

# APPLICATION FORM

Project name:  
ICEM PROJECT OF CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SOCIAL DIALOGUE  
AND ORGANISING IN TURKEY

Project No.: CH010071

Implementing organisation: ICEM  
Approving (National Req. Org.): FNV Bondgenoten

Project period (years): 2  
Application period: 2009-2010

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background and previous experiences

As of June 2008, the ICEM has 14 affiliated trade unions in Turkey, in a wide range of different sectors, and belonging to various national centres (Türk-İş, DİSK, KESK, Türkiye Kamu-Sen). These unions are mainly industrial national-based trade unions in the energy, oil, chemicals, rubber, glass, cement, ceramics, paper, pulp, mining, public and environmental services. The ICEM also has newly-established public employees unions as affiliates, who are in real need of a legal base for collective bargaining and the right to strike, as the current particular legislation does not recognise these rights.

The ICEM is the most representative Global Union Federation (GUF) in Turkey. Its 14 affiliates decided, in August 2008, to create a Coordinating Committee to enhance cooperation on their international work within the ICEM activities. This Committee regularly meets and defines joint projects and targets, in collaboration with the ICEM.

The ICEM sectors in Turkey, for example energy and chemicals, receive large direct foreign investments by multinational companies, something which creates new challenges for trade unions that need to be addressed. A major part of the unions is having serious difficulties in organising and carrying out collective bargaining within these multinational companies. Growing hostility against trade unions is evident, including during restructuring and privatisation efforts, and through contracting out policies.

The unions' strength to organise, to negotiate, to settle conflicts, and to protect members is in decline. This deterioration requires a project of capacity building on the part of the ICEM. The proposed project aims to use the strength of the international trade union movement, as well as of its affiliates, in particular FNV Bondgenoten, to raise the challenge to unions and to find a mechanism for meaningful social dialogue. This will be fundamentally rooted in core human, social and economic rights, as enshrined in core ILO conventions.

To learn about the history, values, practices, knowledge and experiences of FNV Bondgenoten will be a great asset for Turkish unions in this regard. In line with the well-known and long tradition of international solidarity and cooperation by FNV Bondgenoten, the project is expected to serve to reach targets. Considering the fact that there are a number of Dutch-based multinationals in Turkey, such as Akzo Nobel and Unilever, the project will also be to the benefit of FNV Bondgenoten itself.

## Problem analysis

There are clear trends which hamper ICEM Turkish affiliates in their ability to recruit new members, establish constructive bargaining and/or social dialogue with private companies, in particular in multinational companies.

These can be summarised as follows:

- Hostility to unions and ignorance of international standards by managements
- Lack of clear non-academic sectoral and company analyses
- Lack of exposure by unions to international level contacts and networking
- Lack of unions' own ability to use unanalysed information in negotiations

- Lack of exposure and training on global agreements and networking for unions
- Need for coordinated and effective union networking and solidarity action

### **Objectives analysis**

The culture of paternalism rooted in Turkish society has a great deal of influence over industrial relations. Most companies operating in Turkey, including MNCs, do not recognise workers' rights - particularly the right to organise and collective bargaining.

At the same time, it is a well known fact in Turkey that labour law cannot be used for defending union rights, because of the many loopholes in the legislation. This situation is criticised by the International Labour Office (ILO) and Turkey is still on the list for observation of the Office. The process of negotiations with the European Union has, so far, not brought any positive developments for the Turkish industrial relations system either.

This project aims to remedy this growing trend, by building the capacity of unions and their leaders - at all levels - on fundamental human, social and economic rights, on organising drives, on social dialogue between MNCs and trade unions, aiming to assist trade unions in organising and reorganising.

### **Strategy analysis**

Throughout the project period, a series of activities will therefore be carried out, including seminars, conferences and other meetings.

- A preparatory meeting will aim to identify the organisational and individual elements that are necessary to allow Turkish unions to define a strategy to reach targets through this project.
- Invited to the first national conference will be the principal officers of Turkish unions, as well as government officials, employer representatives and international delegates. A national conference will be held every year. In addition to discussing strategy, as well as issues that have been discussed at other levels, these national conferences also offer the opportunity to jointly talk about general "social dialogue issues", as listed above.
- Five seminars will take place, in different major Turkish cities, with the participation of local trade union officers and militants, with a view to also spreading the ideas and activities of the project to the other levels of the unions. During these seminars, targets and actions plans will be drawn up, working with task forces and/or discussion forums. If necessary, an additional contribution by experts can be organised, as well as further discussion sessions. Action plans will then be discussed in between seminars, so as to enable the respective action plans to be carried out.
- The final event will be a concluding conference, which will evaluate the implementation of the project and work out recommendations which could be used in the future. This final conference would also be organised to circulate the results of the project via a widely distributed publication.

## **Development Objective**

The overall development objective of this project is to continue to develop peaceful dialogue between companies and trade unions operating in ICEM sectors in Turkey, based on fundamental human, social and economic rights.

## **Project Objective**

The project proposal aims to "build capacity" for social dialogue and organising for ICEM's Turkish affiliates, with a view to reinforcing their capacity to organise new recruitment drives, and engage in industrial relations and social dialogue afterwards.

In crude terms, ICEM affiliated trade unions are losing ground in terms of recruiting members (particularly contract and agency workers), securing collective agreements and functioning dialogues with employers.

As a result of these considerations, the priority activities are:

- Initiation and maintenance of a process of social dialogue and organising, and of project activities in support of this
- Continued strategic activities at local level in those unions willing to participate in the process
- Compiling of information on MNCs and on company negotiations
- Gender activities and agreed coordination structure for the ICEM women's committee
- Development of best practice and models of social dialogue to be promoted amongst ICEM affiliates in the country

## **Expected results**

- Establishment of capable trade union organisers and negotiators, who are able to organise new workers and participate in a formal process of social dialogue
- Improvements in social dialogue
- Awareness raising and skills development on international standards for organising, dialogue and negotiations, and basic human and workers rights, within the participating organisations
- Clear and comparative company and union information for the target MNCs
- Active and representative participation of women membership and representatives in this process

## **Activities**

1. Preparatory Meeting
2. National Conferences
3. Seminars

## **Institutional Framework**

The overall project will be managed by the project management team, which will consist of the following:

- Representatives of ICEM Turkish Coordination Committee
- Representatives of FNV Bondgenoten
- Kemal Özkan, ICEM Chemical and Rubber Industry Officer
- ICEM projects officer

### **Inputs: Overview**

#### ICEM

- Information and political support for company negotiations
- Staff and leadership expertise on the issue of dialogue
- Staff time supporting and monitoring the project

#### ICEM Turkish Coordination Committee

- Coordination of project activities
- Technical and thematic support in carrying out project

#### FNV Bondgenoten

- Staff time carrying out project activities (half day a week to support this project through a Turkish-speaking staff)
- Monitoring visits
- Providing expertise through national and local level trade union officers