

Addressing worker vulnerability in agricultural and food supply chains: Pilot Toolkit



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Executive summary

This Toolkit provides companies in the agricultural and food supply chain with specific guidance on tackling worker vulnerability. It complements ETI's more general Human Rights Due Diligence Framework.

The Toolkit is primarily aimed at compliance managers and HR managers, buyers and technical staff, as well as ethical trade or responsible sourcing staff at first tier suppliers, though many of the considerations and actions are applicable to other actors and stakeholders including at retailers, and worker representatives and NGOs.

The Toolkit can be read as a whole or referred to selectively. It sets out particular considerations and actions that are relevant for companies when conducting due diligence in relation to vulnerable workers, and highlights other useful resources that companies can refer to gain further information and guidance.

Who are vulnerable workers?

Many workers in agricultural and food supply chains are potentially vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation or abuse. However, the structure and employment characteristics of many agricultural supply chains create particular vulnerabilities for women, migrant workers and temporary workers.

Vulnerability is not a definitive condition and is associated with many factors that can change according to circumstances. For example, the vulnerability of women, migrant, and temporary workers, and other types of worker, is often exacerbated when combined with certain employment situations and management practices, socio-economic circumstances outside the workplace, or purchasing practices by customers in supply chains.

What is due diligence

Human rights due diligence involves the actions taken by a company to both identify and act upon actual and potential human rights risks for workers in its own operations, its supply chains and in the services it uses. It may involve an auditing component but it represents a broader and more preventative and collaborative approach to addressing labour abuses and exploitation.

Stakeholder engagement and collaborative actions should underpin each stage and will strengthen the results.

The Toolkit is structured around the key steps in a due diligence process, which are as follows.

Risk assessment:

- **Identifying and mapping your supplier sites against known risks to vulnerable workers:** Risks can be categorised at a country or regional level (e.g. inadequate legal protections, endemic discrimination against certain groups), at a worksite level (e.g. farms in remote locations) or in terms of management practices (e.g. hostile attitudes to trade unions).
- **Prioritising supplier sites:** Risks can be prioritised using analytical or scoring methods, in order to identify higher risk suppliers or sites for more urgent further action.
- **Undertaking in-depth site assessments:** Various forms of site visit may be undertaken at higher risk sites in order to verify risks and understand the context. Such assessments will be different to audits as they should be focused on the risks issues and vulnerabilities identified. They should involve interviewing all categories of workers and meeting stakeholders in order to get a picture of the underlying issues.

Understanding root causes and developing action plans

- **Understanding the nature of the risk:** Root cause analysis of worker vulnerability is important for developing action plans. Root causes can include factors within your control (e.g. your own purchasing practices), those embedded in legal, social or cultural norms in a particular country (e.g. legal gaps, attitudes to women or minorities), those arising from management practices (e.g. use of recruitment agents who charge fees) or factors related to the type of supplier (e.g. seasonality). Each may well require a different type of response.
- **Developing action plans:** Effective due diligence depends on developing an appropriate response to the risk or impact on workers. Depending on the identified issue, some actions may be taken directly and quickly with a supplier, while others may require a longer-term collaborative response acting in co-operation with other stakeholders.
- **Assessing policies and practices:** It is important to review existing policies to ensure they are adequate to cover issues affecting vulnerable workers. Practices that affect suppliers, such as purchasing practices, should also be reviewed to ensure they are not contributing to exploitative working conditions and to poor management practices at suppliers that exacerbate worker vulnerability.
- **Exercising leverage over suppliers:** Achieving buy-in from suppliers for actions to address worker vulnerability is necessary for effectiveness and sustainability. You should work in collaboration with suppliers, providing them with support and applying appropriate commercial incentives.

Taking action

- **Working with suppliers:** Suppliers and their workers should be fully consulted about appropriate mitigation actions. These may include providing training and awareness-raising to suppliers on issues contributing to worker vulnerability (e.g. changing attitudes towards trade unions, improving hiring practices for temporary workers), providing tools and materials for suppliers to use, or encouraging suppliers to review their practices in relation to sub-suppliers such as out-growers).
- **Worker capacity-building:** Actions can include programmes that improve vulnerable workers' awareness of and ability to exercise their rights or that enhance their skill levels.
- **Grievance mechanisms:** Suppliers should be encouraged to set up workplace mechanisms that enable workers to raise complaints and grievances, preferably through a recognised trade union
- **Stakeholder engagement:** While stakeholder involvement will strengthen all stages of a due diligence process, it is particularly important that stakeholder knowledge, expertise and networks are utilised to develop and deliver actions to mitigate risks for vulnerable workers.

Monitoring and reporting

- **Monitoring** of actions should be proportionate to risk and the scale of the programme. Monitoring should focus on impacts and KPIs, be undertaken by personnel with the appropriate skills, and should be participatory to ensure that the voices of the vulnerable worker group are clearly represented. Auditing is unlikely to be the appropriate method.
- **Reporting** builds trust and legitimacy for actions taken. It should take account of the needs and interests of relevant stakeholders such as the workers themselves, the community, internal staff and external stakeholders.

Background to the Toolkit

This Toolkit has been produced in response to requests from Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) member companies for practical guidance and examples of good practice, to support efforts that improve working conditions for vulnerable workers in agricultural and food supply chains.

The Toolkit is primarily aimed at first tier suppliers and has been developed through consultations with ETI members and other companies and stakeholders. Most of the guidance and examples are drawn from the experience of retailers and major suppliers, and it draws on existing guidance from a variety of organisations as well as practical examples of activities and approaches. We are grateful to the many companies and stakeholders that have contributed to this project.

The Toolkit is structured around the due diligence framework set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) which emphasises the responsibility of business to respect human rights within their own operations and their business relationships. The steps in this Toolkit complement the [ETI's Human Rights Due Diligence Framework](#) by providing specific guidance on what suppliers in the agricultural and food supply chains can do to address the particular risks to vulnerable workers in their operations and supply chains.

Human rights due diligence refers to the actions taken by a company to both identify and act upon actual and potential risks for workers in its operations and supply chains and in ETI's experience this has demonstrated the most effective form of due diligence and the most likely way to bring about lasting change is based on collaborative, multi-stakeholder engagement and processes. To find out more about the key principles for conducting meaningful due diligence, see the ETI's Human Rights Due Diligence Framework.

The Toolkit is intended to be a living document that can be revised as lessons are learned and experience of effectively improving vulnerable workers' conditions develops.

ETI HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE FRAMEWORK

Key steps that companies should take to prevent, manage and mitigate human rights abuses in their own operations and supply chains.



How to use the toolkit

The actions in this toolkit are applicable to all tiers of a company's supply chain, though the guidance is aimed primarily at supporting tier 1 suppliers' efforts to address worker vulnerability in their supply chains. It can also be used by range of actors and stakeholders including compliance managers and HR managers, buyers and technical staff at suppliers, as well as ethical trade staff at retailers, and worker representatives and NGOs. It can be used by individual companies or collaboratively between companies and stakeholders to identify and address risks faced by vulnerable workers in different circumstances.

It is intended to be read as an integrated document or equally well as a resource that is referred to according to a particular stage of due diligence or a particular issue that a company faces.

Tools include checklists, questions and processes to consider when conducting each due diligence activity, along with case studies of good or interesting practice derived from ETI members' experience and across the sector. All checklists and processes within this toolkit, or those that are referenced, can be amended to suit the particular requirements of your business.

The steps in this Toolkit follow the structure of the ETI's broader human rights due diligence framework though the focus is on the particularities of worker vulnerability in agricultural and food supply chains. The Toolkit is structured as follows:



Points to consider

Throughout the Toolkit, references to worker voice and representation refer to independent trade unions, democratically elected worker committees or other forms of independent worker representation organisations – where they exist.

Additionally, when the Toolkit refers to auditing, it is important to bear in mind the limitations of audits as a means to assess, monitor and address risks in supply chains. For more information on the limitations and use of audits, see [the ETI's 'Human Rights Due Diligence Framework'](#).



Introduction: What do we mean by vulnerable workers?

Though there is no fixed definition of worker vulnerability, in essence it refers to groups of workers who may be at particular risk of exploitation. It includes workers subject to gross human rights abuses and criminal activities such as modern slavery, but also workers particularly at risk of being discriminated against, or who are in precarious or marginalised work situations.

While there are multiple and various factors that can contribute to vulnerability, within the agricultural and food sectors, the most vulnerable workers are typically:

- **Women workers:** Many elements of the food and agricultural supply chain rely on women workers. Yet women workers are particularly and inherently more at risk of exploitation and are more vulnerable, especially in countries with structural or cultural gender discrimination, in workplaces where supervisors and management are generally male, and if they fall within subsequent categories.
- **Migrant workers:** The food and agricultural sectors often attract and employ workers who have migrated either internally within a country or from another country. There are particular risks where migrants come from areas where there are security concerns, or when there are language, ethnic, religious or cultural differences and tensions between migrants and local supervisors and workers.
- **Temporary workers:** Food and agriculture are seasonal sectors and work is often temporary or insecure. Temporary workers commonly have less bargaining power, have a tougher job accessing their rights and are more at risk of exploitation.

Important: Avoid increasing vulnerability

Always be mindful of a workers' actual working and living situation. Consider the implications of any actions, and take care to not make circumstances worse for vulnerable workers.

Factors contributing to vulnerability

Vulnerability, especially for women workers, may be created, exacerbated or reinforced by various factors, often acting in conjunction with one another. These factors may relate to:

- the type of worker (e.g. women who are from a different culture and who lack local language skills)
- the characteristics of the workplace and the purchasing practices/actions of actors further up the supply chain that drive vulnerability
- the way workers are recruited and treated by management

The following table describes particular factors that contribute to vulnerability and increase the risk of exploitation.

High risk factors for workers	Examples of risk
Literacy and language skills	Workers who have little or no command of the prevailing language in the workplace, who may be illiterate or otherwise socio-economically disadvantaged.
Cultural differences	Workers with a significantly different culture or religion/belief system to the prevailing culture at the workplace (even where there is a common language), especially where they are members of a minority group in a workplace or region who



	may subject to discriminatory laws and treatment.
Age	Both young workers, including children permitted to work within the ILO Conventions, or older workers.
Disability	Workers with physical and mental conditions that may prevent understanding or compliance with working norms or may be subject to discrimination by co-workers.
High risk workplace characteristics	
Supplier in a country with inadequate legal protections	The national legal framework may either have gaps that expose certain types of worker to abuse (e.g. poor protections against gender discrimination or child labour) or enforcement of employment laws may be particularly weak or inconsistent.
Suppliers subject to poor purchasing practices	Suppliers with customers that are prone to making irregular or short notice orders, changing volumes, expecting discounts or special prices on particular agricultural products.
Seasonality	Farms dependent on seasonal orders, especially when the production season is short and intense.
Remote location	Farms or other supplier worksites that are remote or isolated, or distant from government agencies, trade unions or NGOs.
Smallholder farms	Workers working for smallholder farmers may be working in very informal situations and have limited education or knowledge of their employment rights.
Proximity to area with security concerns	Agricultural areas that are near to unstable or insecure regions, or to migrant corridors, heightens the risk of human trafficking or the prevalence of migrants vulnerable to exploitation
Employment conditions and management practices	
Management hostility to worker organisations	Farms, pack-houses or processing factories with managers who are hostile to worker organisations and worker representation
Undocumented or illegal workers	Workers who do not have, or do not believe they have, the legal right to work in a country.
Insecure employment status	Workers without a contract or recognised employment relationship or workers on short term and zero hours contracts.
Low pay	Workers on very low pay, piece rates or where minimum wages are inadequate – especially where accommodation or food is included in wages and workers are therefore dependent on an employer or recruitment agent.
Agency workers	Workers employed or supplied by a third party labour provider especially where the means by which they have been recruited is unclear, or where the job is insecure or where they are migrant workers.
Indebted workers	Workers who are indebted to their employer, or to a recruitment agent, or workers who make up-front payments for accommodation, training, uniforms etc.
Poor health and safety	Farms or worksites that use dangerous chemical substances, where the weather conditions are particularly extreme, or where there are poor health and safety procedures.
Inadequate social	Workers who do not benefit from social security or insurance protection (such as



protection	pensions or support during illness).
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For more information on major human rights risk areas for workers in global supply chains, see the [ETI Base Code](#).

Important: Scale of vulnerability

Agricultural workers are not either *vulnerable* or *not vulnerable*. There is a scale of vulnerability that workers can move up or down, and even out of. For example, though undocumented foreign migrant workers, working on a farm in a remote location, in a country with a weak regulatory environment could be more vulnerable than seasonal, agency workers in a country with strong legislation to protect workers, this does not mean that the second group are not necessarily vulnerable. Workers themselves can also become more or less vulnerable depending on changing circumstances, such as changes in their country’s government, influx of refugees in the labour market, introduction of new legislation, etc.



Step 1: Assessing and prioritising risks

A tailored risk assessment is the essential first step to identify worker vulnerability in supply chains.

Each of the following tasks can be undertaken in the order that works best for you depending on the size and structure of your organisation, and it is best practice to continually engage with stakeholders (See [Annex 6](#)) during the process.

1.1. Identifying general risks

1.2. Analysing and prioritising risks

1.3. Undertaking detailed assessments at site level

1.1. Identifying high level risks

As with any human rights risk, the first step is to gather an accurate picture as possible about where your suppliers and their suppliers are located. You should map your supply chain beyond your first tier, to include lower tier suppliers, out-growers, contractors or subcontractors, and any other business partners directly linked to business operations, such as recruitment agencies. Collaborating with others and drawing on the help of the [Local Resources Network](#) or reaching out to ETI’s tripartite membership could help your supplier mapping.

Once you have a good picture of supplier locations and types, you can apply various risk factors to identify where there may be categories of vulnerable workers.

Particular worker vulnerability risks can arise from **Country level risks; worksite or locational risks, and/or; Management practice risks**. Where multiple risk factors are identified, the overall risks of worker vulnerability are likely to be higher.

By applying these factors, you can get a broad, initial picture of where there are higher risks of vulnerability.

Country-level risks – identify sourcing countries where the following risks are present	✓
Key gaps in labour legislation and poor enforcement of existing laws	
Cultural and social discrimination against women (e.g. endemic sexual harassment of female workers on farms)	
Widespread use of low skilled migrant, contract and agency, or seasonal workers (e.g. Eastern European food sector workers in the UK)	
Cultural or social discrimination against farm/food workers based on caste, or other factors (e.g. Dalits or “untouchables” in South Asia)	
Proximity to conflict, security and/or political concerns, particularly ethnic or religious tensions or civil strife (e.g. high number of refugee workers)	
High levels of corruption, poor governance and inadequate legal institutions (e.g. inadequate labour inspectorates)	
Labour market dynamics contributing to poverty (e.g. high unemployment / informality)	
Weakly defined or contested land tenure rights (e.g. high displacement of rural workers)	
Gaps in national labour and human rights laws relative to international standards (e.g. rural workers not covered by aspects of labour legislation)	



Consistent or credible reports of human and labour rights violations in the sector (e.g. widespread use of child labour, anti-union activities by employers or government)	
Inadequate capacity of local trade unions and civil society organisations (e.g. in countries with historical or current hostility to trade unions or opposition to government)	
Minimum wage levels below international poverty lines	

Marks & Spencer uses country risk profiles relating to labour rights and human rights indicators. This has increased the business's understanding of the main country and sector level risks.

Worksite locations and situation risks	✓
Farms, pack-houses or processing factories with a large female workforce	
Farms where production is highly seasonal	
Workers are dependent on employers for accommodation, transport, food or other in-kind benefits	
Poor quality of accommodation and transport provided to workers on farms	
Farms or other worksites near migrant corridors or areas of conflict	
Farms or other worksites in remote locations without access to community support mechanisms or public services / institutions	
Farms or other worksites in regions with particularly poor public health indicators	
Complex production processes in a single product sourced from multiple areas	

Risks related to management and employment practices	✓
Use of labour recruiters or labour agencies	
Informal hiring practices	
Farms or other worksites with a hostile attitude to independent trade unions or where trade unions do not represent/exclude certain categories of worker (e.g. temporary or migrant workers) from workplace agreements	
Supervisors and managers from different gender, culture, nationality, or ethnicity to other workers	
Poor health and safety procedures & records (e.g. chemical spray use, carrying heavy loads etc.)	
Evidence of discrimination	
Use of subcontracting including to out-growers and smallholders	
Informal or irregular payments to workers	
Low wages relative to national norms and international poverty indicators	
Absence of or poor quality grievance mechanisms	
Evidence of document retention	
Inflexible or dangerous transport arrangements	



Top-down management culture, no worker consultation or engagement mechanisms

Sources of information on country-level risks:

- [US Department of State – Country human rights reports, Trafficking in persons reports, or US Department of Labour – Goods produced by child forced labour](#)
- [World Bank country profiles](#)
- [National legislation and ratification status of ILO conventions that relate to vulnerable workers \(e.g. forced labour, child labour, non-discrimination etc.\) on ILO Natlex](#)
- [Verite’s Forced Labour Commodity Atlas](#)
- Specialist providers of country risk information (e.g. Ergon Associates, Verisk Maplecroft)
- Credible reports of serious labour abuses from media, NGOs, trade unions and international bodies. See Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

Sources of information on site-specific risks

- Specific supplier questionnaires, structured site visits, dialogue with local unions and relevant NGOs – these can all complement information provided through audit reports
- Human rights NGO or independent National Human Rights Commissions
- Country level public health information can be obtained from the [World Health Organisation](#) and the [World Bank](#)
- Country level information on migration issues is provided by the [International Organisation for Migration](#)
- [The global trade union federation -International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations \(IUF\) and their country based affiliates](#)

Sources of information on management and employment practices

- Information obtained from site audits and reports
- For companies using labour agencies in the UK, check on the [government gateway](#)

Other guidance and tools

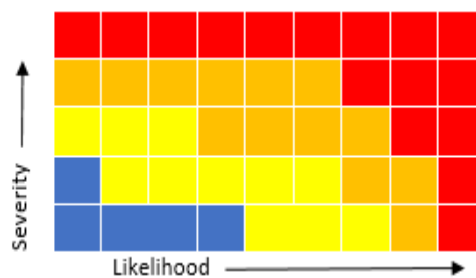
- For suppliers working directly with labour recruiters, [Verite](#) has developed tools to screen and evaluate labour recruiters
- [Chapter 5](#) of WIEGO’s guide on agricultural value chains sets out what specific issues to look for in pack houses, processing units and farms of different sizes

[Waitrose](#) has developed a standardised farm assessment tool for their suppliers to use when assessing their growers. This is reviewed every two years and has been developed to include more indicators that assess social and labour issues. This has improved the retailer’s ability to assess and prioritise risks in their supply chains.

1.2. Analysing and prioritising risk

After making a high-level assessment of potential risks you will need to prioritise higher risk suppliers or sites that require further investigation. To do this it is important to categorise and rank identified risks, by:

- Applying **scores and weightings** to identified risk factors according to your own knowledge or your





business’s priorities to arrive at a ranking for the highest priority suppliers and sites. (see **Annex 1** for an example of this approach)

- Creating a **risk matrix** to prioritise those suppliers that are a medium or high risk of employing vulnerable workers
- Creating a **vulnerability matrix** that ranks supplier based on the red flag indicator areas (see the Oxfam [Risk Assessment methodology](#))

A UK supplier of fresh fruit and vegetables has developed an Ethical Risk Assessment template that it uses to assess working conditions across its supply base. This template has a section on vulnerable workers, and looks at the forced labour risk ranking of the country, the number of women workers on a workplace, how labour is sourced, how their accommodation is provided, and how many migrant workers there are. A risk score is given against each of these categories and supplier receives an overall risk score.

1.3. Undertaking detailed risk assessments at site level

Medium or high risk suppliers or sites are the priority for more detailed assessments to verify initial risk assessment findings, look more deeply into root causes, and identify actions you can take to reduce the risk and improve conditions for vulnerable workers.

You may already have audit data on some of these sites, which may have contributed to scoring them as high risk, but detailed assessments should focus on understanding specific risk issues and the underlying causes rather than being compliance-focussed. As such, a standard social/labour audit is unlikely to be appropriate.

Various types of assessment may be used. For example, social impact assessments can be used if the identified risk derives from conditions affecting the local community, such as land grabbing. In other cases, you may need to develop a tailored methodology relevant to the issue and the site. It is useful to visit both work sites and workers in their accommodation or local communities, where possible.

Considerations when planning detailed assessments	✓
Conduct a thorough desk review of issues faced by different groups in the local area, ensuring that you have gender perspective, to gather information about the underlying social structures	
Develop clear aims or terms of reference for the assessment setting out the purpose, the issues to be covered, the methodology, the audience and the expected outputs	
Hire a well-trained risk assessor familiar with the issues, the sector and the region, who is able to understand management systems and worker perspectives	
Send the supplier pre-assessment questions that allow you to get a clearer picture of the dynamics on a farm or in a workplace as well as the suppliers’ capacity to address vulnerabilities (Sedex’s SAQs are useful starting points that can be amended to help companies assess risks of worker vulnerability at a particular supplier)	
Make clear that the assessment is not a social audit and that you will generate recommendations for all actors to help address the identified issues	
Visit during peak season on farms or processing factories when worker numbers are high	



Ensure you have the consent of growers, farm owners, or factory managers before arrival	
If a site has recently been audited/subject to an official labour inspection, request a copy to review	
Ensure that the tools used in the assessment focus on the indicators of vulnerability, as identified during the initial risk assessment	

*To improve the quality of their audits, **Waitrose** have hired modern slavery risk assessment specialists from the Wilberforce Institute to assess suppliers in three of their primary sourcing countries, the UK, Spain and Italy. Based on prior research and stakeholder engagement, they were able to develop a good picture of the initial concerns which informed how they conducted the assessment and what issues were focussed on. This initial approach combined with the use of specialists in this area has revealed more labour issues than previous social audits.*

Considerations when conducting detailed assessments	✓
Where appropriate, hold meetings with local stakeholders such as on-site trade union representatives, community groups, and labour inspectorates, to understand local perspectives and capacity (see Annex 6 for considerations when engaging with different stakeholder groups).	
Where appropriate, involve local trade unions and NGOs in the assessment visit	
Be clear with the supplier why you have involved other stakeholders and what their role is in the assessment	
Tour the farm, pack-house, or worksite and any accommodation sites to observe standards, practices and worker behaviour	
Hold interviews with senior and middle managers, supervisors, and staff responsible for different other functions (e.g. personnel and payroll) to gain information about policies and management and payment practices, and their perspectives on any worker vulnerability risks	
Take care to protect the workers' anonymity and confidentiality when interviewing them, and to explain why you are speaking with them	
Hold focus groups and interviews with the full range of workers to understand their issues, perspectives and preferred remedies. Ensure that temporary, seasonal, contract workers and all shifts are covered.	
Interview agency and contract workers (and their supervisors, if different) as well as female workers, regular workers, temporary and/or seasonal workers.	
Review relevant documents and records, including records from labour agencies on recruitment methods, fee charged, and wages	
Flag any issues that pose an immediate threat to workers with the supplier's staff responsible for this	
Hold a collaborative closing meeting to discuss key findings, have an initial discussion on possible mitigation measures/remedies, and sound out local management on their capacity and attitudes	



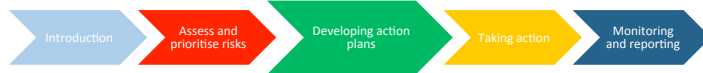
Further guidance

- [Verite](#) has developed tools, which include questions to ask when interviewing labour recruiters, managers, and migrant workers – as well as how to assess on site documentation to identify risks
- The [GLA](#) and [Sedex](#) have developed tools including indicators to businesses spot the signs of modern slavery, with regards to working conditions, accommodation, behaviour, appearance and others.
- The [Association of Labour Providers](#) has developed a toolkit to improve company engagement with workers that speak different languages

Considerations when engaging with workers	✓
Ensure there is a gender balance in the risk assessment or monitoring team	
Use the appropriate language and engage in a culturally appropriate manner (See Annex 2 for examples of questions to ask workers to assess their vulnerability)	
Make sure to meet different categories of worker and representatives (e.g. by sex, role, union membership, age, seasonal / temporary, informal workers and, if applicable, smallholders’ workers and consider splitting workers into groups based on gender, ethnic group or other key factors so that risks of bias are reduced)	
Fix a time that suits their working schedule	
Provide safe and comfortable spaces for interview (e.g. consider interviews outside of company premises and outside working hours and make clear that their identities will be confidential)	
Workers may be reticent about being fully transparent during an assessment unless they are protected - where they are present, unions can help with this, though it is important to understand union relations in the country	
Try and include potentially vulnerable sub-groups in the wider area around the worksite	
Manage expectations to avoid disappointment or frustration with the process	

*A **UK supplier** developed a self-assessment questionnaire to assess worker vulnerability risks at supplier sites outside of the UK. This allowed the company to assess risks before visiting a supplier. It used Stronger Together’s Modern Slavery self-assessment checklists as framework and then made some changes to match its business focus and requirements. To make this as effective as possible, the company translated it into relevant languages for its European suppliers.*

*The **TUC** has developed a [guide](#) for workers in the UK, particularly those whom English is not a first language, with information including: pay, contracts, hours, how trade unions help workers and more widely. To broaden the reach of the guidance and to make it more effective, the TUC collaborated with ETI to have the guide translated into further 4 South Asian languages – resulting in a total of 19 languages available for workers to access and use.*



Step 2: Understanding root causes and developing action plans

There are several ways that businesses can address worker vulnerability through their own policies and practices:

- 2.1. Understanding the nature of the risk
- 2.2. Developing an action plan
- 2.3. Assessing your own corporate policies and practices
- 2.4. Exercising leverage over suppliers

2.1. Understanding the nature of the risk

Before taking action to address the identified vulnerability, it is vital to understand the root causes as there may be some causes that are relatively easy or are within your influence to fix (such as recruitment practices at a worksite or your own buying patterns), while many others may be broad-based and embedded in social or cultural situations (such as endemic discrimination against certain groups).

Applying root cause analysis allows you to gain a deeper understanding of the problem, and to identify intervention points to address the causes of vulnerability.

Root cause analysis typically defines the problem and then requires a series of ‘why’ questions to uncover the underlying issues. This is referred to as the “5 Whys method” or as a “causality tree”.

Further guidance

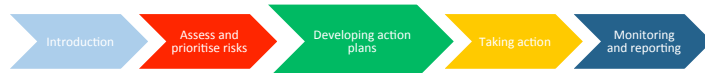
- The UNDP has developed a [tool to help identify the immediate, underlying and root causes of discrimination and inequalities relating to marginalised minorities](#).

2.2 Developing an action plan

Once risks and causes have been identified, the next step is to develop a plan to mitigate and reduce these risks. It goes without saying that the type of actions will depend on the nature and scale of the issue.

Where the issue is relatively simple and within your or your supplier’s area of responsibility (e.g. a supplier’s use of recruitment agents with poor practices) action may involve directly engaging with a supplier in order to support them in changing their practices. However, in cases where the risk issue relates to legal norms or broader social or cultural attitudes, or where similar practices affect a wide range of other workplaces (e.g. discriminatory attitudes towards women or minorities), it will be more effective to address the risk by developing a broad-based longer-term plan in [collaboration with stakeholders](#) such as other suppliers, unions, NGOs or the government.

Steps to take when developing a risk management action plan	✓
Focus on the root causes of the identified worker vulnerability	
Highlight the issues identified in the risk assessment that are most relevant to vulnerable workers	
Consider whether you can address the issue directly or whether it requires a collaborative	



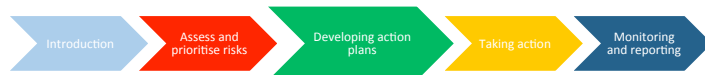
approach	
Clearly divide responsibilities internally between people appointed to manage the issue (the Walk Free Foundation provide further information on this)	
Engage with affected suppliers during the development process to identify capacity and needs	
Consult with and circulate plans to affected workers, unions, other buying companies, and NGOs	
Identify specific actions to address or remedy each of the issues (see Annex 4 for further information)	
Identify collaborative means through which actions will be verified (such as trade unions)	
Establish benchmarks and rules in key performance indicators and a timeline for completing actions	
Define consequences for not taking actions	

*In the wake of a media expose on poor quality **worker accommodation standards** on a UK farm that had recently been audited, suppliers and retailers came together to address the issue. The identified root cause of the problem was the lack of a common objective standard for worker accommodation which could be assessed against during audits. The group therefore commissioned work to develop an industry standard to improve monitoring of worker accommodation in the UK.*

2.3. Assessing your own corporate policies and practices

There are various ways that corporate policies and practices, such as sourcing and procurement practices, can contribute to worker vulnerability. These should be reviewed in order to identify actions that are directly your own responsibility.

Current practice	Action	✓
Policies or codes of conduct that do not address particular factors contributing to worker vulnerability	Involve your suppliers and other affected stakeholders in developing a code of conduct or policies that address gaps on issues that affect particular vulnerabilities (e.g. a policy on accommodation or grievances) Communicate the agreed code / policy to all stakeholders and business partners so that ethical requirements are integrated in other business practices	
Recruitment policies that increase worker vulnerability	Prohibit the use of recruitment fees being charged to job seekers, particularly for migrant workers (see the Employer Pays Principle) Prohibit document retention when (migrants in particular) are recruited Where employment agencies are used, ensure that policies or codes of conduct require that checks are made	
Purchasing practices that contribute to precarious work, excessive hours or abnormally low prices or	Review the impact of your purchasing practices on your suppliers and their workers' conditions e.g. lead times, order changes, role of special offers	



pay	Offer training and support to procurement teams, buyers, senior management, HR departments, managers, supervisors on the impact of their decision on workers	
Inadequate co-ordination between purchasing and compliance staff	Identify opportunities for collaboration and involve key internal staff in developing actions to reduce risks (e.g. buyers, technical staff, HR)	
Lack of oversight of working conditions up the supply chain	Undertake additional work on risks where there are gaps in your knowledge.	
Failure to use information effectively to identify key risks	Communicate the risks you have identified and involve senior management to gain their buy-in Place issues of vulnerable work at the centre of your criteria when selecting contractors or suppliers, and incorporate standards within contracts	
Failure to communicate standards and build long-term relationships with suppliers	Review and amend policies and codes of conduct where these do not address aspects of worker vulnerability Ensure suppliers are fully aware of expected standards through communication, awareness-raising	

Further information

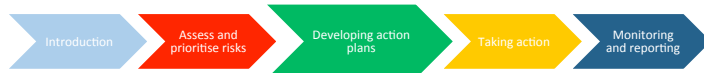
- See **Annex 3** for further information on reviewing purchasing practices and supplier capacity
- ‘Suppliers Speak Up’ guide by [ETI Norway](#) provides a useful overview to help companies improve purchasing practices

Many firms in the South African fruit sector rely on labour brokers to source seasonal workers. However, this arrangement presents some potential risks and challenges for both workers who are vulnerable to exploitation and businesses that are under pressure to meet demand from customers.

***Afrifresh**, a leading South African producer and exporter of fresh fruit, has decided to stop using labour brokers altogether following a number of difficult experiences. On one production site, worker unrest broke out during peak season as a result of a labour broker failing to pay seasonal workers on time. This had a disruptive and costly effect on productivity during a critical period and the company found that it was also being increasingly exposed to liability in individual labour disputes, as a result of national legislation that holds host employers and brokers jointly responsible for workers’ terms and conditions.*

In response, Afrifresh has introduced a new system to engage seasonal workers directly from local communities by cultivating stronger relationships with community leaders. The company issues fixed term contracts to all seasonal workers directly, takes copies of their IDs and pays their wages directly via electronic transfer. In order to deal with the influx of seasonal employees, the company engages additional office staff to deal with the rise in payroll and other administration. If labour brokers are engaged in the future, Afrifresh has developed stringent criteria for brokers to meet, based on national labour legislation and industry standards.

The new system not only provides greater protection for workers, but also has significant benefits for Afrifresh’s operations. The company has better visibility of its workforce for social audits and labour inspections, and through its own human resources systems it can ensure that all seasonal workers



are paid the correct amount on time and that they enjoy the same terms and conditions. The direct relationship with workers and their communities makes it easier for the company to attract the same seasonal workers each year, reducing training costs and increasing productivity, and these improved working conditions have led to a significant decline in the amount of disputes regarding pay and other conditions, allowing all sites to maintain smooth production schedules and productivity levels in peak season.

According to Johan van Wyk, Afrifresh’s Human Resources Manager, “Building good relationships with seasonal workers and having sound employment practices in place - this works better for us as a business.”

With price volatility in the coffee market impacting on otherwise anonymous farmers at the bottom of the coffee supply chain, **Union Hand Roasted Coffee** decided to work directly with farmers to reduce their vulnerability to price fluctuations in the export market. To overcome this they decided to bypass brokers and to work directly with farming communities in the long term to try and provide sustainable prices.

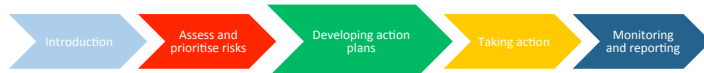
One way in which they have done this is to develop and implement a policy of price transparency of transactions with all participants in their coffee supply chains. This means that Union Coffee determines sustainable prices that are higher than the market price by engaging with each participant group in their supply chain, which helps reduce the vulnerability of farmers to low prices. Steve Macatonia, *co-founder of the company states*, “we pay higher prices compared to the commodity market [and] we invest in our suppliers to build long-term relationships, which we see as a win-win situation. And while our retail prices might be higher and our profit margins lower as a result, the improvements that have been made to the livelihoods of our farmers are intrinsically worth it.”

To verify that they are having a positive impact on the farmers in their supply chain Union Coffee has developed strong relationships with their suppliers, and have their own staff that are trained social auditors, which means they are able to evaluate transparency and traceability, which are not evaluated in third-party accreditation systems. Further, the company has worked with the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands who have helped develop a monitoring system that evaluates their approach on improving livelihoods of small farmers.

2.4. Exercising leverage over suppliers

It is important to get your suppliers to understand and accept their role in reducing worker vulnerability. There are different ways of working with your suppliers depending on the types of risk identified and levels of leverage.

Steps to take when exercising leverage	✓
Understand your influence over a particular grower, farm, supplier or contractor and how best this can be exercised (See point 9 of Annex 1 for further guidance)	
Review your supplier’s capacity to manage labour risks	
Provide appropriate commercial incentives to suppliers (e.g. early forecasting, guaranteed price and on-time payment, volume commitments, long-term business)	
Ensure that relevant colleagues involved in purchasing, buying and recruitment also integrate	



ethical concerns into their operational practice and their communications with suppliers	
Eliminate intermediaries and develop a direct relationship with growers and workers on farms	
Offer capacity-building to suppliers in relation to ethical trade	
Share costs of sustainability improvements	
Work in partnership with other sourcing companies, multi-stakeholder initiatives, governments to identify points of leverage	
Provide recognition and awards for compliance and achievement	

*To address the issue of worker representation in their Peruvian agriculture supply chain, **Tesco** has encouraged suppliers to have independently elected workers on their Health & Safety Committees (HSCs) as a first step towards securing worker representation. To overcome the reluctance of some suppliers to comply with this requirement, different departments within Tesco's, including the responsible sourcing team and commercial team, came together to try and address the issue and they determined to suspend business relationships with unwilling suppliers. This has led to other suppliers meeting Tesco's HSC requirements. Using the same tactics, suppliers' HSCs are now being required to hear labour related issues raised by the worker representatives.*



Step 3: Taking action

When risks to vulnerable workers are identified, it is important to take steps to reduce the risk and to address the problem.

Under this step, there is information on:

- 3.1. Working with your suppliers
- 3.2. Providing training and building worker capacity
- 3.3. Operational grievance mechanisms
- 3.4. Stakeholder engagement

3.1. Working with your suppliers

Collaborative capacity-building with your own workforce and your suppliers can help address identified risks to vulnerable workers. Companies at the top of supply chains should set expectations and provide support to develop capacity, though supply chain actors who employ vulnerable workers have primary responsibility for ensuring they are not exploited.

Considerations when working with your suppliers	✓
Consult with workers about their views on solutions to the issue	
Consult with suppliers about their training needs to build trust and buy-in	
Deliver or fund training to improve the professional capabilities of management staff at suppliers, including supervisors, production staff, HR staff and recruitment agents (e.g. ETI supervisor training)	
Work with supplier staff to challenge any anti-union attitudes and encourage an open approach to worker organisation.	
Raise awareness of decision-making by suppliers that can contribute to worker vulnerability (e.g. their treatment of out-growers)	
Give suppliers practical tools including checklists and case studies that address relevant aspects of worker vulnerability (e.g. see WIEGO's guidance for smallholders on respecting their workers' rights)	
Spend time with suppliers in area or country of operation to build and develop trust. Encourage collaboration and strengthened relations between suppliers and sub-suppliers	
Encourage suppliers to build relationships with their workforce, to understand who they are and what issues they face (the principles of the SEE Formula could be applied to help you do this)	

*A group of UK retailers, including the **Coop, M&S and Sainsbury's** support and fund an **Ethical Trade Forum of Egyptian suppliers** of agriculture produce, in which business and labour issues are discussed, including those relating to vulnerable casual workers. They are facilitated by a local specialist who helps build awareness of labour issues and builds the suppliers' capacity. The specialist's role in facilitation is seen as key to the success of these forums, though another key*



driver behind the forum's success has been the collaboration between the retailers, whose joined up approach has increased leverage over suppliers, and has improved suppliers' willingness to engage on pre-competitive issues.

3.2. Providing training and building worker capacity

As far as possible it is important to work directly with workers to build their understanding of their rights and their ability to enforce these. Such capacity-building may be achieved through directly targeted programmes in the workplace, or indirectly through programmes in the community. Working directly with trade unions and/or independent worker organisations (if unions are not present) that support workers is an effective strategy.

It is important to use targeted training that addresses the vulnerabilities identified during your risk assessment.

Examples of training and capacity building for workers

- Education and training programmes that focus on rights in the workplace, including the right to form, join trade independent trade unions, and bargain collectively (USAID outline challenges and considerations when running MSI training sessions)
- Leadership training programmes to empower and educate workers
- Skills training programmes to upskill workers
- Training on equal treatment of workers; previously 'Supervisor training' – as used in South Africa farms.
- Training or awareness raising through plays, radio, television etc.
- Training provided by trade unions on rights awareness, but also most specialised areas such as Health & Safety

*In 2004, at a time of allegations from local human rights groups of poor labour practices and reports of [sexual harassment against women in the horticultural sector in Kenya](#), **Finlays Horticulture** hired an independent third party expert to conduct an audit of their Kenyan sites. The assessment noted that the company did not train its workers and that their approach could be more systematic, and because 80% of the workforce was female, it was recommended that a formal dialogue mechanism was developed to allow women to raise issues that directly impacted on their participation in the workplace.*

To address the risks of women workers being discriminated against or harassed, the company introduced training sessions that allowed workers to gain skills and feel more empowered. These trainings are part of Finlays' aim to move away from the industry norm of male supervisors managing a largely female workforce, and the company has increased efforts to promote women seeing this as the most effective way to tackle sexual harassment.

Aside from skills training a Finlays also delivers a [discrimination and sexual harassment training](#) for supervisors on its horticulture sites. This is based on the ETI's Supervisor Training Programme and a key aim was to change inappropriate behaviour of supervisors towards women workers, and to get supervisors to understand the role of the gender committee, so they don't see it as interfering with their role, but start to cooperate with it. A social impact assessment of this training found that it had led to a remarkable improvement in communication between workers and management.



Temporary workers in South Africa’s produce industry have traditionally had little possibility of career progression or job stability because their work is seasonal. To address this, **Sainsbury’s** has partnered with DFID and the National Training Institute of South Africa to deliver their [Top of The Class training programme](#) to over 170 workers in the fresh fruit supply base giving participants workplace skills and knowledge, as well as personal development such as leadership skills. Over 26 participants were promoted within 6 months of completing the course.

M&S also fund an NGO in Kenya to deliver training that has [developed leadership skills](#) of workers in their supply chain. An independent assessment of the programme has found that the training has had a positive impact for those who complete it, their co-workers, families, local communities and employers. Within a year, one supplier involved in the programme has noted a 10% increase in productivity.

Considerations when providing training or capacity building	✓
Ensure training is sensitive and relevant to the local context	
Ensure training includes clear communication about workers’ rights	
Create a safe and friendly environment for learning	
Ensure it involves minimal disruption to work	
Use an accessible and relevant language	
Incorporate basic training into the induction process for all types of worker	
Ensure it is participatory promoting active learning, minimising lecturing, and maintaining confidentiality and respect	
Use peer-to-peer training, but ensure trainers are confident in their ability and that they are supported	
Use local independent experts to conduct targeted training (e.g. Stronger Together offer numerous training packages for supervisors, recruiters and others to improve understandings of modern slavery)	
Identify existing initiatives and programmes that your training can supplement	
Use visual and pictorial examples	

Further guidance

- The [IUF](#) has developed a handbook to help its affiliates tackle health, safety and environmental issues faced by agricultural workers
- The [BSR Her Project](#) has developed a toolkit for delivering participatory learning and action

The **Environmental Monitoring Group** developed a project to raise awareness of right amongst workers in the Western Cape of South Africa and build farm workers’ confidence to exercise these rights. The project, [Saamstaan](#), has used theatre as a form of education, and has increased its reach through the use of radio. The issues raised in the plays are linked directly to information gathered through expert interviews with farmers. Additionally, [Implementing partners](#) on **Better Cotton Initiative** projects have used children’s walks and street rallies during school holidays, as a way of identifying children that may have dropped out of school and to raise awareness about



education, school and child labour.

3.3. Operational grievance mechanisms

Operational grievance mechanisms have a threefold purpose. They can help identify and address impacts on vulnerable workers, they provide a means for workers to seek redress and solutions to problems and they enable companies to monitor the effectiveness of their efforts to address worker vulnerability. The mechanism should guarantee non-retaliation. It should also be appropriate to the context.

For example, a farm-level mechanism is likely to be simpler than one established in a large pack-house. Within agricultural supply chains a key challenge is ensuring that all workers – including out-growers and seasonal workers – are aware of the mechanism. Working collaboratively with local stakeholders so that they support the mechanism can be important for success. The key principles to consider when establishing a grievance mechanism are set out in Annex 5.

The most effective forum for raising grievances will be a recognised independent trade union. Other forms of grievance mechanism should not be used as a substitute for encouraging recognition of trade unions.

Types of grievance mechanism	✓
Trade unions or workers' committees, or their representatives	
Worker voice tools, websites, phone numbers or postal addresses. The effectiveness of these is relatively untested and they should never be used to replace worker organisations (Labor Link is already being used by several ETI members to gather information from workers).	
Whistleblowing hotlines that are resourced independently	
Multi-lingual helplines for foreign language workers	

Further information

- [Verite](#) also outline special considerations that should be made for migrant workers, and how to use trade unions and worker committees in the grievance process.

Project Issara will develop a Burmese language smartphone app for migrant workers in Thailand with the help of tech-orientated partners and international research partners. This will be used in line alongside existing trusted, high quality personal interactions through hotlines and community-based fieldwork which have revealed information about abusive recruitment agencies. It is developing this model so that it is scalable and potentially replicable in other countries and other product lines.

M&S has also scaled up its [use of mobile technology](#) in the supply chain to poll 64,230 companies across 46 manufacturing location in 5 countries. This was used as an anonymous channel for workers to report sensitive issues like harassment and bullying, working hours and communication with suppliers.



3.4. Stakeholder engagement

Many problems can only be identified or solved by involving stakeholder such as trade unions, government, other businesses, and/or civil society. In particular, these stakeholders bring specialist and/or local knowledge of workers’ situations and the root causes of problems.

Collaborating with these groups will help build your organisation’s capacity, and the capacity of your suppliers. It can also assist in developing joint solutions to particularly complex problems and can be a way of cost sharing. Collaboration with all stakeholders should take place from the outset of the risk assessment process and continue through more detailed assessments and into the development and delivery of action plans.

It is important to consider the varying needs and requirements of each stakeholder group when engaging with them. Initial background research before engagement will strengthen the quality of your conversations. Below are some considerations when engaging with particular stakeholder groups.

Examples of ways to identify, map and engage with stakeholders	✓
Engage with ETI’s tripartite membership and Local Resource Network to identify stakeholders	
Approach national or international trade unions for suggested local contacts (e.g. TUC , IUF or ITUC)	
Contact other ETI members, including customers and agricultural or food sourcing companies working in the same countries for information on their experiences and contacts	
Ask international NGOs for information about who to speak to in sourcing countries	
Speak with managers at suppliers and sub-suppliers to understand their concerns and who they engage with locally	
Engage with workers on farms or other worksites through representative structures, committees or ad hoc focus groups and interviews	
Review existing literature on the agricultural and food sector and region to identify active local trade unions, NGOs, community groups and academics with specialist knowledge of the issues you have identified	
Identify and approach relevant ministries and official departments for information on your sector of interest (Verite provide further guidance on public policy engagement)	
Map stakeholders to identify how they interact with your business and for points of leverage (See Shift’s guidance on prioritising levels of engagement with stakeholders or Net-Map to identify actors, how they’re linked, how influential they are, and what their goals are)	

Many migrant workers in the Dominican Republic have poor access to healthcare because of the remoteness and lack of facilities in farming areas. These factors have made workers more vulnerable to health issues in the agricultural sector.

*The particular health issues on **Winfresh’s** farms were identified by their staff following engagement with workers on their farms through one-on-one interviews, group discussions, and through issues raised in suggestion boxes on farms. This engagement highlighted that on average, migrant workers had not had a dental check in four years and that there were many health issues. It was also discovered that there was a lack of health education and safety especially in relation to the use personal protective equipment.*

As a result, Winfresh and its supplier Banamiel have invested in improving local health services and



are supporting a major government initiative in the Dominican Republic to improve preventative healthcare in the country. They have done this by funding a mobile health clinic that visits their farms and offers dental appointments once a week and health services twice a week. In addition, they are investing in local health facilities to increase their capacity and improve efficiency.

In 2015, their mobile clinics met with an average of 156 workers each month regarding dental issues and an average of 203 workers received medical treatment each month. Some examples of the improvements made to local clinics include installing water tanks to increase the water supplies, which are otherwise unreliable from the mains, and the building of new consultation rooms in clinics to increase the number of people that can be seen. These initiatives have enabled the local clinics to be open for longer hours and to serve more members of the worker community.

*Twenty different organisations including UK retailers, suppliers, NGOs, brands, farming associations, unions, development agencies and government agencies have come together as part of the [Malawi 2020 programme](#) to bring a living wage to the tea sector in Malawi. As part of the programme, **Oxfam** will be using their [vulnerability risk assessment](#) methodology to engage with the wider stakeholder group and with vulnerable groups. Though initially a challenging process, it is hoped that that widespread early engagement will strengthen the legitimacy of the process with all groups involved.*

*To obtain a better understanding of the issues facing migrant workers in their shrimp supply chains, UK retailers and their UK and Thai suppliers came together to work with **Project Issara**, an NGO based in Thailand with experience of working on the issues facing migrant workers in Thailand. Each retailer disclosed their supply chain information to the NGO who then developed a risk report identifying tier risks and individual risks tailored to each business.*



Step 4: Monitoring and reporting

You should monitor efforts to improve conditions for vulnerable workers in order to verify the effectiveness of actions taken and to drive continuous improvement. Methods of doing this will vary according to the nature of the workers' identified vulnerabilities and the actions taken.

Key steps covered in this toolkit are:

4.1 Monitoring and reviewing

4.2 Reporting and communicating

4.1. Monitoring and reviewing

Monitoring of due diligence should be ongoing and regular. It is important to understand the differences between auditing (which provides a snapshot) and monitoring, which should be an ongoing and participatory approach. Examples of participatory approaches can be seen in ETI's Human Rights Due Diligence framework as well as the [ETI guide on integrating ethical trade into core business practices](#).

Key considerations for monitoring and reviewing	✓
Develop a monitoring plan and ensure that this is proportionate to the risks facing vulnerable workers (see Annex 7 for questions to ask yourself when developing a monitoring plan).	
Ensure that monitoring takes account of any key performance indicators (KPIs) included in action plans	
Take into account the capacities of various enterprises. The costs of monitoring programmes, and an approved budget that supports it should be agreed early on (see Annex 3 for further guidance on assessing suppliers' capacities)	
Find locally based, trustworthy partners to inform the monitoring process (e.g. trade unions)	
Try to devise complementary and mutually reinforcing verification processes based on common standards and indicators, at appropriate parts of the supply chain (See Annex 8 or the DCED guidance for further information on developing KPIs)	
Ensure the monitoring team are skilled and have experience and knowledge of the issue and context	
Triangulate your findings with other sources of information (Verite offer guidance on assessing the documentation of suppliers)	
Ensure that vulnerable workers' voices are represented adequately	
Ensure that women's voices are adequately represented	

*For many years agriculture workers in the US, many of whom are migrants, have experienced low wages and poor working conditions. At its extreme the exploitation faced by these workers amounted to modern slavery. In the mid-1990s the **Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)** a human rights group based in Florida, began to mobilise tomato workers to strike and demand*



better wages and working conditions. After realising that company buyers had the power to influence conditions over tomato growers in the US, the CIW targeted various companies to improve workers' wages and conditions.

*After years of campaigning to improve labour standards, CIW's work led to the creation of the **Fair Food Program (FFP)** in 2011 to improve conditions for workers on participating farms. The FFP brings together workers, consumers, retailers and suppliers to support fair wages and improved labour standards in the agriculture industry, and requires members to suspend purchases from growers that are not complying with the [Fair Food Code of Conduct](#).*

*The FFP also has a regulatory body, the **Fair Foods Standards Council (FFSC)** that monitors the development of issues in the sector. Their [monitoring process](#) is based on worker-to-worker education programmes that inform workers about their rights, the running of a 24 hour complaints hotline that workers can call, and independent audits to investigate complaints. Between 2011 and 2015, the FFSC has issued nearly 120 comprehensive reports and action plans and has received 1,100 complaints. The tomato sector is now considered to have some the best conditions for migrant workers in the agricultural sector, where only a few years ago it was thought to be the worst.*

*A working group from the **UK meat and poultry industry** (retailers and meat and poultry suppliers) agreed on [a set of KPIs](#) to address various employment practices and promote continuous improvement in the sector. The KPIs included levels of agency work at peak and non-peak times, types of agency contracts, breaches of working time regulations, language training and levels of union representation. Suppliers were asked to report results every six months. A number found that this process produced useful data to inform their own cost-base and production processes, as well as enabling a closer understanding of the issues affecting agency workers and job insecurity, and to promote regular employment.*

***Tesco** were concerned about risks that women workers were facing in garment factories in Leicester. During a discussion with a trade union Community, it was established that there were shared concerns. Shared realisation of common objectives has led to the development of a partnership where Community now participate in monitoring visits on the sites.*

4.2. Reporting and communicating

Public reporting and transparency builds trust and legitimacy, and is a key means of demonstrating to internal and external stakeholders that a company is taking its responsibilities seriously. It is also a common way for companies to communicate progress.

It is important that information is linguistically and culturally appropriate, measurable, verifiable, and provided in a timely manner to all involved or affected stakeholders, such as the workers themselves, their representatives, the local community, your internal staff and other external stakeholders.

Reporting on actions taken in relation to vulnerable workers could be project-specific or could be integrated within broader reporting frameworks that cover labour standards, human rights or CSR



issues. Below are some examples of existing mandatory and voluntary reporting mechanisms in place within which activities to address issues affecting vulnerable workers could be included:

- The UK Modern Slavery Act requires companies to report on what steps they are taking during to ensure slavery is not taking place in their business or supply chains. ETI offers [specialist training](#) and advice to companies and the [CORE Coalition](#) has developed useful guidance for companies required to produce a statement.
- The UK Company's Act in 2013 introduced requirements in company reporting to include a strategic report with their annual report covering social, community and human rights issues. The [Financial Reporting Council \(FRC\)](#) produced useful guidance.
- The [EC non-financial reporting directive](#) requires companies to report on their policies and main risks in relation to respect for human rights and other areas.
- For other industries-the [Dodd-Frank Act](#) has instilled mandatory due diligence and human rights reporting for the extractives industry

Further information

- [Shift and Mazars](#) have developed 10 principles that should define a company's approach to implementing the UNGP Reporting Framework, including guidance on how to do this
- Companies and their stakeholders can explore resources such as [the Global Reporting Initiative](#) to better understand and communicate the impact of business on human rights issues.

Nestlé, together with the Danish Institute for Human Rights, [published a report](#) describing the methodology that was applied for HRIAs conducted in seven country operations since 2010, the aggregate findings of the HRIAs, as well as a number of lessons learnt from the process. Nestlé has found that engaging in discussions with labour unions by sharing the HRIA report findings led to improved relations between their country operations and local labour unions.