

## PREVENTION TRAINING FOR SPOUSES AND/OR OTHER ASSISTANTS IN VERY SMALL FIRMS (VSES) IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

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OPPBTP

Dissemination of a training programme specifically designed for spouses and/or other assistants to facilitate the integration of good preventive practices in health and safety in the management of very small firms in the building industry.

### ✧ PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this project is the testing and validating of a training module, through the training of 300 spouses and/or other assistants, to enable them to identify the best practices for reducing accidents at work and selecting appropriate preventive approaches for VSEs in the building industry.

In France, there are more than 800 000 craftsmen firms and over 40% of the building industry. In 1999, craftsmen firms in the building industry had a turnover of 45 billion euros, i.e. 58% of building industry activity. In this respect, enterprises play a critical role in the development of construction activity.

In essence, enterprises are very small (VSEs), since 250 000 enterprises employ less than 20 workers.

The occupational risks facing both employees and construction contractors are particularly significant in the building industry, and both occupational illnesses and accidents at work have a considerable impact on the family structure of VSEs.

In this sector, where on-the-job training predominates and continuous training is not yet sufficiently developed, spouses and/or other assistants very often play a critical role in the management and development of the enterprise.

It is in this context, and with a view to imparting real preventive expertise, that the French *Organisme professionnel de prévention du bâtiment et des travaux publics* (OPPBTP) has proposed, in partnership with the *Fédération française du bâtiment* (French Building Industry Federation – FFB) and its technical institute (IT-FFB), the dissemination of a training programme specifically designed to ensure that VSE spouses and/or assistants will be able to integrate improved preventive practices into all levels of their organisations.

The programme started with the planning of a training module entitled ‘Prevention training for spouses and/or other assistants of very small enterprises (VSEs) in the building industry’, which includes teaching aids and an instruction course relevant to the target group,

The project is composed of several phases:

1. Organisation of an instructor training course to enable organisers and OPPBTP personnel who are members of the regional committees, to fine-tune their teaching skills and adopt the training module.
2. Scheduling briefing meetings in 25 French “departments”, in partnership with the professional organisation representing the sector, the FFB and IT-FFB. This has the twin aim of enabling spouses and/or other assistants to become aware of best practice in prevention and also ensures compliance with current safety regulations.
3. Organising 25 training courses for 12 trainees (2-days each)
4. Providing follow-up monitoring of the trainees that will permit an assessment of the activities carried out and any necessary changes to the module before it enters widespread use.
5. Deployment of the course by integrating it into the OPPBTP’s range of training services.

## ❖ **WORKPLAN AND TIMETABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

### 1. Last quarter of 2001:

- selection (with the FFB and IT-FFB) of the departments where the experiments will take place;
- selection of organisers from amongst the OPPBTP’s personnel, and initiation of the training course for these organisers.

### 2. January 2002 :

- organisation of the briefing meetings in the regions;
- selection of the 25 chosen French “départments”.

### 3. February/September 2002:

- implementation of 25 training schemes.

### 4. September 2002

- assessment/stocktake.

## ❖ **ACTORS AND PARTNERS**

The OPPBTP has a long experience in designing tools for risk prevention and extensive expertise in training systems. The building industry’s professional organisation, the FFB and IT-FFB, is well placed to inform and mobilise spouses and/or assistants through its network of regional and departmental structures and more particularly through the Groupes “Femmes du Bâtiment” [Building Industry Women’s Groups – GFB]. The project is co-funded by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

## ❖ **MAIN EXPECTED RESULTS/PRODUCTS**

The training of 300 VSE spouses and/or assistants, in cooperation with the professional organisation representing the sector, or in other words:

- ✓ perfecting a training module which will subsequently enable extensive deployment,
- ✓ facilitating the dissemination of prevention management into VSEs through continuous training activities,
- ✓ imparting greater expertise to ‘responsible professional’ spouses and/or other assistants who are natural levers for the development and evolution of this sector,
- ✓ disseminating the basic principles of prevention, safety and improved working conditions.

Using OPPBTP's personnel as training organisers will strengthen their status as it underlines its essential function: "to be a referent and a consultant for the firm concerning subjects connected with accident prevention, safety and the improvement of working conditions".

This project will address the entire building sector, from masonry to decoration and fixtures, covering both new building and restoration. The main risks (falling from a height, risks arising from maintenance, chemical hazards, etc.) are all represented.

The contacts established between the course organiser, the regional actor and the trainees will encourage the development of closer links between firms and facilitate the technical and organisational changes necessitated by the implementation of these best practices in the field of prevention.