EU OSHA E-TOOLS SEMINAR 2023
Construction sector and other outdoor workplaces
Bilbao, 4 – 5 October 2023

1 E-tools seminar introduction

Topic of this year’s e-tools networking event was e-tools to assist occupational risk assessment and prevention in the construction and other outdoor workplaces. The meeting took place from 4th October (afternoon) with an introduction and a series of presentations on different tools that have been developed. Then, the workshop continued the morning of the 5th of October with a more practical exercise, bringing attendees together to share experiences and approaches and with an opportunity to discuss the tools.

Five speakers were invited to introduce the topic and present examples used for OSH, as a start for discussion. Finally, the approaches and examples were discussed in groups. Presentations and discussions in the seminar were built on the following key aspects: the challenges and benefits of the use of e-tools for the construction sector and outdoor work; their pros and cons - in what circumstances are e-tools most useful; challenges related to the development and maintenance of a tool (for example, dealing with IT contractors, preparing technical specifications, multilingualism, keeping the tool up-to-date); challenges related to promotion/dissemination of the e-tool; challenges related to the sustainability of the project over time and evaluation of the tool.

The core participants at seminar are representatives in the field of occupational safety and health (OSH) who are nominated by our national Focal Points and who have an interest in the construction sector/outdoor work and in the development of the tools. Social partners, the European Commission and other stakeholders (e.g. ENSHPO) have been invited.

Viewpoints, practices, and experiences were shared in the seminar and also there were opportunities for networking for collaboration in the future.
2 Introductory presentations and presentations from the member states

The meeting started with a welcome of the Chair of EU-OSHA’s Executive Board, Andreas Stoimenidis, to this 9th e-tools seminar. The annual event has taken place since 2015. Andreas emphasized that it is a pleasure to meet each other face-to-face in Bilbao to network, to exchange good examples and to facilitate learning from each other’s experiences.

Next EU-OSHA – Annick Starren - continued with an introduction to the seminar: its objectives and the program of the two days. To set the scene, a definition of an e-tool was presented: an e-tool is an IT-based, online/web-based tool, used via phone or computer, that is interactive and adaptive (tailored outcome based on the data input), and - in our context - is focused on health and safety issues.

E-tools guide the user through the process of decision making instead of other more static tools, like ‘checklists’. EU-OSHA described how it supports the use of e-tools, as well as developing tools their own (e.g. OiRA). Web based tools (e-tools) have also been referred to by DG Employment in relation to the support of OSH risk assessment, especially to be embedded in national legal systems and to reach out to SME’s, and to have strong engagement with social partners.

After the introduction, our four speakers have provided their presentations, separated by a break and time for questions:

- Using BIM in the safety risk management of modular construction – Prof Dr Mikela Chatzimichailidou (University College London).
- Development of intelligent sensorized clothing for the prevention and mitigation of risks for the safety of workers - Prof. Fabrizio Marra (Sapienza University of Roma).
- B-Smart Ireland Interactive risk assessment tool for construction trades - Brian Molloy (HSA Ireland).
- Real-time crystalline silica sensor to be used at construction sites - Maaike le Feber (TNO, Netherlands).

Following the presentations, there was a Panel discussion on the day’s presentations, facilitated by Sarah Copsey, followed by a closing of the day by Tim Tregenza. Main discussion points have been summarized.1

3 Perspectives to the topic

The E-tool seminar continued on day 2 with short perspectives to the topic from the social partners and sector representatives (see also the attached PPT’s):

- Martin Röhrich - Confederation of Employers ‘and Entrepreneurs’ Associations (KZPS), Czech Republic.
- Andreas Stoimenidis - Greek General Confederation of Workers (GSEE), Greece.
- Mireya Rifá Fabregat - European Network of Safety and Health Professional Organisations (ENSHPO).

This was followed by last and 5th presentation on an E-tool form the member states.

4 Group work

The Group work has been introduced by Tim Tregenza of EU-OSHA. As a guidance for the group discussions, a set of questions have been provided:

1. What are the drivers and barriers for the use of digital tools for prevention in the construction sector/outdoors? How do these differ from other sectors?
2. What are the needs of the sector for OSH digital tools going forward (e.g. compliance, supply chain management, environmental sampling)

1 See Day 1 – Summary (pdf document).
3. What are the benefits to the use of digital tools for prevention in construction/outdoor work and what are the dangers (e.g. greater efficiency, loss of data privacy)

4. How do you see the tool developing in future?

5 Discussion points and conclusions

Final discussion points have been summarized and are available.²

William Cockburn, Executive Director of EU-OSHA closed the event, thanking all participants for their active participation and relevant input.

² See Day 2 – Summary (pdf document).