



European Construction Sector Observatory

Policy fact sheet

Germany

AMS-BAU – Occupational Safety and Health
Management System

Thematic objectives 2, 4 & 5

February 2020



In a nutshell

Implementing body	Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Building Trade (<i>Berufsgenossenschaft der Bauwirtschaft – BG BAU</i>)
Key features & objectives	Industry-specific and cost-neutral Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS) designed to help BG BAU members to set up and manage their OSH procedures.
Implementation date	2003 – ongoing
Targeted beneficiaries	BG BAU corporate members (1,029 members currently have a valid certification)
Targeted sub-sectors	All construction sub-sectors
Budget (EUR) ¹	BG BAU member companies pay BG BAU for insurance products and receive access to AMS BAU at no extra cost.
Good practice	★★★★☆
Transferability	★★★★★

As a statutory occupational accident insurance provider² (*Träger der Unfallversicherung*) in Germany, the Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Building Trade (*Berufsgenossenschaft der Bauwirtschaft - BG BAU*) is subject to public law and state supervision. BG BAU activities, products and services all comply with national legislation (e.g. NFL and SGB VII)³, and are driven by the construction sector’s main requirements, concerns and standards. The Occupational Safety and Health Management System – OSHMS or *Arbeitsschutz mit System – AMS BAU*⁷ in German – is one example of such standards.

As part of its tasks and obligations, BG BAU is responsible for providing its members with all of the necessary information, tools and mechanisms for the prevention of risks, hazards and accidents. BG BAU also has a commitment to provide advice on new regulations, best practices and ‘to-do’ activities to improve OSH at work.

An Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS) is a toolbox for monitoring, evaluating and improving a company’s occupational safety and health (OSH) structures, strategies, plans and processes.

The German OSHMS concept was developed in 2002 through the National Guide for OSH Management Systems (*Nationalen Leitfaden für Arbeitsschutzmanagementsysteme – NFL*)⁴. It adheres to ILO-OSH-2001⁵, which is a unique international model designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to guide the implementation of OSH actions at national and business level, as well as the general provisions of the OSH Act⁶ introduced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Bundesministeriums für Arbeit und Soziales – BMAS*) in 1996.

Since the introduction of the National Guideline as a framework and mechanism for the definition, regulation and standardisation of generic and sector-specific OSH management systems in Germany, statutory accident insurance providers, such as BG BAU, have been able to design, develop and improve different OSH management systems following well-accepted ideas, principles and methodologies.

AMS BAU⁷ is an innovative solution that enables construction companies to set up and manage OSH procedures in a cost-efficient manner. Because it is sector-specific, AMS BAU is perceived as a more relevant OHS management system than other (cross-sectoral) German examples. It features a voluntary and free of charge 11-step OSH management methodology that all BG BAU members can access to set up, manage, evaluate and improve their own OSH structures, measures and objectives. Once AMS BAU has been successfully implemented, companies can obtain a three-year certification to demonstrate their compliance with the highest OSH standards and best practices.

AMS BAU has been welcomed by construction companies in Germany due to the advantages it provides, in terms of image and compliance. The

AMS BAU incorporates the core aspects of other national and international OHSMS and Quality Management Systems (QMS) (e.g. SCC Checklist 2011, OHSAS 18001:2007, QMS DIN EN ISO 9001:2008, UMS DIN EN ISO 14001:2009-11)⁸. Importantly, it also integrates sector-specific issues and conditions that are not included in other OSH systems, such as constantly changing workplaces, the influence of weather and special contractual agreements in the construction industry.

According to the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin – Baula*)⁹, the introduction of better and more specialised OSH management systems for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) has helped to significantly reduce the number of work-related accidents, including in professions considered to be high risk. Baula statistics show a 44% reduction in the total number of occupational accidents between 2002 and 2017.

1.

General description

The AMS BAU was launched in 2003. Figure 1 shows the AMS BAU concept which is based on an inclusive approach to planning, building, integrating and improving OSH structures and processes. AMS BAU supports the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) measures in BG BAU member companies (largely SMEs), as well as compliance with stricter OSH regulations and accepted standards within the construction sector. The BG BAU is responsible for its implementation.

Figure 1: AMS BAU Concept



Source: BG BAU (2015), p.30¹⁰

AMS BAU is a practice-oriented management system that incorporates specific requirements for improving health and safety at work within the construction industry. AMS BAU provides an 11-step guideline¹¹ to enable BG BAU members to easily set up and improve their OSH structures, policies and processes. Each step includes: an explanation of the objectives and expected results; a well-defined procedure for implementation; supporting documentation; and a to-do-list for tracking company processes and activities throughout implementation.

The 11-step method is shown in Table 1. It incorporates national and international concepts and regulations for the definition, improvement and assessment of accurate OSH management systems (e.g. National Guide to Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems – NFL, Security Certificate Contractors Checklist - SCC, Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series – OHSAS

18001)¹². More than 80% of the topics covered by the guidelines are related to legal requirements¹³.

Table 1: AMS BAU – OSH implementation method

AMS BAU 11-Step Methodology
1. Set up a safety policy;
2. Define health and safety targets;
3. Establish an organisational structure with responsibilities and tasks;
4. Control information flow and cooperation, identifying legal and other requirements;
5. Identify and assess hazards, deriving and implementing measures, controlling;
6. Regulations in case of emergencies;
7. Procurement;
8. Select and cooperate with subcontractors;
9. Preventive occupational medical care;
10. Training and qualifications;
11. Monitor results and review of health and safety structure and procedures.

Source: BG BAU¹⁴

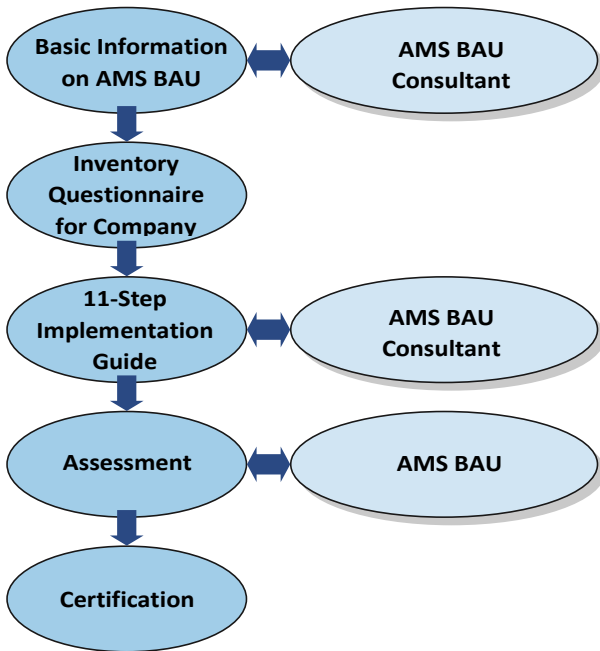
In addition to be a source of information and guidance for companies on OSH process integration and management, AMS BAU is also a cost-effective mechanism that enables companies to assess effectiveness of their OSH processes and structures¹⁵.

Upon successful implementation of AMS BAU, companies receive certification that is valid for three years. Certification demonstrates their compliance with the rules and regulations that govern safe and healthy working conditions within the sector.

The AMS BAU procedural principle to advise and certify companies, as shown in Figure 2, is in accordance with the overarching procedural principle of OSH systems and certifications established by the German Statutory Accident Insurance (Deutschen Gesetzlichen Unfallversicherung - DGUV). The procedural

principle also includes key content from the DIN EN ISO/IEC 17021 and 19011 standards¹⁶.

Figure 2: AMS BAU Procedural Principle



Source: BG BAU (2015), p.7¹⁷

AMS BAU application and assessment is voluntary and free of charge for BG BAU members. Companies can request an assessment of their OSH management systems at any time. BG BAU will determine a person or a team to carry out the assessment.

The assessment is conducted in two stages¹⁸:

- The first stage involves the analysis of the documents provided by BG BAU to the company to assess its situation (e.g. Inventory Questionnaire). Reviewers assess the capability of company to proceed to the second stage;
- The second stage is an interview-based assessment that is conducted within the company. As part of the second stage, BG BAU conducts an audit of the organisation with the participation of a local representative and

evaluates implementation in one or more work places.

Upon completion of both stages, the reviewer provides a report to the Evaluation Committee, summarising the main findings and recommendations for improvement. Based on the information provided, the Evaluation Committee decides whether or not to grant certification.

Companies with AMS BAU certification are allowed to use the AMS BAU logo for business purposes. Although certification is issued for a period of three years, companies must provide proof of the continuity of their OSH systems through the annual “Internal Review Notice”.

The benefits of AMS BAU certification include:

- Improved of cost structure through the use of appropriate preventive measures;
- Demonstrable settlement of external claims;
- Compliance with national regulations and international standards;
- More efficient and motivated employees due to better working conditions;
- Brand improvement as a result of AMS BAU certification;
- Continuous analysis and improvement of operational processes;
- Industry-specific solution.

For those companies that aim to renew AMS BAU certification, BG BAU provides an economic incentive. Companies can obtain a premium of EUR 2,000 for the first renewal. Subsequent renewals are rewarded with a premium of EUR 1,000. These premiums are not available to first time applicants. In addition, a company that is granted a certification with a limited validity after a reassessment is not allowed to claim the economic reward offered by BG BAU¹⁹.

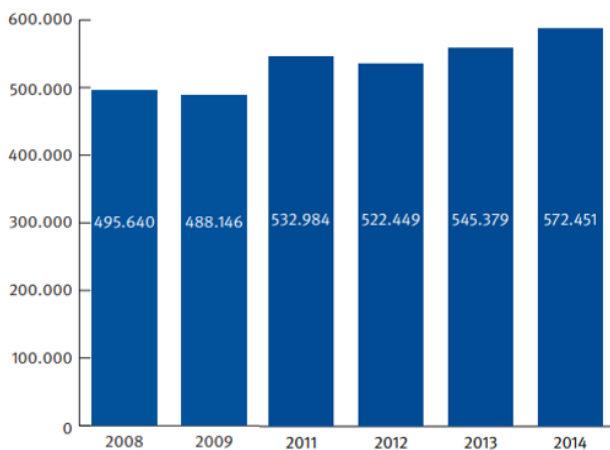
2.

Achieved or expected results

As the statutory accident insurance for the construction industry and construction-related services in Germany, BG BAU extended its services and operations over the last decade. Since its constitution, BG BAU has not only increased the number of companies and individuals affiliated to the institution, but also has extended the total number of employees insured per year, the advisory services in the field of OSH management systems and the AMS BAU certifications granted.

Between 2008 and 2014, the number of BG BAU members grew by 5.4%, as shown in Figure 3. The number of employees insured also grew by 3.35%, from 2.64 million to 2.7 million²⁰. This was due to increased investment in new construction projects in Germany, especially for building construction and urban development. According to 2019 data published by German Trade & Invest (GTAI), construction sector investments grew by about EUR 20 billion between 2007 and 2015, which is an increase of 14.6%²¹.

Figure 3: Total BG BAU members (2008 to 2014)

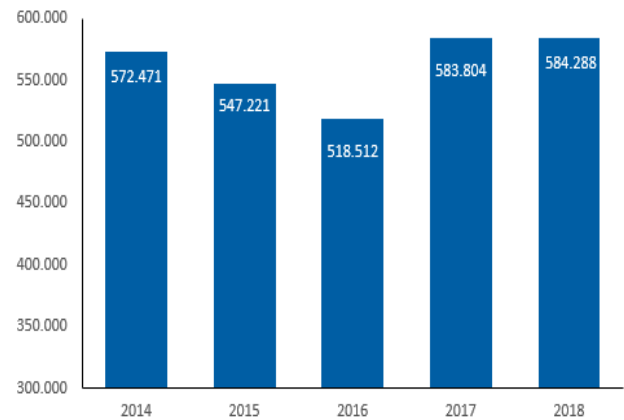


Source: BG BAU, 2012 & 2016²²

Between 2014 and 2016, the total number of members fell by 9.4%, as shown in Figure 4. The contraction was largely due to a decrease in the number of affiliated companies, down from 497,913 in 2014 to 465,686 in 2016²³. In terms of core

members, the fall was about 5.9%. However, in the same period, the number of insured employees increased by about 3.3%. In addition, the number of entrepreneurs of non-commercial construction work affiliations increased by 18.7%, up from 44,504 in 2014 to 52,826 in 2016²⁴.

Figure 4: Total BG BAU members (2014 to 2018)



Source: BG BAU, 2016 & 2018²⁵

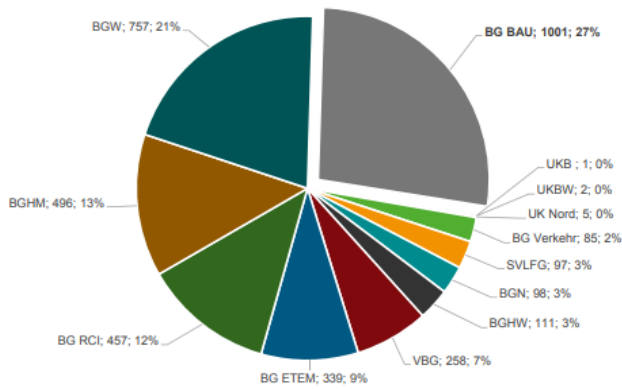
After 2016, construction activity has increased. This is due to attractive government incentives provided to companies and entrepreneurs in Germany, especially for efficient construction and renovation²⁶, as well as other factors such as demographic change, economic confidence and digitalisation. As result, BG BAU affiliations grew by 12.7% between 2016 and 2018²⁷.

Special services and initiatives such as AMS BAU have produced positive results for BG BAU in recent years. Since the introduction of the AMS BAU concept in 2003, more than 2,780 German companies within the construction sector have received advice from BG BAU on how to properly set up, manage and improve their occupational safety and health (OSH) structures, policies and practices²⁸.

The AMS BAU methodology and assessment is recognised by accident insurance institutions across Germany. BG BAU leads the assessment and certification of OSH management systems within

the construction sector with a market share of 27%, as shown in Figure 5. The second most significant is the Professional Association for Health and Welfare (BGW - Berufsgenossenschaft für Gesundheitsdienst und Wohlfahrtspflege), which has a market share of 21%²⁹.

Figure 5: OSHMS assessments - market share, 2018

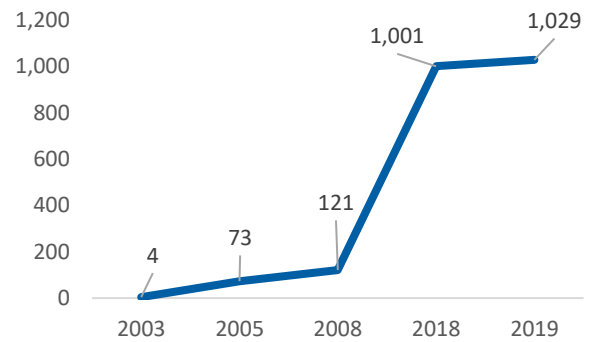


Source: BG BAU, 2019³⁰

OSH management system implementation is becoming more appealing to construction companies. Beyond complying with stricter regulations, the appeal stems from the tangible benefits it delivers, from process improvement, safer conditions, greater cost efficiency and greater brand recognition.

AMS BAU applications continue to grow steadily, year on year, as shown in Figure 6. In 2003, for example, in the year of its launch, only 4 companies applied to use AMS BAU. By 2008, the number of applications had risen to 121. By 2019, AMS BAU had assessed and certified a total of 1,029 companies³¹. Within a decade, AMS BAU applications have increased by about 750%.

Figure 6: AMS BAU assessments / re-assessments



Source: Donker, L., BG BAU, 2009³²

According to BG BAU statistics (2019), companies demonstrate different success rates during the AMS BAU review, based on their size. Companies with more than 500 employees have the highest success rate. 23% of those types of companies have been awarded AMS BAU certification in recent years. Companies with 21 to 49 employees have the second highest success rate (21%)³³, followed by companies with 250 to 499 employees (15%).

BG BAU’s main goals in the coming years are to grow its membership base and to increase the number of AMS BAU assessments, with a view to certifying a larger number of companies. To achieve these goals, BG BAU needs to make members more aware of the benefits of being AMS BAU certified. According to a supervisor at a government administration company, *Unfallkasse Berlin*, there is a lack of awareness among many BG BAU members about how to implement AMS BAU, and what type and level of support they can expect to receive from BG BAU, in terms of advice and assistance³⁴.

3.

Perspectives and lessons learned

Notwithstanding the fact that German companies are bound by law (*Sozialgesetzbuch - SGB VII*)³⁵ to use the services of a statutory accident insurance provider and must ensure effective implementation of OSH policies and measures within their organisation (Occupational Safety and Health Act), they are not legally required to implement any specific OSHMS.

For many years, German companies have viewed OSH regulations and measures as a burden on their business activities³⁶, mainly because they demand key resources such as time and financial resources. However, following the introduction of the National Guide for OSH Management Systems (NFL), cost-effective OSH management and improvement solutions, such as AMS BAU and the German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (*Gemeinsame Deutsche Arbeitsschutzstrategie - GDA*), have helped companies to better understand the benefits of OSH practices.

An OSH management system such as AMS BAU delivers significant return on investment.

A cost-benefit assessment of OSH management systems in Germany, conducted by the Administrative Professional Association (*Verwaltungs – Berufsgenossenschaft – VBG*) in 2015, found that for each euro a company invests in an OSH management system, it is able to generate EUR 2.5 in revenue³⁷.

By implementing an OSH management system such as AMS BAU, companies can demonstrate their commitment to safe and healthy working conditions and practices, as well as their compliance with industry-specific standards and regulations.

According to the Piepenbrock Group (2017), Hofmann Betonteile GmbH (2017) and Schneider Bau (2018), AMS BAU has helped their businesses to

achieve significant benefits, from reduced accident rates to improved employee well-being and motivation, and more effective OSH policies and practices³⁸.

An OSH management system such as AMS BAU can help a company to significantly reduce accidents in the workplace.

According to the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin – Bauba*), effective OSH management systems, policies and practices have enabled German companies to achieve a 44% reduction in the total number of accidents at work between 2002 and 2017³⁹.

AMS BAU is a comprehensive and practical OSH management solution for the construction industry.

According to the Managing Director at Matthias Ruppert Bauunternehmen, AMS BAU has enabled the company to fully integrate a functional, systematic and coherent management system within their business culture and structure⁴⁰. AMS BAU incorporates key aspects relevant to the construction industry, aligning principles and requirements for OSH management and improvement.

In spite of the business value of OSH management systems such as AMS BAU, many companies are unaware of the benefits these types of systems can deliver.

According to the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health – IFA (2018)⁴¹, less than 20% of German companies have effective OSH policies and practices in place, nor the means to continuously improve them. Indeed, BG BAU reported in 2019⁴² that many of their member companies are unaware of the benefits of a system like AMS BAU and the implementation support services BG BAU provides.

4.

Conclusion and recommendations

AMS BAU has been recognised by German statutory insurance providers, public institutions and companies as an effective OSH management solution that meets the specific needs and requirements of the construction sector. AMS BAU is considered to be a robust, well-accepted and dynamic OSH management system that enables companies to set up, manage and improve their OSH structures, policies and practices in a manner that is systematic and structured.

Although AMS BAU implementation is voluntary, as in the case of other OSH management systems, an increasing number of companies understand the value it can deliver to their businesses. Feedback from AMS BAU users indicates that the system is providing them with the support they need to improve their OSH practices. AMS BAU complies with both national guidelines and regulations, and international standards and best practices. In fact, more than 80% of the activities and core procedures described and proposed within the AMS BAU Guideline are specifically designed to cover regulatory terms and conditions.

By 2003, BG BAU has supported more than 2,780 companies through the AMS BAU integration process and has granted more than 1,029 AMS BAU certifications to companies of different sizes. AMS BAU has become the leading OSH management solution provider within the construction sector, with a market share of 27%.

However, in spite of its success, interest in AMS BAU remains relatively limited compared to the number of companies in the German construction sector. According to the Federal Office of Statistics, Destatis (2019)⁴³, there were 8,448 companies in the narrow construction sector in 2018, and more than 700,000 in the broad construction sector. With 3,811 construction companies having attained an OSH management system certification, the potential market for AMS BAU is extremely large.

Looking forward, two recommendations are suggested to help improve the impact of AMS BAU:

- More detailed information on AMS BAU should be made available to help companies to better understand the AMS BAU concept and system, its value and benefits, and the implementation support services available for BG BAU members;
- To increase awareness amongst members and the impact of AMS BAU in the market, BG BAU should develop a more effective marketing strategy to disseminate AMS BAU results and success stories. This would help to generate higher levels of engagement, understanding and interest, leading to greater market impact.

Overall, AMS BAU is rated as a '4-star good practice measure' on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

This score is based on the value and benefits that AMS BAU is delivering to its users, on the basis of their feedback. In addition, AMS BAU implementations have grown steadily year on year. At the same time, the number of AMS BAU certified companies accounts for a minor share of potential clients in the German construction sector. With a more effective marketing strategy, there is potential for AMS BAU to achieve a 5-star 'good practice' score.

AMS BAU is rated as a '5-star transferable measure' on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

This score is based on the fact that AMS BAU is an effective OSH solution that is both industry-specific for the German construction sector, and compliant with international regulations and standards. AMS BAU as a whole system, or elements of it, are certainly transferable to countries that do not yet have similar measures or systems in place.

Endnotes

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