

IOM THAILAND 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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IOM
UN MIGRATION

THAILAND

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1. THE MIGRATION CONTEXT

Having transitioned from a low-income country to an upper-middle income country within a single generation, Thailand has been widely recognized as a development success story in the region. With its demonstrated economic resilience in 2022, the trend continues. Thailand has weathered multiple global and regional shocks just as it was reopening its borders in the wake of the pandemic.

Following nearly two years of suspension, in November 2021, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) resumed cross-border recruitment through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) channel, with the first group of workers arriving in February 2022. At the same time, the RTG continued to allow work permit extensions through in-country registrations introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic due to border closures, in order to enable migrant workers to regularize their status in Thailand. These revised processes enabled businesses to restart and scale up their workforces, contributing to the country's increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 3.2 per cent in 2022. Simultaneously, these measures provided migrants with broader regularization opportunities, with over two million migrant workers benefiting from these regular pathways.

Great strides were also made on migrant inclusion in skills development, with the Ministry of Labour encouraging employers to invest in the Skills Development Fund for migrant workers. In 2022, over 163,620 migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar benefitted from in-service training funded and conducted by their employers.



Migrant workers learning ironing technique as part of tailoring skills training in Pathumthani, Thailand. © IOM 2022/ Rachaphon Riansiri

Thailand has also made commendable progress in combating human trafficking, as demonstrated by the recent upgrade to Tier 2 in the U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. In 2022, the National Action Plan for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) on Protection and Assistance of Victims of Trafficking was endorsed along with guidelines to enable its operationalization at all levels. These guidelines are crucial to rolling out the NRM at the provincial level, and efforts to do so are well underway. Continued support to the NRM will further strengthen the RTG's capacity to effectively address emerging trends in transnational organized crimes in the region, as Thailand has become a strategic point for syndicates to transit victims into neighboring countries to work in online scamming operations. At the same time, it has also become the immediate destination for escaping these exploitative worksites.

As a Champion Country of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), Thailand reinforced its commitment to meeting the 23 GCM objectives during the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) by announcing four pledges:



Enabling birth registration for all migrant children born in Thailand;



Migrant inclusion in Universal Health Coverage (UHC);



Effective implementation of alternatives to detention for children and their families; and



Combating discrimination and promoting positive public perceptions of migrants' contributions to society.

While substantial progress has been made, efforts must continue to ensure no one is left behind and all members of society – including migrants – benefit from the country's steady socioeconomic progress.

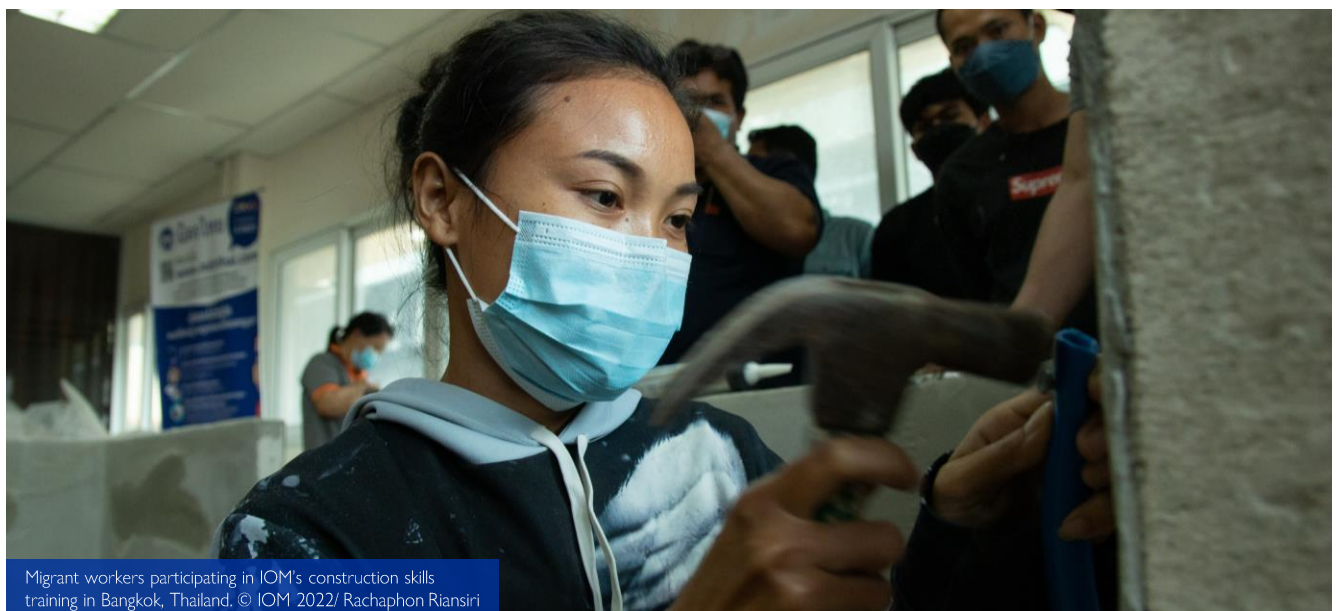
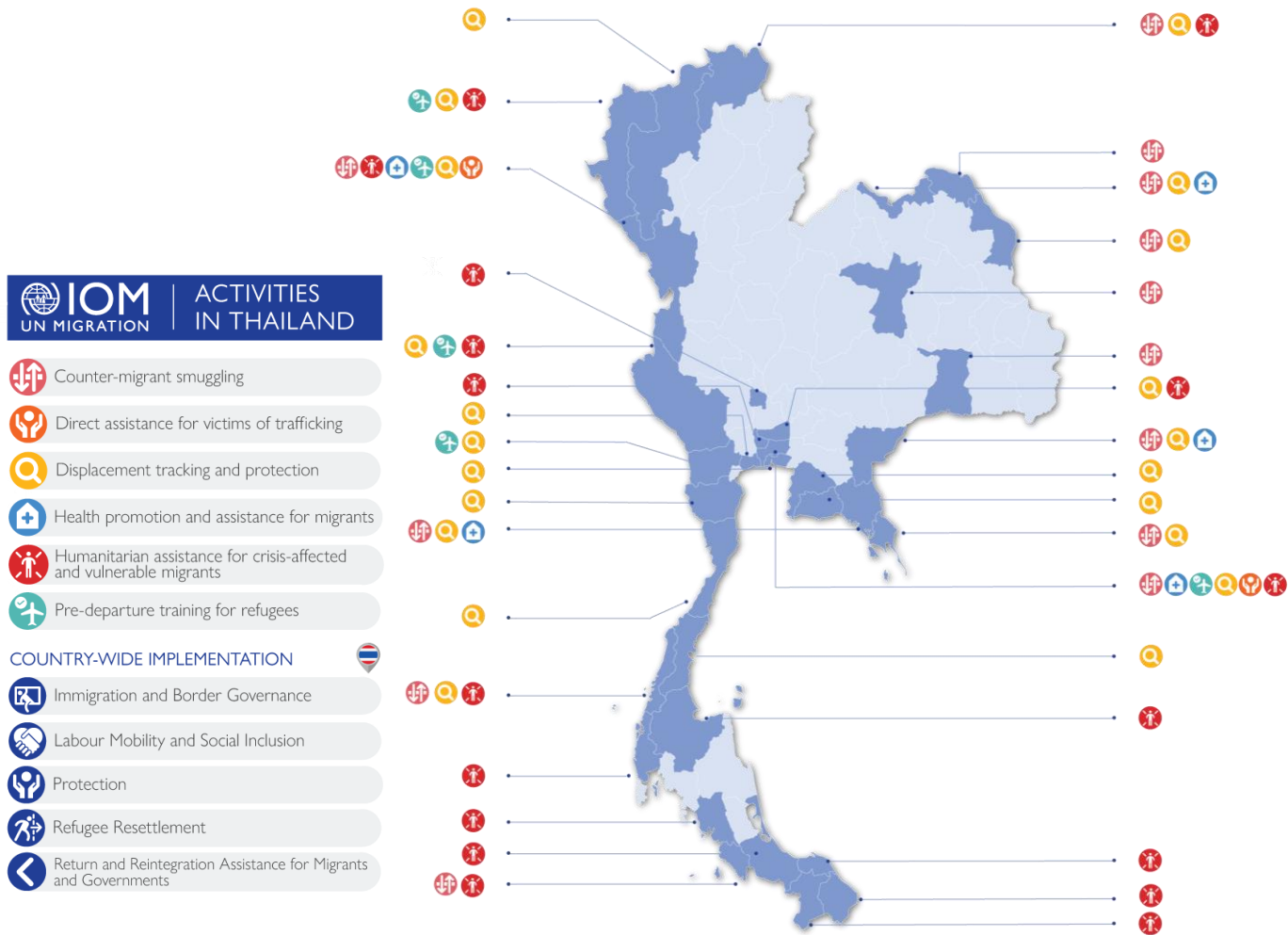
2. IOM THAILAND'S SUPPORT

In 2022, IOM Thailand launched its [country strategy](#), which is guided by the vision of an inclusive society that respects the rights of migrants. The five-year strategy focuses on three key areas of intervention: 1) Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, 2) Human Capital and Mobility Solutions and 3) Leave No One Behind.



IOM's strategy was developed to align closely with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026 and the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP). This report highlights IOM's achievements during the first year of strategy implementation.

Map of IOM Thailand's Activities in 2022



Migrant workers participating in IOM's construction skills training in Bangkok, Thailand. © IOM 2022/ Rachaphon Riansiri



PILLAR 1 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Migration is integrated in the RTG's environment and climate change goals and migrants' resilience to mobility-related risks is strengthened.

1 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE



15 provinces with migrant-inclusive crisis response plans



2 research initiatives



Enhancing Disaster Preparedness and Response while Promoting Migrant Inclusion

In 2022, IOM worked with local government officials in 15 disaster-prone provinces to incorporate migrants into crisis preparedness and response plans. Through these efforts, local stakeholders shared an increased understanding on the different needs of migrants and host communities at all phases of a crisis: preparedness, response and recovery. IOM provided this support using the [Migrants in Countries in Crisis \(MICIC\) Framework](#).

Strengthening the Evidence Base on Migration, Environment, Climate Change & Risk Reduction

IOM is engaged in a series of research initiatives: looking into the evidence base on the mobility impacts of climate change-induced extreme weather events, as well as the role of private sector in supporting migrants affected by climate change and the misuse of environmental resources in the Greater Mekong Subregion. These studies were initiated in 2022, with the findings to be published in 2023.



PILLAR 2 HUMAN CAPITAL AND MOBILITY SOLUTIONS

Human Capital is improved through effective, innovative and responsive mobility solutions.

2 HUMAN CAPITAL AND MOBILITY SOLUTIONS



117,000+ migrant workers benefited from RTG Skills Development Fund



400+ Migrant Health Volunteers trained



45,000+ migrants supported with COVID-19 vaccination, non-food items and community outreach activities



Supported the RTG and WHO health system review on access to healthcare for refugees and migrants

Skills Development

IOM continues to work closely with the RTG to enhance access of migrant workers to skills development and qualification recognition mechanisms, in order to address current and future skills needs.

As a result of IOM's continued partnership with and support to the Employer Confederation of Thailand (ECOT), nine companies have established in-service training schemes for migrant workers on occupational safety and health. More than 2,300 migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar have received skills trainings (both technical and soft skills) with direct IOM support, in partnership with government agencies, businesses and private skills providers.

In addition, between October 2021 and July 2022, over 117,000 migrant workers in Thailand benefitted from skills training through the Skills Development Fund managed by the Ministry of Labour (MOL). This presents an important indication of structural progress towards better integration of migrant workers in Thailand's labour market and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system. IOM supported the MOL's Department of Skills Development with [the roll-out of a campaign](#) targeting employers to promote migrant workers' inclusion in skills development programmes under its Skills Development Fund.



One day, I want to open a small restaurant of my own back in my home country. I already have sales experience from my previous job in a clothing shop and hospitality skills gained as a domestic worker.

Wah Wah is one of over 2,300 migrant workers in Thailand who have benefitted from skills development trainings in 2022, through IOM's regional initiative aimed at increasing migrant workers' access to gainful employment.

© IOM 2022/ Anushma Shrestha

Migrant Health

IOM works closely with the Ministry of Public Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other health partners to support access to health services among migrants. In 2022, IOM continued its efforts to ensure migrant inclusion in overall COVID-19 recovery efforts. As a result, over 5,600 migrants received the COVID-19 vaccine through IOM assistance and nearly 20,000 migrants received essential non-food item (NFI) assistance. Items included PPE, hand sanitizers and soap to help overall infection prevention and control efforts. In addition, more than 20,000 migrants received accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19. IOM trained over 400 migrant health volunteers (MHVs) to help raise awareness and support community-based disease surveillance during the pandemic. IOM's work, particularly its support to strengthening the network of MHVs in Thailand, was featured as a case study in WHO's publication "[Promoting the health of refugees and migrants: Experiences from around the world.](#)"

Furthermore, and in parallel to these community-based health activities, IOM continued its regional border health programme. Anchored on its Health, Border and Mobility Management (HBMM) Framework, IOM conducted activities to improve disease forecasting, community-level disease surveillance and cross-border coordination between Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam. These include the capacity building of 91 immigration officials in integrating public health concerns into border management processes; MHV training and facilitating their work with provincial level health authorities; and the organization of cross-border coordination meetings to encourage multi-stakeholder dialogue in addressing public health emergencies along the migration continuum.

IOM also participated in a joint assessment led by the RTG and WHO on “Review Health System Capacity and Essential Public Health Functions to Address the Health Needs of Refugees and Migrants in Thailand”. The assessment utilized the Refugee and Migrant Health Country Assessment Tool developed by IOM and UNHCR to support countries to assess health systems’ capacities and processes to provide essential health services to refugees and migrants. The findings of this review will be available in 2023.

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Migrants in my community didn’t have sufficient information about vaccines. Many didn’t know getting vaccinated was free, while others didn’t have any idea where they could receive vaccines.

A migrant worker from Cambodia, Uso worked to provide accurate COVID-19 information to migrants and help them access vaccines. He is one of 285 Migrant Health Volunteers (MHVs) that IOM is worked with in six provinces to promote vaccine uptake among migrant communities.



MHVs conduct a health education session on the COVID-19 vaccine in Songkhla, Thailand. © IOM 2022/ Anushma Shrestha



**PILLAR 3
LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND**

Inclusive migration policies, strategies and structural factors are in place to promote migrants’ rights and protection from all forms of discrimination.

3 LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND



THB 2 million+ in compensation awarded to migrant workers for labour rights violation



2 million+ migrants benefited from **in-country registration** and **work permit renewal**



120+ victims of trafficking assisted



25+ media professionals trained



350+ immigration officials trained



3,000+ refugees resettled

Regular Pathways for Labour Mobility

IOM supported continuous multi-stakeholder policy advocacy efforts involving the RTG, representatives from the private sector and civil society organizations aimed at promoting regularization of migrant workers. As an indirect result of these advocacy efforts, the RTG announced a total of four groups of in-country registrations (including one in July 2022) and renewals of work permits for more than 2 million migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar amidst the pandemic.

In 2022, regular labour migration to Thailand through the MOU signed between Thailand and neighboring countries officially resumed following its suspension in March 2020. In May 2022, the MOL approved the reduction of the visa cost for MOU workers from THB 2,000 to THB 500, which as of December 2022 was being reviewed by the Cabinet. This request was put forward by the Cambodian representatives during an IOM-organized bilateral dialogue between the Governments of Cambodia and Thailand in January 2022.

Promoting Pathways for Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration

In an effort to promote sustainable reintegration services in Asia, IOM, in collaboration with UNICEF, brought together government officials from seven countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam) to enhance their knowledge on sustainable reintegration and develop roadmaps for each delegation to strengthen reintegration services in each country.

Migration, Business and Human Rights

IOM continued to work closely with businesses to help them fulfill their responsibilities, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) to respect the rights of migrant workers. In 2022, IOM worked with 73 companies and their supply chains at the national and provincial levels to enhance their capacity to carry out effective human rights due diligence, to engage meaningfully with relevant stakeholders and to address harm to migrant workers that occurred in their operations or supply chains. IOM also worked with civil society organizations to facilitate access to effective remedies through state-based grievance mechanisms for over 100 migrant workers who suffered labour rights violations. In 13 cases (51 women, 49 men), migrant workers were awarded compensation, such as for unfair dismissal, withholding of wages, or work-related injuries. Total compensation of THB 2,171,628 was awarded. Through IOM's ongoing community outreach activities, over 7,000 migrants enhanced their understanding of their human and labour rights.

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I intended to resign from the company, but they did not want to let me go and did not pay my wage. They even withheld my passport, preventing me from working anywhere else.

Naing, a migrant worker from Myanmar, works as a pool cleaner. After being unfairly refused his due salary, Naing received legal assistance from IOM's partner, the Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF), in accessing justice for labour rights violations.



© HRDF 2022

Access to Social Protection

Under the UN Joint Programme, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and UN Women, IOM provided technical support as a member of the Working Group on Domestic and Agriculture Work chaired by MOL, leading to the amendment of the Ministerial Regulation No.14 on Protection for Domestic Workers, which includes migrant workers. The proposed amendment includes more favourable provisions for workers on annual leave, sick leave, working hours, maternity leave, minimum wage, reporting underage workers and prohibition of wage deductions.

Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants – Counter-Trafficking

In 2022, an increase in TIP for the purpose of forced criminality was recorded, which required IOM Thailand and its partners to adjust and scale up the delivery of protection interventions. Throughout the year, IOM assisted over 120 victims of trafficking (VOTs), a 1,200 per cent increase compared to the previous year. In parallel, IOM continued supporting the RTG to strengthen screening, identification, referral and coordination capacities through the development and implementation of the NRM for VOTs. The RTG developed an operational flowchart and released the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the NRM, for relevant authorities to effectively implement the NRM at central and local levels. Furthermore, IOM facilitated bilateral cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia to improve cross-border collaboration to combat TIP. To this end, Standard Operating Procedures on Law Enforcement Cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia were developed and adopted in 2022.

In 2022, IOM, in close coordination with the RTG and other partners, enhanced the capacities of over 647 government and non-government officials in the areas of psychological first aid, trauma-informed investigation, screening, identification and referral techniques for VOTs, including in the fisheries sector.

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What we learned today has to be shared with our communities. Some people don't even understand the concept of trafficking.

Nwe Nwe Lwin, a migrant from Myanmar, attended an information session organized by IOM and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The session was conducted with migrant leaders on the topic of trafficking in persons – including how to identify and report suspected cases.



IOM engaging migrants in a group discussion on safe migration in Mae Sot, Thailand. © IOM 2022/ Miko Alazas

Alternatives to Detention (ATD)

IOM continued to work in close coordination with the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF to strengthen government capacities on ATD. In line with RTG priorities, efforts focused on improving the application of ATD for irregular migrant children and their mothers. Following the RTG's pledge at the 2022 International Migration Review Forum to “effectively implement alternatives to detention measures for migrant children”, a dedicated sub-working group on ATD was created within Thailand's UN Network for Migration. The sub-working group aims to provide a platform to facilitate collaboration between partners to support this pledge. As efforts continue to promote ATD for all migrants, IOM also provided essential assistance to meet the needs of more than 3,000 vulnerable migrants in immigration detention.

Immigration and Border Governance

IOM continued its efforts to enhance the RTG's capacity to improve border management policies, strategies and systems in order to ensure the human rights, dignity, safety and security of all those on the move. More than 350 law enforcement officers working at both the national and local levels were trained on verifying travel documents, on rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches and on combating human trafficking and smuggling at borders. As borders reopened and many immigration officials had not exercised their document verification skills during the pandemic, this capacity building was essential for reinforcing their ability to identify fraudulent documents and thereby combat transnational organized crime. This year, IOM also conducted a rigorous, context-driven, border and migration management assessment of three air and five land border points of entry (PoE) in five provinces. This assessment was carried out as the RTG began to reopen its borders. The findings from this assessment highlight priority areas of focus to promote the safe, regular movement of people and combat current and emerging trends in transnational organized crime, including human trafficking.

Improving the Public Discourse on Migration

In an effort to further promote positive narratives about migrants, combat xenophobia and foster their social inclusion, IOM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs piloted a training on migration reporting. It was the first of its kind in Thailand and aimed to strengthen media capacities to report on migration in an accurate and sensitive manner. The training benefited 30 journalists and government officials and introduced them to the migration context and trends, human rights and migration, ethical reporting, as well as effective storytelling and interview techniques. IOM aims to build upon the success of this pilot and scale up capacity building for media partners to foster evidence-based migration discourse and media reporting in Thailand.

Tuberculosis Case Finding in Refugee Communities

In Thailand, tuberculosis (TB) continues to be an important public health concern. The WHO features the country in its list of 30 high TB burden countries. Despite continued prevention efforts, the shifts in the population structure (namely, an aging society and increased mobility) have resulted in a higher prevalence of TB. IOM is contributing to address the TB burden among mobile and migrant populations through active case finding along the Thailand-Myanmar border. Findings suggest an incidence rate of 650/100,000 population, which is much higher than the national average of 150/100,000. In 2022, IOM screened over 4,500 refugees with chest x-rays in the Mae La temporary shelter, out of which over 400 underwent TB sputum tests and 30 positive TB cases were diagnosed and referred to the Health Sector Lead for treatment.

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I was coughing a lot and had stomach pain. I could not walk properly.

Lee Leh fled Myanmar and now lives in a temporary shelter in north-western Thailand where IOM is conducting tuberculosis screenings and health education. With encouragement from his daughter, he got screened for TB and, as initially suspected, tested positive. Without hesitation, he opted for treatment and has recovered from the disease.



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Refugee Resettlement

Having commenced in 1975, refugee resettlement is IOM's longest standing programme in Thailand and is expected to continue in the coming years. IOM continues to work closely with the RTG, UNHCR and the embassies of resettlement countries to provide durable solutions for refugees. In 2022, IOM assisted in the resettlement of over 3,000 refugees. As part of the resettlement process, IOM provides pre-migration health activities, cultural orientation and pre-departure briefings to refugees in preparation for their resettlement journey. At the same time, IOM offers pre-departure logistical support to facilitate safe and orderly departure to resettlement countries.



It was very sad to say goodbye to my mother and friends, but for now, I have to look forward to my future.

Ah May, a 22-year-old native of the Karen ethnic group in Myanmar, was one of over 3,000 refugees IOM in Thailand assisted to resettle to third countries.

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3. MIGRATION DATA AND RESEARCH

IOM is committed to increasing the availability of reliable data on human mobility dynamics in Thailand – to contribute to informed decision-making and good migration governance. In 2022, IOM released the following information management and research products:

Mobility Monitoring

In 2022, IOM continued to gather and analyze information on the mobility dynamics along the Thailand-Myanmar border in order to estimate the continued scale of entries into Thailand as borders re-opened. IOM began monitoring this in 2021. Noting that the Thailand-Myanmar migration corridor is the largest country-to-country migration corridor in the region, this information helps IOM and partners gain a better understanding of the complex mobility flows between the two countries.

COVID-19 Perception Survey

IOM, in partnership with WHO, completed three rounds of the [COVID-19 Vaccine Perception Survey](#) in Chanthaburi, Chonburi, Greater Bangkok, Ranong, Rayong, Tak and Trat provinces. The surveys aimed to better understand migrants' attitudes towards COVID-19 and hesitations among migrant communities towards the vaccine, in order to develop evidence-informed messaging in the pandemic response. Information, education and communication (IEC) materials were produced based on the findings from this survey and translated into Khmer, Lao and Myanmar languages to raise awareness and promote access to accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19 vaccines.



IOM conducts vaccine perception survey among migrants in Chanthaburi, Thailand. © IOM 2022/ Anat Duangchang

Multi-sectoral Assessments (MSA)

In 2022, IOM undertook a multi-sectoral assessment of needs among Myanmar and Cambodian migrants. The findings point towards persistent vulnerabilities with regards to documentation, education and employment that are exacerbated among migrants who arrived recently. The report and factsheets with disaggregated analysis can be accessed [here](#). These findings will be used by IOM and other partners to inform ongoing and planned interventions for these migrant populations.

Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Workers in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically impacted labour conditions and labour migration across Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand. This [study](#) assesses the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on men and women migrant workers and their families, to inform a migrant-centred approach to socio-economic recovery from the pandemic with evidence-based recommendations. The research applied a mixed-methods approach, including a quantitative survey with a total of 2,187 migrants, 156 employers, and 63 key informant interviews.

Thailand Social Protection Diagnostic Review: Social Protection for Migrant Workers and their Families in Thailand

This [study](#) is part of a comprehensive review of the social protection system in Thailand, produced under the UN Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards an Integrated and Modernized Social Protection System for all in Thailand. The study provides a comprehensive picture of the social protection status of migrant workers in Thailand, including analysis of the level of coverage, key challenges and barriers found on interconnected dimensions from labour migration management to associated policy and legal framework. With evidence-based findings, the study also provides an important set of recommendations that can be used as a basis to improve social protection coverage for migrant workers in Thailand, for the sustainable benefits of all. The study was jointly carried out by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, ILO, IOM, UNICEF and UN Women.

4. HIGHLIGHTS ON REGIONAL MULTILATERAL DIALOGUES

Regional Humanitarian Advocacy Consultation on Rohingya Displacement

There are now more than 1.6 million Rohingya around Asia. Five years since the mass exodus of the Rohingya from Myanmar, nearly one million Rohingya refugees are being hosted in Bangladesh. Malaysia hosts over 100,000 Rohingya, while smaller numbers are being hosted in Thailand and Indonesia. On 15 September, IOM Thailand, in partnerships with UNHCR and the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform (ADSP), organized the 'Regional Humanitarian Advocacy Consultation on Rohingya Displacement'. Around 50 participants from 29 regional and national NGOs and academia from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand shared current experiences, best practices, challenges, and discussed opportunities for coordinated advocacy to improve the situation of the Rohingya in the region. These efforts aim to strengthen regional collaboration on responding to the urgent needs of the Rohingya.

Regional Dialogue on Safe Orderly and Regular Migration

To strengthen migration governance and management, IOM, in coordination with OHCHR and the International Detention Coalition (IDC), organized a Regional Dialogue on the Management of Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and Protection of Migrants. The [regional dialogue](#) brought together 48 high-level officials from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, responsible for migration management in their respective countries, to discuss protection frameworks, international standards and best practices in migrant protection.



UN's Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum in the Asia-Pacific Region

IOM co-hosted this [forum](#), which has served to incentivize businesses to respect human rights and embed norms relating to labour migration. The Forum serves as a mechanism to [enhance the voice of the private sector in regional policy dialogues on ethical recruitment](#) and has seen a growing involvement from IOM's existing private sector partners (including Adidas, amfori, RBA members and UNIQLO under Fast Retailing). The forum brought together more than 400 participants including governments, civil society organizations, trade unions, international organizations, business enterprises, industry associations and campaigners for dialogue on how to strengthen responsible business and corporate accountability in the region.



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Bilateral Consultation between Cambodia and Thailand to Promote Fair and Ethical Recruitment of Migrant Workers

Knowledge products and guidance materials developed by IOM have contributed to increasing stakeholder awareness, commitment and action toward safe labour migration. Feedback gathered from over 500 private and public stakeholders consulted between 2020-2021 were summarized in the [Policy Paper: Solutions to Achieve Fair and Ethical Recruitment and Decent Work of Migrant Workers in Thailand during COVID-19 Recovery](#). The paper formed the basis for the first cross-border bilateral dialogue post COVID-19, supported by IOM, between Cambodia and Thailand in January 2022 to facilitate implementation of the Acknowledge, Act, Advance (AAA) recommendations endorsed by business and government leaders under the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. Resulting from this dialogue, the RTG made a commitment to enhance safe migration. The MOL [approved the reduction of visa fee](#) for MOU workers from THB 2,000 to THB 500, which, as of December 2022, is being reviewed by the Cabinet. The reduction of visa fees was one of the requests made during the meeting by representatives of the Royal Government of Cambodia and was also requested by Thai Business Associations.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



IOM conducts an information session on safe migration. © IOM 2022

International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Thailand

18th Floor Rajanakarn Building, 3 South Sathorn Road, Sathorn, Bangkok 10120 Thailand

Tel: +66 2 343 9300 | Fax: +66 2 343 9399 | Web: thailand.iom.int | E-mail: mediathailand@iom.int