





European Platform Undeclared Work

'Chain Approach' – raising awareness in the cleaning sector

The Netherlands

	<p>Summary</p> <p>The Chain Approach is an initiative of labour inspectorate to tackle labour exploitation in the cleaning sector. It involves a two-fold strategy including awareness-raising among businesses who hire cleaning companies about the risk of undeclared workers in the sector, as well as a prevention strategy focused on changing attitudes towards undeclared work within the sector.</p>
<p>Title of the practice in original language</p>	<p><i>Ketting approach</i></p>
<p>Name(s) of authorities/bodies/ organisations involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspectie SZW (Dutch labour inspectorate); • The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND); • Dutch tax authority; • Municipalities; • Benefits agency.
<p>Sectors</p>	<p>Maintenance and cleaning</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations hiring cleaning companies (directly targeted); • Cleaning companies and workers (indirectly targeted).
<p>Purpose of measure</p>	<p>Changing attitudes: awareness raising</p>

	<p>Aims and objectives</p> <p>The key objectives are to raise awareness among businesses about their responsibilities with respect to hiring legitimate cleaning companies (whose workers are fully declared) and to carry out regular inspections to ensure best practice.</p>
<p>Background context</p>	<p>The labour inspectorate works towards reducing illegal employment and labour exploitation in the Netherlands. It is estimated that there are around 14 000 cleaning companies in the Netherlands with the sector growing each year. As a result, this has led to increased competition in the cleaning sector, while recent evidence reveals an increase in fraud and exploitation (e.g. workers being paid salaries below the minimum wage and working unpaid hours) within the sectorⁱ.</p>



	<p>The labour inspectorate decided to tackle this issue by raising awareness among hiring companies of their responsibility to hire cleaning companies who behave ethically towards their employees, and thereby put pressure on cleaning companies within the sector to change their behaviour. The Chain Approach initiative began in 2013 and is ongoing.</p>
<p>Key objectives of the measure</p>	<p>General objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness with businesses engaged in hiring cleaning companies of their responsibilities to hire declared companies, and the social consequences of their actions. <p>Specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve communication between the labour inspectorate and those hiring cleaning companies in order to increase awareness of fraud and exploitation within the sector; • To increase the number of businesses hiring declared cleaning companies, or that choose to directly employ cleaners instead; • To increase awareness among employers in the cleaning sector of their responsibility to declare their workers; • To improve employee working conditions in the cleaning sector.
<p>Main activities</p>	<p>At the start of the project, the authorities arranged meetings with internal and external stakeholders to discuss the problems with the cleaning industry as well as possible interventions with industry organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspectorate communicates through regular consultations, press releases and social media, with companies. For example, the inspectorate and the tax administration have held discussions with directors of fast food chains; • The companies are informed that they are responsible for hiring a cleaning company that meets the 10-item checklist (https://www.inspectie-checklist.nl/schoonmaak/) e.g. whether the cleaning companies pay taxes and adhere to the rules on working conditions and rest periods;ⁱⁱ • They are also made aware of the penalties for hiring undeclared cleaning companies which include, for example, fines; • The inspectorate undertakes inspections targeted at large companies who hire cleaning companies. This includes night checks where inspectors discuss conditions with workers; • The inspectorate maintains contact through inspections and discussions with hiring companies



	found to be in violation of the law to assess their progress in addressing the issues and to tackle any problems that arise.
Funding/organisational resources	The Chain Approach is funded by the labour inspectorate.

	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Businesses are increasingly aware of their responsibilities to hire ethical cleaning companies and there has been a reduction in the number of undeclared cleaning companies. However, the sector remains vulnerable: continued work and frequent contact are required to ensure businesses hire declared companies.</p>
Achievement of objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of workplace inspections in organisations involved in hiring cleaning companies in different sectors, including fast-food companies, hotels, and cleaning services provided for cleaning windows in private homes; • An increase in inter-agency cooperation to put pressure on companies to stop hiring undeclared cleaning companies; • An increased awareness within companies concerning the use of certified cleaning companies, using the ten-item checklist created by the labour inspectorate. On average, the checklist was visited 70 times a day in 2016; • Companies have tightened their internal hiring procedures and contracts have been adjusted; for example, switching to a different cleaning company if exploitation is discovered; • In 398 inspection sites, 32 cleaning companies were banned at 144 locations. 22 cleaning companies were replaced at 69 locations and at 76 of the sites inspected the cleaning was reported to have changed to in-house;ⁱⁱⁱ
Lessons learnt and success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is good practice to provide companies with a method (like the 10-point checklist) to check that the cleaning companies they hire operate legitimately. • Establishing regular contact with hiring companies is crucial to ensure they are complying with their responsibilities and to ensure that any issues are being resolved.
Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure resources are available to investigate and continue assessing the hiring practices of organisations who employ cleaning companies over a period of more than one year.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooperation is needed with departments related to tax and immigration in order to take a comprehensive approach to tackle the issue of labour exploitation in the cleaning sector.
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Further information	
Contact	Mr Marcel Keijzer: Project Leader, Inspectie SZW Email: MKeijzer@inspectieszw.nl
Useful sources and resources	The Chain Approach checklist https://www.inspectie-checklist.nl/schoonmaak/ An overview of companies inspected including violations indicated and remedies proposed: https://www.inspectieresultatenszw.nl/

ⁱ Regioplan (2013) Labour Inspection Strategies for Combating Undeclared Work in Europe: The Netherlands: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---lab_admin/documents/genericdocument/wcms_227267.pdf

ⁱⁱ The checklist was launched in July 2016 and promoted through the industry and trade associations and social media. The checklist includes, for example, checking whether cleaners can show identity documents; if the cleaners are legally allowed to work in the Netherlands etc. Using the checklist aims to help businesses increase their chances of working with a fair cleaning company and help prevent abuses in the cleaning industry.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Inspectie SZW (2016), Eindrapport Schoonmaak Fastfodd 2014-2016