

DECENT WORK AT SEA: 8 STEPS TO SUCCESS

“Nearly four fishers lose their lives every hour while doing their job. The number of fishers injured or suffering from work-related illnesses are even higher. These fatalities and accidents have major impacts on fishers’ families, fishing crews, [and] fishing communities.” - **FAO, ILO, IMO, Joining forces to shape the fishery sector of tomorrow**



1 COMMIT

- Align company commitments to international guidelines for improving safety and work at sea, including the:
 - ILO: [Work in Fishing Convention C188](#).
 - Food and Agriculture Organization: [Port State Measures Agreement](#).
 - International Maritime Organization (IMO): [Cape Town Agreement](#).
 - IMO: [Standards for Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel](#).



2 LEARN

- Learn about unique challenges to achieving decent work at sea, including the [hazards of fishing](#), the potential for [long periods at sea](#), and the challenges of [at-sea communications](#).
- Dedicate additional resources to improvements for at-sea operations.



3 ASSESS

- Flag high-risk seafood supply chains in assessments, including fishing on vessels in international waters (e.g., tuna) that may be under-monitored and seafood that uses [‘trash fish’ for feed](#).
- Encourage vessels in your company’s supply chain to participate in public [vessel lists](#) and, to the extent possible, share vessel information with buyers.
- If vessel information is available, utilize vessel transparency platforms such as [Global Fishing Watch](#) to review vessel-level risks.



4 BUILD CAPACITY

- Ensure vessel workers receive training on safety, working conditions, rights at sea, payment, and other relevant information prior to departure.
 - Participate in initiatives to train vessel workers and owners, such as those provided by the [International Maritime Organization](#) or [International Labor Organization](#), as well as industry-focused collaborations like the [Seafood Task Force](#) and [International Seafood Sustainability Foundation](#).
- Invest in pilot projects and field-test new technologies on vessels, especially for the following high-priority topics:
 - Worker connectivity and effective grievance mechanisms at sea.
 - Electronic monitoring technologies that can be used to [gather risk data and increase transparency](#).
- Support long-term improvements for at-sea work, including establishing and verifying safe living and working on vessels.
 - Consider the advancements that can be made to existing processes, such as [port interviews with workers](#).
- Work with civil society organizations to improve the ability of workers on DWF vessels to freely associate and participate in collective bargaining.
- Build traceability systems to begin at the vessel and feed segment of seafood supply chains.



5 COLLABORATE

- Encourage flag and port states to ratify the four pillars of fishing vessel safety, if they have not already, and implement standards:
 - [ILO Work in Fishing Convention No. 188](#).
 - [FAO Port State Measures Agreement](#).
 - [IMO Cape Town Agreement](#) (See “Status of Treaties”).
 - [IMO Standards for Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel](#) (See “Status of Treaties”).
- Support the development of implementation guidance on decent work or social responsibility at sea (e.g., [PAS 1550](#)).
 - Encourage fisheries management bodies, including those with limited social mandates, to [set labor standards for crew](#) (even if voluntary).



6 REMEDIATE

- Provide channels for remediation for seafood workers who may return from at-sea trips to different countries than those in which the vessel or employer is located.
- Reimburse or bear the costs of worker repatriation.
 - Commit to repatriating workers at the end of their tenure with the company, facility, farm, or vessel, so they do not face risks of [stranding in remote regions or with limited legal protections](#).
 - Establish and implement processes to repatriate workers upon the termination of their contracts, regardless of which party initiates the termination.
 - Do not leave workers in a country where they do not have the appropriate legal documents or protections.
 - Consider bearing or repaying the costs of repatriation in certain instances that are still fair to workers (e.g., the worker has legal protections in the travel countries, a fair agreement of this nature was stipulated in the contract, etc.).
 - Document the steps taken to prevent future workers from incurring repatriation fees or being stranded.
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7 ITERATE

- Work to achieve the following practice:
 - At-sea segments of company supply chains meet or exceed the standards outlined in [ILO Convention No. 188, the Work in Fishing Convention](#).



8 COMMUNICATE

- Communicate about challenges and accomplishments specific to sourcing from fishing vessels.