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Companies Should Use New Technologies to Monitor Supply Chains for Slavery

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By [Sharon Samuel](#)

Two innovative solutions to worldwide labor trafficking launched this week, providing companies with tools to make responsible sourcing decisions and lessen the risk of slave labor in their supply chains.

The Partnership for Freedom [awarded \\$250,000](#) to Trace Register, a digital analytics company, and Sustainability Incubator, a human rights advisory firm, on Monday for its software that will help businesses monitor their supply chains for forced labor. The software, called the Labor Safe Digital Certificate, allows suppliers to fill out online surveys disclosing the proportion of migrant workers in their supply chains, the duration of fishing and aquaculture expeditions for boats, ports of call, and recruiting practices. The software then fact-checks suppliers' answers against government information and research from nonprofit organizations, allowing companies to identify areas in their supply chains that should be further scrutinized.

Partnership for Freedom, comprised of Humanity United and several U.S. government agencies, ran a contest called [Rethink Supply Chains: The Tech Challenge to Fight Labor Trafficking](#), which challenged teams to come up with technological solutions to modern day slavery in global supply chains. The contest runner-up, Good World Solutions, won \$50,000 for creating a way to collect text communications from supply chain workers and map those data points to pinpoint possible locations of human trafficking. The top five finalists were each awarded \$20,000 earlier this year.

Humanity United and the Partnership for Freedom initiated contests like *Rethink Supply Chains* in response to growing concern over forced labor in global supply chains and the inability of companies to effectively monitor their suppliers abroad. The Labor Safe Digital Certificate grants businesses and government procurement officers access to information about their suppliers that would otherwise be difficult to obtain and to verify. Companies are then able to investigate discrepancies in suppliers' disclosures and to implement anti-trafficking policies throughout all levels of their supply chains.

The [Responsible Sourcing Tool](#), a website that allows federal contractors, procurement officials, consumers, and other stakeholders to understand the risks of human trafficking in different sectors and different countries, also [launched this week](#). The free interactive website was developed by Verité with the support of the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and in conjunction with other U.S. government agencies. Users can view

information, analysis, model compliance plans, and compliance tools according to sector and country. Special resources are available for stakeholders in the fishing and seafood industry.

The ILO estimates that there are approximately 21 million slaves in the world, generating \$150 billion in profits for traffickers every year. Industries where forced labor is particularly common include [fishing and aquaculture](#), [agriculture](#), [construction](#), [manufacturing](#), mining, and [domestic work](#). Companies in high-risk sectors now have better tools to learn more about the push and pull factors for human trafficking in the countries where they are doing business. Technological innovations like the Labor Safe Digital Certificate and Responsible Sourcing Tool will enable companies to assess their risk of contributing to modern-day slavery.