

PROJECT SUMMARY
URUGUAY
ZAFRALES: WORKERTECH IN AGRICULTURE
(UR-T1269 AND UR-G0003)

In Latin America and the Caribbean, technological change, new forms of labor management, and greater flexibility in the labor market have led to an increase in casual employment in rural areas for ever-shorter lengths of time. This, in turn, creates conditions for increasingly unstable and transient jobs that entail greater risks of social and employment vulnerability for workers and their families.

In Uruguay, the number of temporary wage workers has been on the rise, estimated at 25%,¹ which would mean a universe of 20,000 to 30,000 workers. Temporary workers in Uruguay—and in other countries in the region—face extremely complex circumstances. Most of them live in periurban areas, and many in unregulated settlements, where patterns of poverty and exclusion are perpetuated.

This reorganization or restructuring of work has led to the increased use of various hiring methods through service companies, through hiring agents largely in the informal sector, or other parties. They play an essential role in temporary job markets by providing access to the necessary labor for farm work and other tasks. This is the backdrop against which [Zafrales](#) emerged: a technology platform to connect supply and demand for temporary work, with an initial focus on agriculture.

The **objective** of this project is to strengthen, consolidate, and expand a sustainable, scalable platform in order to promote quality employment among temporary rural workers, adding new benefits for this specific group of workers.

To meet this objective, the solution entails a series of improvements to the current Zafrales platform. These involve adding new workertech services and protections² to enhance the quality of life of these rural workers in temporary jobs, such as access to financial services, training and knowledge accreditation, dental and preventive care, and agreements with health care providers.

This project will be a significant catalyst for creating quality jobs in the vulnerable sector of temporary workers in rural areas.

The project is expected to reach 30,000 people who will access employment via the platform, 40% of whom will be women. Workers for these jobs will be hired by at least 60 businesses.

Upon completion of this contingent recovery intervention, Zafrales will have better capabilities for expanding its services in the local market and in at least one additional country of the region.

¹ El sector agrario uruguayo. Trabajadores transitorios y vulnerabilidad social. Riella and Martínez (2020) http://www.scielo.edu.uy/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0797-55382021000200089&lng=es&nrm=iso.

² WorkerTech protections and services are defined as digital services offered to independent workers, to help them: (i) guarantee access to basic employment rights and coverage; (ii) optimize productivity and professional development; and (iii) facilitate collective organization, in terms of both unions and professional organizations.

IDB Lab, the Labor Markets Division (LMK), and the Environment, Rural Development, and Disaster Risk Management Division (RND) will be able to draw lessons learned from the business model for a broader audience in the public and private sectors and in civil society organizations.

The project is aligned with the Bank's Vision 2025 and the IDB Group country strategy with Uruguay.