How data helps Liberty Shared track forced labour in the fishing industry

An interview with Valerie Farabee, director of operational research and analysis, Liberty Shared

Welcome to the business of certainty

**Valerie Farabee,
director of operational
research and analysis,
Liberty Shared**

LIBERTY SHARED

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT
SAFE FROM TRAFFICKING

Liberty Shared is an NGO devoted to preventing human trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery. It does this through legal advocacy, technological interventions, and strategic collaborations with NGOs, corporations, third-party databases, financial institutions and regulators around the globe.

Liberty Shared is at the heart of the battle against modern slavery; of the estimated 43.8 million[1] victims worldwide, two thirds are found in the Asia Pacific region. Forced labour generates an estimated revenue of $150 billion, making it the third largest transnational organized crime by revenue[2]. If an organization is seen to be funding or profiting from these crimes, either knowingly or unknowingly, the consequences can have long-term effects including significant reputational damage, fines and legal action.

The Liberty Shared research team compared their traditional investigative process with one that uses Bureau van Dijk's Orbis, an extensive and comparable data resource. Orbis has information on around 300 million companies in all countries. It provides comprehensive company reports, financial strength indicators and ownership information. It is *the* resource for private company data.

The researchers at Liberty Shared found that by using Orbis they could quickly find, complement and fill in gaps in the company information they need for their research. The data points they looked for include beneficial ownership, information on marine vessels and links between companies and other entities.

We spoke with Valerie Farabee, director of operational research and analysis with Liberty Shared, to see how Orbis simplifies and speeds up her team's investigations. She explained the steps the organization takes to uncover the impact of forced labour and how access to a global database of company information can help.

[1] https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm
[2] http://www.oecd.org/gov/risk/oecdtaskforceoncounteringillicittrade.htm

What is Liberty Shared's mission?

Our goal is to disrupt the business of modern slavery and create an environment safe from exploitation for the vulnerable. We do this by identifying the entities directly and indirectly involved in the "trafficking-to-supply chain".
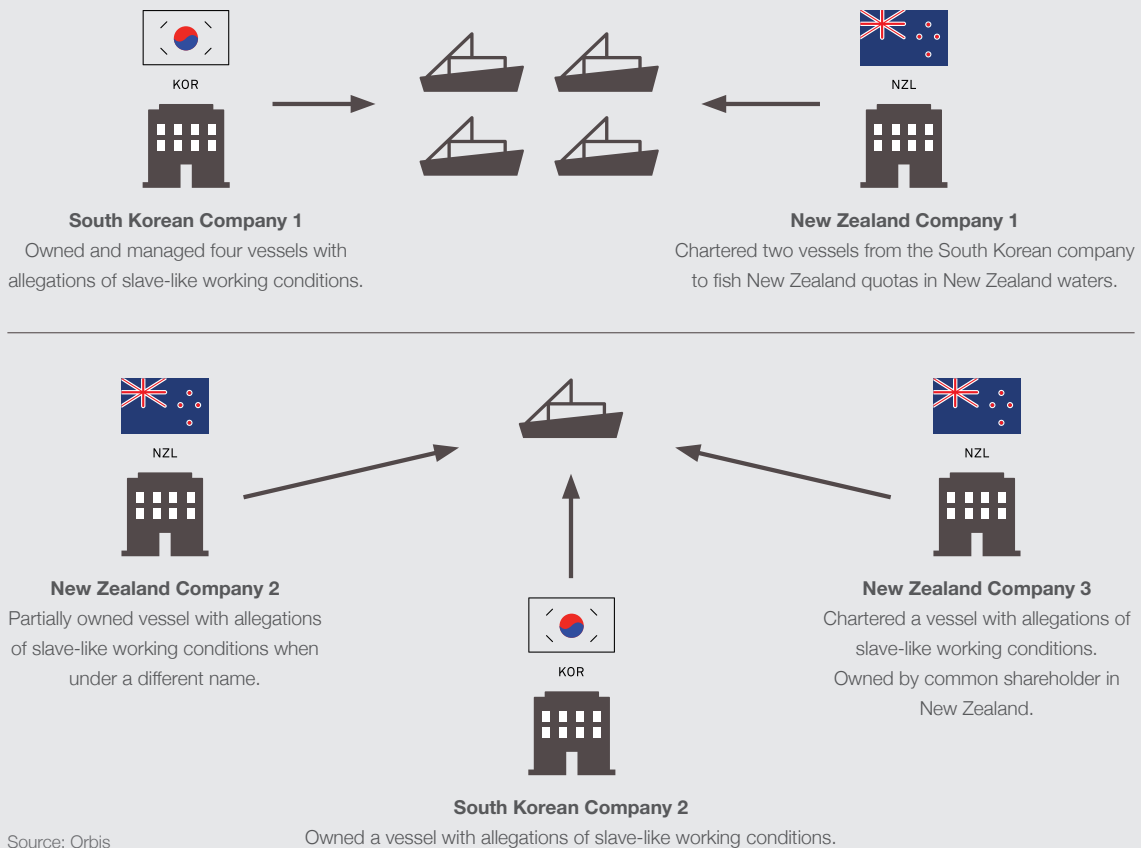
What kind of information is Liberty Shared looking for?

We look for information along the chain that begins with a worker being trafficked and ends with the ultimate consumer of the slave-created product. Information along this chain includes all licensed and unlicensed entities, all businesses, all assets and as many fund flows as we are able to source through publicly available data.
So, what does this look like when we're researching an instance of modern slavery? Let's take a look at the fishing industry: a worker is tricked by a recruitment agency into signing a contract in a language they do not understand, put on a vessel going to a location on which they have not agreed to nor been informed of, consistently beaten and deprived of food, water, medicine, and contact with family at home. Not to mention missing a crucial work product – their paycheck.

The slave-caught fish are sent to processing plants far from the isolated stretch of ocean in which the worker is trapped. The fish from the processing plants are sent to distributors who sell it further, worldwide. End users include consumers at grocery stores, restaurants, and fish mongers worldwide. The worker is not paid, yet profits from the fish he caught fill the pockets of different entities along the supply chain and the financial institutions that service them.

An example of how Orbis can help identify links between entities associated with forced labour in the fishing industry

South Korean Company 1
Owned and managed four vessels with allegations of slave-like working conditions.

New Zealand Company 1
Chartered two vessels from the South Korean company to fish New Zealand quotas in New Zealand waters.

New Zealand Company 2
Partially owned vessel with allegations of slave-like working conditions when under a different name.

South Korean Company 2
Owned a vessel with allegations of slave-like working conditions.

New Zealand Company 3
Chartered a vessel with allegations of slave-like working conditions. Owned by common shareholder in New Zealand.
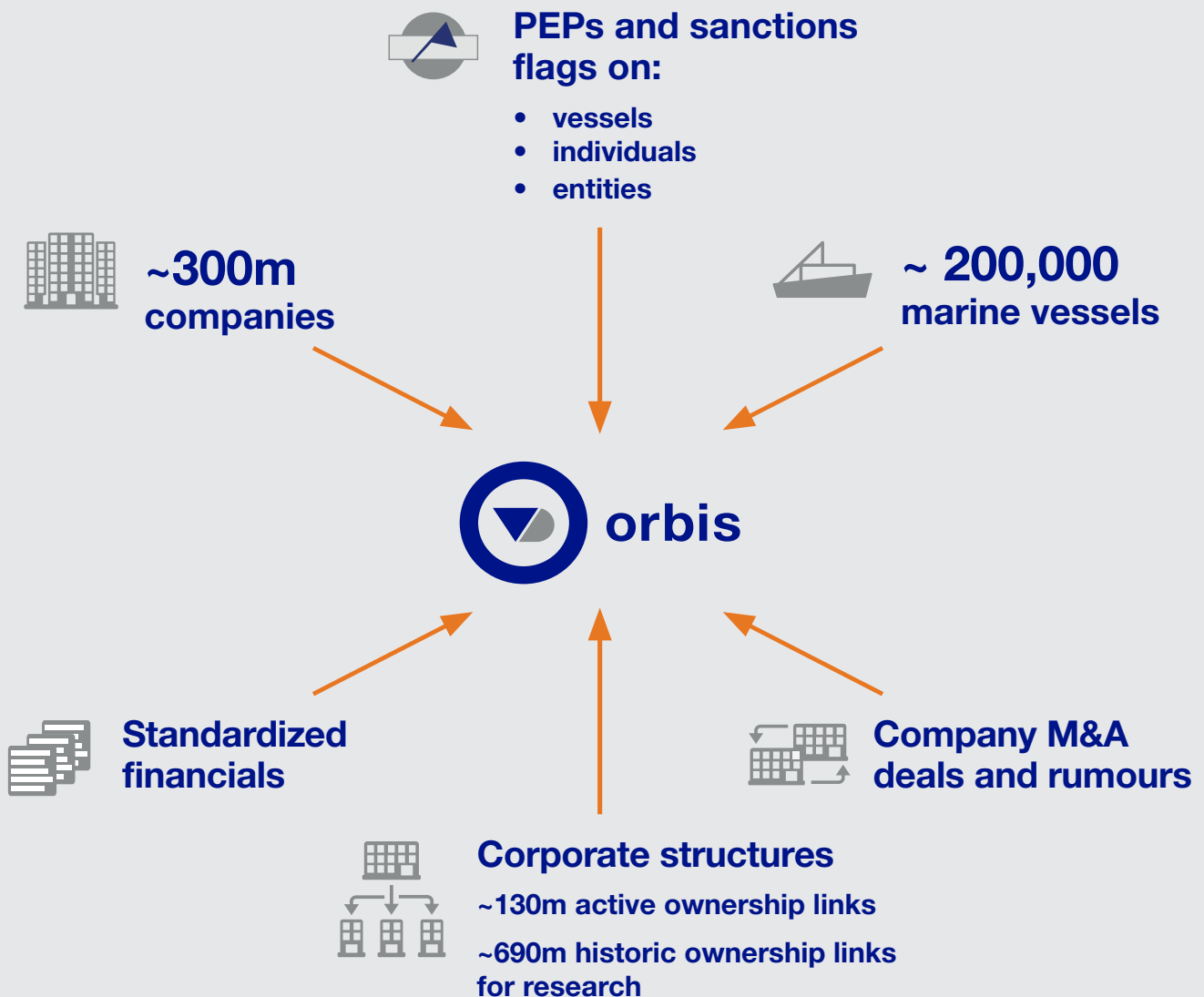
Source: Orbis

We source as much specific identifying information about all entities we have found connected to the trafficking-to-supply chain. These entities may be directly or indirectly involved, but one way or another they may be benefitting from slavery. As with others that use "follow the product" techniques in their research, one of our main targets are the beneficial owners.

What is the research process like?

There are anywhere between 2-5 people at a time on our research team dedicated solely to building out specific instances of modern slavery. Our team members are analysts with professional backgrounds in open source intelligence (OSINT) analysis, law enforcement, and investigative journalism.

Bureau van Dijk captures and treats data from more than 160 separate information providers, and hundreds of its own sources, to create Orbis. Information found in Orbis includes:

PEPs and sanctions flags on:

- **vessels**
- **individuals**
- **entities**

~300m companies

~ 200,000 marine vessels

orbis

Standardized financials

Company M&A deals and rumours

Corporate structures

~130m active ownership links

~690m historic ownership links for research

It takes a solid 2-3 months of dedicated research to put together the ins and outs of one research project. This does not account for the time spent keeping it up to date with all developments, or time spent sourcing new intelligence and information. Orbis can help streamline the process by easily identifying links, relationships, and ownership structures.

How do you help organizations identify and avoid connections to modern slavery?

We offer a wide range of programmes in support of this goal including our Information and Data Collaboration Programme, our Legal Hub, the Freedom Collaborative, and the Victim Case Management System (VCMS). Operational Research and Analysis provides detailed risk information on ongoing cases of crimes related to modern slavery and exploitation.

These resources are used by a wide range of financial service providers, regulators, government agencies, and law enforcement bodies to supplement their existing information and help them know whether they could be directly or indirectly benefiting from slavery.

Financial institutions can mitigate risk by taking advantage of Liberty Shared's many information products. Other civil society actors, such as NGOs, think tanks, and academics, should also be used as part of a wider strategy to exterminate slavery and exploitation from the modern supply chain.

How does Orbis help to identify connections to modern slavery?

Ownership structures and third-party relationships can be difficult to identify in cases of forced labour and modern-day slavery. It's important that databases like Orbis continue to provide accurate information on marine vessels, entities, corporate relationships, and beneficial ownership.

This information, together with those working to confront slavery in grassroots and civil society organizations, can help create an environment safe from exploitation. Orbis is an efficient way in which any organization can work to use and leverage available technology to identify those profiting from modern slavery.

"Orbis is an information rich, one-stop source for the type of information we look for."

Valerie Farabee, director of operational research and analysis, Liberty Shared

You might also be interested in:

- Creating clarity around ownership structures
- Really getting to know your third parties
- A-Z guide of compliance and ownership

To learn more about Orbis and register for a free trial, visit bvdinfo.com

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