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► **Designing a national strategy
to improve safety and health in
micro-, small and medium-sized
enterprises**
A “how to” guide



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to improve safety and health in
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► Acronyms

CSR	corporate social responsibility
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISIC	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MFIs	microfinance institutions
MSMEs	micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
NGO	non-governmental Organization
OSH	occupational safety and health
OSH-MS	occupational safety and health management system
PAOT	participatory action-oriented training
PPE	personal protective equipment
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
WHO	World Health Organization

► Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Acronyms	iv
Introduction.	vi
Goal and objectives of the guide	viii
Structure of the guide.	ix
How to use the guide	ix
Step 1. Set up a task force	1
Key stakeholders to involve in the task force	3
Action guide: Step 1	5
Step 2. Assess the characteristics and OSH situation of MSMEs in the country . . 15	
Key elements of the assessment	16
Action guide: Step 2	21
Step 3. Map existing OSH-related initiatives targeting MSMEs	31
Types of initiative to be considered in the mapping	32
Action guide: Step 3	37
Step 4. Build a national strategy: Identify goals and objectives	41
Starting point	42
Key features of the strategy	43
Action guide: Step 4	47
Step 5. Design initiatives.	53
Tailoring initiatives to MSME characteristics	54
Examples of initiatives to improve OSH in MSMEs.	55
Action guide: Step 5	73
Step 6. Develop an effective and sustainable communication plan	79
Key elements of a communication process	80
Action guide: Step 6	83
Step 7. Monitor and evaluate the national strategy	87
Understanding monitoring and evaluation	89
Undertaking a monitoring and evaluation plan	89
Action guide: Step 7	93
Bibliography	97

Introduction

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) constitute the vast majority of enterprises worldwide, providing incomes and livelihoods for hundreds of millions of workers.

Precariousness and lack of resources are consistently found in most MSMEs. They are also characterized by high levels of informality and low levels of awareness and compliance with occupational safety and health (OSH) standards. Their relatively small size and heterogeneity often imply a lack of the institutional and organizational structure required to support OSH. These factors leave workers in MSMEs particularly exposed to OSH risks.

In most countries and particularly in developing countries, governments and social partners face important challenges in promoting OSH conditions in MSMEs. Reaching out to MSMEs – particularly the smaller ones – is often difficult and needs tailored solutions that are based on the specific context in which they operate.

This “how to guide” was developed with the aim of supporting ILO constituents (governments and employers’ and workers’ organizations) to establish frameworks for improving OSH conditions and ensuring the prevention of occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and deaths in MSMEs through the development of an adapted OSH strategy focused on them.

The ILO project entitled “Upholding sustainable delivery mechanisms to promote OSH in small and medium-sized enterprises”, which was funded by the Republic of Korea, aims to provide support to ILO constituents in promoting the sustainable and effective delivery of OSH in MSMEs.

In this framework, the global report *Improving Safety and Health in Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms* (ILO, 2020) was produced. It describes the OSH situation in MSMEs and reviews a broad range of support mechanisms that national governments, social partners and other actors have developed in order to incentivize the adoption of OSH measures in MSMEs.

The report was complemented by the publication *Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: A Collection of Five Case Studies* (ILO, 2020), which summarizes the OSH situations of MSMEs in Cameroon, Colombia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Tunisia.

Both the report and the case studies highlight some key lessons to ensure the effective implementation by

MSMEs of OSH measures. In particular, national supporting initiatives should be low-cost or preferably cost-free, easy to access and tailored to the specific needs of MSMEs. Initiatives should also integrate OSH with other management goals or business processes.

Based on these findings – and by learning from what has been implemented and identifying which initiatives have succeeded – this “how to” guide has been drafted to provide decision-makers with a practical tool that is adaptable to different contexts and situations.

To ensure the quality and usability of the tool, the draft guide was pilot-tested in Mozambique and Zambia. Consultants based in those two countries utilized this guide, working closely with the relevant ministry of labour, to collect information and organize workshops with relevant world-of-work stakeholders. The consultants each provided a report on the proceedings of the meetings and provided detailed feedback to LABADMIN/OSH about the challenges they encountered and the usability of the guide in order to ensure that it is useful and practical.





Goal and objectives of the guide

The overall goal of this “how to” guide is to support government officials, representatives of employers’ and workers’ organizations and other stakeholders to cooperate in the development of an adapted OSH strategy aimed at improving OSH conditions in MSMEs.

With a view to promoting concerted action on OSH issues in MSMEs, the guide is designed to meet the following objectives:

- ▶ ensure a common understanding, among the different stakeholders, of the process needed to prepare a national strategy on OSH in MSMEs;
- ▶ encourage the engagement and commitment of all the actors involved;
- ▶ suggest a practical, step-by-step approach to developing a national strategy on OSH targeting MSMEs through a coordinated process; and
- ▶ provide guidance and practical examples to governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations and other relevant stakeholders so that they can work together to prepare a balanced, comprehensive national strategy on OSH for MSMEs.

Structure of the guide

This guide is divided into seven sections, each describing a step in the process of developing a national strategy on OSH for MSMEs. The seven sections are as follows:



Step 1: Set up a task force



Step 2: Assess the characteristics and OSH situation of MSMEs in the country



Step 3: Map existing OSH-related initiatives targeting MSMEs



Step 4: Build a national strategy: Identify goals and objectives



Step 5: Design initiatives



Step 6: Develop an effective and sustainable communication plan



Step 7: Monitor and evaluate the national strategy

Each section contains an action guide (see section entitled “How to use the guide” below), along with appendices containing additional information to strengthen the reader’s understanding of OSH for MSMEs.

A successful task force will implement all seven steps listed above. While each step should be completed more or less in that order, step 7, “Monitor and evaluate the national strategy”, should be incorporated in the work of the task force from the very start.

How to use the guide

Because this is a “how to” guide, users should review all steps before identifying the best course of action to set up the OSH for MSMEs task force. Therefore, each step is followed by an action guide, including practical worksheets, on how to analyse the status of OSH for MSMEs in the country; how to establish the task force; and how to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate an OSH strategy with objectives, initiatives and monitoring indicators.

The action guides describe the detailed steps to be completed by the task force; therefore, close collaboration and cooperation between all the stakeholders involved in the task force is a prerequisite for effective and sustainable progress.

As this is a “how to” guide, readers should assess their own needs, read the sections that are most relevant to their context and adapt the action guides according to their particular situation.

While this “how to” guide is intended to design a national OSH strategy focused on MSMEs, it may also be used for the development of sectoral strategies on MSMEs, based on national conditions and practices.





Step 1. Set up a task force

The purpose of the first step is to identify all key actors relevant to OSH in MSMEs and involve them in a national task force to develop and implement a national strategy for improving OSH conditions in MSMEs.

In order to design and implement a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for improving OSH in MSMEs, the government should be fully committed to ensure active cooperation between the ministries and institutions concerned, the employers’ and workers’ organizations, and all the other relevant stakeholders.

As the real benefits of the strategy will be tangible in the medium-to-long term, a firm commitment from all actors involved to dedicate sufficient time is essential.

Many countries have set up an OSH national tripartite body (often called an OSH tripartite council or committee), in which government and social partners cooperate in national OSH governance. The roles and functions of the OSH national tripartite bodies vary from country to country, ranging from a consultative role in the activities and projects of the main institutions to a decision-making role in the definition of national policies and priorities and in drafting laws and regulations, with responsibilities for strategy development and implementation.

The OSH national tripartite committee can be the leader in organizing an OSH task force specifically targeting MSMEs, as it is within its mandate and it may have the budgetary capacity to support the process. That process starts with the identification of the actors to be involved in the task force and throughout each step of the strategy’s development and implementation process. The task force will bring together actors with a range of unique perspectives, with the goal of forming a collectively agreed understanding on priorities, objectives and means to improving OSH in MSMEs. Their respective roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined from the start.

A national coordinator should be designated to lead the task force. The national coordinator’s role will be to ensure the engagement and participation of all relevant stakeholders and task group members, act as the secretariat for the task force and ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken.

The coordinator can be a person or a body, for example:

- ▶ an OSH expert from a governmental or external body;
- ▶ an OSH tripartite committee; or
- ▶ another OSH governmental body.

In this first step, the national coordinator should perform the following tasks:

- ▶ ensure the full engagement of social partners and all relevant institutions in the whole process, from the design of the national strategy to its implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- ▶ ensure that a gender-responsive approach is integrated throughout the strategy. In practice, this means that women’s interests are represented (for example, through a national mechanism for women’s rights and equal opportunities) in the task force or the consultation process;
- ▶ ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken, as MSMEs are heterogenous, have a range of OSH needs and do not all have the same elements to be targeted in a strategy;
- ▶ consult with social partners and all relevant institutions and invite them to participate in the OSH for MSMEs task force;
- ▶ set up the first task force meeting to discuss the need to design and implement a strategy on OSH for MSMEs and agree on the process for the development of the strategy (assessment, definition of priorities, design of initiatives, monitoring and evaluation plan, communication); and
- ▶ act as secretariat of the task force (preparing invitations and agendas, arranging meeting facilities, etc.).



▶ Key stakeholders to involve in the task force

Government

At the government level, the task force should include representatives of ministries that have a direct or indirect role in promoting OSH in MSMEs.

- ▶ **Ministry of labour.** This ministry is usually in charge of OSH. It will be a key stakeholder, together with any appropriate national institution focused on addressing MSMEs, in addressing OSH development in MSMEs.
- ▶ **Ministry of health.** In several countries, this ministry shares responsibilities related to occupational health with the ministry of labour. It may provide relevant data on occupational accidents and diseases and information on initiatives related to health promotion.
- ▶ **Ministry of agriculture.** It is important to involve this ministry due to the sector it represents, which is often characterized by a high number of MSMEs.
- ▶ **Ministry of finance.** Involving this ministry from the beginning is very important to ensure the sustainability of the overall strategy. The ministry may be responsible for allocating financial resources to the national strategy on OSH for MSMEs. In addition, it may provide information and suggestions about initiatives for the development and strengthening of MSMEs, their formalization, and ways to streamline bureaucracy for MSMEs.
- ▶ **Ministry (or ministries) covering MSMEs.** In some countries, a specific ministry may be designated to focus on MSMEs and their needs, recognizing the important role they play in national economies. In most countries, MSMEs are included in the responsibilities of the ministry in charge of economic development; in other countries, microenterprises are covered by other ministries (such as the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business in Australia). Ministries responsible for MSMEs play a pivotal role in the task force at the design stage by providing relevant information and advice on the needs and characteristics of MSMEs, as well as at the implementation stage by including OSH in the promotion and support they provide to MSMEs.
- ▶ **National machinery for the advancement of women and the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women.** By 2004, as recommended by the UN, most countries had established some form of national machinery. The form of such machinery varies greatly among countries, reflecting differences in government structures and political choices (ministry, agency, department, office, council, commission, etc.). Involving this mechanism is key to ensuring that OSH policies and strategies are not gender-blind and do not ignore the vast reality of female entrepreneurship, which is concentrated precisely in micro and small enterprises.
- ▶ **Other relevant ministries, agencies and institutions.** These may include the labour inspectorate, local authorities, occupational health services, national insurance funds and social security or the department of statistics. Other relevant ministries may include the ministry of the environment or the ministry of industry, Depending on what sectors have a high proportion of representation of MSMEs at the country level, other ministries or institutions may be especially relevant.

Employers

Representatives of national employers’ federations should be invited to participate in the task force if they represent entrepreneurs from all businesses. However, the national federation of entrepreneurs in some countries represents only large or medium-sized enterprises, often excluding micro and small enterprises, or may include only some economic sectors and exclude others, such as trade or agriculture. To ensure the representation of the interests of small and micro enterprises, it is necessary to identify the relevant associations in each country, which may be, for example:

- ▶ associations representing small and/or micro businesses;
- ▶ associations representing specific industries or sectors;
- ▶ chambers of commerce; or
- ▶ associations of women entrepreneurs.

Workers

Representatives of national trade union centres or federations should be invited to participate in the task force. As MSMEs often do not have independent unions, the participation of national trade unions of relevant sectors is of vital importance. In particular, if they have specific units dedicated to workers in MSMEs it would be good to involve them. Sectoral unions that represent sectors with a high concentration of MSMEs may also be invited.

Union safety representatives have much to contribute as they are specially trained on workplace health and safety.

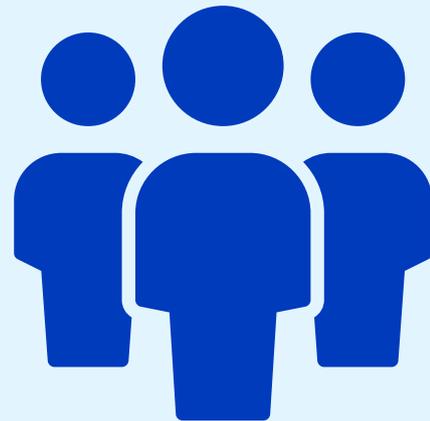
Experts

The task force may benefit from the advice of experts from academia and scientific/technical institutes. They can be experts on OSH and health, MSMEs, or strategy design, monitoring and evaluation, etc. In the selection of experts, gender balance should be promoted.

Experts from international organizations (ILO, World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) etc.) may also be invited to provide guidance and support.

NGOs and civil society organizations

Finally, civil society organizations and NGOs supporting micro and small business, including those in the informal economy and those representing women entrepreneurs and micro-entrepreneurs, may be invited to participate in the task force.



Action guide: Step 1

The following worksheets are intended to support the creation of a task force, including by mapping relevant stakeholders and determining their relative interest and influence in OSH and MSMEs.

Setting up an appropriate task force is essential as it forms the foundation for building a sound and sustainable national strategy.

Worksheet 1.1: Setting up the task force

Setting up a task force will work best if there is a common understanding of the task force’s purpose. Stakeholders gathered to discuss the purpose of the task force should examine the questions below.

Key questions for setting up the task force:

▶ Why set up a task force?

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▶ Who will set up the task force (OSH national tripartite body or other)?

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▶ What are the qualifications for a national coordinator?

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▶ Who will be designated as the national coordinator?

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Worksheet 1.2: Task force national coordinator checklist

Use the checklist below to keep track of the tasks for the task force national coordinator.

Checklist: start-up tasks for the task force national coordinator	
Task	Check (✓)
<p>Identify and consult relevant stakeholders who can be part of the task force. This includes ministries, agencies/institutions, employers, workers, experts, NGOs and civil society organizations. See worksheet 1.3 (Stakeholder mapping).</p> <p>Consideration should be given to geographic representation, urban/rural settings, different sectors/subsectors and gender balance.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Invite stakeholders to be part of the task force. The task force should have members that will actively promote and advocate for OSH in MSMEs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Ensure that a gender perspective will be integrated in all task force meetings, operations and processes.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Conduct the first task force meeting, which should address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ the task force's overall purpose See worksheet 1.1, question 1;▶ the task force steps as outlined in this guide;▶ how to ensure the full participation of task force members;▶ the frequency of meetings; and▶ the modalities for the task force secretariat, including meeting invitations and agendas, distribution of relevant documents, arranging meeting facilities, support staff required, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Other:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>



OSH and MSME experts	NGOs and other organizations	Other actors (if any)
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Part 2: Map stakeholders according to influence/interest

Place the stakeholders listed in part 1 above in the stakeholder map below. The stakeholder map identifies two characteristics: the **interest** that a stakeholder has in OSH for MSMEs and the **influence** a stakeholder has on promoting/advocating OSH for MSMEs. The task force should agree on what each characteristic means in practice. For example:

- ▶ *How is interest defined?* Has the stakeholder supported MSMEs in the past? Has it expressed an interest in supporting OSH issues for MSMEs?
- ▶ *How is influence defined?* Define the type of influence in terms of policy development, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy/support of other actors, research, gender, environmental sustainability, etc.

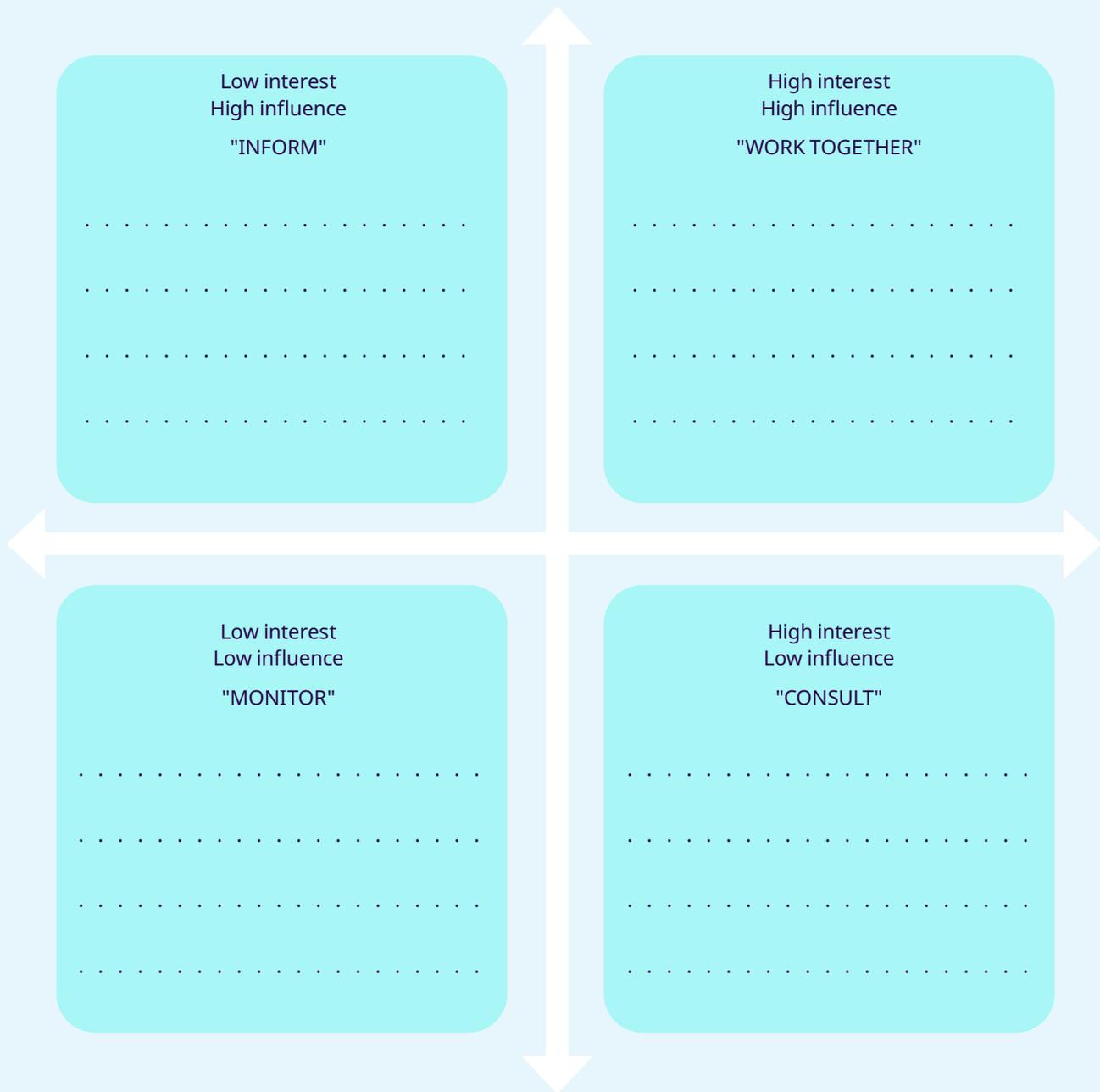
The map is divided into four quadrants (see the figure in the next page):

- ▶ *Stakeholders with low interest and low influence.* These are typically stakeholders the task force will monitor to gauge whether or not their interest/influence changes, but they are typically not a significant contributor to the issue of OSH for MSMEs.
- ▶ *Stakeholders with low interest and high influence.* These are stakeholders that should remain informed on task force work and developments on OSH for MSMEs in the country.
- ▶ *Stakeholders with high interest and low influence.* These are stakeholders that should be regularly consulted on issues of OSH for MSMEs.
- ▶ *Stakeholders with high interest and high influence.* These are the main stakeholders that should be part of the task force and can play a key role in addressing issues of OSH for MSMEs in the country.

Take for example the ministry of labour and a small workers' organization. Where would each of them appear on the stakeholder map?

- ▶ The ministry of labour would likely be a stakeholder with a high level of interest and a high level of influence with respect to OSH for MSMEs. This stakeholder needs to play a pivotal role in the task force.
- ▶ A small workers' organization may have a high level of interest in OSH for MSMEs but a relatively low level of influence. This stakeholder should be regularly consulted to ensure that relevant OSH issues are being addressed by the task force.

► Stakeholder map



Part 3: Analyse the stakeholder map

Once the mapping in part 2 is completed, consider the following questions:

Analysis

▶ Who will we work with to strengthen the task force’s work?

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▶ What expertise, knowledge, skills, tools and resources do the stakeholders bring to the task force?

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▶ What are the motivations of stakeholders for supporting OSH for MSMEs? What are the short-, medium- and long-term goals and areas of interest for stakeholders?

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► How will the task force work with different stakeholders? What opportunities for synergies exist between stakeholders? What risks or challenges exist when these stakeholders work together?

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► Will the task force work to “shift” some stakeholders from one quadrant to another? If yes, how?

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► How gender-responsive are stakeholders in their work?

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Step 2. **Assess the characteristics and OSH situation of MSMEs in the country**

The purpose of this step is to assess the national context of MSMEs – particularly in relation to OSH – in order to identify priority areas and to design an informed national OSH strategy for MSMEs.

In order to develop an effective and feasible national strategy to promote OSH in MSMEs, it is necessary to know the current situation of OSH for MSMEs in the country. This means having a clear picture of the existing legal, institutional, administrative and technical infrastructure in relation to MSMEs and the OSH system.

On the basis of this assessment, gaps will have to be identified and priority issues decided upon, as they will drive the overall direction of the national strategy.

This assessment can be commissioned by the task force, the national OSH committee or the national OSH authority. If these bodies have the internal capacity, they can also undertake the assessment or else commission it to external OSH experts, universities or OSH institutes.

Conducting the assessment can be an opportunity to start a close collaboration between all actors participating in the task force, actively involving them in the process from the beginning.

Once the assessment is drafted, the task force should have the opportunity to review and discuss the assessment. Validating the findings of the assessment helps develop a common understanding of the current state of OSH for MSMEs in the country.

► Key elements of the assessment

Definition of MSMEs

The legal and statistical definition of MSMEs should be included in the assessment. Based on the definition adopted by the country, all the data mentioned in the following paragraphs should be broken down by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, since it is likely that, depending on their size, enterprises may have very different needs that require different strategies and initiatives.

In some countries, the definition of a medium-sized enterprise includes relatively big enterprises, with large numbers of employees, which in terms of capacity and needs are more easily associated with large enterprises than with micro and small enterprises. Similarly, due to their fragility and their significant presence in the informal economy, micro enterprises may require a different strategy than small and medium-sized enterprises.

Socio-economic situation of MSMEs

It is critical to understand the situation of MSMEs in the country based on accurate, verifiable data. Comparing these data with information on national OSH legislation, policies and labour inspection visits will help determine whether the sectors and regions with the highest percentages of MSMEs are well covered in national OSH laws and policies, are prioritized in national strategies and programmes, and are sufficiently reached through national inspection campaigns and visits.

Data should be collected for this purpose on:

- sectors/economic activities with high concentrations of MSMEs (for example agriculture, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction, transport, education, commerce, services, etc.);
- internal/global markets; and
- geographical distribution of MSMEs (for example, by region/province/district or by urban/rural setting).

Data should also be disaggregated by sex in order to understand the extent of female entrepreneurship and its breakdown by size, sector and geographical area, as well as to design policies and strategies that take into account these characteristics and women's specific needs.

Information on the informal economy

More than four out of five enterprises in the world operate in the informal economy. Contrary to previous economic forecasts, informality has not diminished over time and is even increasing in many countries.

The informal economy is a section of the economy that is difficult for the government to monitor and its activities are rarely included in the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

In order to promote OSH, in particular in microenterprises, the informal economy should be addressed and efforts should be made to collect relevant data and information on its characteristics in order to support the design of appropriate strategies, when feasible.

Legislation on OSH for MSMEs and institutional frameworks

The assessment should contain information on OSH legislation, focusing on MSMEs and the sectors in which they have a large presence.

A comprehensive analysis of OSH requirements is needed, including:

- ▶ hazard identification and risk assessment;
- ▶ the adoption of prevention and control measures, based on the hierarchy of controls¹ and including the free provision of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), if needed;
- ▶ the provision of adequate facilities (for example toilet and washing facilities); and
- ▶ OSH training (both induction and regular training);
- ▶ workers' health surveillance;
- ▶ recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases;
- ▶ emergency planning; and
- ▶ workers' consultation.

The analysis of such issues should consider any existing differentiation by enterprise size or sector.

Most of the legislation on OSH falls under the control of ministry of labour. Other ministries, however, will share some responsibility for legislation on OSH (including MSMEs). The ministry of environment, for example, will be responsible for legislation that enhances the prevention of and emergency responses to chemical accidents, including provisions regulating business authorizations for the use of hazardous substances, off-site consequence analysis and risk management plans, etc.

1 According to the OSH hierarchy of control, prevention and control measures should be implemented in the following order of priority: (1) elimination of the hazard (that is, measures that completely remove the source of risk); (2) substitution with a less hazardous process or product; (3) technical and engineering controls (that is, measures that reduce the likelihood of exposure to the hazard); (4) administrative controls (that is, organizational measures and procedures that minimize the risk by adopting safe systems of work); (5) PPE should be used only when collective protective measures cannot be identified.

Labour inspections in MSMEs

In line with the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1955 (No. 81) and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), data collected by labour inspectors should include information on:

- ▶ workplaces liable to inspection and their respective number of employees;
- ▶ inspection visits;
- ▶ violations and sanctions imposed;
- ▶ infringements reported to the competent authorities; and
- ▶ occupational accidents, occupational injuries and occupational diseases (both fatal and non-fatal).

Labour inspectors may also collect other data about the labour market (for example, types of employment contract; income/wages; social protection; working time, including excessive working hours, overtime, on-call work, night shifts; etc.).

In many countries, labour inspection draws on limited resources and a limited number of staff, who are burdened by overlapping tasks; in such conditions, inspectors are obliged to prioritize their actions and tend to exclude small enterprises, which are more numerous and dispersed throughout a given country. However, this excludes precisely those companies in which less attention is paid to risk-prevention measures and for which the proactive role of inspection could be more useful in preventing accidents and occupational diseases.

Knowing how MSMEs are addressed by labour inspections in the country is a key input for a comprehensive assessment.

For the text of OSH-related instruments, see the ILO website, “Conventions and Recommendations”

Data on occupational injuries and diseases in MSMEs

The analysis of the safety and health situation in MSMEs may cover the following issues:

- ▶ fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries in MSMEs;
- ▶ fatal and non-fatal occupational diseases in MSMEs;
- ▶ types of occupational injuries and diseases;
- ▶ notified and compensated occupational injuries and diseases; and
- ▶ serious occupational injuries (for example causing more than 30 days of absence).

OSH data may be found in the national OSH profile. However, the OSH national profile may lack some of the data mentioned above, or there may not be OSH data available by type of enterprise. In this case, it would be relevant to analyse these data from a sectoral perspective, focusing on those sectors that, based on the socio-economic assessment, were identified as accounting for high numbers of MSMEs (for example agriculture, construction, commerce, etc.).

Other sources of information can provide relevant data for the assessment of OSH conditions in MSMEs, in particular the ministry of labour, social security institutions, the labour inspectorate, the employment injury benefit bodies and public health authorities.

Other institutions may have conducted research on OSH in MSMEs, such as insurance companies, sectoral bodies, employers’ associations and trade unions, universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Efforts should be undertaken to find data disaggregated by sex and age, which would provide a better picture of the situation and would help in focusing the strategy.

Disaggregation categories for OSH data

General OSH data (whether collected by the national OSH authority, the labour inspectorate, social security institutions or any other body) may be disaggregated by different categories, which can provide important insights for the development of a national OSH strategy for MSMEs. Such disaggregated categories include the following.

Size of establishment: in size bands based on the number of workers employed, using bands as narrow as possible, ideally in the following ranges: [1-4]; [5-19]; [20-49]; [50-99]; [100-499]; [500-999]; [1,000+]. To facilitate the study of MSMEs, data collection using narrower size bands is necessary; statistics produced using narrow bands can always be aggregated to wider bands later if needed. There should not be an “unknown” category here.

Administrative region: based on the administrative divisions of each country (state, province, district, etc.).

Institutional sector: public, private or other legally defined sector.

Branch of economic activity: based on specific industries. The [International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities \(ISIC\)](#) may be used as reference.

Occupation: At the lowest possible level of disaggregation. The [International Standard Classification of Occupations \(ISCO\)](#) can be used as reference.

Age: in age bands ideally of 5 years, starting at 15 years old or the minimum age used to define the working-age population for statistical purposes, for example: [15-19]; [20-24]; [25-29]; [30-34]; [35-39]; [40-44]; [45-49]; [50-54]; [55-59]; [60-64]; [65-69]; [70+]. Wider age bands may also be used.

Sex: male; female.

Adapted from: ILO, *Guide on the Harmonization of Labour Inspection Statistics*, 2016.

Information on OSH conditions in MSMEs

In addition to data on occupational accidents and diseases, information on the specific OSH conditions in MSMEs may be collected.²

For example, OSH-related questions may be included in national labour force surveys, which may also record other data, including the size of the enterprise, sector, location, etc., to allow the identification of key challenges facing MSMEs.

Customized surveys on OSH can also be carried out to identify the main risks faced in MSMEs and existing knowledge gaps (including in relation to OSH legal requirements), as well as main drivers and barriers to improving OSH in these enterprises.

Relevant information can also be found in studies and research on specific OSH issues that focus on MSMEs, which are often conducted by OSH agencies, institutions, research centres, universities, NGOs, employers and business associations or trade unions.

² See ILO, *Quick Guide on Sources and Uses of Statistics on Occupational Safety and Health*, 2020.





Action guide: Step 2

The following worksheets allow for assessing the situation and providing a clear picture of MSMEs within the country. This step may be particularly time-consuming and may pose challenges with regard to identifying, reviewing and assessing information. For countries with an up-to-date OSH national profile, the profile may likely provide useful information towards completing this step. Through gathering up-to-date, comprehensive information on the current situation of OSH in MSMEs, it will be possible to define clear priorities and monitor improvements.

What criteria define MSMEs? Use the table below to specify the criteria that distinguishes MSMEs. Fill in the columns with criteria specific to your country's context. Examples of criteria include headcount (in annual work units), annual turnover or annual balance sheet.

Criteria	
<p>Micro</p> 	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Small</p> 	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Medium-sized</p> 	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>



Existing gender-disaggregated data on the socio-economic situation in the country
(For example, percentage of female entrepreneurs/small business owners)

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Existing information/data on MSMEs in the informal economy

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Existing data and research on OSH and MSMEs

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Worksheet 2.3: Assessing the national OSH context

Complete the table below to describe the national OSH context in your country.

National OSH context targeting MSMEs
OSH Legal, policy and institutional frameworks
<p>▶ OSH legislation covering MSMEs</p> <p><i>Does the law include specific reference to MSMEs in terms of requirements?</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>▶ Specific OSH legislation targeting MSMEs (if any)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>▶ National OSH infrastructure relevant to MSMEs</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

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- ▶ MSMEs within national/sectoral OSH policies, strategies and programmes
*Are MSMEs covered only in such policies and programmes or are they a specific target/priority?
How are these policies, strategies and programmes implemented and monitored?*

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Resources

- ▶ Financial resources dedicated to OSH

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- ▶ Financial resources dedicated towards MSMEs

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- ▶ Financial resources specifically dedicated towards OSH for MSMEs

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Occupational accidents and diseases

- ▶ Data on occupational injuries and diseases in MSMEs
If available, data should be disaggregated by size (micro, small or medium-sized); sector; geographical distribution; and gender.

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Labour Inspection

- ▶ Frequency of labour inspections in MSMEs
If available, data should be disaggregated by size (micro, small or medium-sized); sector; and geographical distribution.

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Awareness, information and training

- ▶ Information on stakeholders' level of awareness of OSH legislation in MSMEs

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- ▶ Information on MSMEs' level of awareness of workplace legislation and practices that support OSH

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- ▶ Existing training programmes to support OSH for MSMEs, including induction training

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Survey

- ▶ Information from any existing survey that gathers data on OSH conditions in MSMEs

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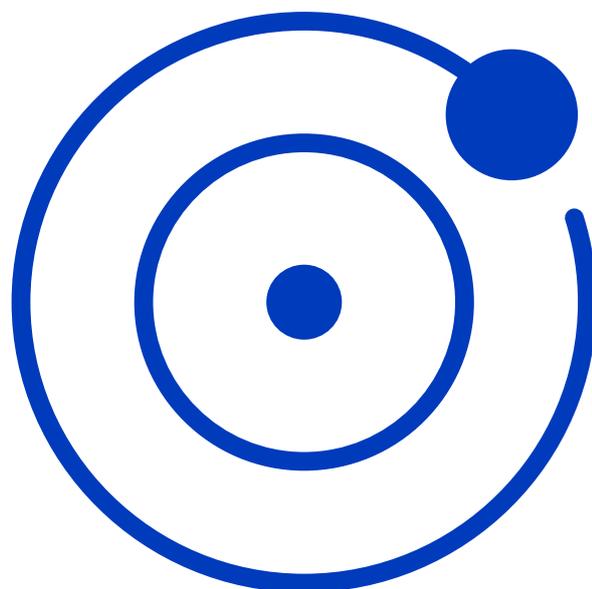
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PHOTOCC

PHOTOCOPIE
LASTIFICATION
SAISIE/SCAN
IMPRESSION
PHOTOCOPIE
100 Ar
Kara-panondro
200 Ar
IMPRESSION NOIR: 200 Ar
IMPRESSION COULEUR:
manomboka @ 300 Ar

PHOTOCOPIE
IMPRESSION
PHOTOGRAPHIE
MIVOCHA





Step 3.

Map existing OSH-related initiatives targeting MSMEs

The purpose of this step is to have a comprehensive picture of current OSH-related initiatives for MSMEs – not only those that focus specifically on OSH but also those intended to promote the development of MSMEs in order to consider the possibility of including an OSH promotion component.

Many countries recognize the crucial role that MSMEs play in the national economy in terms of job creation and GDP. MSMEs are often recognized as key actors in ensuring the development and competitiveness of the national economy.

As a result, in a number of countries national authorities implement initiatives³ targeting MSMEs, some of which are intended to improve OSH conditions for MSMEs or to include an OSH component.

Before starting new initiatives for improving OSH for MSMEs, it is important to comprehensively map all existing initiatives targeting MSMEs, not only those specific to OSH but also those addressing other aspects for promoting MSMEs, in particular those that have proven to be successful and sustainable. In addition, any general OSH initiatives in the country should be taken into account in this inventory, as they may also aid in informing priorities and may provide opportunities for MSMEs. It is particularly important to ensure that the information collected includes the results of the short- and medium-term evaluations of general OSH initiatives, the level of participation in them of MSMEs and their sustainability. It is also important to identify good practices and lessons learned in order to build on positive experiences and avoid repeating mistakes.

For sample questions, see ILO, *Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: A Collection of Five Case Studies, 2020*.

It may be useful if all stakeholders in the OSH for MSMEs task force provide information on the activities they are implementing and help collect information from other sources, such as other ministries and institutions that are implementing initiatives to support the creation and productivity of MSMEs, business associations and employers' organizations, trade unions, women entrepreneurs associations, financial institutions, insurance agencies, universities and training institutes, and international organizations (ILO, WHO, FAO, etc.), NGOs, etc.

► Types of initiative to be considered in the mapping

OSH advisory services targeting MSMEs

OSH advisory services provide information to MSMEs on OSH regulation, tools and initiatives, as well as tangible OSH advice and practical support (for example in carrying out the risk assessment process, adopting appropriate prevention and control measures, training and informing workers, etc.).

Such services may be delivered by public or private authorities, for example by public authorities (labour inspectorates, national OSH authority, etc.), employers' organizations and business associations, trade unions, sectoral associations, OSH institutes, insurance institutions, universities or training institutions, consultancy firms, etc.

Information may be collected about the type of support provided on such matters as OSH regulation, the dissemination of OSH promotional materials or practical advice tailored to specific MSMEs (such as support in carrying out a risk assessment process, adopting appropriate prevention and control measures, training and informing workers, etc.). It is also worth knowing the form in which the advice is provided, for example via face-to-face meetings, video, phone, mail, dedicated web platforms or apps, etc. A breakdown of the costs involved is also helpful (whether services are provided free of charge or there are mechanisms to subsidize costs, etc.).

³ This guide uses the term “initiative” to mean any programme, project or action that promotes OSH for MSMEs. As the task force develops its strategy, it can use “initiative” or any other term it feels is relevant to the specific national context.



OSH networks

It is useful to identify the OSH networks operating at local, national and sectoral levels (if any), as well as participation in regional or international OSH networks. Such networks can be organized or supported by ministries, public administrations, national organizations of safety, health experts (including occupational hygienists, safety engineers, OSH experts and experts in other OSH professions), social partners, professional associations, service providers or other bodies.

Networks may cover different types of activities, such as the sharing of good practices, information, training and education, research, advisory services, tools, awareness and lobbying on the importance of prevention as an economic and social development issue. Some networks also include members' mutual collaboration in implementing joint projects and programmes.

Most networks operate via the internet, not only for delivering information and tools on web platforms but also for organizing training or expert meetings and events.

Awareness-raising on OSH

Awareness-raising is an important element for an OSH promotion strategy in MSMEs. Therefore, it is useful to have a comprehensive picture of the main ongoing and previous awareness-raising initiatives of various entities (such as OSH bodies, labour inspectorates, insurance companies, business associations, workers' organizations, sectoral organizations, etc.) using different means (social media, radio, television, newspapers, public events, etc.).

It would be useful to know if the campaigns achieved the desired impact and managed to reach MSMEs, in particular micro and small enterprises, in which the lack of knowledge and awareness of OSH issues may be more pronounced than in larger enterprises.

The tools produced in previous campaigns (videos, posters, leaflets, checklists, e-tools, etc.), if effective, can be adapted for future initiatives.

OSH training

Many countries include in their legislation obligations for employers to provide workers and their representatives with appropriate training on OSH. During the mapping, both employers' and workers' organizations can provide information on whether or not such training is offered, how it is offered, and how the needs of MSMEs are addressed (the smallest enterprises are often exempted from national mandatory OSH training).

Information should be collected on the types of training offered to MSMEs, including whether there is specific OSH training or if an OSH theme is included in other training activities. Information should also be collected on the providers, methods used, duration and cost of the training provided; in many cases, the cost of the training and the time needed to attend it represent key barriers to accessibility for MSMEs.

It is very important to obtain data disaggregated by company size. For example, micro enterprises are often excluded from the training offered by institutions, while they may have access to training opportunities provided by NGOs, associations or local authorities. It is also more difficult for micro enterprises to find the time needed for attending training as they are often single-member companies.

It is important to obtain data disaggregated by sex in order to determine whether women entrepreneurs, especially in micro and small enterprises, have equal access to participation in the training services offered – and if they do not, to examine the barriers that exist.

Training evaluations are frequently limited to reaction-level feedback at the end of the course; however, it would be more useful to have a longer-term impact assessment in order to detect if the knowledge has actually been acquired, transferred and put into practice by learners, thereby generating measurable improvements.

The mapping should also identify whether there are good practices to replicate, such as initiatives that bring OSH support and training directly to MSMEs in remote areas using a mobile vehicle.

OSH awards

You may check the rate of participation of MSMEs in OSH award initiatives (if any), as well as whether any specific awards for them exist, including awards for women business owners.

OSH certification

It should be determined whether or not public authorities, OSH bodies, insurance institutions, sectoral organizations or other bodies issue OSH certificates, for example upon completion of specific OSH training programmes, participation in specific OSH initiatives or implementation of occupational safety and health management systems (OSH-MSs).

Public procurement tenders

Several countries include social clauses on OSH in public procurement tenders, which can be effective tools for incentivizing OSH in MSMEs. Despite the fact that MSMEs may be restricted in bidding for such tenders, the main subcontractors will still be in this category of enterprise. The task force can explore whether this practice is already in place and what criteria are required.

Economic incentives

It is useful to map the economic incentives programmes provided to support OSH improvements in MSMEs, including the reduction in insurance fees linked to OSH improvements. It is also important to identify how these initiatives are financed in order to assess their long-term financial sustainability.

Other initiatives targeting MSMEs

Relevant initiatives for promoting the development of MSME, even if not specifically focused on OSH, may provide an effective means to insert OSH as a complementary element or a precondition for accessing other economic, production or financial assets.

Programmes for development of MSMEs

Many programmes for supporting MSMEs operate at national, regional and international levels and include a wide range of services provided by public institutions, chambers of commerce and industry, employers' associations, technology centres and research institutes. The aim of such programmes is to assist entrepreneurs in further developing their businesses. For this purpose, they provide assistance in conducting diagnoses, preparing a business plan and supporting the plan's implementation.

In general, micro enterprises are not targeted by such services, although specific programmes for them exist in several countries. Most micro enterprise programmes are managed by public entities or NGOs (often with the support of international organizations) with the aim of stimulating the growth and formalization of micro enterprises in their community, eliminating poverty and building local economic vitality. In general, these programmes offer direct technical assistance and support to local entrepreneurs and provide micro funding. Some of them specifically address women.

Mapping existing programmes and services for MSMEs will provide key information for shaping a strategy on OSH for MSMEs.

Programmes for supporting the formalization process

Several countries run programmes for supporting the formalization process of micro and small enterprises and enabling companies to access the tools of the financial system; obtain soft lines of credit and non-refundable resources from co-financing funds; facilitate their penetration of both domestic and international markets; take part in government procurement selection processes; obtain discounts with respect to aspects such as commercial registration, income tax and para-fiscal contributions; and participate in government-run business development schemes. If these programmes are in place, they can give impetus to the development of OSH as a requirement for formalized enterprises.

Microcredit and guarantee funds

It is useful to check whether microfinance institutions (MFIs) provide financial services to micro and small enterprises and what the existing requirements are for accessing them (for example formalization of the enterprise, insurance, training, meeting minimum decent work standards, etc.). Often there are also micro-credit programmes that specifically target women.

In some countries, government institutions provide guarantees to facilitate MSMEs in accessing the funds they need to improve their competitiveness. MSMEs are given backing for the debts contracted through any financial intermediary that lends to them. These guarantees provide security for credit and leasing operations intended exclusively to finance working capital, fixed investments, business capitalization, technological development or the creation of businesses.

Exploring whether these measures are in place and their characteristics is useful, because it may be possible to use the leverage of a loan or a guarantee to promote OSH improvements in MSMEs.

Corporate social responsibility initiatives

There may be corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes in the country in which MSMEs are included. Some programmes may involve the promotion of OSH and social protection, irrespective of the sector of economic activity. If not, there is the opportunity to benefit from existing CSR programmes to involve also MSMEs and insert OSH promotion in their main goals.

Technical cooperation projects

There are many projects aimed at promoting MSMEs carried out by international or national technical agencies in the context of multilateral or bilateral international cooperation. Unfortunately, there is frequently no coordination between such interventions, so that several projects in one country may be implemented with the same purpose but with different and at times conflicting approaches and methods. If there is no national institution responsible for coordination through which information on current projects in the country can be identified, the United Nations resident representative in the country should be able to provide data on international cooperation, while the diplomatic missions of the main donor countries may provide information on the projects they are sponsoring.

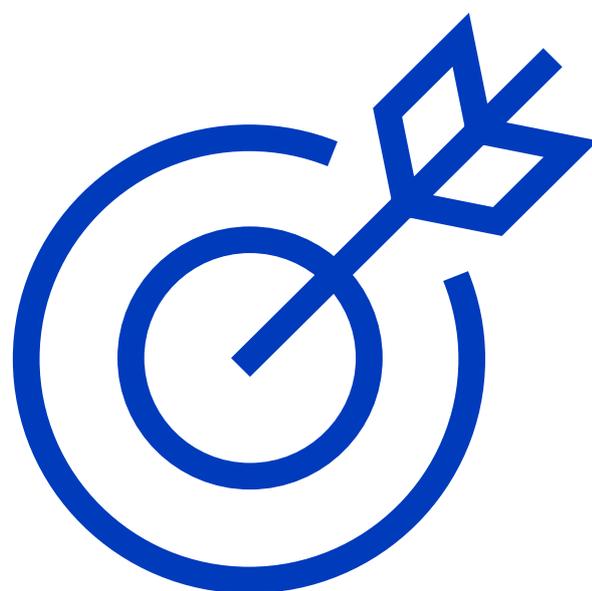




Action guide: Step 3

The following worksheet aims to map current initiatives related to OSH and targeting MSMEs in the country. Members of the task force and stakeholders identified in worksheet 1.3 will be particularly valuable for providing information on such initiatives. While this process may be time-consuming and challenging, it is vital for understanding existing initiatives prior to building a national strategy.





Step 4.

Build a national strategy: Identify goals and objectives

The purpose of this step is to lay the foundation for the national strategy on OSH for MSMEs. Using the information gathered on OSH in MSMEs, including on the existing initiatives, this step helps define priorities should be identified with clear and realistic goals and objectives.

In order to be sustainable, the development of a strategy for the promotion of OSH in MSMEs should be the result of a **participatory process**, in which all members of the task force (and other external actors if necessary) discuss and collectively define priorities, goals and objectives. The task force national coordinator needs to **lead the process** to ensure that, before building the strategy, all participants know the results of the assessment and the mapping and agree on the main challenges and opportunities. Agreement is needed, as all stakeholders must have ownership of the strategy and feel involved in its implementation, actively contributing through their respective organizations or institutions.

► Starting point

The **starting point** for the development of an OSH promotion strategy for MSMEs is a sound understanding of the situation and the mapping of programmes and initiatives in this field.

The *assessment* (see step 2) provided detailed information of the situation concerning MSMEs.

The *mapping* (see step 3) provided an inventory of both specific OSH initiatives for MSMEs and general programmes for the development of MSMEs that may offer an interesting opportunity for synergies with the promotion of OSH.

In considering the information emerging from the mapping, it will be necessary to focus on some characteristics of the reviewed programmes and initiatives, such as the results (direct or indirect) achieved, innovative methods and good practices, lessons learned, sustainability and costs. The analysis of these characteristics will enable the task force to learn from what has already been done and will inspire future actions.

Based on the outputs of the assessment and the mapping, it is possible to identify the challenges and opportunities that arise from the analysis of the situation. Doing this analysis first will help the task force think through the strategic challenges and opportunities before trying to set a goal.

► Key features of the strategy

Target of the strategy

From the findings of the assessment, it will be possible to provide an overview of the characteristics of MSMEs, which will be vital for the definition of the strategy to be implemented by the task force. Choices will have to be made in relation to the target group. The following questions may be considered:

- Do MSMEs have enough common elements to be targeted as a single group?
- Does the task force plan differentiated strategies for MSMEs, according to their different specificities and needs?
- Will the task force give priority to one of these groups?
- Will the task force limit its interventions to the formal economy or should companies operating in the informal economy be integrated?
- Are there certain target sectors in which MSMEs are over-represented?
- How do you plan to ensure a gender-responsive approach and promote the full integration of women entrepreneurs in your strategy?
- How should specific considerations be addressed for young workers, who are often overrepresented in the MSMEs sector, particularly in the technical, vocational education and training sector?

Although MSMEs share many characteristics, their significant heterogeneity should be considered, which also applies to OSH issues. In particular, there are probably relevant differences in management, resource capacity, social relations, work organization, worker representation, business strategy, vulnerability in supply chains and various other dimensions. Consequently, exploring MSMEs as a single entity may prevent a sound analysis of the drivers and barriers for OSH interventions.

Resources and sustainability

The strategy must be financially sustainable.

Before defining the strategy, goals and objectives, it is necessary to explore what types of funding are available; what external funding can be mobilized; and what resources can be found through the direct and operational involvement of the organizations and institutions that operate in the field of OSH promotion or in support to MSMEs (or which may be involved by now). It will also be necessary to predict whether these resources will be “ad hoc” or will be able to have continuity and sustainability beyond the specific current political situations.

Time frame

In order for the strategy to be successful, it should be clearly defined within a fixed time frame. Most strategies are defined to be completed within a two-to-five-year period. This allows for the development of concrete goals, objectives and initiatives that can be properly monitored and evaluated.

Goals and objectives

The strategy must have a clear goal (or goals), which through the initiatives that will be decided will in turn be articulated into measurable objectives. The task force must be both ambitious and practical when setting

a goal; unattainable goals should not be set because failure to reach them would compromise not only the current strategy but also future initiatives. Being too conservative or cautious is also to be avoided; otherwise, the task force risks not impacting the situation and not generating the necessary motivation among stakeholders.

Already in this phase, it is necessary to foresee instances of monitoring and evaluation (see step 7 below) so that the strategy may be adapted to changes that arise during its implementation if problems are identified concerning its effectiveness and/or sustainability.

Setting goals

Goals are the description of the long-term aims that the task force wants to accomplish. They are broad in scope, expressing the general intentions or directions.

To be effective, goals should be:

Motivating. Motivation is key to achieving goals. Goal achievement requires commitment. All stakeholders involved in this exercise should be convinced that the goals set are important and that there is a strong value in achieving them as they will improve the lives of many people. To do so, it is important to avoid setting too many goals and focus on those that can really generate a positive change.

Clear. Goals should clearly show the way and drive the strategy; vague goals are unhelpful because they do not provide sufficient direction. The more descriptive the goals are, the more likely it is that everyone understands each goal in the same way, unambiguously.

Coherent. Every goal should be coherent with the mission of the task force and oriented towards the long-term substantial improvement of OSH conditions in MSMEs.

Realistic. Goals set should be achievable in the framework of the time allocated, the resources available, and the challenges and opportunities detected.

Defining objectives

Objectives are concrete attainments that can be achieved by following a certain number of initiatives.

To define objectives, it is important to have **benchmarks** that assess the pre-intervention situation in order to define the changes/improvements you want to achieve. The assessment (step 2) and mapping (step 3), if done carefully, will provide the information needed to establish benchmarks.

Objectives should be **SMART**:

Specific: if they are too generic it will not be possible to design initiatives to achieve them.

Measurable: they should include clear quantitative and qualitative elements that make it possible to monitor and evaluate their achievement.

Achievable: realistic (yet challenging) objectives should be set, which can be achieved through the implementation of the initiatives defined in the strategy.

Relevant: objectives should be coherent with the goals set, so that the achievement of all the objectives will ensure the final attainment of those goals.

Timed: objectives must have a deadline that is linked to the actions/programmes designed to achieve them.

The table below provides examples of goals and objectives for possible inclusion in strategies for promoting OSH in MSMEs.

Example 1: MSME workplaces	Example 2: Fostering OSH champions	Example 3: Financial access for MSMEs
<p>Goal:</p> <p>Foster quality MSME workplaces that are safe, healthy and fair.</p>	<p>Goal:</p> <p>Develop a network of OSH champions from all sectors advocating for the improvement of the OSH conditions of enterprises.</p>	<p>Goal:</p> <p>Improve financial access for micro and small enterprises and promote sustainable and responsible financial inclusion for small enterprises.</p>
<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Reduce three of the most prevalent types of workplace injuries and causes of illnesses by 15 per cent in MSMEs in three sectors.</p> <p>Reduce injuries and illnesses by 15 per cent in MSMEs operating in three sectors characterized by high-hazard workplaces.</p> <p>Decrease fatalities in MSMEs in the construction sector by 15 per cent, by focusing on the four leading causes of fatalities (falls, struck-by, crushed-by, and electrocutions and electrical injuries).</p> <p>Reduce injuries and illnesses by 20 per cent in at least 100,000 workplaces included in the pilot programme.</p> <p>Within five years of the effective date of significant final rules, achieve a 20 per cent reduction in fatalities, injuries or illnesses in the rate of current MSMEs compliance.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Organize CSR resources to assist service providers in meeting their general labour and OSH needs.</p> <p>Develop the skills of service providers to improve their working conditions and subsequently achieve higher productivity.</p> <p>Enable service providers to comply with labour and OSH legislation.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Align the financial and non-financial services of financial service providers with the needs of micro and small enterprises in pilot areas.</p> <p>Enhance productivity, improved working conditions and access to financial and non-financial services.</p> <p>Improve access to socially responsible finance that is integrated in national policies and the regulatory framework.</p>



Multilevel approach

To be effective, a strategy must be articulated at different levels.

- ▶ **National-level (macro)** policies and measures. These involve the whole country.
- ▶ **Sectoral or local level (meso)** policies and measures. A sectoral approach is particularly important in the case of MSMEs, which may be concentrated in sectors in which OSH conditions are particularly severe and need urgent intervention. A local/regional approach is needed to adapt national policies to the regional/local context, considering its specificities.
- ▶ **Enterprise-level (micro)** policies and measures. These include pilot initiatives, which if successful may become good practices to be replicated at the national level.

The strategy may also have an international dimension, for example through participation in international networks and forums on OSH/MSMEs or by developing an approach of collaboration and mobilization of funds, with international, bilateral and multilateral bodies.

The strategy may also foresee specific actions that specifically target women entrepreneurs, if appropriate, based on the findings of the assessment.

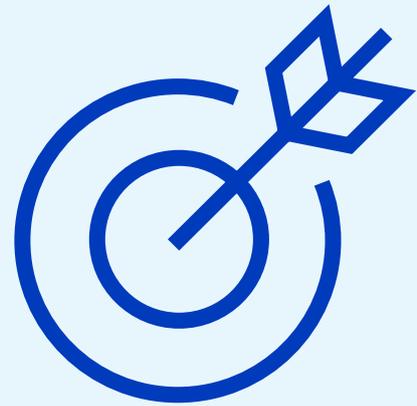
Synergies

The strategy should facilitate the coordination of different OSH initiatives targeting MSMEs and should combine different elements, including regulation, incentives and awareness-raising. The sustainability and impact of the strategy will largely depend on its ability to develop collaborations and synergies with other areas of intervention, in particular initiatives that aim to promote MSMEs (previously inventoried under step 3 on mapping) in which OSH elements may be integrated.

The strategy should also ensure the involvement of relevant authorities, social partners and other organizations in order to increase synergy and maximize the use of available resources.

Orchestrated action ensures that MSMEs are getting the same messages from different stakeholders, which increases legitimacy and credibility.

Coordination among various stakeholders can also allow for a better use of the often limited resources available by allocating tasks to the most effective organizations, which can result in tangible OSH improvements at affordable costs.



Action guide: Step 4

The following worksheets aim at supporting the task force to identify needs, actionable goals and objectives that will drive initiatives. In this step - key for the development of a coherent and sustainable national strategy -, the task force should find common perspectives and define its overall vision based on the needs identified in the gap analysis.



Worksheet 4.1: Gap analysis to define the strategy

A gap analysis is a tool to examine the current state of OSH for MSMEs compared to the ideal, desired state. The examination of the gaps between the current and desired states helps the formulation of an overall strategy, priorities, objectives and initiatives to bridge the gap (see the figure in the next page).

To complete the gap analysis, answer the following questions:

1. **Current state:** Based on the assessment (step 2), what is the current state of OSH for MSMEs?
2. **Desired state:** What is the desired, ideal state of OSH for MSMEs?
3. **Gaps:** What are the gaps between the current and desired states?
4. **Strategy:** What is the overall strategy that can help bridge the gap between the current and desired states? Take into consideration the target audience(s), the enterprise category (micro, small or medium-sized), the formal/informal economies, the requirements of a gender-responsive approach, the available resources, the potential sectoral priorities, the time frame, etc.

Other questions to consider when completing the gap analysis:

- ▶ Given the proposed strategy, what are the potential risks? What are the challenges, how stable is the current political situation and what other threats exist (for example, COVID-19)?
- ▶ How does the strategy affect the meso, macro and micro levels of the country? How does the strategy address the synergies between levels? What about regional, district, municipal and enterprise levels?
- ▶ How does the strategy help strengthen relationships between stakeholders? Between tripartite actors? Between social partners? Between sectors?
- ▶ How sustainable is the strategy?

Worksheet 4.2: Setting goals and objectives

Answer the questions below to develop the goal and objectives of the strategy for improving OSH in MSMEs. This will allow the task force to define the vision and mission of the national strategy in order to ensure it is goal-oriented, with clear objectives to monitor progress.

Goals:

- ▶ What is the overall goal of the strategy?

Note: The task force may opt for more than one goal, but it should keep in mind that goals are general in scope and more detail can be provided through objectives.

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Objectives (see “Tips on drafting objectives” below):

- ▶ What are the specific objectives that must be reached to achieve the goal(s)?

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Resources

- ▶ What are the resources available for reaching objectives and goals?

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Multilevel approach:

How will the goal and objectives be achieved at the national (macro), sectoral or local (meso) and enterprise (micro) levels?

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Synergies:

How will the goal(s) and objectives support collaboration and coordination with stakeholders?

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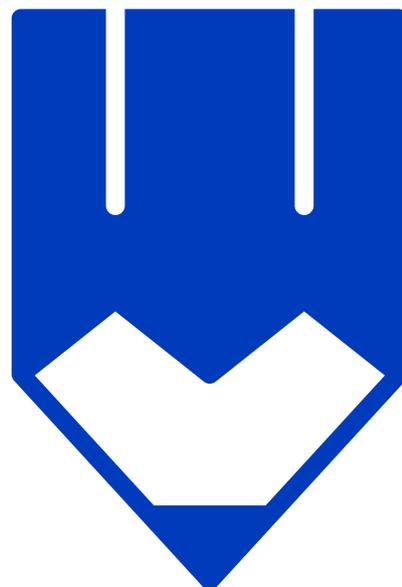
Tips on drafting objectives:

- ▶ Identify the “what” of the objective – what do you want to change? For example: work-related accidents, training programmes, policies, OSH standards, management practices, etc.
- ▶ Identify the level of change you expect from achieving the objective. A common reference point for writing objectives and results is Bloom’s taxonomy, which identifies six levels of learning with respect to objectives: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. For example, if your objective is to raise awareness on OSH for MSMEs, you may write an objective that is at the “knowledge” level; if your objective is on policy review, your objective would be at the “analysis” level.
- ▶ Choose an action verb that is observable and at the level of change identified in the previous step; see the table below for a sample list of action verbs.
- ▶ Add additional criteria qualifying the objective, such as a time frame or a percentage change.

Sample action verbs:

Achieve	Determine	Implement	Reduce
Assist	Communicate	Improve	Restructure
Build	Distribute	Launch	Standardize
Collaborate	Eliminate	Maintain	Structure
Collect	Evaluate	Monitor	Train
Define	Facilitate	Organize	
Develop	Guide	Plan	





Step 5. Design initiatives

The purpose of this step is to design concrete initiatives that support the goals and objectives developed in step 4. Examples of different types of initiative are provided throughout this step to offer suggestions to the task force.

After setting the broad direction towards the future by establishing the overall strategy and goals to be reached, it is now time for the task force to formulate the coherent and concrete initiatives needed to achieve the goals and objectives, including through securing sustainable resources and funding.

Tips for designing initiatives:

- ▶ Be consistent with the objectives and goals of the strategy.
- ▶ Consider the resources and opportunities available in order to design realistic and sustainable initiatives.
- ▶ Adopt a gender-responsive approach.
- ▶ Involve actors who will participate in the implementation of the initiatives.
- ▶ For each initiative, specify who is responsible and define clear timelines.

▶ **Tailoring initiatives to MSME characteristics**

One of the key challenges in reaching out to and supporting MSMEs is the tailoring of OSH initiatives to the specific characteristics of MSMEs. Initiatives must be adapted to the specific needs and work practices of MSMEs and the actual context in which they operate.

Targeting specific sectors or subsectors

To reach the largest number of MSMEs, it is necessary to focus on the sectors in which they have a greater presence. However, adapting a tool or approach to a broad sector is often not sufficient since there is much variation in OSH conditions and needs when working at an aggregated level, such as in the manufacturing or food industries. Targeting specific subsectors provides a good basis for the provision of OSH support – for example, targeting bakeries rather than the food industry in general, or targeting welding companies or working at height in construction rather than the manufacturing industry in general.

In order to develop coherent OSH initiatives that are adapted to the needs of MSMEs and sector-specific, it is important to involve OSH experts, as well as regulatory authorities and people with relevant knowledge about the sector and their processes. Sector experts also have knowledge on business conditions, including vulnerabilities, market, competition and client impact, and the value chain, which makes it possible to develop support of good OSH quality that is also adapted to the needs and conditions of the target group and the regulatory requirements.

The organizational structure of sectors also varies across countries, including with regard to the presence of employers’ and workers’ organizations, which are key actors for promoting OSH in MSMEs, as well as the presence of women entrepreneurs, who may have specific needs to be addressed.

Considering different work practices

OSH initiatives should not only be adapted to the specific sector or subsector but also tailored to its specific work practices. By integrating potential solutions and tools with daily work practices, the chances of successful adaptations are increased, as are the chances of improving and altering daily work practices to achieve more sustainable OSH solutions. MSMEs usually have concrete work practices based on manual

work, using machines, specific working techniques and solving problems when they arise, to which practical advice should be adapted.

For example, sectors that have extensive experience of handling written manuals may benefit from written OSH guidelines, but the same approach may not be efficient in sectors that do not align with traditional work practices and may need complementary personal support from labour inspectors or other intermediaries.

Initiatives should also be adapted to specific work practices in order to provide concrete technical advice on how to solve OSH problems. However, it should be noted that providing very concrete and detailed advice is mainly possible for problems that are common and for which solutions are already known and evaluated, while for problems that are more complex, such as psychosocial or organizational OSH issues, it is much more difficult to provide such support.

Highlighting the positive impacts of good OSH conditions on productivity and business performance

Poor working environments and OSH conditions can negatively impact productivity and product quality, thereby preventing the enterprise from meeting market demands. Similarly, social and managerial conditions of work – such as empowerment, access to training, levels of engagement and equality – have been shown to positively influence enterprise performance.

Better working conditions can also potentially improve performance indirectly, for example by increasing customer satisfaction and worker motivation or reducing absenteeism and accidents.

Improvements can also change the impact of jobs on development.

Jobs in enterprises that provide safe work, appropriate working time arrangements and equal opportunities – all of which reduce risks and enhance opportunities for families and the community – bring wider benefits than merely increased profits.

A positive OSH setting enhances the overall reputation of an enterprise and therefore its business strategy. Having a good working environment strengthens the credibility of enterprises and may therefore serve as a driver for improving – or at least meeting – minimum OSH requirements.

► Examples of initiatives to improve OSH in MSMEs

Based on extensive research on sustainable mechanisms for improving OSH in MSMEs, some key types of initiative have been identified, namely:

1. strengthening the OSH regulatory framework for MSMEs;
2. promoting the OSH advisory role of intermediaries targeting MSMEs;
3. building competences and raising awareness; and
4. creating incentive-based mechanisms.

The main elements and challenges of a series of initiatives that can constitute a reference for the development of actions to be implemented for promoting OSH in MSMEs are summarized below. They are based on research, case studies, interviews and literature review conducted under the project “Upholding sustainable delivery mechanisms to promote OSH in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)” and the preparation of the report *Improving Safety and Health in Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms* (ILO, 2020), both funded by the Republic of Korea.

The examples provided below are taken from various experiences of the ILO and other relevant actors aimed at improving OSH in MSMEs; each country, through its task force, must develop its own strategy based on the problems identified in the assessment, the context defined in the mapping, the goals set, the resources available, the opportunities and challenges present. There are no universal solutions; each country must find its way, but to do so it can draw inspiration from the experiences, whether positive or negative, of other countries. The role of the ILO is precisely to collect, systemize and make these examples available.

Strengthening the OSH regulatory framework for MSMEs

A sound regulatory framework is very important for reaching MSMEs. Since many MSMEs do not have sufficient resources or do not consider OSH a priority and can be hard to reach with information and campaigns, legal obligations and adequate compliance mechanisms are critical to ensure safe and healthy working conditions in MSMEs.

OSH regulations are usually drafted in very specialized language and compliance requires several procedures and documents, contributing to the perception of OSH requirements as a regulatory administrative burden. To implement the law and produce the required documentation, MSMEs often need to rely on external consultants, which can be a problem for micro and small enterprises that may have difficulty bearing the cost of such consultants.

Methods need to be created or adjusted to support MSMEs in complying with regulatory requirements by coordinating the efforts of regulatory authorities, labour inspectorates, social partners and other bodies who can provide advisory services free of charge or at an affordable cost.

For more information, see ILO, *Improving Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms* (2020), Chs 2.1 and 2.2.

Key OSH requirements

Convention No. 155 defines the actions to be taken by governments and within enterprises to promote OSH and to improve working conditions. It defines the roles of employers, workers and their representatives that should be recognized by national OSH legislations.

Employers' obligations include:

- ▶ ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the workplaces, machinery, equipment and processes under their control are safe and without risk to health (Art. 16.1);
- ▶ ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the chemical, physical and biological substances and agents under their control are without risk to health when the appropriate measures of protection are taken (Art. 16.2);
- ▶ provide, where necessary, adequate protective clothing and protective equipment to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, risk of accidents or of adverse effects on health (Art.16.3);
- ▶ provide, where necessary, for measures to deal with emergencies and accidents, including adequate first-aid arrangements (Art. 18);
- ▶ give adequate information on the measures taken to secure OSH to workers' representatives and the possibility to consult their representative organizations about such information – provided they do not disclose commercial secrets (Art. 19(c));
- ▶ give appropriate training in OSH to workers and their representatives (Art. 19(d)); and
- ▶ enable workers or their representatives and, as the case may be, their representative organizations, to enquire into, and be consulted on, all aspects of OSH associated with their work (Art. 19(e)).

Workers' responsibilities include:

- ▶ cooperate in the fulfilment by their employer of the obligations placed upon him or her (Art.19 (a)); and
- ▶ report to his/her immediate supervisor any situation which he/she has reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and serious danger to his/her life or health – until the employer has taken remedial action, if necessary, workers cannot be required to return to a work situation where there is continuing imminent and serious danger to life or health (Art. 19(f)).

Workers' representatives' responsibilities include:

- ▶ cooperate with the employer in the field of OSH (art.19 (b)).

OSH measures shall not involve any expenditure for the workers (Art.21).

Revising the legal framework to better cover MSMEs



Why?

A clear and comprehensive legal OSH framework is of primary importance for MSMEs, especially as small enterprises are often “reactive” to regulatory compliance and may struggle to comply with many different pieces of legislation, for which they possess neither the legal expertise nor the managerial structure.



Key elements

It is appropriate to revise the legal framework to establish a single, basic set of OSH standards at a high level, specifying employers’ general obligations and workers’ rights and responsibilities. Such standards will serve as a framework for the remaining regulations, which may target different types of enterprises and sectors.



Main challenges

OSH legislation should protect the physical and mental health of all workers, women and men, including those working in smaller businesses and in the informal economy. OSH rights need to be expanded to workers in the informal economy and the transition from informal to formal economy should be promoted, as both are essential to improve OSH in MSMEs.⁴

The revision or adoption of laws is a long and challenging process; to that end, it is very important that all members of the task force are convinced about and committed to this initiative and are fully supported by their respective organizations/institutions.

Moreover, legislative changes require parliamentary approval; the task force and the institutions represented by it must have the capacity to raise awareness of the political parties present in parliament and obtain their support. To address this challenge, it may be ideal to have a general legal framework, which should be updated and adjusted by the decrees and resolutions of relevant ministries, as appropriate.

⁴ Member States and social partners may be guided by the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).

Reducing bureaucracy for MSMEs



Why?

Administrative procedures concerning OSH requirements are often complex and time-consuming, in particular when the entrepreneur is not familiar with such practices. This particularly concerns the procedures for notification of occupational accidents and diseases; documentation on risk assessment and management; requests for advice from the labour inspectorate; and procedures for requesting incentives for OSH improvements.

Such difficulties can lead to discouragement and the avoidance of legal obligations and efforts to make improvements in OSH.



Key elements

It could be useful to jointly identify with social partners (eventually based on surveys) what are the most complex procedures, thereby taking measures to simplify them – for example, by introducing telematic methods (dedicated sites, apps, emails) that do not require a physical presence in an office to carry out a practice. For an owner of a micro enterprise, going to an office to sort out a bureaucratic matter would imply closing the enterprise during that time.

Forms and procedures can be simplified, standardized and written in clear language, avoiding the use of technical jargon that cannot be easily understood by users.

Whenever possible, it would be appropriate to reduce and/or unify requirements and procedures, avoiding the duplication and overlapping of documents and improving coordination between the different bodies concerned. For example, a unified system can be created to enable the entrepreneur to notify once an occupational accident or disease, without spending time to communicate by different means to different entities (such as inspection, insurance and other bodies). The same approach of simplification could be applied to the documents to be produced on OSH.

New technologies can facilitate this task, for example by setting up a dedicated website where all practices can be presented.



Main challenges

Setting a website as a single online reference point for all OSH-related administrative matters requires strong cooperation among all the institutions concerned, as well as an efficient and user-friendly system. To prevent potential problems, the website should be created and administered by an OSH-related organization and the information gathered there should be allocated and delivered to other related organizations systematically. The privacy of sensitive data added to the system can also be an issue. In addition, for micro-entrepreneurs, access to IT and familiarity with online operations can also represent a challenge.

Developing OSH inspection methods tailored to MSMEs

Why?

Comprehensive and regular inspections (or at least the probability of being inspected) are vital for ensuring that OSH requirements are implemented in MSMEs. However, in most countries labour inspectorates have only a limited ability to reach out to MSMEs due to their limited resources and capacities, coupled with the use of traditional inspection methods that are not adapted to smaller enterprises.

Smaller enterprises may tend to react with suspicion and hostility towards legal authorities and labour inspectors. In addition, smaller enterprises look for practical and applicable solutions to the problems they encounter, whereas inspectors are not normally in a position to provide such specific solutions. When violations of legislation are identified, these enterprises want to know what is wrong and what is acceptable, and they also want concrete suggestions for improvements.

Key elements

In recent decades, labour inspectorates have suffered severe cuts in funds and staff in many countries. Strengthening inspectorates can guarantee a greater number of inspections in general, including by increasing the number of inspection visits to MSMEs and giving priority to sectors that are considered to be at high risk (such as construction) or have a high concentration of MSMEs that have been excluded from inspection visits for years.

Targeted inspection methods should be developed for smaller enterprises by adapting and adjusting traditional inspections to better meet the specific needs of smaller enterprises without compromising the intent of the inspections.

There should be a focus on dialogue and advice on how to fulfil OSH obligations rather than simply on providing inspections, since smaller enterprises may have difficulties in finding the appropriate solutions to the issues identified during inspections. A more advisory approach may have positive outcomes on the OSH performance of MSMEs by increasing attention to OSH issues and improving the understanding of OSH requirements and how to comply with them. For example, labour inspectors could provide guidance to MSMEs on how to make risk assessments in order to help them comply with regulations. In addition to visits, advice may also be provided through call centres, mail, messages, web pages and other channels that may allow employers and workers to ask specific questions about OSH requirements and compliance.

Inspectors are often viewed with suspicion, if not apprehensiveness, by entrepreneurs, who fear penalties for any irregularities found. One key challenge is how to change perceptions towards inspectors and increase confidence in them. To be credible during a counselling visit, the inspector must be familiar with the problems of the MSME, the sector in which it operates and its location. In this way, the inspector will be able to provide useful advice that will be appreciated by the entrepreneur.

Main challenges

There could be tension and ambiguity between the different roles of OSH inspectors, who may inspect and regulate compliance with existing legal frameworks while at the same time taking on an advisory role. The entrepreneur may not be clear whether the inspector has come to check compliance with the law and sanction irregularities or whether, on the contrary, they have come to help and provide advice.

To properly perform the advice function, inspectors must have received adequate training, including OSH sector-specific skills, if needed, and should emphasize that they only provide information about possible solutions, giving good examples from other similar enterprises.

As already mentioned, the labour inspectorate may often be understaffed and lack the necessary budget, equipment, skills and training to monitor and enforce OSH compliance, in particular in developing countries. The lack of inspectors and the limited resources allocated to inspectorates makes ensuring compliance too often an impossible objective, especially in the context of micro, small and informal firms.

Promoting compliance through other regulatory agencies

Why?

MSMEs are hard to reach because of their high number and high turnover, combined with the limited resources available for OSH inspections. Some countries also face shortages of OSH inspectors, presenting a further challenge. At the same time, other types of inspectors and regulatory bodies – such as food safety inspectors or environmental authorities, are regularly in contact with MSMEs and usually have a high level of sector knowledge. Utilizing those other authorities and inspectors and providing joint inspection visits can increase the number of MSMEs reached with the same resources. Local authorities who are in close contact with MSMEs in the area should also be provided with the necessary skills and resources to build OSH-related competencies at the local level.

Key elements

Identify the existing authorities that have a good coverage of MSMEs in selected target sectors.

Explore the possibility of integrating OSH elements in such inspections through close collaboration with the identified authorities.

Encourage capacity-building and increase the OSH-related skills and competencies of relevant local authorities that are in close contact with MSMEs.

Select key OSH topics that are especially important for a specific sector and assign them to the non-OSH authority for that sector in order to include advice on these topics in their MSME inspections.

Clearly define the OSH assignments of the non-OSH authority and ensure adequate support, for example by providing their inspectors with adequate knowledge and information about OSH.

Establish mechanisms for strong cooperation with the authorities by exchanging information on poorly performing companies and carrying out joint inspections.

Integrating OSH in food hygiene inspections

Food safety inspections are carried out more regularly than OSH inspections. In many countries, food authorities must inspect a newly started enterprise in the first months after their opening. Afterwards, regular inspections may be conducted once every year or every few years, depending on the national context.

These inspectors have a good practical knowledge of the sector and often personal knowledge as well based on their earlier visits. Often, the same inspector meets the same employer over a period of several years and they may develop good relations and trust.

If appropriately trained, they are in a good position to provide advice and support to the MSMEs that are also inspected for compliance with OSH requirements.

Main challenges

The non-OSH regulatory bodies have no obligation to provide OSH support to the visited and inspected MSMEs. They can mainly deal with OSH when there is a clear connection between their main subject and OSH, while several OSH aspects are too distant from their assignments and cannot be dealt with.

Although the non-OSH inspectors and advisers usually have a good knowledge of the sector and their specified field, their OSH knowledge may be limited; if they are not properly trained, their OSH advice and support may be inadequate.

This initiative may generate confusion among MSMEs concerning regulatory roles; entrepreneurs may have difficulties in distinguishing between the different authorities and the demands they make of MSMEs in relation to OSH conditions. As labour inspectors often play an advisory role for enterprises while also monitoring compliance, the ambiguity of these roles may cause tension for business operators, who may be unaware if the inspector is primarily visiting for compliance reasons or to provide assistance in implementing OSH measures.

Promoting the OSH advisory role of intermediaries targeting MSMEs

The regulatory efforts of labour and OSH inspectors can be complemented by other types of intermediaries who may support MSMEs in the interpretation of OSH regulation, thereby helping MSMEs decode the demands they receive from authorities. They can also support MSMEs in risk management and preventive activities.

Such intermediaries may include OSH advisory services, employers' organizations and business associations, trade unions, social security institutions, women's associations, accountants, agricultural advisers, suppliers of equipment and materials, professionals with a potential impact on OSH and NGOs. OSH advisers should use the standards set by the labour inspectors as a benchmark for their work with MSMEs.

Coordination among all the actors interacting with MSMEs in the field of OSH is vital, including among labour inspectors and other intermediaries, in order to avoid overlapping, conflicting messages and a waste of resources.

For more information, see ILO, *Improving Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms* (2020), Chs 2.3 and 2.4.

Establishing or reinforcing OSH advisory systems for MSMEs

Why?

OSH advisers may be the most important intermediaries for reaching out to MSMEs and improving OSH conditions in these enterprises. They have the relevant OSH competence, which gives legitimacy among employers. They can provide practical advice and recommendations, which is what the employer is looking for.

Key elements

The following are some of the areas in which key decisions must be taken in relation to OSH advisory services.

- ▶ **Compulsory vs voluntary.** One key decision is to determine whether the use of advisory services is compulsory or voluntary or a combination of both. For example, it may be compulsory to consult an OSH adviser unless employers or managers are trained in OSH management. If the use of such services is voluntary, incentives can be adopted to promote the uptake of external advisers. For example, MSME employers engaged with an external OSH adviser may avoid completing some legal documentation, which is often time-consuming.
- ▶ **Costs and funding.** Another key decision is to determine whether OSH advisory services will be market-based or free of charge to MSMEs. Since MSMEs – in particular micro and small enterprises – often have restricted budgets, they may be reluctant to pay for OSH services, in particular if there is no legal requirement for OSH advisory services. Free or low-cost OSH advisory services are more likely to reach large numbers of MSMEs. Therefore, to promote the access of micro and small enterprises to OSH services, the task force should identify ways to subsidize those services, such as by providing dedicated loans to MSMEs, using a part of insurance premiums or other public funding lines, or involving the social partners in the provision of such services.
- ▶ **Scope.** It is important to define the tasks that OSH advisers should perform for MSMEs. These may include supporting MSMEs in fulfilling their legal OSH obligations, including by conducting compulsory risk assessments and subsequently preparing required documentation. They may also deliver OSH training and information to workers and employers. When OSH advisory services are provided by – or in consultation with – an occupational physician, they may also include medical check-ups for workers. OSH advisers should be aware of the available tools and initiatives on OSH that focus on MSMEs in order to be able to disseminate them.

Building efficient OSH advisory services

In order to effectively reach MSMEs and support OSH improvements in them, OSH advisers should:

- ▶ have good knowledge of the sector in which the MSME operates;
- ▶ adapt their services, including the information and advice they offer, to the needs and characteristics of MSMEs, since personalized solutions adapted to their specific business are what MSMEs are often looking for;
- ▶ cover all the different types of OSH risks, including psychosocial risks and new and emerging risks;
- ▶ prefer personal meetings and return to the same enterprise on a regular basis – personal contact helps develop a trust-based relationship, which is essential for reaching out to and supporting MSMEs in improving OSH;
- ▶ provide concrete advice to help MSMEs to solve problems; and
- ▶ encourage employers and workers to ask all the questions they wish relating to OSH without fear of retaliation or reprimand from regulatory authorities.



Main challenges

If OSH services are perceived as too expensive, the outreach may be limited because of scarce resources and a lack of business interest on the part of MSMEs, which will prioritize other topics that are more urgent from their perspective.

External OSH advisers may behave differently when interacting with large enterprises as opposed to MSMEs; they may not treat MSMEs as individual clients but reproduce standard documents and recommendations, without paying much attention to the specific needs and context of MSMEs.

Some companies use external OSH service providers to complete written risk assessments only in order to meet the requirements and thus avoid sanctions by labour inspectors, while not using the risk assessment as a basis for adopting measures to control risks – in reality, they are therefore not complying with the intentions of the regulations.

The quality of the OSH services offered may vary greatly, especially if there is no certification and accreditation system in place.

Enhancing the role of social partners as OSH intermediaries



Why?

Social partners may take on active roles as intermediaries by providing direct assistance to individual MSMEs. They may support MSMEs' understanding of their OSH obligations, both from the enterprises' side (mainly employers' associations) and from the workers' side (trade unions).

MSME employers generally have a high level of trust in employers' organizations since they are working in their own interests, which can also further enhance the role of employers' organizations as OSH intermediaries for MSMEs.



Key elements

Employers' organizations and business associations have an important role in supporting member MSMEs to improve their OSH conditions. They should promote the integration of OSH issues in MSME business process, highlighting the positive impacts of safe and healthy working conditions on productivity and business image.

Employers' organizations may guide member MSMEs when they receive an improvement notice from labour inspectors or have to deal with cases of compensation for occupational injuries or other relevant queries. In such situations, the employers' organization is key in translating and interpreting the demands transmitted by improvement notices and OSH legislation into concrete actions and solutions. This is an important task, since as already mentioned it is often difficult for MSMEs to fully understand what they are required to do.

As part of their informative function, employers' organizations can also facilitate seminars on topics related to OSH, in which an expert provides information for member MSMEs on specific topics of interest. Employers' organizations may also provide OSH training for employers, managers and OSH workers' representatives (depending on national law).

As an intermediary, trade unions may offer counselling to their members, disseminate OSH information and provide OSH training (in particular to OSH representatives). To this end, they need to be well represented in MSMEs. Smaller enterprises often lack formal workers' representation, including through OSH representatives or OSH joint committees, as these are often required only for medium-sized and large enterprises.

To overcome this situation, trade unions may organize a network of OSH representatives to cover smaller enterprises (in the same community and/or same sector) that do not have an OSH worker representative at the workplace. They need to have adequate knowledge of OSH, the sector and the characteristics of smaller business. They should visit the enterprises on regular basis (for example, once a year). This type of initiative can increase OSH awareness among workers and establish a positive collaboration with employers on improving OSH conditions.

NGOs and associations promoting women's entrepreneurship development may also be used as channel to reach women-owned MSMEs. They may include an OSH component in their activities related to technical advice, counselling, training and promotion.



Main challenges

Social partners' initiatives and assistance are usually based on membership. Smaller enterprises are typically less well integrated into national industrial relations systems and the workforces in these enterprises tend to be less organized. The limited membership of smaller business in both employers' organizations and trade unions may be a major constraint for the outreach of social partners.

Creating and supporting OSH networks for MSMEs



Why?

Employers in MSMEs are interested in advice and guidance from colleagues and peers who face the same challenges and can provide concrete and feasible solutions.

To this end, OSH networks may be an effective means of sharing good practices and promoting an exchange of existing OSH information. Through OSH networks, MSMEs may find and implement effective OSH solutions that are tailored to their needs.



Key elements

The creation of OSH networks of MSMEs can be promoted at local and regional or sectoral levels. They may be created by public administrations, national or local, together with social partners and OSH experts. OSH networks may include not only relevant OSH actors but also stakeholders from public health and other institutions, when relevant.

Networks usually include the sharing of good practice, information, training and education, research and advisory services. Joining a network offers various benefits to MSMEs; for example, they may organize training together, develop information materials and guidelines, share experiences, and start collaborations and joint initiatives.

Local or national networks may in turn be part of OSH general international networks, which bring their experience and benefit from a wider overview. Or it can be decided to participate in existing MSME networks and integrate an OSH component into them.



Main challenges

The creation of a network requires an initial start-up phase before consolidating and attracting new members. To create a network, therefore, requires motivation and perseverance.

Joining a network takes time and MSMEs, in particular micro and small enterprises, can invest time only in activities that have an evident and immediate benefit for the company.

Inserting the OSH theme into an already existing network on general themes for MSMEs requires expertise and the ability to demonstrate the usefulness of a healthy work environment for productivity and business success.

Building competences and raising awareness on OSH in MSMEs

Awareness-raising, information and training can be major drivers of OSH improvements in MSMEs, since one key reason for the reactive approach of many MSMEs to OSH is often their poor knowledge of OSH and OSH requirements, as well as their perception that OSH matters are not important for the enterprise.

Convention No. 155 requires Member States to adopt measures to promote the inclusion of OSH education at all levels of education and training. Based on the Convention's provisions, many countries include in their legislation obligations for employers to provide workers and their representatives with appropriate OSH training. However, mandatory participation in OSH training typically requires a minimum number of employees. The smallest enterprises, in which the need tends to be most urgent, are therefore often exempted from national mandatory OSH training.

For more information, see ILO, *Improving Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms (2020)*, Ch. 2.5.

Developing OSH training methodologies adapted to the MSME audience

Why?

MSMEs look for practical information and easy-to-apply methods and tools in order to identify their own problems and take the necessary steps to make improvements.

MSME entrepreneurs have little time available and scarce resources, so that OSH training must adopt approaches and methods that allow participants to assimilate key information and concepts quickly and at affordable costs. Women entrepreneurs, due to their multiple roles, have even more difficulties in finding time for other activities, so each initiative must take into account their specific needs and constraints.

Key elements

In order to be effective, OSH training, particularly at the workplace, should:

- ▶ provide a balance between theory and practice;
- ▶ adopt participatory learning methods;
- ▶ use language that is easily understood by the target audience;
- ▶ provide examples drawn from similar companies (in terms of size and sector);
- ▶ be conducted at times and places that are easily accessible; and
- ▶ benefit from the presence of experienced workers as mentors.

The adoption of a participatory approach, coupled with the practical nature of the actions to be undertaken, has proven useful for motivating employers in MSMEs to take action and improve their working conditions. This also contributes to implementing legal requirements in a progressive manner, promoting active participation by employers and workers in decision-making and the realization of workers' rights to enjoy a safe and healthy workplace.

For smaller enterprises in particular, it may be appropriate to organize training for several companies together (from the same sector and/or nearby); in addition to the economic advantage, this method offers an opportunity for exchanging experiences with other MSMEs and may encourage the creation of networks.

The ILO’s participatory action-oriented training

The ILO’s [participatory action-oriented training \(PAOT\) methodology](#) is based on the following six principles.

1. Build on local practice.
2. Use learning-by-doing.
3. Encourage exchange of experience.
4. Link working conditions with other management goals.
5. Focus on achievements.
6. Promote workers’ involvement.

To measure results, improvements are generally recorded through “before-and-after” photographs, which are also used as examples in future training – thus encouraging learning from peers who have already benefited from PAOT.⁵



Main challenges

The cost of training and the time required for participation can be a significant barrier, in particular for micro and small enterprises.

MSMEs sometimes do not perceive the need to develop their knowledge and skills on OSH and therefore do not show interest in the OSH training offered, even if it is free of charge.

There may be a shortage of qualified trainers in OSH, especially in rural areas.

5 For more information, see ILO, [“Participatory Action-Oriented Training \(PAOT\)”](#).

Producing tools and resources tailored to sectoral and local situations

Why?

The provision of specific tools has been a long-standing strategy for supporting MSMEs. The general experience is that many tools, such as those related to OSH management, have been too complicated, which make them difficult to use for MSMEs. Also, tools have often not been designed for and adapted to MSMEs and lack a dissemination strategy for reaching out to and motivating MSMEs to use them. Evidently, MSMEs need more specific tools if they are to develop their own OSH controls.

Many MSMEs, especially micro companies, have difficulties with OSH-MSs and these normally do not work in MSMEs.

Such pervasive difficulties with formal OSH management are important to consider when designing OSH-MSs for MSMEs. There is a need to develop support for OSH management that is better suited to the work practices of different sectors.

MSMEs need simple and practical tools; information and concepts must be easily transferred into concrete and feasible actions.

The language of OSH training must be appropriate for its recipients, in terms of both its style and the actual language used, since in some countries different languages are spoken in different areas, or there may be areas or sectors that include many migrant workers. The use of images can be particularly effective for transmitting messages quickly and concisely.

Key elements

A number of resources and tools may be developed to help MSMEs – employers and managers, workers and OSH representatives – to improve OSH conditions

Such material should reflect sector-specific risks, work organization and other factors, such as the social context.

Resources and tools must use the most suitable means and methods for reaching the target population; if the resource targets people with a low level of education or with little familiarity with the national language, it is necessary to avoid too much written material and use more visual elements, such as pictograms and visual aids. When images are used, these should be inclusive, representing men and women from the different ethnic groups present in the target population.

Resources and tools may cover different OSH-related topics. For example, they may support the process of hazard identification and risk control or may provide information on the implementation of OSH-MSs.

Example of tools and resources that may be developed include:

- ▶ guides and manuals describing how to address a selected set of OSH problems;
- ▶ checklists;
- ▶ web portals with online interactive tools, webinars and simplified Q & As;
- ▶ self-assessment tools;
- ▶ visual material, posters and other awareness-raising material;
- ▶ videos illustrating good work practice and information on different types of control measures; and
- ▶ dedicated practical apps on specific OSH risks or for specific sectors.

The ILO’s Checkpoints apps series

The ILO’s [Checkpoints app series](#) is a digital tool for improving OSH in the workplace. Users can explore illustrated descriptions of each checkpoint and create interactive checklists tailored to their workplace. Each app also includes best practice recommendations for taking action and implementing effective improvements.

The series includes the following apps:

- ▶ “Ergonomic Checkpoints”
- ▶ “Ergonomic Checkpoints in Agriculture”
- ▶ “Stress Prevention at Work Checkpoints”



Main challenges

In many settings, dissemination is perceived as simply posting information on the internet, but these websites are probably visited mainly by the more proactive MSMEs, which are already aware of and interested in OSH. Navigating the very large amount of information available and selecting what suits specific needs best can represent a severe problem for MSMEs, in particular micro and small enterprises.

For MSMEs that have difficulties in finding the right information themselves, intermediaries may help guide them to relevant and reliable sources of information, but there are often not enough intermediaries available to provide this service and reach MSMEs.

Developing tools and training materials requires not only in-depth technical knowledge of the subject but equally sound methodological knowledge. Step 6 (Develop an effective and sustainable communication plan) will review some of the elements of the communication process that must be known in order to develop effective communication strategies.

This combination of technical and methodological skills is not always available and external specialized training/communication services should be used.

The development of training materials has a cost that can be only justified if amortized by their wide use, with an appropriate dissemination strategy; otherwise it may be too expensive.

Before developing new tools, it is necessary to determine what tools already exist (through the mapping covered in step 3) and to check whether they are accessible and at what cost or under what conditions it may be possible to adapt them to the specific intended use (type of business, sector, characteristics, target population, etc).

Once again, coordination and collaboration between all the actors involved is essential to avoid overlapping and ensure an effective dissemination.

Creating incentive-based mechanisms

In order for an incentive to have an impact, the potential gains should be clear and perceived by the entrepreneur as rewarding.

Incentives can be of different types:

- ▶ economic incentives can be *direct* (for example they can be provided to cover – wholly or partially – the expenses for upgrading or purchasing equipment related to OSH performance in the company) or *indirect* (such as reducing insurance premiums in case of OSH improvements at the workplace);
- ▶ administrative incentives may include being relieved of some specific administrative burdens, for example by reducing or suspending some requirements in the event that the company is consulting an OSH adviser;
- ▶ rewards incentives can be adopted to reinforce the positive image of the company through *certificates, labels or awards*. National awards are often issued in public ceremonies, providing governments or other relevant stakeholders with the opportunity to promote a safety culture by publicly recognizing good examples.

For more information, see ILO, *Improving Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms* (2020), Ch. 2.6

Certifications

Why?

A framework for recognition predominantly targeting MSMEs is attractive as it ensures that their efforts and improvements in OSH are not overshadowed by bigger and better-resourced enterprises.

Larger enterprises (partners) often require certification for their subcontractors.

MSMEs often have no resources to invest in advertising their products and public recognition; granting an OSH quality award to a firm constitutes desirable free publicity.

Key elements

Certification may be free or provided at a cost, but if so the cost must be affordable.

Clear procedures must be established for certification as well as for auditing.

Certifications often concern the implementation of the OSH-MS. There are internationally recognized certifications such as ISO, but they are often not suitable for smaller enterprises, since they require a type of organization and resources that MSMEs usually do not have.

Specific systems can be created especially for MSMEs, which can also have different levels: for example, a first basic certificate may be issued after having attended a training course (and after a test of the acquired knowledge/ competences); while further certificates may be issued on the basis of audits at the workplace where OSH conditions and improvement measures taken are evaluated.

Main challenges

There has been an international debate on certification for years; its reliability may sometimes be doubtful if the certification body is funded by the company itself.

Stakeholders must be involved in the identification, selection and control of the companies to which awards will be granted in order to avoid rewarding companies that provide wrong or partial information on their OSH performance and do not set a positive example.

Certification mechanisms need to be supported by a comprehensive strategy that engages enterprises at all levels. In this context, if larger enterprises are engaged MSMEs may have the incentive to participate in the scheme because a number of larger enterprises (partners) require certification for their subcontractors.

Promoting insurance-based cost reductions and other economic incentives

Why?

MSEs have limited financial resources and therefore have difficulties in securing money for investments in OSH. This requires investment in human resources (training) and external advice, as well as direct investment from the enterprise in forms of equipment, the reorganization of workplaces or other OSH improvements.

A reduction in insurance costs can be a powerful means of motivating MSMEs to improve their OSH conditions. MSMEs may be keen to make investments to obtain long-lasting discounts and may be attracted by improving OSH to receive a direct reward.

A portion of companies' insurance premium may be returned to fund preventive action at a workplace level through support for projects aiming at improving health and safety. Since such programmes are redirecting funds paid by companies into OSH improvements, they may be economic sustainable.

Key elements

This initiative should be led by the national insurance bodies; they have the opportunity to carry out extensive support activities, including financial and training support as well as supervisory and preventive consultations for OSH improvements.

The potential coverage among formal MSMEs is wide, as in most countries all enterprises and workers must be insured.

Insurance premium discounts may be accorded for preventive OSH activities. They may apply to enterprises wishing to implement OSH-MSs or those that have spent funds to improve OSH, such as by training employees, replacing machinery or tools, restructuring of the workplace, etc. In addition to premium reductions, financing part of the expense may also be considered.

Another type of incentive may be the payment of the workdays spent to participate in OSH training activities.

Some success factors that may contribute to improve OSH from such subsidies are:

- ▶ information about the subsidies is clearly communicated to MSMEs;
- ▶ clear and simple procedures are established for MSMEs to apply for such subsidies; and
- ▶ a continuous improvements process is promoted beyond the subsidized OSH investments.

Main challenges

There must be a commitment on the part of insurance institutions, which in many countries have a more reactive than proactive approach and view their role in OSH more in terms of compensation and reintegration than prevention.

The preparatory cost for applying for economic support can discourage MSMEs, especially the smaller ones.

Micro and small enterprises operating in the informal economy are totally excluded.

Mainstreaming OSH in other initiatives targeting MSMEs

The mapping (see step 3 above) may have identified some initiatives already in place for MSMEs in which OSH can be integrated; an analysis of these initiatives will allow an evaluation to determine those that should continue and if necessary be strengthened and replicated, as well as those which should be modified or terminated.

For example, an OSH component could be included in training courses for MSMEs organized by business or professional associations to improve productivity; training courses and counselling services provided by various public and private bodies on how to start and manage a business; or programmes and projects for women entrepreneurship development.

We have already mentioned how collaborations with other regulatory agencies (for example food safety inspections) can serve to promote compliance with OSH standards.

Access to microcredit, loans or participation in tenders can be tied to certain OSH quality requirements.

Another strategy may be to promote OSH in MSMEs through the supply chain; multinational companies sensitive to social issues and labour rights may for example play a crucial role by inserting or strengthening the promotion of OSH as a requirement for obtaining contracts in the supply chain.

COVID-19 pandemic and OSH in MSMEs

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the connections and interdependencies between all the companies involved in the supply chain, demonstrating how creating safe and healthy supply chains is essential not only to guarantee the health of workers, producers, suppliers, contractors and customers but also to ensure business continuity.

In this sense, larger enterprises and multinationals play a key role in demanding improvements in OSH conditions in contractors, promoting the transfer of knowledge and good practices. For example, larger enterprises and multinational enterprises with OSH internal services may help smaller enterprises by providing free training or technical advice; as they know the production sector well, they may help MSMEs to implement effective solutions that are suited to their specific context.





Action guide: Step 5

The following worksheets aim to support the task force in determining any particular sectors or subsectors with specific OSH needs, and outlining possible initiatives to be implemented to achieve the goals and objectives of the national strategy..







Step 6. **Develop an effective and sustainable communication plan**

The purpose of this step is to develop a communication plan to successfully inform about the national strategy to improve OSH in MSMEs and disseminate progress on the task force's work.

Communication profoundly influences the way people perceive health and environmental risks; these perceptions contribute to shape whether people adopt or reject risk messages; support or disregard environmental policies; and trust or express scepticism about risk and environmental management.

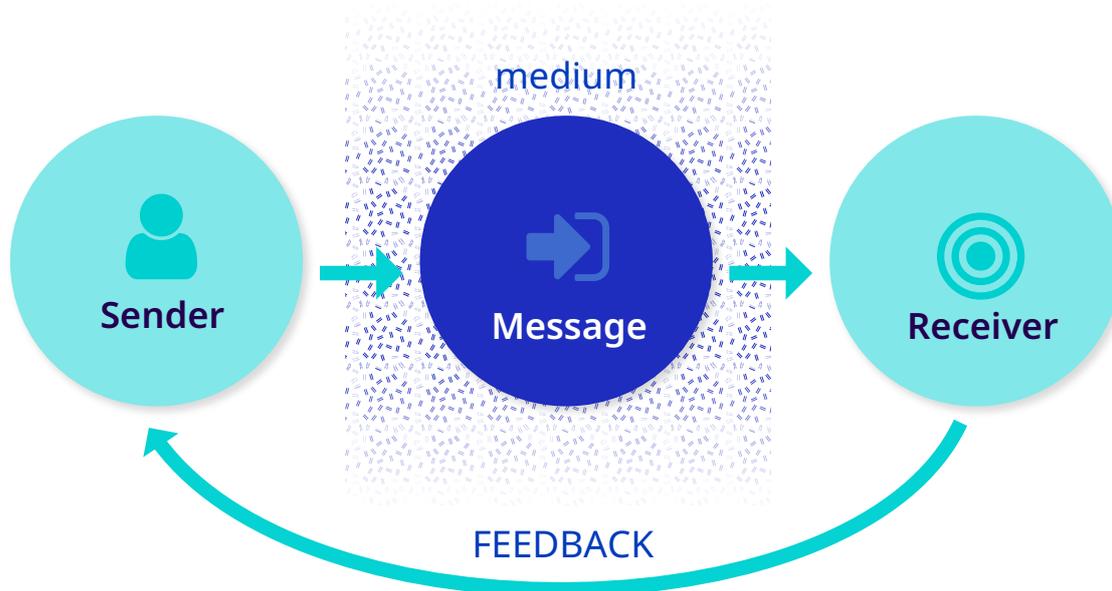
If a government adopts coherent and comprehensive strategies and actions but does not communicate them adequately, it risks seeing its efforts frustrated.

Initiatives for supporting OSH in MSMEs in the formal and informal economy may fail because the dissemination of information is inadequate, resulting in a missed opportunity not only for the enterprises that do not benefit from the programmes designed for them but also for the government that does not achieve its goal of improving working conditions in MSMEs.

Communication should be part of any national strategy from the early stage.

► Key elements of a communication process

The fundamental elements of a communication process are: the sender, the receiver, the message and the medium.



The **sender** is the subject who sends the message. With regard to OSH policies in MSMEs at the national level, in addition to the main subjects (national authority, OSH/MSMEs team and social partners), coordination between the different bodies that transmit information and awareness messages on OSH is necessary.

The **receiver** is the recipient of the message, the target. In commercial advertising campaigns, a precise definition of the target is key to be able to influence the market and reach potential buyers. It is equally important to clearly define the target for awareness-raising campaigns on socio-health issues. The challenge will be greater for some targets, such as micro-entrepreneurs, especially those in remote areas and women micro-entrepreneurs, who may face additional problems. Targeting MSMEs as a single entity may prove to be too vague; in order to be efficient, a communication may require different strategies depending on the types/sizes of the companies involved. Various studies highlight how micro and small enterprises require a particular approach to OSH communication that is more personalized and uses intermediaries – subjects who are already in direct and personal contact with the enterprise and have their trust. This is even more relevant for micro enterprises operating in the informal economy, which are not included in formal information channels.

The **message** is the content of the communication: it must be clear and concise, especially for mass campaigns.

Finally, the **medium** in which the message is transmitted and the **means** chosen to transmit it play a fundamental role in ensuring there are no distortions in communication and the message reaches the defined target by reaching the set objective. Both sender and receiver should be familiar with the chosen means of communication.

Choosing the appropriate medium and language

As highlighted in the report *Improving Safety and Health in Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms* (ILO, 2020), an important lesson learned – from both successful and unsuccessful initiatives – is that it is vital to choose appropriate communication channels. The method of communicating a message should be selected based on the medium that will most effectively convey the meaning of the message to the target population. The delivery method must suit the communication needs of both the sender and the receiver for shared meaning to occur. There is an almost infinite variety of communication methods. These methods will continue to expand and it may not be easy to select the most appropriate method for reliably reaching MSMEs.

The language used should be tailored to the specific target group, should be simple and action-oriented and should avoid using unnecessary administrative or OSH specialized technical terms.

Mass media. The use of traditional mass media – newspapers, magazines, radio and television – may be an effective means of communication for targeted campaigns and for disseminating information on the adopted strategy, initiatives and OSH in general. In particular, local media may be used to reach the population, especially in remote areas.

Images. People prefer pictures and videos over texts; appropriate pictures and videos can compress a large volume of information, can be understood without literacy skills, take less time to consume and are easy to understand. Pictograms, comic strips and other types of simple information on OSH can be effective tools for disseminating OSH information and are especially effective for communicating with migrant workers who do not speak the native language. People also become more emotional when images are used in communication. Images and emotion have a greater impact on people's perceptions than logical arguments based on objective facts and data. Pictures and video images come imbued with emotional attachments and this influences people's perceptions and reactions to the information communicated.

Internet. Often, OSH information is disseminated through internet websites, but such sites are probably visited mainly by more proactive MSMEs, in which owner-managers or others (for example OSH representatives) are already aware of and interested in OSH. On the other hand, it is important for OSH information to be easily accessible and to target the concrete issues and sectors or relevant work processes. Therefore, such information should also be easy for MSMEs to apply once they are motivated or encouraged to search for it. This is especially important for MSMEs that must find OSH information themselves. Often the problem



is not whether or not relevant information is available, but rather how MSMEs can find and select what best suits their needs.

Social networks. Social networks (also on mobile phones) may play an important role in OSH communication, information, experience-sharing and role-modelling and may have an impact on the adoption of safe practices. Several examples of good practices in communicating OSH messages to MSMEs are presented in the report *Improving Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms* (ILO, 2020) and the publication *Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: A Collection of Five Case Studies* (ILO, 2020).

Dedicated apps. Developing new apps that target MSMEs may be a good method of disseminating OSH information. This can be more effective than just posting all the information on a website.

Personal contact and intermediaries. MSMEs (in particular micro and small enterprises) tend to be more responsive when information is delivered by personal contact. In this context, the role of intermediaries can be especially important for providing the right information and guiding MSMEs to the relevant sources of information. Intermediaries, such as training suppliers, may be a major vehicle for spreading OSH measures, practices and policies in micro and small enterprises, along with other means, such as forums, radio programmes and new technologies.⁶

6 For more information, see ILO, *Improving Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms*.



Action guide: Step 6

The following worksheet allows for development of a communications strategy to ensure that information is disseminated to the relevant stakeholders through the correct channels.







Step 7.

Monitor and evaluate the national strategy

The purpose of this step is to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to support the sustainability and effectiveness of the national strategy.

Recent studies⁷ highlight that the main challenges for programmes promoting OSH in MSMEs are their sustainability and the limited number of micro and small enterprises that are able to access these programmes. Sometimes a policy and the resulting strategy is defined on the basis of an analysis of the situation that has changed over time or may have been influenced by unpredictable external factors. There may be many unforeseen events in the implementation of strategies and programmes that can lead to the failure of policies that in theory seemed effective. Without regular and effective monitoring, it will not be possible to identify such problems until an advanced stage of implementation, when it will be too late to fix them.

New governments frequently do not accept that previous governments’ policies were efficient and should be continued and prefer to start new policies and programmes without building on what was previously established. Moreover, governments and institutions are rarely willing to admit that their policies or strategies have been ineffective or have not fully achieved their goals and objectives, and prefer not to have objective evaluations that could show failures and mistakes.

In order to ensure that an OSH strategy for MSMEs may successfully achieve its goals and objectives, a sound monitoring and evaluation plan should be established from the start. Therefore, even though step 7 is the final step in this how-to guide, monitoring and evaluation should be considered throughout the development and implementation of the OSH for MSMEs strategy.

► Understanding monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the systematic collection of data to track progress towards achieving results. Its purpose is to inform the strategy’s ongoing planning, management and reporting mechanisms and take any remedial actions that may be necessary. Monitoring is usually an internal activity of the body responsible for implementation.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the objective and systematic analysis of a programme, which is typically undertaken at its mid-point or completion. In the case of the OSH strategy for MSMEs, evaluations may be undertaken at the mid-point and upon the completion of the time frame established to complete the initiatives (see step 4 for the strategy’s time frame).

Effective evaluation measures:

- the degree to which the strategy achieves expected results, based on formative evaluation (which measures progress) and summative evaluation (which measures the end results at the end of the proposed time frame);
- the extent to which the strategy is implemented as intended (known as process evaluation); and
- whether the strategy fulfils the overall goal(s) set (long-term impact evaluation).

⁷ ILO, [Improving Safety and Health in Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Overview of Initiatives and Delivery Mechanisms](#), 2020; and EU-OSHA, [Safety and Health in Micro and Small Enterprises in the EU: From Policy to Practice – Description of Good Examples](#), 2017.

In measuring those impacts, an evaluation determines the strategy’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, contribution towards impact and sustainability.

Evaluation is undertaken by external actors in order to ensure impartiality.

Key differences between monitoring and evaluation	
🔍 Monitoring	✅ Evaluation
Ongoing process throughout the design and implementation of the strategy	Done on a periodic basis (usually at the mid-point or the end of the proposed time frame for the strategy)
Focuses on inputs (resources used to conduct initiatives, such as budget and staff) and initiatives	Focuses on relevance, results, impacts and attainment of the overall goal(s)
Helps improve project design and functioning of the current strategy	Helps improve the design and planning of future strategies
Produces regular reports and updates on initiatives	Produces a final report, including recommendations and lessons learned

▶ Undertaking a monitoring and evaluation plan

A monitoring and evaluation plan, which should be designed from the start of the OSH strategy, will require a number of key elements, including:

- ▶ defining a clear **purpose** for monitoring and evaluating the strategy;
- ▶ allocating a sufficient **budget** and adequate **human resources capacity** for the duration of the OSH strategy;
- ▶ gathering **baseline data** that describes the initial conditions (before the initiatives begin), which should be gathered during the assessment of national OSH initiatives (step 3);
- ▶ identifying **performance indicators** (qualitative and quantitative) to measure each objective and initiative, each of which should establish **targets** to be reached (for example, an increase of 20 per cent more MSMEs adopting OSH practices in the workplace);
- ▶ determining **data collection tools**, such as surveys or interview questionnaires;
- ▶ defining the **frequency** at which data are collected, such as quarterly or semi-annual progress reports.
- ▶ identifying who will be **responsible** for data collection and analysis; and
- ▶ determining how the monitoring and evaluation findings will be **disseminated and used** to improve the implementation of the current OSH strategy and future initiatives.

As can be seen from the list provided above, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan will require a considerable amount of time, effort and resources. For the purposes of this guide, a brief overview of performance indicators is given below, which is sufficient information for developing a basic monitoring and evaluation plan. For further guidance on monitoring and evaluation, see ILO, [Basic Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation](#), 2015. For more advanced concepts of monitoring and evaluation, see ILO, [Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation: Principles, Rationale, Planning and Managing Evaluations](#), 2020.

Performance indicators

As described in step 5 above, each initiative will produce expected results. Results are measured by quantitative and qualitative indicators, which measure changes relative to an initial or baseline set of conditions. The assessment of the situation of OSH in MSMEs in the country (step 2) provides the baseline data that can be used to measure the progress of the strategy’s initiatives.

Quantitative indicators describe changes in numerical values (for example, accident rates in MSMEs of a critical sector decreasing by 20 per cent). **Qualitative indicators** describe the status of a change in qualitative terms (for example, an increase in awareness and knowledge of OSH among MSMEs).

Examples of quantitative and qualitative indicators

Quantitative indicators

Qualitative indicators

Percentage decrease in the number of fatalities/injuries in MSMEs each year

Risk perception and experience of work-related risk/harm
Perception of safety measures by workers

Number of MSME employers and workers participating in OSH training

Level of satisfaction of employers with training received on OSH standards

Number of national/sectoral/regional campaigns that raise awareness and promote OSH that targets MSMEs

Perceived usefulness of OSH procedures

Number of MSMEs requesting and obtaining financial support to implement OSH measures in the workplace

Perceived level of workplace collaboration on OSH

Gender-sensitive indicators

The difference in the impact of programmes and initiatives on women and men can only be identified if monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are gender-responsive. Only this enables a crucial adjustment of programmes and policies in response to gender issues and needs. It is also essential to check whether policies, strategies and programmes meet these objectives.

Quantitative gender-sensitive indicators will measure the numbers and percentages of women and men involved in any particular activity. Quantitative indicators rely on gender-disaggregated data systems and records and can be linked to the numerical targets established in the programmes.

To improve the gender focus of a programme, it is not enough merely to get more women to participate. The quality of their participation and how they experience the relevance of a given activity are equally important.

Because the use of indicators and other relevant evaluation techniques will lead to a better understanding of how results can be achieved, using gender-sensitive indicators will also feed into more effective future planning and programme delivery.

Some important considerations

A sound monitoring and evaluation plan has costs, which must be identified and allocated from the beginning. Also, the level of effort must be manageable and appropriate to what is being monitored and evaluated.

Monitoring and evaluation can have negative associations. Monitoring is sometimes perceived as a form of surveillance, while evaluation can be perceived as highlighting only negative issues. As noted above, the purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to help improve the design and implementation of an OSH strategy in order to achieve the expected results. An honest evaluation that highlights both positive factors and mistakes made is also fundamental in order to benefit from lessons learned in carrying out future actions.

Programmes/actions are often undertaken at local, regional or sectoral levels and may fail to take account of similar activities that have already been conducted elsewhere, whether positive or unsatisfactory results were achieved. The national authority and the task force can play an important role in collecting and sharing the results of evaluations, disseminating good practices, and favouring cooperation and the harmonization of interventions, which are essential to ensure an optimal impact.





Action guide: Step 7

The following worksheet aims at support the taks force in developing a monitoring and eveluation plan, which is key to ensure that the strategy is effective and making progress. Monitoring and evaluation can also allow the identification of lessons learned, which can help improve the strategy to better meet identified needs.



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International Labour Organization

Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and
Occupational Safety and Health Branch
(LABADMIN/OSH)

Route des Morillons 4

CH-1211 Geneva 22

Switzerland

T: +41 22 799 6715

E: labadmin-osh@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/labadmin-osh



9 789220 379080