

Quarterly Briefing Note

GMS TRIANGLE Project: Viet Nam



Duration:	June 2010 – August 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. There are approximately 500,000 contract-based overseas workers abroad. 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 6 months of 2015:**
56,137 (16,942W: 39,195M)
- **Major destinations of departures in Asia in the first 6 months of 2015:**
 - Taiwan (China): 36,705 (10,225W: 26,480M)
 - Japan: 11,665 (including trainees and skilled workers) (4,363W: 7,302M)
 - Malaysia: 2,674 (1,360W: 1,314M)
 - Saudi Arabia: 2095 (714W: 1,381M)
 - Republic of Korea: 1,511 (126W: 1,385M)

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

Main Activities (April-June 2015)

- In cooperation with World Vision, the first two workshops to rollout MRC services and Operations Manual in 63 provincial Employment Service Centres were held for DOLISAs and Employment Service Centres in the central and southern provinces. 42 participants (16F: 26M) attended the workshop in Quang Ngai on 19-20 May (for central provinces) and 62 participants (17F: 45M) attended the workshop in Ho Chi Minh City on 21-22 May 2015 (for southern provinces).
- A consultation workshop on the operation of Decree 95 regarding administrative sanctions for migrant workers was held on 23 April 2015 for 45 participants (17F: 28M) including representatives from central ministries, trade unions, recruitment agencies, local authorities and migrant workers. Comments were also provided to MOLISA on the proposed amendments to the Decree.
- The draft findings from a research study on complaints mechanisms for Vietnamese workers were shared at the MRC rollout workshops in Quang Ngai and Ho Chi Minh City and at a UN Women supported workshop for 35 participants (22F: 12M) from provincial DOLISAs on Decree No. 119 (concerning migrant worker complaints) and the new DOLAB migrant worker complaints database on 29 May.
- For Domestic Workers Day on 16 June an opinion piece was released by the ILO Country Office Director, in conjunction with a policy brief: *The growing trend of Vietnamese migrant domestic workers* (http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-hanoi/documents/publication/wcms_376172.pdf). ILO research found that recent bilateral developments between Vietnam and destination countries with high demand for domestic workers (notably Saudi Arabia, Taiwan (China) and Thailand) mean there is likely to be a significant, and potentially rapid, increase in the number of Vietnamese migrant workers undertaking domestic work. Given domestic migrant workers' particular vulnerability to exploitation, the policy brief highlighted the importance of Vietnam advocating for improved rights protection for their domestic workers abroad, particularly strengthened minimum entitlements. Initial review and analysis of draft report of the end-line survey results to assess the impact of the GMS TRIANGLE project activities.

Main Activities in the Next Quarter (July-August 2015)

- The third workshop to rollout MRC services and Operations Manual in 63 provincial Employment Service Centres is scheduled for July 2015 in Hanoi (for Northern provinces).
- A consultation workshop on the draft VGCL Position Paper on the Role of Trade Union in Protecting Migrant Workers is scheduled for July 2015.
- A policy dialogue to discuss the draft report of the initial review of the Law on Vietnamese Contract-Based Overseas Workers is scheduled for July 2015. Participants will include representatives from central authorities, local authorities from the five MRC target provinces, VAMAS, VGCL, and recruitment agencies.
- The end-line survey report on the impact of the GMS TRIANGLE project activities will be finalised.
- The Pre-Departure Training Curriculum for workers migrating from Vietnam to Taiwan (China) will be printed and distributed.
- Publication and distribution of research report into the operation of complaint mechanisms for Vietnamese migrant workers is scheduled.
- The policy brief on Vietnamese irregular migrant workers is scheduled for publication and distribution.