

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) TO FACILITATE IMPORT OF FOREIGN WORKERS THROUGH THE ZONING SYSTEM



**Department of Labour, MoLHR
Department of Immigration, MoHCA
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TITLE

1. This procedure shall be called “A Standard Operating Procedure to facilitate import of foreign workers through the Zoning system.”

CONTEXT

2. A Research Team constituting members from the Department of Immigration (DoI), Department of Labour (DoL), Department of Civil Registration and Census, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have developed a Zoning System to quarantine foreign workers in the temporary quarantine facilities. As approved by the Government, four zones were identified namely Samtse, Phuntsholing, Sarpang and Samdrup Jongkhar. Following this, the team has directed DoI and DoL to draft a Standard Operating Procedure to operationalize the Zoning System to import foreign workers.
3. Currently, the Royal Government is constructing temporary quarantine centers at Samtse (200 beds), Phuntsholing (400 beds), Gelephu (200 beds) and Samdrup Jongkhar (200 beds). The construction is expected to be completed by the end of August/September 2021 and the quarantine centres will be operationalized immediately to quarantine both Bhutanese and foreign workers.

OBJECTIVE

4. This SOP is developed with the following objectives:
 - i. Regulate and manage foreign workers effectively without undermining or compromising health safety protocols in place to mitigate the risks of transmission and spread of covid-19;
 - ii. Facilitate import of foreign workers in an efficient, organized and systematic manner through land ports of entry based on location of their worksites;
 - iii. Approve and issue work permit to foreign workers who completes required quarantine duration and test COVID-19 negative; and

SCOPE

5. This SOP shall apply to foreign workers entering from Samtse, Phuentsholing, Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar and shall be implemented by:
 - i. Department of Immigration, MoHCA
 - ii. Department of Labour, MoLHR

- iii. Regional Immigration Offices (RIOs)
- iv. Regional Offices (ROs), MoLHR
- v. Foreign Workers Recruitment Agents (FWRA)/Employers

VALIDITY

6. This SOP shall be valid until further directives.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ZONING SYSTEM

Sl.No.	Agency	Responsibility
1	Employers/FWRA	Clearly mention the worksite in the application
2	Department of Labour/ROs	Clearly mention the port of entry as per the worksite in the application
3	Department of Immigration/RIOs	Facilitate the entry of FWs based on the port of entry stated in the approval order from DOL

7. During the implementation of temporary zonation, the import of foreign workers whose worksites are located in the following districts shall be facilitated through the following ports of entry:

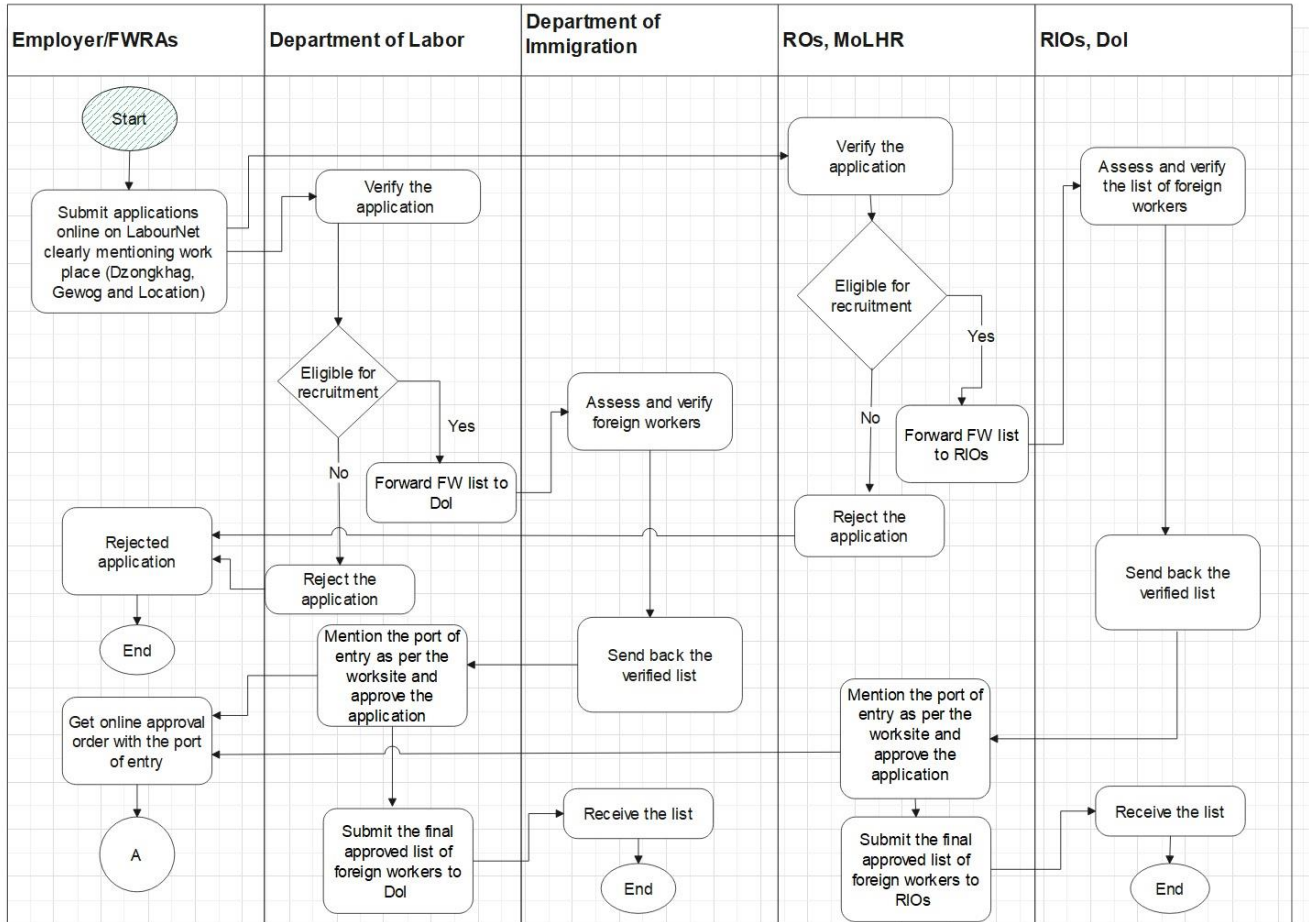
- i. Port of Entry- Samtse: Samtse, Haa and Paro;
- ii. Port of Entry- Phuntsholing: Chukha, Thimphu, Gasa, Wangduephodrang, and Punakha;
- iii. Port of Entry- Gelephu: Sarpang, Tsirang, Dagana, Zhemgang, Trongsa and Bumthang;
- iv. Port of Entry- Samdrup Jongkhar: Samdrup Jongkhar, Pema Gatshel, Trashigang, Monggar, Trashy Yangtse and Lhuentse.

8. During the implementation of permanent zonation, the import of foreign workers whose worksites are located in the following districts shall be facilitated through the following ports of entry:

- i. Port of Entry- Samtse: Samtse, Haa and Paro;
- ii. Port of Entry- Phuntsholing: Chukha, Thimphu and Gasa;
- iii. Port of Entry- Gelephu: Sarpang, Tsirang, Dagana, Zhemgang, Trongsa, Bumthang, Wangduephodrang, and Punakha;

- iv. Port of Entry- Samdrup Jongkhar: Samdrup Jongkhar, Pema Gatshel, Trashigang, Monggar, Trashy Yangtse and Lhuentse.
9. The foreign workers entering through the designated port of entries shall be quarantined in temporary quarantine centres located in these four zones respectively. However, if the quarantine facility in the designated port of entry is full, the employers/FWRA can opt to quarantine them in a different zone as per their convenience and intimate to the DOL/ROs of any changes prior to the arrival of the foreign worker.

A. PROCESS FOR FOREIGN WORKER'S APPROVAL



Step 1

Employers/FWRAs submit application online on LabourNet clearly mentioning the worksite along with the following documents:

- i. Requisition letter if applying through agent;
- ii. Valid Construction approval letter/Trade license/CDB certificate;
- iii. Duly filled Employer Undertaking Form available at <https://www.molhr.gov.bt/molhr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Employer-Undertaking-Form.-10Sep2020docx.docx>;
- iv. Voter card or valid Passport (passport must be valid for at least six months from intended date of departure);
- v. Notarized qualification certificate for professionals;
- vi. Approval from the Government if applicable; and

vii. Submit details of foreign workers in the excel sheet template available on LabourNet.

Step 2

DOL/ROs verifies the application and if documents are incomplete, reject the application, else forwards the list to DOI/RIOs

Step 3

DOI/RIOs verifies and forwards back the list to DOL/ROs

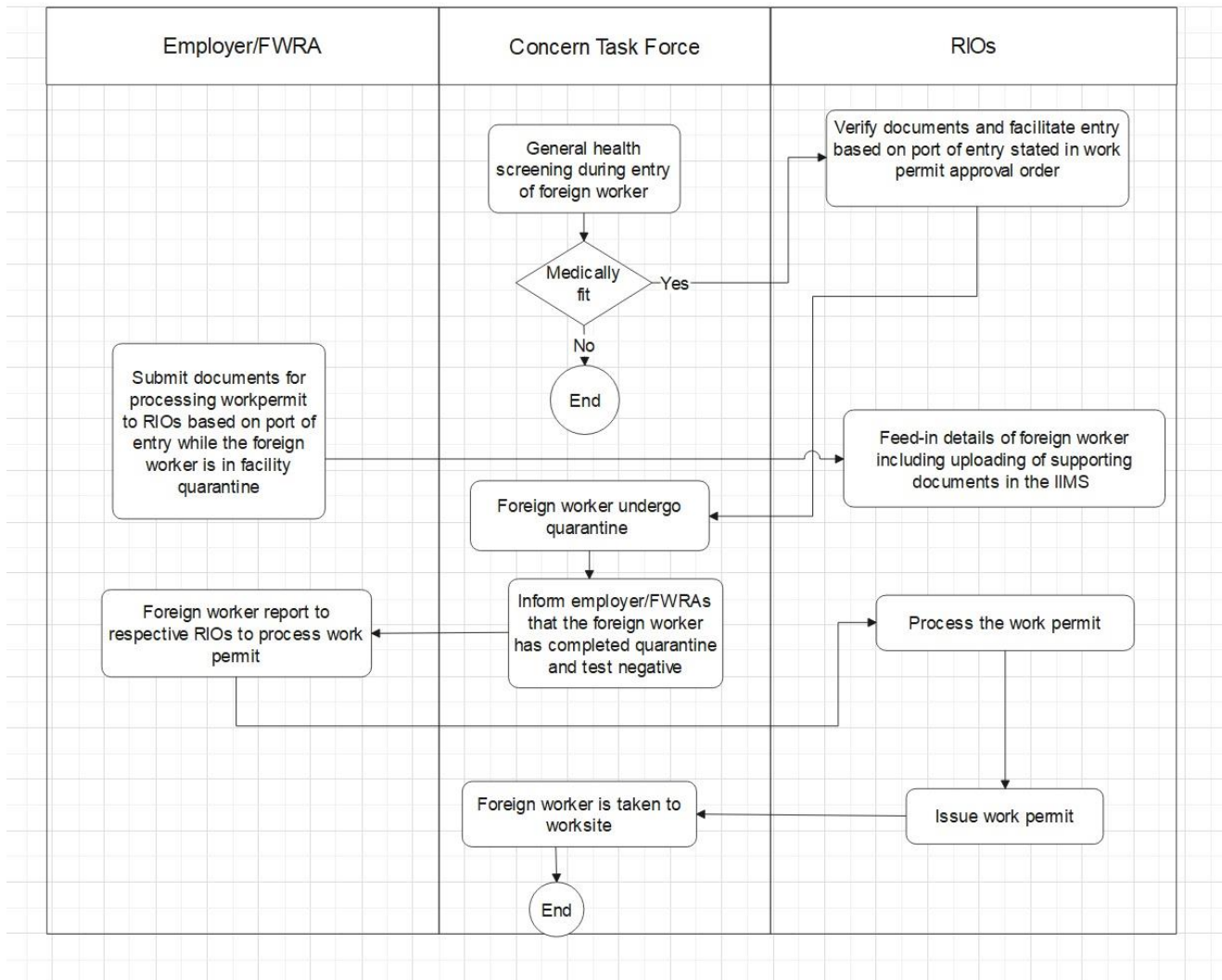
Step 4

DOL/ROs mentions the port of entry as per the worksite in the application and approves the application

Step 5

DOL/ROs submits the final approved list of foreign workers to DOI

B. PROCESS FOR ISSUANCE OF WORK PERMIT



Step 1

FW completes health screening during entry

Step 2

RIOs verifies the ID document and work permit approval order for port of entry and validation of foreign worker, and facilitates entry if medically fit

Step 3

Foreign workers undergo quarantine

Step 4

Employers/FWRAs submit the following documents to RIOs while foreign workers are undergoing facility quarantine:

- i. Copy of valid passport (passport must be valid for at least six months from intended date of departure)/voter card of foreign worker(s) reflected in work permit approval issued by the DoL;
- ii. Work permit approval issued by the DoL;
- iii. Duly completed Work Permit Application Form;
- iv. Duly completed Employer Undertaking Form
- v. Duly completed Employee Undertaking Form; and
- vi. Relevant visa, if applicable

Step 5

RIOs feed-in details of foreign workers, including uploading of supporting documents submitted in step 4 in the Immigration Information & Monitoring System (IIMS) prior to release from quarantine facilities

Step 6

Foreign worker reports to the RIOs after completion of mandatory quarantine with the following documents:

- i. Medical fitness certificate; and
- ii. Quarantine completion certificate

Step 7

RIOs verifies the documents in step 6 and carries out the following:

- i. Review and assess work permit applications in the IIMS
- ii. Enroll biometrics (fingerprints) and capture facial image of individual foreign workers
- iii. Approve work permit applications
- iv. Upload payment receipt and quarantine completion certificate in IIMS

Step 8

RIOs prints and issues work permit and update entry record

Step 9

Employers/FWRAs transports FWs to worksite within 24 hours after issuance of Work Permit