Italy's Labor Mobility System: An Assessment in Support of Global Skill Partnerships

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Aree di Attività (Areas of Activities)
ADI	Assegno di Inclusione (Minimum Income Support)
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AICS	Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation)
ALMP	Active Labor Market Policy
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (European Union)
ANCE	Associazione Nazionale Costruttori Edili (National Association of Building Constructors)
ANETI	Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant (Tunisia – National Agency for Employment and Independent Work)
APL	Agenzie per il Lavoro (Private Employment Agencies)
APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
Art. 23	Article 23
ART-ER	Attrattività Ricerca Territorio Emilia-Romagna (Regional Agency for Innovation and Research)
ASSOLAVORO	Associazione Nazionale di Categoria delle Agenzie per il Lavoro (National Association of Private Recruitment Agencies)
ATCT	Agence Tunisienne de Coopération Technique (Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation)
ATECO	Classificazione delle Attività Economiche (Classification of Economic Activities)
ATFP	Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training)
ATLANTE	Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni (Atlas of Work and Qualifications)
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Germany)
BLA	Bilateral Labor Agreement
CENAFFIF	Centre National de Formation de Formateurs et d'Ingénierie de Formation (National Center for Training of Trainers and Training Development)
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian General Confederation of Labor)
CIDCI	Coordinamento Italiano delle Diaspore per la Cooperazione Internazionale (Italian National Coordination of Diasporas for International Cooperation)

CIMEA	Centro Informazioni Mobilità Equivalenze Accademiche (Information Center on Academic Mobility and Equivalence)
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Confederation of Labor Unions)
COL	Critical Occupations List
CPI	Centro per l'Impiego (Public Employment Center)
CPIA	Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti (Provincial Centers for Adult Education)
CP-ISTAT	Classificazione dei Prodotti ISTAT (Classification of Products – Italian National Institute of Statistics
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Australia)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DG	Direzione Generale (General Directorate)
DGPEMOE	Direction générale du placement à l'étranger et de la main d'oeuvre étrangère au MEFP (Directorate General of Overseas Placement and Foreign Workforce at MEFP, Tunisia)
Dis-Coll	Disoccupazione Collaboratori (Italian unemployment allowance)
DL	Decree Law
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DPO	Data Privacy Office
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ERP	Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica (Public Residential Housing)
ERS	Edilizia Residenziale Sociale (Social Residential Housing)
ESCO	European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EWG	Employer Working Group
FEG	Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz (Skilled Labor Immigration Act)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FONDIMPRESA	Fondo Paritetico Interprofessionale Nazionale per la Formazione Continua (National Interprofessional Fund for Continuous Learning)
FORMA.TEMP	Fondo per la formazione e il sostegno al reddito dei lavoratori temporanei

	(Fund for Training and Income Support for Temporary Workers)
FORWORK	Fostering Opportunities of Refugee Workers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)
GOL	Garanzia di Occupabilità dei Lavoratori (Guaranteeing Workers' Employability)
GSP	Global Skill Partnership
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
INAPP	Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche (National Institute for Public Policy Analysis)
INPS	Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale (National Institute for Welfare)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Italian National Institute of Statistics)
IVC	Individuazione, Validazione e Certificazione (Identification, Validation and Certification services)
LFS	Labor Force Survey
LMI	Labor Market Intelligence
MAECI	Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)
MEFP	Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Formation professionnelle (Tunisian Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training)
MLPS	Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NASpI	Nuova Assicurazione Sociale per l'Impiego (Unemployment Benefit)
MUNER	Motor Valley University of Emilia Romagna
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non -governmental Organization
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSCC	National System for Certification of Competences
NYC	New York City

ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTE	Office des Tunisiens à l'Étranger (Office for Tunisians Abroad)
PALM	Pacific Australia Labour Mobility
PIF	Piattaforma Ingressi Formati all'Estero (Platform for Foreign-Trained Entrants)
PUOI	Protezione Unità a Obiettivo Integrazione (Protection Unit for Integration Objective)
RIDAP	Rete Italiana Istruzione degli Adulti (Italian Network for Adult Education)
SIISL	Sistema Informativo per l'Inclusione Sociale e Lavorativa (Information System for Labor and Social Inclusion)
SILER	Sistema Informativo Lavoro Emilia Romagna (Labor Information System of Emilia-Romagna)
SIRI	Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration
SISCO	Sistema Informativo Statistico delle Comunicazioni Obbligatorie (Statistical Information System of Mandatory Communications)
SLI	Sviluppo Lavoro Italia
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMS	Short Messaging Service
SNEI	Stratégie Nationale de l'Emploi à l'International de la Tunisie (Tunisia's National Strategy for Employment Abroad)
SPID	Sistema Pubblico di Identità Digitale (Public Digital Identity System)
SUI	Sportello Unico per l'Immigrazione (Single Immigration Desk)
THAMM	Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa
TUI	Testo Unico Immigrazione (Italian Consolidated Migration Act)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Union for Labor)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
VAE	Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience (France – Validation of Prior Learning)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Italy's evolving demographics, persistent sectoral labor shortages, and suboptimal integration of migrants' human capital point to the need for a systematic, forward looking approach to legal labor mobility. This institutional assessment lays out how Italy can operationalize market driven mobility partnerships—particularly via Article 23 pre departure training projects—to better meet employer demand while supporting migrant inclusion and development outcomes in the country of origin.

This institutional assessment examines how Italy's institutional and operational frameworks support legal labor mobility. It diagnoses bottlenecks, maps operational pathways, and proposes actionable recommendations to facilitate, further, and fortify access along the migration journey—from demand assessment through post arrival integration. Specifically, it analyzes how labor demand is monitored, vacancy matching mechanisms, project financing, approval processes for migrant entry, training design and effectiveness, skills recognition frameworks, and socioeconomic integration support services.

This analysis is instrumental to understanding the degree to which Italy's labor mobility ecosystem is ready for implementing Global Skill Partnerships (GSPs). GSPs are innovative cooperation models linking human capital development in origin countries with labor needs in destination countries through legal labor mobility channels. Based on aligned occupational and skills standards, training investments occur in origin countries and are financed primarily by destination countries, both for those who remain and those who migrate.

The GSP model is based on a "triple-win" approach:
- Countries of origin benefit from workforce upskilling in key occupations and reduced brain drain.
- Destination countries address labor shortages in high-demand sectors.
- Workers gain better skills and employment opportunities, domestically or abroad.

The assessment focuses on the pre-departure training projects under Article 23 of the Italian Consolidated Migration Act (Testo Unico Immigrazione, TUI). This channel enables non-seasonal labor migrants to enter Italy after completing pre-approved professional, civic and language training in their country of origin. This pathway was selected because it reflects a key aspect of GSPs, which link skills development directly to international mobility opportunities. Therefore, with stronger alignment with GSP principles, this channel has the potential to better integrate migration and development goals.

This assessment was conducted in parallel with another institutional assessment of Tunisia's labor mobility system to evaluate the preparedness of both nations for participation in a GSP. The governments of each country have demonstrated an explicit commitment to enhancing labor mobility between them, motivated by clear demographic and labor market complementarities. Tunisia has a young workforce that is not fully absorbed by the domestic labor market, while Italy faces an aging population and persistent labor shortages in several key sectors.

Geographic proximity, established migrant networks, and long-standing political ties reinforce this interest. As of 2025, more than 123,000 Tunisian nationals legally resided in Italy, and the number of Italian residence permits issued to Tunisians had increased by 31 percent from the preceding year. Bilateral agreements, including the Memorandum of Understanding signed in October 2023, facilitate the legal entry of Tunisian workers to Italy.

Analytical Framework

The analysis follows a diagnostic framework for labor mobility systems that evaluates how institutions organize, coordinate, and deliver migration-related services across the entire labor mobility cycle. This framework adapts the model used by the World Bank to assess labor mobility systems in various countries. It is organized into three main pillars:

- **Pillar I: Facilitating access,** centering on the factors that enable workers to enter international labor markets through structured, regular pathways.
- **Pillar II: Furthering access,** encompassing the processes for skills development, recognition, and certification that ensure workers meet skills requirements of employers abroad.
- **Pillar III: Fortifying access,** focused on the protection, welfare, integration, and reintegration measures that safeguard migrants throughout the mobility cycle.

The methodology includes desk-based literature and policy reviews, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and focus group discussions with Tunisians participating in pre-departure training programs. The report includes **spotlights on Emilia-Romagna** to illustrate local practices of a region pioneering a legislative and strategic framework for talent attraction. Furthermore, it offers **international examples** that provide comparative policy options that could be adopted.

Information was collected and analyzed between February and November 2025. It excludes regulatory changes or initiatives taking place after such period, including the legal provisions applicable to Art. 23 through Decree Law no. 146/2025, approved in late

November 2025.

Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

Legal and Institutional Framework in Italy

Italy's legal framework for labor migration is governed by the Title III of TUI, which regulates entry through two main mechanisms: (1) quota-based channels that set planned labor inflow limits for dependent, seasonal and autonomous workers; and **(2) extra-quota channels** that include pre-departure training projects (Art. 23), European Union Blue Card for highly skilled workers and exemption from quotas for specific occupations.

The governance of labor migration involves multiple institutions (see the stakeholder map in Figure 4.2):

- National ministries that include the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLPS), Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and Ministry of Education and Merit.

- Regional and local governments with delegated competencies in employment services, training, and integration.

- Public agencies like Sviluppo Lavoro Italia (SLI)

- Local public institutions like Prefectures' Single Immigration Desk (Sportello Unico Immigrazione, SUI) and Provincial Centers for Adult Education (CPIA).

- Private sector actors, including employment agencies (APL), industry associations, chambers of commerce, and labor unions.

- Civil society organizations, diaspora groups, and international organizations.

Recent legal amendments (Cutro Decree 2023) strengthened legal migration channels, reintroduced triennial quota planning, streamlined administrative processes, and reformed TUI's Article 23.

The Article 23 channel allows non-EU workers to enter Italy for non-seasonal employment after completing approved pre-departure training in their country of origin. Candidate selection and training can be managed by various Italian stakeholders—such as private employment agencies, industry associations, training providers, civil society organizations, social partners, and local public entities—who may collaborate with origin-country partners, though direct employers are excluded from project leadership. Pre-departure training projects require approval from an Interministerial Commission led by the

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLPS) and must include three mandatory components:

i) technical training aligned with the national reference framework for occupations and skills (including modules on rights, safety, career guidance, and soft skills);

ii) a minimum of 100 hours of A1-level Italian language instruction (with examination);

iii) at least 10 hours of civic education.

Upon completion, hiring employers apply for employment clearance (nulla osta) through the Prefecture's Single Immigration Desk (SUI). Once clearance is granted, the Italian Embassy in the origin country processes the work visa. After arrival, workers sign a residence contract and apply for a residence permit (refer to Figure 4.1 for the Art. 23 process map). As of November 2025, 70 projects were approved across 27 countries, mainly in construction, machinery manufacturing, and transport sectors.

Facilitating Access to the Labor Mobility Scheme

Assessing Labor Demand for Migrant Workers. Accurate, timely demand assessment is foundational for market responsive mobility and training design, and Italy's data systems—Excelsior, SLI's LMI dashboard, SIISL, SISCO, ISTAT's LFS, and ATLANTE—provide rich inputs. However, the absence of a formal, recurrent Critical Occupations List (COL) constrains strategic planning for non-EU labor inflows. Establishing and regularly updating a COL through a combined top down and bottom-up approach—using indicators on sustained unmet demand, vacancy pressure, wage trends, and local supply, as well as structured stakeholder consultations—would anchor programming to real needs.

Identifying and Matching Vacancies for Migrant Workers. Early, structured employer participation is critical to secure vacancies and align standards with real world tasks. Yet employers face limited information about the targeted country's workforce, complex and lengthy clearance procedures, and unpredictable recruitment timelines that can reach 12 months. Reliance on unfamiliar origin country agencies and matching processes further erode confidence and scalability. To strengthen employers' participation, this report suggests four operational measures:

- A single web portal for both employers and workers, centralizing information, clarifying regulations, accepting applications to pre-departure training projects, and connecting to support services.

- Structured involvement of employer representatives by occupation and territory to co- define task profiles, competency levels, training content, and assessment modalities. This can make programs more market-responsive, build trust and

expand vacancy pools through cascading outreach within sectors.

- Support for standardized and technology-enabled matching processes that can increase transparency about candidates' profiles.

- Tailored support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs)—including needs assessments, administrative guidance, and workplace integration services—to overcome participation barriers.

Financing Training and Mobility. Sustainable, fair cost sharing is essential to scale pre departure training while safeguarding quality and equitable access. Current initiatives frequently leverage interprofessional funds (e.g., FONDIMPRESA, FORMA.TEMP) and public resources (AMIF, ESF+), but unit costs remain high and financing is challenging. A phased public-private model can begin with proof-of-concept pilots demonstrating value: employers contribute a fair share of training and placement, while public resources fund coordination, quality assurance, and integration services. Over time, partnerships, modularized training, and localized trainer capacity can reduce unit costs.

Enhancing Migrant Worker Entry Approval. Clearer, faster nulla osta and visa processes improve employer uptake and worker experience. Yet procedures are often longer than statutory timelines due to administrative inefficiencies, fragmented responsibilities, and heterogeneous practices across SUIs. To streamline, the report proposes:

- Simplified and anticipatory checks; for example, advancing worker security screening during training enrollment, pre-filling nulla osta modules for earlier verification, and reducing duplication by consolidating background checks among authorities.

- Consistent service quality across SUIs, which requires resourcing, automation, and staff training, backed by national monitoring to detect and resolve recurrent issues.

- A user-friendly digital communication platform that consolidates procedures, regulatory updates, FAQs, webinars, and vetted service directories for employers and workers.

- Stronger interministerial system interoperability.

Furthering Access

Pre-departure Standards Alignment and Skills Training. Aligning skills standards and implementing competence-based training help workers better match job requirements at the task level. Art. 23 guidelines permit flexibility in training content and assessment methods, allowing employers' needs to be addressed. Nevertheless, due to time limitations

and the absence of formal alignment processes, training often stays at the minimum level, which means additional instruction is needed after arrival—especially for specialized roles—delaying the start of work. To improve readiness, competence-based assessments can be integrated during selection to identify gaps, followed by tailored modular training that matches Italian regional occupational standards. Additionally, using the waiting time between completing mandatory training and visa issuance for extra language preparation would enhance both workplace and daily communication skills right from the beginning.

Recognizing Qualifications and Skills in Italy. Effective identification, validation, and certification (IVC) of skills are essential to improve labour market matching and reduce talent underutilization. While Italy's National System for Certification of Competences (NSCC) provides the framework, decentralized procedures at the regional level, heterogeneous service provision, limited interregional portability, and capacity gaps hinder access for foreign workers. Standardizing IVC services nationwide and providing clear pathways from competence recognition to professional qualifications would enhance efficiency and internal labor mobility. Furthermore, linking pre-departure skills assessments with post-arrival validation— ensuring evidence collected abroad is directly incorporated into Italian systems —can accelerate labor market integration and reduce duplication.

Fortifying Access

Activating Integration Services and Networks. Ensuring migrants have prompt access to basic services and coordinated support allows them to utilize their skills and settle more efficiently. Italy has a solid, multi-year national strategy for labor and socioeconomic inclusion of migrants, utilizing a multi-governance model and a territorial perspective. Yet delays in residence permits hamper service access and can render migrants invisible to public systems. Fragmented and uncoordinated efforts among civil society and local authorities make it difficult for migrants to navigate available resources. Expanding one-stop shops and case management models—with language and cultural mediators and interoperable IT to track beneficiaries— and formalizing mechanisms for inter-agency coordination can help identify and address systemic challenges, ultimately improving the consistency of support provided.

Enhancing Integration through Continuous Language Learning, Labor Market Inclusion, and Housing Access. Ongoing language acquisition, comprehensive labor inclusion services, and access to adequate housing are key to retention, productivity, and social cohesion. Non-EU migrants in Italy frequently encounter challenges due to limited language proficiency, insufficient housing options, and less favorable labor market outcomes compared to Italian nationals, such as higher rates of overqualification,

unemployment, and inactivity. Introducing mandatory six-month post-arrival language courses tied to integration agreements (targeting levels A2/B1), expanding effective public employment programs (e.g., PUOI, FORWORK) with individualized support and job coaches trained in multicultural competencies, and developing innovative housing strategies would significantly enhance early settlement experiences and labor market integration.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Global Skill Partnership for International Labor Mobility: A Triple-Win Opportunity

The Global Skill Partnership (GSP) is an innovative cooperation model that links skills development in countries of origin with labor market needs in destination countries through formal, legal labor mobility channels. According to the World Bank's 2025 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" (Acosta et al. 2025).

In practical terms, this means that workers are trained locally for occupations that are in demand in both countries. A defining feature of the GSP model is its **dual-track approach**:

- **"Away track"**: Trainees who migrate through structured and legal pathways to work in the destination country.

- **"Home track"**: Trainees who remain in the origin country and apply their newly acquired skills domestically, strengthening the local workforce and economy.

This approach allows countries of origin to expand their skills base even after accounting for departures, while destination countries gain access to trained workers, which help fill shortages in critical occupations.

A GSP is based on a skills-building and labor mobility management framework grounded in bilateral or multilateral agreements between origin and destination countries. Public or private institutions in destination countries finance most of the training programs, which are delivered in origin countries. This structure ensures that labor mobility occurs via regular and predictable legal pathways. Training is aligned with occupational standards, certification systems, and labor market demands in both countries. By supporting both the country of origin's training system and the country of destination's sector-specific labor needs, the model enhances mutual benefits and reduces common risks such as skill mismatches, brain drain, and irregular labor migration.

The GSP model embodies a triple-win framework with clear advantages for all actors. This makes the case for mobilizing public and private resources to build resilient labor

mobility systems and investing in skilling the workforce in countries of origin (figure 1.1).

Benefits for countries of origin:
- Upskilling and reskilling of the young workforce
- Improved employability and reduced domestic skills shortages
- Increasing opportunities for economic gains through remittances and return migration entrepreneurship

Benefits for migrants:
- Access to new and market-relevant skills
- Better-paid and more secure employment opportunities abroad
- Opportunities to reinvest skills and earnings in home communities

Benefits for countries of destination:
- A reliable supply of job-ready workers
- Reduced labor shortages in key sectors
- Stronger labor mobility systems and lower reliance on irregular migration

To achieve these outcomes, the GSP strategy focuses on three core objectives:

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 training aligned with employers' needs.

Figure 1.1 Global Skill Partnership—A Triple-Win Framework

Triple Win Framework

Origin Country (Tunisia)

Benefits from the reskilling and upskilling process, economic benefits via remittances, entrepreneurship initiatives, reduced unemployment.

Migrants

New skills, better jobs, higher wages, remittances, and potential for entrepreneurship on return.

Destination Country (Italy)

Access to skilled workers in shortage sectors, economic growth, and strengthened migration systems.

✓ Aligns skills development with labor needs in both origin and destination countries.
✓ Balances migration to avoid brain drain while increasing opportunities for high-value employment in both origin and destination countries.
✓ Offers two pathways: home track (trained individuals contribute locally) and away track (overseas job placement).

Source: World Bank

The Setting for a Global Skill Partnership between Italy and Tunisia

Labor mobility between Tunisia and Italy stems from demographic and labor market complementarities (World Bank 2026a, World Bank 2026b)**.** Tunisia has a young workforce, including a large number of highly educated but unemployed youth, a significant group of inactive youth, and nearly one-third of the workforce that is considered underqualified. Together, these groups represent considerable underutilized human capital. Italy, by contrast, is one of fastest-aging countries in the European Union: nearly one-quarter of the population is above working age; only 15 percent of the population is aged 15–29; and persistent labor shortages affect several key sectors. This imbalance creates an opportunity for skills investment and labor mobility whereby Tunisian youth can fill labor market gaps in Italy while gaining valuable skills and income.

Italy and Tunisia are connected by geographic proximity, established migrant networks and long-standing historical and political ties. Labor mobility between the two countries

is both longstanding and expanding. As of January 1, 2025, there were more than 120,000 Tunisians legally residing in Italy (Istat 2025a). In 2024, the number of residence permits issued to Tunisian nationals increased by 31 percent compared to the previous year (Istat 2025b). Recent bilateral agreements have further formalized these movements, creating momentum for more structured cooperation to strategically manage labor mobility as a development and economic opportunity. A GSP between Tunisia and Italy can align development cooperation with labor mobility to achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes. Existing political will and Italy's experience with pre-departure training provide a solid foundation for such a partnership.

Despite growing recognition of the mutual benefits of cross-border labor mobility, both Tunisia and Italy face significant challenges that hinder the efficient and scalable operation of legal labor mobility pathways. These constraints persist even in the context of growing demand for foreign labor and an increasing political willingness and efforts from both governments to collaborate. Managing migration in a way that maximizes benefits for all stakeholders is inherently complex. Unilateral and bilateral actions and investments must ensure mobility pathways that (1) meet economic goals, (2) attract and retain appropriate talent, and (3) safeguard workers' rights throughout the mobility cycle.

Achieving these objectives depends on strong governance arrangements, which requires:

- Alignment of incentives among diverse stakeholders;
- Enhanced collaboration between public and private actors;
- Adequate institutional capacity, including data and labor market intelligence; and
- Effective coordination across regulation, service delivery, and protection systems.

Gaps in these aspects may result in underutilized labor mobility channels.

Institutions must be able to adequately support the full migrant journey, from pre-departure preparation to post-arrival integration and eventual return. Migrants often face information gaps, inconsistent or fragmented support services, and limited or uneven access to legal protections. These challenges are frequently exacerbated by institutional weaknesses and coordination gaps. Employers seeking to recruit workers from abroad also face challenges related to information asymmetries, red tape, and financial barriers. To address these gaps, efforts must aim to design labor mobility processes that:

- **Facilitate access** to international markets;
- **Further access** by enabling skills development and effective use of those skills to access opportunities; and

- **Fortify access** by ensuring support and rights protection during travel, while working in destination countries, and upon return.

Therefore, an institutional assessment is needed to take stock of the capacities, gaps, and coordination mechanisms within and between entities in Italy and 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.

1.2 Scope of the Institutional Assessment

This institutional assessment aims to support the application of the GSP model between Italy and other countries of origin, starting with Tunisia. It identifies opportunities to strengthen institutional and operational processes, including training arrangements, across key labor mobility pathways. The assessment aims to generate actionable insights that help establish a balanced and mutually beneficial labor mobility framework that supports alignment between skills development and labor market needs and protects the worker throughout the migration cycle.

The assessment identifies strengths and gaps in existing institutional arrangements, and pinpoints operational and governance bottlenecks, with particular attention to those that can be addressed in the short term. Building on these insights, the assessment will propose a practical roadmap to overcome critical constraints affecting labor mobility between Tunisia and Italy that aligns with the strategic goals of the GSP model (figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 Institutional Assessment Objectives

ASSESS CAPACITY
Are structures, systems, processes, and resources appropriate to effectively deliver labor supply arrangements within a GSP?

IDENTIFY BOTTLENECKS
Highlight short-term resolvable issues in labor mobility pathways.

DEVELOP A ROADMAP
Propose solutions for creating streamlined, productive migration frameworks that align with GSP goals.
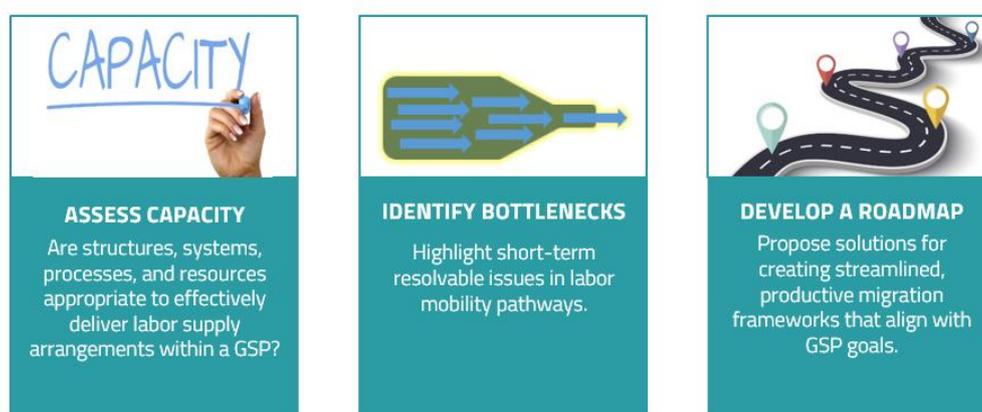
Source: World Bank

The expected outcomes include a set of recommendations aimed at:

- Strengthening labor mobility frameworks and institutional capacity.
- Streamlining labor mobility pathways, including effective job matching.
- Improving access and integration of third-country workers in the Italian labor market.
- Enhancing collaboration and coordination among stakeholders in both countries, including government entities, private sector, social partners, and civil society.

To achieve these outcomes, the institutional assessment examines:

- The **authorizing environment**, including laws, regulations, policies, and bilateral agreements that govern, enable, or constrain enhanced labor mobility and skilling of beneficiary workers.
- **Institutional arrangements and governance** by mapping mandates and roles across relevant entities.
- **Systems and tools** used to manage labor mobility data, integrate processes, and deliver services effectively.

The goal is to reveal both systemic gaps and immediate opportunities to strengthen the design and implementation of the GSP, ensuring that the partnership delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders.

The assessment covers a wide range of entities that together form the core of a GSP ecosystem, spanning three interconnected policy areas: labor mobility, labor market, and skills development. Institutions covered include:

- Ministries of labor, social policy/welfare, and foreign affairs
- Public employment services
- Vocational training agencies
- Social partners and chambers of commerce
- Civil society organizations
- Private sector actors

In the case of Italy, the assessment also covers regional-level government and public agencies.

Tunisia's institutional assessment is presented in a separate, dedicated report. However, this report draws, where relevant, on findings from the Tunisian report to ensure coherence and consistency across both analyses.

This institutional assessment report was developed in parallel to labor market needs assessments of both Italy and Tunisia. This complementary report identifies:

- Sectors experiencing labor and skills shortages,
- Occupations with the highest demand, and
- Worker profiles with strong inclusion potential.

Drawing on enterprise surveys, labor force statistics, and demographic projections, the report highlights which sectors are growing, where labor demand is unmet, and which worker profiles have the highest potential for inclusion. This information is essential for deciding which sectors and occupations the GSP should prioritize, and for determining the scale of training and labor mobility programs. Conducting both assessments ensures that labor mobility pathways are economically justified in terms of target sectors and skills, institutionally feasible and operationally ready.

2. DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK

2.1 Policy Pillars and Phases of Labor Mobility

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

This report applies an adapted version of the World Bank framework (figure 2.1) structured around three interdependent pillars:

  I. **Facilitating access**—supporting workers access international labor markets.
  II. **Furthering access**—harnessing skills to access international labor markets.
  III. **Fortifying access**—strengthening protection and integration of labor migrants.

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

  1. **Pre-recruitment**
  2. **Recruitment and pre-departure**
  3. **Departure and integration**
  4. **Return migration**

The assessment examines the full set of processes and institutional responsibilities at each intersection between a pillar and a 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 (Bossavie et al. 2024; World Bank 2023a).

Pillar I: Facilitating Access

Objective: Supporting workers access international labor markets.

This pillar focuses on how systems enable legal and orderly 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 labor mobility, including bilateral agreements and cooperation frameworks between countries of origin and destination countries. It also explores whether labor 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 vacancy identification, candidate outreach, profiling, and matching processes work effectively—particularly through public and private intermediation channels. The review includes whether administrative clearance procedures and visa process are streamlined, accessible, and coordinated across responsible agencies.

Pillar II: Furthering Access

Objective: Harnessing skills to access international labor markets.

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

- **Pre-recruitment.** The review assesses whether training curricula are aligned with international labor 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 civic education are being effectively delivered to migrants prior to departure. It also examines whether processes for certification of skills and qualifications, where needed, function adequately.

- **Departure and integration.** During employment abroad, the assessment examines whether systems exist for professional skill recognition and verification, and whether there are channels for further training of migrants based on destination-country standards.

- **Return migration.** The review focuses on recognition of skills acquired abroad and availability of reintegration services, including employment support, skills validation and access to entrepreneurship or business development programs.

Pillar III: Fortifying Access

Objective: Strengthening the protection and integration of labor migrants.

This pillar analyzes how systems protect migrant workers throughout the mobility cycle, from initial departure through employment abroad to return and reintegration:

- **Pre-recruitment.** The diagnostic assesses whether enabling legislation is in place to protect migrant rights, and whether bilateral social security agreements and integration policies are being implemented.

- **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 evaluates whether systems are functioning to enable the portability of social insurance entitlements and whether reintegration support is available—such as labor reinsertion programs and entrepreneurship support for returnees.

Figure 2.1 Diagnostics Framework

	1 PRE-RECRUITMENT	**2** RECRUITMENT AND PRE-DEPARTURE	**3** DEPARTURE AND INTEGRATION	**4** RETURN MIGRATION
PHASES OF LABOR MIGRATION				

OBJECTIVES OF LABOR MOBILITY SYSTEM

FACILITATING ACCESS

Supporting workers to access international labor markets

FURTHERING ACCESS

Harnessing skills to access international labor markets

FORTIFYING ACCESS

Strengthening the protection and integration of labor migrants

PRE-RECRUITMENT
- Enabling legal labor migration paths
- Setting the framework of collaboration
- Conducting labor market needs assessment

- Designing trainings and aligning qualifications

RECRUITMENT AND PRE-DEPARTURE
- Identifying jobs and potential candidates
- Implementing profiling and matching activities: tailored and adapted employment services
- Using public and private intermediation
- Facilitating clearance and visa issuance, and supporting travel logistics

- Delivering training, reskilling or upskilling, language and civic course
- Certifying qualifications and skills validation
- Tracking labor outcomes

- Providing pre-departure orientation

DEPARTURE AND INTEGRATION
- Ensuring professional skills recognition, verification and certification
- Further training based on applicable occupational standards and skills frameworks

- Activating support services and networks e.g. diaspora
- Providing employment and labor support services (continuous mentoring and coaching support)
- Establishing grievance redress mechanisms
- Facilitating access to welfare and social insurance benefits in host countries

RETURN MIGRATION
- Recognizing skills acquired abroad

- Establishing bilateral social security agreements and ensuring portability of social insurance rights
- Recognizing skills acquired abroad
- Providing labor market reinsertion programs – entrepreneurship incentives for returnees

Source: Adapted from the framework in Manjula (2013).

A Cyclical and Interdependent Process

The diagnostic framework is structured around four discrete phases of labor 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 labor 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 systemwide coordination, **interoperability of information systems**, and **continuous institutional feedback loops**. Robust labor 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. Together, they ensure that labor mobility governance evolves in step with shifting labor market needs, demographic trends, and worker needs.

An Integrated Systems Perspective for GSPs

Global Skill Partnership (GSPs) encompass a wide array of actors that collectively operate across three interconnected policy areas:

- **Labor mobility policies** provide legal and administrative frameworks that regulate and facilitate cross-border labor mobility.
- **Labor 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 are institutionally aligned, responsive to international labor market needs, and capable of supporting effective and sustainable mobility pathways (Acosta et al. 2025; World Bank 2023a).

The assessment also examines the configuration of the institutional landscape that links

these three policy areas. A key focus is on whether institutions across the systems collaborate effectively, including with private actors, 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 technically sound, operationally feasible and scalable over time (Bossavie et al. 2024; World Bank 2023a).

2.2 Focus of Study

This assessment focuses on the pre-departure training projects as defined by Article 23 of the Italian Consolidated Migration Act (TUI) for non-seasonal migrant workers.[1] The channel reflects several key GSP principles. In particular, it links demand-driven skills development with labor mobility opportunities, which is a foundational element of a GSP, and involves employers early in the process to support successful recruitment.

Building on this channel, a GSP could further strengthen alignment between labor migration, employment, development, and international cooperation policies. This includes improving local training capacity and developing a qualified workforce in the country of origin, while helping mitigate risks such as brain drain.

The focus on the pre-departure training projects (TUI Art. 23) channel responds to a request from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (MLPS). The ministry is currently piloting a project for legal entry channel into Italy, with the aim of institutionalizing pre-departure measures and improving the placement of third-country nationals. The MLPS is working with its in-house agency Sviluppo Lavoro Italia (SLI), and with financial support from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

The main objective of this initiative is to identify opportunities to systematize existing processes and reinforce multi-stakeholder governance to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of this scheme. This systems-based approach aligns closely with the perspective adopted by the World Bank in its GSP initiatives, as opposed to project-based approaches. Consequently, the World Bank and the MLPS have identified opportunities for synergies, allowing the SLI operation and the Institutional Assessment to mutually inform and enhance each other.

From the perspective of the receiving country, the report focuses on the following policy

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[1] The entire assessment is based on legal provisions of Art. 23, prior to the most recent changes issued with the Decree Law no. 146/2025, approved in November 2025.

areas that are crucial for developing a GSP:
- Assessing labor demand for migrant workers.
- Identifying and matching vacancies for migrant workers.
- Financing training and mobility.
- Enhancing migrant worker entry approval.
- Assessing standards alignment, delivering relevant training, and recognizing skills before departure.
- Recognizing qualifications and skills in Italy.
- Activating integration services and networks.
- Enhancing integration through continuous language learning, labor market inclusion, and housing access.

In addition to the national-level analysis, the report features spotlights on the region of Emilia-Romagna. In Italy, regions and local jurisdictions hold exclusive or shared responsibilities with the national government in areas such as labor markets, skills development, and labor migrant attraction and integration. The spotlights serve to illustrate specific local initiatives that address some of the identified challenges in the assessment and illustrate how policies are implemented on the ground. Emilia-Romagna was selected because it became the first region to introduce a law focused on attracting talent (regional law 2/2023). This legislation created a coordinated policy framework to attract, retain, circulate, and valorize talent. It led to several initiatives in areas like skills intelligence, job matching, and socio-economic integration, which all offer valuable insights for this assessment.[2]

2.3 Research Tools

The institutional assessment applies a mix of research methods to better understand how labor mobility systems, including potential GSPs, are designed and implemented in practice across policy, institutional, and implementation levels:

- **Desk review** of relevant legal and policy documentation including national migration legislation, bilateral labor agreements, institutional mandates, national employment and skills strategies, and existing program reports.

- **Semi-structured interviews** aimed at understanding how institutions function

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[2] In August 2025, Puglia became the second region to enact a similar law (L.R. 6 August 2025, n. 13), "Misure per l'attrazione, valorizzazione, mobilità circolare e permanenza dei talenti in Puglia," mirroring Emilia-Romagna's approach.

beyond their formal roles and distill insights on operational dynamics, implementation challenges, and system-level constraints.

- o A first round of interviews focused on mapping institutional roles and interactions across the ecosystem.
- o A second, more in-depth round explored specific institutional processes, coordination mechanisms, and decision-making pathways.

- **International comparative analysis,** drawing on experiences and lessons from other countries implementing similar labor mobility schemes. This perspective helps situate the findings within broader policy and operational trends and identifies emerging good practices that could be adapted to the national context.

- **Focus group discussions** (FGDs) with (potential) migrants were conducted to capture user-level insights interacting with the labor mobility systems, lived experiences, expectations, and perceptions, helping to identify gaps between institutional design and migrant realities.

  - o **Two FGDs were conducted with a total of 17 Tunisians** participating in pre-departure training mobility projects (under TUI Art. 23). The first FGD was held virtually with seven participants who had completed the training and relocated to Italy. The second was held in person with ten participants still in training in Tunisia. The FGD participants also completed a survey covering basic demographic information (see annex A2.2). All discussions were voluntary, confidential, conducted with informed consent, and anonymous.[3] The participants represented in the two focus groups differed in age, education, work experience, and employment status (see table 2.1). Despite targeted outreach efforts, the study was unable to represent female migrant workers.[4]

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[3] The consent form is included in annex A2.2.

[4] From FGDs and interviews with Italian and Tunisian stakeholders, it emerged that Tunisian women mainly migrate to Italy through family reunification once a male family member settled in the destination country.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

CHARACTERISTICS	FG1—ITALY	FG2—TUNISIA
GENDER	100% men	100% men
AGE	32 on average 1/3: between 25 and 30 years 1/3: between 30 and 35 years 1/3: between 35 and 40 years	30 on average 50% between 25 and 30 years 20% between 30 and 35 years 20% between 35 and 40 years
MARITAL STATUS	2/3: single men 1/3: married men	60% single men 30% married with 2 to 3 dependents (wife and children)
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	2/3 with a university degree 1/3 with a vocational degree	100% held a vocational training degree as forklift drivers 80% had a secondary level of education
LANGUAGES	100% spoke Italian, Arabic, and French 50% spoke English	40% spoke four languages (Arabic, French, English, and Italian) 60% spoke three languages (Arabic, French, and Italian)
YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	57% had about 5 years of professional experience 28% had more than 10 years of professional experience	60% had between 1 and 3 years of professional experience 30% had between 5 and 10 years of professional experience Only one participant had over 10 years of experience
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS	100% full-time	40% unemployed 40% employed part-time 20% employed full-time

3. LABOR MARKET AND IMMIGRATION TRENDS IN ITALY

As of January 1, 2025, Italy's resident population totaled 58.9 million, of whom about 5.4 million were foreign citizens (9.2 percent). Net migration has offset population decline: between 2005 and 2024, registrations from abroad exceeded de-registrations (of Italians leaving the country) by 4.8 million. These inflows mainly involved working-age individuals, which helped sustain labor force participation and moderated the rise in the dependency ratio as the total working-age population declined.

As of January 2024, the largest non-EU (European Union) resident communities by number of regular residents included:

- Ukrainians (approximately 386,000)
- Moroccans (372,000)
- Albanians (359,000)
- Chinese (267,000)
- Bangladeshis, Egyptians, Indians, Filipinos, Pakistanis, and Tunisians (approximately 100,000 each) (MLPS 2025b).

Italy's labor market is under growing strain from rapid population aging and workforce contraction. By 2050, the working-age population is projected to decline by 15 percent. The replacement ratio has already fallen to around 0.5, meaning that for every two individuals expected to exit the labor market in the coming decade, there is only one potential entrant. These demographic dynamics are shaping the labor market outcomes. Job creation has outpaced population growth, resulting in historically low unemployment rates. At the same time, labor supply constraints have intensified, revealing persistent worker shortages across multiple sectors and skill levels.

Between 2005 and 2024, limited employment growth in Italy was almost entirely sustained by foreign-born workers. Employment increased by 7 percent in the full period; one of the lowest rates in the European Union. Over this period, employment among Italian nationals rose by only 153,000 while it increased among non-Italian citizens by approximately 1.35 million. Without migrant labor, Italy's employment levels would have remained largely stagnant, underscoring the central role of migration in sustaining labor market stability amid a demographic decline (World Bank 2026a).

However, regular migration flows are driven less by labor market needs than by family reunification and humanitarian protection. In 2023, about 331,000 new residence

permits were issued. Their distribution by purpose was as follows (MLPS 2025b): 39 percent for family reunification, 32 percent for humanitarian protection, 8 percent for study, 9 percent for other reasons, and less than 12 percent were work-related permits. This composition is atypical for a country experiencing widespread labor shortages. This implies that labor demand is being met via conversions, renewals, or short-duration contracts rather than new work admissions.

3.1 Labor Shortages and Demand for Foreign Workers

Italy's ongoing labor shortages are driving growing demand for migrant workers across sectors. According to the Excelsior Survey, Italian firms projected 1,082,170 contracts for immigrant workers in 2024 across the services and industry sector.[5] This represents an increase of 25,000 contracts compared to 2023, and approximately 20 percent of all expected hires nationwide (including nationals and nonnationals). The distribution of these estimated hires of immigrants across sectors is as follows:

- Business support services (29 percent)
- Tourism (21 percent)
- Commerce and personal services (10 percent each)
- Manufacturing (16 percent)
- Construction (11 percent)
- Public utilities (1 percent)

In terms of skill level, the most projected demand is for low- to mid-skilled occupations (88 percent of contracts projected in 2024), and less for skilled occupations (12 percent) (MLPS 2025b).

Firms, however, encounter greater difficulties recruiting migrant workers from abroad. In 2024, firms reported higher "hard-to-fill" rates for immigrant hires (55 percent) than for Italians (46 percent). The most affected sectors included:

- Private health and social care (71 percent hard to fill)
- Metallurgy (70 percent)
- Construction (63 percent)
- Rubber and plastics (60 percent)

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[5] The projections correspond to contracts lasting at least 20 working days (generally equal to 1 calendar month) that companies in industry and services plan to stipulate; a single worker may have more than one in a year. The Excelsior Information System does not include agriculture or domestic employers.

- Food processing (51 percent)

At the occupational level, several bottlenecks exceed 70 percent for several skilled trades:

- Electricians in civil construction (81 percent)
- Machine-tool operators (78 percent)
- Tool setters (74 percent)
- Heavy-truck drivers (70 percent)

Hospitality and care roles (cooks, waiters, nursing/rehab) also show persistent mismatches, indicating structural shortages in both vocational and service-related skills (MLPS 2025b).

Similarly, a World Bank analysis of critical occupations in Italy found labor shortages across several International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) groups (World Bank 2026a)**:**

- Mid-skilled Service and Sales Workers (ISCO 5): Cooks, waiters, bartenders, hairdressers, personal services workers, and health care assistants.
- High-skilled Professionals and Technicians (ISCO 2 and 3): Telecommunications engineers, physiotherapists, special needs teachers, HR professionals, and regulatory associate professionals.
- Craft and Related Trades Workers (ISCO 7): Bricklayers, metal structure workers, mechanics, electricians, bakers, pastry cooks, and confectionery makers.

3.2 Talent attraction gaps and occupational segmentation

Italy's migration system also faces persistent challenges in attracting and effectively utilizing more skilled workers. Only 12.5 percent of foreign-born residents in Italy hold university degrees, compared to 28 percent in other major euro area countries and 17.5 percent among native Italians. The EU Blue Card scheme, designed to attract highly skilled non-EU nationals, has had minimal uptake in Italy: fewer than 3,900 cards issued since 2014, compared to 384,000 in Germany (Basso et al. 2025).

At the same time, migrants in Italy are often overqualified or employed in low-skill sectors, with their skills underutilized. Evidence from administrative data shows that migrants are disproportionately employed in lower-paying firms and tend to earn less than natives. Migrant workers concentrated in blue-collar occupations (81 percent vs. 49 percent for natives), are more likely to work part-time or on temporary contracts and are less likely to hold permanent positions (64 percent vs. 83 percent for natives). The share of

low-paid migrant workers is particularly high: in 2023, 37 percent of migrant workers were classified as low paid, compared to 21–22 percent of natives (Basso et al. 2025).

Overall, the fiscal contribution of migrants in Italy is positive, but the effects are constrained by occupational segregation and restricted opportunities for advancement. Foreign workers tend to participate in welfare programs at higher rates than natives. At the same time, they are estimated to contribute more to local taxes than they receive in public expenditures (Basso et al. 2025). Estimates from Italy indicate that at the local level the arrival of foreign-born individuals has contributed to increased revenues without significantly affecting expenditures (Mariani et al. 2024 in Basso et al. 2025). Non-EU migrants have a positive net fiscal contribution at around the age of 24, contributing about €5,000 per individual and with little increase over time, highlighting restricted occupational mobility among this group. After the age of 65, the net contribution returns to a negative value.

Conversely, in other EU countries such as France, Spain, and Portugal, migrants' net fiscal contribution becomes positive within the 25–34 age group and continues to rise, peaking between ages 45–54. This difference is largely attributable to greater opportunities for occupational mobility and skill progression in those labor markets (Vallì and Rosas 2023).

Box 3.1 Overview of migration trends in Emilia-Romagna

Emilia-Romagna currently has the highest net migration rate among all regions in Italy. In 2024, foreign citizens living in the region numbered 575,476, representing 12.9 percent of the total regional population. This is above the national average of 9.0 percent. The foreign population increased by 1.2 percent compared to 2023. The average age among foreign residents is 37 years, while the average age for Italians is 48 years (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d.-b). Additionally, 9.9 percent of the foreign population comes from non-EU countries, exceeding the national average of 6.6 percent. **Tunisians constitute 3.6 percent of all foreign citizens in 2024** (20,816 individuals, 40.1 percent of whom are women). The size of this community increased by 5.3 percent since 2022 and by 13.1 percent since 2019 (Confcooperative Romagna n.d.; ISTAT n.d.-b).

While net migration is compensating for birth rate deficits more effectively than in other regions, Emilia-Romagna continues to mirror the broader Italian demographic trend, experiencing a decline in the available workforce due to a shrinking active population (Regione Emilia-Romagna 2025, 34–37). Interviewees reported that around 50 percent of regional enterprises face workforce shortages; according to the Excelsior Report projections, **between 2025 and 2028 the private sector in Emilia-Romagna will require**

250,100 workers, including 65,000 foreign nationals (26 percent), representing one of the highest proportions in Italy (Unioncamere – Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Sistema Informativo Excelsior 2025 May, 52).

*FGD insight: Participants consistently **identified economic improvement and enhanced employment opportunities as the primary motivations for joining the labor mobility program.** Most emphasized the opportunity to access better employment prospects abroad, improve their living conditions, and provide financial support to their families. A subset also highlighted aspirations to earn higher incomes and gain new skills through employment abroad. For married individuals, the opportunity to eventually facilitate family reunification was an additional consideration. None of the participants expressed plans to return to Tunisia in the near future.*

4. THE ECOSYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOBILITY IN ITALY

4.1 Legal Framework and Authorizing Environment in Italy

International Legal Framework

Italy is signatory to various United Nations (UN) international agreements for the protection of workers, migrants and labor migrants. This includes 191 **Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO n.d.-a)** on protecting worker rights overall and in specific job sectors, such as minimum wage, maternity leave, equal treatment in the workplace, health, and security, all of which equally apply to migrant and Italian/European Union (EU) workers. Specifically on migrant work, Italy has ratified key ILO conventions, including:

- Convention No. 97 on Migrant Workers (ILO n.d.-b)
- Convention No.111 against Discrimination in the Workplace (ILO n.d.-c)
- Convention No.143 on Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equal Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (ILO n.d.-d)

Furthermore, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are present in Italy (IOM since 1967, UNHCR since 1952). They both collaborate with Italian institutions and public administration (including municipalities) to promote the rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Besides, they ensure that all Italy-signed UN conventions are fully implemented in the country.

In the European Union, both the Union and Member States share responsibility for entry policy. However, Member States retain authority over the number of third-country nationals admitted for work purposes. Regarding legal migration, the EU defines conditions and standards for third-country nationals' entry, long-term visas, and residence permits. Common standards for work permits are set by directives like the single work and residence permit, which ensure equal treatment of non-EU and EU national workers and protects the rights of migrants at work (2024/1233/EU) (European Union 2024), the seasonal workers visas (2014/36/EU), and admissions of highly qualified immigrants (EU Blue Card).

In 2024, the **European Union** adopted **the Pact on Migration and Asylum** (set to enter into application in June 2026) (European Commission n.d.-a). The pact establishes a unified

framework for managing migration across the EU, with the aim of:

- Ensuring shared responsibility among Member States,
- Applying fair and efficient procedures, and
- Managing external borders in full respect of fundamental rights.

One of the four pillars of the EU Pact includes the expansion of legal pathways through two main instruments: talent partnerships and the EU Talent Pool. The **talent partnerships** are EU's main framework for combining training, legal mobility, and capacity building with partner countries outside the European Union. They aim to match skilled workers with EU labor market needs, supporting mobility for study, work, and training, and building capacity in origin countries. Italy has already supported initiatives with Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia (Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale 2024).

The **EU Talent Pool** will be the first EU-wide digital matching tool to connect non-EU jobseekers living outside the European Union with EU employers in shortage sectors. Participation is voluntary for Member States (Italy is a volunteer since its launch), and the platform will integrate the ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) classification and Europass profiles. A pilot Talent Pool was launched in 2023 to give displaced Ukrainian jobseekers direct access to EU employers and allow Member States to test the system (European Commission n.d.-b).

Migration policy is also shaped by international cooperation objectives. The current government promotes labor migration cooperation through initiatives such as the *Rome Process* (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri n.d.-a). This multilateral platform fosters dialogue and cooperation among origin, transit and destination countries, as well as international organizations (including the World Bank Group). The Rome Process seeks to address the root causes of forced displacement, advance legal migration pathways, all while combating irregular migration and human trafficking in the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Africa. The Italian government's Plan Mattei is designed to foster equal partnerships with Africa, aiming for shared growth and benefits. The plan focuses on enhancing strategic infrastructure, reviving local production chains, and making the most of young people's talents. One central goal is to help Africans thrive in their own countries, supporting "the right not to migrate." Economic cooperation under this plan comes with agreements requiring partner nations to tighten controls on irregular migration. The Plan Mattei also works alongside other international projects, with Tunisia as one of its primary focus areas (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri n.d.-b).

National Legal Framework

The Italian legal system regulates the entry of foreign workers into the Italian territory by balancing two needs: (1) the control of migration and the prevention of irregular entries, and (2) the equal treatment of local and foreign workers and the protection of foreign workers (Battisti 2025).

The Italian national legal framework for international labor mobility is anchored in the Consolidated Migration Act (Testo Unico Immigrazione, TUI) (Gazzetta Ufficiale 1998). It is based on three principles: planning immigration flows, counteracting illegal immigration, and guaranteeing the integration of regular migrants. The act regulates entry and residence, establishes enforcement mechanisms, and supports integration policies. Labor migration is specifically regulated by **Title III of TUI, Articles 21–27** (Normattiva 2024), which defines multiple entry channels for work purposes.

Over the past 25 years, labor migration regulations have prioritized limiting entry of foreign labor through quotas. Regular access to work for those outside protection regimes has been limited by an emphasis on strict admission procedures and a clear separation between economic and humanitarian pathways. In 2002, reforms required migrant workers to enter Italy only within quota limits and with an employer's approved clearance (*nulla osta*) confirming intent to hire and lack of suitable local candidates. Although the TUI envisaged triennial planning of labor inflows, this mechanism was suspended for 16 years (2007–23). During this period, quotas were set annually, often without a strategic, multiyear labor market perspective. Quotas became increasingly restrictive and were frequently used to regularize workers already present in Italy, rather than to respond to new labor demand. This limited employers' ability to recruit foreign workers in a timely and demand-driven manner (Pomponi 2024).

The most recent amendments to the TUI Title III provisions, introduced in May 2023 by Decree Law (DL) 20/2023 (the "Cutro Decree," converted into Law 50/2023 and entered into force in December 2024), represent a significant evolution in Italy's approach to labor migration. The new framework places greater emphasis on establishing legal migration channels while maintaining measures to address irregular migration. Key changes include the reinstatement of three-year quota planning, reforms of various entry channels, and the simplification of administrative procedures. This shift is further evidenced by the substantial increase in total entry quotas for the 2023–25 triennium, rising to 452,000 from 183,255 allocated during 2020–22 (Camera dei Deputati, n.d.). In addition, the Flow Decree governing the 2023–25 quotas set forth specific management criteria: progressively aligning labor migrant flows with labor market demands, broadening

the sectors eligible to employ migrant workers, enhancing cooperation with countries of origin, and strengthening vocational training programs abroad (Camera dei Deputati, n.d.).

As of now, there are two macro systems through which non-EU citizens can enter Italy for work: (1) the quota system (TUI Title III, Article 22), which defines quotas of migrant workers based on specific criteria; and **(2) the extra-quota system (TUI Title III, Articles 23–27),** which specify several channels allowing the entry of non-EU workforce outside the annual planned quota.

The Quota System

The quota system is the primary channel through which migrants from non-EU countries enter Italy for work purposes. 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. The Flow Decree for the period 2023–25 established a total of 452,000 workers (136,000 in 2023; 151,000 in 2024; and 165,000 in 2025) (MLPS n.d.-a). The next set of quotas for 2026–28 foresees a total of 497,550 entries, including 230,550 for dependent and autonomous work, and 267,000 for seasonal work in the agriculture and tourism sectors (MLPS n.d.-b).

Quotas are allocated by contract category: seasonal work, autonomous, and dependent work. Within each category, quotas are allocated based on groups of countries cooperating with Italy in migration management, including:

1. Countries who promote media campaigns against irregular migration.
2. Countries of origin having signed migration agreements.
3. Countries with future cooperation agreements on migration.

For seasonal work, specific quotas are allocated to workers from countries signatories of labor migration agreements linked to labor needs in agriculture and tourism. Across categories, quotas are also reserved to refugees and stateless people, and Italians living in Venezuela. Furthermore, quotas for specific occupations within personal and health assistance services have been added recently, and entry related to conversion of residence permit typology.

Tunisia is one of the countries with whom Italy has allocated a specific quota of entry for work in the 2023–25 Flow Decree. This reflects bilateral cooperation to counter 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 dependent work. The agreement introduced simplified visa and work/residence permit procedures (MLPS n.d.-c). This MoU has been

implemented through an Executive Protocol between Sviluppo *Lavoro Italia* (SLI, the Italian in-house agency of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies) and the National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI), signed in March 2024 to facilitate job placement of Tunisian workers into firms in Italy.

Employers seeking to recruit migrant workers must obtain clearance (nulla osta) from the Prefecture (Sportello Unico per l'Immigrazione, SUI). Required documents include the worker's personal details and the firm's *asseveration* certificate,[6] proof from local employment services that no suitable local candidates are available, and proof of adequate accommodation meeting legal standards. Applications for clearance are submitted via an online platform during designated dates throughout the year known as "Click Day," and are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. This procedure is often described as complex, as employers may face challenges in submitting their requests due to high demand within a limited time frame and the extensive documentation required (Ero Straniero n.d.). Once the nulla osta is granted, the migrant worker can apply for a work visa at the Italian Embassy in their country of origin.

Despite the increase in the number of quotas, the flow decree and the subsequent quota system seems little suited to the needs of the Italian labor market for several reasons, including bureaucratic complexity, lengthy procedures, and underestimation of quotas, and, thus, of the necessary workforce (De Blasis and Bonizzoni 2024). Due to the lengthy procedures, only a portion of foreign workers who enter through the quota system manages to settle regularly in the country through formal work and residence permit. In 2024, only 7.8 percent of the defined quotas for nonseasonal work led to regular employment agreements (*contratto di soggiorno*); in 2023, this ratio was 13 percent (Ero Straniero 2025a). Additionally, the bureaucratic complexity and fragmentation among various stakeholders—including local public authorities, private companies, and service providers—have resulted in instances where illicit networks create fraudulent documentation for substantial fees to secure authorizations for foreign workers entering Italy (De Blasis and Bonizzoni 2024). This process severely impacts migrant workers, who may arrive in Italy lacking both formal employment and a valid residence permit.

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-

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[6] This document certifies that the employer has the economic, financial and legal requirements to hire an employee.

quota". 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 labor market needs and to proactively address issues related to illegal migration. These channels are:

- **Pre-departure training projects** (TUI Art. 23) enable non-seasonal labor migrants to enter Italy after completing preapproved professional and language-civic training in their country of origin. These training programs are proposed and funded by public or private entities and are implemented through multi-actor partnerships.

- **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.

- **Specific occupations.** The last Decree Flow 2026–28 (approved in September 2025) allows the entry of workers in the care sector outside the established quota and through a simplified entry procedure.

- **Conversion of residence permit for study, internship, or training.** These permits allow limited work and can be converted to an employment or self-employment permit if legal requirements are met. Under the Cutro Decree, conversion is allowed anytime during the year without quota restrictions, provided the permit is valid.

Overview of the Art. 23 Pre-departure Training Projects

A law-defined set of mandatory procedures must be followed to recruit a non-EU citizen for non-seasonal work through the Art. 23 pre-departure training projects (figure 4.1). First, based on the MLPS's operational guidelines for the implementation of training projects pursuant to TUI Art. 23 (hereafter Art.23 guidelines), a project lead presents a proposal for a pre-departure training project to the Interministerial Commission led by the MLPS (MLPS 2023). The guidelines delimit the typology of actors who can lead and propose projects, and the lead actor can partner with other actors beyond the specified list.[7] Once approved, candidate selection and training take place in the candidate's country of origin. As of November 15, 2025, 70 projects have been approved for implementation across 27

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[7] Project leads can be local public entities, training providers, international organizations, civil society organizations, representatives of social partners, industry associations, labor intermediation agencies, universities, CPIAs, among others.

countries of origin (see box 4.1).

Completion of training by the prospective migrant worker is an essential prerequisite for the employer to initiate the *nulla osta* application process with the Prefecture/SUI. Proof of local worker unavailability is not required when applying through this channel and the submission of a request does not follow any calendared "Click Days," as in the quota system. The SUI reviews the requests, coordinates check with other authorities, and if the *nulla osta* is approved, informs both the employer and the Italian embassy of the worker's country of origin. The candidate then applies for a work visa at the Italian Embassy. After visa issuance, the worker can enter Italy. Within eight days of arrival, the worker must sign the employment and residence contract and the integration agreement and subsequently submit a request for a subordinate work residence permit to the Prefecture/SUI.

Figure 4.1 Process Overview of the Article 23 Channel

1 Art.23 Guidelines – Projects approved on a rolling basis

Pre-departure Training Projects submission

Project Proponent through the MLPS' platform (PIF)

Project Evaluation and Selection

Interministerial Commission coordinated by MLPS

3 By law, issuance within 60 days from request

2 Tipically 4-6 months

Employment Clearance Request and Issuance

Employer; Prefecture's Single Immigration Desk; Territorial Labor Inspectorate; Municipality; Questura

Technical, Language and Civic Training

Training providers as defined by each project

CVs' Screening Candidate Selection

Multiple actors as defined by each project

4

5 By law, submitted no later than 6 months from training completion

6 By law, issuance within 30 days from visa request

Employment Clearance notified to Italian Embassy

Single Immigration Desk; Italian Embassy in country of origin

Work Visa Request

Italian Embassy; Migrant Worker

Visa Issuance

Italian Embassy

8 Within 8 days from arrival

7

Residence Permit Request

Worker; Questura Single Immigration Desk,

Work Contract, Residence Contract, and Integration Agreement Signed

Worker; Employer; Single Immigration Desk

Worker Departure

Worker; Project's Partners

Note: CV = curriculum vitae; MLPS = Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Source: World Bank

The figure outlines the procedure set forth in Art. 23, as established by its legal provisions prior to the amendments introduced by Decree Law No. 146/2025, approved in November 2025. Each box details a specific step in the process, lists the relevant participants beneath it, and, where applicable, indicates the duration of the step above the box.

Box 4.1 Overview of Article 23 Implemented Pre-departure Training Projects

The pre-departure training initiative for labor mobility was first piloted in October 2023, with Tunisia serving as the initial partner country of origin. This pilot project supported a cohort of 40 Tunisian workers, who received training in the construction sector through a collaborative effort between National Association of Building Constructors (ANCE), the construction industry association, and Centro Elis.

Expansion of Projects

Since the initial pilot, the program has expanded significantly. By November 15, 2025, 70 projects have been approved, of which 40 percent are in the preparatory phase, 40 percent are in implementation, and 20 percent had been already completed. Implementation is taking place across 24 countries of origin. Tunisia remains the leading partner, with 14 projects approved, followed by Ghana with 8, Egypt with 6, and Albania with 4 projects.

Figure B4.1.1 Number of Approved Projects Between October 2023 and November 2025
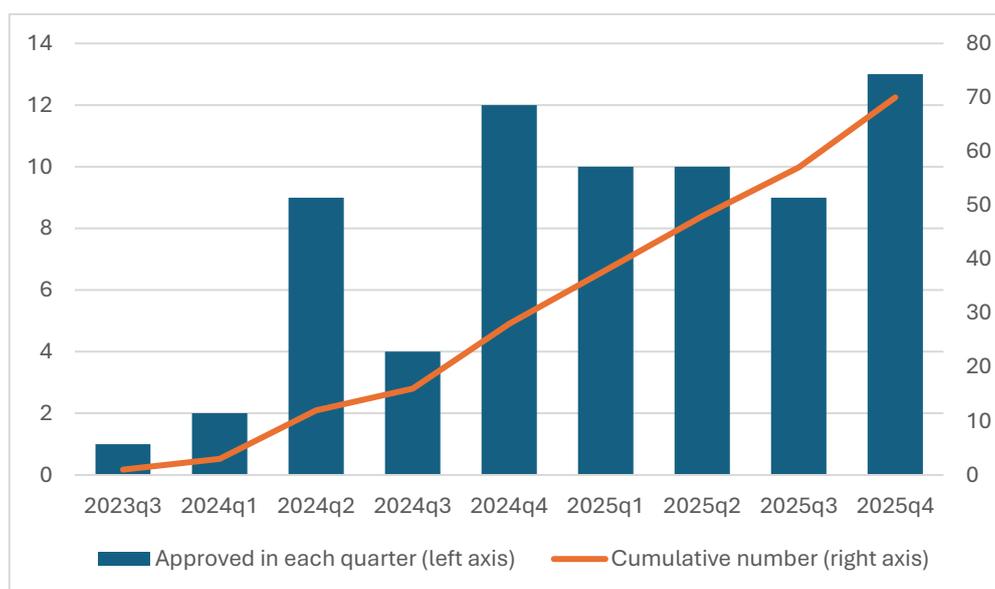
Source: World Bank based on MLPS data (MLPS n.d.-e).

Targets and Progress

Collectively, these projects aim to benefit a total of 7,312 workers. Of these, nearly 3,000 individuals have already enrolled as trainees, and over 1,550 have successfully completed their training. However, there is currently no publicly available information on the number of trainees who have been matched to jobs or who have actually entered Italy.

4.2 Overview of Institutional Arrangements

Italy's system for skills-based labor mobility, especially via the Art. 23 channel, involves a diverse network of stakeholders—including public, private, social, and international organizations. Table 4.1 presents an overview of the principal actors, both directly and indirectly engaged in processes supporting entry via the Art. 23 channel, as well as the integration of migrants into Italy's labor market. The table details the distinct roles these actors assume in relation to labor mobility objectives, as established by the diagnostic framework outlined in Section 2.1. Applying the same framework, Figure 4.2 depicts the network map of these actors, illustrating their interconnections.

Labor migration encompasses various policy fields governed by both national and decentralized systems. The Italian Constitution, in its Articles 116 and 117, determines the legal and administrative competencies of each level of government. The national government has exclusive competence on labor immigration, establishing the legal framework for entry and provisions for migrant integration. Under this national legal and policy framework, Regions have autonomy in managing the integration of migrants, while provinces and local municipalities directly provide services within their respective territories.

In terms of entry policy, the primary national government institutions responsible for

proposing, drafting, and managing labor migration policies are the MLPS and the Ministry of Interior. The MLPS, through its General Directorate for Immigration and Integration Policy:

- Programs and monitors labor-entry quotas and bilateral cooperation.
- Monitors labor market needs to inform labor migration inflows.
- Coordinates labor insertion, and integration/anti-discrimination measures.
- Manages migration funds; safeguards unaccompanied minors.
- Supervises non-EU entry flows, among others (MLPS n.d.-d).

The Ministry of Interior oversees the implementation of legal and administrative procedures that facilitate the entry, residence, and employment of labor migrants within the Italian territory. This is operated through local immigration offices called **Sportello Unico Immigrazione (SUI)** within the **Prefecture,[8]** which issues the nulla osta (clearance) for hiring foreign workers, after obtaining the no-objection from the **Questura** (Police Headquarters) and the Territorial Labor Inspectorate. The former reports to the Ministry of the Interior, and the latter operates under the supervision of the MLPS.

Policy and regulation of the labor market is a shared competence between the State and the regions. The State defines the legal guiding principles and guarantees essential active labor policy services throughout Italy, while the regions have the main regulatory and operational responsibility for active labor market policies (ALMPs) and employment services. The State identifies professional figures, their profiles, and the required qualifications for regulated professions, while unregulated professions fall under the responsibility of the regions (see section 6.2) (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri n.d.-c). The State-Regions Conference (*Conferenza Stato-Regione*), composed by thematic commissions supervised by different regions, coordinates the dialogue and the policy-making process between the 20 regions and the national government.

A network of national, local, and private actors operationalizes labor services to support workers and job seekers. Sviluppo Lavoro Italia (SLI) is the in-house agency of the MLPS key in supporting, advising, and monitoring the operation of employment services and ALMPs. **Regional Agencies for Labor** are responsible for planning ALMPs and for defining the regional employment strategy. Local **employment service centers (CPIs)** are public structures, coordinated by the regions or autonomous provinces and operating at the provincial/local level, which facilitate the matching of labor supply and demand and

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[8] Prefectures are the peripheral offices of the Ministry of the Interior and represent the government in the province or metropolitan city.

promote ALMP interventions. **Private employment agencies (APLs),** intermediation agencies, and staffing or temporary employment agencies are all private operators authorized to offer job matching services. The system of chambers of commerce, industry, crafts, and agriculture (**Unioncamere)** is a key player supporting information systems for ALMPs, particularly in forecasting labor demand needs. The National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies **(INAPP)** is a public entity supervised by the MLPS and is responsible, among other things, for the monitoring and evaluation of labor policies and employment services. Industry associations, employer organizations, and labor unions are key stakeholders in labor market policy.

Training and skills development policy and services are also a shared competency between the national level and regions. The **Ministry of Education and Merit** is responsible for regulating technical education, vocational education, higher technical education, and adult education pathways, and for the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad. This ministry is also responsible for overseeing the Provincial Centers for Adult Education (CPIAs). **CPIA**s are autonomous educational institutions that provide secondary-level education for adults, as well as vocational training, Italian language courses, and initiatives to strengthen citizenship skills and therefore the employability of the population. **RIDAP** (the Italian network for adult education) represents CPIAs and proposes policies on adult education. Regions are responsible for vocational education and the accreditation of training institutions, including private vocational training agencies as well as state and independent educational institutions, which operate a vast range of training courses.

Similarly, in the field of migrants' integration, the State provides oversight of regulations implemented at the subnational level implements. The MLPS oversees the yearly planning of labor immigration, regulating, monitoring, and evaluating the socioeconomic integration of migrants. The State also regulates and defines minimum standards for the provision of services, which must be guaranteed throughout the country to respond to civil and social rights for citizens and residents, including migrants. Importantly, these standards encompass housing, health, education, and labor services. Instead, regions have autonomy to manage integration strategies, including the provision of social and welfare services, together with the provinces and local municipalities, who directly provide services such as health, housing, schools, adult learning. Ultimately, the integration of labor migrants in the Italian economy and society importantly relies on local networks comprised by local city councils and municipalities, social and multi-cultural services managed by regions, civil society organizations (CSOs), labor unions, volunteering associations, faith-based associations, and diaspora associations, and supported by international organizations such as the IOM and UNHCR.

Table 4.1 Description of Stakeholders Directly and Indirectly Involved in Article 23 channels

CATEGORY	ENTITY	FACILITATING ACCESS *Supporting workers access international labor markets*	FURTHERING ACCESS *Harnessing skills to access international labor markets*	FORTIFYING ACCESS *Strengthening the protection and integration of labor migrants*
Ministries and national public agencies	**Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLPS)** *DG Immigration and Integration Policies*	**Enables** legal labor migration paths through planning, managing, and monitoring entries of foreign workers, including pre-departure training projects. **Oversees** bilateral cooperation with countries of origin.		**Enables** legislation for the protection of migrant workers' rights. **Establishes** bilateral social security agreements. **Develops and coordinates** policies for the socioeconomic integration of migrant workers.
	Ministry of Interior *Central Direction for Migration Policy*	**Enables,** together with the MLPS, legal labor migration paths through planning, managing, and monitoring entries of foreign workers, including pre-departure training projects. **Oversees** the work of Prefectures (SUI) in facilitating clearance and visa issuance.		**Monitors** foreigners' integration policies.
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Development (MAECI)	**Enables,** together with the MLPS, legal labor migration paths. **Responsible** for the cooperation		

	General Directorate for Italians abroad and migration policies.	with countries of origin, including bilateral labor agreement signature. **Oversees** embassies' work on visa issuance.		
	Ministry of Education and Merit		**Coordinates and oversees** vocational education and training policies, including occupational/qualifications standards alignment.	
	Embassy *Italian Embassy in Tunisia*	**Responsible** for visa issuance.		
	Agency Sviluppo Lavoro Italia (SLI) *MLPS's in-house Agency*	**Responsible** for the labor market information system, which is also used to conduct labor market needs assessment. **Operates** the project "pre-departure measures and placement of third-country nationals" (Art. 23)	**Promotes** training based on applicable occupational standards and skills frameworks.	**Promotes** migrant workers' rights . **Coordinates** the national network of employment and labor support services.

	National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP)		**Coordinates** the reference tool (Atlas of Work and Qualifications, ATLANTE) to assess occupational/ qualifications standards alignment and to certify qualifications and skills validation.	
	National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT)	**Provides** inputs for labor market needs assessment.		
	Italian Institute of Culture		**Certify** Italian language level in the country of origin.	
Regional and local public entities	**State—Region Committee**	Coordinates the Commission for Work and Vocational Training of the State-Region Conference. It promotes the dialogue between the regions and the national State on labor policies and vocational training		
	Regional government		**Defines** regulations, strategies, and policies for vocational training and skills recognition, verification and certification at the regional level in line with national and EU regulations.	**Facilitates** access to welfare and social insurance benefits in the region. **Provides** employment and labor support services. **Can activate** support services and networks.

	Regional Labor Agency	**Promotes** job matching.		**Manages** employment and labor support services (continuous mentoring and coaching support).
	Prefecture **Single Immigration Desk (SUI)**	**Responsible** for nulla osta (entry clearance) issuance.		**Responsible** for residence permit issuance, necessary to access welfare and social insurance benefits.
	Questura *(Police Headquarters)*	**Collaborates** with the SUI for clearance issuance.		
	Territorial Labor Inspectorate	**Provides** the SUI with documentation relative to the employer, which is necessary for clearance issuance.		
	Municipality	**Provides** the SUI with documentation relative to the employer and necessary for clearance issuance.		
	Identification, Validation, and Certification (IVC) Services		**Provide** professional skills verification and certification at the regional/local level (Italy only).	

	Provincial Centers for Adult Education (CPIAs)		**Can deliver** language training in the country of origin.	**Provide** free Italian language training for migrants across provinces.
	Public Employment Center (CPI)			**Provides** employment and labor support services (continuous mentoring and coaching support).
	Local city councils, local social services			**Provide** and activate support services and networks. **Facilitate** access to welfare and social insurance benefits.
Private sector, labor unions, and industry associations	**Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture (Unioncamere)**	**Produces** the Excelsior Report on labor market trends and needs in Italy, which is used to inform the need for foreign labor in the country.		
	Industry associations and private sector companies	**Informs the** MLPS of labor and skills needs. **Can support** the identification of vacancies and job profiles to be matched to foreign workers.	**Can inform the design of and deliver** training, reskilling, or upskilling initiatives.	
	Labor unions	**Informs the** MLPS of labor market needs.	**Can deliver** civic courses. **Can support with** pre-	**Can provide** and activate support services and networks. **Can facilitate** access to welfare

			departure orientation.	and social insurance benefits. **Promote** migrant workers' rights .
	Private interprofessional funds	**Can provide** economic funds for training in legal labor migration paths.		
	Private employment agencies (APL)	**Can identify** vacancies and potential candidates. **Can implement** profiling and matching activities.	**Can design and deliver** training, reskilling, or upskilling. **Can provide** further training in the destination country.	**Can provide** employment and labor support services (continuous mentoring and coaching support).
	Private vocational training agencies, accredited by regions.		**Can assess** occupational/ qualifications standards alignment. **Can design and deliver** training, reskilling, or upskilling. **Can certify** qualifications and skills. **Can ensure** professional skills recognition. **Can further** training based on applicable occupational standards and skills frameworks	

International organizations and civil society	**Nongovernmental organizations, other nonprofit associations**	**Can support** profiling and matching activities. **Can facilitate** visa processes. **Can support** travel logistics.	**Can support** the delivery of training, reskilling or upskilling, and language and civic courses. **Can deliver** language and civic courses. **Can provide** pre-departure orientation.	**Can provide** and activate support services and networks. **Can facilitate** access to welfare and social insurance benefits. **Can refer** to grievance redress mechanisms.
	International Organizations International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	**Can support** partnerships between the country of origin and destination. **Can support** profiling and matching activities. **Can facilitate** visa processes. **Can support** travel logistics.	**Can support** the delivery of training, reskilling or upskilling, and language and civic courses. **Can provide** pre-departure orientation.	**Can provide** and activate support services and networks. **Can facilitate** access to welfare and social insurance benefits. **Can refer** to grievance redress mechanisms.
	Italian Network for Adult Education (RIDAP)	Promotes the work of CPIAs and educational institutions by representing them before central administration, public and private entities, professional associations, professional and trade union organizations, and other public/private national and local institutions. Proposes policies on adult education and enhances the		

		specificity of the system at the national and European levels.	
	Diaspora associations			**Can provide** and activate support services and networks. **Can facilitate** access to welfare and social insurance benefits. **Can refer** to grievance redress mechanisms.

Source: World Bank staff compilation.

Figure 4.2 Network Map of Actors Directly or Indirectly Involved in Article 23 channel

The map shows the interconnectedness between state and non-state actors categorizing each actor with colors. **Yellow**: Ministries and national agencies; **Blue**: Regional and local public entities; **Green**: Private sector, unions, associations; **Pink**: CSOs and IOs. It also shows the extent of involvement and the relationships among actors through different arrows. **Blue arrows:** Direct responsibility or contribution to the objective of the three pillars; **Black arrows**: Reporting to entities responsible for the pillars' objective; **Dotted arrows**: Providing key inputs to those responsible for the pillars' objective; **Dotted line**: Horizontal collaboration between entities.
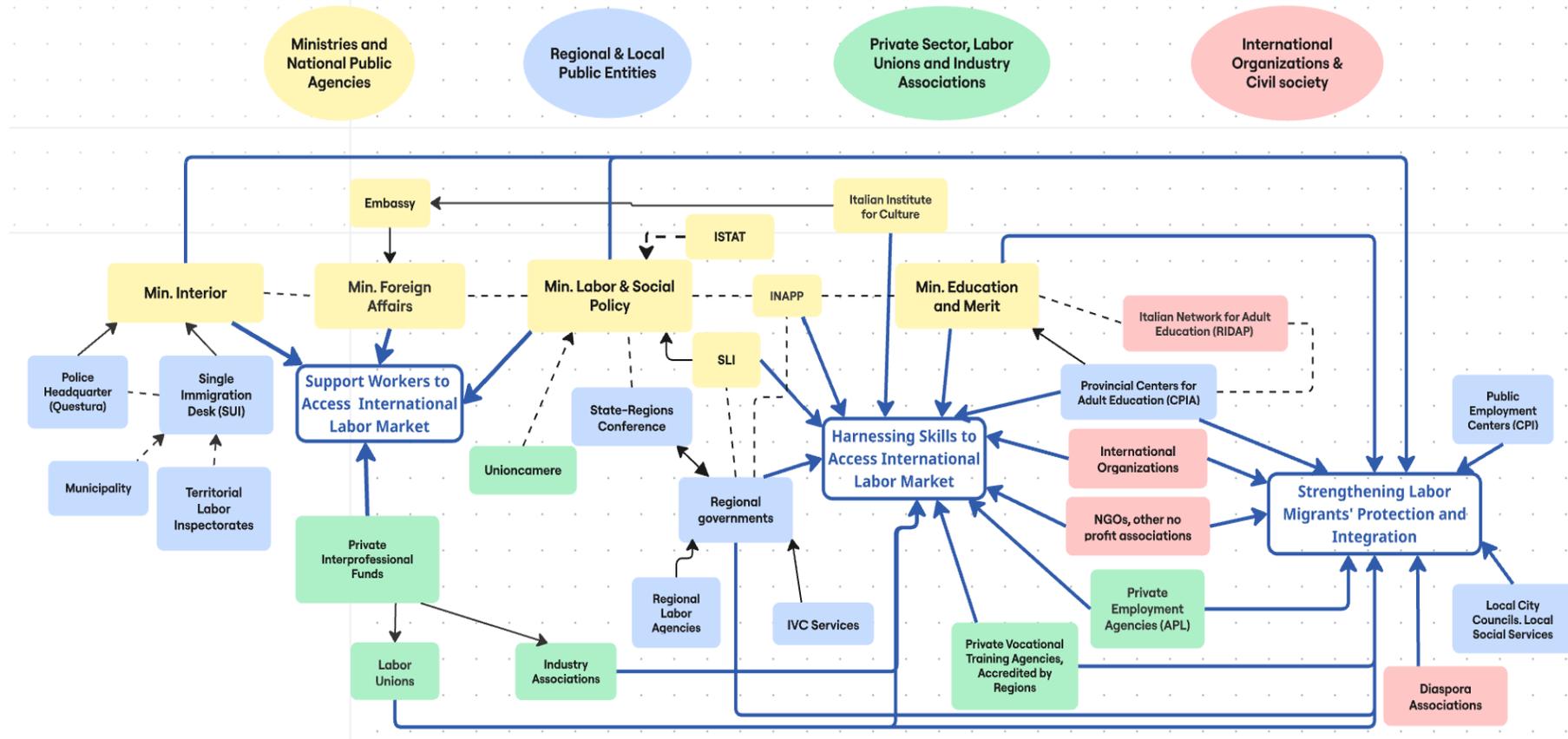
Note: INAPP = National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies; ISTAT = National Institute of Statistics; IVC = identification, validation, and certification; NGO = nongovernmental organization; SLI = Sviluppo Lavoro Italia; SUI = Single Immigration Desk

Source: World Bank staff compilation

Box 4.2 Regional Strategy on Labor Mobility in Emilia-Romagna Region

The Emilia-Romagna region in the past years has been implementing initiatives to attract and retain foreign workers and talents. In 2023, the region formally established its strategy to attract high-skilled workers and address demographic challenges and labor shortages in its territory. The approach offers a replicable model for other regions and can be integrated into central systems in a coordinated manner, while also providing valuable input for pre-departure training programs (Art.23) in Italy.

Ad hoc Regional Legal Framework

In 2023, Emilia-Romagna enacted the *Regional Law to Attract, Retain, and Value Talents in the Region* (regional law 2/2023)[9] to respond to critical labor shortages by attracting talents. The law promotes skills intelligence, skills-job matching, support for legal entry procedures, and access to welfare through an integrated system of public and private services and strategic partnerships at the regional and national levels (including collaboration protocols with administration responsible for entry procedures) as well as at EU and international levels. (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d.-c). The law is implemented through regional and EU-structured funds for employability, training, and residence (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d.-d).

Additionally, the Region has developed its legal framework for the **socioeconomic integration of non-EU citizens** living in the region. Pursuant to EU and national laws, regulations, and policies, it enacted the regional Law no. 5/2004 "**Rules for the social integration of foreign citizens**" that promotes interinstitutional cooperation with the national government. The three-year program applying the law, fosters a bottom-up approach, involving local authorities and civil society organizations, to strengthen the inclusion of foreign citizens through reinforcing their skills, universal access to the welfare services, and the promotion of community work (Regione Emilia-Romagna 2023).

A Multi-level and Multi-actor Authorizing Environment

The **Regional Council** is responsible for regulations, policies, and strategies concerning labor mobility (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d.-f; ART-ER n.d.). The region's in-house agency, **ART-ER**—**supported by universities, research centers, industry associations, local provinces, and municipalities**—is responsible for implementing, among others, initiatives that advance labor mobility, talent attraction and retention, innovation, and local development.

The **Regional Labor Agency** assists in formulating, implementing, and monitoring active and passive labor policies, including training and skills-job matching (Agenzia regionale per il lavoro

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[9] The English version of the law can be found at: https://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/talenti/english/emilia-romagnalaw_talentsattraction_2_14_2_2023.pdf/@@download/file.

Emilia-Romagna n.d.-b). The agency also houses the **Observatory for Labor Market**, which delivers data and analytical insights on regional labor market trends. The management and monitoring of migration is informed by data analysis and reports from the **Regional Observatory on Migration** (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d.-g). At the operational level, **provinces and municipalities** facilitate the integration of migrant workers into public services by setting eligibility criteria and collaborating with civil society organizations and other associations.

Following the publication of the law, a **Regional Committee** composed of 50 representatives from local authorities, academic institutions, ART-ER, professional training entities, businesses, trade unions, professionals, and self-employed organizations was established to implement and monitor the actions set out by the law (Emilia-Romagna n.d.). Several working subgroups, including one on international qualified migration, support the work of the Regional Committee

5. PILLAR I: FACILITATING ACCESS

5.1 Assessing Labor Demand for Migrant Workers

Italy has a rich database on labor supply, labor demand and skills, which can inform the programming of non-EU labor inflows. Six information systems are most relevant (table 5.1):

- The Unioncamere's Excelsior survey
- SLI's Labor Market Intelligence (LMI) dashboard
- The SIISL (Information System for Social and Work Inclusion) matching platform
- The Statistical System of Mandatory Labor Communications (SISCO)
- ISTAT's Labor Force Survey (LFS)
- INAPP's *Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni* (table 5.1).

Together, they provide complementary views on realized, short-term expected, and structural labor demand, and on skills and qualifications, with varying levels of granularity and timeliness.

The following provides an overview of what each information source offers and its strengths and limitations.

- **Excelsior (Unioncamere–Ministry of Labor and Social Policies [MLPS])** is a long-running, nationally representative employer survey that was redesigned in 2017 to a continuous monthly instrument covering a very large enterprise sample. It generates monthly estimates and annual forecasts by province and occupation (CP-ISTAT 2021), including indicators of recruitment difficulty and the **share of vacancies that firms expect to fill with immigrant workers**—useful for proxied foreign-labor demand (Unioncamere n.d.-a). Bulletins and datasets are public and widely used by policy actors (Unioncamere n.d.-b). Indeed, the Excelsior data is extensively used during the round tables with social partners to discuss the quotas for the Decreto Flussi. The data presents two main limitations when estimating effective demand for migrant workers. First, it only reflects intended new hires over a three-month period; since overseas recruitment can take much longer (see section 4.2), a longer timeframe would be necessary to fully account for foreign hires. Second, the data shows intended new contract activations rather than actual headcounts of new hires. Because migrants are often employed on short-term contracts (see section 3), there can be a significant difference between the number of contracts and the number of workers.

- **Labor Market Intelligence (LMI)** **(Agency Sviluppo Lavoro Italia, SLI)** is an open dashboard that integrates multiple sources—SISCO, National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) LFS, Unioncamere Excelsior, National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP) Atlante, and ESCO—to provide insights about labor market trends for over 600 occupations, with territorial disaggregation. An insightful feature is the focus on skill requirements by each profession and the analysis of proximity between occupations which can inform job mobility opportunities (Sviluppo Lavoro Italia, n.d.).

- **SIISL** **(Sistema informativo per l'inclusione sociale e lavorativa):** Launched in 2023 and opened to job seekers and firms in December 2024, SIISL is a national digital platform that is managed for MLPS by the National Institute for Welfare (INPS). It supports job search, matching and linkages to training opportunities. SIISL assists job seekers with CV creation, skills assessment, and identifying opportunities for upskilling or reskilling. It collects job offers from: (1) regional labor agencies through integrated information systems with SIISL; (2) private companies, which can also consult candidates' profiles and CVs; (3) municipalities and public local employment centers; and (4) entities providing job vocational training. SIISL uses AI to generate an "affinity" index, suggesting matches between jobseekers and jobs. While coverage does not encompass the entire vacancy universe, SIISL can provide near-real-time vacancy signals and geographic/occupational patterns for shortage monitoring. The platform also tracks training effectiveness, employment, and skill gaps through analytics; and it is interoperable with other national databases that manage labor and social benefits. SIISL is available to Italian citizens and foreigners legally residing in Italy, including people receiving the social minimum income support (ADI), NASpI or Dis-Coll unemployment allowances, and other vulnerable groups. However, it requires a good level of digital literacy to navigate and access it, as the registration can only be done using the so-called "digital identity" (SPID) (INPS 2024).

- **SISCO (Sistema Informativo Statistico delle Comunicazioni Obbligatorie)** is the online system through which enterprises submit mandatory communications regarding the instatement, extension, transformation and cessation of employment contracts to the MLPS. The system then repurposes the **administrative flow of communications** into statistical outputs (INPS, n.d.), which the MLPS also uses to publish quarterly notes and annual reports, tracking hires, typology of contracts, and separations by sector/contract/geography. SISCO offers high-frequency insights into realized demand, though it excludes self-employment and some categories. A caveat is that it counts contracts and not "heads"; as a result, if the same person is hired multiple times by the same company, they are counted for each contract rather than as a single

employee (MLPS n.d.-e).

- **ISTAT's Labor Force Survey (LFS)** is the official household survey of labor supply, producing estimates of employment, unemployment, inactivity, and hours worked, with breakdowns by sector, occupation, and socio-demographics. It is indispensable to gauge the slack or tightness of labor markets and to compare native and foreign-born citizenship groups, complementing demand-side indicators (ISTAT n.d.-a).

- **Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni** (INAPP n.d.-a) is a national classification and information system that maps work organization across 24 economic and professional sectors, linking areas of activity (ADA) to skills and statistical classifications (ATECO/CP-ISTAT). It also embeds the National Qualifications Framework that describes and classifies the national and regional repositories of education, training and vocational qualifications and references them to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) for comparison. Atlante can serve as a bridging tool that translates occupational demand into competence requirements and recognized qualifications, which are critical for aligning shortage lists with domestic training or recognition pathways.

Table 5.1 Key Information Systems and Uses

System/source	Owner	What It Provides	Periodicity/ Timeliness	How It Informs Foreign Recruitment
Excelsior	Unioncamere —MLPS	Employer forecasts by occupation/province; recruitment difficulty; expected immigrant hires	Monthly/ annual	Flags occupations with high unmet demand and expected immigrant hiring
LMI dashboard	Sviluppo Lavoro Italia	Integrate realized and forecasted demand; skills/knowledge per occupation	Continuously updated	One-stop view to prioritize occupations/territories and define skill profiles
SIISL	MLPS/INPS	Vacancies, jobseekers' CVs, and training offers, with AI matching	Near real-time	Signals current vacancy pressure; supports employer demand evidence
SISCO	MLPS	Job contract flows: activations, cessations, transformations	Monthly/ quarterly	Confirms sustained realized demand and turnover by sector/territory

ISTAT LFS	ISTAT	Labor supply and slack by group/occupation	Quarterly/ monthly indicators	Benchmarks local workforce underutilization; identifies occupations and sectors where foreign labor concentrates
Atlante (INAPP)	INAPP	Tasks and skills mapping; link to national qualifications	Continuous	Can align labor shortage lists with competencies and recognition/training routes

Source: World Bank staff compilation.

Note: AI = artificial intelligence; CV = curriculum vitae; INAPP = National Institute for Public Policy Analysis; INPS = National Institute of Social Security; ISTAT = National Institute of Statistics; LMI = labor market intelligence; LFS = Labor Force Survey; MLPS = Ministry of Labor and Social Policies; SIISL = Information System for Social and Work Inclusion; SISCO = statistical system of mandatory communications; Unioncamere = Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture.

Although a wealth of high-quality data is available, the country lacks a systematic strategy for officially identifying critical occupations or consistently applying this information in migrant labor planning. Interviews indicate that migrant recruitment efforts through the quota system and Art. 23 channel (particularly the large-scale project), often rely heavily on labor needs assessments provided by industry associations. However, the methodologies underlying these assessments remain unclear. Some associations gather estimates directly from employers within the sector, which can be problematic since, as multiple stakeholders note, many Italian firms—especially small and medium enterprises—lack adequate human resource planning and forecasting capabilities. Enhancing the use of official occupational and skills monitoring is important for supporting informed decision-making. SLI's Labor Market Intelligence already synthesizes various data sources to support policy formulation that aligns workforce development with employer demand.

Nonetheless, there remains a need for targeted analysis that integrates robust quantitative methodologies with qualitative insights from comprehensive stakeholder engagement. This enables cross-validation of evidence, consideration of both cyclical pressures and structural imbalances, and the underlying reasons for shortages; therefore, a more accurate identification of trends relevant to immigration planning (World Bank 2026a). For instance, countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia combine both approaches to produce lists of critical occupations that highlight strategically important occupations experiencing shortages that cannot be easily filled domestically (see

box 5.2). Emilia-Romagna also serves as an example of the value derived from systematically combining quantitative and qualitative approaches (see box 5.1).

Box 5.1 Demand Needs Assessment in Emilia-Romagna: The Skills Intelligence Tool

Skills Intelligence Emilia-Romagna (ART-ER n.d.-a; Agenzia regionale per il lavoro Emilia-Romagna n.d.-c) is an initiative of the Emilia-Romagna Region, implemented by ART-ER under Regional Law 2/2023, aimed at attracting, retaining, and developing highly specialized talent. It aims to strengthen the region's permanent system for anticipating highly specialized skills and informs the annual publications of the regional Talent Observatory.

The **Skills-Intelligence Tool** is an interactive platform that provides timely information on the competencies and professional profiles sought by firms operating in the region's Smart Specialization Strategy domains. It is designed primarily for vocational and higher education providers to help align training pathways with emerging labor market needs.

The tool integrates three data areas: **Job Postings**, capturing online vacancies published in the past 12 months; **New Hires**, drawing on administrative records from the Labor Information System of the Region (SILER, *Sistema Informativo Lavoro Emilia Romagna*) in collaboration with the Regional Employment Agency; and **Skill Needs**, based on planned recruitment reported by firms through the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture's (Unioncamere's) Excelsior system.

A dedicated pillar of **consultation groups** complements the quantitative data with qualitative insights. These forums, which bring together Clust-ER members, employment services, headhunters, chambers of commerce, associations, local authorities, and other stakeholders, discuss evolving skill needs and jointly interpret trends.

The initiative is supported by the European Social Fund+ 2021–27 and developed with the Regional Employment Agency, Unioncamere Emilia-Romagna, Clust-ER associations, the Big Data Association, Motor Valley University of Emilia-Romagna (MUNER), and technical partner Lightcast.

Box 5.2 Critical Occupations List

The Critical Occupations List (COL) systematically identifies occupations facing persistent and structural hiring difficulties in the labor market of a country. By distinguishing between persistent shortages and transitory recruitment frictions, the COL provides a robust, regularly updatable evidence base **to guide workforce planning, domestic training investments, and the prioritization of mobility partnerships.**

In response to increasing labor shortages, Malaysia's government set up a Critical Skills Monitoring Committee in 2014 to track skills imbalances in its labor market. In collaboration with the World Bank, the committee developed the COL to identify those jobs experiencing major labor market shortages that could be addressed through government intervention. **The COL** (introduced in 2015) **lists *skilled, sought-after, and strategic occupations***—spanning from mathematicians, actuaries, and statisticians to software developers and electrical engineers, which are **critical for the Malaysian economy's growth, yet difficult to fill.** The data and results are used across **several policy domains:**

- Higher education and technical and vocational education and training planning
- Employment services
- Migration instruments, such as informing the Returning Expert Program and broader admissions for critical occupations.

The COL tool employs a precise methodology and necessitates regular recalibration to ensure its ongoing relevance. It is updated annually and built using the mixed methods process: a top-down analysis of objective labor market indicators (such as employment and wage growth, and vacancy signals) combined with bottom-up evidence from employer surveys and consultations. Over time, the method has incorporated new data sources, including online job postings, to strengthen real-time signals about shortages and skills needs. The tool, however, requires ongoing data improvements and stakeholder engagement to map diverse job titles to standard classifications and reflect the subnational labor market. Malaysia's experience indicates that good practice involves maintaining an evidence-based and transparent list, updating it regularly, housing it within a competent technical agency, and systematically engaging employers as well as other public and private stakeholders. These measures help ensure that the COL remains credible, policy relevant, and responsive to changing skills demands (Moroz 2019).

The World Bank has built Italy's COL on a multisource, indicator-based methodology that triangulates labor demand signals from the Italian Labor Force Survey, mandatory

employer notifications on hirings and separations (*Comunicazioni Obbligatorie*), online job vacancy analytics, and vacancy rate data. **Italy's COL** highlights shortages across 130 occupations, with notable clustering in the northern regions of Italy. Employment gaps are mainly identified in **mid-skilled service and sales workers** (e.g., cooks, waiters, hairdressers, health care assistants), **technical trades** (e.g., bricklayers, electricians, metalworkers, mechanics), **and high-skilled professionals** (e.g., telecommunications engineers, physiotherapists, special needs teachers). These gaps are particularly pronounced in sectors such as **agri-food processing, tourism, and health care** (World Bank 2026a).

5.2 Identifying and Matching Vacancies for Migrant Workers

Early employer engagement and vacancy identification are success factors of mobility partnerships promoted by Italy's Art. 23 channel. Discussions led by OECD with private sector representatives on skills mobility partnerships, revealed that many initiatives remain fragmented and limited in scope due to inadequate early employer involvement, which, for example, in the THAMM project (involving Belgium, France, Germany, and North African countries) led to missed job placement targets (OECD 2024a). In Italy, the Art. 23 guidelines require that project proposals "describe the demand expressed by employers potentially interested in hiring foreign workers trained abroad." This motivates strong employer involvement from the outset.

For employers to participate in overseas recruitment through programs like GSPs, the gains must outweigh the costs. Qualitative research indicates that employers aim to minimize training and recruitment costs but are prepared to invest more to secure well-qualified candidates, including those with language proficiency (OECD 2024a). As the economy shifts toward skill-based hiring, finding talent requires assessing specific abilities —including human and social skills—rather than relying solely on educational credentials. In this setting, preselection and upskilling, which rely on collaborations with various partners in the country of origin, make coordinated programs like GSPs highly valuable to employers. However, employer participation depends on factors like price, delays, and obligations—not just the structural need for workers. Foreseeably, only some employers have the capacity to initiate or join GSPs, with differences emerging between small, medium, and large firms. Prior experience with international recruitment, business collaboration, and the navigation of legal frameworks may also influence participation (Poeschel et al. 2025).

The Art. 23 scheme offers advantages over alternative recruitment channels; however, employers encounter significant challenges when utilizing this pathway. Feedback from stakeholders indicates that employers initially respond favorably, recognizing the benefits of the system over the quota system, such as greater flexibility in timing, hiring numbers, and opportunities for structured skills development. Nonetheless, they highlight that engaging employers throughout the recruitment process demands sustained effort and is not always successful. Firstly, employers frequently lack comprehensive information about foreign candidates, which hinders their ability to assess the suitability of the opportunity. Secondly, reliance on unfamiliar agencies in origin countries for candidate matching may undermine trust. Thirdly, complex and frequently updated administrative requirements are discouraging, with many interviewees noting that submitting a *nulla osta* independently is rarely feasible and typically necessitates assistance from labor consultants. Additionally, the obligation to secure accommodation for future workers prior to application further complicates the process (the clearance process includes suitability checks on the housing/accommodation identified by the employer for the worker – refer to sections 5.4 and 7.2.3). Finally, the extended recruitment timeline—potentially up to 12 months from initial employer interest to worker arrival in Italy[10]—poses difficulties for organizations seeking to fill immediate staffing needs.

To reduce disengagement, some pre-departure training programs now require interested employers to sign hiring commitments. According to key informants, labor mobility projects succeed when companies and workers both make informed decisions and understand the necessary requirements, timelines, and benefits. A lack of employer follow-through can lead to smaller project scopes or leave visa-approved workers in uncertainty, as seen before. To secure vacancies, for example, a few projects have adopted a selective approach: employers are briefed about their legal responsibilities in the framework of the Art.23 channel, and only those who commit to hiring trained workers by signing a letter can proceed to interviews. Several leading destination countries have implemented web-based platforms to reduce information asymmetries and engage both recruiters and migrant workers on a large scale (see box 5.3).

Involving private actors who can represent the interests of employers in Italy's pre-departure training programs may help increase outreach and sustain engagement. The

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[10] Candidate outreach, pre-screening, and selection, if done efficiently, take about two months. Mandatory training under Art. 23 needs another 2–6 months. Entry clearance (nulla osta) may legally be approved within 60 days but often takes much longer. Once approved, the worker books a visa appointment at the embassy, which has up to 30 days to decide.

participation of organizations representing labor demand is widely recognized as essential for the success of labor mobility initiatives (Luthria 2013). As of November 15th, 2025, 54 percent of pre-departure training projects have been carried out by entities representing labor demand, such as private recruitment firms and industry groups. The remaining 46 percent has been led by training providers, civil society organizations, or international agencies involved in cross-border mobility. Key stakeholders have expressed positive views regarding the contributions of private employment agencies (APLs) and industry associations as project leads. The prevalence of projects led by these groups—40 percent by APLs and 11 percent by industry associations—illustrates the benefits of leveraging entities with established relationships with firms and expertise in addressing employer needs, including human resources. Experience with skills mobility partnerships shows that sectoral and professional organizations are valuable in finding corporate partners and key decision-makers within companies. Engaging private sector representatives in program design, implementation, and evaluation helps keep initiatives demand-driven and sustainable (OECD 2024a). Italy's example, however, reveals that not all industry associations are equipped to effectively engage, inform, or address the concerns of interested employers; and other intermediaries may be necessary to promote projects and support informed participation.

In Italy, APLs offer several advantages to pre-departure training partnerships. First, their job placement expertise and developed labor market intelligence help secure employment opportunities for migrant workers. Second, many APLs also act as temporary work agencies (*agenzie di somministrazione*) and can hire workers before placing them with firms relying on an available pool of potential employers, not just one. Third, these agencies have solid experience in managing the clearance request process. Fourth, many of them also cover travel costs for the worker. Finally, and most importantly, workers contracted through APLs have the same rights as direct employees. Despite these advantages, APL services are underused due to a limited market, dominated by a few large players. Incentives and appropriate regulation could help expand and improve these services. Balancing commercial viability and worker protection remains fundamental when adjusting regulatory parameters (Luthria 2013).

Box 5.3 Web-Based Portals as Core Infrastructure for Labor Mobility Policy

Leading labor-immigrant destination countries are increasingly using dedicated web platforms to organize labor migration in a transparent, rules-based, and user-friendly manner. **These portals operate as "single windows" for employers and prospective migrant workers, centralizing information on opportunities, rules, and processes, and often linking directly to application tools and support services.** This box describes three illustrative platforms:

"New to Denmark"—Denmark's Entry and Residence Portal

New to Denmark is the official portal for foreign nationals who wish to visit, live, or work in Denmark or Greenland. It is jointly administered by the Danish Immigration Service and the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI), both under the Ministry of Immigration and Integration. The portal is used to codify complex work permit rules into scheme-specific, stepwise guidance, reducing information asymmetry for both employers and migrants, and supporting compliance-based recruitment.

Features That Make Information and Processes More Accessible:

For Employers
- Dedicated pages on work schemes such as the Fast-Track Scheme explain eligibility, conditions for different "tracks," processing times, fees, and steps.
- Linked tools such as lists of certified employers and downloadable power-of-attorney templates help firms check compliance ex ante rather than through trial and error.

For Workers
- Scheme pages outline income thresholds, rights (e.g., job seeking permits, family accompaniment), limits on job changes, and rules regarding residence lapses, in plain language.
- Step-by-step descriptions of how to get a "quick job start," with timelines and required actions (biometrics, documents, fees), give a clear roadmap and reduce reliance on intermediaries.

"Make It in Germany"—Germany's Federal Skilled-Migration Portal

Make it in Germany is the official website for qualified professionals seeking to work in the country. This highly integrated, multilanguage portal combines eligibility self-assessment, visa guidance, and real job matching, lowering information and search costs for both firms and migrants. It also provides advisory services run by the Federal Employment Agency and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).

Features That Make Information and Processes More Accessible:

For Employers
- An "Information for Employers" track explains regulations for hiring third-country nationals, and options under the Skilled Immigration Act, including fast-track procedures.
- Employers can access advisory services, webinars, events, and case studies that demonstrate how companies successfully recruit and integrate foreign professionals, effectively turning the site into a behavior change tool for firms.

For Workers
- A prominent "Quick-Check" tool allows users to enter their profile and intended activity to self-assess their options for working and living in Germany.
- The portal integrates:
    - Job listings with thousands of vacancies targeted at international candidates,
    - Up-to-date information on professions in demand, and
    - Data on work visas and EU Blue Cards issued, signaling realistic demand.
- Structured, multilanguage content on application steps, recognition pathways, and integration courses helps reduce uncertainty and reliance on informal brokers.
- Comprehensive information on visa and residence (types, procedure, family reunification, and settlement/naturalization); working in Germany: job search guidance, qualification recognition, working conditions, and entrepreneurship; living in Germany: language, housing, childcare, the school system, and social security.

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) —Australia's Labor Mobility Scheme Platform

The PALM portal is the central online interface for Australia's long- and short-term labor mobility program connecting employers with workers from nine Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste. It is jointly managed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), with operational and compliance contributions from the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Border Force, and the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The portal explains scheme objectives, eligible sectors, employer approval requirements, worker eligibility criteria, recruitment channels, worker welfare safeguards, and compliance obligations. This digital architecture not only facilitates recruitment but also actively supports fair recruitment standards, provides transparent and multilingual guidance, and equips both employers and workers with accessible compliance tools. Its "Resources" section serves as a model for codifying obligations and protections, thereby reducing reliance on informal intermediaries. It stands out among global migration platforms for integrating worker welfare, employer compliance, and recruitment integrity within a single open-access system.

For Employers
- Clear eligibility and application sections detail who can become an approved employer, what documentation is required, and what legal obligations must be met (e.g., accommodation standards, minimum hours, health, and safety compliance).
- Step-by-step guidance on the approval and recruitment process.
- Lists of current approved employers, external employment services, and scheme metrics help firms benchmark themselves and understand the recruitment landscape.

For Workers
- Outlines eligibility requirements (age, fitness, English proficiency, background checks, intent to return), workplace rights, and the recruitment process.
- It clarifies that recruitment is exclusively through accredited Labor Sending Units to protect workers from unlicensed intermediaries.
- Cost responsibilities and reimbursement rules, which help workers avoid exploitation and understand their entitlements.

The "Resources" section of the PALM portal consolidates official guidance, templates, compliance tools, multilingual information, and educational materials for both employers and workers. These resources are central to ensuring that PALM operates transparently and that both parties understand their rights and obligations. Resources for employers are designed to standardize employer knowledge nationally. Resources for workers are translated into major Pacific languages and tailored to low-literacy audiences.

Project leads overseeing Art. 23 pre-departure projects are responsible for coordinating candidate-to-vacancy matching— a process that often requires collaboration among multiple partners and relies on low-technology solutions. As stipulated in Art. 23 guidelines, hiring firms do not directly prepare training and recruitment activities. Rather, responsibility for the selection process rests with the project lead, desirably with active participation from local partners in the country of origin—including public institutions such as Italian or joint Italian-foreign Chambers of Commerce. Further research is needed to better understand the sourcing and pre-selection methods used in origin countries. For instance, within the Tunisia-Italy corridor, several initiatives work alongside ANETI International (the international unit of Tunisia's public employment agency), which disseminates job vacancies and pre-screens only those candidates who proactively apply (it is not clear if other entities are leveraging jobseeker registries to broaden their potential talent pool). The project coordinator subsequently forwards selected CVs to prospective employers and facilitates interviews for candidates shortlisted by the firm. This is

predominantly a manual process, which adversely affects scalability, as it proves ineffective when managing large volumes of applicants and job postings. Additionally, insufficient transparency regarding local partners' procedures can undermine confidence in the quality of candidate pre-selection.

> ***FGD insight:*** *One group of recruited Tunisians reported that they were primarily recruited through direct outreach by ANETI International agents, utilizing regional employment offices and sectoral training centers. These institutions identified eligible candidates from graduate databases, especially those with forklift operation training. Initial contact was made by phone, followed by online applications and submission of supporting documents at employment offices. Pre-selection notifications were issued approximately two months after application, with interviews scheduled soon after. The interview process, described as well-organized and accessible by the candidates, included practical and technical assessments, with Arabic and French interpretation services provided. Preparatory support, including stress management and presentation skills, was offered by ANETI representatives and former instructors. Of the 40 pre-selected candidates, 15 were retained, with results communicated within one month. Selected individuals were required to confirm their participation in the program within three days.*
>
> *The second group reported that they largely learned about the program through informal channels, such as social media and personal networks. The application process required document submission and, in some cases, the translation of documents, which local partners supported. General information sessions clarified details about selection and training. Pre-selected candidates underwent two-stage online interviews with language assistance. Interview preparation was also available. Prior to departure, migrants received detailed information on employment conditions, accommodation arrangements and administrative procedures to be completed in Italy. Notably, Tunisian workers were required to sign pre-employment contracts with an Italian recruitment agency, which outlined job roles, duration, and terms.*

Box 5.4 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 personalization (France Travail 2025):

- **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 counseling services.

- **Neo (ChatFT module).** Enables employment counselors to interact with the France Travail information system using **natural language queries**. Following successful pilots, Neo is being progressively rolled out in various regions as of mid-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.

- **ChatFT Écoute.** An assistant under test (deployment expected by late 2025) designed to summarize conversations between counsellors and jobseekers in real time

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

Ethical Governance and Institutional Oversight

France Travail stands out for its institutionalized 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 case of AI use is subject to a full life-cycle evaluation, including risk mapping, multidisciplinary testing, and user feedback.

Bias Mitigation and User-Centered Design

France Travail applies a rigorous methodology to detect and mitigate algorithmic biases, including use of high-quality and representative training data; integration of feedback loops to retrain and adapt models in production environments; and engagement of multidisciplinary teams—data scientists, field counsellors, and legal experts—in reviewing and validating annotated data to ensure that interpretations and decisions are balanced, context aware, and free from systematic bias.

5.3 Financing Training and Mobility

In Italy, pre-departure training initiatives under Art. 23 are primarily financed by project proponents and partners through a mix of public and private funding mechanisms. Among the private instruments available, private interprofessional funds (*fondi paritetici interprofessionali*) are particularly significant in facilitating these training programs. These funds are managed by trade unions, employers' organizations, and private employment agencies. Annually, participating entities contribute to these funds, enabling continuous professional development activities such as upskilling and reskilling for workers. The principal funds currently utilized for financing pre-departure training projects include:

- **FONDIMPRESA** – established by Confindustria and major labor unions (CGIL, CISL, UIL), FONDIMPRESA allows any private company with at least one employee to join by allocating 0.3 percent of the compulsory contribution to the employees' unemployment insurance (Fondimpresa n.d.). It includes a sub-fund for SME training needs. In 2024, FONDIMPRESA allocated €5 million (available until December 2025) for professional training through the Art. 23 channel (Fondimpresa 2024).

- **FORMA.TEMP** – Each year, affiliated APLs contribute 4 percent of each temporary

worker's gross wages. Since 2024, APLs have used FORMA.TEMP to fund Art. 23 pre-departure training initiatives (Forma.Temp n.d.).

Available **public funds** used for Art.23 pre-departure training projects include:

- **The EU Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)** allocates funds to EU Member States through National Programs aimed at managing migration, enhancing asylum procedures, and fostering integration. In Italy, the MLPS's Directorate-General for Immigration and Integration Policies approved using €13 million from the AMIF 2021–27 program for the project "*Promotion of Legal Channels of Entry into Italy – Pre-departure Measures and Job Placement of Third-Country Citizens,*'implemented by its in-house Agency Sviluppo Lavoro Italia. Funding will be used mostly to select, train, and place at least 3,500 non-EU workers from five different countries. This includes €2 million to target 1,000 Tunisian citizens, part of the 2023 MoU and the subsequent Protocol signed between Italy and Tunisia (see section 4.1) (SLI n.d.).

- **The EU Migration Partnership Facility** is a European Union–funded initiative designed to strengthen cooperation and dialogue on migration and mobility between EU Member States and key partner countries outside the EU (Migration Partnership Facility n.d.). This is accomplished through grants, technical assistance, dialogue, and knowledge sharing. The facility has supported several labor mobility partnerships, including Italy's SkillNet project, which aims to create the necessary conditions for establishing a labor migration pathway between Pakistan and Italy (Migration Partnership Facility n.d.).

- **The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** has an overall budget of €142.7 billion for 2021–27, supporting the EU's agenda on employment, social affairs, education, and skills, as well as related structural reforms (European Commission n.d.). In Italy, this fund is managed through both national and regional programs, with the latter also providing co-financing for initiatives such as tuition, living, and travel expenses for vulnerable groups and migrant workers (see box 5.5).

While co-funding mechanisms are available, stakeholders indicate that the costs associated with pre-departure training initiatives remain considerably high and challenging to finance (see table 5.2). These financial barriers negatively impact employer participation rates, especially when the advantages of this recruitment channel are perceived as uncertain due to concerns about candidate quality and the overall effectiveness of the migration process. This highlights the importance of developing cost-

sharing arrangements proportionate to the benefits for each stakeholder, as well as considering catalytic funding—such as development aid at the program's outset—to support proof of concept. Germany's Triple Win program illustrates this well (see box 5.6). Demonstrating positive outcomes can help to establish trust among enterprises and facilitate a gradual transfer of financial responsibility to them (Acosta et al. 2025).

Box 5.5 Emilia-Romagna: Enhancing Available Funds

The Emilia-Romagna region leverages the European Social Fund Plus to fund initiatives aimed at attracting skilled workers from abroad (see box 4.2). This includes the use of skills intelligence tools, developed in collaboration with various regional agencies and associations (ART-ER n.d.-a; Agenzia regionale per il lavoro Emilia-Romagna n.d.-c). In May 2025, as part of the Guaranteeing Workers' Employability (GOL) Program (refer to section 7.2.2), the Region approved an upskilling and reskilling package valued at over €13 million, targeting sectors such as agribusiness, mechanics, textiles, construction, tourism, and health care (Agenzia regionale per il lavoro Emilia-Romagna n.d.-e). Additionally, the EU Commission has allocated €61.5 million through the European Social Fund Plus to the Region to further support employment, social inclusion, education, and training (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d.-h).

Table 5.2 Ballpark Costs of an illustrative Art. 23 Predeparture Training Project

Cost Category	Type of activities	Considered costs	Cost/hour in €	Number of hours	Tot costs	Costs per trainee (with 25 people per class)
Labor market intermediation	Candidate pre-selection (profiling and matching) Facilitating firm interviews and placements	Salary for HR expert Eventual travels to origin country	Variable	Variable		
Training	Designing language-civic-professional trainings Facilities and equipment Delivering training	Facilities, equipment, training materials, meals, salary for trainers and other key staff	€ 250.00	170 hours: 100h Italian, 10h civic, 60h technical*	€ 42,500.00	€ 1,700.00
Mobility	Predeparture orientation	Facilities, equipment, training materials, meals, salary for trainers and other key staff	Variable			
	Passport and Visa fee	Official Stamp required by Italian Embassy			€ 160.00	€ 160.00
	Travel costs	Plane, transport from and to the airport			€ 300.00	€ 300.00
Other costs	Small monetary support to participants	Small pocket salary	€ 90.00		€ 90.00	€ 90.00
Total					**€ 43,050.00**	**€ 2,250.00**

Source: Stakeholder interviews.

The Guidelines for implementing Art.23 pre-departure training projects emphasize the importance of engaging local training partners from countries of origin. This approach is consistent with the GSP model, which advocates for the participation of educators and training resources from both origin and destination countries as a means to promote financial sustainability, capacity transfer, and cost efficiency, as demonstrated by the APTC program in Australia (see box 5.6) (Acosta et al. 2025).

More research is needed to understand the extent to which cost-sharing involves workers in pre-departure training projects. According to the Art. 23 guidelines, projects should ensure that participants are not responsible for any expenses related to training. This aligns with the International Labor Organization's standards on fair recruitment practices for migrant workers, which stipulate that all recruitment fees or associated costs, whether direct or indirect, should be covered by the employer. Exceptions may be permitted only when such costs are strictly defined and transparently communicated prior to acceptance of employment (ILO 2019). According to research and key stakeholders, sharing costs with prospective migrant workers can enhance their motivation and sustain their commitment during the process, while still considering equity.

Box 5.6 International Experiences with Pre-departure Training Programs

Germany's Model for Co-Financing Skilled Mobility: The Triple Win Program

Launched in 2012, Germany's Triple Win Program is the primary government-led initiative for recruiting health care professionals, particularly nurses, from abroad. The program is administered by the German Development Agency (GIZ) in collaboration with the International Placement Services of the Federal Employment Agency.

The Triple Win Program operates on a public-private cost sharing model, which has proven effective in reducing financial burdens and fostering ongoing commitment from enterprises. For instance, under the "Sustainable Recruitment of Nurses" initiative, health care professionals are sourced from countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Philippines, and Tunisia. Employers participating in the scheme contribute through a fee of €5,500 paid to GIZ, in addition to assuming responsibility for travel expenses, accommodation, and costs related to skills and qualification recognition (Dempster et al. 2022).

This fee partially offsets GIZ's expenses for coordination efforts, professional development, language instruction, and integration courses. Remaining costs are covered by GIZ utilizing state budget allocations,

official development assistance (ODA), and European Union financial instruments (Dempster et al. 2022).

The estimated total expenditure for training a skilled worker recruited via the Triple Win Project ranges from €8,000 to €10,000. Over time, increased financial participation from German private companies and their representative associations, as well as the successful placement of trained migrant workers, have strengthened employers' sense of ownership and motivated further investment in these training programs (Schneider 2023).

The Australia-Pacific Training Coalition

The Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) is Australia's leading initiative for technical and vocational education and training in the Pacific region and Timor-Leste. Its goal is to recruit workers for high-demand sectors and address national and regional labor market needs. Launched in 2007, the project has trained over 42,000 workers, and since 2019 has placed over 2,600 workers through labor mobility (APTC n.d.). The program receives funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through ODA: $A134 million for phase 1, $A137 million for phase 2, and $A192 million for phase 3. This support covers general operations, training course design and delivery, and scholarships for eligible students (Dempster et al. 2022).

Initially, the financial model depended solely on national governments to cover all expenses, including the recruitment of trainers from Australia; however, this proved unsustainable. In subsequent phases, several measures contributed to reducing the cost per graduate from $A18,282 in 2019 to $A14,829 in 2022. Specifically, fixed costs were mitigated through increased scale, while the expansion of short courses and microcredentials further lowered program costs. Additionally, the approach evolved to prioritize collaboration with local training partners, including the development of trainers within Pacific countries. This not only reduced expenditures but also supported development outcomes, enhanced sustainability and scalability, and enabled greater customization to address local requirements—ultimately fostering improved employment opportunities within the region. Furthermore, APTC is increasingly engaging employers in cost sharing arrangements for training and encouraging students to contribute financially to their education. The expectation is that the program's quality, relevance, flexibility, and assurance of job placement will incentivize enterprises to invest in training foreign workers (Acosta et al. 2025; Dempster et al. 2022).

FGD insight: Some Tunisian migrant workers reported costs for visa document preparation and submission of about 4,000 TND (1,170 EUR) and language training expenses of 2,000 TND (585 EUR) per person. While some found these costs significant, they considered the services more affordable than other options. Participants valued the role of local partners in handling documentation and logistics as a means to ease administrative tasks. Others received full support from the project organization and ANETI, incurring no participant costs.

5.4 Enhancing Migrant Worker Entry Approval

Entry of migrant workers into Italy via the Art. 23 channel requires successful completion of mandated training and involves two primary stages for authorization. First, the employer intending to hire a non-EU citizen must submit a request and secure clearance (*nulla osta*) for employment. Subsequently, the selected candidate is required to apply for and obtain a work visa. These procedures are sequential, as the visa application cannot proceed without prior issuance of the *nulla osta* (figure 5.1). Multiple institutions participate in these administrative processes, including the Prefectures—specifically through the Single Immigration Desk (Sportello Unico Immigrazione, *SUI*)—the MLPS, the Italian Embassy in the applicant's country of origin, Questura (police headquarters), the Territorial Labor Inspectorate, and the Municipality, among others (further details provided below).

Figure 5.1 Employment Clearance and Work Visa Process
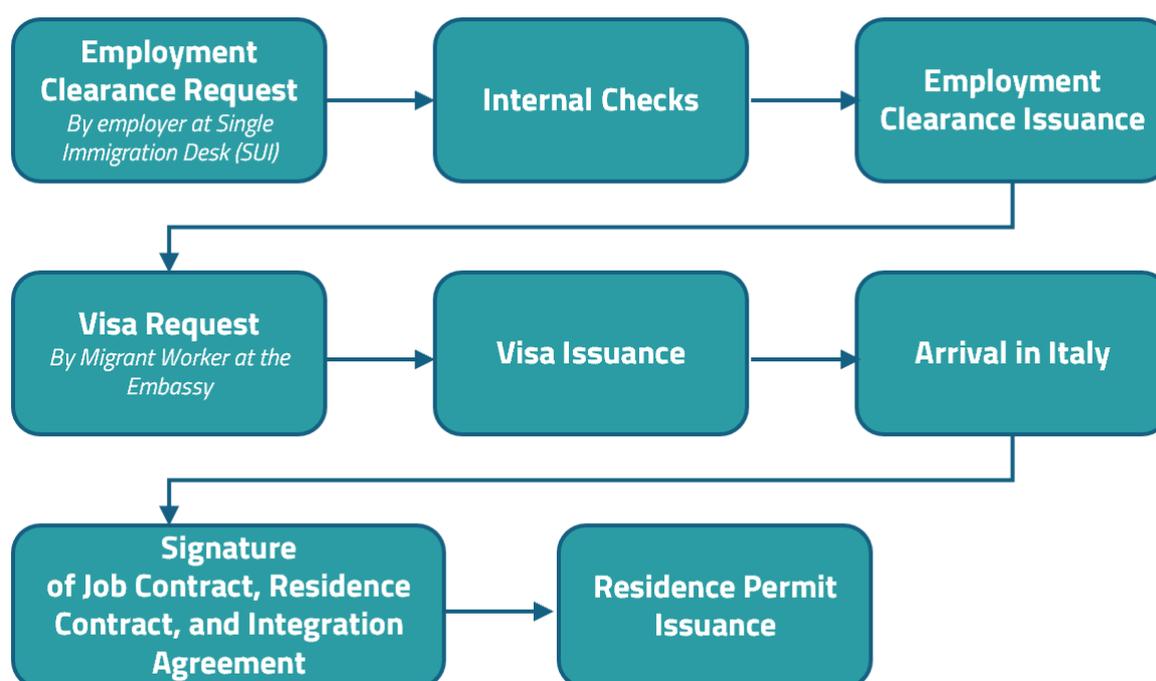
Note: SUI = Single Immigration Desk.

Source: World Bank

Nulla osta

The process for employers to obtain clearance (*nulla osta*) to hire a non-EU worker is managed at the provincial level by the Prefecture's SUI, which coordinates multiple checks.[11] Employers can apply for clearance to the SUI of their province[12] only after the candidate completes the training, as recorded on the MLPS's *Piattaforma Ingressi Formati all'Estero* (PIF), the online system for workers trained abroad under Art. 23. Employers submit the clearance request through the Ministry of Interior's services online portal "Ali Sportello Unico" by providing the *asseveration* certificate proving that all economic, financial and legal requirements are met to employ a foreign worker;[13] and the address of the accommodation arranged for the worker, ensuring it meets housing standards as certified by the Municipality. The application is then reviewed by SUI together with the Territorial Labor Inspectorate, which checks the employer's employment history, tax situation, and overall financial standing (MLPS n.d.-f), and with the police headquarters (Questura), which conducts background checks on both the employer and the trained worker to look for any prior unlawful activity or convictions. Once all these authorities confirm compliance, the SUI issues the nulla osta.

The SUI is expected to issue or reject clearance within sixty days of receiving a complete application.[14] If the documentation is incomplete or requires amendment, the employer has ten days (upon notification from SUI) to provide the rectified documents. If procedural deadlines elapse, clearance is deemed granted automatically (*silenzio assenso*); however, if subsequent adverse findings arise from *Questura* and/or the Territorial Labor Inspectorate, the authorization may be revoked and employment terminated accordingly. When issued,

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[11] Recall that under the Art. 23 legal framework, employers are waived from verifying the unavailability of local workers (a requirement under the quota system).

[12] This can be the Province where the enterprise is registered, the Province of residence of the Employer or the Province where the work will be developed.

[13] Employers affiliated with industry associations that have signed the Protocol for the Simplification of Procedures for the Entry of Non-EU Citizens into Italy for Employment Purposes with the MLPS may be exempted from submit the asseveration certificate. This regulation was implemented to streamline and speed up obtaining clearance.

[14] Law amendments approved on November 26, 2025 reduce from 60 to 30 days the statutory deadline for issuing the employment clearance (nulla osta al lavoro) for non-EU workers who have completed vocational and civic-linguistic training abroad pursuant to Article 23 of the TUI. Accommodation provided at the worksite or hotel are now added among the accommodation requirements for the request. This simplification is also accompanied by extending up to 12 months the period to apply for an entry visa after completion of the training and removing the requirement to reconfirm employer availability before issuing the visa (DI 146/2025).

clearance is transmitted electronically to both the employer and the relevant Italian diplomatic representation for visa issuance to the worker.

In practice, the process of obtaining the nulla osta is often much longer. Interviews with experts and stakeholders indicate that this could be due to administrative inefficiencies and limited capacity and resources across SUIs. This affects their ability to complete the necessary checks and manage paperwork for many clearance requests, which bundle both 'extra-quota' and 'quota' system requests, without any prioritization.

Delays in approving migrant entry are also linked to inconsistencies between national directives and local implementation. Experts pointed to limited awareness among SUI operators regarding up-to-date entry regulations and the need for clear internal instructions (known as '*circolare*') before implementing national policies, including simplifications related to the Art. 23 channel. Hesitation is rooted in weak accountability and fragmented responsibilities among the ministries involved in the process (MLPS, Ministry of Interior, and MAECI). Although SUIs follow national regulations, they are coordinated by Prefectures at the provincial level, which often leads to varied practices across territories within regions.

Progress has been achieved in strengthening inter-ministerial coordination, although opportunities for further enhancement remain. Timely notification of step completion along the *nulla osta* and visa procedures is becoming simpler due to the newly established interoperability of the MLPS's PIF platform with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through this interoperable system, the names of candidates who have completed their training are communicated to the respective authorities for nulla osta and visa, which then initiate the corresponding checks. However, another opportunity to address inefficiencies might be overlooked. Interviews revealed that the initial aim of registering candidates and their ID in the interoperable PIF within seven days of forming the training group was to share the list with the police headquarters (Questura) and initiate security checks promptly. However, it is unclear whether this practice is being followed. Interoperability could also be promoted between the Ministry of Interior's ALI system and consular networks. Currently, SUI operators manually notify consulates of *nulla osta* approval via certified email (Posta Elettronica Certificata), which can cause delays instead of automatic notification.

Visa

Once the *nulla osta* is issued, the prospective migrant worker has six months from the date of training completion to request the work visa at the Italian Embassy or Consulate of the

origin country. The Embassy performs two levels of verification on the worker: internally, within the Embassy jurisdiction, and at the EU level (the Schengen check) to verify that the person has no conviction or has not been evicted by another EU Member State. If the verification result is favorable for the visa issuance, the Embassy informs the SUI office. A new step has been introduced to address instances where employers, after submitting a clearance request, discontinue the administrative process for hiring a worker (Ministero dell'Interno n.d.–b). Under the updated provisions, once a positive response is received from the Embassy, the SUI is required to contact the employer to confirm continued interest in employing the migrant worker. The employer must respond within seven days; failure to do so will result in the revocation of the *nulla osta*. If the employer confirms the interest, the visa will be issued accordingly. By law, visa issuance should occur within 30 days of the visa request (Ministero dell'Interno n.d.–b); however, the time required to obtain the visa is often longer, with some estimates reporting an average time of approximately 121 days, from *nulla osta* issuance to visa issuance (Ero Straniero 2025b).

Arrival in Italy

Within eight days of arrival in Italy, the migrant worker must sign the "residence contract" *(contratto di soggiorno)*, an agreement between the employer and the migrant employee, which is approved by the Prefecture and formalizes the hiring. The signature may be completed at the single immigration desk (SUI) or electronically by the employer. After signing, the employee is entitled to request a subordinate work residence permit. The timeline for receiving this permit, which enables legal employment and residence in Italy, is uncertain in many cases (see section 7.1).

FGD insight: Migrants found the visa issuance process lengthy, which created delays and uncertainty. Some migrants had to postpone personal or professional plans while awaiting confirmation of their status. However, they received support with the necessary documentation from the project organization. Despite visa delays and related costs, participants remained committed and saw the program as beneficial for their long-term professional and personal stability.

6. PILLAR II: FURTHERING ACCESS

Cross-border skills development, recognition, and certification are integral to a strong labor migration system, creating opportunities for mobility and reducing the risk of brain waste. Delivering essential technical and vocational training can address skill gaps and support job creation and sustainable economic transformation (Acosta et al. 2025). The Furthering Access pillar is dedicated to leveraging skills for entry into international labor markets. For destination countries, this involves, prior to worker placement and departure:

- Assessing alignment with occupational and qualification standards
- Designing and delivering training for reskilling or upskilling
- Providing language and civic courses, and
- Certifying qualifications, and validating skills

Upon arrival and throughout the integration phase, it encompasses the recognition, verification, and certification of professional skills, along with additional training aligned with relevant occupational and skills frameworks.

6.1 Pre-Departure Standards Alignment and Skills Training

Systems that facilitate the alignment of qualifications and skills standards between countries of origin and destination are essential for broadening legal labor migration pathways. The Art. 23 operational guidelines establish minimum requirements for training and validating learning outcomes in the country of origin, while allowing discretion for projects to determine preferred training methodologies, content, and tools for endorsing skills (box 6.1). This approach supports training design that responds to specific needs. However, it lacks structured processes for aligning qualifications and skills standards between Italy and countries of origin, which could eventually support larger-scale mobility and broader opportunities for migrant workers within the Italian labor market.

Box 6.1 Training Content and Skills Verification under Art. 23 Pre-departure Training Programs

The Art. 23 Guidelines specify the content of the training program as follows:

- Theoretical and practical instruction tailored to the required competencies, aligned with the national reference framework, for occupations and qualifications established by the Atlas of Work and Qualifications (ATLANTE)

- Sector-specific components, including terminology relevant to the field

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- Career guidance and enhancement of soft skills

- Education regarding workers' rights, as well as workplace safety and security

- A minimum of 100 hours of A1-level language instruction and at least 10 hours of civic education

Upon completion of the training, achievement of at least an A1 language level is assessed via an examination organized by the training center in accordance with statutory parameters.[15]

Technical competency and knowledge acquired through vocational training are verified through a final examination that leads to a certificate of attendance, which details the specific skills acquired in accordance with ATLANTE taxonomy.

FGD insight: *Tunisian workers in Italy underwent one week of practical training in Tunisia, followed by 80 hours of language training, as well as civic and workplace safety and security courses. Tunisian workers in training in Tunisia underwent 6 weeks of pre-departure training, which included Italian language, life skills, health and safety, labor rights, and technical training.*

Employer-specific skill requirements and whether a profession needs a recognized qualification determine the type of technical training and the need for certification. Several stakeholders highlighted that Art. 23 channel is effective for professions without recognized qualification requirements. In fact, managers of pre-departure training projects noted that employers mainly want workers' skills to match firm standards, regardless of formal qualification recognition in Italy. Such competency assessments are typically done through interviews and through tests applied during vocational training. Certain projects offer certificates issued by reputable organizations, which, while not legally binding, may nonetheless hold considerable value within the Italian job market. Instead, practicing regulated professions in Italy, such as social health assistants and nurses, requires accredited training and certification. Consequently, focusing on regulated professions currently seems not feasible for Art. 23 projects unless an occupation-specific framework for recognizing foreign qualifications is established, which could subsequently be applied

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[15] Alternatively, A1 level can also be assessed through entities recognized by Italian law or a certificate issued by the Italian Institute of Culture if present in the country of origin.

to Art. 23 projects (refer to section 6.2).[16]

Time limitations also often impact the training structure, with efforts focused on the minimum required to avoid extending mobility timelines. For instance, although A1 language proficiency is generally considered inadequate—especially for positions that require specialized technical terms—prolonging language courses would delay departure, which can be impractical for employers facing urgent staffing demands. This is complicated by the requirement that training must be completed before employers can apply for entry clearance and migrant workers for visas. Moreover, interviews revealed that vocational training often focuses on fundamental aspects, primarily workplace safety and health protocols, with additional technical instruction scheduled upon arrival in Italy. As a result, migrant workers may be unable to commence their job roles until the supplementary training is completed, which can lead to increased costs and possible delays for both employers and employees.

FGD insight: The Tunisian migrant group revealed that after arriving in Italy and before starting their jobs, they were required by employers to complete an additional week of Italian language classes and three weeks of technical training. This was because certain individuals were found to lack necessary job skills. For Tunisians still in training in Tunisia, another week of training is scheduled to be held in Italy.[17]

Italy does not have a formal process for collaborating with countries of origin on harmonizing professional skill standards. In Italy, there is no agency dedicated to providing national recognition statements for vocational qualifications from non-EU countries.[18] Although the Information Center on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA) handles the recognition of upper-secondary and higher education diplomas, it

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[16] Exceptional provisions have allowed for conditional waivers from standard foreign qualification recognition requirements for specific occupations in critical shortage. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign nurses, doctors, and social-health assistants were authorized to enter Italy and to practice their profession, provided that they were registered in the national professional register for regulated professions in their country of origin. These waivers remain in effect in certain Italian regions.

[17] The questionnaires applied to both groups are available in Annex A2.2. Focus group discussion guide.

[18] A vocational qualification is a formal certification of learning from vocational education and/or training, awarded by a recognized authority, indicating knowledge and skills required for a specific job.

does not cover vocational qualifications required for accessing work. Recognition of vocational qualification and skills is decentralized and operated by Regions (see section 6.2).

However, some projects are setting examples through jointly developed curricula that could eventually support labor mobility arrangements. The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) has begun building training capacity in North Africa as part of the Mattei Plan, creating models for co-developed curricula. For example, the energy multinational Eni, AICS, Italy's Education Ministries, and the Government of Egypt have recently signed an MoU to establish two technical schools in Egypt—Eni will oversee school management and curriculum development, while AICS will upgrade infrastructure and foster inclusivity (Eni 2025). In another initiative, *Tunisie Professionnelle*, funded by €6.5 million from Italy and involving AICS, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and Tunisia's Ministry of Employment and Technical Vocational Education, aims to modernize curricula, enhance facilities, improve trainer expertise, and better align education with private sector demands for youth employment (Business News Tunisia n.d.). However, these projects led by AICS are not specifically designed to promote international labor mobility.

Box 6.2 Germany's model for skills recognition for non-EU citizens

Recognition of foreign qualifications plays a crucial role in enhancing labor market outcomes for migrants. In Germany, migrants who received full recognition of their qualifications experienced a 20 percent wage increase and an employment rate 24.5 percentage points higher than that of peers without such recognition (Fasani 2024). This process facilitates access to regulated occupations that may otherwise be unattainable for migrants. However, the procedure can be intricate and costly, contributing to low application rates. To address these challenges, the Federal Recognition Act (Anerkennungsgesetz) was introduced in April 2012 by Germany to simplify qualification recognition for non-EU migrants. Following this legislative reform, there was a 15 percent growth in recognition applications, a 19 percent rise in employment, and a four percent increase in wages within regulated fields. Notable improvements were also observed in unregulated sectors (Fasani 2024). As part of the Act, the German government developed a portal for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, providing comprehensive information, guidance, and tools for foreign individuals seeking recognition of their qualifications (see box 5.3) (German Federal Government n.d.).

In 2020 **the Skilled Immigration Act** (FEG, Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz) entered into force to **further promote labor mobility in Germany of non-EU skilled workers and professionals,**

with either a recognized university degree or a qualified vocational training with at least two years of training. The latter can also enter Germany to look for a job or a training place. The Act introduced an accelerated procedure to enter the country and to get the professional qualifications recognized, with the employer allowed to start the skills recognition procedure on behalf of the migrant worker, who can enter Germany within two months after obtaining the visa. As for the skills recognition, the Act introduced two new access pathways:

- **The recognition partnership.** The prospective skilled workers do not have to initiate the skills recognition procedure or to obtain a notice of partial recognition prior to entry into Germany. The granting of a visa is linked to the obligation for the worker and the employer to apply for the recognition procedure after entry; the existence of the employment contract and of a vocational/academic qualification recognized by the country of training; and to the A2 level of German language proficiency. After entry, the migrant worker will obtain a residence permit valid for one year, which can be extended up to three years.

- **Skills analysis.** Individuals seeking recognition of their foreign qualifications may be eligible for a residence permit of up to six months in Germany to complete a skills analysis, if deemed necessary by the competent authority. This is contingent upon demonstrating at least an A2 proficiency level in German (Anerkennung in Deutschland n.d.).

6.2 Recognizing Qualifications and Skills in Italy

Italy's vocational education and training (VET) system is characterized by a high degree of decentralization, with responsibilities shared between the State and the Regions. The Ministry of Education and Merit sets national rules for school-based VET (curricula, qualifications, standards), while other national bodies (MLPS, INAPP) define minimum certification standards. Regional authorities are responsible for the planning, regulation and management of regional VET and adult learning systems. This includes post-secondary VET pathways (such as IFTS), and vocational courses mainly delivered mainly through regionally accredited public and private training providers, in accordance with regional programming and quality assurance arrangements (see figure 6.1).

Regions play a central role in recognizing vocational qualifications and skills. They define regional VET qualification repertoires, which are coordinated at national level through the State–Regions Conference (Cedefop n.d.). While this arrangement allows adaptation to local labor market needs, it also introduces fragmentation in how qualifications are applied and recognized across territories. A qualification obtained in one region is not immediately and easily recognized in another region, which poses difficulties labor mobility within Italy.

To address fragmentation, Italy established the National System for Certification of Competences (NSCC). Introduced in 2013 (Legislative Decree 13/2013), the NSCC provides a unified regulatory framework for recognizing learning outcomes acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal learning (Cedefop n.d.).[19] The NSCC provides a single national certification system for formal learning pathways and establishes processes for the identification, validation and certification (IVC) of skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning. Rather than centralizing implementation, the system sets national-level standards while relying on Regions for delivery and alignment with regional qualification repertoires and national standards.

The NSCC is supported by two national transparency instruments: the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Atlas of Work and Qualifications (Atlante). These tools aim to ensure that qualifications issued in different parts of the country remain readable and comparable, both domestically and internationally. The NQF, formally adopted in 2018, classifies all Italian qualifications based on learning outcomes and references them to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), improving transparency and comparability across Italy and the European Union. The Atlante—developed by INAPP—maps occupations, activities, and competences and links them to regional and national qualifications, supporting comparison and certification procedures (Cedefop n.d.). While central to system coherence, the Atlante has no regulatory or enforcement function.

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[19] Formal learning is defined as learning that takes place within formal education and training systems and leads to recognized qualifications. Non-formal learning is learning intentionally undertaken by the learner through planned activities outside the formal education and training system (e.g. organized by NGOs, enterprises, voluntary bodies). Informal learning is learning that occurs in daily life activities and interactions — including in the workplace, in the family, or in leisure contexts — and is not structured or organized intentionally as learning.

Figure 6.1 Institutions and Entities Responsible for Vocational Qualifications

Academic And Vocational Education	Vocational Training	Adult Education	VET Qualification — Authorized Entities Based On Qualifications And Sectors	Certification And Validation
Ministry Of Education And Merit	Regional Governments	**RESPONSIBILITY:** Ministry Of Education And Merit In Conjunction With The Regions	Accredited Training Institutions, Under The Authority Of The Regions	**Formal Education:** Accredited Private Education Entities
Ministry Of University And Research		**Implementation:** Provincial Centers For Adult Education (CPIA): Focus On Vocational And Language Learning	State Institutions And Independent Educational Institutions Under The Authority Of Regions	**Non-formal And Informal Education:** IVC
Governments Of The Regions			Public Entitled Bodies Under The Specified Competent Authority For Individual Regulated Professions	
			State Institutions And Dependent Educational Institutions Under The Authority Of The Ministry Of Education And Merit	
			Provincial Centers For Adult Education Under The Ministry Of Education And Merit Authority	

Note: IVC = identification, validation, and certification; VET = vocational education and training.
Source: World Bank representation based on ETF 2025

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning is operationalized through Identification, Validation, and Certification (IVC) services. These services allow individuals to have competences acquired outside the formal education and training system, assessed against national standards defined in the NQF and the Atlante. IVC procedures follow three main stages (Cedefop n.d.; INAPP n.d.–c):

1. Identification focuses on documenting learning outcomes through evidence such as work histories or portfolios.
2. Validation assesses this evidence through interviews or practical tests and may lead to partial recognition.
3. Certification allows individuals to obtain a formal qualification or part of a qualification, including access to final examinations where relevant.

Individuals must apply to a competent authority—typically a regional administration or an authorized body—to initiate an IVC procedure. If the process is completed successfully, the individual obtains an officially recognized certification valid at national level and usable for employment, further training, or labor mobility purposes.

The decentralized structure of the system also weakens skills portability. Although

guided by national principles under the NSCC, IVC services are organized and delivered at regional level, resulting in variation in procedures, access conditions, and institutional capacity. Some Regions—notably Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont—have developed structured IVC systems (see box 6.3). In other Regions, services remain underdeveloped, without stable funding, undermining equal access and labor mobility across the country (Council of Europe 2024). This means that certification tools remain underused, particularly by adult and low-skilled workers. As a result, many competences remain invisible in the labor market.

Third-country nationals (TCNs) face particular challenges in accessing skills recognition services. Migrant workers often lack information about available procedures, face language barriers, and may have difficulty providing documentary evidence of prior learning. While IVC services are formally open to all individuals, they are not systematically adapted to assess competences acquired abroad, and operators are not always trained to work with foreign qualifications or migrant profiles (Council of Europe 2024).[20] As a result, effective access remains limited: only three percent of migrant workers have obtained formal recognition of prior work experience (Council of Europe 2024), contributing to skills underutilization and occupational mismatch.

Several EU Member States are working to simplify the recognition of foreign skills and qualifications, which can significantly enhance migrant integration into the workforce and support economic goals (European Commission n.d.). Over the past decade, the EU has supported these efforts by providing tools to Member States, such as the Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals, which was launched in 2017 and updated in 2020 (see box 6.4). More recently, in 2023, the European Commission recommended that EU countries streamline and accelerate the recognition of qualifications for skilled individuals from non-EU countries, with the aim to improve access to key job sectors (Cedefop n.d.). Building on this, the EU's 2025 Union of Skills strategy introduced the Skills Portability Initiative, which leverages the Europass Digital Credentials and the EQF to support cross-border recognition of qualifications and micro-credentials, including voluntary referencing of third-country frameworks (European Commission 2024). Country-level initiatives across Europe and abroad signal that this is a priority area for socioeconomic objectives (box 6.5).

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[20] For example, assisting a foreign worker might require foreign language skills, multicultural competencies, and familiarity with the legal and procedural frameworks of workers' countries of origin.

Box 6.3 Skills Recognition and Vocational Training in Emilia-Romagna

The Emilia-Romagna region has implemented various initiatives and innovative tools to strengthen skills recognition and vocational training. These efforts have been supported by close collaboration between public institutions and private entities. Among these:

- In 2020, with funding from the Italian Government administered by the Italian Development Cooperation Agency, the Emilia-Romagna Region led the Project of Emilia-Romagna for Albania (**PEMA) project (Pemproject n.d.)**, which aimed to train prospective Albanian workers for the agrifood sector. These initiatives delivered technical assistance to Albania, enhancing vocational education and training in agriculture through partnerships among private companies seeking skilled labor, vocational training centers, and public entities.

- **Orient-ER (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d.-i)** is a regional tool designed to help individuals identify:

    - The skills and qualifications required for specific occupations,
    - The relevant training pathways to pursue, and
    - The available training services within the region.

    Managed by the regional administration in collaboration with accredited training providers, ORIENT-ER ensures compliance with the regional qualifications' standards and alignment with labor market needs. The database collects information on:

    - Initial vocational education and training,
    - Higher technical education programs,
    - Specialization courses,
    - Training required for access to regulated professions financed or authorized by the Region.

It also provides updated lists of new courses, expiring opportunities, and authorized programs outside public funding. The tool is a key instrument for upskilling, reskilling, and labor attachment in the region.

Box 6.4 Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals

The Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals (European Commission n.d.-c) has been developed by the European Commission for the **recognition of qualifications of non-EU citizens, such as migrants, refugees, and unaccompanied minors staying in EU countries.** This multilingual online platform is accessible to national authorities responsible for reception and integration of

refugees, reception centers, employment services, education and training advisers, social services, and civil society organizations that provide services to non-EU citizens. A questionnaire **gathers data** related to skills, formal and informal qualifications, and work experience in order to provide **personalized guidance** on diploma recognition, skill validation, further training, or accessing employment support services. The tool has been recently improved, offering several separate modules that can be used according to the user's needs. However, it has been conceived for professionals who provide support and/or orientation to migrants, therefore it requires expertise and cannot be self-used by migrant workers themselves.

Box 6.5 Innovations in Skills Recognition Initiatives Around the World

France's Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience (VAE) offers a user-friendly pathway for migrants and refugees to convert prior work and volunteer experience into full or partial diplomas and professional certifications. Targeted initiatives—VAE sans frontières and Parcours VAE migrants—extend access to displaced populations, while the 2023 pilot of VAE inversée aims to actively engage candidates and reduce initiation barriers. The centralized France VAE digital platform (launched July 2023) streamlines navigation through an intuitive digital interface and support nonnative speakers, improving accessibility and throughput. These features underpin the effective use of microcredentials and targeted bridging modules by ensuring that prior competencies are formally recognized.

Canada has long pioneered bridging programs for internationally trained professionals (e.g., physicians, nurses, engineers). It combines competency-based assessments with modular training to meet licensing requirements while enabling work experience. Pilots of alternative credential recognition reduce reliance on traditional document validation, allowing migrants to demonstrate skills directly. Bridging models commonly integrate language upgrading, cultural orientation, and practical placements, with stackable microcredentials that articulate into formal qualifications. This approach accelerates labor market entry for those with partially recognized foreign credentials and supports progression without full requalification.

Germany's recent reforms place employers at the center of recognition, enhancing flexibility and speed. Recognition partnerships under the amended Skilled Immigration Act (effective March 2024) enable qualified migrants to commence work immediately, provided they commit to completing formal recognition upon entry. Employers, in turn, agree to provide support during the process and allocate time for the migrant to acquire any missing qualifications identified through individual assessments (including through internships). In parallel, companies and trade unions are engaged across the Job Turbo Initiative, reinforcing demand-driven pathways that value practical experience.

Source: OECD 2025.

7. PILLAR III—FORTIFYING ACCESS

Strengthening the protection and integration of labor migrants in destination countries can help mitigate the risks of their unequal access to information, rights, and protection (World Bank 2023a). Effective migration systems aim to balance mobility with the protection of individuals, minimizing risks related to participation in international labor markets while ensuring migrant workers' well-being, social protection, and integration in the destination country (Acosta et al. 2025). The Fortifying Access pillar focuses on processes and mechanisms that support migrant workers after their arrival in the destination country, particularly those that reduce vulnerability and promote inclusion. These include support services and networks; employment and labor support services; grievance redress mechanisms; and welfare and social insurance benefits.

7.1 Activating Integration Services and Networks

Arrival in Italy

For first-time non-EU migrant workers, the integration pathway begins with formally registering their arrival in Italy. This must be done within eight days at the Prefecture's Single Immigration Desk (SUI). The initial step includes signing the "residence contract" (*contratto di soggiorno*) (see section 5.4). Those planning to stay longer than one year must also sign the "integration agreement" *(accordo di integrazione)*. This is a mandatory integration process requiring adult foreigners (over 16 years of age) to fulfill certain obligations aimed at full integration and to avoid, in the most serious cases, the penalty of expulsion. It works as a point-based system requiring non-EU citizens to earn at least 30 points over two years, with 16 awarded at signing. Learning Italian culture and language, especially achieving A2 spoken level, is essential. The agreement is also signed by the Prefect or a delegate (MLSP n.d.-n). Once the residence contract and integration agreement are validated by the SUI, migrant workers can apply for the residence permit.

The residence permit is essential for migrants to access public services. It allows migrants to obtain a permanent tax identification number, *Codice Fiscale*, which is required for: tax and social security contributions, access to health care, banking services, mobile phone contracts, and eligibility for social benefits.

While waiting for the residence permit, migrants get an application receipt and temporary tax code meant to allow access to basic services. However, access is often inconsistent.

For example, some banks still require the physical residence permit for the opening of an account, despite regulations allowing temporary documentation. Non-EU migrants without proper documents may become invisible to public services, and risk falling into irregular residency and losing fundamental rights (International Labour Organization 2022). The length of a residence permit depends on the length of the work contract. Researchers and training project leads have observed that delays in issuing these permits are frequent, with some being granted just before the work contract expires.

> **FGD insight:** *Interviewed trained labor migrants reported that delays in residence permit issuance prevented them from obtaining permanent tax identification number. As a result,* **salaries were often paid in cash, creating inconvenience for both migrants and employers.** *However, migrants still received formal monthly pay slips (busta paga) documenting their social security contributions, which employers directly paid to the tax agency.*
>
> **Migrant workers expressed frustration at being unable to directly follow up on their residence permit applications.** *Delays occurred because the process was tied to the Prefecture at the hiring firms legal address, which was often located in a different region from where migrants lived and worked.*
>
> *Despite these challenges, many* **participants reported a positive reception and support upon arriving in Italy.** *They were assisted by the employer with administrative procedures, and several described that "everything was perfect."*

Integration Services

Italy's approach to migrant integration seeks to foster local attachment, empowerment, and participation within the community of residence (International Labour Organization 2022). The state's commitment to supporting the integration process in coordination with local governments is outlined in the **2021–27 Multiannual Agenda on Labor Integration and Social Inclusion,** spearheaded by the **Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (MLPS)**. This agenda promotes:

- Access to active labor market policies,
- Skills development linked to employment, and
- Social and occupational inclusion, particularly of women and vulnerable groups.

It also emphasizes a territorial perspective by means of multilevel and multiactor

governance - at vertical (national government, regions and local entities) and horizontal (private actors) levels -for migrant integration actions and services, and stronger institutional capacity.

Migrant workers have access to a variety of socioeconomic, educational, and cultural services to help with their integration, primarily delivered by civil society organizations (CSOs), diaspora groups, local councils, and municipalities (figure 7.1). However, these services vary widely across territories and are often not well coordinated. Provision is typically project based, with eligibility determined at the regional or local level based on national and EU regulations. Fragmented institutional frameworks limit long-term planning, reduce knowledge sharing, and make it difficult for migrants to identify available services. These challenges are compounded by relatively low levels of investment in integration policies, especially when compared with other EU Member States (Basso et al. 2025).

Figure 7.1 Stakeholders Involved in the Integration Process of Migrant Workers in Italy
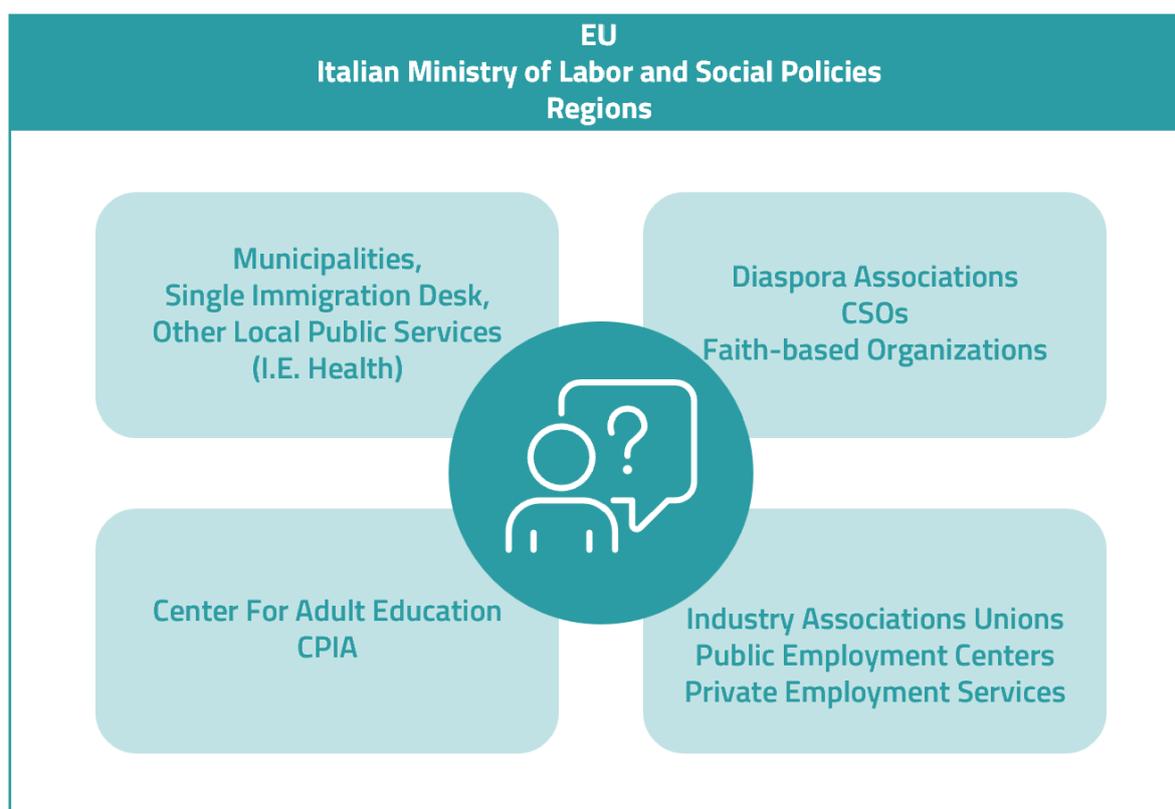
Note: CPI = Public Employment Center; CPIA = Provincial Center for Adult Education; CSO = civil society organization; EU = European Union; SUI = Single Immigration Desk.

Source: World Bank

The evidence highlights the need for a more structured and coordinated support system, particularly for newly arrived migrants who often lack the social networks and institutional knowledge that would help them access various services. Overall, prolonged administrative delays negatively impact the socioeconomic integration and well-being of migrant workers in the short and long run. Coordinated approaches that ensure the integration of migrant workers can positively impact labor market outcomes and the broader economy in the long term (Petrelli et al. 2025). **One-stop-shop** models, where multiple services are co-located or coordinated to address multidimensional needs, could be highly effective for this population. This can be enhanced by employing a **case management approach,** which designs personalized support based on the unique challenges and needs of each client (see box 7.1). Additionally, **cultural and language mediators**, often members of **diaspora communities**, can help facilitate communication and promote trust between service providers and migrants (Petrelli et al. 2025).

Box 7.1 Good Practices on Integrated Services

The Case Management Approach (Petrelli et al. 2025)

Case management is a client-focused, goal-oriented approach used to assess individual needs and coordinate access to social services. It typically involves a social worker or similar professional who supports individuals or families through an agreed support plan. Effective case management relies on **coordination among multiple actors**, including:

- Local and national authorities, which can institutionalize services and support scale-up,
- Civil society organizations, which help reach vulnerable groups and guide users through complex systems,
- Cultural mediators, who ensure services are accessible and culturally appropriate, and
- Multilateral organizations, which can provide early-stage financing and technical support.

Service integration and case management for migrants can importantly improve overall service delivery effectiveness and migrant integration outcomes. The following are two examples of delivery services using the case management approach.

Community Centers as "One-Stop-Shops" in Greece (Marzi et al. 2024)

Since 2017, Greece's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has established 250 community centers across 12 regions to function as "one-stop-shops" for social services and benefits. These centers serve diverse groups including minimum-income beneficiaries, low-income households, immigrants, persons with disabilities, and Roma communities

The centers act as local reference points, linking individual needs and requests with available social programs and services. In addition, the centers offer various application support, psychological assistance, and coordination of local services, with mobile units reaching remote areas.

Combining One-Stop-Shop and Case Management: The Example of Spazio Comune (Petrelli et al. 2025)

Spazio Comune is an initiative developed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2022, in partnership with five Italian municipalities (Turin, Milan, Rome, Naples, and Bari). It aims to support the integration of refugees, and vulnerable and economic migrants through multifunctional local hubs. It uses a flexible case management model that:

- Focuses on individual needs,
- Promotes coordinated service delivery,
- Co-locates multiple services "under one roof," and
- Relies on partnerships between public institutions and nonprofit actors at the local level.

The programs costs are co-shared by the Municipality and UNHCR, and funding can be complemented by other sources, like the national government and/or the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

At the national level, Spazio Comune features as a network, coordinated by local municipalities and implemented primarily by nongovernmental organizations. The intake process can be either directly by visiting the center, or indirectly through referral from the municipality. Typical services offered include legal assistance, employment support, housing services, community matching, language courses, and referrals to other public services. Service implementation and beneficiary outcomes are regularly monitored, with longer-term follow-ups also in place.

The scale and coverage remain modest. During the second half of 2024, the Municipality of Milan managed 3,700 cases, mainly involving migrants from Egypt, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Peru. In the Municipality of Bari, an average of 120 people per month were assisted in 2023, with services focused on housing, employment, and social inclusion.

Diaspora communities contribute to building inclusive, resilient societies beyond remittance flows. They often act as bridges between origin and destination countries and play an active role in policy dialogue and advocacy. In Italy, diaspora organizations are nationally represented via the Italian National Coordination of Diasporas for International Cooperation (CIDCI). This is a third-tier network that links regional diaspora groups, provides a formal structure for engagement, and strengthens diaspora participation in

national policy processes, including the Mattei Plan (Campione 2025).

Migrants seeking legal work in Italy can benefit from organized diaspora activity. Across the country, migrant associations offer guidance and support on administrative procedures for entry, residence, and employment. Some have created multilingual, user-friendly websites with detailed information on labor mobility pathways for prospective workers.[21]

> **FGD insight:** *Several migrant workers reported receiving informal support and guidance from fellow Tunisians who had lived in Italy longer. This peer support helped them navigate everyday challenges more easily. Importantly,* **participants reported no experiences of discrimination or racism.**

Long-term protections for migrant workers should include social security portability, allowing benefits earned across countries to be accumulated. Italy has signed several social security portability agreements with several non-EU countries, including Tunisia, countries of the former Yugoslavia, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil. Furthermore, grievance mechanisms are essential to provide migrant workers with a safe and accessible channel to raise concerns, prevent exploitation, and seek remedies for human rights violations.

Italy has several mechanisms in place, including labor courts and support from trade unions and CSOs and legal frameworks (Law No. 187/2024). However, barriers such as lack of awareness, language difficulties, and little understanding of labor rights limit the utilization of such mechanism (Ethical Trade Initiative 2024). The Australian Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme provides a useful example of how grievance mechanisms can be effectively strengthened (box 7.2).

Box 7.2 Good 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 access temporary or longer-term employment in sectors such as agriculture, meat processing, hospitality, and elder care The scheme is designed to meet Australia's labor shortages while supporting skills development and remittances in participating

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[21] See for example: https://italiahello.it/articolo/come-prepararti-per-cercare-lavoro/ and https://jobclinic.it/

countries.

Within this mobility framework, PALM has developed a robust grievance mechanism anchored in the Deed of Agreement (Section 36) and the Approved Employer Guidelines. 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 seek support from sending-country government representatives (e.g., labor attaché or country liaison officer), enhancing trust and facilitating 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:

- **Lodgment.** Workers or third parties can submit grievances by phone, email, or form. Anonymous submissions are accepted.

- **Acknowledgement.** Within three working days, the 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 noncritical cases, the 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, the DEWR conducts a facts-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.

Source*: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations 2024.*

7.2 Enhancing Integration Through Continuous Language Learning, Labor Market Inclusion, and Housing Access

Italy applies a "pact" model for integration. Through the integration agreement (see section 7.1), non-EU migrants commit to taking steps toward full integration within two years. Meanwhile, the State pledges to uphold fundamental rights and facilitate the integration process in collaboration with local authorities. Indeed, foreign workers with legal regular residence in Italy, along with their families, are entitled to the same rights as Italian citizens, although some services are subject to eligibility requirements. This is an essential element of living and participating in the host society and building cohesive societies (European Commission 2016). However, a recent change in the law made family reunification in Italy more restrictive: most foreign nationals must now complete two consecutive years of legal residence before applying.[22]

In Italy, integration of non-EU migrants is challenged by limited language proficiency, low access to dignified housing and poor labor market outcomes (figure 7.2). Evidence shows that insufficient language skills penalizes immigrants' labor force participation and employment in the Italian market (Ghio et al. 2023). Migrants are often discriminated in accessing housing and over half of them live in overcrowded places; this undermines stability and social inclusion. Finally, migrant workers are more often overqualified, unemployed, or inactive, with respect to Italian nationals (Council of Europe 2024). Access to the labor market remains complex and challenging especially for migrant women (see box 7.3).

Figure 7.2 Integration Statistics of Adult Non-EU Nationals in Italy

Labor And Education In 2023
- 4.8% Enrolled In Education and Training
- 64.2% Employed (National Rate: 66.4%)
- 64.1% Overqualified

Social Integration In 2022
- 40.8% At Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion
- 10.6% Were In Severe and Material Deprivation
- 51.1% Lived In Overcrowding Places.
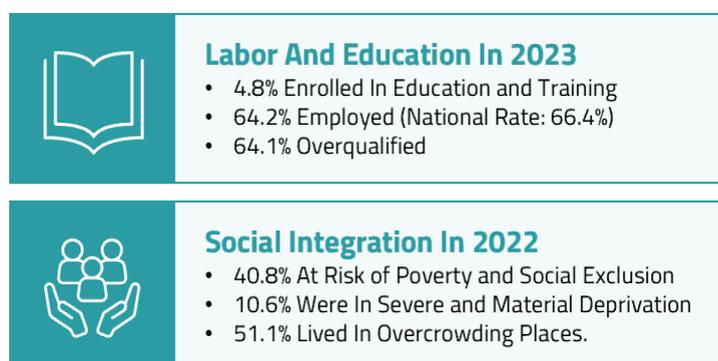
Source: EUROSTAT 2023

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[22] Law 187/2024 established in December 2024.

Box 7.3 Improving Labor Market Integration for Migrant Women

Across Italy—and the European Union more broadly—migrant women face systematic disadvantages in labor market participation compared to both migrant men and native women. As of January 2024, the employment rate of non-EU women in Italy stood at 46.5 percent, considerably lower than the employment rate of non-EU men, which was 75 percent. The inactivity rate of non-EU women reached 47 percent, higher than: EU women (37 percent) and Italian women (42 percent).

These gaps are largely explained by:
- Unpaid care responsibilities,
- Family obligations,
- Lack of extended family networks, and
- Limited access to childcare and social infrastructure.

Migration pathways also matter. Women who migrate **after their partners** tend to have lower employment rates than those who migrate independently. Moreover, highly educated migrant women are often **less likely to secure employment**, highlighting ongoing barriers to the recognition of foreign qualifications and professional skills (ILO 2023b).

In Italy, migrant women are predominantly engaged in domestic and care-related occupations, such as cleaning and personal assistance. In 2024, women accounted for nearly 88 percent of new contracts within this sector, with non-EU nationals comprising 43 percent (164,179) of these new hires. Acknowledging the essential contributions of migrant women, the Italian Government has, for the first time in 2024, allocated migration quotas specifically for women, reserving up to 40 percent of total quotas related to subordinate work and family and social–health care assistance for female workers (MLPS 2025). Their significant presence in the care economy, however, exacerbates the gender pay gap among migrants, carrying a wage penalty of approximately 6 percent compared to other sectors. Opportunities to access other occupations remain limited. For instance, under the Art. 23 pre-departure training projects —which aims to recruit for middle-skilled roles—only 9.5 percent of trainees have been women (Integrazionemigranti/ Gov. Italiano n.d.).

The Italian Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLPS), through its 2021–27 Multiannual Agenda on Labor Integration and Social Inclusion, has been implementing targeted actions and policies to enhance labor market participation and integration of migrant women, as well as their protection and prevention of exploitation and discrimination. Initiatives are planned around seven pillars:

- **Personalized active labor market policies** through individualized social/labor integration plans, tailored to the specific needs and backgrounds of foreign women, and delivered in collaboration with employment centers, local authorities, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure proximity and accessibility of services. Comprehensive support including job orientation, legal advice, and mediation is provided by one-stop-shops and local help desks.

- **For vulnerable groups**, such as women victims of trafficking, exploitation, or gender-based violence, the Ministry establishes dedicated pathways offering psychological support, legal assistance, and housing solutions, while integrating gender-sensitive approaches in anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation programs with the involvement of public institutions, CSOs, and

businesses.

- In the area of **domestic and care work**, regular employment contracts are promoted, with incentives for employers to formalize work relationships.

- **Language and skills training** are offered on flexible schedules (such as morning classes and online options) to accommodate family responsibilities, alongside digital literacy and labor rights awareness to empower women and prevent exploitation.

- **To support work-life balance**, the Ministry provides childcare services (e.g., babysitting during training), housing support, and measures to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life; as well as support for micro entrepreneurship and self-employment, particularly in sectors with high female participation.

- **Awareness, anti-discrimination, and empowerment initiatives** are promoted at national and local level, with the support of bilingual and accessible informational materials, to combat stereotypes and enhance the social value of migrant women's work.

- **Monitoring, evaluation, and data collection** are systematically conducted applying gender-lens, including project monitoring and evaluation, and the dissemination of good practices (Council of Europe 2025).

International Experiences in the Labor Integration of Migrant Women

Many Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries increasingly recognize that migrant women face distinct challenges, including caregiving responsibilities, limited information access, and greater risks of exploitation or overqualification. Many nations have implemented targeted measures to improve labor market integration for these women (OECD 2025).

- **Finland.** The new Integration Act prioritizes employment for migrant women, giving municipalities more responsibility for tailored services and skills development.

- **Germany.** The MYTURN project helps migrant women gain vocational qualifications and secure sustainable jobs; the Job-Turbo Action Plan focuses on quick job placement with continued language and skills training, particularly targeting fields like care and services where women are predominantly employed.

- **Ireland.** Spouses and partners of General Employment Permit and Intra-Corporate Transferee holders can now work without a separate permit, enhancing labor market access for mostly women.

- **Republic of Korea.** Immigration policies allow spouses of skilled workers to take nonprofessional jobs, such as domestic work and caregiving, if they meet criteria like language proficiency.

- **Luxembourg.** Additional support targets women as a vulnerable group with better employment access, anti-discrimination efforts, and community initiatives focused on gender equality.

- **Mexico.** Campaigns and digital platforms, including "Mexico te emplea" provide job listings, training, and labor rights resources to help empower migrant women and increase their formal employment.

Italian Language Training

Art. 23 pre-departure training projects provides migrant workers with A1-level language skills. While this is a valuable first step, it is insufficient for successful integration, effective access to social and labor services, and for ensuring workplace safety. Upon arrival, migrants holding work residence permit valid for one year or more must reach A2 proficiency, as required by the integration agreement.

Notably, Italy's A2 requirement is lower than standards in other major destination countries. EUROSTAT data shows that migrants in Italy have less knowledge of the local language than those in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain, yet their participation in language training is much lower (Basso et al. 2025). This is in part explained in that language courses are not mandatory for migrants in Italy; attendance depends on individual choice. Therefore, migrants can be motivated to attend language training when, for example, seeking the EU long-term residence permit (after 5 years of continuous residence in Italy), which requires an A2-level certificate.

__FGD insight:__ Most interviewed Tunisians who arrived in Italy via Art. 23 channel reported that the A1 Italian language level provided by pre-departure training was insufficient for confident communication. However, many did not see the need to enroll in additional language courses after arrival, believing their Italian would improve naturally through work and everyday interactions.

Box 7.4 Language-Focus Integration Programs—International Experiences

Evidence shows that language targeted programs, combined with personalized integration plans, improve migrants' employment and earnings more than one-size-fits-all approaches (European Commission 2020). The European Union's Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion 2021–27 recommends targeted language training and sector-specific language skills to meet immediate needs in professional environments (Council of Europe 2024).

Research consistently demonstrates a strong positive link between host-country language proficiency and migrants' labor market outcomes, confirming language as a cornerstone of socioeconomic integration.

In Italy, Provincial Centers for Adult Education (CPIA) serve as the principal providers of Italian language instruction for migrants. The institutions offer free courses up to the B1 level. CPIAs operate provincewide and often collaborate with vocational training institutions. Under Art. 23 guidelines, project proponents are encouraged to partner with CPIAs to deliver Italian language courses in migrants' countries of origin. This approach aims to promote continuity and progression toward achieving the A2 level through the CPIA network upon arrival in Italy (MLPS 2023). As of November 2025, out of 70 approved pre-departure training projects, 8 listed CPIAs as partners (MLPS n.d.-h).

Continuous language learning after arrival is often hindered by coordination issues between pre-departure training and the CPIA network, as well as resource limitations. Stakeholders interviewed noted that pre-departure projects rarely inform CPIAs of worker arrivals in advance, making it difficult for CPIAs to plan enough courses. This challenge stems mostly from unpredictable timing of entry clearance and visa issuance (see section

5.1.4). Furthermore, CPIAs often face funding and staffing shortages during enrollment surges, and their focus on in-person classes limits flexibility to expand remote learning and accessibility. To address this, the MLPS's DG for Migration and Integration Policies has recently provided EU- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) funding to strengthen CPIAs' role to improve integration governance and expand training for non-EU migrants in Italy.[23]

Labor Activation Policies

Labor policy regulations in Italy generally apply to both Italians and migrants, with some specific provisions for migrant workers. Unemployed migrants may apply for a **residence permit** for job-seeking purposes up to 60 days before their current permit expires, provided they register with the public employment center (CPI, Centri per l'Impiego) and actively seek employment. This permit allows migrants to access unemployment benefits, job search assistance, and passive labor market measures. However, interviews revealed that there is **no systematic mechanism** to track migrants' employment status, making the timely activation of support measures difficult.

Often CPIs encounter several challenges in adequately serving migrant workers. These challenges include:

- Limited capacity to provide clear and accessible communication
- Insufficient services in languages other than Italian, and
- Lack of cultural and language mediators

In 2021, only 11 percent of the 540 CPIs had dedicated staff or language mediators to support migrant workers. Notably, migrants mainly access basic services (e.g., job search guidance); instead, Italian nationals are more likely to benefit from reskilling and upskilling programs, internships and work placements, and employment incentives (ILO 2023a).

To address these gaps, the MLPS launched a €600 million plan for the period 2020–26 to strengthen and improve the operation of CPIs in order to ensure quality of services and decrease disparities among regions, including training for CPIs' workers (Italia Domani n.d.). Closing these gaps is crucial, given migrants' higher risk of entering the informal economy and being trapped in low-skilled jobs (Corbanese and Rosas 2023).

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[23] See Avviso Pubblico 10/04/2025

The MLPS's 2021–27 Multiannual Agenda on Labor Integration and Social Inclusion outlines priority actions to address informal employment, advance skills, support upskilling and reskilling, and prevent discrimination. Aligned with these objectives, the "Guaranteeing Workers' Employability" program (GOL Program) is a €5.4 billion initiative (2021–25) designed to improve employment services that boost employability and reduce unemployment. This is particularly among vulnerable groups such as those not in education, employment, or training (NEET), the working poor, and recipients of unemployment or minimum income support (MLPS n.d.-i; International Labour Organization 2024).

As of January 31, 2025, 3.2 million unemployed benefitted from the program, of which 15 percent were foreigners (MLPS 2025a). By profiling beneficiaries, the program provides five distinct pathways that combine training, job placement assistance, and opportunities for professional growth.[24]

Multi-actor approaches also aim to improve migrants' labor integration and occupational mobility. Established over a decade ago, the Territorial Networks of Services include local authorities, employment services, education providers, social partners, businesses, and other organizations. They aim to coordinate stakeholders in supporting lifelong learning and worker retention in the labor market. These networks, structured in each region and autonomous province, offer services such as guidance, vocational training, and skills validation based on local needs and regional legal principles (e.g., Emilia-Romagna in box 7.5). However, their implementation has been hampered by factors such as limited stakeholder awareness, insufficient strategic leadership, fragmented governance, inadequate data-sharing systems, and resource constraints. Some networks operate primarily on a project basis with ad hoc funding, and struggle to maintain long-term sustainability and coordinated cooperation (Cedefop 2024).

Good practices in integrated labor and social services are available at the EU level (see box 7.6). They are also illustrated by the Italian Protection Unit for Integration Objective (PUOI) program and the Fostering Opportunities of Refugee WORKers (FORWORK) project that have supported vulnerable migrants. The PUOI program (*Protezione Unità a Obiettivo Integrazione*) aims to promote labor market integration for refugees, beneficiaries of international protection and special protection in Italy by combining protection with personalized pathways to employment integration. Promoted by the MLPS using EU AMIF

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[24] The five pathways are: labor market reinsertion, upskilling, reskilling, labor and inclusion support, and collective reallocation.

funds, the program's actions include vocational training, job matching, and support services delivered through collaborations across public institutions, CSOs, and private employers (PON Inclusione/ Min. Lavoro Politiche Sociali n.d.).

Similarly, FORWORK combined individualized support with placement and training services for labor market and social integration of asylum seekers. Implemented in the Piedmont region by the Regional Labor Agency also through collaborations across public and private nonprofit actors, the program focused on prior learning recognition, language, civic and professional training, assessing skills, and work experiences. Specific professionals like job mentors, teachers and educators, and language and cultural mediators contributed to the delivery of the program by also using the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals (see box 6.4 in section 6.2) to map asylum seekers' qualifications, skills, and work experiences, and to draft the curriculum vitae (CV) for a more targeted and effective pathway into employment (Regione Piemonte n.d.).

Box 7.5 Labor Activation Policies in Emilia-Romagna: The Active Network for Work

The Emilia-Romagna Regional Law n.14/2015 (Regione Emilia-Romagna n.d. -a) mandates the collaboration between social, health, employment, and training services—together with local business sectors, to support vulnerable individuals. The aim is to help people overcome unemployment, health, or social barriers, access jobs (Agenzia regionale per il lavoro Emilia-Romagna n.d.-a), and achieve autonomy. With support from the **European Social Fund Plus**, the Emilia-Romagna Region created and coordinates the "Active Network for Work" (*Rete Attiva per il Lavoro*). The network brings together public employment services and accredited private agencies.

The program targets **unemployed individuals**, including all categories of migrants (refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants).

Key features of the program include:

- A six-month personalized pathway tailored to individual needs,
- A combination of services aimed at labor market integration, and
- Delivery by public employment centers (CPIs) or accredited private providers.

Participants may choose among several support options, including career counseling, traineeships, skills certification, vocational training, and job matching services.

If a participant remains unemployed after six months, they may request a new personalized program or extend the existing program for an additional six months.

Box 7.6 Enhancing Migrants' Labor Market Integration in Other European Countries

Several European countries have introduced specialized programs and services within their public employment services to foster the integration of migrants into the labor market. These initiatives aim to address both skills development and social inclusion, ensuring that migrants can access employment opportunities effectively.

Sweden has introduced a dedicated "fast track" program designed for migrant workers that includes assessment of educational and occupational skills, in-company training, and personalized job search support.

The program has demonstrated tangible results, with approximately 48 percent of participants securing employment upon completion.

Portugal offers integrated placement services encompassing counseling, vocational guidance, training, and employment subsidies. In addition, the public employment center provides targeted services for migrants and refugees, such as Portuguese language courses (levels A2 and B2), cultural mediation to support daily life and job search activities, and entrepreneurial skills development courses.

Denmark applies a "step model" (or transition model) to facilitate gradual labor market integration for migrants and refugees. It consists of:

- A 4–8-week initial phase to identify skills and provide Danish language instruction,
- A company internship combined with further language training, and
- Eligibility for employment incentives.

Source*:* ILO 2023b.

Housing Access

Italy's widespread housing issues present significant obstacles for both migrant workers and employers. The housing market is characterized by strong regional disparities, high prices, and limited supply, particularly in metropolitan centers (Caresana, Peverini 2025). Italian law requires employers to guarantee suitable accommodation for migrant workers when applying for a *nulla osta* (see section 5.4). As a result, housing shortages can influence employers' decisions to recruit non-EU workers.[25] At the same

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[25] Accordingly, several Art.23 pre-departure project managers are making efforts to assist employers in identifying appropriate housing prior to initiating the project, as confirmed by interviews.

time, quality housing is essential for a migrant's pathway toward autonomy and integration in the host country, yet this group often faces more restrictive barriers to access (Fondazione Compagnia San Paolo 2021).

Extensive research highlights the significant challenges and inequalities that migrants face in accessing the real estate market in Italy. These difficulties are attributable both to high housing costs, which affect Italians and EU citizens as well, and to discrimination from landlords (Lomonaco 2022). Studies across the European Union, including Italy, indicate that native populations may sometimes restrict migrants' opportunities in the housing market, limiting their access to residences in non−ethnically segregated areas (Fasani 2024). Additionally, the proportion of migrants residing in substandard or overcrowded conditions is twice as high compared to Italians (International Labour Organization 2023).

Ensuring equitable and resilient housing development necessitates coordinated strategies across governance levels. As part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Italian government is strengthening public housing construction, housing, and urban regeneration policies (Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze n.d.). **Furthermore, various housing solutions have been experimented in Italy by CSOs, social cooperatives, public administrations, and networks of local authorities within projects targeting migrants.** These solutions include:

- Temporary and emergency accommodation, which provides immediate protection but risks becoming long term without pathways to autonomy.
- Social housing, offering affordable rental units managed by public or social entities, though access remains limited due to scarcity and administrative barriers.
- Co-housing and shared living models, which can reduce isolation but require conflict management and ongoing social support.

Across all models, accompaniment pathways and cultural mediation services are essential. The effectiveness of these solutions depends on the continuity of sustained support and the ability to tailor interventions to the specificities of territories and beneficiaries (Fondazione Compagnia San Paolo 2021). Subnational governments around the world are testing innovative approaches to foster inclusion and overcome local housing supply and affordability barriers (box 7.8).

Box 7.7 Public Social Housing in Emilia-Romagna

The Emilia-Romagna Region has implemented measures to safeguard the right to housing. The Region has introduced a €300 million plan focused on redeveloping its public (public residential housing, ERP) and social (social residential housing, ERS) housing assets. This initiative aims to renovate currently unoccupied public housing in need of refurbishment, enabling prompt reassignment to individuals within the medium- and lower-middle income brackets. As an unprecedented measure among regional governments, it incorporates extensive collaboration with local stakeholders and social partners under the Pact for Work and Climate. Of the total funding, €200 million will be secured through a subsidized loan from the European Investment Bank, with the remaining €100 million provided by regional resources.

Source: Emilia-Romagna 2025.

Box 7.8 International Innovations to Expand Migrants' Access to Adequate Housing

Across major migrant-receiving countries, governments have developed innovative approaches to improve migrants' access to affordable housing. These initiatives complement traditional social housing and cash assistance and often involve local authorities. The following illustrates innovations that apply market shaping instruments, digital tools, and rights-based enforcement.

Athens, Greece—"Curing the Limbo" (Urban Innovative Actions [European Urban Initiative n.d.])

The Municipality of Athens piloted a city-backed social rental model that intermediates between refugee households and private owners of vacant flats. The city offered guaranteed tenancy management, basic maintenance, and light incentives to de-risk participation, while integrating housing with language training, employability support, and neighborhood engagement. This combination mobilized underused stock and addressed stigma by demonstrating successful, supported tenancies.

Ireland—"Offer a Home," a local-authority pledge scheme with recognition payment (Government of Ireland 2023)

Government communications and a dedicated portal invited households to pledge spare rooms or vacant units for beneficiaries of temporary protection. Local authorities, working with civil society partners, handled activation and case matching, while a tax-free recognition payment rewarded hosts and stabilized placements. The structured workflow—intake, inspection, matching, and monitoring—improved coverage outside major cities and made participation administratively feasible.

Basque Country, Spain—"Bizigune" Empty Homes Program (Alokabide 2021)

The regional government, through its public housing company (Alokabide), signs multiyear usufruct/lease agreements with owners of vacant dwellings, guarantees rent and unit upkeep, and sublets at regulated, affordable rents to low-income households, including migrants. By pairing credible public guarantees with professional management and targeted outreach, Bizigune systematically converts idle private stock into social rental supply at scale.

New York City (NYC), United States—Proactive Fair-Housing Enforcement (New York City Commission on Human Rights n.d.)

Under the NYC Human Rights Law, the Commission on Human Rights:

- Deploys paired testing against landlords and brokers,
- Impose penalties and remedies for discrimination, and
- Conducts targeted outreach.

Enforcement explicitly addresses discrimination based on national origin and immigration status and is complemented by guidance for industry actors. This reduces discriminatory gatekeeping that disproportionately impedes immigrant households' access to rentals.

8. THE MIGRANT JOURNEY

8.1 Focus Groups Discussions' Main Findings

As part of the assessment of labor 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 (see section 2.3).

- **Focus Group 1 (FG1).** This group consists of Tunisian migrants currently residing and working in Italy, all of whom completed both pre-departure and post-arrival procedures as part of the labor mobility program. Their reflections centered on the practical aspects of integration, employment conditions, and the administrative challenges faced in Italy.

- **Focus Group 2 (FG2).** This group consists of Tunisian workers chosen for the labor mobility program who are undergoing pre-departure training and have not migrated yet. Their input focused on their expectations, preparation, and views regarding the recruitment and training process. They provided insights based on what they learned from institutional briefings and training sessions, though these perspectives have not yet been shaped by real-life experiences abroad.

The discussions aimed at capturing migrant experience on recruitment, training, migration, and integration processes. The key insights are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Pre-Recruitment: Motivation/Decision and Application

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 labor market.

Recruitment

The recruitment process was generally perceived as structured and well-supported by

institutional actors in Tunisia and Italy. Both groups underwent multistage interviews aligned with their qualifications and perceived recruitment mechanisms as effective in facilitating access to employment opportunities abroad. However, improvements in communication and expectation management could enhance the experience for future participants.

Pre-Departure Orientation

While the training structure was the same across both groups of interviewees (following the Art. 23 Guidelines), differences in implementation 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.

Departure, Arrival, and Integration

The experiences reported by migrants upon arrival in Italy reflect the transition from preparation to settlement within the migration cycle. 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.

Upon arrival in Italy, most migrants were required to undergo additional language and technical training that was neither communicated in advance nor clearly described. Throughout this period, participants did not consistently receive any salary or financial compensation; however, accommodation and meals were provided, and a few individuals reported receiving payment for one week of the training.

The unanticipated training requirements, coupled with delays in the residence permit process, generated uncertainty and stress, revealing deficiencies in communication and procedural transparency. These issues emphasize the necessity of seamless coordination between pre-departure orientation and post-arrival support, especially regarding legal documentation and employment 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.

8.2 Migrant Journey Maps

A migrant journey map provides a structured visualization of the end-to-end experience of a migrant within a labor mobility program, capturing actions, touchpoints, and support mechanisms at each phase. It is useful for aligning stakeholders around the actual sequence of processes, identifying enablers and gaps, and informing operational improvements. This section shows two migrant journey maps which reflect insights from each of the two FGs. The maps are organized into four migration cycle stages—Pre-recruitment, Recruitment, Pre-departure, and Departure/Arrival/Integration (for FG1)—each detailing the migrant's steps (from online application through technical interviews and training), the institutions involved (e.g., National Agency for Employment and Independent Work [ANETI] International), and an experience timeline with sentiment indicators. Side panels present the migrant profile and a synthesis of "key insights and opportunities.

Figure 8.1 FG1 Migration Journey Map

profile FG 1
Tunisian worker in Italy

important **characteristics**

- Single man, 32 years old
- University degree
- 5 years of work experience
- Speaks Arabic, French and Italian

Very much motivated, satisfaction with his employment, strong intention to remain and progress in his roles

key insights & opportunities

Initial expectations confirmed despite challenges encountered. **Importance of aligning program design with anticipatory needs of prospective migrants and practical realities.**

Entire process (from training to departure) lasted approx. 1,5 years with an estimated cost for participants at around 4000 TND for visa and 2000 TND for language training. While costs are significant, services were more affordable than other available options. **Expenses as an investment.**

Challenges regarding visa and residence permit issuance, training and preparation for the job. **Importance of ensuring continuity between pre-departure preparation and post-arrival support.**

process

Pre - recruitment		Recruitment	Pre-departure			Departure, arrival, integration		
Decision to participate	Learn about the opportunity to participate in the labor mobility program	Applying for the program and undergoing multi-stage interviews	Trainings on: Italian language, safety and security, professional skills	Medical and psychological screening; pre-departure orientation	Visa application and issuance	Arrival	Residence permit request and issuance	Additional training, placement
Motivation	Social media and word of mouth from friends and acquaintances	Tunisian local training center and private recruitment agency associated with the Italian leading organization	Tunisian and Italian training centers, Institute of Italian Culture	Tunisian and Italian recruitment agencies	Italian Embassy in Tunisia	APL, employer, fellow Tunisians	Prefecture/SUI and employer/APL	APL, employer, fellow Tunisian in Italy

migrant worker's actions

Motivation
Economic advancement and career development are key drivers along with the support to their families.
Not planning to return to Tunisia in the near future.

Effective mechanism but to improve
Submission of documents: academic diplomas, vocational training certificates, national ID cards, and passports translated into Italian. Support of the Tunisian local partner, and some costs to be covered.
Information sessions about: selection process, job types, number of participants to be selected, duration of training.
Two-stage interview online and in Italian, with assistance and interview preparation from the Tunisian local partner.

Training
80 hours of **Italian language course. Security and safety** in the workplace course.
24 hours **professional training.**
Sudden changes in available job vacancies while already in the training phases.
Changes not communicated transparently, but not affected because final placements, even if different than advertised job, were generally aligned with skills and professional qualifications.

Before departure
Medical and psychological screenings.
Briefings on work conditions, job contracts, accommodation arrangements, and administrative procedures in Italy.
Signature pre-employment contracts outlining job type, duration, working conditions, and employer details.

Lengthy process
Translation and visa application process facilitated by the local partner and with the support of the Italian Embassy.
Long visa issuance's process, causing delays and postponement of personal/professional plans.

Smooth and well-organized arrival
Supported with initial setting-in.
Received accompaniment to comply with administrative procedures.
Received informal support and guidance.
Tunisian driving licenses internationally validated for one year.

Residence permit deadlock
Required communication to Prefecture/SUI submitted within 8 days by employer.
Unknown status of procedure.
Prevented from obtaining a permanent tax identification number.
Unable to access basic services.

Unexpected additional training but appreciation for the job
Additional week of Italian language.
Additional three-weeks of technical training.
No salary received during the trainings, though food and accommodation provided.
Received formal monthly payslip.

experience

A strategic step toward long-term professional and personal stability.

Appreciation for the received assistance with documentation, despite the associated costs, and interviews.

Safety and secure module particularly useful and relevant. Italian language not sufficient. Dissatisfaction with sudden changes in available job vacancies, but skills aligned.

Health screening important for the the type of job. Reassured about having accommodation arranged. Ready to migrate.

Lengthy, stressful, uncertainty.

Very well welcomed by employer and other fellows. Not experienced discrimination or racism.

Stress and uncertainty. Lack of clarity about the request' status which creates precarious situation

Disappointment for an additional pre-job placement training not communicated in advance. Acceptance and commitment to the opportunity. Strong intention to remain.

Figure 8.2 FG2 Migration Journey Map

profile FG 2
Tunisian worker in training in Tunisia

important characteristics

- Single man, 30 years old
- Vocational training degree
- 1 to 3 years of work experience
- Speaks Arabic, French and Italian

Very motivated by the prospect of improving his living standards, increasing his income, and enhancing his skills through employment opportunities abroad.

key insights & opportunities

Significant and structured support provided by **ANETI International and implementing partners**, ensuring clear communication and guidance throughout each step of the mobility process.

A free **comprehensive training package** — Italian language, life skills development, health and safety at work, labor rights awareness, and technical preparation — considered **highly effective** in enhancing readiness for employment abroad.

Provision of **free services** throughout the recruitment process and a **monthly grant** to help participants covering part of transportation/accommodation costs during the training period, as important **enablers to participate in work mobility pathways.**

process

Pre - recruitment

Decision to participate

Learn about the opportunity to participate in the labor mobility program

Motivation

ANETI International through regional employment offices (BETI) / Sectoral Training Center.

Recruitment

Applying for the program and undergoing multi-stage interviews

ANETI International, employer

Pre-departure

Trainings on: Italian language, safety and security, professional skills

Pre-departure orientation

Tunisian and Italian training centers

ANETI International, implementing partners

migrant worker's actions

Motivation

Economic advancement and career development are key drivers along with the support to their families.
Better employment opportunities and working conditions compared to those offered by the local private sector

Effective mechanism

Online application through ANETI International platform using CV template.
Submission of documents: Curriculum Vitae, academic diplomas, vocational training certificates, national ID cards.
Information sessions about training process (component and duration);
Signing of an engagement letter for fixed-term recruitment contract.
Two-steps technical interview with assistance and interview preparation from ANETI International.

Training

110 hours of **Italian language course at A1 level,** included module focused on professional vocabulary.
Security and safety in the workplace course.
60 hours **technical forklift training.**
A three-day **life skills course.**

Before departure

Sessions on civic education, cultural and professional adaptation, Italian law.

Sessions on **labour rights and administrative procedures** to be completed upon arrival in Italy.

experience

A strategic step toward long-term professional and personal stability.

Appreciation for the assistance provided by ANETI International during the application process, as well as for the valuable support and guidance offered throughout the interview stage.

All trainings highly useful and engaging, providing practical knowledge relevant to their future employment.
Financial support to cover part of transportation or accommodation costs during training appreciated.

Orientation sessions crucial in informing and preparing to adapt quickly and effectively to the host country.

9. SPOTLIGHT ON TUNISIA[26]

9.1 Overview: Labor Market and Mobility Trends in Tunisia

Tunisia's slow growth and demographic transition are resulting in important labor market pressures. By the end of 2024, real gross domestic product (GDP) was still below its pre-COVID level, with a year-to-year growth of 1.4 percent, and unemployment stood at 16 percent, while participation remained at 46 percent (World Bank 2026b). More than 900,000 working-age Tunisians are either unemployed (650,000) or discouraged and not searching for work although they are willing to work (250,000)[27] (World Bank 2025). Of the approximately 12 million inhabitants, 60 percent are working age (15–59 years), but this ratio is declining. The share of individuals aged 60 and above rose from 11.6 percent in 2014 to 16.9 percent in 2024, and the average annual growth of the total population was just 0.87 percent over the past decade, reflecting a marked fertility decline (INS 2025).

Job creation has been strongest in mid-skilled technical roles, but employment continues to be challenged by skills mismatches. Occupations for which employment has recently expanded include plant and machine operators, assemblers, skilled agricultural workers, and craft trades. Sectors with higher potential, such as information and communication technology services and automotive manufacturing, have also expanded significantly, employing 24,000 and 90,000 workers (OECD 2022b). However, 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. Soft skills such as teamwork, problem solving, and foreign languages are often lacking among job applicants (OECD 2022b).

International mobility is a steady source of employment opportunities and remittances for Tunisians. Currently, around 566,000 Tunisian migrants live abroad (INS/ONM 2021). Emigrants are mostly working-age adults (25–59), and mostly men (69 percent)

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[26] This chapter is based on the World Bank Assessment *Tunisia's Labor Mobility System: An Assessment in Support of Global Skill Partnerships* (World Bank 2026c).

[27] According to the International Labour Organization, discouraged workers are individuals who want to work but are not actively seeking employment because they believe that no suitable jobs are available for them. Under current international statistical standards, discouraged workers are classified as not economically active and therefore outside the labor force. As a result, they are not counted among the unemployed in official statistics, even though they represent a potential labor reserve.

(MEFP 2025). **Tunisian migrants are relatively well qualified:** 39 percent had completed secondary education, 35 percent had higher education, and 7 percent underwent vocational training (MEFP 2025). **Overall, the leading reason for emigration is job search and economic opportunities** (45 percent)—mostly men—, followed by family reunification (32 percent)—mostly women. **Europe is the main destination,** with France hosting just over half (53 percent) of the total, followed by **Italy (14 percent),** and Germany (8 percent). **Significant remittance flows, representing 7.7 percent of national GDP in 2024,** underline their vital role in the country's economic and social stability (MEFP 2025).

As of January 1, 2025, there were more than 120,000 Tunisians legally residing in Italy (ISTAT 2025a). The distribution of permits held by Tunisians (2022) shows family reunification as the primary reason for entry (42.5 percent), followed by protection (21.4 percent), and less frequently for work (12.8 percent) and study (8.5 percent). Tunisians mostly reside in four regions: Emilia-Romagna (20 percent), Sicily (19 percent), Lombardy (18 percent), and Lazio (7 percent). **Among the Tunisian community, there is a significant gender imbalance:** women constitute 38.6 percent, while men represent 61.4 percent. The employment rate gap is substantial—67.5 percent for men versus around 20 percent for women—despite growth observed between 2021 and 2022. Family reunification is the prominent migration push factor among women, whereas men's migration is more linked to employment opportunities. **Tunisian workers in Italy are notable concentrated in the primary sectors** (23.4 percent), frequently engaged in agriculture and fishing; followed by the industrial sector (approx. 18 percent); and transport and business services (15.2 percent) (MLPS 2023).

9.2 Legal Framework and Institutional Arrangements in Tunisia for International Labor Mobility and Skills Development

Over the years, Tunisia has progressively built a structured and coherent legal and institutional framework to govern the international mobility of its workforce. In 2021, the National Strategy for Employment Abroad (SNEI) was adopted to strengthen labor migration governance, align training systems with both national and international labor market needs, and promote safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways. It positions labor mobility as not only a means of regulating the domestic labor market, but also as a lever for economic and social development through enhanced skills and international cooperation (MEFP 2025). **The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP)** is the central authority managing the labor mobility governance framework in Tunisia.

Aligning the training system with national and international labor market needs is a key

policy priority, overseen by the MEFP and training authorities. In line with labor market needs assessed by the MEFP, vocational training curricula are developed by the **National Center for Training of Trainers and Training Development (CENAFFIF)** in collaboration with the MEFP and the private sector. Once validated, these curricula are transferred to **the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP)** and relevant technical and vocational education and training providers for delivery. With the expectation to enhance global recognition and portability of Tunisian qualifications and strengthen pathways for professional mobility abroad, the 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. Moreover, CENAFFIF has recently added transversal modules like soft skills, curriculum vitae (CV) writing, workplace integration, and basic language training to equip graduates with both technical and employability skills, preparing them for foreign labor markets and meeting global skill requirements. This policy area is supported by the World Bank Group's NEXUS Skills & Jobs for Youth initiative, which aims to increase economic inclusion for women and youth—particularly in agrifood—through soft-skills and employability training aligned with private sector needs to connect training with actual job opportunities (World Bank 2024).

In the context of bilateral labor agreements (BLAs), the MEFP's Department of International Cooperation and the Directorate General of Overseas Placement and Foreign Workforce (DGPEMOE) lead the negotiation and legal oversight in close consultation with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians** Abroad, the Ministry of Economy and Planning, and relevant sector-specific ministries. Based on these arrangements, BLAs and cooperation protocols with several European and Gulf countries are growing, including Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM) Plus, EU-Tunisia Mobility Partnership, and long-term agreements with Qatar.

Candidate search, pre-screening, and selection for placement abroad is usually supported by ANETI International, the branch of the National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI) supporting the international placement of Tunisian jobseekers. In collaboration with the ATFP, ANETI International can also deliver additional technical or language training or pre-departure orientation sessions. However, ANETI International currently lacks automated tools for candidate profiling and matching in overseas job placement. While ANETI national is working with the World Bank to develop such a system for faster, more effective, and tailored employment services (World Bank 2023b), upgrading ANETI International could also help it better support various mobility

channels and meet the specific needs of destination countries, enhancing Tunisia's ability to connect talent with global labor markets.

The private sector also plays the role of intermediary in the placement of Tunisian workers abroad. Private overseas placement agencies must operate under the supervision of the MEFP and comply with licensing, monitoring, and reporting requirements to ensure ethical recruitment and worker protection. A list of accredited agencies is published and maintained by the MEFP, while informal operators are tracked and sanctioned to prevent Tunisian citizens from being exposed to fraud or exploitation by unauthorized placement networks.

Once Tunisian workers are deployed abroad, the Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE), through its *social attachés* in the destination countries and by coordinating with both the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT) and ANETI International, provides support to Tunisian workers abroad, ensuring complaints and claims are addressed promptly. It also facilitates migrant reintegration and facilitates social protection portability upon return.

10. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Findings of this Institutional Assessment are summarized in the institutional assessment scorecard (table 10.1). This is based in the diagnostic framework that maps key processes across three core pillars—**facilitating access**, **furthering access**, and **fortifying access**—and three migration phases: **pre-recruitment**, **recruitment and pre-departure**, and **departure and integration**. 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:

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 labor 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 10.1 Process Assessment Scorecard

Pillar and Phase	Function/ Process	Key Actors Involved	Expected Output	Level of Advancement	Assessment
Facilitating Access	**Enabling regular labor mobility paths**	Ministry of Interior; MLPS; MAECI	National legal framework for labor mobility aligned with EU/GSP standards; Legal provisions which enable market-responsive labor migration; Provisions for migrant rights embedded in legal framework.	**Emerging**	Recent law amendments are supportive of market-driven labor mobility channels, but further coordination is needed across governing ministries to enhance operation and effectiveness of such channels.
	Setting the framework of collaboration	Ministry of Interior; MLPS; MAECI; government authorities of country of origin	Bilateral labor mobility agreements with clear objectives which maximize benefit for all; Joint governance for effective enforcement of the agreement, including pertinent coordination structure, monitoring committee and capabilities, and relevant stakeholder inclusion.	**Nascent**	BLAs set broad mobility goals but lack targeted strategies for greater impact. They could focus on shared skill development, address brain drain, and ensure joint responsibility for migrant protections. There is also a need for formal coordination and monitoring systems.
	Conducting labor market needs assessment	MLPS, SLI, Unioncamere, industry associations, Regions	Periodic labor market needs assessment using integrated sources; coordinated interagency labor market intelligence; updated COL that supports foreign recruitment projects; collaboration with sending countries for inputs on their market needs.	**Emerging**	SLI's LMI integrates various data sources to monitor occupations and skills; but there is no production of COLs to inform market-driven labor mobility planning. Country of origin's needs are not considered.

Facilitating Access	**Identifying jobs and potential candidates**	Pre-departure training project's partnership; SLI; partners in the country of origin	Systematic approach to engaging employers (directly or indirectly); vacancy information used to inform projects; efficient methods to collect and confirm quality vacancies; cross-border coordinated candidate identification, screening and selection which responds to employers' needs.	**Emerging**	Projects led by private sector intermediaries and representatives, and those sponsored by employers can easily access vacancies, especially when targets are small. However, large-scale projects face severe challenges due to a lack of systematic processes.
	Facilitating clearance and visa issuance	Ministry of Interior; Prefectures' Single Immigration Desk (SUI); police headquarters (Questura); Italy's consular representation	Accessible hiring clearance with minimal bureaucracy; seamless coordination across authorities and interoperable systems; accessible support for worker visa application; clearance and visa approvals provided with set expectations.	**Nascent**	Procedures are well specified, and recent digitalization supports applications. But rules often change and are not easily accessible to employers. While ministerial systems have some interoperability, it is still limited. Improved coordination and governance between national and local levels are needed to streamline approval timelines.
Furthering Access	**Skills and qualifications alignment and recognition to meet training needs for both countries**	Ministry of Education and Merit; Regional governments; MLPS; INAPP; other sector-specific authorities	Training modules and pathways are tailored for the dual track, with coordinated efforts to align skills and qualifications internationally; flexible approaches to training design are implemented to meet diverse employer needs; recognition and validation protocols of informal and nonformal learning are in place.	**Nascent**	Art. 23-related training adapts to employer needs, with the ATLANTE framework guiding training design. However, no official framework exists for prior skills recognition or standard alignment in countries of origin, complicated by varying occupational standards across Italian regions.

Furthering Access	**Delivering adequate technical, language training, and pre-departure orientation**	Accredited private and public training providers, including CPIA; Regions; nonprofit organizations partnering in pre-departure training projects	Training delivered according to employers' needs; Official or systematic institutional collaboration across countries to potentiate training delivery; accredited or recognized local training centers that meet international standards.	**Nascent**	Pre-departure training is frequently provided to meet minimum requirements, with further training planned upon arrival in Italy. There is no official intergovernmental collaboration with Tunisia to use public or private training centers accredited to Italian standards.
Furthering Access	**Ensuring professional skills recognition, verification, and certification**	Regions; public and private accredited providers of skills recognition and certification services (IVC)	Recognition of informal and nonformal learning services available and accessible and supportive of further labor market integration.	**Emerging**	IVC services are expanding, but quality and comprehensiveness differ significantly across regions. Services are not tailored to the needs of migrants.
	Furthering training based on applicable occupational standards and skills frameworks	Regions; CPIA; private training providers	Clear learning pathways are accessible to migrants to further labor inclusion, job performance, and occupational mobility.	**Emerging**	Employers or intermediation agencies in Italy provide (formal or on-the-job) technical training for workers to fill gaps. The CPIA network offers Italian language courses at the A2 level but has limited capacity. Recent funding may help expand these resources.
Fortifying Access	**Activating support services and networks (including diaspora)**	MLPS; provinces and municipalities; CSOs; diaspora network	Budget allocations and programmatic tools to support integration services; formal engagement of diaspora organizations.	**Emerging**	The MLPS provides strategies, programs, and funding to support integration services. However, supply of services is heterogeneous across regions. Structures for diaspora communities exist, but their involvement in supporting pre-departure initiatives and integration is still limited.

	Providing employment and labor support services	MLPS; regions; CPIs	Integrated actions to maximize socioeconomic inclusion, including through integrated monitoring system, case management, or one-stop-shops.	**Emerging**	Effective models—such as coordinated networks, one-stop shops, and case management—which mostly target vulnerable migrants in certain areas, need to be expanded for a more consistent municipal approach and to extend support to nonvulnerable migrants.

Note: ATLANTE = Atlas of Work and Qualifications; BLA = bilateral labor agreement; COL = Critical Occupations List; CPIA = Provincial Center for Adult Education; CSO = civil society organization; EU = European Union; GSP = Global Skill Partnership; INAPP = National Institute for Public Policy Analysis; IVC = identification, validation, and certification; LMI = labor market intelligence; MAECI = Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Development; MLPS = Ministry of Labor and Social Policies; SLI = Sviluppo Lavoro Italia; SUI = Single Immigration Desk; Unioncamere = Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 General Recommendations: All Pillars

1. **Recognize labor migration as a strategic opportunity** to address Italy's demographic and labor market challenges by shifting from ad hoc, emergency-driven responses to a systematic, forward-looking approach. The formulation of a comprehensive labor migration strategy that incorporates the legal provisions of the Consolidated Act for Migration (TUI), enhances triennial planning, and aligns with demographic, economic, and social inclusion goals of the country has the potential to promote regular and transparent channels for labor mobility, thereby facilitating their expansion and enhancing overall effectiveness.

2. **Strengthen governance and coordination mechanisms** to enhance information sharing, align service standards, and enable early identification of bottlenecks that cut across mandates (Interior, Labor, Foreign Affairs, Regions). Periodic public notes summarizing volumes, processing timelines, and lessons learned would support transparency and mutual accountability. Setting up a formal monitoring committee for bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) to define goals, monitor progress, and facilitate regular engagement with countries of origin.

3. **Leverage data and strengthen evidence-based decision-making**. Connect existing data systems (triennial programming, ALI/Sportello Unico, SIISL, etc.) to monitor labor demand, identify process delays, and track utilization of available support services for migrants in Italy. Regularly publish and update monitoring reports assessing Art. 23 pre-departure training projects and BLAs, highlighting good practices and challenges to inform scaling and improvement of the labor migration channels.

4. **Improve communication mechanisms and user access to information.** Consolidate migration-related relevant websites into a user-friendly digital communication space as a "single-window" for employers and migrants with tailored navigation for each of them. Ensure clear, accessible information about legal instruments, procedures, available support, and resources to access Art. 23 channel. This could be based on examples from Denmark, Germany, and Australia (see box 5.3). Enhanced information and outreach strategies, including the establishment of a communication platform, can enable informed decision-making for both employers and workers, mitigate information asymmetries, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and facilitate access to relevant resources and support services. This platform may also function as the primary

channel for submitting expressions of interest to participate as either a prospective recruiter or trainee in designated pre-departure training project.

11.2 Recommendations for Pillar I—Facilitating Access

Assessing Labor Demand for Migrant Workers

1. **Develop and update Critical Occupation Lists (COLs) to inform market-driven labor mobility plans by adopting a combined top-down and bottom-up approach.** To systematically identify strategic occupations facing labor shortages, the top-down approach provides evidence on whether an occupation is sought after and strategic using quantitative data from multiple sources such as labor force surveys (LFSs) and administrative records. The bottom-up approach generates qualitative evidence gathered through employer surveys and consultations with industry associations and other sector experts. Dovetailing the results from the two approaches ensures that both quantitative indicators and stakeholder insights form a comprehensive and regularly updated COL in demand. In other countries, this approach enables policy makers to swiftly ensure that training and international mobility programs remain closely aligned with real labor market needs. The bottom-up approach reveals why certain occupations are in shortage, helping determine if skilled mobility is an effective solution or if issues like low job attractiveness hinder firms from hiring.

2. **The World Bank's report "*An Assessment of Italy's Labor Market in 2025: In Support of the Italy-Tunisia Global Skill Partnership*" (World Bank 2026a) can be used as a basis toward developing a recurrent COL for Italy.** The COL methodology can serve as the analytical framework to integrate information from the already rich data environment for assessing labor market needs in Italy. The Excelsior system will remain an important source of information regarding labor demand, employer perceptions, and sector-specific trends. Furthermore, qualitative and expert-backed evidence can be identified through the development of Employer Working Groups (see point 5 of section 11.2) or consultative bodies organized by occupation and territories to inform recruitment through the At. 23 channel, including details about workers' profiles and skills, training design preferences, and validate that job openings are sustained over time.

3. **The COL offers a framework to interpret a variety of statistical indicators such as vacancy duration, employment growth, and wage changes.** To maximize use of the existing data, a practical approach could be to (i) use Excelsior forecasts to flag occupations with persistent recruitment difficulty and a high expected reliance on

immigrant hires; (ii) validate with Sistema Informativo Statistico delle Comunicazioni Obbligatorie (SISCO) trends in hires/separations to confirm sustained unmet demand (e.g., rising activations and repeated separations in the same occupations/territories); (iii) use SIISL postings to assess current vacancy pressure and employer search intensity; and (iv) benchmark against LFS indicators of local slack (low unemployment/high employment among residents in the same occupations) to ensure recruitment needs are not due to untapped local supply. Finally, the Atlas of Work and Qualifications (ATLANTE) should be used to codify the competencies/qualifications associated with shortlisted occupations.

4. **Governance and cadence are key to making information available systematically and updating COLs.** An institutionalized system with governance which frequently feeds into policy is needed. A technical group (DG Immigration, DG Active Labor Policies/ Sviluppo Lavoro Italia [SLI], National Institute of Statistics [ISTAT], National Institute for Public Policy Analysis [INAPP], Regions) could update a shortage occupation list at least annually, with quarterly monitoring, applying transparent thresholds. The COL can be used as a key reference for the triennial quota planning and the assessment of Art. 23 pre-departure training projects.

Identifying and Matching Vacancies for Migrant Workers

5. **Establishing Employer Working Groups (EWGs) as a systematic strategy for employers' engagement could support increasing recruitment through the Art. 23 channel.** Strong direct or indirect involvement of employers is key to building trust, reducing information asymmetries, and increasing participation rates. This can be done through the establishment of EWGs, which are groups organized by occupation and tailored to specific territories of carefully selected actors who can contribute with insights about labor market trends, occupational profiles, and operational needs, and inform key aspects of recruitment and training. The EWGs are tasked with setting occupational standards, task profiles, competency levels, language requirements, and collaborating to decide on preferred assessment tools and training modalities. Notably, EWGs also identify recruitment and training challenges specific to certain occupations or sectors, drawing attention to regulatory issues so that solutions may be developed proactively.

6. **The implementation of EWGs can also be instrumental to increase the pool of available vacancies for prospective migrant workers.** Since EWGs send a strong signal that the program will be responsive to actual needs, companies can feel more

motivated and engaged, as their involvement relies on understanding if the benefits of training and hiring outweigh the costs. A cascading approach can be promoted whereby EWG members commit to engage firms within their sector, geographical area, or business networks and campaign to participate in the SLI program. This strategy must be complementary to sharing clear and timely information through a communication platform (see point 4 of section 11.1).

7. **Strategies for employment engagement must also be tailored to the needs of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).** SMEs might require further support, including assessing their labor and skills needs in the medium to long term, understanding administrative processes for recruitment, and managing integration of migrant workers at the workplace. They might also be outside the outreach of industry associations and labor intermediation agencies; hence, other entities should support their engagement, like Chambers of Commerce who maintain registries and communications with all types of firms in the sector.

8. **To engage employers effectively, provide detailed profiles of workers from the country of origin in the relevant occupation and outline the candidate pre-screening process.** Sharing information covering demographics, education, occupational standards (and how they compare to Italian regional standards), and training curricula, helps employers evaluate overseas recruitment opportunities. For enhancement and transparency of candidate pre-selection, a good example is the World Bank–funded program *Accessing Overseas Opportunities for Moroccan Youth*, which built capacity for international labor market intermediation in Morocco and increased German firms' trust in Moroccan candidates, leading to more direct investment in language training and recruitment. Investing in technology-enabled matching tools with built-in transparency is also recommended to enhance employers' trust in the process.

Financing Training and Mobility

9. **Italy could adopt a phased, public-private cost sharing model to finance Global Skill Partnerships, beginning with proof-of-concept pilots that demonstrate value for money and provide a basis for scale-up.** Drawing on lessons from Germany and Australia, employers would contribute a fair share of training and placement costs, while public resources—including national budget, EU instruments, and development assistance—would support program coordination, quality assurance, and integration services. Over time, unit costs should be reduced through partnerships with Italian and partner-country training providers, expansion of modular and short-course delivery,

localization of trainer capacity, and gains from scale. To ensure long-term sustainability, pilots should incorporate rigorous cost tracking and outcome monitoring (e.g., completion rates, credential recognition, job placement, retention), with cost sharing arrangements adjusted as performance is validated. Engagement with employer associations and calibrated trainee contributions, protected by safeguard mechanisms to ensure equity, can reinforce accountability and demand responsiveness.

Enhancing Migrant Worker Entry Approval

10. **The entry approval process needs to be made clearer, more straightforward, and more predictable for both employers and workers.** Instead of merely posting information, the previously mentioned communication platform (see point 4 of section 11.1) could offer a range of support tools. For both employers and workers, these might include interactive frequently asked questions (FAQs), webinars, tutorials, regulatory update notifications, and self-assessment resources to help determine suitability for recruiting or to be recruited through this channel. For workers, in addition to those features, the platform should provide directories of accredited or vetted services like labor intermediaries, visa assistance, cultural mediation, and civic society organizations that offer further guidance.

11. **To streamline the recruitment process within the Art. 23 channel, certain employment clearance (*nulla osta*) and work visa procedures could be initiated earlier and further simplified.** Currently, two waivers are available for employers seeking nulla osta under the Art. 23 channel. Additionally, the possibility of pre-filling required modules for quota system recruitment prior to *Click day* may also be extended to Art. 23 to facilitate earlier nulla osta verification. Furthermore, as the worker's biographical information is entered into the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy's (MLPS's) Platform for Foreign-Trained Entrants (PIF) during training enrollment, security screenings could also be advanced, rather than deferred until completion of the training program. Additionally, it may be worth considering whether three separate background checks for the worker are required, or if a single check could suffice with its results shared among institutions (currently, Questura, the Embassy, and the Schengen authority all perform a similar background check).

12. **Improving the consistency of service quality among local migration offices (Single Immigration Desks [SUIs]) should be prioritized to streamline clearance procedures.** This could involve increasing human resources and financial support, automating sections of the documentation review process, and providing training to staff to

effectively apply the latest national regulations, as well as enhancing their ability to handle complex applications efficiently. Implementing a national monitoring system—potentially involving interministerial cooperation (refer to point 2 in section 11.1)—could help detect recurrent issues among SUIs or between groups of SUIs and initiate appropriate solutions.

11.3 Recommendations for Pillar II—Furthering Access

Assessing Standards Alignment, Delivering Relevant Training and Recognizing Skills Before Departure

1. **Standardize options for assessing and recognizing skills acquired in the country of origin prior to departure to improve employment prospects and optimize talent allocation.** Skills recognition is essential for aligning workforce competencies with labor market demands, reducing *brain waste*, and ensuring that workers are qualified for more complex and productive roles. The evaluation of vocational qualifications obtained abroad could be integrated into the candidate selection and training process. It could follow a competence-based assessment. Competence gaps identified will then be addressed within the pre-departure training project through tailored modular training (according also to regional occupational standards), with the possibility to lead to certification of competencies. Some good practices could be taken from other countries (see boxes 6.2 and 6.5) that have national statements for comparability of the vocational qualification of non-EU workers with national standards, used to support access to the labor market for unregulated professions.

2. **Expand language training opportunities in countries of origin to address current proficiency gaps.** While A1 remains the minimum level of achievement required for training completion under the Art. 23 channel, other opportunities can be leveraged to enable participants acquire further language skills. This could include the attainment of level A2 or reinforcing practical language skills in the workplace, such as sector-specific vocabulary and transversal skills useful for handling everyday situations at work. Additional programs can be delivered through organizations such as the Italian Institute for Culture (Embassy), Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Provincial Centers for Adult Education (CPIA), and private sector partners like Italian chambers of commerce in these countries. Involving CPIAs, as outlined in the Art. 23 Guidelines, simplifies recognition of attained language levels and helps workers continue learning after arrival. The waiting period between completing training and receiving visas provides an opportunity for prospective migrants to take extra language courses.

Recognizing Qualifications and Skills in Italy

3. **Strengthen the identification, validation and certification (IVC) services for the recognition of nonformal and informal skills of foreign workers in Italy.** Enabling faster labor market integration without the need for full requalification is key to enhancing workers' contributions to the economy. This can be done by harmonizing IVC services across regions to consistently offer migrants an easy and effective pathway to validating, certifying, and furthering their skills. In Piemonte and Emilia-Romagna, for example, IVC services lead to training pathways designed to access regional certifications of professional qualifications.

11.4 Recommendations for Pillar III—Fortifying Access

Activating Integration Services and Networks

1. **Promote adoption of one-stop-shop models and case management for migrant support services across territories.** This integrated approach better meets the diverse and multidimensional needs of migrant workers, their families, and the host population more broadly. Building on successful examples from Emilia-Romagna, Milan, and Naples (see box 6.6), local areas can adopt or enhance these practices. It is essential to use language and cultural mediators and interoperable information technology systems for effective multi-stakeholder collaboration and to track the beneficiary across service provision. To reduce information gaps, orientation to access regional and local services could be centralized in a single communication platform.

2. **Enhance the role of diaspora communities in integration support and services.** Diaspora members possess deep knowledge of their home countries' social and political environments, which can make intervention strategies more relevant and effective. These organizations should participate actively in policy discussions and decision-making processes: on the national level, by backing the Italian National Coordination of Diasporas for International Cooperation (CIDCI); and regionally or locally, through mechanisms like promoting the Council of Cultures ("Consulta delle Culture") in municipal governments, as seen in Rome and Palermo.

Enhancing Integration Through Continuous Language Learning, Labor Market Inclusion, and Housing Access

3. **Facilitate continuous language acquisition for migrant workers in Italy.** Implementing mandatory six-month language courses upon arrival—modeled after

the Swedish system—could be linked to the integration contract's point framework to encourage attainment of A2-level proficiency, or B1 if A2 was previously completed abroad (see point 2, section 11.3). CPIAs, which currently offer complimentary instruction and serve as pivotal partners in the MLPS's integration strategy, could manage post-arrival training. This needs timely planning based on early access to information from pre-departure projects regarding migrants' language skills and arrival details. Improving digital resources would further help CPIAs handle higher demand efficiently.

4. **Provide targeted and holistic support for migrants through public employment services.** The MLPS is making progress by increasing funding and launching innovative programs to strengthen labor services. Successful national initiatives, such as the Italian Protection Unit for Integration Objective (PUOI) and Fostering Opportunities of Refugee WORKers (FORWORK) (referenced in section 7.2.), could be scaled up and enhanced by drawing on international best practices (see box 7.6). Regional labor agencies and local job centers can help migrants enter the workforce by combining personalized guidance, job placement, and training for both work and social participation. To do this effectively, staff should receive job coach training with multicultural competencies. Moreover, timely assistance backed by better infrastructure and resources is crucial to track individuals' progress and prevent them from slipping into informal employment.

5. **Innovate in housing solutions for migrant workers.** Besides traditional social housing and assistance, government-led innovations can foster migrants' access to adequate and affordable housing. The national and local governments in Italy could adapt innovative policies and practices already implemented in other settings (see box 7.8). This includes public guarantees and small, predictable incentives to unlock underused private stock; pairing housing with integration services to support tenancy stability; using digital portals to match homeowners with house searchers, and standardized workflows across local authorities to leverage community hosting at scale; and applying data-driven regulation to counter discriminatory barriers.

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ANNEX 1. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS

Public Institutions

Institution	Role/Responsibility
Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (MLPS)	**Directorate General of Immigration and Integration Policies:** Plans, manages, and monitors entry quotas for foreign workers, and oversees bilateral cooperation with countries of origin. Monitors labor and vocational training for entry flows of foreign workers; coordinates policies for socioeconomic integration of migrant workers. **Directorate General for Active Employment Policies, Employment Services and Employment Incentives:** Promotes and coordinates: training policies, management of active labor policy policies. Authorizes the activation of interprofessional funds for vocational training; allocates funds for training policies. Implements policies on vocational education and training and higher technical training, in liaison with the Ministry of Education and Merit. Defines the minimum standards in the field of recognition and certification of skills and pathways for transversal skills and guidance and performs the functions of verification and control of compliance with them.
Agency *Sviluppo Lavoro Italia* (SLI)	It is an in-house agency and operating arm of the MLPS. It promotes people's right to work, training, and professional growth; coordinates the national network of employment services; and it is responsible for the labor market information system.
National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP)	Public research center supervised by the MLPS. It conducts studies, research, and monitoring and evaluation of public policies in the areas of labor, education and training, social protection, active and passive labor policies, the third sector/civil society organizations, social inclusion, and policies that produce effects on the labor market. It also coordinates the Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni. Main teams working on labor

	migration topic: *Mobility and Integration Policies; Civil Economy and Migration; Labor Market; Atlante del Lavoro e delle Professioni.*
Ministry of Interior	**Directorate Civil Liberties and Immigration—Central Direction for Migration Policy—Asylum Migration and Integration Fund Authority:** Analyzes and plans migration policies (including Art. 23), monitors foreigners' integration policies. Contributes to the analysis for defining the flow of foreign workers into the country. Supports the work of Prefetture (Single Immigration Desk [SUI]). Signs memoranda of understanding with associations, industry associations, and unions for cooperation on entry and stay of foreign nationals with specific professional profiles.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Development (MAECI)	**General Directorate for Italians Abroad and migration policies (visa and migration offices):** Responsible for visa issuance, cooperation with countries of origin (including bilateral labor agreement signature) and overseas Embassies' work on visa and migration.
The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)	The implementing agency of the Italian cooperation and development system, led by MAECI.

AICS Tunisia Office plays a key role in promoting inclusive socioeconomic development and strengthening bilateral cooperation between Italy and Tunisia. Its activities focus on areas such as vocational training, job creation, labor 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 labor mobility and projects that promote the reintegration of returnees and the socioprofessional 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. |
| **Italian Network for Adult Education (RIDAP)** | Promotes the work of Provincial Centers for Adult Education (CPIAs) and educational institutions by representing them before central administration, public and private entities, professional associations, professional and trade union organizations, and |

	other public/private national and local institutions. Proposes policies on adult education and enhances the specificity of the system at the national and European levels.
Tuscany Region	Coordinates the **Commission for Work and Vocational Training** of the State-Region Conference. It promotes dialogue between the regions and the nationalgovernment on labor policies and vocation training.
Emillia-Romagna Region	**Departments for migration policies, social integration, and labor market:** Defines regional regulations, strategies, and policies for labor migration in line with national and EU regulations. It coordinates, manages, and supports the implementation of labor, vocational training, and migration policies in the regional territory. It also oversees the Observatory of Migration.
Emilia-Romagna—Regional Labor Agency	Promotes labor matching, manages the employment services, and contributes to the development of the regional labor market. It has legal personality and operational autonomy. It also oversees the Observatory for Labor Market.
ART-ER	In-house agency and operating arm of the Emilia-Romagna Region. Its activities aim at strengthening the regional innovation ecosystem and relationships among stakeholders, promoting the internationalization of business and research system to foster sustainable growth, increasing research and innovation capabilities and productivity.

Private Sector, Employers' and Labor Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, International Organizations, Diaspora Organizations

Institution	Role/Responsibility
Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture (Unioncamere)	Service Initiatives and Programs for Integration and International Cooperation is the public body that unifies and institutionally represents the Italian chamber system. Implements and manages services and activities of Chambers of Commerce,

	coordinates the chambers through directives and guidelines. It produces the Excelsior Report on the labor market in Italy, used to manage labor migration.
National Association of Private Intermediation Agencies (ASSOLAVORO)	The association representing private employment agencies (APL) in Italy. Works to guarantee APLs higher standards of protection and representation, as well as an integrated offer of assistance and information. It regularly intervenes in hearings convened by the government and parliamentary bodies. It is the point of reference for all APLs and organizes meetings, conferences and congresses.
RANDSTAD	Private intermediation labor agency developed worldwide with local branches in Italy as well. It specializes in matching, supporting the career development of workers, and supporting companies with tailored solutions for recruitment. It participates in the Art. 23 channel by leading several projects in some African countries.
National Association of Building Constructors (ANCE)	Industry association for construction companies, representing them at the national level. It participates in the Art. 23 channel, including Tunisia.
Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL)	One of the three biggest Italian labor unions that promotes workers' rights, ensures safety and security in the workplace, and represents workers before the national government and the Italian Parliament. Some of its local branches participate in the Art.23 channel.
Association of Volunteers in International Service (AVSI) Foundation	Italian nongovernmental, civil society organization that works on development and cooperation worldwide, mainly focusing on education; livelihood, economic strengthening, vocational training, and job creation; and migration. It participates in the Art.23 channel through a project to develop Tunisians skills and competencies in the logistic sector to work in Italy. It has signed an agreement with the Tunisian National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI) and the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP).

ELIS	A nonprofit organization that works in collaboration with schools and companies in orientation and training activities. It promotes innovation projects with large corporations and start-ups. It combats educational poverty and marginalization with social projects in Italy and developing countries.
Centro Studi Formzione Istruzione e Lavoro	Italian association providing vocational training and labor services. It participates in the Art.23 channel through several projects, also involving Tunisia.
Association PONTES	A nonprofit organization that supports the social and professional integration of Tunisian migrants, both abroad and upon return. It provides individualized assistance, orientation, and sociolegal 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 national and international partners to strengthen migrant protection and promote sustainable reintegration frameworks.
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Tunisia	Plays a pivotal role in supporting safe, regular, and rights-based labor 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 Labor Migration Governance and Labor Mobility in North Africa), which strengthens institutional frameworks, promotes ethical recruitment, and develops mobility schemes aligned with labor market needs in Tunisia and partner countries. The 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.

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 labor 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, labor 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 labor 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 (World Bank staff):

Duration (approximately):

INTRODUCTION

Please provide the following information about your entity:

1. **Entity Name:**
2. **Type** *(Please specify if ministry, governmental agency, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)– civil society organizations (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 labor mobility:

(Check websites and prefill in advance)

6. **Role in the Global Skill Partnership (relative scope):**
    a. 6.1. How does your entity contribute to labor mobility between Tunisia and other countries? / How does your entity contribute to labor mobility of migrants from third countries? (for Italy)
    b. 6.2. Describe key programs, initiatives, or services relevant to labor 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 labor mobility)

A. Legal Frameworks and Policies

7. Does your entity operate under a national law, decree, policy, or strategy governing labor migration? If yes, please specify:
    a. 7.1. Name the law(s)/presidential decree(s)/ministerial decision(s)/regulation(s)/circulars(s) also at the <u>regional level</u> (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 labor agreements (BLAs),** memoranda of understanding, or trade agreements with labor 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 labor 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 labor migration issues?

(Check websites and have the organizational chart in advance)

11. Does your entity have a dedicated unit or team responsible for labor 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 labor migration adequately funded?
14. Does your entity coordinate with other stakeholders in implementing labor 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 mechanisms, platforms, etc.)?
15. What are the biggest challenges your entity faces in facilitating legal migration pathways?

C. Labor Market Needs Assessment

16. Which entity is conducting the labor needs assessment for BLAs?
17. What process is followed, including cooperation with other entities, social partners, and 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, labor intermediation, and pre-departure services)

D. Recruitment and Labor Market Intermediation

19. How does your entity disseminate information on labor migration opportunities and the programs that are in place (origin: employees, recipient: employers)?
20. Are there specific labor 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 labor mobility schemes? (Tunisia)

22. How can employers that face labor shortages report the shortages to the authorities? How are they informed about labor 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 labor 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 labor 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 labor 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 labor 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 labor migration?
50. Are there additional comments or issues that should be considered in this assessment?

A2.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide

As part of the Institutional Assessment of labor 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 labor 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 labor 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 and 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 labor 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 labor 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 labor migration systems.

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

[Pause and confirm verbally] Thank you. Let us begin.

Notes to the Facilitator:

A. TO DO	B. DO NOT
Encourage open conversation: - Invite everyone to speak. - Use prompts like "Would anyone else like to say something?" or "Who else would like to say something more?"	Do not ask yes/no questions: - Unless as a follow-up, they limit depth.
Ask open-ended questions: - Use gentle probes like "Can you tell me more about that?" or "How did that feel?"	Do not provide examples or suggest answers: - This might influence participants' responses.
Listen actively: - Use "huh," "yes," or "نعم." - Maintain eye contact and stay present.	Do not let only a few participants speak: - Encourage quieter participants.
Guide conversation back gently: - "Let's now move to the next topic." - "I'd like to go back to what we were discussing…"	Do not use leading or assertive questions: - These can bias the answer.
Start with introductions: - Introduce yourself. - Let participants introduce themselves however they prefer.	Do not judge or react strongly: - Stay neutral, even with surprising answers.
Be neutral and supportive: - Use open, nonjudgmental tone and body language.	Do not overprobe: - Avoid making it feel like an interrogation.
Use probes respectfully: - Be curious, not forceful. - Let participants guide how much they share.	Do not interrupt unnecessarily: - Let participants finish before steering them 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 a specific job position?
   - For those who had 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 been matched with a job:
     What are you expecting from the job matching process? What type of work are you hoping for?

3. Let us 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 anyone 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 and 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 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 excitement?

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 have you not 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 help you in 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** 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 for considering 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. One–five years

    c. Over five years

Written Form Questions (migrants in Italy)

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a study conducted by the **World Bank** 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** 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?

    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 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)*:

    a. End of work contract or visa expiration
    b. Could not find stable work abroad
    c. Family reasons (e.g., health, reunification)
    d. Chose to invest or start a business in Tunisia
    e. Personal decision to return home
    f. Faced legal or administrative issues abroad
    g. Other (*please specify*)

ANNEX 3. DATA COLLECTION AND STORAGE POLICY

A3.1 Data Privacy and Ethical Compliance

All interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) 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 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 labor mobility systems in Italy and Tunisia, which is part of a project called the *Global Skill Partnership (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 labor markets.

The Institutional Assessment wants to assess capacities, eventual bottlenecks, and propose solutions to effectively deliver streamlined labor 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 one year after the study is over.

The World Bank will conduct its analysis based on an anonymized data set. 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 one 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 the most. May we proceed?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Do you consent to having audio recorded during the focus group discussion?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Date and Signature