



EU-LAC Foundation  
Fundación EU-LAC



## Call for Case Studies

### **Best Practices and Lessons Learned on Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union**

15 December 2017

#### **1. The EU-LAC Foundation**

The European Union – Latin America and the Caribbean Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation) was created in 2010 and has 62 members: the 33 states of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the 28 members of the European Union (EU), and the European Union itself.

The objectives of the Foundation are to: a) contribute to the strengthening of the CELAC-EU bi-regional partnership process involving participation and inputs of civil society and other social actors; b) encourage further mutual knowledge and understanding between both regions; c) enhance the mutual visibility between both regions, as well as of the bi-regional partnership itself. The EU-LAC Foundation's permanent offices are located in Hamburg, Germany. An Agreement to establish the Foundation as an international organisation was signed in October 2016, and is in the process of ratification.

#### **2. The EUROsociAL+ Programme**

EUROSociAL+ is the third phase of the EU cooperation programme born under the mandate of CELAC-EU Heads of State and Government Summit. The Program aims at supporting national public policies of 18 LAC countries with impact on social cohesion, through exchange of experiences and knowledge among LAC and EU countries. It focuses on three main areas of policy: social policies, good governance and gender equality.

#### **3. Background of Call**

The EU-LAC Foundation and the EUROsociAL+ Programme are launching a call to develop case studies on best practices and lessons learned from programmes, projects and initiatives of Vocational Education and Training Systems (VET) in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.

#### *Overall economic situation and role of VET*

EU and LAC countries are currently affected by high unemployment rates, especially among young people. An average of 19.7 % of EU adults under 25 are without work. This situation is also acute in LAC, where one in four youths aged 15-24 is neither working nor studying. In LAC countries, employment is also characterised by informality and a decreasing number of adequate jobs, particularly in rural areas. Youth unemployment rates in LAC reached 15.3 % in 2015, while over 50 % of workers in the region had informal jobs, mostly in SMEs (informality affects in particular women and young people). Both regions face serious challenges with regard to underemployment – a situation which adds to the persistence of

---

<sup>1</sup> Action Document for EUROsociAL+, European Commission, May 2015.

[https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/action-document-for-eurosoci\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/action-document-for-eurosoci_en.pdf) (accessed





poverty and which affects specific vulnerable sectors of both societies more than others (such as women, young people, the elderly, disabled people, and ethnic minorities).

The social and financial costs for countries are high; families, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), municipalities, public authorities and governments are under pressure to provide for those who cannot find work and break out of the cycle of poverty. This situation forms a fertile ground for social exclusion, insecurity, violence and social unrest – all of which severely affects the social cohesion and economic development of Latin American Caribbean and European societies.

This situation is further complicated by a mismatch between the available skills of the employees and enterprises' needs, thus heavily impairing productivity, competitiveness, and innovation of local, regional and national economies. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are particularly affected, since they recruit locally and cannot always afford to pay high wages for the best-suited employees; 36 % of companies in the formal sector in Latin America and the Caribbean have difficulties in finding an adequately trained workforce, compared to an average of 15 % in OECD countries.

This situation has been acknowledged in several studies published in recent years by the ILO (International Labour Organisation), OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), as well as by economic actors themselves. In their statement directed to the I CELAC-EU Summit, business representatives of the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean emphasised that *"training formats that approach teaching through job placements in companies or that combine work and training, such as dual training programs, are highly regarded by companies, which is shown in the higher employment rates for trained personnel, even in times of crisis"*<sup>2</sup>. On their part, the Heads of State and Governments have provided VET a prominent role in Chapter 5 of the 2015 EU-CELAC Action Plan, by deciding to promote VET with a view to develop, in both regions, skills for employment and for the strengthening of a bi-regional cooperation and institutional networking in this realm.

While the overall situation is cause for concern, a number of initiatives are being implemented to address this issue at bi-regional, regional and national levels.

### ***Situation in the EU***

In the EU, a tradition of apprentices' training has formed the basis for the development of advanced systems of professional training, which is characterised by varying features according to each member state.

While EU member states retain sovereignty on their respective education and training systems, the European Commission, through the Copenhagen Process, has acquired a coordination role, acting in partnership with national governments, employers' and workers' associations and countries outside of the EU to:

- improve the quality of training (initial education, continuing development);
- improve the quality of teachers, trainers and other professionals in the sector;
- make courses more relevant to the labour market.

It performs this role through two agencies: CEDEFOP (European Centre for the

---

<sup>2</sup> Business Statement, IV EU-LAC Business Summit, Santiago de Chile, 26 January 2013, pg. 7





Development of Vocational Training)<sup>3</sup>, whose mandate is to provide information and analysis of education and training systems, policies, and practices in the EU; and ETF (European Training Foundation) to support countries, in the context of EU external relations policies, in the lifelong development of individuals' skills and competences through the improvement of vocational education and training systems.

It is worth mentioning that the Copenhagen Process, and subsequent declarations and communiqués, advocate for enhanced cooperation in VET amongst EU member states with the objective of converting European education and training systems into a worldwide quality reference.

In order to respond to current and future challenges, VET systems of EU member states have to respond to the following needs:

- be flexible and of high quality;
- adapt to labour market evolutions and understand emerging sectors and skills;
- ensure the provision of tailored and easily-accessible continued training;
- ensure the sustainability and excellence of VET through a common approach to quality assurance;
- empower people to adapt to and manage change by enabling them to acquire key competences
- be inclusive;
- facilitate and encourage VET learners' and teachers' transnational mobility;
- secure sustainable funding for VET and ensure the efficient and equitable use of this funding.

### *Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean*

Latin American and Caribbean states are determined to further develop their VET systems pursuing similar objectives as their European counterparts. This was expressed, among others, in item 8 of the Education chapter of the 2014 CELAC Action Plan:

*“Improve and adapt technical vocational education in accordance with the demands of the labor market and the social and economic development of our societies, increasing the percentage of students doing on-the-job training in companies or labor institutions”.*

At a regional level, ILO has promoted the development of public policies, the transition towards a formal economy and the application and respect of international standards and legislation.

ILO's specialised centre CINTERFOR (Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development) acts as a platform for coordination and knowledge sharing by:

- promoting horizontal cooperation for the institutional development and modernisation of vocational training among LAC countries and between these and other world regions;

---

<sup>3</sup> CEDEFOP recently published a comprehensive study of VET systems and their features in the EU-28 countries plus Norway and Iceland.

It is available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/vet-in-europe-country-reports>.





- contributing to the design and management of public policies in line with the decent work programme and in the framework of national plans and strategies defined between the ILO and governments and employers' and workers' organisations;
- developing a learning and knowledge management community through the systematisation and dissemination of information, experiences and innovations;
- conducting research related to the institutionalisation of training systems.

At a country level, several initiatives and plans are currently being designed or implemented. Governments see VET as an efficient tool for increasing productivity and innovation - in particular with respect to SMEs – and for reducing unemployment, especially amongst young people, by favouring higher insertion rates in the job market, thus reducing poverty and inequalities. According to estimations of CAF Development Bank for Latin America, *“since 2008, 65 work training programs have been created,”*<sup>4</sup> with the objective of generating youth employment in the region.

However, VET systems in the region are often viewed as training that is related exclusively to manual jobs and generally unrelated to current or future labour market demands (i.e. lack of pertinence is a common feature). Moreover, a need exists for better coordination between relevant actors, in particular within the Education systems, in order to ensure that primary education with high quality is guaranteed for all; and between education and training systems and productive sectors/firms. It is equally necessary to establish a dialogue between governments, education systems, the private sector, and labour organisations.

### *Other relevant actors and initiatives*

Several international organisations have also developed specific activities related to VET. In addition to ILO's engagement with this issue, the following institutions can be highlighted:

The OECD performs regular reviews of VET systems, and has created a specific tool called PIAAC (Survey of Adult Skills) that collects information about cognitive and workplace competencies of individuals in 40 countries.

*“The survey measures adults’ proficiency in key information-processing skills - literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments - and gathers information and data on how adults use their skills at home, at work and in the wider community.”*<sup>5</sup>

The IDB, in turn, works in the Education and Labour Investment sectors and has published several reviews and studies about VET systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. Jointly with governments in LAC and other entities, the IDB has set up specific programmes to contribute to ensure that graduates have the necessary skills and to facilitate their access to the labour market. The IDB also provides funding for studies, benchmarks, technical assistance and workshops, as well as for efforts aimed at the improvement of educational, training and VET systems.

CAF promotes the strengthening of technical and technological higher education through the improvement of the quality and relevance of the programmes offered. In so doing, it aims to address new demands of the productive sector that arise in the context of technological changes implied by globalisation processes. CAF provides support for workshops, research and training programmes at country level.

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.caf.com/en/currently/news/2016/01/latin-america-seeking-more-formal-employment/?parent=25197> (accessed 8 August 2016).

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/> (accessed 8 August 2016).



### ***EU-LAC Foundation and VET***

The Foundation has been developing activities related to VET since 2013, with the aim of contributing to the implementation of the objectives set out in the EU-CELAC Action Plan. The Foundation's programme focused on VET as an important aspect of sustainable economies by analysing how it could help to reinforce bi-regional competitiveness, while allowing for higher social inclusion and development.

Throughout 2014 and 2015, the Foundation teamed-up with the IDB and supported the participation of European experts in a series of workshops held in eight Latin American and Caribbean countries under the *TransFormation – Skills for Work* initiative.<sup>6</sup>

While this initial step has allowed us to take stock of the situation in a number of LAC countries and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between European and Latin American and Caribbean actors, further steps need to be taken in order to strengthen bi-regional cooperation on the issue, particularly considering that most LAC countries have expressed interest on gaining further knowledge regarding the European VET systems.

### ***EUROsociAL+ and VET***

Since 2005, EUROsociAL+ has been working on supporting LAC national policies for improving the quality of employment, the prevention and reduction of unemployment, underemployment and informality, and the promotion of social protection and labour market policies. In particular, it supported public employment services, fostering the link with VET systems and the acknowledgement and the certification of competencies and skills.

In the latest years, given governments and national institutions' interests, it has also been supporting soft skills development in VET systems.

## **4. Objective of the Call for Case Studies**

The purpose of the call is to receive proposals for case studies related to best practices and lessons learned regarding VET programmes, projects and initiatives in both regions, and explore opportunities for the exchange of experiences and cooperation between countries, as well as at a bi-regional level.

### ***Global objective***

- to foster greater and more sustainable competitiveness and innovation through social and labour market integration in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean

### ***Specific objectives***

The proposals should explore good practices and lessons learned regarding VET in EU and LAC, focusing on:

- areas of innovation in VET involving companies, demand from the productive sector, and labour mobility;

---

<sup>6</sup> For more information on this initiative, see <http://habilidadesyproductividad.org/en/> (accessed 8 August 2016).





EU-LAC Foundation  
Fundación EU-LAC



- opportunities for horizontal exchange of experiences and cooperation between countries and at the region-to-region level

In order to address these objectives, the Foundation and EUROsocial+ call for proposals to prepare case studies regarding good practices and lessons learned regarding VET in EU and LAC countries.

The proposals for case studies should address issues such as the following:

- VET involving companies (e.g. providing teachers or tutors and/or training of teachers and trainers; developing curricula; providing apprenticeship and internship opportunities; providing work placement; etc.);
- experiences in combining work and teaching (work-based learning);
- mechanisms to anticipate labour market needs and adapt VET systems taking into consideration the demands of the labour market.
- development of soft skills in VET systems;
- existing schemes of international cooperation in order to enhance mobility of students and staff, common reference framework for competencies and mutual accreditation of certificates and diplomas.

In addition to describing comprehensively the key features, evolution and results of each initiative, all case studies should include an introduction to VET systems/programmes (set-up established by institutions, characterising features and approaches) and the question of the conditions that have determined the success of the best practice.

## 5. Who is this call addressed to?

All persons involved in the definition, reform, implementation and analysis of laws, policies, programs, projects, interventions, and initiatives aimed at improving the VET systems in the EU and LAC are invited to participate.

Explicitly, we extend this invitation to representatives of:

- Civil society organizations;
- State institutions and agencies;
- Universities;
- Technical and vocational training centres;
- Research institutes / think tanks;
- Large, medium, small or micro enterprises;
- Business networks; and
- Business chambers.

These institutions must have their headquarters in one of the countries of Latin America, the Caribbean or the European Union and may have a public or private nature.

International public bodies may not participate. If an experience has been supported financially or technically by an international body, it can be presented by the national actors who executed the program or project.

The organization / institution submitting a good practice must be the one that carried it out. It is however possible to present a case study implemented by a third party, provided written consent of those who led the initiative is included.

This initiative is funded by:



Federal Foreign Office



## 6. Application Process

Period of dissemination of the present call: December 15, 2017 – February 5, 2018

Applications must be submitted in English or Spanish.

Documentation to be delivered:

- Application form, including detailed project summary (see Annex I)
- CV (one for each applicant)
- Declaration of honour signed (one for each applicant)
- Letter of confirmation of institutional affiliation completed (one for each applicant).

All documents and forms can be downloaded from the Foundation's website at:  
<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/tenders>

All application documents must be delivered exclusively in PDF or MS Word format.

The EU-LAC Foundation undertakes to keep all personal data strictly confidential.

The deadline for submitting case study proposals for this call is:

- 5 February 2018 (23:59 local time in Germany)

All completed proposals received within this timeframe that meet the requirements will be considered for selection.

Proposals should be sent to the following e-mail: [call@eulacfoundation.org](mailto:call@eulacfoundation.org)

The subject of your mail should include: "Call VET"

The EU-LAC Foundation and EUROsociAL+ anticipate a response time of around four (4) weeks to announce the decision. Only those proposals that are selected will be contacted. Please do not contact the Foundation or EUROsociAL+ regarding your application.

## 7. Selection process

A review committee will be established, composed of experts in the field named by the Foundation and EUROsociAL+, in charge of reviewing and selecting those proposals. The evaluation will be based on a qualitative analysis and according to the selection criteria below, selecting the case studies that are considered to have the greatest potential to be replicated in similar contexts or in the face of similar challenges.

## 8. Selection Criteria

Once all proposals have been examined with a view to their eligibility (exclusion criteria: delivery after the deadline, delivery of incomplete application documents, applicant (s) without citizenship of an EU or LAC country), the eligible proposals will be evaluated according to the following selection criteria:

- Quality of the proposal (30 %)
  - Presentation and comprehensibility of the proposal
- Relevance of the experience / initiative (30 %)





- Relevance of the proposed project to the objective of this call
- Results achieved
- Applicability of experience - or some of its key elements - in other countries or (sub) regions of the EU and LAC (10 %)
- Qualification of applicant / team of applicants (30 %)
  - Work experience of the applicant (s) in the subject of the present call
  - Previous experience of the applicant (s) in the formulation of essays or case studies
  - Fluency in language in which the case study will be written

### ***Rules for exclusion from participation***

Excluded from participation in a contract are applicants who:

- (A) are subject to bankruptcy, liquidation, judicial intervention or insolvency proceedings, cessation of business or any other similar situation resulting from a procedure of the same nature in national laws and regulations;
- (B) have been condemned by a final judgment for an offense that affects their professional honesty;
- (C) have committed a serious professional misconduct;
- (D) are not up-to-date on payment of social security contributions or tax payments in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established, the country of the beneficiary or the country in which the contract is to be executed;
- (E) have been convicted of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity;
- (F) are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in the Practical Guide to contractual procedures for EC External Actions (January 2012 version).

Applicants should provide a self-declaration that they are not in any of the above situations.

### ***Exclusion of hiring***

Applicants will be excluded who, during the contract award procedure:

- (A) are in a situation of conflict of interest;
- (B) have made false declarations by providing the information required by the contracting authority in order to be able to participate in the contract or have not provided such information.

Successful candidates will be notified once the selection committee has made their decision. The decision of the selection committee is final and binding. The EU-LAC Foundation anticipates a response time of about four weeks after the deadline of this call.

## **9. Financing selected case studies**







EU-LAC Foundation  
Fundación EU-LAC



Up to a maximum of ten proposals for case studies will be selected. Once selected, a new phase will open for the elaboration of the case studies. The EU-LAC Foundation and EUROsociAL+ will provide detailed guidelines for the elaboration of the case studies.

For each case study selected, and if so requested, the EU-LAC Foundation will provide a € 3,000 contribution to support the work required to prepare the case study. Funding for this initiative is provided with the support of a grant from the European Union and from the German Federal Foreign Office.

Once the winning proposals have been selected by the review committee, the EU-LAC Foundation will sign a contract with the winning applicants, defining the contents of the case study, the maximum number of words in the study, the language of the case study, the calendar of payment, the deadline for the delivery of the draft, the bank details of the applicant, among others. For each case study, the Foundation can make a single disbursement; it will not be possible to divide the disbursement between several bank accounts.

After a quality review of the case study submitted, which may imply that an author is required to make changes and improvements to the case study in accordance with the comments received, the disbursement will proceed.

It is the responsibility of each author to present the final case study at the end of the contract in a publishable format and complying with standards regarding the quality of content presented, grammar and use of language, be it in English or Spanish.

Separately, a process to systematize the experiences, focused on the replicability of the case studies, will be contracted.

## **10. Dissemination of results**

The EU-LAC Foundation and EUROsociAL+ will publish a compilation of the final case studies delivered in the framework of this call, in print and electronic format on their web sites, where the publication can be downloaded free of charge. The selected case studies will be published in English and Spanish. The publication and translation costs will be covered by the Foundation and EUROsociAL+, with additional funding beyond what the amount awarded for each case study.

The views and contents of the case studies published under this call are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU-LAC Foundation, EUROsociAL+, the European Union, or any of the States Members of the Foundation.

Additional funding from the EU-LAC Foundation and EUROsociAL+ might be provided to organize a seminar to feed into the final publication and discuss results. Authors, institutional stakeholders, academia, civil society from both EU and LAC would be invited to participate to the dissemination event.

This initiative is funded by:



Federal Foreign Office



## Annex I

### Application Form

1. Title of the case study: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Theme of the case study: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Summary of the proposal of the case study \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are the most valuable elements that make this experience worth sharing internationally (maximum 500 words)? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your motivation to participate in this call? \_\_\_\_\_
6. In what language will the case study be written? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Previous experience with writing essays and articles in English / Spanish: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Academic degrees / Professional studies: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Current affiliation / position / job: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Previous institutional affiliations / positions / posts: \_\_\_\_\_
11. General Information about Applicant (s):
  - > First Name (s), Last Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - > Nationality (s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - > Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
  - > Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  - > Telephone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - > Email: \_\_\_\_\_

