Mid-Term Review

Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Worker Project in Nepal (ReMi)

Final Report

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LIST OF CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND 1

1.1 Implementing strategy to achieve the outcomes 1

2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS 2

2.1 Evaluation Criteria 2

2.2 Selection of locations, ESCs and LG 2

2.3 Evaluation Tools 3

2.4 Limitations 3

2.5 Outline of the Report 3

3 EVALUATION FINDINGS 4

3.1 Relevance 4

3.2 Coherence and validity of design (internal/external) 5

3.3 Effectiveness 8

3.4 Efficiency 14

3.5 Impact orientation 17

3.6 Sustainability orientation 18

4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT 20

4.1 Lessons Learnt 21

5 RECOMMENDATIONS 22

6 REFERENCES 32

ANNEXES

List of Abbreviations

CMC	Center for Mental Health and Counseling Nepal
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DEPROSC	Development Project Service Center
DoFE	Department of Foreign Employment
EIC	Employment Information Centre
ENSSURE	Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment
ESC	Employment Service Center
FEB	Foreign Employment Board
FEIMS	Foreign Employment Information Management System
FCHV	Female Community Health Volunteer
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
K-HAMI	Korea-Happy Migration
LG	Local Government
LMBIS	Line Ministry Budget Information System
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
MoLESS	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
MRC	Migrant Resource Center
MRN	Migrants' Rights Network
MUAN	Municipal Association of Nepal
NARMIN	National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal
NEMIS	National Employment Information Management System
NVQS	National Vocational Qualification System
PACC	Project Advisory and Coordination Committee
PCIC	Project Coordination and Implementation Committee
PCIU-F	Project Coordination and Implementation Unit at the federal level
PCIU-P	Project Coordination and Implementation Unit at the provincial level
PG	Province Government
PMEP	Prime Minister Employment Programme PMEP
PIC	Project Implementation Committee at the local level
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
PSU	Programme Support Unit
ReMi	Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers Project
RMWs	Returnee Migrant Workers
SaMi	Safer Migration Programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SESC	Strengthening of Employment Service Centres in Nepal
SoP	Standard Operational Procedure

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

The Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers Project (ReMi) (2022–2026), funded by SDC and implemented by the Government of Nepal (GoN) with the technical assistance from HELVETAS, aims to pilot and institutionalise mechanisms for the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers (RMWs) across 20 local governments in Koshi and Madhesh Provinces of Nepal. Its two core outcomes focus on supporting RMWs to establish stable socio-economic conditions and strengthening government capacities across federal, provincial, and local levels for service delivery through Employment Service Centres (ESCs). The Mid-Term Review (MTR), conducted from March to May 2025, used a mixed-methods approach, including document reviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, field observations, and self-assessments. It assessed achievements, implementation gaps, and unintended effects, based on OECD/DAC criteria - with a forward-looking lens that identifies strategic and operational recommendations to improve delivery in the remaining phase and guide the design of Phase II.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. Relevance: The ReMi project is highly relevant to Nepal's current socio-economic priorities and migration governance framework. It aligns with the Constitution of Nepal, the Foreign Employment Policy, The Sixteenth Plan (2024/25-2028/29) and the Internal Employment Promotion Decade (2025–2035), as well as provincial plans in Koshi and Madhesh. The project supports the objectives of the Swiss Cooperation Programme (2023–2026) and contributes to global frameworks such as the SDGs. By targeting RMWs - particularly women, older individuals, and those unlikely to re-migrate - ReMi addresses urgent reintegration needs related to unemployment, stigma, and access to services, making it a timely and strategic intervention.

B. Coherence: The project addresses key barriers to social and economic reintegration, with a long-term vision of establishing locally anchored mechanisms supported by sustained budget allocations. While this ambition may be realised over three phases, the project design requires refinement to improve focus, implementation, and sustainability. The scope has proven ambitious for a four-year initial project phase. **The Theory of Change would have benefited from a phased implementation strategy, a clearer results chain, and a more realistic log frame**. Indicators, especially those related to social and economic integration, are overly broad, complicating logic, tracking, and data collection. Targets set for the project, which started piloting new concepts and approaches with the aim to already build corresponding institutional mechanisms, are too high.

Internal coherence is is adequate with a logical focus on ESCs development, network development, legal and policy reform and case management. However, there is a lack of beneficiary segmentation and clarity about different target groups and their needs, which could have enabled tailored support and performance tracking for vulnerable groups such as women, persons with disabilities, and older returnees, if integrated in the project.

International experience, including ASEAN and ILO's collection of good practices and guidelines, identify six principles for effective reintegration: early preparation, voluntary and informed return, comprehensive support, institutional coordination, social inclusion, and regular monitoring. Social and economic reintegration of returnees only addressed principles after RMW returned to Nepal, hence the principles of addressing integration holistically were only partially applied in Phase I. **Greater integration of these principles should be prioritised in Phase II, with a focus on how ReMi can build on SaMi's project architecture** and strengthen the migration cycle by strengthening coordination, removing duplications, strengthening capacities and by addressing local sustainability and strengthening provincial-level quality assurance and monitoring.

C. Effectiveness: Progress on effectiveness is mixed. ReMi has laid important foundations within government systems, particularly by supporting policy development and enabling provincial and local governments to budget and plan and appoint staff for reintegration services. As compared to the non-supported ESCs, ESCs supported by ReMi are offering more comprehensive services, including counselling, family support, and migration-related referrals. The introduction of a six-step case management model is promising but it requires further investment in staff capacity and quality assurance and digital data collection to expand. **Outreach remains slow, largely due to a labour-intensive direct implementation model used by ESC staff financed by ReMi.** ESC functionality also varies significantly. Social and economic reintegration targets (outcome level) remain very limited, falling far short of project targets. Late multi-stakeholder engagement - particularly with the private sector and other SDC-supported projects like NVQS, ENSSURE, SaMi, QualiTY, and UDAYA - **has limited progress on economic reintegration.** Collaboration with both enterprises and projects have however shown promising results. Where migrant cooperatives and networks were supported, they have extended outreach, built trust, and acted as informal peer navigators - providing a platform that could be institutionalised to enhance sustainability.

D. Efficiency: The project's efficiency has been constrained by several operational challenges. Delays in local government (LG) selection and staff recruitment delayed early implementation, contributing to low budget utilisation - only 25% of the USD 4.27 million allocation had been spent by the end of 2024. A lean staffing model within ReMi has overstretched project teams, who are required to take on several roles and manage service delivery, coordination, and administrative tasks. Such a situation provides limited time for reflection and analysis of progress. Efficiency within the ESCs has been limited, as each was supported by four ReMi-financed staff, but due to an overreliance on direct implementation, services could only reach two wards per ESC.

E. Monitoring and evaluation remains largely activity-based, with inadequate mechanisms for outcome tracking or quality assurance. Data collection and monitoring and knowledge management have not been adequately resourced in the project; leaning from data always provides an opportunity when piloting initiatives. Until late 2024, the absence of a digital data entry system such as KOBO[1] and limited M&E resources further weakened data management and reporting. Strengthening these aspects and shift toward a facilitative implementation model will be critical for improving efficiency in the remaining phase.

F. Impact and sustainability orientation: While it is still premature to assess systemic change, its sustainability and impact of the project, early examples of LG policy adoption, commitment to budgeting and willingness to support ESC-led services and networks/cooperatives show potential. However, lack of disaggregated data and performance-based tracking of these initiatives is a bit concerning for the initial phase of the project. ESC interventions, case management, and reintegration services should be regularly assessed for continuous improvement, efficiency and impact. Data on returnee profiles need to be of quality and should be available for analysis just in time. Knowledge management and reporting should support learning and evidence-based decision-making in project steering meetings.

Most ESCs remain nascent in both form and function. Except for those 20 supported by the ReMi project - which have initiated case management, reintegration services, and referrals - most ESCs are limited to implementing PMEP-related activities and lack operational clarity, adequate staffing, digitized systems, and structured referral pathways. While there are early signs of local governments integrating reintegration functions into their budgets and plans, as seen in ReMi areas, expecting them to fully assume ESC functions in the short term is unrealistic given existing capacity and resource constraints. Even the ReMi-supported ESCs, despite receiving additional inputs, remain reliant on temporary project staff and PMEP funding. Without a national policy framework that defines ESCs' roles, funding, and operational standards, their long-term sustainability is uncertain, and it is further challenged by weak linkages to employers, training providers, and the absence of digital data/information.

G.Sustainability remains a major concern. While provincial and local political commitment is growing, the lack of a national ESC strategy at the federal level and the ending of World Bank's funded Youth Employment Transformation Initiative (YETI) Project pose a question mark on funding of ESCs two critical staffs, which are risks for ReMi. Without the GoN's commitment on future funding of ESCs, and provision of clarity of ESCs' functions in the future, ReMi's reliance on ESCs as key agency for reintegration services appears strategically risky. Permanent institutional anchoring of ESCs within local government structures, standardised procedures, sustainable financing, and cross-tier coordination are critical. ReMi requires a national sustainability plan and exit strategy.

H: Gender, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI): While ReMi articulates a commitment to GEDSI, its implementation needs to be strengthened. Disaggregated data is limited to participation rates without examining outcomes or intersectional barriers. Future strategies must be tailored to the distinct needs of women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, promoting their empowerment, leadership, and decision-making capacity. Inclusive, GEDSI-sensitive case management and leadership within networks and cooperatives are necessary to move beyond symbolic participation to transformative inclusion.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ReMi project sits at a pivotal moment in Nepal's employment and migration governance landscape. It aligns with the Government of Nepal's newly declared Internal Employment Promotion Decade, led by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), which prioritises productive employment, private sector-led job creation, skills development, and social protection - leveraging the experience and savings of RMWs. MoLESS has set up an Internal Employment Management Division to coordinate flagship programmes such as ReMi and K-HaMi.

There are indications that the Government envisions that Employment Services, along with the newly set up Labour and Employment Offices in each province and with Labour and Employment Sections at local government level, will respond to

[1] KoBo Toolbox is an open-source data collection system developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, designed for use by humanitarian organizations, researchers, and development practitioners to collect, store, and analyze field data, even in low-connectivity settings.

both internal and foreign employment requirements. Greater devolution of responsibilities to provincial governments is planned, including cost-sharing for ESC operations, staff, infrastructure, and performance oversight. The development of a Public Employment Services (PES) strategy, co-led by MoLESS and the ILO (with ReMi support), will guide ESC staffing, roles, digitization, and quality assurance. However, as ESCs evolve from job-matching hubs into full-fleged public employment services centres which also offer reintegration services, clarity is needed on how their mandate and resourcing will be expanded. At the same time, SDC remains committed to supporting Nepal's employment and reintegration systems for another phase. However, in Phase II, SDC plans to shift ReMi's role from directly implementing services toward more strategic technical assistance support: strengthening systems, monitoring and building stronger capacities for private sector engagement and digital platforms. This will require MoLESS and local governments to take on greater financial and institutional ownership of ESCs and reintegration services.

Looking forward, ReMi, through ESCs, should deepen economic reintegration by addressing reintegration from the beginning of migration, during and when returning, so that provisions are made for returnees to have a smooth transition. ReMi can also support LGs in their efforts to identify business and job opportunities, linking returnees to growing sectors with job and entrepreneurship potential, and formal financial services, based on existing initiatives and projects; this is however, outside the scope of a project like ReMi. Existing schemes and programmes offered by LGs and FEB need strengthening and more strategic orientation. Partnerships with private sector actors, cooperatives, and national business federations (e.g., FNCCI and CNI) should be formalised based on existing SDC funded projects to create long-term economic pathways for returnees. Although the thematic priorities of future World Bank support are yet to be finalised, initial funding windows for technical assistance exist. These need to be aligned with SDC support and other donor resources to invest in LMIS quality assurance and M&E frameworks, and ESC capacity building.

These shifts demand a forward-looking and flexible approach to ReMi Phase II - one that reinforces system thinking, decentralization, and sustainable local ownership of reintegration services. Given that the current YPO is already embedded in the government budget system, major changes in the final year of Phase I will be difficult. However, minor adjustments can be endorsed by the steering committee, and immediate recommendations should be prioritized in the first-year YPO of Phase II. The following recommendations are split into two parts: four recommendations for immediate action during the remaining phase which ends in July 2026, and one recommendation which hopefully guides the preparation of the second phase.

Immediate Recommendation 1: Prioritise and consolidate during remaining phase

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
MoLESS, SDC, Helvetas, ILO, Provinces	High	Immediate	Moderate

With limited time left in Phase I and foundational work still underway in the 20 current municipalities, ReMi should not expand without consolidation. The MTR highlights two options for ReMi's next phase: first which assumes that ESCs will not continue to have additional financial support (from SDC, World Bank, GoN) and hence not have the required staffing for ReMi to sustain, while the second option would continue ReMis efforts through ESCs. Both options have potential, but require different levels of focus, investment, and political commitment:

Option 1: Embed Reintegration in the Migration Cycle

This option positions ReMi as a focused reintegration programme that supports migrant workers throughout the entire migration journey - from pre-departure to return. It prioritises early planning for return, including psychosocial support, financial literacy, and remittance management. The approach calls for deeper collaboration with SaMi and K-HaMi, and stronger coordination with (N)MRCs, returnee volunteers (RVs), and community networks. Drawing on international models from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Korea, it promotes early economic reintegration planning. Instead of duplicating efforts, it suggests developing shared service models between ESCs and MRCs and overcome duplications in outreach. MRCs might be upgraded as resource centres for departure and reintegration, in this case. However, this approach requires MoLESS to adopt a dedicated reintegration strategy with policy and budget support and may delay ESC expansion while a more integrated and sustainable reintegration model is built.

Option 2: Continue Building ESCs as Inclusive Employment Hubs

In this scenario, ReMi shifts its focus to strengthening ESCs as comprehensive public employment institutions that serve a broad range of jobseekers - not just RMWs. This approach involves expanding the scope of ESCs to provide a full suite of labour market services, including job matching, referrals to skills training and enterprise support, access to loan, and reintegration assistance. It emphasises systems-building through investments in staffing, digital infrastructure, quality assurance mechanisms, and stronger linkages with the private sector to ensure services are demand-driven and sustainable. A key priority under this model is to promote government ownership by integrating ESC operations into federal, provincial, and local budgets, and establishing clear cost-sharing arrangements. Continued collaboration with MRCs and community networks would be encouraged to ensure referral systems and outreach mechanisms remain strong, even if

reintegration is no longer the ESCs' core mandate. While this option aligns ESCs with Nepal's broader labour market coordination goals, there is a risk that the focus on reintegration may weaken unless services for RMWs are formally institutionalised within the ESC strategies and framework.

Whichever strategic direction (option 1 or 2) is chosen for ReMi's future, the MTR team strongly recommends that the current phase focuses on immediate documentation and consolidation of existing interventions. The 20 local governments currently implementing ReMi must complete pilot activities and systematically capture lessons from case management, counselling, referral services, and reintegration support. This includes assessing the feasibility of emerging models such as revolving funds, provincial support structures, and peer outreach mechanisms. Additionally, structured SWOT and effectiveness assessments should be conducted to evaluate which models are scalable and where performance gaps remain (see graph in recommendation, p.24). Developing a clear proof of concept and a practical roadmap is essential before considering replication or expansion. This foundational work is critical to ensure that Phase II of ReMi is credible, sustainable, and truly embedded within government systems.

Immediate Recommendation 2: Strengthen local strategies and approaches for Social Reintegration

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas SDC, MoLESS, CMC, SaMi	High	Immediate	Moderate

Social integration is critical to smoothen reintegration of returnees into the community and families, while it addressed needs for social distress and trauma experienced by returnees. To increase outreach and effectiveness of current services, ReMi should immediately strengthen local strategies by refining service models according to needs (no one shoe fits all process), clarifying expected outcomes, and improving coordination among different actors**. A segmentation is suggested, which helps governments to plan and resource case management for lighter and more serious cases, in need of family and psychosocial counselling support. A strategic approach is required developed to address service gaps and ensure last-mile outreach through partnerships with returnee networks and ward-level stakeholders.**

Peer counselling and para-counsellor models should be tested with returnee networks and other local organisations, and regularly supervised by organisations like CMC or their professional staff. Existing roles carried out by ReMi social mobilisers, family and SaMi RVs and psychosocial counsellors - should be streamlined to avoid duplication and increase effectiveness. Training and capacity building should be provided to (returnee) volunteers and ward representatives/officials to support returnee identification, registration, and basic counselling. A strong quality assurance system is needed for case management, data entry, and service feedback. ESC staff roles must be clearly defined to include facilitation, outreach, and quality monitoring. Regular satisfaction surveys should also be introduced to track progress. Lastly, ReMi should clarify how ESCs will work with MRCs, potentially establishing sub-MRCs in municipalities as a standard model like in Suryodaya Municipality in Koshi.

Immediate Recommendation 3: Strengthen Strategies and Approaches for Economic Reintegration

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas, SDC, MoLESS, DEPROSC, donor funded projects, LG/ PG financed social and economic projects	High	Immediate	Moderate

To strengthen economic reintegration within the local ecosystem, ReMi should support a more coordinated and inclusive approach that aligns services across the migration cycle - from pre-departure to return, in collaboration with SaMi and K-HaMi to minimize economic vulnerability (debts, income poverty) which can lead to social stigmatization. Current initiatives need to be mapped, and gaps should be assessed which affect migrants in their efforts to develop a financially stable situation while abroad and at point of return. This includes mapping local economic opportunities, matching them with returnee skill profiles, and addressing gaps in access to finance, training, and enterprise development. Local and provincial governments must move beyond fragmented schemes and collaborate with projects such as ENSSURE, NVQS, UDAYA, Step-Up, QualiTY, and K-HaMi to align planning, social protection and financing mechanisms for greater impact (in the case of Koshi). Local and provincial governments need to go beyond fragmented schemes and work with DEPROSC, micro finance institutions, banks, donor projects, and cooperatives to build capacity and policy coherence.

ESCs should be developed as labour market engagement hubs with clearly defined roles in job placement, business development, and quality assurance of services and management. Stronger engagement with the private sector is vital - through MOUs, upskilling partnerships, and supply chain linkages - to reduce reliance on public programmes and create sustainable economic pathways. Finally, piloting peer-based economic counselling and community-driven models can personalise support for RMWs, especially when supervised by ESCs and provincial coordinators. These efforts must be backed by robust monitoring systems to ensure responsiveness and results.

Immediate Recommendation 4: Strengthen GEDSI across reintegration mechanism

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas, SDC, MoLESS ILO, PG, LG	High	Immediate	Low

To strengthen GEDSI across the reintegration mechanism, ReMi should adopt a comprehensive GEDSI strategy aligned with existing national GEDSI strategies, which also needs to operationalized and resourced.

This includes budgeting for targeted initiatives that address the specific reintegration needs of women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups - indicators should be revised to better capture intersectional challenges and measure meaningful empowerment outcomes, such as shifts in social status and family dynamics, not just income or participation.

Capacity building, monitoring, and communication must be enhanced, using both qualitative and quantitative tools to assess gender-transformative change. ReMi should also engage in policy advocacy to improve protections for vulnerable groups throughout the migration cycle, including by supporting shelter homes, safe arrival spaces, and migrant forums.

Finally, the project must actively counter stereotypes in economic reintegration by diversifying training and enterprise options beyond traditional roles for women, and collaborating with initiatives like NVQS, ENSSURE, and UDAYA, as well as with local business networks for inclusive labour market participation and equitable access to finance.

Recommendation 5: Foster a sustainable policy environment for Reintegration in Phase II

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas, SDC, MoLESS ILO, PG, LG, K-HAMI, World Bank	Middle	Immediate	Middle

To build a resilient, government-owned reintegration system, ReMi can support the development of a coherent governance and policy framework for Phase II. This includes establishing regular steering and coordination platforms across federal, provincial, and local levels and including other stakeholders (projects, private sector, migrant networks) to harmonise reintegration approaches, using the convening power of SDC, WB and ILO. Reintegration should be embedded across the entire migration cycle - starting from pre-departure - and closely aligned with private sector needs. A dedicated thematic committee on private sector engagement can bring coherence to local employment programmes and financial tools such as loans and remittances. Strengthening communication between MoLESS, Department of Immigration (MoFA), and partners - as well as better aligning NMRC and ReMi systems - will improve data reliability and service coherence.

A stronger strategic approach with a system perspective is essential to navigate the complexity of reintegration services across institutions and government levels. This must be underpinned by a clear stakeholder management strategy that defines roles, fosters partnerships, and ensures alignment across actors - from MoLESS and local governments to NGOs, cooperatives, and private sector actors. A robust monitoring and feedback system, combined with regular meetings for continuous monitoring of progress, is equally critical to track progress, ensure accountability, and guide course corrections during implementation. ReMi can provide technical assistance in this transition.

A shared vision and sustainability plan for ESCs, owned by the government and shared by all relevant DPs, positioning them as core public labour market institutions is crucial if ESCs remain main partners for ReMi. This includes defining their roles, staffing, governance, and cost-sharing mechanisms between federal, provincial, and local governments. Expansion should begin in high-performing, urban municipalities and be guided by clear performance benchmarks. Geographical clustering is advised to optimize cross learning. ESCs should be anchored in permanent government structures and coordinate with MRCs and psychosocial services to ensure a holistic social reintegration approach. Similarly, ESCs should be embedded in the local eco system, linked to BDS, banking and skills development services, to be effective.

Institutionalising continuous capacity building and quality assurance systems is essential. This means decentralising training for all relevant staff - ESCs, MRCs, NMRC, and counsellors - and embedding feedback loops, performance standards, and monitoring tools at all levels. A national Quality Assurance (QA) framework should guide service delivery and accountability, while digitalisation of ESC operations must be accelerated to enable real-time tracking and data-informed decisions.

Building a robust digital Labour Market Information System (LMIS) that integrates ESC data (e.g., Shram Sansar) is another critical step. Combined with a unified M&E system which is used, and capacities for research and be important instruments for ESC coordinators to engage with private sector and be effective for returnees and other job seekers.

In parallel, institutions such as FEB and NMRC must be strengthened. This includes supporting FEB to update trainings and welfare programmes, introduce QA mechanisms, and explore sustainable welfare fund financing - drawing from international models like the Philippines. Existing welfare schemes, including social protection provisions and training

services need to be assessed and strengthened. NMRC's operations should also be strengthened and be more closely aligned with ReMi to strengthen coherence at the district land local level.

GEDSI must be mainstreamed across the system, ensuring inclusive policies and services that meet the diverse needs of returnees. Finally, shifting public perceptions and norms of returning migrants is vital. Positive stories should be documented and shared to highlight their contributions to Nepal's workforce and economy, shaping a narrative that positions returnees as skilled, empowered, and essential agents of development.

Change narrative about returning migrant workers: The Government of Nepal has acknowledged the valuable role that returnee migrant workers can play in strengthening the national economy and workforce. To reinforce this recognition, efforts must be made to shift the public narrative from one of vulnerability to that of capability and opportunity. Positive examples of returnees who have successfully reintegrated, built livelihoods, and contributed to their families and communities should be systematically documented, communicated, and used to influence policy and public discourse. SDC, in collaboration with the government and development partners, should support the collection and sharing of such good practices through media campaigns, policy dialogues, and learning platforms. These stories can also provide concrete evidence for building inclusive and responsive reintegration systems, and inspire other returnees, stakeholders, and service providers to strengthen support mechanisms and foster a more enabling environment.

Immediate Recommendation 4: Strengthen GEDSI across reintegration mechanism

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas, SDC, MoLESS ILO, PG, LG	High	Immediate	Low

To strengthen GEDSI across the reintegration mechanism, ReMi should adopt a comprehensive GEDSI strategy aligned with existing national GEDSI strategies, which also needs to operationalized and resourced.

This includes budgeting for targeted initiatives that address the specific reintegration needs of women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups - drawing from lessons in countries like Bangladesh. The project's logframe and indicators should be revised to better capture intersectional challenges and measure meaningful empowerment outcomes, such as shifts in social status and family dynamics, not just income or participation.

Capacity building, monitoring, and communication must be enhanced, using both qualitative and quantitative tools to assess gender-transformative change. ReMi should also engage in policy advocacy to improve protections for vulnerable groups throughout the migration cycle, including by supporting shelter homes, safe arrival spaces, and migrant forums.

Finally, the project must actively counter stereotypes in economic reintegration by diversifying training and enterprise options beyond traditional roles for women, and collaborating with initiatives like NVQS, ENSSURE, and UDAYA, as well as with local business networks for inclusive labour market participation and equitable access to finance.

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Due to limited job opportunities, Nepali men and women migrate abroad mainly to the Middle East, Malaysia and India. Migration trend for foreign employment reached 741,000 in FY 2022/23.[2] According to the National Census 2021, around 77 per cent of households had received remittance, which contributed to 26.89% of Nepal's GDP, amounting to 10.86 billion USD in 2024.[3] Reliance on remittances often perpetuates multiple cycles of migration, with debt repayment cited as a primary reason for re-migration.[4] Families left behind, particularly women, bear heavy workloads and face social stigma and discrimination, while returnees struggle with sustainable reintegration due to financial constraints, lack of local opportunities, and difficulties in applying for jobs or getting their overseas skills certified domestically. Constitutional and legal provisions[5] ensure the right to mobility and employment abroad and also acknowledge that special attention needs to be given to the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers (RMW). The Foreign Employment Board (FEB) has been providing social integration-related services and training and scholarships for RMWs and their families.

To address the issues of reintegration, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) launched the ReMi Project (2022 to July 2026),[6] which is currently implemented by Government of Nepal (GoN) with the technical assistance from HELVETAS, a Swiss international NGO (INGO), which has also been implementing another SDC funded migration project, the safer migration programme (SaMi) in Nepal since 2011. ReMi supports the returnees and seeks to build a mechanism for social and economic reintegration at federal and provincial and local levels in the long run to address the entire migration cycle. Designed as a pilot initiative, the project aims to test and refine strategies and approaches for social and economic integration, by strengthening two Provinces (Koshi and Madhesh) and 20 local ESCs and their eco-systems to ensure that these services are holistic, demand and need based and accessible. Lessons learnt from this pilot initiative should prepare for scalable implementation in a subsequent phase II. The ReMi Project (2022–2026) has two key outcomes:
1) ensuring returnee migrant workers, both men and women, establish stable social and economic conditions in Koshi and Madhesh Provinces, and
2) strengthening the capacity of local, provincial, and federal governments to deliver effective reintegration services.

The project aims to reach 37,500 RMWs and their families (adjusted to 18.500) through ESCs, while 4,000 individuals are expected to participate in structured family counselling sessions. Additionally, 1,000 returnees in distress benefit from individualised case management, and 2,000 receive psychosocial counselling. Economic reintegration is supported by referring people to business development services (BDS) and skills training/certification provided to 2,000 and 6,000 RMWs respectively. Migrant cooperatives and networks will reach approximately 6,000 returnees, contributing to service delivery and stigma reduction. Inter-governmental coordination and public-private partnerships are fostered and policy consultations held, and budget allocations made for reintegration efforts in the Line Ministry Budget Information System (LMBIS).

1.1 Implementing strategy to achieve the outcomes

The ReMi project's implementation strategy is structured around Nepal's federal governance system, with 20 selected LGs getting technical assistance for reintegration service delivery through ESCs. These ESCs serve as the primary entry point and coordination hub for all reintegration services, for which case management and referral services have been introduced. To operationalise this, the project deploys two dedicated staff per ESC - a family counsellor (trained in psychosocial support and family engagement) and an employment counsellor (focused on skills assessment and job linkage). In addition, there are two Social Mobilisers (SM) appointed by LGs. They are trained to enroll, apply diagnostic tools, counsel and plan reintegration jointly with returnees and their families, and facilitate access to appropriate services (PRODOC p. 20–22). ESCs offer referrals to PMEP's 100-day employment and skills training courses, link returnees to skills upgrading, business development support, and coordinate with existing psychosocial counsellors (e.g. from SaMi) for in-need cases.

At the provincial level, ReMi works with two provincial ministries (Koshi and Madhesh) to integrate reintegration goals into economic development and social welfare strategies, promote access to financial services, and strengthen coordination between municipalities (ibd. p. 19). At the federal level, the project collaborates with MoLESS to support the coordination and formulation of policy frameworks. It is also expected to contribute to the development of National Employment Management Information System (NEMIS), which was planned to be developed during PMEP/YETI. The system was meant

[2] Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), 2024.
[3] Nepa Rastra Bank 2023/24.
[4] Baniya et al 2023; Bhattarai et al 2023.
[5] Constitution of Nepal (2015), Foreign Employment Act 2007, Foreign Employment Policy (2012), Local Government Operation Act (2017), and Reintegration Programme (Operation and Management) Directives for Returnee Migrant Workers, 2079.
[6] See PRODOC, 2022 for details in this section.

to include modules on returnee tracking (p. 17–18). ReMi is designed to build on and complement existing programmes like PMEP/YETI, SaMi, and ENSSURE, and to foster private sector partnerships to ensure that services are market-driven. There are also institutional mechanisms at all three levels of government for guidance, coordination and implementation.[7]

The project also emphasises the role of migrant cooperatives, associations, and networks as important actors for advocacy, outreach, and stigma reduction, particularly for women returnees and those with distressing migration experiences (p. 23). It partners with specialised implementing partners namely Centre for Mental Health and Counseling – Nepal (CMC Nepal) for counselling and case management, Development Project Service Center (DEPROSC) for economic integration and the National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN) and the Nepal and Municipal Association of Nepal (MUAN) to strengthen governance and policy coherence. Additionally, the project also collaborates with other relevant projects such as SaMi, Happy Migration (K-HaMi) Project, SESC, Step UP project, Enterprises and Remittances Project SAMRIDDHI (IFAD), and ENSSURE, QualiTY and NVQS, among others.

2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

To assess the performance of ReMi, SDC appointed an evaluation team, comprising of an international consultant, a national consultant and an assistant. The MTR took place between 1st March and 31 May 2025. A 12-day field mission was carried out, including Kathmandu and various projects sites of Koshi and Madhesh province.

The MTR did a backward-looking and forward-looking analysis. Former focused on measuring progress goals, expected outputs and outcomes of the project and evaluates what is likely to be achieved or not achieved during the remaining phase. It assessed how well the project responded to the GESI assessment recommendations by making required progress on gender equality, disability, and social inclusion, and how effectively it addressed key principles such as non-discrimination and accountability. Similarly, it assessed potential risks and unintended results (positive/negative) and the project's capacities to respond to the same. Further, it evaluated whether the fund flow and implementation arrangements support or hinder implementation. The MTR also provides actionable recommendations for the remaining phase to improve project effectiveness and shape Phase II in design, considering the lessons learned. It also provides a brief overview for synergies and potentials mutual learning between in Bangladesh and in Nepal (see inception report).

2.1 Evaluation Criteria

The MTR employed SDCs proposed OECD/DAC assessment grid: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability (Annex 1). It also analysed the log frame to assess project progress and achievements against defined outcomes, outputs and KPIs (Annex 2). A participatory process was applied as far as possible to ensure that relevant stakeholders' views and realities are reflected in the evaluation report. The MTR covered the following areas:

a) *Relevance:* by assessing alignment with beneficiary needs, context of federalisation, GoN policy priorities and programmes;
b) *Coherence:* by evaluating whether and how the project implementing partners collaborated with each other towards achieving the project outputs and outcomes, and project logic, and whether government's reintegration policies and programmes are compatible with other projects, including SDC-funded initiatives;
c) *Effectiveness*: examining the status of project and effectiveness of ReMi on capacities and collaboration between reintegration service providers and partners to ensure inclusive, gender sensitive and accessible social and economic reintegration services, in the national employment context;
d) *Efficiency:* assessing financial resource management, project and steering set up; operational efficiency, collaboration between spheres, monitoring and knowledge management;
e) *Impact:* assessing intended and unintended effects on returnee migrants and their families;
f) *Sustainability:* Institutional capacity, financial sustainability, and government ownership, from the perspective of the broader national employment context.

2.2 Selection of locations, ESCs and LG

As suggested by SDC, the MTR team visited three ReMi supported, well performing ESCs[8], two ILO supported ESCs, one

[7] At Federa levell: Project Advisory and Coordination Committee (PACC), and The Project Coordination and Implementation Unit (PCIU) in MoLESS. At provincial Level: the Provincial Project Steering Committee (PPSC) and Project Coordination and Implementation Committee (PCIC) in Ministry of Social Development/ Ministry of Labour and Transportation; At local level: The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) in ESC.

[8] The ReMi project defines well performing ESCs as: they have hired project staff, have set up and use case management plan and framework, they have provided referral services. LGs have allotted budgets for the programmes, LGs have endorsed the ReMi project provided guidelines (6) like guidelines for self-employment, start-ups, mobilization of returnee migrant workers networks. The criteria for ILO supported model ESCs were jointly developed with the GoN: Balancing all 7 provinces, Metropolitan and Sub-metropolitan (except in Karnali province where there are no metropolitan or sub-metropolitan), presence of industries within the local level,

MOLESS Model ESC, and the two headquarters of the Koshi and Madhesh province each.

Table 1: LGs visited during MTR

LG types	Province
LG with ReMi supported Model ESC 3	Suryodaya Municipality (Koshi) Laxminiya Rural Municipality (Madhesh) Janakpurdham Sub-metropolitan (Madhesh)
LG with ILO supported model ESCs 2	Biratnagar Metropolitan City (Koshi) Janakpurdham Sub-metropolitan (Madhesh)
LGs with MoLESS model ESC 1	Damak Municipality (Koshi)
Province Headquarters: 2	Biratnagar (Koshi) and Dhanusa (Madhesh)

2.3 Evaluation Tools

A mix-method approach, including qualitative and quantitative analysis was applied and included

- *Review and analysis of documents:* The MTR reviewed of project-related documents including operational and financial reports, internal reviews, relevant studies and relevant documents; relevant laws, policies, strategies, guidelines and Standard Operational Procedures (SoPs);
- *Self-Assessment:* The MTR team also gathered important insights from the self-assessment and follow up discussions with the ReMi team on organizational strengths, effectiveness, and efficiency the start of the mission.
- *Field Mission:* The MTR team met 108 people (28 women) during the field mission (see Annex 3);
  - Key Informant Interviews (KII): 22 KIIs were conducted with key government officials in all three levels, representatives of private sector, project partners including Swisscontact projects, and staff at banks, ESCs, MRCs. KIIs were also conducted offline with a representative of World Bank;
  - Focus group discussion (FGD): 22 FGDs were held across the three tiers of government. FGDs were conducted with beneficiaries specifically the returnee migrants and their networks (community, local and provincial) to understand their needs, involvement in planning, insight into impact and identify areas for improvement. Joint group discussions were held with ReMi partners, government officials, and project team;
- *Field Observation:* The MTR team also visited several small enterprises supported by ReMi project (agriculture farm-fish, cows and vegetable farm, paper plate production unit).
- *Debriefing with SDC:* The MTR team gave presentation of findings at the end of the mission to SDC Nepal and SDC Bangladesh (online) to update and brief SDC on findings and recommendations; and to get firsthand feedback. A separate presentation was given to the ReMi team to clarify some questions and validate findings;
- Sharing with ReMI Phase II Prodoc Writing Team: A draft report, including a data analysis was shared for review, and a final report, incorporating inputs from SDC, has been shared on 19th May 2025.

2.4 Limitations

Given the formative nature of this MTR, certain limitations must be acknowledged, particularly regarding the assessment of long-term sustainability and impact. With only two years of implementation completed, it is premature to draw definitive conclusions on systemic change or sustained outcomes. The absence of systematic information on local governments and ESCs and tracer studies not as yet done, limits the ability to evaluate the systematic assessment of institutional performance and the overall economic and social impact of reintegration efforts on RWS and their families. Additionally, the MTR was constrained by limited field mission time and coverage of only seven Local Governments (LGs), affecting the representativeness of findings. However, discussions with key stakeholders across project sites consistently revealed similar observations, which helped validate findings. Despite these limitations, the review hopes to provide valuable qualitative insights into the project's effectiveness.

2.5 Outline of the Report

The report follows the outline shared in the inception report. Chapter I provides the introduction and project background, while Chapter II discusses evaluation background (scope, approach, methods, clients, and limitations). Chapter III includes discussion of project findings and the overall performance using the DAC criteria relevance, strategic fit, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency of implementation, impact orientation and sustainability. It also discusses the extent of the application of transversal aspects and unintended results. Chapter IV provides conclusions and lessons learnt and selected good emerging case practices. Chapter VI focuses on recommendations and the way forward. The Annex also provides a

volume of budget allocated in fiscal plans and programme. MOLESS identified 13 ESCs in 7 provinces as to be developed 'model ESCs'.

comparison between the Nepal and the Bangladesh project on social and economic reintegration of returning migrant workers.

3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

The evaluation team confirms that the ReMI project is considered highly relevant. The Nepal Government and other stakeholders (ILO, World Bank, K-Hami, JICA supported projects on Career Development and Entrepreneurship Support Program for returnees in Nepal, ESCs and Provincial and Local Government) underscored the pertinent and timely role of the project. The evaluation also affirms the strong alignment and relevance with international and national frameworks and priorities, including:

National Priorities

The project shows high levels of relevance to Nepal's constitutional and legal commitments and development priorities made in the Sixteenth Periodic Plan (2024/25- 2028/29), the Foreign Employment Policy (2012), the Five-year Strategic Plan (FY 2022/23- 2026/27), the Constitution of Nepal 2015, Foreign Employment Act 2107, the Local Governance Operation Act 2017 and Right to Employment Act (2018). The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has provisions for the mobilisation of the capital, skills and experience gained from foreign employment in productive sectors in the country. The Foreign Employment Act 2007 mandates the government to provide social security and welfare to the workers who have gone for foreign employment and for returnees and their families as well as to carry out employment programmes aimed at returnees. The Foreign Employment Policy 2012 stresses on the introduction of effective social and economic reintegration programmes including sensitisation and psycho-social services for dignified social reintegration of female workers who have returned from foreign employments.

The Local Governance Operation Act 2017 also makes the Local Government's (LGs) responsibility for social reunification of RMWs and utilising of their knowledge, skills they gained from the foreign employment. The Five-year Strategic Plan (FY 2022/23- 2026/27) of MOLESS has prioritized collecting and managing of data on RMW' skills and capital at the provincial and local level, studying employment and entrepreneurship-related re-integration programmes for returnees and their families and has, highlighted the need for carrying out community and economic reintegration programmes for women RMWs. The project also aligns with The Reintegration Programme (Operation and Management) Directives for Returnee Migrant Workers published in 2022, which supports social reintegration (including family reunification, psychosocial counseling, leadership development, and social networking); employment (covering skill assessments, certification, skill training, and the modernization of traditional occupations); and entrepreneurship development (e.g. enhancing financial literacy, offering self-employment programs, providing grants and concessional loans in collaboration with local and provincial authorities, and facilitating market access) of returnee migrants.

The project directly aligns with the Government of Nepal's employment creation agenda, the Internal Employment Promotion Decade (2025–35), which emphasizes job creation and self-employment for youth and returnee migrants through improved ecosystems for entrepreneurship, skill recognition, business incubation, and job placement services. It is equally relevant for political leaders and government actors across all tiers, who face growing pressure to generate domestic employment and respond to reintegration demands. Local-level interest is especially strong, with many already integrating reintegration measures into their policies and budgets.

Finally, the project also aligns with the provincial development priorities in Koshi and Madhesh, where social and economic reintegration of returnee migrants have been reflected in their first and second periodic plans.

SDC-Cooperation Priorities in Nepal

The ReMI project also aligns with the Swiss Cooperation Programme 2023-26 for Nepal which seeks to contribute to the improvement of socio-economic well-being of women and men; and supports an inclusive and accountable state by supporting the building of a functional and inclusive federal system, promoting employment, income generation and economic development; and by addressing challenges faced by Nepali migrants while migrating and returning. These synergies reinforce the ReMi project's relevance as a complementary initiative within SDC's broader commitment in Nepal.

UN and Global Frameworks (ILO, UNSDCF, GCM)

The ReMi project contributes to key priorities of the Decent Work Country Programme for Nepal (2023–27), particularly Outcomes 1 and 3, by fostering productive employment, sustainable livelihoods, social security, and inclusive decision-making for returnee migrants. Its efforts to organize and empower returnees through networking and participation in local planning directly support the programme's goals.

Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–27, the project facilitates the reintegration of returnees into society and the economy. It also advances progress on SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10, promoting poverty reduction, decent work, equitable services, skill recognition, and support for female returnees. Additionally, the project reflects Nepal's commitments under the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), ensuring sustainable reintegration through access to social protection, psychosocial care, and decent work.

Returnee Migrants and their Networks

Most importantly, the project is relevant for RMWs and their families as they are the direct and ultimate beneficiaries of the project. Many of them are unemployed or underemployed, lack networks, skills and finances to find jobs and get into self-employment. The project can help ensure that returnee migrant workers' needs are effectively addressed across other SDC- and donor-funded initiatives, as well as through government programmes delivered via ESCs and local governments in the two provinces. It can also play a pivotal role in harmonizing efforts and fostering synergy around reintegration and employment interventions.

3.2 Coherence and validity of design (internal/external)

The original project design effectively targets key areas critical to the social and economic integration of returnee migrant workers. It responds to challenges such as the absence of support networks, psychosocial stress, social isolation and stigmatization, as well as barriers to economic reintegration - including limited access to labour market information, lack of relevant skills or certification, and inadequate support for job placement or entrepreneurship. Collectively, these areas contribute to the overarching goal: "enabling returnee migrant workers to re-establish themselves in Nepal and actively engage in the country's social, cultural, economic, and political life." It aims to address complex social and economic reintegration needs of RMWs across multiple levels of government, seeks to close the gap of circular migration by aligning closely with SaMi, and, by working through ESCs at local level and seeks to make a strong link to the internal labour market. While the project's overall direction aligns with national priorities and local needs, there are design and coherence challenges which undermine its strategic effectiveness.

Scope of the project is too broad and ambitious for a 4-year project

However, the design of the phase 1 of the ReMi project is ambitious in both scope and intention. The current **ReMi's design rather reflects a broad, long-term vision,** but is built into the operational framework with a four-year implementation horizon. While building a mechanism for reintegration is envisaged, the design of the project is very complex and lacks clarity about what it wants to achieve so that after phase 1, ReMi can be replicated and scaled across the country:

- Build systems and structures or relevant partners which are new to reintegration (e.g., ESCs; MRCs, Employment Information Centre);
- Facilitate policy development and alignment, particularly at local and provincial level to create the required framework conditions and economic funding provision;
- Focus on economic reintegration to address economic isolation;
- Effectively reach large numbers through a newly piloted initiative;
- Strengthen outreach to provide case management and referral service delivery (e.g., family and economic counselling);

SDC and Helvetas have highlighted that the project was intentionally designed with an open structure to foster learning during the pilot phase, enabling replication and scale-up during Phase II**, which seems very ambitious.** Feedback from stakeholders highlight that ReMI, at this point is just starting to show results; and to achieve the intended system changes at federal, provincial, and local levels requires a multi-phase, long-term approach, with milestones to be achieved over a period of at least 12 years. The project document, as it stands, has articulated a long-term vision, however, missed to develop a clarity of direction and a detailed, phased roadmap in consultation with key stakeholders. Consequently, the project risks overextending itself without having clarity and direction. Clearly defining what can realistically be achieved within the four-year timeframe is essential for managing the expectations of the government, partners, and - most importantly - returnee migrant workers and their networks. While these limitations were communicated to government and partners, there remains strong pressure to rapidly replicate and scale the initiative across all local governments in Phase II.

Internal project coherence

Theory of change and results framework

While the project has a broad Theory of Change (ToC) on paper, the **impact logic is not sufficiently operationalised and the current log frame shows some weaknesses.** An overarching results chain could better inform about interconnectedness and attributions of interventions on outputs, outcomes and impact; a clear impact logic acts as a guidance for staff and project steering committees to assess and communicate to what extent changes are emerging.

The project follows the existing log frame and has developed an M&E framework; **however, the M&E framework could be strengthened, by aligning it closer to the logframe and by reporting progress made at the institutional level.**

Many interventions are measured as activities, all of which require continuation and institutional development (e.g. ESC strengthening, network development, cooperative development), refinement and deep dive to achieve the desired changes. This additional aspect needs to be addressed so that pilot initiative provides the required foundation and learnings for replication and sustainability with lasting impact.

Formulation of targets

The ReMi project, having a pilot focus on building a re-integration mechanism for returnees, **has rather ambitious target number of beneficiaries** (4000 returnees economically or socially integrated), which are based on several assumptions, over which the ReMi project has no control (see effectiveness sections and discussion on each output). The project, how it has been formulated sets up a mechanism for referrals through ESCs, which themselves are still loosely formed entities with no permanent funding commitment or resources to fulfill the function of an ESC (reintegration, matching, career guidance); and the future of ESCs looms even larger particularly in the context of the WB- funded PMEP/YETI phasing out and MOLESS not yet having clear strategy for ESCs. Therefore, any function in ESC, including the referral mechanism, is in the infancy stage. Further, it is assumed that ReMi benefits from SDC funded projects linkages with SaMi (PSC), QualiTY (VET school development) and NVQS (Skills testing and certification) and ENSSURE (Apprenticeships), which it partially does through referral services, however, not systematically.

Formulation or indicators

The review team found that the ReMi team struggles when reporting progress with the way outcome and output indicators were formulated, since they are often not clear. For instance, the project goal is equally formulated as the outcome 1. Indicators like "social integration" and "economic integration" are not well defined, which leads to inconsistencies and lack of clarity in measurement and interpretation.

Table 2: Goal-Outcome 1

Project Goal	Outcome 1:
Returnee migrant workers have re-established themselves in Nepal and actively participate in social, cultural, economic, and political life	Men and women returnee migrant workers in project working area establish a stable social and economic situation.

Some outcomes and outputs also overlap, and multiple indicators have been used to measure outputs (e.g. output, which makes measurement ambiguous.

Table 3: Examples of some indicators with ambiguity

Example	Observation
Outcome 1: Men and women returnee migrant workers in project working area establish a stable social and economic situation.	2 targets of 4000 men and women being socially and economically integrated is ambitious and lacks realistic foundation. It assumes that local social institutions exist and training and labour markets have a demand for returnees and hence are able to absorb them. Using referral mechanisms is therefore challenging.
Output 1.1 RMW defines return & reintegration plan with family	KPI is formulated as an activity, such as the number of beneficiaries and families either attended sessions or received counselling. This does not necessarily result in a reintegration plan.

- For example, "Proportion of beneficiaries" (under outcome 1): it is unclear what the basis of such proportion is. Is it that an 'increased percentage of RMW population benefitting from services' or is it 'percentage of beneficiaries who have used services'? Reporting is currently done with absolute numbers rather than percentage improvements, making it hard to assess progress, which can either be 'increased capacity of ESCs to deliver more' or 'better services for instance'.
- ESCs (Output 2.1): what is meant by providing 'essential services' is not clear; in other words, indicators of the same have not been specified. They could be case management services, or administering PMEP payments, or refer to the minimum service provision an ESC should have (which would include career guidance, labour market information, labour market matching and basic entrepreneurship information and linking with relevant providers).
- Measuring change: The indicators currently rely on absolute numbers rather than assessing improvements in service delivery capacity of stakeholders or in transformative change of beneficiaries benefitting from in the project. This is particularly important for a system development project. The project does not assess the strengthened capacity of service providers - an important mid- to long-term factor for expanding their reach and delivering more effective reintegration services.
- There are some output-level indicators, which resemble activity results not leading to an output (Output 2.3/2.4). For example, it is unclear how legal provisions or meetings automatically lead to better coordination or improved capacities to provide services for reintegration.

Programmatic Observation

Feedback from stakeholders - including government, private sector actors, and implementing partners and the MTR teams own observations reveals some key gaps, which should be addressed in design to strengthen project coherence:

- Political: The project is perceived as federal government driven, with limited space for local government, private sector, migrant and returnees or their networks, or NGO participation in the planning process;
- Policy level:
    - There is lack of clarity about the role and future of ESCs when it comes to reintegration of RMWs.
    - There is confusion about roles, especially at the provincial and local levels, leading to overlaps in interventions and inefficiencies in coordination;
- Programmatic level:
    - Design could have more systematically operationalized coordination between SaMi and ReMi ;
    - The lack of clarity about the social-economic integration nexus complicates collaboration.

Understanding of Target Group

Beneficiaries and their families: **ReMi's project design falls short in its understanding and segmentation of the ultimate beneficiaries - returning migrant workers.** Although the project team addresses some aspects within the project's scope , the project design does not fully respond to the diversity of returnees; who differ significantly in skill levels and experience, degree of debt and financial stability, psycho-social needs and family context, gender, age, disability, and other socio-economic dimensions. These variations have significant implications for reintegration strategies. They might differ in depth and length of the case management process. The project design has not as yet sufficiently tailored its approaches to these differences. For example:

- Women returnees might need specific targeted support to overcome stigma and labour market barriers;
- Returnees with disabilities and health conditions might also need additional support (also to their families) to access social integration and economic integration support;
- Returnees aged above 40 years face age-related stigma or exclusion in the job market and the project lacks age-specific interventions and finally;
- Skills returnees with entrepreneurship or management potential might also need to be viewed as important group to be served at point of return, since social and economic reintegration should address the entire continuum of returnees.

Selection of LGS/ESCs: The project, being a pilot project to strengthen reintegration mechanism at 3-tiers by engaging and building capacities of LGs, Provinces and the Federal government. The ILO supports the Federal Government in the development of framework conditions and overarching policies for public employment service provision, while the ReMi project strengthens the Province Government and LGs on building effective social and economic integration mechanisms. ESCs have, through their mandate, an important role to play and can become central actors which deliver, through a single window approach, social assistance, referral and employment services for international and local labour markets and entrepreneurship. At the provincial level, the project selected 10 LGs each for Koshi and Madhesh province. The selection was suggested by the provincial government, so the selection resulted in a mix of rural and municipal LGs and their ESCs getting support. **The MTR team felt that the ReMi project would have benefitted from an approach where LGs with strong leadership, economic drive and well performing ESCs could have been piloted first to show quick results before venturing into less dynamic areas.** Further the ReMi project faces challenges in Koshi, where **selected LGs are too thinly spread, which hinders cross learning and potential replication.** The project would have benefitted also if LGs or wards were clustered to provide reintegrated services and to empower RMW networks.

External coherence

Regarding external coherence, the evaluation team found that the ReMi project showed promising collaborative coherence, resulting from a build in collaborative effort between SDC's financed and already matured projects like SaMi, the SDC-World Bank co-financed ILO implemented SESC. Choosing Koshi Province, where SDC's project portfolio for TVET and certification (QualiTY, NVQS, ENSSURE) and enterprise upgrading through UDAYA are being implemented, was a smart move, as this provides positive ground for ReMi project to build synergies and strengthen referrals. As will be shown, however, there are also overlaps and duplications, and there is good scope to intensify this effort and to develop partnerships more strategically (see section effectiveness, recommendations).

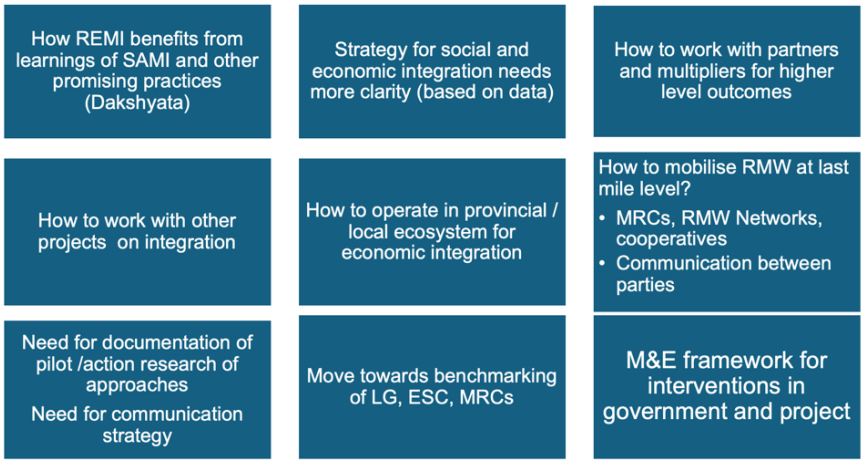
Strategy focus

ReMi has not yet articulated a coherent social and economic integration strategy, how it will be developed into a well anchored mechanism across all three tiers of government. The project was able to build on several promising practices from earlier projects like SaMi, like working with MRCs, the networks built, while ReMi also benefitted from SaMi's presence across the country. **However, up to now, ReMi has not as yet been able to systematically leverage its**

potential by using existing resources from SaMi (e.g. MRCs, returnee volunteers, psychosocial counsellors). **Similarly, ReMi could have built on the Dakshyata project**, a small initiative implemented by the ILO, which addressed reintegration and focused on engaging the private sector/industry association (in Koshi, FNNCI) in assessing skills profiles of returnees.

ReMi, as of now, could benefit from a unified strategy on how to systematically work with the private sector and partners and multipliers - such as the local and provincial government, networks, cooperatives - to achieve higher-level outcomes. There is insufficient clarity on how ReMi interventions interact with ongoing activities in the local ecosystem, such as small and micro enterprise development programmes, skilling initiatives, or local job creation schemes. Communication between actors - project teams, partners, and government officials - is fragmented and ad hoc, preventing joint planning or shared learning.

Figure 1: Strategy elements



Knowledge management and mainstreaming of transversal topics

The project, being a pilot and system building project has very limited resource allocations for M&E in the project and for capacity building of the government and project partners. The design did not make provisions for building capacities for monitoring, quality assurance and knowledge management, including data analysis. The project has addressed GEDSI partially, but not systematically in the design, implementation and reporting (see separate section: cross cutting and GEDSI themes section).

3.3 Effectiveness

The log frame tables below present the status of targets versus achievements as of April 2025. Red indicates 'unsatisfactory' and that targets are unlikely to be achieved within this phase, orange signifies 'satisfactory' and that targets can be reached with additional focused efforts, and green denotes 'highly satisfactory' and that targets are likely to be achieved by the end of the project. The more detailed analysis of log frames with KPI performance for each outcome are found in Annex 2.

Table 4: Outcome 1 KPI

Outcome 1		Target	Status	Observation
	RMW establish a stable economic and social situation	(econ.) 4000 (social) 4000	59 (1) 630 (61F)	
Output1.1	RMW define return & reintegration plan with family (50% of people attending reintegration session)	4261	17% (6%) 704 (45 F)	Plan developed
KPI	RMWs and families who attend reintegration sessions or family counselling	18750	946 (45 F)	
Output1.2	RMW access social protection and psycho-social support services			
KPI	RMWs in distress receive social protection services	1000	9% (35%) 90 (33F)	
KPI	RMWs receive family and psychosocial counselling	2000	32% (10%) 630 (61 F)	Slow roll out
Output1.3	RMWs access skills and knowhow for employment or self-employment in the domestic market			
	RMWs who have acquired skills recognized by NSTB	6000	4% 260 (0)	Age barriers, interest
	RMWs receive BDS, who produce a viable business plan	2000	65% 1309	
	RMWs receive financial services	2000	1% 23 (2F)	Barriers
Output1.4	Migrant cooperatives, associations and networks respond to the needs of returnee migrant workers			
	Coops, associations networks referring RMWs to services	20	65% 13	305 NW in 2 Prov.
	Associations, coops, networks that have built coherent campaigns on rights, stigma, access of RMWs	20	0	What can be achieved?

Outcome 1: Men and women returnee migrant workers establish a stable social and economic situation
The project demonstrated some initial progress in reaching and supporting individual returnees and families across 20 LGs with psychosocial, social, and economic support services through referrals and business development support. The assumption is that with these services, social and economic integration would be facilitated. However, the numbers are with 51 RMW economically integrated and 630 RMW (61 women) socially reintegrated still very low. The project has not yet been able to increase outreach. Most LGs have only covered as of now, which is below expectations. Discussions with the ReMi team highlighted that the project's delay in selecting LGs delayed testing and rolling out the case management system and additional social and economic integration services. **While it is expected that outreach will accelerate, it is unlikely that the project will reach the 4000-beneficiary target for both social and economic integration.** The criteria for measuring 'improved family relationships' for social integration and gainfully employed and paid minimum wage of 17300 NPR for at least 3 consecutive months for economic integration are strict and require systematic monitoring. Against this background, as mentioned earlier, targets set have been unrealistically high.

Output 1.1: RMWs define return & reintegration plan with family
The case management approach developed under the project is a promising and responsive method to address the diverse and often complex needs of RMWs. The 6-step case management process, designed in a participatory manner and piloted over the past two years, aims to address individual psychosocial needs, family dynamics, community networking, and economic integration in a holistic yet tailored way. Family and economic integration counsellors employed by the ESCs, alongside two social mobilisers, have so far registered 1547 RMW (120 women) and started counseling and reintegration services, of whom 706 returnees (45 women) have articulated an integration plan across 20 ESCs. This indicates that while a structure is being put in place, **the scale of outreach has fallen short, and it is unlikely that the target can be met by the end of the project phase.** One key limitation has been the direct delivery model in the project: social mobilisers and counsellors have been heavily involved in door-to-door enrolment, individual counselling, and manual data collection, which has constrained their ability to engage more returnees. Moreover, sustaining returnee engagement through the full reintegration process has been challenging, potentially due to issues of trust and/or the absence of community-rooted support systems.

Observations:
To fully realise the potential of case management, several strategic adjustments are needed. First of all, the effectiveness of case management has not yet been systematically assessed, limiting the project's ability to learn and adapt. Secondly, it is the strength of case management to be need-based, however, a deeper understanding of the person, when it comes to skills, qualifications and economic integration planning is needed. The current questionnaires seem to oversee the details of skills levels, qualifications and profiles, which are required, if they should be linked to Nepal's skills qualification system. The data on RMW profiles has not as yet been analysed to give LGs and the project the required information for decision making and to design economic integration responses.

Further, the current reliance on manual data entry, coupled with the absence of a streamlined digital system, hampers larger scale enrolment, data quality, real-time tracking and performance monitoring.

Output 1.2: RMWs access social protection and psycho – social support services
The project has made promising progress in facilitating psychosocial and social integration support for RMWs, also by tying up and building on structures established by the SaMi project (e.g. MRCs, Returning Migrant Networks and cooperatives). To date, 32% of the 2,000 targets have received psychosocial and/or family counselling, which shows that ReMi is likely to reach the counselling target by the end of the phase. However, while addressing psychosocial counseling needs for returnees in distress and severe need for specialised social counselling and social protection support, the target **of 1000 will most likely not be met, since up to now only 9% (35% of them women) received these services.** When interviewing individuals, these services seem to have contributed to rebuilding social ties and improving the mental well-being of a subset of returnees; however, there is a need to assess the effectiveness systematically. There is also some first evidence that referral mechanisms have strengthened over time, as a result of ESCs starting to collaborate with MRCs and networks on one hand but also as a result of a stronger collaboration with the SaMi project and social division of LGs, which enables professional psychosocial support for more serious cases. The collaboration between MRCs, ESCs and public health institutions is active to some extent, and outreach has expanded modestly through the involvement of MRCs, ESCs, networks, cooperatives, and wards. **However, the scale and consistency of service delivery remain limited, with outreach only reaching two wards due to the continued use of a direct implementation model rather than existing local structures and networks.**

Observations:
There are some information and documentation gaps which need attention which can ensure that the mechanism the project wants to support gets more effective and performance driven. For example: while the number of referrals to social protection

services via ESCs and MRCs has increased, follow-up remains rather informal. Data on referrals and service access, and whether they resulted in closure in favour of the claimants are not yet systematically collected and analysed, as referral processes are still largely informal and not well-integrated into the case management system. A quality assurance mechanism which documents and assess the effectiveness or continuity of psychosocial and family counselling services and whether it contributes to social integration is required.

Output 1.3: Economic integration

Economic reintegration is a core objective of the ReMi project, aiming to support 4,000 RMWs secure gainful employment (as defined for at least three months and aligned with Nepal's minimum wage standards). However, at the time of the mid-term review, only 59 RMWs, including 1 woman, had been gainfully employed - just 1.5% of the target.

Certification of informally acquired skills remains, despite the ongoing SDC funded NVQS project active in Koshi and Madhesh province. Against the target of 6000 RMW, 260 RMWs (0 women) received NSTB-recognised skills certification as of now and it is unlikely that the target will be achieved. It remains a challenge for returnees to access information and skills testing facilities. In addition, skills acquired abroad might not be testable due to the lack of available competency standards and testing capacities (e.g. higher-level testing is not available). Further, many of the returnees have indicated, they do not plan to remain in their trade and seek alternative income-generating options in self-employment, close to their homes, particularly in agriculture, livestock or retail.

Business development support to returnees is on track with 1,309 RMWs accessing financial literacy and business plan development support (65%) and is likely to meet the target; however, feedback from returnees highlighted that there is need for more diversified business development service support, upskilling and technical guidance on how loans and working capital can be accessed so that micro enterprises can grow and expand. **The barrier to access capital partially explains why out of the 1309 RMWs only 23, including 2 women, could access financial services (1%) for starting or expanding their small business.** Some RMWs could access small funding through their own cooperatives or a revolving fund which has been set up by the government for small start-up capital for agriculture and women economic activities. **Challenges like collaterals for accessing commercial loans need to be addressed with commercial banks.**

Observations:

A key challenge has been the limited engagement of the private sector at all levels. Expected partnerships with chambers of commerce, cooperatives, and employers did not as yet materialise; however, this is critical for all the projects currently implemented by SCD in the two Provinces so that labour market outcomes (gainful employment and self-employment) can be achieved. The project struggled to leverage synergies with other government and SDC-supported projects at provincial level which have worked on reintegration with the private sector (address skills development and ion. **Referrals alone have proven insufficient.** ReMi's mandate is to establish a sustainable reintegration mechanism, which assesses reintegration needs and assists returnees and their families through effective need-based referrals and assistance. **However, with ESC the one-stop service provider, it must work more closely with service providers with the mandate of vocational training and business/ labour market services.** Efforts like ILO' Dakshyata project for returnees led to a detailed database for skills profiles of returnees jointly developed with FNCCI in Koshi; similarly Swisscontact's collaborative effort with the IEC under MoSD fostered collaboration between governments and the private sector across LGs within Koshi province, which resulted in a web platform (Shram Sansar) which acts as a job and matching portal, aggregating 14000 job seekers, 100 TVET and skills providers, 200 employers, 5 BDS providers and covers all 137 municipalities within Koshi. The matching platform has been launched on 1st May 2025[9] by the Prime Minister of Nepal which is expected to be rolled out across the country. Another promising initiative in Madhesh Province led to the linking of 936 returnees to the Sworojgar Yojana (Self-employment Plan). **These initiatives show potential but remain geographically limited; they need to be assessed, harvested and where feasible, further resourced and capacitated before they are scaled across the country.**

The provincial and local governments have adopted sector strategies to strengthen value chains, foster business growth and to generate job creation. Multiple donors and SDC projects currently work on economic development which builds its foundation on local sector and employment strategies, linked skills development strategies and enterprise promotion strategies. **SDC' projects, since they are interconnected, can leverage presence and effectiveness, if they operate under one committee for economic development. The local and provincial government seek more consolidation amongst projects for better alignment and suggests more coordination and joint steering and governance.**

Output 1.4: Migrant cooperatives, associations and networks respond to the needs of returnee migrant workers

The project has continued SaMi's earlier and ongoing initiative to promote returnee migrant networks that can accelerate social and economic integration and lobby with their government for recognition and support services. **13 networks were**

[9] Kantipur Daily. Jagir cahiyo ko karmacaari (Need job or workers)? 02 May 2025. https://shorturl.at/ICc5L.

supported, achieving 65% of the planned target of 20, however, 1 network has been registered up to now at provincial level. Similarly, 2 cooperatives have been formed in the two provinces. Campaigns have not yet started. However, it is expected that within the project period the target will be easily achieved if a campaign is well aligned with government and SDC's priorities. Early experiences show encouraging examples of peer assistance, sharing of information, referrals, legal support and informal collaboration emerging within several groups, also amongst women. While the project has initiated some network development activities, these groups remain, however, not as yet fully utilised. They can serve as platforms for peer support, local outreach, and economic collaboration among returnees. Moving forward, enhancing the strategic capacities of these networks - particularly in leadership, service delivery, and engagement with local government and private sector actors - will be key to maximizing their long-term contribution to reintegration. To do so, they require more deliberate investment, training, and coordination to fulfill this role. Without these, their impact remains marginal, and the intended multiplier effect of community-based reintegration is unlikely to be fully realised. In particular, sensitization efforts are needed to ensure that services are inclusive. Strengthening formal coordination between networks and ESCs, and providing targeted capacity-building support, will help solidify the role of these networks as sustainable drivers of social and economic reintegration beyond the project's lifetime.

Outcome 2: The three tiers of government implement effective mechanisms to provide reintegration services to returnee migrant workers

Outcome 2 of the ReMi project focuses on building the capacities of existing government institutions at federal, provincial, and local levels to deliver coordinated and sustainable reintegration services. Good progress was made in policy development, budget allocation for reintegration and the operationalization of local service points through ESCs. Political ownership of the reintegration agenda has been strong at the federal, provincial and local levels. However, critical gaps remain in clarity of the role of provincial government, and on how to strengthen coordination across these tiers of government and in mobilizing the private sector, which constrain the overall sustainability and system anchoring of reintegration efforts.

Table 5: Outcome 2 KPIs

Outcome 2		Target	Status	
	Government implement mechanisms for RMW	22	27% 7	
	Budgets and Plans	22	22	
Output2.1	Local governments have the capacities to provide needs-based reintegration support services			
	ESCs provide essential services to RMW	20	20	Should be an other indicator.
	LG with own policies and plans on reintegration	20	6	
	LG with own budgets for sustainable reintegration	20	20	Not all have 20 Lakh
	Thematic committees engage with RMWs, networks, associations and/or cooperatives	6	1	
Output2.2	Provincial Governments act upon their roles and responsibilities for migration and reintegration			
	Sessions of parliamentarian committees (migr. Profiles)	3	0	
	Number of available draft frameworks	20	0	
	LG receive technical knowhow & budget from PG	20	136	
Output2.3	The three tiers of government coordinate together for reintegration support services			
	Inter-ministerial Meetings	4	0	
	Consultation between Fed-PG-LG on policies/legal frameworks	8	88% 7	
Output2.4	The three tiers of government partners with the private sector on reintegration support services			
	Services provided in partnership with private sector	8	0	
	Collab. initiatives between PG, LG and private sector	8	0	

Notable progress has been achieved in supporting federal, provincial and local governments in the process of developing a more coherent policy environment and framework conditions for social and economic reintegration of returnee migrants and their families. At federal level, ReMi supported MoLESS in the revision of the Foreign Employment Act 2007, while, together ILO and SaMi, it supported the Madesh and Koshi Province in the drafting of the Labour and Employment Policy and allocation of budgets towards reintegration. Other efforts included technical support in the development of implementation guidelines, SOPs and advising on budget allocations for reintegration, and operationalizing local-level services through **ESCs. Political commitment to the reintegration agenda is evident across all tiers of government, reflecting broad ownership of the process.**

However, several systemic challenges continue to limit the effectiveness and coherence of implementation. Provincial governments (PGs), in particular, lack clarity on their roles and mandates, which weakens their coordination with both federal and local actors. Committees at different levels often function in silos, with limited horizontal and vertical alignment. Partners require more strategic technical assistance to facilitate this engagement and strengthen institutional linkages. **In**

terms of data management, overlapping systems such as NEMIS, NLMIS, Shram Sansar, and the planned NLMIS blueprint have led to redundancies and confusion, undermining the potential for integrated data use and analysis. Moreover, monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance mechanisms within government systems remain largely absent or invisible, making it difficult to track performance and inform policy improvements. Finally, engagement with the private sector remains minimal, despite its critical role it has in sustainable economic reintegration of returnees.

Output 2.1: Local governments have capacities to provide needs-based reintegration support services

ReMi has started engaging all 20 targeted ESCs in the project activities, integrating case management, psychosocial referrals, and to a certain extent employment support referrals within their operations. While this engagement marks significant operational progress, challenges persist regarding the institutionalization of reintegration support within municipal ESCs. **The level of ownership and operational capacity varies across municipalities, and many ESCs continue to rely on ReMi technical assistance and resources to deliver services. Further, it is not clear how ESCs will be staffed after the World Bank funded PMEP/YETI project comes to an end and to what extent ESCs can fulfill its core functions.** At this point in time, the financing of ESC's core functions and the employment coordinator and technical assistant, continues. These are functions which are essential in ESCs, which up to now, have hardly functioned as employment service centres in their full function and role to provide the required career guidance, entrepreneurship support and matching services with the private sector.

New non-ReMi supported LGs such as Biratnagar Sub-metropolitan city and Damak municipality in Koshi province are keen to emulate similar ongoing interventions, and some of them have even introduced entrepreneurship related plans[10] and allocated funds. However, a systematic study needs to be done to assess capacities and status of ESCs.

Community outreach and the delivery of services - both social and economic - have visibly expanded in ReMi-supported local governments (LGs) when compared with non-supported ESCs. These efforts have also facilitated access for returnees to loan schemes and initiatives such as the Chief Minister's Self-Employment Program in Madhesh. Unlike in non-ReMi LGs, ReMi municipalities have conducted systematic data collection, including needs assessments of returnees. That said, some non-ReMi LGs, such as the Damak Municipality, have independently undertaken household-level surveys of migrants and returnees.

Referral services offered through ReMi-supported ESCs have increased relatively more compared to those supported by MoLESS or ILO. This is due to enhanced institutional capacity, clearer role definitions for staff, and broader service offerings beyond the PMEP. Collaboration between MRCs and ReMi ESCs has also intensified - more so than with ESCs backed by MoLESS or ILO. ReMi-supported LGs have taken stronger ownership of the reintegration agenda. They have engaged directly with returnees and have gone further than their counterparts in formulating reintegration-related policies, guidelines, and programmes. ReMi LGs for examples, Urlabari Municipality, Kamal Rural Municipality, Miklajung Rural Municipality, and Kerabari Rural Municipality have formulated procedures for formation and mobilization of returnee migrant workers' network. LGs like Laxminiya Rural Municipality in Madhesh, Suryodaya and Urlabari Municipality in Koshi have introduced both the Emergency Fund Management Guideline to Support Reintegration of Returnees and Their Families (2081)[11] and the Procedure for Self-Employment Grant Support Program (2080).[12] These policies aim to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment by leveraging the skills and experiences of returnees. Therefore, ReMi supported ESCs seem to have built more credibility among people and local representatives.

Output 2.2: Provincial governments act upon their roles and responsibilities

To strengthen the inter-governmental mechanisms and to assign leadership responsibilities to provincial authorities, the ReMi project contributed in both provinces to the integration of reintegration priorities into provincial policies and budgets. Good progress was made in both provinces on the Labour and Employment Policy and in the case of Madhesh, where six reintegration-related policies and procedures were developed[13] which address labour and employment (with SaMi and ILO), access to skills, certification, self-employment and grant support. In addition, 2 staff were appointed by the Madhesh province government to coordinate and build capacities of an increased number of 13 newly financed MRC coordinators and 8 district Employment service coordinators. In Koshi and Madhesh, Employment Information Centres (EICs) are being strengthened with the support of SaMi, ReMi and in the case of Koshi, Swisscontact (Step UP). Further, these advancements demonstrate growing political ownership and initial steps toward systematizing reintegration support and towards assuming the role of capacity builder, quality assuring and compliance actors. However, despite these improvements, formal oversight structures and coordination platforms at the provincial level are yet to be established and

[10] Damak Municipality, Youth Self-Employment Program Operating Procedure, 2077. https://shorturl.at/EACHw; Biratnagar Sub-Metropolitan City, Biratnagar Metropolitan's Policy, Programs, and Budget for Fiscal Year 2081–82. https://shorturl.at/fZ1e3.

[11] https://laxminiyamun.gov.np/sites/laxminiyamun.gov.np/files/CamScanner%2002-16-2025%2012.25.pdf

[12] https://laxminiyamun.gov.np/sites/laxminiyamun.gov.np/files/CamScanner%2002-16-2025%2012.29_0.pdf

[13] Labour and Employment Policy, Skills Development Training implementation procedure, Self-Employment Programme Implementation Procedure, Procedure for Employee Recruitment and Service Contract for Labor and Employment Programs, Start-up Loan Support programme, CM Employment Programme.

institutionalised within the federal framework. Provincial reintegration committees and designated focal points are yet to be established, which could be an important next step provinces to take when assuming a supervisory role for reintegration efforts.

Output 2.3: Establishment of Functional Coordination Mechanisms Across Government Levels
The target was to conduct eight formal vertical coordination meetings by 2025. Notable progress has been made, with seven vertical coordination meetings successfully held between LGs, PGs, and the federal level, putting this aspect largely on track. More exchange meetings between LGs and ESCs are planned. Despite this achievement in vertical coordination, **several systemic challenges persist. Horizontal coordination at the federal level remains weak,** as regular inter-ministerial meetings to align sectoral ministries on reintegration have not been very strongly forthcoming. Federal-level governance continues to dominate strategic planning, with limited voice and ownership from provincial and local governments. **Coordination at the provincial level is also fragile, with little integration of sectoral ministries, private sector actors, and local governments into planning or implementation processes.**

Communication between federal ministries and municipalities is still irregular and rather unsystematic, leading to local **governments often feeling disconnected from broader policy and strategy discussions.** Further, a central challenge at provincial level poses limited collaboration with other SDC projects and development partners at provincial and local government level, making coordination for the government complicated. **These are missed opportunities for better alignment, policy coherence, and enhanced effectiveness particularly in areas of economic integration and broader outreach, and cost-sharing.**

Output 2.4: Private sector engagement
While some meetings with local employers were held, no formal strategic partnerships with private sector actors had been established. Engagement with the private sector remains minimal across all tiers of government. At the federal level, discussions with FNCCI have not yet been initiated to systematically address reintegration. At the provincial level, opportunities to link reintegration programmes with provincial cooperatives, vocational training institutions, and local business networks have not been systematically pursued with the help of ongoing projects such as NVQS, ENSSURE, QualITY.

At the municipal level, ESCs and local governments have not yet established partnerships with local businesses or cooperatives to facilitate linkages to apprenticeships, job placements, or enterprise development for returnees. The lack of private sector engagement represents a major missed opportunity for efficiency, sustainability, and scale.

Effectiveness of project implementation partners

ReMi's implementing partners play a vital role in delivering targeted reintegration services and support system development across thematic areas such as case management, financial literacy, psychosocial counselling, and policy and legal and budgeting strengthening within local governments. Each partner brings valuable technical expertise, but there remains scope to enhance their contributions as strategic collaborators in system building. It should be explored whether these partners have an evolving role. Terre des Hommes (TdH) has been instrumental in developing the case management system and currently develops the digitization of enrolment. The rollout has been slower than anticipated. Capacity development, establishing quality assurance mechanisms for registration and case management, and enabling better data analysis is needed so that ESC staff can improve outreach and quality services. DEPROSC has contributed through local business mapping and financial literacy efforts; the project would benefit from enhanced strategic planning and ESC staff training to meet their needs of economic integration and by more strategically engaging with the local ecosystem, including other projects and business networks. CMC has supported psychosocial and family counselling interventions, however, it misses out on building a quality assurance process around family counselling and psychosocial counseling and case management process through supervision and capacity building at the ward and ESC levels. NARMIN and MUAN have just been engaged in advancing policy alignment at the local level, and greater follow-up and coordination support will help amplify their impact - particularly once MUAN is fully onboarded.

ReMi has recognised the importance of fostering a systems thinking mindset across all actors, however, should do this more systematically. Project staff have at times been stretched by direct delivery demands, limiting space for strategic facilitation. Partners have tended to focus more on implementation tasks than on long-term coordination and institutional learning or how to contribute more strategically to overall building and quality assuring the reintegration mechanism. However, this presents an opportunity: by investing in broader system-building competencies - including facilitation, joint planning, and shared accountability - ReMi can better equip its partners and government actors to sustain and scale reintegration services over time. The addition of one Remi staff for M&E and documentation capacity in late 2024 has already created momentum for more structured learning.

Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

The Gender Assessment (2024) highlights critical shortcomings in the project's design with respect to GEDSI. While the project recognises that women returnees are particularly vulnerable to stigma, discrimination and social exclusion in their community, these insights were not yet translated into a coherent set of mainstreaming strategies and/or targeted activities. GEDSI has not yet been consistently applied in the log frame; only one output-level indicator (1.4.2) directly addresses discrimination and stigma against women RMWs.[14] Most indicators under outcome 2, which relate to government policies, legal framework conditions and reintegration programming, have not included gender, disability or social inclusion in their formulation (PRODOC p. 13–15). Moreover, neither the Government's Reintegration Directives[15] nor the project's implementation guidelines provide affirmative measures to specifically engage or support women, people from minority ethnic or religious groups, or persons with disabilities (ibd. p. 16–18).

Despite these design gaps, the project has taken several important steps. The case management approach provides by design individualised and need-based support to returnees, the project has to a certain extent prioritised women for referrals to psychosocial counselling, training, and health services. ReMI has introduced the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology to support gender-sensitive visioning and reintegration planning, and to introduce targeted initiatives for women returnees and other marginalised groups. The staffing model also reflects some attention to diversity, with local hiring practices favoring women, specific ethnic minorities and returnees as project staff and ESC staff (social mobilisers, family counsellors and economic counsellors). Gender-disaggregated data has been collected under Outcome 1, and Returnee Migrant Networks supported by the project include provisions for more inclusive representation. **While these gender aspects have been considered, no specific measures have as yet been taken to address particular needs of vulnerable groups in responses, particularly in the case of economic reintegration. Since data for a better understanding of specific groups and their needs (incl. disability and ethnic groups/caste or religious minorities) have not been systematically analysed and utilized for the design of responses, no information on effectivenss of interventions are available. The missing analysis also makes it difficult to create a deeper understanding and capacity building of partners on understanding GEDSI (eg. Networks, cooperative, LGs, PG, MRCs, ESCs), and GEDSI mainstreaming in areas of social and economic reintegration.**

3.4 Efficiency

Realistic goals, timeframe and timely delivery

The design section has already highlighted that goals and outcomes have been formulated with a long-term perspective, so that many of the output indicators and expected results are quite unrealistic. **System building, including policy formulations and building a mechanism for reintegration through ESCs, which themselves have not yet been institutionalised and functional takes a longer time horizon.** The project design for phase I, which is considered a pilot phase, should have been developed within the scope of a four-year project, with clear milestones to be achieved, not only from the point of view of testing models in two provinces and 20 LGS and their ESCs, but also from an institution building perspective. The project was further designed with the assumptions that a reintegration mechanism is built into existing strong mechanisms at local and provincial levels, including ESCs, so that through case management and referral mechanisms, reintegration of returnees gets mainstreamed in employment, skills and economic and social policies. Such projects highly depend on political support and government approvals at the highest levels, but also on the assumption that the only constraints for reintegration are networks, lack of information, skills and matching opportunities with the labour markets. **The challenge, however, lies in the fact that lack of employment and income opportunities are the root causes for outward migration; consequently, effective economic reintegration measures remain challenging if they are addressed through referrals only. These are realities which are largely beyond the project's direct influence.**

Timely delivery

Timely delivery has been compromised by delays in LG selection, which was finalised only in March 2023, reason being provincial elections. This led to delays in ESC staff hiring and the development of case management and referral systems and reintegration activities which only started from December 2023. These delays severely constrained the timeline for activities like community outreach, counselling, and referral service delivery. The implementation plans envisioned step-wise service roll out from mid-2023 onwards, however it started only in early 2024. There were also changes in provincial governments within the projects, which significantly hindered smooth planning and roll out of the project. Despite these challenges, ReMi has been able to progress quickly, particularly on the engagement front with local governments, their sensitization about social and economic reintegration and capacity building for policy related work and budgeting.

[14] Number of associations, cooperatives and networks that have built coherent campaigns, including those to protect the rights of RMWs, increase access of RMWs to services, and reduce stigma against women returnee migrant workers

[15] Reintegration Programme (Operation and Management) Directives for Returnee Migrant Workers, 2079 (Unofficial Translation).

Engagement and sensitization of local governments takes however time and capacity building. In addition, the project prioritised efforts on policy work and social integration, case management development and only recently started with more efforts on economic reintegration. Private sector engagement however takes time and is in itself a challenging task. Assumptions around the institutional readiness of LGs and ESC capacities to pick up from the beginning in both areas were therefore overly optimistic.

Financial Efficiency

As of December 2024, only 25% of ReMi's total Phase I budget of USD 4.27 million had been spent; 29% from Technical Assistance (TA) and 23% from government funds. This low burn rate results from the delays in rolling out activities mentioned above, which reduced the timeframe for implementation. Spending under Outcome 1 was especially low at 16%, with critical outputs such as Output 1.2 (skills and employment referrals) and Output 2.4 (private sector engagement) showing burn rates of just 13% and 4% respectively. Case management, enrolment and referrals have only started to pick up which explains the low spending. However, services are now gradually picking up, and activities under both outcomes have started gaining momentum in early FY 2024/25.[16]

Table 6: Budget Spending ReMi up to December 2024

Outcome/ output	Direct TA 57%	GoN Treasury 43%	Phase Target 100%	Actual_Dec 2024 (TA)	% burning rate (TA)	% burning rate (GoN)	Total % burning rate
Outcome 1	1,008,065	1,927,313	2,935,378	325,206	32%	8%	16%
Output 1.1	115,876	55,874	171,751	48,521	42%	45%	43%
Output 1.2	482,962	407,087	890,049	114,559	24%	0%	13%
Output 1.3	318,959	1,441,756	1,760,716	159,944	50%	7%	15%
Output 1.4	90,267	22,595	112,862	2,182	2%	89%	20%
Outcome 2	249,208	972,692	1,221,900	37,303	15%	55%	47%
Output 2.1	47,809	827,141	874,949	10,150	21%	61%	59%
Output 2.2	64,289	34,292	98,581	47	0%	63%	22%
Output 2.3	81,557	81,098	162,655	23,362	29%	10%	20%
Output 2.4	55,554	30,161	85,715	3,744	7%	0%	4%
Monitoring Knowledge Management	115,342	-	115,342	34,857	30%		30%
TOTAL	1,372,615	2,900,005	4,272,620	397,366	29%	23%	25%

It is unlikely that the ReMi project will spend the existing budget within the remaining phase, of which only 1 year is left, if budget lines and priorities are kept as they are. In addition, conversion rate gains have increased in favour of additional funds available for the project. **To improve financial efficiency in the remaining project phase, as will be suggested in the recommendation, more funds should be spent on building a quality assurance frame and mechanism for LGs, ESCs and provinces, which is supported by just in time MIS for performance and capacity building of staff so that quality and reporting are part of the reintegration mechanism.** The MTR team also suggests that some additional resources would be allocated to the ReMi project for an internal strengthening of M&E, data collection and monitoring, which can support the system building process. Some funds should also be allocated for harvesting, conducting effectiveness and impact assessments and consolidating key interventions on economic and social integration that were piloted during the first phase through ESCs. These efforts would provide the required empirical evidence of the project's initial impact and offer valuable insights for guiding government planning for replication and scale within the province and across the country.

Project coordination and governance

The ReMi project has established coordination structures at both the federal and provincial levels to promote alignment and oversight across all three tiers of government. At the federal level, the Project Advisory and Coordination Committee (PACC), chaired by the secretary of MoLESS, was intended to convene twice annually. However, only one PACC meeting was as of December 2024, while a second planned meeting in late 2024 was postponed due to scheduling conflicts with senior government officials. Although these meetings function effectively when convened - offering a space for strategic guidance and inter-governmental alignment - their irregular frequency has impacted more strategic decision making and alignments of vision. Participation in these federal coordination forums has been almost exclusively government-driven, with minimal involvement of civil society, development partners, other projects (e.g. K-Hami, SaMi, ILO SESC) or the private sector. ReMi has however, remained actively engaged in national policy dialogue - contributing to ESC strategy discussions, supporting MoLESS in the development of the LMIS digitalisation blueprint, and proposed revisions to the Foreign Employment Act 2007 and new Labour Migration Policy. **The transfer of ReMi's portfolio to the Ministry's Internal Employment Promotion Division has strengthened its institutional positioning and created greater synergy with employment-focused agendas. However, it was noticed that there is scope to remain closer engaged with the ministry to ensure that the project remains relevant and well aligned with the ministry's priorities.** ReMI's recent appointment of a policy advisor has been strongly approved by the MoLESS as an important strategic step to be closer to

[16] This is also recognizing the ReMi budget already included in the Line Ministry Budget Information System of MoLESS.

the government so that ReMi's work in Provinces and Local governments is better coordinated and reflected in federal policy development and planning.

At the provincial level, Provincial Steering Committees (PSCs) in both Madhesh and Koshi were expected to meet quarterly. In practice, it was decided to reduce meetings to an annual meeting so that **only three meetings were** held across both provinces during the current reporting cycle, which seems to be less. While provincial governments have shown increasing ownership through budget allocations and planning inputs, coordination mechanisms remain primarily state-led, with limited representation from other reintegration stakeholders, including private sector, civil society or other projects. Notably, there has been very little participation from private sector actors, vocational training institutions, or aligned projects such as SaMi, NVQS, QualiTY, UDAYA or ENSSURE, which offer clear potential for more synergies. Coordination and steering is currently project driven and not system driven, which should be addressed. Province and local governments have explored just recently closer coordination at least between SaMi and ReMi project to avoid duplications and accelerate synergies and system-wide collaboration; more collaboration with other SDC funded projects, which deal with skills development, certification and entrepreneurship is required, as otherwise, the lack of coordination may undermine the project's broader objective of institutionalising reintegration support across Nepal's federal governance landscape.

Private sector engagement, while currently limited, presents a significant opportunity to strengthen economic reintegration and local employment creation. As local and provincial governments move toward employment-focused reintegration strategies, deeper collaboration with employers, cooperatives, SMEs, and training institutions will be critical.

Collaboration between partners for more synergies and better impact

The project has also initiated collaboration with a range of complementary programmes - such as SaMi, ENSSURE, Step-Up, NVQS, QualiTY, Udaya, and K-HaMI. These linkages present strong potential for coordination in areas like skills development, certification, business support, and employment services. Partnerships with organisations like ILO, Swisscontact, K-HaMI, and the World Bank have fostered synergy, particularly in digitalisation and reintegration information sharing. **Coordination across similar and complementary projects remains however, rather operational and not as yet very strategic; it could be further enhanced through more structured mechanisms at the federal and provincial level, enabling shared planning to support the government on having greater policy and programme coherence. SDC, together with the government and other donors could drive such a process.**

Team set up – Thinly Spread and Overloaded

The ReMi project operates through a multi-tiered very lean staffing structure, beginning with a compact federal team that includes a team and deputy team leader, a small finance and admin section and one driver. Federal-level support has been strengthened with the addition of one M&E and Knowledge Management staff member in September 2024 and a Policy Liaison Officer in April 2025, the latter working closely with MoLESS on key legislative and strategic processes. One thematic manager for Social Integration and one for Economic Integration also manage as provincial Project Support Unit (PSU) coordinators, giving them a dual mandate that spans technical leadership and provincial coordination. While this arrangement indicates resource efficiency, **it also highlights that these very thinly spread teams, who operate across multiple domains - including strategic planning, capacity building, supervision, and reporting - are constantly overworked and have limited time to reflect, which poses a strain on a small core team.**

To address capacity constraints in the provinces, ReMi recently appointed one Policy Liaison Officer and one Social or Economic Officer in each of the two working provinces - Madhesh and Koshi. This marks an important step toward reinforcing the provincial teams with dedicated personnel, enabling better responsiveness to local implementation challenges and stakeholder engagement. However, given the broad scope of responsibilities - from technical backstopping to partner coordination - these roles continue to be overstretched. Although additional staffing has helped reduce some of the bottlenecks identified earlier in the project, the overall implementation model remains heavily focused on direct implementation. ReMi's field teams continue to manage large caseloads and overlapping operational tasks, particularly in geographically dispersed areas like Koshi Province. This can create inefficiencies. This has constrained their ability to engage in strategic system building, quality assurance, reflection, and cross-learning.

While the onboarding of ReMi staff in ESCs across 20 local governments is a critical step for ReMi to route reintegration through ESCs, there are delivery inefficiencies which have limited their effectiveness as sustainable reintegration hubs. Staff are directly involved in enrolment, outreach, and mobilization, fulfilling multiple and overlapping roles as family, economic counsellors, and social mobilisers. Consequently, outreach remains highly labour-intensive, with house visits still being the primary means of engagement in many locations. As a result, ESCs have only reached a limited number of two wards, falling short of broader community coverage targets. With this direct approach, the project risks undermining ESC's core functions and role: being a facilitative agency that provides information, guides and links jobseekers with the labour market and relevant social protection schemes.

M&E, Reporting, and Knowledge Management – Still Nascent

The ReMi project's M&E, reporting, and knowledge management systems are nascent, which might constrain the project's ability to systematically measure progress, generate evidence, and support institutional learning if not addressed. The MTR learnt that the GFA Consulting Group, as consortium partner, was supposed to lead the quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation part, which however, did not materialise; an alternative to this important part of a pilot project, however, was not found till the M&E-knowledge manager was appointed at ReMi late 2024. Currently, there is no comprehensive M&E framework that tracks project-level or institutional progress across federal, provincial, and local levels. Reporting remains largely activity-based, with a limited focus on results, outcome measurement, or effectiveness analysis. This has made it difficult to assess the project's strategic contribution to systemic reintegration or to feed evidence into ongoing policy dialogue. Furthermore, case management and referral data - critical for tracking beneficiary pathways and service effectiveness - are not yet consolidated or shared in a form usable by government stakeholders, limiting ownership and cross-system visibility.

In terms of quality assurance, current efforts are mostly reliant on individual staff initiatives and follow up rather than a structured process. There is no standardised approach in place for reviewing the quality-of-service delivery of case management, counselling of referrals at ESC level or ensuring consistency across municipalities. Feedback loops to inform programmatic adaptation remain weak, partly due to limited staff capacity and partly due to the lack of a routine supervision or mentoring system.

The scope of monitoring remains constrained by data availability, limited reporting from provincial and local levels, and a lack of harmonised indicators. Evaluation and documentation capacity need strengthening. While some thematic studies have been conducted - such as the gender assessment and the 12 Moments That Matter tool - **there is no consolidated plan or system for institutional learning, benchmarking local governments, or sharing results systematically.**

Knowledge management, in particular, has not been systematically developed but is planned. However, planned initiatives - such as knowledge-sharing events in Koshi and Madhesh targeting cooperatives and returnee networks - indicate growing momentum.

Communication and Visibility

The ReMi project has been able to create good visibility in the two provinces and nationally. Non-Remi LGs that the MTR team visited show keen interest in getting guidance on capacitating ESCs and in embedding reintegration into the service provision. More effort on creating visibility of ReMi is required to reach out to other LGs, ESCs and returnees, who often are not aware of the ESCs offering such services. While building stronger linkages to MRCs and networks or cooperative, a communication strategy which is well anchored at province and local levels and which is transversally implemented, can accelerate creating awareness locally and nationally and support overall visibility of reintegration and generate the required interest in engaging with ESCs. Such a national strategy, which is rooted at provincial, districts and local level can be well-executed and cost-effective.

3.5 Impact orientation

Have there been any positive changes in the lives of the project's ultimate beneficiaries?

Although operational only since early 2024, there are initial signs which suggest that ReMi's interventions are beginning to generate an impact on RMWs and their families because of increased recognition of their challenges, increased networking and participation in decision making and better targeted responses provided by governments, service providers, and networks. However, a systematic assessment about the effectiveness of services provided and the impact these services had on social and economic integration before any conclusions can be made.

The project currently assesses impact by monitoring whether returnee migrants have reestablished themselves in Nepal and actively participate in social, cultural, economic and political life resulting from training and additional services. Measuring this impact as mentioned earlier seems unclear and ambiguous and the project is yet to further refine measurable indicators, particularly for social integration. Currently, the project measures social integration by having attended family counselling and social counselling sessions, resulting in a reintegration plan. Satisfaction surveys are planned which should provide the required feedback to services (guidance, referrals etc.) provided through ESCs. The project is yet to undertake tracer studies on economic reintegration, which is measured based on whether national minimum income for three consecutive months is achieved. As mentioned earlier, it is unlikely that ReMI, through referrals done by ESCs, which themselves have not yet been fully functional within the labour market ecosystem, will succeed with the current referral approach.

In countries with a large informal economy and limited employment prospects, self-employment typically serves as a fallback option due to the scarcity of formal employment opportunities. In that case, due to limited options, returnees are likely to be self-employed even without skills training or certification or the respective services. To better assess impact of interventions on beneficiaries' economic wellbeing, measuring increased income, more and regular working days, or improved work quality should be considered.

Have interventions influenced behavioural changes in partner organisations?

Early findings indicate increased interest, understanding and to a certain extent also strengthened capacities among federal, provincial, and local government actors, particularly when including reintegration services into policies, procedures and increased allocation of provincial and local government budgets towards financing ESCs and expanding their mandates towards addressing reintegration. However, there is need for more clarity regarding operationalisation of these policies so that steps taken really have the expected impact. **Priorities remain unclear in the project, to what extent ReMi can fulfil two objectives: 1) ensuring that reintegration is addressed in the migration cycle from early on by harmonizing efforts with SaMi and expanding projects like K-HaMi; and 2) strengthen provincial and local governments, through ESCs to accelerate and foster economic reintegration of RMWs and their families.** Many provincial and local governments continue to face challenges in creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, delivering quality skills training, and generating labour market intelligence - all of which are critical for enterprise development and job creation in the domestic labour market. These limitations contribute to persistent outward migration, underscoring the urgent need for strategic support to enhance the structural conditions for reintegration.

ESC: There are clear indications that the 20 ESCs supported through the ReMi project have delivered an expanded and more diverse range of services, enabled by targeted funding and capacity-building efforts. As mentioned in the effectiveness section, these ESCs have performed better than the non-supported ESCs due their additional capacity building and human resources made available. **Compared to other ESCs, which often limit their services to PMEP related services, supported ESCs have expanded psychosocial counselling, case management, and referral services; less focus has been put on building the core function of ESCs, to facilitate linkages between job seekers and training, entrepreneurships and jobs.** The evaluation team noted that the project shows good potential for positive impact of some ESCs visited, where ESC coordinators are motivated and show vision for ESCs to assume their roles beyond the PMEP administration and case management only. To mention is Suryodaya Municipality, where the ESC coordinator also assumes the section head for labour and employment and coordinates with sub-MRCs, and ReMi funded reintegration staff and closely collaborates with the social section and other sections. While this is a valuable good case practice (see later), **no systematic evidence has been provided which could assess 'behavioural change'.**

The effectiveness of counselling, referral and placement support provided by ESCs, and their collaboration with the private sector has not yet been systematically monitored, highlighting the need for a robust mechanism to assess both performance and service outcomes at each ESC.

Cooperatives and migrant networks have grown in outreach and visibility and influencing local policy decisions in both provinces. Koshi province invited returnee networks in the review of their labour and employment policy, while Madhesh supported returnee networks with some funds for capacity building, enabled their registration. Their representation in the seven-step planning process of the LG has also increased. These shifts signal improved voice in policy making for these networks, which are in turn the multipliers ensuring outreach and access of returnees to reintegration support.

3.6 Sustainability orientation

It is too early to fully assess the project's sustainability, with the project just in action for 2 years and in operation since the beginning of 2024. But there are early indications of progress. These signs highlight potential pathways for long-term impact, provided that critical gaps - such as financial sustainability and permanency of ESCs, strategic and operational questions are addressed.

Financial sustainability

The ReMi project has begun to demonstrate encouraging small steps towards financial sustainability through a combination of budgetary commitments. All 20 partner local governments have allocated around 20 lakhs towards reintegration activities, some of them more. Substantial contributions were made from the provinces Madhesh and Koshi Provinces - together totaling NPR 197.7 million. In Madhesh, the province has gone a step further by financing key human resources, including additional financial allowances for 136 ESC coordinators if they focus their attention on reintegration, besides appointing a provincial coordinator for migration and one for employment to supervise and mentor 13 MRC and 8 Employment officers (in Madhesh) to ensure quality and performance. This financial commitment is reinforced by the formal endorsement of

several reintegration-related policies and procedures that should lead to structured government spending on self-employment, startup grants, and skills training.

Uneven progress: Madhesh Province is significantly ahead in both policy institutionalization and financial commitment for reintegration. It has approved multiple frameworks and operationalised direct financial support for ESC personnel and programmes. In contrast, Koshi Province has made slower progress, with policies still under review and lower budget utilization. This contrast points to varying degrees of political will, administrative prioritization, and institutional readiness across provinces. The reasons might be financial capacities, or other priorities, which need to be addressed. Another factor might have been the thin geographical spread of ReMI in Koshi and more frequent changes of the PG governments (8 times in the past 2 years), which could have delayed progress.

Risky future of ESCs: **A major operational concern is the understaffing and temporary funding of ESC personnel, currently financed by the federal Government and through temporary projects like PMEP and ReMI, which can pose a mid- and long-term risk to ReMi's sustainability, particularly in the absence of committed funding continuity from the national level.** It was signaled by the World Bank and MoLEES that PMEP/YETI will not continue financing ESC coordinators and technical staff, so that the future of funding remains uncertain. While the federal government has signaled its intent to replicate and expand these efforts by proposing dedicated reintegration funds across all provinces, the future of funding for ESCs core staff and operational requirements is not yet decided. It is unclear to what extent Nepal can, given its small fiscal space continue financing ESCs, particularly if they should fully function in their role.

Institutional Sustainability

Institutionalizing Returnee Networks and cooperatives: The registration of Migrant Networks and Cooperatives and their participation in policy development marks a significant first step toward institutionalizing returnee support networks, however, these steps are only at the beginning.

- Local governments and in some cases, enterprises are increasingly willing to collaborate, suggesting the potential for long-term engagement in reintegration efforts.
- Clarity of collaboration between MRCs at district level and ESCs local levels and role of employment officers at district (in Madhesh) and reintegration officer at province is to be further fine-tuned and clarified.
- To maintain momentum, sustained engagement with policymakers is needed to align project objectives with evolving government priorities and institutional frameworks.

Institutionalisation of reintegration mechanisms in ESCs: ESCs as they function are at a nascent stage and far away from assuming their role as a labour market-matching facilitator. ReMi's current additional staff seek to introduce case management systems to strengthen ESCs in profiling and mapping job seekers (returnees in this case), however, they are too caught up in direct implementation and outreach. Internal tensions have been noted between ReMi-supported staff (family and employment counsellors, social mobilisers) and existing ESC staff, often related to role clarity and benefit disparities. These tensions have impacted on staff cohesion and the smooth delivery of reintegration services. For case management to institutionalise, significant efforts need to be made, including strengthening quality of enrolment/data entry, coaching, career guidance and referrals and building links and capacities of last mile networks.

System readiness to replicate and scale

At the policy level, the lack of alignment between ReMi's reintegration framework and broader national employment and PES strategies (e.g. ILO-ReMi and the Employment Promotion Strategy which is currently being developed) has raised **concerns about long-term integration into government systems.** Questions are also emerging from government stakeholders about whether ReMi is fully positioned to address the complexity ESCs bring along as a critical stakeholder to implement the evolving national employment agenda. Should ReMi remain in the circular migration space? If so, then should it be tied up with SaMi and its services at all levels and ensure early integration into the migration process as it is currently tested by K-HaMi or done in countries like the Philippines.

Limited availability of data and monitoring affect sustainability: The overall mechanism and ESC performance is affected by the absence of data and M&E and quality assurance mechanisms. ReMi relevant actors (FEB and DoFE, EIC, ReMi case management data) currently operate across several unlinked platforms and have limited access to just in time data on returnee profiles, their needs, skills profiles and socio-economic status. Similarly, ReMi has not systematically used existing studies and data collected by other projects, which could guide employment services and career guidance of returnees. **The absence of a standardised, interoperable data infrastructure prevents effective planning, referral, and monitoring across levels. For example, case management data is not linked to labour market databases, meaning returnee profiles, including skills profiles, are not utilised to match them with employment opportunities.** Without unified systems, governments also struggle with evidence-based decision-making, planning and budget allocation. Services without data cannot be tailored on a scale.

Exit strategy and sustainability plan: The project is yet to develop an exit sustainability plan together with the government, which includes a road map with milestones to be achieved to assess institutional maturity (see Recommendation 5).

4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

The ReMi project, in its pilot phase, has laid critical groundwork for developing a structured reintegration mechanism for RMWs in Nepal. **Widely regarded as highly relevant by stakeholders**, it addresses the urgent needs of returnees - especially older, low-skilled individuals and women - who are unlikely to re-migrate. The project aligns with national priorities such as sustainable reintegration, creating productive employment and tackling socio-economic vulnerabilities associated with circular migration. To some extent ReMi has built on SaMi's achievement, strengthening case management and psychosocial support mechanisms.

Through its engagement with two provincial and 20 LGs, ReMi has supported mainstreaming of reintegration-related services into subnational planning and programming. ESCs operations have started offering diversified services and expanded access to counselling, referrals, and psychosocial support; and introduced a case management model that holds potential for structured and individualised service delivery. **The groundwork laid in some of the pilot municipalities, including financing, guidelines and SoPs offers promise for further institutionalisation.**

However, several areas require further attention to enhance design, implementation and sustainability. While the project interventions are valid, the project's design shows some challenges, which also includes scope which has proven ambitious for a four-year initial pilot phase. The Theory of Change could have benefited from a clearer results framework and phase-wise implementation strategy; and a detailed results chain and more realistic log frame for the pilot phase. Indicators, particularly those linked to social and economic integration, remain too broad, and have complicated the project logic and systematic progress tracking and data collection. Targets set for the pilot phase with the assumption that the project can build on existing mechanisms, are too high.

International experience shows that effective reintegration depends on six key principles outlined by the ILO: early preparation including financial education and loan free migration, remittances management and saving schemes, voluntary and informed return, comprehensive support (economic, social, psychosocial), strong institutional coordination, gender and social inclusion, and regular monitoring. These principles have only partially been applied during phase 1, which the MTR thinks have influenced the effectiveness of economic reintegration; however, they should be given the required attention in the next phase, while learning from international experiences on how they can be sustained at local level and monitored at provincial level.

Regarding Effectiveness, ReMi has laid foundations within government systems. Through policy support, it has helped provincial and local governments to budget and prepare programmes for RMW reintegration. Supported ESCs have offered more comprehensive services than their non-supported counterparts, introducing counselling, family support, and migration-related referrals. The six-step case management model shows promise but requires further investment in staff training and digital workflow systems. Nonetheless, progress on economic reintegration remains limited. Returnee's expectations around access to cash or in-kind support and business startup loans have not been met. Many RMWs anticipated direct supports in the form of grants or job placements, while ReMi focused on referrals and counselling. This disconnect affected trust and engagement. Reintegration must be framed not just as an administrative process but as a co-created, community-supported pathway that balances service delivery with empowerment, systems building, and strategic partnerships.

Where migrant cooperatives and networks were supported, they have extended outreach, built trust, and acted as informal peer navigators - providing a platform that could be institutionalised to enhance sustainability. However, ESC functionality varies significantly.

Most ESCs remain nascent in both form and function. Except for those 20 supported by the ReMi project - which have initiated case management, reintegration services, and referrals - most ESCs are limited to implementing PMEP-related activities and lack operational clarity, adequate staffing, digitized systems, and structured referral pathways. While there are early signs of local governments integrating reintegration functions into their budgets and plans, as seen in ReMi areas, expecting them to fully assume ESC functions in the short term is unrealistic given existing capacity and resource constraints. Even the ReMi-supported ESCs, despite receiving additional inputs, remain reliant on temporary project staff and PMEP funding. Without a national framework that defines ESCs' roles, funding, and operational standards, their long-term sustainability is uncertain; it is further challenged by weak linkages to employers, training providers, and the absence of digital case management systems.

Late multi-stakeholder engagement on local economic reintegration- particularly with the private sector and other SDC-supported projects like NVQS, ENSSURE, QualiTY, and UDAYA - has limited progress on economic reintegration. Both collaboration with enterprises and with projects have shown promising results but have only been marginal.

Further, when negotiating with the government on replication, the project should insist, for the sake of effectiveness and impact, that LGs are selected based on potential and capacities to deliver results. Further, clustered implementation is critical to show results immediately, so that a basis is created for further roll out to other weaker LGs and accelerated learning.

The current challenges to implement the national reintegration implementation framework reflect that the project needs to address fragmentation and more strategic coordination is needed. ReMi should work more strategically with ILO and other projects to support MoLESS to harmonize the efforts of SESC, SaMi, K-HaMi, and ReMi. International best practices highlight that reintegration is most effective when started before departure (ILO 2020). K-HaMi's holistic approach to circular migration, should therefore guide further operationalisation. Similarly, leveraging SaMi's district-level MRCs for outreach, legal counselling, and psychosocial support as well as for capacity building of counsellors and those involved in outreach and most importantly for referring cases to ESCs for FEB support/services, would reinforce ReMi's reach and continuity. That said, complementarity and collaboration/referrals between MRCs and ESC should be clarified in the guidelines/SOPs.

While collaboration with ILO has supported policy development, ReMI should partner with ILO for engaging with private sector associations and trade unions (multipliers), working on quality assurance frameworks and ESC institutionalisation.

The project's efficiency has been affected by delays in LG selection, selection of thinly spread LGs, and fund flow bottlenecks. A lean staffing model within ReMi and selection of geographically dispersed LGs (in Koshi) has overstretched project teams, who are required to take on several roles and manage service delivery, coordination, and administrative tasks. Such a situation provides limited time for reflection and analysis of progress. Efficiency within the ESCs has been limited, as each was supported by four ReMi-financed staff, but due to an overreliance on direct implementation, services could only reach two wards per ESC. Monitoring and evaluation remain largely activity-based and should be strengthened. Manual data collection, the absence of a KOBO based data entry system and limited M&E resources upto September 2024 have affected quality assurance for activities, data and reporting.

ReMi does not as yet have a robust monitoring and quality assurance framework, which could be the basis for setting up a quality assurance system for reintegration. As a pilot, this is a bit concerning. ESC interventions, case management, and reintegration services should be regularly assessed for continuous improvement, efficiency and impact. Data on returnee profiles need to be of quality and should be available for anlalysis just in time. Knowledge management and reporting should support learning and evidence-based decision-making in project steering meetings.

While ReMi articulates a commitment to GEDSI, its design and implementation needs to be strengthened. Need based responses are required. Disaggregated data is limited to participation rates without examining outcomes or intersectional barriers. Future strategies must be tailored to the distinct needs of women, persons with disabilities (also resulting from accidents abroad), and other vulnerable groups. Inclusive, GEDSI-sensitive case management and leadership within networks and cooperatives are necessary to move beyond symbolic participation to transformative inclusion and empowerment.

Sustainability remains a major concern. While provincial and local political commitment is growing, the lack of a national ESC strategy at the federal level and the ending of PMEP funding pose putting a question mark on funding of ESCs, risks for ReMI. **Without the government of Nepal's commitment on future funding of ESCs, and provision of clarity of ESCs' functions in the future, ReMi's reliance on ESCs as key actor for reintegration services appears strategically risky.** Permanent institutional anchoring of ESCs within local government structures, standardised procedures, sustainable financing, and cross-tier coordination are critical. ReMi requires a national sustainability plan and exit strategy.

4.1 Lessons Learnt

1. When building a reintegration mechanism, a strong long-term vision and clarity about social and economic integration is critical and needs to be operationalized with a phased approach, well defined concepts and strategies, road map, defined milestones and measurable indicators.
2. Social and economic integration reenforce each other and need to be addressed simultaneously. Clarity is required how the project wants to measure progress, which at this time cannot be tracked systematically.
3. Involvement of Provinces, LGs, stakeholders of the ecosystem (projects, migrant communities and networks, private sector) in design and implementation builds understanding and ownership.

4. When building a mechanism, a system perspective is more effective than direct implementation. Technical assistance includes capacity building of multipliers, facilitation, intensive stakeholder management and most importantly, building a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism which continuously guides decision making. Staff needs training and continuous learning and feedback mechanism, and strong reporting to play this role.
5. Case management indicates early results, however, trust and use of resources (ESC appointed staff directly reaching out and managing cases) led to slow and limited outreach.
6. A segmented case management model is crucial to meet the distinct needs of returnee migrants, particularly women and other vulnerable groups, ensuring more targeted and effective reintegration support.
7. Although MRCs, ESCs, and migration networks cooperate, overlaps and duplications remain. Streamlining coordination processes and enhancing collaboration with initiatives like SaMi can accelerate the integration of reintegration services into the public system.
8. Migration networks and cooperatives are effective outreach and service delivery channels, but voluntary engagement is unsustainable. Outreach actors such as returnee volunteers and mobilisers must be integrated into formal systems with adequate remuneration.
9. Economic integration does not start when returnees' return. To be effective, economic risks for indebtedness and vulnerabilities of migrants and their families need to be integrated in the migration cycle from the beginning. Need specific social protection, combined with financial support measures (addressing loans for migration, saving schemes abroad and in Nepal) and training (financial literacy, early planning of return) are effective when integrated in migration cycle. In addition, local governments still struggle with local job creation and the creation of an enabling environment for SME promotion, which amongst other populations, also could benefit returnees. There is a need strong local economic development strategies and private sector involvement interventions, which requires better coordination and synergies with other development projects.
10. Choosing the right LGs based on capacities, performance as potential champions (early adopters) is central for quick positive results and as basis for later replication and scale
11. Clustering LGs and ESCs supports peer learning and improves service delivery. The current geographically dispersed selection has reduced efficiency and made support more resource-intensive. Future efforts should prioritise tighter geographic clustering to increase effectiveness.
12. ESCs are not yet functioning as local labour market institutions due to limited capacity and resources. Their temporary status undermines long-term impact. In contrast, MRCs have stable financing and could be better positioned to lead on social integration, while ESCs can be focused on economic integration.
13. The absence of a robust monitoring and quality assurance framework in ReMi limits its ability to assess and improve the effectiveness of ESCs, case management, and economic reintegration services. As a pilot, this is a significant gap. Structured knowledge management and systematic monitoring of progress are critical to support learning and evidence-based decision-making and are central precondition for accountability and scale.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Preamble

Emerging trends in the GoN

The ReMi project operates at a strategic juncture in Nepal's evolving employment and reintegration landscape, aligning with the Government of Nepal's recently declared Decade for Internal Employment. Led by MoLESS, this agenda seeks to promote productive employment for all, prioritising private sector led entrepreneurship and job creation, skills development and social protection, also by leveraging skills and savings of RMWs generated abroad. To support this, MoLESS has established an Internal Employment Management Division, from where it also coordinates programmes such as ReMi and K-HaMi.

The federal government proposes that the existing Labour and Employment Offices (11) in province and ESCs will be provided with responsibilities to respond to both internal and international labour market needs. The next phase should also clarify and strengthen the role of provinces for ESC performance in the future. Greater devolution of power and a clear cost-sharing arrangement between the federal and provincial and local levels are envisaged to ensure provinces assume responsibility not only for ESC operations, but for their quality assurance and long-term sustainability. Should ESCs get institutionalised service points locally, then a shared vision and sustainability roadmap should guide this process. This includes the need to define core functions and beyond, planning and budgeting for staff based on local needs, investing in digital and office infrastructure, and linking services with other social protection and economic integration initiatives.

ESCs can in this context be positioned as the critical institutions for local labour market coordination and reintegration delivery. A Public Employment Service (PES) strategy, currently developed jointly with ILO support and ReMI inputs, will provide essential guidance on ESC roles, staffing, digital infrastructure, and quality assurance. However, the strategic alignment between the employment-centric mandates of ESCs and the reintegration needs of RMWs require additional attention, which goes beyond the scope of ESCs. ESCs were initially designed as job matching and counselling hubs for local labour markets, but with their growing role for social and economic reintegration, their scope and resourcing must be broadened. Reintegration must therefore be fully institutionalised within ESC operations - supported by appropriate systems, staff, finances and referral networks.

While MoLESS envisions expanding ReMi to five additional provinces during the next phase, it is highly suggested that this process begins with stronger and more urban LGs, where labour markets are more dynamic and income opportunities are more likely available; there is also a strong need to consolidate ongoing interventions in the 20 LGs in Koshi and Madhesh, since these ongoing interventions are not ready to be replicated or scaled. This foundational work is critical for building systems that are not just project-driven but ensure that they are institutionally embedded and government-owned. However, without a clear commitment from MoLESS and a budgeted roadmap for diversifying and institutionalizing ESC services, by adding a reintegration component, at the local level, the long-term sustainability of ESCs and therefore ReMi-supported interventions remains uncertain.

SDC's commitment and priority areas until 2030

SDC remains committed to supporting the Government of Nepal for another phase. Over the next four years, while the exact contours of its support are yet to be defined, SDC envisions that ReMi assumes a more facilitative and strategic role. The MTR team thinks that ReMI should continue strategic technical assistance across government tiers, intensify support for system rollout, strengthening quality assurance, monitoring and reporting, and provide technical thematic advice on LMIS and economic reintegration with closer private sector collaboration. This transition, where SDC moves out of directly funding ESC staff, will require the Government of Nepal - particularly MoLESS and provincial and local governments - to increasingly assume financial and institutional ownership for funding of ESC functions and staff and digital infrastructure, besides setting up ESCs' quality assurance mechanisms, and preparing for country wide roll out of reintegration service delivery.

The MTR wants to highlight for this transition to be smooth, a redefinition of roles across all implementing partners is required. ReMi's implementing partners - DEPROSC, CMC, MUAN, TdH, and NARMI - should be repositioned as embedded capacity support actors, rather than short-term project executors or subcontractors. Further, strengthening institutional capacity of MoLESS at federal level including the Foreign Employment Board (FEB) and the NMRC, currently still funded under SaMi, as well as provincial and local governments, is further essential to improve policy and operational coherence and data systems.

Looking forward, ReMi, through ESCs, should deepen economic reintegration by addressing reintegration from the beginning of migration, during and when returning. ReMi can also support LGs in their efforts to identify business and job opportunities, linking returnees to growing sectors with job and entrepreneurship potential, and developing skills and funding instruments like revolving or matching funds. Existing schemes and programmes offered by LGs and FEB need strengthening and more strategic orientation. Partnerships with private sector actors, cooperatives, and national business federations (e.g., FNCCI and CNI) should be formalised to create long-term economic pathways for returnees. Although the thematic priorities of future World Bank support are yet to be finalised, initial funding windows for technical assistance exist. These can be pooled with SDC support and other donor resources to invest in LMIS quality assurance and M&E frameworks, and ESC capacity building.

These shifts demand a forward-looking and flexible approach to ReMi Phase II - one that reinforces systemic thinking, decentralization, and sustainable local ownership of reintegration services. Given that the current YPO is already embedded in the government budget system, major changes in the final year of Phase I will be difficult. However, minor adjustments can be endorsed by the steering committee as needed, and immediate recommendations should be prioritized in the first-year YPO of Phase II. The following recommendations are split into two parts: four recommendations for immediate action during the remaining phase which ends in July 2026, and one recommendation which hopefully guides the preparation of the second phase.

Immediate Recommendation 1: Prioritise and consolidate during remaining phase

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas SDC, ILO, MoLESS, PAAC, Provinces	High	Immediate	Moderate

At this time, it is too early to say what really works, since interventions are only at the beginning and at this point of time, empirical evidence is quite limited. **The remaining Phase should shift its emphasis to finish piloting initiatives but immediately start documentation and consolidation before it plans to scale (see suggested steps graph below).** This remaining phase should focus on building a proof of concept before institutionalization, which requires clarity of approach, of resources and capacities required for replication and a well-defined road map and implementation strategy. Most importantly, reintegration services need to be embedded into permanent structures at all levels of government. This includes developing financing models and operational frameworks for ESCs, a robust digital system, strong private sector linkages and quality assurance.

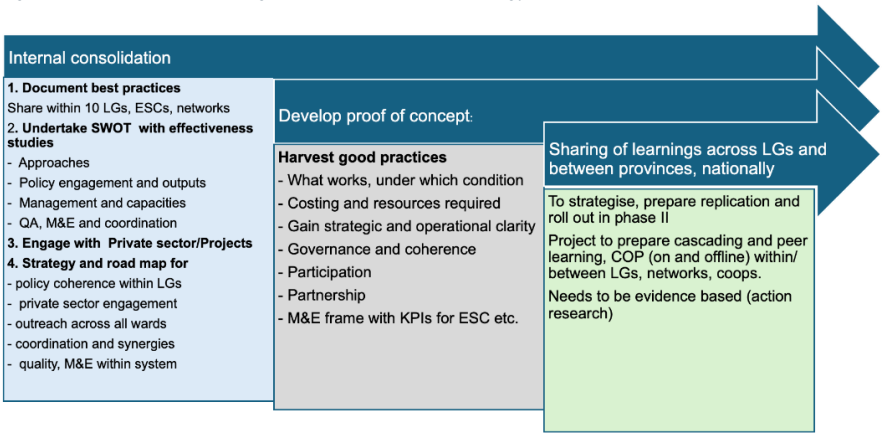
While ReMI II can contribute to the establishment of a national employment oriented ESCs system, it should not forget that the circular migration architecture still needs to be strengthened, particularly in the area of reintegration. **It is crucial that SDC and GoN are aligned about the long-term vision and prioritize what can really be achieved in that area during the next 4 years. The MTR team thinks that given the limited time and existing context, there are 2 options, SDC can explore together with MoLESS, based on which decisions can be made on scope and direction the project in phase II.**

Option 1: Embed social and economic reintegration more firmly within the migration cycle. This would involve designing a more robust and dynamic reintegration mechanism for Nepali migrants, co-created with returning migrants, networks, government institutions at all levels and civil society partners. **For that, a deeper collaboration with the SaMi project is required, which is in the process of phasing out; however still has time for consolidation. ReMi should strengthen existing migration services, by addressing financial literacy, remittances management, saving into migration cycle from early on. For outreach and referrals, it should build stronger connects with MRCs, RVs, use peer counseling, community awareness processes and the psychosocial counseling aspects and build on experiences already made on reintegration during SaMi.** ReMi can continue collaborations at provincial and federal level initiated by SaMi. ReMi's next phase can build on lessons from Phase I and successful international models - such as those from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Korea - that focus on economic reintegration early in the migration cycle, including savings, remittance use, training, and entrepreneurship. There is also potential to align more closely with K-HaMi project by streamlining field operations, outreach, and reintegration tracking to create a more coordinated and scalable approach. In addition, institutional synergies between ESCs and MRCs should be more systematically explored, including the feasibility of more institutionalised shared service models in other existing sections, instead of establishing standalone ESCs in every local government.

Option 2: Alternatively, the project could continue ongoing efforts to strengthen ESCs as its core objective. In this scenario, returnees would remain one of many target groups but not the central focus. Instead, ESCs would have to be developed as comprehensive labor market institutions, capable of offering a range of services including career counseling, job matching, skilling referrals, and reintegration support. Otherwise, they will neither be of use for local nor for returnee workers. Strengthening reintegration services alone within ESCs is not viable. A systems-building approach is therefore needed for ESCs to enhance their ability to connect with vocational training, enterprise development programmes, and private sector employers. Without this foundational strengthening, ESCs cannot deliver on their mandate, nor can ReMi effectively scale through them. Financial sustainability remains a core challenge. For ReMi to continue operating through ESCs and to expand, concrete funding commitments from MoLESS and integration into government budgets are a non-negotiable precondition. Supporting MRCs and more systematic collaboration between ESCs and MRCs needs further focus too, particularly in areas of early departure planning and capacity enhancement of ESC staff, counselors, returnee networks etc.

Strategic consolidation of initial learnings is a must to prepare for a phased scale-up. The ReMi project should immediately start documenting and harvesting best practices from the 20 local governments where ESCs are currently operational. This process should systematically capture what has worked, under which conditions, and which resources were required to so that it worked. replicate successful models (e.g. effectiveness of case management, referral services, family counselling approach, economic integration etc). Complementing this, ReMi should undertake structured SWOT and effectiveness assessments to evaluate the strength of current approaches, ESC performance and the depth of policy engagement LGs, and the robustness of existing quality assurance and M&E systems.

Figure 2: process for preparing proof of concept and strategy for scale



Some feasibility assessments should be made on emerging good practices, as highlighted below. Madhesh has made significant progress on budgeting for provincial support mechanisms to assume the sole of capacity builders, quality assurers to LGs and their ESCs. Some progress has also been made at the cooperative level where revolving funds for returnees are being explored, which are structured small loan schemes for returnees and families to start a business. The fund is currently financed through a combination of remittance contributions and savings. Co-financing with banks and government grant/low interest loan schemes could be further explored. Similarly, good progress was made at LG employment section level in Koshi province to increase coherence of services and bring MRC services closer to local community. The effectiveness of this approach too should be assessed and discussed.

Table 7: Emerging practices in Provinces where feasibility for replication can be assessed

Province Madhes	Province Koshi
• Provincial 5 year plan • 140 Mn allocation • Prov. Reintegration and Employment Coordinator • 8 district Employment officers and 13 MRCs • Coordinated TA with other projects to strengthen economic integration	• EIS with LG/ ESC outreach • District MRCs as aggregator • Sub MRCs within L& Employment section • Coordinated TA with other projects to strengthen economic integration

Building on these insights, tailored intervention strategies can be developed to reflect the specific realities and administrative capacities of rural municipalities, urban municipalities, and metropolitan cities. The financial and institutional roles of MoLESS, PG and the FEB for reintegration must also be clarified - particularly regarding funding channels, responsibility for institutional rollouts, and oversight mechanisms. In parallel, the project should work to systematise the service delivery pathways, by strengthening vertical coordination between Provincial Governments, MRCs and ESCs, and ward-level outreach mechanisms. This creates the backbone for last-mile service delivery and ensures no target group is left behind.

Finally, successful practices and tools should be disseminated at provincial federal level through communities of practice, peer exchanges, and national learning platforms. These shared learning mechanisms will support evidence-based planning and enable a strategically phased replication of the ReMi model across five additional provinces.

Immediate Recommendation 2: Strengthen local strategies and approaches for Social Reintegration

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas SDC, MoLESS, CMC, SaMi	High	Immediate	Moderate

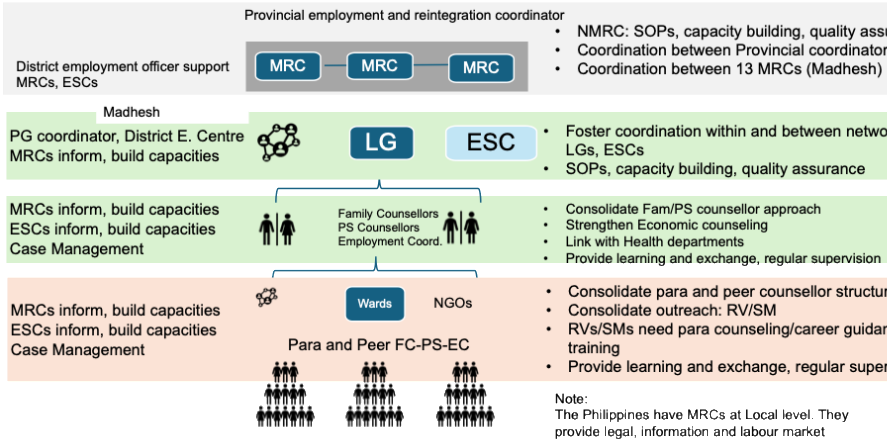
Social integration is critical to smoothen reintegration of returnees into the community and families, while it addressed needs for social distress and trauma experienced by returnees. To increase outreach and effectiveness of current services, ReMi should immediately strengthen local strategies by refining service models according to needs (no one shoe fits all process), clarifying expected outcomes, and improving coordination among different actors as highlighted in the graph below.

- Develop a value chain strategy[17] for social reintegration based on identified gaps and address last mile outreach through strategic partnerships with returnee migrant networks, and ward collaboration.

[17] A value chain for the social integration of returnee migrant workers refers to a coordinated sequence of support services and actors that facilitate their reintegration into family, community, and society. It begins with pre-return counselling and continues through reception, legal identity restoration, family reunification, psychosocial support,

- Explore and test peer counselling, para counsellor models and provide continuous supervision and feedback from specialised organisations like CMC.
- Eliminate duplications among SMs, SaMi RVs, family counsellors, and psychosocial counsellors and health counsellors. Leverage the SaMi model by employing returnees as RVs and supporting them to form networks.
- Build capacity development plan for these outreach volunteers, networks and ward representatives for identification, registration and basic counseling and information sharing.
- Define quality assurance mechanism for data entry, case management, service satisfaction
  - Explore collaboration with CMC for systematic supervision for setting up case management process and build and monitor capacities for reintegration coordinator at provincial level.
  - Clearly define ESC staff's roles as facilitators, case managers, and quality assurers supporting outreach network
  - Institutionalise satisfaction surveys in ESCs on social integration, guidance, counselling
- Determine the institutional anchoring of ESCs, including collaboration and information flow with MRCs (explore sub-MRCs as standard practice).

Figure 3: Suggested way to consolidate social integration, remove overlaps and strengthen outreach



Immediate Recommendation 3: Strengthen Strategies and Approaches for Economic Reintegration within the local ecosystem

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas, SDC, MoLESS, DEPROSC, donor funded projects, LG/ PG financed social and economic projects	High	Immediate	Moderate

3a) Increase policy coherence and local synergies

To ensure meaningful and sustainable economic reintegration of returnee migrants, it is essential that needs are addressed before-during migration and upon return to avoid financial stress, debt, and rather encourage savings and preparing for employment and self-employment at an early stage. Financial literacy, reduced debt and economic vulnerabilities are critical interventions to prevent social stigma for families and returnees. In addition, the local and provincial government needs to move beyond fragmented towards a more coordinated service delivery, where schemes for income generation, skills development, access to loans are better aligned to the needs (see also Annex 5). The following actions can strengthen policy coherence, strengthen ESCs, and introduce innovative, private sector focused community-anchored models such as peer counselling and cooperative-based support.

Institutional capacity at the local and provincial levels needs to be reinforced. DEPROSC, BDS, MFIs or other competent organisations/professionals play a key role in providing technical assistance, supervision, and structured capacity development for economic integration while MUAN, NARMIN can play a similar role for sensitization, capacity building on governance and policy development/budgeting. They can potentially accompany the formation of a provincial (and later national) Association of Local Governments to support and learn from each other (is however, outside the scope of this project). A comprehensive capacity-building plan should be developed for ESC staff and cooperatives, enabling them to deliver and sustain economic reintegration services.

access to social protection, and active community engagement. This approach ensures that reintegration goes beyond employment, addressing stigma, social exclusion, and mental well-being. See graph of relevant actors involved on p. 25.

- Support LGs in mapping local economic sectors, returnee skills profiles, and viable enterprises.
- Develop a strategic framework in collaboration with DEPROSC/other organisations and NARMIN/MUAN that addresses key gaps such as skills mismatches, SME and loan access barriers, and limited private sector engagement in provincial/local planning and budgeting. Existing projects like ENSSURE, Step UP, QualiTY, NVQS, Udayan, and K-HaMi should be integrated into local planning and financing to leverage effectiveness and coordination.
- Differentiate strategies by rural and municipal contexts.
- Address financial education, remittances management, loan schemes and financing gaps through revolving/matching funds and advocate for returnee-specific loan schemes.
- Support cooperatives and networks in managing reintegration resources and strengthening their focus on inclusion and governance.

3b) Involve private sector at all levels

Private sector actors could play a critical role for economic integration by seizing the opportunity of making productive use of the returnee segment who was able to build up skills and experience in particularly sectors, whose jobs are usually occupied by Indian migrant workers.

- In partnership with other SDC funded projects, explore upskilling and reskilling initiatives, co-financing of skills training, short term apprenticeships.
- Explore facilitating access to markets and integrating returnees into local sector specific supply chains. Private sector involvement would significantly reduce the burden on government structures and projects like ReMi, distributing responsibility for economic reintegration more broadly. Enter into MOUs with FNCCI and explore strategic partnerships with ongoing projects (e.g., ADB, World Bank, Agri programmes).

3c) Link ESCs with enterprises and the private sector

- ESCs should be professionalised as labour market integration hubs. Their roles must be clearly defined to include facilitation of local employment and enterprise development, training of peer counsellors, and oversight of quality assurance. Empowering ESCs to coordinate local schemes will ensure services are targeted, accountable, and responsive to returnee needs.
- A robust quality assurance and monitoring system is essential. This should include regular feedback mechanisms, service standards, and tracer studies to track outcomes and guide continuous improvement. Embedding these tools in ESC operations will enhance accountability and data-driven decision-making.
- Finally, ReMi should pilot peer-based economic counselling models through cooperatives, networks, NGOs, and BDS providers. These models offer community-driven support and can be particularly effective when supervised by ESCs and provincial economic coordinators, such as in Madhesh. With regular feedback and adaptation, such approaches can improve outreach and personalization of reintegration services.

Immediate Recommendation 4: Strengthen GEDSI across reintegration mechanism

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas, SDC, MoLESS ILO	High	Immediate	Low

4a) Develop GEDSI strategy for project and government mechanism for reintegration aligning with national GEDSI strategy;

4b) Budget for targeted initiatives to meet specific needs of vulnerable returnee groups with women's increased share in migrating (11%), some targeted initiatives should be explored to better understand needs for reintegration, as it was done in Bangladesh; similarly, targeted initiatives for people with disabilities should be explored;

4c) Review log frame and indicators and analyse intersections while assessing effectiveness or case management or other integration related activities.

- address intersections and different service needs of different target groups;
- jointly agree on indicators measuring women's empowerment, which goes beyond participation and income. Explore changed social status, more equitable relationship in the family and community etc.;[18]
- allocate dedicated resources for capacity building and monitoring and communication

4d) Emphasise monitoring and gender-transformative impact

- develop guidelines and materials to build capacities for monitoring and documentation.

[18] Global Affairs Office Canada (2022): Gender Equality and Empowerment Measurement Tool.

- use qualitative and quantitative criteria and report and analyse patterns. Bangladesh is currently exploring transformative tools developed by Global Affairs Office Canada with their partners (2022) which systematically monitors transformation through a multidimensional lens.[19]

4e) Policy dialogue and advocacy: Promote reforms that enhance specifically vulnerable target groups including women's rights in entire migration cycle.
- address networking and counselling needs in destination countries.
- allocate funds for returning migrant workers for shelter homes and safe spaces at point of arrival, and for migrant forum groups in the welfare centres.
- conduct training and workshops for government officials, community leaders, and service providers to increase awareness about women returnee needs for supportive environments.

4e) Address stereotypes in economic integration, including skills development, labour market participation and economic empowerment: Intensify partnerships with ongoing skills and entrepreneurship projects (e.g. NVQS, ENSSURE, UDAYA) and local business networks to
- address transformation and empowerment and avoid cementation of existing stereotypes (typical trades, e.g. Tailoring, beauticians, livestock/cow raring);
- diversify skills training and business development offers
  - sensitise private sector and engage local employers
  - overcome legal barriers to loans and enhance banking services particularly for women
  - explore options with more forward-looking entrepreneurship opportunities, e.g. group enterprises, food processing with linkages to local markets and beyond, by collaborating with other projects, or local businesses or chambers.

Recommendation 5: Foster a sustainable policy environment for Reintegration in Phase II

A coherent governance system requires the formation of regular steering and coordination platforms at all administrative levels. Using the convening authority of SDC and ILO, ReMi can support MoLESS, provinces and local governments in harmonizing multiple initiatives and generate a reintegration approach based on own Nepal-based learnings and learnings from other development partners and international practices. Central to reintegration would be that it is included across all stages of migration and early on in the cycle. It can also ensure consistent involvement of the private sector. A dedicated thematic committee on private sector engagement can further align various employment programmes at local level, work on facilitation for access to loan, incentive and remittance schemes which are mutually beneficial and suitable for returnees and private sector actors. Improved communication between MoLESS, FEB, and partners will close feedback gaps, while stronger collaboration between ReMi and NMRC will enhance data reliability and service coherence.

5a: Strengthen Coordination, Governance, and Policy Coherence

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas SDC, MoLESS, ILO	High	Immediate	Moderate

- Establish regular joint steering and coordination platforms at federal, provincial, and local levels involving partners relevant to reintegration. This increases local integrated planning and equips governments to integrate ongoing projects into their mechanism and systems.
- Use SDC and ILO's convening power to harmonise reintegration approaches among existing projects and development partners and involve private sector at all levels.
- Explore strategic partnerships and integrate good practices into reintegration framework[20]
- Institutionalise a thematic committee for private sector engagement, bringing coherence across employment programmes.
- Improve communication and feedback loops between MoLESS, FEB, and development partners.
- Foster alignment between ReMi and NMRC to improve data systems and service consistency.
- Increased roles and capacities of NARMIN and MUAN for policy advocacy and coherence.

In the assumption that Reintegration services will be anchored in the long run in ESCs and MoLESS' commitment towards funding and capacity building will continue, the following steps can be taken:

5b: Prepare a Vision and Sustainability Plan for ESCs

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources

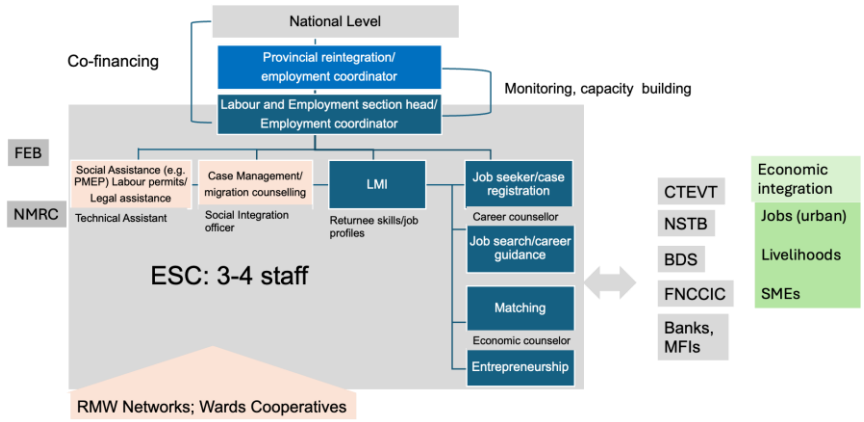
[19] MEDA (2021): Gender Progress Markers: Implementation Manual.
[20] See ASEAN Guidelines (2020) on effective reintegration.

Helvetas SDC, MoLESS, SaMi, K-HAMI, PG, LG, ILO, Worldbank	High	Immediate	Moderate

Building a vision for a PES labour market institution system is critical and should involve all relavant actors in Nepal, including relevant development partners. An overarching ESC vision and strategy must be developed to guide the institutionalization and scaling of ESCs and with them, also how services for social and economic reintegration are included. This includes a shared understanding of their roles, staffing, governance, and unified sustainability plan, ensuring permanent structures, capacity building and financing. The current efforts of ILO and MoLEES to develop an ESC framework to guide the institutionalization and scale-up of ESCs is a great beginning. Strong ownership of LGs is critical for sustainability of ReMi. ESCs' should be anchored in the local government's division. While labour and employment sections are planned, it is unclear at this point whether they are going to be realized. At this point, social development/economic/health sections are formed, where ESCs could be anchored; rather than a separate federal entity located in LG.

i) Vision and commitment towards ESCs as competent local labour market institutions

- Develop a shared vision of ESC functionality, staffing, governance, and secure financing.
- Define scope of services through ESCs (e.g. referrals to FEB, labour approval and renewals, ReMi services, etc.)
- Institutionalise ESCs in Labour and Employment Sections within LG/PG structures, learning from LGs such as Suryodaya Municipality in Koshi Province
- Define core functions by typology (urban vs rural or resourceful vs less resourceful, highly committed vs less committed LG leadership etc.) to ensure operational feasibility
- Based on needs and incident of migration, appoint at least 3-4 ESC staff, including one administrator, and 2 technical staff. In the case of high levels of migration, appoint one staff specialized on reintegration (social assistance and case management).
- Ensure cost-sharing between federal, provincial and local government to enhance ownership and accountability.
- Plan long-term technical assistance and mentoring to build provincial capacity to support implementation and roll out of ESC development, including digitization and quality assurance mechanism
- Begin expansion in high-performing LGs, most likely in urban areas with strong private sector presence, which have potential to act as demonstration models.
- Set up benchmarking system for ESCs to measure and assess progress
- *Figure 4: ESC functionality with embedded reintegration services*



ii) Sustainability plan

Sustainability depends on permanent structures and funding, standard processes, and strong intergovernmental coordination. It demands strong ownership of LGs, if possible, through anchoring within its permanent structure rather than operating as federal structure; however, such an option is still very nascent.

Further, SaMi's strong community and psychosocial structures and services through MRCs, RVs, migrant networks and the ongoing ReMi nexus demands strategic attention. Sustainable reintegration requires both psychosocial and family support and economic services. Hence, pairing them is essential since they enforce each other. MRCs already provide significant sensitization, legal and referral support and collaborate with returnee networks; all these foster social reintegration; ESCs on the other hand in their function are labour market institutions to support any job seekers in economic integration. **To strengthen coordination between MRCs and ESCs, a strategic approach is needed.** The national ESC strategy currently developed together with the ILO will have to come up with an operational framework to guide staffing, financing, and provide performance benchmarks. Digitalization, quality assurance, and integration with job matching and training platforms are urgently needed.

Coordinating closely with SaMi's psychosocial and community engagement models and K-HaMi's early integration planning could enable the development of a more holistic lifecycle approach to reintegration, embedded within Nepal's broader migration governance system. There is also a need to see to what extent reintegration services can be sustainably financed by learning from international experiences, like the Philippines. In the Philippines, the financing of RMW reintegration is a collaborative effort between the government and the returnees themselves. While the government provides substantial support through facilitation, grants and loan programmes, returnees also contribute financially, especially by contributing to mandatory saving schemes, remittance management and investing into skills training and entrepreneurship to access loan schemes.

5c: Institutionalise Capacity Building, Continuous Learning, and Quality Assurance Systems across all tiers

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas, SDC, MoLESS, ILO, LG/ PG, World Bank	High	Immediate	Moderate

To ensure the sustainability, responsiveness, and effectiveness of reintegration services, **the project should support the Government of Nepal in establishing institutional mechanisms for continuous capacity development and quality assurance of all stakeholders involved.** This includes a dual focus on (i) building local and provincial institutional capacities for staff training and knowledge exchange, and (ii) creating a robust quality assurance framework to guide service delivery standards, accountability, and system improvement. The project can closely collaborate with ILO's SESC project's efforts, however, requires local and provincial application.

i) Institutionalise Capacity Building and Continuous Learning at Provincial/Local Level

- A decentralised and sustained system for staff development is critical to maintain service quality, institutional learning, and adaptability across the reintegration ecosystem. Institutionalization should cover multiple actors and functions at all levels, with mechanisms for mentoring, knowledge exchange, and cooperative development.
- Develop structured capacity-building plans for ReMi staff, ESC personnel, Employment Officers, MRCs, NMRC staff, family counsellors, psychosocial counsellors, and M&E officers.
- Institutionalise training and refresher courses tailored to functional roles, including counselling, coordination, outreach, and monitoring though provincial training centres.
- Build institutional capacity at provincial and local government levels for training oversight, outreach, supervision, and para-counselling.
- Establish peer coaching systems and Communities of Practice (CoPs) to enable structured knowledge exchange, documentation of lessons, and cross-learning between LGs and provinces.
- Support cooperative and network development by integrating para-counselling, outreach, social mobilisation, and awareness-raising into LG plans and budgets.

ii) Establish and Institutionalise a Quality Assurance Framework in collaboration with ILO

To ensure consistency, accountability, and results across the reintegration service ecosystem, a Quality Assurance (QA) system should be embedded in national, provincial, and local structures. This system must track performance, generate evidence, and create feedback loops for continuous service improvement.

- Design and implement a QA mechanism with benchmarks and KPIs for Local Governments and ESCs.
- Develop QA tools and guidelines for routine performance monitoring, review, and corrective action.
- Align QA processes with national standards for public employment services and integrate them into local planning and budgeting cycles.
- Strengthen accountability systems through structured supervision, feedback loops from clients and staff, and transparent performance reporting.
- Use QA findings to inform ongoing training, mentoring, and improvements in service delivery at the local level.
- Digitization should be strengthened at ESCs for administration of case registration and referrals, and the cases should be segmented according to the diverse needs of job seekers seeking assistance (information, counseling, referrals etc.). Digitalization and stronger alignment with skills profiling and job matching platforms are critical for economic integration of returnees.
- A robust quality assurance and monitoring system is essential. This should include regular feedback mechanisms, service standards, and tracer studies to track outcomes and guide continuous improvement. Embedding these tools in ESC operations will enhance accountability and data-driven decision-making. There is a need for inbuilt quality assurance for ESCs to function as service providers, for counsellors to perform and for data to be collected, processed and analysed. ESC services need continued monitoring and assessment, and ReMI's reporting and knowledge

management should provide data and analysis so that learnings can be used for continuous improvement of the system. The project should introduce quality benchmarks and monitor case management process as part of institution building.

5d) Build Digital Labour Market information and Monitoring Systems

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas SDC, MoLESS	High	Immediate	Moderate

- Digitise ESC functions through real-time dashboards and service tracking tools.
- Integrate ESC case data with the national Labour Market Information System (LMIS), building on Shram Sansar. However, ensure that before the roll out, Sram Sansar has capitalized the experience and developed a proof of concept and detailed local stakeholder engagement, capacity building and monitoring mechanism.
- Define a unified M&E framework with partner-level and system-level indicators.
- Monitor institutional capacity growth and service delivery effectiveness.
- Use research and feedback loops to refine services, share best practices, and inform policy changes.

5e) Strengthen FEB and NMRC

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Helvetas SDC, MoLESS	High	Immediate	Moderate

- Support FEB in reorienting existing training programmes and social welfare (economic assistance) packages for returnees and support the set-up of a quality assurance mechanism. Build capacity for M&E within FEB.
- Develop analytical tools and fund related research capacities to guide strategic reforms.
- Explore sustainable financing models for the welfare fund, including contributions from migrant workers and learn from international practices (e.g. Philippines, Sri Lanka). Build on existing efforts within Nepal.
- Work on continuum of RMWs and their needs, including women migrant returnees to ensure gender-sensitive and inclusive reintegration services.
- Align NMRC in FEB, currently implementing SaMi, more closely with ReMi to improve coherence and performance at district level.

5f) Ensure GEDSI mainstreaming addresses specific needs and intersectionalities across the system

5g) Change the narrative of returning migrants: The GoN has highlighted the important beneficial role returnees can make in building a more skilled and productive workforce and economy. There are many positive examples which should be documented and shared and communicated. SDC could, together with other partners and the government collect good practices and share these besides using these learnings as basis for system building.

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ANNEXES

1. Assessment Grid of the DAC Criteria
2. Analysis of the Log Frame
3. List of persons interviewed - available internal only
4. Questions from Inception Report
5. Note how Bangladesh and Nepal reintegration projects can benefit from each other
6. Presentation of the findings after the field visit to the Embassy team (will be added)

Annex 1: Assessment Grid based on the DAC Criteria

Assessment Grid for project/programme evaluations of the SDC interventions

Note: this assessment grid is used for evaluations of SDC financed projects and programmes (hereinafter jointly referred to as an 'intervention'). It is based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria.[21] In mid-term evaluations, the assessment requires analysing the likelihood of achieving impact and sustainability. All applicable sub-criteria should be scored and a short explanation should be provided.

Please add the corresponding number (0-4) representing your 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 (put only integers: 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4)	Justification (please provide a short explanation for your score or why a criterion was not assessed)
Relevance Note: the assessment captures relevance of objectives and design at the time of evaluation. In the evaluation report, both relevance at the design stage and relevance at the time of evaluation should be discussed.		
1. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of the target group.	2	The project addresses social and economic reintegration needs of RMWs mainly through ESCs at local level, which includes family counselling, referrals for psychosocial counselling, training and job matching and access to grants and loans for enterprise development. While relevant, referrals alone have not helped RMWs to be economically integrated. Responses should be more need based, particularly in the area of economic integration. GEDSI sensitive approach is required. RMW have high expectations in accessing services through ESCs, particularly from FEB, social protection and economic support, which ESC as yet cannot fully meet.
2. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of indirectly affected stakeholders (not target group, e.g. government, civil society, etc.) in the country of the intervention.	2	The project is aligned with priorities of federal, province and local government to develop a mechanism for social and economic integration, particularly at PG and LG level and strengthening capacities of ESCs. It tries to improve the services. Although the project aimed to also coordinate with private sector and other projects, it has not yet had any substantive engagement with QualiTY, NVQS, ENSSURE, UDAYA, except the SaMi project. There are also overlaps and duplications of outreach related activities and counseling services.
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.	2-3	The ToC is fine; however, the project and its objectives are broadly defined and rather describes the long term perspective. The Phase I results are overambitious and somewhat unrealistic to be met within the project period of four years. The number of beneficiary targets (4000 returnees economically or socially integrated) is also very ambitious. There is a lack of clarity about whether the project's core focus is to build system and structures such as ESCs, EICs and Shram Sansar or policy environment for reintegration or to strengthen outreach to provide case management and referral service delivery for social and economic integration or all these simultaneously. A detailed and phase-wise roadmap is missing. The project relies very much on the assumption that ESCs are functional, and capacity and referral points have quality and efficient service delivery services. Hence, economic reintegration has proven to be challenging. The thinly spread LG selection, particularly in Koshi is also limiting the project's ability to be effectively deliver services. The outcome and output indicators are not clear and have ambiguity. The indicators like "social integration" and "economic integration" and 'essential services' are not well defined, which leads to inconsistencies and lack of clarity in measurement and interpretation. Some output-level indicators are more like activity results not leading to an output (Output 2.3/2.4). The impact logic is not sufficiently operationalized and attributions of interventions to outcomes and impact are difficult to measure. The M&E framework has not been developed fully, which hinders systematic assessment reporting of progress made.
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).	1-2	The project and its objective are in line with the three tiers of government and SDC's priorities of developing for returning migrants to reintegrate economically and socially as highlighted in the Swiss Cooperation Programme 2023- 26. The project aims to address the social and economic reintegration needs of RMWs. To some extent, it has built on other SDC-funded projects namely SAMI and SESC. However, there is much more needs to be done to ensure synergies and complementarities between the SDC-funded project such as SaMi, QualiTY (Skills development and labour market insertion) and NVQS (Skills testing and certification) and ENSSURE (Apprenticeships), UDAYA, SESC and ReMi. There is a need for more strategica coordination and collaboration between these projects.

[21] For information on the 2019 revisions of the evaluation framework see: Better Criteria for Better Evaluations. Revised Evaluation Criteria. Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2019.

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).	2	While there is some level of collaboration between ReMi, SaMi, K-Hami and SESCs and the results are promising, ReMi project should work towards intensifying more synergies. It is also necessary to ensure that project interventions are interacting with ongoing activities in the local ecosystem, such as small and micro enterprise development programs, skilling initiatives, or local job creation schemes. Similarly, there is still lack of more strategic coordination between project teams, partners, private sectors and government officials at three tiers of government.
Effectiveness		
6. The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results.	2-3	Social mobilisers and counsellors' involvement in door-to-door enrolment, individual counselling, and manual data collection have limited their ability to engage more returnees. There are also issues of trust between counselors and community people as the former are not community rooted. Learning and adaptation have not happened mainly due to the lack of systematic assessment of the effectiveness of case management and/or lack of action research and documentation. This has hindered need-based, and qualification- and profile-based case management. Practice of manual data entry has hampered larger scale enrolment, data quality, real-time tracking and performance monitoring. Capacity for quality assurance of data collection and maintenance but also for mentoring peer counselors and outreach workers is missing. The roles of RVs, social mobilisers, SMs, and family counsellors overlap. Referrals alone and no or low engagement with the private sector have proven insufficient for economic integration.
7. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended objectives (outputs and outcomes).	2-3	The project has reached and supported individual returnees and families across 20 municipalities with psychosocial, social, and economic support services through referrals. Only 51 RMW are economically integrated. In each LG, only 2 wards have been covered. It is unlikely that the project will reach the 4000-beneficiary target for both social and economic integration. REMI is likely to reach the psychosocial counselling target by the end of the phase. However, the target of 1000 psychosocial counseling needs for returnees in distress and severe need for specialized social counselling and social protection support most likely not be met, Outreach has expanded modestly through the involvement of MRCs, ESCs, networks, cooperatives, and wards and between. However, the scale and consistency of service delivery remain limited. Certification of informally acquired skills remains a challenge. Against the target of 6000 RMW, only 260 RMWs (0 women) received NSTB-recognized skills certification. It is unlikely that the target will be achieved. Access to information about skills certification, testing and quality of testing capacities have functioned as hindrances. Business development support for returnees is on track (65%) and is likely to meet the target. However, more diversified business development service support, upskilling and technical guidance on how loans and working capital can be accessed so that micro enterprises can grow and expand, is necessary. Access to loan/capital (23/1309) from financial institutions poses constraints for entrepreneurship development. It is expected that within the project period the target related to network support will be met by the project timeline. The project supported thirteen networks out of the target of 20. However, only one network has been registered up to now at provincial level representing. Similarly, 2 cooperatives have been formed in the two provinces. On the output related to local governments have capacities to provide needs-based reintegration support services, the project has started engaging all 20 targeted ESCs in the project activities, integrating case management, psychosocial referrals, and employment support functions within their operations. The level of ownership and operational capacity varies across municipalities, and many ESCs continue to rely on REMI technical assistance and resources to deliver services. It has made significant operational strides, however challenges for institutionalization of reintegration support within municipal ESCs persist. Also, functions of ESCs and reintegration related services very much depends on continuation of financing and capacities. There are some promising examples of peer assistance, sharing of information, referrals, legal support and informal collaboration emerging within several groups, also amongst women. Limited capacity-building and absence of a strategic framework for engagement have hindered their evolution into effective multipliers of services. These networks have the potential to amplify the project's reach to identify and enroll returnees and their families into family counseling and case management, as and when required, foster local ownership, and ensure continuity beyond project funding.
8. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes.	2-3	The project still struggles on achieving GEDSI targets and it is unlikely that it can achieve the target by the project period. While the project recognizes that women returnees are particularly vulnerable to stigma, discrimination and social exclusion in their community, these insights were neither translated into a coherent set of mainstreaming strategies and/or targeted activities nor GEDSI was consistently applied in the logframe; only one output-level indicator (1.4.2) directly addresses discrimination and stigma against women RMWs. Most indicators under outcome 2, which relate to government policies, legal framework conditions and reintegration programming, have not included gender, disability or social inclusion in their formulation. The project's implementation guidelines provide affirmative measures to specifically engage or support women, people from minority ethnic or religious groups, or persons with disabilities. Despite these gaps, the project has also prioritized vulnerable groups, including women, for referrals to psychosocial counselling, training, and health services. It has introduced the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology to support gender-sensitive visioning and reintegration planning, and to introduce

		targeted initiatives for women returnees and other marginalized groups. Gender-disaggregated data has been collected, however data on disability and ethnic groups/caste or religious minorities have not been systematically analysed and utilized for reflective mainstreaming of GEDSI in activities.
Efficiency		
9. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively.	2-3	The project started with a significant delay. As of December 2024, only 25% of ReMi's total Phase I budget of USD 4.27 million had been spent-29% from Technical Assistance (TA) and 23% from Government of Nepal (GoN) funds. This low burn rate results from the delays in rolling out activities mentioned above, which reduced the timeframe for implementation. Spending under Outcome 1 was especially low at 16%, with critical outputs such as Output 1.2 (skills and employment referrals) and Output 2.4 (private sector engagement) showing burn rates of just 13% and 4% respectively. Case management, enrolment and referrals have only started to pick up, which explains the low spending. However, services are now gradually picking up, and activities under both outcomes have started gaining momentum in early FY 2024/25. It is unlikely that the project will spend the existing budget within the remaining phase, of which only 1 year is left, if budget lines and priorities are kept as they are.
10. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe).	2-3	Intervention roll out including staff hiring, case management and referrals etc. was delayed due mainly to delays in LG selection by PG. Therefore, the timeline for activities like community outreach, counselling, and referral service delivery was also pushed back. The implementation plans envisioned step-wise service roll out from mid-2023 onwards started only in early 2024. Despite these challenges, ReMi has been able to progress quickly, particularly on the engagement front with local governments, their sensitization about social and economic reintegration and capacity building for policy related work and budgeting. Engagement and sensitization of local governments and private sector engagement is likely to take time.
11. The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation.	2-3	Both at federal and provincial levels have mechanisms to coordinate and oversee project implementation across all three tiers of government. At the federal level, the Project Advisory and Coordination Committee (PACC) at MoLESS, Provincial Steering Committees (PSCs) at MOSD and MOSD in provinces. The PACC was intended to convene twice annually; however, only one PACC meeting was held during the reporting period (as of December 2024). PSC meetings were expected to meet quarterly; however, only three meetings were held across both provinces during the current reporting cycle. PGs and LGs have shown increasing ownership through budget allocations and planning inputs, coordination mechanisms remain primarily state-led and there is weak or no participation of private sector and other projects in policy dialogue including ESC strategy discussions particularly on self-employment, skills and SME development. There is a need for a strategic guidance and inter-governmental coordination and strategic decision making.
Impact		
12. The extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention. Note: when assessing this criterion, the primary focus is the intended 'higher-level effects'. In the event that significant unintended negative or positive effects can be discerned, they must be specified in the justification column, especially if they influence the score.	2-3	The project is beginning to generate an impact on returning migrant workers and their families. Their needs and priorities have increasingly been recognized by governments and service providers, and their networking and participation in planning has increased – which can be called high level effects. Nevertheless, assessment of whether returnee migrants have reestablished themselves in Nepal and actively participate in social, cultural, economic and political life resulting from training and additional services, is unclear and ambiguous in the absence of concrete and measurable indicators and tracer studies. In addition to the increased prioritization, there seems to be increased understanding and to and capacities among the three tiers of government actors, particularly when including reintegration services into policies, procedures and increased allocation of provincial and local government budgets towards financing ESCs. The 20 ReMI supported ESCs have delivered an expanded and more diverse (psychosocial counselling, case management, and referral services, linkages between job seekers and training, entrepreneurships and jobs, skills, BDS etc.) and improved services, enabled by targeted funding and capacity-building efforts than the non-supported ESCs which are mostly limited to providing PMEP related services. ReMi supported LGs have also supported networking of RMWs and the RMWs have established their own cooperatives who have also been playing critical outreach and basic case management, information sharing and counselling related activities.
Sustainability		
13. The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	2	With the project just in action for last 2 years, it is too early to conclude anything about the project's sustainability. There are some early indications of potential pathways for long-term impact. Both PGs and LGs across the province are interested and motivated to roll out new or continuing existing reintegration related activities. Ownership is also reflected in the policies and budget. However, Several LGs and ESCs as well as PSUs face critical challenges of capacities and trainings including on digitization and case management. The perspective of ESCs is already looking bleak, due to the expected phasing out of PMEP/YETI support and uncertainty of ESC coordinators' tenure, unless MoLESS makes clear commitments towards permanent financing of ESCs.

14. The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	3	All 20 partner local governments have allocated more or less than 20 lakhs towards reintegration activities, some of them have allotted even more. Substantial contributions were made from the provinces Madhesh and Koshi Provinces - together totaling NPR 197.7 million. In Madhesh, the province has gone a step further by financing key human resources, including additional financial allowances for 136 ESC coordinators if they focus their attention on reintegration, besides appointing a provincial coordinator for migration and one for employment to supervise and mentor 13 MRC and 8 Employment officers (in Madhesh) in the eight districts to ensure quality and performance. This financial commitment is reinforced by the formal endorsement of several reintegration-related policies and procedures that should lead to structured government spending on self-employment, startup grants, and skills training. However, these commitments are only partial and do not replace the significant funding requirements of ESCs to become strong labour market institutions. For ESCs and Local Government to continue, it is crucial that the federal government starts looking at international practices how to finance ESCs, and social and economic integration in a sustainable way.
15. The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) is conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes.	2-3	Reintegration related policies at all three levels of governments are favorable. GoN is clearly committed to the decade of internal employment and sees reintegration as an important channel to tap into the diaspora and potential of returnees as drivers for entrepreneurship and job creation. In the context of ReMI, the Madhesh Province is significantly ahead in both policy institutionalization and financial commitment for reintegration. It has approved multiple frameworks and operationalized direct financial support for ESC personnel and programs. Koshi Province has made slower progress, but there are indications that it will also come up with on soon. Obviously, there are varying degrees of political will, administrative prioritization, and institutional readiness across provinces. Economic situation of both provinces is also positive. It is more of the political situation mostly at the PG and federal level that might pose challenges to achieve outcomes of the project – as frequent changes of PG governments in Koshi had delayed the roll out.

Additional information (if needed):

Sandra Rothboeck — International Lead Reviewer

Jeevan Baniya — National Reviewer

Annex 2: Logframe Analysis

SN	Indicator Name	Total Phase Target	Achieved Upto 2024	2024 achieved (%women)	% against overall target	Observation Remi Staff	Observation MTR Team
Goal: Returnee Migrant Workers (RMWs) have re-established themselves in Nepal and actively participate in social, cultural, economic, and political life							
1	Proportion of RMWs who actively participate in social, cultural, economic, and political life	TBD					Need for definition, conceptual clarity. Goal has been defined for a multi-phased project
2	Proportion of RMWs who consider themselves more resilient to deal with the adverse effects of climate change/external shocks.	TBD					Need for definition, conceptual clarity. Goal has been defined for a multi-phased project
Outcome 1: Men and women returnee migrant workers in project working area establish a stable social and economic situation							
3	Proportion of RMWs gainfully employed	4000	59 returnees are currently employed after getting referral services (58 Male and 1 Female). Gainful Employment will be measured at the end of this fiscal year			This is started only in 3rd year and now gradually increasing	Economic integration as of now has not been defined and supported with a strategic approach. Further, the project assumes that through referrals and case management and networks, economic integration will take place. In places with weak ecosystems, usually places characterized by outmigration, job creation, entrepreneurship in general is difficult, hence for re-integration even more. Project has relatively late started with economic integration, therefore is relatively slow on that outcome. It is unlikely that these targets will be achieved by end of the project in July 2026
4	Proportion of RMWs with improved family relationship and psychosocial well-being	4000	630 RMWs (61 F / 569 M) have registered at the ESC and receive family & basic psychosocial counselling. Improved family relationship and psychosocial well-being will be measured at the end of this fiscal year			will be measured at the end of the fiscal year	Case management and social integration are slowly picking up, however, due to direct implementation of the project staff, going door-to door and not using multipliers, the project has till date only been able to reach 630 individuals in 2 wards in the LGs. While enrolment can accelerate during the remaining phase, by using returnee networks more actively, it is unlikely that the target is met. In addition, as of now, there is no clarity about measuring social integration.
Output 1.1: Migrant workers define a return and reintegration plan with their family							
5	Proportion of RMWs and families who attend reintegration sessions or family counselling to articulate return and reintegration plan	4261	704 (45 F, 659 M)	6%	17%		While output 1.1 highlights reintegration plan, measurable indicator 1.1 is reintegration and family counselling sessions attended. There is a gap between having attended and effectively developed. From the internal review, 946 returnees (45 women) attended the session, while 704 against the target of 4261 have developed a plan (17%). The project is unlikely to reach the targets by the end of the phase. Women's percentage is also very low.
Output 1.2: Returnee migrant workers access government social protection and psycho-social support services							
6	Number of RMWs in distress receiving government social protection services	1000	90 (57M, 33F)	37%	9%		Case management and referrals for social protection has started to pick up, however, remain fairly low with 9% overall against the target of 1000 cases to be serviced. However, it is to be highlighted that the percentage of women using the services is 37% which indicates that the case management responds to vulnerable groups. More information is required to assess to what extent ethnic, religious and migrants from discriminated communities are benefitting.
7	Number of RMWs receiving family and psychosocial counselling facilitated by ReMi	2000	630 (61 F / 569 M)	10%	32%		RMW accessing family and psychosocial support are picking up. SMs, and ESC family coaches are directly involved in door-to-door visits, registration and counseling. The referrals made to SaMI psychosocial counselors in serious cases are systematically made. ReMI could increase efforts to enroll women more proactively. While low, there is a possibility to reach the target, if Returnee migrant networks, ward reps are involved, and para counsellors are trained for last mile service support.
Output 1.3: RMWs access skills and knowhow for employment or self-employment in the domestic market							

8	Proportion of RMWs referred to training who have acquired skills recognized by NSTB	6000	260	0	4%		ReMI has not as yet developed a strategic approach for reintegration and how to partner with other projects in that field. Economic integration is complex and addresses shortcomings of the local ecosystem such as lack of capacities for creating an economic environment that enables businesses to grow, innovate and create jobs. Similarly, skills and business development support services are outdated, have access barriers (e.g. age, level of skills and certification), and lack capacities to provide up-reskilling options which need to be addressed through a. concerted economic development approach at the government level. Local/provincial planning, attracting investments and business interested are key areas, which need planning, programming and budgeting. Private sector needs to be involved.
9	Proportion of RMWs receiving business development support, who produce a viable business plan	2000	1309	?	65%	Business plan development	Entrepreneurship as preferred activity for returnees has been fostered by training for business development. The project is on track and most likely meeting targets by end of the phase. However, it is unclear how many women have benefitted. Feedback from beneficiaries highlight that training was not specific enough for their requirements and more skills and business training is required.
10	Number of RMWs who receive financial services	2000	23 (21M, 2F)	9%	1%		Access to finance remains a major challenge for returnees, due to lack of collaterals, which is even more pronounced in the case of women. Small funds are made available in LGs, however, they support livelihood initiatives, which require significant capacity building support and capital for them to expand and grow. LG, PG, FEB need to work financing. initial efforts of setting up revolving funds at provincial, LG and cooperative levels show promise and need further exploration. Linking initiatives with UDAYAN for enterprises ready to expand could be beneficial. However, the project is unlikely to meet the target.
Output 1.4: Migrant cooperatives, associations and networks respond to the needs of returnee migrant workers							
11	Number of cooperatives, associations and networks which refer RMWs to services	20	13		65%	305 returnee migrant networks are currently functioning (13 LG level, 70 ward level, 219 settlement level, 2 province level, 1 district level)	Networks have successfully been mobilised and in some cases formalised. Similarly, cooperatives. The networks should get insitutitonalised, build capacities for last mile services in migration-returnee integration related matters. At this point of time, no GEDSI specific steps have been taken to address specific needs of women migrants and family members where husbe\and migrates. This needs to be developed to ensure that services are inclusive. Further peer counseling skills, case management support can take place through these networks, for which provisions need to be made. Finally, Networks and coops need to be supported for lobbying and advocacy in a systematic way. It is a good beginning, and the project is likely reaching the target, however more capacity building is required to ensure sustainability.
12	Number of associations cooperatives, networks that have built coherent campaigns, including those to protect the right of RMWs, increase access of RMWs to services, and reduce stigma against women returnee migrant workers	20	0		?		As of now, no campaign has been held but networks were active in policy dialogue. It is unclear, to what extent targets for focused campaigns will be met, but through Networks, the goal within this phase can be achieved.
Outcome 2: The three tiers of government implement effective mechanisms to provide reintegration services to returnee migrant workers							
13	Number of policies, procedures and legal provisions related to reintegration in place in the three tiers of government	22	6		27%	1-Labour & Employment Policy approved in Madhesh Province1-Procedure of Self-Employment Program approved in Madhesh Province, returnee migrant network procedure in 2 endorsed	Policies have been formulated; however, it usually takes time to endorse the same. Madhesh is ahead, while Koshi is in the process of developing these policies. Both provinces and LGs acknowledge the need for guidelines and procedures to operationalise reintegration framework. With a push towards intensification, the target can be achieved.

14	Number of provincial and local governments that have coherent plans and budgets for the reintegration of returnee migrant workers	22	22		100% for budget provision		The project highlights that LGs have allocated budgets for reintegration; even though not all LGs have as yet paid the agreed amount, based on which selection of LGs was made. The indicator also highlights that coherent plans are developed, which seems more complex and ambitious. Givern that economic and social integration are still nascent and not as yet fully operationalised, the MTR is doubtful that this has happened. Reporting therefore should be more differentiated.
15	Proportion of RMWs who are satisfied with reintegration services provided of LG	TBD			na		This indicator assesses satisfaction, and surveys will be done later
Output 2.1: Local governments have the capacities to provide needs-based reintegration support services							
16	Number of ESCs providing essential services to returnee migrant workers	20	20		100%		The indicator is very broadly defined and can include any services provided. For the project to be relevant and to use the indicator to qualify, essential services needs to be defined and ESC services need to a benchmark. Effectiveness assessments need to be made
17	Number of local governments with own policies and plans on reintegration	20	6		30%		see above, raw 13
18	Number of local governments that have allocated own budgets for sustainable reintegration services	20	20		100%		see above, raw 14
19	Number of thematic committees that engage in consultation with RMWs, and RMW networks, associations and/or cooperatives	6	1		17%		ReMI up to now has only had one thematic committee, but additional efforts are planned in both provinces, also bringing other SDC funded projects together for strategic collaboration. It is therefore likely that the target can be reached.
Output 2.2: Provincial Governments act upon their roles and responsibilities in relation to migration and reintegration							
20	Number of sessions of parliamentarian committees on matters related to migration and reintegration (informed by migration profiles)	3			0		ReMI up to now has not as yet met with parliamentarian committees, however, with policies formulated, is likely that the target can be reached. ne should make sure that private sector too is engaged and consulted.
21	Number of available draft frameworks facilitating reintegration	20			0		Drafting frameworks takes time, it is unlikely that this will be achieved for all LGs by the end of the project phase. The target set was too ambitious
22	Number of local governments that receive technical knowhow & budget from provincial government to support RMWs	20	136		680%		This indicator is vague does not provide and guidance on quality and effectiveness of services. Project has repeatedly engaged with LG as part of technical assistance.
Output 2.3: The three tiers of government coordinate together for reintegration support services							
23	Number of inter-ministerial meetings addressing reintegration related matters	4	0		0		ReMI upto now has not as yet held interministerial meetings, however, with policies formulated, is likely that the target can be reached.
24	Number of consultation meetings between federal, provincial, and local governments on legal and policy frameworks for reintegration of RMW and their families	8	7		88%		Consultative meetings are held and as highlighted far beyond the target. Policy formulation and implementation requires many interactions which along with better capacities also develops ownership for the process. One should make sure that private sector too is engaged and consulted.
Output 2.4: The three tiers of government partner with the private sector on reintegration support services							
25	Number of services provided in partnership with private sector to support reintegration of RMW and their families	8	0		0		While project has yet to start involving the private sector systematically in reintegration, it can build on other SDC funded projects and the ILO to accelerate partnerships and collaboration for better outcomes. Target can be met.
26	Number of collaboration initiatives between provincial and local governments and private sector that support reintegration and protection of the rights of RMWs and their families	8	0		0		While project is yet to start involving the private sector systematically in reintegration, it can build on other SDC funded projects and the ILO to accelerate partnerships and collaboration for better outcomes. Stakeholder and planning meetings can be held jointly. Target can be met

Annex 3: List of persons interviewed - available internal only

Annex 4: Questions used during MTR and for Self-Assessment

Question Relevance
To what extent does REMI address the needs and priorities of beneficiaries, stakeholders, and indirectly affected groups?
How well does the intervention consider contextual factors such as economic, environmental, social, cultural and political aspects?
Are the objectives, indicators, and strategies of the intervention well-designed, measurable, and feasible? Is the M&E plan appropriate for tracking changes and fostering learning?
Has the intervention effectively adapted to policy, economic, or funding changes over time? Particularly in the context of frequent changes of party leaders in provinces and LG?
How relevant is the ReMi project within the evolving federalization process, ESC reforms, and digitalization of employment services? Does it remain relevant without a reintegration law?
What are the recommendations to increase relevance of project?
Questions Coherence
Is the current project design internally coherent and systematically contributing to the expected results? What is missing?
How well does the project contribute to coherence of Nepal's earlier interventions and policy reforms?
Where do you think is need to strengthen coherence with other SDC projects?
How well does the intervention align with SDC policies (e.g., International Cooperation Strategy 2025-28, SDC Programme Nepal 2023-26)? Where do you think is need to strengthen coherence with other SDC projects?
How compatible is REMI with other Swiss-funded projects in Nepal, ensuring consistency, synergies, and avoiding duplication?
How complementary is the intervention with efforts (e.g. private sector engagement in TVET and RPL) by other actors, including the GoN, in addressing labour migration and reintegration?
What partnerships and policies should be strengthened for sustainability and Phase II? Which interventions should be continued, scaled, or discontinued? How can project impact be institutionalized? What is the role of returnee migrants, particularly in disadvantaged communities?
Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended results and the effects (on beneficiaries and institutions)?
What should be strengthened to increase internal coherence?
Questions Effectiveness
How effectively does the project influence policy, performance of MoLESS, Provincial Government, LGs, and ESCs and local level actors?
How effectively do ReMi's social and economic reintegration services, provided through ESCs, support the successful reintegration of returnees? How well is private sector involved? How far do ReMi activities and approach effect the RMW' decision to 'reintegrate in society' or to decide 'not to remigrate?
Can outcomes and outputs of the project achieved by the end of the project? Please provide tables for each outcome and reflect on results
List major factors influencing the achievement/non-achievement of the outcomes and outputs
How well do key partners and stakeholders collaborate, and how can this be improved for better outcomes (e.g. when collaborating with the local government or private sector)?
How effective is management set-up to lead to expected results?
How effective are the Project Steering and Coordination Committees?
How inclusive and gender responsive/transformative are the interventions? What needs to be improved?
Highlight positives and discuss shortcomings and recommendations
Questions Efficiency
Financial consciousness: Provide spending statistics as defined in presentation as percentage of project: effectively spent against planned spending
What is the cost benefit (qualitative) of the ReMi project for returnees? Which interventions are most beneficial for male and female returnees? (including case studies what works and what does not work)
Timely delivery: How well are results achieved in time? Where is room for improvement?
Operational efficiency: How efficient are project set up, management, monitoring, and steering mechanisms in resource allocation, risk management, and logistics to ensure efficient implementation?
Coordination and Synergies: How well does the project contribute to coordination between spheres? Which synergies does it have with projects like SDC, World bank, K-HaMI, JAICA and FEB funded projects?
Are baseline studies, progress reports and tracer studies in place? Are transformative indicators guiding change?
How well are results/research findings used for adaptive management and project improvement?
Reflect on your capacity for reporting and knowledge management to document progress
Highlight positives and discuss shortcomings and recommendations
Question Impact
To what extent have intended high-level impacts been achieved or are expected to be achieved?
How has the project generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level social/economic effects?
How well have beneficiaries, local, and provincial governments strengthened their capacities and resilience for sustaining the intervention's outcomes?

Which mechanisms assess impact on partners' and institutions capacities to deliver better, more accessible and more impactful services?
Provide evidence of outcomes and impact on final beneficiaries (e.g. better employment or increase income)?
How well have social inclusion and gender transformative approaches contributed to better results and improved wellbeing for discriminated groups and returning migrant women in particular? Where is need for improvement?
Please also reflect on unintended and potential negative effects the project has.
Question Sustainability
To what extent is ReMi's reintegration approach replicable in local governments with limited institutional and technical capacity?
Are there sufficient financial resources, including government co-financing, to sustain project benefits?
How effectively has the project-built stakeholder capacity and ownership to ensure continuity post-funding? Are there indications of interest and ownership from the private sector?
Which policies and institutional mechanisms need further strengthening?
What is the sustainability plan of the project as per design? To what extent project team monitor the progress against the sustainability plan?
Is there evidence for readiness and ownership of Ministry, Governments in all spheres, and amongst service providers (TVET, ESC, Testing centres, MFI/banks), private sector to pro-actively reach out and deliver services to returning migrants?
Which proactive measures has the project to increase ownership from system actors and thus the sustainability of the initiatives?
Which factors could influence the achievement or non-achievement of the sustainability of the programme activities?
Which are the main recommendations for sustainability?

Annex 5: Note how Bangladesh and Nepal reintegration projects can benefit from each other

Background

The social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers (RMWs) has emerged as a key priority for both Nepal and Bangladesh - two major labour-sending countries in South Asia - especially in the wake of recent crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to pressing challenges such as unemployment, psychosocial, social stigma, and limited access to essential services, both countries have launched comprehensive reintegration initiatives with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

In Nepal, the Safer Migration (SaMi) project, launched in 2011 by SDC and HELVETAS initially focused on safe migration. The project gradually incorporated reintegration elements, which informed the design of the current Nepal's Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers (ReMi) project. project that now pilots institutionalised reintegration services in the two provinces -Madhesh and Koshi. Bangladesh began focused work on the reintegration of returning migrant workers with ILO and BRAC under SDC-supported initiatives around 2018, following the completion of earlier migration governance projects. The current reintegration project which began in 2022 has two pillars, builds on insights and pilot efforts from these earlier projects.

Approaches and Strategies

Nepal's ReMi Project (2022–26), implemented by HELVETAS, adopts a systems-building approach, which is embedded within the country's federal governance structure. The project operates through 20 local ESCs, which are being strengthened to function as one-stop service hubs for job seekers and returnee migrant workers, by introducing case management and referral mechanisms. The project focuses on building RMWs networks and cooperatives and facilitates the setting up of legal and regulatory provisions at local and provincial level, besides collaborating with ILO on federal policy related issues. Its core objective is to institutionalise social and economic reintegration support within the public system by integrating these services into the broader employment framework. The project collaborates with implementing partners, specialized in psychosocial/family counselling (CMC), economic development (DEPROSC), building local and provincial planning capacities (MUAN, NARMIN) and social protection (TDh). To ensure sustainability, the project works towards building budgetary ownership by local governments, while provincial authorities are increasingly taking on co-financing responsibilities and oversight and quality assurance. The project is anchored in a federal reintegration framework, aiming to establish a coherent, decentralised system that enables long-term delivery and scaling of reintegration services across all levels.

Criteria	Nepal (ReMi Project)	Bangladesh (Reintegration Project)
Strategic Approach	Systems-building approach within federal structure	Two-pillar approach combining grassroots delivery with policy advocacy
Primary Implementing Actors	HELVETAS, MoLESS, Provincial and Local Governments	BRAC, OKUP, MJF, ILO, IOM, UN Women
Service Delivery Mechanism	Employment Service Centres (ESCs) as one-stop service points	NGO-led direct support in 10 districts via 9 grassroots partners
Institutional Integration	Embedded in public system with federal, provincial and local coordination	Efforts toward system integration ongoing, currently fragmented between pillars
Financing Model	Financed through local governments with provincial oversight	Donor-funded; limited local government financial ownership
Gender and Vulnerability Focus	Gender and inclusion addressed through GEDSI framework, but needs refinement	Strong NGO-led gender-responsive services, particularly psychosocial support for women
Private Sector Engagement	Limited; needs stronger linkages at local and provincial levels	Pillar 2 seeks engagement; local level efforts remain underutilised
Monitoring and Evaluation	Basic; outcome indicators need clearer definitions and stronger tracking	More advanced in Pillar 1; real-time systems still lacking
Use of Migrant Networks	Strong focus on cooperatives and returnee networks	Emerging focus; forums exist but need formalisation and resourcing
Policy and System Reform	Policies and frameworks in place, focus on decentralised system-building and policy frameworks	Led by ILO; national policy framework under development
System Perspective	Helvetas as the main implementing agency builds partnerships, however, still has to adopt a systemic approach where, together with SDC and ILO as a convenor or tripartism, it capacitates local stakeholders, through technical assistance, to build a coherent system.	The project has a system perspective; however, ILO needs to assume the role of a facilitator and convenor of tripartism, where it can support the government in building a more coherent system

Bangladesh's Project (2022–2026), adopts a dual-track approach that combines grassroots service delivery with systemic policy reform. Through Pillar 1, a network of nine NGOs (led by BRAC) provides direct support to returnees across ten migration-prone districts, offering case management, psychosocial counselling, financial literacy, legal assistance, and some economic integration services (livelihood and entrepreneurship support). Interventions are tailored to vulnerable

groups, many of them women and distressed returnees. Pillar 2 focuses on strengthening the national reintegration framework by engaging policy actors and fostering collaboration among government bodies (such as MoEWOE and WEWB), development partners (ILO, IOM, UN Women), and employer organisations. By leveraging the flexibility and outreach of civil society organisations for immediate service provision, while simultaneously pursuing policy change and institutional capacity building, the project addresses both short-term needs and long-term systemic gaps in the reintegration ecosystem.

Mutual Learning Opportunities

The experiences of Nepal and Bangladesh offer rich lessons for each other as highlighted in the table below.

Nepal can benefit from the Bangladesh project on learning from last mile outreach through networks and NGO community work, awareness campaigns and direct implementation services. Its streamlined case management practices and outreach, driven by NGO partners, gives insights into the last mile outreach through NGOs and migrant workers' formal and informal networks. Gender-responsive case management, outreach and interventions offers Nepal insights on how to make reintegration services more inclusive, holistic, and sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups - especially women and distressed returnees.

Bangladesh can benefit from Nepal's a more structured yet still evolving model of institutional collaboration between local provincial and the federal government by building one stop solutions for reintegration at local ESC level. Reintegration is progressively integrated into the national employment system, supported by a clear legal and policy framework. Key federal institutions such as the Foreign Employment Board (FEB) and the National Migration Resource Centre (NMRC) assume critical support functions for returnees or their families for rescue, return and repatriation, and their access to welfare, compensation, insurance and legal claims. MoLESS is actively developing a reintegration framework aligned with federal mandates and decentralised service delivery. The ESC-based project is planned to be rooted in local government structures and financing and progressively integrated into the public employment ecosystem. It explores how reintegration services can be institutionalised within government systems to ensure sustainability beyond donor funding. Bangladesh could benefit from Nepal's approach where specialized implementing partners support LGs and PGs to plan and allocate funds for economic and social reintegration. Furthermore, Nepal's efforts with building formalised returnee networks and cooperatives are promising, since they create community linkages, outreach, and support in referrals and economic integration. In addition, they work on remittance management, saving schemes and revolving funds for small loans. Their increased role in policy, plan and budget advocacy is remarkable.

Areas where both Nepal and Bangladesh need Improvement

Both projects would benefit from a stronger theory of change and more clarity about how goals can be chieved. The MTR team highlights that sustainable social and economic reintegration should begin early in the migration cycle - not only at the point of return. International experiences, such as those from the K-HaMi initiative in Nepal and those in the Philippines, demonstrate the value of preparing migrants for reintegration well before they return home. In countries with limited employment opportunities and underdeveloped labour market and training systems, returnees face even greater challenges in having their skills recognised, accessing upskilling, or securing decent jobs. While self-employment offers an alternative, it must be approached proactively - ensuring returnees are equipped with the financial and business resources needed for success, rather than turning to self-employment as a last resort. Given that both projects have invested significantly in safe migration over the years, the MTR recommends that they more systematically integrate reintegration support into the broader migration cycle and governance framework**. One of the key necessities to be addressed includes financial security and stability of families and RMWs** which also influence economic opportunities of returnees and their status and potential risk of stigmatisation. Nepal and Bangladesh has started introducing welfare and saving initiatives, which need further refinements and consolidation. Some interesting cases are summarized in the table below:[22]

[22] ILO (2019). Effective return and reintegration of migrant workers with special focus on ASEAN Member States
ASEAN (2020): Guidelines for effective return and reintegration of migrant workers.

Table: Critical elements determining likelihood for smooth economic reintegration

Stage	Objective	Actions & Tools
1. Pre-Departure Financial Literacy & Planning	Equip migrants and families with financial knowledge before departure. LGs provide active support.	- Budgeting training - Debt awareness - Goal setting with family - Rights awareness
2. Safe Migration Financing	Prevent debt bondage by providing ethical financing options.	- Avoid migration loans - Loan guarantees - Fair and Ethical recruitment certification
3. Banking & Remittance Setup	Enable safe and affordable cross-border money transfers.	- Open dual bank accounts - Enable mobile remittances - Promote low-cost digital tools
4. Income Management Abroad	Help migrants budget, save, and avoid exploitation.	- Salary tracking tools - Saving incentives, training - Digital banking access - Worker rights monitoring facilitate and access to justice
5. Family Financial Coordination	Align family spending and saving with migrant goals.	- Joint budgeting - Financial literacy for spouses and other members - Communication tools - Establishing SMEs by spouses
6. Investment & Asset Building	Convert remittances into sustainable assets or income.	- SME support - Business incubators
7. Return & Reintegration Planning	Prepare financially and emotionally for return.	- Target-based savings - Business/skill reintegration plans - Health & pension planning
8. Post-return Financial Inclusion	Ensure continued financial access and livelihood.	- Link to banks and insurance - Reintegration grants/loans - Entrepreneurship training

At implementation level, both projects should start building robust quality assurance mechanisms, improving monitoring and evaluation and investing in knowledge management, including documentation. Resources are required for better documentation of learnings from pilot initiatives and to build an institutional memory to guide policy and practice and share the same for mutual learning.

Both projects need to strengthen strategic vision how to develop partnerships to progress on economic integration and support the government in building a coherent ecosystem and economic reintegration environment at local levels. A stakeholder management approach would help to define capacity building and targets and to track performance.

Real-time data systems, feedback loops, and evidence-based decision-making remain weak in both contexts and are essential for scaling and sustaining reintegration services. Institutional learning platforms, cross-country exchanges, and peer review mechanisms could further support continuous improvement.

SDC MTR: REMI Debriefing

Kathmandu, 25 April 2025

Consultant team:
Sandra Rothboeck
Jeevan Baniya
Prasansa Thapa

ReMi
Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers Project

1. About the MTR: Objective and Scope of Review

- Backward and Forward looking
- Performance of progress and achievements (intended and unintended)
- Right design and approach? Are tools and partners appropriate? Anchoring of REMI in ESCs?
  - ESC as part of LGs?
  - Case Management
  - Social Integration and Networks
  - Economic Integration + Private sector Link
- Efficiency, coordination and collaboration: 3 tiers, between ministries and between projects
- Synergies and potential mutual learning between Bangladesh and Nepal
- Entry points for replication and scale (anticipate phase out by 2030): must-nice to have
- Recommendations: Phase II will align with GoN on decade on internal employment. (RMW economic reintegration)

Process and Methods



✓ **Participative**
✓ **Formative**
✓ **Gender responsive**

Total number:
108 (28F, 80M)

1. **Analysis of documents** (Laws, policies, guidelines, SoPs, reports)
2. **Self-Assessment: REMI Headquarters**
3. **Mission:** Koshi & Madhesh provinces, 6 Municipalities
4. **KII and FGDs with key stakeholders** during missions
   - Staff of implementing partners in Kathmandu and field offices
   - PSU, PISU, PIC
   - Government offices: MoLESS, PMEP, FEB, MoLT, MoSD, Madhesh, Prov. Policy and Planning Commission, LG, Ward chiefs, MRCs, ESCs
   - Private sector: FNNCI
   - Projects: SESC, Helvetas (SAMI, ENSSURE); Swisscontact (NVQS, QualiTY, Step up), Udayan, World Bank, K-HAMI.
   - Beneficiaries: Members of Returning Migrant Networks, direct beneficiaries.
5. **Online discussions:** IOM, UNWOMEN, InELAM
6. **Observation: farms, entrepreneurs**
6. **Debriefing** with SDC and Helvetas

3

FINDINGS:

2.1 Overall findings and lessons in a nutshell

- Project has presence, set the ground for integrated reintegration mechanism: nascent stage
- RMW priority at all levels: budgets, in policies and programmes
- Current 3 tier implementation: Top down-bottom up approach effective and mutually enforcing
- Project only partially builds on legacy of SAMI (social integration, access to welfare and justice)
- Federal level seeks more technical assistance (ESC, FEB)
- Low outreach and resource intensive (2 wards): direct implementation or Technical Assistance?
- Overlapping roles: Social mobilisers/ family counsellors and RV
- Networks: critical for outreach, advocacy and services. Capacity building need
- MRC/ ESC –status and clarity of roles yet to be defined. Capacity building needed

5

Contd.

- GEDSI needs to be more mainstreamed in work done by partners/implementation partners
- Root causes of lack of economic integration not systematically addressed
- Staff requires more capacity building and strategic direction in all areas
- Limited involvement of private sector.
- Limited coordination between projects to strategically support LG/PG
- Insufficient focus on quality and analysis of data, documentation of learning
- M&E, quality assurance of project and government mechanism insufficient.

6

2.2 Relevance and Strategic Fit

GoN, SDC, SDG priorities	Government and specific ministries	Private sector	Community, Family, Ultimate beneficiaries: high
✓ReMI mainstreamed in policies and programmes (FG PG, LG)	✓ high priority at federal level, provincial, increasingly at LG level	✓ Interest in addressing skills gaps through returnees	✓Increased sensitization
✓Fund allocations where project is active	✓Allocation of funds at all 3 spheres, integrated in plans.		✓Positive feedback to services
✓Decade of sustainable internal employment	✓High level of relevance and interest at LG /Ward Level where project is active		✓Feeling of empowerment
✓GoN want Nepalis to remain/be integrated in economy			✓Means to advocacy in policy making

Observation:
- Pressure on political Elites at LG, Federal Levels to find solutions for productive internal employment

7

Coherence

a. Design

Definition of Goal, Outcomes and Outputs

- Scope very broad
  - Long term vision /goal instead of 4 year project vision and goal
  - Very ambitious and open design, high numbers
  - What is the focus: ESC development, outreach or system building?

Feedback from Partners (Gov, FNCCI, MRCs, ESC)

- Top government driven: limited involvement of LG, PG, Private sector, NGOs
- Lack of clarity of roles in FG and PG
- Overlaps of interventions and government interactions with other projects
- Lack of clarity about social and economic integration nexus
- Is it a continuation of SAMI with reintegration focus?

Theory of Change-log frame, results chain

- Clear TOC
- Impact logic unclearly defined: need for results chain with clear attributions

9

Indicators measuring project results

- Goal and outcomes are overlapping
- Output indicators are outcome indicators
- Definitions unclear: 'social integration/economic integration'
- Institutional capacity increase not formulated and measured
- 'Proportion of' is not reported as increased….but as absolute figures.
- Outputs are measured through multiple indicators
- GEDSI are not specifically mentioned: important to address intersections

Programmatic observations

- Logic for selection of LGs (spreads too thinly in KOSHI)
- ESC as target beneficiaries, not yet functional (PEMP only)
- Does not make adequately use of SAMI services and mechanism for outreach

M&E

- No M&E Framework monitoring change
- No dedicated quality assurance, backstopping resources to project/provinces

10

c. Understanding of target group

Need for better understanding of ultimate beneficiaries and their needs

- Diversity of returnees not really addressed (skill sets, experience, indebtedness, preferences)
- Family specifics need to be considered to address vulnerability
- Family as additional potential resource for establishing/expanding enterprise
- Rural - urban
- GEDSI not really addressed: socio economic groups to address intersections (incl disability)
- Age as barrier

Need for better understanding of potential multipliers/champions which drive process (LGs)

- Capacities, resources and interest for change
- Policy environment enabling fast pick up (some non REMI LGs fare better)
- Rural and Urban settings and needs
- Ongoing related activities with potential synergies

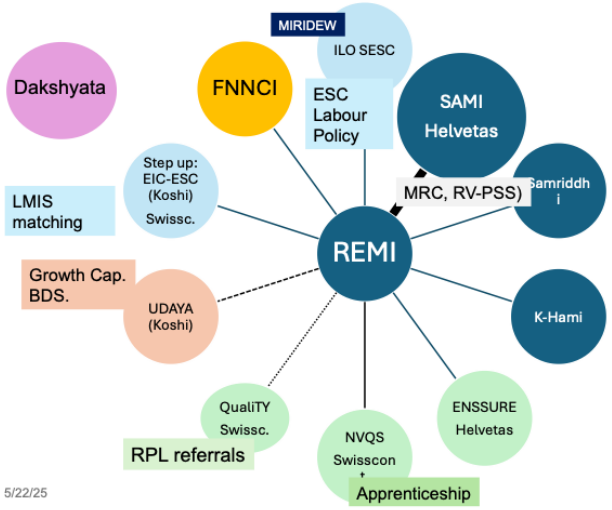
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d. Project can benefit from the following strategy elements

How REMI benefits from learnings of SAMI and other promising practices (Dakshyata)	Strategy for social and economic integration needs more clarity (based on data)	How to work with partners and multipliers for higher level outcomes
How to work with other projects on integration	How to operate in provincial / local ecosystem for economic integration	How to mobilise RMW at last mile level? • MRCs, RMW Networks, cooperatives • Communication between parties
Need for documentation of pilot /action research of approaches Need for communication strategy	Move towards benchmarking of LG, ESC, MRCs	M&E framework for interventions in government and project

12

e. External Coherence: some synergies with SDC and other projects



SAMI-REMI partial integration

Learning from other projects limited

Up to now:
Limited alignment with other projects at all 3 levels

Need for joint implementation strategy, committee

5/22/25 13

Effectiveness:

Outcome 1		Target	Status	Observation
	RMW establish a stable economic and social situation	(econ.) 4000 (social) 4000	59 (1) 630 (61F)	
Output1.1	RMW define return & reintegration plan with family (50% of people attending reintegration session)	4261	17% (6%) 704 (45 F)	Plan developed
KPI	RMWs and families who attend reintegration sessions or family counselling	18750	946 (45 F)	
Output1.2	RMW access social protection and psycho-social support services			
KPI	RMWs in distress receive social protection services	1000	9% (35%) 90 (33F)	
KPI	RMWs receive family and psychosocial counselling	2000	32% (10%) 630 (61 F)	Slow roll out
Output1.3	RMWs access skills and knowhow for employment or self-employment in the domestic market			
	RMWs who have acquired skills recognized by NSTB	6000	4% 260 (0)	Age barriers, interest
	RMWs receive BDS, who produce a viable business plan	2000	65% 1309	
	RMWs receive financial services	2000	1% 23 (2F)	Barriers
Output1.4	Migrant cooperatives, associations and networks respond to the needs of returnee migrant workers			
	Coops, associations networks referring RMWs to services	20	65% 13	305 NW in 2 Prov.
	Associations, coops, networks that have built coherent campaigns on rights, stigma, access of RMWs	20	0	What can be achieved?

Effectiveness of Case Management

Case management: strong and effective way to address needs of returnees

- Design process was participatory and was piloted several times
- Meets specific needs (women, men, levels of abuse and psychosocial needs)
- Time consuming (5-15 sessions)
  - requires SM/counsellors to visit homes for follow up
  - overall positive but hesitation to remain engaged (trust)

Data management system not yet finalized: no systematic data on RMW

- No simplified data entry system
- Manually entered data
- Skills profiles not uniform and aligned with ILO standards

Observation:
- Limited capacities (time) of staff in ESCs
- More capacity building of staff for data entry and quality checking required
- No systematic monitoring along case management
- No effectiveness assessment on case management done
- Need for diversified case management (and costs) not highlighted in M&E matrix

16

Effectiveness of psychosocial counseling and social integration

Psychosocial and family counselling

- Close collaboration with SAMI for referrals
- Mistrust towards counsellors: explore local para/peer counsellors
- Duplication of RVs/SM and family counsellors?

Mechanism

- Referrals process to PS Counsellors / OCMC takes place
- Referral pathways increased
- More multipliers engage in referrals: MRC, ESC, Networks, Cooperatives, Wards, RVs etc.

Observation:

- Limited outreach (2 wards) due to direct implementation (not using existing channels enough)
- No quality assurance about effectiveness
- Better utilize para psychosocial and para family counsellors trained during COVID
- More streamlining required.
- No quality assurance

18

Effectiveness of economic reintegration approaches

Financial literacy and reintegration plan

- Too standardized: different needs (e.g. business upgrading for growing enterprises)

Skills , certification and labour market Integration

- Initiated some linkages with NVQS/NSTB and skills training: challenge of relevant training

Enterprise Development

- Standardised training: is it enough?
- Returnees also require upskilling, higher level business skills
- Access to loans, working capital, BDS, Markets as main barrier

Limited linkages with FNNCI, local chambers, private sector

Observation:
Focus primarily on development of loans/ funds and less on integration into the ecosystem.
Limited private sector engagement

19

Outcome 2		Target	Status	
	Government implement mechanisms for RMW	22	27% 7	
	Budgets and Plans	22	22	
Output2.1	Local governments have the capacities to provide needs-based reintegration support services			
	ESCs provide essential services to RMW	20	20	Should be other indicator.
	LG with own policies and plans on reintegration	20	6	
	LG with own budgets for sustainable reintegration	20	20	Not all have 20 Lakh
	Thematic committees engage with RMWs, networks, associations and/or cooperatives	6	1	
Output2.2	Provincial Governments act upon their roles and responsibilities for migration and reintegration			
	Sessions of parliamentarian committees (migr. Profiles)	3	0	
	Number of available draft frameworks	20	0	If they are LGs
	LG receive technical knowhow & budget from PG	20	136	
Output2.3	The three tiers of government coordinate together for reintegration support services			
	Inter-ministerial Meetings	4	0	
	Consultation between Fed-PG-LG on policies/legal framew.	8	88% 7	
Output2.4	The three tiers of government partners with the private sector on reintegration support services			
	Services provided in partnership with private sector	8	0	
	Collab. initiatives between PG, LG and private sector	8	0	

Effectiveness of system building approach at all levels

- Top down process: PG and LG seek guidance and representation
- Ownership high at all levels; need for clarity and capacity building for stronger mechanism
- PG lack clarity on their role and function (limited interaction with federal and local level)
- Partners require more strategic technical assistance
- The three tiers of government partners have limited engagement with private sector
- Overlapping Data systems: NEMIS/NLMIS, Sram Sansar, planned Blueprint for LMIS
- M&E and quality assurance system within the government not visible
- Coherence: Committees operate in silos. No joint support pf projects at government at strategic level. How does ESC connections with province.

Observation: The project can benefit from a more systemic approach
Project needs to be closer to the Ministry's plans and strategies; appointed staff will help

21

Effectiveness of building Migrant Networks, Cooperatives

- Accelerated and created RMW Networks of returnees
- Cooperatives potential facilitators for social and economic integration and outreach
- Other Migrant Networks and cooperatives seek to emulate Madhesh Experience
- REMI performs more likely when not too thinly spread
- Some Networks actively participate in policy and in planning process (Madhes, Koshi LGs).
- Not yet fully used for more ward level outreach for PS / family counselling
- Networks and Cooperatives need institution building and strategic guidance

Observation:
Project should sensitize networks and cooperatives on GEDSI

22

Effectiveness of ESCs for economic and social integration of RMW

- Limited staffing: project based (PMEP); not permanent
- No institutional maturity: core functions not set up, yet staff are sentitized
- Needs strategy how to be agile facilitating agency within local ecosystem (rural –urban)
- ESCs need networking, capacity building and learning exchange at Provincial level
- Overloading of functions: Poverty Alleviation, Social and economic integration?/ESC functions
- For scale: systematic strategic approach how to set up LG co-financed ESCs and monitor quality is required
- ESC reporting only to FG is not effective. Some PGs/LGs started reorganizing

Observation:

- Madhesh has strong focus on expanding MRCs, cooperatives… feel these are permanent structures, ESC is uncertain.

23

Some observation on non-REMI supported LG in comparison to REMI

LGs

- Awareness and interest about REMI replication high
- Some started allocating funds and exchange with other LGs
- Lack clarity how to systematically address RMW issue
- Fewer and weaker RMW representation for advocacy (since no intervention)

ESCs

- Aware about their core functions, keen on more capacity building
- Fewer resources available
- Less diversified services (mostly PMEP, labour permit, economic assistance from FEB and insurance)
- ESCs under Labour and Employment section seems promising

Observation:

- Government seeks LG mapping and transparent criteria for engaging LGs in phase II.
- Seek to replicate the project in at leats 5 provinces

Intended and unintended Results

Understaffing and temporary funding for staff in ESCs poses risks to REMI performance/sustainability (no future of PMEP and other projects)

Trust issues amongst RMW and direct implementation make outreach inefficient.

ESC staff reports to federal government: risk of lack of accountability for provincial and local mechanism

'Tension' between REMI staff (Family counsellors/Employment Counsellors, SM) and ESC staff: benefit issues

Locating REMI staff or other project staff in ministry is a barrier for private sector to engage

Policy framework and process at federal/provincial/ local level needs alignment for sustainability (ILO-REMI): Need to align with planned national PES strategy.

Government has moved on: is project aware of the bigger picture? Employment Promotion Strategy

FEB wants more collaboration and technical assistance.

2.5 GEDSI

Design-implementation could focus more on measuring and monitoring intersectionality and transformation

Cooperatives/networks need sensitization on intersections, representation, inclusion

- Address GBV-dowry as part of financial literacy/remittances management.

Women migrants make 11% (80000): look for targeted initiatives

Women leadership development in networks and cooperatives and peer counseling training could accelerate expansion and outreach

Analysis of intersections to ensure effectiveness of response will help decision making.

Unclear, what project is doing for vulnerable groups (e.g. PwD, women, PRW with health issues): only referrals or also family empowerment schemes in LG

2.6 Effectiveness of Project Partners

TdH: focus on case management development roll out: very slow

- More capacity development needed
- QA needs to be developed
- Data analysis not done: basis for LGs to plan and allocate funding, for counsellors to reach out.

DEPROCS: financial literacy, economic integration

- Local business mapping
- Training to ESC staff: more capacity building and strategic planning required to achieve required

CMC: Psychosocial, Family counselling

- Insufficient institutionalisation of capacity building of counsellors, supervision
- Feel streamlining at ward, ESC level is required.
- Limited quality assurance systems

NARMIN/MUAN: Policy strengthening (MUAN not on board yet)

- Not enough follow up provisions
- Addition capacities needed

Observation: Partners act as subcontractors, less as strategic partners: consequence; less ownership

Efficiency

Spending and finances:

Outcome/ output	Direct TA 57%	GoN Treasury 43%	Phase Target 100%	Actual_Dec 2024 (TA)	% burning rate (TA)	% burning rate (GoN)	Total % burning rate
Outcome 1	1,008,065	1,927,313	2,935,378	325,206	32%	8%	16%
Output 1.1	115,876	55,874	171,751	48,521	42%	45%	43%
Output 1.2	482,962	407,087	890,049	114,559	24%	0%	13%
Output 1.3	318,959	1,441,756	1,760,716	159,944	50%	7%	15%
Output 1.4	90,267	22,595	112,862	2,182	2%	89%	20%
Outcome 2	249,208	972,692	1,221,900	37,303	15%	55%	47%
Output 2.1	47,809	827,141	874,949	10,150	21%	61%	59%
Output 2.2	64,289	34,292	98,581	47	0%	63%	22%
Output 2.3	81,557	81,098	162,655	23,362	29%	10%	20%
Output 2.4	55,554	30,161	85,715	3,744	7%	0%	4%
Monitoring Knowledge Management	115,342	-	115,342	34,857	30%		30%
TOTAL	1,372,615	2,900,005	4,272,620	397,366	29%	23%	25%

Observation:

- Delay of LG spending, slow fund flow affects implementation of activities
- Most likely requires an extension: need for more focus on M&E system in project and government, training and documentation

30

Staffing and team composition

More staff for technical assistance and M&E required, less on social mobilisation

Project staffing has multiple functions and responsibilities

- Too thinly spread (Koshi)

Focus on direct implementation, less on technical assistance

- Feel overwhelmed and understaffed
- SM/Family counsellors in ESC do not fulfill ESC function: should change their role (capacitate networks and supervise peer counselling and referrals through networks)

System thinking less prioritized (incl. TdH)

Limited capacities how to build ecosystem and engage private sector

- Economic counsellors require ecosystem and business development mindset

Limited Quality assurance, and data analysis focus for policy dialogue and project improvement.

Need for strong thematic exchange amongst thematic staff (HQ-Provinces-ESC staff)

31

Governance, Coordination and Communication

Governance: need for more participation

- More voice from PG and LG at Federal Level, private sector, other projects
- At PG level: no private sector, less LG involvement
- ESC accountability to LG and province limited (report to MoLESS)
- Projects to be governed under one structure (planned at LG, Federal level)

Coordination: need for more coordination of actors

- At project level: with Private Sector, other Projects
- PG level: other sectoral ministries, Private Sector, other projects
- LG thematic committee level: integrated committee required
- Projects should communicate well aligned with government and private sector

Communication needs to be strengthened

- LGs/ESCs to PGs to Federal level feel lack well defined communication channels
- Communication between other projects to ensure alignment at federal/province level

M&E, Reporting and Knowledge Management

Reporting activity based: could be more outcome focused and strategic

- Limited evidence-based reporting

Upto now, limited on M&E: no M&E framework

- M&E system with government helps tracking progress
- M&E framework for project can track progress at institutional capacity level.

Data for case management, referrals not yet available: important for work with Government.

Knowledge Management: staff just recently joined

- No concept on Knowledge Management developed
- Studies undertaken (Gender assessment) and 12 moments that matter

Knowledge Sharing

- Events for knowledge sharing in Koshi and Madhes planned (cooperatives, networks)
- Need for more knowledge sharing amongst LGs, ESCs (together with ILO and other projects?)
- Exposure to other projects can accelerate cross learning

33

2.8 Sustainability snapshots

- Employment Policies in 2 provinces, provincial and many local annual plans highlight reintegration.
- Funding contribution / allocations at PG, LG levels. Increased staffing (Mahesh), increased funding at LG
- Registration of some RMW networks and cooperatives, supported by LG and inspiration for replication in other LGs
- ESC sustainability unsure, since not as yet institutionalized
- PES strategy currently facilitated by ILO is on the way. MoLESS makes provision for ESCs
- ESC most likely monitored and capacitated at PG and funded by LG.
- Some LGs made provisions for ESC coordinators (e.g. employment and labour sections): need for study
- Role of Provincial government for coordination, capacity building and monitoring is currently discussed

34

Good case practices

- Madhes: Provincial coordinator, allocation of funds for 13 MRCs to be supervised/coordinated.
- Network building at ward, LG, Province level
  - Women's / men's sub groups at settlement level
- ESC Suryodaya: coordinator is head of labour and employment section, closely linked to Sub-MRC.
- Cooperative development
  - Madhesh: remittance contribution model and own share holding fund
  - Koshi/Surodaya: Revolving fund, clarity of sector priority (livestock; vegetables)
- ILO, SAMI, REMI: provincial employment policy in Madhesh
- ILO ESC training of ESC coordinators includes migration, re-integration

2.9 Synergies-learning between Nepal-Bangladesh

Nepal	Bangladesh
➢ 3 tier policy –legislative frame-fund allocation at all levels	➢ Reintegration policy process
➢ FEB and routing through LGs	➢ Ecosystem development: • policy-outreach nexus • Multi partner consolidation
➢ MRC-ESC anchoring	➢ Case management
➢ Streamlining PPS/Family counselling	➢ Last mile outreach and community sensitization
➢ Networks/cooperatives for RMW	➢ Women focused initiatives ➢ NGO facilitation and advocacy

Observation : Both project can benefit from
- More private sector involvement
- Economic integration considered higher priority across all stakeholders
- More system thinking perspective
- Stronger M&E and GEDI (segmentation)
- More strategic and systematic data collection and analysis

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 for remaining phase: Prioritize

- Decide on SCOPE and priorities of strategies: ESC development, mechanism for last mile social and economic reintegration or policy development?
- Governance: Multi-stakeholder management approach is key encompassing all three tiers of the government and various CSOs working as thematic partners. Use ILO convening power
- Focus on learning from experiences and consolidate approaches
- Develop intervention strategies based on needs and feasibly of PG and LG: rural/munic/metro
- MoLESS/FEB: routing of finances? Support in planned institutional roll out and monitoring
  - Prov. MRC (dist.)-ESC (local)-Ward outreach to be systematized: collect good practice

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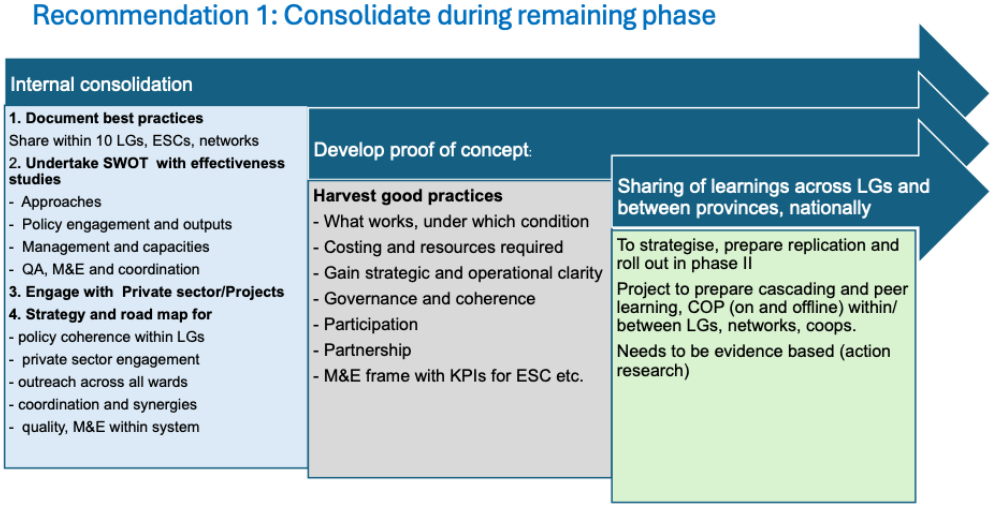
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Recommendation 1: Consolidate during remaining phase



Example: Document and analyse feasibility for operationalization of reintegration guidelines

Province Madhes	Province Koshi
• Provincial 5 year plan • 140 Mn allocation • Prov. Reintegration and Employment Coordinator • 8 district Employment officers and 13 MRCs • Coordinated TA with other projects to strengthen economic integration	• EIS with LG/ ESC outreach • District MRCs as aggregator • Sub MRCs within L& Employment section • Coordinated TA with other projects to strengthen economic integration

Observation:

- Federal government envisages revision of Foreign Employment Act to make provisions for PG/PLEO role as coordinator, capacity building, monitoring

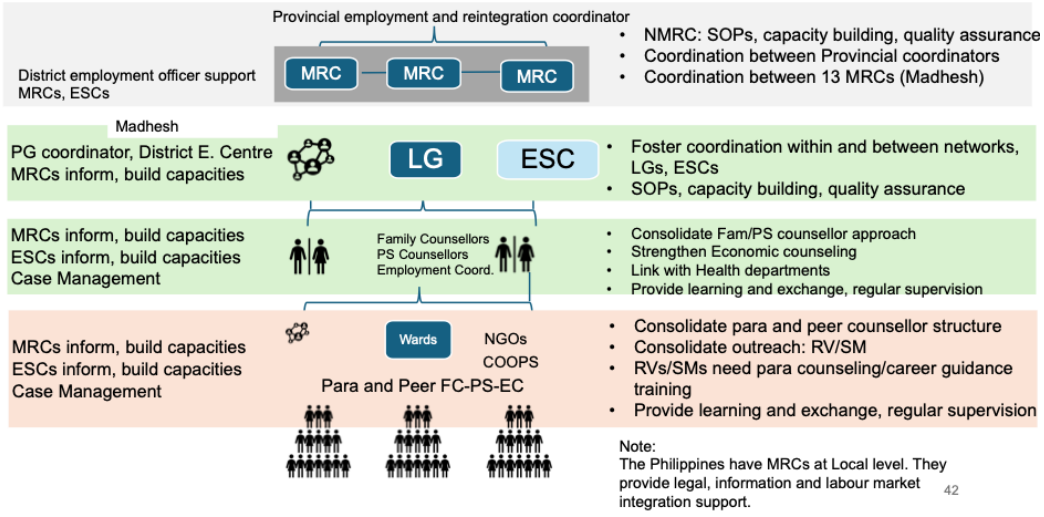
Recommendation 2: strengthen strategies and approaches

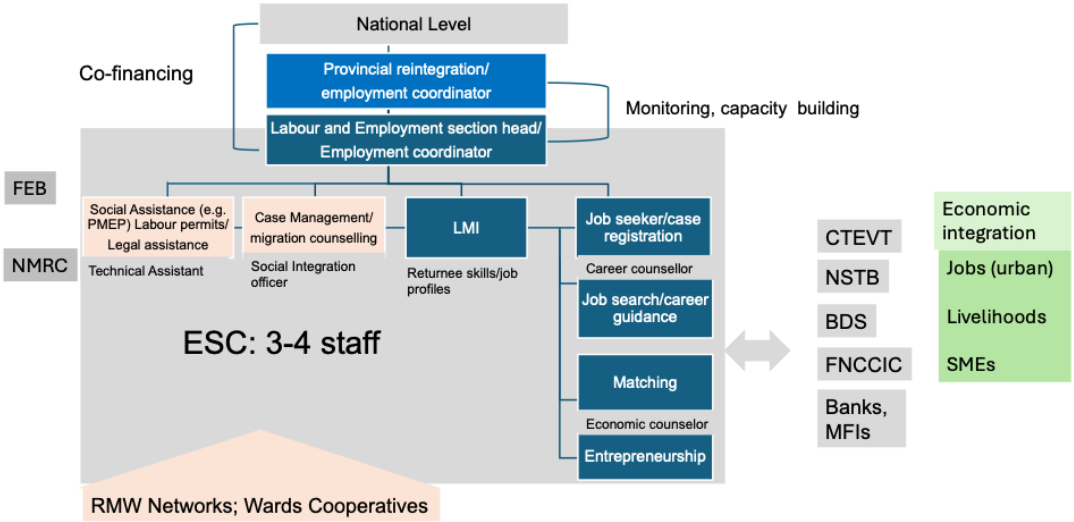
**Develop value chain of social re-integration. Identify gaps and consolidate approaches **

- Clarity of terms 'social integration' what one wants to achieve
- Clarity on social integration to reach last mile
  - ➢MRC-ESC/LG-Ward-Settlements
  - ➢Remove duplications (SM, RVs, Family counsellors, psychosocial counsellors)
  - ➢Learn from SAMIs to employ returnees as RVs.
  - ➢Clarify roles of ESC staff as facilitators and quality assurers
- Clarify anchoring within system
  - ➢MRC
  - ➢MRC integrated in ESC?

Capacity building and QA mechanism in LG and Provincial level

Recommendations for next phase: decentralize last mile support to communities





Develop clarity and strategy for economic integration within LG ecosystem

Support LG in mapping economic opportunities and interventions and skills profiles of RMW

Support local economic development planning for priority economic sectors.

- Ensure private sector involvement
- Distinguish between interventions at rural and municipal level

Continue strengthen capacities and advocacy RMW Networks, cooperatives

- To be involved in strategic planning

Adress loans/financing needs at policy level: explore revolving funds, matching funds

- Support cooperatives/networks in managing these funds

Build intensive partnerships and collaborations and strategize interventions:

- Enter into MOU with FNCCI and their members
- Ongoing projects (e.g. Agriculture World bank; ADB, etc): explore PPPs.

Project needs to provide technical assistance to LG in this area!

Collaborate closely with other TA projects (UDAYA, ENSSURE, NVQS, QualiTY, Step up SESC. KHami)

Recommendation 3: Plan for institutionalization of continued capacity building, mentoring and monitoring/esearch

1. Develop capacity building plans and institutionalise training and refresher courses for

- REMI staff
- Partners (MRCs, Employment Officers, ESC staff, FC, PSC, coordinatorsm, NMRC etc.?
- Family counsellors and supervision
- Psychosocial counselling
- M&E

2. Set up peer coaching/community of practice for information exchange and learning

3. Set up quality assurance mechanism

4. Strategy for Network and Cooperative development, strengthening, expansion and integration into LG plans and budgets.

- Institutional development
- Outreach, social mobilization, awareness raising
- Para counseling, para psychosocial counseling, para family counseling

Recommendation 4: Strengthen Coordination and Governance

1. Support Government in better coordination amongst projects at all levels
   - ➢ Regular exchange and consolidated approach
   - ➢ Joint steering and coordination at Federal, PG and local level. Use implementing partners and other projects as strategic partners
   - ➢ Joint approach for private sector engagement
   - ➢ Bring projects under one thematic committee

SAMI MRC links ESC support RV-SM	ENSSURE Short term induction apprenticeships career guidance Private sector needs	NVQS RPL-L2/3 Tracer study, incl. returnees	Upskilling/ retraining Access challenging	Step-UP Data on returnees Stakeholder engagement	UDAYA Loans MSME growth	K-Hami Education App Start up

2. SDC could develop an integrated strategy, particularly for more coherent strategic TA, engaging private sector benefitting all projects (expert to shift current perspective)
3. SDC-and MoLESS could facilitate MoLESS and all tiers in consolidation of approaches to simplify perspectives and strategies on circular migration/reintegration
4. Ensure communication flow is adequate to ensure ownership
   - ➢ e.g. Ambassador-Minister
   - ➢ SDC Head-Secretary

Recommendation 5- Prepare for Phase II:

Use lessons learnt and proof of concept to strategize reintegration through ESC : basics for roll out strategy and implementation plan.

Decide on priorities: ESC institutionalization? ILO's role has not finished with institutionalization framework.

Revise ESC framework and highlight role of Private sector, Province and involve Private ES

Develop private sector engagement strategy at all level across projects. (use ILOs convening power)

System perspective for interventions : reach out to 5 provinces

- Strategic selection of LGs, 'low hanging fruits' and potential multipliers/champions to act as catalysts for reintegration
- Tie the dots together: redefine roles of staff within ESCs.
- Scale and replicate as per project capacities available: invest into system thinking, technical capacity building.

47

Recommendation 5: Prepare for Phase II:

Develop Benchmarks and strengthen ESCs and Networks/Coops, resources need to be provided

Support GoN to have M&E Framework, road map and milestones/progress indicator for each intervention and partner

Focus on digitization, and M&E systems at gov and project level. Monitor institutional capabilities and change for key partners

LMIS is high priority: SDC should support harvesting of Shram Sansar project, consolidate learnings, TA in roll out.

The ongoing blueprint for LMIS under MoLESS needs to progress towards building an integrated data system, where returnee profiles are integrated.

48

Management response to

Mid-Term Review of Reintegration of Returnee Migrants in Nepal (ReMi) Phase I

Management Response

The Management Response (MR) states the position of the SDC on the recommendations of the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Reintegration of Returnee Migrants in Nepal (ReMi) Phase I. The MR provides a solid basis for strategic decision-making.

Assessment of the evaluation

The evaluation was led by the international consultants of SKILLS COLAB GMBH, Dr. Sandra Rothboeck together with the national consultant Dr. Jeevan Baniya following the OECD DAC criteria.

The purpose of this MTR was backward- and forward looking (assessing Phase I and giving recommendations for Phase II). The report's analysis and resulting recommendations entail many relevant elements. The critical comments on its design including the theory of change, indicators and approach are noteworthy. However, overall, the report and recommendations are poorly structure and some of them follow a project logic approach instead of envisioning technical assistance to the government for a system building approach.

1.	R 1: Prioritize and consolidate during remaining phase	
2.	R 2: Strengthen local strategies and approaches for social reintegration	
3.	R 3: Strengthen strategies and approaches for economic reintegration	
4.	R 4: Strengthen GEDSI across reintegration mechanism	
5.	R 5: Foster a sustainable policy environment for reintegration	
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree

Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

Relevance: The review highlighted that the project is highly relevant and timely.

Coherence: The project design is overly ambitious - the theory of Change (ToC) would have benefitted from a phased implementation strategy, a clearer results chain and a more realistic logframe. While the project goal is coherent with SDC broader engagement in Nepal, synergies and complementarity to other SDC project, most notably SaMi, should be improved.

Effectiveness: Findings on effectiveness are mixed. The ESCs receiving support from ReMi are more effective in-service delivery and the returnee case management model is effective while more must be done in terms of data collection, digitization and digitalisation. Progress against the set targets is slow since the project relays on a labour-intensive direct implementation model, undermining also sustainability of efforts. Furthermore, limited progress on *economic* reintegration is noted.

Efficiency: The projects efficiency has been constrained by several operational challenges, most notably by the ground reality: Most ESCs are to have a meaning collaboration with the private sector. In addition, the current policy framework, resource allocations by the government and model of project engagement lack a robust strategic foundation by the government for long-term sustainability.

Impact: While it is premature to assess systemic change, there is a gap in robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track quality of service delivery, for continuous learning, service improvement and impact assessment.

Sustainability: Sustainability remains a major concern – see E*fficiency* above.

Conclusion: The findings and recommendations underline the need to (i) focus on system building, anchoring project intervention with government owned national programs and policies and (ii) prioritize efforts on economic reintegration requiring strategic and well-designed cooperations with private sector stakeholders. SDC agrees to seize the opportunity to improve the results of the ongoing phase I and the design of phase II by taking specific measures in line with the recommendations outlined below.

Overview of recommendations, management response and measures

Recommendation 1: Prioritize and consolidate during remaining phase		
The remaining phase should shift its focus to complete the ongoing piloting activities to build *a proof of concept and* document the successes or failures, to ensure good practices/models can be scaled in a phased manner. With this, reintegration services can eventually be embedded into permanent structures at all spheres of government. This includes developing financing models and operational framework for ESCs, a robust digital system, strong private sector linkages and quality assurance mechanisms. While ReMi II can contribute to the establishment of a national employment oriented ESCs system, it should consider the entire circular migration architecture, which needs to be strengthened, particularly in the area of reintegration. Option 1: Embed social and economic reintegration more firmly within the migration cycle (stronger linkages with SaMi, through returnee migrant networks and the government). ReMi should strengthen existing migration services, by addressing economic reintegration (financial literacy, remittances management, etc.) early in the migration cycle (pre-departure), building on learnings from phase I and successful models in e.g. Sri Lanka or Korea. In addition, institutional synergies and complementarities between ESCs and MRCs should be more systematically explored. Option 2: The project continues ongoing efforts to strengthen ESCs as its core objective. In this scenario, returnees would remain one of many target groups of ESCs, which provide comprehensive employment services to Nepali citizens (including career counseling, job matching, skilling referrals, and reintegration support). Strengthening reintegration services alone within ESCs is not viable. A systems-building approach is needed for ESCs to enhance their ability to connect with vocational training, enterprise development programmes, and private employers.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
A combination of option 1 and 2 will guide the way forward: First, ReMi phase II will envision a phased approach, allowing a proof of concept in the provinces where the project is currently active (Koshi and Madesh), in a second stage of phase II, activities can be potentially scaled, depending on government and private sector buy-in. Second, social and economic reintegrating will be embedded in the full migration cycle, based on learnings from phase I and experiences from other countries. MRCs and ESCs are the two key institutions to deliver required services and make referrals. The envisioned complementarity between the two institutions will be further clarified and its operationalization will be supported through ReMi and SaMi. This has to be agreed to with MoLESS. At the same time, there will be a system building-approach on public employment services, with ESCs/local employment units as key service delivery unit with direct linkages to the private sector. See also Recommendation 3 and 5.		

Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) Compile and document proof-of-concept and good practices on reintegration (e.g. when to address what in the migration cycle).	ReMi	6 months
b) Develop a phased approach for ReMi phase 2, proofing concept of developed approaches and tools in Koshi and Madesh provinces in the first and potentially second year of phase II, with optional scaling thereafter.	SDC, ReMi	July 2026
c) Clarify and agree with MoLESS on detailed roles and responsibilities of MRCs and ESCs related to migration, reintegration and public employment services, based on an overall ESC vision and related documents.	SDC, WB, ILO, SaMi & ReMi	July 2026
d) Support operationalization of complementarity between MRCs and ESCs and referrals by the two institutions, including advocacy and support for required policy amendments (National Migration and National Employment Policies, ESC procedure, Foreign Employment Act)	SDC, WB, ILO, SaMi & ReMi	ongoing

Recommendation 2: Strengthen local strategies and approaches for social reintegration			
Social integration is critical to smoothen reintegration of returnees into the community and families, addressing social distress and trauma experienced by returnees. To increase outreach and effectiveness of current services, ReMi needs to strengthen the strategy for last mile outreach. To improve the quality of services, the following elements should be considered, a.o.: - Clearly define ESC staff's roles as facilitators, case managers, and quality assurers supporting the local level outreach. - Explore and test peer counselling, para counsellor models and provide continuous supervision and feedback from specialised organizations like CMC. - Leverage the SaMi model by employing returnees as RVs and supporting them to form networks - Eliminate duplications among different services providers (staff, namely SaMi RVs, family counsellors, and psychosocial counsellors and health counsellors).			
Management response			
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree	
SDC jointly with ReMi needs to define which ESCs can realistically play a role in supporting the social reintegration of returnee migrants, especially in addressing trauma and distress. Instead of duplicating efforts, the roles and responsibilities between MRCs and ESCs need to be further clarified - see MR to Recommendation 1. Moreover, for psychosocial support, close coordination with other SDC projects that focus on mental health and psychosocial counselling is required. SDC will support the government through the UN, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) to streamline and institutionalize support for mental health and psychosocial counselling.			
Measures		**Responsibility**	**Timing**
a)	Clarify the role of ReMi/re psychosocial support/social reintegration and future role of ESCs in social reintegration and agree to it with MoLESS and MoHP.	SDC, SaMi and ReMi	July 2026
b)	Potentially, through a technical partner, supporting Provincial Health Training Institutes to introduce para-counseling and peer-support tool for para-counselling support. Also, onboard partners to strengthen RMW network in peer support and para counselling support to the returnees.	SDC/WHO/UN-FPA/SaMi/ReMi	Dec 2026
c)	For local level outreach and capacity building Returnee Migrant Worker (RMW) Network can play a critical role, collaborating with psychologists from the Provincial Health Directorate.	SDC/UN-FPA/SaMi/ReMi	Dec 2026

Recommendation 3: Strengthen strategies and approaches for economic reintegration		
a) Increase policy coherence and local synergies: Institutional capacity at the local and provincial levels needs to be reinforced to address needs of migrant workers and returnees throughout the migration cycle, including financial literacy, preparing for self-employment a.o. A comprehensive capacity-building plan should be developed for ESC staff. Cross-learning amongst LGs through NARMIN and MUAN should be fostered; cooperatives and networks should be supported to manage reintegration and to foster inclusion. b) Involve private sector at all levels: foster productive use of skills through upskilling, reskilling etc. in partnership with other SDC funded projects; facilitate access for returnees into local sector specific supply chains; partnering with associations like FNCCI through MoUs and seek strategic partnerships with other DPs. c) Link ESCs with enterprises and the private sector: ESCs should be professionalized, their role needs to be further clarified; a robust quality assurance and monitoring system is essential; ReMi should pilot peer-based economic counselling models through cooperatives.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
a) Institutional capacity of ESCs needs to be reinforced throughout the migration cycle – see Recommendation 1. Capacity building will be enhanced by technical assistance to the government,		

based on the recently signed MoU between LDTA, FEB and Helvetas. In collaboration with the ILO SESC project, ReMi will support LDTA and Provincial Trainings Centres to integrate reintegration aspects into their ESC staff curriculum, training modules and training delivery; including the planned academic online course developed by Kathmandu University for ESC staff.

b) For private sector engagement and skills related activities SDC will indeed build on ongoing engagements. The ReMi Project Document (ProDoc) for Phase II needs to clearly outline the role and incentives for different private sector stakeholders to engage with ESCs, addressing a.o. the needs of returnees and building on their capital.

c) The MoLESS ESC vision paper (currently being developed with SDC/project support) and related documents as well as in the ReMi ProDoC will define how ESCs should concretely work with the private sector to provide relevant services, supported by a robust M&E system for continuous learning.

Measures	**Responsibility**	**Timing**
a) Helvetas, in close collaboration with ILO and WB, will support LDTA and Kathmandu University to develop ESC basic and refresher trainings (in person and online). For this, ReMi, will also be involved in developing the MoLESS ESC vision and underlying documents.	Helvetas (ReMi, SaMi) in close collaboration with ILO and WB	July 2026
b) SDC and ReMi ensure that the ProDoc for Phase II clearly outlines the role and incentives for different private sector stakeholders to engage with ESCs, addressing a.o. the needs of returnees and building on their capital.	SDC/ReMi	July 2026
c) SDC, WB, ILO and ReMi ensure that the ESC vision and related documents clearly outline the cooperation of private sector stakeholders with ESCs and the role to deliver quality public employment services, including for returnees.	SDC, WB, ILO, ReMi	ongoing

Recommendation 4: Strengthen GEDSI across reintegration mechanism

4a) Develop GEDSI strategy for the project and related government mechanism for reintegration aligning with the national GEDSI strategy.

4b) Budget for targeted initiatives to meet specific needs of vulnerable returnee groups with women's increased share in migrating (11%);

4c) Review log frame and indicators and analyse intersections.

4d) Emphasize monitoring and gender-transformative impact, by developing guidelines and materials to build capacities for monitoring and documentation, using qualitative and quantitative criteria for reporting.

4e) Policy dialogue and advocacy: Promote reforms that enhance vulnerable target groups/ women's rights in the entire migration cycle, by e.g. (i) addressing counselling needs in destination countries or (ii) allocating funds for returning migrant workers for shelter homes and safe spaces at point of arrival.

4f) Address stereotypes in economic reintegration, including skills development, labour market participation, access to financial services and economic empowerment, building on existing partnerships under ongoing skills and entrepreneurship projects (e.g. NVQS, ENSSURE, UDAYA) and local business.

Management response

Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree

All observations and suggestions have been noted. Initial activities to strengthen the GEDSI impact were introduced based on the GESI assessment conducted in May 2024, including but not limited to developing a dedicated GESI outcome based on the current log frame; efforts to enhance staff diversity within the ReMi PSU team as well as the ESC staff recruited under ReMi. This provides a solid basis to better align the project's logical framework with GEDSI objectives in phase 2. Hence, the theory of change and logical framework will remain unchanged during the current project phase, with comprehensive adjustments and revisions planned for the subsequent

project phase, in which GESDI will figure as integral project component, as per the new SDC GESI Framework Paper and related guiding documents and tools.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) Measures and preparation of next project phase as per the SDC GESI Framework Paper. Organize GEDSI training for SDC funded project staff.	SDC	July 2026
b) Document successful cases and actual results achieved under the GESI outcome in phase I.	ReMi	6 months

Recommendation 5: Foster a sustainable policy environment for reintegration in Phase II		
5a) Strengthen coordination, governance, and policy coherence: by e.g. establishing joint steering committees on reintegration and private sector engagement at all levels, improving communication and feedback loops between different government entities etc. 5b) Prepare a vision and sustainability plan for ESCs: by mapping returnee profiles, skills mismatches etc.; differentiating contexts; addressing financial education and supporting returnee networks and cooperatives. 5c) Institutionalise capacity building, continuous learning, and quality assurance systems: across all tiers of government, tailored to functional roles, though Provincial Training Centres a.o. 5d) Build digital labour market information and monitoring systems: Digitize ESC functions, define a common M&E framework and build required capacities and monitor institutional growth and service delivery effectiveness. 5e) Strengthen FEB and NMRC: trainings for FEB staff, explore sustainable financing models for welfare fund learning from international best practices (Philippines, Sri Lanka) and align activities with FEB and NRMC under ReMi and SaMi. 5f) GEDSI mainstreaming: see Recommendation 4 and MR. 5g) Change the narrative of returning migrants: collect good practices of returnees to change the narrative as driver of a skilled and more productive workforce.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
While SDC agrees with some elements of the recommendation, we largely disagree with the approach and responsibilities to implement them. 5a) SDC already fosters thematic committees to streamline development support at all levels. 5b) An overall ESC vision and strategy is currently developed by MoLESS – see Recommendation 1 and corresponding measures b) and c). Moreover, ReMi and SDC will have to leverage its engagement and learnings through the foreseen Labour Migration Policy and National Employment Policy, underscoring the government's commitment to continued investment in the reintegration of returnee migrants. 5c) This is an effort already under way, initiated under SaMi and will be further pushed, through SaMi, ReMi and with support from ILO. 5d) While ReMi is developing an overall digitalization framework and blueprint, individual information and data systems might be supported under other projects, in a sequenced manner, to be guided by an overall strategy and framework on digitalization for the employment and migration sector owned by MOLESS. 5e) ReMi will expand collaboration with FEB and NMRC to improve targeted opportunities and initiatives to benefit returnee migrant workers and their families, aligned with the on-going efforts through SaMi. 5g) Agreed. This is an effort which should inform the broader policy advocacy and political engagement.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) SDC and ReMi engage with MoLESS to ensure the specific needs of returnee migrants and reintegration are reflected and relevant services anchored in the National Employment Policy and the National Migration Policy respectively.	SDC, ReMi	ongoing
b) See Recommendation 1 - Measure 1b).	See above	
c) SDC, Helvetas (SaMi, ReMi) and ILO will closely coordinate to institutionalize all trainings for staff working at ESC MRCs and in other relevant institutions through LDTA and Provincial Trainings Centres. See also Recommendation/Measure 3a)	SDC, Helvetas, ILO	ongoing

d)	ReMi will develop the digitalization framework and blueprint while SDC will advocate and ensure that all digitalization efforts supported by SDC and other development partners are meaningfully sequenced.	ReMi SDC	Oct 2025 ongoing
e)	ReMi will strengthen collaboration with FEB and NMRC to improve targeted opportunities and initiatives to benefit returnee migrant workers and their families, aligned with the on-going efforts through SaMi.	ReMi	ongoing
f)	ReMi to document success cases, enabling SDC/other stakeholders to include concrete examples/evidence in advocacy, political and policy engagement.	ReMi	6 months

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Date: 21.8.2025

Approved by:

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Date: 21.08.2025