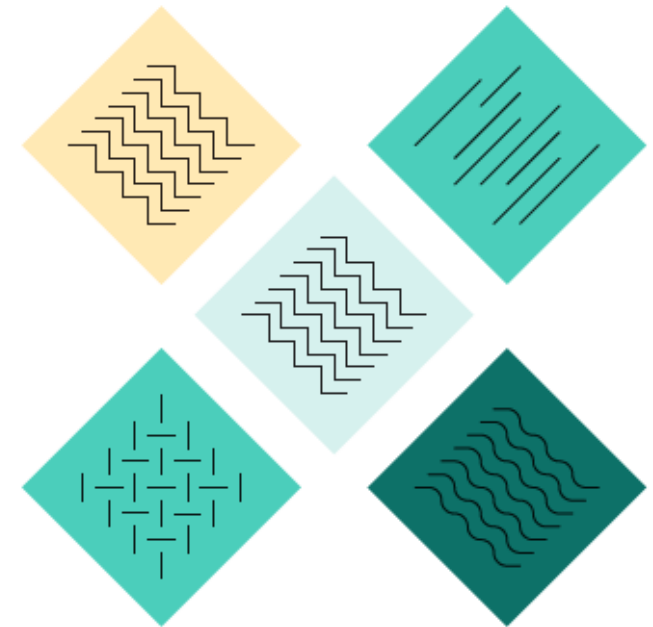# Significance of psychosocial work environment management

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Psychosocial work environment – an increasing risk

- **Fewer injuries and deaths in the workplace, but more emotional stress**

- There has been a marked decrease in injuries and deaths as a result of accidents at work since 1998 (close to a 60% reduction).

- The number of workers who are exposed to physical, chemical, biological and ergonomic factors is flattening out.

- Several employees work in professions where they interact with people. We observe a shift where psychosocial risk factors and emotionally demanding work are becoming more central.

→There has been an increase in psychosocial and emotional

  challenges

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

EN

Occupational safety and health in Europe: state and trends 2023

Summary

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Safety and health at work is everyone's concern. It's good for you. It's good for business.

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# Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and mental health problems

- The most widespread health problems in the population

- Responsible for over 60 percent of sickness absence

- A significant proportion of affected workers claims that the health problems are work-related

- Numerous psychosocial work factors are related to musculoskeletal disorders and mental health problems.

→ The workplace is an important arena for prevention.

- The potential for prevention is significant.

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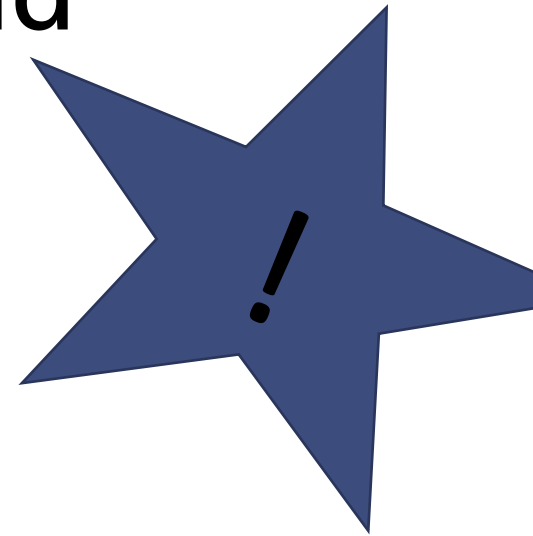
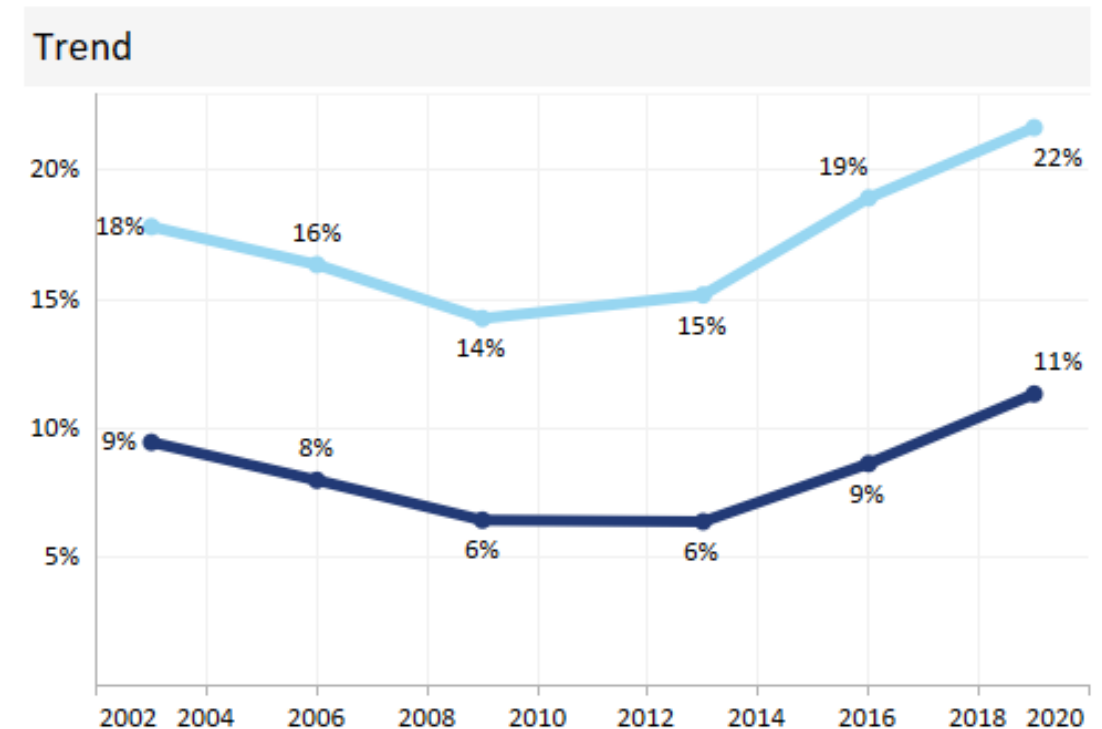# Work related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)
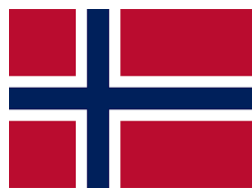
- 68% of all workers in Norway

- 3 out of 5 state that the health problems are work-related

- The largest diagnostic group in Norway: the cause of approx. 40 % of long-term sickness absence

- "It hits the most people and costs the most money"

- Great potential for prevention

Source: STAMI [Forside - STAMI NOA](#)
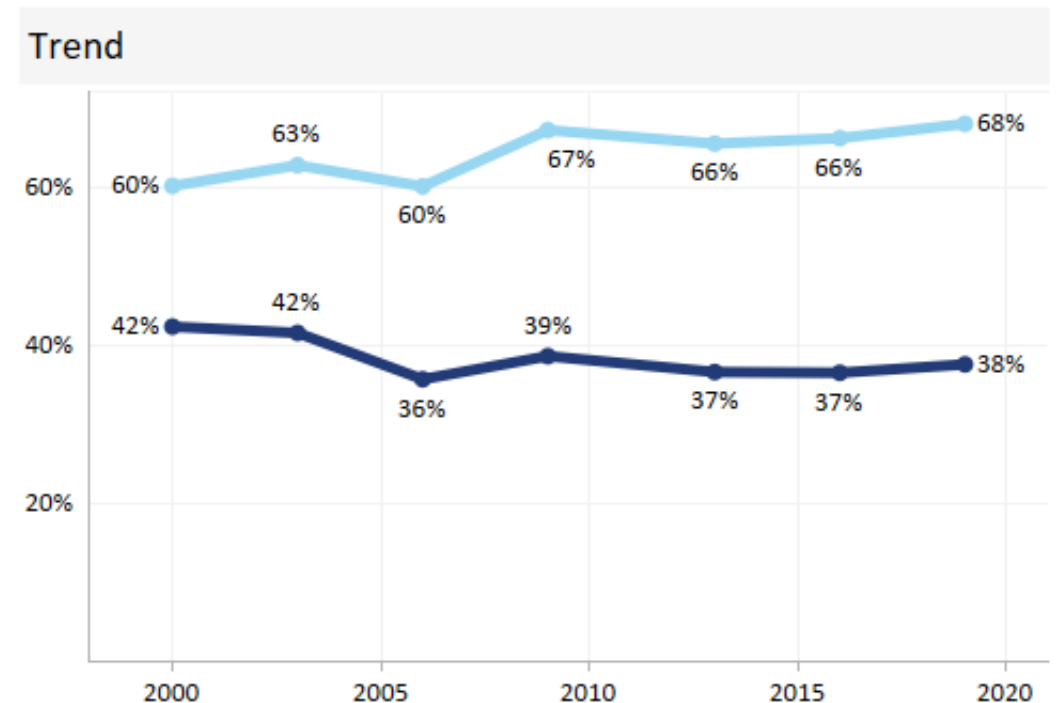
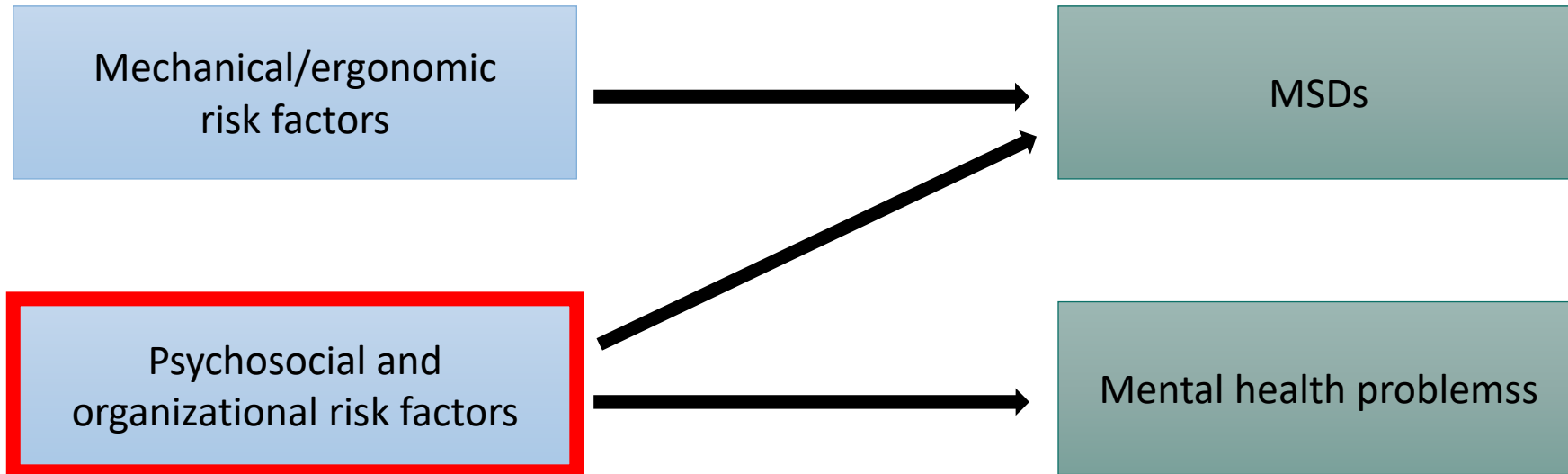

Trend

Work related mental health problems
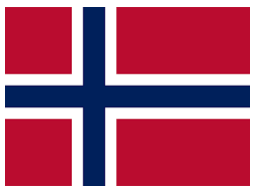
- 22 % of all workers in Norway

- 1 out of 2 states that the problems are work-related

- Cause of 24% of the long-term cases of sick leave (reported by the doctor)

- Increasing trend

- Great potential for prevention

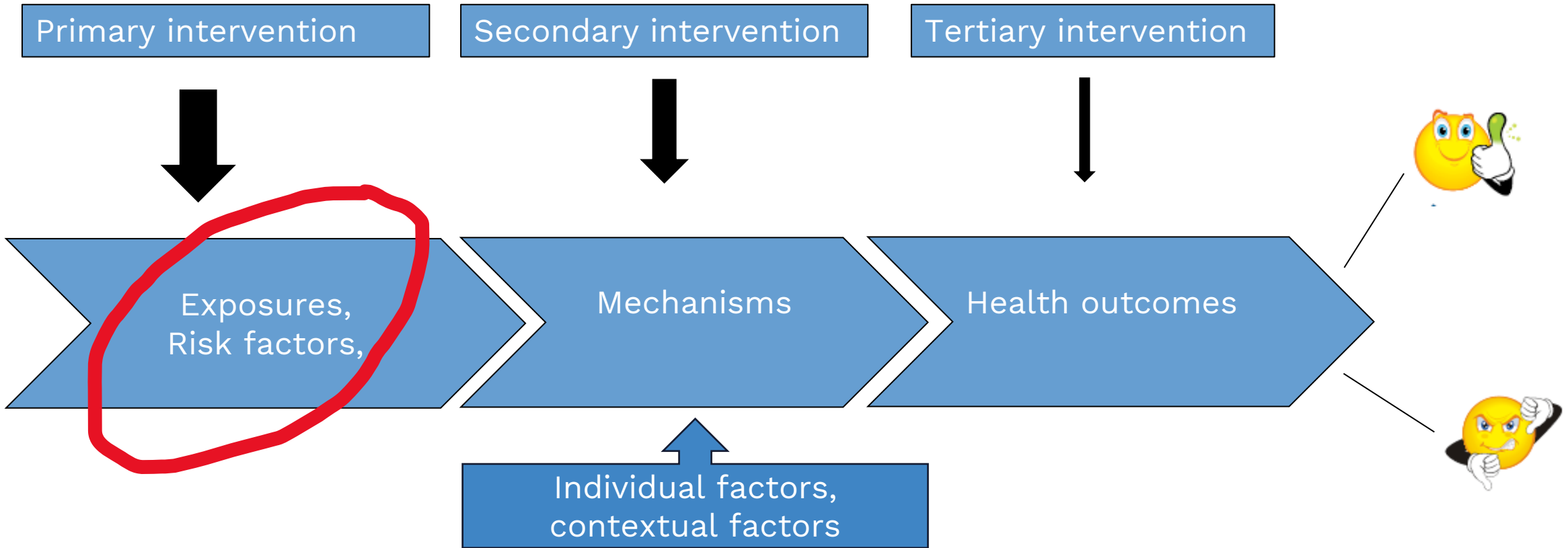Source: STAMI Forside - STAMI NOA

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Risk factors

Health outcomes

Mechanical/ergonomic risk factors

MSDs

Psychosocial and organizational risk factors

Mental health problemss

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Prevention

Primary intervention	Secondary intervention	Tertiary intervention

Exposures, Risk factors, → Mechanisms → Health outcomes

Individual factors, contextual factors

Psychosocial risk factors

- High strain work (high demands/low control)

- Role conflict

- Low leader support

- Effort/reward imbalance

- Emotional demands

- Job insecurity

- Bullying/harassment*

- Sexual harassment

- Violence and threats*

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- Employers have an important responsibility in preventing and ensuring a working environment that gives employees protection against psychological harm.

- The employer must map/get an overview of, and risk assess the working environment. Find out what can lead to or worsen mental health problems. A thorough mapping provides a good basis for assessing whether you can remove or reduce the risk of mental health problems.

- It is crucial to include established risk factors

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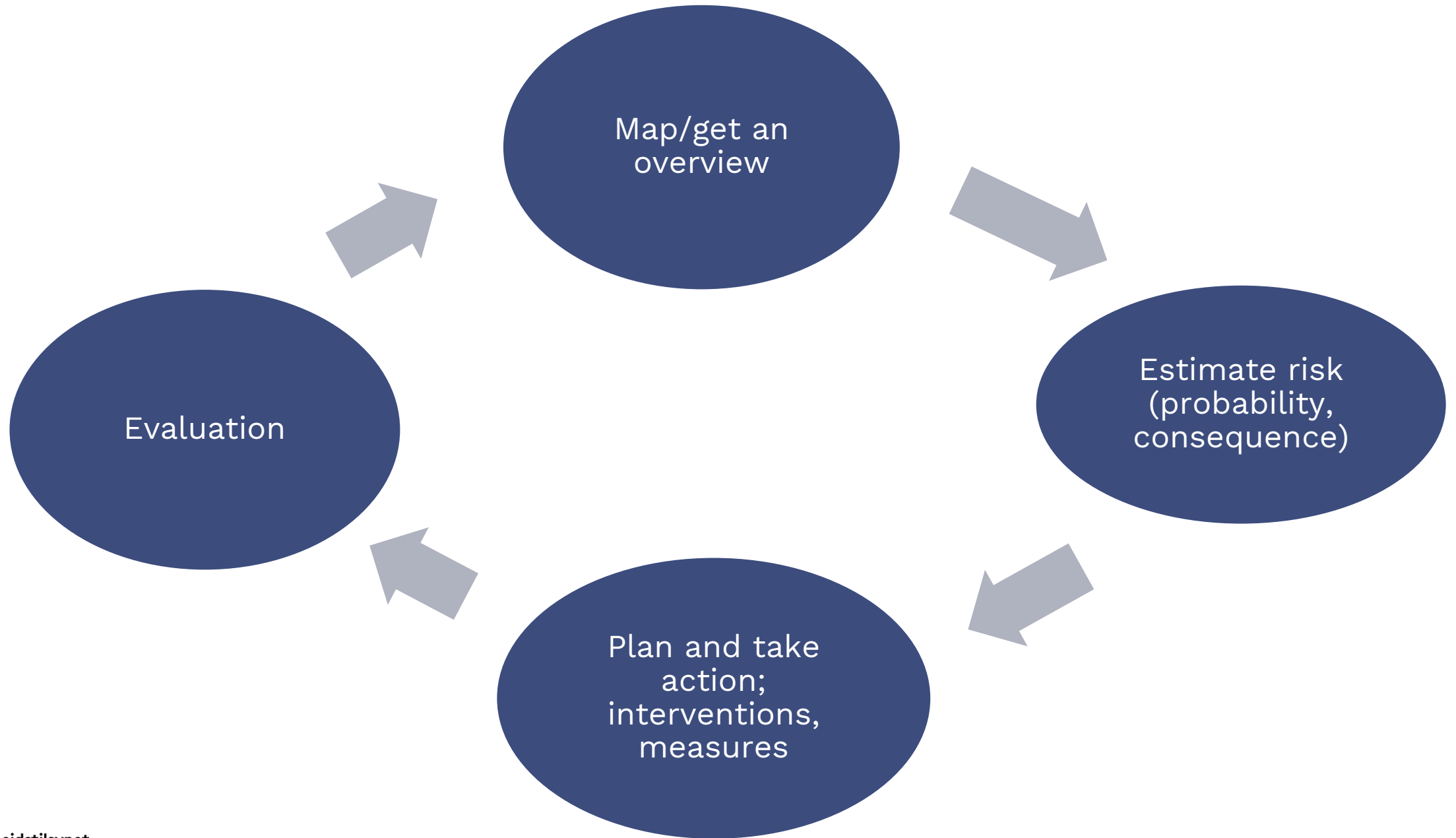
- Collective measures over individual measures

- Organizational level

Increased focus on psychosocial work environment and prevention of MSDs and mental health problems

→Risk factors targeted in inspections, guidance activities

→Exposed groups

= Prioritized topic for labour inspection activities for the last decade – at least

Labour inspection related to psychosocial work environment in the period 2018-2022 revealed 71 % non-compliance to the legislation

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However...

- Psychosocial work environment is a challenging area – both for the enterprises and our inspectors

- Understanding and complying with current regulations is difficult

- Many enterprises say that they prioritize working with psychosocial work environment, without understanding what psychosocial environment *actually* is

- Many enterprises have a reactive rather than proactive, preventive approach

→ Working towards a clearer regulation of psychosocial work environment in Norway

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Thank you for your attention