

1. Introduction

Global supply chains have driven economic growth and transformed societies worldwide but also come with risks and vulnerabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic and escalating trade and geopolitical tensions have exposed their fragility and the potential to disrupt millions of workers, businesses, and consumers. At the same time, growing concerns about human rights, labor conditions, and the environmental impact of business operations have led to increased policy efforts to promote responsible business practices and corporate accountability in supply chains. The “Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Supply Chains (RISSC)” Asia project, funded by the Government of Japan in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), aims to support the recovery of supply chains post-COVID-19 and other disruptions faced by the global supply chains. In the Philippines, the RISSC project focuses on enhancing the aquaculture sector by aiming to achieve more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable supply chains, as well as addressing labour-related risks and opportunities for decent work.

The ILO, in its pursuit of the Decent Work Agenda, describes decent work as the embodiment of individuals’ aspirations within the context of their professional lives. This comprehensive concept encompasses opportunities for productive and fairly compensated employment, ensuring workplace security, and social protection for all workers. It further promotes avenues for personal development and social integration, empowers individuals to voice their concerns, participate in decisions impacting their work, and fosters a work environment characterized by equal opportunity and treatment for all, regardless of gender (ILO, Decent Work).

Beyond its core focus on decent work, the RISSC project also aligns with the ILO’s broader agenda to promote responsible business practice (RBC). By identifying areas for improvement, the project highlights potential violations of international labour standards. This is consistent with the ILO’s commitment to respect the principles enshrined in its core conventions and the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. Furthermore, the project complements the growing focus on business sustainability normative frameworks and standards arising from trade agreements and due diligence requirements. The development of tools and policy advice helps navigate these evolving frameworks and ensures compliance with developing international expectations.

By focusing on a specific industry within a key Asian economy, the RISSC project serves as an entry point for advancing decent work throughout global supply chains. The project leverages the ILO’s established expertise in tripartite and consultative approaches, bringing together governments, employers, and workers to identify and address critical risks and opportunities within the Philippine aquaculture sector.

This study serves three primary objectives:

1. To map the structure, composition and status of the aquaculture sector and supply chain in the Philippines, with a particular focus on the export-oriented segment (production and processing);
2. To analyse decent work and responsible business practices in the sector and identify opportunities for addressing related deficits and risks; and
3. To identify practical, stakeholder-specific recommendations to advance decent work and responsible business practices.