



## Economic inclusion and social protection to reduce poverty Protecting migrant workers

### The issue

Migrants play a crucial role in agri-food systems, something that has become even more apparent in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on movement (nationally and internationally) and the resulting labour shortages are already having an impact on agricultural value chains, affecting food availability and market prices globally, with consequences for food security and nutrition. Migrant workers and their families are being hit hard and will be severely affected by the immediate, medium and long-term consequences of the pandemic. A large proportion of migrants work under informal or casual arrangements, without protective equipment, and risk exclusion from the protective measures – including healthcare and social protection – put in place by governments in response to the pandemic and the economic downturn. This leaves them unprotected and vulnerable to exploitation, poverty and food insecurity. Migrants returning to rural areas face increasing marginalization and stigmatization. A dramatic reduction in remittances is already being observed and will have considerable effects on rural livelihoods, food security and nutrition in migrants' areas of origin.

### The action

In line with [FAO's policy brief recommendations](#), this programme will support migrants working in agrifood systems (particularly seasonal and informal workers), migrants returning to rural areas and remittance-dependent households in rural communities. Activities will include:

- 1 Conducting timely **analysis** of: (1) the impacts of COVID-19 on migrants and their families; (2) the impacts of reduced mobility or safe migration channels (for example, for seasonal migrants) on food security and agrifood systems; and (3) future decisions on migration and rural livelihood diversification.
- 2 Mapping and analysis of **policy responses** and how they affect migrants in agrifood systems; advocating and disseminating good practices and lessons learned; and facilitating virtual multi-stakeholder dialogues in partnership with the United Nations Network on Migration.
- 3 Rapid assessments, in specific country contexts, to **identify target groups and needs** and developing quick guidance tools.
- 4 Based on the assessments, **providing policy support and technical assistance** in areas such as: (1) the inclusion of migrants and their families in COVID-19 responses (including social protection/Cash+); (2) the design and implementation of seasonal migration agreements, labour-matching, skills upgrading/retraining for seasonal, informal and young migrant workers; (3) the adoption of occupational

### Budget

USD 5 to 10 million  
(Budget will affect the scale of interventions)

### Time frame

July 2020–January 2023

### SDGs



### Related FAO policy notes on COVID-19

- ▶ [Migrant workers and the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- ▶ [Migrant workers and remittances in the context of COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa](#)



safety and health measures and improved working/ living conditions for migrants in agrifood systems; (4) the reintegration of migrants, especially youth, in rural areas, including through digital innovations and territorial revitalization; (5) community-level/radio communication and sensitization against stigmatization of return migrants; and (6) targeted support to rural households affected by the reduction in remittances, with attention to gender dimensions.

## Expected results

- 1 Knowledge will be enhanced on the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 on migrants in agrifood systems, migrants returning to rural areas and remittance-dependent households in rural communities.
- 2 Greater advocacy efforts will be made for better inclusion of migrant workers and their families in the response to COVID-19.
- 3 Policy dialogues and partnerships will be strengthened to coordinate responses to the challenges faced by migrants in the agrifood system.
- 4 Subsector-specific guidance tools will be created for countries, along with policy and technical support, on the inclusion and protection of migrants in the COVID-19 response and the reintegration of migrants in rural areas.
- 5 Interventions will be put in place for remittance-dependent households.

## Programme links

The programme builds on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and FAO's COVID-19 response programmes on social protection, young informal rural workers, gender and small-scale farmers. It will also link to ongoing migration projects, as well as coordinated response actions under the United Nations Country Teams, the United Nations Network on Migration and its working groups.

## Partnerships

Migration and sectoral ministries; local authorities and communities; other agencies (such as the International Labour Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Organization for Migration, the World Bank and the International Fund for Food Policy Research), worker and producer organizations, migrant and diaspora associations and civil-society organizations; analysis will build on ongoing efforts by United Nations Country Teams.

## Country focus

Building on work with and expanding to include:

**Africa:** Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda

**Latin America and The Caribbean:** El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras

**Asia and The Pacific:** India, Nepal, Pacific Islands, Philippines, Thailand

**The Near East and North Africa:** Jordan, Morocco

**Europe and Central Asia:** Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uzbekistan

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