



Filipino health professionals working at the nurse's station

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As transforming labour markets, shifting workforce demographics and the growing mobility of workers urge new skills and labour requirements, more than ever, there is a need for a global approach to skilled migration.

While skilled migration is not a new phenomenon, it has not always been to the benefit of all involved parties, that is migrants, states, employers, training and education institutions and communities.

In particular traditional approaches to skilled migration tend to benefit labour markets and employers in destination countries, with migrants in low-skilled occupations at risk of deskilling, underpayment and working under exploitative conditions. Origin countries, in turn, often bear the costs associated with the emigration of skilled workers, which then might be missing in the local labour market.

Against this backdrop, policymakers have increasingly turned to an all-party-benefiting alternative: Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs). Rooted in SDG 4, 8 and 10 and expressly called for in Objective 18 of the Global Compact for Migration, SMPs offer an innovative tool that is centered around worker's skills formation and development, while placing special emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration.

When implemented effectively, SMPs can help destination countries meet skill shortages and labour market needs, improve migrant's skills sets, and thereby career prospects, and not least contribute to country of origins' development through remittances, capacity building and skills transfer.

Based on the UN's institutional frameworks and guided by the principle of migrants' well-being, IOM has identified eight essential prerequisites which must be met to make Skills Mobility Partnerships operational and sustainable.

What are Skills Mobility Partnerships?

Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) are typically bilateral or multilateral agreements concluded between States.

Although they may vary in form, modality and level of stakeholder involvement, they all place skills development at the heart of their efforts.

All SMPs possess the following five components:

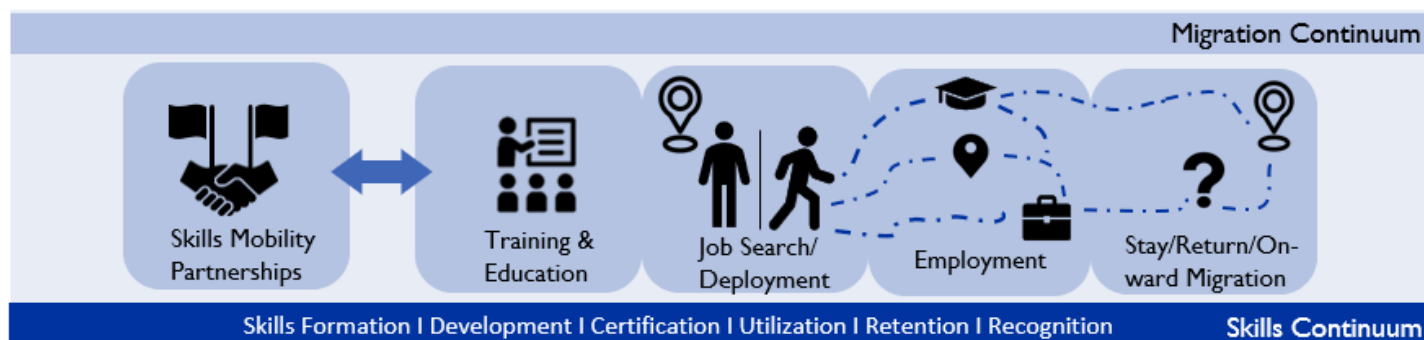
- *formalized State cooperation*
- *multi-stakeholder involvement*
- *training*
- *skills recognition,*
- *migration/mobility*

Essential Prerequisites for Sustainable Skills Mobility Partnerships

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|--|---|
| 1. Long- and mid-term planning | 5. Skills classification and recognition at national level and beyond |
| 2. Multi-stakeholder approach & policy coherence | 6. Address the social aspects of employment and mobility |
| 3. Data for evidence-based policy | 7. Incorporate migration considerations: |
| 4. Local development and job creation | 8. Cost reduction and sharing |

HOW DO SMPs WORK?

Once concluded, the SMP provides the basis upon which stakeholders can jointly develop individual skills programs. By design, SMPs consider participant's previously earned degrees, qualifications and competences at all skill levels. Through cost sharing and joint program conduct between stakeholders, the expenses for training local workers and future migrants are kept low. While some of the trained workers join the local labour market, others leave for deployment abroad, where they are placed in jobs corresponding to their skill level. Upon completion, migrants' skills and experiences are recognized, and accordingly certified, by all parties of the Partnership.



CHALLENGES

- SMPs often suffer the effects of short-term policy vision and planning
- Employers tend to consider immediate needs and are not always ready to invest in future skills
- SMPs often fail due to a lack of coordination and cooperation between countries and different stakeholders within countries
- Sometimes the developmental impact of SMPs on the country of origin are relatively low
- Some SMPs are unsuccessful due to a lack of social considerations such as incorporating migrant's aspirations
- Migration aspects such as existing migratory corridors and routes are often overlooked, making migrants reluctant to take advantage of SMP mobility schemes

IOM'S EXPERIENCE AND WORK ON SKILLS

IOM's Work on Skills

More than 70 skills-related projects across the globe.

Skills development features in a variety of projects on i.a. community development, migrant integration, internally displaced and labour mobility.

IOM has developed special expertise in bringing multiple stakeholder together, aligning different policies, supporting migrants along the migration continuum and facilitating skills recognition.



IOM's recent skills-related projects across the globe

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

As a first step, IOM together with the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Organization of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation, has instituted the [Global Skills Partnership for Migration](#) (GSPM). The GSPM is tasked to mobilize resources, pool expertise and build platforms to help all involved stakeholders develop sustainable mobility schemes, such as Skills Mobility Partnerships.

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