

ILO Regional Skills Programme

Regional Training on Employment Services

16-19 October 2012

Background Note

Introduction¹

ILO's work on employment derives its current mandate from the Global Employment Agenda (2003) and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008). Public Employment Services (PES) have been recognized in the mandate of the ILO since its creation. ILO Convention on Unemployment, 1919 (No.2) recognized the role of employment services and promoted the establishment of national employment services in all member States. The role of the Public Employment Services was fully elaborated in the international level with the adoption of Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88).

The increasing need to provide services to a rapidly expanding and flexible labour market has led to further development of private employment agencies. The 2009 Global Jobs Pact emphasizes the important role employment services play in contributing to a sustained job recovery. Both jobseekers and employers are customers of employment services, both public and private; and most national employment services are guided by an advisory body which reinforces the principles of social dialogue between government, employers and workers.

Employment services match job seekers with job opportunities and are thus central to a well-functioning labour market. They are provided both by government through the ministries of labour and/or by private employment agencies. Close collaboration between public and private employment services is important because it results in the most positive outcomes for the labour market as was demonstrated during the global financial and economic crisis that began in 2008. At the same time, public employment services in a number of developing countries due to resource constraints may not be fully functional. Thus, such services may be complemented by services provided by private employment agencies.

Public Employment Services (PES) plan and execute labour market policies. Their major role is to cushion labour market transitions for workers and enterprises by:

- Providing good information about the labour market;
- Assisting the job search and providing placement services;
- Administration of unemployment insurance benefits or other forms of income support;
- Administering a variety of labour market programmes.

¹ Koeltz, Donna: http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_140947/lang--fr/index.htm

Private employment agencies also play an important role in the labour market. They provide an alternative means of job matching as their core services; they also offer training and up-skilling to meet employers' needs.

In Asia, many developing and developed countries have found public employment services critical in the functioning of labour markets as demonstrated during the global economic crisis. They were responsible for implementing the government's labour market programmes designed in response to the crisis. China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, New Zealand and Singapore were some of these countries. The programmes focused on areas such as strengthening employment services offices to ensure that they are able to cope with the demand for serving the clientele most specially affected by the crisis.

Further, in Asia, employment services play an important role in assisting target and vulnerable groups such as unemployed youths, women, migrant workers, people in rural communities and people with disabilities.

Objectives of the workshop

This workshop is designed to provide opportunities for participating countries to improve their knowledge and strengthen their capacities on the operations and functioning of Employment Service Centres as well as to expand the network to provide jobseekers with opportunities in domestic and overseas areas.

Workshop structure and methodology

The workshop will consist of a number of technical sessions, panel discussions, including country presentations, and technical working group sessions. A field visit to one or two public employment services centres will also be organized. After an overview of the challenge of employment services in Asia and the Pacific, the workshop sessions will be organized under four sub-themes, namely:

- Conceptual overview of employment services: mandate of public employment services and ILO's mandate on employment services;
- Structure and delivery of employment services: current services in employment job centres and best practices;
- International and national challenges faced by public employment services and opportunities;
- Conceptual overview of labour market information and institutional arrangements;
- Public and private partnerships in employment services; private employment agencies
- Migration and Youth Employment and employment services;
- Sharing of country experiences;
- Develop an Action Plan for 2013-14 based on the core services of PES
- Field visit designed to demonstrate some key areas and good practices as covered in the workshop

Participation

The participants will tripartite. The delegations will be invited from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Some ILO staff involved in Employment Services in the Asia and the Pacific region will also be invited. Participants must be at senior level and the participation of women is strongly encouraged.

Country paper

Each country delegation will prepare a country paper for the workshop on national issues and practices. The length of the paper should be no more than 10 pages, A4 and single-spaced. All country papers must be submitted to the ILO no later than **08 October, 2012.**

The following outline will be followed for the country paper.

- I. Overview employment services in the country
- II. Country challenges and opportunities
- III. Performance of employment services for the past 3 years: Perspectives of government, workers and employers organization and criteria used to measure performance
- IV. Role of labour market information in employment services
- V. Target groups (i.e. migrant workers, youth, rural poor, others)
- VI. Proposed next steps and Conclusions