



PROTECT Factsheet

“Improving Migration Management and Migrant Protection in selected Silk Routes and Central Asian Countries”

Project objectives



The **overall objective** is to **contribute to migrant protection in the target countries** covering all phases of (in and out) migration, including countering and preventing irregular migration, trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.

The PROTECT project aims to:

- **Improve migration management and migrant protection** covering all phases of emigration and immigration in the target countries;
- **Enhance awareness on the risks of irregular migration, and facilitate the protection of migrants;**
- **Support informed migration decision-making at the individual, family and community level**, including pre-departure preparation, migration and residence/work abroad, voluntary return and sustainable reintegration.



IN FOLLOW-UP TO
EU-funded project “Improving Migration Management in Silk Routes Countries” implemented by ICMPD from 2017-2022

Two components: Migration Governance and Migrant Resource Centres



Component aims and target groups:

1

**MIGRATION
GOVERNANCE**

AIM: to contribute to the improvement of gender-sensitive and rights-based migration governance at national levels by **strengthening policy frameworks and capacities of public authorities.**

TARGET GROUPS: Government ministries and other state agencies responsible for migration management and migrant protection, labour market regulation, education and vocational training, women, youth, etc.

2

**MIGRANT
RESOURCE
CENTRES**

AIM: to enable individuals, families and communities to make **informed decision as regards their migration plans.**

TARGET GROUPS: Migrants (aspiring, potential, departing, in-service, in-transit, on the move), their families and communities as well as returnees.



Component 1: Migration Governance



What is the focus? This component contributes to the **improvement of gender-sensitive and rights-based migration governance at national levels.**

How will it be achieved? This will be achieved by **strengthening policy frameworks** and capacities of public authorities to better manage migration and mobility in all their dimensions.

What are the expected results? In the long run, there will be **an increase in the capacities of public authorities** in the targeted countries to develop, implement and

evaluate migration- and mobility-related frameworks, including at policy, legislative and institutional levels.

What type of activities? Technical assistance and activities which can take the form of:

- support in developing specific deliverables (e.g. draft laws/regulations, draft policies/strategies, manuals and handbooks, guidelines on specific topics)
- policy workshops
- training
- information exchange sessions
- assessment missions and reports.

Highlights from each country:

Kyrgyzstan



PROTECT collaborates with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration (MLSSM) in bolstering the capabilities of private employment agencies (PEAs) and relevant stakeholders to reinforce awareness and adherence to **ethical labour recruitment norms and standards.**

It furnishes MLSSM with evidence-based policy support to facilitate bilateral or multilateral discussions and negotiations with destination countries. These discussions will centre on **exploring new markets**, employment opportunities, and skill development initiatives.



ICMPD will assist the MLSSM in developing a **comprehensive soft skills training module** tailored for migrants and migrant workers. This initiative aims to increase the competitiveness of Kyrgyz migrant workers seeking overseas employment by complementing their technical and hard skills.

Additionally, PROTECT assists in the formulation of a gender-sensitive national **reintegration policy** and other pertinent policy documents/frameworks. These initiatives are designed to facilitate comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable reintegration processes for returning migrants.

Pakistan

National Emigration and Welfare Policy for Pakistan: the Secretary for MOPHRD presented the policy to the Cabinet and the high-level financial policy group in Pakistan (Specialised Investment Facilitation Council) whose endorsement is significant in the policy approval. The Policy adopts a four-themed strategy: skills development and diversification of labour market, welfare, and protection for migrant workers, return and reintegration, and migration and development.





Labour Market Research Cell established under MOPHRD composed of researchers and analysts able to provide research and strategic advice to high-level decision makers, such as the Minister and its deputies, as well as parliamentary and other commissions requiring advice on labour and migration related issues. The training schedule will take place every month. In each session are case studies, assessments and group work, followed up by coaching and mentoring from PIT and experts.



MRCs have conducted more than five CWA trainings, equipping CWAs to understand MRCs' work in migration management and enhancing their effectiveness in their roles. MRCs maintain regular contact with various CWAs in the GCC countries and Europe to collectively address grievances or queries raised by potential migrants, existing clients, and/or overseas Pakistanis.

Tajikistan



In June 2024, ICMPD in cooperation with the Ministry of labour, migration, and employment of population (MoLMEP) organised a three-day media training which focused on media literacy and objective coverage on migration and migrant-related news in the context of Tajikistan. The training brought together media specialists from MoLMEP and local independent media specialists to exchange knowledge, experience, and skills. It covered various aspects of media coverage on migration matters such as ethical coverage on migration, press release tips and tricks, storytelling, data visualisation, photography, and stories with numbers, among others.

Recognising the role of media in shaping public perceptions and narratives about migration, Migration Media Awards 2024 for best media reporting pieces by different media sources in and out of Tajikistan was announced.. The contest was launched in June 2024 and winners will be announced on the eve of International Migrants Day on 18 December 2024.



Development of a feasibility study to set-up and operationalise a **welfare fund for labour migrants**. Based on one of the priority areas of the National Strategy on Regulating Migration Processes for the period up to 2040 and its Action Plan for 2023-2025 adopted by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in June 2024, PROTECT conducted a workshop to discuss the process of establishing a welfare fund for migrants. This study will complement the existing system that already extends a certain extent of social and legal assistance to migrants and introduce innovative approaches for potential inclusion and implementation based on best practices from other countries.



Component 2: Migrant Resource Centres



MRCs are mostly physical structures (with only one functioning virtually) within partner governments' premises, supervised jointly by ICMPD and national governments since 2016 in Pakistan. MRC counsellors offer migrants information and counselling on safe migration options, risks of irregular migration, and access to services to protect their rights and well-being. The goal is to promote safe, orderly, and regular migration.

What is the focus? This component aims to enhance the work of MRCs, **expand their geographical reach**, and ensure their **long-term sustainability** beyond the project.

How will this be accomplished? This will involve further developing the capabilities of MRCs to provide comprehensive information on migration, expanding their role, and increasing the scope of MRC information campaigns and counselling.

What are the anticipated outcomes? Ultimately, there will be **increased outreach to migrants, improved satisfaction with MRC services, established sustainability plans for each MRC**, and the successful establishment of new MRCs in specific areas of Central Asia and Pakistan.

What kinds of activities will be undertaken?

- Activities to **raise awareness and provide individual counselling** on safe, legal, and organized migration pathways, highlighting the risks and consequences of

irregular migration, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling

- Activities to **enhance the professional, language, and social skills of migrants**, helping them navigate challenges in their destination countries
- **Dissemination of information on available government programs and services for migrants** in both origin and destination countries, assisting them in accessing resources and protecting their rights
- **Strengthening the communication strategies of partner government agencies** to integrate MRCs into their regular structures for sustainability
- **Engagement with various stakeholders at national and local levels** (such as academia, media, community leaders, civil society organizations, recruitment agencies, and the private sector) to establish partnerships for ongoing information campaigns tailored to local needs and capacities

Highlights from each country:

Afghanistan

In 2023 at the Global Refugees Forum, MRC Afghanistan submitted a pledge in the realm of providing services and information to potential migrants and refugees. MRC Afghanistan's pledge could be tracked with pledge number GRF- 08659 on the UNHCR's website dedicated for the pledges, which is made for a duration of three years.

In close partnership with the Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration of Spain (MISSM), MRC Afghanistan promotes complementary pathways for educational opportunities and employment, and sustainable ways of adjustment to the new setting for Afghan female students in Spain.

MRC Afghanistan has established a referral mechanism with Talent Beyond Boundaries' Asia programme, Imagine Foundation in Germany, Nexus 3.0 in Portugal, and Yaran Foundation in Spain to regularly refer qualified Afghans, in particular Afghan women to Yaran, Nexus, and Imagine foundation. While Talent Beyond Boundaries' focus is on employment, the Imagine Foundation's scope of work includes both educational opportunities and employment of Afghan women in the Tech industry in Germany.

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I've just been hired into a new job working remotely for a startup in Spain - can't thank you enough, especially my coach!
— Abiako, backend developer

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Dedicated flyer and referral code of the Imagine Foundation for MRC Afghanistan's clients seeking educational or employment opportunities.

Kyrgyzstan

In March 2024, MRC Kyrgyzstan was officially opened in the city of Osh. With the participation of Dr. Michael Spindelegger, Director General of the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Gulnara Marishovna Baatyrova, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic, and Talantbek Kurbanalievich, Deputy Plenipotentiary Representative of the President in Osh oblast.



As part of community outreach activities in the Jalal-Abad and Batken regions, the MRC conducted meetings with district state administrations, municipalities, universities, officials from the district and city departments of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security, and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic, representatives of rural authorities, social workers, youth, and district police officers. The discussions focused on safe and regular labour migration and the risks of illegal migration.



A Job Fair commemorating International Workers' Day or Labour Day was held on April 30th in collaboration with the MLSSOM and various partners in Osh. The event underscored a notable gap in local workers' soft skills, hindering their ability to effectively network with potential employers.

Pakistan



In March 2024, MRC Pakistan organised a field visit for a senior DG HOME delegation in Pakistan. The field visit was organised in Gujrat as per the request of the Delegation. The visit witnessed a series of activities that included a community session followed by a stakeholder meeting and concluded with a meeting with a group of Overseas Employment Promoters.

MRC Pakistan formalised a partnership with the University of Central Punjab through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement establishes a framework for enhanced collaboration, particularly in conducting awareness-raising sessions on safe and informed migration for UCP students.



ICMPD has inaugurated a new MRC in Peshawar, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. This marks the third MRC established by ICMPD in the country, adding to existing Centres in Islamabad and Lahore. The Peshawar MRC is a collaborative initiative with the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development of Pakistan.

Tajikistan

In November 2023, MRC in Tajikistan reopened at the premises of Migration Service in Dushanbe. The MRC in Dushanbe works closely with individuals interested in migration and provides accurate and timely information to potential migrants to enable them to make informed decision on their migration plan. MRC also presents the risks and consequences of irregular migration, trafficking of human beings, smuggling of migrants, etc.



The MRC provides counselling and pre-departure preparations with potential migrants on a plethora of themes such as seasonal work in the UK, new amendments in the law of Russia on migration, response to the recent terrorist attack in Moscow, Private Employment Agencies – actives ones and the ones in black list, preparation for recruitment to South Korea through Employment Permit System, extremism and terrorism, human trafficking, benefits of organised recruitment overseas, etc.



In March, MRC kicked off partnership with ICAP at Columbia University's project "Migration and health" through distributing free HIV test kits to migrants. The QR-code to the free HIV testing information is printed in the premises of the MRC and the Centre for consultation and pre-departure preparation of labour migrants under Migration Service. MRC and ICAP hold joint sessions in Dushanbe as well as other regions of Tajikistan during outreach sessions with a particular focus on prevention measures against STIs during migration.

Uzbekistan

The concept note on MRC set-up is submitted to MEPR.

Further information

On the project:	www.budapestprocess.org www.pragueprocess.eu
On MRCs:	www.migrantresources.org Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) - Budapest Process
On the implementing organisation:	www.icmpd.org
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