



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS (CFP)

IOM's Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) program is calling for proposals from a research institution with the below Terms of Reference:

### IDENTIFYING EMPLOYMENT-SPECIFIC RISKS FACING MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE CLEANING SERVICES, LOGISTICS, AND PRIVATE SECURITY SECTORS FROM ASIAN NATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

#### Background

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 produced unforeseen shocks on the global economy and supply chains worldwide. According to the World Bank, the global economy contracted by 4.3% in the past year, on the heels of the fourth-worst global recession in history.<sup>1</sup> As outbreaks slowed economic activity, millions of people tipped into extreme poverty as the pandemic disproportionately affected the most vulnerable groups including migrant workers and individuals employed in lower-skilled occupations. Further, global trade collapsed as nations imposed stringent restrictions and closed their borders – disrupting the international provision of goods and services and impacting supply chains at all stages and in all sectors.<sup>2</sup>

With the pandemic, the demand for essential services increased substantially. The need to maintain essential services and ensure that the economy recovers has placed healthcare workers, cleaners, agricultural workers, and other essential workers on the front lines.

According to the latest IOM data, many workers in critical sectors responding to the pandemic are migrants, often exposing themselves to greater risks of contracting COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> In essential jobs such as health care and transport, the ILO discovered that migrant workers comprise a significantly large share of the workforce on the front lines and contributing to the destination countries' economies.<sup>4</sup> Despite their importance, however, migrants continue to face challenges exacerbated by COVID. As the pandemic showed, migrants generally are not covered by social security provisions in countries of destinations, vulnerable to exploitation and abuse owing to border closures, and victimized by worsening working conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Economic Prospects (The World Bank, 2021): <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects>

<sup>2</sup> Impacts of COVID-19 on Global Supply Chains: Facts and Perspectives (IEEE, 2020): <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/stamp/stamp.jsp?tp=&arnumber=9174793>

<sup>3</sup> Migration Data Portal (IOM, 2021): <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic>

<sup>4</sup> Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO, 2020): [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/--migrant/documents/publication/wcms\\_743268.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/--migrant/documents/publication/wcms_743268.pdf)



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COVID-19 further brought to light the importance of key industries that have been crucial in providing services and ensuring that supply chains continue to operate. Particularly, demand for cleaning, logistics, and security services has skyrocketed during the pandemic with the rising need for disinfection, the increasing number of e-commerce deliveries, and the growing need for frontline staff and temperature takers.<sup>5</sup> In Asia, the markets for cleaning services, logistics, and private security services are heavily reliant on migrant workers, often occupying positions facing a shortage in the supply of local workers.

These three sectors are typically classified as indirect procurement categories<sup>6</sup> by consumer-facing global brands. While important to the operations of the brands' supply chains, evidence suggests that migrant workers in the cleaning services, logistics, and private security lines have been subjected to devious employment practices including migrants being forced to accept working conditions different from what was promised, withholding personal identity documents to lock them into their current jobs, and failing to compensate workers with their lawful wages and benefits.<sup>78</sup> Workers in these sectors are also at greater risk of COVID-19 exposure as occupations in these fields, such as truck drivers and janitors, require physical presence and possess limited work arrangement alternatives.

Noting the inherent and situational risks faced by migrant workers in these categories, it is imperative to identify the conditions present that expose migrant workers to forced labour, trafficking, and exploitation risks specific to their sectors both before and during the pandemic. Currently, there is limited published research on these understudied sectors and IOM seeks to fill this gap in knowledge, especially given the industries' exposure to COVID-19.

This research will yield a public report that identifies key labour and human rights risks to migrant workers in the cleaning services, logistics, and private security categories and provide recommendations for governments, regulators, brands, and employers to address the concerns of labour migrants. The study seeks to spark meaningful discussions with different stakeholders to incorporate practical actions in the brands' and employers' operating contexts to prevent exposing migrant workers in these sectors from further labour and human rights risks.

In line with this, IOM's Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) also initiated a regional partnership that seeks to realize the potential of businesses to uphold the human and labour rights of migrant workers. The ensuing report should then feed IOM's CREST Programme with critical insights to create a timely and targeted project that will meet the pressing needs of labour migrants in key sectors, considering the impact of the pandemic. At the same time, this study will supplement the tools

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<sup>5</sup> The Straits Times (2020): <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/some-firms-face-labour-crunch-as-demand-grows-amid-pandemic>

<sup>6</sup> Indirect procurement categories cover services required for the daily operations of businesses but do not directly contribute to a business's bottom line. These comprise goods and services sourced and purchased for internal use which may include maintenance and operations-related costs, human resources, and office supplies.

<sup>7</sup> Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (2017): <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/qatar-cleaning-company-fails-to-pay-migrant-workers-renew-visas-provide-adequate-housing-company-evades-contact/>

<sup>8</sup> Investigate Europe (2018): <https://www.investigate-europe.eu/en/2018/outrage-triggers-political-action-against-exploitation-of-truck-drivers/>



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IOM is developing to support employers in identifying, assessing, preventing, and mitigating risks of forced labour and exploitation during the employment phase of the labour migration process.

## Scope of work

This research will focus on the labour and human rights risks faced by migrant workers in the **a) cleaning services, b) logistics, and c) private security services** sectors. Using the presently available data and information from international organizations, these industries have been selected based on the following criteria: prevalence of migrant workers, proximity to COVID-induced risks, and previous work with IOM. The service provider may suggest a more granular focus of the sectors identified above (e.g. logistics: intermodal freight transport, warehousing and storage, or last-mile delivery) that fit the criteria, pending the approval of the IOM CREST team.

The service provider should prepare a suggested list of companies that offer services in the three identified sectors to be included in the study. The companies selected ideally participate in global supply chains and hold a presence in key labour migration corridors engaged in IOM CREST's work in Asian nations such as, but not limited to Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. The suggested companies and the targeted Asian nations of the service provider will be subject to IOM's approval.

Noting that the risks stemming from the pandemic are extremely volatile for presently employed migrant workers, this study will focus on the **employment stage of international migrant workers** and the identified destination countries in the specific sectors.

The service provider will work closely with and report to IOM Philippines' Private Sector Engagement Unit. Additional support will be provided by IOM's CREST teams in other countries if needed.

## Research objectives

The research should develop findings and propose recommendations for IOM's CREST Programme that will:

1. Identify the key labour and human rights risks to migrant workers in the identified sectors in the research and understand how these risks are linked with the context in which the companies in these sectors operate
  - a. Identify new pandemic-induced labour migrant risks, if any. Are there differences in the institutional issues (long-term) with the COVID-associated risks (short-term)
  - b. Determine if there has been an increase or decrease in the incidence of forced labour, trafficking, and exploitation
    - i. Stratified for demographics: gender, age groups, etc.



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2. Develop an understanding of the specific migrant worker vulnerabilities in the identified sectors and identify the different factors that exacerbate these vulnerabilities
3. Map out the typical recruitment and employment arrangements for migrant workers for the three sectors identified in this research
4. Determine the different private, industry-based, and government-led social protection initiatives currently available to the related migrant workers and the impact of these programs
  - a. Identify industry best practices and potential gaps that prevent policies from effectively eradicating the threats to the migrant workers' human and labour rights
  - b. Diagnose the variations in terms of the availability of these services to the different sectors identified and the potential causes of the variations, if possible
5. Describe potential impact trends of COVID-19 on the key sectors and possible changes to the risks faced by migrant workers as affected by the pandemic
6. Provide recommendations for governments, regulators, brands, and employers to address the common types of migrant worker concerns, tailor-made to address the sector-specific risks
  - a. Establish a list of regulatory agencies, civil society organizations, and relevant associations that possess a significant influence in effecting change in the identified key sectors
  - b. Provide recommendations for both institutional changes and for preparing a post-COVID environment

## Methodology

The study is designed to be qualitative, given the research context. The selected service provider will be tasked to craft the complete methodology, in direct consultation with the IOM CREST Team; however, the following may be considered:

1. Research techniques
  - a. **Key informant interviews** involving migrant workers, government agency workers, recruitment agency representatives, civil society organization members, and migrant workers' association representatives
  - b. **Focus group discussions** involving migrant workers, government agency workers, recruitment agency representatives, civil society organization members, and migrant workers' association representatives
  - c. **Documentary data analysis**
2. Sources of information
  - a. Primary: data responses from key informant interviews and focus group discussions
  - b. Secondary: Reviews and reports from government and international organization reports, case studies, news clippings, and related literature

The selected service provider is responsible for developing the complete research design.



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## Timelines

The research proper will run for five months, between May 2021 to September 2021. Below are the proposed activities within the given timeframe.

Activity	May	June	July	August	September
Conduct literature review	X				
Submit detailed methodology for data collection and relevant frameworks	X				
Set-up consultation meetings, FGDs and interviews	X				
Data collection		X	X	X	
Data analysis		X	X	X	
Draft report				X	X
Share the final draft with IOM and relevant stakeholders					X
Revise and finalize the final report					X

## Qualifications

At minimum, the service provider must possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated organizational experience in carrying out similar research, with at least three research studies on labour migration or modern slavery within the Asia-Pacific region; additional relevant studies will be considered an asset;
- Demonstrated experience in carrying out global risk assessments and risk analysis covering supply chains and human rights issues, such as forced labour and working conditions;
- Demonstrated ability to secure necessary administrative permission and to gather sufficient respondents for data collection; experience in organizing consultations with multinational companies and/or companies with known supply-chains will be considered an asset;
- A team leader with at least 5 years of research experience; additional years of experience and higher academic degrees (e.g. PhD) will be an advantage;
- A research team with at least 1 lead researcher/specialist with relevant expertise on labour migration, forced labour, human trafficking, or exploitation; additional specialists with relevant expertise on the aforementioned fields will be an advantage.



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## Submission of Application

In line with the request, IOM is looking to receive proposals from service providers to conduct the study as described. Interested service providers may send their application, including the below items, to **Ms. Marianne Magtibay, Procurement Assistant, IOM Philippines (mmagtibay@iom.int) on or before 30 April 2021**. The application should be titled: “Research Proposal for CREST Sector Report – Identifying sector-specific risks facing migrant workers.” The proposal documents should be in English.

The technical proposal should include:

- A complete technical research proposal including a description of proposed activities, methodology, and workplan;
- An organizational profile which includes information about the background and mission of the organization and a list of pertinent research studies it has successfully completed (including the contact details of the organization(s) contracting that research);
- A registration certificate for the organization; and
- CVs of the research team leader and key personnel

The financial proposal should include:

- A detailed breakdown of costs per activity;
- Personnel costs; and
- Any other costs relating to the implementation of the tasks outlined under this TOR. Note that the total proposal amount should not exceed the amount shown above.

Any attempt for persuasion will be considered as a disqualification.

ONLY SHORT-LISTED ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE ASSESSED.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Marianne MAGTIBAY  
IOM Philippines Procurement Staff  
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