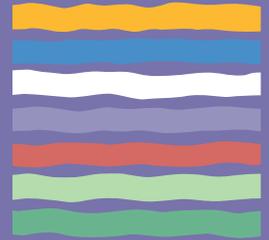
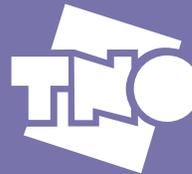


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**Protecting Workers  
Health Series  
No 2**

# **Understanding and Performing Economic Assessments at the Company Level**



**WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION**

**Protecting Workers'  
Health Series  
No 2**

# Understanding and Performing Economic Assessments at the Company Level

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# Preface

This document is the second in a series of occupational health documents entitled: *Protecting Workers' Health*. It is published by the World Health Organization (WHO) within the Global Programme of Occupational Health. It is the result of the implementation effort of the Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All as agreed upon at the Fourth Network Meeting of the WHO Collaborating Centres in Occupational Health which was held in Espoo, Finland from 7-9 June 1999.

The text was prepared by TNO Work and Employment, a service organization in the areas of innovation of work, organization and technology, and employment research. TNO is a WHO Collaborating Centre in Occupational Health, and a member of the European Association of National Productivity Centres. The document was sponsored in part by the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Improvement of safety and health of workers can bring appealing economic benefits for both companies and societies as a whole. It is difficult, however, to convince employers and decision makers of the profitability of improving working conditions. An effective way is to make financial or economic estimations. This publication describes a hands-on approach that can be used in making economic assessments. After a brief introduction in Chapter 1, the most important pitfalls and explanations about relevant principles are summarized in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 4 provides practical outlines. References and suggestions for further reading are listed in Chapter 5.

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# Introduction

# 1

## 1.1 Background

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By means of economic appraisal, the costs and the benefits of health, environment and safety management can be made clear at the national level, at the company level and also for the individual worker. As such it can be a useful tool in advocating good practices. Economic appraisal also shows under which circumstances economic benefits will not be sufficient for prompting preventive action in enterprises.

In recent years, a number of methods and tools for assessing the costs and benefits of occupational health have been developed. Also estimations of national costs have been made in several countries. International comparisons of methodologies and studies on relevant variables in cost-benefit assessments (at company and national level) have shown that many fundamental and practical differences exist in the purpose of eco-

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