

Migration Skill Corridor Brief

Indonesia - Germany

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Focusing on the emerging Indonesia-Germany skilled migration corridor, this brief examines an experimental, jointly developed model of structured and fair skilled mobility. Despite strong public investment, migration volumes remain modest and volatile. The corridor is driven primarily by healthcare and nursing, with growing recruitment in hospitality and catering. The Triple Win programme exemplifies bilateral governance, while Indonesia has strengthened skills-return provisions through bilateral agreements. Sustaining and expanding the corridor will require broader reforms to enable fair, privately led skilled migration.

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-Germany migration skills corridor has evolved into an increasingly structured pathway for skilled labour mobility. While the German government seeks to address labour shortages resulting from demographic change, the Indonesian government views skilled labour mobility as an opportunity to address domestic labour market imbalances, enhance employment outcomes, improve workforce skills, and strengthen the international competitiveness of its human resources.

The Indonesian government has progressively shifted its labour migration policy from a focus on low-skilled deployment towards the promotion of (medium-)skilled and professionally qualified workers. This transition is reflected in recent bilateral agreements with Germany covering nursing, health cooperation, vocational education and training (TVET), and the placement of skilled workers in non-regulated professions, meaning occupations that do not require professional licensing/registration for work allowance, such as those in the hospitality or service sector.

Although the corridor remains relatively small in numbers, it has become increasingly structured and skills-oriented over time. The nursing sector constitutes the most developed component, with Indonesian nurses primarily recruited through the Triple Win program under a government-to-government framework that emphasises ethical recruitment, skills recognition, and worker protection.

At the same time, the corridor has gradually diversified through alternative pathways, including private recruitment programs and vocational training schemes, which have expanded access to training or employment opportunities in Germany. In some cases, these pathways may be perceived as more attractive due to their flexibility, less bureaucracy and comprehensive support throughout the migration process, from recruitment and language training to employer matching, pre-departure preparation, and post-arrival and integration assistance.

Structured programs such as Triple Win have strengthened worker protection and reduced recruitment risks, but remain small in scale, bureaucratically complicated, and lengthy. The programs' ethical outcomes remain limited due to the global structural economic inequalities that are rather 'managed' than mitigated.

The major bottlenecks constraining candidate participation in programs within the corridor are: Language acquisition or formal requirements, recruitment costs distribution, skills recognition, and ensuring equitable access to preparatory training and migration opportunities.

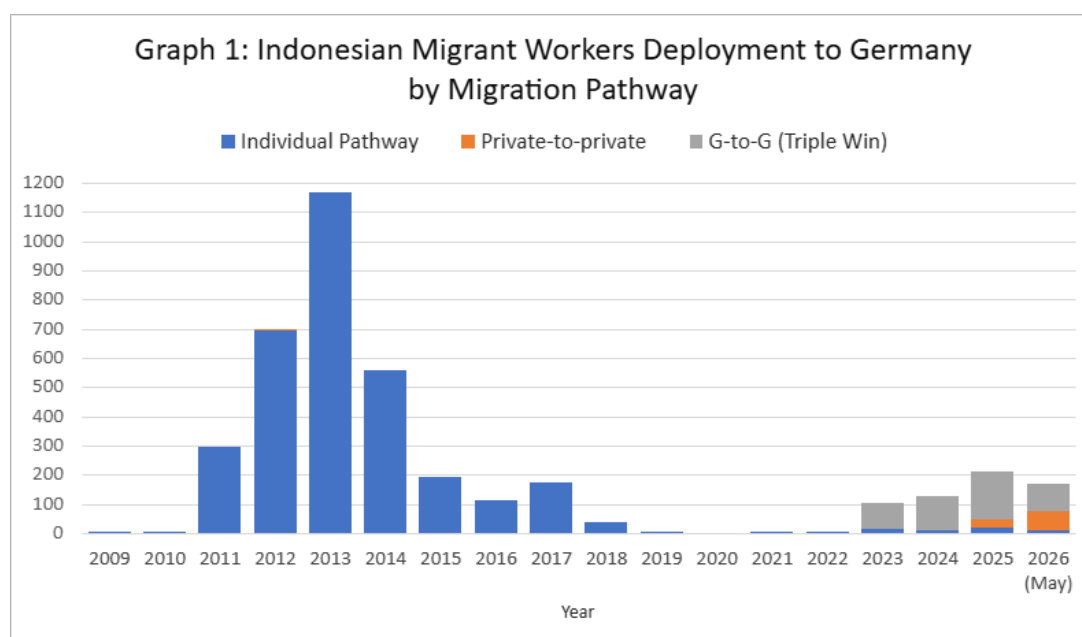
The steady increase in migration flow between Indonesia and Germany in recent years points to growing demand for skilled workers and favourable prospects for corridor evolution and expansion, provided that existing barriers to mobility continue to be addressed. Sustaining this growth will require continued investments in language preparation, skills development, and qualification recognition, supported by fair cost-sharing models between the origin and the destination.

2. Migration dynamics

Migration between Indonesia and Germany takes place through multiple pathways, including labour migration, education, vocational training, and (post-study) employment. The dynamics of the corridor have changed considerably over the past decade, driven by evolving migration policies, labour market needs, and bilateral cooperation.

Germany was among the leading European destinations for Indonesian migrant workers from 2010 to 2015, alongside Italy, Turkey, Spain, and the Netherlands. During this period, 2,898 Indonesian migrant workers were deployed to Germany – predominantly through individual migration pathways. Employment was concentrated in lower- and medium-skilled occupations, particularly among seafarers and other ship-based workers, as well as in hospitality and general labour. Following a peak in 2013, labour migration from Indonesia to Germany declined markedly (Graph 1). This formed part of the broader decline in officially recorded Indonesian migrant worker placements after 2013, which coincided with reforms of Indonesia’s labour emigration governance, including stricter recruitment and placement regulations. From around 2018 onwards, deployments to Germany remained at low levels as Indonesian labour migration increasingly shifted towards Central and Eastern European countries, where growing labour demand and lower entry requirements created new recruitment opportunities.

The introduction of the government-to-government (G-to-G) Triple Win program in 2021, marked a new phase in the Indonesia–Germany migration corridor, shifting labour migration from predominantly individual pathways towards more structured, government-mediated recruitment. Since then, the healthcare sector—particularly for registered nurses—has become the dominant occupation within the corridor, while hospitality-related occupations, such as waiters, bartenders, and chefs/cooks, continue to account for a smaller share of deployments.



Source: KP2MI – *Dashboard Publik Statistik Layanan Penempatan PMI* (n.d.).

The number of nurses deployed under the Triple Win scheme has steadily increased, rising from 85 in 2023 to 114 in 2024 and 164 in 2025. This growth reflects improved candidate preparedness, particularly in German language proficiency and pre-departure training, as well as strengthened institutional coordination between both countries. In parallel, individual pathways have become less prominent compared to earlier periods. It remains open whether private channels will play a bigger role if the corridor expands.

International recruitment structure has also shifted geographically within Indonesia: Bali was traditionally the largest sending region, accounting for nearly one-third (28.9%) of all deployments to Germany, consistent with its strong hospitality workforce. Under the Triple Win program, however, recruitment has become concentrated in Java. Between 2023 and 2026, most participants originated from West Java (91), Central Java (72), Jakarta (45), and East Java (43), while Bali contributed only 13 nurses. This mirrors the concentration of nursing education institutions across Java.

Beyond labour migration, the corridor also encompasses education- and training-related mobility, including students, vocational trainees, and graduates seeking employment (Table 1): Over the last years, the corridor was shaped by comparatively small numbers and high volatility – despite strong bilateral governmental efforts: In 2024, for example, 3,708 migrants with Indonesian nationality entered Germany. A high proportion of them were female (54.4%). In 2024, 220 Indonesian students resided in Germany after graduating and were in search for employment – in comparison, for instance, to 4,770 Indian student graduates. In 2023, the numbers were slightly lower (195 Indonesians in comparison to 3,330 Indians). Among the vocational training migrants in Germany (in total: 9,305) less than 3% were from Indonesia in 2024. In 2023, the numbers were slightly higher (3.8% of all 10,220 vocational training migrants in Germany) were Indonesian. In 2022, Indonesian vocational training migrants were among the top three nationalities with 5.4% after Vietnam and Morocco (in total: 8,045). Similar developments are reflected among Indonesian vocational training and continuing education migrants in Germany: The numbers have been low and decreasing over the last years: 435 in 2022, 390 in 2023, and only 270 in 2024. Return/onward migration also plays an important role: In the year 2024, for instance, 1,805 Indonesian citizens left Germany. The numbers increased slightly, in comparison to the year 2022 with 1,116 Indonesians leaving Germany.

Table 1. Indonesian trainee and worker mobility to Germany, 2022–2024.

Selected indicators	2022	2023	2024
Arrivals of Indonesian nationals	2,260	2,565	3,708
Indonesian student graduates seeking employment	205	195	220
Share of Indonesian nationals among vocational training migrants (%)	5.4%	3.8%	<3%
Indonesian migrants in vocational training & continuing education	435	390	270
Outmigration of Indonesian nationals	1,116	1,220	1,805

Source: BMAF & BMI.

Indonesia is also one of the German partner countries for the so-called Centers for Migration and Development (ZME).¹ These centres aim to support the full cycle of migration – from counselling for work and education opportunities in Germany to accompanying return migrants. This initiative reflects the political intention of circular migration and mutual benefits of skilled migration.

Overall, while migration volumes remain comparatively modest, the Indonesia–Germany corridor has become increasingly diversified in terms of migration pathways, occupations, and forms of mobility, suggesting continued potential for further development.

3. Policies and agreements

Germany and Indonesia have significantly expanded their collaboration on skilled labour mobility and skills development in recent years. This cooperation has evolved in response to complementary priorities in both countries: Indonesia's efforts to strengthen workforce skills and competitiveness while expanding access to quality employment and training opportunities abroad, and Germany's growing demand for qualified workers driven by demographic change and labour shortages.

Reflecting these shared interests, bilateral cooperation initially centred on skills development and institutional collaboration. The 2017 Joint Declaration of Intent on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) supported vocational education reforms and closer links between training institutions and labour market needs. This was followed by the 2020 Memorandum of Understanding on Labour and Employment, which broadened cooperation to labour market development, skills mobility, and institutional exchange, laying the groundwork for subsequent labour mobility initiatives.

Building on this foundation, bilateral cooperation entered a new phase focused on the recruitment and protection of skilled workers. The healthcare sector became the first area of implementation through the 2021 Agreement on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Health Professionals in Germany, which established a structured pathway for recruiting Indonesian nurses under the Triple Win program. Implemented jointly by Indonesia's Ministry for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (KP2MI) and Germany's Federal Employment Agency (BA), the program incorporates provisions on ethical recruitment, worker protection, and support for professional recognition. The 2021 Triple Win agreement reflects bilateral efforts towards safe, fair, and regular skilled migration.

The healthcare partnership was further strengthened through the non-legally binding 2021 Joint Declaration of Intent on Health Cooperation and the 2023 Memorandum of Understanding on the Mutual Exchange and Understanding of the Medical Education Systems.² These initiatives promote cooperation on qualifications, professional standards, and workforce development between the two countries. The 2023 MoU between the Indonesian Health Ministry and the German Medical Council also represents a rare example of a bilateral skills return initiative by

¹ <https://www.bmz.de/en/issues/german-centres-for-migration-and-development>
<https://www.startfinder.de/en/move-id-opens-doors-migration-advice-now-available-bandung-and-mataram>

² <https://en.antaranews.com/news/299127/indonesia-streamlines-process-for-returning-doctors-from-germany>

streamlining the recognition process for Indonesian doctors and specialists working or training in Germany who return to practise Indonesia.

Bilateral labour mobility cooperation has since expanded beyond healthcare. The 2025 Agreement on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Skilled Workers in Non-Regulated Professions opened new opportunities in hospitality and catering, marking an important step towards diversifying labour mobility across a wider range of vocational occupations.

The implementation of these initiatives is shaped by the respective regulatory frameworks of both countries. On the Indonesian side, Law No. 18/2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers governs the entire migration cycle and places strong emphasis on worker protection and ethical recruitment. In the healthcare sector, the Regulation of the Minister of Health of Indonesia No. 37/2015 on the Deployment of Health Workers Abroad seeks to balance international employment opportunities with domestic workforce needs, while limiting placements to countries that provide adequate legal protection. On the German side, the Skilled Worker Immigration Act (2019) facilitated the immigration of international skilled professionals.

Taken together, these agreements and regulatory frameworks reflect the growing transnational institutionalisation of skilled labour mobility between Indonesia and Germany.

4. Good practices

Structured pathways for healthcare professionals: The Triple Win program represents one of the most structured pathways for skilled migration between Indonesia and Germany. The program combines government oversight, employer involvement, language preparation, qualification recognition, and worker protection measures within a single framework. It also promotes ethical recruitment principles by limiting recruitment costs borne by workers and encouraging employer responsibility – although in small numbers and slow processes.

Digitalization and integrated migration governance: Indonesia has developed an integrated digital system that provides prospective migrant workers with a single official platform of verified overseas employment opportunities and migration-related services. The Computerised System for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (SISKOP2MI) supports worker registration, document verification, job applications, and case management. Verified overseas vacancies from licensed recruitment agencies and government-to-government programmes are published through the platform, together with information on job requirements, employment conditions, and any applicable worker-borne costs. Prospective migrant workers can apply directly through the system and monitor the recruitment process, while in-person assistance remains available through Integrated One-Stop Service Centres (LTSA). The system helps to reduce migrants' reliance on informal recruiting channels.

5. Areas for improvement

Negotiating and strengthening multilateral fair recruiting agreements: In the Southeast Asian region multilateral agreements and negotiations for fair and ethical labour migration are common. Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, engage in joint political actions for the

protection of their citizens working abroad. It is essential to further foster and strengthen multilateral cooperation and agreements – apart from bilateral recruiting agreements – for the sake of ethical and fair labour migration. While these negotiations are more complex, the regulations facilitate the cooperation within broader regions or among several partner countries.

Invest into broader digital information and marketing campaigns: Young Indonesian people heavily depend on social networks often through digital sources and social media for their migration decisions. It is pivotal to adequately reach the target group through age-sensitive campaigns in domestic languages and inform about the German education and employment system, including taxation. Steps should be taken to expose misinformation and fight against fraud, falsehoods and misleading information. Ethnic and diaspora community groups or organizations and individuals (“influencers”) with their social media channels are important and trusted social actors for potential skilled workers that share experiences and information in a target-specific manner, culture and language. Cooperation with digitally active diaspora or community organizations or initiatives is a promising approach to introduce migration opportunities to young people and provide reliable information, support, and guidance.

Provide vocational training or licensing scholarships and funds for disadvantaged groups: Education is costly – particularly for disadvantaged groups from rural areas. To make Triple Win more attractive for the young Indonesian population it is reasonable and necessary to further support candidates with the (partial) financing of regular training or licensing costs.

Data and sources

This corridor brief is based upon interviews conducted between February and August 2025. For the migration skill corridor Indonesia-Germany, 24 expert interviews were conducted by the Link4Skills Indonesia-Germany team, including three corridor-specific interviews. These included at the policy level decision-makers, politicians, executives or employees of administrations, ministries, institutions or agencies at various governmental levels and practitioners and stakeholders at the implementation level, including public or private employment/recruitment agencies, language or professional training centers, implementing institutions and organizations, professional chambers, trade unions, welfare and civil society organizations, migrant communities and returnee associations, and employers/companies. In addition, interviews and focus group discussions with five Indonesian migrant nurses in Germany were conducted. This data has been complemented with documents, statistics and studies.

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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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