

# TRIANGLE in ASEAN Quarterly Briefing Note Viet Nam



## July – December 2024

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### Key developments

On 1 December, at a national conference by the Communist Party of Viet Nam, it was announced that the [Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs \(MOLISA\) would be dissolved](#) and its scope of work transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Training and the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs. The dissolution is [part of a wider effort to reorganize the political apparatus](#) in Viet Nam and should be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2025.

On 27 December, MOLISA [announced that 700,000 documented Vietnamese workers were currently working abroad](#). In 2024 alone, 150,000 workers were leaving Viet Nam to work abroad. Viet Nam seeks to send workers to the traditional destination countries such as Japan and the Republic of Korea and expand to new countries of destination. For example, in January 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding on labour migration cooperation between Viet Nam and Finland will be signed.

On 6 September, MOLISA and the Australian Embassy in Viet Nam have jointly [announced the next steps](#) to support Vietnamese workers to work in the Australian agriculture sector under the Viet Nam Labour Mobility Arrangement. The Australian government will allow up to 1,000 Vietnamese workers at a time to undertake work in the agriculture sector. Under this arrangement, Vietnamese workers can be employed either for a short-term (six to nine months) or a long-term (one to four years) in low- and semi-skilled roles across horticulture, meat processing, fisheries (including aquaculture) and forestry. In December, six recruitment agencies selected the first batch of migrants to work under this programme.

### Main programme activities

TRIANGLE organized a series of [Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion \(GEDI\) workshops](#) in five countries in the region. The aim of these workshops has been to bridge silos in the conceptual understanding of the two issue areas and to enhance mutual efforts towards social justice and service provision particularly for migrant workers with disabilities amongst TRIANGLE's partners – government, trade unions, employers, civil society organizations, Migrant Worker Resource Centre (MRC) staff, LGBTQI+ organizations and Organizations for Persons with Disabilities.



Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion workshop on 25-27 September 2024.

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German Development Cooperation Organization (GIZ), and UNU-MERIT, Maastricht University in partnership with the ILO and with technical support from TRIANGLE, organized a **Training on Fair and Ethical Recruitment**. The training was organized as part of GIZ and ILO ongoing efforts to build capacity within MOLISA, Provincial Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the MRCs and social partners. 43 participants from Departments of Overseas Labour (DOLISAs), Viet Nam Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS) including from ten provinces (Phu Tho, Bac Ninh, Ha Noi, Lao Cai, Thai Binh, Nghe An, Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Quang Ngai, and Hue) attended. The aim of the training was to raise awareness and encourage consideration of fair and ethical recruitment throughout the recruitment process. Throughout this training, participants had the opportunity to learn and discuss global norms and key principles on fair and ethical recruitment, identify and understand the roles, interests, and challenges of different stakeholders in this process, and how to foster collaboration between MRCs, DOLISAs, and the Department of Overseas Labour in monitoring fair and ethical recruitment practices and effectively handling migrant workers' complaints. Participants also appreciated the opportunity to learn from the best practices and experiences from other countries of origin, such as Sri Lanka and the Philippines.



Visit by Kiribati delegation to TRIANGLE supported MRCs in Viet Nam 9-11 November 2024.

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Overseas Workers Resource Centre in Kiribati.

On 8 November, MOLISA hosted the **Viet Nam ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) preparatory workshop**. Representatives from government, workers organizations, employers organizations, civil society, research institutes, experts and international organizations [reviewed progress of implementation of previous AFML recommendations, and discussed the theme of the 17th AFML "Care work and labour migration in ASEAN"](#). The theme was deemed very relevant

From 25-27 September, TRIANGLE, in collaboration with the Viet Nam Women Academy, organized the GEDI workshop in Viet Nam for 36 participants (W:28; M:8). Participants included eight representatives from the MRCs in Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Nghe An, Thai Binh, Bac Ninh, Phu Tho, Quang Ngai and Lao Cai, four representatives from the Provincial Association of Persons with Disability of Ha Noi, Hai Duong, Ha Giang and Ha Tinh, the Women's Union and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour. It was the first time ever that issues of gender and disability inclusion in the context of labour migration in Viet Nam were discussed. At the Viet Nam workshop, [a video documenting the training was created](#).

From 30 September-1 October, the Ha Tinh DOLISA, the German Development Cooperation Organization (GIZ), and UNU-MERIT, Maastricht University in partnership with the ILO and with technical support from TRIANGLE, organized a **Training on Fair and Ethical Recruitment**. The training was organized as part of GIZ and ILO ongoing efforts to build capacity within MOLISA, Provincial Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the MRCs and social partners. 43 participants from Departments of Overseas Labour (DOLISAs), Viet Nam Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS) including from ten provinces (Phu Tho, Bac Ninh, Ha Noi, Lao Cai, Thai Binh, Nghe An, Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Quang Ngai, and Hue) attended. The aim of the training was to raise awareness and encourage consideration of fair and ethical recruitment throughout the recruitment process. Throughout this training, participants had the opportunity to learn and discuss global norms and key principles on fair and ethical recruitment, identify and understand the roles, interests, and challenges of different stakeholders in this process, and how to foster collaboration between MRCs, DOLISAs, and the Department of Overseas Labour in monitoring fair and ethical recruitment practices and effectively handling migrant workers' complaints. Participants also appreciated the opportunity to learn from the best practices and experiences from other countries of origin, such as Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

On 9-11 November, TRIANGLE hosted a ten-person **delegation from Kiribati to study TRIANGLE in ASEAN MRCs** in Viet Nam. Prior to Viet Nam, participants visited the TRIANGLE-supported MRCs in Cambodia. The TRIANGLE MRC model of service delivery to migrant workers is recognized as a good practice within the ILO and the broader development community. The Kiribati delegation comprised of senior officials from the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources and representatives from the Kiribati Trade Union Congress, Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre. The study visit will inform planning and establishment of the first-ever Pacific

to the context of Viet Nam, a country that exports care workers at medium and high skills levels, including nurses to Japan and Germany, and expects to see demand for its care workers to increase rapidly in the future. At the same time, several participants recognized that since Viet Nam is one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the world, it will also start to experience worker shortages in the near future. The [draft recommendations](#) were taken to the AFML in Lao PDR on 13-14 November.

On 30 November, TRIANGLE delivered a 30-minute talk for [Viet Nam Women's Newspaper \(online\)](#) on safe labour migration for ethnic minority women migrant workers, providing essential information to ensure decent work for ethnic minority women migrant workers, including benefits and risks of labour migration, recruitment process, how to check and verify information of jobs and recruitment agencies, indicators of forced labour, importance of work contracts, and what to do in cases of abuse or violations of rights

On 5 December, TRIANGLE joined a panel together with civil society representatives, the Ha Tinh MRC and experts at a [Roundtable Discussion](#) on **"Safe Migration for Vietnamese Women Working Abroad in Care and Domestic Work"**. Participants at the Roundtable Discussion were representatives from government, the Communist Party of Viet Nam, mass media, mass organizations, civil society, academics and experts, local authorities of provinces having large numbers of migrant workers, international organizations and MRCs from Thanh Hoa, Phu Tho and Ha Tinh. The event was organized by the Center for Health and Population Initiatives and the Institute for Community Health Development (LIGHT) in cooperation with GIZ. Experts at the roundtable emphasized the importance of ensuring more safe and more effective migration processes for Vietnamese women. Currently many Vietnamese women migrating for care work and domestic work lack necessary skills and knowledge, both professionally and for personal safety. Most of these women come from poor rural and remote areas and have limited education and limited access to information and support services. Climate change and natural disasters are threatening their living conditions, pushing more women to migrate for work. Participants agreed that there is a need for better career counselling, skills training and provision of support services during the migration process. Strengthening law enforcement would be also crucial.

#### ► Upcoming activities and key dates (January – June 2025)

| Date        | Event                                                                             | Location              | Attendees                                                                                                                           | Purpose                                                                                                 |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March-April | Training on Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion (district and commune level) | Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh | Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA), district labour management unit and commune leaders of People Committee | Strengthen partners' knowledge and efforts toward gender equality and disability inclusion in practice. |
| March-April | Training for Women Migrant Workers on Financial Literacy                          | Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh | Potential women migrant workers                                                                                                     | Prepare women migrant workers and their families to cope with separation and manage family finances     |
| March-June  | Job Fairs for Returnee Migrant Workers                                            | Ha Tinh and Thanh Hoa | Women and men returnee migrant workers and enterprises looking to hire new workers                                                  | To support returnee migrant workers to find employment in Viet Nam                                      |

|            |                                                                                              |                       |                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March-June | Community Dialogues with Returnee Migrant Workers                                            | Ha Tinh and Thanh Hoa | Women and men returnee migrant workers and local labour authorities | To identify issues and concerns raised by migrant workers and discuss solutions                                                                                        |
| April-June | Information dissemination outreach events on labour rights of migrant workers working abroad | Ha Tinh and Thanh Hoa | Potential women and men migrant workers                             | To raise awareness for potential men and women migrant workers on safe and legal migration, labour rights at work and enhance their capacity for respond to violations |

## ► Media Coverage

| Date        | Title                                                                                                                                     | Media source                                                        |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 July      | <a href="#">Migrant Workers Pay Sky-high Fees to Expand Taiwan's Biggest Airport</a>                                                      | The Diplomat                                                        |
| 19 August   | <a href="#">Vietnamese lead influx of foreign workers with Korean dream</a>                                                               | The Korea Economic Daily                                            |
| 7 September | <a href="#">Announcing the implementation of support measures for Vietnamese citizens working in the agricultural sector in Australia</a> | MOLISA                                                              |
| 23 October  | <a href="#">Vietnam aims to send 130,000 workers abroad in 2024</a>                                                                       | Viet Nam plus                                                       |
| 11 November | <a href="#">Japan to share entry costs, ease job-changing restrictions for Vietnamese workers</a>                                         | VN Express                                                          |
| 1 December  | <a href="#">Ministries, state agencies to undergo mergers in national apparatus overhaul</a>                                              | Viet Nam News                                                       |
| 1 December  | <a href="#">Vietnam Sets Off Down the Path of Institutional 'Revolution'</a>                                                              | The Diplomat                                                        |
| 5 December  | <a href="#">Resuscitating Vietnamese worker dreams in Japan</a>                                                                           | East Asia Forum                                                     |
| 23 December | <a href="#">Promoting safe migration for Vietnamese women working in caregiving and domestic work sectors</a>                             | Vietnamese German Programme Reform of TVET in Viet Nam (GIZ/MOLISA) |
| 27 December | <a href="#">Vietnamese workers abroad remit home US\$4 billion annually</a>                                                               | Voice of Viet Nam                                                   |



## Viet Nam at a glance

Population: 99.5 million

Labour Force: 55.9 million

Source: ILOSTAT, 2024

## Migrant workers in major destinations

Total: 508,172 migrant workers

Japan: 187,383 migrant workers

Source: International Labour Statistics Database 2024

## Migrant workers deployed through formal channels in 2023\*

Total : 160,000 migrant workers

Japan: 80,000 migrant workers

Source: ADBI, ILO and OECD (2024)

\*Latest available disaggregated figures are from 2023.

TRIANGLE in ASEAN delivers assistance directly to migrant workers and their communities through five Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs). These MRCs are managed in partnership with government institutions and are based in Bac Ninh, Ha Tinh, Thanh Hoa, Phu Tho, and Quang Ngai (all with the Provincial Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs).

Since the start of the programme until the end of 2023, TRIANGLE provided direct services to 68,119 migrant workers (39 per cent women) and reached another 119,244 migrant workers (45.6 per cent women) with information services through Viet Nam MRCs.

## Background information

In 2024 alone, Viet Nam [sent 150,000 migrant workers abroad](#) (2023: 160,000), with Japan being the top destination for regular migration [according to data including up to September 2024](#). Significant numbers of migrant workers also travel to the Middle East, Northern Africa, Europe and middle-income countries in Asia. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Labour Cooperation was signed between Viet Nam and Thailand in 2016 but has yet to be implemented. It permits only employment in the fishing and construction sectors, where a relatively small number of Vietnamese migrants seek employment (ILO and IOM, 2017).

The Law on Contract-Based Overseas Workers (Law 69) was adopted in 2020 and is the overarching framework governing international labour migration from Viet Nam. Six sub-laws, which form the guiding normative documents for the implementation of Law 69, were signed in December 2021 and January 2022 and came into force in January and February 2022 respectively. Under the previous iteration of the law, a sizeable proportion of Vietnamese migrant workers still chose to migrate irregularly. Stakeholders, including Government, have expressed concerns about the number of Vietnamese workers overstaying their visas and becoming irregular in destinations.. While irregular status increases the risk of exploitation, limits available assistance channels, and is punishable by fines and other sanctions in Viet Nam, it also may be less costly for migrant workers, in terms of time and money (ILO and IOM 2017).

Until the onset of COVID-19, the Vietnamese Government annually increased national and provincial labour migration targets and actively promoted labour migration as a means of employment creation, skills improvement and poverty reduction. In 2024, the annual target is 125,000 departing migrants. The Vietnamese Government has developed geographically targeted policies to encourage labour migration as a poverty reduction strategy. In 20 provinces, residents of designated 'poor districts' are eligible to apply for subsidies to facilitate working overseas. The incentives include loans and financial assistance for language training, vocational skills training, health checks and other services. While effective at increasing migration from these areas, there are concerns that these policies encourage migration of the most vulnerable populations, including ethnic minorities who often have very limited education. According to the World Bank (2024), Viet Nam is one of the top receivers of

remittances in the Asia-Pacific, with expected remittance inflows at US\$14 billion in 2023 (2022: US\$ 13.2 billion), accounting for 3.3 per cent of GDP (2022: 3.2 per cent).

- Key partners ► Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)  
► Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA)  
► Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL)  
► Viet Nam Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS)
- Target sites ► Quang Ngai, Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Bac Ninh and Phu Tho provinces
- Focal point ► Anna Engblom, Chief Technical Adviser, [engblom@ilo.org](mailto:engblom@ilo.org)

**TRIANGLE in ASEAN** extends the cooperation between the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, the **Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)** (and **Global Affairs Canada (GAC)** until 2024) on protecting migrant workers and enhancing development opportunities. **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** aims to ensure that the benefits of labour migration are equally realized by men and women migrant workers; employers and governments. In shifting emphasis towards leveraging the development potential of migration, **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** aims to shape labour migration opportunities to support inclusive and sustainable growth in the ASEAN Economic Community. **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** engages institutionally with **ASEAN** and focuses on delivering in six countries (**Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam**).



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