Short-term consultancy: Call for Proposals

Responsible Recruitment of Migrant Workers:
Connecting Business Practices and Development Outcomes

February-April 2021

SUMMARY

The Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) seeks a consultant with proven research experience on labour migration, development, and migrant workers’ rights. The consultant will provide an overview of how the benefits of labour migration – for migrant workers themselves, and their home countries and communities – can be maximised through responsible recruitment practices.

The research will inform a new stream of work being developed by the IHRB Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment focused on the impacts of servicing recruitment debt on migrant workers, their families, and communities – in particular, the lost development potential of their remittances and the nexus between migration, recruitment practices, and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The consultant will develop a policy-oriented research paper that provides a succinct overview and analysis of the impacts of recruitment practices on remittance levels and related development outcomes in migrant workers’ home countries. The consultant will draw on existing research from both academic, non-governmental, international and government bodies and include in the paper relevant data presented in a clear and accessible format. The research paper will bring together data and analysis to inform the basis of policy positions and communications / advocacy messages to business, governments, international organisations, trade unions and civil society to advance understanding and action in support of the migration-recruitment-development nexus.
BACKGROUND

Migrant workers play a vital role in the global economy. Their skills and labour add significantly to the economic vitality of countries of destination and the remittances they send home help to sustain families and communities who may lack other viable income opportunities. Remittances to countries of origin can be a key driver in promoting economic development, improving health and education outcomes, and reducing poverty. In many countries, they form a substantial part of national GDP.

Despite the benefits of migration, many migrant workers face particular challenges at all stages of the migration cycle. Among the challenges facing low-wage migrant workers, being required to pay large recruitment fees and associated costs to secure employment abroad continues to be a common practice. Iniquitous proportions of earnings are taken as fees by business managers, recruitment agents, middlemen and corrupt agents of government. Many migrants are forced to take out loans to pay these fees and this debt may make them vulnerable to further exploitation, including forced labour and trafficking. Such recruitment practices undermine the potential development benefits of migration, including by limiting the available remittances that can be sent to families in home countries. In turn, this can adversely influence broader economic and social conditions in countries of origin.

In 2016, IHRB established the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment, an initiative that seeks to use the collective brand leverage of multinational businesses, working with other stakeholders and expert organisations, to address irresponsible recruitment practices facing migrant workers, with a particular focus on ending recruitment fee charging to workers. The Leadership Group promotes the Employer Pays Principle, which affirms that no worker should pay for a job – all costs of recruitment should be borne not by the worker but by the employer.

The Leadership Group has to date focused largely on the prevention of modern slavery as the ultimate driver for addressing abusive recruitment practices. The initiative is interested in expanding this approach through understanding the impacts on migrant workers, their families, and communities of servicing recruitment debt, including the lost development potential of their remittances.

Prevention of the risks to migrant workers requires appropriate action by business and other societal actors, as highlighted in the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity. Equally, to maximise the benefits of labour migration, businesses and governments must ensure that adequate policies and frameworks are in place to facilitate safe, regular, and efficient migration experiences with the resulting positive impacts on existing strategies to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
DELIVERABLES

1. Research and draft a research paper (approx. 15 pages including executive summary) which will:
   
   - Examine the current status of research and relevant initiatives to address migration-related issues in the context of strategies to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
   - Summarise current recruitment practices and efforts to drive improvements that protect migrant worker rights;
   - Provide an overview of current remittance flows and their significance, particularly to developing countries, including impacts on household income and communities in migrant sending countries;
   - Review current labour migration trends, including current recruitment fee practices and potential impacts on remittance flows within target recruitment corridors;*
   - Present data in accessible format for inclusion in tables/graphics and other advocacy tools; and
   - Provide clear recommendations for governments and business.

* The Leadership Group has a particular focus on Southeast Asia and the Gulf where many members have supply chains and recruitment abuses are well documented.

Priority countries of origin for the research paper are: Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Priority countries of destination are: UAE, Qatar, Malaysia and Thailand.

2. Plan and deliver a webinar presentation on the final research to members of Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment.
**REQUIREMENTS, EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS**

- Demonstrable understanding of migrant workers’ rights, responsible recruitment, labour migration, and migration and development policy debates, including the role of remittances, in particular in Southeast Asia and the Gulf;
- Proven policy research experience, and excellent writing and editing skills in English; and
- Ability to commit up to 25 days’ work, between February – April 2021 to complete this project.

**HOW TO APPLY**

Interested applicants are invited to submit no more than a 3-page overview which should include:

- CV and cover letter highlighting relevant experience and suitability for the role and the approach proposed to complete this consultancy successfully;
- Links to any relevant policy research or briefings previously completed on this or similar topics; and
- Fixed fee/day rate (including VAT if applicable).

Please send submissions to Denise Derbyshire, at recruitment@ihrb.org with “Migrant Workers Programme Consultancy” in the subject line, by 10am UK, 15th February 2021.

Please note that unsuccessful submissions will be held on file for 6 months after the end of the recruitment process.
ABOUT IHRB

Founded in 2009, the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) is the leading international think tank on business and human rights. IHRB’s mission is to shape policy, advance practice, and strengthen accountability in order to make respect for human rights part of everyday business. IHRB seeks to embed international business and human rights standards within responsible business practice in a wide range of countries and industry sectors, working with government, business and civil society.

For more see www.ihrb.org

ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP GROUP

Launched in May 2016, the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment is a collaboration between leading companies and expert organisations to drive positive change in the way that migrant workers are recruited.

Developed as an initiative of the Institute for Human Rights and Business, the Leadership Group operates as a company-led collective advocacy platform harnessing the leverage of major international brands to promote responsible recruitment practices amongst business, the recruitment industry, and government. All members of the Leadership Group are publicly committed to the Employer Pays Principle and its implementation throughout their supply chains. Together, our mission is bold - the total eradication of recruitment fees being charged to workers anywhere by 2026.

For more see https://www.ihrb.org/employerpays