



حوار أبوظبي بين الدول الآسيوية المرسلية والمستقبلة للعمالة
Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian Labor-Sending and Receiving Countries

Abu Dhabi Dialogue Pilot Project Between the UAE and the Philippines:

“Strengthening Joint COO and COD Government Oversight and Monitoring of Recruitment Practices”

Report on Progress

The background to this pilot is an agreement between the governments of the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates to create and test an alternative recruitment model, which enables joint government oversight and monitoring of the recruitment process between the two countries.

The purpose of the pilot project is to determine the extent to which strengthened government oversight and monitoring helps to minimise malpractice in the recruitment of overseas workers, addressing issues including transparency, informed consent, payment-for-recruitment and contract substitution. The pilot also has the potential to establish a platform into which to integrate other avenues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including the provision of CIOP and the certification and joint recognition of skills.

At the Special Workshop of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, in July 2017, an initial outline of the decision making flows inherent in the design was circulated to Member States and feedback received from participants. Feedback included questions regarding recruitment process, applicability in COD markets, and responsibility for accrediting participating recruitment agencies. These questions have subsequently been addressed and incorporated into the design of the pilot.

The governments of the UAE and the Philippines met in February 2018 to further discuss the elaboration of the pilot project. As a consequence of this meeting, it was decided that the pilot would focus on two specific sectors: hospitality and domestic work. Both are sectors in which there is significant overlap between the UAE and the Philippines.



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The further implementation of the pilot relies on the development of a web-based platform that is open and accessible – to differing degrees – to the key participants within the pilot. These participants include the participating governments, the employer (and, as applicable, their recruiter in country of destination), and accredited recruiting agencies within the countries of origin.

Work on the development of this platform has begun. Initial discussions between the governments of the UAE and the Philippines discounted early ideas of developing a platform that is joint-owned by both governments. In particular, the issue of integrating employee details into the UAE's Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation's (MOHRE) existing IT systems, in order to issue work permits and residency visa approvals, proved too significant a barrier to progress for the purpose of a pilot project to be feasible.

Instead, the decision was taken for the platform to be developed by MOHRE, based on an extended interface connected to the existing IT infrastructure. A illustrative example of the functioning of this interface **will be demonstrated to participants at the forthcoming Senior Officials Meeting.**

The pilot design adheres to current practices of recruitment, insofar as the model is demand-driven, rather than supply-driven, and recruitment continues to be business-to-business led. As a consequence, the interface must be able to handle four major processes: 1) demand processing; 2) recruitment; 3) submission of job offers; 4) contracting. These processes have been factored into the design of the interface.

Moreover, due to the focus on two different sectors in the agreement between the UAE and the Philippines, the interface is required to cater to two slightly different processes: the process for the recruitment of private sector workers, and the process for the recruitment of domestic workers.

The key features of the IT system design will be as follows:

1. Parties to the pilot receive an exclusive login and password, which enables them to access the MOHRE recruitment IT infrastructure. Access levels are differentiated according to user type.
2. The process begins with the pilot-selected employer logging in and uploading a letter of demand into the MOHRE system. The employer has



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the choice of proceeding as per the standard recruitment process, or alternatively under the terms of the pilot.

3. If selecting to proceed under the terms of the pilot, a data entry panel is displayed, requiring the employer to enter additional information, including:
 - a. Number of jobs being recruited for
 - b. Job description
 - c. Contract type
 - d. Remuneration – including salary range, housing allowance, cost of living and travel allowances
 - e. Necessary qualifications (as required)
4. The MOHRE system logs the demand letter. If no action is taken by MOHRE staff with 24 hours, a notification is sent to encourage follow up
5. A MOHRE team member manually reviews the letter of demand and vets the contents, to check whether, for example, there are available Emiratis capable of fulfilling the job under offer
6. If approved, the letter of demand becomes visible with the dashboard accessible to the Department of Labour and Employment staff. If no action is taken with 24 hours, a notification is sent to DOLE.
7. The letter is manually vetted by DOLE, to check that, for example, the salary range is acceptable, that the proposed recruitment fees are within an appropriate range, and that the deployment of workers doesn't create anomalies within the domestic labour market
8. If DOLE requires changes to the letter of demand, then the system rejects the application and notifies the employer, providing details
9. If approved, the job notification becomes visible to recruitment agencies registered within the system and enables them to upload information, including C.V.s, recruitment fees etc.
10. Once DOLE approval is received, employers are notified, enabling them to proceed with the process of selecting candidates from the lists supplied



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by the recruiting agency. If relevant, then the candidates skills are attested

11. At this point, normal recruitment practices resume, with eventual job offer and contract validated against the original letter of demand

There remain questions of both policy and technology to be resolved. For example, mechanisms for auditing the process, to ensure the compliance of employers and recruiters, will need discussion and finalisation.

In addition, during the development process, ideas have been identified that may help to improve compliance and competition. For example, making it a condition of participation that that both employers and recruiters advertise the roles that they are attempting to fill, in both countries of origin and destination, may have beneficial impacts in terms of encouraging worker input into the process.