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Description automatically generated**RIAL/OAS BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE BAHAMAS AND THE SECRETARY OF LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY OF ARGENTINA ON DRONE INTEGRATION IN LABOR INSPECTIONS**

**Coordination meeting:** April 26, 2024

**First session:** June 5, 2024

**Second Session:** July 3, 2024

**Third session:** September 11, 2024

All information on this cooperation is available here:

<https://rialnet.org/?q=en/Bahamas_Argentina_LaborInspections>

(Version: August 2 – Open to comments from the Ministries – This document will be updated as the exchange progresses)

**CONTENTS**

1. Overview………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 1
2. Objectives and product…………………………………………………………………………………..… 2
3. Methodology.………………………………………………………………………………………..……….... 2
4. Cooperation sessions—proposed contents and agendas.……………………………….… 3
5. Participants………………………………………………………………………………………..…………….. 6

**OVERVIEW:**

The Bilateral Cooperation Activity between the Ministry of Labour and the Public Service of **The Bahamas** and the Secretariat of Labor, Employment and Social Security (STEySS, for its acronym in Spanish) of **Argentina** on drone integration in labor inspections was selected in the framework of the 17th Call of the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) of the OAS in April 2024, to be carried out virtually.

The RIAL, coordinated by the Organization of American States (OAS), seeks to strengthen the institutional and human capacities of the Ministries of Labor of the Americas through cooperation and technical assistance among them. More information at: <https://rialnet.org>

**OBJECTIVES AND PRODUCT**

**General objective** (as stated in the proposal):Bilateral cooperation will facilitate the exchange of knowledge, training, and capacity building for the Bahamas regarding the integration of drone technology in occupational safety and health inspections.

**Specific objectives:**

* Basic knowledge on general drone usage and care
* Knowledge of specific drone models used in OSH inspections
* Knowledge of policies and authorizations needed to operate a drone in the workplace
* Learn theories to keep drones stabilized during flights
* Learn how to collect drone data
* Learn the potential risks and hazards associated with drones’ usage

**Final product:** Document identifying the key components, elements and lessons learned from Argentina’s experience that can be adapted to The Bahamas’ context regarding the use of drones in labor inspection.

**METHODOLOGY**

The virtual exchange will be carried out following the methodology defined by the RIAL-OAS and discussed at the coordination meeting.

1. Coordination meeting to define contents: Was held on Abril 26 with the participation of both Ministries and the OAS, as well as the Permanent Mission of The Bahamas to the OAS, with the objective of meeting the participating teams, and defining contents and dates of cooperation sessions based on the expectations and interests of The Bahamas and strengths from the experience of Argentina.
2. Exchange of documents and information: Both entities will exchange the information they consider pertinent to meet the objectives of the cooperation prior to the first session and throughout the cooperation. The OAS will make this information available to delegations on the cooperation website.
3. Cooperation sessions: Three (3) virtual cooperation sessions will be held, with a duration of 2 to 3 hours, this could be modified during the course of the exchange. The "Zoom" platform of the Department of Human Development, Education, and Employment of the OAS will be used.
4. Preparation of the final product: Throughout the cooperation sessions, the Ministry of Labor of the Bahamas will be working on the product, which will receive feedback from Argentina.

**COOPERATION SESSIONS — CONTENTS AND AGENDAS**

In the coordination meeting held on April 26, the dates for the cooperation sessions were agreed upon. Additionally, it was decided that the cooperation will primarily consist of training provided by Argentina to the team from the Bahamas, covering general information about the inspection system, the basics of the modernization strategy, the incorporation of drones, and the development of the relevant manual, among other topics.

*Prior to the first session, Argentina shared documents and information relevant to the development of the cooperation sessions, such as the General Protocol for the Operation of Filming Devices in Labor Inspection and the Manual of Internal Procedure - Inspection of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, related to the incorporation of technologies and specifically the use of drones in labor inspection.*

1. **FIRST SESSION — June 5, 2024:** In the first session, an introductory presentation was led by the STEySS of Argentina on the general scope of labor inspection in the country and the use of new technologies in the inspection process. The presentation covered the following points:

* The National Directorate of Inspection of the STEySS of Argentina presented and introduction the country's inspection procedure, highlighting the guiding principles (ILO Conventions 81 and 129); the distribution of competencies and the powers of the Ministry of Labor and the Provincial Administrations; and describing the major stages of the procedure.
* The Argentine team also shared their journey in incorporating ICTs into labor inspection, which began in 2010. They highlighted significant technological developments such as the creation of the National Labor Regularization Plan (PNRT for its acronym in Spanish) application –which records inspection procedure –; the Management of Inspection Orders (GOI for its acronym in Spanish) application –which registers complaints and inspection requests online–; the digitization of files and the use of digital signatures. It was highlighted that the incorporation of these technologies help reduce errors in information processing, optimize processing times, and ensure the security of information obtained during inspections, among other benefits.
* A practical demonstration of an online audit registration in the PNRT-Digital Inspector application was provided. The demonstration covered the required fields for company and worker information and explained the connection modes: an online mode that allows simultaneous computer cross-checks with the Federal Administration of Public Revenues (AFIP for its acronym in Spanish), the National Social Security Administration (ANSES for its acronym in Spanish), and the STEySS server, and an offline mode that saves recorded information until it can be synchronized with the corresponding systems.
* Throughout the session, the Argentine delegation shared lessons learned from incorporating new technologies into labor inspection:
  + The incorporation of new technologies significantly changed the working methods of many inspectors, who were used to working with traditional tools such as paper and pen. This leads to resistance from the inspectors and new forms of approach by the Directorate of Inspection to encourage change.
  + The need to face the challenges (including resistance to change) brought about by the incorporation of new technologies. For example, to familiarize inspectors with the changes, training and information sessions were held in the different regions of the country. The importance of the presence of the central (federal) government at the territorial level was highlighted.
  + The importance of interdisciplinarity and involving inspectors in the planning and testing of the incorporation of new technologies, since they are the ones using them during their work.

***Between the first and second sessions****:* The MTSP of the Bahamas started developing the final product for the cooperation.

1. **SECOND SESSION — July 3, 2024:** In this second session, the STEySS of Argentina made a presentation divided into two modules: (i) introduction to video inspection and (ii) operational aspects of video inspection:

* In the first module, key concepts about video inspection were addressed, along with the types of devices that can be used for it (DRONES and UAV). Since the use of drones is regulated by the National Civil Aviation Administration of Argentina, the STEySS presented the key regulations on the matter, including the registration of UAVs and the requirements for the remote crew operating them. Additionally, relevant provisions of the General Protocol for the Operation of Filming Devices in the field of Labor Inspection were presented.
* In the second module, operational aspects of using drones in inspections were addressed, including the activities in which they are used (for example, inspection in rural areas and difficult-to-access locations), the types of drone flights, and the general procedure for their use. Additionally, the STEySS explained the approach that inspectors in charge of drone operations should take, as well as the particular considerations for special matters such as inspections related to child labor, human trafficking, workplace safety and hygiene, and specific situations like using drone-captured images in cases of inspection obstruction.
* In both modules, the interrelationship between video inspection and the use and protection of the data collected was highlighted. The STEySS presented the regulations on the protection of personal data, emphasizing the need for prior consent from the inspected party before taking images.
* At the end of the session, the Argentine delegation emphasized three important aspects of the Procedure Manual:
  + The importance and need for drone pilots to also be inspectors were highlighted, although this is not mandatory according to the Manual. If the drone pilot is not an inspector, the Manual specifies that during the drone inspection, they must always be accompanied by an inspector to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure.
  + The inspector plays a fundamental role in protecting the images obtained through the use of drones. The images remain in their custody in a sealed envelope until they are delivered to the administrative headquarters, and their receipt is formalized by means of a record.
  + Both inspection reports and obstruction reports that may be issued during the inspection must be signed by the drone's pilot inspector. This allows for the traceability of inspection actions carried out with drones, ensuring compliance with the required legality and preventing them from being questioned by administrative or judicial authorities.

***Between the second and third sessions:***

* *The Bahamas will continue developing the final product.*
* ***By August 28 at the latest:*** *The Bahamas will send the preliminary version of the final product and, if necessary, any additional queries or aspects they wish to delve into during the 3rd session.*

1. **THIRD SESSION — September 11, 2024:** The emphasis of the third and final cooperation session is on the use of drones in labor inspection, as well as the training of inspectors for their use. The agenda proposed by Argentina covers the following points:

* Presentation of drone pilots and explanation of the course for obtaining the license
* Exhibition of videos (case studies) of drone use in Labor Inspection
* Presentation by the Superintendence of Labor Risks

In addition, during this last session of cooperation, The Bahamas will present the preliminary version of the final product developed *(preliminary because Argentina still presents information in the 3rd session)*, and Argentina will provide feedback and address additional queries to contribute to strengthening and finalizing said product.

**PARTICIPANTS**

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