Interreg Co-funded by the European Union
NEXT MED
EmpoweerNEET

TERMS OF REFERENCE

External Expert – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) of the EmpoweerNEET Training and Transition Programme

1. Background and context

EmpoweerNEET MED is a transnational project co-funded by the European Union under the Interreg NEXT MED Programme. It supports young people and women facing barriers to employment, education and training by strengthening their employability and social entrepreneurship competencies and facilitating pathways into the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). The project brings together six partners from Palestine, Spain, Greece, Lebanon, Tunisia and France.

Under Work Package 3 (WP3), dedicated to capacity building and training, the EmpoweerNEET consortium implements a jointly developed hybrid programme targeting at least 300 young people and women Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) across the six participating countries, with a minimum of 50 participants per country. The approved training model combines 20 days of face-to-face training with 20 days of online learning, integrating theoretical knowledge, practical assignments and learning activities adapted to national contexts and participants' needs. This capacity-building programme is complemented by subsequent business development and employment support opportunities designed to facilitate participants' transition from training to practical application, enabling them to further develop and apply their acquired knowledge and skills in real-world professional and entrepreneurial settings.

Under Activity 3.4.1, "MEL System Development and Implementation", the consortium seeks to establish a coherent Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) approach to assess training delivery, effectiveness, participation and satisfaction, skills development and practical application outcomes. While experts may be contracted separately by partner organisations, common core indicators and reporting principles are essential for comparability and learning across the six countries. The assignment described in this ToR is specifically for the Tunisian training programme; it does not require the selected expert to deliver services in the other five countries.

To this end, the Tunisian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship (TCSE) seeks an external Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) expert to develop and adapt a practical training-focused MEL framework and ready-to-use monitoring tools for the activities implemented in Tunisia. The expert will provide initial methodological guidance and capacity building to TCSE. TCSE will remain responsible for ongoing data collection, monitoring, analysis and use of findings throughout implementation.

In accordance with Activity 3.4.1, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning process shall cover two complementary stages of the EmpoweerNEET programme: the capacity-building and training activities implemented under Work Package 3 (WP3), and the subsequent practical application and transition activities implemented under Work Package 4 (WP4). More specifically, the expert will also be responsible for preparing two evaluation reports: one assessing the capacity-building and training programme under Work Package 3, covering Semester 2, and another assessing the practical application and transition outcomes under Work Package 4, covering Semester 5. While the expert's responsibilities will be limited to activities implemented in Tunisia, the methodology, indicators and reporting arrangements shall remain compatible with the common MEL principles established across the six partner countries.

2. Purpose and objectives

The consultancy aims to establish and operationalise a practical, consistent and sustainable MEL approach for the EmpoweerNEET programme implemented in Tunisia. The assignment will encompass the development of appropriate monitoring and assessment tools, the evaluation of training effectiveness and learning outcomes, and the assessment of participants' practical application of acquired competencies through subsequent employment, entrepreneurship and professional development opportunities. The expert shall produce two evidence-based evaluation reports corresponding to the project's Semester 2 and Semester 5 reporting periods, while ensuring methodological compatibility with the wider consortium.

- Define a training-specific MEL framework for Tunisia, aligned with a manageable set of consortium-compatible core indicators, measurement rules and TCSE staff responsibilities.
- Review a representative selection of existing training documentation to identify available data, gaps and practical ways to incorporate earlier records.
- Develop simple, accessible monitoring, assessment and country-level reporting tools, including a Tunisia-focused Excel workbook.
- Propose a light, TCSE-led reporting and learning process for reviewing findings and improving national training and relevant follow-up activities.
- Equip TCSE focal points to use and maintain the tools through one joint online consultation with TCSE and one practical online training workshop.
- Conduct a structured assessment of the national training programme, examining training effectiveness, participant satisfaction, skills development, engagement and the achievement of expected learning outcomes.
- Assess the practical application of acquired competencies and participants' progression through relevant employment, entrepreneurship and professional development opportunities, producing two evidence-based MEL reports aligned with the project's reporting periods.
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3. Scope of work

3.1 Desk review and consultation

- Conduct a focused desk review of the approved training approach, learning objectives and available attendance, assessment and feedback formats.
- Facilitate one joint online consultation with designated TCSE representatives and, where relevant, national trainers or facilitators to identify monitoring needs, existing tools and practical constraints.
- Identify priority data sources and material gaps, including where baseline information is unavailable, without undertaking a full retrospective evaluation.
- Integrate a gender-sensitive perspective in the desk review and proposed instruments, including feasible gender-disaggregated reporting and attention to different experiences and barriers among women and younger participants.

3.2 Training MEL framework and indicator matrix

Develop a concise results-oriented framework following the training pathway: participation and engagement → learning and competency development → practical application → post-training progression. The indicator matrix shall distinguish mandatory project indicators from complementary training-quality indicators and specify definitions, calculation methods, data sources, frequency, responsible staff and appropriate sex-disaggregated measures. Core

measures shall be structured so that Tunisia's results can be compared or consolidated with those of other project partners without requiring the expert to undertake work in those countries.

Monitoring domain	Illustrative Tunisia-focused measures
Participation and retention	Unique participants, attendance, engagement, completion and attrition by training cycle/module, disaggregated by sex where available and appropriate
Training quality	Relevance, accessibility, satisfaction, facilitator effectiveness and any reported gender-related participation barriers
Learning and competencies	Changes in knowledge, skills, confidence and learning-objective achievement, with gender-sensitive interpretation where feasible
Practical outputs	Completeness and quality of portfolios, learning assignments, business concepts, plans or other products
Practical application and progression	Application of acquired skills and reported progression towards employment, entrepreneurship, mentoring, job shadowing, networking or related opportunities
Learning and adaptation	Issues detected, adaptations agreed, actions taken and feedback on improvements

3.3 Standardised data-collection instruments

Prepare a compact, editable toolkit for TCSE that can be used without paid software or specialist technical support. The instruments shall incorporate gender-sensitive questions and sex-disaggregated monitoring where relevant and appropriate. The toolkit shall include:

- A short participant profile and baseline questionnaire, including voluntary gender/sex information where appropriate, with clear guidance on missing pre-training baseline data.
- An attendance and completion tracker, with consistent unique-participant counting and appropriate sex-disaggregated summaries.
- A proportionate pre/post or other suitable learning and competency-assessment template linked to training objectives.
- Concise participant satisfaction and trainer feedback forms for face-to-face and online activities, enabling identification of gender-related barriers and differences where relevant.
- A simple rubric to assess selected practical training outputs (such as portfolios, business concepts or action plans).
- A short participant follow-up form covering application of acquired skills and progression towards employment, entrepreneurship or other relevant professional opportunities.
- A harmonised national reporting template and one simple, editable Excel monitoring workbook for Tunisia, with a basic dashboard capable of exporting or summarising agreed core indicators for consortium-level consolidation; no specialised software or online platform is required.

3.4 Data quality, ethical safeguards and comparability

- Provide concise guidance on data entry, indicator definitions, checks, consolidation and correction.
- Include basic safeguards against duplicate counting, missing entries and inconsistent definitions.
- Specify proportionate safeguards for confidentiality, consent, data minimisation and compliance with applicable data-protection requirements.
- Explain how TCSE should document limitations arising from adaptations to the national training programme, training calendar differences and missing baseline information, to support transparent comparisons with other partners.
- Use aggregated or anonymised data in shared consortium reports wherever feasible.



3.5 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting of Training and Practical Application Outcomes

The selected expert shall undertake two complementary evaluation exercises focusing on the EmpoweerNEET programme activities implemented in Tunisia.

A. Training Programme Evaluation – Semester 2 (WP3)

The expert shall assess the implementation, effectiveness and results of the capacity-building and training programme, drawing on available attendance records, participant assessments, satisfaction questionnaires, training outputs and relevant qualitative feedback.

The assessment shall examine:

- Training implementation, participation, retention and completion.
- Quality, relevance and accessibility of training activities.
- Participant satisfaction and feedback.
- Knowledge acquisition, competency development and achievement of learning objectives.
- Gender-related differences, participation barriers and learning outcomes, where supported by available data.
- Key challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for improving training delivery.

The findings shall be consolidated into a Training Programme MEL Report, documenting achievements, identified gaps, methodological limitations and actionable recommendations.

B. Practical Application and Transition Outcomes Evaluation – Semester 5 (WP4)

The expert shall assess the extent to which participants have applied the knowledge and competencies acquired during the training programme through subsequent practical learning, employment, entrepreneurship and professional development opportunities.

The assessment shall consider:

- Participants' application of acquired skills and competencies.
- Participation in relevant job shadowing, mentoring, entrepreneurial support and networking opportunities.
- Documented progression towards employment or entrepreneurship pathways.
- Participant feedback on the usefulness of training in supporting subsequent opportunities.
- Gender-related differences in access, participation and progression, where relevant.
- Key achievements, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for strengthening transition support.

The findings shall be consolidated into a Practical Application and Transition Outcomes MEL Report.

Both evaluation exercises shall rely on appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods, using project monitoring records, assessment instruments, participant feedback and relevant supporting documentation.

TCSE shall facilitate access to available information and coordinate the collection of routine monitoring data. The external expert shall be responsible for reviewing, analysing and interpreting the relevant evidence and preparing the two evaluation reports.

Both reports shall follow a consistent methodological approach and reporting structure to facilitate comparison and consolidation of findings across the six participating countries.

3.6 Learning cycle and partner capacity-building

- Define a light, realistic schedule and division of responsibilities for TCSE data collection, national reporting, sharing of agreed indicators with the consortium and use of findings.
- Provide a simple action/learning log to record observations, agreed adjustments and follow-up responsibilities.
- Deliver one practical online training workshop for designated TCSE staff, demonstrating use of the questionnaires, reporting templates, gender-sensitive indicators and Excel workbook.
- Test the toolkit with a small sample of existing Tunisian training records, make necessary adjustments and provide a concise user guide; one online TCSE consultation shall precede toolkit finalisation.

4. Expected deliverables

D1 – Tunisia training MEL framework and methodology	Concise national monitoring approach; indicator matrix with harmonised core measures, gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated indicators, definitions, data sources, calculation rules, reporting frequency, staff responsibilities and basic data-quality safeguards. Informed by one online consultation with TCSE.
D2 – Operational MEL toolkit, Excel workbook and TCSE training	Editable national questionnaires, attendance/completion and learning-assessment templates, practical-output rubric, participant follow-up and reporting forms; a simple Tunisia Excel monitoring workbook and dashboard; user guide; limited functionality test; and one online training workshop for TCSE staff.
D3 – Training Programme MEL Report (Semester 2)	Assessment of training implementation, effectiveness, participant satisfaction, competency development, learning outcomes, challenges and recommendations
D4 – Practical Application and Transition Outcomes MEL Report (Semester 5)	Assessment of participants' practical application of acquired skills, progression through relevant opportunities, reported outcomes, lessons learned and recommendations

Deliverables D1 and D2 shall be completed and formally submitted alongside or before the Semester 2 Training Programme MEL Report (D3). The second evaluation report (D4) shall be submitted in accordance with the Semester 5 reporting deadline. The acceptance of these deliverables shall determine the corresponding payment milestones as specified in Section 9.

The consultant shall submit all four deliverables in English, in accordance with the agreed implementation and reporting schedule. The MEL framework and tools shall be provided in editable formats, while the two evaluation reports shall present evidence-based findings, methodological limitations, conclusions and actionable recommendations. The reporting methodology shall remain proportionate to the available data and aligned with the

common evaluation principles established across the EmpoweerNEET consortium. In addition, The Excel workbook shall be simple and require no paid licences, subscriptions or specialist maintenance.

5. Methodology and implementation arrangements

Applicants shall propose a concise, practical approach focused on a Tunisia-specific training MEL framework and tools, while ensuring compatibility with the consortium's agreed core indicators and reporting principles. The methodology shall account for training cycles already completed and transparently identify any limitations in available historical data. Gender sensitivity and appropriate disaggregation shall be integrated throughout the approach.

The expert will work primarily remotely with TCSE. The assignment includes one online consultation with TCSE representatives and one online training workshop for TCSE staff. TCSE will provide relevant available records and will retain responsibility for routine national data collection, follow-up, analysis and reporting after handover. The expert is responsible for developing, testing, documenting and transferring the framework and tools, not providing continuous monitoring services.

Initial consultation and focused review	Week 1	Inputs for D1
National MEL framework and indicator development	Weeks 1–2	D1-National MEL Framework and Methodology
Development and testing of MEL tools, Excel workbook and staff training	Weeks 1–2	D2-Operational MEL Toolkit and Capacity Building
Training programme monitoring and evaluation (WP3)	Weeks 1–2, with final submission before 15 December 2026	D3 – Training Programme MEL Report
Evaluation of practical application and transition outcomes (WP4)	During the relevant WP4 implementation period, with final submission before 23 April 2028	D4 – Practical Application and Transition Outcomes MEL Report

Given the reporting requirements, the activities under the first phase may be undertaken in parallel. Applicants are expected to propose a realistic and efficient work plan ensuring the timely completion of all required deliverables within the established reporting deadlines.

6. Expert profile

Required qualifications and experience:

- Advanced degree in evaluation, social sciences, education, economics, public policy, development studies or a related field.
- At least five years of relevant experience in monitoring, evaluation and learning, including development of results frameworks and usable reporting instruments.
- Demonstrated experience designing practical monitoring and learning tools for vocational training, youth employability, entrepreneurship, blended learning or related capacity-building programmes.
- Strong mixed-methods research, data analysis, dashboard/spreadsheet development, facilitation and English reporting skills.



- Proficiency with Excel-based reporting tools, partner training and clear written guidance; ability to apply ethical approaches to youth participant data.

Desirable: experience in EU-funded cooperation programmes, SSE, NEET inclusion, gender-sensitive evaluation, and knowledge of Arabic and/or French.

7. Application package and selection

Interested individuals or consultancy organisations shall submit a concise technical proposal (methodology, proposed tools, timeline and estimated working days); a separate financial proposal including all applicable taxes and costs; an updated CV or team profiles; and evidence of at least two relevant MEL assignments or professional references.

Relevance of MEL framework/tool development experience	25%
Quality and feasibility of technical methodology	30%
Experience with training, youth, employability or SSE programming	15%
Experience with multi-country or EU-funded programmes	10%
Value for money and financial offer	20%
TOTAL	100%

TCSE will verify eligibility and assess compliant offers against the published criteria, applying its procurement procedures and the relevant Interreg NEXT MED requirements.

7.1 Selection and award decision

TCSE will document the evaluation and award decision using the published scoring criteria and applicable procurement procedures. Applicants will be informed of the outcome, where feasible, within two weeks of the application deadline. Any award is subject to completion of the required internal checks and signature of the professional services contract; the ToR alone does not constitute a contract.

8. Contract duration and Reporting Schedule

The consultancy shall be implemented in two phases corresponding to the monitoring and evaluation of the EmpoweerNEET capacity-building programme (WP3) and subsequent practical application and transition activities (WP4).

Phase 1 – Training Programme Monitoring and Evaluation (WP3)

The first phase shall cover the development and initial operationalisation of the national MEL framework and tools, together with the preparation and submission of the Training Programme MEL Report (D3), assessing the activities and results of the training programme implemented in Tunisia.

Reporting deadline: Deliverables D1, D2 and D3 shall be submitted before 15 December 2026, subject to confirmation of the procurement and contracting schedule.

Phase 2 – Practical Application and Transition Outcomes Evaluation (WP4)

The second phase shall cover the evaluation of participants' practical application of acquired competencies and relevant transition outcomes, culminating in the submission of the Practical Application and Transition Outcomes MEL Report (D4).



Reporting deadline: Before 23 April 2028.

The expert shall ensure the timely completion of all deliverables in accordance with the agreed schedule. The detailed work plan, distribution of working days and contractual arrangements shall be specified in the professional services agreement signed with TCSE.

Indicative Recruitment and Implementation Timeline

Milestone	Indicative timeframe
Application deadline	Sunday, 29 November 2026
Evaluation of applications and selection of expert	30 November – 3 December 2026
Contract signature and onboarding	4–7 December 2026
Implementation of Phase 1 (D1, D2 and D3)	From contract signature until the first reporting deadline
Submission of D1, D2 and D3	Before 15 December 2026
Implementation of Phase 2 (WP4)	During the relevant WP4 implementation period
Submission of D4	Before 23 April 2028

9. Contractual and Payment Conditions

The consultancy shall be awarded on a lump-sum basis, covering the entire scope of work and all required deliverables.

Payments shall be made following submission and formal acceptance of the corresponding deliverables by TCSE and receipt of the relevant invoices.

The total payments shall not exceed the agreed lump-sum contract value. Any amendment to the contract amount or scope of work shall require prior written agreement between the contracting parties, in accordance with applicable procurement requirements.

The payment schedule, invoicing requirements and detailed contractual arrangements shall be established in the professional services agreement signed between TCSE and the selected expert.

10. Review, acceptance and confidentiality

All four deliverables shall be reviewed by TCSE for alignment with Activity 3.4.1, methodological quality, relevance to the national training programme, gender-sensitive monitoring requirements, compatibility with consortium reporting principles and compliance with the agreed Terms of Reference.

TCSE shall provide consolidated feedback, and the expert shall incorporate one round of reasonable revisions per deliverable, within the agreed scope of work.

Formal acceptance of the deliverables shall be confirmed in writing by TCSE. Payment shall be conditional upon satisfactory completion and acceptance of the corresponding deliverables, in accordance with the payment conditions established in Section 9 and the signed professional services agreement.

The expert shall safeguard non-public project information and personal data and disclose it only to authorised persons for approved purposes. All project-specific tools and outputs shall be handed over in editable form under the intellectual-property and confidentiality conditions of the signed consultancy agreement.

11. Submission details

Applications should be sent to: **contact@tcse.network**



Email subject: External MEL Expert – EmpoweerNEET Project

Application deadline: Sunday, 29 November 2026, at 17:00 (Tunisia time, UTC+1).

Applications must include the documents specified in Section 7. Late or incomplete submissions may not be considered.

The assignment covers the development of a national MEL framework and tools, alongside two evaluation reports addressing training outcomes (WP3) and practical application and transition outcomes (WP4) in Tunisia, while ensuring alignment with the consortium's common monitoring principles. It does not extend to project-wide monitoring or the independent final evaluation of the EmpoweerNEET project.