



# ► Promising practices for fair recruitment

November 2024

## Bangladesh: Digitised management of recruitment agencies

### Key points

- Bangladesh has adopted a digital recruitment monitoring platform: the Recruiting Agents' Information Management System (RAIMS) to create a more transparent recruitment and recruitment monitoring process with greater oversight of recruitment agencies and other intermediaries.
- Since its inception in 2022, the RAIMS system now holds the information of over 1,700 recruitment agencies.

### Focus

**FRI pillar:** Improving laws, policies and enforcement to promote fair recruitment; Empowering and protecting workers

**Country:** Bangladesh

**Responsible organization(s):** Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

### The labour migration and fair recruitment context in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a significant country of origin for migrant workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Labour migration is a significant contributor to the growth of the Bangladeshi economy, as migrant remittances contribute a substantial proportion of foreign exchange to Bangladesh. Most Bangladeshi migrant workers are circular migrants engaging in temporary or cyclical labour migration to undertake low-wage employment in semi-

skilled or low-skilled roles. Although labour migration from Bangladesh is traditionally male-dominated, the number of women migrant workers has steadily increased over the years. The Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment sets the migration policy to regulate labour migration.

At the same time, the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Wage Earners Welfare Board (WEWB), the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd (BOESL) and Probashi Kallyan Bank (a state-owned specialised bank for migrants) cover specific aspects of labour migration governance and services to migrant workers. BMET also oversees the recruitment process by registering and regulating private recruitment agencies and jobseekers, and processing emigration clearance for departing migrant workers.

## Description of practice

ILO research<sup>1</sup> has highlighted the utility of digital processes in streamlining multiple layers of the bureaucratic migration process, which could, in turn, eliminate unscrupulous practices and close protection gaps where unfair recruitment practices could occur. Hereby are some examples of ILO's good practice recommendations for digital recruitment platforms.

Bangladesh has adopted a digital recruitment monitoring platform: the Recruiting Agents' Information Management System (RAIMS), operated by the Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), with funding support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and technical support from the ILO in Bangladesh. It aims to create a more transparent recruitment and recruitment monitoring process with greater oversight of recruitment agencies. As of 2023, there are over 1,300 recruitment agencies registered on the RAIMS platform. Agencies can apply for accreditation/licensing and follow up on their application processes on the platform. The RAIMS platform is a product of a public-private partnerships between Bangladeshi authorities and the private sector. While the platform is owned by BMET, the private recruitment agencies have access to the system. For example, the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), an association of recruiting agencies, is also an important contributor to the operationalization of the RAIMS.

The centralization of private recruitment agency monitoring through the RAIMS system enables quicker identification of recruitment irregularities. For example, RAIMS provides a "role-based user authentication system" with a dynamic dashboard where users of the RAIMS can verify the status and information of private employment agencies (PEAs). The information is added by recruiting agents for data transparency and vetted by the administrator from the BMET for data accuracy. In addition, the system enables easy search access for information on any recruiting agent through a customised reporting system. Moreover, the Government has commenced a process to classify PEAs on the RAIMS platform following a set of indicators (see section below for more details). This classification process could enable easier enforcement of fair recruitment principles and incentivize existing PEAs to

improve their recruitment practices. Finally, a user notification system helps facilitate communication between BMET and recruiting agents.

### ► Table 1 - ILO good practice recommendations for digital recruitment platforms

- While digitisation is important, it is not a standalone solution to recruitment-related violations. As such, it should be complemented by on-the-ground efforts with critical migration and recruitment stakeholders to respond to recruitment-related abuse.
- Governments should work to ensure digital inclusion across employers, recruitment agents and other third parties and migrants. This requires that governments make digital recruitment platforms more accessible to all. This can be achieved through sensitisation programs, digital literacy trainings, and increased language options to ensure that marginalised groups are not left out.
- Successful digital recruitment initiatives should be scaled up to include other platforms, labour migration stakeholders, similar initiatives in destination and origin countries (peer-to-peer exchanges), and other migration services.
- Governments should avoid duplication of digital initiatives unnecessarily and encourage interoperability between different platforms.
- Ensure that digital platforms adhere to the international labour standards on labour migration and fair recruitment principles, including the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs.
- Digital recruitment platforms should be regularly monitored to ensure their optimal usage and that the information available is current and correct.

\*For more on good practice recommendations on using digital recruitment platforms, see ILO (2021) Use of digital technology in the recruitment of migrant workers and ILO and IOM (2020) Promoting fair and ethical recruitment in a digital world: Lessons and policy options

<sup>1</sup> ILO (2021) Use of digital technology in the recruitment of migrant workers

The ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines of Fair Recruitment provide guidance on promoting and ensuring fair recruitment practices. These guidelines also include specific recommendations on the use of technology, such as developing government websites containing relevant information on fair recruitment policies, legislation, regulation and processes; and implementing information technology to ensure that employment contracts are respected. However, the role of technology in fair recruitment goes beyond these specific recommendations. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a role in realizing all 13 General Principles through digitization and automation of administrative procedures, digital information management systems, mobile applications and websites, enhanced communication, and online service provision. In some cases, digital technology may represent a primary solution, while in others, it may underpin interactions between recruitment stakeholders and have secondary effects across multiple principles. Below are some links between digital technology and the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment.

► **Table 2 - The links between digital technology and the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment**

ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment	Potential role of digital technology
<b>Principle 1</b> - Recruitment should take place in a way that respects, protects and fulfils internationally recognised human rights, including those expressed in international labour standards.	Enable social dialogue, collective voice, and worker organisation.
<b>Principle 2</b> - Matching recruitment to meet established labour market needs.	Capture and analyse data to better understand market needs.
<b>Principle 3</b> - Appropriate legislation and policies on employment and recruitment should apply to all workers, labour recruiters and employers.	Enhance the capacity of enforcement measures.
<b>Principle 4</b> - Recruitment should take into account policies and practices that promote efficiency, transparency and protection for workers in the process, such as mutual recognition of skills and qualifications.	Automation and digitalisation of administrative procedures; online skill assessments.

<b>Principle 5</b> - Regulation of employment and recruitment activities should be clear and transparent, and effectively enforced. The role of the labour inspectorate and the use of standardised registration, licensing or certification systems should be highlighted.	Use of digital labour inspection tools and information systems for standardisation, data storage and processing.
<b>Principle 6</b> - Recruitment across international borders should respect the applicable national laws, regulations, ... of countries of origin, transit and destination and internationally recognised human rights, including the fundamental principles and rights at work, and relevant international labour standards.	Enable institutional actors, such as border enforcement, to screen for, monitor and record violations.
<b>Principle 7</b> - No recruitment fees or related costs should be charged to, or otherwise borne by, workers or jobseekers	Maintenance of digital records of financial transactions.
<b>Principle 8</b> - The terms and conditions of a worker's employment should be specified in an appropriate, verifiable and easily understandable manner, and preferably through written contracts in accordance with national laws, regulations, employment contracts and applicable collective agreements.	Secure storage of original contracts.
<b>Principle 9</b> - Workers' agreements to the terms and conditions of recruitment and employment should be voluntary and free from deception or coercion.	Online support services and consultation.
<b>Principle 10</b> - Workers should have access to free, comprehensive and accurate information regarding their rights and the conditions of their recruitment and employment	Websites/mobile phone applications containing information on rights and general employment conditions.
<b>Principle 11</b> - Freedom of workers to move within a country or to leave a country should be respected. No confiscation, retention or destruction of workers' identity documents and contracts.	Secure digital repositories for storing copies of contracts and identity documents.
<b>Principle 12</b> - Workers should be free to terminate their employment and, in the case of migrant workers, to return to their country.	Gather information, access consular services, and request repatriation.
<b>Principle 13</b> - Access to free or affordable grievance and other dispute resolution mechanisms.	Online grievance mechanisms.

\*For more on the role of ICT and digital technologies in fair recruitment, please see: ILO (2021) Use of digital technology in the recruitment of migrant workers.

## Proof of impact/progress

- Since its inception in 2022, the RAIMS system now holds the information of over 1,700 recruitment agencies.
- BMET has channelled all its services to recruitment agencies, including licensing through the RAIMS platform, which incentivises agencies to register on the platform and strengthens BMET's monitoring capacity.

## Promising Features

The Government of Bangladesh enacted the Recruiting Agents Classification Rule in 2020. The Rule detailed the classification system of recruiting agents with 14 indicators. BMET then can collect recruitment agency information from the RAIMS system and classify recruitment agencies according to the 2020 Rule based on the indicators listed below.

1. Number of migrant workers sent in the last three years by the recruiting agent.
2. Categorisation of skills of the migrant workers in the last three years (skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled).
3. Number of migrant workers sent by demand letters in last three years.
4. Number of migrant workers sent in last three years following the migrant cost as set by the Government.

5. Percentage of migrant workers who use the formal channel for the transaction of migration costs to recruiting agents in the last three years.
6. Number of skills training centres under the recruiting agents and functionalities of the centres.
7. Availability of recruiting agency-specific website and functional digital system for data management.
8. Educational qualification of the recruiting agency's officials.
9. Years of experience of the recruiting agents.
10. Migration costs borne by the recruiting agencies (number of migrant workers sent without any migration cost).
11. Office equipment, location, security and facilities of the recruiting agents.
12. Establishment of branch offices at district and sub-district levels.
13. Management of complaints redress mechanisms.
14. Recruiting agents' integrity, reputation and respect for rules and regulations.

An Evaluation Committee consisting of nine members, presided over by an Additional Secretary of MoEWOE, will be formed by the MoEWOE to classify the recruitment agencies based on the information and data retrieved from the RAIMS and as vetted by BMET.

## Resources

RAIMS website - <https://raims.bmet.gov.bd/login>

Government of Bangladesh Recruiting Agents Classification Rule 2020

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