

Strengthening Motorcycle Safety Globally

Key Takeaways from the UNRSF Autoliv Roundtable on 25 June 2024

I. Introduction

This document highlights the critical need for improved motorcycle safety globally, drawing on insights from the roundtable discussion “Strengthening Motorcycle Safety Globally” co-hosted by Autoliv and the UN Road Safety Fund, to be addressed through the Fund capacity building under the 2024 Call for Proposals.

II. Why Motorcycle Safety Matters?

Motorcycle fatalities and injuries are a global issue. According to the latest Global Status Report on Road Safety (2023), 30% of all road deaths involve powered two- and three-wheelers (PTW). Southeast Asia carries a significant burden, with nearly 50% of motorcycle fatalities occurring in the region. Low- and middle-income countries are especially affected due to limited access to safe helmets and regulations.

III. Gaps and Challenges in Motorcycle Safety

The roundtable discussion identified several key challenges hindering progress in motorcycle safety:

- **Helmet Usage:**

Despite legislation in some regions, helmet usage remains low, especially for pillion passengers,¹ due to cultural factors, discomfort, and the prevalence of counterfeit or unsafe helmets that fail to meet related UN motorcycle helmet safety requirements². Lack of quality helmets discourages the use of helmets because those available on the market are felt useless.

- **Regulations and Standards:**

¹ Notwithstanding transportation of children as pillion passengers shall be discouraged in local legislations, children are frequently pillion passengers on PTW. UN Regulations No. 22, 05 and 06 provide requirements for helmets fitting children's head sizes.

² UN motorcycle helmets safety requirements are laid down in UN Regulation No. 22 - 05

Variations in motorcycle safety standards and features across regions that are not aligned to UN Regulatory framework create disparities in injury risks. Weak enforcement mechanisms hinder the effectiveness of existing regulations.

- Road safety agencies/Certification laboratories

Lack of road safety agencies and certified laboratories to perform market surveillance tests on helmets (certification/type approval) to verify quality of helmets and establish Conformity of Production policies with helmet manufacturers.

- Data and Research:

Fragmented or insufficient data on motorcycle crashes limits informed decision-making for policy and infrastructure interventions. Limited research exists on effective interventions tailored to the specific needs of low—and middle-income countries.

- Affordability and Accessibility:

Essential safety equipment, like airbags, may be cost-prohibitive for many motorcycle users in low- and middle-income countries, while high-quality helmets could be made available at acceptable costs³. Additionally, the lack of training programmes for safe motorcycle riding further exacerbates the problem.

- Lack of Multi-Modal Transport Planning:

Infrastructure often prioritizes cars, neglecting the needs of motorcycle users.

IV. Motorcycle Safety Project Ideas for PUNOs: Inspired by the Roundtable Discussions

Safe System Approach toward Motorcycle Safety:

- Package of motorcycle safety measures aligned with the safe system approach tailored to countries' needs. As an example, given by ACEM, a safe system approach towards motorcycle safety could include the information from the graphic below. In addition to periodic technical inspection of motorcycles or mandatory fitting of ABS on motorcycles.

³ Retail prices of below USD 20.- for UN Regulation No. 22-05 approved helmets are evident.

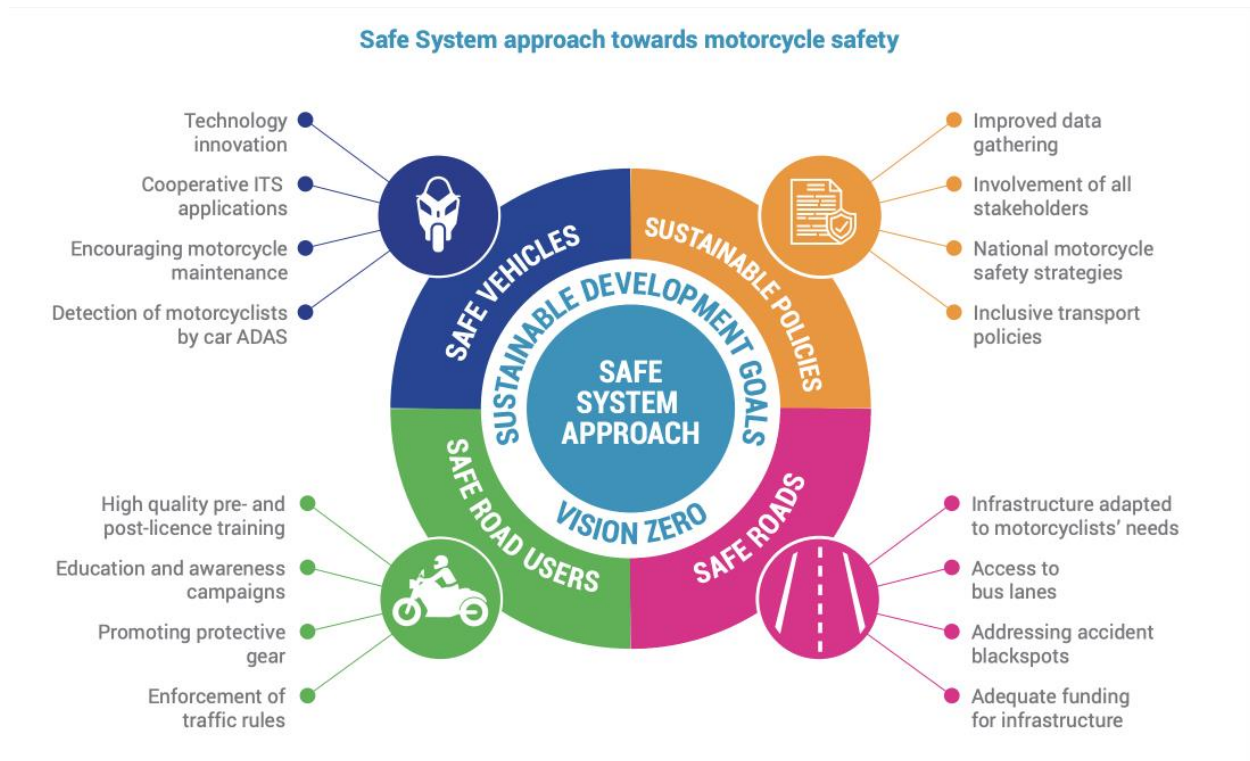


Figure 1 <https://roadsafetystrategy.acem.eu/assets/Files/Safe-Systems-Infographic.pdf>

Harmonize Motorcycle Regulations:

- Advocate for the adoption of UN Vehicle Regulations (WP.29).
- Promote the assessment of countries' compliance with vehicle inspection and helmet UN Regulations, based on the development of the relevant technical criteria.
- Promote mutual recognition of vehicle inspections across regions.
- Encourage globally consistent safety features for motorcycles.
- Strategy dedicated to the enhancement of safety requirements for PTW.
- Interventions promoting lawful road user behaviour.

Improve Helmet Wearability and Affordability:

- Develop regional programmes to combat helmet counterfeiting, aligned with UN type approval systems, wherever applicable.
- Design and pilot of a taxation on non-compliant helmets, in partnership with WIPO.
- Advocate for legislation requiring mandatory use of UN-approved helmets.
- Partner with manufacturers to increase the affordability of UN-approved helmets.
- Implement consumer awareness campaigns on the importance of helmet quality. Consider the role of industry in creating demand for UN-approved helmets and gear.

Enhance Data Collection and Policymaking:

- Design a national data collection strategy for PTW safety.
- Utilize data to identify high-risk areas and behaviours for targeted interventions.
- Develop evidence-based policies to address specific motorcycle safety challenges.

Promote Multimodal Transport and Infrastructure:

- Advocate for infrastructure improvements that cater to motorcycles.
- Integrate motorcycles into multimodal transport planning initiatives.
- Encourage the development of safe and dedicated motorcycle lanes.

Advance Motorcycle Safety Technologies:

- Facilitate research and development of life-saving motorcycle safety gear.
- Explore pilot programmes for introducing affordable airbag systems for motorcyclists.
- Promote the adoption of emerging technologies that enhance motorcycle safety.

Additional Ideas:

- Incentivize safe motorcycle ownership through tax breaks or discounts for UN-approved models.
- Partner with the private sector to develop affordable and comfortable safety gear for motorcyclists.
- Advocate for improved emergency medical care systems to address motorcycle crash victims.
- Conduct research on the specific needs of vulnerable motorcycle users like children and the elderly.
- Explore alternative solutions like rent-to-own schemes for UN-approved helmets.
- Advocate for the reduction or removal of taxes and tariffs on UN-approved helmets in low- and middle-income countries, in partnership with UNCTAD.

V. The UNRSF's 2024 Call for Proposal

The UNRSF Secretariat is inviting PUNOs to submit project proposals related to Motorcycle safety under the 2024 Call for Proposal – funding priority 1, in order to address the raising issue of Motorcycle safety in low- and middle-income countries.

Funding Priority 1. Regional programmes that implement road safety laws and standards aligned with UN legal instruments, wherever applicable as follows:

Provide support, to at least 3 countries, at country or city levels, to address key gaps identified in the 2023 Global Status Report on Road Safety (GSRRS), focused on adopting

and or implementing laws and standards aligned with UN legal instruments, wherever applicable, through regional programmes.

Proposals may include:

- *National Road Safety System. Elements of Powered Two Wheelers (PTW) and their users.*
- *Laws or standards on all five key risk factors of speeding, drink-driving, motorcycle helmets, safety belts and child restraint.*
- *Laws mandating all five core areas of safety equipment and related UN Regulations/Global Technical Regulations (GTR).*
- *UN Rules for vehicle inspections (1997 Agreement), UN Regulations/GTR related to motorcycle safety, etc. as set out in international conventions.*
- *Laws or standards requiring periodic maintenance or inspection for roads.*
- *WHO best practices on effective emergency care.*

(Source: UNRSF Application Guidelines. Call For Project Concept Notes 2024)