

BSCI Takes Action: Responsible Recruitment in Thai Industries



In 2015, the Business Social Compliance Initiative began a project to improve social performance standards in food and fishery supply chains. In 2017, that project has evolved into a multi-stakeholder collaboration supported by the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand.

Promoting Migrant Worker Rights is Good Business

Food industries have proven the driving force behind Thailand's remarkable economic growth in recent decades.

According to the World Bank, the percentage of the Thai population living in poverty declined from 67% in the mid-80s to just 7.2% in 2015.

To meet the needs of its labour-intensive industries, Thailand has become a prime destination for migrants. An estimated 3.25 million migrants from neighbouring countries such as Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia, or approximately 8.5% of the labour force, have entered Thailand in search of work and a better life.

Laws are in place to protect migrants but they are often poorly enforced and the practical knowledge on how to implement them is largely absent at factory level. Some Thai companies have come under scrutiny over their recruitment practices and management of migrant workers.

A Project to Help Identify and Eradicate Exploitation

Recruitment occurring through agencies or brokers exposes companies to potentially illegal or dishonest practices that can result in worker exploitation.

Our project, "Enhancing Capacities of Thai Companies on Social Performance", will train upper and middle management from 70 different Thai companies over the 2017-18 period. The project is funded by the Ministry of Commerce of the Royal Government of Thailand.

Training will improve companies' capacity to:

- Map risks and put in place the right due diligence practices;
- Implement responsible recruitment practices;
- Foster responsible business relations; and
- Remediate instances of worker exploitation.

The project will bring together a broad base of stakeholders for workshops and forums, including representatives of the Thai and local government, businesses and international NGOs.



The Three Company Departments BSCI Will Target for Maximum Impact:

Top-level Management

Training for upper management will give managers the skills to assess risks, initiate change and communicate their renewed responsible recruitment strategy to the rest of the company.

Human Resources

The human resources department will receive training on how to conduct the necessary due diligence on recruiters and third parties, and how to establish effective workplace grievance mechanisms.

Buying/Sourcing

The buying department will learn how to assess and conduct due diligence over suppliers.



By targeting three key in-company departments, we believe we can significantly reduce the risk of worker exploitation and put in place effective mechanisms to remediate abuses.

The Evolution of the Responsible Recruitment Project in Thailand

This project is upscaling its training activities and now has the full support of the Thai government.

In the year ahead, the project will develop local business leaders and companies that will inspire others to engage fully with socially responsible practices and build healthy business relations.

2015

The BSCI Responsible Recruitment Project was conceived in 2015, when reports of abuses against migrant workers in the Thai food and fisheries sectors captured international attention. Subsequently, 21 BSCI participants joined forces to promote better hiring practices and nine Thai producers were selected to tackle forced labour and end the exploitation of migrant workers

2016

BSCI set about raising awareness of the issue and providing training on the benefits and practicalities of responsible recruitment practices. A roundtable in Bangkok was held on 26 May, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders from all sides of the supply chain, producers to buyers and policy makers, to discuss solutions.

2017

BSCI engages top-level management to provide practical steps on responsible recruitment and February

A high-level workshop for company management attended by top executives, business associations, Ministries and key stakeholders.

March

Training for human resource and sourcing departments on Thai labour legislation and responsible recruitment practices in collaboration with IOM.

June

Training on remediating exploitative practices

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Key project activities over the upcoming 12-month period include:

September 21

FTA Multi-Stakeholder Forum: Enhancing Social Performance in Thai Supply Chains – an event covering Thai business enterprises' responsibility to conduct due diligence in their supply chains according to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human rights.

Other Activities

- **Top-level Management Workshops** – embedding responsible recruitment practices and monitoring business partners.
- **Nine Training Sessions for Selected Companies** – targeting middle management within the human resources and sourcing departments and production supervisors.
- **Follow-up Support** – each company will receive support in developing and implementing improvements after the different training sessions.
- **Audits of Top Performers** – the best performers will receive BSCI audits and have the results communicated to buyers in export markets.

Partnerships to Increase Impact and Leverage

This project is led by the Ministry of Commerce of the Royal Thai Government and FTA/BSCI. Since 2015 we have aligned our efforts in Thailand with the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Given the formalised collaboration with the IOM we envisage greater engagement within the framework of this project



About FTA

The Foreign Trade Association (FTA) is the leading business association of global commerce, promoting values of international trade and sustainable supply chains. Uniting over 2,000 retailers, importers, brands, and national associations, FTA improves the political and legal framework for trade in a sustainable way. FTA provides the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) to support participants to improve working conditions in factories and farms worldwide. It also provides the Business Environmental Performance Initiative (BEPI) to facilitate improved environmental performance in global supply chains.