



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Mid-Term Evaluation

Vision Zero Fund – Collective Action for Safe and Healthy Supply Chains

Quick Facts

Countries: Madagascar, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Ethiopia, Colombia, Mexico, Honduras, Global Component

Mid-Term or Final Evaluation: Mid-term clustered

Evaluation Mode: Independent

Administrative Office: LABADMIN/OSH

Technical Office: LABADMIN/OSH

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Project Code: GLO/16/50/MUL, GLO/17/53/EUR, MMR/16/51/MUL, LAO/17/50/EUR, ETH/17/01/MUL, RLA/18/08/EUR, GLO/19/07/EUR, GLO/18/58/FRA, MDG/17/50/FRA

Donor(s) & Budget (US\$):

Germany/BMAS (9,310,581), European Union/Global (3,446,533), European Union/DG EMPL (2,549,563), the United Kingdom/DFID (932,402), the United States/USDOL (618,828), France/DAEI (588,640), Sweden (472,318), Norway (367,017), Siemens (358,422)

Keywords: Global supply chains, occupational safety and health, decent work, protection, social security,

labour inspection and compliance, employment injury insurance, collective action

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Established by the G7 in 2015, the Vision Zero Fund (VZF) is administered and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The responsibility for managing the programme rests with the Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch (LABADMIN/OSH) at ILO Headquarters.

The VZF's objective is to work towards the vision of zero fatal and severe work-related injuries and diseases by improving occupational safety and health (OSH) practices and conditions in sectors that link to global supply chains (GSCs).

The VZF programme has been developed and implemented in the garment/textile and/or agriculture (ginger, lychee and coffee) supply chains of 7 countries—Madagascar, Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and, more recently, Ethiopia, Mexico, Colombia and Honduras—to provide a set of interconnected OSH capacities needed to improve OSH for professionals, institutions, workers and workplaces.

The programme's interventions focus on three strategic outcomes, namely 1) strengthened global, regional and national enabling environments for the promotion of safe and health working conditions in

targeted GSCs; 2) improved legal and policy frameworks to promote and enforce OSH protection, prevention and compensation in targeted GSCs; and 3) improved application of OSH prevention, protection and compensation in targeted GSCs.

Present situation of the project

The VZF is designed to work at the global, country and workplace levels, seeking to strengthen the worldwide enabling environment for safe and healthy working conditions; improve national legal and policy frameworks; and implement more effective prevention, protection and compensation mechanisms for women and men working in targeted supply chains, in particular in the world's least developed countries.

At the global level, VZF activities are designed to generate relevant knowledge (research, lessons learned and good practices), tools, data and policies; to mobilize and advocate for a public commitment to improve OSH in GSCs; and to prevent and reduce workplace injuries and diseases. At the country level, VZF interventions focus on improved prevention and protection from OSH risk, as well as compensation in the event of injury or disease, and reinforce legal and policy development and implementation capacities and mechanisms. Country-level interventions are designed jointly with the national government, social partners and other key stakeholders.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The mid-term evaluation (MTE) was conducted between August and November 2020 by two international consultants who followed a “clustered approach.” The MTE reviewed the VZF’s strategy and performance, from programme launch in 2016 to mid-2020. The MTE focused on global and country-level interventions and took into consideration previous evaluations.

The primary clients of the MTE are the VZF project team, the VZF Steering Committee, and the LABADMIN/OSH Branch of the ILO.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology featured a comprehensive desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs) through Skype or phone calls, and an online survey targeting respondents from Latin America. The evaluators

canvassed a total of 67 people, including national stakeholders and beneficiaries with the support of local consultants in Myanmar and the Lao PDR.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance: The VZF was found to be highly relevant in providing a coherent response to real and pressing OSH deficits in GSCs. The programme acts as a development cooperation instrument grounded in the actual needs of constituents in participating countries. As such, it brings together different actors with different roles, responsibilities and visions to work towards a common ground with an OSH lens, and proposes an integrated approach to address safety and health at the global, national and enterprise levels that are aligned with the VZF’s immediate outcomes and with countries’ national priorities and policies. The VZF is also relevant to its final beneficiaries as it introduces and designs various interventions to address the hazards workers and farmers are exposed to, and by doing so, brings about improvements in working conditions.

Coherence and validity of design: The VZF’s global and country-level interventions are interrelated and mutually inform each other. Country programme models generate knowledge, experiences, research and lessons learned to feed the international debate on OSH in GSCs with evidence-based information on what works (or not) in the agriculture and garment GSCs. The global component provides technical inputs and backstopping services that enrich country interventions with research, tools and guidelines, to be conveniently adapted and used according to each country context. The VZF has made substantial efforts to strengthen collaboration with other ILO programmes and to leverage collaboration with existing projects and ILO departments, especially those dealing with GSCs (e.g. Better Work, SCORE, INWORK and the Global Programme on Employment Injury Insurance and Protection). The VZF Secretariat has seized the opportunity to address the health crisis triggered by the outbreak of COVID-19, and funding has been swiftly reallocated to address country requests and needs, in line with measures to manage the pandemic’s repercussions.

Effectiveness: At the country level, the VZF has made progress towards expected results and

contributed to significant changes on OSH awareness and the broadening of OSH ecosystems. Through action taken by the programme, OSH policies, regulations and frameworks have been strengthened. Efforts to build the capacity of stakeholders have improved the latter's institutional and technical knowledge and strengthened their ability to address OSH issues, and have caused measurable changes leading to an improvement in work conditions and productivity at the enterprise level (e.g. creation of OSH committees, staff trained on OSH, and improved knowledge and use of OSH tools translating into safer work environments).

GSCs covered by the programme have benefitted from value-added solutions to foster knowledge, prevention, protection and productivity of farmers, with the introduction of new techniques to reduce injury and prevent accidents through the adoption of improved agricultural practices and proper storage of fertilizers and agrochemicals.

At the global level, areas to improve include the involvement of private sector actors, which is slated to be addressed with the upcoming completion of a study on private sector engagement. To convince and attract enterprises and global brands, the VZF could call on the notion that meaningful OSH engagement represents an opportunity for enterprises to showcase their efforts to promote decent work, and on the notion that safer, healthier working conditions will potentially resonate with and influence customers.

The VZF's different programme models each have their respective strengths and weaknesses, and there is no single "best" approach to adopt in the selection of future project countries and GSCs. The choice of programme model depends on a multitude of factors, including national stakeholder interest in addressing a specific sector, donor input, level of funding allocated to GSCs based on country needs, the country's existing systems and structures, the degree of commitment of stakeholders, the availability of ILO resources, the potential impact of addressing the GSCs within the country, and the capacity of VZF interventions to contribute to the global debate on GSCs.

The VZF's interventions have yielded tools, guidance notes, methodologies, research, country-level experiences and lessons learned to inform the GSC debate at the international level. At the global

level, the VZF facilitates the sharing of country experiences, research and lessons learned to inform the global development debate on GSCs, building on evidence-based information. The development of a systematic approach to further disseminate knowledge and expertise to target audiences, by means of adapted communication channels, allows stakeholders to access knowledge on different topics related to OHS and GSCs, while informing implementation work at the country level, feeding the policy debate, and supporting both decision and policy making.

Evidence from the bulk of KIIs confirms that collective action exists at the national level to adopt the normative framework and strengthen OSH knowledge. However, the involvement of global brands and other international stakeholders could be strengthened throughout the GSCs. Furthermore, participants in KIIs support the need for the VZF to clarify and expand its private sector engagement strategy.

Efficiency: The VZF has been cost-efficient in its implementation, and project resources have been used for their intended purpose. The VZF has been able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus demonstrating its flexibility and resiliency. Measures such as the reallocation of resources, identification of additional funding, development of training material, and training to ensure worker safety and strengthen knowledge around OSH are all relevant and timely responses. The VZF Secretariat only has limited resources to take on multiple tasks and handle interventions in several countries. Although welcome additions have been made to the Secretariat team, the VZF Steering Committee needs to pay particular attention to funding the needs of this body adequately, given the programme's continuing expansion.

Impact: Evidence from the KIIs highlights several important changes brought about by the VSF interventions, such as increased OSH awareness, a broadening of the OSH ecosystems in targeted countries, and increase technical knowledge leading to more effective labour inspections.

Sustainability: The VZF relies on a number of strategies to enhance sustainability, such as integration with existing legal, policy and institutional frameworks; supporting institutional

and technical capacity development at all levels; and broadening the ecosystem of organizations engaged in OSH promotion. Government-level changes with respect to OSH policies, laws and regulations point to greater ownership on the part of governments, and as such constitute encouraging signs for sustainability. Evidence from the KIIs signals the importance of global-level sustainability measures, but suggests that such measures need to be facilitated by clearly communicating to global brands the added-value that the VZF brings to the table.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Follow up on the gender diagnostics to strengthen the integration of gender in the methodology for OSH in GSCs, and consolidate gender mainstreaming through the adoption of appropriate measures and the allocation of sufficient resources to provide gender mainstreaming guidance, tools and training to country ILO teams and country constituents, to ensure that VZF interventions are fully gender-responsive.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that future project designs incorporate regular follow-up dialogue with country stakeholders on the funding and human resource implications of sustainability and phase-out strategies that identify the roles, responsibilities and commitments of government stakeholders beyond project completion.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that project timelines factor in sufficient time to engage in dialogue with country constituents while adjusting technical capacities, allocation of human and financial resources, and expected outcomes to prioritize what can realistically be done to achieve lasting impact.

Recommendation 4: To effectively support the model of collective action, the VZF should pay special attention to knowledge management and establish a mechanism to facilitate a broader dissemination of its knowledge, expertise, tools and methodologies, data and statistics on OSH.

Recommendation 5: Setting up the Advisory Committee in June 2020 was a welcome initiative. Nevertheless, concrete mechanisms should be put in place to allow the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to be more involved in the

initial consultation stage leading to the approval of projects by the Steering Committee.

Recommendation 6: Follow up on the private sector engagement strategy, to strengthen the participation of private sector actors and international brands, with the deployment of appropriate measures and the allocation of sufficient resources to develop proper mechanisms to support OSH throughout GSCs. Country-level challenges and successes in reaching out to private sectors and national brands should feed into this process. One of the key selling points of the VZF lies in its unique expertise in OSH, which is one of several aspects to address in GSCs, and constitutes a solid entry point, along with other changes that are equally important to ensure decent work conditions.

Recommendation 7: The VZF Secretariat and VZF Steering Committee must examine factors that motivate the choice of country programme models, while recognizing the VZF's added value as a key global influence on OSH in GSCs. The choice of programme model is closely linked to donor input and expectations, level of funding, and interest in addressing a specific sector (as well as donor reservations about involving themselves in a broad range of responses alongside multiple stakeholders and ILO departments).

Recommendation 8: Owing to challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic, consider granting an extension period to projects, where relevant, to ensure that country interventions can be completed as planned.

Recommendation 9: Products developed by the programme at the global and country levels—including tools, guidance, research and case studies—should be further disseminated and used in policy development and implementation at the country level, through the development of a systematic approach to sharing knowledge, publications, research, and good practices. Such an approach should take into consideration target audiences, and be linked to the communications strategy currently being developed, taking into consideration the key role played by the VZF Secretariat in ensuring that country-level programme contributions are consolidated and shared effectively.