



Rabat Process
Euro-African Dialogue on
Migration and Development

Special event

"Circular migration: a cycle of opportunities and skills development".

Outcome
document

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Royaume du Maroc



**REPÚBLICA
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Introduction

Special event on “Circular migration: a cycle of opportunities and skills development”:

- Co-chaired by the Kingdom of Morocco and Portugal.
- Echoing the priorities of Domain 2 of the Cadiz Action Plan 2023-2027, and more specifically its objective 3 that aims to “Promote regular migration and mobility, in particular of young people and women, between and within Europe, North, West and Central Africa, including through Talent partnerships”.
- Organised by the Kingdom of Morocco, this special event was co-chaired alongside Portugal.
- The meeting attracted a varied audience of around 130 participants, including from 40 European and African countries.

Objectives of the meeting

- To explore key aspects of circular migration with a focus on economic opportunities and skills development in the African and European contexts.
- To provide an interactive and informative platform for discussion, bringing together experts, practitioners and stakeholders around the development issues related to circular migration.

Expected results of the meeting

- To identify good practices in circular migration, particularly in terms of facilitating professional mobility, skills development, and integration.
- To formulate proposals aimed at enhancing the implementation of actions and projects and identify potential areas of focus for forthcoming endeavours related to circular migration.

This document provides an overview of the **good practices, challenges, and opportunities of circular migration**, as discussed during two expert panels. It also outlines **recommendations** stemming from these discussions.

1) High-level opening ceremony

The high-level opening ceremony was attended by H.E. Younes Sekkouri, Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (MIEPEEC), H.E. Isabel Almeida Rodrigues, Secretary of State for Equality and Migration, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Fouad Kadmiri, Director of Consular and Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Resident Abroad (MAECAMRE), and Alexandra Sa Carvalho, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), European Commission.

The high-level representatives underscored the **collaborative efforts needed for safe, legal, dignified and mutually beneficial circular migration**, addressing both economic needs and the protection of migrants' rights.

The high-level officials stressed the importance of **strong political commitment** to drive circular migration initiatives and reduce the risks associated with irregular migration. It was suggested to consider tools to recognise skills and establish frameworks for knowledge certification. In addition, emphasis was placed on the **economic opportunities** presented by circular migration and the willingness of various governments to embrace longevity in this context. The imperative of supporting the reintegration of young migrants into their home countries was stressed, while leveraging the skills acquired during their professional experiences abroad.

The promotion of safe, legal, and dignified mobility through **circular labour migration programs** was a common thread, with a call for collaboration between public authorities and the private sector. The high-level officials collectively advocated for a **balanced and organised approach** to migration, incorporating both **internal legal frameworks and international partnerships**.

Additionally, it was reiterated that mobility is inherent to migration and a right enshrined in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The importance of adapting common rules to enhance migrant rights protection and facilitating the return process for seasonal workers was also underlined.

2) Highlighting good practices of circular migration

This first panel explored **successful experiences of circular migration** and how they can contribute to positive results for countries of origin and destination, particularly in terms of facilitating the mobility of migrant workers, support social integration and socio-economic impact.

Added value of circular mobility

In the Kingdom of Morocco, addressing the current challenges in the national job market requires strategic planning. **Migration policies** are emphasised for their role in integrating workers abroad, **diversifying national skills, and enhancing economic competitiveness**. In that manner, **international professional mobility** is viewed as a crucial strategy to meet the demands of the job markets and align individual skills with global opportunities.

Establishing an operational national framework for international professional mobility

The Moroccan Ministry for Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment, and Skills (MIEPEEC) is currently developing the **National Strategy for International Mobility**. This initiative is progressing in tandem with the ongoing national policy development efforts for employment and entrepreneurship.

The strategy aims to **regulate and facilitate the professional migration** of specific population groups seeking opportunities, while **ensuring alignment with national demand**.

Strategic objectives include:

- Integrated governance for coordinated and coherent management of international professional migration.
- Fundamental labour rights and social protection guaranteed.
- Improved intermediation mechanisms and international placement mechanisms.
- Agile, flexible, and competitive training system.
- Sustainable and operational monitoring mechanisms, including intelligence, anticipation, and prospecting system.

The **National Agency for Employment and Skills promotion (ANAPEC)** has been identified as a key institutional player in the implementation of this strategy, working in collaboration with partners to facilitate the migration process.

The overarching vision is to establish a **triple-win approach** that protects the interests of both the origin and destination countries, while ensuring the welfare of migrants. This involves **vertical integration**, which encompasses identifying skill needs, selecting and training migrants, facilitating their professional integration abroad, and managing their return to ensure sustained personal and professional development.

From the perspective of the country of origin, several advantages can be highlighted:

- **Economic development benefits:** Migrants contribute to the economy of their country of origin and/or destination through remittances and spending.

- **Transfer of skills:** Migrants often leave their origin country with basic skills and gain new ones in their destination country. Upon returning, they bring back these acquired skills, which can contribute to the development of various sectors within their home country.
- **Reduction of illegal migration:** Providing opportunities for vocational training and legal pathways for migration can help reduce illegal migration, ensuring that migrants can seek opportunities abroad in a safe and regulated manner.
- **Reintegration and local development:** When migrants return to their home country, they can use their financial assets and newly acquired skills to set up local businesses or community projects. This promotes local development and helps in the reintegration process of returning migrants into their communities.

Circular migration between Morocco and Spain. Recruitment of seasonal workers in the country of origin.

Initiated in 2006, the **seasonal worker recruitment initiative between Morocco and Spain** is designed to empower Moroccan seasonal workers socio-economically during their employment in Spain.

Targeting rural areas, the program includes registration, candidate selection, file management, visa applications, and departure arrangements. Before departure and throughout the process, the program supports female workers with preparatory measures such as awareness sessions, banking initiatives, promotion of income-generating activities, inspections by labour authorities and the Guardia Civil in Spain, mediation, and regular monitoring meetings.

According to ANAPEC, the program has facilitated the placement of 60.424 seasonal workers over the past 5 years. *(Please refer to slide 9 of the presentation for the graphic)*

STUDY ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF CIRCULAR MIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS IN MOROCCO

This [study](#), carried out as part of the IRTIQAA¹ project, aims to empower Moroccan female seasonal workers by setting up a socio-economic program tailored to their profiles and needs. Carried out among 300 women in three regions of origin, the study sheds light on their situation and needs. In addition to providing a better understanding, the study has enabled ANAPEC to consolidate its capacity to implement assistance programs and provide awareness-raising tools for women workers.

As per the findings of this survey, the most frequently mentioned needs for support and training include enhanced understanding of life in Spain and Europe, improved knowledge about contractual procedures, proficiency in financial management, training in entrepreneurship (particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises), and language acquisition, specifically learning Spanish.

Several proposals were suggested, including:

- Enhancing the role of ANAPEC in supporting women, managing contracts, and collaborating with all institutional stakeholders.
- Offering pre-departure support, such as clarifying contract terms and associated rights.
- Providing introductory Spanish language courses to facilitate communication.
- Conducting individual interviews and follow-ups before and after migration.
- Promoting and expanding access to banking services to assist women workers in managing their finances.



¹ The IRTIQAA project "Empowerment of circular migrant women workers in Morocco" is implemented by IOM in partnership with ANAPEC, with financial support from the IOM Development Fund (IDF).

- Supporting the establishment and growth of collectives, aggregators, cooperatives, or associations.
- Arranging workshops focused on personal development to enhance workers' skills and confidence.

Moreover, speeding up the process of banking processes, replicating effective programs, and securing international cooperation are emphasised as essential in this endeavour.

In summary, **training and support** are vital for these women to capitalise on their migration experience and actively contribute to the development of their home society.

Collective Management of Recruitment in Origin (GECCO) model: state of play and prospects

The GECCO programme facilitates **collective labour migration** for foreign nationals from third countries, offering streamlined processes for obtaining residence and work permits tailored to specific sectors. Applicants must meet criteria such as being abroad, nationals of the selection country, and suitable for generic and collective treatment. The program addresses labour shortages in challenging sectors and ensures selection aligns with national employment needs.

Benefits of the GECCO programme include circular projects up to 9 months, stable hiring without return requirements, focus on hard-to-fill occupations, collaboration with origin countries, and effective governance involving organisations and administrations. **Worker rights** are assisted with authorisation, visa processing, travel arrangements and accommodation, as well as training, binding fixed-term contracts, social security enrolment, and fair salaries according to Collective Agreements and regulated conditions.

An update in July 2022 introduced changes impacting the program, including **expanding eligible sectors** in the Occupations Catalog and introducing a **Pluriannual Circular Migration Framework** with four-year work authorisations, providing stability for companies and workers.

WAFIRA: how to make a labour mobility scheme more effective?

The **Women as Financially Independent Rural Actors (WAFIRA)** initiative aims to maximise the development benefits of circular migration and mobility between Morocco and Spain. It focuses on the sustainable socio-economic **reintegration of 250 female Moroccan seasonal workers** engaged in circular migration between the two countries.

The project's primary goal is to enhance the development impact of labour circular migration on the origin country by complementing the GECCO labour agreement between Spain and Morocco with **capacity building, training, and funding components**. WAFIRA equips these women with the necessary skills and financial resources to establish income-generating activities and/or cooperatives upon their return to their rural communities in Morocco.

Key considerations include:

- **Mainstreaming reintegration** into national and local policies
- Enhancing **capacity building** for sustainability
- **Coordinating engagement** efforts between host and origin countries.

Though smaller in scale, the WAFIRA project has demonstrated high effectiveness and holds considerable potential for future development.

The experience of Digital explorers II

Digital Explorers I (2019-2021)

The EU-funded project pioneers a **unique legal migration pathway** aimed at facilitating digital talent exchange between Lithuania and Nigeria. Over 36 months, the initiative has shown promising outcomes, with 30 Nigerian ICT talents receiving training in emerging technologies, and 26 securing positions or training opportunities in leading Lithuanian companies. The project seeks to expand its scope to other European and African nations to replicate its success in promoting cross-border talent exchange and collaboration within the digital sector.

The Digital Explorers I project implemented two **mobility pathways**:

- **Employment** (2019-2020): This one-year track enabled 15 junior to mid-level ICT specialists to secure employment with Lithuanian companies, receiving specialised training to enhance their skills and contribute to the local digital workforce.
- **Traineeship** (2020-2021): This six-month program focused on training 15 entry-level female data scientists, with 11 subsequently placed in positions within Lithuanian companies. The initiative addressed the skills gap and promoted gender inclusivity in the digital sector, fostering economic growth and sustainability.

*“Digital Explorers has been successful at **generating rich and extensive learnings** on **labour migration in the European ICT sector** (...) relevant not only for the implementing partners but also for a range of other stakeholders. (...) The project has (...) **significant potential for replication and scalability** (...).”*

Building on previous experiences for the next destination - Digital Explorers II (2023-2026)

Connecting ICT Markets Through Individual Journeys

The project aims to **expand its geographical reach and scope** through several strategic initiatives.

- Sharing the knowledge acquired with other Baltic states.
- Creating a multi-country multi-track migration model.
- Strengthening established partnerships (Nigeria) and testing new ones (Kenya and Armenia).

These efforts align with the **initiative's goals**, including three tracks tailored to different professional profiles:

- Attracting specialists to the EU (**Professionals track**).
- Developing advanced digital skills in partner countries (**Trainees track**).
- Facilitating knowledge sharing between Baltic and partner country tech ecosystems (**Ambassadors track**).

Overall, these initiatives aim to enhance cooperation, skill development, and knowledge exchange in the realm of migration.

VIDEOS

- [Digital Explorers / Recapping the journey](#)
- [Digital Explorers II: Connecting ICT Markets Through Individual Journeys](#)

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM PANEL 1

- It was highlighted that the global displacement crisis is affecting 110 million people, including 36.4 million refugees². Refugees face unequal rights, especially regarding employment and education, leading to wasted potential. Many lack **necessary documents for regular migration**, relying on dangerous smuggling routes. Adopting systemic approaches is crucial to tackle these challenges, with a focus on country-specific initiatives. Considering the strain placed on asylum systems due to the influx of individuals without access to regular migration pathways, it is imperative to establish a migration framework that is not only efficient but also inclusive and secure for those requiring international protection. Access to travel documents for refugees is essential, but many African countries do not issue them, depriving millions of people of this opportunity. To improve access, it is essential to have the support of donor countries and to guarantee the availability of visas.
- Furthermore, the importance of **involving the private sector in training initiatives** was emphasised, recognising the different integration needs for workers and asylum seekers. The Digital Explorers project in Lithuania serves as a notable example. Cooperation between communities and the private sector is essential for effective integration.
- It is vital to prioritise **sustainable reintegration of migrant workers into national employment policies**, especially in regions like North Africa with low female employment rates. Success requires cooperation among stakeholders and drawing lessons from past experiences. Key aspects of reintegration include sustainability, scaling up efforts, and leveraging public employment services, financial education, basic education, entrepreneurship, and social protection. Securing lifelong benefits, including retirement, for workers is crucial.
- Finally, it was underscored that sharing successful initiatives, via regional platforms like the Rabat Process, is imperative for advancing this agenda.

Recommendations drawn from Panel 1

1. Promote the ability to develop partnerships for programme implementation, involving both origin and destination countries, while considering their diverse priorities and interests.
2. Recognise the critical role of public employment services in collaboration with employers to ensure the success of these programmes.
3. Ensure the protection of workers' rights, including essential access to social rights in their countries of origin following work conducted in other countries and upon return, and ensure the portability of social rights.
4. Promote access to adequate information about the mobility process for workers participating in such programmes.
5. Collaborate closely with skills development in reintegration programs, leveraging the experience acquired abroad upon returning to home countries.
6. Build on lessons learned from pilot projects to establish sustainable programs and expand their reach.

² According to UNHCR's 2023 Mid-Year Trends analyses: <https://www.unhcr.org/mid-year-trends-report-2023>

3) Encouraging mobility and development of skills

The second panel delved into **opportunities for collaboration** among Dialogue partner countries in skills development, emphasising entrepreneurial mobility, investment in market-oriented training, and facilitating mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

Moving from a circular migration of labour to a circular migration of opportunities and skills

Several emerging realities are altering migration patterns, such as:

- Globalisation has led to shifts in aspirations and career trajectories.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the culture and work patterns of younger generations.
- Immigration dynamics are creating pressure on specific skills and generating new skill needs, notably in fields like engineering and medicine in Morocco.
- Changing employment dynamics encompass various forms of employment, including salaried jobs, self-employment, and entrepreneurship.

To address these developments, it is imperative to:

- Review the mapping of skills needs to enhance workforce strategies.
- Identify new mobility opportunities, especially in growing sectors.
- Foster partnerships focused on skills with potential.
- Facilitate access to new markets and promote the exchange of advantages between entrepreneurs from different countries.
- Connect returns to broader opportunities for entrepreneurship and integration/reintegration.

Transitioning towards circular migration of opportunities and skills involves integrating new dimensions into **cooperation programs**. It entails establishing **new partnerships and mechanisms** for assessing labour market needs between origin and destination countries, for both wage employment and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, the Rabat Process is underscored as a pivotal platform for converging migration and development policies, convening partner states and key stakeholders to address migration-related developments.

Supporting the Senegalese and Belgian entrepreneurial ecosystem - the project experience PEM-WECCO (Project for Entrepreneurial Mobility)

THE MATCHMAKER BETWEEN SENEGALESE AND BELGIAN ENTREPRENEURS

"WECCO" means "exchange" in Wolof.

Running from October 2021 to September 2024, the project [PEM Entrepreneurship](#) aims to support the **development of sustainable partnerships between Senegalese and Belgian entrepreneurs**, while improving the business performance of Senegalese companies by offering temporary mobility opportunities between Belgium and Senegal. It facilitates access to networks, matches Senegalese companies with entrepreneurs, provides contacts with Senegalese public agencies, and organises events and meetings with Senegalese entrepreneurs.

This initiative highlights the fact that mobility is an advantage, with **positive effects on business performance**, including skills acquisition, market expansion, adoption of new techniques, job creation and technology transfer.

Key takeaways from this initiative include:

- Involving diverse stakeholders has been key for successful mobility schemes.
- Sectors and entrepreneur profiles need to be aligned with migration policies.
- The Belgian private sector's engagement in mobility programs has progressed gradually. Their involvement is vital for creating mobility pathways, and a better understanding of their needs could enhance the effectiveness of mobility programs.
- Entrepreneur mobility has the potential to create economic partnerships between Belgian and Senegalese entrepreneurs. These partnerships could act as a trigger for labour mobility within partner companies.

Partnerships for skills mobility - The initiative between Germany, Ghana and Senegal

This entrepreneurial mobility initiative tackles worldwide challenges like demographic shifts and the demand for skilled labour by establishing **global skills partnerships** (GSP). These partnerships are tailored to sector-specific needs and operate through localized priorities ("home track") and facilitating blockade-free and fair migration ("abroad track"). It aims to create a **scalable blueprint for legal migration and integration between EU and African countries**, focusing on private sector engagement for demand-driven pathways.

The GSP model initiated in October 2023, between Germany, Ghana and Senegal focuses on **technical and vocational education and training** for construction workers in both the country of origin and Germany.

Expected outputs include:

- Structured pathways for apprenticeships established and tested according to fair migration standards.
- Curricula and training analysis, development of structured training and transparent selection procedures.
- Occupational training for 180 participants in Germany and 180 in Senegal and Ghana.

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM PANEL 2

- It was collectively emphasized that key areas for action include **engaging with the private sector, strengthening social protection systems, and enhancing qualifications**.
- Expanding successful projects into broader programs and initiatives is imperative to meet the increasing demand for skills at the European level and to stimulate opportunities in Africa.
- The necessity to enhance proficiency in languages such as French, Spanish, and English was acknowledged.
- Ensuring family reunification and creating visa opportunities were highlighted as crucial aspects for facilitating regular migration.
- Diversifying the creative industries and fostering support between private sectors on both continents are essential.
- In addition, it was recommended to analyse internal dynamics and exchanges within the African continent, considering the existing mobility at this level.

Recommendations drawn from Panel 2

Operational recommendations

1. Scale up and multiply actions to develop migrants' skills to facilitate their economic integration through technical and vocational training targeted at occupations in demand in destination countries. Similarly, encourage pre-departure training, particularly focusing on language proficiency and intercultural skills, information on migrants' rights and training in fundamental professional skills.
2. Promote partnerships and exchanges between European and African companies to facilitate skills transfers, particularly in business management.
3. Implement more effective measures to incentivize skilled migrants to return to or contribute to the development of their countries of origin, building on lessons learned from global best practices in this area.

Strategic recommendations

4. Ensure alignment between mobility-focused strategies and those aimed at human capital development and employment support to enhance labour mobility, thereby contributing to the country's socio-economic advancement and global positioning.
5. Incorporate the dimension of skills development and utilisation prominently into mobility-related public policies by implementing support measures in employment and training. This involves integrating various phases such as international placement, pre-departure training, skills mobilisation during mobility, skills recognition, and validation upon return, and providing tailored assistance for the professional reintegration of returning migrants.

Recommendations for developing relevant tools for formulating and implementing skills development policies or programs in circular migration

6. Develop systems to anticipate skills needs to design migration policies aligned with labour market demand in destination and origin countries. This requires effective information systems on employment, skills, and migration.
7. Establish systematic mechanisms to recognise migrants' skills, including expanding bilateral and multilateral agreements and implementing national or regional certification frameworks to enhance visibility and recognition of migrants' skills.
8. Promote the introduction of mechanisms to validate informally acquired skills, facilitating the transferability of migrant workers' skills and providing opportunities for migrants to pursue new training pathways.