

Cambodia (January - March 2016)

Key partners	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT) Cambodian Confederation of Trade Unions (CCTU) Cambodian Labour Confederation (CLC) National Union Alliance Chambers Cambodia (NACC) Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies (ACRA)
Target sites	Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Battambang and Phnom Penh
Focal point	Anna Olsen, Technical Officer, olsena@ilo.org , +(66) 91 2150536

Background information

With 300,000 young Cambodians entering the labour market each year and no nationally set minimum wage, many Cambodian workers go abroad seeking employment opportunities and higher wages. The primary destination country for Cambodian migrant workers is Thailand, with workers commonly migrating into the fishing, agriculture, livestock, construction, manufacturing and service sectors, including domestic work. Only a small minority of these workers (and ever fewer women workers) use regular channels to migrate, instead relying on social networks and unlicensed brokers to cross the border and seek employment. Thai Government data shows that in the three months between July to October 2014, following a mass exodus of Cambodian workers from Thailand, 693,630 Cambodian migrant workers and 42,395 dependents without legal documents registered at One-Stop Service Centres for temporary amnesty from deportation.

Since 2010, the Republic of Korea has become the second most popular destination for regular Cambodian migrant workers, with workers migrating into factory, agriculture, fishing and construction sectors. Cambodia also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Japan, but far fewer migrants travel there for work, likely due to the technical requirements of the Industrial Training Program and Technical Internship Program. MOUs with the State of Qatar and the Government of the State of Kuwait were signed in 2011 and 2009 respectively; as yet, no Cambodian migrant workers have been sent through these channels. As of December 2015, 400 Cambodian domestic workers had been deployed through private recruitment agencies (PRAs) to Singapore as part of a pilot project to see if this is a viable migration option in the future.

In December 2015, a new MOU and agreement on labour cooperation was signed between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Kingdom of Thailand. December 2015 also saw the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Malaysian Government signing two MOUs for sending general workers and domestic workers to Malaysia, lifting the suspension of recruitment agencies sending domestic workers to Malaysia that had been in place since 2011.

Cambodian women migrant workers tend to migrate into low-skilled jobs in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, entertainment, hospitality and domestic work industries. Reports of abuse and exploitation of domestic workers have been recorded in all countries where Cambodian domestic workers are employed. With ageing populations in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, demand for household and caregiving services in the region is expected to continue to grow. At the same time, countries like Indonesia and the Philippines that have traditionally deployed large numbers of domestic workers are looking to reduce the number migrating abroad to work in the sector.

Cambodia at a glance

 Population: 14.9 million

 Labour Force: 7.0 million

Migration to Thailand

117,424 MOU migrant workers

Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Thailand (February 2016)

461,851 Migrants registered at one-stop service centres

Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Thailand (July 2015)

111,493 Registered migrants completing nationality verification

Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Thailand (February 2016)

Migration to Malaysia

8,548 regular migrant workers (October 2015)

Source: Immigration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Malaysia

Workers migrating through official channels:

- Thailand (2006-2016): 116,000
W43,950: M72,050
- Malaysia (1998-2016): 46,452
W40,011: M6,441
- Korea (2007-1/12/2015): 43,571
W8,319: M 35,252
- Japan (2007-2016): 2,383
W1,461: M922

In contrast, the fishing sector is almost entirely male dominated and employs significant numbers of Cambodian migrants. Since 2010, there have been increased reports of Cambodian men encountering exploitative and abusive working conditions on fishing boats in South Africa, Senegal, Fiji, Mauritius, Thailand, Taiwan (China) and other destinations. Whilst the Cambodian Government has not put a formal ban on recruiting and sending Cambodians overseas to work on fishing vessels, the Government has made several statements indicating they do not support regular migration into the fishing industry.

The Cambodian Labour Migration Policy and Action Plan (2015-2018) outlines the Government's commitment to harness labour migration for development. The goals of the policy include making it easier for women and men migrants to send remittances, promoting productive use of remittances and supporting successful return and reintegration. To achieve these objectives, the policy emphasizes the need for improved data, more effective service provision and mitigation of the social costs of migration through specific programmes, including through support to the families and children of migrant workers. Productive return and reintegration through decent work and skills recognitions for migrant workers is also streamlined into the Cambodian National Employment Policy 2015-2025. It is acknowledged however that these actions cannot be carried out by the MOLVT in isolation, but also require cooperation with other actors.

Main activities (January – March 2016)

- On 18 January, tripartite stakeholders gathered for a Project Advisory Committee meeting (W11: M31), focusing on localizing the project's theory of change to the context of Cambodia and endorsement of a one-year work plan.
- In March the 'Assessment of the complaints mechanism for Cambodian migrant workers' was published, outlining the achievements and challenges of the complaints process and offering recommendations to government and social partners to strengthen the system and increase access to justice for migrant workers.

Upcoming activities and key dates (April – June 2016)

Date	Event	Location	Attendees	Purpose
June	Annual meeting on the Cambodian Labour Migration Policy	Phnom Penh	Tripartite labour migration stakeholders	To review progress on the Cambodian Labour Migration Policy and agree to an annual work plan for implementation.
June	Annual stakeholder meeting to discuss complaints mechanism	Phnom Penh	Tripartite labour migration stakeholders	To discuss barriers identified in the complaints procedure for migrant workers and devise an action plan for improvements and to provide training for new staff engaged with complaints receipt.
June	Deliver training on Ethical Recruitment and gender-sensitive protection of women migrant workers to recruitment agencies	Phnom Penh	Tripartite labour migration stakeholders	Review of the gender-sensitivity of the delivery of the PDTCC, and development of recommendations and further guidance for the Government, recruitment agency associations and CSOs.

Key developments

- A new registration window for migrant workers in Thailand will be opened for 120 days: 1 April 2016 to 29 July 2016. Migrants registered will be permitted to work in Thailand for a period of two years.
- Significant media attention has been paid to the issue of Cambodian women marrying Chinese citizens with reports of forced labour and exploitation resulting from marriage broker practices. Women choosing to migrate in this way seem to be motivated by a promise of work.

Media

Date	Title	Media source
29 January 2016	Cambodia's low jobless rate hides harsh realities	Cambodia Daily
31 March 2016	Workers in the dark about new trade union law	Phnom Penh Post
1 April 2016	Letter reveals ILO's cautious criticisms of draft union law	Phnom Penh Post

The **TRIANGLE II** project extends the cooperation between the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** and **Australian Department Of Foreign Affairs and Trade** on protecting migrant workers and enhancing development opportunities. **TRIANGLE II** aims to ensure that the benefits of labour migration are equally realised by men and women migrant workers; employers and governments. In shifting emphasis towards leveraging the development potential of migration, **TRIANGLE II** aims to shape labour migration opportunities to support inclusive and sustainable growth in the ASEAN Economic Community. **TRIANGLE II** focuses on delivering in six countries (**Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam**) and engages institutionally with **ASEAN**.