

REGIONAL TEACHERS INITIATIVE FOR AFRICA

WINDOW 3 - CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

POLICY AND PRACTICE RELEVANT EVIDENCE FOR TEACHER WELLBEING AT WORK AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Contracting authority: Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS RULES APPLICABLE TO THE AWARD OF GRANT CONTRACTS

PROGRAM NAME:
REGIONAL FACILITY FOR TEACHERS IN AFRICA
WINDOW 3 - Teacher education & professional development

OBJECT OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS is to generate deeper understanding for policy and practice relevant recommendations on how teacher training and teacher wellbeing at work can be made more effective in Sub-Saharan Africa, ultimately aiming to reduce teacher shortage and attrition in Sub-Saharan Africa.

AVAILABLE AMOUNT OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS:
€4.000.000

SIZE OF GRANTS:
Minimum amount: €400.000
Maximum amount: €800.000

**DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS INFORMATION
MEETING:**

- ONLINE WEBINAR WAS ORGANIZED IN ENGLISH 11TH OCTOBER 2024. RECORDING AVAILABLE: [EDU.FI/CALL2024](https://edu.fi/call2024)

TIME AND DATE LIMIT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF CONCEPT NOTES
■ 25TH OF NOVEMBER AT 4:00 PM (EET/HELSINKI TIME)

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1 SUPPORT FOR TEACHER GOVERNANCE AND TEACHER TRAINING

1.1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Regional Teachers Initiative for Africa (RTIA) aims to support African countries to improve the education and training of teachers and to make sure that their schools have enough qualified teachers. This will be achieved through policy support in areas of teacher governance and teacher professional development and will contribute to delivering quality education for all.

The initiative contributes to regional and national objectives by supporting and complementing national education and teacher reforms, offering opportunities for countries to work together, supporting partnerships and peer learning for teachers in the region, and to work with Europe.

Many countries in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, face persistent challenges in making teaching an attractive and intellectually fulfilling career, as well as identifying effective teaching practices and helping teachers to develop the knowledge and skills needed to support student learning.

Translating this commitment into a concrete action, the European Union together with the African Union endorsed the Regional Teachers Initiative and its aim to tackle this crucial shortage in competent teachers at the EU–AU Summit under the EU–Africa Global Gateway Investment Package.

Part of this Initiative is **the Regional Facility for Teachers in Africa**, which is an EU funded project aiming at addressing the challenges within the teacher profession in Sub-Saharan countries and implemented by a partnership of three EU Member States Agencies: Finland (Finnish National Agency for Education, EDUFI), France (Expertise France) and Belgium (Enabel, VVOB, APEFE) during the period of February 1st, 2024, to January 31st, 2027.

The Facility complements other components of the Initiative to support teacher governance and improve teacher professional development. The Facility includes 3 types of instruments or “windows”: 1) technical assistance on teacher governance and teacher professional development on the basis of the demand from eligible partner countries, 2) testing and scaling effective programs for teacher professional development in the priority areas of foundational learning, digital skills, green skills, and gender-transformative pedagogy, 3) research to create new evidence and support the integration of evidence in the policy making process and in the design of teacher professional development programs.

EDUFI is responsible for the research window, with a focus on research partnerships on teacher policies, teacher satisfaction and well-being, and evidence for better teacher governance and professional development and the dissemination and use of evidence by policy makers and practitioners. This call falls under the research window of the Facility (window 3).

1.2 BACKGROUND

Teacher retention, shortage, and attrition are significant challenges in Africa, where 15 million additional primary and secondary level teachers are needed to meet Sustainable Development Goal 4 by 2030.

Furthermore, there is considerable variation in teacher shortages both among and within countries. According to the United Nations (2022), the population of Sub-Saharan Africa will double by 2050, so the need for qualified teachers will increase even more in the coming years.

Teacher shortages have serious implications on learning outcomes as well as on teacher wellbeing. To improve teacher wellbeing it is important to gain deeper understanding on how to tackle attrition and improve teacher retention. The appeal of the teaching profession has increasingly declined globally, and education systems struggle to attract and retain teachers.

1.3 OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

The overall aim of this call is to generate deeper understanding for policy and practice relevant recommendations on how teacher training and teacher wellbeing at work can be made more effective in Sub-Saharan Africa, ultimately aiming to reduce teacher shortage and attrition in Sub-Saharan Africa. More specifically, the call aims to

- 1) generate new evidence on effective teacher policies and practices to address challenges related to teacher governance, teacher preparation and teaching, and the attractiveness of the teaching profession in early childhood education, primary and/or lower secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- 2) strengthen research capacities in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- 3) disseminate findings so that the evidence produced can inform policy formulation, program design and implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- 4) encourage partnerships of universities and research institutions both within Africa and between Africa and Europe.

For more details on 1 see ‘Themes of the call’. For more details on 2,3 and 4 see ‘Expectations from projects’.

1.4 THEMES OF THE CALL

This call focuses on providing deeper understanding and policy and practice relevant evidence to the teacher shortage in Sub-Saharan Africa through improving both teacher wellbeing at work as well as teacher training which also contributes to the wellbeing. Thus, teacher wellbeing is a factor that influences but also affected by policy level reforms school management, teacher training and job satisfaction. As highlighted by the Transforming Education Summit (TES), teacher shortages, low-quality initial and continuous professional development, undervalued professional status, weak working conditions, low remuneration of teachers and educational leadership, lack of teacher autonomy and innovations are some of the main challenges. These problems, when unresolved, can lead to teacher absenteeism, low performance, and low motivation and ultimately worsen the teacher shortage in Sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, addressing issues related to teaching, teacher training and wellbeing through a systems approach requires better alignment between teacher governance and teacher education.

To address this challenge, two main research themes have been identified. Theme 1 focuses on teacher wellbeing at work and teacher retention, shortage, and attrition, and theme 2 on teacher education and

teacher professional development (TPD). In your proposal, please select only one of the themes described below (not both). The focus areas within a theme can all be addressed in one proposal, but it is equally good to select only one of them.

1.4.1 THEME 1: Teacher wellbeing at work and teacher retention, shortage, and attrition

Many factors affect teacher wellbeing, including financial, physical, and social aspects. In this call, the focus is on work-related wellbeing, viewed as a key factor associated with better performance in the workplace and ultimately, improved student learning. The complexities of policy implementation and the challenges of educational reform are also visible in the work of teachers, if not coupled with sufficient resources and support. Despite the multiplicity of studies, a holistic picture based on the relationships between education governance, teacher welfare policies, retention and attrition is only partially established.

Focus areas under theme 1:

1) Educational reforms and resources

This focus area centers around the formulation and implementation of educational reforms affecting teacher training and teacher working conditions (e.g., teacher recruitment, salary levels, deployment, distribution, professional development, learning environments in schools, decentralization of education administration), how these reforms are led at national and school levels and which incentives are most effective in attracting and retaining teachers in different contexts. Policy implementation is considered crucial for improving teacher motivation and job satisfaction: however, it is dependent on the availability, distribution, and accessibility of resources.

Hence, these education reforms are viewed important for mitigating teacher shortage and attrition. Furthermore, in order to implement relevant and impactful policies, it is important to understand what kinds of feedback mechanisms and social dialogue processes there are between teachers and policy makers in educational policy development in Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes analyzing what kinds of mechanisms work best and understanding the roles teachers or their unions play in developing and influencing educational policies in the region.

Effective policy implementation on teacher recruitment, distribution, retention, presence, and professional development strategies could benefit from comparative analyses to ensure the sustainability of reform implementation as well as to illuminate the impact of socio-political changes on these issues. In addition, studies have shown that gender aspects can affect teacher working conditions and that it should be ensured that formulated policies are effective and equitable for teachers of all genders and/or provide possibilities for their professional development, remove barriers, and include incentives affecting teacher recruitment and retention, especially in regions with significant gender disparities in the educational workforce. Educational policies can also address the challenge of updating the skills of teachers in the face of the technological development of the society.

2) School leadership and management

Effective school leadership and management can impact the school environment in many ways and ensure teacher wellbeing, job satisfaction, teacher professional development and a good work-life balance. A good and well-functioning school leadership is in a key position when improving working conditions in schools.

School leaders can also promote consultative decision-making and an equitable school culture that can improve teachers' sense of professionalism and agency through empowering teachers with greater autonomy, increasing their job satisfaction, motivation, and retention. Principals as pedagogical leaders can play a role in introducing new teaching methods, promoting in-service training and lifelong learning, and allowing teachers themselves to influence their pedagogical choices. Additionally, effective school leaders can foster professional growth in teachers by offering mentorship, support, and opportunities for ongoing professional development. This can lead towards developing school leadership models and managing schools as learning organizations.

Often, policy implementation at school level can feed into the national level, hence, it is also important to identify linkages and feedback systems between these levels. The role that school leaders and district level officials play in creating an enabling positive environment for teachers, can build a shared and consensual institutional vision for improving the student achievement.

Gender stereotypes make it difficult for women in some countries to work in secondary education or to benefit from career progression to leadership opportunities. Research can investigate best practices to encourage and open ways for women to enter leadership and management positions in schools. Also, studies can explore what kind of solutions there are in schools to tackle the technological challenges faced by teachers and what role gender plays in the integration of technology in teaching practices.

3) Teachers' working conditions, motivation and satisfaction with work

Teacher wellbeing should also be studied from the perspectives of teachers – how teachers perceive their working conditions and what can be done to support them in the classroom. This would require a bottom-up approach, which focuses on the classroom context, teaching practices and support provided to teachers. Many of the issues taking place in school and the classroom affect teacher job satisfaction, and well-functioning support mechanisms can further teacher retention, their motivation and human capital. The support can come in many forms, among others through school leadership and management, mentoring, peer support, larger community around teachers and in the form of professional development.

The studies can also provide more understanding on how teachers can be empowered to adapt new policies and practices to their specific contexts, enhancing both their professional autonomy and the overall teaching environment. Teachers may face unique challenges based on their individual or environmental circumstances: for example, new competence areas that arise from education reforms, such as digitalization and green skills, can cause stress to quickly learn new skills or adapt teaching. Research could elucidate the impacts of policy changes on teacher motivation, engagement and agency, job satisfaction, work efficiency and ultimately learning outcomes. Outside the school environment, negative societal perceptions, such as viewing teachers as a disadvantaged group, can contribute significantly to job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates. This undervaluation necessitates societal changes to enhance the public image and status of teachers, thus improving the overall attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Furthermore, teacher wellbeing is often affected by the gender-based violence and harassment in and around schools. Others, including teachers of ethnic and religious minority groups and teachers from LGBTQI+ communities, may also face social exclusion. Strategies tailored to the specific needs and challenges of different regions or teachers from different backgrounds will be more effective in retaining teachers. This includes understanding the unique barriers faced by teachers in different areas and in different situations.

Theme 1: Research objective

The research aims to provide valuable insights into the most effective policies and incentives for increasing teacher wellbeing at work and to retain teachers. These can inform policy decisions at local and national levels and lead to the development of policies and practices that create more supportive and attractive working conditions for teachers. A successful uptake of the research is anticipated to have a significant impact on reducing teacher shortages and/or ensuring the balanced distribution of teachers, and/or identifying factors for improving teacher job satisfaction, and/or implementing effective recruitment and/or retention strategies to attract and retain more qualified teachers.

1.4.2 THEME 2: Teacher professional development

In this call, teacher professional development (TPD) refers to pre- and in-service training as well as the training during the entire career of a teacher. The importance of TPD has been emphasized in various global reports, including UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2020 and the Teacher Policy Development Guide (2019). These reports highlight the need for continuous, context-specific, and inclusive professional development to address the diverse needs of students, especially in resource-limited settings.

TPD is delivered in different forms and implemented by different actors, such as national training institutions, international actors, INGOs, and NGOs, and it has gained increased attention over the last 20 years. However, limited evidence is available on these modalities and their linkages to teacher policies, learning outcomes, and financing mechanisms. There is a growing tendency for African governments to link teacher participation in formal TPD activities, particularly training, to performance appraisal, promotion, and re-licensing processes.

TPD programs often face sustainability challenges due to insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of supportive policies. These factors hinder the ability of teachers to engage in lifelong learning and adapt to evolving educational needs. The lack of continuous and sustainable professional development opportunities means that teachers are less able to update their skills and knowledge in response to new demands. The high prevalence of unqualified teachers and the need for additional teachers requires ongoing and sustainable training programs to build a competent teaching workforce over time. There is also potential to utilize digital technologies for teacher exchanges and peer learning. The development and implementation of curricula is important both in teacher education and in the work of teachers at schools. There is also a need to explore how teacher education programs can address the intersectionality of different forms of diversity and inclusion. The application of integrating information and communication technology (ICT) in education in Sub-Saharan Africa has accelerated during and after Covid-19 pandemic. In TPD programs ICT can make training more accessible, interactive, and engaging, leading to better learning

outcomes. It also helps to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that all teachers, regardless of their location, have access to the latest educational technologies.

Focus areas under theme 2:

Teacher education in pre-service programs play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness and adaptability of future educators. Recent studies have identified three key areas being important for the success of these programs. These areas are therefore the focus areas under this theme:

1) Pedagogical innovations and curriculum development in teacher education programs

The landscape of teacher education is evolving, driven by the imperative to adapt curricula to the demands of modern education systems and societal expectations. Recent studies underscore the necessity of ongoing revisions to teacher education programs to remain relevant and effective. Key research findings indicate three areas of attention: a) the alignment of curricula with contemporary educational needs and societal norms, b) the integration of innovative pedagogies and critical perspectives, and c) the bridging of gaps between academic curriculum content and the practical competencies required in the educational field.

Fostering creativity and critical thinking in teacher professional development can lead to innovative teaching methods, which are able to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. There is a lack of studies on integrating educational reforms into teacher education curricula, as well as identifying best practices from pre- and in-service teacher education that align with curriculum reforms. There is also a need for more comparative research that examines the effectiveness of innovative teaching methods across different educational levels, subject areas, and cultural contexts.

In addition, the increase in population in many African countries, especially those of under 18 years old, and the subsequent growth in class sizes, requires pedagogical skills from the teachers, such as how to ensure that foundational and 21st century skills are learnt in large classrooms, and how to implement the requirements deriving from policy level reform. There is a lack of context-specific research, focusing on the barriers that prevent teachers from engaging in or benefiting from professional development, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2) Inclusiveness in Teacher Professional Development

Studies conducted across several African countries highlight the importance of flexible and inclusive teaching methods, the integration of technology and innovative practices and the necessity of reflective and collaborative approaches for addressing diverse student needs for improving the learning outcomes. Teacher professional development is crucial for addressing this issue and providing tools for teachers to respond to this challenge. Furthermore, the studies underscore the importance of cultural and linguistic integration in teacher education, but there is a gap in research on how teacher education programs can systematically incorporate local cultural knowledge and linguistic diversity into their curricula. In many African countries, particular focus should be paid on bilingual education, providing the possibilities for students to get teaching in their mother tongue.

Literature also shows the importance of having diverse teachers that represent the student population, including bilingual teachers. Future studies could focus on developing and evaluating comprehensive frameworks that integrate cultural and linguistic elements effectively, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to handle the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students. There is also a need to explore how teacher education programs can address different forms of diversity, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and disability.

3) Mentorship in teacher education

Professional development and options for professional growth are crucial for maintaining teacher motivation and enhancing their efficacy in the profession. Teacher educators play a pivotal role in shaping the future of education through their influence on pre-service and in-service teachers. Their responsibilities extend beyond mere instruction to encompass leadership, mentorship, curriculum assessment, and the navigation of socio-economic challenges that affect the educational landscape. Teacher educators thus impact how effectively curricula are implemented and delivered. Continuous professional development is essential for teacher educators to remain aligned with national quality standards to ensure they are fully prepared to mentor pre-service teachers through practical, real-world teaching experiences. Reflective practices are essential in allowing educators to continuously improve their teaching strategies and curriculum assessments. There is limited research on specific characteristics of effective mentorship programs. Future studies could investigate the qualities of successful mentor-mentee relationships and their potential impacts on teacher retention, as well as how reflective practices can be more systematically integrated into teacher education curricula.

Theme 2: Research objective

The call will invite research on context-specific and culturally relevant Teacher Professional Development programs. The objective of the research is to provide deeper understanding on aims, potentiality, and implementation methods of TPD and how to ensure its sustainability and adaptability to changing educational needs and cultural contexts. Ultimately, based on research evidence, the aim is have evidence that can be used to develop TPD strategies and programs that provide equitable possibilities to teacher professional development.

1.5 EXPECTATIONS FROM THE PROJECTS

1.5.1 Linkages to education policy priorities and key stakeholders

Proposals need to include plans on how to ensure that the research is policy and practice relevant and how the results of the research will be disseminated. The policy and practice relevance can be demonstrated through showing clear links with e.g. education policy priorities. The dissemination plans should also include a description of the engagement of key stakeholders to ensure that the research is relevant and positioned for use in policy and practice, including actors such as ministries of education or teacher training colleges. This can be through a letter indicating approval or interest from an appropriate authority. Generally, proposals should demonstrate that the organization applying for the grant is working in and has relationships with relevant education stakeholders in the target countries.

1.5.2 High-quality research for development

Funded projects will be expected to build knowledge, and evidence, and mobilize knowledge for policy and practice. The studies will be expected to meet the quality criteria of international academic research by being methodologically rigorous, original, and relevant. They must be ethically sound, and when relevant, address gender equality and inclusion related issues. More detailed on the expectations can be found in the research template.

1.5.3 Equal partnerships and capacity building

The projects are expected to promote equal partnerships and cooperation between the partners applying for funding and to increase ownership of the projects and their results in Africa and by the African partners. This can be demonstrated through the division of responsibilities between the partners and the research staff, the internal funding arrangements, and the leadership arrangements of the project or support provided to the African partners to strengthen their capacity in conducting research. The proposals should also show ideas on how to build research capacity of the African partners or researchers, enhance African research on teacher training and teacher governance in Africa, and to consider how to provide equal opportunities for both female and male researchers to participate in the project.

1.5.4 Regional approach

The projects are expected to have a regional approach in their proposals. This can be demonstrated e.g. via consortium arrangements between European and African organizations, enhancing cooperation between Europe and Africa, or via consortia that consist of partners in several African countries, aiming for a regional impact in Sub-Saharan Africa. The projects can be implemented either in only one Sub-Saharan country and in this case aiming for a regional impact e.g. through dissemination, or as regional projects implemented in two or more Sub-Saharan countries. The projects cannot include activities taking place in Europe, but all activities should take place in the country/countries of implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

1.5.5 RTIA Regional event in Africa

The Facility for the Regional Teachers Initiative for Africa will organize a high-level knowledge sharing event in Africa in spring 2026 (venue not yet decided). The projects funded by this research call are invited to present their work in that event. RTIA will cover the costs of one participant from each project to the event, but it is recommended that the projects will budget own funding to provide more staff to participate in the event, up to 3 persons from each project.

1.6 FUNDING

The indicative total amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 4 000 000. EDUFI reserves the right not to allocate all the available funds.

Grant amounts

Any request for a grant under this call for proposals must lay between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- Minimum amount: EUR 400 000
- Maximum amount EUR 800 000

Co-financing percentage

The programme will finance 90% of eligible expenditures presented in the final financial report submitted. The government grant recipient shall bear the remaining 10 %.

2 RULES APPLICABLE TO THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1.1 Lead applicant

To be eligible for grants, the lead applicant must satisfy the following conditions:

- be a legal entity; and
- be effectively established in either Europe or in an African country (establishment is determined on the basis of the organization's articles of association which must show that the organization has been founded under an act of law of the country in question and that its registered office is located in an eligible country). In this regard, any legal entity registered locally or acting under a "memorandum of understanding" is not eligible; and
- be a public actor (a 100% public entity, with no private capital) or be a private non-profit actor (e.g., universities, universities of applied sciences, research institutes, I/NGOs, CSOs, trade unions, network secretariats, associations, governmental research institutes or departments); and
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project with the co-applicant(s) and not be acting as an intermediary; and
- have already managed at least one grant (of public funds) that has already ended (not longer than five years ago) and that amounts to 50% of the amount applied for; and
- dispose of financial statements certified by an independent body (audit or statutory commissioner). Those statements must not be older than 2 years.

The potential applicant cannot participate in calls for proposals nor be the recipient of grants if they are in one of the exclusion situations described in Haeavustuksia.fi website (www.haeavustuksia.fi/en/haku/va-oph-2024-52/hakuilmoitus/myontoperusteet).

If the grant is awarded to it, the lead applicant becomes the government grant recipient. The government grant recipient is the main point of contact for the contracting authority. It shall design and coordinate the project implementation.

Please note that individuals and for-profit actors are not eligible as lead applicant or as co-applicant.

2.1.2 Co-applicants

The co-applicants shall participate in the implementation of the project, and the costs that they incur shall be eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant.

The co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria which apply to the lead applicant itself, except that:

- they do not need to prove that they have already managed a grant amounting to 50% of the amount applied for;

The co-applicants must sign the 'Mandate statement' (Annex 4).

If the grants are awarded to them, any co-applicants will become the government grant recipients in the project, with the lead applicant.

The number of co-applicants is limited to 6 in this call, and the minimum number of co-applicants is two (consortia proposals).

2.1.3 Consortium team

The consortium shall consist of partnerships of eligible actors between Africa and Europe. One of the partners (lead or co-applicant) shall be from Europe and two of the partners (lead or co-applicant) shall be from Africa.

The consortia should present a regional approach which can be demonstrated through a Europe-Africa consortium, and in addition to that, it can also pertain an African regional approach. Both single country and multi-country proposals will be funded.

The maximum size of the consortium cannot exceed 7 institutions (one lead applicant and 6 co-applicants). The size of the consortium should be in relation to the suggested research theme and scope. Equitable division of work between the consortium partners is encouraged.

Maximum 7 key research staff members are advised to attach a CV in the format given in Annex 2. The Maximum length is three pages: CV 2 pages, list of publications 1 page (total number of CVs is limited to 7, in case more than 7 CVs are included, only the first five will be considered in the evaluation). The list of publications shall contain the most project-relevant publications by the suggested research staff member.

Number of applications and Grant Agreements per applicant and co-applicant

The lead applicant and/or co-applicant may not submit more than one application for this Call for Proposals and be awarded more than one Grant Agreement under this Call for Proposals.

The lead applicant may not be at the same time a co-applicant in another application.

The call consists of two themes, and the lead applicant shall select one the two themes that it will address in the proposal (not both). A minimum of 2 projects will be funded under each theme.

2.1.4 Associates

Other organizations may be associated with the project. Associates actively participate in the project, however unlike co-applicants, costs incurred by associates are not eligible, and associates cannot be eligible for grants. These associates do not need to satisfy the eligibility criteria mentioned in point 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. The associates must be mentioned in the Research plan template in section four 'Project design and methodology'. Associates may not be eligible under the project as service, goods or works providers.

The associates shall include a letter of collaboration in the proposal stating their interest and role in the project. The letter can be of free form.

2.1.5 Contractors

Government grant recipients may award contracts to contractors.

Contractors shall be subject to grant agreement, including annexes "Procurement procedures to be applied by the grant recipients awarded by the Finnish National Agency for Education", "Terms and conditions of research funding for the Regional Facility for Teachers in Africa" and other conditions mentioned in the grant agreement.

Aforementioned terms do not exempt the recipient from the obligation to comply with national procurement legislation.

If the recipient has its own procurement guidelines, they may follow them, provided that the guidelines are stricter or do not conflict with the conditions set by the Finnish National Agency for Education for the project.

When procuring supplies or services, the call for tenders must include a separate declaration ("Sworn declaration by tenderers involved in the implementation of a grant financed by Finnish National Agency for Education") by the supplier that the sanctions do not apply to it or its beneficiaries.

2.1.6 Eligible projects

Definition: a project is composed of a set of activities and producing academically relevant research.

Duration: The term of a project may not exceed 18 months, and it shall be completed by 31 August 2026.

Geographical coverage:

Projects must be implemented in Sub Saharan African countries (as per the EU definition) listed below. The proposals can be single-country or multi-country proposals. These eligible countries are:

EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA	WEST AFRICA	SOUTHERN AFRICA
1. Burundi 2. Cameroon 3. Central African Republic 4. Congo 5. DRC 6. Djibouti 7. Equatorial Guinea 8. Eritrea 9. Ethiopia 10. Gabon 11. Kenya 12. Rwanda 13. Sao Tome and Principe 14. Somalia 15. South Sudan 16. Sudan 17. Tanzania 18. Uganda	1. Benin 2. Burkina Faso 3. Cabo Verde 4. Chad 5. Côte Ivoire 6. The Gambia 7. Ghana 8. Guinea 9. Guinea-Bissau 10. Liberia 11. Mali 12. Mauretania 13. Niger 14. Nigeria 15. Senegal 16. Sierra Leone 17. Togo	1. Angola 2. Botswana 3. Comores 4. Eswatini 5. Lesotho 6. Madagascar 7. Malawi 8. Mauritius 9. Mozambique 10. Namibia 11. Seychelles 12. South Africa 13. Zambia 14. Zimbabwe

Please note that activities directly involving or targeting national public authorities (including policy making and capacity building) will not be eligible in countries where cooperation with the European Union is suspended at any time from the time of submission of the full project proposal until contract signature.

Geographically, both single country and multi-country proposals are eligible for the call, a minimum of 2 single country and 2 multi-country proposals will be funded. No activities can take place in Europe, but the activities shall occur in Sub-Saharan African countries where the project is being implemented.

Financial support to third parties:

Applicants may not offer to support third parties financially (sub-grants).

Visibility

Applicants must take all measures necessary to ensure the visibility of the financing by the European Union and the RTIA consortium (Expertise France, Enabel, EDUFI, UNESCO and African Union). Projects should include a communication budget line of min. 2.000 EUR to raise awareness among all or a section of the public regarding the motivation behind the project and behind the support provided by European Union, through EDUFI in the country or region concerned, and in terms of the results and impact of the support.

A communication toolkit will be provided to the grantees, including the communications requirements in line with Communicating and Raising EU Visibility Guidance and Facility communication guidelines.

2.1.7 Cost Eligibility: What costs may be included?

Only 'eligible costs' may be covered by the grant. The types of eligible and ineligible costs are indicated below. The budget is both an estimate of costs and an overall cap on 'eligible costs'.

Recommendations to award the grant are always subject to verifications preceding the signature of the grant contract not revealing any issues requiring the modification of the budget (e.g. arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs, and ineligible costs). The verification procedure may give rise to clarification requests and lead EDUFI to impose modifications or reductions to correct any such errors or inaccuracies. Corrections may not give rise to a higher grant and higher percentage of cofinancing from EDUFI.

Consequently, it is in the interests of the applicants to provide a realistic budget and appropriate cost effectiveness.

Eligible direct costs

'The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on one of the following formats, or any combination of these:

- The operational costs: necessary and indispensable costs for achieving the objectives and results of the project, including the cost for achieving verifiable deliverables. This includes staff costs when directly linked with the research deliverables, data collection costs (travel, surveyors, in country meetings etc.), dissemination and outreach expenses (webinars, social media presence, factsheets, policy briefs, etc.).
- The management costs: separate costs related to management, supervision, coordination, monitoring, control, evaluation and financial audit which specifically originate in the implementation of the project or the justification of the grant;
- The structure costs: costs related to the achievement of the social purpose of the government grant recipient, which even though they are influenced by the implementation of the project cannot be separated or charged to the budget of this project. Structure costs amount to maximum 7% of operational costs. The structure costs are lump sums and do not need to be justified. Structure costs are paid during execution of the grant on the basis of operational costs really incurred, considered eligible and approved by EDUFI.

Regarding travel costs, please adhere to EU regulations. The EU per diem rate applies, covering expenses for hotels, local transportation at the meeting location, and daily allowances. For more details, refer to the document: [Per diem rates - 25 July 2022.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#).

Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve up to a maximum of 5% of the estimated eligible direct costs. It may only be used with prior written authorization from EDUFI.

Audit

The projects must include audit costs in their budget. The audit will be carried out by an international auditor that is approved by EDUFI at the end of the project. The audit (1) shall take place immediately after the implementation period of the project.

Personnel costs

The Finnish National Agency for Education will accept as reasonable costs the salaries or remunerations paid to each salary earner up to the maximum amount of what is normally paid for the work in question in

the project country. During the project, the Finnish National Agency for Education may give a permission to deviate from this principle if acceptable grounds exist for it.

The personnel costs that are considered to be acceptable are the costs of employees recruited for the project as well as costs of other employees if the grant recipient reliably proves by means of working time monitoring that the work input has been used for the project.

Eligibility of value added taxes

Value added tax or a corresponding indirect tax paid on value added is accepted as grant-financed expense only if it remains to be paid by the grant recipient in the end.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- 1° Accounting entries not leading to payments as well as imputed costs that are not based on actual costs;
- 2° Provisions for liabilities and charges, losses, debts or possible future debts;
- 3° Debts and debit interests;
- 4° Bad loans/ doubtful debts;
- 5° Currency exchange losses;
- 6° Loans and loans to third parties;
- 7° Guarantees and bonds;
- 8° Costs already financed by another grant;
- 9° Invoices made out by other organizations for goods and services already subsidized;
- 10° Subcontracting by means of service or consultancy contracts to personnel members, Board members or General Assembly members of the organization subsidized;
- 11° Any sub-letting to oneself;
- 12° Purchases of land or buildings;
- 13° Compensation for damage falling under the civil liability of the organization;
- 14° Severance pay or wage expenses paid for a notice period with no work obligation, penalty-like fees, such as fines or interests on delayed payment; employment termination compensation for the term of notice not performed;
- 15° Purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco and derived products thereof;
- 16° Grants to sub-beneficiaries;
- 17° Salary bonuses and contributions of non-statutory supplementary pensions;

- 18° Contributions of non-statutory supplementary pensions;
- 19° Infrastructure and equipment costs, including computers and other equipment;
- 20° PhD thesis (salaries and other costs);
- 21° depreciations;
- 22° fundraising costs;
- 23° costs of business and investment activities;
- 24° reserves;
- 25° costs of legal proceedings;
- 26° compensations imposed by a court of justice;
- 27° repayment of the discretionary government grant, clawback obligations or credit loss from a grant that has been redistributed to other parties.

‘Contributions in kind’ means goods or services provided free of charge by a third party to the government grant recipient. Since contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure on the part of the government grant recipient, they are not eligible costs.

Costs resulting from money given as a gift or from gift cards with a monetary value are not acceptable.

A project grant must not be used to cover facility costs not resulting from the project.

2.2 PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL AND PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

2.2.1 Submission

The applications are submitted via online system available at <https://www.haeavustuksia.fi/en/haku/va-oph-2024-52> by the deadline of November 25, 2024 16.00 (EET/Helsinki time). Late submissions will not be taken into evaluation. Applicants are encouraged to submit the proposals well before the deadline to avoid any technical issues in the submission. Applications submitted by other means (e.g. by fax or email) or sent by mail will be rejected.

To log in in the database, the lead applicant, when not an EU Member State citizen, has to first register oneself at [Suomi.fi website](https://suomi.fi). After that the lead applicant must download an app call Finnish Authenticator from google play store / App store for identifying oneself. On the EDUFI website there is a video guiding the applicants in the registration and use of the Finnish Authenticator. Information is also provided on the Suomi.fi website (link above). Only after that it is possible to start filling in the proposal. Most European citizens will identify themselves through their national identification systems, when logging in to the database for submitting the application.

The application includes several attachment documents and the templates for these can be downloaded from [the EDUFI website](https://edu.fi).

2.2.2 Inquiries and information sessions

Webinars

The info webinar of the call is arranged online on October 11, 2024 at 13.00-15.00 (EET/Helsinki time). The webinar will be held in English and translated into French and Portuguese. Registration information and the recording are available at edu.fi/call2024.

All call documents are published in English only but there are factsheets on the call in French and Portuguese. The proposals can only be submitted in English.

Questions

Questions and clarifications related to the themes of the call shall be sent to erja.hanninen@rtia-facility.eu and sinituuli.suominen@rtia-facility.eu and will be replied on an on-going basis on [the EDUFI website](https://edu.fi) only. The deadline for the final questions and clarification is three weeks before the deadline of the call, that is, on November 8, 2024, and the final answers and clarifications will be provided by EDUFI by November 15, 2024.

Questions related to the technical issues regarding the database can be sent to antti.seppanen@valtiokonttori.fi.

Questions related to the Finnish authenticator are answered by telephone +358 295 53 5115 or by organisaatiopalvelut@dvv.fi. Before contacting the authorities, please look at the video on how to install the Finnish authenticator app on [the EDUFI website](https://edu.fi).

There are no deadlines for questions related to technical issues.

Call timeline

Activity	Date
Call launch	October 4, 2024
Info webinar	October 11, 2024
Deadline for questions	November 8, 2024
Deadline for responses	November 15, 2024
Deadline for proposals	November 25, 2024
Applicants informed of final decision	February 14, 2025
Implementation of the projects commences	March 1, 2025

2.2.3 Evaluation and selection of applications

Opening, administrative/eligibility checks and evaluation of the applications

The review process will consist of the following steps, conducted by EDUFI staff and external reviewers with relevant expertise.

1. Verification of eligibility requirements and proposal completeness

EDUFI will review all submitted proposals after the proposal submission deadline to ensure they meet eligibility requirements and include all necessary application materials. Ineligible, incomplete, and irrelevant proposals will not be considered further. Eligibility check includes that all parts of the application are completed and required attachments are part of the proposal, the legal entity file form from the applicant, and the document substantiating that the applicant has already managed public funds for at least 50% of the amount applied for.

2. Review and ranking of proposals

The independent assessment panel will review eligible proposals using the evaluation criteria described below. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least three panelists. Proposals will be ranked on the basis of scoring and subsequent panel discussion. The panel will recommend which proposals are of sufficient quality to receive the funding.

3. Recommending a cohort of projects

EDUFI will identify a cohort of panel-recommended projects up to the maximum budget for the funding envelope available for the call. The cohort will balance thematic, geographic and applicant diversity in the funding. The cohort will be submitted for approval from the Facility's Implementation Team.

4. Final approval

The Facility's Implementation Team will provide final approval of the projects funded through this call.

5. Notification of results

Following the selection by the Facility's Implementation Team, successful and non-successful applicants will be notified of the results by February 14, 2025. The government decision for the funding will be issued at this point.

6. Request for changes

EDUFI reserves the right to request successful applicants to make changes based on the feedback from the panel and Facility's Implementation Team, if necessary.

7. Start of projects

The implementation period of the projects starts from March 1, 2025.

Numerical evaluation

The consistency between the numerical rating and the written comments is particularly important. In the draft review (before the panel meeting) the numerical evaluation is made with a rating scale ranging from 5 (excellent) to 1 (insufficient). In the final reviews (in the panel meeting) the scale ranges from 5 (excellent) to 3-1 (fair to insufficient).

Draft rating	Description
5 (excellent)	Is very good in international comparison – contains no significant elements to be improved
4 (good)	Is in general sound but contains some elements that should be improved
3 (fair)	Is in general sound but contains important elements that should be improved
2 (poor)	Contains flaws and is in need of substantial modification or improvement
1 (insufficient)	Contains severe flaws that are intrinsic to the proposed project or the application

Evaluation criteria

The funding decisions by Regional Facility for Teachers in Africa (Window 3) are based on a review of the scientific merits of research plans, workplans plans, and the applicants. We use the following criteria (while also considering the objectives of the funding scheme) when assessing scientific merits:

Criteria	Points
1. Applicant / eligibility	Pass - not pass
consortium is a partnership between European and Sub-Saharan African institutions (min. one lead and two co-applicants, max. one lead and 6 co-applicants, one partner from Europe and two from Africa)	
lead applicant and co-applicants meet the set eligibility criteria	
reference from a previous project from the lead applicant (50% value of the requested amount)	
2. Aims and impact	40
the proposal responds to the call objectives, and ultimately contributes to increasing the number of competent and qualified teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa	5
the proposal addresses one of the call themes	5
the proposal has potential significance and societal relevance	5
the proposal provides actionable and policy relevant solutions that are contextualized and build evidence for the potential impact	5
the proposal has a realistic and convincing interaction plan with stakeholders for dissemination of results, mobilizing knowledge and scaling of impact	5
the proposal includes collaboration with stakeholder network (e.g., ministries or decentralized education administrations, schools, teacher training institutions, other research organizations/universities, civil society)	5
the proposal has a regional approach	5
the proposal considers research capacity strengthening of the consortium members in African partner countries (e.g., financial, technical, and administrative support to conceive, conduct, manage and communicate research)	5
3. Implementation	40
the proposal demonstrates scientific and structural quality of the research design, reflected in clear presentation, methodological integrity, adequate data collection/generation, and framing by the examination of current knowledge on the issues	5
the proposal identifies key ethical aspects and ways of addressing them; considers research legitimacy, promotes open science and	5

openness in data collection	
the proposal suggests a clear correspondence between research goals, proposed activities, milestones, monitoring and evaluation, and budget allocations	5
the consortium set-up and organization of work within the consortium is designed to support the implementation of the research project and ensuring fair and equitable partnership	5
the proposal includes clear strategies for adaptive management and mitigation of risks	5
the applicants demonstrate scientific merits in the field of teacher professional development and/or teacher governance	5
the applicants demonstrate competence in research project implementation	5
the research will contribute to the existing research agenda on teachers in the region, to complement research efforts that are already supported	5
4. Cost-effectiveness and budget	20
the proposal presents costs that are relevant and support the project goals (max 5 points)	5 (x 2)
the costs are reasonable within the context of project location (max 5 points)	5 (x 2)

2.3 SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

Lead applicants whose applications have been provisionally selected or included on the reserve list will be notified in writing by EDUFI. They will be asked to provide the following documents to enable EDUFI to verify their eligibility and that of their co-applicants:

1. An external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the accounts of the lead applicant for the last available financial year where the total amount of the grant is above EUR 750,000. The partners, if any, are not required to submit an external audit report. This obligation does not apply to public bodies, or secondary or higher education institutions.
2. A copy of the lead applicant's most recent financial statements (income statement and balance sheet for the last financial year), public bodies being exempted of this. The co-applicants are not required to submit a copy of their financial statements;
3. The financial identity information sheet (to be provided by EDUFI) duly completed and signed by each applicant (i.e. the lead applicant and the co-applicants), accompanied by the requested supporting documentation;

The documents must be provided in the form of originals, photocopies, or scans (showing the company stamps, signatures and dates).

- When these documents are written in a language other than English, Finnish or Swedish, it is strongly recommended for evaluation purposes to provide a translation in English of the document's pertinent parties proving the eligibility of the lead applicant and the co-applicants.
- If the aforementioned supporting documentation is not provided before the deadline specified in the request for submission of supporting documentation issued by EDUFI to the lead applicant, the request may be rejected.
- After verification of the supporting documentation, the EDUFI evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the Facility's Implementation Team, which will decide on the awarding of grants.

Transparency

For the sake of transparency, EDUFI undertakes to publish the list of government grant recipients. By signing the Grant Agreement, the government grant recipients declares that he agrees with the publication of the title of the contract, the nature and object of the contract, its name and location, and the amount of the contract.

Personal data protection and confidentiality

EDUFI undertakes to comply with the regulations in force applicable to the processing of personal data and, in particular, Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 applicable as of 25 May 2018.

Identity and contact details of the Data Controller and its representative:

Finnish National Agency for Education

Hakaniemenranta 6

P.O. Box 380, 00531 Helsinki, Finland

Telephone +358 29 533 1000

e-mail: kirjaamo@oph.fi

The legal grounds justifying the data processing correspond to sections c) and e) of Article 6.1 of the GDPR, namely that:

Processing is necessary to comply with a legal obligation to which EDUFI is subject;

Processing is necessary for the performance of a mission carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of the public authority vested in EDUFI;

The purposes of the processing are:

the management and monitoring of this call for proposals,

managing and monitoring of the award of the grant that is the subject of the call for proposals.

The recipients or category of recipients of personal data are exclusively the authorized staff of the contracting authority, ministries, and State operators charged with the signing and performing of the contract, as well as the service providers assisting them in their activities.

Retention period: these data are stored throughout the period during which the contract is signed and performed, as well as for the duration of administrative usefulness (DUA) applicable to the contract.

In accordance with the provisions of Articles 15 to 21 of the GDPR, persons whose personal data are collected have a right of access, rectification and erasure of this information concerning them. They also have a right to restrict processing and to oppose this processing on legitimate grounds. Information rights and any other right of the persons affected by the processing implemented may be exercised with the EDUFI Data Protection officer.

Individuals whose personal data are collected in connection with the present procedure have the right to lodge a complaint with the Finland's Data Protection Ombudsman.

EDUFI undertakes to guarantee the confidentiality of the proposals sent to it and to ensure the security and storage of these proposals.

3 ANNEXES

Annex 1 Research plan template

Annex 2 CV and list of publications template

Annex 3 Legal entity form

Annex 4 Mandate statement of the co-applicants

Annex 5 Previous project experience template

Annex 6 Budget table for application

Annexes can be downloaded from the [EDUFI website](#).