

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

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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, including through access to complaint mechanisms. 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 3 months of 2015:** 25,766 (7,733W: 18,033M)
- **Major destinations of departures in Asia in the first 3 months of 2015:**
 - Taiwan (China): 16,859 (4,483W: 12,376M)
 - Japan: 5,428 (including trainees and skilled workers) (1,999W: 3,429M)
 - Malaysia: 1,212 (651W: 561M)
 - Saudi Arabia: 988 (453W: 535M)
 - Republic of Korea: 569 (51W: 518M)

Source: Department for Overseas Labour, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, March 2015

Main Activities (January-March 2015)

- Refresher training for provincial resource persons on national legislation and international labour migration issues was held in Phu Tho on 26-27 January and Bac Ninh on 10-11 March. Refresher training for heads of villages was held in Phu Ninh district on 28 January.
- Seven community dialogues were organized in An Dao commune (29 January), Ngoc Xa commune (11 March), Duc Long commune (22 March), Lien Hoa and Bao Thanh communes (30 March) and Phu Nham and Tien Du communes (31 March) to discuss the local migration context.
- End-line surveys for the project were conducted by ILLSA and project staff in Thanh Hoa and Quang Ngai and Nghe An (control province) in March to assess the impact of the GMS TRIANGLE project activities and feed into the project design for a possible Phase II.
- Initial data collected for a study on migration costs for Vietnamese workers in Malaysia by Malaysian research institute with the support of the project and a Vietnamese consultant.
- The signing ceremony of the MOU between VGCL and MTUC on joint efforts to protect migrant workers from labour exploitation was held on 16 March in Hanoi.
- A design team mission to explore a second phase of the ILO GMS TRIANGLE project took place from 20-23 March. The design team met with a range of key stakeholders including tripartite constituents, international organizations, Women's Union and recruitment agencies. During the mission the design team also travelled to Bac Ninh province to attend a job fair, visit the local MRC and meet with officials from DOLISA.
- Coinciding with the design team mission, the annual GMS TRIANGLE Project Advisory Committee meeting took place on 23 March 2015 and was attended by 32 participants (15W: 17M) including the Deputy-Director General, DOLAB, representatives from VGCL, MOLISA, VCCI, VAMAS, provincial DOLISAs and migrant workers. The key focus of discussion was the future direction of the project under a possible Phase II.
- The design team leader gave a seminar on international migration issues on 23 March attended by 68 participants (37W: 31M) including tripartite constituents, academics and international organizations and media.
- The MRC Operations Manual was finalized for printing and rollout among broader (non-target) Employment Service Centres, indicating buy-in from the MOLISA.
- The Pre-departure Training Curriculum (PDTC) for Vietnamese workers migrating to Taiwan has been finalized. The curriculum will train migrant workers on rights and responsibilities when employed in Taiwan, Taiwanese culture and customs and information on how to migrate safely.

Main Activities in the Next Quarter (April-June 2015)

- Workshops to rollout MRC Operations Manual in 63 provincial Employment Service Centres are scheduled for April 2015 (for southern and central provinces) and May 2015 (for northern provinces).
- A consultation workshop on Decree 95 regarding administrative sanctions for migrant workers is scheduled for April 2015 to hear tripartite reactions to proposed changes to the Decree
- Analysis of results for study on migration costs for Vietnamese workers in Malaysia.
- Policy dialogue on draft report on initial review of Law on Vietnamese Contract-Based Overseas Workers is scheduled for May 2015.
- Training-of-trainers on PDTC for workers migrating from Vietnam to Taiwan (China) is scheduled for May 2015 with the objective of training trainers of PRAs on how to use the manuals and disseminate its content to migrant workers.
- Consultation workshop on the draft VGCL Position Paper on the Role of Trade Union in Protecting Migrant Workers is scheduled for May 2015.
- Release of research report into the operation of complaint mechanisms for Vietnamese migrant workers is scheduled for this quarter.