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Skills Migration Corridors: Qualitative Fieldwork Handbook

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<https://link4skills.eu/index.php/publications/>

About the research project “Link4Skills”

The Horizon Europe-funded research project “Link4Skills” addresses recent developments in skilled labour migration in which sending and receiving countries attempt to regulate recruitment, for example by setting up programs such as ‘Global Skill Partnerships’, while other flows remain unregulated and characterized by the dominance of private recruitment or affected by crisis-induced migrations. Link4Skills, as a multidisciplinary and international consortium of 14 partners in 10 countries, six of which are non-EU countries, analyzes skill migration corridors between Austria, Canada, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, and Ukraine.

“Link4Skills” addresses three main policy challenges:

1. How should the EU respond to skills shortages?
2. How can policy-makers identify skills needs in changing labor markets more effectively?
3. How can the EU ensure that skills recruitment both in the EU and beyond is fair and efficient?

The project seeks to bridge the gap between skills supply and demand by considering three policy options: supporting re-/up-skilling, promoting automation, and encouraging migration. The skill sectors/occupations we are focusing on are healthcare, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) / IT and construction.

In the research we pay particular attention to the potential of ‘migration skill corridors’ (MSCs) to better understand global skilled migration. We explore how historically established MSCs can be made more effective and fair and how newly emerging ones can be developed to meet evolving needs.

“Link4Skills” aims to create an inclusive, participatory policy decision-making environment by integrating perspectives of a diverse range of stakeholders, including EU decision-makers, inter-governmental institutions, national and subnational decision-makers, employers and employees’ organizations and civil society. The AI-enabled “Link4Skills” Navigator is a tool co-developed with various labor-market stakeholders to aid decision-making and support mutually beneficial skill flows.

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Introduction

This handbook guided the qualitative field research of the international research consortium “Link4Skills”. Its aim was to ensure similar methodological approaches and practices, including ethical guidelines. This is a revised version of the handbook. As it attempts to assemble information relevant for future projects, we left out some very detailed instructions for Link4Skills. We added a part on methodological reflection. The main empirical results of the comparative corridor analysis of “Link4Skills” – with data collection and analysis based on this fieldwork handbook – will be published in Ullmann & Schwenken (Forthcoming (a)).

Part I: Research Design

1 Research question and research design

This fieldwork handbook guides the qualitative research for work package 4 – “Analyzing migration skill corridors and skills mobility partnerships” within the research project “Link4Skills”. In the preparatory phase, the research consortium jointly discussed and developed the core research questions and the research design.

The guiding research question was:

How and why are different migration skill corridors and related skills mobility partnerships and recruitment agreements (not) working on the ground?

Work package 4 studied the **governance of international skilled labor migration and skills mobility partnerships**; i.e. **bilateral labor agreements (BLAs), frameworks, memorandums of understanding (MoU), memorandums of agreement (MoA), framework agreements or inter-agency understandings (IAU) – or the lack of thereof – and related projects, initiatives, programs and practices implemented by the public and private sector**. L4S seeks to better understand the (enabling or hindering) mechanisms and characteristics of migration skill corridors.

Four interrelated sub-questions guided the research:

1. What **actions** are taken by different stakeholders **to implement** the policies, initiatives and programs?
2. What **knowledge and discourses** are activated and negotiated by the various stakeholders involved? How are ethical, migration, development, employment, health, or education and vocational training policy considerations combined?
3. Which **structural factors** (political, institutional, organizational, cultural, social, post/colonial, technological, etc.) shape the policies and their implementation?
4. How do **skilled migrants respond** to the different approaches and conditions they face? What strategies do they develop?

Question 1-3: answered through interviews with stakeholders and document analysis.

Question 4: answered through focus group discussions with skilled migrants.

The consortium selected **14 migration skill corridors**; results are presented in corridor reports and briefs and a comparative analysis (Ullmann & Schwenken, forthcoming (a)).¹ The research was based on **data triangulation** with input of all partners, including **problem-centered and expert interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions** with migrants. Data originated from **12 countries** (Austria, Canada, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, and Ukraine). The focus was on **three sectors** of high skill demand/shortage in the global north countries: (a) **healthcare**, (b) **Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) / IT**, and (c) **construction**.

We distinguished three levels (see, figure 1):

- **Macro-level: Migration policies and societal transformation** were analysed through policy and document analysis and expert interviews with policy-makers on both corridor sides. This level includes (bi-/multi-) national policies and frameworks, bilateral agreements, MoUs, etc.
- **Meso-level: Migration policy and program implementation and practices** were analysed through qualitative interviews with public, private and civil stakeholders on both corridor sides. This level of cross-border networks, infrastructures, and institutions / organizations entails all processes, discourses, and practices produced by various actors on the ground that can contribute to the emergence or establishment of a corridor or a migration system.
- **Micro-level: Migration decisions and experiences** were assessed through focus-group discussions, qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey with skilled migrants at the destination. This level provides insights into migrant's individual perspectives within a specific corridor or program.

This research was primarily interested in the **actual activities, measures, practical approaches and “realities on the ground” (the meso-level)**. The goal was to better understand in which way the abstract political agendas, regulations, agreements, frameworks, promises and claims (or the lack of thereof), for instance, on ethical recruitment and ‘triple-win’, were **implemented** or dealt with by the various public, private or civil society actors – or, if other goals, logics or approaches, were relevant. By looking at the actual practices and discourses – not only the official agendas – the research sought to uncover **what transnational or national (hindering or facilitating) factors and constellations shape migration skill corridors**.

¹ L4S corridor reports and briefs can be accessed here: <https://link4skills.eu/index.php/publications>.

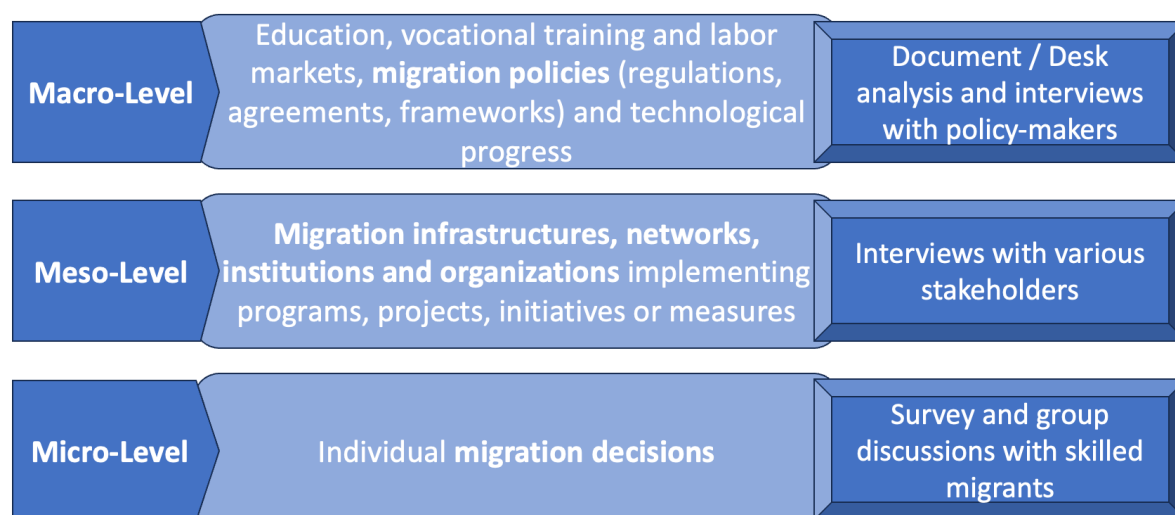


Figure 1: Overview of level of analysis and data type. Source: Own illustration.

While work package 4.4 of Link4Skills was focused on analysing migration skill corridors and skill mobility partnerships in their actual implementation, WP 4.5 has developed an inventory of 156 skills mobility partnerships across all 12 partner countries (Hohwieler et al. 2026). In addition, work package 3 focused on human resources and skills development at the origin (Asis, Ducanes & Roda 2026; Setrana et al. 2026).

2 The ‘migration corridor approach’ and methodological implications

The research design of “Link4Skills” is based on a “**migration corridor approach**” (Bakewell et al. 2016; Carling 2010; Engbersen & Reinold 2026; Triandafyllidou, Shirazi & Engbersen 2024). To operationalize the approach, we formed so-called “**corridor research tandems**” for joint data collection and analysis. This entailed the **equal involvement of researchers on both ends** of the labor migration process. Within L4S, each partner was positioned differently in terms of resources, experiences, epistemic foundations, institutional structures, etc. and required recognition and a power-sensitive approach. **Regular, self-organized, bilateral “fieldwork meetings” have been conducted by the corridor research tandems.** In case of fieldwork challenges, the fieldwork coordination lead was available for support. The transnational fieldwork progress was also regularly monitored by the fieldwork coordination lead. In addition, fieldwork was continuously accompanied by **regular joint online and on-site consortium meetings** on fieldwork progress and potential challenges and **extensive bi- or multilateral communication between fieldwork coordination lead and research partners.** Issues for discussion included the translation of our theoretical interests and concepts into practical approaches in diverse national and transnational field contexts and settings, questions of field access, language and cultural norms, joint and synchronized field entry/stay, context-/case-sensitive sampling, data management, and collaborative analysis and reporting of findings.

Bilateral recruitment agreements, frameworks or skills mobility partnerships operate bi- and transnationally. To analyse a “transnational corridor case” requires close research collaboration **through the whole research process**. The benefit of this methodological approach lies in the **decentering** of the research perspective. By considering the ‘origin’ and ‘destination’ of a skilled migration process simultaneously, researchers **avoid a geographically biased view** and interviewee selection on the phenomena. Data was often collected by research partners on one side and then linked or exchanged with data collected by research partners on the other side. In many cases, researchers of one corridor case jointly collected data either via online or via on-site interviews in case of field visits. (Global North and South) researchers mutually enriched and challenged each other’s epistemic foundations, theoretical assumptions, empirical expertise and field insights through shared knowledge, joint reflections and the commitment to common conclusions. This **integrated perspective of a MSC approach** enabled our researchers to develop a more comprehensive picture of the same phenomena than a conventional single-sited research design would.

There is, however, a danger to reproduce a **‘national container’ perspective**. As the approach usually links two ‘countries’ with national frameworks, the relevance of trans- as well as subnational processes could be neglected. A counter-strategy was to **take within-country differences (e.g. on federal, regional, local, communal or organizational level) seriously**, shy away from too early/strong generalizations, consider the different qualities of linkages (established vs. emerging; with low or high migration flows), and last but not least to **recognize the migrants’ agency** and the **diversity of migration itineraries** (multi-stop/step migration).

3 The corridor case selection

With seven origin (Austria, Canada, Germany, Netherlands and Poland) and five destination (Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Philippines and Ukraine) countries the options for case selection were large (theoretically n=35). For a theoretically-justified selection, twelve country scoping reports offered key information.² The corridors for the in-depth studies were selected based on a **combination of analytical criteria**:

- **Migration flows:** Covering established vs. emerging migration corridors, high and low migration flows; uni-, bi-, and multi-directional flows, including multi-stop/step migration.
- **Involved actors:** Public and private sector and civil society.
- **Corridor size and timing:** Covering established (i.e., pre-existing, historical, post-colonial, political or institutional) connections and newly emerging corridors (i.e., strategically planned linkages through skills mobility partnerships, bilateral agreements or frameworks).
- **Sudden events** (crisis, war and conflict)

² Some reports were further condensed and published as country profiles with key information on migration skill corridors and skilled labor migration: <https://link4skills.eu/index.php/publications/>.

- **Geographical location:** Covering a variety of Global North and South countries.
- **Sectors or occupations:** Covering various sectors or occupations, including STEM/IT, construction, healthcare, and other regulated or non-regulated professions.
- **Fair and ethical recruitment:** Cases include policies/programs that promote fair and ethical recruitment practices.

We selected 14 corridor cases to cover a **spectrum of migration skill corridors types** (figure 2). We selected at least two corridors for each criterion and tried to consider both typical and exceptional or ‘**strong**’ and ‘**weak**’ cases. In order to understand the role of public sector involvement, for example, we included Philippines-Germany as model example and Indonesia-Austria as emerging example.

	Austria (AT)	Canada (CA)	Germany (DE)	Netherlands (NL)	Poland (PL)
India (IN)	Re-/Emerging	Established	Re-/Emerging (IN) Established (DE)	Emerging (IN) Established (NL)	
Indonesia (ID)	Emerging		Emerging		
Ghana (GH)		Emerging			
Morocco (MA)			Emerging	Established	
Nigeria (NG)		Emerging (STEM/IT, construction) Established (Healthcare)			
Philippines (PH)			Established		Emerging
Ukraine (UA)				Emerging	Established

Figure 2: Overview of selected 14 migration skill corridor cases. Source: Own illustration.

The **corridor research tandems** made further decisions in terms of the **subnational case selection** (see, figure 3). Within, for instance, the Philippines-Germany corridor there have been initiated bilateral agreements and multiple skills mobility partnerships (such as Triple Win or Global Skills Partnerships). In short: The corridor was characterized by highly established institutionalized structures of public-led agreements and pathways – but was also and increasingly shaped by private-sector initiatives and recruitment programs besides individual-led pathways. This reflects that **within a corridor multiple pathways, lanes or corridor types can co-exist**. The Nigeria-Canada corridor, in contrast, was, for instance, shaped by no bilateral agreements. While Canada had strong national skills-/points-based systems for skilled labor immigration, Nigerians skilled labor migration governance was underdeveloped. Despite the governance disconnect and partial underinstitutionalization, large skilled migration flows

between both countries exist, led by individual networks and subnational private-sector infrastructures.

Within corridors of balanced private and public initiatives, equally balanced data sampling was easy to achieve. In the case of the Philippines-Poland, for instance, public institutions and policies play an important role in the Philippines, while in Poland the private sector was the primary driver of skilled talent attraction. Such constellations within a corridor are already part of the empirical results, but may initially complicate the subnational corridor case selection.

	Austria (AT)	Canada (CA)	Germany (DE)	Netherlands (NL)	Poland (PL)
India (IN)	New bilateral agreement and SMPs	No bilateral agreement, but partnerships on provincial level, also strong study migration	New bilateral agreement, MoUs, e.g., Triple Win or GSP; also private-led pathways	No bilateral agreement, but private-driven mobility	
Indonesia (ID)	New bilateral agreement		New bilateral agreement, e.g., Triple Win		
Ghana (GH)		No bilateral agreement, but study migration as well as healthcare			
Morocco (MA)			New partnership, EU-funded THAMM Plus; recruitment agreement in various sectors	No bilateral agreement, but sustained flow of various sectors	
Nigeria (NG)		No bilateral agreement but informal and private-sector pathways as well as healthcare			
Philippines (PH)			Bilateral recruitment agreement (Triple Win), Global Skills Partnerships, plus private-led pathways in nursing		No bilateral agreement, but private-driven mobility in various sectors
Ukraine (UA)				No bilateral agreement, but flow due to sudden event (war/conflict)	No bilateral agreement, but flow driven both by labor and forced migration

Figure 3: Overview of key information for subnational corridor sampling of the selected 14 migration skill corridor cases. Source: Own illustration.

4 Data collection, analysis and reporting

The **implementation phase** contained the selection of the corridor cases and data collection. This research stage of an international research team can be best characterized by “collective creativity” (Teagarden et al. 2015, p. 322), “shared learning” (ibid.) and “controlling chaos” (ibid, p. 328). The large, geographically distanced, multi-disciplinary research consortium **with seven global south and five global north partners** and the linking of origin and destination data on multiple-levels required continuous coordination and guidance by the task leaders as well as a high degree of flexibility, trust and autonomy among all consortium partners.

Data collection contained an **exploratory phase** with expert interviews to get a better picture of the transnational field or corridor and relevant key actors, developments and hot topics on the ground (see, Part III).

The **analysis, interpretation and reporting phase** again entailed mutual learning, building consensus and dialogue. The empirical results of all data collected within one corridor case was compiled in **internal migration skill corridor reports**. In these reports data and analysis on both sides was linked. If data has been collected that is relevant for more than one corridor (that means country-specific, not corridor-specific) it was included and equally considered in other corridor reports. The local context findings were jointly discussed and synthesized. In the reporting, each MSC case ideally combined **three analytical levels**:

- The origin perspective
- The destination perspective
- An integrated corridor perspective (linking origin and destination perspective)

A **compendium of each migration skill corridor case** – based on the extensive internal MSC reports – has been created as an intermediary analytical step to summarize and compile key empirical result (Ullmann et al. forthcoming (c)). The internal corridor reports and the compendium formed the basis for the **comparative corridor analysis** (Ullmann and Schwenken, forthcoming (a)).

5 Methodological reflections

Research within a large consortium (approx. 45 researchers and interviewers) required **continuous coordination and negotiation** as well as a **trusting, collegial and engaged relationships** among all partners. The consortium benefitted from the extensive previous experiences in conducting and leading multinational research collaboration by several partners. It was essential to set a clear **joint research vision** and agree upon **ethical and qualitative research standards** and **monitor the research achievements**. Coordination required to continuously balance directive instructions with high flexibility and participatory approaches (figure 4). For some tasks or decisions, for example, several partners desired more clarity and structure, whereas others favored more freedom. This reflects again the different positionalities, resources, and structures within the L4S consortium.



Figure 4: Tensions of coordinating multiple corridor research tandems as multi-sited transnational research.
Source: Own illustration.

The corridor-research design also entailed **language issues**: Researchers in one corridor research tandem usually spoke different first and second languages. English was the working and reporting language within L4S. A corridor or country, though, was characterized by a specific language or a mix of languages and dialects. A “contextualized strategy” (Berg et al. 2025, p. 1) was required as each corridor research team had to make decisions on the adequate interview and transcription language(s).³

Part II: Ethical Guidelines

A multi-partner and international research project comes with ethical and practical challenges. The whole fieldwork process demands nuanced, ongoing moral evaluation. It is important that ethical compliance is not reduced to a one-time “box-ticking” exercise. Researchers need to engage in a process-oriented ethical introspection, asking reflexive questions about neutrality, harm, and respect.

Link4Skills fieldwork instruments have been discussed with the L4S-internal ethics committee and received **ethics approval** from the Research Ethics Committee of Kozminski University in Warsaw, Poland (as coordinator of Horizon Europe Link4Skills). Approval reference: 05-11-2024, chaired by Prof. Grazyna Wasowicz (social psychologist) (see <https://www.kozminski.edu.pl/en/research-ethics-committee>).

The consortium has **shared protocols** for informed consent (see Part V; also communicated and discussed in a fieldwork training workshop), data confidentiality (see in this handbook), and risk mitigation. All consortium members were, if applicable, responsible for **obtaining their own, country-specific research permission**.

The fieldwork coordination team at Osnabrück University monitored the research process and **ethical compliance** (interviewee recruitment, documentation of consents, fieldwork, data handling, etc.). Before fieldwork started, all researchers and interviewers participated in a mandatory one-day **training on qualitative and ethical research standards**.

Some of Link4Skill’s ethical and interview guidelines:

³ Further reflections on the migration skill corridor approach will be published in Ullmann & Schwenken (Forthcoming, (b)).

Interview participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any moment during the interview (and thereafter). Recruitment of interviewees in close relationships with the interviewers (researcher's family, friends or acquaintances) needs to be avoided. Research participation needs to be free from any sense of obligation or perceived pressure. Researchers should focus on recruiting participants through professional networks or institutional and organisational affiliations, where clear boundaries and impartiality are maintained.

Confidentiality and privacy: All information needs to be handled with confidentiality; all personal data must be processed and stored in compliance with the European and national data protection legal frameworks.

Before, during or after interviews, **researchers do not make false or any promises** about the research or their participation (such as that situations or politics will improve; that visa, migration processes, family reunification or formation or the acknowledgment of diploma can be facilitated). Migrants received **renumeration** for participation in interviews or group discussions.

The interviews shall be conducted in a **comfortable setting**. Interviewers need to respect cultural, ethnic, gender and sexual orientation differences, including safeguarding research participants and protecting vulnerable groups. Link4Skills follows the “**Guidance note — Research on refugees, asylum seekers & migrants**” (European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2020)⁴. We also found useful: “**Ethics handbook for the interviewing team**” (2021) of the Horizon 2020 project “ITFLOWS”⁵.

The fieldwork coordination offered **ad hoc consultations** on ethical issues. **Complaints** had to be directed to the project coordinator at Kozminski University. If issues cannot be resolved through these channels, there is an external ethics advisor to the project.

Interviewers need to be adequately trained and comply with fieldwork and ethics principles and standards (see Deliverables D1.3 (Ethics Documents), D7.1 (Governance Handbook) and the L4S Data Management Plan).

Translators need to be asked to fully translate the informed consent and translate (during the interview or while transcribing) accurately and precisely in both directions.

Part III: Conducting Interviews

1 Types of interviews

In Link4Skill's research design, three different interview types were foreseen:

1. **Problem-centred interviews** with policy-makers and practitioners

⁴ <https://eneri.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Guidance-note-%E2%80%94-Research-on-refugees-asylum-seekers-migrants.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.itflows.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ITFLOWS-Ethics-Handbook-v3.0.pdf>

2. **Expert interviews** with experts
3. **Focus group discussions** with migrants.

The **problem-centred interviews with policy-makers and practitioners** aimed to gain qualitative data on processes and experiences as well as on views and opinions with regard to one topic or “problem” of interest (here: the goal, implementation and effectiveness of particular migration skill corridors and related bilateral programs, partnerships or the lack of thereof). This interview technique may entail narration-generating questions, asking for explanations, illustration but also for opposing views, challenges or imaginations (see, Witzel & Reiter 2012).

Expert interviews helped to gather further contextual information about corridors or countries in terms of skilled labor migration and its governance, impacts and evaluations on a specific field and topic (see, Bogner, Littig & Menz 2009).

The **focus groups discussion with skilled migrants** enabled to obtain data on subjective experiences and perspectives on the effectiveness of different migration skill corridors and related skills and talent mobility partnerships or recruitment programs (see, Bader & Rossi 2002).⁶

2 Finding and distinguishing different actors

We distinguished four actor groups: **policy makers, practitioners, experts, and (skilled) migrants**. Each group served a different purpose in the empirical research and needed to be targeted and addressed differently. Some overlaps may occur if interviewees have dual roles/mandates or moved their work position or the sector. For each group, different interview guidelines have been drafted (see, Part V). In case of multiple roles, it was necessary to use the most appropriate one and make necessary adjustments.

The main research interest lied in the **practical implementation of skilled labor migration policies, bilateral labor recruitment agreements or skills mobility partnerships (or the lack of thereof)**. Therefore, it was essential to gain scientific knowledge through the **perspectives of a broad spectrum of private, public and civil actors on both sides of the migration skill corridor**. To understand the practical implementation and “realities” of different bilateral frameworks, skilled labor migration governance, recruitment programs or initiatives (or the lack of thereof) **it was not sufficient to talk with experts or policy-makers** who – usually – **are more distanced from the concrete and everyday implementation and/or do not directly interact with migrants and/or tend to highlight the success of policies, frameworks and programs**. The meso-level perspective, thus, was necessary to gain insight into the actual enabling or constraining factors and constellations the actors on each side of the corridor faced. In a second step, it was necessary to inquire whether similar barriers or opportunities

⁶ The research data of Link4Skills contained as a quantitative component a survey of more than 2.300 skilled migrants based in Austria, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland – originating from various countries, including all L4S origin countries (see, Reinhold 2026).

were observed and perceptions shared by the different actors across the transnational social field.

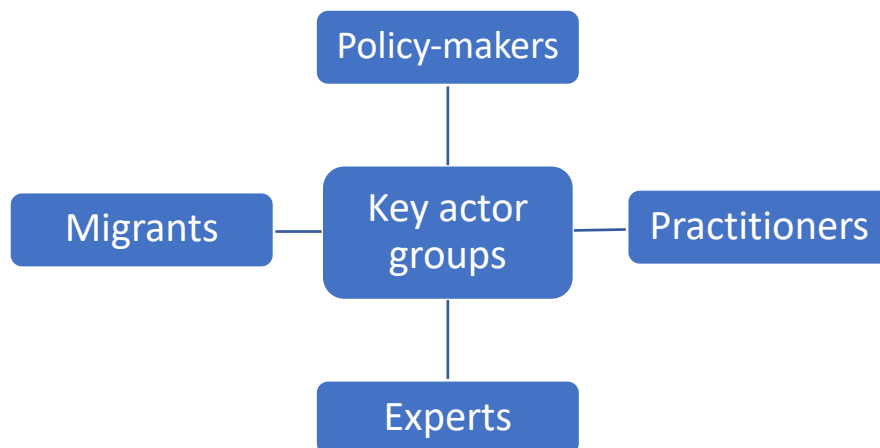


Figure 5: Overview of key actor groups. Source: Own illustration.

We defined the **four actor groups** as follows:

‘Policy-makers’ are political decision-makers, politicians or employees in the executive and administration on different governance levels of the local public ministries, institutions or agencies of employment, education, vocational training, migration, health, integration or development. They are mainly involved in negotiating frameworks, policies or agreements and in deciding on (agenda setting) and conceptualizing (designing, developing) specific inter-agency or subnational implementing projects, initiatives or programs (or the lack of thereof). This group includes executive staff in decision-making and leading positions (but not in implementing or operational positions). They have extensive knowledge on abstract political claims, frameworks, governance, goals, visions, and discourses.

‘Practitioners’ are actors involved in the implementation of skills mobility partnerships, recruitment agreements or cooperation on skilled labor migration (or the lack of thereof). This entails (coordinating, leading or implementing) staff of public or private employment or recruitment agencies, training centers, language schools, professional organizations and chambers, trade unions, welfare and civil society organizations, migrant and returnee associations, private employers/companies (for instance, staff of human resource or training departments) that interact with migrants on a daily basis. This could be, for instance, the training manager of a vocational school that supports migrant trainees, the integration or onboarding staff of international nurses at a care facility, the counselling staff of a professional chamber that prepares and guides skilled migrants for recognition services or tests, street-level staff of local authorities or embassies supporting the return or reintegration, etc. Practitioners of the public, private and civil sector **bring policies and programs (or the lack of thereof) “to life” and co-produce an emerging or established migration skill corridor and its (enabling or impeding) factors** migrant professionals or trainees are confronted with. This group is familiar with **how the daily implementation processes within the transnational field actually work (or not)**. Practitioners can be asked to share insights into their everyday work and routine procedures.

‘Experts’ have **special knowledge, insights, opinions on a topic or field**. This entails **scholars, think tanks or other actors from various backgrounds**. Experts can be important to better understand a country or corridor in terms of skilled labor migration policies and their impact. This group is **more distanced to the actual implementation level** and might also offer a theoretical perspective.

‘Skilled migrants’ are **participants of skills or talent mobility partnerships or other private or public recruitment programs at various stages of their migratory journey (future, current or former participants)**. Migrants may be already licensed (skilled) professionals, others may be school or student graduates that seek to migrate for education or vocational or academic training.

Link4Skills aims at **diverse samples**; a broad spectrum of social characteristics, such as gender, age, class/caste, nationality/ethnicity as well as diverse skills level, work experience, and training or education background shall be included.

Online interviews are usually fine for the policy level and experts. For practitioner interviews and focus group discussions with skilled migrants in particular, personal **visits of relevant institutions or organizations on site** were highly recommended to get a “real” impression, understanding and feeling for the actor’s everyday situation, context, environment.

3 Recruitment of research participants in the field

Potential **strategies included mapping of potential interviewees through desk-research, previous field contacts, snowballing, local events, workshops, passing by at local organizations or institutions, using professional or personal networks, recommendations, social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram), initial phone calls, emails, etc.** The search strategy needed to adapt to the local context and conventions. It is inappropriate to recruit interviewees that are ‘too close’ to the researchers. No feelings of obligation or pressure shall be evoked.

The L4S research teams compiled country- and corridor-specific **stakeholder lists** for the communication part of the project; these include public or private institutions and organizations and representatives as well as key informants or civil society actors that constitute a good starting point for field entry.

For **reaching ‘practitioners’** preliminary on-line research of the institutions or organizations’ website, on-site visits or visits of local networking, exchange, service or information events, were suitable entry strategies. Policy-makers or experts can provide contacts to implementation organizations or have concrete recommendations.

For **reaching skilled migrants** participating in skills or talent mobility partnerships, on-site visits of local private or public institutions or organizations that conduct recruitment programs or skills mobility partnerships was a suitable strategy. In addition, it is recommended to visit target group-specific or sector-/occupation-specific information, recruiting, networking, or

matching events or services. **Local practitioners** (implementing organizations or institutions, such as employment agencies, welcome or return centers, NGOs, training centers, language schools, etc.) served as key **gatekeepers** to reach skilled migrants. It is suitable to request collaboration with public, private or civil implementation organizations or institutions already during or before fieldwork, including options to receive contact to ‘their clients or participants’.

One-to-one interviews are recommended. Yet, it might be suitable to conduct interviews with more than one interviewee. It is **recommended to interview actors affiliated to the same organization or institution** (for instance, interviewing the recruitment program manager and coordinator together). Conducting group interviews with multiple actors from diverse institutional or organizational background is challenging and requires sufficient preparation. Interviewing, for instance, a project staff from a welfare organization and an administrative staff from a local labor ministry is highly complex and complicated. The interview could turn into a focus group discussion which requires specific preparation and guidelines.

It is recommended to inquire ahead – for instance via a **short and informal preliminary meeting** – some background information about the interviewees (such as their work areas and positions) in order to be sufficiently prepared. This makes it possible to directly jump into the interview without losing too much time for orientation.

4 Number of interviews

The migration corridor approach seeks to equally cover processes and insights on two – possibly – politically, socially, or institutionally interlinked and connected transnational empirical sites at the same time (see, figure 6). To form a **suitable corridor “case”** – that is data linked from both corridor sides – **sufficient data from the two research localities were required.**

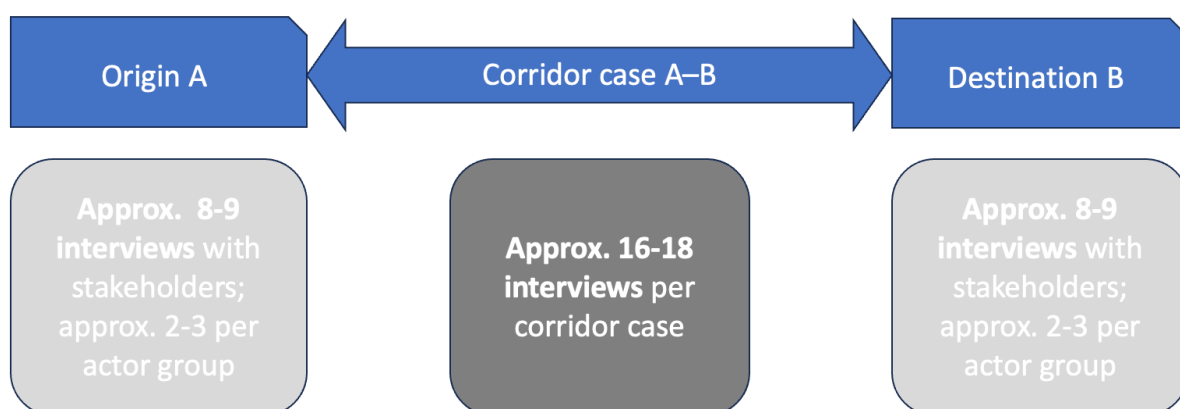


Figure 6: Overview of ideal interview distribution strategy of a two-sided corridor approach. Source: Own illustration.

For a comprehensive data sample, we sought to collect a minimum of 16-18 interviews per corridor case – with approx. 8-9 interviews from diverse actor groups per (origin/destination) country side.

Research partners contributed to **one corridor case** (Ghana, Nigeria), **two corridor cases** (Ukraine, Poland, Austria, Indonesia, Philippines, Morocco), **three corridor cases** (Canada, Netherlands) or **four corridor cases** (India, Germany).

Established corridors with extensive private and public infrastructures and programs may provide more corridor-specific insights (and easy fieldwork access) in comparison to newly emerging, weakly institutionalized corridors. In these cases, country-specific interviews may dominate that provide insights into general national frameworks, structures, and conditions. It may also be the cases that a corridor is more established or relevant on one side (with initiated public programs or policies), while on the other side the infrastructure or policy field may look different or underinstitutionalized. These conditions need to be considered during fieldwork – and provide already analytical insights into the existing bilateral relations on skilled migration.

5 Specificities for data-collection in migration corridor settings

In some cases, the interviewee is a field actor who is **clearly related to a specific corridor** (and a related origin or destination site). This is particularly the case if bilateral recruitment agreements or private or public skills mobility partnerships between two countries exist. In other cases, stakeholders are **not clearly related to a specific corridor**, but to several corridors or countries. Practitioner might have experience in multiple settings; a migrant may have experience in several countries or migration hubs. In these cases, interview data can be relevant for more than one case. The **interview guidelines and questions then need to be adjusted to the specific country-/corridor-context(s) and the data feeded into the other corridor study.**

6 Handling 'Informed consent' with research participants

To ensure informed consent, it is necessary to provide an **informed consent form** (see Part V), specified for each of interviewee group. The research subject needs to have **enough time to read and understand** the informed consent. The researcher team can send or provide the form **ahead of the actual interview meeting**. The interviewer hand over the signed consent forms to the responsible Principal Investigator who keeps it in a safe place.

7 Handling the template interview guidelines

The template guidelines for policy-makers, practitioners and experts were relatively generic (see, Part V) and needed to **be adapted to the particular interview situation, the specific**

role/position of the interviewee in the transnational field, the specific country-/corridor-context, and cultural as well as linguistic conventions. Thus, the interview guidelines contain notes such as “[Select]” or “[Adapt]”.

In the guidelines, **bold questions** were regarded as particularly relevant. During the interview, the interviewer has to check whether certain questions or topics have already been addressed. The guidelines are rather long and comprehensive. It was not meant, however, to ask each question or sub-question one by one in a tiring and bureaucratic manner (following a quantitative survey logic). It was (in line with qualitative empirical social research principles) rather up to the researcher and interviewer to **make decisions on (follow-up) question techniques depending on the particular interviewee and the interviewer situation, interaction and dynamic.**

Asking more questions is possible. Questions that turn into inappropriate or unethical directions are not allowed.

Don’t ask for personal data during the interview situation (in case experts shall recommend and name potential practitioners to be interviewed, share contact details after the interview/recording).

The guidelines use **simple language**. Depending on the specific context and individual positioning of each interviewee, some terms may **not be (easily) understood**. The interviewer has to decide whether specific terms are applicable and understandable to the interviewee. Terms such as ‘migration skill corridor’, ‘circular’ or ‘temporary’ migration may, for instance, be unfamiliar and need explanation. Also, ‘migration’ and ‘mobility’ – in the guidelines used synonymously – have different connotations. If you use certain terms, provide context-/actor-sensitive explanation or justification, if necessary.

8 Qualitative interview techniques

The empirical fieldwork is guided by general standards and principles of qualitative social research (see, Flick 2009):

- **Openness:** Questions are formulated as open as possible.
- **Avoid leading or biased questions.** For example: “How does your everyday work process look like?” instead of “Do you struggle with problems during your daily working life?”
- **Asking for examples:** In order to get deeper insights into how situations (particularly on the implementation level) look like and how actors deal with their work or migration situation, ask for examples (practices, negotiations, routines, etc.). Instead of remaining on an abstract, theoretical level of discourse (saying and doing what is expected and legitimate to be said), deliberately and continuously ask for further illustrations and exemplification. By doing so, you gain insights into the (often implicit) practical level. For example: Directly asking whether ethical considerations are

recognized in the project implementation might most likely lead to the normatively expected answer “Yes, of course.” Instead, ask more indirectly: “Who was involved in the policy design? Can you give examples how the project partnership looked like?”

- **Avoid closed (yes/no) questions** to encourage narration, explanation and description. For example: “What makes the program attractive? What is unique about it?” instead of “Is the program attractive?”
- **Curiosity:** Show honest curiosity and interest into the interviewees’ responses. Go more in depth if it sounds interesting.
- **Flexibility:** The interview guidelines template (see, Part V) is to support and facilitate the interviews. It is essential to remain flexible in its usage and adapt the sequence of questions and subquestions, the selection and order of questions and subquestions to the interview situation, local conditions, corridor-/country-context, and actor position.

9 Transcribing and anonymizing interviews

The interviewer **audio records the interview to facilitate the transcription**. It is recommended to use two technical devices (one for back-up; using the recording with higher quality) and to bring **charging device or batteries** (or check that the devices are sufficiently charged). Recording is **started only after (verbal or written) informed consent has been received**. The recording is saved and named directly after the interview to avoid data loss.

The working language of the research project is **English**. All interview transcripts were translated into English, irrespective of the fieldwork and (recorded) interview language. In case of large amount of data, interview summaries are an adequate alternative.

Transcription guidelines

- **Simple transcription mode:** Approval or non-verbal comments (“Ah”, “Mmh”) are not transcribed; errors corrected; dialect is not transcribed.
- **Verbatim** – summarized transcriptions are not sufficient for analysis.
- **Line numbers included and/or time stamps** makes citation and referencing during discussion and publication easier.
- **Change of speakers indicated:** Abbreviation: Interviewer = “I”; Research participant = “RP”; “M” = “Moderator” (for group discussions).

It is important to **respect and preserve the anonymity** of all research participants.

The interviewing transcript do **not contain research participant’s direct identifiers**, such as **names** (unless agreed so in the informed consent, in the case of policy-makers and experts; see, Part V) or **other types of personal data that clearly enables identification**.

Interviews were labelled with a **unique code and indirect markers** (regarding interview date and place, gender, age, educational/professional background and position, country, organization/institution); the information must not lead to the identification of the participant

– in accordance with the European and national General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the anonymization or disclosure level in the informed consent.

Part IV: Data Management

1 Data storage

Each project consortium partner nominated a data protection officer.

It is important to **respect and preserve the anonymity** of research participants. Three data types can be roughly distinguished:

- **Personal data** that is any personal communication with research subjects (mainly via email or phone) as well as the informed consent forms.
- **Audio recording** of the conducted interviews.
- **Research data** that is the full English anonymized interview transcripts and basis for further research processing and analysis.

Data was stored and shared in specific folders in a **password-secured online workspace**. Only core research staff had access to the interviews and can use them for publications. Recruited interviewers or researchers did not receive access to any sensitive folders. **Student assistants or transcription providers deleted original data** files (and empty the trash folder of their computers or devices) **as well as the transcriptions** after completing the services.

The anonymized research data (transcripts) were stored on a secure, password-protected storage space provided by the data center of the university of the fieldwork coordination lead. The university provides a secure and extensive data storage and administration infrastructure (including access authorization management and storage services) and follows a research data management policy.⁷ The transcripts will be retained for a period of 10 years after submission of the last publications to make the research results (intersubjectively) comprehensible after project end (openness, proof, reproduction and transparency). **After completing the deliverables and publications** the original data (including the de-coding list) will be **destroyed**.

For each type of data **different kinds of processes to secure anonymity** were necessary.

In order to secure de-identification or anonymization, **the different kinds of data types were separated and the de-coding system** to de-identify is kept separately and is not shared (see, Table 1). Research teams made sure independently that this kind of list was temporary stored securely on a local institution/university server. This ensured that through the transcripts or recording a particular interviewed person cannot be identified.

⁷ https://www.ub.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/documents/public/Startseite/4_Publizieren_und_Archivieren/4_4_Forschungsdaten/UOS_AmtlMitteilungen_Nr05-2021_FDM_Policy.pdf

Interview number	Name of interviewee	Informed consent data name	Recording data name	Transcript data name
01	Maxime Muster	L4S_consent_IN-DE_exp_04	L4S_recording_IN-DE_exp_04	L4S_transcript_IN-DE_exp_04
...				

Table 1: Example for a de-coding list for collected interview data – not shared. Source: Own illustration.

2 Labelling of files

Country codes (“DE” for Germany, etc.) and actor short forms (“pol” for policy-maker; “prac” for practitioner; “exp” for expert; and “migrant” for skilled migrants) apply.

- **Personal data labelling:** “L4S_consent_countrycode/corridor_actor_number”, i.e. “L4S_consent_IN-DE_pol_03”.
- **Recordings labelling:** “L4S_recording_countrycode/corridor_actor_number”, i.e. “L4S_recording_IN-DE_prac_06”.
- **Transcripts labelling:** “L4S_transcript_countrycode/corridor_actor_number”, i.e. “L4S_transcript_PH-DE_exp_02”.
- In case an interview was relevant for multiple corridor cases: “L4S_transcript_DE_pol_multi_03” or “L4S_recording_POL_prac_multi_06” – stored in all respective corridor case folders.

Part V: Guidelines and Templates

This part of the handbook contains guidelines and templates for the L4S qualitative-empirical fieldwork. The research and interview teams adapted the guidelines to the specific context of the country and corridor under investigation. This flexible approach allowed context-sensitivity. The research teams translated all documents in local languages, if required.

Guidelines for problem-centred and expert interviews with stakeholders

Interviews with policy-makers

1. **Can you please introduce yourself and describe your professional role and responsibilities in your organization?**

General information

2. **What kind of collaborations or partnerships does your ministry/ parliament/ committee/ administration/ agency [select] maintain in terms of skills and talent development and mobility?**
 - *Asking for:* Projects, programs, initiatives, bi- or multilateral agreements, memorandums of understanding (MoU), memorandums of agreement (MoA), framework agreements or inter-agency understandings (IAU) [Select/adapt].
3. **Content: What is the collaboration (agreement, framework etc.)/project [select] about?** [*Asking for:* What, who, how, numbers?]
 - What is the objective (Job or training placement, selective skilling, vocational or academic training project, social agreement, sectoral cooperation, economic integration, etc.)?
 - Who is involved? [Countries? Institutions? Role of state, private and civil society actors?]
 - Since when? For how long? Pilot or longer?
 - Who is the specific target group? What skills level? How many participants (planned/actual)?
 - What are the main activities, policy changes or regulations [Select]?

Partnership governance

4. **What governance (regulatory agreements or modalities) does the partnership have [adapt governance level to corridor case]?**
 - **How is the project linked to institutional frameworks in both corridor sides?**
 - **What type of agreement underlies the partnership (bilateral, multilateral, regional, global, G2G, PPP, private sector)?**
 - **How are tasks or responsibilities divided?**
 - Who took the initiative for this partnership?
 - What works well?
 - Anything that makes collaboration challenging?

Policy design and evaluation

5. **Who is/was (mainly) responsible for the development and design of the content, regulation, framework, agreement, curriculum, program, initiative [Select]?**
6. **How are/were the sectors/occupational fields selected? Was/Is it based on anticipatory assessment methods? Did/Do you conduct a feasibility study (labor, education or vocational training market analysis, sector/occupation analysis, migration policy analysis)?** If applicable: Where? How?
7. **Is/Was the question who benefits in the partnership explicitly addressed?** (Examples?)
8. **Is the agreement/project, etc. [Select] build on reinvigorating previous migration corridors?**
9. **How is/will be the project evaluated?** (How? By whom? Results?)

Financing

10. **How is the project/agreement etc. [Select] financed and costs** (between e.g. employers, employees, state entities, foundations, sponsors) **distributed?** [Depending on program for: Skills testing/recognition, language or professional training, recruitment, visa, travel, etc.]

Policy themes and measures

11. **What makes your program/project/policy [Select] attractive, what is unique?**
12. **Conceptually, does your policy/project/etc. intervene to prevent skills waste and mismatch and foster skills utilization? At what point?** [*Asking for:* Recruiting, skilling, matching, recognition, integration [Select/Adapt and ask for examples]]
13. **Does the policy/etc. contain measures**
 - **to facilitate the social, economic, political and cultural (re-) integration after arrival/return [Adapt]?** [*Asking for:* Examples]
 - **to tackle (potential) tensions that may arise between migrants and domestic communities or staff?** [ask for experiences; as concrete as possible]
14. **What role does *circular skilled labor migration* or *temporary migration* play?**
[Explain terms, if necessary]
 - [*Asking for:* Intended directionality; means to ensure circularity or return, who chooses the mode and level of voluntariness from full-freedom of movement, return incentives to coercion]

Assessment

15. **How do you assess, based on your to-date knowledge, the success of the respective political collaborations? How effective are respective policies/approaches?**
 - Regarding attracting / retaining education, training and skilled labor migrants?
 - Regarding skills circulation and return?
 - Regarding skills recognition?
 - Regarding benefits [for employers of destination countries, for the origin country's labor and vocational training market and development and for migrants themselves]?
 - Regarding bilateral policy/partnership development?

- What criteria do you use to evaluate the implementation success of these policies?
- What are, in your opinion, the main barriers or impeding factors for success? What could be improved/changed in the future/next phase?

16. Does the agreement/collaboration/framework/project/etc. address ethical concerns related to brain drain or brain gain? [Explain terms, if necessary] If so, how? [Asking for: Examples]

- What measures are in place to support the enhancement of skilled workers or trainees in the origin countries and reduce the brain drain effect?
- What measures are in place to ensure that skilled [e-/ im-] migrants are not underemployed or overqualified for the jobs they take up?
- What steps are taken to prevent exploitation, discrimination and other bad experiences of the migrants during the [re-] migration process and in the workplace?

17. Is there anything you would like to add?

Interviews with practitioners

Our interview is divided into four parts:

- First, we ask about general insights / information on your organization's [Select/Adapt: Language school, training centre, professional chamber or organization, welfare and civil society organization, public or private employment agency, trade union, implementing organization, migrant and returnee association, etc.] skills or talent development and mobility partnerships program(s)/initiatives/projects/etc.
- Second, we go into your practical work.
- Third, we inquire about the migration-related factors (integration, retention and circulation) in your work.
- Fourth, we are interested in your personal professional assessment of your program, initiative, project, agreement [Select/Adapt].

General information

1. Can you please introduce yourself and shortly describe your professional role and responsibilities in your organization?
2. Can you tell more about your organization's mandate in facilitating skills development or skilled labor [e-/ im-] migration in your [destination/origin] country?
 - Objectives? What problem does it tackle?
 - Do you follow a *specific* approach?
 - Who is involved? Who should be involved? (employers, migrant and returnee associations, social networks and local communities, local ministries, public or private employment agencies, trade unions, professional chambers and organizations, language schools, and vocational training centres, etc.)

- Who is the specific target group? What skills level?
- What is the mobility purpose/type (studying, vocational training, employment; non-formal professional experience, language or adjustment qualification, job search)?
- What is the (planned/actual) mobility duration (short or long term, circular)?

Everyday work and processes

Now, I would like to know more about your everyday work in implementing the policies, programs, initiatives [Select/Adapt], your experiences and perceptions on these policies.

- 3. Can you describe the *entire project process* from the initial contact with candidates (the recruitment), to your offered activities, your matching processes, recognition processes to the project completion [Adapt]?**
 - *Question alternative:* Can you describe a typical workday as staff member in this program?
 - With how many (potential, current or return) migrants do you interact on a daily basis?

[This *stimulus* (question 3) aims to initiate a narration. The questions below (questions 4-8) are used only to request details.]

We will now walk step by step through the process. As we need to understand how everything works, please take your time to explain and illustrate things to us, even details.

- 4. RECRUITING: How exactly does your recruiting and selection process work?**
 - Who is involved? How do you cooperate?
 - How do you identify and select candidates for your program?
 - What criteria do you use to determine the suitability of candidates?
 - What are the formal requirements?
 - How do you approach the target group? Is their recruitment difficult or easy?
 - Do participants have to cover costs?
 - What challenges does the recruitment and selection entail for you?
- 5. SKILLING: Can you elaborate on the skilling activities your program includes?**
 - What kind of support, training or counselling [Adapt] do you offer? Which skills types (vocational, language, professional, organizational, cultural, social, etc.)? Which skills level (low, medium, high) [*Asking for:* Skills definition]?
 - At what point of the migratory cycle? Before or after leaving the country? For how long? How many hours per day/week?
 - Where does skilling mainly take place (origin or destination country or both)? In which facility?
 - How do you evaluate the (language or professional) skills level of your participants? Formal education or professional qualifications (certified) or experiences (proofed); Are informal skills considered? If so, how?
- 6. MATCHING: How do you assess a candidate's suitability for a specific work or training position in your [destination/origin] country or your [destination/origin] partner country [Adapt]?**
 - What agreements do you have with employers or agencies (clients)?

- What information about the (potential) employment or training to you provide to your candidates? (skills requirements, level, recognition, etc.)
- How do you deal with participants that hesitate or decline job/training offers?
- How do you deal with situations in which employers/agents/clients who are not satisfied with the employees (lacking language proficiency; low quality of work; non-matching expectations; unhappiness etc.)?

7. RECOGNIZING: Can you describe how the skills recognition process looks like? What role does it play? Which skills are recognized?

- At what point of the migratory cycle do you provide support in getting skills recognized/accredited? Before or after (re-) migration and (re-) integration?
- Which institutions are involved? How do you interact?
- How long does it usually take? [also: reasons for longer or shorter periods]
- What are the requirements? Who bears the costs?
- What is the success rate?

8. COMPLETION: When and how does your project end? Can you give insights?

- Where do your participants mainly work (which sector/occupation)? Which employment or training type? Which [destination/origin or other] country?
- What kind of certificate do participants receive after project completion? How widely is it acknowledged?
- Do you keep a list of 'alumni'/participants? Do you stay in touch?

Migration-related factors

9. What significance has international skilled labour mobility in your program: Do you encourage or discourage it?

10. Do you address *skills [re-] integration and retention* barriers in your program? If so, how? What support do you provide to “keep” migrant workers or trainees at their work or training place in your [origin/destination] country?

- [Only, if suitable:]
- What about relation to domestic staff (reduce competition and tensions)?
- What about problems of socio-economic / class status (gain/loss) or wage differentials [Select]?
- What about stigmatization, vulnerability, cultural differences, legal and political status (gain/loss) [Select]?
- What about gender inequalities and differences?

11. What role does *skills circularity or temporality* play in your project/program? Is it incentivized? [Explain terms, if necessary]

Interviewee's overall assessment

12. How do you assess the success and impact of your project/program?

- What main outcomes have you achieved (so far)?
- Can you provide any data, statistics/numbers or [internal/external] reports on your outcomes (e.g. satisfaction levels; employment, retention or return rates)?

- Can you share any success stories of participants who have benefitted from your program?
- **From your experience, what are the primary benefits and drawbacks in your project/program?**

13. What are the biggest challenges you face in your everyday project/program implementation?

- How do you ensure that the migrants' skills are effectively utilized and recognized in your [destination/origin] country's labor and vocational training market?
- Do you address issues such as brain drain and brain gain? If so, how?
- What improvements or changes would you like to see in the current policies, agreements and frameworks governing skilled labor [e- /im-] migration in your [destination/origin] country or in your partner country?

14. How are stakeholders' interests considered in your program?

- Whom do you consider the most relevant stakeholders for your project?
- How do you deal with different interests?

15. Is there anything you would like to add?

Interviews with experts

- 1. Can you please introduce yourself and briefly describe your professional background and experience in the field of skills development and skilled labour [e- /im-] migration?**
- 2. In the first phase of Link4Skills we did background research on the development of labour migration policies and practices in your [destination/origin] country. Could you highlight aspects or trends to that you find of particular relevance?**
 - Regarding our Link4Skills [destination/origin] countries
 - Regarding the sectors/occupations: STEM/IT, construction and healthcare
- 3. In Link4Skills we are taking different approaches to skills development and mobility into account: Technology, automation, digitalization, re-/upskilling, wage increase, and migration. Could you please comment on the relation between those?**
- 4. How effective and successful do you think current policies (agreements, negotiations, frameworks, programs, diplomacy) [Select/Adapt] in your [destination/origin] country are in regulating international skilled labor [e- / im-] migration?**
 - Are there any examples of successful or failing bi-/multi-lateral policies or collaborations (agreements, negotiations, frameworks, programs, partnerships, initiatives) [Select]?
 - Which role does mutual skills recognition play?
 - Can you provide any surprising observations, findings or experiences that challenge common perceptions about skills development and mobility?
 - What are main implementation challenges, based on your knowledge?

- What metrics or indicators do you use to assess these policies?
5. **Based on your expertise, what changes in policy and practice would you recommend in a world of cross-border labor and vocational training markets?**
 6. **From your perspective, which ethical considerations must be taken into account in skilled labour [e-/ im-] migration and skills development and mobility partnerships?**
 - Do you have an assessment or opinion about so-called ethical recruitment or so-called 'triple-win' approaches?
 - What is hindering ethical skilled labour migration in your [destination/origin] country and/or professional sectors? What could be beneficial?
 7. **How might global events (e.g., economic shifts, rising populism and racism, wars and conflicts, pandemics) influence the trends of skilled labor mobility and partnership?**
 8. **What is your long-term vision for education, training and skilled labor migration collaboration and partnership in cross-border labour and vocational training markets?**
 9. **Is there anything you would like to add?**

Guidelines for focus group discussions with skilled migrants

The research teams could reach out to the UOS coordinating team for a **briefing or workshop** before implementing the focus groups or interviews with migrants (in case of questions).

It is essential to collect basic background information before implementing the discussion through **informal pre-discussion briefings**. These preliminary meetings help to adjust the discussion to the group composition and individual situation of the migrants.

- Which project/program(s) did/will the participants attend? Private-led or public-led?
- What skilled labor migration experiences did/will they choose: direct hiring, mediated G2G, private or skills mobility partnership pathways, or individual pathway?
- Etc.

Group size: between 5 to 10 participants. Smaller groups are suitable for more in depth discussion.

Structure

1. At the start of the focus group discussion (FGD) the researcher and interviewer shortly introduce the Link4Skills research project. The moderator presents a short, simple and concise **statement about the L4S project concept**.
2. The FGDs will be **structured along seven key aspects with stimulus**.
3. The moderator decides which **follow-up questions** suit (and which not to ask).

Introduction phase (5 Min.)

Welcome and short moderator introduction

General aim

In this group discussion, we would like to talk about your **personal experiences, expectations and viewpoints** on skills development and mobility. For our research, we are particularly interested into your perspectives as [**future, current or former** - Select] **participants** of the skills and talent mobility partnership program xxx [Adjust the terms to fit best to your context]. Some of you 1) plan or aspire to apply for a program in the future, others 2) currently participate in a preparation and training program, and yet others 3) already finished their program and returned [Adjust to your group composition]. In our research we explore **how these programs work and what your experiences are**. We try to cover **the whole cycle** (before leaving the country, the time abroad and return) [Adjust to your case situation/context].

We invite you to contribute to actively our discussion. Of course, you only answer those questions you can. This is not an exam. **Sharing concrete examples** help us understand the situations. There is **room for describing your observations, situations, feelings and experiences**. We hope your participation may also offer an interesting opportunity for exchange, networking and reflection among peer migrants.

Research participation

You already received and read our **informed consent form** in advance. This is to remind you that your participation in this group discussion is voluntary. Our **research is independent** from the [Insert project/program name] and this implementing organization [Insert name]. Your participation in this research has **no further impact** on your participation in the program or on your status. All the information you will share will be kept confidential. We will not forward any information to the organization of that program.

At this point, thank you once again for your commitment!

General information on our focus group discussion

- **Duration:** Max. 2 hours;
- **Structure:** Introduction, warm-up, main discussion and closing phase [Use flipchart];
- **Audio recording;**
- For **data protection** all information will be **anonymized** and handled **confidentially**;
- Role of **moderator/s and observant/s (independent from the project/organization)**;
- In case **questions are not clear, please ask**.

Discussion rules

- We are **not testing your knowledge**. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.
- **Mutual respect and appreciation**.
- You are welcome to express your own position, including disagreement.
- **Please let everyone speak and don’t interrupt**.
- Please take your time, but also find a point to stop. Everyone should be able to talk. The moderator/s will also take care of equal speaking opportunities.

Warm-up phase (20 Min.)

Introduction round and first insights

- **Please briefly introduce yourself** [2-4 min/person; in the seating order to have all voices/names recorded, that is needed for transcription]:
 1. **What is your (chosen, not real) name?**
 2. **What is your profession? What is your education or training background?**
 3. **What is your relation to** [skills mobility partnerships or recruitment projects]?
 4. **For warm-up: Mention your spontaneous feelings, associations or images that come into your mind if you think of skills development and mobility/migration** [Select name]? **Explain briefly.**
- **Write your name on the name tags.**

We now got to know each other a bit better. Thanks!

Main discussion phase (70-80 Min.)

Before we talk in detail about the project, let's have an exchange about your perceptions and experiences concerning skills development and mobility/migration.

General (education, training and labor) migration perceptions and experiences (10 Min.)

- [If applicable]: What were your previous experiences, circumstances or situations regarding skills development and mobility/migration? *Alternative question:* Any former (education, training, or labor) migration plans or stays abroad? Which country and how long?
- What is generally relevant for you for going abroad for work or training? How do you select a country?
- [If applicable]: What did you like or dislike about your previous selected country? What problems or barriers did you face?
- What is the "ideal" destination country you? Please explain why.
- How important is the length of migration for you [Referring to circular, temporary or permanent migration and return]? Would you consider going again? Where? Why or why not?
- Skills need to be accredited/recognized. That can be complicated or take a long time. In your case: What experiences do you have? / What do you expect for your next stay abroad?
- How important is personal skills development and a good matching of qualification and job/training for you? Please explain.
- Anything you would like to add or any topic that came up short?

Project evaluation (65 Min.)

Next, we look at the recruitment project/program [Insert name]. We want to jointly evaluate if and under which conditions, the project you are related to works. At one point (shorter or longer ago), you all have received some official information about this project and then decided to participate. Now, we want to know how is the project (and participating in it) really? What is actually happening and how do you like it?

[If possible: Distribute official project/program advertisement material (flyer, information sheet, webpages, illustrations) to stimulate a more detailed reflection.]

We would like to structure our discussion along following aspects [visualized flipchart]

1. Spontaneous reaction
2. Core idea
3. Originality
4. Target group
5. Relevance/Benefits
6. Reform/optimization suggestions
7. Comparison

To start, we are interested in your spontaneous reactions (so no overthinking!) related to the project.

1 Spontaneous reaction (10 Min.)

- **Individual opinion:** Before we discuss together, take some time to individually reflect, feel deeper into your own experiences and emotions and form your own opinion. Write down your spontaneous reactions (feelings, thoughts, likes, dislikes) about the project [Insert name]. There is no “right” or “wrong” answer. [The papers will be collected and read and evaluated after the group discussion.]
- **Group opinion:** Now, let’s collect your responses. What associations, ideas, feelings or terms came into your mind? Please explain your selection. Can you share a related personal experience, situation or viewpoint?
- **Follow-up:** Does someone have a different view? Any other responses?
- [The moderator writes notes or key concepts/aspects on cards or flipchart paper.]
- **Any comments on the result of the group opinion?**

We now dive deeper into the project and its main goals.

2 Comprehension of core idea (5 Min.)

- **What is, in your own words, the core idea of the project** [Insert name]?
- **What are your thoughts about it? What do you like/dislike about it?**
- **Is there anything surprising or striking you?**
- Anything you would like to add or any topic that came up short?

3 Originality (5 Min.)

- **What is, in your opinion, the project’s newness / main feature?**
- **[If applicable]: How does it differ from other recruitment or skills mobility partnership programs (if you know any)?**
- Anything you would like to add or any topic that came up short?

4 Target group (5 Min.)

- **For which (migrant) persons is this project relevant or credible/convincing?**
- Anything you would like to add or any topic that came up short?

Next, we will talk about the *chances and barriers* of this type/pathway of (education, training and skilled labor) mobility. Before we dive deeper, please quickly raise your hands:

- Who mainly sees advantages of this type/pathway?
- Who mainly sees disadvantages?
- Anyone undecided or in-between?

5 Relevance (15 Min.)

- What are, in your view and based on your experiences, the real benefits of this project? *Question alternatives:* What interests, needs or problems are solved? What makes the project attractive? What is the incentive or “added value”? What promotes your willingness and readiness to participate?
- How important are these advantages for you (Weighting)?
- [If applicable]: Do you think this project could substitute or compete with other (previous/existing) approaches/types/pathways or projects? Is there the potential that the project becomes a new standard? Why (not)?
- [The moderator writes notes or key concepts/aspects on cards or flipchart paper.]
- Anything you would like to add or any topic that came up short?

Let us now turn to the project barriers you perceived and experienced.

6 Reform or improvement suggestions (15 Min.)

- What needs to be improved or optimized to fully benefit to your needs? Any reform ideas? *Question alternative:* What are the crucial points, in your opinion and based on your experiences, to make this skilled mobility concept/type/pathway really work?
- Can you share any situations of conflict or tensions during project participation? Short reminder: No worries about negative consequences!
- What are possible reasons for participants to feel frustrated, disappointed or surprised? If so, can you elaborate?
- Would you consider participating in such a project again or recommend it to others? Why (not)?
- What would be your most or least favorite suggestion (Weighting)?
- [The moderator notes key concepts/aspects on cards or flipchart paper.]
- [Participants receive sticky notes to distribute points for ranking (Weighting) of the mentioned aspects. They may also draw symbols, messages or relations next to the concepts/notes to give room for personal expressions.]
- Anything you would like to add or any topic that came up short?

7 Comparison with other skilled mobility projects/pathways/types approaches (10 Min.)

- [If applicable]: Compared to other projects or approaches, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this project?
- What, in your opinion, is the “best” project or approach?
- Anything you would like to add or any topic that came up short?

Moderator interventions [If necessary and during whole main discussion phase]

To keep the discussion running, the moderator brings in short, simple and concise statements about the project [Insert name] concept – Prepared in advance and based on desk-research and previous interviews with policy-makers and project staff. The participants are kindly requested to take a stand: “Do you agree on this statement? Why (not)?”

The statements cover main features:

- **Need/problem, starting situation, consequences/impacts, desired/ideal situation**
- **Solution/benefits**
- **Proof/impact/reason-to-believe**
- **Core idea/tagline**

Closing phase (10 Min.)

Your closing statement

- The moderator for the last time sums up key points and conclusions in own words.
- **How did you experience this group discussion? Do you agree on this viewpoint? Did it cover the most important points? What other conclusions can be drawn?**
- *Alternative: Imagine you have one minute to present your suggestions to the policy-makers of skills development and mobility partnerships. What would you say?*

Moderator interventions [If applicable; sensitive and careful approach necessary]

- **Narrowing down an aspect** mentioned in own words to promote further discussion.
- **Sharing a provocative statement or previously mentioned opinion in a sharpened manner** to promote further discussion and taking a stand.
- **Explicitly addressing observed contradictions, tensions and cleavages** during the discussion and to request further reflection on them.
- **Explicitly addressing personal moods, feelings or impressions** related to a topic experienced during the discussion to request further reflection or receive deeper answers (that entail emotional aspects instead of rationalizations).

Farewell and thanks

Informed consent forms templates

For interviews with policy-makers and experts



Participant information on the research project “Link4Skills”

[For policy-makers or experts]

You are invited to participate in the research project “Link4Skills”. This sheet provides information about the objectives and scope of the research project funded by Horizon Europe (grant agreement number: 101132476). Please take the time to read the following information. The information below aims to facilitate your decision-making process. If you have any questions, uncertainties or request further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us (contact see below).

What is this research about?

In the context of skills shortage and changing labor markets, countries increasingly compete for talents. Origin and destination countries adopt bilateral skills and talent mobility partnerships and international recruiting agreements. This research project aims to answer three questions: How should the EU respond to skills shortages? How can actors identify skills needed in changing labor markets more effectively? How can the EU ensure that skills recruitment is fair and effective? We investigate emerging and established migration skill corridors in three sectors/occupations (healthcare, STEM/IT and construction) and among 12 countries (Austria, Canada, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland and Ukraine). This includes analysing skills-generating structures (education and training); analysing enablers and barriers of skills obtained outside the EU and the recognition of those skills in the EU; and patterns of skilled migration and retention. Findings from the research will be published.

Why have I been invited to take part?

An essential part of this research is based on interviews with relevant field actors. Your expertise, knowledge and experience within the field of skills, mobility and migration will therefore provide highest value for this research.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is fully voluntarily. **You can withdraw yourself from this study without giving a reason and without any prejudice.** The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is April 30, 2025. In case you decide to withdraw your data from the research, all given information will be permanently deleted.

What will happen if I take part?

The participation in the research involves a **single (online or on-site) interview** and is expected to **last around 30 minutes**. You can ask to pause or stop the research activities any time throughout the interview. Your decision to participate in the research project requires explicit agreement in the informed consent below. This process is required to adhere to university and funding guidelines. **We**

kindly ask you to submit the informed consent via email or in person before the interview start. We take a copy of the form for our research records.

Can I choose the form of anonymization?

Yes. In the informed consent below, you can **indicate your preferred form of anonymization**. We would like your permission to use direct quotations in the research output. You can choose whether these quotations may be attributed to your name and your institution/organization's name or not. If you wish for your data to be anonymized, all identifying contextual information linking to you will be removed (such as name, position, workplace, occupation). Based on your given answers, the interview might entail indirect identifiers. To accommodate your preferences, the questions can be answered more generally if applicable. **At any point during the interview, you can rectify your statement or withdraw your consent entirely, if you deem it necessary.**

What about data storage and protection?

With your consent, we would like to **audio record the interview** so that we have an accurate account of the conversation. Your responses will be handled with great care, confidentiality and precaution. We store all data on a password-protected server on Windows Microsoft TEAMS. We use anonymized folders for the recording and transcript. Identifiable data (including consent forms) will be stored in a separate folder. To ensure data privacy, the recording and the decoding list will be deleted after the research publication has been finalized. According to institutional and disciplinary guidelines the research data will be stored on a password-protected storage space provided by the data center of University Osnabrück and destroyed after 10 years.

Are there any risks or benefits in participating?

There are no immediate risks or benefits for research participants. Yet, the participation may offer an interesting opportunity for exchange, reflection, and networking on your specific professional field.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Kozminski University in Warsaw (Poland). Approval reference: 05-11-2024.

Who can I contact if I have a concern about the research or wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study or wish to make a formal complaint, please get in touch with the principal investigator Izabela Grabowska. We seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Prof. Dr. hab. Izabela Grabowska

CRASH Center for Research on Social Change & Human Mobility, Kozminski University, 57/59 Jagiellonska Street, 03-301 Warsaw, Poland, E-Mail: igrabowska@kozminski.edu.pl, Phone: +48 694 004 693.

Further information and contact details

For more information about the research project, please check the website <https://link4skills.eu>. If you would like to discuss further details concerning the research before your participation, the field-work coordinators Helen Schwenken and Johanna Ullmann will do their best to answer your query.

Prof. Dr. Helen Schwenken & Dr. Johanna Ullmann

Institute for Migration Research & Intercultural Studies (IMIS), University Osnabrück, Neuer Graben 19, 49074 Osnabrück, Germany, E-Mail: jullmann@uos.de.

Informed consent to participate in the research project “Link4Skills”

[For policy-makers or experts]

Interview number (to be filled in by researcher/interviewer): _____

Please provide following background information:

Organization/institution:	
Department/work field:	
Work position/function:	
Work experience (in years):	

Please tick each box (with X) if you agree with the statement.

☐	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet above for participation in the research project Link4Skills. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had the answered satisfactorily.
☐	I understand that my participation is voluntarily.
☐	I understand that once results are published, retracting personal data is not possible.
☐	I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any point until April 30, 2025 without giving any reason and without any prejudice.
☐	I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen with the data at the research project end.
☐	I understand the extent to which I could be identified from this research project.
☐	I choose following form of anonymization (chose a, b or c):
☐	a) I agree to the use of direct quotations in research outputs with my name and my organization/institution's name.
☐	b) I agree to the use of direct quotations in research outputs without my name, but with my organization/institution's name.
☐	c) I do not wish to be quoted directly.
☐	I consent to being audio recorded for the purpose of this research project.
☐	I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.
☐	I understand how I raise a concern or make a complaint.
☐	I agree to participate.

Name of research participant	Date and place	Signature
Name of researcher/interviewer	Date and place	Signature

For interviews with practitioners



Participant information on the research project “Link4Skills”

[For practitioners]

You are invited to participate in the research project “Link4Skills”. This sheet provides information about the objectives and scope of the research project funded by Horizon Europe (grant agreement number: 101132476). Please take the time to read the following information. The information below aims to facilitate your decision-making process. If you have any questions, uncertainties or request further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us (contact see below).

What is this research about?

In the context of skills shortage and changing labor markets, countries increasingly compete for talents. Origin and destination countries adopt bilateral skills and talent mobility partnerships and international recruiting agreements. This research project aims to answer three questions: How should the EU respond to skills shortages? How can actors identify skills needed in changing labor markets more effectively? How can the EU ensure that skills recruitment is fair and effective? We investigate emerging and established migration skill corridors in three sectors/occupations (healthcare, STEM/IT and construction) and among 12 countries (Austria, Canada, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland and Ukraine). This includes analysing skills-generating structures (education and training); analysing enablers and barriers of skills obtained outside the EU and the recognition of those skills in the EU; and patterns of skilled migration and retention. Findings from the research will be published.

Why have I been invited to take part?

An essential part of this research is based on interviews with relevant field actors. Your expertise, knowledge and experience within the field of skills, mobility and migration will therefore provide highest value for this research.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is fully voluntarily. **You can withdraw yourself from this study without giving a reason and without any prejudice.** The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is April 30, 2025. In case you decide to withdraw your data from the research, all given information will be permanently deleted.

What will happen if I take part?

The participation in the research involves a **single (online or on-site) interview** and is expected to **last around 45 minutes**. You can ask to pause or stop the research activities any time throughout the interview. Your decision to participate in the research project requires explicit agreement in the informed consent below. This process is required to adhere to university and funding guidelines. **We kindly ask you to submit the informed consent via email or in person before the interview start.** We take a copy of the form for our research records.

Can I choose the form of anonymization?

Yes. In the informed consent below, you can **indicate your preferred form of anonymization**. We would like your permission to use direct quotations in the research output. You can choose whether these quotations may be attributed to your name and your institution/organization's name or not. If you wish for your data to be anonymized, all identifying contextual information linking to you will be removed (such as name, position, workplace, occupation). Based on your given answers, the interview might entail indirect identifiers. To accommodate your preferences, the questions can be answered more generally if applicable. **At any point during the interview, you can rectify your statement or withdraw your consent entirely, if you deem it necessary.**

What about data storage and protection?

With your consent, we would like to **audio record the interview** so that we have an accurate account of the conversation. Your responses will be handled with great care, confidentiality and precaution. We store all data on a password-protected server on Windows Microsoft TEAMS. We use anonymized folders for the recording and transcript. Identifiable data (including consent forms) will be stored in a separate folder. To ensure data privacy, the recording and the decoding list will be deleted after the research publication has been finalized. According to institutional and disciplinary guidelines the research data will be stored on a password-protected storage space provided by the data center of University Osnabrück and destroyed after 10 years.

Are there any risks or benefits in participating?

There are no immediate risks or benefits for research participants. Yet, the participation may offer an interesting opportunity for exchange, reflection, and networking on your specific professional field.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Kozminski University in Warsaw (Poland). Approval reference: 05-11-2024.

Who can I contact if I have a concern about the research or wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study or wish to make a formal complaint, please get in touch with the principal investigator Izabela Grabowska. We seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Prof. Dr. hab. Izabela Grabowska

CRASH Center for Research on Social Change & Human Mobility, Kozminski University, 57/59 Jagiellonska Street, 03-301 Warsaw, Poland, E-Mail: igrabowska@kozminski.edu.pl, Phone: +48 694 004 693.

Further information and contact details

For more information about the research project, please check the website <https://link4skills.eu>. If you would like to discuss further details concerning the research before your participation, the fieldwork coordinators Helen Schwenken and Johanna Ullmann will do their best to answer your query.

Prof. Dr. Helen Schwenken & Dr. Johanna Ullmann

Institute for Migration Research & Intercultural Studies (IMIS), University Osnabrück, Neuer Graben 19, 49074 Osnabrück, Germany, E-Mail: jullmann@uos.de.

Informed consent to participate in the research project “Link4Skills”

[For practitioners]

Interview number (to be filled in by researcher/interviewer): _____

Please provide following background information:

Organization/institution:	
Department/work field:	
Work position/function:	
Work experience (in years):	

Please tick each box (with X) if you agree with the statement.

☐	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet above for participation in the research project Link4Skills. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had the answered satisfactorily.
☐	I understand that my participation is voluntarily.
☐	I understand that once results are published, retracting personal data is not possible.
☐	I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any point until April 30, 2025 without giving any reason and without any prejudice.
☐	I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen with the data at the research project end.
☐	I understand the extent to which I could be identified from this research project.
☐	I choose following form of anonymization (chose a or b):
☐	a. I agree to the use of direct quotations in research outputs with my organization/institution's name; my name will not appear.
☐	b. I do not wish to be quoted directly.
☐	I consent to being audio recorded for the purpose of this research project.
☐	I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.
☐	I understand how I raise a concern or make a complaint.
☐	I agree to participate.

Name of research participant	Date and place	Signature
Name of researcher/interviewer	Date and place	Signature

For focus group discussions with skilled migrants



Participant information on the research project “Link4Skills”

[For migrant participants]

You are invited to participate in the research project “Link4Skills”. This sheet provides information about the objectives and scope of the research project funded by Horizon Europe (grant agreement number: 101132476). Please take the time to read the following information. The information below aims to facilitate your decision-making process. If you have any questions, uncertainties or request further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us (contact see below).

What is this research about?

In the context of skills shortage and changing labor markets, countries increasingly compete for talents. Origin and destination countries adopt bilateral skills and talent mobility partnerships and international recruiting agreements. This research project aims to answer three questions: How should the EU respond to skills shortages? How can actors identify skills needed in changing labor markets more effectively? How can the EU ensure that skills recruitment is fair and effective? We investigate emerging and established migration skill corridors in three sectors/occupations (healthcare, STEM/IT and construction) and among 12 countries (Austria, Canada, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland and Ukraine). This includes analysing skills-generating structures (education and training); analysing enablers and barriers of skills obtained outside the EU and the recognition of those skills in the EU; and patterns of skilled migration and retention. Findings from the research will be published.

Why have I been invited to take part?

An essential part of this research is based on focus group discussions with (skilled) labor migrants themselves. Your personal experiences, knowledge and perspectives on skilled labor migration and your (upcoming, current or former) participation in a skills and talent mobility partnership or recruitment program will therefore provide highest value for this research.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is fully voluntarily. **You can withdraw yourself from this study without giving a reason and without any prejudice.** The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is April 30, 2025. In case you decide to withdraw your data from the research, all given information will be permanently deleted.

What will happen if I take part?

The participation in the research involves a **single on-site focus group discussion** and is expected to **last around 90 minutes**. You can ask to pause or stop your participation during the research activities any time throughout the discussion. Your decision to participate in the research project requires explicit agreement in the informed consent below. This process is required to adhere to university and funding guidelines. **We kindly ask you to submit the informed consent via email or in person before the focus group discussion starts.** We take a copy of the form for our research records.

Can I choose the form of anonymization?

Yes. In the informed consent below, you can **indicate your preferred form of anonymization**. We would like your permission to use direct quotations in the research output. In order to anonymize your data, we will remove all identifying information (such as your name or other names of affiliates, organizations/institutions, etc.). Based on your given answers, the focus group discussion might entail indirect identifiers. To accommodate your preferences, the questions can be answered more generally if applicable. **At any point during the focus group discussion, you can rectify your statement or withdraw your consent entirely, if you deem it necessary.**

What about data storage and protection?

With your consent, we would like to **audio record the focus group discussion** so that we have an accurate account of the conversation. Your responses will be handled with great care, confidentiality and precaution. We store all data on a password-protected server on Windows Microsoft TEAMS. We use anonymized folders for the recording and transcript. Identifiable data (including consent forms) will be stored in a separate folder. To ensure data privacy, the recording and the decoding list will be deleted after the research publication has been finalized. According to institutional and disciplinary guidelines the research data will be stored on a password-protected storage space provided by the data center of University Osnabrück and destroyed after 10 years.

Are there any risks or benefits in participating?

There are no immediate risks or benefits for research participants. Yet, the participation may offer an interesting opportunity for exchange, reflection, and networking on the topic of skilled labor migration.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Kozminski University in Warsaw (Poland). Approval reference: 05-11-2024.

Who can I contact if I have a concern about the research or wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study or wish to make a formal complaint, please get in touch with the principal investigator Izabela Grabowska. We seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Prof. Dr. hab. Izabela Grabowska

CRASH Center for Research on Social Change & Human Mobility, Kozminski University, 57/59 Jagiellonska Street, 03-301 Warsaw, Poland, E-Mail: igrabowska@kozminski.edu.pl, Phone: +48 694 004 693.

Further information and contact details

For more information about the research project, please check the website <https://link4skills.eu>. If you would like to discuss further details concerning the research before your participation, the fieldwork coordinators Helen Schwenken and Johanna Ullmann will do their best to answer your query.

Prof. Dr. Helen Schwenken & Dr. Johanna Ullmann

Institute for Migration Research & Intercultural Studies (IMIS), University Osnabrück, Neuer Graben 19, 49074 Osnabrück, Germany, E-Mail: jullmann@uos.de.



Informed consent to participate in the research project “Link4Skills”

[For migrant participants]

Participant number (to be filled in by researcher/interviewer): _____

Please tick each box (with X) if you agree with the statement.

☐	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet above for participation in the research project Link4Skills. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had the answers satisfactorily.
☐	I understand that my participation is voluntarily.
☐	I understand that once results are published, retracting personal data is not possible.
☐	I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any point until April 30, 2025 without giving any reason and without any prejudice.
☐	I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen with the data at the research project end.
☐	I understand the extent to which I could be identified from this research project.
☐	I agree to the use of direct quotations in research outputs, if I am not identifiable.
☐	I consent to being audio recorded for the purpose of this research project.
☐	I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.
☐	I understand how I raise a concern or make a complaint.
☐	I agree to participate.

Name of participant	Date and place	Signature
Name of researcher/moderator	Date and place	Signature

Transcript template for stakeholder interviews



L4S_transcript_country/corridor_actor_number^{8 9}

L4S Country team and corridor case/s: ¹⁰	
Staff role/s:	Position/function: Department/specialist field:
Name of institution/organization (full name in English and/or origin language, abbreviation; webpage in footnotes):	
Policy level (of the institution/organization):	☐ National/country level ☐ State/province level ☐ Municipal/local/community level
Actor group:	☐ Practitioner ☐ Policy-maker ☐ Expert
Interview date (dd-mm-yyyy):	
Interview place (city, online):	
Interview duration (in minutes):	
Agreed anonymization (based on informed consent):	☐ Direct quotation with institution/organization's name but without interviewee name. ☐ Direct quotation with institution/organization's name and interviewee name. Name: _____ ☐ No direct quotations.
L4S interviewer name/s and email/s:	
Interview debriefing (noteworthy observations):	

[illegible][illegible]

...

⁸ Examples: “L4S transcript DE prac 06”, “L4S transcript IN exp 02”, “L4S transcript GH-CA pol 13”.

⁹ Please include, if technically possible, time timestamps.

¹⁰ Example: „India, India-Netherlands corridor“: Multiple corridors: name L4S ones.

Transcript template for focus group discussions

L4S_transcript_country/corridor_migrant_number^{11 12}



L4S Country team:	
Name of implementing institution/ organization (full name in English and/or origin language, abbreviation; webpage in footnotes):	
Focus group date (dd-mm-yyyy):	
Focus group place (city):	
Focus group duration (in minutes):	
Agreed anonymization (based on informed consent):	Direct quotations without participants' names.
L4S moderator name/s and email/s:	
Focus group debriefing (noteworthy observations):	

M (Moderator): test

RP1 (Research participant 1): test

RP2 (Research participant 2): test

...

¹¹ Examples: "L4S_transcript_GH_migrant_01"

¹² Please include, if technically possible, time timestamps.

L4S_background_country/corridor_migrant_number *[based on the participants' self-evaluations]*

Nr.	Citizenship(s)	Gender (M = male; F = female; D = diverse)	Age	Highest secondary education (formal vocational, academic or professional training or graduation)	Professional experiences (Sector/ occupation) (If applicable, formal, non-formal and informal)	Family status (married, single, partner, divorced, widowed)	Children (number, age)	Migration experience? (countries/corridors)
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								

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