

Call for tenders to produce a study on the safety of loft ladders and ladder feet

This call for a subcontractor to provide expertise is published as part of the implementation of the “ETUC STAND” project Work Programme 2022.

The ETUC will make the call for tender publicly available on its website, as 10 May 2022, and for 21 calendar days (deadline for submission of bids: 31 May 2022).

1. Introduction and background information on the project

International and European standards play a growing role not only in the economy, but also in the organisation of production and working conditions. For example, working equipment complying with good standards can improve safe working conditions. European standards can help to achieve upwards convergence, meaning that workers in countries with lower requirements and/or weak legislation would benefit from a better standard.

Therefore, the European Trade Union Confederation launched the ETUC STAND project, which is aimed at sustaining and reinforcing trade union representation and effective participation in European standardisation. The project runs since 2015 with the financial support of the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

One of the many aspects the ETUC is working on is occupational health and safety. Both workers and employers benefit from occupational health and safety. Prevention of risks is key. Over many years, European trade unions as well as the ETUC has been very active in driving prevention measures. Unions make workplaces safer and union action to promote improvement in Health and Safety rules is crucial.

Ladders are an indispensable tool that is used both in private everyday life and also at work. The variety of materials used to manufacture ladders is diverse. At work, ladders are often used by workers in the construction sector, agriculture and in the cleaning industry. However, working on ladders involves many risks, as they are often carried out at considerable heights. Fall accidents often have dramatic consequences. The financial costs associated with fall injuries are significant. Injuries range from broken arms and legs to fractures and even death. This can lead to lifelong problems such as disability but also the payment of medical treatment and accident compensations to the employees or their families they may leave behind. While ladders are indispensable for the worker to get from one place to another, they are not suitable as a workplace. Yet, workers spend many hours working on the ladder and lifting heavy weight.

2. Objective of the study

There are a number of measures to prevent falls and other accidents when working with ladders. For instance, the quality, ergonomics and safety of ladders can help to limit or even prevent accidents. The design of ladders, but also the durability, ease of use and robustness can contribute a good, safe and practice-oriented work equipment.

Loft ladders are used by a range of craftsmen such as chimney sweepers, carpenters and electricians. The loft ladders are installed in a building usually at the time of building and remain there for many decades without being checked for their stability and robustness. Yet, weaknesses of the ladders are in particular the high material fatigue due to large temperature differences in the attic (summer +50° / winter -10°). Also, material fatigue takes place due to aging, considering the loft ladders are remain in their place for a long time. This can result in the dissolving of anchorages.

The ETUC report on accidents with loft ladders used by chimney sweeps¹, describes accidents of chimney sweepers using loft ladders.

The first objective of the study is therefore to test the durability, robustness and safety for use of different materials of loft ladders, focusing also on different material for ladder parts (e.g. wooden ladder with metal screws). The study should investigate in solutions and recommendations to make the loft ladder more robust and hence safer to use. The focus should be on the manufacturing of the ladder. The study will also undertake a temperature test and check different test loads.

Furthermore, ladders often are supported by a ladder foot to increase stability. A ladder foot is therefore commonly used for ladders which are reaching high and need extra stability such as window-cleaning ladders. The second objective is to test a modification of size of the ladder foot and the resulting stability of the ladder. The test should take the typical use of a window-cleaner into account but the results of this test should also be applicable to similar ladder types.

3. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor

By conducting a study focusing on the testing conditions of loft ladders and the ladder foot of window-cleaning ladders, the ETUC STAND's objectives are:

- To **inform** about the testing results for loft ladders / ladder foots with view to improve overall stability and robustness.
- To provide **recommendations** for manufacturers and for standard-writers in CEN/TC 93 'Ladders' with view to increase safety when working with ladders through good design and manufacturing.

The subcontractor will collect accident data for loft ladders and window-cleaning ladders in Europe with view to analyse the sources and technical shortcomings that cause occupational accidents.

The subcontractor will test the stability and safety of loft ladders and modification of length of the ladder foot by ladders particular window-cleaning ladders. The details for testing as well as different

¹ ETUC report on accidents with loft ladders used by chimney sweeps, June 2021, for internal use in CEN/TC 93 WG 9
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parameter will be chosen in consultation with the ETUC and as noted under 2. The test for the loft ladder should cover temperature testing, humidity and a mixture of material.

The subcontractor will analyse and evaluate the outcome of the tests and prepare recommendations, which can be used by ladder manufacturers and the participants of CEN/TC 93 when preparing standards for ladders as well as testing standards.

3.1. Deliverables:

The sub-contractor will have to provide the following deliverables:

- An interim report of the study
- A final report of the study
- A short and easy to understand summary of the report to be used in communication material, meetings and events
- On a case-by-case basis, and following the publication of the report, the sub-contractor will be asked to assist/participate in (approximately) 2 meetings of CEN/TC 93 with relevant stakeholders

Before the start of the study, there will be a kick-off meeting organised (either a face to face or virtual meeting) to discuss the different steps of the study;

Halfway through the execution of the study, a second meeting is recommended to go over the preliminary results and the presentation of the interim report by the subcontractor to the ETUC STAND secretariat;

To close the study and with the delivery of the draft final report of the study, a meeting shall take place to go over the comments made by the ETUC STAND secretariat;

The subcontractor is also expected to participate in (approximately) 2 CEN/TC 93 meetings to disseminate the results of the study. The subcontractor will present the results on behalf of his/her home organisation. The date of this meeting will be communicated by the ETUC STAND secretariat, well in advance.

4. Expertise, experience and skills required

Sound expertise is required on the following issues:

- Knowledge in ladder safety and testing of ladders;
- Academic Degree in the relevant field of expertise;
- Proven research and presentation skills (in English);
- Proven skills in drafting study reports;
- Ability to work within specified deadlines and to respect budgetary limits;
- Ability to work in a multicultural context and understanding of different industrial relations culture and traditions;
- Good administration and project management skills;

5. Time schedule and reporting

The subcontractor will be asked to perform the above-mentioned tasks by 15 November 2022. The draft study report as well as the summary text should be submitted to the ETUC secretariat by 1 November 2022.

Please note that the exact dates of the above-mentioned events may be subject to slight changes and will be decided upon by the steering committee.

6. Payment

The total maximum budget available for the fees of the subcontractor is **12 000 € (VAT and all taxes included²)** as follows:

The subcontractor will be remunerated in two instalments (advance and final payment). This amount covers the fees but does not include the travel and subsistence costs incurred for study visits and presentation of the results at 1 event. These will be covered by ETUC on the basis of EU rules and thresholds. The costs may not exceed €1.500 and will be reimbursed upon receipt of actual invoices.

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

7. Selection criteria

The selection criteria are:

- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills, as required and described in part 4 of this call;
- Proven track record of ensuring the quality of the tasks, both in terms of content and format (i.e. previous publications), in the relevant subjects specified in this call for tenders;
- Respect of the budgetary and time constraints;

8. Form, structure and content of the tender

² Unless the subcontractor is exempt from VAT, VAT is always included in the total, also when reverse charge applies and it is borne by ETUC.

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 the key coordinator and other team members, when applicable;
 - A selection of the main works and/or articles made by all the experts involved, in relation to the relevant subjects specified in this tender.

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

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.

Prices must be fixed amounts and shall not include travel expenses for the attendance to the Steering Committee meetings and other project events which will be covered by ETUC on the basis of EU rules and thresholds.

9. 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.

10. Content and selection of the bids

This call for tenders will be published on the ETUC website on 10 May 2022, and will be kept online for 21 calendar days. Offers must be sent at the latest on 31 May 2022. Offers must be sent to ETUC in electronic format (by e-mail to amartin@etuc.org), and refer to the “ETUC STAND Project”.

A committee will be formed comprising of 3 representatives of the ETUC. The committee members 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.

This committee 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 all the members of the evaluation committee 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 and the justification for their selection;
4. The names of candidates put forward and justification of their choice in terms of the selection or award criteria.