

Terms of Reference

To conduct research on workers and recruitment processes in Bangladesh, and to provide support in translation and assist with coordination.

Background

The garment industry is a significant employer in Bangladesh, providing employment to millions of workers, mostly women, who migrate from rural areas to urban centers, including the capital city of Dhaka, in search of work in garment factories. The garment industry in Jordan is a fraction of the size of Bangladesh and is mostly made up of migrant workers. Many of these workers are young women from Bangladesh. These workers are enticed by the prospect of improved wages and working conditions compared to those in their home countries. However, the recruitment process for these workers is often characterized by a lack of transparency and accountability, making them vulnerable to exploitation by intermediaries such as recruitment agencies, brokers, and sub-contractors. In some cases, the decision to migrate was not thought through fully which can lead to dissatisfaction or regret. This could be due to lack of information on the nature of work in Jordan or lack of agency in the decision to migrate.

The garment industry in Jordan is primarily driven by large exporting factories who export to the US under the USJFTA. The garment industry has seen significant growth in the last ten years, although there were some challenges due to COVID-19. Exports dropped by 15 per cent in 2020 but rebounded in 2021 with 8 per cent growth, followed by 22 per cent growth in 2022. In total, USD 2.2 billion worth of garments were exported in 2022, the highest export value for the sector to-date. Around 77,800 workers were employed in the exporting garment sector in 2022. Migrant workers make up three-quarters of the workforce. These workers, primarily from South Asia, typically work in Jordan for a contract of two to three years, which can be extended. Bangladeshis are the largest group of workers (over 50 per cent of migrant workers), and there are also workers from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Myanmar. The majority of workers are women – nearly 75 per cent of the production work force – whereas the majority of management positions are held by men.

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) is a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The ILO flagship programme brings together stakeholders from all levels of the global garment manufacturing industry to improve working conditions, enhance respect for labour rights, and boost competitiveness. Better Work Jordan was established in 2008 at the request of the Government of Jordan and the United States government. The Better Work Jordan programme is mandatory for garment factories that export to the US under the US-Jordan Free Trade Agreement.

In Bangladesh, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) is entrusted with regulating the recruitment process for migrant workers. The Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL), a state-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, is authorized to recruit and deploy workers

overseas, and plays a crucial role in selecting candidates for the Jordanian garment industry in collaboration with local recruitment agencies.

Despite the involvement of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training (BMET) of Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL), the recruitment process for migrant workers is somewhat remains uncertain in some cases. Although intermediaries have often charged excessive fees that workers are unable to pay, leading them into debt bondage, the latest annual report shows that cases of recruitment fees have significantly dropped in the last few years. The lack of transparency and accountability in the recruitment process means that workers are often unaware of the terms and conditions of their employment, including wages, working hours, and living conditions.

The Jordanian garment industry has been known for its extensive working hours, low compensation, and inadequate working conditions, which can result in physical and mental health issues. The migrant workforce in the industry is especially susceptible to these problems, given the pressure of meeting production goals, working in risky environments, and dealing with challenging supervisors or colleagues. Furthermore, the absence of social support systems, cultural disparities, and language barriers can further exacerbate the mental health struggles encountered by migrant workers. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize the mental health of migrant workers in the garment industry by providing them with accurate information about their terms and conditions of employment and protecting them from exploitation and abuse. Efforts should and are being made to create safer and healthier work environments, provide access to mental health services and resources, and promote social support networks. Addressing the root causes of exploitation and abuse in the recruitment process should also be a priority to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers and protect their mental health. Nonetheless, such efforts to create a healthy working environment for the workers have been recognized by Better Work Jordan in which a mental health project to provide support and resources for workers. Such initiatives can go a long way in promoting better mental health for migrant workers in the garment industry.

To address this issue, there needs to be greater transparency and accountability in the recruitment process. Employers and recruitment agencies should provide workers with precise details regarding their employment terms and conditions, such as wages, working hours, and living arrangements as this will enable the workers to make informed decisions about migration without being deceived by erroneous information or influenced by their family members already recruited and departed.

Objective

This TOR aims to identify a consultant in Bangladesh to evaluate the recruitment process for workers interested in working in the Jordanian Garment sector, assess its effectiveness, and identify key actors who can enhance the recruitment process and establish a grievance referral system. The consultant's findings will support ongoing initiatives to promote fair recruitment practices in the garment industry and safeguard the rights of all workers.

Migrant workers in Jordan face significant challenges due to the lack of a grievance referral mechanism and a partner worker's organization in Bangladesh. To address this issue, Better Work Jordan will conduct a visit to Bangladesh with two objectives. Firstly, to identify an entity capable of providing adequate induction to workers before their deployment to Jordan, which will address recruitment-related challenges and ensure worker preparedness. Secondly, to discuss possible ways in which workers can seek remedy for their entitlements if they face unlawful dismissal. The visit will be coordinated with the ILO and the Better Work Project in Bangladesh, and suitable partner entities will be linked with local institutions such as the Social Security, Ministry of Labor, and the Worker's Union to establish appropriate partnerships.

It is crucial to note that while the visit is a significant step towards addressing recruitment and induction-related issues, it is not a comprehensive solution. The success of the visit depends on the availability of suitable entities and continued efforts by all stakeholders involved in ensuring effective implementation."

Duties and responsibilities:

The consultant will be responsible for the following:

1. Identifying suitable national partners capable of aiding in recruitment, grievance referral, and mental health, and conducting comprehensive technical analyses for each organization.
2. Conducting a comprehensive review of the existing policies related to workers and recruitment processes in Bangladesh for workers that have an interest working in Jordan.
3. Preparation of an inception report, which will serve as a preliminary plan for mapping and coordinating the garment sector between Jordan and Bangladesh. The inception report will provide an extensive overview of the proposed project, covering various aspects such as the project's objectives, scope, methodology, and deliverables.
4. Assisting the Chief Technical Advisor with coordinating and setting up meetings with both potential partners and translation during Bangladesh visit from Bengali to English and vice versa.

Deliverables

The following deliverables will be provided by the consultant:

Deliverable 1: Inception report. Such report should include:

- Conduct an inception report intended to provide an overview of the proposed project to map and coordinate the garment sector between Jordan and Bangladesh. The report outlines the project's objectives, scope, methodology, and deliverables.

Deliverable 1.2: Initial report with the main findings/ results of the analysis activities:

- This report should summarize the process and methodologies for completing the requested tasks, challenges and description of the outcomes and results.
- Key findings and recommendations stipulated in the duties and Responsibilities heading above.
- The consultant shall also provide in the report (or annexed to it) list of documents, information or contacts made while conducting the requested tasks.

Deliverable 1.3: Final analysis report that includes:

- Matrix clearly describing roles and responsibilities of each organization and their capacity in representing the garment sector in Jordan.
- Clear recommendations on most effective models of business representation in the sector
- Capacity Building recommendations.

All deliverables shall be delivered in English, will be conducted through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews with workers and surveys of workers and employers, and site visits to workplaces to observe recruitment processes and working conditions.

External collaborator qualifications

1. A minimum of five (5) years of experience in conducting research on labour and migration issues in Bangladesh.
2. Experience in conducting qualitative research, including interviews and surveys.
3. Strong analytical and report writing skills.
4. Fluency in Bengali and English, and experience in translation of research materials.
5. Strong communication and presentation and coordination skills.

Timeline

18 days are allocated for this consultancy for a period of three months not exceeding September 2023 as follows:

- Deliverable 1: 1-3 days
- Deliverable 2: 3-5 days.
- Deliverable 3: 2-10 days.

Supervision

The consultant will report to the BWJ Chief Technical Advisor, who will oversee their work.

Payment Schedule

The consultant will only be paid upon satisfactory completion and approval of deliverables and upon receipt of signed invoices.

Payments	Deliverable	Working days
One and Final payment	Deliverables a, 2 & 3	18

Submission

All applicants must submit their technical and financial proposals as two separate documents to the following email address: jordan@betterwork.org. The deadline to submit applications is 01st June 2023.

Only selected applicants will be contacted for an interview.