

AGRUMIG "Leaving something behind" – Migration governance and agricultural and rural change in "home" communities: Comparative experience from Europe, Asia and Africa

DONOR

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[Call: Towards forward-looking migration governance: addressing the challenges, assessing capacities and designing future strategies]

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Unprecedented levels of migration in today's globalised economy are dramatically reshaping social, economic and political landscapes in sending and receiving countries. For policymakers and practitioners, understanding and responding effectively to such rapid transformation is a pressing issue. To date, communities facing socio-demographic transformation due to labour outflows have received less attention. AGRUMIG research focuses on these "sending communities" in low and middle-



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income countries, with a particular focus on transformations taking place in the agrarian sector.

AGRUMIG works in seven countries (China, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal and Thailand). The project seeks to understand a range of economic, institutional, cultural and agro-ecological factors that mediate the outflow of labour from rural areas; explain how demographic changes feed back into reshaping rural transformation in these places; and challenge our thinking on what are the best policy and practice approaches to governing

migration in these contexts. Our emphasis is away from regulating the movement of people to harnessing flows of knowledge and finance *as a result of migration* to help leverage more equitable agrarian change, including tackling structural constraints and stresses on economic development, such as gender inequality and youth exclusion. Our overall aim is to identify policy and practice interventions that harness migration processes and outcomes to stimulate more sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth in rural areas, and reduce the distress so often associated with migration decision-making.





METHODS

AGRUMIG uses survey and participatory tools to examine the drivers of migration and impacts of migration on the rural sector in seven countries across Asia, Africa and Europe. The project employs a qualitative comparative analysis method to identify key contexts in which unique relationships exist between migration and rural transformations. In parallel, we are engaging with policymakers and practitioners across diverse governance environments, establishing dialogues, undertaking literature reviews and conducting key informant interviews to understand how those constructing and implementing policies and practices (on both migration and rural agrarian change) can help mediate future development approaches and achieve more positive impacts.



IMPACTS

A key contribution of the project is the identification of strategies that promote safer and more regular migration through supporting change in sending regions – establishing, in effect, a “positive migration” philosophy. AGRUMIG will outline longer term and more evidence-based governance solutions, supported by comparative analysis and tangible indicators that are sensitive to the position and role of migration within larger agro-livelihood systems. AGRUMIG will also analyse existing contexts and governance regimes on which future responses will need to build, including labour treaties and/or EU partnership agreements, national migration and/or agrarian policies, overseas aid policies and directions as well as initiatives taken at a more grassroots level by diasporas and/or returnees themselves.

The project is organised according to the following five work packages:

WP 1

PROJECT MANAGEMENT



Leading partner: SOAS University of London

Objectives:

- Manage the project legally, contractually, financially and administratively.
- Ensure good quality communication between participants.
- Ensure high-quality reporting of the project results via deliverables and EC reviews.

- Ensure successful dissemination, impact and "uptake" of project knowledge.
- Organise five project meetings.
- Organise the qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) process.

WP 2

AGRICULTURE AND MIGRATION RESEARCH



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Leading partner: University of Birmingham

Objectives:

- Analyse the relationship between economic, cultural and environmental factors that shape migration patterns from agricultural communities at a local level.





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- Analyse how the process of migration itself impacts the agrarian economy, including the (re)production of inequality, changing gender and generational roles, the impact of labour scarcity on production practices, changes in how resources are managed, and the acquisition of agro-ecological knowledge.
- Assess how this two-way interaction between migration and agrarian/rural change affects the longer term trajectory of migration, including the propensity of individuals to increase migration, engage in a new form of migration, or return to their homes.
- Apply a QCA method to combine data from 19 regions in 7 countries to assess the combination of factors that shape the relationship between migration and agricultural/rural change in diverse economic, institutional, cultural and agro-ecological contexts.

WP 3

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE OPTIONS RESEARCH



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Leading partner: University of Birmingham

Objectives:

- Review the activities of state or non-state governance actors directly involved in the regulation of migration including government entities across scales as well as immigration and labour laws of receiving regions, bilateral labour agreements, and supranational governance actors, such as the EU, ILO and IOM.
- Review the activities of the governance regimes that shape the conditions of migration, including workers' education and rights, actions by governments and

NGOs across scales, as well as governance actors who can shape migration pathways in negative ways (e.g., intermediaries who stand between employers, the regulatory authorities and migrants themselves).

- Identify the practices and policies of actors who are not directly engaged in migration governance, yet whose decisions and actions significantly shape the trajectory of farming systems, non-farm rural livelihoods and wider political-economic change in agrarian communities that are a source of migrants. This includes, for example, agricultural sector policies and practices, overseas development interventions, the practices of global agribusiness and the role of the media and education system in shaping livelihood aspirations. Identify how these multilevel governance actions shape the outflow of labour and the decisions of farmers in terms of how they distribute household resources (especially labour) between the agricultural sector and international labour markets, particularly when faced with larger structural barriers grounded in class, gender and social groups.

WP 4

STAKEHOLDER INTERACTION: POLICY DIALOGUES AND ACTION PLAN FORMULATION



Leading partner: International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Objectives:

- Under the umbrella of MARIS (www.maris.iwmi.org), expand and further develop a functioning network of research, policy and practice institutions and associations working

on migration governance at the interface of outmigration and agricultural transformation.

- In each country, constitute national policy dialogues under MARIS that explore and highlight priority policy issues on links between migration governance and agricultural transformation. From these dialogues, establish working groups to contribute to the AGRUMIG-wide community of practice.
- Working closely with key knowledge partners in three of the seven countries (Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal and Thailand), hold national stakeholder policy dialogues that can identify key pathways and support innovative proposals to identify best practices and strengthen future migration governance and agricultural transformation policies across a range of environments.

WP 5

IMPACT AND UPTAKE: MIGRATION GOVERNANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND INSTRUMENTS



Leading partner: International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Objectives:

- Bring innovations in migration governance to mainstream policy and practice in target countries through a combination of policy advocacy, knowledge dissemination and practical demonstration.
- Provide succinct knowledge products on migration governance innovations in the public domain through continued dissemination via social media under the MARIS network.

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*This project is part of the MARIS network
(Migration, Agriculture and Resilience: Initiative for Sustainability) maris.iwmi.org*

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is a non-profit, scientific research organisation focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. IWMI works in partnership with governments, civil society and the private sector to develop scalable agricultural water management solutions that have a real impact on poverty reduction, food security and ecosystem health. Headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with regional offices across Asia and Africa, IWMI is a CGIAR Research Center and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE).