

Call for Applications – June 2026

## Researcher(s)/expert(s) to produce a toolkit for European stakeholders on National and Regional Partnership Plans and just transition

### Background

Negotiations for the next European Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034 are currently ongoing. A key element of the European Commission’s proposal is the merging of 14 previously separate funds – covering cohesion policy, CAP, migration, internal security and several smaller programs – into a **single fund, implemented through National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs)**. This new financial architecture marks a shift from a cost-based to a performance-based budgeting model, linking spending to milestones and reforms.

The MFF proposal (with the end of the Just Transition Fund) and the NRPPs have been criticised on different levels. For example, while the EC’s proposal includes provisions to ensure the continuation of multi-level governance and the partnership principle, central governments possess significant discretionary powers in the planning and design of the NRPPs. Even though the MFF and NRP Regulation are still under discussion, **member states will very soon need to start launching the process of drafting NRPPs**. A few member states have already started. At this stage, it is difficult to understand how member states will undertake this task, how subnational authorities and civil society will be involved and to what extent their past experiences with EU funding will remain relevant. It also unclear how just transition will be concretely included in NRPPs.

### Objectives of the activity

In this uncertain context, the main objective of the activity is to explore **how to support the meaningful participation of subnational and civil society stakeholders in the preparation of the NRPPs and the design of quality just transition projects**. It will focus on the perspectives and needs of national and subnational stakeholders for project design, monitoring and implementation.

To do so, the researcher(s)/expert(s) will (1) **assess the current situation faced by national and subnational stakeholders** when it comes to NRPPs and just transition, in link with the ongoing MFF negotiations; (2) **produce user-friendly documentation** providing key information, best practices and recommendations; and (3) **organise a capacity building seminar** to disseminate the content of the documentation and exchange with relevant stakeholders.

The research process may include, among other tasks:

- analysing current developments related to NRPPs at member state and regional levels based on contacts with relevant stakeholders (analysing the governance processes put in place by the few countries who started developing NRPPs early, understanding their rationale and motivations, understanding the needs of subnational stakeholders, exploring how past experiences interact with the new NRPP format);
- analysing the MFF developments at EU level;

- identifying good practices from current and past experiences that can be useful for member states in their design of NRPPs and, conversely, proposing new practices and processes;
- developing recommendations to support NRPP preparation processes that are inclusive and participatory and that integrate key just transition dimensions, building on the experience of the Just Transition Fund.

### Methodology

Considering the evolving and exploratory nature of the activity, an inductive methodology guided by contacts with on-the-ground actors and continuous adjustments based on the results is envisioned. The precise scope and methodology of the research are to be defined by the researcher(s)/expert(s) based on the objectives of the activity and in close collaboration with FEPS and FES. Further refining the target audience for the toolkit will also be essential during the research process.

Depending on the needs of the activity, the methodology could include a literature review, stakeholder interviews, policy analysis, documentary and press analysis, etc.

The researcher(s) must adhere to the FEPS guidelines for a responsible and critical use of AI in their research and writing endeavours.

### Deliverables

- (1) A toolkit including three short and user-friendly briefs, manuals, leaflets or other (format to be defined, 5 pages maximum each) on topics to be defined throughout the research process;
- (2) A webinar to present and discuss the content of the toolkit.

### Required profile

- Proven expertise in topics related to the EU budget and funding mechanisms, national authorities in charge of EU funding, just transition policies at European and regional levels.
- Proven experience in research with use of literature review and qualitative / mixed methods methodologies
- Proven ability to write papers and communicate in English
- Experience working with just transition stakeholders, both in governments and civil society, at national and regional levels, is an asset
- Creativity, strong communication skills and dissemination capacity
- Capacity to both work independently and develop a common vision with FEPS and FES
- Proven ability to deliver in a timely manner and respect deadlines

### Contractual details

**Start:** Applicants are requested to propose a realistic start date, depending on the expected delivery date. Ideal start date would be September 2026.

**Expected delivery:** November-December 2026

**Type of contract:** Service Provision Agreement with FEPS

**Remuneration:** 9,000 euros (VAT and any ancillary costs included)

Application process and timeline:

- CV of the applicant, with a list of relevant publications written by the applicant
- One-page essay/cover letter on the object of the activity (please do not use AI). You are invited to include first reflections on the methodology, key questions and communication material.
- Tentative timeline and a table outlining the list of tasks foreseen as part of the research, along with the expected number of working days required for each of them
  - Based on the total amount of working days, please provide your daily rate minding the ceiling of 9,000 EUR (VAT included) for the full contract.

**To be sent by email to Luis Sáez Jiménez, ([luis.saez@feps-europe.eu](mailto:luis.saez@feps-europe.eu)) by July 13, 2026.**

Applications not provided in writing via email will not be considered.

If needed, interviews will be conducted **online mid-July**.

Contacts

For further inquiry and questions, please contact Chloé Deffet, FEPS Climate Policy Analyst ([chloe.deffet@feps-europe.eu](mailto:chloe.deffet@feps-europe.eu)) and Luis Sáez Jiménez, FEPS Project Officer ([luis.saez@feps-europe.eu](mailto:luis.saez@feps-europe.eu)).

## **Annex 1: Legal notice**

### **Participation in the tendering procedure**

#### **Tender Process**

FEPS reserves the right to conduct the tender process and select the successful tender.

FEPS is not bound contractually or in any way to a bidder to this request for tender until FEPS and the successful winner have entered a written contract.

#### **Assessment**

In non-preferential order, the evaluation criteria used to assess the quality of the applications are the following:

Criteria 1: A cost proposal – value for money offered by the applicant.

Criteria 2: Quality of the service offered by the applicant.

Criteria 3: Prior experience with similar projects and deliverables.

Criteria 4: Expertise in the topics and research methodologies at hand.

Criteria 5: Availability.

Applicants must be able to work in English language.

#### **Terms of payment**

Prices must be fixed amounts in Euro.

The amount of VAT must be disclosed on the price offer and invoice.

Costs incurred in preparing and submitting tenders are borne by the tenderers and cannot be reimbursed.

#### **Quality issues**

In delivering the service, the tenderer shall ensure the highest quality standards, of which FEPS shall be the sole judge.

#### **Confidentiality and conflict of interest**

The Tenderer undertakes that they will not at any time, either before or after the termination of this service, use or disclose or communicate to any person confidential information relating to the affairs of FEPS.

This restriction shall continue to apply after the termination of the service without limit in point of time.

To ensure the independence of the terms of their contract, the winning tenderer will sign a declaration certifying that they have no conflict of interests in relation to the tasks to be undertaken and undertake to inform FEPS' Director of Operations should this status change.

#### **Terms and conditions**

FEPS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, to advertise for new proposals, to abandon the need for services, and to cancel or amend this call for tender at any time prior to the execution of the written contract.

FEPS reserves the right to waive any formalities in the call for tender process. FEPS may respond to questions or provide information from tenderers and is under no obligation to provide such responses or information to all other tenderers.

By submitting a proposal, the tenderer agrees to:

- FEPS may copy the proposal for the purpose of facilitating the evaluation of the proposal and agrees that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party.
- It will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against FEPS based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided or concerning FEPS' failure, neglect or otherwise, to provide the bidder with pertinent information as Intended by this call for tender.

The accomplishment of a tendering procedure imposes no obligation on the FEPS to award the contract.

Should the invitation to tender cover several items or lots, FEPS reserves the right to award a contract for only some of them.

Subcontracting of contractually agreed responsibilities to third parties will only be possible under written approval and at no additional cost for FEPS.

FEPS shall not be liable for any compensation with respect to tenders whose tenders have not been accepted, nor shall it be so liable if it decides not to award the contract.

#### CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

Foundation of European Progressive Studies (FEPS)

Avenue des Arts, 46 – 1000 Brussels

EUPF 4 BE0896.230.213

<https://feps-europe.eu/>