



# EVALUATION BRIEF

31 August 2023

## EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “ENHANCING INDUSTRY CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT ETHICAL RECRUITMENT MODELS IN VIET NAM AND NEPAL TO PROTECT MIGRANT WORKERS IN SOUTH KOREAN BUSINESSES’ SUPPLY CHAINS”

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

**Evaluation type:** Internal ex-post evaluation

**Evaluator:** Angeline Wambanda, Regional M&E Officer, IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

**Evaluation dates:** December 2022 - April 2023

**Final report date:** 31 August 2023

**Commissioned by:** IOM Development Fund / IOM Viet Nam

**Managed by:** Elodie Jacoby, MEAL Officer, IOM Viet Nam

**Evaluation purpose:** To support IOM and the donor in assessing overall achievements after the end of the project; to ensure accountability to intended beneficiaries and the IDF, and for learning by Project management and senior management within IOM; to identify knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned; and to inform future interventions.

**Evaluation criteria:** Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, and sustainability.

**Evaluation methodology:** The evaluation was conducted remotely. Qualitative methods were used to obtain information, mainly through document review and key informant interviews.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The project was implemented in IOM Viet Nam, Nepal and the Republic of Korea from 1 November 2017 to 1 November 2019, with a no-cost extension until 31 March 2021. It aimed to address two interrelated challenges: Businesses’ ability to monitor exploitation and abuses along the supply chain and identification of recruiters in countries of origin with demonstrated commitment to ethical recruitment practices and to broadly improve transparency, accountability and capacity of recruitment industry in implementing ethical recruitment practices.

Recognizing the links between unethical recruitment practices and decent work deficits for migrant workers, including exploitative situations, this regional project aimed to contribute to the protection of the human rights and labour rights of migrant workers by supporting private sector actors in Nepal, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam to implement fair recruitment principles.

The project was anchored in IOM’s International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS), and the Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) framework. It aimed to provide relevant platforms on which to build communities of practice, and address opacity in supply chains, and multiple possible exploitation scenarios in Asia.

### Project information:

Geographical coverage: Nepal, Republic of Korea, Viet Nam

Project type: Labour Migration

Project code: LM.0334

Gender marker: 2a

Project period: 1 November 2017 to 1 November 2019, with a no-cost extension until 31 Mar 2021

Donor: IOM Development Fund

Budget: USD 300,000

The project worked towards the following objective: **to contribute to the protection of labour rights and decent work for women and men migrant workers through ethical recruitment and fair labour/supply chain practices.**

This was to be fulfilled through the following outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Businesses and other relevant stakeholders in the Republic of Korea adopt ethical recruitment standards and practices.

**Outcome 2:** Labour recruiters in Viet Nam and Nepal implement ethical recruitment schemes.

**Outcome 3:** Industry-led support for ethical recruitment among businesses and the recruitment industry in the Republic of Korea, Nepal and Viet Nam are further promoted

## KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

**Relevance (Rating: Very Good: 4/5):** The evaluation found very good evidence of the project's relevance. Its very aim of strengthening recruiter and employer capabilities effectively supports ongoing initiatives by the Republic of Korea, Nepal, and Viet Nam. Moreover, the project aligned with global commitments including UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, SDG goal 8, and ILO principles for fair recruitment. It also adhered to regional commitments like the Colombo Process and ASEAN Declaration. The project prioritized human rights by promoting ethical recruitment and incorporated gender to some extent into key outputs and indicators. However, the evaluation identified design gaps that failed to address pre-departure rights violations due to legislative limitations in the destination countries. Gender integration was weak in project design.

**Effectiveness (Rating: Adequate 2/5):** The evaluation found weak to adequate evidence of the project's contribution to the protection of the human rights and labour rights of migrant workers, depending on the country of implementation. The companies in Korea and recruitment agencies in Nepal and Viet Nam had not made sufficient progress to adopt ethical standards in their recruitment practices. Only one company (Samsung) was conducting due diligence and training within its supply chains abroad. Two companies in Nepal have started to take steps towards IRIS certification.

**Efficiency (Rating: Good 3/5):** The evaluation found good evidence of efficiency. The project had three staff, one each in the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, and Nepal to coordinate the implementation of project activities in each country. There was an overall project manager who provided technical backstopping and overall coordination, which was described as excellent by the three implementing missions. Budget constraints limited full stakeholder engagement. The project was extended twice, because of delays occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to changes in activities. Despite the above challenges, the project fully utilized the planned budget by project closure.

**Coherence (Rating: Very Good: 4/5):** The evaluation found very good evidence of the project's coherence with internal and external initiatives in promoting ethical recruitment. It effectively collaborated with migrant worker associations, civil society, Private Recruitment Agencies (PRAs), industry associations, and other IOM projects, while also leveraging tools developed through the CREST project for stakeholder training on IRIS and CREST principles. The project also coordinated efforts with Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA) and Responsible Business Alliance (RBA) in Nepal and Viet Nam respectively, and through co-financing with the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) project, it aligned with policy advocacy for ethical recruitment in Viet Nam, demonstrating its well-aligned approach with diverse stakeholders. However, limited engagement with government initiatives during implementation was noted.

**Sustainability (Rating: Good 3/5):** The evaluation found good evidence of the project's sustainability. The project's engagement with companies such as Samsung, and partnerships created with RBA and a few PRAs in Nepal are likely to sustain the capacity building and promotion of ethical recruitment. The project triggered the development of follow-up projects that are facilitating a continuation of some of the project results. Due to limited engagement with governments, it was not clear to what extent CREST tools and guidance or the IRIS Standard have influenced the recent laws and policies published in the three countries.

**Impact (Rating: Good: 4/5):** The evaluation found good evidence of the project's impact. Evidence showed the project introduced IRIS and CREST guidance to stakeholders in Korea, and collaborated with NAFEA in Nepal and RBA in Viet Nam. With broad engagement of stakeholders including MNEs, government bodies, and UN agencies, the project raised awareness effectively. Its catalytic effect was evident in initiatives like the GFEMS-funded project, a result of this project, which led to revisions in Viet Nam legislation. While some PRAs lagged in adopting ethical practices, the project's awareness-building left a significant impact, laying a strong foundation for future ethical recruitment programming.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### IOM in the Republic of Korea, Nepal and Viet Nam

1. When designing ethical recruitment projects, IOM could narrow scope, expectations and set realistic outcomes for projects that engage businesses and PRAs to fully apply CREST guidance and IRIS principles in their policies and practices.
2. Design targeted projects to increase opportunities for women migrant workers in the Republic of Korea.
3. While a corridor approach is good practice, there should be a comprehensive approach to target PRAs regardless of the corridor in migrant sending countries to potentially address challenges faced in non targeted corridors.
4. Engage government and strategic partners such as ILO, and RBA to increase understanding on IRIS which seemed to be perceived as an internal standard by some key informants.
5. For maximum impact, ethical recruitment programs should be designed to include components for engagement of governments in both sending and receiving countries on one hand, businesses, PRAs, and support for empowering migrant workers on the other.
6. IOM could support harmonization of national recruitment policies, working towards enforcement of zero fees policy to eliminate opportunities for exploitation.
7. Strengthen workers associations to know their rights.
8. Continue to engage and leverage the membership of country of origin in regional forums on ethical recruitment to address gaps in legislation to further enhance the project results through current ongoing ethical recruitment projects.
9. Project staff should document and save monitoring information and results of monitoring activities, including monitoring data on output and outcome indicators in a common location such as SharePoint.

### IOM Development Fund

1. Discuss staff costs prior to award, evaluate progress mid point to ensure right level of HR for maximum impact. There should be a realistic expectation on results based on intensity of engagement with stakeholders versus resources and duration of the project. Consider increasing the overall budget for projects of this nature.
2. Ensure that the Fund projects have high-level representation, or a focal point from relevant government ministries participating in planning and implementation of project activities to ensure ownership and sustainability of results.