

Press Release

New Joint EMN-OECD inform published - Skills Mobility Partnerships: Exploring Innovative Approaches to Labour Migration

How can Member States face the growing mobility of workers and skills shortages in the EU? This new joint EMN-OECD inform highlights experiences by EU Member States, non-EU countries and international organisations with regards to the introduction of Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs), a new concept that promotes a sustainable approach to skilled migration and mobility, with the aim to build skills for the benefit of both countries of origin and destination.

Brussels, 3 March 2022

In 2020, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum emphasised the importance of creating new legal pathways in the context of labour migration, skills matching and addressing labour shortages.¹ In this context, and in view of unprecedented demographic changes, technological development and the growing mobility of workers, Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) with third countries are being considered as part of the solution to skills shortages in the EU. This joint EMN-OECD inform presents experiences of implementing SMPs and similar initiatives in the EU and globally.

Several EMN Member States² reported on relevant initiatives with some features of SMPs, for instance development cooperation projects involving the development of skills, multi-stakeholder involvement, training, and mobility. Non-EU examples presented in the inform include, for example, the Australia Pacific Technical College, comprising training centres in five different Pacific nations to offer professional training for vocational careers throughout the region, providing qualifications to allow graduates to qualify for labour migration programmes in Australia; as well as the Korean Employment Permit System for temporary non-professional employment, based on bilateral relations with 16 partner countries.

SMPs are being regarded as a valuable policy tool for skills development and labour mobility. Such a policy tool can help destination countries to meet labour market needs and improve migrant's career prospects whilst also contributing to countries of origins' development. Additionally, SMPs come with their own challenges. The IOM has enlisted eight essential prerequisites for the success of SMPs, namely long- and mid-term planning; multi-stakeholder approach and policy coherence; availability of data for evidence-based policy; local development and job creation; skills classification and recognition at national level and beyond; possibility to address the social aspects of employment and mobility; incorporation of migration considerations; and cost reduction and sharing³.

Background:

¹ Communication on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, COM(2020) 609 final, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en, last accessed on 28 June 2021.

² The following EMN Member States provided responses to the Ad-hoc query 2021.44 "Skills mobility partnerships": Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

³ International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Skills Mobility Partnerships, Available at: <https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl666/files/documents/Skills-Mobility-Partnerships-Infosheet.pdf>, last accessed 3 January 2022.

The study

- Title: “Skills Mobility Partnerships: Exploring Innovative Approaches to Labour Migration”.
- Period covered: The inform reflects on experiences and lessons learned at EU and global level from the implementation of programmes and projects for skills development and labour mobility, prior and following the 2020 New Pact on Migration and Asylum.
- Subject: Overview of experiences with implementing SMPs and similar initiatives in the EU and globally, exploring the main challenges and benefits. The analysis was prepared on the basis of contributions from 22 EMN Member States and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the Centre for Global Development (CGD) and the association of crafts and SMEs in Europe (SME United).

The EMN

The European Migration Network (EMN) is a Europe-wide network consisting of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EU Member States (except Denmark), and EMN observer members Norway, Georgia and Moldova, providing information on migration and asylum. The EMN was set up in 2008 by the European Commission on behalf of the European Council in order to satisfy the need for a regular exchange of reliable information on migration and asylum related issues on a European level.

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