Call for CVs

National consultant for study of technological applications/platforms to increase transparency, ethical conduct, and regulatory oversight of the recruitment of migrant workers

Deadline for submission of proposals: 29 September 2018

Requirement:	Technology Research Specialist
Duty Station:	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Approximate budget:	TBD
Duration:	September – December 2018
Requirements for application:	Submission of CV, see Application section below for more details.

Background

The large-scale migration of workers from sending to receiving States is mostly facilitated by an inter-regional network of private recruitment agencies (PRAs), which have often been found to be charging exorbitant fees to low-skilled migrant workers in sectors such as construction, agriculture and services (including domestic work), sometimes in collusion with employers.[1]

Increasingly, government-facilitated online platforms have been proposed as a mechanism to either help make the process of recruitment by PRAs more transparent and ensure government oversight, or as an alternative to PRAs altogether through government-to-government, or government-to-business recruitment. Both bilateral/corridor platforms, as well as unilateral initiatives by countries of origin, are currently being piloted (particularly in South Asia), which promise a more transparent and efficient process of recruitment for both workers and employers. This is purported to be achieved through a number of common features of such platforms, including:

- Ability to check a recruitment agency's registration/licence or see the agency's rating by users (reducing reliance on unlicensed agents or sub-agents and potentially giving more visibility to fair and ethical recruitment agencies);
- Maintenance of an online repository of key documents such as an employment contract (reducing risk of contract substitution) as well as ability to store other core documents such as copies of passports and birth certificates (which may be required by workers for any number of reasons, including lodging a complaint or applying for a new job) while meeting data protection guarantees;
- Ability to track the entire recruitment process (providing greater visibility to employers and regulatory authorities);
- Provision of online educational materials including information on non-payment of recruitment fees and related costs (by workers) and relevant pre-departure and post-arrival programmes; and
- Links to an online grievance mechanism.

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[1] See for example, ILO 2016, '*Ways forward in recruitment of low skilled migrant workers in the Asia Arab State corridor'* and New York University Stern Centre for Business and Human Rights' study of recruitment in the construction industry in the Gulf (2017).

Despite these potential benefits, some commentators have noted that technological solutions may not solve core challenges affecting the current recruitment framework, particularly potential misconduct by PRAs (i.e. in collusion with employers).[2] For example, online platforms may not achieve their outcomes if:

- PRAs (or subagents of the PRAs) offer to log/track information on behalf of migrant workers, meaning that migrants do not access the platform themselves and thus do not benefit from the potential transparency facilitated through the platform (for example, they may not see the platform-lodged employment contract, and may rely on the contract provided by the PRA – which may have different terms);
- PRAs can still find other ways to charge workers recruitment fees or related costs, including intimidating workers not to reveal through the platform that they were charged fees.

Additional concerns relate to:

- Recruitment through the system becoming more time-consuming and cumbersome, thus increasing and not reducing associated costs, resulting in more workers and employers relying on faster processes such as informal recruitment through social networks (where they may be less protected); and
- Risk of data breaches unless strict protocols are put in place.

About the study

The study aims to provide guidance to States developing online applications/platforms that facilitate recruitment and placement of migrant workers, on how to best leverage new techniques and technologies, including blockchain technology. One of the case studies to be used in the study will be the Musaned recruitment platform created by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The study will also explore and propose innovative ideas for future use of online platforms.

Specifically, the study will consider a number of core questions, such as:

- What is the typology of online platforms, such as Musaned, and what functions are they intended to serve?
- Do such online platforms increase transparency and efficiency of recruitment for the benefit of workers and employers, and for the work of regulatory authorities?
- Do they support ethical recruitment agencies, or present a higher likelihood of fair recruitment?

Objectives
The study will be in two parts:

Part 1: Review of current initiatives

This part will develop a set of criteria and standard operational indicators for online recruitment applications/platforms to be discussed with the participating countries. These indicators will be tested through a mapping and review of the implementation of current relevant initiatives, taking account of the system that was in place before the online platform was implemented as a comparison. Musaned will be one of the initiatives included in this analysis. Criteria could include:

- *Transparency:* level of information available to both worker and employer and degree to which workers in particular actually access and benefit from the available information;
- *Efficiency:* including number of days required to comply with established procedures, the amount of time required to input information (including, on the workers' side, how many appointments are needed particularly to capital cities to lodge information), and – where the

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[2] Jureidini, R (2017) Wage Protection Systems and Programmes in the GCC, GLMM Working Paper

platform has a function for job matching – the quality of the 'skills match' between worker and employer;

- *Cost:* costs to the employers and workers;
- *Assistance to regulatory authorities:* the extent to which online platforms facilitate the work of government authorities to carry out their regulatory/oversight functions over the recruitment process and to what degree do they promote or facilitate cooperation between authorities in countries of origin and destination;
- *Alignment with international labour standards:* including access to complaints and dispute resolution mechanisms, ensuring that workers do not pay recruitment fees, etc;
- *Data protection:* how secure is user data, including both worker and employer data, and what safeguards are in place against data theft or manipulation;
- *Accessibility:* considering that many low-skilled workers may come from remote rural areas, what degree of penetration can be realistically expected or achieved by online platforms and what mechanisms are in place to facilitate access such as mobile applications.

The review will be conducted in accordance with the same indicators for previous (off-line) recruitment modalities as a comparison.

Part 2: Future directions

This part will explore how emerging trends and technologies, including such technology as blockchain, can be utilised to enhance or develop online systems that best fulfil the criteria and indicators tested through Part 1.

It may also consider the possibility of establishing platforms in the countries of destination to promote internal labour market mobility - such as a virtual market place where workers already in the country can be recruited and matched through an online platform (accessible by relevant Ministries as well as private firms).

The final product would be the provision of concrete guidance and recommendations on how the criteria referred to above can be enhanced through the application of new technologies and techniques with a view to their use by policy makers to inform the development or updating of such applications/platforms in the future.

Core Task and Responsibilities

The local researcher will work remotely in a team comprised of a lead international consultant and other local researchers in each of the target countries. The candidate will preferably be an experienced field researcher familiar with technology and with past experience liaising with the relevant selected governmental counterparts. The local researcher will as well be responsible for data collection under the guidance and supervision of the lead international consultant.

In specific, the national consultant's tasks and responsibilities include the following:

- Identify, translate and/or summarise, and analyse relevant national level documents, research, studies, or reports to contribute to the desk research and a literature review to glean insights from existing data
- Conduct primary source interviews and/or surveys with local and regional stakeholders that will include government officials that interact with the platform, , worker representatives, and external stakeholders (NGOs and quasi-government bodies);
- Work with local institutions to identify and recruit potential migrant workers using Musaned to get jobs in Saudi Arabia and/or returnees coming back from Saudi Arabia to be interviewed;

- Assist in the development of a culturally relevant qualitative survey instrument that will be used to interview potential workers and returnees; review and contribute to the development of survey guides;
- Conduct one on one and/or focus group interviews with potential workers and returnees;
- Assess the feasibility of utilizing mobile technology to survey workers in hard to reach areas;
- Work in collaboration with the Lead Researcher to analyse and process information collected;
- Conduct research and analysis and development of guidance and recommendations on the application of new technologies and techniques in Part 2 of the report, based on a literature review as well as key stakeholder interviews through telephone and Skype;
- Contribute to the drafting of the overall report and supporting documents (including policy briefs, summary note and infographics);

Deliverable(s):

The national consultant's deliverables are:

1. Prepare a compilation of all raw data collected for research study.
2. Prepare a first draft of the country level report based on analysis of research findings.
3. In coordination with lead consultant provide inputs to complete report and address feedback by the ILO and IOM.
4. Provide inputs to supporting material, including 2-page policy advisory notes, a summary capturing the core/principal findings and infographics.

Time-frame for deliverables

1	Prepare a compilation of all raw data	Mid-October 2018
2	Prepare a first draft of the country level report	End of -October 2018
3	Provide inputs to complete report	Beginning of November 2018
4	Contribute to addressing feedback by the ILO and IOM	Mid-November
6	Provide inputs to producing supporting materials	[TBC]

Required qualifications

- Advanced university degree (preferably at doctoral level) in economics, social sciences, computer science, or Information Technology.
- Thorough understanding of the technology behind job-matching platforms.
- Sound analytical and writing skills and proven ability to write concise, informative, and accurate reports in understandable terms.
- Experience conducting qualitative surveys, analysis and summarizing results;
- Extensive experience in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).
- Sound understanding of ILO Conventions and Recommendations, and core international human rights instruments.
- Familiarity with the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and the IOM International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) Standard.
- Able to work under time pressure and deliver work of outstanding quality.
- Familiarity with technology applications in the human rights or labour rights space;
- Ability to interview experts from a variety of backgrounds and experiences in a neutral, professional and objective manner;
- Ability to work within a team to trouble-shoot and identify additional opportunities and avenues to collect desired data;
- Demonstrated in-country experience with labour related research and knowledge of politics and processes around foreign labour recruitment;
- Fluency in local official language; Professional fluency in spoken and written English

Application Process

The proposal along with the applicant's CV should be submitted to IOM Bahrain (recruitmentbahrain@iom.int) on or before 29 September 2018. Applications received after this date will not be considered. Successful applicants will be invited for interviews before final selection.