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Overview

Project Issara (www.projectissara.org) is a public-private sector platform and alliance launched in Thailand in January 2014 to tackle human trafficking in Southeast Asia, with an initial focus on forced labour in Thailand’s export oriented industries and supply chains – specifically Thai seafood, in 2014-2015. Project Issara is built on the experience of a team of anti-human trafficking experts coming out of the United Nations (UNIAP) who created an alliance of private sector, civil society, and government partners to address trafficking in global supply chains. As compared with other multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary initiatives, the Issara model is distinguished by working directly throughout the supply chains of private sector partners, and not just convening; also, the Issara team has the technical capacity to train, monitor, design, and conduct research and evaluation, and can carry out these functions as a credible independent body. The Project Issara team also has a long programming history in anti-trafficking in the region, and an established track record of successes as well as established networks within anti-trafficking and migrant worker communities.

Project Issara was initially launched through the coordination of Anti-Slavery International, a UK-based charity working against slavery since 1839, primarily through campaigns and support to NGO programs in various parts of the world. Although Anti-Slavery had no program or specialization in Southeast Asia, it was recognized that the forced labour issue in the region could benefit from the addition of another international advocacy partner. Thus, Anti-Slavery International was a natural partner and served well as an ‘incubator’ as Project Issara awaited its formal registration process. With Project Issara now being legally registered under the newly formed not-for-profit Issara Institute in Thailand and the United States as of July 2015, the next phase of Project Issara will be run independently, with Anti-Slavery International remaining an advocacy partner.

The goal of Project Issara and the Issara Institute is to advance freedom, choices, and opportunities to those who need it most, from disenfranchised factory workers to stranded, abused fishermen to migrant children. We believe that business and society benefit from freedom and opportunity being enjoyed by all. Issara’s unique value proposition includes:

Issara’s Value Proposition

- In-depth, on-the-ground understanding of how supply chains and actors operate and are linked, including across commodities
- Active engagement and deep knowledge on labour issues, with the ability to generate immediate actionable solutions, while also bringing a long-term perspective
- A trusted professional resource that seeks to be factual and solutions-oriented in its approach – no naming and shaming
- Access to the voices, perspectives, and knowledge of migrant workers
- Working and reporting across the entire supply chain
- A nationwide hotline that allows ongoing monitoring and newfound insight and visibility within supply chains
- Strong analytics and data-driven research and advice
- Assurance that remedy offered to trafficking victims found in the supply chain is at an international quality of care standard.

1 Issara means ‘freedom’ in several of the Southeast Asian languages.
Program approach

With the support of a number of foundations and corporate partners, Project Issara implemented the following integrated approach in 2014-2015. A more detailed graphic of the linkages between these components can be found in the Project Issara four-page brief (separate PDF).

| 1 | On-the-ground anti-trafficking fieldwork, including outreach, information, and assistance to thousands, through the Issara multi-lingual helpline |
| 2 | Research and analytics, generating data and analysis for action and decisionmaking – locally grounded and informed, and at an international standard |
| 3 | Private sector partnership and action, including factory assessment and improvement solutions to identify and eliminate risks of trafficking and other labour abuses in the supply chain |
| 4 | Victim support fund, ensuring that the widest range of options, information, and resources for trafficked persons are offered in an empowering way, to allow beneficiaries to make their own informed choices about their recovery and their futures |

Issara Inclusive Labour Monitoring (ILM)™

The Issara Inclusive Labour Monitoring (ILM) process was developed by Project Issara to be a cost-effective, more accurate alternative to social audits to address the specific human rights issue of labour – particularly with regard to foreign migrant labour, due to the inherent vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers in destination countries.

According to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (also known as the Ruggie Principles), companies are required to assess their human rights impacts as an integral part of human rights due diligence. The ILM process is an evolution of the Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) and social audits in that it monitors labour situations on an ongoing basis, provides direct feedback mechanisms and capacity for remedy, and can work beyond a single company, including with the broader supply chains of coalitions of buyers. Project Issara’s ILM approach is informed by its multilingual hotline data, data from migrant community visits, local expert interviews, port risk assessments (for seafood), and workplace assessments, which include site surveys, management interviews, worker interviews, and document review. It therefore provides Issara partner businesses with greater visibility of developments taking place within their supply chain and can enable risks to be identified and mitigated before they escalate.

Key stakeholders and partners

Foundations and funds: Project Issara was launched with support from U.S. private foundation Humanity United; additional foundation support from Anesvad Foundation and
Equitas Foundation was garnered in early 2015; and partnership was established with the Freedom Fund in mid-2014 as well.

**Private sector:** Project Issara also currently works with ten global brands and seafood importers on their Thai seafood supply chains to identify and address risks of trafficking and forced labour, including retailers The Co-Operative, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury’s, Tesco, Waitrose, and Walmart/ASDA, and seafood importers CP Foods UK, Lyons Seafood, Sea Farms, and Young’s Seafoods (collectively these 10 businesses will be referred to as the ‘Seafood Coalition’ in this paper). Development partner IDH Sustainable Trade also provides significant support to Project Issara’s supply chain work for the Seafood Coalition.

**Other key stakeholders:** In addition to working with the above agencies on a regular basis, Project Issara also regularly provided support, information, and organization of field visits for visiting investors, international businesses, and media keen to get a more grounded and nuanced understanding of the situation of trafficking in the Thai seafood industry. NGOs and government remain key players and partners across Issara’s work. To illustrate Issara’s unique network, a selection of 15 key technical implementing partners in the supply chain work as well as the broader anti-trafficking work are summarized in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Issara 2014 – 2015</th>
<th>15 key technical implementing partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner</strong></td>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Human Trafficking Division, Royal Thai Police</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Special Investigations (DSI)</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLA Piper</td>
<td>Law firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Lao PDR</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Myanmar</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Markets Consulting (EMC)</td>
<td>Consulting firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faro Global</td>
<td>Consulting firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation for Education and Development (FED)</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar Association of Thailand</td>
<td>CBO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar People (MP)</td>
<td>CBO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N and T Law</td>
<td>Law firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raks Thai (CARE International)</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella Maris</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Focus International, Laos</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Vision Laos</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology: End-of-pilot phase review

The main purpose of the end-of-pilot phase review was twofold:

1. Assess and report on the effectiveness of the Issara ILM approach and the overall Issara model, particularly its partnerships with the private sector; and,
2. Collect key stakeholder views in order to inform the design of the next phase.

Methods included key stakeholder interviews with over 20 representatives from the business, NGO, and UN sectors, as well as review of program monitoring data and KPIs.

Field outreach. Community-based outreach and awareness raising, and distribution of Project Issara posters advertising the multilingual migrant worker hotline in strategic locations throughout the destination country, as well as in source countries.

The hotline number reached an estimated 3.8 million migrant workers in 2014, through television, NGO partner dissemination, strategically placed posters, and, importantly, word of mouth from ‘satisfied customers’ — migrants we have successfully assisted over the years.
Summary of key findings and lessons learned

**Project Issara Pilot Phase: Key Findings and Lessons Learned**

**COMPONENT 1. ON-THE-GROUND ANTI-TRAFFICKING FIELDWORK**

The backbone of Project Issara’s anti-trafficking work are (a) the multi-lingual hotline, which has been managed by the team for over 6 years (beginning in the UN), and (b) the migrant community-based networks that have grown with the hotline and with the team’s ongoing communication with migrant worker informants and former victims. From this wide and deep network, years of intelligence have been collected on brokers, traffickers, good and bad employers, good and bad police, and other critical information from across Thailand, in a variety of industries. Over the past 18 months the focus of the team has been on the seafood industry (though not exclusively), and in the next phase the seafood industry will remain an important focus of Project Issara. With calls to the hotline increasing due to increased dissemination of the number by suppliers in the Seafood Coalition supply chain, it is hoped that in the next phase resources will be available to upgrade hotline systems and expand the Burmese team, which is currently 1.5 people taking calls and documenting cases coming in 24 hours a day.

**COMPONENT 2. RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS**

Project Issara’s data and analytical products over the past 18 months, focused almost solely on private sector partners, were highly valued by business partners and widely recognized as being one of the more important components of Issara’s value proposition. However, the structure of Issara’s relationships with business as well as its lean funding status meant that there were very few data-oriented deliverables created for public dissemination. Within Issara’s many data streams there is an incredible amount of non-sensitive (to business partners) ground-truthed analytics that could be shared with the wider anti-trafficking and ethical sourcing communities. In the next phase Project Issara should seek to to ensure that such reports and GIS mapping can be widely disseminated on a regular basis.

**COMPONENT 3. PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP AND ACTION**

Project Issara is fundamentally an anti-trafficking initiative, though its hallmark is its supply chain work with private sector partners, which gives the project a very different feel – with different implementation modalities (for example, using most data for business intelligence rather than for police), different technical partners, such as Emerging Markets Consulting and Faro Global, as well as of course the business partners themselves.

The findings regarding performance, efficiency, and potential impact exceeded expectations – through Issara’s efforts, the jobs and lives of thousands of workers in forced labour situations were dramatically improved within a span of months, with coinciding structural changes to the companies’ human resource policies and operations. Not only is the scale of these kinds of results rare in the anti-trafficking world, but so is the speed at which labour improvements were made, as well as the degree to which migrant worker voices drove improvements. Some stakeholders voiced concern that the scale of these results, focused at a firm level, may not be impactful enough to effect measurable change in a large industry.
Issara’s plans for scaling up impact will address these concerns by working more closely with suppliers to drive change upstream; through more varied technical interventions working with multiple businesses and associations at a time, such as through training and capacity building; and, through more regular public dissemination of analytical reports to drive change in the anti-trafficking and ethical sourcing communities.

**COMPONENT 4. VICTIM SUPPORT FUND**

In the beginning, Project Issara aimed to get local service provider partners on the same page regarding standards of care, particularly since the Issara hotline had to refer so many trafficked persons to these NGOs. However, numerous experiences with NGOs and CBOs illustrated that each has their own philosophy of victim care, and not all are compatible. There also is not necessarily willingness or interest at this stage, among some NGO service providers, to shift current practices to align with internationally recognized good practice.

Attempting to get all parties to adopt a minimum quality of care standard would take years of attention and intensive effort, so instead, given how Issara’s primary mandate is not civil society development, the Project found innovative new approaches to empowering trafficked persons that, to date, seem to be more efficient and empowering. These include:

- Unconditional cash transfers to address immediate humanitarian and family needs;
- Helping victims stabilize and regain freedom of movement by working with business partners (i.e., progressive suppliers) to swiftly place victims in safe, well-paying jobs, providing legal documents; and,
- Working with victims to swiftly find individualized solutions to their urgent issues, such as hiring private lawyers to pursue labour/lost wage cases and criminal cases, and coordinating initial post-rescue health care services at cooperating private hospitals ‘friendly’ to foreign migrant workers.

*Issara is a really good model of how buyers and NGOs can work together on enhanced due diligence that give workers a voice, and includes a grievance mechanism to hear from the migrant workforce. It moves on from an auditing approach to something different.*  
- Private sector partner, June 2015

*Project Issara is the opposite of “gotcha” journalism or activist NGO reporting. Its network is reliable, tailored, specific, concrete, and verified. It’s about problem solving through information, not finger pointing or hostility.*  
- Private sector partner, June 2015

*It’s extremely real, practical work on the ground – providing direct support, and building the confidence of Burmese workers. Because of the way Issara is staffed, the Burmese staff are very good at building up relationships of confidence with workers.*  
- Labour expert, June 2015
Snapshot of key performance indicators

Project Issara’s main KPIs through 2014-2015 were derived from its Humanity United-funded work, which focused on the hotline, and the Seafood Coalition work, which focused on the supply chain-oriented work with the private sector. Additional KPIs relating to quality care of victim services and referrals were added in early 2015, with the partnerships of Anesvad and Equitas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicators: Snapshot</th>
<th>January 2014 – June 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of migrants receiving the hotline number through awareness raising</td>
<td>3.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of calls received to the hotline</td>
<td>3,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of calls received to the hotline relating to seafood industry</td>
<td>874 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Thai provinces from which calls to the hotline were made (out of 76)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of factories, fishing companies, and other workplaces identified so far in the Thai-UK seafood supply chain</td>
<td>&gt;300 onshore &gt;500 vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of businesses formally assessed to date...</td>
<td>Targeted Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...First round assessment</td>
<td>10 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...Second round assessment and solutions implementation</td>
<td>18 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of migrant workers in the workplaces assessed through the Seafood Coalition Pilot Project</td>
<td>9,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of formal reports drafted for and provided to corporate members of the Seafood Coalition Pilot Project</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Group progress reports, individual supply chain risk reports, individual incident reports, incident update reports, research on fishmeal traceability, and this end-of-pilot review]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking / exploitative brokering cases investigated, documented, and acted upon</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trafficking victims assisted with the Victim Support Fund, September 2015-June 2016</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[This is a subset of victims assisted through the hotline receiving information and advice, who also received financial resources through the Fund]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Increased responsiveness of Thai businesses to reports of labour abuses:

### Levels of participation, cooperation, and support to the Issara pilot project

- **86%**
- **>24,000 impacted**

18/21 (86%) factory and farm suppliers introduced to the Issara pilot project agreed to participate.

One supplier owning multiple factories brought all of their factories into Issara’s monitoring system, after having such positive results working with Project Issara in identifying and addressing urgent labour risks in one of their participating factories. This action positively affected the lives of over 24,000 migrant workers.

### Action taken in response to Issara labour assessments

- **4,682 impacted**

2 processing plants, 2 feed mills, and 1 fishmeal plant received feedback regarding solutions to address urgent labour risks in their workplace. 2 processing plants and 1 feed mill responded immediately to Issara suggestions for improvement. 1 feed mill resisted change, leading to its customers in the Issara pilot project intervening to insist on an immediate response. The team had limited responsiveness from the 1 fishmeal plant.

The urgent actions taken to eliminate forced labour in the three responsive businesses directly impacted 4,682 workers, and indirectly impacted thousands more due to the adoption of strengthened management procedures business wide, including factories that were not directly involved in the Issara pilot.

### Personnel dedicated/% of people’s time allocated to managing labour issues

While numbers of assigned personnel were not observed to increase in any clear pattern during the timeframe of this pilot, it was observed that those factories responding swiftly to identified labour risks were those who had assigned a multi-departmental team (supply chain development, QA, human resources, etc.) to address the issue, and had more senior management engaged.

### Changes in knowledge and attitude regarding labour issues over time

Pre-post tests were not employed, but in general it has been observed that knowledge and attitude regarding labour issues are significantly more developed downstream, with exporting processors having relatively sophisticated staffing and knowledge of labour issues, and upstream fishing boat owners and fishmeal plants still having highly informal management of human resources. For the latter, labour issues were not as well understood (i.e., what is right and wrong among current common practice), nor were they taken as seriously, as many of those businesses maintained that:

- a) It was difficult if not impossible to have a system of safe, legal migrant labour recruitment given the weaknesses of the government systems and policies in place, and
- b) Even if they did not implement suggested changes to improve labour conditions, they would still have eager buyers of their product given the high demand for trash fish and fishmeal in the manufacturing of animal feed.
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: SNAPSHOT
January 2014 – June 2015

Increased responsiveness of the 10 seafood retailers/importers to reports of labour abuses, as measured by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Levels of participation, cooperation, and support to the Issara pilot project. 9/10 (90%) provided good cooperation, as measured by prompt sharing of supply chain data, assistance with introductions and relationships on the ground, and active participation in Coalition calls and decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
<td>Action taken in response to Issara labour assessments. 7/9 (78%) responded promptly to risk reports and incident reports, as measured by prompt contact with Project Issara, contact with suppliers, and communication of expectations of suppliers of required actions. In most instances, retailers encouraged engagement between the supplier and Project Issara to attempt to improve labour conditions, with the threat of ending purchasing from the supplier as a last resort. In this way, the possibility of keeping migrant workers employed while improving labour conditions was thoroughly explored before terminating business activity, which has possible negative consequences on migrant worker security and livelihoods (it also challenges product sourcing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Corporate advocacy to the Thai government. 2/2 (100%) of ILO GLP Buyers Reference Group meetings had buyer representatives from the Issara Seafood Coalition Group who met with Project Issara beforehand to discuss corporate advocacy points and strategy. Still, the idea has been voiced by some Coalition partners that Issara could possibly provide a fruitful avenue for even more direct corporate advocacy to government – a possibility that is being considered for the next phase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working across the entire seafood supply chain

The Thai seafood supply chain, particularly the shrimp supply chain, is relatively complex due to the risks not only on fishing vessels but also in the fishmeal supply chain – that is, the risk of trafficking in the workplaces involved in making the food that the farmed shrimp are raised on, and not necessarily in the shrimp farms and processing plants themselves. One of Project Issara’s key comparative advantages over the past year has been its ability to work at all tiers of the seafood supply chain, including processing plants, farms, feed mills, fishmeal plants, landing sites, and fishing vessels. Issara also worked in some of the more challenging and informal parts of the supply chain, including secondary/tertiary processing on land (i.e., peeling sheds), fishing at sea, and with recruitment agencies and brokers.

Over the years, companies and auditors investigating the health and safety, environmental sustainability, or other aspects of shrimp production primarily focused on “farm-to-plate” – essentially, farms and processing plants – and not including the full supply chain going “back to boat” which includes that of the shrimp’s food. Farmed shrimp are fed shrimp feed, which in Thailand is made in a couple dozen feed mills from fishmeal. Fishmeal is made in
fishmeal plants, which are located near to fishing piers and ports. The primary marine ingredient in fishmeal is trash fish. Some fishmeal plants own their own piers and fishing boats, and catch their own trash fish; others may not, and have to purchase trash fish from fishing vessels or brokers. Trash fish may be caught by Thai fishing vessels landing their catch directly at port, or by fishing vessels that transfer their catch at sea to carrier vessels or mother ships, which then transport the catch back to port. Feed mills also purchase fishmeal from brokers and aggregators; the role of these brokers selling trash fish and fishmeal at different points in the supply chain introduce serious challenges to traceability efforts.

Supply chain linkages between fishing trawlers using slave labour, seafood exporters, and downstream buyers. (Source: Project Issara 2014)

Due to the transshipment at sea that sometimes occurs, as well as challenges with traceability (insufficient or fraudulent documentation back to boat), fishing vessels have recently been focused on by industry and government as the area of highest risk in the seafood supply chain. Indeed, recent media investigations have also highlighted the risks of trafficking and slavery at sea, on the fishing boats that are catching trash fish going into shrimp feed, as well as fishing vessels catching other high-value fish being exported to the US and Europe.

However, Project Issara’s model and work with the Seafood Coalition Pilot Project allowed a unique opportunity to investigate the labour situation and recruitment mechanisms throughout the entire shrimp supply chain – processing plants, farms, feed mills, fishmeal plants, and fishing vessels. The numerous streams of data and observations collected from the hotline and Inclusive Labour Monitoring process all suggested significant risk at every level of the supply chain with the exception of aquaculture farms, which are highly mechanized and have small workforces. A summary of the risk at each tier follows in the table below.

---


4 Seasonal harvesting teams could possibly present higher risk of exposure to forced labour in aquaculture farms, given that the teams are usually Burmese, hired for temporary work only, and sometimes hired/controlled by agencies. We did not have the opportunity to investigate the recruitment and working conditions of aquaculture farm seasonal harvesting teams, but have proposed this as an area of interest in a follow-on phase of work.
## SUMMARY: FORCED LABOUR RISKS FOUND ACROSS THE THAI SEAFOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Description of labour force and recruitment</th>
<th>Forced labour risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Processing plants** | Primary processing plants are highly labour intensive and typically require thousands of migrant workers. Sometimes they require volumes in excessive of their own production capacity, in which case they sub-contract to smaller peeling sheds to meet volume needs. This sub-contracting has been found to often not be disclosed to customers. | - Forced labour in peeling sheds and other factories, even those that have been extensively audited  
- Exploitative broker fees charged to migrant workers, sometimes amounting to debt bondage; debt bondage is often associated with controller brokers/supervisors who employ mechanisms of control such as restricting freedom of movement, physical abuse, etc.  
- Exploitative terms of employment of piece workers, illegally low pay, illegally low overtime compensation and non-voluntary overtime  
- Problematic management of discipline, termination, and other HR matters |
| **Aquaculture farms** | Aquaculture farms are highly mechanized and have small, often Thai teams who are skilled in taking measures and operating the equipment. Shrimp are harvested by temporary labourers, often Burmese, who are often recruited and managed by agencies through a process and with terms that were not well-known to farm management who were interviewed. | - Generally, risk appears to be relatively low, though informality of human resource practices among all employees, including Thai, is a risk – for example, no workers in some farms visited having labour contracts.  
- No policy regarding labour abuses or complaints mechanisms exists on many farms, reportedly because the labour force is small and turnover is low. |
| **Feed mills** | Feed mills are highly mechanized and have varying reliance on migrant workers depending on the factory and location in the country. Those that are heavily reliant on migrant workers hire them through recruitment agencies, and a number of credible reports have been received regarding a range of physical and financial abuses to migrant workers amounting to forced labour. | - Risk of forced labour by recruitment agencies sub-contracted to manage most or all HR functions of factories, who physically abuse, harass, financially cheat, and manage the migrant work force in a way that is not compliant with Thai law.  
- Unpaid and forced overtime have been documented, leading to some workers having to work 15-16 hours a day straight.  
- Excessive and fraudulent deductions also lead to migrant workers being trapped in debt bondage for long periods of time, and receiving very low pay for months or years. |
| **Fishmeal plants** | Fishmeal plants vary – some employ exclusively Thai workers while others employ migrant workers. Adherence to the MCPD process, and the compilation and storage of associated information also varies, though adherence was generally | - In some geographic localities, risk of forced and debt-bonded labourers being controlled by violent brokers, and employers who refuse to register their migrant workers.  
- Illegally low pay, but with fraudulent documents suggesting that minimum wage is being paid.  
- In other localities, plant workers are hired directly |
found to be low overall. Human resource practices generally appear to be very informal in fishmeal plants nationwide, for both Thai and migrant workers. A significant proportion of raw material is purchased from auction markets and brokers, often with no traceability documentation.

- Generally, informal human resource systems create vulnerabilities such as workers not having contracts or receiving payslips.
- Child labour has been documented in fishmeal plants in two provinces (Jan-June 2015).

| Fishing vessels | The number of Thai fishing vessels landing trash fish in Thailand vastly eclipses the number of fishmeal plants processing this raw material, and the demand for marine product to go into fishmeal and feed remains high. Traceability is extremely low, and trans-shipment at sea is a pervasive risk, as are labour abuses as sea.

- In some geographic localities, risk of forced and debt-bonded fishermen being controlled by violent brokers, and employers who refuse to register their migrant workers.
- Illegally low pay, but with fraudulent documents suggesting that minimum wage is being paid.
- In other localities, fishermen may be hired directly but may be underpaid and overworked.
- Generally, informal human resource systems create vulnerabilities such as workers not having contracts or receiving payslips.
- In the worst scenarios, child labour has been documented on fishing boats in one province (Jan-June 2015), and there have been many well documented cases in recent years of slavery at sea – men trapped on fishing vessels working day and night, with violence and murder.

Excerpt of a tailored risk report to a private sector partner (anonymized).
As alluded to in the KPI summary, the responses from companies receiving the tailored risk reports varied, though the majority did respond quickly and most took action upon receipt of these reports – both Thai suppliers and international retailers/importers.

Issara team speaks with fishing boat staff (right).

Carrier boats (bottom left) travel back and forth between ports and fishing vessels (bottom right), taking supplies and bringing back catch to port. Some fishing vessels bring their own catch back to port, while others send their catch back via carrier boats. This transshipment at sea introduces risk not only because of the informal means by which migrant workers are recruited and managed and also the dangerous nature of work for long periods of time at sea, but also because of the lack of traceability of catch being landed at ports.
Business solutions for trafficking/slavery risk

**Successes to date.** Project Issara has achieved great gains to date through a streamlined approach that couples the hotline, with its intelligence and its ability to connect with workers and victims, with work on the ground to eliminate exploitative brokering and abusive labour conditions amounting to forced labour. For example, reports to the hotline by migrant worker informants and victims of forced labour uncovered a recruitment agency being used by a number of seafood factories and feed mills that had hundreds of workers in debt bondage, forced workers to work extended back-to-back double shifts, paid illegally low wages, and used physical violence for control and to instill fear. Through partnerships with local Thai businesses, encouraged by their customers in Project Issara’s coalition, the Issara team worked closely with several large Thai suppliers to cut the recruitment agency out of their HR operations and ensure that worker contracts, payment, and management were legal and non-exploitative.

The Issara hotline played an integral role in bringing about swift, measurable improvements by allowing the Issara team to provide feedback to suppliers in an iterative manner: once systems improvements were implemented, within days the hotline could collect information from migrant workers on the extent and success of the improvements, and feed that information back to suppliers. Suppliers could then address gaps and weaknesses in implementation, and again get feedback on implementation until standards were met.

This approach, even as a pilot, has positively impacted thousands of workers this year alone, and substantially mitigated supply chain risk of global brands and retailers. It has further inspired some participating suppliers to overhaul migrant recruitment/management practices in their other factories, as well as ensured the dissemination of the Issara hotline number (through multilingual posters) throughout all of their facilities – positively impacting tens of thousands of workers. Thai businesses adopting these changes on their own demonstrates the potential of Issara’s private sector engagement model and is key to unlocking broader systemic change at scale.

In another example, a shrimp peeling shed found to be an undisclosed sub-contractor to a number of key exporting Thai businesses, was found to have egregious labour conditions, with 60 workers being kept like slaves for up to three years. The Project Issara team documented the stories and evidence of torture and abuse, shared this information directly with Thai supplier partners, and played a key role in defining the immediate response plan. The partners swiftly acted not only to cut the sub-contractor from their supply chain, but also to work with the Issara team to provide the victims with support for their recovery as well as to provide safe, stable jobs and worker documentation. The Project is encouraging Thai partner suppliers to blacklist the peeling shed, to drive them out of business – since it appears that the criminal justice response has failed with this case so far, and these crimes would otherwise go unpunished if it were not for the action of local businesses. Importantly, the Issara team
aims to maintain momentum with involved suppliers who are realizing the serious labour risks involved in subcontracting to undisclosed peeling sheds, and work with them to immediately address these risks through disclosure and improvement of labour recruitment and management systems within those small factories. These actions have the potential to impact additional tens if not hundreds of thousands of migrant workers.

**Scaling up impact.** Between these two examples, the lives of many thousands of workers have been directly and positively impacted, slaves have been freed and supported in their recovery, and businesses have been assisted in driving slavery out of their supply chain – not just through decisive action, but through transformative systems change and adoption of higher standards. All of this is done by:

- increasing visibility in supply chains;
- establishing the trust of the local businesses by focusing on solutions and immediate action;
- looking for opportunities to scale up and drive transformative change throughout the entire business and supply chain of influential suppliers (for a start); and
- avoiding efforts that may be taking place to name and shame business – and at the same time maintaining the trust of migrant workers, and building their confidence to voice their perspectives.

An additional way that Issara can scale up impact in the future is through having higher quality responses by law enforcement to address the crux of the slavery issue – not the Burmese brokers or low-level agents, but those who have a business model of profiting from forced labour, and who are driving the forced labour and exploitative recruitment. Thai Union’s Chairman of the Board and President and CEO recently organized a meeting between the Commissioner General of the Royal Thai Police (the top-ranked police officer in the country) and the Project Issara team, to build a channel with law enforcement for case referrals to be handled smoothly, promptly, and without corruption or complicity. The meeting was attended by the commissioners of key law enforcement divisions including the Anti-Human Trafficking Division, the Marine Police, Immigration, and the Central Investigation Bureau – an unprecedented gathering of the most powerful police leaders in the country to meet with an anti-trafficking NGO. Within days, the Project had established a functioning case referral channel with two of the key divisions, and has had follow-on meetings and contact with commissioners as well as operational officers. With private sector backing, Issara has been able to access higher level government and faster government responses than both UN and NGOs are typically able to access.

All this suggests that Issara’s work is adding value that is recognized by local suppliers, and that the model – which at the outset was not known if Thai businesses would indeed be willing and amenable to the Issara approach, as it had not been tested anywhere else globally – holds potential to be ramped up and expanded. Having local seafood factories actively seek support to help improve their businesses and their industry – and even making extra efforts to support Issara’s work – is critical for sustainability and bringing about systemic change to the entire industry.
Above: Thai Union’s leadership introduces Project Issara to the leadership of the Royal Thai Police, to develop a cooperation framework that would support efficient referrals of cases between Issara and law enforcement.

Below: Issara’s private sector partners support important development work as well as clean up supply chains: Burmese volunteer teachers are able to maintain a small school for children of migrants working on the nearby ports, piers, and fishing boats, through support from the Seafood Coalition. The school is located right on the pier, close to parents. Without options such as this for children, working parents may be faced with the difficult choice of leaving their children in the community unsupervised during the day, or, bringing them to work, where they may be at risk of child labour. Issara’s community-based networks allow for linkages between global businesses and migrant community leaders, such as the volunteer teachers here.
Analysis and recommendations: Strategic partnerships, scale, and impact

Recommendation 1: Data and analytics

Expand and more publicly disseminate the data and analytics of Project Issara, since this is where much of Issara’s unique value proposition benefits private sector, NGOs, and government.

A clear message from stakeholders, reinforced by the paucity of current, reliable, and credible data by others in the anti-trafficking sector, is that Issara’s data and analytics produced unique value to partners. Four conclusions are that:

1. Data and analytics should be focused on as a program unit in and of itself.

2. The tailored confidential risk reports are perceived as high value and provide insights and visibility into retailer/importer supply chains that were not previously known to businesses. Many of these reports have resulted in the private sector taking immediate action to address risk and improve identified issues.

3. Data and analytical products should be disseminated more widely, including beyond just private sector member partners.

4. The Issara multilingual anti-trafficking hotline, having amassed a considerable amount of data on different factories, fishing companies, broker-trafficker networks, recruitment agencies, and corrupt relationships, provides an unsurpassed empirical base for working with businesses to improve their labour practices, and to have these improvements informed by the voices of and feedback from migrant workers.

Going forward: Issara Labs

During the pilot, Project Issara was operating with limited funding and manpower to conduct in-depth analysis and reporting outside of the Seafood Coalition work. Going forward, Project Issara will build out the data/analytics aspect of its work as well as the technological tools used to collect and analyze data at a larger scale – recognizing that vulnerable migrant workers exist in the millions and seafood workers exist in the several hundreds of thousands, yet all NGOs combined only reach migrant workers in the low thousands in any given year. Proposed activities in the next phase include:

1. **Hotline.** Increase the number of Burmese hotline staff and data analysts to accommodate the growing numbers of calls from Burmese migrant workers due to increased dissemination of the hotline number. Also, upgrade hotline infrastructure.

2. **Technology (also mentioned below).** Create new technologies to scale up migrant worker outreach as well as data collection and analysis, such as smartphone-based
apps – to take advantage of the fact that Myanmar’s smartphone market share (among all mobile phones) is over 90%, both in Myanmar and among migrant workers, due to lack of legacy systems due to sanctions, high literacy, and decreasing cost of smartphones.

3. **Analysis and public reporting.** Share out key findings and analyses more publicly with specially packaged intelligence products for NGOs and governments, similar to the way Issara currently produces specially packaged intelligence products for business. In this way, scale of impact can be significantly increased by providing the broader sector with substantially more valuable data – so programs can be better planned, policies can be better crafted, and mechanisms and laws can be better implemented and monitored.

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**Recommendation 2. Staying streamlined**

*Maintain the spirit of the Ruggie Principles while focusing on Issara’s core competencies. Expand strategic partnerships and smart ‘outsourcing’ to avoid getting spread too thin or programming too broadly.*

Project Issara started out with 7 components, including capacity building for government officials, supporting government mechanisms, and investing more in civil society capacity. At the beginning, it was thought that ‘even coverage’ of support to business, government,
and civil society was necessary to build a model reflective of the Ruggie Principles. However, feedback from stakeholders as well as internal review of comparative advantage, mandate, and efficiency highlighted that:

1. **Related to supply chain work and industry strengthening**: Issara’s comparative advantage comes through its position as an independent, credible, and technically qualified NGO (with capability to monitor and train) with a strong track record of identifying and addressing trafficking and labour abuses that had not been found by auditors, government, or supplier management. These unique attributes position Issara as an important catalyst of change among other initiatives working in the same space, including the ILO-supported, government-run Good Labour Practices Project (GLP), and the CP-initiated Shrimp Sustainability Task Force.

2. **Related to the victim support fund**: The issue of service provider NGOs not always acting in the best interest of victims is a serious challenge to a hotline, since migrant workers may become less willing to call a hotline if it is rumored to turn victims over to NGOs who may turn victims over to government authorities against their will, or simply limit options for essential support needed. Civil society development is not a main focus of Project Issara’s, but will be a key responsibility of the Freedom Fund, who will be providing grants to local NGOs to combat trafficking in the Thai fishing industry. Project Issara will thus focus its efforts on providing innovative and effective options to victims that are also not resource intensive for the Issara team, such as leveraging private sector relationships to help survivors find safe jobs. Further, in the evaluation of Project Issara’s cash transfer pilot project and state of victim services for labour trafficking victims in Thailand, the independent evaluators will be encouraged to reflect on the effectiveness of Project Issara’s options for victims and those offered by local NGOs, how empowering these options were, and how victim services in Thailand could be shifted from being heavily supply-driven (that is, based on what the NGOs decide to offer) to more demand-driven (that is, what the beneficiaries need and prefer). These lessons learned will be widely disseminated.

**Going forward: More strategic partnering and outsourcing**

For the future, Issara will aim to continue to be a model encapsulating the Ruggie Principles while staying true to its fundamental mandate and philosophy—growing out and scaling up Issara Inclusive Labour Monitoring (ILM) to drive swift, measurable improvements within business; expanding data and analytics; and, strengthening strategic partnerships with organizations who are better positioned and resourced to cover the other key areas of the Ruggie Principles, namely government and civil society. This does not mean that government and civil society will not be engaged by Issara; it simply means that Issara’s contributions and findings will be more tactical, focusing on modeling and documenting emerging good practice, and providing technical assistance.

Issara and its partners should encourage government and industry standards-setting bodies such as ILO GLP and the Shrimp Sustainability Task Force to link up with Issara as a partner for monitoring how labour standards are being upheld, and for training and capacity building on topics such as how to eliminate labour abuses and risks from workplaces and supply chains (for suppliers) or how to identify forced labour (for suppliers and/or government). This approach would capitalize on Issara’s position as an independent and
credible NGO with technical capacity working on the ground, as well as ILO’s position as a promoter of government and industry standards setting and CP’s position as an industry leader.

Other fruitful areas for ‘outsourcing’ key roles to strategic partners includes technology and innovation (as discussed below), and communications. During the pilot phase, partnership with specialist firms such as Emerging Markets Consulting, a regional business consulting firm, and Faro Global, fisheries supply chain consultants, were very successful in ensuring that the right expertise was at the table with local suppliers when trying to understand the business environment, seafood industry, and labour dynamics underpinning trafficking and slavery risk – and trying to design solutions that were feasible and practical for these businesses. Issara will continue to engage expert firms and individuals to ensure the requisite mix of specialist knowledge and in-house expertise is available, and for Issara to remain light, flexible, and streamlined in its operations.

Recommendation 3. Scaling up reach and impact

Scale up reach and impact by (a) creating and applying technology and innovation; (b) employing more diverse approaches to engaging suppliers, building their capacity, and driving improvements; and (c) increasing opportunities for private sector partners and other stakeholder groups to get more engaged and amplify common purpose.

Technology and innovation. From January 2014-June 2015, the Issara hotline received over 3,000 calls in 4 languages from migrant workers, informants, and trafficking victims, and through awareness raising efforts reached an estimated 3.8 million current and prospective migrant workers. It is the largest anti-trafficking hotline in Thailand and receives calls from Burmese, Cambodian, and Lao migrant workers across the region and globally, including from Indonesia and Malaysia, the Middle East, and Europe.

But is this enough, considering that there are an estimated 4 million migrant workers and 500,000 victims of trafficking in Thailand, not to mention exploited Burmese, Cambodian, Lao, and Thais in other parts of the region and world?

Project Issara’s direct connection to thousands of migrant workers over the past six years has been through mobile phones, and over the past year it has been recognized how the great majority of migrant workers have adopted affordable android smartphones to better keep in touch with family and friends at home. Migrant workers are beginning to share evidence of abuses and abusers with the Issara hotline through Line (messaging application similar to WhatsApp) and MMS photo sharing, embedding GPS coordinates, and helping the hotline to connect people with information and assistance at an unprecedented pace.

However, the basic structure of a hotline has a phone number as the central mechanism for information, which limits mass dissemination of information to migrant workers and among migrant workers themselves, as well as the speed of updating critical information regarding labour recruitment and labour conditions. Hotlines require a lock-step increase in manpower and resources to answer the growing number of calls, cases, and questions, some of which could be conveyed or captured in a more efficient manner. These are limiting factors that can be overcome by technological innovation.
**Going forward. Technological innovation**

For the future, integrating technological innovation such as a Burmese language ‘Yelp-like’ smartphone app for migrant workers alongside trusted, high quality personal interactions through a hotline and community-based fieldwork will enable Issara’s impact to scale up significantly and advance ongoing seafood supply chain work in Thailand. Importantly, it will also help to create a model for worker outreach and complaints processing that is scalable and potentially replicable in other countries and for other product lines. The key objectives would be to:

a) Reach and assist more migrant workers, including both victimized migrant workers and those who have positive work and life experiences;
b) Increase the quality and quantity of business intelligence being exchanged among migrant workers and utilized by brands, retailers, and exporters;
c) Support more businesses in using this intelligence to eliminate slavery risk from their supply chain; and,
d) Support service provider NGOs in better understanding the shifting needs, priorities, and hotspot areas of their beneficiary populations (i.e., migrant workers).

We believe this model could be game changing for the anti-trafficking sector at large, and could significantly advance the sector’s means to address vulnerability, migrant labour abuses, and human trafficking. Technological innovation would require some fundraising and partnership (in process), but partnerships with excellent locally-based development-oriented tech partners such as Koe Koe Tech and Love Frankie, as well as Washington-based IST Research have already been established to help build these tools, and Issara has a trusted relationship and network of migrant workers to alpha and beta test the app, to ensure there is appropriate fit for the features, design, and context of migrant worker populations. Given the centrality of data, strategic partnerships, and achieving scale in the post-pilot phase of Issara, focused efforts will seek to make such tools a reality for migrant workers and help further strengthen Issara’s existing service offering.

*The Issara team is able to efficiently collect, collate, and analyze a large amount of data in several languages due to help from tech partners at Akvo, whose software Akvoflow has Issara data flowing from entry on smartphone apps straight to an online dashboard tracked by data managers.*
**Diversifying approaches for engaging suppliers.** During the pilot, Project Issara established its credibility and support role to Thai suppliers, as well as relationships of trust, primarily through a number of one-on-one interactions – at both the leadership level and the management/operations level. These one-on-one interactions also facilitated information exchange which, in aggregate, has allowed the Issara team to develop a nuanced understanding of the dynamics in the Thai seafood industry that contribute to labour risks.

**Going forward. Expanding approaches to engagement with suppliers**

For the future, with credibility and trust relationships established and a core empirical foundation set, Project Issara will be in a good position to expand its approaches for engaging suppliers beyond individual factory assessments – for example, supporting the development of corporate policy guidance, running trainings and seminars for groups of businesses on these issues, and developing training materials and other resources for building institutional capacity more broadly and widely. Issara aims to leverage the relationships of trust with key seafood processors/exporters to engage their suppliers upstream. For example, fishmeal plant managers, who are more removed from the ‘trafficking in supply chains’ fervor and thus have less exposure to the pressures and discussions regarding the elimination of forced labour and child labour (and, even more simply, the definitions and indicators of forced and child labour).

Also, as has been initiated with one key ‘champion’ seafood processor and exporter, Project Issara could expand impact by suggesting opportunities for businesses to support anti-trafficking efforts unrelated to their supply chain (that is, more traditional CSR/philanthropy), for example by employing recovering trafficked persons needing a safe and stable job, or supporting migrant childrens’ schools, which several Thai suppliers already do (though only in a limited geographic area, and the need in other areas is great). These new approaches answer to feedback from some suppliers more downstream in the supply chain who have indicated interest in wanting to know how they can engage more.

**Engaging more stakeholders with common purpose.** As will be detailed in the next section, Issara’s Phase II model proposes a private sector membership model while engaging a broader array of NGOs and experts. Among this mixed group of stakeholders are overlaps in themes of interest, such as the following illustrative examples:

- New technologies to address trafficking in supply chains
- The nexus between seafood sustainability and labour issues
- Empowerment and trafficking victim services
- Building ethical recruitment channels

Progress could be dramatically accelerated by creating synergies from bringing together various stakeholder groups around the different themes in a results-oriented, empirically based, innovation-driven environment. Therefore, Issara would serve as the backbone platform for the member services and data/intelligence services for the wider community, as well as convene thematic working groups facilitated by expert partners or individuals who would guide productive, dynamic discussions based on clear target outputs and timelines. In this way, Issara would aim to serve as an inclusive platform that provides members and participants with as much value as Issara itself derives from contributors.
Going forward. A data-driven platform with results-oriented working groups

As described above, the Issara platform for addressing trafficking in supply chains, starting with seafood, would be continuously driven forward by (a) the data and analytics at its backbone, and (b) the productive work of the working groups. After receiving feedback from members and partners regarding thematic working groups of interest over the next two years, Project Issara would retain expert individuals or groups to facilitate each group, including through online discussions and in-person convenings, as budget permits. The Issara platform and working groups would be distinguished from other coordinating bodies by its pace, nimbleness, and focus on quality, innovation, and results. The Issara team and external experts retained part-time to shepherd the working groups will hold as a core value the desire to provide contributing participants with as much value and quality interaction as possible; and, the desire to make a clear contribution to the anti-trafficking and ethical sourcing sectors, not just in the region but also globally.

The majority of Thai suppliers welcomed the Project Issara team and were very cooperative. Even some factories with forced labour (not pictured here) cooperated enough to allow Issara hotline posters to be displayed in the workplace, which is how the forced labour was discovered – through calls from workers in the factory. Issara aims to expand modes of engaging suppliers in the next phase.
Proposed partnership model for the follow-on phase

Project Issara is entering a new phase of its organizational growth, fueled by positive results from its pilot supply chain work, growing interest from business to continue and formalize new partnerships, and complementary initiatives with migrant workers underway and in the pipeline. Additionally, Issara Institute has just incorporated in the United States and in Thailand as a not-for-profit organization.

The operating and partnership model is a key to Issara’s next phase. It will underpin Issara’s approach and help shape the strategic priorities for follow-on activities. Project Issara has therefore evaluated and reflected upon its approach, core competencies, lessons learned, and the valuable insights and experiences gained from working directly with leading private sector businesses and NGOs over the past 18 months.

**Stakeholder feedback**

Through its Advisory Committee, Project Issara also received direct feedback from over twenty strategic stakeholders (including business and seafood industry representatives, anti-trafficking actors, and other subject matter experts), to help inform the evolution of Issara’s operating and industry partnership model moving forward. Highlights from that analysis include:

| Summary of stakeholder feedback regarding the effectiveness of the Project Issara model |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING** | |
| • **Strengths:** Project Issara’s assessment, reporting, and ILM were identified as a clear comparative advantage. While some industry representatives felt the current level and detail of information was adequate, several others indicated a willingness to pay for more detailed and frequent company-specific information. | |
| • **Weaknesses:** Not enough public reporting of methods, progress, or key findings. | |
| • **In response:** In the next phase, Issara’s data and analytics will be a central component of its work, as a service to all stakeholders both business and non-business. Public reporting of research, anonymized fieldwork findings, working group processes and outcomes, etc. will become a regular part of Issara’s work. Also, a private sector membership model will be offered to businesses that provides a base service offering plus the option to receive more in-depth research and analysis on a cost-plus-overhead basis. | |

| **EXPERTISE AND APPROACH** | |
| • **Strengths:** Project Issara’s deep and broad expertise in Southeast Asia and its ability to bridge the Asian and Western worlds was recognized as unmatched. Its leadership and staff of Southeast Asian experts were universally seen as passionate, skilled, and knowledgeable. This was recognized as a terrific asset to companies, funders, and others who must understand the reality of operating in the Southeast Asian context. Industry representatives also appreciated the neutral and direct tone used in communicating risk results. | |
| • **Weaknesses:** Some respondents questioned the project’s ability to meet the problem at scale based on a model of working factory by factory. Some respondents also thought |
that the project had too many components, while others were satisfied with the array of activities included in Project Issara’s pilot phase. Finally, some non-business respondents raised concern about the lack of transparency into the details of the private sector relationships.

- **In response:** Project Issara will maintain its unique model of having a team of expert Southeast Asian nationals based in Bangkok. It will emphasize a portfolio approach to addressing risk at different tiers of the seafood supply chain to achieve scale. For example, in addition to working at a firm level, Issara will also expand upstream hotline monitoring, develop training and capacity building programs and materials for upstream businesses, and increase public reporting and sharing of hotline, GIS, and research data and analysis. The business membership model will be a standardized, formalized two-tiered model, with a set of benefits that will be transparently communicated.

### PARTNERSHIPS

Comments about the nature and type of partnerships that Issara should include next phase include:

- Membership of US retailers and importers should be expanded
- Expand investment in diverse and strategic partnerships, in particular with conservation NGOs and platforms
- Provide independent, credible monitoring of labour conditions and improvements related to the work of the Sustainable Shrimp Task Force
- Serve as a credible independent monitoring body for industry standards (such as GLP or government), and provide training to relevant actors based on expertise

- **In response:** Project Issara will seek to take advantage of all of the possibilities mentioned above by stakeholders. In addition to the benefits offered to private sector partners, Issara will use its data, analytics, and in-house technical capacity as a platform for partnership, innovation, and strengthening the ecosystem of other existing initiatives in this space. The aforementioned partnerships would be a strong fit with Issara’s objectives and are in alignment with existing growth plans.

### Proposed operating and partnership model

With this in mind, a new post-pilot operating and partnership model is proposed. For the supply chain work, it is essentially a two-tiered strategic membership model designed for importer and retailer businesses, retaining the core elements and focus of Issara’s pilot service offering. The membership structure seeks to ensure clarity regarding scope of services and activities; improve overall transparency; encourage additional business partnerships, such as from the US; and, maintain sufficient flexibility to be able to work in depth with select companies on an enhanced strategic partnership basis.

### Summary: Issara’s Operating and Partnership Model Phase II

- A simple two-tiered strategic membership model, geared to importers and retailers
- NGO and academic memberships will be included as well, to develop synergies with business partners
- Clearly defines conditions of membership, which includes disclosing supply chain information as per the requirement of the pilot Seafood Coalition
Allows members to become eligible to develop expanded partnerships, at cost plus standard contribution to overhead

Encourages increased business participation and technical engagement, with a view to having greater representation from key players, such as US-based companies

Earmarks a portion of the membership fee for victim services fund, as per the pilot Seafood Coalition

Develops programming and partnerships (via development donors and foundations) to complement and enhance private sector engagement, and maintain Issara’s core team and analytics/platform functions

**Draft Membership Agreement: Issara Phase II**

**Benefits to members:**

- Quarterly industry reports covering specified level of supply chains, including general recommendations for supplier engagement and, as relevant, key issues for government engagement (confidential to all members)
- Access to quarterly industry tele-briefings (confidential to all members)
- Biannual company specific risk assessment reports, including specific tailored recommendations for supplier engagement (confidential to company)
- Access to biannual company specific tele-briefings (confidential to company)
- Ongoing hotline monitoring and ILM throughout the supply chains of all members
- Opportunities to participate in thematic working groups with a diverse array of contributors
- Regular and open communication and exchange with Project Issara staff
- Public recognition of membership
- Access to additional tailored partnership agreements

**Members may also opt in to:**

- Participate in ongoing factory remediation programming (e.g. labour improvement plans)
- Participate in factory and industry training programs

**Members agree to:**

- Membership fee of US $25,000 for retailers and $20,000 for importers per year
- Public statement of commitment to address labour issues including trafficking and slavery in Thai seafood or specific commodity
- Provide sufficient supply chain information to inform the ILM process and the industry and company specific reports
- Encourage key suppliers to participate and/or partner with Issara, allowing access to implement ILM process, such as dissemination of hotline posters
- Agreement to maintain confidentiality of member-only communications
- Agreement to release non-sensitive information publicly in other formats
- Use of company logo on Project Issara communications

Over time, Issara’s operating model aims to have the private sector supply chain work fully funded by business, and for this component to be self-sustaining. Core costs and functions would be more appropriately funded by development donors (foundations, government donors, etc.). For the Seafood Coalition pilot, supply chain work costs were in part subsidized by Humanity United support. There is potential for cost recovery to occur in the next phase,
but the transition will largely be determined by factors such as: the total number of members signing up; the efficiency and economies of scope and scale that can be realized; and, the accuracy of forecasted costs and level of effort required. Also, if new commodities or geographies are introduced into the mix, there will be additional upfront investment costs. We also highly value the important role current business partners can have to encourage new business members to join.

**New partnerships for the new phase**

Project Issara is excited to be developing new partnerships and programs for the next phase that fit in with the new model being introduced here. The work described below is primarily core work to build out Issara’s data and analytics functionality, but should enable Issara and partners to add considerably more shared value to its membership.

- **International Justice Mission** – IJM is a champion of justice for vulnerable people around the world, and is known for their work on strengthening criminal justice systems. However, IJM and Project Issara are slated to join forces on a prevalence study that would estimate the number of migrant workers in forced labour in the Thai fishing industry. Project Issara’s team has two of the few people in the world who have ever designed and conducted epidemiological prevalence research on the relatively hidden population of trafficking victims in Asia.

- **IST Research** – The IST Research mission is to deliver decision support innovation to the edge. They will be partnering with Project Issara to launch their Pulse platform – a rapidly configurable two-way information sharing architecture and analysis platform designed to help teams in developing areas of the world work with local populations to exchange valuable information.

- **Koe Koe Tech** – Founded by two cousins, a Myanmar-American and a Myanmar national, KKT is a Yangon-based social enterprise that creates mobile health apps and SMS/USSD services for the people of Myanmar. They will be working with Project Issara to develop the ‘Yelp-like’ app for Burmese migrant workers to exchange information and opinions, which will generate data of benefit not only to migrant workers but also to business, NGOs, and government.

- **Love Frankie** – Founded by the former leadership of MTV EXIT, Love Frankie is a Bangkok-based social change creative agency. They are part of the M&C Saatchi World Services Global Network, and build momentum for social change through innovative communication initiatives that create measurable impact through evidence and research, production and distribution, and impact measurement.