

Call for tenders: Subcontracting expertise on challenges and opportunities for trade unions in the context of a Just Transition

This is a call for a subcontractor (a team of experts) to provide research with a view to supporting the activities of the ETUC “Empowering European Trade Unions for Climate Action via Social Dialogue” project (also called Just Transition project). More specifically, this call for tender will provide a valuable analytical foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities the Just Transition brings for trade unions, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, supporting ETUC and its affiliates in developing effective strategies, and organising.

This call for tenders will be published on the ETUC website on **Thursday 18 December 2025** and will be kept online for one month. The deadline for submission of bids is **Monday 19 January 2026 (noon CET)**.

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1. Background information on the project

Our project aims to strengthen the capacity of national trade union confederations, with a focus on, but not limited to, Central and Eastern European countries - to develop just transition strategies, promoting economic diversification, social policies, and sector-specific measures.

Through facilitation of cross-sectoral discussions, led by national confederations with support from ETUC, we aim to align strategies with international and European frameworks, addressing sectoral changes and regional nuances.

Subsequently, external events will promote these strategies, facilitating exchanges with policymakers, employers, civil society, and trade unions. Targeting countries with limited resources and EU engagement will bridge the gap between European-level discussions and local realities, fostering continuous support for green transition and social mitigation efforts.

To support this concretely, our project will focus on understanding and finding opportunities the operation of relevant funds and legislation related to Just Transition, ensuring alignment with just transition principles and trade union engagement.

Furthermore, our project includes an initial mapping report and three regional workshops, each lasting 1.5 days. These workshops, while similar in structure, will accommodate regional differences, facilitating comprehensive dialogue and knowledge exchange.

Lastly, a final work package will feature a report and launch event in Brussels or Strasbourg, enabling affiliate trade unions to directly interact with policymakers.

2. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor

The objective through this call for tenders is, thanks to the work of the subcontractor, for ETUC to:

- Understand concretely the difficulties trade unions, especially from Central and Eastern European regions, face regarding the just transition and clearly represent the current context (loss of jobs, lack of upskilling, global socio-economic impact... both on short and long term). We would want the subcontractor to focus on challenges but also look at opportunities and their interlinkage.
- Get a complete and clear picture of the available and potential resources that could be used to improve the situation and guarantee an actual just transition, through looking at existing EU funds and existing or upcoming legislation. We want to also have a proper look at what the conditional Just Transition Directive could achieve, if passed and enacted by the European Union. In the identified funds (for example: CISAF, Euro Competitiveness Fund, MFF...), we would like to know if there any examples of successful use by trade unions we can learn from and replicate.
- Obtain sound recommendations applicable for national trade unions confederations, considering their resources and possibilities.

Therefore, the subcontractor will work on the following:

- Preliminary research on relevant and available EU and national funds from now to 2030, that could fund the just transition and be used or promoted by trade union confederations, with a focus on Central and Eastern European trade unions.
- Preliminary research on current state of play in the countries/regions covered by the project regarding the impact of decarbonation and (just) transition measures to get a sense of the current context.
- Research to develop a state of play on the challenges and opportunities offered by the EU industrial policy, with a focus on the current restructuring and deindustrialisation challenges as well as the skills mismatches, in each country covered by the project (to be defined at the start).
- Before each workshop, deeper research on the covered countries and regions regarding existing challenges (already explored in pre-research), opportunities (already explored broadly with pre-research), their interests and priorities, from which comes a set of potential recommendations to be tested during the workshops, including through interviews of our members.
- In each regional context, there will be a focus on the development of and the transposition of ambitious climate policies at the national level. Workshops will be organized by the ETUC team focusing on equipping trade union representatives with practical skills and insights to effectively participate in policy discussions and decision-making processes. The experts will present relevant research and recommendations during each workshop (3 in total).
- After each workshop, drafting of a short report (challenges, opportunities, recommendations),
- Final report, based on previous work and potentially more focused on the Just Transition Directive (depending on the advancement of the legislative file). This report will not only serve as a valuable resource for participating trade unions but also provide suggestions for improvement for policymakers and trade unions in the future. By sharing insights and recommendations, the report aims to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of climate policy processes, fostering greater collaboration between stakeholders.
- The report will be presented at a final conference organised by the ETUC team, where the experts will be expected to present their findings.

The subcontractor is required to design, coordinate, and implement the research activities forming the core of the Just Transition project. External subcontractors will be in charge of drafting the sub-mentioned reports and of introducing content-related aspects at project's events.

The approach and methodology behind the project are carefully designed to align with its overarching objectives and leverage opportunities for trade union involvement in key climate initiatives and developing regionally specific strategies overall.

The selection procedure will take into account the subcontractor's knowledge of trade union structures and dynamics, as well as proven experience with survey research, political communication, and social dialogue analysis.

The subcontractor will work under the supervision of the ETUC project team, ensuring that all activities are implemented coherently and in line with the project's objectives.

3. Profile of the subcontractor

The drafting of survey instruments, interviews, and analytical reports requires sound and proven expertise in the following areas:

- Quantitative and qualitative research methods, including survey design, sampling, interviews and data analysis across multiple countries;
- Experience in political sociology, climate policies, or labour market research;
- Experience working with trade unions or social partners, at national or European level, is a strong asset.

Skills required:

- Ability to design and manage cross-country research projects and coordinate with multiple partners;
- Strong analytical and drafting skills, including the capacity to present findings clearly and concisely;
- Proven ability to translate data into actionable insights for trade union capacity-building;
- Proven ability to conduct interviews;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills in English;
- Capacity to work independently, respect deadlines, and adapt to feedback from the ETUC project team.

4. Time schedule and reporting

Timeline (Project completed by June 2027)

Phase	Period
Call for tenders published	Dec 2025
Contractor selection	Jan 2026
3 regional reports, and interventions in workshop	March/April/May 2026 May/June 2026 Sept/Oct 26
Final report	April/May 2027

The timeline above is indicative and can be discussed with the subcontractor. The subcontractor will be asked to perform all the above-mentioned tasks by June 2027.

5. Payment

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

Contract with ETUC	
Main activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary research, analysis and interviews • Participate to three regional workshops, gather participants' insights • Produce three regional reports • Produce a final report, and present its findings at a conference • Liaise with ETUC and national affiliates throughout implementation. 	
Total budget for the Expertise	42.000 € (VAT and all taxes included)

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.

The reports will be duly and clearly accredited to the authors. Ownership of the results and of the written outputs 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 “Empowering European Trade Unions for Climate Action via Social Dialogue” project.

6. Selection criteria

Bids will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Quality of the methodology proposed in the offer
- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills, 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), 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/her 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 tenderer and of the other team members if applicable;
 - 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.
- Specific information concerning the proposed methodology for delivering the tasks listed in part 2 of this call.

ii) Financial proposals

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 these contracts is up to **42.000€** (VAT and all taxes included). The offer should include a breakdown of the NET amount and the corresponding VAT amount.

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

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 18 December 2025. Offers must be sent at the latest on 19 January 2026 noon CET. Offers must be sent to ETUC, in electronic format (by e-mail to amartin@etuc.org and mdeshayes@etuc.org), and refer to our “Call for Tenders – Just Transition”.

As Steering Committee, the ETUC project team will assess and draw-up a 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 committee will evaluate the tenders that have been deemed admissible. An evaluation report and classification of participation requests will be drawn up 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.