Module 8: Skills and migration

Learning objectives
1. Skills dimensions of Labour Migration
2. Rationale and approach to anticipate skills
3. Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition agreements
4. Skills partnerships for development

Key learning messages

Suggestions for group work

Knowledge Acquisition Test

Recommended readings
Learning objectives

By the end of this module, participants will have:

1. Explored the key terms and concepts pertaining to the skills dimensions of labour migration and key notions on the nexus between skills and labour migration;

2. Analysed why and how we conduct skills anticipation assessments and identified the main principles of skills anticipation and matching;

3. Examined key concepts and mechanisms related to skills recognition, skills validation and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and assessed existing options for setting up recognition agreements;

4. Defined what a skills partnership for development and a skills partnership on migration between countries of origin and destination can be and analysed existing examples, their diverse mechanisms and results.
1. Skills dimensions of labour migration

1.1 Defining and understanding the skills-migration nexus

When we approach the topic of the skills dimensions of labour migration in the perspective of decent work, we should start from asking ourselves a few questions on terminology and definition. In the module on Statistics and labour migration we have identified ways to define migrants and migrant workers. We have also identified how to describe migrant workers based on their migration and labour market experience. Furthermore, the other way around, we have acquired instruments to see which are the workers that can be classified as migrants. In this module, we continue to shed light on terminology and definition by focusing on classification tools looking at: i. skills, competences and capabilities of migrant workers, ii. characteristics of vacancies in the labour market that can be useful to match workers with jobs across a migration corridor.

We get started with introducing key terms and concepts which are common among skills development practitioners and that can come handy to describe the capability of a migrant worker and his/her likelihood to meet the requirements of a vacancy:

- **Skill** – ability to carry out a manual or mental activity, acquired through learning and practice. An overarching term which includes knowledge, competence and experience. **Qualification** – a formal outcome of education or training, proved by certificates or diplomas recognizing a successful completion.

- **Levels of qualifications**:
  - Low-level (Grades 0-8/9 = ISCED 0-2)
  - Medium-level (Grades 9-12/13 = ISCED 3-4)
  - High-level (tertiary = ISCED 5-6)
  - TVET is included in Medium- and high-level qualifications depending on the countries

- **Different types of skills** – Cognitive skills (involving ideas), Technical skills (involving things), Social skills (involving people)

- **Skills development** – the development of work-related skills and competencies (combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes)

We have specified that skills development refers to the development by the individuals of work-related skills and competencies, the latter being the dynamic combination of knowledge, attitudes and practical know-how. How can we define "work-related skills"?

- **Basic/core/foundation skills**: Effective literacy, numeracy, digital skills, foreign languages, learning to learn

- **Technical/vocational skills**: Specialized skills, knowledge or know-how needed to perform specific duties and tasks of a vocation or profession, both theoretical and practical

- **Employability/soft/generic skills**: Communication skills, teamwork, inter-personal relations, problem-solving, adaptability or flexibility, critical thinking, creativity

- **Personal attributes and innate traits**: Honesty, integrity, loyalty, reliability, motivation, etc.

1.2 Skills and labour migration through the lenses of the International Labour Standards (ILS)

The ILO has an important mandate and a set of International Labour Standards on labour migration and skills development and lifelong learning. Indeed, skills and migration are intertwined in ILO’s International Labour Standards:
Apprenticeships and training are a field in which migrant workers should not be discriminated (C97)

Migrant workers should be provided of the same opportunities of the nationals in retraining (C143)

Skills anticipation and matching can optimize the use of skills and human capital that refugees represent (R205 - Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017)

A member may make regulations concerning recognition of occupational qualifications acquired outside its territory, including certificates and diplomas (C143)

The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195)
The Recommendation 195 (2004) is the key International Labour Standard on skills. It recognizes that education, training and lifelong learning contribute significantly to promoting the interests of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society as a whole. They are fundamental and should form an integral part of, and be consistent with, comprehensive economic, fiscal, social and labour market policies and programmes that are important for sustainable economic growth and employment creation and social development. The Recommendation calls on governments, employers and workers to renew their commitment to lifelong learning: governments by investing and creating the conditions to enhance education and training at all levels; enterprises by training their employees; and individuals by making use of the education, training and lifelong learning opportunities. The table below summarises how the Recommendation covers several aspects of the skills systems building blocks.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills Development</th>
<th>Skills Anticipation</th>
<th>Skills Recognition</th>
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<td>Members should (d) provide positive measures to stimulate investment and participation in training; ...(f) promote the expansion of workplace learning and training” (Article 9).</td>
<td>Members should (a) promote, with the involvement of the social partners, the ongoing identification of trends in the competencies needed by individuals, enterprises the economy and society as a whole (Article 9).</td>
<td>Special provisions should be designed to ensure recognition and certification of skills and qualifications for migrant workers (Article 12).</td>
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1.3 Other international frameworks

The Labour Migration–Skills nexus in the Agenda 2030
The Agenda 2030 recognizes the positive contributions of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development. Four targets are directly related to skills and to migration:

- Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

Do you want to know more?
Please refer to Section 3 below to learn more on Skills Recognition.
Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development

Target 8.8: 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

Target 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
The compact gives an important emphasis on the skills dimensions of labour migration, which is reflected in nine objectives out of 23. The key objective from the skills perspective is number 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences.

EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) is the overarching framework of the EU external migration policy since 2011. Key features of the GAMM include:

- A migrant-centred approach with more coherence and integration on all aspects of migration
- Non-binding and flexible nature of the framework
- Complementary to the EU foreign policy and development cooperation
- Comprehensive package with four equally important pillars: 1) Better organising legal migration and well-managed mobility; 2) Preventing/combating irregular migration; 3) Maximising the development impact of migration; 4) Promoting international protection and asylum policies.

Another EU-level instrument is the European Agenda on Migration (2015). The “migration crisis” led to a more European approach on migration governance, including on skills migration, support to victim of trafficking and the resettlement of humanitarian migrants. The “Four pillars to manage migration better” (mentioned above) are combined with a discourse for addressing root causes of migration. Key elements of the European Agenda on Migration include:

- ‘Skills’ are a clear concern linked to legal migration, so as ‘brain drain’ linked developmental impact of migration,
- Increasing coherence between the EU migration and other/development policies,
- Comprehensive partnerships with third countries and new and boosted budgets, with many more actors involved (European Council, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European External Actions Service, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Directorate-General for Trade, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Frontex, European Asylum Support Office, European Training Foundation, European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation). This makes the EU the biggest donor in all migration-related initiatives and projects in the world.
The "New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum" (September 2020) constitutes a comprehensive package including many proposals: from fostering trust by better and more effective procedures, managing better Schengen and external borders, to developing constant and effective solidarity with Member States with many arrivals, and attracting skills and talent to the EU. Two main strategies underpin the new Pact:

1. Developing legal pathways to Europe and acting together to deepen international partnerships. This new strategy envisages to launch Talent Partnerships for better job opportunities at home and legal routes to the EU, with interested third countries, starting first in the EU's Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, and in Africa. The Pact puts forward a comprehensive cooperation with partner countries to help boost mutually beneficial international mobility, including:
   - Supporting legal migration with key partners, including mobility schemes for work or training, scaling up existing cooperation
   - Capacity building in areas such as labour market or skills intelligence, vocational education and training, integration of returning migrants, and diaspora mobilisation
   - Working together with ministries of labour and education, employers and social partners, education and training providers, diaspora associations, greater focus on education to support and reinforce investment in local skills

2. Attracting the talent needed vis-à-vis ageing and shrinking population. To set up an EU Talent Pool for skilled third-country nationals which could operate as an EU-wide platform for international recruitment, through which skilled workers could express their interest in migrating to the EU, and could be identified by EU migration authorities and employers based on their needs.

1.4 A focus on the dynamics of skills mobility and migration

We are now going to delve into four key concepts that will be useful to you in the rest of this module, i.e. brain drain, brain gain, brain waste and brain circulation.

Brain drain
Human capital is a major determinant of long-term economic growth of any country. Departure of large numbers of educated workers is detrimental to the country’s development. It is considered that brain drain occurs when more than 10% of tertiary educated people migrate. Issues related to brain drain include:

- Loss of the public investment in high and medium skilled workers’ education, loss of potential economic development and foreign direct investment (FDI) due to lack of skilled workers, loss of ‘Future middle class’
- The best and the brightest leave also through international student mobility, depleting the countries of origin of their best students in higher education
- It is still very difficult to measure the real effects of brain drain because there are no representative counterfactual scenarios (such as a comparable ‘control group economy’ without skilled out-migration) against which the effects of brain drain could be benchmarked.
- Evidence shows that it is a ‘Zero-Sum’ game for the country of origin and the country of destination

Drivers of brain drain are manifold, but evidence and years of studies have helped in identifying the factors that represent clear conducive conditions:
- **Size and demographic structure of the country of origin:** Small countries with decreasing populations and high education levels (e.g. The Balkans) have higher risks of being involved in brain drain phenomena.

- **Duration of migration:** Possibilities and perspectives of permanent migration are a key factor in brain drain.

- **Sectoral aspects of migration:** Some professions such as in the healthcare sector or ICT have been more often involved in brain drain cases.

- **Selective immigration policies:** The immigration policies of destination countries lead to more brain drain. Several countries have had active brain drain-inducing policies to favour the immigration of high-skilled individuals: USA, Canada, Australia, and many other OECD countries.

- **Economic development level:** Labour market absorption capacity of countries of origin plays an important role in triggering brain drain phenomena.

- **Socio-political situation of countries of origin:** High levels of discrimination, violence, inequality, political and social unrest have been at the heart of brain drain movements.

- **International students’ mobility schemes:** These schemes and their effectiveness have been clearly conducive of the development of brain drain phenomena. Still they do preserve the status of being very specific cases.

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**Brain gain**

Brain gain is the immigration of trained and talented individuals into the destination country. It is sometimes also referred to as "reverse brain drain". Migration can also be an incentive for education acquisition and ultimately foster human capital formation and growth. Features of brain gain include:

- Increased investment in education thanks to remittances results in higher average level of education of the remaining population, e.g. Lebanon, India, Egypt
- Remittances contribute to better education of the next generation, e.g. Moldova
- Skills acquisition abroad as a way to catch global knowledge and technology, e.g. China, Singapore, Azerbaijan, Belarus
- Brain drain transforms into brain gain with returnees bringing back an enormous potential to enhance skills and qualifications
- Mobilization of diaspora networks, including temporary return programmes
- ‘Win-Win’ game regarding all levels of skills
Brain circulation
Brain circulation is the circular movement of skilled migrant workers across countries. Migration is becoming more and more an on-going circular process instead of a one-off move. This new paradigm is linked to globalization and focus on the flows rather than loss of skills and where they are. The emphasis is now placed on networking, linkages, integration into global networks: flows of knowledge values, ideas, etc., e.g. China, India. Brain circulation enhances the risk to reinforce duality in and across societies: who accesses international education and circulation? Brain circulation can provide a ‘Win-Win’ game regarding mainly skilled workers (high-tech/ICT, doctors, dual nationals).

Brain waste
Brain waste occurs if the skills (and qualifications) acquired by a migrant outside of his/her country of work are not recognised within that country (either by the government authorities or the final employer), which prevents migrants from fully using their potential. Hence, brain waste happens when there is a situation of mismatch between education levels and job types performed abroad. This implies skills’ under-utilization or deskilling process, due to uptake of low-skilled jobs. The reality is that often limited types of jobs and sectors are open for migrants. Main sectors are construction, personal and domestic services, agriculture, hospitality services, commerce, transport and manufacturing. Issues in brain waste include:

Examples from the region: Brain drain and brain gain in SADC Member States
The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) created a survey to examine the potential brain drain of graduating students at training institutions in six SADC countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini, and Zimbabwe). A large sample of almost 10,000 final-year students was interviewed in training institutions across the region (universities, training colleges, nursing training colleges, etc.). The results showed that as many four out of five students have thought about moving to another country and only 17% had not considered migrating. In the five years following their graduation, over half of respondents expected to migrate.

Accordingly, the most likely destination for potential skilled migrants in the SADC region is North America (31%), followed by SADC (29%) and Europe (29%). Countries of destination in the SADC region were the first choice of students from Lesotho, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. Europe was the first choice of South Africans.

According to the study, potential brain drain of new skills is most likely to affect Zimbabwe, Eswatini, and Lesotho. According to respondents’ aspirations for out-migration, key beneficiaries outside Africa are North America and Europe and, within the region, South Africa and Botswana. Hence, South Africa is a country that is both suffering from brain drain and a beneficiary of migration in SADC.
‘Invisibility’ of migrants’ skills -> Skills and qualifications recognition is particularly difficult for intermediate and TVET levels, e.g. Moldovans in Europe

Brain waste happens also in countries of origin, characterized by unemployment, informal economy, skills mismatch

Upon return, brain waste often takes the form of skills acquired still being irrelevant to the labour market, difficulty in finding good jobs. Entrepreneurship is also not a widespread option for returnees

Lose-Lose game concerns mainly skilled workers, since both country of destination and country of origin lose.

2. Rationale and approach to anticipate skills

2.1 Key definitions and concepts

It is important that we “speak the same language” throughout this training on skills and migration. To make sure we understand what we are talking about, please familiarise yourself with the definitions provided below:

- **Skills**: Ability to carry out a manual or mental activity, acquired through learning and practice. An overarching term which includes knowledge, competence and experience.

- **Competency**: Ability to actually apply the knowledge, i.e. actually do what is specified as an expected training outcome.

- **Occupation**: A grouping of jobs which have a repeating set of main tasks and duties across industries. For reasons of classification, occupations are grouped together in to narrowly or broadly defined occupational groups on the basis of similarity in the type of work done. During this course, we will be referring to ISCO and International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) classifications.

- **Qualification**: Qualification is a certified outcome of training and education programmes. The ISCED is used as the reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

- **Skills needs**: Another overarching term which refers to both quantitative and qualitative needs. It is not merely the difference between supply and demand but also the result of the interaction between demand and supply. For instance, growing supply of the university graduates can result in growing demand for the higher skilled and crowding out of the lower skilled from the labour market.

- **Skills shortage**: It refers to a lack of adequately skilled workforce available on the labour market. Shortage results either from labour shortage/ labour market tightness (when unemployment levels are low) or from an insufficient number of individuals possessing the specific skills required.

- **Skills gap**: We refer to skills gap when the skills possessed by workers or job seekers do not correspond to those required on the labour market, either in terms of their level or type.

- **Labour shortage**: It stands to denote the situation of an overall shortage of labour at national level (although often sector and occupation related), often used to refer to the quantitative lack of labour.

- **Difficult-to-fill-vacancy**: An open job vacancy during the reference period, that an employer has had difficulty in filling, i.e. it represents a subjective opinion. For instance, no suitable applicants have applied for a job in question for more than 2 weeks. It is not the same as skills shortage since working conditions or poor recruitment practices play a role.
Training needs assessment (TNA): A training need exists when there is a gap between the skill required to perform job tasks and the skill possessed. An assessment is a process of collecting and analysing information and data. A TNA serves purely training needs and is usually performed at the level of company, training institution or industry.

Skills needs assessment: It is a much broader term compared to TNA and serves broader policy objectives, including that of initial and continuing education and training policy, all forms of HRD, financing of training, migration policy, etc.

For further information on key terms for anticipation and skill needs, please refer to the Glossary of terms.

2.2 Global drivers of changes – Skills and Migration

A number of factors are influencing the global evolution of skills demand and supply, and if left unaddressed they are likely to contribute to skills mismatches in the future.

The future of demand goes beyond technology-related skills in higher education: it will require deployment skills for those technologies (business-like and leadership skills, management, project management, marketing) as well as operation and maintenance skills (TVET-training). There will be no lifetime jobs, we might even have different jobs at the same time and have to become managers of our own career. Skills applicable across different occupations and sectors will also be essential: team work, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, etc. There are tools to project jobs in the future and help to understand how global drivers of change will change the labour market and the way we work. This is why the ILO promotes a more process-oriented, qualitative approach.

In general terms, jobs are expected to become more interdisciplinary, skills- and information-intensive, innovation oriented and short-cycled. Over the next ten years, people will need a new set of core and high quality skills- foundational skills, transversal skills, social, cognitive and technical (vocational) skills - which can help workers to move across occupations and from informal to formal economy. It is a combination of different types of skills that helps workers to keep their employability high, be agile and resilient in the context of change.

We will now take a closer look at global drivers of change of skills demand and supply:

Demographics

Demographic changes influence labour supply in different ways in developing and developed countries. In developed countries the population is ageing, while in developing countries large numbers of young people are entering the labour market every year. These changes require that young people have appropriate skills which attract investment and create jobs, while older workers continue to learn and upgrade their skills. The ILO projects that by 2030, the global economy will need to create 344 million jobs in addition to the 190 million jobs necessary to address the current unemployment. According to the UN DESA (World Population Prospects 2019), the overall world population is expected to grow by 10% by 2030. 60% of this increase is expected to occur in developing countries in particular Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia where educational attainment is lagging behind. The population increase is not only a challenge but it is also an opportunity for countries, if they manage to translate the demographic dividend into growth and development. Skills implications include:

- Measures in aging societies – Aging societies will need to develop measures targeting retention, utilization and activation of all current and potential workforce.

- Demographic trends also influence demand in certain sectors – For instance, demand for healthcare and care for elderly workers is growing as a result of aging; activation measures for women will increase demand for child minding and care; the composition of workers in some occupations may
be overrepresented by pre-retirement age meaning that the replacement demand will be growing in these occupations.

- **Specific measure targeting older workers** – These measures should focus on flexible work arrangements and training to keep their skills up to date, especially digital skills.

- **Investment in social capabilities and diversification of skills** – Developing countries will need to invest in social capabilities and diversification of skills at all education levels in order to be able to attract investments and create new jobs for absorbing the growing workforce. Social capabilities refer to an individual’s soft skills, including capacity to recognise and regulate emotions, establish positive relationships, work effectively in teams and handle challenging situations constructively.

**Educational attainments**
The level of educational attainment has increased significantly in recent decades in both developed and developing countries. This means that more talent is available for employers, but also makes it harder for lower-skilled workers to find jobs in an increasingly competitive labour market. On average in developing countries (OECD countries), mean years of schooling increased from 4.2 years in 1990 to 7.4 in 2018. The progress in schooling among girls has been impressive achieving higher rates as compared to boys in OECD countries but variation among developing countries in closing the gender gap is still substantial: for instance, girls achieve only 83% of boys’ attainment.

**Globalization of markets**
The interaction between skills and trade is inseparable from other interactions including those between technology, work organization and skills, and between trade and technology. In combination, change in international competition and technology together means that skills have to adapt to the change that becomes a moving target. Globalisation and trade may cause greater vulnerability of labour markets where wages and employment become more sensitive to economic shocks and are a potentially important source of vulnerability for workers. This raises the stakes of skills development in ensuring that economies are capable of adjusting efficiently through structural transitions affecting industries and countries, thereby improving labour market outcomes. There are four main mechanisms through which trade affects the relative demand for skills:

- **Trade and demand for products** – Trade raises demand for products in which countries have a comparative advantage. In countries with a comparative advantage in skill-intensive sectors, trade thus increases the demand for skilled workers.

- **Expansion of the most productive firms** – International trade leads to the expansion of the most productive firms, which tend to employ relatively more skilled workers.

- **Relocation to low-income countries** – As the costs of offshoring fall, the least complex stages of production tend to relocate from high income to low-income economies.

**Points for reflection:**
1. What are the key demographic trends in your country?
2. What are the implication of these trends for the workforce skill needs and education and training systems?
Trade as catalyst for changes in production technology

Lower trade costs may be a catalyst for changes in production technology, including automation, which increase productivity and favour high-skilled labour in exporting and import-competing firms in both developed and developing countries.

Labour mobility

Labour has become more mobile internationally, and large numbers of people migrate to where jobs are available. Well-governed labour migration can balance labour supply and demand, help develop and transfer skills at all levels, and contribute to sustainable development for origin, transit and destination countries. Over the past years, the number of migrant workers rose from 150 million in 2013 to 164 million in 2017. Given shrinking labour force in developed countries and growing workforce in many developing countries the trend is expected to continue. Competition has globally increased not only for new markets but also for talent: close to 5% of all workers are migrant workers and the share is growing by around 10% in the last 5 years. To avoid brain waste, good systems of recognition of skills are needed in the receiving countries: recognition of prior learning (RPL), recognition of qualifications, etc. At the same time, the major challenge for the origin countries is to retain and create decent work opportunities for their workforce.

Technology and innovation

Technology-induced demand for skills is manifested in a two-fold trend: relative demand for higher skilled workers and skills polarization in the composition of employment. However, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) and ICT (information and communications technology) skills are important not only among the most highly skilled, who contribute to innovation, research and development, but also among skilled workers who are instrumental in the operation and maintenance of new technologies. Similarly, the influence of technology and innovation is felt beyond high-tech industries themselves in other areas such as services and customer care.

To ensure that skills development is in line with changes in skill demand, it is important to understand better how jobs will change in terms of the composition of tasks and hence skills requirements. Which tasks and skills will be less or more demanded in the new future? A recent study by Accenture confirms that lower-skilled work is more susceptible to automation. It also highlights that workers in these roles require the widest range of skills development, but tend to participate less in skills training.

Do you want to know more?

Please refer to Section 3 below to know more on Skills Recognition.

Points for reflection:

1. Which occupations, in your view, are more susceptible for automation in your country?
2. In your county, which percentage of jobs could be radically transformed by automation?
3. Is technological change bringing new opportunities for employment in your country?
Climate change
Climate change and the transition to the green economy influence skills demand through the introduction of new green technologies, new market opportunities in green economic activities and the “creative destruction” of brown jobs, and various policy and regulatory requirements. These processes change the skills requirements within existing occupations, give rise to new occupations and skills needs, and increase the need for retraining and skills upgrading, including in environmental awareness. The Sustainable Development Goals and Paris 2015 put in place a new paradigm when countries committed to decrease global temperature by 2 degrees, aiming for 1.5 degrees by the end of the century. This new policy context has important effects on the labour market and on skills.

Skills implications of climate change:

- It changes the skills requirements within existing occupations. For instance, plumbers need skills in energy and water saving technical solutions and capability in customer advice.
- It gives rise to new occupations and skills needs. For instance, energy accountant or solar systems technician.
- It increases the need for retraining and skills upgrading, including in environmental awareness.

Changes in work organisation
As the workforce and businesses are becoming more mobile, work organization is changing, too. These changes increase the demand for teamwork, initiative, leadership, management skills, and interpersonal and intercultural communication skills. For example, many companies are introducing flatter organizational structures and offering opportunities for online work from a distance. Skills implications of these changes in work organisation include:

- Gig economy and new business models, with new employment relations, beckoning the question: who is responsible for skills development?
- New business practices, as the productivity and competitiveness challenge calls for adoption of new business practices:
  - incremental innovation and continuous improvement;
  - non-routine skills become a critical source of competitive advantage;
  - hard and soft innovation (cognitive skills);
  - core work / non-cognitive/ soft skills;
  - high-performance work organisation: learning organisation and related Human Resources Dept. and participative human resources management strategies;
  - workplace learning.

2.3 Skills mismatches. Types and consequences
45% of employers across the globe report recruitment difficulties. 188 million people were unemployed globally in 2019, i.e. in this large pool of available labour relevant skills were not found. These figures illustrate the situation of skills mismatch: skills are available but jobs require other skills, or the same skills in another place or time. Hence, shortage of skills is as important as shortage of jobs, and employability is as important as recognition and utilization of available talent (more information on skills recognition will be presented in Topic 3 of this module). There are different types of skills mismatch:

- Surplus and shortage: A surplus occurs if there are more skilled individuals than available jobs, while a shortage means there are not enough skilled workers for available job vacancies.
- **Vertical and horizontal skills mismatches**: Horizontal mismatches occur if the type of education, field of study or skills is not appropriate for the current jobs, but the level of education or skills matches the requirements of the jobs. Vertical mismatch occurs if the level of skills or education is more or less than the level of skills or education required to perform a job.

- **Skills mismatch over time**: Skills become obsolete if they are not maintained to adapt to changing jobs requirements, it is especially relevant to technology intensive jobs.

Consequences of skills mismatch

Poor matching between skills supply and demand has many negative consequences for individuals and companies, and can also influence the country’s economy and society more generally. The chart below presents the key consequences of skills mismatches for individuals, companies and countries.

2.4 Labour Market Information System (LMIS) for matching and anticipating skills

Some discrepancies between labour supply and demand may be positive because they enable social mobility and provide incentives for skills development and innovation. However, the real challenge is to minimise skills mismatch and its consequences for economy, society, enterprises and individuals.

Labour Market Information System (LMIS) refers to any information concerning the size and composition of the labour market, the way it functions, its problems and opportunities, as well as employment-related intentions of its actors. As one component of a broader LMIS, skills need anticipation can be broken down into a number of key elements:

- **Institutions (Social dialogue and coordination)**: In every country, a number of institutions have an interest in skills development: they include, among others, various government agencies, education and training institutions and employers and workers organisations. The functions of various institutions in the LMIS ideally should be complementary to one another in order to ensure good coverage and dissemination of data, multifaceted and multipurpose analytical outputs, and translation of findings into policy and practice.

- **Analytical capacity**: It is crucial to understand that the mere production of information on current and future skills needs is necessary, but not sufficient for effective skills anticipation and matching. The concept of anticipation is broader, requiring not only the production of results from analytical models, but also the analytical expertise to interpret and validate them, and the capacity to translate them into the development of practical policies. Both these steps require agreed and coordinated responses by a range of stakeholders.

- **Methods and tools**: As well as identifying past and current trends, the anticipation of skills needs clearly requires a future focus. The trends identified, and various other pieces of intelligence, can be combined and project to reflect potential future outcomes in different ways. Tools are guidelines and instruments that provide good practice on the use of data sources, methodologies and approaches relevant to a specific aspect of skills needs anticipation. They are aimed at providing step-by-step assistance in the development and implementation of systems to anticipate skills needs, based on what works best in countries around the world. (This will be the topic of the next section of this module).

- **Data (Production and use)**: Various data sources are available to identify key pays and current trends in the demand for and supply of skills. Each data source has its own strengths and
Poor matching between skills supply and demand has many negative consequences, for individuals, companies, and can also influence the country’s economy and society more generally.

**Consequences of skills mismatch**

- **Unemployment**
  - Need to take another job than that they are qualified for

- **Direct/indirect investment to achieve the qualification and develop skills not returned**

- **Skills obsolescence**
  - Effect on wages

- **Hiring difficulties**

- **Need to retrain**
  - Loss of original investment
  - Loss of competitiveness

- **Low productivity**
  - Insufficient product quality
  - Loss of competitiveness

- **Public costs of unemployment benefits**
  - Social exclusion of families

- **Low job satisfaction**
  - Loss of motivation
  - Lower productivity
  - Lower quality of output

- **National competitiveness threatens**

- **International companies investments hindered**

**Source:** Using labour market information, Vol I. Guide to anticipating and matching skills and jobs
limitations, and provides insight into different aspects of skills needs. Data availability and quality can present difficulties, particularly in developing and transition countries. Ideally, a number of different data and indicators need to be considered in the analysis to find a detailed and objective picture (This was the topic of our module on Statistics and labour migration).

Skills development is a broad concept composed of 3 pillars: initial TVET and universities, active labour market policy and workplace learning:

- **Initial TVET and universities**: Mid-to-long term skills needs forecasting (quantity of vacancies at sector and occupation level) and ongoing information on changes in the quality of labour market demand (emerging skills and competences, skills mismatches)
- **Active Labour Market policy**: Short-to-medium term skill needs forecasting and assessments and information on current labour market signals.
- **Workplace learning**: Immediate to long-term assessments and linkage between longer-term strategy in enterprise development and skill needs assessments.

2.5 Approaches and methodologies for identification and analysis of skill needs

There are many approaches and methods developed to identify and analyse current and future skills needs. All methods have their own strengths and weaknesses. Their use largely depends on the level of analysis, the availability of data and analytical capacities and the study objectives. This section provides contextual and methodological concerns and main characteristics of the existing methodologies and their relative strengths and weaknesses. Readers need to keep in mind that an effective system to anticipate skills demand usually combines several of these methods and addresses challenges, that are not merely of technical but also institutional nature. Before undertaking any identification of skill needs research always answer the following questions:

1. What are your policy objectives / needs?
2. What are your research objectives? What do you want to find out?
3. Who will be a primary user of the findings?
4. Who will perform research / data collection / analysis?
5. What are the financial resources you have for the study?

Once these questions are answered, you will know:

1. At which level you need to undertake the research (macro, meso, micro: national economy, sector, industry, region, local community, occupation etc.).
3. What will be key target groups, clients – direct and indirect beneficiaries
4. Which methods you may apply
5. and who will be your major partners.
Examples from the Region: Botswana’s Labour Market Observatory

The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) of Botswana manages a Labour Market Observatory (LMO) that generates and updates labour market information and publishes data and reports on its website. The mission of the LMO is to provide relevant, quality and timely labour market information for data users to make informed decisions regarding the labour market situation in Botswana. As a ‘one-stop shop’ for Labour Market Information, the LMO serves a variety of functions:

1. Collect all information on labour market information:
   - All data, reports, information on planned activities, government policies, (major) private and public investments, legal information, international practices, etc.;
   - Data collected by others (only in exceptional cases LMO executes its own surveys on a limited scale);
   - Information on vacancies and jobseekers.

2. Analyse the information:
   - Assess the quality of the information and make recommendations for improvement when applicable;
   - Determine which information is missing, show how missing information can be approximated, recommend on additional questions in existing surveys or administrations, assist in obtaining additional funding if required, etc.;
   - Conduct or subcontract analytical studies;
   - Harmonise data.

3. Construct and populate a Labour Market Information System
   - Forecast the labour demand and supply; and identify mismatches between the two;
   - Disseminate the information on the labour market through: Labour market bulletins and reports Website Seminars and workshops;
   - Prepare labour market plans recommending measures to reduce the mismatches.

The latest list of priority occupations in demand can be found [here](#).
Delphi method
The Delphi method is mainly used when long-term issues (up to 30 years) have to be assessed. Delphi is useful means of predicting and assessing developments where there is no empirical database, where external factors are likely to have a determining effect and where social arguments may dominate economic or technical considerations. As it implies identifying topics that are relevant for the future, it reduces the tacit and complex knowledge to a single statement and makes it possible to judge. Delphi technique can be used for achieving the following objectives:

- to determine or develop a range of possible program alternatives;
- to explore or expose underlying assumptions or information leading to different judgments;
- to seek out information which may generate a consensus on the part of the respondent group;
- to correlate informed judgments on a topic spanning a wide range of disciplines, and;
- to educate the respondent group as to the diverse and interrelated aspects of the topic.

Employer skills surveys (ESS)
Employer or establishment skill survey (ESS) is an instrument designed to generate data on employer demand for and investment in skills. An ESS helps to define the type, level and composition of skills that individuals need to perform the work demanded by enterprises. This type of survey not only documents the skill content of current occupations, but is also an appropriate tool for investigating future needs.

Do you want to know more?
More detailed information on the Delphi method can be found in this document.

https://ecampus.itcilo.org/pluginfile.php/219565/mod_scorm/content/1/scormcontent/assets/QmPAGnQn2vQrv1yt_ZgR71TrONQc71T6f-1. Delphi method.docx

Do you want to know more?
More detailed information on Employers Skills Surveys can be found in this document.

https://ecampus.itcilo.org/pluginfile.php/219565/mod_scorm/content/1/scormcontent/assets/8wb_76Bo6HvYEQu2_Rv9edS23TdUnMvCo-2. Employer skills survey.docx
needs, as it can be designed to obtain past or current information which can be used to anticipate which type of occupations will be in higher (lower) demand or which skills will be key in the future workers’ skills portfolio.

Examples of typical topics include:

- Level and use of skills by current and incoming employees
- Drivers of changing skills needs
- Skill gaps per group of occupations
- Assessment of graduates’ performance at a workplace
- Recruitment practices and difficulties, (hard-to-fill) vacancies
- Evaluation of educational/training policies
- Changes in the demand for skills

**Focus group**
A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards issues of interest. It supports generation of ideas and encourages group thinking. The focus group concentrates on improving existing ideas. Preliminary ideas/products/versions of strategies etc. are usually presented as a starting point. Participants in focus group are encouraged not only to express their own opinions, but also to interact with other members and the facilitator. Examples of typical topics include:

- To validate results of e.g. a quantitative forecast
- To get better understanding and interpretation of data
- To get a feedback / validate results of studies prepared by other research methods
- To gather additional information / fill in information gaps or to clarify ambiguous results obtained by other methods (e.g. through an establishment survey)
- To get a feedback on tools used to present the results of skills anticipation to the final users
- To share and develop ideas on policies and strategies

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**Do you want to know more?**

More detailed information on Focus Groups can be found in this document.

https://ecampus.itcilo.org/pluginfile.php/219565/mod_scorm/content/1/scormcontent/assets/VNb1gr5970mWCGuI_rFk3fYSrvo6vaBdq-3.Focusgroups.docx
Tracer studies
Tracer studies or graduate surveys (otherwise also named alumni surveys) are surveys of graduates from education and training institutions. They are the most valuable single type of survey for collecting systematic and reliable information on the links between study and subsequent employment and work. Graduate surveys provide information about the whereabouts of graduates sometime after the award of the degree, and allow linking this information with socio-biographic and study descriptors (e.g. gender, age, field of study, institution awarding the degree etc.). They can provide valuable data for evaluating the results of the education and training of a specific institution that may be used for further development of the institution in the context of quality assurance.

Two main objectives of tracer studies are to measure the employability of graduates (labour market information) and to get a feedback from graduates to improve the study programme (retrospective evaluation). Examples of typical topics include, employment situation, time to get the first employment, duration of job search, main work tasks/duties, working time, job satisfaction, use of competencies and required competencies, usefulness of study/training programme, strength and weaknesses of the study/training programme and proposals for improvements.

Quantitative modelled skills forecasting
A model in general represents simplified reality that can help understand the phenomenon of interest (e.g. changing patterns of the demand for skills in the labour market). Quantitative economic models allow understanding of the economic reality, in particular trends and interactions within the economic indicators. The results produced by these models provide a sound foundation for informed decisions made by individuals, employers, education and training providers, as well as the various agencies and departments of government.

Quantitative models are typically built using different statistical and econometric techniques. The development of such models is highly dependent on the quality of input data, which are largely gathered by official authorities. They should be, according to techniques used, of relatively long time series and/or of detailed structure. Quantitative

Do you want to know more?
More detailed information on Tracer Studies can be found in this document.
https://ecampus.itcilo.org/pluginfile.php/219565/mod_scorm/content/1/scormcontent/assets/18nREFyf-LNpGMQ0_GfDzAJUALgSB_-pa-4. Graduate surveys_tracer studies.docx

Do you want to know more?
More detailed information is provided in the Guide to skills anticipation and matching – volume 2
models for skills anticipation and forecasts require rather sophisticated information on occupational structure within sectors and/or qualification (education) structure within occupations. In practice it means to combine data usually coming from national accounts (NA) and surveys of households/labour force surveys (LFS). Combining these data sets require complex design as both methodologies differ in their internal logics and elements captured. Examples of typical topics include:

- employment trends by sector/job/qualification (growth of numbers of jobs in economy);
- replacement demand (how many jobs will need to be filled after current workers leave them);
- labour force trends by qualification/gender/age groups (number of people available to work);
- numbers of graduates entering the labour market by qualification/field of study;
- indicators of potential labour market imbalances by sector/occupation/qualification.

**Scenario development and foresights**

Scenario planning is one of the most well-known and most cited as a useful technique for thinking about the future. In foresight projects, the scenario method is a policy analysis tool that helps to describe a possible set of future conditions. At national, regional and local level, scenarios can be used to improve planning capacity, to enrich strategic public policy decisions and to guide major capital investments. Scenarios are a preparation for potential future challenges, not predictions of what will happen. They help us to identify future option spaces and give us confidence to act in a world of uncertainty. The method creates plausible views of the future that decision-makers can use to determine their best response and how to react to alternative plays. Scenarios are qualitatively distinct visions, told as stories, of how the future may look like. They make explicit the assumptions of how the world works.

There are many different possible ways of developing scenarios. Although they might differ in some features, use different terminology, they still carry many similarities. Most of them contain similar process that includes the following stages:

- Identification of the key issues
- Identification of the drivers
- Evaluation of importance and uncertainties
- Creation of scenarios
- Implications of scenarios

**Sectoral approaches**

A sectoral approach to skills anticipation is defined as one which looks at changing skills needs from the perspective of a particular sector. Such an approach includes any study, larger project or programme that adopts a methodological and analytical viewpoint of the sector. It also includes work carried out within a framework of institutional and stakeholder involvement (sectoral bodies such as Sectoral Skills Councils). In many respects it makes more sense to talk about a sectoral focus rather than a sectoral approach or methodology. The sectoral
approaches to anticipation and matching of skills are often included in the broader framework of the development of the sector in the country or the region.

Sector-based anticipation and matching studies may be carried out to:

- inform general education and training policy;
- help to provide useful LMI and advice to labour market participants more generally;
- inform specific options on training programmes, schemes and initiatives to be supported, revised or reduced;
- identify priorities for the professional development of the TVET workforce;
- aid curriculum development and review priorities;
- inform financing models, including the need for incentives;
- inform budget options;
- meet other more general aims and objectives, such as the government's and other stakeholder ambitions for economic development, productivity, growth and industrial policies.

Big or real-time data methods
The use of Big Data analytics or of (almost) real-time information derived mainly from internet-based/digitised data sources is a growing area of business, research and policy concern:

- Machine learning, algorithms – Fast-paced developments in the field of machine learning and of artificial intelligence (AI)-empowered algorithms (text mining, web crawling etc.) have allowed for the collection, synthesis and analysis of a rich and relatively unbounded set of data on skills and skill needs that were previously difficult or costly to collect using conventional sources, such as household or enterprise surveys.

- Big Data analytics – The exploration of Big Data analytics (e.g. analysis of Google search keywords, online surveys e.g. on wages) and of data on vacancies collected by online job advertisement portals (e.g. CEDEFOP's pan-EU real-time job vacancy tool; US data analysed by Burning Glass technologies for the World Economic Forum) constitute innovative approaches. They hold considerable promise and raise high hopes for improving skills anticipation and matching capabilities and diagnostics in countries and enterprises, understanding of complex socioeconomic processes as well as for facilitating a better and more responsive policymaking process. Caution needs to be exercised when analysing the findings of such new data sources as careful understanding of their potential biases and theoretical deficiencies is a prerequisite before deciding to adopt them the design of public policies.

- Online job vacancies and big data analysis – Big data analysis, such as in-depth examination of online job vacancies, is increasingly used to extract information on skills (and other job applicant qualities) demanded by employers. Such methods are also employed to cluster or filter the skills of individuals as declared on own CVs and uploaded on public or private web portals (e.g. LinkedIn, Europass).

- Big data and private businesses – Private businesses are increasingly seeking to adopt artificial-intelligence data analytics for aggregating the skills of their employees and better matching them to suitable training opportunities for facilitating career progression (e.g. IBM's Watson-empowered employee learning and career advisor portal).

- Big data and Public Employment Services – Public employment services (PES) are also exploring ways to enhance their competence-based matching capabilities, by greater reliance on skills matching algorithms that 'deep learn' from their long-established records of job seeker CVs and job vacancies stored in their systems.
Big data or real-time data analysis can be used for achieving the following objectives:

- to better understand employers’ patterns in skill demands as well as to detect emerging skills and skill gaps in occupations;
- to inform individual’s choices of possible training opportunities and career paths;
- to improve the job-skill matching capabilities of public and private employment agencies and fine-tune training offers;
- to enable employers refine their recruitment and talent management strategies.

Is there an ideal approach?
As we have already mentioned, an effective system to anticipate skills demand usually combines several of these methods and addresses challenges, which are not merely of technical but also institutional nature.

3. Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition agreements

3.1 Introduction to recognition and validation

Migrant workers are frequently exposed to skills underutilization, a situation where their skills, qualifications and job experience are not properly utilized in the labour market. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications by countries of destination. Recognition of qualifications comprises two main areas: academic and professional. Recognition of academic qualifications permits the continuation of studies and access to education and training at the appropriate level, while in the case of professional qualifications, recognition gives the opportunity to practice the acquired professional skills.

Recognition describes the assessment and acceptance of the equivalence of formal education diplomas and certificates. It may happen in a national context, or in an international context, and generally denotes the formal recognition of foreign qualifications through credential evaluation.

Validation, on the other hand, is the assessment and validation of skills and competences learned outside formal education, i.e. non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). To clarify, non-formal learning takes place outside formal learning environments but generally within some kind of organisational framework. This can for instance take place in community settings: swimming classes for small children, reading groups, or...
Informal learning – also referred to as experiential learning - takes place outside educational facilities and arises out of activities that are not undertaken with a learning purpose in mind and are hence somewhat inevitable facets of life. For validation, alternative assessment methods are developed to validate skills and competences learned non-formally and informally in order to provide evidence and visibility for the skills of workers. Possible methods include combinations of written exams, aptitude tests, structured interviews, workplace observation, practical demonstration of skills in simulation scenarios and review of work samples.

Who has an interest in skills recognition?

▶ Migrant workers:
  › If skills are recognized, migrant workers can access further training and compete for jobs and wages that are commensurate with their skills or access regulated labour markets
  › Fairer chances on the labour market, as it may provide migrant workers with access job opportunities in part with their equally qualified non-migrant peers

▶ Employers:
  › If skills are recognized, it is easier to find qualified staff
  › More effective recruitment
  › Better matching with skills needs
  › Productivity increase as a result of higher staff motivation

▶ Governments:
  › If skills are recognized, they are formally included in the market, guarantee quality, and broaden the choice of employers
  › Better productivity, skills use, higher quality products/services
  › Promote social inclusion and equity
  › Improve labour market situation of migrant workers
  › Support transition from the informal to the formal economy

**Formal recognition of foreign qualifications across migration corridors**

The key driver for the emergence of mechanisms for the formal recognition of foreign qualifications is to provide better signalling of education credentials across migration corridors that provides transparency, credible information on content and quality, visibility and portability. Indeed, formal recognition of foreign qualifications is the first international instrument used. Usually, evaluations of the credentials of foreign diplomats and certificates are conducted to identify their equivalence of knowledge levels. The analysis and written appraisal are performed by a competent body of an individual’s foreign qualifications in two steps: 1) Evaluating the content (by the National Information Centres) and 2) Recognising the credential or qualification (by the Competent Recognition Authority).

Academic recognition relates to the recognition of a foreign qualification for the purpose of further studies. In academic recognition, evaluators’ main task is to assess whether the applicant is capable of continuing studies in the chosen direction and at the chosen level. Professional recognition describes the recognition of a foreign qualification for the purpose of employment in a certain profession. In professional recognition evaluators assess whether the knowledge and professional skills of the applicant are sufficient to pursue a particular profession in receiving country.

A regulated profession is a profession that is regulated, i.e. if you have to hold a specific degree to access the profession, sit special exams such as state exams, and/or register with a professional body before you can practise it. Unregulated professions, on the other hand, do NOT require a specific degree to access the profession. Key elements of regulated professions may include:
Registration: this enables some general oversight of who is practicing in a specific area
Certification: also requires an individual to pass some form of examination to ensure s/he has reached a required level of competency
Occupational licensing (most restrictive): includes both requirements for those practicing an occupation, and excludes anyone not licensed from performing the occupation

The table below provides an overview of the key differences between academic and professional recognition in terms of regulation, assessment and decision-making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic recognition (for further studies)</th>
<th>Professional recognition (for employment purposes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulated by:</td>
<td>Regulated by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International conventions</td>
<td>National legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral or multilateral agreements among states</td>
<td>Regional agreements (EU directives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation programmes in education</td>
<td>Documents adopted by international professional associations/multi-national firms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Assessment carried out by:                 | Assessment carried out by:                        |
| National Academic recognition information centres (ENIC and NARIC) | Employers or their representatives |
| Higher education institutions/ boards      | Professional bodies/ multi-national firms         |
|                                            | Governmental bodies/ Industry councils            |
|                                            | (often upon advice by ENIC/NARIC centres)         |

| Decision taken by:                         | Decision taken by:                                |
| Higher education institutions              | Employers (in non-regulated professions)          |
| Education and training boards (sometimes)  | Professional bodies or governmental bodies         |
|                                            | (in regulated professions)                        |

Other instruments for formal recognition include:
- Credit transfer and exemption: process that allows to obtain credit for successfully completing a unit of competency/module in one qualification or course transferred to or accepted by another training program.
- Professional standards: professional bodies and public authorities use professional standards and related criteria to award professional designations to individuals that meet the requirements.
- International qualifications: provided for specific sets of skills considered “universal” by multinational private companies such as Microsoft, SAP, Intel (in IT); international education providers such as city and guilds, Pearson etc.; or multinational ship companies for seafarers.
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL): process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, informal and non-formal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training.

The next section provides a more detailed overview of Recognition of Prior Learning systems.

3.2 Recognition of Prior Learning

Why is RPL relevant?
People are always learning, everywhere and throughout the course of their lives. However, learning that takes place outside the formal education and training system of a country is often not well understood or valued. On-the-job training, informal apprenticeships, participation in sporting activities, organizing community events, raising children, managing a household, caring for the sick and for elderly relatives are all activities that result in learning outcomes, but which often do not come with a certificate of competencies recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience acquired.
A formal and widely accepted skills RPL helps improve the market status and value of migrant workers not only in recipient countries, but also in their home countries upon return. Due to a lack of recognition of skills for millions of overseas workers – even after they have gained several years of good international work experience – no formal qualifications often mean lower wages.

What is RPL?
Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, non-formal and informal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training. Thus, RPL provides an opportunity for people to acquire qualifications or credits towards a qualification or exemptions (from all or part of the curriculum, or even exemption from an academic prerequisite for entering a formal study programme) without going through a formal education or training programme. RPL is a process, which, in short, relies on an assessment of learning outcomes to formally recognize competencies. Through RPL, learning outcomes are assessed, not the learning itself (or where or how it took place).

RPL acknowledges that learning outcomes can be acquired in different ways, forms and settings, with a distinction between formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts as follows:

- **Formal learning**: instruction given in education and training institutions or specially designed training areas, including within enterprises in formal apprenticeship systems. Training is structured and has precise learning objectives.
- **Non-formal learning**: learning taking place in activities not exclusively designated as learning activities, but which contain an important learning element.
- **Informal learning**: learning resulting from activities undertaken daily at work, in the family or in leisure activities. RPL puts the focus on the outcomes of an applicant’s learning and not on the way competencies were acquired.

The RPL process
Since the beginning of the millennium, RPL has been receiving renewed attention in both developed and developing countries. Globalization and migration have increased the need for mechanisms for recognition of qualifications across borders. They have also increased the emphasis on lifelong learning, as people need to upgrade their skills set to keep it relevant. Attention to the informal economy has given rise to renewed interest in RPL and its potential to help in the move towards formalization. Many workers acquire workplace skills via informal means. As a consequence, they face significant challenges in gaining decent employment and furthering their education. RPL systems support the validation and recognition of competencies acquired through non-formal and informal means.

As RPL systems differ in their overall design and scope, the applicable process varies, as do the outcomes. Depending on the competencies acquired – and where RPL is applied and RPL outcomes recognized – the process might result in:

- full qualification
- partial qualification
- credits or units towards a qualification
- exemption from an academic prerequisite for entering the formal education and training system or from all or part of the curriculum
- positioning potential learners on formal learning pathways (e.g. before continuing training)
- certificate of labour market competencies or
- no recognition.
Examples from the region: Recognition of Prior Learning in South Africa

Coverage:
- The RPL system in South Africa covers TVET and higher education
- It provides recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning

Legal and policy framework:
- The South African Qualifications Act 1995 includes RPL and mandates the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to develop a policy on RPL
- In 2013, the country introduced a national policy for the implementation of RPL, which enables RPL to be applied in the diverse National Qualifications Framework (NQF) sub-frameworks
- The National Qualifications Framework Act 2009 states that qualifications and standards must be registered in the NQF

Institutional responsibilities:
- SAQA has issued guidelines for the implementation of RPL
- Quality Councils are responsible for quality assurance

Stages and steps:
- RPL can result in qualifications and partial qualifications, credits towards certification of further education, direct access to further education, or the awarding of a new certification
- Methods
  - During the assessment, what the applicant knows and can do is measured against specific standards, as indicated in the NQF
  - The form and sources of evidence required by the recognition process depend on the qualification to be obtained
  - SAQA guidelines include an appeal process

SAQA’s policy for RPL is available [here](#).
The table below describes the key stages an applicant goes through the RPL process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness and information</td>
<td>▶ Potential applicants are aware of RPL as an opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ General information about the RPL system is in place, related</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>requirements, steps to take, assistance available and where to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>obtain it is readily accessible</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ The steps of an RPL process are clear and transparent to all</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stakeholders, as is information for potential applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling and facilitation</td>
<td>▶ Counselling is available to provide potential applicants with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more detailed information about the RPL process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▶ Potential applicants can obtain guidance on the specific RPL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>steps and their requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Counsellors/facilitators perform an initial assessment (pre-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>screening) of applicants and support them in preparing their</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>portfolios (evidence)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Counsellors/facilitators offer guidance on skills gap training, if</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and certification</td>
<td>▶ Assessor reviews the evidence/portfolio submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ If applicable, the applicant might be prepared for a final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessment, test or demonstration against existing qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>standards to receive the certification/units/credits</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Final assessment (e.g. test or demonstration)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▶ Decision on the final assessment and information on shortcoming,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>if applicable (and potential re-skilling, mentoring etc. for another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessment)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Appeal, if legally applicable, by applicant against decision, if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relevant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Award of qualification/certificate/credits/units/exemptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Building blocks of an RPL system

Establishing a system is based on identifying specific needs-based objectives for RPL, to help address existing challenges. Remember that an RPL system does not function in isolation, but is connected to the education and training system of a country. Successful systems do not rely exclusively on RPL, but relate to a national qualifications framework (NQF), a TVET sector reform or a will to improve the governance of the education and training system. It is also important to note that an NQF is not a necessary precondition for RPL and many countries undertook RPL before having a NQF. However, if an NQF exists, RPL should connect with it. The table below describes the building blocks of an RPL system and the steps needed to ensure that each building block is stable.

3.3 Recognition agreements

Formal recognition agreements

Various types of recognition agreements exist across the world. They can be stand-alone or part of trade agreements (e.g. WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services-GATS Article VII) and are mostly based on the principle of equivalence and mutual cooperation. Key types of agreements include:

- **Mutual recognition agreements**: two or more countries agree on the qualifications to be recognised and procedures applied, including professional recognition and mutual access to the labour markets.

- **Regional or sub-regional agreements**: A group of countries in a region agree on the qualifications to be recognised and procedures applied, including professional recognition and mutual access to the labour markets. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) usually envisage free circulation of persons, which implies the right to work in member states based upon the principles agreed in regional treaties. An effective circulation of persons requires adoption of directives for implementation, which need to cover, among other issues, qualification and skills recognition.
### Building Blocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building block</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Regulatory framework**    | - Based on a needs analysis, define which educational sectors the RPL system should cover (for instance, general education and/or TVET, specific occupations/trades only, secondary and/or higher education)  
- Frame RPL in the national employment policy, and make it a priority in education and training policy  
- Integrate RPL into existing qualifications frameworks, as well as in policies and strategies for recognition of skills and qualifications (such as credit systems)  
- Explore what sectoral approaches would be relevant (for instance, consider allowing a sector to design its own RPL process)  
- Integrate RPL into relevant sectoral, economic and development policy, including migration policy  
- Match occupational and qualification standards  
- Synchronize national regulation with regional and local regulation if needed |
| **Institutional framework**  | - Define the institutions that are responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all RPL processes, including awareness raising, guidance and counselling to applicants, and assessment  
- Assess the capacity of existing institutions in terms of the tasks that they are expected to perform to allow the RPL system to function effectively  
- Strengthen capacity if needed, or create new institutions if necessary, such as to provide guidance and counselling to applicants  
- Build capacity of RPL professionals and ensure that they will be regularly retrained |
| **Stakeholder ownership and commitment** | - Identify all stakeholders (such as government institutions, education and training providers, employers’ and workers’ organizations, potential beneficiaries) and make sure they are aware of the benefits of RPL and of their role within an RPL system  
- Keep supporting social dialogue to ensure that RPL’s potential benefits to employers and workers are fully exploited  
- Support tripartite cooperation and collaborative approaches for RPL |
| **Financing**               | - Conduct cost-benefit analysis to define the scope of the RPL system in relation to the educational and labour market needs of a country  
- Determine and implement equitable cost-sharing arrangements (such as Government funding, training levy or other employer contribution, applicant fees)  
- Ensure that funding is sustainable  
- Offer incentives for employers to support RPL  
- Ensure inclusiveness by establishing subsidies for applicants from disadvantaged groups |
| **Quality assurance**        | - Design assessment methodologies around profiles of applicants that are likely to use the system, including those from disadvantaged groups  
- Establish standardized RPL processes and methods at the sectoral level, including standards and quality codes  
- Ensure that information about RPL is available where applicants can easily access it, and that guidance and counselling methods suit applicants’ needs  
- Clarify and ensure oversight for the quality of assessment  
- Establish an M&E system to regularly revise RPL processes and methods |

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**TRAINING PACKAGE ON LABOUR MIGRATION • MODULE 8 • 29**
based on common principles of equivalency. Comparability within the same REC can be achieved through tripartite sectoral regional-level working groups reviewing relevant qualifications across all concerned countries and agreeing on minimum standards; or a regional reference qualification framework, provided that all national qualifications are referenced against the regional framework, or are included in a national qualification framework that is referenced to the regional framework; or mutual trust in the skills development systems of other countries in the REC through a reliable quality assurance system. There are two types of EU recognition directives: sectoral and general (combines harmonisation and recognition):

› Seven occupations (doctor, nurse, dentist, midwife, pharmacist, veterinary surgeon and architect) are automatically recognised across the EU.

› As the recognition of other professions is not automatic, a general directive specifies commons standards for the recognition of other professional qualifications (2005/36/EC). Accordingly, an application has to be made to the authorities in the host country for qualifications to be assessed as equivalent to local qualifications. The authorities that are part of ENIC-NARIC networks are obliged to recognise, conditionally recognise or refuse to recognise the qualifications within a reasonable period of time. Recognition agreements are supported by other EU mobility tools: the Bologna and Copenhagen process, European Qualifications Framework, Europass, EURES, ESCO and Skills Panorama.

Unilateral recognition: any country may decide which skills are needed in the national labour market and hence develop recognition instruments for foreign qualifications. For instance, Germany created the Federal recognition act of foreign qualifications (2012), complemented by the 2018 German Skilled Labour Immigration Law, for equivalence assessment of over 600 occupations. It offers the possibility for prospective labour migrants to have their foreign qualifications assessed and completed prior to arrival in the country. This includes the following procedures:

› Review of formal education diplomas (VET and university degrees)
› Review of non-formal education certificates (further training)
› Review of informal learning outcomes (occupational experience), also including in cases of lacking documents.

Multilateral agreements:

› Lisbon convention on recognition of higher education qualifications (LRC, 1997), established by the Council of Europe, UNESCO and all EU countries. Addis convention on recognition of higher education qualifications in African states (2014), initiated by UNESCO. The Lisbon and Addis conventions established the basis in which workers and students can move easily and can have fair recognition of their foreign qualifications.

› ENIC-NARIC portal (enic-naric.net) is a joint initiative of the EU, the council of Europe and UNESCO, a gateway to recognition of both academic and professional qualifications. NARIC or ENIC centre can provide accurate information on the recognition of qualifications for potential migrants and returnees.

Typical implementation challenges
Possible challenges in the design and implementation of national and international recognition agreements include:

› Better coverage of high-skilled workers: Difficulty in recognition of low- and medium- skills
› Little coverage for TVET: difficult to implement for recognising vocational education and training diplomas/ certificates, as
in many cases knowledge is easier to compare than applied competences and skills.

- **Discretion left for national authorities**, leading to long periods of waiting time and sometimes arbitrary decisions
- **Politically affected decisions** to protect national labour markets/ workers, or national professional bodies
- **Higher costs than benefits**: application fees, lengthy procedures, stringent requirements for recognition, little benefits for workers

**Multilateral recognition instruments in the ASEAN region**

There are currently three initiatives for skills recognition in ASEAN, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) and Mutual Recognition of Skills (MRS) (an ILO-led instrument). The MRS initiatives aims to increase the pace and breadth of policy reform, promote just labour mobility and decent work for migrants, increase investment in education and training. MRS aims to complement the MRAs and AQRF, which focus on high skilled professions, by virtue of the focusing on low-to-middle skilled workers. In Cambodia, Lao PDR & Myanmar, the ILO supported the development of Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCSs), competency/standards and curricula as well as communication/advocacy tools to raise awareness of these services amongst migrant worker communities. Developing MRS follows a migration corridor-specific approach, as presented below:

- **Step 1: Identifying Skills Area for MRS** - First key labour migration patterns in a given corridor need to be assessed at occupational- and skills-level: Which Member State is the target for skills recognition? Which industry with skilled worker shortage is being identified? What is the qualification being proposed for recognition? Which Ministry is responsible for skills recognition? Are national employer and worker support organisations actively involved? For instance, in the Thailand-Lao-corridor, bricklaying and plastering were identified as high-priority skills areas.

- **Step 2 Benchmarking Skills / Competency Standards** - How do skills/competency standards of the sending country compare with those with the receiving country? How is industry leadership of skill standards setting achieved? Who is involved in national standards setting? How is wide stakeholder agreement achieved? Are national skill standards developed with an awareness of international standards?

- **Step 3 Defining & Benchmarking Qualifications** - Is the proposed qualification recognised in the national qualifications system? What are the rules for assembling the units of competency standards into a coherent qualification? Has the national qualifications system been described? The qualifications and competency standards are then put into a comparability matrix.

- **Step 4 Assessing the Assessment and Certification Arrangements** - What is the national student assessment process? What assessment instruments are available? Who is authorised to assess students? What moderation mechanisms are in place to secure student assessment which is fair, valid, consistent and to the specified industry standard? How is the issuing of certificates authorised? Is there a national register of officially awarded certificates and how is that secured and maintained?

- **Step 5 Assessing QA of Training and Assessment Certification Arrangements** - Do the quality assurance policies and processes follow those outlined in the “ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems”? Who is responsible for quality assurance? How does the responsible national agency carry out its regulatory quality assurance functions? Where is full detail available of all policies and processes? Are external quality assurance audit reports available?
Step 6 Drafting Migrant Skilled Worker Profile - This step is particularly relevant when MRS is implemented on the basis of business-to-business and sector-to-sector with a focus on selected occupations: Does the migrant worker profile incorporate all the skills in the qualification and provide useful information for potential employers?

Step 7 Piloting the MRS - Submission of the portfolio to the designated authority of the receiving country for approval of the recognition of selected (vocational) qualification. If approved, implementing the MRS pilot and appraising outputs through Monitoring and Evaluation.

Examples from the region:

The SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)

Purpose:
- To contribute to easier movement of learners and workers as well as promoting lifelong learning opportunities across the SADC region and internationally.
- 10-level reference and level descriptors based on learning outcomes with three domains of knowledge, skills, and autonomy and responsibility
- Set of agreed principles to promote comparability; common understanding of qualifications credits, quality assurance; mutual recognition of qualifications within the region and internationally

Levels of Education:
- Schooling, Higher Education and TVET

Key milestones:
- SADC RQF approved in 2011
- 2017: Launch of SADC RQF and SADC Qualifications Verification Network
- 2019: South Africa and Seychelles NQF aligned to the SADCQF

Four pillars
- National Qualifications Frameworks / National Qualifications Systems
- Quality Assurance (QA) systems and structures as well as capacity to deliver QA mandate
- Recognition / Verification of foreign qualifications and associated policies
- Credible, transparent qualifications information infrastructure

Coordination of implementing areas:
1. Governance – SADC Secretariat
2. Development and Alignment - South Africa
3. Quality Assurance – Botswana
4. Verification - Eswatini
5. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Accumulation, Transfer (CAT) and Articulation - Namibia
6. Advocacy and Communication - Zambia

More information on the SADCQF is available here.
3.4 Guidelines for skills modules in bilateral labour migration agreements

Key skills aspects are frequently omitted from BLMAs, in particular mechanisms and tools for skills recognition. To better reflect skills recognition mechanisms in BLMAs, authorities need to consider key factors and sources of information concerning skills and qualifications, outlined in the table below. The full list of questions is available here.

Second, BLMAs need to be rooted in international standards and good practices for the protection of human and labour rights:

- Eight ILO fundamental Conventions
- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) and Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86) (with Model Agreement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Sources of information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countries of Destination</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a system of skills and qualifications recognition existing in the</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour; social partners and other relevant</td>
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<tr>
<td>country of origin that can inform the movement of migrant workers to the</td>
<td>actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>country of destination in terms of the bilateral agreement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a quality-assured qualification system and how is it structured?</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education (and Higher Education, as appropriate),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have specific skills shortages and gaps been identified?</td>
<td>Ministries of Labour and Education, PES/PrEAs, social partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there procedures for the recognition of prior learning for migrant</td>
<td>Government, workers’ and employers’ organizations</td>
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<td>workers? If yes, which are the institutions and procedures?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Countries of Origin</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a system of skills and qualifications recognition existing in the</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour; social partners and other relevant</td>
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<tr>
<td>country of destination that can inform the movement of migrant workers to the</td>
<td>actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>country of destination in terms of the bilateral agreement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there other bilateral agreements on skills issues? If yes, how are skills</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education (and Higher Education, as appropriate),</td>
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<td>issues regulated?</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can the PES provide assistance to migrant workers in skills matching and</td>
<td>Government, PES, workers’ and employers’ organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognition processes?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there active labour market policies on skills that migrant workers can</td>
<td>Government, PES, workers’ and employers’ organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>access?</td>
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</table>

1 These comprise the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to     |
Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective       |
Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. |
29) (and its 2014 Protocol), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957   |
(No. 105), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), the Worst Forms of     |
Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the Equal Remuneration Convention,    |
1951 (No. 100) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention,   |
1958 (No. 111).
Addressing skills shortages in crisis situations – lessons from COVID-19 pandemic

In recent decades, the healthcare sector has been under increasing pressure of labour shortages in both developed and developing countries. The situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. If adequately designed, BLMAs could be used to promote fair recruitment and to protect the rights of migrant health workers, including through providing access to skills and qualification recognition process, thus preventing brain waste and brain drain. BLMAs could stipulate the recognition and training arrangements to be applied along the specific migration corridor covered by the agreement, including for regulated professions, e.g. medical doctors, nurses. The timely conclusion of agreements in the health sector could ensure the possibility for rapid and effective action in situations such as COVID-19, without depriving countries of origin of their much needed health personnel.

The instruments that can guide the formulation of BLMAs in the health sector include:

- ILO Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977 (No. 149), and its Recommendation, 1977 (No. 157), which outline key labour standards, taking into account the special nature of nursing work.
- WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel (2010), which indicates voluntary principles and practices for the ethical international recruitment of health personnel. It provides reference to qualifications and skills with regard to equality in treatment and access to training opportunities.

Financing skills through BLMAs

In order to ensure sustainability of skills recognition mechanisms, adequate funding needs to be built into the BLMA. One option for skills funding mechanisms are those that build on an existing levy system, such as sector collective bargaining agreements or funds managed directly by bilateral bodies made up of employers’ and workers’ organizations representatives. Alternatively, provisions for financing skills development in BLMAs can include joint collaboration efforts between countries of origin and destination; financing by employers in the destination countries; or shared costs for skills development between origin and destination countries.
4. Skills Partnerships for Development

4.1 What are skills partnerships on migration?

According to the ILO, Skills Partnerships on Migration aim to better organize skills and migration across countries, increase investments in skills development and recognition, and meet the needs of countries of origin, transit and destination as well as of migrant workers and employers. All involved parties or stakeholders are supposed to benefit from such a partnership. In December 2018, ILO, IOM, UNESCO, IOE and ITUC forged a Global Skills Partnership on Migration (GSPM) to mobilize technical expertise of the partner organizations towards supporting governments, employers and workers and their organizations, educational institutions and training providers, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and recognize the skills of migrant workers with a particular focus on low-skilled and medium-skilled workers, women and youth. The GSPM aims to contribute to foster development in countries of origin, transit and destination, improve livelihoods, develop skills, spark innovation, match talents, fill skills shortages and allow for mutual learning.

Skills partnerships on migration can involve governments and ministries, TVET agencies, Employment services, Training Providers, Statistical institutes, Employers', Workers' and Civil society organizations. The key aspects to organise a skills partnership for migration:

- Cost structure of training: who pays for what
- How to promote return or at least to keep professional contact on both sides
- Links to legal migration channels in place
- Selection process of students and their profile
- Curriculum development: which country’s needs to take into account

Below are different opinions and discussions that exist on ‘global skills partnerships’ regarding migration:

The UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018) calls on countries in Objective 18 (34/e) to “build global skills partnerships amongst countries that strengthen training capacities of national authorities and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and trade unions, and foster skills development of workers in countries of origin and migrants in countries of destination with a view to preparing trainees for employability in the labour markets of all participating countries.”

The OECD (2018) calls global skills partnerships ‘Skills Mobility Partnerships’ (SMPs) and consider as “an innovative way to associate migration and skills development for the mutual benefit of origin and destination countries, as well as migrants themselves.”

Do you want to know more?
see Module 5 on International Cooperation
Broader approach including all education/trainings linked to migration, wherever they took place, and whoever paid for them.

SMPS must offer skills development and recognition, and partnership for mutual benefits.

The EU Global Skills Partnership for development include Mobility and Talent Partnerships:

- **EU Talent Partnerships**, starting first in the EU's neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, and in Africa to boost mutually beneficial international mobility, including:
  - Mobility schemes for work or training, capacity building in labour market or skills intelligence, vocational education and training, integration of returning migrants, and diaspora mobilisation
  - Working together with ministries of labour and education, employers and social partners, education and training providers, diaspora associations, greater focus on education to support and reinforce investment in local skills.

- **EU Mobility Partnerships**: cooperation framework for managing migration, ‘legal migration pillar’ emphasises skills dimension; pilot legal migration schemes with skills development component. Examples include supporting mobility and skills include student/teacher mobility (Erasmus+), joint curricula/dual diploma programs and twinning in VET and higher education as well as apprenticeship programmes in foreign firms.

Distinguishing traits of global skills partnerships include:

- **Manage future migration pressure**, addressing many legitimate concerns such as brain drain in countries of origin, integration and fiscal impact in destination.

- **Respond to labour market needs and pressures** both in countries of destination and origin.

- **Directly involve employers** in country of destination to identify and train for specific skills they need that can be learned relatively quickly.

- **Form innovative partnerships for skilled/semi-skilled occupations**, that take between several months and three years to learn, not necessarily a university degree.

- **Create skills before migration**, with constant savings to country of destination and spill over benefits from training centres in country of origin. Almost immediate human capital increase in country of origin.

- **Promote development**. By bringing together training for migrants with training for non-migrants in country of origin, such training occurs in two tracks: a ‘home’ track for non-migrants, and an ‘away’ track for migrants. Trainees can pick which track to go down, and those to go abroad can receive additional training in language, soft skills and integration.

- **Are highly flexible**. Any agreement can, and must, be adapted to the specific country needs in both destination and origin, with diverse financing arrangements and actors.
4.2 Different types of skills partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different types of skills partnerships on migration</th>
<th>Possible Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► Information, guidance and counselling of migrant workers</td>
<td>► Better labour market outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>► Identification and anticipation of skills demand and supply</td>
<td>► Mutually beneficial and regular labour migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>► Skills development in the country of origin</td>
<td>► More relevant and quality training provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Skills development in the country of destination</td>
<td>► Better career development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Mutual recognition of qualifications</td>
<td>► More effective skills use and productivity of enterprises</td>
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The table below provides an overview of existing examples of skills partnerships, presenting their diverse mechanisms and results, by source of funding.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Publicly or privately funded education</td>
<td>Self-financing international students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer in</td>
<td>Multi-national firm global trainee schemes (e.g. Porsche, BMW, VW, Mercedes training and recruitment centres)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Australian Pacific Technical College (Australia) Blue Bird Pilot Scheme (New Zealand, Canada)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Australian Pacific Technical College (Australia) Blue Bird Pilot Scheme (New Zealand, Canada)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Australian Pacific Technical College (Australia) Blue Bird Pilot Scheme (New Zealand, Canada)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant +</td>
<td>Seafarers (the Philippines, China, Russia, Ukraine), Nurses (Finland, Italy, Germany)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer in</td>
<td>Seasonal agricultural worker scheme with training component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Seasonal agricultural worker scheme with training component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Seasonal agricultural worker scheme with training component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>GIZ triple-win project (the Philippines, Georgia, Vietnam, Tunisia), Italy in tourism sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant +</td>
<td>Scholarships and youth exchange programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Scholarships and youth exchange programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country +</td>
<td>Scholarships and youth exchange programs</td>
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<td>Employer in</td>
<td>Scholarships and youth exchange programs</td>
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<td>Destination</td>
<td>Scholarships and youth exchange programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions for</td>
<td>Training for origin and destination needs, according to common standards → perfect transferability of skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits to</td>
<td>Return migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origin Country</td>
<td>Recognition of skills acquired abroad upon return</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demand for skills acquired abroad at origin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indirect transfers (e.g. trade, technology)</td>
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**Possible Outcomes**
- Information, guidance and counselling of migrant workers
- Identification and anticipation of skills demand and supply
- Skills development in the country of origin
- Skills development in the country of destination
- Mutual recognition of qualifications
- Harmonization of training standards
- Recognition of prior learning
Indeed, having a solid funding mechanism in place is crucial for skills partnerships to become effective and sustainable. The box below provides some examples to illustrate the various forms through which SADC member states currently fund skills development.

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**Examples from the SADC region: Funding skills development: Tripartite skills bodies and funds in SADC**

A new ILO study on the SADC region, assessing the skills development levy systems in eight countries, notes that training funds can be financed by employer levies, public subsidies, donor financing or a combination of these sources. The majority of 15 training levies in the selected SADC countries (Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) are based on payroll, averaging 1 per cent, with Tanzania being an exception at 4.5 per cent.

The national revenue authority is responsible for levy collection in most countries. However, whilst the funds provide much-needed resources for skills development in their countries, many employers’ and workers’ organizations in the selected SADC countries perceive the training levy as just another form of taxation, especially among small firms, particularly where enterprises have only limited opportunities to receive grants for training from the levies they have paid.

In South Africa, there are currently 21 sector education and training authorities (SETAs) covering all economic sectors. They develop and periodically update sector skills plans (SSPs), aiming to ensure the correspondence between the skills on demand and delivered. They also provide the appropriate inputs to the skills recognition system.

More information can be found in the *Assessment of the Skills Development Levy Systems in Southern African Development Community (SADC) Countries*. 

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Countries of destination are increasingly engaging in skills partnerships. A forerunner in this domain is Germany, for which the GIZ has developed and implemented three distinct approaches to skills partnerships:

1. ‘Skilled migration’ approach (triple-win): it worked with countries of origin governments to responsibly recruit and prepare professionals (i.e. nurses), support the up-skilling and recognition of their existing skills, and place them with German employers.

2. ‘Destination training’ approach: it also helped the recruited workers acquire new technical skills after they arrive in Germany.

3. ‘Origin training’ approach: it did everything in the first two approaches, but the training of recruited workers took place before they migrate, within the country of origin. Non-migrants are also trained.

Conditions for a beneficial skills partnership on migration between countries of origin and destination include the following:

► Training in the country of origin is more cost-effective and similar quality with destination
► The skills imparted are relevant for both countries’ labour markets, and enhance employability in the country of origin
► Certificates delivered are recognized in both countries’ labour markets
► Those that migrate are not only the best performers
► Migrant workers return to their countries of origin and
  ► their skills acquired abroad are recognised in the country of origin
  ► their skills acquired abroad are demanded and used in country of origin
  ► they contribute to technology transfer and/or trade links

On the other hand, possible challenges in a skills partnership on migration between countries of origin and destination include:

► Developing constructive working relations with/in/ between relevant ministries within a country and between countries
► Cultivating stakeholders buy-in both from countries of origin and destination to make it work
► Creating public-private partnership, by attracting private sector and engaging employers as early as possible
► Establishing a training institution or partnering with existing institutions in the country of origin
► Providing advanced language training in high quality, both technical and conversational
► Providing professional preparation training prior to departure (beyond cultural awareness, workplace skills, conflict resolution)

Point for reflection:

► Does your country meet any of these conditions?
Key learning points

1. The ILO has an important mandate and a set of International Labour Standards also on Skills Development and Lifelong Learning and skills and migration are intertwined in ILO’s International Labour Standards, as well as the Agenda 2030 and the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, the European Agenda on Migration and the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

2. The dynamics of skills mobility and migration can be affected by different drivers: brain drain, which occurs when more than 10% of tertiary educated people migrate; brain gain, which is the immigration of trained and talented individuals into the destination country and is sometimes also referred to as “reverse brain drain”; brain waste, which occurs if the skills (and qualifications) acquired by a migrant outside of his/her country of work are not recognised within that country (either by the government authorities or the final employer), which prevents migrants from fully using their potential; and brain circulation, that is the circular movement of skilled migrant workers across countries.

3. A number of factors are influencing the global evolution of skills demand and supply, and if left unaddressed they are likely to contribute to skills mismatches in the future; among these, demographics, education, globalization of markets, labour mobility, technology and innovation and climate change. While some discrepancies between labour supply and demand may be positive because they enable social
mobility and provide incentives for skills development and innovation, the real challenge is to minimise skills mismatch and its negative consequences for economy, society, enterprises and individuals.

4. There are many approaches and methods developed to identify and analyse current and future skills needs. All methods have their own strengths and weaknesses and their use largely depends on the level of analysis, the availability of data and analytical capacities and the study objectives. These include: the Delphi Method, Employer skills surveys (ESS), focus groups, tracer studies, Quantitative modelled skills forecasting, scenario development and foresight, sectoral approaches, big data or real-time data approaches.

5. Recognition of qualifications comprises two main areas: academic and professional. It describes the assessment and acceptance of the equivalence of formal education diplomas and certificates. It may happen in a national or international contexts, and generally denotes the formal recognition of foreign qualifications through credential evaluation. Validation, on the other hand, is the assessment and validation of skills and competences learned outside formal education, i.e. non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL).

6. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, non-formal and informal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training. A formal and widely accepted skills RPL helps improve the market status and value of migrant workers not only in recipient countries, but also in their home countries upon return. Due to a lack of recognition of skills for millions of overseas workers – even after they have gained several years of good international work experience – no formal qualifications often means lower wages and brain waste.

7. The process can be facilitated by setting up recognition agreements. Several types of agreements exist, each with their own implementation challenges.

8. Skills Partnerships on Migration aim to better organize skills and migration across countries, increase investments in skills development and recognition, and meet the needs of countries of origin, transit and destination as well as of migrant workers and employers. All involved parties or stakeholders (which can include governments and ministries, TVET agencies, Employment services, Training Providers, Statistical institutes, Employers’ organizations, Workers’ organizations and Civil society organizations) are supposed to benefit from such a partnership.
Knowledge Acquisition Assessment

1. Which of the following is the definition of migration according to the UN:
   (a) A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least three years, irrespective of the causes and the means used to migrate.
   (b) A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a half year, irrespective of the causes and the means used to migrate.
   (c) A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year, only for economic reasons.
   (d) A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year, irrespective of the causes and the means used to migrate.

2. Which of the following is not a work-related skill:
   (a) Basic/ core/ foundation skills.
   (b) Technical/ vocational skills.
   (c) Aesthetics skills.
   (d) Personal attributes/ innate traits

3. Which of the following is not an area of the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006):
   (a) Gender and Migration
   (b) Decent Work
   (c) Migration process
   (d) Social integration and inclusion

4. Which of the following are the key concepts of the complex interaction between skills and migration/labour mobility:
   (a) Brain drain, brain damage, brain circulation and brain waste
   (b) Brain drain, brain gain, brain freeze and brain waste
   (c) Brain drain, brain gain, brain circulation and brain waste.
   (d) Brain lost, brain gain, brain circulation and brain waste.

5. Qualification: an official confirmation, usually in the form of a document, obtained through:
   (a) Successful completion of a full education programme
   (b) Successful completion of a stage of an education programme (intermediate qualifications)
   (c) Validation of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies, independent of participation in an education programme (acquired through non-formal education or informal learning).
   (d) All of the above

6. Which of the following is not a type of skill mismatch:
   (a) Vertical mismatch
   (b) Horizontal mismatch
   (c) Skill shortages
   (d) Skill guessing
7. What is the definition of skills anticipation:
(a) Skills needs anticipation refers to activities to assess past and present skills of the labour market in a strategic way, using consistent and systematic methods.
(b) Skills needs anticipation refers to activities to assess future skills needs in the labour market in a strategic way, using consistent and systematic methods.
(c) Skills needs anticipation refers to activities to assess future skills needs in top three most productive economic sectors, using consistent and systematic methods.
(d) Skills needs anticipation refers to activities to assess future skills needs in the labour market in a strategic way, using information only from companies.

8. Which of the following statement is not correct:
(a) Demographic changes influence labour supply in different ways in developing and developed countries.
(b) The population increase is not only a challenge but it is also an opportunity for countries, if they manage to translate the demographic dividend into growth and development.
(c) Demographic trends do not influence demand.
(d) In developed countries the population is ageing, while in developing countries large numbers of young people are entering the labour market every year.

9. Which of the following correspond to the definition of formal recognition of qualifications:
(a) Validating skills/competences learned outside formal education; non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). It may happen in a national context, or in an international context.
(b) Assessing and validating ideas and knowledge learned in different Universities.
(c) Saying in a formal or official way, usually in writing, that something is true or correct.
(d) Assessing and acceptance of the equivalence of formal education diplomas and certificates. It may happen in a national context, or in an international context (formal recognition of foreign qualifications through credential evaluation).

10. Which of the following is not a building block of a Recognition of Prior Learning system:
(a) Financing
(b) Regulatory framework
(c) Stakeholder ownership and commitment
(d) Alignment with International Standards

Correct answers: 1d, 2c, 3a, 4c, 5d, 6d, 7b, 8c, 9d, 10d.
Training activity 1 - discussion

- **Type:** Individual or Group Exercise
- **Time:** 45 min
- **Modality:** Residential or online
- **Level of difficulty for the Trainer:** level 1 beginner
- **Objective:** Apply some of the key terminology and concepts to their own country context

**Modality 1: Residential**

Divide participants into small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions:

Which type/s of skills mismatch is/are the most problematic in your country? Do you have data that you can share on this topic?

If the participants are all from the same country, help them bring the discussion forward by asking what they think the **root causes** could be, and what **strategies** could be put in place to minimize/solve this issue.

If participants are from different countries, another follow up question could be what **commonalities** or **differences** they see in their countries’ response to this issue. Is there potential for **cooperation**? What can be **learned** from neighbouring countries’ experiences?

Ideally, the guiding questions should be projected on a slide or written on a piece of flipchart paper for participants to be able to refer to them with ease throughout the exercise. You can also print them out on a task sheet to be distributed to each group.

Allow 30 minutes for discussion then ask each group to nominate a spokesperson who will summarize the key points for the plenary. Allow at least 5 minutes for each group to present and reply to questions posed by other groups, if any.

**Modality 2: online**

Ask participants to reply to the same questions individually in a forum.
Training activity 2 - personas

- **Type:** Individual or Group Exercise
- **Time:** 60 min
- **Modality:** Residential or online
- **Level of difficulty for the Trainer:** level 2 intermediate
- **Objective:** Apply what they have learned from the module to a real-life example of a “persona”

Modality 1: residential

Divide the participants into small groups and introduce to them the characters, or “personas”, that will be at the heart of the exercise. Assign one to each group and explain that the personas are migrant workers with specific needs and challenges that they can support with skills-related actions.

Ask participants: How can you apply what you have learned in this module in a concrete way so that you can help your “persona” with skills-related actions? They can discuss in their group and prepare an output to be presented in plenary by a volunteer spokesperson. Allow up to 35-40 min for the discussion if needed but make sure that there is time for presentation in plenary and for each group to receive feedback on their work by the other groups.

Please find the personas profiles here below:

**AZFAR**

**Personal Information**
Nationality: Indian
Age: 45 years old
Family: married with children
Host Country: Ghana

**Professional Information**
Education: Master’s degree in management and international trade
Occupation: Businessperson in the export sector

**Additional information**
Azfar lived for ten years in France and the UK
His diplomas are recognized internationally
When he started his career, he used to work for three years in France for an import-export company
Before migrating to Ghana one year ago, he completed training in human resources management and accounting
Has created his own company four years ago in the UK

**IRINA**

**Personal Information**
Nationality: Ukrainian
Age: 38 years old
Family: married with 02 children
Host Country: Italy
Migratory status: permanent resident

**Professional Information**
Education: Hairdresser certification from Ukraine
Occupation: Hairdresser / coiffeuse informally
**Additional information**
Irina moved to Italy three years ago
It was her husband’s decision to migrate. She would have preferred to stay in Ukraine as she only speaks Ukrainian and Russian.
She obtained her hairdresser’s certificate in Ukraine and worked in a hairdressing salon as an employee for five years.
She would like to open her own hairdressing salon in Italy, but she does not have the necessary financial resources.
Irina has not worked on a regular basis since she arrived in the new country. She works as a hairdresser sporadically with her contacts from her husband’s network (informal economy).

**SONIA**

**Personal Information**
Nationality: South African
Age: 40 years old
Family: single with one child (6 years old)
Host Country: Ireland
Migratory status: Permanent resident

**Professional Information**
Education: Graduate studies in Medicine – specialist in dermatology
Occupation: Dermatologist

**Additional information**
Sonia finished her studies in the USA and worked for ten years in Washington.
She benefited from a national programme that aims at attracting highly skilled migrant workers from the health sector. She moved to Ireland two years ago.
She works in a public hospital, and also opened her own private medical clinic thanks to the savings she earned in the United States (and to the deregulated health sector, where professionals are allowed to work both in the public health system and privately).
Her financial resources dramatically decreased compared to what she used to earn in the USA.

She will hopefully benefit from a private pension scheme to which she contributes on a monthly basis.
She thinks that her situation as a working single mother is not as well accepted in Ireland as it was in the United States and she is facing more discrimination than in the US.

**ALY**

**Personal Information**
Nationality: Nigerian
Age: 24 years old
Family: single
Host Country: Germany
Migratory status: undocumented migrant

**Professional Information**
Education: He completed only primary school
Occupation: He works sometimes in the construction sector

**Additional information**
Lives as an undocumented migrant and work illegally as a waiter in a restaurant.
He has overstayed his visa after moving to Germany to visit his cousin.
He is constantly afraid of being deported.
Sometimes he wonders if he could join some vocational training and be better qualified to find employment in sectors with labour shortage such as the nursing sector.
No access to social protection in Germany nor in Nigeria.
PEDRO

**Personal Information**
Nationality: Guatemala  
Age: 47 years old  
Family: married with 5 children living in Guatemala  
Host Country: Mexico  
Migratory status: temporary migrant worker

**Professional Information**
Education: Secondary school  
Occupation: Temporary worker in agriculture

**Additional information**
Works as seasonal worker in Mexico (avocado harvest)  
When he is in Guatemala, he also works in agriculture  
He always emigrates without his family  
He remits 70% of his income to his family although his employer is often delayed in paying him  
He receives full accommodation when he is in Mexico but living conditions are harsh and isolated  
He never received any vocational training, neither in Mexico nor in Guatemala  
Mexico and Guatemala have a Bilateral Labour Agreement  
Sometimes he wonders about looking for better working conditions but his visa is tied to the employer

LUCY

**Personal Information**
Nationality: Philippine  
Age: 21 years old  
Family: single  
Host Country: France  
Migratory status: residence permit on temporary humanitarian grounds

**Professional Information**
Education: Primary school  
Occupation: Unemployed

**Additional information**
Victim of human trafficking in France, where she worked in a sweatshop as a seamstress for 2 years  
She was working 18 hours a day, seven days a week  
Has been supported by associations working with victims of trafficking in France  
Suffers from stigma and has serious trusting issues  
Excluded by her family and her community  
She is thinking of leaving Paris to work in a close city as a waitress and start over

**Modality 2: online**
An online presentation of the personas can be found at this link: [https://view.genial.ly/5fc758caf115960d2322ae11](https://view.genial.ly/5fc758caf115960d2322ae11)  
Ask participants to reply to the same question by posting their answer in the forum or by submitting a one-page written answer. This can be done individually or in groups if the situation allows for it.
Training activity 3 - contest

- **Type:** Individual or Group Exercise
- **Time:** 45 min
- **Modality:** Residential or online
- **Level of difficulty for the Trainer:** level 3 advanced
- **Objective:**

**Modality 1: Residential**

Invite participants to share their best experience in skills development for migrant workers. To make the exercise more engaging, you can structure it as a contest and participants can volunteer to take part.

Ask each volunteer to prepare a short, 60-second “elevator pitch” where they present the key aspects of their best experience trying to convince the panel (you and the other trainers, if available, or one or two volunteers) that the intervention they are describing is the best, most successful, or most promising. If you are in a building with an actual elevator that takes at least 60 seconds, you can do this in the elevator for a more fun twist! Alternatively, you can ask all other participants to vote on the pitch they found more convincing, by raising their hand or by any other method.

The three winners can then present more in depth after the first round of pitches, and participants can ask questions for more details. You can allow up to 10 minutes for this second round of presentations.

**Modality 2: Online**

Ask participants to upload their short video “elevator pitch” to the platform Flipgrid (free). Other participants can review all contributions and vote for the best three, who then get to present in detail during the live webinar.

**Modality 3: blended**

Participants can post their elevator pitch on Flipgrid in advance, then vote, then the three winners can present during the face-to-face session.
1: Skills dimensions of labour migration


UN (2015). Sustainable Development Goals (Targets 8.8, 10.7 and 10.c, in particular).

2: Rationale and approach to anticipate skills


3: Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition Agreements


ILO (2020). Guidelines for skills modules in bilateral labour migration agreements


IOM Migration Data Portal.


Wickramasekara, P. (2018). Assessment guide for bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding on labour migration, with a special focus on Bangladesh, ILO, Bangladesh.

Wickramasekara, P. (2018). Elements of a bilateral agreement or a memorandum of understanding on labour migration. ILO, Bangladesh.


4: Skills Partnerships for Development


ILO (2020). The role of social partners in skills development, recognition and matching for migrant workers.
