



**International Labour Organization  
Regional Office for Arab States**

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**Effective Matching of the Demand for and Supply of Migrant  
Workers between Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) Countries of Origin  
and Destination**

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**Call for proposal  
Terms of Reference**

**For an external consultancy to prepare a Policy-Oriented Research Paper on Matching  
Labour Mobility with Labour Market Needs in ADD Corridors**

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**Background**

Migrant workers have long played a critical role in the growth and sustainable development of economies of destination countries, while at the same time benefiting their home countries through remittances and skills acquired in destination countries.

Among the Asian Labour Sending and Receiving Countries participating in the Abu Dhabi Dialogue,<sup>1</sup> labour mobility is critical to the development of both countries of origin and destination. Yet, the migration process implies complex challenges in terms of governance, migrant workers' protection, and the effective matching between labour supply and demand, particularly in view of the changing employment landscape in ADD destination countries, driven by economic and structural transformation efforts and the goals of nationalization and increased productivity.

With the ambition to move towards knowledge-based economies, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are exerting great efforts to diversify their economic base, putting increased focus on high-value added sectors capable of creating high-productivity and high-skilled jobs. Increased investment in and use of technology will also alter the methods and nature of work, giving rise to digitally enabled jobs. In view of these changing patterns and sectors of employment, the number and profile of migrant workers needed in the labour markets of the GCC is expected to change, in line with the changing needs of employers and the new skills requirements in a more complex world of work.

While low and medium-skilled occupations will continue to rely heavily on migrant workers in view of nationals' reluctance to carry them out, structural changes, including the growth of new sectors and the waning of others, will require new sets of skills or upgraded skills that will need to either be introduced from abroad, or met by a more skilled national workforce.

GCC countries will continue to require migrant workers especially in the short term of the next couple of years, during which economies are expected to bounce back from the economic impact of the pandemic. A recent survey amongst companies in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) suggested that over two thirds of enterprises were planning to hire new employees in 2021-2022 as the

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://abudhabidialogue.org.ae/>

national labour market rebounds.<sup>2</sup> Both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and UAE labour markets are witnessing severe shortages of digital skills ranging from entry-level positions in IT project management, data mining and algorithm design.<sup>3</sup> Skills shortages are furthermore forecasted in banking and financial services, human resource management, retail as well as engineering, manufacturing and personal and health care, in particular nurses and semi-skilled workers for healthcare.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

To date, regular and updated data and information regarding qualifications and skills needed and the evolution of labour demand in the GCC are lacking, inhibiting evidence-based decision-making and effective matching between supply and demand for migrant workers, as well as the anticipation of skills needed in the future. Effective skills partnerships are also limited hindering efforts to continuously update and upgrade skills of workers and skills recognition in countries of origin to match the emerging demands for skills in the destination countries.

Additionally, collaboration on skills between ADD origin and destination countries, which has been the subject of previous ADD discussions, needs to be fostered further. Moreover, most of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) signed between ADD countries of destination and origin cover recruitment and the regulation of working conditions, but do not necessarily look into other potential aspects of this collaboration, including with regard to skills and skills certification and/ or recognition. A recent agreement between KSA and Sri Lanka to advance the roll-out of the KSA Skills Verification Programme in the latter country is more an exception rather than the rule in this regard.<sup>7</sup>

Overall, improving the governance of labour mobility and supporting effective matching between supply and demand for migrant workers require adhering to relevant international labour standards, but also considering good practices, including skills partnerships for job matching leading to improved labour mobility outcomes. Highlighting such practices and instituting them in different parts of the world can help promote efficient skills- and job-matching and enhance migration governance systems.

In view of the above, the ADD Permanent Secretariat has requested ILO's support to develop a policy-oriented research paper on "Matching labour mobility with labour market needs in ADD corridors".

## **Objective**

The overall objective of this research paper is to provide evidence-based policy recommendations on systems and mechanisms for informed and enhanced skills mobility between ADD countries of origin and destination in response to the changing employment landscape in the latter. Regional and international good practices will be mapped to provide practical recommendations that take into account what has worked and what has not worked.

More particularly, the research paper will seek to:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/money/2021/09/26/uae-companies-ramp-up-hiring-plans-as-labour-market-improves-survey-says>

<sup>3</sup> See for instance <https://www.bcg.com/en-hu/publications/2020/alleviating-the-heavy-toll-of-the-global-skills-mismatch>

<sup>4</sup> In the healthcare sector, the new normal after the pandemic has witnessed the booming of new occupational profiles of semi-skilled workers, among them that of nurse assistant. See <https://theconversation.com/using-nursing-assistants-to-fill-coronavirus-gaps-brings-risks-if-theyre-not-up-to-the-job-134242>

<sup>5</sup> Alreshidi, N. M., Alrashidi, L. M., Alanazi, A. N., & Alshammeri, E. H. (2021). Turnover among foreign nurses in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Public Health Research*, 10(1).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Page's 2021 Salary & Hiring Insights Guide.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2272846/saudi-arabia>

- 1- Provide an overview of trends in supply and demand of migrant workers, including existing skills gaps at all levels with particular reference to those sectors that employ migrant workers, in the ADD member states;
- 2- Identify good practices for skills matching globally and regionally and within the ADD member states, and highlight lessons learned (what went right and what went wrong);
- 3- Review the relevance and effectiveness in this regard of selected MOUs, BLAs and/ or protocols signed between ADD destination and origin countries, especially with reference to the extent to which skills demand, recognition or certification are reflected;
- 4- Provide policy recommendations for better matching of migrant labour supply and demand across the ADD migration corridor, in support of improved labour mobility outcomes for both destination and origin countries.

## Methodology

The ILO will recruit an external collaborator (consultant) to undertake this research activity. The consultant will be provided with technical guidance from relevant DWT specialists at the ILO Regional Office for Arab States and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, namely the Regional Senior Skills and Employability Specialist, the Senior Migration Specialist, and the Senior Employment Policy Specialist.

More specifically, the consultant is expected to:

- Conduct a **desk review** of analysis and studies related to trends and issues in labour mobility between ADD countries of origin and destination, particularly in three to four sectors with priority occupations that employ significant number of migrant workers, and identify good practices and lessons learnt, also in view of **best practices, including** skills partnerships for job-matching leading to improved labour mobility outcomes.<sup>8</sup> Examine the trends in skills demand and supply in the light of global drivers of change impacting future of work in ADD corridor. In particular, this review will also draw on the outline presented by the ILO Regional Senior Skills and Employability Specialist at the ADD Senior Officials' Meeting in October 2022 (and which will be shared with the consultant), which focused on five areas:
  - 1) Paradox of the need for skilled migrant workers and skills mismatch;
  - 2) Information asymmetry on skills needs and gaps in countries of destination;
  - 3) Skills recognition;
  - 4) Upskilling migrant workers for improved skills match; and
  - 5) The potential role of Job Centres and Employment Services and Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), where relevant, in countries of origin in matching labour mobility with labour market needs.
- Utilize **secondary data from national and international sources** to support the quantitative analysis and provide an overview of the demand and supply of migrant workers. The data and information gathered will mainly aim at i) understanding the **labour and skills demand** in the countries of destination; and ii) identifying key actors involved in the labour mobility governance processes. In parallel, the consultant will rely on international sources and national accounts from ADD countries of destination to complement the analysis with a better understanding of **skills profiles and qualifications** of workers in the ADD countries of origin to examine the trends in skills supply and demand and impact on migrant workers' employment and vulnerability.
- Review and assess, including through Key Informant Interview (KII), the relevance and effectiveness of **MOUs, BLAs** and/or protocols signed between ADD destination and origin countries, especially with reference to the extent to which skills demand, recognition or certification are reflected. Examine the forms of collaboration this has led to (exchange

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<sup>8</sup> Selected relevant resources are available in Annex 1 of these ToRs.

between training providers, upgrade of skills standards, training of assessors etc.) identify commonalities, gaps and good examples.

Prepare and submit a succinct, **policy-oriented research paper** with evidence-based **policy recommendations**, of not more than 20 to 25 pages, aimed at improving job-matching, skills recognition and migrant workers' preparedness **for a more challenging future of work**. The paper will shed light on data requirements for improved and enhanced skills mobility between ADD countries of origin and destination and will assess the availability and effectiveness of the processes implemented to date to match supply and demand for migrant workers. A first draft will be submitted to the ILO for technical review. The consultant will then revise the paper incorporating ILO's feedback and comments and will prepare a **PowerPoint presentation** so that the findings and recommendations can be presented to the ADD Senior Officials' Meeting and Ministerial Consultation (dates to be determined by the ADD Permanent Secretariat, but tentatively expected to be scheduled in October 2023).

### Expected outputs

- 1- Workplan and detailed outline of the research paper submitted to the ILO's satisfaction.
- 2- Draft policy-oriented research paper, including recommendations, good practices and lessons learned, submitted for ILO's review and feedback. The paper should be structured as follows:
  - a. Executive summary.
  - b. A snapshot of the trends in demand and supply of skills and migrant workers in ADD destination countries, with a focus on three to four priority sectors in occupations with significant numbers of migrant workers.
  - c. Skills profiles of workers in three ADD countries of origin, especially in four to five occupations that are in demand or anticipated to be in demand in ADD countries of destination, including the relevant qualifications of the selected occupations in the identified countries of origin with a potential to match the demand.
  - d. Processes for matching the supply and demand and skills recognition for migrant workers in ADD member states:
    - Key actors and institutions involved;
    - Good examples and best practices; and
    - Role, effectiveness and relevance of bilateral agreements and MOUs.
    - Role of job centres, employment services, and MRCs where relevant
  - e. Conclusions and policy recommendation for enhanced skills matching and recognition for improved labour mobility outcomes.
- 3- PowerPoint presentation of the research paper prepared for delivery at the ADD Senior Officials' Meeting and Ministerial Consultation.

### Timeline and payment schedule

This research activity is expected to require 25 working days between June 2023 and September 2023.

The timeline and payment schedule relating to the assignment is as follows:

Output	Total working days
Workplan and detailed outline of the research paper, including methodology, list of sources for desk review, draft table of contents, etc.	3 days
Draft research paper	17 days
Final research paper (Approx. 25 pages, excluding annexes) and draft PowerPoint presentation	5 days

### **Payment schedule**

Payment will be made upon submission of deliverables and against invoice as approved by ILO.

1<sup>st</sup> instalment: covering 3 working days, upon submission of Workplan and detailed outline of the research paper, including methodology, list of sources for desk review, draft table of contents, etc.

2<sup>nd</sup> instalment: covering 17 working days, upon submission of the draft research paper

3<sup>rd</sup> instalment: covering 5 working days, upon submission of the final research paper (Approx. 25 pages, excluding annexes) and draft PowerPoint presentation

### **Qualifications and experience**

#### **Education:**

- Advance university degree in social sciences or related fields.

#### **Experience:**

- At least 8 years of professional experience in skills, knowledge and employability, including in conducting relevant studies and research.
- Excellent understanding of the skills ecosystem in the GCC, including initiatives relating to migrant workers' skills development and recognition.

**Languages:** Fluency in English (with good knowledge of Arabic preferable).

#### **Required Competencies:**

- Excellent writing and communication skills.
- Comprehensive understanding of the ILO's work on skills policies and systems, including in the context of labour migration and mobility.

## **Proposal Submission Procedures**

The consultant must submit his CV and brief technical and financial proposal by email to both Mr. Kishore Kumar Singh, Senior Technical Specialist, [singhkk@ilo.org](mailto:singhkk@ilo.org) and Mr. Ryszard Cholewinski, Senior Migration Specialist, [cholewinski@ilo.org](mailto:cholewinski@ilo.org). The deadline for submission is **May 19, 2023 COB**.

Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

## Annex 1: List of Relevant Resources on Labour Migration

Abu Dhabi Dialogue (2021). ADD joint Communiqué: Senior Officials' Meeting, 24-27 May 2021.

ADD (2021). The Abu Dhabi Dialogue Sixth Consultation: Joint Declaration, 27th October 2021: Dubai.

ADD (2021). Research paper. Senior Officials' Meeting, 2021. Theme 1: Anticipated Changes in the Employment Landscape in The GCC and their Impact on Labour Supply and Demand in ADD Corridors.

ADD (2021). Research paper. Senior Officials' Meeting, 2021. Theme 2: Leveraging Advanced Technology to Improve Labour Mobility Governance.

ADD (2021). Research paper. Senior Officials' Meeting, 2021. Theme 3: Pre-Deployment Testing of Workers in Asia GCC Corridors.

PowerPoint Presentation for Panel 2 on Migrant Workers Skills Examinations and Recognition: the case of KSA- *Professional Accreditation*.

ILO PowerPoint Presentation for Panel 3 on Building Technological Solutions to Migration Challenges. *Leveraging technology to enhance compliant labour selection practices and improve job-matching*.

*The Fifth Ministerial Consultation of The Abu Dhabi Dialogue, The Dubai Declaration, 17 October 2019.*

Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (2019). *Abu Dhabi Occupational Terms, 26 SEPTEMBER 2019.*

ADD (2019). PowerPoint Presentation on "*The use of Technology in Managing the recruitment and Deployment of Workers*".

ADD (2019). *Collaborating on a Human-Centred Approach to Managing Labour Mobility in a Changing World of Work*. Abu Dhabi Dialogue 5th Ministerial Consultation: High Level Panel Discussion Concept Note.

ADD (2019). *National strategies on the future of work*. PowerPoint Presentation for the High-Level Symposium on the Future of Work.

ADD (2019). *Fair Recruitment*. PowerPoint Presentation for the High-Level Symposium on the Future of Work, 29 April 2019.

ADD (2019). *Investing in People's Capabilities for the Future of Work*. PowerPoint Presentation for the High-Level Symposium on the Future of Work, 29 May 2019.

ADD (2018). *Harmonization of Skills Ecosystems along the South Asia-GCC Corridors*.

ADD (2017). *Cooperating on skills certification in the Asia-GCC migration corridors*. June 2017.

Chakane, M. and Rodrigues, P. (2009). *GCC QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS: CONFERENCE REPORT, 19 May 2009*.

Ernst & Young (2014). *How will the GCC close the skills gap?*.

Hertog, S. *The future of migrant work in the GCC: literature review and a research and policy agenda*.

International Labour Organization (2021). *Training manual on the ILO Guidelines for skills modules in bilateral labour migration agreements*. Facilitator/Trainer's manual.

ILO (2022). *Matching Labour Mobility with Labour Market Needs in ADD Corridors*, paper outline presented to the ADD Senior Officials' Meeting, 18-19 October 2022.

ILO (2022). *Skills needs in the Oman labour market: An employer survey*.

ILO (2022) *Skills needs in Kuwait following the COVID-19 pandemic*.

ILO (2019). *Preparing for a Brighter Future of Work*. Report for the 5th Ministerial Consultation of the ADD, 16-17 October 2019.

ILO (2018). *Key findings and recommendations from the ILO Inter-Regional Experts Forum on Skills and Migration*. PowerPoint Presentation in Colombo- CP TAWG Meeting, 23-24 January 2018.

ILO (2017). *Labour Migration, Skills Development and the Future of Work in The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries*. Working paper, December 2017.

ILO and GIZ (2015). *From India to the Gulf region: Exploring links between labour markets, skills and the migration cycle*.

Malit, F. & Naufal, G, (2017). *Labour Migration, Skills Development and the Future of Work in Gulf Cooperation Council Countries*, ILO Working Paper, December 2017.

National Skill Development Corporation (2020). *Global Skill Gap Report: Assessing Overseas Opportunities for Skilled Manpower from India*.

National Qualifications Authority (2013). *Qualifications meta-frameworks: A report supporting the development of Gulf Cooperation Council's Gulf Qualifications Framework (GQF)*, May 2013.