



International
Labour
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**SAFETY
+ HEALTH
FOR ALL**

► GEFP's OSH Competence Centre: An innovative measure on OSH by the Private Sector

**VISION
ZERO
FUND**

► Summary

Country: Madagascar

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

Presentation of 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 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

The private sector's commitment has been pivotal to the success of the ILO's interventions. From the outset of the project, a compelling case was made to employers, emphasizing the economic advantages of adopting a proactive occupational safety and health policy. This message resonated strongly with employers, facilitating their support and the implementation of the proposed actions.

The project benefited from a close and effective collaboration between the ILO and the Groupement des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires (GEFP), a member of the Groupement des Entreprises de Madagascar (GEM), which represents most of the Madagascar's free trade enterprises. The GEFP played a crucial role in raising awareness and conducting training activities.

The private sector's engagement was further strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the rollout of essential training provided by institutions such as the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the ILO through the Project.

Summary of results

This work resulted in the establishment of an OSH Sub-Committee and an OSH Competence Centre within the Groupement des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires (GEFP). The centre focuses on promoting best practices that ensure safer and healthier working environments for employees of

member companies while raising awareness among other businesses. The Competence Centre members are consulted on sectoral and national OSH initiatives, including the drafting and updating of OSH regulations and the development of the national OSH policy and program.

The GEFP has also developed and adopted an Occupational Safety and Health Charter to encourage member companies to invest in OSH programs. This initiative not only enhances safety but also elevates the international visibility of the GEFP. Within a year of its launch in February 2023, more than 50% of the Group's member companies had officially adopted the Charter.

The GEFP OSH Competence Centre has introduced "OSH Tours," where visits are conducted to advise member companies on improvements in OSH practices. These visits help spread good practices, offering guidance on risk assessment, prevention plans, the establishment of OSH committees, and more. Six companies requested and received visits as part of the project. Additionally, a WhatsApp group has been created to enable training beneficiaries to support one another, share challenges, and receive advice on raising OSH awareness among their teams.

The interventions and training have significantly enhanced the skills of managers and employees within Madagascar's clothing industry and other GEFP member companies. Numerous testimonials indicate improvements in the sector's competitiveness.

To support long-term sustainability, the GEFP has embraced an inter-professional approach to promote these initiatives across other economic sectors, particularly within the Groupement des Entreprises de Madagascar.

► Description

Context

In a context in which workers express frustration over employers prioritizing value creation at the expense of their well-being, the promotion of OSH serves as a common ground between the two parties. However, assessing potential risks in the workplace—such as physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, and psychosocial hazards—remains a significant challenge for companies in the textile sector.

The primary objective of the VZF project has been to raise employers' awareness of the importance of integrating OSH into their operations, emphasizing both the economic and human benefits of such a commitment. While many large textile companies already recognize the value of adhering to OSH regulations, some still face challenges and are content with merely meeting the minimum legal requirements to

satisfy customer demands, often due to a lack of specialized expertise.

The project demonstrated to employers the added value of OSH, despite the ongoing challenges in developing clear and comprehensive OSH policies and procedures, which continue to require significant effort from companies. The initiatives aimed to foster dialogue between employers and workers, encouraging the identification of mutually beneficial solutions to create a safe and healthy working environment. At the same time, these actions contributed to optimizing economic performance by improving productivity, reducing workplace accident-related costs, and enhancing the company's reputation.

Description

The collaboration between the ILO's VZF project and the GEFP was built on a proactive, participatory approach to OSH, focused on promoting training, raising awareness, sharing best practices, and integrating OSH into organizational culture. The project benefited from the GEFP's strong governance, which provided an ideal platform for advancing OSH due to its national influence and active engagement with the government and sector stakeholders.

Launched in 2021, the initiative began with awareness-raising and capacity-building sessions for employers, including workshops on OSH and COVID-19 crisis management. This support reached 56 GEFP member companies. The sessions aimed to inform companies within the textile supply chains, including multinational corporations, about worker safety and health issues, while encouraging the continuous improvement of policies and practices. The approach also aimed to demonstrate to GEFP members that good working

conditions are directly linked to business performance, strengthening commercial relationships with buyers in a global marketplace where transparency and accountability in supply chains are increasingly vital.

These initiatives prompted the GEFP to establish an OSH Sub-Committee and an OSH Competence Centre, now consisting of six specialists responsible for OSH within their respective companies. Their primary mission is to develop support services that promote a culture of prevention while enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the GEFP member companies' production units. This approach integrates international standards with local partnerships.

The project has strengthened the GEFP's commitment by supporting the OSH Sub-Committee and the OSH Competence Centre in organizing activities that promote and sustain OSH within member companies:

- ▶ In April and May 2022, several capacity-building initiatives and workshops were conducted, covering topics such as workplace safety and health, social dialogue, prevention of violence and harassment, and productivity through 5S/Kaizen. Trainers from fifteen companies in the Analamanga and Vakinankaratra regions participated. All attendees found the training valuable and felt equipped to implement initiatives in their companies aimed at improving the employer's OSH duties and responsibilities.
- ▶ The Competence Centre (Pôle de Compétence en SST) encouraged participants to create a WhatsApp group, facilitating the sharing of best practices and solutions to challenges. This group has helped members exchange strategies to raise awareness of OSH within their teams, promoting collective responsibility. These exchanges have reinvigorated companies' OSH committees

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(CSST), allowing members to gather incident data and analyze trends to identify areas for improvement. Since 2022, Competence Centre members have also actively participated in the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, observed annually on April 28.

- ▶ A Charter for the Promotion of Occupational Safety and Health was developed with technical support from the project to enhance the GEFP's international visibility and encourage companies to invest in OSH programs. One year after its launch in February 2023, over 50% of GEFP member companies had adopted the Charter. This reflects the recognition of employers' central role in implementing workplace prevention policies and their commitment to OSH issues. The Charter is signed by company leaders or their representatives, and signatories are required to implement its provisions with support from the Competence Centre. The provisions include creating a prevention policy, conducting risk assessments, preparing a single risk assessment document, and developing a prevention plan. By signing the Charter, companies commit to being drivers of positive change in Madagascar, focusing on preserving human capital, promoting social justice, and ensuring decent work for all. The GEFP will continue to promote the Charter and encourage broader adoption.
- ▶ OSH Tours have been organized with the support of the OSH Competence Centre to help Charter signatories comply with OSH standards. These site visits provide advice on improving OSH practices, sharing good practices, and supporting the implementation of effective, sustainable OSH management systems (including risk assessments, prevention plans, and establishing and operationalizing OSH committees). The OSH Tours have also enabled host companies to define specific performance indicators to regularly monitor progress in occupational safety and health.

► Impact

The interventions implemented jointly by the ILO and GEFP have yielded significant results at various levels.

Institutionally, the project led to the establishment of new bodies within the GEFP, such as the OSH Sub-Committee and the OSH Competence Centre. Additionally, the integration of OSH into the operations of several companies highlights a growing commitment to occupational safety and health. For example, at Akanjo, the creation of a Corporate Social Responsibility department with a dedicated Health and Hygiene unit reflects a strong commitment to OSH. Through the collaborative efforts of the GEFP and the unwavering support of the Competence Centre, several member companies, particularly in the textile sector, have established safety and health committees. As a result, there has been a better understanding of the value and role of these committees. This has also led to the identification of strategies to make OSH committees more proactive and responsive, ensuring timely action. The successful outcomes achieved with the GEFP have inspired the construction sector to adopt a similar approach, with support from the ILO.

Organizationally, companies were supported in meeting OSH standards through technical assistance extended by the project. Specialists assisted in developing the OSH charter and organizing OSH Tours, further demonstrating the private sector's commitment, especially among GEFP members. These OSH Tours, led by members of the OSH Competence Centre trained by the project, provided opportunities to engage participants in defining Single Risk Assessment Documents (DUER), reinforcing the culture of health and safety at work. Additionally, the tours served as a platform for exchanging best practices and discussing solutions to challenges faced by various companies, promoting a collective and collaborative approach to OSH management.

Pôle de compétences SST du GEFP, Avril 2024



This partnership, supported by the Competence Centre, helped embed OSH expertise within companies and fostered internal ownership of identified gaps, which are often overlooked during external audits that may face resistance.

The training and support provided by the project have also contributed to the development of individual skills, particularly among members of the OSH Competence Centre. The close collaboration between the project and the GEFP enabled the Group to mobilize specialists who actively contribute to the Group's activities and assist member companies in achieving compliance. This collaborative approach has strengthened OSH competencies within GEFP companies, ensuring the sustainability of these interventions.

With technical support from the project, companies were guided in meeting OSH standards, leading to specific benefits for individual companies, such as improvements in air and water quality analysis, and the recycling of metals, plaster, and fabric waste. By enhancing the skills of managers and workers, particularly in Madagascar's garment industry

and other GEFP member companies, the interventions have contributed to increased competitiveness in the sector.

► Other information

Project website :

- [Improving Occupational Safety And Health In The Garment And Construction Supply Chains In Madagascar – A Vision Zero Fund Project – Phase II](#)

► Our Development Partners



Federal Ministry
for Labour and Social Affairs

Occupational Safety and Health and
Working Environment Branch (OSHE)



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