

**TRADE UNION PLATFORM
PARIS, 2024**

Cloudwork: Labour Conditions and Challenges to Representation

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Two Broad Types of **Platform Work**



Geographically tethered

**Work required to be done in
a particular location**



Cloudwork

**Work can, in theory, be
performed from anywhere
via the internet**

How Many **Platform Workers** Are There?

- **11% (28.3 million) of people in the EU performed platform work “more than just sporadically” with 3% doing so as their main job. The total no. doing platform work more than just sporadically is projected to reach 43 million by 2025.¹**
- **16% of US adults have earned money through a digital labour platform, with 3% doing so as their main job in the last 12 months (2021).³**
- **Over 1.1 million people in ASEAN countries are estimated to work on *online* labour platforms (2022).⁴**
- **1.3% of adult Africans earn money from platforms (2021).**
- **163 million profiles registered on web-based platforms (Kassi et al., 2021).**
- **154-435 million online gig workers (World Bank Report, 2023).**



Risks and Harms **in the Platform Economy**



Low Pay



I started working at nighttime, so I could catch the work from the US.

Generally, I would start at 10pm and work until sunrise, just to get a few dollars.

 **Jessie, transcriber in South Africa**

Guarantees are no longer the same. Platforms can take almost half of the fare. It doesn't justify the time you spent, the gasoline you pay or the car's wear and tear.

 **Freddy, Didi and Beat driver in Colombia**



Long Hours, Little Flexibility



Most of the time I work long hours. I just closed this morning around 1:00 am. Even as I'm sitting and talking with you right now, I feel back pains.

 Issah, ride-hail driver in Ghana

Some drivers I talked to lived and slept in their car and got only 2-3 hours of sleep so that they could earn as much money as possible.

 Amna, Careem driver in Pakistan



Unsafe Working Conditions



Men often harass the female workers and make us feel insecure. Once, I was even attacked by hooligans and had to be taken to the hospital.

 **Barna, ride-hail driver in Dhaka, BD**

They told us that if you meet with an accident, first finish the delivery and then go wherever you have to go.



Zomato delivery rider in Bangalore, India



Discrimination and Unfair Management



A customer from her balcony was shouting at me while using several abusive words. And a large part of that was directed toward my religion as a Muslim. I was hesitant to complain because I was fearful of further discrimination.

 Issah, ride-hail driver in Ghana

When you get an order you won't know where it's going. By the time you finish the trip you discover the pay is just too low. It makes us so sad and we become very angry.

 Faizal, Swiggy courier in Delhi, India



Individualisation



I don't exist for Glovo, they don't have anything to do with me. There are always new people who want to work, nobody cares, so it's just take it or leave it.

 Andrej, Glovo courier in Belgrade, RS



The **Fairwork** Project

Fairwork: *An Overview*



We have four research streams:

**Location-based
platform work**



Cloudwork



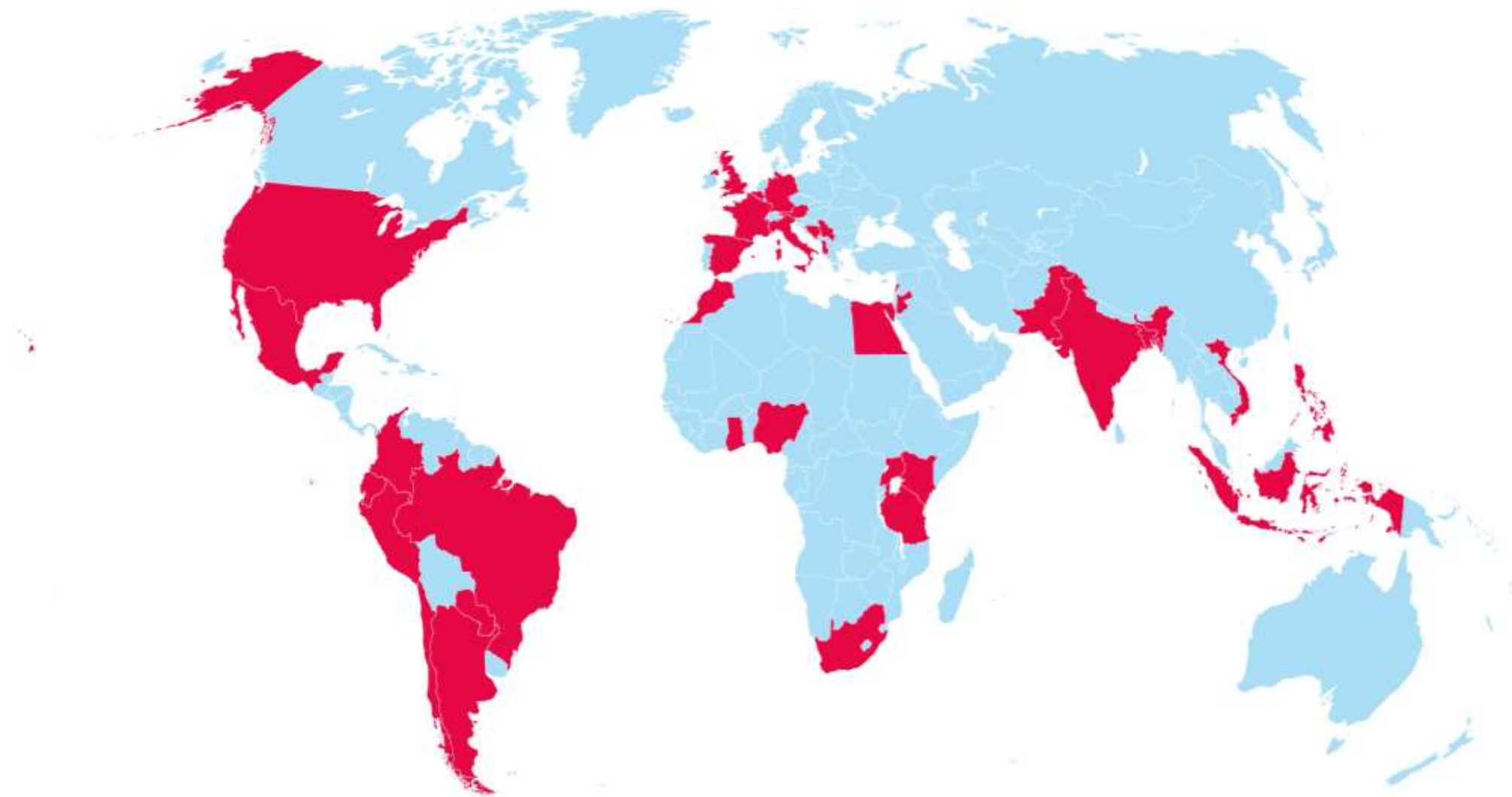
Fairwork AI



Online sex work



Fairwork Countries



Action research: **What is it?**






- Action-research is rooted in emancipatory and democratically orientated traditions of critique.
- We conduct research not only to gain an understanding of working conditions, but also to actively improve them.
- Companies are assessed using the Fairwork Principles and given a score (out of 10), reflecting how ‘fair’ their working conditions are.
- Assessments are based on desk research, worker interviews, and evidence from management.
- Scores are disseminated publicly and displayed in leaderboard for maximum impact.

Fairwork UK Scores 2023



Scoring System



Principle	First point		Second point		Total
 Fair Pay	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Conditions	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Contracts	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Management	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Representation	1	+	1	=	2

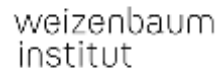
Maximum possible Fairwork Score



Fairwork Funders



Fairwork Collaborators



Impact Metrics



701
Platform
Ratings

304
Changes by
platforms

63
Companies
made
changes

+6K
Workers
Interviewed

+1K
Media
Coverage

62
Academic
Publications

73
Pledge
Signatories

38
Countries

Pathways of Change

Unlocking Opportunity: Allowing Independent Contractors to Access Benefits

Hearing before U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education & the Workforce
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections
April 11, 2024



FAIR.WORK/UK

12 policy proposals for fairer platform work in the UK

COMEUP Search Become a seller

10. Access to representation and freedom of association

ComeUp supports all efforts by 5 Collective bargaining through tra

Just Eat Spain
9,327 followers
2w · 🌐

Desde Just Eat Spain nos complace comunicar que nuestro modelo de #DeliveryResponsable ha obtenido una puntuación de 7/10 en base a los principios evaluados en el informe de investigación Fairwork, siendo la plataforma de entrega mejor valorada en el estudio.



Join an Association or Union to fight for Platform Fairness!

Why Join a Union?

- Collective Bargaining
- Support for individual workers in dispute

FAIR REPRESENTATION

I want to organise with other workers to demand better working conditions. How can I do this?

What are the organisations which help organise workers? And how can I be more informed of events they organise?

TAWU

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS. YOU DESERVE FAIR WORK.

Common Questions of Digital Taxi Drivers, Answered

African Platform workers Representatives

The Guardian

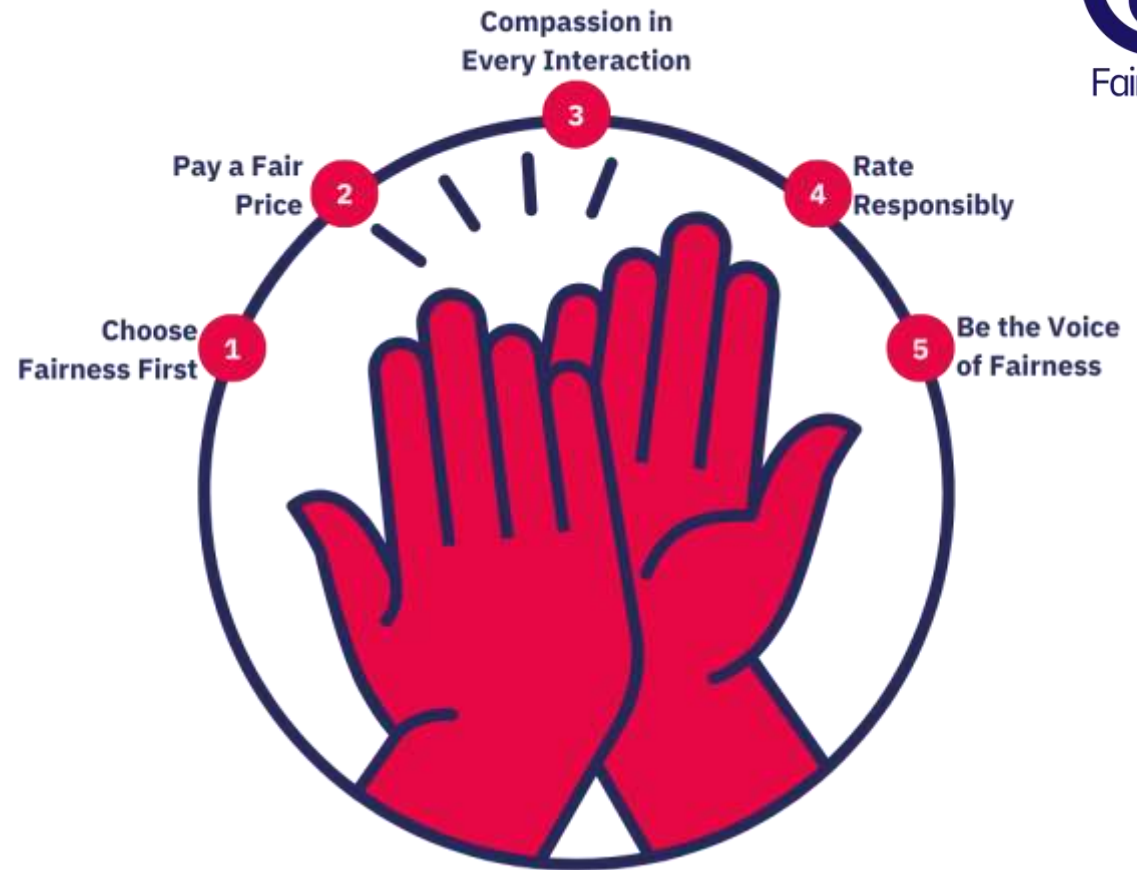
News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle

The future of work 'So many reports of violence and abuse': how the gig economy fails women around the world

Unsafe conditions, sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination are rife among female workers, research finds

Join the Pledge

Learn more or join as an individual or as an organization at [fairwork.org.uk](https://www.fairwork.org.uk)



Five Simple Steps for a **Just Gig Economy**



The Fairwork **Cloudwork** Project

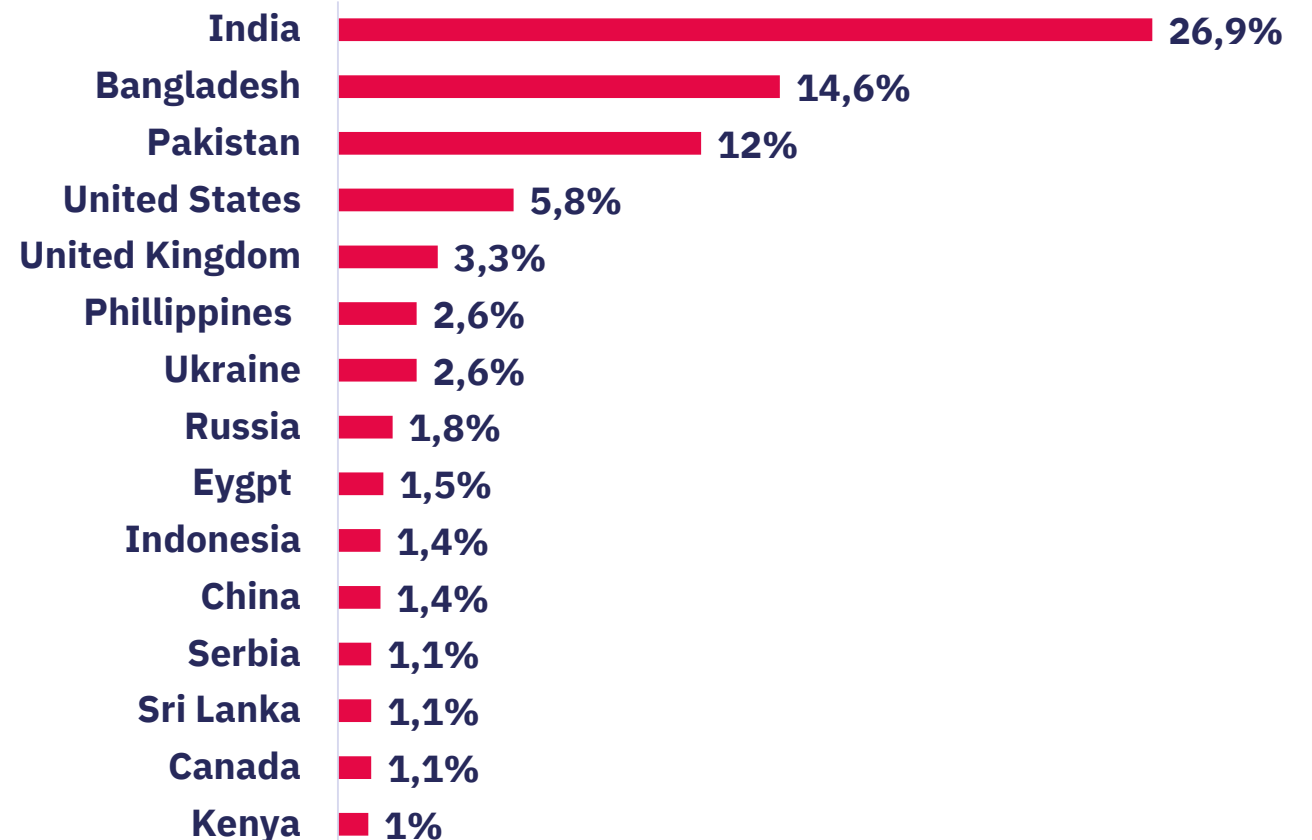
Where are **platform workers** located?



Global Supply of Online Platform Labour

According to OLI estimates, based on leading English (5), Spanish (3) and Russian (3) language platforms, the supply of online platform labour is concentrated in the Global South.

As of 2023, 53.5% comes from three countries: India (26.9%), Bangladesh (14.6%) and Pakistan (12%).



Fairwork Principles for **Cloudwork**



Fair **Pay**

Workers must have full confidence that they will be paid for the work they do, within the agreed-upon timeframe, and in a recognised national currency.



Fair **Conditions**

Platforms should have policies in place to protect workers from risks arising from the processes of work and should take proactive measures to protect and promote the health and safety of workers.



Fair **Contracts**

Terms and conditions should be accessible, readable and comprehensible. Workers should have legal recourse if the platform breaches those conditions and contracts should not require workers to waive this right.



Fair **Management**

There should be a documented process through which workers can be heard, can appeal decisions affecting them, and be informed of the reasons behind those decisions.



Fair **Representation**

Platforms should provide a documented process through which worker voice can be expressed. Irrespective of their employment classification, workers should have the right to organise in collective bodies, and platforms should be prepared to cooperate and negotiate with them.

Data Collection: **Cloudwork**



Desk research

**Map platforms
and analyse
contracts / T&Cs**

+

Worker interviews

**Interview 30-60
workers per platform
(e.g., 2023: 1,092 in 94
countries)**

+

Manager interviews

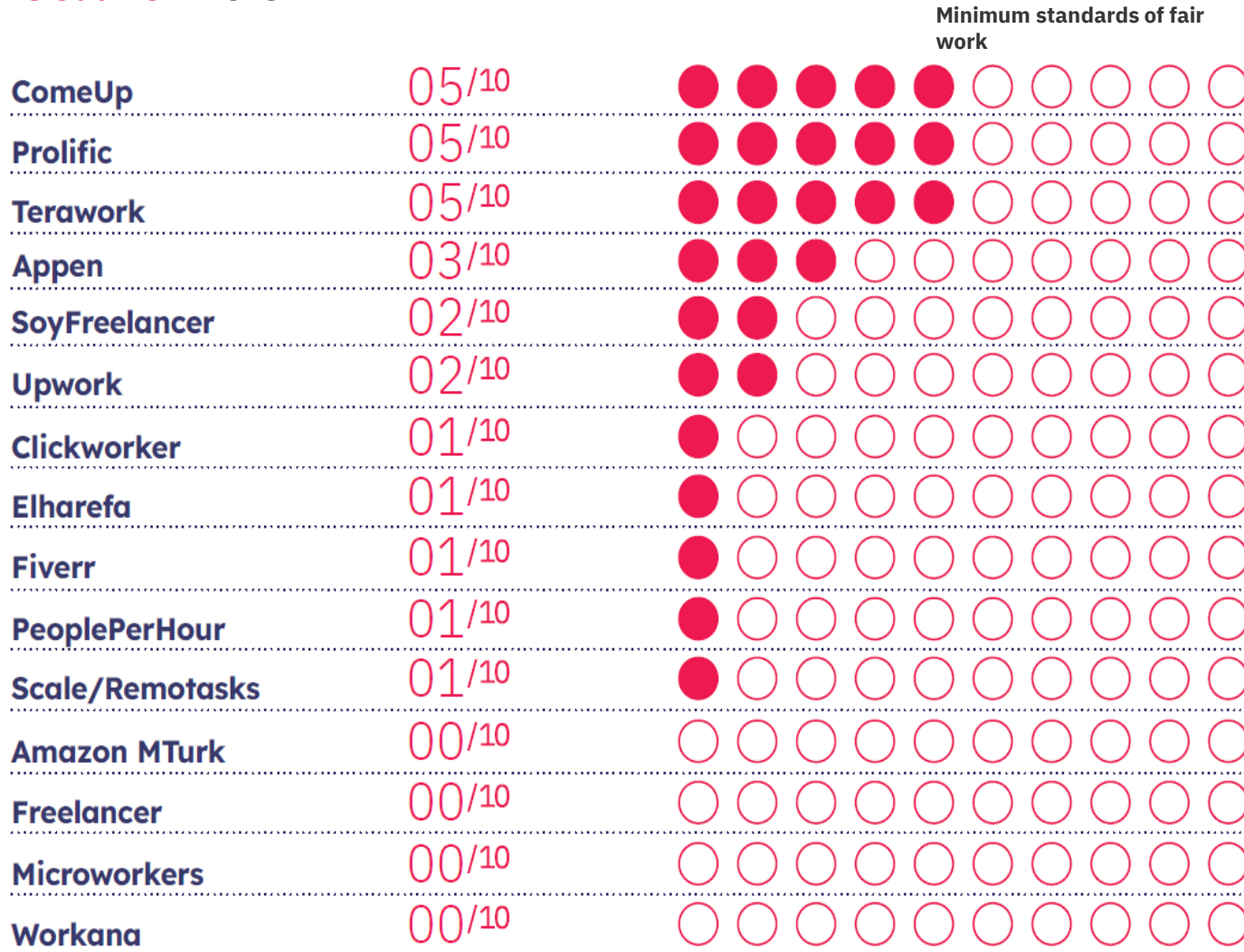
**Interview platform
managers and request
evidence**

Putting it all together

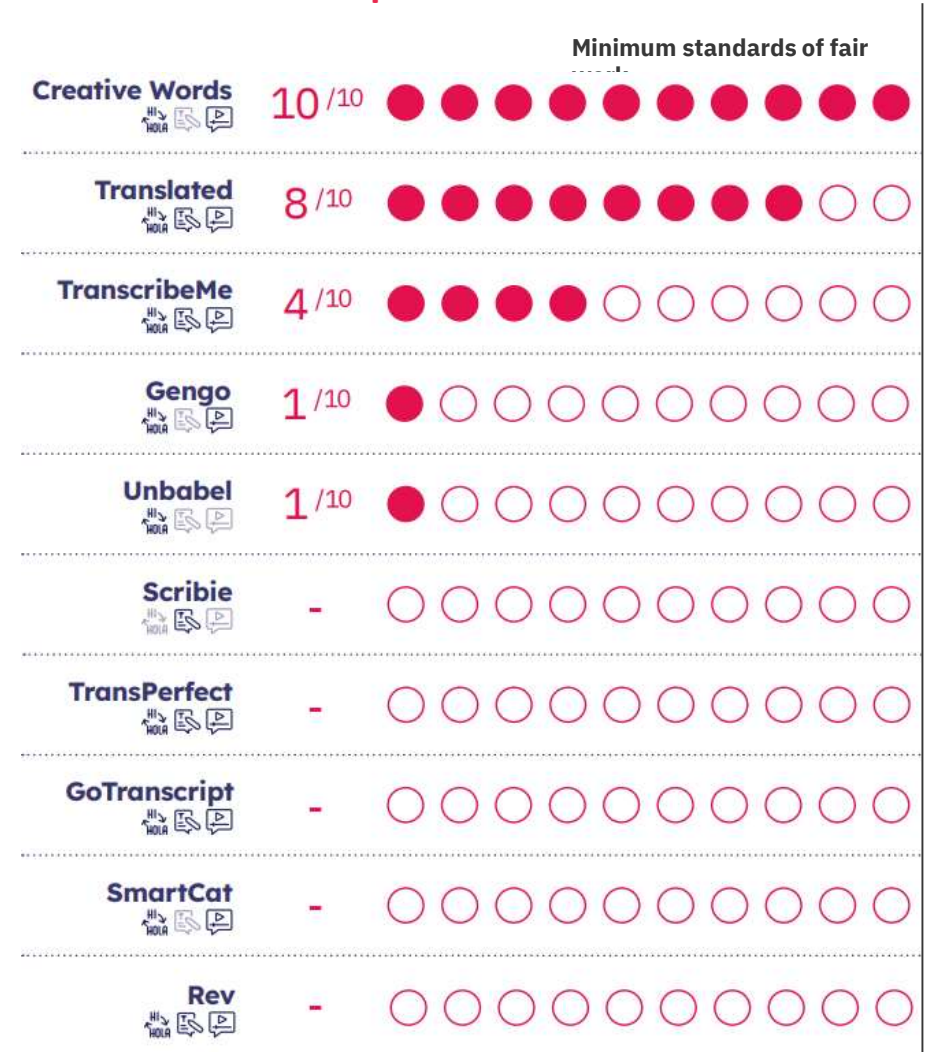
**Final scores are collectively decided and peer-reviewed by
two reviewers from other Fairwork country teams**

Cloudwork and T&T Scorings 2023

Cloudwork 2023



Translation & Transcription 2023



Findings and challenges



Non-payment:

- 25% of workers experienced non-payment
- No evidence of mechanisms ensuring payments on 15/25 platforms

Minimum-wage:

- Evidence that 6/25 platforms ensure this right

Unpaid labour:

- 8.5h (cloudwork platforms) and 5.3h (T&T platforms) per week spent on searching for clients & dealing with overdemanding clients, etc.

Competition for tasks:

- 6/25 platforms promote job availability
- 68.5% of workers reported increasing competition in their platforms

Health and safety:

- 5/25 platforms evidenced measures to mitigate risks



Findings and challenges



Contracts:

- 6/25 platforms evidenced clear, accessible contracts, communicated changes to their workers and did not exempt themselves from liability

Management:

- 9/25 platforms evidenced communication channels with humans in the loop and appeals processes

Anti-discrimination policies:

- 13/25 platforms have a policy in place but not all adopt measures to enforce them

Work allocation methods (including algorithms):

- 6/25 platforms disclosed information about this, but only two consulted workers about changes

Representation:

- 3/25 platforms committed to a process of dispute resolution in which workers have access to an independent advocate who is freely chosen by the worker



Workers' stories



“

My main problem with the platform is that, as shown from my experience with customer support, I really hold no power at all: the site could even decide to randomly ban my account and I would just lose three years of work without being able to do anything about it.”

(Freelancer, Spain)

“

Most jobs are not available to people from my home country of Brazil. It's a significant amount of work that is only available to other countries. Those other workers who have the opportunity to work in these services say they pay too little, or it's too much work for low pay.”

(Microworker, Brazil)

Cloudworkers' agency and resistance



69% of workers surveyed would join a union or association.

Main reasons for joining

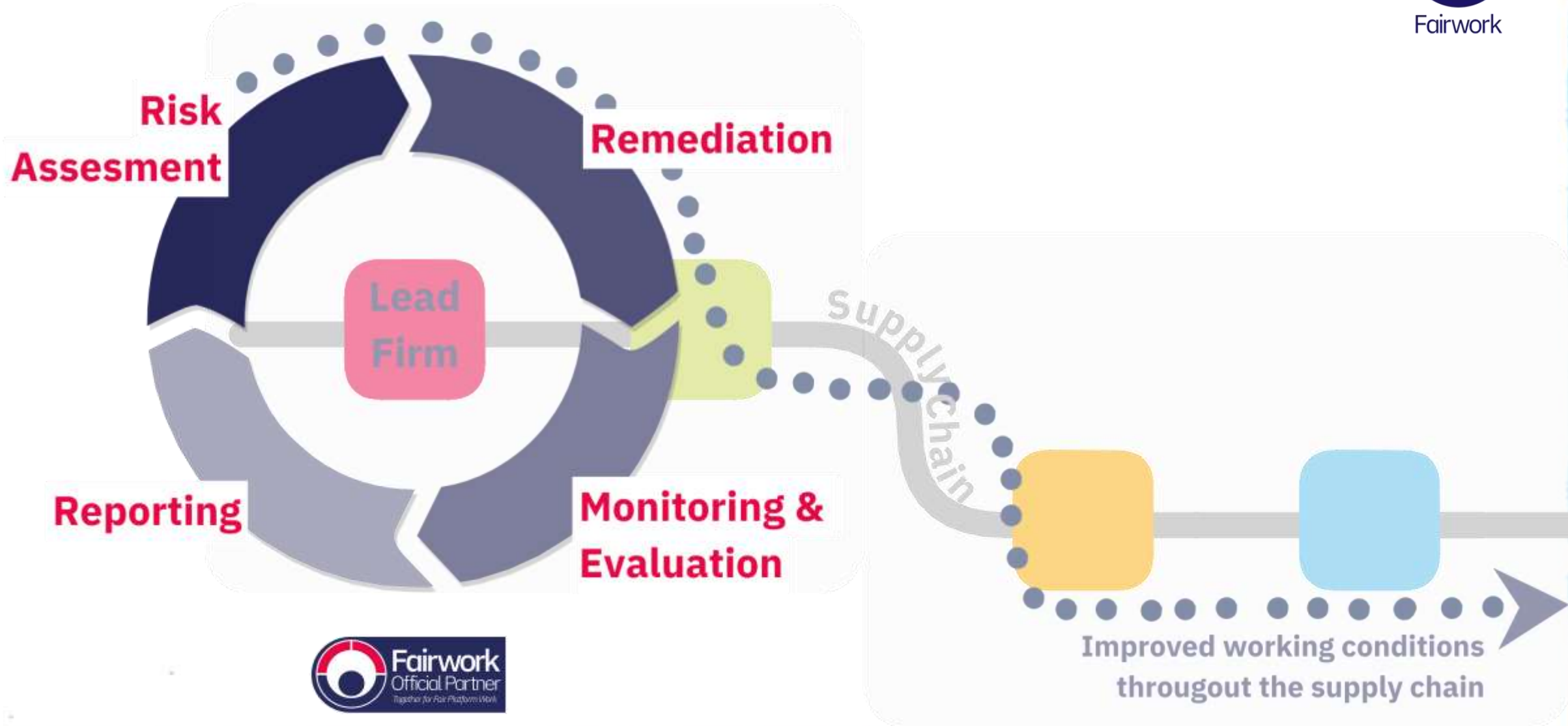
- Improve conditions and pay (36%)
- Enhance collective power and representation (18%)

Main reason for not joining

- Satisfied with labour conditions (25%)
- Workers organization does not apply to platform workers (14%)



Fairwork Due Diligence Consultancy



EU Platform directive and **cloudwork**

Issues and challenges



General transposition challenges:

- National legislation could be watered down / platform-friendly
- Mechanisms for shared liability btw. platforms <> subcontractors

Cloudwork – transposition challenges:

- **Harder employment relationship assessment for cloudworkers**
- Lack of employment related protections (e.g., OSH) for persons performing platform work (PPPW)
- **Strengthen the representation of workers and PPPW and exercising rights listed in the Directive**
- **Amplify data rights (alg. management and transparency for PPPW) and rules for their enforcement**



The Fairwork Project
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Fairwork's Response to the EU Directive on Platform Work Platforms Should Follow Enforceable Standards!

Fairwork welcomes the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council vote in favour of passing the EU Directive on Platform Work.

Over the past five years, Fairwork's research has underlined the need for universal standards to regulate platform work. Our analysis of working conditions in 39 countries makes it clear that without setting enforceable standards, digital labour platforms consistently fail to meet even minimum standards of fairness. Many platforms fail to pay workers a living, let alone minimum wage, and continue to put the financial, mental, and physical health of workers at risk. Practices concerning algorithmic management are opaque, and hide key information from workers, such as remuneration and work allocation. Channels of communication to raise grievances or have issues resolved are either ineffective, or non-existent. And when workers contest subpar working conditions and demand improvements, they often face repercussions from platforms.

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