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Migration Skill Corridor Report INDONESIA – GERMANY

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This paper is dedicated to Prof. Dr. Sukamdi Sukamdi†

Triple-Win or German-Win? Who really benefits from skilled migration between Indonesia and Germany?

Abstract

The Indonesia-Germany labour migration corridor is newly emerging and characterized by medium-skilled and sector-based migration initiated by structured skills mobility partnerships and bilateral agreements. As an experimental, co-developed corridor, the partnership is based on mutual institutional learning, adaptation and change. While migration flows remain highly volatile, they develop towards a moderate level. Migration in the form of vocational training plays an increasing role besides migration of skilled professionals. Public-initiated programmes such as Triple Win or Global Skills Partnerships contribute to establish a regular, structured and ethically oriented migration skill flow – on the basis of transparency, mutual benefits, and fairness. The 2021 and 2025 Triple Win agreements in nursing and hospitality represent examples of co-governance between German and Indonesian public authorities with a designated active political and operational role of the Indonesian government. Systemic limitations (limited scale, high costs and selectivity) and structural challenges, including constraining recognition, visa, and language training infrastructures and high formal requirements, are observable at the early stage of implementation. The recruitment agreements are beneficial for German employers and participating Indonesian migrant workers or trainees, while investments into skills development and vocational training reforms and skills return-oriented pathways for the benefit of the Indonesian society and economy remain limited. Within the corridor, private, public, and civil actors coexist with varying standards, accessibility, and ethical outcomes. It is open whether the recent public investments into mutual beneficial partnerships succeed in the long term in sustainably reshaping Germany as attractive destination for the young Indonesian population – or whether alternative, historically established, English-speaking destinations may offer faster procedures with lower (language) preparation or entry costs and regain the interest of the Indonesian workforce.

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0 Introduction

The migration skill corridor between Indonesia and Germany is an emerging, medium-skilled and sector-based corridor, facilitated by bilateral skills mobility partnerships and public recruitment programmes. Compared with more established migration corridors between Germany and other Asian countries of origin, such as the Philippines or India, the Indonesia-Germany corridor remains relatively small and is still in the making. In 2024, 120 Indonesian migrant workers were deployed to Germany¹, while 220 Indonesian student graduates were searching for a job in Germany, 313 Indonesian first-year students were enrolled, and 390 Indonesians had migrated to Germany for vocational training and further education.² Like the corridor between Indonesia and Austria, the Indonesian-German corridor represents a strategic state-led, co-developed, experimental type (for a typology of labour migration corridors see: Ullmann & Schwenken forthcoming).

Unlike former colonial powers such as the Netherlands and Japan, Germany has no direct colonial legacy in Indonesia. Nevertheless, relations between the two countries have longstanding historical roots, including German commercial, professional and academic presence in the Dutch East Indies and subsequent cooperation after Indonesian independence in 1945.³ Bilateral diplomatic relations were established in 1952, followed by expanding cooperation in economic, educational, research and development fields.⁴ These historical ties have also provided a foundation for labour mobility, which predates the current skills-based corridor.

Earlier labour migration to Germany during 2010–2015 was largely characterised by individual pathways and a relatively broad occupational composition, including seafaring, hospitality, service and other labour occupations.⁵ Since 2020, the Indonesia-Germany corridor has gradually shifted towards more structured and state-supported forms of mobility, marked by several bilateral recruitment agreements and skills mobility partnerships, including the 2021 and 2025 Triple Win agreements covering nursing and hospitality, as well as a Global Skills Partnership (GSP) project. These initiatives reflect growing mutual interest in establishing regular, safe, and structured pathways for labour, education, and vocational training migration. The top-down efforts on fair skilled mobility have also affected the infrastructure and flow composition within the corridor, including the rise of private intermediaries and programmes and increasing interest in vocational training migration to Germany.

In this report, we shed light on the political frameworks and relations, the concrete implementation of skilled mobility programmes, and their consequences and effects

¹ KP2MI. n.d. Dashboard Publik Statistik Layanan Penempatan PMI. <https://www.kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>

² https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/Migrationsberichte/migrationsbericht-2024.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=21

³ Kedutaan Besar Republik Federal Jerman Jakarta. 2018. Jejak-jejak Jerman di Indonesia [Traces of Germany in Indonesia]. <https://jakarta.diplo.de/id-id/deu-indo/deu-spuren-1898042>

⁴ Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Berlin. 2024. Sekilas Hubungan Bilateral Indonesia dan Jerman [Overview of Indonesia-Germany Bilateral Relations]. <https://kemlu.go.id/id/berlin/kebijakan/hubungan-bilateral/-sekilas-hubungan-bilateral-indonesia-dan-jerman?type=publication>

⁵ KP2MI. n.d. Dashboard Publik Statistik Layanan Penempatan PMI [Statistics on Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Services]. <https://www.kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>

particularly for the Indonesian society and migrants themselves. We provide insights from data collected on both corridor sides in order to avoid a biased perspective.⁶

1 Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

Indonesia's approach to legal and safe skilled labour emigration

Indonesia is one of the top labour-sending countries worldwide and has a long history of overseas labour deployment (Asis 2024). The phenomenon has largely emerged in response to limited domestic employment opportunities and persistently high unemployment levels (Al-Azkiya 2022). The country also has one of the world's largest, growing and comparatively young populations.⁷ Economic, political, and social challenges, including concerns related to employment, social mobility, and living standards, further shape migration aspirations among Indonesians.⁸ Young Indonesians increasingly view migration abroad as an opportunity for personal and professional development, as well as better living and working conditions. To just give one example of a current labour migrant: "Near the end of my nursing studies, I looked into the job situation in Indonesia and realised that nurses' salaries were inadequate. So, I started looking for opportunities abroad." (L4S_ID_migrant_01).

In 2024, approximately 297,434 Indonesian workers were deployed abroad, with placements concentrated in several occupational categories, namely as caregivers, plantation workers, domestic workers, and general labourers.⁹ Like India or the Philippines, Indonesia benefits economically from labour migration and the contribution of migrant workers. In media, remittance-sending migrants are often called "remittance heroes" (Indonesian Business Council 2025, p. 10).¹⁰ Traditionally, Indonesia has had a large workforce abroad in low-skilled sectors, with Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Gulf countries among the major destinations. Recruitment in medium-skilled sectors is a more recent development.

The long history of overseas labour migration, including cases of irregular and non-procedural migration, has exposed Indonesian workers to unfair, insecure and inhumane working conditions. This has contributed to sustained government efforts to strengthen the protection of migrant workers' human, labour, and social rights abroad.

The principal legal basis in Indonesia is Law No. 18/2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, which replaced Law No. 39/2004 on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers Overseas, as the earlier framework was considered inadequate to address evolving protection needs. The law frames overseas employment as both a means of securing decent work and income and a right and opportunity for Indonesian citizens to work abroad

⁶ A corridor brief complements our Indonesia-Germany corridor analysis (Sarajwati et al. 2026).

⁷ BPS. 2026. Population by Age Group and Sex, 2026. <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/3/WVc0MGEyMXBkVFUxY25KeE9HdDZkbTQzWkVkb1p6MDkMW==/jumlah-penduduk-menurut-kelompok-umur-dan-jenis-kelamin--2023.html>

⁸ It remains to be seen how national political changes and social conditions may affect the pressure to migrate. The trending hashtag #KaburAjaDulu (#JustLeaveTheCountry) gained visibility on social media in 2025, reflecting discussions among young Indonesians about seeking education and employment opportunities abroad amid political frustration and concerns about economic opportunities and domestic conditions.

⁹ [bp2mi.go.id: bp2mi.go.id/statistik-detail/data-penempatan-dan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-periode-januari-2025](https://bp2mi.go.id:bp2mi.go.id/statistik-detail/data-penempatan-dan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-periode-januari-2025)

¹⁰ https://chcd.abc-institute.id/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/PMI-Complete-Report_28-Apr-1-1.pdf

according to their skills and qualifications, while requiring placement to respect human dignity and legal protection and meet national labour needs. Therefore, it establishes an integrated protection framework covering the entire migration cycle, from pre-departure preparation to employment abroad and return and reintegration. Since the legal framework's enactment, Indonesia's labour migration policy has increasingly combined worker protection with efforts to strengthen skills and better align domestic labour supply with international labour demand. Policy interventions have therefore placed greater emphasis on skills development and vocational training that meet international standards, supporting the preparation of workers for more structured and skills-based migration pathways, including to Germany (Azzahra 2025).

The overseas deployment of Indonesian health professionals is further regulated under the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 13/2025 on the Management of Health Human Resources. The legal instrument provides a regulatory framework to enhance professionalism and global competitiveness of Indonesian health workers, ensuring systematic and safe deployment, upholding competency standards, and guaranteeing legal protection. The international recruitment requires balancing domestic healthcare workforce demand with work opportunities for Indonesian health workers abroad. Placements are also restricted to destination countries whose governments either maintain a formal bilateral agreement with Indonesia or possess domestic regulatory frameworks that ensure adequate protection for foreign professionals.¹¹

Germany's skilled immigration strategy

Germany is a country with strong skills shortage in certain sectors and occupations due to significant societal and technological challenges: Demographic changes (aging, declining birth rate), increasing digitalization (including artificial intelligence and automation) and industrial transformation (Ullmann & Schwenken 2024). According to the Institute for Employment Research of the Federal Employment, Germany's population between 20 and 66 years of age will decrease between 2020 and 2035 by 7.2 million and until 2060 again by 8.9 million.¹²

In 2019, broader political and legal reforms were adopted with the Skilled Immigration Act (2019)¹³ and its further amendments as well as a new Skilled Labor Strategy (2022)¹⁴ to tackle the pressing, systemic labour shortages, facilitate international skilled immigration, and improve the attractiveness of Germany as a destination country for qualified professionals (Becker et al. 2023). The policy changes include skills-or qualification-based¹⁵ and partnership-based approaches to skilled worker shortage.

¹¹ The international recruitment of professionals in fundamental societal sectors such as healthcare requires ethical and humanitarian considerations. Indonesia is not mentioned in the WHO health workforce support and safeguards list 2023. The German government strongly emphasizes adherence to this listing (L4S_DE_prac_05). The list is regularly updated. Critiques highlight that the list displays shortages only with regard to a defined minimum standard, while the demand for high-quality workforce coverage is much higher. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240069787>

¹² <https://doku.iab.de/kurzber/2021/kb2021-25.pdf>

¹³ [https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#_bgbl_/*\[@attr_id='bgbl119s1307.pdf'\]](https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#_bgbl_/*[@attr_id='bgbl119s1307.pdf'])

¹⁴ https://www.bmas.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/PDF-Publikationen/skilled-labour-strategy-pdf.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

¹⁵ For a critical analysis of the skills or qualification criterion on labor mobility, see Robinson & Groß (2026).

In Germany, three pillars or pathways for the temporary¹⁶ immigration of skilled workers exist:

- Skilled labor pillar: Skilled professionals with recognized qualifications can take up any qualified employment in non-regulated occupations.
- Experience pillar: Skilled professionals can migrate with strong and proven practical experiences and without formal recognition.
- Potential pillar: Skilled professionals can migrate without a job/apprenticeship offer and in search of work/training opportunities.¹⁷

Recent years are characterised by major policy changes:

- Extended skilled worker definition by considering both professionals with academic and vocational training (with at least two years);
- Accelerated procedures for skilled workers with reduced administrative processes;
- Facilitated recognition processes for skilled professionals with the possibility to enter Germany during/before recognition and for the purpose of adaptation/adjustment measures, e.g. through recognition partnerships;
- Facilitated immigration of skilled workers for seeking jobs or apprenticeships via the skills- and point-based Opportunity Card;
- Simplified entry and residence permit options of migrants with strong practical skills and work experiences – particular in specialized areas such as IT.

Formal migration partnerships, bilateral recruiting agreements and skills mobility partnerships (SMPs) are a political cornerstone for German (medium-)skilled migration policies.¹⁸ The German government proactively reaches out to origin countries to negotiate such partnerships and agreements for strategic workforce planning (Biehler, Kipp & Koch 2024). The starting point of the much-cited and advertised Triple Win program was the realization that state recruiting programmes and agreements only work successfully if both the requirements of the German labour market *and* the conditions and needs of migrants and origin countries are sufficiently considered.

Based on these policy changes Germany turned into a country with comparatively liberal labour migration policies and high investments into a range of bilateral agreements and partnerships – yet actual skilled migration has remained moderate. We will explain some of the factors leading to this gap later in this Working Paper.

Indonesia-EU relations

¹⁶ Temporary residence permits can be extended and may lead to permanent residency and naturalization when certain conditions are met (<https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/MigrationAufenthalt/ZuwandererDrittstaaten/Migrathek/Niederlassen/niederlassen-node.html>).

¹⁷ https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/EMN/EMNDeutschlandTemplates/emn-template-2-2025-arbeitsmigration.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=9

¹⁸ Partnerships and agreements to recruit skilled workers from non-European countries, such as from the South Asian or North African region, are a rather recent phenomenon. For a long period of time, immigration from (Eastern) European countries, notably Poland, Romania, or Bulgaria, played an important role to cover labor gaps in various medium- und low-skilled sectors in Germany. Experts argue that Germany significantly benefitted from this intra-European mobility. Yet, this ‘mobility potential’ has now apparently been ‘exhausted’ as numbers started to decline for the first time in fifteen years. <https://mediendienst-integration.de/news/trendwende-bei-der-migration-aus-der-eu/>

The relations between Indonesia and Germany are broadly shaped by EU-level relations. Two agreements can be highlighted: In 2014, the EU-Indonesia Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation was signed.¹⁹ The agreement concerns amongst others trade and security as well as legal migration pathways, for example, through simplifying and matching visa regulations. Based on this agreement, Germany and Indonesia have worked together on information transfer and exchange. In 2025, the European Union and Indonesia signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) as a result of political negotiations that date back to 2016.²⁰ Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, stated:

“The new agreement will now open new markets and create more opportunities in key industries. Businesses active in agriculture, automotive, and services will massively benefit from it. [...] This would mean a long-term commitment, based on trust, reciprocity, and mutual benefit.” (Diplomacy & Beyond 2025)²¹

Bilateral agreements and partnerships

Bilateral relations between Indonesia and Germany have been strengthened over the last years and reflect mutual interests. These intensified relations are based on Indonesia’s growing economic importance and large labour supply.

In 2012, Germany and Indonesia signed the “Jakarta Declaration”, a comprehensive partnership agreement on “Shaping Globalisation and Sharing Responsibility”.²² In 2025, a €200 million “Just Energy Transition Partnership” (JETP) agreement was signed on closer economic cooperation.²³ A comprehensive migration and mobility partnership agreement (like the one between Germany and India) has not been negotiated so far.

The strengthened bilateral relations can be highlighted by several joint political or institutional arrangements adopted over the last years:

The 2017 Joint Declaration of Intent (DoI) on the “Strengthening and Deepening of the Partnership in the Field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training”²⁴ – based on the Jakarta Declaration – has been signed to collaborate in institutional technical and vocational education and training (TVET) reforms. The Indonesian government has been interested in enhancing the quality and competitiveness of its national vocational high schools, strengthen collaboration between the German and Indonesian private sector and further develop national

¹⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-indonesia-framework-agreement-on-comprehensive-partnership-and-cooperation.html>

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-indonesia-framework-agreement-on-comprehensive-partnership-and-cooperation.html>

²⁰ <https://diplomacybeyond.com/eu-indonesia-sign-comprehensive-economic-partnership-agreement-cepa/#:~:text=The%20European%20Union%20%28EU%29%20and%20Indonesia%20reached%20a,initiate%20negotiations%20with%20Indonesia%20on%20July%2018%2C%202016>

²¹ <https://diplomacybeyond.com/eu-indonesia-sign-comprehensive-economic-partnership-agreement-cepa/#:~:text=The%20European%20Union%20%28EU%29%20and%20Indonesia%20reached%20a,initiate%20negotiations%20with%20Indonesia%20on%20July%2018%2C%202016>

²² <https://www.ag-friedensforschung.de/regionen/Indonesien/jakarta-declaration.pdf>

²³ <https://jakarta.diplo.de/id-en/jetp-juni-2725664>

²⁴ <https://www.bappenas.go.id/index.php/id/berita/babak-baru-kerja-sama-indonesia-jerman-dalam-pendidikan-dan-pelatihan-teknik-dan-vokasi-qf5fe>

work competency standards and vocational education curricula, while German stakeholders provide technical expertise and support.

The 2020 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Labour and Employment aims to promote decent work, strengthen institutional collaboration, and enhance mutual understanding of labour market systems. It emphasises knowledge exchange, capacity building, and the sharing of best practices between relevant authorities, particularly in relation to labour market development and active labour market policies. While non-binding in nature, the MoU functions as an enabling instrument for more operational and sector-specific arrangements, including subsequent agreements governing the placement and protection of Indonesian workers (L4S_ID_pol_02).

The 2021 Joint Declaration of Intent on Health Cooperation²⁵ between the Indonesian Ministry of Health (MoH) and the German Ministry of Health (BMG) – a continuation of the Jakarta Declaration – further strengthened mutual beneficial relations and collaboration in the health sector across various domains. Practical mechanisms include exchange of experts, delegations, and health professionals, with the aim of facilitating short-term postgraduate education and training in medical specialisations and establishment of direct linkages between relevant foundations, institutions, and organisations in both countries.

The 2023 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Mutual Exchange and Understanding of the Medical Education System between the Indonesian Ministry of Health and the German Medical Association seeks to enhance and deepen mutual understanding of medical education systems, specialist training pathways, continuing medical education, and professional recognition frameworks in both countries. Under this agreement, the German Medical Association supports the provision of information on relevant authorities responsible for the verification of specialist medical qualifications in Germany and on the structure of the German healthcare system. The MoU also facilitates the exchange of statistical data on Indonesian physicians practising in Germany. The collaboration is unique as it streamlines sector-based mutual skills recognition which facilitates the return of Indonesian doctors and medical specialists who have studied and worked in Germany.²⁶

2021 and 2025 Triple Win agreement

Based on a potential analysis conducted by the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) in 2022, Indonesia has been selected as one among 12 focus countries for international recruitment of skilled professionals (BA 2022, p.2).²⁷ This targeted approach is illustrated by a staff member of the German Agency for International Development Cooperation (GIZ):

“We have now decided to go to Indonesia, simply for strategic reasons. [...] There is of course great potential in Indonesia, in terms of numbers alone. In other countries, I only know the figures and developments in the care sector, it is more difficult to find enough applicants.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)²⁸

²⁵ <https://treaty-room.kemlu.go.id/daftar-perjanjian>

²⁶ <https://en.antaranews.com/news/299127/indonesia-streamlines-process-for-returning-doctors-from-germany>

²⁷ The analysis of the potential for skilled workers from third countries consists of four phases: 1. indicator-based analysis, 2. qualitative survey of external partners, 3. in-depth analysis of specific criteria, and 4. willingness to cooperate (BA 2022, p. 1).

²⁸ All interviews conducted in German or Indonesian were translated by the authors into English.

Negotiations with Indonesian state partners about recruitment agreements followed. In 2021, the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) and the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Board (IMWPB) signed a Triple Win agreement on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Health Professionals in the Federal Republic of Germany²⁹. Since 2013, Triple Win has been initiated with multiple partner countries, including the Philippines, India, and Tunisia. The programme provides several provisions that seek to ensure fair, ethical and transparent recruitment and placement, equal treatment, labour rights, and access to social protection in compliance with the regulatory frameworks of both countries.

The framework encompasses close institutional exchange between respective public employment and migration authorities on both countries, building bilateral structures and networks, coordinating recruitment collaboration and dividing mandates across the migration cycle. The agreement stipulates skills development initiatives aimed at facilitating the recognition of Indonesian educational qualifications in Germany and practically testing joint skilled migration projects and sector-/ occupation-specific collaboration.

“Germany offered the Triple Win programme because they anticipate that 20 to 30 years from now, no one will be left to care for them. That’s why they opened the pathway for foreign workers — and even covered all the costs.” (L4S_ID_pol_02)

The inter-agency agreement contains preparation training, including German language courses, support and counselling services on visa proceedings and recognition processes, recruiting, matching as well as post-arrival integration/onboarding support. The following quote of a German employment agency staff illustrates the three expected ‘wins’:

“The three winners are: The company, which of course gets a skilled worker; the applicant, who enters this process on fair terms and is supported throughout; and, of course, the state, or rather the authorities. So, in that sense, depending on when you look at it, the state wins by getting someone who may have been unemployed before into work in another country. Or it wins in the sense that the person who enters the programme receives a qualification and can later return to their home country with a higher or well-trained qualification.” (L4S_DE_prac_12)

The agreement allows the German government to initiate cooperation with Indonesian employment agencies in accordance with the Indonesian recruitment policy.³⁰ This requirement is due to the Indonesian government’s clear focus on the protection of its emigrating workers. For the Indonesian government, the shift towards more structured, bilaterally governed and medium-skilled migration contributes to the agenda of further institutionalizing and regularizing labour migration.

The programme operates in cooperation with the International and Specialized Services (ZAV) of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA), the German Agency for International Development Cooperation (GIZ), and the Ministry of Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (KP2MI). It sets out detailed procedures governing the selection, recruitment and matching, professional qualification recognition, professional licensing, and post-arrival work arrangements – “taking into account the adequacy of the education/vocational training

²⁹ [https://jdih.bp2mi.go.id/uploads/20210909/20210909135903_8889076_PA_English_Version-Fix_compressed\(1\).pdf](https://jdih.bp2mi.go.id/uploads/20210909/20210909135903_8889076_PA_English_Version-Fix_compressed(1).pdf)

³⁰ <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2024-de-triple-win-pflegekr%C3%A4fte.pdf>

structures in the country of origin” (German Residence Act, §16d paragraph 4)³¹. It also regulates standard employment contracts, social security provisions, cost structures, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating programme implementation. Under the agreement, Indonesian skilled workers are granted a residence permit for one year for the purpose of having their qualifications recognized (with the option to extend the permit by one year at a time up to a maximum total duration of three years).

As the bilateral agreement aims for fairness and mutual benefits among all involved stakeholders, the cost distribution among migrants, public authorities, and employers is stipulated in detail and through the whole migration process. Under the ‘Employer-pays-principle’, the programme is primarily financed by the German employer or indirectly through German public funding, while the migrant should pay only a limited share of the costs. This ethical approach is based on the general consideration that skilled workers that voluntarily decide to migrate globally to a society or economy of skills shortage should not be financially burdened by doing so and paying off debts for intermediaries or adjustment training centres. The 2025 Agreement on the Placement of Protection of Indonesian Skilled Workers in Non-Regulated Professions in the Federal Republic of Germany expanded the Triple Win framework to a wide range of vocational and academic occupations. Its current implementation focuses on the hospitality sector (catering, gastronomy, service personnel and cooks/chefs)³². The programme follows the same goals, guidelines and policies as in the healthcare recruitment – with the exception that the German language requirements are lower (A2 compared to B1 for healthcare).

Return and reintegration collaboration

Return and reintegration cooperation is another element of the Indonesia-Germany relations. In 2025, the “Centres for Migration Opportunity, Vocation & Development” (MOVE-ID)³³ implemented by the German Agency for International Development Cooperation (GIZ) and led by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as well as the “Competence Centre Southeast Asia for Professional Migration to Germany” (KSM)³⁴ initiated by the Goethe Institut Indonesia and based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GIZ and Goethe Institut Indonesia.³⁵ The programmes facilitate preparatory training (language and professional skilling) and offer free migration and integration orientation, counselling and information services for prospective migrants. The KSM also aims to extend its impact beyond Indonesia by serving as a regional competence centre for professional migration to Germany in Southeast Asia.

Table 1 and 2 provide an overview of key actors within the Indonesia-Germany migration skill corridor.

³¹ https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/aufenthg_2004/_16d.html

³² https://www.dehoga-bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/TW_Hospitality_GIZ_BA.ZAV_DEHOGA.pdf

³³ <https://www.startfinder.de/en/advisory-centre/advisory-centre-indonesia>

³⁴ <https://www.goethe.de/ins/id/en/nad/bmig/kom.html>

³⁵ <https://www.goethe.de/resources/files/pdf347/press-release-indonesia-and-germany-strengthen-collaboration-in-skilled-labour-mobility-19june2025.pdf>

Table 1: Actor overview: Indonesia. Source: Own illustration based on public information.

Actor	Mandate and competences
National public sector	
Ministry of Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection (KP2MI/BP2MI) ³⁶	Leads migrant worker recruitment, placement and protection. Coordinates the migration cycle and oversees licensed recruitment agencies (P3MI).
Ministry of Manpower (including: labour attachés)	Responsible for labour-market policy, skills development and vocational training.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including: embassies and consulates)	Leads diplomatic coordination and bilateral agreements and supports the protection of Indonesian workers abroad.
Ministry of Health (MoH)	Regulates the health workforce, including professional standards, licensing and international mobility of health professionals.
National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP)	Administers the national competency certification system and supports the certification and recognition of occupational skills.
Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology	Oversees higher education and supports the development of qualified graduates and international academic cooperation.
Workers Social Security Agency (BPJS Ketenagakerjaan)	Provides social security coverage for Indonesian migrant workers throughout the migration cycle.
Provincial/Local Stakeholder (Subnational)	
Provincial/City Departments of Manpower (Disnaker)	Provide local employment services, labour-market information and access to vocational training.
Regional Offices for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BP3MI) and Migrant Worker Protection Service Posts (P4MI)	Carry out KP2MI programmes at provincial and regency levels, including migrant-worker services, pre-departure procedures and protection.
Village and urban administrative authorities	Support residents migrating abroad by promoting regular migration pathways and assisting with required documentation.
Private sector and Business Representation	
Migrant Worker Placement Companies (P3MI), such as “Binawan”, “Assalam Karya Manunggal” and “lin Era Sejahtera”	Licensed agencies responsible for recruiting, preparing and placing Indonesian workers abroad, including coordination with overseas employers.
Association of Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Companies (APIATI)	Represents licensed P3MI and facilitates dialogue between recruitment agencies, government and international partners.
Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN)	Represents Indonesian businesses and supports cooperation on workforce development and international employment.
Education and training institutions	
Universities, polytechnics and vocational high schools	Deliver higher and vocational education and develop occupation-specific skills for domestic and international labour markets.
Vocational Training and Productivity Centres (BBPVP/BPVP) (under the Ministry of Manpower)	Provide competency-based vocational training and support certification and preparation for overseas employment.

³⁶ Since 2024, the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI) has been transformed into the Ministry of Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection (KP2MI), operating as an independent ministry headed by a Minister. However, Law No. 18 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers has not yet been amended to reflect this institutional change and sometimes still refers to the institution as BP2MI.

Training Institution (LPK), such as “Rudi Russel”	Provide vocational, language and pre-departure training and often facilitate prospective migrants during the migration process.
Certification institute (LSP)	Assess occupational competencies and issue professional certificates under BNSP.
Civil society and international organisations	
Indonesian CSOs (e.g., Migrant Care, Serikat Buruh Migran, Infest Yogyakarta)	Support migrant-worker rights through legal assistance, awareness-raising, advocacy and reintegration support.
International organisations (e.g., IOM Indonesia and ILO)	Support migration governance, fair recruitment and migrant-worker protection through technical assistance and capacity building.

Table 2: Actor overview: Germany. Source: Own illustration based on public information.

Actor	Mandate and competences
National public sector	
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	Provides strategic leadership, funding, institutional capacity building, and coordination of skills mobility partnerships.
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)	Responsible for establishing the legal framework for skilled worker migration.
Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)	Responsible for (labour) migration policy implementation, integration and language training infrastructure.
Federal Ministry of Health (BMG)	Responsible for the health policy framework and initiator of the quality seal for recruitment in the healthcare sector.
Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), including the German Office for International Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (GOVET)	BIBB: Further development in vocational education and training and supports and develops international VET cooperation. GOVET: Serves as the central hub for international VET cooperation, coordinating stakeholders, supporting bilateral partnerships, and implementing pilot projects.
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)	Responsible for the “Concerted Action on Nursing Care”, including policies and programmes for skilled migrant recruitment in the healthcare sector.
Federal Employment Agency (BA), including its International and Specialized Services (ZAV)	Public employment agency responsible for international recruitment as well as recruitment agreements such as Triple Win; ZAV assists employers with recruitment and coordinates intake and job interviews.
Service Center for Professional Recognition (ZSBA), including the information portal “Recognition in Germany”	ZSBA: Supplementary advisory resources during qualification recognition processes. “Recognition in Germany: Serves as general sources of information for applicants from abroad.
Federal Foreign Office (AA), including embassies/consulates and the information portal “Make it in Germany”	German Embassy: German visa authority. “Make it in Germany”: Serves as a general source of information for applicants from abroad.
ProRecognition Project, via the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHK) and Delegations of German Industry and Commerce	Provides counselling on recognition at a local level for skilled migrant workers in several countries.

German-Indonesian Chamber of Industry and Commerce / AHK Indonesia/EKONID	Local provider of the ProRecognition advisory service in Indonesia and provider of dual vocational training programs based on the German model.
German International Cooperation and Development Organization (GIZ)	Central operational implementer of Triple Win and other SMPs, providing support for language and vocational training, preparatory courses, recognition and integration throughout the whole migration process.
Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB)	Provides information, advice, and evaluations on foreign educational qualifications.
Subnational public and private sector	
IQ Network – Integration through Qualification	Supports German labour market integration, consulting with recognition, adaption training, skills assessments and legal support.
Bavarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (DEHOGA)	Represents the industry in dealings with public authorities and supports members as well as candidates during international recruitment; involved in the implementation of Triple Win in hospitality.
German Competence Centre for International Skilled Workers in the Health and Nursing Professions (DKF), including Fair Recruitment Healthcare Germany e.V.	Sets and maintains quality standards for international recruitment in the German healthcare sector, including the quality seal for ethical international recruiting.
German Agency for International Healthcare Professionals (DeFa)	Specialized administrative service provider that handles full-service management for privately recruited foreign nursing staff.
German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH), including SCIVET – Skilled Crafts from Germany	Professional chamber with sector-specific coordination of international VET cooperation (partnerships, matching project partners).
Federal Association for the Recruitment of International Skilled Workers e.V. (bvifg)	Association for private-sector international recruitment and migration service providers (recruiters, staffing agencies, educational providers, labour migration law firms, etc.).
Federal Working Group on Foreign Nursing Staff (BAGAP)	Networking platform, representing nursing providers, training institutions, and recruitment actors.
German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK)	Federal professional chamber, coordinates AHK network and initiated SMP projects such as Hand in Hand for International Talents.
IHK Foreign Skills Approval (IHK FOSA)	National central recognition authority for IHK-accredited occupations; determines foreign qualification equivalence.
IMOVE (Training Made in Germany / International Marketing on Vocational Training)	Networking platform to enhance international VET cooperations.
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)	Supports academic mobility through international scholarships, university partnerships, and exchange programs.
Private sector	
Private recruiting agencies, such as “HireIndonesia”, “Raya Recruiting Indonesia”, “Acaluna” or “Go German”.	Recruit, prepare, match and place international workers and trainees with German employers on a commercial basis.
Civil society and international organizations	
Goethe Institut (GI), including the “Competence Centre	KSM: functional for German language training and immigration counselling as upfront infrastructure.

Southeast Asia for Professional Migration to Germany” (KSM)	
German Trade Union Confederation (DGB), United Service Trade Union (ver.di)	Advocates (migrant) workers’ interests and lobbies for fair and transparent labour-market policies and work and training conditions.
DGB Fair Integration and Competence Centre for Fair Integration, DGB Faire Mobility	Free, multilingual social and labour-law counselling for third country nationals (Fair Integration) and EU-internal migrant workers (Fair Mobility).
Welcome Center	Nationwide established and regionally operating on-boarding and integration support, linking international migrant professionals/trainees with employers and civil society.

2 Implementation: Recruiting

There are different recruitment pathways for Indonesian skilled workers to Germany:

- **Government-led pathways:** The government-led recruitment is mediated via the Indonesian Ministry of Migrant Workers Protection (KP2MI) under the bilateral cooperation framework with the German Federal Employment Agency (BA). Within these frameworks, bilateral recruitment agreements and skills mobility partnerships are realized, notably Triple Win in nursing and hospitality and – more recently – Global Skills Partnerships (GSP) in nursing³⁷.
- **Private-led pathways:** Recruitment is also possible through private-to-private schemes via licensed private recruitment agencies (P3MI).
- **Individual pathways:** Individual pathways are run without public or private intermediaries and rely primarily on social networks.

Our data focuses on government-led pathways, notably the Triple Win agreement. As the Triple Win agreement in hospitality is relatively new, the implementation process has not yet been fully observed. We did not collect data on Global Skills Partnerships (GSP) as the programme has only recently been initiated.

Historical recruitment patterns

Between 2010 and 2015, Germany was among the leading European destinations for Indonesian migrant workers, alongside Italy, Türkiye, Spain and the Netherlands, with a total of 2,898 Indonesian workers deployed during this period.³⁸ Migration to Germany was predominantly characterised by individual pathways, while some workers were employed as seafarers or ship-based workers, who at the time were not yet classified as Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Employment was concentrated in a relatively broad range of service and technical occupations, including waiters, cabin stewards, hotel operations staff, general labourers, forklift drivers, truck operators, aircraft maintenance technicians and cooks.

³⁷ <https://www.imove-germany.de/de/berichte-imove-veranstaltungen/iMOVE-Mittagsimpulse-kompakte-Infos-zu-Themen-Projekten-Programmen.htm>

³⁸ KP2MI. n.d. Dashboard Publik Statistik Layanan Penempatan PMI [Statistics on Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Services]. <https://www.kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>

Deployments to Germany peaked at 1,168 workers in 2013, before declining sharply to 556 in 2014 and 194 in 2015.³⁹ This downturn was also observed in other European destinations, including the Netherlands and Italy, and occurred alongside a broader decline in Indonesian overseas labour placements. This period also coincided with changes in Indonesia's labour migration governance, including tighter regulation of overseas deployment procedures.⁴⁰ At the same time, Indonesian labour migration to Europe became increasingly diversified, with growing recruitment opportunities emerging in Central and Eastern European countries.

From 2016 to 2025, Indonesia deployed 736 migrant workers to Germany: 363 through G-to-G (government-to-government) mechanisms, 346 through individual pathways, 25 via P-to-P (private-to-private) arrangements, and two through contract extensions.⁴¹ The composition of migration also shifted towards more structured and skills-oriented pathways. As shown in Table 3, registered nurses constitute the largest occupational group among Indonesian migrant workers in Germany, followed by hospitality-related occupations. Nursing recruitment since then has been carried out primarily under the Triple Win programme. This shift indicates a growing role for government-mediated and programme-based recruitment in the Indonesia-Germany corridor.

Table 3: Top five occupations of Indonesian migrant workers deployed to Germany, 2016–2025. Source: KP2MI. (2026). Data Layanan Penempatan [Placement Service Data, see <https://kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>], 2016–2025 (authors' own compilation/data request)

Occupation	Number of Workers
Nurses	369
Waiters	126
Bartenders	20
Chefs	19
Cooks	18

Job opportunities under the government- or private-led pathways are published on KP2MI's official online platform, SISKOP2MI. Interested individuals can apply directly through the platform or obtain assistance by visiting the nearest One-Stop Integrated Service for Indonesian Migrant Workers (LTSA) or a KP2MI regional office (BP3MI). The official German online portals Make it in Germany – with information on skilled migration, job opportunities, and legal requirements – or Recognition in Germany – for assessment and recognition of foreign professional qualifications – also provide essential information and counselling for Indonesian individuals seeking career opportunities in Germany.

³⁹ KP2MI. n.d. Dashboard Publik Statistik Layanan Penempatan PMI [Statistics on Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Services]. <https://www.kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>

⁴⁰ Purba, Matius Inganta and Yuhan, Risni Juliaeni. 2018. Analisis Determinan Makro Ekonomi pada Beberapa Negara Asia dalam Mempengaruhi TKI Tahun 2011–2015 [Macroeconomic Determinants Influencing Indonesian Migrant Workers in Several Asian Countries, 2011–2015]. *Perisai*, 2(2), 137–157. <http://doi.org/10.21070/perisai.v2i2.1821>

⁴¹ KP2MI. n.d. Dashboard Publik Statistik Layanan Penempatan PMI [Statistics on Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Services]. <https://www.kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>

Triple Win in nursing

Recruitment in the nursing sector under the Triple Win scheme began in 2021, with the first batch accepting 200 Indonesian nursing professionals.⁴² In 2025, the recruitment was conducted through a single recruitment cycle (Batch VII), with a total quota of 150 nurses.⁴³ This represents a significant decrease compared to 2024, when the demand for Indonesian nurses reached 600 positions, implemented across two recruitment cycles (Batch V and VI) within the same year.⁴⁴ Despite the higher quota position of 600, only 315 candidates were ultimately recruited and onboarded into the programme.⁴⁵⁴⁶ So, while the number of deployed candidates increased, the number of new participants was lower. We assume this is partly because there was already a pool of candidates from earlier batches who were still completing their German language training – with some delays also related to changes in the language provision. As more and more candidates finish their preparatory and language training, the number of deployed candidates seems to increase accordingly.

Triple Win in nursing programme requirements

Applicants must be Indonesian citizens and permanent residents, aged 18–38 years, and hold a nursing qualification, typically a D3/D4 diploma (three- or four-year applied diploma) or an S1 bachelor's degree in nursing. Candidates are required to demonstrate certified professional competence through a valid Nurse Registration Certificate (STR).⁴⁷ Applicants must also be willing to undertake German language training, unless they already possess a recognised B1-level German language certificate. Relevant work experience of at least one year is considered an advantage.

⁴² KP2MI. 2021. Announcement of the Final Interview Results for Candidates for the Government-to-Government Programme for Indonesian Migrant Nurses in Germany, 2021. <https://kp2mi.go.id/gtog-detail/jerman/pengumuman-hasil-akhir-kelulusan-interview-kandidat-calon-pekerja-migran-indonesia-perawat-program-government-to-government-di-jerman-tahun-2021>

⁴³ KP2MI/BP2MI. 2025. Pengumuman Pendaftaran Penempatan Kandidat Calon Pekerja Migran Indonesia (CPMI) Perawat Programme G to G Perawat di Jerman Batch VII Tahun 2025. <https://kp2mi.go.id/gtog-detail/jerman/pengumuman-pendaftaran-penempatan-kandidat-calon-pekerja-migran-indonesia-cpmi-perawat-program-g-to-g-di-jerman-batch-vii-tahun-2025>

⁴⁴ KP2MI/BP2MI. 2024. Announcement of Registration for the Placement of Prospective Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) Nurse Candidates under the Government-to-Government (G-to-G) Programme in Germany, Batch VI, 2024. <https://siskop2mi.bp2mi.go.id/pengumuman/detail/217>

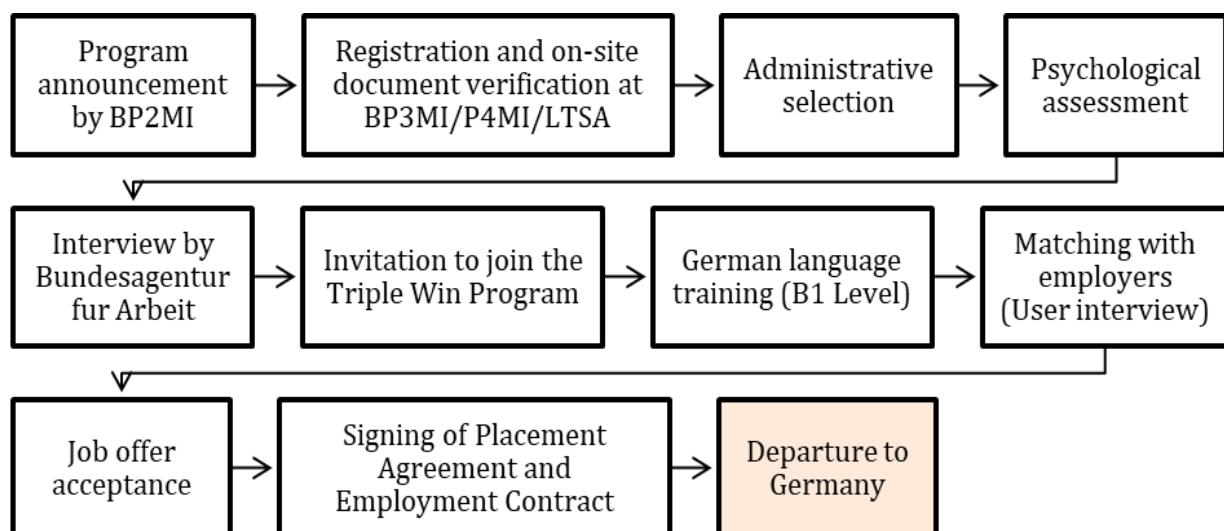
⁴⁵ KP2MI/BP2MI. 2024. Pengumuman hasil akhir kelulusan seleksi interview calon kandidat pekerja migran Indonesia Program G to G perawat di Jerman Batch V tahun 2024 [Announcement of the Final Results of the Interview Selection for Prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers under the Government-to-Government (G-to-G) Nursing Programme in Germany Batch V 2024]. <https://siskop2mi.bp2mi.go.id/pengumuman/detail/216>

⁴⁶ KP2MI. 2024. Pengumuman hasil akhir kelulusan seleksi interview calon kandidat pekerja migran Indonesia Program G to G perawat di Jerman Batch VI tahun 2024 [Announcement of the Final Results of the Interview Selection for Prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers under the Government-to-Government (G-to-G) Nursing Programme in Germany Batch VI 2024]. <https://siskop2mi.bp2mi.go.id/pengumuman/detail/261>

⁴⁷ KP2MI. 2025. Pengumuman Pendaftaran Penempatan Kandidat Calon Pekerja Migran Indonesia (CPMI) Perawat Programme G to G Perawat di Jerman Batch VII Tahun 2025. <https://kp2mi.go.id/gtog-detail/jerman/pengumuman-pendaftaran-penempatan-kandidat-calon-pekerja-migran-indonesia-cpmi-perawat-program-g-to-g-di-jerman-batch-vii-tahun-2025>

The recruitment and placement process is jointly implemented by the German Federal Employment Agency (BA), the German Agency for International Development Cooperation (GIZ), and the Ministry of Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection (KP2MI) through its regional offices (BP3MI). An overview of the official recruitment process is provided by Figure 4. The process begins with the promotion of vacancies through KP2MI communication channels (e.g., SISKOP2MI), including outreach to prospective candidates through local higher education institutions (L4S_ID_pol_04). Candidates register online through KP2MI's official platform, SISKOP2MI, after which their qualification documents are verified and their applications undergo administrative screening before psychological tests are carried out. Candidates who pass these stages proceed to interviews conducted jointly by KP2MI/BP3MI and BA. Candidates who successfully pass the interview stage are then officially announced via the KP2MI website and invited to join the programme. Those who do not yet hold a B1-level German language certificate are required to complete language training under the reimbursement scheme, which typically takes approximately 9–12 months. Once they reach German language level A1, candidates are guided to create their profiles in the Triple Win database, which BA uses to match candidates with prospective German employers.⁴⁸ GIZ facilitates this matching process, while employers can review candidate profiles and invite suitable candidates for interviews. Candidates may accept or decline offers and remain in the matching process until they secure a suitable placement. Once an offer is accepted, candidates sign a placement agreement with KP2MI/BP2MI and an employment contract with the German employer. Prior to signing, candidates attend an information session on the contractual terms and conditions to support informed decision-making.

Figure 4: Recruitment process via Triple Win. Source: Own illustration based on fieldwork interviews and official publications.



⁴⁸ KP2MI. 2025. Pengumuman Hasil Akhir Kelulusan Seleksi Interview Calon Kandidat Pekerja Migran Indonesia Programme G to G Perawat ke Jerman Batch VII Tahun 2025 [Final Announcement of Interview Selection Results for Prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers under the Government-to-Government Nursing Programme to Germany Batch VII 2025]. <https://siskop2mi.bp2mi.go.id/pengumuman/detail/305>

Based on the 2021 Triple Win agreement, participants are exempted from any fees related to the selection and placement process – except for costs that are legally mandated for Indonesian migrant workers, including psychological assessments, passport issuance, mandatory social security contributions under Indonesia’s national social security system (BPJS), police clearance certificates (SKCK), and domestic travel or accommodation costs incurred during the pre-departure phase.

Triple Win in hospitality

Under the 2025 Agreement on the Placement of Protection of Indonesian Skilled Workers in Non-Regulated Professions, Indonesian skilled workers are recruited to date in the hotel and catering sector, particularly for culinary occupations such as cooks and chefs. The main institutional actors, processes and costs regulations mirror those of the Triple Win in nursing track. The programme is coordinated by the German Federal Employment Agency (BA), in cooperation with GIZ on the German side, and KP2MI on the Indonesian side.

The programme recruits German employers in close cooperation with the Bavarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (DEHOGA), which has more than 12,000 partner businesses and checks where skill gaps need to be filled. DEHOGA also assesses the applicant’s resumes and determines whether they would fit into the hospitality industry and companies they represent. To date around 50 Indonesian candidates have been recruited through this programme per year.

The recruitment and matching process largely follows the same procedures as the nursing track. One key difference lies in the language requirement, which is set at A2 (not B1) level. Regardless of whether candidates already hold a language certificate, the programme provides reimbursement for the cost of German language training and one written A2-level examination.⁴⁹

Triple Win in hospitality programme requirements

Applicants must be Indonesian citizens and permanent residents, aged 18–38 years. Further criteria include graduation from a D3 or D4 programme in Tourism (Associate Degree or Bachelor of Applied Tourism), with a minimum of two years of relevant work experience, and possession of a Cook or Culinary Arts competency certificate issued by the Indonesian Professional Certification Authority (BNSP) or other recognised certification body.

Interviews with potential Indonesian candidates are conducted in cooperation with the International and Specialized Services (ZAV) of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) who determines whether a candidate fits the required position. During the job interview the candidate’s qualifications are tested and verified and it is inquired whether the candidate is truly motivated to work as a chef in Germany, or whether the programme is seen rather as an entry point to migrate to Europe and dropping out and job change are likely. German stakeholders reported that – due to the high skills shortage – candidates from other

⁴⁹ The 2025 agreement on the placement of protection of Indonesian skilled workers in non-regulated professions in the Federal Republic of Germany.

occupational fields have a chance as long as motivation is there: “We are pleased when people show interest in our industry” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01).

Candidates who withdraw from both Triple Win programmes after acceptance are subject to a sanction prohibiting re-participation for a period of two years. Candidates who drop out after commencement of training have to pay a penalty of Indonesian Rupiah (IDR) 80 Mio. (€5,000).⁵⁰ Table 5 provides an overview of Triple Win financial penalties. Information on penalty fines is communicated during the orientation phase and after programme acceptance. These strict language training obligations with strong financial penalties appear financially and psychologically risky and stressful for many candidates, particularly for those struggling to learn German language within a fixed time period.

Table 5: Overview of Triple Win financial penalties. Source: Personal conversations during fieldwork.

Language training attendance below 80%	Language training exam results below 80%	Failure to obtain language certificate within 18 months
A1-level: IDR 12,000,000 (€750) A2-level: IDR 25,000 (€1,560) B1-level: IDR 39,000,000 (€2,440)	A1-level: IDR 12,000,000 (€750) A2-level: IDR 25,000,000 (€1,560)	B1-level: IDR 45,000,000 (€2,810)

Private-led recruitment

Private-to-private (P-to-P) recruitment is generally carried out through licensed private recruitment agencies, known as P3MI (Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Companies), which cooperate with German employers or recruitment agencies. In 2025, a total of 25 Indonesian workers were deployed through private-led pathways according to Indonesian official records: in facility management (10), hospitality (6), nursing (6), housekeeping (2), and construction-related work, including electrician (1).⁵¹

In practice, however, P-to-P recruitment may also involve other private actors that do not hold a P3MI license, including German-language training providers and organizations offering pathways for work or study in Germany (L4S_ID_pol_03). Some of these actors operate transparently and maintain legitimate partnerships with German recruiters, while others may provide less transparent recruitment arrangements, creating potential risks for prospective migrant workers. Therefore, emphasis placed by the German and Indonesian governments on fair and ethical recruitment has led to an increase in licensing applications of German private recruiting agencies seeking to benefit from established and reliable legal structures and procedures:

“We now see that private agencies are simply applying for their licenses in Indonesia and are on the right legal path because they simply say: Okay, I'm not going to get involved in anything. I think that was the more sensible approach. So, I want to work

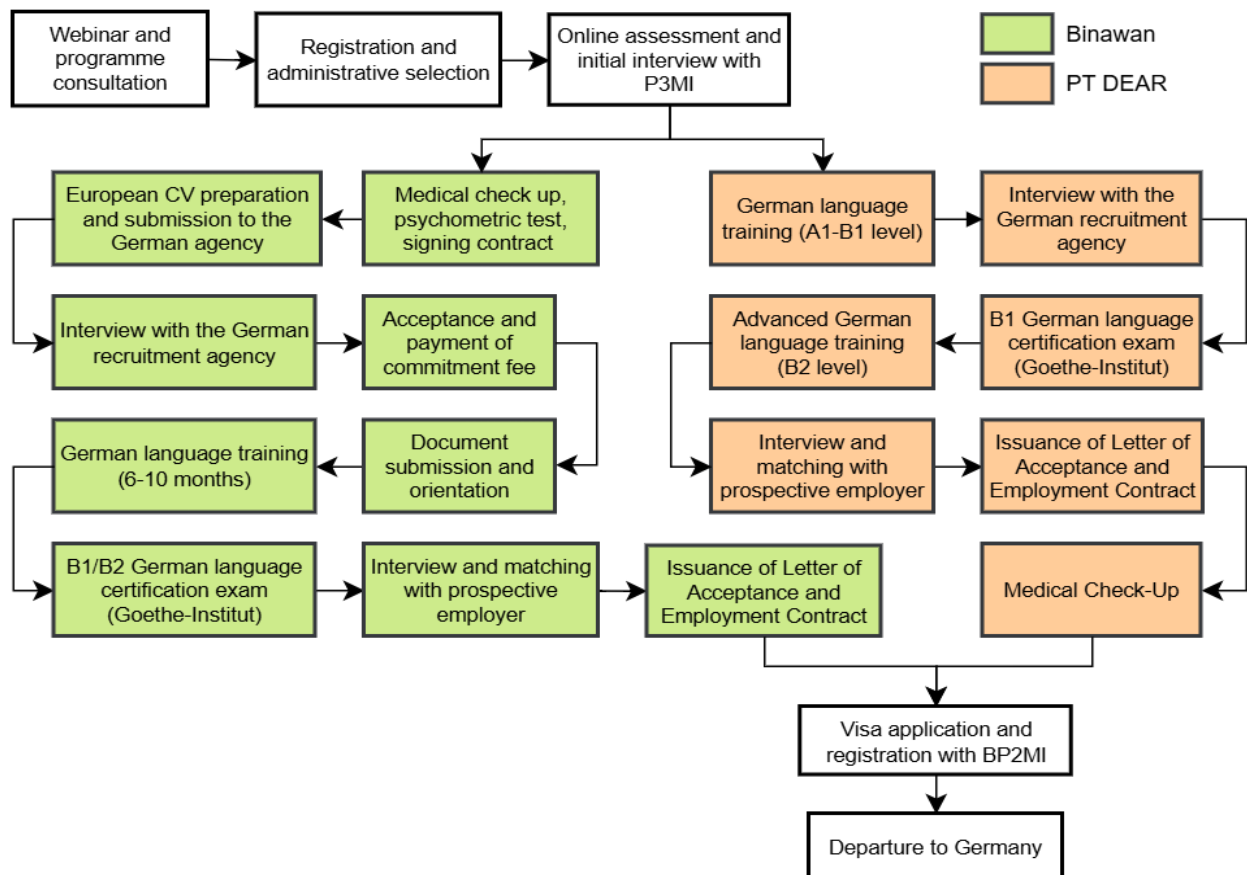
⁵⁰ Information based on personal communication with a former Triple Win programme candidate, October 2025.

⁵¹ Official records of private-led deployments to Germany only appear in 2025, which may reflect either the emergence of new placement channels or improved documentation of previously informal recruitment practices. <https://kp2mi.go.id/dashboard-publik>

with a partner on an equal footing and on a legal basis. I need reliable structures.”
(L4S_DE_pol_17)

An overview of the recruitment process is provided by Figure 6. When a German employer or recruitment agency has a vacancy and has partnered with a certain P3MI, the job order or demand letter is first verified by the relevant Indonesian representative in Germany and submitted to KP2MI. Once approved, the P3MI receives authorisation to recruit for the position, and the verified vacancy is published through SISKOP2MI (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02). Job postings include the placement agreement document, which outlines the rights and obligations of both Indonesian migrant workers and the private recruiting agency. Agencies frequently complement this with outreach through social media, webinars, campus visits, and digital campaigns and other digital channels, enabling prospective candidates to apply directly. Candidates must register through SISKOP2MI and provide basic personal information, including a family consent letter acknowledged by the village head or urban ward chief. After a check of documents, selection interviews are conducted. Those who meet the requirements and demonstrate sufficient motivation are admitted to language training, which typically lasts six to ten months. In some cases, German employers also visit training centres to assess candidates' qualifications and motivation (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02).

Figure 6: Recruitment process via private-led programmes (exemplified by Binawan and PT DEAR). Source: Own illustration based on fieldwork interviews and official publications.



Recruitment requirements and cost arrangements can vary considerably across agencies, including within the same occupational category. While some private agencies adopt a zero-cost or employer-paid model, others require workers to bear selected recruitment-related

expenses, including service fees, language training, or administrative costs. Among private recruitment agencies, Binawan and PT DEAR have emerged as prominent actors in the placement of Indonesian nurses in Germany. Both combine digital outreach, institutional partnerships, and structured language training as core components of their recruitment strategies. On the German side, agencies such as SM Care Solutions or Medical Work Solution are prominent. Private agencies also actively engage with universities and nursing schools as well as subnational government institutions to establish cooperation frameworks. Recently, private recruitment agencies have gradually expanded into non-nursing sectors, such as electricity, construction, facility management, and hospitality. Placements in these non-regulated sectors, still also occur through informal networks and individual pathways (L4S_ID_pol_03).

Agencies offering zero-cost recruitment, such as Binawan, provide free dormitory accommodation, including adequate facilities and meals during language training. Participants are required to pay a deposit as a commitment fee (IDR 5 Mio., approx. €300), which is refundable upon successful course completion and employment contract signing. Apart from this deposit, candidates' expenses are limited.

“At the beginning, we were asked to pay a deposit of 5 Mio. IDR. It could be paid in full or in instalments, but it must be settled—otherwise we won't receive the incentives. We actually receive an incentive of two Mio. IDR each time we progress to the next [language] level. When we complete the programme, the initial deposit should be returned. So, yes, it's basically cost-free.” (L4S_ID_migrant_01)

Such zero- or minimal-cost services are increasingly attractive for Indonesian potential migrants looking for opportunities abroad.

PT DEAR, on the other hand, applies a fee-based recruitment model, with pre-departure costs amounting to approximately IDR 30 Mio. (€1,800) (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02). This covers costs for German language training, counselling, preparatory classes on living and working in Germany, document translation, interview preparation, visa application support, and mediation with German employers until an employment contract is secured. The agency offers instalment payment arrangements and limited bridging funds for candidates facing financial constraints.

“We offer support to those who are highly motivated, have strong experience, and genuinely cannot afford the costs. Part of the payment is made in Indonesia, and the rest in Germany. I'm not concerned about this, because once they arrive in Germany, nurses earn a very good salary. We assist them to make this possible.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02)

Private-led programme requirements (exemplified by Binawan and PT DEAR)

Requirements are broadly comparable to those of public-led programmes. Applicants must, for instance, hold at least a D3 (three-year diploma) in nursing and possess a valid professional licence (STR). The maximum age limit is set at 37 (Binawan) or 40 (PT DEAR) years.

Recruitment pathways via civil society organizations

An alternative labour migration programme is implemented by the International Protestant Missionary Community. This programme is based on the re-establishment of post-missionary transnational ties between Germany and Indonesia. While the Christian institutional and organizational linkages stand firm over a historic period of time since the 1960s (with temporal gaps), they are small in size. The United Evangelical Mission (UEM), for example, recruited 10 candidates in 2025 – both nurses for hospitals and elderly care (L4S_PH_prac_03).

The UEM programme has a long established and wide institutional and organizational transnational network with religious entities in several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, India and the Philippines. Due to the close partnerships and networks, the linkage between them is characterized by personal connections, oftentimes mutual visits, a shared common (religious) cause and vision based on mutual values (such as reciprocity, solidarity or modesty). From the German side, the recruitment programme deliberately followed ethical standards. This included, for instance, making sure to adequately and sufficiently inform the candidates on all essential issues about the recruitment and the living and working conditions, including work activities, taxes or integration issues. The practitioners emphasized that during the whole recruitment and matching process it was regarded as key to making sure that young candidates were not pushed to migrate from their families and friends, simply for better salaries or living conditions for the short-term. Instead, it was seen as relevant to ensuring full understanding, agency and control over their migration decision by also explaining (potential) long-term issues such as integration or return. It was explained that recruitment of too young people would be regarded as unethical.

“It's hard for the migrants to leave back their families, if the situation would be different in the Philippines or Indonesia, from our interviews, they say: [...] If there wouldn't be a need like economic pressure to leave then we would stay of course with our families. And then we thought if there are young people of 16 years – of course they would start with 18 only for them to be of full age. But still 18 is still very young age and we didn't want to take the young people from their family because we thought that doesn't fit to our ethical standards.” (L4S_PH_prac_03)

International recruitment programmes would often lack a clear pathway for return, including facilitated skills recognition and transfer or guaranteed employment and reintegration support. German vocational training degrees, for instance, may not be equally recognized at the Indonesian labour market. Providing enough time and information to make an informed and independent decision was regarded as highly important aspect of ethical recruitment and preparation. UEM stakeholders, for instance, emphasized the importance of openly and transparently communicating the requirements and expectations on both sides (employers and candidates) to avoid unnecessary frustration, disappointment or mismatch.

“The frustration is getting bigger if this information is not shared by the Filipinos or the Indonesians because they think, oh, we did some kind of medical studies, more or less tending to more medical focus. And then the German side is also getting frustrated because they're happy that they're finally getting some support or some new colleagues. But then they don't like, they don't even know, they say, I mean, that's, yes, exaggerated, they don't know how to wash the patients or do the beddings, etc. But

because it's not part of the education in the Philippines or Indonesia, but such little things need to be clarified, of course, going towards the bigger, more important things. But it should be all transparent to people interested in migration to really know or have the full picture.” (L4S_PH_prac_03)

Besides church networks, migrant networks, including programme alumni already working in Germany function as informal support systems that reduce uncertainty as they provide information based on lived experiences and counsel and encourage new applicants. Public and private recruiters mobilize alumni to speak and participate in online sessions: “This helps to increase students’ confidence to join the programme, as it provides first-hand, experience-based information from peers” (L4S_ID_pol_04).

Individual pathways

Individual pathways become increasingly feasible due to digitalisation and the availability of online vacancy portals.

“With digitalization and current developments, people can now apply directly to companies in Germany. They can browse job portals and apply without going through an agency or government channel. But before departure, they still must register with BP2MI so the government is aware they are working in Germany.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02)

Under this pathway, prospective workers are required to secure employment with legally registered foreign companies and are prohibited from accepting low-tier or informal jobs.⁵² While this pathway offers greater autonomy and flexibility, it provides comparatively weaker safeguards. Ethical recruitment standards are less clearly defined, and migrants must submit a declaration to KP2MI assuming full responsibility for all employment-related risks.

Vocational training migration

Beyond skilled professional recruitment, vocational education and training (VET) across a wide range of sectors has become an increasingly popular pathway within the Indonesia-Germany corridor, linking education, skills development, and long-term employment in Germany (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02). Migrating for education and training is also a strategy both for employers and migrants to circumvent skills recognition issues. From an ethical and development-oriented perspective, vocational training migration may contribute to balancing education and training costs between origin and destination countries, as skills development takes place at the destination – not the origin.

The German dual VET system typically involves two to three years of apprenticeship, combining classroom-based instruction with practical training in a company. Both public and private programmes have increasingly expanded into VET placements, particularly in service and technical occupations such as hospitality, culinary work, baking, butchery, electrical and mechanical trades, industrial engineering, and retail.

One example is the partnership between the provincial education authorities and vocational high schools across Indonesia and the Schwarzwald-Baar-Heuberg regional economic development agency to promote structured vocational training schemes in hospitality and

⁵² Regulation of the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia No. 9 of 2019 on Procedures for the Placement of Indonesian Migrant Workers, Chapter IV on Individual Indonesian Migrant Workers.

related sectors.⁵³ In parallel, private agencies and German language training institutions in Indonesia, such as PT DEAR and Rudi Russel, have actively promoted and facilitated vocational training pathways. Candidates are generally required to be 18–35 years old, have completed at least high school or equivalent, and demonstrate strong motivation to pursue an apprenticeship.

Private programmes typically provide intensive German language training for around six months, with the aim of reaching B1 level, and support candidates throughout the recruitment process until they secure a placement and depart for Germany. The costs of vocational training migration were reported at IDR 46.5 million (€2,375) to IDR 49.8 million (€2,540), excluding airfare and visa costs (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01). While some agencies offer financing arrangements, the relatively high costs and limited regulatory oversight of private recruitment remain concerns.

Although formally classified as an education and training programme rather than a labour migration scheme, VET has increasingly attracted student graduates already holding bachelor's degrees. As observed in other corridors, such as Morocco-Germany or India-Germany, candidates perceive the scheme as a strategic entry point or transitional pathway into the German labour market, particularly when their higher education qualifications are not fully recognised or do not lead directly to employment.

„The main target is recent graduates, typically from high school or vocational school (SMA or SMK). However, we do not strictly limit participation to this group. Sometimes there are participants who have already completed university studies or even have work experience, yet they wish to pursue vocational training. For example, we recently had a professional worker who decided to join the programme.“ (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)

There is a risk of skills waste or underutilization – as well as potential reskilling and reorientation costs – if already qualified people or skilled professionals choose pathways below their skills level or outside their qualification solely in order to reach their destination. Concerns about exploitation and fraud have also emerged within the corridor. In 2024, a suspected case of human trafficking disguised as an ‘internship’ programme involved 1,047 students from 33 Indonesian universities and was facilitated by private agencies.⁵⁴ This prompted several institutions to become more cautious and suspend student internship activities in Germany.

Ethical recruitment

The bilateral cooperation framework between Indonesia and Germany places strong emphasis on the ethical recruitment and protection of migrant workers, positioning labour mobility as a process that must be regular, safe, and transparent (L4S_ID_pol_02). Public-led skills mobility partnerships such as Triple Win or Global Skills Partnership strive to balance interests of

⁵³ East Java Provincial Education Office. 2024. Program Kerjasama Vokasi dan Magang di Jerman, Kadindik Jatim: Tingkatkan Kualitas SDM di Jawa Timur [Vocational Cooperation and Internship Programme in Germany, Head of the East Java Education Office: Improving the Quality of Human Resources in East Java]. Dindik Jatim. <https://dindik.jatimprov.go.id/news-detail/989/program-kerjasama-vokasi-dan-magang-di-jerman-kadindik-jatim-tingkatkan-kualitas-sdm-di-jawa-timur>

⁵⁴ See a report by the Indonesian National Police: <https://inp.polri.go.id/artikel/inp-uncover-human-trafficking-in-german-internship-scheme>.

destination and origin labour and education or training markets while safeguarding migrant workers' rights and welfare, in line with the principle of fair migration.

On the Indonesian side, the focus on ethical and fair migration – up to general scepticism towards private or individual pathways – is based on extensive experiences of mistreatment of migrant workers in certain destination countries or regions. Exploitative practices are well documented, for instance, among Indonesian migrant domestic workers in the Arab Gulf states (Blaydes 2023). In order to combat illegal recruitment agencies, the Indonesian Ministry of Migrant Workers Protection (KP2MI) has taken several steps to strengthen ethical and legal recruitment while clamping down on unfair recruiters and employers. A staff member of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) reflects on these Indonesian developments as follows:

“This cooperation is not only young and fresh in this respect, that is to say between Germany and Indonesia, but also because cooperation in regular modes of labour migration is also very, very new for Indonesia and the Indonesian authorities. So, they are also developing in this area, trying to bring the area under control themselves, in a positive sense, because so far, the experiences that Indonesians have had have actually been more in the non-regular area. Many Indonesians mainly go to Japan, South Korea, or even to Gulf countries or perhaps Europe, and they actually work under certain abusive conditions. For this reason, the society there is also particularly sensitive to the issue of economic migration abroad. And there, the authorities are also monitoring this and are actually promoting [...] regular migration to this part of the world. And therefore, they are very, very interested in regular cooperation with Germany and with the [German] Federal Employment Agency in this regard.” (L4S_DE_prac_11)

The 2021 and 2025 Triple Win agreements mark positive examples for governmental-led regulation and oversight, particularly through measures to limit migrant-borne expenses and prevent exploitative practices. The agreements also commit both parties to non-discrimination, mutual benefits, respect and accountability, and compliance with domestic and internationally recognised principles for ethical recruitment. It needs to be noted, however, that recruitment numbers remain relatively small.

According to the Regulation of the Minister of Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection (No. 27 of 2025), officially licensed recruitment agencies (P3MI) are required to uphold ethical standards. Agencies are, for instance, obliged to provide transparent and accurate information for migrant's decision-making, ensure skills matching, and guarantee fair and non-discriminatory treatment throughout recruitment, placement, and employment.⁵⁵ Institutional assistance and oversight are provided via BP3MI, P4MI, or LTSA. At the same time, it needs to be recognized that recruitment via non-licensed intermediaries and individual pathways continue to shape migration flow along the corridor.

Germany: A new alternative, but not priority destination

Germany is increasingly considered by young Indonesians as a potential destination for work and training, but often with false expectations and misinformation. Candidates are often

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https://jdih.bp2mi.go.id/uploads//20260115//20260115155431_889000727_PermenBP2MI_27_2025_English-2.pdf

attracted by the prospect of higher salaries and may receive information based on gross (before taxation) rather than net income. This often leads to disappointment, disillusion or frustration after arriving in Germany and receiving the first payroll (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01).

Besides the expected high-salary, Germany remains less attractive than more established destinations due to the long geographical distance, the cultural differences (with Indonesia being the world's most populous Muslim majority country) and high language requirements. While many Indonesians speak English, German is generally necessary for employment and integration into German society. Japan, for example, is a much more established corridor alternative due to its colonial past, while geographically closer countries such as Malaysia and Taiwan also offer alternatives. The German language requirements in particular were frequently mentioned as a barrier to migration and a reason for programme withdrawal. Nevertheless, the interest to migrate to Germany is steadily increasing – partly as opportunities in some traditional destination countries become more restricted.

To sum up, recruitment of Indonesian skilled workers and trainees to Germany has increased over the years, yet moderately. The growing numbers reflect an improved 'readiness and preparedness' of Indonesian candidates, particularly in meeting German language requirements, as well as the increasingly established cooperation between both countries. The strengthened bilateral relations have facilitated an emerging corridor-specific private recruitment infrastructure – with diverse actors and varying ethical practices and outcomes, while also individual pathways and recruitment via non-registered private intermediaries continue to play a role.

Government-led programmes such as Triple Win provide a high standard pathway to Germany, but remain limited in numbers – despite the skills shortage in parts of the German labour market and the large Indonesian labour pool, with over 60,000 newly certified nurses 'produced' annually.⁵⁶ Due to the strict requirements and penalty regime in Triple Win, many candidates prefer private recruitment agencies (P3MI), which often provide more continuous support and, in some cases, low- or zero-cost recruitment, accommodation, or financial incentives during language training. During our fieldwork we observed cases where candidates withdrew from Triple Win due to its high requirements and strict regulations and instead enrolled in nursing programmes of licensed private agencies. German language acquisition, particularly in nursing and technical fields, where B2-level is usually required, remains a major bottleneck also for the recruitment of vocational training migrants.

3 Implementation: Skilling

The skilling process includes language and professional training (reskilling, upskilling or adaptation) as well as pre-departure orientation and preparation, including information about living and working at the destination country, the educational training system, legal, cultural, and political aspects, and questions on integration and return. Regular skilling primarily takes place in Indonesia as recruitment of skilled professionals dominates. There is a trend towards vocational training migration with regular training taking place in Germany. The primary

⁵⁶ Indonesian National Nurses Association. 2025. Cara mengatasi surplus perawat Indonesia, demi pencapaian SDGs hingga tahun 2030. PPNI-INNA.ORG. <https://ppni-inna.org/detail-berita/01nRR1>

location and modalities of regular and preparatory skilling are major cost factors and benchmarks for ethical skilled labour migration recruitment and partnerships (Schwenken & Ullmann 2026).

Professional skills

Vocational education in Indonesia is primarily offered through government-run vocational training centres (BBPVP/BPVP) or private vocational training institutions (LPK). For vocational occupations such as hospitality, cooking and technical trades, work competency certification is generally issued by the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP).⁵⁷

In nursing, candidates follow a separate professional qualification pathway. Indonesian nurses completed formal nursing education through a three-year diploma (Diploma 3), an applied bachelor (Diploma 4), or a four-year bachelor's programme (S1), followed by the Nursing Profession Programme (Ners), a one-year intensive practical clinical training in hospitals, geriatric clinics, public health centres, or other healthcare facilities.⁵⁸ Nursing graduates are required to pass the national competency exam and obtain a nurse registration certificate (STR) issued by the Indonesian Health Council (KKI) on behalf of the Ministry of Health (L4S_ID-DE_pol_01). Under Triple Win in nursing, no additional pre-departure skilling specific for nursing practice is required or financed from the German side, as preparatory training focuses solely on the German language acquisition.

In the hospitality and cooking sector, candidates typically enter the Triple Win programme with relevant vocational qualifications from Indonesian tourism polytechnics. These include three-year Diploma 3 programmes with extensive theoretical and practical training, as well as shorter two-year Diploma 2 programmes. Both degrees regularly include skilling according to international standards, including on Western / European cuisine. The professional knowledge can easily be transferred and utilized in the German hospitality sector (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01).

Language skills and cultural awareness

Language proficiency constitutes a core prerequisite for Indonesian workers or trainees seeking opportunities in Germany and remains one of the main bottlenecks delaying or constraining skilled mobility across the corridor, regardless of the pathways. The scale of this challenge is illustrated by the first Triple Win nursing batch: of the 200 candidates recruited in 2021, 163 had not passed the B1 German examination by late 2022 and were required to retake the exam.⁵⁹ Between 2021 and 2024, only 105 out of approx. 800 registered candidates of Triple Win successfully completed the B1 language stage.⁶⁰ Examination capacity is another

⁵⁷ <https://bns.go.id/>

⁵⁸ Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System
[https://www.flevin.com/id/lgo/translations/Laws/Law%20No.%2020%20of%202003%20on%20the%20National%20Education%20System%20\(BKPM\).pdf](https://www.flevin.com/id/lgo/translations/Laws/Law%20No.%2020%20of%202003%20on%20the%20National%20Education%20System%20(BKPM).pdf)

⁵⁹ KP2MI. 2022. Announcement on the Retake of the German B1 Language Examination for Indonesian Nurse Candidates under the G-to-G Programme in Germany, Batch I 2021. <https://kp2mi.go.id/gtog-detail/jerman/pengumuman-pelaksanaan-ujian-ulang-bahasa-jerman-b1-bagi-kandidat-calon-pekerja-migran-indonesia-perawat-program-g-to-g-di-jerman-batch-i-tahun-2021>

⁶⁰ KP2MI. 2024. Pelepasan 8 Pekerja Migran Indonesia Programme G to G Jerman Keperawatan [Deployment of 8 Indonesian Migrant Workers under the G-to-G Nursing Programme to Germany]. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C9MKSqHS-9d/>

factor adding to this challenge, with high demand and limited slots at Goethe Institut locations in Indonesia resulting in lengthy waiting times (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02).

We observe that many Indonesian potential migrants attend German language training prior to migration, often self-paid via private language schools or as part of structured public programmes. The overall duration of language training from A1 to B1 typically ranges from 9 to 12 months.

As mentioned before, the language requirements for the Triple Win programmes differ between the occupations:

- B1-level (or above) for nursing or technical fields
- A2-level for the hospitality sector.

Representatives of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) explained that in order to attract sufficient and suitable candidates for Triple Win in hospitality (and not locking doors for those who have an interest in the programme) it was seen as adequate and essential to lower the German language requirement to A2. It is expected, though, that the candidate – in particular when doing a formal vocational training – attends and receives additional training for B1 after arrival in Germany:

“For most of the projects we implement here, we do require B1, unless they come with A2 and do B1 here, or already have B1 and then do B2, especially for vocational training, because with vocational training there is the additional requirement that they also have to go to vocational school.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)

This is also because the hospitality sector is perceived as a “people-to-people industry” (ibid.) with strong “guest contact” (ibid.) and social interaction. German stakeholders explained that preparing and achieving a B1-level (or above), in contrast, would usually take much longer with higher costs and leading to more dropouts over time. From the perspective of the Bavarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (DEHOGA), however, higher language prerequisites – and thus, quick employability/preparedness – were generally favoured.

The Triple Win programme has recently introduced a more flexible and decentralized approach to language learning: Earlier cohorts followed a centralised model with training provided by Goethe Institut, in coordination with GIZ. Under the new policy, Goethe Institut is no longer serving as primary training provider, but remains a key certification body. Candidates can now independently choose and arrange their own language training through private institute tutors according to their circumstances, and cover the costs upfront. They can subsequently claim lump-sum reimbursements of €250 after passing the A2 examination and an additional €250 after passing the B1 examination on their first attempt, regardless of the actual training costs. This approach is intended to encourage candidates to take the programme and opportunity seriously and remain engaged, while avoiding excessive financial burdens:

“The skin in the game is now such that our reimbursement reflects an average price. To put it briefly, I think that's very, very important at this point. But of course, it is the case that skilled workers do not have to go into debt and do not have to pay us a large amount or anything like that.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)

In addition, government-run vocational training centres offer free German language courses for selected candidates in Triple Win nursing programmes, but admission is competitive due to limited capacity.

Private recruitment agencies similarly provide intensive language training, often through their own training centres. Binawan, for example, provides training alongside dormitory accommodation and online classes for those who live in different cities, with candidates receiving IDR 2 million for each successfully completed language level (L4S_ID_migrant_01). At PT DEAR, candidates initially cover the cost of language training, which is reimbursed after employment in Germany up to IDR 15 million (€900) (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02). Language training organised by private recruitment agencies is generally intensive, with classes running from morning to afternoon, five days per week, and is designed to support candidates in reaching B1 or B2 within approximately six to ten months. Some providers also integrate practical experience and cultural preparation: Rudi Russel, for example, requires candidates to complete internships before departure, while cultural awareness training is commonly offered to familiarise candidates with the German socio-cultural context. After arrival in Germany, additional/further language training is usually required, covered by the employer, then followed by another exam and certification to receive skills recognition. In collaboration with the Indonesian Ministry of Health, the Goethe Institut developed the project “German for Education in Nursing”, integrating German language learning into the nursing curriculum in Indonesia⁶¹ Two pilot international classes for German as a foreign language (DaF) were launched. The curriculum has been analysed and standardised in coordination with German authorities, ensuring alignment with professional expectations in Germany.⁶² Plans are underway to extend this initiative to other polytechnic institutions across Indonesia.

Early German government support through GIZ has focused on developing the vocational training ecosystem in Indonesia. Key initiatives include the construction of the Centre for Vocational Training and Productivity (BBPVP), the establishment of dual vocational training systems that combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction, and the implementation of Meister qualifications, officially recognised professional certifications in Germany.⁶³

The partnership between the Indonesian Ministry of Industry and the Malika Zentrum Institute (MZI), representing the German Senior Expert Service (SES), is another example for a skills mobility partnership.⁶⁴ Based on a memorandum of understanding on vocational education and training development, the partnership covers preparatory training for a regular vocational training in Germany, the promotion of job opportunities in Germany, strengthening of teaching capacities through knowledge and skills transfer.

⁶¹ Goethe Institut Indonesia. n.d. Kualifikasi Tenaga Ahli [Expert Qualifications].

https://www.goethe.de/ins/id/id/spr/fak/qfk.html?srsId=AfmBOoo48TxiKKw0RsqnPrid_rJwzpk66FyX5mFCVgAboBs8ySubKsXv

⁶² Ministry of Health. 2024. Expanding Employment Opportunities for Nurses, Ministry of Health Opens German International Classes at Medan and Maluku Health Polytechnics. Kemenkes.

<https://kemkes.go.id/eng/perluas-lapangan-kerja-perawat-kemenkes-buka-kelas-internasional-jerman-di-poltekkes-medan-dan-poltekkes-maluku>

⁶³ Ministry of Manpower. 2024. Minister of Manpower Hopes Indonesia-Germany Labour Diplomacy Will Continue to Develop. <https://kemnaker.go.id/news/detail/menaker-berharap-diplomasi-kenagakerjaan-indonesia-jerman-makin-berkembang>

⁶⁴ Fauzan, Ahmad Muzdaffar. 2024. Indonesia’s Ministry of Industry partners with Germany on industrial vocational training. Antara. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4045035/kemenperin-jalin-kerja-sama-vokasi-industri-dengan-jerman>

4 Implementation: Recognition

The recognition of skills ensures that qualifications obtained in one country are equivalent to the professional standards in another. The process is essential for adequate integration into the destination countries' work place as well as for potential return and reintegration into the origin. Recognition entails formal qualifications or degrees and informal work experiences, abilities, and competences.

German recognition regulations

The recognition process in Germany must usually be completed within three years after arrival to continue employment as skilled professional. Otherwise, return upon contract completion is mandatory, with return costs borne by the migrant.⁶⁵ The employer and the migrant worker are responsible for initiating and completing the recognition procedure, while public and civil institutions may provide additional support and counselling.

Across our data, the German skills recognition process has been perceived as generally costly, lengthy and bureaucratic and – despite formal openings after 2019 – it still requires a significant amount of endurance both by employers and migrants to navigate successfully between the multiple institutions involved and their specific requirements and procedures. In many cases, recognition can take up to one year to complete (L4S_DE_prac_02). Full skill recognition is the exception, while partial skill recognition with required additional or adjustment qualification and assessment testing is very common.

“More than 80% of all applications submitted from third countries for professional recognition do not receive full recognition. They only ever receive partial equivalence. This means that these individuals usually have to compensate for theoretical and practical deficits.” (L4S_DE_prac_01)

The German recognition procedure is implemented on the subnational level by respective local professional chambers that design the professional curriculum and conduct the skill assessment and evaluation.⁶⁶ In spite of the bilateral recruitment agreements, each candidate has to individually apply for skill recognition.

“What FOSA [the German foreign skills approval agency] always says is that it cannot make general statements about Indonesia or even general statements, and that individual cases must always be considered. That's what makes it a bit difficult.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)

Several interviewees on the German side reported that applications and their results in parts significantly vary and deviate depending on the responsible recognition authority. The federal recognition infrastructure does not only contribute to regulation and interpretation leeway and inconsistency, but is also perceived as highly and unnecessarily complex and opaque by every involved party.

⁶⁵ KP2MI. 2025. Announcement of the Final Interview Selection Results for Prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers under the G-to-G Nursing Programme to Germany, Batch VII, 2025.

<https://kp2mi.go.id/gtog-detail/jerman/pengumuman-hasil-akhir-kelulusan-seleksi-interview-calon-kandidat-pekerja-migran-indonesia-program-g-to-g-perawat-ke-jerman-batch-vii-tahun-2025>

⁶⁶ For industry and commerce-related occupations the „IHK Foreign Skills Approval“ (IHK FOSA) is responsible for skill recognition. <https://www.ihk-fosa.de/>

Recognition partnerships

Similar to the bilateral recruitment agreement the private recognition partnerships (§16d paragraph 3, German Residence Act) between an employer and a potential candidate facilitates the arrival of international skilled workers and their entry into the German labour market already before the official recognition process is completed. Professionals can migrate and work in Germany as auxiliary or ‘unskilled’ workers for up to two years. After two years the recognition process must be successfully completed and proven to then be registered as skilled worker by the German immigration authorities and respectively employed (and paid).

“That is basically the idea behind it, to shorten the procedure in professions where there is a high degree of certainty that they will also be recognized. And then the recognition process can take place in Germany.” (L4S_DE_prac_11)

Experience pillar

Migrating to Germany via the qualification pillar (that means skill recognition during or shortly after arrival) is generally considered easier, less complicated and costly. A stay for adaptation or adjustment training can be issued for up to two years (with possible extension up to 3 years). Another option is to migrate via the experience pillar (that means entry without previous recognition but with at least two years of professional education in a recognized public vocational school and at least two years of practical work experience and a salary in Germany of at least 45% of the German contribution assessment ceiling / threshold, BBG). This approach only applies to non-regulated sectors/occupations and is generally perceived as lengthier, more complicated and costly. The costs are covered by the German employer or publicly funded. Migrants are required to participate in additional / adaptation training and pass a recognition exam in order to become employed as skilled workers. The high-salary threshold – a prerequisite for the experience pillar –, however, may be unrealistic or unreachable for jobs in certain sectors or occupations. In our data, we also observed that German employers or intermediaries sometimes remain hesitant, reluctant, inexperienced, or simply unaware of the new legal experience pillar and how to implement it.

Recognition in regulated professions: Nursing

The 2021 and 2025 Triple Win recognition agreements between Indonesia and Germany facilitate the recognition procedures because the required skills at the German labour market and the concrete content the Indonesian training curricular needs to cover are clearly defined in order to be mutually compatible and comparable.

In the case of Triple Win in nursing, the completion of the nursing Diploma is followed by practical training, certification exam, and registration to the Indonesian Health Council (KKI). Both the registration and the last exam cost significant amounts of money. So do widely used voluntary preparation courses for the final test.⁶⁷ These qualifications stand in the way of many young Indonesian people becoming nurses as it is quite costly. For Indonesian nurses to work in Germany, skills recognition is (again) a mandatory step before they can work full-time as a registered nurse professional. The process usually lasts between 9 and 18 months after arrival (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02). There are two possible steps:

⁶⁷ <https://forum.facmedicine.com/threads/how-to-work-as-a-nurse-in-indonesia-full-guide-for-domestic-and-international-graduates.79967/>

- **Determination notice (formerly: deficit notice):** An official document from the local recognition authority stating whether the foreign qualification is equivalent to a German qualification, addressing the gaps (e.g., missing theoretical or practical hours in basic nursing).
- **Adaptation and adjustment measures,** covered by the employer, for additional language and professional training at a vocational college or school – with exam.

During the recognition period, nurses often work as assistants under supervision. Migrants reported receiving a gross monthly salary of approx. €2,700 during the recognition phase (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02).

Recognition in non-regulated professions: Hospitality

In the case of Triple Win in hospitality, Indonesian skilled professionals can enter Germany without recognition of their qualifications beforehand. The recognition process must be initiated immediately after arrival. Usually, the process involves administrative procedures, but no mandatory additional professional training.

Typical recognition steps include: Translation and certification of official documents, formal application for equivalence assessment of the foreign qualifications, completion of additional/adjustment measures in case of qualification gaps or mismatch, other occupation/sector-specific requirements (such as health certificates). Stakeholders reported that the process can cost between €200 and up to €800, in case of private agency fees (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02).

The GIZ had sent professional appraisers to observe and examine the educational training and its system in Indonesia. Diploma 3 was evaluated as extremely comparable and diploma 2 as mostly comparable to the German professional standards (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01). The evaluation of the Indonesian vocational education and training by the German respective professional chamber was a major part of the recruitment agreement and lays the basis for determining the necessity of additional/adjustment measures. German stakeholders frequently emphasized the high Indonesian educational and vocational training standards and that the German economy would clearly benefit from the skills and innovation Indonesian workers and trainees would bring. On the Indonesian side, it needs to be noted that the Indonesian economy also highly depends on the tourism and hospitality sector as important national industry. The Indonesian government's benefits of skilled mobility in this field, therefore, rely on questions of skills return and circulation.

5 Implementation: Migration/Mobility

Visa and residency procedures are another bottleneck to recruit and attract Indonesian migrant workers or trainees. Across the corridor, stakeholders evaluated the procedures differently. Some perceived them as “relatively quick” (L4S_DE_prac_06) in comparison to other corridors, while others complained about the typical complicated, lengthy, and intransparent procedures.

Government-led migration pathways

Bilateral agreements seek to strengthen collaboration and facilitate or accelerate bureaucratic procedures. Under the Triple Win agreement, pre-departure services include broad support,

counselling and information both for employers and candidates around all necessary visa and residency procedures. The detailed cost distribution among candidates, the Indonesian and German government and employers is illustrated in Table 7a and Table 7b.

Table 7a: Overview of the cost structure of the 2021 Triple Win agreement between Indonesia and Germany. Source: BA & BP2MI. 2021.

No.	Activities	Candidate	IMWPB	BA/GIZ (Triple Win Programme) ¹	Employer	Note
1.	Administrative and preparation process		X	X		
2.	Organisation of the Interviews			X		
3.	Medical Check-Up			X		
4.	Double measles vaccination			X		
5.	Swab PCR			X		
6.	Psychological Test	X				
7.	Passport	X				
8.	BPJS Ketenagakerjaan (Indonesian Employment Insurance)	X				
9.	German Courses in Indonesia and preparatory technical course			X		The candidate receives 250 € if he/she passes the German A.2 language exam and an additional 250€ for passing German B1 in the first attempt
10.	Accommodation, Allowance and Travel Costs during the German Course and Application/ Placement Process	X				

¹ The services provided within the framework of the Triple Win programme are either free of charge by the Federal Employment Agency as part of its legally defined tasks or financed by a service fee from the employer via the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Certain costs borne by the employer during employment are paid directly by the employer.

Table 7b: Overview of the cost structure of the 2021 Triple Win agreement between Indonesia and Germany. Source: BA & BP2MI. 2021.

No.	Activities	Candidate	IMWPB	BA/GIZ (Triple Win Programme) ¹	Employer	Note
11.	Visa fee	X				Work permit will be given by the BA in the context of the visa issuing
12.	Orientasi Pra Penempatan (OPP) / Pre Departure Orientation (PDO) / Preliminary Education		X			
13.	Local Transportation to Airport	X				
14.	Airplane tickets from Indonesia to Germany				X	
15.	Electronic Overseas Worker Card (e-PMI)		X			
16.	Application for the Recognition Process (Documents, fees)			X		
17.	Local Transportation when arrived in Germany from airport to residence				X	
18.	Professional Qualification for Recognition				X	Employer or public funding (if granted)
19.	German Course in Germany				X	Employer or public funding (if granted)
20.	Accommodation and living costs in Germany	X				

“The advantage is that we take care of and guide you through the processes and also tell you exactly what is needed and how. [...] For all processes, for the recognition process, preparation for the recognition process, visa process, language, i.e. acquiring the necessary language skills [...] We also offer links to German employers and, of course, we also have the option, so to speak, of offering preparation appointments, preparation appointments for working and living in Germany.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)

Candidates are exempted from fees for selection and placement – except for those required by law for Indonesian Migrant Workers. These costs are usually borne by the employer or the German public body. BP2MI/KP2MI, or an authorized official, determine the maximum limits (ceilings) for each component of placement costs and for each destination country.⁶⁸ If there are statutory regulations, international laws, or agreements that do not require employers to cover these costs, then the relevant placement cost components become the responsibility of the Indonesian migrant worker.⁶⁹

German stakeholders revealed that waiting periods (for appointment slots, processing, or notifications) at German foreign representations are usually shorter for Triple Win participants. While programme participants benefit from this preferential treatment, the majority of candidates migrating through private or individual pathways, hence, have to get to the back of the line – unless their intermediaries also maintain ‘good contacts’.

Private-led and individual migration pathways

The costs for the placement of Indonesian migrant workers by P3MI in Germany are regulated in the Decree of the Head of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI) Number 325 of 2024.⁷⁰ Table 8 illustrates the cost distribution. The amounts specified in the decree represent the maximum ceilings permitted. Licensed private agencies must specify all cost components and exact amounts to be shared to the migrant worker or trainee as well as employer in the placement agreement.⁷¹

For self-arranged, individual pathways, placement costs follow the specific agreement between the employer and the migrant worker or trainee.⁷² There are no fixed or standardized cost schemes. Cost divisions and components can vary largely, depending on the involved parties, and are negotiated and carried out without intervention of public authorities such as BP2MI/KP2MI.

⁶⁸ Regulation of the Minister for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers / BP2MI No. 17/2025 concerning Placement Costs for Indonesian Migrant Workers, Chapter II, Article 2.

⁶⁹ Regulation of the Minister for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers / BP2MI No. 17/2025 concerning Placement Costs for Indonesian Migrant Workers, Chapter II, Article 3.

⁷⁰ The Head of BP2MI Decree No. 442/2023 on Placement Costs for Indonesian Migrant Workers Placed by P3MI with Legal Entities in the Republic of Austria. <https://paralegal.id/peraturan/keputusan-kepala-badan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-nomor-442-tahun-2023/>

⁷¹ Regulation of the Minister for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers / BP2MI No. 17/2025 concerning Placement Costs for Indonesian Migrant Workers, Chapter II, Article 5.

⁷² BP2MI Regulation No. 02/2020 on Placement Costs for Indonesian Migrant Workers, Article 5.

Table 8: Overview of cost structure along P3MI private recruitment with legal entities in Germany. Source: Decree of the Head of BP2MI No. 325/2024 on Placement Costs for Indonesian Migrant Workers Placed by P3MI with Legal Entities in the Federal Republic of Germany. <https://jdih.bp2mi.go.id/index.php/Content/produk/8/889000483>.

No.	Cost component	Amount (IDR / €) ⁷³	Who pays	Note
1a	Health Examination	670,000 / €34,55	Indonesian Migrant Worker	Required by Indonesian Ministry of Health (Regulation No.26/2015).
1b	Measles-rubella Vaccine	1,000,000 / €57,14	Indonesian Migrant Worker	Germany requires migrant workers to have 2 doses of MR/MMR vaccine (IDR 500,000 each).
2	Psychological test (Short Report)	550,000 / €28,36	Indonesian Migrant Worker	Psychological test fee per Ministry of Health guidelines (Letter DL.01.01/1/944/2022).
3	Passport	0	-	First-time issuance for Indonesian migrant workers is free.
4a	Social security (Before Work)	37,500 / €1,93	Indonesian Migrant Worker	Regulation of the Indonesian Minister of Manpower (Number 4 of 2023). The insurance contribution for the protection period before, during, and after employment is IDR 370,000 for a 24-month employment contract.
4b	Social security (During & After)	332,500 / €17,15	Indonesian Migrant Worker	
5	Police Clearance Certificate (SKCK)	30,000 / €1,55	Indonesian Migrant Worker	SKCK required for migrant worker placement (PP No.76/2020).
6	Work Visa	- / €75	German employer	Visa cost issued by the German Embassy in Jakarta.
7a	Domestic transport (Java)	500,000 / €25,78	Indonesian Migrant Worker	Transport from home (Java) to the embarkation point. Price may fluctuate.
7b	Domestic transport (Outside Java)	2,000,000 / €103,21	Indonesian Migrant Worker	Transport from home (outside Java) to the embarkation point. Price may fluctuate.
8	Departure airline ticket	18,250,000 / €1,402,86	German employer	Economy class ticket to Germany. Price may fluctuate.
9	Agency / Company service fee	39,777,500 / €2,273	Indonesian Migrant Worker	Maximum service fee: 1-month wage (EUR 2,273). The wage amount is adjusted according to the Indonesian Migrant Worker

⁷³ Amount in € is mentioned here only for illustrative purpose and calculated by the authors on 21 November 2025.

				Request Letter from the Employer in the Federal Republic of Germany.
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All Indonesian migrant workers or trainees must register their placement at the One-Stop Integrated Service for Indonesian Migrant Workers (LTSA) or their local government office to obtain the e-PMI (e-Indonesian Migrant Worker) card, which serves as official proof that they have fulfilled all procedural requirements. Migrants can register only after securing a job/training offer and contract and must submit a declaration acknowledging responsibility for any employment-related risks, meaning they are fully responsible for their placement. Through private channels, registration begins during programme application. By that public authorities monitor the intermediaries' practices to protect the migrant.

After completing pre-departure registration, migrants attend the Pre-Departure Orientation Programme (OPP), usually held by LTSA, local governments, or BP2MI, no more than two days before departure. The training contains information about the culture and life in Germany, awareness about migrant's rights and duties, contract terms, the local law in terms of work and welfare, and occupation-specific skills. The aim is that prospective migrant workers possess the psychological preparedness and knowledge necessary for training or work abroad. A representative of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) explained the purpose of such preparatory training as follows:

„We have recorded several cases that arose simply because they did not understand the law of the host country, or the culture of the host country, which eventually caused them problems.” (L4S_ID_pol_02)

Due to the complicated German legal and bureaucratic system of skilled worker recruitment, a whole private-led industry and infrastructure, including public-funded agencies and organizations emerged that supports, counsels and informs German employers and potential workers or trainees about the rules, regulations and procedures of recruitment and migration. 'Migration consultants' and 'migration experts' emerged that seek to accompany German companies through the opaque and often intimidating and overwhelming legal system of skilled labour recruitment and help them to find an efficient and adequate way to get 'their' international worker or trainee to Germany (L4S_DE_prac_05).

6 Implementation: Integration, retention, circulation, and return

After arrival in Germany, Indonesian migrant workers or trainees have to adapt to the new working conditions, institutional systems and everyday social life. Integration into German society is strongly shaped by language proficiency and the ability to adapt to the new culture. A key issue that was repeatedly raised in our data was the struggle of Indonesian migrants to learn German – despite the pre-departure orientation and language training (L4S_DE_prac_07; L4S_DE_prac_08).

“We receive complaints quite often. The biggest challenge is language. Our workers are capable, but misunderstandings often occur due to insufficient German. Employers in Germany care less about certificates—they care whether someone can communicate effectively.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_02)

Support structures

Private, public and civic support structures and activities established in Germany help during this process of on-boarding and integration. The offerings include workplace orientation, support in finding an accommodation, paperwork, opening a bank account, organizing language training, recognition procedures, social activities, etc. The initial support is largely provided by German employers (or public entities in case of government-led programs).

Resources and structures for comprehensive on-boarding and integration services vary considerably depending on the sector or occupation: The healthcare sector is generally well equipped and experienced as part of fundamental societal systems to provide respective support for international staff and trainees. Often professional integration or recruiting managers, for instance, take care of the whole migration and integration cycle with close contact to each candidate. Training on intercultural openness and antidiscrimination is frequently conducted to prepare the regular staff for work in an international and multicultural team (L4S_DE_prac_18). While the hospitality sector has a strong international orientation, small- or medium-sized companies in other non-regular vocational occupations, such as skilled trade, may lack the necessary resources and time to provide comparable support.

In the case of Triple Win, comprehensive integration and boarding support is facilitated after arrival. The following quote illustrates the challenges young migrants frequently face and what the programme offers as support:

“It's important that certain things are clarified in advance. [...] This also applies to young people who are starting completely new lives here, with their families far away. They also need a connection, a caretaker structure, someone who can simply accompany them a little during this phase. And exactly, to summarize our function as DEHOGA [Bavarian Hotel and Restaurant Association] very briefly, it is to be or act as this interface between our cooperation partners and our companies. We also advise individual skilled workers who have now arrived here and say, okay, I have a question here and there.” (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)

The GIZ and DEHOGA take a role as advisor or even ‘caretaker’ for the (young) participants to support their wellbeing after arrival.

For vocational training migrants, the German stakeholders emphasized in the interviews that college or school teachers play an important yet underrecognized ‘caretaker-like’ role, as they may be regarded as trusted contact person by Indonesian migrants.

“In other countries, teachers also act as surrogate parents. They take care of the children, the teachers and so on. So, they went to the teachers with their problem and said, yes, with my visa, how do I have to proceed now? And so on and so forth. And we always wondered why, because they could have clarified that with the company. No, that's how we know it, especially the Indonesians: ‘The teacher takes care of me.’” (L4S_DE_prac_07)

This reflects the importance to provide essential training and resources for integration and migration management and support for pedagogical staff in regular education and training institutions.

The role of the Indonesian government focuses on protection through representatives, particularly in case of contractual or legal issues – rather than direct integration support. Once

Indonesian migrant workers arrive in Germany, they are also required to register at the Indonesian Embassy. With assistance from labour attachés, the newly arrived migrants undergo contract verification and are provided with emergency contact mechanisms. Some P3MI agencies maintain overseas representatives to continue support at the destination.

The Indonesian diaspora community has reportedly done well in setting up social networks of mutual support, connection and exchange. The network helps individual migrants to navigate in Germany and eventually integrate long-term (L4S_DE_prac_07).

Retention: To stay or to go?!

According to our data, most Indonesian migrants seem to plan a long-term stay in Germany, or at least in the EU. Job security, professional recognition, access to permanent residency, facilitated family reunification or formation, and better living standards encourage many workers to remain in Germany and pursue long-term careers, despite challenges such as high living and housing costs.

Across our German data, stakeholders repeatedly mentioned the problem of retention among Indonesian workers or trainees. It was reported that skilled professionals often leave their workplace or their location directly after completion of their recognition process. The reasons for job change or (internal or EU) onward migration can vary. Particularly employers that followed ethical principles – and significantly invested into the international recruitment – may feel frustrated about wasting time and money, if candidates would move on quickly and follow other plans (L4S_DE_prac_07). It was reported that some employers even felt ‘betrayed’ or ‘deceived’ by the candidate. This highlights again the importance of a good match of expectations, including the place of residence, the work facility and related work conditions, assigned tasks, career or professional development options, team or organizational culture or integration and support facilities. Negative experiences with dropout and job/employer changes may also make future employers more cautious and hesitant about hiring potential candidates, particularly those smaller companies and employers in remote areas.

Many young Indonesian migrants in our data have expressed interest in exploring and visiting other European countries through the European funded student exchange programme Erasmus as soon as they are able to move freely (after recognition). The German recruitment programme, as such, seems to open the doors for personal development, social networking and exchange of young Indonesians with European cultures and societies in general.

Skills return or circulation hardly plays any role in public- or private-led recruiting programmes. Return migration is largely treated as an individual choice rather than a policy-driven process. As a result, there are no significant structured reintegration mechanisms to absorb and utilise the skills, experience, and professional norms acquired by returning migrants in Indonesia, which represents a key policy gap. This indicates that while the cooperation is effective in terms of placement and retention in the destination country, the potential developmental benefits of skills circulation and return for the country of origin remain underdeveloped.

7 The role of technologies

Technology, digitalization and automation are widely recognized as important factors for both addressing skills shortages in certain sectors or occupations and facilitating international migration. Across the corridor, stakeholders see limited abilities of new technologies to

substitute skilled mobility, but rather that tasks and skills requirements may be reshaped. Interviewees also consistently pointed out that new technologies fundamentally influence the whole migration governance and processes, including matching/recruiting, interviewing, and language training. Yet, it was stressed that digital tools and advancements have not significantly shortened the overall process or speed of decision-making, but rather changed or how procedures run or applications are submitted.

8 Partnership/Programme monitoring evaluation

The Triple Win agreements are still rather new and in the making. Formal evaluations of the Indonesia-Germany corridor and partnerships have not yet been conducted. Evaluation is difficult or too early for programmes, such as Triple Win in hospitality, that were still in preparation phase during data collection (September 2025).

The bilateral agreements officially establish regular joint working committees to continuously discuss, monitor, and potentially adjust the implementation of the recruitment activities. The outcomes of such meetings are not officially accessible making independent evaluation difficult.

Overall, we observe that the numbers of recruited Indonesian workers or trainees migrating to Germany have increased over the last years, though on moderate level. Stakeholders we talked to evaluated the partnership rather positively. On the German side, it was often emphasized that the quality and success of skills mobility partnerships should not solely be measured by numbers, but rather by the quality and mutual benefits the partnerships bring to the involved parties. Establishing joint structures and setting up institutional collaboration with joint knowledge transfer has been mentioned as core interest or success criteria of German skills mobility partnerships also within other corridors.

“For certain projects, you could say that we brought 200 people here, which is a drop in the ocean, and yet you would still say that it was a successful project because everything worked well in terms of the system or the profession involved or whatever. And I would always say that a project is successful when a certain project system is well established.” (L4S_DE_prac_12)

According to the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indonesian Ministry for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, programme evaluations typically focus on assessing the implementation of agreed commitments (L4S_ID_pol_02). The Indonesian government labels the absence of contract violations and protection-related cases among deployed workers, as well as the fulfilment of requested quotas, as the main indicators of success (L4S_ID_pol_01).

In our data, we found that the German and Indonesian government had to navigate different political interests and find compromise and a mutual approach. German stakeholders, for instance, expressed surprise at the Indonesian government representative’s emphasis on migrant’s rights and protection during the latest agreement negotiations. For instance, the Indonesian government repeatedly requested the inclusion of a clause on upholding German basic worker rights within job contracts into the placement agreement, which German negotiators considered unreasonable.

"These are really very, very formal and confusing points, in part because we cannot do that, of course. What goes into the employment contract? And it is perfectly clear that labor law is not being violated in Germany." (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01)

Despite joint agreements, the two governments approach the partnership from different perspective. The German state primarily aims for bilateral agreements with origin states with an expected pool of suitably qualified or quickly employable workers and a high matching of the education and employment market to efficiently mitigate the domestic skilled worker shortage. The Indonesian government focuses from a human-rights- and protection-oriented perspective on bilateral agreements with destination states that adhere to fair and ethical labor (recruitment) standards and human rights. Skill mobility partnership programmes, such as Triple Win, precisely propose to link and reconcile these contrasting or conflicting interests. We figure that the government-led programmes often provide relatively comprehensive support for German employers, while the numbers remain small and the recruitment complex and highly selective with advantage for the most qualified and motivated candidates. As access to quality preparatory and language training is mainly a financial question, the programmes may support those financially affluent classes or socioeconomic background (often from urban areas) that can afford a substantial number of investments of time and money, despite insecurity whether the investments lead to successful deployment.

The majority of Indonesian migrant workers or trainees navigate outside of the government channels through private or individual pathways, often relying on the support and goodwill of the private sector or access to civil support structures.

Private programmes are usually monitored via administrative indicators, such as number of participants, departures, and compliance with regulations, while employers and training institutions in Germany regularly assess programme implementation, candidate's completion and adaptation in the workplace. Early success is often measured by the smooth functioning of placement processes and growing interest in the programmes. Access to respective internal evaluation data is difficult.

9 Consequences and effects

The Indonesia-Germany partnership is an effective and continuously co-developing migration skill corridor cooperation. The programmes successfully link German labour demand with the potential of Indonesian workers. The collaboration improves the vocational training standards and inter-institutional coordination. While room for improvement remains, the partnership is widely regarded as solid and promising foundation for the relatively sustainable and fair skilled mobility governance. The partnership includes clear procedures and formal channels that help to minimize risks of fraud and malpractice. However, communicating transparently and early regarding total costs, timelines and potential delays for participants is vital for prospective candidates to make informed decisions. Broader development effects such as skills circulation or knowledge transfer through returnees remain limited. The bilateral agreement focused so far on nursing, and recently, hospitality, but a future expansion into a wider range of non-regulated occupations is possible.

To evaluate the wins and costs of partnerships such as Triple Win comprehensively it is necessary to consider the different actor's interests and positionalities:

- Skills mobility partnerships and bilateral agreements are beneficial for the **German government** as skilled professionals or trainees are recruited in sectors/occupations of strong skills shortage. Broader structural labour-market or education and training system reforms are thereby circumvented. While the costs remain high and the numbers moderate, the high standard, structured, and co-developed programmes have a strong signalling and trail-pioneer function for the private sector and potential migrants. The corridor becomes – rapidly but temporarily – initiated or revitalized as public, private and individual pathways operate side-by-side with varying standards, accessibility, and outcomes.
- **German employers** have access to a large and for them comparatively cheap pool of high- or medium-skilled Indonesian professionals or trainees, in most cases with high motivation and already a high level of qualification – although in particular the necessary German language proficiency remains a challenge. The partnerships and agreements provide sector-/occupation-specific infrastructures for support, counselling, and recruitment/matching in accordance to German and Indonesian recruitment and work standards.
- For the **Indonesian government**, the partnerships and agreements with Germany open new opportunities for medium-skilled and sector-based mobility of professionals and trainees, particularly – given the agreements in place – in nursing and hospitality. Expert knowledge transfer, capacity building and institutional collaboration are additional benefits. Remittances and employment or training opportunities abroad also provide broader economic benefits,⁷⁴ although the long-term development effects of skilled mobility particularly with regard to genuine efforts towards skills development and circulation remain difficult to assess.
- For **Indonesian migrants**, the partnerships and agreements that link skilling and mobility open new legal chances for personal and professional development through skilled migration with an emerging destination with highly liberal migration governance, including access to permanent residency, family reunification or formation, and welfare or healthcare services. However, the majority of Indonesian migrant labourers or trainees continue to depend on or actively opt for private or individual pathways. Despite the structured programme’s high standards for safe, ethical, and legal migration, they are perceived by some Indonesian migrants as unfitting because of their high selectivity, restrictive language or professional and technical requirements, and lengthy, inflexible, and bureaucratic procedures as well as the risk of bearing high costs when, for whatever reason, dropping out of the programme.

In terms of recruitment in fundamental sectors, such as healthcare, it needs to be critically noted that bilateral agreements and partnerships, such as Triple Win or Global Skills Partnerships, are often perceived as per se ‘guaranteeing’ ethical recruitment. While origin governments formally participate in and approve such arrangements, the long-term economic

⁷⁴ In 2024, for example, remittances sent to Indonesia reached a record value of 4248.27 Mio. \$, almost equaling the national revenues of the tourism sector.

<https://tradingeconomics.com/indonesia/remittances>

and societal effects remain hard to assess, particularly if recruitment increasingly shifts towards private actors.

Within the corridor, private and public (and to a lesser degree civil) recruitment intermediaries compete for Indonesian migrants and German employers. While the structured programmes make up a significant amount, the private sector has been expanding over the last years too. Stakeholders repeatedly emphasized the challenge of ‘scaling up’ the structured programmes with involvement of the private sector – but in an ethical and development-oriented manner (L4S_ID-DE_prac_01). It was admitted a matter-of-fact that involved partners of programmes such as Triple Win, notably the German employers, would follow also economic interests in the end. Global Skills Partnerships (GSPs) or the initiatives led by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), in contrast, actively seek to recognize the origin’s own economy and society and take actions to positively impact the local skills development, strengthen sustainable mutual benefits, and fair migration (L4S_PH_prac_03). It is essential to strengthen and promote respective development-oriented approaches.

It remains to be seen whether the bilateral agreements and partnerships ‘pay off’ for the German and Indonesian government on the long term, and whether Germany will remain competitive as a destination for Indonesian migrant workers given potentially faster procedures, lower preparation or entry costs, and more accessible language and migration systems elsewhere (L4S_DE_prac_12; L4S_ID_pol_04). The German regulatory system in terms of qualification recognition, professional licensing, and visa/residency procedures remain a constraining factor. The ongoing economic downturn makes German employers, particularly of small- and medium-sized companies, additionally hesitant, cautious and demanding in terms of international recruitment. It is, furthermore, unclear whether and how high ethical or development-oriented standards will be maintained if the corridor will be taken over by the private sector on the long run. The future of the corridor will also depend on whether the Indonesian government seeks to continue or expand the recently concluded agreements or partnerships after a first evaluation – or whether other (also more traditional and English-speaking) destinations make ‘better’ offers.

10 Summary of key points

The migration skill corridor between Indonesia and Germany is an example for a newly emerging medium-skilled and sector-based corridor shaped by strategic skill mobility partnerships in healthcare and hospitality. The partnership is still at an early stage – with room for mutual institutional learning, adaptation, and co-development.

Germany recently (re-)initiated agreements with several countries in the Southeast Asian region as well as with India. In contrast to the longer-established bilateral labour relations with the Philippines or the priority partnership with India, the partnership with Indonesia is still experimental.

The agreements in healthcare and hospitality are characterized by a high degree of skills matching – with high formal qualifications acquired at the Indonesian vocational education and training system. The skills matching or gain for German employers makes Indonesian workers highly attractive for the German context – although language challenges remain.

The partnership has contributed to a more structured and regulated pathway for skilled labour migration. While systemic constraints continue to limit speed, scale, and accessibility, the cooperation has strengthened the overall quality and reliability of mobility processes between Indonesia and Germany. Labour market needs and skills matching are the primary logics within the corridor, while development cooperation and educational or vocational policies play a minor role. The structured partnerships create regulated migration pathways that are generally perceived as more predictable and transparent. The migration and integration success largely depend on language proficiency, vocational readiness, and adaptation during the early stages of employment. While retention is an important focus, circularity and return remain less developed, with limited mechanisms to support reintegration or skills circulation back to Indonesia.

In spite of the mutual interest and engagement to cooperate, structural barriers, including bureaucratic hurdles for visa and recognition procedures remain on the German side.

Despite these challenges, young Indonesian workers are increasingly interested in migrating to Germany as a new destination country, often with the expectation for a longer stay. The expected high salary is an important factor for many Indonesians to decide to migrate to Germany. Lack of information and wrong expectations about living and working in Germany (particularly with regard to taxation) are an important problem.

Within these constraints, the Indonesia-Germany corridor demonstrates a pragmatic and evolving model of cooperation that balances German labour market needs with bilaterally developed and structured skilled migration governance.

11 Good practices

- ⇒ **Fair cost distribution:** Programmes such as Triple Win follow the ‘Employer-pays-principle’. This approach to fair skilled migration reduces migration-related costs for migrants and distributes the costs of skilled mobility among employers, migrants, and the German and Indonesian administration. The bilateral agreements stipulate the maximum costs of each party in detail.
- ⇒ **Linkage of language training and professional or vocational preparation:** The systematic and early integration of language training with professional or vocational preparation prior to departure through structured programmes such as Triple Win represents another good practice. Language training and preparatory class tailored to sector-/occupation- or employer-specific contexts and needs, enables participants to acquire relevant skills, improve skills matching, and adapt more quickly after arrival.
- ⇒ **Equal labour rights for international and domestic workers:** The bilateral recruitment agreement between Indonesia and Germany deliberately states that “the conditions of employment [for the Indonesian candidates] may not be less favourable than those for comparable national workers” (Agreement, Annex 1, p. 1). This is a good formal step to ensure that there is no workplace discrimination and that migrant workers are not pressured to perform any work that is not appropriate for their placement. Simultaneously, it makes sure that German regular staff does not feel outbid or replaced by international workers.

12 Policy recommendations

Reduce financial burdens for professional licensing and training: Labels such as ‘zero cost’ or ‘cost free’ have hidden costs that are often not transparent and/or difficult to cover for the applicants, in particular for those from less affluent backgrounds. In the case of the Triple Win programme, German employers recruit Indonesian citizens who have already received the certificates to work as licensed cook or nurse in Indonesia. The ‘double certification’ – first in Indonesia, then in Germany – creates financial and bureaucratic burdens for candidates. The licensing process can be costly, especially considering the exchange rate between the Indonesian Rupiah and the Euro. To make the Triple Win programme more attractive and support its upscaling, partial certification stipends or other forms of financial support could be considered. Alternatively, where legally feasible, the programme could explore accepting graduates without an Indonesian licence, but the skills and completed training. In general, cost-sharing mechanisms, targeted subsidies, or partnerships with training providers could help reduce the financial burden on candidates, particularly those from less advantaged background, and support more equitable access to the Indonesia-Germany migration skill corridor.

Invest into skills development initiatives and return-oriented pathways: In order to strengthen the long-term skill development in the origin country, investments of destination countries are necessary. The Global Skill Partnership programme – in comparison to Triple Win with only small share of additional pre-departure skilling options – places a focus on the investments into the regular vocational training system in Indonesia. In addition, mechanisms to recognize skills and experiences gained in Germany after return are necessary and will support the returnee’s reintegration into the domestic labour market. Strengthening return-oriented pathways would help to increase the developmental impact of skilled labour migration.

Marketing campaigns against misinformation and unrealistic expectations: Young Indonesian people heavily depend on social networks often through digital sources and social media for their migration decision. It is pivotal to adequately reach the target group through age-sensitive campaigns and inform about the German education and employment system, including taxation, and expose misinformation and fight against fraud and wrong images/rumours. Ethnic and diaspora community groups/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 digital-active diaspora or community organizations or initiatives could be relevant for information dissemination.

Note on empirical data and documents

This corridor report 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 centres, 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 (Triple Win and private recruited). The data has been complemented with documents, statistics and studies.

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List of interviews

For this report, we draw on following interviews conducted within the Indonesia-Germany corridor:

Corridor-specific interviews

L4S_ID-DE_prac_01
L4S_ID-DE_prac_02
L4S_ID-DE_prac_03

Country-specific interviews: Indonesia

L4S_ID_pol_01
L4S_ID_pol_02
L4S_ID_pol_03
L4S_ID_pol_04
L4S_ID_exp_01

Country-specific interviews: Germany

L4S_DE_prac_01
L4S_DE_prac_02
L4S_DE_prac_03
L4S_DE_prac_04
L4S_DE_prac_05
L4S_DE_prac_06
L4S_DE_prac_07
L4S_DE_prac_08
L4S_DE_prac_09
L4S_DE_prac_10
L4S_DE_pol_11
L4S_DE_prac_12
L4S_DE_pol_13
L4S_DE_prac_14
L4S_DE_pol_15
L4S_DE_prac_16
L4S_DE_pol_17
L4S_DE_prac_18
L4S_DE_prac_19

Interviews with Indonesian migrants

L4S_ID_migrant_01
L4S_PH+ID_migrant_01
L4S_ID+PH_migrant_01

Key information

Emerging vs. established corridor?	The Indonesia-Germany migration skill corridor is a newly emerging corridor driven by governmental cooperation.
How relevant are formal state-led skill partnerships / agreements ?	State-led/formal agreements are very relevant. A bilateral recruitment agreement (Triple Win) signed in 2021 marked the kick-start of emerging private recruiting activities as it created new opportunities for further collaboration in terms of labour, skilling and mobility.
Who is dominant - private vs. public actors ?	The German public actors and state-led initiatives are dominant, while private recruiting agencies and companies are increasingly entering the country to initiate programs, cooperations, and initiatives.
Degree of dynamism within the corridor (intensive dynamics, ups-downs, static, etc.)?	Historically no linkage or significant migration flow (except for nurses); recently, increasingly dynamic, progressive and steadily increasing – yet still in small numbers.
What general perceptions do involved actors have about (to-be/skilled) migration (positive, negative, etc.)? Is it a politically or publicly controversial topic or accepted?	From the German perspective: generally positive but contested; no significant attention towards Indonesian skilled migration. From the Indonesian perspective: generally positive and normalized as social mobility strategy and national economic and development strategy. The mobility towards Germany is framed as an achievement that reflects the growth of Indonesian workers in the global labour market.
What is the major skilled migration type (study, vocational or language training, non-formal skilled, job search, etc.)? Any trends?	Mainly migration for vocational and language training, adjustment/adaption measures and (medium-skilled) labour migration; increasing importance in the nursing and hospitality sector.
Where does skilling mainly take place (origin or destination, both)?	Mainly in Indonesia, but with vocational and language/adaptation training migration increasingly in Germany.
What skill sectors/occupations primarily shape the corridor? Any new(er)/emerging occupations?	Mainly healthcare (nursing and elderly care) and hospitality (waiters, bartenders, chefs, or cooks).
What skill level shapes the corridor (high, medium, low)?	Mainly medium-skilled to high-skilled migration; the skill level is a question of interpretation within the corridor: in Germany occupations such as nursing or hospitality are considered medium-skilled officially, while German companies benefit from a full diploma and high qualifications received in these occupations in Indonesia.
How do dynamics in one corridor affect other corridors (e.g. competition for talents; diaspora networks reinforcing secondary migration)?	The boom of agreements and recruiting in the Philippines, pushed the German government to take a look around and consider and 'try out' new origin countries in the Southeast Asian region as 'alternative' or 'extension' to the more established corridor with the Philippines.