



## Independent Clustered Evaluation of Vision Zero Fund projects in the global coffee supply chain

### Executive Summary

**Country:** Mexico, Honduras, Colombia, Viet Nam

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**Evaluation type/nature:** Independent Cluster Evaluation

**Evaluation timing:** Final

**Administrative Unit:** CO - Mexico & DWT/CO - Lima & CO-Hanoi

**Technical Backstopping:** LABADMIN/OSH

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**Project Symbol:** RLA/18/08/EUR & VNM/20/01/DEU

**Donor and budget:** European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs - USD 2,066,388 & Germany, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development - USD 1,162,058

**Key Words:** [Use themes as provided in i-eval Discovery](#)



## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The VZF and other projects and initiatives are implemented under the strategic framework of the Flagship Programme Safety + Health for All of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This Programme aims to improve the health and safety of workers by reducing the incidence of work-related deaths, injuries and diseases worldwide. The Programme started in 2016 and targets mainly small and medium-sized enterprises and workers in global supply chains.

The project in Latin America ("Improving occupational safety and health in the coffee supply chain in Latin America" (RLA/18/08/EUR) has the overall objective of reduce the exposure of female and male workers in the coffee supply chain to OSH risks in the workplace in Colombia, Mexico and Honduras through three specific objectives: SO1) Sustainable, safe and healthy working practices and conditions are developed and/or strengthened at industry and company level in the coffee value chains in the target countries; SO2) More workers have access to better prevention, protection and compensation of OSH hazards and risks through adequate institutional support in coffee value chains in target countries and SO3) National, regional and global public and private initiatives, certifications and platforms addressing coffee value chains have improved knowledge and tools to prevent and reduce workplace-related deaths, injuries and diseases. The project budget rises to 1,955,412 euros.

The Vietnam project "Improving safety and health in cooperation with the public and private sector in the coffee supply chain in Vietnam" (VNM/20/01/DEU) has the overall objective of reduce workers' exposure to OSH risks in the coffee supply chain through three outcomes: SO1) Strengthening regional and national enabling environments for the promotion of safe and healthy working conditions in the coffee supply chain; SO2) Improved legal and policy frameworks to promote and enforce OSH protection, prevention and compensation in Vietnam's coffee supply chain and SO3) Increased implementation of effective OSH prevention, protection and compensation mechanisms for women and men working in the coffee supply chain. The budget project rises to USD 1,162,058 dollars.

### Present situation of the project

The project in Latin America already finished. The project in Vietnam still on going until June 2023

### Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation aimed to review and assess the progress and achievements of the Projects against planned outputs and outcomes. The evaluation is clustered due both Projects are part of the same programme VZF, which in

	<p>turn is part of the ILO's Flagship Programme Safety + Health for All), share the same objectives and similar strategies, follow the same results framework, and contribute to the achievement of the same VZF goals; and mainly both Projects work in the same sub-sector / GSC (coffee). Being a clustered evaluation, the evaluation questions are basically the same for both projects, as well as the type of primary and secondary sources used, tools and data collection techniques</p>
<b>Methodology of evaluation</b>	<p>The evaluation was carried out in accordance with ILO standard policies and procedures and complies with UNEG norms and OECD/DAC quality standards following evaluation criteria: (a) relevance, (b) validity of design, (c) effectiveness, (d) efficiency, (e) impact and sustainability. The collection of information from primary sources was carried out through semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted remotely, under the Zoom, Meet or Teams modality. A total of 76 people were interviewed, including members of the project teams (5); representatives of partner institutions, beneficiaries and/or stakeholders in Mexico (18), Colombia (13), Honduras (11) and Vietnam (14); and representatives of the ILO, the VZF or donors (15). Other primary sources from which information was collected were coffee farms in Mexico, Colombia and Honduras: the method of information collection was interviews and, as they were conducted in person, a tour of each farm was also conducted, in all cases guided by the owner/manager of the farm and/or the person being interviewed. A total of 9 farms were visited: 2 in Mexico, 3 in Colombia and 4 in Vietnam.</p>
<b>MAIN FINDINGS &amp; CONCLUSIONS</b>	<p><b>Relevance</b></p> <p>Both Projects are very relevant and pertinent, both to the needs of public and private actors linked to the coffee supply chain in Mexico, Colombia, Honduras and Vietnam for the adoption of safe and healthy practices, and to the coffee farmers, as most of them are in the informal sector and have less access to OSH information and training services.</p> <p>there is a high linkage of the Projects with national OSH regulatory frameworks, mainly in Colombia, Mexico and Vietnam, and to a lesser extent in Honduras; and a high alignment with government priorities, especially in Colombia and Vietnam, and to a lesser extent in Mexico and Honduras. In addition, the evaluation positively assesses the fact that the projects have been supported by the institutions in charge of the steering role of the coffee chain in the countries</p> <p>Both Projects are also aligned with ILO OSH principles and standards, with the Strategic Policy Framework and the Programme and Budget, and, in the</p>



case of Vietnam, with the ILO DWCPs. In addition, overall strategic alignment to the UNSCDF is high, especially in Mexico and Honduras and to a lesser extent in Colombia, as is Vietnam's alignment with the UN One Strategic Plan 2017-2021

#### **Validity of design**

In both projects, the design is appropriate because: (i) the specific objectives complement each other and their achievement contributes to the overall objective; (ii) there is coherence between objectives, outputs and outcomes; (iii) they adequately combine strategic activities at the national level with policies and implementation at the local level; and (iv) the objectives, intervention models and strategies are in line with the VZF model.

The indicators of both projects adequately reflect what is to be achieved, correspond to the VZF indicators, and, in the case of the Latin America project, the proposed goals are reasonable and feasible to achieve during the implementation period. However, there are weaknesses in the design of the Latin America Project, which does not identify the risks it could face during its implementation; the spaces for interaction with similar projects of the ILO, of other institutions of the UNS or of international cooperation; and the sustainability strategy

Both projects have incorporated, in their design, the needs and particularities of the territories in the activities developed, as well as the participation of actors of the coffee chain located in the main producing areas/regions of each country. The evaluation values this approach to territorial heterogeneity, as the characteristics and dynamics of the territories are factors that explain the agricultural productive performance and the behaviour of the labour market.

#### **Effectiveness**

The evaluation positively assesses the different achievements in the implementation of both Projects, which can be grouped into the following categories, which respond to the products and strategies foreseen in their designs: (i) generation of information and knowledge; (ii) capacity building of institutions; (iii) sensitisation and awareness creation among coffee farmers on the importance of OSH; (iv) promotion of social dialogue; (v) positioning of the OSH issue in the coffee chain at global and regional level; and (vi) training and assistance to the final beneficiary population of the Projects.



**VZF projects are gender-sensitive and seek to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all their activities, although they are not solely gender-focused and do not claim to be gender-transformative.**

The evaluation positively assesses that the incorporation of the gender approach in the Projects has taken place mainly in three ways: in the studies carried out, in the training activities, and in the alliances with representative women's organisations.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the projects has been the implementation of the collective action approach of the VZF, which is manifested in the active participation of various institutions during its implementation, both from the State as well as organisations of producers and the coffee chain, employers' organisations and academia. In Colombia, the participation of the Ministry of Labour, the FNC, ANDI, the Colombian Security Council, CRECE, and universities stands out; in Mexico, the STPS, SADER, IMSS, AMECAFE, ANICAFE, CONCAMIN; in Honduras, IHCAHE and COHEP; and in Vietnam VCCI, MARD, MOLISA, VCA, GCP. This participation has been mainly in the elaboration of studies and in the training of farms through demonstration pilots.

However, in the Latin America project, the evaluation found that there was a lack of greater participation of coffee trade unions, especially in Mexico, because they are few and/or not very organised, as well as of MNEs, due to the fact that the ILO is not used to working with this type of organisations and/or that there was a lack of time, resources and other strategies to approach MNEs. Meanwhile, in the Vietnam project, no work has yet been done to strengthen the Department of Labour Safety in labour inspection, nor have trade unions been involved, because the project focuses more on the informal sector, where they are almost non-existent. In contrast, and unlike the project in Latin America, the MNEs have played an important role as partners and beneficiaries of the project

The response of both projects to COVID-19 has been timely, flexible and relevant to the needs of national constituents. Studies on COVID-19 and OSH in the coffee chain (in Colombia) and prevention and mitigation guides and protocols aimed at different links in the coffee chain were developed; these tools were incorporated into their training processes and training courses; and audio-visual material was produced and public awareness campaigns were carried out on how to mitigate COVID-19 risks and on the importance of prevention. On the other hand, although the pandemic has caused delays in the implementation of the Project in Latin America, it also helped the



Project to position OSH in the national agendas and contributed to give more importance to different elements linked to OSH management, such as occupational health surveillance and diseases related to psycho-social risk factors such as confinement.

#### **Efficiency**

The small number of people in the technical team of the project in Latin America does not correspond to the large number of strategies and products contemplated and the number of actors, partners and stakeholders involved in their implementation; on the other hand, in the Vietnam project, the number of staff to implement and monitor the project is adequate. It is positive that, in both projects, the technical teams have actively participated in the coordination mechanisms between partners, which has been useful to create synergies between the different actors in the supply chain and to reach more workers in the coffee sector. On the other hand, a weakness is that the projects in Latin America and Vietnam did not have defined spaces for interaction and communications and coordination between the two were sporadic.

The technical team of the Project in Latin America appreciates the support received from the VZF Secretariat at Headquarters, especially at the programmatic level, providing guidelines on the intervention framework and indicators of the Project and ensuring its alignment with the ILO's Flagship Programme Safety + Health for All. It also values the technical support received from the specialists of the ILO LABADMIN/OSH Branch, reviewing the studies developed by the Project, providing strategies and tools to improve the effectiveness of the intervention, and sharing experiences from other countries. Meanwhile, in the Vietnam Project, the technical team mainly values the PAC as a mechanism to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue on OSH in the coffee sub-sector and to discuss the Project's implementation strategies; pending its use as a space for dialogue on policies, regulations or to promote an OSH enabling environment.

#### **Orientation towards impact and sustainability**

Through studies, training and awareness raising actions, the Projects have contributed to: (i) increase stakeholders' knowledge on economic, social and environmental standards, management and OSH practices for the agricultural sector and the coffee chain ; (ii) foster an OSH culture in the coffee chain, generate greater awareness on prevention and protection of occupational accidents and diseases ; and (iii) strengthen the institutionalism of the actors, in terms of discourse on OSH but above all in

the establishment of alliances and commitments with other institutions linked to the coffee sector, and in the consolidation of a stronger presence in the discussion on strategic issues of the coffee chain.

**The Project in Latin America has favoured the sustainability of the intervention, bringing together public and private institutions related to the chain to work towards a common goal, but mainly achieving that institutions that had an active participation in the training offer, adopt the OSH theme in their training programs; on this last point, the replication of the virtual platforms and training programmes will depend on the operational and financial capacity of the institutions to continue the activities developed**

**For the Vietnam Project, the evaluation considers very positive the inclusion of OSH chapters in the NSC for Robusta coffee cultivation, which is institutionalised in the national agricultural extension system; that agricultural extension technicians will assume the role of promoting OSH in the coffee sector and that they have their own human and financial resources for this; and that OSH is integrated in the programmes of coffee sustainability initiatives (such as the GCP) and also in the OSH training material of the MARD and of private companies in their supply chains.**

**The Projects have had some impact (or are likely to have some impact) on the improvement of national legal and regulatory frameworks, on the enforcement of regulations and/or on the design and/or implementation of national public policies/programmes/strategies to promote OSH in the supply chains of coffee workers, mainly in Colombia.**

In the Latin America Project, as recorded in the farms visited during the evaluation, the main effects of the intervention in terms of reducing exposure to OSH risks in the workplace are: (i) workers are more aware of the importance of teamwork; (ii) the farms have implemented ergonomic measures for workers' heavy loads; (iii) workers are using PPE as it should be and although they have basic equipment, this is being adjusted according to the type of activity the worker performs and the direction in which they are most exposed ; (iv) regular preventive maintenance is carried out on machinery and tools; and (v) the farms have developed protocols for incidents.

In the Vietnam Project, according to the visits made to the farms as part of the assessment, new OSH practices and improved working conditions in the supply chain are also observed as a result of the training received: (i) farmers

have PPE to protect themselves; (ii) farmers take breaks and drink water to avoid exhaustion and dehydration; (iii) farmers apply sliding motion to move agricultural products while working on a slope; (iv) working height has been adjusted to elbow level; and (v) loads have been divided into smaller units. A determining factor for the sustainability of the projects is that the actors involved continue with social dialogue and collaborative work, which in turn depends, to a large extent, on the development of the institutional framework of the coffee sector. In this regard, the evaluation considers that Colombia, Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, Honduras have an advantage over Mexico.

In Latin America, it has contributed to the development of new projects, which are based on the results of the Coffee Project and the tools and methodologies developed: (i) in 2021 the VZF initiated a project in Mexico in the chilli and tomato chains, funded by USDOL ; (ii) in October 2022 a project on OSH in coffee, "Improving safety and health in the global coffee supply chain", funded by the EC, was initiated, through which VZF seeks to consolidate learnings from country projects and scale lessons globally; and (iii) in Colombia, a Ministry of Labour project was initiated targeting the coffee sector and others in the agricultural sector such as fisheries, bananas and palm. Other sectors where interventions similar to those of the Latin America and Vietnam projects could be implemented include floriculture, sugar cane and fruits in Colombia, as well as tea in Vietnam.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### Main recommendations

#### For improving design of new projects

**R1.** Explicitly incorporate the following elements: risk factors; mechanisms for the implementation of the collective action approach; spaces for interaction with similar projects of the ILO, other UN system institutions or international cooperation; sustainability strategy. Likewise, the participation of the constituents in the design process should be evidenced; the relationship between project objectives, outcomes and activities should be adequately dimensioned in relation to the number of project team members; the gender perspective should be more focused on the different links in the coffee value chain and gender indicators in the chain should be strengthened in order to have more comprehensive interventions; indicators should be proposed to measure the effectiveness of the mechanisms planned to raise awareness of the importance of or to position the OSH issue in the GSCs.

**R2.** Consider intersectional and complementary approaches to address more comprehensively the structural deficits and barriers faced by





agricultural workers and producers in adopting safe and healthy workplace practices and put forward value propositions for all actors in the supply chain, including MNEs, workers' organisations and labour inspection or occupational risk prevention directorates, who have had little involvement in the projects evaluated; attract new partners from the private sector and civil society to provide financial and political support.

#### **To strength sustainability of results**

**R3.** In terms of capacity building through training courses or workshops: to achieve greater coverage, in addition to maintaining the strategy of training trainers add other strategies such as dissemination in schools to raise awareness among students about the importance of safety and protection of workers, as well as the establishment of partnerships with more universities to incorporate OSH in their curricula.

**R4.** For interventions with farm owners, managers and/or workers: in the content of the training courses or workshops, incorporate more real examples of farms in the country, show good practices from farms in other countries and how to apply them on their own farms, and include audiovisual material in awareness-raising and sensitisation kits delivered to the farms about what can happen on their farms if they do not give due importance to safe, healthy and sustainable working conditions. Likewise, identify and establish alliances with school-farms, so that they in turn can train other farms; complement the training with personalised assistance and accompaniment in situ on the farms themselves; and massify on the ground, also taking into account the heterogeneity of farms

#### **To enhance knowledge management and learning**

**R5.** Regarding generation of information and knowledge through studies/research/publications: carry out more quantitative studies, with probabilistic samples of the population; carry out studies on topics that have not yet been worked on, such as the characterisation of the migrant population working in coffee harvesting or the impact of climate change on OSH; complement the application of quantitative research techniques with qualitative techniques, which allow characterising the problems faced by women in terms of OSH; improve the dissemination strategy of the studies, identifying target audiences, type of format and content to be disseminated for each type of audience; and carry out advocacy actions to ensure that the reports/studies produced and presented to formal bodies (Commissions Committees) are used as inputs for the discussion of public policies and the design of programmes/projects.

**R6.** Collect and systematise information and evidence on good practices on plantations and farms as a result of their participation in the Projects, and disseminate it to employers and workers, to serve as a basis for evidence-based policy-making.

**Specific recommendations to country offices**

**R7.** In Mexico and Colombia, in terms of social protection for coffee farm workers, given that there is no specific health and accident insurance for farm workers, develop alternatives to promote the affiliation of these workers to social security and protection systems.

**R8.** Specific recommendations for Vietnam for the remaining 6 months of the project are: develop an exit strategy or sustainability plan for the Project; strengthen agricultural extension workers to provide OSH training by adopting the WIND methodology; use the PAC as a space for dialogue on policies, regulations or to promote an enabling environment for OSH; discuss with MOLISA and the Labour Inspectorate the feasibility of institutionalising the tool "Reporting, Recording and Notification of Occupational Accidents and diseases"; review the current OSH Law, identify what specific needs of the coffee chain are reflected in the Law and whether the provisions of the occupational accidents and diseases insurance scheme could be extended to informal agricultural workers; and disseminate the findings of the study "Coffee farmers' access to social protection and occupational health services" and its recommendations on how to extend social protection to informal workers in the sub-sector to the institutions responsible for policy formulation and/or legislation in the country.

**Main lessons learned and good practices**

**LL.1.** Virtual training and communication have made it easier to establish contact with new individual and/or institutional actors because it is quicker and easier; it is a form of communication that came almost forced by the circumstances of the pandemic and is apparently here to stay for a long time. However, it must be considered that connectivity is not the same in all places, which can make virtual communication difficult

**LL.2.** The institutionalisation of some achievements of the Projects, such as the improvement of national legal and regulatory frameworks, in the enforcement of regulations and/or in the design and/or implementation of national public policies/programmes/strategies to promote OSH in the supply chains of workers in the coffee sector, implied not only having generated links with formal bodies (Commissions, Committees) but mainly advocacy and follow-up actions to ensure that the reports/studies prepared

and presented in these bodies are used as inputs for the discussion of public policies and the design of programmes/projects.

**LL.3.** Implementing the collective action approach in agriculture requires developing effective strategies to gather the voices of the different actors in the chain. This is a particularly sensitive issue in agriculture in developing countries, where small farmers and agricultural workers do not have mechanisms for their demands to be considered in public policies.

**LL.4.** Factors beyond the scope of project interventions that may limit their ability to achieve their objectives include: structural barriers to rural and agricultural development; underdeveloped rural labour markets; insufficient youth labour force; reduced organisational capacity and agency of rural workers; and structural limitations for coffee farm workers to access social protection.

**LL.5.** It has been difficult to translate MNE collaboration opportunities into concrete plans, due to different institutional configurations and decision-making structures. This applies mainly to the project in Latin America, as Nestlé has been involved in Vietnam to improve OSH and social protection for coffee farmers.

**GP.1.** In Latin America, VZF's intervention in coffee GSCs sought to build on what had been achieved in the framework of a previous project carried out in Colombia on expanding the knowledge base on safety and health in GSCs, including coffee. In addition, the projects in Latin America and Vietnam were based on a participatory diagnosis among the different actors in the chain where the OSH vulnerability profiles of workers were identified and the institutional framework linked to the chain and OSH was analysed.

**GP.2.** The projects in Latin America and Vietnam were successful in identifying and convening a range of public and private actors from government, employers' and workers' organisations, academia, women's organisations and other international organisations in the different activities developed. This has been valued by stakeholders as an effective mechanism for identifying and defining objectives and activities to be prioritised

**GP.3.** The capacity of the Latin America and Vietnam Projects to respond quickly and in a timely manner to the demands of national constituents during the pandemic. The Latin America Project developed a set of tools that explain, in a clear and simple way, what COVID-19 is and strategies to mitigate its impact. These tools were not only highly appreciated by national constituents, but also became a reference point for the response to COVID-19 in the agricultural sector and in the coffee sub-sector. In addition, the

project shared these tools with other agricultural value chains and countries in the region.

**GP.4.** The Latin America Project was the first of the VZF projects to conduct a study on women's OSH conditions in agriculture. The "Profile of women coffee producers" studies in both Mexico and Colombia provided information on the conditions and needs experienced by women coffee workers in different links and highlighted the importance of developing gender-sensitive interventions to address these specific conditions. These studies have helped to make women's participation in the coffee chain more visible

**GP.5.** To position the issue and generate knowledge globally, the Project in Latin America compiled all the guidelines, protocols, case studies and methodologies validated in various interventions in Mexico, Colombia and Honduras, and designed and published the first OSH toolkit for the global coffee chain. Almost 60% of the knowledge products developed by the Project were translated into English; and around 95% of the knowledge products included in the toolkit developed by the VZF Secretariat for coffee have been produced by the Project. This toolkit was sent to all Project partners in the three countries and regional and global organisations, constituting more than 500 actors in the global coffee chain. Notably, the ILO Regional Office for Latin America recognised the toolkit as the best innovative intervention of the 2020-2021 biennium.

**GP.6.** In the Vietnam Project, the WIND methodology has been widely shared among social partners, including agricultural extension technicians, industries, MNEs, who provided farmers with a replication of the OSH sessions, and a network of trainers has been established to implement OSH knowledge and adoption, including small groups of WIND farmer volunteers.

**GP.7.** In the Latin America Project, the alliance between the ILO and some universities in Colombia to incorporate part of the content of ILO courses and tools in their curricula at undergraduate, specialization and master's level (on OSH hazards, OSH management and quality and integrated management) generated benefits for both parties, as it allows the ILO to reach more people with training activities, while the universities gain in positioning and credibility with their students by having a partner of the magnitude of the ILO. Another experience of joint work that benefited both parties was the project "Addressing child labour in the coffee supply chain" in Honduras.