



International
Labour
Organization

► **A forest of opportunities**

Living and working conditions in Argentina's forestry sector

Rapid Sector Appraisal from
a practical perspective



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► A decision-oriented guide

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Carrying on sectoral studies is always challenging. Value and supply chains are organized in networks that include a diverse set of organizations, with complex links, and usually involving different interests, organizational and institutional characteristics. The research process gets even more complicated when using a sectoral approach to address forced labour, a hidden phenomenon, rare from a statistical perspective. For obvious reasons, many key informants refrain to discuss it because of the potential negative effects that detecting forced labour might have in any given productive process.

Based on the experience of the Rapid Sector Appraisal in the forestry sector in Argentina, this white paper aims at providing hands-on applied information to support the development of Rapid Sector Appraisals focusing on forced labour, specifically, and more generally on other Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRWs) and on decent work gaps.

What is a Rapid Sector Appraisal?

A Rapid Sector Appraisal (RSA), as the name suggests, is a research product which implementation is done over a few months. It has the research design of a case study, but built around a specific productive process, value chain, or supply chain. When focusing particularly on forced labour, the RSA takes advantage of the proposed sectoral approach to understand how the characteristics, the productive arrangement, and the organization of the sector under study might enable labour exploitation and be conducive to forced labour.

What is it used for?

The purpose of an RSA based on an analytical approach to forced labour is to increase the sectoral knowledge base about decent work gaps and to inform about labour exploitation, its victims protection and access to remedies, as well as to identify those responsible for this problem.

The Rapid Sector Appraisal would address critical analytical dimensions, including gaps in statutory legislation, law enforcement and access to justice; socio-economic pressures individuals and workers face; business conduct and business environment. Each of these dimensions highlights the inter-institutional and multidisciplinary approach necessary to understand economic sectors from a labour and human rights perspective.

From the private sector perspective, the information provided by the RSA can be used to identify forced labour main causes and consequences for a proper risk management and the implementation of due diligence effective processes. Finally, the RSA can generate knowledge that unions and workers' organizations can use to detect and register complaints, which will ensure an increased protection of human and labour rights. In sum, the RSA generates actionable knowledge, therefore supporting the fight against forced labour from a sectoral and tripartite perspective.

What are the RSA formats?

The RSA can have three main formats:

- As a **standalone product**, the RSA can be understood as a petit value chain analysis in the sense that it provides a panoramic, yet not in-depth, picture of the sector under study. It also details how the forced labour phenomena manifests itself in a particular economic sector. Such RSA will feature a more balanced

* Cover photograph: General Directorate of Programs, Sectoral and Special Projects (DIPROSE) Ministry of Economy.

multidisciplinary approach, but it can also emphasize a discipline or a topic of interest. For instance, an RSA of the forestry sector in Argentina can provide a panoramic overview and the occurrence of forced labour in this sector. At the same time, the RSA can outline how the judicial system prosecutes those responsible for forced labour (legal perspective), and the key policies implemented to address this problem in the sector of interest (policy perspective). Usually, when developed as a standalone product, the RSA can also provide robust anecdotal evidence about the existence of forced labour; it can detail where this phenomenon might be located in the overall value chain, supply chain or sector.

► The RSA can also take the format of a **scoping research**. Depending on subsequent research products, the RSA will provide insights for the development of more specific knowledge. For example, if the RSA precedes a forced labour prevalence survey, it can still give the “big picture” about forestry production in Argentina, but focusing on a geographical analysis, the characterization of productive units, and of potential victims and vulnerable population. The objective is to inform the survey sampling strategy, or produce an in-depth analysis of potential victims and shed some light on more frequent types of involuntariness and coercion faced by workers in this sector.

► Finally, the RSA can have a format of a **managerial research**. In some sense, it is similar to the scoping research because it precedes something else, most commonly the adaptation of a programme logframe project. For example, this RSA is similar to a pre situational analysis but with a particular sectoral focus. It can be used to identify key stakeholders of a given sector, to analyse these key actors' interests and their influence on combating forced labour, how they interact with each other, and identify the main gaps and policy opportunities that can be explored in the intervention design.

The RSA is based on a case study design built around a specific sector of economic activity. Therefore, as a qualitative case study, the Rapid Sector Appraisal main methodological tools will include a vast bibliographic and documentation desk-review, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with key informants and relevant sectoral actors, as well as field observations.

Key takeaways

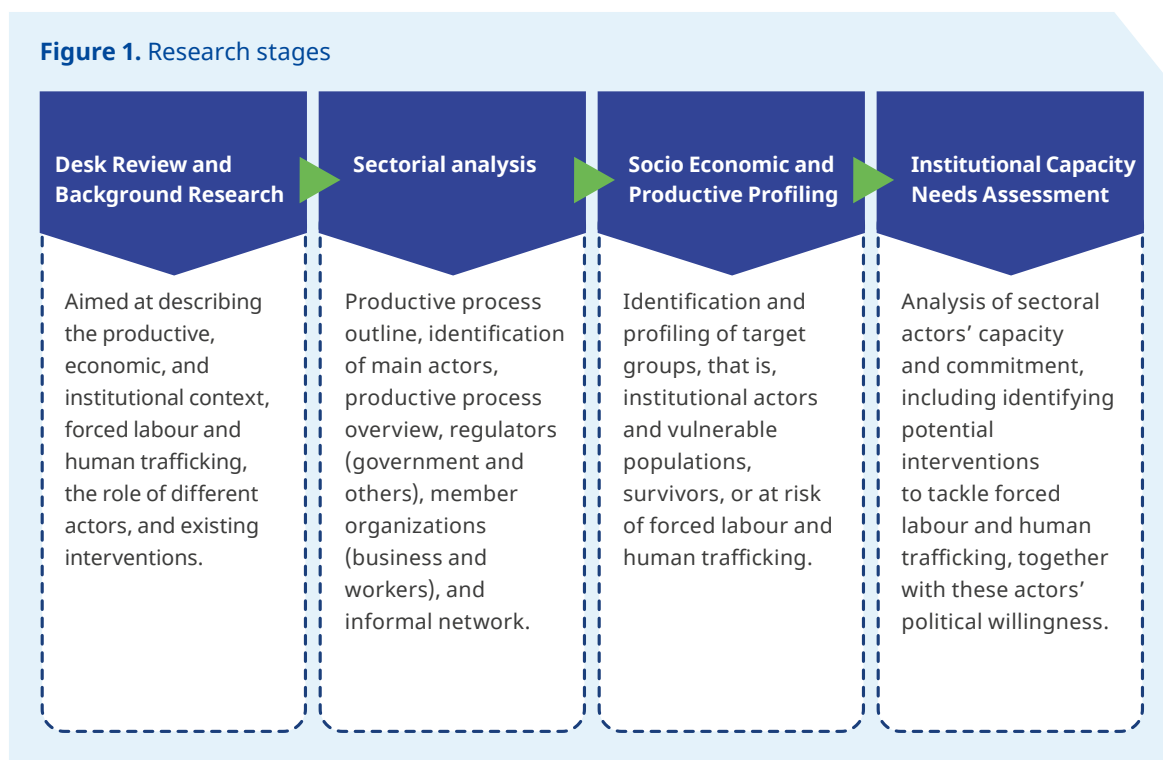
- An RSA is a useful tool to generate actionable knowledge to address forced labour from a sectoral perspective.
- The RSA concept is flexible enough to allow a myriad of approaches and uses according to the context in which the research is carried out.
- Depending on the scope and interest of knowledge of brokers and stakeholders, the RSA can have different formats, leveraging its use for decision making purposes.
- The RSA is qualitative research using a case study format; its methodology is highly adaptable to any sector of interest.
- The RSA can be a standalone research product, a scoping research product, or managerial research.

Which methods are used to build a RSA?

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Research stages

The RSA research comprises the four following stages:



Depending on the use and interest of the stakeholder, the RSA can present different analytical elements (Table 1). It is worth mentioning, however, that the RSA is flexible enough to be adapted and include different analytical elements according to the context in which the research is carried out and the national

actors' needs and interests. For example, it can include elements related to the judicial system effectiveness, or the media portrayal of forced labour in the forestry sector.

Table 1. Reseach Activities and Objectives

Activities	Research Objectives
Structuring Elements	
Desk Review	Review the state-of-the-art discussion of forced labour in the forestry sector.
Secondary Data Sources	Identify and compile official statistics, administrative data and other non-traditional sources of information that can be used in the RSA.
Field Work and Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis	Gather information, identify insights, and triangulate the information previously processed in the desk review, as well as systematize perceptions and the identified needs of tripartite actors about the forced labour phenomenon in the forestry sector.
Basic Multidisciplinary Elements	
Institutional, Legal, and Policy Framework	Analyse the economic context and the institutional, legal, and policy frameworks in which the forestry sector activities are carried out.
Economic and Productive Analysis	Describe the forestry sector and analyse its economic, macroeconomic, productive, and trade implications, as well as the interventions and strategies aimed at combating forced labour in the forestry sector.
Labour, Social, and Demographic Analysis	Understand the social context in which the study is carried out. Identify the existence of decent work gaps, and of potential FPRWs violations. Understand the social and demographic characteristics of workers and potential victims.

Sampling and informants

Besides defining the analytical lens, the data collection and the analysis methods, it is important to identify a profile of respondents to guarantee a multiplicity of perspectives to reflect a tripartite approach. Key informants include representatives of many organizations, including the government, the private sector, workers' organizations, the civil society, and the academia. Depending on the RSA format, it is necessary to define proper sampling needs. For instance, for a standalone product, the sampling tends to be more diverse and inspired in a probabilistic approach, especially if one

of the key research objectives is to define the presence or absence of forced labour in the sector under study. If the RSA is a scoping or a managerial research product, the sampling tends to be purposive, and to target populations of interest for any subsequent studies, victims and vulnerable workers, or populations of interest for managerial questions, for instance policymakers and stakeholders interested in designing a given intervention. Key informants include representatives of many organizations, including the government, the private sector, workers' organizations, the civil society, and the academia. Depending on the RSA format, it is necessary to define proper sampling needs.

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Doing sectoral research in the forestry chain

Each sector has its peculiarities. It is important to understand them because an effective research process is grounded in contextual factors. It should be remembered that forced labour is a challenging research subject.

The [forestry sector](#) is an important source of employment, livelihoods, and incomes for millions of people across the globe, particularly in rural areas. Globally, the forest sector employs an estimated 33 million people, and many more depend on forests, and the products and services they provide. Decent work, including safe and healthy working conditions, are fundamental for ensuring sustainable and productive forestry operations that are environmentally friendly, safe for those working in them, and beneficial to all those who depend on forests for their livelihoods, food, and shelter. (ILO, 2019c.)

Despite its potential to promote economic growth and employment, the forest sector is facing persistent decent work deficits. These deficits include poor and unsafe working conditions, obstacles to the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, low productivity, low wages, and lack of access to social protection, as well as the high incidence of informality. Forests continue to be dangerous workplaces, with multiple occupational safety and health risks to those working in forests.

According to the ILO, the number of formal workers enrolled in the forestry sector increased

in the past few years. Amongst other things, plenty of cheap skilled labour and relatively abundant forest resources are key factors explaining this advance in developing countries. Moreover, in a developing setting, this sector is mostly informal. Forestry, to some extent, and logging in general, are also hazardous activities. Finally, illegal logging is connected to global shadow markets. It accounts for 15 to 30 per cent of global timber production, and is linked to human and labour rights violations, as well as to unauthorized and predatory deforestation with long term derogatory effects in terms of sustainable development and climate change.

Various instances of exchange with numerous actors and representatives from different stages of the forestry sector in the provinces of Corrientes and Misiones were included in the RSA. Promoting sectoral social dialogue instances proved to be crucial in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the sector's situation, as well as assessing the necessary strategies for mitigating risks of rights violations and promoting the sector's development with decent employment opportunities.

Operational issues

Although methods greatly influence the development of any knowledge product, most part of key research decisions derive from operational constraints. It is important to consider the time and budgetary resources available when making decisions about implementing an RSA.

Crossing this information with sectoral characteristics is instrumental to find a balance between the expectations raised and the scope of the RSA. For example, a characteristic of the forestry sector is being geographically disperse, and often in hard-to-reach locations. The best season or time of day to reach informants, especially workers, are other important considerations to make. The research may focus on specific periods of the year, for example the dry season. Often, workers may not be available to participate in interviews given their busy schedule.

Safety is also a concern; it can lead to dangerous situations. For instance, interviewing a forced

labour recruiter as if he was a worker might jeopardize the researcher safety. Workers providing information about their living and working conditions can also suffer reprisals from their "employers" especially if these are involved in forced labour, which is a criminal activity. Always prioritize the wellbeing and safety of researchers and informants.

What to do with the Rapid Sector Appraisal?

Besides taking in consideration that each format of the RSA will have specific uses, always bear in mind that this type of research is not an end in itself, but the starting point of a process aimed at the promotion of decent work and the combat of forced labour. The idea is that the RSA can be used to inform concrete measures and induce sustainable change in the sector under study. To that end, it is equally important to understand that the RSA is a participative process based on a broad social dialogue. From the onset, it is instrumental to include stakeholders and guarantee that their interests and points of view inform the research process. It is also important to consider how to disseminate the RSA and properly communicate its findings and recommendations. There is no recipe, but amongst other things, it is important to remember that information can be disseminated in different ways, a strength that should be explored and used based on the intended message and the targeted audience.

►► Global supply chains have the potential to generate growth, employment, skill development and technological transfer. Nevertheless, decent work deficits and human rights violations, including child labour, forced labour and human trafficking, have been linked to global supply chains. All actors operating in this context have a responsibility to ensure that these human rights violations and abuses are addressed.

► *Ending child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains (2019, p.1) ILO, OECD, IOM and UNICEF. 2019.*

► ILO Resources

Tools adopted by the Governing body

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