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ANNEX VII

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of Asia-Pacific region for 2023-2024 for migration, forced displacement and mobility

Action Document for “Supporting a Talent Partnership with Bangladesh”

ANNUAL PROGRAMME

This document constitutes the annual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, within the meaning of Article 23 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Supporting a Talent Partnership with Bangladesh OPSYS number: ACT-62162 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)
2. Team Europe Initiative	NO
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Bangladesh
4. Programming document	Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme for Asia and the Pacific for the period 2021-2027 (RIP)
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	<p>The Action responds to the priority area 3 “Migration, Forced Displacement and Mobility” of the Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme for Asia and the Pacific - 2021-2027.</p> <p>Specific Objective 2: Contribute to strengthening migration governance and management, to enable orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.</p> <p>ER 2.1: Cooperation, policy dialogue and development, engagement at international, national and regional level with private and public stakeholders in the field of migration and mobility are enhanced.</p> <p>ER 2.4: Human mobility, including labour migration and climate-induced migration, takes place in a more regular and safe manner.</p>

	<p>Specific Objective 3 - Encourage relevant exchange between origin, transit, destination and/or host countries to increase cooperation and improve management of migration and/or forced displacement challenges, as well as to expand their cooperation with the EU on migration, forced displacement and mobility.</p> <p>ER 3.1: Capacities of partner countries to cooperate on and address migration and/or forced displacement challenges, and gradually build ownership of migration related processes identified and agreed in migration partnerships with the EU, are reinforced.</p> <p>ER 3.2: Partner countries' cooperation with the EU on migration, forced displacement and mobility is enhanced. This may include the development of Talent Partnerships.</p>			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	<p>Priority Area 3 – Migration, Forced Displacement and Mobility</p> <p>151 - Government & Civil Society-general</p>			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<p>Main SDG: 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.</p> <p>Other significant SDGs:</p> <p>SDG 1- No Poverty;</p> <p>SDG 5- Gender Equality;</p> <p>SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth;</p>			
8 a) DAC code(s)	DAC 15190 – migration –100%			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Multilateral organisation – 40000			
9. Targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Disabilities @			
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation@	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	transport people2people energy digital connectivity	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration@	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BUDGET INFORMATION			
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020131 South and East Asia Total estimated cost: EUR 3 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 3 000 0000 The contribution is for an amount of EUR 3 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial year following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				

13. Type of financing¹	Indirect management with an entrusted entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1.
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1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action aims to promote mutually beneficial regular and safe migration and mobility and contribute to the prevention of irregular migration, by facilitating legal **labour migration and mobility towards the EU** through supporting the development of a **Talent Partnership** with Bangladesh, which is one of the key elements of the external dimension of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The Talent Partnership with Bangladesh was launched during the mission of Commissioner Johansson to Dhaka in November 2022, and its main components and sectors/professions of focus were endorsed during the first Talent Partnership Roundtable of 1 March 2023. Germany and Italy are the first EU Member States (EU MS) to participate in the Partnership.

Against this background, and in order to take the agreed main components forward, the Action will aim to enhance coordination and collaboration among existing institutions by providing technical assistance and support to bridge the information gaps between national stakeholders in Bangladesh and EU MS, including through facilitated meetings, exchange platforms, stakeholder sessions and workshops and trainings as required, thus acting as a reference point for EU MS interested in skills/labour mobility-related activities.

It will reinforce cooperation between the EU MS and Bangladesh to boost regular international labour mobility as well as skills and talent development in a mutually beneficial way by contributing to development and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive policy framework and financial support to mobilise EU MS' tools and activities aiming at improving overall migration management with Bangladesh. At the same time the action will contribute to inclusive economic development in Bangladesh by sustainably improving skills and livelihoods of migrants and returnees. By creating regular pathways to work in Europe, the action will also indirectly contribute to reducing irregular migration and the dangers that are related to it. It will facilitate regular and regulated migration, ensure the protection of women and men workers' rights, and promote mutual beneficial cooperation between the sending and receiving countries.

The Action will capitalise on the results expected to be achieved by the ongoing programme Skills21, particularly the development of models to facilitate skill mobility to the EU with operational modalities corresponding to the SO 1 of Talent partnership.

The action will cover a wide spectrum of activities needed to implement mobility schemes by supporting directly or by steering the work of Bangladeshi institutions, such as existing training centres. The Action will facilitate the exchange of curricula and standards to ensure that the trainings provided are up to the level required in interested Member States. In line with the overall rationale of Talent Partnerships, the action will also seek to ensure wherever possible that trainings are also relevant for the Bangladeshi labour market, with the aim of growing skills for the benefit of both EU Member States and Bangladesh. It will also facilitate exchanges aimed at comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing modalities for the certification of skills and qualifications, and provide concrete support as regards certifications (e.g. carrying out qualification or skills testing according to Member States' or private employers' standards). It also includes assistance in ensuring fair recruitment procedures, if needed, including carrying out interviews, as well as assistance with language courses and master trainer preparation.

The Action will also include extensive activities required to put mobility plans in place. Capacity building support to strengthen Bangladesh's labour migration governance and training systems and prepare for mobility schemes, pre-departure and integration programmes for migrant workers, and reintegration programmes once migrants return will be among the activities. Furthermore, the action will promote overarching policy dialogue and contribute to the building of the EU-Bangladesh nexus of political and development cooperation. This would entail organising events, conferences, research, and exchange platforms to facilitate migration sector dialogue, which will lead to policy improvements and interaction with the government and corporate sector. Finally, the action intends to place migrant workers from Bangladesh in the EU labour market through the formulation and implementation of mobility programmes.

The Action will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the Agenda 2030, such as SDG 8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment

¹ Art. 27 NDICI

and decent work for all”, especially target 8.6, which demands to “substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training”, as well as target 8.8, with the objective to “protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment”. The action also contributes to SDG 10 “Reduce inequality within and among countries”, particularly to target 10.7 “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. The Action is aligned with the Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 (GAP III²), in particular to the thematic areas of engagement:

I) ‘Integrating the women, peace and security agenda’, Objective 6 - Relief and Recovery where ‘All agreements by the EU with third countries on migration flows and border control must integrate a gender perspective and meet human rights’ standards’. II) ‘Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women’, Specific Thematic Objective 3 with ‘Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources’.

In line with a Team Europe approach, activities will be designed and implemented, where possible, in coordination with EU MS and their respective public/private sector institutions. Direct rights holders of the Action will be Bangladeshi women and men of working age, prone to seek job opportunities abroad or in Bangladesh.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Bangladesh is the sixth largest migrant sending country in the world, and receiving the eight highest amount of remittances globally ([World Migration Report, 2022](#)³). In 2021, at the height of COVID-related travel restrictions and returns, there were still an estimated 7.4 million Bangladeshi migrants abroad according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2021). According to the Government of Bangladesh’s Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) since Bangladesh became independent in 1971, more than 14 million Bangladeshis have gone for overseas employment to over 165 plus countries, and the country has received USD 278 billion USD in remittances (BMET 2023).

Bangladesh's labour market is characterized by a large and growing workforce, with a significant portion engaged in the agriculture sector. The country has experienced substantial economic growth over the years, which has contributed to the diversification of its labour market beyond traditional sectors. However, despite economic progress, Bangladesh still faces several challenges in its labour market. After various tragedies, the most prominent being the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 and under EU pressure in the context of its unilateral trade preferences for least developed countries Bangladesh has developed a National Action Plan on the Labour Sector of Bangladesh (2021-2026), which is currently being implemented. The country struggles with a high rate of underemployment and informal employment, where workers lack job security, social protections, and fair wages. Limited job opportunities, especially in rural areas, lead to an oversupply of labour, which drives down wages and hinders economic mobility. Fundamental labour rights, such as freedom of association, freedom from violence and harassment at the workplace, fair and safe working environments and abolition of child labour are not (fully) respected. In response to these challenges, labour migration has become an important phenomenon in Bangladesh. The country has a significant number of workers who seek employment abroad; most common destinations for Bangladeshi labour migrants are the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, and Bahrain. Other popular destinations include Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and some European countries. The main European countries of destination for regular migration are Italy, Greece, whereas only Greece has a bilateral agreement (MoU) with Bangladesh. 7,594 Bangladeshis were regularly employed in

² The Gender Action Plan III is a Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was welcomed through EU Presidency Conclusions of 16 December 2020. Drafting was led by European Commission in close consultation with EU Member States, EEAS, civil society organisations, partner governments, and international organisations (UN entities, International Finance Institutions among others). The different parties contributed to the drafting of the document through meetings and through responses to a survey conducted during the process.

³ <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/>

Italy in 2022, according to BMET⁴ data. In the same period of time, according to REMAP⁵ 15,228 Bangladeshi nationals arrived (irregularly) in Italy, 907 in Cyprus, 229 in Malta, 117 in Spain and 6 in Greece. 60% of them transited through the Western Balkan and Eastern Europe Region. Labour migration provides an avenue for Bangladeshis to find better economic opportunities and improve their livelihoods. According to BMET, total 1,135,873 (female 105,466) Bangladeshi workers migrated to 21 countries in the same time (2022), contributing USD 21.28 billion in remittances. While male labour migration is more prevalent, there has been a significant increase in female labour migration from Bangladesh in recent years to almost 10% of the total amount– 105466 in 2022, according to BMET data. Women work predominantly as domestic workers or in the garment industry in countries like Saudi Arabia and Jordan. In most labour-receiving countries of the Persian Gulf region and elsewhere, the labour laws do not cover domestic workers. Bilateral labour mobility agreements (MoUs) between the sending and receiving country is one of the promising practices to regulate migrant labour. Several international instruments aim to protect migrants and safeguard their freedom and dignity (ILO in UN Women, 2018). The Colombo Process promotes dialogue on women migrant workers, especially the domestic ones. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) has also supported the rights of these women⁶.

Bangladesh relies heavily on remittances sent by its overseas workers. Remittances make a significant contribution to the country's economy, supporting families, boosting consumption, and financing development projects. Remittances account for 5.33% of the country's GDP on average. The data available on remitters is not sex disaggregated. However, study findings reveal that even low-skilled women workers remit between 70% to 80% of their income to their families. Evidence suggests that a Bangladeshi woman working in the Middle East sends on average 77% of her income back home (Kabeer in UN Women, 2018). A 2013 study by UN Women found these remittances are only part of what women migrants contribute to their homelands. Their social capital – ideas, skills, attitudes, knowledge, contacts and networks further contribute to socioeconomic development, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in their countries of origin⁷.

In the government of Bangladesh, various ministries and departments are involved in managing labour migration. The primary ministry responsible for labour migration issues is the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE). MoEWOE steers the policy formulation for Bangladesh, while its Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) is the directorate that regulates the recruitment process and procedures. There are 46 District Manpower and Employment Office (DEMOs) across the nation providing registrations and other forms of support. As a governmental agency, Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) directly recruits workers for a few selected countries. The technical training centres (TTCs) are engaged in skills-building and provide mandatory pre-departure orientation (PDO) training for outgoing migrants, along with six institutes of marine technology (IMTs). Probashi Kallyan Bank also provides support to the migrants for providing loans for migration. The labour attaché in the destination country provides support to the migrants who work on-site. However, a few more governmental agencies, such as the Department of Immigration and Passports under MoHA, facilitate the international agenda for migrants. MoFA supports in dealing with countries of destination.

Migrant workers of Bangladesh are classified into four groups: (a) less-skilled (b) semi-skilled (c) skilled and (d) professional. The majority of aspiring migrants from Bangladesh are commonly interested in being able to “migrate somehow,” rather than preparing themselves to be skilled workers for overseas labour markets. The Bangladeshi labour migrants are typically employed in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, domestic work, agriculture, and service industries. The majority of Bangladeshi labour migrants are low-skilled workers with limited education and training, resulting in one of the lowest per-worker remittance compared to other remittance receiving countries. Bangladeshi migrant workers often lack formal qualifications, which makes them more susceptible to exploitation and lower wages. The MoEWOE, through its Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training (BMET), operates training centres across the country to provide skill development and pre-departure

⁴ <http://www.old.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/viewStatReport.action?reportnumber=39>

⁵ <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/bangladesh-bangladeshi-nationals-europe-multiple-source-snapshot-2022>

⁶ UN Women (2018). *Women and Migration in Bangladesh*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Accessed through

<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2018/03/Country-Overview-on-UN-WOMEN-migration.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

training to prospective migrant workers. These centres offer training in various trades and occupations, such as construction, healthcare, hospitality, and domestic work. It is responsible for promoting skill development programs for prospective migrant workers by collaborating with training institutes and organizations to provide pre-departure training and skill enhancement courses to equip workers with the necessary skills and knowledge for employment abroad.

The Ministry of Education is involved in the overall education system in Bangladesh, including technical and vocational education. It oversees the development of vocational training institutions and curriculum, ensuring that the educational programs align with the needs of the labour market and provide relevant skills to workers. The Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), under the Ministry of Education, focuses on technical and vocational education and training. It develops and implements vocational training programs, conducts examinations, and issues certifications for skilled workers. The Ministry of Labour and Employment is responsible for formulating and implementing policies related to labour and employment. They collaborate with various organizations to promote skill development programs for both local workers and those seeking overseas employment.

The Ministry of Education in Bangladesh has established the Bangladesh National Qualification Framework (BNQF) to ensure the relevance and consistency of qualification outcomes. The framework supports flexible linkages and pathways for qualifications, both nationally and internationally. Its aim is to enable the portability and comparability of qualifications, aligning them with international standards. The BNQF serves as a crucial tool in driving quality improvements within the education and training system. It provides a structure for the development, description, and systematisation of relationships between qualifications, fostering harmonization.

However, a significant challenge in the labour migration sector is the recognition of skills. Certifications issued in the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) sector in Bangladesh are not comparable or recognized in destination countries. Consequently, migration does not lead to skill enhancement or career progression for individuals seeking employment abroad.

The complexity of migration dynamics, coupled with limited resources, policy and institutional gaps, and inadequate data availability and management, pose significant challenges. Despite Bangladesh's robust legal and policy frameworks, the lack of institutional capacity and effective implementation hampers the facilitation of safe labour mobility. As a result, migrant workers and their families face adverse consequences due to these limitations.

In Bangladesh, labour migration follows one of three procedures: (a) Government-to-Government (G2G), (b) private agency-led and (c) the Government-to-Government Plus (G2G+) mechanism, jointly administered by the Government and private agencies. Of the three, the most common is private agency-led recruitment, through which either individual or group visas can be obtained. The procedure is less transparent and has become far too complex due to the involvement of third-party service providers (who act as intermediaries, called Dalal) hired by overseas employers, with whom Bangladeshi recruitment agencies must now do business. A worker who obtains his or her visa personally through the employer in the destination country does not incur the additional costs charged by such service providers. Private recruitment agencies (collectively Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA) are the key players in the private agency-led recruitment system.

While the Government of Bangladesh has formulated the Overseas Migration Policy of 2016 and Overseas Employment and Migrants Act (OEMA) of 2013, certain challenges remain in ensuring safe and fair labour migration, such as the high cost of migration, legalization of intermediaries, visa-trading, insurance of migrants, recruitment fraud, contract substitution, exploitation, and inadequate protection for workers. The government is continuously working to strengthen the regulation of recruitment agencies, enhance pre-departure training programs, and improve consular services to address these challenges.

Despite all odds, the migration sector of Bangladesh has made good overall progress during the last 15 years, but the migrant labour recruitment system is gradually getting complicated. Various layers in both countries of origin and countries of destination contribute to this. Migration (and labour migration, in particular) is a big industry in Bangladesh and the country benefits greatly from it; however, several challenges remain in relation to the protection of the rights and safety of migrant workers. There are good demonstrations of commitment from the

Government of Bangladesh, such as the ratification of the Migrant Workers' Convention, the development of the Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act of 2013 and subsequent migration policies, and proactive participation in the Global Compact for Migration process. Other stakeholders, including CSOs, the private sector and United Nations agencies, have also contributed much to the development of the industry, but a lot has yet to be done to ensure safe, simple, transparent and fair recruitment. The ILO and IOM, along with other intergovernmental agencies, have taken the initiative to promote ethical recruitment, yet some mechanisms still have to be put in place.

Bangladesh and the EU have a long history of close collaboration based on shared values. The EU-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement 2001⁸ provides a framework for dialogue and cooperation in various areas of mutual interest. It covers political dialogue, trade and economic cooperation, development cooperation, and cooperation in other sectors such as energy, environment, climate change, and migration. The agreement aims to promote mutual understanding, strengthen bilateral relations, and support sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Talent Partnerships are one of the key aspects of the external dimension of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. They aim to strengthen cooperation between the EU, Member States and partner countries and to boost international labour mobility and development of talent in a mutually beneficial and circular way. As outlined in the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, developing legal pathways should also contribute to the reduction of irregular migration.

The Commission is steering the development of Talent Partnerships to ensure they are prepared in a tailor-made and flexible way and address the labour market and skills needs of Member States and partner countries.

Talent Partnerships should combine direct support for mobility schemes for work or training with capacity building and investment in human capital, including skills development, vocational education and training and operationalisation of work-based exchange schemes. In doing so, they aim to ensure an equal win for partner countries, Member States, business communities on both sides and individuals benefitting from the partnerships. In line with the EU bilateral cooperation with partner countries, they should benefit the economic development of communities of origin, advance key partner countries' broader development goals and strengthen opportunities for their citizens. At the same time, they should help address shortages in certain sectors of Member States' labour markets and help the business community on both sides to build the skills in demand. They should transform the risk of brain drain from partner countries into brain gain for all partners, benefiting those involved as they access renewed training opportunities, professional experiences and additional study or vocational education and training developed either in the EU or in their countries of origin.

At the Talent Partnership Roundtable of 1 March, the Bangladeshi authorities, the European Commission, Germany and Italy endorsed the main elements of the Talent Partnership with Bangladesh, including: vocational and professional training (Curricula and modalities, including competency standards, for training will be identified and commonly defined starting in a first phase from the professions identified at the roundtable), recruitment schemes and pre-departure measures (language and integration training for the workers who will participate in the mobility, possibly involving Bangladeshi universities and training institutes, as well as EU Member States' cultural institutes, will be explored), reinsertion of workers returning to Bangladesh.

The Action follows the joint announcement by European Commissioner Ylva Johansson and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to initiate a comprehensive dialogue on migration. It is aligned with and relevant to the Bangladeshi's strategic development priorities and the overall geopolitical programme of the European Commission (2019-2024), notably promoting green and sustainable inclusive growth and jobs, advancing governance and human development, and fostering resilience, peace, and security. The action is to contribute to inclusive economic development by improving livelihoods sustainably and by increasing the income level of migrants and returnees which will create jobs and foster economic growth. The action will also contribute to the implementation of the updated EU Skills Agenda for Europe (2020), the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum (2020), and the Communication 'Attracting skills and talent to the EU' (2022). It is also relevant to the European Year of Skills, as part of which an initiative on the recognition of qualifications of third country nationals will be adopted in 2023. Through the Commission's Communication on "Attracting skills and talent to the EU" issued on

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32001D0332>

27 April 2022 Bangladesh was tentatively identified as a good candidate to propose a Talent Partnership⁹. The first Talent Partnership roundtable between Bangladeshi and EU stakeholders took place in March 2023, with the second one expected to take place in July 2023.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Bangladesh is a country with a surplus of labour and citizens thus engage in labour migration. It has a large and growing workforce, with a significant portion of the population engaged in the labour market. The country's labour force participation rate is relatively high, and it has a young population, with a sizable number of working-age individuals. The labour market in Bangladesh is characterised by a labour surplus, meaning that more workers are seeking employment opportunities than the available job openings within the country. As a result, many Bangladeshi workers seek employment opportunities abroad, including in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and other regions including Europe. Labour migration plays a significant role in managing the labour surplus by providing opportunities for Bangladeshi workers to seek employment and income abroad. The labour surplus in Bangladesh also contributes to the country's competitive advantage as a source of low-cost labour for industries such as garments and textiles, agriculture, construction, and tourism etc. The availability of a surplus labour force helps attract foreign investment and supports economic growth in various sectors. However, addressing the labour surplus and ensuring productive employment opportunities for the growing workforce remain important challenges for Bangladesh. Complex migration dynamics, limited resources, policy and institutional gaps and insufficient data availability, inadequate skills recognition and management still remain key challenges.

On the other hand, the EU has an ageing and shrinking working population and by 2070, the size of the working-age population will decline from about 65% in 2019 to between 56% and 54% of the total EU population in the EU27¹⁰. On the contrary, Bangladesh has one of the youngest populations in the world: around 30% of the population is between the ages of 15 and 29. It can be concluded that there exists an obvious match between the Bangladeshi workforce surplus and EU MS' workforce shortages. However, cooperation on skills development, labour matching, and the validation of credentials and qualifications is essential to ensure that labour migration from Bangladesh to the EU can produce benefits for all stakeholders. Bangladesh has been sending seasonal migrant labourers to some of the European countries. To expand its extraterritorial jurisdiction and accord more protection to its citizens abroad, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has signed bilateral agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with at least 17 countries, including EU MS for sending labour migrants (e.g. Greece, Japan, Hong Kong, Maldives, Qatar,). These agreements aim to facilitate regular and regulated migration, ensure the protection of workers' rights, and promote cooperation between the sending and receiving countries.

The 2020 EU Pact on Migration and Asylum announced the intention to launch Talent Partnerships, mentioning health and agriculture as examples of areas facing skills shortage¹¹ within the EU.¹² Following set-backs caused by Covid-19, the European labour market is overall returning to pre-pandemic levels: the EU labour market continues its recovery and requires new workers, in particular in sectors with structural shortages such as agriculture¹³, long term care and logistics sectors. These sectors differ in terms of skill concentration, level of regulation, and labour market dynamics. Labour shortages in certain sectors are larger than prior to COVID-19 with a sharp increase of unfilled job vacancies. While EU labour migration policies seem to be geared towards highly skilled professionals, the concentration of migrants in low skilled professions and in specific sectors, especially those with large low skilled occupations, is significant (OECD 2020). This has become particularly obvious with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic which highlighted the important contributions of both high and

⁹ COM(2022) 657

¹⁰ 'Population on 1st January by age, sex and type of projection (proj_19np)' ([Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://statistics.eurostat.europa.eu)).

¹¹ https://portal.ieu-monitoring.com/editorial/esde-report-2023-eu-commission-looks-at-possible-ways-to-tackle-labour-and-skills-shortages/411433/?utm_source=ieu-portal

¹² Furthermore, for example the German government's coalition agreement contains an extensive chapter on migration calling for a more holistic concept of migration that seeks to include economic cooperation, visa facilitation, skills transfers, job platforms and cooperation on the reintegration of rejected asylum seekers

¹³ The European Commission (DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) of 2020 noted skill shortages within the health care assistants, associate professional nurses, pharmacists, and midwifery

lower skilled labour migrants to essential services such as health care, agriculture, and food processing. During the last decade, about 50-60% of Bangladeshi labour migrants were unskilled or semiskilled, and only about 5% were highly qualified.

While a Talent partnership addresses the needs of the labour market of the destination country, notably by supporting its capacity to attract an adequate number of qualified workers, it is also aimed at addressing the problems of the labour market of the sending country. It should provide a framework for cooperation to facilitate labour mobility, bringing together a broad range of stakeholders, and to strengthen initiatives to develop skills to boost employment prospects on both the domestic and international labour market. In particular, for the Bangladeshi potential migrant it is key to enhance the possibility to have access to reliable, real time and detailed information on the job opportunities available abroad and the specific conditions and requirements attached to them, so as to be able to make a well reflected and sound choice, and to enter into the most possible direct contact with the employers and job providers, so as to avoid falling victims of too many mediators, fraud or smugglers/traffickers. In addition, it is key for Bangladeshi aspiring migrants to enhance their skills before or immediately after departure in the areas key to obtain better and better remunerated jobs abroad. Similarly, it is important for those Bangladeshis who already have relevant skills and competences, to receive support in in order to ensure the recognition of their qualifications by the employers in the destination countries, and to receive the recognition at the earliest possible stage of the selection procedures. A Talent Partnership should be able to address all these challenges or at least contribute to offer a dialogue to identify solutions.

Analysis of Bangladesh's approach to labour emigration reflects a triple-win perspective: i) supplying labour to destination countries that are labour deprived, ii) reducing domestic unemployment rates and earning remittances through Overseas Bangladeshis, and iii) bringing about benefits to migrants themselves and their families as a means to escape poverty. Labour migration not only has economic benefits, it also improves overall migration management as it helps to strengthen the cooperation with countries of origin and transit, including with the aim to reduce irregular migration.¹⁴

The main national stakeholders/duty bearers of the action would be:

- Ministry of Expatriate's Welfare and Overseas Employment (MOEWOE)
- Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)
- Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE)
- Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)
- Technical and Madrasa Education Division (TMED)
- National Skills Development Authority (NSDA)
- Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL)
- Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA)
- Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies (BAIRA)
- Private Sector – Construction, Hotel & Tourism, IT and Agro-Food business
- Non-governmental and civil society organisations incl. Women's Human Rights Organisations and those representing Persons with Disabilities (DPOs – Disability Persons Organisations)
-
- Other (EU) stakeholders; Interested EU MS public institutions and private sector representatives dealing with employment & mobility schemes (e.g., employment agencies, business associations, academia, etc.)

As concerns Bangladesh, there exist several opportunities for EU MS and their governmental and non-governmental institutions to conclude partnerships with the relevant Bangladeshi labour export institutions such as the MOEWOE, BMET etc. Moreover, part of the EU's interventions in Bangladesh should also include initiating bilateral agreements between the EU MS and their institutions with the Bangladeshi institutions.

¹⁴ Communication From the Commission too the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions Attracting Skills And Talent to the EU

Specifying EU MS labour skills needs would help Bangladesh to train its labour workforce according to EU MSs needs, helping respective EU MS to meet their labour shortages in critical sectors. In this regard, it is necessary to spur and strengthen migration cooperation by boosting mutually beneficial international mobility, based on better matching of labour market needs and skills between the EU MS and Bangladesh.

Using the lessons learned from previous EU Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) pilot projects, areas of implementation for mobility schemes might be health, healthcare, engineering, ICT, long-term care/domestic work etc, based on the sectors identified and agreed upon jointly by the Government of Bangladesh and interested Member States. During the inception phase, these are indicative sectors that could be expanded to other areas/trades mutually beneficial for participating countries.

Cost-sharing mechanisms with the participating private sectors will be explored as appropriate and based on prior experiences from comparable programmes in other countries for mobility initiatives to Europe.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** (Impact) of the action is to foster regular and safe labour migration between the EU and Bangladesh, under the umbrella of the recently launched Talent Partnership.

The **Specific Objectives** of this action are

SO1: Set in motion and maximise the effectiveness of the Talent Partnership between the EU and Member States in Bangladesh while making sure that labour mobility is in line with international labour rights and gender equality, human rights and disabilities standards.

SO2: Improve legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks for legal migration and mobility between the EU and Bangladesh, making sure they are in line with international labour rights and gender equality standards.

Output 1.1: Enhanced access to information on the labour market, skills and mobility trends and the comparability of skills and qualifications between the EU Member States and Bangladesh.

Output 1.2: Improved mechanisms for labour mobility schemes between the EU Member States and Bangladesh.

Output 1.3: Improved dialogue mechanisms between public and private actors from the EU Member States and Bangladesh active in the area of labour migration.

Output 2.1 Improved capacity of key labour migration stakeholders in labour migration planning, management and policy development

Output 2.2. Improved infrastructure and technical capacity of key Bangladeshi stakeholders for implementation of labour mobility schemes between Bangladesh and EU Member States.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Output 1.1: Enhanced access to information on the labour markets, skills and mobility trends and the comparability of skills and qualifications between the EU MS and Bangladesh.

Indicative activities:

- Assessment of priorities of all stakeholders, the policy/regulatory framework in place and institutional set up in charge of facilitating labour mobility schemes with Member States participating in the Talent Partnership, in line with international labour rights standards.
- Assessment of current capacities among staff of relevant institutions for analysis of EU and domestic labour market trends and how these shape potential migration trends, building on and complementing existing assessments.¹⁵
- Analysis of the Bangladeshi labour market to identify available workforce/skills and of the labour market needs of EU MS participating in the Talent Partnership, aimed to ensure better matching of labour market

¹⁵ E.g., 2023 Analysis on Pathways to Labour Mobility in Bangladesh

needs and skills between the EU MSs and Bangladesh – including in cooperation with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP).

- Analysis of skills and qualification frameworks in Bangladesh in priority sectors for the Talent Partnership, with a view to informing the development of training/skills development and facilitating recruitment of migrants in Member States participating in the Talent Partnership.
- Analysis of best practises of the existing mobility schemes successfully implemented between Bangladesh and several third countries (e.g., Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, etc.) in cooperation with BGD authorities and EU MS partners (relevant ministries, public and private employment agencies, business association, etc.).

Output 1.2: Improved mechanisms for labour mobility schemes between the EU Member States and Bangladesh

Indicative activities:

- Development and roll out of interactive models and mechanisms to ensure regular exchange between stakeholders of BD and EU Member States involved in the Talent Partnership.
- Develop guidelines and tools for best practices and information material on legal pathways to the EU in line with international labour rights standards mainstreaming gender, human rights and disabilities
- Set up a monitoring and risk management mechanism, including regular feedback from all stakeholders and impact assessments as regards vulnerability of labour migrants and in view of enhancing development impact of labour mobility scheme.
- Establishment of online/physical migrant worker support services.

Output 1.3: Improved dialogue mechanisms between public and private actors from the EU Member States and Bangladesh active in the area of labour migration.

Indicative activities:

- Facilitating exchanges of information and dialogues between Bangladeshi and EU Member States authorities in charge of labour migration, representatives of Bangladeshi and European TVET institutions, as well as of the Bangladeshi and European private sector, to increase their mutual understanding of the specific working modalities, as well as of the qualifications required and owned by the different parties, supporting also the identification and development of dedicated channels of communication, and building the respective capacities when appropriate.
- Organisation of (inter)national workshops, conferences, study visits, etc., to promote labour migration, development of regular migration pathways, and elaboration of new opportunities for facilitated labour mobility, and development of recommendations to minimise barriers thereto (e.g., between relevant Bangladeshi governmental institutions and EU MS government/public institutions, and between relevant Bangladeshi private institutions such as BAIRA and relevant EU MS private employer institutions).
- Organisation of various activities and events aimed at establishing contacts between Bangladeshi stakeholders and EU MS in order to inform each other on their roles, responsibilities, and possibilities of cooperation, as well as on the EU and EU MS migration policy and visa/entry conditions, as Bangladeshi beneficiaries are largely unaware of the varying visa requirements of EU MS and are therefore unable to interact with the EU (MS) labour market(s) efficiently and effectively.
- Establishment and facilitation of cooperation between MoEWOE and EU MS Consular posts in Bangladesh with the goals of reducing visa abuse, raising awareness of EU MS entry requirements, and fostering mutual trust.
- Supporting Bangladesh in adapting its relevant platforms to EU standards (Europass, ESCO terminology) as to prepare for the interoperability with the EU Talent Pool once created.
- Connecting interested EU MS private employment agencies with the MoEWOE job-web portal and raising awareness on using new labour migration pathways between Bangladesh and EU.
- Support the establishment of working arrangements/agreements and MoUs between relevant institutions.

Output 2.1 Improved capacity of key labour migration stakeholders in labour migration planning, management and policy development

Indicative activities:

- Technical assistance to align relevant policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks in terms of labour migration management in line with EU best practices and international standards (e.g., ILO, etc.)
- Provision of capacity building to key labour migration stakeholders (e.g., MoEWOE, BMET and others etc.) and involved EU MS and their institutions through targeted training, mentoring and technical assistance.
- Provision for implementation and reporting on the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET to boost female participation rates in skills development programmes and labour migration.
- Capacity building for Bangladeshi Labour Attachés on identifying labour opportunities in the EU countries to which they are (to be) deployed and
- Raising Labour Attachés' awareness on fictitious visa applications, visa abuses, etc. to reduce number of fictitious EU visa applications and thereby lower the number irregular migration.

Output 2.2. Improved infrastructure and technical capacity of key Bangladeshi stakeholders for implementation of labour mobility schemes between Bangladesh and EU Member States.

Indicative activities:

- Support for the creation of databases of relevant candidates and job opportunities, when appropriate
- Support for the organisation of screening and interviews of candidates, when appropriate.
- Provision of support to the pre-mobility activities for migrants (e.g., selection of candidates, vocational training, language courses, pre-departure training, etc.).
- Provision of support to the implementation of mobility phase activities such as support for the evaluation of skills and recognition of qualifications in line with requirements in participating EU MS, support of training measures, integration support at the workplace and in everyday life in EU MS, support intercultural training etc.
- Provision of supporting measures for the returning migrant engaged in circular migration schemes, namely for their (re)insertion into Bangladesh's labour market.
- Building the capacity of existing selected TVET or academic Bangladeshi institutions to deliver ad hoc courses, allowing their graduated students interested to engage in a labour emigration experience in the EU MSs to upgrade their skills so as to meet the requirements of the EU labour market for specific jobs
- Provision of counselling sessions to the mobility schemes women and men participant on the transfer and use of remittances.
- Raising awareness on using labour migration pathways between Bangladesh and the EU providing also additional explanation on Talent partnership and legal pathways to the EU and how to find information on job opportunities abroad and the qualifications and conditions attached to such jobs.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

n/a

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project). The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action Category B (not requiring an EIA, but for which environment aspects will be addressed during design).

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project) The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that Gender equity (SDG5) is incorporated as a cross-cutting indicator across each specific objective with a target for female

participation aiming at 50% but not less 30%, including in capacity building programmes such as training courses, workshops, study visits, etc. Though the percentage of women emigrating from Bangladesh is approximately 6% of total emigration, the action will pay a specific attention to incentivise women's participation in mobility schemes. The action will be gender mainstreamed and aligned with the Gender Action Plan III (GAP) namely to the thematic areas of engagement:

I) 'Integrating the women, peace and security agenda', Objective 6 - Relief and Recovery where 'All agreements by the EU with third countries on migration flows and border control must integrate a gender perspective and meet human rights' standards'.

II) 'Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women', Specific Thematic Objective 3 with 'Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources'. As well, the action will contribute to the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023.

Human Rights

The human rights of Bangladeshi citizens including labour rights are often not respected (including labour rights which not fully enforced) which jeopardize the inclusive economic development of the country. The action will indirectly address issues of human rights, including fundamental ILO Conventions, and social protection through the promotion of decent work and creation of employment opportunities in EU MS, including for people living in vulnerable and marginalised situations, particularly prospective and returning migrants. The action will respect the 5 working principles of the human rights-based approach: respecting all human rights, non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency principles, as well as ensuring participation of all stakeholders. The action will equally reinforce the capacities of the duty bearers/public authorities, through improved capacity on enforcement and compliance with social regulations. The Action is aligned with the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. Migration refers to both voluntary movement (e.g., migrant workers) and involuntary movement (e.g., trafficking in human beings and smuggling) of women and men, across geographic borders internationally or internally, with the search for a better life. Studies suggest that migrant workers with lower skills or lower level of educational attainment are exposed to higher risk of injuries. Those could transform into a physical disability, as both women and men migrant workers are often assigned to dangerous and exhausting manual labour resulting in a higher frequency of industrial accidents, such as construction and manufacturing sectors. Most of these low-skilled migrant workers are usually unable to access quality health services and social security including disability benefits, compared to the host population. Therefore, migrant workers with low skills are more vulnerable to occupational health and safety hazards. The SDG Goal 10 on reducing inequalities embraces two separate targets to empower persons with disabilities, and to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people. As the global attention to the intersectionality issues has been increasing, it is essential to enhance the linkage between disability and migration and gender. The action not only will support migrants, but also stimulate inclusion of migrant women and men with disabilities particularly in mobility and talent partnership schemes. The Action will be in line with the National Social Security Strategy 2015-2029, the Disabled Persons' Rights and Protection Action Plan 2018. The Action will ensure that rights of persons with disabilities will be respected, and the planned activities are disability responsive and inclusive. The Action will invite to attend to organisations representing people with disabilities when possible.

Reduction of inequalities

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda recognizes the importance of empowering people in vulnerable situations. Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth includes a specific target to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for migrant workers. In Bangladesh, the gap between rich and poor has widened over time. This polarization in the society hinders economic growth and acts as a barrier for development and well-being. The proportion of income distribution varies across the population sub-groups in Bangladesh. Age, gender, and higher education are the most prominent factors explaining the level of inequality across the provinces of Bangladesh. Despite Bangladesh HDI scores persistently improve over the past consecutive years, immense inequality exists and poses a major challenge: Bangladesh's HDI value falls to 0.503 when adjusted for inequality, resulting in a loss of 23.9 percent of its original HDI value. While direct assistance for the marginalized is crucial, it is equally important to empower people with the tools they need for growth and self-sufficiency. Therefore, it is essential to provide decent work for all and enhance rights of workers, increasing non-marginal work opportunities for women in all their diversity, and leveraging Bangladesh's youth bulge to advance technology-led development.

Democracy

The action will support national government and civil society. The impact of improved migration mobility and thus sustainable economic development will re-enforce democratic principles and governmental accountability.

Conflict sensitivity, peace, and resilience

According to the World Justice Project, Bangladesh ranks 127 out of 139 countries on the Rule of Law Index 2022. The security situation and access to justice in Bangladesh remains challenging though Bangladesh's security environment has improved since 2017 when the Bangladeshi security forces undertook concerted counter terrorist and counter militant operations.

The Action is partially in line with the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019 – 2024), namely:

- i) Best practices and challenges, of EU and its Member States policies and initiatives on protection measures and how they affect / benefit women, men, boys and girls

Disaster Risk Reduction

n/a

Other considerations if relevant

During the implementation of the action, it will be necessary to ensure cooperation to complement, synergise and to prevent overlaps with relevant ongoing and upcoming national and regional initiatives funded by the EU (Directorates General of the European Commission such as DG INTPA, HOME EMPL, etc.) and EU Member States, including, but not limited to:

- (**'Skills 21 – Budget Support'**)-The overall objective of this programme is 'Increased productivity and better employment opportunities through an environmentally conscious, inclusive, demand-driven, and interlinked skills development system responding to the needs of the labour market'. It address the following three priority areas : (1) Strengthening the quality of the TVET/Skills development system notably through the development of the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF) in order to harmonize qualification pathways across both technical and formal education;(2) Supporting the development of model TVET institutes which are inclusive, environmentally oriented, and labour-market responsive providers of qualitative technical training; and (3) Supporting collaboration between the private sector and technical training providers to develop and implement demand-driven technical and vocational training programmes. The programme has been implemented by ILO.
- (**Prottasha II**) - The overall objective of this action is to contribute to the sustainable reintegration of Bangladeshi migrant returnees and to safe migration and two Specific objectives/outcomes are: (1) Improve sustainable reintegration of Bangladeshi returnees and their families in their communities in a gender sensitive manner and (2) Contribute to improve policy and regulatory framework, and coordination system of national and local authorities responsible for migration management. Outcome one will be implemented by BRAC –a Bangladesh origin international NGO, and Outcome two by IOM.
- (**GLO.ACT-Bangladesh**)- The project aims at developing and implementing a more effective national and international response to trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling in the areas of (a) developing evidence based information on patterns and trends to enhance understanding of Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants, (b) Legislative assistance, (c) Capacity building, (d) International cooperation and (e) Victim assistance and protection, and assistance to migrants in vulnerable situation. The project has been implemented by UNODC.
- **Relevant Actions to be funded under the Migration, Forced displacement and Mobility Annual Action Plan for the Asia and the Pacific Region for 2023.**

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1,3	Limited political will and ownership over the EU support	Medium	High	Link programme activities to SDGs, international conventions, national strategies, and new opportunities for cooperation which bring clear mutual benefit (quick wins).

4	Efforts to strengthen the coordination among different stakeholders are undermined by corruption/complicity of government officials	High	Medium	To combat corruption in a comprehensive way, effective policy solutions, including measures to enhance the transparency of procurement process and prevent conflicts of interests as well as measures to ensure enforcement and detection should be in place.
3	Staff turnover and capacity constraints, varying commitment and ownership, political interference and a perceived high level of corruption can derail results.	Medium	Medium	Some of these risks are beyond EU capacity, however, the EUD and implementing partner(s) will seek continued and strategic dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh and development partners capacity building activities as well as increase monitoring, evaluation, and audits of implemented programmes.
2,3	Low private sector engagement in mobility schemes	Medium	Medium	Increase awareness about the benefits of labour mobility schemes among the private sector through targeted campaigns, workshops, and seminars. Highlight the potential advantages, such as access to a larger talent pool, cost-effectiveness, and diversification of workforce skills.
3	Various ministries and national authorities involved are unable to reach consensus on which sectoral targeting for skills development and migration facilitation activities	Medium	Low	Strengthen engagement with government and other relevant authorities through the Project Steering Committee. Identify, through empirical analysis the maximum number of potential sectors as possible to increase the likelihood of an agreement between stakeholders.
3	Identification of sectors and development of mobility schemes with several EU MS overburdens institutional capacity in partner countries.	Medium	Medium	Establish clear coordination and communication mechanisms among implementing partners and partner institutions in countries.
3	Political climate in EU MS in general hampers efforts to create regular migration pathways from Bangladesh and does not allow for additional MS to join the Action and add labour mobility schemes	Medium	Low	Political dialogue between the EU member states and EU institutions facilitated by the European Commission.
3	Migrant women and men with disabilities may face physical, institutional and societal barriers and exclusion from the project activities due to stigma, stereotypes and discrimination	High	Low	Measures such as sensitization, awareness and advocacy will be used to work towards reducing barriers.
3	A gender-blind, neutral, or negative context and problem analysis could reinforce existing gender inequalities and non-realization of human rights in the sector, and hinder the efficiency and sustainability of the action.	Medium	Medium	Knowledge and tools of gender mainstreaming are available. Gender-sensitive monitoring, use of sex disaggregated data, and gender-sensitive indicators. Gender mainstreaming is applied in all phases of the support services.

3	Risk of brain drain from Bangladesh	Medium	Medium	A monitoring mechanism will be put in place to evaluate the development impact of the Talent Partnership on the sending country and mitigating measure will be taken if necessary.
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Lessons Learned:

In the EU, migration and employment management systems are run in very different ways across EU Member States. Issuance of residence permits is the competence of Member States, which also have the prerogative to define the number of labour migrants to admit to their respective labour markets. Furthermore, EU MS national labour markets have different needs, structures, and regulations, which translate into heterogeneous labour migration policies. EU countries seem to be biased towards highly skilled professionals and have designed their policies accordingly. At the EU level, the labour market needs assessment for highly skilled tends to be lighter than the one for low and medium skills or for specific sectors. For low and medium skilled professions, a more detailed labour market assessment is carried out to assess whether exceptional conditions justify migration or ease entry requirements.

The experiences gained through the implementation of the labour mobility pilot projects supported through the Mobility Partnership Fund (MPF) identified the following lessons learned.

- **Importance of time and flexibility** to build trust between the different stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of a mobility scheme has emerged as a main point of attention. The coordination of actors at different levels needs dedicated time and resources to be effective. Time is an important component and prerequisite in building the necessary trust that will lead to success and meaningful engagements.
- **Ability to reshuffle budgets and activities**, or change selection methodologies and targeted skills profiles, can allow project implementers to stay responsive to shifting dynamics in the labour market and changing political alliances following elections, or to enable procedural changes that may deeply affect timelines and planning.
- **Mobility schemes involve a multitude of actors unaccustomed to work with each other.** Not only do projects have to connect EU MS and third country actors and systems with different traditions, capacities, and levels of experience, they also include a great variety of stakeholders in each national context and all with different interests.
- **Implementing partner(s) plays a key role as “interpreter” and facilitator** and need to mediate as well as to support effective communication between private and public stakeholders, such as different ministries and other national administration sectors as involved actors speak “different languages”. Pilot projects have shown that these relationships can be highly conflictual, politicised or, at the very least, complicated.
- **A high degree of administrative skills is required** to break down communication barriers, mediate interests, and expectations, and effectively navigate the tensions of multi-stakeholder public-private partnerships.
- **Important amount of time and resources in preparatory research**, stakeholder mappings and building of trust between participating entities in the inception phase of the project, or even at incubation stage, shall be provided to ensure successful implementation. The most successful initiatives have been those that could rely on well-grounded political and administrative support networks prior to the start of the project.
 - **The creation of formal advisory bodies or committees** for the purpose of coordination with a wider range of impacted rights holders and duty bearers have proven effective in fostering ownership for the different stakeholders in the process. Setting up and regularly consulting an advisory board made up of relevant duty bearers from public and private sectors ensuring equal and meaningful participation of both women and men, can thus lead to fruitful exchanges and important impulses for the success of project.
- **The main precondition for mobility scheme is involvement of relevant government institutions in the origin and destination countries** which should be key cooperation partners therefore it is important to work closely with public employment institutions.
- **Successful mobility schemes heavily rely on the “buy-in” of employers in EU MS** prior to the pre-departure phase to ensure ownership by the private sector in the country of destination. A key indicator of employer commitment is significant investment on their part in the mobility scheme. Employers should bear a considerable part of the costs, of preparing and accompanying labour migration (either directly financially for the recruitment or through contributions such as housing of the personnel, of flight and visa costs, of mentoring of labour migrants during the integration process etc.).
- **Close work with employers is needed to ensure that trainings provided correspond to the actual needs of employers.** For many employers in EU MS and especially in sectors requiring higher skilled workers, the

labour mobility schemes can only be attractive if they allow for a long-term perspective to employment. Policy-level intervention and capacity development should be combined with targeted interventions for direct rights holders..

- **Matching both countries occupational demand and supply requires intensive labour market analysis** on both sides. This process is only successful if conducted in close collaboration with public and private employment agencies and employers in the country of origin as well as in the MS.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the establishment and implementation of an EU-Bangladesh Talent Partnership. It will enable the EU to improve overall migration management in Bangladesh through the facilitation of regular migration and expansion of legal migration pathways and thereby reducing irregular migration, while supporting the creation of skills and building capacities of relevant Bangladeshi stakeholders. Furthermore, the action will address labour market needs and occupation shortages in specific sectors, linked to demographic trends and shortages in EU MS, and support the development of labour mobility schemes to attract long-term or circular workers from Bangladesh.

The action will be linked to the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, EU Skills Agenda (2020) and the Bangladesh National Skill Development Policy (NSDP). The action is to have a triple-win perspective: i) building capacities of relevant Bangladeshi stakeholders in the field of labour migration and mobility and training, ii) bringing benefits to migrants, potential migrants and their families to reduce poverty and acquire new skills, thus reducing domestic unemployment rates and earning remittances through regular migration and iii) supplying labour to EU MS that are lacking labour in certain sectors.

The action will support capacity building and institutional building, including through technical assistance and exchange of public expertise. Furthermore, the action will support policy dialogue at an overarching level and strengthening the nexus of political and development cooperation between the EU and Bangladesh. The action will also support and facilitate cooperation with EU MS at country level with relevant Bangladeshi stakeholders and support identification, formulation, and implementation of future mobility schemes.

This action assumes that the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh continues to prioritise legal migration pathways with the EU. Given that the action is designed to ensure that migration takes place through ‘safe and regular routes’, such routes need to be increased and made more accessible to potential migrants. The action will also incentivise women’s participation in labour migration and thus support their employability.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

This indicative logframe constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention. On the basis of this logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe (or several) may be developed at contracting stage. In case baselines and targets are not available for the action, they should be informed for each indicator at signature of the contract(s) linked to this AD, or in the first progress report at the latest. New columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the Output and Outcome indicators whenever relevant.

- ✓ At inception, the first progress report should include a complete logframe (e.g., including baselines/targets).
- ✓ Progress reports should provide an updated logframe with current values for each indicator.
- ✓ The final report should enclose the logframe with baseline and final values for each indicator.

The indicative logical framework matrix may evolve during the lifetime of the action depending on the different implementation modalities of this action. The activities, the expected Outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the Financing Decision.

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / Source of Data / Assumptions - no activities)

Results	Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact:	A legal and safe labour migration between the EU and Bangladesh under the umbrella of the recently launched Talent Partnership established	1. # of Mutual Agreements, Partnerships and Actions facilitating legal migration and mobility towards the EUMS in place 2. # of people benefited and % of remittance inflow to BD from regular labour migration	2023 1. TBD at inception 2. TBD at inception	2028 1. TBD 2. TBD	1.1 Project and SDG Report for Bangladesh 1.2 Project reports, national statistics	
Outcome- SO 1	Set in motion and maximise the effectiveness of the Talent Partnership between the EU and Member States in Bangladesh while making sure that labour motilities are in line with international labour rights and gender equality human rights and disabilities standards.	1.1 Number of interactive models and mechanisms that connect stakeholders in labour migration operational 1.2 Proportion of women migrants participating in TVET education, disaggregated by the type of institution: public and private	1.10 1.2 13% in public and 33% in private institutions	Tbd at inception phase 1.2 Average 33% increase in TP schemes	1.1 Project reports 1.2 Project reports	

Outcome – SO 2	Improve legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks for legal migration and mobility between the EU and Bangladesh making sure they are in line with international labour rights and gender equality standards.	2.1. Number of institutional and regulatory frameworks adopted or supported by the action 2.2 Number of Regular Labour Migration Visas Issued by EUMS to citizens of Bangladesh disaggregated by sex and age	2.1 0 2.2. TBD	2.1 TBD 2.2. TBD 2.3. TBD	2.1. Project reports 2.2. IOM DTM, REMAP reports	Political will
Outputs related to Outcome 1	<u>1.1: Enhanced access to information on the capacity of labour markets, skills and mobility trends between the EU MSs and Bangladesh</u>	1.1.1 Status of development of Incubation Hub Mappings and Analyses 1.1.2 Number of people who have benefited from institution or workplace-based VET/skills development interventions supported by the EU: (a) all VET/skills development, (GERF 2.14a) 1.1.3 Number of people benefited from (a) Pre-departure training and (b) Language Training by sex and age	1.1.1 0 1.1.2 0 1.1.3 a. 0 1.1.3 b. 0	1.1.1. Incubation Hub Mappings and Analyses Finalised 1.1.2 Number of People benefited by sex and age 1.1.3.a Number of People benefited by sex and age 1.1.3.b Number of People benefited by sex and age	1.1. 1.2. Annual progress report	Bangladeshi's and EU MS institutions committed
	<u>1.2: Improved mechanisms for labour mobility schemes between the EU Member states and Bangladesh</u>	1.2.1 Number of MOUs / SOPs concluded between the Bangladeshi labour export institutions and EU MS institutions (public and private employment agencies) with support of the EU-funded intervention. 1.2.2 Nr. of mobility schemes set up with support of the EU-funded intervention	1.2.1 0 1.2.2 0 1.2.3 0	1.2.1 TBD 1.2.2 TBD 1.2.3 TBD Tbd at inception phase	1.2.1 1.2.2 1.2.3 Annual progress report	EU MS institutions willing to engage in Talent Partnership

		1.2.3. Number of migrants accessing the mobility schemes with support of the EU-funded intervention disaggregated by sex and age				
	<u>1.3:</u> Improved dialogue mechanisms between public and private actors from the EU Member States and Bangladesh active in the area of labour migration.	1.3.1 Nr. of inter-linkages established between the Bangladeshi and EU (MS) job portals with support of the EU-funded intervention	1.3.1 0	1.3.1 TBD	Project reports	Technical possibilities enable interlinking
Outputs related to Outcome 2	<u>2.1</u> Improved capacity of key labour migration stakeholders in labour migration planning, management and policy development	2.1.1 Nr. of policies & regulations on legal migration and mobility developed or revised with support of the EU-funded intervention. 2.1.2 Nr. of staff of relevant GoB Ministry/ departments trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on legal migration and mobility, disaggregated by sex.	2.1.1 0 2.1.2. 0	2.1.1 ? 2.1.2. ? Tbd at inception phase	2.1.1. ? 2.1.2. Pre and post-training test reports	Political and institutional will
	<u>2.2.</u> Improved infrastructure and technical capacity of key Bangladeshi stakeholders for implementation of the mobility scheme between Bangladesh and EU Member States.	2.2.1 Nr. of cooperation and raising awareness events (e.g., workshops, conferences, study visits). 2.2.2 Number of MoEWOE/BMET/GOB staff with increased awareness of legal migration and mobility	2.2.1. will be determined at inception phase 2.2.2 will be determined at inception phase	2.2.1 TBD	2.2.1 Project progress reports	Political and institutional will

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 48 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹⁶.

4.3.1 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

This action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Operational capacity, value added, transparency, absence of conflict of interest, etc. The entrusted entity should have prior experience in migration management, labour mobility and in working in Bangladesh.
- Operation capacity for implementation of migration intervention and Skills development in Bangladesh.
- Technical competencies in implementation of projects and programmes related to the specific objectives of the action, at both international and national level.

4.3.2 Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances

If the implementation modality in indirect management cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, a direct management modality could be used in the form of a grant.

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

To achieve both specific objective, outputs and activities as set in 3.2

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Public bodies, NGOs, pillar and non-pillar assessed national and international organisations with experience and capacities in the sectors targeted by this action.

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated

¹⁶ www.sanctionsmap.eu. Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components¹⁷	EU contribution (Amount in EUR)	Third-party contribution, in currency identified
Implementation modalities – cf. section 3.1.		
Objective/Outputs1-2 composed of indirect management with an entrusted entity – cf. section 4.3	EUR 3 000 000	N.A.
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	May be funded by other Decision	N.A.
Contingencies	N. A	N.A.
Totals	EUR 3 000 000	N.A.

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be the governing body of the project. The PSC will provide strategic leadership, general policy and overall guidance and oversight on the project; it will also assesses and, if necessary, adapt the activities of the project. The PSC will be comprised of the European Commission, EU Delegations and the Implementing Partner (IP), relevant Government and Private bodies. Where relevant, DG INTPA will also invite and/or consult the EEAS and other Directorate-Generals (e.g. DG HOME). Particular attention will be paid to equal and meaningful participation of women and persons with disabilities, in all their diversity, in this committee. The PSC will indicatively meet at least twice a year, in Dhaka/Brussels or remotely, with the first meeting taking place at the end of the inception phase, so that the findings of the inception period can be presented and decisions on the way forward can be taken. Extraordinary meetings can be convened by either party with a due justification. The PSC will have in particular the following tasks: (i) Provide guidance on the implementation of the programme and provide a forum for regular consultation; (ii) Review and approve annual work plans; (iii) Supervise project monitoring and evaluation activities; (iv) Measure progress in project implementation, with a view to taking remedies, adjusting activities and reviewing beneficiary countries, where necessary; (v) Ensure consistency with other relevant ongoing Projects/programmes in Bangladesh.

The implementing partner will be responsible for project management, organisation of project steering committee meetings (including the Commission and representatives of the beneficiary countries, Private Sector) to provide strategic guidance and ensure overall coordination and coherence of activities, monitor deliverables, and drafting reports. The IP will maintain regular consultations with the EU delegations/representations at the local level on work programmes and progress made. The Commission will be directly involved in the monitoring and steering of the Action.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and ensuring effective coordination.

¹⁷N.B: The final text on audit/verification depends on the outcome of ongoing discussions on pooling of funding in (one or a limited number of) Decision(s) and the subsequent financial management, i.e. for the conclusion of audit contracts and payments.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality).

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Monitoring and reporting will assess gender equality results and the implementation of the human rights-based approach working principles (applying all human rights for all; meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making; non-discrimination and equality; accountability and rule of law for all; and transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data). Monitoring and reporting will be based on indicators that are disaggregated by sex, age and disability when applicable. In order to monitor development and equal access, data/indicators will be disaggregated even further when applicable (f.ex. by minority group or case).

5.2 Evaluation

As the scope and political importance of the Talent Partnership grow, it will be of crucial importance to create a dedicated monitoring and evaluation the initiative with specific and measurable qualitative objectives and indicators. This would contribute to fostering learning, demonstrating impact and added value of the pilot project at the EU level.

Having regard to the importance and nature of the action, a mid-term and final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

A mid-term review will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, with respect to future planning and any further phase of the action.

A final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the range of stakeholders being introduced under the new phase of programming (i.e., Ministry of MoEWOE and related agencies, potential emigrants and returnees). The final evaluation is of utmost importance as labour mobility and talent partnership project(s) constitute an innovative approach in programming and supporting the new initiatives (e.g., the 2021 EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, 2022 EU Commission Communication on attracting Skills and Talent to the EU, etc.) All evaluations shall assess to what extent the action is considering the human rights-based and disability mainstreaming approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment. Expertise on human rights and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least three months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

The financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming, and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

In line with the 2022 “[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)”, It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union’s support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions, and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AD	Action Document
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Education and Training
BNQF	Bangladesh National Qualification Framework
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (GoB entity)
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
G2G	Government to Government
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Countries
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
IMT	Institutes of marine technology
MIP	Multiannual Indicative Programme
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas' Employment
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPF	Migration Partnership Facility
OC	Outcome
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEMA	Overseas Employment and Migrants Act
PDO	Pre-departure Orientation
PSC	Project Steering Committee
REMAP	Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SO	Specific Objective
TTC	Technical training centres TTC
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs