



Cross-border recruitment of workers is a vital part of facilitating international labour mobility. When it is done in a fair and transparent way, recruitment contributes to safe, orderly labour migration which benefits countries of origin and destination, employers and migrants. However, when it is conducted in a manner inconsistent with international standards, unethical recruitment can lead to fraudulent behaviour, exploitation and, in the worst cases, conditions of forced labour.

In many migration corridors, gaps in government regulation and enforcement exacerbate the vulnerability experienced by migrant workers in the recruitment process. Inconsistencies across jurisdictions, coupled with uneven enforcement capacity, can put migrants at risk of unsafe and exploitative conditions.

To create a space for governments to address this, IOM launched the IRIS Global Policy Network on Recruitment (the Policy Network) in December 2020. The Policy Network is a Member State-driven collaboration that brings together policy makers, regulators and thought leaders to:

- Discuss key challenges related to cross-border recruitment;
- Identify and co-develop solutions to recruitment-related challenges, and
- Highlight promising practices in the field of policy, regulation, enforcement, and protection.

The Policy Network adopts a “whole of government” approach and engages representatives from the full range of public authorities responsible for or involved in recruitment regulation and migrant worker protection. Relevant Ministries, agencies, and departments (horizontal) across all levels of government (vertical), including national and sub-national authorities are engaged. This encompasses foreign affairs, immigration, justice, interior, labour, and development cooperation portfolios, among others. Through targeted thematic working groups, Members learn from peers and counterparts around the world.

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The structure of the Policy Network, supported by its Secretariat, is composed of the following:

- 1) An **International Steering Committee**, which serves as the highest level of governance and provides Member-led strategic guidance and policy direction to the Policy Network and its Secretariat
- 2) Two **Stakeholder Advisory Councils** that advise the Steering Committee: one comprised of private sector and employer representatives and the other comprised of civil society representation
- 3) **Thematic working groups**, which are the main vehicle for Network activities and bring together Members to discuss a range of priority themes.

The IRIS Secretariat in Geneva serves as the **Secretariat** for the Policy Network. It coordinates all administrative and logistical aspects of the Network, including meeting preparation and support to the Committee, Councils and Groups. It also serves as a member liaison for participants who have questions or would like to be placed in direct contact with other public authorities, while serving to link the Policy Network to other aspects of the IRIS Initiative, including the Certification, Capacity Building and Migrant Worker Voice mechanisms.

THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

Thematic working groups are the main vehicle for solutions- and impact-oriented policy dialogue and exchange. They cover several recruitment-related themes, including:

- the licensing, registration, certification, and oversight of labour recruiters;
- good practice in inspection and enforcement;
- the role of consular officials and attachés;
- good practices in data collection and research to inform policy making;
- enhancing bilateral cooperation to promote ethical recruitment; and
- fundraising and donor engagement to enhance migrant worker protection.



Senior-level officials with respective thematic technical expertise meet virtually or in-person on a quarterly basis. Active listening and learning are important forms of participation, particularly for Members who are new to the topic of ethical recruitment. At a high-level, thematic working groups aim to (1) provide clear, practical guidance to promote policy coherence and good practice in the thematic area; (2) encourage operational and regulatory cooperation across participating jurisdictions; and (3) establish a mechanism through which guidance and strategies can be tested and scaled, and actions taken.

THE MONTRÉAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON RECRUITMENT

The foundation for the Policy Network was laid with the success of the June 2019 Global Conference on the Regulation of International Recruitment, which was held in Montréal, Canada. The Conference brought together 100 policy makers from over 30 countries around the world and resulted in *The Montréal Recommendations on Recruitment: A Road Map towards Better Regulation*, a set of global guidance articulating good practice in recruitment regulation and protection of migrant workers. *The Montréal Recommendations* reflect growing consensus among policy makers that governance gaps in international recruitment require deliberate, robust and coordinated action by regulators. To support this, the guidance addresses a range of policy issues, including recruitment fees and costs; registration and licensing of recruitment agencies; the role of inspectorates, consular officials, migrant welfare officers and labour attachés; strategies to incentivize legal compliance; migrant welfare and assistance; enhancing access to grievance mechanisms, dispute resolution and remedy; and bilateral, regional and multi-lateral engagement.



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IRIS: ETHICAL RECRUITMENT

The Policy Network is a program of IRIS, the IOM's flagship initiative to promote ethical recruitment. IRIS is a global multi-stakeholder initiative that supports governments, civil society, the private sector and recruitment agencies to establish ethical recruitment as the 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: 1) promoting respect for the rights of migrant workers; 2) enhancing transparency and accountability in recruitment; 3) advancing the employer pays principle; and 4) strengthening public policies, regulations and enforcement mechanisms.



To join the Policy Network or learn more about its activities, please contact the IRIS Secretariat: iris@iom.int.

