



# Report: Decent and sustainable work in the inland waterways sector

ILO – Sectoral Policies Department

Technical meeting on decent and sustainable work  
in the inland waterways sector

**20-24 November 2023**

# What is the inland waterways (IWW) sector?



- ❖ Inland water movement of goods or passengers
- ❖ No established definition
- ❖ Some countries include:
  - ☐ vessels solely/mainly navigating in inland waters
  - ☐ river-sea vessels
  - ☐ coastal shipping vessels



- ❖ Seagoing ships → Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.
- ❖ Fishing vessels → Work in Fishing Convention, 2007  
(No. 188)



**Scope of the report:**  
**vessels neither covered by MLC, 2006**  
**nor by Convention No. 188**

## Structure

1. Overview of the inland waterways sector
2. Sectoral trends and developments
3. Opportunities and challenges for decent and sustainable work



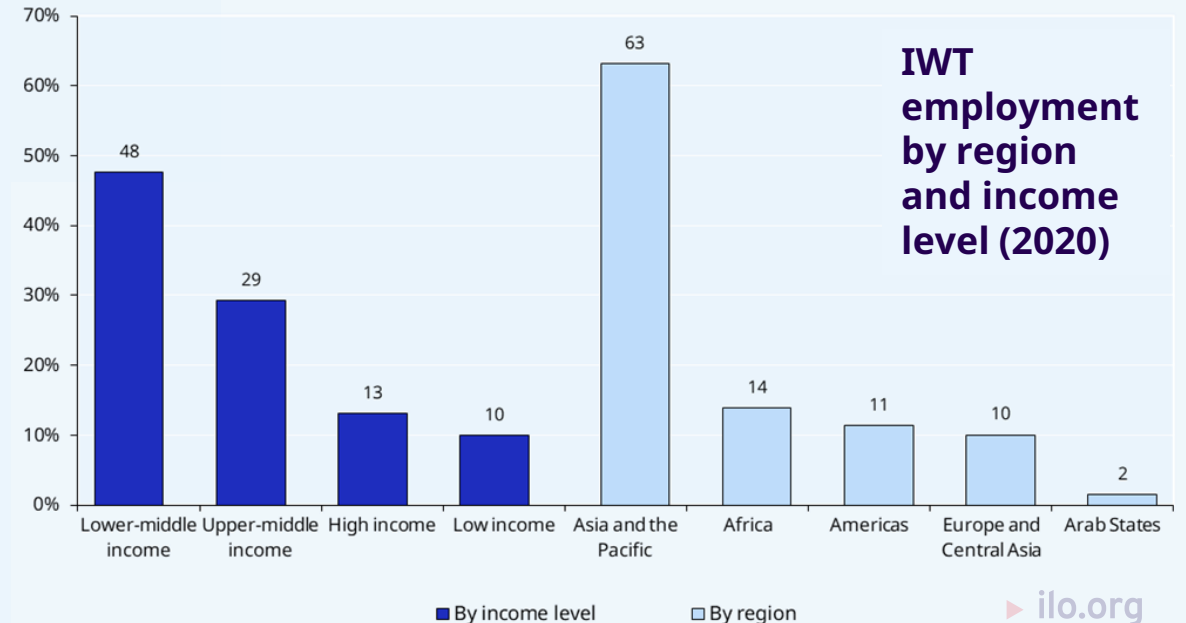
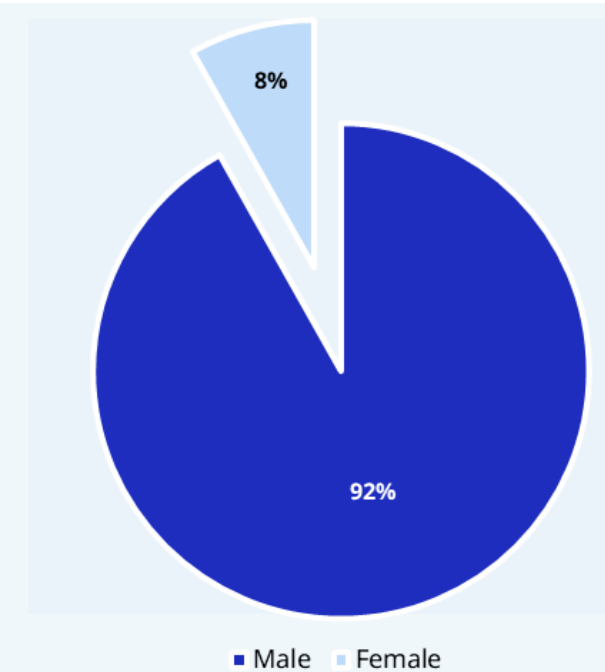
# Overview of the IWW sector

## Employment trends:

- No statistics on global employment
- Lower-middle-income countries: 48% employment
- Asia and Pacific region: largest share
- Women extremely underrepresented (8 %)
- Mostly employees & own-account workers

## Sector features:

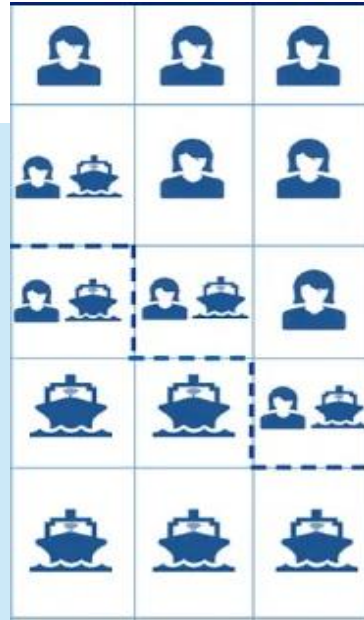
- High informality: Africa, Asia, Latin America
- Most enterprises: microenterprises
- 500.000 vessels (excl. informal sector)
- Growing river cruise subsector



## Drivers of change

### Technological innovation

- Gradual digitalization
- Culmination in automation and remote control with migration vessel-shore



### Environmental sustainability

- Efforts to mitigate impact on climate change (e.g. decarbonization)
- Efforts to adapt to impact of climate change



### Just transition

- Possible positive and negative effects on sector and workforce
- Ensuing training needs, emerging safety risks
- 2015 ILO Guidelines on a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all; 2023 ILC Resolution

## Other trends and developments

- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic
- Scale increase
- Re-flagging
- Migrant workers
- Hydropower development



# Opportunities & challenges

**Social  
dialogue**



**Transition to  
the formal  
economy**

**R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)**

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| Preamble                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p>The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,</p> <p>Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its 104th Session on 1 June 2015, and</p> <p>Recognizing that the high incidence of the informal economy in all its aspects is a major challenge for the rights of workers, including the fundamental principles and rights at work, and for social protection, decent working conditions, inclusive development and the rule of law, and has a negative impact on the development of sustainable enterprises, public revenues and governments' scope of action, particularly with regard to economic, social and environmental policies, the soundness of institutions and fair competition in national and international markets, and</p> <p>Acknowledging that most people enter the informal economy not by choice but as a consequence of a lack of opportunities in the formal economy and in the absence of other means of livelihood, and</p> <p>Recalling that decent work deficits – the denial of rights at work, the absence of sufficient opportunities for quality employment, inadequate social protection and the absence of social dialogue – are most pronounced in the informal economy, and</p> <p>Acknowledging that informality has multiple causes, including governance and structural issues, and that public policies can speed up the process of transition to the formal economy, in a context of social dialogue, and</p> <p>Recalling the Declaration of Philadelphia, 1944, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998, and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008, and</p> <p>Reaffirming the relevance of the eight ILO fundamental Conventions and other relevant international labour standards and United Nations instruments as listed in the Annex, and</p> <p>Recalling the resolution and Conclusions concerning decent work and the informal economy adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 104th Session (2015), and other relevant resolutions and Conclusions as listed in the Annex, and</p> <p>Affirming that the transition from the informal to the formal economy is essential to achieve inclusive development and to realize decent work for all, and</p> <p>Recognizing the need for Members to take urgent and appropriate measures to enable the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while ensuring the preservation and improvement of existing livelihoods during the transition, and</p> <p>Recognizing that employers' and workers' organizations play an important and active role in facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and</p> <p>Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the transition from the informal to the formal economy, which is the fifth item on the agenda of the session, and</p> <p>Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation;</p> <p>adopts this twelfth day of June of the year two thousand and fifteen the following Recommendation, which may be cited as the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015.</p> |
| I. Objectives and scope                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

1. This Recommendation provides guidance to Members to:
- facilitate the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while respecting workers' fundamental rights and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship;
  - promote the creation, preservation and sustainability of enterprises and decent jobs in the formal economy and the coherence of macroeconomic, employment, social protection and other social policies; and
  - prevent the informalization of formal economy jobs.

**Fundamental  
principles and  
rights at work**

**Freedom of  
association &  
collective bargaining**

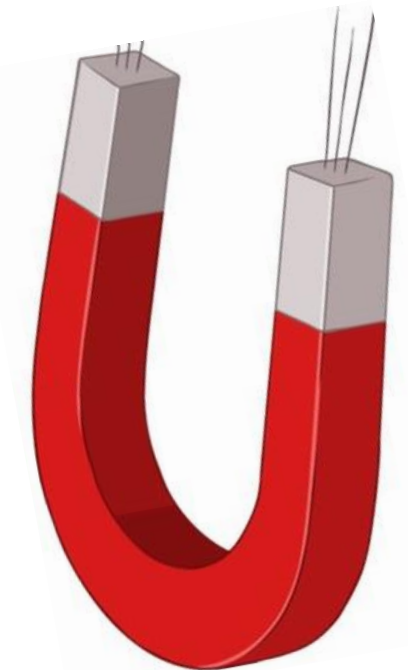
**Eradication of forced  
labour**

**Abolition of  
child labour**

**Elimination of  
discrimination at work**

**Safe and healthy  
working  
environment**

**Attraction &  
retention  
of workers**

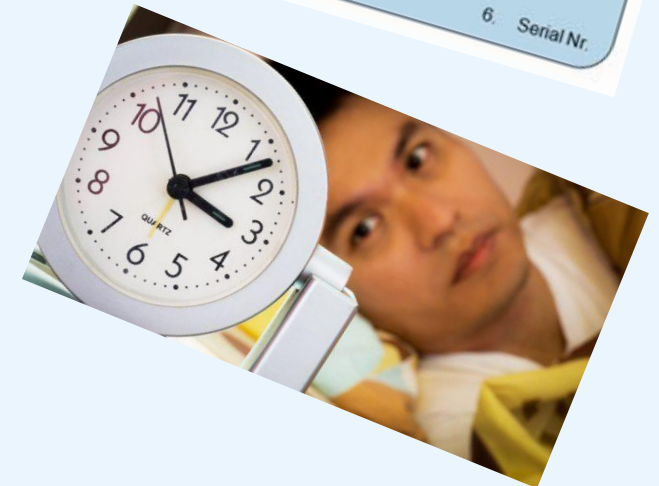
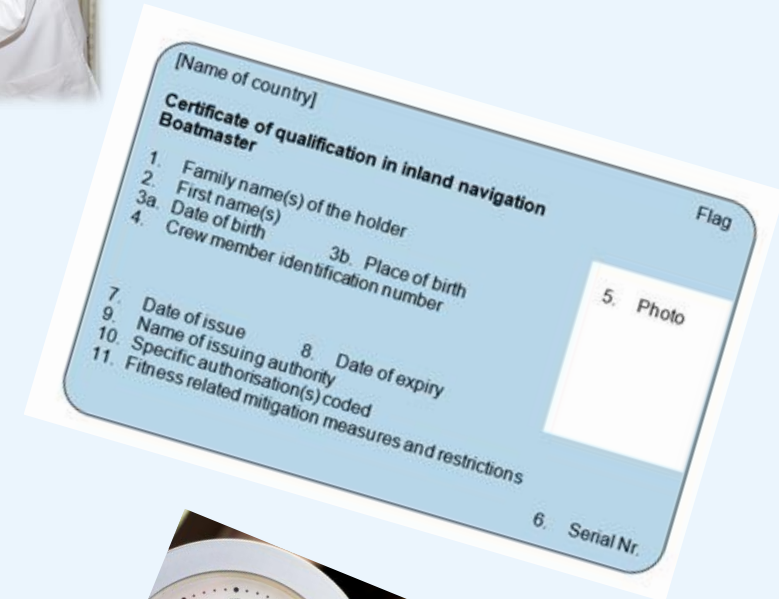


| Institutions                                | Main relevant IWW instruments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Governance framework                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ILO</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hours of Work (Inland Navigation) Recommendation, 1920 (No. 8)</a></li> <li>• Inland Transport Committee (ITC) work (1945-1992)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR)</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rhine Vessel Inspection Regulations (2011)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Regulations for Rhine navigation personnel (2010)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Police regulations for the navigation of the Rhine (1995)</a></li> <li>• CESNI <a href="#">European Standard for Qualification in Inland Navigation</a> and <a href="#">European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation vessels</a></li> </ul> |
| <i>Depositary function of the ILO</i>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Agreement concerning the Social Security of Rhine Boatmen</a> (1950-1979);</li> <li>• <a href="#">Agreement concerning the Conditions of Employment of Rhine Boatmen</a>, 1954.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Basic rules of navigation on the Danube</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Recommendations (technical requirements for IWW vessels)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Recommendations (boatmaster's certificates)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Recommendations (vocational education and training)</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ECE resolution No. 61 (Rev.2)</a> (Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels);</li> <li>• <a href="#">ECE resolution No. 31</a> (Minimum Requirements for the Issuance of Boatmasters' certificates);</li> <li>• <a href="#">ECE resolution No. 24 (Rev.6)</a> (European Code for IWW - CEVNI);</li> <li>• <a href="#">ECE resolution No. 90 (Rev.6)</a> (European Code for Signs and Signals on IWW - SIGNI)</li> </ul> | <b>Intergovernmental Committee on HPP</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Agreement on River Transport via the Hidrovía Paraguay-Paraná (Santa Cruz de la Sierra Agreement), 1992</a> and its <a href="#">Additional Protocols and Regulations</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>CICOS</b>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Agreement Establishing a Uniform River Regime and Creating International Commission for the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin (CICOS) 1999</a>; <a href="#">2007 Addendum</a>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>European Union (EU)</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Directive 2020/12</a> (standards for competences and medical fitness);</li> <li>• <a href="#">Directive 2017/2397</a> (recognition of professional qualifications);</li> <li>• <a href="#">Directive 2016/1629</a> (technical requirements for IWW vessels;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Council Directive 2014/112/EU</a> (working time)</li> </ul>                                                                                      | <b>Joint Committee on the Coordination of Commercial Navigation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Quadripartite Agreement on Commercial Navigation on Lancang-Mekong River, 2000</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Int. Sava River Basin Commission</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Decision 32/07</a> (issuance of boatmasters' licenses)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Decision 33/07</a> (minimum manning requirements)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Navigation Rules</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Mekong River Commission (MRC)</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Agreement on Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin, 1995</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:

- nationally
- regionally
- internationally

- Minimum conditions for work on board in the IWW sector:
  - Minimum age
  - Medical examination
  - Training and certification
- Conditions of service:
  - Contracts
  - Wages
  - Working time
  - Manning
- Safety, health and well-being:
  - OSH, incl. risk assessment, PPE, etc.
  - Accommodation
  - Food and water
  - Medical care
- Social protection



▶ **Thank you!**



Christine Bader, Maritime Specialist

[bader@ilo.org](mailto:bader@ilo.org)

[www.ilo.org/sector](http://www.ilo.org/sector)