

# SRI LANKA BUREAU OF FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT

## Corporate Plan 2023-2027

Approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on 23.02.2023



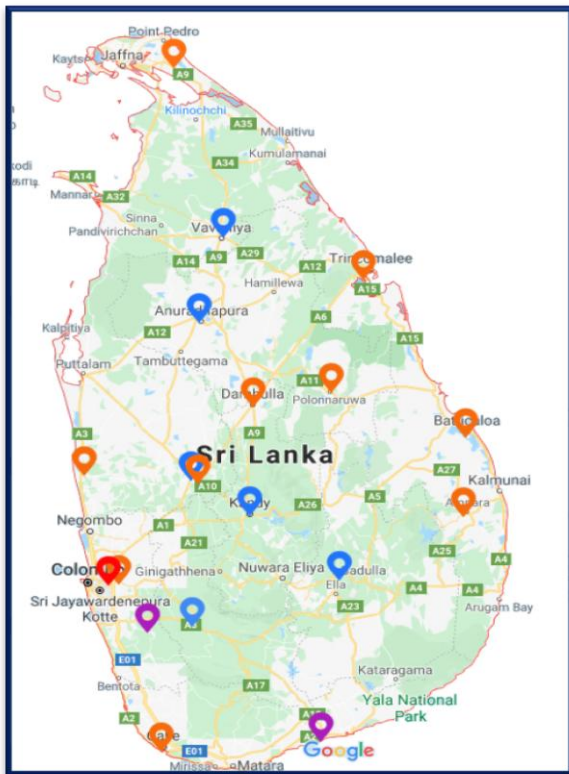


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# *The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment*



## **Divisions of the Head Office: 31 Divisions**

**Head Office** – No. 234, Denzil Kobbakaduwa Mw,  
Koswatta, Battaramulla

## **Migrant Resource Centers : 09**

Mathugama	Kurunegala
Thangalla	Kandy
Haliela	Vavuniyawa
Rathnapura	Anuradhapuraya
Ampara	

## **District Centers: 07**

Jaffna	Galla
Batticaloa	Polonnaruwa
Chillaw	Trincomalee
Dambulla	

## **Training Centers : 02**

Pannipitiya  
Kurunegala

The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) is the regulatory authority for the foreign employment sector in Sri Lanka. It has been established under the provisions of the Parliamentary Act No. 21 of 1985. This act was subsequently amended by the Act No.4 of 1994 and 56 of 2009. The SLBFE presently functions under the purview of the Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment and its affairs are administered by a Board of Directors headed by a Chairman.

The SLBFE has decentralized the most of its services through its branch network that consists of 09 Migrant Resource Centers (MRCs), 07 District Centers, 02 Airport Divisions (including 01 Welfare Assistance Centre) and 02 other Training Centers. In addition, the SLBFE operates 15 foreign branches (Employment Welfare Sections) under 15 Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions/Posts in 13 labour receiving countries with the utmost commitment to serve the Sri Lankan migrant employees.

Main operations of the SLBFE are interlinked through a web-based Information Technology (IT) System that connects all local and foreign Branch Offices including the Employment Welfare Sections of Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions abroad. The SLBFE's IT system and 24/7 Information Centre also facilitate its main stakeholders i.e. Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (LFEAs), Migrant Employees and their Family Members, Prospective Migrant Employees and other General Public to obtain various information and assistance from the SLBFE.



## Employment & Welfare Sections of Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions/Posts Abroad

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 01. JEDDAH    | 09. ISRAEL      |
| 02. RIYADH    | 10. JORDAN      |
| 03. KUWAIT    | 11. LEBANON     |
| 04. BAHRAIN   | 12. MALDIVES    |
| 05. QATAR     | 13. MALAYSIA    |
| 06. DUBAI     | 14. SINGAPORE   |
| 07. ABU DHABI | 15. SOUTH KOREA |
| 08. OMAN      |                 |

## Our Vision

***“Sri Lanka to be the best choice for competent human resources for overseas market”***

## Mission

***“Create efficient and equitable pathways for people to benefit from their skills in overseas employment markets securing interests of all stakeholders while contributing to economic growth”***

## Key Objectives

**1. Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment**

**2. Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of MWs and their family members**

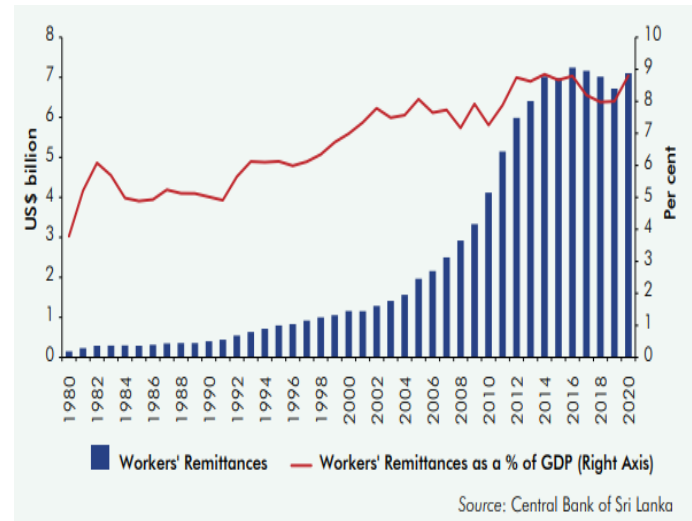
**3. Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies**

**4. Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development**

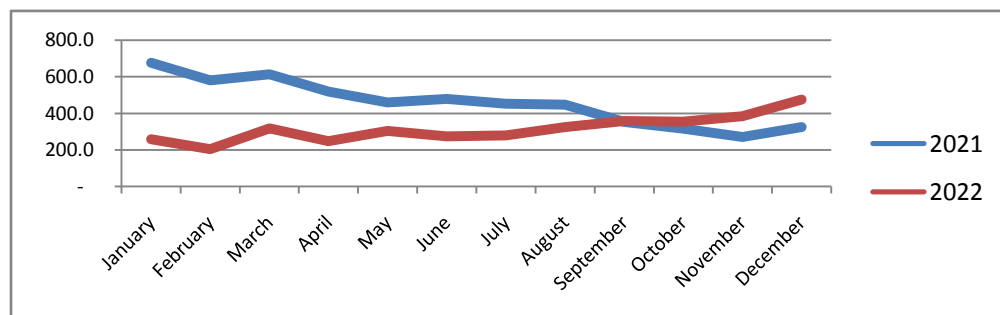
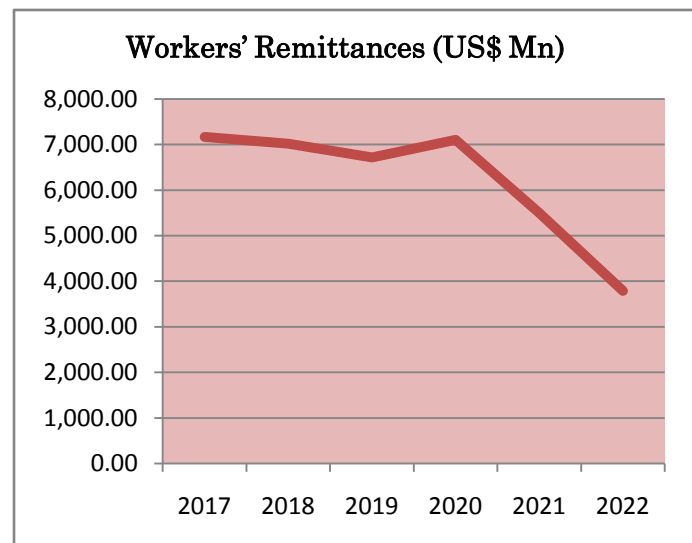
## Importance of Foreign Employment Sector in Sri Lanka

### 1. Workers' Remittances *(Source-Central Bank of Sri Lanka)*

- Migration for employment is a key sector of economy of Sri Lanka due to two main reasons
  - High contribution to the foreign exchange earnings
  - Relieving the pressure on unemployment
- The workers' remittances had increased to around 8% of the GDP during the period from 2001 to 2020. However, this ratio has decreased remarkably in the years 2021 (around 6%) and 2022, due to the COVID 19 pandemic and economic crisis situation in the country.
- Currently, approximately more than one million Sri Lankans are employed abroad.
- The majority is serving in the Middle Eastern region.



Year	Workers' Remittances (US\$ Mn)
2017	7,164.00
2018	7,015.00
2019	6,717.00
2020	7,104.00
2021	5,491.00
2022	3,789.5





## 2. Unemployment

- Sri Lanka's population - 22.181 million people
- Economically Active Population (labour force) - 8.553 million.
- No. of unemployed persons reported in 2021 -approximately 0.440 million (5.1% of the Labour Force)
- Unemployment Rate: Male - 3.7%  
Female - 7.9%.

Sources – 1. Mid-Year Population Estimates 2022 -Registrar General's Department  
2. Annual Report -2021 of Department of Census & Statistics

### Unemployment Rate by Age Group & Level of Education – 2021

Description	Both Sex	Male	Female
Total	5.1	3.7	7.9
By age:			
15 – 24	26.5	21.3	36.2
25– 29	11.4	7.5	18.3
30 – 39	3.8	2.2	6.5
Over 40	1.0	0.6	1.6
By level of education:			
Grade 5 & Below	0.6	0.5	0.7
Grade 6-10	3.4	2.7	5.2
GCE O/L	7.1	5.8	10.2
GCE A/L & above	9.1	6.2	12.2

Source- Department of Census & Statistics

- More youths of the age range of 15 – 29 years are unemployed while majority of them are females.
- Unemployment rates among the active labour force from 2019 ~ 2021 were 4.8, 5.5 and 5.1 respectively.
- The **higher rate of unemployment within the youth population is an opportunity for foreign employment** industry to prepare them for jobs in skilled sectors which are in high demand.
- In mid and long term, this youth population also could serve the motherland upon their return by means of using their higher levels of skills and capabilities achieved through foreign employment.

## 2022 in Brief

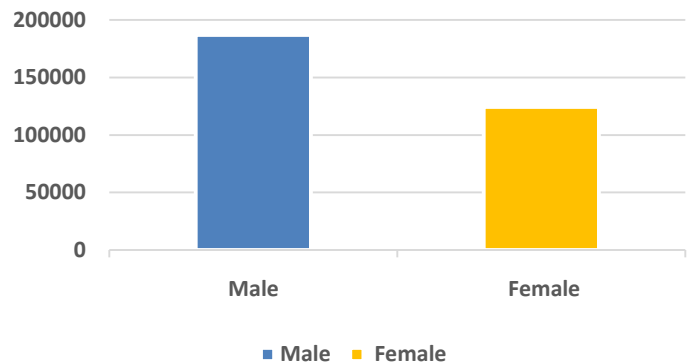
### Registrations for Foreign Employment

**311,161**

Male: 186,981

Female: 124,180

### Registrations for Foreign Employment

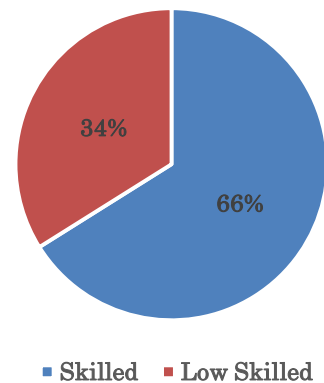


### Total Registrations (Manpower Levels)

Skilled: 205,638

Low Skilled: 105,523

### Total Registrations



### Remittances (Jan – Dec 2022)

US \$ Mn. 3,789.5

LKR (billion) 1,252.5

**Major Countries of Destination**

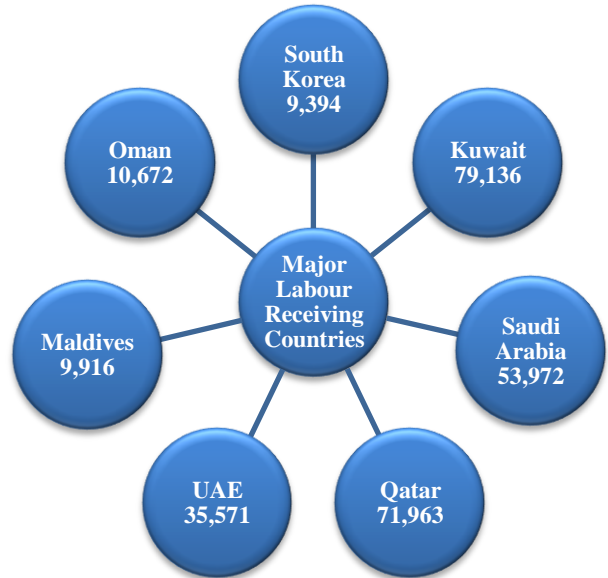
Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,  
UAE, Oman, South Korea,  
Maldives

**Revenue**

Rs. Mn. 8,151.68

**Expenditure**

Rs. Mn. 3,249.80

**Major Countries of  
Destination**

## Our Recruitment Target

### Target 1

**Registration of Migrant Workers with SLBFE**  
**Target through Efforts by SLBFE and LFEAs for the**  
**Period from 2023 to 2027**



### Target 2

**Registration of Migrant Workers with SLBFE**  
**Target through Collaborative efforts by all relevant Stakeholders (Ministry of Education &**  
**Vocational Training Institutes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & SL Diplomatic Missions/Posts**  
**abroad, banks etc.) for the period from 2023 to 2027**



The impact of COVID pandemic situation of the world and prevailing economic recession in the country created lot of push and pull factors in the industry of Foreign Employment locally and overseas in favor of Sri Lankan labour in the year 2022 resulting 311,161 exceeding the expected target of 300,000.

The global pandemic situation paved the way for many Sri Lankans of professional and skilled sectors to penetrate a several niche markets in the trade.

However, those favorable conditions cannot be predicted in the year 2023 and the effort of securing overseas employment opportunities for Sri Lankans should be synergized, and integrated institutional mechanisms of the country in the area of vocational training through appropriate strategies and short term, medium term and long term plans are very much essential in this endeavor.

Besides, achieving the above mentioned **Target1** and **Target 2** will be strictly subject to receiving due cooperation required from other stakeholders/influencing authorities and many other external factors as mentioned below.

- a) Due cooperation and understanding on market dynamics, timely response required from;
  - Ministry of Finance (General Treasury, Department of Public Enterprises, Department of Management Services etc.)
  - Department of Immigration & Emigration (mainly on issuing passports)
  - Department of Police (mainly on issuing police clearance reports)
  - DS offices/GNs
  - Department of Customs
  - Airport & Aviation Services Limited (AASL)
  - Department of motor traffic (ability to issue driving licences without delay)
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc.
- b) Other external factors;
  - Availability of flights and availability/speed of visa officers in embassies of labour receiving countries for issuing outbound visa to migrant workers.
  - Visa policy of other (potential) countries to Sri Lankans
  - Pandemics, war or other unforeseen conditions that may crucially affect the operation of SLBFE or/and potential MWs and/or agencies.
  - Relationships with labour receiving countries.
  - International non-government organizations and civil society organizations.

If other stakeholders cooperate with the SLBFE, and act to reasonably support according to the requirements of overseas markets, and local conditions, the SLBFE will be in a position of achieving the ambitious target indicated as **Target 2**.

Shown below is a list of dependencies of the SLBFE on its stakeholders that will crucially effect on achieving its planned recruitment target (**Target 2**) in this Corporate Plan 2023-2027.

Seri. No.	Stakeholder	Dependency
1	Department of Immigration & Emigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely availability of passports without any major delay in issuing passports.</li> </ul>
2	Department of Motor Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely issuance of Driving Licenses without any major delay in issuing DLs.</li> </ul>
3	Department of Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely issuance of police clearance reports for MWs. (This task should be done at least within 7 working days, therefore, necessary measures to be implemented by the Department of Police).</li> </ul>
4	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely issuance of certificates by the MFA. This is a major factor for foreign employment, especially for professionals.</li> </ul>
5	Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of (at least) some specific cadre provisions for the SLBFE with salary scale in par with the market demand for such positions (e.g. IT expertise).</li> <li>If there are exceptions required, special approvals will be required based on specific situations upon restrictions imposed in common circulars to the public institutions with regard to the expenditure, promotional work and infrastructure development. Timely response and cooperation is a dependency.</li> </ul>
6	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training Institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process of issuance of NVQ certificates under RPL by vocational training institutes is required to improve with a pre-announced calendar in order to minimize the delays.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>The following Up skilling and diversification of Labour market initiatives would also be helpful;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft skills and language skills of those who undergo vocational training courses at vocational training institutes should be improved aiming at overseas demand.</li> <li>Measures to be implemented by the Ministry of Education to upgrade the English language proficiency of the school students in Sri Lanka.</li> </ul>
7	District Secretariats/ Grama Niladhari Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Necessary arrangements should be made to send the confirmation on the Family Care Plans by the Development Officers within 1 or 2 days from the date of request.</li> </ul>

## Our Financial Targets

### Financial Forecast based on the Recruitment Target 1

Financial Forecast based on the Recruitment Target 1 (Summary)						
Seri. No.	Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1	Registration of MWs (total)	260,000	255,000	260,000	265,000	250,000
2	Revenue -total (Rs. Mn) (Revenue received from training prgs. is not included here)	10,389.47	8,300.13	10,909.03	10,025.31	10,665.53
3	Expenditure -total (Rs. Mn)	5,340.18	5,874.20	6,461.62	7,107.78	7,818.56
4	Surplus/profit -total (Rs. Mn -Before Tax)	5,049.29	2,425.93	4,447.41	2,917.53	2,846.97

Financial Forecast based on the Recruitment Target 1 (Detailed)						
Seri. No.	Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1	No. of Registrations of MWs	260,000	255,000	260,000	265,000	250,000
1.1	On self-basis	91,000	89,250	91,000	92,750	87,500
1.2	Trough LFEAs	169,000	165,750	169,000	172,250	162,500
2	Revenue from registrations - total (Rs. Mn)	2,175.855	2,154.417	2,206.067	2,258.496	2,167.026
3	CESS revenue (Rs. Mn.)	695.058	681.692	695.058	708.427	668.325
4	Revenue from licensing of recruitment agencies (Rs. Mn.)	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00
5	Revenue from Missions (Rs. Mn.)	1,918.041	2,013.943	2,114.640	2,220.373	2,331.391
6	Other Revenue -Operating services (Rs. Mn.)	84.59	71.13	68.02	60.22	47.70
7	Finance Income (Rs. Mn.)	5,440.927	3,303.941	5,750.241	4,702.799	5,376.095

## Financial Forecast based on the Recruitment Target 2

Financial Forecast based on the Recruitment Target 2 (Summary)						
Seri. No.	Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1	Registration of MWs (total)	330,000	340,000	300,000	280,000	260,000
2	<b>Revenue -total (Rs. Mn)</b> (Revenue received from training prgs. is not included here)	11,083.06	9,613.76	11,518.83	10,376.16	11,007.22
3	Expenditure -total (Rs. Mn)	5,371.16	5,908.28	6,499.11	7,149.02	7,863.92
4	Surplus/profit -total (Rs. Mn - Before Tax)	5,711.89	3,705.48	5,019.72	3,227.14	3,143.30

Financial Forecast based on the Recruitment Target 2 (Detailed)						
Seri. No.	Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1	No. of Registration of MWs	330,000	340,000	300,000	280,000	260,000
1.1	On self-basis	115,500	119,000	105,000	98,000	91,000
1.2	Trough LFEAs	214,500	221,000	195,000	182,000	169,000
2	Revenue from registrations -total (Rs. Mn)	2,682.305	2,769.392	2,495.467	2,367.021	2,239.376
3	CESS revenue (Rs. Mn.)	882.189	908.922	801.990	748.526	695.058
4	Revenue from licensing of recruitment agencies (Rs. Mn.)	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00
5	Revenue from Missions (Rs. Mn.)	1,918.041	2,013.943	2,114.640	2,220.373	2,331.391
6	Other Revenue -Operating services (Rs. Mn.)	84.593	71.134	68.020	60.218	47.696
7	Finance Income (Rs. Mn.)	5,440.927	3,775.367	5,963.711	4,905.019	5,618.697



## Main Targets to be Achieved & Expected Results

### Objective 01: Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment

#### Why governance of labor migration matters?

Malpractices and irregularities performed by various parties in the foreign employment industry lead to exploitative and abusive situations for migrant workers. The SLBFE is committed to protecting migrant workers within a secure and equitable labour migration process. Therefore, the SLBFE recognizes governance of labour migration and minimizing the malpractices and irregularities within the local and international context is of paramount importance to promote decent and productive foreign employment of Sri Lankans.

Well-governed outward labour migration will contribute to sustainable development in Sri Lanka by maximizing the benefits of migration for employment and minimizing the risks and social costs for migrant workers and their families. Effective governance of labour migration ensures migration in conditions of dignity, security and equity for Sri Lankan nationals seeking employment abroad.

The SLBFE has a wide scope and a mandate in respect of governance of labour migration that encompasses strong **legislative, regulatory and institutional frameworks** that reflect international standards, and ensure effective labour migration governance.

**Table 1: Malpractices and irregularities reported to the SLBFE**

Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
SLBFE received complaints from the general public against non-licensed persons who engaged in illegal recruitment activities and licensed agencies that violated the law	No. of complaints received				
	2,451	2,539	1,143	552	1,337

**Table 2: Legal Action taken by the SLBFE against Illegal Recruitment**

Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
SLBFE conducted raids on illegal recruitment activities	No. of successful raids conducted				
	155	252	176	06	25
SLBFE filed court cases against non-licensed persons who engaged in the business of a foreign employment agency and licensed foreign employment agencies that violated the law	No. of court cases filed				
	213	461	127	246	137

## How we govern the labour migration process?

The SLBFE implements various activities under the provisions of SLBFE Act to govern the foreign employment industry in Sri Lanka i.e. issuance of licenses to carry out business of foreign employment agency, renewal of licenses, cancellation of licenses, conducting inquiries on complaints received from general public against LFEAs or non-licensed parties, conducting raids on illegal recruitment activities, taking legal actions against LFEAs and non-licensed parties who are engaged in illegal recruitment activities.

However, the all possible efforts are taken by the SLBFE to further streamlining the activities pertaining to the governance of foreign employment industry.

Accordingly, our activities are implemented under the below mentioned strategies.

### Strategies

- Strategy 1:** Strengthen the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for governance of labour migration.
- Strategy 2:** Promote policy linkages, institutional coherence and multi-sectoral coordination.
- Strategy 3:** Develop professionalism & capacities of key stakeholders of foreign employment industry to support an effective labour migration sector.
- Strategy 4:** Strengthen structures and systems to improve service delivery by SLBFE.

### Our Targets

1. Amend the SLBFE Act in 2023 to further strengthen the governance and regulation of the Foreign Employment Industry.
2. Conduct awareness programmes continuously through mass media and social media in order to raise awareness of general public on the regulatory measures and services of the SLBFE, during the period from 2023 to 2027.
3. Conduct awareness programmes continuously through mass media and social media in order to raise awareness of general public and government officials to prevent human trafficking, during the period from 2023 to 2027.
4. Implement a Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS) in 2023 to capture the customer feedback on services of the SLBFE with a view to improve service quality.
5. Install touch screens at Airport, SLBFE Head Office and Branch Offices in 2023 to capture customer feedback in order to assess and improve service quality.

6. Implement digital services in 2023 to facilitate the LFEAs to obtain new licenses, renewal of licenses and job order approvals.
7. Implement a digital service in 2023 to facilitate the Migrant Workers to obtain registration (self) for foreign employment.
8. Implement a grading scheme for LFEAs and Foreign Agents to evaluate and reward their performance, once in every two years, commencing from 2023.
9. Decentralize SLBFE's special investigation services to the provincial level within the timeline of 2023-2027 in order to accelerate curbing illegal activities pertaining to foreign employment.
10. Conduct studies on the existing labour laws of 15 destination countries and update relevant documents and processes within the timeline of 2023-2024.
11. Provide legal assistance/advice to aspirant MWs, MWs and their family members through provincial offices of the SLBFE, commencing from 2023.
12. Reimburse the cost of International Quality Assurance Certification incurred by LFEAs, commencing from 2023.
13. Introduce a Human Resource Development plan for the next 5 years from 2023 to facilitate achieving objectives of the SLBFE.
14. Build SLBFE owned regional office premises in Kurunegala (Migrant Resource Center), Amapara (Migrant Resource Centre), Kandy (Migrant Resource Center), Anuradhapura (Migrant Resource Center) and in Homagama within the timeline of 2023-2027.
15. Upgrade standards of issuance of licences with effect from 2023.
16. Introduce a performance evaluation system for the employees of the SLBFE in 2023.
17. Expand of Head Office building within the 2023 – 2027 timeline with a view to enhancing the service delivery.
18. Revamp Foreign Employment Management System (FEMS) in 2023 to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the SLBFE's operations.
19. Implement an online payment gateway in 2023.
20. Implement a digitalized Human Resources Management System for SLBFE in 2023.
21. Implement a Document Management System at the SLBFE by 2024 in order to create a paperless environment.

## Expected Results

1. Well -regulated recruitment channels for foreign employment
2. Well-managed information system on labour migration available for relevant stakeholders
3. Minimized malpractices of the foreign employment industry
4. MWs benefitted with reliable foreign employment opportunities
5. Rights of migrant workers are protected
6. Efficient and customer friendly recruitment processes in place

## Objective 02: Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families

### Why migrant workers and their families need care?

Migration for employment is a complex phenomenon that presents challenges in ensuring protection of rights of migrant workers during their stay in destination countries. These challenges are mostly related to those who go for semi-skilled or low-skilled employment, especially the female domestic workers. The most of the reported cases such as exploitation, non-payment or under-payment of salaries, working for longer hours, physical abuse, etc. has been reported mostly in relation to the low skilled categories.

According to the recent statistics of the SLBFE, the majority of the complaints that were received from or on behalf of migrant employees were related to breach of terms and conditions of employment contract by the employer.

Nature of Complaints Received 2018-2022						
Nature of Complaints		Year				
		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Non receipt of wages	473	611	462	252	309
2	Sickness	605	816	1046	643	736
3	Not sent back after completion of contract period	418	406	560	1272	434
4	Harassment	401	544	342	404	466
5	Lack of communication	299	429	365	298	347
6	Being stranded without employment by employer	103	36	117	95	317
7	Overworked	44	59	72	40	112
8	Premature termination	31	48	22	13	37
9	Other forms of breach of employment contract	894	1,090	802	312	1,029
10	No information/employee run Away	80	132	83	54	35
11	Problem at employee's home (in Sri Lanka)	37	225	189	158	170
12	Others	155	518	1,070	644	508
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,540</b>	<b>4,914</b>	<b>5,130</b>	<b>4,185</b>	<b>4,500</b>

Source - SLBFE database

of Foreign Employment and Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions/Posts abroad, especially in the Middle East, are actively involved in many programmes and activities with the aim of assuring the protection and welfare of the migrant workers and their family members, still there are wide ranging issues that need to be addressed.

In addition to the issues faced by the migrant workers at the destination countries, it is noteworthy that social problems associated with left behind families are also in existence. Lack of collective decision-making within the family at the pre-departure stage and absence of family care and development plans have caused some of these problems.

The development benefits of labour migration depend on the degree to which the migrant workers are protected and empowered by the countries of origin and destination through collaborative approach during the entire migration cycle.

Although the Sri Lanka Bureau

## How we assure the protection and well-being of migrant workers & their family members?

As mentioned under Objective -01, the SLBFE implements the provisions of the SLBFE Act, to ensure the protection of rights of MWs at the pre-departure stage i.e. job order approval process, vacancy advertisement approval process, compulsory registration of MWs, etc.

Further, the SLBFE implements an IT based complaint management system to ensure prompt resolving of complaints and grievances of MWs. In addition to the traditional methods of submission of complaints (by visiting the SLBFE, over the phone, via email, fax etc.) the SLBFE has introduced a web portal and a mobile application to facilitate the MWs to lodge the complaints and also to view messages communicated to the complainants by the SLBFE.

Taking into consideration the responsibility to assure the well-being of MWs and their family members, currently the SLBFE implements activities such as awarding of scholarships to the children of MWs who passed grade 5 examination, G.C.E. O/L examination or enter to a state university to study a bachelor degree programme, awarding of school equipment for the children of MWs' families that face economic hardships, providing special assistance for the needy MWs under the Workers Welfare Fund (WWF).

However, the SLBFE wishes to further expand the welfare facilities provided to the MWs and their family members within the timeline of 2023-2027.

Our activities are implemented based on the below-mentioned strategies.

### Strategies

- Strategy 1:** Strengthen and promote well-planned, coordinated, efficient and gender responsive service delivery for the protection of Migrant Workers and their Family Members.
- Strategy 2:** Implement Welfare programmes/ services and social security system for migrant workers, in-country and in collaboration with host country governments and employers.
- Strategy 3:** Educate and empower Migrant Workers and build alliances to influence policy and programmes on migration.

### Our Targets

1. Establish 04 Employment & Welfare Sections in Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions/Posts established in Japan, Romania, Seychelles and Cyprus in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 respectively, considering the employment opportunities available and Sri Lankan migrant population residing in the respective countries.

2. Further strengthen the Employment & Welfare Sections of Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions/Posts in labour receiving countries by deploying 45 officers in 2023 and another 115 officers in 2025.
3. Implement a non-financial reward system from 2023 to appreciate the LFEAs that efficiently resolve the complaints of MWs.
4. Implement an IT system in 2023 to maintain timely updated profiles of MWs and families to facilitate efficient and effective decision making and policy formulation by the SLBFE.
5. Provide financial assistance to the spouses of the in-service MWs to start up/develop self-employment projects, commencing from 2023 with the view to uplift the socio-economic status of MW families.
6. Provide insurance coverage for all MWs (including their dependents) who obtain the registration of the SLBFE in each year of the period of 2023-2027, without additional cost to MWs.
7. Implement DS level programmes to raise awareness of prospective MWs under slogan “Win life through foreign employment” with the collaboration of banks and NGOs, commencing from 2023.
8. Conduct an awareness campaign through mass media and social media under 3 phases during the year 2023, to educate the potential MWs to prevent human trafficking and smuggling and also to promote safe migration.
9. Implement family development plans for MWs with the assistance of development partners (field level government officers, Banks & SME institutes) for their economic development, covering 5,000, 6,000, 7,000, 8,000, and 9,000 MWs in 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027, respectively.
10. Implement a CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programme to improve facilities of 10 schools in rural areas where at least 10 children of MWs’ are studying, in each year from 2023 to 2027.
11. Conduct regional level trade fairs for migrant workers to sell their self-employment products, once in each quarter in each year from 2023 to 2027.

## Expected Results

1. Migrant workers are well-served through Employment & Welfare Sections of SL Diplomatic Missions/ Posts abroad.
2. Socio-economic well-being of migrant workers and their family members are uplifted.
3. Rights of migrant workers are protected through grievance resolving mechanisms.

## Objective 03: Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in global economies

### Why promotion of skilled labour migration is in vital importance?

Foreign employment has played a significant role in reducing the rate of unemployment in the country. As a country, Sri Lanka has been unable to meet the demand of foreign countries to a considerable level due to lack of competence and skills in local labour market. For certain job categories, existing labour force is not adequate to meet even the need of local labour market.

The data pertaining to registration of Sri Lankans with the SLBFE for foreign employment reveals that a **considerable number of Sri Lankans leave for low-skilled employment.**

#### Registrations for Foreign Employment – By Manpower Level 2018 – 2022

Manpower Level	2018	%	2019	%	2020	%	2021	%	2022	%
Skilled	159,530	76	151,895	75	39,714	74	90,991	74	205,638	66
Low-skilled	51,704	24	51,191	25	13,988	26	31,874	26	105,523	34
Total	211,234	100	203,086	100	53,702	100	122,865	100	311,161	100

Source - SLBFE data base

It is widely discussed that low skilled workers are highly vulnerable for exploitation and subject to violation of human rights, labour rights, harassments and various abuses at workplaces than the skilled workers.

In these contexts, the SLBFE recognizes the dire need of providing training and orientation to foreign job seekers in order to create a skillful workforce to gain the benefits of decent employment.

Accordingly, entering into MoUs or agreements with public and private sector vocational training providers is a timely necessity. Identification of high demand occupations in skilled sectors in labour receiving countries is also essential to prepare a foreign employment oriented skill pool.

Besides, focus has to be drawn towards new markets, as acquisition of reasonable market share in foreign labour market by Sri Lankans is the most beneficial way of attracting foreign remittances to overcome current adverse economic situation of the country. Therefore, promoting foreign employment opportunities for Sri Lankans, in skilled and semi-skilled sectors, especially in the sectors such as health care, hospitality, construction etc., to meet the demand in competitive labour markets is a vital importance.



## How we plan to develop skills of migrant workers and to increase the global market share in skilled and semi-skilled sectors

The SLBFE conducts pre-departure orientation courses for the prospective MWs. In addition, NVQ Level III training courses are conducted to empower the domestic sector female workers. We also encourage the job aspirant migrant workers to obtain required vocational qualifications through established coordination mechanisms with a view to increase the skilled worker pool.

The SLBFE conducts local job promotional programmes to raise awareness among the general public/foreign job seekers on safe migration and proper channels of foreign employment with the aim of catering the current and future demand received from foreign countries.

Further, the SLBFE gains market intelligence through various channels and conducts market promotional activities overseas to explore new foreign job markets for Sri Lankans while expanding the existing markets in skilled and semi-skilled sectors.

Our activities are implemented based on the below-mentioned strategies.

### Strategies

- Strategy 1:** Strengthen sectoral coordination for skills development to benefit from global labour market demand.
- Strategy 2:** Align national vocational qualification framework with regional and international standards.
- Strategy 3:** Implement promotional programmes to secure diversified employment opportunities in the global labour markets.

### Our Targets

1. Reimburse the cost of vocational training of 250 MWs (subject to a maximum of Rs.100,000) in 2023 to encourage the youth to obtain vocational qualifications and leave foreign employment.
2. Reimburse the cost of Japanese language training of 250 MWs (subject to a maximum of Rs.100,000) in 2023 to encourage youth to obtain language proficiency aiming at gainful employment in Japan from 2023.
3. Implement a mechanism with the support of IOM (Integrated Guidance and Referral System – IGRS) to prepare Government servants for foreign employment from 2023.
4. Conduct job promotional road shows/ job fairs in Sri Lanka with the participation of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (LFEAs), recruitment agents in the destination countries and prospective job seekers for selected employment sectors such

as health care, industrial, construction & logistic management, hospitality and food industry where a higher foreign demand is available, commencing from 2023.

5. Reimburse cost of air tickets of business promotional visits of LFEAs who meet given targets, commencing from 2023.
6. Enter into 5MoUs with labour receiving countries within the period of 2023-2027 with a view to increasing market share within two years from the year of signing the MoU.
7. Conduct one Market Intelligence Survey in each year from 2023 to 2027 to identify gainful foreign employment opportunities.
8. Explore new destinations/ employment sectors & opportunities in the global labour market with the collaboration of the Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions, LFEAs, overseas Sri Lankans & other channels
9. Implement image building programmes (locally) to suppress the negative narratives on foreign employment and also to promote gainful foreign employment

### Expected Results

1. Diversified and gainful foreign employment opportunities for Sri Lankan workers are increased.
2. New employers and markets with increased job opportunities are secured.

## Objective 04: Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development

### How labour migration effects Sri Lanka's economy?

The worker remittances is a significant contribution to strengthen the much required foreign currency reserve of the country while it is continuing to be an important and essential factor to reduce unemployment which has been described previously in this Corporate Plan. In 2018 migrant remittances accounted for 8% of Sri Lanka's GDP.

Worker Remittances Against Total Exports (2015 – 2022)								
Year	Workers' Remittances (Rs. Mn)	Total Exports Income (Rs. Mn.)					Total Exports (Rs. Mn)	Workers' Remittances against Total Exports (%)
		Tea	Rubber	Coconut	Garment	Other Exports		
2015	948,957	182,054	3,548	47,745	618,803	573,641	1,425,791	66.56
2016	1,054,489	184,778	4,758	53,283	669,796	588,151	1,500,766	70.26
2017	1,091,972	233,338	5,918	53,036	767,253	672,894	1,732,439	63.03
2018	1,138,124	210,668	4,747	46,166	725,017	760,825	1,747,423	65.13
2019	1,200,766	240,637	4,321	58,852	930,805	900,181	2,134,796	56.24
2020	1,317,007	230,170	5,579	63,974	728,005	831,199	1,858,927	71.00
2021	1,087,188	263,353	8,377	84,674	984,941	1,145,598	2,486,943	43.70
2022*	1,252,504	411,092	12,742	128,509	1,770,608	1,911,962	4,234,913	29.60

Source : Central Bank of Sri Lanka

When compared, the value of annual workers' remittances with the value of the total annual export earnings, it is noteworthy that workers' remittances has recorded a higher contribution to the foreign exchange earnings of the country.

For example, as per the above table, in each year from 2015 to 2020, contribution of workers' remittances had recorded the highest percentage of foreign exchange as a single source against the total exports. In 2020, it had reached the highest ratio which is equivalent to 71% of total export earnings. However, this ratio had decreased in 2021 and 2022 due to the effect of COVID 19 pandemic and the economic crisis situation of the country.

“Development” is not limited to “economic growth”. Especially in relation to migration, it is important to include non-economic, less measurable factors such as increased recognition and respect for human rights and wellbeing, integration and social cohesion, stability, democracy, security, the environment, future prospects, etc. The purpose of development is a rise in the level and quality of life of the population, and the creation or expansion of local regional income and employment opportunities, without damaging the resources of the environment.

Migrant workers are a resource that contributes to the development of both sending and receiving countries.

## How we enhance the benefit of migration?

Labour migration makes multifaceted contribution to the society by way of creating new income sources to the household and economies of grassroots level while transferring technologies of various sectors to the local industries. The labour migration is not only an effective means of poverty alleviation of the country but also it addresses the issue of unemployment.

Accordingly, labour migration from Sri Lanka;

1. Creates employment opportunities to the Sri Lankans outside the country to reduce the burden of unemployment.
2. Encourages migrant returnees towards small and medium scale entrepreneurship by means of being a source of financial and technical assistance.
3. Introduces new technology and skills to the local industries and services through migrant returnees who enter the local labour market after gaining knowledge on advanced technology and skills from overseas experience.
4. Encourages habits of saving and introduces appropriate fund management tools for MWs and their family members.
5. Helps establish MW community networks, cooperative societies, associations etc.

## Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Promote migrant worker remittances through legal channels, savings & productive investment in collaboration with relevant authorities/ institutions.

**Strategy 2:** Promote migrant worker communities as development partners of the country.

**Strategy 3:** Multi-sectoral facilitation for reintegration of migrant returnees and promote development of human and social capital.

## Our Targets

1. Grant financial assistance to 500 migrant workers/family members of migrant workers in each year from 2023 to 2027, to purchase tools, equipment or machinery to start up or develop self-employment projects.

2. Establish community networks e.g. cooperative societies in each district/division from 2023 to 2027 to strengthen the reintegration activities.
3. Establish and maintain linkages with other stakeholders to support reintegration and socio-economic development, commencing from 2023.

## Expected Results

1. Increased gainful investments/ savings by MWs
2. Increased contribution of returned MWs' knowledge, experience, skills, technical competencies and other capabilities for national development.
3. Increased contribution of MWs to the development strategies of Sri Lanka
4. Uplifted image of the migrant community within the society

## Performance Monitoring

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The Corporate Plan 2023-2027 will be implemented through Annual Action Plans that include detailed actions and, targets, performance measurement indicators, their baselines and forecasted cost of undertaking the respective activities.

The implementation of the planned activities will be monitored through quarterly review meetings that would be conducted with the participation of senior management and operational level managers. The performance reports will be prepared by including the feedback of the progress review meetings and will be shared with the relevant authorities such as the line Ministry, the Department of Public Enterprises and the Auditor General's Department.