access to quality guidance services.

For more information, see [Cedefop website](#) and the Cedefop, Department for learning and employability's [Lifelong guidance project](#).

Aims and research questions

Papers must address one or both of the following two main questions:

1. *What is the current state of play of the monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling systems and services in the EU?*

Papers will describe and critically assess the current practices in monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling systems or services at national or regional level. Papers will discuss the methods, quality standards or frameworks and approaches used, issues faced and how to overcome them, and the use made of results (to shape career guidance and counselling services, for example). A focus on lasting impacts and an analysis of outcomes of services and measures is desirable. Papers will cover well-established career guidance and counselling systems or services that have been evaluated, as well as some innovative, more experimental approaches in lifelong guidance that are smaller in scale but provide relevant insights.

2. *How to improve the existing methodological approaches and methods for monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling systems and services?*

Papers will provide discussions and reflections on potential/improved methodologies to monitor and evaluate career guidance and counselling systems or services for adults, within a lifelong learning perspective, and how they can be implemented. For instance, authors could analyse how monitoring and evaluation practices can feed into, or to what extent they are aligned with, existing national or other quality assurance frameworks, or fit different sectoral contexts or guidance strategies at the national or regional level. Papers would reflect on how to improve existing approaches to monitoring and evaluation, propose robust methodologies, and discuss their challenges and how to tackle them. A focus on the



results and lasting impacts of services and measures is important. Authors should also address how the approach might contribute to the development of coordinated and integrated⁶ services and support to individuals along the life path. A final reflection on how the methodology may serve to achieve a feasible (European) minimum standard and if the approach may be transferable to other contexts, is desirable.

Papers should focus on aspects of the research questions proposed under each of the two main questions (presented above) in the following table.

Table 1.1 Research questions

Main question 1: What is the current state of play of the monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services in the EU?

- How are countries monitoring and evaluating their career guidance and counselling services or systems or measures? How are connections being made between the services and the national or regional guidance system?
- What evidence is there of the outcomes, impact and cost-effectiveness of integrated services (compared to non-integrated provision)? Is there parallel evidence of cross-sectoral integrated policy on guidance?
- What evidence is there of the long-term outcomes and impact from interventions for individuals (such as increased qualification level, higher salary or improved well-being)?
- What evidence is there of outcomes from interventions at the organisational level (such as better match between learning offered by organisations and skill training needs of individuals, improved capacity of organisations to provide career development activities, or improved know how of organisations' staff and raised quality standards of career development service provision)?
- What is the evidence on wider social and economic outcomes (such as increased participation and engagement of adults in education and training, including workplace learning, increased employment and job retention, reduction in the cost of social welfare, or higher productivity and engagement levels at the workplace)?
- How is administrative or other data being used for monitoring and evaluation? Have administrative datasets from different entities been successfully linked/matched with the purpose of monitoring and evaluating career guidance services?
- What longitudinal measures are being used to monitor or evaluate career support along individuals' career and life path?
- How is monitoring and evaluation data being used to help increase the quality of career guidance services and improve the practice and professionalism of guidance practitioners (for instance, how data is being used to help target training for career guidance practitioners)?

Main question 2: How to improve the existing methodological approaches and methods for monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services?

- What are the methodological strengths and weaknesses, and the challenges to the implementation of robust evaluation approaches (including experimental and quasi-experimental designs) and how to overcome them using different data (administrative, surveys)?
- How can the value of expenditure on career guidance services or measures be estimated and measured?

⁶ Although not exhaustive, integrated services can be understood as those providing guidance, validation, outreach and other career development activities funded by different ministries and administrative levels in a seamless way to individuals across different stages and processes, from their early contact with services, passing through, as needed, guidance, validation, training until potentially acquiring a qualification, finding a job, engaging in further learning or otherwise.



- What type of outcomes and impacts can and should be monitored depending on the type of services - in terms of the activities provided, type of provider, profile of customers, and intensity of services? For instance:
 - Services provided by PES, educational career guidance providers or other providers.
 - Services for unemployed, employed, or inactive adults.
 - Services covering all beneficiaries ('generic services') or focused on certain groups ('specialist services').
 - Occasional guidance sessions – which are not likely to produce long-term impacts – and continued interventions
- How can evaluations identify the results of career guidance and counselling and differentiate them from those arising from the learning and employment that follows guidance?
- How might the methodology be transferable allowing for contextual variations and differences in governance, provisions in other countries/regions?
- What is the role of and connection to the wider lifelong guidance system in which the services for adults are set? What is the role of cross-sectoral integrated policy on career guidance?

Scope

The scope of the call for papers is defined by:

- **Services and activities:** career guidance and counselling services for working age adults, which can include a variety of activities such as career counselling, motivational training, assessments and referrals, coaching and mentoring, career management support and job search assistance, job shadowing, career sampling, development of individual action plans/programmes, basic skills development for VET entry. Special interest is focused on learning career management skills (CMS). The scope includes employment-related and education-related guidance for adults.
- **Beneficiaries/participants/target groups:** working-age adults. Employed, unemployed and economically inactive adults, as well as specific target groups such as older adults, persons with disabilities, low-qualified, workers in managerial positions, or others.
- **Providers:** All publicly financed career guidance and career development service providers which directly support career development of adults except those provided to students only within education and training institutions.
- **Geographical scope:** papers can cover career guidance and counselling systems or services at the national or regional level.
 - The geographical scope for the first main question (*What is the current state of play of the monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services in the EU?*) are EU Member States.

Note: Cedefop has a particular interest in knowing more about monitoring and evaluation practices or systems in countries where, according to preliminary searches, relevant research and published evidence is not widely available: Belgium (French-speaking community), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.
 - The geographical scope for the second main question (*How to improve the existing methodological approaches and methods for monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services?*) is wider. Evidence on methodological approaches and methods can be collected on career guidance systems outside the EU including the UK, EEA and EFTA, EU enlargement/accession and other countries.

**Key deadlines and timeline:**

- Abstract and CV: 18 January 2021
- Full paper for accepted abstracts: 31 May 2021
- Revised full paper: 30 September 2021

The following table provides a detailed schedule of the process of selection and editing of papers:

Steps	Timeline
Submission of abstracts and CVs	18 January 2021
Confirmation of the acceptance of the abstract	31 January 2021
Submission of papers	31 May 2021
De-briefing session with the paper authors to discuss key findings and implications for Cedefop study	End-June 2021
Quality assurance	June-July 2021
Submission of revised papers	30 September 2021

Submitting an abstract

Researchers are invited to submit:

- An abstract (600-800 words) of their paper in English;
- A CV in English including current position and main publications and reports or link to CV on an institutional website if this provides a list of publications.⁷

The content of the abstract should include:

1. Title
2. Scope (services/system, providers, beneficiaries/target groups/participants; geographical scope - country/region)
3. Objectives and research questions. How these align with the call's aims and research questions.
4. Study design. How it is expected to answer some of the research questions.

Abstracts and CVs should be submitted by 18 January 2021 only via email to Call4Papers_Cedefop_M&EGuidance@icf.com with CareersNet@cedefop.europa.eu in cc.

By submitting their abstracts, authors agree that, if selected, their authored papers can be presented at a future Cedefop event and published in a Cedefop volume on monitoring and

⁷ In cases of multiple authorship, please submit CV of the lead author and all other authors, as well others involved in the research. Teams can be comprised of researchers and individuals working within the career guidance system or provider (practitioners, policymakers or technical advisors) familiar with the system, services and frameworks. It is important that the team demonstrates having a lead expert in career guidance or career development or with expertise specifically in guidance, who can understand long-term impacts and quality services.



evaluation. Participation in the Cedefop event will not require the payment of fees. Travel costs will be reimbursed by Cedefop.⁸

Selection process and criteria

Up to 12 papers will be selected based on the abstracts submitted and the CVs of their authors. Papers will be assessed by a panel comprised of external experts and Cedefop staff. The selection will be based on the inclusion and selection criteria listed in the table below.

Table 1.2 Inclusion and selection criteria

Inclusion criteria (yes/no)
1. Alignment with the scope of the call
2. Relevance to the call aims
3. Relevance to the research questions of the call
4. Level of linguistic proficiency
Selection criteria (score 1-5)
1. Clarity and relevance of the paper's research question/s
2. Adequacy of the study design to answer the research questions
3. Research questions addressed, topics covered* and geographical scope * Type of service providers, type of services and/or measures, guidance system context addressed, and monitoring and evaluation methods discussed.
4. Profile of the author and possible co-authors: Expertise, experience, and publications in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lifelong career guidance (particularly policies and systems), and/or ■ monitoring and evaluation of guidance policies and services, and/or ■ career changes, school-to-work transitions and other <u>relevant</u> topics that involve the collection of longitudinal data on individuals' careers and life paths, including data on career guidance and counselling

The selection process will be coordinated by ICF.

Submitting a paper

After the acceptance of the abstract by Cedefop, researchers will be invited to submit the full paper in English by 31 May 2021. The length of the paper should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words (including references). Guidelines will be provided to the accepted authors.

Please note that the acceptance of the abstract does not imply acceptance of the final paper. All papers will be subject to a thorough quality assurance process before acceptance and publication.

⁸ Travel cost and accommodation will be provided for certain number of persons, within the limits of the budget available/allocated to the event and in line with Cedefop's reimbursement rules.



Support to authors during the submission process

The ICF team coordinating this call will respond to any queries from experts during the submission process by email. Please contact Call4Papers_Cedefop_M&EGuidance@icf.com with CareersNet@cedefop.europa.eu in copy (Cc).

We encourage authors to send an email with a short description of the proposed paper and its scope before submitting abstracts. This will allow the team to do an early assessment of the relevance of the paper to the call and discuss with the authors if there are any concerns related to its inclusion (see above 'inclusion criteria'), at an early stage.

Dissemination of papers

The selected papers will be included in a Cedefop reference publication planned for 2021, which will provide input to the process of developing shared standards for the evaluation and monitoring of career guidance and counselling services and systems in Member States. In connection with this, authors will be invited to present their findings and participate in discussions at a Cedefop event planned for 2021.