



United Nations
Network on Migration
Working Better Together



Voluntary National Report on GCM (Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration) implementation in Uzbekistan

1. Methodology for preparing the voluntary GCM reviews

Today, migration issues and their impact on receiving and sending countries are relevant, and there is a need to improve migration management. Migratory flows have increased in many world regions, particularly in Asia.

With a population of more than **35¹** million, Uzbekistan is the most densely populated country in Central Asia, with an annual population growth of almost **2 per cent** (an annual population growth of 667.1 thousand people), and **600-700** thousand people enter the labour market every year, which are the engine of the country's economic development, but at the same time create demographic pressure to create new jobs. According to experts' forecasts, by 2025, the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan will be more than 36 million people. In this situation, labour migration is necessary to ensure the employment of unemployed citizens of Uzbekistan.

According to information from the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan,² the results of a social survey conducted in 108 cities and regions of the country in January-September 2021 in Uzbekistan show that the unemployment rate was 9.4 per cent, which is 1.7 per cent less than in the same period last year. In the nine months of 2021, the number of labour resources amounted to 19.3 million people, which is 1.1 per cent or 201.4 thousand more than in January-September last year. Of this number, **6.1 million people officially work**, the population growth increased by - 7.9 per cent, or 450.5 thousand people compared to the same period in 2020. Also, **5.9 million workers were unofficially employed**, which is 4.1 per cent, or 254 thousand people less than last year. The survey showed that **1.4 million people need employment**, and out of the total unemployment rate among the economically active segment of the population (4.3 million people, 9.4 per cent), unemployment among citizens aged at 16-30 was 14.9 per cent, among women — 12.8 per cent.

According to measures taken to develop economic sectors and regions, up to 350,000 jobs are created annually in Uzbekistan. Despite this, the Government needs to create new jobs to ensure the employment of the population. In this regard, the Government is taking measures to employ our citizens in foreign countries.

To date, about **1.5** million citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan are in labour migration and work abroad.

An analysis of the past years has shown that the main causes of irregular migration are: a) insufficient legal framework on the regulation of external labour migration; b) the absence of intergovernmental agreements in terms of protecting the rights and interests of labour migrants; d) monopoly on the employment market of citizens abroad; e) the absence of institutionalized state reintegration programs for returning labour migrants from abroad.

¹ State Statistics Committee, available online at <https://www.stat.uz/uz/>

² Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, available online at <https://www.mehnat.uz/uz/news/uzbekistonda-ishsizlik-darazhasi-94-foizni-tashkil-etdi>

In this regard, in order to optimize the processes of external labour migration and to form an effective system of support for migrant workers in Uzbekistan and their families, to provide comprehensive care by the State for their daily needs and aspirations, and to strengthen guarantees of reliable social and legal protection both within the country and abroad, in recent years our country has adopted about 15 normative legal acts to regulate external labour migration.

In particular, in order to ensure the guaranteed provision of paid work to workers, to ensure that they meet the labour standards adopted in the host country and to ensure their social and living conditions during their stay in the territory of a foreign State, legislative frameworks were adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan '**On additional measures to further improve the system of external labour migration of the Republic of Uzbekistan**'³ and by the Cabinet of Ministers '**On measures to further improve and fundamentally review the system of organized employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad**'⁴, as well as a decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan '**On measures to further strengthen guarantees of protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in temporary work abroad, and members of their families**'⁵, where, in order to form an effective system of support for migrant workers and members of their families, to provide comprehensive care by the State of their daily needs and aspirations, to strengthen guarantees of reliable social and legal protection, a **Department for the protection of rights and support of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan** was established, and a **Republican Commission on External Labour Migration** was also formed. Their main activities are a comprehensive analysis of the movement of labour migration, the development and implementation of annual plans and programmes to ensure the organized employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad, the expansion of international cooperation in the field of external labour activity of citizens, the organization of effective work of authorized bodies for the consideration of appeals of migrant workers, the development and implementation of comprehensive measures aimed at improving the income and standard of living of migrant workers' families in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the effective monitoring and control of the processes of preliminary vocational training.

In addition, in order to involve all state structures and the entire society, following the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan '**On measures to introduce a system of safe, orderly and legal labour migration**',⁶ the duties and responsibilities of ministries, departments and executive authorities at the local level were expanded. In particular, to assist citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in using their rights to work abroad through effective management and monitoring of organized recruitment processes, the Agency of External Labour Migration (*later the Agency*) was established under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Agency's branches operate in all regions of the country. The heads of the regional offices of the Agency are also assistants to khokims (governors) of the regions on issues of external labour migration. At the same time, there are more than 200 inspectors in each employment promotion centre under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan responsible for the reintegration of returning of migrant workers.

In order to provide services to citizens in the field of external labour migration, **offices of the Agency** were opened in such foreign cities as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg,

³ Presidential decree 'On additional measures to further improve the system of external labour migration of the Republic of Uzbekistan', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/ru/docs/3811333>

⁴ Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution 'On measures to further improve and fundamentally review the system of organized employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad, available online at <https://www.lex.uz/ru/docs/3903309>

⁵ Presidential decree 'On measures to further strengthen guarantees of protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in temporary work abroad, and members of their families', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/docs/4482657>

⁶ Presidential decree 'On measures to introduce a system of safe, orderly and legal labour migration', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/en/docs/4997979>

Novosibirsk, Samara and Ufa (Russian Federation), Gwangju (Republic of Korea). A post of labour migration attaché has been established in the consulates-general of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In addition, in accordance with the resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan '**On measures to organize the activities of the Agency for the mahallabay work and the development of entrepreneurship under the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction**'⁷ and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan '**On measures to practical introduction of the 'mahallabay' work system and further support for entrepreneurial initiatives of the population**',⁸ the Agency for the Mahallabay (neighbourhoods) Work and the Development of Entrepreneurship was established, the main tasks of which include providing employment for the population with gainful employment on the basis of the vertical system of the work of the mahallabay, attracting them to entrepreneurship, training and orientation to self-employment activities, as well as coordination of the activities of authorized state bodies and organizations and assistants to the district (city) administration on the development of entrepreneurship, ensuring employment of the population and poverty reduction in mahallas.

As a part of the implementation of the 'State Program for the implementation of the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021 in the year of 'Support for Youth and Improvement of Public Health', **an Action Plan for expanding cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for 2021-2023** was developed and approved. In addition, cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other projects are carried out in partnership with OSCE and USAID.

To date, in order to ensure the legal protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad, close cooperation is carried out with 33 Uzbek diaspora organizations abroad (25 in Russia, 6 in Kazakhstan, 1 in Kyrgyzstan and 1 in Turkey), with which agreements on cooperation in this area have been signed.

2. Policy and enabling environment

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan initiated **the drafting of an international code of voluntary obligations for States during the pandemic under the auspices of the United Nations**.⁹ This Code should provide for minimum conditions and obligations of States, both to their citizens and citizens of other countries and to international partners in the political, social, economic, humanitarian spheres and in the field of human rights.

In addition, the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan has taken decisive and systematic measures to maintain the stability of socio-economic and socio-political processes in the country. Special attention is paid to implementing measures for the protection of citizens abroad. Support for citizens abroad is one of the main tasks of the State.

In particular, the President at the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States held on December 18, 2020, proposed the creation of a **Cooperation Program of member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to create a single mechanism for mutual recognition of documents of migrant workers for 2021–2026**¹⁰. The Programme provides for the implementation of measures to assess the State and effectiveness of cooperation among the CIS member States in the protection of the rights and

⁷ Presidential decree 'On measures to organize the activities of the Agency for the mahallabay work and the development of entrepreneurship under the Ministry of economic development and poverty reduction', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/uz/docs/5793280>

⁸ Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution 'On measures to practical introduction of the "mahallabay" work system and further support for entrepreneurial initiatives of the population', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/ru/docs/5353246>

⁹ Pandemic Recovery Assistance, Debt Relief Vital to Keeping Developing Countries' Economies Afloat, Speakers Stress as General Assembly Continues Annual Debate, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/ga12269.doc.htm>

¹⁰ Uzbekistan proposes to adopt a cooperation program on labour migration in the CIS, available online at <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/12/18/summit/>

interests of migrant workers and members of their families, assistance in the field of employment, medical care for migrant workers, professional training and certification of their professional knowledge, skills and social and pension security, as well as the establishment of mechanisms for mutual recognition of migrant workers' insurance policies in the CIS area.

In the field of external labour migration, Uzbekistan has intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements with the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and Turkey. Negotiations to attract citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan to perform temporary work through an organized employment system are conducted with Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Israel and Arabic countries, including Kuwait and Qatar.

The selection and employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad is a licensing activity regulated by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers **'On measures to further improve and fundamentally review the system of organized employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad'**¹¹ and Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan **'On Amendments to the Law 'On Private Employment Agencies''**¹². At present, the Agency of External Labour Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan and licensed private employment agencies of Uzbekistan have the authority to select and employ citizens of the Republic Uzbekistan abroad.¹³

The Agency of External Labour Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan and licensed private employment agencies of Uzbekistan mainly cooperate with employers and recruitment agencies of States, such as the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Israel and the EU countries to attract citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan to carry out temporary work through an organized system of employment.

Cooperation with international organizations. Uzbekistan cooperates with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), USAID, OSCE and ICMPD in migration related issues.

At the 109th session of the IOM Council in Geneva on November 27, 2018, Uzbekistan's application for membership in the IOM as a full-fledged member country was supported. Following the results of the session of the IOM Council, the Republic of Uzbekistan was accepted as a member state of the IOM, as a result of which the Republic of Uzbekistan ratified the IOM Constitution on December 26, 2018, by the Law **'On ratification of the Constitution of the International Organization for Migration'**¹⁴. In April 2021, the IOM office in Uzbekistan was accredited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Uzbekistan.

Within the framework of cooperation with IOM, **projects are being implemented** in partnership with non-governmental non-commercial organizations of Uzbekistan and State structures and centres have been launched to increase the access of the local population to information on combating trafficking in persons, safe and regular migration, and means and mechanisms for the protection of victims of trafficking in persons and migrant workers. **A pilot centre for the development of professional skills for potential labour migrants** was created based on Monocentre in Namangan city to expand the possibility of employment of young people in demanded areas in the labour market, both Uzbekistan and other main destination countries of labour migrants.

¹¹ Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution 'On measures to further improve and fundamentally review the system of organized employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad, available online at <https://www.lex.uz/ru/docs/3903309>

¹² Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On Amendments to the Law 'On Private Employment Agencies', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/ru/docs/4948400>

¹³ List of operating licensed private employment agencies of Uzbekistan, available online at <https://www.mehnat.uz/ru/services/reestr-chastnyh-agentstv-zanyatosti>

¹⁴ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On ratification of the Constitution of the International Organization for Migration', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/docs/4127908>

In addition, in order to provide financial assistance to migrant workers, who are citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan and are in a difficult financial situation and need social protection during the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM **allocated funds in the amount of 105 thousand US dollars** to assist the citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In addition, as part of the creation of the Migration Profile of Uzbekistan with the content of tools for monitoring activities in the field of labour migration, a system of migration management indicators (*Migration Governance Indicators (MGI)*) is being introduced into the field of external labour migration of Uzbekistan.

To date, Uzbekistan has ratified **16 ILO conventions, including eight core ones**.

3. Progress on GCM objectives

Following the latest legislation, the country is carrying out extensive reforms in external labour migration by introducing organized, safe and legal migration mechanisms, as reflected in **the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan**¹⁵.

This mechanism includes three main stages:

Firstly, pre-departure training is provided for persons wishing to work abroad. In particular, the procedure has been introduced, according to which persons travelling abroad within the framework of organizational recruitment undergo language and professional training before the departure. This mechanism stage facilitates the implementation of Objective 1,3,4,5,18 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The training of citizens is carried out in 600 vocational and educational institutions and vocational training centres at the level of the 'mahalla' under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in particular, in 15 Monocentres 'Ishga Marhamat' (Welcome to Jobs), 59 vocational training centres, 54 short-term vocational training courses, 13 colleges in the field of construction and 326 colleges and 127 non-state educational institutions, as well as 1000 points of vocational training of the population at the level of *mahalla*.

In addition, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, together with the Korean Agency for International Cooperation (KOICA), implemented 3 projects to create vocational training centres (VTCs) in the cities of Tashkent, Shahrisabz and Samarkand, as well as a project to organize a **business incubator and training for startups** at the VTCs in Samarkand. Currently, work is underway to create a Teacher Training Centre in Fergana and Urgench, a Teacher Competence Assessment Centre, and a Teacher Development Centre at the Teacher Training Centre in Tashkent.

At the same time, taking into account that in a rapidly changing globalized economy, where education systems are constantly developing, the technical means of training migrants must be adapted to the demand of employers in destination markets. Based on this, in the monocentres 'Ishga marhamat' and foreign partners, training on foreign standards is introduced. In particular, a mechanism for assessing professional competence based on WorldSkills standards is being introduced. Graduates who have successfully completed training are issued with State and international standard of 'skills passport' certificates. It should be noted that documents confirming the completion of training and a skills passport are equivalent to the level of a diploma of secondary specialized vocational education.

For reference: in 2020 and 2021, more than 74.0 thousand individuals were trained in the above professional educational institutions, intending to work abroad.

In addition, within the framework of professional training, the responsible bodies of the Republic of Uzbekistan cooperate with large European, Japanese, Arab and Russian educational

¹⁵ Presidential decree 'On measures to introduce a system of safe, orderly and legal labour migration', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/en/docs/4997979>

institutions, such as GfM Gruppe, OPASCA GmbH, GLOBOGATE Recruiting GmbH, Nippon academy, Turkish organizations Tika, Renesans Heavy Industries, the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, WorldSkills Russia, etc.

Taking into account the fact that the majority of migrant workers from Uzbekistan work in the regions of the Russian Federation, within the framework of the tripartite Memorandum¹⁶ of Cooperation between the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, WorldSkills Russia ('Young Professionals of Russia') and the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, vocational and language training funded by the Government of Uzbekistan for migrant workers from Uzbekistan is carried out in 17 universities and professional colleges in the cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Chelyabinsk, Omsk, Yekaterinburg, Ufa, Samara, Kazan, Novosibirsk. Migrant workers from Uzbekistan are trained in 25 professions in 6 sectors (construction and the service sector, transport and logistics, machinery and technology, production and the automotive industry).

For reference: in 2020 and 2021, more than 1.8 thousand citizens of Uzbekistan were trained in the territory of the Russian Federation

In addition, within the framework of cooperation with IOM, the project **on the Establishing a pilot centre for the development of professional skills for potential labour migrants based on Monocentre in Namangan city was completed**

Secondly, migrant workers are provided with legal and social assistance at home and abroad and comprehensive assistance in the realization of the rights of Uzbek citizens to work abroad. This mechanism stage facilitates the implementation of Objective 5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12, 14, 15 and 19 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

In order to ensure the safety and health of migrant workers, citizens **are issued insurance policies**, as well as issued **credit cards 'Viza-Migrant'**, which ensure the use of the wages of migrants and their families.

In order to protect migrant workers, the **fund was established under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations to support and protect the rights and interests of citizens working abroad**, the main activities of which are:

- provision of legal and social protection, material assistance to citizens who have been subjected to violence, forced labour and discrimination, violation of labour and other rights that have fallen into a difficult financial situation and have remained without identity documents;
- medical care of citizens during the period of labour migration due to injury, accident, in case of impossibility to pay the cost of medical services provided at the expense of the migrant worker with the subsequent reimbursement of the funds paid by them;
- transportation of the bodies of citizens who died during labour migration outside the country, as well as citizens who received injuries or serious injuries during labour activity abroad;
- the return of citizens previously sent to work abroad within the framework of organized recruitment and expelled (deported) as a result of a violation of the legislation of the host country, with the subsequent reimbursement of the funds paid at the expense of these citizens, as well as the return of citizens to whom foreign employers have not provided the specified conditions of employment;
- establishment and equipping of centres for pre-exit adaptation, vocational training, training and testing in foreign languages, confirmation of the professional competence of citizens travelling to carry out labour activities abroad;

¹⁶ Tripartite Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, WorldSkills Russia ('Young Professionals of Russia') and the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, available online at <https://worldskills.ru/media-czentr/novosti/worldskills-russia-podpisal-soglashenie-s-agentstvom-po-vneshnej-trudovoj-migraczii-uzbekistana-i-rossijskim-universitetom-druzhbyi-narodov-ob-organizaczii-obucheniya-grazhdan-respubliki.html>

- establishment and equipping of representative offices of the Agency of External Labour Migration abroad;

For reference: In 2021, the Fund provided social and material assistance to more than **14,000 citizens of Uzbekistan** during their labour activity abroad. In particular, **321 citizens of Uzbekistan** who found themselves in a difficult situation **and 518 bodies of deceased citizens** during the period of their labour activity abroad were returned to their homeland.

In order to provide services to citizens in the field of the social and legal protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan who work abroad and monitor their activities, **offices of the Agency of External Labour Migration** were opened under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in such cities as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Samara and Ufa (Russian Federation), Gwangju (Republic of Korea).

For reference: In 2021, the Agency of External Labour Migration offices provided legal assistance and advice to more than **27,200 citizens** and collected wages and compensation from employers in favour of migrant workers in the amount of **960,000 US dollars**. Diplomatic missions of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad provided legal assistance and advice to more than **59,000 migrant workers from Uzbekistan**.

In order to ensure the legal protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan working temporarily in the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea and the Turkey, agreements have been signed with **25 legal services that**, at the expense of the Fund for Support and Protection of the Rights and Interests of Citizens Working Abroad, free services to our migrant workers are provided.

It should also be noted that the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan has developed and implemented the following information systems in the field of labour migration, which facilitates the implementation of Objective 16 and 17 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

1. The online registration of private employment agencies with a mechanism for independently adding data from legal entities has been created and put into operation (<https://www.reestr.mehnat.uz>);

2. The online system for submitting documents, reviewing and issuing licenses for employment of citizens outside the Republic of Uzbekistan has been created (<https://www.agency.mehnat.uz>);

3. The online system has been created for accounting of concluded employment contracts of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan with foreign employers (<https://www.agency.mehnat.uz>);

4. National database has been established for citizens wishing to work abroad (<https://www.horijdaish.uz>);

5. The online system was created to obtain certificates of employment abroad for citizens working outside the country, to simplify the procedure for registration at the consular registry (<https://www.online.mehnat.uz>);

6. The 'labour-migration' software package has been created and launched, as part of the 'Unified National Labour System' information system under development (<http://www.labor.migration.uz/>);

7. The platform has been created to receive online consultations 'Online consultations' (<https://www.consulting.labormigration.uz>);

8. 'Labor Migrant Uz' mobile application was created (available at Google Play Market and AppStore);

9. The platform has been created to provide social assistance to migrant workers (<https://www.birgamiz.com>);

10. There is an official website of the Agency of External Labour Migration, (<https://www.migration.uz>).

For reference: as of January 1, 2022, the number of persons who have registered and used the services of the 'labour-migration' software complex is **1,490,122** citizens of Uzbekistan. Besides, the number of persons who joined the Telegram group of the Agency of External Labour Migration (<https://t.me/migratsiyaagentligi>) is 26,606.

Thirdly, assistance is provided to **reintegrate migrant workers** who have returned to their homeland. This stage facilitates the implementation of Objective 21 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan has a **Department of External Labour Migration and Programmes for the Reintegration of Returning Labour Migrants**.

In particular, there are more than **200** inspectors in each **Employment Promotion Centre** responsible for the reintegration of returning migrant workers.

Quota jobs are provided for socially vulnerable segments of the population to ensure the employment of returning migrant workers.

A new type of employment assistance services has been introduced – the provision of **subsidies and grants** in the form of non-repayable financial assistance at the expense of the **State employment promotion fund**.

In addition, with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan '**On measures to further strengthen guarantees of protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in temporary work abroad, and members of their families**'¹⁷ in 2020-2021, 3,462 apartments were allocated to migrant workers in need of improved housing conditions within the framework of the implementation of state programs for the construction of housing.

According to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the General Department of Employment of the city of Tashkent and regions, from January to March 2021, 502,403 migrant workers **were** returned from abroad.

The program for the reintegration of migrant workers in 2021 covered **169,5** thousand people, in particular: **135,3 thousand** citizens were employed for permanent work, **23,9 thousand** citizens were retrained for the professions, **4,5 thousand** citizens received subsidies and assistance to start their own business, **5,8 thousand** citizens were allocated soft microcredits for entrepreneurship and self-employment.

In addition, **4,5 thousand** migrant workers were trained in short-term training courses 'Fundamentals of Business Startup' organized jointly with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The trained **1,1 thousand** citizens later opened their own business.

4. Means of implementation

At present, the projects are being implemented at the expense of state funds, in particular, the Fund for Support and Protection of the Rights and Interests of Citizens Working Abroad and the Fund for Assistance to Employment, international organizations (such as IOM, OSCE, ILO and others) and foreign partners.

The sources of income of the Fund for Support and Protection of the Rights and Interests of Citizens Working Abroad are:

- one-time gratuitous financial assistance allocated from the State budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the amount of **200 billion soums** (about **24.3 million US dollars** at the exchange rate of the Central Bank of Uzbekistan on the date of receipt of funds in 2018);

¹⁷ Presidential decree 'On measures to further strengthen guarantees of protection of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in temporary work abroad, and members of their families', available online at <https://www.lex.uz/docs/4482657>

- reservation of funds of organizations sending citizens to work abroad under a license agreement concluded with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the amount of eight thousand five hundred basic calculated values, with the conditions for replenishment of funds in the case of spending the reserved amount, as well as the return of funds in the case of termination or cancellation of the license, with the conditions for the return of funds in the case of termination of the license for the right to employ citizens abroad;
- income from placement of free funds on deposits of commercial banks;
- charitable donations of individuals and legal entities, as well as other sources not prohibited by law.

5. Next steps

1. Currently, the draft **Law on external labour migration**¹⁸ is being developed, including a simplified procedure for the conclusion of treaties and agreements with foreign countries and competent authorities aimed at safeguarding the interests of citizens.

2. The Republic of Uzbekistan has taken the initiative, under the auspices of the United Nations, to develop an **'International Code of Voluntary Obligations of States during a Pandemic'**, which provides for the consolidation of minimum voluntary obligations of States, both to their citizens and international partners, in the political, social, economic, humanitarian, human rights spheres, based on relevant United Nations resolutions, recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) to respond to COVID-19, universal multilateral instruments, as well as principles defined in the Code.

3. In cooperation with IOM, as part of the creation of the Migration Profile of Uzbekistan with the content of tools for monitoring activities in the field of labour migration, a system of migration management indicators (*Migration Governance Indicators (MGI)*) is being introduced into the field of external labour migration of Uzbekistan.

4. The improvement of the system of assistance to the social reintegration of returned migrant workers, with the technical and expert assessment of the IOM, is being discussed with IOM, by developing a system of social reintegration of migrant workers in Uzbekistan based on the study of international best practices and providing practical reintegration assistance to returning vulnerable migrants (creation and launch of training centres and financial support for entrepreneurial (income-generating) activities).

5. There is a need to establish a system and implement mechanisms for the implementation of Objective 20 (Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants) and 22 (Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits) of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

6. Given that Uzbekistan pays special attention to labour migration, since Uzbekistan is the most densely populated country in Central Asia with a population of more than 35 million, which accounts for more than half of the region's total population, it is necessary to consider raising the status of the IOM Mission to the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as increasing funding for Uzbekistan.

¹⁸ Information on the development of the draft law "On external labour migration", available online at <https://www.kun.uz/ru/news/2022/02/16/proyekt-zakona-o-vneshney-trudovoy-migratsii-prinyat-vo-vtorom-chtenii>