

► Skills 21 Project

Assessment Findings and Talent Partnerships Models

▶ Background

- The Talent Partnerships (TP) Concept (New Pact on Migration and Asylum):
 - ▶ Tailor-made partnerships between interested EU Member States with non-EU countries (Third Countries), providing opportunities for work and training.
- International TP models - one of the means for:
 - ✓ matching skilled labour demand and supply on national and international labour market
 - ✓ skills transfer for in-demand occupational sectors, maximising ‘brain gain’
 - ✓ boosting competitiveness and growth

Skills 21 Project – purpose and assessment objectives

Assessments conducted in Bangladesh and interested EU MS with the aim to facilitate TP collaboration through:

- Identification of high-demand sectors and skills shortages in Italy, Germany, and other EU MS, based on indication of potential interest during recent Roundtables
- Analysis and assessment of technical and vocational skills gaps, skills comparability and training needs in Bangladesh to enhance potential Bangladeshi labour migrants' employability on the national and global labour market
- Review of international, regional, and national good practices and lessons learnt for the purpose of identifying 3 prototypes of TP models

▶ Preliminary findings

► Preliminary findings (1)

Sectors and occupations shortages in the selected EU MS

- ICT (software and application developers, system and data analysts and security)
- Construction (bricklayers, plumbers, carpenters and joiners, concrete places, floor layers, building and related electricians)
- Hospitality and tourism (cooks, kitchen helpers, food preparers, waiters, cleaners and helpers)
- Health and care services (nursing professionals, health care assistants, caregivers)
- Transportation and logistics (professional bus and train drivers, heavy truck drivers, transport labourers and freight handlers, mobile plant operators)
- Agriculture (agriculture labourers and farmworkers) and
- Sub-sectors of manufacturing and machine industry (specialists in mechanical engineering and electrical industry).

► Preliminary findings (2)

- Main causal factors for skills shortages are: digitalisation, automatization and greening of the EU MS economies; ageing of societies, migration; “3D” working conditions in some of the sectors; underutilisation of available skills.
- Better matching of skills supply and demand across partner countries require cooperation on skills intelligence, regular and real-time official data on skills demand for each sector, occupations, skills-sets, job vacancies, and easy connectivity and linkages between skilled job candidates and vacancies across job portals. EU sector skills cooperation and Blueprints appear suitable for informing TP.
- G2G modalities in bilateral agreements have proven in historical perspective. The combination of public and private service provision scales-up initiatives and makes them sustainable.
- High level policy dialogue, followed by operational arrangements or implementation plans with clear designation of stakeholders and distribution of roles and responsibilities is crucial for successful TP.

► Challenges in EU MS perspective

Challenges – EU MS

- Variable approaches on visa regimes, skills recognition, LM and migration policy mechanisms across EU MS
- Recent changes in migration legislation and/or labour migration arrangements; Implementation just starting now
- Challenges for establishing streamlined TPs with third countries at political, policy and operation level for the vast range of accreditation, certification and recognition public authorities, training centres and the private sector
- Digitalisation and inter-European cooperation to help ease partnership channels
- Major barriers relate to bureaucracy, time-consuming procedures and requirements for ensuring skills equivalency and mastery of language, making it difficult particularly for SMEs

► Challenges in Bangladesh perspective

Challenges – Bangladesh

- Insufficient practical and foreign language skills. Apprentices do not often have the chance of being exposed to workplace-based conditions where they can grasp the experience of functioning in real-life conditions during the apprenticeship programs. In theory, workplace-based training is an integral part of the NTVQF skills curricula, but the placement of trainees at industry remains a challenge.
- Outdated curricular at TVET institutes: the existing TVET curricula is often not coherent with the technological advancements in the private sector. Companies are introducing new technologies and machinery on a regular basis, but the curricula are yet to adapt to the technology. For European markets, this could be even a greater challenge as the technologies are deemed to be more advanced than Bangladesh.
- Inadequate training for in-company trainers in BD: In-company trainers often do not bring the necessary pedagogical and technical competencies to train apprentices on the job. Most trainers are not aware of the formal training requirements and skills needed to cater the expectations and requirements of the companies in the EU.
- Incompatible recognition of qualifications and diplomas abroad: there are no joint standards nor criteria for licensing and certification. To this date, qualifications agencies/ professional bodies/ education providers cannot grant diplomas that are internationally or at least EU-wide recognized. For example, standardized procedures for professional recognition of qualifications and diplomas to access the EU labour markets are missing.

Bangladesh experience on suitable models in the CoO

- In **South Korea**, the Employment Permit System (EPS) for temporary non-professional employment is based on bilateral relations with BD and 15 other partner countries aiming to fill vacancies in industries such as manufacturing, construction, agriculture, and services. This has worked well for BD as Bangladeshi workers are matched with employers based on their skills and job preferences. Workers are entitled to receive wages and benefits as per South Korean labour laws, including overtime pay, health insurance, and other employment benefits. The drawback is that the employment contracts typically last for three years only, with the possibility of one extension for another year.
- In **Japan**, small-scale bilateral programmes for recruitment of nurses and care workers from BD exist and work successfully. However, these initiatives are small compared to the long-standing Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), first created decades ago as a form of international cooperation. Firms employing TITP participants had to commit to a skills development plan. In practice, TITP skills development was limited, and the programme functioned primarily as a low-skilled labour migration channel. With the introduction of the Specified Skilled Worker programme in 2021, which is based on language and skills certification, Japanese employers have begun to operate language and skills training centres in countries of origin.
- **India** has a Government to Government (G2G) MoUs in the field of skill development and vocational education training and Business to Business (B2B) MoUs with BD, which facilitates recruitment, migration and training services for many countries. The initiative works well but has been operating on a small scale so far.
- Typically, labour contracts for Bangladeshi workers in **Saudi Arabia** are for a duration of two years. These contracts can be extended based on mutual agreement between the employer and the employee. The new labour reforms have made it easier for workers to switch jobs and renew contracts without the stringent restrictions of the previous kafala system. This reform allows for greater job mobility and potentially longer-term employment opportunities within the Kingdom.

Lessons learnt and preliminary recommendations



Lessons learnt and recommendations (1)

- Key principles of successful TPs:
 - ✓ From fragmented initiatives and variety of projects and tools towards harmonizing approaches, tools and mechanisms for key components of future TP models
 - ✓ Need for ensuring policy coherence and coordination regarding skills matching and safe labour migration
 - ✓ Buy-in” of employers and their organisations and involvement of the social partners in CoD to ensure ownership
 - ✓ Support skills development and targeted training of skilled workers both in interested EU Member States and their partner countries with the aim of avoiding potential “brain drain”, skills mismatch and support decent employment.

Lessons learnt and recommendations (2)

- ▶ Policy dialogue and operational cooperation are essential in the areas of:
 - ✓ Skills intelligence, assessments, forecasting and regular monitoring of continuing availability of skilled labour in envisaged occupational sectors
 - ✓ Mapping of standards and qualifications, adaptation and alignment of curricula/training offers, and assessment and certification procedures
 - ✓ Training of trainers and provision of vocational training, language and pre-departure training, as well as social and workplace integration training
- ▶ Potential measures for capacity building are:
 - ✓ Assessing stakeholders own capacities and improving ability to link training and labour market needs
 - ✓ Supporting training centres to deliver quality training services
 - ✓ Developing monitoring and quality assurance mechanism and a risk management mechanism

Lessons learnt and recommendations (3)

- Key principles and measures to guide the application of simplified skills and qualifications recognition procedures are:
 - ✓ Applying a ‘skills-first’ approach emphasizing testing/assessing actual skills and competences
 - ✓ Considering “softer” procedures of validation, certification or recognition of prior learning, skills and qualifications
 - ✓ Pre-arrival access to recognition procedures; facilitate early recognition as part of pre-departure processes
 - ✓ Reducing barriers to effective and fast-track recognition of skills and qualifications in EU Member States
 - ✓ Co-operation, coordination and fast-track communication and information provision between national authorities; knowledge development, support and capacity development; interoperable databases and platforms
- Ensuring protection of migrant workers’ rights, adhering to relevant International Labour Standards (ILO), through:
 - ✓ Independent monitoring of the application of fair recruitment principles
 - ✓ Supporting the implementation of decent work and workplace and social integration standards
 - ✓ Awareness raising, capacity-building and sensitization measures towards all stakeholders, the media and the public
 - ✓ Functional reintegration schemes, services, counselling and training; adequate employment opportunities

Three Talent Partnership models



Highly skilled
workers
Blue Card-Type

**Flexible pathway
for high-skilled
with relevant
high-level
professional
experience**



VET/recognition in
the CoD

**Be trained in CoD,
incl. through WBL
and dual vocational
training and obtain a
recognized
professional
qualification in CoD**



Training in the
CoO

**Be trained in CoO;
Training,
qualifications and
RPL assessments
of existing skills in
CoO in
cooperation with
CoD.**

Model 1: Blue-Card Type for highly skilled workers

Description of the model	TP on highly skilled workers
Target group	Highly skilled workers (ICT, construction, regulated professions)
Training activities	Pre-departure, in the CoO: short-term, adaptation training: Language training; Intercultural awareness; Technical (from the type of Micro credentials)
Recognition	Only if needed; compulsory for regulated professions, if possible – procedures to start in the CoO
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the philosophy of the Blue Card Framework with or without possessing the respective qualifications: • Promoting “first skills” approach • Employer-led model: representatives of the employers usually participate in the identification of the need of short-term targeted professional training, its design and possibly – its delivery in cooperation with training centres • Mobility between jobs, employers, EU countries (for Blue Card holders) • Relevant to highly skilled specialists from the ICT sector, well skilled workers from the construction sector and for regulated professions of nurses and caregivers. • Stronger focus on the skills shortages in the CoD, compared to Model 3 • Suitable both for long-term and for circular migration
Potential for the sectors professions/ workers	ICT, regulated (caregiving); skilled construction workers Further focus on transformation-relevant sectors, occupations and skills could be of a big advantage
Potential to be used in the countries	All countries (with the exception of Denmark and Ireland in the EU)
Features relevant to the TP paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For CoO: Eases burden on the labour market; Transfer of knowledge; Builds capacity in future-related skills and competences; Transfer of funds (remittances); Potentially builds knowledge/skills and networks, in the event of return migration; • For the employees: Occupy attractive and decent work positions, without further delays and lengthy procedures; • For CoD: Addresses shortage occupations; Attracts talents: Raises productivity and competences.

Model 2: VET/recognition in the country of destination

Description of the model	TP on Training and Recognition in the CoD
Target group	Young people and low-middle or semi-skilled workers
Training activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-departure preparatory training in the CoO; - Full or compensatory training to reach requested skills level at the CoD
Recognition	Recognition in the CoD
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the traditional approach to top up labour migrants' skills in the CoD (including apprenticeships) • Aiming at achieving comparability of degrees obtained in the CoO and CoD and/or opportunities to upgrade workers' skills against the standards required in the CoD • Possibilities for working while studying • A longer way of occupying a full position offers all preconditions for a decent job with all benefits, like the citizens of the CoD. • Stronger focus on the skills shortages in the CoD, compared to Model 3 • Suitable for a permanent or long-term migration, although there are examples across the countries of circular migration too, especially in the case of youths' training and exchange.
Potential for the sectors professions/ workers	All non-regulated professions, and particularly good perspectives in the sectors of hospitality, construction
Potential to be used in the countries	Germany, Italy as countries where labour migrants would reside on a longer-term, after getting a fully recognized qualification and decent working positions (because of favourable payment conditions); Italy and Greece – also - for shorter-term migration; Romania – in case arrangements on recognition made.
Features relevant to the TP paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For CoO: Eases burden on the labour market; Builds skills and competences of the workforce, which can be used in the CoO in case of circular migration; Pre-departure training may also raise capacity of domestic institutions to better prepare future labour migrants; Transfer of funds (remittances); Potentially builds knowledge/skills and networks, in the event of return migration; • For the employees: Possibilities for working while training; Avoiding the risk of remaining unemployed or hired for positions that require lower skills and qualifications. • For CoD: Addressing shortage occupations on a long-term basis, as the model enhances the skills pool according to the specific requirements of the country.

Model 3: Training in the country of origin

Description of the model	TP on VET training in the CoO
Target group	Semi-skilled/not skilled
Training activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-departure training in the CoO: - Language - VET - Intercultural training
Recognition	Recognition/Certification – in the CoO or Validation/recognition – in the CoD
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets young and/or skilled or semi-skilled workers by offering relevant training activities in the CoO prior to moving abroad. • Training activities in the CoO, provided in cooperation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - after skills mapping, addressing both skills shortages in CoD and skills development in prospective sectors in CoO - covering foreign language, vocational training, cultural/civic awareness - potentially training “home track” and “away track” students • Suitable for countries with experience and intermediary bodies in development cooperation • Well-applicable model in case of in-company training, lower-level qualifications and for posted workers
Potential for the sectors professions/ workers	All non-regulated professions, all sectors
Potential to be used in the countries	Germany, Italy; Greece and Romania for posted-type workers, in-company training; All countries in case of a common/regional/EU-led approach
Features relevant to the TP paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For CoO: Eases burden on the labour market; Transfer of knowledge; Builds capacity in vocational education and training and skills development in the CoD to better prepare domestic labour force and future labour migrants; Transfer of funds (remittances); Potentially builds knowledge/skills and networks, in the event of return migration; • For the employees: Prevents travelling to the CoD with no relevant skills and recognised qualification and being trapped in precarious situations; Ensures upgrading skills and competences in the familiar circumstances of CoO; Limited risks for not responding to the requirements of the employers in the CoD; All working conditions previously defined and agreed upon, before leaving the country. • For CoD: addressing skills shortages according to the requirements of the employers. Avoiding the risks to get employees with not corresponding skills.