

TEMPORARY LABOUR MIGRATION PROGRAMMES

Legal temporary migration is significant in OECD countries. The movements covered under this rubric are heterogeneous and include both higher and less educated migrants. Most of these temporary migrants, however, work in low-skill occupations. Seasonal workers are the largest single category, although working holiday-makers are growing in number. Trainees, although generally required to have some education or skills, may be employed in low-skill occupations. "Other temporary workers" include a mix of both high and low-skilled workers, service-providers and free-circulation migrants, among others.

Temporary work programmes currently in place in OECD countries are structured differently. Invariably, the duration of the permit depends on the employment offered. Usually the duration is less than one year, especially for the agricultural sector. The offer of employment is also subject to a labour market test, where the job offer must be advertised to residents and conform to certain minimum wage and contractual criteria. In some countries employers must guarantee housing and pay transportation. They may also be obliged to pay repatriation costs for overstayers.

Temporary workers are employed primarily in the agricultural sectors, but also in tourism, food processing, cleaning, hotels and restaurants, and construction.

Table

Temporary work permit programmes for low-skilled workers

Country	Programme	Maximum length of stay allowed	Guarantees required	Sectors involved	Number of participants	Limits
Canada	SAWP	<8 months	Labour market test; employer must pay transportation and housing (can deduct from salary)	Agriculture	18,000 (2006)	None
Canada	Temporary Foreign Worker Programme C (intermediate qualifications and clerical)	<2 years	Labour market test; cover all recruitment costs; help find suitable, affordable accommodation; pay full transportation costs from home country; provide medical coverage until the worker is eligible for provincial health insurance coverage	All sectors	34,000 (2006)	None
Canada	Temporary Foreign Worker Programme D (elemental qualifications and labourers)	<2 years	Labour market test; cover all recruitment costs; help find suitable, affordable accommodation; pay full transportation costs from home country; provide medical coverage until the worker is eligible for provincial health insurance coverage	All sectors	3,500 (2006)	None
France	Seasonal Agricultural	<6 months/annually for 3 years	Labour market test or shortage list; employers must guarantee housing	Agriculture	17,000 (2006)	None
Germany	Bilateral Agreements	<8 months	Employers must provide housing (can deduct from salary)	Agriculture, other temporary	290,000 (2006)	None
Italy	Seasonal Work	<9 months	Demonstrate existence of (but not necessarily provide) housing; must pay repatriation costs for overstayers	Agriculture, tourism	64,540 (2006) (requests)	80,000 (2008)
Korea	Employment Permit System	3 years + 3 year renewal	Labour market test	All sectors	80,000 (2006)	Target 110,000 (2007)
New Zealand	Recognised Seasonal Employer	<7 months	Labour market test; employer must demonstrate (but not necessarily provide) housing and pay half transportation costs; employer must pay repatriation costs for overstayers	Agriculture	5,000 (2007)	Quota of 5,000 (2007)
Spain	Contingent	<9 months	Labour market test or shortage list	All temporary sectors	78,000 (2006)	None

Table continued:

United Kingdom	Seasonal Agricultural Worker Scheme (SAWS)	<6 months	Employers must guarantee housing but can deduct costs	Agriculture	16,000 (2005)	Limited to Romanian/Bulgarian citizens from 01/01/08
United Kingdom	Sector Based Scheme	12 months	Employers must guarantee housing but can deduct costs	Food processing	3,500 (2007)	3 500 (2007); to be phased out
United States	H-2A	<10 months	Employer must pass labour certification test, pay at least enough to counter adverse wage effects, provide housing and cover one-way transportation costs	Agriculture	50,000 (2006)	None
United States	H-2B	<10 months, renewable up to 3 years	Employer must pass labour certification test	Non-agriculture, especially landscaping, cleaning, hotels and restaurants, construction	200,000 (2006)	Capped at 66,000 entries annually

Source: OECD, SOPEMI 2008, p. 158.

The number of temporary workers permitted to immigrate is limited in some countries by quotas. In the United Kingdom only Romanian and Bulgarian citizens are allowed to work under the Seasonal Agricultural Working Scheme.

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Reference

OECD, SOPEMI (2008), *International Migration Outlook*, annual report, Paris.