



## Resource Note on Human Rights and Waste Management

February 2023

### Summary

The waste and recycling sectors are complex with long supply chains that can incorporate many different actors, brokers and types of management processes. Both sectors have relatively low visibility and workers can be engaged in both informal and formal employment in regions across the world.

Some of the human rights risks associated with the sector are around:

- Long working hours
- Exposure to hazardous waste and e-waste
- Low skilled workforce therefore vulnerable to exploitation
- Migrant workers, agency and temporary workers vulnerable to infiltration by organised crime with less traceability than employed staff.

In the UK 66% of modern slavery cases dealt with by the Hope for Justice charity involved a recycling or waste facility. (2017)<sup>1</sup>

Below are some resources for the use of FNET members to work on with their waste management companies in order to help understand human rights risks in their waste supply chains.

### Information on Human Rights in Waste and Recycling Sectors

[GLAA webpage written in 2020](#) summarising labour exploitation in the recycling and waste industry and the headline trends for this sector including victim profiles, recruitment and accommodation in the UK

[GLAA Briefing \(undated\)](#) Recycling & Waste Industry Headline Trends

[Material Recycling World \(MRW\)](#): waste sector magazine with articles, features and legal views on how modern day slavery, forced labour, people trafficking and coercion affect the waste and recycling sector. They held a conference in June 2021 on Modern Day Slavery and member companies participated in anti-slavery week.

[Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing \(WIEGO\)](#) – Web page with resources, statistics, policies and project profiles on waste pickers.

### Resources

#### Indirect Procurement on Human Rights (IPHR) Forum

- [IPHR Forum Modern Slavery in Waste & Recycling Toolkit](#): A Toolkit specific to the waste and recycling industry with practical guidance around; human resources, procurement, operations and technical and corporate responsibility and sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mrw.co.uk/analysis-and-markets/modern-day-slavery/why-the-waste-and-recycling-sector-needs-to-know-about-modern-slavery-02-12-2020/>



- For information on what to ask their suppliers, use the checklist in the IPHR Toolkit, and [Eliza Chanin](#), Compliance Manager at Reconomy has kindly offered to answer any further questions on supplier engagement.
- [IPHR Forum webinar Tackling Modern Slavery in the Waste and Recycling Sector](#) (October 2021)– The focus of the webinar was to sharing insights and learnings that are specific to the sector and to launch the Modern Slavery in Waste and Recycling Toolkit (see above). Speakers include; CIWM, Hope for Justice, Slave-free Alliance, Reconomy, Co-op.
- [IPHR Forum: Waste and Recycling Modern Slavery Protocol](#) This Protocol is a voluntary agreement between organisations and is a public pledge of commitment to work collaboratively to tackle modern slavery and prevent exploitation or abuse of workers.

### **Indirect Spend Alliance**

- [Indirect Spend Alliance webinar on waste & recycling](#). Gives a good overview of some of the human rights issues facing the sector and it's also targeted at procurement professionals too: Speakers include Suez, Reconomy, IPHR Forum.
- A Risk and Opportunity Matrix is being developed by Twenty Fifty for the Indirect Spend Alliance, and the briefing will be updated with access to this resource once it has been shared.

### **Stronger 2Gether Training**

- Tackling Modern Slavery in Waste Businesses – UK - 1 day workshop for waste services providers. Contact [Hannah](#) for more information.
- [Tackling Modern Slavery in Global Supply Chains](#) for those with global waste management sites and facilities (and Toolkit)
- [Tackling Modern Slavery through Purchasing Practices](#)
- [Responsible Recruitment Toolkit](#) resources are all relevant
- Upcoming awareness raising film with facilities management (warehousing) as a focus

### **Food Network for Ethical Trade**

- Raw Materials & Services Working Group meeting 7/2/23 [Recording](#) Passcode: m76w@.w2 Section on waste starts at 1hr.

Please contact [Suzanne](#) at FNET to share any follow-up work with waste suppliers and to identify any areas for future work on waste and recycling.