

Pillars of the Sea 4 (PILLARS4)**Project Number: 101262519****With the financial support
Of the European Union****CALL FOR TENDER****External Expert for Research on the Attractiveness of the Fisheries Sector****1. General Information**

The [European Transport Workers' Federation \(ETF\)](#) is a pan-European trade union organisation which embraces transport trade unions from the European Union, the European Economic Area and Central and Eastern European countries. The ETF represents more than 5 million transport workers from more than 200 transport unions and 41 European countries.

[Europêche](#) represents employers in the European Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries. Europêche will be the partner organization in this project. Europêche will contribute to the achievement of the project objectives. Its members will be involved in the Steering Committee and in the development of the three pillars. ETF and Europêche are social partners in the European Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries.

2. Background and Context of the Project

The ETF, in partnership with Europêche, has been awarded a grant by the European Commission for the project **"Pillars of the Sea 4" (PILLARS4) – 101262519**. This project is part of the European Social Dialogue for the Sea Fisheries sector. Its main objective is to improve social sustainability in the industry through three main pillars:

- **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS):** Developing guidelines to support the implementation of ILO Convention 188.
- **Attractiveness:** Researching aimed at identifying barriers that prevent young workers to enter in the fisheries sector.
- **Enforcement of Directive 2017/159:** Drafting a legislative proposal to ensure compliance with social standards of ILO C188.

This call for tender specifically concerns **Pillar 2**, focusing on producing **qualitative research aimed at identifying the barriers discouraging young people and women from entering the fisheries sector**.

3. Purpose of the tender

In recent years, the European fisheries sector has struggled to attract young workers. While the situation varies across regions and fleet segments, there is a clear and consistent decline in the sector's appeal. The number of companies, vessels and jobs has constantly declined and today the average age of fishers is too high.

Traditionally rooted in coastal communities and passed down through generations, the profession is now facing a disconnect with younger generations. This trend has significant consequences: it reduces economic and employment opportunities in coastal areas, decreases domestic production

of fish products in the EU, increases reliance on imports and increases the number of migrant fishers employed in the EU fleet.

The purpose of this tender is to select an external expert (individual or organisation) to conduct **qualitative research** in selected Member States to identify the key reasons discouraging young people and women from pursuing careers in fisheries. The resulting report will support stakeholders and policymakers in identifying priority areas for action and in designing effective policies to reverse the current trend.

4. Tasks and Deliverables

The selected expert will be responsible for the following tasks:

- **Definition of Scope:** Propose to the Project Steering Committee (SC) a definition of the specific scope of the research and the questionnaire for interviews. Collect feedback of SC and integrate.
- **Desk Research:** Map existing initiatives put in place at national and European levels to increase the attractiveness of the fisheries sector (e.g. campaigns, recognition of qualifications, training).
- **Interviews:** Conduct at least 100 interviews with key actors (including active fishers, retired fishers, young entrants, women, employers, training and employment institutions) in various Member States (including Spain, Italy, France and The Netherlands) to identify common trends, recurring challenges, and best practices. The Social partners can help the expert in this task identify the right people to interview. The meetings and interview could be organized in the framework of the 4 in-person steering committee meetings.
- **Analysis:** Analyse findings to identify common causes of low attractiveness and highlight successful initiatives.
- **Consultation of Steering Committee:** Present progress and preliminary findings at Steering Committee meetings (approx. 5 meetings, one online, four in-person) and integrate feedback.
- **Drafting:** Draft a comprehensive report including legislative and non-legislative recommendations.
- **Presentation:** Presentation of the final report at the final conference to be held in Q4 2027 in Brussels.

Deliverables (in English):

- Proposal of research methodology and interview questionnaire.
- Interim report on preliminary findings from desk research and initial interviews.
- Final Report on "Attractiveness of the EU Fisheries Sector" (ready for publication).

5. Methodology

The expert is expected to work in close cooperation with the ETF Project Manager and the joint ETF-Europêche Steering Committee. The methodology must combine desk research with qualitative fieldwork. The expert will need to engage with diverse stakeholders to gather "on the ground" perspectives.

6. Expertise required

The tenderer must demonstrate:

- **Research skills:** Proven experience in labour market research and qualitative methods (interviews, data synthesis).

- **Sector knowledge:** Understanding of the fisheries or maritime sector dynamics is considered an asset.
- **Gender and youth expertise:** Strong understanding of gender-sensitive research approaches and ability to apply an inclusive lens to the analysis.
- **Social dialogue:** Understanding of the dynamics between trade unions and employers at the EU level.

7. Time schedule and reporting

The project runs for 24 months (starting 1 February 2026). The expert's work is expected to cover approximately 20 months.

- **Start of work:** 1 April 2026
- **Interim Report:** 1 April 2027
- **Final Deliverable:** 1 September 2027
- **Final Dissemination conference:** Q4 2027

The expert will report directly to the ETF Project Manager.

8. Payment

The maximum budget available for this expertise is €41000 (VAT included). This amount covers the expert's fees and administrative costs. Travel and subsistence expenses for attending Steering Committee meetings will be reimbursed separately by the project, subject to the European Union and the ETF travel rules and provision of original receipts.

Payment schedule:

- 30% upon signature of the contract.
- 30% upon approval of the interim report.
- 40% upon approval of the final deliverable.

9. Selection criteria

The selection will be done by ETF and Europêche and will be based on the principle of best value for money, using the following criteria:

- **Expertise and Experience (40%):** Research background, gender expertise, and sector knowledge.
- **Methodology (30%):** Quality and clarity of the proposed strategy for data collection and analysis.
- **Financial Offer (30%):** Competitiveness of the price in relation to the quality of service.

10. Privacy statement

Personal data will be processed in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Data will only be processed for the purpose of the evaluation of this tender.

11. Application procedure

Interested candidates are invited to send their application by 15 March 2026 to a.albertazzi@etf-europe.org.

The application must include:

- **CV** of the expert(s) involved.
- **Technical Proposal** (max 3 pages) outlining the methodology and understanding of the

assignment.

- **Financial Proposal** (indicating daily rate and total number of days).

Brussels