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A Compendium of Fourteen Migration Skill Corridors

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About the research project “Link4Skills”

The research project “Link4Skills” investigates skills shortage and mismatch from a multidisciplinary perspective in a consortium of fourteen partners in ten countries, six of which are non-EU countries. We analyze the phenomena of skilled migration among twelve countries on four continents (Austria, Canada, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, and Ukraine). Linking destination and origin perspectives, the project explores innovative solutions and supports fair skill flow across borders.

“Link4Skills” addresses three main policy challenges:

1. How should the EU respond to skills shortages?
2. How can skills needs in changing labor markets be identified more accurately?
3. How can the EU ensure that skills recruitment both in the EU and beyond is fair and efficient?

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

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

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

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1. Introduction

Migration skill corridors vary significantly in their size, intensity of movements, history, main professions and sectors, societal discourses about labor migration and last but not least how the mobility is governed and implemented. This paper presents fourteen cases that we analyzed in our research consortium "Link4Skills". Conceptually and methodologically, we use **a migration skill corridor (MSC) approach**.[1] Methodologically, a corridor perspective means doing research in research tandems in the origin and the destination countries. The data collection (more than 200 qualitative interviews with public, private, and civil society sectors – non- and for-profit actors, practitioners, policy-makers, sub-, inter-, national organizations and state-entities, migrant and diaspora organizations etc.; documents, focus-groups with migrants of private-led or public-led skill mobility programs) was conducted between February and December 2025.[2] This working paper presents condensed corridors studies. We gave the corridor studies illustrative titles – e.g., "Two ships at night" or "The mouse and the elephant" – to capture key current characteristics and dynamics.

While these summaries were originally a 'side-product' of the comparative analysis, we publish them as **empirical reservoir** to provide brief grounded insights into corridor dynamics and rationales that may be instructive to understand other corridor cases and their dynamics or the evolution of corridor cases over time. The case studies document the politics and field dynamics within a corridor at a specific point in time. Governing frameworks, actor constellations, and structural conditions do change comparatively quickly, particularly in newly emerging migration skill corridors with weak institutionalization, low path dependency and high volatility. This is also the case for corridors driven by ad hoc policies or external forces such as conflict, crisis, and war. Also, within established MSCs skilled mobility governance and skills shortage have recently been on the political agenda – complicated by sociopolitical developments, including economic downturn, multiple global crises and the reorganization of supposedly set global power relations.

The paper starts with a synthesis table with main features of all fourteen migration skill corridors. Then, the summaries of all migration skill corridor reports follow.

Longer versions of the corridor studies exist as **migration skill corridor reports**[3] as well as **corridor briefs** and a detailed **comparative report**[4]**.** While these longer reports contain original interview quotes, a structured analysis, references and lists of interviews, the summaries do not.

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[1] Engbersen, Godfried and Julia Reinold (2026): Migration Skill Corridors. In: Grabowska, Izabela and Mary Boatemaa Setrana (Eds.): *Fair Skilled Mobility. A Manifesto*. Routledge, pp. 13–29. http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781003649755-3

[2] On the methodology, research design, case selection, fieldwork, ethics: Ullmann, Johanna and Helen Schwenken (2026): Skills Migration Corridors: Qualitative Fieldwork Handbook. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 18/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/L4S_WPap18_Fieldwork_handbook.pdf

[3] Access to most reports: https://link4skills.eu/index.php/publications/#reports; summaries were published as migration skill corridor briefs: https://link4skills.eu/index.php/publications/#mscbriefs.

[4] Ullmann, Johanna and Helen Schwenken (forthcoming): Migration Skill Corridors. Comparative Report. Synthesis of 14 migration skill corridor reports. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series*. https://link4skills.eu/index.php/publications/#workingpapers.

Authorship and division of labor: All authors have actively been part of the corridor tandems and contributed to the design of the multinational study, bilocal data collection and analysis as well as authored the detailed (16-50 pages long) corridor reports (in total: 400+ pages). The synthesis table and summaries in this working paper are the result of a comprehensive and comparative re-reading and clustering of all corridor reports by Johanna Ullmann. Through several feedback loops corridor tandems contributed to refine and further enhance the synthesis table and summaries. Johanna Ullmann and Helen Schwenken as fieldwork coordinators put the finishing touches on the report.

2. Synthesis Table: Main characteristics of the migration skill corridors

Corridor	Corridor type(s)	Emerging vs. established	Governance	Involved actors / Driving forces	Dynamism / Migration flow	Public migration perception	Skills type	Skilling location	Sectors / Occupations	Critical events	Dynamics between corridors
India-Austria	- Medium-skilled and sector-based corridor - New strategic skills mobility partnership corridor.	Re-/Emerging	State-led bilateral agreement, broadly covering migration and mobility, with a focus on information-sharing and cooperation in education and training.	Mainly provincial and private-led initiatives, with networks and agreements functioning as "door opener" or "trail-pioneer".	Increasing dynamics.	On both sides: Migration infrastructure: largely positive. General public: rather controversial.	Study and (skilled) work migration	Mainly origin, but increasingly both origin and destination.	Healthcare, STEM/IT	-	Competition with other German-speaking destinations, less attractive/ known compared to Germany or Switzerland.
India-Canada	- Highly-skilled mobility corridor	Established	No formal bilateral partnerships (but province-based recruitment initiatives). Yet, general open migration frameworks, regulations and initiatives.	Mainly private-led; public-led in specific sectors (healthcare) and provinces.	Relatively stable and long-term growth with periodic fluctuations; recently: light slowdown in certain pathways (student migration) and impacted by tensed diplomatic relations.	*India*: Largely neutral to positive, growing awareness of destination regulation complexities; *Canada*: positive, particularly high-skilled migration; recently: more polarized over semi-skilled int'l students; range from positive to negative.	Study and (skilled) work migration	Sector-dependent: Healthcare: primarily in origin; STEM/IT: mixed/both.	STEM/IT, healthcare	-	Shifts in skills demand and restrictive policies may redirect migration flows to alternative destinations, such as UK, Australia or Europe.
India-Germany	- High-skilled mobility corridor - Post-missionary	*India*: Re-/ Emerging. *Germany*: Established.	Extensive state-led bilateral programs, initiatives and agreements, such as "Triple-Win" or	Both public and private actors, with public actors and agreements	Highly dynamic on relatively high level (from German side) / medium level (from Indian	*India*: Politicians: 'export' of skilled workers as major economic strategy and reorienting	Mixed migration : Study, (skilled) work, vocation	Mainly origin, but additional training in destination; increasingly	Mixed: STEM/IT, healthcare, increasing: industry, commerce,	-	Competition with other (German-speaking) destination, such as

	recruiting corridor - New strategic skills mobility partnership corridor - Medium-skilled and sector-based corridor.		"Global Skills Partnerships", with ethical Code of Conduct; role of Indian federal states.	functioning as "door opener" or "trail-pioneer" for private investments; increasing role of sector-specific recruitment and migrant and diaspora communities.	side), with boom of private sector engagements, not much regulated, but highly expanding field.	India's image as hub of skilled workers; General public: highly normalized and more accepted as social mobility strategy; *Germany*: Employers: Highly positive perception of Indian migration as high-quality and desired, but also cultural and integration issues.	al training, job search, family reunification/formation, adaptation/additional training	both in origin and destination; also: investment in skills development at origin (larger time invested in learning language).	craftwork and other vocational occupations, and green tech.		Austria or Switzerland as well as Canada, Australia, US, South Asia, etc.
India-Netherlands	- (Post-) colonial corridor - Highly-skilled mobility corridor.	*India*: Emerging. *Netherlands*: Established.	No formal bilateral partnerships.	Mainly private-led initiatives: Intra Company transfers (ICT) through Indian multi-national companies (MNCs) in the Netherlands.	Increasing dynamic or relatively stable.	*India*: Relatively neutral, role of political relations; *Netherlands*: Generally positive.	High-skilled work migration	Sector-dependent: Healthcare: mainly in origin, partly in destination for additional training for recognition; STEM: varied, mainly origin.	Healthcare (emerging) and STEM/IT (established).	-	Secondary migration and reduced/ shifted demands or changed policies/ governance of other destination may influence migration flow.
Indonesia-Austria	- New strategic skills mobility partnership corridor - Medium-skilled and	Emerging	State-led bilateral agreements and MoUs.	Public actors and bilateral agreements providing the framework and functioning as "door opener"	Increasingly dynamic.	Overall, positive on both sides.	Medium- and high-skilled work migration	Mainly origin	Woodworking and metalworking; healthcare	-	Competing with other German-speaking destination, less attractive/ known

	sector-based corridor.			or "pioneer", while employer demand drives private-led initiatives.							compared to Germany or Switzerland.
Indonesia-Germany	- Medium-skilled and sector-based corridor - New strategic skills mobility partnership corridor - Post-missionary recruiting corridor.	Emerging	State-led bilateral agreements, such as "Triple-Win" or "Global Skills Partnerships", with ethical Code of Conduct.	Mainly state-led initiatives, while the private sector on both sides becomes increasingly involved.	Increasingly dynamic, but still volatile and in small numbers.	*Indonesia*: Generally positive, normalized as social mobility and economic development strategy; reflecting increasing skill capacities for the global labor market; *Germany*: Generally positive, but also contested; low public and political visibility.	Medium/ high-skilled migration and vocational training migration.	Mainly in origin, but increasing role of vocational training at the destination.	Healthcare and hospitality; also, chefs / cooks and other service sectors (waiters, bartenders).	-	The global race for (healthcare) workers from the Philippines pushed Germany to approach new origin partners from the Asian region as 'alternative' or 'extension'.
Ghana-Canada	Highly-skilled mobility corridor	Emerging	No formal bilateral partnerships on the national level, but on the provincial level.	Mainly private-led initiatives.	Sporadic	Overall, positive and politically accepted on both sides.	Study migration.	Both origin and destination, but mainly at the destination for studying.	Healthcare (emerging); potentially emerging: construction and STEM/IT.	-	Absence of national agreements leads to shift towards G2G agreements with other destinations (e.g. Germany), could lead to redirection of migration flows.

Morocco-Netherlands	- (Post-) 'guest worker' corridor - Family reunification/ formation corridor	Established	State-led relationship relevant, but sensitive (focus on return), rather intransparent (potential diplomatic tensions); trilateral cooperation on energy transition (with Germany).	Public actors more involved/ leading than private, but de facto not dominant.	Decreasing or phasing out	*Morocco*: Overall, neutral to decreasing interest. Negative feedback loops from Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands; *Netherlands*: Politically sensitive, focus on return migration.	Mainly family reunification/formation migration.	Not applicable	Not applicable	-	Despite the long migration history, other destinations (including, Germany) seem to be increasingly more attractive and relevant.
Morocco-Germany	- (Post-) 'guest worker' corridor - New strategic skills mobility partnership corridor - Medium-skilled and sector-based corridor.	Emerging	State-led partnerships agreements were initiated, but remain rather general (negotiations ongoing). Multilateral, EU-funded recruiting programs, such as "THAMM" with ethical Code of Conduct; negotiations often linked with return/readmission policies.	Both public and private actors, with public actors/ agreements functioning as "door opener" or "trail-pioneer" for private investments; increasing role of diaspora communities.	Highly dynamic and increasing.	*Morocco:* Generally positive as important social mobility and economic development strategy; *Germany*: Generally positive, but also anti-Muslim attitudes, debates, racism and discrimination against North African migrants.	Mixed migration: study, vocational training, (skilled) migration, job/ apprenticeship search, additional/adjustment training migration.	Mainly in origin, but increase of study and vocational training migration; also: investment in skill development at origin.	Mixed: Industry, craftwork, metal and electrical industry, automotive industry, fiber optic civil engineering, commerce; also, increasingly private recruiting in healthcare (despite increasing skills need in Morocco).	-	Diplomatic conflicts with the Netherlands may plan into the hands of the German government; also: Canada reinvested into ties with Morocco.
Nigeria-Canada	- Medium-skilled and sector-based corridor.	Established in healthcare; emerging in STEM/IT and construction.	No formal bilateral partnerships, but general migration frameworks, regulations and initiatives.	Role of diaspora community and social, informal networks.	Stable	Overall, positive and politically accepted on both sides.	Temporary or permanent labor migration, student migration.	Sector-dependent, both.	Mixed: Healthcare (established), STEM/IT and construction (emerging)	-	Relatively stable corridor.

Philippines-Germany	- Post-missionary recruiting corridor - New strategic skills mobility partnership corridor - Medium-skilled and sector-based corridor.	Established	State-led bilateral agreements such as "Triple-Win" or "Global Skills Partnerships", with ethical Code of Conducts. Negotiations ongoing for a more comprehensive migration agreement.	Both private and public actors; high institutional cooperation, role of "door opener" or "trail-pioneer" for private initiatives, increasing role of sector-specific migrant and diaspora communities.	Stable or stagnating on high level	*Philippines*: Overall positive, but negative feedback on recognition issues; *Germany*: Overall, positive, with cultural stereotypes towards Filipino nurses.	Mainly licensed nurses (skilled migration), but increasingly also nurse apprentices.	Mainly in the origin, but increasingly both (with apprentices hip at the destination).	Healthcare	-	Germany is competing with other destinations for Filipino nurses, pressure to 'offer' attractive conditions to redirect to Germany; signs of flexibility and adjustment of corridor to align mutual needs.
Philippines-Poland	- Temporary work corridor	Emerging	No formal bilateral partnerships; negotiations seem relevant / attractive for the Philippines (workers protection), but not for Poland; formally fragmented, ad-hoc, under-institutionalized.	Mainly private-led informal initiatives; public sector not involved and reactive; also civil actors and diaspora communities play a big role.	Moderately dynamic, steady growth rather than rapid fluctuations, but potential for expansion.	*Philippines*: Overall, positive but vary, including ethical questions. *Poland*: Mixed, but cautious, skepticism persist. On political level: sensitive and controversial with fear of 'taking away' jobs.	Mainly non-formal, medium-skilled work migration; small numbers of vocational, study and job search migration.	Both in origin and destination, but mainly in origin.	Manufacturing, factory work, administrative support, maritime, logistics, transport; construction emerging with growing popularity: welding, pipe-fitting, and hospitality.	-	Often third-country migration pathways; Filipino workers perceived as suitable alternative to 'demanding' Ukrainian workers; Poland competes with other European/ Western countries for Filipino workers; Poland as 'accessible' alternative to more attractive but

											demanding destinations (with G2G-agreements), such as Germany. or Czech Republic.
Ukraine-Netherlands	- Humanitarian / Forced migration corridor - Highly-skilled mobility corridor.	Emerging	No formal bilateral partnerships, but ad hoc policies.	Mainly private initiatives and social networks and diaspora communities.	Dynamic, with peak since war	Both: Public: Generally positive; Political: Controversial, no logic, liberal paradoxes (populist discourse vs. economic needs).	Since war: mainly forced migration with temporary protection; before: family or study migration.	Mainly in origin, with (risk of) de-skilling at destination due to lack of skilling investment due to temporary protection.	Mixed; no specific sector, except to some degree STEM/IT.	War/ conflict/ crises-induced migration.	Ukrainians unsatisfied with their stay in Poland often chose to move onwards to the Netherlands (or Germany).
Ukraine-Poland	- Mixed migration corridor - Humanitarian / Forced migration corridor - Highly-skilled mobility corridor.	Established	No formal bilateral partnerships; seen on both sides as unnecessary.	Mainly private-led, important role of established migrant networks.	Intensive, but fluctuating.	In general, accepted but rather controversial on both sides.	Mixed; since war: also forced migration.	Mainly in the destination.	Mixed/ all sectors, except jobs in the government.	War/ conflict/ crises-induced migration.	Often secondary migration to other European destination (Netherlands or Germany)

3. Summaries of the migration skill corridors

The summary's purpose is to illustrate key corridor characteristics. We describe 1) legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations or the lack thereof, 2) trends and developments, 3) challenges of skilled migration policies and practices, and 4) good practices.

3.1 India-Austria: A re-emerging corridor driven by private and public initiatives, formalized through bilateral cooperation frameworks[5]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The India-Austria migration skill corridor is **gradually moving from fragmented, agent-led recruitment toward more structured, institutionalized and increasingly digitalized migration governance:** The migration cooperation is embedded in broader EU-India relations and a gradually expanding bilateral framework. At EU level, cooperation builds on the **1994 EU-India Framework Agreement,** the **2004 Strategic Partnership** and its Joint Action Plan, the **2021 EU-India Connectivity Partnership**, and the **2016 EU-India Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM)**. These frameworks promote legal migration, mobility of students and professionals, and cooperation on migration governance. Under the **EU's Global Gateway strategy**, cooperation in areas such as digitalization, green energy and urban development also indirectly support skills mobility.

At bilateral level, diplomatic relations date back to the 1950s. Cooperation intensified in the 2000s through sectoral agreements including the **2005 MoU on healthcare infrastructure cooperation**, the **2007 Agreement on science and technology cooperation**, the **2011 MoU on road infrastructure**, the **2012 MoUs on technology cooperation** in shipping and ports, and the **2020 MoU on technology cooperation in road infrastructure**. A **Social Security Agreement (SSA)** signed in 2013 enables mutual crediting of pension contributions.

The most significant development is the **2023 Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA)**. The agreement aims to deepen cooperation on legal migration, student and researcher mobility, and fair recruitment. It promotes information exchange on migration opportunities, supports pre-integration measures and family reunification / formation, and foresees cooperation in vocational education and training (VET). A **Joint Working Group** has been established to implement the agreement through technical dialogue and joint projects. While the MMPA does not create new migration pathways beyond existing legal frameworks, it has generated **political momentum and institutional legitimacy** for expanding cooperation in education and vocational training.

In general, Austria has recently adopted a **more proactive approach to international skilled migration**. Key measures include the **Red-White-Red Card (RWR)**, introduced in 2011 and reformed in 2022, the establishment of **Work in Austria** within the Austria Business Agency in 2019, and a **Skilled Labor Initiative** of the Austrian Federal Chamber of Commerce. An inter-ministerial **Strategy committee for international skilled workers** aims to coordinate recruitment policies. Nevertheless, Austria faces **strong competition from neighboring destinations** such as Germany and Switzerland, which offer larger labor markets and clearer mobility pathways.

India's migration governance is anchored in the **1983 Emigration Act**, which historically focused on low-skilled labor migration to Gulf countries. However, policy attention has gradually **shifted**

[5] For more, see: Huss, Daria and Varsha Joshi (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. India-Austria. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 21/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/L4S-Corridor-Report_India-Austria.pdf

towards emerging skilled migration corridors with Europe and North America. Governance involves several ministries. Several **high-emigration states**, including Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, have **established their own labor migration institutions**.

Main trends

Although overall inflows remain smaller than to Germany, the stock of Indian nationals in Austria is **steadily growing.** Indian nationals rank among the **top recipients** of Red-White-Red Cards and EU Blue Cards in Austria. **Recruitment practices are evolving**, involving multiple actors, including federal and provincial authorities, hospitals, universities, private companies and recruitment agencies. In the healthcare sector, **provincial and private recruitment initiatives are emerging**. One example is a partnership between the province of Burgenland and the dioceses of Eisenstadt and Kanjirapally, aiming to recruit around 50 qualified care workers annually. The initiative builds on a **long-standing church partnership** and partners share responsibilities.

Employer-led initiatives also play a role. The example of a care home operator showed that nurses are recruited through **trusted networks and private agencies** in India, financing German language training and relocation. Strong support structures have reportedly led to **high retention rates**.

Austrian recruitment agencies also play an increasing role in international recruitment. This role remained limited until 2022, since they required special authorization from the public employment service to operate outside the EU.

Recruitment initiatives are increasingly **streamlining foreign qualification recognition and training**. **Organized recruitment cohorts** combined with supplementary recognition courses at Austrian universities of applied sciences can significantly accelerate recognition procedures compared to individual applications. However, these **recruitment initiatives operate independently**, and would benefit from greater coordination and the creation of synergies.

Another prominent trend is the **growing role of universities** in talent attraction. Facing **demographic decline and decreasing enrolment**, Austrian universities are increasingly recruiting international students, including from India. In the healthcare sector, for example the University of Applied Sciences in Carinthia has launched a **pilot program offering free spaces in its nursing programs** to Indian students. In the STEM sector, technical universities have developed structured partnerships with Indian institutions, including quota-based recruitment schemes and joint mobility programs. Many Indian graduates subsequently enter the Austrian labor market and act as cultural and professional bridges between the two countries.

Main challenges

The most persistent operational challenge concerns the **recognition of foreign qualifications**. Austria **lacks a centralized recognition authority**, and procedures vary **across professions and federal provinces**. Recognition processes are often **lengthy, costly and administratively complex**, sometimes taking one to three years. Individual case-by-case evaluations and limited transparency further complicate the system.

Unregulated private recruitment practices in India also pose significant risks. Despite formal regulation under the Emigration Act and the eMigrate system, **oversight remains uneven** and many informal intermediaries operate **outside regulatory frameworks**. Cases of fraudulent recruitment, excessive fees and misleading job offers continue to occur, potentially **undermining trust in formal migration pathways**.

Structural factors further limit Austria's attractiveness. **Language requirements** (German), relatively **high taxation**, and **limited international visibility** make Austria **less competitive** compared with other German-speaking destinations such as Germany or Switzerland. In addition, the

Red-White-Red Card **ties migrants to a specific employer**, which can create dependency and reduce labor mobility.

Good practices

The partnership agreement between the province of Burgenland and the Dioceses of Eisenstadt and Kanjirapally, signed in March 2024, is one example of good practices. The partnership traces back to collaboration between both Dioceses in the early 1980s. Other examples include a recruitment initiative of the private care home operator Senecura, or a cooperation between the Austrian Technical University of Leoben and Indian partner universities that aimed at recruiting Indian students in response to declining enrolment rates. The Work in Austria talent hub connects international skilled workers with Austrian employers and provides counselling and recruitment support.

Network-based recruitment also plays an important role. Partnerships with diaspora networks, church communities and alumni strengthen trust and awareness of legal migration opportunities.

Organized **recruitment and training cohorts** combined with tailored supplementary courses at universities of applied sciences can significantly accelerate qualification recognition and labor market integration.

3.2 India-Canada: The taken-for-granted partnership

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The India-Canada migration skill corridor has expanded significantly over the past two decades, evolving from primarily **education-driven mobility into a broader system combining higher education, skilled migration and long-term settlement**. Migration decisions are increasingly structured around employability and access to permanent residence. **Canada's immigration architecture** – particularly the **education-to-work transition** through study permits, the **Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGRW)** and permanent residence streams – play a central role in shaping this corridor. For many Indian migrants, higher education in Canada functions as main entry point into the labor market and a potential pathway to settlement.

The corridor can be characterized as established, primarily private- and sector-led and moving from a rather ad hoc to a more structured governance.

Institutionally, cooperation is characterized by **dense but fragmented arrangements**. While both countries maintain **strong political relationships**, the corridor has **developed largely without a dedicated bilateral mobility agreement (Except for sector-specific recruitment agreements initiated on a province level, see below)**. Instead, collaboration is embedded in **broader diplomatic and educational frameworks**, including the **2025 Joint Statement on renewed bilateral partnership**, as well as long-standing **academic agreements** such as the **2010 MoU on higher education cooperation** between India and Canada. These instruments promote academic exchange, research collaboration and skills cooperation, but do not create new structured programs. Both sides emphasize strong bilateral commitment, trust and interest in expanding political ties based on established people and institutional ties.

As a result, governance operates through a **multi-layered institutional system**. On the Indian side, migration and skills development involve several ministries and agencies. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) oversees overseas employment through the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) and the eMigrate platform, while the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) coordinates training standards through the Directorate General of Training and the National Skill Development Corporation International (NSDC International). Higher education partnerships are managed by the Ministry of Education (MoE), and professional regulation in health sectors is

overseen by bodies such as the Indian Nursing Council (INC) and the National Medical Commission (NMC). State-level agencies—including NORKA-Roots in Kerala—play an increasingly important role in facilitating ethical recruitment and international placement of health workers in Canada.

Canada's institutional framework combines federal immigration pathways with provincially regulated labor markets and professional licensing systems. International students are permitted to work during their studies and can transition to employment through post-study work permits, allowing them to accumulate Canadian work experience before applying for permanent residence through programs such as the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) or Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP). However, migrants typically **bear the full financial cost** of education and migration, and access to permanent residence remains selective.

Sub-national state-led cooperation has begun to play a more visible role. A notable example is the partnership between **the Government of Kerala and the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador**, which facilitates the government-to-government recruitment of nurses and allied health professionals through NORKA-Roots. Although limited in scale, this initiative represents one of the first structured efforts to create transparent mobility pathways linking Indian training institutions with Canadian labor demand.

Main trends

The India–Canada corridor is one of the **most significant knowledge-/skilled-based migration pathways** linking India with an OECD destination. The Indian diaspora in Canada now exceeds 1.3 million people, representing around 3.7 percent of the national population. This growth has been supported by **Canada's points-based immigration system**, **educational partnerships and the expansion of international student mobility**.

International education has become the dominant entry channel. Indian students represent the largest group of international students in Canada, with more than 400,000 active study-permit holders in recent years. The study-to-work pathway has emerged as the primary mechanism linking education with skilled migration.

Migration channels are increasingly **diversified**. Students arrive directly from India, transition from earlier temporary work or study experience, or enroll in bridging or postgraduate programs to facilitate credential recognition. In many cases, education is strategically chosen based on labor market outcomes rather than academic interest alone.

Recruitment and mobility are mediated through a dense **system of actors**. Canadian universities, private education consultants, recruitment agencies and employers operate alongside public institutions and diaspora networks. **Informal social networks** remain influential, as earlier migrants provide information and contacts for new arrivals.

Sectoral pathways also shape migration trends. In **healthcare**, structured migration channels are developing through **licensing reforms, bridging programs and institutional partnerships** linking Indian training with Canadian labor demand. In contrast, although Canada faces shortages in **construction and skilled trades**, direct migration pathways linking Indian vocational training to Canadian labor markets **remain limited.**

Main challenges

Despite strong institutional and social ties, several structural challenges affect the corridor.

Recruitment and migration processes **remain fragmented and unevenly regulated**. Private recruitment agencies and education intermediaries play a major role in attracting students and workers, yet **regulatory oversight varies significantly** across jurisdictions. This can expose

migrants to high fees, misleading information or contract violations, particularly in sectors with strong intermediary involvement.

Migration through international education creates **substantial financial risk for students.** Tuition fees for international students are significantly higher than for domestic students, and the costs of study, language testing and migration are largely borne by migrants and their families. Many students **rely on part-time employment** to finance their studies, often working in **low-skilled service jobs**. While temporary work can facilitate labor market integration, prolonged employment in survival jobs may lead to **deskilling and delay professional entry**.

Recognition of foreign qualifications remains a major bottleneck. Canada's credential recognition system is **fragmented across provinces and professional regulators**, resulting in **lengthy and costly procedures** for internationally educated professionals. Processing times for recognition may extend from several months to multiple years, and applicants often face **additional requirements** such as bridging programs, language testing and credential evaluations.

These barriers are particularly visible in regulated professions such as **healthcare**. Indian-trained nurses and doctors frequently **need additional training or residency work experience** in Canada before obtaining a license to practice. In other sectors, including construction trades, certification and licensing requirements can also limit the integration of foreign-trained workers despite labor shortages.

The alignment between training systems and labor market outcomes remains imperfect. While India's skills development ecosystem is expanding rapidly, **international comparability of qualifications is still evolving**. Differences in documentation standards, curricula and licensing frameworks often require migrants to **undergo reassessment or additional training** after arrival.

Diplomatic tensions between India and Canada in recent years have affected cooperation in certain academic and research mobility programs, demonstrating the vulnerability of migration partnerships to broader political dynamics.

Good practices

Canada's study-permit and post-graduation work permit (PGWP) system provides a structured transition from education and training to employment and potential permanent residence. These **education-to-work-pathways** also provide a possibility for a more balanced distribution of costs of education between origin and destination. However, to date these financial risks are primarily taken by Indian students and their families or social networks.

Sub-national state-led initiatives such as the Kerala–Newfoundland and Labrador agreement demonstrate how government-to-government recruitment can create transparent and ethical mobility pathways.

Academic partnerships, internships and exchange programs (via MoUs and other inter-institutional agreements) **linking Indian universities with Canadian institutions** facilitate early labor market connections and long-term mobility trajectories.

3.3 India-Germany: Germany fighting for its share of the Indian global gold mine for labor power[6]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

[6] For more, see: Joshi, Varsha, Johanna Ullmann, Helen Schwenken, and S. Irudaya Rajan (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. India-Germany. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 17/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/India-Germany-corridor-report-1.pdf

The India-Germany migration skill corridor represents one of the most institutionalized and state-led skilled migration partnerships between India and a European destination. It is anchored in bilateral labor agreements, sector-specific programs and a dense institutional architecture that reflects Germany's shift towards regulated and proactive skilled migration governance. The cornerstone is the **2022 Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA)**, which provides a coordination framework for labor migration, student mobility, ethical recruitment, and return cooperation. The partnership is embedded in a multi-level governance structure involving national ministries, subnational authorities, public intermediaries, employers, and private recruitment agencies.

Germany has progressively strengthened this cooperation through domestic legislative reforms, most notably the **2019 Skilled Immigration Act** and its 2023 amendments. These reforms expanded eligibility beyond highly skilled workers to include vocationally trained professionals, trainees, and jobseekers, while instruments such as the **Opportunity Card** signal a shift toward potential-based migration models. Complementing these reforms, Germany launched the **Skilled Labor Strategy for India**, explicitly identifying India as a priority partner and acknowledging the growing role of private recruitment agencies in facilitating mobility.

Operationally, the corridor **combines state-led programs with private recruitment channels**. German institutions such as the Federal Employment Agency (BA), GIZ, and Goethe-Institut coordinate recruitment, language training, and integration support. On the Indian side, governance is more fragmented. National ministries provide policy frameworks, while implementation relies heavily on licensed intermediaries and regional actors. Subnational institutions, particularly NORKA Roots in Kerala, have emerged as trusted recruitment partners, especially in the healthcare sector.

Skills mobility partnership (SMP) programs form the operational backbone of the corridor. The most prominent is **Triple Win**, which recruits nurses through coordinated government-to-government (G2G) channels. Additional initiatives include **Hand in Hand for International Talents (HiH), Global Skills Partnerships (GSPs)**, and training partnerships such as **APAL Trainees from Asia and Latin America – Technology**. These programs demonstrate an incremental approach to migration governance based on pilot projects, sector-/occupation-specific initiatives, and institutional experimentation.

Overall, the corridor **prioritizes process integrity, skills validation, and risk management.** State-led agreements and partnerships function primarily as **demonstration models for ethical recruitment and structured recognition** rather than large-scale recruitment mechanisms.

Main trends

Migration between India and Germany has **expanded rapidly** in recent years. Indians now constitute one of the **fastest-growing migrant groups** in Germany, driven by labor migration and rapidly increasing student mobility. As of 2024, approximately 50,000 Indian students were enrolled in German universities, more than double the number five years earlier.

Mobility within the corridor is strongly linked to **long-term settlement aspirations**. Indian migrants often perceive Germany as a stable (alternative) destination offering pathways to permanent residence, family reunification/formation, and social protection. Circular migration remains limited, as long-term employment and settlement opportunities are generally preferred.

At the same time, Germany is widely regarded as a **high-threshold destination**. German **language requirements** represent the single most significant barrier to entry across nearly all migration channels, including healthcare, vocational training, professional, and student migration. As a result, Germany is often perceived as a **secondary destination** compared with traditional English-

speaking countries such as the UK, Canada, or Australia, becoming more attractive when these destinations restrict access.

Another major trend is the **growing role of private recruitment agencies**. While state-led programs remain influential as regulatory benchmarks, private intermediaries have **expanded rapidly** on both sides following the liberalization of Germany's migration framework and tightening policies in other destinations. Some actors increasingly operate as "**mobility managers**", offering integrated services such as housing, family reunification / formation facilitation, childcare arrangements, and spousal employment support. Their services directly address migrant priorities related to settlement and retention.

In addition, the corridor is characterized by a **strong linkage between migration and pre-departure skilling**. Language training, professional bridging courses, and recognition procedures are **embedded within (private and public) recruitment pathways**. In healthcare, recognition processes of programs such as Triple Win are often integrated into employment, allowing migrants to migrate and work in Germany (often as healthcare assistant) while completing language training and professional registration, essential for health workers to secure the possibility of bringing their family along.

Main challenges

Despite strong institutionalization, the corridor faces persistent structural challenges. A central issue is the **limited scale of state-led programs**. Initiatives such as the Triple Win program have demonstrated **effective models for ethical recruitment** but operate at **relatively small volumes**. Over three years, only around 670 nurses were recruited through this program, highlighting the gap between public initiatives and labor market demand.

A second challenge concerns **lengthy and complex migration procedures**. Government-to-government programs typically require 12–18 months to complete language training, recognition procedures, and visa processing. While these timelines ensure compliance with (high) ethical recruitment standards, they **create opportunity costs** for both migrants and employers.

The corridor is also (increasingly) characterized by a **dual recruitment structure**: **Ethical state-led programs** offer strong protections but remain **highly selective**, often favoring candidates with **strong academic backgrounds and language skills**. **Private recruitment agencies**, by contrast, expand access and accelerate placement but frequently shift costs onto migrants through fees for language training, documentation, and placement services. This bifurcation produces **differentiated migration channels with uneven distribution of risks and benefits**.

Language acquisition constitutes the most significant bottleneck. Most migration pathways require B1 or B2 German proficiency prior to departure, creating **long preparation periods** and **substantial financial costs** for migrants. **Limited teaching capacity**, **uneven quality** among private language providers, and **low exam pass rates** further exacerbate delays.

Additional challenges arise from **mismatches between German and Indian vocational training systems**. While nursing qualifications are relatively compatible, vocational occupations often require **complex recognition procedures and additional training**. Germany's strict qualification requirements exclude a large segment of India's semi-formal workforce, even when informal and non-formal practical skills are strong.

Institutional fragmentation further complicates governance. Evaluation mechanisms remain decentralized, with **programs assessed primarily through short-term indicators** such as recruitment numbers or recognition outcomes. Long-term monitoring of migrant integration, career progression, or return/reintegration outcomes remains limited.

Skills development and return initiatives, such as Global Skills Partnerships (GSPs), are promising but remain small scale and patchy. **Stronger efforts towards development-oriented partnerships**

that significantly strengthen education, training and employment opportunities for the domestic Indian population are necessary to realize the 'triple win' promises, beyond remittances.

Also, social factors such as **growing anti-migrant sentiment** in parts of German society and migrants' concerns about discrimination may influence long-term retention and settlement decisions.

Good practices

The India-Germany migration skill corridor is an example for **ethical co-governed recruiting models**. Programs such as Triple Win demonstrate the operationalization of the employer-pays principle and structured skilled migration pathways.

In order to speed up skilled migration, an **integrated approach to education, training and recognition** is promising, yet also challenging for migrants that have to juggle different responsibilities and expectations. Sequenced systems linking language training, workplace integration, and professional recognition enable gradual labor market entry.

The India-Germany corridor is an example of a shift from transactional recruitment **toward developmental skills partnerships**, where migration governance becomes linked to broader institutional cooperation such as vocational education, curriculum development, and training infrastructure. Rather than functioning solely as a labor extraction mechanism, the corridor **increasingly operates towards long-term intra-institutional capacity-building and knowledge transfer**.

The corridor is based on close **cooperation with subnational institutions**. Cooperation with actors such as NORKA Roots shows how regional intermediaries can strengthen ethical recruitment and coordination.

3.4 India-Netherlands: The mouse and the elephant: Dutch reliance on Indian talent[7]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The India-Netherlands migration skill corridor represents a **relatively recent but established, largely private-sector driven and ad hoc governed corridor for highly skilled migration**. Despite large asymmetries in population and labor market size, **bilateral relations** between the two countries are generally considered **positive and cooperative**. However, **no comprehensive bilateral recruitment agreement** on skilled labor migration currently exists. Existing bilateral frameworks relate to specific economic and social protection arrangements rather than migration governance. These include a **Social Security Agreement (SSA)** and a **Convention** between the Republic of India and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the **Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion**, which regulate the portability of social security benefits and prevent double contributions. While these agreements are enormously important to facilitate mobility indirectly, they do not constitute a structured and mutual beneficial migration partnership.

At the national level, the **introduction of the 2004 Knowledge Migrant Visa Scheme (*Kennismigrantenregeling)*** represented a key turning point. The scheme simplified admission procedures for highly skilled migrants, including spousal work rights, and enabled a broader range of professionals to enter Dutch labor markets. No comparable schemes exist for medium-skilled migration, reflecting the **Netherlands' policy focus on highly skilled workers**.

[7] For more, see: Reinold, Jullia, Varsha Joshi, Godfried Engbersen, and S. Irudaya Rajan (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. India-Netherlands. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 10/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/IN-NL-Corridor-Report.pdf

Governance of the corridor is further shaped by the structure of the Dutch labor market, where employers hold primary responsibility for recruitment and visa sponsorship. As a result, the corridor is strongly **company-driven**, particularly through **multinational enterprises and large Indian technology firms** operating in the Netherlands. Government institutions—such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MEA) and agencies supporting foreign investment and entrepreneurship – mainly create framework conditions to attract Indian companies rather than migrants directly.

Indian migration to the Netherlands has therefore often followed **corporate investment patterns**. The expansion of major Indian IT firms into the Netherlands over the past two decades (supported by the Indian government and its emphasis on promoting global expansion of Indian startups and large-corporate conglomerates), combined with the country's favorable business climate, multilingual workforce and strategic location within Europe, has contributed significantly to (high-skilled) labor mobility along the corridor. Conversely, Dutch firms have also established operations in India, strengthening economic interdependence and occasionally reducing the need for relocation through offshoring arrangements.

Although governments on both sides have shown **increasing interest in strengthening skilled migration cooperation**, **political dynamics complicate policy development**. In the Netherlands, migration debates are strongly shaped by broader political concerns about migration control and social impacts rather than labor market demand. This reflects a **broader "liberal paradox"**: while employers seek access to global talent, **political pressures favor more restrictive migration governance**.

Main trends

Indian nationals represent **the largest group of third-country nationals in the Netherlands,** and the country has become one of the most significant European destinations for highly skilled Indian migrants despite its relatively small size. Migration flows are dominated by **knowledge migrants, intra-company transferees (ICTs) and international students**, particularly in STEM-related sectors.

Highly skilled migration increased steadily until 2022 but has recently declined. The number of knowledge migrants fell by around **29 per cent between 2023 and 2024 and nearly 50 per cent compared with 2022**, partly due to a slowdown in vacancies in the technology sector, declining competitiveness indicators and growing political debates about restricting migration. Policy discussions regarding the reduction of international student numbers, changes to the 30-per-cent tax ruling and budget cuts in higher education have also raised concerns about the Netherlands' attractiveness for international talent.

Indian professionals are concentrated in sectors such as **STEM/ IT**, although migration has gradually diversified to include healthcare. Universities and research institutes play a key role in attracting Indian researchers and students, with Indian nationals representing the second-largest non-EU student group in the country.

In many cases, migration follows a **stepwise mobility pathway**. Indian professionals frequently arrive through **intra-company transfers (ICT) within large multinational firms and later transition to the knowledge migrant scheme**, which provides more stable residence prospects. **Family migration** has also grown significantly and surpassed labor migration in 2023, reflecting longer-term settlement strategies.

Although circular migration is often discussed in policy debates, empirical patterns indicate a trend towards **long-term retention and settlement**. Many Indian migrants pursue permanent residence and family reunification/formation, increasingly viewing the Netherlands – and Europe more broadly – as an attractive long-term destination. **Community networks and diaspora**

organizations have grown significantly and play an important role in talent attraction and integration.

The corridor is also shaped by historical migration patterns. A large population of **Hindustani Surinamese**, descendants of Indian indentured laborers who migrated to Suriname under Dutch colonial rule, resides in the Netherlands and numerically exceeds recent migrants from India, creating a historically layered migration landscape and reflect a **post-colonial corridor type.**

Main challenges

Despite strong economic linkages and migration flow, the corridor faces several structural challenges.

There is a **lack of structured migration frameworks**, particularly for **medium-skilled workers**. While labor shortages exist in sectors such as healthcare and technical trades, both the Dutch government and Dutch employers have been hesitant to develop new recruitment mechanisms. Governments often expect employers to take the initiative, whereas companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), look to the state for regulatory guidance. This mutual hesitation has created a **policy stalemate**.

The **absence of binational institutional recruitment infrastructure and partnerships** complicates international hiring in **new sectors and occupations** outside the scope of the highly skilled migration scheme. Employers entering unfamiliar recruitment markets face administrative barriers, limited coordination mechanisms and high regulatory complexity of the Indian recruiting and labor market. This is particularly evident in healthcare recruitment, where professional recognition procedures can be lengthy and uncertain.

Skills recognition processes remain also challenging. For example, nurses trained in India must obtain Dutch professional registration before practicing, which requires language proficiency and extensive certification procedures. As a result, some migrants temporarily work below their skills level, risking deskilling (or overqualification). Ultimately, this may deter them from pursuing a career in the Netherlands.

In addition, the Dutch migration policy environment has become **more restrictive and politically contested**, affecting the country's attractiveness for international professionals, students, and trainees. Debates surrounding migration control, reductions in tax incentives and limitations on international student recruitment create uncertainty for employers and migrants alike and limit the scope for skilled migration-oriented policymaking, especially in the realm of medium-skilled migration.

From the perspective of the origin society and economy, the India-Netherlands corridor reflects ad hoc private-driven high-skilled migration where **training and education primarily takes place at the origin**. Strategic skilled migration planning is mainly absent. Yet, this (lack of) governance raises concerns of brain/skills drain, education and training cost sharing, and return policies and incentives. Finally, broader structural issues, such as the **housing shortage in the Netherlands**, increasingly affect migrant recruitment and retention, as access to affordable accommodation has become a significant challenge.

Good practices

The India-Netherlands corridor represents an example for strong **employer-driven mobility pathways**. The knowledge migrant scheme and recognized sponsor system provide relatively efficient procedures for companies to recruit highly skilled workers.

Private-led **innovation and start-up cooperation** in both directions have indirect impact on social and economic connections. Bilateral initiatives linking entrepreneurial ecosystems support business expansion and indirectly stimulate highly skilled mobility.

Air connectivity is another feature that impacts skilled migration. In the case of India-Netherlands large Indian airlines set up in the Netherlands reflecting strong economic ties.

3.5 Indonesia-Austria: Strong engagement and ongoing operationalization[8]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The migration skill corridor between Indonesia and Austria is an **emerging skills mobility partnership type** centered on **medium-skilled and sector-based labor mobility and vocationally trained workers**. It reflects complementary policy interests: Austria seeks to address persistent labor shortages, while Indonesia aims to create (fairer) employment and training opportunities abroad and relieve pressure on its domestic labor and vocational training market. Historically, bilateral relations were primarily development-oriented. The **1980 Agreement on technical cooperation** focused on economic and social development cooperation rather than labor mobility. Current migration cooperation builds on these long-term development engagements, particularly the upgrading of Indonesian vocational training centers in woodworking, metalworking and tourism according to Austrian standards, which has sparked interest of the Austrian private sector in recruiting from Indonesia and has ultimately led to increased bilateral cooperation in these fields.

Institutionally, cooperation has intensified in recent years through several state initiatives: A **2022 MoU on dual apprenticeship training** aims to strengthen work-based vocational education cooperation, while a **2024 MoU on the recruitment of professional and skilled workers** establishes a political framework for labor mobility. Although non-binding, the latter represents a milestone in bilateral migration governance and foresees a **Joint Committee** to develop implementation guidelines. The agreement emphasizes ethical recruitment, protection of migrant workers' rights, and cooperation in the mutual recognition of professional qualifications through information exchange on national qualification frameworks. **Ongoing dialogue and close cooperation** are needed to ensure that the cooperation develops in a balanced and sustainable way.

At the European level, Austria participates in the **EU-Indonesia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)**, while negotiations on the **EU-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** remain underway.

Domestic migration governance frameworks also shape the corridor. Austria regulates skilled migration primarily through the **Red-White-Red Card (RWR)**, a points-based system introduced in 2011 and repeatedly reformed to facilitate access for qualified professionals. Complementary initiatives include the government-supported program **Work in Austria** and the **Skilled Labor initiative** of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, which identifies **Indonesia** as a **priority partner** country.

Indonesia has also reformed and strengthened its governance framework. Law on the **Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers** introduced a **rights-based approach** covering the entire migration cycle, including recruitment, placement, and reintegration. The law increased state oversight of private recruitment agencies and **established stronger protection mechanisms** for migrant workers.

Overall, the bilateral corridor is characterized by a strong **strategic, state-supported approach**, in which vocational training cooperation has led to labor mobility initiatives. While still at an early

[8] For more, see: Huss, Daria, Sukamdi Sukamdi, Mar'a Kamila Ardani Sarajwati, Bernadet Lioni Andri Damayani, Muhammed Arif Fahrudin Alfana, and Evita Hanie Pangaribowo (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. Indonesia-Austria. *Link4Skill Working Paper Series 22/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/L4S-MSC-Report_indonesia-Austria.pdf

stage and involving **modest and volatile numbers of migrants**, both governments demonstrate **strong interest in expanding this mutually promising cooperation.**

Main trends

Labor mobility from Indonesia to Austria remains limited but has shown gradual growth as institutional cooperation expands. The corridor is strongly **driven by state-led initiatives, employer demand, and sector-specific initiatives**, particularly in healthcare and selected vocational professions.

Austria has adopted a **more proactive international recruitment strategy** in recent years. Public institutions and business organizations actively promote Austria as a destination for foreign workers and trainees. The establishment of dedicated structures promoting Austria as a destination among Indonesian professionals reflects the country's strategic prioritization within Austria's international skilled labor initiatives.

The healthcare sector has emerged as a central pathway. Programs such as the **#Nurses4Vienna** illustrate structured recruitment models combining university partnerships, language training, and qualification recognition support.

At the same time, **private-to-private placement** schemes remain common for Indonesian migrant workers and trainees globally and also play a role in this corridor. Indonesian private recruitment agencies must be licensed and operate under strict regulatory frameworks, while placements must be verified by Indonesian labor attachés abroad.

A further trend concerns growing efforts to improve mutual skills comparability. Austrian institutions are developing a **Pre-Check Register** for Indonesian qualifications to facilitate comparability within the Red-White-Red Card system (similar to the one developed with the Philippine government). This initiative aims to reduce administrative bottlenecks and allow employers to assess vocational qualifications more efficiently.

Main challenges

Despite growing cooperation, several structural challenges limit the scale of the corridor.

Migration volumes remain small due to **strict admission requirements**. Language proficiency in German, qualification recognition procedures and certification requirements constitute significant barriers for potential migrants. Access to affordable language training and reliable information about employment opportunities is often limited.

Recognition of qualifications **remains complex and time-consuming**. Austria's federal system involves multiple authorities and institutions in the recognition process, leading to inconsistent outcomes and long processing times that can extend from one to three years. **Case-by-case assessments** further increase uncertainty for applicants and employers.

Recruitment processes are sometimes characterized by **limited transparency or uncertainty,** particularly in **private placement** schemes. In some cases, candidates invest in language training without guaranteed employment outcomes. Moreover, **unlicensed private recruitment** companies occasionally attempt to facilitate placements outside regulated channels, exposing migrants to higher risks.

Austria faces a **competitive disadvantage** compared with other German-speaking destination countries. Germany and Switzerland are often more attractive due to higher visibility, larger labor markets or higher wages. Austria also remains **relatively unknown** among potential migrants in Indonesia.

So far, there are **no bilateral agreements on social security** signed.

Good practices

The development of pre-assessed qualification lists (**Pre-Check Register**) helps employers anticipate recognition outcomes and significantly reduces administrative bottlenecks. The prior development-oriented **vocational training cooperation also created a foundation for a mutually** beneficial skilled migration partnerships: **Upgrading Indonesian vocational training centers** in line with Austrian dual-training standards strengthens local skills development while creating potential recruitment pools for Austrian employers (**skills match**).

3.6 Indonesia-Germany: Triple-Win or German-Win?[9]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The Indonesia-Germany migration skill corridor is **relatively recent but increasingly emerging and structured form of bilateral skills mobility cooperation**. It is characterized by a strong state-led approach linking migration governance with skills development, vocational education and labor market needs. Cooperation has primarily focused on **medium-skilled occupations in healthcare** (particularly nursing) and, more recently, the **hospitality and catering sector**. Government-to-government (G2G) arrangements form the core institutional mechanism, creating regulated and planned pathways for legal labor mobility.

The cooperation is embedded in a set of bilateral agreements and institutional frameworks. The **2021 Agreement on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Health Professionals** between Indonesia's migrant worker authorities and the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) regulates the recruitment and placement of Indonesian nurses in Germany and outlines procedures for selection, employment conditions, recognition processes and social protection. This agreement underpins the nurse recruitment scheme implemented through the **Triple Win Program**, which combines labor market matching with ethical recruitment and development objectives.

Complementary frameworks reinforce the broader cooperation architecture. A **2020 MoU on labor and employment** provides a general framework for labor market cooperation and knowledge exchange. The **2021 Joint Declaration of Intent on health cooperation** deepens bilateral health-sector collaboration, while the **2023 MoU on the mutual exchange and understanding of the medical education system** promotes information exchange on professional training and qualification systems. In 2025, a new **Agreement on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Skilled Workers in Non-Regulated Professions** expanded the corridor to hospitality occupations such as cooks and chefs. Global Skills Partnerships (GSPs) with an explicit development-oriented approach have recently been initiated.

These arrangements are embedded within Indonesia's domestic labor migration governance framework established by Law No. 18/2017 on the **Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers**. Multiple institutions participate in implementation, including the Indonesian migrant worker protection authority (BP2MI/KP2MI), the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration (MOMT), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and vocational training institutions besides licensed private recruiting agencies (P3MI). Germany's migration infrastructure complements this governance framework through national legislative reforms, such as the **2019 Skilled Immigration Act** and its 2023 amendments and other political instruments to proactively govern skilled labor mobility. In addition, information portals such as **Make it in Germany** and **Recognition in Germany**, which provide guidance on labor migration procedures and qualification recognition aim to attract talents worldwide.

[9] For more, see: Ullmann, Johanna, Mar'a Kamila Ardani Sarajwati, Muhammad Arif Fahrudin Alfana, and Helen Schwenken (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. Indonesia-Germany. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 16/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/L4S-Indonesia-Germany-MSC-report-1.pdf

Overall, the corridor illustrates a pragmatic model of migration governance that links skills development, labor demand and regulated mobility. The cooperation contributes to improved training standards, greater institutional coordination and more transparent and ethical (rights-/protection-oriented) recruitment processes. At the same time, systemic constraints, including administrative complexity and preparation costs, continue to limit the speed, accessibility and scale of the governmental programs, while private initiatives play an increasing role.

Main trends

Migration from Indonesia to Germany **remains relatively small but has expanded gradually** since the late 2000s. Initial migration flows were largely individual and concentrated in service and maritime occupations. Since the mid-2010s, mobility has increasingly shifted toward structured programs, particularly through G2G recruitment schemes.

Healthcare workers, especially **nurses**, represent the **largest occupational group** among Indonesian migrants in Germany. This trend reflects structural labor shortages in Germany's healthcare sector as well as Indonesia's large supply of (licensed) nursing graduates. Many Indonesian nurses face limited domestic employment opportunities or comparatively low wages, making overseas employment more attractive.

Retention rates among Indonesian workers in Germany are relatively high. Migrants frequently pursue long-term employment due to favorable working conditions, professional recognition and prospects for permanent residence and family reunification/formation.

In addition to the G2G pathway, **private-to-private (P2P) recruitment channels** have expanded in recent years. Licensed private recruitment agencies increasingly facilitate placements in nursing, hospitality and technical occupations, often combining recruitment services with intensive German language training and institutional partnerships with universities and vocational schools. The cost sharing mechanisms vary – from fully covered programs to programs with significant candidate invests.

Another significant trend is the **growing interest in education and vocational training migration pathways**. These programs are perceived as a relatively accessible entry route into the German labor market and are increasingly pursued even by (high-skilled) university graduates whose qualifications are not directly recognized in Germany.

Main challenges

Despite its strong institutionalization and growing numbers, the Indonesia-Germany corridor faces several structural constraints.

In general, the participant numbers of G2G or P2P programs **remain small relative** to Indonesia's labor supply. Even structured programs such as Triple Win recruit only a limited number of candidates annually, despite the country producing tens of thousands of nursing graduates each year and despite the overall increasing interest into Germany as destination for professional or trainee migration.

Language requirements constitute the main bottleneck. German language proficiency is a mandatory prerequisite for most pathways, with minimum requirements ranging from A2 for hospitality occupations to B1 or higher for healthcare professions. The preparation process is **lengthy and costly**, and many candidates fail to reach the required level. Limited examination capacity at local official certification institutions further delays deployment.

Administrative procedures and qualification recognition processes remain **complex**. The recognition of foreign diploma and professional licenses in Germany is often **time-consuming and bureaucratic**. Migrant nurses frequently undergo additional training to close gaps between

Indonesian and German training standards while working in assistant roles during the recognition period.

The expansion of private recruitment channels creates **variation in recruitment conditions**. Although licensed agencies are **required to comply with ethical recruitment standards**, recruitment costs, training models and support services **differ substantially across agencies**.

While the cooperation framework effectively supports labor or training placement and retention in Germany, the **developmental dimension of migration remains limited**. **Skills circulation, return migration and structured reintegration mechanisms are largely absent** from the bilateral framework. Return migration is generally **treated as an individual decision** rather than a policy objective, limiting opportunities for systematic knowledge transfer, increase of the domestic skilled workforce or institutional learning in Indonesia.

Good practices

The Indonesia-Germany emerging migration skill corridor represents an example for a strongly **integrated migration-skills approach**: Government-to-government programs combine vocational training, language preparation and labor market matching, creating transparent and regulated migration pathways.

The corridor also reflects the mutual political commitment to **ethical recruiting standards**. Bilateral agreements emphasize fairer recruitment practices, cost transparency and equal labor rights for migrant workers, but numbers remain small.

The collaboration is based on previous **institutional cooperations in VET training** that were primarily development-oriented. Joint initiatives linking Indonesian education institutions with German vocational and language training programs and standards contribute to improved training quality and job readiness. These approaches provide opportunities for sustainable skills development.

3.7 Ghana-Canada: An uneven partnership of skills migration and development?

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

Skilled migration between Ghana and Canada takes place in the **absence of a bilateral legal framework**. Despite this institutional and regulatory gap, the two countries maintain **strong diplomatic relations**, partly rooted in their shared membership in the Commonwealth of Nations (CoN) and a **long-standing development cooperation partnership** dating back to 1981. Skilled mobility takes place, for instance, through **academic exchange programs and scholarships** e.g., via the Ghana Education Trust (GET) Fund. The scholarships often include return obligation and guaranteed employment in Ghana after graduation. For labor migration, the main legal pathway is **Canada's Express Entry** system, through which skilled migrants can apply for permanent residence. Many Ghanaian graduates who study in Canada also transition into the labor market through the **Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWP)**.

Main trends

Skilled migration within the Ghana-Canadian corridor is relatively decent in numbers and **largely individual and network-driven.** Migrants rely on personal initiative, diaspora networks, social media and informal contacts to access opportunities. **Private recruiting agencies and intermediaries play an important role** in facilitating both education, training and labor migration, although their practices vary widely in terms of costs and ethical standards.

Student migration constitutes an important mobility channel. Ghanaian students often finance their studies through personal or family resources or side jobs, sometimes incurring **significant debt**. Many view international education as personal investment that increases chances of

accessing the Canadian labor market. **Canadian universities actively recruit** international students as part of their internationalization strategies and financial models, since international students pay significantly higher tuition fees.

In healthcare, Ghanaian migrants are usually already highly skilled based on international standards, but frequently undertake costly and lengthy additional training or reskilling upon arrival. While no diplomatic discussions about bilateral recruiting agreements or MoUs take place at the moment, stakeholders in the healthcare sector on both sides, see **large potentials in skills mobility partnerships** that stronger link skilled migration and (skills) development policies and mitigate risks of brain/skills drain at the origin.

Main challenges

One significant challenge in the Ghana-Canadian corridor is **skills recognition**. Canada's recognition system is fragmented across provinces, which complicates recognition procedures. Even when credentials are assessed as equivalent by organizations such as World Education Services (WES), healthcare professionals must still pass additional licensing exams such as the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCLEX) and demonstrate **recent professional practice**. These requirements often lead to long waiting periods and limited access to bridging programs. As a result, many professional migrants experience **deskilling** and work temporarily in lower-skilled positions, such as personal support workers or survival jobs, while waiting to obtain full work accreditation. This situation contributes to skills mismatch, underutilization, wage disparities and frustration among migrants.

Due to lack of regulation and control and the absence of skills mobility partnerships, **unfair recruiting practices** leave migrants often vulnerable to high recruiting fees, while Ghana carries the **main costs for education** of skilled workers.

Migration **policy fragmentation** in Ghana also poses governance challenges. Different aspects of migration are handled by multiple ministries, including labor, foreign affairs, interior and health, which are often insufficiently coordinated. Furthermore, Ghana's **National Labor Migration Policy (NLMP)** currently requires revision to better address issues related to circular (skilled) migration, return and reintegration.

Uncertainties in Canadian immigration policies, including limits on study permits and unclear transition pathways from temporary status to permanent residence, create additional challenges for prospective migrants.

Good practices

Canada offers pathways that can facilitate labor market integration for international graduates. Students can work part-time during their studies and may apply for a **Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWP)**, which allows them to gain Canadian work experience and potentially transition to permanent residence through programs such as **Canadian Experience Class (CEC)**. While these opportunities are highly selective and costly for Ghanaian migrants, they provide structured pathways to employment.

Despite these challenges, several promising practices exist: **Subnational inter-institutional cooperation**, particularly between universities, has become an important mechanism for skilled mobility governance in the absence of formal state-level agreements. Partnerships between educational institutions, scholarship programs and training initiatives contribute to mutual beneficial skills development and international mobility, even without a formal bilateral migration framework.

3.8 Morocco-Germany: Geographically close, but politically distant? Two confident partners striving for a win-win-relationship[10]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The Morocco-Germany migration skill corridor is **relatively recent but increasingly structured and state-led pathway** for labor mobility, particularly in **medium-skilled technical occupations, vocational training, and selected professional sectors**. Unlike many European migration corridors, it does not stem from strong post-colonial legacy. While economic asymmetries persist, the bilateral relationship is generally perceived as politically rather neutral and positive and **institutionally cooperative**, enabling the development of a partnership framed around fairness, reciprocity and mutual benefits.

Diplomatic relations date back to 1956. The labor migration linkage of the two countries traces back to a **guest worker agreement**, primarily in the mining sector (1963-1973). Over the time, the relations have gradually evolved into a **multidimensional partnership** linking migration, economic cooperation and development support. A major milestone was the **2022 Joint Declaration on the Moroccan-German strategic dialogue**, which strengthened bilateral cooperation across multiple policy areas. In 2024, the two governments concluded a **Comprehensive Migration Partnership** aimed at simultaneously reducing irregular migration and facilitating legal labor mobility. This approach explicitly **combines security concerns with structured pathways for skilled migration**. Both partners emphasize a principle of co-responsibility, seeking to avoid one-sided 'resource extraction' and instead promote a balanced framework in which both states benefit.

At the institutional level, **cooperation is highly formalized and state-led**. Moroccan actors include the Ministry of Labor and Professional Integration (MIEPEEC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE), the Office for Vocational Training and Labor Promotion (OFPPT), and particularly the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC), which has recently established a **Directorate for International Placement**. On the German side, the Federal Employment Agency (BA), especially its International Placement Service (ZAV), plays a central role. A recently established **Joint Working Group** coordinates labor migration cooperation and facilitates continuous dialogue between institutions. This reflects the general mutual political commitment to establish a balanced relationship, where Moroccan interests and needs in terms of skills development and labor market needs are equally considered.

Several governmental initiatives structure the corridor. The EU-supported **THAMM** project (**Towards a holistic approach to labor migration governance and labor mobility in North Africa**) and its follow-up phase **THAMM Plus** aim to **build a joint governance system** for labor migration between Moroccan and European institutions. The program focuses on safe and regular mobility pathways, institutional capacity-building and pilot recruitment schemes. In addition, bilateral initiatives such as **MAzubi** facilitate the recruitment of Moroccan apprentices for Germany's dual vocational training system, particularly in technical fields.

The partnership also builds on broader **economic cooperation**. Germany is Morocco's sixth-largest trading partner and around 300 German companies operate in the country. **Development cooperation**, especially in vocational training, employment promotion, and climate and energy transitions, provides an important foundation for the growing agenda linking migration and skills development.

[10] For more, see: Belhaj, Karima, Johanna Ullmann, Mehdi Lahlou, and Helen Schwenken (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. Morocco-Germany. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 19/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/L4S_WPap19_MA-DE_CorridorReport.pdf

Despite these extensive institutional frameworks, the **quantitative impact remains modest**. The number of migrants moving through official programs is still limited, although both governments consider the governance architecture a significant achievement and a potential model for future EU talent partnerships. Negotiations to further expand collaboration such as following the Global Skills Partnership (GSP) model are ongoing.

Main trends

Migration from Morocco to Germany has **increased in recent years**, particularly through **vocational training pathways and technical occupations**. The corridor covers a diverse set of sectors, including industrial mechanics, machining, plastics technology, construction, hospitality and IT. Vocational training migration has emerged as a particularly successful model: Moroccan candidates enter the German dual training system, combining company-based work with vocational schooling and ultimately obtaining a German qualification.

Interest among Moroccan youth is **rapidly growing**. A noticeable trend is the **expansion of German language learning**, both through public programs and a **flourishing private market of language centers**. Many young Moroccans invest independently in language training, reflecting the perception of Germany as an increasingly attractive destination.

Institutionally organized recruitment programs such as THAMM prioritizes sectors where Moroccan graduates face limited domestic employment opportunities, while **avoiding sensitive areas where domestic shortages exist**. This **sector-selective approach** aims to ensure that outward mobility does not undermine Morocco's own labor market needs.

Another important trend is the **growing involvement of regional actors and employers**. German companies recruiting Moroccan workers often provide mentorship systems, housing assistance and integration support. Regional initiatives such as cooperation between the German state of **Lower Saxony and the Moroccan region of Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima** illustrate the increasing **role of subnational partnerships** linking labor migration with investment and regional development.

The **Moroccan diaspora in Germany** also plays an emerging **bridging role**. Although smaller than Moroccan communities in France or Belgium, it is becoming more organized and contributes to transnational networks, investments and information flows supporting migration.

At the same time, **private recruitment channels** are expanding, particularly in sectors such as **nursing**. These channels operate largely outside the official partnership framework, with varying ethical standards and cost sharing models, and illustrate the growing attractiveness of Germany as a destination country.

Main challenges

Despite the structured governance framework and increasing numbers, several constraints limit the corridor's effectiveness.

Language remains the most significant barrier. Access to the German labor market typically requires at least B1-level proficiency and an **officially recognized certificate**. While demand for German language training has surged, courses and examinations are **costly and examination slots limited**, creating a socio-economic filter that restricts access to mobility.

A second challenge concerns **certificate and diploma recognition**. Although recent German reforms allow migrants to start working before full recognition is completed, qualification recognition procedures remain **complex, lengthy and often costly**. Candidates must navigate different institutional systems and may initially work below their qualification level until additional training or examinations are completed. Individual case-by-case recognition procedures, particularly in regulated professions, are time- and resource-consuming. To

circumvent recognition issues, migrants and employers perceive vocational training migration as increasingly attractive strategy to circumvent recognition issues. Migrants strategically accommodate their vocational training decisions to sectors or occupations where recognition in Germany is feasible.

Administrative procedures, particularly **visa processing**, also slow mobility. Delays of eight to nine months between candidate selection and arrival are common due to limited consular capacity. Such timelines create costs and uncertainty for both migrants and employers.

Another challenge is the **growing but weakly regulated private recruitment and language training sector**. Numerous private intermediaries and language institutes have entered the market, sometimes charging **high fees or offering misleading promises** to candidates (or employers). The **lack of clear regulation and oversight** in terms of unethical practices and quality control makes it difficult for prospective migrants (and employers) to distinguish between reliable and exploitative offers and partners.

Structured **return and reintegration policies** to (re-)attract migrant diaspora to remigrate and invest in Morocco are still missing, besides initiatives such as **Centers for Migration and Development (ZME)** that seek to council and guide returnees and provide business assistance.

Sectoral governance also poses dilemmas. To avoid brain-drain, Morocco restricts official recruitment in sensitive sectors or occupations such as healthcare or construction. Continuous joint monitoring and institutional exchange is required in terms of selected occupations/sectors. However, private channels increasingly recruit nurses directly, creating a **parallel migration pathway outside bilateral control** or mutual benefits principles.

Finally, the corridor remains **highly selective**. Costs related to language learning, certification, and preparation limit participation primarily to candidates with sufficient **financial resources and educational capital**. Moreover, **gender disparities** persist: delayed family reunification / formation rules make migration more difficult for women, particularly mothers, and the majority of participants remain young single men.

Good practices

The corridor reflects strong **bilateral governance**. Institutionalized cooperation between ANAPEC and the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) enables coordinated recruitment, ethical safeguards and continuous policy dialogue – although numbers remain modest.

The corridor also exemplifies an **integrated training-migration approach**: Programs such as THAMM link language training, vocational preparation, migration procedures and post-arrival integration, improving job matching and long-term employability.

Multi-level and multi-stakeholder partnership is another key feature. Collaboration between regional authorities, employers and diaspora networks supports sustainable integration, recruitment and transnational economic linkages.

3.9 Morocco-Netherlands: An established, yet decreasing corridor – absent of skilled migration[11]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The Moroccan-Dutch migration corridor is a **well-established** one rooted in labor recruiting during the 1960s/70s. Over time, this initial wave formalized through bilateral agreement gave

[11] For more, see: Reinold, Julia, Godfried Engbersen, Mehdi Lahlou, Karima Belhaj, and Mohamed Mghari (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. Morocco-Netherlands. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 09/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/L4S_MA-NL-Corridor-Report.pdf

rise to stable migration communities, forming the basis for enduring social, cultural and economic ties between the two countries. Overall, the corridor is **stable, historically grounded and socially integrated** and transformed from a temporary labor scheme into a permanent settlement. It can be categorized as **post-'guest worker program' corridor type**. Today, Moroccans constitute one of the largest migration groups in the Netherlands.

Despite these long-standing ties, bilateral relations experienced **tensions** in the 2010s. **Diplomatic frictions** emerged mainly around concerns regarding the influence of Moroccan authorities over Moroccan citizens in the Netherlands, limited cooperation on return of rejected asylum seekers, and several politically sensitive incidents. In recent years, relations have improved and are generally described as **constructive, reflecting the historical and social linkages**.

At the EU level, the Netherlands is among the member states that signed the **2013 EU-Morocco Mobility Partnership (MP)**, which established a broad cooperation framework. The partnership addresses legal migration, border management, development and security issues. Within this framework, specific emphasis is placed on the mutual recognition of qualifications, mobility opportunities for students and researchers, and the role of migration in supporting development in Morocco. The partnership also promotes circular migration and the mobilization of skills to mitigate potential brain drain. In practice, however, the Netherlands has taken a **relatively cautious and limited role** in implementing initiatives under this framework.

Bilateral cooperation has nevertheless continued to evolve. In 2021, the Netherlands and Morocco adopted a bilateral **Action Plan** on migration cooperation, which foresees the establishment of a **Joint Committee** on migration matters, regular ministerial exchanges and operational cooperation on return and readmission. However, most measures **primarily focus on migration control, particularly return and readmission**. Cooperation on legal skilled migration remains less developed and largely exploratory.

Additional bilateral initiatives exist in areas such as **academic exchange and renewable energy**. While these agreements do not explicitly address migration, they **may indirectly facilitate mobility**. A longstanding **Social Security Arrangement (SSA)** between the two countries, first established in 1972 and subsequently revised, also continues to provide an institutional framework for migrants' rights and benefits.

Overall, the corridor can be characterized as a **mature, historically embedded migration relationship**. Yet, it remains **politically sensitive** and currently receives **limited strategic attention regarding skilled mobility**. Dutch migration policy priorities focus predominantly on **return and readmission**, whereas Morocco has expressed **stronger interest in expanding opportunities for legal and skilled mobility and skills development**. This **divergence of political interests** partly explains the **limited development of bilateral recruitment agreements and skills mobility partnership initiatives** within the corridor.

Main trends

Migration flows from Morocco to the Netherlands have **declined significantly** compared with earlier decades. Current mobility is largely **driven by family formation and reunification** rather than labor migration. Also, student migration occurs on a small scale. As a result, the corridor **cannot presently be considered a fully developed migration skill corridor**, despite its potential.

The Moroccan-Dutch migration system has **increasingly become self-sustaining through established communities and migrant networks**. However, unlike in earlier phases of the corridor, these **networks no longer actively encourage migration**. Research suggests that tightening immigration policies, limited economic opportunities and experiences of social hostility have led settled migrants to **provide more negative feedback** to potential migrants. This

dynamic has contributed to declining aspirations among Moroccans to migrate to the Netherlands.

At the same time, the corridor is characterized by **growing forms of transnational mobility.** Second- and third-generation Dutch citizens of Moroccan origin are firmly established in the Netherlands but **maintain strong ties with Morocco**. Some have increasingly considered or undertaken **return migration**, motivated by professional opportunities, entrepreneurial prospects or dissatisfaction with experiences of discrimination in the Netherlands. Highly skilled returnees may work remotely for Dutch companies while residing in Morocco or establish businesses serving transnational communities.

Private-sector involvement in recruiting Moroccan workers **remains limited**. Dutch employers rarely recruit directly from Morocco compared with other origins. Possible explanations include perceived language barriers, mismatches between available skills and labor market needs, and limited awareness among employers of Morocco as a potential recruitment pool.

These patterns illustrate an **emerging form of circular or transnational mobility** within the corridor – despite governmental stagnation. Rather than traditional labor recruitment, mobility is increasingly **shaped by diaspora networks, remote work opportunities and transnational lifestyles**.

Main challenges

Several challenges limit the development of the Moroccan-Dutch migration skill corridor.

There is a clear **policy mismatch** between the two governments. While the Netherlands prioritizes cooperation on return and readmission, Morocco is more interested in expanding legal pathways for skilled migration. This imbalance **complicates negotiations** on mutually beneficial mobility initiatives.

The **political climate** surrounding migration in the Netherlands **restricts policy space for expanding (medium-skilled) migration channels**. Medium-skilled mobility initiatives are often politically sensitive and resource-consuming and therefore limited in scale.

Private-sector engagement remains weak. Dutch companies rarely recruit from Morocco, and international recruitment agencies are largely absent in this corridor. This reduces the practical implementation of labor migration opportunities.

Social dynamics also play a role. Experiences of **discrimination and exclusion** reported by some Dutch citizens of Moroccan origin may **reduce the attractiveness** of the Netherlands as a destination for potential migrants and encourage outward mobility among younger generations.

Good practices

Academic and research mobility initiatives, including bilateral agreements facilitating PhD exchanges and scholarship programs may contribute to longer-term professional mobility and knowledge exchange.

Sectoral cooperation agreements (e.g., in renewable energy) promote professional exchange, training and business collaboration with potential indirect mobility effects.

3.10 Nigeria-Canada: Unequal partners of migration and skills development?

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

Nigeria's labor migration governance remains nascent, piecemeal, reactive and largely chaotic, despite the country being a major migration origin. By contrast, Canada operates a skills-based, relatively universal and established labor migration system – though without a strong partnerships approach towards origin countries. At the bilateral level, the **absence of formal**

MoUs and BLAs along the Nigeria-Canada corridor results in **weak, underdeveloped and uncoordinated transnational governance, with limited control and oversight from the Nigerian side.**

The corridor is emerging and rapidly expanding, but is not governed solely by official policy. Instead, it is **co-produced by a dense network of private sector intermediaries** whose regulation and ethical standards vary widely. This creates both flexibility and risk. While there is **strong potential for development-oriented outcomes**, this depends on introducing structural migration partnerships, bilateral labor agreements (BLAs), and systems for mutual recognition of qualifications to reduce skills waste and skills exploitation. At present, principles of ethical and transparent recruitment are recognized as important but remain insufficiently implemented.

Main trends

Migration from Nigeria to Canada is increasing, driven by wage differentials, employment and education opportunities, and Canada's reputation as a transparent and accessible destination. Canadian outreach efforts, including private recruitment activities and partnerships with education and employment institutions, have reinforced its attractiveness. Migration pathways typically follow a **two-step model**: entry through **temporary residence** (e.g. International Mobility Program, Provincial Nominee Programs, Federal Skilled Worker Program) or as **international students**, followed by transition to permanent residency through Express Entry (Canadian Experience Class). This creates a largely **one-way, long-term migration pattern** focused on retention at the destination rather than skills return or circulation to the origin.

Nigeria's governance framework, while underdeveloped, involves collaboration among multiple actors such as the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), ministries, civil society, employers' associations and international organizations. Initiatives like the **ILO–IOM Fairway program** aim to improve ethical recruitment and safe migration, though implementation remains limited.

Private intermediaries play a central role, facilitating documentation, employer communication and skills verification, often through digital channels that are weakly regulated. At the same time, Nigerian migrants proactively invest in acquiring globally demanded qualification, especially in IT, automation and digital technologies, to align with Canadian labor market needs. **Study migration** is particularly important due to its structured pathway to work and residency, and its role in improving skills matching through Canadian credentials and work experience.

Main challenges

A central challenge is the **lack of regulation of private recruitment intermediaries**, many of whom operate without governmental registration or oversight. This creates vulnerability to fraud, exploitation and misinformation, exacerbated by information asymmetries and opaque cross-border processes. The corridor's **dual lack of strong governance** on both ends makes it particularly susceptible to unethical practices and unbalanced costs and outcomes. There is also **heavy reliance on international organizations (IO)** in terms of migration regulation and infrastructure, highlighting the need for greater ownership and strategic planning by the Nigerian government.

The absence of MoUs and BLAs further limits education, training, and skilled labor migration coordination and protection mechanisms. **Recruitment chains** are built on trust and financial incentives, with embedded networks determining which qualifications are recognized. Credential recognition is not purely technical but shaped by institutional reputations, creating uneven opportunities and structural vulnerabilities.

Skills mismatch is a major issue. Many migrants face difficulties in credential recognition, often requiring further education, reskilling or career changes upon arrival. Canada's fragmented, province-based recognition system, particularly in regulated professions, creates barriers,

including costly and lengthy licensing processes, limited residency opportunities, and licensing requirements such as ‚**recency of practice'**. This leads to widespread **deskilling and reliance on survival jobs** contributing to skills waste and underutilization.

Although Canada seeks skilled workers, effective utilization of foreign qualifications often depends on **acquiring Canadian education and work experience**. This creates systemic inefficiencies and contradictions within migration policy goals. Financial burdens, lack of guidance, and insufficient preparatory support further complicate integration and fair skill usage.

At the macro level, the corridor contributes to **(the risk of) uncontrolled brain drain and resource exploitation** from Nigeria, with limited prospects for circular skilled migration or return. While remittances are emphasized, there is less focus on leveraging skills, technology and knowledge transfer. Over time, **deskilling** of workers **reduces the developmental benefits** for the origin country, while facilitated skills utilization and transfer provide the precondition for fair skills return.

Good practices

Some positive practices exist on both sides. In Nigeria, **professional bodies** play an important regulatory and protective role. For example, **engineering associations** enforce ethical standards, provide continuous professional development, and protect members through welfare mechanisms and disciplinary actions against misconduct.

In Canada, **reforms in credential recognition** such as the harmonization of licensing processes for internationally trained nurses have improved accessibility. Additionally, **reintegration programs** support returnees in applying acquired skills within Nigeria's labor market.

3.11 Philippine-Germany: The global race for Filipino nurses – How much is in it for Germany?[12]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The Philippines-Germany migration skill corridor represents an **established co-governed, strategic partnership** for skilled labor migration, particularly in nursing. Diplomatic relations date back to 1954 and migration of Filipino nurses to Germany has occurred intermittently since the 1960s. The corridor has become more structured since the 2010s through formal bilateral recruitment cooperation, while building on long-standing labor emigration governance in the Philippines.

A central milestone is the **2013 Triple Win government-to-government agreement** between the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) – now the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) – and Germany's Federal Employment Agency (BA) through its International Placement Services (ZAV). The agreement regulates the recruitment and deployment of Filipino health professionals and establishes joint responsibilities in pre-migration preparation (including language training, professional preparatory training, and cultural orientation), ethical recruitment standards, and integration support upon arrival in Germany. It also created a **Joint Committee** for program implementation and monitoring. The initiative aims to generate benefits for all parties: addressing Germany's nursing shortages, protecting Filipino workers, and supporting development gains for the Philippines through skills return.

Since 2016, the framework has evolved into a **dual recruitment system**. In addition to the government-to-government track, the Philippines has **allowed licensed private recruitment**

[12] For more, see: Ducanes, Geoffrey, Johanna Ullmann, Maruja M.B. Asis, Helen Schwenken, and Maria Andrea Soco-Roda (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. Philippines-Germany. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 20/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/L4S_Corridor-Report_Philippines-Germany.pdf

agencies to recruit nurses for Germany under the German employment regulation White List. This opened the corridor to employer-driven recruitment while maintaining the Philippines' regulatory oversight. Under this system, the **Employer-Pays-Principle** largely applies: employers typically cover costs such as language training, visa processing, airfare and placement fees, while workers bear limited expenses (e.g., passports and medical tests).

Bilateral cooperation has expanded further. **MoUs signed in 2022** broadened recruitment to additional health professionals and **other skilled occupations** (e.g., electrical mechanics, cooks, hotel staff, and plumbers). Since 2020, the corridor has also included the **Global Skills Partnership (GSP)**, implemented by GIZ, which links migration pathways with training cooperation in the Philippines. The GSP supports nursing education, strengthens geriatric care training, and creates "home" and "away" tracks for students, allowing some to work in Germany while others remain in the domestic health system.

These initiatives are embedded within the **Philippines' extensive migration governance** framework, often described as a **global model**. The legal foundation includes the 1**974 Labor Code** and the **1995 Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act**, strengthened by **2010 Republic Act (10022)** and the **2021 Department of Migrant Workers Act**. The Philippines maintains strict regulatory procedures for overseas employment, including licensing of recruitment agencies, contract verification, and mandatory pre-departure documentation/registration, to ensure worker protection and safe migration.

Germany, for its part, has increasingly adopted a proactive skilled migration policy. Reforms such as the **2019 Skilled Immigration Act** and its subsequent amendments have encouraged structured labor migration partnerships and ethical recruitment, particularly for medium-skilled occupations such as nursing.

Main trends

Migration flows have **expanded** in the past decade. Germany's share of newly deployed Filipino nurses increased from negligible levels in 2013 to higher deployments levels by 2021–2022. The growth is largely attributable to the **involvement of private recruitment agencies after 2016**, which expanded outreach and sometimes provide allowances during language training.

The corridor is **increasingly institutionalized** but remains **demand-/market-oriented**. While bilateral agreements establish regulatory frameworks, the **majority of recruitment occurs through private agencies**. Historical connections such as **Catholic missionary networks and church-affiliated hospitals** have also shaped early migration patterns and continue to influence (nurse recruitment) networks within the corridor.

Government-led programs such as the **Triple Win** play a **smaller quantitative role** but serve **important regulatory and symbolic functions** by establishing ethical recruitment standards and structured cooperation. However, participation in the program has declined in recent years, partly due to pandemic disruptions and probably due to competition from alternative migration destinations and pathways (mainly due to program lengthy, bureaucracy and intransparency in terms of timelines).

The corridor is also supported by **strengthening institutional and social infrastructures**. A **growing Filipino nursing diaspora** in Germany facilitates peer networks, integration support and information exchange. Training initiatives under the **Global Skills Partnership (GSP)s**, as well as renewed **cooperation on technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** with the Philippine Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), further deepen institutional linkages. These developments suggest a **gradual consolidation** of the corridor **into a relatively stable and self-sustaining migration pathway** for nurses.

Main challenges

Despite strong institutional engagement, several structural challenges persist.

The **migration and recognition process remains lengthy and complex**. German procedures for credential recognition are often **fragmented across federal states**, resulting in **delays and temporary deskilling**, as many Filipino nurses initially work as nursing assistants while completing recognition requirements.

Language acquisition is another major barrier. The requirement to reach advanced German proficiency (often up to B2 level) extends **preparation time and increases costs**. Government programs typically do not provide financial allowances during language training, making participation difficult for nurses who support families. Private recruitment agencies sometimes address this gap by offering stipends, which partly explains their larger recruitment numbers.

Administrative complexity also exists on the Philippine side. While strict migration governance aims to protect workers, procedures for accreditation, documentation and exit clearance can be **time-consuming and costly for employers and applicants**. Some foreign employers therefore recruit Filipino workers already residing abroad (**Third-country hiring**), which the Philippine government considers irregular (with migrants being exposed to higher risks and vulnerability).

Additional challenges relate to **integration and retention**. Filipino nurses report experiences of **workplace discrimination, social exclusion, and segregation** in some contexts. At the same time, **high expectations** regarding employment conditions can lead to **dissatisfaction** if recognition processes or working conditions differ from initial expectations, also within government-led programs. In some cases, Germany serves as an **entry point to the broader European labor market** rather than a long-term destination. Particularly German employers that followed ethical standards and made considerable recruitment investments struggle with retention as many Filipino nurses (a trend observable also among other international workers arriving in Germany) decide to move on to another employer or another EU country after recognition.

Furthermore, the corridor raises **broader ethical and sustainability debates**. Large-scale recruitment from a country that itself faces increasing health workforce shortages highlights ongoing global inequalities in labor markets and training capacities. While the Philippines actively manages overseas employment and exercises agency in negotiating agreements, **structural economic asymmetries** continue to shape migration outcomes.

Good practices

The corridor is an example for **integrated migration and skills training partnership**. Initiatives such as the **Global Skills Partnership (GSP)** combine migration pathways with capacity building in Philippine nursing education, including equipment transfers, faculty exchange and improved geriatric care training. They remain small scale, costly, and coordination-heavy however.

The corridor reflects **structured bilateral governance**. Government-to-government cooperation frameworks (e.g., the Triple Win agreement) provide regulatory oversight, ethical recruitment standards and institutional coordination between stakeholders.

The Filipino nurse community in Germany is strongly organized and an important stakeholder for **knowledge exchange and diaspora-based mentoring and policy consultation**. Filipino nurses also increasingly support new applicants through peer coaching, information sharing and pre-departure orientation, strengthening preparation and integration within the corridor.

3.12 **Philippines-Poland**: Like two ships in the night – The need for migration skill corridor' formalization[13]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

The Philippine-Poland migration skill corridor can be described as **emerging, demand-driven but weakly institutionalized corridor without substantial bilateral agreements or governance, systematic oversight or formal integration mechanisms.**

The **Philippines** operates one of the world's **most institutionalized and well-praised** labor migration systems tracing back to the 1970s. Migration governance is consolidated under the Department of Migration Workers (DMW) and **strongly aligned with international ethical recruitment standards**. The Filipino government increasingly promotes deeper bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) with destination countries.

Poland' migration governance framework, by contrast, is still evolving and has historically been **fragmented and reactive/ad hoc to business demand and crises**. Policies such as the **2025 Act on Foreign Employment** or the **Migration Strategy 2025-20230** aim to attract skilled migrants, simplify procedures and modernize systems, but they do not provide targeted approaches and dedicated pathways for Filipino workers.

The contrast between the two systems is significant: while the Philippines pursues a structured, state-led, protection- and rights-based labor migration model and recruitment agreements, Poland relies largely on employer needs and general labor market regulations. The (potential for) formal labor mobility partnerships has been discussed in the past informally but have not yet materialized. As a result, the **corridor operates largely through fragmented, externally driven mechanisms, imposed mainly by the Polish private sector**. Some observers describe the current system as **resembling a 'cowboy market'**, characterized by limited oversight, reliance on intermediaries, and weak coordination between the two states.

Main trends

Despite this **institutional void**, migration flow continues to grow, primarily driven by labor shortages in Poland and the appeal of higher wages and EU access for Filipino workers. Another factor is the growing role of **private recruitment agencies and temporary work intermediaries**. These agencies and intermediaries frequently **function as de facto employers**, signing contracts with Filipino workers and assigning them to Polish companies. This system has facilitated a **rapid rise in work permits and employment registrations – largely outside of government oversight.**

Filipino migrants in Poland are **concentrated in sectors not traditionally associated with Filipino migration globally**. While typical sectors such as healthcare, domestic work, or maritime occupations are present to the less extend, workers are more commonly employed in **manufacturing, construction, food processing, logistics, and transport**. This sectoral shift has also produced a **gender change**: male workers increasingly dominate migration to Poland, diverging from the female-dominated Filipino migration patterns globally.

Due to the lack of formalization on the Polish side, recruitment processes are heavily **intermediary-driven and often rely on informal networks** between agencies and employers. **Personal contacts and employer** referrals play an important role in connecting Polish firms with recruitment agencies in the Philippines or in third countries.

[13] For more, see: Wanicka, Olga, Maruja M.B. Asis, Izabela Grabowska, Goffrey Ducanes, and Maria Andrea Soco Roda. 2026. Migration Skill Corridor Report. Philippines-Poland. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 23/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/L4S_MSC-Report_PH-PL.pdf

Overall, the corridor can be described as characterized by **private links with weak state engagements**: a growing migration flow largely coordinated by private actors rather than structured bilateral state cooperation.

Main challenges

The main **structural challenge is the absence of a formal bilateral labor migration framework**. Migration governance between the Philippines and Poland is poorly coordinated, and on the Polish side labor and migration policies operate largely independently. While the Philippines promotes structured, state-led and ethical labor mobility with strong protection mechanism, Poland prioritizes employer flexibility and minimal state interference. This mismatch creates **procedural complexity and uncertainty** for workers and employers. Filipino workers remain institutionally overlooked in Polish migration policy.

Recruiting practices pose another challenge. While Philippine requires formal procedures with accredited agencies, many Polish employers recruit Filipino workers from third countries to bypass the (lengthy, complex, and costly formal state) regulatory system. **Third-country arrangements** often increase migrant's vulnerability (higher fees, contract ambiguity, risk of abuse).

Private recruiting poses additional risks: **Hidden costs and unclear employment conditions** are frequently reported. Workers may face salary deductions for accommodation, utilities, or administrative services that were not clearly explained before departure.

Administrative barriers also affect recruitment and migration processes. Visa appointment systems are often described as chaotic and constitute a major bottleneck, with limited slots and lengthy delays, especially after Polish 'visa scandal'. In some cases, work permits expire before workers can obtain visas and travel to Poland.

Skills mismatches and limited recognition of qualifications represent additional structural issues. Many Filipino workers are highly skilled but employed in middle or low-skilled manual jobs.

Integration support in Poland remains limited. Although state-supported initiatives such as migrant integration centers exist, Filipino migrants **rely on civil, community-led organizations, churches and informal networks** (such as local sport associations) for assistance, information, and language learning. Online communities and social media platforms also play a role. Consequently, long-term retention of Filipino workers in Poland is uncertain, and **migration often remains temporary or circular**.

Good practices

There is emerging awareness and training cooperation to increase skills match between Poland and the Philippines: Some Polish employers independently initiated **skills testing and training in the Philippines prior to deployment**, helping align workers' competencies with specific job requirements and reducing skills mismatches.

The **support and services provided by the Catholic church and NGOs** fill an important void in the promotion and protection of Filipino migrant workers.

3.13 Ukraine-Netherlands: The different one[14]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

[14] For more, see: Reinold, Julia, Viktor Borshchevskyy, Iryna Lapshyna, and Godfried Engbersen (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. Ukraine-Netherlands. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 12/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/L4S_WPap12_MSC_Report_UA-NL_05-03-26.pdf

The Ukrainian-Netherlands migration skill corridor is **recent and largely unstructured;** it **expanded and transformed** after the **Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022**. It can be characterized as **newly emerging humanitarian and ad hoc and demand- as well as crises-driven mobility corridor** largely driven by a **mix of public and private actors**. Prior to the war and conflict, migration flows were limited and were primarily composed of family reunification/formation, international students, intra-company transfers (ICT), and highly skilled migrants. The corridor is shaped by **private-sector recruitment and individual mobility**, rather than coordinated intergovernmental arrangements.

The corridor governance reflects a **multi-stakeholder structure**. While private companies traditionally played an important role in facilitating skilled mobility, the integration and reception of displaced Ukrainians have shifted governance towards a **hybrid system** involving national authorities, municipalities, employers, recruiting agencies, universities, and civil society organizations. Despite this expanded institutional landscape, **direct bilateral cooperation between the two governments remains limited**.

The transformation occurred in 2022 with the activation of the **EU Temporary Protection Directive**, which granted displaced Ukrainians immediate access to residence, employment and public services across the EU. In the Netherlands, this framework allowed rapid and privileged labor market entry (compared to other refugee groups).

In parallel, the Netherlands maintains selective skilled migration pathways open to third-country nationals, most prominently the **Highly Skilled Migrant Visa scheme *(Kennismigrantenregeling)***, which provides fast-track residence permits for workers meeting salary thresholds and employer sponsorship requirements. This scheme offers a **clear pathway toward long-term settlement and labor market integration**, but it is limited to a relatively small segment of highly qualified migrants.

Main trends

Since 2022, the Ukrainian-Dutch migration corridor has been dominated by forced migrants benefitting from temporary protection, alongside smaller groups (posted workers, students, entrepreneurs, highly skilled professionals). **Social networks, professional contacts, and language accessibility** play a significant role in shaping destination choices. Existing Ukrainian communities and professional networks in Dutch cities have acted as pull factors.

Institutionally, the Netherlands has addressed Ukrainian arrivals largely through **national and local initiatives rather than bilateral migration governance**. Universities, for instance, have sometimes offered reduced tuition fees or dedicated support programs.

Multiple international and EU-level initiatives have supported labor market integration and mobility (**EURES Talent Pool, Seeds of Bravery, Tent Partnership for Refugees**).

The corridor shows a **mixed occupational profile**. A significant share of skilled Ukrainians works in IT. A large proportion, yet, works below their skills levels, reflecting barriers related to skills recognition and insecurities regarding their length of stay.

Another notable feature is the **importance of posted workers and transnational recruitment chains**, often mediated through companies registered in other EU countries, particularly Poland. In such arrangements, Ukrainian workers are formally employed under another EU jurisdiction while working in the Netherlands, creating **complex regulatory situations and sometimes exploitative conditions**.

At the same time, the Netherlands is **gradually tightening broader migration policies** affecting international professionals, which is not specific to the Ukrainian-Dutch corridor. Measures to reduce the inflow of international students and stricter conditions for migrant recruitment may affect the country's overall attractiveness for skilled workers, including Ukrainians.

Main challenges

The most significant structural challenge of the corridor is the **temporary nature of the refugee protection regime**, which creates uncertainty about long-term residence prospects. This uncertainty reduces incentives for employers, educational institutions, and migrants themselves to invest in **training, credential recognition, and long-term integration**. As a result, many displaced Ukrainians participate in the labor market but remain only partially integrated. A major consequence is **deskilling of highly educated Ukrainians**, for example in regulated professions such as healthcare. Factors are: slow recognition of foreign diploma, regulatory barriers in protected professions, and sectoral mismatches.

Language barriers constitute another critical obstacle. While English often enables initial labor market entry, **full professional integration in many sectors requires proficiency in Dutch**, limiting access to higher-skilled positions.

Dutch policy approaches have emphasized **rapid employment over long-term integration**. The Dutch **work-first strategy** prioritizes immediate labor market participation, which has resulted in relatively high employment rates among displaced Ukrainians. However, critics argue that the approach places insufficient emphasis on **training, career progression, and skills development**, reinforcing occupational mismatches.

The ad hoc nature of early reception responses has **integration effects**: Many initiatives initially assumed short-term displacement, but as the war continues, policymakers increasingly face the challenge of **transitioning from emergency reception to sustainable integration strategies**.

Good practices

The **multi-stakeholder governance model**, involving municipalities, employers, universities, NGOs and migrant organizations, has enabled rapid labor market access and flexible responses to labor shortages. Civil society organizations and Ukrainian diaspora networks have played a particularly active role in providing information, assisting with credential recognition, and facilitating access to housing, childcare and employment.

Strong migrant agency and community organization have contributed significantly to integration outcomes. Ukrainian networks in the Netherlands actively exchange information, support newcomers, and facilitate professional connections, thereby strengthening the corridor's informal infrastructure.

3.14 Ukraine-Poland: Networked migrants and de-networked policies[15]

Legal, political and institutional frameworks and relations

Migration between Ukraine and Poland constitutes an **established but asymmetrical migration skill corridor** that is simultaneously **crisis- *and* labor-driven**. Historically, the corridor developed as a **form of circular and seasonal labor migration**, facilitated by geographical proximity, dense migration networks, and comparatively liberal employment regulations for Ukrainian citizens in Poland. Simplified employment procedures allowed Ukrainians to work legally without requiring standard work permit, creating a privileged labor migration system long before the recent displacement crisis. Institutionally the corridor **lacks a comprehensive bilateral skilled migration framework or state-level agreement**. Cooperation between the two countries is characterized primarily by **ad hoc arrangements and crises response** rather than structured mobility

[15] For more, see: Borshchevskyy, Viktor, Emil Chról, Ivanna Kyliushyk, and Iryna Lapshyna (2026): Migration Skill Corridor Report. Ukraine-Poland. *Link4Skills Working Paper Series 08/2026*. https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Full-Report-8.-Internal-Migration-Skill-Corridor-Report-Ukraine-%E2%80%93-Poland-copy.pdf

partnership. Existing bilateral cooperation mechanisms focus on limited – but important – areas such as **qualification recognition, seasonal employment arrangements, pension coordination, and avoidance of double taxation**. This situation partly reflects Ukrainian's traditional preference to address migration governance within broader EU frameworks rather than through bilateral negotiations. In addition, skills mobility partnerships (and retention or integration policies on the Polish side) are largely perceived as inappropriate given the Ukrainian conflict situation and subsequent skills shortage.

At EU level, several developments have significantly shaped mobility between the two countries (**EU-Ukraine Association Agreement** since 2014, visa-free travel since 2017), including short-term and circular mobility, particularly of seasonal workers (agriculture, construction, tourism).

(Return) migration governance has historically not been treated as major policy priority. Although Ukraine adopted the **Strategy of State Migration Policy of Ukraine** until 2025, this framework is widely considered **insufficiently comprehensive**. Moreover, migration governance in Ukraine involves several state bodies whose responsibilities often overlap, leading to coordination challenges. The **Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022** represented a spontaneous turning point in the migration corridor, with Poland turning to the main (temporary) destination for displaced Ukrainians. In response, the European Union activated the **Temporary Protection Directive**, granting Ukrainian nationals immediate legal residence, access to the labor market, healthcare, education, and social benefits across EU member states without requiring regular asylum procedures. Poland **implemented these provisions through national legislation**, enabling rapid labor market access and legal residence for Ukrainian refugees.

Main trends

The Ukraine-Poland migration skill corridor is strongly **shaped by informal migration networks and diaspora structures** rather than formal recruiting systems or programs. The temporary protection status facilitated rapid labor market entry and mobility.

At the policy level, **Polish migration management remains reactive rather than strategic** with responsibilities dispersed across several institutions and **lack of a comprehensive strategy or specific measures**. Simplified licensing procedures for Ukrainian medical professionals were initiated but remain contested.

Poland has emerged as **major transit country** for Ukrainians with high level of third country migration into Western EU countries with stronger integration support, clearer long-term residence pathways and higher wages, including Germany or the Netherlands. **Ukrainians as major foreign workers** in Poland have demonstrated relatively strong labor market positioning, with increasing upward mobility and growing bargaining power. Language competency, cultural proximity and high skills play a role here.

Main challenges

(Return) Migration governance on both sides remains fragmented, underdeveloped and insufficiently strategic. Poland lacks a long-term, evidence-based migration policy with focus on attraction and integration. Similarly, Ukraine has historically lacked a comprehensive migration, retention and diaspora policy framework, and government coordination remains limited.

The temporary protection status facilitates rapid labor market access, but **reinforces a sense of impermanence** as the legal framework is provisional and repeatedly extended. This uncertainty affects both migrants and employers' long-term efforts and investments.

Skills recognition remains challenging, particularly for regulated professions, such as nursing or teaching. The recognition (nostrification) process is widely described as **lengthy, complex, and costly, often requiring additional examinations or curriculum adjustments**. As a result, many

skilled migrants accept jobs below their qualifications (**deskilling**) rather than wait for official authorization to practice their profession.

Recruitment practices in some sectors remain **poorly regulated.** Private recruitment agencies and intermediaries operate with limited state oversight, which can lead to exploitative practices such as charging recruitment fees or redirecting migrants to other EU countries without proper safeguards.

Polish integration policies and structures remain underdeveloped. Personal initiative or employer investments play a role. Polish language proficiency is often a prerequisite for skilled employment, making language barriers a critical obstacle to labor market advancement.

Migration has significant **demographic implications for Ukraine**. The country already faced high levels of emigration before the war, and current displacement trends risk exacerbating demographic decline and labor shortages. Large-scale outmigration of young people and skilled professionals may contribute to long-term **brain drain and complicate post-war reconstruction** efforts.

Good practices

The rapid implementation of the **Temporary Protection Directive** enabled displaced Ukrainians to access legal residence, employment, and social services without lengthy asylum procedures, facilitating swift labor market participation. Ongoing discussions on **developing a national integration strategy** in Poland, including the establishment of **Foreigners' Integration Centers (CICs)** offering language courses and career counselling, may contribute to more structured integration policies in the future.