Terms of Reference

Consulting Services for the Innovation Challenge on Jobs and Migration

## Background

Today, there are approximately 295 million people living outside their country of origin. This number will likely only increase as the forces driving cross-border migration are becoming stronger, including the demographic imbalance across countries, technological change which creates disparities in labor productivity, and pressure from climate change negative impacts (World Development Report 2023, forthcoming). Sudden episodes of conflict and violence further exacerbate such movements. Moreover, movements of people persist, despite difficulties. For example, mobility restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic reduced migration flows through the Mediterranean only at the beginning; later, the number of arrivals in European coast countries was higher in 2020 and 2021 than pre-Covid-19, with migrants taking more dangerous routes.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The literature on the impact of migration is extensive and highlights the economic benefits it typically brings for the migrants, the sending countries as well as the receiving countries. These derive from labor reallocation across sectors and geographies, from households’ improved ability to adapt to shocks and invest in assets and productive activities given remittances, knowledge and financial transfers (remittances) to the country of origin, and demographic compensation in destination countries, among others. Experimental evidence shows for example how international migration programs have generated large and sustained benefits for migrant workers and their accompanying families, including higher consumption, durable asset ownership, savings, and dietary diversity (Gibson et al., 2018).[[2]](#footnote-3) Studies have also identified significant and persistent contributions to the welfare of staying family members through reduced volatility in consumption (Mondal and Khaman, 2018)[[3]](#footnote-4) and higher spending on education and health (Yousafzai, 2015).[[4]](#footnote-5) For receiving countries, migration is positively associated with higher regional income and further innovation, with municipalities with higher shares of migrants reporting higher numbers of patents per capita (OECD, 2022)[[5]](#footnote-6); also, some country experiences show immigration policies that have supported filling focalized labor shortages.[[6]](#footnote-7),[[7]](#footnote-8)

However, the challenges to accrue such benefits are also numerous. First, the costs of migration remain high given unaddressed market failures such as lack of access to credit for migrants, and information asymmetries about migrants’ skills and skills demand in international labor markets. Second, entry conditions may lead to suboptimal migration flows. Third, policies often do not consider the negative and positive externalities of cross-border migration. For example, high-skilled emigration brings positive results to sending countries through remittances, but it also imposes negative externalities to these countries through brain drain and related fiscal costs (Gibson and McKenzie, 2012).[[8]](#footnote-9) Fourth, poorly managed migration-related processes put human lives at risk while transiting and create political and social tension within the host communities. The significant heterogeneity among migrant groups adds to the complexity faced by policies attempting to address such difficulties.

More efforts and collective action are needed to create more orderly and safe migratory flows that benefit all. There are opportunities to address the obstacles to make today’s migration contribute to sustainable development. Inter-government agreements, such as the Global Skill Partnership,[[9]](#footnote-10) can help by enhancing market-led labor migration that is safe, legal, and ethical, supporting development goals for countries of origin, and meeting the skills needed in the receiving country. Also, interventions that target simultaneously the humanitarian and developmental aspects of human mobility could be effective to sustain good outcomes of migration; an example is the World Bank’s pilot in Greece to support Syrian refugees transition to employment, among other things through the Skills Recognition Tools.[[10]](#footnote-11) Finally, emerging technologies are bringing to live new ways to support and improve migration; for example, biometric identifiers are used to deliver humanitarian services; social media networks and translation apps help migrants to improve interaction with host communities and mobilize political will; machine learning supports predicting immigrants’ vulnerabilities, such as sexual and reproductive health risks, and matching them with relevant services.

Global and country-level policy needs such cutting-edge initiatives to make cross-border human mobility more beneficial for all. More evidence is needed, however, about their effectiveness and durability before they can be replicated and scaled up. This requires more accurate, coherent, and timely data collected across the migration stages (origin, transition, and destination), as well as data collection methods on migratory flows and migrants’ integration in the local labor markets (in destination as well as origin countries if and when they return).[[11]](#footnote-12)

Better insights are also needed on the effectiveness of the policies and instruments that help foster safer and more orderly and regular migratory flows. Not only is rigorous evidence hard to come by on what policies and interventions work in practice, the existing evidence also needs updating as migration flows in the 21st century have intensified and become more complex. Among others, issues include the potential of bilateral agreements, the effectiveness of pre-departure orientation and skilling programs, actions to enhance capital accumulation of migrants and transfers to their families (e.g, facilitating savings accounts and lowering remittances cost), impacts of integration policies on the host communities, and policies to incentivize and enhance return migration, as well as improve the impacts of returnees.**[[12]](#footnote-13)**

In response to these operational knowledge and data gaps, the Rome Jobs and Labor Mobility Center launches an Innovation Challenge that catalyzes innovative research to develop evidence on promising solutions. The World Bank’s **Rome Jobs and Labor Mobility Center (Rome JLM Center)** was established to foster evidence-based policymaking and solutions to generate more and better jobs by fostering productive labor mobility, within and across sectors and borders, with a focus on Africa, the Middle East and Europe. In partnership with the World Bank’s C4D2, UN agencies and academia, the activities of the Center combine interaction with policymakers, with top-notch analysis and innovative data collection to develop actionable solutions.

## Objectives

The *Innovation Challenge on Jobs and Migration* is a call for proposals that assess the effectiveness of new solutions (interventions, data/tools, policy actions) which improve cross-border labor mobility and labor market integration of international migrants and refugees. It will issue up to four contracts with an anticipated size of US$ 200,000 to US$ 350,000 per contract to catalyze more research in areas with uncovered knowledge gaps. Importantly, it looks for sustainable solutions that can be scaled through national programs of sending and receiving countries or World Bank operations.

The objective of the consulting services is to build evidence around effective solutions that maximize the economic and job benefits from safe, orderly, and regular migration.

## Scope of consulting services

The scope of work of the consulting services includes:

1. Development of the selected proposal and carrying out all necessary activities to produce high-quality research and generate the committed deliverables (see section 6), including primary and/or secondary data collection, desk research, partnership-building, hiring specialized staff, among others. The Consultants must also possess the appropriate equipment and tools to carry out research.
2. Participation in all feedback workshops (see sections 5 and 6) with World Bank staff and contribute to the knowledge exchange among participants.
3. Participation and contribution to the dissemination activities and outputs (see section 8) for Bank-internal audience and external audience to learn the results of the studies; examples: blogs, webinars, and videoclips cross-posted in different websites and social media.

## Eligibility/qualification criteria

**The team**

1. The call is open to research centers, think tanks, non-profit organizations, international organizations, and firms with strong, actionable-evidence-generating credentials. It is not open to individuals.
2. The teams must demonstrate high-quality research credentials in rigorous evaluation methodologies and the study of international migration.
3. Participation from and/or partnerships with developing country research institutes or initiatives is highly encouraged.

**The solution**

1. The innovative solution can be an intervention, policy action or data/tool that supports safer, orderly, and regular international labor migration and labor market integration.
2. Geographically, the focus is on Europe as a destination region from different migration corridors nearby, such as Africa, the Middle East, Ukraine, and Caucasus, but also from further away such as Latin America and Asia.
3. The thematic scope is around solutions that foster regular migratory labor flows, while not fully excluding employment questions related to asylum seekers and refugees, and it crosses the spectrum of the three stages of the migration process: i) pre-departure, for example, information and orientation programs; ii) during migration, like integration policies and financial access; iii) and possible return migration, such as financial and non-financial incentives to return and reintegrate. Under-researched areas will be prioritized.
4. Proposals must study a solution and outcomes which allow to observe results in the short-term. The timeline to complete the studies is twenty-four months from the contract award date.
5. The innovative solution around which the proposal will generate new knowledge is either in its piloting or testing phase or has been rolled out, but its impact has not yet been evaluated.
6. Relevance and operationalizability: The solution must clearly show potential for practical and financial sustainability and scalability; broad accessibility to all targeted beneficiaries and/or potential users; and/or replicability in other contexts.

**The approach**

1. The rigor of the study approach (data/method/tool) must be of academically publishable quality.
2. The proposal must focus on studying the effectiveness of new solutions by using relevant, rigorous, and rapid approaches, including:
   1. “Out-of-the box” approaches to data collection, data generation, data integration, or data utilization;
   2. New data, analytical tools, and methods that expand the research frontier;
   3. New evaluation methods that provide robust evidence about new solutions;
   4. New ways to integrate systematic learning and evaluation while implementing the solution;
   5. Mixed methods – quantitative and qualitative – to generate knowledge on perceptions and behaviors in adopting solutions, etc.
3. Feasibility of data collection and analysis, and timely availability of results, including as intermediate inputs.
4. The proposals must demonstrate a strong rationale of how the generated evidence can be translated into results on the ground and/or continue catalyzing solutions. As such, the proposal must clearly articulate how it contributes toward one or more of the following outcomes:
5. Better informed World Bank’s operations and its clients’ policymaking by innovating in the production and use of data and by bringing knowledge in areas where evidence about solutions to address international migration challenges is weak.
6. Increased innovative approaches to design operations and programs catalyzed by the newly provided knowledge, tools and/or methods.

## Process

The Rome JLM Center together with World Bank colleagues from the *Migration Community of Practice*, which brings together WB staff with an interest in migration issues and is hosted by the Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, will closely manage the processes of proposal selection, implementation and quality assurance, and dissemination.

Identification and selection of winning contracts will be made through an international full competitive process following World Bank corporate procedures. The submitted proposals will be evaluated by a Technical Evaluation Team comprised of World Bank staff.

The quality assurance approach will be nimble and results-oriented. Based on their area of expertise, Bank staff members of the *Migration Community of Practice* will be matched with the selected consultants to act as technical advisors accompanying the development of the studies. Their role will be to provide oversight to assigned consultants and ensure the operationalizability prospects of the proposal, for example, by facilitating dialogue with operational teams and CMUs in countries covered by the proposal to promote two-way learning. The Rome JLM Center will oversee continuous compliance with the contracts’ Terms of Reference.

Besides the ongoing exchanges between consultants and Bank advisors, the RJLM Center will structure three feedback workshops. The objective of these events is to spur nurturing exchanges among all participants.

## Deliverables

The Consultant is responsible for delivering the following:

1. Inception report and presentation at first workshop:
   1. Detailed version of their updated proposals, including the description of the solution subject of study; precise explanation of the research methodology; specific implementation plan, including data collection, roles of partners, etc; and comprehensive discussion about scalability/replicability.
   2. The first workshop where consultants will present and discuss their plans will take place in person in Rome.
2. Data collection instruments or prototype tools.
3. Intermediary report and second workshop:
   1. A draft report which presents exhaustive literature review, reports on data collection carried out; presents qualitative and quantitative descriptives of the target population; indicates any adaptations to the original methodology and to the research questions; describes how implementation challenges have been addressed; discusses preliminary results; and updates the implementation plan.
   2. Participate in the second workshop, which is a Quality Enhancement Review session that takes place virtually/ in Rome.
4. First draft of full study and third workshop
   1. The revised draft of working papers/report which covers at least the following: literature review, description of the targeted problem, description of the solution, methodology and limitations, final results, discussion regarding policy implications, and conclusions.
   2. Present their results in the third workshop based in Rome and get feedback.
5. Final version of the study
   1. The Consultant will submit the final version of the study which reflect he feedback provided in the workshops.

The following table indicates the list of deliverables.

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| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable** | **Expected date** |
| 1. Inception report and presentation at first workshop | 3 weeks after contract signing |
| 2. Data collection instruments or prototype tool | June 2023 |
| 3. Intermediary report and presentation at second workshop | October 2024 |
| 4. First draft of full study and presentation at third workshop | Mid-April 2025 |
| 5. Submission of complete study | First week of June 2025 |

## Budget

The value of each contract shall be within the range of US$ 200,000 to US$ 350,000. The proposals must outline how their proposed budget will be used, and the technical evaluation team will judge the appropriateness.

## Dissemination

Strategic dissemination of the new evidence is key to operationalizing it. Hence, the RJLM Center will broadcast the studies developed under the Innovation Challenge and share the new knowledge with targeted internal and external audiences. Below is an indication of products and channels that will be used. The Consultants are requested to collaborate with World Bank staff in such dissemination activities.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Tool | Description | Audience |
| Products | | |
| Blogs | To provide a personal perspective on the topic being studied by the Innovation Challenge participants, to keep the audience engaged | Internal/External |
| Webinars | To present the findings from the studies to targeted audiences, such as policymakers, practitioners, and relevant actors who may take part of the solution, such as social partners (employers and workers). | Internal/External |
| Videoclips | Showcase the solutions being studied through the Innovation Challenge, could be at the initial phase, during the study or to present results | External |
| Channels | | |
| World Bank websites | - Migration Umbrella website  - Jobs and Development website  - The Rome Dialogues on Jobs and Migration platform | Internal/External |
| World Bank’s Migration Community of Practice | Peer to peer learning and knowledge exchange, for example through BBLs. | Internal |
| Presentations tailored to country offices | Dissemination targeted to generate exchange and learning with specific WB country offices | Internal |
| Topic conferences | Where pertinent, teams will be encouraged to apply to presenting their research in related conferences, such as the Migration and Development Conference, and IZA’s Jobs and Development conference. | External |

1. Testaverde, Mauro; Pavilon, Jacquelyn. 2022. Building Resilient Migration Systems in the Mediterranean Region: Lessons from COVID-19. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37534 License: CC BY 3.0 IGO. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Gibson, J., McKenzie, D., Rohorua, H., & Stillman, S. (2018). The Long-term impacts of international migration: Evidence from a lottery. *The World Bank Economic Review, 32(1*), 127-147. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Mondal, R. K., & Khanam, R. (2018). The impacts of international migrants’ remittances on household consumption volatility in developing countries. *Economic Analysis and Policy, 59*, 171-187. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Yousafzai, T. K. (2015). The economic impact of international remittances on household consumption and investment in Pakistan. *The Journal of Developing Areas, 49(6),* 157-172. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. OECD (2022), The Contribution of Migration to Regional Development, *OECD Regional Development Studies,* OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/57046df4-en. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Platonova, A. and G. Urso. (2012). Labor shortages and migration policy. International Organization for Migration: Brussels. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Czaika, Mathias (ed.),  'High-Skilled Migration: Introduction and Synopsis' ,  in Mathias Czaika (ed.), *High-Skilled Migration: Drivers and Policies*  (Oxford, 2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 15 Feb. 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198815273.003.0001>, accessed 21 Nov. 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Gibson, J., & McKenzie, D. (2012). The economic consequences of ‘brain drain’ of the best and brightest: Microeconomic evidence from five countries. *The Economic Journal, 122(560),* 339-375. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <https://gsp.cgdev.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Testaverde, M., Koettl-Brodmann, S., Galazios, K., Jones, T., Mckerracher, M., Meyer, C.J., Gael de Moraes; Pantelaiou, I., & T. Giannis. Support to the Labor Market Integration of Refugees in Greece: Assessing Skills and Work Readiness - Best Practices and Recommendations (English). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099816003082261107/P17097904da52c05308137080d97c1ffb23> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Despite much improvement, data to study international migration displays several gaps related to inconsistencies in definitions and measures, limited comparability, incomplete frameworks regarding the drivers of migration, under‐coverage of sending regions, inadequate disaggregation of the migrants’ demographics, and lagged representation of the data; poor availability of qualitative data to complement quantitative analysis is falls short. See: Bircan, T., Ahmad Yar, Purkayastha, D., & S. Yilmaz. (2021). “Finding the gap Addressing the international migration data gaps”. Policy Brief HumMingBird Project. Retrieved from https://hummingbird-h2020.eu/images/publicationpdf/d2-3-short-eind.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Christiaensen, L., Gonzalez, A. S., & Robalino, D. A. (2019). Migration and jobs: Issues for the 21st century. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, (8867).* [↑](#footnote-ref-13)