

Call for Tender

Research “Impact of the pandemic on the social services sector and the role of social dialogue”

The research will be contracted in the framework of [FORESEE \(VS/2021/0054\)](#), a project that aims to build capacity for effective social dialogue structures in the social services sector at national and European level. The project is co-funded by the European Commission, DG EMPL.

1. Tender specifications

The Federation of European Social Employers is looking for a researcher/research team to produce a study on the impact and consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic in the social services sector, and the role of social partners and social dialogue in managing the crisis.

Social services are understood as services for older persons, persons with disabilities, children and other excluded or disadvantaged persons, both residential and non-residential services (NACE codes 87 and 88). Focusing on these different sub-sectors may be relevant in the framework of the study.

2. Context of the study: the FORESEE project

The FORESEE project aims to strengthen the capacity of social partners in social services, by further developing national and EU-level sectoral social dialogue structures that are needed for the sector to best deal with its current challenges. The social services sector is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Europe, directly employing over 11 million workers, and is an important contributor to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

FORESEE will take stock of the impact of Covid-19 on the social services sector and reflect on the role of social partners during the crisis. Social partners and social dialogue at national and EU level play an important role in ensuring safe and healthy workplaces at all times, and especially during a global health emergency, and in tackling the anticipated long-lasting effects of the pandemic.

3. Main elements of work

The research should examine the following main topics (non-exhaustive list):

1. **Literature review** (pointing to relevant studies and identifying gaps)
2. **Adaptations of working conditions and their impact on the workforce:**
 - Implications for occupational safety and health
 - Psychosocial risks and stress
 - Impact on time schedules
 - Users/staff ratios, impact of staffing levels on resilience of services and the sector
 - New ways of service delivery (remote work, etc.)
 - Community-based care during COVID-19, impact in the short and long run
3. **Impact of Covid-19 on recruitment and retention (covering past, present and future developments):**

- Recruitment difficulties linked to the crisis, also covering cross-border workers
 - Retention difficulties linked to the crisis
 - Absence and illness of staff
 - Impact of the pandemic on the sector's image and attractiveness
- 4. Actions and measures taken in the context of social dialogue/by social partners:**
- EU / national / regional / company level actions in addressing the pandemic
 - Topics addressed through Social Dialogue
- 5. Key learnings and innovative practices to be carried forward:**
- Changes in working conditions that may stay
 - Innovations in the way services are delivered
 - New skills and trainings
 - Better anticipation of/preparedness for future health crises

Geographic and temporal scope

The study should cover at least 9 EU countries, respecting a geographical balance. The priority should be given to the countries represented in the FORESEE project: Portugal, Austria, France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Greece. The researchers may suggest other countries based on the relevance and representativity of the cases and on the availability of data. A final decision on the countries should be taken with the contractee.

The study should consider the full span of the COVID-19 crisis, while also considering future developments.

The study should be developed through desktop research and expert interviews. As the study aims to cover the perspective of employers and workers, the researchers should interview representatives from both employers and employee representatives. The Social Employers and their European Trade Union counterparts from the European Public Services Unions (EPSU) can recommend some of its members to contact for this purpose.

The Researcher/Research team is expected to deliver:

- A report in English containing the main findings of the study, including figures and an analysis of the trends observed.
- An executive summary of the final report.
- A presentation of the main findings during a dedicated project event (Q3-2021).

4. Deadlines

Deadline for application: **09/04/2021 23:59 CET**

Response to application: **16/04/2021**

Selected applicants are expected to take on the assignment as soon as possible after the signature of the contract. The draft report and the executive summary should be provided by early July 2021, while the final report should be submitted in late September 2021. An overview of results of the study should be provided during a project event in September 2021.

5. Expertise required

The researcher(s) will be expected to demonstrate that they have:

- Knowledge of the social services sector in Europe

- Knowledge on industrial relations and social dialogue at EU/national/company level
- Experience in doing desktop research, drafting and conducting of questionnaire surveys, and interviews with a variety of stakeholders
- Experience writing reports for Social Partner organisations or the European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, etc.)
- Experience carrying out and drafting academic studies/research in English
- Knowledge of multiple European languages is an asset (to collect data and conduct interviews at national level)

6. Selection and award criteria

The applicant(s) should submit the following documents until 09/04/2021; 23:59 CET:

- A motivation letter describing your expertise and explaining why you are the right candidate(-s) for the assignment (not more than 1 page).
- A technical proposal explaining how you plan to conduct the research, including a review of what has already been done, a proposed methodology, a work plan, resources needed, budget, etc. (not more than 2-3 pages).
- A CV, including the list of published articles, reports, studies, if relevant.

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the best value for money, considering the quality of submitted documents and individual expertise. The contract will be awarded to a tenderer who clearly proves that they have knowledge, experience and expertise which match at least 70% of the selection criteria.

Only selected candidates will be contacted.

7. Content of the bids

The tenderer will ensure that their bid clearly identifies how they meet the selection criteria, ideally by indicating their knowledge and expertise under each of the relevant headings. Examples of previous work that demonstrates their ability to write and present to a primarily employers' organisation / trade union audience would also be useful.

8. Payment and contract

Payment will be made on receipt of the draft report and the final version of the report, 40% and 60% respectively.

The contract will be drawn up between the Federation of European Social Employers and the contractor.

The travel and accommodation expenses for the contractor to attend the project event, if the event takes place as a face-to-face meeting, will be claimed separately from the fee.

9. Price

The estimated price is **EUR 17.500**, VAT and all taxes included.

10. Contact Details

Please send bids to Alina Pavicevac, Project & Policy Officer, Federation of European Social Employers, alina.pavicevac@socialemployers.eu