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FAIRWAY Programme

 ETHIOPIA  KENYA  MOROCCO  NIGERIA  UGANDA



 BAHRAIN  JORDAN  KUWAIT  LEBANON

————— Countries of origin in Africa —————

————— Countries of destination in Arab States —————

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Timeframe: December 2019 – November 2023
Budget: 9 million CHF
Beneficiaries: Migrant workers from Africa and Asia, working in the Middle East



Strategy and objectives

The FAIRWAY Programme is an inter-regional initiative to improve labour migration conditions from Africa to the Arab States, and to protect all vulnerable migrant workers in the Arab States*. Over the course of four years, FAIRWAY will contribute to enabling migrant workers to contribute to sustainable development in both countries of origin and destination.



Policy, regulations, & enforcement: the fragmentation of how labour migration is governed between Africa to the Arab States leaves migrant workers exposed to significant risks to their physical, psychological, and socioeconomic well-being, particularly due to a lack of oversight in recruitment and restrictive sponsorship laws that tie workers to their employers.



Companies & employers: As public awareness of forced labour prompts tougher legislation on modern slavery, local and regional companies need to adopt more proactive action on eliminating risks of forced labour and ensuring decent work across their supply chains.



Information & voice: Migrant workers, who are often lower-income, experience many practical barriers to exercising their rights, and have limited ability to speak out against abuse, or negotiate collectively for better working conditions. Too often, migrant workers have limited access to information on safe recruitment, employment options, compensation schemes as well as administrative and complaints procedures.



Bargaining power: Reform of labour migration governance systems and practices will require a more level playing field and greater cooperation and dialogue across migration corridors. Re-negotiated or newly negotiated bilateral labour agreements between countries of origin and destination will need to instil key rights or protection issues and include strong implementation and enforcement mechanisms



Discrimination & xenophobia: In discussions around migration, preconceived notions often trump empirical evidence, and reality is often skewed by misinformation. Discrimination, particularly in some destination countries, is also visible in policies that reflect entrenched perceptions of workers' abilities based on their gender, ethnicity and nationality.

*With a focus on the countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain

The FAIRWAY Programme addresses underlying causes of decent work deficits at their source through national-level interventions in selected countries of origin in East, West and North Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Morocco). In the Arab States, the Programme provides continuity to interventions in countries of destination across the region by building on the work of the FAIRWAY Middle East Programme (2016-2019), and focuses on low-wage migrant workers from all regions.

With an emphasis on key sectors where vulnerable migrant workers are engaged—including domestic work and the construction sector— FAIRWAY seeks to address the interlinked structural, behavioural, and practical barriers to improved labour migration.

To do so, FAIRWAY works to realise **four objectives**:

- 1 Private sector, employers', and workers' organizations are engaged to produce decent work for migrant workers
- 2 Gender-responsive policy frameworks are developed or strengthened to realise fair recruitment and decent work and regulatory compliance
- 3 Discriminatory attitudes towards women and men migrant workers are diminished; and
- 4 Migrant workers have improved access to information and support services throughout the migration cycle.



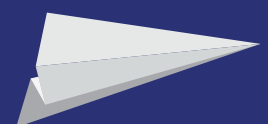
A range of decent work deficits remain a reality for many migrant workers. These include deceptive, fraudulent and abusive hiring practices and debt bondage, cases of abuse and exploitation, poor working conditions, as well as limited voice, representation, and access to justice.



Returning home, migrant workers can also face difficulties reintegrating within local labour markets or moving out of low-income jobs, at times pushing them to re-migrate. These issues have their roots in a combination of governance, institutional, and social challenges.

What can FAIRWAY do to support change and reform?

- Employers, companies, and recruitment agencies can be sensitised to the [decent work agenda](#) through pilot initiatives and knowledge exchanges, which can promote fairer practices in line with ILO guidance such as the [ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment](#); and practical tools such as the [ILO-IOE Guidance Tool for Construction Companies in the Middle East](#).
- Trade unions and migrant workers' associations can be mobilized to advance migrant workers' representation and organization, and by participating in regional and inter-regional exchanges, important networks and strategies of collaboration can be established.
- By supporting evidence-based and inclusive policy and regulatory reform, the Programme can address structural governance issues. This includes strengthening recruitment regulations and compliance through better monitoring, enforcement, and professionalization of the recruitment industry. In countries of destination, FAIRWAY will support reform of the sponsorship system, particularly to ensure that domestic workers and other low-wage migrant workers are not excluded from future reforms.
- Building on existing and emerging opportunities for exchange between African and Arab States, the Programme will enable regional and inter-regional dialogue that helps to identify areas of shared interests and set groundwork for greater collaboration.
- By harnessing behavioural change strategies and insights, the Programme can address discriminatory policies, practices and attitudes against migrant workers at the level of employers, the public, and policymakers themselves.
- By providing support to labour administrators and social partners to effectively deliver information and assistance to migrant workers, including prior to departure and consular, the Programme will ensure that African workers are better protected whilst in the Middle East.



Programme Background

Migrant workers play an essential role in labour markets in the Arab States - globally, the Arab States sub-region has the largest share of migrant workers as a proportion of all workers. The majority of migrant workers in the Arab States come from Asia, though numbers from African countries are on the rise.

The search for decent work and livelihood opportunities is a key driver of migration around the world, with 64 per cent of international migrants considered migrant workers, according to the latest ILO estimates. On the African continent too, a combination of demographic pressures, a growing workforce, wage differentials, and poor employment prospects at home are key drivers of young African women and men to seek work abroad.

The projected growth of labour migration and mobility from both Asia and Africa creates an imperative to continue to tackle some of the major risks of migration and decent work deficits. The key to leveraging the economic opportunities opened by low- and medium-skilled labour migration from Africa to Arab States is to ensure that migrant workers are in situations of safety and decent work throughout the migration cycle.





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