

Quarterly Briefing Note

GMS TRIANGLE Project: Viet Nam



Duration:	June 2010 – June 2015
Key Partners:	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), Vietnam Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS), Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA)
Target Sites:	Quang Ngai, Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Bac Ninh and Phu Tho Provinces
Focal Point:	Ms Nguyen Thi Mai Thuy, National Project Coordinator (NPC) for Viet Nam, thuy@ilo.org , +(84)3747-5171

Background Information

With an estimated 1.1 – 1.5 million people entering the labour market each year, the Government of Viet Nam has a policy to promote labour migration as both an employment and poverty reduction strategy. The number of contract-based overseas workers increased from 300,000 in 2005 to 500,000 in 2011. About 200,000 of these migrants are employed in East Asia, with an additional 40,000 in the Middle East and North Africa. Specific targets have been set for the number and skill level of migrant workers deployed over the next ten years.

The developmental impact of migration in Viet Nam is significant. Each year, approximately US\$1.6 billion is sent in remittances. Nine provinces with a concentration of designated 'poor districts' are eligible to apply for subsidies to facilitate overseas migration. These incentives include loans and financial assistance for language training, supplementary vocational skills training, health checks and other services.

Although this has led to an increase in the number of workers heading abroad, a number of gaps in the system remain. In particular, potential migrants and intending migrants should be better informed about the costs and benefits of migration, and how they can better protect themselves throughout the migration cycle. There are considerable differences in the levels of knowledge and awareness between areas that have a tradition of migration and the 'poor districts' in which migration is being newly promoted. There remain concerns about access to justice for returned migrant workers, including the liquidation of contracts that have involved a deposit or security paid by the migrant worker before departure.

There are increasing irregular migration flows to China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia and Thailand. In addition, there are concerns about the number of Vietnamese workers who are overstaying their visas and therefore becoming irregular migrant workers (in South Korea, Taiwan [China] and Malaysia). The irregular status of these migrants increases their vulnerability to exploitation and limits the channels available to them to seek assistance, and is punishable by fines and other sanctions in Viet Nam and the destination country.

Population:	86.9 million
Labour Force:	47.4 million

- **Estimate of migrant workers abroad:**
500,000
- **Departures of migrant workers in the first 11 months of 2014:**
98,784 (W38,761: M60,023)
- **Major destinations of departures in Asia in the first 11 months of 2014:**
 - Taiwan (China): 57,823 (W23,535: M34,288)
 - Japan: 18,219 (including trainees and skilled workers) (W7,023: M11,196)
 - Republic of Korea: 7,056 (W631: M6,425)
 - Malaysia: 4,846 (W2,132: M2,714)
 - Saudi Arabia: 3,547 (W1,873: M1,674)

Source: Department for Overseas Labour, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, August 2014

Main Activities (October-December 2014)

- The Pre-Departure Training Curriculum (PDTC) for Malaysia was printed and DOLAB and VAMAS held the first Training-of-Trainers for trainers in Hai Phong from 6-9 October 2014. A pool of 32 trainers (from 20 recruitment agencies responsible for sending 80 per cent of migrant workers to Malaysia) are now able to deliver the PDTC.
- In collaboration with the Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP) project, training on forced labour, anti-human trafficking and ethical recruitment was held on 4-5 November 2014 in Nha Trang. The training was targeted at the 48 Project Advisory Committee members, key staff of MOLISA, and staff from provincial and criminal justice systems.
- In cooperation with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) the 2nd national preparation meeting for the 7th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) was held in Nha Trang with 41 participants (20M: 21W) from provinces, MOLISA and related organizations on 3 October 2014. Thirty-two recommendations were agreed, including new recommendations focusing on the right of workers to keep their contracts, training for labour attachés and consular officials and improving occupational health and safety awareness.
- Training for ten new recruitment agencies on Code of Conduct (CoC-VN) monitoring and evaluation was undertaken in November 2014 and joint monitoring of the CoC-VN by VAMAS and VGCL commenced in December 2014 with 10 different recruitment agencies in Ho Chi Minh city. The monitoring involves interviewing pre-departure and returned migrant workers, visits to recruitment agencies and observing pre-departure training delivery.
- Twelve community dialogues were conducted in Quang Ngai (10) and Ha Tinh (2) providing opportunities for the exchange of information between migrant workers, commune authorities and DOLISA on issues facing migrant workers and measures to address these issues.
- The draft MOU between VGCL and Malaysia Trade Union Congress (MTUC) on collaborating to protect migrant workers was discussed in Malaysia from 13-16 December 2014 and will proceed to signing in early 2015.
- Several media events took place on 18 December 2014 to celebrate International Migrants Day. An opinion article by the Director of ILO Country Office for Viet Nam highlighted the importance of effective complaint mechanism for migrant workers and was published by local newspapers. The GMS TRIANGLE's NPC participated in a live interview with VGCL on the Voice of Vietnam's Labour Specialist's programme, discussing the rights of migrant workers to join a trade union and the role of trade unions in protecting migrant workers.
- Refresher training workshops were held for 49 provincial officials (26M: 23W) from Ha Tinh (4-5 December 2014), and 40 provincial officials (25N: 15W) from Thanh Hoa (22-23 December 2014). The workshops provided updated information on the national legislative framework, issues facing migrant workers in destination countries and how to access support.

Main Activities in the Next Quarter (January-March 2015)

- The signing ceremony of the MOU between VGCL and MTUC on joint efforts to protect migrant workers from labour exploitation is scheduled for January 2015.
- Thirty-five community dialogues on international labour migration issues will be held in Bac Ninh, Phu Tho, Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh during January, February and March 2015.
- Refresher training courses for provincial authorities on national legislation and issues relating to migration will be held in Bac Ninh (23-24 January) and Phu Tho (first week of February).
- Workshops to roll-out Migrant Worker Resource Centre Operations Manual and services to Employment Service Centres in 63 provinces will be held during February 2015.
- Training-of-trainers on PDTC for workers migrating from Vietnam to Taiwan (China) will be held.
- Consultation Workshop on the draft VGCL Position Paper on the Role of Trade Union in Protecting Migrant Workers will be held in Hanoi in March 2015.
- Release of research reports into the operation of complaint mechanisms for Vietnamese migrant workers and irregular migration in North Central Viet Nam is scheduled for this quarter.