

**Step 3 of the guide “Digital RI&E tools: trade associations get to work!” translated into English.**

**This Step 3 shows how an OiRA tool can be implemented in a sector.**

# STEP 3 Implementation of the OiRA tool in your sector

## What is implementation?

### Implementation is putting a change into effect

For an OiRA tool this means that the tool is used by employers/employees and is also applied on the shop floor. In order to be able to **use** the OiRA tool, the employer (and/or employee) must know that it exists and must know where he can find it. Using it means filling in the tool and making plans.

**Applying** the tool goes further. It means that the employer carries out the plans, updates them on a regular basis, re-prioritises and acts on this.

Only then has the change come into effect: the employer sees its benefit. And not only as a one-off activity. The change can be seen, because it leads to results on the shop floor.

Bearing this in mind, there are **two levels** of implementation:

1. For employers' organisations: to ensure that companies know that there is an OiRA tool and to encourage and support them in using it.
2. For companies (employers and employees): to use the OiRA tool and to continue to apply it. This leads to improvements in working conditions.

### The role of employers / employers' organisations

Responsibilities in the field of health and safety are coming to rest increasingly on the social partners, on companies (employer and employees), but also on the sector: employers' organisations and trade unions. Employers' organisations can help their members by supporting employers and employees in complying with their legal obligations and in this way assisting them in their operations. Employers' organisations can play an active role in this.

The digital OiRA tool is one of the ways in which this can be done. The tool makes it easier for companies (employers and employees) to work on improving working conditions.

Employers' organisations can play an active role in the development and the implementation of an OiRA tool. This is beneficial not only for the entrepreneurs, but the employers' organisation itself can also give itself a particular profile by doing so. The activities give members greater control over the services provided, and the employers' organisation can put its own added value in the spotlight.

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## Three strategies!

We set out three strategies for implementing an OiRA tool. These approaches ensure not only that the tool will be used, but if you organise it in a certain way they will also help to give the employers' organisation itself a better picture of its members.

The first strategy is called 'implementation, the second 'development' and the third has been given the name 'resource'. The strategies have been developed from pilot projects carried out by various employers' organisations.

### 1. Implementation

#### Starting situation

The starting situation with this approach is that you have developed the OiRA tool and that you are now going to implement it. In developing it you may perhaps have involved some of the active members who are known to you, but you have not yet been actively communicating about it with other members.

#### Activities

The activities you carry out are aimed at:

- informing all the members that the tool has been developed for them, to make life easier for them;
- encouraging the members to use the tool;
- and – if you wish – supporting the members in the use of the tool.

The best thing to do is to develop a coherent **implementation plan**, connecting one activity with an activity that follows on from that. You check whether you have achieved the desired result with the first activity and if you wish modify your communication strategy until you achieve what you are aiming at.

For example, you send a message using one of the communication channels available to you, for instance inviting people to take part in a workshop, you report back on the workshop by putting an article in one of the media and encourage employers to inform colleagues about the OiRA tool and what it can do for them.

This is not a one-off activity: you can repeat activities of the same type, with different emphases. For example, at regional meetings you have an enthusiastic employer explaining what he or she has got out of the OiRA tool and then you report on this in the media again.

The signals you pick up from the members - from a workshop or at a meeting - you can then translate into services for your members, and then you let them know what you have done with their comments.

### 2. Development

#### Starting situation

With this approach you, as an employers' organisation, maintain active contact with your members from the start of the development of the OiRA tool.

These contacts are about:

- developing the content of the tool;
- the way in which you bring attention to the tool so that employers (and employees) will use and apply it;
- and, if you wish, the support you are organising at sector level to help members use the tool.

#### Activities

You put your activities in a coherent **development plan**, connecting one activity

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with another that follows on from it. You communicate on this regularly and effectively with the members who are at more of a distance from the development process.

During the development process with companies you are in fact already starting with the implementation of the digital OiRA tool by, for example, providing publicity about the meetings in the media available to you. An enthusiastic group of people who together with you develop the content of the tool can instill enthusiasm in others to use it.

You can also ask these, and other, members how you can bring the tool to the attention of other companies in the sector in an appealing way. In this way you can obtain information about the best way of keeping other companies informed that there is a tool and what it can mean for them so that they will start to use it.

All the signals you pick up can give you input about what type of services the members need, in addition to the OiRA. You can organise these services yourself or you can make proposals to service providers in the sector.

### 3. Resource

#### Starting situation

The starting situation here is completely different. This is not about the OiRA tool as such, but you use the tool as a resource in dealing with 'issues' of concern among members.

#### Activities

With this approach you organise (themed) meetings on the basis of issues that concern employers (and employees). At theme-based meetings like this, for example, you can invite a speaker who is an expert on the chosen subject. As well as discussing the subject and the possible avenues that can be taken to find solutions, you do something else as well. You bring attention to the OiRA tool to examine together whether the subject is dealt with sufficiently in the tool and whether the possible solutions are appropriate. What you are really doing is presenting the tool as a resource for obtaining information about the subject and coming up with solutions. If the content of the tool is not appropriate to deal with the subject, you will still have gained an understanding of this through the meeting. Another way of using the OiRA tool as a resource is through a cabaret performance on 'good practice' organised jointly by a number of employers' organisations and made available on a regional basis. In a serious but entertaining way, subjects can be put in the spotlight. These might include 'good entrepreneurship', to enable entrepreneurs to stand out from competitors, or 'good employment practices', to enable staff to provide the services needed to achieve or maintain that competitive position. The storyline of the performance starts with someone calling in sick (or having an accident). During the performance it becomes apparent that the employer could have been aware of the cause if he had filled in the risk assessment together with his staff....

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## Three strategies!

### Important additional tips on implementation

**These tips are the result of experiences among employers' organizations in the Netherlands. In this country employers and employees organizations have gained a good experience on how to promote the RI&E (name of the previous version of OiRA in the Netherlands) . Use the knowledge that has been acquired! And be inspired by the examples in organising implementation activities in your own sector.**

#### 1. Differentiate by actor

The employer is obliged to have an up-to-date risk assessment. Employers, prevention staff, staff representatives and works councils influence the use and the application of the risk assessment. So approach these groups as well to encourage this.

##### Examples from practice

BGZ Wegvervoer (the organisation for occupational health in the road transport industry) publishes articles about the OiRA tool in both employers' newssheets and employees' newssheets.

Working together with trade unions, the Productschap Diervoeder (Animal Feed Marketing Board) organises information days about the OiRA tool. Employees, members of the works council, staff representatives and trade union officials are invited to take part. Employers are encouraged to allow their employees to take part.

The Productschap Vis (Marketing Board for Fish and Fish Products) was also behind the organisation of a cabaret evening, for all the personnel in the sector, about good entrepreneurship and good employment practice. The performance showed that absences (occupational accidents/diseases) from work can be prevented by, among other things, the risk assessment being filled in jointly. What was

also interesting were the conversations in the interval between the employer and employees about what the performance had to say and what it meant for the workplace.

#### 2. Written and digital communication channels

A general article about the value of and the need for a risk assessment is an excellent way of putting the OiRA tool in the spotlight. The more the employer feels that he personally can see the added value for himself and his company, the greater the chance is that it will be used. An interview with an employer, and quotes from employers, are examples in which the added value can be stressed.

Periodical sector newssheets and journals are an excellent medium for reporting news items about the OiRA tool, either in the form of articles or columns. You are of course always dependent on the publication date. Rapid communication media include letters, e-mail messages (whether or personalised or not) and newsletters.

Information to support implementation can also be put on an employers' organisation's website. You can encourage employers and employees to visit the site more regularly by referring in articles to the site and by developing a specific column on the site with, for example, frequently asked questions from employers and employees about the OiRA tool. You can add to the frequently asked questions page by setting out the actions that you as an employers' organisation are planning to undertake as a result of the questions that have been asked. It is interesting for the members and contributes to your profile. You can call on members to respond and adapt your services to their responses. By doing this you can demonstrate your added value for the members and how you tackle issues about which they are concerned.

##### An example from practice

With a personalised e-mail the Centrale Branchevereniging Wonen (central

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#### Important additional tips on implementation

Association for the interior furnishings sector) asked members to take part in a test. The OiRA tool itself was tested before being delivered. Part of this test was how to approach other companies in the sector and encourage them to use the OiRA tool. Tips were given about the content of the message and the communication channels to be used. Verdicts from the employers taking part in the test were then used in the various media.

#### 3. Organising workshops

Offering workshops about filling in the OiRA tool can persuade employers to start to use the digital tool. The presence of advisers at the workshop who can answer questions straight away can serve two purposes, namely

- a. the person filling it in gets an answer straight away to the questions he/she has, and
- b. it is clear to the employers' organisation what statements raise questions.

Based on this, changes can be made to the OiRA tool so that the person who fills it in next has fewer questions, and the employers' organisation can use the questions as an input for its services. This input can also result in changes to the services you offer your members.

##### Examples from practice

The Productschap Vis is to update its OiRA tool following a workshop of this type. The members had a number of questions for which as yet the tool did not offer a solution.

At subject-based meetings the Sociaal Fonds Taxi (the social fund for the taxi sector) receives feedback on the content of the OiRA tool. As a result it can be modified to take into account the issues which are of concern to members.

BGZ Wegvervoer (the organisation for occupational health in the road transport industry) organises workshops at which health and safety experts help the people responsible for carrying out the risk assessment to fill in the tool.

#### 4. Increasing the number of contacts

The employers' organisation usually has contact with a fixed group of companies. If you organise an activity, you can not only send invitations, but also ask specifically whether the people invited also know other people who might be interested in attending as well.

Another way of increasing the number of contacts is to choose the time and place of the meeting carefully.

##### Examples from practice

The Productschap Vis intends to organise a workshop on filling in the OiRA tool in a place where it knows that there is an active chairman for the small and medium-sized firms sector. They ask him to invite more interested parties. Considerably more people register than was expected. The risk assessment workshop is organised in the evening and locally.

The Sociaal Fonds Taxi, which organises general meetings for companies (employers and employees) where the OiRA tool is used as a resource, follows the same type of strategy. It also organises meetings in a 'nice place where you do not go every day'. The meeting is held at the end of the day, and includes a meal. Attendance exceeds expectations and the members are pleased because what is on offer ties in with the questions they have. It helps to attract others.

#### 5. Use of language, obligation or help for companies

Carrying out a risk assessment is a legal obligation and takes time. Generally speaking the law is not a source of inspiration for the employer. He already 'has to' do too much. But the obligation to carry out a risk assessment can also be put forward in a positive light. A risk assessment is an easy way of identifying occupational risks (safety and health risks) and working in a more targeted way on the causes of occupational accidents and diseases and absence from work. Perhaps 'working on quality' or 'healthy working' would be a more successful approach.

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### Recognition of the digital sector-specific OiRA tool

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Other employers, on the other hand, are more likely to be goaded into action by a more negative approach: the tool is a way of avoiding fines.

#### Tip:

- adapt your approach when drawing attention to the risk assessment to the perceptions of the entrepreneur
- use language the entrepreneur will understand
- emphasise the sector-specific nature of the tool.

#### Example from practice

From a test among its members the Centrale Branchevereniging Wonen obtained information about how it could best communicate with other members. The suggestions were used in communications in CBW publications. With each article published this resulted in 100 extra "hits" on the website of the OiRA tool.

#### 6. Give support

It is important that your members learn how to deal with the sector-specific OiRA tool. Some people are comfortable using computers, and others are wary about starting. Organising workshops gives you direct feedback on what else can be modified (in terms of content).

It also gives you feedback about the support needed to start using the OiRA.

Another way is to instruct your own or external health and safety experts or occupational health and safety service providers always to ask whether the members have a written risk assessment and/or whether they can and do work with it in practice.

Here too you can pick up signals for follow-up, regarding services or the content of the tool.

#### Examples from practice

The Sociaal Fonds Taxi has occupational health and safety trainers who give members support, among other things with the risk assessment.

BGZ Wegvervoer tries to ensure that advisers make appointments with members before, during or after they fill in the risk assessment. The signals that come from this support are translated into new services.

The Centrale Branchevereniging Wonen also translates the questions from employers about the risk assessment into support with the OiRA through the Verzuimloket (absence helpdesk).

#### 7. Employer and employees

After the risk assessment has been carried out, employees often have to do their work differently. So support from them is extremely important. The first step is for employees to be aware of the risks involved in their work. If only for this reason the employer should involve employees when dealing with the risk identification step, making plans and developing practical solutions for problems that come to light when the risk assessment is carried out. This also makes it more likely that the proposed solutions will indeed be practicable.

**Example from practice**

Taking this approach, the Productschap Diervoeder organises theme-based days for employees and their representatives. Their role in the risk assessment is discussed and at work more of the OiRA tool is filled in. The problem areas and how solutions can be found for them are discussed at follow –up meetings.