

# Project Brief



International  
Labour  
Organization

## Improving occupational safety and health systems in the CIS countries

### Results

- World OSH Day – 28 April – is marked in all CIS countries to raise awareness and build safety culture
- National OSH profiles were prepared in seven countries; regional OSH profiles published in four Russian regions
- GOST 12.0.230-2007 (ILO–OSH 2001) is introduced in over 50 enterprises in North-West Russia, as well as at pilot enterprises in Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan
- Employers' organizations in Armenia and Kazakhstan have started to develop capacity to provide OSH services to their members
- Training in modern risk assessment organised with Armenian, Kazakh, Ukrainian employers' organization; tripartite training held in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan
- OSH networks expand the knowledge and experience to all CIS countries



Photo: ILO

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### Contact

#### **ILO Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

Petrovka Street, 15, office 23  
107031, Moscow, Russia  
tel.: +7 495 933 08 10  
fax: +7 495 933 08 20

*Wiking Husberg*, Senior OSH Specialist  
E-mail: husberg@ilo.org

*Roman Litvyakov*, Regional OSH Coordinator  
E-mail: litvyakov@ilo.org

*Oxana Gerasimova*, Project Assistant for Occupational Safety and Health  
E-mail: gerasimova@ilo.org

#### **Project on Improving OSH System in North-West Russia:**

*Marat Rudakov*, Programme Assistant  
E-mail: rudakov@ilo.org

**Project on OSH and Safety Representatives**  
*Bilal Yunusov*, Project Coordinator (Uzbekistan)  
E-mail: uzbekosh@ilo.org

**This brief describes several projects that are implemented in the CIS region and are aimed at improving occupational safety and health systems in these countries.**

### Background

Working conditions in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Russia, have been a major concern over the past two decades. More than 8,500 fatal accidents per year are reported in the CIS countries. The life expectancy of, especially, the male population has fallen drastically in the last ten years. In Russia, it is now less than 60 years.

The underreporting of accidents is huge, especially among small and medium-size enterprises and in the informal economy. The ILO estimates that the real figures are substantially higher. The situation is further aggravated in the countries that have retained the outdated system of compensation

**ILO estimates that there are 2.3 million work-related fatalities per year worldwide, and about 337 million of non-fatal accidents. The global economic costs of work-related accidents and diseases represent 4% of the global gross domestic product (GDP), which is more than 20 times that of official development assistance. Beyond the economic issues we have a moral obligation: the human costs are far beyond acceptable.**



Photo: ILO

for work in hazardous working conditions ("hazard pay"), which is an ineffective use of money for the employer, and a loss of health for the workers. Hazard pay demotivates both worker and employer side to improve working conditions.

However, a new positive trend is that most countries in the region have analysed their national OSH systems and prepared programmes for improvement. At enterprises, the understanding that **Safe work is good business** is gaining ground.

### OSH challenges in the CIS countries

There are three major challenges in implementing this approach in the CIS countries. They are:

- upgrading and re-creation of national occupational safety and health (OSH) systems, based on the ILO Convention No. 187 (2006), including legislation, its implementation, information and training, inspection and monitoring;
- introduction at enterprise level of modern OSH management systems, based on ILO-OSH 2001 (GOST 12.0.230-2007);
- re-establishing and modernising occupational accident and disease insurance systems based on a preventive and advisory approach (to replace the outdated practice of “hazard pay”).



The approach for each country is based on the evaluation of the national context, e.g. awareness level, existing OSH legislation, OSH capacity, and development of social dialogue. Experience in the CIS countries have shown that several stages are necessary for the effective internalisation of an OSH approach that substantially differs from the previous concept.

The main element of OSH management system is risk assessment, aimed at preventive measures and improvement of working conditions.

## OSH tools

**ILO Convention No. 187** draws up the process of tripartite development

## ILO Conventions and Guidelines

Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)

Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)

Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)

Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)

Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)

ILO-OSH 2001 identical with GOST 12.0.230-2007

Other sector and hazard related Conventions, see

<http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

of the national OSH system. This includes preparation of OSH profiles and national OSH programmes. Capacity building and training need to go in parallel with the actual introduction and application process, such as real introduction of OSH management system in selected enterprises, development of corresponding OSH legislation or adaptation and development of training material by national trainers.



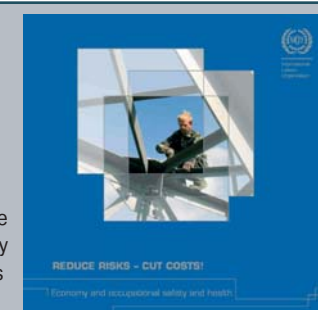
## Prevent and save money!

Gennady, chief safety engineer at a pulp-and-paper mill works for one of the pilot enterprises selected under an ILO project funded by Finland to improve occupational safety and health (OSH) systems in North-West Russia. In 2007 the pilots tested a new ILO methodology for recording and reporting the economic costs of occupational accidents.

Thanks to the new methodology, the Russian OSH experts realized that the real cost of accidents was in some cases four to five times higher than they previously thought. “We always thought about accident costs only in terms of equipment damage and medical expenditures for injured workers.

We have never considered indirect costs related to the interruption of the work process, investigation costs, additional measures to prevent similar accidents in future etc. Moreover, enterprises with high accident rate make higher payments to the Social Insurance Fund. When we summed up all our losses, we were literally shocked”, says Gennady. The pilot group applied the new methodology to 58 occupational accidents revealing considerable costs up to 700,000 roubles (US\$ 28,000) in 33 cases.

**Prevention is an investment in the quality of workers’ lives. But it is an investment with an economic payoff: healthy workers ensure higher productivity; “safety pays” is not only a slogan, it is a fact!**



The ILO Subregional Office has translated and published around 30,000 pages of Russian language OSH materials (ILO Encyclopaedia, Codes of Practice, Training Manuals, Guidelines, posters and videoclips). This material is available on the Academy of Safework website([www.safework.ru](http://www.safework.ru)) and on CDs.



Promoting OSH management systems also implies the use of other tools related to conditions of employment, occupational accident insurance, HIV/AIDS, safety of migrant workers and social dialogue.

## Partners

The ILO Subregional OSH Team works with a network of labour inspectors, OSH specialists, the ILO/CIS information and training centres, and social partners in the region. The national partners, in their turn, have their own broad contact network.

The development of the national OSH system implies active work with the Ministries of Labour and Labour Inspections.

Workers’ and employers’ organisations and selected enterprises are the main partners in the introduction of OSH management systems at enterprise level.

Ministries of Agriculture and social partners are essential in improving living and working conditions in the informal rural economy.