



Implementing Freedom of Association – A roadmap

Why is Freedom of Association important?

Freedom of Association (FOA) has been important to form the society in Norway today, and the benefits workers in Norway have. Just to mention a few; annual leave, maternity and paternity leave, pay increase, sick leave and the list goes on. This human right is not as strong all over the world, on the contrary it's even forbidden in some countries, and within some companies.

Freedom of Association is a core human right, but also an enabling right and the key to unlocking other international labour standards. It involves raising awareness among workers of their rights, enables them to voice their concerns, and determines how disputes and grievances are handled in the workplace – hence it contributes to create and secure decent work for all.

A Practical tool

The guide “Roadmap to implement Freedom of Association (FoA), Collective Bargaining (CB) and Worker Representation (WR)” is aimed at companies with international supply chains. It is intended to make a step by step roadmap to enable and progress on Freedom of Association, Collective Bargaining and worker representation in the supply chain.

The Roadmap is accompanied by specific tools for mapping and managing implementation of Freedom of Association. Members may access these online.

What is freedom of association?

Freedom of Association is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and one of ILOs core conventions. It facilitates economic and social advancement through its emphasis on worker equality and protection. Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining is also outlined by the ILO in the Sustainable Development Goals Decent Work Agenda (SDG8), and is fundamental for companies work with sustainability and responsible business conduct.

Critical in Due diligence

As a business sourcing product from the global marketplace, committing to meeting, promoting and supporting the right to freedom of association within your supply chains is part of being a responsible business.

The Ethical Trade Norway approach to due diligence is based on UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible business. The purpose of this resource is to help companies implement Freedom of Association and is built around the six steps in due diligence:

- Commitment and governance (step 1)
- Identify risk (step 2)
- Manage risk, seize opportunities and remedy (step 3 & 6)
- Tracking implementation and communication (step 4 & 5)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Key salient risk to workers

Absence of freedom of association, collective bargaining and worker representation is a salient risk to workers. Especially, it's a high risk in global supply chains and in sourcing countries where the ability for workers to voice their concerns is suppressed and the legal framework, underpinning protection of worker rights, is weak or unenforced.

Responsible business ensure efforts to implement Freedom of Association, Collective Bargaining and worker representation.

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About us

Ethical Trade Norway is a multi-stakeholder initiative and a resource centre and an advocate for ethical trade practices. Our objective is cooperation on trade which promotes human rights, workers' rights, anti-corruption and responsible environmental management.