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ANCHORING DUE DILIGENCE

A SEA Alliance webinar series to accelerate action on
Human Rights Due Diligence

Session 4: Worker Engagement

When workers participate and engage, business operations improve.

Thursday, 19 January 2023 | 3 PM GMT/ 10 AM EST

View the recording that includes a presentation from panelists and Q&A [here](#).

What is Worker Engagement?

Workers should have various means of engaging with their employers to make improvements to working conditions. Freedom of association and collective bargaining are fundamental worker rights that help workers to do so, and these also create the conditions for the protection of other core labor rights.

However, the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is legally limited or underutilized in some regions and sectors, such as high-seas fishing. In these instances, companies can implement a range of activities—termed “[worker engagement](#)”—that enable workers to interact with employers regarding workplace culture, working conditions, and other issues. Methods of engagement may include grievance mechanisms, worker management meetings, committees, and trade unions.

More Information on visit the Roadmap for Improving Seafood Ethics, [RISE](#).

What should companies do to support worker engagement?

1. Engage stakeholders throughout the human rights due diligence process.
 - Resource: Global Compact Network Netherlands, Oxfam, and Shift, Doing Business With Respect for Human Rights, [Chapter 3.7 Stakeholder Engagement](#)
2. Provide access to effective and trusted grievance mechanisms and ensure remedy for workers.
 - Resources: Verite: [Establishing Effective Grievance Mechanisms](#)
3. Support and proactively remove barriers to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining.
 - Resources: Ethical Trade Initiative: [ETI FOA & worker representation: company guidance](#)



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Caution: Before Engaging Directly With Workers...

- Make sure appropriate safeguards and protections are in place to safely engage workers directly (confidentiality, trust, etc.)
- Seek to identify existing trusted parties to work with, like local grassroots organizations.
- Work with worker organizations and unions if available. Do not create duplicate parallel processes.

Indicators to Measure Progress

World Benchmarking Alliance created the Seafood Stewardship Index (SSI) and ranked the 30 most influential companies in the seafood sector. The SSI [benchmark methodology](#) is a great reference for companies looking to guide and evaluate their progress. There are 18 core social indicators that align with human rights due diligence. Look into aligning with the specific indicators for worker engagement that are listed below.

D6: Engaging with affected and potentially affected stakeholders

D7: Grievance mechanisms for workers

D8: Grievance mechanisms for external individuals and communities

D12: Collective bargaining fundamentals

Getting Started Doesn't Have to be Complicated

- Learn from and connect with existing pilots and grassroots organizations
 - Focus on Forced Labor Exploitation (FLEX) has a worker engagement HRDD pilot in UK service industry
 - Contact: info@labourexploitation.org
 - Stella Maris Kaoshiung is working to support migrant fishers and advocate for government reforms.
 - Contact: stellamariskaohsiung@gmail.com
 - As part of its UK Action Plan, the SEA Alliance is working with partners in the fishing industry and civil society organizations to scope the potential for a pilot in the UK fishing industry based on the model of the Fair Food Program in US agriculture. More information will be provided on this in due course.
 - Contact: andy.hickman@seafish.co.uk
- Build your coalition and internal champions by sharing the [Roadmap for Improving Seafood Ethics \(RISE\)](#) and by sharing the [webinar series](#).
- Look internally at your company practices. How does your company engage workers and support unions? What can you learn and apply to your engagement with supply chain partners?
- Identify what existing grievance mechanisms are in place throughout your supply chain operations. Evaluate their effectiveness and functionality. Are they considered legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, and transparent? Do workers trust and use these mechanisms?
- Work with a consultant to develop a strategy to improve worker engagement and promote Freedom of Association. SEA Alliance members should contact Andy Hickman (Andy.Hickman@seafish.co.uk) for information on existing resources.