

Terms of reference for the external evaluation of the LINKS project

Paris, the 23rd of February 2017

1. Introduction

The Foundation *La main à la pâte* aims at improving the quality of science and technology teaching in primary and middle schools. It is a foundation for scientific cooperation founded in 2011 by the Académie des Sciences, the École Normale Supérieure (Paris) and the École Normale Supérieure of Lyon. The Foundation's activities are carried out within France and internationally, providing assistance and professional development for teachers. Programmes are designed to help them implement inquiry-based learning which stimulates a scientific spirit in pupils, understanding of the world and capacities for expression.

For many years, the Foundation has been playing a role at European level, designing and coordinating different projects with the support of the European Union: SciencEduc and Pollen under FP6, Fibonacci under FP7, SUSTAIN under Lifelong Learning Programme and the latest, the LINKS project with the support of the Erasmus + Programme.

As the coordinator, the Foundation is coordinating this invitation to tender and the contract for the external evaluation of the LINKS project.

2. Description of the LINKS project

The LINKS project (Learning from Innovation and Networking in STEM - science, technology, engineering and mathematics) aims to improve inquiry-based STEM teaching through the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers and their educators, both at primary and secondary levels.

The project is a partnership between nine institutions involved in STEM CPD of teachers and their educators in Finland, France, Austria, Italy and the United Kingdom. They belong to (and some of them coordinate) national networks which

represent around 120 local CPD providers. The key outcome is to use CPD to enhance the achievement of pupils in STEM subjects.

The **main purpose of the project is** to:

- Develop models of sustainable, quality and impactful STEM professional development programmes which can be used by other CPD providers and influence decision-makers to improve STEM CPD provision;
- Demonstrate the added-value of sharing innovative and effective practice between European CPD providers on the quality and impactfulness of STEM;
- Gain support from policy and decision-makers on the scaling-up of national programmes at national and European levels.

Indeed, to make the CPD have a positive impact, it is crucial to design and implement policies and programmes that target effectively the needs of teachers. The CPD should particularly address the following issues:

- What type of knowledge and skills should be developed among teachers and educators;
- What sort of innovations can be used in the content, methods, tools of CPD, especially in the context of the development of digitalisation;
- What role can educators, employers, STEM professionals and the scientific community take in CPD for teachers.

The project also addresses another key challenge: the commitment of decision-makers to the development and sustainability of a proposed CPD strategy. To provide a strong and long-lasting impact of the innovations developed by partners, there is a requirement to provide evidence of the positive impact of the CPD activities on teacher development and outcomes for pupils.

To address those issues, the partners are using a network focused on developing systemic change of the main stakeholders (i.e. CPD providers, local and national governments, employers, the scientific community and the European Commission) and devising long-term strategies for innovative, effective and sustained STEM CPD.

To increase the influence on decision-makers, the members of the partnership are committed to achieve the following **objectives**:

- Collating and sharing best practice in the design and implementation of impactful professional development for teachers and educators;
- Sharing experiences and developing successful strategies in five cross-cutting areas which make STEM CPD programmes effective:
 - 1. working with the schools;
 - 2. working with the scientific community;
 - 3. working with the employers;
 - 4. quality assurance and evidence-based impact evaluation;
 - 5. building comprehensive partnerships and alliances;
- Disseminating, nationally and across Europe, the outputs of the project to influence the actions of various stakeholders.

The **outputs** will consist of:

- A report of the best innovative practices in the CPD programmes from across the partnership; a full edition of the English version of the report will be available as well as executive summaries in all languages of the partnership;
- Five brochures of guidance and effective strategies on the cross-cutting issues listed above.

The outcomes of the project will be disseminated through five national seminars, and a European conference for up to 245 key stakeholders and decision-makers. These events will provide opportunities for seeking feedback and comments from key stakeholders and target groups to improve the quality and ownership of the outcomes.

To implement these activities and produce the outputs, partners will involve around forty-five members from their staff, using a range of expertise and experience across their networks.

The main **expected impact** in the long term is to increase the interest and commitment of external stakeholders and decision-makers in the design and implementation of large-scale, sustained and effective STEM CPD programmes . Other shorter term impacts are also expected on the project members, their organisations and their national network. In particular, it is expected that through sharing of effective practice, enhanced strategies will be integrated into future CPD.

The Foundation *La main à la pâte* (France) coordinates the project and uses a collaborative approach to the production of the outcomes. All countries are involved in the coordination of one issue and will participate in the production of the outputs, the organisation of events and the dissemination process. The LINKS project is intended to provide a consistency of approaches to innovative and flexible models of STEM CPD programmes at European level, while allowing for adaptation to meet the needs and constraints of each country.

The project has a duration of 36 months from the 1st of September 2016 to the 31st of August 2019.

The total budget of the project is EUR 442,680 of which EUR 434,930 are granted by the Erasmus + programme. The grant agreement has been signed between the Foundation *La main à la pâte* on behalf of the partnership and the French National Agency on behalf of the Erasmus + programme.

3. Objectives of the evaluation

The LINKS project is tendering for an external evaluation of the project to ascertain the impact of the project and inform STEM CPD stakeholders about the project outcomes.

There are three types of quality-assurance and evaluation procedures to be used within the project:

- First, **partners will conduct a formative self-assessment** of the learning and improvements to their CPD practices as a result of the field visits and subsequent study. The partners will record the changes occurring in their own and the other countries practices as a result of the project ;
- Second, a pool of **external ‘critical friends’** with the knowledge of STEM CPD **will be used to quality-assurance the intellectual outputs** (study + guidance brochures). They will be asked to provide feedback on the drafts written before publication;
- Third, **an external evaluation** of the outcomes of the project.

The **purposes of the external evaluation** are:

1. To establish how successful the project partnerships and activities are at developing and producing effective models of quality and impactful STEM CPD.
2. To evaluate the success of the documentation produced by the project on influencing the other CPD providers and decision-makers to improve STEM CPD provision.
3. To evaluate the success of the project on influencing other CPD providers and decision-makers in endorsing the models promoted by the partnership to develop innovative and sustained programmes in STEM CPD.

More precisely, the evaluators will be expected to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in building a common understanding and knowledge of effective CPD practice through:

- **The field visits organised between partners:**
 - o the visits themselves (e.g. quality and relevance of the content, preparation and programming, suitability of the participants mobilised, etc.);
 - o the benefits gained from the visits (as identified by partners);
 - o the production of the study (engagement and contributions, role of the critical friends, management of the collective validation...).
- **The sharing of expertise across the five cross-cutting themes:**
 - o The collaboration through face-to-face and remote meetings, the coordination and leadership, engagement of partners...
 - o the production of the brochures (engagement and contributions, role of the critical friends, management of the collective validation...).
- **The dissemination process:** quality of the events organised (content, participants, communication, results...), quantification and appreciation of the dissemination process at national and transnational/European levels.

4. Methodology

The evaluation will be expected to use data and method triangulation and combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies. We also expect the evaluator to complement from the partners’ self-assessment and outcomes from ‘critical friends’ with whom the project is engaging. It will be also expected to integrate the findings into the findings from the external evaluation.

The focus of the evaluation will also need to address the delivery targets and indicators of achievement mentioned in the project proposal and agreed by Erasmus+.

Your tender response should set out a detailed explanation of the methodology you propose to use for this evaluation; including evaluation models that you feel are particularly suitable for a programme of this kind.

5. Intellectual Property Rights

All intellectual property arising from any work will be vested in the Foundation *La main à la pâte* (France).

6. Deliverables and Audience

The deliverables will be clear, succinct progress and final reports that set out the key findings and make recommendations for improving the programme.

The principal audiences for the reports will be the partners and their networks. These groups will consider the reports so that lessons can be learned and implemented as work progresses. Reports will also be shared with the project's funder, the Erasmus+ programme represented by the French National Agency.

7. Timeline

Activity	Milestone
Open, competitive ITT issued Clarification questions responded to	March 2017
Independent evaluator appointed and evaluation started	April 2017
Meetings with the Foundation <i>La main à la pâte</i> (France) team updating on the progress	Quarterly throughout contract lifetime
Interim report from evaluator	At project mid-term i.e. February 2018
Final report	Sept 2019

8. Costing and pricing

Proposals should include a full budget plan for the whole costs including any anticipated travel, expenses and VAT. All costs should be clear and transparent, clarifying the number of days of each individual working on the activity that they provide. Decisions will be based on perceived value for money, rather than the lowest cost proposal. **Proposals should not exceed EUR 15,000 for the contract period (April 2017 – Sept 2019).**

9. Tender content

Tenders should show, as a minimum:

- how the aims and actions of the evaluation will be addressed to ensure effective and ethical completion of the evaluation across Europe;
- the timeline for development of instruments, data collection, analysis and reporting;
- the roles, responsibilities and brief CVs of personnel in the research team;
- a breakdown of costs by staff and non-staff categories, office costs, travel and subsistence costs;
- risk assessment and mitigating actions;
- contact details of two referees.

Where possible links to recently published reports should be included.

10. Submission and format of proposals

The deadline for receipt of submissions is **12.00 noon on the 23rd of March 2017**. Late submissions will not be accepted. All submissions will be acknowledged with a notification of receipt.

An electronic copy of the proposal should be received in PDF format by this deadline. This is an electronic only submission process; therefore all documentation must be submitted in PDF format as a single zipped folder if the size of the submission is greater than 10Mb.

Proposals should be no longer than 10 sides of A4 (excluding CVs of people involved) and typed in Arial size 12 font. If the proposal exceeds this limit evaluators will be advised to disregard any information outside the limit.

Proposals with the subject line “**Tender for LINKS external evaluation**” should be emailed to: laurence.constantini@fondation-lamap.org.

The Foundation *La main à la pâte* (France) reserves the right not to award a contract.

A decision will be made as soon as possible after receiving the tenders, with a face-to-face clarification meeting if needed.

11. References

Tenderers should indicate the names of two current or recent customers for whom similar evaluations have been carried out and who would be prepared to act as referees.

12. Selection criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria which are not listed in order of importance:

- compliance with, and understanding of, requirements outlined in this tender document;
- understanding of the educational landscape, STEM education and the background and context of the STEM CPD in at least one European country;
- effectiveness of the proposed methodology for undertaking the evaluation;
- clarity and feasibility of the programme of work, workplans and risk assessment;
- relevant experience of the tendering team;
- ability to meet the required timetable;
- management of any existing or potential conflict of interest identified by the bidder;
- value for money.

13. Enquiries

These instructions are designed to ensure that all tenders are given equal and fair consideration. It is important therefore that you provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified.

Please contact Laurence Constantini (laurence.constantini@fondation-lamap.org) if you have any questions relating to the requirements or any difficulty in providing the information requested. We will aim to respond to any queries within 5 working days. If we feel that the query relates to an issue which all prospective bidders should be made aware we reserve the right to communicate our response to all those who have shown interest for the tender. Pre-tender negotiations are **not** allowed.

If you consider any point you raise to be confidential to your own proposal please make this clear. Please note the **last date for the submission of any queries is noon the 10th of March 2017.**



The LINKS project is supported by the French National Agency of the Erasmus + Programme. This document reflects only the author's view. The French National Agency and the Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.