

WORKER ENGAGEMENT IN THE SEAFOOD SECTOR: 8 STEPS TO SUCCESS

“By strengthening worker voice and representation, management is...investing in staff retention, boosting workplace morale, and improving productivity while preventing crises that could harm their company’s reputation and earnings.” —Art Prapha, Oxfam



1 COMMIT

- Commit to implementing effective grievance mechanisms.
- Commit to upholding ILO core labor rights, including the ability of workers to collectively bargain and freely associate.
 - If the right to free association is legally limited, commit to other forms of worker engagement, such as worker committees.
- Align commitments throughout the supply chain to achieve the long-term sustainability of worker engagement.
 - Incorporate commitments to effective grievance and worker engagement in supplier expectations.



2 LEARN

- Train staff and supply chain partners on core labor rights—including the right to collective bargaining and freedom of association—and the importance of access to effective grievance mechanisms.
 - Share the business benefits of worker engagement, such as staff retention, increased morale, and improved productivity.
- Ensure that workers have access to information on their rights and conditions of employment from recruitment to employment.
- Empower workers with training and resources to enable meaningful participation in monitoring labor conditions and engaging in improvement processes once on the job.



3 ASSESS

Direct worker engagement provides companies with the most accurate information of conditions and worker experience. However, collecting data about and from workers requires particular safeguards to ensure protection from retaliation, recrimination, and reprisal.

- Collect data on issues raised by workers in the risk assessment, and use this information when identifying salient issues.
 - Companies that collect data from workers must also be prepared to verify and remedy reported instances that violate company policy.
- If issues are not raised through grievance processes and worker engagement, utilize publicly available information from civil society or worker-support organizations to determine whether risks are actually absent or the grievance and worker engagement mechanisms are ineffective.



4 BUILD CAPACITY

- At minimum, ensure effective grievance mechanisms in your company's supply chains.
- Share information about the resolution of grievances and corrective action plans regarding grievances with workers to build trust and encourage engagement.
 - Invest in establishing or scaling effective grievance mechanisms.
- Consider shared grievance mechanisms with other companies, including pooling funds to reimburse workers or provide other forms of remedy.
- Proactively remove barriers to freedom of association and collective bargaining in your company's operations.
 - Provide suitable mechanisms for ideas and concerns to be communicated from workers to management.
 - To the fullest extent allowed by law, there should be no negative repercussions for organizing.
 - Grant trade unions representing workers access to the workplace as appropriate.



5 COLLABORATE

- Advocate for all seafood workers' right to collectively bargain and freely associate, regardless of immigration status.
- Support the legal right of workers and civil society organizations to report on and make claims of workplace abuse without fear of retribution.
- Establish dialogue and build trust with trade unions, workers networks, and local communities.



6 REMEDIATE

- Remediate issues raised through worker engagement, including but not limited to formal grievance mechanisms, worker hotlines, and any issues raised by trade unions, committees, or other workers' associations by following the guidance outlined in the RISE Roadmap step: Remediate.
 - Workers or their representatives should participate in verification of remedy.



7 ITERATE

- Work to achieve the following practices:
 - Recognize the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining.
 - Engage in ongoing, meaningful consultation and communication with workers, worker representatives, and governments.
 - Establish procedures to collect, investigate, and resolve grievances within the seafood supply chain.
 - Participate in procedures to settle industrial disputes where relevant.
- For further guidance, see ILO: Q&As on business and collective bargaining.



8 COMMUNICATE

- Report the number and type of grievances raised, including how grievances were identified, resolved, or other outcomes.
- Report the conditions outlined in any current collective bargaining agreements, the number of worker committee meetings conducted, and other ways that the company is engaging workers.