



**Grant application
under Budget Heading 04.03.01.08
Industrial relations and social dialogue**

**Call for proposals 2016
VP/2016/001**

**Working title:
“Mental Health in Quality Construction Work”**

-

**Lead applicant: EFBWW
Co-applicant: FIEC**

DRAFT - Description and work programme of the project

“Mental Health in Quality Construction Work”

CONTENT :

1. Introduction
2. Goals of the project
3. Links with the objectives and priorities of the budget heading and other EU-policies
4. Partners and staff involved
5. Timetable of activities

1. Introduction

Good working conditions and quality work are two sides of the same coin and today, it is broadly recognized that in this relation various parameters are influencing the overall work situation. Work processes are the interaction of people, man and machinery, information and psychological system, between processing machinery and information to name just a few combinations. This mentioning of the various parameter of influence already shows the complexity of today's working processes.

It is furthermore undisputed that we have experienced a (gradual) switch from more physical to mental activities from more individual work activities to interactive processes and from more standardised to more flexible work arrangements.

All these aspects have an effect of our occupational activities and the psycho-mental strain. Principally, the named changes can, on the one hand, improve the knowledge base in today's occupations, they allow (and demand) to continuously adopt to new work arrangements and are based on continuously learning. On the other hand, these changes can have unexpected and undesirable side-effects.

As an effect of these developments and over years, we are witnessing a growing occurrence of psycho-mental illnesses in European countries. Health insurances are reporting about a growing share of absenteeism based on this type of diseases. Just recently, the Austrian Social Security Institutions published a report (<http://www.hauptverband.at/portal27/portal/hvbportal/content/contentWindow?contentid=10007.728936&action=2>)

stating that over the last two decades the number of psychosocial illnesses has continuously increased and in total tripled. What is of relevance in this respect is also the character of psycho-social illnesses. They are in tendency chronic and result in long periods of absenteeism. The German state health insurance is documenting an average of 25.2 days for each sick leave. (http://www.aok-bv.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/2015/index_14199.html)

Being aware of the importance of psychosocial well being at the workplace, the European Commission in 2005 published a Green Paper on “Improving the mental health of the population – Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union” (Com[2005]0848). Later, on 12 and 13 June 2008, under the title “Together for Mental Health and Well-Being”, a High Level Conference took place in Brussels. Further, the problem was also highlighted in both Community strategies for OSH at workplaces, the one published in 2007 (COM[2007]62 final) and the “Strategic Framework” (COM[2014]332 final), published in 2014. Equally, the European Parliament equally showed great concern and paid strong attention to the issue. A Resolution on Mental Health was adopted 19 February 2009 and in its Resolutions on the last two Community strategies for occupational safety and health, the Parliament in each time highlighted the object.

The high importance of the topic is also proved by the decision of the OSHA Agency in Bilbao by choosing it for the campaign 2014 – 2105 in which FEIC as well as EFBWW were campaign partners. (See also the campaign guide: <https://www.healthy-workplaces.eu/all-ages-splash-page/documents/HWC2016-campaign-guide.pdf>)

Workers and employers are equally concerned and therefore, the topic, even though one of high complexity and a not easy to deal with issue, has put on the European agenda of the European social partner organisations and other institutions already a long time ago. Already in 2006 the cross sectorial social dialogue (ETUC, Business Europe [UNICE], UEAPME and CEEP) agreed on an autonomous framework agreement on work-related stress.

The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC), already on 10 January 2006 agreed on a joint declaration on this topic. Additionally, they supported a research study on “Stress in the European construction sector: up-to-the-minute?” published in 2004. (CLR Studies 3, CLR/Reed Business Information)

Undoubtedly, the reason for an individual illness can have various reasons of both nature internal/individual reasons and external reasons. Taking this into account the European OSH-Agency in its campaign draw the conclusion that occupational health activities should focus on work related aspects and not on the individual person (see also page 16 of the campaign guide).

To understand the complexity of the problem one needs to realise the main characteristics of construction work. Unlike other (stationary) workplaces, a construction site and each of its workplaces are continuously changing and require a collaboration between workers of various professions and occupations. These characteristics have strong implications on occupational safety and health. Construction comprises a high number of different occupations, including the need for co-operation between their respective activities, construction is mobile, is executed under ever changing climate conditions, construction is an ever changing environment (distinct to many other industrial and further work activities). Construction is furthermore confronted with various type of technology, often not standardised. One example in this respect is the broad range of used machinery. Construction work is also confronted with short deadlines, high expectations of clients and some more “environmental conditions” .;

Developing tailor made approaches for the evaluation and reduction of psychosocial hazards,

all these aspects plus questions like the qualification, the design of the respective task and some more elements and their development has to be examined. We intend to subcontract this integral part of the project.

2. Goals of the project

The project partners believe that a better dialogue between them could support not only a better understanding of the overall topic and the mutual understanding of each other's views and concerns but could also help establishing a structural exchange of information. We are aiming at a deepened understanding of pathways for solutions that take into account the specific situation of construction work and changes within the various work processes/occupations equally taking into account the high number of small enterprises in our sector and the specific conditions in subcontracting.

The planned deliverables of the project are:

1. Following related discussions within EU institutions and other social dialogue structures on European level
2. Presentation of (some) existing concepts
3. Collecting good examples and practical approaches
4. Running a joint follow up research, starting from the results of our inquiry from 2004 "Stress in the European construction sector"
5. The publication of some information to the topic, good practise examples and research results.

On a second level, the project aims at fostering discussions and activities on national levels. We are aware of the fact that in many countries, the resources to deal with this subject are very much restricted. Additionally, there are seldom other institutions or structures providing sector specific approaches or solutions. The research shall improve the stakeholders understanding of the subject and good practise examples shall allow social partners on company level to practically deal with the issue.

Complementary to the five listed deliverables, we are aiming at designing a precise dissemination and follow-up activity plan, guaranteeing a lasting impact of the project.

The project partners therefore intend to organise a one-day workshops (dealing with goals 1, 2 and 3) and a final conference to present deliverable 5. Goal 4 shall be subcontracted to a professional institute/organisation.

3. Links with the objectives and priorities of the budget heading

and other EU policies

As pointed out in the introduction, this project application meets the concern of European policy makers and many activities carried out over the last one and a half decades.

This action fully fits within the objectives of the **sub-programme (“Support for European Social Dialogue”)** as defined in the **“Call for proposals 2016 for industrial relations and social dialogue projects”**. (To be performed once the Call has been published)

The action is focusing on the quality of work and especially the safety and health conditions in work processes. By this, the action is also directly contributing to healthier and longer working lives and meet therefore various.

The action is a part of the social partner work programme of the construction industry for 2016 to 2019 and builds on previous discussions within the social dialogue construction.

This application is clearly in line with the EC Communication (COM[2014]332 final) on ‘A strategic framework on health and safety at work 2014 – 2020’. More particularly, the project intends to involve stakeholders in discussions and co-operation on several of the seven strategic priorities pointed out by the Communication:

- Contributing to national strategies in a clearly localized area,
- Facilitating compliance with OSH legislation by presenting specific solutions
- Tackling the problem of demographic change by improving the ergonomics of machinery
- Contributing especially to the strategic objective of an aging workforce and the prevention of work-related diseases

The Commission’s Communication also calls for the active collaboration of social partners with the aim of enhancing job quality in order to support productivity and competitiveness. Challenges to be addressed include the capacity to put in place effective and efficient risk prevention measures. Once again, in the area of psychosocial workplace hazards, social partners can show their capacity to find responses which meet both workers’ and companies’ interests. Contributing to a better understanding of the topic and presenting tailor-made approaches for specific work constellations, the project is also contributing to a sustainable industry in Europe and therefore, meets vital aspects of the EU 2020 strategy.

4. Partners and staff involved

a. *Involvement of social partners at European level*

The European sectoral social partners for the construction sector, namely the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) will be partner in this project.

The EFBWW will coordinate the project and both social partners will jointly execution the project activities and the decision-making processes regarding all relevant aspects of the action.

A project steering group will be established. The two partners will execute the overall project activities as well as the preparation and running of the two larger gatherings. They will also jointly work on the preparation and dissemination of the project deliverables.

The research part of the project shall be subcontracted.

b. Involvement of the social partners and members at national level

The role of the social partners, members of EFBWW and FIEC, at their national level will be on the one hand to disseminate and promote the project results and, on the other hand, to prepare and participate in the respective workshops. Some national affiliated federations will contribute with good practice examples. Additionally, they will be represented in the project's steering group. Furthermore, we like to encourage national affiliated organisations to improve the social dialogue in their respective country.

c. External Expertise

External expertise will be mobilized for the initiating workshop at the beginning of the project.

d. Activities to be sub-contracted

- The research activity on character and changes in construction work shall be subcontracted.
- Further, translation of text and printing of material shall be subcontracted

5. Timetable of activities

For carrying out the action, we will establish a Steering Group. This Steering Group shall consist of six members: three each from EFBWW and FIEC. The EFBWW will be the overall co-ordinator.

The project partners intend to undertake this project according to the following work-plan and timetable.

Before each of the steering group meetings, the coordinator will arrange the necessary preparatory activities, i.e. preparing and sending invitations, documents and further information relevant for the respective meeting. Working language for the steering group meetings is English. The workshops will work with simultaneous interpretation into three languages. Only the first workshop, intending to gather stakeholders from more countries will work with five languages.

Preparatory phase

In a first step, the project partners will appoint the members of the steering group. During the preparatory phase of the project, the Steering Group will agree on the work-plan.

EFBWW will prepare, communicate and launch a tender for the subcontracting of the research activities. Deadline for bids shall be beforehand the first steering group meeting too, allowing to present an evaluation of received bids at the first steering group meeting.

1st Steering Group - End of 2016 or beginning of 2017

- Agreement on the work-plan and confirmation of the project timetable
- Tender for the research activities, bids and their evaluation
- Agreement on a structure for the one-day workshops and responsibilities
- Discussion on aspects for a dissemination plan
- Draft invitation letter to present good practise examples

2nd Steering Group

- Detailed preparation of the workshop
- Discussion on internal reporting and evaluation activities
- Reporting to the European social dialogue
- Possible reports on national information or activities related to the project topics
- Updating on EU activities in the related area

One-day workshop

Aim of this workshop is:

- Gathering various stakeholders and experiences
- Presenting the project its concept the aims and expected deliverables
- Receiving information about the EU discussions on psychosocial hazards at workplaces (Commission; Social Partner agreement, EN 10075 ...)
- Talking about the specifics of various type of construction work

Main activity

The main activity will be to

- Evaluate and report on various concepts of psychosocial hazards at workplaces
- Following discussions on EU-level
- Collecting good practices
- Carrying out the research
- Preparing the deliverables
- Preparing the final conference

3^d Steering Group

- Evaluation of the 1st one-day workshop
- Adjustment of the workshop concept for the coming three workshops
- Status report concerning the inquiry
- Preparation of the following workshops – discussion and decision of topics
- Discussing further dissemination activities

4th Steering Group

- Presentation of a draft report on the five one-day workshops
- Presentation results of the inquiry
- Discussion of the draft proposals for a better involvement of interested parties in the European standardisation process
- Agreement on the project documents: Summary report on the inquiry, joint declaration, proposals for the better involvement of interested parties in the standardisation process
- Reporting on the respective dissemination activities – including further planning of dissemination action
- Submission of a draft joint declaration
- Reporting (including timelines) on the coming activities: finalization of documents, translation, proofreading, layout printing)

Final Conference

Aim of this conference is:

- Presenting the deliverables
- Presenting research results
- Presenting dissemination activities and jointly consider with the participants possible action on national/company levels
- Brainstorming on follow-up action and how to ensure a lasting impact of the project

Follow-up phase

It is foreseen to arrange possible further dissemination activities during the follow-up phase.

5th Steering Group

- Final evaluation of the project
- Discussion on the draft project report for the European Commission
- Discussing possible follow-up activities, especially considering a lasting cooperation between the two sectors