Independent Evaluation of PROMISE Phase II

Final Evaluation Report

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List of Abbreviations

ACRA	Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies
AFML	ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CLMT	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar in Thailand
CMDWG	Community Migrant Development Working Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECOT	Employers' Confederation of Thailand
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
G2G	Government to Government
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IED	Inclusive Economic Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JILAF	Japan International Labour Foundation
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LESA	Lao Employment Service Association
MBHR	Migration, Business, and Human Rights
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR
MLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Cambodia
MRC	Migrant Resource Centres
MRCP	Swiss Mekong Region Cooperation Programme
NPAC	National Project Advisory Committee
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDO	Pre-departure Orientation
PPSC	Public Private Steering Committee
PRA	Private Recruitment Agencies
PROMISE	Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand
RPAC	Regional Project Advisory Committee
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SLOM	Senior Labour Officials Meeting
SMP	Skills Mobility Partnership
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics
TICA	Thailand International Cooperation Agency
TPQI	Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ToR	Terms of Reference

Independent Evaluation of PROMISE Phase II

Executive Summary

The project and purpose of the evaluation

The regional project "Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement" (PROMISE) is implemented in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand, running from September 2021 to August 2025, with a budget of USD 7,500,000. Its goal is "Migrants, especially women from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, have improved employment opportunities and conditions, particularly in Thailand, through enhanced skills and protection, leading to poverty reduction in communities of origin."

The objectives of the independent evaluation commissioned by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are to assess progress towards achieving the expected impact and outcomes and analyse the effectiveness of various approaches to deliver results at both impact and outcome, and on gender and governance as transversal themes.

A team of three consultants has implemented the evaluation using a mixed methods approach. Secondary research involved reviewing project documents, academic studies, and policy frameworks. Primary research involved 55 stakeholder meetings involving 135 respondents including SDC and IOM representatives, policymakers, employers, skills development providers, civil society organizations, and migrant workers. A survey was conducted with migrant workers who had previously participated in PROMISE trainings, in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, which elicited 492 responses (207 from Cambodia and 285 from Myanmar, with no responses from Lao PDR). Fieldwork was carried out in Cambodia, Thailand, and Lao PDR, while interviews with stakeholders from Myanmar and Jakarta were conducted virtually.

Relevance

PROMISE is highly relevant to labour migration issues in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR. The program aligns with SDC's new strategy, focusing on economic empowerment, protection/decent work, and governance. PROMISE recognises the linkage between migration and skills development and emphasises skills development across the labour migration cycle, in comparison to other programmes which focus on governance and protection. Through this, PROMISE achieves a unique value proposition with significant investments in skills development and a novel approach to addressing labour migration and protection of migrant workers. PROMISE has met the felt needs of a wide range of stakeholders, evidenced in its strong partnerships. In Myanmar too, despite the political situation limiting engagement with government, PROMISE has managed to maintain continuity of project activities and outputs, playing a key role in supporting the migration governance system in a state where government focus on it is deprioritised.

Coherence

PROMISE is a critical contributor among a suite of labour migration initiatives focussing on the ASEAN region and specifically, the Mekong sub-region, such as ILO TRIANGLE, PROTECT, MBHR, Asia Regional Labour Migration Program, etc. PROMISE has demonstrated strong collaboration and complementarity with these interventions, partnering with them to promote joint action and strengthening policy advocacy. There is scope for greater coherence between ILO and IOM's MRC models. PROMISE follows SDC's operational principles as laid out in its Global Programme on Forced Migration and Displacement, however there is scope for better interaction and exchange with other SDC projects in the broader South Asian region as well as globally. PROMISE has also built strong relationships with ASEAN, emerging as a key advocate at and partner to ASEAN systems.

Effectiveness

Outcome 1: *National and regional policies and institutional capacities related to skills development, labour migration, and ethical recruitment are more migrant-inclusive and gender-responsive, and better serve the needs of migrant workers and their employers*.

PROMISE has played a key part in supporting ASEAN mechanisms and forums, including migrant workers' priorities in discussions and instruments. PROMISE has also played a key role in facilitating bilateral dialogue and cooperation on several key issues, as seen tangibly in the SMP pilots. At the national level, there have been varying degrees of success with policy and governance. In Myanmar, work with government was hindered due to the political situation. In Cambodia, safe migration trainings have been mainstreamed, but governance of PDOs not yet directed by the government. In Lao PDR, the government's lack of resources and state of the economy, and low project budgets constrained effective work. Buy-in from private sector has been strong, leading to successes such as the establishment of in-service training programmes. Overall, PROMISE II has made critical contributions to policy and governance.

Outcome 2: *Women and men migrant workers have improved employability across the labour migration cycle*.

PROMISE has innovated and is experimenting with skill development initiatives at all stages of the migration cycle through different models and with varying degrees of success. Pre-departure skill training is at pilot stage but has buy-in from key stakeholders and shows great promise. On-the-job and skill trainings through government and CSOs at destination reach underserved workers, but face scalability challenges. Skill recognition has also been promoted, with certification by TPQI being a major step, though work remains on strengthening RPL systems. Training for returnee migrants, job referrals and reintegration assistance are critical interventions with significant benefits. These actions together constitute significant progress towards Outcome 2.

Outcome 3: Women and men migrant workers are more informed and protected at all stages of migration

The MRCs and community outreach programmes under PROMISE have reached a massive number of migrant workers with information, referrals, aid and other services. These systems also enable other pillars of the project through referrals, making them critical links. These services have played an outsized role for migrant workers, making strong contributions to Outcome 3.

Efficiency

PROMISE has demonstrated high efficiency in project implementation, having mobilized USD 619,132 in co-funding from various stakeholders, reflecting strong local buy-in. Its governance and steering structures have acted as strong multi-stakeholder forums with major convening power, acting as a bed for discussion, dialogue, consensus building, and solutioning through a collaborative and partnerships-driven approach. The budgets across countries have been skewed towards Thailand, from where the regional project was managed, and significant regional and destination-based activities implemented. The distribution of budgets across activities is also as per the project priorities.

Impact

PROMISE has had a marked impact at the policy and institutional level, with tangible contributions to various policy instruments and governance at regional and national level. In addition, intangible, but substantial changes at these levels include the fact that key issues have been brought into the policy agenda despite shifting political will and strained resources, and that the facilitation of multi-stakeholder collaboration has led to unique solution models and consensus. Similarly, at the migrant worker level, workers report several positive results from project activities, and a substantial number of workers have been benefited, especially through information and outreach activities. There is room to build on and consolidate this impact on workers.

Sustainability

Interventions with high sustainability include those have been mainstreamed into government priorities and systems, such as Cambodia's integration of safe migration training into its TVET

curriculum, which is now part of the Strategic Plan for Employment Development, Social Security, and Vocational Training 2024-2028. Other examples include stakeholders having expressed commitments to take initiatives forward, such as skill training of employers by ECOT with support from MOL, and handover of MitrThai to the Migrant Working Group in Thailand. In other cases, pathways to sustainability are visible, but need further advocacy and handholding, as in the case of institutionalisation of PDO where government directive is awaited. In other cases, sustainability challenges remain. For instance, CSO-led training programmes and MRCs, despite their benefits, will continue to require external support and funding, without clear avenues for handover.

Conclusion

PROMISE is a comprehensive and ambitious initiative, successfully navigating the complexities of labour migration governance across Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand. It has strengthened policy discourse, enhanced skills development pathways, and fostered multi-stakeholder cooperation at national and regional levels. Most significantly, migrant workers—the project's core beneficiaries—have reported tangible economic improvements through skills training, job placements, and access to safer migration channels. The project's work in ethical recruitment, regional policy advocacy, and community-driven engagement has established a strong foundation for future interventions. However, challenges persist in ensuring governance, scaling up successful models, ensuring sustainability, and addressing vulnerabilities of migrants who rely on informal recruitment networks.

Recommendations for a Future Regional Project

To build on PROMISE's achievements, future projects must maintain a migration-cycle approach. In the premigration phase, in countries of origin, priorities include awareness about safe migration, community engagement and citizen participation, supporting local economic development through skills training, skills certification, increasing employment opportunities and labour productivity. A Skill Development Fund could be piloted in the countries of origin, similar to the one in Thailand, with policy advocacy planned if it is successful. PRA capacities for ethical recruitment could be further strengthened, and directives for their governance needs to be completed in all three countries.

The interventions at destination include strengthening the In-service training mechanisms of employers at destination. Bilateral and sub-regional arrangements are needed for Skills and experience certifications, completing the pilots and model development of SMPs.

At the regional, sub-regional and national level, a comprehensive policy guide is needed, supported by regional, sub-regional and bilateral dialogue consensus building on issues, such as the expansion of migration channels to curb irregular migration, portability of social security, skills matching and certification. While work with ASEAN should be continued, to bring a regional focus and cooperation on key issues, policy advocacy efforts should focus on bilateral agreements that have direct national impact. Given the high costs of remittances, there is a need to pilot regional or sub-regional initiatives on cross-border digital financial services, such as mobile banking and e-wallets, which can provide migrant workers with secure, low-cost remittance options. Returnee migrant workers need skill certificates to find jobs, skill trainings, enterprise start up training and support, and social and psychological support for reintegration.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships have worked well and must be continued, with the addition of workers' associations. Improved coordination among UN agencies, and robust mechanisms for aligning intervention models, data sharing and reporting, will ensure continuity and long-term impact in advancing safe and productive migration. Within the SDC, future interventions should adopt a more structured governance and coordination framework, with clear mandates for the expectation and role for SDC- SCOs in each country, and at the thematic regional and head-quarter levels.

Independent Evaluation of PROMISE Phase II

The Evaluation Report

1 Introduction

The PROMISE (Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand) project, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), supports migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar in Thailand (CLMT). Part of SDC's Mekong initiatives, PROMISE enhances employability, incomes, and safe migration through skills development, improving livelihoods in Thailand and origin communities. This evaluation, commissioned by SDC, is being undertaken to assess project performance, progress, and learnings from PROMISE Phase II, which comes to an end in 2025. The evaluation was initiated in November 2024 and completed over the course of 4 months, in the second half of February 2025.

1.1 Swiss Mekong Region Cooperation Programme

Switzerland has engaged in development work in the Mekong region for several decades. In recent years, their work in the Mekong sub-region has been guided by three separate programmes:

- Swiss Mekong Region Cooperation Programme (MRCP) 2022–25
- Swiss Cooperation Programme Myanmar 2019–23 (respectively 2024-27)
- Swiss Cooperation Programme Vietnam 2021–24

PROMISE is implemented under MRCP, which places a country-level emphasis on Lao PDR and Cambodia but includes regional projects with either a broader Mekong outreach (involving namely Myanmar and Thailand) or an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-wide coverage. Building on the previous Mekong Region Strategy (2018-21), the MRCP's overall goal is:

"To enable people, in particular young people, women and disadvantaged groups in Lao PDR, Cambodia, and the Mekong region to be more prosperous, resilient, and better included in development processes."

The MRCP operates through three distinct portfolios, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Outcome Portfolios under MRCP 2022-25

Portfolio 1: Inclusive Economic Development	People in the Mekong region, in particular young people, women, and disadvantaged groups, in Cambodia and Laos, have better quality employment and income and are more resilient to economic crises.
Portfolio 2: Climate Change and Natural Resource Management	People in the Mekong region, in particular young people, women, and disadvantaged groups, in Cambodia and Laos are more resilient to climate change and disasters, have more secure and equitable access to natural resources (land, forest and water) and manage them sustainably.
Portfolio 3: Governance and Citizen Participation	People in the Mekong region, in particular young people, women, and disadvantaged groups, in Cambodia and Laos, benefit from responsive public service delivery and actively engage in local and national governance processes.

PROMISE forms a part of the first portfolio on Inclusive Economic Development (IED). Three outcome statements have been defined as part of this IED portfolio, viz.,

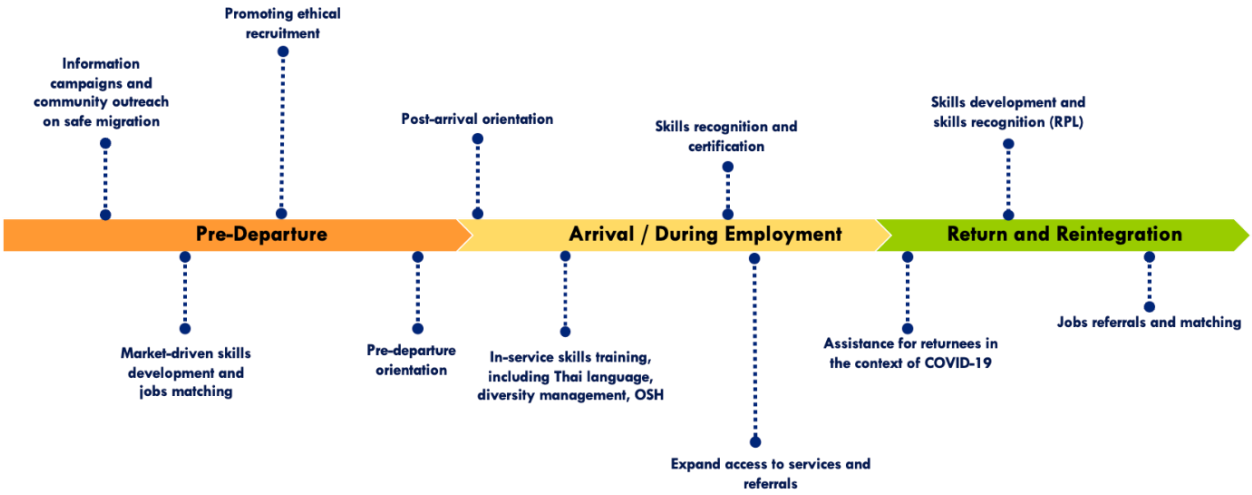
1. People have improved skills and are more employable.
2. Public and private institutions and civil society organizations provide better quality vocational skills development (VSD), employment support, and business development services.

3. Policymakers develop and implement, based on evidence and multi-stakeholder consultations, gender-responsive and inclusive policies on vocational skills development.

1.2 PROMISE: An overview

Phase I of PROMISE, initiated in 2017, following a pilot phase in 2016, ran until August 2021. The second phase was initiated in September 2021 and will come to an end in August 2025. PROMISE Phase II is implemented by IOM, with its country office in Thailand assuming overall coordination and supervision of the project. Phase I achieved results across each stage of the migration cycle, as shown in Figure 2. However, as noted in IOM's proposal for Phase II, the links between these stages were not yet fully established or sustainable and the successful approaches needed to be scaled up.

Figure 2: Interventions across the Migration cycle in PROMISE Phase I



(Source: PROMISE Phase II Proposal by IOM)

PROMISE Phase II leverages these foundations and learnings, to provide continuity and aim for scale, to build on the achievements of the first phase. The overall objective for PROMISE Phase II is:

"Women and men migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar in Thailand, and returning migrants, have enhanced decent employment and improved livelihoods contributing to economic resilience and poverty reduction."

This goal will be achieved through three interrelated outcomes, viz., Responsive, Inclusive, and Protective, explained in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Outcome Statements for PROMISE Phase II

Responsive

- National and regional policies and institutional capacities related to skills development, labour migration, and ethical recruitment are more migrant-inclusive and gender-responsive, and better serve the needs of migrant workers and their employers.

Inclusive

- Women and men migrant workers have improved employability across the labour migration cycle.

Protective

- Women and men migrant workers are more informed and protected at all stages of the migration cycle: pre-migration, migration to host country and return to home country.

PROMISE targets migrant workers from CML and to / in Thailand, and works with stakeholders across the migration cycle, and at multiple levels from the regional to national and sub-national levels. Some elements of PROMISE at various levels and with various stakeholders are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: PROMISE approach at various Levels

At regional level	Technical support to ASEAN in developing inclusive policy frameworks, and enhances coordination and learning in the region
At national level	Contributes to development of policies and strengthens implementation
For Government Officials	Capacity development
For Private Sector	Improving capacities and practices related to safe migration, skill development, and decent employment
For Migrants	Increasing awareness of migrant workers, improving thier skills, and strengthening of migrant resource centres and skill training to improve livelihood options and employment

Having provided an overview of MRCP and PROMISE Phase II, the report is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the objectives, approach and methodology of the evaluation. Section 3 provides the findings ordered as per OECD evaluation criteria and the TOR questions. Section 4 provides a conclusion statement and Section 5 makes recommendations for a future programme in the region, based on the experience of PROMISE-II.

2 Evaluation objectives and methodology

The independent evaluation undertook a retrospective examination of Phase II of PROMISE, covering its three outcome areas – Responsive, Inclusive, and Protective. The assessments covered three levels:

- Target group, viz. migrant workers
- Policies, legal frameworks, and systems at CLMT and ASEAN
- Institutions and key actors, particularly public and private agencies

The evaluation assessed progress towards the expected impact and outcomes, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of the various approaches used. The evaluation considered gender and governance as key transversal themes in all these assessments.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this assignment (reproduced in Annexure 10) provided a list of questions, structured around the OECD DAC criteria for evaluation, and served as a guide for the evaluation. These were further refined during the inception phase, in consultation with IOM and SDC. The final list of evaluation questions is given in Annexure 8. An evaluation design matrix, detailing the research methods and assessment criteria for each question is given in Annexure 5.

The evaluation used a participatory, mixed-methods research methodology, to collect both qualitative and quantitative data through primary and secondary research. Secondary research included a review of project documentation, academic literature, relevant good practices, and a study of the policy-legislative-institutional landscape at the national and regional levels. A list of documents referred to as part of secondary research is given in Annexure 9. Primary research collected data from a wide variety of stakeholder groups across local, national, and regional levels, using a combination of semi-structured in-depth Interviews (IDIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a survey. The research instruments for interviews and the survey are reproduced in Annexure 4. Table 1 summarises the stakeholder groups for primary research along with the research methods used, and the number of meetings and respondents.

Table 1: Stakeholder groups, research methods and numbers of meetings, respondents

Stakeholder Group	Description	Research Method	No. of Meetings	No. of Respondents
1. SDC	Specialists and project staff at headquarters, regional, and national offices	IDIs	5	9
2. IOM	Specialists and project staff at headquarters, regional, and national offices	IDIs	8	14
3. ASEAN	Representatives from ASEAN Secretariat and ACMW	IDIs	2	4
4. Government	Representatives from relevant government departments at national level in CLMT countries (excluding Myanmar)	IDIs	11	28
5. Employers and Recruiters	Officials from employers, private recruitment agencies (PRAs), and associations across CLMT countries	IDIs	8	9
6. Skill Development Providers	Representatives of skill development service providers across CLMT countries	IDIs	4	7
7. Civil Society Organisations	Representatives of CSOs across CLMT countries engaged with PROMISE or labour migration	IDIs	6	8
8. Multilateral Agencies and Development Partners	Representatives of these agencies implementing or financing labour migration initiatives in the region	IDIs	5	6
9. Community Workers	Volunteers at IOM Migrant Resource Centres and representatives of Community-based Organisations	IDIs, FGDs	3	11
10. Migrant Workers	Migrant workers from CLM across the labour migration cycle	FGDs	4	42
Total			**56**	**138**

Through these methods, the evaluation team conducted 56 meetings with 138 respondents across various categories of stakeholders, including 7 FGDs with migrant workers, community workers and volunteers. Most of these meetings were conducted in person, during a field mission by the evaluation team to Cambodia, Thailand, and Lao PDR between 5th to 18th January 2025. Meetings with stakeholders in Myanmar and Jakarta were conducted virtually, as were other meetings with stakeholders who were not located in the Mekong region. A detailed list of stakeholders and individuals met is present in Annexure 7.

In addition, a survey targeting CLM migrant workers who participated in PROMISE trainings was conducted. This survey collected information from a total of 492 respondents – 207 from Cambodia and 285 from Myanmar. All primary research interactions ensured a 'do no harm' principle and sought informed consent from participants. All outputs and outcomes data referred to in the document is sourced from the PROMISE results matrix for Year III (up to August 2024).

Limitations:

Due to the political climate in Myanmar, the evaluation team was unable to visit the field locations and conduct interviews in person. These interactions were conducted virtually. Although carrying out such an exercise virtually poses some constraints to capturing data, the team enhanced the participation of respondents by doing open-ended discussions. Further, efforts have been made to ensure comprehensive data collection, by speaking to a range of stakeholders and triangulating data from secondary sources.

The survey of migrant workers was launched late into the evaluation, as translations, checks, and test-runs required time. The survey received 495 responses, which is a good sample, but there was no participation from Lao PDR. If launched earlier, it could have potentially received more responses.

3 Evaluation findings

This section has been organised based on the six OECD DAC criteria, with findings presented in sub-sections corresponding to each criterion.

3.1. Relevance

The PROMISE project is highly relevant to labour migration issues in the CLMT countries The program aligns with SDC's new strategy, focusing on economic empowerment, protection/decent work, and governance. PROMISE recognises the linkage between migration and skills development, and emphasis on skills development across the labour migration cycle, in comparison to other programmes which focus on governance and protection. Through this, PROMISE achieves a unique value proposition with significant investments in skills development and a novel approach to addressing labour migration and protection of migrant workers. PROMISE's strong partnerships with a wide range of stakkeholders, allow it to act on several levels and respond to migrant worker needs across the migration cycle. In Myanmar too, despite the political situation limiting engagement with government, PROMISE has managed to maintain continuity of project activities and outputs, playing a key role in supporting the migration governance system in a state where government focus on it is deprioritised.

3.1.1 Selection of partners and interventions

The project has worked with a wide range of partners across stakeholder groups in each country. The list below delineates these groups with some examples[1].

- Government agencies such as Ministries of Employment, Labour, Skill Development, in countries of origin and destination, and government organisations like Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (TPQI), as well as local government institutions and leaders.
- Private sector partners, such as PRAs like Premium Manpower, associations of recruitment agencies like Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies (ACRA) and Lao Employment Service Association (LESA), employers and their associations, such as the Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).
- Private skill development providers such as vocational training centres e.g. Dual Tech Vocational Training Centre, and universities e.g. Myanmar Creative University, as well as public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions.
- ASEAN mechanisms, ASEAN Forum for Migrant Labour and sectoral bodies such as the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW), Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM).
- Civil Society Organisations like Legal Support for Women and Children (LSCW) Cambodia, HomeNet, Sisters' Foundation and Foundation for Rural Youth Thailand, and Village Focus International (VFI) Lao PDR.
- Projects by multilateral agencies and other development partners such as ILO's TRIANGLE and PROTECT, IOM's MBHR, IOM's Asia Regional Migration Program etc.

Each of these partnerships take a different engagement approach based on the nature of the partner and their work. For instance, with ILO (International Labour Organisation), there is joint work on planning and policy advocacy, while with PRAs it is to provide training support to promote ethical recruitment and Pre-departure Orientation (PDO), while other partners support the implementation of PROMISE initiatives. Broadly, the engagement can be classified into the following categories (these

[1] A more detailed list of partners/stakeholders is given in Annexure 6.

are not exclusive categories, and PROMISE performs one or more of these activities with selected partners):

- Technical and knowledge support by PROMISE, such as with ASEAN forums and government
- Partner-led implementation of project-supported activities, such as with CSOs or skill providers
- Joint planning of project, research, and advocacy efforts, such as with ILO, UN Women
- Provision of training (or training of trainers) and curricula for further action, such as with PRAs
- Invitation to contribute to knowledge products, toolkits, or to participate in project advisory fora such as the Regional or National Project Advisory Committees (RPAC, NPAC)

Aside from a few exceptions, PROMISE has selected appropriate partners for various activities, allowing it to act at various levels of action from local to the policy level, and at all stages of the migration cycle[2]. By involving them in joint planning exercises and/or aligning with the interests of each stakeholder group and their activities, PROMISE has secured buy-in and investments from partners. Many of these partners have contributed to the project either in cash or in kind (as highlighted in the section on efficiency), which is commendable. The focus on relationship building and partnerships is visible in the fact that all the stakeholders interacted with were actively engaged in PROMISE activities. The link with national institutions and the private sector was strong. Similarly, there has been good mobilisation at the policy level, where IOM has made a place for itself both with line ministries at the national level as well as in regional processes of ASEAN.

In Cambodia and Myanmar, there has been greater mobilisation and partnership building at the community level, as compared to the other countries. This has been particularly strong in Myanmar, where the network of community-led Community Migration and Development Working Groups (CMDWGs) has been involved in project activities, including those supported by IOM's Migrant Resource Centres (MRC). In Cambodia, there have been some efforts to work with the commune-level leaders at the community level, but this relationship is not as well established as in Myanmar.

A category of stakeholder that is prominent in its absence is that of workers' organisations such as trade unions or worker-led associations. PROMISE has had some engagement with workers' organisations, such as the Cambodian Informal Economy Reinforce Association, National Union Alliance Chamber of Cambodia and Lao Federation of Trade Unions. These organisations have largely been involved in a consultative role, as members of the National Project Advisory Committees in their respective countries, and in some outreach and training activities. Similarly, organisations like HomeNet and Migrant Working Group (MWG) represent worker groups, although these are not pure worker-led organisations. PROMISE prioritised collaboration with CSOs over Workers' Organisations, as there was a greater focus on skills development and services, compared to protection. Though these were CSOs that prioritised worker voice, there is a difference between CSOs and organisations led by workers representation. This decision, to some degree, may be because IOM, by virtue of its functions, usually works more with CSOs, while ILO is the UN agency that typically prioritises engagement with Workers' Organisations, in keeping with its foundational principle of tripartism.

Having said this, as a labour migration project, PROMISE offered an opportunity to engage more closely with Workers' Organisations, just as it did with Employers' Organisations. The latter was utilized well, the former was a missed opportunity. Where PROMISE did work with Workers' Organisations, it utilised these organizations more like CSOs. It could instead benefit from having a targeted strategy for them, involving them in safe migration training at a minimum, and in providing skill training, as they

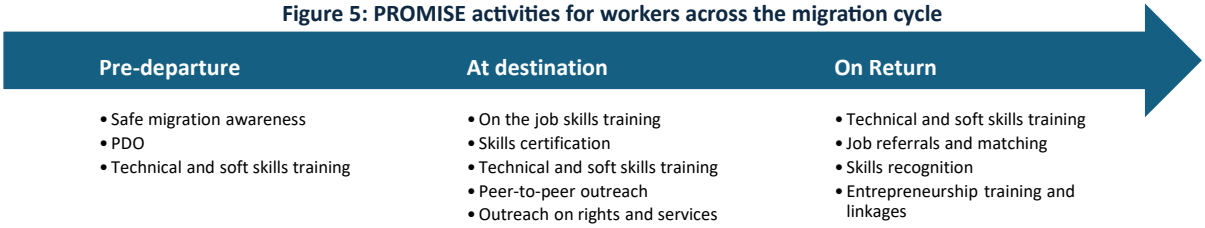
[2] Occupational Safety and Health Conditions at a private sector partner that provides training in Thailand were reportedly poor. Similarly, some of the training programmes offered by CSOs has not yet been approved by TPQI. These were a few exceptions to the high quality of partners selected in all countries.

represent a large pool of workers who could be potential migrants. While there are limitations in Thailand, as migrant workers cannot form or hold office in a union, this strategy can be explored in home countries. This can have a greater effect on promoting migrant workers' voice and representation in the long-term.

3.1.2 Needs and priorities of migrant workers

The needs and priorities of migrant workers vary significantly based on their stage in the migration cycle, as well as numerous other factors, including their status in the migration cycle, nature of migration (irregular/regular or seasonal/long-term), country context, skill level, and the sector of work. PROMISE aims to meet the needs of migrant workers across the migration cycle, with several activities at each stage, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: PROMISE activities for workers across the migration cycle



There is a strong focus on skills development across the migration cycle. This focus on skills, especially that of providing on-the-job skills training at destination through employers and linking skills and migration, has been cited by several stakeholders as PROMISE's unique proposition and strength. Phase II has emphasised reintegration assistance and skills for returnee migrants.

Migrant workers (42 in total) met during the evaluation and provided highly positive feedback about the training received. This was confirmed in the survey as well. Over 50% of respondents stated that technical skills training had helped them perform their job roles better, over 32% reported being able to earn higher incomes, over 32% reported being able to find better jobs, and about 20% reported that it helped them secure employment. These numbers were slightly lower in Myanmar than in Cambodia. Similarly, under 5% of workers in Myanmar and 10% in Cambodia reported low satisfaction with various types of soft skills training. Moreover, migrant workers stated in FGDs that after receiving safe migration and training through PROMISE, they were unlikely to migrate irregularly or at all, even if they had previously migrated. These responses indicate that there is a high level of satisfaction among migrant workers with the training and safe migration awareness provided.

The project has initiated Skills Mobility Partnership (SMP) pilots, which place workers in jobs first and then provide targeted skills training at the pre-departure stage responding to job market and employer demands in Thailand. These have received positive feedback from stakeholders but need to be assessed and scaled up further based on the implementation experience. Greater focus on skills at the pre-departure stage may help protect migrants better or even limit irregular migration. Expansion and institutionalisation of such mechanisms will require systematic action to promote bilateral dialogue to coordinate skills recognition mechanisms and establish such SMPs, as well as to expand channels of migration to include semi-skilled workers. The current MoU between Thailand and countries of origin does not include this, as discussed in later sections. PROMISE has played a role in opening this question for stakeholders, most importantly the Thai Ministry of Labour (MOL), which has established a Working Group to Assess the Feasibility of Enhancing the Mechanisms for Semi-Skilled Migrant Workers Recruitment. This is an important step and must be followed up with greater facilitation of bilateral dialogue to expand such initiatives beyond the pilot stage.

Reforming and strengthening the PDO process has been a focus, with varying degrees of success, as noted in later sections. Notwithstanding this, it must be noted that activities like PDOs through PRAs largely target workers migrating through regular channels. Though important, these may not reach the

many workers who are migrating irregularly. Further, migrant workers who migrate through irregular channels are usually financially stressed and may not be willing to invest the time and/or costs of skill development, if it potentially means a loss in wages. Interactions with workers revealed that migration decisions are made at a young age, even during schooling years, and are informed largely by informal brokers or relatives who have migrated. Awareness and outreach activities at the community level are critical to promote safe, regular migration. The work with commune leaders in Cambodia, CMDWGs in Myanmar, and MRCs has offered this access to many workers, including women, but has been limited to certain provinces. Addressing the issue of irregular and unsafe migration will require community outreach to be scaled up, along with measures like providing safe migration training in schools, so that information and resources are accessible when migration decisions are made. Measures to compensate wage loss in financially stressed households will also be integral, to create incentives for investments in training and awareness by workers and their families.

Another commonly highlighted issue was that of recruitment fees and related costs charged to workers by recruiters. These can be substantial and create sizeable debt burdens, amongst other issues. IOM, along with ILO and UN Women, has taken some steps on this issue, for instance, by ensuring that provisions on reduction and elimination of migrant-borne recruitment fees and costs are present in ASEAN instruments. A draft sub-legislation on recruitment fees in Cambodia has also been submitted jointly by ILO and IOM. This has not been endorsed yet, but there are promising signs of political will to work towards reductions. While some efforts have been made towards reducing these costs, stakeholders highlighted that this issue that needs further consensus and action.

3.1.3 Needs and priorities of employers and recruiters

PRAs engaged with PROMISE stated that they were satisfied and benefited from the training and support. However, they indicated that more Training of Trainers (ToT) on PDOs and ethical recruitment are needed to ensure that awareness and training percolates within each agency. They also stated that while they were consulted for inputs, they would like to be more involved in supporting the implementation of project activities.

Employers' associations in home countries also echoed a similar sentiment. Notably, they also strongly suggested that there is a need to influence Thai employers to provide letters of experience or similar documentation to workers when they return, so that skill level and experience can be gauged, to promote better employment outcomes for returning migrants. The topic of issuing a letter of experience was also raised at a Regional Project Advisory Committee (RPAC) meeting. Though migrant workers are entitled to receive a certificate of employment on request, this does not seem to be the case in practice. IOM has been working to raise awareness among employers about issuing this certificate and encouraging migrant workers to request it upon completion of employment.

In addition to experience certificates, through collaboration with PROMISE, TPQI was the first official Thai certification agency to certify migrant workers' technical and occupational skills using the existing national curricula and standards. IOM also ensured that provisions relating to this are included in the Vientiane Declaration. While these are a start, these efforts need to be continued till such skills certifications and experience certificates are institutionalised in practice to ensure that migrant workers' skills and experience are recognised and can be leveraged for greater employability.

Employers and their associations in Thailand too expressed positive sentiments about PROMISE activities. There was conviction amongst employers met that investment in skill training of migrant workers incentivised their participation, and had positive effects on the businesses,. Moreover, ECOT indicated that they would be keen to support employers to access finance through the government's Skill Development Fund (SDF) and provide training to migrant workers, in the future.

3.1.4 Impact of the crisis in Myanmar

There has been volatility in Myanmar due to conflict and socio-political circumstances since PROMISE was initiated. First, there was a refugee crisis, followed by COVID-19, and the 2021 military coup. Further, in 2024, the People's Military Service Law was enacted, which authorised the conscription of youth, and exacerbated refugee exodus and outbound migrants, especially young males.

PROMISE operations in Myanmar have shown initiative and resilience. Despite being unable to work with government, PROMISE has made some strategic shifts in Myanmar to continue supporting workers. At a country level, more funds were allocated after the mid-term of the project, and it worked more closely with the private sector and communities. Linkages with employers and PRAs were strengthened to promote ethical recruitment, job matching, and PDO, as well as with private skill development providers to enhance skills training and increase safe migration awareness. An NPAC-like forum, without government representation was recently established. Table 2 lists some outputs related to engagement with the private sector.

Table 2: Outputs Related to Private Sector in Myanmar

Activity	Total across CLMT	Total in Myanmar
No. of employers trained on skill development and migrant protection	695	61
No. of recruitment agencies trained on ethical recruitment, including PDO	532	360
No. of employers recruiting returnee migrants	45	7

The majority of recruitment agencies trained through PROMISE II are in Myanmar. The number of employers trained on skill development and migrant protection and recruiting returnee migrants through the programme is low when compared with other countries, and reflect the difficulty in operating in the Myanmar context. An employers' association interviewed in Myanmar reported working with PROMISE to setup job matching and linking programmes for returnee migrant workers, across multiple sectors. This is a promising initiative, and could show results with time.

Community-level activities have been facilitated through the network of 11 MRCs (9 are operated through PROMISE). The MRCs intensified efforts to support potential and returning migrant workers with skills enhancement and job matching, as well as community outreach on safe migration. As per data from PROMISE's results framework, over 68,000 workers were assisted at these MRCs, which is the highest among home countries. These 9 MRCs are located in the compound of local labour exchange offices. Owing to the political situation, the teams have adjusted their strategy and engage with local/technical level public sectors in line with UN engagement principles, when necessary, to refer workers for public services.

MRCs interface with the CMDWGs, which have been critical in facilitating access and awareness at the community level. Many of these groups existed prior to PROMISE, as they were supported by previous IOM projects. Seeing the utility of these groups, many other villages expressed interest in establishing their own CMDWGs, which IOM and the MRCs supported. These groups are trusted within communities and are often the first points of information for migrant workers. The revolving funds available with these groups have enabled access to finance and reintegration assistance for returning migrants interested in setting up businesses. In fact, it is only in Myanmar that a seed fund or economic integration assistance is provided to returnee migrants. This was provided to 733 workers of which 391 (53%) were women. Results in Myanmar have been encouraging, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Results with migrant workers in Myanmar

Activity	Total across CLMT	In Myanmar (% of total)	Female (Myanmar)
Workers reached through information campaigns	24,913	13,980	6,462

Workers trained in entrepreneurship skills, digital and financial literacy	1,541	751	501
Workers establishing or strengthening business	486	451	231
Workers given technical skills training	944	589	213
Returnee migrants referred employment in CLM	2,810	371	112

On many of these parameters, Myanmar has comparable results when compared to that of other home countries, while on some parameters, results are better, at least at the outputs level. The fact that the project continued progress at the outputs level despite challenges is good. Yet, as discussed in the effectiveness section and in Annexure 4 on survey findings, results at the outcome level were less impressive than those in Cambodia. This indicates that reorientation to work with the private sector and to place focus on the community level has been a promising strategy to surmount some of these challenges and maintain project efficacy at the output level. There is a strong case to examine the community engagement model adopted in Myanmar and scale it to other project countries.

Another issue raised in Myanmar is that due to the ongoing political situation and civil war, there have been several requests to MRCs by general citizens (those who are not returning migrants) and internally displaced migrants for skills, reintegration support, as well as humanitarian aid. Currently, these requests are not being serviced by the MRCs as they are mandated to support returnee migrants. Instead, they try to make referrals to other CSOs who may be able to offer support. This is an open issue that IOM and SDC may consider going forward, given the climate in Myanmar.

Further, PROMISE Phase II's components on returnee migrants do not fully align with Myanmar's needs. There is a greater trend for outward migration from Myanmar leading to the need for a systematic labour migration management system.

3.2 Coherence

PROMISE is a critical contributor among a suite of labour migration initiatives focussing on the ASEAN region and specifically, the Mekong sub-region, such as ILO TRIANGLE, PROTECT, MBHR, Asia Regional Labour Migration Program, etc. PROMISE has demonstrated strong collaboration and complementarity with these interventions, partnering with them to promote joint action and strengthening policy advocacy. There are some overlaps, such as with MRCs, which can be resolved and streamlined for better outcomes and joint action towards institutionalisation. On the other hand, while PROMISE follows SDC's operational principles as laid out in its Global Programme on Forced Migration and Displacement, there is scope for better interaction and exchange with other SDC projects in the broader South Asian region as well as globally. PROMISE has also built strong relationships with ASEAN, emerging as a key advocate at and partner to ASEAN systems. While commitment and implementation of ASEAN instruments varies across countries due to their voluntary nature and countries' own contexts, this action at the regional level crucial and has implications for future action.

3.2.1 Complementarity with other initiatives

Internal coherence and complementarity

PROMISE falls under SDC's IED portfolio of MRCP and complements skills development/TVET related projects and an emerging engagement on creating an enabling environment for SMEs. Through its community activities, PROMISE also contributes to enhancing local participation and governance structures, as envisaged in Portfolio 3 on governance and citizen action.

Discussions with SDC officials revealed limited avenues for joint engagements, knowledge sharing and transfer, and cross-pollination between SDC's global portfolio, South Asia initiatives, and PROMISE in the Mekong subregion. This is also visible in the fact that SDC's Global Programme on Forced Migration and Displacement Programme Framework 2022-25 (GPMFD), despite having a strategic component

on safe labour migration, does not make mention of PROMISE or SDC's work in the Mekong region. Though it mentions the prioritisation of certain important labour migration corridors such as between South Asia and the Middle East, Africa and the Middle East, and Central Asia and the Middle East, as well as significant intra-regional corridors in Africa, it does not make mention of Southeast Asia or intra-regional migration in the Mekong corridor. PROMISE employs many of the principles from GPMFD, such as using the whole of government, multi-stakeholder, elevator, and corridor approaches.

PROMISE's focus and initiatives on skills development could have potentially benefitted from the exchange with projects in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, among others such as the GPMFD. So far, the opportunities for knowledge transfer and experience exchange, with initiatives in the South Asian region and with the global programme, have not been sufficiently explored.

External coherence and complementarity

PROMISE is among a host of initiatives on labour migration by national, regional, and international or multilateral actors in the Mekong subregion. PROMISE partners well with government agencies, working within their priority framework to further safe migration, skills development and mobility, and reintegration. Reportedly, PROMISE also creates its annual work plans in consultation with multiple stakeholders. This is enabled through joint planning driven by the RPAC, NPACs, and Public Private Steering Committee in Thailand (PPSC), which are co-chaired by line ministries in each country. This enables PROMISE to respond to the priorities of migrant workers, as perceived by the government and other stakeholders. Similarly, it has built relationships with ASEAN, as discussed in Section 3.2.2.

Notable multilateral initiatives on labour migration in the region include ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN, ILO and UNWomen's PROTECT (Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia), and IOM's Migration, Business, and Human Rights (MBHR) in Asia project. PROMISE's focus on the linkage between skills and migration gives it a unique place among these initiatives, each of which, similarly, has its own unique features and modus operandi.

Owing to the similar focus on development at the policy level, both IOM and ILO have ensured joint planning and strategic alignment with one another. They have a global MOU outlining their intended collaboration. At the Asia level too, IOM and ILO have a joint work plan which cascades down from the institutional to the national and project levels.

PROMISE initiated platforms like the RPAC, NPAC and PPSC have representation from ILO, UN Women, and other IOM projects. PROMISE also works through external platforms such as the UN Network on Migration and joint action on supporting the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) taskforce, etc. This has led to greater efforts in conducting joint advocacy activities and technical support to policymakers at various levels. e.g. the joint submission of draft sub-legislation on recruitment fees in Cambodia and provisions of reduction of migrant-borne recruitment costs in ASEAN instruments as referred to in Section 3.1.2, and pushing recommendations for welfare of care workers at the AFML. There is good synergy and collaboration between these projects.

MBHR and the Asia Regional Migration Project are both managed through the IOM country office in Thailand, and they coordinate for strategic alignment, covering 9 countries between the two projects. Since MBHR works primarily with the private sector, it contributes to shared efforts towards worker rights and ethical recruitment, while PROMISE with its wider remit is also able to focus on technical support to the government to institutionalise these practices. Further, MBHR takes a more top-down approach, applying downward supply chain pressure by collaborating with large private companies. PROMISE, on the other hand, follows a bottom-up strategy, prioritizing migrant workers' access to skills and decent work. Additionally, MBHR emphasizes access to remedies for migrant workers,

providing a broader framework for addressing their needs. Together, these approaches create a more comprehensive and balanced effort to support migrant workers through multi-faceted avenues, and demonstrate internal complementarity between IOM's flagship initiatives.

There are some overlaps between PROMISE and ILO TRIANGLE. A prominent example of this overlap is that both projects run MRCs (with some MRCs also supported by PROTECT), although they are somewhat different in operation, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Differences Between IOM and ILO MRCs

IOM MRCs	ILO MRCs
•Located at borders •Contact more with deported and other returnee migrants •Larger numbers of returnee migratnts •Community outreach through local leaders •IOM operated •d	•Located in provincial towns •Target community based potential and returnee migrants •Smaller footfall •Governent/CSO/ Union/ employer associations managed

IOM and ILO supported MRCs each serve different target groups at different stages of migration. Admittedly, there is collaboration. For instance, information on ILO supported MRCs is given in IOM training materials with referrals provided directly as needed. Similarly, ILO supported MRC in Banteay Meanchey in Cambodia refers migrant workers to IOM MRCs for skills development opportunities. Efforts have also been made to streamline some operations, for e.g., IOM and ILO conducted joint training for MRC staff in Lao PDR.

Yet, there has been some siloing of these two models in operation. This specialisation of the MRCs of the two agencies offers possibilities for synergies with both coming together to collectively meet the needs of a greater proportion of migrants. There are opportunities to exchange experience, collectively develop training material, operating procedures, and jointly work towards institutionalisation and handover, which are being missed. Leveraging these and strengthening coordination, instead of operating as two parallel systems, can ensure more seamless flow of services for migrant workers, make a better case for institutionalisation, and enable better convergence and impact.

Another area of overlap is in the work on ethical recruitment and recruitment fees. At the global level, ILO and IOM standards on this are aligned, through the former's General Principles and Operational Guidelines under its Fair Recruitment Initiative, and the latter's IRIS standard. Both promote a voluntary, self-regulatory approach by the private sector and aim to eliminate worker-borne recruitment fees and costs by emphasising the employer pays principle. At the national and regional level too, IOM and ILO are aligned on promoting compliance with national laws as a minimum standard with a gradual shift towards reduction and elimination of such costs in the future. In practice however, some conflicts emerge. In Cambodia, for example, ILO has been working with recruitment agencies to adopt a Code of Conduct (COC) for PRAs, which stipulates that such costs must be transparent and compliant with the law, with a commitment to move towards a zero-fee model in the future. IOM on the other hand, provided training[3] to the same stakeholders on ethical recruitment using IRIS standards. IOM has been promoting this as a voluntary standard for recruiters by incentivising them to go beyond the COC and national compliance in a gradual approach. However, the IRIS standards do not recognise this phased approach and is binary in nature. IOM's intention to promote compliance with national laws as a minimum standard and providing incentives to go beyond the COC to IRIS standards, and therefore, the differences between COC and IRIS in practice, must be addressed, clarified, and streamlined, as they work with the same set of stakeholders. This is critical to ensure that stakeholders are on the same page and the push for systemic reform is not diluted.

[3] With the availability of the COC, IOM reduced its training on ethical recruitment for PRAs. It instead focussed on their role in PDO delivery but intends to restart training on ethical recruitment again soon.

Letter of Intent with TICA[4]

In January 2024, a trilateral letter of intent was signed between the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), IOM, and SDC. This letter aimed to create a partnership to promote safe migration and skills development through collaboration on three fronts: facilitating national and bilateral dialogue, providing capacity building to CLMT governments, and supporting skill development and certification activities for migrant workers in Thailand and in countries of origin. This partnership is in nascency, and IOM has built trust and buy-in from TICA by engaging them in RPAC and PPSC meetings and involving them in project activities. Over time, there has been greater engagement from TICA, culminating in the rollout of a unique SMP initiative, as discussed in the sections on relevance and effectiveness.

The letter of intent with TICA is a signal of the Thai Government's commitment to addressing issues of migrant workers in Thailand and in the region. IOM recognises that this partnership will be nurtured and expanded over time. The roll-out of the first few initiatives is a step in the right direction and addresses key issues. Moreover, this partnership has the potential to complement SDC's and IOM's efforts by channelling further finance, donor interest, and complementary activities. For instance, ECOT brought in funding from the Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF) in financing TPQI's skill certification for migrant workers at the pre-departure stage. Seeing this demand and proof of concept, TICA later funded the training of trainers from origin countries to sustain pre-departure technical skills training. At the same time, TICA agrees to provide financial resources to TPQI to train and certify migrant workers in Thailand to address the legal gap that restricts governmental agencies to utilise their budget to support foreign nationals. This partnership is an important breakthrough with sizable implications and benefits for future activities.

3.2.2 Influencing ASEAN practices, frameworks and alignment of Member States

Engagement with and influence on the normative framework and practices of ASEAN

Through the course of PROMISE Phase I and II, IOM has developed a working relationship with the ASEAN Secretariat as well as its mechanisms such as AFML, and has contributed to sectoral bodies such as the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM).

PROMISE has worked with ACMW focal points of respective countries to support them in policymaking and implementation both at the national and regional levels. PROMISE also supports labour officials representing countries at fora like SLOM and AFML. Officials from Lao PDR, for example, expressed that they received committed support from IOM when the country was the ACMW chair and in the preparation of the ASEAN Declaration on Skills Mobility, Recognition and Development for Migrant Workers (Vientiane Declaration) in 2024. PROMISE has also been able to support policy development in the case of the ASEAN Declaration on The Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations in 2023 and support the Secretariat in the development of the ASEAN Migration Outlook series with its inputs.

IOM, together with UN Women, provides support to the AFML Task Force on Migrant Workers in organising the forum, nominating CSO members to participate in the forum, and contributing its priorities and inputs to the recommendations of successive AFMLs.

These examples demonstrate that through PROMISE, IOM has been able to secure a seat at the table, when it comes to engaging with ASEAN and having its policy inputs heard. Moreover, as referred to in Section 3.2.1, IOM has worked closely with ILO to jointly influence policy, particularly at the ASEAN

[4] The evaluation team was unable to meet representatives of TICA due to scheduling and availability constraints. Therefore, this analysis is based on discussion with other stakeholders.

level. This collaboration has enabled IOM, to strengthen its role in supporting setting policy agendas and institutional norms.

The engagement with ASEAN is an important part of the labour migration governance puzzle and is integral to bringing institutional change in standards and practices across countries. Yet, it is to be recognised that this is a long-term activity and will bear fruit years down the line, as ASEAN itself reaches consensus and sets standards, which national governments will subsequently adopt and implement based on their own capacity and priorities at any given time.

Alignment of countries of origin with ASEAN Frameworks

Each of the home countries is at different stages in their socio-economic growth and political economy. In Myanmar's case, since the military coup, there has been limited focus on alignment with ASEAN frameworks on safe migration. On the other hand, Cambodia and Lao PDR, have demonstrated commitment and intent. While the political economy in these countries is very different, both countries have low levels of socio-economic development and governments strained by many pressing development needs. In Lao PDR's case, this is further compounded by deteriorating macro-economic stability, and an inflation and unemployment crisis. Lao PDR and Cambodia (more vocally so) have indicated that migration and resultant remittances are critical levers in their growth strategy. PROMISE has recognised this and used this sentiment as an inroad to discussions on safe migration.

Despite limited resources and capacities, the national governments have engaged with PROMISE; they have shown buy-in, supported activities, discussed key migration issues, and made attempts to work with PROMISE to address them. Given their position, the fact that they are demonstrating intent and investing in these issues is a sign that they are keen to work on safe migration and align with ASEAN frameworks. At the same time, despite having the bureaucratic will, political economy issues have prevented full attention to safe migration, especially given the conflicting importance of remittance for the economies of the COOs.

3.3 Effectiveness

PROMISE II has made critical contributions from policy and governance to institutional to the operational level, through a host of initiatives. Most crucially, it has innovated and is experimenting with skill development initiatives at all stages of the migration cycle through different models and with varying degrees of success. Training for returnee migrants and on-the-job training through employers at destination are critical interventions with significant benefits. Pre-departure training is at pilot stage, but has buy-in from key stakeholders and shows great promise. Training through government and CSOs at destination have scalability challenges but are important as they reach underserved demographics. Skill recognition has also been promoted, with certification by TPQI being a major step, though work remains on strengthening RPL systems. These actions together constitute significant progress towards Outcome 2.

The MRCs and community outreach programmes under PROMISE have reached a massive number of migrant workers with information, referrals, aid and other services. These systems also enable other pillars of the project such as skills development and certification through referrals, making them critical links. These services have played an outsized role for migrant workers, making strong contributions to Outcome 3.

PROMISE has been instrumental in bringing stakeholders together at various levels. Though closer ASEAN engagement has been more recent, PROMISE has played a key part in supporting ASEAN mechanisms and forums, including migrant workers' priorities in discussions and instruments. PROMISE has also played a key role in facilitating bilateral dialogue and cooperation on several key issues, as seen tangibly in the SMP pilots. At the national level, there have been varying degrees of

success with policy and governance. In Myanmar, work was hindered. In Cambodia, key developments have taken place and strong relationships built. In Lao PDR, there remains scope for more work. While buy-in from private sector has been strong, leading to successes such as the establishment of in-service training programmes, the work on institutionalising PDO remains incomplete. Overall, though, there has been significant progress made on Outcome 1, through these activities.

3.3.1 Influence on policy and government practices

Policy is a key area of focus for PROMISE with one of its outcomes, focussing entirely on policy and institutional systems. Outcome 1 - Responsive – envisages that national and regional policies and institutional capacities related to skills development, labour migration, and ethical recruitment are more migrant-inclusive and gender-responsive and better serve the needs of migrant workers and their employers. To achieve this, PROMISE has focused on policy outcomes at three levels – national, bilateral, and regional.

Influence on policy and practice at national government level

To meet this objective, PROMISE has worked with both home and destination countries. As noted in Section 3.2.2, each of the home countries has a unique socio-cultural and political economy context, which influences their policy priorities, as well as their practices and capacities. In Lao PDR and Cambodia, PROMISE has built strong relationships with various government departments, including the crucial line departments such as MLVT in Cambodia and MLSW in Lao PDR. Similarly, in Thailand, PROMISE has established a working relationship with the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (DLPW), and other departments of MOL, such as the Department of Skills Development (on the campaign on SDF) and the Department of Employment (on training for officials for Migrant Worker Assistance Centre).

Through these relationships, PROMISE has had a tangible impact on policy, by supporting and providing inputs to the adoption of several policy instruments and strategies at the national level in each of these countries. Examples of these policy instruments are given in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Examples of policy instruments adopted with inputs from PROMISE

Thailand

- Amendment to Ministerial Regulation No. 14 on Protection for Domestic Workers
- Changes in relevant instruments to facilitate in-country registration of migrant worekrs, reduction of visa fee for migrant work permits, and enrolment of seasonal migrant workers in the Social Security Fund
- Development of professional qualificattion standard for international labour recruiters

Cambodia

- Strategic Plan for Employment Development, Social Security and Vocational Training 2024-28
- Cambodia Labour Migration Policy 2024-28

These have been achieved through a combination of approaches, including advocacy, technical support to working groups of government agencies, conducting and supporting research activities. The amendment of the Cambodian TVET curriculum to mainstream safe migration training is a key achievement. PROMISE has also nudged governments to explore and make further reforms on key issues, leading to the establishment of working groups, for example on the implementation of the PDO programme in Cambodia, though the Prakas has not been issued yet, as discussed in Sectiopn 3.3.2.

It has understood political will, spotted opportunities, and seized them to bring focus on important issues in existing political priorities, and in some cases, been proactive in nudging governments and shaping policy agenda as well. For instance, through the SMP pilots, it has brought focus on expanding channels of migration to include semi-skilled workers and nudged the Thai government to explore this.

Similarly, Important issues such as safe migration and skills training for returnee migrants have been included in Cambodia's strategic plans and national policies.

It would be useful to develop a common minimum checklist of policy standards on labour migration for countries of origin and destination. The checklist associated with the Vientiane Declaration can act as a starting point. However, this is highly focussed on skills and is primarily intended for use by government as a self-assessment tool. A minimum checklist and standard covering areas such as accessible migration channels, safe migration, skill development and matching, job matching, and the broader spectrum of labour migration governance could be developed. This will serve as a useful tool, primarily intended for use by agencies like IOM, SDC and other development partners, to guide and prioritise actions on policy advocacy and judge progress towards them.

In addition to providing technical and knowledge support to shape the policy agenda, PROMISE is active in building the capacity of government systems and improving practice to further migrant-centric outcomes. This is achieved through a combination of approaches including capacity-building workshops, exposure visits, etc. Across CLMT countries, several workshops on themes such as safe migration, facilitating regular migration, community outreach, ethical recruitment, and others, have been conducted with government agencies at all levels, from national to provincial and local levels. Governments largely expressed positive feedback about these training sessions. There are some tangible results from this, such as the establishment of Lao Employment Service Association (LESA), which was conceptualized during an exposure visit to Cambodia, and the fact that commune-level officials in Cambodia stated that they are better equipped to provide safe migration training. However, it is difficult to gauge the effect on government practice through this evaluation.

Overall, PROMISE has built goodwill and trust with government agencies and has been able to shape discourse on key issues of migration. However, given the largely varying contexts, especially in Lao PDR and Cambodia, there is need for continued engagement for comprehensive changes in practice, and development of institutional capacities.

Facilitating bilateral dialogue

Many critical areas of labour migration governance, such as expansion of migration channels, skills mobility and recognition, and portability of social security, require bilateral cooperation. PROMISE is actively engaged in trying to facilitate such dialogue and cooperation between CLMT countries. PROMISE's results framework lists six bilateral/regional policy consultation workshops:

- Consultation Workshop on the ASEAN Skills Development;
- Mekong Dialogue on Labour Mobility;
- Bilateral roundtable between recruiters and employers from Myanmar and Thailand;
- Lao PDR Feasibility Study Tour on Best Practices in Migrant Worker Support and Reintegration Services in Cambodia;
- Bilateral Consultation on Pre-Departure Technical Skills Training between Cambodia and Thailand;
- Bilateral Consultation to Promote Fair and Ethical Recruitment of Migrant Workers between Cambodia and Thailand during the Recovery of the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- Pre-departure skills training dialogue between Lao PDR and Thailand on collaboration in the hospitality and tourism sector.

The RPAC, with its convening power bringing together important stakeholders from across CLMT countries, has been an important conduit in building consensus and facilitating such dialogue, though it only meets once a year. Similarly, the tripartite letter of intent with TICA, which mentions bilateral dialogue as a key area of cooperation, is an important step that has the potential to accelerate these

efforts. Benefits are already visible with the SMP pilot. Similarly, the creation of the working group on semi-skilled migrant workers recruitment brings focus to a key issue of expanding migration channels. Further issues like cooperation on social security are still underway with some indications that these will be taken up, based on commitments received from PPSC members, while other forums facilitated by IOM like the Mekong Dialogue on Labour Mobility have discussed issues like migration channels, remittances, climate mobility, and social security.

Support to ASEAN structures

As noted in Section 3.2.2, PROMISE has established working relationships and collaboration with various ASEAN structures including ASEC, AFML, SLOM, ACMW, and has also influenced or provided inputs to several regional policy documents. Responses from stakeholders about the work with ASEAN have been mixed. Some stakeholders suggested that resources invested in work with ASEAN may have limited dividends since its declarations are voluntary and need to be committed to and implemented by members. Others suggested that focused work with select working groups on key issues may be a good approach.

PROMISE has had some successes through its work with ASEAN. Working with ASEAN is critical to ensuring that key labour migration governance issues are represented in regional policy discourse. However, since each country has its own priorities and capacities to implement, these effects may not be felt in the short or even medium-term at the country level.

3.3.2 Building capacities of private recruitment agencies

PROMISE's engagement with PRAs largely revolves around promoting and training PRAs on ethical recruitment, building capacities related to safe migration, training on effective PDO delivery, and technical support. Table 4 presents the results related to capacity building of PRAs, as stated in PROMISE's results matrix.

Table 4: Results related to capacity building of PRAs

Activity	Thailand	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Total
No. of representatives from PRAs trained on ethical recruitment, including PDO	97	34	41	360	532
PRAs demonstrating increased compliance with ethical recruitment principles (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	88%

In Cambodia, PROMISE has built a strong relationship with ACRA. Through PROMISE I, a total of 94 PRAs were given training on ethical recruitment. Under PROMISE II, however, only 34 were covered. The reason for this decline was that IOM focussed more on PDO delivery, than on ethical recruitment as ILO had developed the COC (discussed in the relevance section). Altogether, 128 PRA and ACRA representatives were trained. An area of success is the development of a self-monitoring checklist for PRAs which was piloted through ACRA and now is reportedly being routinely conducted by select PRAs on a biannual basis. Feedback from ACRA suggested that more trainers must be trained in each PRA, as staff turnover is a consistent issue, and a critical minimum of trained staff helps capacity retention. Moreover, ACRA itself is reported to have only one trainer for PDO training for 120 members. Therefore, further training of trainers is needed to address this and ensure sustained capacity building.

Reforming the PDO curriculum, standardising the delivery of PDOs to migrant workers, and facilitating the issue of the PDO directive by MLVT, was a key issue of engagement in Cambodia. While the government has mandated PDOs by law as early as 2013, stakeholders reported that the PDO delivery by PRAs is not uniform. Therefore, this was a key deliverable of PROMISE II. In pursuance of this, IOM conducted a needs assessment on strengthening PDO programmes, following which, it updated the PDO curriculum and handbook in consultation with PRAs and other stakeholders. While IOM worked

with PRAs to train them on their role in PDO delivery, only 347 (148 women, 126 men in Lao PDR and 22 women and 51 men in Cambodia) migrant workers received PDO through PRAs with PROMISE support, against a target of 33,500 in the proposal. There was a recognition that MLVT oversight would be required to make the process effective. IOM nudged the government to setup a working group to roll-out this PDO programme. Since then, there have been multiple delays, possibly due to competing priorities or lack of political will, but a Prakas on PDO has not been issued. This is an area that will need continued efforts, so that the Prakas is issued and sustainability, oversight is established.

In Myanmar and Lao PDR too, PROMISE has provided trainings and workshops on ethical recruitment to several PRAs. As discussed in earlier sections, the Ministry of Labpour and Social Welfare (MLSW), Lao PDR expressed interest in establishing LESA, an association of PRAs, following their exchange visit to Cambodia where they interacted with ACRA. PROMISE supported the establishment of LESA in 2024, which is in very early stages and IOM continues handholding and capacity-building support. While there have not been significant activities yet, LESA could be a critical partner in building capacities and oversight of PRAs.

3.3.3 Skills development models and approaches

In PROMISE II, the goal of skills development has been to enhance the employability and incomes of migrant workers at home and destination or enable them to initiate businesses. A few different models and approaches have been experimented with and used, to fit the needs, contexts, and institutions that vary across the migration cycle.

Technical and soft skills development

PROMISE has supported migrant workers with technical as well as soft skills development, provided through a range of mechanisms and involving different stakeholders at home and in destination countries. These are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Skill development models at various stages of the migration cycle

Stage of Migration Cycle	Model and Approach
Pre-departure	New approach being piloted under SMP, where job placement is done first, and then targeted skill development curated for the job role is provide prior to migration
At Destination	At destination, focus is on providing training while migrant workers are in-service, and is done through three broad channels: • Training provided by government agencies • Training provided by CSOs • Training provided by employers with support from government's Skills Development Fund and by employers' associations
On Return	On return to home countries, returnee migrants are offered skill development programmes through TVET institutions, CSOs and Community Based Organisations (e.g. CMDWGs), and in some cases, are also provided reintegration assistance and entrepreneurship training

Pre-departure training, under the SMP Pilots[5], is currently being tested in two sectors – construction in Cambodia and hospitality in Lao PDR. This is being supported by employers, recruiters, and agencies like TICA and JILAF, and is an innovative initiative, with potential for sustainability.

This model can address certain key issues. Firstly, it could potentially expand channels for migration. The MOU route is currently limited to unskilled workers, and through this pilot, there is bilateral

[5] Though this pilot emerged through discussions amongst PROMISE stakeholders at an RPAC meeting and PROMISE has been involved in setting this in motion, the trainings are being conducted with external financial support through JILAF and TICA presently.

dialogue to consider the feasibility of expanding this to the recruitment of semi-skilled workers. The earlier MOU route would relegate workers to unskilled status, even if they possessed skills. This could act as a disincentive for workers to invest in skill training, instead creating a perverse incentive for irregular migration. The new model of skill training and expanding the channels of migration could create greater incentives for workers to invest time and effort in skills training, as well as safe, regular migration, by providing better employment opportunities and wages. Further, this model could generate greater buy-in from Thai employers, who stated a preference for hiring skilled workers, and the government, who suggested that home countries should have the greatest responsibility of skilling workers being sent out. This model, therefore, could align the interests of several stakeholders. At the same time, unique challenges could emerge, including possibilities of employers withdrawing hiring commitments, and home countries' difficulties in sustaining skilling costs without external funding.

The models for training at destination is another unique intervention being implemented by PROMISE. Cumulatively, 3,247 (1,444 women) and 4,351 (2,411 women) migrant workers in Thailand have been trained in technical and soft skills respectively, through various models. Of the three models at destination, the model of in-service training for migrant workers by employers is the most innovative. It also seems to be the one with the greatest pathways to sustainability, scalability, and institutionalisation, as the financial hurdles are decreased through access to the government SDF and incentives, and the institutional hurdles are reduced by commitments made by institutions like ECOT to take the training of individual employers further. Through PROMISE II, 106 Thai employers have developed in-service training programmes. There is a continued need for providing master training to ECOT and government agencies to bring more employers on board and train them, and to ensure that this process is institutionalised with a gradual withdrawal by PROMISE in the medium term.

Training at destination has also been provided by CSOs such as the Foundation for Rural Youth (FRY) and Home Net (which has focussed on migrant domestic workers). Migrant workers in Thailand who had received this training reported that it was beneficial. However, CSOs are constrained by the scale that they can reach with the resources and funding available to them. PROMISE has also worked with the Informal Labour Division under MOL to provide training. This has been targeted towards domestic workers and has recently been expanded to agricultural workers and employers. Though the government may have greater capacity to scale initiatives beyond individual CSOs, their output has been similar, at about 300 workers and employers annually.

Training for returnee migrants has been a key component of PROMISE II. This training is provided by TVET institutions and CSOs in home countries, and includes vocational, soft skills, and entrepreneurship training, along with the provision of reintegration assistance. While it is difficult to track returnee migrants, PROMISE made efforts to do so through MRCs and community engagement. 944 returnee migrant workers have been trained in technical skills with direct PROMISE support. A breakup across countries is given in Table 6. Interactions with returnee migrant workers and other stakeholders suggest that this is a highly beneficial intervention. Returnee migrant workers interacted with in Cambodia (29 in number) who had received the training stated that though many of them had migrated before (most through irregular channels), most of them did not think of remigrating. After having received this training and safe migration information, they were more confident of being able to secure income in the home country itself. Of those interviewed, most had started businesses, some had full time jobs, and only two had part time jobs and were looking for another part-time job. Migrant workers as well as

Table 6: No. of Returnee Migrant Workers Trained

Country	Returnees Trained	Female	% Female
Cambodia	260	58	22%
Lao PDR	97	51	53%
Myanmar	589	213	36%
Total	**944**	**322**	**34%**

TVET institutions stated that the reintegration assistance and allowances provided relieved some economic pressure and allowed returnee migrants to invest time. In fact, TVET institutions stated that while short-term vocational training was the most ideal option, since most migrant workers wished to return to work as soon as possible, several trainees wished to continue to advanced levels after completing short-term training. The allowance is a critical enabling factor without which economic pressures may force many out of the system.

In Cambodia, skills development and recognition for returnee migrants have been included as a key priority in its Strategic Plan for Employment Development, Social Security, and Vocational Training 2024-2028. In Lao PDR, there is a unique situation where two parallel TVET systems exist, one under the MLSW and one under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES). Currently, PROMISE only works with the TVET institutions under the former, whereas the latter - a network of 26 public and 56 private TVET schools with a combined enrolment of about 19,000 - remains unutilized in communicating safe migration messages to adolescents and youth. PROMISE has begun engaging with MOES, to explore feasibility of integrating safe migration into TVET structures as a starting point. This remains at a consultative stage. Efforts must be made to scale these programmes.

Skills certification and recognition of prior learning

Skills recognition and certification systems are integral to achieving greater employability and income for migrant workers. This issue has gained significant traction in policy discourse following the Vientiane Declaration. Skills certification has been flagged as an issue by stakeholders from several perspectives. Employers' and recruiters' associations across CLM countries mentioned that it is difficult for them to gauge the skill level of workers to assess and hire them in the absence of skills certificates and experience certificates by Thai employers. Therefore, they suggested that dialogue with Thai employers be initiated, to ensure that workers receive experience certificates.

In the absence of formal skills training, systems for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which assess and certify workers' skill levels are critical. While RPL mechanisms exist across CLM countries, stakeholders reported that there are many barriers to effective operation of these systems. This includes lack of awareness from migrant workers, difficulty in having workers appear for tests, and low literacy disabling workers from successfully completing the test. Cambodia has recently introduced an eRPL system where workers can complete the theoretical assessment online and only appear in person to complete a practical assessment. While this reduces cost and time, it adds an additional barrier of digital literacy to the process. Stakeholders suggested that work is needed to make RPL systems more inclusive and accessible, for instance, using visual or pictorial aids to help those with low literacy levels. PROMISE provides referrals to returnee migrant workers to have their skills certified, usually through the MRCs as a point of access, and has enabled 100 returnee migrant workers to receive certification. There is significant work that remains to be done in this regard, both in raising awareness, referring, and supporting workers to get certified, as well as to improve accessibility and strengthen systems.

Another novel way that PROMISE has supported skills certification is by supporting private employer partners and CSO partners in Thailand - who have provided skill development programmes - under the project, to have their curricula vetted and aligned with TPQI standards. By doing so, migrant workers who receive such training from these partners can receive TPQI certification, which gives them a professional qualification that is recognised by employers. TPQI has made their qualification standards open source, so that training providers can align their curricula to it, and have it vetted by TPQI, or receive handholding from TPQI to bring it in alignment, following which they can offer TPQI certification. PROMISE's work to bring TPQI to this initiative is a major step, as it is the first official certification agency to certify migrant workers' skills. Prior to this, the only avenue was with the Department of Skills Development, which was largely inaccessible to migrant workers as the tests were

conducted in Thai. Through these at-destination training models, PROMISE has supported 3,478 migrant workers in Thailand to receive certification from a recognised certification body in Thailand.

3.3.4 Cross-cutting themes of gender and good governance

The MRCP lists gender equality and good governance as key transversal themes that permeate through their strategic portfolios in the region. In keeping with this, PROMISE lists a gender-responsive approach and focus on several of its outputs and outcomes. Good governance, on the other hand, does not find mention in the PROMISE proposal. In the absence of this definition, this evaluation makes use of MRCP's articulation, which refers to a combination of rights-based approaches, citizen participation, and strengthening of local governance systems.

Gender equality

Gender is well-entrenched in IOM's organisational strategy, as seen in its Gender Equality Policy and the IOM Strategic Plan 2024-28. IOM ensures gender responsiveness in its teams and project implementation by offering gender training for newly hired staff through the UN system's "I Know Gender" e-learning course, which has a specific module on gender and migration, offering mandatory training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH), and assignment of gender focal point at every level from Headquarters to Regional and Country Offices. PROMISE reports strong female representation in its leadership structure and teams. Notably, across the CLMT countries, all National Project Officers and three of four Chiefs of Mission were women.

In PROMISE I, UN Women was a key partner and had a central role in addressing gender mainstreaming in project activities. UN Women is not a part of PROMISE II. To bring a gender lens, IOM assigned a regional project officer to play the role of gender focal point and hired a gender consultant to develop a gender strategy for PROMISE. The strategy aims to provide a roadmap to achieve gender goals by removing structural barriers to the livelihoods, skills, and employment of women migrant workers and using a gender-sensitive approach. Some key strategies recommended were advocacy for inclusive environments for women migrants and individuals with diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC), training that meets the needs of both women and men and maintaining gender balance in the establishment of community-groups, among others.

PROMISE has collected gender-disaggregated data across all its activities. PROMISE has maintained a balanced representation of women and men among participants and beneficiaries, with 47% being women and 53% being men. Interestingly, this data aligns with the profile of migrant workers in Thailand, where 44% of registered workers are women and 56% are men.

IOM has identified 12 specific indicators for 50% female participation. This has been achieved in 6 of 12 indicators, but in some areas where there is external reliance for referral and mobilisation, equal participation was not achieved. Based on the analysis of the results framework by the evaluation team, the progress on achieving female participation in activities has been good. However, while in most activities this rate is between 40-60%, in some cases the participation is well above 60%, and in others, below 40%[6]. These outliers are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: PROMISE interventions with highest and lowest female participation

Intervention	Female Participation
Above 60%	
Government representatives trained on ethical recruitment and monitoring	61.8%
Workers trained on entrepreneurship, digital, and financial literacy with direct PROMISE support	62.6%
Employers trained on skills development and migrant protection	63.6%

[6] A more complete table with female participation across various interventions is given in Annexure 3.

Migrant workers brought into networking mechanisms in Thailand	76.5%
Below 40%	
Returning migrant workers referred to employment in CLM	22.6%
Number of government representatives trained on job matching	30.6%
Returning migrant workers trained with technical skills with direct PROMISE support	33.9%
Number of TVET students receiving safe migration training	38.0%

It is to be acknowledged that low participation in these may be due to the lack of data to conduct targeted mobilisation of workers (such as in the case of returnee migrants) or due to external referrals as mentioned earlier, and progress can be reviewed accordingly.

In its training activities, PROMISE has paid attention to including feminised sectors such as care work, domestic work, hospitality, etc. to ensure that women migrant workers have more skill development opportunities. Partners like HomeNet which works with women workers have also been able to lend a gender lens to activities.

PROMISE has done reasonably well in bringing a focus on gender in its policy advocacy and research activities too. Reportedly, all its research outputs adopt a gender-sensitive lens and ensure that female voices are captured. There are notable inclusions of gender in policy achievements, such as using a gender-responsive approach in the PDO curriculum in Cambodia and the Ministerial Regulations on Domestic Workers in Thailand. Another example is that of the 17th AFML, where through joint advocacy with UN Women and ILO, IOM was able to push for a set of recommendations to secure the rights of migrant care workers, a feminised sector.

Good governance

The PROMISE proposal does not explicitly mention themes of good governance, barring references to labour migration governance at the national and regional levels. However, through its activities, PROMISE has contributed to better governance at these levels as well as at the community level, to varying degrees.

PROMISE has provided a suite of training to national governance and built capacities of government officials. Table 8 gives an overview of the number of government officials trained on various topics, based on the PROMISE results matrix.

Table 8: Number of Government Officials Trained

Country	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Total	Women	Men
No. of government officials from CLMT demonstrating enhanced understanding of relevant policy frameworks and application at national level	4	159	0	0	163	71	92
No. of government officials trained on ethical recruitment and monitoring	9	16	13	374	414	256	158
No. of government representatives trained on job matching	32	30	NA	NA	62	19	43
Total	45	205	13	374	639	346	293

A total of 639 officers were trained, of which over 50% were from the destination country and over 50% were women. In the long term, training in policy frameworks, ethical recruitment and monitoring, and job matching could lead to improved policy design and implementation and governance outcomes. PROMISE has also supported initiatives such as the Labour Market Information System in Lao PDR, which could lead to better decision-making and governance capacity.

PROMISE has successfully supported community participation and strengthening local governance. As referred to in Section 3.1, PROMISE has worked with the community through CMDWGs in Myanmar. These CMDWGs are prime examples of community-led and community-managed local institutions to promote citizen participation and ownership in development coordination and activities. In Cambodia too, the project has worked with commune and village level leaders: building their capacities to carry out outreach and awareness on safe migration and counsel individuals at the community level, with these activities now mainstreamed into the five-year development plans. In total, PROMISE has supported the training of 982 representatives from CSOs, CMDWGs, and local authorities, contributing to greater local ownership and citizen participation in development and governance. These models have the potential for assessment and scale, both in other districts in Cambodia, as well as in Lao PDR, with appropriate contextualisation.

3.4 Efficiency

PROMISE has demonstrated a strong measure of efficiency in project implementation. Financially, PROMISE's expenditure has yielded good results across budget items. PROMISE has mobilized USD 619,132 in co-funding from various stakeholders, reflecting strong local buy-in. Its governance and steering structures bear mentioning, as they have acted as strong multi-stakeholder forums with major convening power, acting as a bed for discussion, dialogue, consensus building, and solutioning through a collaborative and partnerships-driven approach.

3.4.1 Functioning of PROMISE governance/steering structures

PROMISE's implementation and decision-making are supported by several governance and steering structures/platforms that bring various stakeholders together at different levels. These are shown, along with their membership, in Figure 8.

Figure 8: PROMISE Governance/Steering Structures



RPAC's overall objective is to provide strategic guidance, advice, and suggestions on planning and implementation of PROMISE towards achieving objectives and sustainability of interventions. The NPAC performs a similar function at the national level.

These committees meet periodically, usually on an annual basis. They have played an important role in the project's functioning. Firstly, at all levels, their convening power has been instrumental in bringing various stakeholders together, both to provide direction to PROMISE's activities and develop cooperative work-plans and to discuss and build consensus on key issues. Moreover, RPAC has created a unique multi-stakeholder and multi-lateral dialogue mechanism focussed on labour migration and skills in the Mekong sub-region. While ASEAN exists as a multi-lateral forum, it is broader and involves a larger number of countries. With RPAC, stakeholders from home countries have greater opportunities to meet those from destination, leading to better knowledge exchange, harmonisation, and partnerships. RPAC has facilitated partnership and knowledge transfer between stakeholders in

the region, as seen in the fact that ACRA has agreed to provide support to the newly formed LESA. It has promoted dialogue between different stakeholders across borders, leading to cooperation in innovative pilots like the SMP which emerged during RPAC meetings in 2023 and 2024.

The NPACs in Cambodia and Lao PDR have played a similar convening role to target actions and promote cooperation between national stakeholders, giving greater prominence to the national agenda and decentralising decision-making.

In Myanmar, since the project does not engage with the government, an NPAC like forum has been created without government representation, which brings together various project partners to participate in a Project Advisory and Review Meeting. The first meeting was held in March 2024 involving 20 participants. This is an important development to ensure that Myanmar benefits from a multi-stakeholder forum as in other countries of origin. This is a recent development, and too early to see results in terms of stakeholder cooperation and initiatives, which it could potentially foster.

In Thailand, a PPSC has been set up. PPSC brings together important stakeholders with a more targeted focus on fostering collaboration between the public and private sector, in addition to the general steering, agenda-setting, and advocacy functions that the RPAC, NPAC play. PPSC played a key role in setting up the partnerships that facilitated the in-service skill development programmes. It has also played an important role in discussing, setting up mechanisms to sustain these initiatives beyond the project period and advocating for cooperation on critical issues like international portability of social security benefits and recruitment of semi-skilled migrant workers.

These platforms have played an important role, both internally in terms of guiding the functioning and relevance of PROMISE activities, and externally, in terms of facilitating cooperation, advocacy, and consensus. As such, the establishment and sustenance of these platforms through the project can be considered a good management practice.

3.4.2 Project management and cost structure

PROMISE followed a decentralised project management structure. Under this structure, IOM's Thailand Country Office based in Bangkok takes overall responsibility for the programme. Activities at the national level are coordinated by IOM's country offices in Bangkok, Phnom Penh, Vientiane, and Yangon. Once the annual workplan and budgets are discussed and set, the National Project Officers (NPOs) in charge of PROMISE at each of the IOM country offices are responsible for national-level project management.

Figure 9 provides a breakup of the budget across different categories of expenses. Operational expenses account for the largest share at 49% of the project budget, followed by staff expenses (40%), office expenses (7%), and overheads (4%). While staff expenses seem high when compared with operational expenses, this may be justified considering this is a regional project with staff presence in four countries.

Figure 10 presents the project budget by location. Thailand accounted for the largest share (49%). This is understandable, considering that Thailand accounts for both the regional and national offices,

Figure 9: Overall Project Budget

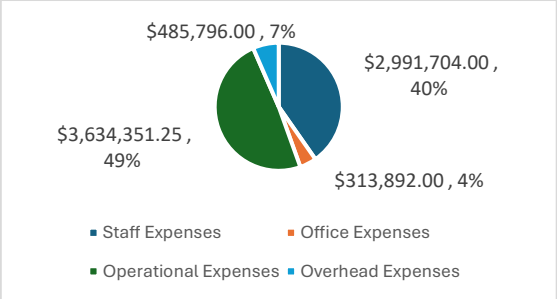
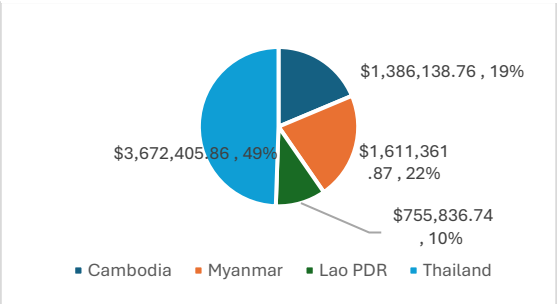


Figure 10: Project Budget by Location



and as a destination country, also accounts for many of the advocacy and partnership building activities. On the other hand, among home countries, while Myanmar and Cambodia have roughly even splits, Lao PDR has a substantially lower budget share. Several stakeholders emphasized that the team in Lao PDR did not have enough resources. The rationale appears to have been delays in getting approvals from government for several initiatives, consequent delays in activity implementation, leading to lower resource allocations. Since Cambodia and Myanmar were in more advanced stages of project implementation, more resources were required to sustain and scale activities, though even in Myanmar, activities and budgets had to be adjusted for delays. However, the lack of financial and human resources would have limited the number of activities in country, affecting stakeholder buy-in.

Figure 11: Project Budget by Various Categories of Activities

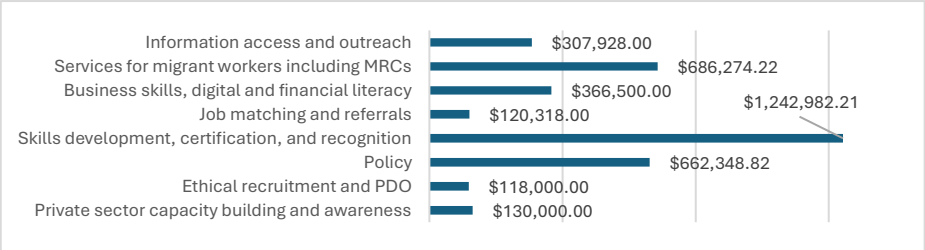


Figure 11 illustrates the project budget broken down across different categories of activities. Skill development, certification, and recognition related activities accounted for the largest share of the budget. Since skill is a central focus of the project and the fact that the project has demonstrated several unique models of training and strengthened existing training systems across all stages of the migration cycle, this expenditure is justified. Services for migrant workers, including platforms like MitrThai and MRCs, are the second largest category. Systems like MRCs are cost-intensive operations, but they have been critical in terms of both the number of workers reached and in acting as referral points to enable other aspects of the programme. Policy action at various levels was another significant budget item. Considering the number of partnerships and dialogue established, from regional to bilateral to national level, this expenditure has yielded significant results. Information access and outreach, such as safe migration training and community outreach, have been integral components as well, reaching many workers and casting a wide net to enable other activities, as with the MRCs. Other activities, even with small budget heads have yielded significant results, such as those on job-matching and work with private sector. Critical links like that of the PDO system remain unfinished. Nevertheless, when taken across categories, overall, there has been fiscally prudent expenditure across activities, and it has yielded strong results.

The governance mechanisms – RPAC, NPAC, PPSC - also played a role in promoting a cost-efficient structure. For starters, they allowed stakeholders to come together and jointly discuss collaborative workplans, allowing for more targeted and convergent investment of resources. This allowed IOM to ensure that its expenditure contributed effectively and efficiently to activities and priorities of the government, as well as other stakeholders. Moreover, some members of RPAC/PPSC, such as ECOT and TICA also mobilised investments to co-finance or manage expenditure for various project or supplementary activities.

3.4.3 SDC supervision and coordination in the region

SDC has followed a decentralised structure to manage the project, referred to as its 'applied set-up'. Under this setup, the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) in Phnom Penh has taken the overall lead in regional coordination and monitoring of the project, while the SCOs/embassies in Vientiane, Bangkok, and Yangon provide support at the national-level and the SCO in Jakarta takes the lead in liaison with ASEAN. This setup could allow for greater coordination between the SCOs in each country with IOM country offices and national implementation, reducing coordination barriers, and potentially contributing to better management. Currently the engagement and relationship between the SCOs and the IOM country offices does not seem to be mandated in written in any document. The

expectations from the SCOs/ Embassies are not spelt out, and the support to PROMISE project does not feature in the formal time allocation or performance assessments of SCO/Embassy staff. SDC has several regional projects, and usually, the SCO located outside the SDC partner country having the lead on a given project are expected to contribute to monitoring/ steering of that same project. However, this is not explicitly spelled out, although sometimes may be mentioned in the job descriptions of the concerned staff. It would be important to write these expectations, so that the staff can allot time, and also gain access to financial and other data they need to support the projects. Such clarity would aid mutual learning from the extremely rich experiences in SDC's national, regional and global projects and thematic expertise and experiences.

In practice, there have been varying levels of engagement between the SCOs/embassies with PROMISE and IOM. Some SCOs have been more involved and engaged with the project than others, and this is largely linked to the initiative that individuals in the SCOs and IOM agencies take in the country.

Since SDC does not have an SCO in Bangkok, coordination is left to the Embassy which has limited involvement in development activities, leaving monitoring and coordination of PROMISE to take a backseat relative to other functions. Having said that, SDC staff's participation in the field visits organized by IOM served as an important intervention for monitoring, feedback and continuous improvement. Further, the Swiss Embassy in Bangkok has played an important role in facilitating access of IOM to TICA, while that in Jakarta facilitated access to ASEC. Both of these are key relationships and have generated much success for the project.

3.4.4 Contributions of the government, private sector, and civil society

Stakeholders from across the government, private sector, donors, and CSOs have made several financial and in-kind contributions to support or supplement project activities and outcomes.

A range of organisations have made financial contributions[7] for activities ranging from skills training and certification, training of trainers, dissemination of knowledge products, supporting MRC activities, facilitating bilateral dialogue and networking, and community outreach, to name a few. These include agencies like Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Japan, European Union and Sweden (through MBHR), LIFT Fund, UK, among others. Altogether, it is estimated that about USD 619,132 has been contributed by various agencies to PROMISE activities, with a breakup by country given in Table 9. The maximum contributions are raised in Thailand (51%), and the highest contributors are from donors and their funded projects, with government contributing another 43%, and CSOs and others contributing only 15%. There were no contributions from the private sector.

Table 9: Estimated financial contributions by stakeholders

Country	Type of Contributor				
	Government	Donors	CSOs/ Others	Total	Percentage
Thailand	265,000		50,000	315,000	51%
Lao PDR		17,300		17,300	3%
Cambodia		54,000	19,000	73,000	12%
Myanmar		188,832	25,000	213,832	34%
Total	**265,000**	**310,132**	**94,000**	**619,132**	
Percentage	43%	51%	15%		100%

Other than financial contributions, many stakeholders have also made substantial in-kind contributions to PROMISE activities. For instance, several employers have absorbed costs of training to migrant workers or even provided for wages for workers on training days or prizes for workers. In other cases, government and employers have provided for land or venue for activities, a notable example of which is the land provided by Cambodian and Lao Governments for the MRC and iMAC

[7] The details of financial and non-financial contributions made by various stakeholders is given in Annexure 2.

(Integrated Migrant Assistance Centre) respectively. Governments and CSOs have also made contributions by organising training and outreach activities. These contributions demonstrate that there is significant buy-in from stakeholders and recognition for PROMISE activities and priorities.

3.5 Impact and sustainability

The project results framework provides four indicators at the impact level, viz.,

1. Percentage increase in monthly income among women and men migrant workers from CLM
2. Number of migrant workers reached under PROMISE across CLMT
3. Number of migrant workers with enhanced employability and livelihoods
4. Reduction on monthly income gap between men and women migrant workers

Crucially, of these, 1 and 4 can be treated as impact indicators. 2 and 3 are calculated simply as an aggregation of several outputs (of which many may have overlaps, leading to double counting). The project does not have clear impact-level indicators for aspects like enhanced employability or livelihoods, except the income enhancement. Moreover, PROMISE has commissioned an impact assessment, independent of this evaluation, which is underway at the time of writing this report, so data on these indicators is unavailable. These factors make it difficult to make a judgement of impact based on quantitative indicators. Instead, the evaluators have made this judgement based on findings from the survey, and through triangulation of statements made by stakeholder respondents.

Overall, PROMISE has had a marked impact at the policy and institutional level. This includes tangible contributions to various policy instruments and governance at regional and national level. In addition, intangible, but substantial changes at these levels include the fact that key issues have been brought into the policy agenda despite shifting political will and strained resources, and that the facilitation of multi-stakeholder collaboration has led to unique solution models and consensus. Similarly, at the migrant worker level, workers report several positive results from project activities, and a substantial number of workers have been benefited, especially through information and outreach activities. There is room to build on and consolidate this impact on workers.

3.5.1 Impact at policy and Institutional Levels

PROMISE has had several positive outcomes at the policy level, having contributed to critical instruments at both regional and national levels, as detailed earlier in Section 3.3. While these contributions are tangible, the project has made substantial intangible contributions to policy and governance in general. The principal contribution is the fact that through engagement with PROMISE, several critical ideas and migrant-centred priorities have been placed firmly on the map for governance, which will have lasting effects. One example is that the CLM countries are all classified by the UN as Least Developed Countries (LDC). Cambodia and Lao PDR have young institutions, developing institutional capacity, and strained financial resources, which are strained to achieve progress on a range of pressing priorities from inflation to unemployment to food security to indebtedness, to name a few. In such a context, PROMISE has been able to bring safe migration, skill development and recognition, and ethical recruitment into the spotlight for line ministries, and achieved significant buy-in to focus government resources into these issues, whether at national policy strategy level or at the operational level. There is certainly a question of shifting political priorities and insufficient political will, causing delays and constraining government action, but this is to be seen in the context of the countries' political economy and the competing priorities for small pool of resources and political attention. In such a context, PROMISE has done well to ensure that these concepts are being explored, debated, and considered at every level of governance, which provides a strong foundation for further action.

In Thailand too, PROMISE has been instrumental in fostering a more migrant-inclusive form of governance, though there was political reluctance by the government to spend resources on migrant workers. Against such a backdrop, PROMISE has been able to bring government resources to skill training of migrant workers (through the Skills Development Fund) or social protection of migrants (through their inclusion in the Social Security Fund), and initiate exploration on enhancing channels of migration which could benefit a bigger class of workers. These are key shifts towards migrant-inclusive and migrant-friendly labour migration systems. With buy-in from agencies like TICA and MOL, there is high potential to build on.

Another key contribution that PROMISE has made at the policy and institutional level is in facilitating long-term partnerships and promoting multi-stakeholder action. Platforms like NPAC, RPAC, PPSC, have brought stakeholders together, achieved some consensus, and most crucially, built cooperation mechanisms and partnerships between them. This has led to multi-stakeholder partnerships that have birthed entirely new solution models like the collaboration between TICA, TPQI, JILAF, and Cambodian TVET institutions to facilitate the SMP. PROMISE has built government-to-government and private sector partnerships and learnings as well, evidenced in the engagement of ACRA in Cambodia co-founding and co-initiation of LESA in Lao PDR which will likely pay dividends in the future. These mechanisms have shaped new possibilities for collaborative action, cooperation, and solutioning by stakeholders, whose impact will ensue in a few years.

Private sector stakeholders too have been capacitated with a majority of those engaged showcasing higher levels of knowledge and understanding of ethical recruitment and safe migration, as per project data. At the same time, further handholding and capacity building on issues of conducting and governance of ethical recruitment will need to be intensified and continued, to ensure that these benefits result in impact at scale and in the long-term. This is true in all countries of origin but is of particular importance in Lao PDR where LESA is at nascency.

While 106 employers in Thailand have established in-service training mechanisms, 45 employers across CLM countries are now recruiting returnee migrants. By building relationships with key stakeholders like ACRA, ECOT, LESA, UMFCCI, and others in each of the countries, and building their capacities to ensure that these ideas and awareness percolate further, PROMISE has built pathways to long-term impact.

3.5.2 Impact on migrant workers

Interactions and the survey with migrant workers who received technical and soft skills training under PROMISE (across all these different models of training) , indicate positive impacts for the migrant workers that PROMISE worked with, as follows:

- Most workers reported positive benefits from the PDOs they had received, with them feeling that they had more confidence about migrating, had greater awareness of their rights, and greater awareness of safe migration practices.
- Over half of the survey respondents (53.12%) felt that technical skills training improved their job performance. 35.16% reported that it helped them secure a job with better conditions, 31.17% stated that the training enabled them to earn a higher income, and 19.95% credited it with helping them find a new job. A smaller proportion (7.23%) acknowledged the training as beneficial but stated that it did not lead to better job opportunities or additional income. Notably, 10.97% believed the training was not useful for them.
- Satisfaction with soft skills training was high. Over half of the respondents rated the various types of soft skills training it as high or very high, while very few gave negative ratings. However, for all formats, about 40-45% gave an average rating. Positive ratings across categories are higher in Cambodia, as compared to Myanmar. In terms of perceived benefits of the soft skills training, the

highest number of respondents selected that it made their stay in Thailand more convenient and that it improved their overall understanding (both 36.51%). This was closely followed by respondents selecting that it encouraged them to start their own business (33.33%), it helped them make better financial decisions and save money (31.22%) and allowed them to access social protection measures (21.69%)[8].

Overall, these results indicate several positives, the proportions reporting these benefits indicate that there is room to improve training satisfaction or better outcomes for more migrant workers.

PROMISE's engagement with communities through the MRCs and local leaders has helped it reach irregular migrants and bring awareness to those who could potentially use irregular channels. In Thailand too, PROMISE has been supporting irregular migrants, first by helping migrant workers obtain and maintain their regular status (through policies for in-country registration, extension of work permits, and others), enabling their access to skills training, and conducting outreach for information awareness. These are helpful initiatives which address important issues. However, increasing impact on safe migration will require concerted action to scale up safe migration outreach at community level, facilitating greater involvement of local leaders, and engaging through schools to reach youth when migration decisions are made.

PROMISE has reached over 268,000 workers with information through the project. The information services through MRCs have reached over 114,000 workers. MitrThai, a digital information portal for migrant workers with contributions from government, private sector, and CSOs (in terms of contents and services available on the portal), receives 3,000 monthly direct visits and has reached 90,000 workers. MRCs and the MitrThai platform are key to promoting safe, regular migration and worker welfare. However, though there is an indicator on increased awareness of migrant workers, this data is not available yet, and it is difficult to gauge the direct impact of these initiatives.

3.5.3 Sustainability

The level of sustainability for interventions varies significantly, based both on location as well as on the intervention itself. Several of these interventions have strong potential for long-term sustainability and handover. Chief among these are initiatives where they have been mainstreamed into government priorities and systems, such as Cambodia's integration of safe migration training into its TVET curriculum, which is now part of the Strategic Plan for Employment Development, Social Security, and Vocational Training 2024-2028. Other examples include stakeholders having expressed commitments to take initiatives forward, such as skill training of employers by ECOT with support from MOL,and handover of MitrThai to the Migrant Working Group in Thailand. In other cases, pathways to sustainability are visible, but need further advocacy and handholding, as in the case of institutionalisation of PDO where government directive is awaited. In other cases, sustainability challenges remain. For instance, CSO-led training programmes and MRCs, despite their benefits, will continue to require external support and funding, without clear avenues for handover.

Some of these interventions are discussed in further detail below.

Safe migration training: The biggest success with respect to this is the mainstreaming of safe migration training into the TVET curriculum in Cambodia. Inclusion in the curriculum and capacitating of trainers in the institutions, ensures that these institutions are in a position to provide this training, even beyond PROMISE, with minimal financial support required. Similarly, safe migration has been included in the commune development plans. This will most certainly require financial support from the government, but their inclusion means that there is a higher likelihood that these activities may continue, though

[8] Further details and disaggregated data from the survey can be found in Annexure 4.

at a smaller scale. Crucially, both TVET institutions and commune-level leaders interacted with perceived these as highly beneficial and expressed a keen desire to continue them. Similarly in Myanmar, it may be possible to capacitate the CMDWGs to offer safe migration trainings and add to their corpus funds before the project is completed, to achieve a measure of sustainability through community action.

PDO delivery: PROMISE has refined the PDO curriculum and initiated master training with PRAs on PDO delivery in Cambodia, with some more envisaged before the end of the project. In Lao PDR, this has still not happened, since LESA is in its nascent stages, and is scheduled to be conducted in 2025. In Cambodia, PROMISE has nudged the government to initiate a working group for implementing the PDO programme, but a government mandate is awaited. There is some potential for Associations of PRAs to ensure that PDO is provided to migrant workers. However, for long-term sustainability, government mandate to necessitate action by PRAs (and their associations) will ensure oversight for uniformity and consistency in delivery.

Skill training and certification: PROMISE has made significant strides in promoting this area across CLMT countries. Pre-departure training is still in a pilot phase, and it remains to be seen what form this will take in the future. However, the initiation of the working group on hiring semi-skilled workers and TICA's cooperation in facilitating SMPs is a promising sign that traction on this issue may continue. In-service training has a clear roadmap to sustainability as referred to in Section 3.3, with technical support from ECOT, financial support from the government and the Skills Development Fund and certification by TICA. For training of returnee migrants, challenges still exist, chief among them being the lack of data on returnee migrants. Nevertheless, the inclusion of returnee migrants training in the Cambodia policies is a promising sign for continuity, but some external funding will be needed to continue the trainings . In Lao PDR too, skill training is unlikely to sustain beyond the project period due to lack of engagement and/or resources with the government. In Myanmar, skill trainings will need to financed externally and conducted through INGOs, CSOs or private sector skill training providers.

One of the key barriers to sustainability in the case of skills training is that the allowances provided to migrant workers (or even other potential measures like fee subsidies) are critical to ensure that migrant workers invest time and stay in the skills development system. To promote sustainability, the following measures can be considered:

1. Complete and scale up the SMP pilots, which are multi-stakeholder partnerships. With donors like TICA, and implanting partners like ECOT and TVET, and the implicit understanding that employers have skin in the game to invest resources here (even if limited), this model can be iteratively developed and designed for sustainability with contributions from varied sources.
2. Establish a Skill Development Fund (akin to Thailand) in Countries of Origin[9]. This fund can pool in resources through contributions from donors, employers, and government (which can also provide resources in kind, e.g. dormitories, training premises, etc.). This new model can be tried for returnee migrants. If it shows promise at a pilot stage, this can be institutionalised through policy.
3. In Cambodia, the government has a grant for skill training for workers with low incomes, these are however, insufficient in number, and it is not clear to what extent potential migrants have access to it. The access of vulnerable returnee migrants to this government scheme could be increased.

MRCs and community engagement: MRCs are a cost-intensive operation. Global experience suggests that MRCs usually require external support to function effectively. While the governments have

[9] Lessons can be learned from the sectoral funds/boards set up by the Ministry of Labour in India. These boards which operate for various sectors, like construction, hand-rolled tobacco workers, etc., pool in finance through contributions from employers and government to provide social protection and benefits for workers.

provided some support to MRCs, such as through the provision of land in Cambodia and Lao PDR, and even providing some staffing in Lao PDR, it is unlikely that this model will sustain without external financing support. IOM has initiated discussions in Cambodia with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Cambodia (which runs the Poi Pet Transit Centre, where the MRC is located) and MLVT about the future of the MRC, but these have not reached a conclusion so far. Officials at the Transit Centre were confident that knowledge sustainability has been established through training, and with some handholding they can take operations forward. However, financial sustainability will remain a question until discussions with the ministries yield commitments. An option to consider may be that as there are several other INGOs and agencies operating resource centres within the same premises, resources can be pooled together to integrate these individual centres into a single centre. These can continue to receive external finance, but will benefit from shared resources, convergence, and economies of scale, with potentially contributions by government over time.

MRCs play an essential role in Myanmar, where state-led migration governance is deteriorating. These MRCs in Myanmar have been working in tandem with CMDWGs. The CMDWGs received funds from PROMISE II which are used to provide loans for businesses, the interest providing funds to cover costs and extend grants to families of migrants and others who need such support. The structure and leadership of these groups will enable their sustenance. Post PROMISE, they could face issues of elite capture, transparency and equity in governance. In the Myanmar context, sustainability needs to be perceived differently, where MRC could keep a light oversight on CMDWGs, making it contingent upon IOM to find some consistent funding for MRCs in Myanmar. At the least, it would be important to ensure transparent and accountability processes and systems, such as regular financial and activity reporting to the local community. Although some of these systems are already in place, they could be an important target for the last few months of the PROMISE II project.

3.5.4 Drivers and restrainers of change in labour governance and employability

All stakeholders need to be key drivers of change for different topics under the safe migration agenda.

The government is key to ensuring outreach to large numbers of migrant workers at all stages of migration, reducing irregular migration and in expanding channels of regular migration. The restrainers here are the inability of governments to assign financial and human resources, and to balance the need for remittances with the safety of outgoing workers, wherein there may also be vested interests of politicians and bureaucrats. Overall, the national governments are likely to collaborate with international agencies to promote safe migration, at the ASEAN level and in the CLMT countries.

PRAs are critical to create awareness and prepare outgoing migrant workers, and they have cooperated well with both IOM and ILO. However, they need further capacity building and more oversight and monitoring of the numbers and quality of the trainings. Restrainers include both formal and informal recruitment agents at the sub-national level, whose practices cause indebtedness, and sometimes, bondage and/or trafficking.

Employers at destination play an important role in not only ensuring decent work but also institutionalising skill development to increase productivity, employability, and incomes[10]. They also play a critical role in working towards matching skills standards and certification of work experience.

Private skill providers are a critical resource, to work alongside, or instead of, government skill training institutions. They can reach potential, outgoing and returnee migrants, and provide job linkages. Another important group of drivers of change are community-based organizations and leaders, and

[10] IOM's Migration, Business and Human Rights (MBHR) regional project supports all types of businesses in their responsibility to respect the rights of migrant workers, including employers and their associations.

MRCs, who create the outreach to migrant workers in all phases of migration, and provide the services needed to substitute or supplement those of other stakeholders.

4 Conclusion

PROMISE is a vast project, spanning work across four heterogenous country contexts, with multiple levels of action from the grassroots level to regional policy level, and with a wide array of stakeholders. Any intervention operating at this scale is a complex endeavour in and of itself, and remarkably, PROMISE has got positive feedback and been well received by stakeholders across the board. It has made important strides in training the focus of the policy agenda on key issues, moving the needle in promoting skills development, built capacities of stakeholders involved, and fostered partnerships, cooperation, and dialogue between a host of agencies across the CLMT countries. Most crucially, as a project seeking to promote incomes and employment opportunities, its core constituency is that of migrant workers: who have also reported positive outcomes on their economic potential through engagement with and support by PROMISE.

PROMISE has laid a strong foundation for future interventions to build on. In addition, it has promoted cooperation, partnerships and enabled action by national and regional stakeholder, which is a critical driver of change for development.

5 Recommendations

A future regional project, with a focus on the Mekong sub-region countries, is needed. The specific recommendations:

Approaches and Principles

1. The project must continue to adhere to SDC's corridor, elevator, and whole of government approaches, and the principle of Leave No One Behind. The project design must also follow the KFPE guidelines of transboundary research and development partnerships used by SDC and Swiss National Science Foundation in their grants processes[11]. The design must ensure gender equality and social inclusion are mainstreamed through the project.

The suggested interventions for a future sub-regional project are given below.

Pre-migration phase, in countries of origin

Investments in the countries of origin are imperative, not only to curb distress migration, but also to benefit from the demographic dividend in all the three sending countries, while ensuring safety and decent work for the migrant women and men. The interventions needed would be:

2. **Awareness about safe migration**, through departments of education and technical training, must be given in early adolescence, as school dropouts are reportedly high after the age of 13/14, especially in Laos. National donor-supported programmes can be launched in each of the three countries, and particularly in Myanmar, awareness will require community level engagement, through local CBOs and CSOs.
3. **Community engagement and citizen participation:** The models for community engagement and citizen participation include MRCs in all 3 sending countries, CMDWGs in Myanmar and commune leadership development in Cambodia. In Cambodia and Laos, PROMISE also worked

11 The SDC-SNSF's projects under the SOR4D programme and under SDC- EPFL's Tech4D program apply the KFPE (2018). Guide for transboundary research partnerships.

with CSOs to involve youth in skill training, enterprise start-ups, Thai language learning, door-to-door contacts, peer-to-peer networks, and leadership. The community groups, CSOs and leaders play an important role in community outreach and addressing irregular migration. These must be studied further and scaled up in other regions within these countries, as well as in Lao PDR. National governments cannot yet sustain community level engagements and will need donor support. Further, ILO and IOM need to establish complementarities and jointly find solutions for sustainability and advocate for sustained support to them from governments in Cambodia and Laos, and donor-funded projects in Myanmar.

4. **Supporting local economic development**: Addressing issues of migration, especially in a situation where distress migration due to conflict and climate related shocks will grow in addition to the existing burden of economic migration, requires emphasis on creating virtuous cycles of growth in the home countries. This will include skills training, skills certification, increasing employment opportunities and labour productivity. Though PROMISE has been working on these, stronger national programmes are needed, especially in countries like Lao PDR and Myanmar, where limited in-roads have been made due to the socio-political context.
5. **Set up a skill development fund in the countries of origin,** like the one in Thailand. This new model can be tried for returnee workers. If it works at a pilot stage, later a policy directive can be pursued which institutionalises a Skill Development Fund.
6. **PRA capacities and systems for ethical recruitment:** Interventions to support recruitment agencies in developing awareness on and complying with ethical recruitment must continue in all three countries of origin. Capacity building of PRAs can continue through their associations: ACRA and LESA**.** Government oversight of PDO delivery needs to be pursued in Cambodia and initiated in Lao PDR.
7. **Consensus about ethical recruitment standards and road maps:** Future interventions must attempt to bring consensus on desired outcomes and joint roadmaps between agencies like ILO and IOM (e.g. on the issue of recruitment fees and other important principles pertaining to the ethical recruitment of migrant workers), to ensure that work with stakeholders is directed towards a common goal.

At destination: national, bilateral and sub-regional arrangements

8. **Skills and experience certification:** PROMISE provides referrals to returnee migrant workers to have their skills certified, usually through the MRCs as a point of access. The work that remains, in all CLMT countries, spans raising awareness, referrals, and support to migrant workers to get certified, and strengthening the skills provision and certification systems.
9. **Skill Mobility Partnerships (SMPs)** a critical lever to promoting safe migration and improving status of migrants at destination countries. SMPs must be analysed and scaled up, with TVET institutions, both private and public, in the home countries. It would also be important to work concurrently on certification, by scaling up the work being done with TPQI. The policy advocacy will enable incorporating skills mobility into the overarching MOUs in line with the Vientiane Declaration, contributing to the expansion of the migration channel. However, success will depend on the political buy-in of at least two countries.
10. **In-service training mechanisms of employers at destination** have been piloted in PROMISE II and can be further strengthened, through employer associations such as ECOT and government agencies, to ensure quality, provide guidance on good practices, and establish a learning platform with employer associations, promote end-of-employment certification that can be recognized upon return in countries of origin.
11. **Engagement of partners**: In addition to working with CSOs, a future initiative, even when implemented by IOM, could partner with Workers' Organisations to involve them in safe

migration training and advocacy, at least in countries of origin, to promote migrant workers' voice and representation.

Regional, sub-regional and national policy ecosystems

12. **A migration policy checklist:** A comprehensive gap analysis of the policy landscape is needed, resulting in a common minimum checklist of policy standards on labour migration for countries of origin and destination. This guide could be used to develop policy priorities and targets and would also provide the foundation to work more with statistical offices and civil service commissions to enhance public migration data and train civil servants on migration.
13. **Regional, sub-regional and bilateral dialogue** will need to be a continued focus, to ensure that there is active knowledge sharing, cooperation, and consensus building on cross-border issues, such as the expansion of migration channels to curb irregular migration, portability of social security, skills matching and certification. Platforms like RPAC, NPAC, and PPSC have been catalysts in this regard, and future interventions must replicate such structures that foster multi-stakeholder, multi-lateral partnerships. Work with ASEAN is integral, and should be continued, to bring a regional focus and cooperation on key issues. However, given ASEAN's voluntary nature, efforts should focus on bilateral agreements that have direct national impact.
14. **New initiatives:** Stakeholders highlighted that migrant workers use informal channels for remittances, which carry high costs and financial risks. There is a need to pilot regional or sub-regional initiatives on cross-border digital financial services, such as mobile banking and e-wallets, which can provide migrant workers with secure, low-cost remittance options. There is scope for policy influence, e.g. ASEAN governments should reduce remittance fees in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of lowering transaction costs to less than 3% of the amount sent. Good practices in this field of work, e.g. from Philippines, Kenya and Uganda can inform the project design.

In country of origin, on return

15. Reintegration: Returnee migrants, especially if they are deported or return with no savings, need social, psychological and economic reintegration. The interventions tried by PROMISE II could reduce the vulnerability of the returnee migrants, though growth and resilience of the local economy would determine the prospects of such economic reintegration, which continues to be a problem in the Laos and Myanmar contexts.In Myanmar, the work will have to be scaled up through MRCs and CMDWGs, which will need both resources and oversight. Another good opportunity would be to advance the work with employers' associations such as UMFCCI, who have participated in job matching for returnee migrants.

Project management

16. SDC's 'applied setup' has merits, but the experience in practice has been mixed. To improve this, it is recommended that SDC define clearer mandates on the expectation and role for SCOs in each country. Moreover, clear protocols must be set in place for the coordination, reporting, and data sharing between national offices of IOM (implementation agency) and the SCOs, so that the latter is enabled to play an informed role.

Annexures

Annexure 1: SDC Evaluation Grid

The SDC assessment grid for the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria

Note: This assessment grid (Version: 11.06.2020) is used for evaluations of SDC / SECO financed projects and programs, based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria. All applicable sub-criteria are scored, and a short explanation is provided. The numbers (0-4) represent the evaluation team's rating of the sub-criteria in the column "score":

0 = not assessed
1 = highly satisfactory
2 = satisfactory
3 = unsatisfactory
4 = highly unsatisfactory

Key aspects based on DAC criteria	Score	Justification
Relevance		
1. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of the target group.	1	PROMISE works across the whole migration cycle, in both Countries of Origin (COOs: Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar) and Country of Destination (COD: Thailand). In the COO, it meets the needs of the migrant workers by prioritizing skills development, the project enhances employability, job retention, and income opportunities, as evidenced by over 50% of surveyed migrant workers reporting improved job performance and over 32% securing better jobs or higher wages. The focus on pre-departure training and reintegration support responds to employer demands and the economic realities of returnee migrants, particularly in Myanmar and Cambodia. While the project has launched safe migration initiatives, there is a need to expand outreach to irregular migrants who may not access formal pre-departure programs. In the COD, the project meets the needs of the employers. Thai employers stress the importance of providing experience certificates for returning migrants to facilitate better job opportunities. Overall, employers, recruiters, government and CSOs have expressed satisfaction with the project but highlight the need for more Training of Trainers (ToT) programs and greater engagement in implementation. PROMISE II's initiatives have gained positive stakeholder feedback, but challenges like high recruitment fees and scaling up targeted training pilots remain areas for further intervention.
2. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of indirectly affected stakeholders (not included in target group, e.g. government, civil society, etc.) in the country of the intervention.	2	PROMISE II effectively addresses the needs of indirectly affected stakeholders, including governments, CSOs, private sector actors, and regional bodies, by fostering multi-level engagement. Collaboration with government ministries supports policy development, capacity building, and skills recognition, aligning with national priorities for safe migration and workforce development. Partnerships with private sector stakeholders, such as recruitment agencies and employer associations, promote ethical recruitment and skills training, improving workforce preparedness. CSO engagement enhances community outreach and migrant support, particularly through commune leaders in Cambodia and CMDWGs in Myanmar. At the regional level, PROMISE's involvement in ASEAN forums strengthens migration governance through policy dialogue and knowledge-sharing. Engagement with workers' organizations is limited, reducing migrant representation in advocacy.
3. The extent to which core design elements of the intervention (such as the theory of change, structure of the project components, choice of services and intervention partners) adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the target group.	2	The core design elements of PROMISE II—including its theory of change, project structure, intervention choices, and partner selection—align well with the needs and priorities of the target group by addressing safe migration, skills development, and employment support. The National and Regional Project Advisory Committees (NPACs and RPACs) have provided a structured platform for stakeholders to discuss migrant needs, interventions, and collaborative opportunities, ensuring responsiveness to changing priorities. The project's outputs, including the Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) manual, skills management training, safe migration training, and Thai language training, directly cater to the skills enhancement and employability of migrant workers. The choice of intervention partners—ranging from government agencies, private sector actors, vocational training providers, and CSOs—ensures multi-level

		impact across the migration cycle. By engaging with TVET institutions, recruitment agencies, and employers, PROMISE enhances access to formal training and ethical job placement. CSO partnerships further strengthen community-based support for migrants, particularly in Myanmar and Cambodia.
Coherence		
4. Internal coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions of Swiss development cooperation in the same country and thematic field (consistency, complementarity and synergies).	2	PROMISE is part of SDC's IED portfolio under MRCP and complements other activities in skills development and governance within the region. However, discussions with SDC officials indicate a lack of joint engagements, knowledge sharing, and cross-pollination between SDC's global portfolio on migration and its initiatives in South Asia with PROMISE and SDC's work in the Mekong region. The SDC's Global Programme on Forced Migration and Displacement (GPMFD) for 2022-25, despite focusing on safe labour migration, does not mention PROMISE or the Mekong region. The GPMFD prioritizes migration corridors between South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and intra-regional corridors in Africa, but overlooks Southeast Asia. PROMISE still employs many GPMFD principles, such as multi-stakeholder and corridor approaches. PROMISE's focus on skills development could benefit from exchanges with projects in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, among others in GPMFD. However, opportunities for knowledge transfer and experience exchange with South Asian initiatives and the global program have not been thoroughly explored.
5. External coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors in the country and thematic field (complementarity and synergies).	1	PROMISE is among a host of initiatives on labour migration by national, regional, and international or multilateral actors in the Mekong region. PROMISE partners well with government agencies, working within their priority framework to further safe migration, skills development and mobility, and reintegration, and developing joint work plans. Similarly, it has built relationships with ASEAN. PROMISE has strong complementarity with projects by other donors and implementing agencies, such as ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN, IOM's MBHR and Asia Regional Labour Migration Programme, and UN Women, ILO's PROTECT. It engages in several joint activities including advocacy, planning, and even implementation. There are some overlaps in activities, such as in the MRCs which are operated by both IOM and ILO or some conflicts such as between IRIS and FRI, which have some scope to build further complementarity and joint action.
Effectiveness		
6. The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results.	1	PROMISE has used targeted approaches and strategies to work on various verticals with different stakeholders. This includes a combination of skill training programmes, advocacy, capacity building, and community outreach. Several strategies are innovative and unique, with high potential for scalability and replicability, and there has been significant work on institutionalizing these as well.
7. The extent to which the outcomes achieved contribute to gender-specific results.	1	The project developed a gender strategy and has done well in terms of the team composition and leadership, outreach to women migrants through its various interventions, and affirmative measures to enable greater participation of women in training programmes. The project has achieved a representative gender split and female participation in project activities.
8. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes.	2	Although ACRA has played an important role in involving PRAs, and PROMISE has trained trainers on PDOs, the oversight of delivery of PDOs is not yet mandated by a directive from the Cambodian government, hence the oversight of PRAs remains limited. In Laos, LESA and LNCCI need time and more mobilization to start playing more active roles. At the community level, the IOM MRCs work with the CBOs in Myanmar, who identify and support returnee migrants and deliver safe migration trainings to potential migrants. They manage project funds, where good governance is established through local leadership and IOM MRC staff keep an oversight. In Cambodia community leaders play an important role. In Thailand, employers' organizations like ECOT garner employers for the project.
Efficiency		
9. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively.	1	PROMISE follows a decentralized structure with country offices having significant financial autonomy after the annual budget plans are set. Thailand receives the largest budget share due to its regional and national roles, as well as advocacy and partnership activities. Myanmar and Cambodia have similar budget allocations, while Lao PDR's share is significantly lower. The lower allocation to Lao PDR is reportedly by design, due to delays in government approvals and

		activity implementation. This has limited resources and stakeholder buy-in in Lao PDR. Governance mechanisms like RPAC, NPAC, and PPSC have promoted cost efficiency by enabling collaborative work-plans and targeted investments. Additionally, stakeholders such as TICA and JILAF have mobilized support for various projects, ensuring effective use of resources.
10. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe).	3	Several of the project activities were delayed, e.g. in Lao PDR due to delays in government agreement to proceed with the initiatives, or in Myanmar due to rule of the military junta. The time frame for activities was adjusted to enable their completion.
11. The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation.	1	The NPAC, RPAC and PPSC worked well, engaged stakeholders and resulted in good coordination and innovative new initiatives involving several partners. The minutes of meetings show detailed discussions on lessons, challenges and barriers and solutions suggested for project strategies and partner collaborations, to meet the needs of migrant workers. They have shown strong convening power, building consensus, and facilitated dialogue, cooperation.
12. Financial and in-kind contributions by stakeholders and partners	1	Numerous stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, donors, and CSOs, have contributed funds and resources to support PROMISE activities. For example, TICA mobilized JILAF finance, and agencies like KOICA, the European Union, and others provided approximately USD 619,132 for skills training, certification, and community outreach. Additionally, in-kind contributions have been significant; employers have covered training costs and provided wages during training, while governments and CSOs have offered land and venues for activities, such as those provided by the Cambodian and Lao Governments for the MRC and IMAC.
Impact		
13. The extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention.	2	There have been several successes at policy level., bringing key issues into the policy agenda and facilitating dialogue on important cross-border issues like expansion of migration channels and skills certification. The partnerships and cooperation established between stakeholders and the consensus built on policy agenda items will have significant benefits in the long term. Similarly, migrant workers have reported positive impacts from the training and awareness received, with many of them reporting that they have been able to perform their job roles better, secure better employment opportunities, seek higher wages, feel more confident in migrating, more aware of safe migration, and more aware of their rights and entitlements.
Sustainability		
14. The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	3	The governments have participated well in PROMISE, they need further capacity building and handholding, especially for taking forward policy initiatives at national and ASEAN levels. Cambodian government has shown high ownership of the initiatives but have been tardy in issuing governance directives on ethical recruitment. Lao PDR has had very few activities. PRAs need more trainers per member organization and need continuous oversight. CSOs have high ownership but need support to bring well-trained and experienced technical trainers. In Myanmar, the community, private sector and CSOs have participated in the project but given that the project cannot work with the military government, mainstreaming and sustainability of initiatives remains low.
15. The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	3	The partners in Thailand have the resources to contribute to and raise resources to continue skill trainings and other activities in the COD, and to a certain extent in the COO. Cambodia has been able to mainstream some activities but will not be able to continue the activities at the scale needed, with own resources. PRAs may be able to continue PDO trainings with own resources. Myanmar and Lao PDR PRAs, trainers, skill providers and CSOs lack the resources for continuing the activities needed to achieve the outcomes. MRCs have significant challenges to financial sustainability.
16. The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) is conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes.	3	On the positive side, stakeholder cooperation is high. However, legislation does not yet adequately protect irregular migrants, political factors prevent work with government in Myanmar, Myanmar and Lao PDR face low economic activities and high inflation, and the push factors of migration and need for remittances put the COOs in a weak bargaining position. Technical inputs from UN agencies have limited uptake due to these endemic contextual factors.

Annexure 2: Contributions made by PROMISE II Partners

Table A2.1 Estimated Financial Contributions by Partners

Country		**Donor**		
	Project/ Activity		**Development Partner**	**CSO/ Other**
Thailand	HDPN: Skills Development for Migrant Workers	Japan	195,000	
Thailand	Skills training and certification for 150 migrant workers in Thailand	TICA	45,000	
	TOT for Cambodian TVET institutions		25,000	
	Pre-Departure Technical Skills Training for Cambodian Migrant Workers	JILAF		50,000
Sub-total Thailand			**265,000**	**50,000**
Lao PDR	Strengthening Lao PDR as ASEAN Chair: Pilot of a skills testing and certification mechanism in collaboration with the Skills Development Institute	UK	6,100	
	Strengthening Lao PDR as ASEAN Chair: National dissemination of the Vientiane Declaration and capacity building to strengthen implementation of its Checklist	UK	4,400	
	Strengthening Lao PDR as ASEAN Chair: National dissemination of the Vientiane Declaration and capacity building to strengthen implementation of its Checklist	UK	6,800	
Sub-total Lao PDR			**17,300**	
Cambodia	TEAM-TB Elimination Among Migrants: MRC	The global fund		10,000
	MBHR: Strengthening PDO programme in Cambodia	EU-Sweden	20,000	
	MBHR: Strengthening PDO programme in Cambodia	EU-Sweden	7,000	
	MBHR: ToT for sub-national government officials on safe migration and labour migration policy and regulations	EU-Sweden	12,000	
	MBHR: ToT for sub-national government officials on safe migration and labour migration policy and regulations	EU-Sweden	10,000	
	MBHR: Development of Plan of Action for the implementation of MoU on eliminating trafficking in person and protecting victims of trafficking in person	EU-Sweden	5,000	
	Counter trafficking: Development of Plan of Action for the implementation of MoU on eliminating trafficking in person and protecting victims of trafficking in person	JTIP		2,000
	Contributing to socioeconomic recovery through improved skill training and access to employment for migrant workers impacted by COVID-19: Community outreach on safe migration	IDF		7,000
Sub-total Cambodia			**54,000**	**19,000**
Myanmar	Empowerment of Migrants Workers on the South-East Borderline:IRIS trainings for PRAs and bilateral roudtable dialogue (Myanmar-Thailand) on ethical recruitment	LIFT		25,000
	Enhancing Community Resilience in Conflict and Disaster-Affected Communities in Myanmar: MRC and safe migration outreach	KOICA	188,832	
Sub-total Myanmar			**188,832**	**25,000**
Totals	**619,132**	**525,132**		**94,000**

Table A2.2 Contributions in Kind by Stakeholders

Country	**Partner**	**Description of Contribution/Activities**	**Estimated Value, if applicable (USD)**	**Frequency/ Duration**

Thailand	Fixzy (Private Skills Development Provider)	Absorption of costs for construction skills training for migrant workers	5,000	Annually
Thailand	TPQI	Subsidies for migrant workers to access official skills certification	50 per person	Ongoing
Thailand	Employers	Worker's wage on day of training (not mandatory to pay by law)	10 per person	Annually
Thailand	Employers	Monetary prizes for good performers among trainees	100 per course	Ongoing
Thailand	Temples	Provision of training venue free of charge	-	Ongoing
Thailand	Employers	106 companies established in-service trainings for migrant workers benefitting 2,977 migrants	-	Ongoing
Thailand	Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Labour	Employers provide skills training to migrant employees subsidized by the Government through tax deductions, benefitting over 650,000 migrant workers since October 2021	Unavailable	Ongoing
Lao PDR	Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge Authories	Integrated Migrant Assistance Centre (iMAC) at the PoE in Vientiane Capital	-	Ongoing
Cambodia	Government-MoSVY	Migrant Resource Center is located in the premise of Poipet Transit Center	10000	On-going
Cambodia	Government-MLVT	Venue for Technical meetings for policy and PDO development are organized at MLVT	-	On-going
Cambodia	Government-MLVT	Meeting costs for Bilateral meeting between Cambodia and Thailand to finalize PoA on MoU on TIP organized	5000	2 days
Cambodia	Government-MLVT	4-month stipend for returning migrant trainees provided	280/trainee	On-going
Cambodia	Government-MLVT	Costs of Safe migration training conducted across 37 TVET institutes are covered by MLVT/TVET institutes	100/class	On-going
Cambodia	Red Cross	Activity cost for Safe migration outreach conducted	-	Monthly
Cambodia	Chab Dai coalition	Training costs for 3 rounds of TOTs on safe migration to CSOs conducted	10000	3 months
Cambodia	Government-TVET institute	Coordination and learner mobilization for TVET training to returning migrant workers provided	-	On-going
Myanmar	Employers	Venue for Provision of skills training venue free of charge	-	Ongoing
Myanmar	CMDWGs	Leveraged grant funds from own sources, from the 3,000 USD contributed from PROMISE, which was used to provide loans to 70 returneed migrants, with timely repayment, and 10% of the repayment used provide h support for 25 vulnerable migrants to improve their livelihoods as well as for safe migration awareness sessions led by CMDWGs.		

Table A2.3 Scale up of PROMISE activities through stakeholders

Activity	Partner	Target reached	Expected reach annually
Safe migration training for TVET trainees	TVET institutes	4,890	5,000
Safe migration community outreach after ToTs on safe migration and integration of safe migration in commune (sub-national) development plan	Commune counsellors	6,100	5,000
Safe migration community outreach after ToTs on safe migration for the CSO partners Kamrieng Transit Center and youth club leaders	Chab Dai Coalition, Youth Star Cambodia (youth-led organization)	928 10,677 (women: 4,915)	1,000
Pre-departure orientation	Private recruitment agencies and MLVT		30,000
Skills development for returning migrant workers (without support of the programme)	TVET institutes--PIBMC, NVIB and NPIA and Poipet Transit Center	110	200

Annexure 3: Gender-Disaggregated Numbers

Table A3.1 Number of Women Reached Through PROMISE Intervention

Intervention Logic and Indicator	Y1-Y3 Cumulative	Cumulative Women (Percentage)
Women and men migrant workers from CLM in T, and returning migrants, have enhanced decent employment and improved livelihoods contributing to economic resilience and poverty reduction.		
A: Percentage increase in monthly income among women and men migrant workers from CLM	Not available	
B: Number of migrant workers reached under PROMISE across CLMT	944,628	Not available
C: Number of migrant workers with enhanced employability and livelihoods	676,291	315,644 (46.67%)
D: Reduction on monthly income gap between women and men migrant workers	Not available	Not available
Outcome 1: RESPONSIVE National and regional policies and institutional capacities related to skills development, labour migration and ethical recruitment are more migrant-inclusive and gender-responsive, and better serve the needs of migrant workers and their employers.		
1A: Relevant policies across CLMT, and within ASEAN, are more effective and coherent in promoting skills development, safe migration and decent work for migrant workers	Women included in several policy recommendations, while not evident in others	
1B: Number of regional policies developed or revised as a result of the project	4	Not available
1C: Number of national policies developed or revised as a result of the project	7	Not available
1D: Number of government officials from CLMT demonstrating enhanced understanding of relevant policy frameworks and their application at the national level	163	71 (43.56%)
1E: Number of employers establishing in-service training mechanism for migrant workers	106	Not relveant
Output 1.1 Private sector has increased capacity to implement and comply with policies, good practices and international standards related to skills development, decent employment and safe migration for women and men migrant workers		
1.1A: Number of employers, businesses and brands reached with information and guidance on laws, policies good practices and international standards	9,861	67 (0.68%)
1.1B: Number of employers trained on skills development and migrant protection	695	442 (63.60%)
1.1C: Percentage of employers trained with increased capacity to implement and comply with policies, good practices and international standards,	88%	Not available
Output 1.2 Strengthened compliance with and implementation of ethical recruitment principles among recruiters, employers, Governments and CSO		
1.2A: Percentage of recruitment agencies in CLMT demonstrating increased compliance with ethical recruitment principles, including IRIS	88%	Not relevant
1.2B: Number of representatives from recruitment agencies in CLMT trained on ethical recruitment, including PDO/PAO	532	247 (46.43%)
1.2C: Number of government representatives trained on ethical recruitment and monitoring	414	256 (61.84%)
1.2D: Number of CSO representatives trained on ethical recruitment and monitoring	71	34 (47.89%)
1.2E: National professional standard for recruitment agencies established in Thailand	Yes	Not relevant
Output 1.3 Support the development and implementation of evidence-based, migrant-centred and gender-responsive national and regional policies and frameworks, including through enhanced collaboration between public and private sector		
1.3A: Policy development / implementation supported by the programme are evidence-based, migrant-centric and gender-responsive	Not assessed	Not assessed

1.3B: PROMISE priorities are represented in regional migration for (ASEAN/AFML and Colombo Process)	Yes	Not assessed
1.3C: Number of bilateral/regional policy consultation workshops	6	Not assessed
1.3D: Labour market information relevant to migrant workers and their employers is improved in CLMT and available to all relevant stakeholders	Pending	Not assessed
1.3E: Number of public-private collaboration mechanisms established/supported	4	Not assessed
Outcome 2: INCLUSIVE Women and men migrant workers have improved employability across the labour migration cycle		
2A: Percentage of migrant workers obtaining employment opportunities as a result of PROMISE referrals	20%	Not available
2B: Percentage of returning migrants receiving economic integration assistance reporting improved employment or livelihood	100%	Not available
2C: Number of returnee migrant workers find employment with PROMISE support	466	279
2D: Number of migrant workers accessing skills development programs through PROMISE referrals	648377	303046
2E: Number of migrant workers: who access skills development and skills certification with direct PROMISE support	23,458	11,124
2F: Number of migrants workers receiving PDO/PAOs through PRAs and relevant government agencies supported by PROMISE (at least 50% women)	347	170
2G: Number of returning migrant workers gaining skills certification in CLM through PROMISE referrals (at least 50% women)	100	Not available
Output 2.1 Improved access of migrant workers to skills development, certification and recognition at all stages of the migration cycle		
2.1A: Number of TVET students receiving safe migration training (at least 50% women)	6,143	2,337
2.1B: Number of migrant workers trained on soft skills before deployment in CLM with direct PROMISE support (excluding financial literacy) (at least 50% women)	24	13
2.1C: Number of migrant workers trained on technical skills in Thailand with direct PROMISE support (at least 50% women)	3,247	1,444
2.1D: Number of migrant workers with their technical skills certified by a recognised skills certification body in Thailand (at least 50% women)	3,478	1,579
2.1E: Number of migrant workers trained on soft skills in Thailand with direct PROMISE support (excluding financial literacy) (at least 50% women)	4,351	2,411
2.1F: Number of migrant workers with their soft skills certified by a recognised skills certification body in Thailand (at least 50% women)	3,730	2,056
2.1G: Number of returning migrant workers trained with technical skills with direct PROMISE support (at least 50% women)	944	320
Output 2.2 Enhanced mechanisms for jobs matching and referrals for returnee migrants		
2.2A: Jobs matching platforms/referral mechanisms are available and suit the needs of returnee migrant workers and their employers	In progress	Not available
2.2B:Number of employers who employ returnee migrants as a result of the programme	45	0
2.2C: Number of government representatives trained on job matching	62	19
2.2D: Number of returnee migrant workers referred to employment in CLM (at least 50% women)	2810	634
Output 2.3 Improved business skills and digital and financial literacy for migrant workers in CLMT		
2.3A:Number of migrant workers who received start-up/seed funding or economic integration assistance	733	391
2.3B: Percentage of migrant workers trained demonstrating improved knowledge on business skills, digital literacy, and financial literacy	91%	0
2.3C: Number of migrant workers/migrant household who establish businesses or strengthen existing ones	486	217
2.3D: Number of migrant workers trained in entrepreneurship skills, digital/ financial literacy with direct PROMISE support (at least 50% women)	1541	964
Outcome 3: PROTECTIVE Women and men migrant workers are more informed and protected at all stages of the migration cycle.		

3A: Number of migrant workers receiving information as a result of the programme through referrals to skills development, counselling, legal advice, and safe migration information)	268,337	Not available
3B: Percentage of migrants surveyed with increased awareness (disaggregated by: employment, skills; counselling; legal advice; safe migration information)	Not available	Not available
Output 3.1 Improved and more coordinated assistance and services for migrant workers		
3.1A: SOPs, including job and skills development referrals, are implemented by migrant worker service providers across CLM	In progress	0
3.1B: Number of relevant staff trained on SOP	92	49
3.1C: Number of migrant workers assisted through PROMISE supported MRCs/MAC	114,452	47,265
Output 3.2 Improved access to information for migrant workers and their families		
3.2A: Number of audience members reached via Mitr Thai (including relevant FB posts)	89,335	0
3.2B: Number of migrant workers reached through information campaigns in CLM	24,914	12,672
3.2C: Number of CSO and MDWG representatives trained on safe migration, return and reintegration services	922	482
3.2D: Number of migrant workers brought into networking mechanisms in Thailand (at least 50% women)	1,173	897

Annexure 4: Key Findings from Survey of Migrant Workers

A survey of CLM migrant workers who had participated in PROMISE supported training was conducted. This included migrant workers in Thailand as well as returnee migrants or potential migrants from or to Thailand. Key findings from the survey are presented in this annexure.

Respondents profile overview

The survey gathered responses from 492 migrant workers in Thailand or in home countries, of which 207 were from Cambodia and 285 were from Myanmar. Respondents came from a wide variety of age groups, as shown in the table alongside, with an average age of 29 years.

Table A4. 1 Average age of Survey Respondents

Country	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Average Age
Cambodia	16	61	29.42
Myanmar	14	73	29.29

Gender representation was balanced, with about 47% of respondents identifying as female and 51% as male. A very small percentage (0.20%) identified as a gender other than female or male, while the rest preferred not to disclose their gender. This distribution was not even in both countries, though. In Cambodia, the majority of respondents were male (72.38%), while 26.19% were female. In Myanmar, the bulk of the respondents were female (62.72%), while 35.89% identified as male.

While the survey targeted migrant workers from CLM who had participated in PROMISE trainings, these were workers across the migration cycle. Overall, most respondents were returnee migrants, with 43.06% stating that they have returned home after migrating and do not intend to migrate again. and do not plan to migrate again and 5.71% stating that they were returnees who planned to migrate again soon. About 31.84% of respondents were migrant workers currently in Thailand, the majority of these being from Myanmar, as many as 52% of the respondents from Myanmar were in Thailand. A small portion (4.90%) were those who planned to migrate for the first time soon. About 13.47% of respondents selected the "other "category, of which about half the respondents provided details stating that they planned to permanently relocate or stay in Thailand.

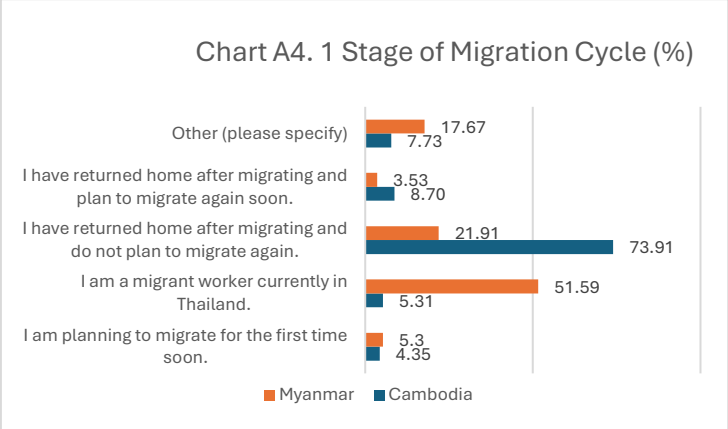


Chart A4.1 provides a disaggregation of this data by country. As can be seen, the number of respondents stating that they have returned and do not plan to migrate again is significantly high in Cambodia. This percentage is lower among Myanmar migrants, which may be due to the political situation and lack of gainful livelihoods opportunities in Myanmar.

Of the migrant workers in Thailand, the largest group is of respondents (43.80%) have been in Thailand for more than 5 years, followed by those who have stayed for 1-3 years (30.99%), those who have been in the country for six months to 1 year (12.40%), and those in the country for three to five years (10.74%). The smallest group of respondents in Thailand (2.48%) have been there for less than six months.

Among the returnee migrant workers, 31.94% stayed in another country for more than five years before returning home, 24.45% spent one to three years abroad, while 17.84% stayed for six months to one year. A smaller portion, 14.76%, had migrated for less than six months, and only 11.01% had stayed between three to five years. These figures highlight varying migration durations, with long-term stays being the most common.

Pre-departure Orientation

Concerningly, when asked if they had received a PDO or not, prior to migration, most respondents gave a negative answer. From this, it seems that PDO was not widely accessible or provided to migrants. Overall, 58.32% of respondents reported that they had not participated in a PDO, while only 28.42% confirmed that they had received orientation, while 13.26% were unsure.

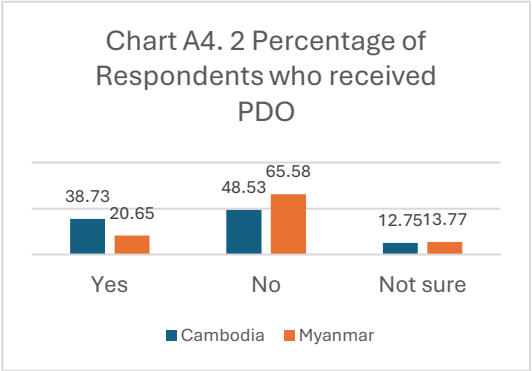
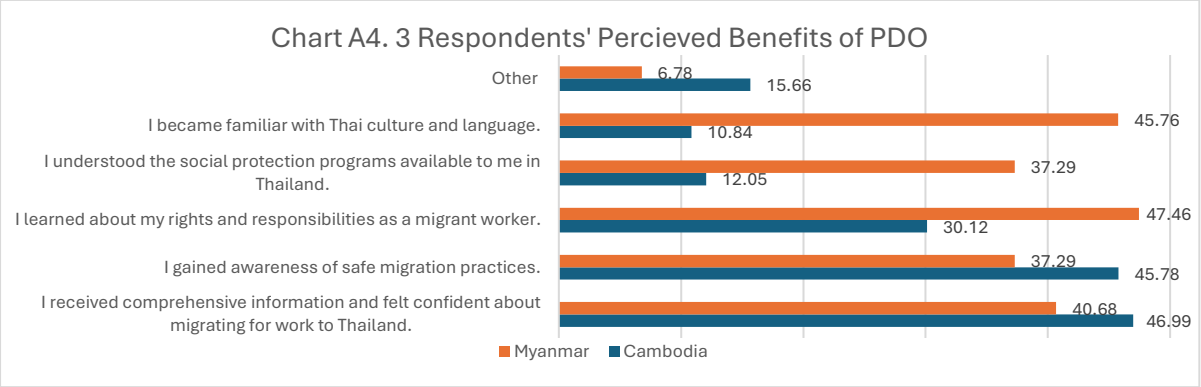


Chart A4.2 provides data disaggregated by country. It is visible that a higher number of respondents in Cambodia reported receiving PDO while a higher number in Myanmar reported the opposite.

When the respondents who received PDO were asked how they would rate the PDO, they gave an average score of 3.64. Interestingly, from these, respondents in Cambodia only rated it a 3.3 while those in Myanmar rated it 4.08. Together, these results seem to indicate that workers in Cambodia are more likely to

receive a PDO, but those that do in Myanmar, seem to be more satisfied with the PDO provided[12].

When asked about the perceived benefits of PDO, the largest share of respondents stated that it provided comprehensive information and increased their confidence about migrating to Thailand (44.53%) and helped gain awareness of safe migration practices (43.07%), followed by other responses. The lowest share of respondents (22.63%) stated that it helped them understand the social protection programmes available to them in Thailand. The following figure provides this data disaggregated by country. These are depicted in Chart A4.3.

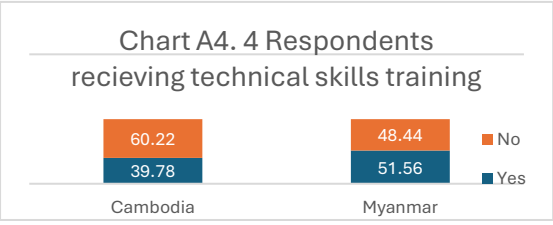


Among migrant workers from Myanmar, 45.76% of respondents stated that they became familiar with Thai culture and language, while the corresponding number for Cambodia is only 10.84%. Similar differences can be seen in responses on learning rights and responsibilities and about social protection programs available to them in Thailand. Numbers are a little more similar for both countries in terms of gaining awareness about safe migration practices and about confidence in migrating to Thailand, which are slightly higher for Cambodia. However, overall, these numbers show room for improvement in positive responses.

The survey had an optional question for respondents to offer their feedback on improving the PDO or additional topics to be covered. There were 19 such responses from Cambodia and 14 from Myanmar, which are given in Table A4.2

Table A4. 2 Suggestions by Cambodia and Myanmar Respondents on improving PDO

Cambodia		Myanmar	
Response	**Number**	**Response**	**Number**
Appreciative Inputs	4	Wants more training programs	3
Safety and Pre-departure Training	3	Wants training on worker rights & regulations	2
More information on workplace rights, contracts, and MRC support	2	Wants mental health & stress relief training	1
More training and support	4	Wants emergency contact numbers for support	1
Encouragement for responsibility among migrant workers	1	Wants Thai authorities to be more considerate	1
Unclear responses	2	Wants better financial & legal support	1
		Appreciates current training quality	1
		Wants improved living & working conditions	1
		Unclear responses	4



Technical Skills Training

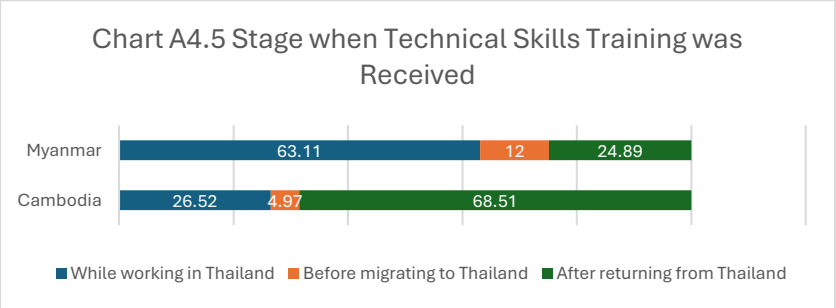
46.38% of respondents were those who had received any form of technical skills training.

Chart A4.4 shows that a higher percentage of respondents from Myanmar were those who had received technical or vocational skills training and fewer were from Cambodia.

[12] To be noted that some of the respondents have considered safe migration training as PDO.

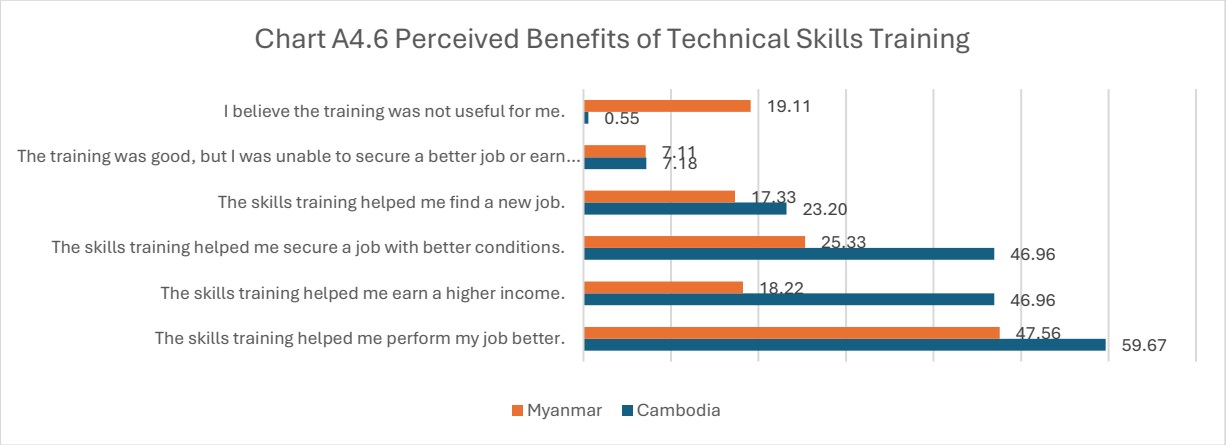
There was an almost even split between those who had received it while working in Thailand (46.88%) and those that had received it after returning from Thailand. Only 8.73% of respondents reported receiving training before migration. This is in keeping with PROMISE activities, as the pre-departure training through SMPs is only being piloted, and the focus has been on training at destination and for returnee migrant workers.

When looking at this data disaggregated by country, there is a significant difference among responses from each country, as shown in Chart A4.5.



A significantly higher proportion of migrant workers from Myanmar reported receiving training at destination. This is in line with the profile of the respondent, as a higher proportion of respondents from Myanmar were presently in Thailand.

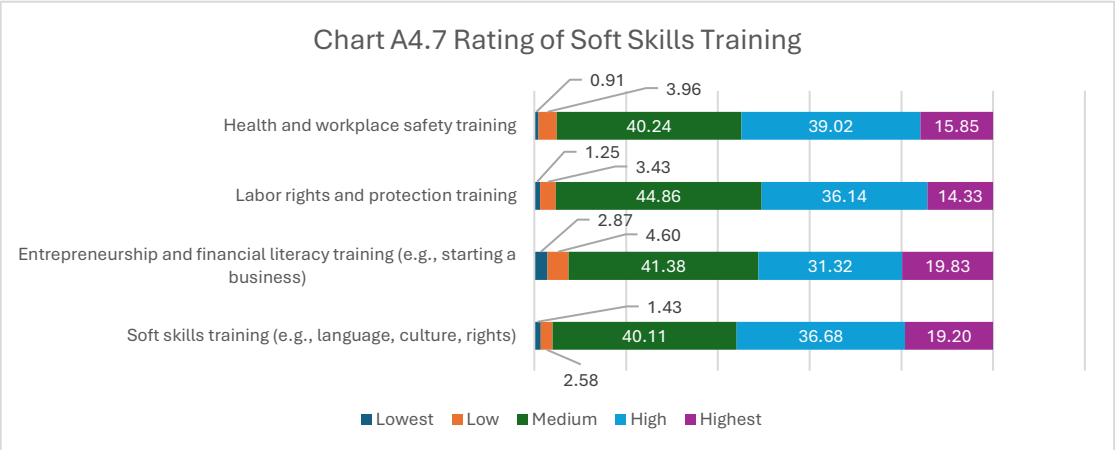
When asked how they benefited from the technical skills training, over half of the respondents (53.12%) felt that it improved their job performance. 35.16% reported that it helped them secure a job with better conditions, 31.17% stated that the training enabled them to earn a higher income, and 19.95% credited it with helping them find a new job. A smaller proportion (7.23%) acknowledged the training as beneficial but stated that it did not lead to better job opportunities or additional income. Notably, 10.97% believed the training was not useful for them. Chart A4.6 shows this data disaggregated by country.

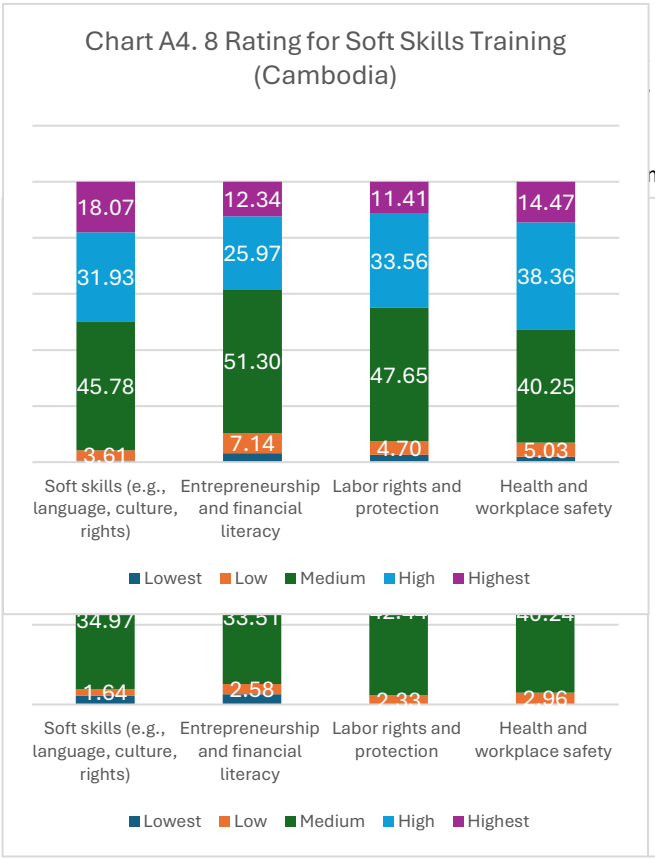


The number of positive responses are significantly higher among respondents from Cambodia, as compared to those from Myanmar. Most notably, almost 1 in 5 respondents from Myanmar considered the training not useful, while this was almost negligible in Cambodia. This indicates that respondent's satisfaction seems to be higher in Cambodia. This is an issue that is worth exploring in greater detail.

Soft Skills Training

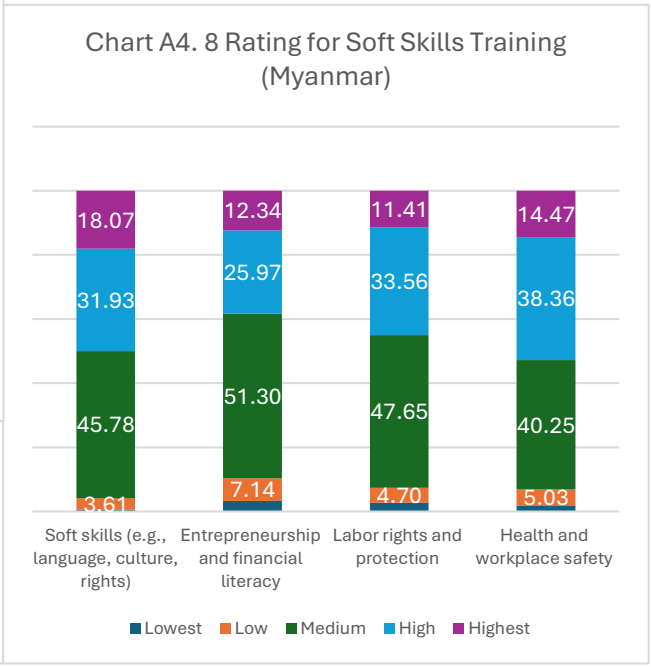
401 respondents reported receiving soft skills training. Respondents were asked to share their rating for the various soft skills training components they had received. Chart A4.7 shows the overall rating of soft skills training





which is a promising sign. Similarly, very few provide negative which shows that there is room for improvement. Chart A4.8

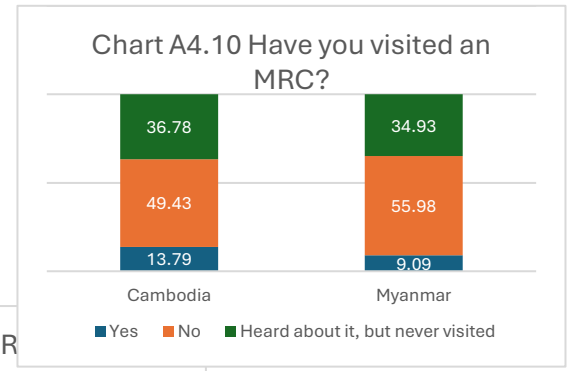
mpared to Myanmar. When asked how the training benefited



them, the highest number of respondents selected that it made their stay in Thailand more convenient and that it improved their overall understanding (both 36.51%). This was closely followed by respondents selecting that it encouraged them to start their own business (33.33%), it helped them make better financial decisions and save money (31.22%) and allowed them to access social protection measures (21.69%). Only 2.12% selected that the training was good but not useful for them, and 1.59% selected that they did not find the training relevant. Chart A4.9 provides this data disaggregated by country.Ratings about benefits of training are significantly higher among respondents from Cambodia than those from Myanmar. The only exception is the option on making stay in Thailand more convenient. This may be due to the respondent profile, as a higher number of respondents from Cambodia are returnee migrants, while for Myanmar the higher share is currently in Thailand.

Engagement with MRCs

In both countries, notably, a very small proportion of respondents had visited the MRCs (11.11%), and over half did not know about nor had not visited them (52.91%). This is surprising, since the respondents only include those workers who have participated in PROMISE training. This indicates that there is greater potential for increasing visibility of the MRCs and increasing worker outreach with them, as knowledge of MRCs in the larger community will likely be far lower.



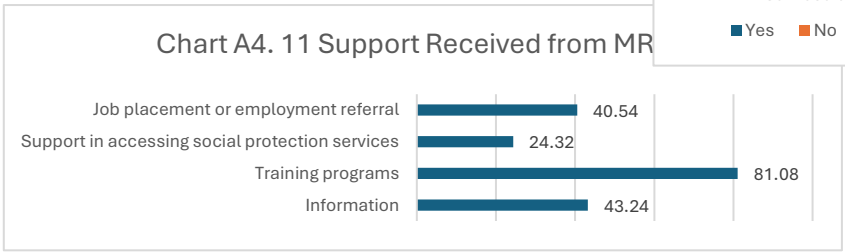


Chart A4.10 shows that a slightly larger proportion of respondents in Cambodia visited an MRC. This data, however, is not conclusive, as it is skewed by the profile of respondents and their engagement with certain MRCs or presence in certain locations.

Those who had received support were asked what kind of support they received from the MRCs. Chart 4.11 provides their responses. 81% had participated in training programs, 43% had received information, 40.54% had received job placement support or referrals, and 24% had received support in accessing social protection services.

Suggestions and feedback

The survey also had an open question asking respondents for their feedback and suggestions to improve the relevance and effectiveness of the training and support offered under PROMISE. A total of 290 respondents provided suggestion on improving the skill training programs. In Cambodia, 125 suggestions were collected from the survey respondents. Expansion of training programs is the most requested improvement, with 32 respondents emphasizing the need for more courses, diverse skills, rural expansion, and evening or online learning options. Technical and vocational training follows closely with 27 respondents, highlighting skills like electricity, baking, sewing, car repair, cybersecurity, and sustainable agriculture. Additionally, 16 respondents called for financial and business support, while 14 emphasized language and soft skills training. Employment and job placement support was requested by 11 respondents, particularly in internships, industry partnerships, and job counseling. Support for migrant workers and poor communities (10 responses) and legal awareness on labor rights (7 responses) were also highlighted. Infrastructure improvements (6 responses) and enhancing training quality (5 responses) were the least mentioned but remain relevant for program effectiveness.

In Myanmar of 165 respondents, 50 individuals had no specific suggestions or comments. However, among those who provided input, Business & Entrepreneurship Training (22 responses) was the most frequently requested. Skills Training in General (14 responses) and Language Courses (12 responses) were also in demand. Financial Management Training (10 responses) and Computer & IT Skills (8 responses) were as essential. Other notable training needs included Beauty & Personal Care (7 responses), Hospitality & Food Preparation (6 responses), Sewing & Handicrafts (5 responses), and Fire Safety & Emergency Training (2 responses). There were also requests for Social Enterprise & Social Work Training (2 responses) and Migrant Rights & Safe Migration Training (5 responses). 8 respondents called for more frequent or advanced training. 9 responses expressed positive feedback, while 7 respondents suggested specific skills such as mechanics, editing, and international rights training.

Annexure 5: Evaluation Design Matrix

Table A5.1 Evaluation Design Matrix for Promise II

DAC Criteria	Q. No.	Evaluation Question	Research Methods	Stakeholders Groups for Primary Research	Criteria and Indicators for Assessment
Relevance	1	Has the project selected and supported the right partners and interventions to contribute to improved employment and income, enhanced skills and safer migration journeys of CLM migrant workers?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Literature Review	SDC, IOM, Civil society, Multilateral Agencies and INGOs	Partners and interventions selected; rationale for selection (expertise of the partners, earlier interventions, sector, scale); review of partnerships and interventions (responsiveness to needs of migrants).
	2(a)	To what extent has the programme contributed in a tangible manner to addressing the needs and priorities of migrant workers in the countries of origin (including their communities) and in the countries of destination, viz. Thailand?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Survey	SDC, IOM, Migrant Workers, Employers and Recruiters, Skill Development Providers, Government Agencies	Review of needs, demands of migrant workers and matching against project interventions and outputs; assessing migrant workers perspectives on home and host countries (survey data to contain a gender disaggregated analysis, and questions about needs of women and excluded groups to be included in the survey and interviews).
	2(b)	Are employers and migrant workers satisfied with the training and support provided by the project? Is there more demand from their side? If so, what are these demands and needs?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Survey	Migrant Workers, Employers and Recruiters, Skill Development Providers	Responsiveness to needs and priorities of migrants through a review of needs, demands of migrant workers and matching against project interventions and outputs, assessing migrant workers and employers' perspectives.
	3	How did the crisis in Myanmar impact the Programme, and how has the Programme been able to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations from Myanmar affected by the crisis?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Survey	SDC, IOM, Migrant Workers, Government	Responsiveness to the needs of migrant workers and vulnerable populations, assessed through a contextual analysis of crisis and its impact; review of specific project interventions or modifications to address these particular needs
Coherence	4	To what extent are PROMISE interventions complementary to those of other actors (including bilateral and multilateral donors, UN initiatives such as ILO's TRIANGLE project, private sector, civil society)? How do you assess the pertinence of the tripartite Letter of Intent between TICA, SDC and IOM?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Literature Review	SDC, IOM, Civil Society, Multilateral Agencies and INGOs, Government	Synergies and complementarities with projects by other actors (government, non-government, and private sector); analysis of PROMISE partnerships
	5(a)	To what extent are ASEAN Member States, in particular Cambodia and Lao PDR, committed to align with relevant ASEAN skills development and safe migration standards?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Literature Review, Policy Landscape Analysis	SDC, IOM, Government, ASEAN, Skill Development Providers, Civil Society	Review of ratification and implementation status of standards in policy, practice in Member States of ASEAN
	5(b)	How has PROMISE been seizing opportunities to influence	Project Reports Review, In-	SDC, IOM, ASEAN	Connection modalities of PROMISE to ASEAN influencers;

		normative frameworks, policy, and practices of ASEAN, such as the SLOM, AFML, ACMW, etc.?	Depth Interviews		nature of opportunities that have arisen; review of PROMISE response to these opportunities
Effectiveness	6	Has PROMISE managed to meaningfully build the capacities of private recruitment agencies in terms of safe migration and ethical recruitment principles, including to strengthen their integrity?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, governments, Employers and Recruiters	Responsiveness and alignment to capacity enhancement needs of agencies identified and targeted by PROMISE; additional needs and perceived capacity gaps reported by private agencies and other stakeholders;
	7(a)	Has PROMISE managed to influence relevant CLMT government policies, practices to enhance protection of migrant workers and access to skill development?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Literature Review, Policy Landscape Analysis	SDC, IOM, ASEAN, Government, Civil Society, Skill Development Providers	Review of policy, practice changes reported by stakeholders and contribution reported by PROMISE; number of policy instruments or processes influenced
	7(b)	To which extent has IOM managed to foster/facilitate relevant bilateral dialogues between the recipient country Thailand and the sending countries Cambodia and Lao PDR (e.g. regarding skills transfer, mutual recognition of prior learning, portability of social security benefits)?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Literature Review, Policy Landscape Analysis	SDC, IOM, Government, ASEAN, Civil Society, Multilateral Agencies and INGOs, Skill Development Providers, Employers and Recruiters	Review of dialogues/workshops facilitated by IOM/PROMISE; Outputs of dialogues facilitated; Reports made by stakeholders on effectiveness of dialogue and outputs and further opportunities
	7(c)	How effectively is PROMISE supporting relevant structures of ASEAN, notably SLOM, ACMW and AFML, in designing, implementing, and monitoring relevant policies and plans?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	IOM, ASEAN, SDC	Identification of relevant structures of ASEAN; Modes of participation, consultation, partnership, etc. of PROMISE with these structures; contributions and outputs that PROMISE has made to these structures; influence and connections with these structures
	8	How do you assess the different skills development approaches and models that were initiated, supported by PROMISE? What are the most effective forms of collaboration and modalities to support migrant workers' employability and income?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Literature Review, Survey	SDC, IOM, Skill Development Providers, Civil Society, Migrant Workers, Multilateral Agencies and Donors, Government	Scale, outputs, responsiveness of models, modalities, approaches, collaboration adopted by PROMISE; rapid assessment of models and approaches prevalent in the region; models that have shown success
	9	To what extent has PROMISE achieved its intended results related to the crosscutting topics of gender equality and good governance?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, Government	Gender-segregated data for each activity; consideration of gender mainstreaming in research, policy, practice; review of rights-based, participatory approaches and good governance related considerations in interventions;
	10	Which interventions of PROMISE should be continued, and which should be discontinued in any	Project Documents Review, In-	SDC, IOM, Civil Society, Government, ASEAN,	Analysis of successful interventions (based on scale, responsiveness, effects) and factors for success; analysis of

		subsequent new intervention, and why?	Depth Interviews		least successful interventions and factors; analysis of risks, challenges, and barriers
Efficiency	11(a)	How have the governance/steering structures under PROMISE (NPACs in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Lao PDR, PPSC in Thailand, RPAC at the regional level) contributed to the project, in terms of their functioning and relevance?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, Government, Members of steering structures	Extent to which steering structures answered to their TOR; Self-assessment by SDC, IOM, members of steering structures; review of steering structures outputs, minutes, activities and contribution to interventions or decision-making
	11(b)	To what extent have PROMISE management, monitoring, and steering mechanisms supported an effective and efficient (cost structure) project implementation between the IOM's Bangkok Office and the national offices of IOM in Phnom Penh, Vientiane and Yangon?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM	Identification of management, monitoring and steering mechanisms; Assessment of process flow, best practices, roadblocks, delays or redundancies; effect on project implementation
	12	How has SDC been supervising project implementation across the different countries? Has the applied set-up, with the Swiss Cooperation Office in Phnom Penh having the lead and the Swiss Cooperation Offices/Embassies in Vientiane, Yangon, Bangkok and Jakarta/ ASEAN ensuring national-level monitoring and liaison with ASEAN, been working?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, Government, ASEAN	Self-assessment by SDC; Review of processes and systems for applied set-up; engagement between SCOs and ASEAN, and reports by ASEAN;
	13	To what degree have governments, private sector and civil society contributed financially and/or in-kind to project interventions?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, Civil Society, Skill Development Providers, Employers and Recruiters, Government, ASEAN	Analysis of partnership modalities and outputs; identification of financial contributions made by partners; Identification of in-kind support by partners (resource time, staff/faculty secondment, office or meeting spaces, development of briefs or written outputs; support provided by government or integration with government programmes
Impact	14	To what extent has PROMISE generated, or is expected to generate lasting impact at the policy, institutional, and target population levels, as conceptualized in the project document? In which area has the project been most successful in that regard, and where has it had less influence?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Survey	SDC, IOM, Civil Society, Skill Development Providers, Employers and Recruiters, Government, ASEAN, Migrant Workers	Review of performance against target indicators in proposal such as number of participants, increase in income, number of policies developed, etc.; analysis of high and low achievement areas
	15	To what extent has PROMISE generated, or is expected to generate lasting impact at the policy, institutional, and target population levels, as conceptualized in the project document? In which area has the project been most successful	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, Civil Society, Government, Employers and Recruiters, Skill Development Providers	Review of actions taken to influence; Private agencies showcasing increased compliance with ethical recruitment principles; Assessment of procedural shifts reported by private recruiters and employers;

		in that regard, and where has it had less influence?			
Sustainability	16	How effectively has the project built the necessary capacity of government institutions to manage relevant institutions (such as Migrant Resource Centres/ Integrated Migrant Assistance Centres, Community Working Groups, etc.) and policies? To what extent are private recruitment agencies in CLM capable/willing to sustain predeparture orientation standards, and how are Thai companies/ employers committed to provide skills training and recognition to CLM migrant workers?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, Civil Society, Government, Employers and Recruiters, Skill Development Providers	Assessment of the capacities of government institutions to manage relevant; Assessment of procedural shifts reported by private recruiters and employers; Alignments in skill recognition systems across member states; extent to which PDO, skill training and prior recognition systems integrated in policy and institutional systems of member states.
	17	Which specific interventions and partnerships have demonstrated significant potential for sustainability and scalability?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews	SDC, IOM, Civil Society, Government, Employers and Recruiters, Skill Development Providers, Multilateral Agencies and INGOs	Interventions which implementing agencies and government have mainstreamed into their own programmes (trainings, recognition of prior learning); The extent to which budget allocations have been made for any of the interventions; Have/ SDC IOM started more projects around the most effective interventions?
	18	Who are the key drivers (and restrainers) of change for improving labour governance and the employability of migrant workers in the region? What areas should be further strengthened?	Project Documents Review, In-Depth Interviews, Literature Review, Policy Landscape Analysis	SDC, IOM, Government, ASEAN, Multilateral Agencies and INGOs	Stakeholder mapping and analysis; Assessment of stakeholder and policy action at national, regional level; Data reported by civil society and academic literature

Annexure 6: List of Partners and Stakeholders

Table A6.1 Country-wise List of Partners and Stakeholders

Stakeholder Type	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Regional
ASEAN					ASEC
					ACMW
Government	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT)	Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW)		Ministry of Labour - Permanent Secretary Office/Department of Skills Development	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Lao PDR
	Department of Employment and Manpower, General Department of Labour (GDL) of MLVT	Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW)		Ministry of Labour - Department of Employment	Ministry of Manpower Indonesia
	Directorate General of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DGTVET), MLVT	Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW)		Ministry of Labour - Department of Labour Protection and Welfare	Ministry of Manpower Indonesia
	Poipet Transit Center (PTC)	Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW)		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Thailand International Cooperation Agency	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training Cambodia
	Siem Reap Provincial Job Center	Job Centre, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)		Thailand Professional Qualification Institute	
	Battambang Provincial Job Center				
	Banteay Meanchey Provincial Administration				
	Mongkol Borei District Administration				
Private Sector (Employers and Recruiters)	Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies (ACRA)	Lao Employment Service Association (LESA)	The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI)	Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT)	
		Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI)	Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEAF)		
			Tain Bachi Private Recruitment Agency		
Skill Development Providers	Polytechnic Institute of Banteay Meanchey (PIBMC)	Skills Development Institute, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Myanmar Creative University	Fixzy Co. Ltd.	

	National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor (NPIA)	Skills Development Institute, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Dual Tech Vocational Training Centre		
			May Yu Thanlwin Co.,ltd		
Civil Society Organisations	Legal Support for Women and Children (LSCW)	Village Focus International	Pa O Youth Learning Centre	Foundation for Rural Youth	
	Cambodian Informal Economy Reinforcement Association (CIERA)	Sengsavang		Migrant Working Group (MWG)	
				HomeNet	
				Sisters' Foundation	
Multilateral Agencies					ILO
					UN Women

Annexure 7: List of stakeholders met

Table A7.1 Country-wise list of stakeholders and number of people met

No of organizations	Category	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Others	Regional	No. of people met
3	**UN agencies**	3	5	7	5	3	3	26
2	**Funding agencies**	2	3	1		4		10
13	**Government**	20	4		4			28
5	**Skill Providers**	4	1	2	1			8
8	**Private Recruitment Agencies/ Employers Organization**	2	2	1	4			9
7	**CSOs**	2	2		4		1	9
3	**Community representatives and workers**	29	2	12			1	44
41	**Total**	**62**	**19**	**23**	**18**	**7**	**5**	**134**

Table A7.2 List of organizations met

UN agencies
IOM, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and RoAP
ILO, Regional Office, Thailand
UN Women, Regional Office, Thailand
Funding agencies
SDC Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Berne, Bangladesh
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Government
Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Cambodia
Department of Employment and Manpower, MLVT Cambodia
Directorate General of Technical Vocational Education and Training, MLVT, Cambodia
Banteay Meanchey Provincial Administration, Cambodia
Commune Administration, Cambodia
District Administration, Cambodia
Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour, Thailand
Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Thailand
Poi Pet Transit Centre, Cambodia
Thailand Professional Qualification Institute, Thailand
Department of Labour Protection and Welfare, Ministry of Labour, Thailand
Department of TVET, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR
Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR
Skill Providers
Dual Tech Vocational Training Institute, Myanmar
Polytechnic Institute of Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia
National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor, Cambodia
Skills Development Institute, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), Lao PDR
Thailand Professional Qualification Institute
Private Recruitment Agencies/ Employers Organization
Premium Manpower, Cambodia

Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies (ACRA), Cambodia
Pongpara Polymer, Thailand
Lao Employment Service Association, Lao PDR
Employers Confederation of Thailand (ECOT)
The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry
Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), Lao PDR
Fixzy, Thailand
CSOs
Legal Support for Women and Children (LSCW), Cambodia
Cambodian Informal Economy Reinforcement Association (CIERA)
Migrant Working Group
Foundation for Rural Youth (FRY), Thailand
Village Focus International, Lao PDR
Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (Homenet Thailand)
Centre for Development and Environment, Lao PDR
Community representatives and workers
CMDWG, Myanmar
FGDs met in Thailand
ASEAN Regional Forum

Table A7.3 List of persons met

No.	Date	Name of Respondent(s)	Designation	Organisation	Stakeholder Category	Mode (Virtual/In-person)
1	13.12.2024	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Virtual

9	06.01.2025	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	

[redacted]

[redacted]




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51	17.01.2025	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Annexure 8: Evaluation Questions

Table A8.1 List of evaluation question

DAC Criteria	Q. No.	Evaluation Question
Relevance	1	Has the project selected and supported the right partners and interventions to contribute to improved employment and income, enhanced skills and safer migration journeys of CLM migrant workers?
	2	To what extent has the programme contributed in a tangible manner to addressing the needs and priorities of migrant workers in the home countries (incl. their communities) and in the host country Thailand? Are employers and migrant workers satisfied with the training and support provided by the project? Is there more demand from their side? If so, what are these demands and needs?
	3	How did the crisis in Myanmar impact the Programme, and how has the Programme been able to the specific needs of Burmese refugees?
Coherence	4	To what extent are PROMISE interventions complementary to those of other actors (including bilateral and multilateral donors, UN initiatives such as ILO's TRIANGLE project, private sector, civil society)?
	5(a)	To what extent are ASEAN Member States, in particular Cambodia and Lao PDR, committed to align with relevant ASEAN skills development and safe migration standards?
	5(b)	How has PROMISE been seizing opportunities to influence normative frameworks and practices of ASEAN?
Effectiveness	6	Has PROMISE managed to meaningfully build the capacities of private recruitment agencies in terms of safe migration and ethical recruitment principles, including to strengthen their integrity?
	7(a)	Has PROMISE managed to influence relevant CLMT government policies, practices to enhance protection of migrant workers and access to skill development?
	7(b)	To which extent has IOM managed to foster/facilitate relevant bilateral dialogues between the recipient country Thailand and the sending countries Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar (e.g. regarding skills transfer, mutual recognition of prior learning, portability of social security benefits)? And how do you assess the pertinence of the tripartite Letter of Intent between TICA, SDC and IOM in that regard?
	7(c)	How effectively is PROMISE supporting relevant structures of ASEAN, notably SLOM, ACMW and AFML, in designing, implementing relevant policies and plans?
	8	How do you assess the different skills development approaches and models that were initiated, supported by PROMISE? What are the most effective forms of collaboration and modalities to support migrant workers' employability and income?
	9	To what extent has PROMISE achieved its intended results related to the crosscutting topics of gender equality and good governance?
	10	Which interventions of PROMISE should be continued, and which should be discontinued in any subsequent new intervention, and why?
Efficiency	11(a)	How do you assess the functioning and relevance of the governance/steering structures under PROMISE (NPACs in Phnom Penh and Lao PDR, PPSC in Bangkok, RPAC)?
	11(b)	To what extent have PROMISE management, monitoring, and steering mechanisms supported an effective and efficient (cost structure) project implementation between the IOM's Bangkok Office and the national offices of IOM in Phnom Penh, Vientiane and Yangon?
	12	How has SDC been supervising project implementation across the different countries? Has the applied set-up, with the Swiss Cooperation Office in Phnom Penh having the lead and the Swiss Cooperation Offices/Embassies in Vientiane, Yangon, Bangkok and Jakarta ensuring national-level monitoring and liaison with ASEAN, been working?
	13	To what degree have governments, private sector and civil society contributed financially and/or in-kind to project interventions?
Impact	14	To what extent has PROMISE generated, or is expected to generate lasting impact at the policy, institutional, and target population levels, as conceptualized in the project document? In which area has the project been most successful in that regard, and where has it had less influence?
	15	How well has the project managed to influence the functioning and oversight of private recruitment agencies and the institutionalization of pre-departure orientation and skills training by the competent authorities?
Sustainability	16	How effectively has the project built the necessary capacity of government institutions to manage relevant institutions (namely Migrant Resource Centres/ Integrated Migrant Assistance Centres) and policies? To what extent are private recruitment agencies in CLM capable/willing to sustain predeparture orientation standards, and how are Thai companies/ employers committed to provide skills training and recognition to CLM migrant workers?

	17	Which specific interventions have demonstrated significant potential for sustainability and scalability?
	18	Who are the key drivers (and restrainers) of change for improving labour governance and the employability of migrant workers in the region? What areas should be further strengthened?

Annexure 9: Documents Studied

PROMISE Project Documents

Arezo Malakooti (2021). *Impact Assessment of the Skills Development Component Under the Poverty Reduction Through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Thailand (PROMISE) Programme: Final Report.*
IOM (2021). *Agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the IOM on PROMISE Phase II.*
IOM (2021). *Project Proposal for Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand (Promise II).*
IOM (2021). *Socioeconomic Impact of COVID-19 On Migrant Workers in Cambodia. Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand.*
IOM (2021). *Towards a Shared Responsibility Framework on Ethical Recruitment, Decent Employment and Skills Development for Migrant Workers in Thailand.*
IOM (2022). *Interim Financial Report (September 2021 to 31 August 2022): Poverty Reduction Through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand (PROMISE Phase II).*
IOM (2022). *Interim Report to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for PROMISE Phase II (Reporting period September 2021 – August 2022).*
IOM (2022). *Minutes of First Meeting of the Programme Advisory Committee for Cambodia (PAC-KH) of the Poverty Reduction Through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand Phase II (PROMISE II).*
IOM (2023). *Interim Financial Report for PROMISE Phase II (Reporting Period September 2021 to 31 August 2023).*
IOM (2023). *Interim Report to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for PROMISE Phase II (Reporting Period September 2022 – August 2023).*
IOM (2023). *Minutes of Second Meeting the Programme Advisory Committee for Cambodia (PAC-KH) of the Poverty Reduction Through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand Phase II (PROMISE II).*
IOM (2024). *Interim Financial Report for PROMISE Phase II (Reporting Period September 2021 to 31 August 2024).*
IOM (2024). *Interim Report to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for PROMISE Phase II (Reporting Period 2023-24).*
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IOM (2024). *Meeting Summary of Project Advisory Mid-Term Review Meeting on Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills and Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand (PROMISE) in Myanmar.*
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Annexure 10: Terms of Reference of the Project

Terms of references
Contract no. 81082409 (Local Mandate)
PROMISE Evaluation and Scoping Study

Type of assignment:	**Independent evaluation** (end-of-phase/project evaluation) and **scoping study**
Project to be evaluated:	PROMISE (Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand)
Scope of work:	1. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of PROMISE (Phase 2) 2. Conduct a scoping/design study for a new regional migration project
Duration of the assignment	60 working days, 04 November 2024 to 28 February 2025
Contracting authority:	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); Swiss Cooperation Office in Cambodia
Coverage:	Cambodia, Lao PDR and Bangkok (on site); Jakarta and Myanmar (remotely)

I. **Introduction**

This document contains all relevant information related to a call for proposals for an upcoming independent evaluation of the regional project PROMISE (Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand) and a scoping study concerning options for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to financially support a next labour migration initiative in the Mekong sub region. The present Terms of Reference (ToR) describe the purpose, context, objectives, scope and methodology of the evaluation and scoping study. They further describe the evaluation/scoping study process, expected deliverables and the terms and conditions for participating in the invitation to bid.
This consulting mandate has the two-fold objective of

- evaluating the overall performance of PROMISE Phase 2 in line with the relevant criteria of the OECD DAC (*cf. chapter IV*);
- conducting a light scoping/design study for a possible new regional labour migration project supported by the SDC, building on the results and lessons learnt of PROMISE (*cf. chapter V*).

These two tasks are interrelated as the forward-looking part of the evaluation will partially inform the scoping study. Whereas the evaluation report will be a widely accessible document, the study will be for the exclusive use of the SDC.

II. **Background and context**

The overall goal of the SDC's Swiss Cooperation Programme in the Mekong Region (MRCP) 2022-25 is to enable people, particularly young people, women, and disadvantaged groups, to become more prosperous, resilient, and better included in development processes. Projects and development activities are implemented across the following three thematic portfolios: (i) inclusive economic development (IED), (ii) governance and citizen participation, and (iii) climate change and natural resource management. Within the overall MRCP, the Swiss Portfolio Outcome related to the priority topic of IED reads as follows: *People in the Mekong region, especially young people, women, and disadvantaged groups in Cambodia and Lao PDR, will have better quality employment and income and be more resilient to economic crises*.
Three outcome statements have been defined in support of the aforementioned outcome:

a. **People** have improved skills and are more employable.
b. **Public and private institutions**, and civil society organizations provide better quality vocational skills development (VSD), employment support, and business development services.
c. **Policy-makers** develop and implement, based on evidence and multi-stakeholder consultations, gender-responsive and inclusive policies on vocational skills development, SME development, and decent work, in collaboration with the private sector and civil society.

The PROMISE project is part of the IED portfolio and started in 2017 (phase 1). The ongoing phase 2 (final/consolidation phase) will come to an end in August 2025. The PROMISE project is implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), with the IOM Thailand Office assuming the overall coordination and supervision.

Regional labour migration context

Migration remains a key feature in Thailand and its neighbouring countries, with continued efforts by the Royal Thai Government (RTG) to facilitate cross-border recruitment through the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Employment of Workers (MOU) channel combined with Cabinet Resolutions allowing work permit extensions through in-country registrations. As of June 2024, 3.05 million migrant workers were registered in Thailand. Approximately 78 per cent of migrants were registered through in-country registrations, with the majority of registered migrant workers (79 per cent) being Myanmar nationals, followed by citizens of Cambodia and Lao PDR. Additionally, data from the Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour show that approximately 265,666 newly recruited MOU migrant workers entered the Kingdom of Thailand between September 2023 and June 2024. The year 2023 marked a demographic turning point in Thailand, where the working-age population (ages 20-24) was lower than the number of individuals leaving the workforce (ages 60-64). This shift will widen the gap between those entering and exiting the workforce, raising concerns about labour shortages and negative effects on economic growth, especially in the agricultural sector. In tandem with the growing share of the aged population in Thailand, the demand for workers in care sectors, including health care and eldercare, is expected

to increase significantly. Notably, RTG has improved some of its labour protections that also affect migrant workers in Thailand, particularly in the informal sector. The Ministerial Regulation No. 15 on Protection for Domestic Workers represents a significant step forward in protecting the rights and wellbeing of domestic workers, a majority of whom are migrant workers. Public consultations have begun to similarly develop a Ministerial Regulation on Protection for Agricultural Workers. On skills development for migrant workers, the Department of Skills Development under the Ministry of Labour has continued to promote access of the Skills Development Fund for employers of migrant workers. In 2024, over 250,524 migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar have benefited from in-service training conducted by their employers under the Skills Development Fund.

In Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), led by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), continues to prioritize labour migration as a catalyst for sustainable economic development. The recently launched strategic plan 2024-2028 of MLVT emphasized four strategic priorities for outbound labour migration, including strengthening and expanding overseas skilled labour market, facilitating pathways for regular migration and effective and fair and ethical recruitment, promoting protection of the rights of migrant workers and enhancing successful reintegration, particularly through skills development and recognition for returnees. The RGC intends to improve labour migration governance, migrant worker protection, skills development, and integration of migrant workers. This also includes enhancing pre-departure orientation (PDO) for migrants and aligning Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes in Cambodia with Thailand's labour market needs.

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), a new Law on Employment took effect on 1 December 2023, covering both domestic and overseas employment and providing guidance on ethical recruitment practices. This legislation was followed by the establishment of the Lao Employment Business Association in June 2024, the country's first industry body representing private employment agencies. The association aims to raise standards for ethical recruitment practices, especially for migrant workers. Simultaneously, the country continues to grapple with a labour shortage crisis driven by factors such as low wages, rising inflation, and the depreciation of the Lao PDR Kip. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) reported a significant increase in migrant workers leaving Lao PDR for Thailand under the MoU channel, rising to 104,670 in 2023 from 51,501 in 2022.

Meanwhile, the situation in Myanmar has continued to deteriorate since the February 2021 military takeover. Widespread economic disruption continues, including severe pressure on the domestic labour market, posing more challenges on return and reintegration of migrants. Following the enforcement of mandatory conscription among Myanmar women aged 18-27 and men aged 18-35 in April 2024, an increase in visa applications as well as irregular border crossings into Thailand has been observed. Several policies imposed by the military junta in an effort to increase the inflow of foreign currencies has had direct adverse impacts on Myanmar migrants living and working abroad.

Regionally, an ASEAN Declaration on Skills Mobility, Recognition, and Development for Migrant Workers and its Checklist, are expected to be formally adopted at the 44th ASEAN Summit in October 2024. The Declaration paves the way for incorporating skills recognition into MOUs, admission policies, and labour migration governance, facilitating the mobility of migrant workers at various skill levels within ASEAN. Moreover, the Second Edition of the ASEAN Migration Outlook, which focuses on the climate change-human mobility nexus, has been finalized and endorsed by the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM).

III. Overview of PROMISE

Overall goal of the project: Women and men migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar in Thailand (CLMT), as well as returning migrants, have enhanced decent employment and improved livelihood contributing to economic resilience and poverty reduction. The following three outcomes shall contribute to achieving this overall objective:

Outcome 1: National and regional policies and institutional capacities related to skills development, labour migration, and ethical recruitment are more migrant-inclusive and gender-responsive, and better serve the needs of migrant workers and their employers.

Outcome 2: Women and men migrant workers have improved employability across the labour migration cycle.

Outcome 3: Women and men migrant workers are more informed and protected at all stages of migration

Expected Results of Phase 2: Approximately 450,000 migrant workers (50% women) across four countries (CLMT) will benefit from the project:

- 150,000 migrant workers will have access to skills development, skills recognition, and job referrals, leading to better employability and livelihoods.
- 300,000 migrant workers will have access to information, increased networking, and protection, enabling them to better take advantage of existing opportunities.
- 5,000 employers will receive information and guidance on laws, policies, good practices, and international standards related to skills development, decent employment, and safe migration.
- 300 employers will establish in-service training for migrants while receiving training on skills development and migration.
- 400 government officials, staff from recruiting agencies, and representatives of civil society organizations will be trained in delivering improved services to migrant workers.

Approach: The project engages with various stakeholders, including government, private recruiting agencies, employers, and civil society organizations at regional and national levels. At the regional level, it provides technical support to ASEAN in developing inclusive policy frameworks for migrant workers, particularly addressing skills development and decent employment. At the national level in CLMT, it contributes to the development of evidence-based, migrant-centred, and gender-responsive policies and strengthens their implementation related to safe labour migration, skills development, and employment for migrant workers. PROMISE also enhances coordination and learning in the region.

Investing in the capacity development of government officials is key to promoting understanding of policies and providing effective services to migrant workers. The project also improves the capacity and practices of the private sector (private recruitment agencies) related to safe migration, including pre-departure orientation, skills development, and decent employment. It also focuses on strengthening migrant resource centres to offer quality services, including referral services for skills development and employment. The project provides business skills and digital and financial literacy to migrant workers in CLMT to improve livelihood options and employment.

Target Group and Project Location: The project targets women and men from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar across the migration cycle: before migration, during migration in Thailand, and upon returning to CLM. Private recruitment agencies, employers, migrant resource centres, and governments in CLMT will also benefit through capacity building to improve policies, practices, and management of safe migration, and to strengthen service delivery for migrants, providing skills development and decent employment. This regional project covers Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand.

An independent evaluation of PROMISE Phase 1 was conducted in 2020. The final evaluation report will be available as part of the documentation package for this evaluation.

IV. **Evaluation objectives, scope and focus**

The evaluation of PROMISE Phase 2 will cover all three outcome areas as outlined in the project's results framework (logframe). It will assess progress towards achieving the expected impact and outcomes and analyse the effectiveness of various approaches to deliver results at both impact and outcome levels. The evaluation will also carefully consider gender and governance as transversal themes. Project results at outcome level are expected to be assessed at three levels:

a. At the level of people (beneficiaries), i.e. migrant workers from CLM in Thailand and migrants returning from Thailand to CLM.
b. At the level of policies, legal frameworks, and systems at CLMT and ASEAN.
c. At the level of institutions and key actors, particularly government institutions and the private sector (employers; employers, sectoral and recruitment associations; private recruitment agencies), by strengthening their capacities.

The evaluators will perform the following key tasks:

- Conduct a desk review of relevant PROMISE documents (project document with logframe, annual work plans, operational reports, CBA report, the evaluation report of PROMISE Phase 1, and other relevant PROMISE publications).
- Develop an inception report outlining the exact evaluation methodology, work plan, interviews and meetings, in close coordination with SDC Cambodia and the IOM Office in Bangkok.
- Analyse the project approach/strategy and the various interventions in line with the six OECD DAC criteria (cf. draft evaluation questions below).
- Assess the effectiveness of the implementation modalities to achieve the set objectives as set out in the project logframe, including in terms of collaboration with government entities, training providers, the private sector (employers, recruitment agencies), and civil society actors.
- Assess current synergies and/or possible overlaps in terms of sectors and interventions between PROMISE and other (regional) migration projects, in particular ILO's Triangle Project, the EU's project PROTECT and the EU's programme MBHR (Migration, Business and Human Rights).
- To the extent possible, assess synergies or duplications (including regarding sector and thematic focus) between PROMISE and SDC skills development projects in CLM.
- Analyse the contribution to and linkages with ASEAN policies, instruments, and coordination mechanisms, particularly regarding migration and skills development of migrants.
  Assess the contribution of PROMISE to enhance regional platforms, in particular ASEAN and its bodies, but also the Colombo process.
- Assess the levels of ownership and own contributions on the part of CLMT governments and the private sector.
- To identify challenges and priorities which should be addressed during the remainder of PROMISE Phase 2 (end of August 2025), as well as ideas for future programming (*here is the interface with the scoping study*).
- Conduct one or two field missions involving interviews and meetings with relevant PROMISE stakeholders and beneficiaries in CLMT, such as migrant workers, relevant ministries, employers, recruitment agencies, training providers, development partners, NGOs, and ASEAN staff responsible for migration and TVET.
- Prepare a full-fledged evaluation report (max 25 pages, excluding annexes).

The evaluators are expected to assess and answer the below-mentioned **tentative key guiding questions**, which are structured along the six OECD/DAC criteria. This list of questions is not exhaustive and shall be reviewed/refined/prioritized during the elaboration of the inception report, in consultation with SDC.

Relevance	1. Has the project selected and supported the right partners and interventions to contribute to improved employment and income, enhanced skills and safer migration journeys of CLM migrant workers? 2. To what extent has the programme contributed in a tangible manner to addressing the needs and priorities of migrant workers in the home countries (incl. their communities) and in the host country Thailand? 3. How did the crisis in Myanmar impact the Programme, and how has the Programme been able to the specific needs of Burmese refugees?

	4. Are employers and migrant workers satisfied with the training and support provided by the project? Is there more demand from their side? If so, what are these demands and needs?
Coherence	5. To what extent are PROMISE interventions complementary to those of other actors (including bilateral and multilateral donors, UN initiatives such as ILO's TRIANGLE project, private sector, civil society)? 6. How do you assess the functioning and relevance of the governance/steering structures under PROMISE (NPACs in Phnom Penh and Lao PDR, PPSC in Bangkok, and RPAC)? 7. To what extent are ASEAN Member States, in particular Cambodia and Lao PDR, committed to align with relevant ASEAN skills development and safe migration standards? How has PROMISE been seizing opportunities to influence normative frameworks and practices of ASEAN? How effectively is PROMISE supporting relevant structures of ASEAN, notably SLOM, ACMW and AFML, in designing and implementing relevant policies and plans?
Effectiveness	8. Which interventions of PROMISE should be continued and which should be discontinued in any subsequent new intervention, and why? 9. Has PROMISE managed to meaningfully build the capacities of private recruitment agencies in terms of safe migration and ethical recruitment principles, including to strengthen their integrity? 10. Has PROMISE managed to influence relevant CLMT government policies and practices to enhance the protection of migrant workers and their access to skills development? To which extent has IOM managed to foster/facilitate relevant bilateral dialogues between the recipient country Thailand and the sending countries Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar (e.g. regarding skills transfer, mutual recognition of prior learning, portability of social security benefits)? And how do you assess the pertinence of the tripartite Letter of Intent between TICA, SDC and IOM in that regard? 11. How do you assess the different skills development approaches and models that were initiated and supported by PROMISE? What are the most effective forms of collaboration and modalities to support migrant workers' employability and income? 12. To what extent has PROMISE achieved its intended results related to the crosscutting topics of gender equality and good governance?
Efficiency	13. To what extent have PROMISE management, monitoring, and steering mechanisms supported an effective and efficient (cost structure) project implementation between the IOM's Bangkok Office and the national offices of IOM in Phnom Penh, Vientiane and Yangon? 14. *For SDC internal learning and the conceptualisation of future regional projects*: How has SDC been supervising project implementation across the different countries? Has the applied set-up, with the Swiss Cooperation Office in Phnom Penh having the lead and the Swiss Cooperation Offices/Embassies in Vientiane, Yangon, Bangkok and Jakarta ensuring national-level monitoring and liaison with ASEAN, been working? 15. To what degree have governments, private sector and civil society contributed financially and/or in-kind to project interventions?
Impact	16. To what extent has PROMISE generated, or is expected to generate lasting impact at the policy, institutional, and target population levels, as conceptualized in the project document? In which area has the project been most successful in that regard, and where has it had less influence? 17. How well has the project managed to influence the functioning and oversight of private recruitment agencies and the institutionalization of pre-departure orientation and skills training by the competent authorities?
Sustainability	18. How effectively has the project built the necessary capacity of government institutions to manage relevant institutions (namely Migrant Resource Centres/Integrated Migrant Assistance Centres) and policies? To what extent are private recruitment agencies in CLM capable/willing to sustain pre-departure orientation standards, and how are Thai companies/employers committed to provide skills training and recognition to CLM migrant workers? 19. Which specific interventions have demonstrated significant potential for sustainability and scalability? 20. Who are the key drivers (and restrainers) of change for improving labour governance and the employability of migrant workers in the region? What areas should be further strengthened?

IV. **Objectives, scope and focus of the scoping study**

The SDC intends to stay engaged on the topic of labour migration in the years to come, beyond the horizon of the current PROMISE project. Any project supported by the SDC in future shall build on the results and lessons learned from the two phases of PROMISE, and take into account relevant context developments and priorities of ASEAN.

Therefore, the SDC wishes to combine the evaluation of PROMISE with a light scoping/design study to get external guidance on the options at hand for SDC to continue supporting regional labour migration initiatives in the Mekong sub region. The SDC intends to collaborate with other donors to achieve a wider impact and effectively bundle resources.

The SDC plans to make a financial contribution to a new/upcoming or existing regional labour migration project, provided it corresponds to the SDC's thematic and geographic priorities and the SDC can be adequately involved in project steering.

In terms of thematic priorities and possible areas of intervention, the SDC is interested in a project that works, inter alia, towards

- enhancing the employability of migrant workers in the ASEAN region, particularly through skills development and skills mobility/recognition;
- improving the capacity of national and regional authorities to monitor and track migrant workers and to improve (labour) migration policies and response/support mechanisms;
- enhancing the access of migrant workers to social benefits and health insurance, and exploring avenues to address the climate change / migration nexus;
- fostering digital skills and financial inclusion of migrant workers;
- consistently promoting and supporting safe migration and pre-departure and post-arrival orientation, incl. through cooperation with civil society / local NGOs;
- engaging private sector actors (in particular companies receiving migrant workers as well as recruitment agencies) in a responsible manner; and
- advising CLMT governments on (re-) negotiating labour migration related bilateral agreements, in accordance with good international practice and ASEAN standards.

Any new future regional project funded by the SDC shall provide added value to the national-level portfolios of the SDC in Cambodia and Lao PDR. Regional projects must always create solutions that address regional challenges in a coordinated manner, rather than just duplicating national-level efforts.
A leading role in any future project shall be played by ASEAN, serving as a discussion and dialogue platform for relevant authorities from the Member States, and setting relevant standards.
The evaluators shall do a rapid appraisal of the relevance and feasibility of the SDC joining existing and/or upcoming similar projects supported/financed by other development partners, for example TRIANGLE (Australia, Canada), PRIORITY (EU) or Migration, Business and Human Rights (MBHR) (EU, Sweden).
In light of the above, the scoping study shall consist of a short input paper (up to 10 pages) covering mainly the following aspects:

- Context: challenges and opportunities related to labour migration in the Mekong sub-region / ASEAN, incl. overview of relevant normative frameworks/mechanisms;
- Assessment and overview of funding options for SDC, both in terms of existing programmes/projects, to which SDC could hook on and contribute, or emerging new initiatives, in the planning and steering of which SDC could participate;
- Possible objectives, beneficiaries and theory of change of a new intervention (or of an expansion of an existing programme/project);
- Possible avenues for engaging the private sector and involving civil society;
- Open issues that would need to be clarified by the SDC (and other development partners) in the months following the evaluation and the scoping study;
- Annexes: a) List of relevant existing projects – global/regional/country (name of project, expected results, interventions, coverage, duration, funding/donor), to which SDC could contribute; b) list of relevant policies and coordination mechanisms/bodies as key drivers for strengthening employability and skills development/recognition of migrant workers in the region; and c) list of relevant contacts for SDC (donors/governments/private sector at regional/country levels).

The scoping study shall appear as a logical supplement to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation report.

V. **Methodology, Timeframe and Deliverables**

The SDC does not prescribe a particular methodology for the evaluation and the scoping study. Rather, bidders for this consulting mandate are expected to propose a suitable methodology as part of their technical offer, which can be confirmed or adapted as part of the inception phase (report), once the mandate has been awarded and the contract signed. The evaluation shall be conducted by a team composed of one international consultant and a local consultant in at least some the CLMT countries (2-3 experts in total).
The overall responsibility for the evaluation will lie with the international/regional consultant/team leader. The international consultant will have a contract with the SDC Office in Cambodia, to which he/she will report. The team leader will subcontract the national/local consultant(s), who will work under his/her supervision, both in technical and administrative terms.
The evaluation team shall engage with key stakeholders of PROMISE during the design, field work, validation and reporting stages. The responsible offices of both the SDC and IOM will suggest and facilitate the necessary contacts/connections.
The evaluation team is expected to ensure in-person visits to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Bangkok, and remote interviews with stakeholders in Myanmar and Jakarta.
Evaluation Process and Timeframe: The following work plan provides suggested dates, responsibilities, and resources needed for the various activities of the evaluation process. This work plan will be adapted by the evaluation team, in consultation with the SDC, during the inception phase.

Activity	**Date (indicative)**	**Responsibilities**
1. **Kick-off meeting with evaluation team**	First half of Nov 2024	SDC, Consultants

2.	**Desk review of relevant documents (as provided by the SDC/IOM); preparation of inception report**	First half Nov 2024	Consultants
3.	**Draft inception report: evaluation objectives, design, methodology, stakeholders, timeline etc.**	25 Nov 2024	Consultants
4.	**Finalization of the inception report**	3 Dec 2024	Consultants
5.	**Field mission with data collection, interviews, etc.; at the end of the mission, there shall be a debriefing with SDC and IOM on the data collection process and a discussion of possible open questions**	Jan 2025	Consultants
6.	**Submission of the draft evaluation report and scoping study**	31 Jan 2025	Consultants
7.	**Debriefing workshop with selected key stakeholders to present/validate the key evaluation findings and recommendations**	3-7 Feb 2025	Consultants
8.	**Discussion (video call) on the draft scoping study**	Feb 2025	Consultants, SDC
9.	**Written feedback on the draft evaluation report and scoping study (SDC only)**	10 Feb 2025	SDC, IOM
10.	**Submission of final evaluation report and scoping study**	17 Feb 2025	Consultants

The following **three key deliverables** are expected to be submitted by the evaluation team:

- Inception report (draft and final version)
- Evaluation report (draft and final version)
- Scoping/design input paper (draft and final version)

VI. **Reference documents**

SDC and IOM will share a number of relevant documents at the start of the assignment. Those documents include:

- PROMISE project document, logframe, budget, annual reports, etc.;
- Relevant SDC documents, in particular the Mekong Region Cooperation Programme, entry/credit proposals, sectoral guidance and policies, report on the external evaluation of phase 1, etc.;
- General documents for local context as e.g. relevant policies, reports;
- An open list of key people from government, DPs, CSOs and private sector which need to be interviewed by the evaluation team.

VII. **Competency Profile of the Evaluators**

The evaluation and scoping study shall be conducted by a team of two or more consultants combining know-how on labour migration and skills development, from both an international and regional (ASEAN) and national (CLMT) perspective.
The team shall comprise experts with the following professional and thematic competencies:

Team Leader:

- Qualification: a senior international/regional expert with a relevant advanced university degree (Master or higher).
- Experience: at least 10 years of experience in development cooperation, project evaluation, and design, along with proven management capacities.
- Knowledge: relevant know-how of / experience with Swiss approaches to TVET and migration, both globally and regionally. Solid experience in skills development/TVET and migration, with an in-depth understanding of social inclusion, gender-relevant aspects of migration, and interconnected socio-economic challenges.
- Regional Expertise: profound knowledge, experience, and understanding of regional dynamics and trends in the Mekong region and ASEAN, particularly relevant to migration, as well as familiarity with policy documents and key stakeholders, including development partners, ASEAN bodies, and employers.
- Responsibilities: overall responsibility for the evaluation and scoping study, and for ensuring that his/her team has all the required methodological and thematic know-how to cover all aspects of the evaluation and study.

Country-level evaluators:

- Location: those experts are expected to cover Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Myanmar, with a combination of on-site missions and remote assessments. Missions to Myanmar and Indonesia are not required.
- Expertise: Expertise and knowledge in skills development and migration, and familiarity with relevant national policies. Profound knowledge of key stakeholders, ranging from government to private sector.
- Experience: Proven experience in development cooperation, project evaluation, and design. Familiarity with the concepts of social inclusion and gender equality is required.

The team shall consist of 2-3 consultants (incl. the team leader) and include both male and female members.

VIII. **Reporting**

The evaluators will report to Mr. Christian Disler, Deputy Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Cambodia, for the entire duration of the assignment. Operational and logistical support will be provided by the SDC and IOM offices in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand.

IX. **Terms and conditions of the call for proposals**

Interested candidates are kindly requested to send the following documents to Mr. Christian Disler (christian.disler@eda.admin.ch) and Mr. Ros Va, Senior National Programme Officer at the Swiss Cooperation Office in Cambodia (va.ros@eda.admin.ch):

1. Letter of interest / operational proposal by the international team leader, with indication of the applicant's understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology/approach, team composition and core competencies, and statement of availability (October 2024 until end of January 2025). The team leader / lead consultant is expected to disclose any prior working relations with the PROMISE project and, if such a prior involvement exists, clarify how he/she intends to deal with such a potential conflict of interest. (max 4 pages)
2. CVs of all team members. (max 3 pages per member)
3. At least two reports of similar assignments (without annexes and photos)
4. Financial proposal (incl. consultancy fees, travel costs and other expenses), in line with the budget template

All bidders have the possibility to send to the SDC **up to three comprehension questions** related to the ToR in writing before Thursday, 26 September 2024, 18:00 hrs ICT.

The deadline for submitting a full-fledged proposal is Monday, 7 October 2024, 18:00 hrs ICT.

The contract will be awarded by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Phnom Penh following a competitive appraisal of the technical and financial offers received within the established deadline. Unsuccessful bidders will not be informed about the reasons for their non-selection, neither in writing nor orally.

The team leader or his/her company will sign the contract with SDC on behalf of the evaluation team.

NB: All members of the bid-winning evaluation team will be excluded from participating in the implementation of any next SDC funded labour migration project in the Mekong sub region.

Phnom Penh, September 2024

Annexes

- Budget template
- PROMISE Project Document Phase 2
- Mekong Region Cooperation Programme 2022-2025