

# Detailed Work Programme

## PROJECT

### TRADE UNIONS PREVENTIVE AGENTS

Call for proposal: VP/2016/004/0034. Trade Unions Preventive Agents (TUPAs).

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Application ref. VP/2016/004/0034

Applicant: ISTAS  
Coapplicants: FDV, SOLIDARNOSC, UNIVERSITY CARDIFF

## 1. Background

The policies and regulations of the European Union on occupational health and safety demand systematic approaches to the management of OSH at company level. These approaches have their origins in a particular model of OSH management originally developed at national levels in northwest European countries such as Sweden, Denmark and the UK, in which duty holders are expected to apply competent approaches to the identification, evaluation and management of OSH risks in a participative way, engaging with workers and benefiting from their experiences in doing so (Walters et al 2011 – See Annex “References”). Institutional arrangements for workers representation to support this engagement are a feature of regulatory requirements found at national levels in all member states, in the Framework Directive 89/391 and in ILO Convention 155. However, it is widely recognized that for various structural and labour relations reasons, the institutions of such representation are poorly implemented within small enterprises (EU-OSHA 2016). As a result, arguably, the measures of the Framework Directive, its daughter Directives and national provisions to transpose them are also least effective in relation to their impact in small companies and do little to counter the well established finding that serious injuries and fatalities are proportionally greater in these establishments than in their larger counterparts (see Nichols 1997; EU-OSHA 2016).

Regulators and trade unions have attempted to address this problem through both regulatory and voluntary means. Thus, in a few EU member states, such as Sweden and Italy, there are regulatory provisions that allow the representation of workers inside small firms by trade union representatives that are not employed within these establishments; and in other countries, such as in Spain and elsewhere, the trade unions have set up their own arrangements to do so voluntarily within national frameworks for labour relations provided through regulation and social dialogue.

There is a general awareness that varieties of such schemes exist in different EU member states but there has never been an evaluation of their range or their effects; or of the national contexts that support or act as barriers to their role. Given the importance of finding methods to improve the safety and health performance of small firms and the widely accepted finding that intermediaries play an important role in achieving this, the absence of a robust evaluation of these arrangements is a serious omission and it is the aim of this research to address this.

The project will study some of the most relevant of these experiences, to find out to what extent they have succeeded in improving the involvement of workers' representatives in the preventive management of small firms, and what are the key features that have supported this success. It will identify convergences and divergences in these experiences and the industrial relations contexts with which they are framed. The results of the research will contribute to the dissemination of knowledge concerning these experiences and, hopefully, to their transfer and replication, to reach new situations and provide further support for the improvement of OSH in small firms through processes of social dialogue.

## 2. Structure of the project

### **STAGE 1. START UP AND AGREEMENT ON COMMON METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES MONTHS 1 TO 6**

- Kick-off meeting (online). MONTH 1
- Initial document on conceptual framework MONTHS 1 TO 3
- Initial document on conceptual structure of national reports MONTHS 1 TO 3
- Guidelines on interview to key informants MONTHS 1 TO 3
- 2nd Project meeting. Madrid. Discussion on methods – MONTH 4
- Final version of methodological tools. MONTHS 5 TO 6

### **STAGE 2. FIELD WORK OF THE PROJECT. PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS MONTHS 7 TO 13**

- Selecting key informants MONTH 7
- Mapping experiences MONTHS 7 TO 9
- Collecting quantitative data. – MONTHS 9 TO 11
- Reviewing of legal framework. – MONTHS 9 TO 11
- Interviews with key informants, trade union agents, where possible or convenient to workers and employers. – MONTHS 7 TO 11
- Elaboration of national report. – MONTHS 12 TO 13

### **STAGE 3. DEBATE ON CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REPORT – MONTHS 14 TO 18**

- Comparative analysis of the national results. MONTHS 14 TO 15
- Validate conceptual framework and methods. MONTHS 15 TO 16
- Preliminary conclusions.- MONTHS 15 TO 16
- 3d Project meeting. Rome. Debate on conclusions – MONTH 17
- Final report. MONTHS 17 TO 18

### **STAGE 4. PRESENTATION AND DISSEMINATION OF OUTCOMES – MONTHS 19 TO 24**

- 4th project meeting (on line) on dissemination – MONTH 19
- Executive summary leaflet on the trade union agents for prevention (TUAP) – MONTHS 19 TO 21
- Short audiovisual presentation of the outcomes of the action MONTHS 19 TO 22
- Final Conference in Brussels - MONTH 23
- Final Project Meeting in Brussels – MONTH 23
- Articles, web pages, social networks - MONTHS 22 TO 24
- Administrative ending of the action – MONTH 24

### 3. Description of the project activities

**STAGE 1. START UP AND AGREEMENT ON COMMONS METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES** Intended to develop common conceptual frameworks and definitions, to clearly identify the kind of experiences which fall within the scope of the project and to unify how to describe and analyze those experiences. What kind of support for workers' participation and representation in small firms is possible and/or most important? What form does such support take? Which national and other conditions determine this form and what evidence is there of the effectiveness of such support? What are the contexts and constraints for its sustainability and transfer to other regions, sectors or countries?

**Kick-off meeting (online). Creation of the Task Group** The project will start with an online kick-off meeting to introduce the members of each partner organisation that will be representatives and contact persons in the project and will ensure the appropriate development of its activities (Project Managers). ISTAS will be the project leader and meeting coordinator. The main goals of the kick-off meeting include:

- information and joint review of project activities
- timetable and basic aspects of budget and expenses
- designating personnel responsible for tasks
- establishing communication channels for the project
- agreement upon contents of the initial documents
- Creation of the Task Group for the project, responsible for the technical development of the work programme

Project Managers will discuss, prepare, validate and coordinate the project's actions and documents from this first online meeting to the final evaluation meeting after the final Conference. Because of the agenda of the meeting, attendance of the Swedish external expert is required.

**Elaboration of conceptual framework and analytical frame. Initial document.** To correctly identify the experiences and put them into context, one of the first steps of the action will be to propose a conceptual framework that, on the basis of the available information, should express a common consensus between the partners on:

- what kind of experiences are we talking about,
- what is the common problem they address,
- which are their common context elements (influence of EU regulations, EU economic and political context, practices in the EU, unionization in the EU, challenges for workers' participation and representation in OHS in SMEs...) and which are their context differences (variations in legal and economic national context, in unionization, in model of workers' representation/participation in general and specifically in OHS and, in particular, in OHS representation/participation in small firms.),
- how do the Trade Unions' Preventive Agents address these challenges,
- barriers and difficulties they face,
- why do we think they can be a good practice,
- how is the changing European labour market affecting them.

Cardiff University and ISTAS will be responsible for drafting this document. To ensure that this conceptual framework is suitable for use in the project, all the partners will start by

providing a brief description of what is already known about TUPAs and other trade union support for worker participation/representation on OHS in small firms in their countries. The leaders of this part of the project will further develop this knowledge reviewing the research literature internationally to establish the current state of knowledge concerning trade union based interventions on OSH in small firms and their contexts and determinants.

The Swedish contribution to this part of the research will be subcontracted to a Swedish external expert, as already explained in the application.

**Definition of the conceptual structure of national reports. Initial document.** To ensure that national reports provide the needed ground for comparison, we have to agree on

a) elements of the national context to be described in the national report. This will include legal and economic framework, unionization of the workforce, model of industrial relations and of workers' representation/participation in general and specifically in OHS.

b) a common method to collect information on the experiences in the field work, by further developing the variables described in section G5 of the application.

c) items to be included in the description of the experiences: criteria for selection of national experiences, balance between general view of the country and focus on specific experiences, in-depth description of selected experiences, legal basis and framework of the experiences, agreements supporting the trade unions' preventive agents, coverage of TUPAs as workers' representatives, attributions and rights of the agents, elements to assess the work and the impact of the agents, main conclusions.

Cardiff University and ISTAS will be responsible for drafting this document.

At this point it is important to underline that as there are no known experiences of TUPAs in Poland, its national report will focus on describing elements of the context of its industrial relations in favour and against the possibility of implementing similar experiences somewhere in the country.

The Swedish contribution to this part of the research will be subcontracted to a Swedish external expert, as already explained in the application.

**Elaboration of guidelines on interview to key informants.** Most of the information on the experiences will come from key informants, such as trade unions officers and, where possible, local administration, employers or workers of affected companies, and or the agents themselves. To optimize the results of the interviews and unify their outcomes, all the partners will use a similar script/guideline, covering all the variables previously defined and other main points to fully understand the experiences (agreement covering the work of the agents, funding of their work, number of agents involved, number of firms within the scope of the agreement, attributions of the agents, existing tools to follow their work, activities developed, existing feedback on the effects of their work, satisfaction with their action of the social agents, etc..). ISTAS will be responsible for the draft document, with the help of the subcontracted Swedish external expert.

**2<sup>nd</sup> project meeting. Discussion on methods.** ISTAS will organize and moderate a 2/3 days meeting of the Task Group to be held in Madrid, to discuss the whole methodological approach to the project, specifically the field work, and to ensure shared understandings of

the research instruments and their use. As a result, guidelines for producing the field work of the project will be approved.

**Final version of methodological tools.** According to the guidelines approved in the meeting, the partners responsible for the drafting will adapt the conceptual framework, the structure of national reports and the guidelines on interview to key informants

The Swedish contribution to this part of the research will be subcontracted to a Swedish external expert, as already explained in the application.

## **STAGE 2. FIELD WORK OF THE PROJECT. PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS**

**Selecting key informants.** As the trade union agents for prevention are, in most countries, the result of collective bargaining at local level, we first need to contact key informants to gather undocumented information in the most effective way. We should differentiate two kinds of key informants in order: (1) to have a general view on the extension of the experiences (2) to have in depth information on selected, most relevant experiences. The number and nature of key informants to be contacted in each country will vary according to its national situation. We expect to address as key informants trade unions officials at regional level, regional public authorities, trade unions experts on OHS, trade unions preventive agents themselves, and, if possible, employers' regional representatives and employers and workers of small firms involved in the experiences.

**Mapping experiences.** In each country, we will try to give as precise an account as possible of the existing relevant experiences, to report on how developed they are and to select the most relevant ones. This work will be developed with the help of key informants and other sources of information like existing reports and other information on the work of the trade unions' preventive agents, for example from the records of authorities (that sometimes provide funding for the TUPAs) on their activities (such as number of visits, enterprises visited and actions developed).

**Collecting quantitative data.** To contextualize the information of key informants, we will collect available quantitative data from official sources on the health and safety figures related to the area or to the sector where the experiences come from.

**Reviewing of legal framework.** General description of the legal framework of industrial relations, collective bargaining and workers' and trade unions' rights which make the experiences possible.

**Interviews with key informants.** Once the general picture is drawn, as described in the previous steps, we will collect the data to measure in each selected experience the variables that support the theoretical framework, interviewing key informants.

**Elaboration of national report.** According to structure agreed to in stage 1. The core section of the report will be the general overview of the TUPAs activity in the country and the in-depth

description of the most relevant experiences through analysis of the collected data. The analytical strategy will consist of both discourse analysis and realistic evaluation methods, focusing on the variables of the conceptual framework, in order to allow comparison of the experiences of the different countries..

The Swedish national report will be in charge of the subcontracted Swedish external expert, as already explained in the application.

### **STAGE 3. DEBATE ON CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REPORT**

**Comparative analysis of the national results.** Each partner will analyze all the national reports, to identify, common points, keys for success, good practices, ways to replicate the experiences, influence of national legal and economic context and industrial relations systems on the experiences and their viability.

**Validate conceptual framework and methods.** The findings of the national reports will be used initially to validate the conceptual framework and the methodological strategy of the research. This work will be done by Cardiff University and ISTAS.

**Preliminary conclusions.** After a first collection of partners' inputs, ISTAS will prepare a draft document on conclusions that will deal with the above mentioned subjects (common points, keys for success, good practices, ways to export and replicate the experiences). The Polish partner, representing countries not having developed experiences with TUPAs, will be very active in validating models for transfer described from other partners, taking into account its national determinants.

**3rd Project meeting.** Before the final EU comparative report and to ensure consistency of the analytical approach and its delivery. Debate on conclusions in a two/three day meeting of the Task Group in Rome. Agreements on contents of the final report, methods and duties of each partner for its production.

**Final report.** Separate work of each partner and final assembly.

The Swedish external expert is going to participate to all the activities of this stage of the project, to contribute with the Swedish point of view and national experience.

### **STAGE 4. PRESENTATION AND DISSEMINATION OF OUTCOMES**

This project has a dual role. It is a research project and its main result will be a research based report that compares weaknesses and strengths of the TUPAs' experiences in the five quite diverse countries of Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK (as well as detailing those experiences in separate national reports). At the same time, and in order to better fulfil the objectives of the call for proposals, the most important findings of the research will be delivered in more accessible formats to stakeholders, agents involved in the OHS management

in small firms and decision and policy makers, to promote debate, transfer replication and improvement of the various types of TUPA systems.

**4th project meeting on dissemination.** Brainstorming and discussion on ways to present the final report, or its most relevant findings for action, to a wider audience. Agreements on the structure and contents of the leaflet and the audiovisual presentation. Because of the agenda of the meeting, attendance of the Swedish external expert is required.

**Executive summary leaflet on the trade union agents for prevention (TUAP)** (pdf). A short (maximum 20 pages) and easy to read written summary of the report, specifically oriented to inform stakeholders (particularly trade unions, employers' organizations and public authorities) on how TUPAs may help to improve OHS management in small firms and on good practices in relation to their working to improve prevention in small firms. It will be produced by ISTAS, with the contribution of the rest of the partners. To facilitate diffusion, we will produce 500 printed copies of the leaflet in Italian, Polish and Spanish.

**Short audiovisual presentation of the outcomes of the action.** The short movie (10-12 minutes) will be another way to present and disseminate the results of the project, bearing in mind that most stakeholders are more likely to watch a ten minute "short movie" than to read a 200 pages final report. It will be produced with off-screen narration over appropriate images and diagrams provided by the partners, and short clips of testimony from key informants interviewed in the second stage of the project. The short movie will be in English (the narration) and in the mother tongue of the person concerned (with English subtitles) in the case of the testimonies. Easy to follow instructions on how to subtitle the movie in other languages will be provided.

**Final Conference** to present the outcomes in Brussels. ISTAS with the help of the ETUI will prepare and organize a Final International Conference in Brussels to present the main conclusions of the project and disseminate the different actions carried out during the 2-year period. The best experiences may be presented during the final conference. EU stakeholders, especially trade unions representatives (from the applicants' countries, but also from other EU countries), will be invited to the Conference to have the opportunity to participate and express their views. Both the existing strong institutional connections of applicants from Italy, Poland and Spain with national trade unions in their country and the involvement of the European Trade Union Confederation, through the associated partnership of the ETUI, will grant a positive reaction and participation of European trade unions to our Conference. In any case, a specific work of personally contacting targeted unionist will be developed by the consortium. The Swedish contribution to this part of the research will be subcontracted to a Swedish external expert, as already explained in the application.

**Final project meeting** The fifth and final project meeting will take place in Brussels after the Final Conference. ISTAS managers and the European Trade Union Confederation -as associated partner- will evaluate the results and prepare the project report for the European Commission. During the meeting, other dissemination activities will be taken into consideration to spread the impact of the project (press conferences, website posts, social networks, ...).



The Swedish contribution to this part of the research will be subcontracted to a Swedish external expert, as already explained in the application.

**Other dissemination activities:** Partners will disseminate project documents, results and conclusions throughout their sphere of influence. Partners from Italy, Poland and Spain will distribute the printed copies of the leaflet in their language among stakeholders of their country. All corporate websites will include a space with information on TRADE UNION AGENTS FOR PREVENTION. All resulting products will be posted on the websites and social networks of participating partners and on ETUI's website.

Project managers will, whenever possible, facilitate dissemination through stakeholders' networks (particularly trade unions, employers' organizations and public authorities).

ETUI, as associated partner, will collaborate in the dissemination of project's results and the distribution of project documents among union members to guarantee the transfer of knowledge and tools to other trade unions, stakeholders and policy makers at the EU level.