Peer Review on the "Use of web-based tools for OSH risk assessment"

Dublin, Ireland, 2-3 October 2017

Riski-Arvi – risk assessment at Finnish workplaces

Peer Country Comments Paper - Finland

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1 Situation in the peer country relative to the host country

1.1 Overview to Finnish labour market

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the Finnish economy. 99 % of Finnish enterprises that have employees, are small or medium-sized. These enterprises employ 55 % of the Finnish workforce. 90 % of all workplaces have less than 10 employees. In total, there are approximately 350 000 private companies in Finland, while approximately 200 000 workplaces are under the supervision of the occupational health and safety authorities.

In Finland, the Regional State Administrative Agency (AVI) is responsible for regional supervision and direction of occupational safety and health. In AVI, there are five regional divisions of occupational safety and health. The divisions operate under the direct control of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. In addition to enforcement, the Finnish OSH authorities provide advice and guidelines both to employees and employers in questions related to safety and health at work. Advice and guidance aims at encouraging workplaces to take care of their OSH matters themselves and to at least comply with the minimum level required by law. The most important advice and guidance channels are provided on the website 'Tyosuojelu'[1] and by the national telephone service. In 2016, the website had more than 650 000 users and the telephone service was provided to more than 23 000 callers (Suorsa et al., 2017)

The economic crisis has also affected Finland. Consequently, the divisions of occupational safety and health have been facing significant reductions in staff numbers. In 2015, the size of the inspection staff was 453 person-years (Suorsa et al., 2017), while the current budget level makes it possible to employ approximately 400 person-years in the long term (Finnish state budget proposals, 2017). In 2015, the goal was 30 000 workplace inspections. In 2016, it was reduced to 28 500 and in 2017 to 28 000 inspections (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2017). Part of the reduction is compensated with more efficient work methods, for example the use of a new inspection data system but also by decreasing the amount of inspections.

1.2 Safety management in Finnish SMEs

The OSH legislation in Finland is mainly based on EU legislation and is therefore comparable to Ireland.

Safety management practices vary a lot across Finnish companies. International companies often have the most advanced safety management practices, but also many Finnish-based companies, both small and large, are highly committed to OSH issues. In general, the basic safety and health requirements are well met in Finnish workplaces (Aura et al, 2014) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act is reasonably well known in workplaces (Niskanen et al, 2009). In a recent study among the technology industries in Finland, 77 % of the responding workplaces[2] had conducted a risk assessment (Finnish Industrial Union, 2017). Nevertheless, there are also companies which have not even conducted the basic safety measures, including risk assessment, or do not even know that they are obliged to do so (Savinainen et al., 2014).

Small companies are usually less organised than bigger ones. They do not always have sufficient knowledge on OSH issues, OSH representatives of employees are not selected and occupational health care is not organised. Only 40 % of the small

[1] www.tyosuojelu.fi
[2] N = 670

technology companies (less than 50 employees) had organised an OSH committee[3] (Finnish Industrial Union, 2017).

The highest accident rates are in the traditional sectors, such as construction, woodworking, metal industry and transportation. Consequently, the largest proportion of the OSH inspections in 2016 were carried out in the construction industry (25 % of all inspections). On the other hand, the economic structure in Europe is changing, and this has already brought new business sectors to Finland. These are mainly knowledge-intensive businesses, innovative services and high-technology businesses. To keep up with the continuous change, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2015) has identified several megatrends that have an impact on OSH issues in Finland. These include demographic changes (i.e. ageing, urbanisation); major changes in economic structure (job displacement, labour mobility); new technologies (artificial intelligence, 3D printing, virtual teams); new business areas (bioeconomy, cleantech, digital economy, innovative services) and changes in work arrangements (pop-up offices, remote working, virtual teams, increase in self-employed persons).

These changes have major impacts on OSH. Because of demographic changes there is a mismatch between labour supply and demand, and consequently firms in some areas and sectors may have difficulties in finding the right staff. This affects their possibilities to develop their business which consequently limits their OSH resources at the same time. On the other hand, global economic changes put high pressure on work productivity and people are expected to make longer work careers. This brings out new safety needs of an aging workforce that should be acknowledged both by employers and OSH authorities. New technologies and work arrangements may have decreased traditional accident risks, while psychosocial stress is increasing.

[3] According to the Occupational Safety Act, a safety committee is required in all workplaces that have more than 20 employees.

2 Assessment of the policy measure

2.1 Riski-Arvi – Risk assessment tool for Finnish SMEs

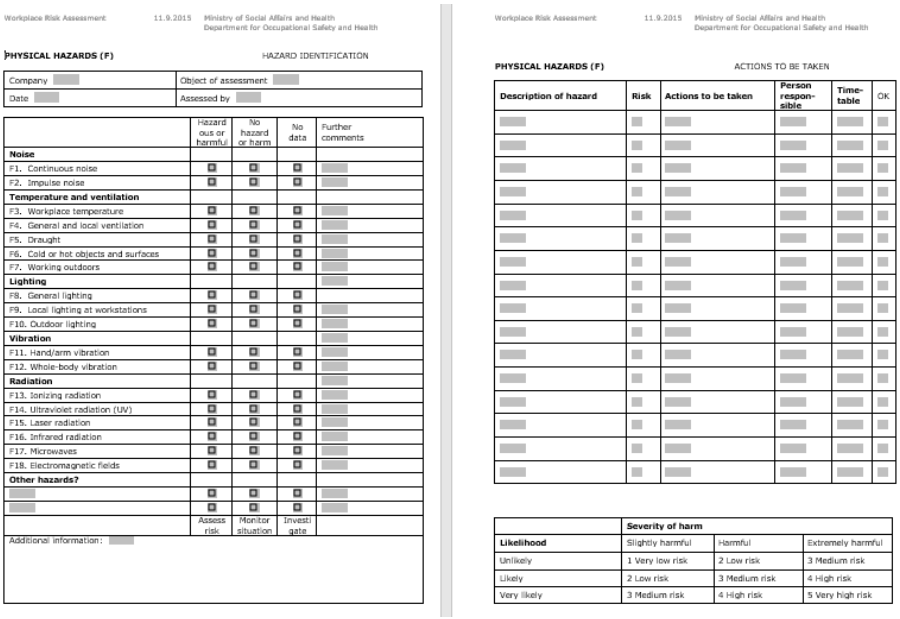
The Riski-Arvi tool was launched in 1997 and was first provided to customers in printed folders. A few years later, the tool was published on the Internet in pdf-format free-of-charge. At the same time, in early 2000s, the first software version of the tool was developed. It had a simple user interface and an Access database in the background as a data source. It was delivered to customers on CD-ROMs. First, both the printed version and the CD-ROM were available free-of-charge from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The digital version of the tool made data analysis possible and this version of Riski-Arvi included eight different data reports. During its first years, Riski-Arvi quickly became the most used risk assessment tool in workplaces in many sectors, including industry, service sector and municipalities.

The Riski-Arvi tool provides hazard checklists to help employers conduct comprehensive risk assessments and to increase the comparability of the analyses[4]. The checklists consist of five categories:

- physical hazards
- chemical and biological hazards
- accident hazards
- physical strain
- psychosocial stress.

For each identified hazard, a description is required on the other side of the paper to explain how the hazard is present in the workplace and what risk mitigation measures will be taken. To complete the risk assessment process, a risk estimation is included (3x3 risk matrix). After the risk estimation, current activities and proposed plans for risk mitigation are recorded for each identified risk (Figure 1).

Figure 1. One of the five Riski-Arvi checklists, risk matrix and the reporting table



Workplace Risk Assessment 11.9.2015 Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Department for Occupational Safety and Health

PHYSICAL HAZARDS (F) HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

Company	Object of assessment
Date	Assessed by

	Hazardous or harmful	No hazard or harm	No data	Further comments
Noise				
F1. Continuous noise	☐	☐	☐	
F2. Impulse noise	☐	☐	☐	
Temperature and ventilation				
F3. Workplace temperature	☐	☐	☐	
F4. General and local ventilation	☐	☐	☐	
F5. Draught	☐	☐	☐	
F6. Cold or hot objects and surfaces	☐	☐	☐	
F7. Working outdoors	☐	☐	☐	
Lighting				
F8. General lighting	☐	☐	☐	
F9. Local lighting at workstations	☐	☐	☐	
F10. Outdoor lighting	☐	☐	☐	
Vibration				
F11. Hand/arm vibration	☐	☐	☐	
F12. Whole-body vibration	☐	☐	☐	
Radiation				
F13. Ionizing radiation	☐	☐	☐	
F14. Ultraviolet radiation (UV)	☐	☐	☐	
F15. Laser radiation	☐	☐	☐	
F16. Infrared radiation	☐	☐	☐	
F17. Microwaves	☐	☐	☐	
F18. Electromagnetic fields	☐	☐	☐	
Other hazards?				
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	
	Assess risk	Monitor situation	Investigate	

Additional information:

Workplace Risk Assessment 11.9.2015 Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Department for Occupational Safety and Health

PHYSICAL HAZARDS (F) ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

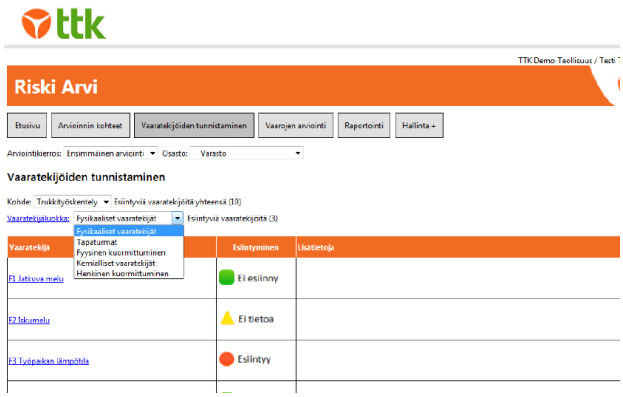
Description of hazard	Risk	Actions to be taken	Person responsible	Time-table	OK

	Severity of harm		
Likelihood	Slightly harmful	Harmful	Extremely harmful
Unlikely	1 Very low risk	2 Low risk	3 Medium risk
Likely	2 Low risk	3 Medium risk	4 High risk
Very likely	3 Medium risk	4 High risk	5 Very high risk

[4] The checklists are available in English online: https://ttk.fi/en/well-being_at_work_and_occupational_health_and_safety/occupational_health_and_safety_work_in_the_workplace/responsibilities_and_obligations/analysis_and_assessment_of_risks_at_work

Since 2005, the Centre of Occupational Safety[5] has been managing and delivering Riski-Arvi. In 2013, the first online version of the tool was launched[6], with similar contents and structure as the CD-ROM version (Figure 2). The online version requires registration and provides user management (administrative users with modification rights and other users with reading rights). Over the years, the checklists have been slightly modified, but the original content, structure, and ideology have remained the same for 20 years. Riski-Arvi is available in Finnish but Swedish and English versions will be available later this year. The fee for a single workplace is EUR 200 per year, which includes five user accounts.

Figure 2. User interface of the online Riski-Arvi



Since the checklists have been available online free-of-charge, they have been incorporated into many commercial risk assessment tools (Annex 2). Thus, during the last two decades, Riski-Arvi has become the national standard of risk assessment tools in Finland. One example of Riski-Arvi spin-offs is ArkiArvi, a simplified version of the online Riski-Arvi[7]. It is meant for micro workplaces (less than 10 employees), and its checklists are shorter than in Riski-Arvi[8]. ArkiArvi can be used online without registration and charge. It consists of more simplified checklists than Riski-Arvi, and has no risk estimation and reporting features. ArkiArvi is available in Finnish and Swedish.

In addition to the commercial and free-of-charge tools that are based on Riski-Arvi, the whole content of the original Riski-Arvi is available online in pdf[9]. This includes detailed instructions for risk assessment, checklists, forms and explanations for each hazard. Therefore, it is easy for anybody to conduct risk assessment with Riski-Arvi without the online version and without contacting an OSH expert. This means, evidently, that that number of Riski-Arvi users is impossible to evaluate.

2.2 Comparison of Riski-Arvi and BeSMART

From the beginning, there were several guiding principles which served as a basis for the development of Riski-Arvi. These principles are still being used in many Finnish risk assessment tools even today. The risk assessment tool should:

[5] Website of the Centre for Occupational Safety: www.ttk.fi
[6] Internet: www.turva-arvi.riskiarvi
[7] Internet: http://www.arkiarvi.fi/
[8] Checklists of ArkiArvi contain 25 hazard items, while in Riski-Arvi checklists there are 107 hazards to be checked.
[9] Internet: http://www.ttk.fi/files/2941/Riskien_arviointi_tyopaikalla_tyokirja_22052015_kerttuli.pdf

- be simple and easy-to-use
- be general enough that they could be applied to workplaces of different sizes and sectors
- be detailed enough that they would cover all safety aspects in enough detail
- comply with risk assessment traditions and standards (BS8800, OHSAS 18001)
- lead to concrete improvements in health and safety at work
- encourage employers to continue health and safety development in co-operation with employees, occupational health care and other safety experts

BeSMART seems to be based on the same principles and is similar to Riski-Arvi in many ways:

- Both tools emphasise usability and easy access
- Both use checklists
- Both tools target all workplaces and especially SMEs
- Both have a well-established position in the home country
- Both are very cost-effective both for administrators and users
- Both include a wide variety of OSH risks and increase employers' awareness of OSH issues
- Both tools have origins in national governmental bodies and they both have originally been free-of-charge. This makes them transparent, objective and reliable.

The biggest difference between Riski-Arvi and BeSMART is that Riski-Arvi offers similar content to all workplaces, while BeSMART pre-selects the most relevant hazards for various occupations. In Riski-Arvi, the employer makes the decision of the risks that are relevant and present at their workplace. This also makes the Riski-Arvi checklists shorter and more concise than in BeSMART. Studies have shown that companies are not willing to use long checklists. Instead they have a preference for clear and concise risk assessment tools (Savinainen et al, 2014; Kalliolinna, 2014). Furthermore, having only one version of the Riski-Arvi checklists, makes the management of the tool much easier and effective. In addition, if Riski-Arvi is being used, everybody knows what content has been analysed, since the tool is the same for all.

As Riski-Arvi has been applied in many commercial applications, also some sector-specific versions have been developed as printed versions[10]. In addition, there are studies that have applied the general Riski-Arvi checklists to a specific occupation, identified and analysed the hazards and reported the results[11]. This shows that although the original tool is the same for all sectors (a stable platform), it can produce materials and studies that are tailored and adjusted to specific sectors (dynamic applications). At the same time, the original tool is validated by various experts.

In Riski-Arvi, workplaces are asked to write a short description of each identified hazard. This is because it is important to analyse how and where the hazards are present at each workplace. In addition, risk estimation is required to analyse severity and likelihood of anticipated consequences. This helps employers to identify the most critical hazards and to prioritise scarce resources. These features are aligned with the

[10] For example, for maintenance work (Ketola et al., 2001) and wood working (Varonen, 2001)
[11] For example, in waste management (Lamberg, 2014) and ambulance work (Murtonen and Toivonen, 2006)

fact that the employer is responsible of safety and health at work and they must know what the risks are.

Based on the long experiences of different versions of Riski-Arvi, it is evident that employers can take this responsibility. For example, a questionnaire study in 2004 revealed that 80 % of respondent workplaces had conducted occupational risk assessment. In Finland, it is common that workplace risk assessment is conducted parallel and in co-operation with workplace inspections, which are conducted by occupational health care (Savinainen et al., 2014). Occupational health care provides valuable support for workplaces in risk identification, evaluation and monitoring.

Unlike BeSMART, Riski-Arvi is no longer provided by Finnish OSH authorities but by the registered association Centre for Occupational Safety. It is independent from the OSH authorities and gets its funding from accident insurance payments paid by employers through the Finnish Work Environment Fund. In addition to Riski-Arvi, there are several other tools and methods available and applicable to most workplaces (see Annex 2). This increases the choice of risk assessment method for workplaces.

3 Assessment of the success factors and transferability

In spite of effective workplace control and supervision systems, it is impossible to say, how many Finnish workplaces have conducted risk assessments and which of the many tools available have been used. It is widely acknowledged, however, that proactive safety management, which includes risk assessment, is widely applied in large workplaces (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2015). In addition, Anttonen et al (2010) state that different areas of occupational safety and health are relatively well covered in workplace risk assessments. Nevertheless, more training to risk assessment is required and the results of the risk assessments are not sufficiently taken into action.

The strengths and weaknesses of Risk-Arvi are listed in the following table:

Table 1. Strengths and weaknesses of Riski-Arvi

Feature	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
Simple and compact	Easy to use	May lead to overly simplistic analysis
Accessible from many places free-of-charge	Easy to get	-
Long life-span and widely used across several sectors	Usability proven in practice	Old structure and logics need to adapt to many changes
Well-established structure and content and modest modifications	Old assessments comparable to new ones	-
Covers five OSH areas	Comprehensive risk assessment	All areas not equally important to all workplaces
Same content to all	Well-known content	Limited individualisation possibilities
Several applications and online versions available	Freedom to choose	Data compatibility between applications

Risk assessment is one of the basic requirements that is checked in workplace inspections conducted by the Regional State Administrative Agency (AVI). In 2016, approximately 30 000 workplace inspections were made. Risk assessment was inspected in 13 823 workplaces, and in 3 823 (28 %) cases employer was requested to improve it. In these cases, risk assessment had not been done or it had been outdated or insufficient. This does not give the full picture of Finnish workplaces, however, since the inspections are targeted to those workplaces that are known or suspected of having problems in OSH aspects.

The biggest barrier against transferability of BeSMART in Finland is due to the language, origin of the tool and cultural differences. Finnish employers want to have OSH tools in Finnish, provided by Finnish organisations and experts, whom they know and trust. Only a small minority of workplaces request English tools, and many Finnish risk assessment tools are already available in Swedish and English (see Annex 2). Finnish providers are preferred because of the language but also because of data security. The Finnish providers are known and trusted by the companies and they are also easier to approach than foreign providers. They are also familiar with long OSH

traditions in Finland. Also data security issues are important, especially with SaaS (software-as-a-service). Many companies do not actually know where the data of online services is stored, but it is easier for them to discuss data security issues with Finnish service providers using their own language.

In Finland, provision of online tools has not significantly increased risk assessments in workplaces. This is due to 15 years of risk assessment history and various tools that were available in print - groundwork had already been done before the introduction of the internet which explains why online risk assessment tools did not revolutionise risks assessments in Finland.

4 Questions

- Hazard identification and risk estimation should be continuous and not only restricted to filling the risk assessment forms. This includes, for example, daily inspections and risk assessment in planning and preparation of new tasks. How does BeSMART support SMEs in continuous risk assessment?
- Risk assessments easily become outdated, typically in three to four years. Then, they need to be revised and new risk assessments need to be made. The revisions give feedback to the employer on how the risks have changed and how successful the mitigation measures have been. How does BeSMART handle revised risk assessments and version management?
- Since the first digital versions of the Riski-Arvi, there have been concerns on data security, especially because risk information is often sensitive. How does BeSMART ensure data security?

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Annex 1 Summary table

The main points covered by the paper are summarised below.

Situation in the peer country relative to the host country
• 90 % of the Finnish workplaces have less than 10 employees • Labour market is in continuous change and OSH systems need to keep up with the change. • Safety authorities emphasise employers' responsibility of risk assessment and safety management and provide advice, guidance and tools to support the employers. • Safety management practice vary across Finnish companies, but the general awareness of OSH issues is good.
Assessment of the policy measure
• Riski-Arvi has been the leading risk assessment tool in Finland for the last two decades. • It provides hazard checklists in five categories, and includes also tools for risk estimation and documentation. • Online version of the Riski-Arvi was launched in 2013. • Riski-Arvi checklists are included in many commercially available online tools.
Assessment of success factors and transferability
• Several similarities between BeSMART and Riski-Arvi were identified (usability, availability, SMEs, checklists, etc.). • The biggest difference between Riski-Arvi and BeSMART is that Riski-Arvi offers similar content to all workplaces, while BeSMART pre-selects the most relevant hazards for various occupations. • The biggest barriers against transferability of BeSMART in Finland are language, origin of the tool and cultural differences.
Questions to the host country in the Peer Review
• How does BeSMART support SMEs in continuous risk assessment? • How does BeSMART handle revised risk assessments and version management? • How does BeSMART ensure data security?

Annex 2 Example of relevant practice

The following table lists online risk assessment tools in Finland. Most are available also as mobile application:

Name of the tool:	Short description:	Operator:	Web address:
Riski-Arvi	OSH risk assessment	Centre of Occupational Safety	www.turva-arvi.riskiarvi
Granite	OSH risk assessment, enterprise risk management. Includes Riski-Arvi checklists	Granite Partners Ltd	www.granitegrc.com
InstaAudit	OSH risk assessment, ESHQ management platform. Includes Riski-Arvi checklists	LIS Group Ltd	www.instaaudit.com
ZEF	OSH risk assessment, online tests and surveys. Includes Riski-Arvi checklists	ZEF Ltd	www.zef.fi/riskiarvioinnti (only in Finnish)
Atlantis	OSH risk assessment. Includes Riski-Arvi checklists	Atlantis Consulting Ltd.	www.acoy.fi
HSEQ Monitor	OSH risk assessment, safety audits. Includes Riski-Arvi checklists	3T Ratkaisut Ltd	https://www.3tonline.fi/workplace-risk-assessment
T3 Monitor	OSH risk assessment, safety audits. Includes Riski-Arvi checklists	NordSafety Ltd	https://www.nordsafety.com/features/occupational-safety/
Safetum	OSH risk assessment. Includes Riski-Arvi checklists	Safetum Ltd	https://www.safetum.fi/turvallisuushavainnot/tyon-vaarat-riskit/ (only in Finnish)
PIRA	OSH risk assessment. To be launched later in 2017	Finnish Institute of Occupational Health	https://www.ttl.fi/palvelu/pienyrityksen-tyoturvallisuus-pira/ (only in Finnish)

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