



The Spanish Ethical Trade Forums and Stronger Together have joined forces to tackle the risk of forced labour in Spanish agri-businesses.

The two organisations have signed a unique collaboration agreement that will maximise the impact of both organisations in improving labour conditions and tackling forced labour in Spanish agricultural production

The Spanish horticulture sector has grown exponentially in the last twenty years, resulting in economic growth and job creation, which in turn has attracted many temporary workers. The high proportion of temporary migrant workers - often female, sometimes lacking the correct legal status and recruited through outsourced labour brokers - coupled with low rates of representation and an absence of grievance mechanisms contributes to significant vulnerability and heightened risks of exploitation. Modern slavery is a hidden crime that many businesses are not aware of or equipped to identify and prevent.

The Ethical Trade Forums offer a space for all those in the Spanish agri-food supply chain to share experiences and good practices on a wide range of labour matters. At the same time, the Forums provide producers with opportunities for capacity building and learning with expert input and, through grower-led topical working groups, practical tools and solutions for critical labour challenges are developed.

Stronger Together focuses on providing specialist guidance, training, and resources for businesses on detecting, deterring, and dealing with forced labour that is practical, pragmatic and easy for any business, of any size to understand and use.

The collaboration between the two organisations will include:

- Joint capacity building webinars for producers
- Stronger Together will join and participate in different ETF working groups such as *Responsible use of labour providers, Circular labour migration and Grievance mechanisms*.
- Sharing insights and learning between the organisations. Stronger Together's expertise in tackling modern slavery in global supply chains, and the Forums' experience in the improvement of labour challenges will offer a robust contribution to suppliers and their customers.

Call to action for businesses

Sergio Barbera, Conexion Social director of the Forums commented, "*Anticipating issues, also being generous and transparent while collaborating, are the keys for success at an initiative like the Forums and working along with a great organization like Stronger Together surely will add great value and help to achieve our shared goals.*"

Jhon Munoz, Global Partners Manager of Stronger Together Spain said, *“Addressing modern slavery is becoming a critical and complex issue for organizations to tackle. To tackle it with efficacy and efficiency, the experience and network of Stronger Together, which offers a proven and effective solution, will add value to the impact that Ethical Trade Forums is having in the region.”*

The Spanish Ethical Trade Forums were established in 2015 as a grower-led response to a recognised need to promote better working conditions within the Spanish horticultural sector. Sponsored by nine retailers and 24 importers, and coordinated by a team of specialists in Spain, the Forums exist to support positive change throughout the sector, brought together by a shared belief in the right of each and every worker to decent conditions, freedom, equity, security and dignity.

The Forums provide support to suppliers and growers on shared challenges; aligning collaboration to maximise effectiveness; building capacity to implement practical solutions and promoting connections throughout the supply chain. In practice, this means working collaboratively at facilitated events and through joint working groups, sharing good practices and practical experiences and finding effective solutions to be implemented throughout members’ operations.

Solutions developed to date include:

- Monthly capacity building seminars on a range of topics from fire safety to workforce diversity
- A practical guide for producers on the responsible use of labour providers
- An accommodation standard guide and checklist
- Training on Covid management
- Development of labour standards guided self-assessment.
- Development of an anti-harassment protocol
- Guidance on how to develop an equality plan.
- A pilot using mobile phone technology to survey workers’ opinions.
- A practical guide for effective implementation of workers & companies representative’s dialogue

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Stronger Together, an organization with a global approach and a track record of tackling modern slavery in agriculture supply chains, launched a programme in Spain in 2019.

This specialist industry programme is working to support the horticulture sector in Almería, Huelva and Murcia to detect, deter and deal with the risks of forced labour and other forms of hidden labour exploitation. It aims to protect and enhance the reputation of the businesses in the horticultural sector as good employers.

Businesses are supported to take proactive measures to detect, deter and deal with forced labour within their own operations and supply chain, and have a platform for sharing challenges and good practice on this topic. Producers, growers and other stakeholders have access to practical guidance through:

- [Free downloadable toolkit](#) and resources with step by step guidance (available in Spanish and in English)
- Interactive [“Tackling Forced Labour in Spanish Agri-Businesses” training workshops](#) (currently delivered online)
- [Worker awareness resources](#) (available in Arabic and Spanish)
- Collaboration with peers and businesses across the Spanish agriculture supply chain on tackling forced labour that supports peer-to-peer learning, making an impact at scale and increases cost-efficiency.

For further information on all our work, please visit <https://www.stronger2gether.org/es/> or follow us on LinkedIn