

*Mobilizing Institutions for Skills Development and Managed
International Labour Mobility*

Report for Tunisia



January 2025

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Acknowledgements	5
Acronyms.....	6
Executive Summary	9
1. Introduction	13
1.1. A Global Skills Partnership between Italy and Tunisia.....	13
1.2. Objectives of the Institutional Assessment	16
2. Framework and Research Tools for the Institutional Assessment	19
2.1. Framework	19
2.2. Research Tools	24
3. Labour market and mobility trends in Tunisia	26
3.1. Overview of mobility trends in Tunisia	26
3.2. Labour market trends in Tunisia and the mapping to international labour mobility and GSP potentials	28
3.2.1 Economic Growth and Labour Market Linkages	28
3.2.2 Structural Challenges	29
3.2.3 Sectoral and Occupational Trends	30
3.2.4 Skills Gaps and Future Needs	31
3.2.5 International Context and Opportunities	33
4. The ecosystem of international labour mobility in Italy and Tunisia	36
4.1. Legal framework and authorizing environment in Tunisia.....	36
4.2. Institutional arrangement and overview of processes in Tunisia.....	41
4.3. Institutional map: actors involved in international labour mobility in Tunisia	44
5. Migrant Journey	49
5.1. Focus Groups Discussion Background Information	49
5.2. Focus Groups Discussion Findings - Journey Map.....	52
5.2.1. Pre-Recruitment: Motivation/decision & application	52
5.2.2. Recruitment	52
5.2.3. Pre-departure orientation	53
5.2.4. Departure, arrival and integration	55
5.3. Migrant journey map:.....	56
Migration Journey Map – Focus Group 2: Tunisian Worker in Training in Tunisia	58

6. Institutional Process Assessment	60
6.1. Pillar I – Facilitating Access	60
6.2. Pillar II – Furthering Access	68
6.3. Pillar III – Fortifying Access	73
7. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations	82
7.1. Summary of Findings – Score card	82
7.2. Conclusions and Recommendations	88
7.2.1. Conclusions and Recommendations: Horizontal application, all pillars.....	88
7.2.2. Conclusions and Recommendations: Pillar I – Facilitating Access ..	91
7.2.3. Conclusions and Recommendations: Pillar II – Furthering Access...	94
7.2.4. Conclusions and Recommendations: Pillar III – Fortifying Access ...	96
7.2.5. The umbrella of BLAs - Prioritizing Recommendations	103
References.....	106
Annex 1: Analytical Institutional Mapping	113
Annex 2. Data collection and assessment tools	118
A2.1. In-depth questionnaires.....	118
A2.2. Focus group discussion guide	123
Annex 3. Data collection and storage policy.....	133

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Acknowledgements

The World Bank’s Social Protection team, with financing from the Jobs Multi-Donor Trust Fund, with specific contributions from the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Italy, is implementing a technical assistance initiative aimed at strengthening regular, safe, and orderly migration processes between Italy and Tunisia and other countries of origin. As part of this effort, Global Skills Partnerships are being promoted between Tunisia and Italy, as the destination country. These partnerships seek to move beyond a more traditional mechanism focused on addressing labor market gaps in the destination country, towards one that generates a triple win: for the country of origin, for the destination country, and especially for migrant workers.

This report was prepared by Eirini Andriopoulou, Ayoub Daoud, and key contributions from Roberta Maddalena, under the leadership of Veronica Michel Gutierrez and Rada Naji. The team received overall guidance and support from Pablo Ariel Acosta, and Angela Elzir. The report also benefited from thorough review and insightful comments provided by Luz Stella Rodriguez.

The team appreciates the commitment, support, and guidance of the World Bank Office in Tunisia, led by Alexandre Arrobbio. The team gratefully acknowledges valuable support from Social Protection unit team members, particularly Mohamed Aziz Majoul, Mohamed Aziz Ben Ghachem, Alessandra Marini and Gianluigi Nico for their valuable support during the consultation process.

The team extends its sincere appreciation to the public institutions and stakeholders who actively participated in this assessment. Notably, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP), the Overseas Placement Unit of the National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI International), the National Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP), the National Observatory of Employment and Qualifications (ONEQ), the National Center for Trainer Training and Training Engineering (CENAFFIF), the Ministry of Economy and Planning, the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT), the Office of Tunisians Abroad (OTE), the National Migration Observatory (ONM), and the Tourism Training Agency (AFMT). Special appreciation goes also to private sector and civil society organizations who provided valuable inputs and collaboration throughout the assessment process, as well as to international organizations — the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) — for their constructive engagement and insights.

The team expresses its gratitude to all institutions, partners, and individuals whose time, expertise, and constructive feedback contributed to the development of this Institutional Assessment.

Acronyms

AFMT : Agence de Formation dans les Métiers du Tourisme
Tourism Training Agency

AICS : Agence italienne pour la coopération au développement
Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

ANCE : Association nationale italienne des entrepreneurs en bâtiment
Italian National Association of Construction Contractors

ANETI : Agence nationale pour l'emploi et le travail indépendant
National Agency for Employment and Independent Work

APPE : Agences Privées de Placement à l'Étranger
Private overseas Placement Agencies

ATCT : Agence Tunisienne de Coopération Technique
Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation

ATFP : Agence tunisienne pour la formation professionnelle
Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training

AVFA : Agence de vulgarisation et de formation agricoles
Agricultural Extension and Training Agency

AVSI : Fondation AVSI
AVSI Foundation

BLA : Bilateral Labour Agreement

BM : Banque Mondiale
World Bank

CENAFFIF : Centre national de formation des formateurs et d'ingénierie de formation
National Center for Trainer Training and Training Engineering

CNSS : Caisse nationale de sécurité sociale
National Social Security Fund

CTICI : Chambre Tuniso-Italienne de commerce et d'industrie
Tunisian-Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

CSOs: civil society organizations

DGPEMOE : Direction générale du placement à l'étranger et de la main-d'œuvre étrangère
General Directorate for Overseas Placement and Foreign Workforce

ENABEL : Agence belge de coopération internationale
Belgian Agency for International Cooperation

EU: *European Union*

FG : Focus Group

FGDs : Focus Group Discussion

GIZ : Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
German Development Cooperation

GSP : Global Skills Partnership

IACE : Institut arabe des chefs d'entreprises
Arab Institute of Business Leaders

IA : Institutional Assessment

ILO : *International Labour Organization*

OIT : Organisation internationale du travail

ICT : Information and Communication Technologies

INCA Tunisie : Institut national confédéral d'assistance Tunisie
National Confederated Institute of Assistance Tunisia

INS : Institut National de la Statistique
National Institute of Statistics

IOM : *International Organization for Migration*

OIM : Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations

LMA : Labour Market Assessment

LMNA : Labour Market Need Assessment

MAE : Ministère des Affaires étrangères

MoFA: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

MAS : Ministère des affaires sociales

Ministry of Social Affairs

MEFP : Ministère de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle

Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training

MEP : Ministère de l'économie et de la planification

Ministry of Economy and Planning

MJM : Migration Journey Map

OECD : Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OFII : Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration
French Office for Immigration and Integration

ONEQ : Observatoire national de l'emploi et des qualifications
National Observatory of Employment and Qualifications

ONM : Observatoire National de la Migration
National Migration Observatory

OTE : Office des Tunisiens à l'Étranger
Office of Tunisians Abroad

SLI : Sviluppo Lavoro Italia
Italian Employment Development

SNE : Stratégie Nationale pour l'Emploi

SNEI : Stratégie nationale de l'emploi à l'international et de la protection des droits des travailleurs migrants

SNM : Stratégie nationale Migratoire

STEM : Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

THAMM : Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UGTT: Union générale tunisienne du travail
Tunisian General Labour Union

UN: United Nations

UTICA : Union tunisienne de l'industrie, du commerce et de l'artisanat
Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade, and Handicrafts

Executive Summary

The Institutional Assessment Report was prepared to support the operationalization of the Global Skill Partnership (GSP) between Italy and Tunisia by identifying how national institutions can more effectively govern, coordinate, and deliver skills development and managed labour-mobility pathways. The report aims to provide a clear diagnostic of Tunisia's existing institutional landscape, assess its readiness to underpin structured labour mobility under the GSP model, and propose a sequenced set of recommendations that can translate the growing bilateral cooperation with Italy into a development-oriented mobility framework.

The assessment focuses on how Tunisia's institutional architecture—from skills development to labour intermediation, migrant protection, and reintegration—can function cohesively to ensure that GSPs deliver sustainable outcomes for workers, employers, and both countries. Drawing on a modified labour-mobility diagnostic framework, the analysis evaluates the soundness of key processes along the mobility cycle across three pillars—Facilitating Access, Furthering Access, and Fortifying Access—and examines how institutions perform in the four phases of pre-recruitment, recruitment and pre-departure, departure and integration, and return migration. Pillar I - Facilitating Access examines the legal, institutional, and bilateral mechanisms that enable workers to enter international labour markets through structured, regular pathways. Pillar II - Furthering Access focuses on the skills, training systems, and certification processes that ensure Tunisian workers meet the technical, linguistic, and professional requirements of employers abroad. Pillar III - Fortifying Access addresses the protection, welfare, and reintegration measures that safeguard migrants throughout the mobility cycle, including grievance redress, access to social protection in destination countries, and support for return and reinsertion.

Within this framework, the assessment confirms that the Italy–Tunisia GSP provides a strong strategic opportunity for mutually beneficial cooperation. Tunisia faces structural labour-market pressures marked by high unemployment, especially among graduates and women, persistent informality, and skill mismatches that hinder the transition of young people into stable employment. At the same time, Italy confronts demographic ageing, a shrinking workforce, and chronic shortages in key sectors such as construction, agrifood, logistics, industrial maintenance, hospitality, and care. The GSP model responds directly to these complementary needs by linking training in Tunisia with employment opportunities in Italy, creating a dual-track training system that allows some beneficiaries to migrate through regular channels while others employed in the domestic economy benefit from enhanced training, improved curricula, and upgraded technical and vocational education and training (TVET) equipment. This structure transforms mobility from a talent-drain risk into a mutually reinforcing development tool that expands skills supply in Tunisia, increases employability, and supports private-sector productivity.

The benefits of this model extend beyond employment outcomes. For Tunisia, GSP pathways generate opportunities for skill acquisition, exposure to advanced production

standards, and accumulation of human and financial capital that can be reinvested upon return. They unlock access to remittances, promote entrepreneurship, and reinforce bilateral cooperation through institutional strengthening. For migrants, the GSP ensures regulated recruitment, decent working conditions, improved protection mechanisms, and clearer prospects for mobility and integration. For Italy, the partnership secures a reliable workforce, reduces dependence on irregular migration channels, and increases predictability for employers. As highlighted in the report, the Italy–Tunisia partnership builds on foundational existing cooperation, including the 2023 Memorandum establishing quotas for 12,000 non-seasonal workers, several sectoral conventions, and complementary EU-funded programs such as THAMM+ that support training, governance reforms, and mobility pilots.

The findings of the Institutional Assessment reveal a system with strong foundations but uneven operational performance across pillars and phases. Tunisia has in place an advanced legal framework governing labour mobility, with provisions aligned to international and GSP principles, and a long history of bilateral labour agreements. Institutional mandates across agencies are well-defined, and several pilots have demonstrated the capacity of Tunisian institutions to coordinate training and recruitment with European partners. However, the institutional analysis also shows that many key processes remain at emerging or nascent stages, particularly those that require formalized coordination, systematic data use, and long-term institutionalization of processes.

In the area of facilitating access, Tunisia has solid legal bases and platforms for collaboration, but structured mechanisms for bilateral coordination—such as permanent joint committees, shared outcome indicators, and regular monitoring—remain limited. Labour-market needs assessments have been conducted, but their institutionalization as periodic exercises is still in progress, and the integration of their results into migration planning, sector prioritization, or bilateral negotiations requires further reinforcement. While ANETI International, the unit within the national employment agency which facilitates recruitment and matching for international placements, has a track record in placing people abroad, profiling tools and matching systems require modernization, and coordination with private recruitment actors is at a nascent stage. The report notes that digitalization and AI-supported profiling—as implemented in comparable contexts—will be crucial to scale up future mobility volumes.

In the area of furthering access, the TVET system in Tunisia has broad geographic coverage and a strong institutional backbone, but the development of new training programs is slow, equipment is outdated in several specialties, and curricula are not systematically aligned with international standards such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) or the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO). The National Center for Trainer Training and Training Engineering (CENAFFIF) plays a central role in curriculum development, but the update cycle remains lengthy and insufficiently responsive to employer's demand. Pilots under THAMM+ have demonstrated the feasibility of modernizing occupational and safety standards, language training, and soft skills modules, but scaling these models requires more stable financing and tighter collaboration between training institutions and employers in Italy and Tunisia. Recognition of

competencies—particularly those acquired abroad—remains at an early stage, with no national system yet in place to ensure portability and equivalence of skills.

In the area of fortifying access, the assessment identifies the most substantial gaps. Pre-departure orientation exists but varies across institutions and is not standardized or systematically tracked. There are no institutionalized grievance or legal-aid mechanisms dedicated to Tunisian labour migrants, and consular services—although supportive—operate without coordinated systems for complaint handling. Access to welfare and social-insurance rights abroad is fragmented, and bilateral social-security portability mechanisms are not yet operational. Reintegration and entrepreneurship support for returning migrants remains limited, with no system to identify returnees, assess their skills, or channel their resources toward productive reinvestment. Diaspora engagement, while active in certain sectors, is not yet linked to structured mobility or support systems for newly arrived workers abroad.

Drawing on these findings, the report proposes a comprehensive and sequenced reform pathway under the umbrella of the GSP and BLAs. In the short term, the priority is to establish strong governance and coordination mechanisms to ensure that mobility pathways are well-managed. This includes activating Joint Bilateral Labor Agreements (BLAs) Implementation Committees with Italy to define common outcomes, indicators, and coordination modalities; standardizing pre-departure orientation across ANETI International and the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT); and publishing a joint workplan led by the National Observatory of Employment and Qualifications (ONEQ) to institutionalize biannual Labour-Market Needs Assessments. Strengthening ANETI International’s profiling and matching systems is critical, including assessment of partnerships with private recruitment agencies to increase scalability. Short-term actions also include drafting BLA clauses on decent work, grievance access, and post-arrival support; identifying consular focal points; and piloting home-track training programs in selected sectors such as construction or agrifood, ensuring employer engagement and outcome tracking.

Medium-term priorities focus on embedding evidence-based planning and institutionalizing training reforms. These include fully integrating labor market needs assessments (LMNA) into workforce planning, ensuring they inform quota allocation and sector prioritization; scaling up dual-track training with secured financing, accelerated curriculum updates, Train-the-Trainers programs, and equipment upgrades; and implementing EQF/ESCO-aligned curricula. A national skills-recognition and validation system should be rolled out to cover both domestic and foreign-earned competences, supported by equivalence agreements with Italian regional authorities and chambers of commerce. Strengthening protection mechanisms is essential, including the creation of migrant grievance and legal-aid channels coordinated with consulates and NGOs, improved liaison with Italian welfare institutions through OTE, and formalized diaspora partnerships to support integration, and job navigation. Medium-term reforms should also include the design and implementation of comprehensive return and reinsertion programs that leverage the human capital acquired abroad.

Over the long term, the recommendations aim to embed the GSP-BLA architecture into national strategies and legislation to ensure sustainable and predictable delivery. This includes coordinating the production cycles of key national strategies—migration, labour mobility, skills, long-term fiscal and demographic planning—to build a coherent whole-of-government approach. Negotiating and operationalizing bilateral social-security portability agreements, including no-waiting-time clauses, is essential for ensuring rights-based mobility. Institutionalizing systematic evaluation of training and mobility programs will allow Tunisia to integrate results into budgeting and VET planning. The long-term agenda also calls for adopting legal and regulatory provisions that mandate periodic LMNAs, ensure the portability of skills and credentials, and require shared tracking systems for worker journeys. Finally, establishing an inter-ministerial scientific committee to monitor brain-drain risks and demographic trends will help guide future mobility policy.

Taken together, these recommendations outline a coherent institutional reform path that can transform Tunisia’s mobility architecture into a modern, efficient, and development-oriented system aligned with international best practice.

1. Introduction

1.1. A Global Skills Partnership between Italy and Tunisia

Labour Mobility Dynamics and Labour Market Complementarity between Tunisia and Italy

Labour mobility between Tunisia and Italy is rooted in both demographic trends and labour market dynamics that offer natural complementarities. Tunisia's workforce is young, with a growing share of higher-educated youth facing limited local employment prospects. In contrast, Italy is grappling with a declining working-age population and increasing labour shortages in critical sectors such as construction, eldercare, and transport. This contrast creates a skills investment and labour mobility opportunity where Tunisian workers can fill labour market gaps in Italy while gaining valuable skills and income.

Furthermore, the two countries are connected by geographic proximity, historical ties, and established migrant networks. Labour mobility flows from Tunisia to Italy are both longstanding and expanding. Recent bilateral agreements have formalized these movements, with the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training indicating that Tunisians in Italy constitute over 15% of Tunisians abroad—amounting to over 300,000 individuals out of a total of 2 million (MEFP, 2025). This is notably higher than earlier estimates. Meanwhile, UN DESA's *International Migrant Stock 2024* dataset shows that 16% of Tunisia's total migrant population—approximately 117,000 people—reside in Italy (UN, 2024). These figures underscore the scale and growth of Tunisian migration to Italy, which has increased nearly 3.5-fold since 1990. These dynamics set the stage for more structured cooperation to manage labour mobility strategically as a development and economic opportunity for both countries.

The Need for an Institutional Assessment

Despite growing recognition of the mutual benefits of cross-border labour mobility, growing demand for foreign labour and an increasing willingness and efforts from both governments to collaborate, both Tunisia and Italy face important challenges that hinder the efficient operation of legal labour mobility pathways. Tunisia's institutions which hold competences that can facilitate labour mobility, work mostly in a fragmented manner. Besides this, various small-scale bilateral programs operating under different schemes make it difficult to harmonize procedures or scale operations. These gaps result in underutilized labour mobility channels, leaving international demand for labour unmet, while skilled youth in Tunisia remain unemployed or wait long to emigrate for work reasons. Better governance, integrated systems, and enhanced coordination between public and private actors—is essential to transform existing initiatives into scalable, sustainable labour mobility programs that deliver economic benefits.

Important reforms are needed to ensure that institutions can adequately support the full migrant journey—from pre-departure preparation to post-arrival integration and return. Currently, migrants often face information asymmetries, inconsistent support, and limited legal protections, challenges that are exacerbated by the lack of interoperable systems and clearly defined institutional roles. To address these gaps, efforts must aim to design labour mobility processes that facilitate access to international markets; further access by enabling skills development and harnessing such skills to access opportunities; and fortify access by ensuring support and rights protection during travel, while working in destination countries, and upon return. An institutional assessment is thus needed to take stock of the capacities, gaps, and coordination mechanisms within and between entities in Tunisia. It must also consider the lived experiences of migrants and their families at every stage of mobility, to inform reforms that are both comprehensive and grounded in the realities of those they aim to serve.

Global Skills Partnership for international labor mobility: A Triple-Win Opportunity

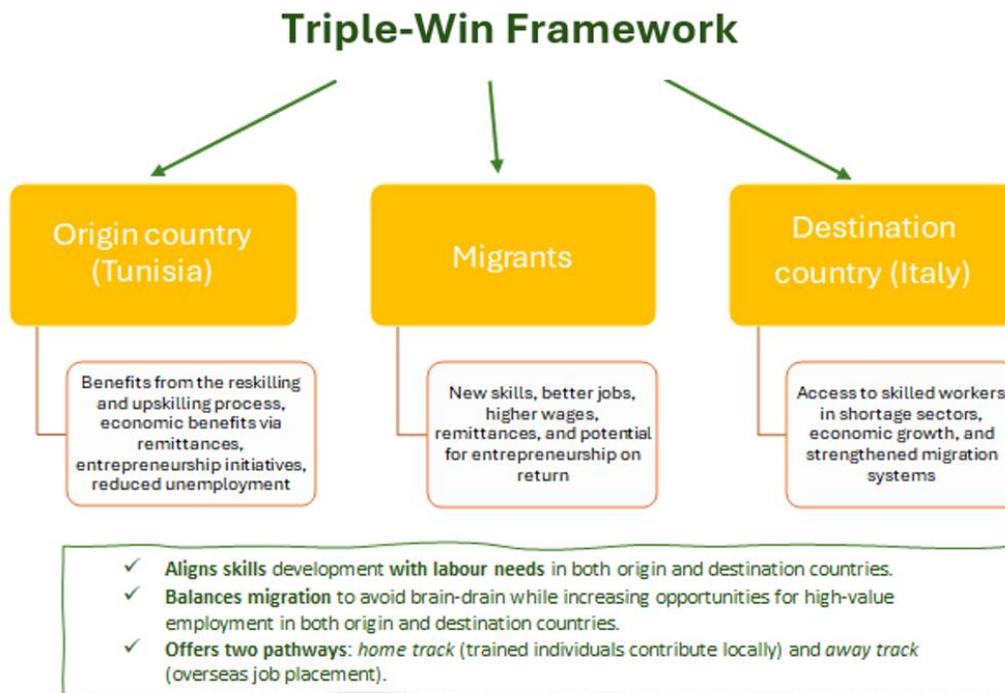
The Global Skills Partnership (GSP) is an innovative cooperation model that connects human capital development in origin countries with labour needs in destination countries through formal, legal labour mobility channels. As defined by the World Bank in the report *Global Skill Partnerships for Migration: Preparing Tomorrow's Workers for Home and Abroad*, a GSP “links human capital expansion and training with international mobility in a way that is financially sustainable and mutually beneficial for both the origin and destination countries. Training occurs primarily in the origin country and includes people who will stay home as well as those who plan to immigrate” ([World Bank, 2025](#)). In the context of Tunisia and Italy, this dual-track approach allows Tunisian workers to be trained locally in occupational profiles that are in demand in both countries. Some trainees migrate to Italy through structured, legal pathways “away track”, while others contribute their skills domestically “home track”, bolstering Tunisia’s workforce and economy.

GSP is based on a skills-building and labour mobility management framework grounded in bilateral or multilateral agreements—such as those being developed between Tunisia and Italy—where firms and government institutions in destination countries finance most of the training programs, which are delivered in origin countries. This structure ensures that labour mobility occurs via regular and predictable legal pathways. Training is aligned with occupational standards, certification systems, and labour market demands in both countries. For this reason, GSPs are most effective when focused on occupations that show shared and strong labour demand across the two countries. They are often particularly well suited for middle-skill occupations, though they can also be adapted for other skill levels where labour needs overlap. By supporting both the Tunisian training system and Italy’s sector-specific labour needs, the model enhances mutual benefits and reduces common risks such as skill mismatches, brain drain, and irregular labour migration.

The GSP model between Tunisia and Italy embodies a Triple Win Framework with clear advantages for all. For Tunisia, the model supports reskilling and upskilling of its labour force, improving employability of the workforce and reducing worker shortages among firms,

and increases opportunities to generate economic benefits through remittances and entrepreneurship by returning migrants. For Tunisian migrants, it offers new skills, access to better-paying, and the potential to reinvest their experience and earnings into their communities. For Italy, the GSP provides a reliable, job-ready workforce to address persistent shortages in key sectors, while strengthening labour mobility systems and reducing entry through irregular labour mobility channels (Figure 1). This model demonstrates how Tunisia and Italy can align development cooperation with labour mobility to create sustainable, regulated, and equitable outcomes.

Figure 1: Global Skill Partnerships - A triple-win model



Crucially, GSPs can mobilize additional public and private resources to build resilient labour mobility systems. They foster partnerships among a broad range of actors—governments, employers, training institutions, civil society, and international organizations—to align incentives and deliver results. In the case of Tunisia and Italy, the strong demographic and economic complementarity, combined with political will and growing experience with pilot programs like Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa THAMM+¹ (see THAMM / THAMM-Plus North Africa – Tunisia Focus),

¹ Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM-Plus) is a regional programme co-financed by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), running from 2024 to 2027. It is implemented by the German Development Agency (GIZ) in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), ENABEL, OFII, and AICS, in close cooperation with Tunisian authorities such

provide a solid foundation for scaling GSPs. This approach can help formalize and expand labour mobility pathways that not only address immediate labour shortages but also contribute to long-term economic development and institutional transformation in both countries.

The strategy focuses on three targets:

1. **Investing in skills and job-matching systems** to support both local and international employment.
2. **Facilitating cross-border worker mobility** through formal, demand-driven, and mutually beneficial agreements.
3. **Mobilizing private capital** to invest in skills employers need.

1.2. Objectives of the Institutional Assessment

Objectives of the Institutional Assessment

The Institutional Assessment aims to support the application of the Global Skill Partnerships (GSP) model between Tunisia and Italy by examining opportunities to enhance operational processes, including training, involved in key labour mobility pathways between Tunisia and Italy. While the assessment is anchored in the GSP framework as a reference model, most of the insights, findings, and conclusions generated are applicable to broader labour mobility pathways linked to skills investments, including bilateral, sectoral, and employer-driven mobility schemes.

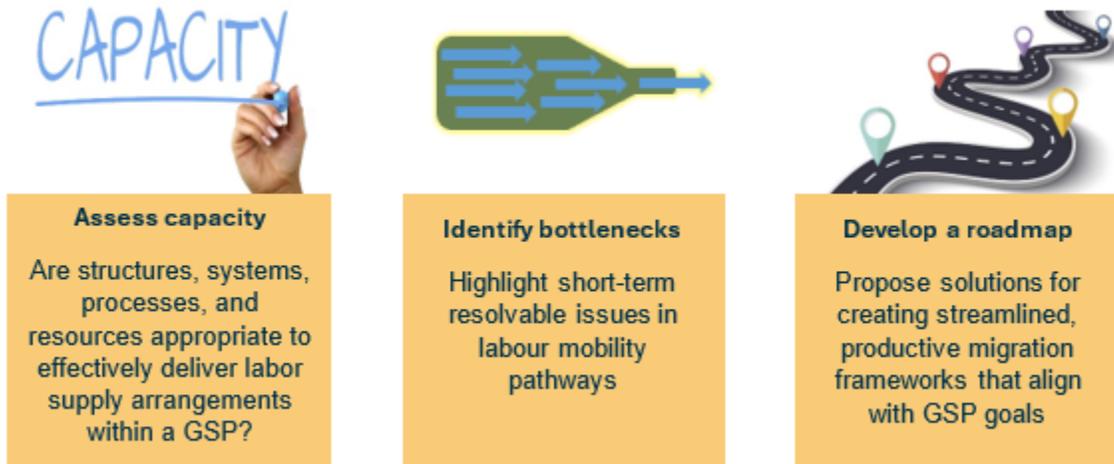
The assessment seeks to generate actionable insights to ensure a balanced, mutually beneficial mobility framework which supports alignment between skills development and labour market needs and protects the worker throughout the migration cycle. It will identify strengths and gaps within current institutional arrangements and provide recommendations to support the development of effective, sustainable and scalable labour mobility mechanisms.

More specifically, the assessment seeks to assess whether the current institutional structures, systems, processes, and resources effectively support international labour mobility within a GSP-inspired framework, while remaining adaptable to other skills-based mobility models. It also aims to identify operational or structural bottlenecks within the institutional landscape—particularly those that can be addressed in the short term—that hinder the efficiency and coordination of labour mobility pathways. Building on these insights, the assessment will propose a practical roadmap to guide the creation of streamlined and productive labour mobility frameworks that are fully aligned with the

as the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) and ANETI International. The programme builds on the earlier THAMM initiative (2019–2023) and aims to institutionalize safe, fair, and demand-driven labour mobility pathways between North Africa and the EU (GIZ, 2025a; GIZ, 2025b).

strategic goals of the GSP between Tunisia and Italy and can inform wider skills-based migration initiatives. (Figure2).

Figure 2: Institutional Assessment Objectives



The expected outcomes include **a set of recommendations** to facilitate: (i) strengthened labour mobility frameworks and institutional capacity; (ii) streamlined labour mobility pathways, including effective job matching; (iii) improved access and protection of Tunisian workers in the Italian labour market; and (iv) enhanced collaboration and coordination among stakeholders in both countries, including government entities, social partners, civil society, and private sector actors.

Scope of the Institutional Assessment

The scope of the institutional assessment covers four key dimensions in the operation of labour mobility pathways. First, it examines the authorizing environment, including laws, regulations, policies, and agreements that govern, enable, or constrain labour mobility and skills development between Tunisia and Italy. Second, it reviews the institutional arrangements and governance by mapping mandates and roles of institutions involved in skills development (including training and certification) employment, and labour mobility. It assesses how governance structures support or hinder collaboration and coordination both across agencies within each country and bilaterally between Tunisia and Italy. Third, the assessment looks at the resources—human, physical, financial, and knowledge-based—within the relevant institutions to deliver both high-quality training and effective mobility services. The Institutional Assessment also focuses on skilling initiatives—the central pillar of the GSP model—by assessing how training institutions, curricula design, certification systems, and coordination mechanisms contribute to the development of job-ready skills aligned with domestic and international labour demand and facilitate effective labour

mobility. Lastly, it analyzes the systems and tools used to manage labour mobility data, integrate processes, and deliver services efficiently and transparently. As it is further analyzed in Sections 2 and 3.2. this framework of analysis has been developed by the WB and has already been used in a set of countries (see World Bank 2023; 2024; 2024a;2024b;2024c).

This multidimensional analysis will help identify where in the institutional landscape mandates are unclear, coordination breaks down, legal or procedural barriers persist, and operational capacities are under strain. By understanding these factors in an integrated way, the assessment can reveal both systemic gaps and immediate opportunities for strengthening the design and implementation of the GSP, ensuring that the partnership delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders.

The institutional assessment covers a wide range of entities that together form the core of a GSP ecosystem, which spans across three interconnected policy areas: labour mobility, labour market, and skills development. Institutions involved include ministries of labour, ministries of social policy/welfare, ministries of foreign affairs, public employment services, vocational training agencies, national statistics institutes, social partners, chambers of commerce, civil society organizations, and private sector actors in both Tunisia and Italy. The assessment applies an integrated framework to diagnose the capacity, effectiveness, strengths, opportunities, and challenges with special attention to how entities within these three policy areas interact and coordinate to support legal labour mobility.

Geographically, the assessment focuses on Tunisia. It considers national-level institutions and their operational capacities across regions. The scope also includes Tunisian institutions operating in Italy that are part of the broader labour mobility system, such as embassies and consulates, the Office of Tunisians abroad “Office des Tunisiens à l'Étranger (OTE) and its network of *attachés sociaux*, who provide essential services for Tunisian migrants. Additionally, diaspora organizations are considered part of the institutional landscape, offering community-based support, advocacy, and transnational engagement that reinforce migrant protection and integration efforts. Finally, Italian institutions present in Tunisia are also included in the assessment, such as the Italian Embassy and Consulate, the Italian-Tunisian Chamber of Commerce, and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), which support bilateral cooperation on labour, training, and labour mobility issues.

The analysis pertaining to the Italian institutional system is presented in a separate, dedicated report. While the institutional assessment applies a shared analytical framework to both Tunisia and Italy, the structure, mandates, and legal environments of the two systems are significantly different. A dedicated report for Italy allows for more targeted and context-specific analysis and presenting the findings separately ensures greater clarity, usability, and relevance for stakeholders and policy counterparts in both countries.

2. Framework and Research Tools for the Institutional Assessment

2.1. Framework

Diagnostic Framework and Phases of Labour Mobility Analyzed

The World Bank’s diagnostic framework for labour mobility systems offers a comprehensive approach to diagnose how public institutions organize, coordinate, and deliver services across the entire labour mobility cycle. The framework enables governments to identify strengths, gaps, and potential reforms by systematically assessing the functionality and soundness of their labour mobility systems. It has been applied in multiple contexts, including a detailed diagnostic for Northern Central America and Columbia (World Bank, 2023; 2024), and provides a tested methodology for system-wide institutional analysis.

This report applies an adapted version of the World Bank framework (**Figure 3**) structured around three interdependent **pillars**:

- I. **Facilitating Access** – helping workers access international labour markets;
- II. **Furthering Access** – harnessing skills to access international labour markets;
- III. **Fortifying Access** – strengthening the protection and integration of labour migrants.

These pillars are analyzed across the four phases of the labour mobility cycle:

1. **Pre-Recruitment**
2. **Recruitment and Pre-Departure**
3. **Departure and Integration**
4. **Return Migration**

The assessment covers the **full set of processes and institutional responsibilities** at each intersection between pillar and phase, as defined by the diagnostic framework. The **legal and institutional framework for access** is treated as a cross-cutting dimension that permeates all pillars and phases, reflecting that a well-designed legal and governance framework is not simply an auxiliary support to the system—it is a foundational element that actively shapes how institutions interact (World Bank, 2023; Bossavie et al., 2024).

While the analytical framework primarily focuses on access to international labour markets, the assessment systematically integrates the *home track* by examining the extent to which training programs are aligned with domestic labour market needs. In particular, the analysis considers labour market needs assessments (LMNAs), training system capacity, and the responsiveness of training provision to employer demand within Tunisia, ensuring that skills investments support both international labour mobility pathways and sustainable local employment outcomes.

Figure 3: Diagnostics Framework



Source: Adapted from the framework in **World Bank** (2024b)

Pillar I - Facilitating Access

Objective: Helping workers access international labour markets

This pillar focuses on how systems are organized to enable legal access to employment abroad through coordinated intermediation, employer engagement, and regulatory oversight. It spans two early phases of the migration cycle:

- **Pre-Recruitment:** The analysis examines whether there are functioning legal pathways for labour mobility, including bilateral agreements and cooperation frameworks with destination countries. It also explores whether labour market needs assessments are conducted in a systematic and timely manner to inform program planning and worker preparation.
- **Recruitment and Pre-Departure:** The focus is on whether job identification, candidate outreach, profiling, and matching processes are working effectively—particularly through public and private intermediation channels. The review includes whether administrative clearance procedures, such as visa issuance and travel logistics, are streamlined, accessible, and coordinated across responsible agencies, and there is effective information flow.

Pillar II - Furthering Access

Objective: Harnessing skills to access international labour markets

This pillar examines how systems support the development, certification, and recognition of skills needed for both local and international labour markets, as well as for reintegration. It spans all four phases of the labour mobility cycle:

- **Pre-Recruitment:** The review focuses on whether mechanisms are in place to design training curricula aligned with local and international labour demand, and whether occupational and qualification standards are coordinated with destination country requirements.
- **Recruitment and Pre-Departure:** The analysis considers whether training, reskilling, and language or cultural education are being effectively delivered to migrants prior to departure. It also examines whether processes for certification of skills and qualifications are functioning effectively.
- **Departure and Integration:** During the period abroad, the assessment looks at whether systems exist to support professional skill recognition and verification, and whether there are channels for further training based on destination-country standards.

- **Return Migration:** The review addresses whether there are functioning processes for recognizing skills acquired abroad and whether returnees can access tools or services that support their reintegration into the labour market in the country of origin.

Pillar III - Fortifying Access

Objective: Strengthening the protection and integration of labour migrants

This pillar analyzes the extent to which systems protect migrant workers at all stages—from initial departure through employment abroad to return and reintegration:

- **Pre-Recruitment:** The diagnostic considers whether enabling legislation is in place to protect migrant rights, and whether bilateral social security agreements and integration policies have been designed.
- **Recruitment and Pre-Departure:** The review explores whether pre-departure orientation is delivered to inform migrants about their rights, responsibilities, and risks.
- **Departure and Integration:** At this stage, the analysis examines whether migrants have access to reliable support networks, such as consular assistance, diaspora platforms, or employment services. It also reviews whether grievance mechanisms are in place and whether migrants can access welfare and social insurance in host countries.
- **Return Migration:** The review looks at whether systems are functioning to enable the portability of social insurance entitlements and whether reintegration support is available—such as labour reinsertion programs and entrepreneurship support for returnees.

A Cyclical and Interdependent Process

The diagnostic framework is structured around four discrete phases of labour mobility, but in practice these phases are cyclical and interdependent. Migration is rarely a linear journey. Workers may move through multiple cycles of recruitment, employment, and return, and the performance of one phase often determines the success of the next. For instance, a weak alignment between training and labour market demand in the pre-recruitment phase may reduce employment outcomes abroad, just as inadequate reintegration mechanisms can increase the likelihood of repeated migration under more precarious conditions (Bossavie et al., 2024).

This cyclical perspective reinforces the importance of system-wide coordination, interoperability of information systems, and continuous institutional feedback loops. Robust labour mobility systems must not only function within individual phases and pillars

but also create linkages between them. These linkages allow for knowledge-sharing, adaptive management, and policy learning—ensuring that labour mobility governance evolves in step with shifting labour markets, demographic trends, and worker needs.

An Integrated Systems Perspective for GSPs

The institutional assessment underpinning Global Skill Partnerships (GSPs) encompasses a wide array of actors that collectively operate across three interconnected policy areas: labour mobility, labour market and skills development. Labour mobility policies provide the legal and administrative frameworks that regulate and facilitate cross-border labour mobility. Labour market policies generate the demand-side conditions for employment by defining occupational needs, establishing job-matching processes, and signaling workforce gaps. Skills development policies form the supply side of the equation by designing, delivering, and certifying training programs to prepare workers for foreign employment. The diagnostic process investigates the extent to which these three policy areas institutionally aligned, responsive to international labour market needs, and capable of supporting effective and sustainable mobility pathways (Acosta et al., 2025; World Bank, 2023).

The assessment also examines the configuration of the institutional landscape that links these three policy areas. A key focus is on whether institutions across these policy areas collaborate effectively to support the entire GSP cycle—from identifying overseas job opportunities and aligning curricula, to managing workers' mobility and facilitating return and reintegration. Understanding how these institutional relationships operate is essential to designing GSPs that are not only technically sound but also operationally feasible and scalable (World Bank, 2023; Bossavie et al., 2024).

Methodological Rationale for Stakeholder Inclusion

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of how labour mobility systems function, the institutional assessment encompasses a wide and diverse range of actors. These institutions are grouped by category according to their mandate, function, and governance level within the labour mobility, labour market and skills systems. The goal is not only to map formal mandates but also to understand how various institutional actors interact, coordinate, and influence the functioning of labour mobility pathways.

The first group includes line ministries and central agencies, which are responsible for core policy and operational functions across employment, vocational training, migration governance, education, and social protection. In countries with decentralized responsibilities, such as Italy, regional and local authorities are also included. These subnational institutions often play critical roles in labour market services, training governance, and employer engagement—functions that must be captured to understand implementation capacity across levels of government.

Also, the assessment includes public implementing agencies, such as employment services and training institutions, which are operationally responsible for profiling

candidates, managing mobility programs, and aligning training supply with labour demand. These institutions are essential to evaluating system performance in areas such as job matching, curriculum design, skills certification, and labour market responsiveness.

Among the private and non-state sectors, the mapping incorporates recruitment agencies and overseas placement offices, which directly facilitate access to foreign employment opportunities and interact with both employers and job seekers. Chambers of commerce and industry are included due to their role in representing employer interests and shaping demand-driven training. Social partner organizations, such as employer associations and trade unions, are critical stakeholders in both governance and implementation, and their inclusion helps assess participatory mechanisms and labour standards. Similarly, private universities and training providers are involved in delivering skills relevant to mobility programs and are thus included to assess the diversity and regulation of the training ecosystem.

The assessment also covers civil society organizations (CSOs) and diaspora associations, which often provide complementary services including outreach, pre-departure preparation, legal assistance, and reintegration support. Their inclusion ensures the diagnostic captures accountability structures and community-based support networks. Finally, international cooperation agencies and multilateral organizations are included due to their influence in shaping policy, providing technical assistance, and facilitating cross-border program implementation.

2.2. Research Tools

The institutional assessment uses a combination of research methods to better understand how labour mobility systems, including potential GSPs, are organized and operate in practice across policy, institutional, and implementation levels. This approach combines document-based research, qualitative fieldwork, and international comparative benchmarking. It is designed to examine how institutions function, how different components of the system interact, and where coordination or capacity challenges may arise.

The first step involves a structured desk review of relevant legal and policy documentation. This includes national migration laws, bilateral labour agreements, institutional mandates, national employment and skills strategies, and existing program reports. The desk review helps to establish the formal framework in which institutions operate, and provides the analytical foundation for assessing regulatory alignment across the migration, labour market, and skills systems. It also supports the mapping of existing coordination mechanisms, implementation tools, and historical developments relevant to labour mobility and skills partnerships.

The qualitative research is conducted through a two-stage interview process. The first round of interviews focuses on identifying mandates, activities, and institutional interactions across the ecosystem. The second round—more in-depth—explores specific institutional processes, coordination practices, and decision-making pathways. Interviews are semi-

structured, allowing for guided conversation while enabling stakeholders to share insights on operational dynamics, implementation challenges, and system-level constraints. This qualitative layer is essential for understanding how institutions function beyond their formal roles and how processes are managed across different governance levels.

To complement country-specific findings, the assessment incorporates a benchmarking component that draws on international experiences and lessons from other countries implementing GSPs or similar labour mobility schemes. This comparative perspective helps to situate the findings within broader policy and operational trends and to identify emerging good practices that may be adapted to the national context. Benchmarking also supports the development of context-sensitive recommendations grounded in feasible and proven approaches.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) with Tunisian migrants in Italy and prospective migrants in Tunisia have been conducted to capture user-level insights into how labour mobility systems are experienced in practice. These discussions provided valuable perspectives on the alignment between institutional design and migrant realities, helping to identify areas where expectations and implementation diverge. The findings offer critical input for designing more responsive and inclusive GSP models that better reflect the lived experiences and needs of migrants across different stages of the migration cycle.

3. Labour market and mobility trends in Tunisia

3.1. Overview of mobility trends in Tunisia

Labour mobility has long been a defining feature of Tunisia’s socio-economic landscape, shaped by persistent domestic labour market imbalances and broader Mediterranean dynamics. High unemployment, especially among youth and graduates, combined with underemployment in informal or precarious sectors, continues to motivate Tunisians to seek opportunities abroad. These aspirations align with the structural demand for foreign workers in European and Gulf economies, where demographic ageing and labour shortages create openings for international recruitment. Labour mobility therefore represents both a household livelihood strategy and a driver of upward social mobility, with remittances, skills transfer, and diaspora engagement providing important contributions to national development.

According to household survey data (INS, HIMS 2021), there were around 566,000 current Tunisian migrants aged 15 and above, equivalent to approximately 5% of the resident population. Broader diaspora estimates, including all age groups, place the number significantly higher, with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the office of Tunisians abroad “*Office des Tunisiens à l’Étranger*” OTE data reporting over 1.4 million Tunisians abroad in 2018, and MEFP figures suggesting close to two million by 2024. While the scale varies by source, the trend across datasets points consistently to a steady increase in international mobility over recent decades.

The distribution of Tunisian migrants remains strongly oriented towards Europe, where France hosts just over half (52.5%) of the total, followed by Italy (14.2%), Germany (8.2%), and other European destinations (8.5%). Beyond Europe, notable Tunisian communities are found in Canada (2.5%), the United States (1.5%), and the Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia (2.5%), Qatar (2.5%), and the United Arab Emirates (1.8%). Libya also remains a relevant destination (1.4%). These patterns reflect both historical ties and new economic opportunities. The Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT) data confirms the diversification of skilled postings, with approximately 64% of the workers the institution places overseas, placed in Gulf countries, 22% in Europe, and 11% in the Americas in 2022. This diversification of destinations reflects wider African trends documented in recent research, which highlight the gradual shift of African migration patterns beyond traditional European corridors towards North America and the Middle East (Abdel Jelil *et al.*, 2025).

Motivations for mobility vary by demographic profile and destination. Overall, the leading reason for emigration is job search and economic opportunities (45%), followed by family reunification and marriage (32%), and study or training (11.5%). Gender-specific data reveal important differences: nearly 59% of men report job search as their main motivation, while almost 69% of women migrate for family reasons. Marital status is also significant: married migrants predominantly cite family reunification (around 68%), while single migrants are more likely to move for job opportunities (54%) or study (16%). By destination, migration to

Italy is overwhelmingly linked to employment, while Germany attracts a relatively higher share of students and trainees. These figures underline the interplay between personal circumstances, gender norms, and institutional pathways in shaping Tunisian migration.

The demographic profile of Tunisian migrants also shows concentration among working-age adults. In 2021, 31% were aged 25–34, 29% were 35–44, and 20% were 45–59, while only 9% were 15–24. Men accounted for around 69% of the migrant population, while women represented 31%, although their share is higher in certain European countries such as Belgium and other EU destinations.

In terms of education, Tunisian migrants are relatively well-qualified. Among current migrants, 39% had completed secondary education, 35% had higher education, and around 16% had primary schooling, while smaller shares reported vocational training (6.6%) or no schooling (3.3%). The occupational profile before the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates strong participation in sectors aligned with both domestic and foreign labour demand. Migrants were employed mainly in construction (17%), hotels and restaurants (13.7%), trade (8.7%), manufacturing (8.1%), and agriculture and fishing (7%). These distributions confirm that Tunisian labour mobility has traditionally served both mid- and low-skilled segments of foreign labour markets, while also reflecting structural demand in services and industry.

Finally, migration outcomes are reinforced by significant remittance flows. Transfers from Tunisians abroad reached 8.5 billion dinars in 2024, increasing by 11.8 percent compared to 2023. These flows represent 7.7 percent of national GDP, underlining their vital role in the country's economic and social stability (MEFP, 2025). Although remittances are predominantly used for consumption, their scale demonstrates the continued macroeconomic importance of labour migration. In this context, Tunisia has developed the National Strategy for Employment Abroad (SNEI), adopted in 2021. The SNEI aims to strengthen governance of labour migration, align training systems with both national and international labour market needs, and promote safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways. It positions labour mobility as not only a means of regulating the domestic labour market—especially for young graduates and women—but also as a lever for economic and social development through enhanced skills and international cooperation (MEFP, 2025).

Finally, bilateral partnerships, particularly with Italy, have gained momentum. A memorandum of understanding signed in 2023 opened quotas for 4,000 non-seasonal Tunisian workers in Italy per year, supported by agreements facilitating recruitment, training, and visa procedures. In addition, several sectoral conventions (construction, logistics, industrial maintenance, welding, and metalworking) are creating new structured opportunities for young Tunisian workers. These initiatives form part of a broader international cooperation framework designed to meet European labour shortages while strengthening skills that can later benefit Tunisia upon workers' return (MEFP, 2025).

3.2. Labour market trends in Tunisia and the mapping to international labour mobility and GSP potentials

3.2.1 Economic Growth and Labour Market Linkages

Tunisia's recent economic performance continues to weigh heavily on labour market outcomes. Real GDP growth reached 1.4% in 2024, after stagnating in 2023, leaving overall activity still slightly below its pre-covid level (World Bank, 2025a). While growth benefited from the recovery of agriculture and tourism, it was weighed down by weaker performance in oil, mining, manufacturing, and construction. Labour market indicators reflect these trends: unemployment stood at around 16% in Q3-2024, modestly above its pre-pandemic level, while participation remained at 46.2%, slightly below the pre-Covid benchmark (World Bank, 2025a). According to the most recent data of the annual national population and employment surveys, unemployment decreased to 15.7 in Q1 2025.

According to the latest population census conducted by the Institut National de la Statistique (INS), Tunisia's demographic dynamics are central to labour market pressures. The population reached 11,972,169 on 6 November 2024, with an average annual growth of just 0.87% over the past decade, reflecting a marked fertility decline (INS, 2025). The working-age group (15–59 years) still accounts for 60.3% of the population, highlighting the urgency of policies to better absorb and productively employ this cohort. Within this group, the census notes a decline in the 15–34 age range, attributed to lower fertility and youth emigration, while the 35–59 age group has expanded, reflecting a maturing and aging workforce. At the same time, the share of individuals aged 60 and above rose from 11.6% in 2014 to 16.9% in 2024, while the median age increased from 32.1 to 35 years, and the age dependency ratio for older persons climbed from 18% to 28%. The aging index—the ratio of people aged 60+ to those under 15—grew from 49% to 73.9%, indicating a significant demographic shift. The proportion of children under 5 years declined from 7.9% to 5.9%, and those aged 5–14 years dropped from 18.6% to 17%, confirming the sustained decline in fertility. Women now represent 50.7% of the population, with a masculinity ratio of 97.4, and outnumber men in most age groups above 25 years, due to higher female life expectancy and male-dominated migration patterns. Regional disparities are evident: Districts 2 and 3, which include governorates such as Tunis, Ariana, Ben Arous, Nabeul, Sousse, Monastir, Mahdia, Kairouan, Kasserine, and Siliana, together account for 59.1% of the national population, driven by urbanization and internal migration. In contrast, interior regions like Tataouine, Mahdia, and Siliana show higher aging rates and youth outmigration; for example, Siliana has an aging index of 84.1% and a dependency ratio of 34.7%, both significantly above national averages. Census data confirm that Tunisia's demographic dynamics are central to labour market pressures and underscore the need for forward-looking labour market strategies that address aging, gender inclusion, and regional inequalities through targeted skills development and employment policies.

The IMF's most recent Article IV consultation (2021) emphasized that labour market weaknesses are at the core of the country's economic and social challenges. At that time, unemployment was already elevated at 16.2%, particularly among youth, women, and low-skilled workers. The Fund noted that persistent unemployment reflects structural barriers, including a large public wage bill, financial vulnerabilities in state-owned enterprises, and regulatory rigidities that constrain private sector dynamism. These constraints have prevented sufficient productive and formal job creation, while also reinforcing informality and discouragement in the labour force. The IMF recommended rebalancing public spending toward education, health, and social protection, alongside reforms to foster private sector-led, job-rich growth and stronger investment in human capital (IMF, 2021).

3.2.2 Labor market segmentation challenges

Tunisia's labour market continues to face structural constraints that limit its ability to fully leverage the country's human capital. More than 900,000 working-age Tunisians are either unemployed or discouraged inactive (World Bank, 2025b). The unemployment rate is particularly high among university graduates (21–23%) (World Bank, 2025b; World Economic Forum, 2025). OECD data confirm that unemployment has been persistently above 12% since the 1990s, with youth especially affected: over 85% of the unemployed are under 35, and the average transition to a first job now exceeds 26 months (OECD, 2022b). One-third of young people (15–29) are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs), raising concerns for social cohesion and long-term growth potential (OECD, 2022b).

Gender disparities are especially pronounced: women's unemployment is 61% higher than men's and participation is less than half that of men's. Moreover, in Q1 2025, unemployment stood at 20.3 for women versus 13.6 for men. Addressing barriers such as childcare provision and parental leave could substantially raise female labour force participation, with World Bank estimates suggesting potential growth gains of 0.5 percentage points annually by 2030 if Tunisia were to converge with peer averages (World Bank, 2025a).

Geographic disparities further compound these challenges. Unemployment is below 10% in some coastal regions but reaches nearly 30% in southern governorates, reflecting historic concentration of activity in coastal zones, low internal mobility, and limited transport and housing infrastructure (OECD, 2022b). Census 2024 data confirm these demographic patterns, with 59% of Tunisians residing in coastal districts, while some interior regions face population decline and high male outmigration, leaving women proportionally more numerous (INS, 2025). These structural features reinforce inequalities in labour market outcomes and underscore the importance of policies that address both geographic and social dimensions of participation.

3.2.3 Sectoral and Occupational Trends

Labour demand remains concentrated in specific sectors and occupations. Job creation has been strongest in mid-skilled technical roles such as plant and machine operators, assemblers, skilled agricultural workers, and craft trades. Expanding sectors include motor vehicles, rubber and plastics, basic metals, agriculture, fisheries, accommodation, and food services (World Bank, 2025b). At the same time, industries such as textiles and electronics have faced job losses, even while reporting over 21,800 vacancies, particularly for sewing machine operators and embroidery workers. Other shortage occupations include chefs, waiters, commercial sales representatives, accountants, manufacturing supervisors, and industrial engineers (World Bank, 2025b).

OECD evidence highlights that job creation has often been concentrated on low-productivity activities such as construction, retail, and hotels, contributing to the persistence of underemployment and informality.

A study on informal employment in Tunisia, conducted by ONEQ in collaboration with the ILO and UNDP in 2024, revealed that 1,266,474 people were employed in informal jobs in the second quarter of 2019, corresponding to an informality rate of 36%. The phenomenon is particularly prevalent among the self-employed (70%), and affects men (39%) more than women (27%). It disproportionately impacts individuals with low education levels, as 53% of informal workers are illiterate or have only completed primary school. Youth and older workers are also more exposed, with informality rates of 52% and 48%, respectively (ILO, 2024).

From a sectoral perspective, agriculture and fishing (85%), construction and public works (63%), social and cultural services (45%), and trade (42%) are the most affected. Geographically, the Center-West region registers the highest rate of informal employment (68%), followed by the North-West (48%) and South-West (47%).

Informal workers typically lack social protection coverage, experience low and unstable incomes, and are exposed to unsafe working conditions. Among wage employees in informal jobs, 53% earn less than the minimum wage, while 87% of self-employed workers and small employers earn an average annual income of around 7,500 TND. Moreover, 21% of informal workers face job instability, losing their employment within six months (ILO, 2024).

At the same time, sectors with higher potential, such as ICT services and automotive manufacturing, have expanded significantly, employing 24,000 and 90,000 workers respectively by 2019, with strong export orientation. These sectors face skill shortages in both technical and soft skills, underlining the importance of education–industry partnerships (OECD, 2022b).

A nationally led diagnosis further underlines a structural segmentation of the labour market—between public and private, formal and informal, and by enterprise size—which shapes both hiring patterns and job quality. This segmentation coexists with a concentration

of activity and employment along the coast (MEFP, 2019). This insight complements OECD evidence on informality and precarious contracts among youth in lower-productivity services (OECD, 2022a; 2022b).

3.2.4 Skills Gaps and Future Needs

Employers consistently identify skills mismatches as a leading challenge. Shortages are evident in technical skills such as equipment handling, quality control, and systems analysis, alongside transversal competencies like customer service, communication, and languages (World Bank, 2025b). Digital skills, green competencies, and internationally recognized certifications are increasingly in demand (World Bank, 2025b). OECD analysis shows that while the share of tertiary graduates has quadrupled since the 1990s, the private sector has mainly created jobs in low-skill activities, leading to high graduate unemployment, particularly among women (OECD, 2022b). At the same time, around 60% of the unemployed have not obtained a tertiary degree, reflecting the vulnerability of low-skilled men with limited technical and soft skills.

Weaknesses in vocational education and training (VET) contribute to mismatches. Many VET programmes remain unattractive, with outdated curricula and limited responsiveness to employer needs (see [Box 7](#) for more details on the VET system). Dropout rates in secondary education are high, and VET pathways often attract students with lower academic performance, leaving them ill-prepared for formal sector jobs (OECD, 2022b). The 2019 National Employment Strategy highlighted that VET was under-utilised and often perceived as low status. Enrolment stood at about 7.8% of secondary students (2013–15), with high dropout rates (≈ 1 in 3), despite shortages in trades such as construction, agriculture, and technical occupations. The report also pointed to governance and financing bottlenecks in continuous training, which limited responsiveness to employers' needs (MEFP, 2019). While subsequent reforms may have been initiated, these challenges remain a useful reference point for understanding the structural roots of skills mismatches.

University curricula similarly lag behind market demand, particularly in ICT and STEM fields, where employers report difficulty recruiting qualified candidates despite high graduate unemployment. Soft skills such as teamwork, problem solving, and foreign languages are often lacking among applicants, compounding the challenge (OECD, 2022b).

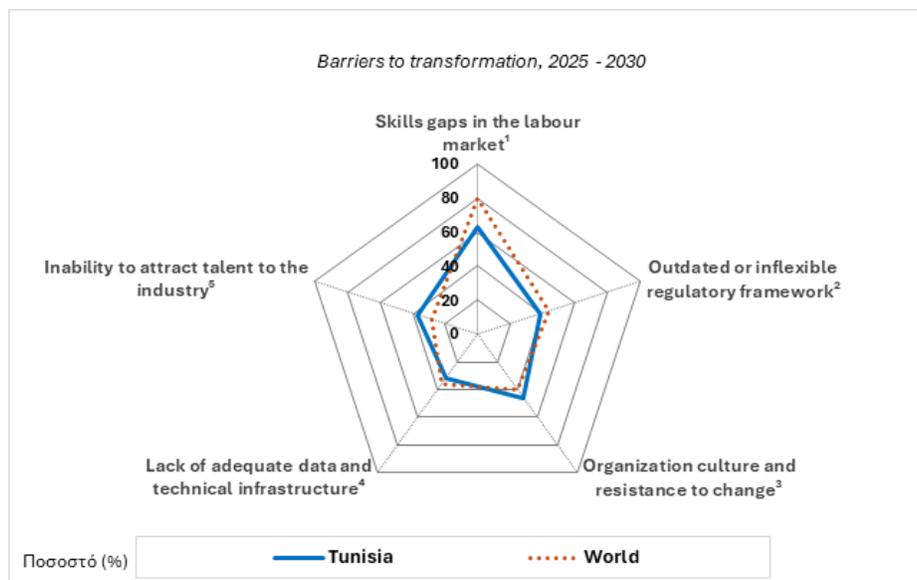
Demographic trends add another layer to these challenges. The share of Tunisians aged 60+ rose to 16.9% in 2024, compared to 11.6% in 2014, signaling rapid ageing (INS, 2025). This shift increases the urgency of policies to promote lifelong learning, reskilling, and adaptive social protection to ensure that older workers can remain active and productive in the labour market.

Addressing skills gaps is seen as a critical priority in Tunisia, with 80% of companies operating in the country identifying skills gaps as the top barrier to business transformation by 2030 and 86% aiming to upskill their workforce to respond to key business trends. Employers in Tunisia see a particularly strong increase in demand for leadership and social influence, creative thinking, and AI and big data skills. Demand for programming skills is also

on the rise, with 72% of firms identifying it as a growth area. To meet these needs, seven out of ten employers plan to fund training internally, while around 41% aim to leverage hybrid, public-private co-funding models, pointing to an emerging ecosystem approach to workforce development (World Economic Forum², 2025, p. 69). However, governance challenges remain. Despite relatively high spending on active labour market policies (0.9% of GDP in 2017, above the OECD average), implementation is fragmented across institutions and impact evaluations are limited (OECD, 2022b). Strengthening labour market intelligence systems and improving coordination between public and private actors would help ensure that training investments translate into better outcomes.

Businesses in Tunisia also identify significant barriers to transformation. The most critical is a pronounced skills gap in the labour market, cited by 80% of organizations compared to 63% globally (Figure 4). Other barriers include regulatory rigidity (44%) and lack of adequate technical infrastructure (36%). Interestingly, Tunisian firms report less resistance from organizational culture (40% vs. 46% globally), but they are more concerned about attracting talent to the industry (28% vs. 37% globally). These findings highlight that while Tunisia is relatively well-positioned in terms of inclusion and AI adoption, overcoming skills shortages and strengthening infrastructure will be essential for accelerating economic transformation (World Economic Forum, 2025).

Figure 4: Barriers to transformation for Tunisian firms, 2025-2030.



Data Source: World Economic Forum (2025)

² The survey focuses on current strategies, forecasts and estimates of global businesses, with an emphasis on large multinational and local companies that are significant due to their employment size or revenues. The sample only includes enterprises with more than 500 employees. As a result, smaller businesses and the informal sector are not represented, and their practices, challenges and transformation prospects towards 2030 are not reflected in the findings.

3.2.5 International Context and Opportunities

According to the 2024 *EURES Report on Labour Shortages and Surpluses in Europe*, structural labour shortages persist across the EU, particularly in the sectors of healthcare, construction, transportation, ICT, and hospitality. The most frequently reported shortage occupations across Member States include nursing professionals, welders and flame cutters, building and related electricians, freight and heavy truck drivers, and cooks. Additional construction occupations such as plumbers, painters, plasterers, and floor layers are also widely identified as facing recruitment difficulties. In the transport sector, shortages extend to mobile plant operators and transport equipment mechanics. These findings reflect sustained demand for vocational and technical profiles across essential sectors and can help inform the targeting of EU–Tunisia Skills and Talent Partnerships, by identifying areas where labour market needs in Europe align with training and mobility potential in Tunisia (EURES Report, 2024, pp. 6, 24, 34).

In particular, Italy’s labour market is marked by structural demographic decline and persistent labour shortages, especially in mid- and high-skilled occupations. A shrinking working-age population and rapid population aging are reducing labour supply while sustained job creation in services, construction, and trade sectors has pushed unemployment down and vacancy rates up. This mismatch is particularly acute in health and social care, where Italy faces a shortfall of more than one million care workers to meet the needs of its aging population, as well as in education, engineering, and technical occupations. Employers report persistent hiring difficulties even in contracting industries, as available jobseekers often lack the qualifications or geographic mobility required to fill vacancies (World Bank, 2025c).

Italy’s Critical Occupations List produced by the companion labour market assessment produced by the World Bank, highlights shortages across a wide spectrum of occupations, including mid-skilled service and sales workers (e.g., cooks, waiters, hairdressers, healthcare assistants), technical trades (e.g., bricklayers, electricians, metalworkers, mechanics), and high-skilled professionals (e.g., telecommunications engineers, physiotherapists, special needs teachers). These gaps are more intense in sectors like agri-food processing, tourism, and healthcare, which are simultaneously central to Tunisia’s economy (World Bank, 2025c).

Global Skills Partnerships (GSPs) between Tunisia and Italy offer a concrete avenue to address labour market challenges by linking reskilling programs in Tunisia to both international and domestic demand. Through the “away track” Tunisian workers trained in shortage occupations can access legal and better-paid opportunities abroad, while the “home track” strengthens Tunisia’s workforce in sectors such as manufacturing, agrifood, and services. Importantly, the home track ensures that upgraded training provision also strengthens Tunisia’s domestic labour market, helping firms address shortages, modernize production, and absorb young workers. This dual approach reduces the risk of brain drain, secures a return on training investments, and supports inclusive growth by modernizing Tunisia’s TVET system and embedding it into international labour market standards.

Crucially, the very shortages targeted by the GSP overlap with Tunisia’s workforce potential, particularly among youth, discouraged workers, and graduates facing long-term unemployment. By aligning curricula with both Italian and Tunisian employer needs, well-structured GSPs can provide pathways into mid-skilled technical roles, language training, and certifications recognized across markets. In doing so, they help alleviate domestic mismatches, prepare returnees to reintegrate productively, and allow Tunisia to turn demographic pressures into opportunities for inclusive and sustainable employment growth. Importantly, prioritizing the domestic labour market will ensure that outward mobility complements, rather than competes with, national development objectives.

Box 1: Skills and Labour Mobility Opportunities for Tunisia through EU Cooperation

The European Union’s evolving skills and mobility agenda offers Tunisia a strategic opportunity to advance national employment, training, and migration reforms by leveraging demand created from pressing European labour market needs and enabling EU frameworks.

Strategic Frameworks and Instruments

The Union of Skills (European Commission, 2025c) builds on the *European Skills Agenda (2020-2025)* to deepen cooperation on training, qualifications, and mobility. It provides a structured framework for aligning Tunisia’s skills development strategies with EU labour market priorities.

Key instruments include:

- **Reinforced Pact for Skills:** expansion of sectoral and regional alliances in key industrial ecosystems such as renewable energy, digital, tourism, health, and construction (European Commission, 2024a, 2024f, 2025a, 2925b).
- **EU Skills Academies and NetZero Industry Academies:** under the *NetZero Industry Act (2024)*, these academies form EU wide training networks for green and industrial upskilling. Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) across Europe collaborate with these academies through Erasmus+, which supports transnational partnerships, innovation, and capacity building in vocational education and training (European Commission, 2025c; European Commission, 2024b).
- **EU Talent Pool:** the first EU- wide digital matching platform connecting third country jobseekers with EU employers in shortage sectors. (European Parliament, 2025; European Commission, 2025e).
- **Skills Portability Initiative:** launched under the *Union of Skills* to facilitate recognition of qualifications and micro-credentials across borders. It builds on the *Europass Digital Credentials* framework and the *European Qualifications Framework (EQF)*. According to the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017, the EQF provides a common reference to make qualifications more transparent and comparable across Europe; it also foresees voluntary referencing of third-country frameworks, enabling Tunisia to link its national framework to the EQF (European Commission, 2017; European Commission, 2024c).

Labour Mobility Pathways and Funding Mechanisms

The EU–Tunisia Talent Partnership Roadmap (European Commission, 2025c) provides a framework combining training, legal migration, and reintegration. It identifies priority sectors such as construction, mechatronics/electronics, logistics, agriculture, tourism, and personal services, linking Tunisian training and employment systems with EU demand for skilled labour.

Implementation is supported by EU funding frameworks such as Erasmus+ and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI–Global Europe)

- *Erasmus+* enables participation in transnational vocational education and training partnerships, institutional capacity building, and Centres of Vocational Excellence projects that foster cooperation with EU Member States (European Commission, 2020; 2024d; 2024e).
- *NDICI–Global Europe* provides the EU’s main external funding envelope (2021-2027), supporting bilateral and regional cooperation on skills, employment, and mobility, including the implementation of the Mobility Partnership Facility (MPF) managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) (ICMPD, 2024).

Under the MPF, **Tunisia is already involved in several concrete pilot projects** linking vocational training and mobility pathways:

- **ProMob PlastSkills (2024-2027)** – training and reskilling 800 Tunisian technicians in the plastics industry, with certifications valid in Tunisia and France and mobility opportunities to permanent employment in France (Mobility Partnership Facility, 2024a).
- **SDM4EU – Skilled Driver Mobility for Europe (launched 2023)** – developing frameworks for professional driver training and mobility, including Tunisian candidates, to address EU shortages in the transport sector (Mobility Partnership Facility, 2024b).
- **MOBILISE – Circular Talent Development for Climate Smart Agriculture (2023-2027)** – promoting climate smart agriculture training and circular talent pathways across Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Netherlands (Mobility Partnership Facility, 2024c).

Possible Avenues for Additional Cooperation

Looking ahead, pilot concepts aligned with EU frameworks could further strengthen Tunisia–EU collaboration (European Commission, 2025c):

- **Tunisia–EU Construction Skills Academy (Net-Zero)** – linking Tunisian VET centres to EU Net-Zero Academies for training in energy efficiency, PV installation, and site management;
- **Mechatronics Mobility Track** – aligning curricula with ESCO standards and embedding EU recognised microcredentials;
- **Logistics & Professional Drivers Scheme** – certifying training to EU driver standards with ethical recruitment and reintegration components;
- **Seasonal Agri Skills Programme** – combining pre-departure training, legal seasonal work, and reinvestment support for returnees;
- **Skills Portability and Recognition Taskforce** – bilateral referencing of the Tunisian NQF to the EQF and adoption of Europass Digital Credentials.

4. The ecosystem of international labour mobility in Italy and Tunisia

4.1. Legal framework and authorizing environment in Tunisia

International Legal Framework

Tunisia has long demonstrated a strong commitment to international cooperation on migration and labour mobility, as reflected in its active participation in major global and interregional governance processes. As a member of the United Nations (UN), International Labour Organization (ILO), African Union (AU), League of Arab States, Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), and more recently the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Tunisia plays a central role in shaping and adhering to international migration and labour policies.

The country is aligned with global and regional migration frameworks, including the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in relation to SDG 8 (decent work) and SDG 10.7 (facilitated migration). Tunisia is also a proactive participant in dialogue and cooperation mechanisms such as the Rabat Process, the Khartoum Process, the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue (MTM), and the Africa-EU Mobility Partnership. These platforms provide structured avenues for Tunisia to engage with European and African partners on issues related to migration governance, labour mobility, and development.

At the continental level, Tunisia supports and contributes to the implementation of the African Union's Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) 2018–2030 and the African Plan of Action, reinforcing its role in advancing coherent migration strategies within Africa.

Furthermore, Tunisia signed a Mobility Partnership with the European Union in 2015, setting the foundation for a closer, more structured collaboration on migration and mobility. This partnership represents a critical milestone in Tunisia's effort to balance migration management with opportunities for legal mobility and skills partnerships with European states.

Tunisia's legal commitments are also reflected in its extensive engagement with the ILO normative framework. The country has ratified 63 ILO conventions and one protocol, including all eight fundamental conventions, three governance conventions, and 52 technical conventions. These ratifications signal Tunisia's adherence to international labour standards, including the protection of migrant workers and the promotion of fair and decent work.

Together, these instruments and commitments form a robust international legal and policy environment that supports Tunisia's role in initiatives such as the Global Skill Partnerships

(GSP) with Italy, facilitating ethical, rights-based, and development-oriented labour mobility schemes.

Bilateral Labour Agreements

Tunisia has established a diverse portfolio of bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) with key partner countries, reflecting its strategic approach to facilitating professional mobility and reinforcing cooperation on employment-related matters. These agreements are negotiated and implemented by multiple institutions, including the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), The National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI International), The Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP), and the Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT). Notable agreements include the Tunisia–Germany agreement (2017) to promote skilled migration and cooperation on readmission, and the Tunisia–Malta agreement (2019) focused on employment and skills exchange. The Tunisia–Italy Memorandum of Understanding (2023) further expands legal pathways for migration through structured worker reception programs. Tunisia has also signed longstanding agreements with France, Switzerland, and Qatar, demonstrating its long-term engagement in international labour mobility. In parallel, ANETI International has concluded implementation conventions with employment agencies and institutions in Italy, France, and Germany, as well as through multilateral initiatives such as THAMM and THAMM+, to operationalize these frameworks and ensure coordinated skills mobility schemes (see Box 2).

Box 2: THAMM programs in Tunisia (Tunisia Focus)

Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM-Plus) is a regional programme co-financed by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), running from 2024 to 2027. It is implemented by the German Development Agency (GIZ) in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Belgia Agency for International Cooperation ENABEL, the French Office for Immigration and Integration OFII, and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation AICS, in close cooperation with Tunisian authorities such as the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) and ANETI International. The programme builds on the earlier THAMM initiative (2019–2023) and aims to institutionalize safe, fair, and demand-driven labour mobility pathways between North Africa and the EU (GIZ, 2025a; GIZ, 2025b).

In Tunisia, THAMM-Plus focuses on strengthening both governance frameworks and practical mobility projects. It has developed Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) training modules aligned with ILO standards for the construction and maintenance sectors, directly linked to mobility schemes with Italy and Germany. It has also supported institutional improvements—such as integrating migration-related questions into the National Employment Survey—while modernizing employment services through digitalization. In addition, the programme has organized job fairs, workshops, and study visits to build networks between Tunisian vocational institutions, employers,

and European partners. This approach combines training, governance reform, and mobility into a systemic framework that enhances Tunisia’s role as a partner in addressing EU labour shortages (GIZ, 2025a; GSP, 2025). Tunisia is currently focusing on scaling mobility through sector-specific projects. A flagship example is the partnership with Italy’s construction sector, where 2,000 Tunisians will be trained and employed over three years in three regions - Veneto, Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna. To support this, Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) modules aligned with ILO standards were developed, and a Trainer-of-Trainers programme is equipping Tunisian instructors with modern teaching skills. These measures strengthen Tunisia’s role as a reliable partner in addressing EU labour shortages while safeguarding workers’ rights.

The THAMM–OFII strand has focused on modernizing Tunisia’s labour migration governance, notably by supporting the establishment of a Monitoring and Forecasting Unit for Occupations in Short Supply at the National Observatory of Employment and Qualifications ONEQ. It also advanced the digitalization of employment services, strengthened labour market and migration data systems, and introduced tools to improve inter-institutional coordination in mobility management. In parallel, OFII’s involvement reinforced operational ties with French employers, facilitating structured pathways for regular migration and the implementation of pilot placements.

The THAMM–Enabel project was implemented in Tunisia from 2019 to early 2025, co-financed by the EU and carried out by Enabel the Belgian Agency for International Cooperation in partnership with ILO, IOM, GIZ, OFII, and Tunisian authorities. It piloted structured labour mobility between Tunisia and Belgium in three shortage occupations—data/network technicians, industrial maintenance, and automation—while also strengthening national systems. In Tunisia, 133 young people were trained in technical, soft, and language skills; 117 were employed (110 in Tunisia and 7 in Belgium). The project also improved governance through a diploma authentication platform at the Ministry of Employment, supported ANETI counsellors with training and digital tools, and upgraded VET provision by equipping centres in Nabeul and El Khadra and certifying 56 ATFP trainers (Enabel, 2025; 2025a).

According to the programme evaluation report (Enabel, 2025a) the low number of placements under THAMM-Enabel was primarily due to two interrelated factors. First, complex Belgian administrative procedures—such as lengthy “permis unique” processing, housing requirements, and family reunification rules—created significant delays and uncertainty, discouraging employers from participating. Second, there was limited employer engagement and a sectoral mismatch: few Belgian companies committed to the pilot, and the shortage occupations selected for Tunisia (industrial maintenance and automation) were not among the most pressing needs of Tunisia’s own labor market, where sectors like health and tourism were more relevant. This reduced local buy-in and made the project less attractive for scaling, even though the chosen sectors were aligned with Belgian shortages. Together, these factors explain why actual mobility placements fell far short of initial targets.

Key takeaways for future projects include (Enabel, 2025; 2025a):

- Secure early and continuous involvement of employers in both Tunisia and destination countries to increase actual mobility placements;
- Embed short complementary training cycles (technical, language, soft skills) tailored to employer demand;
- Invest in digitalization and certification systems that build trust in qualifications;

- Strengthen employment counsellors' capacity for outreach, placement, and pre-departure guidance;
- Balance international mobility outcomes with strong national employability results;
- Ensure return and reintegration measures to make circular migration more sustainable.

National Legal and Institutional Framework:

Creation and Mandates of Public Institutions

Over the years, Tunisia has progressively built a structured and coherent legal and institutional framework to govern the international mobility of its workforce. This framework clearly delineates the mandates of both public and private actors and reflects the country's commitment to organizing labour migration in a way that is rights-based, development-oriented, and responsive to evolving global labour markets.

The institutional architecture supporting labour migration has been shaped by successive reforms to address the changing dynamics of mobility. The initial framework dates back to the 1960s with the establishment of the Office for Tunisian Workers Abroad, Employment, and Vocational Training (OTTEFP), which consolidated responsibilities for vocational training, employment placement abroad, and social assistance to migrants under a single structure.

In response to increasing migration flows and evolving cooperation priorities, this unified structure was gradually reorganized into specialized entities. Established in 1972, the Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT) was created to foster South–South cooperation by facilitating the placement of highly qualified professionals abroad—particularly within the public sector—and by supporting the implementation of development programs and projects in partner countries, mainly across the Arab and African regions, within bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks. Subsequently, the OTTEFP was restructured, giving rise to three separate and complementary institutions:

- The Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE) in 1989, with a mandate focused on the socio-economic support and protection of Tunisian nationals abroad;
- The National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI) was established in 1993 with a mandate focused on domestic job placement, which was later expanded in 2010 through the creation of ANETI International, to support the international placement of Tunisian jobseekers.
- The Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP), also created in 1993, is responsible for managing the national vocational training system. Its role in aligning training programs with labour market demands, including international standards, was further clarified and reinforced by the 2008 vocational training law.

More recently, new institutions have been introduced to enhance Tunisia’s analytical and monitoring capabilities. The National Migration Observatory (ONM) was established under Decree No. 2014-1930 of April 30, 2014, with the objective of generating data and informing policy on migration trends. Additionally, the National Employment and Qualifications Observatory (ONEQ), established as a general department under the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (MEFP) in 2000, plays a central role in labour market analysis, skills forecasting, and the evaluation of employment policies. Its specific roles and functions were formally defined by Decree No. 856 of September 26, 2019. In 2023, a Monitoring and forecasting unit for occupations and skills in Tunisia and abroad was created within ONEQ and was formally institutionalized in 2024.

Role and Regulation of Private Employment Intermediaries

The **private sector** also has an intermediation role in the placement of Tunisian workers abroad. **Law No. 2010-49 of November 1, 2010**, stipulates that private overseas placement agencies must operate under the **supervision of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training**, through the **Directorate General for Overseas Placement and Foreign Workforce (DGPEMOE)**, and comply with licensing, monitoring, and reporting requirements to ensure ethical recruitment and worker protection.

Box 3: How Private Intermediaries Can Support International Labour Mobility

Private training providers and recruitment agencies can play an important role in supporting international labour mobility when they are effectively coordinated with Public Employment Services (PES). Experience from World Bank technical assistance projects in Morocco, Ecuador, Bangladesh, Central America, and Colombia shows how private intermediaries can help prepare and connect workers with jobs abroad, while ensuring quality, protecting workers, and rewarding providers based on results. The same approach is also compatible with Global Skill Partnerships (GSPs), where origin and destination countries co-design training and placement systems (World Bank, 2013, 2022; 2023; 2024; 2024b; 2024c).

How it works in practice

- **Licensing and registers:** PES maintain public registers of licensed intermediaries, linking licensing and renewal to performance.
- **Shared standards and agreements:** PES, quality bodies and intermediaries sign agreements to share data, allow audits and use common training standards.
- **Fair practices:** Employer-pays principle is applied to avoid worker fees; codes of conduct and grievance systems ensure fair treatment.
- **Local outreach:** Municipalities and NGOs help expand access, reduce costs for candidates, and bring opportunities closer to communities.
- **Protection for vulnerable groups:** Safe accommodation, equal access for women, and gender-sensitive complaints channels.

- **Monitoring and inspections:** Risk-based approaches combining data checks, random audits and consular follow-up abroad.
- **Performance assessment:** Intermediaries can be evaluated with a scorecard covering placement rate, sustained employment (retention at 4/8/12 months), worker and employer satisfaction, complaint resolution, and equity (e.g., women placed). Providers can be rated in three bands (Excellent, Good, Needs Improvement) to guide incentives and improvement.
- **Payments and incentives:** Milestone-based payments tied to verified placement and retention, and bonuses for placing vulnerable or hard-to-place groups.

Country examples

- **Ecuador:** The assessment highlighted the need for stronger coordination between PES and private agencies, and investment in labour market intelligence systems to align training with overseas demand (World Bank, 2024c).
- **Morocco:** Through ANAPEC International, Morocco managed large-scale seasonal migration to Spain. Lessons include the value of bilateral agreements, stronger regulation of recruiters, and enhanced protection services abroad (World Bank, 2013; ILO, 2023; 2025).
- **Bangladesh:** Over 1,000 licensed recruiters operate under a regulated system. The country introduced a smart card system to track workers and a Wage Earners' Welfare Fund for emergencies (World Bank, 2024a).
- **Colombia:** The APE–SENA model links the Public Employment Agency (APE) with the national training institute (SENA). Workers do not pay fees, receive training aligned with employer demand, and employers are verified through consulates (World Bank, 2024b).

4.2. Institutional arrangement and overview of processes in Tunisia

The governance of labour migration in Tunisia is characterized by a complex and multi-actor institutional ecosystem, reflecting the transversal nature of labour mobility policies and the country's longstanding engagement with international cooperation on migration. While the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) holds the primary mandate for developing labour mobility strategies and overseeing BLAs, the implementation and management of these strategies involve a wide range of institutions with interlinked responsibilities across policy development, operational execution, training, monitoring, and migrant support.

The MEFP leads the formulation of national strategies including the National Employment Strategy (SNE, 2019), the National Strategy for International Employment and the Protection of Migrant Workers' Rights (SNEI, 2021), and the National Strategy for the Reform of the Vocational Training System (2013). However, these strategic documents have not been updated on a regular basis, which may limit their responsiveness to evolving labour market dynamics and international demand. The MEFP also coordinates the negotiation of BLAs, primarily through the Directorate General of Overseas Placement and Foreign Workforce (DGPEMOE) and the International Cooperation Department, with technical input from legal

and technical departments. The process is also carried out in close consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians Abroad, which supervises the negotiation, the signature and chairs the monitoring committees for BLA implementation, the Ministry of Economy and Planning, and relevant sector-specific ministries.

The DGPEMOE is also responsible for regulating private overseas placement agencies. Authorized agencies are required to submit an annual report and are subject to regular inspection. A list of accredited agencies is published and maintained by the MEFP, while informal operators are tracked and sanctioned, in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior, to prevent Tunisian citizens from being exposed to fraud or exploitation by unauthorized placement networks.

In addition to its core role of facilitating employment opportunities abroad for job seekers, ANETI International is actively involved in the implementation of BLAs, working in close coordination with national institutions such as ATFP and a range of international partners, including IOM, AVSI, ANCE, OFII, GIZ. ANETI International publishes calls for applications, pre-selects suitable candidates, organizes interviews in coordination with foreign partners, and supports successful applicants through tailored training (technical and linguistic) and pre-departure orientation sessions. These training courses are provided either by the Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP) or third-party actors often hosted in ATFP facilities. ANETI International works closely with foreign employers to ensure candidates meet job-specific requirements and plays a strategic matchmaking role between supply and demand in international markets.

The alignment of vocational training programs with labour market needs is supported by a system-wide coordination effort led by the MEFP, informed by labour market data from the National Institute of Statistics (INS) and the National Employment and Qualifications Observatory (ONEQ). The ONEQ monitoring and forecasting unit (Cellule de Veille), established in 2023, operates under the guidance of a steering committee comprising representatives from public institutions, private sector actors, and sector-specific technical committees. Training curricula are developed by the National Center for Training of Trainers and Training Engineering (CENAFFIF) and delivered by private and public training providers such as the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP), which manages a nationwide network of 136 training centers offering more than 400 specializations across 12 economic sectors (see [Box 7](#) for more details on the VET system). ATFP covers 90% of the vocational training provision in the public sector, while the remaining 10% is covered by the Agricultural Extension and Training Agency (AVFA) and the Tourism Training Agency (AFMT). Combined, these public institutions represent approximately 80% of the national vocational training system, with the remaining share delivered by nearly 1,000 private training institutions, operating predominantly in the services sector.

Beyond MEFP's institutional orbit, several other public actors contribute to international labour mobility. The Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT), under the supervision of the Ministry of Economy and Planning, supports both circular and long-term migration of skilled professionals, primarily targeting public sector employees and experienced private sector executives, notably in the education and healthcare sectors. ATCT operates through

a network of seven international representations, which are actively engaged in prospection efforts to identify labour market opportunities and develop new partnerships with counterpart institutions. These efforts have resulted in the signature of multiple bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding, such as the 2019 agreement with the Saudi Arabian Manpower Agency (ARCO) and the 2018 memorandum with Québec International, among others. ATCT's deployment activities are particularly concentrated in Gulf countries, while also expanding to European countries and Canada, thereby contributing to the international visibility and recognition of Tunisian expertise.

The Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE) plays a complementary and strategic role within Tunisia's labour migration governance system by delivering a broad range of socio-economic services to Tunisians residing abroad. With representation in 17 countries, embedded within Tunisian embassies and consulates, OTE ensures close proximity to diaspora communities and responsiveness to their evolving needs. Its core services include legal assistance, integration support, and social protection, notably through the implementation of 23 bilateral social security agreements, which uphold the rights of Tunisian migrant workers across various host countries and currently cover around 93% of the total Tunisian community abroad. These agreements guarantee Tunisians living abroad health coverage, access to family benefits, and the ability to transfer their acquired rights and benefits, including retirement pensions, from their country of residence to Tunisia. In addition to these statutory functions, OTE is actively engaged in diaspora mobilization and reintegration initiatives, often implemented in partnership with consular services and international organizations.

The National Migration Observatory (ONM) provides research and data to support evidence-based migration governance. Its mandate includes the collection and dissemination of migration statistics, the analysis of migration's socio-economic impacts, and the provision of policy recommendations to guide national and international cooperation frameworks.

Together, this extensive network of institutions forms a multi-actor interdependent system for managing labour migration, with differentiated roles spanning policy formulation, implementation, regulation, training, and diaspora support. While this reflects a strong institutional commitment to international mobility, coordination challenges remain areas for further reinforcement to enhance coherence and efficiency across the migration governance system.

In sum, Tunisia's labour migration governance framework is anchored in a wide and diverse institutional landscape, reflecting a strong policy commitment to international mobility and skills development. While core institutions such as MEFP, ANETI International, AFTP, ATCT, and OTE play leading roles across various stages of the migration cycle, a broader network of public, private, and international actors contributes to implementation and oversight. Despite the breadth of engagement, coordination and strategic alignment remain critical areas for improvement to ensure the effectiveness, responsiveness, and sustainability of labour migration pathways. [Table 1](#) below provides a structured overview of the key institutions involved in the migration cycle, mapping their functional roles across four main stages: pre-recruitment, recruitment and pre-departure, departure and integration, and

return migration. This mapping illustrates the distribution of responsibilities within the system and supports a clearer identification of coordination needs and institutional complementarities.

Table 1: Entities roles in the migration cycle

Entity	Pre-recruitment		Recruitment and pre-departure			Departure and integration	Return migration	
	Demand: (i) Identifying Sectors and Occupations (ii) skills accreditation alignment	Supply: proposals intake, Profiling and matching to sectors	Upskilling and re-skilling: Trainings and certification	Jobs selection: interviews and contracts signature	Legal and Logistic: Visa process and travel arrangements	Arrival and 'settling in' Starting on the job	Providing labour market reinsertion programs	Ensuring portability of social insurance rights
Ministry of Employment and Vocational training	√							
ANETI International		√	√	√				
ATFP			√					
ONEQ	√							
CENAFFIF								
DGPEMOE								
ATCT	√	√		√				
ONM								
OTE						√	√	
CSOs, labour unions, diaspora associations						√	√	
CNSS								√

4.3. Institutional map: actors involved in international labour mobility in Tunisia

The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) is the central authority managing the labour mobility governance framework in Tunisia as illustrated in [Figure 5](#). This process begins with labour market assessments, coordinated by the National Employment and Qualifications Observatory (ONEQ) in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics (INS). The aim of this assessment is to analyze current and future labour market needs, both domestically and internationally, and provide evidence-based inputs to inform public decision-making on employment, qualifications, and skills development policies.

Figure 5: Institutional map of entities related to International Labour Mobility for Tunisia by lead ministry and policy area.

Based on this analysis, vocational training curricula are developed to align with labour market requirements. This task involves strong coordination between CENAFFIF (responsible for curriculum design), the Department of Vocational Training Development, the Department of Corporate Relations, and the private sector. CENAFFIF typically designs training curricula over a period of 6 to 8 months in consultation with employers to ensure relevance. Once validated, these curricula are transferred to the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP) and relevant public or private TVET institutions for delivery across their training network.

In the context of BLAs, the Department of International Cooperation and the Directorate General of Overseas Placement and Foreign Workforce (DGPEMOE) lead the negotiation and legal oversight within MEFP. These departments consult internally with the Department of Legal Affairs and relevant technical directorates, and externally with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—which hosts joint monitoring committees composed of all engaged institutions—along with the Ministry of Economy and Planning and sectoral ministries when necessary.

ANETI International plays a pivotal role in implementing BLAs, in close collaboration with DGPEMOE. It coordinates with ATFP to deliver additional technical or language training to selected candidates or to host such training in ATFP facilities. ATFP also supports outreach by publishing job offers on its platforms. ONEQ contributes to this cycle by monitoring vocational training outcomes and analyzing employment trends, offering valuable feedback to improve the responsiveness of training and placement services.

The Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT) operates with institutional autonomy under the Ministry of Economy and Planning, independently managing its own international labour mobility schemes. These include prospecting for foreign partners, signing cooperation agreements, and monitoring labour market trends through its internal unit. ATCT oversees a comprehensive service chain that spans the entire migration process: publishing job opportunities, organizing open days, preselecting and coaching candidates, delivering pre-departure orientation sessions, and supporting visa and administrative procedures. It also coordinates with third-party providers for technical and language training. To ensure successful placements, ATCT supports candidates through tailored preparation activities, including language training (French and English), CV development, interview coaching, and cultural and professional adaptation sessions. It facilitates visa processing in collaboration with embassies and conducts post-departure follow-up through supervision, problem-solving, and annual coordination meetings with deployed professionals. Although ATCT and ANETI International operate separately, they maintain a functional coordination channel to exchange candidate profiles and respond efficiently to partner demands.

Once Tunisian workers are deployed abroad, the Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE) becomes the lead institution for social protection and support. OTE coordinates with both ATCT and ANETI International when issues arise concerning Tunisian workers, ensuring complaints and claims are addressed promptly. OTE offices abroad collaborate with their national headquarters, and with Caisse nationale de sécurité sociale (CNSS) – the main social

security fund in Tunisia and ANETI, to facilitate migrant reintegration and ensure social protection portability upon return.

Finally, the National Migration Observatory (ONM) plays a central role in migration monitoring and knowledge generation. Through its evolving MIGRADATA platform, ONM continues to develop and strengthen its data ecosystem by gathering inputs from institutions such as ANETI International and ATCT to maintain a comprehensive data ecosystem on migration and mobility. This coordination is meant to enable evidence-based migration policies and foster greater institutional alignment across the labour mobility system.

Box 4: Legal pathways to Italy

There are two macro systems through which non-EU citizens can enter Italy for work: i) the quota system (TUI Title III art. 22) which defines quotas of migrant workers on the basis of specific criteria, and ii) the extra quota system (TUI Title III art. 23-27) which specify several channels allowing the entry of non-EU workforce outside the annual planned quota.

The Quota System

It is the main channel through which migrants from non-EU countries can enter Italy for work reasons. Every three years the Presidency of the Council of Ministries issues the Law Decree, commonly known as *Decreto Flussi*, which sets the three-year plan of annual quotas of migrants allowed to enter Italy for work.³ The Flow Decree for the period 2023-2025 established annual quotas for 136,000 people in 2023, 151,000 in 2024 and 165,000 in 2025. The next set of quotas for the period 2026-2028 foresees a total of 497,550 entries, of which: 230,550 for dependent and autonomous work, 267,000 for seasonal work in the agriculture and tourism sectors.⁴

Quotas are determined based on contract category: seasonal work, autonomous, and dependent work. Within each category, quotas are allocated according to groups of countries cooperating with Italy in migration management: i) countries who promote media campaigns against irregular migration; ii) countries of origin having signed migration agreements, and ii) countries with future cooperation agreements on migration; for seasonal work, specific quotas are allocated to workers from countries signatories of labour migration agreements linked to labour needs in agriculture and tourism. Across categories, quotas are also reserved to refugees and stateless people, and Italians living in Venezuela. Furthermore, there are quotas for specific occupations within personal and health assistance services, and entry related to conversion of residence permit typology.

Tunisia is one of the countries with whom Italy in the 2023-2025 Flow Decree has allocated a special quota of entry for work, given its agreements to cooperate for counterfeiting irregular migration and human trafficking. On October 20, 2023, Italy and Tunisia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate entry of 12,000 Tunisians workers over a period of three years into Italy for

³ See <https://integrazionemigranti.gov.it/it-it/Altre-info/e/2/o/54///id/128/Decreto-flussi-2023-25-Le-quote-in-dettaglio->

⁴ See <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/pagine/flussi-2026-2028-approvato-in-esame-preliminare-il-dpcm-da-500-mila-ingressi>

dependent work through simplified visa and work/residence permit procedures.⁵ This MoU has been implemented through an Executive Protocol between *Sviluppo Lavoro Italia* (SLI, the Italian in-house company of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) and the *Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail* (ANETI International), signed in March 2024 to facilitate job placement of Tunisian workers into firms in Italy.

The Extra- Quota System

The Migration Consolidated Act (TUI) establishes several alternative pathways for migrants to enter Italy for employment purposes, commonly referred to as “extra-quota” channels. These avenues are not subject to quota restrictions and do not impose limitations on the number of entry permits issued. In light of recent amendments to the TUI (DL 20/2023), the government has placed increased emphasis on these channels to better adapt to changing labour market needs and to proactively address issues related to illegal migration. These channels are:

- **Pre-departure training projects** (TUI art. 23) enable labour migrants to enter Italy after completing pre-approved professional and language-civic training in their country of origin. These training programs are proposed and funded by public or private entities, based on identified labour market needs, and are subject to pre-approval from an interministerial commission. They are designed based on the guidelines set by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and are implemented through multi-actor partnerships, which can include entities in the country of origin. As of September 4th, 2025, 57 projects have been approved for implementation across 23 countries of origin.
- **Other categories** permitted to enter Italy for employment purposes outside of quota restrictions and without limitation include investors, EU Blue Card holders qualifying as highly skilled professionals such as researchers, artists, and trainees. Additionally, nationals from countries that have concluded a repatriation agreement with Italy are eligible for both dependent and seasonal positions.
- **Specific occupations:** the last Decree Flow 2026-2028 (approved in September 2025) allows the entry of workers in the care sector outside the established quota and through a simplified entry procedure.

⁵ See <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita-immigrazione/focus/accordo-italia-tunisia-materia-di-lavoro>

5. Migrant Journey

5.1. Focus Groups Discussion Background Information

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are a widely recognized qualitative research method for capturing nuanced perspectives, particularly among vulnerable or mobile populations. The structured yet open-ended nature of FGDs allows for the exploration of themes such as motivation, integration, and future aspirations, while also accommodating diverse demographic profiles and migration stages. Focus groups and participant observation can make a big difference in understanding vulnerability (Dani, 2003). In migration studies, FGDs offer a platform for participants to articulate lived experiences, expectations, and perceptions that may not surface through quantitative surveys alone. The World Bank has increasingly employed FGDs to complement institutional diagnostics, especially in contexts where migrants face asymmetries of information and limited access to formal grievance mechanisms. For instance, the assessment of labour mobility systems in Northern Central America, included a Migrant Journey Map for Salvadorians moving into the United States which illuminated the "pain and satisfaction" points across the migration cycle, offering actionable insights for program improvement (see World Bank, 2023).

As part of the assessment of labour mobility systems between Tunisia and Italy, two focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to gather direct insights from individuals participating in pre-departure training mobility projects, defined by the operational guidelines for Art. 23 of Italy's Consolidated Migration Act⁶. These discussions aimed to complement institutional and programmatic data by capturing migrant perspectives on recruitment, training, migration, and integration processes, as experienced at different stages of the migration cycle.

- **FG1:** Composed of Tunisian migrants currently residing and working in Italy, who had completed both pre-departure and post-arrival procedures and are employed under the labour mobility program. Their reflections focused on the practical realities of integration, employment conditions, and administrative challenges encountered in Italy.
- **FG2:** Tunisian participants who have been selected for the labour mobility program and undergo pre-departure training but have not yet migrated. Their contributions centered on expectations, preparation, and perceptions of the recruitment and training process. This group offered a forward-looking perspective, shaped by institutional briefings and training but not yet tested by real-world conditions abroad.

Although both groups participated in projects framed and ruled by the Italy's Ministry of Labour and Social Policy guidelines, the actors and processes shaping the projects carries

⁶<https://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/AnteprimaPDF.aspx?id=5890>

important differences. For example, while both projects were led by a CSO with the support of Italian private recruitment agencies, FG2 participants have been supported with the required documentation to enter Italy (i.e. language proficiency certificate, work visa, etc.) by the organization leading the project in closely collaboration with ANETI International and at no cost for the participant. Instead, FG1 participants were supported by private providers, which implied paying for the language training and the submission of documents. Furthermore, Tunisians already in Italy (FG1) underwent one week of practical training in Tunisia followed by three weeks of training in Italy, while those still in Tunisia (FG2) are following 6 weeks of pre-departure training and an additional week of training is planned to take place in Italy. The questionnaires applied to both groups are available in [Annex A2.2. Focus group discussion guide](#).

Participants were selected based on their direct involvement in the mobility program and their willingness to share their experiences. Discussions were conducted in a confidential and supportive environment, with informed consent obtained from all participants ([the consent form is included in Annex A2.2.](#)).

The participants represented in the two focus groups differed in age, education, work experience, and employment status. It is important to note that the study sought effortfully and with no success to represent female migrant workers⁷, hence all participants across both FDGs are men. Overall, 17 people participated in the FGDs, 7 in FG1, and 10 in FG2. [Table 2](#) provides an overview of the composition and characteristics of the two focus groups, including participant profiles, location, and timing of the sessions.

FG1 composed of Tunisian migrants currently residing and working in Italy, had an average age of 32, with participants evenly distributed across the 25–40 age range. Two-thirds were single, and one-third were married. Educational attainment was relatively high, with two thirds holding university degrees and one third holding vocational qualifications. All participants were multilingual, speaking Arabic, French, and Italian, and half also spoke English. In terms of professional experience, 57% had around five years of work experience, and 28% had over ten years. All were employed full-time at the time of the discussion, primarily in the telecommunications sector.

FG2 consisted of selected candidates in Tunisians who, at the time of the FGD, were still undergoing pre-departure training and had not yet migrated. The group's average age is 30, with half of the participants being between 25–30 years old. Sixty percent were single, while 30% were married with dependents. All participants held vocational training degrees in forklift operation, and 80% had completed secondary education. Language proficiency was also decent: 40% spoke four languages (Arabic, French, English, and Italian), while 60% spoke three (Arabic, French, and Italian). In terms of work experience, 60% had between one and three years, 30% had five to ten years, and one participant had over ten years. Employment status varied: 40% were unemployed, 40% worked part-time, and 20% were

⁷ From FGD and interviews with both Italian and Tunisian stakeholders it emerged that Tunisian women mainly migrate to Italy to reunite with their male member of the family, once the latter has himself settled down in the destination country.

employed full-time. Most had experience in the transport and logistics sector, with others coming from the food and automotive industries.

Table 2: Focus Group Participants Characteristics

Characteristics	FG1 – Italy	FG2 - Tunisia
Gender	100% men	100% men
Age	32 on average 1/3: between 25-30 1/3: between 30-35 1/3: between 35-40	Age: 30 on average 50% between 25-30, 20% between 30-35, 20% between 35-40
Marital status	2/3 single men 1/3 married men	60% are single men, 30% are married with 2 to 3 dependents (wife and children)
Educational level	2/3 have a university degree 1/3 have a vocational degree	100% hold a vocational training degree as forklift drivers 80% of the participants have a secondary level of education.
Languages	100% Italian, Arabic and French 50% English	40% speaks 4 languages (Arabic, French, English and Italian) 60% speaks 3 languages (Arabic, French and Italian)
Years of experience	57% have about 5 years of experience 28% have more than 10 years of experience	60% of participants have between 1 to 3 years of experience, 30% have between 5 to 10 years of experience and only 1 participant has over 10 years of experience
Current employment status	100% full-time	40% of the participants are unemployed, 40% are employed part-time and 20% are employed full-time.

5.2. Focus Groups Discussion Findings - Journey Map

5.2.1. Pre-Recruitment: Motivation/decision & application

Participants in both focus groups, identified economic improvement and enhanced employment opportunities as the primary motivations for joining the labour mobility program. The participants of FG2 emphasized the potential to improve their living conditions and provide financial support to their families. A subset also mentioned aspirations to earn higher incomes and gain new skills through employment abroad. Their motivations are largely forward-looking, based on anticipated benefits and the training received prior to departure.

Migrants in FG1 similarly cited economic advancement and career development as key drivers for their initial decision to participate. For married individuals, the opportunity to support their families and eventually facilitate family reunification was an additional consideration. Despite delays in visa issuance, participants remained committed to the process and viewed the program as a strategic step toward long-term professional and personal stability. None of the participants expressed plans to return to Tunisia in the near future.

In conclusion, the motivations expressed by both groups demonstrate a shared emphasis on economic advancement and skill development as key drivers for migration. While these priorities are consistent across the migration cycle, the perspectives differ in depth and immediacy. Trainees (FG2) articulated forward-looking aspirations shaped by institutional messaging and training, whereas migrants (FG1) reflected on their motivations through the lens of lived experience, confirming many of their initial expectations while also acknowledging the challenges encountered. This contrast underscores the importance of aligning program design with both the anticipatory needs of prospective migrants and the practical realities faced by those already integrated into the host country's labour market.

5.2.2. Recruitment

Participants in FG2 reported that the recruitment process was initiated through direct outreach by ANETI International agents, either via regional employment offices (BETI) where they were registered or through the Sectoral Training Center. These institutions utilized existing databases of graduates, particularly those specialized in forklift operation, to identify eligible candidates. Initial contact was made by phone, during which ANETI International representatives explained the employment opportunity in Italy and guided interested individuals to apply online using a standardized CV template. Applicants were required to submit supporting documents, including diplomas, certificates, proof of employment, ID card, driving license, and academic records, directly at the employment offices.

Candidates were informed of their pre-selection approximately two months after submitting their applications, with notifications sent via email. The proposed job positions were generally aligned with the candidates' field of specialization. Interviews were scheduled shortly thereafter and consisted of two components: a practical test involving forklift operation and pallet placement, followed by technical questions. Communication during the interviews was facilitated by interpreters translating between Arabic, French, and Italian. Participants described the interviews as well-organized and accessible. They also highlighted the preparatory support provided by ANETI International representatives and former instructors, which included advice on managing stress and presenting themselves to employers. Out of 40 preselected candidates, 15 were retained by the employer, and results were communicated approximately one month after the interview via phone and email. Selected candidates were asked to confirm their willingness to proceed within three days.

The costs that were shared regarding the engagement of HR experts in the selection process (conducting interviews) are estimated at around 290 euros per candidate (approximately 1,000 TND).

Migrants of FG1 reported learning about the opportunity to participate in the labour mobility program primarily through informal channels such as social media and word of mouth from friends and acquaintances. The application process required the submission of various documents, including academic diplomas, vocational training certificates, national ID cards, and passports, some of which needed to be translated into Italian. This application process was supported by local partners.

Some migrants attended information sessions that outlined the selection process, job types, number of participants to be selected, and the duration of training. Pre-selected candidates underwent a two-stage interview conducted online and in Italian, with support from the Tunisian training center, including language assistance and interview preparation. While most participants found the process manageable, a few expressed dissatisfactions with sudden changes in available job vacancies while candidates were already in the recruitment and training phases. These changes, which were not communicated transparently, implied a change in the searched job profile, although final placements were generally aligned with the candidates' skills and professional qualifications.

The recruitment process, as described by both groups, was generally perceived as structured and supported by institutional actors in Tunisia and Italy. Both groups underwent multi-stage interviews aligned with their qualifications and overall, the recruitment mechanisms were effective in facilitating access to employment opportunities abroad, though improvements in communication and expectation management could enhance the experience for future participants.

5.2.3. Pre-departure orientation

Among FG2 selected candidates attended an initial information session at ANETI International, where representatives outlined the structure and content of the training program. This included Italian language instruction, life skills, health and safety, labour

rights, and technical training. Candidates were asked to sign an engagement letter for fixed-term labour supply contract recruitment under Article 30 of Legislative Decree 81/2015 (that regulates labour supply from private recruitment agencies). In conformity with the Art. 23 guidelines, the Italian language component consisted of 110 hours of instruction at A1 level, delivered by the Italian language institute in Tunis, with emphasis on professional vocabulary. Training on labour rights and responsibilities was provided by an Italian labour union association and covered employment contracts, benefits (including health insurance and social security), and administrative procedures required upon arrival in Italy. These included obtaining a residence permit, tax code, health card, and other legal documentation. A third project partner delivered a three-day life skills course, covering topics such as teamwork, professional integration, and stress and conflict management; 60 hours of technical forklift training; and complementary modules on civic education, cultural adaptation, Italian law, and workplace health and safety.

According to the implementing partner of this program, the total cost of the training package per candidate, including facilities, equipment, study materials, professional training materials, and the salaries of trainers and administrative staff, was approximately 1,600 euros (around 5,450 TND). This project partner also provided participants with a monthly grant of 300 TND (equivalent to 90 euros) to support participants with transportation costs, or accommodation expenses for those who had to relocate from their home city to Tunis in order to attend the training.

Among FG1, migrants reflected on the training they had received prior to departure. The workplace safety and security modules were considered particularly useful and relevant to the nature of their jobs. However, the Italian language training of 80 hours was viewed by some as insufficient, as it only covered basic communication and did not fully prepare them for language demands in the workplace. After completing the professional training (24 hours), participants underwent medical and psychological screenings, which were considered important given the physical requirements of the job roles.

Before departure, migrants reported receiving detailed briefings on work conditions, job contracts, accommodation arrangements, and administrative procedures in Italy. Interviewed migrants had signed pre-employment contracts with the Italian recruitment agency that clearly outlined job type, duration, working conditions, and employer details. The assurance of having accommodation arranged in Italy was positively received and contributed to participants' readiness to migrate. However, the visa issuance process was described as lengthy and stressful, causing delays and uncertainty. Some migrants had to postpone personal or professional plans while awaiting confirmation.

The entire process for FG1 participants—from training to departure—lasted approximately one and a half years. The financial cost for participants was estimated at 2000 TND (equivalent for 587 Euro) for the language training, and around 4000 TND (equivalent for 1175 Euro) for the visa, this amount covered document translation, visa fees, and expenses related to the submission and follow-up of the application process. The official cost for acquiring the visa is 160 euros. While some migrants considered these costs significant, they also noted that the services were more affordable than other available options and viewed

the expenses as an investment. Additionally, the involvement of the training center in collaboration with a private agency in managing documentation and logistics in Tunisia was appreciated, as it reduced the administrative burden on participants.

Overall, while the training frameworks were the same across both groups of interviewees, differences in implementation of pre-departure training projects led to somewhat different experiences. The relevance or intensity of the Italian course, the provision of financial support for one group and cost-bearing by the other group, and timing of logistical challenges, were key differences in how interviewees from two different pre-departure projects experienced the recruitment and training processes.

5.2.4. Departure, arrival and integration

Migrants of FG1 reported being well received upon arrival in Italy and supported with the initial settling-in. They received accompaniment to comply with administrative procedures, such as the employer's mandatory communication to the Prefecture/SUI office regarding the job and residence contracts, sent via certified email. Several participants described the arrival process as smooth and well-organized, with some stating that "everything was perfect." It was also helpful that their Tunisian driving licenses were internationally validated for one year, enabling them to drive in Italy, and they were provided with vehicles to commute to work. Moreover, several migrants received informal support and guidance from fellow Tunisians who had been living in Italy longer, which helped them navigate everyday matters more easily. Importantly, participants reported no experiences of discrimination or racism.

Further language and technical training were needed after arrival. Upon starting their jobs, migrants (FG1) continued to receive technical orientation from their employers and senior colleagues. They also benefited from an additional week of Italian language training after arrival. Although the language training in Tunisia was considered insufficient by some, many migrants felt that daily practice on the job allowed them to improve their Italian and did not express a need for further formal instruction. Furthermore, some migrants were required to complete an additional three-week technical training upon arrival, as requested by the employer, who assessed that certain individuals lacked the necessary skills for the job. During this period, migrants were not paid a salary, though they were provided with accommodation and food. A few reported receiving payments for one week of the training. The additional training had not been communicated in advance, and its duration was unclear to participants. While this situation was disappointing, migrants generally accepted it, citing their commitment to making the most of the opportunity and their intention to remain in Italy.

The residence permit procedure was identified as a major source of stress and uncertainty. Although migrants were informed that the employer had submitted the required communication to the Prefecture/SUI office within the legally mandated eight-day period, they lacked clarity on the status of their residence permits. This created a precarious situation, as the absence of a residence permit prevented them from obtaining a permanent

tax identification number. Without this code, individuals are not able to access basic services such as registering with a primary care doctor, opening a bank account, or acquiring a mobile SIM card. As a result, salaries were paid in cash, which was considered inconvenient for both the migrants and their employers. Nevertheless, migrants received formal monthly payslips (*busta paga*), which documented their social security contributions, paid directly by the employer to the tax agency. Migrants expressed concern about their undocumented status and the lack of updates on the residence permit process. They were particularly frustrated by their inability to follow up directly, as the procedure was linked to the Prefecture corresponding to the recruitment agency's legal address, which is in a region different and far to the one where migrants themselves worked and lived.

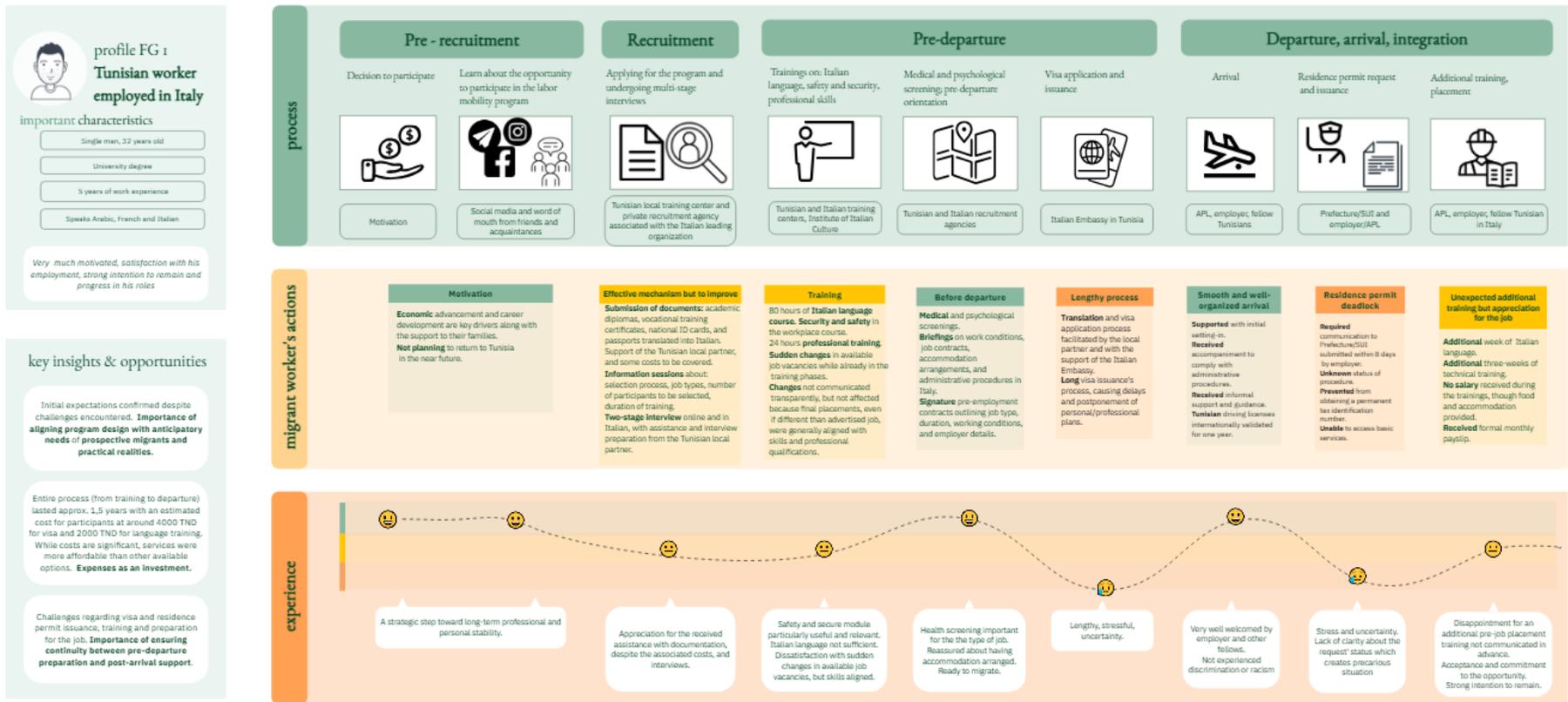
The experiences reported by migrants upon arrival in Italy reflect the transition from preparation to settlement within the migration cycle. Travel costs were fully covered by the employer, amounting to approximately 300 euros (around 1,000 TND) per candidate, which included airfare and related travel expenses. Initial support with administrative procedures, continued job orientation, and access to accommodation contributed to a generally positive reception and facilitated early integration. Informal peer support and the opportunity to improve language skills on the job further eased adaptation. However, the unexpected requirement for additional unpaid training in some cases and the prolonged residence permit process introduced uncertainty and stress, highlighting gaps in communication and procedural transparency. These challenges underscore the importance of ensuring continuity between pre-departure preparation and post-arrival support, particularly in relation to legal documentation and job readiness. Despite these issues, migrants expressed satisfaction with their employment and a strong intention to remain and progress in their roles, indicating a successful—though not without complications—entry into the integration phase of the migration cycle. They appreciated the stability, opportunities for skill development, and potential for career advancement that their roles in Italy offered.

5.3. Migrant journey map:

Migration Journey Map – Focus Group 1: Tunisian Worker Employed in Italy

The migration journey map for Focus Group 1 (Figure 6) illustrates the full pathway of a Tunisian worker who successfully migrated and is now employed in Italy. The map is structured along five stages—pre-recruitment, recruitment, pre-departure, departure/arrival, and integration—and highlights the worker's experiences, motivations, and challenges throughout the mobility process. It depicts how motivation for economic advancement and career growth guided participation, supported by information spread through social networks. The recruitment process involved training and selection jointly managed by Tunisian and Italian institutions, covering Italian language, health and security, and professional skills. The pre-departure phase included medical and psychological screening as well as visa preparation, while the departure and integration stages outline additional training, and workplace adaptation and lengthy unclear procedures for residence permits and administrative clearances.

Figure 6: FG1 migration journey map:



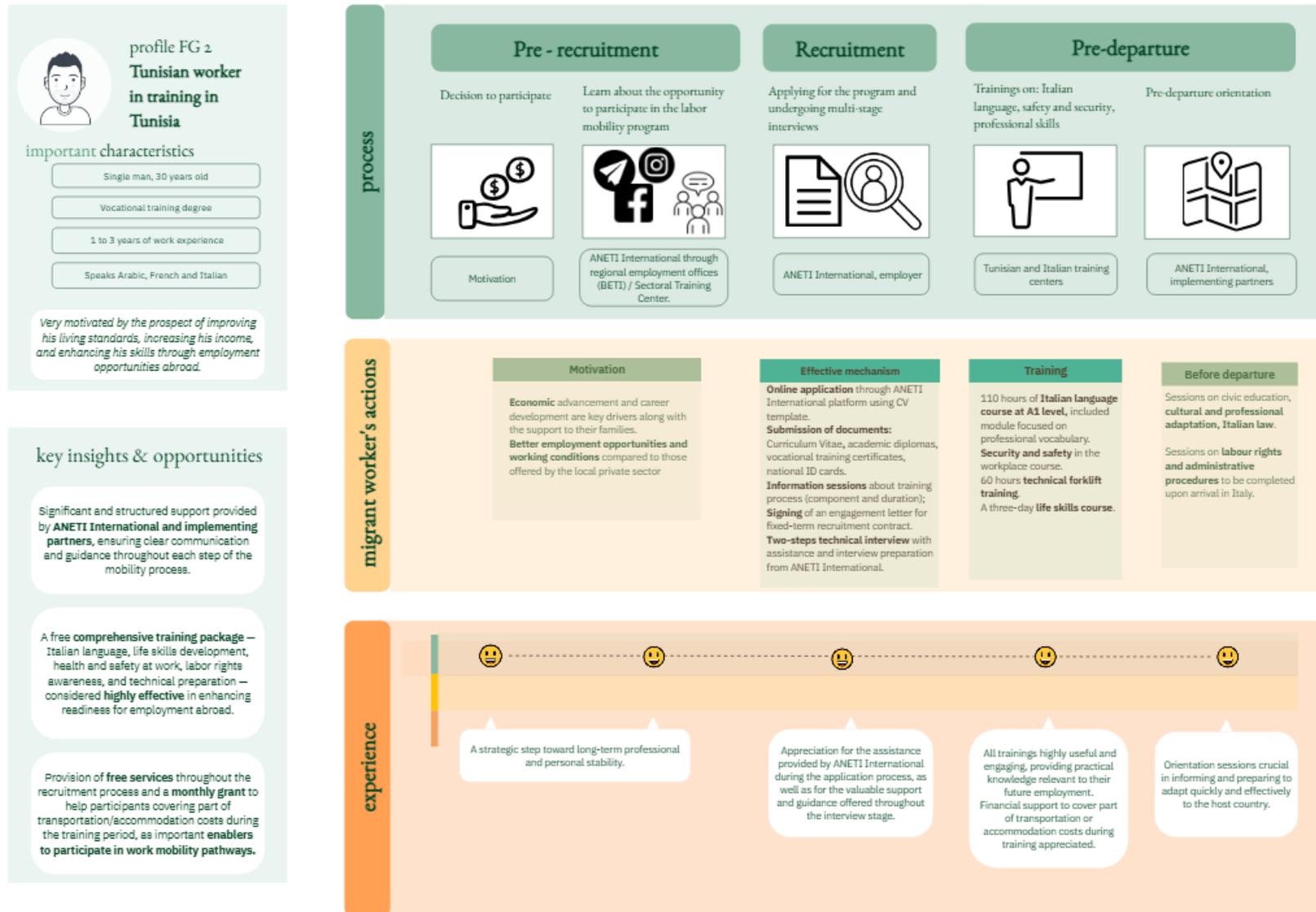
The map also provides key insights and opportunities, emphasizing the importance of aligning program design with participants' expectations and reinforcing pre-departure and post-arrival support. The lower section traces the worker's emotional and experiential trajectory—from initial motivation and anticipation, through stress and uncertainty during recruitment and administrative processes, to eventual satisfaction and a strong intention to remain and progress professionally in Italy. Overall, the visualization captures both the operational steps and the human dimension of the mobility experience.

Migration Journey Map – Focus Group 2: Tunisian Worker in Training in Tunisia

The migration journey map for Focus Group 2 (Figure 7) presents the experience of a Tunisian participant enrolled in a pre-departure training program in Tunisia as part of a labour mobility pathway. It follows, till the moment of the FGD, three main stages—pre-recruitment, recruitment, and pre-departure—and details the mechanisms, actors, and support structures involved. The map shows that the process begins with motivation driven by the search for better employment opportunities and living conditions abroad. The recruitment stage, managed by ANETI International, includes an online application process, submission of credentials, and multi-step technical interviews in collaboration with employers. The pre-departure phase focuses on a comprehensive training package encompassing Italian language acquisition, technical and soft skills training, and orientation sessions on labour rights, cultural education, and Italian law.

The map highlights key insights underscoring the structured assistance provided by ANETI International and partners, as well as the value of free services, financial support, and clear communication throughout the process. The participant's experience is depicted as positive and motivating, with a steady emotional trajectory reflecting appreciation for the program's organization and effectiveness in preparing candidates for future employment abroad. Together, the visual and narrative components illustrate a well-coordinated mobility preparation pathway that strengthens both employability and readiness for migration

Figure 7: FG2 migration journey map



6. Institutional Process Assessment

6.1. Pillar I – Facilitating Access

Enabling Regular Labour Mobility Paths through Legislations and Policies

Tunisia has laid a strong legal and institutional foundation for the governance of international labour mobility (see section 4). This foundation is reinforced by the adoption of the *Stratégie Nationale de l'Emploi à l' International et de la Protection des Droits des Travailleurs Migrants* (SNEI), which introduces structured, multi-level coordination mechanisms across national, regional, and local levels. The strategy promotes policy efficiency by minimizing duplication, optimizing the use of public resources, and enhancing coherence in implementation. It also defines clear institutional mandates, with entities such as DGPEMOE, ANETI International, and ATCT operating under formal agreements embedded in national legislation. Crucially, the SNEI encourages inclusive stakeholder participation, bringing together public institutions, trade unions, employer organizations, civil society, and migrant associations to collectively shape Tunisia's migration governance.

The SNEI is also intended to work in synergy with other national frameworks—particularly the National Employment Strategy (SNE) and the National Migration Strategy (SNM)—to promote long-term policy alignment. However, these strategies are not regularly updated, limiting their relevance and effectiveness. Moreover, they are not linked to broader national planning instruments that are currently not in place in Tunisia—such as a medium-term national growth strategy, which would articulate government priorities and guide sectoral investment, or a long-term fiscal sustainability framework, which is essential for assessing the impact of demographic trends, including migration, on public expenditures for health, education, and social protection. The absence of such instruments constrains Tunisia's ability to fully integrate labour mobility into its national development vision. Establishing and aligning these frameworks could significantly strengthen strategic planning and sustainability.

While Tunisia has made important strides in labour mobility governance, several operational challenges remain. These include limited use of digital tools across institutions, and gaps in post-placement monitoring. Additionally, constraints in human and technical capacity—such as shortages of specialized staff and digital infrastructure—can affect the consistency and coordination of labour mobility programs. Inter-agency data exchange is still evolving, and digital systems are not yet fully interoperable, which may limit the efficiency and scalability of labour mobility pathways.

Setting the Framework of Collaboration

As presented in previous sections, Tunisia has established a solid institutional framework for international labour mobility through a growing number of bilateral labour agreements and cooperation protocols. Key directorates within the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP), supported by agencies like ANETI International and ATFP,

coordinate negotiation, implementation, and legal alignment. Tunisia maintains agreements with several European and Gulf countries, and technical cooperation with others. Institutional representation abroad and platforms like the National Migration Observatory (ONM) support coordination, though limited capacity and data interoperability remain challenges. While the frameworks are in place, coordination challenges persist, particularly in the operationalization phase. One recurrent challenge reported by ATCT is the difficulty in identifying technical counterparts in destination countries and establishing sustainable, structured communication channels. This stems from complex institutional mapping and coordination issues linked to the diversity of stakeholders involved in labour mobility in some countries. The absence of formal bilateral consultation mechanisms—such as framework agreements or memoranda of understanding—often limits structured cooperation. Identifying foreign partners largely depends on economic diplomacy and embassy networks, while differing institutional mandates and legal statuses further complicate collaboration. Limited human and digital resources, as well as logistical constraints for exploratory missions, also hinder ATCT’s capacity. As a result, coordination with foreign counterparts often remains informal, reducing the continuity and efficiency of cooperation. This can delay implementation and weaken mutual understanding around program objectives and institutional responsibilities.

Implementation protocols are not always developed in sufficient detail or coordinated early enough, resulting in missed opportunities to anticipate key operational needs. In some instances, consultation with training institutions may occur too late in the process to effectively influence key implementation aspects—such as the availability of equipment, the scheduling of Train-the-Trainer (ToT) programs, or the alignment of funding with the occupational profiles targeted under specific agreements. These gaps can undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of labour mobility partnerships, particularly when timelines for job placement are compressed or training capacity is already constrained.

Altogether, these findings point to a maturing architecture for international cooperation yet underline the need for reinforcing coordination between domestic stakeholders and their counterparts abroad—both during negotiation and throughout implementation—to maximize the impact of Tunisia’s labour mobility agreements.

Conducting Labour Market Needs Assessment

Conducting robust labour market needs assessments in both origin and destination countries is essential for designing a balanced and effective GSPs. In the origin country, such assessments guide the identification of sectors and occupations that align with both external demand and domestic development objectives. This ensures that the “home track” of the GSP produces value for Tunisia through targeted training, economic reintegration of returnees, and broader workforce development outcomes.

In practice, the selection of sectors and occupations under Tunisia’s BLAs remains largely driven by partner country demands. Although prior consultations are held with foreign partners to ensure a certain degree of alignment with Tunisian priorities, this process remains insufficient. A more systematic and regular assessment of national labour market needs and demographic trends would enable Tunisia to adopt a more proactive approach in

negotiating bilateral agreements and labour mobility programs (BLA and GSP). This would ensure that the international mobility of Tunisian workers complements and reinforces national skills development strategies.

Tunisia has several sources of labour market information and analysis at its disposal ([Table 3](#)). The National Institute of Statistics (INS) conducts the Labour Force Survey (LFS), while the Tunisian-Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CTICI) implement an enterprise-level survey on job vacancies and skills. In parallel, ONEQ plays a leading role in labour market diagnostics, with additional contributions from ATFP. ONEQ has also recently established a Monitoring and Forecasting Unit (Cellule de Veille) to continuously monitor and analyze the evolution of the labour market in Tunisia and in partner countries, particularly European countries, and to identify and anticipate labour and skills needs at the national level in order to improve the alignment between training provision and employer needs. This unit is supported by a multidisciplinary steering committee and sector-specific technical committees. The steering committee meets at least twice a year and, if necessary, with the technical committee. It is responsible for coordinating the monitoring and anticipation of skills needs, as well as proposing and validating the area of study, monitoring and validating the work and results of studies in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders. The steering committee is composed of representatives from the MEFP and the four structures under its supervision (ANETI, ATFP, CNFCPP, CENAFFIF) ATCT, INS, the Arab Institute of Business Leaders (IACE), the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS), as well as two private international placement agencies and social partners such as UTICA, UGTT, and the joint chambers of commerce such as the Tunisian-Italian Chamber of Commerce, Tunisian-French Chamber of Commerce, Tunisian-German Chamber of Commerce. The sectoral technical committees are composed of members of the monitoring unit, ANETI International, a representative of the sector, and a representative of the technical ministry responsible for the sector under study. Since its establishment, the unit has conducted a comprehensive analysis of the transport and logistics sector within the framework of the THAMM–OFII project. It is currently undertaking several strategic sectoral assessments in the agri-food industry, information and communication technology, and construction sectors, as mandated by the Prime Minister’s office.

Despite these efforts, several critical limitations affect the ability of the current system to inform effective labour mobility planning. First, there is no centralized mechanism to coordinate and institutionalize regular, forward-looking assessments across relevant institutions—including INS, ONEQ, ANETI International, ATFP and ATCT. ONEQ currently conducts surveys and sectoral studies upon request (ministries, organizations, donors). This results in fragmented data collection and limited integration of findings into decision-making processes. While ONEQ has the mandate to monitor and evaluate policies, programs, and measures adopted in the areas of employment and vocational training, as well as to provide labour market intelligence, it faces staffing and technical capacity constraints that limit its ability to perform systematic forecasting and ensure continuity. In accordance with its legal mandate and subject to prior approval by the competent authorities, ONEQ produces and transmits recommendations derived from the results of its studies and surveys to relevant decision-making bodies, including the MEFP, and MESRS .

For example, ONEQ has conducted evaluations of national employment programs, with findings made accessible through the *emploi.tn* platform. The dissemination of results is ensured through steering and technical committees, which organize conferences and workshops to engage stakeholders. Once validated by the MEFP, the outcomes are also published online and shared directly with companies by email, ensuring both transparency and operational follow-up.

Table 3: Available data sources to capture labour demand and supply, as well as migration trends in Tunisia

Data Source	Conducting Entity	Period / Latest Data	Focus	Use
Labour Force Survey (LFS)	National Institute of Statistics (INS)	Annual since 2000; quarterly since 2011	Employment, unemployment, labour force participation	Core data on labour supply
Enterprise Survey on Job Vacancies and Skills	World Bank, INS, Tunisian-Italian Chamber of Commerce (CTICI)	Latest round in 2024	Employer needs, vacancies, skills, hiring constraints	Core data on labour demand
National Survey on International Migration (HIMS)	INS, ONM	Conducted in 2021	Emigration trends, diaspora profiles	Insights into international labour supply
Population and Housing Census (2024)	National Institute of Statistics (INS)	Conducted November–December 2024; preliminary results May 2025	Demographics, labour force, education, housing, internal migration	Baseline data for labour supply and socio-economic planning
Online Job Vacancies Dataset			Real-time job postings and skills in demand	Supplementary view of unmet demand
ONM Data Portal	Observatoire National de la Migration (ONM)	Continuously updated	General migration statistics and indicators	Public access to migration data
MigraData Platform	ONM, with EU and ICMPD support	Launched February 2023	Real-time migration information system	Strengthens evidence-based migration policy

Second, as reported by the stakeholders, training institutions such as ATEP are not consistently engaged in forward planning processes, which weakens the feedback loop between labour market demand and training capacities. Moreover, there are no standardized tools in place to assess critical shortages, or the impacts of labour mobility, which is particularly relevant for outward mobility programs. The limited interoperability of data systems across institutions (e.g. across ANETI, ANETI International, ONEQ, ONM) further hampers coordination and reduces the potential of existing assessments to guide policy and partnership development.

Third, institutional capacity constraints—both human and technical—pose significant challenges to the strategic use of labour market assessments. For instance, ONEQ currently operates with a very limited team of around eight staff members, and has not recruited new personnel since 2015. This restricts its ability to expand analytical functions or engage more actively in inter-institutional coordination. To address these limitations, ONEQ plans to strengthen its human resources by recruiting new staff, including statistical and IT engineers. On the technical side, the organization is developing a digital platform—expected to be operational between December 2025 and January 2026—to monitor labour market dynamics at both national and international levels and to interconnect the various institutions producing employment and labour market data. , While ONM has implemented an integrated migration information system, the absence of an in-house IT specialist has delayed progress and limited its ability to manage and scale digital platforms like MIGRADATA.

These observations suggest that while Tunisia has several foundational elements in place to support labour market analysis, technical and human resource constraints currently limit the effectiveness and strategic use of such assessments in shaping labour mobility programs and partnerships. These concrete limitations underscore the need for targeted investments in both human resources and digital infrastructure to unlock the full potential of Tunisia’s labour market intelligence system. Nonetheless, institutions such as ONEQ, ATFP, and ANETI—building on their existing mandates and technical experience—offer significant potential to develop a more integrated and forward-looking labour market intelligence system. Such a system would be instrumental in ensuring that Tunisia can identify GSP priority sectors that are not only in demand internationally, but also strategically relevant and sustainable for its own economic transformation.

Identifying Jobs and Candidates • Profiling & Matching • Intermediation

ANETI International is identifying and preselecting candidates for international placement. Approximately 60% of ANETI International’s shortlisted candidates are retained by foreign employers, indicating promising alignment between candidate profiles and destination country needs. However, ANETI International currently lacks automated tools for profiling and matching candidates for overseas job placement, limiting its ability to efficiently align labour supply with job offers at scale. This significantly affects responsiveness to international demand and reduces the potential for large-volume or rapid matching across dynamic labour markets. In this period, ANETI national is receiving technical assistance from the World Bank to develop an automated profiling and matching system, which could serve as a model for future upgrades at ANETI International. This upgrade aims to improve the speed and effectiveness, but at the same time develop tailored and adapted employment services that respond to different candidate profiles, and firms’ need. A similar upgrade for ANETI International could improve its ability to support differentiated mobility channels and respond more efficiently to the specific requirements of destination countries, ultimately strengthening Tunisia’s capacity to match talent with global labour market needs.

Additionally, the absence of a formalized collaboration mechanism between ANETI International and private or international recruitment actors limits the diversity of intermediation pathways and reduces flexibility in matching Tunisian talent to a wide range of global opportunities. While Law No. 2010-49 provides an important framework for ethical recruitment and worker protection—requiring private overseas placement agencies to operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training—it also introduces regulatory and financial requirements that may be challenging for some firms. These constraints appear to have contributed to a decline in the number of active private intermediaries, potentially limiting Tunisia’s capacity to scale and diversify access to international employment. In some cases, this may also encourage informal practices, which carry risks for workers. Addressing these regulatory bottlenecks, while maintaining safeguards, could help strengthen the role of responsible private actors and improve coordination across institutions involved in job identification, profiling, matching, and placement.

In 2023, ATCT facilitated 4,510 placements, up from 3,511 in 2022, with growing demand in countries such as Germany, Canada, France, and Oman—especially in the healthcare and education sectors. ATCT maintains a candidate database of over 30,000 profiles, structured in accordance with the ESCO classification system, and operates a network of seven international offices to support employer engagement abroad. Both ANETI International and ATCT also contribute to pre-departure orientation efforts, which in some cases include involvement from international partners to provide legal and cultural preparation.

Despite this progress, operational challenges constrain the system’s overall effectiveness. ATCT’s international prospecting and placement activities are constrained by staffing limitations as reported by stakeholders, particularly in its monitoring and follow-up functions. These capacity gaps affect the frequency, scope, and continuity of outreach to foreign employers.

Facilitating clearance and visa process - Supporting travel logistics

Despite the available structured channels for labour mobility between Tunisia and Italy—such as the pre-departure training projects (TUI art. 23) and the Flow Decree (TUI art. 22), reinforced by the bilateral MoU signed in October 2023—significant administrative delays continue to affect the effective right to entry for work reasons. A central bottleneck lies in the issuance of the *Nulla Osta*, the clearance that Italy’s local prefectures representing the Ministry of Interior must provide before a visa can be issued. Reports from multiple stakeholders, including training institutions and employers, cite that visa processing often exceeds several months, in contrast to the 30 days for the visa and 60 days for the *Nulla Osta* stipulated by law. In 2024 alone, over 600,000 work visa applications were submitted for just 151,000 available quotas, highlighting the strain on administrative systems and the mismatch between demand and institutional processing capacity. These delays are disrupting recruitment timelines, discouraging employer participation, and negatively impacting the perception of regular migration channels among potential migrants, as reported by interviewed stakeholders.

While pre-departure orientation exists in some cases, a comprehensive system to support travel logistics for Tunisian labour migrants is largely absent. Key components such as assistance with visa appointments, document collection, transportation arrangements, post-arrival reception, and temporary accommodation remain fragmented or informal. Public institutions such as ANETI International and ATCT may provide general guidance, but they are not systematically resourced or mandated to deliver logistical support throughout the full migration cycle. The lack of a structured mechanism is particularly problematic under the Article 23 pathway, where coordinated timing between training completion, employer readiness, and administrative approvals is crucial. In the absence of logistical support, migrants may face high travel costs, administrative confusion, and stress during a critical transition period as also stated in the FGDs. This not only affects their preparedness and well-being but may also weaken integration outcomes and increase attrition before placement. A more coordinated approach, involving public institutions, employers, and potentially international partners, or diaspora organizations could significantly improve the reliability and equity of the migration process.

Box 5: Use of Artificial Intelligence for Profiling and Matching – The France Travail Model

France Travail—the French public employment service—has positioned itself at the forefront of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve the delivery of employment services. Particularly notable is its ethical-by-design approach to developing and implementing AI tools for profiling jobseekers and matching them with job opportunities, while ensuring human oversight, transparency, and alignment with public service values.

AI Tools Supporting Profiling and Matching

France Travail has developed and tested several AI-powered tools and use cases (*cas d'usage*) to enhance service effectiveness and personalisation:

- **ChatFT:** A generative conversational assistant used by over 40,000 counsellors since November 2024. It supports document drafting and synthesizing jobseeker interactions, enhancing the efficiency and quality of counselling services ([France Travail, 2025](#)).
- **Neo (ChatFT module):** Allows employment counsellors to interact with France Travail information system using natural language queries. Following successful pilots, Neo is being progressively rolled out in various regions as of mid-2025 ([France Travail, 2025](#)).
- **MatchFT:** An AI matching system currently in pilot in 87 local agencies (Pays de la Loire and Centre-Val de Loire). It enables SMS-assisted pre-selection of candidates for employers and will be rolled out nationally by the end of 2025 ([France Travail, 2025](#)).
- **ChatFT Écoute:** An assistant under test (deployment expected by late 2025) designed to summarise conversations between counsellors and jobseekers in real-time ([France Travail, 2025](#)).

These tools improve profiling and matching by offering real-time, personalised recommendations. This reflects a broader trend among public employment services globally, where AI is increasingly used to support vacancy recommendation, skill matching, and early profiling of jobseekers to improve service targeting—while always maintaining human oversight over decision-making ([OECD, 2024](#); [Schnitzer & Betcherman, 2025](#)).

Ethical Governance and Institutional Oversight

France Travail stands out for its institutionalised ethical governance system, which ensures that AI use aligns with legal, societal, and human values. This framework includes:

- The Charte éthique de l'IA (AI Ethics Charter), adopted in 2022, defines seven guiding principles: human oversight and support, transparency, fairness, purpose limitation, data protection, explicability, and inclusion.
- A dedicated Pôle éthique de l'IA (AI Ethics Unit), which coordinates all AI projects and validates ethical indicators.
- A Comité Consultatif Éthique sur l'IA (CCEFT.IA), composed of external experts, researchers, legal specialists, and user representatives.
- An internal AI usage committee that includes staff representatives and monitors implementation practices.
- Each AI use case is subject to a full lifecycle evaluation, including risk mapping, multidisciplinary testing, and user feedback.

Bias Mitigation and User-Centred Design

France Travail applies a rigorous methodology to detect and mitigate algorithmic biases:

- Use of high-quality and representative training data; for example, data scientists and employment counsellors collaborate to ensure datasets reflect diverse user realities.
- Development of detailed labelling guides for annotators; these ensure consistency and ethical sensitivity.
- Engagement of multidisciplinary teams (data experts, employment counsellors, legal advisors);
- Integration of feedback loops to retrain and adapt models in production environments;
- Ergonomic studies to ensure AI tools align with actual work conditions and enhance service delivery;

One practical example is the inclusion of diverse profiles—data scientists, field counsellors, and legal experts—in reviewing and validating annotated data. These teams work together throughout the AI project cycle to ensure that interpretations and decisions are balanced, context-aware, and free from systematic bias.

Why France Travail Is a Best Practice

France Travail's model illustrates how AI can be responsibly deployed in public employment services. This reflects international developments where AI is being applied to improve efficiency and individualization of services, especially for matching, profiling, and labour market forecasting (OECD, 2024). It enhances labour market intermediation while respecting ethical, social, and legal considerations.

Key Feature	Implementation at France Travail
Human-centric AI	AI tools assist but do not replace counsellors
Full lifecycle ethical oversight	Pôle éthique, ethics committees, and systematic risk reviews

Transparent profiling and matching	JRE scoring, MatchFT, and AI-guided counselling support
Regulatory collaboration	CNIL sandbox participation, GDPR compliance
Ongoing evaluation	Monitoring and refinement across all AI use cases

6.2. Pillar II – Furthering Access

Designing Training & Aligning Qualifications

The Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP) manages an extensive national network of over 130 training centers, providing more than 400 specializations across 12 economic sectors. This broad infrastructure forms the foundation of Tunisia’s vocational training system (see also [Box 7](#)) and its capacity to meet both domestic and international labour market needs.

Box 6: Designing New Training Programs by CENAFFIF

CENAFFIF plays a pivotal role in ensuring that vocational training programs meet evolving labour market needs while maintaining national standards of quality and coherence. The design of new training programs follows a **structured, multi-step process**:

1. Identification of Training Needs

The process begins when companies express specific skills requirements, typically communicated through UTICA to the Directorate General for Relations with Businesses (DGRE) under the MEFP. These requests are then forwarded to the Directorate General for the Development of Training (DGDF), which mandates CENAFFIF to develop or revise training programs accordingly.

2. Preliminary Study and Work Situation Analysis (AST)

CENAFFIF conducts a Work Situation Analysis (AST) to identify the main tasks and activities associated with the targeted occupation. This analysis is validated by enterprises in the relevant sector to ensure real-world accuracy and applicability.

3. Development of Reference Frameworks

Once the occupational profile is confirmed, CENAFFIF mobilizes expert trainers—often from ATFP—to develop four complementary reference frameworks:

- **Occupational and Skills Framework (RMC):** Defines the core competencies and key job functions.
- **Training Framework:** Specifies the modular structure, learning objectives, and pedagogical methods.
- **Certification Framework:** Establishes evaluation criteria, assessment tools, and examination procedures.
- **Resource Organization Framework:** Details the equipment, facilities, and human resources required to deliver the program effectively.

4. Dissemination of Training Programs

Once validated, the finalized frameworks are disseminated to ATFP centers and private training institutions, both electronically and in printed form, ensuring harmonized implementation across the national training network.

5. Timeframe and Quality Assurance

Although the official timeframe for this process is four to six months, stakeholders report that the full cycle—from identifying a new specialty to implementation—often extends to two or three years. This delay constrains the system’s ability to respond swiftly to technological and market shifts.

Updating of Existing Curricula:

In principle, curricula should be revised every five to seven years for evolving specialties. However, in practice, no significant updates have occurred in over a decade, underscoring the urgent need for a more systematic and responsive mechanism to keep training content aligned with current economic and technological realities.

At the core of this system lies the Centre National de Formation de Formateurs et d’Ingénierie de Formation (CENAFFIF), which is responsible for developing and revising training content. In recent years, CENAFFIF has increasingly incorporated transversal modules—such as soft skills, CV preparation, workplace integration, and basic language instruction—to ensure that graduates possess not only technical expertise but also the broader employability skills required in diverse work environments.

Building on these efforts, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) is developing a new competency-based normative framework designed to align Tunisia’s vocational training system with international standards, particularly those of the European Union and African regional frameworks. Once implemented, this reform is expected to enhance the global recognition and portability of Tunisian qualifications, thereby strengthening pathways for professional mobility abroad.

While the institutional and technical foundations are well established, further efforts are required to ensure that training design and qualifications remain effectively aligned with international labour mobility objectives.

- **Enhancing Strategic Engagement in Mobility Program Design:** Although ATFP plays a crucial role in implementing bilateral labour agreements (BLAs), it is not consistently involved in their initial design or in shaping the operational frameworks that underpin their implementation. Earlier and more structured participation of ATFP in these stages would enable better alignment between training supply and projected labour demand in destination countries. Such engagement would allow ATFP to identify and promote sectors where its centers have existing capacity, thereby optimizing resource use and accelerating deployment. Conversely, where BLAs target sectors in which ATFP’s capacity is limited, early consultation would enable timely planning to mobilize the required equipment, trainers, and financial resources. This approach would also open opportunities for international co-financing of targeted upgrades, ensuring that Tunisia’s training infrastructure remains responsive and sustainable in the face of evolving global mobility needs.
- **Improving Curriculum Responsiveness:** While mechanisms exist for the private sector to propose updates or new specializations, stakeholders—including training institutions, recruitment agencies, and employers—note that the process from need

identification to implementation remains lengthy and administratively complex, often taking two to three years. Moreover, updates are frequently initiated reactively, rather than through a regular, evidence-based review cycle. Strengthening collaboration with employers and private sector representatives at all stages of the process would help ensure that training programs remain relevant, agile, and closely aligned with both domestic economic priorities and international labour market trends.

Delivering Training & Certification

ATFP and CENAFFIF lead a wide array of initial and continuing training programs through an extensive infrastructure across the country. CENAFFIF plays a key role in curriculum design and has incorporated transversal modules—including language instruction, workplace readiness, and CV preparation—into training content. These elements are especially relevant in preparing candidates for employment in foreign labour markets and reflect growing alignment with global skill demands.

A significant institutional advance is the development of a new competency-based normative framework by the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP). This reform aims to shift from a traditional accreditation model toward one that aligns more closely with international (particularly EU and African) standards. Once operationalized, this framework is expected to enhance the recognition and portability of Tunisian qualifications abroad, making them more relevant for cross-border employment and regional mobility frameworks.

In this context, it is also important to consider skills recognition and certification at all stages of the migrant journey—not only prior to departure from Tunisia but also during integration in the recipient country and upon return. Recognizing competencies and credentials acquired at any point along this path can strengthen employment prospects, facilitate social and professional integration abroad, and improve the conditions for reintegration and economic contribution in the event of return.

While training programs are actively delivered and evolving, several areas could benefit from further operational development to maximize their contribution to structured mobility:

- **Institutional Capacity Constraints:** Training institutions face challenges in scaling provision in high-demand areas due to limited availability of specialized trainers, technical equipment, and adequate infrastructure. Conversely, some fields experience lower enrolment and oversupply, influenced by perceived job market attractiveness.
- **Language and Safety Training:** Despite efforts to incorporate transversal competencies, language instruction (especially in French and English) remains limited in scope and level as reported by various stakeholders (public and private recruitment agencies, national and international employers etc.), affecting employability in foreign markets. Occupational health and safety training is in place but could be further expanded to align with international standards.

- **Monitoring and Adjustment Gaps:** There is no formal mechanism currently in place to assess the impact of international mobility on domestic skill availability, nor to adjust training offers accordingly. This limits the ability to respond proactively to potential skill shortages, especially in essential sectors
- **Alignment of Certification with International Standards:** Despite the promising shift toward a competency-based model, the current certification processes are not yet consistently harmonized with widely recognized international frameworks, such as ESCO or the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This partial alignment can affect the external recognition of Tunisian credentials, particularly for skilled or regulated professions abroad.
- **Validation of Prior Learning Skills:** Tunisia has put in place a process for recognizing prior learning and work-based competencies. MEFP has operationalized mechanism for validating professional qualifications, allowing individuals to have skills acquired in the workplace or abroad officially recognized through a technical examination, with certification awarded upon successful completion⁸. The results of this recent reform need to be assessed.
- **Institutional Coordination:** Linkages between institutions responsible for training delivery, certification, labour intermediation, and migrant integration in destination countries are not yet fully developed. Enhanced coordination across these domains could strengthen the continuity and coherence of the training-to-placement pipeline.

Box 7: Tunisia’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) System: Structure, Reforms, and Innovations

Tunisia’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) system plays a central role in addressing youth unemployment and preparing the workforce for both national and international labour markets. With over 130 public training centers managed by the Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (ATFP), the system provides technical and vocational skills across more than 300 specialties. Despite its scale and strategic importance, the system faces challenges in aligning training with labour market demands and in attracting youth, particularly young women (CGIL, UGTT & Nexus Solidarietà Internazionale, 2024).

Technical and Institutional Setup

The VET system is structured around the Classification Nationale des Qualifications (CNQ), which defines seven qualification levels, with VET covering levels 1 to 4. The main degrees include:

- **Certificat de Compétences (CC)** – Level 1: Entry-level certification for basic skills.
- **Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP)** – Level 2: Foundational vocational training, typically for early school leavers.
- **Brevet de Technicien Professionnel (BTP)** – Level 3: Intermediate technical training in fields such as construction, mechanics, and electronics.
- **Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)** – Level 4: Advanced vocational training, sometimes bridging to higher education.

⁸ <https://www.emploi.gov.tn/fr/68/certificat-dattestation-de-qualification-professionnelle>

Training is delivered through public institutions, private providers, and sector-specific agencies (e.g., agriculture, tourism, defense). The system employs a competency-based approach and increasingly promotes alternance training—a dual model combining classroom instruction with workplace experience. However, governance remains highly centralized, and regional autonomy is limited. Gender disparities persist, with only 6.2% of VET students being female in 2016 (CGIL, UGTT & Nexus Solidarietà Internazionale, 2024).

Reform Trajectory

Since the 1990s, Tunisia has implemented several reforms to modernize its VET system. The MANFORM program (1996) introduced competency-based training and emphasized partnerships with the private sector (Runner et al., 2009). The 2008 reform legally recognized VET as a strategic tool for economic development, while the 2013–2016 reforms focused on decentralization, lifelong learning, and regional responsiveness (CGIL, UGTT & Nexus Solidarietà Internazionale, 2024). According to the ATFP, the integration rate of vocational training graduates into the labour market reached 80% in 2023, with growing international placement partnerships (ATFP, 2025).

Despite these efforts, the system continues to struggle with mismatches between training supply and labour market demand, particularly in sectors like tourism and agriculture.

TAKWEEN and FIESP

To address persistent gaps, two pilot projects were launched: TAKWEEN and FIESP.

The TAKWEEN project (2021–2026), supported by Swisscontact and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), introduced short-cycle, post-diploma, eco-certified training programs lasting 1 to 3 months, with 80% practical content and a strong emphasis on soft skills. It targets graduates from both VET and higher education, offering specializations in automotive mechanics, energy efficiency, electronics, ICT, and tourism. TAKWEEN has trained over 11,000 youth and 470 trainers, achieving employment insertion rates averaging 70–75%, with some specializations reaching 100% (Swisscontact, 2021).

The FIESP project (2019–2023), implemented by GIZ and funded by BMZ, develops technical training programs in textiles, plastics, and tourism/hospitality, in collaboration with professional federations and regional enterprises. Training is delivered across eight regions, including Bizerte, Hammamet, Sousse, Monastir, Djerba, and Tozeur. In the tourism sector, specialized modules in cuisine, bar/restaurant service, and housekeeping have yielded job placement rates exceeding 80% in some areas (GIZ, 2023).

Tunisia's vocational education and training (VET) system plays a vital role in addressing youth unemployment and preparing the workforce for both national and international labour markets. Labour mobility should be considered a strategic dimension of VET planning (ETF, 2021; CGIL, 2024). The European Training Foundation highlights the need for improved coordination between employment and training policies, better data systems to track labour market outcomes and migration flows, and stronger regional governance. CGIL emphasizes integrating international labour mobility planning into VET strategies to prepare youth for employment opportunities abroad. Both sources advocate involving private sector actors in curriculum development to ensure training aligns with real-world skill requirements and supports international employability.

Tracking labour outcomes

In Tunisia, multiple public institutions—most notably ANETI and ATFP—collect administrative data related to job seeker registration, job placements, training participation,

and service delivery. While these data systems provide useful inputs, current practices for tracking labour market outcomes, especially post-training employment trajectories, remain fragmented. Although there is growing institutional awareness of the need to assess employment outcomes and the effectiveness of training programmes, there is not yet a comprehensive or consistent mechanism in place to monitor labour market integration following participation in employment or vocational training schemes. Consequently, the potential of existing data to inform a complete understanding of employment pathways and longer-term impacts remains underutilized.

ONEQ plays a central role in labour market analysis and has made progress in building the analytical base for tracking labour outcomes. It is mandated to access administrative microdata from key institutions such as ANETI, ANETI International, and AFTP, positioning it strategically to support more systematic monitoring. However, limited capacity has led to discontinuity in conducting assessments on a regular or structured basis. Studies are typically conducted on-demand for selected sectors rather than at recurrent intervals or in a structured, cyclical manner across all sectors. Moreover, microdata is not systematically exchanged to support this function, and there is no formalized process underpinning post-training outcome tracking. Despite these limitations, existing efforts provide a foundation for reinforcing the analytical capacity of the broader employment and training system.

6.3. Pillar III – Fortifying Access

Developing social protection, migrant rights and integration policies

Tunisia has made notable institutional progress in strengthen the social protection of its nationals abroad. The country has signed 23 bilateral agreements with European and Arab countries in the field of social security, allowing Tunisians living abroad (TRE) to benefit from social security services and transfer their retirement pensions from host countries to Tunisia. The Office des Tunisiens à l'Étranger (OTE) further supports migrants through a network of 54 social attachés located in 17 Tunisian embassies and consulates. These attachés offer administrative, social, and informational support, including assistance with documentation, service navigation, and initial settlement needs.

While relevant actors are engaged in different aspects of migrant support, there does not appear to be a clearly articulated or nationally coordinated strategy for the integration of Tunisian nationals abroad. Instead, efforts are often shaped by bilateral arrangements and agency-specific mandates. Stakeholders interviewed during the assessment highlighted that protection measures for Tunisian migrant workers are not yet systematically embedded in the instruments currently used to operationalize labour mobility. For example, while BLAs set out employment conditions, their accompanying protocols often do not include detailed provisions on grievance procedures, housing standards, or mechanisms for follow-up after placement. Similarly, labour mobility programs implemented to date have focused largely on matching and deployment, with limited attention to the structured monitoring of rights or coordination of support services once workers are abroad. These patterns indicate that current arrangements have so far placed greater emphasis on deployment and placement

logistics, while areas related to the broader protection and follow-up of migrants appear to be less systematically addressed.

Data gathered through the assessment process further confirms these gaps. For instance, while the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training plays a strategic role in developing migration and employment policies, there is limited coordination of ANETI International, with OTE, or relevant diaspora stakeholders when it comes to post-departure monitoring. This fragmentation makes it difficult to assess how well migrants are protected or integrated once abroad. Addressing these coordination challenges could improve the responsiveness and developmental potential of labour mobility frameworks.

Activating Support Mechanisms and Networks for Migrant Integration

Tunisia has taken important steps to activate support mechanisms for its nationals abroad. One of the most prominent examples is the deployment of social attachés by the OTE, who operate in consulates and embassies in major destination countries. These representatives serve as the first point of contact for migrants, providing assistance with documentation, administrative needs, and accessing host-country services. In addition, a variety of diaspora organizations and community-based associations have emerged in countries such as Italy, offering cultural, linguistic, and informal social support. These networks provide essential assistance to migrants and play a valuable role in community integration.

Despite these positive elements, many support services remain fragmented. While pre-departure training and preparation are organized in Tunisia, there is no structured mechanism to ensure continuity of support after migrants arrive in destination countries. This is particularly evident with regard to employment-related services such as post-arrival job orientation or mentorship. Stakeholders note the absence of formal cooperation mechanisms between Tunisian institutions and host-country civil society, public employment services, or migrant support organizations. As a result, many migrants navigate the integration process independently, and their access to support varies by region and circumstance.

Although some grievance mechanisms exist in host countries, their accessibility and visibility to Tunisian workers abroad appear limited. Interviews suggest that processes for reporting workplace violations or contract breaches are often informal or unclear—particularly for workers in low-skilled or temporary roles. Interviews indicated that grievances—such as workplace disputes or breaches of contract—are often handled informally or solely through host-country institutions. There appears to be limited structured involvement of Tunisian authorities in the follow-up of such cases, even in situations where workers have migrated through formal channels such as BLAs. This suggests that bilateral procedures for joint monitoring and response may not yet be fully operationalized or consistently applied in practice.

Box 8: Best Practice Example – Grievance Mechanism under the PALM Scheme

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme enables workers from Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste to take up temporary or longer-term employment in Australia, primarily in the agriculture, meat processing, hospitality, and aged care sectors. The scheme is designed to meet

Australia's labour shortages while supporting skills development and remittances in participating countries.

Within this mobility framework, PALM has developed a grievance mechanism anchored in the Deed of Agreement (Section 36) and the Approved Employer Guidelines (Section 9.12). The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) manages the process in close coordination with other agencies such as the Fair Work Ombudsman, Australian Border Force, and state workplace regulators

A key innovation is the option for workers to request support from their sending-country government representative (e.g. labour attaché or country liaison officer), which enhances trust and facilitates smoother communication. The mechanism also provides for anonymous reporting and whistleblower protections, allowing not only workers but also third parties (e.g. co-workers, community representatives, or officials) to raise concerns about exploitation or misconduct without fear of reprisal.

How It Works in Practice

The mechanism is designed to be accessible, confidential, and solution-focused, with clear timelines to ensure accountability:

- **Lodgement:** Workers or third parties can submit grievances by phone, email, or form. Anonymous submissions are accepted.
- **Acknowledgement:** Within three working days, DEWR provides confirmation, explains the process, and outlines expected timelines.
- **Assessment and Triage:** Grievances are prioritized according to urgency. Serious safety or criminal concerns are referred immediately to the relevant authorities, while less severe issues may be redirected for informal resolution with the employer.
- **Resolution and Mediation:** For non-critical cases, DEWR may convene an **early resolution meeting** within 10 working days, bringing together the worker, employer, DEWR officials, and—if requested—the sending-country representative.
- **Investigation and Remedies:** If mediation fails, DEWR conducts a fact-based investigation, aiming for resolution within 20 working days. Possible remedies include corrective action by the employer, redeployment of the worker to another approved employer, or referral to enforcement bodies.
- **Review:** Workers who remain dissatisfied may seek an internal review or escalate to the **Commonwealth Ombudsman**.
-

What Makes this Scheme Different from the General System

While all workers in Australia have access to national labour rights mechanisms (e.g. the Fair Work Ombudsman, Safe Work Australia, and anti-discrimination bodies), the PALM grievance mechanism introduces additional safeguards tailored to the specific situation of temporary migrant workers:

- **Dedicated administrative structure:** complaints are handled directly by DEWR as the scheme manager.
- **Employer obligations:** PALM employers are legally required to have grievance systems in place under the Deed and Guidelines.
- **Involvement of sending-country representatives:** labour attachés or country liaison officers can participate at the worker's request.

- **Time-bound standards:** strict timelines for acknowledgement (3 days), early resolution (10 days), and outcomes (20 days).
- **Protection while abroad:** stronger emphasis on confidentiality, anonymous reporting, and whistleblower protections.
- **Redeployment option:** if disputes cannot be resolved, workers may be redeployed to another approved employer.
- **Programme integration:** lessons from grievances feed directly into PALM’s monitoring and compliance framework.

Outcomes and Key Takeaways

The PALM grievance mechanism has:

- Fostered faster resolution of workplace conflicts through early dialogue.
- Reduced escalation of disputes, with most addressed within 20 working days.
- Enhanced protection of workers abroad, giving them confidence to raise issues without reprisal.
- Built trust among workers, employers, and governments by embedding transparency, confidentiality, and clear procedures.
- Contributed to programme improvement, as systemic lessons are integrated back into PALM’s management.

Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024)

Particularly for the Italian case, regional variations in administrative procedures, welfare access, and housing availability can create additional barriers for migrants. For example, access to welfare and social insurance benefits may differ across regions, and some migrants face challenges in understanding eligibility requirements and navigating local administrative systems. Similarly, while employers are formally responsible and required to find and declare a residential address for newly arriving workers, migrants may encounter difficulties securing adequate housing in the longer-term—especially in urban areas where rental prices are high or availability is limited. Conversations underline the need for stronger cross-border coordination between origin and host-country institutions. Establishing partnerships with diaspora associations and migrant service providers could also enhance support coverage and effectiveness.

Providing Orientation and Ongoing Support Services

Pre-departure orientation has emerged as a core part of Tunisia’s approach to preparing workers for international labour mobility. ANETI International and partner institutions deliver training sessions that include language preparation, CV writing, and intercultural awareness, particularly for those migrating through BLAs. These programmes help workers understand the expectations of employers abroad and provide practical tools for adapting to new environments.

However, mechanisms for ensuring continuity of support after departure are still underdeveloped. Post-arrival support—such as mentorship, job coaching, or access to employment counselling—is not systematically provided. There is also no dedicated system

to accompany workers through the early stages of employment abroad, even when they have been placed through official channels. While OTE social attachés may offer basic assistance, this is not a substitute for structured labour market services, especially in sectors with high turnover or seasonal work patterns.

The potential role of diaspora networks and host-country organizations in providing ongoing support is recognized but remains underutilized. While many Tunisian communities abroad are active and organized, formal mechanisms to link them with institutional actors in Tunisia are limited. More structured collaboration could enable the provision of follow-up services, mentorship, and even peer-based guidance for new arrivals. This would contribute to smoother transitions and reduce drop-out or return due to unmet expectations.

According to interviews and mission observations, the absence of institutional feedback loops also hinders the ability to improve programme design. Workers who encounter difficulties abroad often have no formal avenue to report challenges or request additional support. Building a clearer system for two-way communication between migrants and relevant institutions—both in Tunisia and abroad—could support more adaptive and responsive labour mobility frameworks.

Facilitating Return Migration and Economic Reintegration

Support for returning migrants in Tunisia remains at a relatively early stage of institutional development. While some reinsertion and entrepreneurship programmes are in place, these initiatives are not yet systematically integrated into broader labour mobility frameworks. Stakeholders noted that returnees—particularly those who had temporary or seasonal contracts—often receive limited structured assistance upon arrival, which affects their ability to reintegrate economically or professionally. Public institutions and civil society actors do provide reintegration-related services; however, these efforts are often fragmented and constrained by limited resources and a lack of coordination across actors. For example, the Office of Tunisians Abroad (OTE) emphasized its mandate to protect the socio-economic rights of returnees but also pointed to challenges in mobilizing investment and reintegration support at scale due to coordination and outreach limitations.

Box 9. Spain–Morocco “WAFIRA” and “WAFIRA II” Programmes: A Regional Best Practice in Gender-Responsive Circular Labour Mobility

The *WAFIRA* initiative (“Women as Financially Independent Rural Actors”) and its second phase *WAFIRA II* represent a bilateral model of circular labour mobility linking Spain and Morocco. The initiative combines seasonal employment abroad with training, reintegration, and entrepreneurship support upon return, promoting sustainable mobility outcomes and women’s economic empowerment. It is coordinated by the Spanish Secretariat of State for Migration within the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the EU-funded Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). On the Moroccan side, the National Employment and Skills Agency (ANAPEC) coordinates pre-departure training, skills development and reintegration (Migration Partnership Facility 2023).

Integrated Approach: WAFIRA I and II

Launched in 2021, *WAFIRA I* focused on female rural workers from Morocco employed seasonally in Spain's agricultural sector, particularly in berry production in Andalusia. It supported approximately 250 women who participated in structured mobility cycles complemented by entrepreneurship training, financial-literacy sessions, and mentoring during and after their employment abroad (ILO, 2023). Upon return, participants received coaching and seed funding to establish income-generating activities in agriculture, trade or services. By 2024, 209 women had formalized small businesses or cooperatives, demonstrating how mobility can generate productive reintegration and strengthen local economies (ILO, 2025).

Building on this foundation, *WAFIRA II* scales up the model to a regional and multi-stakeholder initiative. The new phase, launched under the MPF in partnership with France, Portugal, Cabo Verde, and Mauritania, seeks to reach 3 000 seasonal workers—both women and men—through structured labour-mobility pathways and entrepreneurship support (Migration Partnership Facility, 2025).

Together, *WAFIRA I* and *WAFIRA II* demonstrate how gender-responsive, development-oriented circular labour mobility can address labour-market needs in destination countries while promoting entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and empowerment in origin communities.

Policy Innovation: Multi-Annual Circular Migration Visas in Spain

A major innovation complementing these initiatives is Spain's introduction of a four-year multi-annual authorization for seasonal and circular workers under the GECCO Order – Orden ISM/1488/2024 of 27 December 2024 (*Gestión Colectiva de Contrataciones en Origen para 2025*). This Order, issued by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, allows participants in circular-migration programmes to work for up to nine months per year over a four-year period, without annual re-application (European Commission, 2025d; BOE, 2024). The measure aims to simplify legal pathways in seasonal circular migration and strengthen continuity in mobility partnerships by reducing administrative burdens and reinforcing trust between workers, employers, and institutions.

Key lessons for Tunisia:

- linking temporary employment abroad with skills development and entrepreneurship support for sustainable reintegration;
- embedding gender equality and women's economic empowerment as central elements of circular mobility schemes; and
- exploring multi-year, renewable visa frameworks to ensure predictable, rights-based, and development-oriented labour-mobility channels.

A key achievement in this regard is the bilateral social security agreement between Tunisia and Italy, which allows the portability of key entitlements such as pensions and health benefits for Tunisian workers engaged in formal labour mobility. This agreement provides an important safeguard for migrants and enhances the credibility of formal migration schemes. Yet, in practice, however, this agreement has not been fully leveraged. Operational challenges—including a lack of interoperability between Tunisian institutional systems and limited administrative capacity—have made it difficult to ensure that benefits acquired abroad are efficiently transferred and accessed. The experience of intermediaries like INCA illustrates the gap: when they supported pension applications, the number of submissions

reportedly increased by 300%. This points to a significant need for strengthening the administrative interface and institutional cooperation involved in making social protection portability effective. Additionally, the National Observatory of Migration (ONM) has taken steps to modernize its data systems to better monitor return trends, but still faces gaps in regular data collection, especially on irregular migration and socio-economic reintegration outcomes.

The recognition of skills and qualifications acquired during migration is another area where institutional mechanisms are still evolving. Tunisia has introduced a framework for recognizing prior learning. Yet, many returning migrants, especially those in lower-skilled or irregular employment, lack documentation that could support recognition of their competencies. As a result, their potential to re-enter the labour market or apply their skills remains underutilized. ATFP has highlighted the importance of understanding the true cost of training in order to adapt services for returnees. However, limited data on returnees' profiles and employment trajectories makes it difficult to assess needs and plan effectively. With better data, ATFP could identify gaps in equipment, financing, and trainer capacity, and engage international partners to help address these needs. Stakeholders emphasized the untapped potential of skilled and experienced migrants abroad to contribute through knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, and collaboration with local actors.

Interviews with institutional stakeholders suggest that addressing these gaps would require closer coordination between Tunisian ministries, labour market institutions, and foreign partners. This includes not only public agencies, but also employer associations, vocational training institutions, and international organizations. Reintegration support and the portability of rights are not yet systematically embedded in the design or follow-up phases of BLAs. A more structured inclusion of return and reintegration measures within mobility frameworks could help ensure that return is seen not as the end of a migration cycle, but as a meaningful part of a broader circular migration and development process

Box 10. Leveraging the Tunisian Diaspora for Integration and Return

Countries around the world are increasingly recognizing the value of engaging their diaspora communities in migration governance and national development. In **Niger**, diaspora inclusion has been institutionalized through Organic Law No. 71 (2014), which allocates five seats in the national Parliament to diaspora representatives, ensuring their voice in legislative processes. **Portugal** has established the Portuguese Communities Council, an advisory body composed of members elected by Portuguese citizens abroad, to guide emigration and diaspora-related policies. **Kyrgyzstan's** Council on Relations with Compatriots Abroad facilitates coordinated decision-making and policy implementation involving diaspora members. Similarly, the Republic of **Moldova** has developed multiple platforms for diaspora engagement, including the Diaspora Congress, Diaspora Days, and the Diaspora Business Forum, which promote active participation in national development and strengthen ties between the state and its citizens abroad (IOM, 2024)

The Tunisian diaspora—estimated at over two million people—represents a key asset for national development and international cooperation. Diaspora networks can play a pivotal role in two phases of the migration cycle: **departure and integration** abroad, and **return and reinvestment** at home.

1. Departure and Integration Support

Diaspora associations can serve as gateways for newly arrived workers, helping them settle and integrate into host societies. They provide peer support, cultural mediation, and labour-market guidance, which reduce vulnerability and support circular migration objectives. Formal engagement with diaspora communities is associated with stronger mechanisms to protect nationals abroad (IOM, 2024).

Examples from other regions show the value of structured diaspora engagement:

- The **South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA)**, created by the University of Cape Town, connects expatriate scientists and technologists with South African institutions, while the **South African Diaspora Network** builds mentoring links between business leaders abroad and domestic start-ups (World Bank, 2006).
- In **Armenia**, diaspora organizations and embassies collaborate to organize overseas job fairs and support returning professionals' reintegration into the labour market (OECD, 2017).
- In **Albania**, diaspora forums and the National Diaspora Agency have built an extensive outreach network that provides professional guidance and information sharing for Albanians abroad (Bossavie, et al., 2024).

Practical options for Tunisia could include:

- Partnering with diaspora chambers of commerce and professional networks to provide **pre-departure briefings** and **post-arrival mentoring**;
- Developing **digital diaspora platforms** to connect Tunisian workers abroad with mentors and employers;
- Supporting **diaspora-led integration campaigns** aligned with fair recruitment standards and social dialogue frameworks.

2. Return and Reinvestment

Returning migrants and diaspora investors bring capital, expertise, and global connections that can stimulate innovation and job creation. Well-designed programs can turn these returns into sustainable development impacts.

International good practices include:

- The **Diaspora Invest Project** in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, which provided grants and technical assistance to diaspora entrepreneurs; in four years, it mobilized US \$22 million in investment and created more than 1,500 jobs (Bossavie et al., 2024).
- The **Croatian Unity through Knowledge Fund**, which finances joint research projects between the Croatian diaspora and domestic institutions, strengthening innovation ecosystems (Bossavie et al., 2024).
- **India's diaspora bonds** (such as the Resurgent India Bonds), issued through the State Bank of India, successfully attracted large-scale financial contributions from Indian expatriates during economic crises (World Bank, 2016).
- **South Africa's mentoring networks** linking entrepreneurs abroad with start-ups at home have supported early-stage innovation and skill transfer (World Bank, 2006).

For Tunisia, measures could include:

- A **“Return and Invest Tunisia”** scheme providing co-funding, incubation, and legal facilitation for diaspora-led enterprises;
- **Diaspora innovation hubs** linking Tunisian universities and SMEs with international expertise;
- **Mentorship and knowledge-exchange programs** using the Tunisian scientific and business diaspora;
- Development of **diaspora investment platforms** or bonds to channel remittances into productive sectors.

7. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Summary of Findings – Score card

Findings from the Institutional Assessment Report (in particular those presented in chapter 6) are summarized in the institutional assessment scorecard. This is based in the diagnostic framework that maps key processes across three core pillars—Facilitating Access, Furthering Access, and Fortifying Access—and four migration phases: Pre-recruitment, Recruitment and Pre-departure, Departure and Integration, and Return Migration. The scorecard shows four types of information:

- **Institutions involved:** actors who have a role in the process assessed.
- **Indicators:** concrete outputs expected from a well-functioning process (e.g., frameworks, agreements, programs);
- **Level of advancement:** categorized using a four-tier system (*Advanced, Emerging, Nascent, Not Yet Available*);
- **Justification:** a concise explanation drawn from the report’s narrative and findings.

The classification on the level of advancement reflects how developed and operational each process is, considering the presence of regulatory frameworks, institutional mandates, delivery systems, and coordination mechanisms. The goal is to identify areas that are already functional, those requiring targeted improvement, and those that represent clear institutional gaps. The four categories used in the assessment are defined as follows:

Advanced: The process is fully functional and supported by a coherent institutional and regulatory framework. All necessary components—such as legislation, systems, mandates, and coordination mechanisms—are in place and actively implemented. Institutions carry out their roles effectively, and the process is aligned with GSP objectives.

Emerging: Some foundational elements of the process are in place, such as relevant programs, pilot initiatives, or partial legal frameworks. However, gaps remain in terms of consistency, coverage, coordination, or operational scale. The process is underway but not yet institutionalized or fully aligned with structured labour mobility pathways.

Nascent: Initial awareness or interest exists, and some actions or mandates may be present. However, the process is at an early stage of development, with major components still missing—such as policy frameworks, institutional roles, funding, or delivery mechanisms. Implementation is minimal or fragmented.

Not Yet Available: There is currently no identifiable institutional process, policy, or structure addressing the function. No formal mandate, program, or coordination mechanism is in place.

Table 4: Process Assessment Scorecard

Pillar	Phase	Function/Process	Key Institutions Involved	Indicators	Level of Advancement	Assessment Justification
Facilitating Access	Pre-recruitment	Enabling regular labour mobility paths	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Social Affairs Ministry of Economy and Planning	National legal framework for labour mobility aligned with EU/GSP standards; Legal provisions for circular migration; Provisions for migrant rights embedded in legal framework.	Advanced	Legal framework and institutional setup exists and are well developed. Yet further alignment may be required for specific provision.
Facilitating Access	Pre-recruitment	Setting the framework of collaboration	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Social Affairs, ANETI International, ATPF, ATCT	Bilateral labour mobility agreements signed and enforced; Joint governance structure or bilateral committee established; Defined roles and responsibilities; Monitoring and evaluation mechanism; Regular bilateral coordination; Stakeholder inclusion in governance	Emerging	Framework has been developed. Bilateral coordination, evaluation and stakeholder inclusion can be improved.
Facilitating Access	Pre-recruitment	Conducting labour market needs assessment	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, ONEQ, ANETI International (Tunisia); INS (Tunisia); National Migration Observatory (ONM); Private Sector Federations (UTICA); Tunisian Italian Chamber of Commerce (Frequent periodic labour market assessment conducted country wide; Critical Occupations List updated at least biannually; Use of enterprise surveys and admin data; Inter-agency coordination to produce and use labour market intelligence; Cooperation mechanisms with foreign counterparts to identify needs in destination countries; LMI and skills intelligence tailored to different stakeholders	Emerging	Tunisia conducted a strong labour market assessment recently, but regular integration into labour mobility planning is limited. Dedicated unit in ONEQ has been established, but needs to be reinforced. Need for further Inter-agency coordination. Need for tailored avenues to feed information into decision-making across stakeholders.

Facilitating Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Identifying jobs and potential candidates	ANETI International; ATCT, Italian Employers; Private recruitment agencies, Chambers of Commerce (Italy and Tunisia)	Bilateral consultations with Italian employers; Job demand data received; Candidate registration systems functioning;	Emerging	Coordination with Italian employers occurs through pilot initiatives, but sustained institutional mechanisms for job identification are still developing. More diversified outreach strategies for candidate selection are needed, and more inclusive of unemployed people.
Facilitating Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Implementing profiling and matching activities: tailored and adapted employment services	ANETI International; MEFP; ATCT; Italian Employers; Private Recruitment Agencies	Candidate profiling systems in place; Matching based on job requirements; Involvement of private recruitment agencies in structured pilot activities; Job fairs	Emerging	Initial profiling tools and employment services exist; improvements are planned to tailor them for international placement and develop automation to scale up.
Facilitating Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Using private sector intermediation	ANETI International; ATCT, Private Recruitment Agencies; MEFP	Legal framework permitting and regulating private recruitment intermediation; Oversight of private agencies regulated; Public-private coordination mechanism.	Nascent	Legal oversight mechanisms exist, but operational collaboration between public and private actors in international mobility remains limited.
Facilitating Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Facilitating clearance and visa issuance	Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Italian Embassy in Tunisia;	Standardized visa application process for labour mobility; Coordination among ministries and embassies; Timeline tracking for visa issuance;	Emerging	Need to strengthen collaboration with foreign embassy to prioritize visa process for particular migration channels; need for stronger control of visa support services to reduce scams;
Furthering Access	Pre-recruitment	Designing trainings and aligning qualifications	MEFP; CENAFFIF, ATFP; ATCT; Public Training Centers; UTICA; Italian Training Providers	Training modules designed with consultation with employers; Agile mechanisms for curriculum update; curriculum adapted to international job requirements; Language and civic training integrated. Alignment with host country standards; Curricula revision processes initiated based on international benchmarks	Emerging	Tunisia has a well-developed training system with increasing employer involvement, though more systematic alignment to international mobility needs is necessary.

Furthering Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Delivering training, reskilling or upskilling, language and civic course	ATFP; AFMT; AVFA; ATCT; ANETI International; Private Training Providers; MEFP	Existence of operational training programs; Accredited training centers; Training Equipment; Train the trainers programs	Emerging	Training infrastructure is in place and several reskilling programs have been launched with international support, but there is a need for better alignment with employer demand abroad and stronger public-private coordination. Moreover, train the trainers programs and availability of equipment may be limited in some cases.
Furthering Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Certifying qualifications and skills validation	ATFP; AFMT; AVFA CENAFFIF, MEFP	Validation protocols for acquired skills; Certification frameworks aligned with international standards; Recognition of informal and non-formal learning; Certification bodies operational; Curricula revision based on international benchmarks	Emerging	Tunisia has developed skills certification systems, especially for TVET, but a standardized validation and certification system aligned with destination country standards is still under development. On-job skills recognition mechanism in place. Also UTICA has developed its own recognition system.
Furthering Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Tracking labour outcomes	ANETI International; MEFP; ONEQ,	Monitoring systems tracking post-placement outcomes; Data-sharing between origin and host country; Feedback loop from migrants and employers; Digital systems capturing labour mobility performance indicators	Not Yet Available	There is currently no institutional capacity to track systematically labour market outcomes for migrants placed abroad.
Furthering Access	Return Migration	Recognizing skills acquired abroad	MEFP, ATFP; ANETI International, ANETI	Validation systems for on-jobs skills acquisition; Skill documentation mechanisms for returnees;	Emerging	Progress in recognizing skills acquired on-the-job, though a structured recognition framework for international experience is still in development.
Fortifying Access	Recruitment and Pre-departure	Providing pre-departure orientation	ANETI International; ATFP, MEFP, ATCT	Pre-departure orientation programs covering rights, expectations, destination information;	Emerging	Orientation services exist, especially through ANETI International and ATCT, but are not standardized, nor do they fully cover all outgoing labour migrants under GSP schemes.

Fortifying Access	Departure and Integration	Activating support services and networks (e.g., diaspora)	OTE; Embassies and Consulates; Diaspora organizations	Support services offered to migrants abroad; Engagement mechanisms for diaspora organizations; Institutional mandates for diaspora support; Budget allocations and programmatic tools	Nascent	Support networks exist formally through attachés sociaux and diaspora engagement structures, but coverage is limited and not systematically resourced. Institutional support is constrained by budget and staffing limitations, and not all migrants benefit from these services.
Fortifying Access	Departure and Integration	Providing employment and labour support services	ANETI International; OTE (Attachés sociaux)	Existence of post-placement monitoring systems; Mentoring programs for migrants; Dedicated staff or institutional units for migrant follow-up	Not Yet Available	No structured programs for continuous labour market support abroad in cooperation with destination countries are identified. Existing consular services focus on administrative or legal support .
Fortifying Access	Departure and Integration	Establishing grievance redress mechanisms	OTE; Embassies and Consulates; Ministry of Social Affairs	Availability of complaint channels for migrants; Institutional roles clearly defined; Legal aid systems; Monitoring and enforcement frameworks; Cooperation with host-country institutions	Not Yet Available	There are no institutional grievance mechanisms tailored for labour migrants. Dispute resolution is handled case-by-case through consular support.
Fortifying Access	Departure and Integration	Facilitating access to welfare and social insurance benefits in host countries	CNSS; Ministry of Social Affairs; OTE; Embassies and Consulates	Bilateral mechanisms for welfare coordination; Guidance for migrants on entitlements abroad; Social insurance enrolment support; Consular mediation for claims; Awareness initiatives	Nascent	Although consular actors provide some guidance and services, there is limited institutional coordination with host-country welfare systems.
Fortifying Access	Return Migration	Establishing bilateral social security agreements and ensuring portability of social insurance rights	CNSS; Ministry of Social Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Bilateral portability agreements; Transfer mechanisms for pensions and insurance; Case management systems; Institutional capacity to process claims; Inter-agency coordination and interoperability	Nascent	Bilateral dialogue has occurred, but no functioning portability mechanisms are in place for returnees. Institutional capacity and international alignment remain limited.

Fortifying Access	Return Migration	Providing labour market reinsertion programs – entrepreneurship incentives for returnees	ANETI, MEFP, Ministry of Economy	Job counselling and entrepreneurship programs for returnees; Reintegration funding schemes; Linkages to financial institutions and startup incubators	Not Yet Available	There are no dedicated institutionalized mechanisms for returnee identification, tailored business support, or reintegration strategies under a labour mobility framework such as the GSP.
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7.2. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.2.1. Horizontal application, all pillars

Developing national strategies and key monitoring reports

Developing coherent national strategies and foundational monitoring reports is essential for Tunisia to effectively govern labour mobility and workforce development in a way that aligns with its long-term socio-economic goals. Without structured planning and regular evaluation, policies risk becoming fragmented, reactive, or misaligned with evolving labour market realities—both domestically and internationally. Comprehensive strategies provide a roadmap for government action, clarify institutional roles, and create accountability mechanisms, while regular monitoring reports ensure that planning is grounded in evidence and remains responsive to demographic and economic shifts.

In the context of international labour mobility, these tools are especially critical. They enable the government to anticipate skills needs, manage migration proactively, and ensure that labour mobility policy is not isolated but integrated into broader national development frameworks—such as employment, education, fiscal planning, and social protection. Interlinking these strategies enhances coherence and cooperation across institutions, making the design and implementation of public policies more effective.

Key national strategies and monitoring reports should be (further) developed, articulated and regularly updated to support a coherent and forward-looking approach to labour mobility, workforce development, and economic planning: i) National Migration Strategy, ii) Labour Development Strategy, iii) Long-Term Demographic and Fiscal Sustainability Report, iv) National Growth Strategy (**Figure 8**).

Figure 8: Blueprint for National Strategies and Key Monitoring Reports



While some of these frameworks already exist (**Table 5**), their adoption, implementation, and regular renewal have faced delays. In many cases, strategies tend to reflect the priorities of individual ministries rather than being anchored in a shared, whole-of-government vision. Strengthening interlinkages and ensuring timely updates would enhance policy coherence and improve Tunisia’s capacity to respond to evolving demographic, labour market, and migration dynamics.

Table 5: National strategies and Monitoring reports

Research/Strategy	Entity	Year	Source
National Strategy for Reforming the National Vocational Training System	MEFP	2013	https://www.emploi.gov.tn/uploads/pdf/Reforme_FP_Tunisie-Fr.pdf
National Employment Strategy	MEFP	2019	https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_867712.pdf
National Strategy for International Employment and the Protection of Migrant Workers' Rights	MEFP	2021	
Analyses of the labour market situation	ONEQ	2024	https://www.emploi.tn/uploads/pdf/ONEQ/Conjoncture_T3_2024.pdf
National Survey on International Migration (HIMS)	ONM	2021	http://www.migration.nat.tn/ar/publications/etudes-et-recherche/rapport-de-lenqu%C3%AAte-tunisia-hims-2
In-depth profiles of Tunisian migrants abroad	ONM	2023	http://www.migration.nat.tn/ar/publications/etudes-et-recherche/profils-appfondis-des-migrants-tunisiens-%C3%A0-l-%C3%A9tranger
Study on the migration of high skilled Tunisians	ONM	2021	http://www.migration.nat.tn/ar/publications/etudes-et-recherche/etude-sur-la-migration-des-tunisiens-hautement-qualifi%C3%A9s
Overview of the information system on international labour migration to and from Tunisia	ONM	2021	http://www.migration.nat.tn/ar/publications/etudes-et-recherche/etude-sur-la-migration-des-tunisiens-hautement-qualifi%C3%A9s-4

Tunisia requires a comprehensive and dynamic National Migration Strategy that addresses both outbound and inbound migration in consistency with the National Strategy for International Employment and the Protection of Migrant Workers' Rights (SNEI), which is already well developed. This strategy should establish a clear vision for how the country manages emigration (including labour mobility, student migration, and diaspora engagement) and immigration (including legal pathways, integration, and protection of migrant rights) and at the same time how it protects domestic economy and critical sectors

from brain drain. The strategy must take an international perspective, aligning with Tunisia's bilateral and multilateral commitments and reflecting labour demand trends in partner countries. It should also define institutional roles, data governance responsibilities, and legal frameworks to manage cross-border labour movements with transparency and fairness.

To remain relevant and effective, this strategy should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals (e.g., every four years), based on evolving demographic, economic, and geopolitical realities. It must be firmly linked to Tunisia's employment, education, and economic development policies. For example, migration flows — both inflows and outflows — must be factored into labour market forecasting and long-term workforce planning. The strategy should also include monitoring tools and impact indicators to assess how migration contributes to national development and social cohesion.

Developing further the National Employment Strategy to be transformed to a Labour Force Development Strategy, should serve as the country's master plan for building a competitive, adaptable, and future-ready workforce. It must cover skilling, reskilling, and upskilling, especially in sectors with current or projected labour demand — both domestically and internationally. This strategy should provide a national framework for aligning vocational education and training systems with labour market intelligence, including employer input and international qualification standards. It should include policy tools to integrate groups with low labour participation rates such as youth, women, or particular characteristics such as people with disabilities, migrants and returnees, while anticipating skill needs in high-growth and migration-relevant sectors.

The strategy should be closely linked and aligned with both the National Migration Strategy and Tunisia's Economic Growth Strategy. For example, if migration channels are opened in the healthcare or construction sectors, the labour strategy must ensure sufficient training and certification mechanisms to prepare candidates. It should also support reintegration by recognizing and capitalizing on the skills of returning migrants. Regular updates, every four years, should be informed by feedback loops from all relevant entities concerned, including social partners, chambers of commerce, and the private sector.

Tunisia needs a recurring Long-Term Population and Public Finance Sustainability Report, integrating demographic projections (including net migration) and fiscal modelling. This report would project population growth, aging patterns, labour market participation, and migration trends, and analyze their long-term impact on social security systems, healthcare, pensions, and public finance sustainability. Such a report is vital for anticipating future pressures and making evidence-based decisions on workforce development, pension reform, and migration policy.

Net migration must be explicitly modelled as part of these projections, recognizing both its economic contributions (through labour and remittances) and service demands (healthcare, housing, education). The findings should feed into both the Migration and Employment Strategies, helping to determine the optimal level and type of labour inflows needed to sustain Tunisia's economic and demographic equilibrium. Updates should occur

at frequent intervals e.g. every four-year, coinciding ideally with revisions to national medium term budget frameworks.

The National Growth Strategy should articulate Tunisia’s medium- to long-term priorities for sectoral growth, investment, and regional development. It should identify which sectors are expected to drive economic expansion and where labour shortages are likely to emerge. Crucially, the strategy must recognize the full role of migration—not only as a channel for relieving pressure on domestic labour markets through outflows but also as a source of human capital through inflows and returns. Outbound migration can help mitigate unemployment while building skills through international experience; returnees, in turn, can bring back valuable expertise, innovation, and entrepreneurial drive that contribute to domestic growth.

The strategy should also define concrete mechanisms for leveraging the economic potential of the Tunisian diaspora, including mobilizing remittances for productive investment, encouraging knowledge transfer, and engaging diaspora networks in sector-specific development initiatives. Migration should not be treated as a parallel or isolated issue but embedded in national economic planning—aligned with export strategies, innovation ecosystems, and labour force projections. It must connect directly with both the Migration Strategy and the Labour Force Development Strategy. For example, if the growth strategy prioritizes renewable energy or digital services, corresponding upskilling programs and international mobility pathways should be developed. Furthermore, long-term demographic and fiscal forecasts—including net migration trends—should inform the strategy to ensure sustainable and inclusive labour and capital policies. Regular, quadrennial updates would help keep the strategy responsive to macroeconomic trends and global dynamics.

7.2.2. Pillar I – Facilitating Access

Strengthening the Framework of Collaboration

To strengthen the governance of international labour mobility, Tunisia should institutionalize formal bilateral follow-up mechanisms for all signed labour agreements. Joint monitoring and coordination committees—developed in collaboration with destination countries—would enable structured oversight, feedback loops, and timely issue resolution. These mechanisms are essential for translating political agreements into sustained, operational partnerships, especially under high-volume mobility schemes. In parallel, the internal coordination among key directorates within the MEFP—namely, the Directorate General for Overseas Placement, Directorate General for Vocational Training Development, and the Office of Legal Affairs—should be formalized to ensure alignment of legal, operational, and training elements throughout the negotiation and implementation phases.

Equally important is the strengthening of implementation protocols accompanying each agreement. These should go beyond general provisions and explicitly address technical dimensions such as the financing of training, procurement of necessary equipment, preparation of trainers, and modalities for scaling up support in line with growing demand. Moreover, the agreements should incorporate concrete measures for worker protection and

support—an area often overlooked. This entails safeguarding workers’ rights, providing access to grievance mechanisms, ensuring decent working conditions, and offering reintegration support where relevant. Enhancing the legal and technical capacities of the involved MEFP units would support this effort. This includes targeted training on drafting agreements, access to model clauses, and reference materials tailored to the Tunisian context and international standards. Developing institutional expertise in this area will help ensure that future agreements are both legally sound and operationally feasible.

To support evidence-based coordination, Tunisia should reinforce the role of the Observatoire National de la Migration (ONM) as a functional, real-time data platform for inter-institutional collaboration. Clear protocols should define the responsibilities of each agency contributing data, supported by dedicated technical staff and appropriate digital tools. Lastly, improved coordination with consular offices of destination countries based in Tunisia is critical to streamline visa issuance and facilitate timely approval processes.

Aligning Skills, Mobility, and Policy through Data-Driven Labour Market Assessments

For Tunisia, LMNAs must serve a dual purpose: identifying labour gaps abroad that its workforce can help fill, while ensuring that those pathways align with national economic priorities and local job creation strategies. Without a strong evidence base, the selection of sectors in BLAs risks being driven primarily by destination country demand, potentially overlooking domestic workforce development, sustainability, and the mitigation of skills drain.

Tunisia already has the foundations for such assessments through various national data sources and institutional stakeholders. The Labour Force Survey (LFS), led by the National Statistics Institute (INS), provides valuable data on employment and education. ANETI maintains administrative records on the unemployed and job seekers, while ANETI International holds information on participants in international mobility programs. ATFP tracks enrolments and completions in initial training, reskilling, and upskilling programs. ONEQ also plays a crucial role in monitoring and evaluating employment and vocational training policies and programs, as well as tracking the integration of graduates from training and education systems into the labour market. It is further mandated to analyze and anticipate labour market dynamics at national, regional, and sectoral levels. On the demand side, the Chambre Tuniso-Italienne de Commerce et d’Industrie (CTICI) has launched a new enterprise survey on job vacancies and skills, which could play a key role if institutionalized and conducted regularly. The establishment of ONEQ’s Monitoring and Forecasting Unit would further strengthen the system’s capacity to generate evidence-based insights, identify and anticipate labour and skills needs both nationally and internationally, and enhance the alignment between training provision and employer demand. ATCT has also expressed a strong willingness to engage in the establishment of a joint interinstitutional monitoring unit, which would enable the pooling of resources, foster data sharing, and improve the consistency and complementarity of forecasting analyses across institutions. Despite these assets, there is no formal coordination mechanism to link supply- and demand-side data across institutions in a coherent, sustainable, and frequently updated

manner. Strengthening data integration and assigning clear institutional roles will be key to building a reliable LMNA system.

A comprehensive LMNA should include several core components. It should map the profile of the current workforce by region, sector, and qualification level, and identify labour surpluses and shortages. It should assess the profile of potential migrants, especially those whose skills match priority sectors in partner countries. It must also analyze skills mismatches, both in terms of overqualification and underqualification, and offer projections for emerging occupations and evolving skill demands. Moreover, LMNAs should support sector prioritization by identifying areas of bilateral demand that are sustainable and offer spillover potential for Tunisia’s economy. To ensure consistency, data collection must be standardized (e.g., using ISCO and ISCED), securely shared, and used systematically in national workforce and mobility planning. It is recommended to develop a unified database combining administrative, survey, and big data sources to improve labour market intelligence. Finally, a crucial aspect is to ensure the effective utilization of data: information should be shared in a meaningful way, rather than simply presenting statistics; data must be processed and customized to deliver relevant insights to various stakeholders (i.e., adopting a client-oriented approach); and it is essential that the information is disseminated appropriately.

Figure 9 summarizes four key actions to strengthen Labour Market Needs Assessments (LMNAs) and ensure alignment between skills, mobility, and policy. These include establishing a national coordination mechanism, enhancing microdata access and harmonization, conducting biannual joint labour market reviews, and developing transparent sector selection criteria. A well-designed LMNA can provide a critical foundation for aligning Tunisia’s labour and migration policies, ensuring that international mobility contributes to inclusive and sustainable national development.

Figure 9: How to develop Market Intelligence Systems



Improving Coordination and Tools for International Recruitment and Candidate Matching

To strengthen Tunisia's capacity to respond to growing international labour mobility opportunities, strategic improvements are needed in both coordination and digital infrastructure. ANETI, through its dedicated platform ANETI International, plays a pivotal role in the preselection of candidates for overseas employment. Investing in a semi-automated IT tool would improve efficiency and responsiveness, particularly in the context of growing demand under programs such as the GSP. In parallel, increasing ANETI International's operational resources—both human and technical—is essential to enable more agile coordination and candidate support. ATCT, which manages placements of qualified professionals abroad, could also reinforce its skilled mobility outreach by expanding employer engagement through its international offices.

Broader collaboration with non-state actors is equally critical to enhancing Tunisia's access to global labour markets. **Formal partnerships between ANETI International and private recruiters, diaspora networks, and international staffing firms** would help diversify placement channels and extend reach to new sectors and regions. These partnerships should be supported by clear roles, coordination protocols, and quality assurance measures. Additionally, scaling up and standardizing **pre-departure orientation services**—covering legal, cultural, and administrative preparation—would strengthen migrant readiness and reduce transition-related vulnerabilities. These services should be expanded in **collaboration with NGOs and international organizations**, which can provide technical expertise, contextual guidance, and complementary support to public institutions.

7.2.3. Pillar II – Furthering Access

Strengthening Tunisia's Training and Certification for Global Workforce Integration

To ensure that Tunisia's training and certification systems can fully support labour mobility objectives, greater integration between training providers and labour mobility planning is needed. Institutions such as ATFP and CENAFFIF should be systematically involved in the design and implementation of international mobility programs, including the selection of priority sectors, curriculum updates, and the anticipation of training needs. This will improve the relevance of training pathways and help align skills development with both domestic and destination country demand. In parallel, the roll-out of Tunisia's competency-based training reform should be accelerated and explicitly linked to international qualification frameworks such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and ESCO, to enhance the recognition and portability of Tunisian credentials abroad.

Strengthening inter-institutional coordination is equally important. MEFP, ANETI, training centers, and other stakeholders could collaborate more closely to ensure continuity between training delivery, certification, and integration processes. Additionally, Tunisia currently lacks a systematic mechanism for tracking labour market outcomes of trainees. Introducing such a system would make it possible to evaluate the real-world impact of

training investments and support evidence-based improvements. Regular program evaluations and feedback loops would also help ensure that training remains responsive to labour market needs and mobility trends, particularly in sectors identified through bilateral or regional labour agreements.

Finally, Tunisia should invest in both national and cross-border skills recognition systems. At the national level, a mechanism should be developed to validate on-job acquired or foreign-earned skills, particularly for experienced workers who may lack formal certification. At the international level, partnerships with destination-country institutions—such as regional authorities, chambers of commerce, or employer associations—should be pursued to promote the mutual recognition or practical equivalence of Tunisian qualifications. This would help reduce barriers to employment abroad, increase employer confidence, and ensure that mobility translates into real opportunities for skilled Tunisian workers.

Investing in the Home-track reskilling and upskilling

Investing in home-track reskilling and upskilling ensures that training designed for international mobility also creates pathways to decent jobs at home, benefiting staying jobseekers and workers. By structuring training opportunities to serve both outward mobility and domestic employment, the country can ensure that migration complements national development rather than competing with it. Workers who remain in Tunisia contribute to local firms and economic growth, while those who migrate can return with enhanced skills and experience, reinforcing the cycle of knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship. In this way, home-track investment can mitigate the risk of brain drain, reduce unemployment, modernize the local workforce, and improve productivity in sectors such as agrifood, construction, and ICT—areas where shortages coexist with high youth unemployment.

Practical Recommendations

- Create dedicated home-track programs under ANETI International and in cooperation with ANETI to reskill and upskill jobseekers in sectors prioritized for both domestic and international demand, with an inclusion approach which serves the unemployed.
- Align curricula with international standards (e.g., EQF, ESCO) so that skills acquired at home are portable and recognized abroad, increasing employability and reducing brain drain risks.
- Leverage bilateral cooperation frameworks and donor funding to co-finance training infrastructure, equipment, and Train-the-Trainer programs, ensuring scalability and sustainability.
- Develop monitoring systems to track employment outcomes of home-track participants, creating feedback loops for continuous improvement and alignment with labour market needs.

- Promote public–private partnerships to co-design curricula and provide internships or job placements in Tunisia, ensuring that training translates into real employment opportunities.

7.2.4. Pillar III – Fortifying Access

Promoting migrant’s integration

To strengthen the integration of Tunisian migrants abroad, there is a clear need to expand and professionalize the network of institutional actors involved in post-arrival support. Social attachés, already present in many Tunisian consulates, play a valuable frontline role, but their capacity should be broadened and reinforced. This includes offering services such as contract screening (e.g., employment and housing agreements), basic legal advice, and referrals to trusted local providers of social and labour integration services. Creating clear focal points for integration support—both in diplomatic missions and in coordination with local authorities in host countries—would help ensure more consistent assistance for migrants after arrival.

In parallel, Tunisia should leverage the strength of its diaspora organizations, many of which already play an informal role in helping new arrivals navigate life abroad. Formalizing cooperation through structured partnerships and support mechanisms would allow these organizations to co-deliver orientation sessions, civic education, community-based social inclusion programs, and orientation on housing.

A functioning migration system also requires accessible and trusted grievance redress and legal support mechanisms (see Box 9). Migrants who face labour disputes, housing issues, or discrimination must have safe and clear channels to report violations and seek redress. These services could be delivered through consulates, partner NGOs, or host-country support structures and should include assistance with navigating labour laws, housing contracts, and welfare entitlements. In addition, migrants need targeted information and guidance on accessing welfare systems in destination countries, particularly in decentralized systems such as Italy, where service provision vary significantly between regions.

Strengthening Formal Pathways in Labour Mobility

As reviewed in **Box 4**, Italy offers two primary channels for semi-skilled labour migration: the quota system and **pre-departure training projects**. The latter offers promising potential to enhance transparency and reduce risks associated with informal recruitment practices. The structured and demand-driven training linked to international mobility aligns with the principles of a GSP. Also, it allows for deeper Tunisian engagement in project design and monitoring. However, delays in work permit issuance remain a challenge. This points to the value of continued bilateral dialogue and technical cooperation to strengthen joint implementation and monitoring mechanisms, address bottlenecks, and improve post-arrival support.

Monitoring and Accountability: Institutionalizing bilateral follow-up mechanisms for all signed labour agreements can significantly reduce risks of informal employment and fraudulent recruitment. This could include **joint monitoring committees** and structured feedback loops to identify operational challenges early and ensure accountability. A **dedicated monitoring framework** for each mobility program—with indicators on visa issuance, job placement, contract compliance, and worker well-being—would support transparency and help prevent informal practices.

Data Systems and Transparency: Strengthening the *MigraData platform* and improving interoperability across institutions would enable real-time tracking of mobility flows and outcomes. Systematic data exchange would allow for early detection of irregularities and support evidence-based planning. A *grievance and redress dashboard* accessible to both origin and destination country institutions could further enhance transparency and responsiveness, though this may require legislative adjustments.

Worker Protection and Legal Safeguard: Embedding grievance redress mechanisms, legal support, and post-arrival services into mobility program design is essential to protecting workers from informal employment risks. While the extent of Tunisian authorities' involvement may vary, their role could be reinforced through enhanced consular support and legal aid—particularly in cases of delayed documentation or contract-related issues. The OTE, despite current limitations in institutional support, holds a formal mandate and could be empowered to play a more active role in safeguarding migrant rights.

Oversight of Private Intermediaries: Especially, in high-volume mobility schemes involving private recruitment actors, third-party audits or civil society oversight could help ensure ethical standards and reduce the risk of informal or exploitative practices. These measures could complement official regulatory frameworks already existing in both countries.

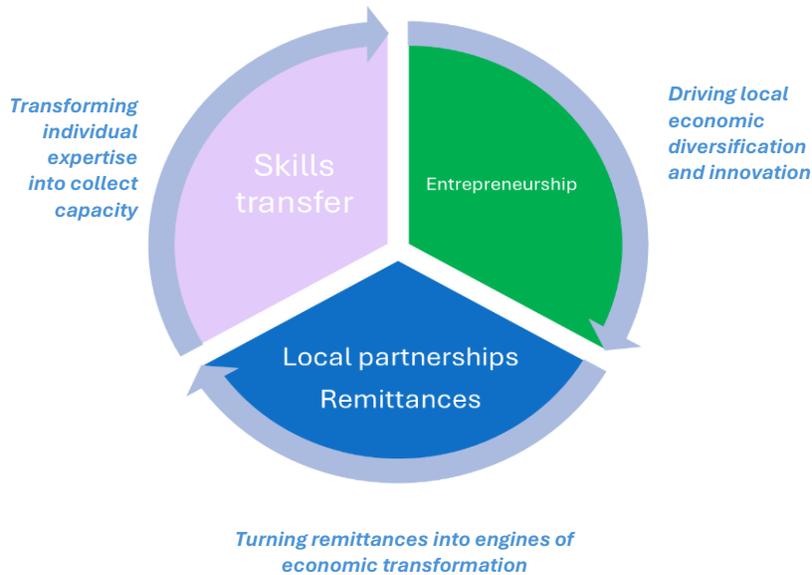
Enhancing the Development Impact of Return Migration “Brain gain”

The phenomenon of high-skilled emigration—often referred to as “brain drain”—has traditionally raised concerns about the loss of human capital in origin countries. However, recent causal evidence challenges this narrative, revealing that migration opportunities can stimulate domestic investment in education and skills. For example, when the United States expanded visa availability for Filipino nurses, the Philippines experienced a substantial surge in nursing graduates, with over 113,000 new nurses licensed during the same period—far exceeding the number who emigrated (Batista et al., 2025). This illustrates a “brain gain” effect, where the prospect of migration incentivizes skill acquisition at home. Moreover, remittances sent by high-skilled migrants are frequently used to fund education, further enhancing the human capital base. Return migration also plays a pivotal role, as skilled individuals bring back expertise, experience, and global perspectives that can foster innovation and improve socio-economic outcomes in their home countries (Batista et al., 2025).

The development potential of return migration in Tunisia can be understood through three interrelated dimensions: the transfer of skills, the promotion of entrepreneurship, and the reinforcement of local partnerships and remittances (**Figure 10**). Anchoring policies in these

areas would allow return migration to move beyond reinsertion challenges and become a lever for socio-economic transformation.

Figure 10: Potentials of Circular and Return Migration



Skills transfer is one of the most significant benefits of return migration. Many Tunisians acquire technical and managerial expertise abroad that is highly relevant for domestic labour markets. Yet these competencies are often underutilized because they are not formally recognized or adequately connected to local institutions. Establishing clear mechanisms for the validation of skills acquired abroad, linked to Tunisia’s national qualifications framework, would help returnees integrate more easily into the labour market. In addition, creating opportunities for returning professionals to contribute to training programmes or vocational institutes would enable systematic knowledge sharing and “brain regain.” Short-term return schemes, allowing experts abroad to temporarily engage in teaching or institutional support, could reinforce this dynamic.

Entrepreneurship offers another pathway for maximizing the contribution of returnees. Returning migrants often bring not only financial savings but also new ideas, professional networks, and familiarity with international business practices. These assets can be channelled into the creation of enterprises that generate employment and innovation. To unlock this potential, returnees require tailored support—such as preferential access to credit, business incubation services, and targeted mentoring. Dedicated returnee entrepreneurship funds, possibly co-financed with international partners, could amplify the impact of migrant investments. In this way, return migration becomes a driver of local economic diversification rather than a source of pressure on the labour market.

Remittances from Tunisians abroad already play a crucial role in household income and macroeconomic stability, but their potential for productive use remains underexploited. Encouraging **partnerships** between local authorities, civil society, and diaspora associations can help channel a portion of these flows into community development projects, infrastructure, or social enterprises. Establishing matching schemes—where

remittances are complemented by public or donor funds—would multiply their impact. Furthermore, structured partnerships with local chambers of commerce and municipalities could facilitate collective investment projects, ensuring that remittances contribute not only to consumption but also to sustainable local development.

Table 6 offers some practical recommendations for policies to enhance return migration and experiences from other countries.

Table 6. Policies to Enhance Return Migration and “Brain Regain” in Tunisia

	Recommendations	Illustrative Examples / Good Practices from other countries
Labour Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand ANETI International and regional employment offices, in collaboration with OTE, to provide services to Tunisian emigrants abroad and to returnees (job-matching, counselling). • Design returnee-specific job-placement and wage-subsidy schemes for priority sectors (construction, green tech, health). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bosnia & Herzegovina – Diaspora Invest links returnees with employers and finance, generating 1,500+ jobs (Bossavie et al., 2024). • Greece – ReBrain Greece Initiative provides wage subsidies to attract skilled professionals back to Greece, co-financing salaries for up to two years (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2020). • Honduras – The Centro de Atención al Migrante Retornado (CAMR) offers integrated reintegration services for returnees, including vocational training, psychosocial counselling, and job placement support coordinated through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The programme also provides temporary shelter and links to microenterprise initiatives for sustainable livelihoods (World Bank, 2024; IFRC, 2023).
Education & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate rapid recognition of qualifications and experience acquired abroad. • Create “return fellowships” for academics and scientists. • Support R&D initiatives and cooperation between universities/research centers national and abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodia – The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism allows returning migrant workers to have skills acquired abroad assessed and formally certified within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. This facilitates access to better local jobs or entrepreneurship opportunities for returnees (ILO, 2019). • Armenia - The iGorts Fellowship Programme and the broader Diaspora for Development (D4D) Framework, Armenia promotes the circular return of skilled professionals from the diaspora. Returnees are placed in public institutions for one year, contributing to skills transfer, curriculum modernization, and institutional capacity-building in education and public administration. The initiative also fosters long-term reintegration by

		<p>recognizing professional experience gained abroad and connecting returnees to academic and training networks (WB, 2006; Diaspora for Development, 2024; Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, Republic of Armenia 2025).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croatia – Unity Through Knowledge Fund supports joint R&D between returnees and local institutions (Bossavie et al., 2024).
Investment & Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a <i>Return & Invest Tunisia</i> scheme offering co-funding, incubator and accelerator services for diaspora entrepreneurs. • Develop diaspora co-investment funds to channel remittances into productive SMEs. • Remove or defer taxes on capital repatriated for business creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bosnia & Herzegovina – Diaspora Invest Programme Implemented with World Bank support, mobilized diaspora and returning entrepreneurs through matching grants, mentoring, and access to finance. The programme awarded US \$2 million in grants to 164 firms, leveraging US \$22 million in total investment, creating 1,571 jobs, and increasing firm sales by 70 percent—three-quarters from exports to former destination countries. It exemplifies how diaspora and returnee investment can drive local enterprise growth and productive reintegration (Bossavie et al., 2024).
Social Protection & Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure easy re-registration of returnees in health insurance and social-security systems. • Develop interoperable bilateral portability systems for pensions and benefits with major host countries based on bilateral social security agreements already in place (France, Italy, Germany). • Provide relocation grants or housing assistance for families returning from EU countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippines – Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Operates a comprehensive Full-Cycle National Reintegration Programme that provides returning Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) with integrated social protection, health coverage, and enterprise support. Through its Reintegration Services, OWWA offers livelihood grants, skills training, psychosocial counselling, and access to the <i>Enterprise Development and Loan Package</i>, implemented with the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines. In 2022–23, the programme supported more than 20 000 returning OFWs through financial literacy and business-start-up training and facilitated loans and livelihood assistance packages for small enterprise creation. OWWA also coordinates with the Department of Health and Social Security System to ensure continued health-insurance coverage and access

		to welfare benefits after return (OWWA, 2023; UN Women, 2022; MPTF, 2023).
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design targeted support for reintegration into national education systems 	<p>Honduras: The Government published an <i>Orientation note</i> in 2020, providing specific guidance to teachers on how to facilitate the reintegration of returning migrant children into the national education system (<i>IOM, 2024</i>).</p> <p>Mexico: The <i>EDUCATEL Migrante</i> telephone line has been operational since 2021, offering tailored advice to potential returnees on how to continue their studies upon return (<i>IOM, 2024</i>).</p>
Taxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce temporary income-tax relief (e.g., 50% reduction × 5 years) for qualified returnees. • Offer duty exemptions for transporting personal effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greece – Law 4758/2020, Article 5C ITC: 50% exemption on Greek-source employment/business income for eligible returnees for up to seven years (Greece, 2020; PwC Greece, 2025). • Italy – “Rientro dei Cervelli”: 70–90% income-tax exemptions for qualified returnees (OECD, 2022).
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a national Return Migration Portal providing integrated information on employment, business, taxation, and social protection. • Organize Diaspora Fairs in Europe to present Tunisian job and investment opportunities. • Within the National Migration Observatory (ONM), ensure a dedicated Return Migration section is set up to systematically register and analyze returnee data and programme results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spain – Plan de Retorno a España (2019): Introduced 50 coordinated measures across ministries and regions to facilitate voluntary return. The plan integrates one-stop offices and a digital return portal providing employment, business, and social-protection services. It has improved administrative efficiency and diaspora outreach, becoming an EU reference for integrated return governance (Bossavie et al., 2024, pp. 230–231). • Nigeria – Migration Governance Framework: The National Migration Policy (2015) and Labour Migration Policy (2014) established inter-agency coordination led by the Ministry of Labour and NCFRMI. Migrant Resource Centres in Abuja, Lagos, and Benin City act as one-stop hubs for information, referral, and reintegration support, improving coordination and transparency across government institutions (World Bank, 2021, pp. 13–15, 73).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albania – National Diaspora Strategy (2021–2025): The National Diaspora Agency manages a digital diaspora registry, business forums, and outreach through embassies and online platforms. The system has strengthened policy coherence and data collection, linking returnees and investors with local institutions (Bossavie et al., 2024, pp. 224–226).
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Portability of Social Security Rights

Ensuring the portability of social security rights plays a vital role in enabling sustainable and secure return migration. When migrants are able to retain and access benefits such as pensions and health coverage earned abroad, they are more likely to engage with formal migration schemes and view return as a viable option. In Tunisia, while the bilateral agreement with Italy provides a legal foundation for portability, its implementation has faced operational constraints, including limited interoperability between institutional systems and administrative bottlenecks. Building on these findings, there is scope for Tunisian authorities to explore ways to enhance institutional coordination, improve digital infrastructure for tracking contributions made abroad, and facilitate access to benefits upon return. Strengthening the interface between CNSS and diaspora support structures could also help bridge gaps in benefit claims and reinforce trust in formal migration pathways.

Belgium’s Overseas Social Security (OSS) system⁹ offers a technically robust model for portable social protection, particularly for workers outside the European Economic Area, Switzerland, and the UK. The OSS mirrors Belgium’s domestic social security architecture, providing access to pensions, health insurance, and unemployment benefits through a voluntary contribution scheme. Workers can enroll online, calculate future pension entitlements using actuarial formulas adjusted for inflation, and manage contributions and documentation digitally (Jashari, 2025). Monthly contributions range between €200 and €800, and benefits are disbursed globally, with over 40,000 beneficiaries receiving €313 million in 2023. The system also allows seamless reintegration into Belgium’s domestic social security upon return, without loss of accrued benefits or waiting periods. Tunisia could benefit from this example by developing a similar digital platform that enables migrants to maintain continuous coverage while abroad, simplifies the process of benefit claims, and ensures that returnees can reintegrate into the national system without administrative delays. Adopting such a model would not only improve benefit access and institutional efficiency but also reinforce the credibility of formal migration pathways and strengthen the social contract with Tunisian workers abroad. Moreover, World Bank

⁹ See <https://www.overseassocialsecurity.be/en/index.html>

assessments of Belgium’s bilateral social security agreements, such as with Morocco, emphasize the importance of automated data exchange and clear information provision to ensure effective portability, particularly in pension and health care domains (Holzmann, Wels and Dale, 2016; Holzmann, 2016).

7.2.5. The umbrella of BLAs - Prioritizing Recommendations

The recommendations presented throughout Chapter 7, together with the proposed measures to structuring Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) presented in [Table 7](#), form a set of actions to operationalize the Global Skills Partnership (GSP) between Italy and Tunisia. [Table 8](#), in turn, organizes main recommendations according to their expected ease of implementation and transformative potential: short-term measures represent quick wins achievable within current mandates and resources; medium-term recommendations require further design, capacity, or international coordination; and long-term proposals are structural in nature, embedding the GSP and BLA framework into national strategies, institutions, and legislation for lasting impact.

This prioritization provides a structured basis for sequencing the Government’s efforts to operationalize the GSP and strengthen BLAs in Tunisia. With the technical assistance of the World Bank, this framework could be further developed into a more detailed implementation roadmap, elaborating for each recommendation indicative milestones, and performance indicators, based on Governments policy priorities and decisions. Such a roadmap—prepared in consultation with national counterparts—would help translate these recommendations into a coherent, results-oriented reform agenda aligned with Tunisia’s policy priorities and institutional capacities.

Table 7: How to design BLAs to maximize the triple-win benefits of labour mobility?

1. Evidence-Based Planning	2. Training & Skills Alignment	3. Recruitment & Matching	4. Rights & Integration	5. Governance & Monitoring
Conduct parallel or joint labour market needs assessments	Define who delivers and finances training (including equipment + Train of Trainers)	Agree on cross-border institutional collaboration to respond to employers' expectations on recruitment procedures	Guarantee portability of social protection (pensions, health)	Establish Joint BLA Implementation Committees
Identify priority sectors and occupations based on home and host labour market demand data	Align curricula with international standards while responding to local needs	Implement digital profiling and matching tools	Include enforceable clauses for decent work and housing	Identify desired common outcomes to be achieved, Indicators to assess progress
Use demographic/employment projections for migration planning	Structure dual-track training (some migrate, others stay)	Standardize pre-departure orientation (rights, contracts, logistics)	Provide legal aid and grievance redress channels	Use shared tracking systems for worker journeys
Link sector choices to national growth strategies	Include certification and evaluation mechanisms	Promote transparency about visa, clearance, and travel timelines	Activate support networks	Examine potential for cooperation with private sector, NGOs, INOs, Diaspora Organizations

Table 8: Prioritization of Recommendations

Short-term (0–12 months)	Medium-term (12–24 months)	Long-term (24 + months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up and activate Joint BLA Implementation Committees with Italy; agree on common outcomes and indicators. • Standardize pre-departure orientation across ANETI International and ATCT. • Publish a joint workplan led by ONEQ (cellule de vielle) to publish Labour Market Needs Assessment (LMNA) report biannually. • Upgrade ANETI International candidate profiling and matching systems, and assess needs for partnerships with private recruiters for future scalability. • Develop BLA clauses for decent work, housing, grievance access, and post-arrival support; designate consular focal points. • Pilot home-track training programs in 1–2 sectors (e.g. construction, agrifood) with employer partnerships and outcome tracking. • Agree on ONM database standards, facilitate the exchange of data and produce a BLA/GSP dashboard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalize LMNAs (annual/biannual) and integrate results into sectoral workforce planning, which also include assessment of country’s skills development capacity • Scale up dual-track training with secured financing (including ToT + equipment) and EQF/ESCO-aligned curricula, including enhanced curricula update processes. Develop public private partnerships to increase capacity. • Roll out a national skills-recognition system (including validation of foreign-earned competences) and promote equivalence with Italian regions/chambers. • Establish migrant grievance and legal-aid channels (helpline + case management) coordinated with consulates and NGOs. • Formalize diaspora partnerships for mentoring, arrival support, and job navigation. • Improve consular liaison (OTE) with Italian welfare institutions to improve migrant access to social-protection schemes. • Implement return-reinsertion and entrepreneurship support programs which leverage human capital built abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the cycle of production of the key government strategies concerning migration, international labour mobility, labour force and skills, long-term sustainability of public finances and growth strategy. • Negotiate and operationalize bilateral social-security portability agreements (pensions and health) and no waiting time clauses for migrant workers working through BLAs in destination countries. • Embed the BLA architecture in law and regulation (mandatory committees, LMNAs, portable credentials, worker-protection clauses, shared tracking systems). • Enhance the participation of the unemployed to the trainings of international mobility programs (home or away track) through official refers of ANETI’s employment consultants. • Institutionalize systematic outcome evaluation of training, and mobility programs both for the home and away track with feedback into budgeting and quota planning. • Develop an interministerial scientific committee to monitor brain drain and demographic risks.

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Annex 1: Analytical Institutional Mapping

Public institutions:

Institution	Role/Responsibility
Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP)	Leads the development of national employment and mobility strategies, including the negotiation and oversight of bilateral labour agreements. The MEFP supervises key institutions involved in vocational training and international employment services, and ensures policy coherence across sectors. It also oversees the regulation of private placement agencies and alignment of training systems with labour market needs.
ANETI International	ANETI International plays a central role in facilitating employment opportunities abroad for young professionals, job seekers, seasonal workers, and individuals from the private sector. It is actively engaged in the implementation of bilateral labour agreements, working in coordination with national institutions such as ATFP and a wide range of international partners. ANETI International collaborates closely with foreign employers, acting as a strategic intermediary between labour supply and international demand. Its responsibilities include publishing calls for applications, pre-selecting qualified candidates, organizing interviews (both online and in-person), and delivering tailored training programs, including technical and language modules, followed by pre-departure orientation sessions to support professional and cultural integration abroad.
The Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP)	ATFP is the primary provider of vocational training in Tunisia, delivering approximately 90% of the public sector's training provision, alongside specialized institutions such as the Agricultural Extension and Training Agency (AVFA) and the Tourism Training Agency (AFMT). At the national level, including both public and private providers, ATFP contributes to nearly 80% of total vocational training delivery. The agency manages an extensive network of 136 training centers nationwide, offering over 400 specializations across 12 economic sectors, thereby playing a central role in preparing the workforce for both domestic employment and international mobility opportunities.
National Center for Training of Trainers and Training Engineering (CENAFFIF)	Designs and develops vocational training curricula to align with sector-specific labour market demands. CENAFFIF works with public and private stakeholders to ensure training are relevant to the needs of the labour market . It also plays a key role in training-of-trainers, ensuring quality standards across the national vocational training system.

National Employment and Qualifications Observatory (ONEQ)	<p>Monitors labour market trends, conducts skills forecasting, and evaluates employment policies to inform evidence-based planning. ONEQ contributes to the alignment of training and employment services with national and international market demand, including through its monitoring unit. Its data supports strategic planning for labour mobility programs and the development of targeted sectoral pathways.</p>
Directorate General of Overseas Placement and Foreign Workforce (DGPEMOE)	<p>Responsible for the negotiation and legal oversight of bilateral labour agreements and regulation of private recruitment agencies. DGPEMOE plays a critical role in ensuring that migration partnerships comply with national labour standards and provide ethical recruitment pathways. It also monitors agency activities and ensures coordination with international counterparts on mobility frameworks.</p>
The Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT)	<p>Supports both circular and long-term labour mobility for skilled professionals, primarily from the public sector (notably in education and health) and experienced private sector executives. It establishes bilateral agreements with international counterparts to facilitate mobility pathways and manages a robust candidate database aligned with ESCO standards to ensure effective job matching. ATCT provides a comprehensive range of services, including candidate coaching, pre-departure orientation, visa facilitation, and post-departure follow-up, positioning it as a key actor in promoting Tunisia’s expertise abroad.</p>
National Migration Observatory (ONM)	<p>Collects, analyzes, and disseminates data on migration flows, labour mobility trends, and socio-economic impacts. ONM supports policy development and international cooperation through research and evidence-based recommendations, helping shape mobility strategies.</p>
The Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE)	<p>Provides socio-economic support to Tunisians abroad, including legal aid, integration programs, and social protection services through a network of representatives in 17 countries, embedded within Tunisian embassies and consulates, ensuring close engagement with diaspora communities and responsiveness to their evolving needs. Through initiatives like TOUNESNA, MOBITRI, and EDMEJ, OTE actively engages in reintegration and diaspora mobilization efforts linked to labour mobility.</p>

Private sector, employers' and labour organizations, Chamber of commerce, International organizations, Diaspora organization

Institution	Role/Responsibility
Private Overseas Placement Agencies	Private entities licensed to place Tunisian workers abroad under MEFP supervision. They are required to adhere to national regulations on ethical recruitment, submit annual reports, and coordinate with public institutions such as DGPEMOE. They offer additional channels for accessing international job opportunities, particularly in high-demand sectors.
The Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA)	is the main employers' organization in Tunisia, representing the interests of the private sector across all economic sectors. It plays a pivotal role in social dialogue, engaging in tripartite negotiations with the government and trade unions on employment policies, labour regulations, and economic reforms. UTICA supports private enterprises through advisory services, regulatory guidance, vocational training partnerships, and facilitation of access to finance. It also acts as the voice of Tunisian employers in national and international forums, contributing to the design of employment strategies and advocating for a business environment that fosters investment, competitiveness, and private sector-led growth.
INCA Tunisie	INCA Tunisia is a specialized organization focused on the social protection of Tunisian workers living abroad, particularly in France and Italy, and operates as part of the broader Patronato INCA network, an Italian institution dedicated to defending workers' rights and providing social assistance. The organization offers a wide range of support services to Tunisian expatriate workers and their families who have remained in Tunisia, particularly in relation to social security rights, retirement benefits, workplace accident claims, and occupational illnesses. INCA Tunisia plays an essential role in facilitating administrative procedures and communication between Tunisian migrants and social security institutions in host countries. It also conducts awareness-raising and training sessions to inform workers of their rights and the steps required to access social benefits. In addition, the organization maintains institutional partnerships, notably with the Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE), to enhance the protection and empowerment of migrant workers and their families.

The Tunisian-Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CTICI)	<p>Serves as a key economic facilitator and institutional mediator, fostering bilateral cooperation between Tunisia and Italy. It actively promotes Italian investment in Tunisia, supports the export of Tunisian products to the Italian market, and facilitates the introduction and distribution of Italian goods in Tunisia. CTICI plays an important role in assisting both Italian and Tunisian companies in navigating administrative and regulatory processes, particularly in dealings with public institutions such as the Central Bank, tax authorities, and other regulatory bodies. Beyond its trade promotion functions, CTICI also conducts economic and labour market studies, contributing valuable sectoral analyses and insights to guide bilateral initiatives. It regularly shares its perspective on priority sectors for enhanced Tunisian-Italian cooperation, especially in areas with high employment and investment potential.</p>
ESPRIT University (Private)	<p>Plays a proactive role in preparing students for international labour mobility through a combination of global academic partnerships, dual degree programs, and international accreditations such as CTI and EUR-ACE. With a strong emphasis on employability, ESPRIT offers specialized programs tailored to industry needs, particularly in high-demand technical and engineering fields. The university also facilitates student mobility and professional placement abroad, equipping graduates with the skills, certifications, and intercultural competencies required to succeed in international labour markets.</p>
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Tunisia	<p>Plays a pivotal role in supporting safe, regular, and rights-based labour mobility through technical assistance, capacity building, and direct implementation of programs. It is a key partner in the THAMM project (Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa), which strengthens institutional frameworks, promotes ethical recruitment, and develops mobility schemes aligned with labour market needs in Tunisia and partner countries. IOM also implements return and reintegration programs, supporting Tunisian nationals returning from abroad through personalized reintegration plans, skills development, and access to employment or entrepreneurship opportunities—thus contributing to sustainable reintegration and local development.</p>
Association PONTES	<p>a non-profit organization that supports the social and professional integration of Tunisian migrants, both abroad and upon return. It provides individualized assistance, orientation, and socio-legal support to migrants throughout their mobility journey. Abroad, PONTES facilitates integration by offering services related to housing, employment, language learning, and administrative guidance. Upon return, the organization supports reintegration through counseling, skills recognition, and local economic reinsertion initiatives, helping returnees rebuild their lives and contribute to their communities. PONTES also collaborates with</p>

	<p>national and international partners to strengthen migrant protection and promote sustainable reintegration frameworks.</p>
<p>The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in Tunisia</p>	<p>Plays a key role in promoting inclusive socio-economic development and strengthening bilateral cooperation between Italy and Tunisia. Its activities focus on areas such as vocational training, job creation, labour mobility, rural development, and youth empowerment, often in partnership with Tunisian institutions and civil society organizations. AICS also supports migration-related programs, including initiatives that facilitate legal pathways for labour mobility and projects that promote the reintegration of returnees and the socio-professional inclusion of vulnerable populations. Through its programming, AICS contributes to addressing the root causes of irregular migration and fostering opportunities for dignified work in Tunisia.</p>

Annex 2. Data collection and assessment tools

A2.1. In-depth questionnaires

The in-depth questionnaire included in Annex 2 was a structured data collection tool used to guide interviews with key stakeholders involved in labour migration governance. Organized around the main stages of the migration cycle—Framework for Access, Facilitating Access, Furthering Access, and Fortifying Access—it covered legal frameworks, institutional roles, labour intermediation, skills development, and worker protection, among other areas. The questionnaire was designed to be adaptable to different types of entities, including government institutions, training providers, and civil society organizations. This allowed for its use across a range of interviews while maintaining consistency in the information gathered. Its structured format helped ensure that interviews yielded comparable data and addressed the institutional dimensions relevant to labour mobility. By **tailoring the tool to the specific mandate and scope of each institution**, the assessment was able to gather targeted insights that contributed to mapping existing practices, identifying challenges, and informing the broader diagnostic process.

Date of Interview:

Name of Interviewer (WB staff):

Duration (approximately):

INTRODUCTION

Please provide the following information about your entity:

1. **Entity Name:**
2. **Type** (Please specify if Ministry, Governmental Agency, NGOs-CSOs, Training Provider, Private Company, Social Partner, other):
3. **Address:**
4. **Contact Person Details:**
 - a. 4.1. Name:
 - b. 4.2. Position:
 - c. 4.3. Email:
 - d. 4.4. Phone Number:
5. **Brief Description of the Entity:**
 - a. 5.1. Mission and objectives:
 - b. 5.2. Main sectors of operation related to migration and labour mobility:
(Check websites and prefill in advance)

6. Role in the GSP (relative scope):

- a. 6.1. How does your entity contribute to labour mobility between Tunisia and other countries? / How does your entity contribute to labour mobility of migrants from third countries? (for Italy)
- b. 6.2. Describe key programs, initiatives, or services relevant to labour migration (emphasis to programs between Tunisia and Italy that are already in place).

I. FRAMEWORK FOR ACCESS

(Legal frameworks, agreements, and institutional responsibilities governing migration policy and labour mobility.)

A. Legal Frameworks and Policies

7. Does your entity operate under a national law, decree, policy, or strategy governing labour migration? If yes, please specify:
 - a. 7.1. Name the law(s) / presidential decree(s) / ministerial decision(s) / regulation(s) / circulars(s) also at regional level (for Italy):
 - b. 7.2. Main objectives:
 - c. 7.3. Challenges or limitations:
(multiple replies for more than one legislative act, provide us with the reference to the legislation – Check in the framework of desk review legislation in advance)
8. Are there bilateral or multilateral agreements already in place?
 - a. 8.1. List any Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs), Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), or trade agreements with labour provisions with other countries (Tunis) / third countries (for Italy).
 - b. 8.2. Which entities are involved in setting up a BLA? Could you describe the process?
 - c. 8.3. How frequently are these agreements reviewed or updated? Through which process?
9. Does the legal framework clearly define responsibilities related to labour migration? If not, what are the gaps? Can you identify strengths and bottlenecks (if any) related to legislative framework?

B. Institutional Architecture

10. Based on the organizational chart can you identify the units of your entity related to labour migration issues?
(Check web-sites and have the organizational chart in advance)
11. Does your entity have a dedicated unit or team responsible for labour mobility?
12. Does your entity have the necessary human resources and technical capacities to manage migration-related tasks effectively? Could you provide us with an estimation of the number of individuals working on these issues?
13. Are your entity's activities related to labour migration adequately funded?
14. Does your entity coordinate with other stakeholders in implementing labour migration policies and regulations? If so, what type of stakeholders are involved (public, private,

NGOs, INOs) and how do you coordinate (e.g. if there are some mechanism, platforms, etc.)?

15. What are the biggest challenges your entity faces in facilitating legal migration pathways?

C. Labour Market Needs Assessment

16. Which entity is conducting the labour needs assessment for BLAs?

17. What process is followed, including cooperation with other entities, social partners, private sector employers in order to identify the sectors and occupations in need, as well as the number of needed workers?

18. Are there gaps in methodology or data collections that could be improved?

II. FACILITATING ACCESS

(Processes for recruitment, labour intermediation, and pre-departure services.)

D. Recruitment and Labour Market Intermediation

19. How does your entity disseminate information on labour migration opportunities and the programs that are in place (origin: employees, recipient: employers)?

20. Are there specific labour intermediation services provided to match workers with employers? If so which type (public, private, or both). If yes, how are they regulated and monitored?

21. Do Public Employment Services refer unemployed individuals to international labour mobility schemes? (Tunisia)

22. How can employers that face labour shortages report the shortages to the authorities? How are they informed about labour mobility schemes? (Italy)

23. How does your entity ensure that workers are matched with job opportunities that align with their skills and qualifications?

24. What mechanisms exist to ensure transparency in recruitment processes?

E. Pre-Departure Preparation

25. Does your entity conduct or support (in cooperation with other entities, private providers or NGOs) pre-departure training for migrant workers?

- 25.1. If yes, please specify the topics covered (e.g., language, skills certification, financial literacy).

26. Are there medical or legal clearances required for departing workers? If so, what are the procedures?

27. How is travel to the destination country arranged? Who covers the costs?

28. What support services are available to workers before they migrate?

III. FURTHERING ACCESS

(Developing skills, cross-border certification, and long-term workforce planning.)

F. Skills Development and Recognition

29. Does your entity provide or support (in cooperation with other entities, private providers or NGOs) vocational training aligned with international labour market needs?
30. Are there mutual recognition agreements for skills or qualifications between Tunisia and Italy?
31. What steps are taken to ensure the quality and relevance of training programs for migrant workers?

G. Data and Performance Monitoring

32. Does your entity maintain a database of migrant workers?
33. What indicators are tracked to measure migration success (e.g., employment rates, remittances, job satisfaction)?
34. Are there data-sharing mechanisms between institutions to improve labour migration management?
35. What improvements do you think are necessary to enhance institutional capacity for migration governance?

IV. FORTIFYING ACCESS

(Protection measures and support for migrant workers abroad and upon return.)

H. Migrant Integration, Protection and Welfare

36. What migrant integration policies are in place? (recipient country)
37. Are there any welfare funds, financial assistance, or insurance programs available for migrant workers (both from origin and destination countries)?
Check eligibility conditions of main benefits in recipient country
38. How does your entity ensure compliance with international and national labour standards and fair treatment of workers abroad (origin country)/migrant workers (recipient)?
39. Does your entity coordinate with destination/origin country institutions to provide worker protection?
40. What are the main risks faced by migrant workers during their stay abroad?
41. Are there mechanisms to report grievances related to working conditions?
42. Are there policies in place to protect migrant workers from abuse, exploitation, or human trafficking?

I. Return and Reintegration

43. Does your entity track the number and conditions of returnee migrants (both countries)?
44. What reintegration services (economic, social, psychological) does your entity provide for returnees (origin)?
45. Are there job placement or skills certification programs for returning workers (origin)?

46. Are there any government programs to help reintegrate returning migrants into the local labour market (origin)?

Final Remarks

47. Could you suggest the addition of important stakeholders to our list? Which institutions or organizations do you believe should be prioritized for review during the assessment?
48. Have there been any previous reviews or reforms in this area that you believe we should take into account to build on past work?
49. What recommendations would you provide to improve institutional coordination for labour migration?
50. Are there additional comments or issues that should be considered in this assessment?
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A2.2. Focus group discussion guide

As part of the Institutional Assessment of labour mobility systems between Tunisia and Italy, a tailored Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide was developed to systematically capture the lived experiences of migrants, returnees, and potential migrants. This tool draws upon structured inputs from a range of validated questionnaires and international best practices, adapted to the Tunisian context and to the operational dynamics of bilateral labour migration programs. The guide is designed to support a nuanced understanding of each phase of the migration journey—pre-recruitment, recruitment and training, legal and logistical preparation, departure and integration, and return—through a participatory approach that emphasizes open-ended reflection and inclusive dialogue.

The insights generated from the application of this tool provide direct feedback from migration stakeholders themselves — particularly beneficiaries of labour migration schemes. These findings enrich the institutional diagnostic by highlighting both strengths and challenges faced by individuals navigating legal migration channels. They inform the assessment of how policies, programs, and institutions perform in practice across the migration cycle and help identify critical gaps in coordination, access to services, information dissemination, and worker protection. The tool also allows for disaggregated analysis by migrant status, enabling more responsive policy recommendations that are grounded in evidence from the field.

Introduction & Oral Consent

Hello, my name is [Name], and I work with the World Bank. We are conducting a study to understand the experiences of individuals who have participated or are preparing to participate in legal labour mobility programs from Tunisia to Europe, especially Italy.

The objective is to identify areas of enhancement in the system so that the Governments and their partners from the private and development sectors can work together to make the process easier for other people like you who will go through the labour mobility programs in the future.

The discussion today will take approximately 1.5 to 2 hours. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any question or leave at any time. Everything you share will remain confidential. We are not collecting your name or any personal identifiers, and your responses will only be used for research purposes to help improve labour migration systems.

We would like your permission to audio-record the conversation, so we don't miss any important points. Do we have your consent to proceed?

[Pause and confirm verbally]

Thank you. Let's begin.

Notes to the Facilitator:

A. To Do	B. Do Not
<p>Encourage open conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite everyone to speak. - Use prompts like “Does anyone else would like to say something?” or “Who else would like to say something more?” 	<p>Do not ask yes/no questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unless as a follow-up, they limit depth.
<p>Ask open-ended questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use gentle probes like “Can you tell me more about that?” or “How did that feel?” 	<p>Do not provide examples or suggest answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This might influence participants’ responses.
<p>Listen actively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use “huh,” “yes,” or “نعم.” - Maintain eye contact and stay present. 	<p>Do not let only a few participants speak:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage quieter participants.
<p>Guide conversation back gently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Let’s now move to the next topic.” - “I’d like to go back to what we were discussing...” 	<p>Do not use leading or assertive questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These can bias the answer.
<p>Start with introductions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce yourself. - Let participants introduce themselves however they prefer. 	<p>Do not judge or react strongly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay neutral, even with surprising answers.
<p>Be neutral and supportive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use open, non-judgmental tone and body language. 	<p>Do not over-probe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid making it feel like an interrogation.
<p>Use probes respectfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be curious, not forceful. - Let participants guide how much they share. 	<p>Do not interrupt unnecessarily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let participants finish before steering back on topic.

FGD Oral Questions

1. First, we will talk about the (Pre-Recruitment Phase): **(everyone)**
 - How did you first hear about this opportunity to work abroad? And why did you want to join this program? Were you also considering job opportunities inside Tunisia at the time?
 - Can you describe the application process? What form did it take? Was it easy or difficult to complete? Did you get help from someone? Who helped? Were you required to submit hard copies of any documents? If yes, how easy or difficult was that process?
 - If you could change or improve the application process, what would you suggest?

2. Now we will talk about the (Recruitment and Matching Process) **(everyone)**
 - Who has been matched with specific job position?
 - For those who'd been already matched with a job:
From the moment you submitted your application, how long did it take to hear back or get matched with an employer? Does the job sector align with your background or is it a new career path?
 - For those who have not yet matched with a job:
What are you expecting from the job matching process? What type of work are you hoping for?

3. Lets now hear a bit about the Training and Preparation experience that you had to do **(everyone)**
 - Who has already taken pre-departure training?
 - For those who have undertaken training, what was it like? Was it interesting, useful, and enough to prepare you for the job post? Which parts were most or least useful to you?
 - Did you experience any difficulties in following and completing the training?

4. We are also interested in hearing about your experience in the Job Interviews and Employer Interaction **(everyone)**
 - Can you tell us about your experience with the interviews with foreign employers? How did it go? Was there an interpreter or someone helping you during the interview?
 - How did you prepare for the interview? Did any one support you or provide advice?
 - How were you informed about the selection results? (right after the interview, through which channel)

5. Next, we need your opinion and insights about the Legal and Logistical Preparation
 - **(Potential migrants)** Have you already started the visa process? If yes, please share your experience, including any difficulty you have faced, and support given.
 - **(Potential migrants)** What information have you been provided about the terms of your work contract? Do you still have questions or information gaps about it?
 - **(migrants and returnees)** What was the process of getting your visa like? Did you face any difficulties? How long did it take? Did anyone assist you?

- Do you know how long your visa and work contract are valid for? (migrants and potential migrants that already have a contract & Visa)
- (everyone) Did you get any support regarding your job contract, housing, or travel? What kind of support was most helpful? And what kind of support did you need, but you did not receive?
- (everyone) What information has been shared with you about your rights and responsibilities as a worker in Italy? who provided this information?
- Could you please share any specific worries or concerns which you had/have about the journey you were/are about to start as a worker in Italy? Any specific excitements?

6. The final step we will discuss is the Departure and Integration (migrants and returnees)

- Did you receive support in arranging things like a residence permit, opening a bank account, or getting an ID in Italy? Who supported you—was it an organization, the diaspora, or the government? What was most difficult for you to start a life like a resident in Italy? For how long have you experienced difficulties? How did you manage or overcome these challenges?
- At the workplace, what has been more challenging for you? (do not prompt them from the beginning, only if helpful to motivate, ask about cultural differences at the workplace, language skills, technical skills, the job or working conditions were not what they expected, etc)
- Have you received further training when in Italy? If yes: what type of training? And was it your employer or yourself who decided to pursue more training? If not, do you think you would benefit from more training and why haven't you yet engaged in a course?
- Has any of you tried to get your skills recognized, verified or certified in Italy? If yes, could you please describe the process which you followed and your experience?

7. Return and reintegration (returnees only)

- What are the challenges you have faced when coming back to Tunisia? What kind of support, if any, did you receive during this process?
- Did the skills you have acquired in Italy have helped you securing and starting a career in Tunisia? Are you working in the same sector now as you were in Italy? Or did you switch to another type of work and what influenced this change?
- How do you view your migration journey overall? And what advice would you give to others considering migrating to Europe today?

Written Form Questions (potential migrants)

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a study conducted by the World Bank Group (WBG) to better understand the experiences and challenges of individuals considering migration. It is complementary to the oral questions discussed during the focus group session, and aims to help us better connect your personal background with your views and experiences related to migration.

By completing this form, you will help us build a clearer picture of how different demographic and professional factors influence the migration journey. This information is essential to improving the support and programs available for people in similar situations.

Please be assured that this questionnaire is completely anonymous. We do not ask for your name or any identifying information. Your answers will be used only in an aggregated and confidential way for research purposes.

We thank you sincerely for your time and for sharing your perspective.

Demographic and Employment profile

1. Age (*please fill in*):
2. Gender (*please fill in*):
3. Governorate (*please fill in*):
4. Marital status (*please select one*):
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Married with children
 - d. Other
5. Number of dependents, including kids, parents, husband, wife., etc (*please fill in*):
6. Education Level (*please select one*)
 - a. Secondaire
 - b. Formation professionnelle
 - c. College
7. Which languages do you speak? (*please fill in*):
8. Number of years of work experience (*please fill in*):
9. Current employment status (*please select one*):
 - a. Unemployed
 - b. Part-time employee

- c. Full-time employee
- d. Self-employed

10. Sector of current job or last job *(please fill in)*:

11. Which are the reasons of consider migrating *(please select and order answers by priority, giving 1 to the most important. E.g. you can select three and number them from 1 to 3, giving 1 to the most important reason)*:

- a. To find better employment opportunities
- b. To earn a higher income
- c. Due to lack of local job opportunities
- d. To improve living conditions / access better quality of life
- e. To gain new skills or training abroad
- f. To support my family financially
- g. Other (please specify):

12. For how long would you like to live abroad?

- a. Less than one year
- b. 1-5 years
- c. Over 5 years.

Written Form Questions (migrants in Italy)

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a study conducted by the **World Bank Group (WBG)** to better understand the experiences and challenges of individuals considering migration. It is **complementary to the oral questions discussed during the focus group session**, and aims to help us better connect your personal background with your views and experiences related to migration.

By completing this form, you will help us build a clearer picture of how different demographic and professional factors influence the migration journey. This information is essential to improving the support and programs available for people in similar situations.

Please be assured that this questionnaire is **completely anonymous**.

We do **not** ask for your name or any identifying information. Your answers will be used **only in an aggregated and confidential way** for research purposes.

We thank you sincerely for your time and for sharing your perspective.

1. Age *(please fill in)*:
2. Gender *(please fill in)*:
3. Governorate *(please fill in)*:
4. Marital status *(please select one)*:
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Married with children
 - d. Other
5. Number of dependents, including kids, parents, husband, wife., etc *(please fill in)*:
6. Education Level *(please select one)*:
 - a. Secondaire
 - b. Formation professionnelle
 - c. College
7. Which languages do you speak? *(please fill in)*:
8. Number of years of work experience *(please fill in)*:
9. Current employment status *(please select one)*:
 - a. Unemployed
 - b. Part-time employee
 - c. Full-time employee
 - d. Self-employed

10. Sector of current job or last job *(please fill in)*:
11. What were the reasons to migrate to Italy? *(please select and order answers by priority, giving 1 to the most important. E.g. you can select three and number them from 1 to 3, giving 1 to the most important reason)*:
- a. To find better employment opportunities
 - b. To earn a higher income
 - c. Due to lack of local job opportunities
 - d. To improve living conditions
 - e. To gain new skills or training abroad
 - f. To support my family financially
 - g. Other (please specify):
12. How long have you been living in Italy? *(please fill in)*:
13. How many jobs have you had since arriving in Italy? *(please fill in)*:
14. How often do you have to renew your work permit? *(please fill in)*:
15. How often do you have to renew your VISA? *(please fill in)*:

Written Form Questions (returnees in Tunisia from Italy)

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a study conducted by the **World Bank Group (WBG)** to better understand the experiences and challenges of individuals considering migration. It is **complementary to the oral questions discussed during the focus group session**, and aims to help us better connect your personal background with your views and experiences related to migration.

By completing this form, you will help us build a clearer picture of how different demographic and professional factors influence the migration journey. This information is essential to improving the support and programs available for people in similar situations.

Please be assured that this questionnaire is **completely anonymous**.

We do **not** ask for your name or any identifying information. Your answers will be used **only in an aggregated and confidential way** for research purposes.

We thank you sincerely for your time and for sharing your perspective.

1. Age (*please fill in*):
2. Gender (*please fill in*):
3. Governorate (*please fill in*):
4. Marital status (*please select one*):
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Married with children
 - d. Other
5. Number of dependents, including kids, parents, husband, wife., etc (*please fill in*):
6. Education Level (*please select one*)
 - a. Secondaire
 - b. Formation professionnelle
 - c. College
7. Which languages do you speak? (*please fill in*):
8. Number of years of work experience (*please fill in*):
9. Current employment status (*please select one*):
 - a. Unemployed
 - b. Part-time employee
 - c. Full-time employee
 - d. Self-employed

10. Sector of current job or last job (*please fill in*):
11. What were the reasons to migrate to Italy?
- To find better employment opportunities
 - To earn a higher income
 - Due to lack of local job opportunities
 - To improve living conditions
 - To gain new skills or training abroad
 - To support my family financially
 - Other (please specify):
12. How long have you lived abroad in Italy?
13. How many jobs have you had during your stay in Italy?(*please fill in*):
14. What are the reasons that led you to return to Tunisia after living in Italy (*please select and order answers by priority, giving 1 to the most important. E.g. you can select three and number them from 1 to 3, giving 1 to the most important reason*):
- End of work contract or visa expiration
 - Could not find stable work abroad
 - Family reasons (e.g. health, reunification)
 - Chose to invest or start a business in Tunisia
 - Personal decision to return home
 - Faced legal or administrative issues abroad
 - Other (please specify)
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Annex 3. Data collection and storage policy

Data Privacy and Ethical Compliance

All interviews and focus group discussions undertaken in the framework of the Institutional Assessment adhered strictly to the World Bank’s internal data privacy standards. The process was conducted in direct coordination with the World Bank’s Data Privacy Office (DPO), a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) where necessary, as required by institutional protocols for high-sensitivity data collection activities. No personal data were shared with third parties or external vendors, and data were handled exclusively by authorized World Bank staff. All audio recordings and related transcripts were securely stored and encrypted using Microsoft Teams and OneDrive—both tools pre-approved by the Bank’s DPO. Informed consent was obtained from all participants using a standardized consent form (written or oral), previously reviewed and validated by the DPO. A sample of the approved consent form is presented below for reference.

Consent Form – Focus Group with Migrants

IDENTIFICATION

Interviewer Name :

Date : _____

NOTICE AND SCREENER

The World Bank is conducting a study, the Institutional Assessment, about international labour mobility systems in Italy and Tunisia, which is part of a project called the *Global Skill Partnershipss – GSP* between Italy and Tunisia, a bilateral training and migration agreement where the destination country helps fund training in the origin country for skills needed in both labour markets.

The Institutional Assessment wants to assess capacities, eventual bottleneck and propose solutions to effectively deliver streamlined labour migration frameworks in line with GSP goals. We want to ask some questions about your migration trajectory to Italy (reason to travel, support received before and after departure, settling in Italy, eventual return to Tunisia, etc.) in order to capture your experience and point of view, which will complement the analysis we are doing with public and private institutions in Italy and Tunisia.

Any response that you provide will be kept confidential. No specific information about you will be shared with third parties. We will record audio of the interview for ensuring quality in information recording and processing using Microsoft Teams, which is a tool approved by the World Bank for its alignment with the Bank’s Data Privacy policies. We will retain these records for up to 1 year after the study is over.

The World Bank will conduct its analysis based on an anonymized dataset. Please note that any identifying Personal Data will be securely safeguarded by the World Bank, safely stored and encrypted by the Social Protection Global Unit, and will be deleted within 1 year after the study is over.

If you have any questions about this research study or about the processing of your personal data, please contact vmichelgutierrez@worldbank.org.

Your participation in the focus group is entirely voluntary. If at any point there are any questions you do not feel comfortable answering, you can choose not to answer them. You can also choose to stop the interview at any point without penalty.

The focus group will take 60 - 90 minutes at most. May we proceed?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Do you consent to having audio recorded during the focus group?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Date and Signature