

Navigating high-risk waters: Advancing decent work in the seafood industry



WEBINAR

25 June 2025 | 11:00-12:30 CEST / 10:00-11:30 BST

This is the fourth of seven webinars and workshops in Electronics Watch's 2025 Knowledge Building Series for public buyers. It is part of an Innovation Pilot to strengthen and expand our impact model.



Why the seafood sector?

Seafood is the most traded food commodity globally, providing nutrition to billions and employing around 60 million people.

However, whether it is fresh or frozen, the seafood we find in university canteens, care homes or on hospital meal trays is likely fished and processed by workers who are subject to gross exploitation and rights violations. According to the ILO, 128,000 fisher workers are in situations of forced labour. The seafood sector is one of the most dangerous occupations, with an estimated 24,000 casualties a year.

A lot of seafood is caught in international waters where national labour laws do not apply, and there are many cases of human trafficking, poor working and living conditions, unfair or unpaid wages.

Many seafood workers spend months or even years at sea, with no escape, working up to 20 hours a day. Some are abandoned in foreign ports, with no wages paid, no permission to live and work there, and no way of getting home, while the captain runs away and shipowners hide behind flags of convenience and legal loopholes. Seafood companies lag behind other industries in addressing human and labour risks and ensuring safe and healthy working conditions.

About the webinar

Seafood worker representatives, civil society organisations and academics will share their expertise on labour and human rights issues in the industry. They will highlight examples of good practices to tackle worker rights violations, and provide practical advice for your procurement processes. Speakers will cover questions to ask suppliers, and provide guidance on employment standards that public buyers should expect to see in the sector, along with sources of expertise and advice. The webinar will be interactive, combining insights from panellists with discussions among participants.

Speakers will address:

- The labour rights risks and challenges facing seafood workers
- How public buyers can manage these issues in tender and contracts: possible criteria and clauses, follow-ups with suppliers, challenges with certifications to manage risks
- Examples from multi-stakeholder initiatives involving trade unions, civil society organisations, industry bodies, governments and others: their achievements and challenges
- Key recommendations (do's & don'ts) for public buyers

Presentations

Expert on forced labour in the fishing sector | Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)

Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) | Global trade union federation representative | Public buyer perspective