



مجلس أبوظبي بين الدول الآسيوية المرسلات والمستقبلات للعمال
Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian Labor-Sending and Receiving Countries

A PROGRESS REPORT TO STEERING COMMITTEE

“Pilot Project on Skill Development, Certification, Upgrading, and Recognition”

February 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This UAE Ministry of Labor (UAE-MOL) progress report's primary objective is to evaluate and highlight ongoing pilot project development, current challenges, and implementation/action plans required to achieve effective project delivery for the next six (6) months. The report will specifically summarize the recent pilot project's completed and scheduled work, while identifying potential scientific and administrative challenges and other coordination requirements from all relevant stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

The governments of the State of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have recently initiated a pilot project to gauge the effects of an integrated approach to the development, certification, documented upgrading and recognition of construction and service workers' skills on human capital formation, workers' welfare, income potential, and labor productivity to inform policy initiatives in the areas of labor admission and labor mobility.

The UAE and Kuwait have actively cooperated with the governments of the Philippines, India, and Pakistan to conduct a pilot project by identifying a group of construction and service workers recruited by UAE and Kuwait employers in pre-selected construction and service occupations. The project aims to: (1) test workers to be certified as qualified for the jobs they were recruited to perform on the basis of occupational standards developed by the respective UAE and Kuwait qualifications authorities; (2) offer workers the opportunity to be periodically tested and certified for upgraded skills; (3) document accumulated skills throughout employment; and (4) enter into agreements with the participating origin countries on the mutual recognition of upgraded skills. The sample will be monitored to identify and measure the impact of pilot activities in terms of the desired outcomes. Pilot implementation will be supported by international training and certification service providers operating (Jas 1), international organizations (the World Bank, IOM, and ILO) and a group of researchers (Zayed University, New York University Abu Dhabi, Center for Global Development) to conduct and monitor impact assessment activities and report on findings.

COMPLETED WORK

Progress

1. The UAE MOL officially launched the pilot project in Abu Dhabi and in Kuwait on December 2014.
2. The National Qualification Authority (NQA) visited and accredited JAS 1 Training and Assessment Center in Chennai, India on December 2014.
3. The Abu Dhabi Quality Conformity Council (AD – QCC) approved JAS 1’s proposed Level 1 Testing Materials for the pilot project.
4. The UAE MOL recently reviewed and approved last January 2015 Sri Lankan’s proposal to include Sri Lankan workers into the pilot project sample.
5. The UAE MOL held numerous technical group workshops and private meetings to review and implement pilot project.
6. The UAE MOL signed memorandum of understanding (MOU)/agreements with four largest participating construction companies in the UAE.
7. The Swiss Development Fund, in cooperation with UAE MOL, committed to financing the training/assessment cost of Sri Lankan’s inclusion into the pilot project.

CHALLENGES

The following challenges, including sample size and diversity concern, could impact pilot project’s implementation process in the long run.

Sampling

1. Sample Size and Diversity Concern

Currently, the pilot project’s sampling size was largely dominated by Indian population (98%), with little sampling population from Pakistan and Philippines. To mitigate this potential challenge, the UAE MOL welcomed the participation by Sri Lanka into the pilot project during the last technical group meeting. The MOL has specifically committed to accommodate the Sri Lankan government’s request in cooperation with the Swiss Development Council (SDC). The Sri Lankan delegates and NQA and QCC authorities will also further share and discuss their labor occupational standards for official review and assessment for the pilot project.

In addition, given the limited sampling population from Pakistan, the UAE MOL also ensured during the technical group meeting that workers’ participation and employers’ expressed interest will be increased to address the sample size and diversity concern. In particular, the UAE MOL has delegated Jas 1 to make arrangements for training and certification facilities in Pakistan that will be officially visited and accredited by NQA and QCC authorities.

SCHEDULED WORK

After holding the 3rd Technical Group Meeting at MOL-Dubai, the following future actions plans have been identified for all stakeholders, including UAE MOL, Scientific Committee, National Qualification Authority, Abu Dhabi QCC, JAS 1, and Employers, that are crucial to achieving effective project delivery. The most immediate scheduled task in particular is the Scientific Committee’s survey methodology/content draft materials, which will be utilized to capture participating pilot workers’ socioeconomic information. In particular, UAE MOL will share with Steering Committee members survey methodology/content when Scientific Committee produces them for final review and implementation over the next few weeks.

Stakeholder	Action Plans	Duration
UAE MOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with all stakeholders regarding their action plans • Schedule private meetings with country participants, including India and Pakistan • Submit full guidelines to employers 	February 2015
Scientific Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize and submit scientific methodology (surveys) and protocol proposals within the next 7-10 days to MOL Management Team and Jas for review and implementation 	February 2015
National Qualification Authority (NQA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and accredit training/assessment centers in Sri Lanka and Pakistan based on existing government and industry standards 	February 2015
Abu Dhabi Quality Conformity Council (ADQCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Upskilling/Upgrading (2nd Testing Material) for the pilot project in cooperation with JAS 1 	February – June 2015
JAS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit all proposals to accredit Sri Lanka and Pakistan training/assessment centers to NQA • Coordinate with Sri Lankan delegates regarding a working MOU and an activation of training/assessment • Finalize MOUs with employers (only for Al Habtoor) 	February 1, 2015
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit and review JAS 1’s training facility • Select and commit 500 or more construction workers into the pilot project 	February – August 2015