



Survey: Design of a Migrant Worker Support Network Pilot in British Columbia (Employers, Employer Representatives, and Industry Associations)

Introduction:

In Budget 2018, the Government of Canada announced an investment of \$3.4 million over two years to establish, on a pilot basis, a network of support organizations for migrant workers dealing with potential mistreatment by their employers. The Pilot Migrant Worker Support Network (MWSN) will take place in British Columbia (BC) and is planned to launch in the Fall of 2018.

The goal of the MWSN is to bring together organizations, employers, and service providers to support migrant workers to learn about, understand, and exercise their rights while in Canada. The Network will work together to identify potential enhancements to worker protections. ESDC envisions the MWSN consisting of the following Network partners and stakeholders: Migrant Worker Support Organizations, migrant workers, Settlement Agencies, Unions, employers and representatives of industries and employers, BC government representatives, Federal government representatives, and Consulate Liaison Officers, with Employment and Social Development Canada providing secretariat support to the Network (for a visual depiction of the Network's structure, please see Annex A).

ESDC is consulting with a wide range of stakeholders and partners so that the Network's design and key activities are informed by the expertise and experience of its potential participants. Employers play a key role in worker protections given their proximity to workers while they are in Canada, and provide expertise regarding how to access this population.

The purpose of this 2-page survey is both to a) seek your input, given your expertise in the needs of businesses that employ migrant workers, which will inform the Network's design and implementation, and b) better understand your activities in regards to supporting both employers and migrant workers during their employment in Canada.

We ask that you email your completed survey to Auto-TFWP-PTET@hrsdcc.gc.ca by the end of **Friday July 6, 2018**.



Name of Employer/Employer Representative/Industry Association: BC Greenhouse Growers' Association, Linda Delli Santi

Contact details: [please indicate the best way to reach you]: 604-531-5262 or linda@bcgreenhouse.ca

Do you employ or represent employers or industries that employ migrant workers under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program? Yes

If yes, please indicate the occupational sector in which they are employed (e.g. caregiver, agricultural work, tourism and hospitality, etc.).

Agriculture - Horticulture

FOR EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES/INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS: Does your association provide any information to businesses to assist them in understanding their obligations under the conditions of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and supporting the unique needs of migrant workers during the term of their employment?

If yes, please explain.

We disseminate information from Government, Service Canada, The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) and the BC Agriculture Council regarding the TFW Ag Stream and SAWP - contract and housing requirements and other relevant information. We assist in publicizing meetings about the foreign worker programs such as the one put on at the start of the season by the Mexican Consulate. We work closely with the BCAC, WALI and the CHC labour committee.

FOR EMPLOYERS: Does your business provide any information to the migrant workers that it employs pertaining to their rights while in Canada, education on health and safety matters, or other topics that will help support them while in Canada (e.g. how to access medical care while in Canada)?

If yes, please explain.

n/a

Given your experience employing migrant workers or representing employers or industries that employ migrant workers, do you think employers require additional guidance or education regarding their obligations under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (e.g. understanding program conditions, labour laws) and how to best support the migrant workers that they employ (e.g. helping migrant workers access medical care if employed in a rural area, translation services)?



If yes, please explain.

There is always room for additional knowledge and improvement but it has been my experience that the employers that I work with understand their obligations under the TFW program and also do their best to support the migrant workers they employ.

Given your experience, what kinds of activities (e.g. workshop, information packages) would support employers to better understand their obligations when employing migrant workers (e.g. housing requirements)?

We already have workshops and information packages about the employer obligations when employing migrant workers. The housing requirements are clearly spelled out in the BCAC housing inspection form. The BCAC and the Mexican Consulate, along with the Province and WorkSafeBC attend and present at these workshops. We encourage our members to attend even if they do not employ from SAWP but the TFW Ag stream, as the obligations and housing requirements are very similar for both, if not exactly the same. There is a need for the federal government to break down silos and work across departments including AAFC, ESDC and IRCC to ensure employers understand what is expected and also ensure government understands how the program works on the farm. The government should also include industry associations for these workshops and information packages to further ensure that the message gets out to the employers.

Given your experience, what activities (e.g. workshop, information packages) would support migrant workers to better understand their rights and supports available to them while in Canada (e.g. settlement services)?

The migrant workers are absolutely entitled to understand their rights and the supports available to them while in Canada. For the Agricultural workers there could be workshops and information packages that are specific to them. A hotline or a list of phone numbers for support services in their language would also be useful. There could be a training session or outline and kit (information packages) provided to employers to hold a meeting with their migrant workers to give them an explanation and understanding of their rights and the supports available to them when they first arrive. The handouts should be in the migrant workers' language and location specific for contact information. Many of my employers hire Canadian residents fluent in the language of their migrant workers in order to assist in their training and educating, they could deliver these workshops. This training session or outline kit could contain advice on how to deliver these messages, including using any returning migrant workers (who would be willing) to speak to their experiences in settling in. The government should also include industry associations for these workshops and information packages to further ensure that the message gets out to the employers. The Mexican Consulate in BC is already putting on workshops and information sessions for the employers, and the Mexican Government is putting on these information sessions for the migrant workers prior to leaving Mexico. It would be a logical next step to have them develop these sessions to be directed to the migrant workers when they arrive in BC.



Would your business or association like to be involved in bilateral discussions leading up to each quarterly Network meeting?
yes
Would your business or association like to be considered for a role as a representative within the Network? Please note that space on the Network will be limited due to the number of stakeholders involved.
Yes
Role of and interaction with Advisory Board We are exploring establishing an Advisory Board to provide strategic advice and guidance to Network participants, such as key issues the Network should focus on.
What other role(s) could the Advisory Board play? What type of interaction/integration could the Advisory Board have with Network participants (e.g. completely separate, mixed Network and Advisory Board membership)?
A separate advisory board might be the better way to go. The meeting I went to on the 22 nd of June had enough participants to provide input but far too many participants to actually develop the parameters for the network. I think there should be separate or sub groups of networks as the needs of agricultural workers are very much different from nannies or caregivers for example.
What challenges or obstacles, if any, do you anticipate the Network facing (e.g. lack of time/resources)?
The Temporary Foreign Worker programs are absolutely essential to the continued success of agriculture and in my case, greenhouse agriculture. Assuming the network adds value to the employers and migrant workers there will always be someone from agriculture to commit the time to participate. Again, assuming the network adds value to the employers and migrant workers, funding mechanisms can be developed. Network participants need to understand how the various programs work, how the different stakeholders use the programs and where there may be misinformation. There is concern that participants in the Network do not understand all of the regulatory requirements that are already in place. Some of the proposed participants do not have any legal accountability, financial risk, or political risk if wrong information is shared. Some interested parties have objectives that run counter to government policy and program objectives. These agendas may confuse the migrant workers and risk undermining the program objectives.



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ANNEX A – Visual depiction of Network Structure

