



Vientiane Declaration on Skills Mobility, Recognition and Development for Migrant Workers and its Checklist



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Vientiane Declaration on Skills Mobility, Recognition and Development for Migrant Workers and its Checklist

The ASEAN Secretariat
Jakarta

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GLOSSARY

The following definitions are used in the context of this ASEAN Declaration and Checklist while being mindful that national definitions may be available across ASEAN Member States and different from one another.

Bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs): The term BLMA refers mainly to bilateral labour migration agreements, which are arrangements between two States, or agencies. A BLMA describes in detail the specific responsibilities of each of the Parties and the actions to be taken by them with a view to accomplishing their specific goals in terms of governance of labour migration. It includes legally binding bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). It can also include specific bilateral agreements between government ministries or agencies in countries of origin and destination, dealing with different aspects of labour migration. It can also cover framework or cooperation agreements that include labour migration along with other migration topics such as irregular migration, readmission, and migration and development.

Recognition of prior learning: A process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, non-formal and/or informal learning against standards used in formal education and training. Thus, recognition of prior learning provides an opportunity to people to acquire qualification or credits for a qualification or exemptions (of all or part of the curriculum, or even exemption of academic pre-requisite to enter a formal study programme) without going through a formal education or training programme.

Skills Assessment: An evaluation of an individual's skills, knowledge and attitude (i.e. competencies) to perform tasks of an occupation or a job role against a set of agreed skills or competency standard. In TVET, skills assessment is conducted after the completion of training to evaluate learning outcome and provides the basis for issuing a formal skill certificate. The term Skills Assessment can be used interchangeably with Skills Testing.

Skills Certification: The process of issuing a certificate, diploma or other credential formally attesting that a set of learning outcomes or performance criteria has been acquired or demonstrated by an individual. Formal certification is only issued by a recognized certifying body using predefined standards and criteria. A skills certificate is thus a formal expression of the vocational or professional abilities of a worker and represents his/her skills, knowledge and other competencies. In the context of international migration, it is often used as evidence that the worker has the required type and level of skills.

Skills Development: Skills development refers to the continuous process of acquiring, enhancing, and updating abilities to improve performance, adaptability, and qualifications. It encompasses basic education, initial technical vocational education and training, and lifelong learning opportunities, including upskilling and reskilling. This development occurs formally, non-formally and informally in educational and training institutions and on the job at the workplace.

Skills Matching: The alignment of workers' skills with job requirements in the placement process.

Skills Mobility: Skills mobility refers to the movement of migrant workers of all skills levels and their ability to access employment opportunities in other ASEAN countries that match their skill sets. It also encompasses the extent to which these skills are formally recognized by governments or businesses in the destination countries, facilitating appropriate job placement and integration into the workforce.

Skills Mobility Partnership (SMP): SMPs describe bilateral or multilateral cooperation agreements or arrangements between States that promote skills development and skills-based mobility. They vary in terms of form, modalities and level of stakeholder involvement, but all focus on skills development. SMPs promote labour mobility that is grounded in labour market and skills data and centred around skills development, recognition and matching to the benefit of labour markets, employers, communities and migrants.

Skills Levels

Low-skilled worker: A person who undertakes simple and routine tasks which require the use of hand-held tools and often some physical effort. (Skills level 1 of ISCO-08, the International Standard Classification of Occupations).

Middle-skilled worker: A person who undertakes routine and repetitive tasks in cognitive and production activities. Medium-skilled workers include workers in occupations such as skilled agriculture and fishery, clerical work, craft and related trades and plant, machine operators and assemblers. (Skills level 2 of ISCO-08).

High-skilled worker: A person who undertakes complex technical and practical tasks, and/or complex problem-solving, decision-making and creativity tasks. High-skilled workers include workers in occupations such as managers, professionals, and technicians. (Skills level 3 and 4 of ISCO-08).

Skills Recognition: Skills recognition is the process by which the qualifications, competencies and skills of migrant workers are evaluated and acknowledged, independently of whether they were acquired in countries of origin or destination. Skills recognition can happen through different means including formal skills certification and informal appraisals by employers.



VIENTIANE DECLARATION ON SKILLS MOBILITY, RECOGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

WE, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits chaired by Lao People's Democratic Republic;

NOTING the significant progress made by ASEAN Member States in achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, including an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community which engages and benefits the people and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic;

RECALLING the purposes of ASEAN, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, which are to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, to enhance the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN, as well as to develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and lifelong learning, and in science, technology and innovation, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and the strengthening of the ASEAN Community;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the equitable rights of migrant workers are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration;

RECALLING that the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (Cebu Declaration), Vientiane Declaration on Transition from Informal Employment to Formal Employment Towards Decent Work Promotion in ASEAN, and ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ASEAN Consensus) outline the measures to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers, recognise the shared and balanced responsibilities of the countries of origin and destination to promote their full potential, dignity, fundamental rights, and fair treatment, and call for collaboration to promote human resources and skills development of migrant workers;

REITERATING the commitments in the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development in the Changing World of Work and its Roadmap adopted at the 36th ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Declaration on Promoting Green Jobs for Equity and Inclusive Growth of ASEAN Community adopted at the 33rd ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Declaration on Promoting Competitiveness, Resilience and Agility of Workers for the Future of Work adopted at the 38th ASEAN Summit and the Bangkok Declaration on Advancing Partnership in Education for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in ASEAN adopted at the 35th ASEAN Summit;

COGNISANT of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and international labour standards on fundamental principles and rights at work, which stipulate migrant workers' right and access to gender-responsive, skills development and recognition;

MINDFUL that income differentials among ASEAN Member States, demographic transition, technology advancement, just transitions, as well as climate change and crisis situations will continue to impact labour migration patterns, generating both opportunities and challenges for both countries of origin and destination;

NOTING that special attention is needed to realise women migrant workers' equitable access to skills mobility, recognition and development. There is a need to develop skills standards, curricula and assessment criteria and to provide training and assessment, as necessary, in women-dominated occupations and sectors where those are currently lacking, such as domestic work;

ACKNOWLEDGING that Labour Force Survey data from key ASEAN countries of destination indicates that the majority of migrant workers are employed in middle-skilled occupations while labour migration policies and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) in the region mainly cater for low-skilled migration;

UNDERLINING the importance of rights-based, inclusive and gender-responsive measures to facilitate greater labour mobility within the ASEAN region and inclusion of all migrant workers in skills development, assessment and certification schemes that respond to labour market needs;

DO HEREBY DECLARE our commitment to take the following measures to enable access to skills mobility, recognition, and development to migrant workers of all skills levels in accordance with the respective ASEAN Member States' national laws, regulations, and policies:

Skills Mobility and Skills Recognition in Recruitment Process and Admission Policies

1. DEVELOP and STRENGTHEN admission and labour migration policies to enable labour migration at all skills levels in accordance with labour market requirements of both countries of origin and destination.
2. STRENGTHEN and PROMOTE the mechanisms to recognise skills of all migrant workers and, such as integrating the mechanisms into admission policies and recruitment processes with a view to facilitating migration at all skills levels within the region. The skills recognition approaches may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Recognition of qualifications across ASEAN Member States through the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF) and ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems (AGP);
 - b. Recognition of country-of-origin qualifications in countries of destination based on mutual recognition of skills arrangements agreed between two countries;
 - c. Skills assessment and certification based on standards of countries of origin and destination including recognition of prior learning;

- d. Industry-based skills recognition;
 - e. ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs);
 - f. Regional skills certificates; and/or
 - g. Specified process and licensing for registered occupations.
3. PROMOTE transparency of skills, qualifications and experience required for jobs that migrant workers take up and ENSURE skills recognition in recruitment processes are in place to adequately review migrant workers' skills and experience in the job matching and recruitment process.
 4. Where applicable, CONSIDER the use of, but not limited to, Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs), Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), or Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) to facilitate inclusive, fair and gender-responsive recruitment and decent employment of migrant workers at all skills levels. The BLMAs, MOUs, and SMPs should specify:
 - a. arrangements for recognition of skills;
 - b. arrangements for skills matching in recruitment;
 - c. access to skills assessment and certification, including recognition of prior learning;
 - d. access to skills development, career progression and life-long learning;
 - e. responsible authorities or other stakeholders, and cost structure for provision of the above.
 5. MONITOR AND ASSESS skills and labour shortages to identify in-demand occupations for migrant workers in countries of destination to inform admission policies, including quotas, and negotiation of BLMAs, MOUs and SMPs and to inform the design and delivery of training programmes in countries of origin and destination. Countries of origin will also assess impact of outlabour migration on their national labour markets, for example risks of brain drain and skills shortages.
 6. PROMOTE whole-of-society and whole-of-government collaboration and partnerships at national level between government agencies, employers' organisations, workers' organisations and other relevant

stakeholders as well as at regional or bilateral level between ASEAN Member States, international organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to enhance skills mobility, development, and recognition for migrant workers.

7. **ENABLE** the exchange of labour market information, where available, among ASEAN Member States, such as information on demand for specific skills and occupations.

Skills Development, Assessment, and Certification

8. **FACILITATE** all migrant workers' access to skills development, assessment and certification at all stages of the migration cycle.
9. In countries of destination, **PROMOTE** migrant workers' right to fair treatment in accessing skills development, assessment, certification, career development and life-long learning in accordance with their skills development needs.
10. **STRENGTHEN** provision of technical and vocational training (TVET) and skill development to align with the demand of the labour market in countries of origin and destination. Specific attention should be paid to changing skills needs due to technology advancement, just transition, and other factors.
11. **FACILITATE** migrant workers' effective access to skills development, assessment, and certification through inclusive, gender-responsive design of these services, including access provided to women migrant workers, migrant workers with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations in the design of relevant services.
12. **DEVELOP** and **IMPROVE** skills standards, curricula, and assessment criteria which respond to the needs of migration including in women-dominated sectors, and **SHARE** information on national skills standards, quality assurance system among ASEAN Member States. The ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems (AGP) should be promoted as a tool to harmonise quality assurance for skills certification.

13. PROMOTE recognition of prior learning in countries of origin and destination as an important means to formally recognise migrant workers' skills gained through non-formal training or on-the-job learning.
14. DEVELOP guidelines for data collection on use of skills development, assessment, and certification services disaggregated by migrants and non-migrants.
15. PROMOTE the use and recognition of end-of-employment certificate issued by employers in countries of destination and countries of origin, specifying job scope, tasks performed, years of experience, and skills acquired on the job.

Fair Recruitment and Decent Work

16. Where skills training, assessment, and certification are required by employers as part of the recruitment process, ENCOURAGE ASEAN Member States that these costs are not charged to migrant workers.
17. ENSURE that all migrant workers' wages and benefits are fair and commensurate with their skills, qualification and experience, and PROVIDE decent work for all migrant workers regardless of their skills levels.
18. PROVIDE pathways to career development opportunities for all migrant workers including the right to change employers in countries of destination, where applicable.
19. MONITOR recruitment and employment practices and provision of skills development, assessment and recognition services to ensure compliance and to prevent exploitation of migrant workers with measures outlined in this Declaration.

WE tasked the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM), with the support of the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) and its subsidiary bodies, ASEAN TVET Council (ATC), and other relevant ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies, to take appropriate and coordinated efforts to realise this Declaration, subject to the national laws, regulations and policies of ASEAN Member States, through various regional collaborations on skills mobility, recognition, and development for migrant workers.

WE further tasked the SLOM, with the support of the ASEAN Committee on Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), to develop a Checklist as a tool which facilitates the self-assessment of ASEAN Member States' progress in implementing this Declaration.

ADOPTED on this Ninth Day of October in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Four, in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, in a single original copy, in the English Language.

CHECKLIST OF VIENTIANE DECLARATION ON SKILLS MOBILITY, RECOGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Instruction

The purpose of this checklist is to assist ASEAN Member States (AMS) to undertake the following actions on a voluntary basis:

- Self-assess the status of their policies and practices to facilitate skills mobility, recognition and development for migrant workers;
- Identify needs and actions for strengthening policies and practices to facilitate skills mobility, recognition and development for migrant workers;
- Monitor progress at a regional level by establishing a baseline and update the checklist on a regular basis.

Please answer the questions below based on the current situation in your country.

Choose Yes (Y) or No (N) or N/A (Not Applicable) to indicate your answer to each of the questions. Please use the last column to provide remarks, complementary and more specific information on your answer as well as the variations that may exist between skills levels, industries, and occupations. For optimal usage of the checklist, it is recommended to provide comments as detailed as possible, including the names or references of specific relevant policies and measures, and when applicable, to what other AMS they relate (e.g. for Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs) or Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs)). This will make usage of the checklist over time more meaningful to identify changes.

Please note that there is no right or wrong answer. You can consult the concerned units or offices to get the most complete answer. Answering “No” does not always mean a negative answer as there might be contextual reasons for it. Answering “Yes” to a question does not necessarily mean

that the country has no further work to do on skills mobility, recognition and development for migrant workers, as there may be challenges in the practical application of the commitments.

The result of self-assessment using this checklist is not intended to compare country performances. It is to track a country's own progress which is possible if completion of the checklist is done regularly.

The following mechanism of completing the checklist and reporting the results will be undertaken by the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM):

- The checklist will be completed by AMS once every three years and shared with the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) one month prior to the SLOM in the year of submission. In this regard, it is recommended that the checklist will be completed by AMS in 2025, 2028 and every three years afterwards. ASEC shall inform AMS to prepare and complete the checklist.
- The responsibility to answer questions in the checklist will be assumed by SLOM focal points with input from the respective focal points of SLOM-WG, ACMW, ATC, other relevant ministries and stakeholders at national level. The SLOM focal points may invite their respective national employers' organisations, national workers' organisations and national civil society organisations to submit input as relevant.
- ASEC will compile and submit the self-assessment results of ASEAN Member States to SLOM, ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of ASEAN Consensus on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), SLOM's Working Group on Progressive Practices to Enhance the Competitiveness of ASEAN (SLOM-WG) and ASEAN TVET Council (ATC) for information. The compilation of self-assessment results will be disclosed to SLOM, ACMW, SLOM-WG and ATC only.
- ASEC will produce a summary and submit it to SLOM for consideration and endorsement. The summary will be submitted by the SLOM Chair to the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) for adoption. The summary will be made public and uploaded to the ASEAN website (www.asean.org) following ALMM's adoption.
- The first results of the self-assessment in 2025 will serve as baseline information which allows mutual learning among ASEAN Member States based on the identified good practices, challenges and gaps.

The results will also guide SLOM in considering responsive actions at regional level and, where relevant, national level.

- The progress of implementation of the regional actions will be reported by the lead countries of activities to the annual meetings of SLOM. ASEAN Member States may also share their respective achievements at national level to the annual meetings of SLOM on a voluntary basis.
- The regional actions may be updated by SLOM in the future in response to the results of the subsequent self-assessment every three years.
- This checklist may be updated or improved by SLOM as necessary in the future based on the lessons learned by ASEAN Member States in answering the questions. Any amendment to this checklist shall be reported to the ALMM for adoption.
- Technical assistance of the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other partners is encouraged to support the capacities of ASEAN Member States in completing the checklist, taking responsive actions at national level, and/or implementing the regional action plan.

Checklist: Skills Mobility and Skills Recognition in Admission Policies and Recruitment

Checklist	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
1. Does your country have admission and labour migration policies in place to facilitate inbound or outbound labour migration at all skills levels?				
2. Does your country have mechanisms in place to recognise skills of all migrant workers in admission policies and recruitment processes, including but not limited to?				
a. Recognition of qualifications across AMS through the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF) and ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems (AGP)				

Checklist	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
b. Recognition of country-of-origin qualifications in countries of destination based on mutual recognition of skills arrangements agreed between the two countries;				
c. Skills assessment and certification against country-of-destination standards, including recognition of prior learning;				
d. Industry-based skills recognition;				
e. ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs);				
f. Regional skills certificates;				
g. Specified process and licensing for restricted occupations.				
3A. Is there a requirement to specify skills, qualification and experience for jobs that migrant workers take up?				

Checklist	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
3B. Is there a process in place to review migrant workers' skills and experience in the job matching and recruitment process?				
4A. Are BLMAs, MOUs or SMPs available to facilitate inclusive, fair and gender-responsive recruitment and decent employment of migrant workers at all skills levels?				
4B. Do these BLMAs, MOUs or SMPs specify... (Note: Leave this empty if you have responded Question 2 with "No".)				
a. arrangements for recognition of skills?				
b. arrangements for skills matching in recruitment?				
c. access to skills assessment and certification, including RPL?				
d. access to skills development, career progression and life-long learning?				
e. the responsible authorities or other stakeholders?				

Checklist	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
f. the cost structure for the provision of the above services?				
5A. Are skills and labour shortages in your country regularly monitored and assessed to inform policies and quotas for admission of migrant workers, negotiation of BLMAs, MoUs and SMPs, and design of training programmes in countries of origin and destination? [country of destination]				
5B. Are impacts of outmigration on your country's labour market regularly monitored and assessed to identify, for example, risks of brain drain and skills shortages? [country of origin]				
6A. Are there collaboration and partnerships with other government agencies, employers' organisations, workers' organisations and civil society in your country to enhance skills mobility, recognition and development for migrant workers?				

Checklist	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
6B. Are there bilateral and/or regional collaboration and partnerships with other ASEAN Member States, international organisations and/or other relevant entities to enhance skills mobility, recognition and development for migrant workers?				
7. Does your country exchange labour market information with other ASEAN Member States such as information on demand for specific skills and occupations?				

Checklist: Skills Development, Assessment, and Certification

Checklist	Yes	No	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
8A. Do inbound migrant workers in your country have access to skills development, assessment and certification? [country of destination]			

Checklist	Yes	No	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
8B. Prior to deployment and upon return to your country, do returning migrant workers have access to adequate skills development, assessment and certification? [country of origin]			
8C. Are there mechanisms to disseminate information about skills development, assessment and certification to migrant workers?			
8D. Are there mechanisms to prevent scam courses and false advertisement for accreditation?			
8E. Are there incentive structures for employers and workers to encourage skills developments specific to countries of destination?			
9. Do national laws or policies facilitate inbound migrant workers' right to fair treatment in accessing skills development, assessment, certification, career development and life-long learning in accordance with their skills development needs? [country of destination]			

Checklist	Yes	No	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
10. Is provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills development in your country aligned with the labour market demands which may change due to technology advancement, just transition and other factors?			
11. Are skills development, assessment and certification services designed to be inclusive and gender-responsive to enable access of women migrant workers, migrant workers with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations?			
12A. Are skills standards, curricula, and assessment criteria available for occupations that are open to migrant workers, including in women-dominated sectors?			
12B. Does your country share information on national skills standards and quality assurance systems with other ASEAN Member States?			

Checklist	Yes	No	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
13. Are there policies or measures in place to recognise prior learning (i.e. non-formal training and on-the-job learning) for migrant workers?			
14. Is data being collected in your country on usage of skills development, assessment and certification services disaggregated by migrants and non-migrants?			
15. Are there policies or measures in place to require and encourage employers to issue an end-of-employment certificate for migrant workers (which specify job scope, tasks performed, years of experience, and skills acquired on the job)? [country of destination]			

Checklist: Fair Recruitment and Decent Work

Checklist	Yes	No	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
16. Are the costs of skills training, assessment and certification required by employers as part of the recruitment process covered by migrant workers?			
17A. Are there policies or measures in place to ensure that all migrant workers' wages and benefits are fair and commensurate with their skills, qualification and experience?			
17B. Are there measures in place in your country to ensure decent work for all migrant workers regardless of their skills levels?			
18. Are there measures in place in your country to provide all migrant workers with pathways to career development opportunities including their right to change employers, where applicable?			

Checklist	Yes	No	Remarks Please use this space to explain your answer and provide additional information.
19. Are there mechanisms in place to monitor fair and ethical recruitment and employment of migrant workers and provision of skills development, assessment and recognition services?			



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