



SEA Fisheries: Strengthened Coordination to Combat Labour Exploitation and Trafficking in Fisheries in Southeast Asia

Project Brief

To reduce trafficking and labour exploitation in fisheries by strengthening coordination and increasing the efficiency and efficacy of efforts at the national and regional levels.

OBJECTIVE




KEY PARTNERS



- National ministries of labour, fisheries, maritime enforcement agencies, law enforcement agencies, workers' and employers' organizations, industry associations, civil society organizations.
- Regional institutions, international buyers and retailer groups.
- UN and international organizations.

3 years (April 2017 – March 2020)

DURATION



GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE




Southeast Asia

United States Department of State
(Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons)

DONOR



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Project Objectives

Globally, over 54 million women and men work in fishing and aquaculture. The majority are in the Asia-Pacific region, home to around 87 percent of the world's fishers and 73 percent of its fishing vessels. In recent years, the trafficking of workers into fishing has emerged as an issue in Southeast Asia's fishing and seafood industry.

Fishing is inherently hazardous, and it takes place in relative isolation and with unique practices in terms of working hours and wages. There is a weak legal framework and limited enforcement in the sector, complicated by jurisdictional challenges. There are strong links between illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the use of forced labour on board. The seafood supply chain is also one of the most complex global value chains, involving multiple sources and processing locations, some of which are mobile, as well as multiple markets with different consumer demands and preferences.

The work is often carried out by migrants, who are particularly vulnerable to being deceived and coerced in recruitment and employment. Workers are trafficked within the region, but also on vessels fishing all over the world. The work is highly segregated by gender, with women and children usually working in processing factories and less formal 'peeling sheds', while fishing is almost exclusively the domain of men.

The SEA Fisheries Project aims to reduce trafficking and labour exploitation in fisheries, by strengthening coordination at the national and regional levels. The project will be regional in nature, with a particular focus on Indonesia and Thailand.

One of the first priorities of the project will be to set out the specific mandate, composition and functions of a Regional Coordination Body which will build links between key interventions and approaches, develop and implement joint strategies, and share information. Links will also be made with national task forces and ASEAN frameworks on migration, trafficking and fisheries. The project will also explore the integration of the Regional Coordination Body and strategy into existing structures.

Outcomes and Activities

The SEA Fisheries Project works on three key areas:

1. To establish a Regional Coordination Body

The project will establish a Regional Coordination Body to support existing national bodies to improve coordination in combating trafficking in the fisheries sector. The entity will be broad-based and include various government departments (the competent authorities on labour, migration, trafficking and fisheries), workers' and employers' organizations, industry associations, buyer groups, international organizations and research institutions. Senior officials meetings will be convened, with participation from social partners, to identify regional coordination priorities. A secretariat for the Regional Coordination Body will also be incubated by the ILO.

2. To coordinate strategies and action plans

The project will coordinate strategies and to support the adoption of result-oriented and gender-responsive regional action plans that enhance the complementarity and efficiency of various initiatives ongoing to combat trafficking in the fisheries sector.

Activities will include mapping of current and planned anti-trafficking activities concerning sea fisheries at the regional level and in priority countries (Indonesia and Thailand).

3. To commission and conduct independent research and provide a platform for knowledge sharing and enhancing communication

The project will commission and conduct independent research and analysis to underpin the development of strategies and action plans, to fill knowledge gaps, and to establish platforms that can enhance the sharing of good practices and experiences. Research will be conducted at the regional level on cross-cutting issues and in priority countries. Priority research areas will be identified in consultation with the stakeholders. Platforms for enhancing communication on progress, good practices and international standards will be established at the regional and national levels.

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