

Call for tenders for subcontracting an expert study in the framework of the ETUC project “Prevention of OSH risks: climate change, psychosocial factors and the EU trade strategy”

This is a call for a subcontractor to provide expertise **on Trade and OSH** in the framework of the implementation of the ETUC project “Prevention of OSH risks: climate change, psychosocial factors and the EU trade strategy”.

The ETUC will publish the call on its website on 1 August 2025. **The deadline for submission of bids is 8 September 2025 at noon (12:00).**

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1. Context of the expert study: the project “Prevention of OSH risks: climate change, psychosocial factors and the EU trade strategy”

1.1 Summary and objectives of the project

The project has 3 main objectives.

- To continue exploring trade union strategies aimed at mitigating the occupational safety and health (OSH) risks associated with climate change, as well as those arising from the emergence of industries and services focused on combating and mitigating climate change, with a focus on sectoral and company-level approaches negotiated by social partners and trade union actions.
- To contribute to the accumulation of evidence and the formulation of proposals concerning psychosocial factors in the workplace and their prevention.
- To deepen involvement in the establishment, monitoring, and enforcement of OSH provisions within trade agreements. This effort seeks to ensure a level playing field for European companies and workers while also extending the international dimension of the European Union by disseminating its social standards to regions engaged in commercial exchanges.

1.2 Context of the project

Climate change

The escalating impacts of climate change are manifesting in profound effects on OSH worldwide, extending far beyond rising temperatures. While the direct threat of heat stress is significant, workers across various sectors face a multitude of adverse effects stemming from climate change. Increased exposure to UV radiation poses risks of skin damage and melanoma, particularly for outdoor workers, while extreme weather events such as storms, floods, and wildfires introduce hazards that can jeopardize the safety of workers and disrupt essential services.

Furthermore, the drying of European climates exacerbates existing risks, amplifying challenges such as heightened exposure to silicate dust in agricultural and farming settings and poses new problems as the interplay between the use of personal protective equipment and heat and humidity conditions.

The European Commission has recognized the urgency of addressing these climate-induced OSH challenges, exemplified by the publication of guidelines on heat stress management in May 2023. These guidelines provide crucial recommendations for employers and policymakers to mitigate the risks associated with heat exposure in the workplace, underscoring the need for proactive measures to safeguard workers' health and well-being in the face of climate change.

As climate change continues to unfold, it is imperative to recognize its impacts by comprehensively addressing the diverse range of environmental hazards and implementing effective mitigation strategies, so as to create safer and more resilient workplaces for all. In addition to the direct impacts of climate change, the transition to green industries and the implementation of mitigation strategies introduce new and often unfamiliar OSH risks. While these initiatives are crucial for addressing the root causes of climate change and promoting

sustainability, they also present challenges that must be addressed to ensure the well-being of workers.

Furthermore, efforts to improve energy efficiency in existing buildings for sustainability purposes can introduce OSH risks during the renovation process. Workers involved in tasks such as insulation removal, asbestos abatement, and the handling of construction materials may encounter hazardous substances and airborne pollutants, highlighting the importance of proper safety protocols and training.

ETUC will give particular attention to studying sectoral and company initiatives negotiated by social partners to address the risks arising from extreme weather events. This approach diverges from previous EC-funded projects undertaken by ETUC, since we will also pinpoint trade union unilateral actions, campaigns, and resources in this area, offering a new perspective to our investigation.

Psychosocial risks

Occupational stress has emerged as a widespread concern, resembling a pandemic. This issue has gained heightened attention following Covid-19, particularly due to the widespread adoption of teleworking and remote work, which has contributed to an increase in musculoskeletal disorders. Notably, women workers are disproportionately affected by psychosocial risks and musculoskeletal disorders, emphasizing the necessity of incorporating a gender dimension in the assessment, prevention, and treatment of these conditions.

In 2023, there was a notable surge in political interest regarding mental health within the EU. Initiatives such as the communication on "A comprehensive approach to mental health" and the high-level conferences organized by the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies underscored the need for enhanced European action in this domain. These events highlighted the intricate relationship between various psychosocial factors in the workplace and mental health, particularly focusing on prevention.

Robust evidence suggests that work-related stress and psychosocial challenges contribute significantly to increased absenteeism and turnover rates among staff, alongside diminished productivity and performance. Enacting legislation to address these challenges would not only benefit workers but also employers, fostering an environment conducive to the adaptation by social partners to sector-specific approaches.

It is imperative to acknowledge that inadequately managed psychosocial risks can exacerbate substance abuse among workers, heightening the societal repercussions of this issue.

The subcontracted company in charge of compiling the existing evidence at this regard will also benefit from the existing EU-OSHA research existing at this regard. The topic of work-related suicide will also be addressed for consideration within the project, identifying - if needed - sectorial approaches.

Trade

In a previous action, the European Trade Union Confederation, backed by the European Commission, conducted a study examining the relationship between trade agreements and clauses designed to uphold OSH provisions. Drawing on insights collected from this initiative, which included a comprehensive mapping exercise of OSH provisions across various trade agreements, this new initiative aims to shift focus towards the implementation and enforcement of these provisions within the agreements. This will be accomplished through direct engagement with social partner organizations in partner countries, providing firsthand information.

Moreover, the project will investigate successful practices from other trade agreements, such as the Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement, to understand how OSH provisions are considered and enforced. The goal is to extract exemplary practices that could inform the revision or future negotiation of trade agreements, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of OSH provisions globally.

2. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor

Given the context outlined above, the subcontractor is required to:

- Develop a methodology for the research and drafting of the report.
- Carry out interviews and/or a survey with project participants and other relevant stakeholders to feed the research.
- Produce **a report on Trade and OSH** (between 30 to 50 pages), in English (this means that the document should be finalised in English and require no language proofreading). See more information below.
- Participate in project's events, including:
 - The project's Steering Committee meetings and collect inputs and provide updates on the research undertaken;
 - The specific seminar where the report will be presented and discussed with participants;
 - The final Conference where the final report will be presented.
- Work in close coordination with the ETUC project's team throughout the project.

Report

The research will entail the assessing of the EU trade policies' impact on OSH, with a focus on their adherence to OSH-related clauses aimed at protecting workers' safety and health in recipient countries.

The project will study the practical implications of existing clauses in trade agreements identified in the previous ETUC action, "Prevention of OSH risks emerging from the dual transitions and at the center of the EU trade strategy". This analysis will aim at identifying effective provisions and factors within certain agreements, as well as areas where improvement is needed.

Another section of the report will offer recommendations, assessing the potential ratification of ILO core conventions, determining whether additional legal commitments are necessary, and examining implementation mechanisms, including enforcement actions and sanctions.

The project will adopt a worker-centric approach, incorporating interviews with trade unionists and key stakeholders from partner countries to gain an insider perspective on the practical impact of trade agreements on OSH. Notably, several regions, including the Caribbean, Western Balkans, Central America, Latin America, South Korea, and Vietnam, have included OSH provisions in their Free Trade Agreements, albeit with varying degrees of protection. The absence of OSH provisions in African FTAs will also be explored.

The structure of the report should include the following sections:

- Introduction;
- Overview of osh provisions in eu trade agreements;
- Analysis of implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness;
- Identification of potential clauses to protect and improve osh rights;

- Case studies and examples (including transcript of interviews with trade unions from third-countries and best cases from trade agreements signed by non-eu trade partners);
- Recommendations for future trade agreements;
- Conclusion.

3. Expertise, experience and skills required

The drafting of the study requires sound and proven expertise in the following fields:

- Expertise on EU labour legislation, with a focus on the areas of occupational safety and health, and trade.
- Knowledge of relevant European-level policies and legislation on the areas of occupational safety and health, and trade;
- Experience in working on European level projects;
- Experience in working with trade unions at both European and national level.

Skills required:

- Proven ability to carry out in-depth research on EU issues and understanding links between European and national level;
- Proven research skills, including identifying stakeholders and conducting interviews;
- High proficiency in English: ability to draft documents and make presentations in English;
- Ability to work within specified deadlines and to respect budgetary limits;
- Availability to participate to meetings of the Steering Committee.

To ensure a coherent policy approach, familiarity with ETUC demands, included in documents available on [this page](#).

4. Time schedule and reporting

The subcontractor will be asked to sign the contract in September 2025. The working calendar will be submitted to ETUC according to an agreed timeline, to be discussed on the occasion of the first meeting between the ETUC's project team and the subcontractor. Exchanges with the ETUC's project team will be planned on a regular basis to ensure a smooth coordination.

5. Payment

The total maximum budget available for the fees of the subcontractor is as follows:

Contract with ETUC	
Main activities and Meetings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting the report in English • Participation in selected project events and the seminar to present - and update, if necessary - the content of the report. Participation in the project's final conference • Liaising with the ETUC project team, the Steering Committee and national affiliates when necessary 	
Total budget for the Expertise	24 000 € (VAT and all taxes)

included¹⁾

The subcontractor will be remunerated in various instalments (advance and final payment). This amount covers all fees but does not include the travel and subsistence costs for possible physical meetings. These will be covered by ETUC on the basis of EU rules & thresholds (see the EC table of maximum amounts per EU member state).

The studies will be duly and clearly accredited to the authors. Ownership of the results and of the written outputs (including the study produced by the sub-contractor) shall be vested in the ETUC, which shall have the right of first publication. The subcontractor may use the results and the written outputs after their publication by the ETUC, quoting the ETUC as contractor and the OSH project.

6. Selection criteria

Bids will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Quality of the technical proposal submitted by the bidder;
- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills (including CV) as required and described in part 3 of this call;
- Proven track record of ensuring the quality of written materials produced, both in terms of content and format (i.e. previous publications) and in the relevant subjects specified in this call for tenders;
- Financial proposal within the prescribed budget.

7. Form, structure and content of the tender

Tenders must be written in English. They must be signed by the tenderer or his duly authorised representative and be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures. Tenders must be clear and concise and assembled in a coherent fashion.

Since tenderers will be judged on the content of their written bids, they must make it clear that they are able to meet the requirements of the specifications.

All tenders must include at least two sections:

- i) Technical proposal

The technical proposal must provide all the information needed for the purpose of awarding the contract, including:

- Specific information covering the technical and professional capacity, as required, in particular:
 - Description of relevant professional experience with emphasis on the specific fields covered by the invitation to tender;
 - Detailed curriculum vitae of key coordinator and of the other team members;
 - A selection of the main works and/or articles published by all the experts involved, in relation to the relevant subjects specified in this tender.

¹ Unless the subcontractor is exempt from VAT, VAT is always included in the total budget, also when reverse charge applies and VAT is borne by ETUC.

- Specific information concerning the proposed methodology for delivering the tasks listed in part 2 of this call for tenders.

ii) Financial proposal

Prices of the financial proposal must be quoted in euros, including if the sub-contractor is based in a country which is not in the euro-area. As far as the tenderers of those countries are concerned, they cannot change the amount of the bid because of the evolution of the exchange rate. The tenderers choose the exchange rate and assume all risks or opportunities relating to the rate fluctuation.

The maximum amount available for this contract is EUR 24,000 (VAT and all taxes included²).

Prices shall be fixed and not subject to revision during the performance of the contract.

8. Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money, taking into account the specific objectives, requirements and selection criteria of the tender. The principles of transparency and equal treatment will be respected with a view to avoiding any conflicts of interest.

9. Content and selection of the bids

This call for tenders will be published on the ETUC website on 1 August 2025. Offers must be sent at the latest on 8 September 2025 at noon (12:00). Offers must be sent to ETUC, in electronic format (by e-mail to lmartin@etuc.org) and refer to the “ETUC Trade and OSH project”.

The ETUC will confirm the date and time of receipt of each bid. The ETUC will sign the report on the bids received, which will list the admissible bids and provide reasons for rejecting bids owing to their failure to comply with the stipulations of the tendering process. The ETUC will also evaluate the tenders that have been deemed admissible. An evaluation report and classification of participation requests will be drawn up, dated and signed by the ETUC and kept for future reference.

This report will include:

1. The name and address of the contracting authority, the purpose and value of the contract;
2. The names of any excluded candidates and the reasons for their rejection;
3. The names of candidates selected for consideration;
4. The names of candidates put forward and justification of their choice in terms of the selection or award criteria.

² See footnote 2.