

## ‘STEP – TAKE A STEP FOR YOUR HEALTH’ (MOL PLC): HUNGARY

### 1. Organisations involved

- MOL Group (hereinafter MOL)
- MOL Hungary
- MOL Plc

### 2. Description of the case

#### 2.1. Introduction

MOL Hungary is an oil and gas company based in Hungary. It belongs to MOL Group, which operates in over 40 countries and employs almost 30,000 people worldwide. In Hungary, MOL Hungary is one of the largest employers with over 8,000 employees. It is composed of MOL Plc (with 5,553 employees) and its subsidiaries. MOL Hungary can be described as a leader in occupational safety and health policy among Hungarian companies. The MOL Group health policy is part of its global health, safety and environment (HSE) policy. It recognises that health protection is an integral part of the management philosophy and it includes two dimensions: health and safety at work and workplace health promotion.

In terms of health and safety prevention, the principles of the company are:

- All work-related accidents and occupational diseases are preventable.
- Health and safety is the responsibility of each manager.
- Adherence to health and safety policy is mandatory for all workers.

MOL aims to provide a healthy work environment to improve the overall health conditions of all employees, with special attention paid to selected target groups such as older workers. In addition to the provision of basic occupational healthcare, MOL identifies and analyses the effects of its activity on the health and safety of its workers using a risk-based approach (focusing on the more vulnerable categories of workers, including older workers, and high-risk occupations) and uses workplace risk assessment as part of its prevention system. MOL also has a mental health programme (COHESIO), as part of which it carries out workplace psychosocial (stress) risk assessments.

In 2006, MOL Plc initiated the STEP programme, which has subsequently rolled out in 2007. STEP is an organisation-wide programme focusing on the promotion of health at work for certain target groups, such as older workers.

#### **Sustainable employment**

As part of its strategy, MOL Plc intends to retain workers at the company for as long as possible through its overall sustainable development and health, safety policy. In addition to the STEP programme for workplace health promotion, the policy includes plans for specific target groups:

- The **Equal Opportunity Plan (EOP)** (a second EOP is under way for 2013–2015) supports employees close to retirement by offering them individual human resources consultation and career advice, information booklets and regional family days.
- The **‘White Book of Rehabilitation’** ensures equal opportunities for employees with reduced ability or disabilities. It also supports workers with chronic illnesses.

Financial benefits are available to employees with long service in the company; for example:

- Under the MOL Plc collective agreement, a **loyalty bonus** is given to employees annually if they deliver outstanding work over a long period (20–40 years). Additionally, an allowance (equal to 90 days' average wage, also equal to the price of one share in MOL) is given to retiring employees for each year of service with the company.
- The MOL Care Foundation provides **financial support** to employees of retirement age in cases of bereavement or major financial difficulties.

## 2.2. Aims

In addition to ensuring legislative compliance, the STEP programme aims to improve the working environment in order to reduce sick leave and to retain older workers at work.

It focuses on health promotion and the prevention of occupational ill-health. This two-pronged approach seeks not only to stop people being made ill by their work, but also to use the workplace as an avenue for actively promoting healthy behaviour.

## 2.3. What was done, and how?

The STEP programme was launched in 2006 as a long-term programme for workplace health promotion. It is a company-wide project taking place in the central MOL Plc offices as well as in the local work sites in Hungary (although certain services may be found only in the central offices).

STEP raises workers' awareness of health and safety issues. It does so by developing an open culture whereby employees are encouraged to initiate actions to improve their own health and, through this, reduce sickness absence and increase the productivity of the company.

### 2.3.1. Setting up the initiative

The STEP programme was developed and rolled out as a collaboration between company management, health and safety representatives, employee representatives and trade unions. It is now coordinated by a steering committee, which includes management, works council (worker representatives), trade unions and safety representatives. As a top-down, bottom-up programme, STEP comprises both group-wide and local activities. Core programme activities (screenings and design of an individual health plan) are coordinated in the work sites by the occupational health services (or occupational doctor). In addition, local communities (for example the workers and managers working in the various work sites) determine their needs at the beginning of each year and can design and implement their own activities in addition to the core activities of the programme.

### 2.3.2. Steps for implementation of the programme

The programme starts with an assessment of the worker's health status by the occupational health service provider at the work site. A number of analytical tools are used, such as age structure analysis and work ability analysis, as well as medical screenings for specific risk factors (such as diabetes, cholesterol, stool blood, body mass index, etc.), depending on the nature of the work of the employee (for example specific screenings for shift employees).

The occupational health service provider (occupational doctor) then designs an individual health plan for each worker, with a number of recommendations for measures and activities in which the worker should participate depending on his/her current condition and related risk factors.

The delivery of the activities is outsourced to private external service providers. General activities in which the worker can participate include:

- workplace interventions by specialists (such as ergonomic workplace intervention, psychological workplace intervention and assessment);
- training and advice sessions (on stress management and reduction, healthy lifestyles, etc.);
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*Stress management interventions:* Employees can voluntarily participate in stress management training on weekdays or at weekends, in which they can learn about the definition of stress, stress theories and relaxation techniques and participate in role playing. The main target groups are employees in customer services departments, employees working in shifts and managers. Training on stress management is more popular among office workers than among production/warehouse employees.

- packages of additional medical screenings depending on the individual and the type of work he/she does (cardiovascular package, cancer prevention package, musculoskeletal package, vaccination programmes);

*Individual health targets:* The so-called 'Big MOL 10 STEP for your health' comprises the following steps: (1) stop smoking; (2) move for at least half an hour a day; (3) have high-density lipoprotein cholesterol above 1 mmol/l; (4) have blood pressure below 135/85 Hgmm; (5) consume less than 19 g of alcohol, a maximum of five times a week; (6) have triglyceride below 2 mmol/l; (7) have body mass index below 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>; (8) have low-density lipoprotein cholesterol below 3.5 mmol/l; (9) have total cholesterol level below 4.5 mmol/l; and (10) have blood sugar level below 6 mmol/l.

- physical activities (office gym programme, company sporting events, outdoor weekends, hikes, etc.);
- awareness-raising campaigns, such as 'stop smoking' and 'healthy food at work' campaigns;
- family days, on which the family members of employees can also participate in health screening for various health risks (diabetes, cholesterol, body mass index, etc.);
- communication/promotion tools, for example the *STEP Active* magazine, STEP client service (including a call centre for participants of the STEP programme), posters, brochures, leaflets, road shows and client surveys;
- rewards (a scheme in which participants to the STEP programme can collect points at each event that can be converted to STEP gift items).

### **2.3.3. Activities targeting older workers and workers with chronic diseases**

Certain of these activities are tailored to accommodate the specific needs of older workers and workers suffering from chronic diseases. They include additional medical screenings, tailor-made physical activities and regular follow-up. Based on age structure analysis, age/morbidity statistics and work ability analysis, measures and solutions are tailored to the specific needs of older workers and workers with chronic diseases in line with MOL's equal opportunities plan and 'White Book of Rehabilitation'.

### **2.3.4. Actors involved in implementation**

The programme is established at the central level in MOL Plc. The steering committee in charge of the overall implementation of the programme includes top management, safety representatives, workers' representatives and trade union representatives. It is supported in the operation of the activities by the human resources department, the communications department, external consultants (such as occupational therapists, psychologists, sport professionals, gym trainers, medical doctors, dieticians and ergonomists) and the network of STEP volunteers.

At the local level (at each work site) a network of STEP volunteers coordinates the programme with the support of external contractors (for example for the medical screenings and the organisation of physical activities). The STEP volunteers (also called 'STEP engines') are MOL employees facilitating the dissemination of information on the STEP programme and supporting the local initiatives.

### 2.3.5. Exchange of information

Representatives from the STEP programme participate in information exchange with other international organisations. This allows the exchange of best practice and contributes to better implementation of the programme.

### 2.3.6. Barriers to implementation

In implementing the programme, barriers were the number and geographical spread of the work sites and the different working cultures among the different occupations and work sites. In addition, the financial investment could be considered low, relative to the company's size.

## 2.4. What was achieved?

The programme has resulted in an overall decrease in the sickness absence rate and improvement in the overall health condition of the employees.

Each year, the programme is evaluated in three distinct ways: a questionnaire survey for employees, the collection of medical data by the occupational health services and an evaluation of costs led by management. The results of the evaluation over the past 7 years show a continuous increase in the number of participants, an increasing 'regularity' rate (that is participation in the programme three or more times), and permanent improvement of the quality of the programme.

In particular, in 2013:

- The rate of sick leave in the MOL Group was under 2%.
- The number of participants in the different STEP activities in MOL Plc amounted to 4,780 employees out of a total of 5,533 employees.
- Thirty-six per cent of participants participated three or more times in the different STEP programmes.
- Incidence of cardiovascular disease was reduced by 5% and its risk factors by 10%.
- Employees felt they were able to continue working longer and the sustainability of the work has been improved.
- After the first 6-year period of the programme, signs of behavioural change among employees and the adoption of healthier lifestyles can be clearly seen through many local initiatives.

## 2.5. Success factors

The following factors contributed to the success of the initiative:

- *Integration of workplace health promotion into a comprehensive HSE policy:* Recognising that the good health of employees contributes to the sustainability of work is a core element of MOL's HSE policy. Its comprehensive workplace health promotion policy covers diverse programmes and actions with overall objectives and continuous evaluation. It also complements other policies, such as the equal opportunities plan.
- *Coordination of stakeholders:* The widest range of participants (management, human resources, health and safety representatives, workers' representatives, employers and employees, external consultants and social partners, activists and volunteers) were involved and coordinated throughout the process, from the initiative to its implementation, operation and evaluation.
- *Shared responsibility:* The flexibility to develop tailored local initiatives in addition to the core activities determined at steering committee level gave strong ownership and achievement to each of the work sites.
- *Diversity of tools and measures:* A variety of tools, including analysis of age structure, age/morbidity statistics and work ability analysis, as well as a variety of measures covering prevention and health promotion, have been used.
- *Dissemination of information:* STEP activities are communicated in a number of engaging ways, such as the *STEP Active* newsletter, STEP client service, network of volunteer employees, posters, brochures, leaflets, road shows, training and client surveys.

## 2.6. Transferability

The type of approach taken by MOL Plc, with its mix of group-wide and local activities, provides a good example for large companies.

Organisations that wish to develop a comprehensive programme to address occupational disease, injury prevention and employee retention, could easily adopt the actions described here. The shared responsibility and rigorous evaluation make for a readily transferable approach.

## 2.7. Further information

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## 3. References and resources

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