



**Monterey Bay
Aquarium**

Warmwater shrimp social risk profile

Forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous
child labor risks

Ecuador, Aquaculture and Processing

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SEAFOOD SOCIAL RISK TOOL V2

Disclaimer

The Seafood Social Risk Tool has been prepared for information purposes only, and is not intended to constitute business, legal, market, financial or investment advice. The Seafood Social Risk Tool is designed to serve as an informational resource and does not override legislation or internal policies or procedures. It is recommended that all users of the Seafood Social Risk Tool seek independent legal advice. The Monterey Bay Aquarium Foundation shall not be responsible to any party related to its use or interpretation of the information contained in the Seafood Social Risk Tool.

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About the Seafood Social Risk Tool

The Seafood Social Risk Tool (SSRT) is a risk assessment tool that assesses the risks of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor associated with a seafood product and producing country. The tool includes more than 80 risk indicators that assess evidence of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor in seafood supply chains and the underlying drivers of risk associated with these abuses. This information is used to create risk profiles to help businesses and other interested stakeholders to better understand the risk of human rights abuses in seafood supply chains and to focus businesses' due diligence efforts to improve conditions for seafood workers.

To learn more about the SSRT and access the full list of available risk profiles, visit <https://www.seafoodwatch.org/our-projects/seafood-social-risk-tool>.

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Overview

Ecuador is a globally important producer and exporter of farmed shrimp. The country has been involved in shrimp farming for approximately 50 years and has benefitted from investments in areas such as genetics and technology, the establishment of a strong industry association, developments in export markets, and vertical consolidation of some of the industry.ⁱⁱⁱ Whiteleg shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) is the main species produced and its production takes place in Ecuador's five coastal provinces, with 60% of shrimp ponds located in Guayas.ⁱⁱⁱ The shrimp industry provides direct and indirect employment to around 280,000 people.^{iv} Shrimp is Ecuador's second-most important export industry in terms of foreign income after oil products.^{v,vi} In 2022, Ecuador became the world's largest exporter of shrimp and prawns,^{vii} with export values reaching nearly US\$6.29 billion in 2023.^{viii} The main countries for export are China, the United States, Spain, and Vietnam, which accounted for 80% of Ecuador's total shrimp export volume in 2023.^{ix}

Base risks of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor in the country in general

The current operating environment for business in Ecuador is not favorable to a reduction of risk for forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor. Factors that influence the base risks include poor law enforcement, organized crime, the prevalence of child labor in rural areas, a large population of vulnerable refugees and migrant workers, and violations of workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively.

Enforcement of child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking laws is hampered by a combination of limited resources and corruption. Evidence suggests that there is a need for three to four times the number of labor inspectors reported in 2023 and for more resources for the National Police's Anti-Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Unit.^{x,xi} At the same time, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes remains a serious concern, with allegations including labor inspectors accepting bribes to ignore violations.^{xii} There is also a highly severe security crisis and high levels of narco-trafficking by armed cartels and gangs, to which there has been an inefficient response from authorities.^{xiii} Transnational organized crime groups and armed gangs illegally recruit children into criminality and armed conflict.^{xiv} Groups involved in organized crimes such as drug trafficking and forced recruitment for armed conflict are also connected to human trafficking networks.^{xv} Ecuador has the third highest criminality score in Latin America and the fourth highest in the Americas according to the Global Organized Crime Index.^{xvi}

A national child labor survey has not been conducted since 2012, when the National Institute of Statistics and Census determined that 360,000 (8.56%) children aged 5 to 17 years worked in Ecuador, with more than half involved in hazardous work.^{xvii,xviii} Due to a lack of oversight, child

labor rates in rural areas are five times higher than in cities and overall are higher among indigenous children.^{xxix} Agriculture and livestock farming are the two main economic sectors that employ working children.^{xx} A 2022 national survey on employment, unemployment, and underemployment detected that nearly 270,340 children and adolescents in the country still face child labor daily.^{xxi} Despite education being free, children face barriers such as inadequate or lack of school locations, resources and infrastructure, as well as financial difficulties and a lack of transportation.^{xxii} The net rate of attendance to basic education in 2022 was 94.7%, high school 76.6%, and higher education 26.5%.^{xxiii}

Ecuador is host to a large population of refugees and migrant workers from Colombia and Venezuela, with an estimated 444,800 Venezuelans refugees, migrant workers, and asylum seekers in Ecuador as of March 2024.^{xxiv} While the country has strong migration policies in place to protect migrant workers, Venezuelan households surveyed in Ecuador face significant barriers to accessing basic needs including food, accommodation, health, and education according to a survey by the Interregional Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela.^{xxv} Most people surveyed (79%) are employed informally, and most (86%) earn a maximum of US \$84 per month, equivalent to the December 2020 poverty line measured by income for Ecuador.^{xxvi} According to the 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report, indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians, Colombian refugees, and Venezuelan migrant workers are especially vulnerable to human trafficking.^{xxvii} Ecuador is a transit route and a destination country for victims of human trafficking from Colombia, Venezuela, and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, with migrant workers exploited in sex trafficking and forced labor.^{xxviii}

According to the Global Rights Index 2024, Ecuador is one of the ten worst countries in the world for workers, with restrictive legislation and an anti-union climate. Workers attempting to join or form trade unions face dismissal and even death threats.^{xxix} Meanwhile, enforcement of related laws is poor and penalties are rarely applied to those violating workers' rights.^{xxx} Therefore, the ability of workers to organize in Ecuador is poor, limiting mechanisms to address exploitative working conditions through freedom of association and collective bargaining.^{xxxi}

Adjusted risks of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor in the country's seafood supply chain

Overall, there is very limited information available to inform an accurate assessment of the adjusted risks of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor in Ecuador's seafood industry, and more specifically, in the shrimp aquaculture and processing industries. Ecuador's fishing and shrimp farming industries are included in the US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report in connection to human trafficking and forced labor, and anecdotal evidence from shrimp worker testimonies indicate there are some problematic employment practices and

working conditions in shrimp processing. In addition, shrimp aquaculture in Ecuador has been linked to the destruction of mangrove ecosystems, with adverse impacts upon local indigenous communities that depend on these mangroves, leading them into poverty.^{xxxii} Risks in shrimp feed production are out of scope of this profile.

There is evidence linking Ecuador's seafood industry, including fishing and aquaculture production to child labor and forced labor. The US Department of Labor's Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor states that children work in fishing, which is considered in national legislation to be hazardous work.^{xxxiii} In addition, the US Department of State's 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report states that human traffickers exploit Ecuadorian men, women, and children in forced labor in several industries including fishing and shrimp farming.^{xxxiv} But while the 2024 TIP Report links illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing to workers' increased vulnerability to forced labor,^{xxxv} it is not clear which labor violations are specifically alleged to occur in shrimp farming nor what the source of those allegations is. No other evidence was found linking Ecuador's shrimp farming industry directly to forced labor, human trafficking, or hazardous child labor.

Ecuador's lucrative shrimp industry has been a key target for organized crime groups, as the country faces a security crisis. The rising crime wave has resulted in an increasing number of cases of extortion, threats, theft, assault, and even murder of shrimp farm workers by criminal organizations with some as recent as June 2024.^{xxxvi,xxxvii,xxxviii,xxxix} As a result of some criminal gangs being aided by workers inside more isolated shrimp farms, some farms have taken additional security measures to limit external communications, resulting in the increased isolation of farm workers that live on site for extended periods during on/off shifts.^{xl} Isolation can impact upon the mental health of workers and is an indicator of forced labor risk as it prevents workers from seeking help in exploitative situations. In January 2024, Ecuador declared a 60-day state of emergency after an outbreak of gang-related violence and increased the presence of security forces.^{xli} However, a lack of proper infrastructure, equipment, mobile units, and personnel hamper effective enforcement and protection by national authorities.^{xlii} Economic losses in the shrimp industry as a result of crime were estimated to be around US\$200 million in 2022.^{xliii} The industry reportedly needs to invest US\$60 million annually in order to protect its own businesses.^{xliv} Transnational criminal organizations have also used shrimp trade for narcotrafficking, where shrimp companies are used to transport cocaine into Europe.^{xlv,xlvi}

Very little information is available regarding the workforce employed in Ecuador's shrimp industry. No information was found on the presence of vulnerable workers in the shrimp aquaculture and processing workforces other than women, who reportedly comprise the main shrimp processing workforce.^{xlvii} It is unclear whether foreign migrant workers are employed in the shrimp industry, but migrant and refugee children from Colombia and Venezuela have previously been identified as vulnerable to exploitation in Ecuador's fishing industry.^{xlviii} In addition, a significant proportion of

the refugee population in Ecuador lives in the Guayas and Manabi provinces, which are important shrimp farming and processing areas.^{xlix,l}

Available information regarding working conditions in the shrimp industry is also very limited and sometimes contradictory. Anecdotal evidence is suggestive of problematic practices that could in some instances indicate a risk of forced labor but is not sufficient to conclude forced labor. During a 2021 Trade Union School (Escuela Sindical 2021), run by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Ecuador Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS), workshops were held with 32 union workers from different regions and sectors, including the shrimp industry and first-person experiences were collected.^{li} Testimonies from a shrimp processing worker in Guayaquil indicate that shrimp workers are subject to long working hours and low wages, with female workers also experiencing sexual harassment, and that workers lacked social security benefits and older workers experienced unfair dismissals without compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic.^{lii} Another testimony from the FES-ILDIS report also links shrimp farming in Ecuador to social issues outside the scope of this assessment, stating that it impacts on local food (rice) production and access to water in areas of shrimp farm development, which businesses may wish to consider if conducting a wider social impact assessment.^{liii}

Summary of evidence of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor in the seafood supply chain

Country-level indicators

- According to various sources, there is evidence of human trafficking, forced labor, and child labor in multiple industries and sectors in Ecuador, including agriculture, floriculture, aquaculture, mining, plantations, and domestic services, among others.
- Goods identified as produced with child labor in Ecuador include bananas, rice, livestock, bricks, flowers, and gold.

Seafood industry-level Indicators

- Ecuador's seafood industry, specifically fishing and aquaculture, has been linked to forced labor, including potentially forced child labor, and hazardous child labor by sources from the US Department of State and US Department of Labor. However, these reports do not provide further information regarding the alleged human rights abuses and cite few publicly available sources.

Aquaculture indicators

- The US Department of State's 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report states that Ecuadorian men, women, and children are exploited in sex trafficking and forced labor in several industries including shrimp farming.
- A 2020 report to Congress by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration citing earlier reports from the US Department of State and US Department of Labor states that there are limited and anecdotal reports that suggest that men, women, and children are exploited by traffickers in fishing and shrimp farming in Ecuador.
- However, these reports do not provide further information regarding the alleged human rights abuses or the source of these allegations, and no further publicly available evidence was found to corroborate them.

Processing indicators

- No evidence was found linking Ecuador's shrimp processing industry directly to forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor.
- However, testimony collected in 2021 from a shrimp processing worker during a workshop by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Ecuador Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS) states that female workers are subject to sexual harassment, wherein intimidation and threats is an indicator of forced labor.

Summary of factors that affect the likelihood of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor in the seafood supply chain

Factors that increase the likelihood

Country-level indicators

- Ecuador performs poorly against the indices for governance practices and systems.
- The presence of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers from Colombia and Venezuela, who are vulnerable to human trafficking.
- There are gaps in legislation to protect migrant workers, specifically, the practices of charging recruitment fees to migrant workers and withholding workers' passports are not prohibited.
- Enforcement of human trafficking, forced labor, and child labor laws is hindered by limited resources in the labor inspectorate, and alleged corruption and official complicity in human trafficking.
- Ecuador has not ratified ILO Convention 188 on Work in Fishing or Protocol 29 to the Forced Labor Convention.
- Ecuador is rated as one of the worst countries in the world for workers, who risk dismissal and even death threats for organizing.

Seafood industry-level indicators

- No information was found about access to workplaces in the seafood industry for third-party monitors such as trade union representatives, or access to grievance mechanisms for workers.
- Implementation and enforcement of fishing industry regulations is insufficient, as reflected by the issuance of a "yellow card" for illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing against Ecuador by the European Commission in October 2019, which has yet to be revoked. The lack of monitoring and enforcement associated with IUU fishing can contribute to an increased risk of human rights and labor violations, and human trafficking and forced labor sometimes co-occur with IUU fishing.
- IUU fishing by foreign-flagged vessels operating in Ecuador's waters has been linked to impacts on the livelihoods of artisanal fishing communities in Ecuador, which may increase workers' vulnerability to exploitation.

Aquaculture indicators

- Shrimp farms are sometimes located on isolated islands in estuaries around El Oro and Guayaquil, with workers staying on site for shifts ranging from 10 to 20 days.

- Some isolated farms require workers to hand in their mobile phones when on site to mitigate security concerns relating to criminal gangs.
- Little information on the shrimp aquaculture workforce in Ecuador was found, making it difficult to assess the vulnerability of shrimp farm workers to labor exploitation. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of the refugee population in Ecuador lives in the Guayas and Manabi provinces where nearly 70% of shrimp aquaculture takes place, indicating that vulnerable workers may be employed in shrimp farming.
- A study conducted on the shrimp sector at six shrimp farms in the Jama canton found that most of the workers were part of the informal sector, wherein there is more limited regulatory oversight, and workers may be more vulnerable to exploitation.
- The same assessment in the Jama canton found that around 50% of workers are employed as temporary workers, who are more likely to be subjected to exploitation.
- Limited information was found on recruitment practices, contracts, and compensation in shrimp aquaculture in Ecuador.

Processing indicators

- Around 60% of shrimp is exported to China where demand for more sustainable products may be lower than in other key markets (See SSRT warmwater shrimp profile: China).
- Little information on the shrimp processing workforce in Ecuador was found. Evidence suggests that women fill most roles in shrimp peeling and shrimp heading.
- Limited information was found on recruitment practices, contracts, and compensation in shrimp processing in Ecuador.
- Testimonies collected in 2021 from a shrimp processing worker indicate that they work 12-hour days but receive wages equivalent to only 8 hours of work, and that most employees lacked social security benefits and older workers experienced unfair dismissals without compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Factors that decrease the likelihood

Country-level indicators

- Ecuador is party to the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), which targets IUU fishing. Efforts are being made to implement the traceability of fishery products in line with the provisions of the PSMA and other agreements.
- The Ecuadorian government reaffirmed its intentions to eradicate child labor and presented technical standards to control the situation in 2023.
- Ecuador coordinates with foreign governments on anti-trafficking operations.
- A new anti-trafficking law was approved in 2023 to fill gaps in legislation and strengthen coordination between state institutions and civil society.

Seafood industry-level indicators

- In 2020, Ecuador approved the new Organic Law for the Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries to promote and control these sectors.
- Third party certification schemes for farmed seafood containing social components to varying degrees are operating in Ecuador. Schemes present include the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), Best Aquaculture Practices, and GlobalG.A.P.
- The Ecuadorian Chamber of Agricultural Commerce has made commitments to have the complete shrimp industry certified to the ASC Farm standard, which includes requirements on forced labor, child labor, and human trafficking.

Aquaculture indicators

- Shrimp production contributes positively to Ecuador's economy through direct and indirect employment.
- An impact assessment conducted at six shrimp farms suggests that shrimp farm workers receive wages that are close to or greater than living wages.
- Limited information suggests employees are directly contracted and no recruitment agencies are used.

Processing indicators

- Ecuador's shrimp supply chain is characterized by a high degree of vertical integration from shrimp fry production to shrimp processing, offering the potential for greater oversight and transparency of shrimp supply chains.
- Around 35% of shrimp is exported to markets such as Europe and the United States, which could offer a leverage point for buyers to drive improvement efforts in related production.
- An impact assessment conducted at six processors suggests shrimp processing workers receive wages that are close to or greater than living wages.
- Limited information suggests employees are directly contracted and no recruitment agencies are used.

Aquaculture

The main aquaculture product in Ecuador is whiteleg shrimp, (*L. vannamei*), which accounts for 99% of the country's aquaculture production volume.^{liv} The remaining 1% constitute small volumes of Nile tilapia, rainbow trout, and other species.^{lv} According to FAO estimates, Ecuador produced 1,109,000 metric tons (Mt) of whiteleg shrimp in 2022.^{lvi} Shrimp production developed mainly in the coastal region because of the natural conditions that create the correct environment for aquaculture. Shrimp production started in El Oro province in 1968 and expanded to Guayas province. During the 1990s, the number of enterprises investing in shrimp farming grew, as did laboratories for larvae, feed mills, and packaging businesses.^{lvii} According to the Subsecretary of Aquaculture there were 4,090 shrimp farms with 218,350 hectares dedicated to shrimp production in 2022.^{lviii} Around 60% of production takes place in the province Guayas, 20% in El Oro, 9% in Esmeraldas, 9% in Manabí, and 2% in Santa Elena.^{lix} Three farming methods are used: extensive, semi-intensive, and intensive production. The average production per hectare (ha) is estimated to be around 6 Mt/ha/year, with the more productive farms being able to reach up to 15 Mt/ha/year by having 3-4 farming cycles per year.^{lx, lxi} Wild capture of post larvae (PLs) and broodstock for seed production is forbidden and the industry is exclusively supplied with PLs from brood stock involved in genetic improvement programs.^{lxii}

The fisheries and aquaculture sector is regulated by the Law for Fisheries and Development, among other regulations, agreements, resolutions, and measurements dictated by public and private agencies. Shrimp farming also follows the “Regulations for Breeding and Culture of Bio Aquatic Species”, and various ministerial agreements decreed to regulate commerce, post-larvae imports, export product quality control, and others.^{lxiii} According to the National Institute of Statistics and Census, the shrimp industry provides around 280,000 direct and indirect jobs.^{lxiv}

Ecuador's quality control system is highly appraised because it complies with FDA requirements, the Veterinary Department of the European Union, Japanese consumer protection organizations, and Canadian inspection organizations.^{lxv} The main concern in aquaculture is the destruction of mangroves to construct ponds for farming.^{lxvi} More than a quarter of shrimp farming areas operate in areas where mangrove forests are located.^{lxvii} This activity has a high impact on the environment and the communities located nearby. The Ministry of the Environment in Ecuador currently has the National Mangrove Conservation Plan for continental Ecuador, which was developed with the support of initiatives from non-governmental organizations and international organizations and aims to promote the protection, recovery, and sustainable use of Ecuador's mangroves. The legal validity that sustains this plan is contemplated in the ministerial resolutions from 1994 to 2019, in which the plan's approval took place. Another relevant resolution is No. 056 of January 28, 2011, which establishes in Article 1, a total cost for the loss of environmental goods and services and the restoration cost due to logging, harvesting, alteration, transformation, or destruction of mangrove forests at over US\$89,270 per hectare.^{lxviii}

Processing and Trade

In Ecuador, shrimp is known to some as “pink gold” for being as lucrative as petroleum since it is the second most exported product in the country.^{lxxix} The Ecuadorian shrimp industry is export oriented and supports a small domestic market only.^{lxxx} In 2023, Ecuador was the world largest exporter of shrimp^{lxxxi} and one out of every five shrimp that circulated in the world markets came from Ecuador.^{lxxxii} Shrimp exports reached over 1.2 million Mt at a value of US\$6.28 billion in 2023^{lxxxiii}, which is estimated to be 5.7% of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP).^{lxxxiv} Ecuador’s main export markets for shrimp are China (59%), Europe (18%), and the United States (17%).^{lxxxv} China and Vietnam are the main markets for Head On Shell On (HOSO) products, while the United States and Europe are the main markets for headless shell-on (HLSO) and peeled products.^{lxxxvi}

The Ecuadorian shrimp industry is characterized by high levels of consolidation and vertical integration.^{lxxxvii} Five shrimp export companies are responsible for 43% of the country’s export volume.^{lxxxviii} A lot of shrimp companies are vertically integrated spanning hatcheries, production, processing, and feed manufacturing. The shrimp industry is represented by the non-profit organization National Chamber of Aquaculture (Cámara Nacional de Acuicultura). Its goal is to promote “[translated] the sustainable development of the Ecuadorian aquaculture sector through quality services that promote competitiveness in a framework of deep respect for social and environmental standards, thus contributing to the well-being of the community.”^{lxxxix} In 2021, there were 187 companies affiliated with the National Chamber of Aquaculture, of which 144 were shrimp producing companies.^{lxxx} As of August 2024, there were a total of 172 approved establishments for export of fishery products to the European Union, although these may include processing facilities that process fish product other than shrimp. Most are located in Guayas province (41%), followed by Manabi (39%) and Santa Elena (12%).^{lxxxi} Ecuador’s main ports for shrimp exports are the ports of Guayaquil, Puerto Bolívar, Esmeraldas, and Manta.^{lxxxii}

In 2022, the production cost for shrimp was 24% higher than in previous years due to elimination of the diesel subsidies, and the increase in commodity prices, which increased the price of shrimp feed. Other contributing factors were the increase in the Ecuadorian basic wage and the country's security crisis. Better security systems need to be implemented to avoid robberies and attacks by land and waterways.^{lxxxiii}

Due Diligence for Warmwater shrimp in Ecuador

Important Country-Specific Considerations

- The second-most important industry in Ecuador is shrimp farming, and the country is currently the largest shrimp exporter in the world.
- Ecuador mainly exports shrimp to China, Europe, and the United States.
- Ecuador's shrimp industry has been a target for criminal activity, including extortion, threats, theft, assault, and murder of workers involved in the shrimp production industry. The shrimp industry is also used to traffic drugs abroad.

Suggested Due Diligence Priorities & Questions

Worker's demographics

There is little publicly available information about the workforce in shrimp aquaculture and processing, making it difficult to identify vulnerable workers.

1. What proportion of shrimp workers are foreign or domestic migrant workers and where do they originate from?
2. What is the proportion of young workers (15–18 years old) in the workforce? What protocols are in place to protect young workers from hazards?
3. What is the proportion of temporary versus permanent workers?

Complaints mechanisms

The ability of workers to organize in Ecuador is rated poorly overall, limiting available mechanisms to address exploitative conditions through freedom of association and collective bargaining.

1. Do workers in your operation/supply chain have access to third party monitors such as trade union representatives?
2. Do workers in your operation/supply chain have access to a complaint mechanism?
3. Are there procedures in place to deal with instances of violence and intimidation such as sexual harassment if they arise?
4. Are there procedures to document, track, and resolve workplace complaints?
5. Are workers who submit complaints protected against adverse repercussions?

Working conditions

There is limited publicly available information about working conditions, including working hours, safety provisions, and compensation in shrimp aquaculture and processing.

1. How are working hours, overtime, and rest periods monitored for all workers, including temporary and seasonal workers?
2. Do workers receive a pay slip and are they aware of wage-setting mechanisms?
3. Is overtime voluntary and compensated?
4. Are workers paid at least the minimum wage according to state or sector requirements?
5. What payment structure is used to compensate workers (e.g., piece rate or fixed salary)?
6. What security measures are in place to protect shrimp farm workers from gang-related threats and violence? What compensation is provided to workers and their families in case of injury or loss of life?
7. What facilities are provided to enable shrimp farm workers that live onsite for extended shift periods to communicate with their friends and families?

Ecuador: Country-level indicators

Indicator	Description	Sources
Poverty levels in a country	<p>Human Development Index</p> <p>HDI Value (2022): 0.765</p> <p>HDI Rank (2022): 83/193</p> <p>Ecuador’s HDI value for 2022 places it in the category of ‘high human development’ and positions it at number 83 out of 193 countries and territories. Ecuador’s HDI value is close to the regional average of 0.763 for Latin America and the Caribbean.</p> <p>Ecuador shows progress against each of the HDI indicators for health, education and income from 1990 to 2022. However, when Ecuador’s HDI value is discounted for inequality, it falls to 0.639, a loss of 17.6% due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension indices. The average loss due to inequality for high HDI countries is 17.8%, and for Latin America and the Caribbean, it is 20.7%.</p>	<p>UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)</p> <p>UNDP Global Human Development Indicators Country Profile:</p>
	<p>Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population): 25.2% (2022), showing improvement over the last decade from 36% (2009).</p> <p>The percentage of Ecuador’s population living below the national poverty line spiked in 2019 and 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. It increased from 23.2% in 2018 to 33% in 2020, before decreasing again from 2021 onward.</p> <p>The poverty headcount ratio is lower than both neighboring countries Colombia and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colombia (2021): 39.3% • Peru (2022): 27.9% 	<p>World Bank</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Global Hunger Index (2023):</p> <p>Ecuador ranks 65th out of 125 qualifying countries. With a score of 14.8 out of 100, Ecuador suffers from a level of hunger that is ‘moderate’.</p> <p>Ecuador performs worse in the GHI than neighboring countries Colombia and Peru, which both score a ‘low’ level of hunger.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colombia: 5.7 • Peru: 7.4 <p>Note: GHI is scored on a 100-point GHI Severity Scale, where 0 is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst (where ≥ 50 is ‘extremely alarming’).</p>	<p>Global Hunger Index (GHI)</p>
<p>Country’s position in the regional economic power system</p>	<p>Comparing HDI ranking to other countries in the region</p> <p>Ecuador</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HDI Value (2022): 0.765 • HDI Rank (2022): 83 (high human development) <p>Neighboring Countries:</p> <p>Colombia HDI Value (2022): 0.758 HDI Rank (2022): 91</p> <p>Peru HDI Value (2022): 0.762 HDI Rank (2022): 87</p> <p>Other countries in South America:</p> <p>Brazil HDI Value (2022): 0.760 HDI rank (2022): 89 (high human development)</p>	<p>UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)</p> <p>UNDP Global Human Development Indicators Country Profile:</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Venezuela HDI Value (2022): 0.699 HDI rank (2022): 119 (high human development)</p> <p>Bolivia HDI Value (2022): 0.698 HDI rank (2022): 120 (high human development)</p>	
	<p>Comparing its recent economic growth to the general economic growth rates in the region</p> <p>Ecuador GDP Growth (annual %): 2.9 (2022)</p> <p>Neighboring countries:</p> <p>Colombia GDP Growth (annual %): 7.5 (2022)</p> <p>Peru GDP Growth (annual %): 2.7 (2022)</p> <p>Other countries in South America:</p> <p>Brazil GDP Growth (annual %): 2.9 (2022)</p> <p>Venezuela GDP Growth (annual %): -3.9 (2014)</p> <p>Bolivia GDP Growth (annual %): 3.1 (2022)</p>	<p>World Bank Databank figures on annual economic growth</p>
	<p>Migration data</p> <p>Net migration rate (immigrants minus emigrants per 1,000 population) for Ecuador is: -1.201 (2023).</p> <p>Migration inflows (2022): 784.8 thousand</p>	<p>IOM Migration Data Portal.</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Regional migration trends and patterns</p> <p>Ecuador is a country of origin, destination, and transit for migrants.</p> <p>Over the past decade, Ecuador has become a significant destination country for migrant workers from other South American countries, as well as a transit country for further migration up north, and a source country for emigrants heading to the United States. It is estimated that there were 871,000 immigrants in Ecuador in the period 2020-2023, which translates to 1 immigrant out of every 20 residents. The majority originate from Venezuela, having fled the political and economic crisis, and over a quarter are Colombian who migrated during the country's long-running civil war. As of mid-2020, 8% of the Ecuadorian population lived abroad in the United States, Spain or Italy. MPI, 2023</p> <p>Venezuelan migrant workers and refugees have migrated in large numbers across Latin American countries since 2015. Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru host more than 70% of the total Venezuelan migrant and refugee population worldwide. In the period between 2019 and 2020, less than 1,000 Venezuelans were granted refugee status in Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador combined, in contrast to Peru which recognized slightly more than 1,100 people as refugees in the same period. The percentage of Venezuelans in an irregular status has increased in Ecuador between 2017 to mid-2018 and 2020, with 44% of Venezuelans being irregularly in the country between 2017 and mid-2018, up to 72% in 2020. According to the World Bank, Venezuelans who arrive in Ecuador have had fewer financial resources in recent years.^{lxxxiv} The new Ecuadorian administration indicated its desire to introduce a regularization program, building upon the previous administration's</p>	<p>MPI, 2023, Ecuador Juggles Rising Emigration and Challenges Accommodating Venezuelan Arrivals</p> <p>Chaves-González, D., Amaral, J., and Mora, M.J., 2021 Socioeconomic Integration of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees: The Cases of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Washington, DC and Panama City: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and International Organization for Migration (IOM).</p> <p>International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2022, Recent Migration Trends in the Americas. IOM, Buenos Aires and San José</p> <p>Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 2021, MIGRATION FLOWS IN</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>efforts in 2019 and 2020, that had led to regularization of 40,407 Venezuelans through the Exceptional Visa for Humanitarian Purposes. Chaves-González, Amaral, and Mora, 2021</p> <p>According to Ecuador’s Ministry of Government (2022), in the period between January and May 2022, official records showed entry of 7,411 Venezuelans and exits of 11,921 Venezuelans. This indicated that higher figures were to be expected for 2022 compared to 2021 if current trends were to continue. Almost half of the surveyed population in February to March traveled with close relatives, which did not see Ecuador as their destination (50.9% indicating Peru as their destination, 25.8% Chile, and 12.3% other countries including Venezuela and Argentina). IOM, 2022</p> <p>Migration patterns in Latin American and Caribbean countries are subjected to significant changes. The Venezuelan crisis generated the second largest displacement of people globally after the one in Syria, yet it is receiving little international attention. Many people are without regular migration status, with over 90% of these estimated irregular migrants located in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, which are also the three main destinations for Venezuelan migrants. IDB, 2021</p> <p>According to the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants (R4V) platform, Colombia hosted 2,875,743 Venezuelans as of August 2023, Brazil 510,499 as of September and Peru 1,542,004, and Ecuador 474,945 as of June 2023. R4V, November 2023</p> <p>Most immigrants in Ecuador live in the Guayas, Manabi, and Pichincha provinces; 86% of the refugees are from Colombia; and 88% of people in human</p>	<p>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN Statistics on Permits for Migrants</p> <p>R4V, November 2023, Latin America and the Caribbean, R4V Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in the Region - Nov 2023</p> <p>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR), 2022, Tendencias nacionales del desplazamiento forzado hacia Ecuador – 2022</p> <p>UNHCR, 2025, UNHCR Ecuador: Operational Update 2024 in Review</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>mobility come from Venezuela. Women represent 55% of immigrants and refugees (children and adults). Immigrant populations are generally young, representing 57% of productive capacity able to contribute positively to the economy. UNHCR, 2022</p> <p>According to the UNHCR, Venezuelan people continued to represent the main refugee and migrant population entering Ecuador in 2024. The main needs identified for Venezuelan refugees and migrants were access to food (82%), followed by housing and shelter (67%), and access to livelihoods or employment (57%). UNHCR, 2025</p>	
	<p>Known human trafficking routes</p> <p>The Freedom Collaborative Victim Journeys Map identifies Colombia to Ecuador as a known human trafficking route. Freedom Collaborative, n.d.</p> <p>According to the US Department of State’s 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, Ecuador is used as a transit country by traffickers to move victims from Colombia, Venezuela, and the Caribbean to other South American countries and Europe. US Department of State, 2024</p>	<p>Freedom Collaborative, No date, Mapping Risky Migration Journeys Globally</p> <p>US Department of State, 2024, 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report</p>
<p>Governance practices and systems in a country (measured through indexes)</p>	<p>WGI (2022) Percentile rank:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice and Accountability: 48.79 • Political Stability and Absence of Violence: 38.68 • Government Effectiveness: 40.09 • Regulatory Quality: 35.38 • Rule of Law: 26.89 • Control of Corruption: 29.72 <p>Ecuador ranks in the lower percentiles. While close to the regional average for Latin America and the Caribbean, it scores lower in all six indicators. Peru</p>	<p>World Governance Indicators (WGI)</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>and Colombia perform better than Ecuador in terms of Voice and Accountability, Regulatory Quality and Rule of Law. But Ecuador scores better than Peru on Government Effectiveness and Control of Corruption.</p> <p>Note: Percentile rank among all countries ranges from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest) rank, where the higher the percentiles, the better the governance.</p>	
	<p>Corruption Perception Index (2023):</p> <p>Score: 34/100</p> <p>Rank: 115/180 countries</p> <p>More than two-thirds of countries score below 50 on this year's CPI, with an average score of just 43. Ecuador's score of 34 and positions it 115th out of 180 countries and territories. Ecuador scores slightly higher than Peru and lower than Colombia, its neighboring countries.</p> <p>Neighboring countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peru: 33/100 • Colombia: 40/100 <p>Note: Based on 0 = Highly Corrupt, 100 = Very Clean.</p>	<p><u>Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI)</u></p>
	<p>Basel Anti-Money Laundering Index (2023):</p> <p>Rank: 80/152 countries</p> <p>Overall score: 5.06/10</p> <p>In 2023, Ecuador ranked among the top half of the countries assessed for the Basel AML Index with a score that indicates a moderate risk, i.e., vulnerability to money laundering and terrorist financing. In 2020, 2021 and 2023, Ecuador ranked higher, indicating a</p>	<p><u>Basel Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Index</u></p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>higher risk, than neighboring countries Peru and Colombia; there is no information about 2022.</p> <p>Neighboring countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peru: 4.81/10 • Colombia: 4.74/10 <p>Note: Ranking is out of 152 countries; top possible score is 0 (low risk,), lowest score is 10 (high risk).</p>	
	<p>Global Rights Index (2024):</p> <p>Rating: 5 (No guarantee of rights)</p> <p>The ITUC Global Rights Index ranks Ecuador as one of the 10 worst countries in the world for workers in 2024. Workers faced serious anti-union discrimination when trying to form or join unions. The ITUC reports on multiple instances of workers receiving death threats for attempting to form a union or carry out union activities. In other instances, workers were dismissed. Meanwhile, the authorities also hindered union formation by rejecting union registration applications without justification.</p> <p>Neighboring country Colombia is also rated 5 but is not listed among the ten worst countries in the world for workers, although Colombia is reputed to be the deadliest country in the world for trade unionists. Peru is rated 4 (Systematic violations of rights). The average rating for the Americas is 3.52.</p> <p>Neighboring countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peru: 4 • Colombia: 5 <p>Note: Countries are ranked from 1 to 5+, where five plus corresponds to “no guarantee of rights due to</p>	<p>International Trade Union Conference (ITUC) Global Rights Index (GRI)</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	the breakdown of the law” and 1 corresponds to “sporadic violations of rights”.	
Education and general literacy levels in a country	<p>Adult literacy rates, among the population aged 15 years and older (2022): 94%</p> <p>Adult female literacy rate (2022): 93%</p> <p>Adult male literacy rate (2022): 95%</p> <p>Comparison to neighboring countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peru (2020): 94% • Colombia (2020): 96% 	World Bank Open Data
	<p>Primary school completion rates, total (% of relevant age group) (2020): 100%</p> <p>Primary completion rates, female (% of relevant age group) (2022): 101%</p> <p>Primary completion rates, male (% of relevant age group) (2022): 99%</p> <p>Comparison to neighboring countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peru (2022): 103% • Colombia (2021): 99% <p>Note: “There are many reasons why the primary completion rate can exceed 100 percent. The numerator may include late entrants and overage children who have repeated one or more grades of primary education as well as children who entered school early, while the denominator is the number of children at the entrance age for the last grade of primary education.”</p>	World Bank Open Data
	Lower secondary education completion rates, total (% of relevant age group) (2022): 96.8%	World Bank Open Data

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Lower secondary completion rates, female (% of relevant age group) (2022): 98.0%</p> <p>Lower secondary completion rates, male (% of relevant age group) (2022): 95.7%</p> <p>Comparison to neighboring countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peru (2022): 90.2% • Colombia (2021): 85.7% <p>Note: “There are many reasons why the rate can exceed 100 percent. The numerator may include late entrants and overage children who have repeated one or more grades of lower secondary education as well as children who entered school early, while the denominator is the number of children at the entrance age for the last grade of lower secondary education.”</p>	
	<p>School enrolment, tertiary (2020): 58% gross</p> <p>School enrolment, tertiary, female (2020): 64%</p> <p>School enrolment, tertiary, male (2020): 52%</p> <p>Comparison to neighboring countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peru (2017): 71% • Colombia (2021): 58% <p>Note: “There are many reasons why the rate can exceed 100 percent. The numerator may include late entrants and overage children who have repeated one or more grades of lower secondary education as well as children who entered school early, while the denominator is the number of children at the entrance age for the last grade of lower secondary education.”</p>	<p>World Bank Open Data</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
<p>Attitudes towards migrant workers in a country's population</p>	<p>Migrant Acceptance Index score: 3.51/9 (2019)</p> <p>Comparison to neighboring countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colombia: 3.98/9 (2019) • Peru: 3.61/9 (2019) <p>Ecuador's 2019 score of 3.51 out of 9, a decrease from 6.13/9 in 2016, indicates that people in Ecuador have become less accepting of migrants and are less accepting of migrants than on average for all countries assessed, with a world score of 5.21/9 in 2019.</p> <p>Note: Based on 138 countries surveyed in 2016; U.S. surveyed in 2017; and updated in 2019 (data not publicly available for all countries); top possible score is 9.0.</p>	<p>Gallup Migrant Acceptance Index</p>
<p>Legislation and regulation to protect migrant workers</p>	<p>Coverage of legal provisions under the labor laws</p> <p>The Organic Law of Human Mobility, reformed in January 2021, recognizes the rights of foreigners residing in Ecuador, including those that are subject to international protection, to work and to have access to social security. Under Article 51, foreign residents of Ecuador have the right to work in the country and can access social security. Under Article 56, foreigners may conduct business and trade within the country for 180 days. Organic Law, of 18 January 2021, Amendment of the Organic Law of Human Mobility, of 5th January 2017, 2021</p> <p>However, Article 51 of the Organic Law of Human Mobility does not apply to foreigners in irregular or illegal situations or to tourists. If an employer hires an employee under irregular circumstances, the employer will be sanctioned using a penalty fee up to 20 salaries (based on the basic income salary). If a foreigner works illegally in Ecuador, they can be fined</p>	<p>Organic Law, of 18 January 2021, Amendment of the Organic Law of Human Mobility, of 5th January 2017 (original: Ley Orgánica, de 18 de enero de 2021, Reformatoria de la Ley Orgánica de Movilidad Humana, de 5 de enero de 2017), 2021</p> <p>Venezuela Migrante, 2020, Twelve rights for Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador (original: Doce</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>and, in case of repeated offences, deported. Venezuela Migrante, 2020</p> <p>According to the 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report, legislation to protect vulnerable migrant workers is not sufficient. Employers are required to register the contracts of foreign workers to allow authorities to verify that working conditions and pay are adequate. However, Ecuador has failed to prohibit several practices that can leave migrant workers vulnerable to forced labor. Specifically, Ecuador has not prohibited the charging of recruitment fees to workers or the withholding of workers' passports, and it has not afforded migrant workers the right to switch employers without first obtaining special permissions or losing their work permit. US Department of State, 2024</p>	<p>derechos para migrantes venezolanos en Ecuador)</p> <p>US Department of State, 2024, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report</p>
	<p>Access to social protection, health, and education</p> <p>The Organic Law of Human Mobility, reformed in January 2021, grants prioritized and specialized attention to foreigners in a situation of human mobility for priority attention groups, including the elderly, children and adolescents, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and those suffering from catastrophic diseases. Organic Law, of 18 January 2021, Amendment of the Organic Law of Human Mobility, of 5th January 2017, 2021</p> <p>According to the ILO, in Ecuador, health is a right guaranteed by the state. The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (articles 3, 9, 43, and 362) and the Organic Law of Human Mobility (article 52) establish that foreigners have the right to free access to all levels of health care, including procedures and services. Medical assistance is provided through the public health framework to the general population and those who are not protected by any of the</p>	<p>Organic Law, of 18 January 2021, Amendment of the Organic Law of Human Mobility, of 5th January 2017 (original: Ley Orgánica, de 18 de enero de 2021, Reformatoria de la Ley Orgánica de Movilidad Humana, de 5 de enero de 2017), 2021</p> <p>Barriers to access the Social Protection System faced by the migrant and refugee</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>institutions of the contributory social security system. Article 52 recognizes the right of access to health systems, for which public or private institutions that provide health services cannot, in any case, refuse to provide health care. Under Article 58, foreigners can apply for a humanitarian visa if they are in a vulnerable position. In addition, Article 90 offers international protection for foreigners in Ecuador and ensures access to equal rights. This protection is given to refugees or people seeking asylum.</p> <p>The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) considers human mobility a right and includes 58 articles for people in human mobility situations. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 9 recognizes that foreigners must enjoy the same rights and obligations as Ecuadorians. • Article 11 states that everyone is equal and shall enjoy the same rights, duties, and opportunities. It sanctions all forms of discrimination. • Article 41 recognizes the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. <p>Ecuador’s National Plan of Human Mobility 2017–2021 focuses on promoting the exercise of people's rights in human mobility in all its dimensions. It seeks to promote universal citizenship and free mobility inside the international sphere; it will generate conditions to promote orderly and safe migration and strengthen people’s rights. It defends diversity, integration, and safe migration.</p> <p>The ‘National Agenda for Equality in Human Mobility 2017-2021’ contains public policies aimed at reducing</p>	<p>population in Ecuador (original: <i>Barreras para el acceso al Sistema de Protección Social que enfrenta la población migrante y refugiada en Ecuador</i>), International Labour Organization, 2022</p> <p>Venezuela Migrante, 2020, Twelve rights for Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador (original: <i>Doce derechos para migrantes venezolanos en Ecuador</i>)</p> <p>UNHCR ACNUR, 2022, Una evaluación a personas refugiadas y migrantes venezolanas en Ecuador revela sus necesidades más críticas (An evaluation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>socio-economic gaps, guaranteeing rights, promoting peaceful coexistence, and non-discriminating against people in human mobility, specifically for children and adolescents.</p> <p>The ‘Plan for Attention and Protection of the Venezuelan Population in Human Mobility in Ecuador, 2020-2021’ proposes strategic lines of action in areas of socio-economic inclusion, attention, and protection; access to services such as health and education; international cooperation; and multilateral management. International Labour Organization, 2022</p> <p>Article 48 of the Organic Law of Human Mobility states that all foreign children can access Ecuador's education system without a visa or passport. The only required document is the birth certificate. Venezuela Migrante, 2020</p> <p>Despite the protections outlined above, refugees and migrant workers from Venezuela still face barriers according to the Interregional Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. The Joint Assessment Needs 2022 report states that immigrants in Ecuador face significant barriers to fulfilling necessities; almost three-quarters live in irregular migration status; 67% do not have access to food; 70% do not have housing; 26% have public health; and 18% have education. Most people surveyed (79%) are employed informally, and most (72%) earn a maximum of US \$84 per month. UNHCR ACNUR, 2022</p>	<p>reveals their most critical needs)</p>
	<p>Bilateral MOUs or other agreements specifically designed to protect migrant workers</p> <p>Ecuador has bilateral agreements to coordinate migration processes with several countries, including</p>	<p>IOM, May 2018, Migration Governance</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	Spain, Belgium, Chile, Peru and Argentina, as well as bilateral agreements labor agreements, for example, with Spain. In addition, Ecuador has memorandums of understanding on migration with other countries such as Guatemala. IOM, May 2018	Snapshot: Republic of Ecuador
Ratification of relevant international conventions and domestication of conventions into a national legal framework (Forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor)	Convention No. 29 – In Force	Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
	Convention No. 105 – In Force	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
	Convention No. 138 – In Force	Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
	Convention No. 182 – In Force	Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
	Protocol 29 – Not ratified	Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (P29)

Indicator	Description	Sources
	Palermo Protocol - Ratified	<u>Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the 'Palermo Protocol')</u>
	Convention No. 188 – Not ratified	<u>ILO Convention 188 on Work in Fishing;</u>
	PSMA – Party to the PSMA	<u>The FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)</u>
	<p>Domestication into national legislation</p> <p>Article 46 of the Constitution and articles 82 and 95 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code (CNA) define 15 years as the minimum age to start working in all areas, including domestic service. The minimum age for hazardous work is set out in the CNA as 18 years. In the case of adolescent work (between 15 and 17 years of age), there is a limit of 6 hours of work per day for 5 days a week if it does not harm the right to education and complies with all legal and labor guarantees as mechanisms to protect their integrity and ensure their development. Additionally, parental authorization is required. <u>US Department of Labor, 2024</u> , <u>Constitucion de la Republica del Ecuador, 2008</u> , <u>Codigo De La Niñez y Adolescencia</u></p>	<p><u>US Department of Labor, 2024, 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor</u></p> <p><u>CONSTITUCION DE LA REPUBLICA DEL ECUADOR 2008 (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008), LEXIS, 2008</u></p> <p><u>Código de la Niñez y Adolescentes (Childhood and</u></p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Hazardous occupations and activities for children are listed in Articles 5, 6, and 8 of Resolution No. 016 of 2008, and Article 5 of the Ministerial Accord MDT-2015-0131. US Department of Labor, 2024</p> <p>According to the US Department of State’s 2024 Trafficking in Persons report, “Articles 91 and 92 of the 2014 Criminal Code criminalized all forms of labor trafficking and some forms of sex trafficking and prescribed penalties ranging from 13 to 16 years’ imprisonment. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those for other grave crimes, such as kidnapping. Article 91 defined trafficking broadly to include all labor exploitation, child pornography, child labor, illegal adoption, and the sale of tissues, fluids, and genetic materials of living persons. The definition of trafficking in Article 91 correctly established the use of force, fraud, or coercion as an essential element of an adult trafficking offense. However, the law did not include a necessary provision indicating that the elements of force, fraud, or coercion were unnecessary in the case of sex trafficking offenses involving child victims. Therefore, some forms of child sex trafficking offenses were not explicitly criminalized under Article 91.” US Department of State, 2024</p> <p>Regarding the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), which Ecuador acceded to in February 2019, the European Commission reports that the “current national legal framework does not provide for a comprehensive implementation of the PSMA. Ecuadorian authorities reported for instance that there is no legally established mechanism to ensure the control of transshipments in ports.” European Commission, 05 November 2019</p>	<p>Adolescence Code), Ley No. 2002.100</p> <p>US Department of State, 2024, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report</p> <p>European Commission, 05 November 2019, COMMISSION DECISION of 30 October 2019 notifying the Republic of Ecuador of the possibility of being identified as a non-cooperating third country in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing</p> <p>FAO, December 2024, ‘FAO assists Ecuador in traceability of fishery products’</p> <p>OECD, 2022, Responsible Business Conduct Policy Review Ecuador</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Nonetheless, efforts are being made to support the implementation of the PSMA. Experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) visited Ecuador in December 2024 to support the country with implementing traceability of fishery products in line with the provisions of the PSMA and complementary international instruments to combat IUU fishing. The FAO experts supported the government in reviewing the country’s legal framework for traceability and assessing its technical implementation. FAO, December 2024</p> <p>In a 2022 OECD report, Ecuador is cited to be the first country to ratify the 27 legally binding international human rights instruments listed by the United Nations (UN) Treaty Section, plus the nine-core international human rights instruments and optional protocols relating to these instruments based on UN and government sources. Ecuador has further adopted and is participating in the UN human right systems’ inquiry, individual complaints and interstate communication procedures as well as ratifying most of the human right treaties of the Inter-American Human Rights System, most recently ratifying the Instrument Against Discrimination and Intolerance in 2021. OECD, 2022</p>	
Regulation of recruitment	<p>Country’s government-sanctioned oversight mechanisms (regulations, accreditation schemes, inspection, etc.) of recruitment agents</p> <p>Evidence of Ecuador’s government-sanctioned oversight mechanisms for recruitment agents has not been found.</p> <p>A UN periodic report from 2017 states that “It is not feasible to ratify Convention No. 181, given that it</p>	<p>United Nations, 2017, Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Consideration of reports submitted by States</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>provides for the operation of private employment agencies, which do not exist in Ecuador.” UN, 2017</p> <p>Since the implementation of Constituent Mandate 8 in 2008, the outsourcing of labor through third-party agencies is largely restricted. Defensoría Pública del Ecuador, n.d. It is unclear how this is implemented and enforced in practice.</p> <p>There are ministerial resolutions that allow for the use of certain types of short-term or outsourcing labor contracts, with specific provisions for the flower, palm, fishing, livestock, and construction sectors. US Department of State, 2024</p>	<p>Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, Marco legal nacional, Decretos, n.d.</p> <p>United States Department of State, 2024, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Ecuador</p>
<p>Enforcement of legislation for forced labor, human trafficking, hazardous child labor, migrant worker protections, recruitment and working conditions</p>	<p>TIP Report</p> <p>The United States Department of State’s 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report assigns Ecuador a Tier 2 TIP Ranking, stating “The Government of Ecuador does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period; therefore Ecuador remained on Tier 2.”</p> <p>Efforts to address human trafficking included an increase in suspects investigated for trafficking crimes, an increased number of police workers working on trafficking cases, coordination with foreign governments to investigate and repatriate victims, identification of victims of forced criminality, and completion of a protocol for protection of victims in the witness-assistance program.</p>	<p>US Department of State, 2024, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report</p> <p>US Department of Labor, 2023, 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor – Ecuador</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>However, officials prosecuted and convicted fewer traffickers, and specialized services were not provided for adults or boys and girls younger than 12.</p> <p>Law enforcement is hindered by corruption and official complicity in human trafficking crimes. Yet, the TIP Report states that the government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of complicit government employees in the past year and cases from previous years have yet to be resolved.</p> <p>In addition, the TIP report highlights concern from NGOs and some government officials that the Ministry of Labor failed to adequately investigate forced labor. US Department of State, 2024</p> <p>A lack of resources in Ecuador’s labor inspectorate, including transportation and equipment, hinders the enforcement of labor laws. The US Department of Labor suggests that Ecuador should increase the number of labor inspectors from 160 (2023) to 556 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force and should improve funding to the labor inspectorate to enable inspectors to better carry out their duties. US Department of Labor, 2023</p>	
	<p>Child labor laws</p> <p>The Ecuadorian government has set up institutional mechanisms to enforce child labor laws and regulations, but there are gaps in enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement, such as a lack of human resources.</p> <p>The Ministry of Labor (MOL), Attorney General’s Office (AGO), and Ministry of Interior (MOI) enforce child labor laws. The MOL enforces child labor laws in</p>	<p>US Department of Labor, 2024, 2023, Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor – Ecuador</p> <p>US Department of Labor, 2023, 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>the formal sector through the Directorate for the Attention to Priority Groups.</p> <p>Separate from the MOL, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) conducts routine inspections in the informal sector for child labor. US Department of Labor, 2024</p> <p>In 2022, the MOI established the National Directorate for the Investigation of Crimes Against Women, Family, Children, Adolescents, Trafficking in Persons, and Smuggling, which oversees law enforcement departments responsible for labor and sex trafficking cases involving children. The primary anti-trafficking law enforcement unit responsible for investigating all crimes against children, including labor and sex trafficking is UNIPEN. The Ministry of Tourism’s Code of Conduct for tourism industry workers includes actions intended to prevent sexual exploitation of minors in tourist establishments.</p> <p>Although there are comprehensive laws in place covering child labor, enforcement is hampered by a likely insufficient number of labor inspectors that tend to focus on the formal sector, have both insufficient resources such as transportation and equipment as well as knowledge and training on child labor and child labor laws. In addition, regulations concerning hazardous work are not being enforced equally in rural areas and family-run operations. US Department of Labor, 2022</p> <p>In December 2022, Ecuador started the campaign "Solidarity without Borders" that has allocated US\$410 million for developing various social programs, of which US\$15 million is to eradicate child labor and begging. Secretaría General de Comunicación de la Presidencia, 2022</p>	<p>Child Labor – Ecuador</p> <p>Secretaría General de Comunicación de la Presidencia, 2022, El Gobierno emprende acciones para erradicar el trabajo infantil y la mendicidad (General Secretariat of Communications of the President's Office, Government takes action to eradicate child labour and begging)</p> <p>Ministerio de Inclusión, Económica y Social, 2023, NORMA TÉCNICA DEL SERVICIO DE ERRADICACIÓN DEL TRABAJO INFANTIL (TECHNICAL STANDARD OF THE SERVICE ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOR)</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>In 2023, Ecuador presented the "Service Technical Norm for Eradicating Child Labor." These standards aim to standardize, regulate, and regularize services focused on eradicating child labor. Both public and private providers will carry them out throughout the national territory. These norms are in accordance with the Constitution, the National Development Plan 2017–2021, the Childhood and Adolescence Code, the Labor Code, and other national and international norms applicable to this effect. Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social, 2023</p>	
	<p>Global Slavery Index (2023):</p> <p>The 2023 GSI methodology states the Government Response Rating is “based on data collected on 141 indicators that are relevant to understanding how each government is tracking towards achieving 42 activities organized into five milestones. Each milestone represents an aspect of a strong government response to modern slavery; for example, supporting survivors to exit and remain out of modern slavery”.</p> <p>Est. no. of people living in modern slavery: 135,000</p> <p>Prevalence Index Rank: 7.6 per 1,000 people</p> <p>Vulnerability to Modern Slavery: 48/100</p> <p>Government Response Rating: 51/100</p> <p>Note: The GSI government responses to modern slavery is presented as a percentage. Higher percentage reflects more action being taken and a higher percentage on the GSI is assumed to mean lower risk by the SSRT.</p>	<p><u>Global Slavery Index’s overall ratings</u></p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Documentation from national labor inspection and other law enforcement agencies</p> <p>The Ministry of Labor in Ecuador, 2017–2021, presented a project to work on the eradication of child labor (PETI). It seeks to create new public policies, programs, and actions to prevent and eradicate child labor. It has a social perspective of co-responsibility and restitution of violated rights for children and adolescents. Ministerio del Trabajo, 2019</p> <p>In 2023, Ecuador presented the "Service Technical Norm for Eradicating Child Labor." These standards aim to standardize, regulate, and regularize services focused on eradicating child labor. Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, 2023</p> <p>In February 2023, a new anti-trafficking law was approved in Ecuador to extend victims' rights. The recently approved legislation fills gaps, strengthening coordination between state institutions and civil society. It provides the establishment of mechanisms to prevent and combat human trafficking and to protect and assist victims based on human rights and under a gender, intercultural, intersectional, human security, territorial, intergenerational, and human mobility approach. OEA, 2023</p> <p>Ecuador implemented a law against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, which establishes guidelines for strengthening investigation and prosecution actions as well as determining specific measures for the protection, care, and assistance of victims and potential victims of the crimes in question. Ministry of the Interior, 2023</p> <p>Ecuador approved the Organic Law on the Right to Human Care, whose objective is to regulate and protect the right to care for working people with</p>	<p>Ministerio del Trabajo, 2019, Proyecto de erradicación del trabajo infantil (Child Labor Eradication Project)</p> <p>Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, 2023, Norma Técnica del Servicio Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil (Technical Standard of the Service for the Eradication of Child Labor) v2 2023</p> <p>OEA, 2023, Nueva ley contra la trata de personas entra en vigor en Ecuador ampliando los derechos de las víctimas (New law against human trafficking comes into force in Ecuador, expanding the rights of victims)</p> <p>Ministry of the Interior, 2023, Ministerio del Interior participó en</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>respect to their children, direct dependents, and other members of their families who clearly need their protection. BDO Ecuador, 2023</p>	<p>la creación de la Ley Contra la Trata de Personas y Tráfico Ilícito de Migrantes (Ministry of the Interior participated in the creation of the Law Against Human Trafficking and Illicit Smuggling of Migrants)</p> <p>BDO Ecuador, 2023, Ley Orgánica del Derecho al Cuidado Humano (Organic Law of the Right to Human Care)</p>
	<p>ILO</p> <p>Comments from the ILO’s Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) have included several direct requests to the government of Ecuador:</p> <p>2022</p> <p>In relation to Forced Labour Convention no. 29, the committee requested on steps taken, results achieved, and difficulties identified in relation to the Plan of Action against trafficking in persons in Ecuador 2019–30. In addition, the Ecuadorian government was requested to provide information and examples of coordination of different institutions on the activities of the Interinstitutional Coordinating Committee for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Illicit Trafficking of Migrants and for the</p>	<p>Direct Request (CEACR) - adopted 2022, published 111st ILC session (2023)</p> <p>Direct Request (CEACR) - adopted 2022, published 111st ILC session (2023)</p> <p>Direct Request (CEACR) - adopted 2021, published 110th ILC session (2022)</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Protection of Victims. Direct Request (CEACR) - adopted 2022, published 111st ILC session (2023)</p> <p>2021</p> <p>In relation to Abolition of Forced Labour Convention no. 105, the Committee reiterated its request to clarify whether compulsory community work can be imposed by a judge without the consent of the convicted person, and if so, a specification of the offences for which compulsory community work can be imposed. Direct Request (CEACR) - adopted 2022, published 111st ILC session (2023)</p> <p>In relation to Convention no. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, the Committee encouraged the Ecuadorian government to continue its efforts to combat child labor and recognizing that child labor in the informal economy can also be fought through enforcement mechanisms, and labor inspection. The committee requested to take necessary measures to adapt and reinforce the labor inspection services and ensure appropriate training for labor inspectors to improve their capacity to detect cases of child labor, and to continue to ensure that people that employ children in violation of the law are punished.</p> <p>In addition, the Committee requested the Ecuadorian government to continue its effort to increase the school attendance rate of children under 15 years of age, and take measures in the near future to adopt legislation that establishes a system of individual permits for children under 15 years of age who work in activities such as artistic performances, that limits working hours and prescribe the conditions under which such employment or work is allowed. Direct</p>	

Indicator	Description	Sources
	Request (CEACR) - adopted 2021, published 110th ILC session (2022)	
Evidence of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor in the country	<p>General evidence from other sectors</p> <p>The US Department of State’s 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report stated that over the last five years traffickers have exploited victims in both Ecuador and abroad. “In Ecuador adults and children are exploited in sex trafficking and forced labor within the country, including in domestic service; begging; banana, abaca hemp, and palm plantations; floriculture; shrimp farming; fishing; sweatshops; street vending; mining; and other areas of the informal economy.” US Department of State, 2024</p> <p>According to the 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, children mostly work in the agricultural sector (85%), and have been linked to the production of bananas, rice, and flowers, and raising poultry, hogs, and bovine. US Department of Labor, 2024</p> <p>The 2022 Findings also identify children working in the production of coffee, palm oil, vegetables sugarcane and citrus, that are primarily produced for domestic consumption. Children use chemical products and machetes, which are considered hazardous by national law or regulation. Other agricultural sectors include fishing and the carving and treading of abaca fiber, which are also both considered hazardous. Services and Industry make up the respective remaining 10% and 5%, in areas such domestic work, food services, working in auto shops, street work and garbage scavenging, gold and small-scale mining, production and construction brick and brickwork. Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor, sometimes as result of human trafficking, include commercial sexual exploitation, use in illicit activities,</p>	<p>US Department of State, 2024, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report</p> <p>US Department of Labor, 2024, 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor – Ecuador</p> <p>US Department of Labor, 2023, 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor – Ecuador</p> <p>US Department of Labor, 2024, 2024 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>including drug trafficking and robbery, recruitment of children by Colombian non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict. Furthermore, children are employed in the worst forms of child labor in the production of pornography, and forced labor in small scale banana, hemp, and palm plantations, cacao, coffee, floriculture, mining, and in domestic work, street vending, and begging. US Department of Labor, 2023</p> <p>Goods identified as produced by child labor include farm animals (bovines, hogs, and poultry), rice, bananas, bricks, flowers, and gold. Children that work in agriculture and who look after farm animals may be exposed to hazards such as exposure to chemicals, exposure to dangerous tools, and animal bites. US Department of Labor, 2024</p>	

Table 1: Ecuador - Country-level indicators

Ecuador: Seafood industry-level indicators

Indicator	Description	Sources
<p>Direct evidence of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor</p>	<p>Ecuador’s seafood industry has been linked to human trafficking, forced labor, forced child labor, and hazardous child labor by the US Department of State and US Department of Labor in the past five years:</p> <p>The US Department of State’s 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report states that human traffickers exploit Ecuadorian men, women, and children in sex trafficking and forced labor in several industries including fishing and shrimp farming. The report links the correlated risk of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing to workers’ increased vulnerability to forced labor in the industry including</p>	<p>US Department of State, 2024, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report</p> <p>US Department of Labor, 2024, 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Ecuador</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>on foreign-flagged vessels. These vessel operators often subject workers to forced labor and coerce workers to cross into sovereign territories illegally, increasing their risk of criminalization. IUU fishing has also been linked to loss of livelihoods for Ecuadorian coastal artisanal fishing communities, who could become displaced and trafficked into alternative sectors due to environmental degradation. US Department of State, 2024</p> <p>In addition, the US Department of Labor’s 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor states that children work in fishing, which is considered in national legislation to be hazardous work. The report also states that migrant and refugee children from Colombia and Venezuela are vulnerable to exploitation in the fishing industry. No further information or references are provided. US Department of Labor, 2024</p> <p>The 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor report cites the 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report and the US Embassy in Quito as references for children working in fishing. Migrant and refugee children from Colombia and Venezuela are reported to be vulnerable to exploitative labor practices in some parts of the fishing sector in the coastal region of Ecuador. US Department of Labor, 2023</p> <p>This follows an earlier report from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 2020 that also reported on migrant and refugee children from Colombia and Venezuela being vulnerable to exploitative labor practices in some parts of the fishing sector in Ecuador’s coastal region, and that there is insufficient identification and response to forced labor in the fishing sector. The Venezuelan migration crisis and the unforeseen impact of the</p>	<p>US Department of Labor, 2023, 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Ecuador</p> <p>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2020, Human Trafficking in the Seafood Supply Chain, Report to Congress</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>COVID-19 pandemic are exacerbating the risks of forced labor in Ecuador. According to the 2020 Report to Congress, Ecuador is one of several countries or territories considered most at risk for human trafficking and forced labor in their seafood sector. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2020</p> <p>These reports do not provide further information regarding the alleged human rights abuses, or the types of activities performed by children in the seafood industry, and while they are based on information from a variety of sources including in-country contacts, they cite few publicly available sources, making it difficult for the SSRT analyst to corroborate this evidence.</p>	
<p>ILO indicators of forced labor and ILO R190 definition of hazardous child labor</p>	<p>The US Department of Labor’s 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor report indicates that children are working in the fishing industry. The source for this claim is traceable back to the 2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which cites a 2013 report by Ecuador’s Ministry of Work and Labor Relations (Ministerio de Trabajo y Relaciones Laborales) that uses data on child labor from the 2010 population census. US Department of Labor, 2022 , US Department of Labor, 2018</p> <p>This claim is thus based on information that is over a decade old.</p> <p>The 2013 national report states, of the working children aged from 5 to 17 years, 31.96% (81,264 children and adolescents) worked in activities related to “agriculture, forestry and fisheries”. Among those, nearly 27% were aged 17 and nearly 88% were aged 13 years or over. Most (77%) of children identified as working in the sector were male. The report did not</p>	<p>US Department of Labor, 2023, 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Ecuador</p> <p>US Department of Labor, 2019, 2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Ecuador</p> <p>Ministerio de Trabajo y Relaciones Laborales, 2013, PETI - Proyecto de Erradicación del</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>detail the types of activities performed by working children or provide a breakdown of the number of children working in fishing. While the Ministry report made no direct links to specific fishing activities, it identifies coastal provinces Guayas and Manabi, both of which have strong links to Ecuador’s tuna industry as well as shrimp farming, and these provinces had the highest number of children working in “Agriculture, forestry and fisheries”. Ministerio de Trabajo y Relaciones Laborales, 2013</p> <p>There is some evidence relating to the impacts of crime upon fishers’ vulnerability to forced labor, though the reports are now 7 to 10 years old.</p> <p>Research by Verité indicates that fishers in Ecuador are vulnerable to debt bondage when affected by piracy:</p> <p>“There were also reports that pirates robbed fishermen of their boats, catches, or motors, making them vulnerable to debt bondage. In some cases, their employers deducted the amount of these goods from their pay. In other cases, self-employed fishermen had obtained loans from informal money lenders for their boats, and upon losing them, had to work in fishing for prolonged periods to pay off the debt.” Verité, 2016</p> <p>In addition, Verité found that fishermen are sometimes forced to traffic drugs or subjected to killings or intimidation by drug traffickers Verité, 2016</p> <p>Media reports describe how Ecuadorian fishers are vulnerable to exploitation by drug traffickers, being intimidated into drug trafficking or lured with</p>	<p>Trabajo Infantil 2014–2017</p> <p>Verité, 2016, Fishing and Aquaculture</p> <p>InSight Crime, 14 March 2014, ‘Ecuador’s Cocaine Pirates: Part I’</p> <p>InSight Crime, 25 February 2016, ‘Ecuador: 300 Fishermen Arrested for Drug Trafficking in 3 Years’</p> <p>InSight Crime, 28 June 2017, ‘Ecuador Fishermen Jailed Abroad Illustrative of ‘Drug War’ Justice’</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>promises of cash payments. InSight Crime, 2014 , InSight Crime, 2016; InSight Crime, 2017</p> <p>Fishers are reported to have been arrested on drug trafficking charges in the US and Central America, including fishers from the coastal provinces of Manabi, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Santa Elena, and El Oro. InSight Crime, 2016</p>	
<p>Fishing, aquaculture and processing regulations and policies</p>	<p>Labor-related fishing and aquaculture legislation</p> <p>Ecuador’s seafood industry is regulated by the Organic Law for the Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador, which was approved in April 2020. Included in the law is a new sanctioning system. The law also contains the country’s first legislation specific to aquaculture. European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries, 2023</p> <p>While the new Organic Law regulating the seafood industry does not cover labor-related legislation, it does address the issue of IUU fishing. The new sanctioning regime divides infractions for both aquaculture and fishing into minor violations, serious violations, and very serious violations. Organic Law for the Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador, April 2020</p> <p>Other related regulations and policies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, September 2015. • The Code of Conduct for Responsible Management of the Ecuadorian Tuna Value Chain (voluntary). 	<p>European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries, 2023, MISSION REPORT</p> <p>Organic Law for the Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador, April 2020</p> <p>Ministerio de Comercio Exterior, August 2017</p> <p>ILO NATLEX Database</p> <p>The Outlaw Ocean Project, October 2024, Ecuador, Global Fishing Legislative Database</p> <p>Global Slavery Index (GSI) 2018 - Fishing</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>The Ministry of Foreign Trade (Ministerio de Comercio Exterior) identifies five pieces of national and international legislation relevant to labor in fishing in Ecuador:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention No. 112 Minimum Age (Fishermen), 1959 • Convention No. 126 Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen), 1966 • Child Labor Eradication Project (PETI) 2014-2017 • Organic Code on Labour, 2005 • Resolution No C D 333 – Regulation for the Workplace Risk Audit System, 2010. <p>Ministerio de Comercio Exterior, August 2017</p> <p>The ILO NATLEX database lists 2 laws and 2 regulations relating to fishers. ILO NATLEX Database</p> <p>In addition, The Outlaw Ocean Project’s Global Fishing Legislative Database identifies one law relating to labor rules, offenses and infractions for Ecuador: Resolution SPTMF 113/13. Article 3 of the Resolution requires that Ecuadorian workers must constitute no less than 50% of an Ecuadorian vessel’s crew. The Outlaw Ocean Project, October 2024</p> <p>The 2018 Global Slavery Index (GSI) for fishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Fisheries Policy (catch outside EEZ, distant water fishing, and subsidies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medium Risk 	<p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p> <p>Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, 2.- Marco legal nacional Leyes, n.d.</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wealth and Institutional Capacity (GDP per capita, value landed per fisher, and unreported landings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medium Risk <p>No specific labor-regulation in relation to aquaculture was found.</p> <p>According to an impact assessment by Impact Buying, the “Código del Trabajo” protects workers, both in aquaculture and companies further down the supply chain. Impact Buying, 2023</p> <p>The Código del Trabajo applies to all employment relationships between employers and workers in Ecuador and sets out requirement for topics such as working hours and overtime, wages and salaries, including payment of minimum wage established by the National Salary Council (CONADES) or by the Ministry of Labor Relations, leave and vacations, employer obligations in relation to social security and safe working conditions, and conditions for collective bargaining, among others. Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, n.d.</p>	
Enforcement and implementation of industry-specific regulations and policies	<p>There is evidence for the implementation of a Traceability, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance System for the fishing industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “252 fishing inspectors who control everything from fishing ports to processing plants.” Ministerio de Comercio Exterior, 2017 • “In order to avoid child labor in the fisheries sector, 481 control activities were completed, and more than 15,000 people were trained 	<p>Informe sobre el Sector Atunero Ecuatoriano (Report on the Ecuadorian Tuna Sector) Ministerio de Comercio Exterior, 2017</p> <p>Voluntad política y presupuesto para salir de la “tarjeta amarilla” (Political</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>through seminars and home/enterprises visits. (2016)". Ministerio de Comercio Exterior, 2017</p> <p>However, capacity for implementation is limited. Although the Government increased the number of fishing inspectors hired nationwide in 2016, the number was later reduced due to financial cuts to just 60 inspectors for the entire Ecuadorian fleet and foreign-flagged vessels unloading in Ecuador. Proanioyassociados, 2019</p> <p>The issuance of a “yellow card” against Ecuador by the European Commission in October 2019 highlights the country's failure to properly implement and enforce fishing industry regulations. European Commission, 2019</p> <p>After five years of implementing multiple measures to address IUU fishing, Ecuador’s yellow card status was scheduled for review in September 2024. America Economia, 6 May 2024</p>	<p>will and budget to get out of the "yellow card) Proanioyassociados, 2019</p> <p>Commission notifies the Republic of Ecuador over the need to step up action to fight illegal fishing, European Commission, 2019</p> <p>America Economia, 6 May 2024, European Union would withdraw the yellow card from Ecuador's fishing sector in September 2024</p>
<p>Access to workplaces for third-party monitors (trade union representatives, on-board observers, etc.)</p>	<p>Unknown.</p> <p>Available information regarding access for third-party monitors only relates to fishery observers who collate data relating to the management of the fishery.</p>	
<p>Worker access to a functional grievance mechanism</p>	<p>Unknown.</p> <p>The Codigo del Trabajo covers handling of individual and collective labor conflicts. Defensoría Pública del</p>	<p>Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, 2.- Marco legal nacional Leyes, n.d.</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, n.d. It is unclear whether the mechanism is functional and used by workers.</p>	
<p>Access to join a trade union</p>	<p>There are no legal impediments for fishers or seafood processing workers to access workers' unions. Participation in trade unions is open to all, including migrant workers. UN Human Rights, September 2017</p> <p>Furthermore, no evidence of violations related to the seafood industry was found. However, access to workers' unions in Ecuador is rated poorly overall by the Global Rights Index (see country-level indicators). Ecuador is one of the 10 worst countries in the world for working people. ITUC, 2024</p> <p>An impact assessment conducted by Impact Buying states that workers in important economic sectors in Ecuador, in particular export sectors like shrimp, are encouraged by the Ministry of Worker Relations to establish and run collective organisations at the company level, such as worker associations, cooperatives, or works councils. The rate of unionisation in the shrimp sector is low, with works councils primarily used in shrimp hatcheries, farms, and processing plants. Impact Buying, 2023</p>	<p>Committee on the rights of migrant workers considers the report of Ecuador, UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, September 2017</p> <p>ITUC, 2024, Ecuador</p> <p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p>
<p>Participation in voluntary schemes and implementation of comprehensive corporate policies and strategies to combat forced labor, human trafficking, and</p>	<p>The Ecuadorian Government and the tuna industry have developed a voluntary Code of Conduct and associated certification program for the tuna sector called 'Ecuadorian Tuna Sustainability' called Sustentabilidad Ecuatoriana Atunera (SEA). The SEA certification program covers the capture and production processes of tuna and other large pelagic species landed in Ecuadorian ports. It is a voluntary third-party certification standard based on the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations protocol for responsible fisheries, its guidelines for eco-labeling, and other international regulations.</p>	<p>The Ecuadorian Chamber of Tuna Industrialists and Processors (CEIPA), July 2018, 'Making marine based value chains sustainable in developing countries SEA: Ecuadorian Sustainability Tuna', 2nd. Oceans Forum</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
hazardous child labor	<p>Cited objectives of the program are to “Contribute to practices of respect for social and labor rights of those who perform work in the capture, transport, and processing of seafood products.” and ‘Indicators of Good Social Practices on Board’ comprises one of five modules for the standard. CEIPA, July 2018 , Godelman, E., 2019 , Undercurrent News, 1 May 2018. It is unclear whether industry actors have been certified against SEA.</p> <p>There are also eight Ecuadorian fisheries currently engaged in Fishery Improvements Progress: two tuna, two mahi-mahi, and one swordfish, titi shrimp, small pelagics, and large pelagics. One of the tuna FIPs is required to conduct a social risk assessment. Fishery Progress</p> <p>In 2018, the country presented the Sustainable Shrimp Partnership (SSP) at the Seafood Expo North America. This initiative aims to compromise producers to farm shrimp with the highest standards, fully traceable, antibiotic-free, and sustainable. SSP developed one of the most demanding protocols for shrimp production with the support of the SSP Advisory Council, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), and the Colombian Institute of Technical Standards and Certification (ICONTEC). It is also collaborating with several international organizations on projects to identify new challenges the industry must address and find alternatives to improve production practices further. Among the founder members of SSP, it is possible to find Almar Group, Lanec, Omarsa, Promarisco, Nueva Pescanova Group, Songa (National Society of Galapagos), and other associates who help to reach the standards such as Biomar, DSM, INVE Aquaculture, Skretting, and Vitapro,</p>	<p>on Trade-related Aspects of SDG 14</p> <p>Godelman, E., ‘Sustainability Certification System of the Ecuadorian Tuna Value Chain’, IV Regional Forum on Tuna Sustainability Manta, Ecuador 2019</p> <p>Undercurrent News, 1 May 2018, ‘Ecuador signs free trade agreement with EFTA, launches new tuna brand’</p> <p>Ministerio de Producción, Comercio Exterior, Inversiones y Pesca</p> <p>Fishery Progress</p> <p>SSP cumple 5 años lideranda la innovacion y construyendo un future sostenible para la industria acucicola mundial (SSP celebrates 5 years leading innovation and building a</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>which add value to the production chain in shrimp farming. Revista Acuicultura, 2023, Sustainable Shrimp Partnership</p> <p>To differentiate Ecuadorian shrimp even further, the Ecuadorian Chamber of Agricultural Commerce has made commitments to obtain ASC certification for all of Ecuador’s shrimp farms. ProjectXGlobal, 2018 ASC sets standards for seafood farming and includes requirements relating to the minimum age of work, use of contract agreements, freedom to leave the workplace and to terminate employment, among others. As of 16th of June 2024, Ecuador has 56 Shrimp Standard certificates and 4 in the initial audit. According to ASC’s Impact Dashboard there are 91 Ecuadorian shrimp farms certified, representing 13% of the total number of ASC certified shrimp farms which is behind countries like Vietnam and India. This contrasts with certified volumes, where Ecuador is the largest producers of ASC’s certified shrimp responsible for 49%. According to the Certification and Ratings dashboard, Ecuador has 19.6% of its shrimp production ASC certified. ASC, ASC Impact Dashboard, Certifications and Ratings, 2023</p> <p>In terms of Best Aquaculture Certification (BAP), there are 83 BAP certified facilities in Ecuador, including 34 shrimp hatcheries, 25 shrimp farms, and 14 shrimp processors. The BAP Standard includes requirements relating to social accountability and more specifically child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. According to the Certification and Ratings dashboard, Ecuador has around 20% of its shrimp production BAP certified. BAP, Certifications and Ratings, 2023</p> <p>Global G.A.P. certification is also active in Ecuador. There are 31 GlobalG.A.P. certified whiteleg shrimp</p>	<p>sustainable future for the global aquaculture industry), page 12-13, Revista Acuicultura 151, 2023</p> <p>Sustainable Shrimp Partnership</p> <p>ASC, Find a Supplier</p> <p>ASC Impact Dashboard</p> <p>Certifications and Ratings, Environmental Data Tool</p> <p>BAP, BAP Certified Aquaculture Producers</p> <p>GlobalG.A.P., GlobalG.A.P. Database</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	producers. The GlobalG.A.P. integrated farm assurance for aquaculture requires compliance with Risk Assessment on Social Practice (GRASP), which includes requirements relating to workers' wellbeing. GlobalG.A.P.	

Table 2: Ecuador - Seafood industry-level indicators

Ecuador: Aquaculture Indicators

Indicator	Description	Sources
Direct evidence of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor	<p>The US Department of State's 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report states that human traffickers exploit Ecuadorian men, women, and children in sex trafficking and forced labor in several industries, including shrimp farming. US Department of State, 2024</p> <p>The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 2020 reported that there are limited and anecdotal reports that suggest that men, women, and children are exploited by traffickers in fishing and shrimp farming within Ecuador. The information in this report is based upon the US Department of State and/or US Department of Labor reports. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2020</p> <p>These reports do not provide further information regarding the alleged human rights abuses or the types of activities performed by children in the shrimp industry. The source of these claims is not directly cited, and no further publicly available evidence was found to corroborate them.</p>	<p>US Department of State, 2024, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report</p> <p>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2020, Human Trafficking in the Seafood Supply Chain, Report to Congress</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
<p>ILO indicators of forced labor and ILO R190 definition of hazardous child labor</p>	<p>No evidence found.</p>	
<p>Labor supply in the domestic market</p>	<p>Shrimp has become a pillar of the Ecuadorian economy, to which it now contributes some 280,000 direct and indirect jobs, according to the National Chamber of Aquaculture (CNA). BBC, 2023</p> <p>However, the status of the labor supply in the domestic market is unknown.</p> <p>A study conducted on the shrimp sector as a generator of employment at six shrimp farms in the Jama canton in Manabí province, found that the number of workers at these farms varied from 12 to 76 workers in 2018 and 6 to 56 workers in 2020. On average, around 23% of the workers were part of the formal sector and 77% were part of the informal sector. The study also notes that shrimp farms mainly hire men due to the physical effort required of the work. Chancay-Paco, Avila-Vasquez, Conforme-Soledispa, 2021</p> <p>According to an article by Molinos Champion (2022), a prominent shrimp aquaculture feed company, employees working in shrimp farms need multiple skills, and the higher the skill profile, the higher the payment. The shrimp business requires different employees, positions, and specializations, which may vary depending on the business size. For example, management of culture tools, business management, aquaculture, data analysis, laboratories, water quality, and even molecular biology. Molinos Champion, 2022</p>	<p>BBC, 2023, Cómo Ecuador se convirtió en el mayor exportador mundial de camarones (y qué papel clave jugó China) (How Ecuador became the world's largest shrimp exporter (and what key role China played))</p> <p>Chancay-Paco, Avila-Vasquez, Conforme-Soledispa, 2021, Comportamiento del sector camaronero como determinante en la generación de empleo en el Cantón Jama (Behavior of the shrimp sector as a determining factor in the generation of employment in Canton Jama)</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
		Molinos Champion, 2022, Personal en camaroneras: ¿qué habilidades son requeridas? (Shrimp Farm Personnel: What Skills Are Required?)
<p>Aquaculture Characteristics</p>	<p>Isolation of the site</p> <p>Many shrimp farms are located in estuaries around El Oro and Guayaquil and are sometimes sited on isolated islands. These farms provide free transport, food, and accommodation for workers when on site. Workers stay on farms for extended periods, with on/off shifts ranging from 10 days on and 4 days off, up to 20 days on and 8 days off. Due to an increase in armed robberies by criminal gangs, that sometimes receive inside help, some farms have tightened their worker selection process and limited methods of external communication. As a result, some farms require workers to hand in their mobile phones when on site. Impact Buying, 2023</p> <p>As of December 2023, there were 3,344 shrimp farms registered with the Undersecretary of Aquaculture of the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries. Subsecretaria de Aquacultura, 2024</p> <p>As of 14 of June 2024, 902 shrimp farms were registered with the Undersecretary of Quality and Safety of the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries. Subsecretaria de Calidad E Inocuidad, 2024.</p> <p>It is unclear what the level of shrimp farm registration is, although there have been reports of expansion of</p>	<p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p> <p>Subsecretaria de Aquacultura, Listados Oficales, 2024, Listado de camaroneras autorizadas Dic.2023 (Official Listings, List of authorized shrimp farms Dec. 2023)</p> <p>Subsecretaria de Calidad E Inocuidad, 2024, Camaroneras Registradas y Aprobadas</p> <p>VASEP, 2023, Xuất khẩu tôm Ecuador</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>illegal shrimp farming by the Vietnamese Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP), which are repeated by other news outlets. VASEP, 2023</p> <p>An article in relation to mangrove deforestation states that since 2022, Ecuador allows illegal shrimp farms to easily become legalized, which seems to imply that illegal shrimp farming is present. Nautilus, 2022</p> <p>This is substantiated by an article on the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment, and Fishing presenting an Executive Decree on Monday, April 25, 2022, in Pedernales, province of Manabi, to regulate shrimp farms in beach and bay areas. With the signing of the resolution, small and medium shrimp farmers will be able to exercise their activity legally and regularize 18,900 hectares, which will generate a more significant social and economic contribution to this important industry on a national scale. Ministerio de Producción Comercio Exterior Inversiones y Pesca, 2022 , El Comercio, 2022</p>	<p>năm 2023 dự kiến không tăng mạnh (Ecuadorian shrimp exports in 2023 are not expected to increase sharply)</p> <p>Nautilus, 2022, The High Price of Cheap Shrimp</p> <p>Ministerio de Producción Comercio Exterior Inversiones y Pesca, 2022, Sector acuícola contará con procesos ágiles para la regulación de sus camaroneras (Aquaculture sector will have agile processes for the regulation of its shrimp farms)</p> <p>El Comercio, 2022, Gobierno firma decreto para regularizar predios camaroneros (Government signs decree to regularize shrimp farms)</p>
	<p>Child-adult ratio in aquaculture communities</p> <p>Unknown.</p>	<p>Ecuador Fertility Rate 1950 – 2024, Macrotrends, 2024</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>No specific information was found about the child-adult ratio in Ecuadorian shrimp farming communities.</p> <p>Workers on shrimp farms are reported to be mainly men by Impact Buying’s 2023 impact assessment, which included site visits among six shrimp farms. Impact Buying, 2023</p> <p>Average fecundity in Ecuador is reported to be 2.301 in 2024. Macrotrends, 2024</p>	<p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p>
Workforce Characteristics	<p>The proportion of low-skilled migrant workers</p> <p>Unknown. Specific information about the proportion of low-skilled migrant labor employed in shrimp aquaculture has not been found.</p> <p>Around 60% of shrimp production takes place in the province Guayas, and a further 20% takes place in El Oro, 9% in Esmeraldas, 9% in Manabí, and 2% in Santa Elena. Piedrahita, 2018.</p> <p>A significant proportion of the refugee population in Ecuador lives in the Guayas, Manabi, and Pichincha provinces; 86% of the refugees are from Colombia. UNHCR, 2022.</p> <p>Given the presence of refugees in important shrimp-producing areas, it is possible that shrimp aquaculture may employ vulnerable migrant workers.</p> <p>According to Primicias, 2021, in an interview with an immigrant living in Ecuador: There is opportunistic behavior from Ecuadorians, meaning they give Venezuelans jobs and take advantage of their situation. They are not well paid, and due to their irregular situation, they feel pressure to accept any job offer regardless of the conditions. Primicias, 2021</p>	<p>Piedrahita, Y., 2018, Current situation of the shrimp industry in Ecuador</p> <p>UNHCR, 2022, Tendencias nacionales del desplazamiento forzado hacia Ecuador – 2022</p> <p>Primicias, 2021, Estudio revela precaria situacion laboral de venezolanos en Ecuador (Study reveals precarious employment situation of Venezuelans in Ecuador)</p> <p>Carreo, Erazo, Narváez, and Moreno, 2020, La</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Even though this study is not related specifically to the shrimp farming sector, it might be an extended situation for all immigrants in irregular situations inside the country in all working areas.</p> <p>An investigation into social responsibility in shrimp farming in Machala, Santa Rosa, Puerto Bolivar, Arenillas, and Huaquillas found that only 40% of employees had technical training for performing their tasks. Carreo, Erazo, Narváez, and Moreno, 2020</p> <p>A 2023 impact assessment of a farmed shrimp supply chain in Ecuador states that the shrimp sector is technology intensive and that farm workers require a technical background. Impact Buying, 2023</p>	<p>responsabilidad social en las empresas camaroneras (Social responsibility in shrimp companies)</p> <p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p>
	<p>Legal presence/regularity of migrant workers</p> <p>Unknown.</p>	
Recruitment and Contracts	<p>Use of recruitment agents</p> <p>The use of recruitment agents for outsourcing of labor is largely restricted under Constituent Mandate No. 8. Defensoría Pública del Ecuador – Biblioteca digital, n.d.</p> <p>According to an impact assessment of the farmed shrimp supply chain in Ecuador by Impact Buying, the outsourcing of labor is forbidden. Permanent and temporary workers must be hired directly without the use of labor providers. Impact Buying, 2023</p>	<p>Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, Marco legal nacional, Decretos, n.d.</p> <p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
	<p>Contract-and compensation- related regulations and practices</p> <p>There is limited information about contracts and compensation in the shrimp farming sector in Ecuador.</p> <p>According to the Ministry of Labor in Ecuador, the minimum wage in the fishing and aquaculture industry varies between US\$456,30 to US\$470,86 depending on the position. Ministry of Labor, 2023</p> <p>Impact Buying reports that workers in the shrimp sector have a total remuneration that is either close to or beyond the living wage level. Shrimp farm workers that need to stay onsite are provided with free boarding, lodging, and transport. Impact Buying, 2023</p> <p>Contract and compensation practices should follow the conditions set out in the Código del Trabajo, which cover provisions for working hours and overtime, salary payments, bonuses, and profit sharing. Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, n.d. While the impact assessment by Impact Buying does reference to these conditions, it is unclear from the report whether these conditions were met at the aquaculture sites visited. Impact Buying, 2023</p> <p>A study conducted on the shrimp sector as a generator of employment at six shrimp farms in the Jama canton found that on average, 50% of the employees were permanent workers and 50% were temporary workers. Chancay-Paco, Avila-Vasquez, Conforme-Soledispa, 2021</p>	<p>Ministry of Labor of Ecuador, occupational structures - minimum wages and salaries and rates 2023</p> <p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p> <p>Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, 2.- Marco legal nacional Leyes, n.d.</p> <p>Chancay-Paco, Avila-Vasquez, Conforme-Soledispa, 2021, Comportamiento del sector camaronero como determinante en la generación de empleo en el Cantón Jama (Behavior of the shrimp sector as a determining factor in the</p>

Indicator	Description	Sources
		generation of employment in Canton Jama)

Table 3: Ecuador - Aquaculture Indicators

Ecuador: Processing indicators

Indicator	Description	Sources
Direct evidence of forced labor, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor	No evidence was found linking shrimp processing in Ecuador directly to forced labor, human trafficking, or hazardous child labor.	
ILO indicators of forced labor and ILO R190 definition of hazardous child labor	The foundation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung conducted workshops with 32 union workers from Ecuador in 2021, on the labor violations experienced by women in work in various sectors including agriculture, domestic work, and the platform economy. Testimony from a shrimp packing plant worker in Guayaquil revealed that shrimp workers were subjected to long working hours and low wages. The same worker also reported the occurrence of sexual harassment against women in the shrimp industry in Ecuador, saying “Las mujeres jóvenes que vienen en busca de empleo son acosadas por los dueños y ciertos trabajadores. Las persiguen hasta que ceden ante el acoso o lo denuncian.” [Translation: Young women who come looking for work are harassed by the owners and certain workers. They chase them until they give in to the harassment or report it.] Morales Troya, 2022	Morales Troya, A. M., 2022, No es un trabajo que nos permite vivir, solo sobrevivir": El trabajo en el Ecuador actual. Quito-Ecuador: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Ecuador Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS)

<p>Processing Characteristics</p>	<p>Processing stage</p> <p>Ecuadorian shrimp is exported in various frozen product forms, depending on the export market. Head On Shell On (HOSO) products are predominantly exported to China, whilst Headless Shell On (HSLO) and peeled products end up in the United States and European markets. Shrimp Insights, 2023</p>	<p>Shrimp Insights, 2023, PIVOTAL TIMES FOR THE WORLD'S TWO LARGEST SHRIMP EXPORT NATIONS ECUADOR AND INDIA</p>
	<p>Consolidation and vertical integration</p> <p>There is a high degree of vertical integration and consolidation in Ecuador's shrimp supply chain.</p> <p>According to ProjectXglobal, the level of vertical integration is high and there is a high consolidation at farm level. ProjectXglobal, 2018</p> <p>A FeedInfo article also refers to consolidation of the sector, stating that the larger farms with economy of scale have increased their market share at the expense of smaller farms, which have either been acquired by these larger firms or gone out of business. FeedInfo, 2024</p> <p>According to Chancay-Paco <i>et al.</i> (2021), Ecuador's shrimp industry includes large vertically integrated companies that own processing plants, feed factories, laboratories and shrimp farms, and provides an environment that gives other shrimp farms access to improved resources such as laboratory-raised shrimp larvae. Chancay-Paco, Avila-Vasquez, Conforme-Soledispa, 2021</p> <p>Vertically integrated operations can include, for example, hatcheries, shrimp farms, and processing plants. SONGA, No date, Omarsa, 2019</p>	<p>ProjectXglobal, Shrimp FEED-X Value Chain Analysis, 2018</p> <p>FeedInfo, 2024, INSIGHT: Ecuadorian Shrimp Sector Now Confronted with Multiple Challenges After Years of Strong Growth [Part 1]</p> <p>Chancay-Paco, Avila-Vasquez, Conforme-Soledispa, 2021, Comportamiento del sector camaronero como determinante en la generación de empleo en el Cantón Jama (Behavior of the shrimp sector as a determining factor in the generation of</p>

		employment in Canton Jama) SONGA, No date, Vertical integration Omarsa, 2019, Sustainable shrimp [Presentation]
	<p>Domestic versus export</p> <p>Evidence suggests that most of Ecuador’s shrimp production is destined for export to foreign markets. In 2021, 84% of shrimp production was exported. OikoData, 2022</p>	OikoData boletin de economia industrial, Edicion no. 8, Encadenamiento Productivo de Camaron, 2022
Workforce Characteristics	<p>Skilled versus low-skilled</p> <p>Unknown.</p> <p>Specific information about Ecuador’s skill levels in the shrimp processing workforce has not been found. However, shrimp processing generally involves high levels of low paid unskilled labor.</p>	
	<p>The proportion of women in the workforce</p> <p>Work in shrimp packing plants is described as feminized. A testimony from a woman who works in a shrimp packing plant in Guayaquil indicates that women work in shrimp peeling and packing roles, while men work in roles that involve heavy labor. Morales Troya, 2022</p> <p>According to an informational video from the Ministry of Women and Human Rights (2021), women represent around 60 and 70% of the workforce in the shrimp industry in Ecuador (specifically in processing plants). Ministry of Woman and Human Rights, 2021</p>	Morales Troya, A. M., 2022, No es un trabajo que nos permite vivir, solo sobrevivir": El trabajo en el Ecuador actual. Quito-Ecuador: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Ecuador Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS)

	<p>Workers in processing plants are predominantly women according to an impact assessment of a farmed shrimp supply chain in Ecuador, which included site visits to six shrimp processors. According to the findings, most processing plants employ some women in management positions and are taking action to prevent gender discrimination. Impact Buying, 2023</p>	<p>Ministry of Woman and Human Rights 2021, Taller Con Mujeres Camaroneras (Workshop with Shrimp Women)</p> <p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p>
	<p>The proportion of migrant versus local workers</p> <p>Unknown.</p> <p>Most seafood processing plants are in the Guayas province (41%), followed by Manabi (39%) and Santa Elena (12%) provinces. European Commission IMSOC, 2024</p> <p>A significant proportion of the refugee population in Ecuador lives in the Guayas, Manabi, and Pichincha provinces; 86% of the refugees are from Colombia. UNHCR, 2022</p> <p>Given the presence of refugees in important seafood processing provinces, which also overlap with important shrimp-producing areas (see Aquaculture indicators), it is possible that shrimp processing may employ vulnerable migrant workers, but specific information about the proportion of migrant versus local labor employed in shrimp processing was not found.</p>	<p>European Commission IMSOC, 2024, Establishment Listing</p> <p>UNHCR, 2022, Tendencias nacionales del desplazamiento forzado hacia Ecuador – 2022</p>

	<p>The proportion of minority or indigenous workers</p> <p>Unknown.</p>	
	<p>The proportion of temporary and contract versus permanent workers</p> <p>Unknown.</p>	
	<p>Workers' origins</p> <p>Unknown.</p>	
	<p>Migrant worker language (vs. dominant language in the industry)</p> <p>Unknown.</p> <p>It is believed to be Spanish since most migrant workers come from neighboring countries.</p>	
	<p>GDP per capita of processing country and main worker source country</p> <p>Unknown. Information on the origins of shrimp processing workers was not found.</p> <p>Ecuador's Gross Domestic Product per capita was last recorded at 5590.54 US dollars in 2022. The GDP per Capita in Ecuador is equivalent to 44 percent of the world's average.</p>	Trading Economics 2022
	<p>Legal presence (regularity) of migrant workers</p> <p>Unknown.</p>	
	<p>The ability of migrant workers to change jobs</p> <p>Unknown.</p>	
Recruitment and Contracts	<p>Use of contractors and recruitment agents</p>	Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital,

	<p>The use of recruitment agents for outsourcing of labor is restricted under Constituent Mandate No. 8. Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, n.d.</p> <p>According to an impact assessment of the farmed shrimp supply chain in Ecuador by Impact Buying outsourcing of labor is prohibited. Permanent and temporary workers must be hired directly without the use of labor providers. Impact Buying, 2023</p>	<p>Marco legal nacional, Decretos, n.d.</p> <p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study on Shrimps from Ecuador</p>
	<p>Compensation method</p> <p>Limited information regarding contracts or compensation in shrimp processing in Ecuador was found, but there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that shrimp processing workers work long hours and are poorly paid.</p> <p>The foundation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung conducted workshops with 32 union workers from Ecuador in 2021, on the labor violations experienced by women in work in various sectors including agriculture, domestic work, and the platform economy. Testimony from a woman who works in a shrimp packing plant in Guayaquil says “No es un trabajo que nos permite vivir, sino solo sobrevivir. Trabajamos hasta 12 horas, pero nos pagan lo mismo que si trabajáramos 8” [Translation: It is not a job that allows us to live, but only survive. We work up to 12 hours, but we get paid the same as if we worked 8]. Another testimony from the same worker states that employees did not stop working during the COVID-19 pandemic, most did not have social health insurance, and older people working for 10 or more years were fired without compensation. Morales, 2022</p>	<p>Morales Troya, A. M., 2022, No es un trabajo que nos permite vivir, solo sobrevivir": El trabajo en el Ecuador actual. Quito-Ecuador: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Ecuador Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS)</p> <p>Impact Buying, 2023, Impact Assessment on the Jumbo Supply Chain of Shrimps from Vietnam with Comparative Study</p>

	<p>In processing plants, the workers are offered piece rate payments to top up their daily wage. Impact Buying reports that workers in the shrimp sector have a total remuneration that is either very close to or above the living wage. Impact Buying, 2023</p> <p>Contract and compensation practices should follow the conditions set out in the Código del Trabajo, that covers provisions for working hours and overtime, salary payments, bonuses and profit sharing. Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, n.d.</p> <p>While the impact assessment by Impact Buying does refer to these conditions, it is unclear from the report whether these conditions were found to be met at the processing facilities visited. Impact Buying, 2023</p>	<p>on Shrimps from Ecuador</p> <p>Defensoría Pública del Ecuador - Biblioteca digital, 2.- Marco legal nacional Leyes, n.d.</p>
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Table 4: Ecuador - Processing indicators

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