

Tender for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Consultant Expert

Key objectives of the tender

1. Conduct an RPL Pilot Study of the Irish Community Education context.
2. Develop and deliver a professional development programme for Community and Adult Education Staff.

Purpose

AONTAS as Irish National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) is leading a new project 'Adult and Community Education: Supported Learner Pathways 2020-2021'. As part of this project, AONTAS is seeking an experienced consultant/researcher with a strong track record of expertise in the area of recognition of prior learning (RPL).

The impact of this work is to build the capacity of educators in the community education sector and develop new guidelines for the use of RPL in working with marginalised and vulnerable groups, and employees with low qualifications.

The European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL)

The [Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning](#) defines the focus for European cooperation in adult education policies for the period to 2020. It was adopted by the Council in November 2011. In it, the Council recognises that there is a need for all adults regularly to enhance their personal and professional skills and competences, but that adult learning is the weakest link in national lifelong-learning systems. Adult participation in learning continues to be low. In order to achieve an effective adult learning sector, more needs to be done.

Among the issues targeted for action in the Agenda are: increasing the possibilities for all adults to access flexible, high-quality learning at any time in their lives; developing new approaches to adult education focusing on learning outcomes; raising awareness that learning is a lifelong endeavour; developing effective lifelong guidance systems and systems for validating non-formal and informal learning.

To facilitate cooperation between European countries and the Commission in implementing the EAAL, each participating country has a National Coordinator. Each National Coordinator sets out a work programme which identifies the specific actions their organisation is going to take to implement the EAAL in their country.



Specific priorities of the EAAL for the period 2015 - 2020 are:

- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Supply and take up
- ✓ Flexibility and access
- ✓ Quality

AONTAS

AONTAS is the Irish National Adult Learning Organisation. Since its foundation in 1969, AONTAS has a long track record of support for adult learners, practitioners and providers. As an umbrella body committed to advocating and lobbying for the development of a quality service for adult learners and promoting the value and benefits of lifelong learning, AONTAS works on behalf of its 400+ strong membership and regards them as a key resource which provides the organisation with a grassroots, authentic understanding of adult and community education practice and learner perspective. The membership profile comprises a rich mix of statutory, voluntary and community organisations involved in the provision of further education and training, as well as individuals who are deeply involved in and committed to the concept and practice of lifelong learning.

AONTAS Membership Services Include:

- One Step Up Information and Referral Service
- Adult Learner's Festival and Star Awards
- Learners as Leaders Programme
- Learner Voice Resources
- The National FET Learner Forum
- AONTAS Communications Strategy
- AONTAS Advocacy Strategy
- AONTAS Advocacy Events
- Adult Learner Journal

Expected Impact:

Build the capacity of educators in community education and develop new guidelines for the use of RPL in working with marginalised and vulnerable groups, and employees with low qualifications.

Target Audiences:

- Community education tutors, staff, and management

In addition, the wider impact of this activity seeks to support the implementation of the [European Commission Upskilling Pathways Recommendation](#) by having a specific focus on

- Learners with low educational attainment in employment
- Lone parents
- Travellers
- Migrants
- People with disabilities
- Marginalised and vulnerable adults

As part of this work, we are seeking an RPL expert to:

Action 1: Design and conduct an analysis of current RPL practices and learner pathways in Ireland, and best practice in Europe.

- *Report to focus on community education practices and/or practices that are applicable for future learning in a community education setting.*
- *Provide an evidence base through quality and accurate research supporting the development of Action 2 (p.4)*
- *Study findings to include: a qualitative report outlining the current RPL context in Ireland with assessment and validation practices used, profile of learners previously engaged in RPL, challenges faced in the sector, institutions and other stakeholders previously and currently involved, resources available, and recommendations for future policy and practice.*

Action 2: Develop and deliver a CPD programme for community adult education tutors and staff to build their capacity in this area [estimate 20 – 25 participants]

Purpose: Participants will be prepared to practice RPL in their own centres with knowledge on practices, potential pathways, and validation opportunities.

1. RPL Training Programme for Community Education Tutors/staff

- *This must include face to face sessions.*
- *Guidelines for implementing RPL in a community education context*
- *Include development of materials and resources needed for staff for a future pilot study.*

The AONTAS EU Projects Officer will work closely with the RPL expert to develop and implement these activities. Following on from this work, in 2021 AONTAS will conduct a pilot study in a community education setting supporting a provider with RPL in their community.

Outputs from Expert:

- High quality research using a qualitative approach and qualitative methods with an estimated 20,000 word report in-line with the principals of community education and adult learning.
- Development of continuous professional development programme, course materials, RPL guidelines for community education settings, and resources.
- Delivery of CPD programme with 20 – 25 participants.

Timeframe and Process:

It is anticipated the expert will complete this activity from March 2020 to January 2021. The successful tenderer is expected to meet with the AONTAS CEO, EU Projects Officer, and other members of the AONTAS team as needed, to ensure all stages of the activity are on-track and in-line with the project goals. All work should be complete in January 2021 in order to allow AONTAS to begin the pilot study following on from this work.

Ethics and Values:

We expect the successful tenderer to adhere to AONTAS' values and follow AONTAS' policies as deemed appropriate.



Accountability and Management:

The contract for this service rests with AONTAS, the primary point of contact for the successful tenderer will be Niamh O'Reilly CEO, AONTAS.

The successful tenderer will be expected to:

- Maintain regular contact with the CEO, responding to communications in a timely manner
- Take into account feedback from AONTAS Members.
- Be proactive in seeking clarification, information or guidance as needed

Timeframe and Deliverables

We expect the successful tenderer to:

- Commence this work in March 2020
- Provide regular progress updates to the CEO
- Provide a draft report by August 2020
- Deliver face to face CPD programme with up to 25 participants
- Provide a draft programme for the CPD and accompanying materials
- Complete all activities by the end of January 2021

Competency and expertise requirements

The successful tenderer will:

- Have a proven expertise in the Recognition of Prior Learning,
- Demonstrate an understanding and awareness of the adult learning sector, with emphasis on community education.
- Provide evidence of relevant experience and examples of academic research conducted.
- Demonstrate ability to work collaboratively and engage with AONTAS team and AONTAS members.
- Provide evidence of development and delivery of programmes suited to adult and/or higher education participants.
- Ability to synthesise a large range of information methodically, accurately and succinctly.
- Provide two referees associated with examples of two most appropriate areas of work.
- Desirable: PhD in Adult Education/Education/Sociology/ or relevant discipline

Tender Requirements

Tenders for this work must include:

1. Name of applicant, address and contact details. In the case of consortia, please assign one person as the principal contact / for organisations please provide details on the organisation.
2. A statement outlining the understanding of the brief (max 1000 words)
3. Personnel involved – details of all personnel who will be involved, including a CV which outlines their qualifications/experience.
4. Description of proposed project approach, methodology, actions and timeframe (max. 1500 words)
5. Examples of two relevant previous projects along with a separate referee, including contact details, for each project.
6. Costs – detailed per day cost and any associated costs, including VAT.
7. Notification of any potential conflicts of interest
8. An up to-date copy of the tenderer’s Tax Clearance Certificate and relevant insurances.

Evaluations of tender submissions will be based on criteria specified in the tender requirements, using the following award criteria:

No	Requirements / Criterion	Weighing Criteria
1	Understanding the Brief	20%
2	Relevant Knowledge, Expertise, Experience, Project Management and Resources Allocated	40%
3	Content and Quality of Proposed Plan and Methodology	20%
4	Cost	20%
Total marks		100%

Minimum scoring required for requirements/criterion is 60% for each.

Tenderers must achieve a minimum score of 60% of the total marks available for each of the individual qualitative criteria (1-4). Any Tender which does not meet this minimum threshold shall be excluded from further consideration.

The lowest cost tender which also meets all of the minimum requirements of the qualitative award criteria, will receive the maximum score achievable under this criterion. The scores of the other valid Tenders will be calculated by using the following formula: Number of marks = the cost of the lowest valid tender divided by the cost of the valid tender in question and multiplied by the maximum score achievable.

1. Understanding the brief

Those tendering should demonstrate in their proposals a good understanding of the brief.

2. Relevant knowledge, expertise, experience and resources allocated

The highest scores will be awarded to the tenderers with the most appropriate knowledge and experience in delivering similar projects. The tenderer must supply a CV of the person who will be carrying out the work.

3. Content and quality of proposed plan and methodology.

This refers to the proposed approach to the design and development given the content in this Request for Tender. Tenderers must demonstrate their capability to bring the contract to a satisfactory conclusion by describing the methodology of approach to accomplish the project's required outcomes within the stated timeframe.

4. Cost

This must include all costs and expenses for the work.

5. Quotations should be inclusive of VAT, and should be quoted in Euro.

All prices quoted must remain valid for the duration of the work.

Following completion of the tender evaluation, the successful tenderer will be notified in writing. Once the offer is accepted, letters will be issued to the unsuccessful tenderer/s notifying them of the result. A tender assessment panel is in place to assess the applications and to award the contract to the successful tenderer. The panel will have to be satisfied that the method and programme of work meet the requirements outlined and are cost effective.

The panel does not commit itself to accepting the lowest cost tender and will not accept any responsibility for any expenses incurred in the preparation and submission of a tender. The panel may cancel the process at any time. AONTAS will not engage in any discussions or negotiations in advance of adjudication. AONTAS is not in a position to provide feedback on unsuccessful tenders.

Budget and schedule of payments

The maximum expected budget for this project is €25,000 (inclusive of VAT). The price will be inclusive of all expenses, travel, subsistence and administration. Costs for the delivery of the CPD programme including teaching and learning space and other associated costs must be included. AONTAS will not make any payments other than the price in the quotation response document. A payment schedule will be agreed with the successful tenderer prior to the commencement of the work based on project deliverables.

Any quotations exceeding this amount must clearly state the reason for exceeding €25,000 or will not be evaluated and will be eliminated from the process. Quotations with lower pricing will receive a proportionally higher score under the award criteria concerning cost.

Shortlisting and Clarification Meetings

A shortlist of the most competitive applicants may be invited to present or provide further information on their bid prior to selection. An invitation to interview is not an indication that a contract has been awarded. Applicants attending such interviews will do so at their own expense.

Tax Clearance Certificate

Before the contract is awarded, the successful tenderer will be required to produce a valid Tax Clearance Certificate, and if the certificate should expire within the course of the contract, a new certificate will be required. All payments under the contract will be conditional on the person/organisation being in possession of a valid certificate at all times.

Insurance

The successful tenderer must produce evidence of professional indemnity and car insurance as part of the tender submission and this cover needs to be in place for the duration of the contract for work.

Conflicts of Interest

Any conflicts of interest involving a tenderer must be fully disclosed to AONTAS. Failure to disclose a conflict-of-interest may disqualify a bidder or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of-interest comes to light.



Ownership of Material

Resulting from this Work AONTAS will retain ownership of any research, materials and/or documentation resulting from the project. All research, materials and/or documentation must be returned to AONTAS on request or in the event that the contract is terminated. No part of the research, materials and/or documentation may be used without the prior consent of AONTAS.

Closing Date for Receipt of Tender

The closing date is 12 noon on February 14th 2020. Any tenders received after this time and date will not be considered for adjudication. Please leave enough time for postage and emailing in order to meet the deadline. Any discrepancy found between the electronic and paper copy may mean the tenderer is disqualified from the adjudication.

Tender Submissions

Should be addressed to: Dearbháil Lawless, EU Projects Officer, AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation, 2nd Floor, 83-87 Main Street, Ranelagh, Dublin, D06 E0H1. Or via email it to dlawless@aontas.com