

Project Brief

EU-ILO Regional Project: Towards Sustainable Partnerships for the Effective Governance of Labour Migration in the Russian Federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia

Regional activities

Advocating ILO Standards and effective practices

- Dissemination of ILO labour standards pertaining to migrant workers
- Contributing to CIS/ EurAsEC model legislation concerning migrant workers
- ILO Multilateral Framework disseminated
- Handbook on Labour Migration disseminated
- Guide on Regulation of Private Employment Agencies translated to Russian and disseminated.

Regional (CIS) consultations

A series of regional consultations is planned on rights of migrant workers and regularization; migration and development; education and skills of migrant workers; assessing demand for migrant workers.

Cooperation with the UN, regional and international organizations

This includes: technical assistance by providing ILO conventions and guidelines; participation in working groups of the EuroAsian Economic Community (EurAsEC);

assistance in drafting of model legislation on labour migration and private employment agencies. Joint workshops with the IOM on the role and regulation of private recruitment agencies in Central Asia and Russia. Coordination of activities in the field of migration with the World Bank and UNDP.

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Key ILO publications on labour migration

- Towards a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy. International Labour Conference, 92nd Session 2004. – Geneva, 2004
- ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration. Non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration. – Geneva, 2006
- OSCE-IOM-ILO Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination. – Vienna, 2006
- Forced Labour in the Russian Federation Today: Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Human Beings. – Geneva, 2006
- Guide to Private Employment Agencies. Regulation, monitoring and enforcement. – Geneva, 2007
- Rights of Migrant Workers in Kazakhstan: National Legislation, International Standards and Practices. – Almaty, 2008

Countries: Russian Federation, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Target groups: migrants and their families, national governments, trade unions, employers' organizations, NGOs

Duration: 2007–2009

Background

A number of the policy and research activities in the CIS region in recent years have focused on countering human trafficking, with far less attention on issues of labour migration, including other forms of irregular migration. Yet there is a pressing need to re-examine current approaches to the governance of migration for three principal reasons.

First, although there are important variations between the project countries, in the next decade they will all be confronted with a reduction of native labour forces because of a decline in fertility rates. In the Russian Federation, for example, it is estimated that up to 1.5 million workers per year are being lost to the labour market through demographic transitions. Although each of these countries currently has significant unemployment levels, in the medium term labour market demand will outstrip labour supply and undermine potential economic growth across the region. Labour migration is an important element in a suite of policies required to address this challenge.

Second, the presence of large populations of irregular workers, especially in certain key sectors of the Russian Federation, is symptomatic of the need for better policies and systems. The reliance of certain sectors on irregular workers is not economically sustainable. There are also very pressing concerns about the human and labour rights of the workers themselves. An immediate challenge is to regulate the situation of irregular workers; a longer term challenge is to regulate the labour market to reduce demand for them.

Third, important disparities mean that there are likely to be increasing incentives for migration across the region for the foreseeable future.

Disparities in economic development and particularly the availability of work combined with the growing demographic gradients across the region serve to encourage migration. Most migrants in the region move to the Russian Federation – it is estimated for example that over 500,000 Tajiks seasonally migrate to the Russian Federation each year.

It is also important to note that there is also significant migration from the Russian Federation, particularly of the educated and skilled, with specialists and managers comprising more than forty percent of annual labour migration (of close to 70,000) from the country. In this context all countries in the region face the challenge of maximising the benefits of migration for both origin and destination countries, while minimizing its potentially negative consequences. Specifically, more effective regulation of immigration needs to be combined with longer term and more proactive initiatives to reduce disparities and ensure that those who move do so voluntarily, in a legal manner and because their labour is required.

Project Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to promote a sustainable, participative and equitable approach to the governance of labour migration in the Russian Federation, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.



Photo: ILO

The project has five specific objectives, each focusing on one or two countries: (1) to develop practical methods for assessing and forecasting labour market requirements with a view to improving migration governance; (2) to promote decent work and enhance the protection of migrant workers' rights; (3) to develop a system of earned regularisation and introduce sound regularisation policies and procedures; (4) to contribute to the productive utilization of the region's human resources by developing systems for the portability of qualifications and reducing bureaucratic obstacles to recruitment; and (5) to develop policies that enhance the positive impact of migration on development in origin countries.

In order to reach the objectives a series of activities, grouped under research, policy dialogue and capacity building are underway. Project advisory groups, comprising project partners have been formed in all the concerned countries to guide project implementation.

Project activities

Activities in the Russian Federation

Capacity building in labour migration planning and forecasting

- International practices studied in Austria, Spain, Italy and UK
- National experience studied for Russia
- National workshop
- Study visit to Spain
- Methodology development

Regularization of migrant workers and rights of migrant workers

- International practices studied in Italy and Spain
- Assessment of the implementation of the new immigration legislation in Russia
- National workshop
- Study on working and living conditions of migrant workers in the communal and public utilities sector with a view to promote trade union membership and services
- Awareness raising among employers on legalizing migrant worker labour relations

Partners in the Russian Federation

- Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation
- Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation

- Russian Union of Industrialists and Employers (RSPP) and Coordinating Council of Employers Unions of Russia
- Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
- Federal Service of State Statistics of the Russian Federation
- Researchers

Activities in Kazakhstan

Promoting decent work and protection of migrant workers

- Assessment of national legislation for the entry, employment and residence of migrant workers in comparison with international conventions and practices
- National workshop held and round-table organized with the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Actions to increase trade union membership of migrant workers
- Awareness raising and training planned for government officials and social partners on social security for migrant workers
- Study and national workshop on employment of migrants in the informal economy
- Consultations in South Kazakhstan with regional authorities, labour inspection, trade unions, employers and NGOs to follow up recommendations of the study

Partners in Kazakhstan

- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Confederation of Employers (Entrepreneurs) of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Researchers



Photo: ILO



Activities in Armenia and Tajikistan

Enhancing the development impact of migration

- Study of emigration of skilled human resources, return migration and diaspora policies
- Study made on savings and investment potential of remittances and financial products (Armenia)
- National workshops held
- Support to development of State policies and programmes on engaging the diaspora as development partners underway
- Support to development of skills registers for returnees
- Support to banks and MFIs in tailoring loan and deposit products for migrants and their families
- Support of the Construction Trade Union on information and advocacy work towards migrants and potential migrants (Tajikistan)

Partners in Armenia and Tajikistan

Armenia

- Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
- Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia

- Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia
- State Employment Service Agency, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia
- Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen (Employers) of Armenia
- Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia
- Researchers

Tajikistan

- Department of Employment and Social Protection of the Population under Executive Apparatus of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Migration Service in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Employers' Union of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Tajikistan
- Researchers

Activities in the Kyrgyz Republic

Facilitating the productive utilization of human resources

- Study of human resources development and labour migration in KR
- National workshop
- Support to trade unions in developing and implementing a Programme on Labour Migration for 2008-2010
- Updating of occupational classification in construction sector
- Consultations on skills testing and accreditation in order to enhance regional portability of qualifications

Partners in the Kyrgyz Republic

- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic
- State Committee of Kyrgyz Republic on Migration and Employment
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic
- National Confederation of Employers of Kyrgyzstan
- Trade Unions Federation of Kyrgyzstan
- Researchers