

A Practical Guide for seed production: Navigating Social Rights and Ethical Practices in the Seed Sector



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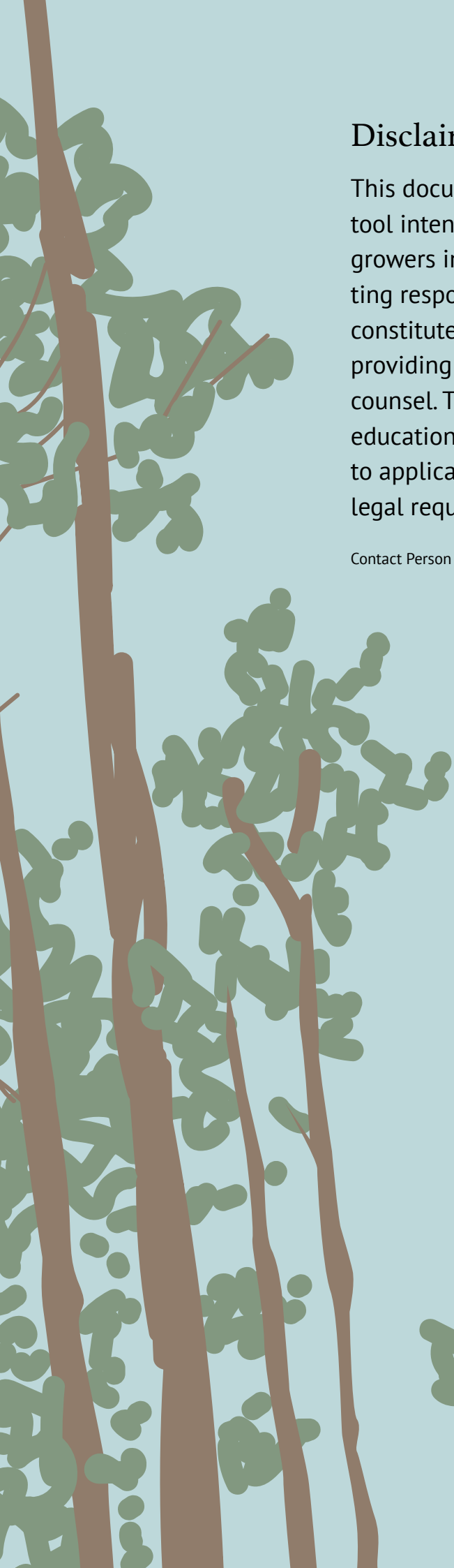
Executive Summary

Navigating Social Rights and Ethical Practices in the Seed Sector: A Practical Guide, published by the International Seed Federation, intends to contribute to the extensive work that has already been carried out in the seed sector, including seed companies, associations and smallholder growers on social and environmental responsibility. **Rather than duplicating these efforts, these guidelines aim to build upon and complement existing publications and guidance available by providing a pragmatic framework for seed companies, suppliers, and industry associations to uphold responsible labour practices and meet international social standards.** Special focus has been placed on efforts related to raising awareness and capacity building, as these are considered particularly effective regarding long-term and sustained change.

Rooted in the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code, the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct, the Ethical Charter on Responsible Labour Practices, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP) and the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) core conventions, the guidelines offer clear and practical steps towards social responsibility practices tailored to the seed sector. **These guidelines have been leveraged to create a voluntary guidance tool which aims to facilitate the adoption of responsible social practices for all stakeholders, whatever company size, in line with mandatory human rights and environmental obligations such as the upcoming EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), the associated national EU laws such as the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (SCDDA) and the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).**

Covering twelve key areas—including, among others, forced and child labour, fair compensation, working hours, non-discrimination, health and safety, supplier engagement, and environmental protections – the document outlines what responsible practices look like and how to implement them. **Each section includes concrete *Dos and Don'ts* to provide guidance towards responsible labour practices in daily operations.**

Developed through a collaborative and multi-stakeholder process with companies, seed federations and non-governmental organisations, these guidelines have been designed to cater to the real-world conditions of seed production. They are intended to empower actors throughout the supply chain into action, from multinational corporations to smallholder growers and their seasonal labourers. By applying them, they can strengthen ethical supply chains and contribute to a more socially responsible and sustainable seed industry.



Disclaimer

This document has been developed as a voluntary guidance tool intended to support seed companies, associations and growers in the seed sector in understanding and implementing responsible social and ethical practices. It does not constitute, and should not be interpreted as, a document providing advice or as a substitute for professional legal counsel. The contents herein are for informational and educational purposes only. Users are encouraged to refer to applicable national laws and regulations for binding legal requirements.

Contact Person ISF: Ben Rivoire – Sustainability Focal point: b.rivoire@worldseed.org

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Acknowledgements

This document is the result of extensive and fruitful discussions with a variety of relevant stakeholders within the seed industry. We extend our appreciation to the following stakeholders in particular:

ISF member seed companies, including BASF, Bayer, Bayannaoer Guanr Agricultural Development Co Ltd, East-West Seed, Bejo Seeds, Semillas Fito and Syngenta;

National and regional seed associations, including the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), Asociación Nacional de Obtentores Vegetales (ANOVE), Seeds Canada, Plantum NL, Regional Seed Association for Asia Pacific (APSA) and Union Française des Semenciers (UFS);

Non-governmental organisations, including Arisa and Solidaridad.

Their practical insights and field-level experience ensured the relevance and applicability of the guidelines. In addition, sector-specific expertise helped enrich the guidelines and align them with international best practices. Their contributions have been instrumental in shaping a sector-specific framework that is both grounded in the local context and responsive to the needs of the seed industry.

Document prepared with the support of Peterson Solutions: www.peterson-solutions.com

Contact person: Tamara Reygers Social Impact Lead EMEA: treyggers@onepeterson.com

Introduction to the Guidelines

Navigating Social Rights & Ethical Practices in the Seed Sector: A Practical Guide, published by the ISF, has been developed to build upon and complement existing social and environmental guidance for seed companies¹ and suppliers² within the seed sector. It is designed to provide a clear and pragmatic framework to support seed companies and their suppliers in implementing responsible labour practices and meeting international social rights standards, while reinforcing the ongoing commitment within the industry to responsible and ethical practices. **Seed companies and suppliers, regardless of their current level of social compliance maturity, are encouraged to adopt principles in these guidelines in a manner appropriate to their context and capacity.**

Grounded in the principles of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code, the Ethical Charter on Responsible Labour Practices, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPR), the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) core conventions, these guidelines offer practical, industry-specific steps for introductory efforts and advancing social rights compliance across the seed sector. The topics have been developed in line with the upcoming EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), the associated national EU laws such as the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (GSCDDA) and the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

By leveraging these internationally recognised publications, this document emphasises the importance of meaningful stakeholder engagement and consultations. This approach is particularly relevant in the seed industry, where capacity building and raising awareness have been found to be key in achieving widespread impact at a field level. The focus on stakeholder engagement, central to this framework, ensures that the guidelines not only promote responsible practices but also facilitate inclusive, field-level interactions with key stakeholders, such as smallholder farmers and local communities, which are essential for further driving tangible improvements in the sector.

This guidance document covers the following twelve core areas critical to fostering an ethical, safe, and inclusive work environment across the industry. Not all topics addressed in these guidelines will be equally relevant to all regions, contexts, or stakeholders. However, they have been included to ensure comprehensive coverage of key issues within the seed industry and should be considered where applicable, recognising their importance in promoting responsible and ethical practices across the sector.

1. **ENSURE FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES** – Clear expectations for leadership accountability and proactive implementation of legal and international standards, ensuring transparent and legally compliant contracts and working arrangements.
2. **PROHIBIT FORCED LABOUR** – Preventing all forms of involuntary work and ensuring freedom to leave employment.
3. **ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR** – Aligning with national (or international) age requirements and promoting access to education.

4. **FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION** – Safeguarding workers' rights to organise and engage in open dialogue with employers.
5. **HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS** – Providing a healthy and hazard-free working environment with adequate training and protective measures.
6. **PROVIDE LEGAL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS** – Guaranteeing payment of minimum wages and access to legally mandated benefits.
7. **ENSURE FAIR WORKING HOURS** – Upholding limits on working hours, rest periods, and overtime in accordance with national regulations or international norms.
8. **PREVENT DISCRIMINATION** – Ensuring equal treatment of all workers regardless of personal characteristics (gender, ethnic origin, religion, etc.) or background.
9. **ENSURE HUMANE TREATMENT AND ADEQUATE GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS** – Preventing abuse and establishing safe and effective channels for raising concerns.
10. **ENSURE RESPONSIBLE SOURCING AND SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT** – Encouraging ethical procurement practices and holding suppliers accountable for social compliance.
11. **RESPECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES (IPLC)** – Promoting respectful engagement and protection of IPLC rights, land, and cultural heritage.
12. **PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT** – Promoting responsible resource use through a baseline study and impact mitigation plan.

Continuing to promote social compliance is crucial not only for safeguarding workers' rights but also for enhancing the seed sector's role in their ongoing efforts to advance sustainable agriculture and ensure global food security. These guidelines draw from real experiences in the field and practical engagement with suppliers to offer a realistic and actionable approach, regardless of where an organisation currently stands in its sustainability journey.

Developed through an inclusive, multi-stakeholder process, the guidelines incorporate input and experience from businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and both regional and global seed associations. This collaborative approach ensures that the content is relevant and aligned with the operational realities of the sector. By applying the guidance outlined in this document, seed companies and their partners can continue to take meaningful steps while contributing to a socially responsible and sustainable seed industry. The document includes clear dos and don'ts to help users understand what is expected and how to take action.

¹ Seed companies include, but are not limited to, the following: multinational seed corporations, national or regional seed companies, seed breeding and R&D companies, seed production companies, seed processing and packaging companies, seed marketing and distribution companies, public-private seed ventures, startups and AgTech seed companies, and farmer cooperatives or associations producing seed.

² The term "supplier" refers to an entity that provides goods or services to a seed company as part of its operations or supply chain. The term can cover a range of actors depending on the context.

Social Rights Compliance Topics

The following guidelines provide a clear and concise overview of the responsibilities and commitments for a sustainable seed sector. They guide companies in implementing ethical and legal labour practices within their operations, through an emphasis on capacity and awareness building. Through this, the seed companies and suppliers are empowered to engage meaningfully with relevant stakeholders and be the drivers of positive impact.

The chapters cover various topics, including employment practices, prohibitions against forced and child labour, freedom of association,

legal compensation, working hours limitations, non-discrimination, humane treatment, grievance mechanisms, health and safety regulations, respect for indigenous peoples and local communities, and environmental protections. Companies can expect practical guidance, a framework that supports local, legal and ethical requirements, meaningful stakeholder engagement strategies, and an emphasis on continuous improvement to ensure long-term engagement and sustainability.

Why Social Rights Guidelines Matter in the Seed Industry?

The seed industry depends on people – farmers, workers, partners, and communities. Their rights, dignity, and well-being are the foundation of our success.

The ISF Social Rights Guidelines help the entire seed sector to:

- Ensure fair, safe, and respectful working conditions across our operations and value chain
- Protect vulnerable groups, including smallholder farmers, seasonal workers, and women
- Promote ethical business practices and responsible partnerships
- Prevent risks related to labour practices, discrimination, and human rights violations

- Build long-term trust with farmers, employees, customers, suppliers and society
- Strengthen the reputation and sustainability of the seed industry globally

By following these guidelines, the seed industry is contributing to stronger communities, resilient farming systems, and a more responsible future for agriculture.

Social responsibility is central to how seed actors and players grow, operate, and will support success as company and as an industry.



1. ENSURE FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should ensure that all employment practices are fair, lawful, and transparent. This includes upholding national legal standards or international labour norms where the former is absent, establishing clear and secure employment relationships, and maintaining documentation to demonstrate compliance. Employers should actively engage with relevant stakeholders and remain informed about evolving legal and ethical responsibilities in the industry. This could be through community meetings, accessible communication channels, training and capacity building sessions, awareness raising workshops, among other examples.

By treating employment as a structured, transparent, and legally grounded relationship, with clear roles, fair compensation, and responsive communication, employers can create stable and respectful workplaces that uphold the rights of all workers while managing risks across their operations.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: Employers should stay informed about the legal regulations within their country that affect the way they can do business, and the way they should establish relationships with their employees. This means that they should also be informed if these regulations are to be changed. In some cases, such as smallholder growers with limited access to legal resources, seed companies should provide simplified summaries or workshop sessions on any relevant legal updates. Companies and suppliers could, as a progressive step, maintain clear records and documentation which provide evidence of their compliance. Good practices shared by ISF members include using digital contracts with smallholder farmers to improve transparency and communication, and conducting human rights checks with independent teams that visit suppliers to assess their compliance with supplier expectations.

The following topics, among others, should be included in this **regular review of legal and industry-related changes**:

- Occupational health and safety,
- Safety standards for machinery and equipment,
- Minimum age of employment and child labour restrictions,
- National or regional minimum wage regulations,
- Legally mandated benefits,
- Legal protections for temporary, contract or casual workers,
- Requirements for seasonal and migrant workers,
- Worker accommodation standards and entitlements,
- Regulations on working hours, overtime, breaks and rest periods,
- Land use rights, tenancy agreements and displacement safeguards,
- Water rights and irrigation usage rules,
- Agrochemical application and buffer zone requirements,
- Biodiversity conservation obligations,
- Use, storage, and disposal of agrochemicals and hazardous substances.

To accomplish this, employers should be aware of the different stakeholders that are involved in their operations and ensure that open communication channels are established with them. This is a crucial step to be able to engage meaningfully with stakeholders. Examples of typical stakeholders include, among others: workers, worker repre-

sentatives or unions, government institutions, suppliers of products and/or services, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), contracting agencies, and clients. In this way, any potential negative impact of operations can be reported to the employer, as well as any due benefits.

In situations **where formal contracts or agreements are not the norm**, best practices include encouraging employers and workers to retain a document with the following information:

- The worker's name,
- The date the work was performed,
- The number of hours worked,
- An overview of the tasks performed,
- The payment or wage received,
- The worker's signature validating the information³.

By ensuring regular and formal employment, such as through a verbal or written agreement or contract, which preferably includes the clear terms and conditions of employment, this well-defined employment relationship will result in regular employment. In situations where formal contracts or agreements are not the norm, best practices include encouraging employers to offer the workers a paper, when and if possible, where they can include the following information: their name and signature, the date, the number of hours worked, an overview of the tasks performed, and payment or wage received.

All workers, including apprentices and those defined as high-risk workers, should be offered at least a minimum wage or the prevailing industry wage, and all legally mandatory benefits and allowances. Best practices can include transitioning from offering the legal minimum wage, when exists, as the base wage for the lowest-paid employees. Best practices could transition into a living wage as the lowest wage for workers.

³ In cases where the worker is illiterate, careful consideration must be taken to ensure that the information included is valid.

The following should be included in formal labour contracts or agreements with workers if applicable:

- Expected pay, including actual wage and any legally mandated benefits and allowances,
- Expected overtime pay,
- Working hours,
- Expected overtime,
- Any allowances or benefits, including at least the legally mandated ones,
- Expected tasks to be performed during their employment.

The employer should ensure that the workers are well prepared to perform the tasks they are hired for. This includes informing the worker of the task or tasks they are expected to perform throughout their employment and/or offering any capacity building that is necessary for the worker to perform the task in a safe and efficient manner.

When employing high-risk workers⁴, employers should take into account special considerations. Employers should be aware of all the high-risk workers (e.g. young workers or migrant workers) employed within their site and ensure that their employment complies with the relevant national labour laws (or international labour standards). For

indirectly hired or contract workers, employers should be aware of employment conditions with their direct employer and be able to verify that they are within the legal frameworks. Where feasible, employers should prioritise direct employment relationships, as indirect or third-party arrangements can increase the risk of adverse impacts on workers' rights and working conditions.

All workers should be ensured open communication channels and grievance mechanisms, such as "open door" policies or an assigned person of trust, regardless of the type of employment relationship.

Employers should retain documentation as required by national laws to demonstrate compliance with local labour regulations. Where such requirements are absent or unclear, employers are advised to align with international labour standards. Below are examples of documentation typically maintained in accordance with legal and industry norms:

- Business registrations and certificates,
- Government registrations or permits,
- Financial records (such as digital payments),
- Contract/labour agreements of all workers,
- Guidelines, policies (if applicable) and/or rules of the workplace,
- Work permits for foreign employees,
- Capacity building records (on the rules of the site).

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Maintain clear records of local labour codes, safety regulations and international labour standards.
- ✓ Ensure that at the start of employment, workers are given or informed of clear work contracts or agreements in a language or format they can understand.
- ✓ In cases where illiterate workers are employed, make sure that verbal agreements are clearly communicated and simplified contracts or explanations are provided. In these cases, the worker should also be able to choose a trusted person to read or check the document.
- ✓ Maintain a clear understanding and monitor the workers who are involved within your own operations, including any temporary, seasonal, subcontracted, agency, intern, or other worker type.
- ✓ Offer capacity building for workers, e.g., traditional "classroom" setting, via chat groups, posters available in the common areas, or coaching during the work performed.
- ✓ Workers who are being trained are paid at least the minimum wage or the prevailing industry wage, including all legally mandated benefits and allowances.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- Do not ignore government updates or news regarding changes or amendments to labour laws.
- Do not keep only the records of permanent workers.
- Do not offer written contracts to illiterate workers or contracts in a language the worker does not understand.
- Do not sign blank or inaccurate documents as a substitute for the actual contracts.
- Do not hire temporary or contract workers if it is not allowed by law.
- Do not refrain from maintaining records of the indirectly hired workers or temporary workers.
- Do not pay contract or temporary workers less than permanent workers, if they perform the same work.



⁴ Refer to the definition for high-risk workers in the Annex.

2. PROHIBIT FORCED LABOUR

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should ensure that work is conducted on a voluntary basis throughout their operations, with forced labour being strictly prohibited under any circumstances.

Forced labour can take on different forms, such as prison labour, debt bondage labour, human trafficking of migrant labourers, psychological coercion, withholding of identity documents, or forced or coercive overtime through threat of punishment, intimidation, penalty or force. Some of these examples of forced labour might be difficult to identify, as they can appear to be voluntary on the surface. It is imperative that the site ensures that all employment is freely chosen.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: To accomplish this in practice, facilities should implement mechanisms that protect workers, including building capacity and raising awareness within the organisation regarding the risks of forced labour, and how to prevent it. This includes having a clear understanding of their workforce, including indirectly hired workers, to ensure a proper and complete overview. Furthermore, facilities should strictly prohibit all forms of abuse and harassment and communicate this to management and workers on a continuous basis.

Typical examples of practices that are conducive to a high risk of forced labour are the following:

- Retention of work papers or identity documents
- Loans or workers in debt
- Delays in payment
- Indirect payments (via a third party)
- Forced overtime
- Abusive behaviour
- Isolation of the workers
- High-risk payment methods (such as piece rates)
- Dependency on housing and work, particularly in the case of migrant workers
- Language barriers or illiteracy.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Capacity building should be offered to management, farmers and workers regarding the risks of forced labour and the policies in place to prevent it.
- ✓ Third-party, agency or contracted workers' contracts should be verified and checked for unethical or unlawful terms, such as excessive recruitment fees, unpaid overtime, debt bondage clauses disguised as advances, etc.
- ✓ Allowing workers to resign with reasonable notice
- ✓ Providing all the required allowances, benefits and wages entitled to a worker, as per legal, industry or international standard requirements.
- ✓ A policy should be developed which clearly defines what is considered forced labour and the actions to be taken if cases of forced labour are found.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- Do not use any kind of forced labour, including prison labour, migrant workers who are victims of human trafficking, slave labour, bonded labour, etc.
- Do not confiscate the original documents of workers, as it would prevent their free movement
- Do not confiscate the personal belongings of workers.
- Do not pay a part of the worker's wages, benefits or allowances to a recruitment agency, labour broker, or other third party.
- Do not restrict workers (foreign or other) from joining unions.
- Do not restrict workers' breaks or toilet usage during working hours.
- Do not require the worker to pay deposits or fees as a condition of employment.
- Do not set unrealistic production targets which force workers to engage in overtime to achieve the minimum wage.



3. ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should ensure that their operations and supply chain is free from child labour. The general minimum age for employment refers to the age at which a child may undertake full-time work without such work being classified as child labour. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138, this minimum age is established at 15 years, with the option for countries to initially⁵ set it at 14 years. A lower minimum age applies to “light work,” which refers to activities that are simple and non-hazardous in nature, carried out for a limited number of hours per day or week, and which do not interfere with the child’s education or development. The minimum age for light work is set at 13 years, or 12 years initially⁶ for certain countries. In all cases, international standards strictly prohibit any form of hazardous work before

the age of 18.

Where the law does not include requirements regarding the completion of compulsory education, deferral to international standards or industry standards regarding young workers is expected. In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, seed companies and their suppliers should encourage workers and local communities to prioritise education for young people.

The ISF has always been concerned about the welfare of those working in the seed sector, and in line with this, it aims to fully eradicate child labour from the seed sector worldwide.

Relevant publications on the prevention of child labour within the seed industry, which can provide further insight as to the seed industry’s efforts, include, among others:

- [ECHO – Enabling Child and Human Rights Position Statement](#) (2019), published by ECHO.
- [Minimum Age Convention C138](#) (1973), published by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- [The seed industry engages in combating child labour](#) (2018), published by the ISF.
- [The Ethical Charter on Responsible Labor Practices](#) (2018), published by the International Fresh Produce Association.
- [WISH – Wage Improvements in Seed Hybrids](#) (2022), published by BASF, Arisa and Syngenta.

Employers must ensure that they do not violate local regulations against child labour. Employers should comply with local laws and observe the ILO’s requirements for general work and light work. Adolescent or young workers, who are under the age of 18 and are able

to perform work as per the established regulations, are not permitted to perform hazardous work or work long hours, as defined by the ILO below.

Hazardous work includes the following activities, as defined by the ILO Recommendation No. 190:

- Work under particularly difficult conditions, such as long hours or nighttime shifts, or where the young worker is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer,
- Work performed with dangerous machinery, equipment or tools,
- Work that involves heavy lifting,
- Work that exposes the young worker to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or temperatures, noise levels or vibrations that damage health.

⁵ ILO Convention No. 138 recognises that some countries, when first applying the Convention, may set the minimum working age at 14 years as a transitional measure due to socioeconomic conditions. Some countries continue to apply this lower age threshold today.

⁶ ILO Convention No. 138 recognises that some countries, when first applying the Convention, may set the minimum working age for “light work” at 12 years as a transitional measure due to socioeconomic conditions. Some countries continue to apply this lower age threshold today.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: The ISF advises that, to prevent child labour, employers should raise awareness through meaningful stakeholder engagement on the concerns of child labour among local employees, farmers and (local) communities. This could include building the capacity of community organisations and local actors to identify and intervene in child labour cases, while also training local managers and farmers on the awareness of child labour and appropriate work for young workers. Other practical methods to raise awareness include: visual campaigns, announcements, and interactive workshops, among others. Within these awareness-raising efforts, it is also important to highlight the value of education to local communities and employees as a long-term solution to child labour and a pathway to better opportunities. It is especially important to ensure that these awareness-raising activities are culturally appropriate and aligned with the community's values, in order to enhance their practicality.

Employers are also advised to implement a manageable system for the prevention, monitoring, systematic reporting and implementation of corrective measures regarding child labour. This includes prohibit-

ing the hiring of workers who do not meet the requirements, prohibiting them from carrying out work activities, and encouraging them to continue their education.

In order to ensure that these systems can be effectively implemented, the site should carry out an age verification process when employing workers, to ensure that they follow the national laws and regulations. This can prove to be a challenging process in certain contexts, particularly for smallholder actors. Potential processes for age verification can include the following: checking personal documentation (national ID card, birth certificate, etc.), revising school enrolment records, among others.

Employers are also encouraged to implement policies with their contracting parties that ensure that no child labour is found throughout their supply chain. If the site is found to be employing workers who are not in line with these regulations, a proper remediation plan should be put into effect, as per the [ILO Guidance on Preventing, Identifying and Addressing Child Labour](#).

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?	WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?
✓ A proper and adequate age verification process is in place for use during recruitment, such as ID or school enrolment paperwork verification. ✓ Provide capacity building for management and supervisors on the specifics of young workers. ✓ Provide capacity building to young workers on what the legal restrictions are regarding their employment. ✓ Offer interactive and culturally appropriate activities to local communities (i.e. puppet shows) that effectively communicate the harms of child labour and the importance of its prevention. ✓ Offer educational programmes which support young workers. ✓ A proper remediation policy should be developed for cases where child labour is uncovered, including facilitating their access to education. ✓ A policy should be developed, which clearly states the regulations regarding the minimum hiring age, the kinds of tasks which can be performed by young workers, and measures to take for proper remediation.	> Any form of child labour. > Do not rely on physical appearance alone to assess worker age. > Do not avoid keeping proper documentation on the young workers employed, including their age and tasks performed. > Do not allow young workers to perform night shifts, long shifts or hazardous work. > Do not allow school-age children to work during school hours or full-time, if the local young worker regulations do not allow it. > Do not use family labour in ways that are not in line with the local young worker regulations.



4. HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should ensure a safe and healthy work environment for their workers, which is designed and maintained to minimise the risk of accidents and other dangerous situations arising from the nature of the work performed.

Employers should comply with all applicable national laws, regulations and the seed industry best practices examples in relation to the health and safety of the site, including housing for the workers when provided by the employer. Workers should be able to access all equipment necessary to carry out their tasks in a safe manner, and any adequate compensation coverage in the event of an injury or fatality. Workers should also be involved throughout the assessment of risk and training, ensuring that their knowledge and experience are considered.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: Relevant health and safety measures should be implemented throughout the site operations to be fully effective and have a long-lasting impact on the workforce's well-being. For this to be achieved, the employer should ensure that the workplace is clean, hygienic and well-lit in line with industry standards. A clear procedure should be established to identify the relevant potential hazards on-site and assess their risk. Any information on these potential hazards and how they can be avoided should be clearly (in a language and format all workers understand) and directly communicated to workers, through any of the following means: clear signs posted in the workplace, social media groups, in-person capacity building, interactive trainings (where workers can also share their experience and knowledge) among others.

It is essential to strengthen protection measures for those working in the field and in processing facilities, particularly regarding chemical exposure. This includes the proper storage of chemicals, the consistent use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and clear, enforced

procedures for the safe handling and application of hazardous substances. All third parties involved in the operations should be informed of the company's health and safety policies and procedures to ensure alignment and accountability. In some cases, workers may handle chemicals without basic protection, such as wearing flip-flops, lacking gloves or safety glasses, or working near chemical containers stored in direct sunlight with no safeguards against spills or leaks. Addressing these risks requires a cultural shift, with dedicated efforts to educate workers on the dangers associated with chemical exposure and the importance of safe practices.

The workplace should have the proper equipment in place to mitigate these hazards insofar as possible, such as through locks, sufficient ventilation, exposure to unsafe weather conditions (extreme sun exposure or other), personal protective equipment (PPE), etc. During the hazard assessment, tasks that require the worker to wear PPE should be identified and documented for future reference.

Seed companies and suppliers should also consider external audits as a relevant tool to ensure compliance with laws and industry standards. Suppliers should be encouraged to undergo audits, as this helps identify health and safety risks, promote continuous improvement, and demonstrate commitment to safe and responsible operations across the supply chain.

DISCLAIMER: While this section is critical and closely linked to ethical practices, it is addressed here in a limited capacity. This is due to the distinct nature of this topic, which requires a specialised approach, sector-specific standards, and technical expertise beyond the scope of this document. **The intention of this guidelines document is to maintain a focused and practical approach to social issues and address occupational health and safety within a separate publication.**

Examples of hazards that should be identified, among others:

- Noise hazards,
- Slip and fall risks,
- Exposure to hazardous chemicals,
- Overexposure to climate risks, such as heat, sun or rain,
- Ergonomics risks,
- Eye strain risks,
- No access to water,
- Sexual harassment,
- Fire hazards.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?	WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?
✓ Workers should be informed regarding the health and safety situation of the site, particularly regarding the importance of using safety equipment and PPE. ✓ A working group on occupational hazards can be established to identify and share applicable regulations and best practices. ✓ All relevant hazards should be identified and assessed by a capable person, and proper controls should be developed. ✓ Necessary PPE should be provided free of charge for all workers who require it, as determined during the hazard assessment. ✓ Workers should be provided with adequate and sufficient protection from unsafe weather conditions, such as prolonged exposure to the sun, heat, rain or cold. ✓ Records are kept regarding work-related illnesses and injuries, especially those resulting in hospitalisation or fatality. ✓ Undergo regular audits on health and safety practices to ensure compliance with relevant laws and industry standards. Encourage and support suppliers to do the same. ✓ A policy on health and safety within the workplace should be developed. ✓ Ensure that pregnant women are performing safe and adequate work.	> Do not force workers to perform work under unsafe conditions. > Do not allow workers to perform tasks that require the use of PPE without PPE. > Do not neglect capacity-building exercises, especially when introducing new machinery or processes. > Do not allow workers to perform potentially hazardous tasks they are not trained for. > Do not assume that temporary or seasonal workers understand safety procedures. > Do not ignore signs of fatigue, dehydration or injury among workers. > Do not allow untrained workers to enter confined spaces such as silos or seed tanks. > Do not overlook the regular maintenance of seed cleaning machines.



5. PROVIDE LEGAL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should provide adequate compensation in line with the national minimum wage or the appropriate industry standards (in the absence of statutory minimum wages established). Any required allowances and benefits as established by national law or contract should be included as well.

Employers should compensate their workers for their labour or services according to the national law or relevant industry standards and

provide any fringe benefits established by law or contract. All workers have the right to just and favourable remuneration, ensuring that they can provide a decent living for themselves and their families. Best practices for stakeholders can include progressing towards establishing the regional or national living wage benchmarks as the lowest base wage paid to workers.

Paying a decent wage has been determined to be central for the socioeconomic development of workers and their communities. Because minimum wages are found to be insufficient in certain areas to cover the basic needs of workers and their families, the concept of “**living wages**” aims to cover this gap.

- Select a living wage benchmark provider from the IDH recommended list ([IDH Living Wage Identifier - IDH - the Sustainable Trade Initiative](#))
- Measure and identify the gap (if any) between what your workers are currently paid and what they should receive as per the living wage estimates
- Discuss the gaps with the relevant stakeholders and how to close them. IDH provides guides on how to take action ([Roadmap 4: Close the Gap - IDH - the Sustainable Trade Initiative](#))

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: To facilitate this, employers should guarantee that the recording and calculation of hours and payments are accurate, and wage and fringe benefits are paid promptly and in compliance with the law or industry standards. Wage and payment

information should be transparent and understandable by the workers, with extra precautions taken in the case of language barriers and illiteracy. Overtime compensation, benefits and/or allowances should meet or exceed the legal minimum standards.

The **minimum benefits** are established by law, and in the case of extra benefits given, these should not be used to replace a minimum wage. Typical benefits can include the following, among others:

- Food allowances,
- Sick leave,
- Maternity leave,
- Holiday leave,
- Transport allowances.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ All workers, including trainees, apprentices, migrant workers and other non-regular workers, should be paid at least the legal minimum wage or the seed industry standard.
- ✓ Raise awareness and build capacity among the workforce on legal remuneration (including benefits) and incentives workers should receive according to law.
- ✓ Payments should be made directly to workers, avoiding payments through contractors.
- ✓ Pay records should be maintained for both employers and workers.
- ✓ Payroll documents should be kept up to date, including lawful deductions.
- ✓ Overtime should be compensated at a premium rate, as required by law, or in the absence of this, as established by international standards.
- ✓ If practical or realistic for your organisation, consider progressing towards living wage payments.
- ✓ Provide all workers with completed pay slips, booklet or card, showing the total wages earned, the number of hours worked (including overtime), lawful deductions, bonuses, and allowances.
- ✓ Provide seasonal or unorganised workers a simplified and easily understandable record of hours and pay, such as a booklet or card, which workers can keep updated.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- > Do not pay workers below the legal minimum wage, or in the absence of this, below the seed industry standard.
- > Do not hold wage deductions unlawfully from workers.
- > Do not require workers to work during breaks or lunchtime.
- > Do not manipulate pay stubs or pay slips that intend to hide the total amount of hours worked or the actual salary earned.
- > Do not delay payment for the labour or services provided by the workers by more than a month.
- > Do not set unrealistic production targets that force workers to engage in overtime to achieve minimum wage.
- > Do not withhold wages as a means of punishment for workers.
- > Do not withhold legally required benefits from temporary or seasonal workers.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE IN THE INDUSTRY, PROJECT WISH:

[Wage Improvements in Seed Hybrids \(WISH\)](#) is a multistakeholder collaboration in which BASF Nunhems, Syngenta, and Arisa are focused on addressing minimum wage compliance issues and child labour issues in India's vegetable seed sector.

Recent industry reports indicate labour rights violations and child la-

bour continue to be a challenge facing India's agriculture industry. WISH aims to understand the root causes to be able to tackle these issues and provide interventions to address the challenges across the supply chain.

The project team aims to implement meaningful change across multiple focus areas by 2025.



6. ENSURE FAIR WORKING HOURS

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should respect the regular working and overtime hours permitted by the national law and international labour standards.

Employers should ensure that the working hours of their workforce are in line with the limitations established by national legislation. Employers are encouraged to make efforts towards best practices within the industry, which include the following (according to ILO standards): regular working hours should not exceed 48 hours per week, and when working overtime, total working hours should not go beyond 60 hours per week. Employers are encouraged to ensure that all workers receive at least 24 consecutive hours of rest within every seven-day work period. By upholding these regulations, even during peak seasons, workers are further protected from being overworked, and therefore less at risk of causing accidents which can harm a worker's wellbeing and lower productivity for the site.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: Employers should respect the working hours, including overtime, by upholding legal working hour

limitations, considering peak season. The working hours are recommended to be monitored to the extent feasible, by using any of the following tools: recording the start and end time of the workday on a notebook or diary, simple time-tracking phone applications, sign-in sheets or logbooks, among other tools. Sufficient breaks, as legally mandated or according to the seed industry standards, when these are absent, should be provided. Finally, at least one day off per week should be granted to workers, or two days off every two-week period.

DISCLAIMER: While it is essential to protect workers from excessive working hours, it is recognised that the **agricultural sector involves seasonal peaks that may require extended workdays**. In such cases, any additional hours should be managed responsibly, with appropriate compensation (according to national labour legislation), rest periods, appropriate shelter, access to basic medical attention and sanitation, access to water and food, and overall consideration for workers' well-being.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Raise awareness and build capacity of workforce regarding maximum working hours and overtime, by postings in the workplace, or verbal communications.
- ✓ Ensure that workers are able to take breaks established by law during the work day and the rest days established by law during the week.
- ✓ Maintain time records of working hours, including breaks, by using any of the previously mentioned tools.
- ✓ Ensure that all employees are provided with official public holidays and paid time off, as per local laws.
- ✓ A policy on maximum working hours, according to national law or, in its absence, seed industry standards, should be developed.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- > Do not force workers to engage in overtime work, under threat of punishment, retention of wages or intimidation.
- > Do not refrain from paying the overtime (premium).
- > Do not refrain from recording working hours and overtime accurately.
- > Do not assign unrealistic daily quotas, which would lead them to perform excessive hours of work.
- > Do not discourage workers from taking rest days that are legally required.
- > Do not restrict workers' use of sick days.
- > Do not schedule back-to-back shifts without sufficient rest periods.



7. PREVENT DISCRIMINATION

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should ensure equal and respectful treatment of all workers, particularly in regard to hiring, compensation, advancement, discipline, termination and retirement, regardless of race, gender⁷ religion, caste, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disabilities, political opinion, or union membership or affiliation⁸.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: Employers should ensure that employment decisions such as hiring, pay, promotion, termination, retirement, and access to capacity building are based solely on a per-

son's ability to do the job. No advantages or disadvantages to workers should be ensured based on their personal characteristics. A respectful and inclusive work environment is expected to be fostered for all, to promote an inclusive and resilient workplace that values the contributions of all workers equally. Open communication channels should be developed and maintained for when this is not the case, and grievances should be communicated. Further, organisations should comply with legal requirements related to specific employee groups, such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, or protected minorities.

⁷ ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1950 (No. 100).

⁸ ILO Discrimination Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

A GENDERED APPROACH: Addressing gender disparity in the seed industry requires proactive and structural interventions that go beyond non-discrimination policies. Organisations can begin by ensuring women have equal access to formal employment opportunities across all levels of the seed supply chain, including technical, supervisory, and decision-making roles, not just informal or low-wage tasks. Practical steps include setting targets for female representation, providing gender-sensitive training and leadership development, and guaranteeing equal pay for equal work.

In high-risk areas where cultural and systemic barriers are entrenched, partnering with local women's groups and community leaders can

help shift norms. It is essential to provide safe and anonymous grievance mechanisms tailored to women's needs and protections against harassment and abuse. Furthermore, broader change can be driven by integrating gender considerations into procurement practices, such as requiring suppliers to demonstrate inclusive hiring and workplace practices. Inclusion must also mean voice: involving female workers and smallholders farmers in the design and evaluation of workplace policies, training content, and agricultural programs ensures that interventions are relevant, effective, and sustainable.

Employers should make efforts to maintain the following **proper documentation** to ensure that they are in compliance with these standards:

- Agreements or labour contracts
- Documentation on promotions, transfers, dismissals or terminations
- Annual and maternal leave requests
- Pregnancy benefits requests
- Grievance procedure records, including the source of grievance, how it was dealt with and its outcome
- Disciplinary measure records
- Performance evaluation documentation
- Pay scale documentation

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Provide capacity building for management and supervisors on relevant discrimination activities.
- ✓ Spread awareness regarding non-discrimination and protections to all workers, via postings in the workplace, in-person capacity building, etc.
- ✓ Ensure that workers can access the information on non-discrimination.
- ✓ Provide all benefits required by law for pregnant women and new mothers.
- ✓ Ensure that all workers, especially female workers, are provided with proper sanitation stations.
- ✓ Ensure that female growers and farmers are properly engaged in business deals, and if appropriate, they are provided direct contracts and payments to their own bank accounts.
- ✓ Provide proper grievance mechanisms for workers who have suffered discrimination in the workplace.
- ✓ Ensure that grievances are effectively dealt with, and an appropriate outcome can be expected.
- ✓ A policy should be developed that prohibits discrimination.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- > Do not discriminate against workers based on their personal characteristics, such as paying male workers more because they are male.
- > Do not penalise female workers who get pregnant or get married.
- > Do not dismiss workers based on the worker's health status when this does not impact their ability to perform the work or place other workers at risk.
- > Do not dismiss women if they are pregnant.
- > Do not blacklist workers based on their participation in union activities.
- > Do not include any type of discriminatory bias in the recruitment process, such as including questions about marital status, religious beliefs, caste, or race.



8. ENSURE HUMANE TREATMENT AND ADEQUATE GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should treat all workers with dignity and respect. No workers should ever be subjected to physical, sexual, psychological or verbal harassment or abuse.

Employers should ensure that their workplace prohibits any form of harassment, abuse or intimidation, and provides a safe space for their workers to conduct their tasks. In other words, any unwelcome or uninvited conduct directed at an individual, or improper or excessive treatment or disciplinary action – covering any of the twelve ethical principles referred to in this document –, should be categorised as harassment or abuse, and, therefore, be strictly prohibited. Special attention should be taken in relation to gender-based violence, and the impact it can have on the workers.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: In line with this, employers can ensure that their workers are guaranteed respect and dignity. Employers should prohibit all forms of abuse and harassment and communicate these policies in a clear manner to the entire workforce. In cases where there are policies and they are not met, effective and appropriate grievance mechanisms should be available to all stakeholders and reach the relevant management or supervisors. Stakeholders who should be able to access these grievance mechanisms include: all workers, both directly and indirectly hired, clients/customers, suppliers and communities that have been impacted by the operations. Adequate disciplinary measures should be available for such cases, and the disciplinary system should be properly communicated and understood (in both language and format) by the workforce.

A grievance mechanism should follow the principles as established by the UNGP:

- Anonymous complaints or suggestions are allowed, which protects users from retaliation and ensures that they trust the process.
- The system should not be manipulated or interfered with to ensure its fairness.
- The system should be simple and accessible to all workers, both in ensuring users know about it and how it should be used.
- Users should be able to access information and any expertise that is necessary to engage in the grievance process.
- The grievance mechanism should be transparent, to ensure users can stay informed about the process of their grievance.
- The outcomes and remedies should be in line with the internationally recognised human rights.
- There is a regular review of the process based on feedback and dialogue with the users, which prioritises its continuous improvement.
- Outcomes of the grievance procedure involve, when appropriate, facilitated discussions with the relevant users.
- If required by the users, recourse to a legitimate independent third-party mechanism is possible.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Grievance mechanisms should be made available to workers through any of the following: suggestion boxes, designated websites, hotlines, open-door policies, etc.
- ✓ Disciplinary measures should be structured in a way that allows for appropriate escalation, from verbal warnings to written warnings to suspension and finally to termination.
- ✓ Workers should undergo capacity building on harassment, workplace violence and bullying, particularly related to gender-based violence.
- ✓ Users should be able to submit grievances anonymously.
- ✓ A policy should be developed that strictly prohibits harassment and abusive behaviour, including how the company deals with these behaviours, and how the grievance process works.
- ✓ The relevant management or supervisors should be made aware of the policy, the grievance mechanism and the disciplinary procedure.
- ✓ Grievances should be recorded and tracked, and ensure they are properly resolved, and the number of grievances should be published on a yearly basis.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- Do not allow any physical, verbal, sexual or psychological harassment or abuse inflicted on any stakeholder.
- Do not dismiss complaints without appropriate review.
- Do not leave grievances to be handled only by the direct supervisors.
- Do not allow unreasonable or extreme disciplinary measures, such as monetary fines for poor performance, threats or physical punishment.
- Do not place suggestion boxes in areas where the workers might be discouraged from using them.
- Do not restrict worker movement or deny workers access to food, toilets, water, or medical care.
- Do not retaliate against workers who have submitted a grievance.
- Do not change the disciplinary procedure according to the person receiving it, in a way that appears to act favourably to one worker or group of workers.

9. ENSURE RESPONSIBLE SOURCING AND SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should build capacity internally to further responsible sourcing practices and selectively engage with suppliers and other stakeholders within their value chain who uphold ethical standards that are in line with internationally recognised human rights standards.

Our increasingly globalised and interconnected world has made supply chains more complex, and therefore more difficult to regulate. As such, human rights-related risks have increased. Within this context, experts have found that by implementing responsible sourcing practices, employers can expect a positive and enduring impact on worker rights and labour conditions to extend even beyond their direct operations.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: Employers should attempt to selectively engage with other suppliers and stakeholders, depending on the human rights and ethical standards they uphold, and communicate openly regarding these expectations. When possible, they should engage in collaborative work and capacity building exercises with these stakeholders in an effort to improve social and environmental practices. Organisations can engage with other stakeholders in a variety of ways, such as by endorsing ethical purchasing practices, encouraging internal auditing activities, offering awareness meetings to growers to explain worker rights-related expectations, having suppliers sign off on their guidelines, providing self-assessments, or suggesting improvement plans.

Ethical purchasing practices include avoiding last-minute orders or cancellations, setting unrealistic deadlines, or applying cost pressures that may lead suppliers to cut corners on social or environmental standards.

Employers can build on these efforts systematically, and should publish their commitments publicly, consistently build capacity internally, assess the risks and impacts of their operations, integrate findings into their business processes, monitor the implementation of these findings, communicate regarding the process with all relevant stake-

holders and finally provide remediation when appropriate. Employers are encouraged to actively identify, address, and mitigate negative social and environmental impacts in their supply chains by implementing these procedures and practices which further ethical standards.

When **human rights-related risks** are present at one stage of the supply chain, they often spread and affect other stages as well. This highlights the need for **ethical practices and partnerships** throughout the entire supply chain.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Include the topics of human rights, labour standards, and environmental protection within the supplier evaluation process.
- ✓ Have suppliers sign codes of conduct, guidelines or compliance agreements which are in line with national laws or international human rights standards if the former is lacking (such as ILO or UNGP).
- ✓ Offer capacity building, resources, training, or technical assistance both internally and externally to support suppliers in improving their environmental and social practices.
- ✓ Ensure equal business opportunities are given to small-scale seed growers or processors, with fair contract terms.
- ✓ Regularly assess compliance of suppliers through audits, site visits, and third-party verifications (particularly in high-risk areas).
- ✓ Prioritise transparency by publicly disclosing sourcing practices, key supplier locations, and actions taken to address human rights risks.
- ✓ Develop a policy which clearly defines the expectations towards suppliers and other stakeholders who are potential business partners.
- ✓ If necessary, disengage responsibly from suppliers who are not in line with your organisation's social and ethical expectations.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- > Do not engage with suppliers solely based on a competitive price.
- > Do not ignore signs of harassment, abuse, and other evidence of a harmful workplace.
- > Do not engage in unfair purchasing practices, such as sudden order cancellations, unrealistic lead times, or delayed payments, which can lead employers to cut corners and exploit workers.
- > Do not overlook exploitative subcontracting practices, which are not in line with the national law.
- > Do not source inputs without verifying their origin and production conditions.
- > Do not disengage with high-risk areas entirely; instead of working with suppliers to improve the conditions through collaborative efforts.

10. RESPECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES (IPLC)

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) within the area of operations and respect their land and resources.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is derived from the right to self-determination of indigenous people. It is one of the safeguards to the right to self-determination over lands and resources and extends further than simply through consent by means of signing a contract or withholding consent. It is a process through which these communities can have control and a voice on the matters affecting their people and their territories.

Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) refer to groups who have longstanding ties to specific lands and natural resources. The agricultural sector can have a negative impact on the surrounding

IPLC, which is why it is crucial that they engage with these stakeholders in a meaningful way. The operations of a site should ensure that its practices respect the rights of the IPLC in relation to their lands and their resources, in line with national laws and regulations. Where production or conservation uses impinge on IPLC rights, lands, resources, territories, livelihoods, or food security, IPLC are compensated or accommodated through appropriate measures which reflect outcomes of the appropriate free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) process. Particular attention to this should be given in geographical areas where free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is found to be frequently jeopardised. In geographical areas where land rights are established, compliance with FPIC is by default if users are able to demonstrate how they legally acquired the land.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is derived from the right to self-determination of **indigenous people**. It is one of the safeguards to the right to self-determination over lands and resources and extends further than simply through consent by means of signing a contract or withholding consent. It is a process through which these communities can have control and a voice on the matters affecting their people and their territories.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: Free, prior and informed consent should be practiced with IPLC as a form of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the operations, at every step of their processes and activities, as required by national law. This includes, amongst others, the following activities: acquisition or leasing of land, commencing operational activities on the land, carrying out activities

which will have some impact on the land or resources. If any of these activities are found to cause a negative outcome for the IPLC, the site should have an effective grievance mechanism that covers it, and appropriate remediation in line with the results of the FPIC process should be carried out.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Raise awareness and build capacity internally to implement relevant policies and processes.
- ✓ The information about the activities given to IPLC is accessible (in a language they understand and an appropriate format), clear, consistent, accurate and transparent.
- ✓ Maintain a direct and open line of communication with IPLC, which allows for reciprocal communication.
- ✓ Set up regular meetings with IPLC to ensure continuous consent or discuss new activities necessary.
- ✓ If FPIC has not been applied or respected, any harm caused should be resolved and remedied.
- ✓ Maintain clear records to evidence that the land has been legally acquired.
- ✓ Have procedures and processes in place that allow identifying if their operations affect any IPLC, and remedy violations of these rights.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- > Do not use intermediaries who do not represent the IPLC interests, or to whom the IPLC have not provided consent as their intermediaries.
- > Do not disregard IPLC customs and governance structures, particularly throughout FPIC processes.
- > Do not access land without IPLC consent.
- > Do not commence activities without the consent of indigenous peoples and local communities, or without sufficient time in advance.
- > Do not purchase land through coercion, intimidation or manipulation to obtain the consent of IPLC.
- > Do not intimidate local environmental and human rights defenders.



11. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should recognise and respect the right of workers to freedom of association, including forming or joining groups or associations of their choice.

DISCLAIMER: The right of workers to freely associate and engage in effective communication with employers is a fundamental labour right that should be respected and supported across the seed industry. However, it is important to recognise that in many agricultural contexts, including throughout the seed production supply chain, this right is not frequently exercised due to the seasonal and temporary nature of much of the workforce. While promoting and protecting this right remains essential, especially where stable employment relationships exist, it may not always be practical or realistic to expect full implementation in every context. Nonetheless, employers should make efforts to create an environment where freedom of association is respected, and where possible, gradually move toward more stable and regular employment models over time.

Worker unions and their representatives are recognised by international labour standards as a crucial part of furthering healthy em-

ployer-worker relationships. The rights to freedom of association have been found to further guarantee the protection of workers and promote fair employment environments⁹.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: The site should ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement with trade unions and affirm workers' rights to freedom of association. This should be openly communicated to all employees to ensure awareness. Workers should not face any form of discrimination based on their decision to join or not join a union, or their level of involvement in union activities. Management should avoid interfering with or attempting to influence any union's administrative functions.

Open and effective communication channels should be created between management and worker groups or their representatives. These channels should enable the smooth exchange of feedback, grievances, and suggestions. When collective negotiations take place, the employer should comply with all legal obligations and engage in the process sincerely and in good faith, with the goal of promoting worker participation in workplace decision-making.

Where freedom of association is restricted by law, the employer should respect **alternative means of worker organisation and association**, to the extent it is allowed by law.

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Raise awareness for management and supervisors on the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining of workers.
- ✓ Engage in negotiations with the workers union in good faith.
- ✓ If a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is reached, make sure to honour the terms agreed upon.
- ✓ Ensure that grievance mechanisms can be accessed by workers who are illiterate or located in remote areas, such as through toll-free hotlines or other voice-based grievance channels.
- ✓ Keep records of collective bargaining agreements.
- ✓ Keep grievance records.
- ✓ When possible, raise awareness and build capacity among the workers regarding their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- ✓ Develop a policy which communicates openness to unions and labour associations and provides support when necessary or required.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- > Do not terminate employees who attempt to organise or join a workers' union.
- > Do not threaten or punish workers who attempt to organise or join a workers' union.
- > Do not blacklist workers based on their union or related activities.
- > Do not obstruct alternative means of workers' association, where this right is restricted by law.
- > Do not discriminate, dismiss, or otherwise punish workers based on whether they are union members.
- > Do not offer monetary compensation to workers to manipulate their decision to join a union.
- > Do not dismiss workers and hire replacement workers to weaken or break up a legal strike, or to avoid negotiating in good faith.



12. PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES: Seed companies and their suppliers should comply with relevant local environmental laws and regulations. In cases where such laws are absent, they are encouraged to follow environmental protection standards as established by the seed industry or international standards.

Including environmental protections within this guidance document is essential for the seed industry because environmental and human rights are deeply interconnected. The health and livelihoods of local communities, farm workers, and growers depend on access to clean water, healthy soil, and a stable climate. Environmental degradation and the effects of climate change can directly harm seed quality, agricultural productivity, and the well-being of those working on or living near seed production facilities. Access to water, in particular, is both a human right and a critical input for seed cultivation, cleaning, and processing. By protecting natural resources and promoting sustainable environmental practices, the seed industry can better uphold the rights and dignity of its workers and surrounding communities, while ensuring the long-term viability of seed systems and food security.

Employers are expected to comply with environmental policies and procedures that are in line with relevant laws and regulations. Particular attention should be given to water management, soil health and management, energy usage, hazardous chemicals management, air quality and waste management.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE: The sources of environmental impacts of the site, including those related to water, energy, hazardous chemicals, air pollution and waste, are identified. A baseline of consumption and impact is established based on this identification process. Finally, efforts should be made to find ways of mitigating the negative impact of the site.

Seed companies and growers can take the first steps toward reducing their environmental impact by raising awareness and building capacity around responsible environmental practices. This can be done through workshops, interactive sessions, posters, and other communication tools. Practical examples of sustainable practices include switching from plastic mulch to biodegradable alternatives, recycling plastic containers, and repairing leaks in irrigation systems.

DISCLAIMER: While this section is critical and closely linked to ethical practices, it is addressed here in a limited capacity. This is due to the distinct nature of this topic, which requires a specialised approach, sector-specific standards, and technical expertise beyond the scope of this document. The intention of this guidelines document is to maintain a focused and practical approach to social issues and address environmental impacts and protections within a separate publication.

Examples of **realistic methods** to establish a baseline of consumption:

- Use water efficiently
- Prevent wasting water
- Weigh or estimate **waste** quantities
- **Electricity** and fuel bills
- Track storage and handling practices of hazardous **chemicals**
- Identify sources of **emissions**, such as diesel engines, open burning, etc.

The following documentation should be maintained to provide evidence of compliance with the law:

- Environmental impact studies
- Environmental commitment and **policy**
- Inventory of discharge points of waste and wastewater
- Inventory of hazardous waste
- Hazardous waste management
- Waste disposal
- Wastewater treatment plant inspection, maintenance, and monitoring
- Air emissions monitoring results
- Water and energy efficiency monitoring
- Safety Data Sheets
- Waste storage inspection records

HOW CAN THIS OBJECTIVE BE ACHIEVED?	WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?
✓ A policy should be developed which includes clear rules regarding the environmental laws and regulations to follow, and in the absence of these, the seed industry standards. ✓ Where possible, invest in renewable energy options and alternative pesticides, insecticides and herbicides. ✓ Identify the sources of environmental impact of the site, such as the consumption of water, waste generation and disposal, hazardous chemical use, air emissions and energy usage. ✓ Track the use of energy such as coal, natural gas, petrol, hydro, or wind. ✓ Ensure that water extraction, use, storage, transfer, and infrastructure are in line with local regulations. ✓ Reduce waste generation where possible and prioritise the following disposal mechanisms: reuse, recycle, biological treatment, and controlled incineration with energy recovery. ✓ Ensure that the quantity and quality of all wastewaters comply with relevant permits. ✓ Install and maintain pollution control or treatment systems or use emissions treatment suppliers that are in good working condition and in line with regulations.	> Do not ignore indirect impacts, such as logistics-related emissions. > Do not use hazardous chemicals without a clear monitoring system which tracks the storage, usage, and disposal. > Do not release waste directly into local water sources, such as rivers, lakes, oceans, seas, etc. > Do not disregard local environmental laws. > Do not allow untrained workers to manage, store and dispose of hazardous chemicals and waste. > Do not store waste and chemicals in containers that have not been checked for leaks or spill risk.



Glossary

This glossary provides definitions of key terms used throughout the Social Rights Compliance Guidelines for the Seed industry. It is intended to support a shared understanding of important labour and human rights concepts among seed companies, suppliers, and industry associations. The terms included draw from internationally recognised sources, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO),

and have been adapted to reflect the specific context and needs of the seed sector.

Understanding these terms is relevant for effectively applying the guidelines and promoting fair, safe, and responsible working conditions across the seed supply chain.

NATIONAL LABOUR LAWS

National labour laws refer to the set of legal standards and regulations established by a country's government to govern employment relationships within its jurisdiction. These laws typically cover areas such as minimum wages, working hours, health and safety, child labour, forced labour, freedom of association, and conditions of employment.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [“National labour law database”](#) and ILO Glossary of Labour Law Terms.

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed industry, companies and suppliers should comply with the labour laws of the countries in which they operate or source from. This includes ensuring that farm workers and site employees are employed in accordance with national minimum wage laws, working time regulations, and occupational health and safety standards. Compliance with national labour laws is a foundational requirement for broader social rights compliance and serves as the baseline for implementing international standards such as the **ILO core conventions**, **ETI Base Code**, and the **Ethical Charter on Responsible Labour Practices**.

ETHICAL TRADING INITIATIVE (ETI) BASE CODE

The ETI Base Code is a set of labour standards developed by the Ethical Trading Initiative based on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It provides a foundation for ethical labour practices, including freedom of association, fair wages, and safe working conditions.

Source: [Ethical Trading Initiative \(ETI\), Base Code of Labour Practice](#).

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Seed companies and their suppliers can use the ETI Base Code as a benchmark to ensure labour rights are respected across their operations and supply chains.

ETHICAL CHARTER ON RESPONSIBLE LABOUR PRACTICES

The Ethical Charter on Responsible Labour Practices is an industry-wide agreement by stakeholders in the fresh produce and horticulture sectors to uphold labour rights, health and safety, and responsible recruitment. It sets expectations for buyers, suppliers, and labour providers to promote ethical employment.

Source: Ethical Charter on Responsible Labour Practices, UK Food Industry.

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Though developed for horticulture, its principles are applicable to seed production, which often shares labour risks related to seasonal, temporary, and migrant workforces.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS

International labour standards are legal instruments developed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that set out basic principles and rights at work. These standards are typically codified as Conventions (which are legally binding for countries that ratify them) and Recommendations (non-binding guidance). They cover a wide range of labour issues, including freedom of association, the elimination of forced and child labour, non-discrimination in employment, working conditions, and occupational health and safety.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [What are International Labour Standards?](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** International labour standards serve as a global benchmark for fair and ethical working conditions across supply chains. In the seed industry, they are especially relevant for ensuring that both farm workers and processing staff are protected from exploitative practices such as child labour, excessive working hours, or unsafe work environments. Compliance with these standards is key for farmers and seed companies aiming to meet the expectations of international buyers, investors, and regulatory frameworks such as the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). These standards are also foundational to voluntary industry frameworks like the ETI Base Code and the Ethical Charter on Responsible Labour Practices.

EMPLOYER

An *employer* is a person, company, or organisation that hires one or more workers to perform services under agreed terms and conditions in exchange for wages or a salary. The employer is responsible for ensuring legal compliance with applicable labour laws, the relevant code of conduct and for providing a safe and fair working environment.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [Glossary of Labour Terms](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed sector, employers may include seed companies, farm owners, cooperatives, or contractors that engage workers for activities such as pollination, planting, harvesting, seed processing, packaging, and distribution. Employers in this context are responsible for upholding both national labour laws and international standards, ensuring that workers are legally employed, fairly compensated, and protected from exploitation.

- ✓ For **seed companies that engage seed growers of any size as independent contractors**, the seed company, as the primary business partner, is expected to establish clear contractual expectations regarding social rights compliance and conduct due diligence to ensure these standards are upheld by the growers in their own operations.
- ✓ For **seed growers who directly employ seasonal or unorganised labourers**, they are considered 'employers' under these guidelines and are fully responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable social rights, including fair wages, safe conditions, and non-discrimination. Support from seed companies or industry associations in terms of practical guidance and resources is encouraged for these growers.
- ✓ For **seed suppliers who engage farmers**, the supplier acts as the direct 'employer' or contracting entity for the farmers' labour or production. However, seed companies sourcing from these suppliers are also responsible for ensuring responsible sourcing practices, including due diligence on the social rights performance of their suppliers and promoting compliance throughout their supply chain.

EMPLOYEE

An *employee* is a person who works under a formal or informal employment contract and provides labour or services in exchange for wages or a salary. Employees typically work under the direction of an employer and are entitled to certain rights and protections under national labour laws and, in some cases, international standards.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [Glossary of Labour Market Terms](#)

- ✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed industry, employees may work in various roles, such as production, research, administration, quality control, or field operations—either on farms, on-site, or in offices. Ensuring that all employees, regardless of job type or contract length, have safe working conditions, fair compensation, and access to grievance mechanisms is central to building a socially responsible and compliant seed sector.

WORKER

A *worker* is any person who performs work for another person or entity in exchange for wages, a salary, or other forms of compensation. Workers may be employed under formal or informal arrangements and can include permanent, temporary, seasonal, part-time, and migrant labourers.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [International Labour Standards Department Glossary](#)

- ✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed sector, workers include individuals involved in various stages of seed production and distribution, such as pollination, planting, cultivation, harvesting, cleaning, packaging, and processing. These workers may be directly employed by seed companies or indirectly engaged through farms or contractors. Ensuring the rights and well-being of all workers, regardless of employment status, is essential to achieving social rights compliance in the industry. This includes fair wages, safe working conditions, protection from discrimination, and access to grievance mechanisms.

REGULAR EMPLOYMENT

Regular employment refers to work that is secure, with ongoing contracts rather than casual, seasonal, or temporary arrangements. It includes protections such as notice periods, benefits, and social security contributions.

Source: [ETI Base Code, Clause 7](#).

- ✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Regular employment is rare in parts of the seed industry due to its seasonal nature, but promoting it where possible improves worker security and reduces exploitation.

CONTRACT WORKER

A *contract worker* is a person employed under a fixed-term or task-based agreement, often through a third-party agency or contractor, rather than being directly hired by the company for whom the work is performed. Contract workers may not have the same benefits, protections, or job security as permanent employees.

Source: [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) – Glossary of Labour Terms](#)

- ✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed sector, contract workers are commonly engaged for seasonal or labour-intensive activities, such as sowing, harvesting, seed cleaning, and packaging. They may be hired by farms, cooperatives, or outsourcing agencies. Because contract workers often have less job stability and limited access to protections, they are considered more vulnerable to exploitation. Ensuring fair treatment, safe conditions, and equal rights for contract workers is a key part of social rights compliance in the industry.

TEMPORARY WORKER

A *temporary worker* is an individual employed for a limited period of time, often to meet seasonal, project-based, or short-term labour needs. Temporary workers may be hired directly by an employer or through an employment agency and typically do not have permanent contracts.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [Glossary of Statistical Terms](#)

- ✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed sector, temporary workers are often hired during **peak agricultural periods**, such as planting and harvesting seasons. While they are essential to operations, temporary workers often face **greater risks** of underpayment, excessive hours, lack of social protections, and unsafe working conditions. Recognising and protecting the rights of temporary workers is a key aspect of achieving **fair and inclusive labour practices** in seed supply chains.

APPRENTICE WORKERS

Apprentice workers are individuals, often young or inexperienced, who work under a structured capacity-building agreement to gain skills, typically for lower pay and limited time.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [R208 Quality Apprenticeship Recommendation, 2023 \(No.208\)](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Apprentice workers are relevant in the seed industry, where knowledge of agricultural practices, seed handling, and seasonal cycles is often passed on through hands-on experience. Apprenticeships can provide valuable training opportunities and help address skill shortages in rural areas.

SEASONAL WORKER

A *seasonal worker* is a person employed during a specific time of the year when demand for labour is high, typically linked to agricultural cycles or other seasonal activities. Employment is temporary and tied to tasks that recur in the same period each year.

Source: [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) – ILO Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Seasonal workers are essential in the seed sector for tasks such as planting, pollination, harvesting, seed processing, and packaging—all of which follow specific agricultural timelines. These workers are often hired for short durations and may not receive the same benefits or protections as permanent staff. Ensuring that seasonal workers have fair wages, safe working conditions, and protection from exploitation is critical to improving labour practices and meeting social compliance standards in the seed supply chain.

HOME WORKER

A *home worker* is a person who performs paid work from their own home or other premises of their choice, rather than at the employer's workplace. Home workers typically use their own equipment or materials and may be formally or informally employed.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [Home Work Convention, 1996 \(No. 177\)](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed sector, home workers may be engaged in activities such as seed cleaning, sorting, or packaging, especially in informal or small-scale supply chains. Because their work is often out of sight, home workers are more vulnerable to low wages, lack of legal protection, and unsafe working conditions. Recognising home workers as part of the supply chain and ensuring their inclusion in social compliance measures is crucial for building fair and transparent labour practices across the industry.

ADOLESCENT / YOUNG WORKER

An *adolescent or young worker* is a person who is **above the minimum legal age for employment** (typically 15 years old, or 14 in some countries) but **below the age of 18**. Young workers are legally allowed to work, but may be subject to **special protections** to ensure their safety, health, and development, such as limits on working hours, restrictions on hazardous tasks, and access to education.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [Minimum Age Convention, 1973 \(No. 138\)](#), [Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 \(No. 182\)](#)

✓ **Relevance to the Seed Industry:** In the seed sector, young workers may be employed during busy periods such as planting or harvesting seasons, especially in rural areas. While their involvement in non-hazardous tasks may be legal, companies should ensure they are not exposed to dangerous work, excessive hours, or conditions that interfere with their education or development. Clear policies and monitoring are essential to prevent the risk of child labour and ensure compliance with both national laws and international standards.

HIGH-RISK WORKERS

High-risk workers are individuals who are more vulnerable to exploitation or abuse due to their employment status, age, gender, disability, migration status, or contract type.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [“ILO Curriculum on Building Modern and Effective Labour Inspection Systems”, Module 9](#)

The following documentation should be maintained to provide evidence of compliance with the law:

- Migrant workers,
- Young workers,
- Pregnant women,
- Disabled workers,
- Caste-affected workers,
- Any indirectly hired workers,
- Agency-hired workers,
- Contractors,
- Illiterate workers,
- Workers who speak a different language,
- Homeworkers,
- Workers paid on a piece rate,
- Workers performing hazardous tasks,
- Workers on loan,
- Workers with disabilities.

CONTRACT / LABOUR AGREEMENTS

A *labour agreement* is a formal or informal understanding between an employer and a worker outlining the terms of employment, such as duties, wages, hours, and duration.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [Convention No. 158](#)

SHORT-TERM CONTRACT

A *short-term contract* refers to an employment agreement that is limited in duration, typically lasting less than one year. These contracts are used to cover temporary work needs, such as seasonal peaks, special projects, or staff absences, and may or may not be renewable.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [ILO Definitions and Classifications](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Short-term contracts are common in the seed sector, particularly for roles linked to agricultural seasons or project-based production tasks (e.g., pollination, planting, harvesting, seed processing). While these contracts can provide flexibility for employers, they may also limit workers' access to social protections, benefits, and job security. Ensuring that workers on short-term contracts receive fair treatment, safe working conditions, and clear employment terms is essential for upholding social rights compliance across the supply chain.

SITE / FACILITY / WORKPLACE

A site or facility or workplace refers to any physical location where work is performed, such as farms, fields, seed processing plants, warehouses, seed storage locations or research stations.

Source: [GlobalG.A.P. Glossary](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed industry, defining the site/facility/workplace clearly helps ensure that labour standards apply consistently to all production and processing activities, whether in rural farms or industrial facilities.

FORCED LABOUR

"All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily" (ILO Convention No. 29). It includes practices such as coercion, deception, debt bondage, restriction of movement, withholding of wages, and abuse of vulnerability.

Source: [ILO Convention on Forced Labour, 1930 \(No. 29, Article 2\(1\)\)](#). Other relevant documentation: [ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 \(No. 105\)](#) and [ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 \(P029\)](#).

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** The seed industry often relies on seasonal, casual, or informal labour in remote rural areas, which can create conditions of vulnerability. This increases the risk of forced labour practices such as excessive recruitment fees, deceptive contracting, or restrictions on workers' freedom to leave their jobs, especially among migrant, women, or child labourers. Preventing and addressing forced labour in the seed sector requires strong safeguards, worker awareness, and responsible recruitment practices.

BASE WAGE

The base wage is the standard rate of pay a worker receives for normal working hours, excluding bonuses, overtime, or allowances.

Source: [ILO Convention No. 131](#); [ETI Base Code Clause 5](#).

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Ensuring a fair base wage in seed production is critical, especially where wage manipulation or piece-rate systems are used.

ALLOWANCES

Allowances are additional payments or in-kind benefits provided to workers, such as housing, food, transportation, or childcare subsidies.

Source: [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) – C095 Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 \(No. 95\)](#)

LEGALLY MANDATED BENEFITS

These are benefits that employers are required to provide by law, such as paid leave, social security contributions, maternity protection, or severance pay.

Source: [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\), "Q&As on Social Protection"](#)

PREVAILING OR MARKET WAGE

The prevailing wage is the average or standard wage paid for similar work in a specific geographic area or industry, often used in public procurement or minimum wage setting.

Source: [United States Department of Labour, "Prevailing Wage Information and Resources"](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** In the seed industry, prevailing wages are used frequently due to the seasonal nature of the sector, informal employment arrangements, and limited regulation in rural areas.

OVERTIME WAGE

An overtime wage is the additional pay workers receive for hours worked beyond the legal or agreed-upon standard workweek.

Source: [ILO Convention \(No. 1\)](#)

LIVING WAGE

The following is the ILO's definition of living wages:

- the wage level that is necessary to afford a decent standard of living for workers and their families, taking into account the country's circumstances and calculated for the work performed during the normal hours of work;
- calculated in accordance with the ILO's principles of estimating the living wage;
- to be achieved through the wage-setting process in line with ILO principles on wage setting."

Source: [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) – "Living Wages"](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Living wages are relevant to the seed industry, where seasonal and informal labour is common and workers are often paid at or below minimum wage, limiting their ability to meet basic needs. Ensuring living wages helps promote decent work, reduces worker vulnerability, and supports a more stable workforce.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES (IPLC)

IPLCs are culturally distinct groups with strong ties to specific lands and ecosystems. They often have traditional knowledge and practices and are recognised under international human rights frameworks.

Source: [World Resources Institute](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) often inhabit agricultural and rural areas, making them directly affected by the activities of the agricultural sector. In many cases, they are also engaged in farming themselves—either through smallholder agriculture or subsistence farming—placing them both as contributors to and as communities potentially impacted by agricultural practices and value chains.

FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC)

FPIC is the right of IPLCs to give or withhold consent to projects that affect their land, resources, or rights, based on full information, without pressure, and before any action is taken.

Source: [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** Given that IPLCs often live and farm in rural and agricultural areas, the principle of FPIC is highly relevant to the seed industry. Their operations can have direct impacts on these communities. Applying FPIC helps safeguard their rights, supports equitable engagement, and promotes responsible business conduct by ensuring that IPLCs are meaningfully consulted and their decisions respected before any activity proceeds.

GOOD FAITH

Good faith refers to honest, fair, and transparent behaviour in employment relationships, including open communication, fair negotiations, and respect for agreed terms.

✓ **Relevance to the seed industry:** : In the seed industry—where informal employment, seasonal work, and limited union representation are common—ensuring good faith in negotiations is especially important. It helps build trust, strengthens worker-employer relationships, and supports fair outcomes in areas such as wages, working conditions, and dispute resolution. Upholding good faith principles is essential to fostering a respectful and equitable work environment, even in settings with limited formal structures.

