
Mid-term Evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's 2009-13 Strategy

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1 Executive Summary

Evaluation aims and objectives

This report presents the findings from the mid-term evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's (EU-OSHA's) 2009-2013 strategy¹. The main aim of the evaluation was to assess the progress made by the Agency in implementing this strategy, and to provide the basis for updating it in 2012.

The evaluation also had a number of key evaluation questions and was required to assess the Agency's:

- Relevance - to what extent are the vision and multi-annual general objectives of the Agency's strategy still relevant to occupational safety and health (OSH) needs in the EU and its Member States? Is there a need to reassess the weight of the four mission-related areas² of the strategy?
- Effectiveness – to what extent are the objectives of the Agency's strategy, and the objectives for each of its four mission-related areas, being realised? What is the contribution of the four mission-related areas to the achievement of the Agency's vision?
- Consistency/European added value - what is the effect (positive or negative) of the activities of the Agency on the achievement of the objectives of the EU as

¹ http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/work_programmes/strategy2009-2013

² The Agency's four mission-related areas are: the European Risk Observatory (ERO); Working Environment Information (WEI); Communication, campaigning and promotion; and Networking and co-ordination. Each mission-related area has specific objectives referred to as multi-annual general objectives.

expressed in its OSH strategy 2007-2012³, and the objectives of Member States and social partners? What is the value of the activities of the Agency in promoting OSH above what is achieved, or possible, using national resources alone?

- Implementation Design – to what extent do the systems and processes, both as a whole and for each of the four mission-related areas, contribute (or hinder) the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of the Agency and the achievement of the Agency vision?

Perceived relevance of the Agency

Overall, the activities of the Agency were seen as relevant to its target audiences; and the balance of activity across the Agency's four main areas was considered to be appropriate. Further details were that:

- Whilst relevant to the OSH research community across the EU, the research outputs were seen as particularly relevant where there was less existing OSH research at a national level.
- The Esener⁴ survey was relevant to the needs of researchers, and policy-makers. At EU level, Esener was seen as particularly useful in identifying issues for the Commission to focus on. At Member State level, Esener offered a comparative view of other countries, and provided new information in those Member States where similar, national level, data sources did not exist.
- European campaign topics were generally seen as relevant to representatives of employers, workers and Government, although the relevance of any one topic to any one Member State or organisation inevitably depended on national and organisational priorities. The broad, thematic focus of the campaigns offered flexibility in the focus of the campaigns (both in terms of sectors and groups of workers) and was well received.
- Having a campaign at EU level was felt by Commission officials to be complementary to their work and a means by which practitioners could be

³ Improving quality and productivity at work: Community Strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work (COM(2007) 62).

⁴ The European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (Esener) is a pan-European survey involving 36,000 telephone interviews with managers and workers' representatives in enterprises with ten or more employees.

supported in implementing preventive measures with respect to complex EU directives.

In line with the results of previous evaluations (eg a 2007 report by CSES⁵), some Agency materials were felt to lack a clear target audience. Factsheets, for example, were often seen as too complex and not practical enough for use in the workplace, yet not detailed enough for OSH experts. They were also considered to be not sufficiently tailored to national contexts.

Stakeholders suggested a number of possible improvements to the targeting of such materials:

- Allowing factsheets to be edited at national level to make them more appropriate to the national context.
- Establishing systems/processes to ensure that the target audience for information is clearly defined and products tailored to that audience.

Although it is not the main purpose of the Agency to reach workplaces directly (the Agency seeks to target intermediaries with its information, with the ultimate aim of benefiting employers and employees) stakeholders considered the relevance of Agency activities to employers to be variable. Whilst factsheets were not considered practical enough, tools such as OiRA (Online Interactive Risk Assessment Tool) were regarded as relevant. NAPO (an animated cartoon character) was also regarded as relevant to workplaces. For Agency information to be relevant to employers, it needs to be simple, practical and available in their native language. Some materials of potential value to employers (e.g good practice case studies) were only available in restricted languages.

Views on the effectiveness of the Agency

Stakeholders generally believe that the objectives of the Agency concerned with the provision of reliable information on new and emerging risks, and the running of effective awareness-raising campaigns are largely being met. Detailed findings include:

- The work of the risk observatory was regarded as valid and credible, relevant and useful, by both policy-makers and researchers. Researchers and policy-makers both suggested that further comparative information on the

⁵ 'Evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work', May 2007, Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES)

implementation of legislation and on the way OSH is organised within Member States (i.e who is involved, what their roles are) would be useful.

- Esener, in particular was felt to offer a valuable cross-EU perspective on the management of OSH which is helpful to policy-makers in identifying areas in which employers may need support.
- European Week campaigns are generally seen as effective in raising awareness of issues, although there were mixed views about the extent to which these campaigns reached employers and workplaces. The involvement of multinational employers (and EU-level social partners) as campaign partners appears a positive development in this regard.

The extent to which the Agency is meeting its objective of providing practical and user-friendly information of use to people involved in OSH is less clear. Initiatives such as OiRA and NAPO are seen by stakeholders as useful to employers and workplaces; and can be used in, or easily adapted to, different contexts. The utility of more traditional methods of communication (eg factsheets) is less clear. Stakeholders expressed the view that for information to be of use to employers, it needs to be simple, practical and available in all relevant EU languages.

Suggestions about how to improve the effectiveness of materials included increased flexibility for tailoring at national level; and a more focussed approach to their design with particular audiences and national contexts in mind. This would, however, most likely require more input from partners at national level.

Evidence from stakeholders suggests that more could be done to engage both focal points and the national networks in the work of the Agency. The Agency could make targeted efforts to improve the capacity of the network, and some focal points may require support in encouraging the engagement of network partners. Regular visits to (selected) Member States, whilst resource intensive, could also be useful in generating greater engagement with the Agency. There are also likely to be differences in what constitutes effective engagement levels within each Member State. Consultation with focal points about the kind of input they are willing/able to offer would be welcomed as a 'one size fits all' model is unlikely to be appropriate. With 27 Member States, plus EFTA representatives involved in Focal Point meetings, ways of working that enable more active involvement could be sought. For example, task groups involving smaller groups of focal points which focus on particular issues or projects may be a useful additional or alternative way of working.

Consistency of the Agency's work with EU and national priorities and its European added value

The Agency was perceived as having a positive effect on the achievement of the Community's OSH objectives. The Agency was seen as increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of legislation. A perceived example of this was the work done by the Agency in facilitating the exchange of OiRA across Member States.

The effect of Agency activities on national objectives at Member State level was more varied. In some Member States, the Agency is the main provider of OSH information and can make a contribution to national objectives. In other Member States, typically those with more resources devoted to, and information on OSH, the effect of the Agency on national objectives was much more limited.

The Agency was perceived as adding value above national resources on OSH across its four mission-related areas, although European added value appears greatest in Member States with less resources for OSH or less experience of the framework directive. European added value was achieved by:

- Adding value directly to some Member States through its research outputs by providing information that would otherwise not be available.
- Adding value by conducting activities that can only be carried out at EU level, for example by providing consistent, standardised information across the 27 Member States on the management of OSH by enterprises.
- Raising the profile of OSH issues at national and European level through activities such as Esener.
- Adding value by providing practical and user-friendly information to employers. Through projects such as OiRA, practical tools for managing OSH at the workplace are effectively shared across Europe in a way that would not happen without the Agency.
- Adding particular value in Member States where campaigns on OSH would not happen, or at least not in the same way, without the support of the Agency. The European branding of the campaign has the potential to raise the profile of OSH both within national Governments and the wider media, and can be influential in securing additional funding for a campaign on OSH. European branding has more of an effect in some Member States than others, depending on the availability of national resources for OSH and attitudes towards Europe more generally.

Similarly, the added value of the Agency's networking activities vary according to whether or not similar networks already exist in a Member State, which is in turn a reflection of the traditions of tri-partite working in a Member State. In some

States, the network helps to maintain relationships whilst focal points from other Member States value the opportunities provided by the network to exchange information with other focal points, often on an informal basis.

Views on the implementation design of the Agency

There was broad support for the working arrangements of the Agency. The Board's tri-partite structure and representation from across the 27 Member States were well supported. The Agency was seen as generally effective, staff seen as competent and responsive, and working relationships with the Agency were felt to be good at an operational level. Additional views from stakeholders were that:

- Although there was broad support for the composition of the Board, there was a view that the Agency could make more use of its expertise.
- More could be done to involve both focal points and national network partners with the work of the Agency. Focal points particularly felt that the main focus of their role was on disseminating Agency outputs, with less scope for them to discuss issues and input more directly into the Agency's work. Addressing this issue may require a different format to focal point meetings, and more missions by Agency staff.
- Esener was well implemented, both in terms of the technical aspects of survey design and implementation, and in terms of the dissemination of its results. Some suggestions were made for technical improvements which could be implemented in any future waves.
- European campaigns are generally well implemented. The central organisation and the funding arrangements for organising the campaign (the European Campaign Assistance Package, ECAP) were welcomed by many as being more transparent and less administratively burdensome than previous arrangements. However, a significant minority of focal points felt the arrangements offered less flexibility in the choice of campaign activities; and that they offered less value for money.

In order to more clearly identify the target audiences for Agency products, stakeholders suggested that the Agency develop better systems and processes to clarify the rationale of a project or product, who it is aimed at, and how best to deliver this. Board members suggested a 'Business Case' approach. There was also a suggestion that the Agency could do more to focus its efforts, on particular Member States, topics, or activities. Overall, therefore, the Agency could potentially do less, but deliver more value to its key audiences.

Overall assessment

The Agency operates with limited resources in a complex environment. It has heterogeneous target audiences located across 27 diverse Member States. Despite these challenges it is felt to do a difficult job very well and to have competent and responsive staff. The information provided by the Agency is seen as credible and offering good quality OSH content. Further, the Agency is viewed as capable of designing, developing and conducting its own data collection e.g through Esener. The objectives of the Agency's strategy and the balance of its activities across the four main mission-related areas are appropriate.

The relevance and usefulness of the Agency's activities to its target audiences are generally felt to be high, particularly amongst researchers and policy-makers. The difficulty of reaching employers (and particular SMEs) is widely acknowledged but the Agency has also made progress in this area in its work on OiRA. There is clear European added value across its four mission-related areas, although this tends to be greatest in Member States with less in the way of OSH resources, or experience of the framework directive.

Key recommendations

Although the overall assessment of the Agency is positive, there are ways in which its work could be improved. These are outlined below.

The Agency should develop internal systems and procedures to help achieve greater prioritisation and impact in its work

The Agency is currently seen as trying to do too much. More should be done to focus Agency resources on activities that have the most impact. Devoting greater resources at the project inception stage to clarify why projects would be worthwhile, whether and how they would work in practice, who they would be for, and how their results would be measured, may help to assess the relative merits of various ideas or proposals. Projects may also be selected and their performance monitored using agreed criteria, such as European added value. Whatever the approach taken, some form of standardised process would allow greater prioritisation in the Agency's work and help achieve greater focus and impact.

The Agency should focus on a smaller number of larger projects with potential to achieve greater reach and impact

A rebalancing of resources between production and dissemination could help the Agency achieve greater reach. If the Agency were to focus on a smaller number of key projects, more resources would be available to promote the outputs to a wide range of potential stakeholders and make these outputs accessible and relevant. This rebalancing would also free up more resources for the active engagement of the network.

The Agency should consult with the network about adopting a portfolio-based way of working whereby Member States can decide which projects from a range of options to participate in

Currently the Agency offers too many products or activities to all Member States, without taking account of the differing interests of, and demand from, different Member States. A number of stakeholders suggested that Agency projects and activities should be more focussed on those Member States where there is an interest in them. OiRA is a good example of how a project can be taken up and adapted to national contexts by Member States who show an interest. Such a 'portfolio' approach could be particularly beneficial to the Working Environment Information mission-related area given the difficulties involved in making its products relevant to the intended target audience. Any enhanced responsiveness to the needs of Member States, however, would require greater inputs from FOP structures. The risks are that either such participation is not forthcoming, or that Member States who have an interest in particular projects simply do not have sufficient resources to help develop them. Adequate consultation with the network about these issues would be required to move forward successfully.

The Agency should, however, continue with some large projects involving all Member States, for example the campaigns and Esener

Having said that, there are clearly activities that are of value across Member States, for example the EU-wide campaigns and Esener. These activities add clear European added value and should be continued.

The Agency should consult with focal points to explore ways of engaging them, and network partners, more in the work of the Agency

The evidence from this evaluation suggests that the involvement of focal points and network partners in the work of the Agency could be improved. Focal points saw their relationship with the Agency shifting over time towards the dissemination of Agency outputs rather than a more active input into Agency

activities. Whilst this is likely to reflect the growing size of the focal point network, and the difficulties involved in managing this, steps could usefully be taken to better engage with focal points and national network partners. The Agency should consult with focal points and explore ways of better engaging with them, perhaps through involving focal points in the design of projects, through smaller meetings based around particular projects, and/or through more regular visits to Member States. The role of the Agency's networks should continue to remain at the heart of its strategy for achieving a successful future.

2 Introduction

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) was commissioned by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (the 'Agency') to conduct a mid-term evaluation of its 2009-2013 strategy. This report contains the findings of the evaluation.

The report is structured around the key objectives for the evaluation (described below in Chapter 3) and is as follows:

- Chapter 3 – describes the background to the evaluation, outlines key evaluation objectives and describes the methodological approach
- Chapter 4 – presents the results of the evaluation in relation to the relevance of the Agency's strategy and objectives to its key target audiences
- Chapter 5 – assesses the progress of the Agency in meeting the aims and objectives of the strategy, and provides an assessment of the effectiveness of Agency activities
- Chapter 6 – presents the results of the evaluation with respect to an assessment of the European added value of the strategy, and its impact on the objectives of key partners at EU and Member State level
- Chapter 7 – presents an assessment of the available evidence in respect of the Agency's systems and processes and the extent to which they support the efficiency and effectiveness of Agency activities
- Chapter 8 – summarises key conclusions from the evaluation with respect to the key evaluation objectives.

3 Background and Evaluation Approach

3.1 About the Agency and its strategy

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work was established in July 1994 and is the European Union organisation responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant information that can serve the needs of people involved in health and safety at work. The legal basis for its actions are contained within its founding regulation, which has been updated three times, the last of which was Council Regulation 112/2005. This last update contains an explicit link between the work of the Agency and the Community strategies on health and safety at work.

The Agency is based in Bilbao, has a budget of approximately €15 million, and a staff of around sixty OSH, communication and administrative specialists. The work of the Agency is organised around four main mission-related areas which are also reflected in its organisational structure (although at the time of writing two of these five mission-related areas are to be combined). These are the:

- European Risk Observatory (ERO), responsible for the identification of new and emerging risks and the Agency's research outputs.
- Working Environment Information (WEI), responsible for the Agency's information on good practices.
- Communication, campaigning and promotion, including responsibility for the organisation of the European Week for Safety and Health at Work.
- Networking and co-ordination, responsible for developing and maintaining the Agency's strategic and operational networks in Europe and beyond.

The work of the four areas are in practice closely inter-linked.

The Agency is organised on a tri-partite principle, and major strategic issues such as its budget and work programmes are adopted and monitored by a Governing Board comprised of representatives from EU Member State governments, workers' organisations, employers' organisations, and the European Commission. There are also observers from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), EU-level social partners and representatives from three EEA-EFTA states (European Economic Area – European Free Trade Association). The Board meets twice each year. Selected from the Board are 11 members who comprise the Bureau and who oversee the operational performance of the Agency and meet four times per year. There are also both advisory and expert groups which provide strategic guidance and expert input on the different areas of the Agency's work. Advisory groups include tri-partite representation in addition to representatives from the Commission and experts in the relevant field, and are appointed by the Agency and its Board. Members of expert groups are appointed by national focal points (see below) and include observers representing employers, workers and the Commission. In addition, there is a Topic Centre, comprised of a consortium of national health and safety institutes under contract with the Agency and which produce outputs in support of the Agency's work.

At national level, there are focal points (FOPs) in each Member State and in EFTA and (potential) candidate countries. Each national focal point is responsible for organising and managing a tri-partite network of the main OSH organisations within their country. The focal points and their associated national networks form the 'backbone' of the Agency. The role of the focal point includes collecting information from the network in response to requests from the Agency, and helping to disseminate information from the Agency to network members. The focal points are heavily involved in the organisation and promotion of European Week campaigns and are also responsible for maintaining a national focal point website.

The Agency's 2009-2013 strategy⁶ takes account of both the above Council Regulations and the current Community Strategy on health and safety at work⁷, and defines a vision for the Agency and six key strategic goals. The Agency's vision is 'to be the European centre of excellence for occupational safety and

⁶ EU-OSHA Strategy 2009-2013, http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/work_programmes/strategy2009-2013/view

⁷ Improving quality and productivity at work: Community Strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work (COM (2007) 62)

health information, promoting a preventive culture to support the goal of making Europe's current and future workplaces safer, healthier and more productive'. The Agency's six key strategic goals are:

- To raise awareness of occupational safety and health risks and their prevention
- To identify good practice in occupational safety and health and facilitate their exchange
- To anticipate new and emerging risks in order to facilitate preventive action
- To promote Member State co-operation on information sharing and research
- To promote networking to make the best use of occupational safety and health resources in Europe and beyond
- To make EU-OSHA a leading exemplar in social and environmental responsibility.

The six strategic goals are supported by general, multi-annual objectives in each of four mission-related areas. Included within the strategy are a number of specific tasks and areas for the Agency to focus on defined in the 2007-2012 Community Strategy. These are to:

- Ensure that the activities of the Agency raise awareness and promote and disseminate best practice, focussing to a greater degree on high-risk sectors and SMEs.
- Develop sectoral awareness-raising campaigns targeted in particular at SMEs, and to promote the management of health and safety at work in enterprises, through the exchange of experience and good practices aimed at specific sectors.
- Draw up, through the European Risk Observatory, a report examining the specific challenges in terms of health and safety posed by the more extensive integration of women, immigrant workers and younger and older workers into the labour market.
- Review the extent to which health and safety aspects have been incorporated into Member States' vocational and occupational training policies.
- Collect and disseminate information intended to support the development of occupational health promotion campaigns, in combination with the strategy and Community public health programmes.
- Encourage national health and safety research institutes to set joint priorities, exchange results and include occupational health and safety requirements in research programmes.

- Enhance risk anticipation to include risks associated with new technologies, biological hazards, complex human-machine interfaces and the impact of demographic trends.

3.1.1 Previous research and evaluations

There have been two previous evaluations of the Agency, in 2001⁸ and 2007⁹, and a number of evaluations of the European Week campaigns¹⁰.

The most recent evaluation of the Agency focussed on the focal points and their network's contribution to the performance of the Agency in achieving its vision. It also assessed, amongst other things, the overall impact of Agency activities. The evaluation concluded that the Agency was highly regarded as a source of OSH information and there was a generally positive view with regard to the types of activities undertaken and their relevance to, and impact upon, target groups. The Agency was also regarded as carrying out its activities effectively, and there was not a need for a major change to Agency objectives or activities. However, the evaluation also concluded that the target audience for which Agency activities were least relevant was employers and workplaces, and suggested that there should be a greater emphasis on the development of more practical products. The evaluation also concluded that, with such a diverse group of target audiences and limited resources, there was a need for the Agency to prioritize target audiences to ensure that outputs were relevant and impacts maximized. The evaluation also concluded that there was untapped potential for focal points and national network partners to contribute to defining Agency priorities and target groups, and that there was a need for a strengthening of the relationship with focal points. The evaluation concluded that European Week campaigns should be theme rather than sector-based and should run over a two-year rather than one year cycle.

The 2001 evaluation of the Agency reached generally positive conclusions about the work of the Agency, but also concluded that some of the Agency's information could be made more practical and that the diversity of national situations influenced how effectively the focal points could carry out their tasks. The

⁸ 'Does information communicate? Evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work', February 2001, Social Development Co.

⁹ 'Evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work', May 2007, Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES)

¹⁰ eg 'Evaluation of the Healthy Workplace Campaign 2008 & 2009 and ECAP', July 2010, Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES)

evaluation also concluded that there was a need to strengthen both the focal points and national networks, and the latter was required to ensure that the products of the Agency were relevant to their intended end-users.

Evaluations of European Week campaigns have generally concluded that these are well organised and conducted effectively, although they have identified a need for the Agency to do more to mobilise network partners and reach employers and workplaces.

3.2 Evaluation aims and objectives

The main aim of the evaluation was to assess the progress made by the Agency in implementing the 2009-2013 strategy, and to provide the basis for an update of the strategy in 2012. The evaluation is intended to be both strategic and operational i.e. to consider whether there is a need to change the strategy, but also to consider how the implementation of the strategy can be improved. As regards scope, the evaluation covers the EU and its 27 Member States. Although during the strategy period, three EEA-EFTA states have been included in the work of the Agency, they were considered to have been involved with the Agency for such a short period of time that a decision was made to focus the evaluation on the EU-27. The EU-27 have been involved with the work of the Agency since the start of the strategy period. The evaluation is also focussed on four main mission-related areas of the 2009-2013 strategy: European Risk Observatory (ERO); Working Environment Information (WEI); Communication, campaigning and promotion; Networking and Co-ordination.

In addition to the above general aims, the terms of reference for the evaluation, identified a number of key evaluation objectives. These are described below:

- **Relevance** – to what extent are the vision and multi-annual general objectives of the Agency’s strategy still relevant to occupational safety and health (OSH) needs in the EU and its Member States? The terms of reference also asks whether there is a need to reassess the weight of the four mission-related areas of the strategy.
- **Effectiveness** – to what extent are the objectives of the strategy, and the objectives for each of the four mission-related areas, being realised? What is the contribution of the four mission-related areas to the achievement of the Agency’s vision.
- **Consistency/European added value** – what is the effect (both positive or negative) of the activities of the Agency on the achievement of the objectives of the EU as expressed in its OSH strategy 2007-2012, and the objectives of Member States and social partners? What is the value of the activities of the

Agency above what is achieved or possible using national resources alone i.e what is the added value of the Agency above purely national actions to promote OSH?

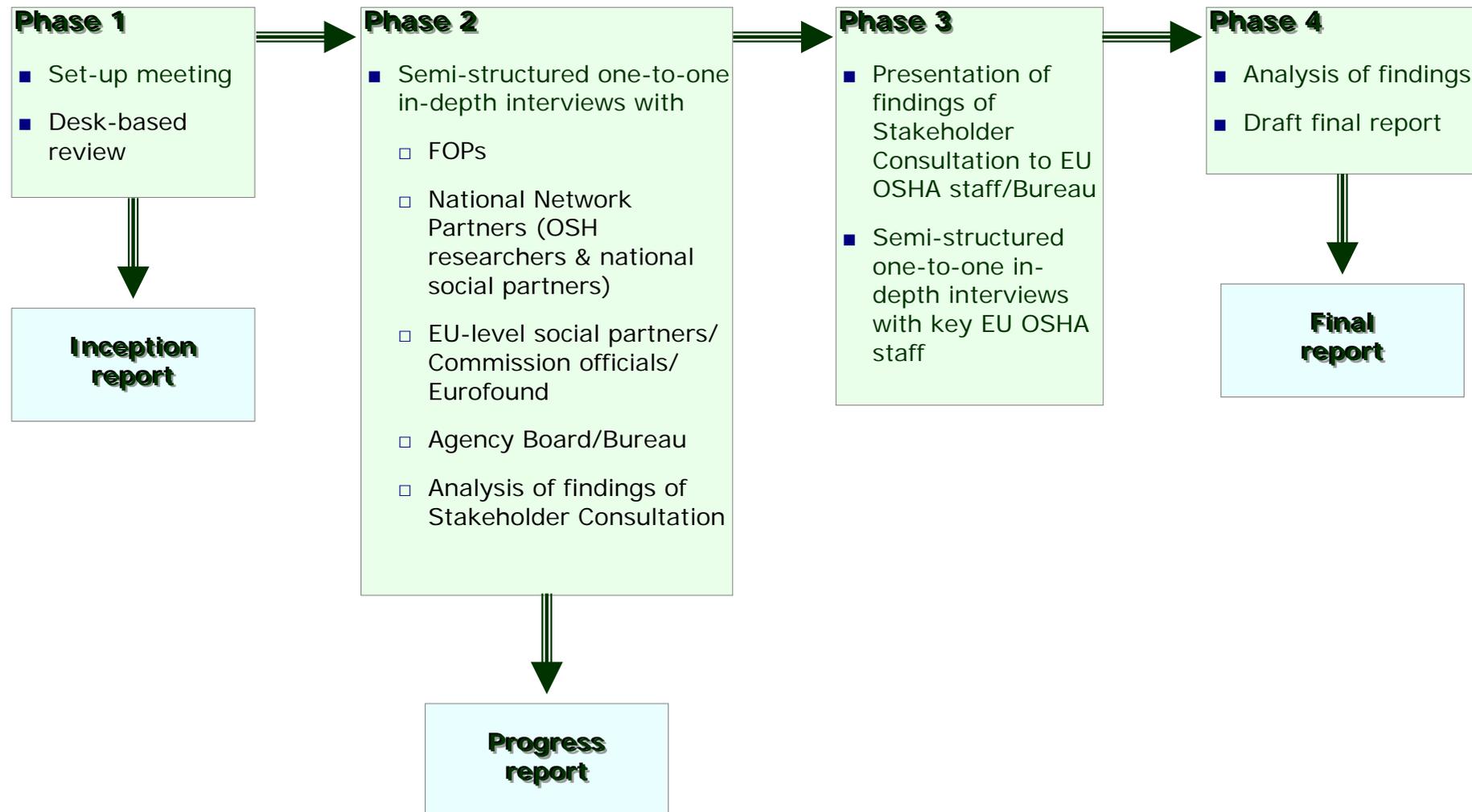
- Implementation Design – to what extent do the systems and processes, both as a whole and for each of the four mission-related areas, contribute (or hinder) the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of the Agency and the achievement of the Agency vision.

These five key evaluation objectives are addressed in turn in each main section of the report. First, the evaluation approach and method are described.

3.3 Evaluation approach

There were four main phases to the evaluation. These are outlined diagrammatically in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Overview of Methodological Approach



- **Phase 1** – a meeting was held with Agency staff to understand more about the work of the Agency and to discuss an approach to the evaluation. Prior to the meeting, a desk-based review had been commenced. This reviewed monitoring information held by the Agency on its activities (e.g its performance report), previous evaluations of both the Agency and some of its activities (eg evaluations of its European Week (EW) campaigns), and other Agency documents (the 2009-2013 strategy itself, annual work programmes, activity reports, founding regulation etc.). In addition, the desk-based review included a light-touch assessment of Member State strategies on OSH with a view to gaining an appreciation of the influence of the work of the Agency on national strategies. The output from this phase of the research was an inception report outlining the approach to the evaluation.
- **Phase 2** – this phase of the work involved an extensive semi-structured interview programme with Agency Board and Bureau members, national focal points (FOPs) and network partners (including both employer and worker representatives, and the OSH research community), and wider stakeholders such as officials from the Commission, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), EU-level social partners and a representative from Eurofound. The interview programme also included interviews with a small number of employers and campaign partners involved in the European Week campaign on safe maintenance.
- **Phase 3** – following an analysis of the results from the semi-structured interview programme, presentations of emerging findings were made to both key Agency staff and the Bureau. This provided an opportunity for both Agency staff and Bureau to discuss the findings and provide feedback to the evaluation team. One-to-one discussions were also held with key Agency staff to provide an opportunity for more detailed feedback on the findings from the interview programme, and to clarify any outstanding issues.
- **Phase 4** – the final phase of the evaluation involved formulating conclusions based on findings from phases 2 and 3, and the submission of a final report.

3.3.1 Details of the stakeholder consultation process

As noted above, Phase 2 of the evaluation involved an extensive consultation exercise with a wide range of stakeholders from across the EU and its Member States with varying degrees of awareness of, and involvement with, the activities of the Agency. Further, participants to the interview programme varied in terms of their expertise in OSH issues, their ability to comment on national versus European level issues, and their seniority within their respective organisations and hence their ability to comment on policy and/or operational issues.

The interview programme was designed so that the achieved sample met key criteria agreed with the Agency and its Bureau. These criteria were:

- Cross-Member State representation – this meant that the sample of interviewees included representatives of all 27 Member States.
- Known country-level performance – where there were known differences in performance for example differences in impact in Agency activities across EU-15 and EU12 Member States.
- Tri-partism - to reflect the tri-partite nature of the Agency.
- Structural differences – the interview programme took account of the fact that in some states OSH responsibilities are centralised, whereas in others they are decentralised.

An invitation to participate in an interview was sent out in three languages (English, French and German) to all contacts provided by the Agency. These included focal points, national network partners, campaign partners and others. The standard approach was to conduct the interview in English if possible, although respondents were given the option of being interviewed in their native language. Interviews were conducted in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, Polish and Russian as well as in English. The majority of interviews were conducted by telephone, but interviews were conducted face-to-face in Italy, Finland, UK, Slovenia, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Interviewees were split into two groups. Interviews with group one focussed on Agency activities as a whole, but with a number of specific prompts and probes on both the Agency campaigns and Esener. Interviews with the second group focussed on either the European Week campaign on safe maintenance or Esener, depending on the interviewee concerned, as well as asking a few questions about Agency activities as a whole. These 'case studies' were selected as they are both significant projects for the Agency. Esener also represents a new type of activity for the Agency, that of designing, developing and implementing its own primary data collection. Case study interviewees were identified by the relevant Agency network manager and included researchers, policy makers, worker and employer representatives, campaign partners, and employers.

The interviews were structured around the key objectives for the evaluation, namely relevance, effectiveness, consistency, European added value, and implementation design (see Appendix 2 for sample topic guides). Interviewees were asked for information on their background and organisational role, role in relation to the Agency, and the activities of the Agency they were familiar with before any questions around the key evaluation objectives. Using this approach,

interviews could focus on activities and issues for which the interviewee could make an informed assessment.

The profile of participants according to key groups is shown in Table 3.1. The profile of participants at the Member State level is shown in Table 3.2. A full list of participants is provided in Appendix 1. It should be noted that representatives of government, employers and workers were all contacted in each of the Member States and offered the opportunity to participate. Some of those approached elected not to take part.

Table 3.1 Profile of semi-structured interview programme participants

Interview group	Interviewees representing these groups
National focal points	26
National network partners (employer and worker representatives)	25
National network partners (OSH research community)	8
Governing Board/Bureau	29
European Commission, MEPs, EU-level social partners, and Eurofound	10
Agency Staff	9
Campaign Partners	5
Europe Enterprise Network Representative	1
Employers	3
Total number of interviews	101

Note: Total number of interviews is less than sum of interviews across the interview groups as interviewees can be part of more than one group.

Source: IES

Table 3.2 Profile of semi-structured interview programme participants at Member State level

Member State	Government Representative	Employer Representative	Worker representative	OSH researcher
Austria	y	y	y	
Belgium	y	-	y	
Bulgaria	y	-	-	
Cyprus	y	y	y	
Czech Republic	y	y	-	
Denmark	y	y	y	
Estonia	y	-	-	
Finland	y	-	-	y
France	y	-	-	y
Germany	y	y	y	y
Greece	-	-	-	y
Hungary	y	y	y	
Ireland	y	-	-	
Italy	y	-	-	y
Latvia	y	y	-	
Lithuania	y	y	-	
Luxembourg	y	-	-	
Malta	y	-	-	
Netherlands	y	y	y	
Poland	y	-	-	y
Portugal	y	y	-	
Romania	y	-	-	y
Slovakia	y	-	y	
Slovenia	y	y	y	
Spain	y	-	y	
Sweden	y	y	-	
United Kingdom (UK)	y	y	-	y

Source: IES

The data from the interview programme was analysed thematically (the main themes being the key evaluation objectives) using Atlas.ti by key informant groups (i.e focal points, board members, employer representatives etc.) and by both Member States, and groups of Member States (EU-15 versus EU-12). In addition to a desk-based analysis of the data, the key themes and findings in relation to them were discussed amongst the analysts involved.

Drawing conclusions from qualitative data is necessarily different from the approach used with quantitative data. The emphasis is less on how many participants said something, and more on who said what. In drawing out themes and conclusions from the stakeholder consultation, the focus has been on identifying views that are consistent either within a particular group of stakeholders (e.g focal points), which are consistent across a number of stakeholder groups (eg focal points and national network partners), or which are expressed by those with specialist knowledge or who are heavily involved in a particular activity. For example, focussing on the views of OSH researchers when making an assessment of the credibility of the Agency's research outputs. A consistent view does not imply uniformity (i.e that all focal points, say, expressed a particular view) rather that the view was expressed by several participants. Drawing out themes and conclusions from the data necessarily requires a judgment by the evaluation team. The risk of placing too much emphasis on particular themes or issues is mitigated by the evaluation team working collaboratively and discussing the findings at several points throughout the research process.

Sections four through to seven report the results from the stakeholder consultation. It is worth pointing out that participants can fall into more than one stakeholder group. For example, some of the participants were both on the Agency board and/or bureau and also represented employers or workers at Member State level. Similarly, some Government representatives from the board or bureau were also involved in focal point work at national level.

4 Relevance

4.1 Introduction

The relevance of Agency activities to its key stakeholders and target audiences at both EU and Member State level are key questions for this evaluation. The Agency's target audiences include policy-makers and social partners at both EU and Member State level, the OSH research community, employers and employees, and people involved in OSH. As outlined in its 2009-2013 strategy, different aspects of the Agency's work are intended to reach different target audiences. An additional question is therefore whether the target audiences for the Agency's activities and products are clearly defined.

Key questions to be addressed in relation to the assessment of the relevance of the Agency are:

- To what extent are the activities of the Agency relevant to its target audiences at both EU and Member State level?
- Are target audiences for its products clearly defined?
- Is the relative weight of the four mission-related areas adequate considering the needs and problems to be addressed in OSH in the EU and its Member States?
- To what extent are the strategy's objectives and activities relevant to the needs and problems to be addressed in OSH in the EU and its Member States?

It is worth noting that in assessing the views of policy-makers at Member State level, we have focussed on the views of Agency Board members and those occupying a senior position within the national administrations dealing with OSH.

4.2 Summary of relevant monitoring information

The 2010 EU-OSHA network survey¹¹ comprised interviews with 183 national network partners and 5,933 OSH-mail subscribers (including OSH professionals, employees and employers, and their representatives etc.). The survey asked a number of questions pertinent to an assessment of the relevance of the Agency and its activities. When respondents were asked *'to what extent do you think the Agency's activities meet the most important needs in occupational safety and health?'*, the average score was 3.5 where a score of 1 represented *'not at all'* and a score of 5 *'to a very high extent'*. The Agency was therefore felt to meet the most important needs in OSH to a *'moderate or great extent'*. With respect to differences between different types of respondent, the survey found that respondents from EU-15 countries gave slightly lower scores on average (3.5) compared with EU-12 countries (average score 3.7). Representatives of employer associations gave lower scores on average (3.3) when compared with other types of respondent eg employee representatives at the workplace, employers, researchers (each of these types of respondent gave a score of 3.6 on average) etc.

In addition to questions about the relevance of Agency activities as a whole, questions were also asked in the network survey concerning the relevance of the work of the European Risk Observatory and the information produced by the Agency on good practice. The survey asked the question, *'based on your knowledge, how successful is the European Risk Observatory in identifying the most relevant new and emerging risks?'*. The average score for all respondents was 3.7 (where 1 represented *'not successful at all'*, and 5 represented *'very successful'*). The survey report concluded that the risk observatory was *'moderately to greatly successful'* in identifying the most relevant new and emerging risks. The report also found few differences in average scores between different types of respondent. Representatives of employer associations gave the lowest average score (3.5), but this still represented a positive outcome.

Respondents to the network survey were also asked about the completeness of the scope of the good practice information produced by the Agency. Overall, an average score of 3.5 was achieved, and the scope of the good practice information provided by the Agency was judged as *'fairly complete'*. There were differences reported for different types of respondents, however these were small. In addition, a separate survey¹² of a representative sample of the EU-OSHA publications user

¹¹ EU-OSHA Network Survey (2010). Carsa.

¹² Online Survey to the Publications User Panel (2009). Carsa/CSSES

panel explored views on five publications produced by the Agency. For those members of the user panel who had used one or more of the publications, the relevance of the publications was rated as high (an average score of 4 was achieved where 1 represented *'not relevant at all'* and 5 *'very relevant'*). For each publication, the vast majority of those respondents who were familiar with it felt that it was likely to get the key messages across to the target audience(s).

4.3 Results from stakeholder consultation

4.3.1 European Risk Observatory

In general, the work of the European Risk Observatory (ERO) was viewed as relevant to policy-makers at both Member State and EU level. One MEP referred to the Agency as a *"good, early warning system"* for OSH issues, and another that the focus on psychosocial risks in Esener (European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks) was highly relevant. Commission officials saw the focus of the Agency on new and emerging risks as relevant, and the work on Esener as key in helping identify issues in OSH on which the Commission should focus.

At Member State level, policy-makers from across the Member States viewed Esener as relevant in terms of monitoring the state of OSH across the 27 Member States; and by one EU-15 focal point as a potential means by which the Agency could determine its priorities. The relevance of Esener to national needs depended to an extent on the availability of similar data sources at national level. Typically, policy-makers from Member States with less in the way of national data sources on OSH viewed Esener as of greater relevance. Several policy-makers from Member States without access to such data sources reported that Esener was key in raising the profile of psychosocial risks. However, policy-makers from Member States with access to national data sources still viewed Esener as relevant for its ability to offer a comparative view on OSH management across the EU.

Awareness of Esener amongst employer representatives at Member State level appeared low. Those employer representatives who were also on the board of the Agency were more familiar with the survey, although there were also two representatives not on the Agency's board (but both experts on OSH) who were familiar with it. Amongst those familiar with the survey, there were mixed views on its relevance. Whilst the comparisons and benchmarking that the survey enables were felt to be relevant, there was also a view that the survey focussed too much on new and emerging risks instead of *'bread and butter'* issues, and would benefit from extending its coverage to employers with fewer than ten employees. A view expressed by one employer representative was that the survey could be

made more relevant to their needs, if re-focussed, for monitoring of the implementation of EU directives and requirements eg those on risk assessment.

There was greater awareness, and a more positive view of the relevance of Esener, amongst worker representatives at Member State level. Esener was either seen as confirming existing findings or as adding value, as there was no similar research within a Member State. It was felt to be relevant in both EU-15 and EU-12 Member States. In one Member State with existing surveys of this kind, Esener was still felt to be relevant as it was large-scale, pan-European and offered an independent view (surveys of this kind in this Member State were typically trade union sponsored). Researchers from both EU-15 and EU-12 countries viewed the provision of a standardised, cross-EU dataset on management practice with regards to OSH as highly relevant.

“It is a significant survey. It’s the first time that this type of comparative data set was available asking these types of questions across Europe. So, for researchers, it is a very important development because it stops you from having to use national data sets. So, on that level, it is rather useful and very relevant in terms of shaping this debate.”
(Researcher, EU-15)

The research reports produced by the risk observatory were viewed by policy-makers and representatives of both employers and workers, as more relevant to the needs of experts than themselves. However, policy-makers from Member States with less in the way of OSH research did view the research activities of the Agency as relevant to national needs.

The OSH research community viewed the research reports produced by the Agency as having only limited relevance to the needs of researchers in countries with a significant OSH research capacity of their own. However, in Member States with less developed OSH research capabilities, the reports were regarded as more relevant to national needs. In addition to the research reports produced by the Agency, researchers also mentioned that both policy overviews and the website were relevant to their needs. The relevance of policy overviews reflected a wider interest in comparative information on areas such as the implementation of OSH legislation within Member States, and OSH ‘systems’ (i.e information on who is involved in OSH matters, their role and responsibilities etc.).

“I think they meet our needs quite well. Yes, because many times we go on their website and find relevant information for us, that helps us really a lot, so I think they quite well meet our needs.” (Researcher, EU-15)

One researcher, also involved in the production of research reports through the topic centre, noted the difficulty in writing reports to cater for such diverse needs across the EU. They suggested that rather than providing a report for all countries in the EU, an alternative approach may be to identify topics of interest to

particular (groups) of countries and to write the reports with those countries in mind.

4.3.2 Communication, campaigning and promotion

At EU level, the European campaigns were viewed as relevant to the objectives of the Community Strategy on OSH and a means by which OSH practitioners could be helped in implementing preventive measures set out in Commission directives. In particular, the OiRA tool developed as part of the campaign on risk assessment was considered highly relevant to the aims of the Commission. For EU-level social partners, the topics of the campaigns were generally seen as relevant, although relevance did depend on the types of organisation or workers represented by the social partner concerned. The campaign on risk assessment appears to have been regarded by employer organisations at EU-level as particularly relevant to employers.

“I think the risk assessment was probably the most relevant one recently. I think it was clear that there was a real company dimension to that, in terms of helping companies, and it’s testament to the campaign that their OiRA tool came out of it, which is something that’s designed to help companies undertake risk assessment. It’s a fairly tangible subject, I think, for companies to look at, because they’re all obliged under legislation to do a risk assessment, from the smallest to the largest, so I think that struck a chord”
(EU-level social partner, employer)

At Member State level, the topics of the European campaigns are generally seen as relevant to policy-makers, although there are exceptions to this where a campaign topic was not thought to fit well with national priorities. The broad, thematic focus of the campaigns were considered to offer flexibility in adapting the campaign to the local context in terms of its focus on particular sectors or vulnerable groups. The campaign on risk assessment appears to have been relevant to both EU-15 and EU-12 countries, either in terms of reinforcing a core aspect of the national approach to OSH, or as focussing on a topic perceived as new or difficult but required by EU directives. The campaign on safe maintenance was also generally seen as relevant and applicable to a broad range of sectors and groups. Whilst both the campaigns on safe maintenance and risk assessment were seen as relevant, there appear to be more mixed views about the upcoming campaign on leadership and worker involvement. This is welcomed by some Member States, particularly where it is aligned with national priorities, but in other cases there appears to be a concern that its is too general, too all-encompassing or too ‘soft’.

“Risk assessment is a very sensitive topic in (Member State). So this campaign was very useful because it put some clarification on this topic and as well was occasion to speak about that and to see other methods from other countries. So it was absolutely relevant”.
(Focal point, EU-12)

“Another very successful campaign was that on risk assessment, because it’s a relatively new and difficult topic, and to explain what is risk assessment and why it’s needed was very important.” (Focal point, EU-12)

For both employer and worker representatives at Member State level, the risk assessment and safe maintenance campaigns were seen as relevant topics, although their relevance to the organisations or workers they represented depended on the topic in some cases. Both the upcoming campaigns on leadership and worker involvement, and psychosocial risks, were not felt to be relevant by some of the employer representatives. The broad, thematic focus of the campaign topics was seen as helpful by employer representatives as this meant the campaign could be tailored to suit their needs.

Both employer and worker representatives felt that the campaign materials were not specific enough to national contexts. There was also a view that they were not relevant to some key target audiences such as employers, young people in technical schools, and workers. It was suggested that the Agency could allow for editing of the campaign materials, making the inclusion of the details of national telephone lines and websites possible at national level. However, it was also acknowledged that the scope for flexibility was limited due to the European nature of the campaign. It was also recognised that it was difficult for the Agency to produce materials that were relevant to such a diverse range of needs.

A number of employer and worker representatives saw locally developed campaign materials as more relevant to their needs than Agency products, although the content of Agency materials could be a useful aid. Some employer and worker representatives took the view that it was the role of social partners at national level to make information relevant to the stakeholder they represented. There was less criticism of campaign materials amongst focal points, with some EU-15 countries rating these materials as much better than other Agency materials. They also tended to be regarded as more useful in EU-12 countries. In other cases, there was acceptance that the campaign materials cannot be changed, and efforts made to develop additional materials suited to the national focus of the campaign.

The relevance of other Agency activities in this mission-related area is covered in Section 5 on effectiveness.

4.3.3 Working Environment Information

The Agency’s work under the ‘Working Environment Information’ (WEI) mission-related area is mainly targeted at intermediaries who work with employers and those involved in OSH at the workplace. In general, the products and activities of the Agency were felt to be less relevant to employers, particularly small and

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and there was a consistent view across the main stakeholders that awareness of the Agency and its products was relatively low amongst employers (and SMEs in particular).

“... the information that’s provided isn’t always useful for the company level. The feedback the employer organisations at national level get from their members - so, the individual companies - is either that they don’t know about the Agency, or they don’t know about the information being available, or that it’s not that useful.”

(EU-level social partner, employer)

The target audience for some Agency information materials, particularly factsheets, was not always clear. Factsheets were felt to be of varying quality and were often insufficiently tailored to the national context, too complex or technical, or not practical enough for use in the workplace. There was a view that the information provided could fall between two stalls – it was not practical enough for workplaces and yet not detailed or technical enough for OSH experts. However, it was acknowledged that it was difficult for the Agency to satisfy such diverse needs across Europe and produce something of relevance to all.

“The factsheets, they are a bit difficult, because of course in Europe, the different countries have such different needs. And when they are trying to be something for everyone, then it’s very difficult to make it effective. But it is good to make short papers like factsheets, but I think maybe they should be developed a little, so that the workplaces could use them better.”

(Focal Point, EU-15)

“The quality of fact sheets varies a little bit - some are really good. What people need is practical information.” (Focal point, EU-12)

The need to satisfy diverse stakeholder groups was also felt to mitigate against the provision of tailored information. It was also acknowledged by some respondents in EU-15 Member States, that more comprehensive national materials on good practice were available and where this was the case these were considered more relevant. There were suggestions from a number of stakeholders that the Agency should invest more effort in identifying the audience for their different products, and for these products to be designed with that target group in mind. Another suggestion was that the Agency could provide tailored information to (groups of) countries on topics of interest rather than covering everything for everyone.

“Well, one of the problems of the information of the agency is that they want to satisfy everybody and for that reason, the information, by nature, is rather vague and general, and very often too scientific. So, it would be better to design, for each report, who is the most important user. ... I think that the information of the agency could be improved a lot if they would have a better understanding of their users, and not try to satisfy everybody. So, in the end, they do not satisfy anybody” (Focal point, EU-15)

Language was also considered to be a major barrier in terms of the relevance of the Agency's work to employers, especially SMEs. Although factsheets are available in all languages, some of the translations were felt to be of a poor quality, although others felt this had improved over time. Equally, some Agency materials regarded as potentially relevant to employers such as good practice case studies and e-facts are not available in all relevant EU languages.

There appeared to be a consistent view amongst focal points, employer and worker representatives that NAPO and OiRA (online interactive risk assessment tool) were regarded as highly relevant to the needs of employers and workplaces.

The balance between the Agency's four mission-related areas was generally felt to be good by employer, worker, and Government representatives.

4.3.4 Networking and co-ordination

There was a mixed picture amongst stakeholders with respect to the relevance of the Agency's networking activities. For some groups, particularly OSH researchers, involvement in the topic centre network was felt to be valuable. For other national network partners, such as employer and worker representatives, the perceived value of the network was more variable. Typically, network partners in Member States with established traditions of tri-partite working in OSH viewed the network as less valuable. In Member States without such traditions, the networking activities and support of the Agency were seen as relevant.

4.3.5 Future OSH priorities

Stakeholders identified a range of OSH priorities for the future. These included the ageing workforce, developing a preventative culture through incorporation of OSH into the education system, OSH in small and micro-firms, migrant workers, and psychosocial risks. Although the list of future OSH priorities mentioned by stakeholders was extensive, they all appeared to be topics on which the Agency has already conducted, or is doing, work.

4.4 Key findings in relation to relevance

In general, the activities of the Agency were seen by stakeholders as relevant to their target audiences (a conclusion supported by the Agency's own monitoring information) and the balance of activity across the Agency's four main areas as appropriate.

The Agency's **research outputs** are seen as relevant to the OSH research community in EU-15 and EU-12 Member States, although they have particular relevance where there is less in the way of existing OSH research at national level. Esener is viewed as relevant to the needs of researchers and policy-makers at both EU and Member State level. For policy-makers at EU level, Esener is seen as useful in identifying issues for the Commission to focus on. At Member State level, Esener is seen as relevant as either a comparative view across the Member States or as a means of providing new information, depending on whether or not similar data sources exist at national level. Monitoring information provided by the Agency confirms the relevance of research outputs, with the risk observatory viewed a '*moderately to greatly*' successful in identifying the most relevant new and emerging risks.

The topics of the **European campaigns** are generally seen as relevant to representatives of employers, workers, and Government, although the relevance of any single topic to any one Member State or organisation inevitably depends on national and organisational priorities. However, the broad, thematic focus of the campaigns appears to offer flexibility in the focus of the campaigns and to be well received. Campaigns were seen at EU level as complementary to the work of the Commission and a means by which employers could be supported in implementing complex EU directives.

The Agency's available monitoring data suggests that, overall, the good practice information produced by the Agency is viewed as being '*fairly complete*' in scope. It also suggests that where a good practice publication is used, it is rated as highly relevant by the user and likely to get key messages across to the target audience. However, evidence from the stakeholder consultation suggests that the relevance of Agency activities in this area could be improved. Many of the findings in this evaluation, and with respect to the relevance of Agency activities to employers and the workplace more generally, mirror those of previous evaluations. In 2007, an evaluation by CSES (Op. Cit.) reported that the profile and visibility of Agency activities amongst companies was typically low, and Agency activities were rated as least relevant to companies by all types of stakeholder. Further, the evaluation identified that the target audiences for some Agency materials, for example factsheets, was unclear and that they could be made more practical to be of greater relevance to workplaces. There also appeared to be some materials that may be of relevance to employers and workplaces, but which are only available in restricted languages.

Stakeholders have suggested a number of possible **potential improvements** to address these problems. These include allowing factsheets to be edited to make them more appropriate to the national context; establishing systems or processes to ensure that the target audience for the information is clearly defined at the

outset and the information tailored to that audience; focussing more effort on developing different products to reach employers rather than relying too heavily on factsheets; focussing resources on developing particular products or information of interest to particular (groups) of Member States. There may also be scope for re-apportioning translation resources to focus on those products of most interest to employers and workplaces.

The Agency has developed **new ways of working** and new types of product which appear to be more relevant to employers and workplaces. The provision of practical tools (OiRA) and information through means not dependent on language (e.g NAPO), were considered relevant to employers and workplaces.

5 Effectiveness

5.1 Introduction

The terms of reference for this evaluation included an assessment of the extent to which the objectives of the Agency's 2009-2013 strategy, and those of each of its four mission-related areas, have been achieved. In addition, the terms of reference states that an assessment should be made of the contribution of each of the four mission-related areas to the Agency vision. The objectives of each of the four mission-related areas, and an assessment of the extent to which they have been achieved based on the results of a consultation with stakeholders, are considered in turn in Section 5.3. First, in Section 5.2 below, a summary of the available monitoring information held by the Agency relevant to its effectiveness is provided.

5.2 Summary of relevant monitoring information

A 2010 survey (Op. Cit.) of OSH Mail Subscribers and national network partners asked '*to what extent has the Agency (EU-OSHA) contributed to increased awareness about occupational safety and health in your country?*'. Overall, respondents rated the contribution of the Agency with a score of 3.0, where a score of 1 represented '*not at all*' and a score of 5 '*to a very high extent*'. The Agency was therefore seen as contributing to awareness raising on OSH to a '*moderate extent*'. Respondents from EU-12 countries provided a slightly more positive assessment when compared with respondents from EU-15 countries (an average score of 3.2 compared with one of 3.0). The survey also asked whether the respondents' organisation had taken action to improve occupational safety and health on the basis of the information from the Agency. Of those OSH Mail subscribers who knew whether action had been taken or not, the majority (62%) reported that it had. Respondents from EU-12 countries were more likely to report action having been taken than not

when compared with respondents from EU-15 countries (70% compared with 60%). In terms of types of respondent, employers were more likely to report taking action than not when compared with other groups (67% for employers; 65% for trade union representatives; 63% from the representatives of employer associations; and 44% for employees).

In addition to an overall assessment of the contribution of the Agency to raising awareness of OSH at the national level, the survey also asked questions about the reliability of the work of the European Risk Observatory, and the benefit derived from the good practice information produced by the Agency. Overall, the information provided by the risk observatory was considered to be reliable (an average score of four on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented *'not reliable at all'* and 5 represented *'very reliable'*). Consistently high scores (near or above 4.0) were reported for respondents from EU-12 and EU-15 countries, and different types of respondent (eg representatives of employee associations etc.). Respondents were also asked *'to which degree has your organisation benefited from good practice information provided by the Agency?'*. The average score of 2.9 achieved was the lowest for all of the survey questions but still indicated that a *'moderate'* benefit was obtained from the Agency's good practice information. A more positive assessment was given by respondents from EU-12 countries when compared with those from EU-15 countries (an average score of 3.1 compared with one of 2.8). Across the different types of respondent (eg representative of employer associations, employers etc.), average scores were similar.

The survey of the EU-OSHA user publications panel (Op. Cit.) reported positive views regarding the writing style, presentation, coverage of the topic concerned, and the language of the five publications included in the survey amongst those who had used the publications. Respondents to the survey also rated the usefulness of the publications highly (an average score of 4.3 was achieved where 1 represented *'not useful at all'* and 5 represented *'very useful indeed'*).

Monitoring data is also available on the number of website visits, website pages viewed per visit, and OSH Mail subscribers. The latter has grown over the period from 2008 and passed 50,000 during the first half of 2011. With respect to the website it is difficult to compare different years for technical reasons. However, during the first six months of 2011 the Agency website had 1,014,471 unique visitors compared to 998,859 in the same period of 2010.¹³ Comparing the first six

¹³ A unique visitor is a visitor who came to the Agency site at least once within a month.

months of 2011 with a similar period in 2010, the average number of pages viewed per visit increased from 3.95 to 4.05 pages.

5.3 Results from stakeholder consultation

5.3.1 European Risk Observatory

The aims and objectives of the ERO mission-related area are to:

- provide reliable and comprehensive information on new and emerging risks;
- provide information which is useful and relevant for its key target audiences: policy-makers, the OSH research community, and to a lesser extent OSH researchers.

The European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (Esener) is a major project related to this mission-related area, and its aims are to:

- provide insight into the way that enterprises manage occupational safety and health, and key emerging risks;
- give indications as to how policy-makers, practitioners, EU-OSHA and other providers of OSH information can provide enterprises with better support.

In assessing the impact of the work of the ERO on policy-makers, this section focuses on the views of MEPs, Commission officials, and to a lesser extent European social partners as they have an indirect influence on policy. At Member State level, the views of high level civil servants from the relevant national ministries or bodies have been considered. Many of these are on the board of the Agency. In addition, as at European level, the views of national social partners have also been considered. Again, some of these national social partners are also on the Agency's board. The views of the OSH research community include views from both EU-15 and EU-12 countries. Some OSH researchers were also the current national focal point and/or involved in the work of the topic centre.

At the level of European policy-makers, MEPs valued the focus of the Agency on new and emerging risks and referred to a high significance being attached to the work of the Agency by the Parliamentary Committee for Employment and Social Affairs. The work of the Agency on specific topics such as that on needle stick injuries and psychosocial risks were both mentioned as highly useful. For example, the information provided by the Agency on the former was seen as contributing to action taken by the Commission. Commission officials cited the work of the risk observatory as one of the key contributions of the Agency and recognised this as a challenging task that the Agency was carrying out well. One

commission official also felt that the Agency was recognised as an expert body by the 'European partners'. The research work of the Agency was also felt to be useful to the Commission's Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH).

"It's very useful in that regard because their mission is to identify new and emerging risks for health and safety at the workplace. We see this activity as challenging, of course, but we think that they are doing good work" (Commission Official)

Policy-makers and researchers at Member State level considered the research work of the Agency to be valid and credible. When policy-makers discussed issues of concern in OSH, these were areas in which the Agency has carried out research. The extent to which the research produced was regarded as useful depended to a significant degree on the available OSH research within a Member State. Typically, EU-15 countries found Agency research less useful than EU-12 countries, although there were exceptions to this. The perceived usefulness of research work also varied depending on the type of output. For example, research reports were regarded as mainly for OSH experts rather than policy-makers, whereas Esener was considered to be useful by both policy-makers and researchers .

The view of policy-makers on the usefulness of Esener depended to a degree on the availability of similar, national data sources. Where such data sources were not available, Esener had a clearer, more direct impact. For example, one EU-12 Member State reported that evidence from Esener had been helpful in national legislative debates. Another EU-12 country reported that the results of the Esener study were already being used to help formulate campaigns and policies on OSH. Esener was also seen in these Member States as filling an information gap and helping to identify problem areas and raising awareness of 'new' issues such as psychosocial risks. The secondary analyses of Esener commissioned by the Agency were also viewed as potentially useful in helping to highlight some of the challenges faced by employers and ways in which they could be better supported. For policy-makers in EU-15 countries, Esener was still regarded as useful in raising awareness and in terms of enabling comparisons with other countries. Some of the key policy messages coming out of Esener were also viewed as valuable.

"So, I don't think anybody has questioned the reliability of the report, and that is not always the case. So, that is good." (Policy-maker, EU-15)

"It is interesting that they give information at the country level, so you can compare. So, you can think we are doing well, or you can think in a certain aspect they are not doing that well. So, it is useful in that respect." (Policy-maker, EU-15)

"It is a very good base for development. To realise where the problems are. And then once you know where the real problems are, it is easier to find ways to correct or to improve on the situation. So it was very interesting and very good. And also for comparison between the countries, it was very interesting." (Policy-maker, EU-12)

"I always think that studies like this, and not only the ESENER Survey, give focus to certain items, certain questions, and if it was not there, it would not have attention. So it raises attention, it raises the profile of the subject, it motivates people to do something. So, in that respect it is useful." (Policy-maker, EU-15)

"... the excellent data set that ESENER has. I think that shows areas where there needs to be more action, and one of the main conclusions from ESENER is that small businesses need more information. They want to do something about Health and Safety, but they just don't know how to do it. It's not that they think it's going to be too costly, it's just they don't have the skills or the knowledge. I think that's an incredibly important finding from ESENER." (Policy-maker, EU-15)

The usefulness of the Agency's research outputs to employer representatives was considerably less than for either OSH researchers or policy-makers. There was a view amongst some employer representatives that Esener would be more useful if it enabled an identification of areas where employers were struggling to implement EU directives. There was also a view that the survey would be more useful if it included representation of employers with fewer than ten employees. The research reports were generally considered more for OSH experts than employers.

For worker representatives, Esener was felt to be more useful and there were reports of the direct impact of Esener in helping to get OSH issues on the national agenda. Esener also offered a pan-European, independent view of OSH management which was recognised as useful in Member States with access to similar data.

"But I must say that these European surveys really helped. The European Foundation with their working conditions survey every five years and ESENER. They added credibility. Because now we have data, survey data from our own companies. This (issues such as psychosocial risks) is a major concern and we cannot pretend it doesn't matter." (Worker representative, EU-12)

OSH researchers viewed the research outputs of the Agency as valid and credible. The perceived usefulness of research outputs appeared to vary with the nature of the output and the availability of OSH research within the relevant Member State. One researcher for example, from an EU-15 country, referred to an absence of any systematic research on health and safety issues, and a paucity of national data on the subject. In this context, the research outputs of the Agency were considered invaluable. Where there was significant OSH research within a country this could mean that there were better or more up-to-date local resources available.

However, where the topic of research aligned with national priorities, Agency outputs could still be useful. There was a strong consensus that the move into primary data collection and the cross-EU perspective provided by Esener was useful.

Esener was viewed by OSH researchers as effectively filling an important information gap in terms of a European perspective on management practice, drivers and barriers with respect to OSH. It was viewed as helping to identify the weak and strong points in the management of OSH across Europe, and as providing straightforward messages to policy-makers on where action was needed.

“Overall, the results support other findings that we have, and other literature that exists. So, that’s quite good in that respect.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“And, so, for the EU to be taking steps, and to do some proper primary data gathering, is very important. And also will get much more credibility with the Member States on that level.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“So, there are interesting comparative issues that come out of this which, surely, must have an influence on specific Member States. I would say that this (Esener) is probably a pretty good lever of change, probably differentially across the European Union, depending on what kind of Member State you’re dealing with.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“I think the survey explores not only awareness, and practices, which is very useful of course, but drivers and barriers to practice, and needs. I think this, for me, is the most important aspect of the survey, because there, we can bring back policy makers very straightforward messages on what has to be done.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“From my point of view, it’s most useful because it allows you for the first time, in one single data set, to do this type of modelling that actually shows you where the weak parts are in the European Union in terms of health and safety management. There are not that many big surprises in there, but it’s good to have it in one data set. That, for me, is the most important thing.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“We have the European working conditions survey, that is repeated every so many years, but that’s focused on the employee level. What Esener does is fill in the gap that existed up until now on what actually managers tell us, but more specifically trying to look at practices at establishment level, and we didn’t have so many, so much data on those before. So, I think in that respect, it feels a significant gap.” (Researcher, EU-15)

A number of OSH researchers suggested a need for comparative information on OSH legislation and arrangements across the different Member States. This view was echoed by some policy-makers.

“I don’t think that they have much information on legislation from different countries through the website. But that might be something which relates to OSH and is a relevant issue to offer as well” (Researcher, EU-15)

One OSH practitioner from an EU-12 Member State without OSH research capacity felt that both the reports and Esener were useful for maintaining the profile of OSH issues. Another researcher highlighted how useful they found policy overviews.

5.3.2 Working Environment Information (WEI)

The key result to be achieved in the WEI mission-related area as set out in the 2009-2013 strategy is to provide practical and user-friendly information on prevention of work-related illnesses and accidents. The strategy outlines a number of more precise aims including:

- identifying and exchanging good practice
- analysing the success factors of good practices
- collecting, analysing and disseminating available information on preventing work-related illnesses and accidents
- covering both workplace level and intermediary level practices.

The key target audiences for this mission-related area are people involved in OSH. Intermediaries within national governments, social partners and others may also be considered target audiences as they are intermediaries by which information may reach workplaces.

The ultimate aim of reaching employers with practical and user-friendly information was acknowledged as a challenging one given the distance of the Agency from employers, and the availability of comprehensive, national resources in some Member States. It is also the case that one of the Agency's key target groups, SMEs, can be difficult to reach with health and safety information.

As previously discussed, some Agency products such as the factsheets were not generally considered to be practical enough for workplaces. There was a consistent view that for information to reach employers, especially SMEs, it needs to be available in all relevant EU languages. Focal points, worker and employer representatives also consistently identified OiRA as being useful to employers, including SMEs. OiRA was viewed as practical and suitable for adaptation to the national context without a large translation effort. OiRA represents a new way of working for the Agency and is focussed more on providing an information architecture rather than the information itself. NAPO was also highlighted as a useful tool by focal points, employer and worker representatives and was regarded as a simple and effective way to communicate key messages on OSH.

The good practice information collected by the Agency and made available on its website was regarded by a few employer representatives as useful, although as this information is not currently available in all EU languages, others stated that it was inaccessible to employers because of the language barrier. E-facts were also felt to be practical and useful by one employer representative, although they were an OSH expert and able to read English. E-facts are currently only available in English.

As noted above, employers and workplaces in some Member States have access to comprehensive, national resources, and in these contexts, local resources are regarded as more useful (by employer and worker representatives). In Member States without such comprehensive resources, the good practice information and tools provided by the Agency appeared to be regarded as more useful. Typically, Member States in the EU-12 fit into the latter category. There was a view from a small number of both employer and worker representatives that the Agency should focus its resources on delivering practical products for those Member States that want them rather than trying to produce everything for everyone.

All three groups viewed the Agency as doing a better job in terms of awareness-raising compared with the exchange of good practice. Exchanging good practice was acknowledged as difficult due to the diversity of national contexts. However, OiRA was a notable success in this regard. The Agency had facilitated the exchange of the tool across the Member States and this had been well received. There was a suggestion that the facilitation of the exchange of good practice could be improved by the provision of more information on national contexts. This could, perhaps, facilitate an assessment of how transferable a particular practice might be.

5.3.3 Communication, campaigning and promotion

The 2009-2013 strategy states that the key result to be achieved for this mission-related area is to reach the target groups defined for the different Agency activities. Several specific aims are also described and these include to:

- add value by consolidating efforts via an overall marketing plan;
- engage in well-targeted communication and promotion projects and campaigns;
- ensure high levels of engagement from traditional and new partners.

Efforts to promote Esener and reach OSH researchers and policy-makers appear to have worked well. The seminars organised to disseminate Esener appear to have been well received by both researchers and policy-makers. One researcher also

reported that the online interactive mapping tool to present the Esener results was well regarded.

“The outreach events that I’ve attended were really good. It’s professional. They do it right. They pitch it at the right level with good information and the right type of mix of people there’.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“I think people found it very interesting. The feedback that I’ve had, because we promoted obviously the survey quite widely, is that it’s particularly innovative and useful, because you can look at the findings per question, and you can look at the findings across sectors, across types of enterprise, and across countries, so this is really, really useful, and people, especially from the different countries, they really loved that, that they were able to do that quite easily.” (Researcher, EU-15)

In general, national focal points viewed the European campaigns as effective and useful in raising awareness of OSH issues. The campaigns also appear to be well regarded by OSH researchers, and again as effective in raising awareness. The extent to which the campaigns reached employers and workplaces appeared more mixed, although one EU-level employer representative viewed the campaigns as one of the ways in which the Agency did reach employers. The Agency was seen to effectively engage with employers (and social partner organisations) as campaign partners. Campaign partners viewed the European Week campaign on safe maintenance, and the experience of working with the Agency positively. As an example, an employee from one multinational organisation regarded the campaign as giving impetus to their own efforts to raise the profile of health and safety within their own organisation, and raising the organisation’s CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) profile. They also felt that the campaign enabled the organisation’s different national branches to become aware of the existence of a focal point within their Member State and to establish links with them. In addition to employers, the Agency also engaged with relevant networks such as the Europe Enterprise Network. A representative from the network regarded involvement with the campaign as a ‘hook’ upon which to organise some of their other activities.

There was a more mixed view amongst employer representatives at national level about how effective the campaigns were in reaching employers and workplaces, particularly SMEs. One employer representative from an EU-15 country felt that the activities around European Week were more for policy-makers and researchers than for companies. There were, however, reports of campaign materials being disseminated to employers and employer involvement in seminars and workshops. The good practice awards were also felt to be effective in raising awareness of the Agency amongst employers. There was a view that the campaigns, where they did reach employers, were targeted more at larger organisations who have resources which allow them to participate more than

smaller organisations. The Agency has already taken some steps to address this by launching a good practice award for smaller employers.

“I don’t think there’s a problem in the balance of the activities. I think they obviously put a lot of resources, personnel and financial, into the campaigns they run, and I think that is probably one of the best examples of where they do include companies. Because they have this partnership approach, now, to the campaigns, where a lot of individual companies are involved, or sectoral organisations; and I think that that works well” (EU-level social partner, employer)

“The social partners together with the OSHA authority do some activities related to European Week. It’s mostly for political stakeholders and researchers maybe. There is not a huge support by companies.” (Employer representative, EU-15)

“We did maintenance last year and ran maintenance events around the country. ... 30%, 40% of the people there are members, but we’re reaching out to a lot of others as well.” (Employer representative, EU-15)

“All the materials are very useful. We have received many requests from our members to disseminate them or send them extra material, so that they can make copies of them and disseminate the information to their employees or the person who’s in charge at the enterprise level about health and safety matter.” (Employer representative, EU-12)

“So, two years ago with the risk assessment campaign, there was more participation of people, more involvement in terms of companies” (Employer representative, EU-15)

“Yes, I think they(the European Week campaigns) really have an impact on national strategies and national policies, because they really give a focus on a special risk or a special population and they can raise awareness. They can give some ideas to prevention institutes, and prevention politics, so I do think the national campaigns have had an impact, yes.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“For example, we had several seminars (on safe maintenance) across (Member State) and the demand was so big that we had to repeat them. This was for the first time. Usually we had the problem of how to get the listener, the attendance. Now, for the first time, the demand was much higher than our capacity so we had to repeat some of the seminars.” (Employer representative, EU-12)

Worker representatives viewed the European Week campaigns as important and useful for bringing a focus on OSH, but as for employer representatives, there were mixed views on how effective they were at reaching workplaces, and in particular workers. Campaign materials were felt to be too difficult and detailed for workers to understand, and the main message of the campaign needed simplifying to reach workers. One worker representative suggested that focal points should be more involved at the start and end of the campaigns to improve their effectiveness.

The Agency website was generally viewed as a significant resource of valuable information, particularly since much of the information was available in 24 languages. However, there was a consistent view that it was difficult to navigate or to find particular pieces of information.

“One problem is that the website of the Agency is very difficult to deal with. If you’re not aware of what is available, it’s difficult to get to know and to find the documents. For example, the case study database. I know of it, because I’ve been working on it, but my colleagues do not know about it. I’ve told them, go and have a look, but you know, it’s very difficult for them to find it. I think that is a problem.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“Yes, most of all, of course, is the website of EU OSHA. And I must commend the fact that quite a lot is translated into our language. Not everything, but quite a lot and this is helpful to many people.. But you really have to research the website to become aware of all the work that is being offered. I noticed that when people are looking for good practices they are still not aware that it can be found on the website of EU OSHA. And partly, I think that’s because it takes skills to find it, to know that it(the website) has all these elements on it.” (Employee representative, EU12)

5.3.4 Networking and coordination

The key aim of this mission-related area outlined in the 2009-2013 strategy is ‘to develop and maintain EU-OSHA’s strategic and operational networks in Europe and beyond, and for these networks to add value to the work of the Agency by increasing the relevance, the efficiency or the effectiveness of EU-OSHA’s activities’.

The specific objectives for this work area are:

- For national, tri-partite networks to provide quality input to Agency activities, and contribute to the effective dissemination of Agency information via the focal point network.
- For Agency activities to be made more relevant through the involvement of network partners in the Agency’s planning work.
- For awareness of the Agency and its activities to increase among key audiences via cooperation with and commitment from networks (including board members, focal points, European partners).
- For an increase in exchange of good practice and research information between Agency network partners (Member State, European as well as international).

Previous evaluations (Op. Cit.) have identified that both the resources and support available to focal points, and the strength and commitment of national networks, vary across the 27 Member States. The strength of national networks is in part a

reflection of the traditions of tri-partite working on OSH in a Member State. Previous evaluations have also suggested that the commitment of national networks is often weak, but that their commitment is needed to ensure that Agency activities and products are relevant to end users, particularly employers.

The results of the stakeholder consultation suggest a similar picture. Whilst the operation of national networks were often referred to as good, there were also examples of networks that were not felt to operate so well. One EU-12 focal point reported difficulty in engaging social partners in the network, another that the network was not operating well in terms of the collection of information in response to requests from the Agency. Each focal point has the responsibility to organise national network meetings. The target is for each focal point to arrange three meetings per year. The Agency's monitoring information suggests the majority of focal points were below that target in 2009, and these meetings were described in some cases by some stakeholders as 'lacking dynamism`.

There was a view from representatives of employers and workers, and from focal points, that the Agency could do more to engage national social partners in the work of the Agency. Suggestions for achieving this centred around Agency staff visiting Member States once every year or couple of years to discuss Agency work and to discuss national concerns. Focal points were not thought to have sufficient resources to familiarise national network partners with the work of the Agency.

There were suggestions from some employer representatives that efforts should be made to expand the national networks to include SMEs. There have been efforts to achieve this, although there is a concern amongst focal points regarding the resources this requires and whether it is always appropriate.

Focal points attend meetings with the Agency three times per year in Bilbao. These meetings were regarded by focal points as too focussed on the Agency providing information and less concerned with discussion of issues and seeking the input of focal points. There was a consistent view amongst focal points that they felt less involved in decision-making that they had done in the past. One suggestion was for the Agency to consult with focal points to identify the areas that they would value contributing to and how this could take place. There was also a view that more discussion of issues amongst focal points would help less experienced focal points to become more effective in their role. Greater opportunities for discussion may also help focal points discuss ways of meeting any challenges they face in achieving their objectives.

"The meetings could be improved. There should be more discussion points" (Focal point, EU-15)

"I got the impression at the beginning when we started our co-operation with them that we felt that we were listened to. Our meetings are not any more brainstorming, everything is

done by the agency. It means we come to the meeting, we are told what our tasks are. Even if you say something, you don't get the impression that you are listened to."
(Focal point, EU-12)

"I think it's important to renew the co-operation, and try to have more open and general debate with the Agency and with the Focal Points. Not only the Focal Point managers, but the Focal Point as such, to identify what could we do to have a better effect of what we are doing, or should we do something different..." (Worker representative, EU-15)

"I do think sometimes maybe a person from the agency should come to (Member State) once a year, or once every second year to have maybe a big seminar or something like that so more people know of the background of the Agency and the work that is done."

"... it was a feeling in the beginning that we were part of the decision making. Only a small part, but we were part, and now we are not part at all. The only thing we have to do is implement what has been decided by the Board and by the different units, and disseminate the message. On the other hand, I have to say that compared to the very start of the Agency, that the contact with the project managers and the assistance of project managers and the staff is a lot better than before." (Focal point, EU-15)

With respect to the exchange of good practice and research information, there were examples reported of focal points discussing issues informally, or exchanging information on an ad hoc basis. This appeared to be mostly between Member States with similar languages or in geographical proximity. There was a view that the Agency could do more to facilitate networking between focal points, perhaps through the organisation of regional conferences.

With respect to the OSH research community, participation in the topic centre network was felt to be useful and to facilitate information sharing.

5.4 Key findings in relation to effectiveness

The objective of effectiveness is primarily concerned with whether the objectives of the Agency, both in relation to each of its four mission-related areas, and more generally, are being met. The evidence from the stakeholder consultation suggests that the objectives of the Agency concerned with providing reliable information on new and emerging risks, and the running of effective awareness-raising campaigns, are largely being met.

The work of the **risk observatory** is regarded by stakeholders as valid and credible. This is supported by the Agency's own monitoring information. It is also regarded generally as relevant and useful to policy-makers and researchers. Esener, in particular, is regarded as offering a valuable cross-EU perspective on the management of OSH and as helping policy-makers identify areas in which employers may need support. Both researchers and policy-makers suggested other

comparative information on the implementation of legislation and on the way OSH is organised within Member States (i.e who is involved, what their roles are) would be potentially useful.

The **European Week campaigns** are generally regarded as effective in raising awareness of OSH issues. There are mixed views concerning how effectively the campaigns reach employers and workplaces, although there were examples of the involvement of employers. The involvement of multinational employers (and EU-level social partners) as campaign partners appears to have been well received.

With respect to the **provision of practical and user-friendly information**, it appears that this objective is only being partially met. Initiatives such as OiRA and NAPO appear to be useful to employers and workplaces, and can be used in, or easily adapted to, different contexts. The usefulness of more traditional methods of communication such as the factsheets is less clear, although these can still be perceived as useful, particularly in Member States with less in the way of national resources on OSH. For information of this nature to be useful to employers and workplaces, it needs to be in a form which is both simple and practical, and available in all relevant EU languages. Suggestions about how to improve the effectiveness of these materials include increased flexibility for tailoring at national level, to a more focussed approach in terms of designing materials with particular audiences and national contexts in mind. This would, however, most likely require more input from partners at national level.

The evidence from the stakeholder consultation also suggests that more could be done to engage both **focal points and the national networks** in the work of the Agency. It is also clear that some focal points still require support in building the capacity of the network. The Agency could make targeted efforts to improve the capacity of the network and seek to generate greater engagement by making regular visits to (selected) Member States. The Agency could also consult with focal points about the level of engagement they would like, and what kind of input they would be willing to give. A 'one size fits all' model is unlikely to be appropriate. With 27 Member States, plus EFTA representatives, there may also be a need to find ways of working that enable greater involvement. For example, meetings with smaller groups of focal points based around particular projects may be an alternative and feasible way of working in some cases.

6 Consistency/European Added Value

6.1 Introduction

The terms of reference for the evaluation includes an assessment of the effects (both positive and negative) of the activities of the Agency on the objectives of key stakeholders at EU and Member State level (i.e consistency). In particular, the evaluation should assess the impact of the activities of the Agency on the objectives in the Commission's OSH strategy 2007-2012.

In addition to an assessment of consistency, the evaluation was also intended to assess the European added value of the activities of the Agency. European added value refers to the value the Agency adds above purely national actions. The Agency may add value above national resources in a number of ways including the sharing of knowledge between countries and exchanging information about the OSH situation in the different Member States; helping to develop a network of national actors in countries where these networks are relatively weak; encouraging partners and political forces to address OSH issues; raising the profile of OSH and influencing decision-making at national and European levels; trans-national networking between national focal points etc.

6.2 Summary of relevant monitoring information

The EU-OSHA network survey (Op. Cit.) asked respondents '*to what extent has the Agency contributed to increased awareness about occupational safety and health in Europe*'? The average response to this question was higher than that for the equivalent national question (an average score of 3.6 compared with one of 3.0 at national level), and was higher for respondents from EU-12 when compared with EU-15 countries (an average score of 3.9 compared with one of 3.6). When looking at different types of respondents, the most positive assessment was from OSH

researchers (3.8) and the least positive from representatives of employer associations (3.3). However, all of these average scores are above 3 representing a generally positive assessment.

6.3 Contribution of the Agency to the Community OSH Strategy 2007-2012

As previously described in Section 3.1, the 2009-2013 strategy includes a number of tasks for the Agency defined in the 2007-2012 Community Strategy on OSH (Op. Cit.). Table 6.1 below presents an overview of these tasks, and a selection of the actions taken to date by the Agency in response to these tasks. Stakeholder views on these activities are covered in Section 6.4, as well as in Sections 4.3 and 5.3.

Table 6.1 Selected actions taken by the Agency in response to the 2007-2012 Community Strategy on OSH

Task in Community OSH Strategy	Actions taken by the Agency to date
Ensure that the activities of the Agency raise awareness and disseminate best practice, focussing to a greater degree on high-risk sectors and SMEs	The Agency has undertaken work looking at high-risk sectors such as transport, healthcare, construction. The Agency has focussed on SMEs as a core target group for its information, for example by focussing part of its European Week campaign on Risk Assessment on the information needs of SMEs and by producing a report on the relationship between economic performance and occupational safety and health in SMEs.
Develop sectoral awareness-raising campaigns targeted in particular at SMEs, and to promote the management of health and safety at work in enterprises through the exchange of experience and good practices aimed at specific sectors	As above, the Agency's European Week campaign focussed in part on the information needs of SMEs. OiRA, an online interactive risk assessment tool developed to meet the needs of small and micro enterprises, was part of the campaign.
Draw up, through the European Risk Observatory, a report examining the specific challenges in terms of health and safety posed by the more extensive integration of women, immigrant workers and younger and older workers into the labour market.	The Agency has published materials on the occupational safety and health of migrants, women and young workers. In addition to providing stand-alone materials on these subjects to workers, employers and policy-makers, the Agency also incorporates the themes within other projects. For example, through reports on occupational health and safety in female-dominated occupations eg OSH in the textiles sector. The Agency also provides information on demographic issues including ageing and older workers on its website, and will be producing co-branded products with the European Year 2012 on Active Ageing.
Review the extent to which health and safety aspects have been incorporated into Member States' vocational and occupational	The Agency operates closely with the European Network for Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health (ENETOSH). The Agency also produced a report in 2009 on OSH in the school curriculum.

Task in Community OSH Strategy	Actions taken by the Agency to date
<p>training policies.</p> <p>Collect and disseminate information intended to support the development of occupational health promotion campaigns, in combination with the strategy and Community public health programmes.</p>	<p>Work in response to this task has included factsheets on workplace health promotion for employers and for employees, and collections of case studies. The Agency has also supported DG EMPL initiatives, for example raising awareness about the new Directive on sharps injuries and the DG's implementation guide. Recent work has focussed on mental health promotion and the health promotion of younger workers. The Agency has also established an expert group involving representatives from key organisations such as the European Network of Workplace Health Promotion, DGs EMPL and SANCO, the ILO and WHO.</p>
<p>Encourage national health and safety research institutes to set joint priorities, exchange results and include occupational health and safety requirements in research programmes.</p>	<p>The Agency participates in the NEW OSH ERA consortium, and through this network funded a joint call for proposals. The Agency is also involved in encouraging national research institutes to reach consensus on major OSH research priorities through expert seminars, and publications on OSH research priorities.</p>
<p>Enhance risk anticipation to include risks associated with new technologies, biological hazards, complex human-machine interfaces and the impact of demographic trends.</p>	<p>The Agency has produced four expert forecast reports covering emerging physical, biological, psychosocial and chemical risks. These reports were followed with seminars to stimulate debate amongst researchers and policy-makers. The key risks identified have been followed up with literature reviews. In addition, the Agency is finalising a project on new and emerging OSH risks associated with new technologies in green jobs. The Agency has carried out Esener, a pan-European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks.</p>

Source: EU-OSHA

6.4 Results from the stakeholder consultation

The campaigns, and other information provided by the Agency, was viewed by the Commission as complementary to their work, particularly in terms of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of legislation. Commission officials cited OiRA as an example of how the Agency's work complemented their own, and has helped companies with the implementation of EU directives. As noted in Section 4.3.1, Esener was viewed by Commission officials as helping to identify areas in which employers need support in improving OSH practice. The contribution of the Agency to the objectives set out in the Community Strategy was also evident from some of the comments at Member State level by focal points and national network partners. Positive comments were made on the quality of information produced by the Agency on the topic of road transport by some EU-12 focal points and national network partners. There were also reports of Agency materials being used at national level to promote key messages consistent with the

aims of the Community strategy, for example the use of Agency films for the construction sector and photos related to OSH in the hotel and catering sector. More broadly, Agency materials which were either not dependent on language (NAPO) or regarded as simple ways to communicate key messages (such as films, photos, pictures etc.) were considered useful in reaching vulnerable groups such as migrant and young workers.

“We need this information and communication (i.e that provided by the Agency). So we see the agency work very much as complementary to our own work. It’s fundamental for increasing the effectiveness of legislation” (Commission official)

“I would say our directives tend to be quite complex and technical with lots of annexes. They are not easy reading for practitioners. The information campaigns of the agency help practitioners to understand and to implement the preventive measures that are set out in the directives - so they have a complementary role” (Commission official)

“Every employer has to document a risk assessment regardless of the nature of the risk or the size of the company. There have been claims that the policy should be changed and that there should be a kind of blanket exemption for micro and small companies to do that. We are not following this advice - instead we would prefer to develop user friendly systems that allow you to do this risk assessment in much simpler conditions than is the case nowadays. And for that reason the agency are developing a project which is called OiRA. This could contribute to a better implementation of the present legislation.” (Commission official)

“Well, from the point of view of the commission we find that the activities of the agency are very, very relevant for our European strategy on health and safety. We find that the work of the agency is indeed very relevant for the implementation of this strategy.” (Commission official)

The opening up of a Brussels Office by the Agency was viewed positively by both MEPs and Commission Officials, and there was a view that the Agency had successfully raised the profile of OSH issues at a European level.

At Member State level, the effect of Agency activities on the objectives of policy-makers varied across the Member States. In some Member States, the Agency was regarded as the main provider of information on OSH and as making a significant contribution to meeting national objectives on OSH. In other Member States where more comprehensive national resources were available, the effect of the Agency on national objectives was much more limited. In one case, the campaigning activities of the Agency were seen as potentially detracting from efforts to communicate with employers on national priorities where these did not marry with the campaign theme.

The effect of the Agency’s activities on the objectives of social partners at national level appears much more limited. Whilst there were examples of Agency

information and activities being regarded as useful, the perceived contribution of the Agency to organisational objectives was less clear.

The cross-EU perspective on OSH provided by Esener was regarded as something that only a European level organisation could carry out and as useful for highlighting areas where employers may need more support. It was viewed as providing a European dimension on OSH and as a means by which the profile of OSH issues could be raised, differences across the Member States highlighted, and helping to address those differences. There was also a clear European added value to the research produced by the Agency in those Member States with little in the way of research or data sources on OSH.

“I think it’s always interesting to have these kind of surveys, because only a European Institute can carry out these kind of surveys.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“I think it’s absolutely essential. Because we all know that Europe is one, but at the same time it’s so diverse, so I think if we really want to talk about Europe we need to be able to be addressing those differences, and we need to be promoting best practice and learning across Europe. Surveys like that (Esener) can promote that.” (Researcher, EU-15)

With respect to the European campaigns, several EU-12 focal points expressed the view that there would not be a campaign on OSH or would not be the same amount of campaign-related activities, without the financial resources provided by the Agency. In addition, in at least one EU-12 Member State, the campaign was regarded as more structured than anything at a national level. Further, the European branding of a campaign was seen as influential in gaining greater profile for OSH at national level, securing additional resources for OSH at national level, and gaining greater profile in the media. These benefits were more common in EU-12 Member States, although there were also EU-15 Member States that reported similar benefits. There was also a perceived European added value in having the same campaign topic all over Europe, albeit implemented in different ways at national level. One employer representative from an EU-15 Member State reported that funding from the Agency made a difference to the nature of their campaigning activities (i.e it helped ensure that their activities involved all the social partners).

“In some countries, including ours, it’s sometimes the only option for running an information campaign because of lack of resources. I think the EU-OSHA support is quite important for us, yes.” (Focal point, EU-12)

“When we discuss national budgets, it is an argument that you have to be part of the EU campaign dealing with these issues.” (Focal point, EU-12)

“The EU contribution is quite essential for (Member State), because we will get some money via EU OSHA for organising this campaign every two years. Now, this is

important because without the money of the EU OSHA we have not the possibilities to organise so many different activities.” (Focal point, EU-12)

“I think it’s an added value, if it’s the same campaign all over Europe, although you have your own national way of implementing the campaign. It’s an added value that this is going on all over Europe.” (Worker representative, EU-15)

“In (Member State), it’s (the campaign) much more structured than anything else. So, what I like is that it enables us to focus on a specific problem, which would otherwise be neglected or overlooked and would be only one of many things that we would talk about. So it allows us to focus on a specific issue. And for a moment, we can forget about other issues which are still very important. And it actually enables us to make a move concerning awareness, attitude, managing of a certain issue.” (Worker representative, EU-12)

Although the exchange of information across Member States was reported as difficult due to the diversity of national contexts, the Agency was perceived as having played a key role in facilitating the exchange of OiRA across the Member States. This was well regarded by employer representatives and Commission officials, and seen as a way of both helping employers and achieving Community OSH objectives. There were also reports of informal networking and information exchange between focal points, particularly those with similar languages and interests, or who were geographically in close proximity. There was a view amongst some focal points that more could be done by the Agency to facilitate such networking. For example, one focal point suggested that the Agency could facilitate cross-border networks on particular sectors. One EU-12 focal point reported how the information shared through the Agency had helped define national OSH priorities by informing the policy debate. The topic centre network was also valued by researchers as a means to quickly locate information. Although the strength and added value of national networks varied across the 27 Member States (largely as a result of the previous existence or otherwise of national networks and the traditions of tri-partite working), there were examples of Member States where these networks were felt to be very useful and where the Agency had played a role in encouraging the involvement of stakeholders at a national level.

“This (OiRA) is something where you have the best practice. It can be transferred, if adapted, to the national level. So this is something where you have an added European value, simply by disseminating best practice information.”

(Employer representative, EU-15)

“So I think those contacts are very useful because you know someone in Europe, in a different country who can feed you information that you probably would have spent a long time getting. But you’ve got that contact and they might quickly know where to direct you rather than you trying to find it on your own” (Researcher, EU-15)

6.5 Key findings in relation to consistency and European added value

The Agency was perceived as having a positive effect on the achievement of the Community's OSH objectives, by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of legislation. Examples of this included the work done by the Agency in facilitating the exchange of OiRA across Member States. The contribution of the Agency to the Community OSH strategy was also evident through the Agency's work on Esener, and its work on high risk sectors such as road transport. More broadly, Agency materials which were either not dependent on language (NAPO) or regarded as simple ways to communicate key messages (such as films, photos, pictures etc.) were considered useful in reaching vulnerable groups such as migrant and young workers.

The Agency was seen as the main provider of OSH information in some Member States and in these cases was seen as making a contribution to national objectives. In other Member States, typically those with more resources devoted to, and information on OSH, the effect of the Agency on national objectives was much more limited.

There was clear European added value of Agency activities across its four mission-related areas. European added value appears greatest in Member States with fewer resources for OSH or less experience of the framework directive.

The Agency's research outputs add value directly to some Member States by providing information that would otherwise not be available. In addition, the Agency adds value by conducting activities that can only be carried out at EU level, for example by providing consistent, standardised information across the 27 Member States on the management of OSH by enterprises. Further, European value is added by raising the profile of OSH issues at national and European level through activities such as Esener.

In some Member States, campaigns on OSH or particular OSH topics would not happen at all, or at least not in the same way, without the support of the Agency. The European branding of the campaign can raise the profile of OSH both within national Governments and the wider media, and can be influential in securing additional funding for a campaign on OSH. European branding has more of an effect in some Member States than others, depending on the availability of national resources for OSH and attitudes towards Europe more generally.

The Agency provides added value by providing practical and user-friendly information to employers. Through projects such as OiRA, practical tools for managing OSH at the workplace are effectively shared across Europe in a way that would not happen without the Agency.

The added value of the Agency's networking activities vary according to whether or not similar networks already exist in a Member State, which is (in turn) in part a reflection of the traditions of tri-partite working in a Member State. In some Member States, the network is seen as simply helping to maintain relationships, in others it is seen as more important. Focal points from particular Member States value the opportunities provided by the network to exchange information with other focal points, often on an informal basis.

7 Implementation Design

7.1 Introduction

The terms of reference for this evaluation includes an examination of the systems and processes in place, both at a generic level and in each of the four mission-related areas, and how these contribute (or hinder) the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities carried out by the Agency.

7.2 Results from stakeholder consultation

In general, there was a positive view of both the way the Agency carried out its activities, and of its staff. Staff were viewed as doing a difficult job well, and were seen as responsive and competent. There was strong support for the tri-partite structure of the Agency and its working arrangements. The advisory groups were also mentioned as a positive forum in which to discuss particular projects.

“I think everything works well. I think the staff of the agency are very competent and very nice and we have a good co-operation with each other.” (Focal point, EU-15)

“We have good relationships with agency staff, they’re as helpful as they can be, and always very grateful for the information we can provide. No, we don’t really have any problems with the working relationship between us. It works very well. I think the agency staff are uniformly very good at that relationship-building, and providing information.” (Focal point, EU-15)

“Well, the Advisory Group is one of the strongest relations in the running of the Agency because every project is debated, and the practical dilemmas are also debated at the start(of the project).” (Worker representative, EU-15)

7.2.1 Structures and networks

There was strong support for the tri-partite structure of the Board and the representation from all 27 Member States, although one or two board members felt it may be useful to consider how the working arrangements of the Board may be improved to get the most out of it. On a practical level, there was also a view that board papers could be made more concise.

“But the board is key, and the board is not too big, but it’s a matter of organising and structuring it.” (EU-15, Board member)

*“So I guess that they could use the potential of the board more because they are all the decision making people, all the important people from countries who are there. If they involved themselves more on the activities, they could get better results.”
(Board member, EU-12)*

Board members suggested that some national networks could be strengthened, and there was a need to ensure greater consistency in the level of co-operation across the national networks. There was also a view that both national network partners and focal points could be more involved in the work of the Agency. Greater exchange of information between focal points and sharing experiences about the role of focal points was something the board would encourage.

7.2.2 European risk observatory

With respect to the work in the ERO mission-related area, the largest project to date in the strategy period is that of Esener. This was largely viewed as well executed by the OSH research community, although several possible technical improvements were suggested. There was a consensus amongst OSH researchers that the survey should be followed up, both with future waves of data collection with as consistent a question set as possible and also qualitative data collection to explore the survey findings in more detail. The Agency is currently undertaking the latter. The Agency has also undertaken a number of secondary analyses of the Esener data and this approach was also well received by researchers and policy-makers. However, one researcher felt that the Agency could do more to facilitate communication and co-operation between the research contractors carrying out these secondary analyses. Outreach events organised to promote the findings of Esener were regarded as well executed, and one policy-maker felt the Agency could do more of this type of thing to engage with a wider range of policy-makers involved in OSH at Member State level.

“Yes, and you can’t really fault them (the Agency) for the way that the survey was run and was organised. It is actually pretty sound. Certainly there are all kinds of questions you might want to change but that’s always going to be the case.” (Researcher, EU-15)

“Because, ideally you want to see trends across Europe and across countries, so the survey definitely needs to be repeated. Now, the original plan was that the part of Esener that focuses on OSH would remain the same and the second part would change every time. So (this time) it was psychosocial risk, (next time) it could be musculoskeletal, chemical, or what have you. There is obviously a good argument for that because you have so many issues. But at the same time, you would want to have some repetition in relation to issues that we’ve looked at before, to see whether actually something has happened.”

(Researcher, EU-15)

7.2.3 Campaigns

The processes for deciding the topic of European campaigns were generally thought to work well. The campaigns were seen as well executed and the working relationships with the Agency were felt to be good by both focal points, national network and campaign partners. There were mixed views, however, amongst focal points and board members on both the central organisation of the campaigns and the use of the European Campaign Assistance Package (ECAP).

The Agency has engaged the services of a contractor with a pan-European network of partners to be able to organise seminars and public relations activities in all 27 Member States. Under ECAP, national focal points can select a range of campaign activities up to a certain budget from a virtual ‘menu’. There was a view amongst some focal points that the ECAP system offered less flexibility in terms of campaign activities than under the previous subsidy system, although they differed in the extent to which they perceived this to be a problem. One EU-15 focal point felt that there were sufficient resources at a national level for traditional methods of dissemination such as conferences and seminars, but that the funding from the Agency had enabled the organisation of more innovative promotional activities aimed at key target groups in the past. They suggested that there should be the possibility of agreeing with the Agency activities outside of those available through ECAP on an ad hoc basis. ECAP was viewed more positively by others, who saw it as administratively less burdensome than the previous subsidy system, although it was accepted that it offered less flexibility.

The majority of the focal points who expressed dissatisfaction with ECAP were EU-12 Member States who tended to also perceive a lack of value for money as the ‘prices’ on the virtual menu may exceed local prices for similar activities. With respect to the central organisation of the campaign, there were also mixed views, with a number of focal points viewing the use of intermediaries at both European and Member State level as reducing the funding available to the focal point. This was perceived in some cases as reducing the ability to secure additional funding from the relevant ministry or body at national level. There was also a view that the national subcontractors were not sufficiently expertise or knowledgeable enough

about OSH, or who to contact in OSH media circles within a Member State, and this meant that they required support from the focal point. However, there were a number of other focal points who were satisfied with the arrangements in place.

“They work as well as all the constraints of the campaign and the system allow. I don’t think I would see obvious ways of improving it within the systems that we have.”

(Focal point, EU-15)

“It’s a lot less bureaucracy than the previous system which involved matched funding between the agency and the authorities. That required an awful lot more paperwork. So, from our point of view, ECAP is administratively more simple, so we don’t mind ECAP.”

(Focal point, EU-15)

“Now, that makes it very clear to both sides, both to (Campaign Subcontractor) and to the Focal Point, what’s going to be provided, what’s included in the ‘price’. There’s no money involved but what’s included in the price and what isn’t. And I think that was a huge step forward, and that was a great initiative by the agency staff in making it absolutely clear what ECAP would do, and what it wouldn’t. So that’s the sort of thing, I think .It’s the personal relationships, and the clarity you get from agency staff, what’s included, and what’s not, that’s been useful.” (Focal point, EU-15)

“First of all, the list of activities is quite limited. It’s limited in as much as we cannot organise something outside of the menu. We cannot ask for some activities which could be useful for our country but that are not on the menu. Only if we want to pay for them ourselves. The next thing is that the prices, for instance, for a press conference, it’s so high that for that same money we could organise two conferences for 100 participants. If the Agency could work out something more flexible that allow the focal points to carry out some activities, of course in agreement with Agency, that could be part of the campaign. So, there could be some really country-specific activities which are needed or suggested by the focal points.” (Focal point, EU-12)

“It’s much costly and less effective than if on a national level with the involvement of the social partners things could be managed. Prior to this new system came in, the focal points were the ones organising and running programmes and so on at a national level. We had more involvement in every aspect, more involvement from the social partners, which made it more cost-effective, cheaper and I would say it had more impact on the target groups.”

(Worker representative, EU-12)

The fact that the campaigns are now organised over a two-year rather than one-year cycle was generally well received. One worker representative felt that there could be benefits in extending the campaign period to three to four years, and one focal point felt that there was a need to revisit campaigns on core topics every five to ten years so that momentum on an issue was not lost. Another suggestion was that efforts should be made to ‘link` campaigns ensuring that, for example, the theme of a previous campaign is incorporated into the theme of the current campaign. The underlying view under all three suggestions appears to be desire to

find ways to maintain the momentum of campaigning on what are perceived to be core topics e.g risk assessment.

As discussed in the section on 'relevance', the broad, thematic focus of the campaign was viewed positively, with focal points and national network partners adjusting the campaign to focus on particular sectors. There may be a distinction between themes which are regarded as more traditional or 'core' and those that are regarded as 'soft'. For example, both risk assessment and safe maintenance were generally regarded as having worked well. There was more of a mixed view about the upcoming campaign topic on leadership and worker involvement. This may reflect normal uncertainty about how a campaign may play out in practice, but it may also reflect a perception that topics like risk assessment or safe maintenance are somehow more concrete or tangible.

7.2.4 Information sharing

As discussed in previous sections, the target audience for some Agency products is considered to be unclear, and some of the information not sufficiently targeted. It has also been suggested that the Agency currently tries to produce some products that attempt to satisfy all Member States and all stakeholders, which was felt to be too ambitious and lacking focus. Focal points, board members, and national network partners have all suggested that the Agency either devote more resources to identifying a target audience prior to developing a product, or focus their resources on developing products of interest to particular Member States i.e identify which Member States are interested in a product and work with them to produce something to meet their needs. Board members suggested that the Agency should develop business cases for its activities i.e specify who a product or activity is for, why it would be helpful, and how it is to be achieved. More engagement with focal points, national networks and board members was seen as potentially beneficial in ensuring that the products developed by the Agency were practical, useful, and well-targeted.

There was also a view that the Agency could reduce the amount of materials it provides in printed format. Some Agency outputs such as research reports and the annual report could be provided online rather than printed. Both the quality of translations and the materials that the Agency chooses to translate were also discussed. Although there was a view that the quality of translations had improved, there was still felt to be room for improvement. Some of the materials translated by the Agency are viewed as not practical enough for employers. Other, more practical materials, are not available in all relevant languages. For example, good practice case studies were regarded as potentially of interest to employers, but these are only available in restricted languages.

The opening of an office in Brussels was regarded as a positive move by European policy-makers.

7.3 Key findings in relation to implementation design

There was broad support for the working arrangements of the Agency. The Board's tri-partite structure and representation from across the 27 Member States were well supported. The Agency was seen as generally effective, staff seen as competent and responsive, and working relationships with the Agency were felt to be good at an operational level. There was a suggestion that more could be made of the board's expertise.

There was a widely held view that more could be done to involve both focal points and national network partners with the work of the Agency. Focal points commonly stated that there was less scope for them to discuss issues and to input into the work of the Agency, and a greater focus in the role on disseminating Agency outputs, than has been the case in the past. Addressing this issue may require a different format to focal point meetings, and more missions by Agency staff.

Esener was seen as well implemented, both in terms of the technical aspects of survey design and implementation, and in terms of the dissemination of its results. Technical improvements were suggested but this is to be expected with any survey.

The European campaigns are generally seen as working well. However, there was a view amongst a significant minority of focal points that the use of ECAP and the central organisation of the campaign restricted flexibility in campaign activities and represented poorly perceived value for money. However, it should be noted that these comments were in the context of broadly positive views.

More could be done to ensure that the target audience for some of the Agency's products is more clearly defined. Systems and processes to clarify the rationale for a project or product, who it is aimed at, and how it is best delivered, were suggested by stakeholders. Board members suggested a 'Business Case' approach.

There was also a suggestion that the Agency could do more to focus its efforts, on particular Member States or particular topics or activities i.e less may be more.

8 Conclusions

The Agency operates with limited resources in a complex environment. It has heterogeneous target audiences located across 27 diverse Member States. Despite these challenges it is felt to do a difficult job very well and to have competent and responsive staff. The information provided by the Agency is seen as offering good quality OSH content. The objectives of the Agency's strategy and the balance of its activities across the four main mission-related areas are appropriate.

The relevance and usefulness of the Agency's activities to its target audiences are generally felt to be high, particularly amongst researchers and policy-makers. The difficulty of reaching employers (and particular SMEs) is widely acknowledged but the Agency has also made progress in this area in its work on OiRA. There is clear European added value across its four mission-related areas, although this tends to be greatest in Member States with less in the way of OSH resources and/or less experience of the framework directive.

Having said that, there are ways in which the work of the Agency could be improved. The Agency is currently seen as trying to do too much. More should be done to focus Agency resources on activities that have the most impact. Devoting greater resources at the project inception stage to clarify why projects would be worthwhile, whether and how they would work in practice, who they would be for, and how their results would be measured, may help to assess the relative merits of various ideas or proposals. Projects may also be selected and their performance monitored using agreed criteria, such as European added value. Whatever the approach taken, some form of standardised process would allow greater prioritisation in the Agency's work and help achieve greater focus and impact.

A rebalancing of resources between production and dissemination could help the Agency achieve greater reach. If the Agency were to focus on a smaller number of key projects, more resources would be available to promote the outputs to a wide range of potential stakeholders and make these outputs accessible and relevant.

This rebalancing would also free up more resources for the active engagement of the network.

Currently the Agency offers too many products or activities to all Member States, without taking account of the differing interests of, and demand from, different Member States. A number of stakeholders suggested that Agency projects and activities should be more focussed on those Member States where there is an interest in them. OiRA is a good example of how a project can be taken up and adapted to national contexts by Member States who show an interest. Such a 'portfolio' approach could be particularly beneficial to the Working Environment Information mission-related area given the difficulties involved in making its products relevant to the intended target audience. Any enhanced responsiveness to the needs of Member States, however, would require greater inputs from FOP structures. The risks are that either such participation is not forthcoming, or that Member States who have an interest in particular projects simply do not have sufficient resources to help develop them. Adequate consultation with the network about these issues would be required to move forward successfully.

Having said that, there are clearly activities that are of value across Member States, for example the EU-wide campaigns and Esener. These activities add clear European added value and should be continued.

The evidence from this evaluation suggests that the involvement of focal points and network partners in the work of the Agency could be improved. Focal points saw their relationship with the Agency shifting over time towards the dissemination of Agency outputs rather than a more active input into Agency activities. Whilst this is likely to reflect the growing size of the focal point network, and the difficulties involved in managing this, steps could usefully be taken to better engage with focal points and national network partners. The Agency should consult with focal points and explore ways of better engaging with focal points, perhaps through involving them in the design of projects, through smaller meetings based around particular projects and/or through more regular visits to Member States. The role of the Agency's networks should continue to remain at the heart of its strategy for achieving a successful future.

Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

Table 1 National level interviewees

Country	Name
Austria	Christa Schweng
	Dr Alexandra Schöngrundner
	Julia Nedjelic-Lischka
	Dr Gertrud Breindl
	Martina Häckel-Bucher
Belgium	Willy Imbrechts
Bulgaria	Atanas Kolchakov
Cyprus	Leandros Nicolaidis
	Polyvios Polyviou
	Maria Theocharidou
Czech Republic	Martin Rohrich
	Karel Petrzelka
	Daniela Kubickova
Denmark	Lone Jacobsen
	Leo Matthiasen
	Jan Kahr Frederiksen
	Anders Just Pedersen
Estonia	Tiit Kaadu
Finland	Dr Asko Aalto
	Kai Savolainen
	Helena Kalliolina
France	Marie-Amelie Buffet
	Olivier Meunier

Country	Name
Germany	Ulrich Riese
	Dr Lothar Lissner
	Dr Dietmar Reinert
	Saskia Osing
	Marina Schroeder
	Reinhard Gerber
Greece	Theoni Koukoulaki
Hungary	János Gádor
	Károly György
	István Mandrik
	Gábor Borhidi
Ireland	Annette Slater
Italy	Michele Lepore
	Dr Diego Alhaique
	Francesca Grosso
	Daniele Di Nunzio
	Davide Spanti
Latvia	Renars Lūsis
	Laima Beroza
Lithuania	Vaidas Levickis
	Nerita Sot
Luxembourg	Paul Weber
Malta	Remigio Bartolo*
Netherlands	Dr Irene Houtman
	Henk Schrama
	Mario Van Mierlo
	Somja Baljeu-Veenstra
Poland	Dr Wiktor Marek Zawieska
	Wieczysława Nowak-Turowiecka
Portugal	Maria Manuela Caldo Correia
	Luis Lopez
	Manuel Marcelino Pena Costa
Romania	Georgiana Ioana Nicolescu
Slovakia	Laurencia Jancurova
	Bohus Bendik
Slovenia	Igor Antauer
	Tatjana Petricek

Country	Name
	Vladka Komel
	Lučka Böhm
	Marjan Ravnik
Spain	Angel Vidal Herrer
	Belen Perez Aznar
	Isabel Dudzinski
Sweden	Barbro Kohler Krantz
	Gunnar Sundqvist
United Kingdom (UK)	Christian Van Stolk
	Jenny Lawson
	Roxanne Gervais
	Steve Pointer
	Dr Stavroula Leka
	Pippa Morgan
	Dr Stuart Bristow

Note: *provided a response to questions by email.

Source: IES

Table 2 European level interviewees

Name	Organisation
Domenico Campogrande	European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC)
Rebekah Smith	Business Europe
Riccardo Viaggi	European Builders Confederation (EBC)
Gerard Neyret	European Federation of National Maintenance Societies (EFNMS)
Armando Silva	European Commission
Éva Török	European Commission
Jean-Paul Tricart	European Commission
Francisco Jesús Alvarez Hidalgo	European Commission
Viktor Kempa	European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Dr Agnès Parent-Thirion	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)
Stephen Hughes	MEP
Jutta Steinruck*	MEP
Proinsias de Rossa	MEP

Note: *provided a response to questions by email.

Source :IES

Table 3: EU-OSHA interviewees

Name	Position
Jukka Takala	Director (until 15 September 2011)
Francoise Murillo	Head of the Resource and Service Centre
Eusebio Rial Gonzalez	Head of Prevention and Research Unit
Andrew Smith	Head of Communication and Promotion Unit
William Cockburn	Senior Project Manager
Jesper Bejer	Network Manager
Heike Klempa	Campaign Manager
Lorenzo Munar	Project Manager
Brenda O'Brien	Brussels Liaison Office Manager
Tim Tregenza	Network Manager

Source: IES

Appendix 2: Topics covered in the Stakeholder Interviews

Topic guides were used to guide the interviews. Although the exact nature of the questions asked in each interview was flexible to accommodate the different backgrounds, roles, interests and knowledge of the interviewees, each interview covered four main themes: relevance, effectiveness, consistency/European added value, and implementation design. As noted in Section 3 on 'Background and evaluation approach', interviewees could be split into two main groups. The first group were interviewed about their views on the activities of the Agency as a whole, with specific probes on the European Week campaigns and Esener. The second group were interviewed in-depth about the European Week campaign on safe maintenance or Esener, and were also asked some additional questions about their views on the activities of the Agency as a whole.

Example topic guides are provided below.

National Focal Point Topic Guide

Background for Interviewer

What is a Focal Point?

The Agency has limited resources and is reliant on intermediaries to have an influence on OSH awareness and practice. The national focal points are the backbone of the Agency's network. They play a central role in the healthy workplaces campaign. FOP contacts in each country carry out their duties alongside their main job, and the resources/support available in each Member State differs.

What do we want to know?

We are interested in exploring four key themes in relation to the Agency's products and activities. These are outlined below and form the main structure of the guide.

Agency products and activities include research outputs such as surveys and evidence reviews, good practice guidelines, campaign materials and events. The largest financial spend of the Agency is on a biannual campaign, the most recent of which was the 2010-2011 campaign on Safe Maintenance, and on Esener (a pan-European survey of workers and managers involving 36,000 interviews). Whilst interviewees may raise any activity as a point of discussion, please make sure that you ask about Esener and the campaign on safe maintenance with respect to the four key themes.

The four main themes which form the basis of all the questions in the guide are:

Relevance – How well do the activities and products of the Agency meet occupational safety and health needs in the relevant Member State, and Agency target audiences (eg employers, researchers, policymakers etc.)? How could the activities be made more relevant both now, and looking ahead over the next five years?

Effectiveness – What difference do Agency activities and products make in raising awareness and improving practice with regards to occupational safety and health? To whom, and how, do they make a difference?

European Added Value/Consistency – To what extent, and how, does the EU-OSHA add value to efforts to raise awareness and improve practice in OSH at a national level? eg does the European dimension facilitate action at a national level; does it increase the credibility of OSH at a national level. In short, what does it contribute over and above national efforts.

Implementation of EU-OSHA activities – How could current working arrangements be improved to add more value? Could the way in which the Agency works with FOPs, or the way in which national networks are organised be changed to add more value?

Introduction for interviewee

- Introduce self and IES, and independence of the evaluation.
- Explain that IES has been commissioned by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) to carry out a mid-term evaluation of its 2009-2013 strategy. The main aim of the research is to assess the progress of the Agency in implementing the strategy, and to inform an update of the strategy planned for 2012.
- This interview will focus on your views of EU-OSHA, in particular:

- how well do the Agency's activities and products meet occupational safety and health needs in your country, and of the Agency's key target audiences;
 - the usefulness and impact of Agency products and activities;
 - whether and how Agency activities and products have contributed to one or more of the OSH objectives of your country;
 - to what extent has the Agency helped develop a European dimension to OSH, and to what extent has it facilitated action on OSH at the national level;
 - if, and how, current working arrangements with the Agency and the national network could be improved.
- Explain confidentiality and anonymity i.e what interviewees say will be treated in confidence and they will not be identifiable in the research report.
 - Ask to record the interview. Explain that transcripts of the interview are treated confidentially and not passed on to EU-OSHA. Take notes if interviewee prefers.
 - Invite questions.

Background

1. Could you provide a brief background on your job title, role, and the organisation you work for?
 - *Probe for their expertise in OSH and how they are involved in OSH policy or practice*
2. Could you provide a brief overview of your involvement with EU-OSHA?
 - *Probe for their role with regards to EU-OSHA and activities they are involved in*
 - *Probe for how long they have been involved with EU-OSHA*

Effectiveness of EU-OSHA

3. Which Agency activities or products are you most familiar with?
 - *Probe for how and why the products and services were used*
 - *Ensure we specifically understand the extent of their involvement with:*
 - *EU-OSHA campaigns, particularly during the strategy period ie 2009-2013*
 - *the ESENER survey*

- Probe, if necessary, for use of particular products/services eg campaign materials, good practice guides and tools, research reports, publications, website etc.*

4. How useful did you find these activities or products for promoting good practice or raising awareness about OSH issues ...?
- a. in your country
 - b. amongst OSHA target audiences eg these could be OSH researchers, employers (generally and from specific sectors or size of organisation eg SMEs), employees with OSH responsibility within organisations, OSH practitioners, OSH policymakers etc

Use the following prompts for each of a-b:

- Why were they useful?*
 - How could their usefulness be improved, if at all?*
 - To what extent have they helped to change policy, practice or research priorities (ask for examples)?*
5. Which of the Agency's activities and products do you think have the most impact? And on which target groups?
- Probe, if necessary, with respect to the various target audiences for the Agency's work.*
6. Just to sum up. On a scale of 1-4, with 4 being very well and 1 not very well at all, how well do you think the Agency is performing in terms of achieving its goals of promoting good practice and raising awareness on OSH issues?

Relevance of EU-OSHA activities

7. Thinking about the activities of the Agency that you are familiar with, how well do these (help) meet
- a. occupational safety and health needs in your country?
 - b. anticipated occupational safety and health needs in your country five years from now?
 - c. the needs of the Agency's target audiences?

Use the following prompts for each of a-g:

- Which activities or products are most relevant and why?*
- Which activities or products are not relevant and why?*

- How could the Agency's activities be changed to better meet the needs of groups outlined in a-c above?*
8. Where respondent has some awareness or involvement with the campaigns ask: Thinking specifically about the three EU-OSHA campaigns that have, or will, run during the 2009-2013 strategy period, how relevant did/do you see these as being?
- Prompt if necessary that the campaigns are: 2008-2009 – Risk Assessment; 2010-2011 – Safe Maintenance; 2012-2013 – Leadership and Worker Participation.*
 - Which of these did they feel was most relevant and why?*
 - Which campaigns were most relevant to which groups/users?*
9. What do you see as the main occupational safety and health needs the Agency should address over the next five years?
10. Before we move on. On a scale of 1-4, with 4 being very well and 1 not well at all, how well do you think the activities of the Agency meet the OSH needs:
- a. in your country?
 - b. of the Agency's target audiences?

Contribution of EU-OSHA to partner objectives/European added value

11. To what extent has the work of EU-OSHA contributed to the achievement of, or facilitated action on OSH objectives in your country?
- Probe for examples*
 - Which Agency activities and products have helped, how and why*
 - Ensure that you prompt about the extent to which campaigns have helped here*
12. On a scale of 1-4, with 4 being to a very high extent and 1 not at all, how much has the work of the Agency contributed to the achievement of or facilitated action on:
- a. OSH objectives in your country?
13. To what extent does the Agency facilitate sharing of information/research on OSH?
- Probe for how this could be improved, if at all?*
 - Probe for examples of how sharing of information/research has had an impact*

- *Prompt on whether contribution of campaigns to this could be improved.*

14. Just to sum up. Overall, on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being very important to 1 not being important at all, how important is the European dimension in promoting improved safety and health at work?

Implementation of EU-OSHA activities

15. With respect to your role as a focal point, how effective are current working arrangements?

- *Probe for what works well? What works less well? And how working arrangements could be improved.*
- *Probe for challenges/barriers faced in carrying out the role and what, if anything, the Agency could do to help overcome these barriers/challenges. Probe for working effectiveness of working arrangements with respect to the campaign on safe maintenance.*
- *Probe specifically for effectiveness of working arrangements with respect to the campaign on safe maintenance.*

16. In your role as a focal point, what factors are (most) important in helping you to have an impact?

- *Probe for importance of availability of national resources, effective collaboration with national network partners, support from the Agency etc*

17. To what extent does the Agency facilitate networking amongst the focal points?

- *Probe for how useful this networking activity is, and how it could be made more useful?*

18. Before we move on. Overall, on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being very effectively and 1 not effectively at all, how effectively does the Agency carry out its functions with respect to meeting its objectives?

ESENER case study questions

If the ESENER survey has been covered already spontaneously in the preceding questions, please prompt only when necessary to fill in any gaps.

19. One of the things we're particularly interested in is the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks.

IF ESENER HAS ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED: Can I just ask a couple of questions specifically about that. *Then use prompts a-c below where necessary.*

IF ESENER NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED: We haven't talked (much) about that yet. Are you familiar with the survey? *If yes, discuss their use of the survey results using prompts a-c below.*

- a. How relevant the survey was to their needs and those of researchers and policy makers across the EU in supporting employers?
 - b. How useful the survey was in identifying factors that help or hinder enterprises in safeguarding health and safety?
 - c. How much did the survey results help them in their role, or help take forward their country or EU objectives?
- If not familiar with the survey, explain a little about it (ie it is a major new initiative conducted by the Agency. It involved a pan-European survey of workers and managers, involving 36,000 interviews which aimed to identify factors that help or hinder enterprises in safeguarding health and safety, particularly from new and emerging risks. It was also designed to help policy makers support employers in managing such risks).*
- Is this something that you think would be relevant to you? Is it the sort of thing that you would find useful? Probe for why/why not. What type of format would they prefer for finding out more about the survey?

Overview

20. Overall, how effective do you think the Agency is in
- raising awareness of occupational safety and health?
 - facilitating action to improve occupational safety and health?

Anything else they would like to add?

Thank them for their time.

Esener Case Study Topic Guide

Description of ESENER: EU-OSHA's Europe-wide establishment survey asks managers and workers' health and safety representatives about how health and safety risks are managed at their workplace, with a particular focus on the newer 'psychosocial risks', such as work-related stress, violence and harassment. The survey aims to assist workplaces across Europe to deal more effectively with

health and safety and to promote the health and well-being of employees. To this end it provides policy makers with cross-nationally comparable information relevant for the design and implementation of new policies in this field. See <http://osha.europa.eu/en/riskobservatory/enterprise-survey/about-the-survey> for more details.

The survey, which involves approximately 36,000 interviews and covers 31 countries, has the support of governments and social partners at European level. For EU-OSHA, this project represents one of its most important initiatives to date and is expected to provide valuable information for use over several years.

Note to interviewer: *People asked to take part in the case study element of the evaluation have normally been specifically selected because they are a user or potential user of the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks. They may have used the survey to meet their own needs, the needs of their organisation, the organisations/ individuals they represent, their country or needs at an EU-level.*

You will be required to use this guide with a range of different interviews:

- *MEPs*
- *Commission officials*
- *FOPs*
- *employer representatives*
- *worker representatives*
- *OSH researchers.*

All questions should have some relevance to each of these groups, but will need to be used flexibly depending on the level of engagement of the interviewee.

Interviewer's introduction

- Introduce self and IES, and independence of the evaluation.
- Explain that IES has been commissioned by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) to carry out a mid-term evaluation of its 2009-2013 strategy. The main aim of the research is to assess the progress of the Agency in implementing the strategy, and to inform an update of the strategy planned for 2012.
- We want to talk to you mainly about your experiences of the EU-OSHA ESENER survey. In particular we want to focus on:

- the impact, relevance and usefulness of the survey
- whether and how the survey has contributed to the OSH objectives of your organisation, the groups you represent, national/European policy objectives on OSH
- to what extent the survey has helped develop a European dimension to OSH, and helped action take place at a national level.
- We are also interested in your views of EU-OSHA more generally.
- Explain confidentiality and anonymity i.e what interviewees say will be treated in confidence and they will not be identifiable in the research report.
- Ask to record the interview. Explain that transcripts of the interview are treated confidentially and not passed on to EU-OSHA. Take notes if interviewee prefers.
- Invite questions.

Background

- 1 Could you provide a brief background on your job title, role, and the organisation you work for?
 - *Probe for their expertise in OSH and how they are involved in OSH policy, practice or research at either a personal, organisational, national or European level.*
- 2 What is their involvement with EU-OSHA?
 - *Check our information on whether they are on the board/bureau, a FOP, a national partner, a research partner, an employer etc.*
 - *How long they have been involved with EU-OSHA – have they previously held a different role? If they have no role, have they used any EU-OSHA materials outside those involved directly related to ESENER?*
 - *Establish for the purposes of this interview the level at which they feel comfortable in answering questions. Does this stop at their own role, their organisation, organisations/individuals they represent? Can they comment any further – at a national or European level?*

Awareness and use of the survey

- 3 Could you talk me through what you know about the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER)?

Probe to establish how much they know about the survey:

- *scope – that it covers 31 countries (EU 27 + Croatia, Turkey, Norway and Switzerland) and involves 36,000 telephone interviews with both managers and workers*
- *content – that the survey covers:*
 - *OSH management*
 - *psychosocial risks and their management*
 - *drivers and barriers for OSH and psychosocial risk management*
 - *worker participation*
- *availability of data:*
 - *that a full set of reports and a map tool for viewing results, as well as questionnaires, information on survey design and guidance is available online*
 - *that a full dataset is available for analysis in the UK Data Archive.*

4 How have you used the survey?

- *Probe for examples on how they have used the survey for:*
 - *their own purposes*
 - *their organisation*
 - *any organisations or individuals that they/their organisation represent*
 - *informing country-level activities/debate etc.*
 - *informing European level activities/debate etc.*
- *Establish which aspects of the information available they have used eg:*
 - *online or paper-based reports*
 - *national presentations or seminars supported by EU-OSHA*
 - *questionnaires and guidance*
 - *technical information on survey design*
 - *their own analysis of the dataset at the UK Data Archive.*

Effectiveness of ESENER

5 How **useful** did you find the ESENER survey?

Ensure that you cover the different aims of the survey, ie:

- raising awareness about OSH issues
 - developing an understanding of workplaces' needs for support and expertise
 - understanding the factors that encourage action and those that hinder it amongst enterprises?
 - *Use the following prompts for all:*
 - *How and why was the survey useful?*
 - *To what extent has the survey helped to change policy, practice or research priorities (ask for examples)?*
 - *Where interviewee is able to, ask for their view on the usefulness of the survey beyond their own role (go only to level at which you have agreed they are comfortable to comment) ie to...*
 - *their organisation*
 - *any organisations or individuals that they/their organisation represent*
 - *their country*
 - *at a European level, including for EU policy makers.*
- 6 What aspects of the ESENER survey do you think are most useful and why?
- 7 What would you like to see improved or changed about the ESENER survey?
- 8 How would you compare the usefulness of the ESENER survey with other sources of information that you have used/are aware of?
- *This could be national, European or international surveys, or other monitoring data*
 - *It is useful to know what information they use, even if they goes beyond survey data.*

Relevance of ESENER

- 9 How well do you think the ESENER survey meet the needs of potential users?
- *Go only to the level that you have agreed the interviewee is comfortable responding, but cover where possible:*
 - *them in their own role*
 - *their organisation/those they represent*

- *OSH needs in their country*
- *OSH needs at a European level, including for EU policy makers*
- *future OSH needs nationally and at EU level.*

10 How relevant do you think the results and impacts of the ESENER survey are? (*ie the published outputs from the survey, the content and focus of the survey, and the likely follow up research*).

11 How could the survey outputs or content be made more relevant (*probe on relevance to them, their organisation, those they represent, national objectives and EU objectives as appropriate*)?

Contribution of ESENER to partner objectives/ European added value

12 To what extent has the ESENER survey contributed to the achievement of, or facilitated action on (go only to the level to which respondent is able to answer):

- d. *your organisation's objectives? probe for examples*
- e. *your national OSH objectives? probe for examples*
- f. *EU policy objectives? probe for examples.*

13 What do you think the ESENER survey adds to purely national efforts of data collection and analysis?

14 Ask Commission officials:

A. How do you see the ESENER survey fitting into the broader Community Strategy on OSH?

B. How does the ESENER survey compare with other information collection activities? What does it add?

ESENER implementation

15 Ask researchers:

A. What do you think the ESENER survey added to the existing body of research?

B. How could the questions or method used in the survey be improved to add greater research value?

C. What value is there in EU-wide surveys of this kind compared to national survey, what do they add?

D. *If not already covered spontaneously:* Do you have any plans to conduct your own independent research on the ESENER dataset? If so, for what and when will it be used.

E. What would be the best way of following up on ESENER (repeat survey, qualitative studies)?

Ask all:

16 Overall, on a scale of 4, with 4 being very well and 1 being not very well at all, how well do you think the ESENER survey is achieving its objectives of:

- understanding how OSH is managed in practice across Europe?
- identifying how new and emerging risks are being managed at the workplace?
- helping those who guide and support employers in dealing with OSH issues?

General EU-OSHA questions

These final questions may not be appropriate for all respondents. Ask only of those who have a wider involvement with EU-OSHA beyond their use of ESENER.

Now I'd like to finish by asking you a few questions about EU-OSHA more generally.

17 In your view, how well does the Agency meet the needs of different user groups (ie end users (employers and workers), national organisations, EU-level partners)?

18 Overall, how effective do you think the Agency is in:

- raising awareness of occupational safety and health?
- facilitating action to improve occupational safety and health?

19 How much do you feel the Agency makes a difference at national and European level? How much does it make a difference to you in your role (and, where appropriate, at other levels ie organisational, representatives, national, EU)?

20 How much do you think the Agency adds value to what can happen in individual countries?

21. How important do you think ESENER is to EU-OSHA in terms of achieving its objectives of promoting good practice and raising awareness about OSH issues across the EU?

22. One final question. Overall, on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being very well and 1 not very well at all, how well do you think the Agency is performing in terms of achieving its goals of promoting good practice and raising awareness on OSH issues?

Anything else they would like to add?

Thank them for their time.