

Migration Skill Corridor Brief

Indonesia-Austria

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Emerging as a strategic skills partnership, the Indonesia–Austria migration skill corridor reflects growing cooperation in vocational training, healthcare, and the recruitment of skilled workers. This brief examines the corridor’s evolving policy framework, recent bilateral agreements, and innovative approaches to skills recognition and ethical recruitment. It assesses how coordinated governance and institutional cooperation can support sustainable labour mobility while advancing workforce development and mutual benefits for both countries.

This Migration Skill Corridor Brief is part of a Link4Skills compact publication series examining labour mobility and skills mobility pathways between select countries across Europe, Africa, Asia, and North Ame. Based on the project’s more extensive Migration Skill Corridor reports, the briefs provide concise analyses of migration dynamics, policy frameworks, good practices, and challenges shaping skills mobility, with the aim of supporting fair, sustainable, and mutually beneficial migration pathways.

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1. Executive summary

The Indonesia–Austria migration skills corridor is an emerging pathway that has gained strategic importance in recent years. Although migration stocks and flows remain low in total numbers, a significant growth trend could be observed in the past decades. In the healthcare sector, Indonesia has become an attractive origin country for Austria, due to its robust qualification standards. In the medium-skilled segment, talent attraction from Indonesia has gained momentum since Indonesia contracted Austrian companies to upgrade four vocational training centres in woodworking, metalworking, and tourism-related professions in Medan, Serang, Makassar and in Banyuwangi.

With these professions classified as shortage occupations in Austria, this development has led to a better alignment of training standards and sparked growing interest within Austria’s private sector in recruiting professionals from Indonesia. Ultimately this contributed to the country’s inclusion in the skilled labour initiative implemented by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ). At the same time, Indonesia has shown strong interest in expanding overseas employment opportunities and alleviating pressure on its labour market, particularly in the medium-skilled segment, while promoting skills-based and protected labour migration pathways.

These developments led to the signing of a 2022 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on dual apprenticeship training and ultimately to the 2024 MoU on the recruitment of skilled workers between both countries. As implementing partners of the 2024 MoU, the WKÖ and the Austrian Business Agency (ABA) - Work in Austria play a key role in advancing labour mobility cooperation with Indonesian stakeholders through business outreach, recruitment activities, and the promotion of Austria as a destination country for Indonesian professionals.

This shows that, although the MoU on the recruitment of skilled labour is still relatively new, there is high interest in its operationalisation from both sides. Looking to the future, there are discussions on integrating so-called “away-tracks”, which prepare for mobility to Austria, into the four vocational training centres.

Competency checks, which have been developed by the WKÖ as a tool to make skills visible and verifiable, are already partly available in the Indonesian language, and a pre-check register is under development. The register aims to facilitate the mutual recognition of occupational skills in the framework of the Red-White-Red (RWR) Card – Austria’s combined residence and work permit, which is designed to attract skilled non-EU professionals, particularly in shortage occupations.

Recent healthcare partnerships, including the *Nurses4Vienna* initiative, further demonstrate the corridor’s growing focus on skilled mobility pathways through cooperation between Austrian and Indonesian universities, healthcare institutions, and employers. The initiative combines recruitment, language training, qualification recognition, and integration support to facilitate the long-term integration of Indonesian nurses into Austria’s healthcare workforce.

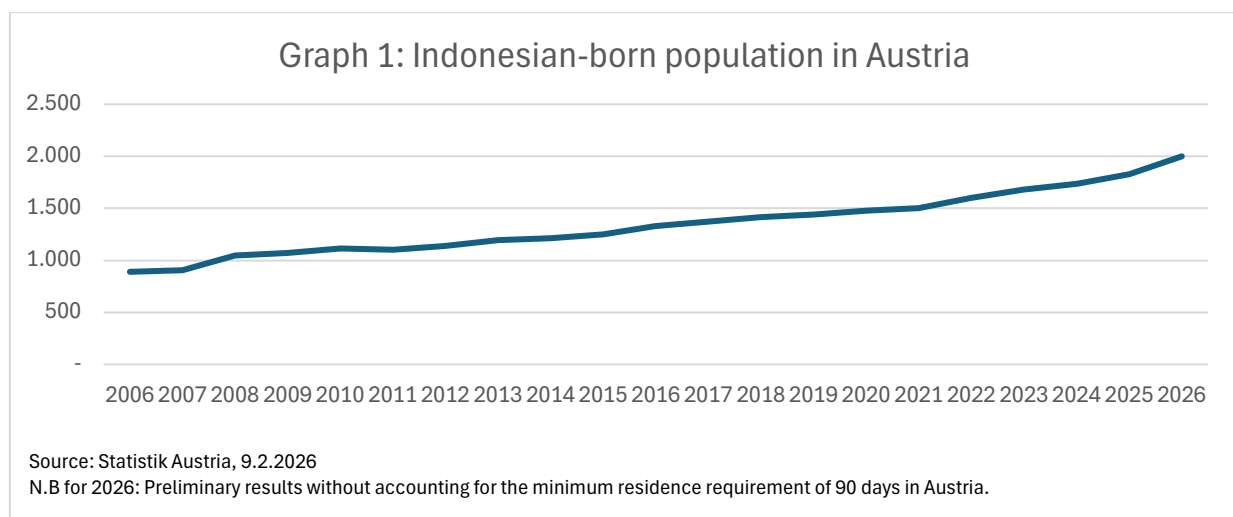
Altogether, the Indonesia–Austria skills corridor holds strong potential for mutual benefit as Austria gains qualified professionals, while Indonesia expands overseas employment opportunities under an ethical and skills-oriented framework.

2. Migration dynamics

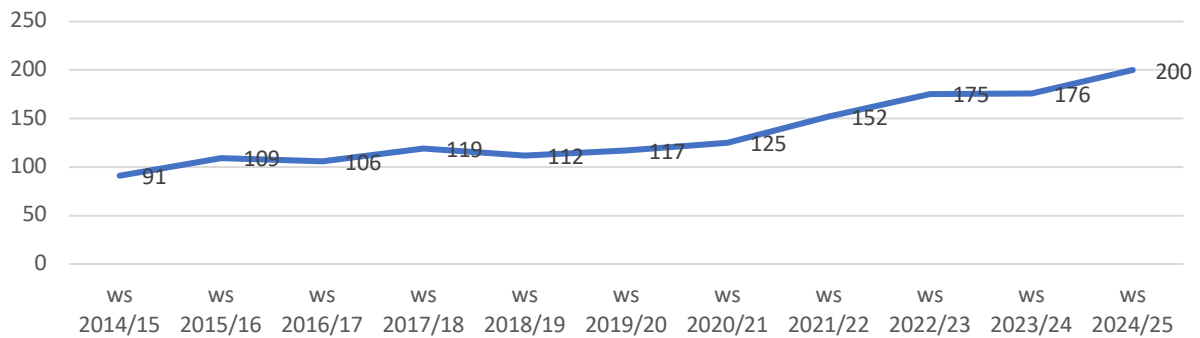
Although the numbers of Indonesians in the yet emerging corridor remain low, a distinct growth trend can be observed. In the last 20 years, the Indonesian-born population in Austria has more than doubled, from 890 in 2006 to 2,000 in 2026 (graph 1). Most are concentrated in Vienna (826), with smaller communities in Upper Austria (242) and Lower Austria (241). A similar development can be observed among students over the last ten years, as the number of Indonesian students has more than doubled from 91 in the winter semester 2014/15 to about 200 in 2024/25 (graph 2). This trend is also reflected in the number of RWR Card holders. After a period of relative stagnation, figures rose from 25 to 40 between 2024 (when the MoU on skilled worker recruitment was signed) and 2025 (graph 3). Further growth is expected as the still very recent MoU matures.

In terms of labour mobility, Indonesian migration to Austria shows a highly fluctuating pattern, with a sharp peak in 2012, followed by near-zero outflows between 2015 and 2022, and a renewed increase after 2023 (Graph 4), with a total of 70 migrant workers between 2010 and May 2026. The occupational structure is strongly concentrated in the hospitality sector. Migrants predominantly enter through self-initiated channels rather than private recruitment agencies or government-to-government schemes. The origin distribution is concentrated in Bali (37), which is a key talent pool for hospitality-related employment, followed by West Nusa Tenggara and West Java (7 each), with smaller shares from other provinces.

A distinct pattern emerges in the healthcare sector, where the *Nurses4Vienna* initiative represents a migration pathway based on education and qualification recognition. Participants typically arrive in Austria on student visas during the study and recognition process. In 2025, the first cohort comprised 46 nursing graduates from Indonesian partner universities, primarily located in Java, including DKI Jakarta, West Java, and East Java. The programme is gradually expanding to other regions outside Java to broaden access for nurses across Indonesia.



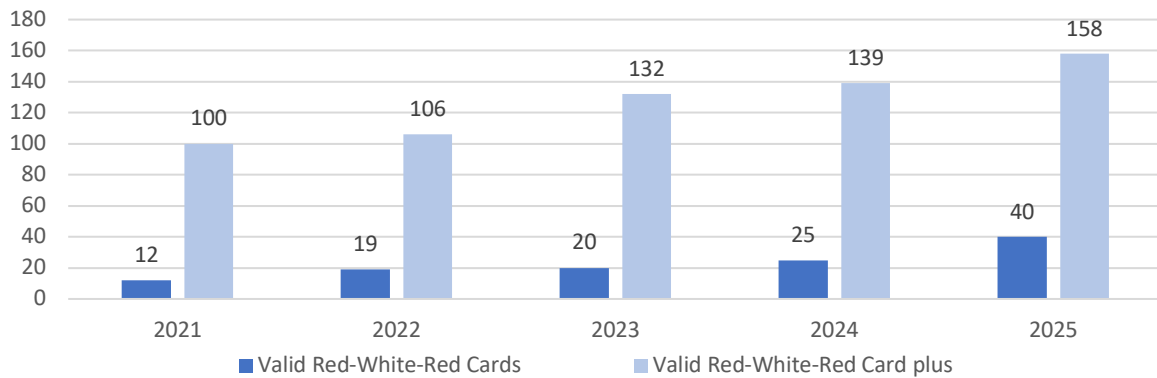
Graph 2: Indonesian Students at Austrian Universities



ws = winter semester; data includes refers to ordinary students at Austrian universities, universities of applied sciences and university colleges of teacher education

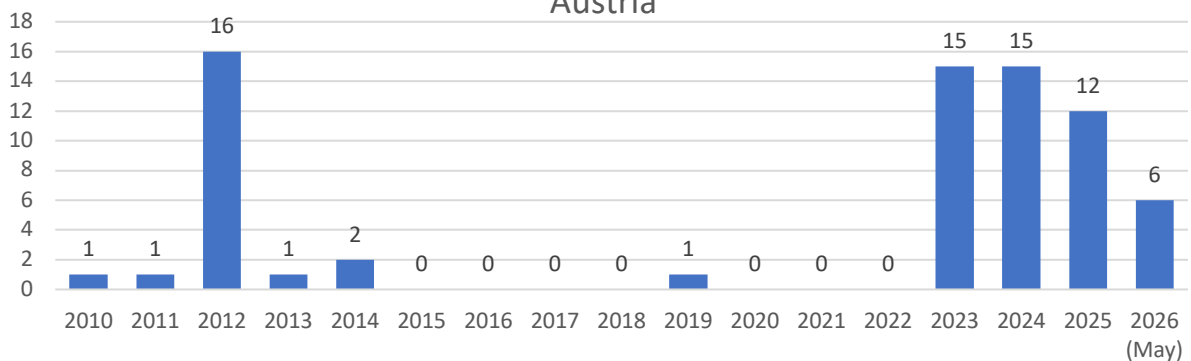
Source: STATcube – Statistical Database of STATISTICS AUSTRIA, retrieved on 23.4.2026

Graph 3: Valid Red-White-Red Cards and Red-White-Red Plus Cards Held by Indonesian Nationals



Source: Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior (2015-2025) Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsstatistik.

Graph 4: Annual Outflow of Indonesian Migrant Workers to Austria



Source: KP2MI – Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Service Statistics, retrieved on 9.6.2026, from <https://www.kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>

3. Policies and agreements

Cooperation between Austria and Indonesia has strengthened in recent years, beginning with the signing of an MoU on dual apprenticeship training in 2022, which aimed to develop a broader framework for cooperation in the area of vocational training. It was expanded two years later through a MoU on the Recruitment of Key and Skilled Workers, as a political Declaration of Intent between the Indonesian and Austrian governments. Although it is not legally binding, it serves as a basis for more concrete implementation agreements and future cooperation in the area of labour mobility. This applies particularly to the joint promotion of employment opportunities in both countries, information exchange on national qualifications frameworks (in view of facilitating the mutual recognition of qualifications), and cooperation in education and training, among others. The agreement also foresees support in legal procedures, for example concerning accessing the RWR Card, along with plans to expand German language courses in Indonesia. It also highlights principles of ethical recruitment and the protection of the rights of skilled workers. The WKÖ and ABA as implementing partners of the MoU take an active role on promoting Austria as a destination country for skilled professionals in Indonesia and in facilitating recruitments from Indonesia. A pre-check register for Indonesia is currently under development, with the aim to facilitate the mutual recognition of occupational skills. Interest in the further operationalisation of the MoU is high on both sides, given Indonesia's focus on the medium-skilled segment in its attempt to alleviate pressure on the labour market through deployment of Indonesians abroad, and Austria's interest in recruiting in this sector.

The RWR Card scheme for non-EU professionals is the primary channel for skilled Indonesians entering Austria. It grants temporary residence with restricted access to the labour market for very highly qualified workers, skilled workers in shortage occupations, other key workers and start-up founders. With few exceptions, such as start-up founders, applicants must have a concrete job offer to apply for a work and residence permit under the scheme. After two years and subject to specific requirements, RWR Card holders may apply for the RWR Card Plus, granting temporary residence and unrestricted access to the Austrian labour market, while eligible family members can apply for the RWR Card Plus without this waiting period. The scheme is considered a key instrument for facilitating the immigration of qualified non-EU workers. It is also considered a good practice that family members of these permit holders are granted access to the labour market. Nonetheless, several challenges remain, including complex approval criteria as well as the potential for vulnerabilities through the card's linkage to one specific employer.

On the Indonesian side, Law No. 18/2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers is the main legal instrument for extending protection to Indonesian workers abroad. It regulates the entire migration cycle, ranging from pre-departure to reintegration upon return. The deployment of Indonesian health professionals to foreign countries is specifically regulated under the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 37/2015 on the Utilisation of Health Workers Abroad. This regulation outlines procedures for overseas placement, aiming to improve the professionalism and global competitiveness of Indonesian health workers, ensure systematic and safe deployment, uphold competency standards, and guarantee legal protection,

while considering a balance between domestic healthcare needs and employment opportunities for health workers abroad. Generally, Indonesian policy interventions focus on strengthening global labour market analysis, improving the alignment between domestic labour supply and international demand, and expanding vocational training programmes that comply with international standards.

4. Good practices

The pre-check register, which is currently being developed for Indonesia with the aim to facilitate the mutual recognition of occupational skills, was referred to as a particularly good practice by interviewed experts. This register not only facilitates the entry of skilled workers by simplifying the recognition of pre-assessed occupational skills in shortage occupations in the framework of the Red-White-Red Card, it also helps employers assess the potential outcomes of the procedure. For this purpose, vocational training standards in both countries are aligned to ensure their comparability.

On the Indonesian side of the corridor, the end-to-end, technology-enabled protection system, anchored in Law No. 18/2017, is considered a good practice. The system records and monitors all procedures through the national digital platform SISKOP2MI. It requires the completion of key protection and verification steps by all candidates, including administrative processing through One-Stop Integrated Service (LTSA) units and village or urban ward-level document validation to confirm identity, documentation integrity and family acknowledgment. Once all requirements are validated in SISKOP2MI, candidates proceed to the mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation Programme, which serves as the final step before the issuance of the e-PMI Card (e-Indonesian Migrant Worker Card) and authorisation to depart. During overseas placement, continuous monitoring and support are facilitated through the Peduli WNI application. This digitally integrated and standardised protection chain strengthens ethical recruitment, enhances transparency and ensures compliance with protection standards from initial registration to deployment clearance.

5. Key takeaways

The migration skills corridor between Indonesia and Austria is still at an early stage, making it premature to draw conclusions about its long-term impact. Nevertheless, complementary interests and strong engagement of both countries point to a long-term potential for mutual benefits. For Austria, the corridor contributes to addressing persistent shortages of skilled labour, particularly in sectors such as skilled trades and healthcare, where demand for qualified professionals continues to rise, while for Indonesia, the favourable working conditions and strong worker protection in Austria makes it an interesting destination for labour migrants that help relieve the national labour market. Austrian institutions actively promote Austria as an attractive destination for Indonesian professionals, and a pre-check register aimed to simplify the comparability of pre-assessed foreign qualifications in the framework of the Red-White-Red

Card procedure is under development. Despite ongoing challenges, such as limited access to affordable language training, there is a clear commitment to sustained dialogue and practical cooperation, which can help ensure the corridor develops in a balanced way for both sides.

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About the Link4Skills project

Link4Skills is an EU-funded research and project addressing the global challenge of skill shortages and mismatches through innovative, sustainable solutions that foster fair skill utilization and exchange across continents.

Focusing on Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, the project seeks to bridge the gap between skill supply and demand by facilitating re/up-skilling, promoting automation, and encouraging migration as policy options.

Link4Skills is creating an inclusive, participatory policy decision-making environment by integrating a diverse range of stakeholders, including EU decision-makers, inter-governmental institutions, national and subnational decision-makers, employers organizations, employees organizations, and civic society co-development institutions.

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