

VISION ZERO

Strategy and its implementation all over the world



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Foreword

The main topic of the current issue is VISION ZERO, a global prevention strategy that is easy to communicate, easy to understand and easy to implement. This brochure provides a unique overview of the status of the VISION ZERO strategy. It gives also an outlook on where the journey will lead. VISION ZERO is already being implemented in many countries and companies worldwide. Learn more about examples from Germany, Africa, Luxembourg, India, Colombia and Pakistan in this publication. Safe, socially just and at the same time sustainable supply chains are also a topic, as is the Vision Zero Fund.

VISION ZERO was the main topic of DGUV Forum 7-8/2023, the professional magazine of the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). It was published in German language only. Due to the great interest in an English edition of the Vision Zero contributions, we have translated them into English and relaunched them. The English articles are printed with the kind permission of the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV).

I would especially like to thank my colleagues Annelie Möstl, DGUV, and Anja Renner, German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Energy, Textile, Electrical and Media Products Sectors (BG ETEM), for their support in publishing this issue.

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VISION ZERO: One path – one goal

Key facts

- Vision Zero is based on the belief that every accident is preventable
- The strategy covers not only occupational health and safety but also wellbeing at work and environmental protection
- There are numerous guides, brochures, videos, and training and consulting services for companies to assist in implementing Vision Zero

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Vision Zero is an easy-to-communicate, easy-to-understand, and easy-to-implement global prevention strategy that is already being used in many companies worldwide. It is based on “7 Golden Rules” and is suitable for implementation at national, sectoral, and company level.

Developed by the International Social Security Association (ISSA) in 2017, everyone is now talking about Vision Zero. The vision of a world without accidents at work and work-related diseases is not necessarily new and has had many different names, such as Mission Zero, Zero Harm® or Total Worker Health®. Vision Zero is not intended to replace or devalue existing systems for safety and health at work but rather to complement them and give them a new impetus. Vision Zero combines the core ideas of all these initiatives under the three pillars of safety, health, and wellbeing (see Figure 1).

It is crucial that the Vision Zero approach is flexible. Depending on requirements, one of the three dimensions can be brought into focus and adapted to any conceivable work environment. The Vision Zero strategy allows every workplace, every company, and every industry in every region of the world to benefit greatly.

Vision Zero is built on the “7 Golden Rules” (see Figure 2), and it is based on the belief that all occupational accidents and diseases are preventable. The strategy is based on values – the safety, health, and wellbeing of employees should not be affected by work. On the contrary, work should rather help to improve employee’s health, as well as to strengthen their self-confidence, skills and employability. Work-related accidents, injuries, and diseases can be prevented through the anticipation of risks, proper design, planning, procedures, and practices. Here, the right preventive measures must be taken into account, and all stakeholders must be involved. It is, therefore, a process of the continuous improvement of occupational safety and health; it is a new way of thinking, a paradigm shift and a way to establish a global prevention culture. Vision Zero is based on the understanding that companies that make a long-term commitment to occupational safety and health protection, enjoy a better market position.



Figure 1 The three dimensions of safety, health and wellbeing of the Vision Zero Strategy; © ISSA

7 Golden Rules for Vision Zero

1. Take leadership – demonstrate commitment
2. Identify hazards – control risks
3. Define targets – develop programmes
4. Ensure a safe and healthy system – be wellorganized
5. Ensure safety and health in machines, equipment and workplaces
6. Improve qualifications – develop competence
7. Invest in people – motivate by participation

Figure 2 “7 Golden Rules” of Vision Zero; © ISSA

The Vision Zero strategy allows every workplace, every company, and every industry in every region of the world to benefit greatly.

The paradigm shift

The following overview (Figure 3) shows how Vision Zero differs from conventional occupational safety and health approaches.

The paradigm shift has now been implemented by many companies and organizations. A list of all companies that have expressed their commitment to Vision Zero can be found at <http://visionzero.global>. More than 16,000 individuals, companies and organizations are registered there. One reason for this success is the simplicity of the message:

- “7 Golden Rules” that can be memorized instead of studying a 100-page rulebook
- Three focus areas, which are also valid outside the workplace
- A vision that appeals to everyone, because everyone wants to feel healthy and safe at work

The Vision Zero methodology can be applied in both small and large companies. It is just as relevant for workers as for employees or self-employed, and this is true for countries both with a low and a higher standard of living.

By promoting Vision Zero, ISSA also aims to contribute to the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Vision Zero supports Goal No. 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth”, Goal No. 3 “Health and Wellbeing”, Goal No. 4 “Quality Education”, and Goal No. 17 “Partnerships”.

Added value strategy

Vision Zero has been launched in over 50 countries since 2017. What began as a campaign has subsequently often been transformed into national programmes. Some of the countries have had remarkable success with their Vision Zero activities:

In Poland, for example, fatal accidents in agriculture have already fallen by 80 percent in the period between 1993 and 2020.¹ The Polish Agricultural Social Insurance Fund

Traditional approaches in occupational safety and health (OSH)	Vision Zero
OSH control strategy	OSH commitment strategy
OSH goal driven	OSH is a journey, a process
Preventing accidents and diseases	Creating safe and healthy work
OSH programs	OSH is an integrated part of business
OSH management	OSH leadership
OSH owned by a few	OSH owned by all
Benchmark on injuries & illness	Benchmark on good-practice and leading indicators
OSH is a cost	OSH is an investment
Workers are part of the problem	Workers contribute to solutions
Incidents are failures	Incidents are opportunities for learning
OSH management systems	OSH culture and learning

Figure 3 Vision Zero: from accident prevention to the promotion of health, safety and well-being at work; in Policy and Practice in Health and Safety, IOSH 2017; © Zwetsloot, Leka, Kines

launched a national media campaign with Vision Zero film competitions, youth campaigns and information that reached more than 115 million households.

Singapore introduced a national strategy in 2019, based on the ISSA Vision Zero approach, with the goal of reducing fatal occupational injuries to less than 1.0 per 100,000 workers and serious injuries to less than 12.0 per 100,000 workers by 2028 with the aim of making Singapore the country with the safest workplaces in the world in the near future.² In India, Vision Zero events and follow-ups were held in 27 of 28 states, which is also due to the DGUV's bilateral support. In Côte d'Ivoire, more than 50 labour inspectors have been trained and are now complementing factory visits using the Vision Zero tools.

The Association of Social Security Institutions of Luxembourg (AAA) has aligned its prevention strategy with Vision Zero as a three-way relationship, achieving a 15 percent reduction in the accident rate (see article by Dr. Sunnen, p. 16). The Social Security Organisation of Malaysia is implementing a long-term Vision Zero strategy that is designed to last up to 30 years. In Malaysia, more than 11,000 employees have already been trained by Vision Zero trainers, and 67 percent of the participating companies have reported a noticeable improvement in their companies' prevention culture. Furthermore, a targeted Vision Zero road traffic prevention campaign has already achieved a 76 percent reduction in commuting accidents.

Furthermore, state-owned enterprises in Kazakhstan, companies in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, England, and Finland, but also in Korea, Norway, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zambia work with the Vision Zero guidelines and the "7 Golden Rules".

The European Union's (EU) Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work (2021–2027) also takes a Vision Zero approach and aims to prevent all work-related fatalities in the EU. "increasing impact of climate change and our shared commitment to the vision of zero workplace deaths," said Nicolas Schmit, EU Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights at the EU Summit on Safety and Health at Work on May 15-16 in Stockholm.³ Paulina Brandberg, Minister for Equality and Deputy Minister for Employment, added: "We are now gathering experts and politicians to review the ongoing implementation of the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work. Important issues will be discussed at the meeting, including how to fulfil the 'vision zero' approach to work-related deaths and how to promote mental health in working life."⁴

This illustrates how Vision Zero has evolved from a campaign to a strategic instrument.⁵ At the recent EU Occupational Health and Safety Summit in Stockholm, specific reports were given on the Vision Zero initiatives of the EU member states and the EU Senior Labor Inspection Committee (SLIC).⁶

Numerous tools support the implementation of Vision Zero. Some of these tools are briefly presented below.

The Vision Zero toolbox

The Vision Zero toolbox contains the most important implementation aids for improving the prevention culture in companies. In addition to the most important tool, the Vision Zero Guide for employers and managers, this toolbox also contains many other useful instruments for improving occupational safety and health in companies.

Vision Zero is based on the recognition that companies that make a long-term commitment to occupational safety and health enjoy a better market position.

Vision Zero guide for employers and managers

ISSA aims to support companies and managers in continuously improving safety, health, and wellbeing in the workplace. In line with Vision Zero, ISSA has therefore developed the Vision Zero guide to promote a strong prevention culture. The guide is based on a comprehensive survey of the most effective measures for prevention. More than 1,000 employers, CEOs, managers, prevention experts, employee representatives, and labour inspectors contributed to this survey. As a result, a practical and effective Vision Zero guide⁷ was created and is available for free download in many languages. A special version for small and medium-sized enterprises is also available.

Proactive Leading Indicators guide to measure and manage safety, health and wellbeing at work

ISSA offers the 14 proactive headline indicators⁸ as a free supplementary tool for companies and organizations that are committed to Vision Zero and want to measure and evaluate the quality of their performance in safety, health, and wellbeing. This benchmarking tool is based on proactive leading indicators that highlight not only the past but also the current situation or, rather, what should be done in the future. These 14 proactive leading indicators – two for each of the “7 Golden Rules” – can be used for various benchmarking purposes, both internally to improve safety, health and wellbeing, and in external business relationships, such as supply chains. The indicators are designed to be used by companies with potential for improvement as well as by champions of occupational health and safety.

The guide includes 14 fact sheets, one for each indicator, describing the goals of each indicator, key concepts, best practices and constraints, and recommendations for measuring these indicators.

Guide on how to create a healthy work environment and promote wellbeing at work with Vision Zero

The new Vision Zero guide on Wellbeing at Work⁹ supports leaders and management with extensive background information on workplace wellbeing. Also, it offers a maturity model for measuring workplace wellbeing. This tool is designed to help companies of all sizes and from all sectors of the economy better understand and realign their level of prevention in relation to wellbeing. It is also intended to provide guidance on how organizational practices can be implemented to achieve proactive or creative levels of wellbeing in an organizational setting. The guide is aimed at anyone who wants to contribute to healthy and stress-free workplaces where employees realize their potential while working in a productive and customer-oriented manner. It addresses the topic of wellbeing from different angles, such as the work hierarchy level, the individual perspective, or the collective level.

The 7 Golden Rules to protect the environment and our future

The European Network of Safety and Health Professional Organisations (ENSHPO) and ISSA have expanded the Vision Zero strategy and the “7 Golden Rules” to include aspects of environmental protection. The new Vision Zero environmental guide¹⁰ makes it easier for companies to act more sustainably with the help of the “7 Golden Rules”.

More products underway

On the occasion of the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, which will be held in Sydney, Australia, from 27–30 November 2023, two new guiding threads currently being developed by Vision Zero partners will be launched:

1. The Vision Zero guide for labour inspection – to support sustainable compliance with regulations, and
2. The Vision Zero Guide for Improving Safety, Health and Wellbeing in workplaces along global supply chains (see contribution by Ehnes/Roth, p. 35).

Vision Zero Training

The implementation of Vision Zero can be supported by the Vision Zero guides or by supporting competence development. Therefore, Vision Zero offers a comprehensive training concept for companies, organizations, and relevant stakeholders. The Vision Zero training is aimed at top management, executives and future leaders at all levels. IOSH offers an accredited Vision Zero training program¹¹, while the ISSA Prevention Sections, which developed the Vision Zero concept, offer customized Vision Zero training. For this, it is recommended to contact the ISSA sections directly if there is a need for training or train-the-trainer concepts.¹²

Conclusion

After six years of Vision Zero, it is evident that many companies have successfully integrated Vision Zero into their existing prevention strategies.

Vision Zero has evolved from a campaign to a strategic tool. It contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in relation to Decent Work and economic growth, health and wellbeing, good education, and partnerships. Overall, Vision Zero offers a holistic approach to occupational safety and health that aims to create a safe and healthy working environment for all.



Bibliography

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Footnotes

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- ² [https://www.mom.gov.sg/about-us/divisions-and-statutory-boards/occupational-safety-and-health-division#:~:text=OSHD's%20ambition%20is%20for%20Singapore,and%20ill%2Dhealth%20at%20work.\(accessed 5/22/2023\)](https://www.mom.gov.sg/about-us/divisions-and-statutory-boards/occupational-safety-and-health-division#:~:text=OSHD's%20ambition%20is%20for%20Singapore,and%20ill%2Dhealth%20at%20work.(accessed%205/22/2023))
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- ⁹ <https://visionzero.global/sites/default/files/2023-03/4-VZ-Wellbeing.pdf> (accessed 05/22/2023).
- ¹⁰ <https://visionzero.global/guides> (accessed 22.05.2023)
- ¹¹ <https://iosh.com/educators-and-trainers/deliver-vision-zero-courses> (accessed 24.08.2023)
- ¹² <https://ww1.issa.int/de/about/prevention-sections> (accessed 05/22/2023)

The VISION ZERO success story – Working together to save lives

Key facts

- This article examines the Vision Zero initiative in relation to the current crises people are facing
- Vision Zero tools are freely available for operational use, are all based on the “7 Golden Rules” and can be used worldwide
- 5 future focus areas describe the next phase of the International Social Security Association’s (ISSA) prevention culture initiative, focussing primarily on the sustainable implementation of Vision Zero

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During the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Singapore in 2017, the ISSA launched the Vision Zero initiative and the accompanying “7 Golden Rules”. This was the start of a success story. One that focuses on leadership culture, humane work, social dialogue and sustainability in corporate culture.

For many people, a glance at the daily newspaper or their smartphone means being bombarded with crises. Man-made climate change has been caused by how we live – or want to live – and by how we work. There is war and violence very close to our European homes. Inflation and economic problems continue to challenge us. World hunger seems insurmountable. This all leads to dramatic refugee and migration movements. On top of that there are global health problems and pandemics to deal with. Then there are global working conditions that need to be addressed. Global working conditions also need to be addressed, as global supply chains mean that we can no longer ignore the conditions under which items are produced for us to buy as cheaply as possible in our own countries.

The Vision Zero story

So – isn’t it a relief to read about a success story for a change? The Vision Zero strategy certainly deserves a positive headline.

Vision Zero has come of age since the International Social Security Association (ISSA) presented the fledgling campaign at the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Singapore in 2017. Today, the global prevention strategy Vision Zero is more successful than ever. In today’s fast-paced world with its constant stream of campaign slogans, who would have thought such a lifespan was possible? Who would have thought that the “7 Golden Rules”¹ of Vision Zero would become widely known and understood around the world? Who would have thought that so many institutions would collaborate to develop the

Vision Zero tools and that Vision Zero would be used to inform national and sector strategies? And who would have thought that more than 15,000 partners worldwide would lend their good name and commitment to Vision Zero?

Vision Zero – the path to a culture of prevention

Initially, Vision Zero focused exclusively on prevention in the workplace. It has since become clear that Vision Zero is even more effective if other fields of action are included, such as corporate environmental protection, road safety and public health. It’s about moving away from traditional ‘silo thinking’ and reaching all the people in their different environments with a unified, simple language. Because ultimately, physical integrity is indivisible: ONE VISION ZERO. Vision Zero’s core message is that accidents, injuries and occupational diseases have causes – so every accident and every disease can be prevented if the right measures are put in place at the right time.

Safety and health at work can no longer be the exclusive concern of experts and specialists. Instead, it needs to become part of the daily agenda for all entrepreneurs, managers and their employees.

It calls for a new way of thinking and a new way of looking at the issue. More than ever, ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) is being understood in the boardroom as a set of issues that increasingly determine a company’s long-term success in the global competitive arena.

Vision Zero translates the world’s laws, standards and regulations into a simple, understandable action plan that is compatible with national regulations around the world. Vision Zero embodies people’s fundamental right to physical integrity. Everyone has the right to return home safe and healthy at the end of every working day.

Accidents and diseases are not random – they have causes. By identifying the causes in time, every accident and disease can be prevented. Vision Zero has three pillars: Safety – Health – Wellbeing.

Practical tools for the workplace

The vast majority of unsafe or health-threatening situations can be identified by not looking the other way. This is the primary responsibility of every executive board, manager and supervisor.

That’s why ‘Leadership’ is at the top of the “7 Golden Rules”.

The entire Vision Zero toolkit, which is now available in several languages, can be seen in the table.

With the groundwork laid and the toolkit well stocked, the next phase in the Vision Zero initiative is to support the sustained application of the strategy around the world. To this end, five primary fields of action have been identified as the main focus areas.

The VISION ZERO Toolbox	
The VISION ZERO Website	https://visionzero.global/
VISION ZERO Guide for Employers and Managers: 7 Golden Rules – For Zero Accidents and Healthy Work	https://visionzero.global/sites/default/files/2017-12/2-Vision%20Zero%20Guide-Web.pdf
VISION ZERO Guide – 7 Golden Rules for Small Businesses	https://visionzero.global/sites/default/files/2020-10/EN-VZ-Guide%20for%20small%20enterprises_0.pdf
VISION ZERO Advice and Consulting	For more information please contact the ISSA Sections
VISION ZERO – Proactive Leading Indicators Guide	https://visionzero.global/guides
VISION ZERO Training for Managers and Coordinators	For more information please contact the ISSA Sections
VISION ZERO Guide – 7 Golden Rules to Protect the Environment and our Future	https://visionzero.global/sites/default/files/2023-08/2-VZ-Environment2022_0.pdf
VISION ZERO Guide to create a Healthy Work Environment and promote Wellbeing at Work	https://visionzero.global/sites/default/files/2023-08/2-VZ-Wellbeing_0.pdf
VISION ZERO Guide for Improving Safety, Health and Wellbeing in Workplaces along Global Supply Chains	Coming soon
VISION ZERO Guide for Labour Inspection	Coming soon

Table 1 The VISION ZERO Toolbox; © Helmut Ehnes

Initially, Vision Zero focused exclusively on prevention in the workplace. It has since become clear that Vision Zero is even more effective if other fields of action are included, such as corporate environmental protection, road safety and public health.

Vision Zero translates the world’s laws, standards and regulations into a simple, understandable action plan that is compatible with national regulations around the world.

**Future focus area 1
Implementing Vision Zero in the organization**

Thanks to the wealth of experience gained in this area, we know that each company needs to follow its own path. This is because there are as many different starting points as there are different requirements for a culture-driven prevention approach. As a result, there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution, as some people may be hoping for. That said, it’s worth the extra bit of effort because it results in a more sustainable implementation. Plus, having ‘something of your own’ counts more in the end. There is often a fear that introducing Vision Zero will mean that everything has to be rethought. This is not the case. On the contrary, Vision Zero should be seen as a new umbrella under which everything worth preserving can be successfully brought together.

For companies seeking external support, there is a twelve-point implementation process that provides guidance.

Implementation Process: 12 Steps to the VISION ZERO Strategy	
1	START: Create Commitment for VISION ZERO
2	KICK-OFF: Information and Motivation Workshops
3	INVENTORY: Use VISION ZERO Guide
4	STRATEGIC PLAN: Timeline-Stakeholders-Structure
5	DEFINE GOALS: Select Leading Indicators
6	DEFINE MEASURES: Define Activities
7	DETERMINE TARGETS: Control Implementation
8	GO PUBLIC: Event – Advertising – Communication
9	REALIZATION PHASE: Measure & Monitor
10	ANALYSIS: Target/Actual Comparison
11	RESULTS EVALUATION: Document & Communicate
12	UPDATE PHASE: Update Procedures & Strategy

Figure 1 Implementation Process: 12 Steps to the VISION ZERO Strategy; © Helmut Ehnes

**Future focus area 2
Vision Zero at national level**

The second field of action works on the premise that those affected have to become stakeholders if sustainability and acceptance are to be achieved. Finding local or sectoral partners to introduce the Vision Zero approach at national or industry sector level will prove beneficial. A stakeholder should take the initiative but without claiming exclusive rights to Vision Zero. Rather, all stakeholders should be able to find their place in this initiative. An open culture of collaboration ensures mutual acceptance and transforms participants from consumers into promoters.

In the end, everyone benefits from this.

There are already some good examples in different countries that are making Vision Zero a national strategy. Successful strategies are characterized by statements about the following questions:

- What is at the core of the initiative?
- What should the strategy be about – workplace prevention or a broader approach?
- Who will take the lead – who will be involved – how will the roles be distributed?
- What are the most specific targets to be achieved?
- What is the time frame?
- What concrete measures and activities are planned to achieve these targets?
- What implementation structures are available or need to be established?
- How will marketing and communications be carried out?
- How will success be measured and, if necessary, how will it be readjusted?

One very positive development supports the move to develop national strategies: In its new strategic framework for safety and health at work for the period 2021-2027, the European Commission strongly urges all Member States to consider the Vision Zero approach in their national policies. Consequently, the only recommendation is to develop national prevention strategies along global supply chains based on Vision Zero to gain better market access through better connectivity.

Future focus area 3 Overcoming silo thinking with Vision Zero

We all know it – The best thing to do first is check who is responsible. We think and act in silos. And, of course, the requirements, actions and approaches are completely different depending on the environment one is in.

Is this a promising road to take, if essentially we want the same thing – to guarantee people’s fundamental right to physical and mental integrity? If we want to reach and influence our peers, wouldn’t it be much better to use one language? Isn’t everything connected?

The conclusion has to be: Yes, we need to bring together what belongs together. People cannot conduct themselves in a safe and healthy way some of the time, yet at other times ignore it completely. That’s why OSH professionals need a more holistic perspective as well:

- Protect life and health at work.
- Include prevention with general health risks.
- Prevention also applies outside the workplace.
- A culture of prevention must also include the financial and business sectors.
- Why do we only start talking about safety and responsibility in the workplace?
- What about the school, education and training sectors?

Future focus area 4 Vision Zero as a matter for CEOs and management

It cannot be said often enough: Occupational safety, health and wellbeing is not primarily the responsibility of OSH professionals. It is management’s responsibility. All those involved in OSH must therefore learn the language of corporate leaders.

Rather than being unnecessarily complex, the concepts should be made accessible to everyone through clear and simple language. Only then can people adopt them as their own. The arguments have been on the table for a long time:

- For some, legal certainty is important.
- Fewer accidents and illness mean less downtime and lower costs.
- They also mean better quality and a more motivated and creative workforce.

- Building a good image takes years – destroying it only takes a second.
- Attractive companies find skilled workers, even now.
- What’s wrong with having happy, satisfied employees if they deliver better economic results?

So if prevention, safety, health and wellbeing are the responsibility of our managers, we have to ask ourselves what we are doing to ensure that they are also able to communicate with people in a way that motivates and values them. The answer is: not enough. Of course, some people do it naturally. And most of us have responsibilities – we just haven’t learned how to fulfil them.

Hence the call to action: Talking about prevention culture in the workplace is too late. It’s like locking the stable door after the horse has bolted.

It has to start in pre-schools, schools and all educational settings – be it vocational training or higher education. Vision Zero must become part of the curriculum and syllabus for all those who could have leadership responsibilities later in life – regardless of which discipline. This must be achieved politically. If not, this endeavour will fail.

Future focus area 5 Cooperation, not confrontation

The fifth future focus area revisits the topic of alliances. Many notable organizations, governments, institutions and also social partners have well-founded ideas and concepts. However, most of the time, they fight alone – always with the message that the issue at hand is the most important. Unfortunately, it has a limited impact. Why? Because although all these well-known organizations generate a flood of messages, tools, concepts and initiatives, the target groups are often identical. Is it really so impossible to join forces and work together instead of against each other?

While this may sound utopian, it’s our duty to demand it, to reach out to each other and to make proposals. Let’s make a start if no one else will! Preferably today! Because it’s all about the bigger picture: about one world – one humanity – ONE VISION ZERO.

Footnote

- ¹ See <https://visionzero.global/guides> (Downloaded 18.07.2023)

VISION ZERO – A guide for action

Key facts

- The prevention strategy “VISION ZERO. Zero accidents – healthy work!” was launched in 2014 by the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the raw materials and chemical industry (BG RCI)
- The target: To significantly reduce the number of fatal occupational accidents and new pensions resulting from accidents, or at least to halve them, within ten years
- Nine years on, BG RCI reviews the progress to date

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Every occupational accident and occupational disease can be prevented if the right measures are put in place at the right time. In 2014, this conviction led to the launch of the Vision Zero prevention strategy at BG RCI. Nine years down the line, how is the implementation going and what impact is it having on BG RCI's member companies?

When someone develops an occupational disease or is involved in an accident at work – in the worst case, a fatal one – it is a devastating blow to those affected and their families. The consequences of occupational accidents and diseases are usually permanent and therefore life-changing.

In addition to personal suffering, there are also high financial costs involved. The German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the raw materials and chemical industry (BG RCI) alone spends around 960 million Euros a year addressing the consequences of occupational accidents and diseases, which places a burden on the companies in terms of their contributions.

Nine years ago, the conviction that every occupational accident and disease can be prevented if the right measures are put in place at the right time led to the launch of the Vision Zero strategy.

Zero accidents – healthy working!

With the prevention strategy “VISION ZERO. Zero accidents – healthy work!”, which was adopted by the BG RCI board of directors in May 2014, the BG RCI set out to significantly reduce, or at least halve, the number of fatal occupational accidents and new occupational injury pensions within a ten-year span. At the end of this period, they would review the situation, examine each element and adjust the strategic direction if required.

The working environment within BG RCI member companies was to be reshaped in such a way that nobody need die at work or suffer injuries or diseases so serious that they caused lifelong health problems. The primary aim was to ensure that occupational safety and health protection be taken into account at all times and that Vision Zero become part of the corporate culture.

Ambitious goals for the best possible results

For a vision to succeed, it requires defined, concrete goals. BG RCI's Vision Zero is based on seven specific targets that are still being pursued today:

Target 1: Reduce the risk of accidents at work by 30%.

Target 2: Reduce the number of new pension cases from accidents at work by 50%.

Target 3: Reduce fatal accidents at work by at least 50%.

Target 4: Reduce occupational diseases.

Target 5: Increase the number of companies with zero accidents.

Target 6: Align prevention services more closely to actual needs.

Target 7: Increase the use of prevention services.

The targets were deliberately set high, even though it was clear from the outset that they would be hard to achieve on this scale within ten years. The fundamental idea, however, remains the same: Every occupational accident is one accident too many and every occupational disease is one disease too many.

With the prevention strategy ‘VISION ZERO. Zero accidents – healthy work!’, adopted by the BG RCI board of directors in May 2014, the BG RCI set out to significantly reduce, or at least halve, the number of fatal occupational accidents and new pensions resulting from occupational accidents within ten years.

Concrete proposals for companies

To achieve these ambitious goals together with its member companies, BG RCI developed a wide range of activities to bring about a change in awareness and in the culture in these companies – despite the temporary slow-down caused by the Corona pandemic.

Because – accidents and occupational diseases can only be prevented if safety and health are recognised as fundamental values and if managers and employees live up to their responsibilities.

One of the measures that have been put in place is the continuous improvement of prevention services that are closely aligned to the needs of the member companies. You can read about some of the initiatives below.

Media

The first publication, the Vision Zero guide for managers¹, details the seven Vision Zero success factors for organisational implementation. This guide was later supplemented by an in-depth guide² on each of the success factors.

Based on accident analyses, the following guidelines have also been published: “12 LIFESAVERS for managers” and “12 LIFESAVERS for employees”³ to help prevent fatal accidents at work and the “8 LIFESAVERS for commuting safety”⁴ to help prevent accidents on the way to and from work.

Existing prevention products are being updated on a regular basis and further developed as the need arises. Well-established publications, such as the BG RCI expertise newsletter, have been brought under the Vision Zero umbrella, both in terms of content and the new title.

With the VISION ZERO newsletter⁵, BG RCI regularly offers up-to-date information on prevention topics in the workplace and for road traffic.

Training courses

The package of measures also includes the expansion of BG RCI’s training programme, as targeted, high-quality training is essential for effective prevention. In particular, BG RCI is committed to designing the VISION ZERO management seminars⁶, which aim to raise awareness of the strategy among middle and senior managers.

BG RCI “Systematic Safety” seal of approval

BG RCI also offers its member companies comprehensive solutions for implementing an occupational safety and health management system (OSHMS) and monitoring its effectiveness. Assessment is also available for companies that already have an OSHMS in place. Following a successful assessment, the company is awarded the BG RCI “Systematic Safety” seal of approval.

The BG RCI seal of approval has existed for some time. It is now being used to support Vision Zero as it is an excellent tool for making the goals of Vision Zero a reality.

Events and campaigns

BG RCI also runs events and campaigns that are tailored to different target groups. Examples include the occupational safety and health competition “Arbeitsschutz GEWINNT!” (“Occupational Safety and Health WINS!”), the trainee competition, and the protecT forum, all of which are conducted under the Vision Zero umbrella.



Occupational Safety and Health WINS!

„Arbeitsschutz GEWINNT!“⁷ is the successor to the “VISION ZERO Promotion Award“, the BG RCI’s occupational safety and health award. It is regarded as a treasure trove of innovative prevention solutions from BG RCI member companies.

The trainee competition “Safety from the start”⁸ focuses on trainees at BG RCI member companies and teaches them safe and health-oriented behaviour.

The protecT⁹ forum is an annual congress for entrepreneurs, managers, works councils and other key people from BG RCI’s member companies.

Vision Zero Cooperations

To achieve Vision Zero across the board, BG RCI is committed to working closely with associations, companies and other multipliers and disseminators. To date, around 50 companies and associations have become cooperation partners. At the heart of these collaborations is the voluntary public commitment to Vision Zero, working together to strengthen safety culture in the workplace over the long term.

There are many ways to get involved at different levels. Companies can use the cooperation agreement to draw employees’ attention to the Vision Zero values already established in the company or take a closer look at the culture of prevention concept and develop new activities in this area.

BG RCI’s main objective is to provide support to all those involved in occupational safety and health so that they can make the most effective use of their expertise.

Demand and impact of Vision Zero

The response from member companies shows that BG RCI is meeting the Vision Zero targets in terms of demand for prevention services. Not only is this very good, it is actually increasing slightly. This confirms that BG RCI is on the right track. In the meantime, tried and tested tools and services are to be further professionalised and digital services such as explanatory films and e-learning are to be expanded.

However, if one only looks at the figures and compares them with the parameters and targets that were set in 2014 when Vision Zero was launched, it is difficult to evaluate the past years. The goals that were set – particularly the percentage reduction targets for the risk of occupational accidents and new occupational accident pension cases by 2024 – have not yet been fully achieved. In contrast, BG RCI’s new occupational disease pensions showed a sharp decline.

Events in recent years, most notably COVID-19, have had a strong influence on the statistical development. The pandemic clearly affected the overall picture. Accordingly, the number of accidents at work and on the way to and from work decreased between 2020 and 2021, most likely due to the lockdowns. It is not clear to what extent workplace prevention efforts had an impact on accident statistics.



Figure 1 Vision Zero Target 1 – Reduce the risk of accidents at work by 30% by 2024 (reportable and non-reportable occupational accidents)

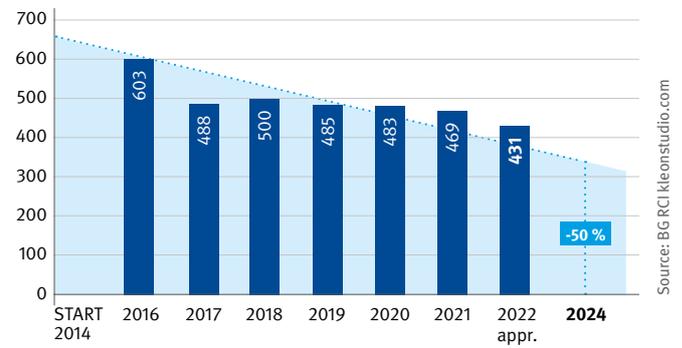


Figure 2 Vision Zero Target 2 – Reduce the number of new pension cases from accidents at work by 50% by 2024

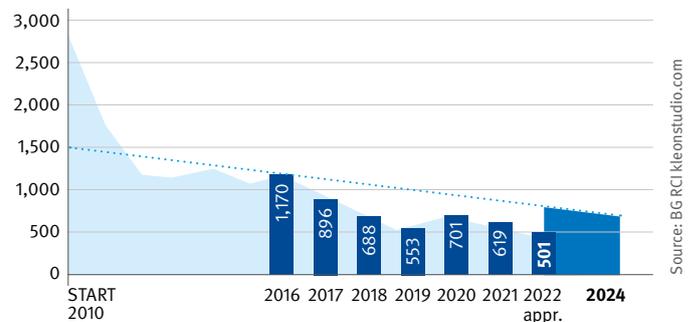


Figure 3 Vision Zero Target 3 – New occupational disease pensions BG RCI total (absolute)

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to judge the success of prevention measures on the basis of these figures alone. To conclude that Vision Zero is not making enough impact would not do justice to the overall positive trend. Taken as a whole, Vision Zero is the right strategy for reducing accidents and occupational diseases.

With this strategy it must be emphasised that Vision Zero is about more than just complying with rules and regulations.

It is primarily about the attitudes of managers and employees, about changes in awareness and in the culture within these organisations. In this respect, social skills such as risk awareness and the ability to pay attention to oneself and one's colleagues play an important role. These competences are difficult to represent in figures and guidelines.

Companies need to create a positive culture of error, in which mistakes are not punished, but are used as an opportunity to learn. This is important because a considerable proportion of all accidents at work can be attributed

to behavioural errors such as carelessness, ignorance or inattention. In other words: The prevention culture needs to be embedded in the corporate culture.

What does the future hold for us beyond 2024?

Achieving the goals of Vision Zero and sustaining them in the long term is only possible if the vision of a healthy and accident-free workplace can be established in companies beyond the designated ten-year period.

What's more, in the future, the focus will need to shift from just looking at the numbers to establishing a consistent culture of prevention in member companies of all sizes. This is a process that will take time, probably well beyond 2024.

If the enthusiasm surrounding this issue continues to resonate and permeate throughout organisations, then Vision Zero will continue to be a powerful guide to a world free from work-related injuries and illness.

Achieving and sustaining the goals of Vision Zero is only possible if the vision of a healthy and accident-free workplace can be established in companies beyond the designated ten-year period.

Footnotes

- ¹ VZ 002 "VISION ZERO. Null Unfälle – gesund Arbeiten! Leitfaden für die Umsetzung im Betrieb", [VISION ZERO. Zero accidents – healthy working! Corporate implementation guidelines], BG RCI, as of: 02/2019, https://medienshop.bgrci.de/shop/vision-zero?query=/vz_leitfaden.xml&field=path (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ² VZ Set [VISION ZERO Set], BG RCI, as of: 09/2018, <https://medienshop.bgrci.de/shop/?query=/vz-set.xml&field=path> (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ³ KB 012-1 "Mein Leben. 12 LEBENSRETTNER für Beschäftigte" [My Life. 12 LIFESAVERS for employees], BG RCI, as of 07/2022, <https://medienshop.bgrci.de/shop/?query=/kb012-1.xml&field=path> and KB 012-2 "Meine Verantwortung. 12 LEBENSRETTNER für Führungskräfte" [My Responsibility. 12 LIFESAVERS for managers], BG RCI, as of: 07/2022, <https://medienshop.bgrci.de/shop/?query=/kb012-2.xml&field=path> (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ⁴ KB 018 "Sicherheit auf allen Wegen. 8 LEBENSRETTNER für Ihren Arbeitsweg" [Safety on all roads. 8 LIFESAVERS for commuting safety], BG RCI, as of: 01/2023, <https://medienshop.bgrci.de/shop/?query=/kb018.xml&field=path> (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ⁵ "VISION ZERO Newsletter", BG RCI, www.bgrci.de/praevention/praeventionsmedien/newsletter/ (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ⁶ "VISION ZERO Workshop für Führungskräfte" [VISION ZERO workshop for managers], BG RCI, <https://seminare.bgrci.de/de/?q=MMFK1016> (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ⁷ www.bgrci-arbeitsschutz-gewinnt.de (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ⁸ www.bgrci-azubiwettbewerb.de (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)
- ⁹ www.forum-protect.de (German version accessed on 04/07/2023)

VISION ZERO, a national strategy for a culture of prevention in Luxembourg

Key facts

- Regular media coverage is essential to generate awareness for a culture of prevention in the workplace and to stimulate behavioural change
- The “7 Golden Rules” of Vision Zero and further prevention tools provide a suitable framework for the implementation of a culture of prevention in companies
- Appropriate counselling as well as regular information and exchange forums are beneficial for companies

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The national Vision Zero strategy for the promotion of occupational health and safety was launched in 2016 in Luxembourg. In 2022, the second phase of Vision Zero (2023 to 2030) was announced, this time with the support of the Luxembourg government. This article provides an overview of the implementation of both Vision Zero phases in Luxembourg.

The long-standing partners, the Luxembourg Accident Insurance Association (AAA), the Luxembourg Employers Association (UEL) and its National Institute for Sustainable Development and Corporate Social Responsibility (INDR), launched the Vision Zero occupational safety concept as a national strategy for Luxembourg in 2016.¹

The Vision Zero kick-off in Luxembourg

The Vision Zero concept and the Vision Zero National Charter were officially launched in Luxembourg as part of the tenth anniversary edition of the annual Occupational Health and Safety Forum, in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses the Hereditary Grand Duke and Grand Duchess. The charter was signed by twelve national institutions: six ministries (Departments of Social Security, Health, Employment, Sustainability, Home Affairs and Civil Service), three national trade unions and the Vision Zero initiators (AAA, UEL and INDR).²

They all committed to a common and integrated approach, based on the “7 Golden Rules” of Vision Zero, to reduce the number and severity of work-related accidents, commuting accidents and occupational diseases in Luxembourg.

A national target was set to reduce the work-related accident incidence rate by 20 percent in the period 2016 to 2022 (from 5.37 percent in 2014) to 4.30 percent in 2022). Another objective was to continuously reduce the number of serious injuries and fatalities in work-related accidents.

Luxembourg-based businesses have since been encouraged to join the national Vision Zero community. This is a voluntary commitment to reducing the number and severity of work-related accidents, commuting accidents and occupational diseases.

Review of the first phase of Vision Zero (2016–2022)

The first Vision Zero activity report was produced in the form of a comprehensive brochure and multi-language infographic videos documenting Vision Zero's positive impact at national level. The cooperating national organisations and Luxembourg-based companies have both implemented a variety of awareness-raising measures and specific actions since the launch of Vision Zero.

Statistically speaking, the pandemic years 2020 and 2021 were exceptional years. Due to the numerous lockdowns, closures and shutdowns of certain activities, as well as widespread remote working, it was impossible to adequately assess the achievement of objectives. However, a promising 15 percent reduction of the incidence rate for work-related accidents was achieved in 2019.

The accident statistics for 2022, the last year of the review period, are currently not yet available. They are due to be published in autumn 2023.

The second phase of Vision Zero (2023–2030)

Given the achievements of the first phase of Vision Zero and the significance of this issue, the initiators of Vision Zero (AAA, UEL and INDR) have decided to launch a second Vision Zero phase in order to continue the efforts in the area of occupational health and safety, with a special focus on risk sectors. The national Vision Zero strategy is now officially supported by the government (Government Council decision of 24 October 2022).

The following national targets have been established for the second period (2023 to 2030):

- A 20 % reduction in the national frequency rate of work-related accidents, all sectors combined, compared to 2019 (3.71%), by directing a particular effort at risk sectors through the implementation of a set of more targeted actions
- Continued decrease in the number of serious and fatal accidents

Joining the Vision Zero strategy

Cooperating institutions and companies are encouraged to join the national Vision Zero strategy. Members' names are published on the Vision Zero internet portal³. They receive a certificate of membership and are permitted to use the Vision Zero logo.

Vision Zero members are committed to the following objectives:

- Actively contribute to the achievement of national objectives
- Reduce the number and severity of work-related accidents, commuting accidents and occupational diseases
- Continue and intensify all the efforts already made in the field of occupational health and safety
- Provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees and other persons working in the company, including contractors, temporary workers and visitors, on a continuous basis
- Promote and ensure effective management of health, safety and well-being at work in the spirit of a culture of prevention in companies
- Implement an action plan that takes into account the Four Principles and “7 Golden Rules” of Vision Zero



Figure 1 The logo of Vision Zero in Luxembourg

- Devote special effort to vulnerable employees, especially young employees, new recruits and the ageing population
- Communicate their commitment to occupational health and safety
- Anticipate and manage changes in the world of work, particularly in relation to digital, ecological and demographic transitions

Media presence

Media campaigns⁴ and regular media exposure are essential⁵ to generate awareness for the national Vision Zero strategy and a culture of prevention, as well as to encourage behavioural change in the area of occupational health and safety.

The first media campaign was launched in June 2017. It featured victims of work-related or commuting accidents. The aim wasn't to shock, but to challenge and inform, to raise awareness and to mobilise people. The real faces, voices and the experiences of the accident victims in the campaign touched a nerve and made people aware of the risks in the world of work.

The second media campaign began in autumn 2021. This time the concept was to list the consequences of a work-related accident in three sectors that served as examples: construction, industrial production and administration. The evocative commercials clarified the Vision Zero objective: “To prevent accidents at work through a collective culture of prevention.” In autumn, the campaign focus will shift to road safety.

Both campaigns were cross-media campaigns, with the respective commercials, ads and banners being distributed in several flights on the internet, in social networks, in the press, on the radio, in cinemas and on out-of-home elements.

A new internet portal visionzero.lu was launched at the same time as Vision Zero and its content is regularly updated and revised. The portal is now available in three languages (German, French and English).

Companies are also sensitised to and informed about the issue via the social media and newsletters from Vision Zero and the initiators.

Occupational Health and Safety Forum and Award

“The initiators” of Vision Zero collaborate with several organisations to host the Occupational Health and Safety Forum once a year as well as the bi-annual National Occupational Health and Safety Award.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Award was presented for the first time in 2018 by three ministries, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Insurance and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social and Solidarity Economy.

It is awarded in recognition of particularly innovative measures or products that improve health, safety and wellbeing at work.

The award recipients are selected by a jury. In the selection process the jury focuses on innovative, efficient and durable implementations as well as on measures with a high impact and optimum transferability to other companies or sectors.

All winning companies have a video made about their project and receive prize money.

There is also a public choice award, which goes to one of the award recipients. The winner is determined by a digital public vote for a few weeks after the official award ceremony.

The Occupational Health and Safety Forum has become a must-attend event in Luxembourg for company managers, occupational health and safety officers and all other stakeholders in this field.



Source: BG RCI kleonstudio.com

Figure 2 Media campaign banners

The OSH Forum takes place in all even numbered years in the form of an exhibition with around 1,500 visitors, 100 exhibitors and more than 20 workshops. The Forum also serves as a platform for the presentation of the Occupational Health and Safety Award.

In odd numbered years the Forum is held as a conference. This year’s event boasted a varied programme with a plenary session in the morning and three topical sessions on risk areas in the afternoon.

Four ministers welcomed the 400 participants to the conference.



Save the date!

The next Occupational Health and Safety Forum takes place on 15 May 2024 in Kirchberg (Luxembourg). Information will be available online a few months before the event at www.visionzero.lu/forum-sst.

The Occupational Health and Safety Forum has become a must-attend event in Luxembourg for company managers, occupational health and safety officers and all other stakeholders in this field.

Advice and information material

The AAA's prevention department provides occupational health and safety advice to companies. It can be contacted either by telephone or online.

Smaller companies can also obtain detailed advice in connection with the certification process for the "Sécher a Gesond mat System" ("Systematic Health and Safety") label. This quality label was introduced by the Luxembourg Accident Insurance Association to encourage employers' specific efforts towards risk prevention, while minimising the administrative component.

A variety of brochures are made available to businesses via the website and during various events. Most of the information material is available in French and German, though some is available in other languages.

The prevention department also publishes accident prevention recommendations. These are professional rules for the prevention of work-related risks and are intended to help employers and employees optimally meet their legal and statutory obligations in the area of occupational health and safety.

Further brochures and recommendations on accident prevention for companies in risk sectors are being developed as part of the second Vision Zero phase's sector-based approach. Additional efforts are being made to encourage more companies in the risk sectors to obtain the "Sécher a Gesond mat System" quality label.

Risk sectors

To increase the granularity of the accident statistics, the companies and other contributors were divided into more than 80 clusters of comparable activity, distributed across ten main categories. The analysis of accident statistics as well as the identification of risk sectors will contribute to the development of the prevention concept for risk sectors together with the relevant professional associations and social partners. Specific projects with the Chamber of Agriculture and the Chamber of Skilled Crafts and Trades have already started. There will be further collaborative projects as part of the sector-based concept for the second Vision Zero phase.

A bonus-malus system as an incentive for companies

Accident insurance contributions are paid in their entirety by the employers in Luxembourg. In 2019, a bonus-malus system was introduced as an incentive to accident insurance contribution payers to invest more in the prevention of accidents. The basic contribution rate of each company can be reduced or increased by means of a specific multiplication factor, the bonus-malus factor. The bonus-malus factor is calculated by dividing contributors into risk categories according to their primary activity and then comparing them to other contributors in the same category. This comparison is based on the costs of work-related accidents in a specified reference year.

The bonus factor was reduced from 0.90 to 0.85 on 1 January 2023 to raise awareness among companies about occupational safety and health and encourage them to introduce preventive measures, but also to reward companies that have made efforts in this area. This has the effect of further lowering the contribution rate for companies, self-employed persons and employers of domestic personnel with zero work-related accidents.

Vision Zero global campaign

It remains to be mentioned that the initiators of the national Vision Zero strategy (AAA, UEL, INDR) are also official partners of the worldwide Vision Zero Global campaign of the International Social Security Association (ISSA).



Further details

Vision Zero strategy in Luxembourg:

www.visionzero.lu

Association d'assurance accident (AAA):

www.aaa.lu

Footnotes

- <https://visionzero.lu/de/ursprung> (downloaded 7.7.2023)
- <https://visionzero.lu/de/ursprung> (downloaded 7.7.2023)
- <https://visionzero.lu/de/vision-zero-beitreten> (downloaded 7.7.2023)
- <https://visionzero.lu/de/medienkampagne/> (downloaded 7.7.2023)
- <https://visionzero.lu/de/> (downloaded 7.7.2023)

Implementing VISION ZERO in Africa

Key facts

- In 2018, a number of African countries committed to the prevention of work-related accidents and occupational diseases in line with Vision Zero
- In Africa, the Vision Zero campaign was developed into a Vision Zero business strategy, which is also a business strategy
- The “7 Golden Rules” guide, which is available in eleven languages, supports the correct implementation of the Vision Zero concept

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Vision Zero has been successfully rolled out in many African countries since 2018. What began as a campaign has evolved into a business strategy to improve safety and health at the workplace. The OSHAfrica Declaration 2019 on the implementation of Vision Zero is being used by many African companies.

The Vision Zero campaign, launched in 2017 at the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, convinced people around the world that work-related injuries and occupational diseases are preventable. Vision Zero (VZ) was subsequently launched all over the world – and that included many African countries.

Inspired by the Vision Zero campaign launch in Singapore, stakeholders in Africa also started to get involved. There was a great deal of correspondence between government safety and health institutions, safety and health professionals and the International Social Security Association (ISSA) discussing the roll-out and implementation of Vision Zero across Africa. This led to the following VZ launch events in Africa:

- The regional launch of the African VZ in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, on 28 April 2018;
- The Nigerian VZ country launch in Lagos, Nigeria, on 24 May 2018;
- The VZ country launch in Accra, Ghana, on 30 October 2018;
- The VZ country launch in Livingston, Zambia, on 14 December 2018.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the pace of Vision Zero launch events in Africa. South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, Cameroon, Zimbabwe and other countries were already in the process of implementing VZ on a nationwide basis before the outbreak of COVID-19.

As the Vision Zero roll-out in Africa gathered momentum, interest from African safety and health organizations in ISSA accreditation as Vision Zero trainers increased. A number of trainers used the ISSA’s tried-and-tested

training materials to conduct VZ training in several African countries. Most African organizations learned about Vision Zero through the work of these VZ trainers, through participation in the national VZ launch events, and through other activities by registered VZ trainers.

Enterprise and sector level roll-outs

Vision Zero’s global implementation is taking place at several levels: at international, national and enterprise level. The Vision Zero strategy is inherently versatile and innovation is always an integral part of its implementation. In Nigeria, enterprise level implementation was very popular. Zambia, on the other hand, preferred to implement Vision Zero at sector level. In the long run, however, both approaches achieve the same goal.

Before the business disruptions caused by COVID-19 happened, a number of organizations in Nigeria had expressed interest in the enterprise-level adoption of Vision Zero. This was seen as a very intuitive approach to the VZ strategy’s growth and propagation in that country. On 17 May 2019, Nigeria celebrated the first VZ launch at enterprise level at the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency – NIMASA, a Nigerian government agency responsible for the country’s maritime operations.

The enterprise-level implementation of Vision Zero was a complete success and the management’s commitment and motivation to enforce Vision Zero’s “7 Golden Rules”¹ to improve occupational safety and health was commendable. This implementation was graced by the presence of the agency’s executive directors, who had all come to

attend the presentation of the “Vision Zero Occupational Safety and Health Award” to the agency’s Commissioner for Safety and Health at Work.²

Zambia, on the other hand, focused more on the sector-level roll-out of Vision Zero, another effective strategy that has led to numerous positive outcomes. This roll-out was led by the Zambian Workers Compensation Fund Control Board (WCFCB). Vision Zero was implemented in the following sectors in Zambia before the COVID-19 outbreak:

- The agricultural sector in Mkushi, Zambia, on 28 August 2019;
- The hospitality sector in Mfuwe, Zambia, on 26 September 2019.

All the stakeholders in these Zambian sectors came together to sign up to the implementation of Vision Zero and the “7 Golden Rules” that have become so popular in Africa.

Zambia has gone one step further in the context of the VZ campaign. It has involved the education sector by launching numerous campaigns in schools called “Safe Workers of Tomorrow” (SWOT) as part of Vision Zero. The SWOT initiative was developed to raise safety and health awareness among children in primary and secondary education and it turned out to be another very successful VZ initiative.

Efforts to implement further sector-level initiatives were abruptly halted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, preparations for Vision Zero roll-outs in the following sectors in Zambia were already underway:

- Small enterprises in the mining industry;
- The road and transport sector;
- The petroleum industry;
- The water supply and wastewater disposal sector.

Following the OSHAfrica International Conference in South Africa in 2019, discussions were held about an Africa-wide event that would focus on Vision Zero. The “Vision Zero Africa Conference” took place in Lagos, Nigeria, in November 2021 with participants from 18 countries around the world. Since then, the conference has evolved into an African event that is held every two years.

Zambia is hosting the second conference in September 2023, providing an opportunity for the attending safety and health professionals to learn what is being done with and for Vision Zero in many countries and workplaces on the African continent.



OSHAfrica

OSHAfrica is a network of OSH professionals across Africa.

The network was established in 2017 and currently has 570 members in over 40 African countries. The primary aim of OSHAfrica is to bring all African OSH professionals together to collaborate and share data. For more information on OSHAfrica, visit: www.OSH-africa.africa

Vision Zero as a business strategy

The Vision Zero campaign in Africa has evolved into a Vision Zero strategy. This transition has helped Vision Zero to be perceived as a clear-cut business strategy and not just a campaign. The term “strategy” turned out to be a game changer for Vision Zero because many company management teams and organizations were able to better identify with “strategy” than with “campaign”.

OSHAfrica found that the management and executives of organizations that had either participated in the Vision Zero roll-out or sent representatives to Vision Zero events were more open-minded and motivated to implement Vision Zero.

The “7 Golden Rules” were very memorable and people were able to identify with them. In Zambia, the “Zambia Sugar” company had already introduced a programme called “Target Zero”, and other companies had introduced similar programmes before the development of the VZ strategy. It was easy for these companies to align their existing programmes with the VZ strategy by using the “7 Golden Rules” as a guide. Many cities and countries in Africa had programmes with different names, but all the names included the word “Zero”.

Vision Zero’s global implementation is taking place at several levels: at international, national and enterprise level. The Vision Zero strategy is inherently versatile and innovation is always an integral part of its implementation.

The Vision Zero campaign in Africa has evolved into a Vision Zero strategy. This transition has helped Vision Zero to be perceived as a clear-cut business strategy and not just a campaign.

It wasn't necessary to persuade the organizations and companies of the benefits of Vision Zero because the concept was already convincing and attractive. The leadership commitment, which is the first of the "7 Golden Rules", is so easy to follow that organizations embraced the idea with enthusiasm. It is the ideal starting point for all subsequent steps in the implementation of Vision Zero.

At the outset of the campaign, the organizations interested in implementing VZ were asked for a written commitment, but this was met with obvious reluctance, so the focus was shifted to encouragement and support, and to showing them how the Vision Zero strategy can bring about positive change in their organizations.

Implementing the "7 Golden Rules"

The "7 Golden Rules" can be flexibly implemented. Even when implementation formats differ, the results are either identical or very similar.

Once the management has committed to Vision Zero, it is up to the organization to decide which of the "7 Golden Rules" are implemented in the next step. Some organizations commit to implementing all "7 Golden Rules" at once, while others prefer to focus on a few selected rules first and move on to the next Golden Rule as soon as they are able. There have been cases where organizations have combined the rules of "Invest in people" and "Improve qualifications" into a single element in their implementation plan, which has proven to be effective.

When asked about the reason for this combination, they gave the clear answer: "You can't improve qualifications without investing in people."

In other words, they believed that these two rules were so closely interlinked that it was necessary to combine them into one single rule, leaving them with only six Golden Rules. However, the ultimate outcome is the same.

Define VZ targets – another Golden Rule – was not a problem for organizations during the implementation of Vision Zero, possibly because this is something they are already familiar with. Now they are able to focus on it as one of the guiding principles of Vision Zero. The targets are professionally and meticulously defined, and then clearly documented using a pre-agreed checklist.

Although Vision Zero is implemented on a company-wide basis, the business units and departments may also routinely carry out their own independent risk identification programmes. OSHAfrica supported the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, whose management decided to engage an external consultant to conduct fire risk assessments at its two plants in Lagos. This showed a remarkable level of commitment to overcoming the fire hazard-related problems which are not uncommon at the two plants.

Another positive development is improvements to incident reporting in the organizations that have started to use this data to implement corrective actions and set targets for areas where they need to focus their attention.

Looking at the activities of the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency since the launch of Vision Zero, it is clear that credible steps have been taken to improve occupational safety and health using the "7 Golden Rules". At the time of the VZ roll-out, the agency did not have a stand-alone safety and health department. Instead, isolated measures were implemented under the responsibility of different departments.

It wasn't necessary to persuade the organisations and companies of the benefits of Vision Zero because the concept was already convincing and attractive. The leadership commitment, which is the first of the "7 Golden Rules", is so easy to follow that organizations embraced the idea with enthusiasm.

Today, with the help of the leadership commitment approach, an independent safety and health department has been set up, headed by a qualified professional in the role of deputy director. This is one of the agency's important VZ achievements. It has made a major contribution to the development of safety and health and emergency response capacities.

There have also been recent attempts to establish a tele-medicine concept to support cadets and crew members on vessels requiring assistance in Nigerian territorial waters. The author of this article was informed that this draft had been submitted for approval. Discussions are in progress with the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) about training and certification for all employees of this institution, including cadets in training.

One of the "7 Golden Rules" of Vision Zero that organizations in Africa have found difficult to understand is rule number five, which refers to safety and health when working with equipment and machinery.

Some of these companies have systems in place, such as machine guards, and they also provide training for employees on the safe use of equipment and machines. However, there is a need to address the issue of safety both in the procurement of machinery and in the supply chain. Many people are still trying to grasp this new concept and it isn't easy persuading company and organization managers and executives to buy safer machines.

Encouraging them to embrace the maxim that "they shouldn't buy equipment or machines because they are cheap, but because they are safe" requires a very strategic and tactful approach. Some managers have been able to empathize with the situation and in some cases, they even reported their own procurement experiences, such as receiving personal protective equipment that was not fit for use.

The implementation of this aspect of Vision Zero is making slow progress due to the amount of red tape involved, as well as the supply chain managers perceiving a threat to their jobs and the procurement processes.

Many organizations design very clever safety and health programmes and events, using established global events from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) as an information base. They also design their own programmes to address current safety and health issues in the workplace. Granted, there is still a lot of room for improvement, but it is also important to recognize what these organizations have already achieved and to keep encouraging them to continue.

The OSHAfrica 2019 Declaration

The OSHAfrica 2019 declaration is a policy document that emerged from the OSHAfrica Conference in South Africa. This document clearly highlights the benefits of implementing the "7 Golden Rules" of Vision Zero. These rules have not only been published, but also slightly amended to reflect African workplace safety and health realities.

A paper calling for companies to use the VZ strategy to improve safety and health was one of the highlights of this conference. Since then, many safety and health professionals in cities and countries across Africa have requested this paper to use in their workplaces. Some of the key points of the OSHAfrica version of the "7 Golden Rules" are as follows:

- The need for leadership actions that are visible to all employees; walk the talk;
- Involve communities in general safety and health programmes through a community participation system that covers the majority of environmental safety and health aspects;
- Promote risk-based thinking and gender-specific risk assessments in the workplace, considering the variability of workplaces and social environments;
- Emphasize evidence-based targets with policies on implementation, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation;

- Consistent collection of OSH data at all levels (enterprise, country and global);
- Develop occupational disease monitoring systems to provide information for prevention and control measures;
- Eliminate child labour and promote decent work;
- Use knowledge about human interaction with machines to minimize workplace risks;
- Ensure the use of safe equipment to reduce workplace hazards because safe technology protects human capital;
- Promote lifelong learning from pre-school to adulthood;
- Promote prevention with pictographic images;
- Establish a culture of appreciation for employees and improve social interaction;
- Change the role of employees in safety and health from passive to active;
- Involve employees in the design of occupational safety and health.

Based on the above points, it is easy to understand why creativity was necessary in the implementation of Vision Zero, which nevertheless led to the same results.

OSHAfrica used the “7 Golden Rules” simply to highlight areas that need urgent attention, such as child labour and gender equality – two key issues at African workplaces.

As previously mentioned, the implementation of the VZ strategy involves a number of challenges.

Assessment of VZ implementations in Africa

The Vision Zero implementation results for Africa are currently in the process of being recorded. A number of tools exist to support their assessment, such as the Proactive Leading Indicators Guide published by ISSA (2020).

Has the implementation of the VZ strategy had a positive impact on enterprises in Africa? The answer is yes, because the processes for improving safety and health have been shown to work.

Given the obvious assessment challenges faced by some organizations, OSHAfrica is considering organizing training for key stakeholders on how to use the Proactive Leading Indicators Guide as a practical tool for measuring the performance of the Vision Zero strategy.

Granted, there is still a lot of room for improvement, but it is also important to recognize what these organizations have already achieved and to keep encouraging them to continue.

Footnotes

¹ See <https://visionzero.global/de/leitfaden>, downloaded on 15.6.2023

² Zambian Workers Compensation Fund Control Board

Vision Zero Rating System India (VZ-RSI)

Key facts

- Occupational accidents, damage to health and occupational diseases can be prevented through prevention, decent working conditions and compliance with corporate and human rights obligations
- The aim of the Vision Zero rating system India is to develop a “culture for occupational safety and health” in order to achieve the Vision Zero goal through continuous improvement
- Safe and healthy working conditions also have a positive impact on the economic success of companies

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Every person has the fundamental right to life and physical integrity. However, the figures of accidents at work and on the way to work show that this humanitarian requirement is not met worldwide. The goal of the Vision Zero Rating System India is to implement the Vision Zero strategy in a process-oriented and sustainable manner in Indian companies as a prevention strategy.

Accidents at work and occupational diseases are neither determined by fate nor unavoidable – they always have causes. By building a strong prevention culture, decent work conditions and adhering to the obligations of business and human rights, causes for work-related accidents, harm and occupational diseases can be prevented.

Safe and healthy working conditions are not only a legal and moral obligation – they also pay off economically. Investments in safety and health at workplaces avoid human suffering and protect our most valuable asset – our health and our physical and psychological integrity. Most importantly, they also have a positive impact on the motivation of employees, on the quality of work and products, on the company’s reputation and on the satisfaction levels of employees, managers and customers and thus on economic success. Healthy working conditions contribute to a healthy business and generally to a better and safer world.

The construction and manufacturing industries are the second largest employer in India after the agricultural sector. Both industries are mostly unorganized, employing uneducated, untrained and unexperienced workers, mostly migrants. The two sectors use technology from very basic to most recent automation exposing workers to extreme work situations. These characteristics make them more vulnerable in general and specifically with respect to occupational accidents and diseases.

Considering these factors, based on the Vision Zero approach and the “7 Golden Rules”, a multi-stakeholder (DGUV Germany, German Embassy – New Delhi, ISSA – Construction, OSH Academy and BG BAU) project ‘Vision Zero Rating System India’ (VZ-RSI), a benchmarking system to reach identical standards has been launched. The aim of the rating system is to motivate and support in developing a ‘Pro OSH Culture’ for achieving Vision Zero through continual improvement.

Vision Zero-RSI Process

The VZ-RSI is a comprehensive tool for assessing the OSH performance and enhancing occupational safety, health and wellbeing. The VZ-RSI offers an international instrument for the identification and prevention of risks. It is a web-based system having two phases (phase one & two).

Phase one consists of 82 questions covering technical and administrative areas concerning occupational safety, health, environment and worker wellbeing as prescribed in the relevant laws and rules. It also covers the administration of these laws and rules including penalties and clearances awarded by the concerned authorities. To put it briefly, phase one is segregating and eliminating the industries that don’t follow the law of the land.

By building a strong prevention culture, decent work conditions and adhering to the obligations of business and human rights, causes for work-related accidents, harm and occupational diseases can be prevented.

The online questionnaire completed by the responsible person or owner of the industry is assessed and evaluated by a team of technical experts. Industries qualifying phase one enter phase two which solely refers to the progressively practiced Vision Zero-7 Golden Rules¹ by the industry. Mainly, it is about the status of implementation and level of achievement in terms of development of ‘Pro OSH Culture’. Industries are asked to describe the methods used and efforts made in practicing these golden rules.

Vision Zero-RSI Ratings

The final evaluation is made by a team of experts under five rating categories. **One Star** which is the least category is awarded to the industry which has complied with all applicable acts, rules and regulations, and no prosecutions, penalties imposed and notices received during the assessment year (as per phase one).

Two Star rating is given to the industry which has qualified for star one and also has made efforts towards implementing VZ-7 Golden Rules during the assessment year.

Three Star rating is given to the industry which has qualified for star one and also has successfully operationalized VZ-7 Golden Rules during the assessment year. **Four Star** rating is given to the industry which has qualified for star one and also has successfully operationalized VZ-7 Golden Rules during the current and preceding assessment year.

The topmost rating – **Five Star** rating – is given to the industry which has qualified for star one and also performed as facilitator for implementing the VZ Rating System in other industries involving OSH professionals employed with them.

VZ-RSI Rating Declaration

The rating declarations are made in the Vision Zero annual conference in India. The professionals of the industry which has been rated are requested to hold a presentation about the success story of operationalizing the VZ-7 Golden Rules. This ‘Sharing of Best Practices’ presentation motivates other industries for implementation.



Figure 1 First Vision Zero Rating System Declaration Ceremony (Rating Year 2021) and Seminar on Vision Zero Approach to Safety, Health and Wellbeing for Sustainable Business Growth on 10 February 2023 at Holiday Inn, Mayur Vihar, New Delhi. © Dr. Singh

Present Status

In order to propagate the concept of 'Vision Zero' and 'Vision Zero Rating System India', 14 workshops in different industrial clusters were organized. They were performed in the states of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

In 2021 (January to December), for the first time, assessments were carried out for the rating. In 2023, in phase one, 42 industries completed the questionnaire. However, only nine industries could qualify in phase two. On 10 February 2023, these nine industries were invited to the annual conference of VZ-RSI in New Delhi (India) to present the best practices they had developed and adapted for the "7 Golden Rules".

During the conference, the call for applications for the assessment year 2022 (January to December) was announced, and it is expected that for this year, more than 100 industries will take part in the rating system.

Future plan

Following the successful implementation of the rating system in construction and manufacturing industries, the scheme is planned to be extended to other industrial sectors, such as mining, ports & docks and the service industry. Currently, in India, 13 laws concerning occupational safety and health are being amalgamated to the occupational safety, health and working conditions code (2020). Therefore, in the coming years it will be required to cover all the industries and work areas.

In India, organizations, such as Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Apex Foundation, have already participated in promoting the rating system. It is expected that more than 500 industries will apply for a rating for 2023.

The VZ-RSI is open for the support when developing and extending the system to other countries. Some countries have already expressed their interest in the Vision Zero Rating System.

“Safe and healthy working conditions are not only a legal and moral obligation – they also pay off economically. Investments in safety and health at workplaces avoid human suffering and protect our most valuable asset – our health and our physical and psychological integrity.”

Footnote

¹ Please see the 7 GOLDEN RULES & GUIDES <https://visionzero.global/guides>

Developing a national prevention strategy for Punjab/Pakistan based on VISION ZERO

Key facts

- A national prevention strategy has been developed for Punjab with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the DGUV
- The strategy is based on the Vision Zero initiative by the International Social Security Association in Germany and the “7 Golden Rules” – with ten ambitious and specific targets – and is to be implemented within ten years
- This approach paves the way for a new culture of prevention, aligns with the current strategic policy framework within the European Union and can also be used by other countries

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Germany has been supporting the sustainable development of Pakistan’s textile industry for many years. Yet the national prevention strategy for Punjab/Pakistan is a milestone. Based on Vision Zero, it relates to all sectors of the economy. The aim? To develop a culture of prevention.

On 3 May 2023, the newly developed Prevention Strategy for Safety, Health and Wellbeing at Workplaces for the Punjab Province of Pakistan was launched by the Labour and Human Resource Department (L&HRD) of the Government of Punjab in a ceremony in Lahore, Pakistan. Punjab is the most populous province in Pakistan. It covers the Pakistani part of the Punjab metropolitan region, has an area of 205,000 km² and a population of 110 million. Punjab is the richest province in the country and accounts for a large percentage of the country’s industrial production. Important sectors include textile processing, construction and agriculture.

Germany has been supporting the sustainable development of Pakistan’s textile industry for many years through a variety of innovative projects. Yet this most recent strategy is a milestone, as it will be applied to all sectors of the economy and, at a later stage, extended to the whole of Pakistan.

This newly developed strategical framework is based on the Vision Zero initiative by the International Social Security Association (ISSA) in Germany and aims to establish a culture of prevention, focussing on safety, health and the wellbeing of employees.



Figure 1 The Vision Zero prevention strategy launch in Pakistan on 3 May 2023. © GIZ

The national strategy development process was the central component of an overarching project commissioned by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), which also developed and tested qualification concepts for labor inspectors and safety & health officers. Two DGUV/ISSA experts were involved in helping to develop the strategy.



Information

Working on behalf of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the DGUV has been advising the Ministry of Labor & Employment for the Punjab Province in Pakistan since 2018 and the Federal Ministry of Commerce, Textiles, Industry & Production and Investment since 2021. In addition to developing and implementing a prevention strategy for Punjab, a training curriculum was developed for occupational safety specialists. At the same time, the participating training institutes will receive advice on digital methods and further training for their trainers.

Other focus areas include the further development of the training curriculum for labor inspectors, further development of an app to monitor occupational accidents, and guidance on the development and evaluation of prevention campaigns.

Achieving success together

The success to date has been achieved under difficult conditions. Owing to the global pandemic, the first of three workshops could only take place online, with the kick-off in December 2021. Despite the adverse conditions, it took less than eighteen months to develop the strategy and obtain the agreement of all the stakeholders. Initially, there was considerable scepticism about such an undertaking. Why is this necessary? We already have laws and regulations. Why should we, as inspectors, sit at the table with the social partners? These and other concerns had to be addressed first.

Following extensive consultations, the ribbon was finally cut at a two-day face-to-face workshop which brought together representatives from industry, trade unions,

employers, civil society, the scientific community, OSH experts, government departments and other relevant international partners. The constructive atmosphere was palpable for everyone in the room, seated at the same round table and all focussed on the common cause.

Having a concrete roadmap in place in advance proved beneficial as it provided a constant point of reference, as shown in the table (Figure 2).

Roadmap for the development of a national prevention strategy for the Punjab province in Pakistan	
1	Inventory Phase
2	Strengths -/Weaknesses Analysis (SWOT-Analysis)
3	Understanding VISION ZERO Phase (Basic Understanding)
4	Identifying Actors, Stakeholders and Structures
5	Definition of Strategy-Aims and of Timeline
6	Identifying Strategy-Measures and Activities
7	Design Phase and Stakeholder Consulting Processes
8	Launchevent/Advertising and Communication Phase
9	Realization and Implementation Phase
10	Continuous Advertising and Communication
11	Continuous Reporting of Results and Progress – Annual Conference
12	Correction- and Update-Phase

Figure 2 Roadmap for the development of a national prevention strategy for the Punjab province in Pakistan; © ISSA

The result: A new prevention strategy for Punjab

The strategy document, which has now been officially released by the provincial government, begins with a political foreword on the significance of the document, followed by an introduction to the topics of a national strategy and Vision Zero. It explains the three fields of action – safety, health and wellbeing – and the “7 Golden Rules” that underpin them.¹ The document also sets out the responsibilities and structures for the sustainable implementation of the strategy.

This is followed by the main sections, introducing the general aims and purpose of the new approach, followed by ten specific and very ambitious objectives to be achieved over an initial ten-year period. For instance, the number of fatal occupational accidents is to be reduced by 75% by 2032. (The other targets will soon be made available on the Punjab provincial government website.) The list of objectives is followed by the measures, grouped into 13 clusters, which are considered the appropriate route to achieving the objectives and which will now be addressed in a phased manner.

At this point, number 5 in the series of measures serves as a helpful example as it addresses the specific needs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Interestingly, this is followed by a large number of target-related activities that are already categorised as “achievable in the short term”, “implementable in the medium term” and “to be tackled in the long term”. This shows that concrete implementation activities begin as soon as the strategy is launched. In other words, the strategy is more than just an attractive presentation. It comes to life right from the start.

A strategy for Punjab – A milestone

Speaking at the launch event, Tauseef Dilshad Khatana, Deputy Minister of Occupational Safety and Health, highlighted the importance of this historical achievement, saying, “The Punjab Prevention Strategy for Safety, Health and Wellbeing at Workplaces is a new roadmap aimed at implementing and achieving a culture of prevention, in the light of Vision Zero, in the province of Punjab in Pakistan.”

“Safety at work is a fundamental right and not a choice,” emphasised Rao Zahid, Deputy Secretary of Development at the Ministry’s Labor and Human Resource Department (L&HRD). He shared that “the roadmap was developed through a consultation process and now it is time to focus on the implementation of measures for developing and improving a culture for safety, health and wellbeing at all establishments.”

He also highlighted the importance of this initiative in the context of ILO conventions C155 and C187, which have now become the fundamental conventions.

10 Year (2023 to 2032) Action Plan Targets & Measures



Figure 3 Ten-Year (2023 to 2032) Action Plan Targets & Measures

The experience of developing the national prevention strategy for the Punjab province can be seen as an example for many other countries in the world.

Helmut Ehnés, an international prevention expert from DGUV and ISSA, Germany, elaborated that “Vision Zero goes beyond compliance. It requires a change in the thinking, behaviour and mindset of all leaders, managers, and employees. To establish a culture of zero accidents, the ‘7 Golden Rules’ are key, and these rules serve as the foundation for the Punjab Prevention Strategy.”

Ansa Rabia, Component Manager at the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) reiterated, saying, “The future looks promising with the launch of Vision Zero, the Punjab Occupational Safety and Health Act and the supplementary Punjab Prevention Strategy. We strongly believe in Vision Zero which is the fundamental building block for this strategy.

The efforts of L&HRD towards the promotion of prevention culture is crucial for the success of this strategy. The commitment towards Vision Zero and the Punjab Prevention Strategy is pertinent for a socio-economic boost. The German development cooperation has been supporting the Pakistani Government initiatives for years. We work together with our partners in support of their socio-economic reform agenda aimed at reducing poverty, promoting economic growth and creating jobs. Our work contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and is implemented in line with the Pakistan-German cooperation agreements.”

Promoting a culture of prevention, based on preventive, proactive strategies, must be encouraged to replace the reactive and compensatory framework. One of the guiding principles in the strategy document explains that this is to be achieved through a risk-based approach to identifying all reasonably foreseeable hazards in the workplace and the necessary corrective measures.

The national strategy for Punjab is intended to serve as the backbone for a future-oriented prevention culture. The fundamental ideas are:

- A framework for a new prevention strategy is being developed to support the necessary change process. L&HRD will be proactive in this regard. Vision Zero goes beyond “compliance with regulations”. The “7 Golden Rules” must be implemented to create a zero harm culture in every company.

- L&HRD actively involves all relevant stakeholders (internal and external) in this development process to create ownership, motivation and acceptance of the new approach. Social dialogue is particularly encouraged.
- The guiding principles are about developing a common understanding of the principles of the Vision Zero strategy for Punjab and its “soul”. Safety, health, wellbeing or rather mental health should not be seen as a bureaucratic burden, but as an indispensable factor for the bright future of Pakistani society.
- The strategy will help to position the Punjab Province and L&HRD in such a way that the economic framework and envisaged changes are seen as leading the way for successful and sustainable collaborations between all the stakeholders.

This will have a positive impact on market, customer and investor awareness. The fact that Europe is following a similar path with its current framework and is also building on the Vision Zero concept will likely be beneficial for future economic cooperations.

The experience of developing the national prevention strategy for the Punjab province can be seen as an example for many other countries in the world. Of course, we don’t expect every element to be applied in exactly the same way. But the fundamental, proven approach, the core elements of the strategy and the development steps are groundbreaking. There’s no need to reinvent the wheel when it’s already rolling. Yet, in terms of a further development process, meaningful improvements can be made to help it run more smoothly and reduce wear and tear.

Footnotes

- ¹ http://ciwce.org.pk/downloads/Punjab_Prevention_Strategy_on_Safety_Health_and_Wellbeing_at_Workplace.pdf

Reinforcing an occupational safety and health culture with VISION ZERO – The Grupo Energía Bogotá success story

Key facts

- The electricity sector in Colombia has been one of three economic sectors with the highest work-related mortality rates in recent years
- After several serious accidents, Grupo Energía Bogotá (GEB) decided to implement the Vision Zero model
- A two-step approach was taken to facilitate the prompt mitigation of primary risks and the development of an occupational safety and health culture

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When Grupo Energía Bogotá in Colombia introduced a new strategic plan, it experienced significant growth in construction projects. There were massive impacts on the company, one of which was an increase in serious occupational accidents. This article describes how Vision Zero helped to halt this trend.

Grupo Energía Bogotá is a multinational group of companies based in Colombia operating along the entire Latin American energy chain in the areas of electricity generation, transmission and distribution, as well as natural gas transmission and distribution. In 2016, it defined a new group-wide strategic plan. This new plan led to massive growth in new construction projects, particularly transmission grid projects (transmission lines, towers, substations), and it also had significant impacts on business operations. Compared to the previous year, for example, the number of contractors and hours worked increased by more than 700 percent. The development of the growth projects also entailed an increase in jobs associated with high-risk activities. The occupational safety and health (OSH) management system in place at the time was still in the roll-out phase and priority measures had not yet been defined, which meant GEB's safety culture had a low level of maturity. As a result, a number of serious accidents and high-damage-potential accidents occurred in 2017 and early 2018.

In general, the accident figures for the electricity sector in Colombia are high and there is vast scope for improvement leading to a reduction in serious and fatal accidents. According to the Colombian Safety Council's Occupational Safety and Health Observatory [Consejo Colombiano de Seguridad], the electricity sector has been one of three economic sectors with the highest mortality rates from work-related accidents in recent years.¹

Prevention of serious and fatal accidents

The accident situation made GEB recognise the need to implement a plan to strengthen its occupational safety culture with the aim of permanently reducing the incidence of accidents resulting in personal injury, property damage and environmental harm. After extensive comparative studies, GEB chose the Vision Zero model developed by the International Social Security Association (ISSA) as the best alternative for the development and implementation of best practices in line with the "7 Golden Rules" and as a first step towards the prevention of serious and fatal accidents.

In order to achieve those aims and to ensure the new culture could be successfully established, an occupational safety and health strategy was developed at GEB. The strategy aims to expand the safety culture at Grupo Energía Bogotá by implementing a containment plan to mitigate priority risks in the short term and developing a structured, best-practices-based plan reflecting the Vision Zero model that will contribute to the company's operational excellence and thus to (medium/long term) value creation.

The priority risk mitigation phase was designed with the new paradigm in mind and involved the development of the following steps:

1. Identification of risks in critical operations
2. Review of existing systems and measures to manage and mitigate risks
3. Definition of measures to minimise identified risks

4. Support during the implementation of the defined short-term measures
5. Prioritisation of measures and definition of the roadmap
6. Monitoring of execution

The first step comprised an assessment of occupational safety and health management. The following main weaknesses were identified:

- Risk management was delegated to occupational safety and health management without any project and operations management training.
- No effective checks were in place for a high percentage of operations, including high-risk activities.
- Contractors in projects that exposed them to a high accident risk were deviating from instructions.
- There was a high risk of fatal accidents recurring due to company and industry findings not being documented.

In order to ensure that the containment measures had the desired effect, a work plan for education and training measures was drafted with the following four focus areas:

1. Improving leadership competence
2. Empowering contractors
3. Reinforcing the occupational safety and health function
4. Learning from mistakes

Examples of measures that will contribute to improving leadership competence are discussed below.

Weekly agenda with occupational safety and health topics

In order to facilitate a systematic review of critical risk mitigation measures by senior management, a weekly agenda of OSH topics and key performance indicators was set. For this purpose, contractor work activities associated with serious or potentially serious accidents were identified. An additional performance dashboard with leading and lagging indicators was developed to support the continuous and sustainable implementation of the mitigation measures.

Measures are monitored and implemented on a weekly basis to ensure the prevention of serious accidents. Another element of the concept is monthly management visits to the persons responsible for transmission business with the aim of inspiring employees and conveying the value of life to them.

The plan to strengthen the OSH culture was developed in line with the Vision Zero model and involved the following steps:

1. Diagnosis: initial assessment of the maturity of the OSH culture at GEB and its subsidiaries
2. Definition of the vision for safety and health and the corresponding measures
3. Plans to implement the measures and the “7 Golden Rules” of Vision Zero
4. Behaviour training and intervention
5. Implementation of new skills
6. Stabilisation and maturation of skills

Step one was to determine GEB’s maturity level in terms of OSH culture and process safety by performing surveys, conducting interviews and obtaining documents for analysis and assessment purposes.

According to the Colombian Safety Council’s Occupational Safety and Health Observatory, the electricity sector has been one of three economic sectors with the highest mortality rates from work-related accidents in recent years.

In order to facilitate a systematic review of critical risk mitigation measures by senior management, a weekly agenda of OSH topics and key performance indicators was set.

The safety culture assessment document identified the weaknesses and included recommendations to eliminate them. Based on the perceptions of GEB's direct employees, the level of safety culture maturity at each subsidiary and the GEB group headquarters was determined using the five-level Parker scale.

At the same time, the guidelines for a risk-based process safety management system published by the Center for Chemical Process Safety (CCPS) were followed to perform document reviews, visits and interviews to determine the level of compliance with the four elements recommended by the CCPS.² The report details the status of implementation as well as short and medium term action requirements.

Based on the report, recommended actions were then defined for the next 18 months of the implementation phase of the safety culture and process safety transformation, supplemented with deadlines and activities tailored to the needs of each subsidiary.

After the OSH culture diagnosis, work plans were drawn up taking the identified requirements and weaknesses into account. The OSH management model was developed in collaboration with the responsible OSH managers at each of the subsidiaries on the basis of the Vision Zero strategy.

“Life First”

A corporate committee was established for each subsidiary to ensure compliance with the guiding principle of “Life First” (Primero la Vida). The committee is a governing body that facilitates synchronised group-wide strategy implementation on the basis of the diagnosis results and action plans. Furthermore, taking into account the weaknesses identified in the diagnosis for the individual subsidiaries, the recommended work plans for the implementation phase were drawn up to address six overlapping areas: on-site OSH management, OSH governance, OSH human resource management, “just culture”, process safety and contractor management.

Based on this, the training plan developed for the strategic, tactical, operational and OSH levels covers five topics: proactive practices, visible OSH leadership, process safety and operational discipline. These topics were prioritised and the relevant training provided in 2021 and 2022.

After more than three years of successful implementation of the Vision Zero model at GEB and its subsidiaries in Colombia, Peru and Guatemala, there have been no further fatal accidents in the factories and a significant reduction in the accident rate (68 % fewer lost-time accidents). GEB's “Life First” motto forms the basis for implementing the strategic objective of establishing an occupational safety culture at all subsidiaries.

Footnotes

¹ Beobachtungsstelle für Sicherheit und Gesundheitsschutz bei der Arbeit [Occupational Safety and Health Observatory, CCS]: Sterblichkeitsrate von Beschäftigten nach Wirtschaftssektoren 2020 [Mortality rate of employees by economic sector 2020], <https://ccs.org.co/atel-col-2020/> (downloaded 10.07.2023)

² Center for Chemical Process Safety (CCPS): Guidelines for risk-based process safety, 2010, John Wiley & Sons.

Global supply chains – Cornerstones of the ISSA Trade Section’s VISION ZERO project

Key facts

- Companies, markets, customers and policymakers are becoming increasingly sensitized to working conditions along global supply chains
- ISSA Trade is currently developing a guide based on the Vision Zero strategy to provide supply chain communities with a global tool for status quo assessment and collaborative partnership development
- The guide is based on a 5-step model, a “7 Golden Rules for supply chains” self-assessment checklist and an “SHW+” checklist for supply chain partners

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Global supply chains are increasingly coming under critical scrutiny. Calls for safe, socially just and sustainable supply chains are getting constantly louder. How can the ISSA Trade Section’s Vision Zero project provide guidance and effective support to all stakeholders?

The multitude of current developments, such as the digital transformation, informal or platform work, the pandemic, migration pressure, climate change, free trade agreements and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, are leading to an increasing focus on sustainability, decent work and social security along global supply chains and in all the economic sectors of an interconnected world. As a result, companies and customers are becoming increasingly sensitized and political initiatives and legislation are being discussed.

A current International Social Security Association (ISSA) project addresses this issue. It focuses on the development of a globally applicable tool for recording, assessing and optimizing the safety, health and wellbeing of workers along supply chains. The entire ISSA prevention network is involved in the project developed under the leadership of the International Trade, Goods Logistics and Port Handling Section (ISSA Trade).

The guide that is being developed in the context of this project is nearing completion – which is why we are presenting its main features here.

Based on the Vision Zero strategy, the “Improving Safety, Health and Wellbeing at Workplaces along Global Supply Chains by VISION ZERO” project aims to define a concept to determine compliance with minimum criteria at key

points of the supply chain, to identify deficits and to promote a sustainable communication and optimization process between the partners, the development of a basis for trust and hence collaboration.

Project framework and idea

The new tool is intended for cross-border use, independent of national legislation. The project is being carried out by an international working group of researchers from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). Professor Gerard Zwetsloot from the Netherlands is also involved. Industry representatives and stakeholders were given the opportunity to contribute their comments and feedback to the project.

Based on the assumption that all companies are fundamentally responsible for their actions, the current discussion is calling for that responsibility to extend to the respective supply relationships in order to create fair competitive conditions worldwide. Supply chains connect companies of different sizes, in different sectors of the economy, in different regions of the world and with different levels of occupational safety and health. However, they generally only see as far as the next “level supplier” and, beyond that, there is often a “black hole”.

Based on the assumption that all companies are fundamentally responsible for their actions, the current discussion is calling for that responsibility to extend to the respective supply relationships in order to create fair competitive conditions worldwide.

Supply relationships are typically structured in a very complex way and supply chains that have long been global are becoming increasingly fragmented. In addition to that there are numerous intermediate levels – from raw material extraction or agricultural production, through processing and transport to the sale of the finished product to the consumer (see Figure 1).

Therefore, the aim of the project is to provide a tool that is capable of shedding light into this darkness. The tool has to be viable for every country without contradicting national legislation. It has to define the minimum standards required but, at the same time, set realistic requirements and motivate all stakeholders to participate. This is certainly a challenging undertaking, given that supply chains can have unlimited complexity.

So, the project result that is about to be published, can definitely only be a first step. The main objective is to establish a basic concept. Then, in the next steps, that concept will be supplemented with sector-specific requirements and other terms of reference.

Project objectives and key points

The main project objectives were defined as:

- Improve safety, health and wellbeing (mental health) in global supply relationships and along the supply chains;
- Promote the sustainability of economic activities;
- Establish shared best practices for sustainability in trade relations and supply chains;
- Develop practical instruments for the industry;

- Use economic cooperation between suppliers and partners in the supply chains (Business-to-Business) to improve working conditions;
- Provide transparent information to the public and customers.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following key points were defined within the framework of the project:

- The Guide for Sustainable Supply Chains, which builds on the Vision Zero strategy and
- The “7 Golden Rules”, which have been adapted to address supply chain issues.
- Social responsibility: Every company is fundamentally responsible for occupational safety and health as well as compliance with fundamental rights and core labor standards.
- “Safety. Health. Wellbeing PLUS (SHW+)” defines the minimum standards to be achieved at every step of the supply chain.
- A 5-step model is proposed for the implementation of the guide.
- The guide contains sample templates and checklists.

The two main checklists that will be available with the publication of the new guide are:

- The “7 Golden Rules for supply chains” checklist. It is used for a self-assessment of the supply chain status quo in one’s own (proactive) company.
- The “SHW+ for supply chain partners” checklist. It helps to identify the SHW+ status quo among (reactive) partners in supply chains.



Figure 1 A simplified example of a supply chain; © Ehnes/Roth

“Supply chains connect companies of different sizes, in different sectors of the economy, in different regions of the world and with different levels of occupational safety and health. However, they generally only see as far as the next level supplier and, beyond that, there is often a “black hole”.

What is SHW+ all about?

The new term SHW+ was coined to ensure that the focus of the discussion on the sensitive issue of working conditions along supply chains not only considers the fundamental right to a safe and healthy working environment (i.e. traditional occupational safety and health issues), but also questions compliance with fundamental principles and human rights at work (ILO core labor standards).

The plus sign represents the additional issues of child labor, forced labor, long working hours, freedom of association, discrimination and remuneration (see Figure 2).

The 5-step model

The guide recommends a five-step approach to continuous improvement in supply chains (see Figure 3, page 40).

In step 1, a company that is part of one or several supply chains accepts that scrutiny of its own supply chains is necessary and worthwhile. This can be any company at any stage of the supply chain or any point in a supply chain network – but it is likely to be a company that plans to bring new products to the market and is facing critical questions from consumers. That’s the start.

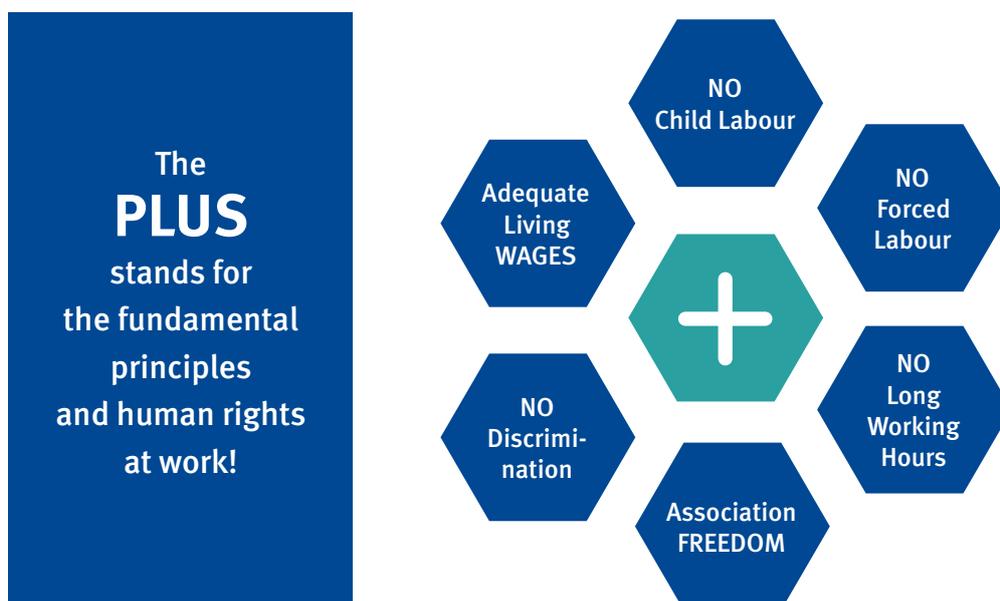


Figure 2 A simplified example of a supply chain; © Ehnes/Roth



Figure 3 A five-step process for improving SHW+ in supply chains; © Ehnes/Roth

In step 2, this proactive company will be asked to identify and assess its own situation, its own approach and its level of knowledge about its own supply chains using the “7 Golden Rules for supply chains” checklist. This checklist not only serves to identify the status quo, but also as a source of self-motivation and inspiration.

In step 3, the most important (critical) cooperating companies in the supply chains are defined. It is advisable not to aim for 100 % supply chain coverage from the outset, but to focus on a few significant companies first. The selection can be made according to various aspects: percentage contribution to the finished product, risk probability, exclusive supply chain cooperations. Companies that are at the beginning of the supply chains (raw material suppliers) should be preferentially included. Contact is now made with the selected companies and they are encouraged to cooperate. The “SHW+ checklist for supply chain partners” can be used to examine the status quo of these companies. It can be assumed that the initial assessment will provide immediate starting points for criticism and improvement.

In step 4, the suppliers’ willingness to cooperate is cultivated. The aim is not to replace suppliers who reveal shortcomings, but to work on a relationship with them that extends beyond the simple act of order processing. Efforts must be made to develop genuine partnerships because trust and sustainable improvements can only be achieved by working together. Initial cooperation projects can be helpful – because success builds trust.

Step 5 is about building on the trust base to achieve sustainable, long-term partnerships and continuously improve the maturity of the “supply chain community of fate”. Now is also the time to consider involving other partner companies.

What are the arguments in favor of this approach?

The tools developed in this project

- are designed for international use and can be applied worldwide, regardless of national legislation;
- can be used to define and promote sustainable supply chain relationships;
- can be used to implement and document sustainability requirements along global supply chains;
- enable risk assessment and vulnerability identification along supply chains;
- can be used to identify, design and select improvement measures;
- enable the maturity of supply chains to be determined by applying Vision Zero’s “7 Golden Rules” and 14 proactive leading indicators;
- can be used for the internal or external benchmarking of results.



Information

The guides, including all checklists, will be officially launched at the 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2023 which takes place in Sydney/Australia from 27–30 November 2023, and can then be downloaded from <https://visionzero.global/>. Companies interested in testing the tool can contact the authors in advance.

Vision Zero Fund: Collective action for safe and healthy supply chains

Key facts

- The Vision Zero Fund was established by the G7 in 2015 and was endorsed by the G20 in 2017. The Fund is administered by the International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialised agency of the United Nations
- The Fund uses the convening power of the ILO to bring stakeholders together under its collective action model to improve safety and health in global supply chains
- The Fund is currently active in three supply chains (agriculture, construction, and garment/textiles), and implements projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. To date, its work has benefited 8.3 million workers worldwide

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The Vision Zero Fund will only work, if all stakeholders are willing to act hand in hand. It is only through collective action that the manifold challenges in occupational safety and health can be tackled industry-wide in order to provide safe and healthy supply chains.

Each morning, somewhere in the world, 1,000 people leave for work and don't return home. An additional 6,500 people die every day from work-related diseases.

These are the people who make our clothes. Grow the beans for our coffee. Construct the buildings in which we live and work. They need safe and healthy workplaces. They deserve our shared commitment to improving health and safety along the global supply chain.

The objective of the Vision Zero Fund (VZF) is to work towards the vision of zero fatal and severe work-related injuries and diseases by improving occupational safety and health practices and conditions in sectors that link to global supply chains, and by strengthening institutional frameworks such as labour inspectorates and employment injury insurance schemes in countries linked to such global supply chains.

To that end, the VZF facilitates collective action through a model of joint responsibility. VZF, as part of the ILO, uses its convening power to bring stakeholders together to design and develop industry-wide (rather than company-specific) strategies.

The Fund works primarily in less developed countries with weak governance and in sectors (such as agriculture and construction) where evidence suggests significant decent work deficits exists. A pre-condition for funding is the commitment of countries and stakeholders to prevention and the implementation of minimum labour, environmental and safety standards.

Model of collective action

In 2017, in their statement supporting the Vision Zero Fund, the G20 labour and employment ministers encouraged *“governments, social partners, local and international companies as well as NGOs to take collective action for the prevention of workplace accidents and commit to implementing appropriate actions within the framework of the Vision Zero Fund”*¹.

Based on this mandate, the Fund has made collective action a central component of its current strategy. The approach is rooted in the idea that the root causes of safety and health deficits in global supply chains are complex, they are multi-faceted, and cannot be addressed by one actor alone. To improve OSH in supply chains in an effective and sustainable way requires an approach that involves a wide range of stakeholders acting collectively.

The strategy is defined as a “multi-stakeholder approach that involves governments, workers and trade unions, employers and their organisations, multilateral organisations, civil society and development agencies, working together so that each meets its responsibilities consistent with organizational roles, to implement an agreed plan or set of actions to reduce severe or fatal work accidents, injuries or diseases in global supply chains.”

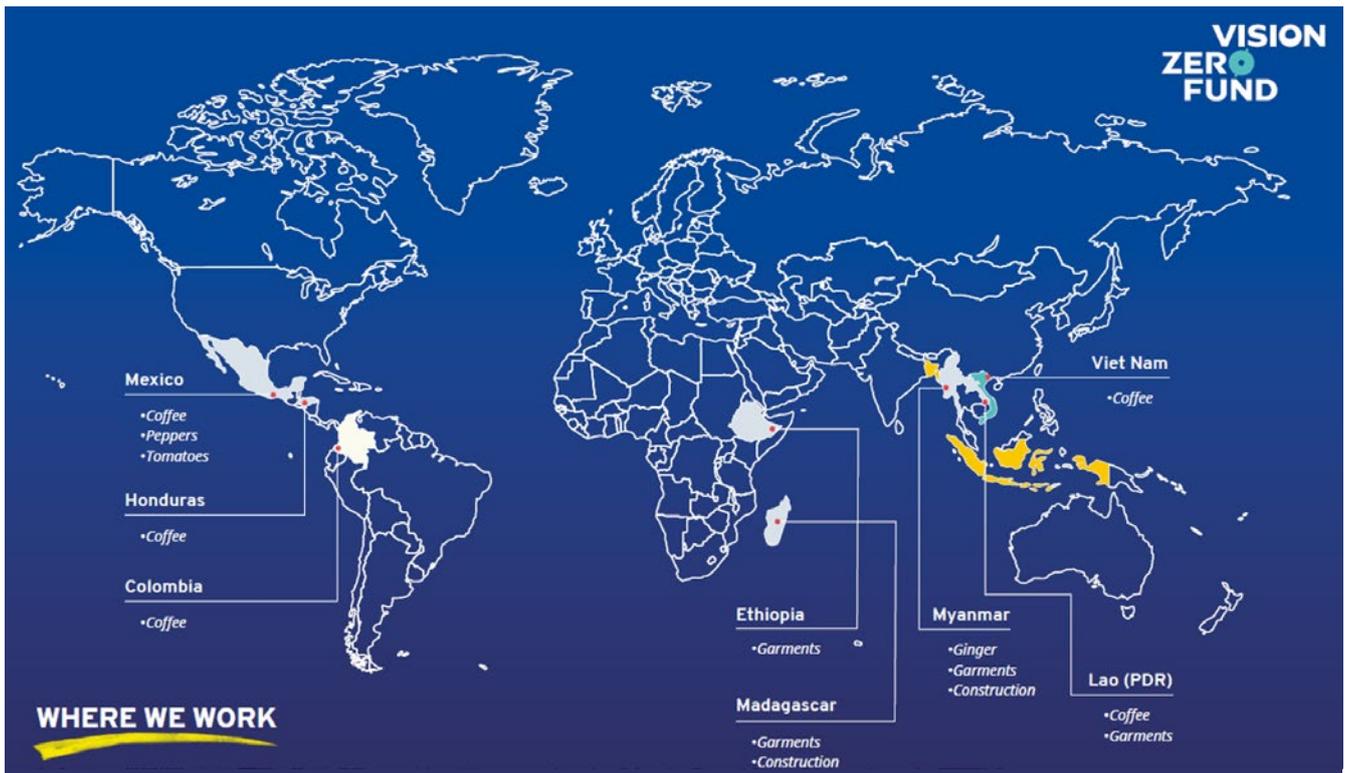


Figure 1 Beneficiary countries of the Vision Zero Fund; © IAO 2023

Implementing evidence-led solutions

The Fund has developed a specific approach and intervention framework to address OSH in global supply chains. We select countries and sectors based on specific criteria; then map the entire supply chain through an OSH lens to identify risks and strategic entry points for improvement. In every project country, prior to implementing activities, the Fund conducts a comprehensive assessment (called *Assessment of drivers and constraints for OSH improvement*²). This assessment provides:

- A holistic understanding of a given value chain, its institutional environment, its drivers and constraints for decent work and in particular OSH and how those affect the nature, severity, probability of harm arising from the exposure to workplace occupational hazards and their impact on various groups of workers in the value chain;

- An identification of strategic entry points for improvement, which may be different from traditional interventions on OSH, as they may be multi-layered and indirect, or related to other inter-linked working and employment conditions;
- A basis for project design and implementation based on the designed intervention models.

By involving constituents and other stakeholders in the assessment process from the start (see figure 2), VZF country projects strengthen relationships, build trust, and facilitate commitment to a process of collective action.

Synopsis of the methodology

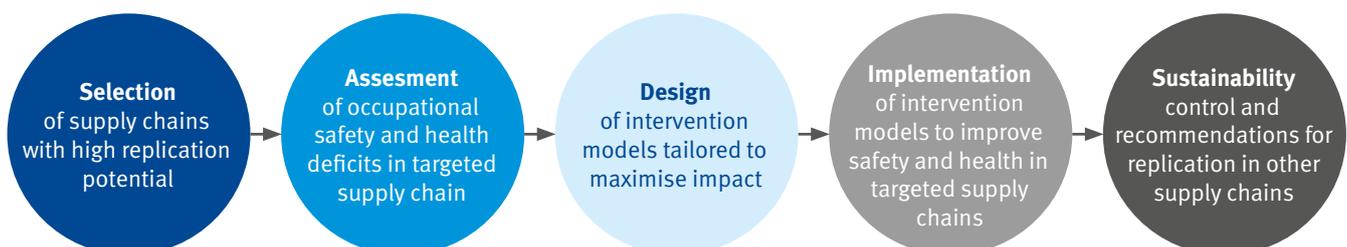


Figure 2 Vision Zero Fund methodology; © IAO 2023

Working at multiple levels

The Fund uses the findings from the assessments (see above) to carefully develop tailor-made interventions at national, sectoral and workplace levels. As mentioned above, these “intervention models” are developed in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including the representatives of multinational enterprises.

The Fund works at multiple levels in its project countries because it recognises that they are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. For example, for improvements at workplace level to be sustainable, it needs to be underpinned by strong national and sectoral institutions and an effective regulatory framework that includes good laws and robust enforcement of those laws. That is why a significant portion of the Fund’s work at country level is focused on strengthening legal and policy frameworks and national institutions (see below).

The Fund’s main achievements to date

Knowledge management

Generating, sharing, and managing knowledge is a key component of the Fund’s work. Knowledge may include tools, methodologies, training modules, and research. To date, the Fund has developed more than 120 knowledge products on safety and health in global supply chains, 80 of which have been published.³

Private sector engagement

Engagement with the private sector is crucial to the Fund’s efforts. This involves engaging with global buyers and multinational enterprises to leverage their presence, influence, and resources in support of the Fund’s goals. At country level, the Fund has engaged with local suppliers and representatives of global buyers from the start. As a result, local business owners have improved OSH conditions, social dialogue between tripartite constituents and private sector acts has improved, and all stakeholders have better access to data, knowledge, and expertise.

At global level, the Fund established public-private partnerships with Nike, Nestlé and Siemens and is currently engaged in conversations with other global buyers in the private sector. Since the Fund is active in more than one sector, it aims to influence global conversations on OSH and engage with global platforms (such as The Global Coffee Platform, the International Coffee Organization and the International Women’s Coffee Alliance, for example) to achieve its objectives.

Implementing effective, low-cost solutions

Actionable research is at the heart of every Vision Zero Fund country project. As mentioned above, they all start with a comprehensive assessment of drivers and constraints, including workplace observations. These assessments often find that OSH improvements do not require large financial investments. Simple, low-cost solutions that are easy to implement and maintain can have a significant impact on workers’ health and safety, as well as productivity.

For example, in Myanmar, the Fund identified many OSH hazards, including ergonomic and biological ones in ginger trading facilities. Men carried baskets of produce on their backs, shoulders, or heads to move from the warehouse to the trucks. They were compensated based on the amount of produce they carried and loaded per day. This created an incentive for workers to carry heavier loads at faster paces, straining their bodies in the process. Meanwhile, women sorted produce. They were exposed to ergonomic hazards from squatting all day, breathed dusty air, and worked in poor sanitary conditions. None of the workers were entitled to social security benefits or financial assistance in the event of an injury or illness.

The Fund assessed innovative ways to address OSH challenges by linking improvements with enhanced productivity and product quality. The team identified methods to improve OSH, mostly by addressing ergonomic concerns and workers’ exposure to dust and debris. For example, project staff and local traders developed a prototype for a new ginger sorting table, which allowed workers to stand instead of squatting. The table also features a dust accumulator to reduce the time spent on post-sorting cleaning. Women workers in particular noted a reduction in bodily stress. It is estimated that the sorting tables saved nearly 40% of workers’ time, compared to using the traditional method.

Strengthening the labour inspectorate

Labour inspectorates face various hurdles in countries in which Vision Zero Fund operates. These include limited financial and human resources, high turnover, outdated and inefficient inspection methods, and a lack of authority to enforce compliance. Plus, OSH is not usually a priority issue for labour inspectors. The agriculture sector poses more problems. Most labour inspectorates do not even cover the sector. Where they do have authority, workplaces are often remote, hard to reach, and largely informal.

The VZF Madagascar project provides a good example of how the Fund has helped to strengthen labour inspectorates. In that country, the Fund helped the inspectorate develop a strategic compliance plan.⁴ It also supported the government on a five-year plan to promote better collaboration between the labour inspectorate, social security agencies, and occupational physicians. Already, the results are clear. A group of 12 labour inspectors are now part of a dedicated OSH task force, leading efforts to scale up OSH skills across the country. Thanks to enhanced coordination among key OSH actors, the most vulnerable workers in the informal sector – seasonal lychee workers – have gained access to OSH services. The project also facilitated collaboration between the Malagasy labour inspectorate and the French Directorate for Enterprises, Competition, Consumer Affairs, Labour and Employment in La Réunion. The collaboration has promoted the exchange of good practices and hands-on learning.

Improving access to employment injury insurance

Vision Zero Fund was established as a direct response to the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in Dhaka in 2013. More than 1,100 workers died and 2,500 were injured. To help workers and their families, multinational companies and individuals contributed to a compensation scheme meant to provide financial and medical support. The tragedy shed light on the importance of proper employment injury insurance (EII) benefit schemes in cases of work-related accidents and diseases.

EII schemes are not new. They are a standard pillar of social security in many countries. However, 60% of the global labour force lacks this type of protection.

One of the Fund's key areas of work is to strengthen EII in project countries and diminish the need for reactive compensation schemes after tragedies. Activities include providing technical support to social security institutions and implementing capacity building initiatives on the ground. Myanmar again provides a good example of what can be achieved.

In 2017, the Fund partnered with Myanmar's Social Security Board (SSB) to provide better services to its members and effectively insure them against OSH risks. The Fund helped the SSB complete a comprehensive legal, administrative, and IT reform to improve overall efficiency and communication with employers and workers. Its recommendations included modernizing the IT system and streamlining claim procedures.

Two townships benefited from the pilot project, which tested a set of streamlined procedures around disability, funeral grants, and survivor benefits, as well as enhanced communication with clients. It promoted a reorganized workflow, strategic monitoring and reporting, and the separation of front and back-office functions.

An independent assessment deemed the reforms a success. Workers received improved, faster services. For example, temporary disability claim processing time was reduced by 77%. For SSB staff, the processes were more streamlined and efficient.

Advancing gender equality

Women face specific patterns of occupational hazards and risks. Recognizing the division of labour from a gender perspective is the first step in promoting safer, healthier workplaces.

In 2019, the Fund adopted a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming to better support women in key OSH areas.⁵ A team of gender experts reviewed its methodology to assess drivers and constraints for OSH improvement. Based on that, the Fund developed a thematic brief to provide clear guidance on how to design, implement, and monitor and evaluate gender-responsive projects.⁶ At the same time, the Fund's country teams gathered gender-specific data in target supply chains and used that information to develop gender-responsive interventions.

An example of how to facilitate more gender-responsive responses can be implemented come from the Fund's work in the coffee sector in Mexico. The Fund's assessment showed a need to improve the visibility of women in Mexico's coffee sector. The team investigated the role of women and gained insights on their attitudes toward safety and health. In doing so, the team partnered with the International Women's Coffee Alliance and drew from its extensive network of women coffee producers to reach more workers. This survey allowed the team to better understand the OSH conditions of women in coffee, including social protection and OSH services, exposure to psychosocial risks, and working hazards.⁷ This allowed the team to design interventions and training material that could better respond to women's specific learning needs.

Addressing new emerging risks

Climate change and associated environmental degradation pose increasing risks to workers' health and safety. They are often the first to be exposed to climate change effects, for longer durations and at greater intensities than the general public.

In 2022, the G7 asked the Fund to address the impact of climate change on OSH in supply chains.⁸ As part of this mandate, Vision Zero Fund has identified three project countries on three different continents (Madagascar, Mexico, and Vietnam) in which to implement pilot activities. The focus will be on the design and implementation of adaptation measures that will benefit some of the most vulnerable workers in the agriculture and construction sectors.

In Madagascar, the Fund has commissioned research to assess the impact of climate change on the safety and health of cotton farmers and construction workers in Madagascar. In Mexico, the project is implementing a methodology to measure heat exposure and heat stress among workers in the tomato and chili pepper sectors in Jalisco and assess the perceived and direct impacts on the health and productivity of workers. In Viet Nam, the Fund is conducting a comprehensive feasibility study to assess the overall impact of climate change on the safety and health of agricultural workers and to identify appropriate adaptive measures that can be implemented with the support of the Fund.

Concluding remarks

For the Fund's model of collective action to work, key public and private stakeholders need to be willing to take joint and collaborative action to address industry-wide OSH challenges. Not only does this include the ILO's tripartite constituents – governments, employers and workers – but also OSH professionals and globally-minded institutions such as DGUV, which are important partners in the process of helping the VZF develop industry-wide solutions and improving OSH conditions for vulnerable workers worldwide.

Footnotes

¹ Towards an Inclusive Future: Shaping the World of Work, G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Ministerial Declaration, 2017, S. 24, www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/about_g20/previous_summit_documents/2017/G20%202017%20Labour%20Ministerial.pdf

² <https://vzf.ilo.org/insights/occupational-safety-and-health-in-global-value-chains-starterkit/>

³ See <https://vzf.ilo.org/insights/>

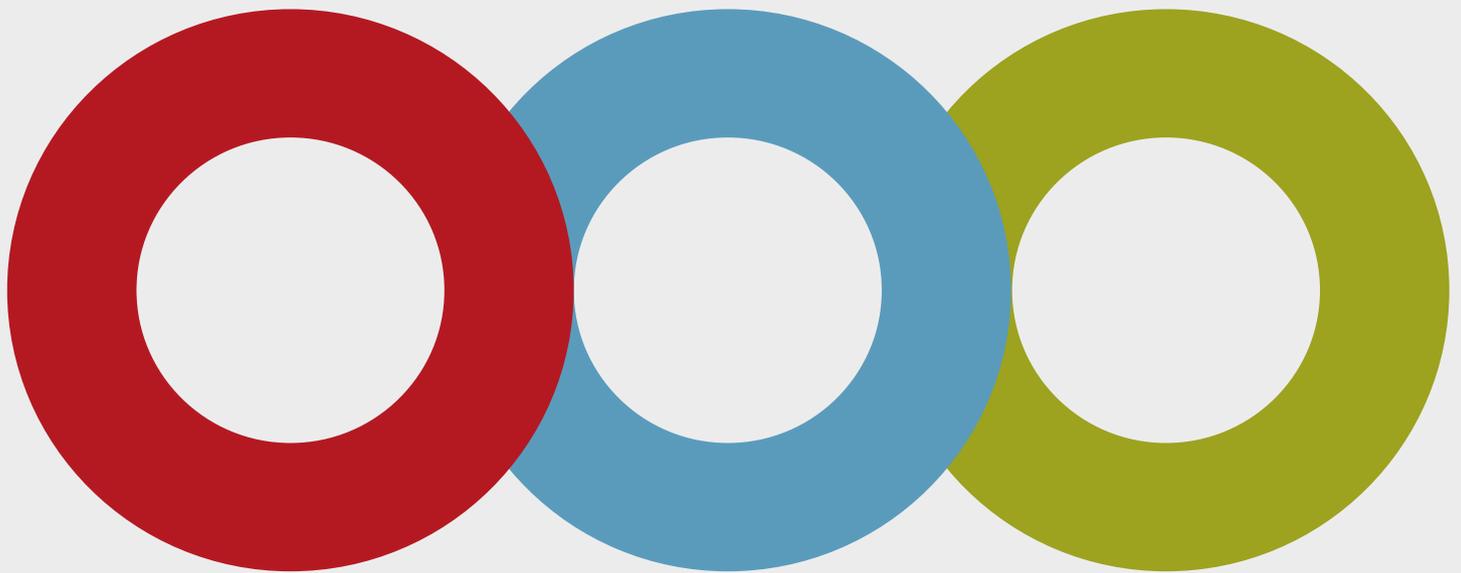
⁴ Using an approach spearheaded by the ILO. See <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-administration-inspection/resources-library/training/strategic-compliance/lang-en/index.htm>.

⁵ <https://vzf.ilo.org/insights/vision-zero-fund-approach-to-gender-equality/>.

⁶ <https://vzf.ilo.org/insights/a-systemic-approach-to-integrating-gender-into-vzf-methodology/>

⁷ <https://vzf.ilo.org/insights/profile-of-women-coffee-producers-in-mexico-case-study-of-their-occupational-health-and-safety-conditions/>

⁸ <https://vzf.ilo.org/projects/climate-change/>



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