



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



THAILAND MIGRATION PROFILE

Thailand is the main destination country for international migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, and hosts an estimated 4 million migrant workers. A series of registration processes have been implemented on an ad-hoc basis since the 1990s, to attempt to deal with growing numbers of irregular migrant workers in the country.

In 2002/2003, Thailand took a step forward in its migration policy with the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia and Myanmar. Subsequently, the Nationality Verification (NV) process was initiated to allow irregular migrants already working in the country the opportunity to regularize their status. These processes have continued in recent years with limited but varying degrees of success in managing the labour migrant population entering and working in Thailand.

Most recently, Thailand has taken further steps to improve its labour migration management with the signing of amended MOUs with Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar in 2015/2016 and a new MOU signed with Viet Nam in 2015; an extended registration policy allowing registered migrant workers to stay in the country for up to two years and then re-register (including with new employers) and a new decree on recruitment which prohibits charging of recruitment fees to workers in Thailand.

KEY MIGRATION FACTS

- As of May 2016, according to the Thai Ministry of Labour, there were approximately 2 million documented migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR in Thailand. Almost 80% of those migrants were coming from Myanmar (1.43 million), while the rest came from Cambodia (487,000), Lao PDR (128,000), and Viet Nam (no reliable statistics available).
- Of the documented workers, approximately two-thirds are fully regularized migrants with passports, while the rest, approximately one-third, are "pink-card" holders granting them temporary permission to stay and work in Thailand.
- Of the fully regularized workers, 323,000 (23%) entered Thailand formally under the MoUs, while 1,04 million (77%) entered irregularly but completed the Nationality Verification (NV) process.
- There are no official figures of irregular migrants in Thailand; however the numbers are believed to be somewhere between 1-2 million migrant workers.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND POVERTY DATA

- Population: 68 million (2015)
- GDP/Capita: USD 5,820 (2015)
- Net Migration Rate: 0.3 migrants/1,000 population
- The poverty rate in Thailand was estimated at 10.9% in 2014. Thailand has made remarkable progress in social and economic development but poverty and inequality continue to pose significant challenges especially in rural areas in the Northeast, North, and South.

**Data from MPI, ADB & World Bank*



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