



International
Labour
Organization

Fair
Recruitment
Initiative

► Fair Recruitment Initiative: Paving the way for decent work

Celebrating 10 years of progress



What is the Fair Recruitment Initiative?

The **Fair Recruitment Initiative** aims to ensure recruitment practices that are aligned with labour standards, are developed through social dialogue and respond to gender equality concerns. It focuses on transparent, regulated, and enforced processes that protect workers' rights and prevent forced labour and trafficking in persons.

Fair recruitment is the first step to decent work. Hence, recruitment should be conducted in a way that protects workers, responds to labour market needs, and aligns with employment policies.

The Fair Recruitment Initiative was launched in 2014 as part of the ILO Director General's call for a Fair Migration Agenda. The same year, ILO's Protocol on Forced Labour reaffirmed the importance of fair recruitment in preventing forced labour.

Since its launch, the Initiative has been critical to ILO's work in the area of national and international recruitment of workers and has added renewed impetus and visibility to this important topic.

The [General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment](#) and the [Definition of Related Recruitment Fees and Costs](#) are at the heart of the Initiative and represent the most comprehensive, global guidance on recruitment, steering the ILO's action and inspiring relevant stakeholders at all levels.

To mark the **10th anniversary** of the Fair Recruitment Initiative, the ILO has documented progress and lessons learned to identify key achievements, gaps, emerging challenges and future priorities.



What are the objectives of the Fair Recruitment Initiative?

The Fair Recruitment Initiative is based on four pillars:

Pillar 1: Global Knowledge

Enhancing global knowledge on national and international recruitment processes

To produce quality data, identify practical challenges, as well as foster and disseminate knowledge that can play a crucial role in evidence-based policy making, influence actions of relevant stakeholders and shape a balanced narrative on labour migration.

Pillar 2: Law and policy

Improving laws, policies and enforcement to promote fair recruitment

To support governments with reforming their legal frameworks and enforcing fair recruitment in line with International Labour Standards and the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for fair recruitment and the Definition of recruitment fees and related costs.

Pillar 3: Business practices

Promoting fair business practices

To ensure the implementation of fairer, safer and more effective recruitment practice in the private sector, notably through the development of practical tools and standards.

Pillar 4: Empowering workers

Empowering and protecting workers

To increase the capacity of workers' organizations to advocate for fair recruitment frameworks, organize workers in sectors at risk of unfair recruitment and provide support including on access to justice in cases of violations.

What are the Fair Recruitment Initiative key achievements by pillars?

Pillar 1: Global Knowledge

Production of knowledge

The ILO has led the development of multiple global knowledge products, including more than 150 publications:

 61 knowledge products

 41 targeted capacity building tools

 53 advocacy materials

The Initiative has also produced a variety of national research, including studies measuring Sustainable Development Goals 10.7.1 indicator in 8 countries, to assess recruitment fees and related costs borne by migrant workers. These studies revealed major regional differences, with high costs in some countries, such as Bangladesh where recruitment fees and related costs can amount **14.6 months** of a worker's income at destination.

Dissemination of information

In 2022, the ILO officially launched the [Fair Recruitment Knowledge Hub](#), an interactive platform that is available in English, French and Spanish, organized around 7 priority areas, and has over 500 members. The platform hosts a repository of more than 200 resources, including publications, data sets, articles, training resources and learning materials on fair recruitment in different languages, themes and geographic contexts. It has promoted more than 45 events. The platform has been visited by 6,300 users since its official launch. More than 4,100 sessions were launched through a Google Search where the platform is often listed as relevant to the search terms.

Media and narratives

In the past five years, the ILO organized more than 50 trainings for journalists and media professionals, targeting more than 30 countries. The ILO has also supported the establishment of a network of trainers around the world.

The ILO developed specific [resources for Media](#), like the media toolkit "Reporting on forced labour and fair recruitment: An ILO toolkit for journalists" and the "Media friendly glossary" both available in: Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

These tools have been adapted to 13 national/ regional context, in 11 different languages, and also count some thematical extensions, such as the glossary on [Women migrant workers and ending violence against women \(EVAW\)](#).

The ILO media toolkit has been integrated as a reference by numerous media institutions and universities, in at least nine countries. For instance, in the Philippines, the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication introduced an elective course, accredited by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), using the toolkit as a key reference. The toolkit is also mentioned as a recommended resource by the [Global Investigative Journalism Network](#).

The toolkit is also referenced in policy documents, In France, for example, the [National strategy to accelerate the elimination of child labour, forced labour, humain trafficking and modern slavery](#) mentions the ILO media toolkit.

Additionally, through the annual Global Media Competition on Labour Migration, the ILO, in collaboration with its partners, recognizes exemplary media reporting that contributes in changing the narratives. The competition has over 2,500 submissions between 2015 and 2023, from 95 countries.

Pillar 2: Law and policy

New regulations and policies

Over the past four years, the ILO supported at least **20 countries** to revise or adopt new regulations and/or policies covering recruitment practices.

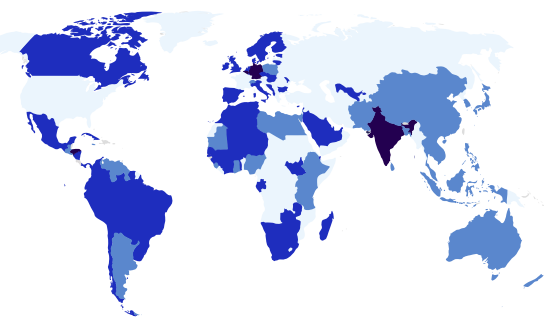
Recruitment fees and related costs

Since the launch of the Fair Recruitment Initiative, at least **25 countries** have adopted specific new laws or reformed existing ones to align with principles of fair recruitment regarding recruitment fees and related costs, while the adoption of proposed legal revisions is expected in an additional number of countries.

The legal reforms, and the tripartite consultations that preceded them, were documented in the case of [Madagascar](#), [Thailand](#) and [Viet Nam](#).

In total, at least **110 countries** adopted legislation regulating and/or prohibiting recruitment fees and related costs.

Global overview of legal provisions on recruitment fees and related costs



Regulated Prohibited Prohibited and regulated

Ratifications of International Labour Standards

Since the launch of the Fair Recruitment Initiative in 2014, **133 additional ratifications** of International Labour Standards related to recruitment have been reported. These ratifications demonstrate country commitment to fair recruitment.

Additional ratifications of International Labour Standards

Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	4
Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (P029)	60
Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88)	2
Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	4
Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	7
Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)	10
Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)	18
Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)	28

Pillar 3: Business practices

Global interventions

► ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour (GBNFL)

In 2021, ILO GBNFL and ITC-ILO launched a due diligence toolkit focused on fair recruitment for small and medium enterprises. This digital toolkit helps companies mitigate risks in recruitment processes and track effectiveness. It supported a training course for 130 ILO constituents and is available in English, French, and Spanish, with a tailored version for Malaysia.

► Partnership with business schools

The ILO, in partnership with the Global Business School Network (GBSN) and the Geneva School of Economics and Management (GSEM/UNIGE), developed teaching resources on fair recruitment for business school practitioners, aiming to train future business leaders.

► Piloting fair recruitment practices with a corridor approach

In 2018, QDVC, a shareholding company of Qatari Diar and VINCI Construction Grands Projets, partnered with the ILO Qatar Project Office to pilot fair recruitment practices in the construction sector, focusing on the Bangladesh-Qatar migration corridor. The pilot aimed to address worker vulnerabilities by improving recruitment practices, with two private recruitment agencies, STS in Qatar and Bonanza in Bangladesh. The pilot reduced recruitment costs for workers by 44 per cent and improved worker selection, benefiting both workers and businesses.

Country interventions

At country level, a range of private recruitment agency networks in at least 14 countries have adopted codes of conduct and practice that incorporate fair recruitment principles. Examples include networks in Cambodia, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Ghana, Mauritius, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Viet Nam.

► Guatemala

ILO worked with the Chamber of Agriculture, the sugar producers association, and the palm oil producers association to promote fair recruitment. This resulted in sector-specific policies for the sugar and palm oil industries, impacting 11 sugar mills (63,000 direct jobs, 315,000 indirect jobs) and the palm oil sector (28,575 direct jobs, 143,000 indirect beneficiaries).

► Mexico

In 2020, a collaboration between ILO, Verité, and AHIFORES led to the development of an 8-part fair recruitment toolkit for the agricultural sector, tied to a compliance system. AHIFORES, representing 80% of the country's fruit and vegetable production, played a key role.

► Myanmar

The Code Compliance and Monitoring Committee developed guidelines in 2018 and 2019 to enhance monitoring and ranking of signatories. By 2019, over 90 per cent of Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies had signed the code of conduct.

Pillar 4: Empowering workers

Migrant Recruitment Advisor (MRA)

Launched in April 2018, the MRA platform initially served Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines, expanding to Kenya and Sri Lanka in 2019, and Hong Kong and Bahrain in 2020. By 2024, it operates in 13 countries, providing information on over 10,000 recruitment agencies across 23 countries in multiple languages. As of August 2024, the platform has 619,000 users, with 29,000 active monthly users. In 2021, a chatbot feature was introduced and upgraded with AI in 2024 to enhance accessibility and user-friendliness, offering recruitment law and policy information in eight languages.

Collaboration across trade unions

The ILO has facilitated **seven bilateral cooperation agreements** between trade unions across migration corridors, both inter-regionally and intra-regionally, covering the following corridors: Nepal-Jordan, Ethiopia-Kuwait, Côte d'Ivoire-Tunisia, Kenya-Lebanon, Nigerian-Bahrain, Ethiopia-Somali, Cambodia-Thailand.

Through the ILO FAIRWAY project, local trade unions have supported 27,686 migrant workers, including 3,681 in the Arab States and 24,005 in Africa. In Bahrain, outreach activities were conducted in collaboration with unions from countries of origin. The Safe and Fair project has notably reached 9,142 women migrant workers, provided services to 63,893, resolved 2,398 complaints, and engaged 130,342 women in preventing violence and trafficking.

Migrant worker Resource Centers (MRCs)

Over the past decade, the ILO has supported the establishment of MRCs, which provide migrant workers with information on fair recruitment, safe migration, and rights at work. At least, 51 MRCs operate in 9 Asian countries, 25 in 7 African countries, and 2 in Mexico. Additionally, 8 MRCs in Lebanon and Jordan have been documented. The ILO has developed several guides and operations manuals to guide the establishment of similar centers by trade unions, NGOs, and job centers.

Strengthening trade union capacities

The Initiative has supported a series of measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of trade unions to better organize migrant workers, and promote fair recruitment principles. In particular, ITUC has developed a mini guide to ensuring fair recruitment for decent work.

In Madagascar, the National Union of Malagasy Domestic Workers (SENAMAMA) benefited from the support and guidance of the ILO in collaboration with the IDWF, which allowed the union to actively take part in the process of revising the labour code and aligning it with the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). SENAMAMA greatly contributed to this process, notably to the definition of the term “domestic worker” and the introduction of a standard contract. The union also supported the government of Madagascar in the repatriation of more than 300 migrant workers from Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. The union has recruited in less than 2 years more than 2,000 members in 3 regions of the country (Analamanga, Vakinankaratra and Haute Matsiatra).





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© International Labour Organization – 2025
Revised version published in May 2025
First version published in October 2024

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