What is IRIS?

- The International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) is a global initiative that is designed to promote ethical international recruitment.
- IRIS works by defining and setting a benchmark for ethical recruitment – the IRIS Standard – and by establishing a voluntary certification system for international labour recruiters.
- IRIS has been created by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and a coalition of partners from government, civil society and the private sector.

How do you identify IRIS certified recruiters?

- Recruiters who have been IRIS certified will have the option of being included in a publicly available list of ‘IRIS certified labour recruiters’ at the IRIS Certification website [http://iris.saasaccreditation.org/](http://iris.saasaccreditation.org/).
- IRIS certified recruiters can also use the IRIS certified trademark on their websites and other visibility materials.

How does IRIS certification work?

- IRIS certification is voluntary and only available to private recruitment agencies that send or receive workers from overseas.
- To become an IRIS certified labour recruiter, applicants (recruiters) will need to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the IRIS Standard.
- The IRIS Standard outlines what ethical recruitment looks like in practice. It is based on international human rights instruments, ILO conventions and standards and best practice from the recruitment industry.
- IRIS takes a management system approach to certification. In other words, for a recruiter to be IRIS certified, they will need to demonstrate that their management system meets the requirements of the IRIS Standard.
- A management system is the way an organization manages the different, interrelated parts of it business, in order to meet its objectives. It is a framework for evaluating business risk and managing resources to properly plan, implement, monitor and improve each business practice.
- 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.
Within the IRIS certification model, there are clearly defined roles for each of the stakeholders:

- The IRIS Secretariat at IOM performs the role of **Scheme Owner** and is responsible for developing the IRIS Standard, advocating for ethical recruitment, capacity building and stakeholder engagement.
- It is important to note that IOM is not involved in the decision-making process for certification. This allows IOM to deliver capacity building programs without conflicts of interest and reflects the fact that certification is beyond IOM’s mandate and expertise.
- A separate entity performs the role of **IRIS Scheme Manager** and is responsible for managing and supervising the IRIS certification process. The Scheme Manager is appointed by IOM.
- The IRIS certification audit of recruiters is conducted by independent **third-party auditors**, which are trained and approved by the IRIS Scheme Manager in coordination with the Scheme Owner (IOM).
- The approved audit companies are ultimately responsible for making the decision about whether a recruiter can be IRIS certified.
- A key element of IRIS certification model is the monitoring and compliance mechanism.
  - This mechanism will be both complaints-driven and will occur through periodical surveillance and re-certification audits.
  - This mechanism will be implemented in partnership with civil society, relevant authorities and private sector partners.
- The **IRIS Advisory Committee**, which consists of government, civil society and private sector representatives, is not involved in the certification process. Rather, its role is to provide high-level advice to the IRIS Secretariat on the overall development and roll out of IRIS.
How do recruiters apply for IRIS certification?

1. Recruiters can apply for IRIS certification through the IRIS Certification website at http://iris.saasaccreditation.org/.
2. The process will begin with the recruiter (applicant) completing the IRIS Self-Assessment Questionnaire to determine if they are ready for IRIS certification.
   - If yes, the recruiter can submit their application via the website. If not, the recruiter may wish to undertake further training or drop out of the process.
3. When the recruiter lodges their application, they will be prompted to select an IRIS approved auditor from the website.
4. The recruiter will be asked to provide the necessary information on business practices to the auditor for their review.
5. Together, the recruiter and the auditor will develop a joint certification plan, which will be submitted to the IRIS Scheme Manager for approval.
6. Once approved by the Scheme Manager, the audit process can start.
7. Ongoing monitoring and re-certification after 2 years
   - Certified (compliant)
   - Not certified (non-compliant)
8. Labour recruiter implements Performance Improvement Plans
9. Status on website
10. Ongoing monitoring and re-certification after 2 years
11. Voluntary withdrawal from certification process

Labour Recruiter → Self assessment → Application → Engagement with Audit Company → Audit of Labour Recruiter → Certification Decision

Training and Capacity Building

- Factsheet 2: IRIS CERTIFICATION SYSTEM
What does an IRIS audit look like in practice?

• An IRIS audit typically occurs in two stages.
• During the first phase, the auditor will carry out a desk review of the recruiters’ business practices.
  ◦ The auditor will ask for supporting documents such as company policies, standard operating procedures, contracts, job advertisements etc.
• The second phase occurs ‘on-site’ and will involve interviews with the recruiter, workers and business partners.
  ◦ The auditor will be looking to verify that a management system is in place and is being followed.
• The audit will be conducted using IRIS tools – including the IRIS Standard and auditing framework to verify compliance with the IRIS Principles.

How long does IRIS certification last?

• For a recruiter to be certified for the first time, they will need to go through the two-stage audit process (as described above).
  ◦ Following the initial certification decision, the recruiter will undergo two surveillance audits after 6 and 12 months. Surveillance audits are considered ‘lighter’ audits.
  ◦ After two-years, the recruiter will need to go through the two-stage audit process again to be re-certified.
• When a recruiter has been certified for the second time, only one surveillance audit will be conducted after 12 months.

How much will IRIS certification cost?

• There will be no fixed flat rates as each recruiters’ business is different and costs vary between countries.
• The IRIS Scheme Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the auditors are not over-charging recruiters for the audits.
• It is likely that the initial IRIS audits will be subsidized.

What are the certification outcomes?

• When the audit is complete the auditor will make their recommendation for/against IRIS certification. There are five possible certification outcomes for recruiters:
  1. Leading (IRIS Certification): The recruiter is complying with all IRIS Principles and is considered in the top tier of recruiters.
  2. Performing (IRIS Certification): The recruiter is complying with all the IRIS Principles but there is still some room for improvement.
  3. Developing (No Certification): While the recruiter is not ready for certification, there are no critical issues and the recruiter has demonstrated their potential for future certification.
  4. No Rating (No Certification): The recruiter is breaching one or more IRIS Principles (i.e., there is evidence that workers are paying fees for their jobs).
  5. Alert (No Certification): The auditor has uncovered serious recruitment and/or human rights breaches, such as evidence of forced labour. Alternatively, there is evidence to suggest that the recruiter has tried to unduly influence the certification outcome.
• Recruiters who have been certified will have the option of being included in a publicly available list of ‘IRIS certified labour recruiters.’
• This can help recruiters increase their market visibility and attract new clients and workers.

Photos: © IOM.