



International  
Labour  
Organization



# IMPROVING THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF WORKERS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS IN MADAGASCAR



In Madagascar, the project implemented by the ILO under the Flagship Programme “Safety + Health For All” aims to improve the health and safety of workers in textile and lychee global

supply chains, thanks to financing from the Vision Zero Fund. Launched in 2017 with the support of the French Ministry of Labour (Department of International and European Affairs), the

project has already led to a number of advances and fruitful cooperation with the French Directorate General for Labour.

## BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SITUATION

Primarily export-oriented, the textiles and lychee industries are important for the Malagasy economy. The textiles sector generates around 260,000 jobs and can be broken down into four main activities: cotton cultivation; cotton ginning/cleaning; spinning and weaving; and garment manufacturing. Furthermore, Madagascar is one of the world's top five producers of lychees. The industry, which generates around 110,000 jobs, includes three main activities: lychee cultivation; harvesting/transport; and packing/processing.

In order to provide a better understanding of the occupational risks and to identify all the stakeholders involved, the ILO carried out an analysis of the drivers and constraints with a view to improving occupational safety and health (OSH) in both sectors. The major risks identified for cotton growers are exposure to chemicals and dust, while the 200,000 workers in garment factories are exposed to chemicals, mechanical and ergonomic risks, as well as transportation and psychosocial risks.

With regard to lychee cultivation, the major risks are falls from a height and carrying heavy loads. During the product processing and preserving stages, the main risks identified are the carrying of heavy loads, exposure to sulphur, falling



A worker harvesting lychees in the Toamasina region

objects and fires. In general, the seasonal nature of the product, leading to a low level of professionalization of the sector, the absence or discontinuity of social protection and the lack of collective organizations increases workers' vulnerability to occupational risks.

Based on the findings of these studies, the tripartite stakeholders adopted intervention measures to improve OSH.

### FIRST TANGIBLE RESULTS

**173 OSH inspectors trained in OSH** - A task force of 12 labour inspectors and directors was established in 2018 and received professional training in OSH, followed by field training in the form of a study visit to La Reunion in close collaboration with the Directorate for Enterprises, Competition, Consumer Affairs, Labour and Employment (DIECCTE).

This exchange provided Malagasy inspectors with the scope for creating legislative guidelines for the strengthening of the Malagasy

body of standards. Armed with this new knowledge, the Task Force, with support from their central office, trained all 173 Malagasy labour inspectors and controllers, who now have the ability to carry out effective OSH inspections throughout the country. This is an outstanding achievement.

**Occupational health services assessed** - A participatory occupational health assessment is currently being completed in line with the principles of the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161). This analysis addresses the social partners' interest in increasing



Workers in a textiles factory in Antananarivo province

access to occupational health preventive services for workers in the informal economy. The assessment identified gaps in population coverage and in the functions offered by these services, as well as opportunities for improvement through the identification of innovative practices and potential new partnerships. During the assessment process, the chief medical officers of 16 Intercompany Medical Services (SMIE) received training on occupational health services and Convention No. 161.

### Strengthened inter-institutional coordination

- A five-year plan of action has been adopted to facilitate coordinated and/or joint action by stakeholders in the OSH system (labour inspectorate, SMIE, the Malagasy National Social Security Fund (CNaPS), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Tourism) after their staff were trained in the major functions of the national OSH system.

### Getting the social partners involved

- The main trade union organizations operating in the textiles industry have been made aware of the importance of risk assessment and respect



A pre-recruitment medical examination. Waiting room at the Toamasina Organisation Médico-Sociale Interprofessionnelle (OMSI)

for the general principles of occupational accident and disease prevention. They then agreed to form and train a task force that would then share its knowledge with union activists and workers. Employer members of the Association of Tree Trade Zone Enterprises and Partners operating in the textiles sector should also receive OSH training if they so request.

### Measures to protect workers in the lychee industry

- Since 2017, 293 managerial staff from seven voluntary processing plants have received OSH training. This training, focused on prevention, dealing with occupational accidents (identification, and risk assessment and control), handling an epidemic such as the plague in the workplace, and the certification requirements of the GlobalG.A.P. and its social practices counterpart (GRASP) with respect to OSH was provided jointly by national stakeholders and the ILO. At the producer level, the managers of seven cooperatives were trained in plague prevention and safe harvesting by the Tamatave Horticultural Technical Centre.

In addition, immediate measures were implemented: in some plantations, trees were trimmed down to minimize falls from a height; a prototype of an easier-to-handle garaba (traditional basket used for the harvesting and transport of lychees) that also minimized the risk of cuts was developed by local craftspersons, with more than a thousand of these prototypes being used during the 2018 campaign; a standardized first aid kit was introduced in plantations; and an OSH management system was established on lychee farms and in lychee processing plants.

Lastly, 1,100 seasonal workers were registered by their employers with SMIE for the 2018-19 campaign, which enabled them for the first time to benefit from occupational health services in the same way as permanent workers, thanks to a scheme specially designed for them by SMIE, with ILO support.



## NEXT STEPS

Capitalizing on the results achieved, the ILO is now seeking to work with the Malagasy constituents and multinationals in the targeted sectors with a view to:

- + Promoting the ratification and effective implementation of the three core OSH Conventions (Convention Nos 155, 161 and 187);
- + Strengthening the capacities of labour inspectorates and the judiciary

in order to better explain and facilitate understanding of and enforce OSH regulations;

- + Improving coordination between institutions with a mandate to promote OSH;
- + Strengthening the capacities of the social partners at national level and in the sectors concerned;
- + Improving informal economy workers' access to occupational health services and strengthening service functions;

+ Ensuring the continuation of basic prevention and protection measures already being implemented in the workplace;

+ Promoting greener and safer agriculture in the cotton sector;

+ Improving the OSH policies of multinationals in the targeted sectors sourcing from Madagascar.

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