

## MiWORC and its impact

MiWORC seeks to use research findings to inform policy-making and strengthen capacity amongst various actors.

### Policy-Informing

MiWORC aims to provide evidence-based policy material to inform the EU-SA Dialogue Facility and a range of labour migration and related policy development processes in South Africa and the region. Through policy briefs, research reports, presentations to stakeholders and policy dialogue events, MiWORC enables Government, business, and organised labour to make use of empirical evidence in developing informed policy agendas.

### Capacity Building

The strengthening of critical research, monitoring & evaluation, and policy development skills among Government, Labour, and NGO staff is one of the core objectives of MiWORC. More specifically, the project targets researchers, policy developers, and middle to senior managers within Government and organised labour.

## Research Uptake

MiWORC has an ambitious research uptake plan which is organised around **three main areas**: inclusive research conceptualisation and design; targeted communication through constant information flow; and user-friendly outputs.

Regular meetings are held throughout the duration of the programme to inform and engage all stakeholders. This ensures that MiWORC outputs have a direct policy relevance.

In addition to its online presence [www.miworc.org.za](http://www.miworc.org.za), MiWORC's quarterly newsletter provides regular updates on research developments, events, and outputs to over 800 stakeholders, across South Africa and the region.

Each of MiWORC's work packages has a publication and dissemination plan specific to the needs of its partners and associates. This includes the translation of research findings into policy-friendly documents (briefs, fact sheets, and media releases) as well as specific presentations and workshops on demand.



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Project funded by the European Union EU-South Africa Dialogue Facility EuropeAid/132200/LACT/ZA.  
Coordinated by the African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand

# Migrating for Work Research Consortium



## Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC)

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## Overview

Labour migration to South Africa is both a historical and a contemporary phenomenon. While the country's wealth was built on the migrant labour system, current labour migration has profoundly changed. Migrants' origin, conditions, and sectors of employment, and status in South Africa have rapidly transformed since 1990 but these changes and their impact on the South African labour market have been poorly understood.

With the constant narrowing of legal channels of access, vast numbers of foreign workers are likely to be in precarious conditions of irregularity, underemployment, and exploitation. Our understanding of how the more highly-skilled migrants find their way into the South African labour market remains limited. Unless existing statistical data is explored and improved, and accurate empirical evidence produced, policy-making in South Africa and the region is unlikely to make any strong impact on the reality of millions of South African and foreign workers.

## The Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MIWORC)

Building on over a decade of research experience in migration studies, the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) at Wits University has embarked on a partnership with a range of academic (GovINN, UP; UNU-CRIS; UNESCO Chair on Free Movement), government (Department of Labour; South African Local Government Association; Statistics South Africa), and international (ILO; IOM) partners. This partnership is expressed through the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC).

MiWORC is based on a matching fund principle. The European Union, in the framework of the EU-South Africa Dialogue Facility (EuropeAid/132200/L/ACT/ZA), funds 50 per cent of the consortium. Beyond an ambitious scholarly agenda, one of MiWORC's objectives is to avail empirically based evidence to the EU- SA Dialogue facility, a bilateral on-going strategic partnership between the European Union and South Africa, as well as to a range of key stakeholders in government, organised labour, business, and the NGO sector.

### Partners

- African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS), University of the Witwatersrand
- Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation (GovINN), University of Pretoria
- United Nations University – Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS)
- Unesco Chair for Mobility, Free Movement and Regional Integration
- Migrating Out of Poverty Research Consortium, University of Sussex (MOoP)
- South African Department of Labour (DoL)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)

### Associates

- South African Local Government Association (SALGA)
- Statistics South Africa (Stats SA)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

## MiWORC's Research Design

MiWORC's originality is in working at the intersection of migration studies, international relations, sociology of work and political economy. In order to document and analyse the contemporary role played by regional foreign labour in the South African economy, the MiWORC project has been organised into the following four Work Packages (WP):

### WP1: Policy

WP1 provides an overview of migration and labour policies in Southern Africa through a comparative analysis of a sub-set of Southern African countries (Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho). The study aims to identify replicable best practices within the region, and gauge the extent to which lessons learnt in other regional contexts (including the EU) are taken into account in policy formulation processes.

### WP2: Data

Existing national statistical instruments omit any description and account of foreigners' participation within the South African economy. By and large, data is inadequate and limited. This work package aims to improve the **quality of available statistics** on foreign labour in South Africa, and to allow

comparison to domestic labour participation at a national and local level. The WP begins with a critical review of the scope and relevance of existing statistical data sets in South Africa and provides recommendations on the technical and institutional aspects of a longer-term improvement strategy, with options that can be implemented, such as a pilot survey. WP2 is guided by an advisory committee comprised of the DoL, Stats SA, SALGA, ILO, IOM, and ACMS.

### WP3: Sectors

WP3 explores the impact of low and high skilled migration in key sectors of the South African economy: Construction; Mining; Commercial farming; Hospitality; Domestic work; and Public Health care. It seeks to understand why and how the South African economy is structurally dependent on low-skilled foreign labour by examining existing legal frameworks, recruitment strategies, conditions of employment, and mobilisation.

The study on highly skilled labour seeks to understand the link between skilled migration and South Africa's economic development, with a particular emphasis on skills issues. Specific questions relating to this study include whether recruitment of highly skilled migrants is informed by labour market needs or governed by other driving forces; what key assumptions dominate employers' selection criteria; and whether skills transfers between foreign and local workers are taking place, and if so, through which mechanisms?

### WP4: Social Rights Portability

Migrants within Southern Africa are moving between countries where social protection systems are minimal, or non-existent, and the question on non-citizens access to social protection remains debatable. This work package explores the social benefits available to, and accessed by foreign labourers. Within a context of increased labour migration and regional integration, could portable social benefits for migrants provide better mechanisms for social protection?

Some of WP4's guiding questions are: What role do the informal networks organised by foreign workers play in social protection? Are there limitations on foreign workers' access to state and private sector forms of social protection? What role could corporations play in developing systems of portable social security rights? Can the SADC facilitate forms of social protection in labour exporting countries?