



## Filling data and knowledge gaps on OSH in GSC to strengthen the model of shared responsibility (GLO/19/07/EUR): Final Internal Evaluation

### QUICK FACTS

**Countries:** Vision Zero Fund Secretariat (ILO, Geneva)

**Evaluation date:** 22 February 2022

**Evaluation type:** Project

**Evaluation timing:** Final

**Administrative Office:** LABADMIN/OSH

**Technical Office:** LABADMIN/OSH

**Evaluation manager:** Not Applicable

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**DC Symbol:** GLO/19/07/EUR

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**Key Words:** Global supply chains, Occupational Safety and Health, Research, OSH Data and Knowledge

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

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

The PROJECT was embedded in Vision Zero Fund (VZF) which aims to prevent work-related deaths, injuries and diseases in sectors operating in or aspiring to join global supply chains (GSC). The VZF is managed and implemented by the International Labour Office (ILO) and is part of the ILO's Flagship Programme: SAFETY + HEALTH FOR ALL. At the time of the evaluation, VZF had 9 projects in 7 countries: Colombia, Ethiopia, Honduras, Madagascar, Mexico, Myanmar, and Vietnam, and covers three supply chains: garment /textiles, agriculture, and construction. The PROJECT's **objective** was to produce research to generate knowledge and data to contribute to the following Vision Zero Fund's strategic outcomes:

- Strengthened global, regional, and national enabling environments for the promotion of safe and healthy working conditions in targeted GSCs.
- Improved legal and policy frameworks to promote and enforce OSH protection, prevention, and compensation in targeted GSC.
- Improved application of OSH prevention, protection and compensation mechanisms for women and men working in targeted GSCs.

### Present situation of the project

This evaluation took place prior to the completion of the project which started in December 2019 and ended in January 2022

### Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The **purpose of the internal evaluation** was accountability, learning, planning, and building knowledge. The scope of the evaluation was to assess the work carried out by the PROJECT at global level, but it also included a review of some work

	<p>conducted at country level within the framework of the PROJECT. The clients of the evaluation were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project's donor (European Commission (EU) DG Employment)</li> <li>• VZF Secretariat and country projects teams</li> <li>• The VZF global advisory and steering committee members</li> <li>• ILO LABADMIN/OSH Branch, including ILO Flagship Programme Safety+Health For All</li> <li>• The ILO evaluation office (EVAL)</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology of evaluation</b>	<p>The evaluation used mixed methods to estimate changes and attribution at each stage in the programme logic. It also combined data gathering and interpretation by programme staff with external review, and it built on earlier internal or external reviews. In addition, the following mix of complementary methods were considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conceptualisation of the PROJECT's theory of change, mechanisms, and contexts</li> <li>- Interviews with ILO staff</li> <li>- Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in selected countries to discuss objectives, challenges, and achievements</li> <li>- Analysis of reports and documentation, including the web page of the project (<a href="http://www.ilo.org/vzf/research">www.ilo.org/vzf/research</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>MAIN FINDINGS &amp; CONCLUSIONS</b>	<p>Concerning its <b>RELEVANCE</b>, the evaluation noted that the PROJECT benefitted from being embedded into the broader VZF initiative and being able to work through its field structures. This was very important because it allowed the PROJECT to have coverage that it would have not have otherwise. This also</p>

provided the opportunity to build upon the relationships that the VZF field team had developed with ILO constituents and other stakeholders. This was particularly positive when it came to establishing cooperation with ILO tripartite constituents at national level.

Among the several examples of its relevance, the PROJECT contributed to the WHO/ILO Joint Estimates of the Work-related Burden of Disease and Injury, 2000–2016. The report details the impact of selected 19 occupational risk factors to human health through the specific health outcomes and offers various examples of policies and actions for prevention. These estimates provide a valuable basis for formulating, prioritizing, planning, costing, implementing, and evaluating effective policies and actions to mitigate the work-related burden of disease and injury, at country, regional and global levels, across sectors.

The PROJECT's work on COVID-19 during the pandemic highlighted the paramount importance of having OSH systems in place during a public health crisis. This confirmed the relevance of this topic as a disruptive force in GSCs with potential implications for OSH. Furthermore, it also reinforced the notion that "climate change" is a disruptive force in GSCs with potential implications for OSH.

With regards to **COHERENCE**, the evaluation confirmed that the design of the PROJECT's log frame took into account VZF log frame, as well as the Flagship programme. The PROJECT's indicators and outcomes were aligned with those of VZF and flagship programme.

Gender issues were integrated in the development of the research concept notes and in the conceptualisation of the research methodologies. The evaluation noted that specific research questions focused on gender issues in the

methodologies for the research on climate change, COVID-19 and for the synthesis reviews. It was also noted that the PROJECT faced challenges when it came to implementing the research methodology for the research on COVID-19. As for the research on climate change, the PROJECT made an effort to cover all available literature with reference to gender issues. As for the synthesis reviews, these were inevitably limited to knowledge available in the assessments already conducted. However, the PROJECT made efforts to extract everything available related to gender issues and the new reviews showed the gaps in VZF assessments at country level.

Issues related to disabilities were not considered in the design of the PROJECT, thus were less prominent during the implementation. This is something that should be kept in mind in future ILO project designs. However, the evaluation noted that the issue of disabilities was considered in the literature review on climate change. A section on disabilities was included in the report of findings with some evidence on workers with disabilities being more at risk to suffer health consequences.

With regards to **EFFECTIVENESS**, it was highlighted that the PROJECT contributed to the objectives of the ILO Flagship Programme (Safety + Health for All) and the LABADMIN/OSH branch activities by providing fresh data and information that potentially could serve as evidence upon which effective legislation, policies and interventions could be designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

The PROJECT learned a lot during the production of the synthesis review on drivers and constraints for OSH in agricultural and garment global supply chains, which required the analysis of several country level assessments on these two sectors. The synthesis reviews carried out by the PROJECT helped identify areas where improvement is possible for implementation in VZF countries of the methodology for the

assessment of drivers and constraints for OSH developed by previous EC funded Project.

Regarding **EFFICIENCY**, it was highlighted the excellent work done by the coordinator of the PROJECT. Given the nature of the PROJECT, there was a heavy reliance on ILO regular staff, in particular technical specialists, to ensure technical review and quality of the products. Nonetheless, overall, LABADMIN/OSH Branch leadership was considered very efficient on engaging its Technical Specialists on collaborating with the PROJECT.

Another aspect that was highlighted with regards to efficiency of the PROJECT was with regards to the establishment of an internal two-way information flow. The evaluation noted that having the PROJECT embedded within the LABADMIN/OSH Branch, also guaranteed that PROJECT products were made accessible to all ILO staff in general, but specifically to ILO OSH Specialists, both in headquarters and in the field.

Regarding **IMPACT / SUSTAINABILITY**, the evaluation noted that this will very much depend on whether the PROJECT's products and knowledge are used and whether its finding become references for future work on OSH research. In this regard, communication, dissemination, and promotion of the PROJECT's findings is a key element for its meaningful impact.

The evaluation noted that the PROJECT contributed to the creation of a learning platform with VZF funding, into which the PROJECT products and learnings are showcased. This provides easy access to knowledge products generated by the PROJECT. The learning platform presents information and knowledge in an orderly manner, catalogued in different categories, such as assessment reports, research papers, fact sheets, and tools + filters by Countries, sectors and topics. In this regard, it was noted that the PROJECT's findings have been used at national



level in VZF project countries. In addition, it can also be argued that knowledge and information derived of the PROJECT's activities and products can be easily adapted and transformed into global tools that can be used by ILO constituents.

With regards to the WHO/ILO Joint Estimates of the Work-related Burden of Disease and Injury, 2000–2016 (produced with the support of the PROJECT), there is a lot of potential for this information to be used by policy makers around the world. One example of this was how a committee of experts in Japan - regarding the prevention of long working hours and associated health problems including cardiovascular diseases and mental health outcomes- used the estimated to design new regulation and policy development. This is an example of how this kind of information can be key for ILO member States to adjust and review national regulation framework and policies, using data and scientific evidence.

The evaluation also noted that the “Brief Guides for employers and workers on reporting, recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases”, produced under the PROJECT framework, have already been “actionable” as these instruments have been successfully tested at country level. This is the case of Honduras, where several VZF activities have been conducted. The PROJECT worked jointly efforts COHEP (national Honduran employers’ organization) to adapt the Guides for the national context. With the support of the PROJECT, COHEP has been training OSH technicians from its member associations (initially with the coffee sector) to help implement the Guides.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### Main findings & Conclusions

The ILO needs to:

1. Strengthen the LABADMIN/OSH Branch's capacity with regards to data / statistics collection and research production;
2. Do more on capacity building of governments, employers' and workers' organizations to collect data with a view to reducing knowledge gaps on OSH;
3. Nurture an evidence-based approach to policy design and advocacy, and technical cooperation on OSH;
4. Focus future ILO research and data projects on collecting more quantitative data, as opposed to only qualitative information;
5. Adapt to national level the Workers' and Employers' Guides on "Reporting, Recording and Notification of Occupational Accidents and Diseases" in other countries;
6. Continue to foster collaboration between ILO STATS and LABADMIN/OSH, and promote more collaboration between LABADMIN/OSH with the ILO's SECTOR and Better Work;
7. Needs to develop tools and methodologies to better assess impact of research projects;
8. Do more to explain the existing linkages between OSH and climate change to generate interest to promote "actionable knowledge" and direct links to GSC.

### Main lessons learned and good practices

**Making research "actionable" through factoring-in tripartism.** Research within the ILO scope can be a bit different than doing research in a purely academic environment. Tripartism can potentially add positively to the quality and substance of knowledge and information generated through research, but it also implies that more time must be allocated to properly engage constituents. Future ILO research projects should take this into account. This implies allocating sufficient time and



resources to conduct proper tripartite consultations from the outset of the project (design phase), to guarantee buy-in of the project's objectives by constituents.

**Creating synergies among consecutive projects and building on previous findings.** The process which lead to the two “synthesis and systematic reviews of the drivers and constraints for OSH improvements in selected GSCs” showcased, in a very clear manner, a constructive and practical way in which consecutive smaller projects can create positive synergies and build on results and findings, as a good way to produce “global” products from which the broader ILO community can benefit.

**Incorporating the ILO Department of Statistics on research and data projects.** The evaluation noted the positive involvement of the ILO Department of Statistics during the design phase of the PROJECT. This provided for efficient collaboration among the Department and the PROJECT from the outset of implementation. The PROJECT highlighted the importance of producing research through factual information and data, as a fundamental basis to promote informed discussions that are conducive to ILO policy guidance and ILO technical cooperation activities. Lack of factual information may produce ill-informed discussions that in turn can produce deficient policies. This is relevant not only at national level discussions, but also at global level, where the ILO is expected to lead international efforts on labour and OSH policy.

**Fostering clusters of different projects on the same topic (learning from others).** The PROJECT highlighted the positive synergy generated among the different VZF projects. For example, methodologies and products developed in Colombia and Honduras are planned to be transferred to Mexico in collaboration with ILO's constituents, and to other countries, also beyond the VZF. VZF Staff, provided support for a

successful implementation of the PROJECT, taking advantage not only of the experience generated by other VZF projects, but also of the good relationships established with ILO constituents at country level.

**Finding talent and expertise on OSH.** The issue of finding competent external talent was brought up several times during the evaluation. It was pointed out that the PROJECT sometimes struggled to find international experts on OSH and the desirability of the ILO developing a database of OSH professionals and institutions that could support future work done in this area (consultants' roster). This was particularly challenging when conducting research on climate change and OSH.