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International  
Labour  
Organization

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

*EoI N° LKA/20/01/WHO –*

*ILO, Sri Lanka Office*

**Develop a framework to inform a strategy on overseas migration of  
healthcare workers from Sri Lanka adopting fair and ethical  
recruitment practices**

Responses to be received by

22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2021

*Re-advertised on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2021*



**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Eoi)**  
**Eoi N° LKA/20/01/WHO**  
**Framework for Sri Lanka Health Workers Mobility, ILO, Sri Lanka Office**

## **Background**

Overseas migration is an attractive alternative for Sri Lankan healthcare workers for a number of reasons. However, placement in health sector jobs and social work are relatively scarce, constituting only 1.8% of all migrant employment in 2016. Nationally, while a Health Labour Market Analysis has indicated the potential of the sector to contribute to improving the labour market participation rate of women and youth in particular, job growth and public expenditure in the health sector have both been relatively low (WHO, 2018). Correspondingly, while there is a demand for professional qualifications in the health sector, the placements available are limited as in many other countries. Although a minority of students seek to qualify in educational institutions overseas and affiliated schools in Sri Lanka, not all qualifications awarded by these private medical schools and overseas medical institutions are recognised by the relevant accreditation bodies such as the Sri Lanka Medical Council. A percentage of those qualifying nationally as well as overseas, apply to work overseas and by all accounts are successful in doing so.

Sri Lanka does not have a National health workforce policy, nor does it encourage or promote migration of health workers for overseas employment. However, the most recent Human Resources for Health (HRH) Strategic Plan (which expired in 2018) made a number of different government directorates responsible for planning, recruitment, training and deployment of health workers, including for international migration.

Overseas migration of Sri Lankan nationals is governed by the National Labour Migration Policy. However, a large proportion of those seeking employment abroad, especially a majority of women, migrate for low-skilled jobs, including for domestic work, although migration of skilled workers has been increasing especially amongst the younger male migrant workers. Although the Government of Sri Lanka presently has no intention to promote migration of health workers for overseas employment, given the high demand for such workers in Sri Lanka as there is no bar to any qualified health worker from seeking employment overseas, current research has highlighted the need to develop guidelines for such migration, in order to ensure, both worker welfare and protection and the quality of healthcare delivery in Sri Lanka.

Evidence to support the development of such a governance framework is scattered and fragmented. Quantitative data on migration of healthcare workers is scarce, but a few indicators of employment of Sri Lankan medical personnel in major countries of destination suggest overall migration in this sector is decreasing (WHO, 2018). In the case of nurses, although global demand is high, the low numbers of nurses migrating from Sri Lanka may be due to the standardised level of qualifications awarded in Training schools and the language of instruction (in all such Public sector training schools including Universities the medium of instruction are the national languages rather than English). Similarly, although there is a high demand for support workers such as care-home workers, home nurses, elderly and childcare providers, special needs workers, there are no training schools nationally that award internationally accredited qualifications. Further, there is limited knowledge on the implications of overseas migration of healthcare workers on the healthcare sector nationally.

These are some of the gaps that this project seeks to address by supporting the Government of Sri Lanka to plan and manage the overseas migration of healthcare workers, in a 'double win' for the health sector and for healthcare professionals, to enable those who wish to do so to take up well-remunerated and skilled employment overseas, without compromising on healthcare delivery at the national level.

## **1.1 ILO-WHO Partnership**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) collaborated on the Working for Health initiative in collaboration with the EU-funded "Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework for Labour Migration" (REFRAME), The Working for Health partnership consists of a series of interventions towards the longer-term goal of a comprehensive health workforce policy. The ILOs interventions under the partnership is two-pronged:



1. Improve labour-management relations in the healthcare sector by building on the ILO's previous work of piloting a Dispute Resolution Mechanism in the sector. The focus is on enhancing inter-sectoral commitment, social dialogue, and policy dialogue for health and social workforce investments and action.
2. Strengthen capacity of the government to negotiate bi-lateral arrangements to maximize the mutual benefits from health worker labour mobility internationally.

The EU-funded Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration (REFRAME) project is a global initiative, which aims to; prevent and reduce abusive recruitment practices, protect migrant workers and maximise their agency in recruitment processes worldwide. The project achieves this through disseminating and operationalising *the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment* at global, regional, and national levels, implemented under the framework of the ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative. In Sri Lanka, REFRAME contributes, among other things, to examining international recruitment processes from the perspective of the recruitment industry as well as from the perspective of particular sectors.

REFRAME and the WHO/ILO, through the Working for Health partnership, agreed to conduct a sector study/policy dialogue on migration and recruitment in the healthcare sector. The activity was to include a desk review/Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and a series of stakeholder consultations/policy dialogues to cover two years of work. This work was to be undertaken in two phases: the first to consist of the desk review and KIIs, and the second to conduct stakeholder consultations/policy dialogues leading to a framework which would inform a strategy towards adopting fair and ethical recruitment practices in overseas migration of healthcare workers from Sri Lanka. This TOR contributes to (phase II) above, by examining the rationale and basis of *health worker labour mobility*.

### **1.1.1 Phase I of ILO/REFRAME component**

In the first phase, the ILO, through REFRAME, commissioned a study on the recruitment and migration of Sri Lankan healthcare workers overseas with the dual objective of; identifying opportunities and challenges for improving healthcare worker's access to decent employment and working conditions; and to assess the development benefits of such migration to healthcare service delivery in Sri Lanka. The desk review explored the impact of recruitment and migration on the health workforce in Sri Lanka through different lenses. This included comparing existing policies and strategic plans with international policy frameworks (such as the *WHO Global Code of Practice* and *ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment*) and best practices. The aim was to identify ways in which the migration of healthcare workers may provide better opportunities for overseas employment for Sri Lankans without compromising the quality of healthcare delivery within Sri Lanka. Overall, the project aims to ensure that recruitment practices for all migrant workers are free from abuse and violation of labour and human rights, thereby improving migration outcomes for migrant workers and their families.

The study finds that the policy landscape to develop safe, efficient and rights-based healthcare migration policies in Sri Lanka is complex, covering several ministries, social partners, professional associations, recruitment agencies and non-governmental actors. Nevertheless, the development potential from overseas migration of healthcare workers is significant, specifically, the benefits from circular or temporary migration programmes, and the opportunities to strengthen skills and expertise of healthcare workers and professionals through overseas deployment. These benefits can be fruitful when recruitment practices are fair and safe reducing incidences of abuse and rights violations of the migrant workers. While Sri Lanka has well developed policies for low-skilled migration, skilled and professional migration policies for healthcare workers will require substantively different approaches, content and incentives. Currently specialised training of doctors through overseas post-graduate opportunities may be a model for certain circular or temporary migration programmes. Specific measures will also need to be developed for different categories of healthcare workers such as midwives and nurses.

### **1.1.2 Phase II of ILO/REFRAME component**

This Terms of Reference (TOR) is for Phase II of the WHO- ILO collaboration. The aim of this consultancy is to build on the work done in Phase 1 by addressing stakeholder comments on the Report



(outcome of Phase I) through further Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and to carry out a series of consultations with key stakeholders which would serve to elaborate the findings and recommendations of the Report and; as a basis for policy dialogues to develop a framework which may serve, at a later date, as a guideline for overseas migration of healthcare workers.

## 2 Objectives and Methodology

The objective of this assignment is twofold:

1. Elaborate on the existing desk review by incorporating views from various stakeholders, including ILO's tripartite constituents
2. Develop a framework which would contribute to a strategy for overseas migration of healthcare workers that supports fair and ethical recruitment practices within the primary objective of ensuring adequate meeting of requirements for the delivery of healthcare within Sri Lanka.
- 3.

The ILO/WHO and MoH shall establish an advisory/technical committee comprising of Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Foreign Employment and other relevant Ministries/stakeholders to review the draft report/s and final report and to provide guidance to the consultant/s in the preparation of the deliverables.

***It is noted that the MoH shall in anyway be considered to have endorsed the findings of the report by providing inputs or suggestions on the content and recommendations of the report/s.***

### **1. Build on the desk review (conducted in Phase I) and expand the mapping study of recruitment practices in the healthcare sector by analysing the following:**

- How labour market outcomes in the health care sector in Sri Lanka impact a worker's decision to enter the public sector or to migrate for work in the same sector abroad;
- What type of skills/jobs are in demand in receiving countries, and does Sri Lanka have the capacity to produce healthcare workers with the requisite skills (this may be a separate rapid assessment/stand-alone study if necessary)
- How recruitment practices and migration trends vary according to different 'migration corridors' and the legal and policy frameworks that govern them;
- How recruitment practices vary according to the different modalities through which men and women migrate;
- The impacts that different recruitment practices have on rights' violations, in particular on the collection of recruitment fees and forced labour.

The above should be undertaken by:

- Conducting a series of interviews and consultations with key stakeholders to explore the potential for developing HRH networks with diaspora communities and collaborative partnerships between developed countries and developing countries' health systems including recognition of skills of privately trained Sri Lanka healthcare personnel in Sri Lanka and abroad
- Conducting awareness programmes for relevant stakeholders to raise awareness on ILO and WHO global instruments on recruitment and healthcare.
- The skills/jobs gap analysis may be completed under a separate methodology. The following is recommended as a methodology
- A minimum of 10 qualitative interviews with key government and non-governmental actors in the areas of migration and healthcare provision, education, and recruitment, as well as the ILO's tripartite constituents to identify opportunities for improvement of healthcare migration
- A minimum of 10 qualitative interviews with different categories of healthcare workers (different categories of doctors, nurses, mid wives etc.) including where possible informal caregivers and domestic workers to explore perceptions of opportunities in the sector and motivation for choosing (or not) to migrate. The sample should include both aspiring and returned migrant healthcare workers.



- At least one plenary consultation with relevant stakeholders, including ILO's tripartite constituents. ILO will provide technical support for the plenary sessions including bringing in experts for different thematic areas as well as providing input in to the preparatory work.

## **2. Develop a framework that would contribute towards a strategy on overseas migration of healthcare workers adopting fair and ethical recruitment practices**

This activity seeks to build on the work done in Phase I by undertaking a series of consultations which would contribute towards drafting the framework for a strategy on overseas migration of healthcare workers. The framework would be the first step in a longer term engagement with the MoH to develop a Healthcare worker overseas migration strategy that will adopt both the *WHO Global Code of Practice* and *ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment*. Activities under this objective would include:

- Conducting a series of dialogues with government and non-government stakeholders to:
  - - Review current assessments of healthcare worker demand to maintain/achieve health sector objectives in Sri Lanka, with a view to ascertaining the most suitable mechanisms to expand provision of healthcare qualifications and training.
  - - Identify strategies to build consensus to adopt the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel and the ILOs General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment into a national healthcare strategy
  - - Assess current recruitment practices undertaken by public and private actors in the recruitment industry related to healthcare workforce. This assessment should include the role of agents and intermediaries in the recruitment process.
- Supporting the ministries of Health, Foreign Employment and Labour to identify key participants for an ILO training on "Negotiating Bi-Lateral Agreements", organized by the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin. The proposed outcome of the training is that at least two advocacy products (briefs, presentations) are reproduced in support of developing a strategy on overseas migration of healthcare workers which encompasses fair and ethical recruitment practices

## **3 Deliverables**

- Short Inception Report with a detailed work plan and time line, methodological approach, draft interview guides and consultation schedules and list of potential key informants.
- Draft findings Report (25-30 pages approx.) Structured as per objectives under (1) and (2). The Report should contain policy recommendations and a separate section on the Draft framework for a healthcare worker overseas migration strategy
- Final Report after receiving stakeholder comments which should include the framework that would inform the development of a strategy on overseas migration of healthcare workers from Sri Lanka adopting WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel and the ILOs General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment
- Two advocacy products based on the research findings and consultations tailored to various audiences: one policy brief (3-4 pages) and one presentation (8-10 slides).

COVID-19: Consultant/Consultancy company will be required to fully comply with applicable UN and Government regulations and SOPs for prevention against spread of COVID-19 and organize work in such a way to ensure safety of self and other stakeholders

### ***The following data is also required to be submitted to the ILO.***

- Database of any quantitative data collected, with cross-tabulated data as requested by the ILO.
- Notes of at least 2 consultations and at least 20 qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and workers in the healthcare sector and recruitment sector (list to be agreed in advance with ILO).



#### **4 Required Skills and Competencies**

- At least 5-7 years of prior work experience in the field of research (Health, public policy, international development, labour market research)
- Prior healthcare sector research, even if not country-specific, is an advantage
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative research
- Dependable field team and interviewer capacity
- Excellent writing, editing, analytical and oral communication skills in English
- Proficiency in Sinhala and/or Tamil is an advantage

#### **How to prepare and submit your response**

Interested companies shall complete the attached Eol Response Form and Financial Proposal ([Annexes 1 and 2](#)) in accordance with the instructions provided and submit a comprehensive proposal with all supporting documentation by email to [musthafa@ilo.org](mailto:musthafa@ilo.org) and [senarathge@ilo.org](mailto:senarathge@ilo.org)

1. Subject: Eol N° LKA/20/01/WHO – Framework for Sri Lanka Health Workers Mobility, ILO Sri Lanka Office no later than 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2021.
2. The ILO will not consider incomplete submissions. All responses and supporting documentation received will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be made available to the public.
3. The ILO reserves the right to change or cancel this procurement process or any of its requirements at any time during the process; any such action by the ILO will either be posted publicly or directly communicated to all participants, as appropriate.



**Annex 1**

**Eol RESPONSE FORM**

**5 COMPANY DETAILS**

Item	Details		
Legal Name of Company and place of Registration:			
Date founded:			
Company Business Registration:	<b>Registration No.</b>	<b>Date of Registration</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Address Details	Address:		
	Tel. Number:		
	Fax Number:		
	E-mail:		
	Website:		
Type of Business	<b>Corporate/Limited</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Other (specify)</b>
Principal areas of business activity of the Company			

**6 COMPANY BACKGROUND**

*In not more than hundred (100) words provide background on the Company*

The Company/Organization

**7 CONTACT DETAILS:**

**7.1 Main Contact Person:**

Name:		Telephone No.:	
Position:		Mobile No.:	
Email Address:		Fax No.:	





## 7.2 Alternative Contact Person:

Name:		Telephone No.:	
Position:		Mobile No.:	
Email Address:		Fax No.:	

## 8 COMPANY INFORMATION

Question	Answer
Is the applicant company a subsidiary or affiliate of another company? If yes, what is the parent or holding company's name and registered office address?	
UN experience: a) Has the company previously provided services to the ILO? (Yes/No) If yes, please state when, and for which ILO services. b) Has the company previously provided services to other UN organizations? (Yes/No) If yes, please state when, and for which UN entity.	
Do you have any comments on the Terms and Conditions applicable to ILO Contracts for Services? If so, please include them here:	

## 9 COMPANY EXPERIENCE WITH SIMILAR PROJECTS

Please provide 2 references the ILO may contact where the company has provided services similar to those required by the ILO. Each reference should indicate: client name and address, client sector of activity, service provided, two (2) contacts with telephone numbers and email.

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Reference 1	
CLIENT NAME:	
CLIENT ADDRESS:	
CLIENT SECTOR OF ACTIVITY AND SIZE:	
PROJECT SIZE (in person months/years) and SHORT DESCRIPTION:	
CONTRACT DURATION:	
CONTACT 1 NAME:	
CONTACT 1 E-MAIL AND TELEPHONE:	

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CONTACT 2 NAME:	
CONTACT 2 E-MAIL AND TELEPHONE:	

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Reference 2	
CLIENT NAME:	
CLIENT ADDRESS:	
CLIENT SECTOR OF ACTIVITY AND SIZE:	
PROJECT SIZE (in person months/years) and SHORT DESCRIPTION:	
CONTRACT DURATION:	
CONTACT 1 NAME:	
CONTACT 1 E-MAIL AND TELEPHONE:	
CONTACT 2 NAME:	
CONTACT 2 E-MAIL AND TELEPHONE:	

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**10 FURTHER INFORMATION**

Please include or attach any further information about the company that you consider to be important for carrying out the ILO’s requirements.

*Please note that any information supplied by the company will be treated with the utmost discretion.*

I certify the accuracy of the above-mentioned information. I recognize the right reserved by the ILO to verify with the listed firms/organizations the accuracy of any information submitted in response to the above-mentioned questionnaire or otherwise submitted to the ILO. I further authorize the ILO to disqualify the firm I represent from the competition in the event that any of the above information is found to be false, erroneous or ambiguous.

Name and title of the authorized representative:

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Signature: .....

Place: .....

Date: .....



**Annex 2**

**PRICE LIST/ FINANCIAL PROPOSAL**

Please feel free to indicate costs for the activities in detail for the assignment in LKR.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....