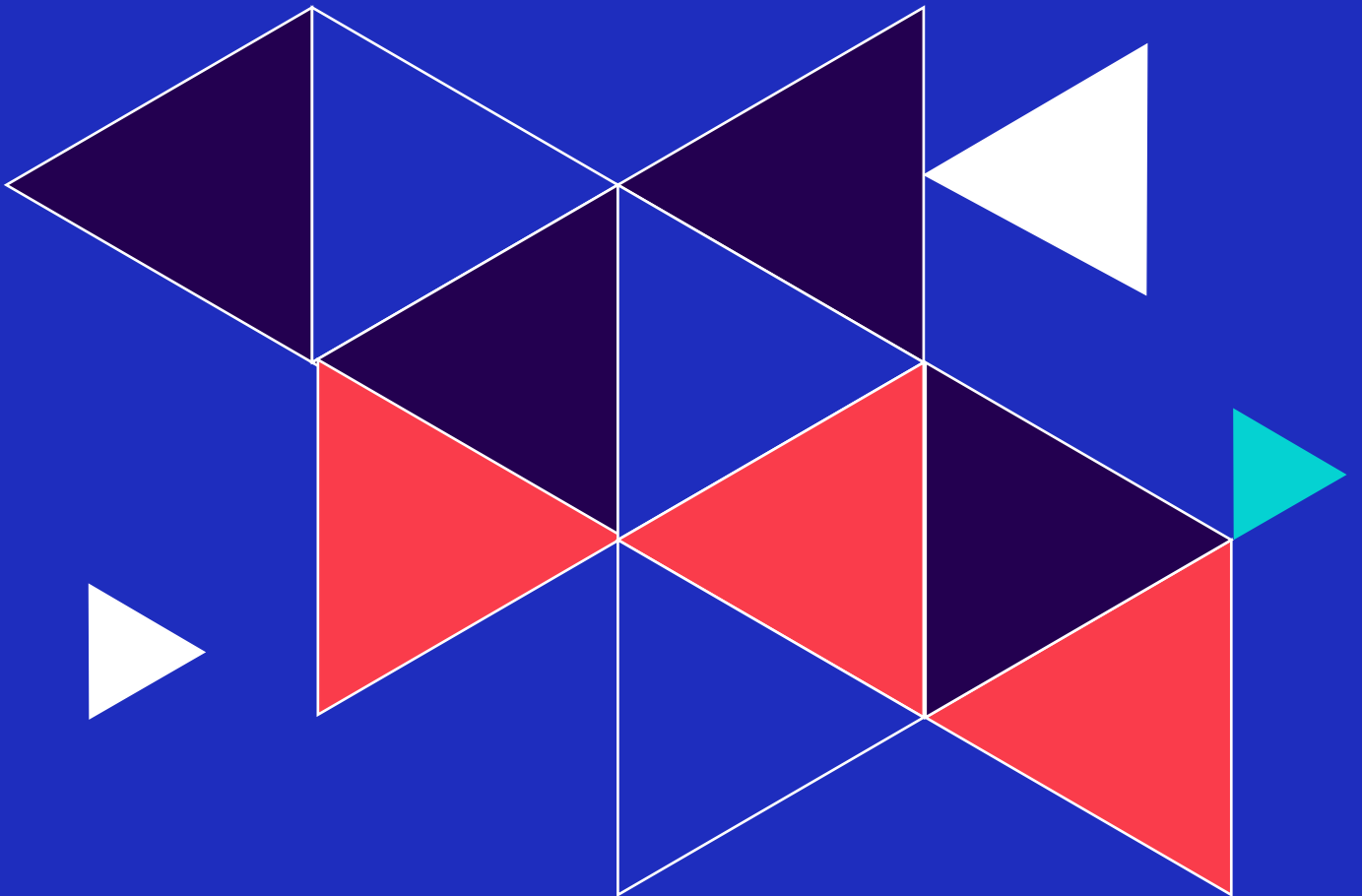


- ▶ **Counting rules for survey-based indicators on decent work in marine fishing**





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November 2025

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## ► Background

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Marine fishing is one of the most hazardous and physically demanding occupations in the world, posing significant challenges to ensuring decent work for fishers. They face numerous risks, not only from the natural dangers of the sea, but also from the isolated and informal nature of their work, which increases vulnerability to poor working conditions and violations of fundamental rights.

Despite anecdotal and qualitative evidence, there is still a lack of comprehensive and reliable data on working conditions in the fishing sector. This gap is particularly true for serious and often hidden violations such as forced labour, human trafficking, and child labour, which are difficult to detect through conventional data collection methods due to their illegal and clandestine nature.

To address this gap, the ILO has developed robust and innovative survey tools to assess decent work in marine fishing, including the prevalence of fundamental rights violations. These tools form part of the *Toolkit for decent work in marine fishing*,<sup>1</sup> designed to assist National Statistical Offices, government agencies, and research institutions with a ready-to-use package that ensures consistent and effective implementation of surveys in this sector. The toolkit includes this document, a living area questionnaire, and a vessel questionnaire.

The survey targets fishers engaged in marine fishing, as classified under ISIC Rev. 4 code 0311. It covers fishers from nationally flagged and foreign-flagged vessels, including industrial, commercial, and artisanal fishing vessels of various sizes and types. Fishers aged 15 and above are selected for interview using both vessel-based and household-based sampling methods, provided they meet the following criteria:

- Are employed or engaged on vessels that dock in the survey country;
- Live in households within the national territory and have engaged in marine fishing at any time during the past three years.

For the purposes of the survey, fishers are defined according to ILO Convention No. 188 as: *"Every person employed or engaged in any capacity or carrying out an occupation on board any fishing vessel, including persons working on board who are paid on the basis of a share of the catch but excluding pilots, naval personnel, other persons in the permanent service of a government, shore-based persons carrying out work aboard a fishing vessel and fisheries observers."*<sup>2</sup>

Thus, all persons employed or engaged on a fishing vessel are included in the survey regardless of their occupation on board, such as captain, officer, crew member, technician, operator, fisher, diver, cleaner, or cook, provided they fall within the defined scope.

The questionnaires and counting rules evolved through multiple phases. An initial version was developed jointly by the ILO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It was subsequently shortened and improved following cognitive testing in Cambodia and Indonesia, with support from Praxis Labs. Further revisions incorporated feedback from the National Steering Committees and Technical

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<sup>1</sup> ILO, *Toolkit for decent work in marine fishing*, Geneva, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> ILO, *Work in Fishing Convention*, 2007 (No. 188).

Advisory Committees in Ghana, Indonesia, and South Africa, where the survey was piloted. At the request of these countries, the scope was expanded from forced labour and trafficking in persons to decent work, supporting broader policy responses to labour rights violations. The final version also enhances the measurement of fair recruitment practices and recruitment-related costs.

While national questionnaires and counting rules were adapted to local contexts and priorities, this version retains the core structure and is available for use and adaptation in future surveys.

The purpose of this document is to provide clear guidelines for interpreting and coding survey responses into decent work indicators. These guidelines are essential to ensure consistency in data processing across countries and over time, enabling the production of robust, comparable, and harmonised indicators on decent work in the marine fishing sector.

## ► 1. The decent work indicator framework

---

The primary aim of the survey is to assess the state of decent work in the marine fishing sector using robust and replicable statistical methods aligned with the ILO definition of Decent Work and its conceptual and measurement framework.

Decent work, as defined by the ILO, is productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. It includes fair income, safe conditions, social protection, opportunities for personal and family development, and effective social dialogue.

The **ILO Decent Work Framework** is a comprehensive approach to promote decent work built around four strategic pillars: employment creation, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue. It includes ten substantive elements for monitoring and promoting progress towards decent work, expressed through indicators disaggregated by gender and other relevant factors. The ten elements are: employment opportunities; adequate earnings and productive work; decent working time; balancing work, family and personal life; work that should be abolished; stability and security of work; equal opportunity and treatment in employment; a safe working environment; social security; and social dialogue, including employers' and workers' representation. As such, the ILO Decent Work Framework, embedded among its ten elements, includes those defined by the ILO as Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In 1998, with the adoption of the **ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work**,<sup>3</sup> the ILO officially recognised four Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW), which are enforced by eight Conventions and one Protocol. The Declaration marked a formal commitment by ILO Member States to uphold and promote these core labour rights. The four fundamental principles and rights recognised in the ILO Declaration were: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

In 2022, the ILO amended the Declaration to expand this framework to five categories, corresponding to two additional ILO Conventions, including the right to a safe and healthy working environment. The FPRW elements and their associated instruments are illustrated in Figure 1.

---

<sup>3</sup> ILO, [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up](#), adopted at the 86<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference (1998) and amended at the 110<sup>th</sup> Session (2022).

**Figure 1. Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) and ILO instruments**

| Freedom of association and collective bargaining                                                                                                                             | Elimination of forced labour                                                                                                                                        | Abolition of child labour                                                                                   | Elimination of discrimination in employment                                                                                       | Safe and healthy working environment                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)</p> <p>Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)</p> | <p>Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29),</p> <p>Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention No. 29</p> <p>Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)</p> | <p>Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)</p> <p>Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)</p> | <p>Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)</p> <p>Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)</p> | <p>Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155)</p> <p>Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention No. 187</p> |

When focusing on the fishing sector, the **ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)**, establishes minimum standards to safeguard the working and living conditions of fishers worldwide. Recognising fishing as a hazardous occupation, Convention No. 188 addresses the unique challenges faced by those working at sea and ensures that fishers benefit from protections similar to those enjoyed by workers in other sectors.

The Convention aims to ensure that fishers have decent working and living conditions on board fishing vessels, covering minimum requirements for work on board, conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health protection, medical care, and social security.

Convention No. 188 builds upon the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998 and later amended in 2022. It also takes into account the ILO Fundamental Conventions on workers' rights that were in force at the time of its adoption in 2007. This ensures that the convention aligns with the core international standards on freedom of association, collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour and child labour, non-discrimination, and occupational safety and health, offering a comprehensive framework to promote decent work in the fishing sector.

## ► 2. Counting rules for fundamental principles and rights at work and decent work in marine fishing

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The Decent Work in Marine Fishing survey assesses compliance with the key elements of ILO Convention No. 188 and the ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. While not all Decent Work and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work elements may be uncovered through surveys administered to workers, they establish a clear foundation for the survey methodology and operational framework.

The survey places particular emphasis on identifying and documenting evidence of forms of work that should be abolished, such as forced labour and child labour, in accordance with the relevant ILO Conventions. In addition, the survey assesses adherence to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children — supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (Palermo Protocol, 2000) — by measuring instances of trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced labour within the marine fishing sector.

While these severe violations are examined in detail, the survey also includes a broader set of indicators related to fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW) and decent work (DW). These are captured at a more general level to provide an overview of working conditions in the context where forced labour, trafficking in persons, and child labour are assessed in depth. This balanced approach reflects the need for parsimony in interviewing workers, while acknowledging the importance of maintaining a decent work lens when assessing rights violations. Parsimony is particularly relevant when interviewing fishers, who often operate in hard-to-reach environments and may face time constraints, mobility challenges, and heightened vulnerability. Keeping the questionnaire concise and focused helps ensure reliable responses while still offering meaningful insights into the broader decent work environment.

The survey does not assess whether national laws comply with ILO Conventions, as this responsibility lies with the ILO supervisory bodies. When national legislation does not fully align with international standards, references to relevant national laws may be considered; however, the survey primarily evaluates compliance with international standards. These international benchmarks serve as the reference point for policy guidance and the development of recommendations.

The counting rules for measuring the Decent Work Indicators and the Fundamental Principles and Rights Indicators are derived from the two questionnaires used in the Decent Work in Marine Fishing Survey. This document is intended to be read alongside those questionnaires. The counting rules specify the procedures for combining response values to construct each indicator, using the question codes as outlined in the questionnaires.

## 2.1 Counting rules for fundamental principles and rights at work indicators

The ILO International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) has endorsed several key resolutions and guidelines to support the statistical measurement and monitoring of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW). The core instruments relevant for survey data collection and analysis concern child labour and forced labour.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the Framework of Decent Work Indicators provides guidelines on indicators that reflect several aspects of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW). Furthermore, in the absence of any internationally endorsed guideline for interpreting and operationalising the legal concept of trafficking in persons, the Survey on Decent Work in Marine Fishing leads the way in developing methodological tools to estimate instances of trafficking for forced labour within the marine fishing sector.

The methodological tools developed by the ILO to measure child labour and forced labour endorsed by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) are outlined below.

### ILO methodological tools for measuring child labour and forced labour

#### Child labour

- **Resolution concerning statistics of child labour (18th ICLS, 2008):** It establishes international standards for the collection, compilation, and analysis of child labour data, defining child labour in alignment with relevant ILO conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>5</sup>
- **Resolution to amend the 18th ICLS: Resolution concerning statistics of child labour (20th ICLS, 2018):** It updates the 2008 standards, harmonising definitions and measurement approaches with the broader statistics on work, employment, and labour underutilization.<sup>6</sup>

#### Forced labour

- **Guidelines concerning the measurement of forced labour (20th ICLS, 2018):** It provides detailed recommendations on survey design, operational definitions, and classification to support internationally comparable statistics on forced labour.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Resolution concerning the methodology of the SDG indicator 8.8.2 on labour rights (20th ICLS; 2018) sets out the approach for measuring national compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining as part of the monitoring for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the methodology relies on administrative information from the ILO supervisory system and does not apply to survey data.

<sup>5</sup> ICLS/18/2008/Resolution II: Resolution concerning statistics of child labour.

<sup>6</sup> ICLS/20/2018/Resolution IV: Resolution to amend the 18th ICLS. Resolution concerning statistics of child labour. [wcms\\_667558.pdf](#)

<sup>7</sup> ICLS/20/2018/Guidelines: Guidelines concerning the measurement of forced labour. [Forced Labor Guidelines-final.docx](#)

These instruments establish internationally agreed concepts and measurement frameworks that enable countries to generate consistent, comparable, and policy-relevant statistics on child labour and forced labour—thereby strengthening the monitoring of legal standards and improving evidence-based policy making.

The remainder of this section outlines the counting rules used for indicators related to the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW). The topics addressed encompass forced labour, including bonded labour and trafficking for forced labour, child labour, freedom of association and collective bargaining, occupational safety and health, and non-discrimination. In particular, the counting rules for child labour and forced labour are based on the methodologies and guidelines endorsed by the ICLS presented earlier.

## Forced labour

The ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) defines, in its Article 2, forced or compulsory labour as *“all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”*

For statistical purposes, a person is classified as being in forced labour if, during a specified reference period, they engage in any work that is both under the threat or menace of a penalty and involuntary (ICLS 2018). Both conditions must be present for this to be statistically considered forced labour.

This document guides the development of the forced labour indicator by creating sub-indicators that, when combined, allow for the measurement of forced labour (i.e., coercion and involuntary work). It also helps in identifying characteristics of forced labour (i.e., duration) and indicators of forced labour within specific subgroups (i.e., bonded labour and trafficking in persons for forced labour), as outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1. Forced labour indicator and sub-indicators**

| Indicator code | Sub-indicator description                |
|----------------|------------------------------------------|
| FL             | Forced labour                            |
| COE            | Coercion                                 |
| INV            | Involuntary work                         |
| DUR            | Duration of forced labour                |
| BL             | Bonded labour                            |
| TIP FL         | Trafficking in persons for forced labour |

The forced labour indicator and all its sub-indicators are calculated for eligible fishers who are employed as dependent workers (i.e., employees). Although forced labour cases can also occur under different employment statuses, the survey questionnaire was designed to identify forced labour that results from coercive measures imposed by the employer or recruiter. It is not suitable to capture forced labour for other employment statuses, which require different types of questions not included in the current tool. Depending on the contexts and circumstances, researchers may choose to measure forced labour among fishers in different employment statuses, possibly by including specific questions in the questionnaire.

Thus, forced labour and all its sub-indicators are calculated for fishers who are eligible for the survey (EL02=1) and work for someone else for a fee, including regular salary, profit sharing, catch bonus, etc. (WC01=1). Fishers are eligible for the survey if they are currently working on a vessel in marine fishing or if they have worked on a vessel in marine fishing at any time during the past 3 years.

Table 2 presents the counting rules for identifying forced labour by combining sub-indicators related to involuntary work and coercion. Elements of involuntariness and coercion can be observed during the recruitment and employment phases, including employment separation. In each of these phases, a person is regarded as being in forced labour if at least one sub-indicator of involuntary work and one sub-indicator of coercion are present — meaning that any verified instance of involuntariness or coercion is sufficient to classify the case as forced labour. In the case of FL.3, the two indicators of coercion and involuntary work are identified together with one condition.

**Table 2. Counting rules to measure forced labour in different employment phases**

|      |                                   |                                                                                       |
|------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FL.1 | IW_R = 1 and COE_R = 1            | The fisher was in involuntary work and under coercion during the recruitment phase.   |
| FL.2 | IW_W = 1 and COE_W = 1            | The fisher is/was in involuntary work and under coercion during the employment phase. |
| FL.3 | IW_COE = 1                        | The fisher is/was in involuntary work and under coercion during the employment phase. |
| FL   | <b>FL.1=1 or FL.2=1 or FL.3=1</b> | <b>The fisher is/was in forced labour</b>                                             |

## Involuntary work

Involuntary work refers to any work carried out without the free and informed consent of the worker. Circumstances that may lead to involuntary work, especially when undertaken under deception or without proper information, include, inter alia:

- unfree recruitment at birth or through transactions such as slavery or bonded labour;
- situations in which the worker must carry out a job of a different nature from that specified during recruitment without a person's consent;
- abusive requirements for overtime or on-call work that were not previously agreed with the employer;
- work in hazardous conditions to which the worker has not consented, with or without compensation or protective equipment;
- work with very low or no wages;
- work in degrading living conditions imposed by the employer, recruiter, or other third-party.
- work for other employers than agreed;
- work for a longer period of time than agreed;
- work with little or no freedom to end employment contract.

Table 3 outlines the counting rules for identifying seven possible situations of involuntary work during the recruitment and employment phases. Specifically, it includes three indicators of deceptive recruitment and four indicators of potential involuntary work during employment, which relate to: abusive requirements for overtime; work in hazardous conditions; employment under degrading living conditions; and working for an employer different from the one initially agreed upon. This framework enables a systematic assessment of both deceptive recruitment practices and exploitative employment conditions that may lead to involuntary work.

**Table 3. Counting rules to measure involuntary work**

| Involuntary work | Question/response counting rule                | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IW.1             | TV06=2<br>and TV07=2<br>and (FM05=1 or FM06=1) | <p><b>Deceptive recruitment</b>, that is, situations in which a worker is required to perform a job different from that agreed upon during recruitment, without their informed consent.</p> <p>The fisher was unaware that the job would take place on a fishing vessel, felt unable to refuse the assignment, and believed the broker, recruiter, vessel owner, or captain took advantage of their vulnerability.</p> |

| Involuntary work | Question/response counting rule                                                              | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IW.2             | WC14=3 and (FM05=1 or FM06=1)                                                                | <p><b>Deceptive recruitment</b>, that is, situations in which a worker is required to perform a job different from that agreed upon during recruitment, without their informed consent.</p> <p>The fishers' working and living conditions were worse than promised, and they believed the broker, recruiter, vessel owner, or captain had taken advantage of their vulnerability.</p>                                          |
| IW.3             | WC13=996 and (FM05=1 or FM06=1)                                                              | <p><b>Deceptive recruitment</b>, that is, situations in which a worker is required to perform a job different from that agreed upon during recruitment, without their informed consent.</p> <p>The fisher was not informed in advance about the conditions of the work (wages, working hours, time at sea) and believed that the broker, recruiter, vessel owner, or captain took advantage of the fisher's vulnerability.</p> |
| IW.4             | WN09=2                                                                                       | <p><b>Abusive requirements for overtime</b> or on-call work that were not previously agreed upon with the employer.</p> <p>The fisher would not have accepted this job if they had known the hours would be this long.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| IW.5             | HS01=A or B or C or D or E or F or G or H or I or J or K or L or V (case by case) and HS02=2 | <p><b>Work in hazardous conditions</b> to which the worker has not consented, with or without protective equipment.</p> <p>The fisher works in a hazardous environment and would not have accepted the job if they had known in advance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Involuntary work | Question/response counting rule | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IW.6             | LC01=2 or LC02=2                | <b>Work under degrading living conditions</b> linked to the job.<br><br>The quantity or quality of food does not meet the fisher's needs, or they are not given sufficient clean drinking water.     |
| IW.7             | FM04=1                          | <b>Work with other employers</b> than agreed.<br><br>The fisher was made to work on a vessel different from the one agreed upon, for example, transferred to another vessel without their agreement. |

Table 4 presents the counting rules for grouping indicators of involuntary work into two categories: one for involuntary work during the recruitment phase and the other for involuntary work during the employment phase.

**Table 4. Counting rules to measure involuntary work during the recruitment and employment phases**

|      | Question/response counting rule      | Meaning                                                                                                                                            |
|------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IW_R | IW.1=1 or IW.2=1 or IW.3=1           | <b>Possible involuntary work situations during the recruitment phase.</b><br><br>The fisher was recruited without their free and informed consent. |
| IW_W | IW.4=1 or IW.5=1 or IW.6=1 or IW.7=1 | <b>Possible involuntary work situation during the employment phase.</b><br><br>The fisher works or worked without their free and informed consent. |

### Threat or menace of any penalty

The threat or menace of any penalty is a means used to force a worker to perform work against their will. Workers may be directly subjected to coercion, verbally threatened by these measures, or witness coercion imposed on other colleagues in relation to involuntary work. Elements of coercion may include, inter alia:

- Threats or violence against workers, their families, or close associates;
- restrictions on workers' movement;
- debt bondage or manipulation of debt;
- withholding wages or other promised benefits;
- withholding valuable documents such as identity documents or residence permits; abuse of workers' vulnerability through denial of rights or privileges; and
- threats of dismissal or deportation.

**Table 5. Counting rules to measure coercion**

|              | Question/response counting rule                                                                                                                                                            | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>COE.1</b> | TV07=2<br><br>and<br><br>[TV08=2 or 4 or 5 or REFUSAL (999) or 995 (case by case)]                                                                                                         | <b>Coercion during the recruitment phase.</b><br><br>Upon arriving at the port, the fisher could not refuse the job because they had to repay the travel costs or the wage advance to the employer or recruiter, or because of fear of physical violence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>COE.2</b> | LC03_1 or LC03_2 or LC03_3 or LC03_4 or LC03_5 or LC03_6 or LC03_7 or LC03_8 or LC03_9 or LC03_10 or LC03_11<br><br>=<br><br>A or B or C or D or E or F or V (case by case) or Z (REFUSAL) | <b>Coercion during the employment phase: Abuse</b><br><br>During the employment period on the fishing vessel, the fisher could not refuse work or challenge orders because the broker, recruiter, captain, supervisor, vessel owner, or ship agent used threats, intimidation, or deprivation to control them. This included threats or acts of physical violence, confiscation of their phone or SIM card, denial of basic necessities or medical care, being forced to work while ill or injured, or being made to eat food that went against their religious beliefs. Coercion can extend to threats against co-workers or the fisher's family. |

|  | Question/response counting rule                                                                                                                           | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | LC04=A or B or C or D or F or V (case by case) or Z (REFUSAL)                                                                                             | <p><b>Coercion during the employment phase: Not able to complain without serious negative consequences.</b></p> <p>If the fisher attempted to make a complaint about the conditions on the vessel, they risked facing several negative consequences. These included losing their job and being required to pay their own airfare home, not receiving their full wages, being struck, or being denied food, water, or rest breaks. They could also receive a bad reputation or a negative report in their seaman's book, which could affect future employment. Raising a complaint could also result in negative repercussions for their colleagues.</p> |
|  | <p>(FM01_1 or FM01_2 or FM01_3 or FM01_4 or FM01_5 or FM01_6 or FM01_7 = 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or REFUSAL)</p> <p>and</p> <p>(FM02 = 2 or 998 or 999)</p> | <p><b>Coercion during the employment phase: Withholding ID documents or other documents without the possibility of accessing them</b></p> <p>During the employment period on the fishing vessel, the fisher could not have access to their own documents (e.g., passport, seaman's book, work permit, birth certificate) because they were held by the broker, recruiter, captain, supervisor, vessel owner, or ship agent, who refused to return them or to allow the fisher access to them.</p>                                                                                                                                                       |

|              | Question/response counting rule                                                        | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>COE.3</b> | FM03=B or C or D or E or F or Z (Refusal) or<br>[(FM03=A or G) and (FM05=1 or FM06=1)] | <p><b>Coercion during the employment phase: Coercion to prevent employment separation</b></p> <p>The fisher could not leave the vessel for a range of possible reasons, including owing a debt to the vessel owner, captain, or ship agent that had to be repaid before disembarking, fear of being reported to the authorities, and threats or acts of violence from the captain, vessel owner, ship's agent, or recruitment agency. The fisher may also be unable to leave if their identity documents are withheld, if they risk not being paid for completed work, or if they fear receiving a negative report in their seaman's book. Additional barriers include the potential loss of guaranteed money or the inability to return home.</p> |

Table 6 presents the counting rules by grouping coercion indicators into two categories: those during the recruitment phase and those during the employment phase.

**Table 6. Counting rules to measure coercion during the recruitment and employment phases**

|       | Question/response counting rule | Meaning                                                                                |
|-------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COE_R | COE1=1                          | The fisher was under threat or menace of a penalty during the recruitment phase.       |
| COE_W | COE2=1 OR COE3=1                | The fisher is/was under the threat or menace of a penalty during the employment phase. |

Table 7 presents the counting rules for a specific case of forced labour where involuntary work and coercion are identified together in a set of questions.

**Table 7. Counting rules to measure involuntary work and coercion together**

|        | Question/response counting rule | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IW.COE | RC08=Yes and RC09=1 or RC09=999 | <p><b>Work with no or limited freedom to terminate the work contract due to debt.</b></p> <p>The worker cannot leave because they owe a debt to the vessel owner, captain, or ship agent (coercion), and they would have left if this debt had not existed (involuntariness).</p> |

### Bonded labour

Bonded labour is a specific form of forced labour in which individuals are compelled to work due to debt. These debts can arise when workers or families take out loans, pay high fees, or receive advance payments from their employer or recruiter. These debts can begin during the recruitment phase when fishers are compelled to pay unlawful recruitment fees and related costs.

The terms of repayment may be unfair, unclear, or illegal, allowing employers to use the debt as a means of coercion to keep the worker in forced labour until the debt is fully repaid. This situation puts fishers in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis their employers or recruiters.

**Table 8. Counting rules to measure bonded labour**

|      | Question/response counting rule     | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BL.1 | TV07=2 and (TV08=2 OR 4) and IW_R=1 | <p><b>Bonded labour at recruitment.</b></p> <p>Upon arriving at the port, the fisher could not refuse the job because they had to repay the travel costs or the wage advance to the employer or recruiter, and they had been recruited without their free and informed consent.</p> |
| BL.2 | RC08=1 and RC09=1 or RC09=999       | <p><b>Work with little or no freedom to end the work contract due to debt.</b></p> <p>The worker cannot leave because they owe a debt to the vessel owner, captain, or ship agent (coercion), and they would have left if this debt had not existed (involuntariness).</p>          |

|      | Question/response counting rule          | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BL.3 | FM03=A and (FM05=1 or FM06=1) and IW_W=1 | <b>Debt is preventing the worker from leaving.</b><br><br>The fisher could not leave the vessel because of a debt owed to the vessel owner, captain, or ship agent that had to be repaid before disembarking, and the fisher worked without their free and informed consent. |
| BL   | BL.1=1 or BL.2=1 or BL.3=1               | <b>Bonded labour</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

### Duration of forced labour

Calculating the duration of forced labour is crucial for two main reasons.

First, it offers a deeper understanding of the severity and impact of exploitation: longer durations of forced labour often indicate more severe harm, as extended periods in such conditions cause greater physical, psychological, and social damage to victims. The length of time an individual is subjected to forced labour generally correlates with the intensity and persistence of deprivation, ongoing abuse, or coercion they face.

Second, measuring duration is essential for accurately assessing the stock and flow of forced labour. The *stock* refers to the total number of individuals currently trapped in forced labour at a specific point in time, offering a snapshot of the problem's magnitude and helping allocate resources for interventions. The *flow*, on the other hand, measures the number of people who have experienced forced labour at any point during a reference period, thereby highlighting new incidents and facilitating trend analysis over time. Together, these measures allow for more effective monitoring, policy development, and support for victims.

In practice, the stock of forced labour is measured by the number of people who experienced forced labour within a specified reference period, such as one calendar year or the past twelve months (one-year prevalence), adjusted for the average duration of forced labour among those affected, expressed as a fraction of the specified reference period. The resulting statistic can be interpreted as the average stock of forced labour at any given point during the specified reference period.

**Table 9. Counting rules to measure the duration of forced labour**

|     | Question/response counting rule  | Meaning                                                   |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| DUR | DATE_INTERVIEW – WC16=START_DATE | Duration of forced labour (months) under the current job. |

## Trafficking in persons for forced labour

As defined by the Palermo Protocol: *"Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."*<sup>8</sup>

While an international statistical framework exists for forced labour (as per the ICLS guidelines adopted in 2018), a similar standard currently does not exist for trafficking in persons, including for forced labour purposes. ILO, UNODC, and IOM currently have an ongoing project that aims to discuss the adoption of statistical guidelines on TIP within the context of the UN Statistical Commission.

To statistically characterise trafficking in persons within this survey, we have aimed to identify the three essential elements of trafficking:

**ACT** of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons

(through/by)

**MEANS** of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability; or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person

for the **PURPOSE** of exploitation.

Within the scope of this survey, we aim to identify trafficked persons for the purpose of forced labour. Thus, the purpose of exploitation in this context is forced labour.

To establish trafficking in persons in the context of fishing, we need to ascertain the presence of the ACT by the MEAN for the PURPOSE of forced labour. We need to differentiate between the following two fundamentally different cases:

- fisher lives on the fishing vessel;
- fisher does not live on the fishing vessel.

For fishers who live on the fishing vessel, accommodation is directly provided by the employer, and the access to and conditions of this accommodation are under the control of the employer. In this case, the definition of harbouring applies, establishing the ACT of TIP-FL. If someone was harboured (ACT) and coerced (MEANS) to work in forced labour (PURPOSE), trafficking in forced labour is established.

For fishers who do not live on the fishing vessel, an ACT of recruitment, transportation, transfer or receipt through coercive MEANS for the PURPOSE of forced labour has to be identified. Cases where trafficking in persons for forced labour can be ascertained with questions identifying forced labour and at least one of the ACTs are presented in Table 10. In all cases, the following counting rules applies:

**ACT by MEANS for PURPOSE of FL = TIP-FL**

<sup>8</sup> [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime | OHCHR](#)

Table 10. Counting rules to measure trafficking for forced labour

|          | Act                                                                                        | Means                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Purpose                          | Meaning                                                                                                   |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | <i>Evidence of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons</i> | <i>Evidence of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability; or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person</i> | <i>Forced labour or services</i> |                                                                                                           |
|          | BY                                                                                         | FOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                  |                                                                                                           |
| TIP-FL.1 | EL02C > 1 day                                                                              | COE = 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | FL = 1                           | <b>Harbouring</b> (on the vessel) by means of coercion (ILO definition) for the purpose of forced labour. |
| TIP-FL.2 | TV07=2                                                                                     | COE_R=1 or IW_R=1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | FL = 1                           | <b>Recruitment</b> by means of coercion or deception for the purpose of forced labour.                    |
| TIP-FL.3 | TV04 = F or G or H or I or J or K                                                          | IW.1=1 or COE.1=1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | FL = 1                           | <b>Transportation</b> by means of fraud or deception for the purpose of forced labour.                    |
| TIP-F.4  | FM04 = 1                                                                                   | FM04 = 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | FL = 1                           | <b>Transfer and receipt</b> by means of coercion on another vessel for the purpose of forced labour.      |

## Child labour

Convention Concerning Work in the Fishing Sector (No. 188) complements the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) by specifically addressing child protection in the fishing sector, which is often informal and hazardous. Article 9 of ILO Convention No. 188 establishes that the minimum age for work on board a fishing vessel shall be 16 years. However, national laws and regulations may permit children aged 15 to 16 to work on board if they participate in approved vocational training programmes in fishing or perform light work that is not likely to harm their health, safety, or development. The Convention also requires that young persons under 18 years must not perform hazardous work, including tasks that could jeopardise their safety or well-being.

Whether fishing as an industry (ISIC = 0311) or only certain activities within the fishery, such as night work (for example, during deep-sea fishing), are considered hazardous work will be determined by national legislation. Many countries designate deep-sea fishing as hazardous work, effectively prohibiting all work by children (under 18) in the sector. In determining the counting rules for child labour in fishing, the relevant national minimum age for the specific fishing activity must be respected.

**Table 11. Counting rules to measure child labour**

|                       | Response and counting rule                                                     | Meaning                                                         |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Child labour</b>   | (DG01) =< minimum age for fishing by type of activities (national legislation) | A fisher is below the minimum legal age for working in fishing. |
| <b>Hazardous work</b> | (DG01) =< 18 (national legislation)                                            | Long hours, night work and other hazardous activities.          |

## Freedom of association

As referenced in Convention No. 188, the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) establish the fundamental rights on which the related provisions of Convention No. 188 are based. Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 ensure workers the right to form, join, and participate in organisations of their choosing, and for these organisations to operate independently developing and managing their programmes, including engaging in collective bargaining. These rights must be exercised without interference, discrimination, or retaliation from employers, employers' organisations, or the state.

Trade unions play a central role in promoting and protecting workers' rights, including preventing violations of fundamental principles and rights at work and assisting affected workers. Upholding freedom of association and collective bargaining has been recognised as essential for inclusive and sustainable growth, with the ILO Centenary Declaration affirming that "freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining" are enabling rights.

The assessment of freedom of association in this questionnaire relies on one indicator: membership in a trade union or workers' association. The indicator used in this questionnaire—membership in a trade union or workers' association—provides valuable insight into workers' ability to organise and the presence of collective representation within the sector. It offers an indicative understanding of whether workers are joining unions and, to some extent, of the enabling environment for worker participation. However, union membership alone cannot fully capture the broader conditions that shape freedom of association. Workers may be legally able to form or join unions but choose not to do so for a variety of reasons, including limited awareness of their rights, lack of trust in unions, or fear of negative consequences. In some contexts, workers may refrain from joining a union because they have observed or anticipate retaliation and may be discouraged from exercising their rights—even in the absence of explicit threats—due to fear of punishment (chilling effect).

**Table 12. Counting rules to measure freedom of trade union or workers' association membership**

|    | Question/response counting rule | Meaning                                                         |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| FA | SPCB05=1                        | The fishers have a trade union/workers' association membership. |

Moreover, the survey does not include any specific question regarding whether a Collective Bargaining Agreement covers the workers. As such, while the indicator provides valuable initial insights and contributes to broad coverage of decent work elements within a survey primarily tailored to measure forms of work to be abolished, it does not replace the need for a more targeted analysis. A more detailed assessment is necessary to determine whether workers can effectively exercise their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, both in law and in practice.

## Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

The Work in Fishing Convention, Articles 31–33, specifies the requirements for fishing vessels regarding occupational safety and health. The survey questionnaire assesses fishers' perceptions of hazards they encounter on board, indicating whether they have experienced any of the listed hazards (adapted to the country and subsector) or any additional hazards identified through the “Other, specify” option that researchers consider valid. If any such hazard is reported, the indicator is assigned a value of 1.

**Table 13. Counting rules to measure safety hazards on the vessel**

|     | Question/response counting rule                                                                         | Meaning                       |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| OSH | HS01=A or B or C or D or E or F or G or H or I or J or K or L or V (to be considered on a case-by-case) | Safety hazards on the vessel. |

While this approach offers a useful initial insight into occupational safety and health conditions on fishing vessels, it does not replace a comprehensive assessment. Occupational safety and health is a complex and multifaceted area that demands detailed, specialised investigation to fully grasp risks, root causes, and systemic shortcomings. The occupational safety and health indicator included in the survey, therefore, provides only a broad overview, and more in-depth analysis would be necessary if occupational safety and health were to be the primary focus of the research.

## Non-discrimination

According to ILO Convention No. 111, Article 1(1)(a), discrimination refers to *“any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.”*

Non-discrimination, as one of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in fishing, requires that fishers are not treated differently or unfairly because of any of their characteristics. Differential treatment can occur when specific groups of workers are more likely to face violations of decent work, such as lacking a written contract, being exposed to workplace hazards, experiencing forced labour or child labour, receiving lower pay than others doing the same job, or encountering other forms of disadvantage.

Depending on the country context, the survey data can be used to explore whether specific groups of workers face higher exposure to decent work deficits, which may point to underlying discriminatory dynamics. Table 14 provides examples of characteristics that may lead to different treatment, including age, education level, nationality (including when crew members have a different nationality from the captain), years of experience, role on board, and migrant status.

**Table 14. Counting rules for possible indicators of vulnerability**

| Response option      | Meaning                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (DATE-DG01) < XX     | Fisher is under XX years.                                                                                                                            |
| DG05=1 OR 2 OR 3     | Low level of formal education.                                                                                                                       |
| DG04B ≠ WC06         | The fisher and the captain are from different nationalities (= higher likelihood of racism and language barriers).                                   |
| DG06A=(DG01)         | First fishing vessel the fisher has worked on (= higher likelihood that they were not familiar with the conditions at sea before accepting the job). |
| WC03=1. General crew | Fisher holds the least power on the vessel.                                                                                                          |
| TV02A=1              | Fisher migrated overseas for this job and is a migrant worker.                                                                                       |

## Other decent work indicators in the fishing sector

### Measurement framework for decent work indicators

The statistical measurement framework for decent work is based on the following guidelines:

- 18th ICLS (2008): Guidelines for ten elements of decent work, many of which directly reflect FPRW topics (e.g., elimination of forced and child labour, equal opportunity, and safe work environment, hours of work, union density, and social security, among others).<sup>9</sup>
- This framework was expanded and updated in 2013 in an ILO Manual.<sup>10</sup>

### Fair recruitment

The ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs state that “no recruitment fees or related costs should be charged to or otherwise borne by workers or job seekers”. The terms “recruitment fees or related costs” encompass any fees or expenses incurred during the recruitment process necessary for workers to secure employment or placement, irrespective of the manner, timing or location of their collection.<sup>11</sup>

This principle is further enshrined in the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), specifically Article 22, paragraph 3(b), which mandates that “Each Member shall, using laws, regulations or other measures: require that no fees or other charges for recruitment or placement of fishers be borne directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, by the fisher.” Similarly, the Private Employment Agency Convention, 1997 (No. 181) at Article 7 mandates that “Private employment agencies shall not charge directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers.”

<sup>9</sup> [Microsoft Word - Decent work indicators English.doc](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Decent Work Indicators. Guidelines for Producers and Users of Statistical and Legal Framework Indicators. ILO Manual](#)

<sup>11</sup> [General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment](#)

The Decent Work Survey in Marine Fishing questionnaires allows the calculation of the total cost of recruitment borne by fishers, as well as the total amount paid for recruitment costs. The survey categorises recruitment fees and related costs into four components: travel costs associated with reaching the place of work, preparation costs required to begin employment, fees related to individual brokers or agencies, and a final category of residual costs termed “other costs”.

Travel costs encompass expenses incurred from the fisher’s residence at the time to the job destination. For instance, this includes bus or flight tickets, border crossing fees, and food and accommodation during travel.

Preparation costs cover any expenses incurred before commencing the job. Examples include visa costs, passport fees, and other documentation such as contract preparation, mandatory tests or training, pre-departure training, basic safety training (BST), police certificates, health tests, vaccinations, travel and health insurance, equipment, and fisher’s books.

Costs associated with individual or agency brokers include fees charged by public or private recruitment agencies, placement fees, and similar charges.

Lastly, the residual category of “other costs” encompasses any additional expenses related to the recruitment or placement of workers, such as gifts, bribes or other payments, interest on borrowed money, fees for debts incurred to secure or start the job, and other related expenses.

Another way to capture the burden of recruitment costs for workers is through the measurement of SDG indicator 10.7.1, which reflects the recruitment costs borne by employees as a proportion of their annual income in the country of destination.

Fair recruitment indicators are calculated for fishers who are employees. The calculation of the SDG 10.7.1 indicator is further restricted to employee fishers who have migrated nationally or internationally to start their fishing job.

**Table 15. Counting rules to measure fair recruitment**

|            | Question/response counting rule                                                                                                                                                                      | Meaning                                                                                                          |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FR         | RC03A = 1<br>AND<br>RC03B = A                                                                                                                                                                        | Fisher paid the recruitment fees or related costs themselves.                                                    |
| FR AMOUNT  | RC03C                                                                                                                                                                                                | Amount paid.                                                                                                     |
| SDG 10.7.1 | Total recruitment-related costs paid by fisher (RC_TOT) = RC01C + RC02C + RC03C + RC04C<br><br>Total earnings (TOT_PAY) = ER03A + ER04B + ER05A + ER06B + ER07B<br><br>SDG 10.7.1 = RC_TOT / TOT_PAY | Average number of monthly equivalent earnings in recruitment costs that migrant fishers paid during recruitment. |

## Employment contract

According to ILO Convention No. 188, Article 20, vessel owners are responsible for ensuring that each fisher has a written work agreement signed by both the fisher and the fishing vessel owner or by an authorised representative of the fishing vessel owner, providing decent work and living conditions on board the vessel as required by this Convention. Article 18 specifies that the fisher's work agreement, a copy of which shall be provided to the fisher, must be carried on board and made available to the fisher and, in accordance with national law and practice, to other concerned parties upon request.

As written contracts for fishers are rare in informal contexts, such as artisanal fishing, the questionnaire also measures whether in the absence of a written contract, the fisher has at least a verbal agreement.

**Table 16. Counting rules for the employment contract**

|      | Question/response counting rule | Meaning                        |
|------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| CONT | WC09=1                          | Fisher has a written contract  |
|      | WC10=1                          | Fisher has a verbal agreement. |

## Working time

According to ILO Convention No. 188, Article 14, working hours for fishers are defined in terms of minimum rest periods rather than maximum working hours. Specifically, the Convention stipulates that for fishing vessels operating for more than three days, the minimum rest period for crew members should not be less than 10 hours in any 24 hours, and 77 hours over seven days. Consequently, the maximum working hours per day should not exceed 14 hours, and the maximum working hours per week should not exceed 91 hours. Any hours worked beyond these thresholds are classified as overtime in the analysis of the survey results.

It is important to note that the Convention allows for some exceptions. The competent authorities may permit limited and temporary exceptions. Still, fishers shall receive compensation periods of rest as soon as practicable or establish alternative requirements that are substantially similar and do not jeopardise the safety and health of the fishers. Moreover, the skipper may require the fishers to perform any hours of work necessary for the immediate safety of the vessel, the persons on board, or the catch, or for assisting other boats in distress at sea. The skipper should provide an adequate period of rest as soon as possible after the normal situation has been restored.

For workers in the fishing industry, rest hours are essential for ensuring their safety, well-being and overall work-life balance. Despite the exceptions in the Convention, the general principle remains that workers should receive adequate rest to protect their physical and mental health.

As shown in Table 17, the daily and weekly working hours reported by the fishers are compared to the maximum daily and weekly working hours allowed by the Convention. If national legislation sets maximum working hours, those thresholds should be used to prevent fishers from working excessively long hours.

**Table 17. Counting rules for working time**

|    | Question/response counting rule                            | Meaning                                                             |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WT | WN04 > max daily hours<br>(max 14 hours work/day)          | The number of hours worked per day exceeds the maximum daily hours. |
|    | WN03 * WN04 > max weekly hours<br>(max 91 hours work/week) | Number of hours worked per week exceeds maximum weekly hours.       |

## Earnings

As stated in Article 23 of Convention No. 188: “Each Member, after consultation, shall adopt laws, regulations or other measures providing that fishers who are paid a wage are ensured a monthly or other regular payment.”. Payment systems in the fishing industry are varied and highly dependent on the country and sector of employment. The questionnaire permits the assessment of five distinct types of payment, along with any combination of them.

**Fixed wages** are a type of payment more commonly found among fishers with formal jobs working on industrial vessels. These payments provide stability regardless of the catch, but do not include any component to incentivise fishers. In the questionnaire, fishers are asked about fixed wages that are paid regularly, including details about the amount, currency, and period of payment. The reported payment value includes advance wage payments (if any), after deductions for taxes and social contributions (paid by the worker or the employer), but before any other deductions related to accommodation, food, recruitment costs, or other debts owed to the employer.

Another common payment method, often used in more informal contexts, is the share-of-catch system, where workers receive a portion of the catch’s value after deducting expenses such as fuel and maintenance. Fishers report the last payment amount with the relevant currency and reference period. Similar to fixed wages, share-of-catch payments are communicated alongside the wage advance, after deductions for taxes and social contributions, but before other types of deductions.

**Lump-sum** salaries are also often used as a form of payment in the fishing sector. These are payments received either at the end of a trip, at the conclusion of employment, or after a longer period, but not regularly like fixed wages. Fishers specify the amount, currency, and reference period of lump sum payments, after deducting taxes and social contributions, but before other deductions.

In addition to these three main types of payment, workers can receive performance-based bonuses to motivate productivity. The amount, currency, and reference period of these bonuses or catch premiums are also included in the questionnaire. In some cases, workers also receive in-kind benefits, such as food, accommodation, or essential supplies, which supplement monetary payments reported in the questionnaire.

It is not uncommon for workers to be compensated through a combination of these methods. This diverse range of payment methods reflects the need to navigate the inherent

unpredictability of fishing activities, striking a balance between the risks and rewards shared by workers and employers.

Table 18 outlines the counting rules for these different types of payment methods. Total earnings are calculated by converting payments to the same currency and reference period (such as one month) and then summing them up. Depending on the country context, fixed wages can be compared to either the national or sectoral minimum wages to assess decent working and payment conditions.

**Table 18. Counting rules for earnings**

|         | Question/response counting rule                 | Meaning                                                                                               |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FW      | ER01=A                                          | Fisher is paid a fixed wage.                                                                          |
| PC      | ER01=B                                          | Fisher is paid a proportion/share of the catch.                                                       |
| LS      | ER01=C                                          | Fisher receives a lump-sum payment either at the end of their employment or after a specified period. |
| BON     | ER06A=1                                         | Fisher is paid with a bonus or an allowance.                                                          |
| INKIND  | ER07A=1                                         | Fishers receives in-kind benefits.                                                                    |
| TOT_PAY | TOT_PAY = ER03A + ER04B + ER05A + ER06B + ER07B | Total earnings of fishing workers.                                                                    |
| FW      | ER03A $\geq$ national minimum wage              | Fisher's earnings reach or exceed the national minimum wage.                                          |

## Social security

Social security is an essential part of decent work, acting as a safety net for workers experiencing situations like job loss or work-related injuries. Access to employment and health insurance is crucial for all workers, especially those in insecure and high-risk sectors such as fishing.

Convention No. 188 emphasises the importance of comprehensive social protection for all workers, including those in the fisheries sector. Articles 35–36 of Convention No. 188 specify that countries must take measures suited to their national context to ensure social protection for all workers in the fishing industry.

Additionally, Article 36 highlights the importance of cooperation between countries through both bilateral and multilateral agreements to implement national practices that support this social protection. This protection should be universal, meaning it should cover all workers in the capture fisheries sector, regardless of nationality, and be based on the principle of equality. Notably, this may present challenges for international migrant workers who may not have the right to social protection in the country where they work.

Convention No. 188, in Article 34, specifies the obligation of member countries to provide social security protection for fishers who are normally resident within the country's territory and their dependants, to the extent permitted by national law, under conditions no less favourable than those for other workers living in the territory. Acknowledging the difficulties involved in ensuring social protection for all workers, the Convention, in Article 35, states that Member States should take measures, according to their national circumstances, to progressively attain comprehensive social security protection for all fishers who are normally resident in their territory.

The Decent Work Survey in Marine Fishing assesses whether fishers have employment insurance, social insurance, and social security compensation in case of work-related injury, illness, or death. Low participation in social security means many fishers lack financial security, healthcare, and support during emergencies, leaving them vulnerable to income instability and unsafe working conditions.

**Table 19. Counting rules for social security**

|            | Question/response counting rule | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EMP_INS    | SPCB01 = 1                      | Fishers with employment insurance.                                                                                                                                                        |
| HEALTH INS | SPCB03 = 1                      | Fishers with social health insurance.                                                                                                                                                     |
| SOCS_1     | SPCB05A = 1                     | Fishers believes that in the event of injury due to an occupational accident, disease or death, their employer will provide appropriate medical care.                                     |
| SOCS_2     | SPCB05B = 1                     | Fishers believes that in the event of injury due to an occupational accident, disease or death, their employer will provide compensation in accordance with national laws or regulations. |
| SOCS_3     | SPCB05C = 1                     | Fishers believes that in the event of injury due to an occupational accident, disease or death, their employer will provide your family with compensation in case of death.               |

## Living conditions

Convention No. 188 addresses living conditions on board, such as food and water provisions available for the fishers. According to Article 27 of the Convention, *“Each Member shall adopt laws, regulations or other means requiring that:*

- (a) the food carried and served on board be of a sufficient nutritional value, quality and quantity;*
- (b) potable water be of sufficient quality and quantity; and*
- (c) the food and water shall be provided by the fishing vessel owner at no cost to the fisher.”*

However, in accordance with national laws and regulations, the cost can be recovered as an operational cost if the collective agreement governing a share system or a fisher’s agreement so provides.”

The survey includes two questions to assess whether food and water are available in adequate quality and quantity on the vessel. Fishers face risks not only to their health and dignity but also to their productivity when subjected to degrading living conditions, such as insufficient or poor-quality food (including food that does not meet their religious requirements) and inadequate access to safe drinking water.

**Table 20. Counting rules to measure living conditions**

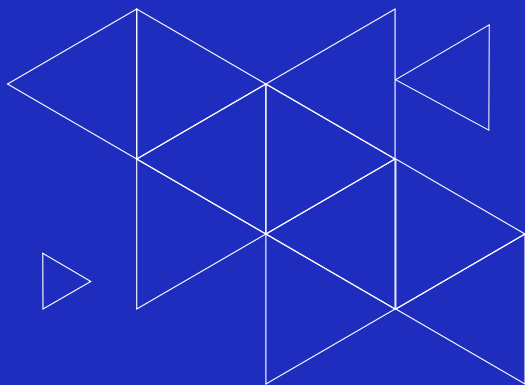
|      | Question/response counting rule | Meaning                                 |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| LC_1 | LC01 = 1                        | Sufficient quantity and quality of food |
| LC_2 | LC02 = 1                        | Sufficient clean drinking water         |

## ► Annex: Measurement framework of decent work and fundamental principles and rights at work

| Theme                      | International labour standards                                    | Indicator                                                                                                            | Indicator description                                                                                           | Indicator code |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Fair recruitment</b>    | Recruitment and placement<br>(Convention No. 188, Article 22, 3b) | Share of fishers who paid recruitment and/or placement fees to agencies or brokers                                   | Fisher paid the recruitment fees or related costs themselves                                                    | FR             |
|                            |                                                                   |                                                                                                                      | Amount paid                                                                                                     | FR AMOUNT      |
|                            | The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development                       | SDG 10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in the country of destination | Average number of monthly equivalent earnings in recruitment costs that migrant fishers paid during recruitment | SDG 10.7.1     |
| <b>Employment contract</b> | Fisher's work agreement<br>(Convention No. 188, Articles 16-20)   | Share of fishers with/without contract                                                                               | Fisher has a written contract                                                                                   | CONT           |
| <b>Working time</b>        | Hours of rest<br>(Convention No. 188, Article 14)                 | Share of people working overtime                                                                                     | No. of hours worked per day<br><br>No. of hours worked per week                                                 | WT             |
| <b>Earnings</b>            | Payment of fishers<br>(Convention No. 188, Articles 23-24)        | Share of fishers with below minimum wage earnings                                                                    | Fishers' payment                                                                                                | TOT_PAY        |

| Theme                                                        | International labour standards                                                                                                                                                                              | Indicator                                                  | Indicator description                                          | Indicator code |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Occupational safety and health</b>                        | Medical examination (Convention No. 188, Articles 10-12)<br>Medical care (Convention No. 188, Article 29-30)<br>Occupational safety and health and accident prevention (Convention No. 188, Articles 31-33) | Share of fishers experiencing safety hazards on the vessel | Safety hazards on the vessel                                   | OSH            |
| <b>Freedom of association</b>                                | Freedom of association and collective bargaining (Conventions No. 87 and No. 98)                                                                                                                            | Share of fishers in a trade union or workers' association  | Trade union/workers' association membership                    | FA             |
| <b>Equality and inclusion (non-discrimination)</b>           | Non-discrimination (Convention No. 111)                                                                                                                                                                     | Share of fishers in a vulnerable group                     | Vulnerable groups                                              | ND             |
| <b>Work to be abolished (child labour and forced labour)</b> | Minimum age (Convention No. 138)<br>Worst Forms of Child Labour (Convention No. 182)                                                                                                                        | Share of fishers in child labour                           | A fisher is below the minimum legal age for working in fishing | CL             |
|                                                              | Forced labour (Convention No. 29)                                                                                                                                                                           | Share of fishing employees in forced labour                | The fisher is in forced labour                                 | FL             |
| <b>Social security</b>                                       | Social security (Convention No. 188, Articles 34-37)                                                                                                                                                        | Coverage of employment insurance among fishers             | Fishers with employment insurance                              | EMP INS        |
|                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Coverage of health insurance among fishers                 | Fishers with social health insurance                           | HEALTH INS     |

| Theme                    | International labour standards                                                                        | Indicator                                                                                | Indicator description                                                          | Indicator code |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
|                          | Protection in the case of work-related sickness, injury or death (Convention No. 188, Articles 38-39) | Coverage of fishers in the case of injury due to occupational accident, disease or death | Fishers with coverage in case of work-related injury, disease or death         | SOCS           |
| <b>Living conditions</b> | Accommodation and food (Convention No. 188, Articles 25-28 and Annex 3)                               | Food and clean water needs                                                               | Sufficient quantity and quality of food<br><br>Sufficient clean drinking water | LC             |
| <b>Repatriation</b>      | Repatriation (Convention No. 188, Article 21)                                                         | NA                                                                                       | NA                                                                             | NA             |



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