LABOR MIGRATION IN ASIA

TRENDS, SKILLS CERTIFICATION, AND SEASONAL WORK

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ADBInstitute

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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

ILO International Labour Organization

This publication was jointly prepared by the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The names of geographic areas and territories used in this joint publication follow the practice of ADBI.

ADB recognizes "China" as the People's Republic of China; "Korea" as the Republic of Korea; "Laos" as the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Note:
In this publication, "$" refers to United States dollars.

CONTENTS

iii

TABLES, FIGURES, AND BOXES

BOXES

FOREWORD

As this report indicates, labor migration is a key feature in sustaining the development of many economies in Asia.

In 2023, the Asian labor migration landscape continued its post-pandemic recovery, largely returning to characteristics that defined it prior to the pandemic. The deployment of workers from Asian countries rebounded and reached almost 7 million. More than half of these labor migration flows were directed to Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Deployment to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region was also high—double the number from 2022. Other non-traditional destinations in East Asia, as well as Europe and North America, are becoming increasingly important.

The expansion in labor migration to Asian economies in recent years stands out, interrupted only by the pandemic. Demographics play a role, with a shrinking youth population in most advanced economies in the region, as well as fewer new entrants to the labor force willing to take on some of the lower-paid and less-skilled jobs in manufacturing, services, and agriculture. Changes in labor migration policies in a number of destinations also allowed higher numbers and opened additional sectors and occupations. With higher labor deployment, remittances to Asia and the Pacific reached $371.5 billion, bouncing back to pre-pandemic shares at 43.2% of the global total.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the share of women migrant workers in total outflows from Asia was around 32% (2016–2019); as of 2023, there appears to be an increase. There is a a wide variation among countries of origin with respect to the gender composition of these labor migration flows. Labor migration in the region occurs primarily under temporary migration regimes and for elementary occupations and medium-skilled work. However, Asia is also an important source region for skilled workers.

In June 2023, the 13th Roundtable on Labor Migration in Asia was organized by the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and held in Bangkok, Thailand, on the theme of "Integrating Skills Development and Certification into the Labor Migration Cycle." Following the Roundtable, the three organizations have prepared this joint annual publication. The 2024 edition, Labor Migration in Asia: Trends, Skills Certification, and Seasonal Work, has three chapters, and statistical annexes providing comparative data on international labor migration in Asia. The report includes two thematic chapters on skills and seasonal work that draw on the 13th Roundtable on Labor Migration in Asia, and a chapter on labor migration trends, drawing on the most recent international labor migration statistics.

Chapter 1 examines the labor migration trends in Asia, looking at outflows from the main countries of origin in Asia, including destination, gender, and skills composition. The chapter further reviews labor migration to OECD and non-OECD countries of destination, as well as student mobility. It also provides a description of the latest trends of remittance flows to and from Asia and the Pacific at the regional and sub-regional levels, as well as updates on remittance costs.

Chapter 2 looks at the pathways for middle-skilled migration and the accompanying skills recognition or certification approaches in two countries of destination in the ASEAN region—Singapore and Thailand—taking the example of the construction sector. While the phenomenon of labor migration of migrant workers into elementary-level occupations in the construction sector has been documented, labor migration into middle-level skilled occupations in construction is less studied.

Chapter 3 reviews the origin and development of seasonal work schemes across Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom and looks at the evolution of seasonal work in Japan and the Republic of Korea. By assessing the role that the schemes play in these countries, it touches on some of the enduring policy concerns associated with seasonal worker programmes, notably risks of exploitation to participating migrant workers, and the oversight arrangements in place to mitigate these.

Labor migration has the potential to deliver multiple benefits but also poses risks and negative impacts. This publication aims to provide policy guidance and reference by analyzing labor migration trends and sharing regional and country experiences on thematic issues. We hope that this publication series remains of use to policy makers and practitioners in and outside governments in Asia and in OECD countries.

Our sincere thanks go to the team that continues to organize the annual Roundtable on Labor Migration and the authors of this year's timely publication.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Trends in Labor Migration in Asia

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1.1 Introduction

There was a clear increase in demand and mobility of migrant workers in 2022, as global labor shortages, stemming from the post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic recovery and reduced availability of foreign workers, had significant effects. In 2023, the Asian labor migration landscape has continued to recover, largely returning to characteristics that defined it prior to the pandemic. 2023 had record-level labor migrant outflows from the main origin countries, including the Philippines and Bangladesh. This may reflect not just a bounce-back after 2 years of depressed mobility, but rather reflect structural shifts in demand in some destination countries and an intensification of the trends towards higher mobility seen in the 2010s.

This chapter provides an overview of labor migration trends until the end of 2023 with the most recent data available covering most major Asian countries. After describing the changing trends by origin and destination countries, the chapter focuses on skills, gender, and student mobility, and includes a brief overview of the volume of foreign-born workers, including their labor market outcomes and shifting profiles in terms of country of origin and residence status. The chapter ends with a description of the latest trends of remittance inflows to Asia and the Pacific at the regional and subregional levels, as well as the evolution of their costs.

1.2 Changing Trends: Short and Medium Term

The consequences of COVID19 on migration flows in the Asian region were particularly strong and lasted longer than in other parts of the world. The decline in deployment from and admittance of labor migrants in Asia was particularly steep in 2020, with a complete pause of exits and entries in a number of Asian economies. Contrary to migration flows to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, which not only recovered from the pandemic but reached an all-time high in 2022, labor migration flows in Asia are recovering more slowly and deployment of workers was still below the 2019 level in 2022. Looking at 2023, the rebound in deployment from Asian countries however continued and Asian worker outflows reached almost 7 million. This is 800,000 above the previous record level of 2015–2016 and 34% higher than in 2022 (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Total Outflows of Workers from Selected Asian Countries, 2010–2023
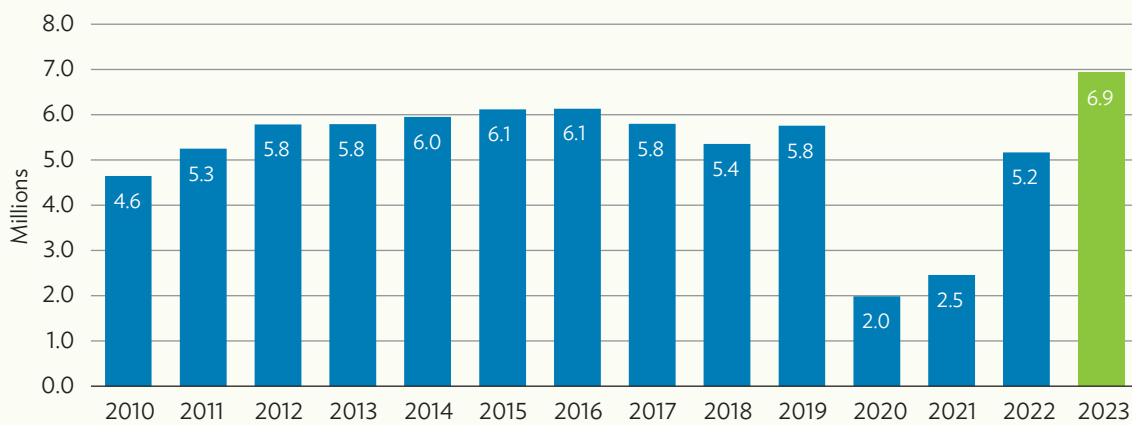
Note: Total of the 13 countries presented in Table 1.1. Data are partially estimated for 2022 and 2023. Total is calculated assuming outflows from countries with missing data follow the trend of those with available data.

Source: National authorities.

The main driver behind this sharp rise was the Philippines where deployment of overseas workers (both land-based and sea-based) doubled to more than 2.3 million, the highest figure ever recorded, and 8% higher than in 2019, the previous record year (Table 1.1). The second main country of origin for Asian migrant workers in 2023 was Bangladesh, with 1.3 million departures for employment (+15% compared to 2022). This is also a new record, and almost twice the 2019 figure. Pakistan remained the third sending country with 863,000 workers registered to work abroad. This moderate rise of 4% compared to 2022 is also the highest number ever registered. Very sharp increases also occurred from Nepal, Indonesia, and the People's Republic of China (PRC). During financial year (FY) 2022–2023, half a million Nepalese workers went abroad, 42% more than the previous year, and more than twice as many as in FY2019–2020. Labor migration from Indonesia increased by 37% in 2023 and reached 275,000 workers, matching the 2018 and 2019 levels but still significantly below the period in the early 2010s. Similarly, the number of workers dispatched overseas under labor cooperation from the PRC increased by one-third in 2023, to about 350,000—although still well below the 500,000 annual dispatches observed in the years prior to 2019. As a result, the stock of PRC workers abroad under labor cooperation rose slightly for the first time since 2018 (+5%). In India, almost 400,000 workers were given emigration clearance in 2023, 7% more than in 2022. This is the same order of magnitude as before the COVID-19 crisis but lower than in the early 2010s. First semester data on outflows from Myanmar for overseas employment show a 9% increase in 2023, which, if it continues, would lead to 2023 figures of around 200,000 workers.

According to the Department of Overseas Labour of Viet Nam, a record 160,000 Vietnamese workers went abroad in 2023, 5% more than in 2019. This is also well above the government goal, which was set at 110,000–120,000 workers for 2023.

Several countries of origin report figures indicating a decline in 2023 relative to 2022. Sri Lanka registered 298,000 departures for foreign employment in 2023, a slight decrease compared to 2022 but still at a very high level compared with historical figures. The decrease may be related to nonregistration of persons going overseas with tourist visas but intending to find work in the United Arab Emirates or

Oman, especially in domestic service. In Thailand, 2023 figures indicate an 18% increase in deployment relative to 2022 and below the level of the 2010s, although Thailand has lower volumes of placements than most other countries.

Table 1.1: Outflows of Workers from Selected Asian Countries, 2012–2023
('000)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2022/23 % change	2019/23 % change
Philippines	1,802	1,836	1,833	1,844	2,112	1,993	1,845	2,157	550	743	1,206	2,331	93	8
Bangladesh	608	409	426	556	758	1,009	734	700	218	617	1,136	1,305	15	86
Pakistan	635	620	752	947	839	496	382	625	225	288	832	863	4	38
Nepal	385	451	520	499	404	383	354	236	190	72	349	494	42	109
India	747	817	805	781	521	391	340	368	94	133	373	398	7	8
PRC	512	527	562	530	494	522	492	487	301	323	259	347	34	-29
Sri Lanka	282	293	301	263	243	212	211	190	54	122	311	298	-4	57
Indonesia	495	512	430	276	235	262	284	277	113	73	201	275	37	-1
Myanmar	68	67	65	95	146	162	234	330	75	3	187	203	8	-38
Viet Nam	80	88	107	116	126	135	143	153	79	45	143	160	12	5
Thailand	134	131	120	117	114	91	115	114	41	37	88	104	18	-8
Lao PDR	7	23	8	51	58	49	120	54	28	0	53	87	65	62
Cambodia	35	23	25	41	86	96	105	68	23	3	34	...	...	...
Total	5,790	5,797	5,953	6,117	6,137	5,801	5,359	5,758	1,990	2,459	5,172	6,931	34	20

... = data not available, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, p = preliminary data, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Notes:
1. Totals for 2022 and 2023 are estimated.
2. Philippines series adjusted from previous publications to include seafarers. Previous series included only land-based deployments.
3. 2023 data for Viet Nam, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and the Lao PDR are estimated based on partial data.

Source: National authorities.

Overall, more than half of these labor migration flows are directed to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, especially to Saudi Arabia. Indeed, Saudi Arabia was the destination for more than 1.6 million Asian workers in 2023 (Table 1.2). This is only 3% more than in 2022 but it is a new record. While there was only marginal variation in the overall figure, there was a clear shift in terms of countries of origin. While inflows from Bangladesh and Pakistan, the main origin countries to Saudi Arabia, declined by around one-fifth, inflows of overseas Filipino workers were multiplied almost fourfold.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was the second main GCC country of destination for Asian migrant workers in 2023 with 783,000 entries (+65% compared to 2022). Based on the first three quarters of 2023, the deployment of land-based workers from the Philippines is estimated at 287,000 persons (+138% compared to 2022 and +7% compared to 2019). Labor migration from Pakistan and from India also rose sharply, by 79% to 230,000 workers and by 116% to 72,000 workers, respectively. Inflows from Bangladesh were stable in 2023 at almost 100,000 migrant workers and those from Nepal rose by 10% to 59,000.

Labor migration flows from Asia to Qatar had already returned to their pre-COVID levels in 2022 and increased a further 20% in 2023 and stood just under 400,000 workers. This is mainly due to the doubling in the numbers of deployments from the Philippines. No significant change was recorded in the outflows from Pakistan (55,000 workers) and from India (31,000), while there was a shift between Nepal (−47% to 41,000 workers) and Bangladesh (+130% to 56,000). Preliminary data indicate a 58% decline in deployment from Sri Lanka to Qatar in 2023 relative to 2022.

Flows from Asia to Kuwait were stable in 2023 (273,000 workers), but the breakdown between origin countries changed. Worker inflows from Bangladesh increased by 79% to 37,000 and those from Nepal by 38% to 31,000, while those from India dropped by 33% to 48,000. Only deployments from the Philippines were stable (+3% to 74,000).

Table 1.2: Flows of Workers to Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, Main Sending Countries, 2023 and % change 2022–2023

	Bangladesh		India		Indonesia		Nepal		Pakistan		Philippines		Sri Lanka		Total
	2023	% change	2023	% change	2023	% change	2023	% change	2023	% change	2023	% change	2022	% change	
Saudi Arabia	497,674	−19	200,713	12	6,310	35	55,791	−55	426,951	−17	401,656	289	53,902	97	1,642,997
United Arab Emirates	98,422	−3	71,687	116	976	78	59,152	10	229,894	79	287,797	138	35,563	77	783,491
Oman	127,883	−29	21,336	−33	...	...	2,716	−25	60,046	−27	...	...	10,669	66	222,650
Qatar	56,148	130	30,683	−1	307	−64	40,517	−47	55,112	−5	136,608	108	71,954	137	391,329
Kuwait	36,548	79	48,212	−33	425	−41	31,410	38	2,328	−2	74,535	3	79,123	522	27, 581
Bahrain	...	...	7,376	−28	...	...	3,952	−48	13,345	11	20,721	171	3,370	78	48,765
Total GCC countries	816,676	−13	380,007	7	8,018	16	193,538	−33	787,676	−1	921,318	149	254,581	158	3,361,814

... = data not available, GCC = Gulf Cooperation Council.

Note: Figures on 2023 worker deployments from the Philippines are available until September only. For Nepal, data refer to fiscal year 2022/2023, starting 16 July 2022.

Source: National authorities of origin countries.

Oman is the only GCC country that saw a drop of Asian worker deployments between 2022 and 2023, by 28% to 223,000, but this is in the context of a historically high figure reached in 2022. Indeed, the 2023 figure is still higher than any prior to 2022. The main countries of origin have all been affected relatively equally, with decreases ranging from a quarter to a third, including −29% for Bangladesh, which provided the largest group (128,000 workers).

Bahrain, traditionally the smallest destination country in the GCC for Asian workers, received almost 50,000 in 2023 (+15% compared to 2022). Here too, this total masks opposite trends by country of origin, with +170% for the Philippines contrasting with −48% for Nepal and −28% for India.

Table 1.3: Flows of Workers to ASEAN Countries, by Origin and Destination, 2022

Origin / Destination	Indonesia	Nepal	Bangladesh	India	Lao PDR	Pakistan	Philippines	Thailand	Viet Nam	Sri Lanka	Myanmar	Cambodia	Total
	2023	2022/23	2023	2023	2022	2023	2023	2023	2023	2022	2023(e)	2022	Total
Singapore	7,898	220	53,265	...	...	87	179,847	3,690	1,355	1,178	19,640	47	267,180
Malaysia	72,260	219,357	351,683	15,319	...	20,905	30,720	8,369	480	266	48,654	0	768,013
Thailand	...	29	...	4	51,652	...	...	...	...	36	98,664	18,417	150,385
Brunei Darussalam	2,872	862	1,081	...	...	146	...	581	...	...	...	...	5,542
Total 2023	83,030	220,468	406,029	15,323		21,138	210,567	12,640	1,835		166,958		1,191,120
Total 2022	50,300	26,576	116,323	12,839	51,652	6,472	89,828	7,919	...	1,480	161,941	18,464	525,330

... = data not available, ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Note: 2023 data for Myanmar are estimated based on the first semester figures.

Source: National authorities of origin countries.

According to deployment figures from origin countries, about 1.2 million Asian workers went to an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) country in 2023, double the number from 2022 (Table 1.3). Malaysia, by far the main host country, received more than half of them. The number of migrant workers sent from Bangladesh increased sevenfold in 2023 to reach 352,000 and those from Nepal increased eightfold to 219,000. More labor migrants were deployed to Malaysia from other Asian origin countries in 2023 than in 2022. For example, Indonesia sent 72,000 workers (+67% compared to 2022). However, this is still slightly below pre-pandemic levels and far from the annual flows of the beginning of 2010s. The Philippines sent about 30,000 workers to Malaysia in 2023, double the number from 2022, and Pakistan 20,000, three times more.

Singapore is another important country for Asian labor migrants and receives large numbers of workers from the Philippines and from Bangladesh. In 2023, 180,000 workers came from the Philippines, a sharp 141% increase but in line with what was observed in the 2010s. The 53,000 workers from Bangladesh in 2023 represent a 17% drop, but is also in line with the traditional figures registered before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the late 2010s, Thailand received more than 200,000 workers from Myanmar per year. The recovery of this labor migration channel only started in the second half of 2022, approaching the same levels (100,000 in these 6 months), but the flows observed in the first semester of 2023 indicate a relatively marked decline, at 50,000.

Outside ASEAN and the GCC, and excluding OECD countries, Taipei,China is the destination of many Asian workers. For Indonesian workers, indeed, it became the top destination for deployment in 2023, with 83,000 deployments. It has also been the top destination for Thai workers since 2012 (32,000 in 2023), and it is a significant destination for deployment from Viet Nam, with 58,600 deployments in 2023, second only to Japan.

Destination countries do not consistently report inflows, but do report stock, although not always by origin. Not all migrant workers in destination countries are counted in origin country deployment figures, since some may arrive through other channels, including regularization. Thailand recorded 2.3 million migrant workers in February 2023, Malaysia 1.8 million in September 2023, and Singapore 1.5 million in June 2023. Brunei Darussalam reported 400,000 migrant workers in 2021.

1.2.1 Gender Composition of Deployment of Workers from Asian Countries

From 2016 to 2019, the share of women among migrant workers from Asian countries remained relatively stable for each origin country, although the share of women in the total had slightly increased, to 32.8%. Generally speaking, the COVID-19 crisis had a disproportionate effect on migration of women, and lowered the share of women in outflows. For example, 2021 was a low point in the share of women among workers from Nepal, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. In 2023, the share of women stood at 29.4%.

In detail, the share of women among landbased deployments from the Philippines has been rising since 2016—when they already accounted for more than half of the total—and reached almost two-thirds in 2023 (Figure 1.2). The Philippines is now the origin country with the highest share of women in outflows, above Indonesia which was leading until 2021. In 2021, a record 88% of the outflows of workers from Indonesia were women, but in 2022 and 2023, this percentage fell back its 2016 level, just above 60%. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is the other country to send at least as many women as men for work abroad. Historically, Sri Lanka had long been a sending country for workers in the domestic and care sector, mostly women. As a result, outward labor migration from Sri Lanka comprised a vast majority of women until the mid-2000s and was still gender-balanced until 2012. But between 2012 and 2017, the share of women declined rapidly, and they accounted only for one-third of the total in 2017. Since then, this share rebounded and fluctuated around 40% (45% in 2023). For Cambodia, data on the stock of migrants by gender are available. Women accounted for 41% of Cambodia's overseas workforce in 2023, matching the average recorded between 2016 and 2020, but the latest flow data available show a share of 38.5%. The share of women among Vietnamese workers going abroad has declined slightly between 2016 and 2022, from 36% to 34% but 2023 figures show a rebound, to 35%. These variations are partly explained by changes in destination: the share of women among Vietnamese workers going to the Republic of Korea is much lower (below 10% over the period) than among those going to Japan (around 40%) or Taipei,China (around one-third), so higher flows to the Republic of Korea explain part of the change in overall gender proportion. Women accounted for 23% of the Thai migrant workers in 2023, up from 20% in 2016.

Bangladesh is the only country where women's share in worker outflows declined notably. After rising to 17% in 2019, the share has since declined regularly, and stood at 5.6% in 2023, mostly due the change in the composition of worker outflows to Saudi Arabia, which were gender-balanced in 2016, but comprised only 13% women in 2023. Changes in destinations have also influenced the trend, such as the resumption of flows to Malaysia in 2022 (50,000) and 2023 (352,000). The flows from Bangladesh to Malaysia were entirely male in 2023, so higher flows to Malaysia increased the share of men in total deployment. The sectors authorized for employment in Malaysia are currently those where few women are employed (e.g., construction and plantation agriculture). The variations in flows to Jordan also impact the overall proportion of women, as almost all workers going to Jordan are women, making it the second main destination for Bangladeshi female workers. Flows to Jordan peaked at 20,000 in 2019, contributing to the 17% record, but stood at only 14,000 in 2022 and 9,000 in 2023.

Historically, very few women have left Pakistan for employment abroad through reported deployment channels; although in 2023, their share rose from 1% to 2%. Likewise, almost no women were recorded among Indian deployed workers until 2021, and only 1.6% in 2022 and 1.4% in 2023. Women migrating outside deployment channels—generally high-skilled or professional—are not captured in these figures. Nor are those moving through irregular channels, or through free movement arrangements such as at the India–Nepal border.

Figure 1.2: Share of Women Among Labor Migrants by Selected Origin Countries, 2016–2023 (%)
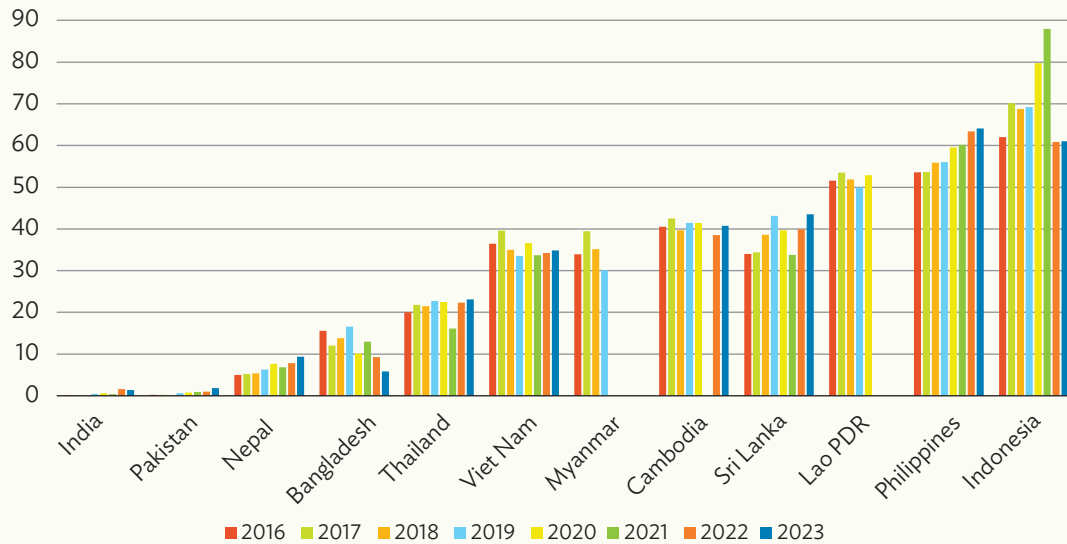
Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Note: The data used here are deployment data, so they exclude most skilled workers who are able to depart outside the managed deployment channels as well as those who move irregularly in more precarious and low-paid work. For example, data for India do not include nurses (and other skilled workers) including in occupations with a higher representation of women. For the Philippines, data refer to land-based overseas Filipino workers. 2023 data for Cambodia are stock data.

Sources: Official data from national authorities; ILO International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS).

1.2.2 Skill Levels of Migrants Deployed in Gulf Cooperation Council Countries and Asian Economies

A large proportion of migrant workers from Asian countries deployed in the GCC countries or in Asia occupy low-skilled jobs, mostly in the construction or domestic and care sectors. However, clear signs of an increase in average skill level were visible until 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery that followed blurred the picture, with strong variations in the number of departures of workers and in the sectors concerned. As a result, the skill composition of worker outflows evolved in different directions by country of origin.

A number of origin countries report deployment of domestic workers separately from other occupational skill groups. This is the case for the Philippines, where domestic workers have comprised more than half of all deployments since 2017, or Sri Lanka, where they comprise about one-quarter of deployments. Domestic work may be classified as at least semi-skilled, based on the tasks performed (Holliday 2023).

Among Pakistani workers registered for employment abroad, the share of skilled workers peaked at 50% from 2019 to 2021. By 2023, it had fallen back to 44%, the proportion observed in the mid-2010s (Figure 1.3). Conversely, at 46%, the share of low-skilled workers ("elementary") was at its highest since 2017.

Figure 1.3: Workers by Skill Category, Selected Origin Countries, 2015–2023 (%)
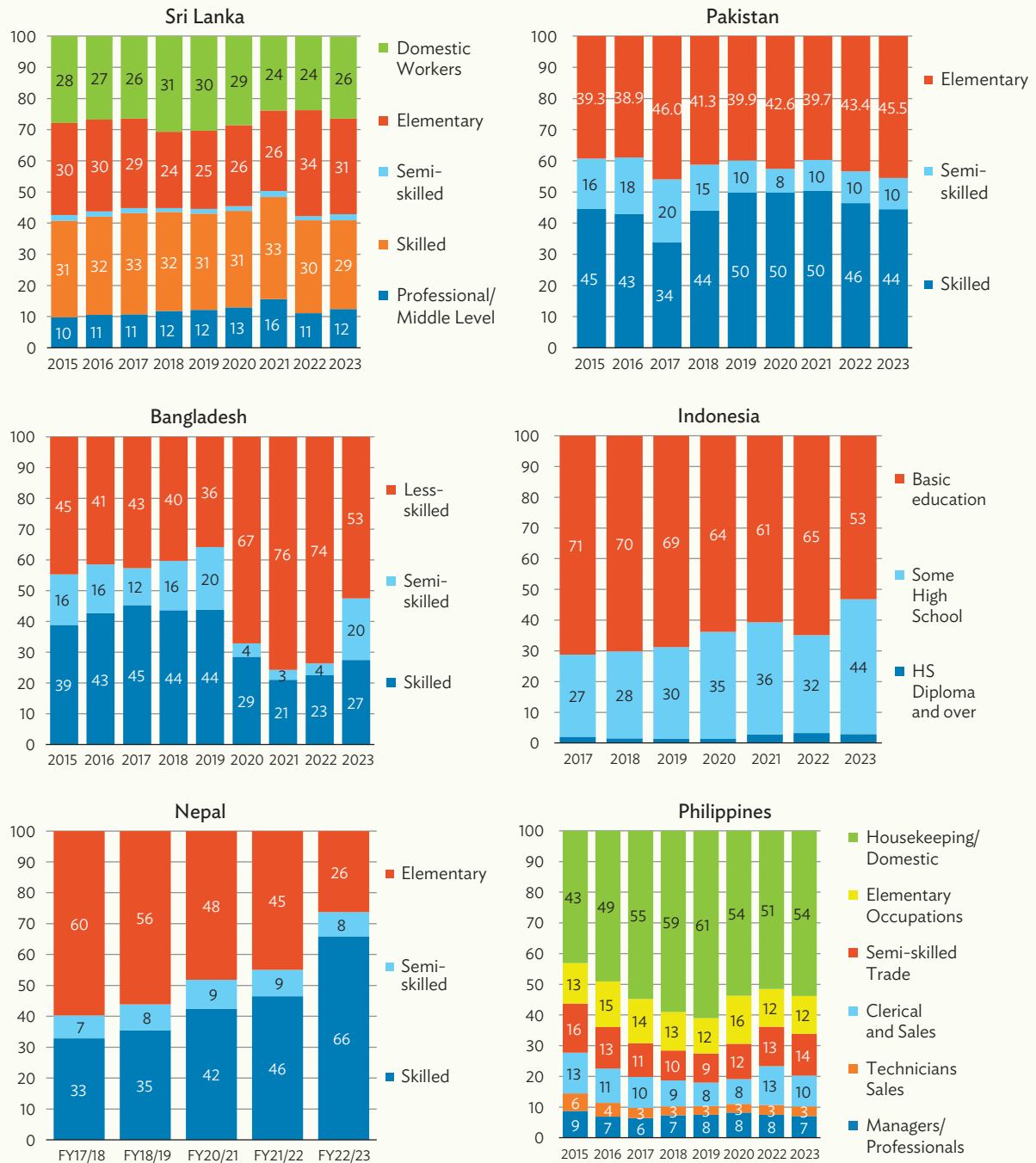
HS = high school, FY = financial year.

Note: Categories are those reported in national data. For Indonesia, "basic education" includes junior high and primary school. For Nepal, "skilled" includes the categories skilled, highly skilled, and professional. For Pakistan, "skilled" includes the national categories skilled, highly qualified, and highly skilled. For Sri Lanka, "skilled" includes the categories skilled, professional, and middle level/clerical.

Source: National data.

Figures on those leaving for work abroad published by Nepal's Department of Foreign Employment show a very strong shift toward more skilled workers. Indeed, following four consecutive annual increases, the share of workers falling in the skilled categories doubled, from one-third in fiscal year (FY)2017–2018 to two-thirds in FY2022–2023. In absolute numbers, skilled categories increased from 250,000 workers, and the less-skilled dropped from 366,000 to 203,000 over the period.

In 2023, the skill composition of Sri Lankan workers leaving for employment abroad returned to its 2015 distribution. The share of high-skilled workers, which had gradually increased from 41% in 2015 to 49% in 2021, went down to 41% both in 2022 and 2023.

The level of education of Indonesian workers has been rising since 2015, despite a drop in 2022, the latter most likely due to needs for lower-skilled workers at the beginning of the recovery. In 2023, 47% of workers had at least some high school education, 20 percentage points more than in 2017. The share of those who finished at least secondary education has stood at just 3% since 2021.

Data for Bangladesh are not comparable over the whole period but, amidst much higher overall numbers, 2022 deployments appear to include slightly more skilled workers than 2021 deployments. 2023 deployments had a very different profile, with 27% of Bangladeshi workers skilled and 20% semi-skilled, possibly as an effect of the surge in deployments to Malaysia.

1.3 Labor Migration to OECD and Non-OECD Asian Economies

Labor migration to Asian OECD countries and other economies in the region has expanded greatly in recent years, interrupted only by the pandemic. Demographics play a role, with shrinking youth cohorts in most developed economies in the region, as well as fewer new entrants to the labor force willing to take on some of the lower paid and less-skilled jobs in manufacturing, services, and agriculture. Policies have opened in a number of destinations, to higher numbers or to additional sectors or occupations. This section reviews the different evidence available on inflows and employment of migrant workers in Asian destinations.

Between 2015 and 2019, the number of foreigners employed in Japan surged from 908,000 to 1,660,000, marking an average annual growth of 16%. However, this rapid expansion came to a halt in 2020 due to Japan's prolonged border closures and strict pandemic containment measures. The growth rate during 2019–2020 slowed to 4%, and further dwindled to 0.17% during 2020–2021. As Japan gradually reopened its economy, foreign employment witnessed a rise in 2022, and accelerated growth in 2023.

According to data from Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Figure 1.4), as of October 2023, 2.0 million foreigners were employed in Japan, with nearly 80% originating from Asia. This was a 12% increase from the previous year. However, growth rates varied significantly based on residence status. Foreign workers holding an "engineer, humanities, and international services" status totaled over 366,000 in 2023, marking a 15% increase (+47,000) compared to 2022. Conversely, the number of other professionals increased substantially from 161,000 in 2022 to 230,000 in 2023 (+43%). Despite a 6% increase in students and a 20% rise in technical interns, both categories remained below 2019 levels, reflecting the impact of travel restrictions on these groups.

In 2023, citizens from Viet Nam comprised the largest group, with 518,000 individuals employed, marking a 12% increase from 2022. Among them, 209,000 held technical intern status (compared to 183,000 in 2022), and 160,000 held the status of "professional and technical field" (compared to

Figure 1.4: Japan, Stock of Foreigners Employed, 2015–2023
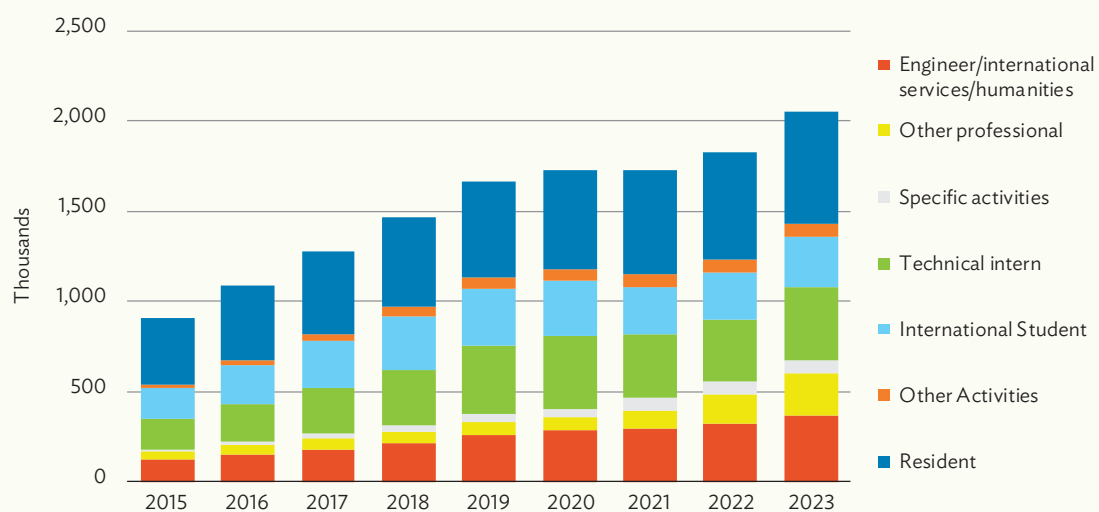
Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan. Figures for October of each year.

119,000 in 2022), with 84,700 designated as "engineer, humanities, and international services." While most countries of origin experienced growth in numbers, Indonesia and Myanmar notably recorded the highest growth rates at 56% and 50%, respectively.

In the Republic of Korea, the number of foreigners employed also saw an impressive increase of 9% rise, to reach a record high of 923,000 in 2023. This growth can be attributed to a surge in nonprofessional E-9 visa holders, which increased 29% from 209,000 to 269,000. The E-9 visa is issued to workers employed under the Employment Permit System, in lower-skill occupations in certain sectors—primarily manufacturing, and mostly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The E-9 visa allows employment up to almost 10 years if the worker meets renewal conditions. Annual entry quotas are set by the government of the Republic of Korea. The increase in 2023 was a result of an expansion of the annual admission quota for E-9 workers to 120,000.[1] In terms of sectors of employment, the manufacturing industries were allotted 80,000 new E-9 workers and agriculture 17,000, and an additional 7,000 jobs in the shipbuilding industry. Furthermore, the number of student and trainee visa holders, as well as professional visa holders, also experienced notable increases of 18% and 12%, respectively. However, there was a 13% decrease in the number of Work and Visit (H-2) visa holders.[2] Among the 923,000 employed foreigners in the Republic of Korea, more than 90% (843,000) are Asian nationals. PRC nationals, including ethnic Korean Chinese, constitute over 40% of the employed foreign population in the Republic of Korea. However, there was a slight decrease of 7,000 from 2022. Notably, there has been a significant increase of 20% or more in the number of foreign nationals from Southeast Asian countries, such as Viet Nam, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. These individuals primarily hold E-9 nonprofessional visas. Nepal and Uzbekistan are also among the main origin countries of employed foreigners in the Republic of Korea.

[1] The annual admission of 110,000 was originally planned for 2023, but there was an additional assignment of 10,000 in November 2023. Among the 110,000, more than 80% comprises new entries.

[2] Work and Visit (H-2) is a 3-year extendable visa designed for individuals aged 18 or older, who are overseas Koreans with one of the seven nationalities (People's Republic of China, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) and wish to visit or work in the Republic of Korea in one of the 46 designated occupations.

Figure 1.5: Republic of Korea, Stock of Foreigners Employed, 2015–2023
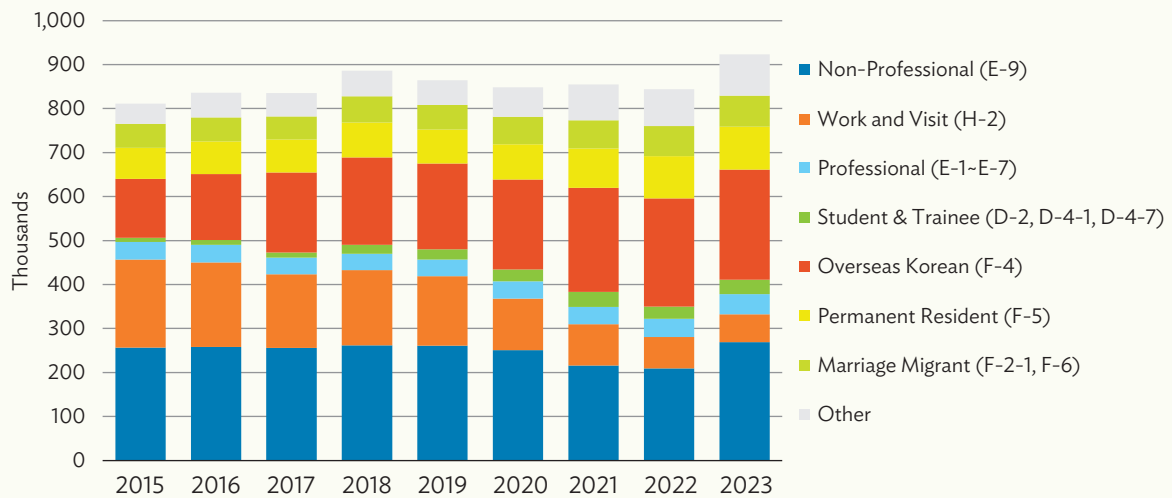
Source: Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force, Ministry of Justice and Statistics Korea.

One Asian non-OECD economy that attracts numerous workers from the region is Taipei,China. The government of Taipei,China in 2022 outlined plans to attract an additional 400,000 foreign workers by 2030 (National Development Council 2022). The strategy involves enhancing the recruitment of white-collar foreign professionals, drawing in and retaining more international students of ethnic Chinese background, and increasing the retention of young migrant workers with vocational or university education. In Taipei,China, the foreign workforce increased by 3.5%, rising from 728,000 to 753,000 in 2023, reaching a record level. However, achieving this 2030 target would require an annual growth rate of 5.6%. While the employment of migrant workers in the manufacturing industry did not change significantly compared to the 2022 figure, the construction industry experienced an almost 51% growth, and agriculture, forest, fishery, and domestic work saw a 25% increase (Figure 1.6). The top three origin countries of foreign workers are Indonesia (36%), Viet Nam (35%), and the Philippines (20%). Workers from Indonesia accounted for the majority of the increase from 2022 to 2023. Three out of four foreign workers employed in the social welfare sector are from Indonesia, while 45% of workers engaged in production industries are from Viet Nam.

Figure 1.6: Taipei,China, Stock of Foreign Workforce by Sector, 2015–2023
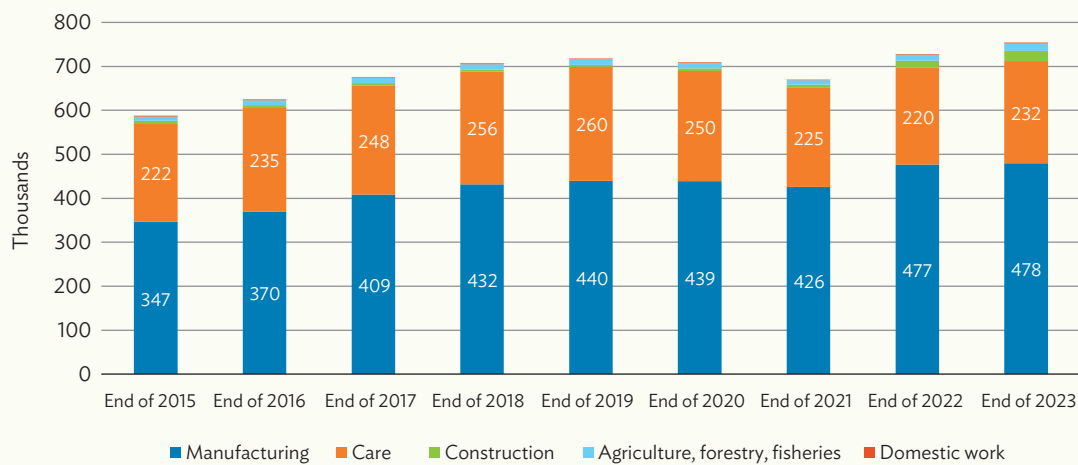
Source: Workforce Development Agency, Ministry of Labor, Taipei,China.

In terms of gender, employment of male and female foreign workers grew by 4.5% and 2.5%, respectively. However, the number of females engaged in productive industries decreased by 2.4%. In particular, the care and domestic work sectors, where foreign workers are predominantly women, have shown a slow recovery, remaining below the 2020 figures since their significant drop in 2021.

In Singapore, the total foreign workforce reached 1.49 million in June 2023, continuing its recovery from the sharp 14% drop in 2020 and finally surpassing pre-COVID-19 figures (Table 1.4). The most affected sectors—construction, marine shipyard, and process sectors (manufacturing of petroleum, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals)—saw a notable growth of 5.5% during the first half of 2023.

The Singapore government continued to tighten the overall number of S Pass (mid-level skilled) and work permit holders through quota reductions. Generally, companies are limited in hiring S Pass holders to 10% of the total workforce in the services sector and 15% (18% before January 2022) in the construction, manufacturing, marine shipyard, and process sectors, ensuring a balance with the local workforce. The number of S Pass holders did not however significantly decrease. This can be attributed to the new Manpower for Strategic Economic Priorities (M-SEP) scheme introduced in December 2022, which allows high-value companies to address skills shortages through exceptions to the quota requirements.

Table 1.4: Singapore Foreign Workforce Numbers, December 2018–June 2023

Pass Type	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022	Jun 2023
Employment Pass	185,800	193,700	177,100	161,700	187,300	197,300
S Pass	195,500	200,000	174,000	161,800	177,900	177,200
Work Permit (Total)	972,600	999,000	848,200	849,700	1,033,500	1,084,600
– Work Permit (Migrant Domestic Workers)	253,800	261,800	247,400	246,300	268,500	276,600
– Work Permit (Construction, Marine Shipyard, and Process)	355,700	370,100	311,000	318,400	415,000	437,900
– Work Permit (Other)	363,100	367,100	289,800	285,000	350,000	370,100
Other Work Passes	32,100	34,700	32,200	27,200	25,400	28,800
Total Foreign Workforce	1,386,000	1,427,400	1,231,500	1,200,400	1,424,200	1,488,000

Notes: Data may not add up to the total due to rounding. The Singapore Employment Pass is for highly-skilled professionals and has a minimum salary requirement. The S Pass is for mid-level skilled staff with salary requirements.

Source: Ministry of Manpower, Singapore.

Hong Kong, China is another important destination, and like other Asian economies saw entries curtailed during the pandemic. Figure 1.7 illustrates the evolution of the number of selected visas issued annually since 2015. After a sharp drop in all four categories in 2020, there was a robust rebound in 2023. Notably, "quality migrant" visas and visas under the immigration arrangement for nonlocal graduates showed a year-to-year growth of 573% and 158%, respectively. While the composition of these two visa holder categories stayed relatively stable despite the surge in numbers, the composition of General Employment Policy visa holders changed significantly (Box 1.1).

Figure 1.7: Selected Employment Visas/Entry Permits in Hong Kong, China, 2015–2023

Legend:
- Quotas Allotted under "Quality Migrant Admission Scheme"
- Visas/Entry Permits under "Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates"
- Employment Entry Permits under "Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals"
- Employment Visas/Entry Permits under "General Employment Policy"
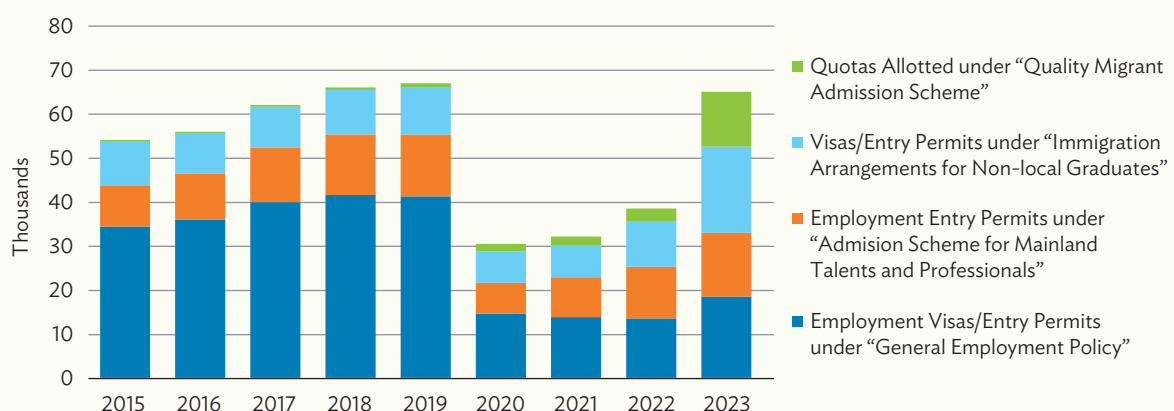
Note: The "Immigration Arrangements for Nonlocal Graduates" has been expanded to include graduates from the GBA campuses of Hong Kong, China universities since 28 December 2022.

Source: Immigration Department, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

Box 1.1: Shifting Profiles of Incoming Foreigners in Hong Kong, China

The number of applications approved under the General Employment Policy for the first three quarters of 2023 saw a significant increase, reaching 18,500, marking a 94% increase from the 9,500 recorded for the same period in 2020, albeit remaining below 50% of the 2019 level (41,289). However, a breakdown of statistics by various variables, including region, industry/sector, and monthly remuneration, reveals striking changes in the profiles of the applicants from 2022 to 2023, broadly returning to the compositions observed in 2019. During the pandemic, low-wage workers and those from certain countries were far less likely to enter. Since then, the climate for international businesses and their staff have worsened due to political changes and foreign firms have been reducing their presence, leading to fewer applicants for work authorization.

Applicants in 2023 were lower paid, working in industries other than those which previously dominated, and less likely to come from non-Asian OECD countries. Table 1.5 indicates a return in the share of applicants to the 2019 level, with the proportion of Indians decreasing by 4 percentage points, while citizens of the Republic of Korea increased by 2.6 percentage points. However, the absolute numbers and the proportion from non-Asian OECD countries, including Australia, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have not recovered in 2023. Statistics on monthly remuneration illustrate even more significant changes, with those earning below HK$20,000 monthly (US$2,560) increasing by 31.2 percentage points even above the 2019 level of 33.5%, while all other groups experienced decreases. This shift can be attributed to the different industries where new applicants are employed. Academic research, education, and the financial services industry saw a sharp drop in their share by 6.2 and 11.2 percentage points, respectively. In contrast, "other" increased by 14.6 percentage points to comprise almost 43% of all categories.

Table 1.5: Breakdown Statistics on Applications Approved under the General Employment Policy

By region of applicants

	2019	(%)	2022 (Jan–Sep)	(%)	2023 (Jan–Sep)	(%)
Japan	4,019	9.7	920	9.7	1,691	9.2
United Kingdom	5,280	12.8	838	8.8	1,540	8.3
Republic of Korea	2,991	7.2	500	5.3	1,462	7.9
United States	4,071	9.9	667	7.0	1,332	7.2
Philippines	1,292	3.1	369	3.9	1,318	7.1
India	2,684	6.5	951	10.0	1,100	6.0
France	2,091	5.1	506	5.3	685	3.7
Australia	1,720	4.2	284	3.0	579	3.1
Canada	975	2.4	255	2.7	404	2.2
Others	16,166	39.2	4,212	44.3	8,365	45.3
Total	41,289	100.0	9,502	100.0	18,476	100.0

14

Box 1.1 *continued*

Table 1.5 *continued*

By monthly remuneration of applicants (HK$)

	2019	(%)	2022 (Jan–Sep)	(%)	2023 (Jan–Sep)	(%)
Below $20,000 (US$2,560)	13,813	33.5	1,058	11.1	7,824	42.3
$20,000–$39,999	12,547	30.4	3,677	38.7	5,311	28.7
$40,000–$79,999	9,312	22.6	2,935	30.9	3,177	17.2
$80,000 or above	5,617	13.6	1,832	19.3	2,164	11.7
Total	41,289	100.0	9,502	100.0	18,476	100.0

By industry/sector of applicants

	2019	(%)	2022 (Jan–Sep)	(%)	2023 (Jan–Sep)	(%)
Academic Research and Education	4,670	11.3	1,690	17.8	2,073	11.2
Arts/Culture	5,417	13.1	100	1.1	2,124	11.5
Commerce and Trade	5,834	14.1	1,213	12.8	1,835	9.9
Engineering and Construction	1,567	3.8	864	9.1	1,169	6.3
Financial Services	4,719	11.4	1,894	19.9	1,606	8.7
Information Technology	1,655	4.0	410	4.3	470	2.5
Legal Services	486	1.2	114	1.2	113	0.6
Recreation and Sports	6,534	15.8	533	5.6	1,172	6.3
Others	10,407	25.2	2,684	28.2	7,914	42.8
Total	41,289	100.0	9,502	100.0	18,476	100.0

Source: Hong Kong Immigration Department.

15

1.4 Labor Migration to Non–Asian OECD Countries

Labor and economic-category migration to OECD countries, whether temporary or permanent, rose sharply in 2022. Permanent-type labor migration rose 36% between 2021 and 2022, and at 1.1 million new permanent migrants was well above its level of the 2010s. In terms of temporary-type labor migration, more than 2.4 million work permits and authorizations were granted in OECD countries (excluding Poland) in 2022, a 77% year-on-year increase from 2021 and 14% above the 2019 levels. This section examines labor and economic-class migration to several non-Asian OECD destinations of relevance for migration from Asia.

Labor migration to the United Kingdom continued its upward trajectory in 2023, as evidenced by the issuance of 270,000 employment-based entry clearance visas to migrant workers (main applicants) in the first three quarters of 2023. This marks a substantial 34% increase from the figure for the same period of 2022, and is also above the full-year total for 2022 (Figure 1.8). The numbers are expected to reach a record level by the end of 2023. This growth still occurred despite a notable decrease in the number of British National (Overseas)—or BN(O) visas—by 43% year-on-year, from 21,400 (Q1–Q3

2022) to 15,400 (Q1–Q3 2023). This visa is available to those with BN(O) status, acquired by British overseas territories citizens by connection with Hong Kong, China who registered for this status before 1 July 1997, as well as their family members.

Among the total labor visas issued, 115,000 were granted to individuals from Asian countries, accounting for 43% of the total visas issued. Almost all major Asian origin countries, except Indonesia and Nepal, experienced year-to-year growth in the third quarter of 2023. While the top two Asian countries of origin, India and the Philippines, experienced moderate year-to-year growth (18% and 6%, respectively), the most significant increases were observed in Bangladesh (756%), Pakistan (232%), and Sri Lanka (129%). The three main subcategories for issued visas were "Skilled Worker— Health & Care" with 56,000 visas issued to Asian citizens (a 105% increase compared to Q3 2022), "Skilled Worker" with 24,600 visas issued (a 7% increase), and "Overseas Domestic Worker" with 13,900 visas issued (a 9% increase).

The increase in inflows to the United Kingdom in fact reflect policy changes to the labor migration framework to lower the income threshold for work in the care sector and the elimination of the cap on admission. These changes were made to respond to greater demand for labor following the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union (EU) and the end of free movement between the EU and the United Kingdom.

Figure 1.8: Labor Migration from Asia to the United Kingdom, 2015–2023
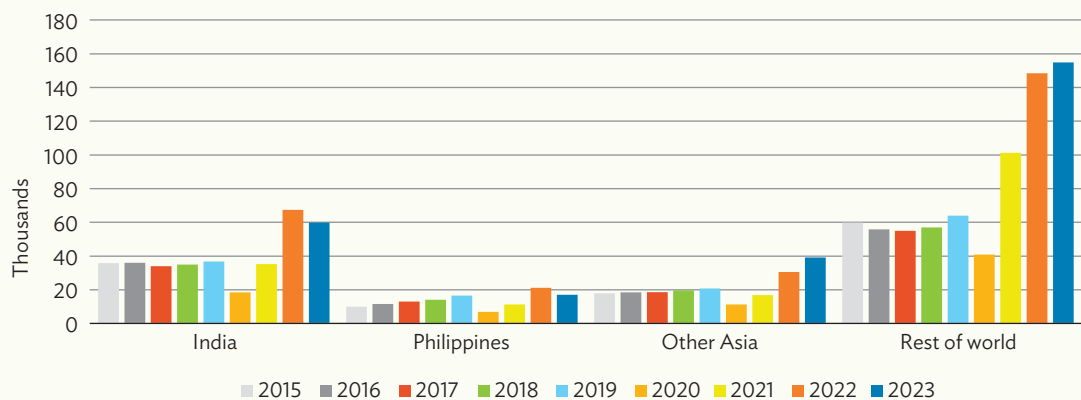
Note: Employment-based entry clearance visas issued for main applicant. Employment-based migration is former Tier 1, 2, and 5. The 2023 Q4 figure is estimated.

Source: United Kingdom Home Office.

Asia has long been the primary region of origin for permanent immigrants to Canada, particularly in economic categories. Most of these permanent-type migrants were already in Canada on temporary work or study status. Since 2015, approximately 60% of new permanent admissions have been Asian (Figure 1.9). The major Asian origin countries contributing to this trend include India, constituting 62.4% of the total Asian economic migrants, followed by the PRC at 12.5% and the Philippines at 11%. Notably, Indonesia, Viet Nam, and Nepal, among other Asian origin countries, have experienced significant growth. The Canadian government targets for 2024 economic categories foresee 6% annual increases, making it likely that economic migration from Asia to Canada will also increase in 2024.

Figure 1.9: Labor Migration from Asia to Canada, 2015–2023
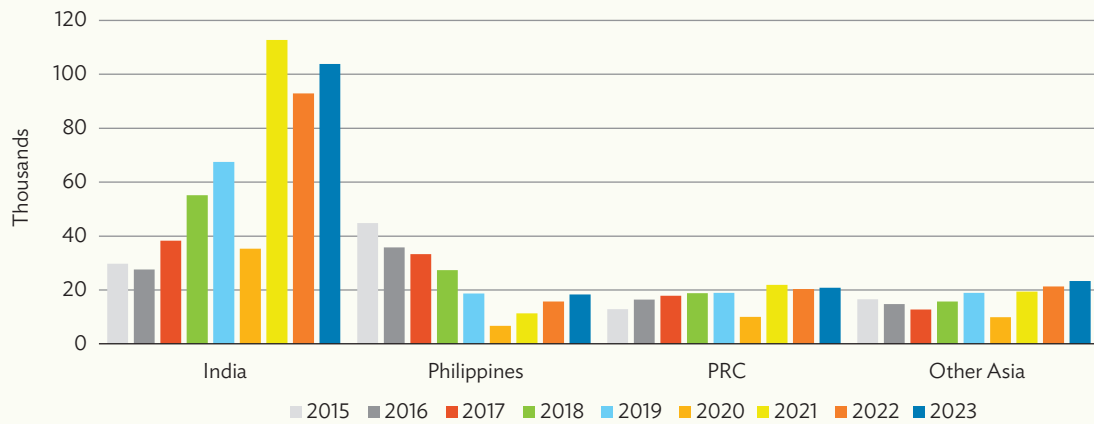
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Note: Canada admissions economic categories (includes dependents of primary applicant).

Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Turning to Australia, temporary skilled labor migration from Asia to Australia experienced an 8.4% decrease, reaching 25,800 in 2023 (Figure 1.10). Following the sharp rebound observed in 2022 for the number of temporary resident (skilled) visas granted to Indian citizens, the momentum appears to have diminished, resulting in a 39% decrease. On the other hand, flows from the Philippines through this channel continued to increase strongly, with a 54% growth. The growth for the PRC remained modest at 7%.

Figure 1.10: Temporary Skilled Labor Migration from Asia to Australia, 2015–2023
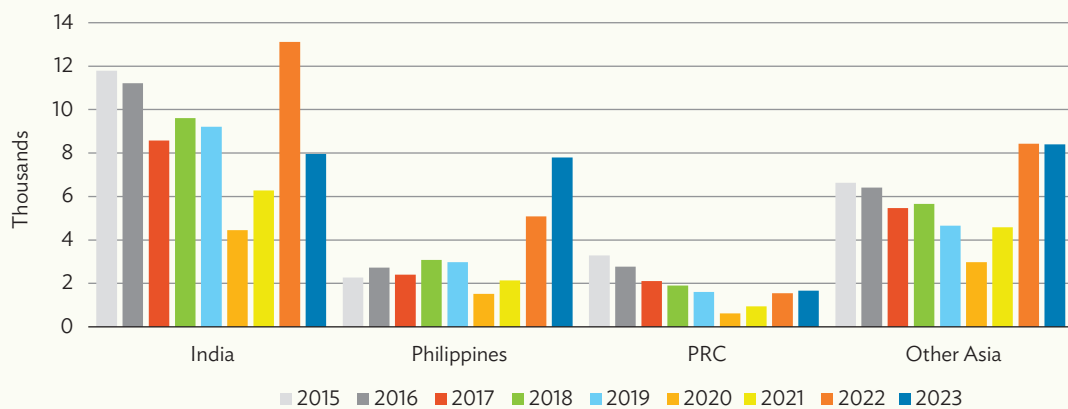
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Note: Temporary resident (skilled) visas granted.

Source: Australian Department of Home Affairs.

Shifting focus to skilled workers in the United States and examining nonimmigrant visa issuances (Figure 1.11), which exclusively reflect new arrivals from abroad, the share of Indian immigrants still accounted for the majority but decreased to 74% in 2023. Simultaneously, the share of immigrants from the PRC increased significantly to 12% from 3% following the lifting of strict travel restrictions in both the PRC and the United States.

In absolute numbers, nearly 193,400 Indian workers were issued an H-1B visa during 2023, representing a 1.5% decrease. The growth for workers from the PRC was substantial, at 275%. Workers from other Asian countries received a total of 14,300 visas in 2023.

Figure 1.11: **H-1B Visa Issuances by the United States, by Country of Nationality of Recipient, 2019–2023**
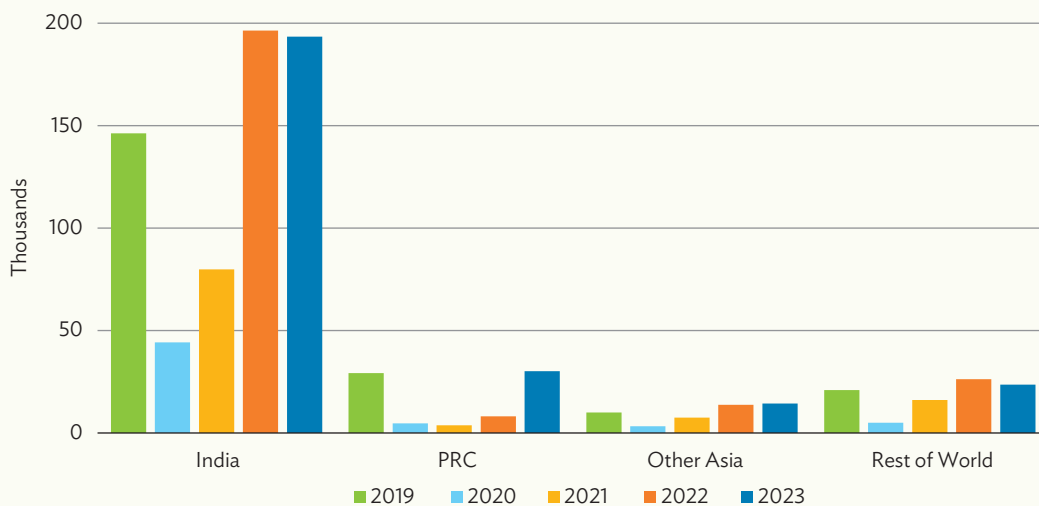
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Note: Includes H-1B and H-1B1 visas.

Source: United States Department of State.

In addition to this inflow of H-1B visa holders, the United States also admits family members, who receive H-4 visas. Most H-4 visa beneficiaries are also from India or other Asian nationalities (Box 1.2).

There are other categories of temporary migrants to the United States, such as the H-2A and H-2B visa holders, where Asian migrants are practically absent. The case of L-1 intracompany transfers, on the other hand, is different: Asian recipients comprised more than half of the 77,000 L-1 issuances in 2023, of which Indians were the largest group, about one-third of the world total. Like H-1B holders, many L-1 holders later settle in the United States as permanent residents.

Box 1.2: **Indians Receive Most H-4 Visas as Family of Skilled Workers**

H-4 visas are issued by the United States to family members of skilled workers. The H-4 visa is available to spouses and unmarried children (under the age of 21) of H-1B, H-1C, H-2A, H-2B, and H-3 visa holders, although the category is dominated by H-1B family. Figure 1.12 illustrates the H-4 visa issuances by country of nationality from 2019 to 2023. After a significant drop in 2020, issuances swiftly recovered and reached a record level of 156,400 in 2023. Notably, approximately 84% of H-4 visa beneficiaries have been Indian nationals. In December 2023, there were about 140,600 H-4 issuances corresponding to the 193,400 H-1B and H-1B1 visa issuances for individuals from India. In contrast, there were only 4,300 H-4 visas for the 30,100 H-1B visa issuances for individuals from the PRC. This may reflect the higher share of men among Indian H-1B holders (75%) than among those with PRC nationality (50%). Male skilled labor migrants are more likely to have and to bring family members than female skilled labor migrants (OECD 2017).

Figure 1.12: **H-4 Visa Issuances by the United States, by Country of Nationality of Recipient, 2019–2023**
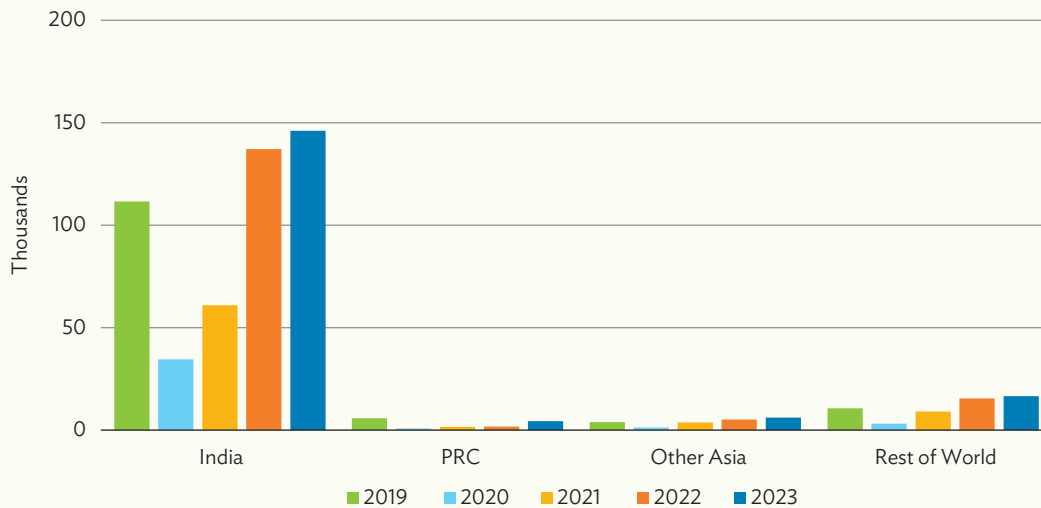
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: United States Department of State.

Some skilled migration from Asia to the EU occurs through the EU Blue Card scheme for highly-qualified workers. Looking exclusively at this type of residence permit, the share of Asians among skilled workers has remained relatively stable since 2019, hovering around 30%. In 2023, the number of Indian workers increased by 19%. Notably, the share of Indian-born individuals among Asian skilled workers has consistently risen, reaching 84% in 2022 (Figure 1.13). However, there was a decline in the number of PRC workers by 17% in 2022.

Figure 1.13: European Blue Card (Highly-qualified Workers) Issuances, 2019–2022
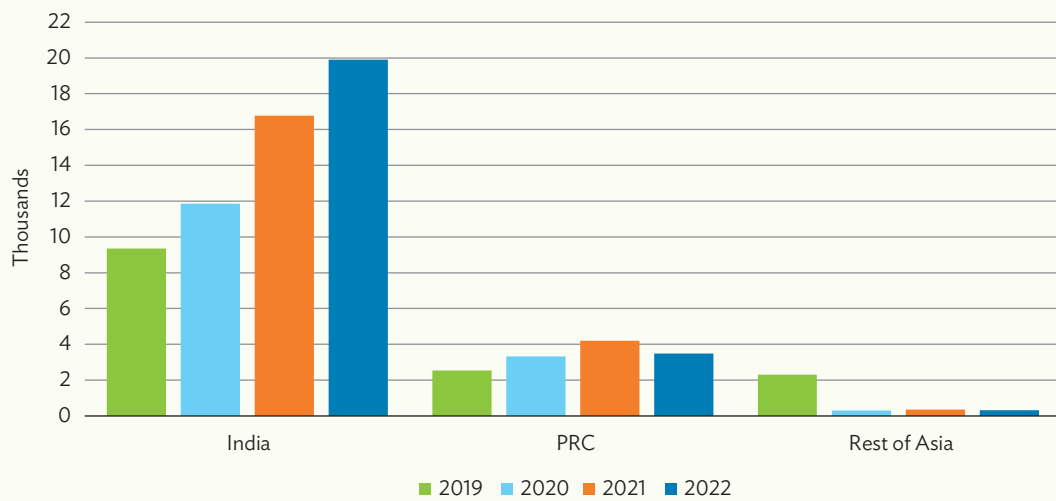
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: Eurostat.

While high-skilled workers are predominantly Indians, it is worthwhile to examine all employment permits issued to Asian workers by specific destination countries. In Germany, most permits for employment are issued to high-skilled or skilled workers. The number of employment permits issued to Asians surged by 284% in 2022, increasing from 5,800 in 2021 to 22,500. This was still less than the increase in permits to workers from the rest of the world, which rose 360%. However, the flows from India grew more than that, to 10,900 in 2022 from 2,400 in 2021. The PRC and the Philippines were among the top three Asian origin countries. In Italy, by contrast, most work permits are issued to lower-skilled workers. In Italy, Pakistan emerged as the top Asian origin country, along with India and Bangladesh, as the number of permits issued to Pakistanis increased by 112%, while those issued to Indians saw a moderate 11% increase. The increase in labor migration from the rest of the world to Italy was lower, increasing only 23%.

Figure 1.14: First Employment Permit by Citizenship in Italy and Germany, 2019–2022

Italy

Germany
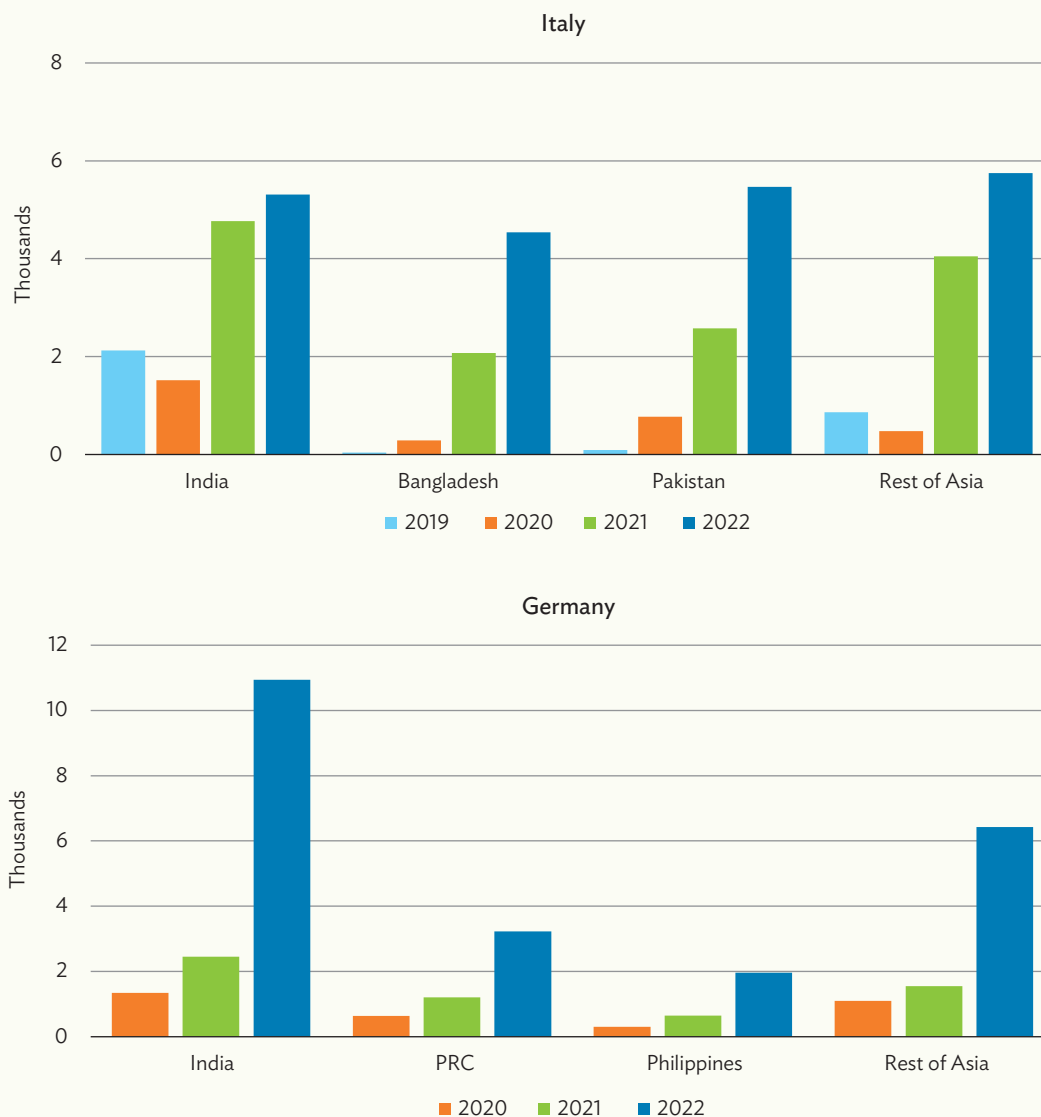
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: Eurostat.

1.5 International Student Mobility to and from Asia

Comparative data on international student enrolment are available for 2021, a year which still reflected disruption in movements related to the pandemic. The share of Asian students from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia has increased from 28% in 2000 to its record level of 40% in 2020. However, for the first time in 2 decades, it recorded a negative change of greater than 0.5% in 2021 (from 40% to 38%). The most recent data, estimated by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, refer to 2021, but this declining new trend starting from 2021 will persist in Asia's lower international mobility for education during the pandemic.

In 2021, the number of outbound internationally mobile tertiary students studying abroad barely budged, rising only 0.17%. However, the share of Asian students among these internationally mobile tertiary students marked a notable decline of 4.5%, representing the first decrease since 2012 (Figure 1.15). East Asia, which had played a pivotal role in Asia's increasing prominence in international student mobility at the turn of the century, has had a falling share since 2013. Despite returning to its 2005 share of about 20% in 2020, it dropped below the 20% level again in 2021. This decline was attributed to reductions in the number of outbound international students from the PRC, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, decreasing by 6.8%, 10.7%, and 11.6%, respectively. Conversely, the decrease in South Asia was not significant (–0.5%), and the region maintained its share at around 13.5% in 2021. South Asia has been consistently the main driver of Asia's growth in international student mobility since 2013.

Figure 1.15: Share of Outbound Internationally Mobile Tertiary Students by Region of Origin, 1998–2021 (%)
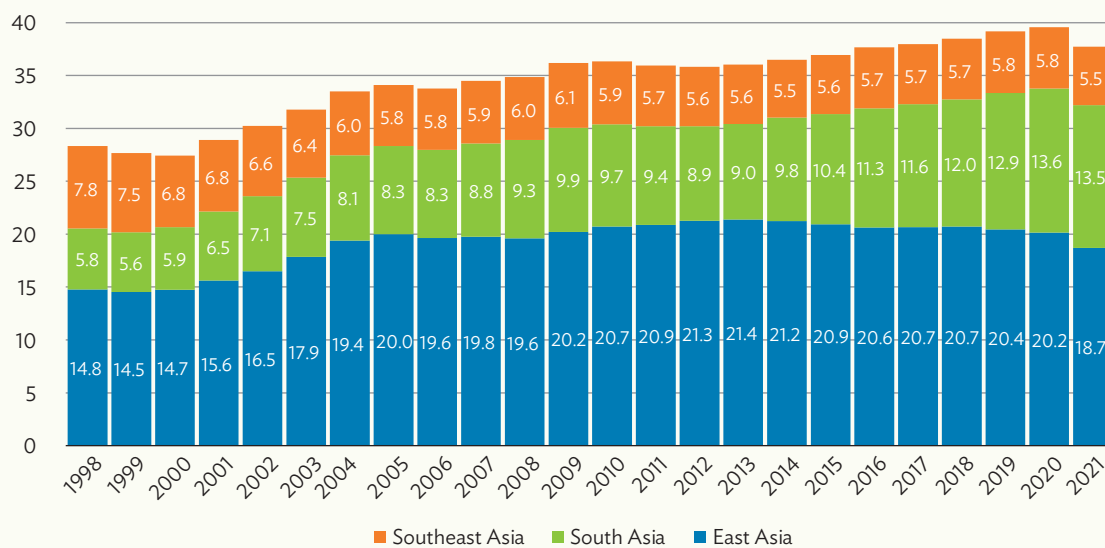
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

For a considerable period, Asia has been the primary source of international students for OECD countries. However, in 2021, the region saw a slight decrease in its share, dropping by 2 percentage points compared to 2020 (Table 1.6). Notably, the two main Asian origin countries, the PRC and India, together comprised half of the region's share.

Table 1.6: Share of International Students Enrolled in an OECD Country by Continent of Origin, 2020 and 2021

	2013	2020	2021
Asia	53	59	57
Europe	24	21	22
Africa	8	8	10
Latin America and the Caribbean	6	6	6
North America	3	3	3
Oceania	1	1	1
Unspecified	5	2	2

Source: OECD Education at a Glance Database (2022) (accessed 15 January 2024).

Box 1.3: Indian Students have Higher Stay Rates than Other Permit Holders

International students from India are more likely than international students overall to stay in the host country (OECD 2022). The rates were highest in Canada (91%) and Australia (81%). In contrast, in most countries except for Canada, New Zealand, Japan, and Netherlands, PRC students have a lower stay rate than the overall international student population.

Figure 1.16: Stay Rates in 2020 of PRC, Indian, and all Permit Holders with First Education Permit in 2015
(%)
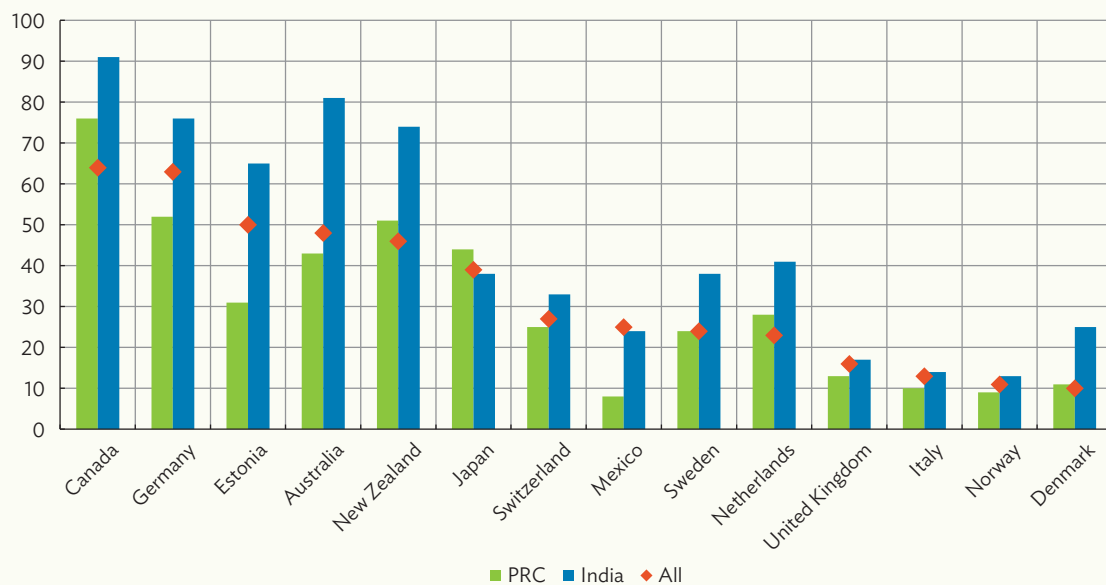
PRC = People's Republic of China.

Note: Stay rate includes individuals still enrolled as students. Data with less than 40 nationals in the base year are excluded. Data from Denmark and Sweden include returning individuals. Data from New Zealand do not include individuals who transitioned to citizenship. Data from the United Kingdom refer to out-of-country visa grants with no valid leave in the prior 12 months and include a small number of child students arriving for secondary education.

Source: OECD International Migration Outlook (2022).

Looking at non-OECD Asian destinations of international students, figures suggest that the pandemic and associated restrictions have had a dramatic negative effect on the enrollment of international students in the PRC. The PRC had set an objective in 2020 of bringing 500,000 international students (including language, exchange and non-degree students) by 2020: the number of international students in higher education institutions was 307,000 in 2018 and 333,000 in 2019. The number fell to 274,000 in 2020, 256,000 in 2021 and 253,000 in 2022, raising the question of how the PRC will restore its attractiveness for international students.

Malaysia is another significant destination of international students in Asia. Numbers peaked in 2018, at about 171,000, before falling to 131,000 in 2020 and 2021 and only slightly increasing in 2022.

> **Box 1.4:** **Size of Asian Migrant Populations and their Labor Market Outcomes in the OECD Area**
>
> **More than 50% of immigrants in Türkiye, Canada, Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea originate from Asia**
>
> In the OECD, around 30% of the immigrant population hails from Asian countries, while approximately one in five foreign-born individuals in EU countries come from Asia. In the Netherlands, the proportions of African, Asian, and Latin American immigrants are similar, each constituting around 20% of the immigrant population. In the Nordic countries (excluding Iceland), characterized by significant humanitarian flows, a substantial portion of immigrants, ranging from 30% to 44%, were born in Asia, primarily South Asia. Unsurprisingly, in Japan and the Republic of Korea, over 79% of immigrants were born in Asia. In Canada and Australia, more than half of the foreign-born population comes from Asia.
>
> **Figure 1.17:** **Migrants Born in Asia as a Share of All Migrants, 2020**
>
> Population aged 15 to 64 years old, 2020
>
>
>
> Note: Immigrants born in "other countries" are not considered. Japan determines who is an immigrant on the basis of nationality, not on the basis of country of birth. The Republic of Korea determines who is an immigrant on the basis of nationality and additionally includes immigrants who have been naturalized in the past 5 years in the immigrant population. The Republic of Korea's data include those aged 15 and above. Finland, Sweden, and France potentially include North African countries under "Asia."
>
> Source: OECD (2023). Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In.
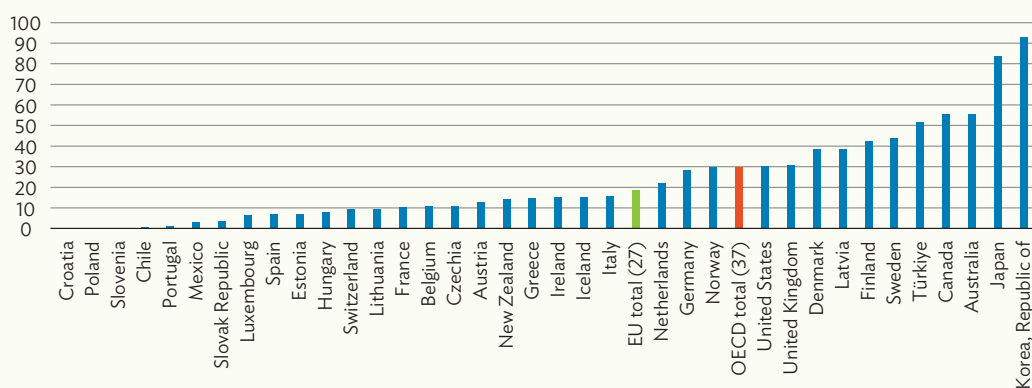
Box 1.4 *continued*

The unemployment rates of migrants from Asia showed a more significant improvement compared to those of other migrant groups

Table 1.7 illustrates changes in employment, unemployment, and participation rates by migrants' region of origin in 2022. In most OECD countries, the employment situation for migrants generally saw improvement over the year. Notably, employment rates for migrants, especially those from Asia, showed more significant improvements compared to other migrant groups in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

In the United States, migrants born in Asia and the Middle East experienced significantly lower unemployment rates (2.8%) compared to the overall foreign-born population (3.5%) and native-born individuals (3.9%) in 2022.

In Canada and the United Kingdom, immigrants from Asia nearly caught up with, or outperformed, the native-born in terms of employment rates, with figures of 75.7% versus 75.8% in Canada and 71.2% versus 70.3% in the UK.

In Japan, migrant employment rates varied from 94% for migrants from Viet Nam to 69% for those from the PRC, while the native-born employment rate stood at 77%.

In the Republic of Korea, employment rates improved the most for PRC-born ethnic Koreans, emerging as the origin group with the highest employment rate (77%). Conversely, other PRC-born migrants remained the group with the lowest employment rate, below 38%, despite a slight improvement since 2021.

Table 1.7: Employment Rates by Region of Origin in Selected OECD Countries in 2021 and 2022 (%)

Country/Region of Birth		Employment Rate		Unemployment Rate		Participation Rate	
		2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Australia	Asian-born	72.8	76.8	5.8	3.5	77.4	79.6
	Foreign-born (total)	74.2	77.2	5.3	3.6	78.3	80.0
	Native-born	75.7	77.5	5.2	3.9	79.8	80.6
Canada	Asian-born	72.5	75.7	8.4	5.3	79.2	79.9
	Foreign-born (total)	72.9	75.2	8.5	5.9	79.6	79.9
	Native-born	73.4	75.8	7.0	5.0	78.9	79.8
EU27 countries	Asian-born	63.5	66.2	10.2	8.0	70.7	72.0
	Foreign-born (total)	64.5	66.8	11.9	10.0	73.2	74.3
	Native-born	69.0	70.3	6.4	5.6	73.7	74.5
United Kingdom	Asian-born	67.3	71.2	6.2	5.6	72.7	75.5
	Foreign-born (total)	64.5	66.8	11.9	10.0	73.2	74.3
	Native-born	69.0	70.3	6.4	5.6	73.7	74.5

Box 1.4 *continued*

Table 1.7 *continued*

	Country/Region of Birth	Employment Rate		Unemployment Rate		Participation Rate	
		2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
United States	Asian and Middle East-born	70.0	72.1	5.1	2.8	73.7	74.1
	Foreign-born (total)	70.0	72.6	5.6	3.5	74.2	75.2
	Native-born	67.8	69.4	5.5	3.9	71.7	72.2
Republic of Korea	Asian-born	67.6	67.8	5.9	4.1	71.8	70.7
	PRC (ethnic Korean)	74.5	77.3	7.2	3.9	80.3	80.4
	PRC	35.8	37.6	10.9	7.3	40.2	40.5
	Viet Nam	54.5	54.5	6.1	5.1	58.0	57.4
	Other Asian	77.8	76.0	3.4	3.1	80.5	78.4
	Foreign-born (total)	67.6	67.8	5.9	4.1	71.8	70.7
	Native-born	67.3	69.3	3.5	2.9	69.8	71.4
Japan*	Asian-born		77.1		4.4		80.6
	PRC		68.8		5.3		72.7
	Viet Nam		93.7		1.3		94.9
	Korea (includes DPRK)		71.6		6.7		76.8
	Philippines		78.0		5.8		82.8
	Foreign-born (total)		77.3		5.1		81.4

DPRK = Democratic People's Republic of Korea, EU = European Union, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Notes: The population refers to working-age population (15–64) for the employment and participation rates and to active population aged 15-64 for the unemployment rate. Rates for the Republic of Korea are estimated for the population aged 15–59 and refer to foreigners and immigrants who have been naturalized in the past 5 years, compared to nationals. * Rates for Japan refer to foreign nationals, the main nationalities, and to the year 2020. The region of birth could not be made fully comparable across countries of residence because of the way aggregate data provided to the OECD Secretariat are coded.

Source: OECD. 2023. International Migration Outlook.

1.6 Remittances to and from Asian Economies

Inflows. Remittance inflows remained on a global upswing in 2023 along with economic expansion. Inflows amounted to $860.3 billion or 3.0% higher than the previous year, despite constraints from continued geopolitical crises and tighter monetary policies (Figure 1.18). Remittances to Asia and the Pacific reached $371.5 billion, bouncing back to pre-pandemic shares at 43.2% of the global total. Meanwhile, the share of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) went from 17.5% in 2022 to 18.3% in 2023 as remittances grew 7.8% to $157.6 billion. Notably, there was a steady increase in the share of LAC in global remittances in the past 10 years due mainly to the expansion in employment opportunities for migrant workers in the United States. Europe's share had steadily declined over the years as a counterbalance to these trends, from around 25% in the late 2010s and down to 22.9% in 2023. In 2023, remittances to Europe were $197.4 billion, placing second to Asia and the Pacific in terms of value and share of the global total, followed by LAC.

Figure 1.18: Remittance Inflows, 2001–2023
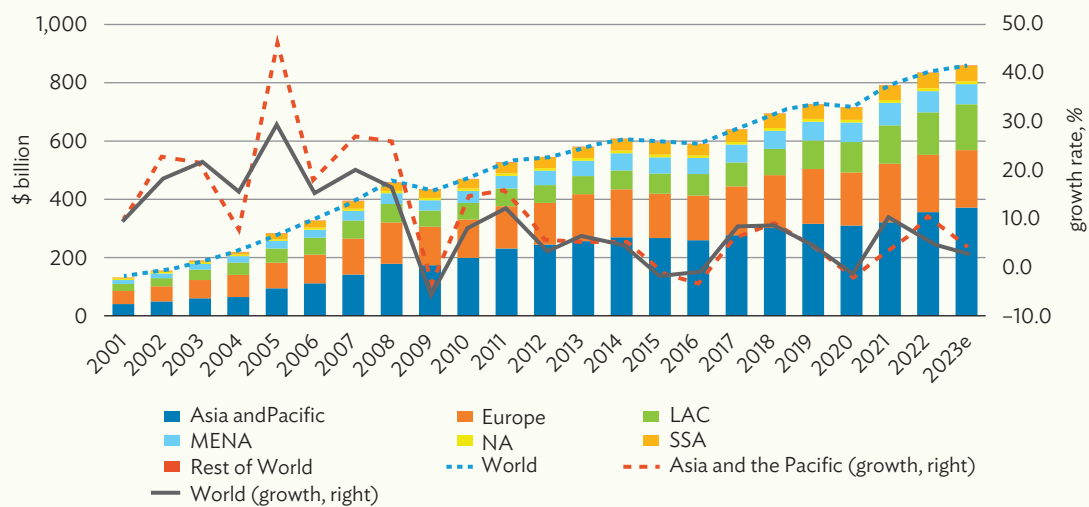
LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean, MENA = Middle East and North Africa, NA = North America, SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa, ROW = rest of world.

Note: Asia and the Pacific—comprising ADB Members countries from Central and West Asia, East Asia (including Japan), South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania (Pacific island countries with Australia and New Zealand).

Source: World Bank-KNOMAD, December 2023.

Outflows. In contrast, outward remittances dipped slightly by 1.0% in 2022 due mainly to the $6.6 billion drop in remittances from Europe. The Russian Federation, which is a major source of remittances for economies in Central and West Asia (CWA), saw an outflow of workers from these economies in 2022, as well as economic sanctions that weakened the ruble and affected remittance transactions (United Nations 2022). Remittance outflows from the Russian Federation went from $16.8 million in 2021 to $5.8 million in 2022. Meanwhile, remittances from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) were steady at $132.6 billion ($133.0 billion in 2021) although ongoing reforms could have a substantial impact on remittances in the coming years. Countries in the region, in particular members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), have positioned themselves as go-to investment destinations and embarked on economic diversification policies to reduce reliance on oil. In turn, these changes are driving demand for skilled workers and shifting the structure of migrant labor. GCC countries are implementing policies to attract and retain skilled foreign workers and address this demand, including allowing long-term permanent residence (De Bel-Air 2023). Saudi Arabia, which is the second largest source of remittances from the region after the United Arab Emirates, recently adopted similar policies to attract foreign businesses and workers De Bel-Air 2023).4 GCC countries have also been discussing reforming the "kafala" system[3] to grant more rights for migrant workers (Radwan and Alshammari 2020; Sherman 2022). These reforms are done parallel to "nationalization" policies which aim to increase employment of GCC nationals and lower national unemployment rates.

Offsetting the sluggish performance of Europe was North America, where remittance outflows surged 9.8% as the economy and labor market particularly that of the United States recaptured the strength lost during the pandemic. Nevertheless, Europe remained the top source of remittances comprising 36.7% of total outflows, followed by MENA (26.3%), and North America (17.8%) (Figure 1.19).

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[3] The kafala system gives employers control on workers' employment and movement (including entry/exit in the country), among others. For more details, see Robinson (2022).

Figure 1.19: Outward Remittances, 2000–2022
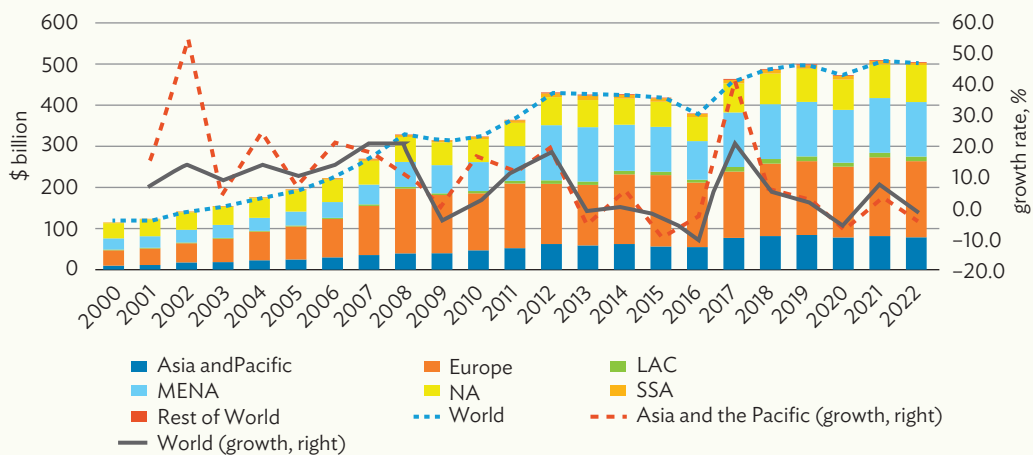
LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean, MENA = Middle East and North Africa, NA = North America; SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa.

Note: Remittance inflows and outflows are not equal due to discrepancies in reporting. See for example, Reinke (2007).

Source: World Bank-KNOMAD (2023).

1.6.1 Remittances in the Asia and the Pacific Region

Inflows. Most of the Asia and the Pacific region saw increased remittance inflows in 2023 as the global economy expanded despite global geopolitical challenges (Figure 1.20a). Oceania posted a 15.4% growth, followed by South Asia (12.7%) and Southeast Asia (6.9%). On the other hand, there was a significant drop of 11.5% in remittance flows to CWA following 2 years of double-digit growth (20.3% in 2021 and 25.1% in 2022). This resulted in a lower share of CWA in total remittance inflows to Asia and the Pacific, to 15.7% from 18.5% previously. Remittances to East Asia were also down although there were signs that it is bottoming out as it fell by only 1.9% compared 2.9% in the previous year. Recovery from the pandemic was slow due to stringent mobility restrictions in the PRC and Hong Kong, China, and persistent geopolitical competition which affected the PRC's businesses in the region and abroad.

Figure 1.20: Remittance Inflows 2021–2023 and Outflows 2020–2022, by Global Region

A. Inflows in Asia and the Pacific, 2021–2023e
value in US$ million / share to total in %
2023e - outermost circle

■ Central and West Asia   ■ East Asia   ■ Oceania   ■ South Asia   ■ Southeast Asia

58,290, 16%
65,867, 19%
81,077, 22%
75,817, 21%
63,772, 17%
65,022, 18%
3,832, 1%
3,321, 1%
164,480, 44%
145,931, 41%
16%
23%
21%
1%
39%
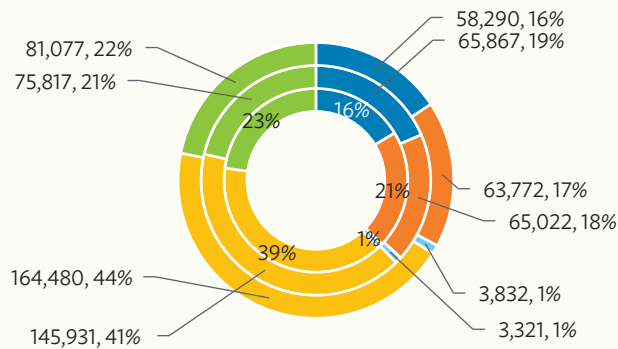
B. Outflows from Asia and the Pacific, 2020–2022
value in $ million / share to total in %
2022 - outermost circle

■ Central and West Asia   ■ East Asia   ■ Oceania   ■ South Asia   ■ Southeast Asia

6,362, 8%
5,287, 6%
20,966, 27%
21,214, 26%
32,108, 41%
40,479, 50%
11,222, 14%
9,193, 11%
7,962, 10%
5,343, 7%
6%
28%
11%
7%
48%
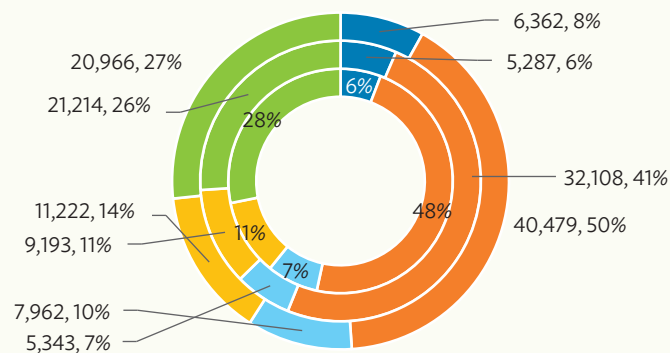
Source: World Bank-KNOMAD. December (2023).

Outflows. In comparison, outward remittances have hovered around $80.0 billion since 2017, and the slight uptick in 2021 was cut short as remittances again dipped to $78.6 billion in 2022 (a –3.6% change). There was a marked broad-based drop in remittances from East Asia (the PRC, Japan, and the Republic of Korea) amounting to $8.3 billion (a –20.7% drop) (Figure 1.20b). Geopolitical competition continued to weigh down the PRC's economy, and trade wars affected supply chains and employment in the region. Hence, the share of East Asia dropped to 40.8% from half of the total remittance outflows from Asia and the Pacific in the previous year. Meanwhile, the surge in outflows from Oceania (49.0% increase) raised its share to 10.1%; and South Asia (growth of 22.1%) saw its share increase to 14.3%.

Bilateral Flows.[4] Figure 1.21a and Figure 1.21b show the bilateral flow of remittances in 2021, by source region and destination in Asia and the Pacific.[5] The top source of remittances globally in 2021 was Europe, followed by North America and MENA. For the Asia and the Pacific region, the main source was MENA, or specifically countries in the GCC whose economies are reliant on migrant workers. South Asia took the greater share of remittances from MENA at 47.0% of the total equivalent to $69.3 billion. Meanwhile, CWA countries receive the most remittances from neighboring Europe (which includes the Russian Federation, as noted), taking 9.9% of the total or $25.4 billion. North America shows a different pattern, as flows to East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia are comparable at respective shares of 10.0% ($22.9 billion), 9.6% ($22.1 billion), and 12.4% ($28.5 billion) of the total.

Proximity and culture, which influence the migration of workers, are also important factors in remittance flows. This is observed in the case of Europe and CWA, and for the regions of Asia and the Pacific, where remittance flows mostly stay within the same region. Large economies serve as the main source of remittances and support the remittance corridors in the region. In South Asia, these would be India and Pakistan; while in the case of Southeast Asia these are Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.[6] Along with the PRC (and with the exception of Singapore), these countries are in a unique position because they supply workers to developed countries and at the same time provide jobs for those within the region (Chandra 2023).

Figure 1.21: Remittance Flows in 2021, by Source and Destination, Global Regions, Value, and Share

A. Remittance flows in 2021, by Source and Destination
(in $ million)
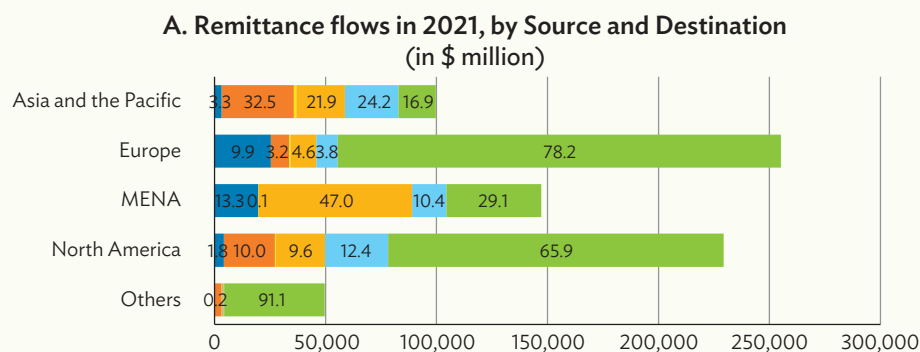
Destination	Source				
	Others	North America	MENA	Europe	Asia and the Pacific
Central and West Asia	87	4,234	19,640	25,374	3,282
East Asia	3,206	22,919	145	8,277	32,444
Oceania	91	519	29	516	1,170
South Asia	504	22,099	69,285	11,655	21,822
Southeast Asia	519	28,458	15,345	9,679	24,155
ROW	45,208	151,065	42,834	199,644	16,873

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[4] Remittance inflows and outflows are useful in analyzing trends, but do not show the interlinkages among countries that is contained in bilateral flows data. Bilateral flows complement the previous section, with the caveat that analysis is based on 2021 estimates which do not capture more recent information (Ratha, Plaza, and Kim 2022).

[5] Note that only the subregions of Asia and the Pacific are indicated in the destination, with the rest added together as rest of world.

[6] For further details, see World Bank. Corridors | Remittance Prices Worldwide (worldbank.org)

Figure 1.21 *continued*

B. Remittance flows in 2021, by Source and Destination
(in $ million)

Destination		Source				
		Southeast Asia	South Asia	Oceania	East Asia	Central and West Asia
■	Central and West Asia	1,360	11	606	217	1,087
■	East Asia	3,958	1,329	5,060	21,969	128
■	Oceania	141	8	973	48	0
■	South Asia	5,279	10,028	5,706	805	4
■	Southeast Asia	8,375	1,075	5,011	9,691	2
■	ROW	501	499	9,072	1,691	5,109

MENA = Middle East and North Africa, ROW = rest of world.

Note: Central and West Asia, East Asia, Oceania, South Asia, and Southeast Asia comprise Asia and the Pacific. Destinations shown are only the subregions of Asia and the Pacific; other regions are shown as ROW.

Source: KNOMAD/World Bank Bilateral Remittance Matrix 2021, December 2022.

1.6.2 Share of Remittances to Gross Domestic Product

Figure 1.22a and Figure 1.22b show the share to gross domestic product (GDP) and values for remittance inflows in 2023 and outflows in 2022 for countries in Asia and the Pacific. For both remittance flows, countries from the Pacific and CWA are among those with the highest shares of remittances to GDP. Economies in these regions are dependent on remittances from abroad sent by migrant workers in host countries. At the same time, the migration of local workers and the small local population in the case of the Pacific mean that these economies face labor shortages which are filled by foreign workers, who also send remittances abroad (Tinio 2024).

Inflows. For the first time, Tajikistan in 2023 topped the list of countries with the highest shares of remittances to GDP, with 48.2% (Figure 1.22a). Limited opportunities in the country push workers to look for jobs abroad, primarily in the Russian Federation in the construction and services sectors (Yamada, Shimizutani, and Murakami 2022). Most of these migrant workers are male and aged between 15 to 44 years old (ADB 2020), and their remittances substantially contribute to household spending especially non-food items and education. Given the limited employment opportunities in the country and high underemployment, there is strong motivation for workers to look for jobs abroad, made even worse by the pandemic.[7] Remittance inflows to Tajikistan suddenly surged 83.0% in 2022 to $5.3 billion, almost double the $2.9 billion in the previous year. In 2023, this further went up by 6.6% to $5.7 billion.

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[7] To facilitate access to jobs abroad for its migrant workers and in some cases to protect their rights as well, Tajikistan has bilateral agreements with the PRC (2017), United Arab Emirates (2018), the Russian Federation (2021 update of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2013), Kazakhstan (2018), and Uzbekistan (2018), and also maintains cooperation with several other countries (IOM 2021).

Figure 1.22: Remittance Inflows in 2023 and Outflows in 2022, Asian Economies, Value, and Share

A. Inflows, value as share to GDP, in %

■ 2023e   ● % of GDP in 2023

B. Outflows, share to GDP, in percent

■ 2022   ● % of GDP in 2022
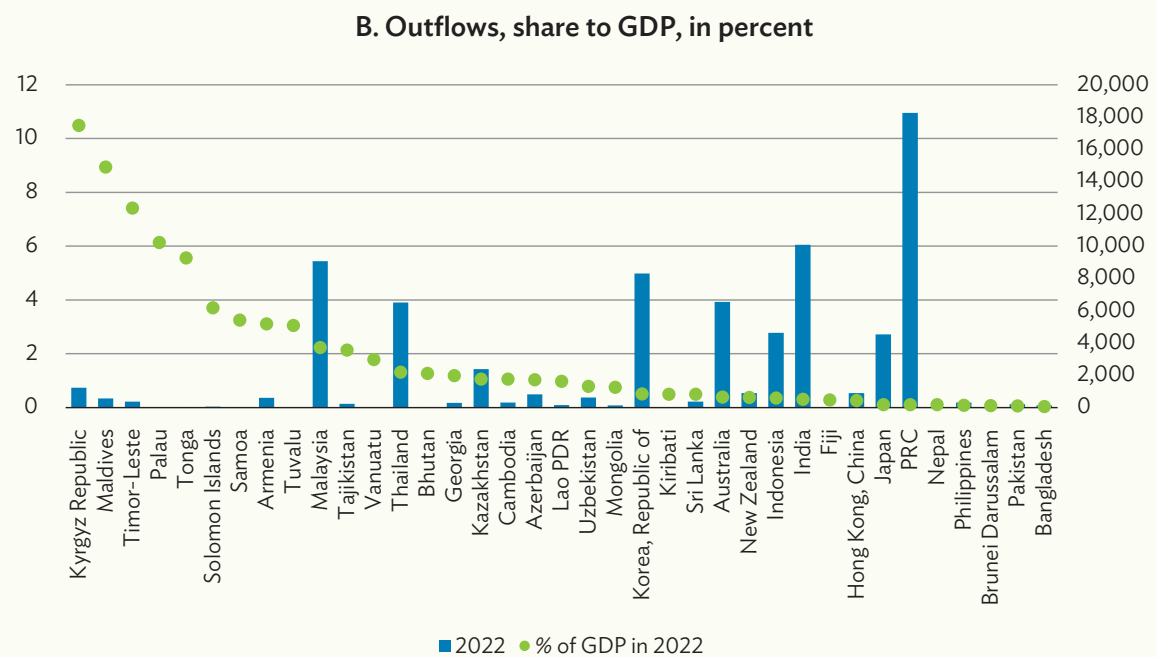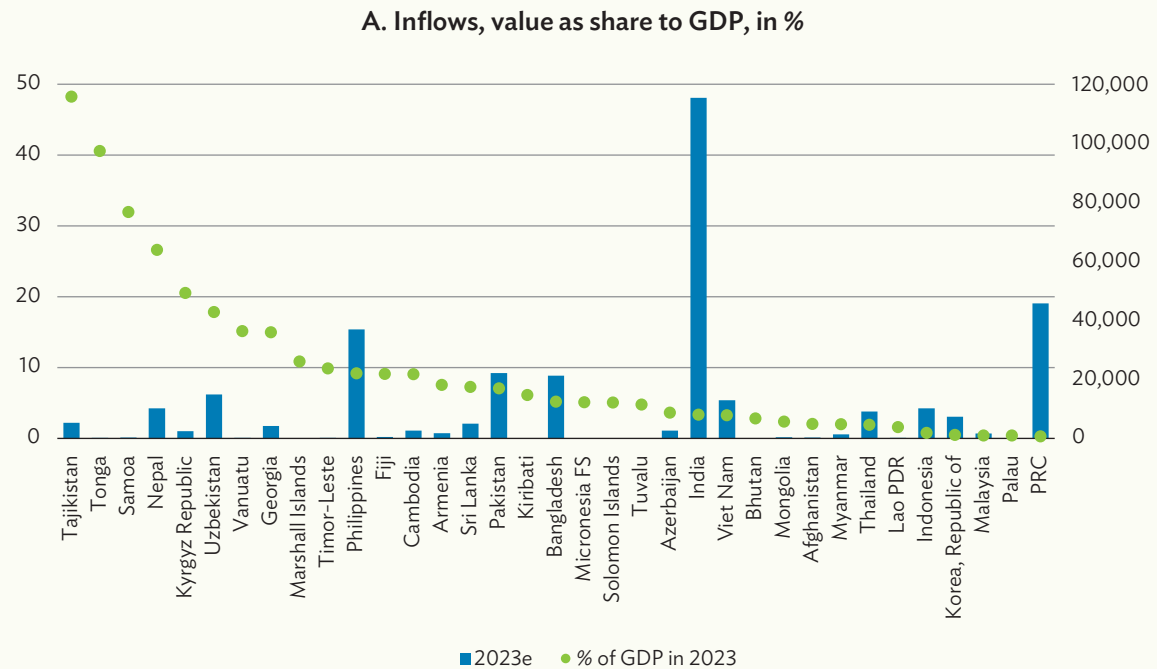
GDP = gross domestic product, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: World Bank-KNOMAD (2023).

Outflows. Meanwhile, outward remittances as share to GDP in 2022 was highest in the Kyrgyz Republic at 10.5% (Figure 1.22b). The expansion of foreign investments[8] in the Kyrgyz Republic has increased demand for labor, which is met mainly by supply of migrant workers from neighboring countries particularly the PRC as the Kyrgyz Republic's own workers migrate for work abroad. Large-scale projects also demand specialists that are normally hired through a quota system for foreign labor migration administered by the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration (Kim 2023). Foreign workers can also work in the country through pendular (border) labor migration, which is for those who reside in neighboring countries but work in the Kyrgyz Republic and for citizens of the Eurasian Economic Unio; these workers are exempt from work permits and quotas.

1.6.3 Cost of Sending Remittances

Figure 1.23: **Cost of Remittances by Destination, 2020–2023**
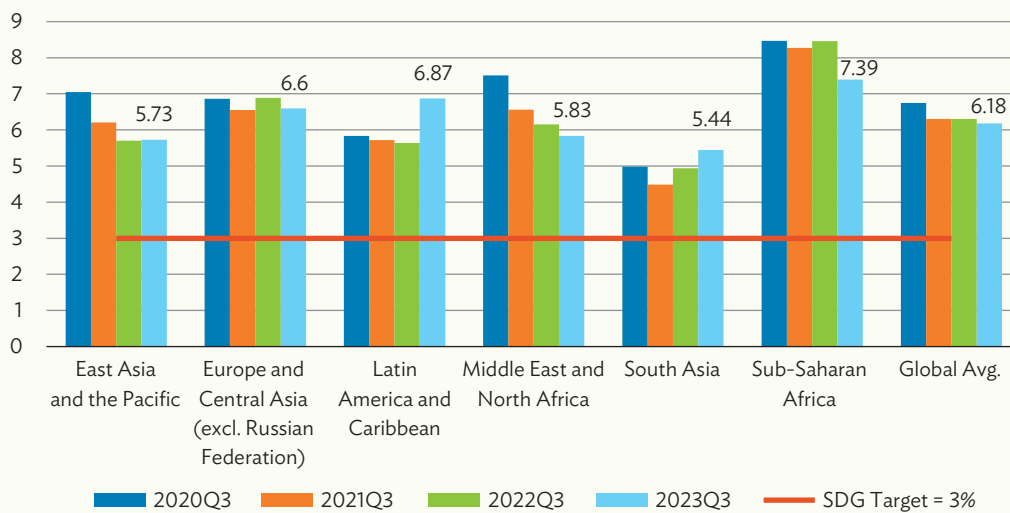
Source: World Bank (2023). An Analysis of Trends on Cost of Remittance Services. Remittance Prices Worldwide Quarterly Issue 47. http://remittanceprices.worldbank.org

The average cost of sending a $200 remittance in 2023, at 6.2%, remained well above the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10.c benchmark of 3.0%[9] (Figure 1.23). Costs across the regions declined especially in SSA where the cost of remittance transfers were most expensive, dropping from 8.5% to 7.4%; and in MENA where the cost went down from 6.2% to 5.8%. A similar trend was seen in other regions, except in two regions where the cost was the lowest. In South Asia, the average cost was fluctuating between 4%–5% since 2020 but jumped to 5.4% in 2023; while in LAC the cost was between 5.5%–6% before it went up to 6.9% in 2023. A closer look is necessary to determine the possible reasons for these increases. The cost of remittance transfers depends on several factors, but mainly on remittance corridors, channel (bank, money transfer operators or MTOs, mobile operators, and post

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[8] Investors in the Kyrgyz Republic are mainly from the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, the PRC, Malta (where many Russian investors reside), and the Netherlands (Lloyd's Bank. n.d.).

[9] Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10.c: By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%; SDG indicator 10.c.1: Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted. Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10#targets_and_indicators/

office), and service provider; and the large differences in fees between these options is cancelled out by averaging (Maeda, Edwards, and Surdayarma 2024a).

Digitalization has been a key reason for the decline in the cost of cross-border remittances. Online and mobile transfers, including e-wallets, have drastically reduced the cost of operations, simplified the transaction process, and improved accessibility. Seeing this opportunity, governments are implementing reforms to expand the use of digital channels and ease the process for migrant workers who send money back home. For example, in 2024, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) allowed exchange houses under the jurisdiction of UAE authorities to increase remittance fees for transactions done over the counter by at least 15%; this may encourage senders to use digital channels (WAM 2024). Likewise, the Kyrgyz Republic has been implementing reforms to strengthen its digital payments landscape and improve access to financial services particularly for those in the rural areas (Vargas and Savonitto 2023). With this, the use of digital channels improved and in 2021, 22% of the Kyrgyz Republic's households opted to receive remittances through digital transfers, such as to payment cards or mobile wallets. The foremost reason for the adoption of digital means is convenience due to reduced travel and wait times. Cost was not as important, since the new system had similar costs to the dominant low-cost channel between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation (interlinked the Kyrgyz Republic's Elcard and the Russian Federation's Mir national card payment systems).

On the other hand, in the Pacific where the cost of cross-border transfers is much higher compared to other regions (Subhanji 2022), the majority of the population still uses more expensive conventional bank channels and MTOs. This is mainly due to preference for ease of use and accessibility, and lack of awareness of lower cost options and low digital literacy (Maeda, Edwards, and Surdayarma 2024b). Providers with more branches or presence, such as banks or MTOs that have been in the region longer and have wider networks, are favored over MTOs with limited presence even when the latter are less expensive, and over digital options that require digital savvy. In addition, since digital channels are dependent on existing infrastructure, inadequate information and communication technology infrastructure and internet and/or mobile connectivity also constrain the use of online channels and mobile transfers.

1.7 Summary

This chapter outlines the significant shifts in labor migration in Asia following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether record deployment levels in 2023 reflect structural shifts in demand in destination countries is still unclear, although indications are that the rebound goes beyond recovery from the pandemic. The main origin countries—the Philippines and Bangladesh—saw substantial increases in migrant worker outflows, particularly to Saudi Arabia for the former, and to Malaysia for the latter, but destinations outside the GCC and ASEAN appear to be growing in importance.

Other trends have been disrupted. Labor migration of female workers in Asia had been increasing as a share of outflows. While the overall percentage in 2023 remained below the 2019 figure, the share of women in workers outflows was still higher in 2023 than in 2019 for two-thirds of the origin countries. Average skill levels of deployed workers was increasing up to 2020, but have since varied due to changes in the number of workers leaving and the sectors concerned. As a result, the skill mix of outgoing workers has evolved in different directions depending on the country of origin.

Asian skilled workers dominate inflows to many OECD economies. In addition, labor market outcomes of Asian migrants improved more than those of other migrant groups. Enrolment of Asian students in global higher education is still preponderant but for the first time in 2021, their share in the total declined, primarily due to fewer students from the PRC.

Remittance flows toward Asia rebounded slightly later than in the rest of the world, reflecting the later recovery of labor migration. In 2023, the increase of remittance inflows to Asia and the Pacific (4.4%) was higher than that of the rest of the world, and the share of Asia as a recipient rose to 43.2%. This overall figure hides different situations across Asian subregions, with South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania recording strong increases in 2023, while remittance flows to East Asia were stable and those to Central and West Asia, where several countries rely heavily on remittances, dropped sharply, mostly due to the situation in the Russian Federation. The cost of cross-border remittances are lowest toward South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific island countries, but still well above the SDG target, and costs appear to be increasing in South Asia.

The prospects for labor migration in Asia suggest that, barring major geopolitical or health disruptions, increased movement will occur in the next few years, as channels to new destinations open as labor markets tighten and skill needs climb.

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Middle-Skilled Labor Migration in the Construction Sector: Migration Pathways and Certifying Skills of Migrant Workers in Singapore and Thailand

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2.1 Introduction

Of the total of 9.7 million international migrants living in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) net destination countries—Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand—9 million are international migrants of working age, of whom 7.1 million are intra-ASEAN migrants from origin countries within the region. Traditionally the majority of migrant workers in the region are engaged in elementary occupations across agriculture, industry, and services. Yet with economic growth as well as rapid demographic, technological, and industrial shifts in the region, the need for skilled workers is growing as evidenced by increasing employer demand as well as calls to strengthen regional cooperation in skills development, skills recognition, and jobs matching to meet job market demands and skills shortages (ASEAN 2020, 2023). Recent international labor migration statistics show that over 50% of migrant workers across three top destination countries[1] in the ASEAN region are employed in medium-skilled jobs (ILOSTAT n.d.). Legal pathways for admission have not, however, kept pace with this shift.

Regular migration pathways are needed to meet labor demand. There are different ways for governments to react to labor and skills shortages (ILO 2019b). Many economies use certification systems that require employers to try first to recruit local workers; employers are certified to recruit foreign workers if this recruitment effort fails. Alternatively, many economies have established a quota system for selected occupations, in which a specified number of migrant workers are admitted in shortage occupations, which are identified based on available labor market information and forecasts. Yet another approach is to charge a levy on employers as a disincentive for hiring migrant workers and to encourage domestic hiring. Quotas at an enterprise level linked to the number of locals employed—sometimes called a "dependency ratio"—can also be applied.

This chapter looks at the pathways for middle-skilled migration and the accompanying skills recognition approaches in two countries of destination in the ASEAN region—Singapore and Thailand. Both countries attract workers of varying skill levels to the construction sector. While the phenomenon of labor migration for migrant workers into elementary-level occupations in the construction sector has been documented, labor migration into middle-skilled occupations in construction is less studied. This chapter compares the different processes and pathways for middle-skilled labor migration applied by Singapore and Thailand to identify good practices and lessons that can benefit other countries in the

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[1] Data are drawn from the labor force surveys of Brunei Darussalam (2022), Malaysia (2022), and Thailand (2021).

region. In doing so, this chapter draws from a country note on Singapore's recruitment and immigration policies for construction sector migrant workers and a rapid assessment survey with Thai employers.

2.2 Frameworks on Skills Recognition for Migrant Workers

Given the important role that migrant workers play in national economic and social development, investment in the upskilling and reskilling of workers as well as facilitating the mutual recognition of skills, qualifications, and competencies has been recognized as an important objective in the global migration agenda. Objective 18 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration calls on states to "Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies". Further, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work noted that promoting the acquisition of skills, competencies, and qualifications for all workers throughout their working lives is needed to address existing and anticipated skills gaps; to ensure education and training systems are responsive to labor market needs, taking into account the evolution of work; and to enhance workers' capacity to make use of the opportunities available for decent work (ILO 2019a).

The centrality of skills development to inclusive economic growth and employment was reiterated in ILO's Global Call to Action for a human-centered recovery (ILO 2021). In ILO's Guidelines for Skills Modules in Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (ILO 2020) several relevant labor instruments are identified (Box 2.1).

> **Box 2.1:** **Instruments in Bilateral Labor Migration Agreements**
>
> The ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)
>
> - Article 14(b) that a country may, following previous consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, adopt regulations for the recognition of occupational qualifications held by migrant workers and acquired abroad, including certificates and diplomas.
>
> The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195)
>
> - Part VI, para. 12 that "Special provisions should be designed to ensure recognition and certification of skills and qualifications for migrant workers." The same Recommendation at para. 21 (f) pledges that international cooperation should "promote recognition and portability of skills, competencies and qualifications nationally and internationally".
>
> The ILO general principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment (ILO, 2019c)
>
> - General Principle 4: Recruitment should take into account policies and practices that promote efficiency, transparency and protection for workers in the process, such as mutual recognition of skills and qualifications;
>
> - Operational Principle 4.4: Governments should also consider adopting mutual recognition agreements to facilitate recognition of foreign qualifications in order to address brain waste and de-skilling.
>
> - General Principle 7: No recruitment fees or related costs should be charged to, or otherwise borne by, workers or jobseekers.

Box 2.1 *continued*

- According to the definition of recruitment fees and related costs in Part IIB, para. 12 (p.26): When initiated by an employer, labor recruiter, or an agent acting on behalf of those parties; required to secure access to employment or placement; or imposed during the recruitment process, the following costs should be considered related to the recruitment process:

  ....

  iii. Costs for skills and qualification tests: costs to verify workers' language proficiency and level of skills and qualifications, as well as for location-specific credentialing, certification or licensing;

  iv. Costs for training and orientation: expenses for required training, including onsite job orientation and pre-departure or post-arrival orientation of newly recruited workers ...

ILO Recommendation No. 86, para 10(b) suggests the adoption of measures that can facilitate migration, including:

- to ensure, where necessary, vocational training so as to enable the migrants for employment to acquire the qualifications required in the country of immigration.

Source: ILO (2020).

There are several approaches to upgrading and recognizing the skills of migrant workers. These include:

- *Skills' testing and certification.* In this model, workers are tested in the country of origin and issued certificates that demonstrate their competencies match the skill standards required by the country of destination. Additional testing and skilling may be done in the country of destination. This model is followed by Singapore, and is elaborated in this chapter.
- *Mutual standards and qualifications framework.* An important dimension to the mutual recognition of different qualifications frameworks is referencing, which involves co-relating two or more frameworks in terms of levels, credits, and types of qualifications (ILO 2015). At present, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) serves as a common reference framework that enables comparisons of education qualifications with the ultimate objective of supporting the free movement of skilled labor in the region. It requires states to align their respective national qualifications frameworks (NQF) against the AQRF so as to develop a common benchmark. As of September 2023, only Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand have made significant progress in this regard (Miña 2023). Complementing the AQRF are the mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) to facilitate the mobility of professionals within ASEAN in eight professional occupations (engineering, architectural services, surveying, nursing, medical practitioners, dental practitioners, tourism, and accountancy). Qualifications, skills, and experiences in these professions are recognized across ASEAN member states. Further, the ILO has been working with the governments of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), and Myanmar for several years to establish mutual recognition of skills agreements (MRS) between Thailand and Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar in selected middle-skilled occupations. Bricklaying and plastering in the Cambodia–Thailand corridor were identified as priority occupations as part of the MRS initiative of ASEAN member states and the ILO. As part of the MRS initiative, Thailand and Cambodia have signed a Technical Assessment Report, which confirms that

all skills certification components, including competency standards and assessments on bricklaying and plastering (Level 1 Thailand and Level 2 Cambodia) are technically comparable.

- *Establishment of joint minimum standards.* Occupational classifications and qualification frameworks vary considerably across countries. The ILO's International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) refers to elementary occupations as jobs that involve manual or physical tasks and use of hand-held tools; while medium-skill occupations refer to jobs that require the ability to read and write and perform simple math, as well as a high level of motor skills, high-skill occupations refer to jobs that require performance of complex technical and practical tasks, and/or complex problem solving, decision making, and creativity tasks. Countries need to align their national classification frameworks with international standards. A joint minimum standards framework does not include systematic recognition of certificates as described within the previous model (mutual standards and qualification frameworks), but enables cross-border comparison to allow the skills of migrant workers to be effectively evaluated (ILO 2015).

2.3 Labor Migration Frameworks for Medium-skilled Occupations in Singapore and Thailand

Singapore

With 1,525,500 migrant workers in the country, Singapore is a top country of destination in the ASEAN region; migrant workers comprise nearly 39% of the country's labor force. Of the total number of migrant workers, 13% are Employment Pass holders (high-skilled workers), and 73% are work permit holders (semi-skilled workers and workers in elementary occupations). Migrant workers in the construction, marine shipyard, and process sector make up almost 40% of work permit holders (WPHs).

The Employment of Foreign Manpower Act governs the regulations concerning the employment of migrant workers in Singapore. It covers work passes, as well as enforcement for offences and infringements. The country has an array of work passes and visas for different categories of workers and their dependants (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Categories and Subtypes of Passes

Professionals	Skilled and Semi-skilled Workers	Trainees and Students	Family Members	Exemptions and Working While on a Visit Pass
1. Employment Pass 2. Personalised Employment Pass (PEP) 3. EntrePass 4. Overseas Networks & Expertise Pass	1. S Pass 2. Work Permit for migrant worker 3. Migrant domestic worker (work permit) 4. Confinement nanny 5. Performing artiste	1. Training Employment Pass 2. Work Holiday Pass (under Work Holiday Program) 3. Work Holiday Pass (under Work and Holiday Visa Program) 4. Training Work Permit	1. Dependant's Pass 2. Long-term Visit Pass (LTVP) 3. Pre-approved Letter of Consent 4. Letter of Consent for Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA)-issued LTVP/LTVP+ holders 5. Letter of Consent for Dependant's Pass holders who are business owners	1. Miscellaneous Work Pass 2. Work Pass Exempt Activities 3. Work pass exemption for foreign students 4. Work passes for holders of Long-term Visit Passes issued by ICA

Source: Compiled from Singapore Ministry of Manpower. Work Passes. https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/

There are five general categories of work passes and permits available to foreigners seeking to work or live in Singapore. Migrant workers in the construction sector are mostly admitted on a work permit.

In general, workers on a work permit are subject to more restrictive conditions (such as housing restrictions,[2] restrictions on applying for permanent residency and family reunification) compared to those entering Singapore to work under S Passes or Employment Passes (Table 2.2). The work permit for construction sector workers[3] is further differentiated into two types: R1 (higher-skilled) and R2 (basic-skilled). An R2 permit enables the permit holder to work in Singapore for a maximum of 14 years, whereas the R1 permit enables the permit holder to work up to a maximum of 26 years. To qualify for an R1 permit, the worker needs to meet one (or both) of the skills or years of experience criteria. The skills are recognized in the form of a Skills Evaluation Certificate (SEC) or a Skills Evaluation Certificate –Knowledge (SEC(K)) when the worker successfully completes a course that is validated by the Building and Construction Authority (BCA). Since 1992 Singapore has imposed a two-tier levy system, where levies for skilled workers are lower than that for basic-skilled workers.

Table 2.2: Comparison of S Pass, Work Permit, and Employment Pass

	Skilled and Semi-skilled Workers		Highly-skilled/Professional Workers
	S Pass	Work Permit for Migrant Worker	Employment Pass
Who is eligible?	Skilled workers. No restrictions on country of origin.	Skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in the construction, manufacturing, marine shipyard, process, or services sector. Eligibility requirements vary by sector. For construction, workers must be above 18 years of age and below 58 years (if they are Malaysians); non-Malaysians must be above 18 years of age and below 50 years of age at the time of application. Restrictions on country of origin apply.	For foreign professionals, managers, and executives. Candidates need to earn at least S$5,000 a month. No restrictions on country of origin.
Required skills, experience, and qualifications	Qualifications and experience are assessed; criteria not provided by Ministry of Manpower.	Depending on sector as well as skill level. For construction, "basic-skilled" workers must have a SEC; for "higher-skilled" workers, they must have a SEC(K).	Candidates need to pass the Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS) (minimum score of 40 points). Points are given for qualifications and experience.
Qualifying salary	Fixed monthly salary comparable to top one-third of local associate professional and technician (APT) salaries. Currently S$3,150 a month. Minimum salary of S$3,500—$3,650 for financial services.	No minimum salary indicated.	Earn at least from S$5,000 a month and increases progressively with age, up to S$10,500 a month for those in the mid-40s. Different rates apply for financial services.

continued on next page

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[2] For details, see Various types of housing and their specific requirements (mom.gov.sg)

[3] Singapore specifies different skills and qualifications for work permit seekers depending on the sector of work (construction, manufacturing, marine shipyard, process, services). Details can be found at https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-worker.

Table 2.2 *continued*

	Skilled and Semi-skilled Workers		Highly-skilled/Professional Workers
	S Pass	Work Permit for Migrant Worker	Employment Pass
Who can apply?	Employers or appointed employment agents. Employers submitting S Pass applications must first advertise on the government job portal, MyCareersFuture, and consider all candidates (resident) fairly.	Employers or appointed employment agents.	Employer or appointed employment agent.
Cost of permit	S$100 for application. Another S$105 for pass issuance.	S$35	
Validity period (1st time)	2 years	2 years	First-time candidates: up to 2 years
Renewability	Yes. Up to 3 years. S$100 for renewal.	Yes. Up to 2 years. S$35 for renewal.	Renewable for 3 years
Family	Spouse/unmarried children under 21. Parents only if passholder earns at least S$12,000 a month (same requirement for E Pass)	Not available	Passes for family members available subject to higher minimum salary of candidate
Foreign worker levy	Yes. 2-tier levy. Tier 1: S$550 (to increase to $650 from 1 Sep 2025) Tier 2: S$650	Yes. Varies depending on R pass type, nationality, and whether deployed off-site.	Not applicable
Security bond	Not applicable	Yes. Employers are required to take out a banker's or insurer's guarantee for each non-Malaysian permit holder.	
Other costs or requirement	• Compulsory medical insurance • Primary care plan for pass holders working in CMP or residing in dormitories	• Compulsory medical Insurance • Primary care plan for pass holders working in CMP or residing in dormitories. PCP must be purchased after getting the in-principle approval or renewal letter.	

CMP = construction, marine shipyard, and process, PCP = primary care plan, SEC = Skills Evaluation Certificate, SEC(K) = Skills Evaluation Certificate (Knowledge).

Notes: $1 = S$1.346. Source: IRIS (Conversion Date: 1 March 2024).

Tier 1 refers to companies that hire 10% of its workforce as S Passes. Tier 2 refers to companies that hire up to 18% of its workforce as S Passes. From 1 September 2025 onward, the Tier 1 S Pass levy will increase to S$650;Tier 2 remains unchanged at S$650 (https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/s-pass/upcoming-changes-to-s-pass-eligibility)

Source: Chen (2024).

Thailand

Thailand has become a key destination for migrant workers from neighboring countries and increasingly from further afield across ASEAN, both for elementary occupations, and for medium- and higher-skilled occupations. According to the Department of Employment, as of March 2024, there were 3,313,425 migrant workers in Thailand of whom 3,043,868 (91.86%) were general workers (March 2024 data) were general workers (from Myanmar, the Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Viet Nam), 179,462 (5.4%)

skilled workers, and 90,095 (2.71%) of minorities/highlanders/lifetime[4] worker permits. In terms of employment, nearly 54% of migrant workers are engaged in industry, 33% in services, and close to 13% in agriculture.[5] In relation to occupations, nearly 60% were in medium-skilled jobs, 37% in elementary occupations, and 3% in high-skilled occupations.

Thailand's labor migration governance draws mainly from the 1979 Immigration Act that governs the visa regime by which foreigners may enter the country, and the Alien Workers Act 2008 that covers the type of work allowed for migrant workers, their entitlements and benefits, repatriation funds, review and appeals committees for the employment of migrant workers, as well as oversight and penalties for violations of the law.

In terms of occupations, there are four classifications (Table 2.3) that determine the employment choices available to migrant workers in Thailand. Certain specific occupations, ranging from artisanal and crafts production to transport to advanced financial and legal services, are entirely prohibited. Others are allowed subject to treaties or employment by an approved employer.

Table 2.3: List of Occupations Prohibited to Migrant Workers

List 1: Strictly Prohibited	List 2: Prohibited with Exceptions	List 3: Exceptions for Skilled or Semi-skilled Workers	List 4: Exceptions under Treaties
27 occupations that are strictly prohibited for migrant workers. These include occupations in certain traditional handicrafts, commercial driving, beauty services, tourist guide work, legal services, etc.	Three types of prohibited occupations, with the condition that migrant workers are allowed to work under international agreements or obligations to which Thailand is bound.	Eight prohibited occupations for foreigners, with an exception that migrant workers are allowed to do skilled or semi-skilled work when working for an approved employer including bricklaying, carpentry, and construction.	Prohibited occupations which foreign workers are permitted to perform under the condition of having employers and permitted to enter Thailand by Immigration Law under a memorandum of understanding or agreement between the Thai government and the foreign government are: (i) labor, and (ii) shop front sellers.

Source: Government of Thailand. Notification Re Prescription of the Prohibited Occupations for Foreigners by virtue of the Foreigners' Working Administration Emergency Decree, B.E 2560 (2017).

During 2016–2018, Thailand developed a more comprehensive legal framework, including the adoption of the Royal Ordinance on the Management of Employment of Foreign Workers, B.E. 2560 Amendment (2nd Edition), B.E. 2561 (2018), to manage labor migration in parallel with the implementation of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) processes (elaborated below. Also see Table 2.4). The Royal Ordinance allows some exceptions to the prohibited occupations for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers.

- Section 7 allows migrant workers to work in occupations mentioned in List 3 when employed by an approved employer (see Table 2.3)
- Under Section 61 technical skilled migrant workers can be recruited for "necessary and urgent work" provided that work be completed within 15 days

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[4] This category refers to ethnic groups and individuals who are already present in Thailand and who do not have Thai citizenship, are undocumented, stateless, or have an uncertain legal status under Thai law. They are covered under Section 63/1 of the Royal Ordinance. The 2011 Thailand Migration Report discusses the intricacies of these group in detail. See IOM (2011).

[5] Thailand Labour Force Survey (2023), as reported in the ILMS Database in ASEAN (2023 edition).

MOU workers and regularized workers are restricted to List 4. To work in occupations under List 3 (including bricklaying and construction work), they must apply to the Department of Employment (DOE) to add a particular occupation to their work permit.

In relation to types of work permits for migrant workers, there are eight types, catering to different skill types and nationalities (Table 2.4):

Table 2.4: **Types of Work Permits for Migrant Workers in Thailand**

Name of Permit	Target Groups
Section 59: General Work Permit	All workers; generally semi-high skilled
Section 59: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	Low-skilled workers under MOUs with neighboring countries
Section 62	Generally semi-high skilled workers linked to investments, petroleum, or other laws
Section 63	Migrants who are (1) being deported under the law on deportation and granted with the exemption to conduct a profession at any place instead of deportation or during the time of deportation or (2) in Thailand without being permitted under the law on immigration but is permitted to stay in Thailand while waiting for repatriation under the law on immigration. The result of deportation or repatriation is announced by the end of January of each year.
Section 63/1 group 1	Migrants (1) whose nationalities have been withdrawn under the Announcement of the Revolutionary Council No. 337 dated the 13th of December B.E. 2515 (1972) or other laws; or (2) born in Thailand but has not been granted with the nationality under the Announcement of the Revolutionary Council No. 337 dated the 13th of December B.E. 2515 (1972) or the law on nationality.
Section 63/1 group 2	Migrants who (1) have been granted with the status of legal migrant under the notification of the Ministry of Interior issued under the law on immigration; or 2) have no status under registration and have been given an identification card under the Rule of Central Registration Bureau issued under the law on people's registration.
Section 63/2	Work permits in cases where the Minister (1) permits a foreigner or type of foreigner to enter Thailand under the law on immigration or (2) exempts a foreigner or type of foreigner from complying with the law on immigration. The Council of Ministers may prescribe that such foreigner or type of foreigner may be able to work for the benefit of economic and social development. This section was applied to migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic to extend their work permit duration.
Section 64	For low-skilled workers from neighboring countries: Cambodia, Myanmar, and Lao PDR (to be implemented).

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (2021).

Work permits under the category of Section 59: General Type and Section 62: Investment Promotion are for higher-skilled workers in specific occupations and carry income thresholds. Migrants under these two permits require to show evidence of adequate finances of B20,000 ($555) per person and B40,000 ($1,111)[6] per family. In addition, under Section 59: General Type, migrant workers must also reach an income above the minimum wage, which varies by nationality.[7]

Of the remaining work permits, those under Section 63, Section 63/1 group 1, Section 63/1 group 2, and 63/2 are only given to migrants who are already in Thailand. Work permits under Section 64 are only

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[6] $1 is equal to B35.99. Source: IRIS. Date of conversion: 1 March 2024.

[7]   The salary threshold ranges from B25,000 ($694) per month for African nationals and up to B50,000 ($1,389) per month for citizens of European countries, Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United States (ASEAN Secretariat 2021).

for migrant workers from Cambodia, Myanmar, and the Lao PDR (pending implementation) who are only allowed to work as laborers and domestic workers.

To fill labor shortages in elementary occupations, Thailand has relied on bilateral labor migration agreements with its neighboring countries (corresponding to work permits issued under Section 59: MOU). In 2002 and 2003, the Royal Thai Government signed MOUs on employment cooperation with the governments of Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar, which established a channel for regular labor migration to Thailand from neighboring countries. In 2015 and 2016, Thailand revised the MOUs to broaden cooperation on labor issues, including skills development and social protection and signed a new agreement with Viet Nam.

However, because there are no facilitated pathways (certain occupations are restricted and for others there is a long list of requirements for both employers and prospective employees) for the recruitment of middle-skilled migrant workers, employers rely on MOU channels and the regularization process[8] to recruit migrant workers for middle-skilled occupations even though these pathways are for elementary occupations (so called low-skilled jobs).

2.4 The Construction Sector in Singapore and Thailand

Singapore

The construction sector plays a crucial role in the development of the Singaporean economy in terms of public infrastructure, housing, and private investment. It contributes 3.5% of the country's GDP (Singstat) and is one of the biggest employers of foreign manpower. A steep drop in construction sector activity occurred in 2020 during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic when strict control measures were imposed domestically and exacerbated by the disruption in the material supply chain and in the movement of people.

The majority of construction workers come from countries such as Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand—referred to as "Non-Traditional Sources" (NTS) by Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM), as well as Hong Kong, China, the Republic of Korea, and the People's Republic of China (PRC)—referred to by MOM as "North Asian Source" (NAS) countries. To reduce reliance on foreign labor, the MOM mandates that all firms retain a minimum of 10% of their foreign workforce (work-permit holders) as higher-skilled (R1) workers before recruiting basic-skilled (R2) workers. This mandate is facilitated by established "upgrading pathways," which also reduce levies for firms and increase the maximum employment for higher-skilled foreign workers to 22 years, compared to 10 years for basic-skilled R2 workers (Gao, Low, and Wee 2018). Indeed, one of the key differences between R1 and R2 workers is that there are higher levies for R2 workers (since 2013).

Singapore faces workforce shortages and an aging workforce in the construction sector. Vocational education and training (VET) has thus become critical to maintain global and regional competitiveness (Wei et al. 2020). Singapore's BCA plays a leading role in workforce development in this sector. However, construction VET for local learners appears to be more comprehensive than programs directed at migrant workers, which generally prioritize trade-specific skills and safety competency to satisfy employer obligations (Wei et al. 2020). Employers have incentives to upgrade their workers from R2 to R1 (surveyed employers noted that the majority of their work permit holders were higher-

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[8] Irregular migrant workers in Thailand can regularize their status through worker registration windows known as the nationality verification process. Upon being issued the so-called "pink card" they have permission to live and work in Thailand up to 2 years without having to return to their country of origin.

skilled). The same employers also noted the criteria for upgrading R2 workers to R1 work permits: work performance, supervisors' assessments, and length of employment with that particular employer (Chen 2024).

For middle-skilled migrant workers seeking employment in Singapore's construction sector for the first time, there is entry under the R1 (higher-skilled) pathway. Out of the four schemes available for the recruitment of R1 migrant construction workers (outlined in Table 2.10), all except one require workers to have local work experience in Singapore to qualify.[9] The Direct R1 Pathway allows both new and experienced workers with 0–4 years of construction experience in Singapore to obtain R1 status if they can pass the SEC(K) trade test at higher skills' standards, and draw a monthly minimum salary of S$1,600. In terms of training costs, first-time migrant workers pay for their own training at overseas training centers in their home countries. Upon registering for the test and being paired with employers, the employers pay for the tests. Upon arrival in Singapore, migrant workers are required to go through the Construction Safety Orientation Course as well as an onboarding program before they are allowed to enter the worksites. The employer pays the course fees. Employers also cover the costs if workers are required to attend any work-related refresher courses, additional skills courses, and any training for upgrading purposes.

Migrant workers who are already in Singapore, and who wish to upskill, can do so on their own initiative, if they meet all the criteria; in practice because of the costs and time needed for certification, this may be challenging for migrant workers (discussed in Section 2.2.2).

Thailand

The Thai construction market size is estimated at $26.68 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of greater than 5% to reach $34 billion by 2029 (Mordor Intelligence 2024). There are approximately 100,000 construction companies registered in Thailand, of which only 0.7% or 691 companies) qualify as large-scale operations. The three largest players are Italian Thai Development, Sino-Thai Engineering and Construction, and Ch. Karnchang.

The construction sector in Thailand employs over 2.2 million people, of which approximately 17% are migrant workers employed via the MOU scheme (Krungsri 2022). According to the Department of Employment data (November 2022), based on the number of work permit applicants by immigration and occupation type, construction is the top employment category for regularized migrant workers (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Foreign Worker Situation, Thailand

Section 63/2	According to the Cabinet resolution on 13 July 2021	According to the Cabinet resolution on 25 September 2021	According to the Cabinet resolution on 5 July 2022
Construction	171,164 positions	70,223 positions	103,997 positions
Agriculture and livestock business	35,320 positions	33,492 positions	41,806 positions
Agriculture continuation business	–	41,067 positions	–
Service business	84,444 positions	–	34,738 positions

Source: Department of Employment (2022). Foreign Worker Situation. As of November 2022.

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[9] https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/manpower/overseas-trade-testing-and-upgrading-for-foreign-workers

The construction sector is facing a labor shortage, triggered in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2022 survey by the Ministry of Labour indicates that the construction sector had a labor shortage of 1.32 million people, with the highest demand in Bangkok (30%).

2.4.1 Recruitment of Medium-skilled Migrant Workers in the Construction Sector in Singapore and Thailand

The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) provides a reference to occupations by category and by skills. In the construction sector, occupations by skill level are shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Occupations by Skill Level

Elementary Occupations	Medium-skill Occupations	High-skill Occupations
Corresponds to ISCO level 1	Corresponds to ISCO level 2	Corresponds to ISCO level 3
Building construction laborers perform routine tasks in connection with building construction and demolition work. Examples of the occupations classified here: bricklayer's assistant, construction laborer (building work), demolition laborer, hod carrier	Building and related trade workers construct, maintain, and repair buildings; erect and repair foundations, walls and structures of brick, stone and similar materials; shape and finish stone for building and other purposes. The tasks call for an understanding of the work organization, the materials and tools used, and the nature and purpose of the final product. Under the minor groups listed under this classification group, occupations include: house builders; bricklayers and related workers; stonemasons, stone cutters, splitters and carvers; concrete placers, concrete finishers and related workers; carpenters and joiners; roofers; floor layers and tile setters; plasterers; insulation workers; glaziers; plumbers and pipe fitters; air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics; painters and related workers; spray painters and varnishers; building structure cleaners	Construction supervisors coordinate, supervise, and schedule the activities of workers engaged in the construction and repair of buildings and structures. Examples of the occupations classified here: building construction supervisor, site manager (construction).

Source: ISCO-08 Classification Table.

Singapore

The current R1 (higher-skilled) and R2 (basic-skilled) structure for skills upgrading in Singapore began in the late 1990s. One of the earliest references to a longer maximum employment period for migrant construction workers was in 1999, when a member of Parliament mentioned how migrant workers have been trained from "from unskilled to semi-skilled, to skilled and to be trade-certified". This was in the context of the introduction of the Building and Construction Authority Bill 1999 that provided the legislative framework for the formation of a new statutory board, the BCA.[10]

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[10] Building and Construction Authority Bill, Parliament of Singapore, 20 January 1999. https://sprs.parl.gov.sg/search /#/topic?reportid=029_19990120_S0003_T0003

To qualify for a work permit, migrant workers must clear the Skills Evaluation Certificate (SEC) and Skills Evaluation Certificate—Knowledge (SEC(K)). Testing and training can be done in the country of origin or in Singapore at a government accredited center (details noted in the section below). In 2014 a new "Market-Based Recognition Framework" was introduced whereby basic skilled workers with at least 6 years of construction experience in Singapore and who earn a salary of at least S$1,600 are allowed to upgrade to Higher Skilled or R1 status.

The total number of WPHs and S Pass holders a company can hire is limited by a quota and subject to a levy. The quota system is referred to as the Dependency Ratio Ceiling. For the construction sector, a company can employ five WPHs for every local employee, and it can hire up to 83.3% of its total workforce as WPHs. Until 2024, the levy rate was differentiated by source countries or areas.[11] Also, as part of the national drive to improve productivity, raising employment benefits while weaning the dependency on foreign manpower, the Construction Dependency Ratio Ceiling was reduced on 1 January 2024 from 1:7 to 1:5 (BCA 2023).

In anticipating challenges for companies to transition into the newly tightened S Pass eligibility criteria, employers were allowed from 1 November 2023 to convert S Pass workers paid a minimum fixed monthly salary of at least S$1,600 to Higher-Skilled R1 WPHs.[12] Normally, new work permits in the construction sector would require the workers obtain the SEC(K) certification pathway, including any workers undergoing S Pass to work permit conversions (BCA 2023). However, as a one-off concession, The BCA and MOM waived that training requirement for 40 selected non-executive occupations (BCA 2023). The rationale supporting this change is also the idea that S Pass workers would already be better qualified even beyond the higher standard of the SEC(K). "The higher skilled status will be valid for 2 years or till 31 October 2025, whichever is earlier. Thereafter, these WPHs must meet the prevailing R1 criteria to continue to be considered R1 WPHs." (BCA 2023). The updated criteria and requirements for construction sector WPHs are outlined in Table 2.7.

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[11] Prior to 2024, the levy scheme was further differentiated by whether the companies were hiring the workers from NTS countries, also known as the man-year entitlement (MYE). However, the scheme was dismantled with effect from 1 January 2024 in response to industry feedback for a simplified levy framework. See Dismantlement of Man-year Entitlement (MYE) Framework FAQ, SCAL (2023). https://www.scal.com.sg/uploads/files/SCAL%20Infographics%20on%20MYE.pdf

[12] These workers will qualify for R1 under the Direct R1 Pathway. Under the Direct R1 Pathway, WPHs will need to be paid a minimum of S$1,600 and pass SEC(K) at a higher skill level. The latter requirement is waived for eligible workers.

Table 2.7: Work Permit Criteria and Requirements for Construction Sector as of 1 January 2024

Source Economy or Region	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Maximum Period of Employment (as of 1 January 2024)	
			R2 Basic Skilled	R1 Higher Skilled
			Qualifications	
	All work permit holders can work up to 60 years old.		Skills Evaluation Certificate (SEC) and Skills Evaluation Certificate – Knowledge (SEC(K))*	• Core Trade • Multi-Skilling Scheme • Direct R1 Pathway • Market-Based Skills Recognition Framework (MBF)
Malaysia	18 years old	Below 58 years old	No maximum period of employment.	
People's Republic of China (PRC)	18 years old	50 years old	14 years	26 years
Non-traditional sources (NTS)				
India				
Sri Lanka				
Thailand				
Bangladesh				
Myanmar				
Philippines				
North Asian sources (NAS)			No maximum period of employment.	
Hong Kong, China (HKSAR passport)				
Macau, China				
Republic of Korea				
Taipei,China				

SEC = Skills Evaluation Certificate, SEC(K) = Skills Evaluation Certificate (Knowledge).

Note: *The "Knowledge" refers to the addition of a written test.

Source: Compiled from Construction Sector: Work Permit Requirements, Ministry of Manpower. https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes -and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-worker/sector-specific-rules/construction-sector-requirements

There are additional requirements that both migrant workers and employers need to complete in order to secure work permits. Migrant workers are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19,[13] and if they are non-Malaysians, they need to attend a 3-day residential "settling-in" program on arrival in Singapore. Since September 2023, employers need to secure "acceptable accommodation" before workers are allowed to enter Singapore.

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[13] This requirement also applies to S-pass holders.

Thailand

Thailand's Labor Force Survey data show that 59.8% of migrant workers in Thailand are employed in medium-skilled occupations, even though there is no facilitated pathway. One likely explanation for the large presence of migrant workers in medium-skilled jobs is that they were hired as low-skilled workers but in fact perform medium-skilled jobs (ILO 2022).

In 2023, the ILO conducted a rapid assessment with 11 private sector employers[14] to scope the current practices in the construction sector with regard to the employment of migrant workers (in plastering, bricklaying, and electrical wiring occupations) in Thailand. With regard to skills, respondents were asked about the number of workers, both Thai and migrant, employed at the skilled/semi-skilled level and in elementary occupations (Figure 2.1). While not all employers provided complete responses, the following information emerges from those that did share some data:

- Migrant workers are being employed in both medium-skilled and elementary occupations in the construction sector in Thailand (Figure 2.1).
- Many migrant workers already possess pre-existing skills and experience in construction.
- Employers are using their own company standards for assessing skills and determining wages.

Figure 2.1: **Construction Workers by Occupation Level and Migrant Status (Based on Employer Survey) (%)**
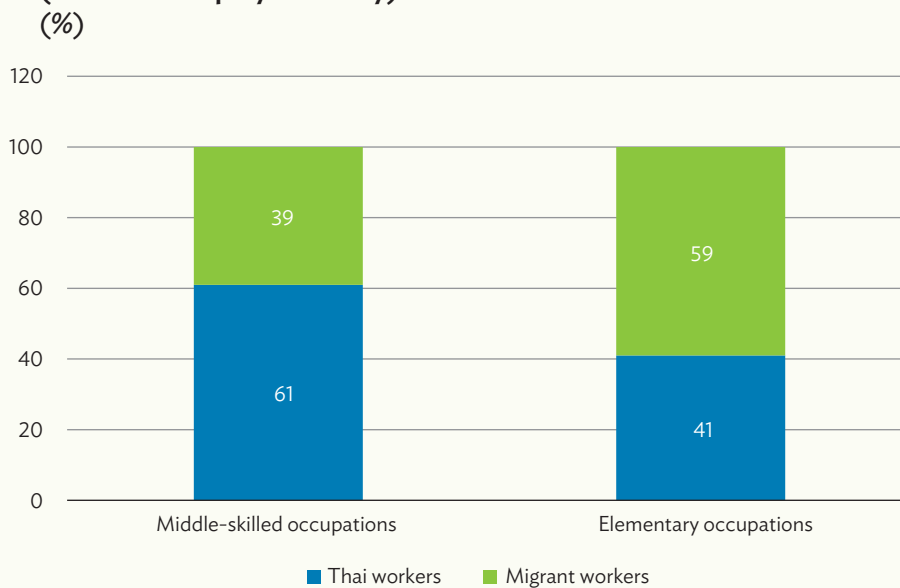
Source: ILO (2023c).

Regardless of skill levels, most employers surveyed used MOU channels to recruit migrant workers (62%), while 35% of migrant workers were recruited via registration/regularization methods (i.e. the nationality verification process). Neither of these recruitment methods were intended for recruitment into middle-skilled occupations.

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[14] Nine construction companies and two subcontractors who collectively reported employing a total of 4,450 migrant workers.

As there are no salary requirements for work permit holders under the MOU schemes, employers can set their own wages. In the rapid assessment,

- One company reported paying the minimum wage to all workers regardless of nationality (i.e., no distinction made between Thai and migrant workers) or occupational skill (minimum wage ranged from B320–B354 per day, depending on location of employment).
- One employer applied their internal skill grading tool to determine how much to pay workers.
- Two subcontractors who are involved in housing construction projects shared that they follow two practices: (i) internal evaluation of skills and past experiences to determine wages, and (ii) paying workers per output produced.

Generally, migrant workers in middle-skilled occupations earn more than migrant workers in elementary occupations. Two employers shared data for elementary occupations (see Table 2.6 for the classification of elementary occupations):

- *Bricklaying and Plastering*—three respondents shared data for migrant workers; two employers provided data on Thai workers. Daily wages ranged between B450–B900 (approximately $12–$25) for Thai workers; for migrant workers, wages ranged between B400–B700 (approximately $11–$19). Only one respondent gave information about women migrant workers, noting that women migrant workers (plasterers) earn B400 (approximately $11) per day in their company. This company paid the same rate to both men and women migrant workers.
- *Elementary occupations*—two employers provided information; migrant workers are paid B370 (approximately $9) a day by one employer, while another employer pays B500 (approximately $13) a day.

The daily minimum wage in Thailand ranges between B328–354 and is anticipated to increase by 2.4% in 2024. 2022 data indicate that the average monthly income for construction workers is B12,128 (approximately $336), which averages to B404 ($11) per day (Thailand National Statistics Office 2023).

Thailand has been collaborating with Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar to pilot the mutual recognition of the skills of migrant workers in bricklaying and plastering, industrial sewing, and building electrical wiring. Among these pilots, the agreement between Cambodia and Thailand on mutual recognition of skills in bricklaying and plastering is closest to completion. The pilot has completed all the steps to reach step 5 of the MRS Roadmap. In February 2023, a technical assessment report agreeing to the standards was signed. It affirms that "all skills certification components, including competency standards and assessments, on Bricklaying and Plastering (Level 1 Thailand and Level 2 Cambodia) are technically comparable" (ILO 2023b).

While the mobility arrangements for the recruitment of middle-skilled migrant workers still remain to be developed, the MRS agreement between Thailand and Cambodia is promising because it provides a way forward for employers to standardize recruitment and wage conditions for migrant workers in middle-skilled occupations in bricklaying and plastering.

2.4.2 Skills Recognition and Certification for Migrant Workers in the Construction Sector

Singapore

Depending on the country of origin, migrant workers coming to work in the construction sector in Singapore at an R1 level are required to have been tested and certified in at least basic-level skills based on a curriculum set by the BCA; depending on the country of origin, workers can have different certifications (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: Certificates Required before Working in Singapore

Sources	Certificates Required before Working in Singapore
Non-traditional Source (NTS)*, People's Republic of China (PRC)	SEC or SEC(K)
North Asian Sources	One of the following: • SEC • SEC(K) • [New] ALP End-of-course Validation
Malaysia	One of the following: • SPM or equivalent • SEC • SEC(K) • [New] ALP End-of-course Validation

ALP = accelerated learning program, SEC = Skills Evaluation Certificate, SEC(K) = Skills Evaluation Certificate (Knowledge), SPM = Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Registration).

Source: Table reproduced from BCA website.

Migrant workers be trained and tested at overseas training centers (OTC) (Table 2.9). At the time of writing, there are 14 BCA-approved local companies operating OTCs in six countries, all of which except the PRC are classified as NTS countries. The centers operating in Bangladesh and India offer the greatest number of trade tests per center, almost triple those offered in the other countries.

Table 2.9: Location of Overseas Training Centers and Number of Trade Tests Offered

Country*	Number of Approved Companies	Number of Trade Tests Offered at Each Training Center
Bangladesh – NTS	5	15–24
PRC	2	3–5
India – NTS	3	12–16
Myanmar – NTS	2	3–4
Sri Lanka – NTS	1	3–4
Thailand – NTS	1	4

NTS = non-traditional source, PRC= People's Republic of China.

Note: *The list of overseas training centers is available at https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/manpower/overseas-trade-testing-and-upgrading-for-foreign-workers.

Source: Chen (2024).

Employers are required to register their workers with the BCA-appointed OTCs' Singapore offices for tests, by completing and submitting the following documents to the BCA:

1. Declaration Letter for Overseas Test Registration
2. Request for Approval (RA)
3. Latest Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority printout; and
4. Singapore List of Trade Subcontractors registration certificate (exempted for BCA registered contractor)

After receiving the test results from the OTC, employers are required to:

1. Apply for In-principle Approval (IPA) from MOM
2. Bring worker to Skills Certification Enrolment Counter at the BCA Academy (BCAA) for identity verification and IPA letter endorsement within 4 or 5 months of the test date

The instructions and user guides found on the online Overseas Testing Management System[15] guide employers to register for the BCAA appointment.

Upgrading from basic-skilled to higher-skilled

There are currently four main upgrading pathways available for R2 (basic skilled) migrant workers to attain an R1 (higher-skilled) permit in the construction sector: the CoreTrade Scheme, the Multi-Skilling Scheme, the Direct R1 Pathway, and the Market-based Skills Recognition Framework (Table 2.10).

Table 2.10: Pathways for the Recruitment of Middle-skilled Migrant Workers in Construction

	CoreTrade Scheme	Multi-Skilling Scheme	Market-based Skills Recognition Framework (MBF)	Direct R1 Pathway
Scheme active since:	2008	2012	2014	2015
Details	Three types of personnel which can be registered through this scheme: tradespeople, foremen, and supervisor. Candidates for each category are expected to undergo practical and theory tests, with some exceptions for tradespeople and supervisor level.	An alternative pathway that complements the CoreTrade Scheme to upgrade experienced workers. Workers must acquire a second SEC or SEC(K) qualification in another trade. Since October 2016, the second SEC qualification can also be substituted with a 120-hour safety-related course or a recognized equivalent. Such workers would need to attain at least 6 years of work experience.	The MBF automatically upgrades all workers on an existing basic R2 permit to an R1 permit if they meet the minimum criteria mentioned below. No further qualifications required.	To expedite the building up and retention of experienced workers, this pathway allows employers to either upgrade existing R2 permit holders or to recruit directly from source economies if the workers meet the minimum requirements. No minimum years of working experience in Singapore is required.

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[15] Available at https://otms.bca.gov.sg/

Table 2.10 *continued*

	CoreTrade Scheme	Multi-Skilling Scheme	Market-based Skills Recognition Framework (MBF)	Direct R1 Pathway	
Source economies	For all sources			For NTS and PRC	[Enhanced] For Malaysian and NAS
Minimum construction experience in Singapore	4 Years	4 Years	6 Years	NA	NA
Minimum fixed salary	NA	NA	S$1,600	S$1,600	S$1,600
Skills assessment	Pass the SEC(K) in at least 2 trades	Pass CoreTrade skills assessment	NA	Pass the SEC(K) at higher-skill level	i) Pass the SEC(K); ii) Pass the ALP end-of-course validation; or Hold an SPM qualification (for Malaysians only)

ALP = accelerated learning program, NA = not available, NTS = non-traditional source, PRC = People's Republic of China, SEC = Skills Evaluation Certificate, SEC(K) = Skills Evaluation Certificate (Knowledge), SPM = Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Registration).

Source: Chen (2024).

In February 2022, the Direct R1 Pathway was enhanced with a newly introduced accelerated learning program (ALP) targeting Malaysians and workers from the Republic of Korea; Taipei,China; Hong Kong, China; and Macau, China.[16] There are 34 types of courses offered across 16 companies[17] that are approved by the BCA to offer training courses and test enrolment services under the ALP framework.[18] Courses offered under the ALP involve up to 1day of training followed by an end-of-course validation exercise. The end-of-course validation consists of a practical test that takes 4 to 5 hours to complete and assesses a construction worker's craft-skills attains satisfactory competency that meets the required quality standards of a skilled tradesman.[19]

Construction workers in Singapore can upgrade their skills by receiving training and assessment at one of the 26 BCA approved training and testing centers (ATTCS). These centers offer advancement for these pathways:[20]

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[16] See FAQ from BCA at https://www1.bca.gov.sg/docs/default-source/docs-corp-buildsg/manpower/alp-faq.pdf?sfvrsn=4ef7cfdc_4.

[17] See list of approved ATTCs and courses offered at: https://www1.bca.gov.sg/docs/default-source/docs-corp-buildsg/manpower/list-of-attcs-offering-accelerated-learning-programmes-(alp).pdf?sfvrsn=7ca9b92a_16.

[18] Information as of 28 July 2023. BCA Approved Training and Testing Centers (ATTCs) providing training and skills assessments for construction workers to be upgraded through designated pathways, BCA. https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/manpower/bca-approved-training-and-testing-centres

[19] https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/manpower/bca-approved-training-and-testing-centres

[20] https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/manpower/bca-approved-training-and-testing-centres

- CoreTrade Scheme
- Multi-Skilling Scheme
- Direct R1 Pathway
- Continuing Education and Training (CET)
- Skills Evaluation Certificate (Knowledge) (SEC(K))
- Certificate of Successful Completion (CSC)

The range of fees payable per candidate for various types of courses and tests conducted at ATTCs vary by the number of courses and/or tests and pathway scheme (Table 2.11).

Table 2.11: **Range of Fees Payable to ATTCs per Candidate**

Pathway	Total No. of Different Types of Courses/Tests	Details
CoreTrade	31 courses	Skills Assessment (SA) Fees only (before GST): Tradesman: S$324–S$830 Trade Foreman: S$364–S$744
		Familiarization Course (FC) and Skills Assessment (SA) Fees (before GST): Tradesperson: S$858–S$2,830 Trade Foreman: $964–$1664
	42 tests	1st SEC(K) Test Only (before GST): S$360–S$830
Multi-skilling Scheme	43 different courses leading to 2nd Skills Evaluation Certificate (Knowledge)	Express Training Course: $405–$2,000 SEC(K) Test: $360–$830 Express Training Course + Test: $514–$2,680
CoreTrade and Multi-Skilling	19 different courses for CET requirement	CET: $110–$130
Range of fees payable to BCA per candidate:		
CoreTrade	3 different courses for CET requirement	CET for CoreTrade Supervisors: $375

ATTC = approved training and testing center, BCA = Building and Construction Authority, CET = Continuing Education and Training, SEC = Skills Evaluation Certificate, SEC(K) = Skills Evaluation Certificate (Knowledge).

Source: Chen (2024).

When it comes to costs, first-time migrant workers generally pay for their own training at the overseas training centers in their home countries. Upon registering for the test and being paired with employers, the costs of the tests are paid by the employers. For in-country training and certification it is generally the employers who sponsor migrant workers in Singapore for the BCA training (costs for each for worker sent to the training range between S$1,000–$1,500 or $742–$1,114 [Chen 2024]). Workers can undertake the training on their own initiative but both the costs as well as the timings of the training (which take place during working hours) make this unlikely. Skills training and upgrading benefits both workers and employers—workers can improve opportunities to earn more money, while employers benefit from enhanced skills, as well as lower levies (Chen 2024).

Thailand

Thailand's national qualification framework, which was approved in 2014, covers all education sectors (secondary education, tertiary education, VET, etc.) as well as skills standards qualifications and professional qualifications. The Office of the Education Council is responsible for providing national information, coordinating, managing and monitoring the national qualifications frameworks (NQF), while the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour (as implementing agencies) are responsible for assessing and recognizing qualifications from other economies (KWPF 2015).

Occupational and competency standards have been developed by both the Thai Professional Qualification Institute, under the Prime Minister's Office, which has developed the Professional Qualifications and Occupational Standards Framework, and the Department of Skill Development (DSD) under the Ministry of Labour, which is responsible for the National Occupational Skills Standards. The DSD provides occupational skills training and testing to those already at work and those wishing to enter the world of work. The Occupational Skill Testing System is divided into three types: (i) skill testing for national skills standards qualifications, (ii) skill testing for working with overseas qualifications, and (iii) skills testing for working in specific industrial or service sector qualifications. The DSD supervises the Skill Development Institutes located in every region of Thailand. In addition to Thai Professional Qualification Institute and the DSD, industries and professional associations can also develop competency standards for their sector.

At present, for the construction sector, there is no standardized manner by which skills for migrant workers in the construction sector are assessed, graded, and compensated apart from the award of minimum wages for elementary occupations. Even for national workers, benchmarking of skills has not been straightforward, with level 1 of the DSD qualifications officially mapped to level 3 of the Thai NQF, even though the skills descriptors for these levels vary. The DSD definition of its level 1 in current skill standards is "skills required for beginner skilled worker—performing tasks with clear instructions under close supervision", while the Thai NQF level 3 descriptor is "application of knowledge skills in the field, ICT, communication in problem-solving, and work in a new context including responsibility for oneself and others". The Thai AQRF referencing report however, uses new and more advanced descriptors for the DSD levels, and the DSD has been requested to provide its latest level descriptors. In practice, each employer is currently using its own criteria of measurement, and setting compensation according to its own standards.

With regard to the MRS process between Thailand and Cambodia for bricklaying and plastering, the Thai NQF level descriptors have been matched to the Cambodian Qualifications Framework (CQF) level descriptors with Thai NQF level 3 having similar outcomes to the CQF level 3. However, the process is not straightforward due to the problematic mapping of Thai DSD skill level 1 to Thai NQF level 3 (as noted above). An assessment of the MRS process reveals key lessons from the MRS between Thailand and Cambodia (ILO 2021):

- Before embarking upon benchmarking it is important to understand each other's qualifications structure so that confusion over levels is minimized.
- The skills in the standard being proposed for mutual recognition need to be fully analyzed to be certain that migrant workers will meet employer requirements.
- Full documentation, especially of quality assurance and assessment policies and procedures, needs to be shared and well discussed so as to smooth the pathway to mutual recognition.

2.5 Comparison of the Models

Both Singapore and Thailand are major countries of destination for migrant workers in the construction sector. Both countries recruit migrant workers of varying skills to meet the demand for elementary, middle-skilled, and professional occupations in the construction industry. Singapore has clear labor migration pathways for the different skills categories. It has aligned these with testing and certification as far as lower- and middle-skilled occupations go. In Thailand, middle-skilled labor migration is taking place in an ad hoc manner or through a more cumbersome work permit system. Both countries have also adopted different approaches to address their labor market needs. The effectiveness of both these approaches needs to be assessed in light of their usefulness to the local labor market conditions, immigration rules, as well as benefits to workers and employers alike (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12: Comparison of Models: Singapore and Thailand

Assessment Criteria	Recruitment of Migrant Workers in Middle-skilled Occupations (Singapore approach)	Recruitment of Migrant Workers in Middle-skilled Occupations (Thailand approach)
Responsive to labor market demand in the country of destination	No facilitated pathways. R1 workers need to meet the income threshold as well as local experience requirements. Training and tests are based on the curriculum of the national authority which in turn can adapt to labor demand priorities.	No facilitated pathway. While MRS ensures skills matching, this is a pilot and recognition or certification systems are not yet in place. Employers use their own systems to assess skills with no standardization.
Alignment with labor mobility pathways for migrant workers of different skill groups	Work passes (by skill and sector) and visa pathways are in close alignment.	The current work permit structure does not cater to the facilitated recruitment of middle-skilled workers in the construction sector. The MRS agreement between Thailand and Cambodia has focused on skills recognition and matching; mobility pathways for medium-skilled occupations remain to be identified.
Recognition of prior learning (RPL), qualifications and skills	Workers must complete specific training and pass the minimum assessment level set by the country of destination in order to qualify for the work permit. Previous experience and qualifications are not automatically recognized.	The MRS approach is based on joint collaboration between countries of destination and origin to standardize their qualification frameworks.
Implications for employers	Lower levies for higher skilled workers; training and testing is done in government-accredited centers which ensures that all migrant workers recruited have similar levels of skills/education. For migrant workers who get trained and certified in Singapore training costs are generally borne by the employers (ranging between S$1,000–S$1,500 per worker).	When MRS arrangements are in place, employers will have a framework to determine the recruitment of Cambodian workers of different skill levels; for migrant workers from other countries, employers will need to continue to use their own training and assessment standards that may differ from employer to employer in the absence of an industry standard. Employers may recruit migrant workers to work in skilled construction sector jobs under Section 59 General Work Permit, but there is an income threshold that needs to be maintained.
Implications for migrant workers	RPL and previous on-the-job experience (outside Singapore) is not factored in and workers must get trained/assessed afresh in order to be hired. For workers converting from R2 to R1 categories, higher-level skilled training can lead to improved work and visa conditions. Workers can undertake training on their own initiative (not common practice), however; if they are not sponsored by the employer, then they have to bear the cost themselves. First-time migrant workers to Singapore pay for their own training in their countries of origin at the overseas training centers (which are accredited by Singapore's Building and Construction Authority).	For Cambodian workers, the MRS provides a framework for RPL and skills recognition, as long as they have technical qualifications and their prior skills assessed in their country of origin. Migrant workers from other countries will need to continue to negotiate their terms of employment with employers. In the absence of a clear mobility pathway for middle-skilled occupations, workers who rely on memorandum of understanding channels for employment in Thailand are often recruited at lower skill levels with a corresponding impact on wages.

MRS = Mutual Recognition of Skills Agreement.

Source: Authors.

2.6 Conclusions

Among the ASEAN countries, Singapore has different permit options for workers based on skills. In terms of the two other major countries of destination in the ASEAN region, labor force survey data from Malaysia and Thailand show that a majority of migrant workers employed in these countries were in medium-skilled occupations in 2019. In Thailand, 60% of migrant workers were in middle-skilled occupations (61% men and 58% women) ,while in Malaysia those in middle-skilled occupations accounted for 56% (53% men and 61% women) (ILO 2023a). This finding is illuminating given neither Thailand or Malaysia have admission policies or MOUs that provide a facilitated legal migration pathway for medium-skilled migrant workers.

MOUs that include middle-skilled labor migration, or admission policies covering all skills levels, are necessary to meet the actual skills demands of employers and businesses in economies facing shortages. Such entry processes should have cost-effective processes for skills recognition or certification.

Where migration programs do not recognize or respond to the different skills required within a sector of work, they can effectively flatten the skills to the detriment of both worker and employer (ILO 2023a).

There is great potential for skills recognition and certification systems to positively impact on the functioning of labor markets for the benefit of migrants and employers, as well as for countries of origin and destination. For workers, enhanced skills can lead to better employment, including higher wages, and increased technical know-how. It can support them with in having their skills appraised and recognized back in countries of destination.

Skills recognition or certification having standardized assessment eases recruitment processes. It allows for employers to assess migrants' productive potential and their capacity to comply with the company's quality standards and actual skill needs.

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Migrant Seasonal Workers from Asia and the Pacific: Schemes and Policy Concerns

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3.1 Introduction

The employment of seasonal migrant workers has been a staple support to agriculture across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries for many decades. In Asia, both Australia and New Zealand have developed seasonal worker programs drawing on the available workforce in the broader Pacific region for employment in the agriculture, horticulture, and viticulture sectors.

In Australia and New Zealand, these "bespoke" programs, designed specifically for short-term admission for employment in these sectors, are complemented by sizeable working holiday maker (backpacker) visa schemes that draw in young, unskilled casual labor each year, many of whom then work on farms and in orchards, as well as other seasonally driven sectors such as hospitality and tourism.

The Republic of Korea, facing increased unmet labor demand in a context of declining demographics, has recently developed a seasonal and temporary work program, while Japan has made use of "technical intern" schemes reminiscent of early seasonal worker programs in the United Kingdom to fill gaps in the traditionally family-based farming sector.

While most migration programs are managed primarily by ministries of interior, home affairs, or justice, seasonal worker programs forming part of the overall immigration system are notable for often being managed primarily or jointly by other ministries and agencies, including departments of agriculture, employment, foreign affairs, or a mix. Policy priorities across these departments can vary, as can the interests of the private sector, and key countries from which migrants are recruited. Seasonal worker programs drawing on the Pacific island country workforce are framed by destination countries as having a strong development impetus. This is in contrast to working holiday maker schemes in the same destination countries, which are viewed as a form of tourism, pitched primarily toward wealthy OECD countries. As a result, worker profiles—and productivity—are very different.

Recent policy reviews of seasonal worker schemes in the Pacific have focused on improving outcomes for participating workers and promoting stronger development outcomes. This stems, in part, from the recognition—brought home by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and attendant international travel restrictions—of the essential nature of seasonal work, coupled with increasing concerns from Pacific island partner countries that seasonal programming is draining their domestic labor markets.

This chapter will review the origin and development of seasonal work schemes in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom and look at the evolution of seasonal working in Japan and the Republic of Korea. It will assess the role that the schemes play in these countries relative to working holidaymaker programs. It will outline some of the enduring policy concerns associated with seasonal worker programs, notably risks of exploitation to participating migrant workers, and oversight arrangements in place to mitigate this.

It is clear that employers will be reliant on migrant labor for some years to come. Repeated efforts across OECD countries to recruit national workers into seasonal agricultural work have revealed an unwillingness among national workers to take on unskilled and semi-skilled work in a sector that can requires hard physical labor for minimum wage. Labor-saving technology in the agriculture sector is slowly improving but remains far from commercially viable on a large scale in the most labor-intensive activities. To be sustainable in the long term, governments will have to ensure that programming can strike the balance between smooth access to time-critical seasonal labor, adequate protection for those who participate, sufficient oversight to ensure compliance, and consideration to maximizing positive development impacts for communities once workers return home.

3.2 The Evolution of Seasonal Working in Asia and the Pacific and the United Kingdom

Seasonal worker schemes have become a small but critical element of annual immigrant intake each year, though may not be counted in net migration figures due to the short-term nature of the visa.[1] Programs in Australia, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand have all been developed within the past 20 years; while the United Kingdom's current program is more recent, the history of migrant seasonal labor stems back more than 50 years. Migrant labor is now integral to the development and maintenance of the agriculture and horticulture sectors in all three countries. Unlike most immigration categories, seasonal workers tend to be subject to greater oversight from governments, and businesses are required take on greater responsibility for the wellbeing of workers in their employ, including through providing accommodation and sharing some costs.[2]

In Australia and New Zealand, formal seasonal worker programs have been pursued in parallel with long-standing working holiday maker (WHM) programs, with many backpackers engaging in seasonal work during their trip. While the overall number of WHMs exceeds seasonal workers in Australia and New Zealand, this is a less predictable source of labor, as backpackers are faced with many choices as to what, when, and where they work, including not to work at all. Indeed, the stated priority for WHM programs is cultural exchange among youth. Major programs exist in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, with smaller programs in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and across Europe, including the United Kingdom. Each specify eligible nationalities and tend to be reciprocal in nature. Numerical caps and educational thresholds may be set in the agreements, especially with developing countries.

3.2.1 Recognised Seasonal Employers Scheme (New Zealand)

New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme was established following a successful pilot in 2007. While open to workers in other nationalities if employers can demonstrate a pre-established relationship, the program is primarily aimed at workers from nine Pacific island countries[3] to undertake seasonal work in the horticulture and viticulture industries. It has been identified as one of the first seasonal worker programs in the OECD to deliberately consider the positive development impacts in the broader Pacific region (Gibson and McKenzie 2014); a recent review of the scheme acknowledged the role of the program in promoting economic and social resilience (Office of the Minister for Immigration 2023).

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[1] For example, Australia's Net Overseas Migration calculation is based on incoming travelers who stay in country for 12 months or more within a 16-month period.

[2] Accommodation costs may still be significant, which is a challenge in Australia and New Zealand. (ILO 2022).

[3] Eligible Pacific countries are Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Initially capped at 5,000, the program has gradually increased in response to demand from employers (Figure 3.1). It was set at 19,500 for the 2023/24 season (New Zealand Immigration n.d.). The incoming New Zealand government has committed to doubling the size of the program, even while numbers are still recovering post-COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions (Movono, Scheyvens, and Auckram 2023). However, it is unclear whether participating Pacific island countries will be as enthusiastic (see below).

Figure 3.1: New Zealand Program Caps and Arrivals, 2007–2023
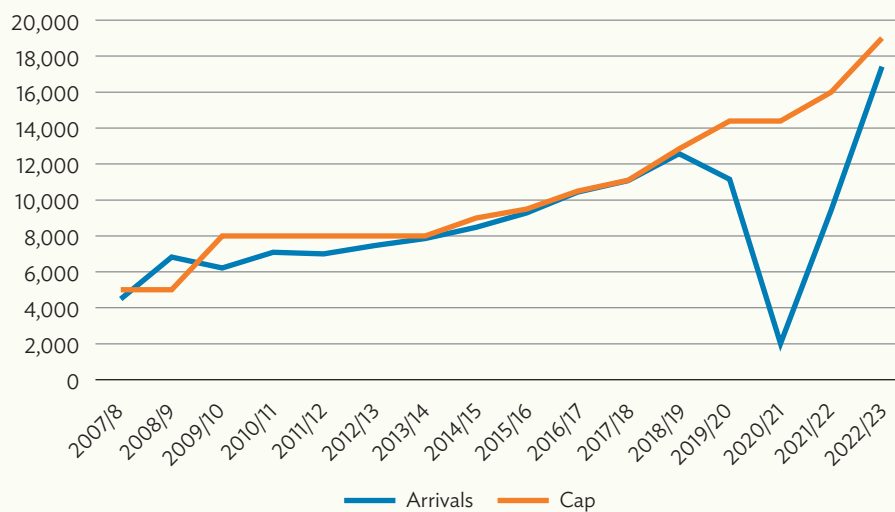
Source: New Zealand Immigration.

The visa allows workers to stay up to 7 months in any 11-month period. According to 2022/23 season data, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu are the top three countries of origin for workers, which is consistent with pre-pandemic trends. Beyond the Pacific, a small but significant number of workers from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taipei,China, and Thailand also arrive under the RSE scheme, presumably because employers have pre-existing relationships (as above).

A government review of the scheme, conducted in 2023, found that it had been transformative for industry as well as for Pacific workers, through both remittances and skills development, filling gaps in the horticulture and viticulture sectors (Office of the Minister for Immigration 2023). Indeed, the New Zealand government has estimated that RSE workers composed 12% of the workforce in those sectors (Office of the Minister for Immigration 2023).

The RSE scheme is underpinned by a regulatory framework which requires employers to gain prior approval from the government to employ seasonal workers (who are then allocated based on past employment through RSE), labor market testing, and make commitments to arrange accommodation, advances flight and associated costs (although workers still pay or reimburse the majority of recruitment-related costs), and support worker wellbeing. Employers are also responsible for costs associated with overstay.

The scheme has been developed through strong engagement from employers, notably through sector associations such as Horticulture New Zealand (Gibson and McKenzie 2014). Indeed, industries lobbied for the introduction of the scheme and play an active role in ensuring it functions well (Curtain and Howes 2020). Recruitment tends to be done directly by growers and cooperatives, who have an interest in maintaining a good reputation to ensure a stable supply of workers and repeat journeys. Indeed, from the outset, repeat journeys have been strong: an estimated 52.2% of workers from the 2007-08 season returned to work in 2008-09, and the majority of these (86.1%) for the same employer (Gibson and McKenzie 2014).

The relevance of the scheme for New Zealand is set to continue, in a context of low unemployment and declining numbers of young people living in rural areas. In addition, New Zealand employers have demonstrated a preference towards more skilled and dedicated workers recruited through the RSE scheme than available working holidaymakers as the former are viewed as more reliable and productive, particularly if returning through the scheme bringing with them accumulated expertise (Curtain et al 2018). This contrasts with the Australian experience (see below).

However, the 2023 review identified several challenges and areas for potential reform. These include a need for greater long-term planning and transparency over how the annual cap is set, so that employers can plan more effectively; reducing the use of past worker allocation to determine future allocations, to allow more opportunity for new employers in the scheme; improving and streamlining labor market testing, including to reduce duplication; putting in place a stronger compliance and oversight to reduce risks of exploitation and mistreatment, including greater resourcing, stronger sanctions, and increasing RSE workers' representation; and creating greater flexibility in visa conditions, including to allow multi-entry visas, and potentially the ability to change employers. As a result, a collaborative 3-year planning cycle has been proposed, linked to a stronger compliance framework, to facilitate longer-term planning and certainty. In addition, several proposals were made to address pastoral care of workers, and conditions of work. As of late 2023, decisions on the proposed reforms are still pending (Office of the Minister for Immigration 2023).

The New Zealand Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program allows young people from 18 to 30 (and up to 35 from certain partner countries) to live and work in-country for up to 12 months (up to 23 months for Canadians, and 36 months for British nationals). Currently New Zealand has agreements with 38 economies, including a number from Asia: the People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Japan; the Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Philippines; Singapore, Taipei,China; Thailand; and Viet Nam.[4] Details of the scheme differ according to partner country, but participants can usually study for up to 6 months.

Prior to the pandemic, the 65,676 visas were granted under the WHM scheme in 2018/19. During the pandemic, visa grants and numbers dropped significantly. For the year 2020/21, just 2,916 visa grants were made.[5] However, by 2022/3, visa grants had rebounded to 63,750 (Figure 3.2).[6]

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[4] Selected European Union/European Economic Area countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden), plus Argentina, Brazil, Canada, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, China; Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Taipei,China; Thailand, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, and Viet Nam. Information from immigration.govt.nz (accessed 10 January 2024).

[5] Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Migration Data Explorer. mbienz.shinyapps.io/migration_data_explorer/ (accessed 10 January 2024).

[6] Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Migration Data Explorer. mbienz.shinyapps.io/migration_data_explorer/ (accessed 10 January 2024).

Figure 3.2: New Zealand Working Holiday Maker Visa Grants, 2013–2023
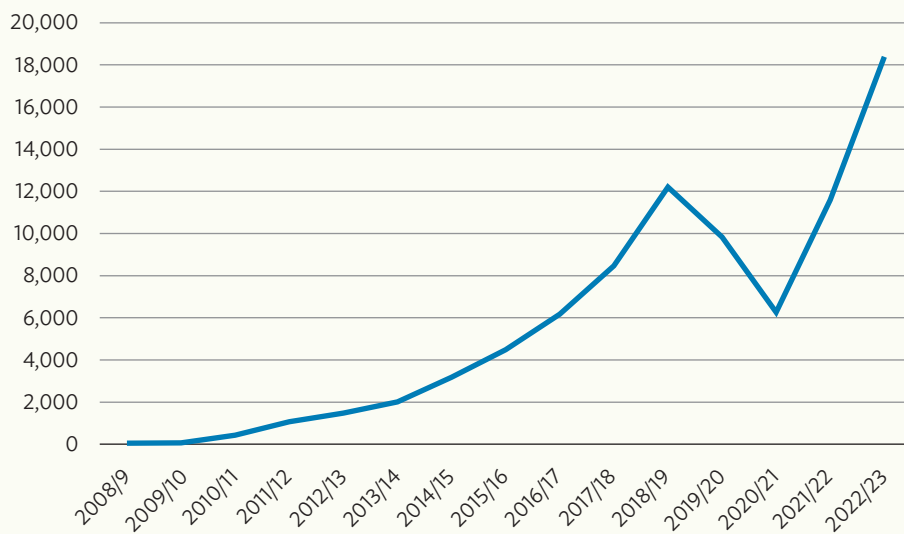
Source: Ministry for Business Enterprise and Innovation.

The top participating nationalities prior to the pandemic were fairly consistent: the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Canada. However, following the pandemic, these nationalities have so far formed a smaller proportion of the total WHM participants—62% in 2022-23, versus 74% in 2018-19—with significant increases in participation from the PRC, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Despite being a much more plentiful source of labor, sectors such as horticulture and viticulture are less dependent on working holiday makers than seasonal workers, and tend to view them rather as a useful supplement to the core seasonal workforce.

3.2.2 Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (Australia)

Australia has had a Seasonal Worker Program (SWP) in place since 2012, following a 3-year pilot that began in 2009. The program was closely modelled on New Zealand's RSE program. It was initially open to employers in the horticulture, agriculture sectors and (later) accommodation in selected regions. In April 2022, the government merged this scheme with a pre-existing Pacific Labour Scheme to establish a new Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, designed to offer both short and long-term employment opportunities (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations 2022). A short-lived agriculture visa—developed in the interim—led to a memorandum of understanding with Viet Nam, which has yet to be implemented, although the government is in discussions with the Vietnamese government.

The SWP was open to nine Pacific island countries, and Timor-Leste.[7] Seasonal workers could obtain 3-year visas for work up to 9 months each year but were obliged to return home for the remaining

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[7] A short-lived Australian agriculture visa targeted at a broader range of countries has been discontinued.

3 months. As with the RSE scheme, employers needed prior approval from the government, and meet a number of specific obligations related to worker protection and support.

Unlike the RSE scheme, the SWP experienced slower take-up from Australian employers, who had become used to a readily available workforce through existing Working Holidaymaker programs, despite their lower levels of productivity.[8] Surveys established that many employers were unaware of the SWP in the early years, while those who did felt it involved high costs and excessive process (Hay and Howes 2012). However, the government has estimated that around 74% of workers return for a the subsequent year (PALM 2022), which further increases their value in terms of skill, predictability, and productivity.[9]

The Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (PSWPS) was capped at 2,500 for its 3-year duration, however the cap was later removed, and the SWP has steadily grown. The COVID-19 pandemic brought home the importance of a reliable and proximate seasonal workforce (Box 3.1), and the need to reinforce relationships in the broader region, which led to the creation of the PALM scheme, intended to offer a broader number of opportunities to workers from the region. The number of PALM workers has grown significantly: from around 8,000 workers in March 2020 to over 38,145 workers by October 2023, although this figure also includes those on longer-term 4-year visas (PALM 2022).

Figure 3.3: SWP and PALM Program Arrivals, Australia, 2008–2023
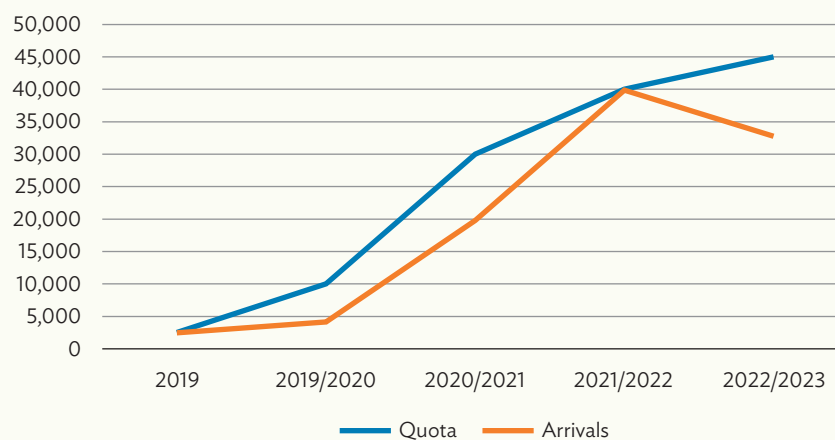
PALM = Pacific Australia Labour Mobility, SWP = Seasonal Worker Program.

Source: ANU Development Policy Centre.

Under the scheme, accredited employers can recruit workers for up to 9 months, or for longer-term roles between 1 SWP and PALM Program Arrivals, Australia, 2008–2023ber of changes to improve the attractiveness and function of the program. Employers must pay up front costs for visas and travel (over A$300) although may recoup this from workers once employment begins; they must ensure standards

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[8] A 2018 study found that the productivity of seasonal workers under the SWP were, on average, 20% higher than that of Working Holiday Makers in the horticulture sector. See Zhao et al. (2018).

[9] ???

of accommodation and are responsible for the wellbeing of workers. For workers, there is support to make it easier for PALM workers to access their superannuation savings (pension contributions) on their return home, new rules to ensure pay based on minimum 30 hour weeks, and minimum net pay for workers (particularly important in early weeks, when pay deductions are higher). In addition, additional resources have been committed to strengthen oversight of domestic operations and prevent exploitation.[10] Through these changes, the government hope to ensure the seasonal work program can realize stronger relationships in the region, while meeting employers' needs, including through support to help a wider number of agricultural employers, notably small growers, to access additional workers. As with New Zealand, workers cannot change employers independently, which can raise the risk of vulnerability to exploitation, including forced labor.

Alongside this, Working Holiday Maker programs play a critical role in addressing skills shortages across Australia, notably in the horticulture and agriculture sectors, and in more remote regions. WHM schemes have been in place for nearly 50 years, first established in 1975 for nationals from Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. The program is intended to serve as both branding opportunity for Australia, where attracting people both as tourists and immigrants remains important. It is estimated that the program contributes A\$3.1 billion to Australia's economy, boosting tourism in regional areas (joint Standing Committee on Migration 2020).

The WHM scheme is comprised of two subcategories with broadly similar rules. The Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa is open to nationals between 18 and 30 (35 for some nationalities) from 19 partner economies.[11] These are uncapped. A Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa offers similar opportunities to nationals of a further 29 partner countries,[12] but require 2 years of post-secondary study, functional English, and possibly a letter of support. For this visa, each participating country has a specific cap attached to the number of visas issued annually (except for the United States). For participating countries from Asia, the caps range significantly: the PRC (5,000), Indonesia (4,612), Malaysia (1,100), Mongolia (100), Papua New Guinea (100), Singapore (2,500), Thailand (2,000), and Viet Nam (1,500).[13]

Both visas offer participants a 12-month visa, with the opportunity to take up short-term work to pay for the trip, and up to 4 months of study. Participants who do 3 months of specified work in specified regions may be eligible for a second visa, and a third, if a further 6 months of work is undertaken.[14] The purpose of this is to encourage WHM participants to engage in needed work in less populated regions, including seasonal agriculture work.

The WHM scheme has gradually expanded, reaching a peak in 2012-13, with over 258,000 visas granted. Numbers declined dramatically during COVID-19–with just 39,586 visas granted during 2020–21, and many more either unable to travel to Australia, or returning home early. Numbers have since recovered to 224,431 in 2022–23 (Figure 3.4).

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[10] For example, by committing A\$168.1 million over 4 years to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in the 2023/4 budget.

[11] Selected European Union/European Economic Area countries (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden), plus Canada, Hong Kong, China; Japan, Republic of Korea, Taipei,China; and the United Kingdom. Information from immi.homeaffairs.gov.au (accessed 10).

[12] Selected European Union/European Economic Area countries (Austria, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Spain), plus Argentina, Brazil, Chile, People's Republic of China, Ecuador, Indonesia, Israel, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, San Marino, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, Uruguay, United States, and Viet Nam. Information from immi.homeaffairs.gov.au (accessed 10 January 2024).

[13] Caps for 2023–24 program. https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/whm-program/status-of-country-caps

[14] immi.homeaffairs.gov.au

Figure 3.4: Australian Working Holiday Maker Visa Grants, 2005–2023
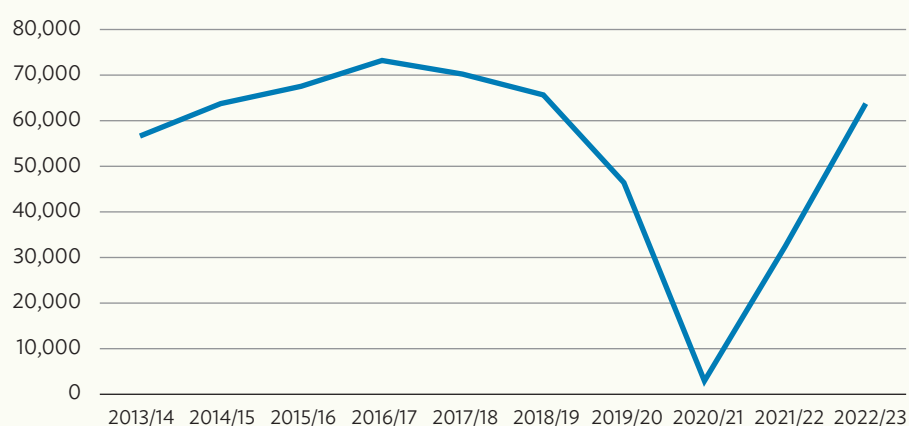
Source: Department of Home Affairs.

Based on most recent data, the top nationalities granted visas in 2022–23 were the United Kingdom (17%), France (12%), and Ireland (9.6%), all of which saw over 100% increase in grants compared with the previous year, along with Taipei,China, with an over 200% increase (15,528 compared to 5,142).[15] Other Asian countries with significant numbers of WHMs include Indonesia and the PRC. As of December 2022, the Australian government was negotiating with Fiji, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands to join the WHM program, and is expected to include 1,000 places for Indian nationals as part of the Australia–Indian Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, signed in April 2022 (Department of Home Affairs 2022).

Table 3.1: Nationalities of RSE and PALM Workers, 2022–23

	RSE	PALM
Fiji	879	1,047
Kiribati	633	275
Nauru	0	0
Papua New Guinea	248	515
Samoa	4,160	1,299
Solomon Islands	960	824
Timor-Leste	0	2,712
Tonga	1,930	3,172
Tuvalu	234	0
Vanuatu	7,100	8,539
Other Asia*	1,280	0

PALM = Pacific Australia Labour Mobility, RSE = Recognised Seasonal Employer.

* Other Asia includes India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taipei,China, Viet Nam

Source: Bedford (2023).

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[15] immi.homeaffairs.gov.au

Despite its popularity, a number of experts have expressed concerns that the work requirements to qualify for visa extension can place backpackers in vulnerable situations, willing to take on sub-standard working conditions in order to meet the stipulation (Coates, Wiltshire, and Reysenbach 2023; Riley and Howe 2019). As such, there have been calls to abolish the visa extensions, reiterated in the 2023 Review of the Migration System.

3.2.3 Seasonal Worker Programming in the United Kingdom

The use of seasonal worker programming in the UK has fluctuated over the past decade, despite having a long-standing scheme for migrant agriculture work since the mid-1940s. Its most recent iteration is the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), suspended in 2014, and restarted in 2019. These fluctuations are closely related to the availability of EU nationals before and after the UK's exit from the European Union (Brexit).

The visa allows overseas workers to come to the UK for a maximum of 6 months, with the possibility to return in subsequent years. Originally intended to attract young people to engage in cultural exchange and provide a source of labor for the agriculture sector, the scheme became more focused on labor supply over time. Employers must either be registered as operators, or work through registered labor providers, to receive an allocation of the quota of workers. Employers must meet appropriate standards of health and safety, welfare, pay, and accommodation. As with the Australian and New Zealand schemes, arriving workers are tied to the farms on which they work and can switch farms only with the permission of the operator.

During the early 1990s, the scheme's quota was limited to 5,000 per year, and 10,000 per year during the second half of the 1990s. By 2004, the cap had risen to 25,000, before being reduced to 16,250 between 2005 and 2008 in response to the accession of eight new EU member states and the expectation that EU nationals exercising their rights of free movement would fill labor gaps. These nationalities were expected to sufficiently fulfil labor demand, and the government stated its intention to phase out the seasonal work program over time.

Between 2004 and 2007, the vast majority of SAWS workers came from Eastern Europe, although not necessarily from EU member states. Of those coming from Eastern Europe, the largest proportion was from Ukraine (33%), with a significant number from Bulgaria (23%), the Russian Federation (15%), Romania (11%), Belarus (9%), and Moldova (6%) (Migrant Advisory Committee 2013). In 2008, eligibility was further limited to Romanian and Bulgarian workers following their accession to the EU, and the quota for the scheme was raised to 21,250.

After several delays, the SAWS program closed in 2014 as Romanian and Bulgarian workers gained free movement rights to work in the UK. Between 2014 and 2019 the UK had no seasonal worker program. However, following the Brexit referendum in the UK in 2016, the subsequent UK withdrawal from the European Union and end of free movement, the UK government put in place a pilot scheme, with 2,500 places beginning in early 2019.

Since that point, the scheme has expanded rapidly from 10,000 in 2020, to 30,000 in 2021. The pilot and scheme broadly followed the model of SAWS up to 2014. The 6-month visa is also complemented by a 2-month visa for workers in the poultry sector, specifically for the pre-Christmas period. The overall 2022 quota was raised to 38,000 (with an additional 2,000 for the poultry sector), and the scheme opened to the horticultural sector. Despite some suggestions to reduce dependence on migrant seasonal workers, the quota for 2023 was raised to 45,000, with a possibility to increase further if needed (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: United Kingdom Seasonal Worker Quota and Arrivals, 2019–2023
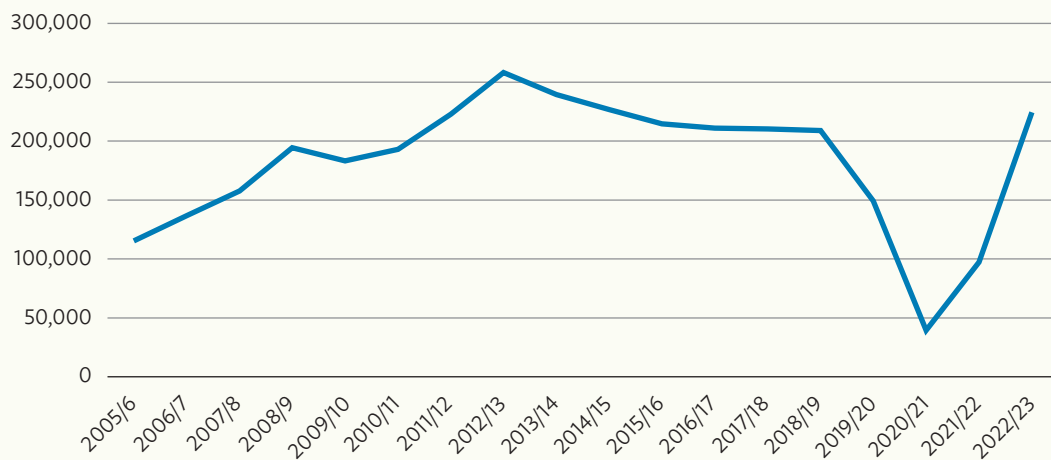
Source: Home Office, United Kingdom.

The composition of those arriving under the new seasonal worker scheme was initially overwhelmingly from Ukraine (91% in 2019, and 87% in 2020), dropping over time, largely due to the restrictions on men leaving Ukraine amid conflict. The majority of those arriving to the UK in 2022 came from Central Asia, notably the Kyrgyz Republic (22.7%), Tajikistan (15.1%), and Kazakhstan (14.9%) (McKinney, Coe, and Stewart 2023). In 2022, just 2,500 of seasonal worker visas issued in 2022 went to EU citizens (Migration Observatory 2023).

This rapid shift away from Ukraine, and other more familiar countries, and proliferation of source countries has posed a challenge for government entities responsible for oversight, including the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, who have fewer pre-existing networks in Central and Southeast Asia. As a result, there have been reports of high recruitment fees being charged to seasonal workers arriving under the scheme, notably from Nepal and Indonesia, which have, in turn led to overstay and requests for assistance from workers unable to repay loans taken out to cover the fees.[16]

The future of the program remains unclear, although farmers and others have expressed a need for predictable labor supply in the agriculture sector. At the same time, significant concerns over the treatment of overseas workers, including exploitation by illegal recruiters, mean that the SAWS program will need some further investment. A review of migrant seasonal working in the UK is being undertaken by the Migration Advisory Committee, to be published in 2024.

While the UK does run a Working Holiday Maker scheme (now the Youth Mobility scheme) it does not seem to impact labor demand in the agriculture sector to any significant degree.

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[16] See for example, May (2023), Mellino, Pangeni, and Pattison (2022), Dugan (2023).

3.2.4 The Seasonal Worker Program in the Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea introduced a seasonal worker program as a pilot in 2015. The existing nonprofessional visa—the Employment Permit System—was ill suited for temporary work as it had high upfront costs and long lead times. The government was reluctant to authorize seasonal work due to concern over potential overstay. To address this, the seasonal pilot allowed workers to come following nomination by municipalities, on C-4 short-term employment visas (allowing stay up to 90 days). The program was largely successful and was mainstreamed in 2017. In 2019, longer stay was allowed on Seasonal Work (E-8) visas (allowing stay up to 5 months, extended to 8 months in 2023). While interrupted by the pandemic, the seasonal program has since recovered. About 20,000 workers arrived in 2022 and more than 27,000 workers in the first half of 2023.

Workers are recruited from the broader region, including the Philippines, Nepal, Viet Nam, Mongolia, the Lao PDR, Cambodia, Uzbekistan, and Thailand, to work in the agriculture and fishery sectors. The local government remains responsible for ensuring that workers remain with their employer. Recruitment occurs through two channels: MOUs between municipalities in the Republic of Korea and origin countries; or direct recruitment of relatives (age 19–55) of migrants who have already moved to rural Korea to marry a Korean national. In the first case, workers must show experience in a related field, and meet age requirements and any additional conditions which may be set by municipalities. Continuing placement from origin municipalities and countries are conditional on overstay rates staying at a minimum.

Most workers are employed in small farms and the program limits the number of seasonal workers in a single workplace. However, due to shifting labor needs, from 2023 the local branch of the National Agricultural Cooperative directly employs and places workers to deal with mismatches in demand among farms who need labor only for a few weeks. Despite this, a number of employers still hire unregistered migrant workers to meet demand (Choi 2023). The Republic of Korea is still reviewing this program to improve conditions and ensure that it matches labor needs while meeting labor standards.

3.2.5 Seasonal Agricultural Workers in Japan

Historically, farming in Japan has been family-based and small-scale, although the number of group management entities has been gradually increasing along with the use of capital-intensive technologies. However, labor-intensive work remains demanding in the production stage of agricultural products. The total number of farmers has dropped over the past decade; the 2020 Census of Agriculture and Forestry reported that Japan had 1.52 million agricultural workers, a drop of 20% from 2015 (1.97 million) (Yoshikawa 2022). This population is also aging with the average age of farmers now approximately 67 (Roberts and Fujita 2023). Due to this aging and gradual decrease in the agricultural workforce, agriculture management entities are seeking to meet labor demand with seasonal workers.

Japan does not have a formal seasonal worker program; instead, historically, workers have been sourced for the agriculture and other sectors through the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), in place since 1990, and which was extended to various agriculture specialties in the early 2000s. Initially a 1-year visa, it is now possible to extend the stay for up to 3 or 5 years depending on the activity. Arriving trainees are given training, including classes on Japanese language and culture, before commencing work. Employers are responsible for securing housing, return air tickets, and training fees, while supervising organizations manage paperwork and connecting workers to farms (Roberts and Fujita 2023).

Since it is designed as a training program with the requirement to stay with a specific employer in a specific activity, interrupting the traineeship to return home—as occurs in seasonal work—terminates the training and associated visa. In light of high fixed costs for entering TITP, it is therefore ill-suited for seasonal use, even if some firms and workers use it this way, offering short-term "training" programs of 7 months, for example, terminating at the end of the season.

Since 2019, the TITP has been complemented with a Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) program, which allows more flexibility in changing employer and place of employment within sectors. As seasons and harvest times differ across the country, workers can move around Japan to harvest different crops on a rolling basis. They may also work for dispatching firms which place them at different farms. While more than 11% of people entering the SSW program through 2023 work in the agriculture sector, farmers have highlighted an increasing demand for manual labor that is accessible on a flexible basis.

Box 3.1: **Policies to Maintain the Seasonal Workforce during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

As the COVID-19 global pandemic took hold in early 2020, countries made unprecedented decisions to close borders and limit international mobility, with the hope of slowing the pace and scale of contagion. Australia and New Zealand severely restricted entry to their countries for non-citizens without valid residency, and along with the Republic of Korea, imposed mandatory 14-day quarantine. While visa holders could technically arrive in Australia and New Zealand, the costs of quarantine and limited number of places available meant inflows meant long backlogs, even for nationals.

This had a knock-on impact on the seasonal workforce. Indeed, across the world, it quickly became apparent that, while remote working was a possibility in many sectors, essential agriculture labor could be neither displaced nor deferred. In New Zealand, policies were put in place to ensure the 9,000-odd Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers in-country during the onset of pandemic could work safely, while extending visas. Nonetheless, migrant workers found themselves with less work in-between seasons, despite efforts to increase the ability to switch employers. Workers faced a range of other serious challenges at this time, exacerbated by lack of social protection. According to the World Bank, the majority (68%) of seasonal workers in Australia and New Zealand experienced a reduction in work hours between March and August 2020, although far fewer (47%) reduced remittances sent home (World Bank 2021).

For the 2020–21 season, just 2,000 workers arrived in country, with border exceptions created for RSE workers from Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu (Bedford 2021a). In 2021–22, RSE workers were brought in from Samoa, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands, with a new one-way quarantine travel arrangement available for seasonal workers from Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu, thus reducing costs for employers to bring workers in.

In Australia, dependence on backpackers meant that the seasonal shortage was more severe, as many working holiday maker (WHM) participants returned home with no new arrivals. During the course of the 2019–2020 season, the number of WHMs dropped from 135,236 in June 2019, to 85,691 in June 2020 (Joint Standing Committee on Migration 2020). As such, the approximately 7,000 Seasonal Worker Program (SWP) workers who remained in Australia when international borders closed due to COVID-19 in March 2020 were offered temporary 12-month visas and were redeployed to new positions (DFAT 2021). The SWP was resumed in August 2020, with the vast majority of approvals for workers from Vanuatu, Tonga, and Samoa. Nonetheless, in 2020/21, the SWP intake overall dropped to 6,266.

Despite continued restrictions on travel, the Australian government committed to expand the SWP in late 2021 and scaled up operations to achieve this. Conversely, in New Zealand, resumption of seasonal worker movement was slower.

73

There are seasonal work programs in other OECD countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Mexico, but these have not involved Asian or Pacific island workers in any significant number. Another channel for seasonal work in Sweden and Finland exists, specifically for berry pickers, mostly from Thailand (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2: **Berry Pickers from Thailand in Sweden and Finland**

Every year, around 10,000 Thai nationals go to Sweden and Finland to pick berries for up to 3 months. Taking advantage of the "right of access" to private forest land, between July and October the workers pick wild berries for processors. Pay is dependent on the weight and quality of berries picked.

These are not seasonal programs but structured practices, which have been in place for decades. In Sweden, there were initial challenges related to transportation, housing, and the possibility that the berry harvest would prove insufficient to ensure adequate pay. Thus, sector regulations were adjusted to ensure that berry pickers are ensured a minimum wage, and that the employer provides transport, room and board, following an intervention from labor unions. Since 2011, immigration authorities verify that employers have the capacity to pay workers.

Most workers are hired by Swedish firms from Thai companies operating in Sweden who do the direct recruitment themselves. Berry pickers earn about €1,800–€2,000 per month and total deductions for travel and other expenses amount to about 1 month of earnings in total, although pickers may earn much more and/or pay higher fees. Sweden and the Thai Department of Labour are in dialogue, and workers go through the Thai Department of Foreign Employment process for deployment, so they are registered as departing workers and provided with the standard information given to Thai nationals exiting for foreign employment.

In Finland, this work is also done as seasonal work without a residence permit, on the basis of a 90-day visa. An invitation from a Finnish company, or a work contract, as well as proof of means is necessary. Employment by temporary agencies is not allowed. Pickers are classified as self-employed, even if they are in practice dependent on the berry companies that coordinate their work and deduct expenses from their earnings.

While both Sweden and Finland see many workers repeat their seasonal work every year, suggesting that the programs are profitable for many participants, there are still some issues such as exploitation and excess fees, and even a few cases of extreme abuse, including human trafficking. In 2022, workplace inspections in Finland found frequent violations. Repeated human trafficking cases have been identified among the actors who arrange travel, lodging, and transport and buy their berries. The inflow to Finland in 2023—about 2,000—was half the 2022 level, due to a visa issuance suspension. The Finnish government is reviewing its approach to governance of migrant workers coming as berry pickers.

Sources: Hedberg, C., L. Axelsson, and M. Abella. 2019. Thai Berry Pickers in Sweden – A Migration Corridor to a Low-wage Sector. Stockholm: Delmi. www.delmi.se/en/publications/report-and-policy-brief-2019-3-thai-berry-pickers-in-sweden-a-migration-corridor-to-a-low-wage-sector/. OECD. 2011. Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Sweden 2011. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264167216-en. Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. 2024. Study on Status of Foreign Berry Pickers and its Economic Effects Begins. Press Release, 19 January. https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-//1410877/study-on-status-of-foreign-berry-pickers-and-its-economic-effects-begins

3.4 Policy Challenges

Seasonal migrant labor programming is subject to additional scrutiny from a broad range of stakeholders, due to the specific nature of the role it plays in the agriculture and horticulture sectors, the potential vulnerability of workers, and fears of overstay. The Australian and New Zealand governments have both engaged in periodic reviews of the schemes and adjusted them to address identified issues. By contrast, Working Holiday Maker schemes have been subject to far less scrutiny and oversight, even while many of the risks—particularly of poor treatment and underpayment—are the same.

3.4.1 Vulnerability of Workers

Issues surrounding the treatment of seasonal laborers are well understood and are not specific to the countries discussed in this chapter. These issues include but are not limited to:

- Conditions of work, ensuring that migrant workers are not pressed into doing unreasonable hours, and have both a strong knowledge of health and safety, as well as safe working conditions.
- Ensuring that workers are housed in decent accommodation and have access to all relevant social and health services.
- Fair payment for work undertaken and ensuring that deductions are in line with expected expenses such as accommodation and transport.

Compounding this, seasonal workers may be reluctant to report poor and exploitative conditions, given their dependence on continued work in subsequent seasons, to send money home to families, and lack of freedom to change employer.

The Australian, New Zealand, and UK seasonal worker schemes all place conditions on employers, who must be either directly or indirectly accredited, to ensure specific standards regarding accommodation, conditions of work, and payment (including minimum wage).[17] In addition, a number of steps have been taken to improve oversight of the programs and strengthen community support mechanisms for workers. In New Zealand, new proposals are currently under review, while in Australia there are additional resources to increase the number of Community Liaison Officers, increase the accessibility of the Fair Work Ombudsman for seasonal workers, and ensure workers are aware of their rights and entitlements (including clarity with respect to pay deductions for upfront recruitment-related costs recouped by employers). Through Community Connections, the Australian government partners with a range of nongovernment organizations, including representative organizations, to facilitate support to PALM scheme workers.[18]

Working holiday makers (WHM) are a more challenging cohort due to the less predictable trajectory of individual participants: while seasonal workers are linked to specific employers, WHMs may choose to work in any region, and for any employer, on a casual basis and are not tracked. In Australia, several reviews have highlighted risks of exploitation exacerbated by dependency on employers, such as underpayment and nonpayment of wages, sexual harassment and health and safety concerns, and the program is under review, particularly with respect to visa extensions, which are a key incentive for WHMs to work in rural agriculture. Given dependence on WHMs in much of the agriculture sector, it is likely that limiting the program would increase labor shortages in the short term, potentially increasing demand for workers arriving under the PALM program, in greater alignment with the New Zealand experience.

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[17] For a comprehensive overview of the rights and obligations that exist under the RSE and SWP schemes see ILO (2022).
[18] https://www.palmscheme.gov.au/contact (accessed 7 February 2023).

3.4.2 Oversight and Compliance

Oversight of these programs remains challenging due to fragmented governance and the scale of resources needed to regulate short-term, fluid, and often fragmented employment contexts. As such, governments have also focused on empowering workers to raise concerns themselves, including through community engagement. Governance challenges are further compounded in Australia by geography, and the difficulties of undertaking spot checks in an agriculture sector spread over many hundreds of kilometers, in contrast to the relatively compact UK and New Zealand sectors.

Most immigration channels are managed directly by the Home Affairs portfolio, which means most functions are housed in the same place. Seasonal worker programs are more complex, and particularly those in New Zealand and Australia focused on recruitment from the Pacific region. For example, the SWP in Australia was led, until 2022, by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (now the Department for Employment and Workplace Relations). The decision to merge the SWP with the Pacific Labour Scheme (managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, DFAT), resulting in the PALM program, has also meant a change in governance.

While the Department for Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is now responsible for domestic delivery of the program, DFAT retains the lead on engaging with participating Pacific countries. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) remains responsible for visa issuance and compliance, while a combination of DEWR, DHA, the Fair Work Ombudsman, and the Australian Border Force, are all responsible for monitoring the program.

In terms of oversight, several bodies have a role to play. The DEWR can undertake surprise audits and cancel approved employer agreements if conditions are not found to be acceptable. Complaints can be made to the Fair Work Ombudsman, who can then investigate reports of exploitation. The Australian Border Force, along with state and territory law enforcement can also conduct raids and take action over concerns of either exploitation or "disengagement" (workers abandoning the employment for which they were admitted). Finally, sending countries have an interest in preventing non-compliance with admission conditions, so may also impose penalties.

In the United Kingdom, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs leads the seasonal worker scheme, while the Home Office remains responsible for inspections, and compliance. The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, lead agency for preventing labor exploitation, has explicitly stated it is not the lead agency for upholding the rights of seasonal migrant workers. A recent report from the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration noted a "lack of clarity" about accountability (Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration 2022).

In the Republic of Korea, the disconnect is between national and local government: while local governments nominate workers, allocations are decided through a Review Council led by the Ministry of Justice, involving departments of employment, agriculture and fisheries, amongst others (Migrant Forum Asia 2024). During the pandemic, this disconnect became clear as, though allocations were made, local governments lacked the capability to navigate travel restrictions and necessary exemptions for seasonal workers. While 5,806 visas were allocated in 2020, just 223 workers managed to become "operational". Where overstay is a problem, the challenge is passed on to sending countries who may not be permitted to participate in the seasonal worker program on a temporary, and sometimes permanent basis if a significant percentage of workers overstay (Choi 2023).

In New Zealand, the strong participation of industry in the design and management of the seasonal worker scheme appears to ameliorate gaps in accountability leading to exploitation and abuse, as there

are strong incentives within the horticultural sector to self-police and ensure strong labor supply in the future.

However, much of the oversight relies on workers themselves being able to voice concerns and highlight abuses. This assumes workers have a strong understanding of their rights and entitlements, but also that they have sufficient confidence that reporting will not put them at a disadvantage. As neither the Australian nor New Zealand schemes offer the flexibility to change employer, and many workers rely on returning in subsequent seasons, they may be reluctant to jeopardize their employment, even if not meeting standards.

3.4.3 Bilateral Relationships and Management by Origin Countries

Another driver to ensuring robust management of seasonal worker programs in the Pacific is desire on the part of Australia and New Zealand to maintain strong regional relationships at the political level. In the United Kingdom, by contrast, post-Brexit the relationships with key sending countries is far looser, and changeable, although agreements have been signed with the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan to strengthen oversight in the past couple of years.

But the Pacific relationships are more complex than the pure economics of labor demand and supply. On the one hand, Pacific island governments, and their communities, are keen to ensure the wellbeing of their workers overseas. On the other hand, in recent years, concerns have been expressed about the long-term development benefit of seasonal worker programs, and the impact on the domestic workforce and social impacts on communities,[19] despite the strongly positive impact of remittances sent home.

Typically, three methods of recruitment have been employed in the Pacific to source workers for the RSE and SWP schemes. First, the creation of a "work-ready pool" of pre-screened candidates, as in Tonga, which allows national government and local communities a say in who participates. Second, the use of agents to select workers, as in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands; the agents are licensed by the government, and offer screening, though employers are more reluctant to add to the costs of recruitment. Third, employers engage in direct recruitment; this is easier for the more consolidated New Zealand industry than for the more fragmented Australian industry, which has greater reliance on intermediaries. Over time, direct recruitment becomes easier as workers return in subsequent years, and networks become stronger.

Several of the key participating Pacific island countries in seasonal worker programs in Australia and New Zealand are reviewing the terms of their participation, having expressed concerns publicly. Tonga has put in place a framework to better manage labor mobility from the country, while Vanuatu is reviewing arrangements. Samoa restricted approvals for seasonal worker departures on a month-by-month basis from 2022, and has now set out new policy priorities, including the prioritization of those without formal employment, the promotion of circularity (potentially standing down returning workers), and enhancing welfare (Sharman and Bedford 2023). These changes also include stronger licensing arrangements and fees, for recruiters, and a cap of 6,000 workers per year to both Australia and New Zealand.

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[19] For example, a recent review of labor needs in Vanuatu highlighted that 60% of enterprises reported being negatively impacted by labor mobility programs, with 50% reporting that one or more staff members had left for Australia in the previous year (Orozco and Spencer 2023).

Pacific island governments must maintain a tricky balance. By raising standards in recruitment processes, as well as costs, governments may push employers to recruit more strongly in other participating countries and become domestically unpopular. This is particularly the case in countries where the economy is significantly bolstered by remittance flows; remittances formed 43.5% of Tonga's GDP in 2022, 33.6% of Samoa's GDP, and 15% of Vanuatu's GDP, the top three contributing countries to the SWP and RSE schemes (Chandra 2023).

As such governments managing seasonal worker programs are increasingly seeking to address these concerns, such as efforts to improve portability of superannuation (pension) contributions, or facilitate contributions at home, for example, through New Zealand's Seasonal Worker Superannuation Administration Service (Bedford 2021b). They are also seeking to complement short-term labor with longer-term opportunities, as with the new Pacific Engagement Visa offering permanent residency in Australia to 3,000 Pacific nationals per year.

Consultations—such as that undertaken by New Zealand with Pacific island countries in March 2023 during its review of the RSE program, and venues such as the Pacific Island Forum—can be invaluable to find solutions that mutually benefit all those involved. This is particularly relevant as new forms of mobility—such as Australia's Pacific Engagement Visa—offer new opportunities. The International Labour Organization has recommended that there be regional coordination of any renegotiation of bilateral labor migration agreements to facilitate some minimum common standards (ILO 2022).

3.5 The Future of Seasonal Work Programs for Migrant Workers

As demographics in Japan and the Republic of Korea suggest, dependence on a migrant seasonal workforce is likely to increase in the Asia region, just as Australia and New Zealand are looking to expand their own schemes. While the Pacific region is serving the latter countries well at the current time, the already significant proportion of nationals arriving each year from some participating states suggests that there may be an upper limit.[20] If Japan and the Republic of Korea commit fully to scaling up migrant seasonal support in their agriculture sectors to shore up domestic food security, then there may be increased competition in the future. More broadly, global dynamics, including the impact of climate change on the predictability of crops and food supply in many parts of the world, will push countries to review their own role in global supply chains and domestic supply.

Some lessons can be taken from the experiences outlined above.

- Regional programming is most reliable, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Even with strict travel restrictions in place, both Australia and New Zealand found ways to restart mobility from the Pacific island countries for seasonal workers. In the UK, free movement of EU workers mitigated the need for formal seasonal worker programming. Australia and New Zealand may need to look more closely at loosening regional mobility more generally to realize the benefits of the Pacific workforce in the long term.
- Collaboration and co-design can be beneficial. As we have seen, seasonal worker programs which focus exclusively on the needs of employers and host governments, to the detriment of

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[20] The Griffith Asia Institute estimates that the number of Pacific island workers travelling to Australia and New Zealand each year could reach 50,000 by 2030 (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 2021).

workers and communities at home, tend to be less successful. The models of engagement that are being developed in the Pacific, bringing together governments, employers, and migrant communities can avoid abrupt changes.

- Clear well-resourced governance and close working partnerships are important. When multiple agencies and departments are involved, clear divisions of responsibility can ensure regulatory issues do not fall between the gaps. These are important within countries, as well as across them, and reduce the scope of action for unscrupulous recruiters and facilitators. But rules to prevent exploitation need to be matched with the resources to enforce them.

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ANNEX 1

ECONOMY-SPECIFIC NOTES

BANGLADESH

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	152.1	1,071	6.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	56.0
2022	172.2	1,785	7.1	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.7

Immigrant population in Bangladesh

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	988	0.77	46	17.8	68.4		
2015	1,422	0.91	47	15.3	65.2		
2020	2,115	1.28	48	13.4	58.0		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	Total	
Number of foreign workers ('000)	85.5	
% of total employment		

Stock of international students ('000)	2009		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	1.6		2.1	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.2		2.3
Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
						4.7	4.3	5.9	7.8

Emigration from Bangladesh to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Bangladesh living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16			
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	161.9	123.6	285.5		390.4	295.9	686.3	
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	33.0	24.4	57.4		18.4	24.5	21.0	
15–24 (% of population 15+)	17.2	23.1	19.7		9.6	11.0	10.2	
25–64 (% of population 15+)	78.2	73.3	76.1		85.5	84.0	84.9	
Total emigration rates (%)	0.4	0.3	0.3		0.7	0.5	0.6	
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.7	2.0	2.4		4.0	6.5	4.8	

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	43.3	48.6	50.8	50.9	51.6	53.8	53.3	39.8	50.5
Italy	10.5	12.7	12.4	10.7	14.6	13.4	11.8	7.8	14.6
United Kingdom	3.0	5.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	9.0
United States	12.0	14.4	13.4	18.4	14.6	15.6	15.0	9.1	6.3
France	1.2	1.8	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.3	3.3
Canada	3.8	2.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.4	1.6	3.0
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	17.7	20.6	21.4	23.1	24.6	27.2	31.3	35.3	39.9
United States	3.8	4.8	5.4	6.5	7.0	7.4	8.1	8.7	8.5
United Kingdom	4.2	4.9	3.6	3.1	2.5	2.3	2.6	3.2	6.6
Canada	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.3	3.7	5.1	5.8

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total									
Saudi Arabia									
United Arab Emirates									
Malaysia									
Kuwait									
Oman									
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	556.0	758.0	1 009.0	734.0	700.0	218.0	617.0	1,136.00	1,305.45
Saudi Arabia	58.3	143.9	551.3	257.3	399.0	161.7	457.2	612.4	497.7
Malaysia	30.5	40.1	99.8	175.9	0.5	0.1	0.0	50.1	351.7
Oman	129.9	188.2	89.7	72.5	72.7	21.1	55.0	179.6	127.9
United Arab Emirates	25.3	8.1	4.1	3.2	3.3	1.1	29.2	101.8	98.4
Qatar	124.0	120.4	82.0	76.6	50.3	3.6	11.2	24.4	56.1

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−0.45	−1.49	−1.19	−2.24	−4.54	−3.04	−2.30	−2.07	−1.88

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	15,296	13,574	13,502	15,566	18,364	21,752	22,206	21,504	23,000

CAMBODIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	14.8	992	7.3	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	75.4
2022	16.6	1,489	5.2	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	0.4

Immigrant population in Cambodia

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	146	1.20	51	22.5	32.8		
2015	74	0.48	46	17.3	71.8		
2020	79	0.47	46	12.3	74.8		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total	Agriculture	Industry	Services
Number of foreign workers ('000)	88.4	32.2	14.2	41.5
% of total employment	1.0			

Stock of international students ('000)	2006	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018	2018	2021	2022
	0.1								0.5	3
Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018	2018	2021	2022	

Emigration from Cambodia to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Cambodia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)			239.1		130.1	162.2	292.3
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)			15.2		5.9	8.8	7.5
15–24 (% of population 15+)			11.8		5.8	5.0	5.3
25–64 (% of population 15+)			81.1		76.7	78.2	77.5
Total emigration rates (%)			3.2		2.5	2.9	2.7
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)			52.7		16.7	29.0	21.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	16.4	16.4	17.1	19.6	20.1	18.8	20.8	10.1	8.4
Korea, Republic of	10.5	9.5	9.6	10.2	9.5	8.7	9.9	3.5	4.6
United States	2.5	2.4	1.8	3.0	3.9	3.1	2.6	1.5	1.7
Australia	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.8
Japan	1.3	2.3	3.7	4.2	4.8	5.0	6.3	3.7	0.5
France	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	2.3	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.5	3.8	4.5	4.8	4.8
Australia	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.7	1.9	1.8
United States	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.0
Japan	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total				1,220.6			1,301.6		1,356.6
Thailand				1,134.2			1,220.2		1,262.2
Korea, Republic of				48.7			45.9		51.0
Malaysia				30.1			23.0		22.3
Japan				6.7			11.5		20.1
Singapore				0.9			0.8		0.9
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	25.0	41.0	86.0	96.0	105.0	68.0	23.0		33.7
Thailand	15.8	16.2	76.4	87.9	60.3	57.8	18.6		18.4
Japan	0.5	1.4	1.6	2.3	3.0	3.9	3.1	0.6	6.4
Korea, Republic of	7.7	7.1	7.4	6.0	4.9	5.9	0.9	2.6	8.9
Singapore	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.0		0.0
Malaysia	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0		0.0

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	–1.87	8.34	6.11	–0.55	–4.29	–2.01	–1.86	–1.74	–1.64

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	1,185	1,199	1,287	1,431	2,659	2,588	2,539	2,616	2,800

85

HONG KONG, CHINA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	7.2	39,888	1.7	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	56.1
2022	7.3	43,370	–3.5	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	5.1

Immigrant population in Hong Kong, China

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	2,669	40.40	54	7.2	63.2		
2015	2,841	39.54	61	7.0	63.1		
2020	2,962	39.52	63	7.7	61.6		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	Total	Miscellaneous social and personal services	Import/export, wholesale and retail trades	Real estate, professional, and business services	Financing and insurance	Accommodation and food services	Public administration, education, human health, and social work activities	Construction	Transportation, storage, postal, and courier services	Other
Number of foreign workers ('000)	450.1	326.5	22.8	20.5	17.9	17.5	16.2	9.8	9.8	9.3
% of total employment	12.0	74.4	3.2	3.8	7.3	5.7	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.1

Stock of international students ('000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	21.1	26.7	30.0	32.0	32.0	34.3	37.3	42.6	47.3	46.9	53.5

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Jan–Sep
	34.4	36.0	40.0	41.6	41.3	14.6	13.8	13.5	18.5

Emigration from Hong Kong, China to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Hong Kong, China living in OECD countries	2000			2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	188.5	199.9	388.4	291.8	332.7	624.5
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	6.3	7.7	14.0	7.2	7.1	7.2
15–24 (% of population 15+)	24.8	20.7	22.7	11.5	8.3	9.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	69.7	73.7	71.8	74.4	77.9	76.2
Total emigration rates (%)	6.5	6.6	6.6	8.8	8.7	8.7
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)				16.7	17.0	16.9

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	9.4	6.7	6.9	13.8	17.4	17.3	15.2	6.1	56.3
United Kingdom	3.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	1.3	48.9
Australia	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.3	3.9
Canada	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.0	2.3
Korea, Republic of	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6
Japan	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.3	2.2	2.3	1.1	0.3
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	32.8	34.3	35.7	36.7	35.9	35.9	35.6	34.7	33.8
United Kingdom	12.9	14.7	16.2	16.7	16.6	16.3	16.3	16.3	16.6
Australia	9.2	9.1	8.8	9.3	9.2	9.6	9.7	8.8	8.2
United States	8.6	8.5	8.5	8.0	7.5	7.0	6.7	6.5	5.8

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	8.04	5.30	11.84	1.94	2.61	2.12	3.99	3.15	4.62

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	387	399	437	425	451	427	453	414	408

INDIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	1,274.49	5.5	5.2	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	45.9
2022	1,417.17	7.2	8.7	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	7.3

Immigrant population in India

			Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
			Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000			6,411	0.61	48	7.1	57.8	73.1	3.0
2015			5,211	0.40	53	9.2	65.1		
2020			4,879	0.35	53	9.5	64.6		

Stock of foreign workers by sector		Total							
Number of foreign workers ('000)									
% of total employment									

Stock of international students ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	34.4	39.0	42.0	44.8	46.7	46.1	47.4	49.3	48.0	46.7

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022

Emigration from India to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16			
Stock of persons born in India living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	1,027.6	943.0	1,970.6		2,545.0	2,280.6	4,825.6	
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	264.2	226.6	490.8		27.0	26.9	26.9	
15–24 (% of population 15+)	10.2	11.0	10.6		9.3	7.6	8.5	
25–64 (% of population 15+)	80.0	77.7	78.9		79.1	78.8	79.0	
Total emigration rates (%)	0.3	0.3	0.3		0.5	0.5	0.5	
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.9	3.8	3.2		2.7	3.7	3.1	

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	241.0	286.9	270.8	276.0	310.0	353.5	407.2	229.0	417.3
Canada	33.1	38.3	39.5	39.8	51.7	70.0	85.6	42.9	127.9
United States	67.3	76.3	62.8	63.0	59.1	58.9	53.8	45.8	92.6
United Kingdom	30.0	46.0	36.0	35.0	50.0	62.3	92.0	31.8	63.5
Germany	19.5	22.4	26.1	27.7	29.5	33.7	39.1	20.5	34.1
Australia	38.1	39.6	34.7	38.6	40.0	33.1	32.6	24.5	26.4

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	147.6	172.2	222.2	262.2	290.6	316.9	390.2	436.3	424.2
United States	74.8	82.2	112.7	135.7	142.6	135.9	133.3	128.6	109.3
Canada	13.6	15.7	16.3	19.9	32.6	34.8	74.3	95.0	93.8
United Kingdom	22.2	19.6	18.2	16.7	16.4	19.6	27.3	55.2	83.9

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022
Total		10,401.2	13,327.4	10,453.2	13,459.2				
United Arab Emirates		2,800.0	2,800.0	3,100.0	3,419.9				
Saudi Arabia		3,050.0	3,253.9	2,812.4	2,592.2				
Kuwait		921.7	918.0	928.4	1,028.3				
Oman		795.1	783.0	688.2	779.4				
Qatar		600.0	697.0	691.5	745.8				

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	781.0	521.0	391.0	340.0	368.0	94.0	133.0	373.0	398.3
Saudi Arabia	308.4	165.4	78.6	72.4	161.1	44.3	32.8	178.6	200.7
United Arab Emirates	225.7	163.7	150.0	112.1	76.1	17.9	10.8	33.2	71.7
Kuwait	66.6	72.4	56.4	57.6	45.7	8.1	10.2	71.4	48.2
Qatar	59.4	30.6	24.8	34.5	31.8	8.9	49.6	30.9	30.7
Oman	85.1	63.2	53.3	36.0	28.4	7.2	19.5	32.0	21.3

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.01	–0.12	–0.14	–0.34	–0.45	–0.37	–0.40	–0.33	–0.30

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	68,910	62,744	68,967	78,790	83,332	83,149	89,375	111,222	125,000

INDONESIA

KEY INDICATORS

		Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012		250.2	2,960	6.0	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	64.2
2022		275.5	4,074	5.3	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	3.6

Immigrant population in Indonesia

			Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
			Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000			292	0.14	48	21.1	47.0	33.0	46.0
2015			338	0.13	42	26.6	55.1		
2020			356	0.13	42	21.4	64.3		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2023		Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Industry	Services
Number of foreign workers ('000)		121.2	3.4	56.4	61.5
% of total employment		0.1			

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	6.4	...	7.2	...	...	7.3	7.7	7.8	7.7		

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	77.1	80.4	86.0	95.3	109.5	93.8	88.3	111.7	121.2

Emigration from Indonesia to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16			
Stock of persons born in Indonesia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	162.3	177.3	339.6		159.8	205.2	365.0	
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	22.0	26.4	48.4		15.0	14.8	14.9	
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.7	11.3	12.4		14.7	8.9	11.4	
25–64 (% of population 15+)	65.4	61.8	63.5		57.4	62.2	60.1	
Total emigration rates (%)	0.2	0.2	0.2		0.2	0.2	0.2	
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	3.2	4.2	3.6		0.9	1.1	1.0	

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	36.3	35.3	34.7	38.8	39.1	47.8	53.6	27.4	22.6
Türkiye				1.2	1.6	2.1	2.7	1.3	5.7
Korea, Republic of	11.8	10.5	8.5	9.0	6.9	10.7	9.8	3.4	3.1
Germany	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.6	3.0	3.0	1.9	2.4
Japan	9.6	11.8	14.3	16.8	19.6	23.2	28.8	13.7	2.3
Australia	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.6	2.1
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	27.8	29.3	32.2	34.4	36.2	37.3	39.8	40.7	39.5
Australia	9.5	9.5	10.2	10.7	11.0	12.2	13.9	12.9	11.7
United States	8.2	8.6	8.9	9.3	8.8	8.5	8.0	8.0	7.4
Japan	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.9	3.6	4.2	4.7	5.1	5.1

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total			3,256.0	4,300.0	4,900.0			3,700.0	
Saudi Arabia			1,500.0						
Malaysia			917.9						
Taipei,China			146.2						
Hong Kong, China			140.6						
Singapore			106.0						
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	276.0	235.0	262.0	284.0	277.0	113.0	73.0	200.8	275.0
Taipei,China	75.3	77.1	62.8	72.4	79.6	34.3	7.8	53.5	83.2
Malaysia	97.6	87.6	89.0	90.7	79.7	14.6	0.6	43.2	72.3
Hong Kong, China	15.3	14.4	68.1	73.9	70.8	53.2	52.3	60.1	65.9
Korea, Republic of	5.5	5.9	3.7	6.9	6.2	0.6	0.2	11.6	12.6
Japan	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.4	5.8	9.7

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.30	−0.04	−0.07	−1.05	−1.14	−0.36	−0.37	−0.38	−0.34

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	9,659	8,907	8,990	11,215	11,666	9,651	9,402	9,960	11,000

JAPAN

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	127.6	33,518	1.4	Employment / population ratio (15+, Total)	60.7
2022	125.1	36,032	1.0	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	2.6

Immigrant population in Japan

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	1,686	1.32	53	15.7	66.6		
2015	2,232	1.74	53	15.7	67.4		
2020	2,771	2.19	51	8.3	75.3		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2022	Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	Construction	Manufacturing	Information, communication	Wholesale, retail	Hospitality, restaurants	Education	Health and welfare	Services, N.E.C.	Other
Number of foreign workers ('000)	2,048.7	57.1	145.0	552.4	85.4	263.6	233.9	80.0	90.8	320.8	219.7
% of total employment											

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	150.6	135.8	132.7	132.0	143.5	164.3	182.7	164.3	182.7	202.9	222.7

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	144.1	142.0	160.3	190.0	208.8	237.5	278.6	306.8	164.0	20.2	307.8

Emigration from Japan to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Japan living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16			
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	215.6	348.7	564.3		266.5	437.5	704.0	
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	68.4	93.5	161.9		25.9	18.0	21.1	
15–24 (% of population 15+)	15.0	12.7	13.6		13.3	8.3	10.2	
25–64 (% of population 15+)	81.0	73.3	76.2		74.8	73.1	73.8	
Total emigration rates (%)	0.4	0.6	0.5		0.5	0.8	0.6	
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	0.7	1.0	0.9		0.8	1.2	1.0	

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	36.4	33.4	36.4	34.7	29.3	29.6	30.6	20.7	25.1
Korea, Republic of	5.9	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.5	5.2	5.1	4.5	6.1
Germany	6.8	6.7	6.9	7.0	6.9	7.1	7.2	3.0	4.1
United States	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.1	4.6	4.3	4.5	3.8	3.9
Canada	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.6	1.4
Netherlands	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.1	1.3
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	28.6	29.2	28.4	29.2	29.1	29.1	29.5	29.7	26.3
United States	16.0	15.5	15.1	15.4	14.8	14.9	14.7	14.2	12.2
United Kingdom	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.6
Australia	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.4

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–90	1990–95	1995–00	2000–05	2005–10	2010–15	2015–20	2020–25	2025–30
	−0.48	0.07	−0.16	0.26	0.43	0.56	0.56	0.52	0.38

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	3,325	3,830	4,443	4,369	4,389	4,888	5,294	5,384	5,485

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	6.5	1,777	8.0	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	57.3
2022	7.5	2,599	2.7	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	2.6

Immigrant population in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	22	0.41	47	19.7	55.9	49.5	8.2
2015	46	0.68	36	15.3	71.5		
2020	49	0.67	36	11.2	75.9		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2022	Total		Agriculture	Industry	Services
Number of foreign workers ('000)	32.6		3.9	16.3	12.4
% of total employment					

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
							6.9				

Emigration from the Lao People's Democratic Republic to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in the Lao People's Democratic Republic living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	132.8	131.4	264.1		122.3	131.7	253.9
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	4.4	5.8	10.2		2.4	6.0	4.2
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.8	13.7	13.8		2.4	3.2	2.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	81.2	79.0	80.1		84.6	82.2	83.4
Total emigration rates (%)	8.3	8.1	8.2		5.1	5.4	5.2
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	23.8	29.2	25.9		9.5	13.4	11.1

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**2.5**	**2.2**	**2.6**	**2.6**	**2.6**	**2.8**	**3.2**	**1.4**	**1.2**
Korea, Republic of	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3
United States	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.3
Hungary	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Japan	0.9	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.4	0.4	0.1
France	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.7**	**0.8**	**0.9**	**1.0**	**1.1**	**1.2**	**1.1**
Australia	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Hungary	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2
Japan	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total						**110.0**			

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
Total	**50.7**	**58.3**	**49.4**	**120.5**	**54.1**	**28.1**	**0.2**	**52.8**	86.8
Thailand				89.8	53.8	28.0		51.7	
Korea, Republic of				0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1		
Japan				0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1		

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.01	−2.66	−5.30	−5.35	−3.68	−3.46	−2.10	−1.95	−1.84

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	189	189	243	240	297	232	221	198	225

MALAYSIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	29.7	8,711	5.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	63.5
2022	33.9	11,399	8.7	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	3.7

Immigrant population in Malaysia

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	1,464	6.31	44	22.6	54.6	91.3	5.9
2015	3,281	10.84	39	26.9	62.9		
2020	3,477	10.74	38	27.7	63.4		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2019	Total (2022)	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Mining and quarrying	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale, retail; vehicle repair	Accommodations, food and beverage	Administrative and support services	Activities as households as employers
Number of foreign workers ('000)	1,997.8	491.3	5.1	575.8	287.2	272.6	253.0	122.3	89.4
% of total employment	12.6	31.9	5.6	21.5	22.5	10.5	16.3	15.2	85.7

Stock of international students ('000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	56.2		99.6	111.4	124.1	100.8	122.8	82.0	89.2	92.5	100.4

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	62.7	79.3	69.8	79.8	77.8	70.7	45.6		40.3

Emigration from Malaysia to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Malaysia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000s)	98.6	115.7	214.3		152.6	179.2	331.8
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000s)	16.9	18.8	35.7		23.1	20.6	21.8
15–24 (% of population 15+)	23.9	19.0	21.2		17.9	14.7	16.2
25–64 (% of population 15+)	71.2	75.3	73.5		69.3	70.4	69.9
Total emigration rates (%)	1.2	1.5	1.4		1.3	1.6	1.5
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	5.7	6.7	6.2		4.5	5.6	5.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	22.9	19.2	21.0	14.1	16.8	16.7	15.0	9.0	9.4
Australia	5.6	4.5	4.0	4.1	4.2	3.4	2.5	2.1	2.9
United States	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.0
United Kingdom	9.0	6.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.0
Germany	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.5	0.8
Korea, Republic of	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.5	3.8	4.1	3.3	1.2	0.8

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	45.7	47.7	49.2	50.9	50.1	49.9	48.2	44.3	36.5
United Kingdom	13.3	15.6	17.0	17.4	16.4	15.0	14.1	13.5	11.5
Australia	15.5	15.4	15.0	15.3	15.1	15.7	16.1	14.1	11.4
United States	7.4	7.3	7.9	8.4	8.5	8.6	7.7	6.7	4.9

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	5.06	3.04	4.73	5.49	5.65	1.71	1.60	1.50	1.32

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	1,644	1,604	1,649	1,686	1,597	1,427	1,552	1,620	1,750

MONGOLIA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	2.8	3,374	12.3	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	54.5
2022	3.4	4,250	5.0	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	8.2

Immigrant population in Mongolia

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	8	0.34	44	14.1	72.8		
2015	20	0.66	33	8.9	71.4		
2020	21	0.65	33	12.5	69.5		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2023		Total	Mining and quarrying	Education	Wholesale, retail; vehicle repair	Manufacturing	Administrative and support services	Construction	Agriculture
Number of foreign workers ('000)		5.7	1.7	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.7	0.0
% of total employment									

Stock of international students ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.6	2.3			1.5	3.6
Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		

Emigration from Mongolia to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Mongolia living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	1.8	2.6	4.4		15.6	24.0	39.7
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)					55.1	55.6	55.4
15–24 (% of population 15+)			27.2		27.6	18.4	22.1
25–64 (% of population 15+)			70.3		71.5	80.9	77.2
Total emigration rates (%)		0.3	0.3		1.5	2.1	1.8
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)		1.5	1.3		2.8	3.0	2.9

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**8.9**	**9.3**	**14.8**	**14.9**	**20.1**	**20.1**	**19.1**	**13.0**	**9.2**
Korea, Republic of	4.3	4.0	8.3	8.2	11.8	10.2	8.7	7.1	3.8
Türkiye	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.2	1.0
United States	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.8
Czechia	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.7	1.2	1.5	1.3	0.7	0.7
Germany	0.6	1.0	1.3	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.6
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Total	**6.6**	**7.5**	**7.4**	**7.9**	**8.8**	**10.1**	**11.5**	**12.9**	**12.5**
Korea, Republic of	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.7	3.4	4.6	5.2	4.9
Japan	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.0
Australia	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.5

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total						**44.0**	**50.0**		
Korea, Republic of							6.7		
Czechia							4.0		

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.00	–7.89	–4.47	–1.22	–0.84	–0.30	–0.27	–0.25	–0.24

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	261	260	273	441	561	549	471	399	440

MYANMAR

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)
2012	50.2	949	7.3	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)
2022	54.2	1,169	4.0	Unemployment (% of total labor force)

Immigrant population in Myanmar

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	98	0.21	47	18.1	60.1		
2015	73	0.14	45	13.8	63.7		
2020	76	0.14	45	13.1	65.2		

Stock of foreign workers by sector	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	0.1	0.1						0.5		

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Myanmar to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Myanmar living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16			
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)					106.5	113.0	219.6	
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)					29.8	31.6	30.7	
15–24 (% of population 15+)					15.3	13.8	14.5	
25–64 (% of population 15+)					74.0	74.3	74.2	
Total emigration rates (%)					0.6	0.6	0.6	
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)					1.8	1.5	1.6	

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**26.6**	**26.3**	**31.4**	**33.4**	**34.5**	**29.6**	**25.6**	**14.6**	**7.4**
United States	16.2	14.2	17.1	17.0	17.3	11.1	6.4	5.3	3.0
Korea, Republic of	4.6	5.1	5.2	6.7	6.3	7.4	5.9	1.9	1.5
Japan	2.1	3.3	5.2	6.1	7.6	8.1	11.6	6.2	1.4
Australia	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.2	1.9	0.3	0.2	0.4
Germany	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**3.3**	**3.9**	**4.2**	**4.9**	**5.5**	**6.8**	**8.3**	**8.9**	**8.5**
Japan	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.8	2.6	3.3	3.7	3.5
United States	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8
Australia	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.4	1.2

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total			**2,021.9**						
Thailand			1,418.5						
Malaysia			304.0						
Singapore			79.7						
China, People's Republic of			92.3						
Japan			7.6						

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	**65.0**	**95.0**	**146.0**	**162.0**	**234.0**	**330.0**	**75.0**	**3.0**	**187.5**
Thailand	33.2	53.6	102.7	148.9	198.0	238.1	58.6	0.0	105.7
Malaysia	25.9	35.0	33.9	3.3	24.8	78.8	10.6	0.0	35.0
Singapore	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.1	1.3	21.3
Japan	0.5	1.7	2.4	3.3	3.9	6.7	4.7	1.5	14.1
Korea, Republic of	4.5	4.5	5.7	5.7	6.1	4.8	0.7	0.0	8.4

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	1,934	2,255	2,453	2,673	2,553	2,672	1,282	1,261	1,500

NEPAL

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	27.3	781	4.7	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	35.6
2022	30.5	1,083	5.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	11.1

Immigrant population in Nepal

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	718	3.00	66	20.4	59.5		
2015	509	1.89	69	16.1	69.8		
2020	488	1.67	70	11.9	76.0		

Stock of foreign workers by sector — Total (2022)

Number of foreign workers ('000)	10.0
% of total employment	

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
		0.1									

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)			2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

Emigration from Nepal to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Nepal living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)			23.9		171.6	136.0	307.6
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)			8.7		36.8	41.2	38.8
15–24 (% of population 15+)			24.0		25.5	24.0	24.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)			75.0		72.5	73.6	73.0
Total emigration rates (%)			0.2		1.6	1.2	1.4
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)			2.2		12.3	20.8	15.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	34.5	39.0	43.1	46.2	47.0	50.3	48.7	29.1	28.4
United States	8.8	8.6	9.3	10.2	9.5	9.9	8.8	6.7	7.2
Australia	4.0	4.4	4.2	5.1	4.4	3.0	3.8	4.7	6.8
United Kingdom	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	3.0
Portugal	0.8	0.9	1.4	1.3	1.7	4.2	5.0	3.9	2.8
Japan	8.3	11.5	13.4	14.1	14.5	13.0	13.1	4.2	1.5

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	24.0	26.1	30.7	38.9	52.1	68.7	78.4	81.1	72.4
Australia	7.2	9.2	11.8	14.7	21.1	32.9	41.9	40.8	33.0
Japan	2.4	3.1	5.1	8.4	12.8	14.5	15.0	18.4	18.4
United States	8.7	7.6	7.9	9.9	12.3	14.4	14.1	12.7	10.9

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023
Total	499.0	404.0	383.0	354.0	236.0	190.0	72.0	348.9	494.2
Malaysia	196.5	61.0	95.2	104.2	10.0	39.2	0.1	26.1	219.4
United Arab Emirates	53.1	52.8	57.9	60.2	62.8	52.1	11.6	53.8	59.2
Saudi Arabia	96.9	138.5	72.9	41.0	46.1	39.3	23.3	125.4	55.8
Qatar	124.1	129.0	121.1	103.2	75.0	29.8	22.1	76.8	40.5
Kuwait	9.6	10.0	13.1	17.6	16.0	9.0	0.0	22.8	31.4

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	–2.42	0.75	–4.08	–6.22	–7.37	–15.11	1.49	5.07	0.44

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	6,730	6,612	6,928	8,287	8,244	8,108	8,226	9,293	11,000

PAKISTAN

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	202.2	1,310	3.0	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	49.4
2022	235.8	1,696	4.7	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	6.4

Immigrant population in Pakistan

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	4,182	2.94	46	7.7	60.4		
2015	3,507	1.76	47	7.0	60.0		
2020	3,277	1.48	45	8.0	66.8		

Stock of foreign workers by sector		Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)		
% of total employment		

Stock of international students ('000)	2003	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	0.4									

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021
								4.5	3.5	5.0

Emigration from Pakistan to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Pakistan living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	375.0	293.7	668.7		806.7	620.5	1,427.2
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	79.8	60.4	140.2		20.4	19.6	20.0
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.9	15.4	14.5		12.4	11.8	12.1
25–64 (% of population 15+)	80.3	78.2	79.3		79.9	79.9	79.9
Total emigration rates (%)	0.9	0.7	0.8		1.2	1.0	1.1
Emigration rates of the highly educated (%)	3.1	3.6	3.3		7.3	9.2	8.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	72.3	79.5	99.4	96.0	92.1	91.5	97.4	73.4	109.5
United Kingdom	10.0	11.0	8.0	11.0	15.0	9.9	16.0	14.7	27.3
Italy	7.8	9.6	11.4	14.7	15.0	13.2	9.9	9.7	14.3
Türkiye	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.5	2.7	4.5	2.7	11.9
Spain	6.5	5.3	4.8	6.4	6.6	8.7	11.7	7.4	9.8
United States	13.3	18.7	18.1	19.2	17.0	15.4	13.6	10.2	9.6
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	25.2	28.6	31.2	35.0	36.8	40.7	43.8	46.2	51.4
United Kingdom	7.2	6.6	6.1	5.5	5.2	5.6	6.5	7.8	12.9
Australia	4.8	6.3	8.2	10.0	10.1	11.3	12.2	11.3	9.5
United States	4.6	4.8	5.2	6.1	6.9	7.4	7.6	7.5	7.1

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	947.0	839.0	496.0	382.0	625.0	225.0	288.0	832.3	862.6
Saudi Arabia	522.8	462.6	143.4	100.9	332.7	136.4	155.8	514.9	427.0
United Arab Emirates	327.0	295.6	275.4	208.6	211.2	53.7	27.4	128.5	229.9
Oman	47.8	45.1	42.4	27.2	28.4	10.3	38.4	82.4	60.0
Qatar	12.7	9.7	11.6	21.0	19.3	7.4	38.0	58.0	55.1
Malaysia	20.2	10.6	7.2	9.9	11.3	2.3	0.1	6.2	20.9

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.28	–1.77	0.71	–0.86	–0.40	–1.14	–1.11	–0.87	–0.70

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	19,306	19,819	19,856	21,193	22,252	26,089	31,312	29,871	24,000

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	1,354.2	6,592	7.9	Employment / population ratio (15+, Total)	63.6
2022	1,412.2	11,560	3.0	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	4.9

Immigrant population in the People's Republic of China

			Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
			Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000			508	0.04	50	13.5	61.9	n.a.	n.a.
2015			978	0.07	39	14.1	59.3		
2020			1,040	0.07	39	14.6	60.2		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2020		Total							
Number of foreign workers ('000)		444.3							
% of total employment									

Stock of international students ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021
	96.4	108.2	123.1	137.5	157.1	178.3	201.2	225.1	221.7	210.9

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
					336.0				

Emigration from the People's Republic of China to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in the People's Republic of China living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	976.3	1,089.8	2,066.1		2,057.5	2,562.6	4,620.1
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	217.0	250.7	467.7		28.0	27.5	27.8
15–24 (% of population 15+)	12.3	11.4	11.8		17.4	16.2	16.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	73.1	73.4	73.3		68.6	70.9	69.9
Total emigration rates (%)	0.2	0.2	0.2		0.4	0.5	0.4
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	1.5	2.3	1.8		1.2	1.8	1.5

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	549.2	555.9	545.1	551.6	563.0	565.8	572.0	275.6	301.8
Korea, Republic of	178.6	192.9	177.0	165.5	156.8	169.3	138.7	96.3	94.8
United States	72.1	75.9	74.4	81.9	71.8	65.6	62.3	41.7	49.7
Canada	34.1	24.6	19.5	26.9	30.3	29.7	30.2	16.5	31.0
United Kingdom	46.0	39.0	43.0	35.0	58.0	55.9	74.0	2.2	30.2
Australia	27.9	27.1	27.9	29.1	29.3	25.7	25.5	18.8	17.0
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	646.8	702.8	743.3	788.8	844.4	904.5	955.6	976.9	885.2
United States	231.9	266.1	291.1	309.8	321.6	333.9	340.2	343.8	295.4
United Kingdom	81.8	86.2	91.5	89.3	96.5	107.8	122.1	143.9	145.8
Japan	89.8	85.2	79.2	76.5	79.4	84.1	91.5	99.1	99.5

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	1,027.0	969.0	979.0	997.0	997.0	992.0	623.0	592.0	543.0

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	562.0	530.0	494.0	522.0	492.0	487.0	301.0	323.0	259.0

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−0.08	−0.13	−0.06	−0.30	−0.32	−0.22	−0.25	−0.26	−0.24

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	63,938	61,000	63,876	67,414	68,398	59,507	53,000	51,000	49,500

PHILIPPINES

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	98.0	2,589	6.9	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	57.1
2022	115.6	3,528	7.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	2.2

Immigrant population in the Philippines

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	318	0.41	49	15.8	53.4	54.8	11.9
2015	212	0.21	48	12.5	52.7		
2020	226	0.21	48	12.9	53.0		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2014	Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)	91.4
% of total employment	0.1

Stock of international students ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
		4.3	3.3								

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	17.1	21.0	22.7	24.3	28.4	42.0	45.3	54.2	158.7	106.6	70.2

Emigration from the Philippines to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16			
Stock of persons born in the Philippines living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	745.8	1,192.1	1,938.0		1,349.3	2,200.0	3,549.3	
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	107.5	168.8	276.4		16.4	16.3	16.3	
15–24 (% of population 15+)	13.9	9.6	11.3		12.3	7.5	9.3	
25–64 (% of population 15+)	75.7	80.5	78.6		73.6	76.7	75.5	
Total emigration rates (%)	3.1	4.8	3.9		3.9	6.1	5.0	
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	5.3	8.1	6.8		11.8	16.2	14.3	

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	152.9	161.3	182.6	172.1	174.8	168.5	171.4	86.0	95.8
United States	54.3	49.2	56.0	52.2	48.7	46.9	45.6	25.2	27.5
Canada	29.5	40.0	50.8	41.8	40.9	35.1	27.8	11.0	18.0
United Kingdom	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	12.0	6.8	11.1
Australia	11.0	10.3	11.9	12.0	12.1	10.9	9.2	8.5	9.8
Germany	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.9	4.0	4.8	4.2	6.4

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	9.4	11.3	12.3	13.8	14.5	15.9	19.7	23.1	22.6
Australia	2.8	4.2	4.4	5.1	5.2	6.0	9.3	10.1	9.6
Canada	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.9	1.6	2.8	3.0
United States	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.4	2.9

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	2,320.0	2,447.0	2,240.4	2,338.6	2,299.1	2,202.0	1,771.5	1,825.0	1,963.0
Saudi Arabia	575.4	604.4	533.2	594.0	558.4	493.2	485.5	445.3	451.6
United Arab Emirates	361.9	379.3	356.2	357.8	361.1	290.7	289.6	262.8	269.0
Kuwait	123.0	141.9	143.4	156.7	131.7	136.5	132.8	107.7	151.2
Hong Kong, China	116.0	144.4	125.5	152.0	143.8	165.2	161.1	122.3	119.8
Taipei,China	111.4	110.1	116.5	88.9	125.4	147.5	148.0	62.1	

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	1,438.0	1,670.0	1,595.0	1,507.0	1,649.0	333.0	397.0	820.4	1,752.1
Saudi Arabia	406.1	460.1	433.6		412.5	86.8		143.8	401.7
United Arab Emirates	227.1	276.3	265.5		269.9	50.8		166.2	287.8
Hong Kong, China	85.7	116.5	144.5		159.1	32.3		44.8	187.2
Singapore	141.5	171.0	162.2		163.5	32.4		74.7	179.8
Qatar	133.2	141.3	122.6		121.8	23.5		82.0	136.6

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2020–2025
	–1.08	–2.12	–2.57	–3.03	–3.44	–1.70	–0.63	–0.59	–0.61

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	29,799	31,142	32,810	33,809	35,167	34,883	36,685	38,049	40,000

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	50.2	26,680	2.4	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	62.2
2022	51.6	33,719	2.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	2.8

Immigrant population in the Republic of Korea

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	244	0.52	41	26.8	66.4		
2015	1,371	2.70	44	21.4	66.1		
2020	1,728	3.37	45	21.6	66.0		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2022	Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Mining and quarrying	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail, food, lodging	Business, personal, public service, & others	Electricity, Transportation, Telecommunication, Finance
Number of foreign workers ('000)	923.0	61.0	412.0	411.0	112.0	170.0	143.0	25.0
% of total employment	3.3	4.0	11.1	9.1	5.3	3.1	1.3	0.7

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	62.7	59.5	55.5	52.5	54.5	61.9	70.8	84.7	98.9	111.6	118.5

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
							264.0	79.5	38.2	197.0	300.9

Emigration from the Republic of Korea to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in the Republic of Korea living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	628.9	817.2	1,446.1		766.3	1,020.4	1,786.7
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	88.0	105.3	193.3		14.8	13.3	14.0
15–24 (% of population 15+)	16.8	15.4	16.0		12.4	9.3	10.6
25–64 (% of population 15+)	74.6	74.9	74.8		71.5	72.7	72.2
Total emigration rates (%)	2.2	2.9	2.6		3.6	4.6	4.1
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.9	4.8	3.7		3.8	5.9	4.8

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**75.2**	**70.9**	**66.0**	**73.2**	**73.4**	**76.8**	**81.1**	**43.2**	**38.5**
United States	23.0	20.2	17.0	21.7	19.0	17.5	18.3	16.1	12.2
Canada	4.5	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.8	6.1	3.3	8.2
Germany	5.5	6.3	7.2	7.7	8.2	7.9	7.7	3.9	4.1
Japan	24.2	21.1	22.6	25.6	28.0	32.4	33.9	8.3	2.9
Australia	5.4	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.2	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.4
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Total	**111.1**	**108.1**	**102.7**	**99.8**	**99.4**	**96.6**	**97.0**	**97.5**	**83.8**
United States	70.5	67.6	64.0	60.5	56.2	52.4	49.6	47.0	38.8
Japan	16.5	15.0	13.5	13.0	13.1	13.2	14.3	15.8	14.8
Australia	6.8	6.6	6.2	6.1	8.3	8.4	8.6	8.2	7.2

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2020–2025
	0.82	0.32	0.69	0.34	−0.64	1.60	0.23	0.39	0.59

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	6,464	6,524	6,526	7,125	7,166	7,435	7,742	7,825	7,939

SINGAPORE

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	5.3	51,679	4.4	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	68.3
2022	.6	67,360	3.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	2.8

Immigrant population in Singapore

			Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
			Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000			1,352	33.55	55	5.2	73.2		
2015			2,483	44.41	56	8.1	71.8		
2020			2,524	43.14	56	8.7	72.3		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2022	Total	Manufacturing	Construction	Services
Number of foreign workers ('000)	1,424.2	242.3	379.9	796.7
% of total employment	36.6	50.1	76.1	27.6

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	47.9	53.0	48.9			53.1	53.2	51.8	53.0	55.0	58.3

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Emigration from Singapore to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16			
Stock of persons born in Singapore living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	48.5	58.1	106.6		66.4	90.0	156.4	
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	9.1	10.8	19.9		19.6	18.1	18.7	
15–24 (% of population 15+)	19.3	17.0	18.0		21.2	15.3	17.8	
25–64 (% of population 15+)	76.2	78.0	77.2		70.7	71.1	71.0	
Total emigration rates (%)	3.0	3.6	3.3		2.7	3.7	3.2	
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	8.6	11.3	9.9		2.9	4.2	3.5	

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	8.3	9.2	7.4	7.4	12.6	12.6	12.4	3.9	4.4
Australia	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.9	1.2
United States	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7
United Kingdom	2.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	0.3	0.6
Germany	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.3
Korea, Republic of	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.3
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	21.5	22.2	23.0	23.5	22.3	22.2	21.8	20.1	18.0
United Kingdom	5.9	6.8	7.3	7.5	7.3	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.6
Australia	9.1	8.8	8.8	8.9	7.9	8.0	7.8	6.3	5.3
United States	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.3

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	200.0	207.0	212.2	212.5	213.4				

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	8.38	18.22	17.03	4.47	30.71	11.83	4.72	4.53	4.38

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e

SRI LANKA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	20.4	3,331	8.7	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	49.2
2022	22.2	4,376	3.3	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	5.2

Immigrant population in Sri Lanka

		Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
		Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000		40	0.21	45	3.6	63.1	41.8	13.4
2015		40	0.19	48	19.0	36.5		
2020		40	0.19	47	21.1	44.0		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2022		Total
Number of foreign workers ('000)		23.6
% of total employment		

Stock of international students ('000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.2

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
				13.7	16.9	15.1		4.9	4.6	8.4

Emigration from Sri Lanka to OECD countries

	2000			2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Sri Lanka living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	169.2	147.7	317.0	353.5	329.0	682.5
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	26.7	30.5	57.2	13.9	16.4	15.1
15–24 (% of population 15+)	14.6	15.2	14.9	8.6	6.6	7.6
25–64 (% of population 15+)	79.8	76.8	78.4	81.9	82.3	82.1
Total emigration rates (%)	2.4	2.1	2.3	4.3	3.8	4.0
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	27.2	28.7	27.7	8.2	6.0	7.0

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	29.9	30.4	31.0	29.9	27.0	24.7	25.0	17.8	17.6
Australia	5.3	4.5	3.9	3.8	3.2	2.7	2.7	2.4	3.2
Canada	2.4	2.6	1.8	1.5	2.2	2.2	2.2	1.3	2.0
France	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.6	2.0
Italy	6.3	5.3	4.8	4.0	3.7	3.4	4.1	2.3	1.9
United Kingdom	1.0	2.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.9

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	12.1	12.4	12.5	14.1	15.8	18.9	22.9	23.9	22.1
Australia	4.0	4.4	4.9	6.1	7.0	8.8	11.3	10.5	9.1
Japan	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.8	2.9	4.3	5.5	4.7
United States	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.6

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2008	2009	2010		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	1,792.4	1,831.4	1,932.2						
Saudi Arabia		600.0							
Kuwait		200.0							
United Arab Emirates		150.0							
Qatar									
Lebanon									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	301.0	263.0	243.0	212.0	211.0	190.0	54.0	122.0	300.0
Kuwait	43.6	38.5	32.4	37.4	47.0	43.1	8.0	12.7	79.1
Qatar	84.6	65.1	59.5	56.6	50.8	40.8	9.7	30.3	72.0
Saudi Arabia	80.5	74.9	63.4	37.7	35.9	35.5	9.4	27.4	53.9
United Arab Emirates	50.3	43.7	40.1	36.7	32.8	32.9	10.7	20.1	35.6
Oman	5.8	7.1	9.7	8.9	8.3	9.0	2.7	6.4	10.7

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−1.64	−2.88	−4.99	−4.69	−5.23	−4.71	−4.63	−4.03	−3.77

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	7,000	7,262	7,190	7 043	6,749	7,140	5,522	3,819	5,400

TAIPEI,CHINA

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2023, %)	
2013	23.4	21,973	2.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	57.2
2023	23.4	32,358	1.4	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	3.5

Immigrant population in Taipei,China

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	400	1.8	52				
2010	474	2.0	62				

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2022			Total	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and animal husbandry	Manufacturing	Construction	Social welfare (nurses and home-maids)
Number of foreign workers ('000)			753.4	142.2	476.7	23.6	234.3
% of total employment			6.5	27.9	15.9	2.6	
Stock of international students ('000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	11.6	12.6	14.1	15.8	17.8	21.2	28.4	31.8	32.0	34.5
Inflows of foreign workers ('000)		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019

Emigration from Taipei,China to OECD countries

	2000				2015/16		
Stock of persons born in Taipei,China living in OECD countries	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	191.6	238.3	429.9		226.9	318.9	545.9
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	42.5	54.0	96.4		15.3	15.7	15.5
15–24 (% of population 15+)	22.4	17.4	19.6		11.1	9.3	10.0
25–64 (% of population 15+)	73.7	78.5	76.4		74.1	77.9	76.3
Total emigration rates (%)	2.2	2.7	2.4		2.2	3.0	2.6
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	5.3	7.0	6.0		4.6	6.4	5.4

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**22.0**	**18.2**	**21.7**	**26.0**	**27.8**	**30.1**	**32.5**	**16.1**	**13.1**
United States	5.4	4.7	4.9	5.1	4.9	5.2	5.8	4.7	4.2
Korea, Republic of	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.7	1.9	1.6
Australia	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4
Japan	6.6	7.7	10.8	12.2	13.7	14.9	16.3	4.2	1.3
Canada	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.6	1.3
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total						67.7	71.5	60.3	53.1
United States			21.1	21.5	22.5	22.9	23.7	19.7	20.5
Australia						18.2	18.4	15.6	11.9
Japan						10.3	9.6	7.2	4.9

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	**726.0**	**724.0**	**728.0**	**736.0**	**737.0**	**739.0**	**501.0**	**319.0**	**473.0**
People's Republic of China (including Hong Kong, China and Macao, China)	427.0	420.0	407.0	405.0	404.0	395.0	242.0	163.0	177.0
Southeast Asia	113.0	111.0	111.0	109.0	112.0	120.0	86.0	40.0	71.0
United States	86.0	92.0	99.0	101.0	95.0	92.0	77.0	54.0	103.0
Japan and Republic of Korea								23.0	40.0
Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total									

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	0.80	−1.43	−2.31	1.84	2.18	1.46	1.27	1.01	1.00

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e

THAILAND

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	69.2	5,426	7.2	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	65.9
2022	71.7	6,278	2.6	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	0.9

Immigrant population in Thailand

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	1,258	2.00	49	30.8	47.0	84.7	9.9
2015	3,470	5.05	50	16.6	67.8		
2020	3,632	5.20	50	16.6	67.8		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2021	Total	Agriculture	Industry	Construction
Number of foreign workers ('000)	1,099.5	138.6	592.4	364.3
% of total employment	2.9	1.1	7.2	2.1

Stock of international students ('000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
			31.6					25.1		27.1	29.9

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	79.8	91.2	107.7	117.9	120.6	125.1	129.0	193.4	

Emigration from Thailand to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Thailand living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	90.8	180.0	270.8		171.1	438.7	609.8
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	15.8	33.9	49.7		17.6	21.2	20.2
15–24 (% of population 15+)	38.7	21.8	27.5		23.3	9.9	13.7
25–64 (% of population 15+)	59.6	76.3	70.7		69.4	82.8	79.0
Total emigration rates (%)	0.4	0.7	0.6		0.6	1.5	1.0
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	2.4	3.1	2.8		1.4	2.9	2.2

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	58.6	84.8	60.3	65.0	108.5	118.5	92.7	31.4	24.6
Korea, Republic of	18.3	48.3	20.1	28.5	71.5	80.3	53.3	8.7	5.2
United States	4.6	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.0	3.9	4.5	3.3	3.5
Germany	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.9	3.7	2.8	2.8
Australia	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.4
Japan	15.4	14.3	14.5	15.4	16.4	17.1	17.9	6.4	1.6

Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	21.1	21.4	23.5	24.5	26.4	27.2	26.9	26.5	21.9
Australia	3.2	2.9	4.8	5.7	7.4	7.8	7.7	6.8	6.1
United States	7.0	7.1	7.1	6.9	6.4	6.4	6.0	5.8	4.8
United Kingdom	6.0	6.2	6.1	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.7	4.5

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total					153.3	168.4	154.9	149.5	
Taipei,China					74.2	77.0	71.8	68.6	
Malaysia						3.5		3.3	
Singapore						4.3	3.5	2.7	
Hong Kong, China						2.7		1.8	
United Arab Emirates						3.1		1.4	

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	117.3	114.4	91.0	115.4	113.8	40.8	37.3	88.2	104.4
Taipei,China	34.7	35.0	35.2	33.5	32.2	13.7	6.8	25.4	32.4
Korea, Republic of	0.2	12.6	12.6	12.5	12.5	3.1	3.2	8.6	13.0
Japan	7.7	8.6	9.2	9.2	9.6	4.8	0.6	8.1	9.7
Malaysia	3.3	3.3	7.1	8.2	7.9	3.2	1.3	4.4	8.4
Israel	7.1	8.6	7.5	8.3	9.1	2.5	6.1	9.4	6.4

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025
	1.86	−2.09	2.34	1.17	0.18	0.49	0.28	0.28	0.27

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	5,895	6,270	6,720	7,466	8,162	8,257	9,065	8,912	9,800

VIET NAM

KEY INDICATORS

	Population (million)	GDP per capita (constant 2015 $)	GDP growth rate (annual, %)	Labor market indicators (2022, %)	
2012	89.3	2,229	5.5	Employment / population ratio (15+, total)	72.0
2022	98.2	3,655	8.0	Unemployment (% of total labor force)	1.9

Immigrant population in Viet Nam

	Stock of foreign-born population (0+)			Foreign-born population, 15 years old and over			
	Total ('000)	% of population	% women	% 15–24	% 25–64	% low-educated	% high-educated
2000	57	0.07	42	21.0	50.5		
2015	73	0.08	42	14.0	68.0		
2020	77	0.08	42	11.9	69.1		

Stock of foreign workers by sector, 2020	Total	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Trade/ transport/ hospitality/ business services	Pub. ad, comm/ social/other services/ activities
Number of foreign workers ('000)	68.3	19.2	13.4	3.2	28.8	3.8
% of total employment	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.2

Stock of international students ('000)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	4.0	3.6	2.5	2.9	5.6	4.2		7.3	8.6	8.4	7.8

Inflows of foreign workers ('000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	55.4	56.9	74.0	78.4	76.3	83.6			

Emigration from Viet Nam to OECD countries

Stock of persons born in Viet Nam living in OECD countries	2000				2015/16		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Emigrant population 15+ ('000)	747.4	768.6	1,515.9		1,016.5	1,179.2	2,195.7
Recent emigrants 15+ ('000)	63.0	86.1	149.1		8.7	12.3	10.6
15–24 (% of population 15+)	12.5	12.1	12.3		9.4	8.2	8.8
25–64 (% of population 15+)	81.1	79.9	80.5		76.5	76.6	76.5
Total emigration rates (%)	2.8	2.8	2.8		2.8	3.1	3.0
Emigration rates of the high-educated (%)	17.1	19.8	18.2		9.9	10.8	10.4

Legal migration flows to OECD (5 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	101.8	125.3	151.7	184.7	213.9	243.5	282.0	154.8	89.8
Japan	31.7	43.0	65.9	77.5	98.6	123.3	148.2	71.1	24.2
Korea, Republic of	22.2	28.0	30.2	40.1	48.0	56.0	61.3	28.0	17.4
United States	26.5	29.4	30.4	40.1	37.9	33.4	39.2	29.5	16.1
Australia	5.7	5.2	5.1	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.5	5.1	7.8
Germany	4.1	5.1	6.1	7.0	7.0	8.5	8.8	7.5	7.7
Stock of international students (3 main destinations, '000)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	53.2	57.1	63.6	78.2	90.2	104.3	122.7	133.1	133.1
Japan	4.2	6.1	10.6	19.2	26.8	34.3	40.6	44.1	43.3
Korea, Republic of	2.1	2.1	2.5	3.4	4.7	7.8	13.2	19.1	24.9
United States	17.7	17.9	19.3	22.2	23.2	25.6	26.0	25.2	23.2

Emigration to non-OECD destinations

Stock of workers overseas (5 main destinations, '000)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total							580.0	650.0	
Taipei,China						200.0	206.2		
Malaysia		74.8			70.0				
Russian Federation									
Lao People's Democratic Republic				30.0					
Saudi Arabia									

Flows of workers deployed (5 main destinations, '000)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	116.0	126.0	135.0	143.0	153.0	79.0	45.1	142.8	160.0
Japan	27.0	39.9	54.5	68.7	82.7	38.9	19.5	67.3	80.0
Taipei,China	67.1	68.2	66.9	60.4	54.5	34.6	19.5	59.3	58.6
Korea, Republic of	6.0	8.5	5.2	6.5	7.2	1.3	1.0	10.0	11.6
People's Republic of China	..	..	..	..	..	0.6	1.8	0.9	1.8
Hungary	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.5	0.8	1.5

Net migration rate (per thousand)	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2025	2025–2030
	−1.03	−1.10	−0.56	−1.59	−1.86	−0.89	−0.84	−0.94	−0.86

Remittance inflows (current $ million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
	8,051	8,556	9,406	10,191	10,885	10,715	12,722	13,200	14,000

GENERAL NOTES

1. All tables with top three/five destinations are ranked by decreasing order of frequency for the last year available.

2. Data on remittances for 2016 are estimates.

3. "NA" data = not available.

4. Educational attainment levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997).
   "Low-educated" persons have completed at best lower secondary education (ISCED 0/1/2).
   "Medium-educated" have completed at best post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3/4).
   "Highly-educated" persons hold at least a first stage tertiary degree (ISCED 5/6).

5. The definition of non-citizen students was only used for the economies for which no data on nonresident students were available.

6. Data on international students in the Asian economies are only for degree programs (undergraduate and upward) and do not include short-term language courses.

7. Stock of foreign workers in economy by sector reports figures for the four largest employers of foreign workers.

DATA SOURCES

Data	Source
Key indicators	World Bank, World Development Indicators
Immigrant population in economy	
Total immigrant population 0+ ('000)	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020). International migrant stock: The 2020 revision
% of total population 0+	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020). International migrant stock: The 2020 revision
Age structure (2000, %) (population 15+)	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020). International migrant stock: The 2020 revision
Education (2000, %) (population 15+)	DIOC-E 2000
Stock of international students	UIS Education database unless otherwise specified. Break in series in 2013.
Inflows of foreign workers	ILO-ILMS
Emigrant population: persons born in [economy] living in OECD countries	DIOC-E 2000, DIOC 2000, DIOC 2010, DIOC 2015, Barro and Lee (2010), and Lutz et al. (2010)
Legal migrant flows	OECD International Migration Database (IMD)
International students from [economy] in OECD countries	OECD Education and Skills database
Net migration rate	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision, custom data acquired via website.
Remittance inflows	World Bank, Migration and Remittances Data

METADATA		
Emigration to non-OECD destinations	**Comments**	**Source**
Bangladesh		
Stock of workers overseas in non-OECD countries		Population and Housing Census 2011
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries and the category "others"	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)
International students	Public and private universities summed	University Grants Commission, UNESCO UIS
Inflow of foreign workers ('000)	New permits only	Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)
Cambodia		
Stock of workers overseas in non-OECD countries		Ministry of Labour report, February 2022
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	ILO ILMS
Hong Kong, China		
Emigrant population living in OECD countries	Some destination countries such as Germany, United Kingdom, and United States are not included	
Stock of foreign workers		
Inflow of foreign workers ('000)		Annual report, Immigration Department (https://www.immd.gov.hk /eng/press/press-publications.html)
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		
India		
Stock of workers overseas in non-OECD countries	Nonresident Indians. Includes all NRIs, whether workers or not. Series break from "Nonresident Indians" from "overseas Indians"	Ministry of External Affairs (Annual Reports)
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Overseas Employment database, emigrate.gov.in; Country wise Emigration Clearances (ECs) obtained by RAs and Direct Recruitment by Fes, 2015-2016 E-migrate (https://emigrate.gov.in/ext/home.action)
Indonesia		
Stock of foreign workers	Trade includes wholesale and retail trade, hotels, and restaurants	Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		World Bank presentation "Malaysia-Indonesia Remittance Corridor"; news reports.
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries and the category "others"	BNP2TKI (Placement and Protection Agency)
Japan		
Stock of foreign workers		Status of reporting on the employment of foreign workers, and Labor Force Survey, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
Inflows of foreign workers		Statistics on Legal Migrants, Immigration Bureau of Japan up to 2019; From 2020 on: Number of Visas Issued, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Stock of foreign workers		IOM
		"Lao PDR Labour Force Survey 2017," Laos Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Planning and Investment, June 2018
Inflows of foreign workers	Number of work permits issued	Department of Skills Development and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		ILO-ILMS
		LAOSIS (Laos Statistical Information Service)

Malaysia

Stock of foreign workers	Figure for agriculture includes plantation	Department of Statistics Malaysia

Mongolia

Stock of foreign workers		National Statistics Office of Mongolia

Myanmar

Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	Adjusted from Myanmar fiscal year to calendar year using quarterly data	Central Statistical Organization of Myanmar
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		Central Statistical Organization of Myanmar

Nepal

Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	Excludes re-entries. All totals include OECD countries	Department of Foreign Employment, for Nepalese Fiscal Years (mid-July to mid-July)

Pakistan

Stock of workers in non-OECD countries	Figures are for stocks of Pakistanis overseas (including workers, students, and other categories). We assume that for the Gulf countries, most of this figure represents migrant workers. All totals include OECD countries	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment
Inflows of foreign workers	Work visas granted to expatriates.	Board of Investment, Prime Minister's Office
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment

People's Republic of China

Stock of foreign workers	Residents for purpose of employment, 2020 Census (preliminary)	National Bureau of Statistics
Emigrant population living in OECD countries	Some destination economies such as Germany and United States include Taipei,China and Hong Kong, China data	
International students in OECD countries	Figures include those for Taipei,China	UNESCO UIS
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		Ministry of Commerce
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		Ministry of Commerce. Brief Statistics on China's Overseas Labor Service Cooperation

Philippines

Inflows of foreign workers	New permits delivered to foreign workers	ILO-ILMS, Department of Labor and Employment
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		The Philippine Statistics Authority
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries, new and repeat deployments	ILO-ILMS, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Republic of Korea

Stock of foreign workers		Korean Statistical Information Service
Inflows of foreign workers		Korean Statistical Information Service

Singapore

Stock of foreign workers		Ministry of Manpower

Sri Lanka

Inflows of foreign workers		Issuance of residence visas for private and public sector employment, Board of Investment and Construction
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		Institute of Policy Studies (2008): "International Migration Outlook, Sri Lanka" (original source: Bureau of Foreign Employment); "Sri Lanka Country Study" by Judith Shaw (original source: SLBFE 2005); "Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia", ILO and Department of Employment and Manpower Cambodia, June 2010
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	Bureau of Foreign Employment, country presentation at ADBI-OECD roundtable

Taipei,China

Key indicators		National Statistics
Stock of foreign workers		Ministry of Labor
Stock of international students		Ministry of Education, UNESCO UIS
Emigrant population living in OECD countries	Some destination countries such as Australia, Germany, and United States are not included	
International students in OECD countries	Number of students obtaining visas from foreign nations	Ministry of Education, UNESCO UIS
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries	Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (People's Republic of China includes Hong Kong, China and Macao, China)

Thailand

Stock of foreign workers	Only total is the number of 2018	ILO-ILMS
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries	Includes "illegal workers"	ILO-ILMS, Overseas Employment Administration Division
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries	All totals include OECD countries. Includes New and Re-entries	Overseas Employment Administration Division

Viet Nam

Stock of foreign workers		MOLISA
Stock of workers in non-OECD countries		MOLISA, country presentation at ADBI-OECD-ILO roundtable
Flows of workers deployed to non-OECD countries		MOLISA

ANNEX 2

COMPARATIVE TABLES

Table A2.1: Inflows from Asia to the OECD, by Economy of Origin ('000s)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Afghanistan	17	20	15	13	13	16	15	11	13	18	24	29	35	34	45	139	153	105	103	101	71	127
Azerbaijan	1	2	5	4	4	4	5	3	3	3	6	4	4	4	5	6	23	28	30	34	15	34
Bangladesh	23	24	19	22	30	37	42	34	40	50	50	50	42	43	47	51	51	52	54	53	40	50
Bhutan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	14	13	11	9	7	5	7	5	3	2	1
Brunei Darussalam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cambodia	4	5	5	5	6	7	11	9	10	9	10	12	15	16	16	17	20	20	19	21	10	8
China, People's Republic of	282	334	335	322	367	438	503	518	530	460	508	531	504	547	555	541	553	563	566	572	276	302
Georgia	1	2	7	7	8	11	10	9	8	8	8	9	10	11	12	14	19	22	24	30	17	29
Hong Kong, China	10	12	13	12	10	8	10	8	8	6	9	7	6	9	7	7	14	17	17	15	6	56
India	113	151	161	145	192	213	206	213	215	227	253	243	229	241	263	268	278	310	354	407	229	417
Indonesia	29	32	33	31	27	35	30	27	31	22	25	29	31	36	35	35	39	39	48	54	27	23
Japan	34	38	39	35	36	42	34	32	29	34	32	34	37	37	34	37	35	29	30	31	21	25
Kazakhstan	5	4	17	15	12	9	8	7	7	7	8	9	7	9	11	12	19	25	31	32	20	35
Republic of Korea	59	69	62	54	57	66	68	72	79	78	76	71	71	75	70	65	73	73	77	81	43	39
Kyrgyz Republic	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	11	14	15	16	8	17
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2	2	2	1	2	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	1
Malaysia	11	14	12	13	16	11	12	20	24	20	22	17	21	23	19	22	16	17	17	15	9	9
Maldives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mongolia	6	6	4	7	8	11	15	15	15	9	10	9	10	9	8	15	15	20	20	19	13	9
Myanmar	2	3	3	3	3	5	11	10	10	23	19	24	27	23	23	27	29	34	30	26	15	7
Nepal	4	3	5	6	8	9	14	17	19	23	25	30	33	39	42	47	49	47	50	49	29	28
Pakistan	54	59	49	47	73	74	83	74	76	77	100	106	84	73	78	99	96	92	91	97	73	110
Philippines	165	188	195	192	211	192	173	169	158	164	168	161	160	152	158	181	173	175	169	171	86	96
Singapore	6	6	6	5	6	7	7	7	7	5	7	9	9	8	9	7	7	13	13	12	4	4
Sri Lanka	23	21	22	24	23	28	28	21	33	33	41	36	35	30	29	31	30	27	25	25	18	18
Tajikistan	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	5	4	6	4	8
Taipei,China	16	21	21	15	20	17	32	33	22	24	20	18	17	22	18	22	26	28	30	32	16	13
Thailand	32	35	34	35	36	47	51	48	47	47	50	53	59	61	87	64	68	109	119	93	31	25
Timor-Leste	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Turkmenistan	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	9	21	36	81	18	25
Uzbekistan	8	6	8	11	8	9	11	12	20	13	16	16	19	19	21	21	33	45	43	58	28	59
Viet Nam	52	60	64	55	66	78	82	88	98	76	87	95	94	102	125	152	186	214	243	282	155	90
Total Asia	**960**	**1,117**	**1,139**	**1,083**	**1,245**	**1,379**	**1,470**	**1,465**	**1,511**	**1,449**	**1,593**	**1,621**	**1,578**	**1,645**	**1,734**	**1,896**	**2,038**	**2,154**	**2,265**	**2,421**	**1,286**	**1,667**

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Source: OECD International Migration Database.

Table A2.2: Outflows of Workers from Asian Economies, by Destination

	Bangladesh											
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	215,452	14,241	24,232	25,271	8,131	4,135	3,235	3,318	1,082	29,202	101,775	98,422
Saudi Arabia	21,232	12,654	10,657	58,270	143,913	551,308	257,317	399,000	161,726	457,227	612,418	497,674
Oman	170,326	134,028	105,748	129,859	188,247	89,704	72,504	72,654	21,071	55,009	179,612	127,883
Kuwait	2	6	3,094	17,472	38,188	49,604	27,637	12,299	1,744	1,848	20,422	36,548
Bahrain	21,777	25,155	23,378	20,720	72,167	19,318	811	133	3	11	10	1
Qatar	28,801	57,584	87,575	123,965	120,382	82,012	76,560	50,292	3,608	11,158	24,447	56,148
Other Middle East												
Jordan	11,726	21,383	20,338	22,093	23,017	20,449	9,724	20,347	3,769	13,816	12,231	8,626
Lebanon	14,864	15,098	16,640	19,113	15,095	8,327	5,991	4,863	488	235	858	2,594
Iraq	359	7,456	13,627	13,982	4,738	3,819	19,567	9,266		5	64	92
Israel												
Asia, OECD												
Japan	420	41	55	99	165	145	163	229	142	3	508	967
Korea, Republic of	1,447	2,121	1,748	2,359	1,980	1,829	2,287	1,647	208	108	5,910	4,996
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore	58,657	60,057	54,750	55,523	54,730	40,401	41,393	49,829	10,085	27,875	64,383	53,265
Malaysia	804	3,853	5,134	30,483	40,126	99,787	175,927	545	125	28	50,090	351,683
Taipei,China												
Thailand												
Hong Kong, China												
Macau, China												
Maldives												
Brunei Darussalam	5,038	5,971	6,633	6,354	5,836	8,587	4,480	3,628	530	12	1,850	1,081
Indonesia												
India												
China, People's Republic of												
Other Destinations												
Italy	9,280	4,792	856	44	3	1		2		653	7,594	16,879
Mauritius	5,421	5,961	5,938	4,753	4,679	5,942	6,608	7,576	2,014	215	5,484	1,201
United Kingdom				4	11	7	8	11	21	123	942	10,383

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Table A2.2 *continued*

	India											
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	141,138	202,016	224,033	225,718	163,731	149,962	112,059	76,112	17,891	10,844	33,233	71,687
Saudi Arabia	357,503	354,169	329,937	308,380	165,356	78,611	72,399	161,103	44,316	32,845	178,630	200,713
Oman	84,384	63,398	51,318	85,054	63,224	53,332	36,037	28,392	7,206	19,452	31,994	21,336
Kuwait	55,868	70,072	80,419	66,579	72,402	56,380	57,613	45,712	8,107	10,158	71,432	48,212
Bahrain	20,150	17,269	14,220	15,623	11,964	11,516	9,142	9,997	4,175	6,382	10,232	7,376
Qatar	63,096	78,367	75,935	59,384	30,619	24,759	34,471	31,810	8,907	49,579	30,871	30,683
Other Middle East												
Jordan	1,819	1,462	2,133	2,047	2,742	2,341	1,941	3,941	317	2,386	2,487	1,187
Lebanon	288	281	313	341	316	110	109	160	21	54	282	200
Iraq	925	6,553	3,054	1	0	0	0	162	759	935	1,430	1,599
Israel												
Asia, OECD												
Japan												
Korea, Republic of												
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore												
Malaysia	21,241	22,388	22,926	20,908	10,604	14,002	16,370	10,633	2,435	36	12,836	15,319
Taipei,China												
Thailand	9	15	53	10	1	0	6	24	10	1	3	4
Hong Kong, China												
Macao, China												
Maldives												
Brunei Darussalam												
Indonesia	11	38	29	6	1	10	10	0	1	0	0	0
India												
China, People's Republic of												
Other Destinations												
Mauritius												
Romania												

Table A2.2 *continued*

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
						Indonesia						
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	35,571	44,505	17,962	7,619	2,575	1,667	726	578	117	437	548	976
Saudi Arabia	40,655	45,394	44,325	23,000	13,538	6,471	5,894	7,018	1,793	747	4,676	6,310
Oman	8,836	10,719	19,141	6,766	1,014	1,085	749	471	65	37	115	
Kuwait	2,518	2,534	1,714	310	987	1,162	1,172	782	74		718	425
Bahrain	6,328	5,384	5,472	2,570	123	125	86	130				
Qatar	20,380	16,237	7,862	2,460	1,355	1,037	587	217	42	219	848	307
Other Middle East												
Jordan	106	0	0	103	65		7	48	2	33		
Lebanon												
Iraq												
Israel												
Asia, OECD												
Japan	3,293	3,042	2,428	468	279	538	458	486	749	359	5,832	9,673
Korea, Republic of	13,593	15,374	11,848	5,501	5,912	3,728	6,905	6,193	641	174	11,554	12,580
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore	41,556	34,655	31,680	20,895	17,700	13,379	18,324	19,354	4,474	3,217	6,624	7,898
Malaysia	134,023	150,236	127,827	97,635	87,616	88,991	90,671	79,663	14,630	563	43,163	72,260
Taipei,China	81,071	83,544	82,665	75,303	77,087	62,823	72,373	79,574	34,287	7,789	53,459	83,216
Thailand	1,035	1,041	717	90	6	6	11					
Hong Kong, China	45,478	41,769	35,050	15,322	14,434	68,103	73,917	70,840	53,178	52,278	60,096	65,916
Macao, China												
Maldives								322	292	73	449	1,164	330
Brunei Darussalam	13,146	11,269	11,616	9,993	8,152	6,623	5,707	5,639	1,202	0	513	2,872
Indonesia												
India	535	409	203	68	97							
China, People's Republic of	1,967	2,055	915	108	65	84	22					
Other Destinations												
Italy	3,691	3,746	1,295	1,516	851	1,010	1,204	1,349	411	3,225	3,582	3,519
Mauritius	982	1,017	838	144	5							
Poland							102	430	837	1,195	1,897	1,524
Romania							25	34	34	83	288	221
Türkiye	1,209	1,518	1,246	1,108	498	811	1,005	730	47	874	1,489	2,289

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Nepal											
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	34 503	58 586	55 426	53 094	52,793	57,887	60,244	62,776	52,085	11,611	53,844	59,152
Saudi Arabia	68 103	96 903	86 613	96 887	138,529	72,892	40,962	46,080	39,279	23,324	125,369	55,791
Oman	1 884	3 931	3 952	3 470	3,059	3,066	3,059	2,722	1,996	1,556	3,626	2,716
Kuwait	9 165	17 376	20 196	9 634	10,049	13,134	17,555	15,995	8,974	2	22,786	31,410
Bahrain	3 100	4 255	4 418	4 168	3,146	3,911	4,862	4,633	3,305	3,146	7,592	3,952
Qatar	44 883	103 932	128 550	124 050	129,038	121,128	103,179	75,024	29,835	22,131	76,823	40,517
Other Middle East												
Jordan	558	520	440	385	1,232	2,745	1,944	1,458	2,374	930	927	621
Lebanon	2	181	447	181	167	146	22	11	5	2	3	7
Iraq												
Israel	7	0	0	0	189	132	118	58	14	1	306	786
Asia, OECD												
Japan					3,844	2,238	761	959	939	553	2,478	5,839
Korea, Republic of					80	90	27	22	50	16	173	21,870
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore					89	148	127	206	85	28	188	220
Malaysia	96 272	158 663	210 009	196 497	60,979	95,244	104,209	9,999	39,167	107	26,091	219,357
Taipei,China					0							1
Thailand					21	26	31	30	5	2	12	29
Hong Kong, China	140	143	139	163	360	175	175	88	91	0	0	58
Macao, China	359	318	391	484				739	572	0	0	603
Maldives	7	25	104	45				1,974	887	1,008	2,735	3,994
Brunei Darussalam					150	158	144	143	121	5	285	862
Indonesia					6	1	5	1	13	1	1	4
India												
China, People's Republic of					181	186	269	448	151	66	1	74
Other Destinations												
Croatia								7	645	1,087	5,206	7,186
Malta								1,717	1,668	64	1,268	5,603
Mauritius								90	74	46	260	519
Poland								1,108	184	453	1,502	4,915
Romania	71	35	14	1				1,178	1,930	1,912	6,418	13,137
United Kingdom								60	38	315	2,808	2,248

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Pakistan											
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	182,630	273,234	350,522	326,986	295,647	275,436	208,635	211,216	53,676	27,442	128,477	229,894
Saudi Arabia	358,560	270,502	312,489	522,750	462,598	143,363	100,910	332,713	136,376	155,777	514,909	426,951
Oman	69,407	47,794	39,793	47,788	45,085	42,362	27,202	28,391	10,348	38,350	82,380	60,046
Kuwait	5	229	132	164	770	773	493	126	419	1,607	2,089	2,328
Bahrain	10,530	9,600	9,226	9,029	8,226	7,919	5,745	8,189	7,843	12,977	13,653	13,345
Qatar	7,320	8,119	10,042	12,741	9,706	11,592	20,993	19,327	7,422	37,987	57,999	55,112
Other Middle East												
Jordan	279	345	328	321	282	285	170	205	54	334	349	244
Lebanon	23	15	57	33	42	24	27	12	1	7	12	19
Iraq	32	951	1,041	709	543	599	756	2,306	1,177	2,819	2,387	4,307
Israel												
Asia, OECD												
Japan	62	44	69	82	102	153	258	391	356	17	900	1,184
Korea, Republic of	7	12	46	13	17	9	13	25	64	91	2,025	1,638
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore	47	42	76	68	33	54	65	82	37	21	95	87
Malaysia	1,309	2,031	20,577	20,216	10,625	7,174	9,881	11,323	2,301	106	6,175	20,905
Taipei,China												
Thailand												
Hong Kong, China	17	20	38	29	38	54	57	60	52	52	75	122
Macao, China												
Maldives												
Brunei Darussalam	74	67	48	85	85	212	225	187	32	7	202	146
Indonesia												
India												
China, People's Republic of	220	155	254	355	482	457	854	1,252	298	607	673	1,794
Other Destinations												
Greece	0	0	0	2	3	2	3	1	1	15	579	2,914
Italy	3,361	2,068	1,563	431	242	141	86	20	6	77	350	1,360
Mauritius												
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,263	4,947
United Kingdom	183	158	250	260	346	340	587	903	804	1,034	2,922	16,449

Table A2.2 *continued*

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
						Philippines						
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	259 546	261,119	246,231	227,076	276,278	265,498		269,921	50,759		166,171	287,797
Saudi Arabia	330 040	382,553	402,837	406,089	460,121	433,567		412,521	86,817		143,847	401,656
Oman	16 048	16,577	15,880	22,274	27,579	25,399		25,364	5,904			
Kuwait	75 286	67,856	70,098	86,019	109,615	107,604		125,457	11,083		100,619	74,535
Bahrain	22 271	20,546	18,958	21,428	21,429	21,388		20,887	5,021		11,097	20,721
Qatar	104 622	94,195	114,511	133,169	141,304	122,619		121,832	23,513		82,046	136,608
Other Middle East												
Jordan	3 025	2,223	3,393	7,253	9,970	7,063		7,758	1,524			
Lebanon	1 227	2,874	3,010	3,694	3,959	4,179		3,886	734			
Iraq				487	525	521		1,066	71			
Israel	4 582	4,385	4,590		6,392	6,879		7,748	1,717			
Asia, OECD												
Japan	9 947	10,936	12,815	14,161	21,363	21,924		32,844	10,579		24,575	45,176
Korea, Republic of	8 979	11,664	11,958	11,418	13,592	13,479		14,221	3,121			
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore	172 690	173,666	140,205	141,453	171,014	162,223		163,546	32,379		74,734	179,847
Malaysia	38 407	34,088	31,451	26,199	33,178	33,194		30,871	5,826		15,094	30,720
Taipei,China	41 492	41,145	58,681	62,598	65,364	69,235		71,132	16,113		19,978	67,864
Thailand	9 204	8,659	6,653	7,204	9,321	10,405		12,719	2,305			
Hong Kong, China	131 680	130,686	105,737	85,704	116,467	144,535		159,093	32,261		44,839	187,195
Macao, China				9,756	14,088	17,790		24,941	3,624			
Maldives				1,214	1,492	1,404		1,881	485			
Brunei Darussalam	14 907	17,000	11,478	14,088	10,099	14,925		13,836	2,433			
Indonesia	5 166	5,489	5,007	3,880	5,302	4,984		5,014	1,840			
India				466	581	386		279	58			
China, People's Republic of	9 969	9,829	6,229	6,564	9,166	9,369		10,040	1,171			
Other Destinations												
Mauritius				37	53	51		15	8			
Romania				249	229	278		608	156			

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Sri Lanka										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Gulf Cooperation Council countries											
United Arab Emirates	38 234	48 502	50 347	43,666	40,124	36,667	32,836	32,866	10,708	20,050	35,563
Saudi Arabia	97 993	80 887	80 480	74,894	63,389	37,745	35,866	35,478	9,402	27,417	53,902
Oman	4 889	5 317	5 759	7,082	9,748	8,865	8,345	9,016	2,714	6,416	10,669
Kuwait	44 229	42 740	43 552	38,473	32,415	37,410	46,951	43,089	8,036	12,730	79,123
Bahrain	4 533	4 547	3 979	3,722	3,222	3,002	2,922	3,017	1,047	1,896	3,370
Qatar	57 478	80 724	84 622	65,139	59,527	56,637	50,774	40,785	9,651	30,334	71,954
Other Middle East											
Jordan	10 387	7 060	6 197	4,809	3,870	3,925	4,163	4,611	955	2,095	5,597
Lebanon	3 945	3 537	3 058	2,604	2,640	2,408	2,229	1,902	537	703	1,284
Iraq				110	171	162	262	183			
Israel	1 768	1 944	2 010	1,986	2,274	2,498	2,033	1,559		1,264	1,632
Asia, OECD											
Japan	112	118	88	106	144	402				807	4,410
Korea, Republic of	5 629	5 402	6 686	6,967	8,609	5,807	5,409	6,207	1,292	1,426	6,120
Asia, non-OECD											
Singapore	980	1 265	1 470	1,461	1,840	1,795	1,917	2,124	762	1,178	3,007
Malaysia	2 691	3 297	3 312	3,239	2,916	1,996	2,455	3,296	522	266	1,941
Taipei,China											
Thailand	2				11	16	30	31			
Hong Kong, China	449	513	468	493	573	636	584	624	216		127
Macao, China											
Maldives	4 044	3 485	4 511	4,813	6,116	6,279	7,298	7,767	2,383	7,082	12,816
Brunei Darussalam	11	15	12	9	14	9	8	17	3		
Indonesia					20	21					
India	97	11	136	121	187	157					
China, People's Republic of	6	3	5	11	6	10	12	17			
Other Destinations											
Mauritius	273	382	149	196	250	140	195	91	31	0	
Romania				128	139	225	482	2,315		3,002	3,012
Seychelles										860	1,606

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Thailand											
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	7,245	5,495	5,038	4,623	4,014	3,270	2,326	1,931	541	479	1,261	1,183
Saudi Arabia	517	509	446	36	358	297	220	199	40	15	88	250
Oman	298	280	260	245	370	288	295	306	75	66	169	149
Kuwait	1,792	1,729	1,626	2,448	1,265	1,703	1,917	1,391	189	51	442	513
Bahrain	1,106	969	888	853	904	807	641	601	148	72	244	277
Qatar	2,623	2,392	2,449	2,273	1,562	904	554	482	111	131	300	350
Other Middle East												
Jordan						13	17	16	3	2	206	11
Lebanon						42	35	33	5	6	7	6
Iraq									1			
Israel	5,126	8,393	7,618	7,144	8,629	7,494	8,260	9,122	2,547	6,081	9,417	6,415
Asia, OECD												
Japan	8,596	6,904	7,614	7,705	8,610	9,196	9,180	9,600	4,778	637	8,147	9,656
Korea, Republic of	10,393	11,758	9,835	189	12,609	12,609	12,476	12,529	3,130	3,249	8,571	13,039
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore	11,864	10,728	8,191	7,265	5,843	5,399	4,553	3,819	1,078	1,189	3,064	3,690
Malaysia	4,441	3,852	3,237	3,318	3,263	7,141	8,182	7,919	3,185	1,324	4,402	8,369
Taipei,China	39,128	34,631	37,105	34,738	35,027	35,199	33,546	32,204	13,707	6,751	25,372	32,436
Thailand												
Hong Kong, China	2,533	2,225	2,209	2,185	2,160	2,296	2,028	1,770	36	240	836	1,582
Macao, China									61			287
Maldives									45			60
Brunei Darussalam	2,697	2,489	1,944	1,846	1,461	1,299	1,109	1,109	281	31	453	581
Indonesia	2,480	3,210	3,103	2,538	1,967	1,724	1,636	1,355	353	306	551	639
India	2,480	3,210	3,103	1,860	1,646	1,468	1,432	1,391	372	322	553	718
China, People's Republic of	923	1,169	725	405	261	398	287	231	36	5	6	79
Other Destinations												
Finland												2,863
Lao People's Democratic Republic												2,351
Mauritius												1
Romania										18	7	3
Sweden												6,000
United States												2,073

117

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Viet Nam											
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gulf Cooperation Council countries												
United Arab Emirates	1,731	2,075	831	286	136							
Saudi Arabia	2,360	1,703	4,191	3,975	16			1,375				444
Oman	154	25	57	86								
Kuwait	440	31	30	54	40	9						
Bahrain	11	16	9									
Qatar	105	206	850	455								
Other Middle East												
Jordan	20	0	0									
Lebanon												
Iraq												
Israel	210	141	484	268	250							
Asia, OECD												
Japan	8,775	9,686	19,766	27,010	39,938	54,504	68,737	82,703	38,891	19,510	67,295	80,010
Korea, Republic of	9,228	5,446	7,242	6,019	8,482	5,178	6,538	7,215	1,309	1,036	9,968	11,626
Asia, non-OECD												
Singapore	107	149	92	31	29				537	713	1,822	1,355
Malaysia	9,298	7,564	5,139	7,354	2,079	1,551	1,102	454				480
Taipei,China	30,533	46,368	62,124	67,121	68,244	66,926	60,369	54,480	34,573	19,531	59,306	58,620
Thailand	0	0	0	0		0						
Hong Kong, China	0	0	0		11	0						584
Macao, China								401				169
Maldives												
Brunei Darussalam	74	18	0	0		0						
Indonesia	0	0	0	0		0						
India												
China, People's Republic of	0	4	0		7	0			594	1,820	910	1,806
Other Destinations												
Hungary										465	775	1,539
Poland											494	797
Mauritius												
Romania								3,478	924		721	840

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Myanmar										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Gulf Cooperation Council countries											
United Arab Emirates	39	0	14	77	271	127	214	323	83	67	425
Saudi Arabia											
Oman											
Kuwait	1	0	0	0		0	0				
Bahrain											
Qatar	10	77	15	0	73	135	87	116	19	52	473
Other Middle East											
Jordan						0	296	1 115	164	227	609
Lebanon											
Iraq											
Israel											
Asia, OECD											
Japan	0	36	518	1,678	2,384	3,331	3,889	6,690	4,680	1,534	14,094
Korea, Republic of	3,669	4,003	4,482	4,475	5,731	5,676	6,105	4,756	738	28	8,368
Asia, non-OECD											
Singapore	452	791	501	431	707	355	504	467	86	1,348	21,295
Malaysia	26,921	25,905	25,892	35,022	33,920	3,305	24,773	78,781	10,636	27	34,964
Taipei,China											
Thailand	37,347	36,029	33,188	53,578	102,722	148,942	198,017	238,082	58,642	25	105,682
Hong Kong, China											
Macao, China						6	9	9	0	0	
Maldives											
Brunei Darussalam											
Indonesia											
India											
China, People's Republic of											
Other Destinations											
Mauritius											
Romania											

119

Table A2.2 *continued*

	Cambodia										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Gulf Cooperation Council countries											
United Arab Emirates											
Saudi Arabia											
Oman											
Kuwait											
Bahrain											
Qatar											
Other Middle East											
Jordan											
Lebanon											
Iraq											
Israel											
Asia, OECD											
Japan	102	111	518	1,399	1,562	2,280	3,002	3,945	3,109	631	6,365
Korea, Republic of	8,132	8,820	7,671	7,073	7,371	5,967	4,870	5,938	919	2,577	8,880
Asia, non-OECD											
Singapore	0	111	190	99	87	138	287	135	39		47
Malaysia	180	90	470	807	123	27	53	69	26		
Taipei,China											
Thailand	26,390	13,468	15,839	16,163	76,433	87,909	60,333	57,823	18,625		18,417
Hong Kong, China											
Macao, China											
Maldives											
Brunei Darussalam											
Indonesia											
India											
China, People's Republic of						0	15					
Other Destinations											
Mauritius											
Romania											

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Source: National sources.

Table A2.3: Migrant Remittance Inflows in Asian Economies, 2000–2022
($ million)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023e
Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	90	141	378	179	219	347	253	349	628	823	804	829	789	320	370	300
Azerbaijan	57	104	163	156	204	623	790	1,268	1,518	1,255	1,410	1,893	1,990	1,733	1,846	1,270	643	1,133	1,226	1,275	1,403	1,527	3,950	2,800
Bangladesh	1,968	2,105	2,858	3,192	3,584	4,315	5,428	6,562	8,941	10,521	10,850	12,071	14,120	13,867	14,988	15,296	13,574	13,502	15,566	18,364	21,752	22,206	21,504	23,000
Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	3	4	5	8	10	18	12	14	20	34	43	58	57	83	73	88	75
Brunei Darussalam	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Cambodia	103	113	123	128	147	164	184	186	188	142	557	611	855	1,003	1,103	1,185	1,199	1,287	1,431	2,659	2,588	2,539	2,616	2,800
China, People's Republic of	758	1,209	2,354	4,620	6,640	23,626	27,565	38,395	47,743	41,600	52,460	61,576	57,987	59,491	62,332	63,938	61,000	63,876	67,414	68,398	59,507	53,000	51,000	49,500
Georgia	206	219	226	248	359	446	627	883	1,065	1,112	1,184	1,547	1,770	1,945	1,986	1,459	1,521	1,794	2,034	2,258	2,110	2,644	3,854	4,500
Hong Kong, China	136	153	121	120	240	297	294	317	355	348	340	352	367	360	372	387	399	437	425	451	427	453	414	408
India	12,883	14,273	15,736	20,999	18,750	22,125	28,334	37,217	49,977	49,204	53,480	62,499	68,821	69,970	70,389	68,910	62,744	68,967	78,790	83,332	83,149	89,375	111,222	125,000
Indonesia	1,190	1,046	1,259	1,489	1,866	5,420	5,722	6,174	6,794	6,793	6,916	6,924	7,212	7,614	8,551	9,659	8,907	8,990	11,215	11,666	9,651	9,402	9,960	11,000
Japan	773	1,250	1,127	811	774	905	1,177	1,384	1,732	1,595	1,684	2,132	2,540	2,364	3,734	3,325	3,830	4,443	4,369	4,389	4,888	5,294	5,384	5,485
Kazakhstan	68	85	111	42	57	62	84	143	126	198	226	180	283	341	401	294	384	560	618	506	374	310	481	440
Korea, Republic of	4,524	4,516	5,135	5,875	5,935	5,200	4,850	5,155	6,978	6,000	5,854	6,602	6,589	6,475	6,574	6,464	6,524	6,526	7,125	7,166	7,435	7,742	7,825	7,939
Kyrgyz Republic	2	5	30	70	179	313	473	704	1,223	982	1,266	1,709	2,031	2,278	2,243	1,688	1,995	2,486	2,689	2,411	2,423	2,792	3,225	2,600
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	6	18	38	42	110	203	170	188	189	189	243	240	297	232	221	198	225
Macao, China	..	..	47	48	53	53	55	54	52	48	47	48	47	49	37	40	28	35	42	55	66	74	83	90
Malaysia	342	367	435	571	802	1,117	1,365	1,556	1,329	1,131	1,103	1,211	1,294	1,423	1,580	1,644	1,604	1,649	1,686	1,597	1,427	1,552	1,620	1,750
Maldives	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	8	6	5	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Mongolia	1	27	69	79	203	177	155	178	225	200	266	250	324	257	255	261	260	273	441	561	549	471	399	440
Myanmar	102	116	105	84	117	129	115	81	55	54	115	127	275	1,644	1,808	1,934	2,255	2,453	2,673	2,553	2,672	1,282	1,261	1,500
Nepal	111	147	678	771	823	1,212	1,453	1,734	2,727	2,983	3,464	4,217	4,793	5,584	5,889	6,730	6,612	6,928	8,287	8,244	8,108	8,226	9,293	11,000
Pakistan	1,075	1,461	3,554	3,964	3,945	4,280	5,121	5,998	7,039	8,717	9,690	12,263	14,007	14,629	17,244	19,306	19,819	19,856	21,193	22,252	26,089	31,312	29,871	24,000
Philippines	6,924	8,760	9,735	10,239	11,468	13,733	15,496	16,437	18,851	19,960	21,557	23,054	24,610	26,717	28,691	29,799	31,142	32,810	33,809	35,167	34,883	36,685	38,049	40,000
Singapore	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sri lanka	1,154	1,170	1,296	1,423	1,574	1,976	2,167	2,507	2,925	3,337	4,123	5,153	6,000	6,422	7,036	7,000	7,262	7,190	7,043	6,749	7,140	5,522	3,819	5,400
Tajikistan	..	..	79	146	252	564	976	1,514	2,278	1,566	2,021	2,722	3,222	3,698	3,384	2,259	1,867	2,237	2,183	2,322	2,187	2,922	5,346	5,700
Taipei, China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Thailand	1,697	1,252	1,380	1,607	1,622	1,187	1,333	1,635	1,898	3,808	4,433	5,256	5,657	6,585	6,524	5,895	6,270	6,720	7,466	8,162	8,257	9,065	8,912	9,800
Turkmenistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	30	50	34	24	23	27	35	31	16	8	5	1	2	2	1	1	0
Uzbekistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,421	1,709	3,632	2,180	3,438	4,910	6,090	6,443	6,815	4,843	5,795	7,130	7,610	8,546	7,084	9,277	16,736	16,100
Viet Nam	1,340	1,100	1,770	2,100	2,310	3,150	3,800	6,180	6,805	6,020	7,569	8,326	7,912	9,429	9,794	8,051	8,556	9,406	10,191	10,885	10,715	12,722	13,200	14,000
Total	35,417	39,479	48,394	58,787	61,906	91,076	109,009	138,019	174,622	169,973	194,507	225,958	239,264	250,891	264,066	262,211	255,053	271,806	296,633	311,158	305,992	317,015	350,686	365,858

Note: All numbers are in current $.
Source: World Bank.

Table A2.4: Net Migration Rate
(per 1,000 population)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Afghanistan	−50.23	−9.72	65.24	17.31	−10.50	10.38	2.47	−35.74	8.40	−2.15	−5.00	14.42
Azerbaijan	1.95	1.96	1.80	1.56	1.58	1.90	1.93	1.93	1.67	0.10	0.15	0.18
Bangladesh	−3.28	−2.64	−3.36	−3.90	−3.85	−5.07	−8.01	−6.39	−9.52	−5.04	−3.11	−2.27
Bhutan	10.39	10.00	9.77	9.63	8.65	2.69	−1.42	−1.84	−2.03	−1.82	−1.69	−1.32
Brunei Darussalam	4.99	4.63	4.34	3.93	3.51	3.18	2.76	2.32	1.85	1.46	1.18	−0.72
Cambodia	−0.35	−0.33	−0.31	−0.57	−0.45	−0.86	−0.78	−0.72	−2.47	−3.41	−2.99	−2.94
China, People's Republic of	−0.44	−0.38	−0.37	−0.41	−0.35	−0.40	−0.36	−0.33	−0.35	−0.26	−0.16	−0.11
Georgia	−31.17	−26.43	−14.31	−7.71	−7.64	−7.85	−8.03	−8.19	−8.33	−8.46	−6.41	−6.77
Hong Kong, China	9.06	4.76	3.17	2.73	1.46	0.01	1.81	4.48	3.81	2.95	1.48	3.54
India	−0.14	−0.16	−0.19	−0.23	−0.19	−0.48	−0.58	−0.65	−0.70	−0.66	−0.31	−0.19
Indonesia	−0.20	−0.30	−0.38	−0.44	−0.45	−0.45	−0.44	−0.44	−0.46	−0.41	−0.32	−0.22
Japan	0.67	0.73	0.80	0.94	1.06	1.20	1.26	1.28	1.24	1.24	1.16	1.09
Kazakhstan	−2.85	−1.88	−0.91	−0.23	0.61	1.47	2.19	0.82	0.14	0.50	1.40	0.88
Korea, Republic of	−1.55	−0.57	−0.29	−0.47	−0.70	−0.76	−0.59	−0.82	−0.42	0.10	1.15	5.30
Kyrgyz Republic	−4.28	−4.86	−5.02	−3.02	−3.36	−5.21	−5.86	−9.48	−7.04	−5.46	−9.53	−8.40
Lao People's Democratic Republic	−6.24	−6.07	−5.98	−6.42	−6.94	−4.12	−4.13	−4.43	−4.44	−4.48	−4.33	−4.30
Macau, China	9.62	15.10	25.40	25.08	24.51	23.63	22.99	22.24	21.64	20.95	20.24	16.19
Malaysia	7.61	8.47	9.37	9.18	9.70	9.52	9.53	9.17	7.90	6.92	4.00	3.96
Maldives	0.47	1.91	1.86	1.48	1.33	0.64	15.85	18.95	17.75	17.30	17.41	17.52
Mongolia	−4.41	−3.81	−3.33	−3.08	−3.21	−3.38	−4.19	−4.52	−4.43	−3.61	−3.18	−0.46
Myanmar	−2.34	−2.85	−3.23	−3.53	−3.58	−3.87	−3.87	−3.81	−3.70	−3.23	−2.36	−1.66
Nepal	−5.98	−5.96	−6.31	−7.10	−8.14	−9.05	−10.18	−10.53	−10.91	−11.07	−10.75	−12.67
Pakistan	6.11	2.16	−5.10	−3.46	−3.07	−3.62	−3.53	−3.09	−2.82	−1.78	−2.22	−4.47
Philippines	−1.58	−2.32	−2.41	−2.47	−2.16	−2.58	−2.67	−2.43	−2.09	−2.50	−1.94	−1.08
Singapore	9.76	7.81	5.50	4.69	3.67	18.68	33.85	32.19	30.42	28.93	21.34	13.80
Sri Lanka	−4.88	−0.82	−1.06	−1.08	−0.05	−1.88	−1.20	−0.97	−0.57	0.27	−1.29	−0.64
Tajikistan	−2.21	−3.06	−3.13	−3.38	−3.68	−4.03	−4.33	−4.56	−4.75	−4.90	−4.41	−3.95
Taipei,China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Thailand	1.89	1.97	2.10	1.73	1.83	1.07	1.18	1.37	1.28	1.28	0.77	0.97
Timor-Leste	−14.31	−11.02	−10.86	−10.44	−6.11	−1.53	−1.60	−1.93	−3.10	−3.76	−1.48	−0.28
Turkmenistan	−2.07	−1.95	−1.83	−3.30	−1.92	−1.69	−1.94	−1.92	−1.88	−1.85	−1.83	−1.80
Uzbekistan	−2.67	−1.93	−1.86	−1.70	−1.48	−1.26	−1.08	−0.99	−0.87	−0.72	−0.71	−0.70
Viet Nam	−1.91	−2.04	−1.98	−1.89	−1.83	−1.73	−1.57	−1.41	−1.19	−0.21	−0.05	−0.05

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2022 Revision (UNDESA) https://population.un.org/wpp/ (accessed April 2023).

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Afghanistan	3.48	1.53	7.84	−8.31	−2.60	−1.32	−1.29	−0.21	4.29	−4.57	−1.60	−1.56	−1.52
Azerbaijan	0.21	0.24	0.11	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.16	0.04	0.11	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bangladesh	−1.59	−1.26	−1.41	−1.81	−0.34	−1.09	−1.97	−2.08	−0.37	−1.03	−1.81	−1.79	−1.77
Bhutan	−1.01	−1.00	−1.18	−1.57	−0.70	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38	0.38	0.38
Brunei Darussalam	−0.84	−0.96	−1.07	−1.15	−1.27	−1.36	−1.47	−1.34	−0.89	−0.43	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cambodia	−2.97	−3.11	−3.21	−3.39	−2.59	−2.88	−3.22	−3.43	−1.36	−1.46	−1.79	−1.77	−1.75
China, People's Republic of	−0.09	−0.10	−0.14	−0.11	−0.11	−0.13	−0.21	−0.21	−0.02	−0.14	−0.22	−0.22	−0.22
Georgia	−6.94	−7.15	−4.24	−3.53	−2.81	−2.09	−1.37	−1.44	−0.73	−0.73	−2.67	−2.68	−2.69
Hong Kong, China	5.01	3.40	3.05	1.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.67	2.67	2.67
India	−0.14	−0.18	−0.24	−0.36	0.05	−0.16	−0.41	−0.43	−0.03	−0.22	−0.34	−0.34	−0.34
Indonesia	−0.15	−0.15	−0.15	−0.15	−0.15	−0.15	−0.15	−0.15	−0.09	−0.06	−0.18	−0.18	−0.18
Japan	1.08	1.06	1.09	1.18	1.24	1.30	1.41	1.46	0.70	0.70	0.81	0.81	0.82
Kazakhstan	0.53	0.47	−0.36	−0.69	−0.41	−0.87	−1.71	−1.98	−0.66	−0.99	0.00	0.00	0.00
Korea, Republic of	5.57	5.77	5.88	5.24	1.99	2.19	2.30	2.14	0.00	0.84	0.58	0.58	0.58
Kyrgyz Republic	−7.34	−6.48	−5.65	−4.97	−4.19	−4.53	−4.92	−5.41	−2.23	−2.53	−1.51	−1.48	−1.46
Lao People's Democratic Republic	−4.06	−3.82	−3.83	−1.91	−1.65	−1.49	−1.45	−1.43	−1.41	−1.39	−1.33	−1.31	−1.29
Macau, China	10.62	10.24	10.03	10.56	11.17	12.18	12.71	13.02	12.57	5.85	7.22	7.13	7.04
Malaysia	3.83	3.40	3.10	2.60	3.11	2.45	1.87	1.86	1.73	1.38	1.45	1.43	1.41
Maldives	17.33	17.10	30.54	29.18	27.21	25.00	21.84	13.35	2.21	2.28	−15.18	−16.47	−15.50
Mongolia	−0.77	−0.54	0.28	1.33	2.47	3.50	3.62	3.31	0.00	0.00	−0.25	−0.25	−0.24
Myanmar	−1.23	−1.24	−1.47	−1.83	−1.69	−2.01	−2.17	−1.90	−1.24	−0.66	−0.65	−0.64	−0.64
Nepal	−13.51	−13.53	−11.23	−7.98	−3.51	−2.77	−2.84	−2.45	10.50	9.92	−2.03	−2.01	−1.98
Pakistan	−8.12	−9.24	−9.74	−10.24	−10.67	−7.25	−5.94	−5.26	−2.59	−2.04	−0.70	−0.69	−0.68
Philippines	−1.59	−2.00	−2.35	0.07	0.75	0.34	−0.14	−0.22	−0.37	−0.70	−0.61	−0.60	−0.59
Singapore	12.71	12.40	10.88	7.27	6.41	6.17	6.17	6.95	3.62	3.26	4.53	4.50	4.47
Sri Lanka	−4.61	−4.59	−4.60	−4.61	−4.61	−4.57	−4.49	−4.37	−4.25	−4.24	−3.54	−3.53	−3.53
Tajikistan	−3.49	−3.05	−2.63	−2.22	−1.84	−1.47	−1.11	−0.77	−0.37	−0.37	−2.01	−1.97	−1.93
Taipei,China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Thailand	1.07	0.97	0.79	0.46	1.09	0.62	0.13	0.05	0.50	0.02	0.27	0.27	0.26
Timor–Leste	−0.68	−1.36	−1.34	−4.57	−4.46	−4.34	−4.23	−4.10	−2.69	−1.51	−3.72	−3.67	−3.62
Turkmenistan	−1.76	−1.73	−1.70	−1.67	−1.64	−1.61	−1.58	−1.56	−0.72	−0.71	−0.62	−0.61	−0.61
Uzbekistan	−0.69	−0.68	−0.67	−0.66	−1.12	−1.52	−1.85	−2.10	−1.17	−1.15	−0.58	−0.57	−0.56
Viet Nam	−0.05	−0.05	−0.05	−0.05	−0.05	−0.04	−0.03	−0.04	−0.02	−0.01	−0.84	−0.84	−0.83

123

Table A2.5: International Students in OECD Countries by Economy of Origin

	Number of international tertiary students enrolled			Of which at master's and doctoral level	As a percentage of total tertiary	Number of graduates at master's and doctoral level
	2020	2021	% change	2021	2021	2021
Afghanistan	9,931	11,124	12	4,401	40	717
Azerbaijan	27,375	30,983	13	8,678	28	1,975
Bangladesh	35,277	39,946	13	23,463	59	3,935
Bhutan	3,006	2,547	– 15	1,154	45	946
Brunei Darussalam	1,381	1,225	– 11	209	17	121
Cambodia	4,823	4,768	– 1	1,440	30	642
China, People's Republic of	976,904	885,232	– 9	404,258	46	152,279
Georgia	5,636	5,493	– 3	2,450	45	546
Hong Kong, China	34,652	33,787	– 2	7,105	21	3,138
India	436,269	424,213	– 3	239,615	56	60,559
Indonesia	40,721	39,486	– 3	12,467	32	4,739
Japan	29,710	26,338	– 11	8,650	33	2,158
Kazakhstan	14,497	15,940	10	5,058	32	1,332
Korea, Republic of	97,438	83,838	– 14	27,930	33	3,744
Kyrgyz Republic	4,030	4,280	6	1,253	29	273
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1,218	1,137	– 7	430	38	211
Malaysia	44,259	36,499	– 18	7,773	21	3,560
Maldives	489	480	– 2	167	35	106
Mongolia	12,949	12,519	– 3	4,265	34	1,321
Myanmar	8,879	8,480	– 4	1,839	22	665
Nepal	81,060	72,362	– 11	16,452	23	6,678
Pakistan	46,185	51,364	11	28,969	56	6,910
Philippines	23,128	22,635	– 2	5,198	23	1,788
Singapore	20,099	17,951	– 11	4,818	27	2,412
Sri Lanka	23,916	22,101	– 8	8,186	37	2,522
Tajikistan	1,606	1,632	2	501	31	99
Taipei,China	..	..	..	..	..	..
Thailand	26,461	21,927	– 17	8,339	38	4,692
Turkmenistan	18,765	20,141	7	1,166	6	140
Uzbekistan	15,423	17,808	15	3,561	20	844
Viet Nam	133,139	133,092	0	20,786	16	6,968
Total	**2,179,225**	**2,049,329**	**–6**	**860,582**	**42**	**276,020**
Rest of the world	2,209,339	2,276,072	3	1,008,021	44	264,041
Total	4,388,564	4,325,401	–1	1,868,604	43	540,061
Share of Asia (%)	**50**	**47**		**46**		**51**

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
Note: Data for graduates in the United States are not available.
Source: OECD. Online Education Database. www.oecd.org/education/database.htm (accessed April 2023).

LABOR MIGRATION IN ASIA
TRENDS, SKILLS CERTIFICATION, AND SEASONAL WORK

This report is based on the discussions at the 13th ADBI-OECD-ILO Roundtable on Labor Migration in Asia: Integrating Skills Development and Certification into the Labor Migration Cycle, held on 27–28 June 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. The annual roundtable brings together labor experts and policy makers from across Asia to discuss trends in labor migration and emerging policy and issues on migrant workers.

Chapter 1 analyzes labor migration flows in Asia and relevant policy developments, including a section on the flow and cost of remittances. Chapter 2 looks at the pathways for middle-skilled migration and the accompanying skills recognition or certification approaches in Singapore and Thailand, focusing on the construction sector. Chapter 3 examines programs for seasonal workers in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and how they relate to other programs for migrant workers in agriculture. The chapter also provides an overview of seasonal migrant worker options in the agriculture sector in Japan and the Republic of Korea, and Thai seasonal workers in Nordic countries.

Statistical annexes provide updated economy-specific notes and comparative tables on country-level migration flows.

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International Labour Organization

The ILO is a specialized United Nations agency with a constitutional mandate to protect migrant workers, and it does so as part of its overarching goal of advancing social justice and promoting decent work.

Its objectives are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection, and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues. Its tripartite structure provides a unique platform for promoting decent work. Making fair migration a reality is high on the ILO agenda, at the global level and in the Asia-Pacific region. The ILO has 187 member states.

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