

Viet Nam April - June 2019

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Key partners | Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) Viet Nam 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 Programme Coordinator, thuy@ilo.org , +(84-24) 3734-0902 (ext. 306) |

Background information

There are approximately 540,000 Vietnamese migrant workers currently overseas. Most are young men and women from rural areas who obtain low-skilled employment abroad in the manufacturing, construction, fishing, agriculture, domestic work, and service industries. A total of 142,860 workers went abroad through formal channels in 2018, 35 per cent were women (Department of Overseas Labour, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, 2019).

Migrant workers make a significant contribution to the economic development of Viet Nam through remittances, providing a major source of foreign exchange income. In 2017, the World Bank estimated that approximately US\$13.8 billion was sent home by Vietnamese migrants. This figure constitutes over six per cent of Viet Nam's GDP, placing the economic importance of its remittances second only to the Philippines within Southeast Asia (World Bank, 2018).

The main destination countries for Vietnamese workers have traditionally been the more developed economies of East Asia, including Taiwan (China), South Korea, Malaysia, and Japan. However, in recent years, destinations have become increasingly diverse, including significant numbers of migrant workers to the Middle East, Northern Africa, Europe and middle income countries in Asia. A survey of over 23,000 migrants from Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh provinces of Viet Nam found that Thailand had become the most common destination for these women and men, making use of overland routes through the Lao People's Democratic Republic (ILO, 2015). These movements are almost entirely irregular, as the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between Viet Nam and Thailand in 2016 has yet to be implemented and permits only employment in the fishing and construction sectors, where a relatively small number of Vietnamese migrants are employed (ILO and IOM, 2017).

The Law on Contract Based Overseas Workers 2006 is the overarching framework governing international labour migration in Viet Nam. Despite this law, a sizeable number of Vietnamese migrant workers are employed irregularly outside the parameters of bilateral agreements and MOUs on labour migration, including in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, China, Thailand, Angola, Russia and Cyprus. There has also been concern about the rising number of Vietnamese workers overstaying their visas and becoming irregular migrant workers in South Korea, Taiwan (China) and Malaysia. Irregular status increases vulnerability to exploitation and limits the channels available for seeking assistance. Irregular migration is punishable by fines and other sanctions in Viet Nam as well as in destination countries. The Law is currently undergoing review with changes anticipated.

The Vietnamese Government has developed geographically-targeted policies to encourage labour migration as a poverty reduction strategy. In 20 provinces, the residents of designated 'poor districts' are eligible to apply for subsidies to facilitate working overseas. The incentives include loans and financial assistance for language

Viet Nam at a glance

 Population: 92.7 million

 Labour Force: 56.4 million

Migrants in major destination countries

Taiwan (China): 170,000 migrants

Japan: 148,000 migrant workers

Republic of Korea: 50,000 migrants

Malaysia: 50,000

Thailand: 50,000

Source: Estimates by Department of Overseas Labour, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (March 2019)

Migrants deployed

Total: 142,860 migrants
(Women=50,293/Men=92,567)

Taiwan (China): 60,639 migrants
(Women=19,273/Men=41,096)

Japan: 68,737 migrants
(Women=27,610/Men=41,127)

Republic of Korea: 6,538 migrants
(Women=736/Men=5,802)

Malaysia 1,102 migrants
(Women=634/Men=468)

Source: Department of Overseas Labour, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (January 2018)

training, vocational skills training, health checks, and other services. While effective at increasing migration in these areas, there are concerns that these policies encourage the most vulnerable populations to migrate, including ethnic minorities with very limited education. It is likely that the number of migrant workers going abroad will continue to rise as the Government pursues its migration targets, supported by push factors of high rates of underemployment in many areas.

Although the emerging trend of more women migrating is viewed by some in Viet Nam as problematic, it appears likely to continue due to recent developments in bilateral cooperation with Malaysia and Saudi Arabia on deployment of domestic and care workers. Women's migration into domestic work will be further affected by Taiwan (China) lifting a 2005 suspension on Vietnamese domestic workers, and the Thai Government allowing irregular Vietnamese domestic workers already in Thailand to register for work permits.

Main programme activities: April – June 2019

On 21, 22, and 23 April, three training workshops were organized on the **national legislation framework for recruitment, complaint mechanisms, and counselling skills** for local authorities and organizations from Phu Tho (W59: M32).

In June, 22 recruitment agencies were monitored by the Viet Nam Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS) on the **compliance of the VAMAS's Code of Conduct, version 2018**.

With support from the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS), the development of a **'business case' study on the feasibility of employer pays recruitment for migrant workers and identifying catalysts for industry-led change** has commenced.

Upcoming activities and key dates (July - September 2019)

| Date | Event | Location | Attendees | Purpose |
|------------------|---|----------|---|--|
| July/August | Development of standard operating procedures to support migrant workers' access to justice in Viet Nam. | TBC | Tripartite constituents, social partners, international organizations. | Increase migrant workers' access to justice. |
| July | Training on national legislation framework for recruitment, complaint mechanisms, and counselling skills. | Bac Ninh | District and community authorities, mass organizations. | To build capacity of local authorities and mass organizations for better labour migration governance and counselling. |
| September | National Preparation Meeting for the 12 th AFML | Ha Noi | Tripartite constituents, social partners, international organizations. | To review implementation of 11 th AFML recommendations and draft recommendations for the 12 th AFML. |
| August/September | Validation workshop of the study on labour migration and its impact on women empowerment. | Ha Noi | Tripartite constituents, social partners, international organizations and public. | To validate the initial findings and draft study on labour migration and women's empowerment. |

Media coverage

| Date | Title | Media Source |
|---------|---|----------------------|
| 7 June | Czech Republic resumes work visas for Vietnamese citizens | VNExpress |
| 19 June | UAE signs recruitment MoUs with Vietnam, Nepal, Pakistan | Emirates News Agency |

TRIANGLE in ASEAN extends the cooperation between the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, the **Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** and **Global Affairs Canada** on protecting migrant workers and enhancing development opportunities. **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** aims to ensure that the benefits of labour migration are equally realised by men and women migrant workers; employers and governments. In shifting emphasis towards leveraging the development potential of migration, **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** aims to shape labour migration opportunities to support inclusive and sustainable growth in the ASEAN Economic Community. **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** engages institutionally with **ASEAN** and focuses on delivering in six countries (**Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam**).