



Factsheet 1:

Overview of IRIS

What is IRIS: Ethical Recruitment?

- IRIS: Ethical Recruitment, is IOM's flagship initiative to promote ethical recruitment of migrant workers.
- It has been created by IOM and a coalition of partners from government, civil society and the private sector.
- IRIS is a global multi-stakeholder initiative that supports governments, civil society, the private sector and recruiters to establish ethical recruitment as a norm in cross-border labour migration.
- The goal of IRIS is to make international recruitment fair for everyone involved: migrant workers, employers, recruiters and countries of origin and destination. It does this by:
 - Promoting respect for the rights of migrant workers;
 - Enhancing transparency and accountability in recruitment;
 - Advancing the Employer Pays Principle; and
 - Strengthening public policies, regulations and enforcement mechanisms.
- IRIS is referred to under Objective 6 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
- IRIS priorities include: 1) awareness raising and capacity building, 2) migrant worker voice and empowerment, 3) the regulation of international recruitment, 4) voluntary certification of private recruitment agencies, 5) stakeholder partnership and dialogue.
- IRIS directly contributes to IOM's broader efforts to promote safe, orderly, regular and legal labour migration, as well as combat forced labour and exploitation.
- IRIS has undergone significant pilot testing which included testing of:
 - The IRIS Standard to ensure that it is set at the right level (i.e. it's not too easy or impossible for stakeholders, especially recruiters, to follow),
 - IRIS capacity building programme to ensure that training and support are relevant, practical and useful,
 - The IRIS audit framework and methodology to ensure that it is credible, feasible and robust, and
 - The overall IRIS certification model to ensure that it is a smooth and logical process.
- IRIS certification was launched in selected countries in December 2018 and is being introduced to new locations over time.
- In the meantime, IOM is rolling out a capacity building programme for labour recruiters which starts with a two-day training program to introduce them to the IRIS Standard, management systems and IRIS certification. For more information please refer to the factsheet on IRIS capacity building.
- The IRIS capacity building programme uses tools developed to support recruiters, employers, NGO and governments to implement ethical recruitment.



Why we created IRIS ?

- The exploitation of migrant workers often begins at the recruitment stage when workers are charged recruitment fees and costs or misled about the job on offer.
- According to the latest global estimates of modern slavery, around 25 million people are victims of forced labour globally – with about half of all victims in debt-bondage.
- When it comes to combatting modern slavery, many interventions focus on the employment stage – such as how workers are treated in the factory or farm setting.
- While these interventions are important, they often come too late when it comes to tackling unethical recruitment and its consequences.
- International recruitment often remains a gray area due to the lack of a standard definition of ethical recruitment, as well as inconsistencies and gaps in how international recruitment is regulated.
- It is for these reasons that IOM and a coalition of likeminded stakeholders decided to develop IRIS.
- At the global level IRIS has been supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Who are key partners ?

- Since its inception, IOM works with a variety of stakeholders to create demand for ethical recruitment and IRIS.
 - These include the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment (LGRR), the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), amfori, Responsible Business Alliance (RBA), International Tourism Partnership (ITP), and other industry associations.
- Similarly, IOM works closely with stakeholders who have similar initiatives to ensure complementarity and a consistent approach.
 - These include Social Accountability International (SAI), Clearview, the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), ISEAL, the Responsible Labor Initiative (RLI), the Fair Labor Association.
- Within the UN system, IOM and ILO are working together to promote ethical and fair recruitment.
 - In particular, the ILO has established the policy framework for ethical recruitment through its Fair Recruitment Initiative and General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment,
 - While IOM is working on the more operational aspects of ethical recruitment through the IRIS initiative.
- IOM is also working with a team of certification specialists and social compliance professionals on the more technical aspects of IRIS Certification – such as strengthening and expanding the IRIS certification scheme, audit methodology and IRIS training programs.
 - These include Social Accountability Accreditation Services (SAAS), ISEAL Alliance, social auditing community and others.



What is ethical recruitment ?

- To put it simply, ethical recruitment means hiring workers lawfully, and in a fair and transparent manner that respects and protect their dignity and human rights.
- The IRIS Standard explains what ethical recruitment means in practice, and what labour recruiters need to demonstrate to become IRIS certified.
- The IRIS Standard consists of seven principles of ethical recruitment:
 - Respect for Laws, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
 - Respect for Ethical and Professional Conduct
 - Prohibition of Recruitment Fees to Jobseekers
 - Respect for Freedom of Movement
 - Respect for Transparency of Terms and Conditions of Employment
 - Respect for Confidentiality and Data Protection
 - Respect for Access to Remedy
- The IRIS Standard was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.
- It is based on existing international human rights instruments, ILO Conventions and standards, ILO's General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as related codes of conducts and best practice from the recruitment industry, including World Employment Confederation Code of Conduct.

What are recruitment fees ?

- Recruitment fees or related costs refer to any fees or costs incurred in the recruitment process in order for workers to secure employment or placement, regardless of the manner, timing or location of their imposition or collection.
- This includes medical and insurance costs; skills and qualifications tests costs; training and orientation costs; equipment costs; travel and lodging costs, and any administrative costs or overhead fees associated with job placement.
- Recruitment fees include costs that are paid in money or property, deductions from wages or benefits, kickbacks or bribes, and in-kind payments such as free labour.
- IRIS's position on recruitment fees and costs is consistent with the ILO's Definition of recruitment fees and related costs

What is the Employer Pays Principle and will it cost more ?

- The Employer Pays Principle is considered best practice and is endorsed and promoted by the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment, different industry groups and increasing number of governments.
- As the name suggests, under this model the worker does not pay any fees or costs for their recruitment and deployment – rather these costs are covered by the employer (company).
- While this model may initially appear to be a more expensive option for companies and recruiters, it needs to be considered within the context of risk management and proves to be more cost efficient in the long-term.
- For example, if an unethical recruitment agency provides a worker that is not suitable for the company, then there will be additional costs for the company in repatriating the worker, recruiting a replacement worker, and possibly even fines if there has been any legal non-compliance.

IRIS CERTIFICATION

How does IRIS certification work?

- IRIS certification is voluntary and only available to private recruitment agencies that send workers overseas.
- To become an 'IRIS certified labour recruiter,' applicants (recruiters) will need to undergo IRIS Capacity Building Programme and demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the IRIS Standard.
- The IRIS certification model is based on similar global certification schemes and includes a series of checks and balances to ensure the scheme is credible and robust.
- Please refer to the factsheet on IRIS certification for more information.

PILOT TESTING AND ROLLING OUT IRIS

Testing the IRIS Standard

- The IRIS Standard was developed after extensive consultation with government, civil society and private sector stakeholders.
- It was then pilot tested to ensure its fit for purpose in different geographical, jurisdictional and sectoral contexts.
- This included testing the Standard against the needs of recruiters and employers.
- This also occurred as part of IOM's broader engagement with private sector with companies interested in learning more about how workers are recruited within their supply chains.

Testing the IRIS Certification System

- In partnership with Social Accountability Accreditation Services, selected experts and audit companies, IOM has been testing the feasibility and applicability of all components of the certification system.
 - This initial testing has taken place in 2018, in South and Southeast Asia.



How is IRIS rolled out ?

- Following the launch of IRIS certification in December 2018, IRIS is being rolled out gradually through pilot projects in selected countries.
 - This includes in the Philippines and Canada where IRIS launched its first government to government pilot project.
 - The first stage of the IRIS roll-out focuses on assisting committed recruiters with building their capacity to meet the requirements of the IRIS Standard.
 - This is followed by networking with like-minded employers to establish ethical recruitment corridors.
 - Please refer to the factsheet on IRIS capacity building for more information.
- During the roll out, IRIS collaborates with similar initiatives promoting ethical recruitment such as ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative, Responsible Labour Initiative of RBA, the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment and others.

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