



Rabat Process
Euro-African Dialogue on
Migration and Development

Thematic Meeting

Mobility schemes as driver of change: how to unpack their full potential?

Outcome
document

20-21 June 2024
Praia, Cabo Verde



Under the co-chairmanship of Cabo Verde and Portugal

Project funded by the European Union



Project implemented by ICMPD



In the framework of the support programme to EU-Africa Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD)

Introduction

Thematic Meeting on mobility schemes as driver of change:

- Co-chaired by Cabo Verde and Portugal;
- Echoes Objective 3 (Area 2) of the Cadiz Action Plan 2023-2027;
- Builds on the virtual Thematic Meeting on Legal Migration and Labour Migration, co-chaired by Portugal and Cabo Verde in December 2021, and the Thematic Meeting on Labour Migration, co-chaired by Spain and Senegal in September 2022;
- The meeting attracted a diverse audience of around 81 participants from 27 European and African countries.

Objectives of the meeting:

- Explore opportunities for cooperation between authorities of countries of origin and destination as well as with employers to identify scope for new labour mobility schemes;
- Share lessons learned and good practices between Rabat Process partner countries to facilitate the recognition of diplomas and of professional skills;
- Identify the possibility to scale up existing successful initiatives that promote the integration of migrants through African and European experiences;
- Discuss and exchange good practices to promote communication, awareness raising and access to information on regular channels of migration and integration.

Expected results of the meeting:

- Pinpoint new labour mobility schemes and funding sources including to scaling up existing ones.
- Identify corresponding solutions to unlock factors that prevent some mobility schemes to deliver their full potential.
- Formulate recommendations on how to increase awareness among migrants and their communities on the benefits of regular pathways and multiple opportunities for integration.
- Reflect on appropriate policies and strategies, based on good practices, as well as new initiatives like the European Union (EU) Talent Pool, to facilitate the recognition of diplomas and professional skills, thereby promoting mutually beneficial international recruitment.

This document gives an overview of the main **conclusions of the meeting**, as well as **good practices, challenges and recommendations** linked with mobility and labour migration schemes.

1) High-level opening ceremony

The **high-level opening ceremony** was attended by H.E. Miryan Djamila Sena Vieira, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Cabo Verde, H.E. Nuno Sampaio, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal, Carla Grijó, Ambassador of the EU Delegation to Cabo Verde, Albert Siaw-Boateng, Director of Free Movement of Persons and Migration in the Economic Affairs and Agriculture Department of the ECOWAS Commission, and Jean-Charles de Cordes, Coordinator of the Rabat Process Secretariat at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

The high representatives highlighted the importance of **effectively managing migration policies and mobility**, beneficial for migrants, as well as for their countries of origin and destination. They emphasised the need for cooperation, legal frameworks ensuring the respect of migrant workers' rights and facilitating their integration, as well as development-oriented approaches.

The high representative of Cabo Verde insisted on designing mobility schemes that promote **sustainable migration** in origin, transit, and destination countries. Moreover, she underlined the importance of careful planning, systematic programming and follow-up mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels, to maximise the benefits of such mobility schemes.

The Portuguese high representative emphasised that migrants are **agents of development**, and that legal migration is essential for **social and economic growth**. He noted that European Commission programmes, such as the Talent Partnerships or the EU Talent Pool, must be balanced and take into consideration the needs and interests of the countries of origin. This approach promotes a comprehensive management of migration based on dialogue and cooperation.

The European Union reaffirmed that mobility schemes are more efficient thanks to **close cooperation between states and the participation of diverse stakeholders**, including the private sector, with particular attention to training and skills recognition. Legal migration offers significant advantages to migrants, origin and destination countries by improving migrants' living conditions and by meeting the needs of host countries' labour markets.

At the opening ceremony, it was also highlighted that the **Rabat Process** is built on collaborative efforts and a shared vision to advance the dialogue. It continues to serve as a platform for exchanging experiences and best practices in different areas related to better migration management.

Finally, the high-level speakers welcomed the field visit organised at the University of Cabo Verde as part of the Thematic Meeting, which aimed at showcasing the Migration Observatory of Cabo Verde. They underlined the importance of **information-sharing and data collection** in the field of migration, essential to support policy formulation and informed decision-making.

2) Setting the scene: an overview of the current landscape of mobility schemes

The first session laid the groundwork by offering a general overview of current challenges linked to skills shortages at the international level, and the strategies adopted to face them. Some regions are facing demographic, ecological and digital transitions that are transforming labour markets and economies. Paradoxically, despite significant migration flows, labour shortages persist, prompting countries to develop innovative approaches to address them.

Mobility schemes and their role in labour migration systems: challenges and opportunities

In recent years, several mobility and partnership programmes have been launched, with pilot projects and several cycles dating back to the early 2000s. New flagship projects, such as **global skills partnerships**, are currently being tested. Despite this, there is limited visibility on the results and lessons learned from these initiatives. The [Migration Policy Institute \(MPI\)](#) is conducting research to assess how these programmes can fill skills shortages and integrate into the migration architecture.

The representative from MPI underscored that **new mobility schemes for labour and training**, such as the [Talent Partnerships of the EU](#), and the [Partnerships for Skills Mobility](#), are currently being deployed. These pilot initiatives explore **new approaches** such as testing demand along new sectors or corridors, exploring innovative skills matching, development and transfer strategies, and strengthening capacities by actively involving employers in the process.

Nevertheless, these initiatives face several **challenges**, including:

- Different training standards;
- Difficulties in securing support from the private sector, as employers are unsure about the pace at which they can recruit people – it is crucial to understand their needs;
- Time constraints to build the project infrastructure and capacities;
- The high costs of these pilot projects limit their expansion;
- Economic and political fluctuations could have an impact.

It is therefore essential to:

- Maintain realistic expectations about the outcomes and timing of mobility schemes.
- Evaluate what constitutes value for money in these mobility schemes.
- Integrate lessons learned from mobility schemes into the political agenda on legal migration pathways.

MPI also stressed the importance of mainstreaming **ethical recruitment practices** and sharing information with governments to ensure that workers are aware of opportunities.

Promoting integration through mobility: the free-movement initiative under ECOWAS

Partnerships between different regions have their own particularities, challenges, and opportunities. In West Africa, migration processes are of crucial importance. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which brings together fifteen countries as a political and economic regional union, aims to **facilitate integration of the labour market and free movement of people**. Currently, several ECOWAS countries serve as origin, transit, and destination countries for migrant workers.

Within ECOWAS, movements mainly occur between neighbouring countries, with over 80% of the migrant population coming from border countries. The West African region, where more than 60% of the population is under 24 years old, also experiences significant migration flows to other parts of Africa. The profiles of migrants have diversified, including more women, young people, and skilled people. In addition, significant rural exodus has led to urbanisation, with approximately 60% of the region's population now living in urban areas.

While there are several legal instruments in place, it is crucial to conduct **awareness campaigns to promote these rights**, as many people in the region and national authorities are still not fully informed.

Challenges in the implementation of the Free movement protocol include disparities in implementation, weak national and regional dialogue structures, insufficient monitoring of ECOWAS labour policy and its action plan, as well as limited implementation of information systems on labour market and migration.

Promoting regular labour migration pathways: the experience of Nigeria

As a country of origin, transit and destination, Nigeria is constantly enhancing its policies and practices to **promote regular labour migration pathways** through several initiatives, including the National Policy on Labour Migration (revised in 2020), the creation of Migrants Resource Centres (MRC), the implementation of model-NELEX employment centres, and the regulation of private employment agencies (PEAs). Other initiatives include information systems on the labour market to improve data sharing and analysis to develop evidence-based policies; bilateral labour agreements; advancing skills and certifications programmes; the Nigerian Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM).

Nevertheless, several **challenges** remain:

- Lack of data and statistics to monitor labour migration programmes and develop evidence-based policies;
- Limited awareness among Nigerians about regular labour migration pathways, resulting in reliance on irregular pathways;
- Insufficient strengthening of technical capacities of employees;
- A limited number of Migrants' Resource Centres (only 4 in Nigeria);
- Strict visa requirements in countries of destination.

To address these challenges, Nigeria suggests the following **recommendations**:

- Set up and maintain more robust data management systems to assess outcomes, evaluate migrants' needs and take evidence-based decisions.
- Increase the number of Migrants' Resource Centres to cover all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.
- Strengthen awareness campaigns to promote initiatives and programmes that facilitate regular labour migration pathways in Nigeria.

From Nigeria's perspective, in light of demographic changes in Africa, **collaboration** is crucial to promote legal migration, address youth migration and skill mismatches in African economies, and negotiate and conclude bilateral agreements to ensure effective migration governance.

EU-funded initiatives on legal and labour migration: learning and innovation from transnational skills partnerships

Since 2016, the [Migration Partnership Facility](#) (MPF) has supported cooperation between the EU and partner countries on migration through grants, with a total budget of around €160 million since inception. These partnerships focus on legal and labour pathways, anti-trafficking efforts, border management and capacity building. To date, 60 grants have been awarded to 60 partners, and additional projects are planned for professional mobility and expert dialogues.

Labour mobility initiatives present a number of **opportunities**:

- Competing interests and motivations in the design of labour mobility programmes (creating new migration routes or exploiting existing routes for training or employment);
- Support for the development of complementary competences (rules, laws, policies, social standards, institutional frameworks on migration and work, as well as on education, recognition of skills and qualifications);
- Public-private partnerships (involving public and private sector stakeholders).

Labour mobility programmes capitalise on EU pilot projects. Several good practices have been identified as part of these pilot projects:

- Diversification of approaches to include **low- and medium-skilled profiles**;
- Identification of **priority sectors for labour migration** to the EU that are consistent with priority sectors for economic growth in the country of origin;
- Over-investment in education and skills in the country of origin;
- Investment in developing sustainable structures (public or private) and funding models that can facilitate longer-term labour migration processes.

Several **challenges** still need to be tackled such as:

- High complexity and structure of costs;
- Coordination between the public and the private sector, which requires more work and is still "new";
- Legal pathways proposed by EU member states are limited in volume/type and remain disparate.

Some building blocks of labour migration initiatives:

- **Sector studies** play a crucial role in ensuring that these projects run smoothly. They make it possible to target specific needs and opportunities in different sectors, thus facilitating better planning and implementation of programmes.
- The **recognition of qualifications and skills** is also essential. With the launch of 12 new projects, 8 of which include training programmes, the aim is to ensure that migrants' qualifications match the requirements of the labour market. This strengthens their employability and facilitates their professional integration in their new host country.
- **Institutional capacity building** is also of paramount importance, particularly in less developed countries. This includes the efficient management of visa applications and the establishment of accessible legal pathways, thus facilitating regular and safe migration.
- The **creation of links between markets**, such as the [Digital Explorers](#) project between Lithuania and Nigeria, illustrates the direct economic impact of these initiatives. By favouring Lithuanian companies' investment in the Nigerian market, this programme has led to the opening of a branch in Abuja, providing permanent jobs for 15 people.
- In addition, **successful integration or reintegration** largely depends on the implemented programme, which often requires additional efforts to ensure that integration is sustainable and complete in the new community and professional environment. Pre-departure preparation, including language learning, mobility readiness, and tutoring, is essential for migrants to maximise their opportunities and succeed in their integration.

MPF (ICMPD) highlighted the importance to keep exploring the **benefits of digitalisation and artificial intelligence technologies** to improve administrative efficiency, streamline visa services and to access data, particularly in the green economy. It is also crucial to use mobility schemes to identify training opportunities, acknowledging that current training often falls short for new technologies. The [Mapping of labour migration pathways in the EU](#) could serve as a reference for further reflection on this topic.

ICMPD's work on Labour Mobility: www.migrationpartnershipfacility.eu



For a global approach to migration governance and labour mobility in North Africa (THAMM)

The [THAMM](#) experience in North Africa can be summarised in three key words: **cooperation, coordination and sustainability**. Between 2019 and 2023, cooperation agencies (the German Agency for International Cooperation - GIZ, the Belgian Development Agency - Enabel, and the French Office for Immigration and Integration - OFII) implemented pilot mobility schemes, while multilateral agencies (the International Labour Organization - ILO, and the International Organization for Migration - IOM) focused on strengthening governance capacities. THAMM addressed mobility in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, and this inter-agency collaboration enabled improved intervention efficiency and monitoring for donors.

Bilateral labour agreements have long existed, but the current context is marked by a complexification and multiplication of such agreements. In-demand skills are increasingly diverse, with central questions of sustainability and funding at stake. Inverted demographic dynamics between North Africa and Europe, shortages in specific sectors, and increased demand of non-EU workers in sectors such as agriculture, tourism and care also characterise this period.

Key principles

- The **ILO** places an emphasis on **employment** (ethical and fair recruitment) and on the creation of decent working conditions in both countries of origin and destination. Labour market needs in the country of origin should be assessed from the start of long-term programmes.
- **Decent work**: other pillars include Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Social protection, and Social dialogue. It is important for workers to know their rights under national legislation to prevent any form of discrimination.
- **Living and working conditions** must be considered in labour mobility programmes, in compliance with international standards and respect for national labour legislation.
- It is essential to ensure that the **skills sought by employers** support sustainable investment in training, meet expectations and are flexible enough to adapt. This represents a challenge for vocational training programmes in the face of rapidly evolving work forms.

The **intervention strategies** of the THAMM programme include in particular:

- **Public policy frameworks and services for migrant workers**: Work on improving public policy frameworks and effectiveness of services provided.
- **Fair and ethical recruitment**: Promotion of fair and ethical recruitment practices and training for public employment services on pre-departure orientation.

- **Skill portability:** Development of social rights portability, collaborating with national social security funds to ensure access to accumulated rights.
- **Data improvement:** in-depth work with statistical institutions.

Governance and scaling

- It is crucial to enhance governance capacities to strengthen the strategic and management capacities of countries of origin. Scaling up and coordinating pilot projects and initiatives are essential to have a significant impact on structural unemployment in North Africa.

ILO emphasised the need to build and strengthen institutional capacities to better adapt to changes in the labour market, while also continuing to experiment and innovate. **Dialogue platforms**, such as the Rabat Process, facilitate the continuous reintegration of lessons learned and good practices, thus creating a virtuous cycle of mutual reinforcement between institutional frameworks and mobility programme experimentation.

During the session, Tunisia, Niger, Morocco, Portugal and Ireland shared their experiences, progresses and projects in terms of labour migration.

The moderator and representative from OECD highlighted the creation of new migration policies and programmes aimed at **mutual benefits**. He also noted the **diversification and emergence of new partnerships**, notably between Niger and Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Qatar, illustrating interesting dynamics of "South-South" partnerships. The OECD further reminded that this year marks the second round of regional reviews of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), in preparation for [the 2026 International Migration Review Forum](#).

3) Recognising professional skills for better integration

The second session allowed participants to identify and discuss on initiatives and programmes that foster the recognition of skills, qualifications and professional experience, and to analyse their impact on integration of migrant workers.

Break-out group 1: Promoting and facilitating the recognition of skills, qualification and professional experience

Several **international standards and conventions** aim to facilitate the recognition of qualifications at global, regional and national levels. These include the [1979 Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region](#), the [2014 Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States](#), and the [2019 Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education](#).

Progress has been made in the certification and recognition of qualifications, with some disparities between the African and European region. It is important to examine successful experience to promote skills recognition and facilitate the integration of migrant workers.

► The perspective of Germany

Until 2024, only « skilled workers » could immigrate to Germany. However, since March 2024, the **Law on Immigration of Skilled Workers** was developed to broaden pathways to employment, studies and training in the country. This law states that formal qualification must be recognised in the training country, with at least 2 years of professional experience and a minimum gross monthly wage. Generally, formal qualifications are mandatory in Germany, as professional experience alone is not sufficient. For regulated professions, recognition is always strictly required.

The [German approach](#) for the recognition of qualifications mainly focuses on formal diplomas, supported by a robust system for Technical and vocational education and training (TVET). A new validation law will be implemented

in 2025. In Germany, recognition assesses the equivalence of foreign qualifications with German vocational training programmes. Since 2012, holders of non-German qualifications have been able to apply for a recognition procedure. Over the past ten years, 280,000 recognitions have been granted.

However, **several challenges** exist:

- The German VET system and its occupations are unique: there are very few similar qualifications anywhere in the world.
- The differences between non-German qualifications and German training programmes must be compensated for recognition.
- Generic or individual compensation measures are necessary.
- The overall recognition process can be time-consuming and costly.
- Recognition requires broad support, particularly among skilled immigrants.

Two examples of **collaborative approaches for the recognition of qualifications** are the following:

- **Recognition partnerships:** Collaboration between the German employer and the migrant worker as part of the recognition procedure. The migrant can start working in a skilled job before asking for recognition. This procedure generates costs, which allows the migrant to get the necessary financial means by already working in Germany. No practical experience is available to date.
- **Global skills partnerships:** collaboration between representatives of Germany and the migrant workers' countries of origin to meet the need for skilled labour. These partnerships involve monetary and technical investment in training standards for selected professions in the country of origin. Current examples: [GLZ Programme for Nursing, Philippines and Mexico](#) - the first group of nurses recently arrived in Bonn; and [Programme for Construction Professions: Ghana and Senegal](#) - a project which is still in its initial phase. The aim is to establish one-year training courses that should be certified to continue their professional training in Germany.

► **The perspective of Ghana**

As a country of origin, transit and destination for migration, Ghana is unique due to the diversity of migrants' skills and key sectors such as hospitality, transport, and the trade of goods. Labour opportunities are one of the key drivers of migration.

Existing challenges include language skills, cultural diversity, high moving fees, and unfair recruitment practices. To improve **migrant integration**, Ghana has implemented initiatives such as language support, employers' contributions, the improvement of working conditions, diaspora engagement, and investment in research, academic and technical sectors (STEM) and cultural events.

Some **recommendations** based on the experience of Ghana:

- Develop projects and partnerships to harness socio-economic benefits;
- Promote mutual recognition agreements between countries;
- Improve labour market data (relevant, impactful and reliable);
- Provide language support to overcome language barriers;
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework;
- Create a technical working group on labour migration;
- Develop and implement frameworks to promote safe, orderly and regular migration;
- Provide skills training and up-skilling (apprenticeships);
- Implement a fair and transparent assessment process;
- Provide certification, recognition and qualification for all skilled migrants (high-skilled, medium-skilled, low-skilled);
- Organise cultural awareness workshops focusing on customs and values.

► ILO Support for Employers on Labour Migration

Partnerships: International Organisation of Employers (IOE), regional and national employers' organisations

Standards:

- [Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy](#) (MNE Declaration)
- **International Labour Standards** (ILS) related to migrant workers, which guide enterprise policies and practices, include:
 - [Migration for Employment Convention \(revised\), 1949 \(No. 97\)](#)
 - [Migration for Employment Recommendation \(revised\), 1949 \(No. 86\)](#),
 - [Migrant Workers \(Supplementary Provisions\) Convention, 1975 \(No.143\)](#)
 - [Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 \(No. 151\)](#).
- The ILO [General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and the Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs](#) offer the most current and comprehensive international guidance. These principles and guidelines apply to all workers, including migrant workers, whether recruited directly by an employer or through an intermediary. They cover recruitment within and across national borders, including through temporary work agencies, and apply to all economic sectors.

Initiatives and Tools:

- [ILO Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards](#)
- [ILO Helpdesk for Business on Labour Migration](#)
- Comprehensive [Modular Training Manual on Fair Recruitment](#) to assist enterprises in designing, supporting, and implementing fair recruitment practices for migrant workers, along with a [practical due diligence toolkit](#).
- ILO's [Global Business Network on Forced Labour](#)
- The [ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative Knowledge Hub](#) provides resources to learn more about fair recruitment and engage with policymakers and practitioners.
- [Database of Good Practices](#): searchable by region and sector.

Recommendations of break-out group 1

1. **Standardise recognition criteria** across destination countries and specifically across regional economic communities.
2. **Strengthen private sector engagement** in countries of destination particularly with Technical and Vocational Educational and Training systems (TVET).
3. **Enhance** the value of **locally acquired** qualifications and work experience.
4. Create more **efficient structures of qualification equivalence** in countries of origin for skills acquired in host countries.
5. Mainstream the **qualifications/competencies** variable in diaspora databases.
6. Reactivate the **effective implementation of existing national qualification frameworks**.
7. Establish **comprehensive transparency** on long term implications of migrants' choices on qualification recognition through digital solutions.
8. **Improve language skills and certifications** in skills recognition processes to strengthen the integration of migrant workers in labour markets in countries of destination.

Break-out group 2: Bridging mobility and integration - Mainstreaming the integration of migrants in mobility schemes

This working group has examined how mobility programmes can be better aligned with migrants' integration pathways, identifying challenges and good practices to improve their integration into host societies. It emphasised the importance of **structuring mobility programmes** to promote better integration of migrants, highlighting their economic, social, and cultural contributions.

Strengthening the integration of migrants thanks to cooperation between Portugal and Cabo Verde: lessons learned from the Coop4Int programme

The [Coop4Int project](#) aims to improve the integration of migrants in Cabo Verde by developing local tools and services and strengthening cooperation between Portugal and Cabo Verde on migration issues.

With financial support by the EU, the project is implemented by the High Commission for Migration (ACM) and the Portuguese Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA), in collaboration with the High Authority for Immigration (AAI) of Cabo Verde, the Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE), and the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB).

The project runs for 37 months from December 2021 and its components include:

1. **Strengthening integration mechanisms:** Focus on improving local understanding of migration and defining organisational roles.
2. **Training for Cape Verdean authorities:** Capacity building to effectively manage migration.
3. **Vocational training for immigrants in Cabo Verde:** Courses in sectors such as construction, cooking and plumbing.
4. **Increasing knowledge about migration:** Studies and surveys to understand the dynamics of migration.

Key achievements include setting up local immigration units and service stations, promoting immigrant entrepreneurship and developing municipal immigration plans. The project also focuses on awareness-raising campaigns, academic cooperation and emergency preparedness. The goal is to effectively integrate immigrants into Cape Verdean society in line with the EU framework and United Nations principles.

Recommendations of break-out group 2

1. **Strengthen cooperation** on travel documents to combat irregularities.
2. **Set up response mechanisms for the return of migrants**, including their readmission and reintegration.
3. **Establish a national data management system on migratory movements** to monitor the migratory context of different countries.
4. **Develop pre-departure mechanisms** to prevent the exploitation of migrants and to promote access to basic rights in destination countries.
5. **Raise awareness**, through media and other communication means regarding the **risks associated with irregular migration**.
6. Develop **migration policies based on human rights**, and humanize support services.
7. **Involve cooperation sector**, including NGOs, municipalities and local entities in **promoting integration**.

8. Promote **exchange programmes for diaspora communities** from various countries to enhance integration through cultural diversity to prevent discrimination, and engage the diaspora in funding microbusinesses.
9. **Involve academia and chambers of trade** in the identification of needs for the labour markets.

4) How to better inform and promote legal migration pathways

This third and last session facilitated discussion on programmes implemented by partner countries to inform, communicate, and raise awareness on legal migration pathways, whilst discussing the importance of involving the private sector in the promotion of sustainable mobility pathways.

Break-out group 3: Informing on legal migration pathways and empowering choices

This working group looked at **information campaigns** aiming to raise awareness on the risks of irregular migration and legal migration pathways, which are key tools in migration governance used by European governments. Despite their importance, shortcomings remain regarding **their impact and effectiveness**. Participants therefore explored available tools to better measure these aspects.

Perspectives and challenges of IOM's information and awareness-raising campaigns in West Africa

Information campaigns have become an essential tool for raising awareness amongst potential or actual migrants about the dangers of irregular migration, and to encourage the use of legal pathways. These campaigns aim to help migrants make safer decisions. To achieve this, development organisations, NGOs, and international organisations are working together to highlight the risks of irregular migration. Between 2014 and 2019, EU Member States invested over €23 million in 104 awareness raising campaigns. Despite these investments, there is limited evidence regarding the effectiveness of these campaigns in changing attitudes and behaviours related to irregular migration.

In this context, IOM analysed the **impact of information and awareness-raising campaigns**, beginning with the evaluation of [Phase 1](#) of the "Migrants as Messengers" programme in Senegal in 2018, followed by [Phase 2](#) in four West African countries (Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal). This second study aimed to assess the impact of peer-driven awareness-raising activities and community engagement on local opportunities and risks associated with irregular migration, focusing on knowledge, perception, attitudes and intentions of youth irregular migration in West Africa.

The results indicate that the campaign did not affect the intention to migrate irregularly or attitudes towards this practice. Its effects on knowledge and perceptions of irregular migration varied by country and targeted groups: results were positive in Senegal, moderate in Guinea and highly variable in Gambia. Overall, the campaign reinforced the perception of risks associated with irregular migration, but adding information on local opportunities did not systematically improve its effectiveness and sometimes even reduced knowledge about local employment. The impact of this campaign also differed between rural and urban areas.

Promoting access to information on legal migration: the experience of the MigraSafe Africa project

Despite numerous campaigns promoting the benefits of regular migration, it is crucial to provide migrants with clear information on the **available legal pathways**. The complexity of EU legislation makes it difficult for migrants to understand their options, even when this information is available online. The [MigraSafe Africa](#) project was launched to address this need, aiming to make legal information more accessible, assist migrants with their day-to-day challenges and raise awareness of the European legal framework.

This 28-month initiative (January 2022 - May 2024) began with the collaboration of eight countries - Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Senegal, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia - as well as the expertise of European partners, including Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland. The project proposed activities specifically tailored to the four target groups - embassies and consulates, immigration liaison officers, national and local authorities, and civil society organisations (CSOs).

After the sessions held with these groups, several key conclusions were drawn:

- ✓ The network of immigration liaison officers has more tools and positive levers for dialogue on migration.
- ✓ Importance of training and seminars for national authorities.
- ✓ CSOs have been able to express their specific needs and concerns.
- ✓ Providing CSOs with information and training on existing legal avenues enables a better understanding of safe migration alternatives for migrants.
- ✓ Useful tools have been developed for designing new regulations and effective and successful policies.
- ✓ Strengthened cooperation with partner countries, and creation of trust environments.

In the absence of clear and sufficient information, even people eligible for regular migration pathways can turn to irregular routes. [Objective 2](#) of the [Global Compact for Migration](#) deals with root causes, evoking “adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin”.

Recommendations of break-out group 3

1. Utilise all available vehicles for **outreach** such as social media networks, community leaders, religious leaders, families, among others, to inform on the **benefits of regular migration** as well as the risks of irregular migration. Particular attention should be given to gender specificities, culturally sensitivities, visual means.
2. Create **specific communication strategies** for regular migration avenues: reaching out to the appropriate target groups using the relevant vehicles (example of recruitment campaigns).
3. **Involve all stakeholders** in the design of awareness raising policies through whole – of - society approaches, including ministries, local authorities, CSO, recruitment agencies, town criers, information desks, MRCs, among others.
4. **Ensure that information on existing regular pathways, mechanisms and agreements is shared amongst all stakeholders** (newly adopted legislations such as bilateral labour agreements, MoUs, etc.)
5. **Enhance capacity development and knowledge building towards information sharers** to facilitate dissemination of existing and new regular pathways.
6. **Conduct systematic impact assessments** to evaluate the efficiency of information campaigns and to streamline lessons learned into policies and projects.

Break-out group 4: Examining the role of the private sector and employers in the implementation of labour mobility programmes

This working group clarified the **crucial role of the private sector** in promoting labour migration. Employers, thanks to their in-depth knowledge of the conditions of the labour market and skills shortages, play a key role in international recruitment. Discussions addressed challenges faced by employers and highlighted good practices to support them in recruiting migrant workers.

► **The perspective of [Business Europe](#): *the role of labour migration in meeting employers' needs***

Companies, small or large, face **labour and skills shortages**. This situation is heightened by demographic forecasts, which predict that the number of people of working age in the European Union will fall by 35 million by 2050. The Covid-19 pandemic also significantly impacted by reducing the employees' working time. In this context, labour migration is essential to fill those skills shortages, thereby playing an indispensable complementary role.

Currently, companies are looking for **digital skills** (32%), **professional qualifications** (34%) and STEM skills, that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity. In addition, when attempting to recruit workers from a third country, employers may face several **obstacles**, complicating the development of an effective recruitment strategy:

- Slow and complex recognition procedures for qualifications acquired in a third country;
- Bureaucratic and non-digital administrative procedures;
- Long waiting times for visa appointments;
- Linguistic barriers.

Deployment of an **EU Talent Pool** to facilitate recruitment outside of the EU:

- The European Commission is offering an [EU Talent Pool](#) to help recruit jobseekers from non-EU countries to occupations facing shortages within the EU.
- This **unique online platform** will match the profiles of third-country jobseekers of all skills levels with offers from European employers. Participation by Member States will be voluntary, and they will support the management of the platform, which will also provide information on recruitment and migration procedures, with guarantees for fair working conditions.

Recognition of skills and qualifications from third countries

- The recognition of foreign qualifications is a major obstacle to recruitment. Facilitating this recognition and the validation of skills acquired in third countries is crucial for employers and workers from third countries.
- The 2023 recommendation of the European Commission highlights the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#), an 8-level system which helps to make national certifications more understandable and comparable, thereby improving transparency, comparability, and transferability of certifications.

Talent partnerships in the framework of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum

Launched in June 2021, the [Talent Partnerships](#) initiative aims to address skill shortages in the EU and strengthen mutually beneficial migration partnerships with third countries. These tailored partnerships offer mobility opportunities for work or training and support the recognition of qualifications.

- Talent partnerships will build on successful pilot projects, broadening their scope and ambition with the cooperation of Member States and partner countries.
- The first step is to launch partnerships with Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia, followed by Pakistan, Bangladesh, Senegal and Nigeria.
- These partnerships could facilitate the entry of participants into the EU talent pool.

► **How to implement a sustainable labour mobility pathway? The experience of [Wellow Group](#)**

In Cabo Verde, **several initiatives** were implemented:

- **Internationalisation** to create a borderless group;
- **Filling skills shortages** by finding the right people in the right places;
- Using **cultural proximity**, with 14% of the immigrant population in Portugal;
- **Creating values** with a positive impact on community;
- Purpose to create a **fair and sustainable labour mobility** pathway.

Some **obstacles and challenges** have been identified:

- Instability of migration policy due to legal changes;
- Complex bureaucracy which makes the anticipation of steps, documentation and roles uneasy;
- Lack of knowledge on cultural specificities, which affects recruitment and integration;
- Difficulty to organise online interviews in good conditions at the early stage of the recruitment.

The Wellow Group representative stressed that the **presence of the private sector in the region** is of vital importance. Employers can improve and strengthen the recruitment of migrant workers and job mobility programmes. The Wellow Group's experience also demonstrates the feasibility of sustainable labour mobility schemes.

Propositions of the Wellow Group :

- **Stability of public policies:** Establish trust-worthy policies.
- **Increased agility:** Improve the capacity of public services in legalisation procedures.
- **Simplification:** Reduce the manual work involved in completing and analysing documents.
- **Extension of applications:** Include candidates not registered in the employment service.
- **Mutual concessions:** Balance recruitment processes in terms of qualifications and services.

Tourism and migration in West Africa: the COPITOUR-ECOWAS perspective

Private sector organisations such as the Confederation of Private Tourism Industries, [COPITOUR-ECOWAS](#), can play an **important role in promoting legal migration** by recruiting foreign workers and organising, in conjunction with the States and organisations in charge of migration, conferences, forums and other events on legal migration.

Hotel and tourism business owners face a number of **challenges**:

- **Lack of relevant information on legal migration** and legislative provisions in destination countries;
- **Lack of knowledge of promotional tools.** There is a need to strengthen communication capacities and awareness-raising techniques on legal migration;
- **Lack of knowledge of partnership agreements** between countries of origin and destination in the hospitality and tourism industries;
- **Recognition of diplomas, bridges and validation of experience**, particularly in the catering industry;
- **Employers' reluctance** to risk losing skilled labour;
- **The risks of poaching and the reintegration of employees** trained abroad.

Propositions of COPITOUR-ECOWAS :

- **Associate employers** in the preparation of agreements between host and origin countries;
- **Win-win partnerships:** establish partnerships for employers' exchanges between hospitality and touristic companies in host and origin countries, favouring the sharing of good practices;
- **National strategy on labour mobility:** ask states to create and follow-up on a national strategy with well-evaluated and regularly adjusted action plans;
- **Strengthen the capacities of states and of the private sector** in the formulation and implementation of labour mobility schemes;
- **Data collection mechanisms:** Implement effective systems of collection and treatment of statistical data on recruitment and integration of migrants;
- **Mixed commissions:** Create commissions between host and origin countries to handle diploma recognition, bridges, and validation of acquired experience;
- **Strengthening provisions:** Improve measures relating to professional mobility, recruitment and integration of migrants;
- **Links with promotion structures:** Establish robust links between structures promoting regular migration and employers' organisations in the private tourism sector;
- **Human resources capacities:** Strengthen competences of HR managers on regular migration to better mainstream this issue in personnel management;
- **Visa facilitation:** Streamline visa procedures for workers of the tourism industry in collaboration with employers' representatives.

Recommendations of working group 4

- 1. Establish platforms for social dialogue** between private sector, multilateral institutions and state governments to address labour market needs, ethical recruitment practices and skills development (creation of mixed committees).
- 2. Promote ethical recruitment grounded in robust legal frameworks** for protection of migrant workers' rights and prevention of labour exploitation.
- 3. Develop more bilateral and multilateral agreements** to facilitate contact between companies and public employment services, involving embassies, trade unions and employers' associations.
- 4. Promote information-sharing between government, public institutions, and private sector** to ensure a coordinated approach to labour migration.
- 5. Improve regulatory frameworks** to better manage labour migration and protection of migrant workers.
- 6. Reinforce consular services** aimed to streamline efficiency for visa processing and issuance of residence permits.
- 7. Establish online platforms** to connect job seekers to employment vacancies in both public and private sectors to streamline job search processes and improve access to opportunities.

5) Strengthening knowledge on migration in Cabo Verde – promoting data sharing

As part of the Coop4Int project, the Cabo Verde Migration Observatory was established to collect and analyse data on trends in emigration from Cabo Verde worldwide and on immigration to Cabo Verde. The project was initiated to address a crucial need: to understand migration dynamics and provide reliable data to inform public policies.

Zoom on the Emigration Observatory in Portugal

- Promoting regular migration and addressing the lack of data on migration are key challenges. It is crucial to know the number of emigrants and immigrants. In Portugal, state institutions only disclose data from the National Institute of Statistics (INS) which does not publish unregulated statistics.
- The [Emigration Observatory in Portugal](#) played a key role in collecting and analysing migration data, by supporting the elaboration of more effective and appropriate public policies. Its objectives include collecting data on Portuguese emigration, fuelling public debate, provide information for the development and evaluation of public policies, as well as resources for scientific research.
- Co-funded by the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Observatory is composed of members from the [Centre of Research and Studies in Sociology of the ISCTE](#), of the University Institute of Lisbon (CIES-ISCTE), and operates through inter-university partnerships.
- The Observatory partners with public entities, the media and academia. At the international level, it works with similar observatories in other countries, participates to the creation of a network of observatories in CPLP countries, and is part of [Rede Migra](#), which brings together more than 480 researchers from 22 countries, researching international migration from and to Portugal.

Migration dynamics in Cabo Verde

- As an origin and destination country, Cabo Verde is facing new challenges including labour market, regularisation, health and education. This migration issues have become a priority in the political agenda, reflecting a heightened scientific reflection and academic production. It is in this context that the [Migration Observatory of Cabo Verde](#) was reactivated in January 2024.

- Initially established in 2014, it was revived to meet crucial needs in terms of managing and understanding migration dynamics:
 - Strengthen the ability to produce, collect and process data on migration in Cabo Verde;
 - Promote research on migration, both to and from Cabo Verde;
 - Scientifically support decisions made in the field of migration;
 - Promote the knowledge of Cape Verdean civil society on cultural and religious diversity.

The implementation of the Observatory was made possible thanks to funding from the European Union in the framework of the Coop4Int project, which has enhanced knowledge of migration and provided technical support and coordination with entities such as the AAI, DGACM and ISCTE.

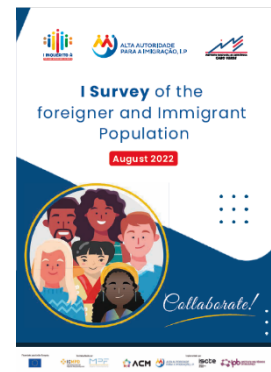
There are still several **challenges** for the Migration Observatory of Cabo Verde:

- Strengthening its technical capacity.
- Improving collection and production of accurate data.
- Efficient coordination of the various stakeholders involved.
- Ensuring the participation of academia, given its central role in knowledge production.
- Ensuring the continuity and usefulness of the Observatory beyond the initial project framework.

In the frame of the Coop4Int project, the first **Survey on the Foreign and Immigration Population (IPEI)** was led in August 2022 by the National Institute of Statistics and the High Authority for Immigration (AAI).

Objectives of the survey :

- ✓ Produce official statistics to support planification, development, follow-up and evaluation of migration-related public policies;
- ✓ Understand the sociodemographic characteristics of foreigners/immigrants and their family members;
- ✓ Analyse the professional profile and economic conditions of foreign communities and immigrants in Cabo Verde;
- ✓ Evaluate living conditions, comfort and available goods;
- ✓ Study the cultural characteristics and integration processes of foreigners and immigrants.



- **Report on foreign and immigrant population.** Final results of the first survey on the foreign and immigration population in Cabo Verde: <https://om-mne.gov.cv/>

6) Conclusions

To conclude, the development of **secure, robust, and sustainable mobility schemes** is essential to ensure safe and orderly migration. This requires close collaboration among all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, academia, NGOs and civil society organisations. A collective approach is crucial to optimise migration management and improve living conditions.

The Thematic Meeting highlighted the importance of adhering to the **principle of integration**, which involves elaborating and implementing policies and strategies through integrated approaches and comprehensive plans to address migration in a holistic manner. Successful integration of migrants into host countries is also essential for empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion.

PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH

- The Thematic Meeting attracted a diverse audience of 81 participants, including representatives from 27 partner countries of the Rabat Process, as well as experts from international organisations, academia and the private sector.
- According to the online feedback survey, participants expressed high overall satisfaction, with ratings exceeding 4 out of 5 for aspects such as meeting quality, logistics, relevance, and timing.
- The breakout group format was particularly appreciated by participants, facilitating an efficient exchange of good practices, experiences and challenges amongst partner countries.
- The involvement of the private sector and the field visit to the University of Cabo Verde were also highly valued.
- The event was widely covered on the Rabat Process social media channels, with 4 LinkedIn posts and 23 tweets, resulting in 5,865 impressions and 2,728 reactions on LinkedIn and 2,284 impressions and 71 reactions on X (former Twitter).
- The thematic meeting was also covered by six local digital newspapers, featuring quotes from the State Secretaries for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation for Cabo Verde and Portugal.