



GOOD PRACTICES TO END CHILD LABOUR

Corporate Social Responsibility: certification of commitments in the field

Distinction Award of Agriculture Company Free of Child Labour (DEALTI-its acronym in Spanish)



Country
Mexico



Creation year and validity
2007 – to date



Responsible institution(s)

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Mexico (STPS) led, together with various Mexican entities and organizations, the design and implementation of the Distinction Award of Agricultural Company Free of Child Labour (DEALTI-its acronym in Spanish).

The section of Labour Inclusion and Work of Minors of the STPS is in charge of coordinating the award at the national level and defines the mechanisms and participation requirements that must be met by work centers interested in adopting and renewing the DEALTI distinction. It also coordinates its actions with the state representations of the STPS to obtain the distinction.

The Inter-Institutional Assessment Roundtable is made up of the STPS, the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES), the Agrarian General Attorney's Office (PA), the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI) and the National Institute for the Development of Capacities of the Rural Sector, A.C. (INCA Rural), among others.



Hazardous child labour
and Agriculture

Within the framework of the Regional Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour, eight factors have been prioritized with the potential to accelerate the rate of reduction of child labour and advance in the achievement of target 8.7 of the SDGs.

Most of the children and adolescents working in the region do so in the agriculture sector, which includes livestock, fisheries, forestry and aquaculture production. Most of them participate in unpaid work modalities in small family farms, but also in production processes linked to supply chains for both export and domestic consumption. In agriculture, one of the three most dangerous sectors of activity, children and adolescents are exposed to serious physical and psychological risks that affect their health and development.



Background

Inter-institutional coordination has been one of the strategies that the Mexican State has used to provide a more effective response to the challenges that arise in the rural environment of the country. Since 2007, the STPS has led the inter-institutional coordination of different institutions and entities of the Federal Government in order to provide more effective attention to migrant agricultural workers.

The joint commitment has been to advance not only in the assistance in the places of destination of migrant day workers, where the impact of the violations is more evident; but also in the communities of origin, where economic precariousness drives them to seek employment and income alternatives individually or as a family through migration.

It is in this context that the STPS, together with various entities of the Mexican Federal Government, designed and launched the Distinction Award of Agricultural Company Free of Child Labour, with the aim of recognizing agricultural companies throughout the country that adopt a policy of care and protection of children and adolescents, implementing actions that contribute to the development of worker families, as well as that of their sons and daughters, and rejecting the use of child labour.



Issue we proposed to address

Agriculture in Mexico is an important item of the economy. A considerable proportion of the arable land is devoted to the production of fruit and vegetables, resulting in a high demand for temporary agricultural workers.

According to the 2007 Agricultural Census, carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), in Mexico there were 5.1 million people hired to perform agricultural or forestry activities. One of the characteristics of migration for labour reasons is that it involves not only the workers, but also mobilizes entire families, including girls and boys who, at various times, join in the work of the fields. The precariousness of these families and the demanding activity of the agricultural seasons are elements that promote child labour.

On its part, the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL), based on the 2009 National Survey of Agricultural Workers, estimates that the labour force population in Mexico amounted to approximately 9.2 million people, of which 21.3% were migrants and close to half were of indigenous origin.

According to the results of the Child Labour Module (ENOE, 2017), 2.1 million girls, boys and adolescents between 5 and 17 years-old perform child labour. Of these, 34.5% (724,000) work in the agricultural sector, which means that one in three Mexican boys

and girls work in the fields. The data indicate that approximately 300,000 girls and boys leave their communities of origin each year to migrate with their families to other parts of the country in search of work and income. One of the most excluded and vulnerable groups of the Mexican child population is made up of the daughters and sons of agricultural workers, most of whom come from indigenous communities.



Objectives of the practice

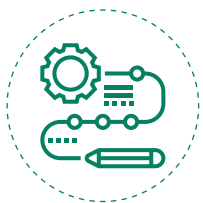
The objectives of the DEALTI are:

- Promote a culture of non-hiring of child labour in the field.
- Recognize the agricultural companies of the country for adopting a policy of care and protection of children, through which they reject the use of child labour and implement actions for the full development of the working families and their children.



Target audiences

The DEALTI is a distinction granted to agricultural work centers that are settled in the national territory and the main activity of which is to cultivate the land.



Methodology developed

The DEALTI is a management model that encourages agricultural companies that hire farm workers to comply with current labour standards, establish a child care and protection policy that allows for rules, guidelines and criteria to carry out actions for the benefit of the sons and daughters of agricultural workers, incorporate measures to verify and ensure the non-hiring of child labour in any of its areas and processes, as well as the protection of adolescents who work and show practices of social responsibility in care and child protection.

The validity for the use of the symbol of the distinction is two years, with the possibility of renewal. During this period, recognized agricultural work centers may use the logo in whatever medium they deem appropriate. It has coverage throughout the national territory and serves employers (agricultural work centers), workers, indigenous populations, and children and adolescents.

The stages and/or processes developed in the implementation are:

Stage 1 Registration

Agricultural companies can participate in obtaining and periodically renewing the DEALTI through work centers, taking into account the provisions established by the STPS for registration and verification. For a renewal, it is required to submit, among other documents, the corresponding application, the constitution acts of the workplace, certificate of good standing from the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, documents that certify the childcare and protection policy, code of business ethics, manuals or duties of the positions that are accredited as responsible for the care and protection of children.

Based on the information submitted, the STPS Labour Inclusion and Work of Minors section assesses the information for the approval of the application.

Stage 2 Integration and submission of evidence

The work center is responsible for putting together an electronic portfolio of evidence that shows the compliance with the following axes defined in the verification instrument of the DEALTI:

Axis 1. Dissemination of the Policy for Childcare and Protection

Verifies the establishment of means, as well as their periodicity and the mechanisms to make known the company policy on child labour.

Axis 2. Action in the communities of origin

Assesses the measures adopted by the company to publicize the policy implemented regarding the prohibition of child labour, including: informing workers about the location of the work center, the tasks to be carried out, the salary modalities and working conditions; guaranteeing that the people who travel have the documentation and conditions to carry out the corresponding activities in the company; increasing the quality and safety of transportation from the communities of origin or residence to the company, and covering the food and hydration needs of people who travel, with particular attention to girls, boys and adolescents.

Axis 3. Actions upon arrival and reception of company workers

Verifies that the company has the instruments and mechanisms required to identify the population under 18 years-old for planning their stay within the facilities, away from work areas, making the workers' families aware of the Care and Child Protection Policy of the company. Considers that the accommodations that house the agricultural workers have healthy, safety and living conditions; it reviews that a medical diagnosis is obtained for the children and adolescents who accompany their families, and that a diagnosis of the health and nutritional status of the population of those under six years-old is established.

Axis 4. Actions for childcare and protection in the company

Confirms that access to initial education and basic education for boys and girls is guaranteed; that programs of extracurricular and/or recreational activities are established that favor their development; it guarantees children under 14 years-old a sufficient,

balanced and palatable diet to meet their nutritional requirements; and shows evidence that the personnel that carry out activities with this group have the proper training and the necessary accreditations to do so.

Axis 5. Actions for a safe return to the community

For the return of the agricultural workers' families to their places of origin, companies must ensure that the progress and achievements of girls, boys and adolescents in health and education are recorded in documents with official validity, and must determine the number of people who the company undertakes to move to their places of origin or agreed destinations and to provide security conditions in the transfer.

Axis 6. Actions for continuous improvement

Requires identifying and documenting opportunities for the continuous improvement of the work center, updating the contents of the axes described to elevate the level and scope of the measures and actions.

Axis 7. Actions of child protection in the community

A report must be prepared on the actions undertaken for the benefit of the community in which the agricultural workers and their families live, on educational, medical - welfare, sports, recreational and cultural matters.

Axis 8. Actions of Safety and Health on the Job

Promotes compliance with health and safety regulations at work as a fundamental part of decent work. For this, evidence of at least one of the options proposed in this area must be complied with and submitted, such as the proof of registration in the Self-Management Program in Safety and Health at Work (PASST-its acronym in Spanish).

Stage 3 About the actions of the Social Welfare section of the STPS

Having received the evidence from the work center, the Labour Inclusion and Work of Minors section initiates the process of final score of the file. In order to obtain the approval, it is required to achieve a score over 85/100.

Stage 4 Actions of the Adjudicating Committee

The Labour Inclusion and Work of Minors section is responsible for submitting the final results of the work centers to the Inter-institutional Evaluation Table, according to the review, verification and evaluation carried out. Once all the work centers have been assessed, the Record of the Adjudication is drawn up.

Stage 5 Notification of results

The decision of the Inter-institutional Assessment Roundtable is made known to the work centers through a written communication. On its part, the STPS publishes on its webpage the list of award-winning work centers. In case of having obtained the Distinction, the "Letter of Commitment" by the workplace becomes effective, which establishes the responsibilities that correspond to it as the recipient of the distinction.



Expected results

In accordance with the DEALTI model, at the same time that their participation for obtaining the Distinction is promoted among companies, it is intended to make work centers aware of the importance of carrying out actions that directly benefit the agricultural workers' population that they house during agricultural cycles or to the community closest to it. Said actions or practices are registered in the Bank of Good Labour Practices that has been generated from the implementation of the model, so that other agricultural companies can learn about, adapt and replicate the experiences in their facilities and with their staff.

The Labour Inclusion and Work of Minors section is responsible for submitting the final results of the work centers to the Inter-institutional Evaluation Table, according to the review, verification and evaluation carried out.

The distinction has been awarded to nearly 400 agricultural work centers in 22 Mexican states (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Coahuila, Colima, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico, Michoacán, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Yucatán and Zacatecas) and has benefited 212,906 farm workers and their minor children.



Economic and human resources and input required

It is estimated that the approximate annual budget for DEALTI's operation is the equivalent of USD 26,000, of which USD 10,300 is considered for travel expenses and fares to work centers to validate the adoption of the model; and the remaining amount is destined for the event where the agricultural work centers previously approved by the Inter-institutional Evaluation Table will receive the distinction.



Implementation Challenges

Budgetary, political, social and information challenges have been identified. One of them was the definition of the target population: origin, destination, places of transit and number of people, since a large percentage

are migrants. To counteract the above, the Government, through the Ministry of Social Development and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, applied in 2009 the National Survey of Agricultural Workers (ENJO-its acronym in Spanish).

Regarding the budget, DEALTI has allocated approximately USD 26,000, of which two fifths are assigned to the award ceremony (proportion that is under review). Another challenge lies in raising awareness and persuading work centers to implement the management and administration model that DEALTI represents. The company's commitment must be expressed not only in compliance with the law, but in the full respect for human rights and improvement in the quality of life of agricultural workers.



Criteria that identify it as a good practice



Innovation

Mexico has carried out various experiences in the agricultural sector for the certification of commitments in the field of corporate social responsibility through the labeling of product packaging, in order to guarantee consumers that they promote the quality of life of their workers. However, regarding the non-use of child labour in the production of products, prior to the implementation of DEALTI, the use of labels by companies and producers had not been adopted.



Relevance

The Federal Labour Law has classified agriculture as one of the three most dangerous work activities at national level, along with mining and construction. In this sense, agricultural activity is prohibited for people under 18 years-old. Although the country has been registering a trend towards a decrease in the hiring of hazardous child labour in the agricultural sector, it is recognized that there are still important challenges to achieve effective compliance with the legislation and thus eradicate the use of child labour in the Agriculture.

Another challenge lies in raising awareness and persuading work centers to implement the management and administration model that DEALTI represents. The company's commitment must be expressed not only in compliance with the law, but in the full respect for human rights and improvement in the quality of life of agricultural workers.



Effectiveness

DEALTI has been considered as a strategic application, since it is proposed as the only non-coercive action of the Federal Government to prevent and eradicate child labour in agriculture, which is considered as positive and attractive because it gives real added value to a product or service favoring entrepreneurs. Likewise, its effectiveness lies in focusing particularly on the primary sector, in which one in three working minors is employed.

It is highlighted that DEALTI is one of the seven projects that are operated at the national level by the Head Department of Labour Equality for Agricultural Workers, Indigenous People, Youth and Prison Inmates, which represents a high cost-benefit ratio since with a moderate budget, actions are undertaken that benefit a large number of agricultural workers and their families in the participating work centers, in the communities of origin and in the communities near the work centers.



Efficiency

The practice has been efficient taking into account the number of participating work centers, which are constantly monitored through consultancies and visits. In the same way, it is valued as efficient when considering the territorial coverage of the strategy, since the participating work centers are located in 22 of the 32 states of the country. It is highlighted that DEALTI is one of the seven projects that are operated at the national level by the Head Department of Labour Equality for Agricultural Workers, Indigenous People, Youth and Prison Inmates, which represents a high cost-benefit ratio since with a moderate budget, actions are undertaken that benefit a large number of agricultural workers and their families in the participating work centers, in the communities of origin and in the communities near the work centers.



Replicability

Due to its adaptability to all types of national and/or state contexts, the DEALTI model is capable of being easily replicated. The budget for its operation is relatively low and is invested mainly for: i) the dissemination of the distinction in graphic and electronic media; ii) the provision of travel allowances to the personnel who operate it to hold the required meetings with the agricultural associations, unions, groups and confederations likely to participate, and iii) follow-up visits to the participating work centers to learn about the actions they perform.

On the other hand, it is required that the personnel who provide follow-up to the process have full knowledge of the current labour framework, with emphasis on what is related to work in agricultural fields, the minimum ages to work, as well as risk activities and those that need of special observance by the authority. Likewise, it must have the capacity to develop its operating guidelines, registration formats and monitoring and assessment of the working conditions of agricultural centers.

Before the experience is replicated, the following should be considered: i) adapting the model to the specific situation of the region; ii) pilot the strategy in some agricultural work centers; iii) train and raise awareness of public servants appointed to operate the strategy, and iv) analyze reports of results to identify positive and negative experiences of application, so that they can be used for improvement processes.



Transfer of the practice among countries

The DEALTI has been shared with Peru, through the Ministry of Labour and the Promotion of Employment (MTPE) during October and November of 2017.



Bibliography

Catálogo de Capacidades Mexicanas de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo. (no date). Distintivo Empresa Agrícola Libre de Trabajo Infantil (DEALTI). Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social. Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo. Retrieved from: <https://de.sre.gob.mx/capacidades/instituciones-mexicanas/secretaria-del-trabajo-y-prevision-social/distintivo-empresa-agricola-libre-de-trabajo-infantil-dealti>

Distintivo Empresa Agrícola Libre de Trabajo Infantil (DEALTI). (2015). Premio Interamericano a la Innovación para la Gestión Pública Efectiva - Edición 2015. Organización de los Estados Americanos. Retrieved from: <https://www.oas.org/es/sap/dgpe/innovacion/Banco/2015/COORDINACION/Distintivo%20Empresa%20Agr%C3%ADcola%20Libre%20de%20Trabajo%20Infantil.pdf>

Distintivo Empresa Agrícola Libre de Trabajo Infantil (DEALTI). (2019). *Empresa Agrícola Libre de Trabajo Infantil – Guía de operación para renovación 2019*. Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social. Retrieved from: https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/476208/GUIA_DEALTI-11_JULIO_FINAL.pdf

Empresa Agrícola Libre de Trabajo Infantil. (2013). *Lineamientos de operación 2013*. Comité Estatal de Sanidad Vegetal de Sonora. Retrieved from: <http://www.cesaveson.com/files/docs/inocuidad/130607LineamientosDEALTI.pdf>

La Jornada del Campo. (2017). *El Trabajo agrícola infantil en México*. La Jornada del Campo. Retrieved from: <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2017/07/16/cam-infantil.html>



Find more good practices at www.iniciativa2025alc.org
or contact iniciativaregional@ilo.org