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Global Skills Partnership on Migration

The Global Skills Partnership on Migration (GSPM) is an initiative between ILO, IOM, UNESCO, IOE and ITUC to join forces and mobilise expertise for the development and recognition of skills of migrant workers. It supports governments, employers and workers as well as their organisations, educational institutions and training providers, and other stakeholders to rethink migration in a way that is of mutual benefit to all stakeholders; principally migrant workers, including those who return (with a particular focus on women and youth), employers in need of skilled workforce, as well as the countries of origin and destination.

Migration is an ever-growing phenomenon. With [over 169 million international migrant workers](#) globally, there are significant opportunities to foster development in countries of origin, transit and destination, improve livelihoods, develop skills, spark innovation, match talents with jobs, fill skills shortages and allow for the transfer of skills and peer-to-peer learning. It is crucial to maintain these opportunities and alleviate the disruptions to cross-border mobility through the implementation of resilient skills partnerships. This is vital not only to preserve the socio-economic opportunities for migrants and countries of origin who benefit from the skills and remittances of nationals abroad but also for destination countries and employers who depend on skills mobility to fill skills shortages. **The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for well-designed legal pathways that fill skills gaps, in particular in key industries that rely on foreign or cross-border skilled workers** to keep the economy and the health system running during the various shut-downs.



This partnership between five major global actors aims at leveraging these opportunities, while responding to changes in skills needs in times of increasing **automation, digitalization, and transitions** towards low-carbon economies. Reskilling, skills matching and upskilling programmes in origin and destination countries are crucial

to effectively respond to current and future labour market needs. The Global Skills Partnership on Migration also aims to **support the establishment of skills recognition systems, the integration of employers' skills needs and fair distribution of costs for skills development and recognition** among the benefitting stakeholders.

Access to **job opportunities and skills development** are key factors in improving productivity, social cohesion and the well-being of workers. The recognition of the diverse skill sets that migrant workers possess and the portability of qualifications and skills can facilitate their access to decent work and life, stimulate skills portability between countries of destination and origin, and facilitate the reintegration of migrants upon return. These skills should be equally valued and developed in the countries of origin to expand migrants' migratory choices. This would make remaining in the country of origin as viable an option as migrating, and prevent brain drain. Skills partnerships on migration also involve **protecting migrants' rights and empowering them** to exercise their rights through pre-departure and post-arrival trainings. This is critical to prevent migrant workers at all skills levels, particularly those considered at medium and low levels, to be exposed to conditions of exploitation or discrimination, due to a lack of effective social protection or lack of regulatory frameworks aimed at their protection. **The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the distinct vulnerabilities migrants may face in light of globally rising unemployment rates and increased levels of xenophobia.**

This underlines the timeliness and importance of ensuring that migrants are equipped with the skills set needed on the labour market. The Global Skills Partnership on Migration will support stakeholders in making this journey a success for all through enhanced skills partnerships at national and regional levels.

► What is a skills partnership?

Skills partnerships, including the role of social partners and public-private partnerships therein, are an **innovative mechanism for sharing the benefits of migration for both countries of origin and destination, as well as migrant workers and employers hiring foreign workforce**. The key role of skills partnerships on migration has been recognised in intergovernmental consultations that led to the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). **The GCM devotes objective 18 to the issue of investing in skills development and facilitating recognition of skills, qualifications and competences, calling for the establishment of skills partnerships.**

► What form can they take?

Skills partnerships at local, regional, national or international levels can range from informal knowledge exchange, mutually beneficial skills development arrangements to formal bi- or multilateral labour migration agreements, including for example:



Dialogue

A structured channel for dialogue between governments, employers' and workers' organisations to share information on labour market demand, with a view for policymakers to reflect this information in labour migration policies.



Recognition

A formal recognition system for migrants' skills and qualifications, which enables them to put their skills to use in countries of destination and upon return in countries of origin - these should also include ways for countries to anticipate future demand for skills.



Training programmes

Investment in training programmes for migrant workers in countries of destination and/or investment in training systems in countries of origin from government or other stakeholders in destination countries. This might include developing digital skills for the benefit of migrant workers in communities of origin, as part of labour migration agreements or mobility arrangements.



Tripartite partners

Mutual recognition and harmonisation of training systems among tripartite partners, which promotes peer-to-peer and work-based learning, apprenticeship, skills upgrading, as well as a culture and mindset of lifelong learning in the countries involved.

► Skills partnerships respond to Goal 4, 8 and 10 of the SDGs

Goal 8.8 calls on member states to “protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment”. Goal 4.3 calls for “equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”, and goal 4.4 for increasing “the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent

jobs and entrepreneurship”. Goal 4.7 promotes education and training for “sustainable development, (...) a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”. Finally, goal 10.7 stresses that “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies” should be facilitated to reduce inequality between countries.

September 2019

The members of the Global Skills Partnership collaborated on two tripartite workshops in West and Central Africa, validating [two subregional studies](#) on the potential of skills partnerships on migration and developing skills partnership ideas among country delegations.

► [Workshop report West Africa.](#)
[Workshop report Central Africa.](#)

November 2019

The members of the Global Skills Partnership held consultations on the role of social partners in skills partnerships on migration. A report captures the discussion, findings and recommendations.

► [The role of social partners in skills development, recognition and matching for migrant workers.](#)

Joint activities

2020-2021

The members of the Global Skills Partnership collaborated on a study on the mobility of health workers in Africa in partnership with the African Union Commission.

Key tools and publications of GSPM members

- ILO. 2020. [Guidelines for skills modules in bilateral labour migration agreements.](#)
- ILO. 2020. [How to facilitate the recognition of skills of migrant workers: Guide for employment services providers.](#)
- ILO. 2020. [Guide on Making TVET and Skills Development Inclusive for all.](#)
- ILO. 2018. [Policy brief on Skills and Migration.](#)
- ILO. 2017. [General practical guidance on promoting coherence among employment, education/training and labour migration policies.](#)
- IOM. 2021. [Labour Mobility and Skills in Response, Recovery and Post Covid-19 Pandemic.](#)
- IOM. 2020. [Paving the Way for the Future Labour Migration, A Belgian-Tunisian Skills Mobility Partnership.](#)
- IOM. 2020. [Skills Mobility Partnerships - Towards a Global Approach to Skills Development and Labour Mobility.](#)
- UNESCO. 2020. [Global Skills Academy.](#)
- UNESCO. 2016. [Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\) \(2016-2021\).](#)
- UNESCO. 2019. [TVET qualifications frameworks.](#)
- UNESCO. 2015. [Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\).](#)
- IOE. 2020. [Future Skills Assessment report.](#)