

<b>Public Employment Service and Labour Migration at a Sub-regional Level.</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Supporting technical assistance and training for the implementation of an employment and monitoring service for labour migration at the sub-regional level.</b>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>In general, labour markets in Central America and the Dominican Republic, to a greater or lesser extent, have a number of common characteristics: a low-skilled labour force, insufficiency of decent jobs, growth in the number of workers in the informal economy sector, as well as the different underemployment modalities and the social and occupational vulnerabilities that come along with them. This, together with other factors, affects the populations' quality of life and promotes inequality, especially for women and youth.</p> <p>This situation must be addressed from various perspectives, and emphasis should be put toward <b>domestic labour market public policies which, should be additionally articulated through regional strategic actions.</b> In a globalized world, where poverty and unemployment affect various nations and labour migration is an everyday reality, measures that go beyond the national scope are necessary.</p> <p>To achieve this, and in order to promote equal opportunities in accessing employment, the role undertaken by labour institutions is essential, particularly of public employment services since they constitute a public space for meeting labour supply and demand for both nationals and foreigners. Labour mobility is a human right and to guarantee its implementation, policies must be established to address it from a comprehensive perspective which benefits the countries of origin and destination, respects the rights of migrants and guarantees information and guidance services.</p> <p>Under the <b>Project for Strengthening Integrated Systems of Training, Orientation and Labour Insertion</b> (FOIL which represents its name in Spanish), <b>the ILO supports professional training institutions in the Central American sub-region (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama) and the Dominican Republic in order to improve public employment services.</b> Specifically, the project's result 1.2 seeks to generate <b>"strengthened sub-regional and national employment services, with greater capacity to coordinate and to provide information and assistance for the whole population, including migrants, which incorporates a gender perspective and fulfills the function of coordinating and harmonizing programmes"</b>.</p>
<b>Main results</b>	<p><b>1. Expanded and consolidated regional spaces of interagency meeting: SICA</b></p> <p>The first objective of the FOIL Project is to create an integrated social and occupational system in the institutions with the capacity to plan and implement sustainable and quality public policies, which is essential for the sustainability of all the results. Bearing this in mind, in 2013 two meetings of the <b>Central-American Council of Labour Ministers for the Integration System of Central America (SICA)</b> were held, and their framework supported the development of a <b>Regional Strategic Agenda for the generation of productive and decent employment.</b></p> <p>In May 2013, technical support was offered to the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Council of Labour Ministries, as well as to the <b>Labour Directors Forum (29-31 May 2013)</b> which subscribed a <b>"Declaration on Decent Work, Youth Employment and Labour Migrations"</b>. The second tripartite meeting of the Council of Labour Ministers presented the Declaration and concluded with issuing a statement by the Council in this particular issue.</p> <p>In September, the Project supported consultations to governments and social actors regarding the Strategic Regional Agenda which involved visits to all countries and interviews with officials from Labour Ministries, employers' and workers' organizations.</p> <p>During the implementation of the Project, the Employment Directors Forum meetings was organised (October 2010, April 2011, February 2012, October 2012 and May 2013) in which plans of action and shared cooperation programmes have been approved in order to improve the regional management of the intermediation and orientation function.</p> <p><b>2. Regional network of public labour services</b></p> <p>Regionally, the <b>Labour Directors Forum</b> decided at its IX meeting to form a <b>Regional Network of Public Employment Services.</b> Actions have been initiated to improve the work of the of public employment services network, especially through staff training and creating opportunities for labour-related information exchanges among regional countries. Specifically, an online course on counselling and employment agencies had been designed and taught to 130 officials, and in October 2013 a course on managing labour mobility procedures. The <b>Labour Insertion Portal</b> is being modified in order to become the portal for the <b>Employment Network of Central America and the Dominican Republic.</b></p> <p>Many of these actions are coordinated with the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES), the two Forum meetings conducted in 2012, and the labour mobility course in October 2013.</p> <p><b>3. Training of staff in employment intermediation and orientation</b></p> <p>In the <b>"VIII Forum of Labour Directors in Central America and the Dominican Republic"</b> (October 2010), a training program for officials of the Ministries of Labour was agreed, and the first activity developed was a <b>Course on Employment, Vocational Training and Labour Intermediation</b> for managers of each countries' Labour Directorates.</p> <p>Following this agreement, a team of directors in the intermediation and orientation departments of each Ministry of Labour in</p>

the sub-region agreed on the overall strategy and thematic contents that will be developed through competencies.

In the second semester of 2012, with the support of CINTERFOR, the course was designed, based on a previous diagnosis of the posts' competences which materialized in a [competence map](#) of the orientation and intermediation managers. The training modules were placed in the space for virtual training of the employment portal (<http://foil.oit.or.cr/elearning/>). During July and August 2012, a [process for the validation of the course](#) was developed [with 30 staff from 7 countries in the region](#).

During the first trimester of 2013, a [training of trainers](#) was organized as part of the "Regional Training Programme on employment orientation and intermediation", which combined classroom and distance learning sessions. The purpose of the course was to develop and/or deepen competences of people who would be responsible for training employment managers from each country's Ministries of Labour. In total, [48 officials of the public employment services in the region have been trained as virtual tutors](#) whom are capable of teaching virtual courses on employment intermediation and orientation.

The course will take place in a virtual format through the Regional Portal of Job Placement from July 22, 2013 and will end on December 13, 2013; the participants include [130 directors from regional countries and is led by 26 tutors](#), <http://foil.oit.or.cr/elearning/> (User: visita2013 Password: Visita\_2013).

#### 4. Harmonization of policies and processes for labour mobility

In the **X Reunion of the Forum of Employment Directors in Central America and the Dominican Republic**, support from the FOIL project in order to train officials in Labour Mobility Management was requested, as well as to define some guidelines about the program and its contents. In this context, the Employment Directors participated in a **workshop on "Labour Migration and Public Employment Services"** (October 2012) in the Dominican Republic, which was organized with the National Directorate of Employment Service (SENAEH), chaired by the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES) for Latin America <http://webcast.richcast.eu/webinar/115108>

In October 2013, the first part of the process in training officials in labour mobility management was taught through a sub-regional [workshop on the harmonization of policies and procedures for managing labour mobility in Central American countries and in the Dominican Republic](#).

This course intends to **promote and define orderly systems of labour mobility management in Central-American countries; provide employment managers with information and practical tools and; to facilitate the relationship between labour institutions involved in the process of regulating and managing migration flows in different regional countries**. The course is addressed to staff who manage labour mobility at different levels: governmental authorities and officials of the Ministries of Labour who work in the public employment services, as well as departments of labour migration and the people in charge of employers' and workers' organizations.

The associations developed through the exchange of experiences and achievement of activities between the participants during the development of this course, will facilitate the implementation of international projects and accompanying measures among the parties. The results will be presented in the second phase of the training which is to start in the first half of 2014.

The planning of the training process is coordinated with the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES), which supports the incorporation of Employment Services from other regions (Asia, Europe, South America and Mexico).

Regarding the development of its contents, the course takes materials and experts from the ILO, IOM, EU, and the Spanish and Mexican Ministries of Employment and Social Security.

With the resources and materials generated from both phases of the course, training modules will be developed for an online course on "labour mobility management" which enables to provide training on labour competencies to officials..

#### 5. Employment Placement Portal

In 2008, the Regional Portal of Job Placement (<http://www.empleo-foil.oit.or.cr/>) was created with the purpose of becoming a space for communication and transfer of experiences, information and employment-related products among social and employment institutions in the region, the analysis of labour markets, its trends, as well as living and working conditions of citizens for improving their quality of life.

Recently, work has been developed on optimizing the [documentation center](#) (which contains over 700 documents), [enabling a space for virtual training for officials from social and labour institutions in the region](#) (including their ongoing guidance and placement). The course will be about labour mobility and will include a section on ["Living and Working Conditions in Central America and the Dominican Republic"](#) with basic information on practical, legal and administrative matters that should be taken into account.. Personnel from Ministries of Labour have been trained to update this space. Furthermore, a website has been created for information sharing and telecommuting of the Forum of Employment Directors in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

#### 6. Strengthening the Public Employment Services

Between 2007 and 2009, with the support of the FOIL-CECC/SICA Programme, two studies on the situation of public employment services in the region have been produced, which provided a first insight into the performance of public employment services in terms of progress and challenges.

	<p>In 2011, the Ministries of Labour approved to conduct detailed country analyses that are capable of tracing a path for improving their impacts and capacities for action (plans of action).</p> <p>During 2011 and 2012, studies on the situation and plans of action were carried out for improving Public Employment Services in Honduras, Dominican Republic Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The process included consultations with staff, users, and representatives from the business sector, as wells as workers. Additionally, the processes culminated in the validation of workshops with all stakeholders.</p> <p>The FOIL Project has a commitment to support the implementation of the resulting plans of action. The following plans of action have been supported in accordance to each Directorate of Employment:</p> <p><b>HONDURAS.- National Employment Service of Honduras (SENAEH)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote the <b>regulation of private employment agencies in Honduras</b>: development of a Draft Project for the Regulation of Private Employment Agencies and Related Services, and a Manual of Administrative Procedures for its application.</li> <li>- Strengthen the Network of Associated Offices to the SENAEH through public-private partnerships under the leadership of the Employment Directorate General of the Ministry of Labour (structure and protocol of actions for the Network of Associate Offices to the SENAEH and development of a strategy to integrate new players to the network and enhance their participation).</li> </ul> <p><b>COSTA RICA.- Information, Orientation and Intermediation National Service for Employment in Costa Rica (SIOEI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the consolidation of the "Employ yourself" strategy (initiative on youth employment) in order to provide comprehensive care in the field of social and employment insertion of young people in vulnerable situations.</li> <li>- Design an internal articulation plan of the National Employment Directorate and a model of management of intermediation agencies in the municipalities.</li> </ul> <p><b>NICARAGUA.- Public Employment Service of Nicaragua's Ministry of Labour (SEPEM)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of effective strategies on Labour Intermediation in Public and Private Employment Agencies in order to improve competitiveness and labour productivity, and training of a total of 84 officials from public and private employment agencies in the country.</li> <li>- Support horizontal cooperation by providing technical assistance to the Argentinean Ministry of Labour in order to improve the computer application of the Employment Service (SISEPEM)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strengthening Employment Directions</b> - Pilot plan for the adaptation and implementation of the SIMAPRO methodology (Measurement System and Improvement of Productivity) to improve management within the Employment Directorates in Costa Rica, Panama and Honduras, in collaboration with the ILO office in Mexico as of October 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborators</b>	Labour Ministries of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, the Dominican Republic, through the Forum of Employment Directors of the Dominican Republic and Central America.