

Good Working Conditions in Tanneries (GOTAN)

Background

The leather industry is a vital sector for Bangladesh's economy, accounting for approximately 3 % of the country's total export revenue in 2021. The industry provides employment opportunities for around 850,000 individuals, both directly and indirectly.

However, production processes in tanneries often neglect compliance with international social and environmental standards, putting workers' wellbeing at risk and negatively affecting competitiveness on the global market. The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), responsible for monitoring the implementation of occupational health and safety (OHS) measures, is not sufficiently equipped to carry out inspections that meet international standards. In the event of non-compliance, sanctions are ineffective or inadequately enforced. Internal management systems are needed to ensure ongoing compliance with international OHS standards and to establish professional work structures and responsibilities in tanneries. In addition, the institutional framework must be in line with national legal requirements.

Local companies, such as leather manufacturers, exporters, buying houses and chemical suppliers, can help ensure that social and environmental standards are met. Typically, these companies employ mid-level managers who have graduated from training and educational institutions. However, curricula remain insufficient with regard to adequately tackling OHS and safe chemical management, despite the potential for anchoring them through teaching and research.

Objective

Project name	Good Working Conditions in Tanneries (GOTAN)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Commissioned value	4.0 million Euro
Project region	Dhaka, Gazipur, Chattogram, Jashore
Partner ministry	Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE),
Implementing agency	Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)
SDG contribution	Gender Equality (SDG 5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)
Duration	May 2022 – April 2026

The project seeks to strengthen the institutional framework for increased OSH compliance in tanneries in selected regions of Bangladesh. This will result in improved working and living conditions for workers employed by tanneries.

Approach

To achieve its objective, the project promotes collaboration among public and private stakeholders by developing organisational and individual capacities. Moreover, it enhances advisory services for tanneries through intermediary organisations.





The development of training and course materials will support local service providers to meet the criteria of international OHS requirements and to adopt sustainable practices. The capacity development approach of the project focuses on the organisational development of DIFE to fulfil its mandate as the regulatory authority for inspections in tanneries.

Areas of intervention and envisaged activities

1. Capacity Development of the DIFE

- Strengthening capacities of DIFE to effectively manage the inspection system in tanneries
- Advising DIFE in improved implementation and monitoring of inspections
- Utilising the Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA) online database to increase transparency in the monitoring of inspections

2. Consulting and Training Services on OHS for Better Working Conditions in Tanneries

- Supporting local service providers to develop tailor-made training materials and courses based on demand. Actively generating demand for such training among tanneries.
- Trainings include topics such as chemical management as well as support for implementing OHS measures, following a gender mainstreaming approach
- Equipping trainers with knowledge on OHS and fostering digital competencies to ensure the quality of trainings online and in person

3. Advancing Higher Education in the Field of OHS in Leather Production

- Advising providers of educational services to revise current curricula and adapt to international standards by including OHS-relevant modules
- Strengthening the knowledge of graduates of bachelor and master programmes in the area of OHS in leather production
- Encouraging exchange formats between private sector and universities to promote sustainable development in the leather sector

Expected results

The improvement of DIFE's inspection capacity will have a positive impact on health and safety risks in the tanning industry. Equipping local intermediaries and partnering with educational service providers will ensure the sustainability of the project's interventions, contributing to the overall well-being of tannery workers and their communities.

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