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The Philippines has built an international reputation as a major origin country of migrant workers. The Philippines is active at the international level. It is among the first to have signed and ratified the ICRCW, is very active at the GFMD and among the few countries to have secured an IOM deputy-directorship. The Philippines is also the only Asian country to ratify ILO's convention on domestic workers (C189). It sets a minimum wage of USD 400 for Filipino overseas domestic workers, which applies to all destination countries.

Legal Framework

- A unit for the welfare of overseas workers was set up in 1977.
- Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act passed in 1995, amended in 2007 and 2010.
- Seven agencies on labor migration merged into the Department of Migrant Workers in late 2021.

Recruitment

- Government and licensed private agency deploy workers.
- Placement fee varied based on occupation and destination countries.
- 10 countries are currently [listed](#) as no-placement-fee country.

Pre-departure training

- Pre-departure training was introduced in 1983.
- Mandatory for all Filipino workers.
- Topics: code of conduct for workers, information on destination country, health & safety, financial literacy, work contract, and rights.

Exit controls

- All migrants must obtain an exit clearance to be presented at the immigration counter.
- Completion of pre-departure training and submission of a work contract required for the exit clearance.

Destination Country Protections

- 29 labour attachés across Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North-America and Oceania.
- Shelters and a special unit for migrant workers available in some embassies.
- Hotline available for overseas workers.

Bans on Migrant Worker Mobility

- At least 40 migration bans have been imposed since 1982.
- Banned workers range from domestic workers, au pairs, new hires, to all workers.
- The target country of bans has varied across all continents.

Philippines has one of the most comprehensive labour migration policy in the region, and even worldwide. Its policies have been adapted by many other origin countries and referred to by international organizations. Compared to all countries in the database, it has the highest number of migration bans, labor attaches, and bilateral labor agreements. The Philippines is also a pioneer of several key policy instruments for migrant workers, such as migration bans and pre-departure training (along with Pakistan and Thailand).

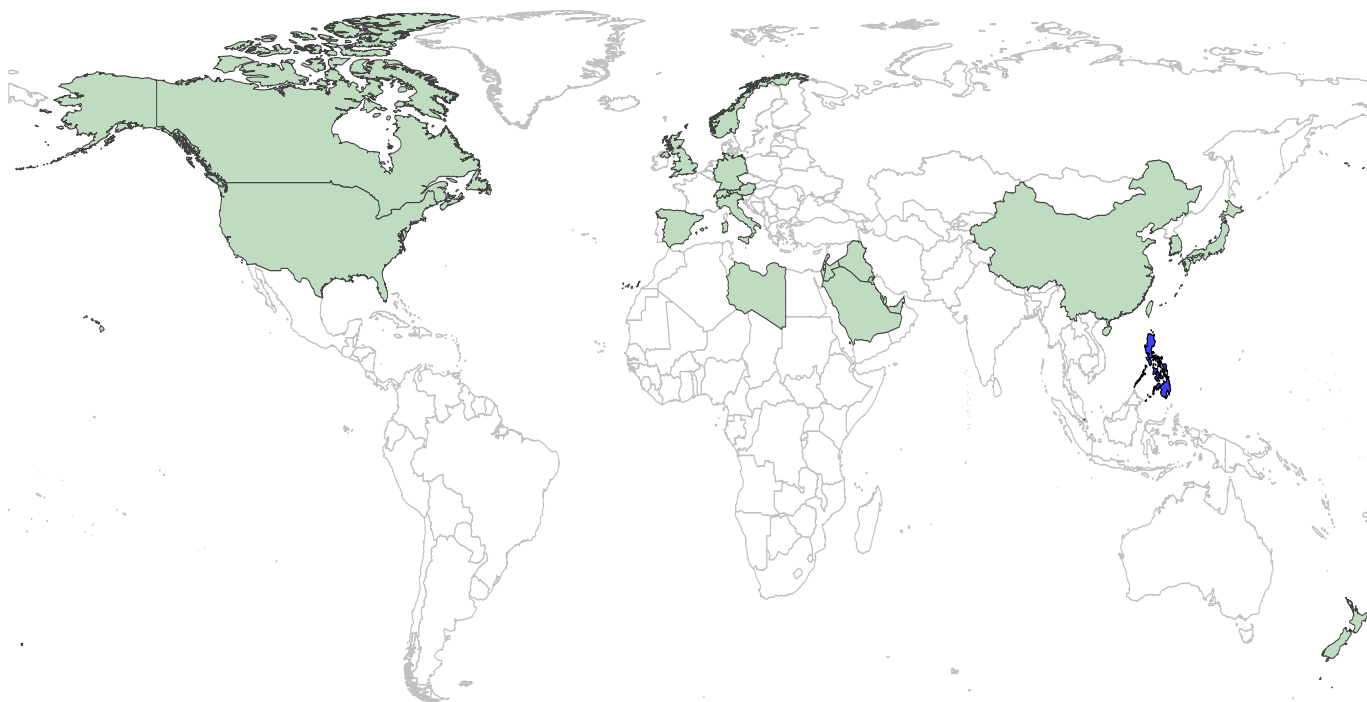
Philippines Bilateral Labour Agreements

Our database records a total of 63 Bilateral Labour Agreements or Memorandum of Understanding between the Philippines and 26 destination countries (alphabetical order):

Austria (2023), Bahrain (2007), Canada (2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015), China (2018), Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (1994, 2000), Germany (2013), Iraq (1982), Israel (2018), Italy (2015), Japan (2009, 2017, 2019), Jordan (1981, 1988, 2010, 2012, 2018), Kuwait (1997, 2012, 2018), Lebanon (2012), Libya (1979, 2006), New Zealand (2008, 2015), Norway (2001), Qatar (1981, 1997, 2008), Republic of Korea (2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2017), Saudi Arabia (2013, 2017), Singapore (2024), Spain (2006), Switzerland (2002), Taiwan (1991, 2001, 2003, 2011, 2015), UAE (2007, 2017, 2021), United Kingdom (1955, 2002), USA (1968).

The above list includes both valid and expired agreements.

Figure 1 Map of the Philippines (● blue) and destination countries with BLA (○ green)



The above information derived from the [RIGHTS policy database v6.0](#). For a more comprehensive overview of emigration policies in 50 origin countries in the database, see Ersanilli, E (2024) [Origin countries' policies on low-waged migrant workers. Results from the RIGHTS policy database](#).