

Shaping platform policy and worker rights –
An introduction to global best practices

Deep Dive: Worker Status in the Platform Economy

Facilitator's Notes

Time needed: 1 hour and 10 minutes

Aim

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Understand why worker status is the central regulatory question in platform work and what rights flow from it.
- Compare different approaches that governments around the world have taken to address worker classification.
- Assess the benefits, limitations and applicability of these approaches

Before delivering the training read the Trainer Resource Sheet for further details. It provides an up-to-date overview of key concepts, global examples and current regulation, giving you the grounding to answer participant questions with confidence.

Activity Instructions



[Learn – Worker Classification as a Central Question]

 15 minutes

1. Welcome participants, introduce the learning aims and distribute the Handout Sheet ( Slide 2).
2. This activity explores the specific question of worker classification ( Slide 3-4). Highlight the following key points:
 - a. **Worker Classification is a central question** because whether a worker is classified as an employee, a self-employed contractor, or something else determines which legal protections apply to them. Including minimum wage, sick pay, holiday entitlement, social protection and the right to organise
 - b. Platforms often **classify workers as freelancers, partners, contractors** etc. in order to avoid employer obligations
 - c. **Not all workers want to be classified as employees** as some wish to maintain the freedom that a self-employed status grants them
 - d. **Consequences fall on the most vulnerable:** Women, migrant workers and those with care responsibilities are disproportionately affected by the instability and lack of protection that misclassification creates
 - e. **Regulatory responses to the platform economy vary across the world and there is no one size fits all solution.** Opportunities are shaped by political contexts and local levels of social and economic development.



[Engage – Different Approaches to Classification]



50 minutes

3. Divide the participants into small groups (4-5 per group)( Slide 5).
4. Give each group a marker pen and two sets of coloured notecards.
5. Assign each group one of the four regulatory approach cards from the Handout Sheet.
If you have more than four groups, more than one group can work on the same card.

The four approach cards:

Card A Defining employment (income) Mexico	Card B Defining employment (legal presumption/control) EU Platform Work Directive
Card C New category India	Card D Sector-specific Singapore

6. Ask each group to imagine that they are participating in a meeting with policymakers who are developing measures to address regulatory gaps in different areas of the platform economy. Their objective is to assess the effectiveness of certain approaches.
7. Instruct each group to refer to the approach that they have been assigned and encourage them to read through thoroughly and identify potential touch points for their own cases. Should groups require more information they can research the laws online.
8. Prepare a display area on the wall or flipchart in the format of a table, with two columns labelled:

Benefits	Challenges

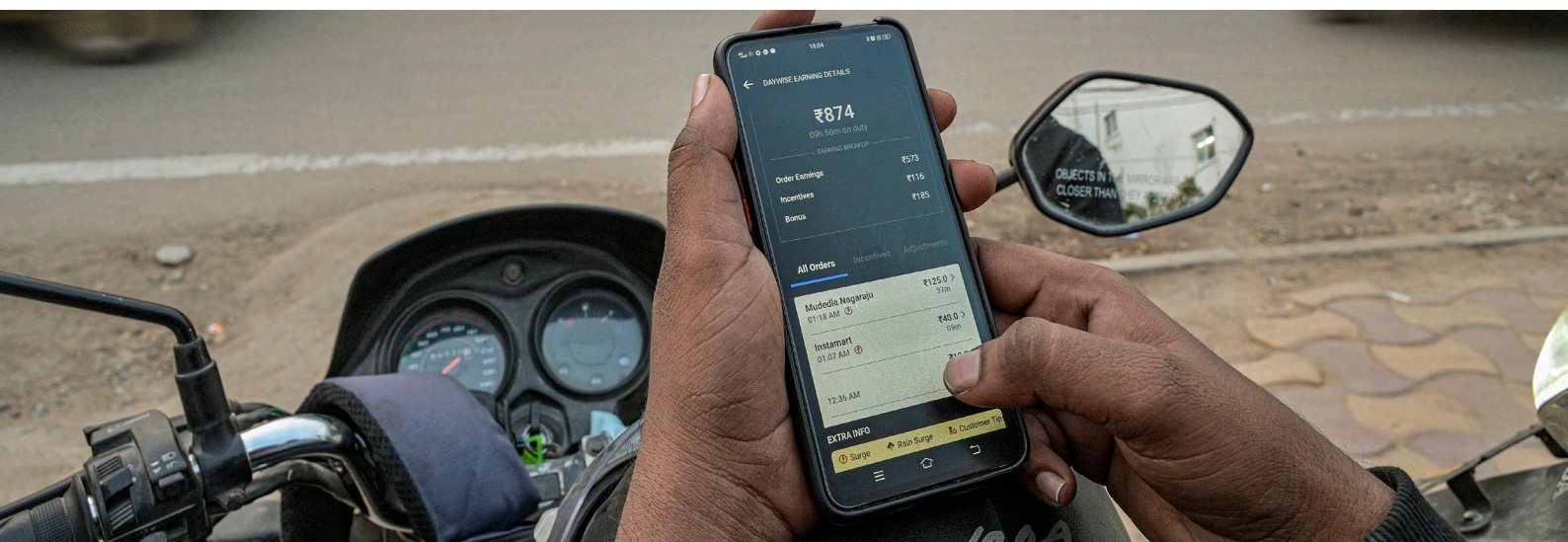
9. Ask each group to discuss the questions below and to consider the main benefits and challenges for their regulatory approach. Ask participants to write their ideas in the columns.
 - a. What rights and protections would this approach give to workers in practice?
 - b. What are the main limitations or risks of this approach?
 - c. How does this approach compare to the current situation for platform workers in your country?
 - d. Which groups of workers might benefit most and are there any who might be left out or disadvantaged?
 - e. What barriers might there be to implementing this approach in your context, legal, political or economic?
 - f. What additional protections might women, or other marginalised groups, need to achieve equal outcomes?



[Summarise]

15 minutes

10. Once the groups have finished, ask each group to nominate someone to report back on their discussion. Ask each group to also identify the one provision they would most want to see adopted in their own context and write it on a notecard to bring to the plenary ( Slide 7).
11. Bring the key notecards together and summarise the main points that have been identified. What were the provisions that were most favoured by the groups? Summary should note the following (see Trainer Resource Sheet for more information)
 - **No single approach is universally right. Each involves trade-offs**
 - **The legal presumption of employment is a significant shift**
 - **Classification is not the end of the story**
 - **Collective action can fill the gaps that regulation cannot.**
12. Close by asking the group to reflect on the following questions:
 - a. What form of protection or piece of policy was most favoured in your group?
 - b. Based on what we have discussed, what is a provision or stipulation from one of the presented case studies that would be valuable to implement in your relevant context?



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Bonn, May 2026

Shaping platform policy and worker rights –
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Deep Dive: Worker Status in the Platform Economy

Trainer Resource Sheet

Time needed: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Please read this sheet before conducting the training. It provides both general information introducing trainers to the topic and also more specific details that can be used in guiding the activities.



[Learn – Worker Classification as a Central Question]

As we have identified the platform economy is growing and providing new opportunities for work. But major regulatory gaps mean that platform workers are often left facing insecure working conditions, low and unsafe pay rates and pressure from algorithmic management, with women and other marginalised groups facing disproportionate impacts.

- **Consequences fall on the most vulnerable.** Women migrant workers and those with care responsibilities are disproportionately affected by the instability and lack of protection that misclassification creates.
- **Regulatory responses to the platform economy vary across the world and there is no one size fits all solution.** Opportunities are shaped by political contexts and local levels of social and economic development.

Worker Status (Slide 3-4)

- **Worker Classification** is a central question because whether a worker is classified as an employee, a self-employed contractor, or something else determines which legal protections apply to them. Including minimum wage, sick pay, holiday entitlement, social protection and the right to organise.
- Platforms often classify workers as freelancers, partners, contractors etc. in order to avoid employer obligations. **Not all workers want to be classified as employees** as some wish to withhold the freedom that a self-employed status grants them.



[Engage – Different Approaches to Classification]

Refer to the country cases on the handout sheet.
More information on each law can be found by

accessing the digital link provided on the sheet.



[Summarise]

- No single approach is universally right. Each involves trade-offs. Reclassification gives the most rights but may not be achievable in every context. New categories can be a stepping stone, but risk creating a permanent underclass of workers. Sector-specific rules can achieve gains in specific contexts but leave many workers uncovered.
- Classification is not the end of the story. Even where workers are reclassified, enforcement matters. Platforms have responded to adverse rulings by restructuring contracts, lobbying for exemptions, or withdrawing from markets. Unions play a critical role in making rights real.



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Handout Sheet

This sheet is to be handed to all participants to use as a resource during the workshop

For workers, misclassification means:

Employee	Independent Contractor
✓ Minimum wage guaranteed	✗ No guaranteed pay floor
✓ Sick pay entitlement	✗ No sick pay
✓ Holiday pay	✗ No paid leave
✓ Social security contributions from employer	✗ Worker bears full contribution cost
✓ Health & safety protection	✗ Limited or no employer liability
✓ Right to unionise and bargain collectively	✗ Often excluded or legally uncertain



CARD A | Mexico – Defining Employment by Income



Amount of earnings (not the kind of work) determines whether a worker is an employee or self-employed.

Ley Federal Del Trabajo 21/02/2025

DETAILS

Workers who earn a net monthly income equivalent to at least one minimum monthly wage (currently around MXN \$8,364 or ~\$418 USD) are classified as employees with full labour protections, regardless of hours worked. Whilst workers who earn less than the minimum monthly wage are considered independent contractors. The idea being that this income threshold allows platform workers to keep the desired benefits of flexibility, should platform work only constitute a minor source of income for the individual worker.

This assessment takes place monthly, based on the previous months earnings.

Companies must register the platform workers deemed employees with the Mexican Social Security Institute and pay for their social protection coverage (sickness, OSH, maternity).

Alongside the status classification the law provides platform workers with the right to unionise, right to algorithmic transparency and right to fair remuneration. All of which are becoming common features of policy designed for platform workers.

POTENTIAL TENSIONS

- Workers just below the threshold may be equally dependent on the platform but receive none of the employment protections
- Earnings fluctuate month to month, creating legal instability around status and workers status can change month to month
- Platforms can influence earnings through pricing and task allocation
- The wage threshold is measured per platform. Which does not reflect the tendency for workers to work for multiple platforms. potentially keeping workers below the threshold deliberately.

CARD B | EU – Legal Presumption of Employment



Workers are presumed to be employees if the platform exerts a certain degree of control over the worker. The legal responsibility to prove otherwise lies with the platform.

EU Platform Work Directive

DETAILS

A rebuttable presumption of employment applies where facts indicate the platform exercises control and direction over a worker. The burden of proof shifts to the platform to demonstrate otherwise rather than the worker having to prove they are an employee, which is costly and difficult.

The Directive also contains provisions on algorithmic transparency and management and the right to collectively bargain.

POTENTIAL TENSIONS

The definition of control and direction varies depending on how each country implements the approach.



CARD C | India – Creating a New Worker Category

A distinct legal category is created for platform workers thereby sidestepping the employee vs self-employed binary.



The Code on Social Security 2020

DETAILS

The Indian approach acknowledges the high diversity of work relations existing in the country from full employment to informal economy. Therefore, the introduction of the Social Security Code 2020 sidesteps the classification debate entirely. The main goal of the code is to grant social protection access to platform workers and does so by defining them as a new category.

POTENTIAL TENSIONS

- Risks becoming a permanent ceiling rather than a floor because platforms have an incentive to keep workers in the lower-rights category.
- This law primarily focuses on social protection access and does not prescribe rights for collective bargaining, living wages or algorithmic accountability. Core labour rights can remain out of reach.

CARD D | Singapore – Sector Specific

Targeted protections for a specific sector



Singapore Platform Workers Act 2024

APPROACH CHARACTERISTICS

Singapore enacted the Platform Workers Act in September 2024 to regulate ride-hailing and delivery services. The act was designed for a specific sector of the platform economy and addresses specific characteristics of those workers i.e. being a ride-hail or delivery worker. The act establishes a process of providing retirement benefits, work injury compensation insurance, occupational safety and health protections, and establishing collective bargaining processes between platform operators and platform work associations.

POTENTIAL TENSIONS

Coverage is limited: workers outside the defined sector remain unprotected.

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