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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
स्वीस सरकार विकास सहयोग एसडीसी

Migrant Rights and Decent Work (MiRiDeW) - Phase I

Goal

Strengthen support systems of the Government of Nepal to better protect the rights of Nepali migrant workers along with increased benefits from labour migration

Time Frame

1 October 2018 – 31 December 2022

Target Groups

Men and women migrant workers and their families

Budget

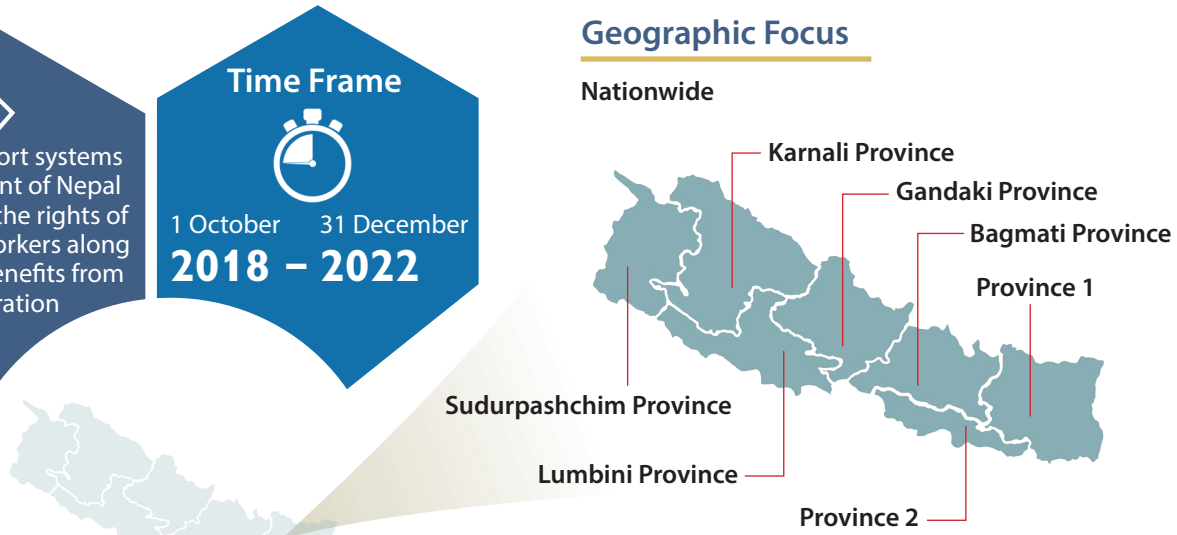
CHF 4.26 million

Donors

SDC: CHF 2.36 million
FCDO[i]: CHF 1.9 million

Geographic Focus

Nationwide



Implementing Agency

The International Labour Organization (ILO) as a technical assistance provider implements the project in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, workers organisations, civil society organisations and other Government partners like the National Human Rights Commission, the National Planning Commission (NPC), the Foreign Employment Board and the Department of Foreign Employment.

Background

Labour migration is a major element of Nepal's economy and contributes significantly to its overall development. About half a million men and women leave Nepal every year to work mainly in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Malaysia. Around 56% of all households in Nepal receive remittances from labour migration. Despite the positive implications of labour migration, there are challenges that limit migrants from fully benefitting from it. Many low skilled workers face a deficit of decent work opportunities in destination countries, are severely exploited and do not receive effective legal or other consular services.

Nepal's support mechanisms for migrant workers are inadequate. Embassies and consulates in most destination countries are understaffed, insufficiently prepared for their job and lack resources to provide services to workers in distress, including supporting women who face sexual and physical abuse.

The Government of Nepal (GoN) has taken some crucial steps to reduce the costs of migration. For instance, it has strengthened bilateral agreements with destination countries. As a member of the Colombo Process, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and the Global Forum on Migration and Development, it also contributes to the regional and global labour migration discourse. The MiRiDeW programme supports the GoN to improve mechanisms promoting and protecting the rights of migrant workers, to maximise the benefits of labour migration.

Programme Overview

The MiRiDew programme focuses on strengthening the capacity of the GoN to protect the rights of Nepali migrant workers at home and in destination countries, particularly Qatar, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The programme aims to develop and pilot operational guidelines to strengthen the capacity of Nepali diplomatic missions to provide effective services to migrant workers abroad. It also supports the GoN to participate meaningfully in regional and global policy dialogues on labour migration. In addition, it supports the government to translate international commitments into national policies and programmes.

Furthermore, the programme supports the GoN in implementing, monitoring and reporting labour migration issues, particularly related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international frameworks. The programme works in close coordination with civil society, trade unions and diaspora organisations in destination countries to strengthen network-building and service delivery for Nepali migrant workers abroad.

What the Programme Will Achieve

- Strengthen and implement labour migration policies at federal and provincial level.
- Strengthen bilateral and regional mechanisms to improve Nepali migrant workers' access to better jobs.
- Nepali consular and diplomatic missions in destination countries provide effective support services to Nepali migrant workers.
- The GoN engages effectively in regional and global policy dialogues relating to labour migration and implements relevant policies.

How It Will Achieve the Objectives

- NPC and MoLESS have monitoring mechanisms in place for key labour migration indicators.
- MoLESS completes preparations for the formalisation of new labour markets for low skilled workers.
- MoLESS develops systems to respond to migration-related policy trends in destination countries.
- The GoN pilots newly endorsed operational guidelines for Nepali consular and diplomatic missions.
- Diplomatic and consular missions increase coordination with non-governmental support structures, including support structures for female migrants in destination countries.
- GoN develops a national position, including priorities and concrete messages for regional and global policy dialogues on labour migration.
- Reflection of global and regional policy dialogues on labour migration in the policymaking process of the GoN.

[i] *The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Government of the United Kingdom (FCDO)*