

# Labour shortages, foreign migrant recruitment and the portability of qualifications in East and South-East Asia

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The paper examines labour shortages, admission of foreign workers and the portability of qualifications in Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand. Rapid economic growth and the rapid transformation of economies in these countries in recent decades, usually towards a more skill-intensive context, led to labour shortages. It has increased pressure to admit foreign workers, mainly from labour-rich but poorer neighbouring countries. The five countries included in this study differ in their capacity and in the way they assess and address labour shortages. Linking labour migration policy to the domestic labour market remains a complex task. The admission policies of the five countries differ in the amount of planning involved, the level of government and private sector involvement, the sectors in which foreign workers are admitted and in the rights and entitlements afforded to foreign workers. The study concludes that there are still significant differences among the

receiving countries as to their readiness to recognize foreign worker skills. Without a workable qualifications framework, the recognition of skills across countries is rendered difficult, hindering the mobility of workers and possibly preventing a more efficient allocation of labour resources.

**Subject Tags:**

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**Regions:**

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