

Working Paper 19/2026

Migration Skill Corridor Report MOROCCO – GERMANY

Karima Belhaj*, Johanna Ullmann**, Mehdi Lahlou*, and Helen
Schwenken**

*Association International Migration (AMI), Morocco

**Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS), University Osnabrück,
Germany

<http://link4skills.eu>



The Link4Skills project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 101132476

Correspondance

Karima Belhaj: karima.belhaj.88@gmail.com

Johanna Ullmann : jullmann@uos.de

Contributors

Bachir Hamdouch and Mghari Mohamed

Geographically close, but politically distant? Two confident partners striving for a win-win-relationship

Abstract

The Morocco–Germany labour migration corridor is an emerging strategic skill mobility partnership built on the historical legacy of the 1963–1973 "guest worker" recruitment era, when roughly 22,400 Moroccans migrated to Germany, mainly into mining. The corridor has historically been weaker than Morocco's ties with France, Spain, Belgium, or the Netherlands, partly due to language barriers. Renewed interest stems from complementary needs: Morocco's high youth unemployment and skills-market mismatch, and Germany's acute labour shortages.

Cooperation is anchored in the EU-funded, multi-donor THAMM/THAMM Plus programme (2019–2026), implemented by GIZ, IOM, ILO, and Enabel, which builds joint governance structures between Morocco's employment agency ANAPEC and Germany's Federal Employment Agency (BA/ZAV) (and other destinations) rather than fixed migrant quotas. A parallel bilateral scheme, "MAzubi", institutionalises annual recruitment of apprentices. Recruitment currently centres on industry, handcraft and technical trades (metalwork, automotive, mechatronics, fibre optics) and increasingly healthcare and hospitality, while recruiting doctors, engineers or construction workers is deliberately avoided to protect Morocco from brain drain. Apprenticeship-based "training migration" is the preferred model, as it eases recognition hurdles and builds employer trust more effectively than hiring already-qualified workers.

Key challenges include a costly, lengthy and inconsistent German skills-recognition process; an informal Moroccan labour market that makes verifying prior experience difficult; a booming, loosely regulated private recruitment sector (especially in healthcare) prone to excessive fees and unethical practices; and employer concerns about candidate dropout or early job change. Federal (German) versus centralised (Moroccan) governance structures also complicate coordination, though subnational partnerships (e.g., with Lower Saxony) have proven effective. Diaspora and social networks increasingly facilitate private-sector connections.

The report highlights good practices such as skills simulation/testing centres, the digital "Work and Stay Agency" one-stop platform, and ethical safeguards protecting Moroccan labour-market interests. Policy recommendations include multilingual (Arabic/French) information campaigns, ratification and enforcement of the ILO private-recruitment convention by Germany, expanded Goethe Institut presence, scholarships to counter elite capture of opportunities, greater gender/age diversity in recruitment, and stronger reintegration support for returnees.

Acknowledgements: We thank Franziska Schrader and David Szilágyi for their excellent research support during the production of the report.

1 Legal, political, and institutional frameworks and relations

The migration skill corridor between Morocco and Germany can be described as emerging **new strategic skill mobility partnership corridor (medium-skilled and sector-based type)** that is based on a **historical (post) 'guest worker' corridor**. The collaboration has recently been intensified – both between Morocco and the European Commission and specifically between Morocco and Germany.

From the Moroccan side, professional mobility is a key issue as demographic growth remains high but employment opportunities are limited. The country faces a **mismatch between workers' skills and market needs**, particularly in the expanding technology and service sectors. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of adequate vocational training opportunities and by public employment and education policies that struggle to adapt to fast-changing economic dynamics, thus hindering human capital development and skill-adequate employment. These challenges have a direct impact on the region's economic growth, preventing young graduates from accessing qualified jobs.

From the German side, the relationship to Morocco is of (geopolitical, economic and migration/mobility-related) importance. Other countries, such as Spain, France, Belgium or Italy historically share a more direct post-colonial relationship that also entails historical diaspora communities. Migration flows between Morocco and Germany have also been smaller due to the language barrier. The linkage traces back to the **German post-war 'guest worker' regime** (1963-1973), when approximately 22.400 Moroccans migrated to Germany for work, primarily in the mining sector.¹

To bridge this gap and respond to mutual needs – Morocco's high unemployment among qualified workers and Germany's acute labour shortages – the two countries have recently established **new legal cooperation frameworks for skilled labour migration**. These skill mobility partnerships aim to promote the economic integration of migrant workers but also to reduce the risks of exploitation. They strive to support the transition to employment through training assessment and follow-up mechanisms, help address structural employment challenges as well as providing long-term economic prospects for countries of origin. Also, the partnership agenda clearly follows both the facilitation of desired 'legal' skilled migration and the mitigation of undesired 'illegal' forced migration.

In the wake of these policy changes, **mobility flow** between Morocco and Germany has been **relatively strong and steadily increasing**. An increasing number of (young) Moroccans (wish to) migrate to Germany.

In comparison to other corridors, however, **circularity and temporal migration** is more common (including return migration for business and entrepreneurship).

In 2013, the **EU-Morocco Mobility Partnership Agreement** was signed between Morocco and the EU as well as several members states (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The main goal was to improve the mobility of Moroccans for education, training and employment purposes, including study, research and business mobility (European Commission 2013)².

¹ <https://taz.de/50-Jahre-marokkanische-Gastarbeiter/!5062924/>

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_13_513/IP_13_513_EN.pdf

In 2024, a **Joint Statement on the Moroccan-German Strategic Dialogue** was signed. This is the result of extensive bilateral negotiations. The official partnership remains **relatively generic, vague and empty** in comparison to the several other migration partnerships and recruiting agreement. While the German government has pushed for a more specific or binding agreement, it seemed to have been highly difficult to find the necessary compromise and common interest for such an agreement. Negotiations for a comprehensive migration and mobility agreement are ongoing.

The **THAMM project** (“**Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa**,” see Box 1), is jointly facilitated with Germany, Belgium and Italy on the EU side and Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt (for subregional activities also Algeria and Libya) on the North African side. The program is a flagship project of the **EU Talent Partnership** initiative announced in the “Pact on Migration and Asylum” (2024)³.

Morocco is one of **five priority countries of EU “Talent Partnerships”**. The partnership takes the form of **roundtables** bringing together ministers and ambassadors, as well as EU-funded pilot projects such as THAMM+, which foresees around 150 mobilities to Germany and 500 to Italy, and sectoral initiatives such as Women as Financially Independent Rural Actors (WAFIRA) for seasonal women workers in Spain.

The initiative promotes fair, regular, transparent labour mobility schemes with wins for all involved parties – as opposed to a mere “export” of skills. As several European partners are involved, the program is a complex **multilateral agreement**. The program focuses on the sustainable establishment of a joint (skilled) migration governance and legal framework, including pilot recruiting projects and partnerships. By doing so, the project also intends to reduce “irregular” migration.

The bilateral project between Morocco and Germany is called “**THAMM Plus**” and is funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The program aims to build a joint governance system for skilled labour migration between Moroccan institutions (such as the Ministry of Employment and the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills - ANAPEC) and German institutions (notably the Federal Employment Agency BA, via its International Specialized Services ZAV division). The projects’ focus is on fostering mutual understanding of both countries’ institutional employment and education systems and building trustful bilateral relationships, rather than setting migrant quotas, to create a sustainable strategic partnership. To implement the recruiting projects of THAMM Plus, an **inter-agency agreement between ANAPEC and BA** has been signed.

BOX 1: THAMM and THAMM Plus Program Factsheet

The **THAMM (Plus) program** “Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa” is based on the Global Skills Partnership (GSP) model, which promotes cooperation between public and private sectors to address skill shortages while ensuring adequate protection for skilled migrant workers. It aims to facilitate safe and regular migration pathways for skilled workers to EU member state destinations with high labour demand, such as Belgium, Germany or Italy.

³ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/739247/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)739247_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/739247/EPRS_BRI(2022)739247_EN.pdf)

Multi-donor action: European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa); German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Implementing agencies: German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ); International Organization for Migration (IOM); International Labour Organization (ILO); Belgian Development Agency (Enabel).

Implementation period: 2019–2023 (THAMM) / 2024–2026 (THAMM Plus).

Beneficiary countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt (partly Algeria and Libya).

Target groups: State and non-state institutions managing labour migration and international mobility; vocational training and qualification institutions; skilled workers interested in labour migration.

Objectives and components: Four main pillars:

1. Test safe and labour-market-oriented mobility schemes between North Africa and the EU.
2. Capitalize on and disseminate lessons learned from pilot projects at national and regional levels.
3. Develop tools to analyse and promote migration.
4. Strengthen partner institutions in training and qualification systems.

THAMM Plus, as a follow-up program, seeks to further institutionalize and sustain labour migration pathways by aligning with the needs of both origin and destination labour markets. Planned activities include improving candidates' employability for national and European markets, institutionalizing migration procedures (from selection to integration), and formalizing inter-institutional partnerships.

Main Moroccan actors:

Ministry of Labour and Professional Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Living Abroad; National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC); Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research; and social partners (employers' and workers' organizations, etc.).

Besides "THAMM", several **bilateral recruiting agreements and institutional arrangements** have recently been concluded. For example, the ANAPEC signed a **placement agreement** with the Federal Employment Agency (BA) on the German side. This agreement, initially focused on three profiles in the construction sector, allows German companies to recruit through the two Moroccan public employment services using an accelerated procedure for labour market access. As explained by the director of international placement at ANAPEC:

"The goal is for companies operating in these sectors and in need of such profiles to be able to do so through this placement agreement, thanks to an accelerated and simplified recruitment and work permit procedure through our two public employment services."
(L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 6, lines 10–14)

In addition, a **Joint Moroccan-German Migration** working group has been established to steer cooperation.

On the Moroccan side, the institutional framework has evolved to support this partnership: ANAPEC has created a **Directorate for International Placement** (previously only a division) dedicated to labour migration, and the Ministry of Labour (MIPEEC) coordinates the various national actors (sectoral ministries, the “Office for Vocational Training and Labour Promotion”, OFPPT) for training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, etc.).

The **Centers for Migration and Development (ZME)** (initiated in Morocco and several other origin countries) have been opened, in partnership with GIZ, to inform candidates in different regions about migration or return migration options.

Stakeholders reported that various **industry and handcraft sectors and occupations (metal and electrical industry, automotive industry, fiber optic civil engineering, but also commerce)** are currently part of the recruitment partnership between Morocco and Germany. For the THAMM Plus program, for example, recruitment is permitted, amongst others in the **automobile industry and mechatronics**. **Active recruiting of Moroccan medical doctors, construction workers or engineers**, however, is not allowed as the Moroccan economy is itself in need to retain and recruit respective workers. Yet, in the field, stakeholders reported, for example, about recruiting of **mechatronic engineers**.

The closer cooperation and partnership between Morocco and Germany in terms of public recruitment has been reflected overall positive by several stakeholders: “I find it to be an **exemplary, fair, and respectful partnership**. And if something doesn’t suit us, **we discuss it together directly**,” said an ANAPEC representative. GIZ shares this view, noting that the bilateral governance system in place “works well. There are sustained relationships between partners; people know each other; they understand how both countries function.” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 13, lines 4-6).

However, in practice, the **Federal system states** like Germany, in comparison to **centralized countries** like Morocco, makes the cooperation between both countries complicated. Against this background, a **private-public-partnership (a sort of MoU), at the subnational level** between Tangier, Titouan, and Hussema (Morocco) and Lower-Saxony (Germany), signed in 2025, has been considered as significant success.⁴

In short, the Morocco-Germany migration skill corridor shows signs of evolving into a new structured partnership for skilled mobility, supported by formal recruiting agreements and close cooperation between public employment services and private actors, rather than by informal or purely private dynamics. The reinforced partnership has also initiated the **establishment of a booming and expanding skilled migration partnership industry** and a highly dynamic **transnational infrastructure** of involved private and public actors.

2 Implementation: Recruiting

From the perspective of the population of (young) skilled Moroccans, the **interest into Germany as destination country** seems in general to be **increasingly high** in comparison to the traditional destination countries (like France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands or Canada). Germany is often (still) perceived as **economically and politically strong country with high education and employment standards** and **geographical proximity**. The language barrier and cultural distance, in contrast, are commonly emphasized as major challenge besides the German bureaucracy and

⁴ https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd11801/files/documents/Colombia2024-2025/Nov%20Meetings/RT%205_Outcomes%20Summary_February.pdf

federal system. The high interest to Germany as destination country is also the result of **heavy and highly visible advertisement** by private (and public) recruiting agencies and language centers all around the country as well as via **digital channels and social media** (also in comparison to other destinations).

In the following, we will focus on the recruiting within **public-led partnerships, such as THAMM Plus**. Besides private-led recruiting of workers or trainees via private agencies or directly via employers play an increasing role.

The national employment agency ANAPEC plays a central **bridging role** between labour supply and demand on the Moroccan side, in coordination with German partners such as the BA, with technical support from GIZ.

In practice, in case a German company or institution expresses recruitment needs in Morocco (through an agreement or a project), a structured, multi-stakeholder and multi-step process begins: consultation on the eligible work profiles and sectors, launch of a call for applications in Morocco, preselection by ANAPEC based on core criteria (such as proven language proficiency, educational diplomas and work experiences), presentation of candidates to BA and organization of selection interviews involving the German side. High motivation, for instance, was reported as important selection criteria: “Those who are **truly motivated** will be selected.” (L4S_DE-MA_prac_08).

To **officially prove** respective skills and experiences, however, was commonly mentioned as **bottleneck** due to the highly informal sector in Morocco. As the **recruitment** between Morocco and Germany **covers various sectors** (and is result of continuous negotiation between the public authorities), the **(risk of) skill mismatch** is another problem. The skill profile of a **roofer**, for example, is less common and professionalized in Morocco than in Germany what complicates the recruiting (L4S_DE_prac_01). **Welders** are required both in Morocco and Germany, but have some differences in the training curriculum and job profile/requirements that need to be negotiated and discussed to facilitate recruiting and recognition (L4S_MA_pol_03).

The costs in public-funded projects that follow high ethical recruiting standards is considered essential. German stakeholders also reported that Moroccan potential **migrants seem to be relatively skeptical towards cost-free programs or services, such as “THAMM Plus”**. It was told that **quality programs or services are usually perceived as costly**. Some candidates may also consider to ‘pay’ in order to reach their ‘dream’ by almost any financial means. Debts are not unusual (L4S_MA_prac_10). On the other side, the willingness of German employers to cover higher costs **varies between the sectors**. The hospitality sector, for example, is generally high in demand but has fewer financial means.

Programs such as THAMM Plus also pay particular attention to the **protection of the origin’s social and economic interests**. **Prior bilateral institutional consultation** is held to exclude or limit offers in sectors considered sensitive for Morocco (e.g., public health, see section 10) to **avoid a brain drain** of vital skills. This consultation also extends to **recruitment criteria**: each mission is discussed between partners to adjust requirements to the local labour market (degrees, experiences, etc.) and ensure that the desired profiles exist locally. When a sector presents a risk of large-scale “poaching” (for example, aeronautics, where Morocco has invested heavily), ANAPEC may seek ministerial approval, renegotiate and discuss with the German side and redirect public recruitment toward other pools or recent graduates. For instance, ANAPEC avoids targeting professionals already employed in Morocco to prevent disruption to local businesses:

“We do not target candidates who are already working in Moroccan companies.” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 05, lines 10-11).

The preferred recruitment model on the Moroccan side is that of **apprenticeship** in Germany rather than direct hiring of qualified workers. This “training-based migration” model has proven effective: “Apprenticeship works much better than direct recruitment of qualified workers because the German company feels more confident seeing that the candidate goes through the German training system... Moreover, their language skills improve throughout the training.” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 05, lines 30-32). Stakeholders saw apprenticeship mobility also a important strategy to circumvent the lengthy, costly and bureaucratic German recognition process (see section 4).

As early as 2015, a pilot project funded by the World Bank enabled the recruitment and departure of 108 Moroccan apprentices to Germany (in hospitality and catering), followed by a second phase with over 80 others (hospitality, catering, and construction). Building on these experiences, a follow-up **bilateral inter-agency recruiting agreement** named “**MAzubi**” (a contraction of “Maroc” and “Azubi”, meaning apprentice in German) was established: each year, the ZAV (International Placement Service) of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) sends a mission to Morocco to recruit apprentices in sectors facing labour shortages in Germany. This agreement - without external/EU-funding –, aims to institutionalize the annual recruitment of cohorts of apprentices and establish a routine collaboration. ANAPEC proactively searches for candidates matching requested profiles (youth with a basic level of German, ideally with initial training or experience in the target field) to present them to German recruiters.

In parallel, the recruitment of **already qualified workers**, the process remains “less smooth,” according to Moroccan practitioners (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 05, lines 27-30). German companies seem to be often more reluctant or demanding when hiring trainees or professionals trained abroad, hence the need for stronger support mechanisms. Nevertheless, direct offers do exist, for instance, the German group “Geodesia” recruited Moroccan **fiber optic technicians** through the placement agreement — but these require convincing German employers of the candidates’ value while managing administrative constraints (visa, diploma recognition; see section 4). ANAPEC and its partners intervene to facilitate these connections, ensuring logistical coordination: collecting and transmitting candidate files to the BA ZAV once a company makes a selection, organizing interviews (on-site or online), and assisting with post-selection formalities.

As already mentioned, outside the public framework, there is also an increasing number of **private actors** (international and national recruitment agencies, small or mid-size consulting firms and start-ups, etc.) active in this corridor. These parallel channels can be in some cases a real opportunity for a smooth and successful recruitment and new skill mobility chance. Yet, they sometimes mislead candidates or lead to abusive practices or fraud: “There are also private actors who recruit privately. So, for a Moroccan interested in working abroad, it’s complicated to know whom to contact or how to avoid the traps of unethical recruitment with excessive fees.”. The **private recruiting field specified on skilled migration to Germany**, particularly in the **healthcare sector**, for example, is **booming** in Morocco. Due to the high interest, stakeholders reported about in parts exorbitant high prices for candidates, unethical and unrepeatable practices and lack of quality control.

Public authorities emphasize the dissemination of reliable information (through ANAPEC/GIZ information centres and awareness campaigns and cost-free support via the German Goethe-Institut) and the free nature of public recruitment services. The use of private agencies is

increasing, yet on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, the existence of these private intermediaries highlights the need for clear governance and monitoring of the corridor, ensuring that candidates know where to turn and are protected against exploitation.

The **number of recruited candidates remain modest** within programs such as THAMM. Officially the low numbers are frequently justified by emphasizing that the major goal is to test new sectors and approaches, open new legal and fair skilled migration pathways and align the needs of EU Member States and Morocco (L4S_MA-DE_pol_03).

In summary, the recruitment process within this corridor is increasingly structured to support fair, ethical, transparent and mutual beneficial skilled migration, but loopholes and problems remain: it mainly involves engaged public actors, is based on transparent calls for applications, prioritizes training in Germany to ensure employability, and officially integrates ethical principles (protecting Morocco's interests and candidates' rights). The **cooperation between the public employment agencies of Morocco (ANAPEC) and Germany (BA)** was frequently reported by stakeholders on both sides to be positive, trustful and helpful. Also, German companies involved are beginning to trust this structured system. According to GIZ, participating employers expressed, so far, overall satisfactions with the hired Moroccan workers (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 10, lines 43-45). This encouraging feedback reinforces the idea that well-supervised public recruitment with proper preparation can meet employers' expectations while being beneficial for workers.

3 Implementation: Skilling

Training candidates is a central issue for skilled labour migration, particularly given the language and cultural differences and, at times, the varying technical standards between the two countries. In the following, we provide empirical insights with focus on state-funded programs, such as THAMM Plus or "MAzubi".

The mobility schemes implemented often rely on a **continuum of training** before departure and after arrival, combining the acquisition of language and cultural skills, adaptation to destination skill requirements, and general enhancement of candidates' existing professional strengths.

Before departure, the focus is usually placed on **German language training**, often considered the main "gateway" to accessing qualified employment. In recent years, there has been a genuine surge of interest in learning German in Morocco:

"Many young Moroccans have decided to learn the German language during their training, which is a very good thing. They are preparing themselves; they see that in Germany today, there are opportunities." (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 05, lines 11-15).

This trend is reinforced by changes in German labour migration policy, which have opened new pathways for qualified workers and relaxed legal requirements (for example, allowing degree recognition to be completed after arrival). Motivated candidates, therefore, seem to invest increasingly on their **own initiative and at their own expenses** in (often private) language courses. A young Moroccan points out: "For me, it's an investment. For my future. I'd like to spend the money." (L4S_MA_prac_05a). There are flourishing **networks of private language and preparatory centres and institutes** (besides the public-funded Goethe-Institute) offering training at different levels. In parts the quality of these courses were reported to be questionable and unregulated, leaving students with debts and a certificate, but without corresponding practical language skills.

In addition, it was noted that many individuals are increasingly using **self-learning online tools and programs**: “There are online courses... people who learn by themselves with free online lessons. Then, the Goethe-Institute... also offers paid online courses... Now, it’s a question of cost.” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p.12, lines 24-28). While Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and free apps offer an initial introduction, obtaining an official certification (such as the Goethe B1 certificate) usually requires paid courses and an examination, which can represent a substantial investment for candidates (see section 4).

Corridor partners have set up several mechanisms to support this (up-/re-)skilling process. On the Moroccan side, ANAPEC has developed new **pedagogical tools and preparatory workshops** for prospective emigrants. For instance, in its regional offices and information spaces, ANAPEC offers the possibility of learning foreign languages online or through guided self-learning, and organizes preparatory training sessions, such as “**Me and the international/German labour market**” to familiarize candidates with the realities of working abroad. As described by GIZ:

“They [ANAPEC] have developed tools... For example, one can learn foreign languages online through ANAPEC... They also offer training on ‘how to prepare for the international labour market.’” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 11, lines 13-14)

The **preparatory training** usually includes working and living in Germany and ‘standards’ of the German work culture such as punctuality, high work ethics, reliability, etc. (L4S_MA_prac_12). Another training topic mentioned was **financial literacy** with focus on **return. Remittances** are a key economic factor for Morocco. Stakeholders see an **indirect opportunity to strengthen local economic development**: “What options are there, even if I send my money back, so that I **don't just use it for consumption, but perhaps also invest it?**” (L4S_MA_prac_14).

Skilling mainly takes place in Morocco, while the interest into German vocational training is increasing. At the same time, German companies such as **big hospitals increasingly invest into nursing colleges** that specifically serve the German market and their specific professional requirements. Hence, private partnerships between German employers and Moroccan training centers play an increasing role. German companies also build **high specialized training or ‘simulation’ centers** to further prepare, train and assess the candidates on the spot.

In general, Morocco follows a **dual vocational training system** since 2000. The system has highest reputation in comparison to other North African countries. However, the Moroccan demography (relatively **young population with 2.5 children per women**) leads to **national education or training pressure**. Economic hick ups negatively affect the national budget for educational investments, while structural and institutional reforms are required. The project “**Tamheen**” together with GIZ, for example, aims to accompany this process and advise the Moroccan Ministry of Education, the Moroccan Employer’s Association, the Moroccan Office of Vocational Training and Employment Promotion (OFPPT) and the Department of Vocational Training (DFP) in this context (L4S_MA_prac_04). Yet, it is perceived as highly difficult to change a historically developed system (that is rather school-based and led by OFPPT and not company-driven).

In spite of the **structural adjustment and matching** (both countries following a dual vocational system approach), the **curricular as well as the pedagogical approaches for certain sectors or occupations differ**, what complicates the recognition process.

In general, the **strengthening of local training capacities** is recent and still expanding, but it demonstrates Morocco's determination to prepare its nationals thoroughly before departure. In addition, the OFPPT (Office for Vocational Training and Labour Promotion) has undertaken to revise its curricula towards a **competency-based approach** and to open Cités des Métiers et des Compétences (Skills and Trades Cities), which could eventually **integrate modules linked to foreign labour market requirements** (it was mentioned to introduce German as an optional subject in certain regular vocational streams, though funding such courses remains a challenge).

In parallel, cooperation projects such as THAMM+ have implemented specific **pre-departure trainings** for pilot cohorts. These training programs generally include intensive **German courses** (often financed by the project) and sometimes **technical bridging modules** to close skill gaps. For example, in a pilot partnership with a German region, Moroccan candidates in automotive mechatronics followed several months of German classes up to level B1 in Morocco, with a remarkable success rate: around 35% of candidates already reached the required level thanks to these efforts.

There is a significant pool of young people self-learning German and reaching intermediate levels, often via German recruiters. However, for those unable to afford lengthy and costly language training, the barrier remains real. A key challenge seems to be to **democratize access to language training to widen the socio-economic profile** of candidates (see section 10). There are, for example, significant inequalities in terms of access to skilled mobility opportunities among young Moroccans in **rural and urban areas**.

ANAPEC also organizes a **pre-departure workshop** entitled "**I prepare for my departure**". Following topics are covered: Practical information (housing, social security, etc.), prepare for recruitment and integration, awareness of cultural differences and reducing a cultural or administrative 'shock', rights and duties of migrant workers, etc. Banks (to propose tailored financial solutions), returned migrants (to share experiences), or representatives of organizations such as IOM (to explain possible reintegration schemes) are sometimes involved. This is reflected in the following quote:

"We invite candidates to get informed about all aspects before departure so as not to face difficulties once they arrive. And if there are partners providing support or information, we also involve them." (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 13, lines 20-22-23)

After arrival in Germany, **training usually continues** on-site. Apprentices join the regular (2-3 year) German **dual vocational training system**, alternating between vocational schools and company work placements to ultimately obtain a German professional diploma. This pathway ensures significant upskilling, full linguistic immersion, and familiarization with local professional norms. For already-qualified workers, **continuous training** often takes the form of **additional language courses** (many continue up to B2 or even C1 to access more opportunities) and, where possible, **technical adaptation modules** provided by employers or professional colleges

Many German states have established **integration or "Welcome Centers"** (such as in Lower Saxony), offering free language courses or guidance toward complementary training to bridge skill gaps. These structures, mentioned by ANAPEC as an inspiring model, serve as a link between foreign recruitment and successful and sustainable labour market integration.

It is also worth noting that **distance learning and the use of technologies** are becoming increasingly prevalent (see section 8). During the Covid period, much of the training moved

online, and this modality continues: The Goethe-Institut, for instance, now offers intensive online courses, allowing access for candidates in remote regions. However, cost remains a limiting factor. Partners are also exploring **joint training schemes** (e.g., Global Skills Partnership with Belgium mentioned by ANAPEC), in which candidates would be trained partly in Morocco and partly in the destination, with shared financing. Such initiatives could, in the future, increase the number of people trained specifically for the German market while also benefiting Morocco by training more youth, even if not all ultimately migrate.

In the case of Morocco, the **Office for Vocational Training and Labour Promotion (OFPPT)** is an important public institution and decisive actor in the field of skilled mobility. The institution's mission is to train young people capable of integrating into the labour market at four levels (specialization, qualification, technician, and advanced technician) and to adapt its programs to economic and social demands. Vocational training has become highly attractive, with some programs registering seven to eleven applicants per place, reflecting growing enthusiasm and the need to expand capacity (L4S_MA-DE_prac_02, p. 2, lines 20-25-30). The OFPPT designs its programs using a competency-based approach, built upon job situation analyses (AST) in close collaboration with businesses. This training engineering aims to make curricula "readable" for both national and international markets, requiring adjustments to meet partner countries' expectations (L4S_MA-DE_prac_02, p. 3, lines 1-10). Funding partly comes from a dedicated tax (1.6% of the payroll)⁵ that supports vocational training and involves companies in the system.

One important barrier to skilling frequently mentioned in the field was the issue of **individual skill recognition in Germany** (see section 4): each candidate must have his/her qualifications validated by a German professional chamber, such as the Chambers of Commerce (IHK). This **lengthy, bureaucratic and complex case-by-case process** can take four to five months and often discourages German employers and candidates. In contrast, countries such as Canada recognize diplomas more easily. To overcome these obstacles, the OFPPT representative advocates for co-designed curricula with destination countries and for requiring several years of experience (generally three to four) to compensate for candidates' lack of "professional exposure" (L4S_MA-DE_prac_02, p. 4, lines 41-49-25).

Finally, OFPPT stresses the **need for a real "triple-win" partnership: training of trainers and funding institutional equipment** by the German state would benefit the Moroccan institution on long-term; the host country gains skills aligned with its needs; and candidates obtain a valued qualification attractive both for origin and destination labour markets. This model, still at an early stage, is seen as a guarantee of corridor sustainability (L4S_MA-DE_prac_02, p. 5, lines 4-16).

In short, the skilling component of the corridor seeks to combine local skill development with German employers' expectations. Progress has been made: the German language, once rare, now seems to be thriving among young Moroccan students and professionals; apprenticeship tracks provide a structured and attractive framework particularly for the Moroccan side as education costs are shared more fairly; and pre-departure support tools are beginning to show results. Challenges remain in terms of equal accessibility of candidates and sustainability of training funding (currently heavily reliant on time-limited projects and state or EU-funding). Nevertheless, all actors agree that investment in professional training is the cornerstone of a successful skills

⁵ In Morocco, the Vocational Training Tax (TFP) levies a rate of 1.6% on company payrolls. This mandatory contribution is managed by the National Social Security Fund (CNSS) and is used to finance employee training and upskilling programs, thereby contributing to the development of vocational training in the country.

migration partnership with ‘wins’ for everyone involved. The difficult part, however, is determining who will cover the costs on long-term.

4 Implementation: Recognition

The recognition of skills and diplomas is a crucial aspect, as it determines qualified workers’ legal access to the destinations’ labour market and their career advancement once there. Within the Morocco-Germany corridor, several measures have been adopted to facilitate recognition, although obstacles remain depending on the sector or occupation.

In Germany, legislation generally requires foreign workers to have their qualifications (vocational or academic diplomas or certificates) **officially recognized** to occupy regulated positions of a certain skill-level. Until recently, this recognition had to be obtained before entering the country, which represented a major barrier (complex procedures, lengthy delays). Under the new German Skilled Workers Immigration Act (in force since 2020), it is now possible **to recruit and begin working and finalize the recognition procedure after arrival**. As noted by an ANAPEC representative, “Recognition now... can be done in Germany,” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 5, lines 15-18) which marks a significant step forward in terms of flexibility.

Under pilot agreements, the obligation of recognition has not been abolished but rather **postponed until after the candidate arrives** in Germany. For example, fiber optic technicians recruited through the institutional agreement must initiate their qualification equivalence procedures **as soon as they arrive** and are granted a set period (**up to three years** in this case) to complete them. “The condition is that once they arrive on German soil, candidates must start their recognition procedure.” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 6, lines 16-18). During this period, they may work in positions **below their formal qualification level** and then move up to roles matching their credentials once recognition is obtained. This transitional mechanism prevents candidates from being penalized: they save time by starting work earlier (during or before recognition) while gradually regularizing their professional status.

The **health sector** illustrates the challenges of recognition: Moroccan medical or paramedical diplomas require equivalence in Germany, sometimes involving additional exams. Aware of these difficulties and the fact that Morocco itself faces a shortage of doctors and nurses, the corridor has so far excluded this sector from cooperation. Health professionals who leave on their own initiative do so outside public programs and must individually undertake lengthy qualification procedures (such as the approbation). The political choice has not been to actively promote migration in this sector to avoid an immediate “brain drain.” Due to the severe shortage both in nursing and doctors in Germany, however, German hospitals advertise attractive offers and compete for international talents (online, and sometimes, even with head hunting directly at universities or nursing colleges at the origin).

Another aspect of recognition concerns **language certifications**, which are mandatory to obtain employment, student or training visas. The German embassy in Rabat accepts only certain official certificates (notably those from Goethe-Institute) to attest language proficiency.

“The problem is that you have to have a certificate. And the certificate must be issued by the Goethe-Institute, and it costs money,” recalls ANAPEC (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 14, lines 35-42)

In other words, it is not enough for a candidate to have learned German independently or followed a random course at their own expense; they must prove their level (usually at least B1) with an **officially recognized document** from the consular authorities. This standardizes the evaluation of language skills but also creates an **additional financial filter** (to pay for Goethe courses/exams) and a **logistical barrier** (exam sessions are not frequent and places are limited). To address this, actors are discussing possible solutions: multiplying examination centres in partnership, integrating German courses into Moroccan regular curricula with final certification exams, or providing financial assistance for the best candidates to take the test.

Regarding technical skills and professional experience, recognition in Germany is handled on a **case-by-case basis**. For regulated professions (engineers in certain branches, health professionals, teachers, etc.), a **formal equivalence procedure** by the relevant German state authorities is required. For non-regulated professions, a statement of comparability may suffice, or the employer may assess the candidate's competencies directly.

Many Moroccan stakeholders clearly **criticized the German recognition system as lengthy, costly, and bureaucratic**. One specific problem, frequently mentioned, was that original documents would often be required, while digital documents would not be accepted by authorities, which reflects the **insufficient modernization and digitalization of the German bureaucracy**. The **German federal structure** further complicates the procedure as national standards and structures are missing. Also, **inconsistency and contradicting requirements, and procedures**, and the complicated structure (between German local professional chambers, vocational training schools, welfare organizations, and federal organizations of vocational training and education) were seen as typical problems. In particular, the required **individual application procedure** for skill recognition was criticized as **highly inefficient, unnecessary, and unpleasant**. The process often leads to **(feelings of) deskilling, frustration, and devaluation**. Moroccan public representatives proposed that **sample expert reports** about vocational training degrees at certain colleges. This reflects the recognition system "Anabin" with foreign university degrees.⁶ Alternatively, if public agreements on skill recognition would be too complicated, **'cluster or cohort recognition'** would be an alternative. This means joint recognition of school cohorts with similar degrees from the same origin educational institution. The current structures, requirements, and procedures were frequently perceived as **deterrent** and in **contradiction to the German public image** as country welcoming skilled workers.

As already mentioned, the Morocco-Germany corridor is **characterized by various sectors and occupations**. This **skill diversification** challenges the recognition process too. The various curricular and job profiles between both countries do **not always match**, and **adequate 'reference occupations' are sometimes missing**, what makes **reskilling** and/or **adjustment measures and partial recognition** likely. The recognition issue is even more complicated in case German companies search for workers skilled for a highly-specific task that does not eventually refer to an official German occupation profile ("reference job").

Due to these persistent German **structural recognition problems**, both Moroccan youths as well as public representatives expressed high **interest and engagement into the mobility for vocational training and studying to circumvent recognition issues**. It was commonly perceived easier to become fully trained in Germany – instead of finishing a Moroccan training degree and then struggle with recognition.

⁶ <https://anabin.kmk.org/cms/public/startseite>

In programs such as “**THAMM Plus**”, ANAPEC and GIZ play a key **intermediary role** in facilitating these processes: guiding candidates to the appropriate German authorities, assisting with document translation, and monitoring files in coordination with the embassy or chambers of trades in Germany. For example, for automotive mechanics or electronics technicians trained by the OFPPT, GIZ may collaborate with the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abroad (AHK) to assess how far the Moroccan diploma matches the German standard—and to identify whether a few months of complementary training in Germany are needed to fill specific gaps. This type of partial recognition, combined with further training, is encouraged by the THAMM program allowing candidates to start working as assistants and later achieve full qualification after completing additional education on-site.

Recognition durations vary widely: some candidates have their qualifications validated within weeks (when the Moroccan diploma closely matches German standards), while others must study one or two years in Germany to reach the required level, particularly in highly technical professions or those with strict standards.

The **associated costs** (translations, administrative fees, supplementary courses) are partly covered under pilot projects—but in the long term, the issue of sustainable funding for these recognition processes remains open.

In summary, the corridor is moving toward a **progressive and supported recognition** of qualifications. Recent German reforms have paved the way for **greater flexibility** (“Bring the talent first, validate the diplomas later”, GIZ-Rabat), which is a major advantage. However, proof of competence—whether linguistic, vocational or academic—remains a mandatory step that can slow mobility and make Germany as destination less attractive. Actors are striving to ease these constraints through better candidate information, institutional agreements to accelerate equivalence, and mobility planning focused on sectors where recognition is feasible (hence the current focus on hospitality, IT, and construction, and the avoidance of health and education, where recognition barriers are higher). In the longer term, setting up training bridges, for instance, integrating parts of the German curriculum into Moroccan regular professional training, could further facilitate the automatic recognition of certain Moroccan certifications in Germany, though this remains at the conceptual stage. For now, each candidate must navigate between two systems and prove their worth in both, hence, the importance of personalized guidance to ensure that no skill is lost in the process.

5 Implementation: Matching

Matching refers to the phase where labour supply and demand effectively converge, that is, the selection of candidates by employers, alignment between profiles and positions, and the modalities of interviews and contracting. Within the Morocco–Germany corridor, this stage is conducted within public skill mobility partnerships collaboratively among stakeholders to optimize satisfaction for all parties and to ensure transparency throughout the process.

In spite of the skill demand on one side and the skill supply on the other, the matching process usually is **complicated and lengthy**. Stakeholders emphasized that a quick and efficient matching would be beneficial for everyone involved. German actors generally complained about the difficulty to evaluate the existing skills and the skilling potential of candidates.

One staff of a local Moroccan employment agency (ANAPEC) in Rabat explained: “The problem is that one of the three aspects [language, qualification, experience, J.U.] may always be **insufficient**

or need to be proven – in some cases, the people are **very highly qualified**, they have a **lot of practical experience** – but, because Morocco primarily has an informal sector, it is **difficult to prove professional qualifications.**” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_08). **Practical competency tests on-site** could be an approach to mitigate this problem, as stakeholders proposed.

In the following, we describe the official matching process of THAMM: After a **call for applications** and a **preselection** by ANAPEC, a **recruitment session** is organized to carry out the final matching. Several formats are used: **in-person recruitment missions** with a delegation of German employers or representatives travelling to Morocco or **online interviews**. ANAPEC manages the logistics (candidate profile formal check and selection, invitations, provision of rooms or equipment, interpretation if needed).

Selection generally occurs in two stages: first, a **technical and linguistic assessment** of candidates by the Moroccan side (tests, exploratory interviews, etc.); then, German employers (often together with BA or GIZ) conduct the **final interviews** and make the definitive choice. The procedure is jointly managed. This cooperation has been evaluated remarkable positive on the Moroccan side: “Everything is done in perfect coordination... There is never any conflict [between the partners]” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 11, lines 36-37).

Indeed, “the selection of candidates within the framework of mobility programs... [is carried out by involving] the German public employment service, which travels to conduct candidate selection,” (GIZ - *Rabat*) ensuring that German criteria are fully integrated while maintaining transparency for the Moroccan side. Involving the Federal Employment Agency (BA/ZAV) or employers themselves as early as the final selection stage establishes mutual trust: Morocco does not ‘send off’ candidates without ensuring that a concrete job awaits them, and Germany ensures the motivation and competence of those it hosts.

To enhance recruiting alignment between both sides’ interests, **special preparation sessions** are organized for candidates before interviews. For example, the GIZ has provided **intensive coaching** so that Moroccan candidates feel comfortable during job interviews in German, sometimes conducted by German trainers:

“They provided very precise coaching to give them tips... so that they could succeed in those online interviews.” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 14, lines 22-24)

This coaching covers personal presentation, how to highlight skills according to German cultural expectations, and stress management during video-conferences. Thanks to these simulations and targeted advice, many candidates succeeded in convincing recruiters despite language barriers or distance.

In certain cases, particularly during the pandemic, the entire matching process took place online (interviews, document management, etc.). This demonstrates the feasibility of **remote matching**, although many employers still prefer in-person meetings when hiring from abroad.

Once the candidate has been selected by the employer, the **contracting and hiring process** begins. An employment contract is established, generally for a fixed term (often one to two years, renewable) or, in some cases, a permanent contract, depending on sectoral regulations. ANAPEC and the BA act as facilitating intermediaries: “ANAPEC sends all the documents... directly to ZAV so that ZAV can issue [the authorization]. At the same time, ZAV coordinates with the company for the company’s documents... we share the documentation.” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 15, lines

3-6). This **close and efficient coordination** between public employment agencies shortens processing times compared to the individual procedures a candidate would have to handle alone.

Regarding **profile-to-position alignment**, the corridor prioritizes sectors where Moroccan candidates' skills meet German labour demands. In **hospitality and catering**, for instance, German recruiters value Moroccan graduates' know-how and versatility, provided linguistic upgrading is offered. In IT, where demand is global, challenges relate mainly to language proficiency and specialized technical skills.

ANAPEC explains: "Germany will not come to recruit unskilled workers. It will require candidates with a diploma in construction. However, these [qualified] candidates do not really match the company's needs, which are essentially for unskilled labour." (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 9, lines 10-13).

This quote highlights how skills are differently evaluated and regulated on both sides. It also reveals a mismatch between employer demand (rather low-skilled than skilled labour) and labour migration regulations (which require a diploma and language proficiency). To overcome this issue, the mediation role of ANAPEC and GIZ is key: they explain to the employers the local constraints — for example, that it is unrealistic to find professionally 'unqualified' but German-speaking labour in Morocco — and propose alternative solutions, such as recruiting a trained Moroccan technician who can start in a lower-skilled position (but with perspective of professional upward mobility).

This **tripartite dialogue** among employers, and institutional partners on both sides helps realign expectations and prevents recruitment failures. Yet, the collaboration is often with private actors but **less with trade unions or civil society organizations or migrant communities**.

Employer and employee satisfaction serve as a key indicator of matching success. So far, official feedback by implementing organizations has been positive: "German companies that have hosted Moroccan workers through these programs are satisfied with their performance and integration." (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_04, p. 17, lines 8-10). Similarly, on the migrant side, no early departures or withdrawals have been reported, suggesting that positions generally meet candidates' expectations (see section 7).

One area for improvement is the stronger **involvement of German employers and professional organizations**: while some large groups or professional associations are highly engaged (e.g., the Hotel association supporting apprentice recruitment), particularly **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) remain hesitant or unaware** of the international recruitment possibilities. Through the THAMM project, **GIZ plays an advocacy role**, encouraging companies to 'open their doors' to Moroccan talents by showcasing successful experiences and reassuring them about available support (visa facilitation, training, integration).

In the future, **digital matching platforms** (see section 8) will play a growing role, further facilitating the linking of job offers with candidates' CVs more systematically. For now, matching remains largely human-driven and institutionally managed, ensuring reliability and quality control.

In general, the structured and gradual collaborative matching of public-led programs has proven effective: no significant failures have been reported, candidates matched the needs, and employers' expectations were well communicated. Yet, the numbers of candidates remain small,

while the role of private recruiting increases in the field. The main challenge ahead will be to maintain and sustain this level of quality as the migration flow scales up.

6 Implementation: Migration/Mobility

The migration and mobility phase covers all the procedures allowing selected candidates to travel to Germany and legally reside there for work. In the Morocco–Germany corridor, this is often considered the **slowest and most cumbersome step**, mainly because of visa procedures.

Despite efforts from both sides to facilitate the process, **administrative bottlenecks persist**, directly affecting mobility timelines. The German migration process is generally perceived as **complicated, lengthy and bureaucratic**. Once the employment or apprenticeship contract is obtained and work authorization issued, candidates must apply for a national work visa at the German consulate. This is where waiting times become lengthy: Currently, it takes in average eight to nine months between selection and arrival, much of which is due to the four-month delay in obtaining an appointment: “Eight, nine months... It’s long because there’s also the question of the consulate’s capacity to process applications,” explains an ANAPEC representative (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 12, lines 17-18). Also, **incomplete documents or wrong documents** lead to a **cancellation** of the whole process and often require a completely new application. Another issue is the **delayed and digitalization of the visa issue and application process** on the side of German embassies (L4S_DE-MA_prac_12). These institutional barriers have negative impact on the employers’ and candidates’ motivation and the candidates’ skills (loss): “An employer cannot wait a year” (Ibid) to fill a position, and yet “they wait because the need is enormous.” (Ibid). Many stakeholders pointed to the lack of consular personnel resources: “Countries want workers but invest nothing in their consular services... all facilitation efforts... can be completely blocked by very long visa procedures.”(L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 12, lines 23-28-23). This issue extends beyond Germany. Other European consulates face similar challenges.

Due to these visa issues, skilled migrants sometimes search for alternatives: “The process is **long and complex**, and at the end there’s always the visa application. And even just that – there are never enough appointments available. [...] This leads to the belief that, okay, if others go faster routes, then maybe I’ll get through there faster...” (L4S_MA_prac_10). This quote hints at the fact that irregular pathways are perceived as valid alternative as the official procedures seems to be “**not so easy and smart**” (Ibid.).

To address this, advocacy efforts are underway to increase consular staffing and appointment slots or to introduce fast-track procedures for program participants. In certain mobility schemes support is available: for instance, the project may finance and coordinate **group submission** of visa applications or **flag ‘urgent cases’**. However, the German consulate maintains its own procedures and may not grant formal ‘exemptions’ and shortcuts; applications are often processed in the established order, with no automatic priority for corridor candidates. However, information on this issue remains contradictory. Private recruiters on both sides also emphasized how important ‘good contact’ to consulate staff would be to get timely slots offered. Individual applications are particularly lengthy and often without success, while **project/program-based applications or group applications** through **partnership agreements or private contacts** can significantly facilitate and accelerate the process. Participating in respective public programs, hence, provides **privileged access to authority processes**.

After arrival, candidates convert the visa usually into a renewable four-year **residence permit**, a process handled by local immigration authorities. According to testimonies, this process is far

quicker than the initial visa procedure. Compared to other countries, one might say that the pre-departure phase is labourious, but – according to our data –, once in Germany the worker's administrative status seems to stabilize.

Despite these delays, corridor partners have implemented **practical support measures** to facilitate candidate mobility during this transitional period. Through THAMM+, the GIZ provides **financial and logistical support** to candidates before departure: “We assist the candidate, we pay for their plane ticket.” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_04, p. 21, lines 788-791). This type of support relieves candidates of major initial costs (plane tickets, often unaffordable for young job seekers; rental deposits; first month's rent) and also reassures employers, who see their future employees arriving under stable conditions. Travel itself is generally managed by the candidate once the visa is obtained, but with institutional support.

ANAPEC also helps with **pre-departure administrative preparation**. Candidates receive support to obtain required documents (international driving permits, certified translations of documents, etc.). In Morocco, these procedures run relatively smooth, and cooperation with the German embassy sometimes includes information sessions on German culture and laws (organized through institutions such as the Centers for Migration and Development (ZME) or the Goethe-Institute). These efforts, though peripheral, ease post-arrival adaptation and form an integral part of the state-funded skilled mobility process.

The **visa fee**—relatively high—remains another sensitive issue. Currently, Moroccan candidates must pay national/Schengen visa fees themselves (around €75–€100), which can be significant for them. Public programs have made efforts to remove these costs for candidates through reimbursement upon proof or advance coverage.

“Candidates... pay for the visa. Except when it's a mobility scheme... under a cooperation project where the project... also supports the candidate in their visa application.” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 12, lines 30-35)

Outside such projects, the cost remains the candidates' responsibility. Moroccan stakeholders have expressed the wish that Germany exempt Moroccan workers from visa fees, following the example of other European countries (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 12, lines 26-31). France, for example, has implemented specific visa issuing instruments to facilitate processes.⁷

Another aspect of mobility concerns the **visa type and conditions**. Visas granted to Moroccan workers in this corridor are usually long-stay national work visas (category D, multiple-entry). They are often valid for six months upon entry, during which they are converted into a four-year residence card (for stable contracts).

Family reunification is not immediate: Under German law, workers must typically reside for a certain period and hold a stable contract (at least one year) before bring their families. This particularly affects married candidates and women migrants, for whom leaving alone adds an extra barrier.

⁷ France introduced the “Passport Talent”, a multi-year residence permit for highly qualified profiles (researchers, experts, innovators, executives, artists). This scheme provides an accelerated procedure and benefits for families (spousal work rights, facilitated family reunification), demonstrating a political will to enhance the country's attractiveness for skilled mobility.

In conclusion, the migration/mobility dimension remains a **highly constrained segment**, largely due to **visa delays**. Actors are aware of this and **advocate for structural and institutional improvements on the German side** (greater consular capacity, simplification of certain steps). In the meantime, pragmatic solutions have been implemented to mitigate or circumvent waiting periods: financial assistance for patient candidates, regular communication to keep them informed, and adjusting recruitment calendars based on visa realities (e.g., launching calls for candidates early enough to anticipate delays). Physical mobility of skilled workers or apprentices is well-prepared and supported by state actors, yet still depends heavily on bureaucratic parameters beyond project or programs' control. This highlights the need to better align migration and consular realities: without such adaptation, even the most effective matching mechanisms risk being slowed down.

7 Implementation: Integration, retention, circulation, return

Onboarding and integration are crucial for the success of skill mobility partnerships, as they determine the retention of skilled workers, their well-being, and, eventually, prospects for circulation or return. Although the number of Moroccans who have migrated through public programs remains modest so far, the first signs are overall positive: professional and social integration appear to proceed smoothly, and no premature returns have been registered.

On the German side, several mechanisms exist to **facilitate the reception of newcomers**. In some states, as mentioned earlier, **"Welcome Centers", NGOs or migration communities or organizations** provide support and advice to employers and foreign workers or apprentices, helping with settlement procedures (registration for health insurance, local authorities, etc.), housing searches, language learning and connecting with the local community.

The example of Lower Saxony, cited by ANAPEC, shows that German **federal authorities** can play a driving role in supporting companies that recruit internationally and assisting them in the onboarding of foreign employees.

German companies that have recruited from the Moroccan labour market have generally shown themselves to be **well-prepared and committed** to integrating their Moroccan hires. Some employers have committed to **offering affordable accommodation** to foreign recruits, at least during the first months (often in youth housing or shared apartments), given the difficult German **housing market**, particularly for foreigners. Others offer **mentorship and onboarding systems** within the company (a reference colleague helping the newcomer understand workplace culture and procedures). Some organize **internal training or gradual trial periods** to allow employees time to adapt.

Yet, some stakeholders also reported that the work environment frequently **lacked intercultural sensitivity, a welcoming culture and openness and strategies to integrate international staff**. Racial discrimination and sentiments, particularly towards North African migrants were often perceived (L4S_MA_prac_14; L4S_DE-MA_prac_09).

"That's also a matter of **cultural norms**, when you're dealing with a business owner who says, 'I'd prefer to hire skilled workers only from Far East Asia,' as he put it. That's always an underlying assumption. There are **plenty of stereotypes and prejudices, even among German business owners**. And then **Morocco and Tunisia don't get me anywhere**." (L4S_DE_prac_01)

Besides good job-skills match, strong arrival/integration support various stakeholders highlighted the positive impact **diaspora communities** can have on **integration and retention**: Their active involvement is an important part of “THAMM Plus” (see, L4S_MA_prac_14). The idea is both to facilitate the integration process through personal and social contacts (to the national community) as well as to open opportunities of how to ‘**give something back**’ and **engage for the development of the origin country** on long-term. The Moroccan diaspora in Germany is smaller than in France or Belgium, yet, it is active and increasingly organized: “The Moroccan diaspora in Germany... is now becoming more and more organized... and is present in all regions of the country,” notes GIZ (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 11, lines 25-27). We are seeing the emergence of Moroccan associations in Germany, often supported by the POMIR project (“Projet pour la Mobilisation de la Diaspora Marocaine”), led by GIZ. Though still recent, these diaspora networks play a key social role, welcoming and supporting newcomers, organizing cultural events, and providing guidance on essential public services and regulations. For instance, a young apprentice arriving in Germany can be connected with other Moroccans in the same region, helping to avoid isolation.

Another important aspect of integration is **family reunification**. Currently, the rule requires qualified workers to spend at least twelve months in Germany before applying to bring their spouse and children, with the process itself taking several additional months — meaning that, in practice, reunification may only occur after two years or more. This constraint weighs particularly on **women migrants, especially mothers**, who are often reluctant to leave children behind for extended periods: “For women, clearly, it’s an additional obstacle” when it comes to migrating alone (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 15, line 27). So far, the majority of candidates migrating to Germany were **young single men**, which means the full impact of family reunification policies has yet to be felt. However, looking forward, there will be a need to better inform candidates about these waiting periods and possibly advocate for faster reunification procedures, particularly to ease this burden on women’s mobility.

In terms of **circulation (back-and-forth mobility) and definitive return**, it is still too early to draw firm conclusions, as few beneficiaries have completed their experience. The declared objective of the public skill mobility partnerships is not specifically to encourage return, but rather to establish a “win-win” migration model, where migrants fill labour gaps in Germany and improve their own prospects, while potentially becoming assets for Morocco when they eventually return with enhanced skills and resources. Nonetheless, structures already exist to **facilitate eventual return**. GIZ mentioned, for example, the RECOSA/POMIRE project, which, in collaboration with IOM, supports Moroccans abroad wishing to invest or resettle: “The Centers for Migration and Development provide... counselling and guidance for returnees... who wish to resettle in Morocco after years abroad.” If a qualified Moroccan worker decides to return in a few years, they may benefit from such programs (professional reintegration support, business start-up assistance, etc.). Yet, **return policies** for participants of skill mobility partnerships in Morocco have **not been developed so far**.

As for temporary circulation, some pilot programs already involve non-permanent stays. For example, the “Young Professionals” agreement with **the Netherlands** allows young Moroccan employees to spend six to twelve months working in Dutch companies before returning home. No such scheme exists yet with Germany, but **short-term exchange formats** (technical internships, dual-country apprenticeships, etc.) could be envisioned in the future as another way to share skills while ensuring return of talent.

Against the background of these measures and policies feedback on integration and retention, so far, indicates: “For now, it’s going very well. We’ve even received very **positive feedback**. Companies... are satisfied with the people who are there,” according to a THAMM+ project coordinator at GIZ. Significantly, there have been no reported dropouts or early returns based on our empirical data with state-led programs: “We haven’t had any returns. No one has come back so far. And for those in Germany, things are going well.” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_04, p. 10, lines 40-41). These observations suggest that skilled migrant **retention seems to be strong**, at least in short term (one to two years). Long-term monitoring is required to evaluate whether Moroccan migrants plan to stay or return.

In summary, the integration and retention in the Morocco-Germany corridor is evolving: it seems that migrants are adapting well, and employers are satisfied. The key to success appears to be: Individual follow-up (each migrant knows whom to contact, employer, GIZ, or even ANAPEC remotely, in case of difficulty); Diaspora anchoring (Moroccans find support through compatriots already in Germany); Engagement of local German authorities (who are beginning to structure their foreign worker reception systems). Ultimately, the ideal of a migration skill corridor is one where individuals can, throughout their careers, move easily and successfully between two countries, transfer knowledge, and even launch binational projects. While this vision is still emerging, the establishment of this foundation of trust and successful individual integrations marks a significant step in that direction.

8 The role of technologies

Technologies play an increasingly important role in skilled migration, both in facilitating recruitment and training and overcoming geographical distance. While this corridor remains largely based on strong human interaction, digital transformation brings new opportunities to enhance policy efficiency and accessibility.

One area of impact is the **digitization of recruitment and information procedures**. Canada, Morocco’s historical partner in labour mobility, has served, for instance, as a model with its virtual “Journées Québec” job fairs and robust web platforms:

“Canada has a very solid experience with Morocco... they have all their systems of job days, information days about Canada, their online platforms... we also tend, for Germany, to move toward this model, with online platforms... Journées Québec, Journées Canada... for Germany as well.” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 7, lines 02-18)

In practical terms, this means **developing digital portals** where German job offers are published and accessible to Moroccan candidates (also in French and/or Arabic), organizing online information sessions on opportunities in Germany, and even holding virtual job fairs (webinars where employers present vacancies and chat with candidates).

Since 2020, several **online job fairs** have been tested: During the pandemic virtual interviews replaced in-person missions, and ANAPEC broadcasted live sessions in Social Media to inform candidates about sectors and companies recruiting in Germany. The long-term ambition is to create a **bilateral recruiting platform**, following the example of Morocco-Canada. This would increase visibility and access and simplify the matching by allowing recruiters to preselect CVs. AI-powered tools could be used to identify suitable candidates within the ANAPEC database.

Digital learning and training tools have also brought flexibility and increasing access. As mentioned earlier, ANAPEC offers **language and pre-departure e-learning courses**. Candidates use also free or paid platforms or apps for self-organized language learning. GIZ and OFPPT are considering the integration of online technical or language training modules, such as introductory courses to German professional standards in specific trades, accessible to candidates before departure. This would in long-term lower costs (reduction of trainer, facility or travel costs, etc.). The pandemic also demonstrated that **remote training and coaching** can be effective: during pilot projects, German trainers coached Moroccan candidates remotely for job interviews and tested their skills. Such practices, unimaginable a few years ago, become more common, reduce travel costs and speed up processes.

It was also observed that candidates increasingly make use of **digital AI application services** during the application process, for example, to improve the language, content and style (L4S_DE-MA_prac_12). These tools make it sometimes difficult for employers to further assess the actual language or communication competence of (international) candidates and highlight the importance of on-site/personal interviews.

In the future, also **qualification recognition** could partly rely on technology, for instance, through online validation tools (such as, virtual reality practical assessments or online theoretical exams).

Technologies also help **bridge linguistic and informational gaps** between the two countries. An example mentioned by GIZ: there is a website providing statistics on foreigners in Germany, but available only in German; however, “now it’s quite easy to translate” into English. The use of **automatic translation tools** allows better access to information in different languages. Similarly, for candidates, **internet access** offers a direct window to Germany and the German labour and vocational training market: Social Media or online forums open doors to learn about life and work there and exchange with fellow citizens already in Germany about their challenges and experiences. This easier access to on the ground information helps **align expectations with reality, reducing the risk of disillusionment** upon arrival.

The role of technology also extends to **maintaining the transnational social and professional links and networks**. Moroccan workers in Germany use Social Media and other tools extensively to stay in contact with their families and with implementing organizations when needed. This makes migration more bearable (one no longer ‘disappears’ after leaving, and daily contact to the origin country, the family and social network can be maintained).

Against this background, public institutions increasingly use Social Media by proactively **creating chat groups** for program cohorts, to answer administrative or practical questions and support. This digital approach facilitates monitoring and evaluation after project end.

Many stakeholders also emphasized the **need of further modernization and digitalization of the German bureaucracy**. One step into the right direction could be the “Work and Stay Agency”⁸ with digital services and the digital visa portal⁹, besides the official information portal “Make it in Germany”¹⁰. Official information in Arabic language is generally scarce.

⁸ <https://www.workandstayagentur.de/>

⁹ <https://digital.diplo.de/>

¹⁰ <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/>

Also, German language exams at Goethe-Institute, for example, still require physical presence. This shows that **digitalization has not yet fully penetrated official procedures**. In addition, the digital divide can exclude some candidates (those without stable internet access cannot easily follow online courses). Stakeholders we talked to were aware of this and tried to compensate by offering internet access within ANAPEC spaces for online classes or reimbursing travel costs to attend testing centers (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 15, lines 9-18)).

In conclusion, digital technology appears as a **lever for rationalization, democratization and expansion** of the corridor. Through online recruiting and training platforms, more candidates across Morocco, including in rural areas, can be reached and informed about migration opportunities. Digital tools can reduce certain costs (fewer exploratory missions) and speed up steps (online interviews, remote training). They also help transform the corridor into a dynamic network: over time, one could imagine an online community of Morocco-Germany program alumni sharing experiences and advising newcomers. Ultimately, technology enhances human work without replacing it: personal contact remains essential (to build trust, negotiate agreements, etc.), but it is increasingly supported by digital infrastructures that strengthen the corridor's resilience and scope. Lastly, it needs to be mentioned, that digital solutions are often driven by **private innovation and companies**, while public institution often lag behind.

9 Partnership/Program monitoring evaluation

Several mechanisms are used to assess the Morocco-Germany partnership and its public mobility programs, to measure success, identify obstacles, and guide improvements. Evaluation is usually carried out quantitatively (number of people trained, placed, retention rates, etc.) and qualitatively (stakeholder satisfaction, relevance of processes, etc.), and involves both operational actors and strategic decision-makers. Yet, it is highly difficult to gain access to respective internal evaluations. More transparency is required in order to effectively evaluate respective programs that usually require high public investments. In the following, we draw on insights we gained in the field.

Many stakeholders reported about the overall positive partnership experiences. It is expected that the partnership will be more professionalized and institutionalized over the next years.

“We are **striving to expand our cooperation with Morocco**. Simply because we have found that, first of all, **ANAPEC is an extremely reliable partner**. It is really important to **have structures in place that work well**. [...] **When you have someone like ANAPEC, you simply have well-rounded processes** that you can rely on the long run and that work. And secondly, we have noticed that there is a **very high affinity for Germany in Morocco**. So, we definitely find people there, **both skilled workers and trainees, who already have relevant German language skills before we even accept them into the project**. [...] we see **good structures for cooperation there**. And at the moment, we're actually **only being slowed down a bit by the labour market**.” (L4S_DE_pol_11)

For the partnership project “**THAMM Plus**” it was emphasized by implementation stakeholders that the **establishment of bilateral institutional structures and private partnership networks** was pivotal, as well as ‘**trying out**’ **different legal pathways** and finding mutual ‘solutions’ to barriers. **High numbers of recruitment or the scaling up** of recruiting numbers, in contrast, were deliberately **not perceived as main goal**.

Stakeholders complained about the **instable financial situation** that risks that the established structures and processes quickly fall into pieces again (L4S_MA_prac_11). GIZ considers that a **multi-stakeholder funding** approach is needed, involving a mix of public funds (for the collective benefit of an expanded skilled workforce), employer contributions, and candidate investment to demonstrate commitment.

On the side of German and Moroccan implementation stakeholders, the **German bureaucracy** was frequently mentioned as key factor that challenges ‘successful’ project/program realization.

On the operational side, **regular meetings between ANAPEC and BA/GIZ** serve as ongoing exchange and evaluation measures. According to ANAPEC, the relationship with Germany is closely monitored:

“We discuss, we communicate regularly. We... meet regularly. We exchange views... We propose approaches between us” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 16–17, lines 35–1)

Each recruitment mission or pilot project is followed by a debriefing between partners to assess what worked and what did not. For example, after the first cohorts of apprentices of the bilateral recruiting agreement were sent, both partners observed that the model was successful (good integration rates) and decided to make it permanent through “MAzubi”. Similarly, the THAMM experience revealed obstacles (visas, etc.) that are now being addressed as mentioned above. Both ANAPEC and GIZ consider the partnership dynamic and evolving: “I think it’s a partnership that evolves every year,” said the ANAPEC representative, highlighting mutual respect and transparency. This fluid dialogue appears as an indicator of the formal partnership’s good health (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 16, line 35).

At the level of specific public programs, progress reports and indicators are tracked. For example, the THAMM+ project has objectives in terms of structures established (number of agreements signed, information centres opened) rather than large migration volumes, since its primary official goal is mutual labour migration governance. Other programs, such as PALIM (with Belgium), have tested joint training approaches and compiled lessons learned in reports. ANAPEC notes that there are “a lot of projects on mobility” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 14, line 20) (THAMM, PALIM, WAFIRA, etc.) and that it is time “to draw conclusions and move to a larger scale, to generalize them.” (Ibid).

This reflects an overall assessment: pilots were **useful for experimentation**, but impact will remain limited until these experiences are **institutionalized or in parts taken over by private actors (“Trail blazer function”)**. Success seems to be, therefore, in the case of THAMM Plus not be measured by the number of people placed but by the ability to institutionalize good and sustainable practices and structures.

In terms of perceived successes, both public parties agree that the partnership has established a **solid legal and institutional framework**. GIZ considers that “the successes are really this governance system that has been set up between Morocco and Germany... now it works” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_04, p. 13, lines 1–7); actors seem to know each other and cooperate effectively. ANAPEC describes it as a “real partnership,” (L4S_MA-DE_prac_01, p. 16, lines 12–33) where each side understands the other’s constraints (skill shortages on the one side, unemployment on the other side) and works hand in hand to address them. This convergence of views is a positive indicator: there seems to be so far no evident frustration on either side; instead, a **shared vision of partnership** has emerged.

As for persistent challenges, evaluations we received on the ground point mainly to: The **visa/consulate problem**, an external bottleneck largely beyond the partnership's control (see previous sections). All oral reports mention it as a politically driven issue to be resolved. The **sustainable financing** of skill mobility partnership activities: GIZ clearly identifies that the ideal model would involve a joint public-private-contribution, as much of the current setup relies on temporary EU-funding. German employers will have to invest more in the future (some already pay for language training for their recruits, but not systematically), and both states need to establish durable and fair co-financing mechanisms (e.g., binational training funds). This is tracked as a success criterion: a program is only truly successful if it can continue without external or public aid or be replicated by others. **Institutional sustainability**: one risk noted is that progress achieved so far partly depends on a few highly committed individual employees. In the event of staff turnover or administrative restructuring, there is a need to avoid starting from scratch. The proposed solution is to officially formalize institutional agreements and procedures. "There must be institutional agreements that are signed, so that there is continuity when staff changes," insists GIZ (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_04, p. 14, lines 23-26). This aspect is measurable: In 2023, a bilateral framework agreement on labour migration partnership was signed between the Moroccan and German governments (through the Joint Migration Group), representing an important milestone that formalizes the collaboration and shields it from future political or institutional changes.

Quantitatively, the **number of beneficiaries** of the skill mobility partnerships in this corridor **remains modest** compared with more established corridors (Morocco-France, Morocco-Spain, etc.). For instance, over ten years, annual departures to Germany numbered in the hundreds at most, far behind the thousands bound for France or Canada (Schäfer, I., & Ho Dac, M.-L. 2026)¹¹. However, the trend has been rising over the past five years, showing that ongoing actions are beginning to bear fruit. Stakeholders noted that the quality of migration also matters: a single well-matched, sustainable placement is worth more than ten unsuccessful ones (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 11, lines 01–07). In this sense, the success rate—defined as the share of candidates who remain in post for several years—is a monitored indicator. To date, this rate is very high, based on our empirical insights, as **no dropouts have been recorded** (though the **sample significantly remains small** considering the **high investments**). **Employer satisfaction**, gathered through written feedback or surveys, is also part of the qualitative evaluation, and, as mentioned, remains **very high**.

At the strategic level, evaluation considers how the partnerships fit within the broader vision of both countries. On the Moroccan side, according to our interviews, the partnerships align with the **national strategy for professional emigration** in certain sectors, which aims to make **use of surplus skills while protecting strategic domestic sectors**. ANAPEC states that "all the pilots have allowed us to learn a lot about how to do things... everyone knows how it should be done. Now it's time to implement it." (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 14, lines 02–04), stressing the need to capitalize on these institutional recruiting experiences and make them permanent policy. A key indicator of success from the Moroccan side is that **Morocco maintains its demographic advantage and pool of employable young graduates while providing international opportunities for those unable to find suitable jobs or training locally**.

¹¹ Schäfer, I., & Ho Dac, M.-L. (2026). Morocco as a Migration Partner: Goals, Formats, Effects, and Next Steps for Germany, Spain, and France. DGAP Report No. 7. German Council on Foreign Relations.

On the German side, evaluation focuses on the **contribution to labour needs**: attracting a few hundred Moroccan workers is **modest in scale** but seen as a pilot for diversifying recruitment channels beyond Europe or Asia.

The THAMM project is closely observed by European institutions as a **potentially replicable model for partnerships** with other origin countries. The partnership's reputation for **ethical conduct and mutual respect** is also an intangible but real measure of success: if this corridor is perceived as balanced, it strengthens political trust between Morocco and the EU, paving the way for further cooperation.

In summary, the bilateral skill mobility partnerships and programs have been evaluated overall very positive by the various stakeholders in terms of institutional cooperation (partners praise the exemplary collaboration), promising tangible results (successful placements, structures established), and clear areas for improvement: scaling up, stabilizing funding, and removing administrative bottlenecks. Conclusions converge on the idea that the corridor must now enter a scale-up phase, building on accumulated lessons. The shared goal is to move from a series of pilot projects to a permanent structure integrated into the public policies of both countries and led by private actors. Real success will be achieved when the corridor operates routinely, with a steady flow of circulating skills, rather than as an experimental, highly publicly-funded initiative with small numbers.

10 Consequences and effects

Strategic skill mobility partnerships such as “THAMM Plus” aim at facilitating fair, equal and transparent recruitment of skilled migrants for the mutual benefits of all partners involved: the migrants themselves, the origin government, the destination government and the employers. Given the (potential) contested interests, unequal power relations and positionalities, ethical questions need to be considered, including talent outflow, social and economic development and cost sharing.

From the **perspective of the German state**, the main benefit lies to increasing the national skilled labour resources. Through recruitment expensive structural reforms of the labour or educational training market are not required to upskill or reskill the local population, including elderly, women or (present) forced migrants or to increase wages or invest into automation. As the skilling primarily takes place in the origin, Germany also benefits from the wage differential and the origin's skilling investments. The partnership also facilitates the selection, filtering and differentiating between ‘desired’ skilled migrants and ‘undesired’ ‘irregular’ migrants. The programs primarily target highly motivated and skilled migrants – the ‘high potentials’ within a sector/occupation. This raises questions of fairness and long-term impact on the origin, if those skilled workers left behind are the ones with less motivation and qualification.

From the **perspective of the Moroccan state**, the skill labour mobility offers the opportunity to relieve the local economy and vocational training market (due to high population of unskilled or unemployed youth). There is also opportunity for skill return and circulation due to the geographical proximity in the long-term. The partnerships also open new legal pathways to Europe and strengthen the governmental and institutional establishment of a joint legal framework. As skilling primarily takes place in Morocco (and the vocational training in Germany is still small in numbers, yet, increasing) Morocco is investing more into the skilled (migrant) population. This raises questions of brain drain/brain gain. Although private investments of

companies/employers, recruiters and colleges/training centers are visibly increasing they primarily prepare for the German labour and employment market (not the Moroccan).

For German **employers**, the main effect is relief from labour shortages. Moroccan recruits fill vacancies that are difficult to staff locally, either because such jobs are unattractive to Germans or because there are simply not enough applicants. Employers thus benefit from a young, motivated, and partially trained workforce. The costs on their side may include investments in language or professional training or onboarding and integration. Depending on the sector/occupation, these costs are small compared to other options, such as increasing wages, organizational reforms, automation, upskilling/reskilling or retaining of local population or closing organizational units/teams. The benefit for the German economy is very clear and without doubt: Companies receive young, well-educated and motivated workers or apprentices. While apprenticeships require more 'investment' on the side of employers, they open the long-term opportunity for ideal skill match and 'return' of investment – as the candidate is skilled by German standards from scratch. At a broader level, the partnerships help diversify recruitment sources in the Germany economy: traditionally oriented toward Eastern Europe or Asia (India, Vietnam, etc.), Germany is now expanding its outreach to the Maghreb, which helps distribute risks of shortage and fosters new economic ties.

For the **migrants** themselves, the new opportunities are also overall attractive. They gain stable employment, higher salaries than they would earn in Morocco, exposure to a new environment, valuable experience, and often upgraded skills (especially in the case of apprentices or those receiving further training in Germany). Many view it as a career and personal development opportunity and a path to upward social mobility. Yet, there are personal costs: (temporary) family separation, cultural adaptation, financial burdens, etc. As discussed earlier, those who succeed in completing all stages are often the most resourceful and financially able, raising questions of social equity and tensions. Currently, there is a bias toward candidates from backgrounds able to fund preparation (intensive language courses, travel, etc.), while youth from disadvantaged regions may face more barriers. Partners are aware of this:

“To ensure equal opportunities between people with low income and those with high income, for now, that’s not the case. Those with higher income can afford language courses and exam fees” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_04, p. 12, lines 37–40)

Although the quotation is partial, it highlights the challenge of social inclusion and equal opportunities at the origin. The risk to avoid is that the corridor benefits only a small, well-connected and resourceful elite, thus reinforcing inequality. Some emerging solutions include providing language training scholarships to deserving but low-income candidates (through public or private funding) and decentralizing information services to reach rural areas.

Officially, the partnerships desire a **balanced partnership** in which each side benefits. Morocco sees in this corridor an opportunity to integrate its young, qualified workers into the international labour market, thus reducing pressure on domestic employment while potentially benefiting from skill transfers. Germany, for its part, views it as a structured way to address labour shortages in specific sectors without relying on irregular migration or contributing to a unilateral brain drain from a vulnerable country. Project coordinators emphasize this **notion of symmetry**: “We must have precisely an equal partnership where no one loses, where everyone, both states and individuals, wins.” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 18, lines 04–05). This statement captures the spirit in which the corridor needs to be conceived: Unlike earlier migration schemes (for instance, the “guest worker” agreements of the 1960s, which were more one-sided), this model officially aims

for a situation in which Morocco does not lose its skilled workers and potentials to the detriment of its own social and economic development, while Germany contributes to the training of those talents. In practice, this means that both countries **co-invest**: Morocco by providing basic education and training to its youth, and Germany by offering complementary training and professional experience and opportunities, with the hope that the young person either remains in Germany and contributes to its economy or returns more qualified and contributes to Morocco's economy and society—in both cases, there is no “net loss.” But in how far are these alluring claims actually implemented?

Because: **Concerns about brain drain and skill loss remain**, particularly on the Moroccan side. Certain strategic sectors, if opened to large-scale migration, could suffer, with healthcare being the most often cited example. For this reason, **practical safeguards and monitoring** and **joint negotiation measures** have been put in place and are essential. ANAPEC refuses to promote job offers abroad for profiles that are critically needed:

“Health, it's only nurses and caregivers. So, we avoid publishing job offers for nurses. Why? Because it causes the departure of nurses who work in public services.” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 07, lines 15–17)

This choice shows that Morocco aims to use the corridor and related agreements and partnerships **selectively and strategically to minimize internal negative and unplanned effects**: promoting fields with a surplus of graduates (for example, IT, where many graduates struggle to find local employment) or sectors where temporary migration can be beneficial (such as construction, where large local projects are cyclical). **Sensitive fields are strictly controlled or excluded to prevent shortages**. So far, this has worked relatively well according to our informants: given the limited number of departures, the impact on the local labour market remains negligible. In the medium term, however, if the corridor expands, balance must be maintained, for instance, if the German IT or healthcare sector begins recruiting large numbers of Moroccan workers, Morocco will need to train enough to meet both domestic and international demand.

In terms of overall “**gains and losses**,” following aspects need to be highlighted:

- **Morocco**: Gains = reduction of graduate unemployment, potential remittances, skill development (through returnees or engaged diaspora), international skill recognition; Costs = risk of talent loss in key sectors, investment in primary, secondary and/or professional education benefiting other countries, social and cultural impacts of youth absence.
- **Germany**: Gains = immediate access to skilled labour, demographic rejuvenation, sectoral skill shortage relieve or renewal, cultural diversity and innovation, strengthened international cooperation; Costs = financial and organizational effort for integration, adaptation to workers from different systems, and competition with other global talent destinations, risk for social tensions.
- **Migrants**: Gains = improved income and job stability, international experience, professional and social advancement, language acquisition; Costs = family separation, lack of social network, cultural adjustment, stress, and financial sacrifices.
- **Companies**: Gains = quick solution to skill shortage, facilitated recruiting and integration process, access to already qualified or trained workforce. Costs: investments into onboarding, integration and diversity measures, investments into additional language and professional training.

The public-funded skill mobility partnerships such as “THAMM Plus” follow **high ethical standards of fairness (including the employer-pays-principle) and transparency**. On the ground, the project is **highly complex, costly and coordination-intensive** in terms of establishing a joint legal and institutional framework – also due to the multi-stakeholder engagement and the multi-level partnerships, both with national and subnational actors, with private, public and in parts civil representatives. The recruited numbers remain low. With the big investments, the lengthy process and the high selection process the projects **tend to produce high expectations on all sides. It is open, whether these standards can be met on long-term or for a larger-scale. Private partnerships (under the given bilateral frameworks) work often faster, less bureaucratic and more adjusted** to the respective needs and requirements of all involved parties than large scale multilateral and multistakeholder programs.

From an ethical perspective, the partnerships aim to be exemplary by **officially promoting safe, legal, transparent, and jointly managed migration**. They seek to avoid exploitation, trafficking and abuses found in many migration channels where unscrupulous and unregulated private intermediaries exploit candidates or where poor working conditions await them abroad. ANAPEC and GIZ view themselves as **guarantors of this ethical standard**: “Labour migration... is the most respectful form of migration... Going to another country based on a job offer helps avoid the risk of ending up in irregular situations and facing many difficulties” (L4S_ MA-DE_prac_01, p. 18, lines 11–13).

The public skill mobility partnership initiatives have the potential to encourage **an alternative to irregular migration**, which often entails dangerous journeys, undeclared work, and a lack of protection. In this sense, it channels migratory aspirations into a **positive framework**. Yet, it needs to be highlighted that – so far – the respective programs only recruit a **very small number** of candidates, while the majority of recruitment continues to take place via private channels or irregular pathways, where candidates often rely on the good-will of agencies or employers.

Given the attractive ethical standards and claims, the partnership between Morocco and Germany may serve as **role model for other partnerships** between EU member states and North African origins. As such, the partnership has the potential for a **more balanced power** relation, where **the origin is not a passive recipient but active participant** of joint labor migration policies: Moroccan interlocutors stress that Europe should not merely ‘demand’ labour but need to invest into skill development. This principle of **co-responsibility** could lead to greater EU support for regular skilling centres in Morocco (as Enabel¹² does for Belgium) and simplified visa procedures.

The Morocco-Germany corridor stands **outside traditional postcolonial relationships** (such as Morocco-France or Morocco-Belgium). The relationship is, therefore, **politically more neutral and less burdened by historical political, societal, institutional or cultural asymmetries**. Though an **economic gap** between an established and emerging economy remains. Actors in the field actively strive **not to reproduce related dependency patterns and power asymmetries**: by **emphasizing reciprocity**, they aim to counter what some call the “visa hierarchy” (where the EU opens its doors only enough to meet its own economic needs without deeper engagement to offer equal opportunities for the origins). The existence of the “**Joint Migration Group**” gives Morocco a stronger voice. Still, Germany has a clear and instant economic gain, while Morocco

¹² Final evaluation report of the project “Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM)” Project code: MAR2000111 Countries: Belgium, Morocco, Tunisia, Implementing agency: Cota ASBL, Final report submission date: March 5, 2025.

bears more potential economic and societal loss (its skilled youth), while its future gains in terms of social and economic development are difficult to quantify. Hence, **further efforts to balance this asymmetry** are required.

It should also be noted that **Germany competes with other destinations**. A young Moroccan who learns German might just as easily emigrate to Austria or Switzerland (same language) or, if fluent in English, to Canada or the United Kingdom. The public-funded skill mobility partnerships provide **strong and cost-free institutional support for migrants**, including training, housing and follow-up and **create a highly positive national image** about German society and economy. These measures **make Germany more attractive** in the global market for skilled workers and increase the chances that migrants eventually chose Germany for their migration journey rather than trying their luck independently in Canada, UK, etc. In this way, the skill mobility partnership efforts compensate to a certain degree for the linguistic disadvantage and institutional barriers (recognition, visa, etc.).

In addition, the evaluation of the partnership consequences/effects also depend strongly on the **time-frame**: While quick wins for all partners are clear, the **long-term effects**, particularly on brain drain and social and economic development at the origin are difficult to evaluate and require **constant monitoring and flexible policy adjustment**.

If the high ethical commitments are met on the ground and continue and the necessary adjustments are made (for instance, improvements in consular processing and shared training funding), the Morocco-Germany corridor could evolve into a sustainable model with long-term benefits for both societies and economies. The difficulty, however, lies on **how to negotiate and implement a shared responsibility and distribution of benefits and costs on the ground** on long-term. This seems to be a **complex, contested, multi-stakeholder ongoing** process.

The European Union delegation in Rabat reported that skills represent “the backbone” (EU Delegation, Morocco) of the EU’s action in Morocco, covering a wide range of sectors including education, TVET, employment, social protection, health, innovation, and higher education. For this same delegation, it is essential to work in an **integrated manner** and to support skills for employment at the origin – hand in hand with mobility initiatives to ensure a win-win relationship.

As the skill mobility partnership program “THAMM” is an example for an **EU-funded project** (compared to national recruiting agreements), the processes and outcomes are also **shaped by (restrictive or liberalizing) national labour migration policies and regulations**:

“We also try to understand and gather the initiatives of the member states because, obviously, legal migration— and that is something I should have said from the start— is not a 100% European policy. I mean, it depends a lot, first of all, on the member states, because the numbers of people who will enter a specific member state depend entirely on those member states and the visas they issue. There are EU directives on certain types of legal migration, but these directives are transposed into national law and do not specify the numbers, which depend on the member States. So, it is a member state policy, which means that our role is to support and open possibilities, but in the end, it depends on the member states.” (EU Delegation, Morocco)

As mentioned, legal migration policy is primarily the responsibility of member states: they decide the number of visas and work permits. The EU provides directives and funds projects to

harmonize procedures. This reality limits the capacity of EU-funded partnerships to increase flows quickly and underscores the importance of continuous dialogue between destination and origin states and coordination between national and European institutions.

The future success of this approach will depend on the ability to **scale up pilot mechanisms** and **remove the legal and administrative barriers** identified earlier.

11 Summary of key points

There is **high mutual interest** between Morocco and Germany to (re-)strengthen and expand the partnership. Yet, there are **structural and political differences and the labour and employment markets historically developed differently** and **similar skill demands** (that makes recruiting unethical in certain sectors or occupations) **make smooth cooperation sometimes difficult** (e.g. in terms of skill recognition or joint skilling).

In general, the **relationship between the public employment** agencies was mutually described as **overall highly positive, trustful and cooperative**. At the same time, from the German side, high investments into mutual exchange and joint governmental procedures were made, while the Moroccan side demanded more investments into skill development.

In comparison to other corridors, **social and diaspora communities** play an increasingly important factor as **facilitators of private partnerships** due to their cultural, political, societal knowledge as well as their experience into the educational and employment markets on both sides.

Although **Morocco signed the ILO convention on private recruiting**, the corridor-specific skilled migration recruiting **infrastructure expanded significantly and visibly** in the last years, with many private actors (language, training or recruiting agencies, also highly specific, such as for vocational training in the German healthcare sector). Stakeholders reported of the problem of **unethical recruiters or language centers** in Morocco that offer expensive services or work with unethical practices (including binding clauses). On the other side, there is high willingness from the side of young Moroccans to make respective personal 'investments'. Often Moroccan skilled migrants do not know about ethical recruiting programs or state-led programs such as "THAMM" are still too small in scale.

While ethical recruiting becomes increasingly important also in the field of healthcare, the problem of **dropout and job change** was frequently mentioned by German employers. Moroccans have to **prove their willingness and motivation to work (at least for a certain period of time after recruiting)** in the respective sectors (such as healthcare) for sustainable recruiting from the perspective of German employers. It was regarded as problematic to use (private) recruiting into healthcare simply as 'bridge' to Europe/Germany.

The geographical proximity between both countries **opens doors for real skill exchange, circularity and mutual benefits** in terms of skill investments. Yet, Germany is not the only partner trying to convince Morocco to adapt the educational system and occupational profiles to the German 'standards'. It is open and unclear whether there is institutional change into which direction. What further complicates the partnership, is the potential similar skill needs, which makes it unethical to recruit for example construction workers, engineers, or doctors from Morocco. There is already **high self-organized skill flow in certain high-skilled sectors, such as engineering and doctors**. Stakeholders discussed this differently: while some emphasized that it

will not be possible to ‘stop’ this kind of skill movement, others pointed out that at one point certain sectors or occupations will be **system relevant and essential for the development** of a country and potential regulations to retain skills for a certain period of time could be an alternative policy approach.

Public skill mobility partnerships such as “THAMM Plus” primarily aim at the establishment of a joint political and institutional framework, while numbers do not play the major role. This highlights the **mutual importance of establishing a long-term, sustainable and mutual beneficial policies and infrastructure**, in contrast, to small pioneer projects. At the same time, “THAMM” is currently implemented with several destination partners (including Italy and Belgium), which puts Morocco under pressure on which direction to go (and for how long).

From the German side, the interest of private partners into cooperation with Moroccan stakeholders was high, but there was a **lack of information, knowledge and understanding of the Moroccan political and institutional structure, the development, system and quality of the Moroccan vocational training system** and respective contact institutions or persons. Networking events on the subnational level were effective and important to initiate private partnerships. Often lack of trust and cultural misunderstandings play in too.

A major issue mentioned (besides visa and bureaucracy issues) was the question of skill recognition. As the corridor is characterized by **various mobility types and skill sectors/occupations** (that also are dynamic based on the local skill demands), it is difficult to establish partnerships: Many sectors or occupations are involved, often in small numbers (in comparison, for example, to the Philippines-Germany corridor shaped by nurse migration). Moroccan public stakeholders emphasized the need to further facilitate recognition processes, for example through **sample reports or cohort / group recognition**.

12 Good practices

- In order to better match the skills and expectations, **work and training simulation and testing centers** on the ground at the origin can help to practice, experience and try out the new profession or work environment.
- The German “**Work and stay agency**” (WSA)¹³ is a recently initiated digital platform to centralize and digitalize all bureaucratic procedures of the skilled worker recruitment process. The idea is a ‘one-stop-shop’ government with full service for employers and future employees, including transparent information about the processing status or missing documents. The goal is to increase the modernization, digitalization, bureaucracy reduction and, hence, the efficiency and planning of the process.
- **Apprenticeship migration** (compared to trained and licensed skilled migrants) is an effective and attractive option to circumvent recognition issues. From an ethical viewpoint, it adds to fairer education cost distribution between origins and destinations.
- Programs such as “THAMM Plus” pay particular attention to **ethical recruitment and protection of the origin’s interests**. For instance, it is avoided to target professionals already employed in Morocco to prevent disruption to local businesses. **Prior intra-institutional consultations** are held to exclude or limit offers in sectors or occupations considered sensitive for Morocco (e.g., public health) to avoid a brain drain of vital skills.

¹³ https://www.workandstayagentur.de/wsa_entwurf.pdf

13 Policy recommendations

- There is a **lack of official information on the German education system, employment market and the different sectors or occupations** (in demand) in languages such as **Arabic or French**. Often private webpages offer respective information service/platforms and are mistaken for public websites, but sometimes contain fault information. **Information marketing campaigns are required in Arabic or French on job profiles that are relevant and highly demanded in Germany** (but with not complementary job profile in Morocco) such as specific jobs in the steel, electrical or wood processing industry. This gives a better picture to young Moroccans what the job opportunities Germany offers.
- In highly specific job sectors or occupations the **simulation and testing** of practical and theoretical knowledge is important. While it is highly difficult for Moroccans to prove work experience – often due to the highly informal sector – it would be a door opener if training centers for various occupations of the German vocational training system would open that offer the testing, preparation or adjustment/adaptation measures on-site. This would entail private and public investments into technology, teaching material and/or equipment.
- The **ILO Convention on private recruiting** still needs to be ratified by Germany. While it was ratified by Morocco the convention needs to be fully enforced. This would contribute to a better regulation and control of private recruiting agencies and protection of migrants.
- **German cultural centers and services** (such as Goethe-Institut) could be further established (following the example of France or Spain) in order to facilitate access to learning the German language, networking and exchange.
- **Short-term exchange formats** (technical internships, dual-country apprenticeships, etc.) could be envisioned in the future as another way to share skills while ensuring return of talent.
- There is a danger that skill mobility partnerships only benefit a small, well-connected, resourceful elite, thus reinforcing social and economic inequality at the origin. One solution could be to provide **language training scholarships** to deserving but low-income candidates (through public or private funding) and **decentralize information services** to reach rural areas.
- **Ensuring greater diversity of profiles** recruited within the partnership programs with regard to **gender** equality: attracting more women and in terms of **age** bias: targeting senior workers and addressing their specific needs, such as family.
- **Managing return policies**: Ensuring that returning home is a success, not a setback. This could involve former program participants who could share their experiences as trainer of trainers for new programs.
- **Creating genuine binational professional networks**.

Data and Sources

This corridor report is based upon interviews conducted in 2025. For the migration skill corridor Morocco-Germany, 34 interviews were conducted by the Link4Skills Morocco-Germany team. These interviews include at the policy level decision-makers, politicians, executives or employees of administrations, ministries, institutions or agencies at various governmental levels and practitioners and stakeholders at the implementation level, including public or private employment/recruitment agencies, language or professional training centers, implementing institutions and organizations, professional chambers, trade unions, welfare and civil society organizations, migrant communities and returnee associations, and employers/companies. On the Moroccan side we jointly conducted, amongst others, interviews with international organizations such as the ILO, IOM, the EU Delegation, Dutch embassy. This data has been complemented with documents, statistics and studies

List of interviews

Corridor-specific interviews

L4S_MA-DE_pol_01
L4S_MA-DE_pol_02
L4S_MA-DE_pol_03
L4S_MA-DE_prac_04
L4S_MA-DE_prac_05
L4S_MA-DE_prac_06
L4S_MA-DE_prac_07
L4S_MA-DE_prac_09
L4S_MA-DE_prac_10
L4S_MA-DE_prac_11
L4S_MA-DE_prac_12
L4S_MA-DE_prac_13
L4S_MA-DE_prac_14
L4S_MA-DE_prac_15

Country-specific interviews: Morocco

-

Country-specific interviews: Germany

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

Key information

Emerging or established corridor?	The Moroccan-German corridor can be described as relatively established, but remerging. In comparison to other more traditional corridors (such as Morocco-Belgium or Morocco-France), the attractiveness/interest as well as the numbers are steadily increasing in recent times.
How relevant are formal state-led <u>skill partnerships / agreements</u>?	The Moroccan state is an increasingly important and attractive partner for various European (destination) countries, including Germany as new strategic partner or long-established post-colonial connections (such as France or the Netherlands). As important partner, Morocco can increasingly take an active role in selecting and specifying conditions. Germany has a disadvantage with regard to German language, bureaucracy and less established diaspora communities. For Germany, the cooperation with Morocco is of high strategic importance. But political negotiations remain difficult, also due to different political and institutional structures (federal vs. centralist). Instead of a comprehensive migration and mobility agreement, the THAMM Plus project, for example, initiated various private-public-partnerships. The goal is to establish a joint legal framework and facilitate regular skilled migration.
Dominant actors	The public initiatives and programs function as trail-blazer with increasing flow through private and direct recruiting initiatives. Public engagement into skill mobility partnerships led to a boom of private investments and engagements, including direct recruiting, for example, by German hospitals as well as founding of (German-or employer-specific) nursing schools in cooperation of German and Moroccan actors.
Degree of dynamism	High increase of interest and attraction among young Moroccans to migrate for work, study or vocational training to Germany. Increasing numbers of migration.
Perceptions of involved actors about (to-be/skilled) migration, level of political or public controversy	From the Moroccan side: general positive attitude towards migration as important factor for development of economy, society and family (potential return of resources and remittances); widespread accepted life choice. From the German side: general positive, but also anti-Muslim attitudes and debates, anti-Muslim racism, discrimination and stereotypes against North African migrants.
<u>Skill level, migration type</u> and trends	Mainly medium-skilled; increasing: young migrants directly after school graduation for vocational training or study in Germany. Mix of study, vocational training, language training, adjustment and recognition measure, employment, job search = increasing skilled migration diversification.
Location of skilling	Mainly in Morocco, though increasing study and vocational training migration to Germany; but also: investments into skill development by German companies in Morocco; “hype” of vocational training in Morocco, but unclear how successful and sustainable.
Main sectors / occupations, any new(er)/emerging occupations	Industry and handcraft sectors and occupations (metal and electrical industry, automotive industry, fiber optic civil engineering, but also commerce). Also: increasing numbers in healthcare and hospitality (despite skill need in Morocco).
Do dynamics in one corridor affect other corridors?	Diplomatic conflicts with the Netherlands, a traditional post-colonial corridor with Morocco might play into the hands of the German government that had interest in extending the strategic partnership with Morocco. But, also, Canada reinvested into the ties with Morocco by flagship projects.