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SUMMARY INFORMATION

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF COSTS

BORNE BY VIETNAMESE WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT ABROAD

STATISTICAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATOR 10.7.1

KEY FINDINGS

International labour migration is an important driver of job creation, increased income and skills development for Vietnamese workers. This summary is based on data from the 2025 Labour Force Survey and the 2025 In-depth Migrant Worker Survey¹. It focuses on key aspects of international labour migration, including the characteristics of migrant workers; costs borne by Vietnamese workers for employment abroad; working conditions; access to support services; borrowing and debt; and return and reintegration into the labour market.

Based on the findings, the summary presents several observations and recommendations aimed at promoting safe, regular, effective and sustainable international labour migration in Viet Nam.

¹. With technical support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and funding from the European Union and the Government of Sweden.



OVERVIEW OF VIETNAMESE WORKERS WORKING ABROAD

Vietnamese workers working abroad are relatively young, predominantly from rural areas, and concentrated in three main destinations: Japan, Taiwan (China), and the Republic of Korea.



About **412,000** VIETNAMESE WORKERS went abroad for work during the three years preceding the survey.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS



84.6% were from rural areas



Median age:
27 years



79.6% had completed upper secondary education or higher



59.0% male



41.0% female



76.7% worked in Japan, Taiwan (China), and the Republic of Korea

COMPARED WITH 2021



The share of female workers increased from **31.4%** to **41.0%**



The share of workers from the **Northern Midlands and Mountainous Areas and the Mekong River Delta** increased from **12.3%** to **23.0%**

COSTS, EARNINGS AND RCI 2025



OVERALL RESULTS FOR 2025



VND **125.7**
million
Average costs
borne by workers



VND **28.1**
million
First-month
earnings



4.5

What is RCI?

Recruitment Cost Indicator
of Vietnamese Workers – RCI =

Total amount paid by workers to obtain
their first job abroad
Workers' earnings during the first month of
employment in the destination country within
the reference period.

An RCI of 4.5 means that the total costs paid by workers for employment abroad were equivalent to approximately 4.5 times the earnings they received from that employment during their first month in the destination country.

COMPARED WITH 2021

Year	 Average costs	 First-month earnings	 RCI
2021	VND 164.9 million	VND 22.4 million	7.4
2025	VND 125.7 million	VND 28.1 million	4.5

KEY CHANGES



Average costs
DECREASED
by **23.8%**



First-month
earnings
INCREASED
by **25.4%**



DECREASED
from **7.4**
to **4.5**

In 2025, the costs borne by workers for employment abroad decreased substantially, while earnings increased, resulting in a notable reduction in costs relative to workers' earnings.

COSTS AND RCI

ACROSS WORKER GROUPS

RCI varies across worker groups by sex, area of residence and skill level.

BY SEX



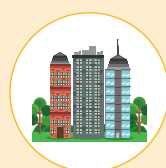
Female workers had **lower** average costs and a **lower** RCI

Group	Average costs	RCI
 Male	VND 133.8 million	4.9
 Female	VND 114.0 million	4.0

BY AREA OF RESIDENCE



Workers from rural areas had **higher** costs and a **higher** RCI.



Urban

Average costs
VND **107.8** million

RCI
3.7



Rural

VND **128.9** million

4.6

BY SKILL LEVEL



High-skilled workers had the lowest **average** costs and RCI.

Skill level	Average costs	RCI
High-skilled	VND 67.8 million	1.3
Medium-skilled	VND 143.2 million	5.4
Low-skilled	VND 109.1 million	4.5

COST AND RCI BY DESTINATION AND MODE OF JOB ACQUISITION

Costs and RCI varied across destination labour markets and modes of job acquisition. The findings show that workers who obtained jobs through individual recruiters or brokers incurred **substantially higher costs and RCI** than those using other channels.



BY DESTINATION



JAPAN

AVERAGE COSTS

VND **140.8** million

RCI **5.3**



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

AVERAGE COSTS

VND **139.4** million

RCI **5.0**



TAIWAN
(CHINA)

AVERAGE COSTS

VND **130.2** million

RCI **6.0**



OTHER DESTINATION
MARKETS

AVERAGE COSTS

VND **85.7** million

RCI **2.4**



BY MODE OF JOB ACQUISITION

RELATIVES/FRIENDS

Share of workers

23.4%

RCI **2.1**



INDIVIDUAL INTERMEDIARIES

Share of workers

16.0%

RCI **6.6**

PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Share of workers

13.8%

RCI **5.7**



PRIVATE RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

Share of workers

37.8%

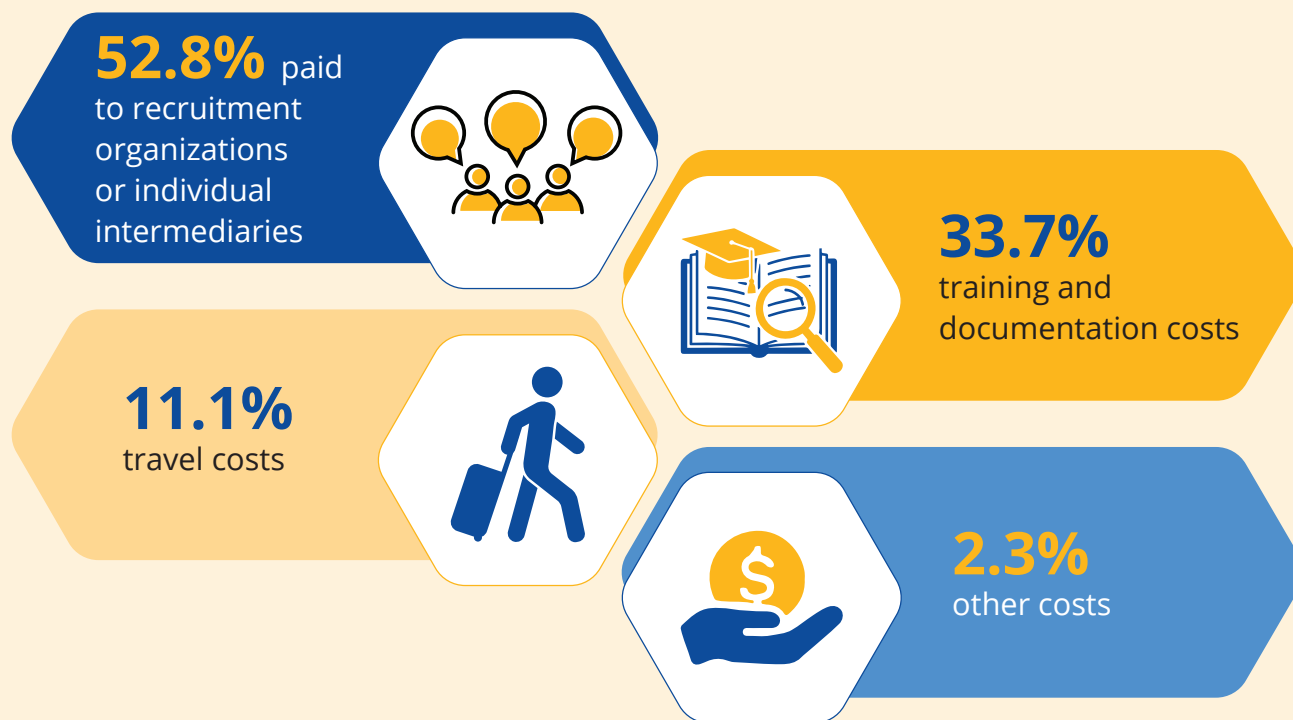
RCI **5.8**



BREAKDOWN OF WORKER-PAID COSTS, PREPARATION TIME, BORROWING AND RETURN



BREAKDOWN OF WORKER-PAID COSTS



PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION TIME



6 months
average preparation time
BEFORE DEPARTURE

BORROWING TO FINANCE MIGRATION COSTS



OF WORKERS
BORROWED MONEY



AVERAGE AMOUNT
BORROWED



OF BORROWERS BORROWED
MORE THAN 70% OF THEIR
TOTAL MIGRATION COSTS

Source: In-depth Survey of Migrant Workers, 2025. The survey covered 3,596 respondents in six provinces and centrally governed cities using non-probability sampling. The findings are not statistically representative of all Vietnamese migrant workers.

CHALLENGES AND INFORMATION NEEDS

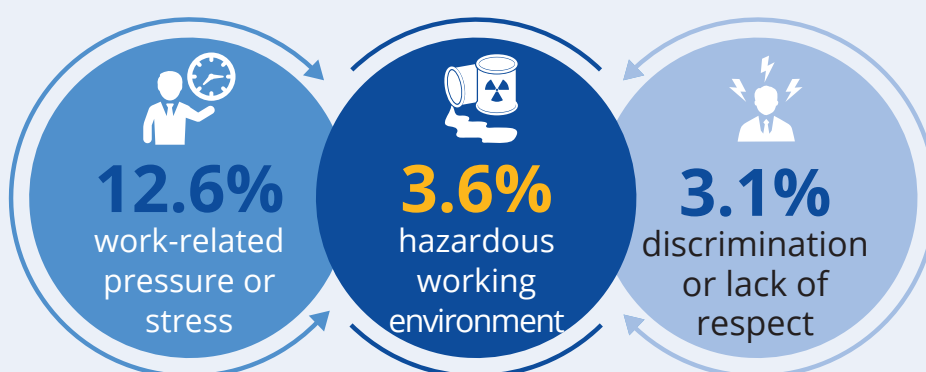


81.5%
of workers
reported no
significant
difficulties



18.5%
of workers reported at
least one difficulty

COMMON CHALLENGES



INFORMATION WORKERS WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE BEFORE DEPARTURE



65.4%
Contracts, wages,
working hours,
benefits and
obligations



65.3%
Living
conditions



62.1%
Occupational
safety and
health

RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

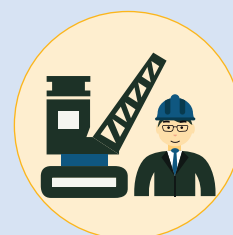


63.9%
paid for their
own return
travel

VND **12.7** million
average return cost



8.7% still had outstanding
debt after returning



65.0% were working
after returning

RECOMMENDATIONS

01 Strengthen policies to support safe and regular migration and reduce migration costs

Continue to improve policies to support international migrant workers, particularly young workers and workers from rural areas; prioritize reducing migration costs and strengthening oversight and transparency of fees and informal charges. At the same time, promote safe, regular and transparent migration channels; strengthen labour cooperation based on the principle of fair recruitment; expand access to formal credit; and strengthen communication, counselling, monitoring and action against illegal intermediaries and irregular migration.

02 Improve the skills and capabilities of the migrant labour force

Strengthen vocational, skills and foreign-language training in line with the needs of each destination labour market; promote the recognition of skills, qualifications and work experience, thereby expanding opportunities to access jobs requiring higher skill levels and offering better incomes, and enhancing competitiveness.

03 Diversify and improve access to destination labour markets

Continue to diversify overseas labour markets through strengthened bilateral cooperation, while carefully assessing migration costs, working conditions, access to financing, protection of workers' rights, and opportunities for career development before expanding cooperation programmes.

Alongside market expansion, there should be a shift in focus from the quantity to the quality of employment opportunities; promote the recognition of skills, qualifications and experience; expand the recruitment of skilled and technical workers; and strengthen support for the professional development of Vietnamese workers in destination countries.

04 Strengthen information provision, support and protection for workers abroad

Strengthen the provision of transparent and accessible information on employment contracts, living and working conditions, rights, safety and risks in destination countries and territories; at the same time, enhance the role of Vietnamese representative missions abroad in supporting workers, strengthen mechanisms for receiving complaints, providing emergency assistance, and protecting workers' rights.

05 Strengthen support for return and reintegration

Strengthen policies to support labour market reintegration for returning workers, particularly those who continue to face employment and financial difficulties. At the same time, promote the recognition of skills and experience acquired abroad; support retraining, facilitate access to suitable employment opportunities and promote entrepreneurship to make more effective use of the returning workforce and enhance the sustainability of international labour migration.

06 Strengthen data systems for international labour migration

Continue to improve the system for collecting, updating and analysing international labour migration data to support the monitoring of migration costs, working conditions, and the return and reintegration of workers. This will help improve the quality of data for monitoring SDG indicator 10.7.1 and for policymaking on safe, orderly and sustainable migration.