



Terms of Reference

Research on OSH qualifications frameworks

1. BACKGROUND

Occupational safety and health (OSH) professionals¹ play important roles in OSH national systems and in OSH management at the workplace level. To ensure that workplaces are safe and healthy, employers may need to secure OSH competence by engaging in-house OSH professionals and/or receive support and advices from personnel within an internal or external OSH service or from independent professionals providing OSH consultancy services.

OSH is a multidisciplinary field and OSH professions encompass many disciplines and job types. OSH-related professions include professions such as occupational safety engineers, occupational physicians and nurses, OSH inspectors, ergonomists, occupational hygienists, as well as more generalist OSH professionals who carry out a number of OSH functions and have job titles such as OSH technicians, prevention advisor, expert in risk prevention, safety officer, safety and health officer, and occupational safety specialist.

International labour standard do not provide an official definition of “OSH professionals” also sometimes called “OSH expert”, “OSH personnel”, “OSH specialist” or “OSH official”. ILO Recommendation 197 on the promotional framework for OSH speaks of “personnel engaged in the area of occupational safety and health, such as inspectors, safety and health officers, and occupational physicians and hygienists” while R171 on Occupational health services stipulates that “Occupational health services should have sufficient technical personnel with specialised training and experience in such fields as occupational medicine, occupational hygiene, ergonomics, occupational health nursing and other relevant fields.”

The roles, functions and tasks of OSH professionals and their education and training requirements and regulatory context vary across and even within countries.² The increase in the number of OSH professionals performing OSH-related functions in the workplace, among other factors, has seen countries increasingly choosing to regulate the profession. There is a strong push in developed economies³ to regulate entry to professions by defining exclusive education and training requirements and to require that retention of membership in the professional body and career progressions depend on continuing professional development.⁴ Many countries have formulated official or semi-official competence criteria for OSH professions. Many associations and networks of OSH professionals have also been working on defining the various OSH professions and the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their functions.⁵

¹ NOTE: The generic term “OSH professionals” is used here to refer to any professional with OSH-related qualifications.

² INSHPO. 2017. The Occupational Health and Safety Professional Capability: Framework A Global Framework for Practice. International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations (INSHPO). Park Ridge, IL, USA.

³ Country classification used by UNDESA available at -

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2014wesp_country_classification.pdf

⁴ Hale. A. 2019. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) professions: who are they and why do we need them?

⁵ See for example: The [European skills/competences, qualifications and occupations, IOSH competency framework](#), INSHPO [Occupational Health and Safety \(OHS\) Professional Capability Framework - A Global Framework for Practice](#) ⁶ ILO. 2012. ILO Training Package on Development of a National Programme of Occupational Safety and Health. Geneva : ILO

Some countries have chosen to regulate various aspects of the OSH profession in legislation, while others rely on other bodies such as professional associations for regulation and oversight. Countries may choose to regulate the content, length and structure of education needed for OSH professionals, including specialised training and corresponding degrees, to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and competence to effectively carry out OSH related functions. This may be further reinforced by requirements for continuous professional development, certification schemes for OSH professionals, accreditation schemes for training providers and registration of OSH professionals.

While there is no international labour standard that reflects member States' agreement on the regulation of OSH professionals, Article 5(c) of Convention No. 155 stipulates that "The policy" referred to in Article 4 of this Convention shall take account of the following main spheres of action in so far as they affect occupational safety and health and the working environment (...) training, including necessary further training, qualifications and motivations of persons involved, in one capacity or another, in the achievement of adequate levels of safety and health.

Article 11 of Convention No. 161 stipulates that the competent authorities of member States shall determine the qualifications required for the personnel providing occupational health services, according to the nature of the duties to be performed and in accordance with national law and practice.

In practice, the degree and level of inclusion of OSH in national education systems and trainings largely depend on the level of development of these systems and on specialized personnel available. The problem is also that the existing situation in a country is often the result of an unplanned and unregulated process in which training initiatives by institutions or groups accumulate without prior assessment of the quantity and quality of specialized know-how and skills that the country really needs.⁶ To date, most initiatives focus on the experience of developed economies and might not be fully applicable/transferrable to developing economies, including in South and South East Asia.

It is against this background that the ILO is proposing to develop an approach for Governments, associations of OSH professionals and social partners to assess their OSH qualifications frameworks and ensure the quality of granted qualifications in the field of OSH. In turn, this will contribute to the strengthening of national OSH management systems at national and workplace level. To set the basis for the development of this approach, the ILO is conducting a research on OSH qualifications frameworks.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this consultancy is to conduct a research to identify the policies, systems, programmes and initiatives related to OSH qualifications that contribute to ensuring the availability of suitably qualified OSH professionals. To identify recent trends and good practices in the field of OSH qualifications, the research will compare and analyse existing typologies for various OSH professional qualification frameworks and conduct a more in-depth analysis to understand the experiences from key informants in specific countries when it comes to developing and implementing OSH professionals' qualifications frameworks.

The research will start with a global literature review based on which countries will be selected to conduct case studies. It is foreseen that the study will look at developed economies and at the experience of some developing economies in Asia and the Pacific region, among others.

The findings from the research, including the main trends and good practices identified in the research, will serve as a basis to develop a tool to support developing countries to improve the qualified supply of OSH professionals to cover labour market needs.

⁶ ILO. 2012. ILO Training Package on Development of a National Programme of Occupational Safety and Health. Geneva : ILO

To achieve these objectives, the research could seek to examine:

- Existing modalities for regulating OSH professions (e.g. in legislation, in regulation and/or self-regulation by professional associations);
- Participation of OSH professionals in the development and governance of national qualification systems and/or of the most representatives organizations of employers and workers in national OSH qualification systems;
- Businesses and sectors requirements for OSH professionals;
- Existing requirements, standards, types of profiles and training curricula. This could include identifying and comparing any requirements on:
 - The roles, functions and tasks of the OSH professionals; ;
 - The competencies that OSH professionals must have to carry out their functions;
 - Education and training requirements for the OSH professionals, including minimum content and length;
 - Continuous professional development requirements;
 - Requirements for accreditation of entities providing OSH training;
 - Certification requirements and requirements for registration in public registry, and the differences and links between these requirements;
 - Ethical related requirements, including requirement for an ethical code of practice for OSH professionals and its content;
 - Responsibility/liability of OSH Professionals.
- Gender considerations in access to professions and retention of professionals;
- Existing mechanisms to promote and enforce compliance with requirements under the OSH qualifications frameworks;
- Existing measures and actions to promote entry into OSH professions, and education and training programmes for OSH professionals;
- The process followed by countries for identifying their needs and developing their OSH qualifications framework, including information on the stakeholders consulted and involved in the process;
- The resources needed for the implementation of OSH qualifications frameworks, including in terms of training capacities and resources;
- Whether if the qualifications of OSH professionals meet the standards set by the government authorities;
- Whether the content of the curriculum produces graduates with skills and capabilities that are required to perform their role, and whether if the qualifications meet the needs of the country and organizations in terms of know-how and skills (e.g. under qualification, over qualification);
- Any challenges and constraints faced in the development of OSH professionals' qualifications frameworks and implementation in practice;
- To what extent the experience from developed countries is transferable to developing countries, and to what extent these developed systems are suitable for developing countries.

3. KEY TASKS

1. Develop a short document detailing the methodology to conduct the research, including a detailed workplan. This should include research questions and a strategy on how to approach the research questions and conduct the research. The methodology will be presented and discussed with the ILO project team and LABADMIN/OSH technical specialists;
2. Based on the methodology, carry out a literature review of existing OSH qualifications frameworks and draft a report of the findings, including a comparative analysis;
3. Based on the findings of the desk review, and in consultation with the ILO project team and LABADMIN/OSH GTT technical specialists, identify countries to conduct case studies and

identify key informants (internal and external to the ILO) at global, regional and country level who could provide information to gain a more in depth understanding of OSH qualifications frameworks, their development and implementation. Key tasks include:

- a. Identify criteria for country selection and select countries to conduct case studies;
 - b. Identify and produce a list of key informants at global, regional and country level. This could include, among others, national governments such as national authorities for health, labour and education, social partners and associations of OSH professionals;
 - c. Identify the most relevant approach and data collection means to collect information (e.g. through interviews, focus group discussions and/or survey);
 - d. Develop and implement the research tools to collect information;
 - e. Draft case studies based on information collected from key informants.
4. Based on findings from the desk review and case studies, analyse and compare findings to identify trends and good practices. Present and discuss the findings of the research with the ILO project team and LABADMIN/OSH GTT technical specialists and agree on an outline for the report of findings;
 5. Draft a report of findings from the research including an analysis of trends and good practices on OSH qualifications;
 6. Facilitate a consultation workshop with key informants to present the research findings, get their feedback and validate the draft report of findings.
 7. Compile all feedback received and draft the final report.

Throughout the duration of the contract, the consultant may be requested to present the progress / results of its work in organized meetings in the form of “update emails” or PowerPoint presentations. All findings should be analyzed through a gender sensitive lens.

4. QUALIFICATIONS

The consultant/service provider should have the following profile:

- Advanced university degree in occupational safety and health, social sciences, law, development studies, or other relevant field;
- Research experience related to OSH qualifications frameworks;
- Good knowledge of OSH qualifications frameworks and related concepts;
- Experience in conducting qualitative research, case studies and semi-structured interviews;
- Excellent command of written and spoken English. Knowledge of Spanish and French is an advantage.

5. DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

The contract will start on 15 November 2021 and end on 16 May 2022.

The following products will be delivered by the consultant or service provider:

1. Research methodology, including a detailed workplan to carry out the research assignment
2. Report from the initial review including findings
3. Data collection methodology including list of key informants, as well as relevant approaches and tools to collect information
4. Draft case studies based on information collected
5. Draft research report including an analysis of trends and good practices on OSH qualifications
6. Report from the consultation workshop
7. Final research report including conclusions and recommendations

6. REPORTING

The consultant will report to Alizée Charbonneau, Programme and Operations Officer. She/he will receive technical guidance from the project team and OSH specialists from the International Labour Office and field offices.

7. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Interested candidates intending to submit an expression of interest must supply the following information:

- A brief cover letter describing of how the candidate's/team's/organization skills, qualifications and experience are relevant to the assignment;
- A CV/CVs/or organization history highlighting previous assignments that are relevant to the context and subject matter of this assignment;
- A technical proposal describing how this assignment will be carried out, including a suggestion of timeline.
- A financial offer confirming the candidate's daily professional fees expressed in US dollars or detailed quote for an organization (indicating also fees received for similar assignments in the past two years).
- The names and contact details of two referees;
- Two reports/documents relevant to this assignment where the applicant was the lead author.

Please send your application with relevant attachments by 29 October 2021, COB Geneva time to:

Alizée Charbonneau (charbonneau@ilo.org)