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**SAFETY
+ HEALTH
FOR ALL**

A photograph of three men in business suits shaking hands. The man on the left is Black and wearing glasses. The man in the center is Asian and wearing glasses. The man on the right is white with a beard. They are all smiling. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is partially covered by a dark blue diagonal overlay.

► **Consolidation of regulatory frameworks for occupational safety and health in Madagascar: An inclusive approach**

**VISION
ZERO
FUND**

► Summary

Country: Madagascar

Project name: Improving health and safety at work in Madagascar's value chains - Vision Zero Fund (VZF)

About the project

The project aimed to reduce fatalities, occupational accidents, and diseases across Madagascar's value chains. Its core focus was to promote a culture of prevention, enhance company policies and practices, and strengthen the regulatory and institutional framework for occupational safety and health (OSH). This initiative was part of a broader strategy that initially supported the agricultural sector – specifically the lychee supply chain - before expanding to the textile and construction sectors.

The project was implemented under the ILO's [Safety and Health for All Flagship Programme](#) in Madagascar with joint funding from the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the French Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Introduction

Occupational safety and health in Madagascar's textile sector face persistent challenges. At the national level, the absence of clear legal frameworks has hindered the implementation of effective preventive measures to ensure safe and healthy working conditions. Locally, workers – particularly those in small and medium-sized enterprises, the informal economy and remote areas, often operate in precarious conditions where risks are magnified. In this context, it is crucial to strengthen national regulatory and policy frameworks while proactively anticipating potential challenges in implementing new regulations at the local level.

To avoid the inefficiencies of a top-down reform approach, which often fails to raise awareness, foster ownership, or address local constraints, the project adopted a participatory approach. This approach allowed all stakeholders to actively contribute to the changes. By empowering stakeholders with knowledge of international labour standards (ILS), encouraging dialogue, and collaboratively developing reforms, the project facilitated the adoption of key ILO conventions on occupational safety and health: Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health (1981) and Convention No. 187 on the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health (2006). The project also

supported the ratification of Convention No. 161 on Occupational Health Services (1985).

Summary of results

The momentum generated by the project resulted in the adoption of ILO Conventions 155, 161, and 187. Additionally, the project supported the reform of the Labour Code, which now includes a dedicated chapter on OSH. The project proactively contributed to the development of five specific implementing decrees on OSH, responding to a recommendation from social partners to address legal gaps in the previous version of the Code.

The ILO's approach fostered the active involvement of key stakeholders at both national and local levels. The strengthening of national OSH policies and regulatory frameworks has benefited from inclusive decision-making. Tripartite dialogue has been crucial in managing the varying interests and perspectives of government, employers, and workers, as well as balancing the diverse expectations of ministries of health, labour, and justice.

► Description

Context

Studies on the drivers and constraints for improving OSH in the lychee and textile sectors served as the foundation for consultations and the drafting of a standards review. A complementary study of the construction sector further reinforced recommendations for enhancing current policies and standards.

In 2020, the ILO conducted a comprehensive assessment of OSH standards in Madagascar, revealing significant gaps between Malagasy legislation and the international standards outlined in ILO Conventions C155, C161, and C187. The key findings of the study were as follows:

- **Absence of National Policies and Programs:** The lack of national policies and programs dedicated to occupational safety and health (OSH) limits the ability to define clear frameworks and develop coordinated plans to improve working conditions and protect workers from occupational hazards.
- **Outdated OSH Regulations:** The absence of specific, up-to-date OSH regulations, with references in some

cases over 50 years old, impedes effective protection of workers, especially in the context of emerging risks.

- ▶ **Insufficient Support Services:** There are no provisions for establishing an information and advisory service on workplace safety and health, hindering the gradual improvement of working conditions, particularly in small businesses and the informal economy.
- ▶ **Lack of Sector-Specific Risk Studies:** No studies have been conducted on sector-specific risks or on employers' obligations regarding training, information dissemination, and risk assessment.
- ▶ **Limited Awareness Campaigns:** There is a lack of awareness campaigns focusing on the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases. The system is primarily compensation-based, exposing workers to avoidable risks and recurrences.
- ▶ **Unimplemented OSH Management Systems:** Proposed provisions for modernizing OSH management systems remain unimplemented, creating a significant gap between theoretical frameworks and practical application.

These shortcomings were further exacerbated by a lack of human, material, and financial resources, which limited the capacity of the labour inspectorate and regulatory bodies to

effectively enforce occupational safety and health standards. Additionally, the informal and seasonal nature of many jobs, coupled with the lack of awareness of regulations among both companies and workers, as well as insufficient OSH skills among key stakeholders, deepened these challenges.

Following the normative assessment, several recommendations were made to strengthen Madagascar's legal and regulatory framework for OSH. The key proposals included ratifying the ILO's OSH framework conventions, establishing a national OSH policy, aligning national regulations with international conventions, creating an OSH database, and strengthening the institutional frameworks.

Description of the practice

To ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of OSH regulatory reforms in Madagascar, the project adopted an integrated approach focused on enhancing the quality of legislation while proactively addressing potential challenges in its application. **The approach was designed to be inclusive, participatory and holistic.**

- ▶ **Inclusive:** The project mobilized key stakeholders—including the Ministry of Labour, the National Labour Council (CNT), the Business Law Reform Commission (CRDA), the Ministries of Justice and Health, parliamentarians, senators, businesses, schools, and the media—through participatory initiatives that

Launch of the OSH national policy and program in August 18th, 2023



fostered meaningful engagement and progress. Strong government leadership played a decisive role, while the project's strategy emphasized awareness-raising, uniting representatives of the State, workers, and employers around critical OSH issues. The project also consulted the Association of People with Disabilities and integrated a gender-sensitive approach through targeted actions and indicators, such as during trainer development programmes.

- **Participatory:** The roadmap for ratifying and implementing the three ILO conventions was developed through an inclusive and participatory process. A Tripartite Committee was established to oversee its execution, ensuring consensus among stakeholders on priority actions. This Committee played a crucial role in guiding activities, building consensus and ensuring the roadmap's timely and effective implementation.

To support the ratification of Conventions C155, C161, and C187, awareness-raising campaigns were conducted. The

Ministry of Labour, Employment, and the Civil Service received logistical and technical support from the ILO, particularly in organizing national consultations and delivering training sessions on the conventions.

In 2022, the ILO hosted a business forum on decent work, drawing hundreds of participants to thematic sessions that showcased best practices for responsible, safe, and healthy supply chains. High-level speakers included the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour, and key representatives from government, businesses, trade unions, and the informal economy.

Additionally, the ILO facilitated the presentation of the three conventions to the National Labour Committee (CNT). Discussions focussed on adapting the texts to Madagascar's specific challenges, the needs of Malagasy workers and the country's socio-economic realities. Awareness-raising workshops underscored the importance of workplace prevention measures and demonstrated the feasibility of investing in occupational safety and health.

Launch of the OSH national policy and program in August 18th, 2023



The project was overseen by a Tripartite Consultative Project Committee (CCTP), which brought together key ministries involved in legal reforms. In addition to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and the Civil Service, the committee included the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Public Works, and relevant affiliated bodies, such as the National Social Security Fund. The CCTP's composition was expanded as needed to align with specific interventions. For instance, to support the integration of OSH into technical education and vocational training, the Ministry of Technical Education was included, even though it was not directly responsible for legal reforms.

Businesses were represented by the Groupement des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires (GEFP), the Syndicat des Entrepreneurs du BTP Madagascar (SEBTP), and the Economic Development Board of Madagascar (EDBM), an investment promotion agency under the Presidency of the Republic.

Trade unions participated in the CCTP through the Conférence des Travailleurs de Madagascar (CTM), the Plateforme Nationale de l'Économie Informelle SOAVA, and Randrana Sendikaly. Additionally, the Fonds Malgache de Formation Professionnelle (FMFP), a public-interest association dedicated to vocational training development, joined the Committee.

The Tripartite Project Advisory Committee (TPAC) played an integral role in steering OSH interventions, particularly in the textile and construction sectors. It also functioned as a governance hub for supply chain-related projects, including Better Work and Trade for Decent Work, ensuring alignment and coordination across initiatives promoting responsible and sustainable supply chains.

- **Holistic:** ILO-supported capacity-building, awareness-raising, and promotional sessions have equipped government institutions and OSH oversight bodies with the necessary expertise to adopt new standards and policies. From 2019 to 2021, training workshops in the Senate and National Assembly facilitated the ratification of the three conventions and contributed to the revision of the Labour Code.

“The training courses were able to get the laws passed more quickly because they enabled participants to discuss how OSH standards can be adapted to Madagascar’s specific context and actually implemented.”

Representative of the National Assembly’s Legal Affairs Committee of Madagascar

To align national legislation with the ratified Conventions, the ILO strengthened the capacities of National Assembly committees, particularly those overseeing the civil service, labour, employment, and migration. A dedicated capacity-building workshop was held in Antsirabe on 10-11 October 2019. Additionally, the ILO supported the Ministry of Labour in preparing submission dossiers, including fact sheets on the three Conventions and draft laws authorizing ratification. A presentation on the Conventions was also delivered to the Economic and Social Council of the Presidency. To enhance accessibility, copies of the texts and fact sheets were widely distributed.

The Ministry of Labour submitted the ratification bill to the National Labour Committee before it was advanced to

the Government Council. After multiple revisions, the bill was examined by the Council of Ministers, ratified by the President, and officially deposited with the ILO on 15 June 2023.

Following ratification, efforts to develop a national occupational safety and health (OSH) policy and program were launched, engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including UN agencies and financial institutions. This program has been integrated into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024-2028 priorities, ensuring long-term commitment to OSH improvements.

► Impact

The project successfully mobilized and actively engaged the government, employers, and workers in the decision-making process to strengthen Madagascar's OSH regulatory frameworks. Consultations also included journalists, the education sector, and OSH professionals, ensuring a broad and inclusive approach. This proactive tripartite collaboration led to significant achievements, most notably Madagascar's ratification in June 2023 of three key ILO conventions on occupational safety and health: Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health (1981); Convention No. 187 on the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health (2006); and Convention No. 161 on Occupational Health Services (1985). These milestones mark a crucial step toward enhancing workplace safety and health standards across the country.

The inclusive, participatory, and holistic approach to strengthening Madagascar's national regulatory frameworks for occupational health and safety has successfully raised awareness among key stakeholders about the importance of prevention and the need for proactive measures to ensure effective law enforcement.

The ratification of these three ILO Conventions serves as a crucial foundation for achieving sustainable, long-term results. By fostering stakeholder engagement and ownership, this approach enhances the prospects for a lasting impact. Ultimately, it will support the implementation of the national OSH policy, promote strategic partnerships, and drive greater stakeholder commitment to building a cohesive and effective national OSH system in Madagascar.

Other information

Project website: <https://www.ilo.org/projects-and-partnerships/projects/improving-occupational-safety-and-health-garment-and-construction-supply>



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