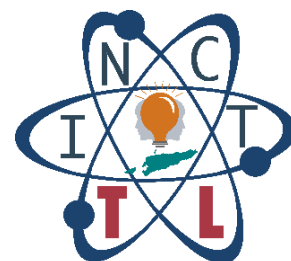




COUNTRY REPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES OF OSHMS IN TIMOR-LESTE

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1. Country Profile: Occupational Safety, Health, and Hygiene in Timor-Leste

In 2023, Timor-Leste strengthened its commitment to workplace safety through **Law No. 11/2023**, which establishes general principles and legal obligations to promote Occupational Safety, Health, and Hygiene (OSH) across all sectors. This law applies to all employers and workers, including national and international entities, regardless of size or industry.

The law mandates preventive measures to reduce occupational risks, safety training, provision of protective equipment, and regular monitoring of workplace hazards. It emphasizes shared responsibility among employers, employees, and the government in ensuring safe, healthy, and dignified working conditions.

By aligning with international labor standards and ILO conventions, this legislation marks a significant step toward improving labor protection and promoting sustainable employment practices in Timor-Leste.



Figure 1_Map of East Timor

2. KEY INDICATORS

Population (million)	1.3
GDP (USD billion)	1.6
GDP per capita (USD)	1,295
Poverty headcount ratio -national poverty line (percent population)	41.8
Poverty headcount ratio-USD 1.90 a day (2011 PPP, percent population)	22.0
Poverty headcount ratio-USD 3.20 a day (2011 PPP, percent population)	65.9
GINI index	28.7

Notes: Population and GDP data are for 2019. Poverty and inequality data are for 2014 (with revised PPPs)

Table 1_Indicators

3. Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030

The **Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2011–2030** of Timor-Leste outlines a comprehensive and long-term vision for achieving inclusive and sustainable national development. The plan encompasses a broad agenda aimed at transforming Timor-Leste into a prosperous, resilient, and upper-middle-income country by 2030. It is structured around three key pillars: social capital, infrastructure development, and economic growth.

Within this framework, **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)** is recognized as a critical component of national development. The SDP emphasizes the creation of a healthy, educated, and productive population as a foundational element of social capital. In this context, ensuring safe and healthy working conditions is seen as vital to improving workforce well-being, reducing occupational risks, and enhancing overall productivity.

The Plan calls for the integration of OSH policies and practices into all sectors of the economy, particularly in areas experiencing rapid growth such as construction, oil and gas, agriculture, and manufacturing. It also underscores the need to strengthen institutional capacity, enact robust legal frameworks, and implement effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to uphold OSH standards.

By embedding OSH into its strategic vision, Timor-Leste affirms its commitment to safeguarding the rights of workers, supporting decent work, and advancing the broader goals of sustainable human development.

PART 1 INTRODUCTION		
PART 2 SOCIAL CAPITAL	PART 3 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	PART 4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Training • Health • Social Inclusion • Environment • Culture and Heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and Bridges • Water and Sanitation • Electricity • Seaports • Airports • Telecommunications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Development • Agriculture • Petroleum • Tourism • Private Sector Investment
<div> <div>←</div> <div> PART 5 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Defense • Foreign Affairs • Justice • Public Sector Management and Good Governance • National Development Agency / Economic Policy and Investment Agency </div> <div>→</div> </div> <div> <div>←</div> <div> PART 6 ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND MACROECONOMIC DIRECTION </div> <div>→</div> </div>		
PART 7 Summary of the Staging of the SDP and Conclusion		

Table 2_ Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030

4. Occupational Safety and Health Policy.

Timor-Leste's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Policy is principally established through Law No. 11/2023, which sets out the general principles, rights, and obligations aimed at ensuring safe, healthy, and hygienic working conditions across all employment sectors. This legislation serves as the cornerstone of the country's national OSH framework, reflecting the government's commitment to aligning with international labor standards and promoting decent and dignified work.

The law applies comprehensively to all types of workplaces—public, private, cooperative, and mixed-sector organizations—regardless of the size or nature of the enterprise. It extends protection to a broad spectrum of individuals engaged in economic activity, including permanent employees, temporary and contract workers,

self-employed individuals, interns and trainees, apprentices, and economically dependent workers.

Key provisions within the OSH policy include obligations for employers to conduct workplace risk assessments, provide adequate training and protective equipment, and establish internal systems for the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases. It also empowers employees with the right to be informed of occupational risks, to refuse dangerous work, and to participate in workplace safety programs.

Furthermore, the policy encourages the active involvement of social partners—including trade unions and employer associations—in the development, implementation, and monitoring of OSH standards, thereby fostering a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement.

5. Identification of Hazards

Timor-Leste faces a broad spectrum of natural hazards that pose significant threats to public safety, infrastructure, and socio-economic development. Based on findings from the Comprehensive National Disaster Profile Synthesis Report, the country is particularly vulnerable to floods, landslides, strong winds, and earthquakes, each of which has the potential to cause widespread damage and disrupt the lives of affected communities. *(Note: “earthquakes” was repeated in the original—this has been corrected.)*

In addition, drought remains a persistent hazard, particularly in the country’s semi-arid regions, where it adversely affects water resources, agriculture, and food security. Coastal regions also face erosion and sea-level rise, which threaten ecosystems, human settlements, and critical infrastructure.

The identification and continuous monitoring of these hazards are essential for effective disaster risk reduction (DRR), contingency planning, and the integration of climate adaptation measures. A multi-hazard approach is required to enhance preparedness and build resilience at both national and community levels.

6. Assessment of Risks

In 2023, Timor-Leste encountered a multifaceted risk environment, particularly in relation to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and broader socio-economic vulnerabilities. The country's high exposure to natural disasters—including floods, earthquakes, and landslides—continued to pose significant threats to public safety, infrastructure, and workforce well-being. These risks were further intensified by the prolonged effects of El Niño and the growing impacts of climate change, which contributed to environmental instability, unpredictable weather patterns, and resource scarcity, especially in water and agriculture.

From an economic perspective, Timor-Leste's continued reliance on oil and gas exports for national revenue underscored a critical vulnerability. Fluctuations in global commodity prices and the finite nature of petroleum reserves have exposed the country to fiscal uncertainty, thereby impacting public investment in health, education, and social protection, including OSH-related programs.

This risk landscape emphasizes the urgent need for integrated and diversified strategies that strengthen disaster preparedness, occupational risk management, and economic resilience. Key priorities include investing in risk-informed infrastructure, mainstreaming OSH into development planning, enhancing early warning systems, and promoting economic diversification to ensure more stable and inclusive growth.

7. Establishments of OSH Objectives

In Timor-Leste, the establishment and operation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Committees play a pivotal role in promoting and maintaining safe and healthy working environments. Although the formation of such committees is not yet explicitly mandated by national legislation, their creation is strongly encouraged as a best practice, in alignment with guidance from international bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO).

These committees serve as structured platforms for dialogue and collaboration between employers and workers, aiming to foster a shared

responsibility for workplace health and safety. Their key objectives include identifying potential occupational hazards, proposing preventive measures, monitoring the implementation of safety policies, and promoting a culture of risk awareness and continuous improvement in OSH practices.

The voluntary establishment of OSH committees reflects a commitment to participatory governance in the workplace, ensuring that both management and labor are actively involved in shaping health and safety outcomes. By institutionalizing communication and joint decision-making, these committees contribute to reducing accidents, improving working conditions, and enhancing overall organizational performance.

Timor-Leste's long-term OSH objectives also include the progressive formalization of such structures, integration of OSH into national development strategies, capacity building for labor inspectors, and the promotion of preventive health measures across all sectors of employment.

8. Development of OSH Plan

The development and implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) plans in Timor-Leste are integral to achieving the nation's broader development goals and aligning with existing labor regulations. As outlined in the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2011–2030, the vision for a prosperous, peaceful, and inclusive society is anchored in the creation of a healthy, well-educated, and productive population. In this context, OSH plans are recognized as essential tools for protecting the workforce and ensuring sustainable national development.

OSH plans in Timor-Leste are designed to promote safe working environments through structured risk assessments, hazard prevention strategies, worker training, emergency preparedness, and continuous monitoring of health and safety conditions in the workplace. These plans aim to reduce workplace injuries and occupational diseases, improve productivity, and foster a culture of prevention and accountability.

Key components of the national OSH plan include:

- Integration of OSH into national labor and public health policies;
- Development of sector-specific OSH guidelines;
- Strengthening institutional capacity for enforcement and compliance;
- Promotion of OSH education and awareness at all levels;
- Encouraging employer-employee collaboration through safety committees and consultation mechanisms.

By embedding OSH planning within national development frameworks, Timor-Leste reinforces its commitment to decent work, social protection, and human capital development, while addressing the challenges of economic vulnerability, informal employment, and environmental risk.

9. Implementation of OSH Plan

In Timor-Leste, the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) plans is a critical yet challenging aspect of national labor governance. Although the country's Labour Code and related regulations acknowledge the importance of OSH in promoting decent and dignified work, several structural and operational barriers hinder effective implementation across various sectors.

One of the primary challenges lies in limited awareness and understanding of OSH principles among workers and employers, particularly in the informal economy and among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Many workers remain unaware of their rights to a safe working environment, while employers may lack the technical knowledge or resources to comply with OSH standards and implement preventive measures.

Moreover, institutional capacity gaps—such as an insufficient number of trained labor inspectors, limited access to technical training, and underdeveloped workplace safety monitoring systems—further constrain enforcement and oversight. In many cases, OSH responsibilities are not fully integrated into management systems, and compliance mechanisms may be absent or inconsistently applied. To address these gaps, implementation efforts must prioritize:

- Capacity building for labor inspectors and OSH professionals;
- Awareness campaigns and education for both workers and employers;
- Support mechanisms for SMEs to develop OSH policies and practices;
- Strengthening of national coordination structures to align OSH enforcement with broader development goals.

Strengthening the implementation of OSH plans is essential not only for reducing occupational risks and improving worker well-being but also for fostering productivity, social equity, and sustainable economic growth across Timor-Leste.

10. Routine Monitoring and Improvement

In Timor-Leste, the routine monitoring and continuous improvement of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) systems have become increasingly prioritized, particularly within high-risk formal sectors such as construction, oil and gas, and infrastructure development. These efforts aim to institutionalize a culture of prevention, enhance workplace safety standards, and align national practices with international labor norms.

The Government of Timor-Leste, in collaboration with international development partners such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), is actively working to:

- Strengthen institutional capacities for OSH governance and enforcement;
- Develop sector-specific OSH standards and inspection protocols;
- Promote OSH training and certification programs;
- Raise awareness among employers, workers, and the general public regarding occupational hazards and prevention strategies.

Regular inspections, reporting systems, and performance audits are increasingly being utilized to ensure compliance with OSH regulations. These are supported by legal reforms and policy dialogues aimed at improving coordination between government ministries, employers' organizations, and labor unions.

However, significant challenges persist—particularly in the informal economy, which comprises a large proportion of Timor-Leste's labor force. Workers

in rural and marginalized communities often lack access to OSH services, are not covered by formal labor protections, and may work in hazardous conditions without adequate safeguards.

To address these disparities, targeted interventions are required to:

- Extend OSH outreach to informal workers and rural areas;
- Adapt monitoring mechanisms to non-standard work arrangements;
- Strengthen data collection and analysis for evidence-based policy-making;
- Promote inclusive OSH systems that consider gender, youth, and vulnerable groups.

A sustained commitment to monitoring and improvement is vital to ensuring that all workers, regardless of sector or status, benefit from safe, healthy, and dignified working conditions.

11. Investigation of Work-Related Accidents, Incidents and Diseases

In Timor-Leste, the investigation of work-related accidents, incidents, and occupational diseases is legally regulated under Law No. 11/2023, which sets forth mandatory procedures for reporting, inspection, and follow-up actions. This legal framework is designed to ensure accountability, promote preventive measures, and safeguard workers' health and safety across all sectors of employment.

Under the law, employers are obligated to immediately report any work-related incident—such as accidents, injuries, or occupational illnesses—that result in harm to an employee's physical or mental health. Notifications must be submitted to the relevant authorities, including the National Directorate of Labor Inspection, as well as to worker representatives or OSH committees where applicable.

In the event of a fatality or serious injury, the employer is required to suspend all work activities at the incident site, pending a thorough investigation. A multidisciplinary team—typically composed of labor inspectors, health and safety experts, and in severe cases, law enforcement authorities—is deployed to examine the circumstances, assess compliance with OSH standards, and determine the root causes of the incident.

The law also emphasizes:

- The documentation of findings and evidence;
- The development of corrective and preventive action plans;
- The requirement for employers to cooperate fully with inspections;
- Sanctions for non-compliance or failure to report serious incidents.

These investigations are not only essential for ensuring justice and accountability but also serve as learning tools to inform policy reform, training programs, and the continuous improvement of workplace safety standards. Enhancing the capacity of investigative bodies and promoting a transparent, non-punitive approach to reporting are key priorities for building a more resilient occupational health system in Timor-Leste.

12. Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

Timor-Leste's emergency management system is built upon a comprehensive framework that integrates prevention, preparedness, and response mechanisms to address both natural and human-induced disasters. Recognizing the country's vulnerability to a range of hazards—including floods, earthquakes, landslides, droughts, and health emergencies—the Government of Timor-Leste has prioritized the strengthening of national capacities and institutional coordination in the field of disaster risk management.

Key components of the national strategy include the development and implementation of National Disaster Risk Management Plans (NDRMPs), which provide structured guidance on hazard identification, risk assessment, mitigation strategies, and emergency response protocols. These plans are aligned with international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and incorporate a multi-sectoral approach involving key ministries, civil society, and the private sector.

To enhance preparedness, the government often in collaboration with international partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) conducts:

- Emergency simulation exercises at national and community levels;
- Capacity-building programs for emergency responders and local authorities;
- Public awareness campaigns to educate citizens on emergency procedures and evacuation protocols;
- Investment in early warning systems and emergency communication infrastructure.

In the event of a disaster, rapid response coordination mechanisms are activated through the National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC), ensuring the deployment of resources, coordination of humanitarian aid, and restoration of critical services.

Despite progress, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to emergency services across rural and vulnerable communities. Continued investment in localized disaster preparedness, inclusive planning, and inter-agency coordination is essential to enhance national resilience and protect both lives and livelihoods.

13. Performance Monitoring and Measurement

In Timor-Leste, performance monitoring and measurement of development efforts are primarily guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which serves as the central strategic instrument for planning and implementing UN-supported development initiatives aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UNSDCF outlines six priority outcomes, each of which is supported by dedicated Results Groups responsible for ensuring effective coordination, implementation, and accountability. These Results Groups are tasked with developing and executing Joint Work Plans (JWPs), which function as the primary operational tools for programming, resource mobilization, monitoring, and reporting. These plans facilitate integrated and coordinated actions across UN agencies, government institutions, and development partners.

To ensure high-level oversight and strategic direction, a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) has been established. The JSC is co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and a senior government official designated by the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste. Membership of the JSC includes key stakeholders, such as:

- Representatives from relevant government ministries;
- Civil society organizations;
- UN agency chairs or co-chairs of the six Results Groups.

The JSC plays a critical role in reviewing progress, addressing implementation challenges, and guiding policy alignment to ensure that development interventions are impactful, inclusive, and aligned with national priorities.

Through this performance monitoring structure, Timor-Leste and its development partners aim to foster transparency, results-based management, and mutual accountability, while reinforcing the commitment to achieving sustainable and equitable development outcomes across all sectors.

14. Assets & Challenges of the Previous/Current Activities

Strengths	Weakness
Legal Framework, Labour Law already incorporates provisions on health, hygiene, and safety at work, demonstrating a commitment to protecting workers.	Lack of Awareness and Training: A significant issue was a lack of awareness about workplace safety and worker rights among both employers and employees, contributing to a high injury toll.
Government Initiatives: The Secretariat of State for Vocational Training Policy and Employment (SEVTPE) has organized workshops and is developing legislation in this area	Weak Institutional Capacity: The system struggled with a lack of specialized care and infrastructure, hindering its ability to effectively address OSH concerns.
International Collaboration: The ILO has partnered with the government and other stakeholders to promote OSH.	Insufficient Enforcement: There was a need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, including private rights of action and more

<p>Social Dialogue: The Labour Code incorporates dispute resolution mechanisms, promoting social dialogue and constructive labour relations.</p> <p>Growing Awareness: There is a growing recognition that safe and healthy work is a basic human right and essential for economic development</p> <p>Focus on Construction: Specific attention has been paid to safety in hazardous areas like construction, with workshops and initiatives targeting these sectors.</p> <p>Positive Attitudes: Overall, there is a positive attitude towards the introduction of work health and safety legislation among workers and employers.</p>	<p>robust whistleblower protections, to address violations and ensure compliance.</p> <p>Dependency on External Funding: The system's reliance on external funding raised concerns about its long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Shortage of Trained Personnel: A critical shortage of trained medical personnel, particularly in emergency services, further exacerbated the weaknesses in the OSH system.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Capacity Building: There's a need to strengthen national and workplace capacities to ensure compliance with OSH laws, including those protecting workers' safety and health, freedom from violence and harassment, and improving productivity.</p> <p>Awareness and Training: Initiatives are underway to raise awareness among workers and employers about OSH, emphasizing the importance of safe and healthy workplaces.</p>	<p>1. Infrastructure and Construction: Construction Industry: Timor-Leste is experiencing significant infrastructure development, which raises OSH concerns in the construction sector. This includes potential risks from accidents, diseases related to construction materials, and lack of awareness among workers about OSH procedures.</p> <p>2. Natural Hazards: Floods: Timor-Leste's geography, with steep slopes and fast-flowing rivers, makes it vulnerable to flooding, especially during</p>

<p>ILO Conventions: Promoting the adoption and implementation of ILO Conventions related to minimum age and workplace violence is a key focus.</p> <p>Working Condition Improvement: Efforts are directed towards improving working conditions through a one-stop-shop approach, potentially simplifying access to resources and support.</p> <p>Focus on Construction: Occupational safety and health in construction projects is a specific area of attention, with initiatives aimed at reducing accidents and improving working conditions.</p>	<p>the rainy season. Flooding can lead to displacement, injuries, and disease transmission.</p> <p>3. Workplace Conditions:</p> <p>Biological Agents: Exposure to microorganisms, such as bacteria and viruses, in the workplace can pose health risks.</p> <p>Lack of Awareness: A significant number of workers may not be aware of the OHS risks in their workplaces, making it crucial to implement education and training programs.</p>
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Table 3_SWOT Analysis

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