

Lessons Learned from Projects Linking Green-Skilled Training and Migration

SHONA WARREN · NICOLE PAGAN · HELEN DEMPSTER

Abstract

This paper examines six projects that link green-skilled training with international labour migration, looking at lessons learned in terms of design, implementation, and scale. Drawing on a literature review, stakeholder interviews, and a roundtable of experts, it identifies five factors crucial to success: political and financial buy-in; strong multi-stakeholder collaboration embedded in the project structure; private-sector engagement; effective skills mapping and training; and support for migrant workers. Public-funded pilot projects dominated the landscape, with emerging private-sector innovations offering scalable models. Projects enhanced institutional capacity; built trust foundational for working relationships between countries and institutions; and demonstrated the potential for how linking training and migration can effectively expand the global stock of green-skilled workers while supporting equitable development. However, complex governance, financing challenges, subsequent size-limited project structures, and fluctuating employer demand continue to constrain scale. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for designing sustainable partnerships that balance labour needs, development objectives, and green transition goals across countries of origin and destination.

Lessons Learned from Projects Linking Green-Skilled Training and Migration

Shona Warren, Nicole Pagan, and Helen Dempster

Center for Global Development

The authors would like to thank the stakeholders who generously gave their time and insights for this paper.

Shona Warren, Nicole Pagan, and Helen Dempster. 2026. "Lessons Learned from Projects Linking Green-Skilled Training and Migration." CGD Policy Paper 378. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/lessons-learned-projects-linking-green-skilled-training-and-migration>

CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

2055 L Street, NW Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20036

1 Abbey Gardens
Great College Street
London
SW1P 3SE

www.cgdev.org

Center for Global Development. 2026.

The Center for Global Development works to reduce global poverty and improve lives through innovative economic research that drives better policy and practice by the world's top decision makers. Use and dissemination of this Policy Paper is encouraged; however, reproduced copies may not be used for commercial purposes. Further usage is permitted under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

The views expressed in CGD Policy Papers are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the board of directors, funders of the Center for Global Development, or the authors' respective organizations.



Contents

Acronyms	1
Introduction	2
Methodology	3
Key findings	6
Buy-in and motivations	6
Structure	10
Private sector engagement	14
Skills mapping and training	16
Migrant workers	20
Scaling	23
Recommendations	27
References	28

Figures

1. Project sample: Six green skilled migration projects 4
2. Growth of labour migration projects featuring green skills 2007–2025 8

Tables

1. Project sample 5
2. Stakeholders involved in GSP implementation in both countries
of origin and destination 12
3. Stages of training 18
4. A funding approach to scale green skilled mobility projects 26

Boxes

1. Official development assistance (ODA) and labour migration 13
2. Gender and green skills 22
3. The APTC's cost-sharing model 25

Acronyms

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
ANAPEC	National Agency for Employment and Skills Promotion (Morocco)
APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
BA	German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CGD	Center for Global Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
EMN	European Migration Network
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSP	Global Skill Partnership
HOMERe	High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MPF	Migration Partnership Facility
NRW	North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PALM	Pacific Australia Labour Mobility
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SNMPI	National Strategy for International Professional Mobility (Morocco)
SSRN	Social Science Research Network
THAMM	Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Introduction

There is a global skills shortage in sectors critical to delivering the green transition, estimated to rise to six million workers in the next five years (New Climate Institute, 2025). This is the case for general roles (such as in sustainable construction and seasonal agriculture) as well as specialist roles (such as heat pump installers and solar panel technicians). In many countries, labour shortages across these occupations are already causing delays to project timelines, restricting the growth of sectors key to climate change mitigation and meeting net zero targets (IEA, 2023). Promoting labour migration may help fill shortages in high-income countries, but may deprive low- and middle-income countries of the skilled labour they need to achieve their own green transition goals. What is needed, therefore, is a global increase in the stock of green-skilled workers.

One way to achieve this is to link training in green skills with labour migration opportunities (Adaawen, 2022; Huckstep et al., 2023). There are many different models and frameworks—such as Skills Mobility Partnerships, Global Skill Partnerships, and Talent Partnerships—which could, and have, been used for this purpose.¹ Regardless of the model chosen, linking training and migration offers three key benefits over and above pure recruitment of green-skilled workers:

1. They increase the global stock of workers, thereby reducing the risk of “brain drain”, ensuring all countries have the skilled workers they need to meet their green transition goals;
2. They guarantee a pipeline of skilled workers for countries of destination, particularly from markets with a large supply of young labour; and
3. They facilitate credential and skill recognition, as employers and governments come together to co-design curricula which can meet international standards.

These benefits are slowly being realised and put into action by governments in countries of destination. A 2022 survey found that pairing migration and development cooperation was becoming an increasing priority for European countries (Benjelloun, 2022). Countries are interested in how to create legal labour migration pathways (including circular and temporary pathways) while facilitating international skill and diploma recognition, mitigating against “brain drain”, and preventing labour market distortions. Many high-income countries are expanding opportunities for mid- and high-skilled migrants to move, particularly to support key growth sectors such as the green transition (OECD, 2023). And a small yet growing subset of labour migration projects are focusing on pairing labour migration with green skills development (Huckstep and Dempster, 2024; ILO, 2024b).

1 A brief note on terminology. “Skills Mobility Partnerships” is an umbrella term which refers to any models which link training and migration. “Global Skill Partnerships” are one such model, delivering a “dual track” of training in the country of origin, with some trainees moving to the country of destination. “Talent Partnerships” are European-level frameworks which consolidate all migration programming within target countries (Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Bangladesh, and Pakistan). See IOM (2023); EMN (2022); and https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-resettlement/talent-partnerships_en.

However, such projects are often complex (due to the number of stakeholders involved); costly (due to the necessary foundational capacity-building for migration systems and relationships, and training alignment) (Dempster et al., 2022). These factors are all inhibiting the ability of these projects to scale. Of course, there are additional factors: changing employer demand, engaging the private sector, political backlash, conflicting priorities, migration governance, and high costs associated with capacity development (Hooper, 2019; EMN, 2022). A recent analysis of EU initiatives found “no universal good practice exists ... all schemes and mechanisms are differently challenged by bureaucracy, cultural constraints, private sector’s mistrust or public sector’s rigidity” (Ferro, 2024).

While there have been some efforts to distil lessons learned from labour migration projects (e.g., Hooper, 2019; EMN, 2022; Chirita and Stefanescu, 2021) there remains a gap in learning from projects which have combined training and migration to support the green transition. Given the increasing importance of this intersection, we at the Center for Global Development (CGD) felt this was an opportune time to develop this research paper under the auspices of our “Linking Training and Migration for the Green Transition” research project.² Interestingly, in general, green-skilled migration projects suffer from the same challenges and opportunities present in other sectors, although we have highlighted where we found green skills specific issues.

Methodology

Our research, undertaken between May and August 2025, consisted of four main phases:

1. **Mapping.** Mapping of projects that paired labour, migration, and training for a green transition-related sector.³ We then applied the following three criteria to maintain a manageable scope:
 - a. Projects include a training component in general skills or professions that are relevant to the green transition e.g., construction, engineering, welding, electrical skills.
 - b. Projects include a Global South–North labour migration component: circular, temporary, or permanent.
 - c. Projects include the intention to assist project participants in finding employment, either temporary or permanent, in the country of destination.
 - d. Projects have already moved people.

Applying the three criteria allowed us to review projects that had successfully trained, moved, and employed workers. Following outreach with project stakeholders, our sample came to six projects, allowing us to do deep dives on each project (Table 1).

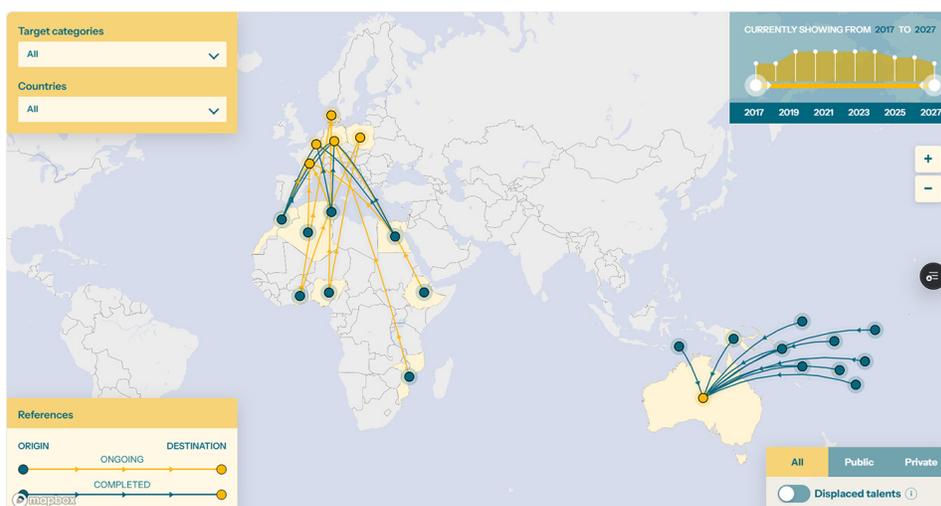
2. **Literature review.** A review of publicly available literature related to green-skilled migration projects. In addition, project documentation where available, project evaluations, and grey literature.

² For more, please see <https://www.cgdev.org/project/linking-training-and-migration-green-transition>.

³ 25 projects as of June 2025, the map is available here <https://www.cgdev.org/media/mapping-green-skilled-migration> and is a living document, with new projects found and added.

3. **Stakeholder interviews.** 19 stakeholder interviews were conducted virtually between May and July 2025, on the basis of anonymity, with project implementers, funders, partner governments, employers, and project participants.
4. **Key findings roundtable.** A stakeholder roundtable was held on August 28, 2025, where key findings were presented and recommendations discussed and refined.

FIGURE 1. Project sample: Six green skilled migration projects



Note: Please see Table 1 for project details.

Our overarching research questions were:

- What lessons can be learned from labour mobility projects that have combined training and migration to produce skills relevant to the green transition?
- What are the key common elements of projects that made them successful, and what were the common challenges?
- If, and how, did projects scale, and what were the enabling factors or barriers to scale?

As the number of projects was a small sample, with limited geographic representation, it is difficult to draw broad lessons. Indeed, the financial and operational structures make direct comparison difficult. Instead, we have sought to draw out examples of good practice and considerations for design that might be applicable to other projects in this space, which will have varying designs and structure. The aim is for these takeaways to help guide project implementers and policy practitioners on best practice and lessons learned from across the broad range and scope of projects taking place in this emerging space.

We faced a number of constraints including limited access to project documentation (such as process and impact evaluation data) as well as access to stakeholders (Dempster et al., 2022).⁴ This paper is therefore not a comprehensive evaluation of the projects included—often only one or two stakeholders were spoken to per project—so statements made do not represent the overall view or impact of a project.

⁴ This is not specific to green-skilled mobility projects but applies to labour mobility more broadly.

TABLE 1. Project sample

	Project	Included General Skills Relevant to the Green Transition	Country of Destination	Country of Origin	Years	Number of People Moved	Funding
Public ⁵	Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project	Construction	Germany	Morocco	2017–2021 Completed	103	World Bank
	Australian Pacific Training Coalition (APTC)	Built environment (including construction), engineering, and electro technology	Australia	Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Nauru	2008–2025 Completed	18,000+ trained (100+ migrate per yearly cohort ⁶)	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
	High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment (HOMERe)	Various, including engineering and energy	France, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia	France, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia	2012–present Ongoing	600+	Hosting companies, HOMERe country offices
	Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration (THAMM)	Network technicians, industrial maintenance technicians, electronics, construction, heating and air conditioning, and metal work	Germany and Belgium	Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt	2019–2022 Completed	697	Co financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)
Private ⁷	Eryk: African Apprenticeship Program	Electricians	Denmark and Poland	Nigeria and Ghana	2018–Present Ongoing	50	Eryk (a private employer)
	Bauverbände NRW: The Pool Approach	Construction	Germany	Ethiopia	2022–Present Ongoing	20+	Bauverbände NRW, employer contributions to industry association

Note: Full details of projects, and the wider mapping, can be found here: <https://www.cgdev.org/media/mapping-green-skilled-migration>.

5 For this report, we define “public” projects as those which have been implemented primarily by governments with public funding. HOMERe is an exception, which is led by a civil society organisation but has benefited from public funding.

6 Over the last five years on average, the percentage has been between 2.5% to 10% of each yearly cohort (which ranges from 5592 in 2022, growing to 7235 in 2023) to migrate. (APTC, 2024a; APTC, 2023)

7 For this report we define “private” projects as primarily led by the private sector with no, or limited, public funding.

Key findings

We have structured our analysis around five key findings, all crucial to get right if a project is to be successful: political buy-in to get the needed stakeholders and funding; how the project is subsequently structured and financed; private sector engagement throughout the project cycle; facilitating skills mapping and training; and supporting the migrant workers themselves. In the final section, we examine more broader thoughts on scale.

Buy-in and motivations

Across our project sample, we found that the establishment of new labour mobility projects—whether led by public or private actors—requires the political backing from all governments involved. Projects are therefore particularly vulnerable to increased political scrutiny during efforts to reduce immigration rates. Managing the various political dynamics at play across governance levels has proven challenging for our reviewed projects (Stefanescu, 2020).

A number of common factors drove political buy-in; motivating governments, employers, and funders to engage in labour mobility projects. Skill shortages in countries of origin, unemployment in countries of destination, and interest in building better migration management systems and relationships between countries were all cited as underlying rationales for engagement.

These motivating factors exist within a shifting overarching political context where we are seeing labour mobility projects increasingly bound to broader migration management and foreign policy aims. For example, Australia's relations with its Indo-Pacific neighbours are central to Australia's foreign policy strategy, and it considers itself to have a leading role in the economic development of its Pacific Island neighbours (DFAT, 2025a; Clare, 2022). To counter China's increasing influence in the region, Australia has increased development investments in the Pacific. They have identified labour mobility as “central to Australia's engagement in the region” by providing jobs and skills, as a way to help combat key challenges for the Pacific, such as a youth bulge and unemployment (DFAT, 2025b; Clare, 2022; Sora, 2024).

In the European context, there are ongoing discussions on linking returns and readmission cooperation to labour migration agreements. For example, under the EU's Talent Partnership framework, Bangladesh, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, and Nigeria have been proposed as countries that would benefit from EU migration, if they cooperate on returns and readmission of their own nationals. There are difficult geopolitical constraints therefore impacting the foundations of these upcoming labour migration frameworks—with an emphasis on readmission and returns cooperation being prioritised above training and compatibility frameworks on the legal migration side. Pure alignment of workers, training curricula, soft skills, and complementary demand for green skills is unlikely to be the sole factor for country selection in the EU going forward. Indeed, this is reflected in recent bilateral labour agreements, which are increasingly becoming broader, now covering migration management through capacity development and returns agreements (Varesio, 2025).

For example, the 2024 Germany-Morocco deal has been framed both as an opportunity for regular labour migration, as well as for cooperation on broader migration management.

Stakeholders have differing but complementary motivations for starting or joining labour mobility projects

For countries of destination across our sample, their involvement in labour mobility projects has largely been driven by the need to address demographic changes and accompanying skills shortages, while curbing irregular migration. For many European countries, publicly funded labour mobility projects were a way to test pioneering strategies and ways of working, with public investment in training in both countries of origin and destination, to respond to labour shortages and to foster regular pathways for prospective migrants, at a time when irregular routes are rising in public and political concern. Ministries of development were also focused on developing capacity, piloting new ways of working, and establishing networks which could be leveraged for more concrete and operational relationships (Dempster and Tesfaye, 2022).

On the other side, countries of origin commonly collaborate on labour mobility projects to reduce unemployment rates, increase knowledge transfers, and foster remittances. Morocco, for instance, was looking at ways to tackle high unemployment rates via a range of post-Arab Spring 2011 reform efforts, including international mobility (World Bank, 2015). The HOMERe project began in 2012 to reduce the severe unemployment rates of the post-2011 era and to respond to difficulties of companies in the Mediterranean to find skilled labour.⁸ Private sector employers were largely motivated to instigate their own international mobility projects due to a lack of apprentices and skilled workers in their own domestic market. Adjunct interests include reducing unemployment rates in the country of origin, knowledge transfer between partners, and remittances. Eryk found they were unable to source skilled electricians in Poland or Denmark, leading them to train and hire new workers from Nigeria. Meanwhile, Bauverbände NRW, a German construction industry association, was also struggling with skill shortages. Having previously worked with Ethiopian construction partners through a prior capacity-building project, they were also aware of interest among Ethiopian partners to reduce unemployment in construction, increase know-how for Ethiopian employers hiring workers upon their return, and encourage remittances.

A complex set of factors have driven financing decisions

With key stakeholders on board, an equally important first order concern is securing funding; who funds it, why, and for how long, often shapes the purpose, structure and stakeholders of the project.

Since 2017, the EU has increasingly funded and engaged in labour mobility projects through initiatives such as the Talent Partnerships, the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) (funded via the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – AMIF), and the EU Trust Fund for Africa (Caritas, 2022).

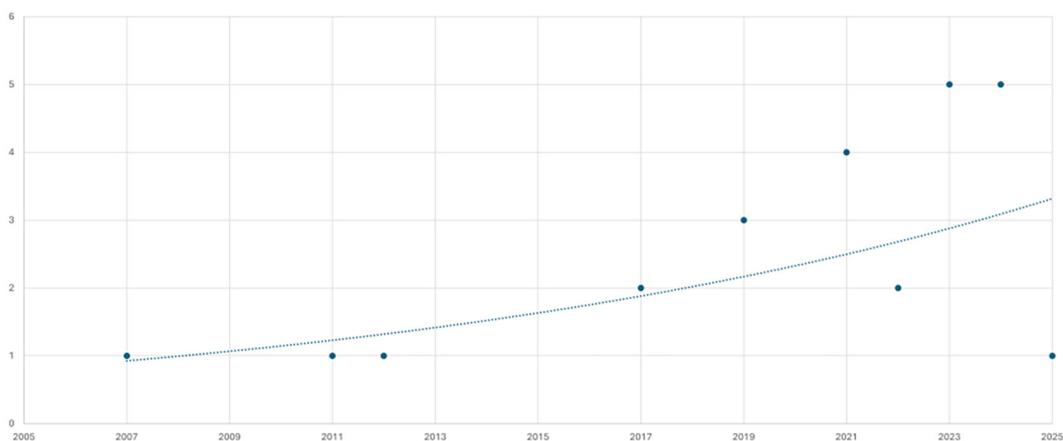
⁸ See <https://ufmsecretariat.org/project/homere/>.

These initiatives have been largely set up to be responsive to labour shortages in EU countries of destination.

However, analysis has shown that the AMIF funding has largely created short-term, temporary, mobility projects that have focused on migrants ultimately staying in countries of origin (Kumar, 2024). Similarly, the short-term nature of AMIF funding—a maximum term of 36 months—has determined that projects are smaller in scale, moving relatively fewer people (Kumar, 2024).

This may change, and we heard from interviews that the MPF has been increasingly receiving applications from projects targeting green skills. This shift is visible in our initial mapping of the broader green skills landscape; of the 25 emerging and established initiatives found, 16 were launched in the last four years.

FIGURE 2. Growth of labour migration projects featuring green skills 2007–2025



Source: Warren, 2025.

Across our sample, meeting skills shortages was the key driver to establish a project, rather than broader carbon emissions reductions goals.

The World Bank has long funded labour mobility projects, often as part of wider capacity-building and technical assistance projects (World Bank, 2025). Interviewees reflected on how these funding mechanisms had a complex set of drivers, including finding equitable solutions to worker shortages, promoting legal migration routes, and reducing irregular migration flows. For instance, the World Bank funded the Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project in 2014 as a way to test labour mobility solutions for worker shortages and legal pathways options, while leveraging the evaluation capabilities and reach of the World Bank to disseminate lessons learned.

For other public-funded projects in our sample, development agencies of the country of destination were both a key funder and implementer, with “capacity-building” the driving goal. Development agencies are often responsible for ensuring the “mutual” development benefit for countries of

origin in mobility partnerships (Dempster and Tesfaye, 2022). However, this leads to high fixed costs, due to the financing needed to build institutional capacity and networks upfront. For THAMM, a public-funded project, the primary purpose was to improve the governance of labour migration (European Commission, 2021). Migrants paid no costs, and the €5 million budget (US\$5.8 million) was entirely covered by the EU.

Bauverbände NRW is an example of a private-funded approach; employers in Germany are matched with skilled workers from Ethiopia. This is referred to as a 'pool approach' which sees Bauverbände NRW, the employer association, act as a bridge between its members—construction companies in Germany—and a pool of trained workers in Ethiopia. Bauverbände NRW also provides part of the human and financial resources, through staff time paid for via broader member contributions. The project is driven by employer demand for skilled construction workers in Germany. For employers, their financing is covered by their membership fees to the industry association, with pre-financing by migrant workers for pre-departure training, including language training and some technical skills training for the construction sector. The migrants are then reimbursed in instalments by employers once they have arrived in Germany and begun their apprenticeship. The programme remains popular with employers and continues to grow within a climate of German companies reporting difficulty finding domestic apprentices (Ifo, 2025), however the pool approach is still in its first three years of operation, so long-term impacts of the financing model and sustainability are still to be assessed. For Eryk, the other private-funded initiative in our sample, the employer themselves was the project implementer and funded it solely themselves.

Mobility projects are inevitably impacted by geopolitical relations between countries

A positive working relationship between partner country institutions is key to the success of labour mobility projects. Most projects in our sample have grown out of prior working relationships between countries, for instance via pilots in other occupational sectors, or connections with actors from previous projects. Bauverbände NRW, for instance, had established relationships during prior capacity-building projects in Ethiopia which they then built on for their pool approach.

Establishing projects with wholly new countries requires increased investment into networks, relationships, and capacity-building. We heard from stakeholders the challenges in navigating partner country choice, with geopolitics and racial stigma sometimes playing a role. Indeed, as discussed earlier, broader context on migration issues such as returns and readmissions can often determine labour migration agreements. The EU has found difficulties in increasing the uptake of labour mobility projects across some member states due to hesitation in expanding regular migration (Caritas, 2023). To better attract new countries of destination to take part in these projects, data showing quantitative and qualitative economic and development benefits for governments and employers could demonstrate the value of such an approach.

More broadly, good diplomatic relations between the country of origin and destination are an important pre-condition to the projects' establishment and successful implementation. As the International Labour Organization (ILO) has noted about THAMM, it "**faced delays due to political and institutional factors, which required adaptability. Success depended on government commitment and staff expertise.**"⁹ In one period of diplomatic issues between Moroccan and German Governments, GIZ was unable to attend coordination meetings or use its logo as part of the THAMM programme (ILO, 2024a). Changes of government were also found to temporarily slow progress for the Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), as new governments settle in and develop relevant training and labour migration approaches. However, it also could result in increased collaboration and opportunity with a new government, as in the case of Fiji where an increased focus on TVET was found with a change in government (APTC, 2023).

Embassies have emerged as a key actor, streamlining the visa process and promoting the projects to relevant employers. In implementing their project with Germany, Morocco's National Agency for Employment and Skills Promotion (ANAPEC) found that a designated contact point at the German Embassy was able to facilitate visa procedures at times of strained geopolitical relations between the two countries, illustrating the usefulness of good embassy-project relations.

All of the projects in our sample used existing migration pathways to move workers, and were subject to existing challenges in the migration system as a result. Migration governance issues, such as visa processing times, remain a major challenge in the execution and scaling of such projects. Workers trained by the THAMM project found themselves in a limbo, having resigned from jobs held previously and ready to move, but then were forced to find new temporary employment to sustain themselves while waiting for their visa to be issued. Similarly, Eryk has faced delays in visa processing and residence permits once workers are in Poland, during which they are not able to travel outside of Poland. As Eryk's structure requires skilled electricians to be deployed for short-term work across the EU, long wait times for visas have impacted their work programmes. The unpredictability of visa time frames is also an ongoing barrier to greater employer engagement, particularly for employers wanting to fill time-sensitive roles (Hooper et al., 2025).

Structure

Public-funded pilot projects most prevalent, with emerging innovative structures from the private sector

The reviewed projects were set up by a mix of employers, development agencies, multilateral institutions, and civil society organizations. There was no one dominant project and financing structure in our sample of six projects, however in the first step of our methodology, the mapping

9 See <https://webapps.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/files/file/1536991>.

exercise, we found public-funded pilot projects were the most common. Each project in our sample had different drivers and purposes, with financing models and operational structure to suit:

- **Public-funded projects** were supported by governments directly; through regional funds such as the MPF or AMIF; or through bilateral funding. THAMM and APTC are examples of public-funded projects in our sample.
- **Private-funded projects** are funded and run directly by the employer or an employer association. Eryk and Bauverbände NRW in Ethiopia are examples of this.

Some projects were also financially supported by the migrants themselves, either in the form of payment for language training, or financing for elements of travel later reimbursed by employers (Dempster et al., 2022).

Operationalising a partnership requires strong stakeholder management and collaboration

Strong collaborations between involved stakeholders are imperative for the success of labour mobility projects and building a “climate of trust” (Stefanescu, 2020; ILO, 2024a; Hooper, 2019). All the projects in our sample that involved development agencies used multi-stakeholder or tripartite approaches, with ministries on either side, private sector, development agencies, and international organisations. Representation from, and collaboration between, different groups is important; however, with greater representation greater coordination is required between stakeholders, which can be a hurdle for projects both for their launch and throughout the project cycle. The Independent Final Evaluation of THAMM noted that pre-consultations to establish needs and priorities of stakeholders began in 2017 with Morocco, two years before the project began (ILO, 2024b). It also found that coordination across groups such as employers, training institutes, government stakeholders, and implementing partners, was time and resource intensive, with limited budget allocated, and a lack of clear roles and responsibilities. THAMM had increased challenges on the Belgian side, with four employment agencies coordinating at the regional level.

Some projects were able to streamline the stakeholder management process better than others. When multiple stakeholders are involved, interviewees across the project sample emphasised the importance of leveraging existing groups such as industry associations and construction forums to reduce coordination time. Bauverbände NRW held regular construction forums in Ethiopia, which involved construction employers; skills, labour, and finance ministries; and other government agencies, where they shared knowledge and addressed problems. For example, the construction forum came to an agreement on how best to structure pre-financing for the trainees (repayments in instalments after arrival in Germany), after working through some early challenges.

For projects focused on capacity-building, the collaboration and relationships set up were intended to continue beyond the project cycle. We heard from stakeholders how strong working relationships

had developed between government ministries and industry associations, which supported engagement beyond the structures of the project. These working relationships developed through regular meeting touch points, meaningful collaboration at key project junctures, and informal, open and regular, channels of communication between stakeholders. This is the precise form of relationship and network building that many projects are counting on to scale (see Scaling section for further discussion). For projects following a Global Skill Partnership (GSP) model, collaboration across stakeholders was fundamental, requiring considerable planning and time investment (see Table 2 below).¹⁰ One stakeholder who had implemented a GSP reflected that coordination and alignment across stakeholders “is the key for everything we have done” when compared to other models of migration partnerships.

TABLE 2. Stakeholders involved in GSP implementation in both countries of origin and destination

Governmental bodies	including ministries of development, labour, immigration, diaspora, interior, and that of sectoral interest (e.g. energy)
Non-governmental bodies	labour unions, diaspora organisations, and civil society organisations.
Employers, employer associations, industry associations	particularly for skills anticipation and shaping training requirements in both countries of origin and destination.
International organisations	including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Ongoing questions of financing remain

Within our project sample, we saw different forms of private sector involvement in projects, from in-kind support, co-financing elements, to employers fully funding their own initiatives. Both public- and private-led projects are investing in local training systems, through supply of equipment and use of facilities by local institutions. Employers are also increasingly willing to financially contribute to projects and wider structures; for example, stakeholders reflected that German employers looking to hire from Morocco are now paying for pre-departure language training as part of an agreement between ANAPEC and the German Employment Agency.

However, across public-funded projects (see Box 1 for further discussion of official development assistance (ODA) and labour migration), employer engagement was cited as an ongoing challenge with potential financial risk to employers identified as a barrier (discussed in the section on Private sector engagement). To address this, project implementers highlighted the need for future projects to plan how financial risk is distributed across actors. One solution was to frame potentially high costs to employers and governments in comparison to the cost of unfilled vacancies (EMN, 2022). Another suggested approach, is to map out for employers a cost breakdown, how costs could fall over

¹⁰ A Global Skill Partnership (GSP) is a bilateral labour migration agreement between equal partners. The country of destination supports the training of people in the country of origin before they move. Some stay and support the local labour market (the “home track”), while others migrate to the country of destination (the “away track”). To learn more, please visit <https://cgdev.org/bettermigration>.

time as more candidates and employers take part which will hopefully reduce perceived risk for employers (Dorst et al., 2024).

Across our sample we also saw measured steps to increase migrant payments alongside employer engagement. APTC, in some of its training programmes, have candidates pay subsidised fees. For one private sector project in our sample, candidates pay for the training and employers reimburse once the migrant worker has been placed in an apprenticeship, quality of work assessed, and commitment established. Some stakeholders suggested that this approach attracts candidates that are more committed, due to the modest financial buy-in.

This is controversial. International organisations such as the ILO and International Organization for Migration (IOM) cite concerns about any pre-financing by migrants, due to the ILO guideline that states that migrant “workers shall not be charged directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or related costs for their recruitment” (ILO, 2019). However, there are exceptions to this guideline, if the costs are “in the interest of the workers concerned; ... limited to certain categories of workers and specified types of service; ... and the corresponding related costs are disclosed to the worker before the job is accepted”.¹¹ These exceptions are able to provide some flexibility to both migrant workers and employers in developing sustainable models of financing (Dempster et al., 2022; Carmichael, 2024). In practice, we heard from stakeholders of a rapidly increasing uptake of (and payment for) languages such as German by prospective migrants before formal participation in a labour migration project—potential migrants upskilling themselves, without specific employment opportunities in mind—another grey area of the ILO guidelines.

BOX 1. Official development assistance (ODA) and labour migration

Whether and how official development assistance (ODA) can be used for labour mobility projects is an ongoing discussion between donors. A temporary working group was established by the OECD Development Advisory Committee (DAC) in 2020 to establish criteria for reporting migration related activities as ODA (Dempster et al., 2022). In the following years, they approved both principles and criteria regarding the ODA eligibility of labour migration projects (Weberberger and Gaveau, 2025). For example, criterion 7 states:

“Activities that focus on giving access to decent labour opportunities (Decent Work Agenda), protecting the rights of migrants, preventing abuse and exploitation or aiming to improve migrants’ overall labour situation in ODA-eligible countries are ODA-eligible. Activities fostering labour mobility from ODA-eligible countries to non-ODA eligible countries can also be eligible, where the primary purpose is to benefit developing countries (migrants’ countries of origin) ... Activities intended to primarily fill labour market gaps in the non-ODA eligible country are not eligible.”

11 See https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_536755/lang--en/index.htm.

And principle 3 states that:

“While benefits to provider countries do not preclude ODA eligibility, development co-operation should not be used as a vehicle to promote the provider’s domestic migration agenda. The promotion of economic development and welfare of a developing country must come before any other goals.”

In practice, this means that labour mobility projects have elements that are ODA eligible (e.g., capacity-building of partner institutions and training workers who remain in the country of origin) and elements that are not (e.g., training workers who move to the country of destination, visa fees, airfares). For example, the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme (the mobility programme linked to APTC) is partially ODA eligible as the primary purpose is to benefit Pacific countries, through focusing on skills and communities. In particular, the programming financed by Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is considered ODA eligible.

Private sector engagement

Engaging the private sector is a challenge

While our project sample included two private-led initiatives with dedicated and proactive employers, on the whole, public-led projects often find engaging employers a challenge (Dempster and Huckstep, 2024). Employer engagement is critical to the success of a labour mobility project, and a lack of private sector engagement has been found to be a barrier for many EU-funded labour mobility pilots (EMN, 2022). A key draw for many small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is that publicly funded projects can reduce the “administrative burden” and cost of hiring international workers (Stefanescu, 2020). It is imperative that more labour mobility projects measure the impact of international recruitment on participating employers to support the scaling of existing, and establishment of new, projects. APTC for example, undertakes graduate tracer surveys and employer engagement surveys.¹²

In sectors related to the green transition, broader economic and policy trends have lowered the demand for green products and services in Germany, and the subsequent demand for workers. Both the Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth and THAMM projects reflected that their focus sectors have seen a decline in demand in Germany, reducing companies’ need to hire. This was not necessarily the case in other countries, but does signify that the demand for workers to support the green transition may be more susceptible to shifts based on external factors.

¹² See <https://aptc.edu.au/surveys>.

Industry associations are preferred partners to identify and engage with employers

All projects highlighted industry associations as important partners, allowing projects to access employers in countries of destination, most often SMEs facing shortages in green skilled sectors. GIZ, responsible for employer mobilization in the Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project, successfully collaborated with two regional industry associations in Bavaria and Thuringia. Industry associations were instrumental throughout the project process: identifying employers to join; conducting interviews with participants in Morocco for placement; and acting as a multiplier effect for SME involvement.¹³ For APTC, engagement with the private sector through industry bodies was “critical”, with strategies in place in each country of engagement to best understand influence and industry trends (APTC 2023). Bauverbände NRW is a unique example of a German construction industry association leading a labour mobility project itself for the benefit of its German members. Due to the direct connection with, and demand from, its members it has seen early success in the matching and placement of apprentices.

Preparing employers is key to ensuring they have realistic expectations and see the project as a long-term opportunity

Stakeholders from across the project sample reflected on the importance of managing employers’ expectations regarding project timelines, needed resources, and candidates’ profiles.

The Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project invested considerably in this. Several in-person consultations and study missions were organised bringing German employers to Morocco, and expectations were laid via pre-matching consultations with employers (World Bank, 2015). The challenges faced due to cultural and working differences (including differences in communication of feedback) in phase one were addressed via more targeted pre-departure training on the reality of German culture and life in phase two. Moreover, during phase one of the project, there was an active effort to build the networks and identify the key elements to replicate the project in other sectors, via targeted consultations with private actors, companies, employer associations, and chambers of commerce, industry, and crafts. Engagement within companies is also critical; one employer reflected on the importance of preparation ahead of a labour mobility project as key to ensuring buy-in from across the employees, and to better increase team cohesion.

The engagement with the project should be framed to employers as a long-term investment, from which results are going to improve over time. Employers that are willing to invest time and effort in the whole process, not necessarily the largest, were cited as the best partners to collaborate with. For the THAMM project, one company happy with recruits from the initial project cycle have since signed an integrated development partnership to continue engagement

.....
¹³ From internal project documentation shared with Authors.

with THAMM Plus (the second iteration of THAMM, currently active).¹⁴ The partnership will see collaboration on knowledge sharing, the company supporting technical training development and competence assessment mechanisms. Other companies involved in THAMM have decided to independently continue their recruitment: one German employer, following successful recruitment of workers from Tunisia via THAMM, has since independently visited Tunisia and recruited apprentices autonomously.

Overall, the private-led initiatives included in this study are effectively managing to train and place workers, addressing labour shortages and providing work opportunities in contexts with high unemployment rates. The EU has shown interest in having other companies replicating this model, and have organised knowledge exchanges between Eryk, Bauverbände NRW, and EU institutions.

Skills mapping and training

Skills mapping is key to understand skills needs in both countries of origin and destination

Understanding the occupations and skills in demand, both now and in the future, is critical to the design of labour mobility projects. In order to achieve development benefits for labour mobility projects, it is important to consider country of origin skills needs alongside those in countries of destination (Hooper, 2019). It is therefore important to undertake skills mapping at both the national and regional levels, requiring cooperation between national, regional, and vocational actors (OECD, 2016). Previous research has found that projects which consulted and updated skills requirements throughout the project cycle were able to ensure the skills remained in demand and relevant for workforce needs (Stefanescu, 2020). None of the projects in our sample were initially conceived with carbon emissions reduction outcomes in mind. However, green skills were frequently cited as in demand. Stakeholders noted that capacity-building for skills assessments is not sector specific, however, to understand specific skills needed in each sector (including “green” sectors such as construction and mechatronics) project staff became sector specialists. For APTC, green skills are increasingly integrated across trainings, as part of APTC’s Skills for Climate and Disaster Resilience Strategy (APTC, 2024b).

Detailed skills anticipation assessments require proper consultation across actors as well as analysis of skills and labour force data. For larger projects in our sample, such as THAMM, capacity-building to enable local partners to conduct their own skills assessments was a key outcome. In all THAMM countries, the project supported the development of inter-institutional national roadmaps, to improve national level coordination of skills anticipation for labour migration (ILO, 2024a). Trainings to increase capacity of national authorities were undertaken, however data management systems were highlighted as a barrier to accurate skills assessments.

¹⁴ Finding from internal project documentation shared with the authors.

From our project sample, we heard of the importance of design consultations as a tool to understand what skills are in demand by industry. Design consultations included a range of actors, with most involving country of origin ministries, industry, training institutions, country of destination ministries, and international development actors. From these consultations, sector and occupations for the migration project can be agreed. For THAMM, consultations between ANAPEC, the German Employment Agency (BA), THAMM GIZ, and the Moroccan Office for Vocational Training and Employment Promotion, resulted in joint selection of occupations for both German and Moroccan labour markets including industrial mechanic apprentices and heating and air conditioning technicians.¹⁵

For Skills Mobility Partnerships, which seek to supply skilled labour for both countries of destination and/or origin, skills assessments are needed to identify skills that will benefit both countries. For example, in THAMM, mechatronics was identified as an in-demand occupation in both European countries and Morocco. Some project stakeholders reflected that it has proven challenging, however, to collect input from local employers on the establishment of training curricula and skills assessments. This is because employers think that workers will be primarily trained for international labour markets and will not be employed domestically. For smaller, private-led, projects in our sample, placements and training were responding to immediate demand, so the project implementers did not undertake a broader landscape analysis of skills.

Further capacity-building and investment in TVET structures and data management is required to support better analysis of domestic and international skills needs. Industry associations can play an important role if better involved and engaged in this process, supporting skills assessments and ensuring that they are aligned to domestic needs. This will be of particular importance for green skills, as technology continues to advance and the market is projected to rapidly grow.

Looking ahead at migrants who wish to return to their countries of origin, it is also important that skills for re-integration have been considered. To this end, the entire skills dividend should be built into the design of the project; what skills can support the employer (both local, and abroad), the worker, and the country of origin and how can these skills be developed, to ensure that all benefit from skills transfer when workers return. Within our project sample, only one project fostered circular migration and did include reintegration support; other projects should consider this.

Training in the country of origin: Quality key to building trust of process for employers

Levels of training ranged from soft skills such as informal cultural awareness sessions, language training, to highly technical and skilled certification (Table 3). All projects in our sample delivered pre-departure training for prospective migrants. Pre-departure training was highlighted by

¹⁵ Finding from internal project documentation shared with the authors.

stakeholders as particularly important for safety and skills standards, as well as cultural and professional expectations. For some projects, stakeholders reflected that overall pre-departure training should be strengthened to emphasise cultural differences in approach to work, and better set expectations for the challenges of migrating to a new country. For Germany, most prospective migrants to Germany need to meet B2 level, which takes approximately a year of intensive training. Bauverbände NRW has found that for many employers, the commitment to German language study is taken positively, and increases willingness to hire. However, a shortage of teachers and long waiting lists for classes has been a bottleneck for projects in our sample.

TABLE 3. Stages of training

Country of Origin – Pre-Departure	Country of Destination – Post-Arrival
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language training • Cultural awareness training • Some technical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-based learning • Apprenticeships • Formal qualifications • Cultural integration • Further language training

At the technical end of the spectrum, Enabel worked with the Moroccan National Institute for Professional Training to develop a module for security and quality control in mechatronics, in line with EU directives on safety. 30 trainers were taught to deliver the training; the Moroccan certificate is now recognised by European factories and has become the model for other mobility schemes between Morocco, Italy, and Germany.

Across the project sample, we have seen that the willingness of employers to hire is built over time through visits, quality training, and using industry associations as intermediaries. With trust built, we see that companies return to the projects for further placements. HOMERe shared how, although it can be challenging to bring companies on board at first, they then tend to continue hiring interns annually from the pool. After the internship, about a third are hired by the company where the internship took place, a third are hired by the local branch in the country of origin, and the remainder find other employment. In the Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project, at least 90 percent of participating employers were willing to hire again from Morocco, 59 percent of apprentices were employed by their companies and 26 percent by another company (World Bank, 2015).

Willingness to hire again from institutions was highlighted by some stakeholders as a way forward for scaling labour migration, under a path dependency approach. If companies start trusting the quality of students from certain institutions, that in itself might be a greater sign of quality than a certificate. However, successful initiatives such as Morocco’s mechatronic certification process

highlight the benefits of formal certification recognition as improvements to standards, quality, and investment in training in the country of origin.

Training in the country of destination: A mix of work-based learning and apprenticeships best for green skills

Most projects in our sample delivered a mix of training in the country of origin followed by work-based learning in the country of destination. This was noted as particularly important for safety standards in green-skilled related sectors. The apprenticeship model is dominant in Germany, which aligns well with the German visa system and allows companies to have oversight of training alongside migrants working and earning – due to this, it is a cheaper model of labour migration for German employers in our project sample. It can also be of benefit to the apprentices themselves, as they are able to learn to the standard and preferences of their employer. One reflected on the positives of work-based learning upon arrival in the country of destination: ***“I was learning a lot. After this period, I have more confidence, I have more knowledge about the job and the people. I [have] the necessary skills, more than before I joined.”***

However, some stakeholders reflected frustration at the fact that skilled workers with years’ experience and qualifications were brought in at the apprenticeship level in Germany. They would prefer better investment in recognition of certification from countries of origin to avoid de-skilling. ANAPEC has significantly invested in this approach, with the digitisation of two Moroccan certifications on the Europass platform (ILO, 2024a). Certification recognition is an ongoing challenge for labour migrants – often being non-standardised and costly (Anger et al., 2024). In particular some stakeholders cautioned against market distortion when only a few certification bodies are recognised, which has led to extortionate fees and monopolies. Recognition of less formalised prior learning (such as general skills, or on the job experience) could be a helpful bridge for workers and companies, however is even more difficult to square than standardised certification recognition, as it requires greater cooperation between country institutions and is labour intensive with high levels of technical understanding required by officials (Dempster and Huckstep, 2024).

Another alternative is for projects to deliver the entirety of the training in the country of origin, similar to the GSP model. Investment in training in the country of origin can deliver greater development benefits for the country of origin and can also be cheaper for projects than delivering training in the country of destination (Chand and Dempster, 2019). However, this approach relies on the existence and quality of existing TVET institutions in the country of origin; their ability to scale; and trust in that quality from employers in the country of destination.



Migrant workers contracted by Eryk.
Source: Eryk.

Migrant workers

Matching between employers and workers: candidates are essential to success

The migrant worker, their skills, and aptitude in their role is fundamental to the success of labour mobility projects. Across interviews with stakeholders, candidate commitment and quality of skills was cited as critical to success during placement and retention with employers in countries of destination. Selection therefore is a key part of the process. Indeed, research of 18 broader labour mobility projects funded by the MPF found that the matching process between candidates and companies cannot be underestimated in importance, and that more resource intensive approaches to matching such as interviews are necessary (Stefanescu, 2020).

Engagement in selection was a key success factor in the Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project. Employers were engaged from the start via industry associations in building the selection criteria, were included in the interviews with candidates, and co-defined the pre-departure training. We heard from stakeholders that these relationships later continued beyond the scope of the initial project, and some have become part of ANAPEC's working practice. Bauverbände NRW initially matched employers and candidates through a manual CV sift, and then organised virtual interviews between the two before departure. By comparison, other projects in our sample, such as THAMM, only engaged employers once candidates were trained and ready to be hired; they found placement and employer buy-in more challenging with a reduced level of placement rates, particularly with workers from Egypt (ILO, 2024b).

Across our sample, there were a variety of approaches to candidate targeting. The private-led projects in our sample selected candidates with a higher level of skill, most having already completed training or previous work in the sector. On the other hand, public-led projects specifically targeted candidates undergoing “professional reorientation” to avoid brain drain (European Commission, 2021). When reflecting on their first phase, THAMM emphasized the importance of early agreement between project actors on qualification and skills requirements, to avoid “inadequate matching” between employers and workers. Gender balance and inclusion have been a challenge across our sample, with hesitancy cited from both employers and female workers (further discussed in Box 2).



An apprentice in road construction contracted through Bauverbände NRW, with their employer.
Source: Bauverbände NRW.

Overall, the projects had low attrition rates and successful placement rates, whether in the country of origin or abroad. In 2024, 89 percent of all APTC graduates found it “easy” or “very easy” to secure work and once employed, 94 percent of employers reported high satisfaction with APTC graduates (APTC, 2024d). Employer engagement was even higher, with 99 percent of employers satisfied with the technical skills assessment and 96 percent more likely to employ another APTC graduate (up four percent from 2023) (APTC, 2024c). From this sample, roughly 2.5–10 percent of each cohort migrate. Since 2022, there have been no drop-out for both trainees and employers in the Bauverbände NRW programme. For HOMERe, 70 percent of graduates of the programme were successful in finding a job in their country of origin at the end of their training (Ferro, 2024). However, most the data we have is from a relatively short time frame; follow-up surveys and information are needed to assess the rate of attrition and longer-term impacts of employment and integration. An example of a good model of longitudinal data collection comes from New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme, which includes graduate tracer surveys.

BOX 2. Gender and green skills

Across our project sample, female participation in green skills-related labour mobility occupations was low. This is in line with the wider gender imbalance in green skills globally.¹⁶ Stakeholders highlighted a range of issues, from reluctance of employers to hire women to a lack of interest from some women themselves in migrating. One project implementer reflected on a roundtable held with prospective participants, and noted that the women involved were not interested in the migration portion of the project.



Female worker contracted by Eryk.
Source: Eryk.

However, other projects have seen some demand from women to migrate. In the THAMM project, female candidates who migrated noted positive impacts on their individual development and professional behaviour—which stakeholders reflect is illustrative of empowerment. THAMM also included collaboration with women’s organisations in Morocco who consulted in the development of the National Strategy for International Professional Mobility (SNMPI) (ILO, 2024a).

In the Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project, while there was a considerable number of women who applied for the scheme, they did not match the qualifying criteria (either being overqualified or lacking experience on the ground).¹⁷ While small-scale mobility projects will not be able to address the underlying issues of female participation in green skills, steps can be made to ensure individual projects increase participation as much as reasonable, such as by sharing calls for candidates in women’s networks or introducing quotas. For APTC, a specific Gender, Equity, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy has strongly supported the work of the programme: in 2023–24, 49 percent of APTC graduates were female (APTC, 2023). This result followed specific targeting of women in marketing campaigns to enrol in courses, and offering introductory and women-only courses in non-traditional trades such as engineering, welding and construction.

16 See <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/10/07/why-women-risk-losing-out-in-shift-to-green-jobs>.

17 See <https://mia.giz.de/qlink/ID=253504000>.

Employers play a leading role in integration

Stakeholders across our sample agreed that employers play a key role in supporting migrant integration in the country of destination. Public sector stakeholders reflected that integration should be led by employers in the country of destination, rather than left to public services which are often under pressure. In the THAMM project, employers have found it difficult to socially integrate some foreign workers in workplaces (Ferro, 2024). Some projects have also found it difficult to find funding for integration programmes in the country of destination, with some public and ODA funding only available to provide support for activities in the country of origin. Bauverbände NRW and Eryk are examples of the leading role employers can play in supporting integration; they organised events with staff such as cooking workshops, while also providing support in finding accommodation and matching with mentors.



Apprentices in road construction contracted through Bauverbände NRW with their employer.
Source: Bauverbände NRW.

Scaling

Labour mobility projects have long been criticised for their failure to scale. They often require large financial investments and extensive coordination mechanisms to move a small number of people. Many of the barriers to scale have already been addressed in this report, including a lack of political will, a sustainable cost-sharing structure, employer investment, and enabling migration governance structures. As the projects discussed in this paper are all relatively recent, there is not yet grounded evidence on what has worked in terms of developing mobility infrastructure. However, projects which link training and migration for the green transition have the potential to deliver economic wins for the trainees themselves, employers, countries of origin and destination, as well as the planet through carbon emissions reduction. To do this, a larger number of people will need to move in future.

However, it's important to define what we mean by "scale" and what role we expect stand-alone labour mobility projects to play. Our research has found that the majority of labour mobility projects *do* scale, "morph" into a new form, or *inform* the design of subsequent larger pathways (Dempster et al., 2021). As has already been discussed in this report, many projects were designed to improve the capacity of labour mobility infrastructure and migration governance to enable the movement of future workers free of a rigid project structure. It would be unfair to judge a specific labour mobility project for failing to "scale", if it had indeed created that path dependence.

Many projects in our sample have created this enabling infrastructure, which is already seeing results at scale. They noted that by establishing the "plumbing" now, later projects and pathways will benefit from the systems, infrastructure, and regulatory processes set up which are crucial to scale (Poeschel et al., 2025). For example, ANAPEC in Morocco now has autonomous working relationships with governments and employers, placing 700 skilled workers annually, and is the go-to partner for many European countries looking for skilled workers, driven (in part) by the capacity build by the Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project (Salak, 2025). In the THAMM project, all three countries of origin (Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt) have continued to use the formalised selection, preparation, and placement procedures for workers migrating to Germany outside of THAMM.¹⁸ Surveyed as part of THAMM's final evaluation, stakeholders agreed that policy coherence for labour migration increased as a result of their engagement with THAMM.¹⁹ ANAPEC's relationship with Germany has grown from strength to strength, with ANAPEC signing an agreement with the German Employment Agency (BA) to ensure the placement of workers in key green skills sectors: Civil Engineering Technicians, Structural Works Specialists, and Certified Electrical Installation Technicians (ANAPEC, 2025). Other programmes and employers are able to build upon the foundations laid by previous labour mobility projects funded by international organisations, such as the World Bank who are now able to step away from financing ANAPEC (World Bank, 2025; ILO, 2024a).

These results in investment can take years to see. Stakeholders noted the difficulty in measuring the impact of capacity-building, and the importance of thinking holistically about value for money and return on investment when it comes to institutional strengthening and localisation of delivery.²⁰ It will be important to identify what outcome measures define "success", and develop process and impact evaluations to measure this success. Particularly in a context of shrinking development funding, considerations need to be made for sustainability beyond development funding and international organization investments. For example, APTC have transitioned some programmes to

18 Finding from internal project documentation shared with the authors.

19 For Morocco 73 percent, for Tunisia 60 percent, and for Egypt 77 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I believe that policy coherence for labour migration has increased". See ILO (2024a).

20 An example of a labour mobility project investing in understanding cost effectiveness is the MPF's Digital Explorers project. Their Value for Money Assessment aimed to understand the broader impact of the project, including capturing these extra-project impacts (Digital Explorers, 2022). Similarly, the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) quantified the European added value of supporting and developing skills mobility partnerships, finding that it could increase European GDP by €2.8 billion per year (Navarra and Fernandes, 2021).

local partners, after judging that they are able to offer enough places at a reasonably high standard to meet local demand. They are now working on supporting partners to provide fee-for-service training to increase financial sustainability (see Box 3). For this version of scaling—transferring responsibility to local training providers—further analysis is needed, including a training needs analysis, costed training proposal, and embedding of industry consultation into the annual processes for strategic and operation planning.

BOX 3. The APTC’s cost-sharing model

The investment design document for APTC’s third phase breaks down the various contributions from the Australian government, Pacific governments, employers, and trainees themselves (Table 5.2 in *APTC, 2017*). Many of these are in-kind contributions. For example, employers were to make workplace training facilities available for use; and Pacific governments were to make land, buildings, and equipment available. Similarly Pacific governments were to support the funding of new TVET teachers, as that would benefit local students as well as those who moved to Australia./ Following successful placement and employer engagement rates, interest in co-investment from employers is increasing—97 percent of APTC employers surveyed in 2024 indicated they would be interested in supporting other employees to attend APTC courses (*APTC, 2024c*)—as part of their broader push to advance fee-for-delivery training (*APTC, 2023*). For example, Reeves Envico (a large construction employer) had their staff to deliver training on working safely in the construction industry for APTC students, while also covering travel and accommodation for trainers.

Despite positive examples of cooperation and strong partnerships between countries, often we are seeing labour mobility partnerships established as a “carrot” alongside the “stick” that is cooperation on border management and returns. This can contribute to uneven power dynamics (*Caritas, 2022*). We heard from some stakeholders that it is difficult to identify and enforce a focus on development objectives. In the case of APTC, labour mobility has been a divisive issue in the Pacific; Samoa has introduced reforms to devolve decision making for labour migration to the local level, and Vanuatu has seen local employers facing skills shortages due to emigration (*APTC, 2023*). It will be important for all partners to identify shared objectives to facilitate sustainable, scaled, partnerships (*Hooper and Sohst, 2024*).

Envisioning the structure of scale

As described above, two key challenges to scale are sustainable financing and employer buy-in, which necessarily interconnect. When most stakeholders think about a sustainable financing structure, they think about employers in countries of destination bearing the majority, if not all, of the cost burden. Of course, in the context of shrinking and increasingly tied bilateral aid, questions of employer financing and buy-in are more urgent (*Hahn, 2024*). However, as an MPF review of 18 pilot projects found, “such contributions only appear realistic on a basis of established trust, and

demonstrated results that will take time to obtain” (Stefanescu, 2020). What is needed is a phased approach, whereby employer contributions are progressively scaled up as trust is developed.

This begs a key question: should there be a role for public-led and -funded projects? And if so, what should that role be, particularly in context of increased fiscal constraints and shrinking development budgets? In our sample, we looked at private-led projects which are successfully connecting skilled workers with employers in countries of destination, and scaling these efforts. However, it is not clear that the economic development of the country of origin was a key consideration, at least on par with meeting skill shortages in the country of destination. If we desire equal partnerships—whereby both countries benefit from a combination of training and migration, something particularly necessary in sectors such as green skills which face a global shortages—there will likely always be a role for public engagement and funding. This can protect development interests, while also absorbing private sector risk in the early phases to build the capacity, relationships, and underlying skills mapping for projects to build on. So, what should the right balance be? This, we outline in Table 4.

TABLE 4. A funding approach to scale green skilled mobility projects

Phase	Tasks	Funding
Phase one: Capacity-building and systems strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping, including consultations with relevant stakeholders such as governments, training institutions, employer associations, licensing bodies • Funding is secured for phase one; training and migration at small scale (c. 50 people) takes place • Enabling infrastructure developed: capacity of local stakeholders is strengthened, stakeholders are engaged, trust is built • Process and impact evaluation is undertaken to demonstrate value of project 	Phase one will largely be public-funded (either through bilateral or multilateral support). However, employers should pay <i>something</i> in this phase, likely a small contribution once they received (and are happy with) a skilled worker. To enable this, it will likely be necessary to initially work with one or two multinational employers who are used to hiring internationally and comfortable contributing financially.
Phase two: Increasing placements and numbers moved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader range of employers (e.g., SMEs) are brought on board, using evaluation evidence • Greater number of people are trained and moved (c. 200 people) 	Phase two will be funded using a mix of public funding (e.g., for further capacity building, training of people who stay in the country of origin) and employers (e.g., training and migration of those who move to the country of destination). Migrants could be asked to cover some of their own costs.
Phase three: Public engagement and funding phase out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions with enhanced capacity take the lead in training people and facilitating migration through existing links with employers • Greater number of people are trained and moved (c. 1,000 people+) 	Phase three will largely be financed by employers, and perhaps migrants themselves. There may still be a role for very nominal public funding, but that money would be better spent setting up new structures in different countries/sectors.

The approach outlined in Table 4 does not go into detail on the type of financing required. In our sample, the public-led projects largely used ODA and other development financing tools to cover costs, and the private-led projects used fees from their members. It is likely that other, more

innovative, financial solutions will be needed to cover these costs, whether the project is public- or private-led. For example, loans, income share agreements (ISAs), and guarantee funds. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into depth on these solutions, but we recommend interested stakeholders review the work of the Mobility Finance Network (MFN) and the NGO Malengo who are experimenting with these solutions in more depth.

Recommendations

This section contains five general recommendations for project implementers as they seek to design and scale projects which link training and migration to support the green transition. We encourage readers to explore the projects in our sample in more depth, and connect with the implementers themselves to learn more.

1. **Employer contributions (both in-kind and financial) should be planned to scale in each phase of the project.** There will likely always be a role for both public and private funding in the design and delivery of labour mobility projects. Yet, for projects to scale, employer contributions will need to grow. To do this, it will be imperative to build trust in a project, and gather data to prove its impact, and to best predict and respond to future demand. In-kind contributions (such as technical equipment and training) alongside financing can increase both the relevance of training and the sustainability of projects.
2. **Business cases need to be developed to engage new countries—of both origin and destination.** To better attract new countries to take part in these projects, creating a business case and gathering better data showcasing the value of the project could set out the quantitative and qualitative economic and development benefits for governments and employers.
3. **Holistic skills mapping should be undertaken to support skills development for all labour markets, including for reintegration.** Skills mapping is foundational for the pipeline of training to employment—understanding what skills are in demand not only better supports labour market outcomes for migrants, but also ensures skills are relevant for employers in both countries of origin and destination. Skills mapping should be regularly updated in consultation with industry.
4. **Increase capacity and support for industry associations, and directly partner with them.** Industry associations are an important convenor and touch point for employers, and with their buy in and support can positively contribute across the project cycle—to skills mapping, planning training, and placing workers.
5. **Better monitoring and impact evaluation are needed, particularly during phase one, to track the impact for employers and funders.** Baseline, midline, and endline evaluations should be financed and undertaken, alongside employer and employee tracer surveys to understand the long-term impact of training and migration on cohorts.

References

- Adaawen, Stephen. "Human Capital and Mobility at the Service of the Green Economy." Brussels: International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 2022. https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/58474/file/MIEUX_GreenEconomyHumanMobility_EN.pdf.
- ANAPEC. "ANAPEC – the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills of Morocco." Washington DC: World Bank, 2025. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/ec8585edba3e34fd17aad06629cb60a8-0310022025/related/S1-04-Salak-labor-Mob-conf-WB.pdf>.
- Anger, Silke, Jacopo Bassetto, and Malte Sandner. "Lifting Barriers to Skill Transferability: Immigrant Integration through Occupational Recognition." IZA – Institute of Labor Economics Discussion Paper 17444 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5019067>.
- Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC). "2023 Annual Report." Canberra: Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), 2023. https://24045200.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/24045200/Files/APTC%202023%20Annual%20Report_web%20version%20Aug%202024.pdf.
- . "2022 Annual Report." Canberra: Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), 2024a. https://24045200.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/24045200/Files/Annual%20Reports/2022%20Annual%20Report_web%20version_Aug%202024.pdf
- . "APTC Skills for Climate and Disaster Resilience Strategy 2024-2025." Canberra: Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), 2024b. https://24045200.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/24045200/The%20APTC%20Climate%20and%20Disaster%20Resilience%20Strategy_Final.pdf.
- . "Employer Engagement Survey Report 2024." Canberra: Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), 2024c. <https://24045200.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/24045200/Files/Employer%20Engagement/Employer%20Engagement%20Survey%20Report%20-%202024.pdf>.
- . "Graduate Tracer Survey Report 2024." Canberra: Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), 2024d. <https://24045200.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/24045200/Files/Graduate%20Tracer/Graduate%20Tracer%20Survey%20Report%20-%202024.pdf>.
- . "Stage 3 Investment Design Document." Canberra: Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), September 18, 2017. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/aptc3-design-document.pdf>.
- Benjelloun, Sara. "Migration and Cooperation in the Mediterranean: Beyond Divergent Priorities." Euromesco, April 2022. https://www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/1.-EuroMeSCo-survey_Sara-Benjelloun.pdf.
- Carmichael, Elicia. "Balancing Financial Risk in International Labor Mobility Programs." Labour Mobility Partnerships (LaMP) (blog), November 26, 2024. <https://lampforum.org/2024/11/26/balancing-financial-risk-in-international-labor-mobility-programs/>

- Caritas. “Why Europe Needs More Labour Migration.” Rome: Caritas, 2023. https://www.caritas.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/221215_CE-briefing-paper_labour-migration-V2.pdf.
- Chand, Satish, and Helen Dempster. “A Pacific Skills Partnership: Improving the APTC to Meet Skills Needed in the Region.” Washington DC: Center For Global Development (CGD), 2019. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/pacific-skills-partnership-improving-aptc-meet-skills-needed-in-region>.
- Chirita, Oleg, and Diana Stefanescu. “Tapping into Global Talent – Putting the EU Talent Partnerships in Motion.” ICMPD (blog), January 18, 2021. <https://www.icmpd.org/blog/2021/tapping-into-global-talent-putting-the-eu-talent-partnerships-in-motion>.
- Clare, Angela. “Briefing Book Article, 47th Parliament: Pacific Islands – Key Issues.” Australian Parliament House, June 2022. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/Research/Briefing_Book/47th_Parliament/PacificKeyIssues.
- Dempster, Helen, Ismael Gálvez Iniesta, Reva Resstack, and Cassandra Zimmer. “We Analyzed 57 Legal Migration Pathways. Here’s What We Found.” Center for Global Development (CGD) (blog), July 16, 2021. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/we-analyzed-57-legal-migration-pathways-heres-what-we-found>.
- Dempster, Helen, Ismael Gálvez Iniesta, Reva Resstack, and Cassandra Zimmer. “Financing Legal Labor Migration Pathways from Pilot to Scale,” June 2022. <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/financing-legal-labor-migration-pathways-pilot-scale.pdf>.
- Dempster, Helen, and Sam Huckstep. “Options for Green-Skilled Migration Partnerships: A Guide for Policymakers.” Washington DC: Center For Global Development (CGD), June 17, 2024. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/options-green-skilled-migration-partnerships-guide-policymakers>.
- Dempster, Helen, and Beza Tesfaye. “Why and How Development Agencies Facilitate Labor Migration.” Washington DC: Center for Global Development (CGD) and Mercy Corps, August 2022. <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/why-and-how-development-agencies-facilitate-labor-migration.pdf>.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). “Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Corporate Plan 2025–26.” Canberra, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), August 15, 2025a. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/dfat-corporate-plan-2025-26.pdf>.
- . “Pacific Labour Mobility.” Canberra, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2025b. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/engagement/pacific-labour-mobility>.
- Dorst, Emma, Kate Hooper, Meghan Benton, and Beatrice Dain. “Engaging Employers in Growing Refugee Labour Mobility Pathways.” Brussels: Migration Policy Institute, July 2024. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-employer-engagement-refugee-labor-pathways_final.pdf.

Digital Explorers. “Digital Explorers – Value for Money Assessment.” Migrationpartnershipfacility.eu. Brussels: International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 2022. <https://www.migrationpartnershipfacility.eu/calls-for-proposals/documents/11-reports/89-digital-explorers-value-for-money-assessment-full-text>.

European Commission. “Action Document for towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM III).” Brussels: European Commission, 2021. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/7eb3c5a4-cd51-4bf9-9d00-2cee8c86412a_en?filename=C_2021_9615_F1_ANNEX_EN_V2_P1_1639233%20Annex%20IV%20THAMM%203.PDF&prefLang=sk.

European Migration Network (EMN). “Skills Mobility Partnerships: Exploring Innovative Approaches to Labour Migration.” European Migration Network (EMN), March 3, 2022. <https://emn.gov.hr/news/new-joint-emn-oecd-inform-skills-mobility-partnerships-exploring-innovative-approaches-to-labour-migration/819>.

Ferro, Anna. “Legal Labour and Circular Migration in EU: An Analysis of Different Initiatives in EU and the Case of the Mentor2 Project between Italy, Morocco and Tunisia.” CeSPI, 2024. https://www.cespi.it/sites/default/files/documenti/mentor2_circular_migration_aferro_eng_def.pdf.

Hahn, Helena. “What Role for Skills Mobility in the Green Agri-Food Transition?” Heinrich Böll Stiftung | Brussels Office - European Union. Brussels: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024. <https://eu.boell.org/en/2024/12/04/what-role-skills-mobility-green-agri-food-transition>.

Hooper, Kate. “Exploring New Legal Migration Pathways: Lessons from Pilot Projects.” Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute (MPI), February 2019. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/TCM_MigrationPilotProjects-FINALWEB.pdf.

Hooper, Kate, Tesseltje de Lange, and Jasmijn Slotjes. “How Can Labor Migration Policies Help Tackle Europe’s Looming Skills Crisis?” Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute (MPI), June 24, 2025. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/migration-policies-europe-skills-crisis>.

Hooper, Kate, and Ravenna Sohst. “Competing for Talent: What Role Can Employment- and Skills-Based Mobility Projects Play?” Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute (MPI), April 27, 2024. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/competing-talent-mobility-projects>.

Huckstep, Sam, and Helen Dempster. “Meeting Skill Needs for the Global Green Transition a Role for Labour Migration?” Washington DC: Center for Global Development (CGD), January 2024. <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/meeting-skill-needs-global-green-transition-role-labour-migration.pdf>.

Huckstep, Samuel, Helen Dempster, and Charles Kenny. “The Billion Dollar Benefits of Expanded Green-Skilled Migration.” Center For Global Development (CGD), September 26, 2023. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/billion-dollar-benefits-expanded-green-skilled-migration>.

- Ifo Institute. “Majority of Companies Report Difficulties in Finding Trainees (4th Quarter 2024)”, Randstad Ifo HR Survey, Ifo Institute, January 2025. <https://www.ifo.de/en/facts/personnel-manager-survey2024-q4/majority-of-companies-report-difficulties-in-finding-trainees?>
- International Energy Agency (IEA). “World Energy Employment 2022”. International Energy Agency (IEA), 2023. <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-employment-2022/overview#abstract>.
- International Labour Organization (ILO). “General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs.” Geneva: International Labour Organization (ILO), 2019. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/publication/wcms_536755.pdf.
- . “Independent Final Evaluation of Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM).” Geneva: International Labour Organization (ILO), February 22, 2024a. <https://webapps.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/files/file/1536991>.
- . “Professional Mobility North Africa-Europe: The New Deal?” Geneva: International Labour Organization (ILO), March 31, 2024b. <https://www.ilo.org/resource/professional-mobility-north-africa-europe-new-deal>.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). “Recommendations and Guidance for Policymakers and Practitioners Skills Mobility Partnerships.” Geneva: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2023. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pub2023-002-el_skill-mobility-partnerships.pdf.
- Kumar, Clare. “Expanding legal pathways for labour immigration A stocktake of the European Commission’s efforts.” London, ODI Global (ODI), 2024. https://media.odi.org/documents/Expanding_legal_pathways_for_labour_immigration_policy_brief.pdf.
- Navarra, Cecilia, and Meenakshi Fernandes. “Legal Migration Policy and Law: European Added Value Assessment.” Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/694211/EPRS_STU\(2021\)694211_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/694211/EPRS_STU(2021)694211_EN.pdf).
- New Climate Institute. “The Impacts of Skills Shortages on Global Power Sector Emissions.” New Climate Institute, 2025. <https://newclimate.org/resources/publications/the-impacts-of-skills-shortages-on-global-power-sector-emissions>.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). “Getting Skills Right Assessing and Anticipating Changing Skill Needs.” Paris: OECD, 2016. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@americas/@ro-lima/@sro-port_of_spain/documents/genericdocument/wcms_728392.pdf.
- . “International Migration Outlook 2023.” Paris: OECD, 2023. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/10/international-migration-outlook-2023_0faed233/b0f40584-en.pdf.

- Poeschel, Friedrich, Colleen Boland, Tesseltje de Lange, Martin Ruhs, and Ayse Saka-Helmhout. “Engaging the Private Sector in Global Skills Partnerships. Exploring the Potential of International Business-To-Business Approaches.” Global Strategy for Skills, Migration and Development (GS4S), 2025. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14764638>.
- Salak, Halima. “Case Study Morocco: ANAPEC – The National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills of Morocco.” Presentation at South Asia Labor Mobility Conference and Workshop, 2025. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/ec8585edba3e34fd17aad06629cb60a8-0310022025/related/S1-04-Salak-labor-Mob-conf-WB.pdf>.
- Sora, Mihai and Jessica Collins, Meg Keen. “The Great Game in the Pacific Islands.” Sydney, The Lowy Institute, August 2024. <https://interactives.loyyinstitute.org/features/great-game-in-the-pacific-islands/>.
- Stefanescu, Diana. “Partnerships for Mobility at the Crossroads: Lessons Learnt from 18 Months of Implementation of EU Pilot Projects on Legal Migration.” Brussels: International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 2020. <https://www.migrationpartnershipfacility.eu/storage/files/mpf-policy-brief-pilot-projects-1020.pdf>.
- Varesio, Bianca and Orlane Janvier. “Bilateral Labour Arrangements: Emerging trends for EU Member States.” Vienna, Migration Partnership Facility, 04 December 2025. <https://www.migrationpartnershipfacility.eu/news/bilateral-labour-arrangements-emerging-trends-for-eu-member-states>.
- Warren, Shona. “A Global Map of Green Skilled Migration Projects.” Center for Global Development (CGD), December 10, 2025. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/global-map-green-skilled-migration-projects>.
- Weberberger, Katharina, and Valérie Gaveau. “DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics: ODA Casebook on Activities in the Field of Migration.” Paris: OECD, February 23, 2025. [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT\(2023\)34/FINAL/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)34/FINAL/en/pdf).
- World Bank. “Global Skill Partnerships for Migration: Preparing Tomorrow’s Workers for Home and Abroad.” Worldbank.org. Washington DC: World Bank, 2025. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/ec7bae47-3efe-459f-b566-e236a7ddd32a>.
- . “Morocco – Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth Project.” Washington DC: World Bank, 2015. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/412621485843343566>.