

A Skills Mobility Partnership Framework for the Indian Ocean Region

Report

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Foreword

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) through the European-funded Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project and in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Cap Business Indian Ocean provided support to the organisation of dialogues in the Indian Ocean region with the objective to strengthen skills mobility systems in the Indian Ocean region.

Within this context, SAMM began a process of engagements¹ in 2022 with key stakeholders (trade unions, employers and policy makers) from Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros and Madagascar. A range of interventions were undertaken. They included the drafting of national skills mobility frameworks (Mauritius and Seychelles) as well as research into skills and labour migration needs (Comoros and Madagascar) identification. Additional interventions included the establishment and organisation of a Community of Practice to support the sharing of experiences around the recognition of migrant skills and qualifications and the development of tools to assist practitioners, employers and trade unions in the SADC region. At the same time, technical support was provided to formulate a new methodology in the drafting of Critical Skills lists and put effective labour market information systems in place for evidence-based labour migration decision-making. All of these initiatives had the objective to contribute to improved mobility in the region as well as initiatives to strengthen TVET systems to enhance alignment between education and labour market supply and demand.

The recommendations that emanated from these dialogues suggested the need to formulate a Skills Mobility Partnership Framework for the Indian Ocean level with the objective of addressing existing skills gaps and enhancing the competitiveness of the sub-region. According to the conclusions of the dialogues, this framework should contribute to the employability of workers from the IOC region by building up coherence in terms of education and training in most important economic sectors such as Tourism/Hotels/Restaurants, Construction, Fisheries, textiles, etc.

The **Global Skills Partnership on Migration (better known as GSPM)** is an initiative between ILO, IOM, UNESCO, IOE (International Organisation of Employers) and ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) to join forces and mobilise expertise. The key role of skills partnerships on migration has been recognised in intergovernmental consultations that led to the development of the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (better known as GCM) adopted in 2018 by 164 countries**. The GCM devotes **objective 18** to the issue of promoting skills mobility and calling for the establishment of skills partnerships.

Skills Mobility Partnerships **at local, sub-regional, national or international levels** can range from informal knowledge exchange and mutually beneficial skills development arrangements to formal

¹ The Meeting “Labour Migration governance in the Indian Ocean Region and the Role of Trade Unions”, in Quatre-Bornes, Mauritius on 21-22 July, 2022; and the workshop, “Labour Migration Governance in the Indian Ocean Region: Dialogue between employers and policymakers” in collaboration with the IOE Policy Working Group on Migration, the Indian Ocean Commission and Cap Business Océan Indien which took place in Quatre-Bornes (Mauritius) on 25-26 July 2022.

bilateral or multilateral skills portability agreements including one or several of the following thematic areas:

- the recognition of labour shortages or labour market needs, also linked to the elaboration of lists of occupations in high demand and critical skills lists;
- skills transferability;
- improving the mechanisms (e.g. equivalence and comparability) to ensure the mutual recognition of foreign qualifications (diplomas, certificates) and non-formally acquired skills (e.g. job experience) in different sectors;
- student exchange programmes, scholarships, professional exchange programmes, trainee or apprenticeships;
- joint efforts to optimize upskilling for improving employability;
- collaborative programmes for partnerships between the private sector and educational institutions;
- training for job seekers, mentoring, and internship programmes; and,
- improving skills profiling and skills matching.

Skills Partnerships on Migration or Skills Mobility Partnerships, including the role of social partners and public-private partnerships, are an innovative mechanism for sharing the benefits of migration for both countries of origin and destination. GSPMs support governments, employers and workers as well as their organisations, educational institutions and training providers, and other stakeholders to rethink migration in a way that is of mutual benefit to all stakeholders; principally migrant workers, including those who return (with a particular focus on women and youth), employers in need of skilled workforce, as well as the countries of origin and destination.

A first draft of a Skills Mobility Partnership Framework for the Indian Ocean Region was presented and discussed in a tripartite meeting that took place on 5th and 6th October, 2023 in Port Louis, Mauritius. The meeting discussed and considered the components and elements of a possible *“Skills Mobility Partnership for the Indian Ocean region”* that incorporates work done at the country-level and considers the fact that the four countries are at different stages of development in general, and more particularly in the development of their education and vocational training systems, economic growth and job creation.

Further dialogue with, and inputs from, the Ministries of Education and Training, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Finance and other relevant institutions were required in the elaboration of this Framework. A whole-of-Government approach comprising the previously mentioned Ministries together with the Ministry of Labour, social partners (workers and employers’ organisations) and the Ministry in charge of Migration issues was ensured during the formulation and revision of the Framework. Political willingness, financial support and follow-up will be required to effectively implement it through its accompanying Plan of Action (including immediate, mid-term and long-term goals).

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1. Introduction

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) through the European-funded Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project has been working with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Cap Business Indian Ocean to support the strengthening of skills mobility systems and improve labour migration governance. This is critical if the broader region is to benefit from its strategic location in terms of the world's bulk cargo traffic².

A range of interventions have been undertaken to assist SADC countries in the development and implementation of Labour Migration Policies and its Action Plans³; the drafting of a skills mobility framework for Mauritius (which has since been endorsed) and for the Seychelles (in progress); and carry out research into the skills and labour migration needs of Comoros and Madagascar (see Annexures 1 to 4).

Additional interventions also include the implementation of Communities of Practice that support the sharing of experiences around the recognition of migrant skills and qualifications and the development of toolkits to assist practitioners, employers and trade unions in SADC. There are also processes underway to support SADC member states to draft Critical Skills lists, and put effective labour market information systems in place to support evidence-based labour migration decision-making that ensures improved mobility in the region as well as initiatives to strengthen TVET systems to enhance alignment between education and labour market supply and demand.

The ILO and the IOM are involved in the Global Skills Partnership on Migration (GSPM),⁴ which seeks to support governments, employers and workers as well as other key stakeholders in the broader skills ecosystem to rethink migration in a way that is of mutual benefit to all. Within this context, in 2022 SAMM began a process of engagements⁵ with key stakeholders (unions, employers and policy makers) in four SADC countries in the Indian Ocean region: Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros and Madagascar (all four of these countries are also part of SADC). A multitude of Small Island Developing States' (SIDS) challenges were raised during the discussions.

The recommendations that emanated from these dialogues suggested the need to formulate a skills mobility partnership framework at the Indian Ocean level with the objective of addressing existing skills gaps with the purpose of enhancing the competitiveness of the sub-region. In addition, the dialogues point to the need for such a framework to contribute to the employability of workers from the IOC region by building up coherence in terms of education and training in most important economic sectors in the Indian Ocean region such as Tourism/Hotels/Restaurants, Construction, Fisheries, textiles, etc.

A first draft of a Skills Mobility Partnership Framework for the Indian Ocean Region was presented and discussed in a tripartite meeting that took place on 5th and 6th October, 2023 in Port Louis, Mauritius.

² <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/15/mapping-indian-ocean-region-pub-89971>

³ Through the SAMM project, action plans were developed for several countries including, the Seychelles, Mauritius, Namibia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Eswatini whilst such processes are currently underway in the Comoros and Madagascar.

⁴ The GSPM is an initiative between ILO, IOM, UNESCO, IOE and ITUC to join forces and mobilise expertise for the development and recognition of skills of migrant workers, identification and recognition of skills shortages, the need for skills transfer and other skills mobility related issues.

⁵ The Meeting "Labour Migration governance in the Indian Ocean Region and the Role of Trade Unions", in Quatre-Bornes, Mauritius on 21-22 July, 2022; and the workshop, "Labour Migration Governance in the Indian Ocean Region: Dialogue between employers and policymakers" in collaboration with the IOE Policy Working Group on Migration, the Indian Ocean Commission and Cap Business Océan Indien which took place in Quatre-Bornes (Mauritius) on 25-26 July 2022.

The meeting discussed and considered the components and elements of a possible “*Skills Mobility Partnership for the Indian Ocean region*” that incorporates work done at the country-level and considers the fact that the four countries are at different stages of development in general, and more particularly in the development of their education and vocational training systems, economic growth and job creation.

Further dialogue with, and inputs from, the Ministries of Education and Training, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Finance and other relevant institutions will be required in the elaboration of this Framework. A Whole Government Approach comprising the previously mentioned Ministries together with the Ministry of Labour, social partners (workers and employers’ organisations) and the Ministry in charge of Migration issues in each country will ensure main stakeholders are involved at each stage of the formulation and implementation of this Skills Mobility Partnership Framework for the Indian Ocean Region. In order to ensure that the Framework is effectively implemented, National Platforms could be created including all relevant Ministries mentioned above with the purpose of creating and implementing a Strategic Skills Mobility Plan of Action (including immediate, mid-term and long-term goals) and counting with the necessary funding.

2. Policy frameworks and global commitments which inform a Skills Mobility Partnership Framework for the Indian Ocean region

A skills mobility partnership framework for the Indian Ocean region takes cognisance of a number of global and regional policy frameworks and commitments.

At a global level:

The key role of skills partnerships on migration has been recognised in intergovernmental consultations that led to the development of the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** in 2018 adopted by 164 countries (including the four Indian Ocean countries: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles). The GCM devotes objective 18 to the issue of investing in skills development and facilitating recognition of skills, qualifications and competences, calling for the establishment of skills partnerships⁶.

The skills-related areas mentioned in the GCM include, amongst others: recognition of labour shortages; skills transfer; improving the mechanisms (equivalence and comparability) to ensure the mutual recognition of foreign qualifications (diplomas, certificates) and non-formally acquired skills (job experience) in different sectors; student exchange programmes, scholarships, professional exchange programmes, trainee or apprenticeships; optimizing upskilling for improving employability; collaborative programmes for partnerships between the private sector and educational institutions; training for job seekers, mentoring, and internship programmes; and improving skills profiling.

Acknowledging the inclusion of migration or labour migration-related sustainable development targets in the **2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda** particularly through:

- SDG target 8.8 “Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment”; and

⁶ Skills partnerships at local, regional, national or international levels can range from informal knowledge exchange and mutually beneficial skills development arrangements to formal bi- or multilateral agreements.

- SDG target 10.7 “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”.

As part of the UN SDG’s, Mauritius and the Seychelles have entered into cooperation agreements which stipulate national priorities in terms of the implementation of the SDGs with the UN.

At the same time, all Indian Ocean member states have committed to “strengthening the efficiency of the institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers through promoting fair and effective labour migration governance” as part of acknowledging the 2019 I.L.O. Abidjan Declaration “Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa, Realizing the potential for a future of work with social justice”.

In addition, several ILO instruments call for the recognition of migrant workers’ skills and qualifications:

- **ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). Article 14(b)** specifically refers to the recognition of occupational qualifications acquired abroad, including certificates and diplomas. The recognition of qualifications principle is recognized as an important prerequisite for migrant workers being able to compete on equal terms with nationals in terms of access to employment.
- **ILO Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)**, promotes the adoption and development of “comprehensive and coordinated policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training, closely linked with employment, in particular through public employment services”.
- **ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195). Part VI, paragraph 12** indicates that “Special provisions should be designed to ensure the recognition and certification of skills and qualifications for migrant workers.” Recommendation No. 195 promotes the recognition and portability of skills at national and international levels, as well as promote strategies and policies to mitigate the negative effects on developing countries. In this context skills portability is defined as skills that can be used productively in different jobs, professions and industries, certification and recognition of skills in national and international labor markets. That is, skills portability = skills transferability + credible skills information.

Furthermore, the 3rd generation of **decent work programmes** make a commitment to “fair and effective labour migration governance.”

At SADC level:

Countries in the Southern African region have taken steps to effectively formulate and implement labour migration policies through the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan (2020-2025), produce and harmonize labour migration data, improve skills recognition and the portability of social security benefits, as well as the fair recruitment of migrant workers and develop bilateral labour migration agreements to ensure the protection, particularly the fundamental labour rights of migrant workers and harness the benefits of migration for countries of origin and destination. This work is in line with **Article 5 of the 1992 Declaration and Treaty of SADC** which refers to the need to “develop policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and service, and of the people of the region generally among Member States.”

There are a range of other AU, SADC and COMESA relevant policy frameworks guiding work in this area:

- The African Union (AU) Migration Policy Framework and its Plan of Action (2018-2030) includes labour migration recommended strategies⁷
- SADC Employment and Labour Policy Framework (2020-2030)
- SADC Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits (2019)
- SADC Regional Qualifications Framework
- COMESA Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, the Right of Establishment and Residence

At IOC level:

The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) initiated a study to analyse mobility and vocational training in and between four Indian Ocean countries (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles), and a French Department (Reunion) mainly for the agriculture, construction, tourism and blue economy sectors. This study was presented at a Regional Conference on Training and Professional Mobility, which took place in February 2022. During this conference, key players in the region took stock of the existing training programmes and considered the extent that these meet the needs of these countries. This has led to a process of building a regional cooperation programme that supports international cooperation between Indian Ocean countries in terms of technical, technology and professional training through skills mobility.

At the same time, countries in the region which have a significant brain drain or where a large portion of their citizens live abroad are exploring innovative Diaspora programmes – which could be linked to this framework. An interesting example is a programme promoted by the IOM called the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA). This capacity-building programme helps to mobilize competencies acquired by African nationals abroad for the benefit of Africa's development. Based on its long experience in the Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN), IOM has launched this new programme to strengthen its capacity building efforts in assisting African countries to benefit from the investment they have made in their nationals⁸. Through its mobility-based approach, MIDA aims at helping African nationals abroad to directly contribute to the development of their countries of origin.

In order to understand and explore the extent to which the countries in the region are able to attract and retain expertise, the research team sought to gather data on the number of foreign students, teachers/lecturers and apprentices/interns access opportunities in the region and then decide to remain and contribute towards their overall development. Based on desktop research, the research team has yet to access sufficient data in relation to these three areas across the countries. However, what emerges from the study is that there clearly are foreign teachers/lecturers in Mauritius and Seychelles. For example, at least 40% of Unisey's staff are foreigners. Based on our desktop research, the only country with accessible data on foreign students is Mauritius.

Table 1. Number of foreign students who enter secondary and tertiary education in Indian Ocean countries⁹

⁷ The framework also recognizes that “migration will be a major topic in the [twenty-first] [c]entury and will therefore pose certain social, economic and political challenges for [policymakers] in the future management of migration for the betterment of African societies”⁷.

⁸ More information here : https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mida_en.pdf Mida in Somalia : <https://midasom.iom.int/> Mida in the GLR : <https://midasom.iom.int/> <https://weblog.iom.int/diaspora-expert-helps-special-needs-children-rwanda>

⁹ This table needs to be updated by the countries.

Country of origin	Host country (country of destination)				Total no that remain permanently
	Comoros	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	
Country name			India (1 041)		
Male			557		
Female			484		
Country name			Madagascar (282)		
Male			140		
Female			142		
Country name			Nigeria (253)		
Male			167		
Female			86		
Country name			Zimbabwe (172)		
Male			59		
Female			113		
Country name			Kenya (157)		
Male			60		
Female			97		
Total			South Africa(138), Tanzania (132), France (100)		
Male			63/54/54		
Female			75/78/46		
Total			2 858		
Male			1 413		
Female			1 445		

In the case of Mauritius, it should be noted that most of the international students, i.e. 56% were from Africa, 37% from Asia, 6% from Europe and 1% from the rest of the world. In terms of the field of study, medicine remains the preferred area of study with 35.3% (1,009) followed by 12.0% (344) enrolled in the Information Technology field, 11.5% (329) in Business/Commerce/Marketing, 11.2% (320) in the Administration/Management, 6.3% (181) in the Travel/Hotel/Tourism and 4.8% (138) in the law field and the resulting 18.9% (537) in other fields. International Students were studying at postgraduate, undergraduate level and sub degree level with 12.8% (367), 85.6% (2,446) and 1.6% (45) respectively.

3. Cross country context of the Indian Ocean countries

This section outlines the characteristics of four Indian Ocean countries (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles) indicating where there is commonality and differences. This overview seeks to

deepen our understanding of potential areas of collaboration to ensure that once adopted this regional skills mobility framework will be of mutual benefit to all.

3.1 Understanding the skills gaps across the four countries

A review of skills demand across the four countries highlights that the highest skills in demand are in tourism and construction followed by ICT, finance and the blue economy. Cutting across sectors in all of these countries is the need for green skills and digital skills so as to deal with changing technologies.

In the case of Madagascar, the skills needs are extensive and cuts across five priority sectors (textile, tourism, ICT and communication, construction, rural development) with a particular focus on strong technical skills (engineers, software engineers), digital skills, including software development, cloud architecture, data engineering, and cybersecurity and particularly in the textile sector, skills to meet technology change.

In the Comoros¹⁰, tourism and construction are also emphasized as well as the need to address challenges in terms of skills in agro-processing, the blue economy and in future infrastructure plans including transport and energy, which will require ongoing maintenance capabilities. Seychelles also focuses on the construction and tourism sectors and shares with Madagascar an emphasis on the growing demand for ICT skills and with Comoros the focus on the blue economy. In addition, Seychelles has a focus on the financial sector. In the case of Mauritius, there is also demand in these sectors, including construction, hospitality and tourism as well as manufacturing. This demand is primarily for low-cost workers (manual labour) but there is also a demand for a range of artisan type jobs (example, machine operators in manufacturing) and an increasing demand for higher level skills in finance, ICT and in specific aspects of the ocean economy as the country seeks to position itself as a “smart economy”.

In addition to the above-mentioned sectors, Mauritius also has a shortage of specialised skills in the health care sector and within traditional sectors.

3.2 Factors contributing to a skills gap

Several factors were identified by respondents across all four countries as explanations relating to the challenge in finding the requisite human resources. Some examples of these challenges are highlighted in the following examples :

In Mauritius and the Comoros respondents suggested that there is a lack of willingness to work in low skilled, low paid jobs. This is a consequence of a number of cultural or societal factors. Critically though this appears to relate to issues of wages and employment conditions, which has emerged as a key factor contributing to churn in the labour market and the extent of the “brain drain”. Specific related issues that were raised include the view from respondents in Comoros, that there is a heavy reliance on remittances from the people living in the diaspora and this support acts as a disincentive to either stay in the country or work in low-paid jobs. In additional respondents across all the countries indicated that public sector jobs are more sought after than those in the private sector. In the Seychelles the limited opportunities for skills development and related career progression were cited

¹⁰ The Comoros Emerging Plan 2030 also identifies key areas of potential growth: tourism and handicrafts; the Blue Economy; providing a financial and logistical hub in the Indian Ocean; modernising agriculture to ensure food security; and developing specific industrial niches to enable the diversification of the economy. Development in each of these areas will create demand for specific skills, ranging from semi-skilled workers to technicians, engineers, and professionals.

as a factor encouraging Seychellois to work elsewhere. Both the Seychelles and Mauritius are facing aging populations which limits the number of people who can fill positions in the labour market.

In addition to these wider labour market issues there were some specific issues raised relating to what is described as a skills mismatch. These relate broadly to:

- A misalignment between what the education and training providers offer and the needs of the local job market. This relates to many factors include the state of foundational education systems in some of the countries, the limited focus on STEM subjects and the challenges relating to TVET.
- The lack of career guidance to ensure that youth are being exposed to the needs of the labour market which is exacerbated by a lack of accurate or up-to-date labour market data.
- The lack of expertise amongst training providers. This was raised as an issue in the case of both Madagascar and the Comoros.

Related to these factors, as highlighted above, skills shortages are attributed to the challenge of insufficient numbers of people to fill existing vacancies and the lack of the requisite skills. Respondents also said that the absence of systems that can recognize the skills that individuals have which they may not have formal qualifications for, as well as the limited capacity to recognize qualifications acquired in another country. In addition, there is a concern that there is a lack of a culture of building local talent and upskilling where employees do not have exactly the experience, skills or qualifications that employers are looking for. There is also a view that some employers in the region believe that migrant workers are more productive than local labour.

Finally, as mentioned previously, the lack of labour market data both makes it more difficult to understand the shortages and also makes it more difficult to plan to address these shortages. This emerged as a key concern in both Comoros and Madagascar and to a slightly lesser extent but was still considered to be a challenge in the case of Mauritius and the Seychelles. A respondent from Madagascar stressed that “we need a labour market information system to see what the needs of the labour market are so that the colleges can adapt their training programmes.”

3.3 Interventions to address existing skills gaps: Government and business

Compared to the other island countries, Mauritius is viewed as having the most advanced education and training landscape. Mauritius has a network of technical and vocational colleges and universities.

In the case of Seychelles, training has largely happened through professional centres across a number of sectors. The government has, however, set in motion the establishment of Centres of Excellence across some priority sectors whilst the university is still relatively new, and it is establishing itself.

In contrast to this, Madagascar only adopted a TVET policy in 2015 and the Malagasy Vocational Training Fund (FMFP) was set up in 2019. There is currently a strong focus on building capacity in the TVET institutions. Further the introduction of the skills levy has the potential to drive training and skills development. Interviews point to the fact that the launching of the skills levy was an initiative driven by the private sector to address the skills shortages in the country and to encourage training. They indicate that companies in mining and textiles have traditionally conducted their own training whilst several donor organisations and companies have been focused on supporting the countries digital transformation plan by introducing digital skills training. Interviewees also highlight the support provided by faith-based NGOs to drive skills development.

In the case of Comoros¹¹, interviewees suggest that there are insufficient levels of formal vocational training taking place and where it is happening it is not meeting industry needs. In the case of the HEIs, the university is still teaching subjects that are also not perceived as meeting the needs of the economy. Interviewees highlight that employers are reluctant to train their employees as they are concerned that employees once trained will leave. There is also a focus on encouraging foreign students to come study in Comoros.

RPL and skills transfer were also highlighted as a concern, and it was indicated that there are plans underway to strengthen these processes in Mauritius. In Seychelles there are also attempts to promote and provide for RPL whilst there are attempt to ensure that training providers offer qualifications that can be accredited by the Seychelles Qualification Authority. It is intended that this will take place within the frame that will be provided by the developing an RPL policy. Seychelles has also begun to implement a localisation (succession planning) plan which is facing some challenges.

Cross country review of institutions responsible for issuing of secondary and tertiary-level Diplomas/Certificates	
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology • Higher Education Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – University of Mauritius – UOM – The University of Technology, Mauritius - UTM – The Mauritius Institute of Education - MIE – The Mahatma Gandhi Institute – MGI – The Rabindranath Tagore Institute - RTI – Open University of Mauritius – OU – Université des Mascareignes - UdM – The Mauritius Institute of Training and Development - MITD – Mauritius Institute of Health - MIH – Academy of Design and Innovation • 44 registered private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) • 525 MQA Registered TVET Providers • Polytechnics Mauritius • Institute of Technical Education and Technology (ITET) (formerly Mauritius Institute for Training and Development (MITD))
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education • University of the Seychelles (Unisey) • The Ministry of Education is establishing a new TVET school, the Centre for Excellence in Technology, for students from the existing ‘General and Skills’ pathway that runs concurrently with the ‘Academic and Technical’ pathway in all secondary schools • 10 Professional Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education (SITE) – Seychelles Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture (SIAH) – National Institute of Health and Social Studies (NIHSS) – Seychelles Business Studies Academy (SBSA) – Seychelles Institute of Art and Design (SIAD) – Seychelles Institute of Technology (SIT) – Seychelles Maritime Academy (SMA)

¹¹ Education is a challenge in the Comoros, with children completing an average of 8.4 years of schooling by age 18. This is 2 years fewer than children in other lower-middle income countries and is generally of a low quality. The World Bank notes that for the Comoros to develop economically it is critical that it invests in the education system. This should include a focus on supporting teachers in improving their teaching, increasing attention to measuring learning outcomes, and improving school infrastructure. Other actions to improve the basic education system include waiving school fees, subsidising school supplies, and improving school transport.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA) – The Guy Morel Institute (TGMI) – Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning (SIDOL)
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seychelles Qualifications Authority • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Employment and Technical and Vocational Education • The National Institute for Professional Training in TVET (L'Institut National de Formation du Personnel des Etablissements d'Enseignement Technique et de Formation Professionnelle) • (INFor) • Catholic University of Madagascar • Higher Institute of Communication, Business, and Management of Madagascar • Higher Institute of Technology of Antananarivo • Higher Institute of Theology and Philosophy of Madagascar • Higher Polytechnic Institute of Madagascar • Higher Vocational Agricultural School of Bevalala • Institut Supérieur Polytechnique Arsenal (ISPA) • Madagascar Institute of Political Studies • National Institute of Public Health • Reformed University of Madagascar • University of Antananarivo • University of Antsiranana or University of North Madagascar • University of Fianarantsoa • University of Mahajanga • University of Toamasina • University of Toliara • Zurcher Adventist University
The Comoros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of National Education and Technical and Vocational Education • University Comoros • Kampala University • Midocean University

3.4 Measures to address skills gaps: Recruiting migrant workers

This section provides a brief overview of the labour migration trends across and between the four countries.

3.4.1 Sectors recruiting migrant workers¹²

Table 2. Number of migrant workers from, and to, Indian Ocean countries per Economic Sector

Country of origin	Countries of destination							
Economic sector	Comoros		Madagascar		Mauritius		Seychelles	
Country	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Agriculture								
Construction								
Manufacturing								
Hospitality and tourism								

¹² These tables need to be updated by the countries.

Other eg ICT				
Country				
Country				
Country				

Table 2. Number of migrant workers from, and to, Indian Ocean countries per Skill level

Country of origin	Countries of destination			
	Comoros	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles
Country				
Highly-skilled				
Semi-skilled				
Low-skilled				
country				
Highly-skilled				
Semi-skilled				
eLow-skilled				
country				
Highly-skilled				
Semi-skilled				
Low-skilled				
country				
Highly-skilled				
Semi-skilled				
Low-skilled				

Table 3. Number of migrant workers from, and to, Indian Ocean countries per Occupation

Country of origin	Countries of destination			
	Comoros	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles

Occupations (stipulate according to your circumstances)	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Country								
Engineers								
Doctors								
IT								
Other:								
Country	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Engineers								
Educators								
IT								
Other:								
Country								
Engineers								
Artisans								
IT								
Other:								
Country								
Engineers								
Other:								

In Mauritius it is estimated that there are 38,917 migrant workers officially registered under two types of permits: 32,200 linked to work permits and COEs which relate to predominantly lower skilled workers and 6,717 linked to occupation permits for professionals and people starting their own businesses. The main sectors which recruit migrant workers include construction and manufacturing which account for over 85% of the migrant workers. Hotels and Restaurants only account for 1.3% with target sectors like Information Technology and Financial Intermediation falling into the category of Other Sectors and accounting for less than 2.3% of current foreign workers. In terms of occupation permits (issued for higher level skills and business owners), most of the 6,717 permits are issued in Professional Services (29.7%); ICT & Media (19.2%) & Financial Services (16.2%). It should be noted that the manufacturing sector employs 80.8% males and 19.2% females whereas construction employs close to 100% males. This accounts for the overall gender disparity in the employment of foreign workers.

In the case of the Seychelles, there was a demand for 17,061 posts (as at 2021) mainly in construction (7,440), accommodation and food service activities (3,371), wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles/motorcycles (1,485) and manufacturing (1,022). This trend continued into 2022, with an additional 8,730 post applications, with the majority being new applications and about 30% renewal applications. While primarily concentrated in low- and semi-skilled jobs in the construction, tourism, and manufacturing sectors, migrant workers also occupy highly skilled positions in the tourism, financial and public service sectors. Interviews observe that there is consensus across the key stakeholders that with respect to certain scarce skill requirements there will always be a need for migrant workers, particularly as Seychelles grows its competitiveness in sectors such as financial services and the digital economy. However, organised labour and civil society organisations believe that with appropriate planning and training there are sufficient Seychellois to fill most available jobs.

Whilst the Comoros is largely a country of origin, there is a demand to attract specific skilled workers. However, there is no scarce skills visa available but this may change with the revision of Law No. 88-025 which governs conditions for entering and residing in the Comoros.¹³ Data however, points to the fact that there are a small number of migrants in the country with 2020 data indicating that there are roughly 12,496 migrant workers in the country. Of that number, 51.6% of them were women, whereas 49.4% were men.

As in the case of Comoros, Madagascar is mainly a country of origin. However, the 2018 General Population and Housing Census (RGPH3) shows that there were 33 187 foreign individuals living in Madagascar out of a population of just over 29 million. Meanwhile, as at 2019, 184,762 Malagasy nationals emigrated which made up 0.69% of the 2019 population. Malagasy emigrants include both skilled and unskilled workers. Unskilled workers are more likely to be women participating in domestic work, caregiving, or as au pairs and tend to migrate to Europe and the Gulf countries. Some male unskilled workers find employment on cruise liners, and both men and women participate in seasonal and informal work. Whilst the majority of those who emigrate are women, there is no specific data on the number of skilled migrants living abroad. It is noted however, that for example, despite the lack of physicians in Madagascar with a doctor/patient ratio of 0.1812:1,000, there is still a strong desire for medical students to emigrate and work abroad. For example, in a survey conducted, 49.7% of Malagasy medical students desired to emigrate, study and work abroad. The 2021 human flight and brain drain in Africa index indicates that Madagascar is slightly above the world average of 5.25 index points.

3.4.2 Country of origin of migrant workers

The primary sources of migrant workers in Mauritius with respect to lower skilled positions are Bangladesh (44,2%), India (40,5%) and Madagascar (9,6%). Additionally, workers are sourced from Sri Lanka, Nepal and China. With the exception of Madagascar, very few workers originate from SADC countries, with only 0,3% of work permits and certificates of exemption being granted to SADC nationals.

Seychelles mainly sources workers from India, Madagascar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Mauritius, with new migration flows emerging from countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The number of migrants from Western European countries has also increased in recent years. Interviewees report growing demand for migrant workers from India in the agricultural sector and from South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya for security services.

In terms of Madagascar, data on migrants is limited however, the top countries of destination for Malagasy include France, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, Canada, Italy and Belgium. However, it should be noted that the countries of destination differ depending on whether skilled or unskilled workers. For example, Malagasy women often move to China, Lebanon, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to find employment as domestic workers. Very often they are exploited by recruitment agencies and end up being trafficked. Under Article 42 of Law No. 2003-044 on the Labour Code, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Civil Services and Social Laws (MTEFPLS) now requires migrant workers to provide a contract approval by the relevant Malagasy Embassy for employment located in non-Gulf countries. This is done to protect Malagasy nationals from being trafficked. By mid-year 2020, 193,500 Malagasy had emigrated to a different country.

In the case of the Comoros, the main countries of origin for migrant workers are from Madagascar (76.56%), 6.76% from Reunion Island, 3.83% from France, and 1.14% from the United Republic of

¹³ International Organization for Migration (IOM). Migration Governance Indicators: Union of the Comoros. 2021.

Tanzania¹⁴. Other countries include Pakistan, India, Egypt, China and Senegal. Overall, the majority of immigrants were from the Sub-Saharan Africa region. As highlighted above, Comoros is also a country of origin and has historically been affected by high emigration flows. Until the 19th century, Comorian youth emigrated towards Islamic countries like Yemen, Egypt, and Zanzibar. After the arrival of the French colonial empire in 1886, migratory movements varied, and Zanzibar and Madagascar became the main Comorian destinations. Following their independence, the emigration of Comorian nationals was redirected towards France.

According to the United Nations, in 2019 there were 120,298 emigrants abroad. The main destination countries that year were Mayotte, France, Madagascar, Libya, and Réunion. The net migration rate in 2021 was -2.2 migrants/1,000 population. Emigrants are mainly female and young. Their average age is 22, and they are usually chosen by their families to migrate because of their physical skills and the low rate of opportunities in the Comorian employment market.

3.4.3 Challenges to improving skills mobility

There is broad consensus about the need to promote free movement across countries in the region, whilst taking into account country specific contexts. For example, employers in Madagascar highlight the high levels of unemployment and the need for the 500 000 youth who enter the labour market every year to find employment. At the same time employers would like to see more flexibility to terms of the skills transfer provision¹⁵ when recruiting a foreign worker. Respondents suggest the need to engage other countries to facilitate the movement of Malagasy with a view to accessing employment and training opportunities in other countries. The government believes that bilateral agreements should be set up with various countries that are potential destinations for their citizens.

Stakeholders in the Comoros state that the visa processes are not difficult or complicated but suggest that to better enable mobility the Comoros should explore establishing additional bilateral and multi-lateral agreements to encourage cooperation between countries to share capacity building and workplace learning opportunities.

In the case of the Seychelles, there are processes in place to ensure that qualifications are verified however delays could at times be experienced. There are special provisions for non-Seychellois who apply to work in the International Trade Zone (ITZ). However, overall business believes that the processes around certain visas should be simpler and more transparent.

Until recently Mauritius had quotas for recruiting migrant workers that gave preference to some sectors. However, government is in the process of making several changes to this system as they do not appear to be meeting the needs of all sectors. In addition, Mauritius has put in place measures to attract individuals with higher-end skills as there is an understanding that many individuals with high level skills would prefer to work in other countries such as the UAE, Singapore and North America. In this regard, Mauritius like other countries in the region are very focused on strengthening their diaspora programmes

¹⁴ Interviews pointed out that foreign labour come through Tanzania from Burundi and Ruanda, and they try and get to Mayott but if they cannot they stay in the Comoros.

¹⁵ Employers suggested that there should be flexibility in terms of the recruitment of skilled foreign workers to enhance the quality of skills in the country, without a fixed term for skills transfer.

Finally, there is a need to address the issue of the governance of migration as many respondents raise the real concern that irregular migration is common and places migrants at risk of human trafficking and the violation of their rights. This has been raised repeatedly particularly in the case of Madagascar and the Comoros.

3.4.3.1 Skills agreements in place

The following include examples of the type of existing and potential skills-related agreements (including exchange programmes and training opportunities) in place across the four countries:

In the case of **Mauritius**, the governments of Canada and Italy have provided training opportunities to Mauritians, through the facilitation of the IOM. Since 2007, 468 Mauritians have been placed in employment in Canada under the Circular Migration Project in the food processing sector. A total of 100 Mauritians have been trained in the agro-processing, tourism and fisheries sectors in Italy, with particular attention given to the recruitment of Rodriguans. They have then been provided with support to start projects in Mauritius (MLHRDT, 2023).

In the case of **Seychelles**, the only formal BLMA currently in place is with Bangladesh. BLMAs are currently being discussed with Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Lesotho and the Philippines. The process was slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic but has made progress recently. Other initiatives in place include:

- Within the framework of the Stipendium Hungaricum Programme for the years 2023-2026, 10 students from Seychelles will receive scholarships to study in Hungary every year in various fields including social work, commerce, international relations and veterinary science. Fourteen others are in the areas of medicine under another agreement.
- Seychelles and Mauritius have formalised their collaboration through the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation, the 13th session of which took place in April 2023. The two countries continue to collaborate on various regional and international issues including climate change, marine conservation and tourism, as well as blue economy and fisheries, health, education, arts and culture, and new business links between the Seychelles Investment Board and the Economic Development Board of Mauritius (Seychelles Nation, 2023b). No formal agreement pertaining to skills mobility is currently in place between the countries.
- In 2003, a framework cooperation agreement was signed between Seychelles and La Réunion (since renewed tacitly). It is being implemented through action plans, the last of which was signed in July 2013. It covers areas as varied as education, the environment, tourism, health, French-language teaching and energy.
- In 2018 an office representing the Regional Council of Reunion, a French department in the Indian Ocean, was opened in Seychelles. The opening of the office followed the signing of an agreement aimed at making transactions with the European Union (EU) and Indian Ocean countries easier. The office in Seychelles is the fourth that provides the presence of Reunion in countries forming part of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). Identified areas of collaboration are in clean and renewable energy and biodiversity.
- As part of COMESA, the Seychelles is involved with Malawi, Mauritius, Zambia and Mozambique are negotiating MRAs for accountancy services in the context of the Accelerated Programme on Economic Integration (APEI) region (Sawere, 2019).

- The Ministry of Education will be working closely with the China-Africa TVET Alliance through the signing of an MOU. Two cohorts of trainers from Seychelles were to travel to the Shandong province during 2023 for training and benefit from additional support over a period of 5 years (SNA, 2023).

In the case of **Madagascar**, several BLMAs and Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) between Madagascar and Mauritius, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Lebanon are in the draft stages of development. The BLA development process typically includes rounds of negotiation and comments, and the formation of a joint committee composed of officials from both countries (ILO, 2021).

Comoros has concluded bilateral visa-exemption agreements with Mauritius, Senegal, and Tunisia, and has signed a series of memorandums of understanding with Morocco, which include some focus on migrant communities in each country. There are also sector specific co-operation initiatives such as in the banking sector between the Comoros and several Francophile countries in Africa (Senegal, Morocco). In addition, the Comoros and Madagascar have established strong relationships and have embarked upon numerous exchanges in relation to education and training. Finally, Comoros has bilateral investment treaties in force with Burkina Faso, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, but none specifically dealing with labour migration.

4. A Common Sustainable Development Vision in the Indian Ocean region

The **Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)** is an intergovernmental organisation of cooperation comprising Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Réunion (an overseas region of France). The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) was created in 1982 in Port Louis, Mauritius. The Council of Ministers (composed of the foreign ministers of the member countries) provides the strategic and political direction of the IOC. It is the supreme decision-making body of the organisation. The IOC has a dozen technical and financial partners, among which the European Union and the French Development Agency.

The IOC promotes peace and stability, maritime security, food security, environmental conservation, fisheries, climate change adaptation, the interests of island developing states, public health and cultural expression. The IOC's action is in line with the international frameworks to which its member states are signatories, such as the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development to 2030 and the Global Climate Agreement, among others.

In 2019, the IOC adopted its regional action plan for the blue economy, which serves as a framework for conducting responsible and sustainable projects. The blue economy is a label that calls for ethical and sustainable use of the sea. This label encompasses both economic and climate-related issues, promoting aquatic and marine ecosystems through the economy. The IOC's project portfolio has lately expanded considerably to include: public health, gender, mobility, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, regional connectivity (digital, air, maritime), trade negotiations, agricultural development, sustainable coastal zone management, waste management, use of earth observation technologies for environmental monitoring, renewable energy, culture, etc.

Cap Business Indian Ocean brings together chambers of commerce and industry as well as professional organizations from the island territories of the southwest Indian Ocean. The association, registered in Mauritius as the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Indian Ocean (UCCIIOI), was created in 2005. It is to date the only structure bringing together the main decision-

makers of the private sector at the Indian Ocean level, making it a key player in economic cooperation in the area. Its general secretariat is located in Ebène, Mauritius.

With a network comprising some 20,000 companies, it is today the sole spokesperson for the Indian Ocean private sector on issues common to the different territories. As a key player in economic cooperation in the area, its primary vocation is to promote trade between the islands and to clarify future issues to encourage the emergence of common fronts. It actively participates in strengthening public-private dialogue in several strategic sectors. Over the years, it has considerably strengthened its collaboration with various important international partners and donors, including the French Development Agency, the European Union, the International Organization of La Francophonie and the Indian Ocean Commission, among others. All its activities are carried out in conjunction with its members and partners, while respecting the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity.

5. Towards a Skills Mobility Partnership Framework for the Indian Ocean region

The aim of such a framework is to ensure that the positive developmental effects of improved mobility of skills are felt across Indian Ocean countries. This framework should ensure benefits accrued to both the countries of origin and destination and should address the needs of migrants and local workers (including their trade union representatives), employers and the overall development of their economies. This revised framework captures both the deliberations made during the October 2023 conference as well as the research and processes which preceded the conference.

5.1 Cross cutting principles underpinning the Framework

Three cross-cutting principles will underpin and guide the realisation of the intentions of this Gender-Sensitive Skills Mobility Framework:

- *Facilitating social dialogue on skills mobility in the region*
- *Enhancing capacity building at a regional and country level*
- *Strengthening labour migration governance across the region*

Facilitating social dialogue on skills mobility in the region:

Social dialogue (within tripartite structures) in the region is the cornerstone of the operationalization of this Framework. This principle is based on the understanding that a successful regional skills mobility framework - which seeks to contribute towards achieving employment, productivity and inclusive growth - requires collaboration among and across a range of stakeholders: government officials (policy makers), employer and trade union organisations and key institutions linked to the broader skills ecosystem. A commitment to social dialogue will ensure that key stakeholders are able to forge a common understanding of how to **enhance the efficient functioning of the labour markets across the region through skills mobility**. This could include a consideration of ways to build a shared understanding of the value of skills mobility in the region.

A regional tripartite structure, which has the capacity and is trusted by all key stakeholders, should facilitate regular dialogues to monitor and ensure implementation of the key elements of the framework. This regional tripartite structure should feed into country specific structures to ensure alignment between what is happening at a national and regional level.

Enhancing capacity building at regional and country level:

The second cross-cutting principle relates to ensuring that all stakeholders can effectively participate in these engagements and support the implementation of this framework. This requires some consideration as to the capacity of the regional institutions to support the framework including engaging with structures such as the Indian Ocean Commission as to whether it can support the coordinative work of this framework. As part of a commitment to this principle, a range of suggestions were made at the October conference in relation to ensuring there is a mechanism for trade unions to engage and interact at the IOC level so that they can play a more meaningful role in promoting skills mobility and assisting migrant workers. In addition, this principle would be promoted by encouraging inter-governmental engagement such that representatives from a range of ministries including Foreign Affairs, Education, Labour, Finance can engage these issues in a coordinated manner at a regional level. And finally, it was felt that in relation to the private sector such capacity is already in place. However, attention should be placed on ensuring that relevant information and resources are provided to the private sector such that they can prepare for engagements.

Strengthening Labour Migration Governance across the region:

The third principle guiding the Framework relates to the need to ensure that there is good governance of all labour migration policies, plans and interventions. This includes the imperative to give expression to the shared commitment to migrant workers' human and labour rights including the eradication of gender-based discrimination with the aim of moving towards gender equity. Other ways that this principle will be operationalized are provided in the Skills Mobility Framework (outlined below) and particularly with respect to the role played by bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs) and circular migration programmes.

5.2 Key Elements of a Gender-responsive Skills Mobility Partnership Framework

The previous section (5.1) outlines three cross-cutting principles which will underpin, guide and support the implementation of the Framework. In giving effect to these principles, this section unpacks the core components and associated elements (actions) of the Framework:

Component 1. Addressing Labour and Skill Shortages at all Skill Levels (low, semi and highly-skilled)

Element 1.1. Enhancing the identification of labour shortages or labour market needs (if possible, by economic-sector, industry and occupational-level) at all skill levels through the elaboration of lists of occupations in high demand or critical skills lists and other means.

Element 1.2 Improving skills profiling of the national workforce as well as of foreign workers through labour market information systems (LMIS), particularly through labour migration statistics.

Element 1.3. Establishing systematic information flow between the private sector and educational institutions to address skills mismatch and better meet industry requirements and needs.

Component 2. Developing, Attracting and Retaining Skills in Demand

Element 2.1. Strengthening secondary and tertiary education systems particularly through vocational and professional training as well as technology programmes.

Element 2.2. Implementing student exchange programmes, international scholarships, and professional exchange, (e.g. trainee, mentoring, internship, apprenticeships programmes) between countries.

Element 2.3. Fostering skills transferability between migrant and national workers as well as migrant entrepreneurs.

Element 2.4. Migration of foreign teachers and professors for secondary and tertiary education systems.

Component 3. Ensuring Skills Recognition and Employability

Element 3.1. Improving the portability of skills¹ (e.g. equivalence and comparability) by ensuring the recognition of foreign qualifications (diplomas, certificates) and non-formally acquired skills (e.g. job experience) through credential evaluation, mutual or bilateral skills recognition agreements, qualification frameworks, the harmonization of occupational labour standards and the recognition of prior learning systems.

Element 3.2. Promoting joint efforts to ensure that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes are coupled with reskilling and upskilling initiatives to improve the employability of national and migrant workers.

5.2.1 Component 1. Addressing Labour and Skill Shortages at all Skill Levels (low-skilled, semi-skilled and highly skilled)

Element 1.1. Enhancing the identification of labour shortages or labour market needs (if possible, by economic-sector, industry and occupational-level) at all skill levels through the elaboration of lists of occupations in high demand or critical skills lists and other means such as the creation of a database at the Indian Ocean level identifying labour market needs.

To give effect to this element, there is a need to *strengthen skills anticipation systems* that support planning for current and medium to long-term skills needs (with a focus on potential growth sectors across the region) and to promote alignment at a country level between supply and demand. This should consider a gender-sensitive approach and the imperatives of changing technology (digital skills) and other transitions related to the future of work (including with reference to the green and blue economy transitions).

Secondly, country-level skills anticipation processes should feed into a regional process to assist in developing a regional platform to facilitate “brain circulation” across the region.

Element 1.2 Improving skills profiling of the national workforce as well as of foreign workers through labour market information systems, particularly through labour migration statistics.

To develop a *reliable labour market information system* that can be used in the skills anticipation systems (outlined above) to determine immediate, medium and long-term skills needs. These skills needs should be captured, possibly in the form of a critical skills list, and shared in ways that help shape skills programme interventions. This requires support to create and strengthen country-level Labour Market Observatories as well as an Indian Ocean-level Observatory to function such that there is up to date skills and labour migration data which is disaggregated in a way that takes gender into account. This evidence-based data is central to the success of Social Dialogue processes on Skills Mobility and improved labour migration governance at a regional level.

Element 1.3. Establishing a systematic information flow between the private sector and educational institutions to address skills mismatch and better meet industry requirements and needs.

Key actions to operationalize this element requires a process in which officials from key government departments (education and training, economic growth and job creation), industry and union representatives are able to collectively engage education and training institutions to ensure higher levels of coordination and alignment between education and vocational training centres' curriculums and the regional and country-level job markets. As a basis for these conversations, the skills in demand that are identified (as above) should be detailed into the key emerging occupations which can then be used to inform the review of relevant qualifications and curricula, in consultation with employers in the region.

5.2.2 Component 2. Developing, Attracting and Retaining Skills in Demand

Element 2.1. Strengthening secondary and tertiary education systems particularly through vocational and professional training as well as technology programmes.

A key action is for stakeholders in the region to explore how the Indian Ocean Commission-drive regional vocational programme¹⁶ could feed into country initiatives where attempts have been made to strengthen programmes for vocational education as well as in relation to Higher Education Institutions. The potential exists for this regional initiative to create or strengthen Skills Centers of Excellence that stem out of each country's competitive advantage at the sectoral level and through collaboration of research and production of tools.

Linked to this, is a need to strengthen TVET offerings across the region through higher levels of engagement between supply and demand (as highlighted above). This activity could be linked to a regional campaign to support social partners to promote TVET as a career option. At the same time, a review of existing career counselling interventions is needed across the region so that alternative pathways can be opened up for young people.

Final actions are linked to exploring the feasibility of establishing a regional fund, which could either be an amalgamation of national skills funds or an alternate funding mechanism. This fund would promote skills development across the region with the aim of funding skills mobility including the funding of training for migrant workers as well as employers and workers operating in the informal economies in the region (link to element 3.2).

Element 2.2. Implementing student exchange programmes, international scholarships, and professional exchange, (e.g. trainee, mentoring, internship, apprenticeships programmes) between countries.

Actions to give effect to this element should focus on ensuring young people across the region are exposed to quality work experience (and learning opportunities) across countries in the region (and beyond) to ensure they are work ready and have the needed transversal skills. These activities should ensure that there is an understanding that young people will bring back such expertise to the benefit of their country of origin and to the region. Such arrangements could be crafted through the negotiation of BLMAs that could optimize student, professional and trainee/apprenticeships/internships exchange programmes and equally important should stress the

¹⁶ The IOC has initiated activities to set up a programme to make sure that vocational training is accessible to all young people across the countries to make them more employable and fill skills gaps in the region. The intention of this programme is to standardize training in areas such as agriculture, tourism and the blue economy in the region and in the medium term to expand this to the health sector as well as the digital economy.

commitment to protect the rights of migrant workers and the respect for their rights under international law. This will require work on the formulation and effective implementation of BLMA's with targeted countries in the IOC and within SADC. BLMA's formulation, negotiation and implementation should bring on-board tripartite partners to the table.

Examples of BLMA's (based on the research process) that could be explored, include:

- Formalize informal arrangements already in place between the Comoros and Madagascar in relation to sourcing workers from Madagascar.
- Mauritius and the Seychelles which both require lower skilled workers in construction and tourism – could consider exploring a bilateral agreement with Madagascar which has an oversupply of labour who are considered to be very hard working.
- A bilateral agreement could be explored between the Comoros and Mauritius in relation to training up Comorians in the tourism sector as Comoros wants to build up its tourism sector and Mauritius has the capacity to train their workers.
- A bilateral labour migration agreement between the Seychelles and Comoros could be considered around training in the fishing industry as the Seychelles has a relatively well-developed fishing industry.

Element 2.3. Fostering skills transferability between migrant and national workers as well as migrant entrepreneurs.

Giving effect to this element is ensuring that a circular migration approach underpins skills transfer programmes and support of succession planning¹⁷. This requires building capacity at a regional level to support country level interventions. As part of this activity, countries should explore how innovative Diaspora Programmes can assist in encouraging those living in the Diaspora to contribute back towards the development of their countries of origin by engaging in various skills transfer programmes.

In terms of encouraging migrant entrepreneurs, various processes underway to promote entrepreneurship through the Indian Ocean Commission should feed into local initiatives to promote and strengthen entrepreneurial training and education as well as linking these into Diaspora programmes.

Element 2.4. Migration of foreign teachers and professors to support secondary and tertiary education systems.

Actions should focus on reviewing supply and demand across the region with a view to sharing resources where feasible with structured BLMA's which would govern such arrangements and this action should be linked into activities outlined in elements 1.3 and 2.1.

5.2.3 Component 3. Ensuring Skills Recognition and Employability

Element 3.1. Improving the portability of skills¹⁸ (e.g. equivalence and comparability) by ensuring the recognition of foreign qualifications (diplomas, certificates) and non-formally acquired skills (e.g. job

¹⁷ A circular migration programme approach needs to ensure that when migrant workers return to their own countries, there are locals who can fulfil those jobs. Hence, when migrant workers come with specialized skills (which are not present in the country of destination) they should be required to train and mentor locals but in a way that is sustainable for the business. Circular migration can also focus on ensuring that workers who migrate to other countries return to their country of origin with new skills and experience to the benefit of the local labour market. As part of this, attempts should be made to ensure that these skills and experience are recognized.

¹⁸ The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation concerning human resources development: education, training and lifelong learning, 2004 (No. 195) defines portability of skills along the following two dimensions: (a)

experience) through credential evaluation, mutual or bilateral skills recognition agreements, qualification frameworks, the harmonization of occupational labour standards and the recognition of prior learning systems.

Actions to give effect to this element require a focus on reviewing how skills recognition systems and mechanisms need to be improved. What capacity is required as well as countries exploring what is required to work towards certification at the Indian Ocean level and how they can share qualifications across the region to prevent duplication and unnecessary expense and time in developing new qualifications. Actions should also focus on how RPL - to ensure the optimum utilisation of the existing labour force – applies to both local and migrant. As part of this, focus should be on drafting RPL guidelines for the region and building the capacity of relevant role players to utilize these guidelines.

Element 3.2. Promoting joint efforts to ensure that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes are coupled with reskilling and upskilling initiatives to improve the employability of national and migrant workers.

Actions should ensure that RPL processes are linked to opportunities for reskilling and upskilling (as outlined in component 2). Hence, the focus should be on encouraging companies in the region to provide workplace learning opportunities, where practically possible. Such efforts could ensure that young people in countries which have a huge population (such as Madagascar) could be assessed and then reskilled or upskilled to fill positions in countries which have demand such as the Seychelles, Mauritius (and for the purposes of this programme Reunion). Activities linked to this should be tied into how countries in the region are utilizing BLMAs – either with countries within the IOC region, SADC or beyond.

6. Conclusion

This revised regional skills mobility framework reflects on in-principle agreements reached by all constituencies about the kinds of activities that will need to be undertaken to progress the work. This includes facilitating different forms of social dialogues to build consensus about priorities and ways to address these, strengthening the capacity of institutions and stakeholders to drive these processes and ensuring that labour migration governance is strengthened to create agreements that enables mobility in ways that meet the needs of all constituents across the countries in the region.

These activities are crucial to deepening the shared **vision and goal** that is emerging in this process and to give effect to the framework. Implementing such a framework could contribute to the employability of workers from the IOC region and ensure that the key sectors across the economies in the region have the skills necessary for industrial transformation and growth leading to the overall development of the region.

This requires that all stakeholders provide input into the framework and that there is a mechanism to progress key actions at a regional and country level.

Annexure 1

1. Background on the Comoros

The Union of the Comoros has a total population of 821 625, with approximately 53% of the population being younger than 20 years old. 45% of the population lives below the national poverty line. The combination of the impact of Cyclone Kenneth in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic led to a contraction of GDP by 0.5% in 2020. The economy began to recover in 2021, with GDP growing by 2.1%, followed by further growth of 2.9% in 2022.

The country is both economically and ecologically fragile and is particularly at risk as a result of climate change. The impacts of climate change are exacerbated by the fact that the majority of the population lives in rural areas and are dependent on subsistence agriculture and small-scale fishing for survival.¹⁹ The high population density of the Comoros places immense pressure on the natural environment. Approximately 57 % of agricultural land is degraded, and deforestation remains an on-going problem.

The sociopolitical context is also challenging and has been unstable since the country's independence in 1975. This instability has had a negative impact on the Comoros' economic development.

The low export base and need for continuous supply of imports means that the trade deficit is approximately 40% of GDP, and the country depends on remittances from expatriates (24% of GDP) for a large percentage of its foreign exchange in order to contain its current account deficit. The country is strongly dependent on imports of food, and lacks infrastructure, such as transport and cold storage facilities, to support an increased reliance on local production.

The Comoros Franc is pegged to the Euro in a similar fashion to the CFA Franc in West Africa. This limits the Comoros monetary sovereignty and enables a system of uneven exchange which makes the export of economic surpluses simple and reduces the capacity of the government to invest in economic development. Importantly, France is represented in the central bank and has an implicit veto over statutory issues, effectively controlling monetary policy (Sylla, 2020).

The African Development Bank notes that the Comoros is constrained in its ability to develop its economy due to a low total factor productivity, a narrow productive base, an unattractive business environment, a small internal market, limited internal and external connectivity, and a substantial infrastructure deficit. Similarly, to the World Bank, they suggest that the country focuses on addressing policy deficiencies in education and health, and by improving the quality and quantity of basic infrastructure.²⁰

2. State of the labour market

The vast majority (around 80%) of the working population is employed in agriculture, which contributes 49.5% of GDP and is focused on producing cash crops for export. The primary cash crops produced are vanilla, cloves, and ylang-ylang, accounting for 70% of total exports.²¹ The reliance on the export of primary products for such a large proportion of GDP means that the country is subject to major fluctuations in income resulting from volatility in commodity markets. This reliance also means that the economy of the Comoros is structurally tied to levels of demand for primary products in other regions of the world.

¹⁹ Union of the Comoros draft labour migration policy

²⁰ African Development Bank Group. Union of The Comoros: Country Strategy Paper 2021-2025

²¹ Union of the Comoros draft labour migration policy

The informal sector accounts for 87.5% of employment across all sectors, with 99.5% of employment in agriculture being informal, and 80.9% of non-agricultural employment being informal.²²

The unemployment rate in the Comoros was 9.4% in 2021, along with a relatively low labour force participation rate (44.4% in 2020) (Anriddine, 2023).

Rates of poverty are lower among wage workers than those working in agriculture, and decreased poverty rates are associated with higher levels of education. However, youth unemployment is high, reaching 50% in 2014, and education is a challenge in the Comoros, with children completing an average of 8.4 years of schooling by age 18. This is two years fewer than children in other lower-middle income countries and is generally of a low quality.

The World Bank notes that for the Comoros to develop economically it is critical that it invests in the education system. This should include a focus on supporting teachers in improving their teaching, increasing attention to measuring learning outcomes, and improving school infrastructure. Other actions to improve the basic education system include waiving school fees, subsidising school supplies, and improving school transport.²³

The Comoros has begun to address its education related challenges, and the Minister of Education committed to using the multisectoral Local Education Group (LEG) to conduct dialogue on coordinating the education sector in 2022. The LEG brings together representatives from government, financial and technical partners, civil society organisations, and private education providers to provide a platform for addressing challenges within the education sector in the Comoros. UNICEF is also providing support to the education system by providing training to Ministry of Education officials, and to teachers and pedagogical supervisors.²⁴

2.1 Key gaps in knowledge relevant to the labour market

The lack of accurate and up to date information on the labour market is an important challenge in identifying and implementing relevant labour market policies. This is an issue which was highlighted repeatedly during interviews with various respondents. The type of data and analysis that is lacking relates to sectoral productivity and the drivers of differences in productivity across sectors which could help inform skills development policy; data around the actual needs of the labour market more broadly, while an agricultural census would enable planning and monitoring of agriculture and help to direct investment towards more sustainable land use. Data on land reform and the constraints on land distribution could also help inform interventions to increase productivity and employment, and there is a lack of knowledge about urbanisation and the impact this process has on development and labour markets.²⁵

Recognising this challenge, the Comoros held a national summit on statistics in 2022 to review the existing statistics system and to begin the process of establishing a more effective, modernised approach to gathering and using data on development priorities.²⁶

3. Current and future demand and supply of labour

²² <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/informality/>

²³ World Bank. Towards a more united and prosperous Union of Comoros: Systematic Country Diagnostic 2018.

²⁴ UNICEF. Country Office Annual Report 2022 - Comoros

²⁵ World Bank. Towards a more united and prosperous Union of Comoros: Systematic Country Diagnostic 2018

²⁶ UNICEF. Country Office Annual Report 2022 – Comoros.

In the absence of accurate data, interviews point to skills shortages in tourism and construction, whilst challenges also exist in relation to agro processing, the blue economy and in future infrastructure plans in relation to transport and energy will require ongoing maintenance capabilities. The ADB country programme for 2021 - 2025 focuses on developing infrastructure for transport and energy in the Comoros. This is likely to create demand for specific skills within the economy both for construction and ongoing maintenance of this infrastructure.²⁷ The Bank notes that overall, the labour force of the Comoros can be classified as largely unskilled.

In terms of industrialisation, there is potential for the development of agro-industrial processes to add value to existing cash crops and fisheries products. Examples include refining ylang-ylang extracts, developing perfume products, processing cassava into sago flour, packaging vanilla and cloves, among other options. The Comoros Emerging Plan 2030 also identifies key areas of potential growth in the country that could contribute to its ongoing economic development and structural transformation. These areas are tourism and handicrafts; the Blue Economy; providing a financial and logistical hub in the Indian Ocean; modernising agriculture to ensure food security; and developing specific industrial niches to enable the diversification of the economy. Development in each of these areas will create demand for specific skills, ranging from semi-skilled workers to technicians, engineers, and professionals. In line with this, the Plan identifies the need to invest in education and training as an important catalyst for the development process.²⁸

3.1 Digitalisation and agriculture

A study conducted on digitalisation in the agricultural sectors of SADC in 2021/22 by the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) found that the Comoros was the least developed of 16 countries included in terms of the use of digital technology within the agricultural sector. The study found that only around 8.5% of the population of the Comoros is using the internet, which is substantially lower than the regional average of 29.94%. This was in part due to the study team's difficulty in accessing information and an unwillingness to participate in research among potential respondents in the country. However, this finding does reveal that the country is lacking in some of the foundational requirements for a digital economy.²⁹

Digitalisation is included as a catalyst in the Emerging Comoros Plan 2020 - 2030, and the need to develop digital skills among the population is emphasised in this plan, and in the more recent Comoros 5G strategy.³⁰

3.2 The Blue Economy

The Comoros has a total of 427km of coastline and an Exclusive Economic Zone of 160 000km². At present the main Blue Economy related activity undertaken in the Comoros is fishing, with a primary focus on harvesting Tuna and Tuna-like species. However, the Comoros has potential for developing the Blue Economy in four main sectors: fisheries and aquaculture; coastal tourism; recreational activities, and transportation. There is also potential for oil and gas exploration in parts of the Mozambique Channel that fall within its Exclusive Economic Zone. The development of these sectors will require an array of skilled workers if they are to contribute significantly to the Comoros' overall economic development and to contribute to addressing the range of socio-economic challenges faced by the country.

²⁷ African Development Bank Group. Union of The Comoros: Country Strategy Paper 2021-2025

²⁸ Government of the Union of the Comoros. Emerging Comoros Plan 2020 – 2030.

²⁹ CCARDESA Digital Agriculture County Study - Comoros

³⁰ <https://isp.page/news/comoros-5g-strategy-a-blueprint-for-success/>

4. Interventions to address existing skills gaps: Government and business

As indicated previously, interviews point to significant challenges in relation to education broadly, whilst in the case of technical and vocational training, there is not a lot of formal training that takes place to meet industry needs. For example, in the case of the HEIs, the university is still teaching subjects such as (geography/philosophy/history). Interviewees explain that there are attempts by the government to address some of the gaps. However, the challenge has been that with so much of the training not being formal, it becomes difficult for such training to be recognised. And where colleges are conducting formal training, the numbers going there are not significant.

A significant amount of training is driven by donors whilst government support is limited by budgetary constraints. At the same time, interviews highlight that employers are reluctant to train their employees as there is no guarantee that they will stay. As part of an attempt to build education capacity (in relation to finances, quality of lecturers), the Comoros wants to encourage foreign students to come study there which they believe will create an impetus and an influx of finance to upgrade capacity and impact on the quality of learning.

In the interim, the Indian Ocean Commission's (IOC) five member states (as highlighted at the outset) are investigating the possibility of developing a regional vocational training mobility programme to respond to challenges in meeting the skills needs of their economies. At a meeting between employers and policy makers in the Indian Ocean small island states, employers identified climate change, youth unemployment, and labour shortages in tourism, construction, agriculture, fisheries, and the broader Blue Economy as important economic challenges. Employers also argue that there is misalignment between vocational training and the needs of the local job market. Further, they argue that there is a lack of willingness among potential employees to perform low skilled, low paid labour.³¹

4.1 National Fund for Youth Employment

In June 2021 the National assembly of the Comoros adopted the text of a bill mandating the establishment of a national youth employment fund. The bill focuses on establishing financing youth employment initiatives in growth promoting economic sectors with the direct collaboration of local municipalities. It includes provisions for financing youth-run businesses and income generating activities, providing technical training to youth to better match demand for skills in the labour market, and a loan guarantee system to facilitate access to credit for youth from banks and microfinance institutions.³²

5. Mismatches in labour supply and demand

Gaining insights into the extent of the mismatch between supply and demand is hampered by a lack of data on the labour market in Comoros. This, the World Bank notes as an important challenge to policy development. This makes it difficult to gain insight into the existence of mismatches in the supply and demand for labour and specific skills in the country. At a broad level, the African Development Bank observes that while access to education has been expanded at all levels for both boys and girls, the training and education system is poorly adapted to the needs of employers.

³¹ Southern African Migration Management Project. Labour Migration governance in the Indian Ocean Region - Draft Activity Report 2022.

³² <https://alwatwan.net/societe/assemblee-nationale-i-le-2019-initiative-%C2%ABun-jeune,-un-emploi-%C2%BB-ent%C3%A9rin%C3%A9-par-les-d%C3%A9put%C3%A9s.html>

Combined with low levels of growth that do not support large scale job creation, youth unemployment remains a key challenge on the islands.³³

Interviews, however, point to a range of factors contributing to both a shortage and a skills mismatch. For example, in relation to the skills shortage, respondents raise issues such as a lack of willingness to work in certain jobs such as low skilled, low paid jobs. This is a consequence of a number of cultural or societal factors. Coupled with this is the fact that for example, there is a heavy reliance on remittances from the people living in the diaspora. About one-third of Comorians live in the diaspora. Other factors emerging from interviews are the lack of specific skills, a lack of RPL; the state of the education systems (as highlighted) and a lack of focus on STEM subjects.

Finally, as is evident across the region, the misalignment between what the education and training providers offer, and the needs of the local labour market is a factor contributing to a mismatch. This coupled with a lack of planning and skills anticipation mechanisms in place.

6. Emigration, migration and the recruitment of migrant labour

The IOM notes that the Comoros does not collect or publish migration data, which makes it difficult to ascertain the extent to which demand for migrant labour in specific sectors exists. There are also no specific scarce skills visas available to attract specific skilled workers to the country, although this may change with the revision of Law No. 88-025 which governs conditions for entering and residing in the Comoros.³⁴

The lack of data on makes it very difficult to develop coherent policy and highlights the need for the development of a new evidence based national labour policy that includes a focus on migration. This process is spearheaded by the Ministry of Youth, Employment, Labour, Sports, Arts, and Culture, with the Ministry's social partners. This tripartite commission is responsible for overseeing the policy development process. The tripartite commission is supported by a multi-sectoral commission that includes all the ministries and institutions involved in managing migration related issues in the Comoros.³⁵

The official Consultative Council for Labour and Employment established in 2012 does not specifically include a focus on labour migration. While a tripartite commission was established in 2020 to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market, including impacts on migration, this body currently operates on a voluntary basis.

6.1 Countries of origin and destination

The main countries of origin for immigrant workers in the Comoros are Madagascar, Tanzania, Pakistan, Senegal, France, India, Egypt, China, and Senegal. While the primary countries that Comorian workers emigrate to are France, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Canada, and the United States.

It should be noted and as highlighted previously, approximately one third of the Comoros population live outside of the country and remittances form an important contribution to GDP. The reliance on remittances is also partly due to years of political instability which have made it difficult for state institutions to be stably established. This has led to a strong reliance on local level governance based on traditional governance structures, financed through remittances from the diaspora.³⁶

³³ African Development Bank Group. Union of The Comoros: Country Strategy Paper 2021-2025

³⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM). Migration Governance Indicators: Union of the Comoros. 2021.

³⁵ Union of the Comoros draft labour migration policy

³⁶ World Bank. Towards a more united and prosperous Union of Comoros: Systematic Country Diagnostic 2018.

Remittances have also contributed to increased inequality between those who rely on family in the diaspora, and those who do not have emigrant family members.

There are also significant inequalities between the three islands that comprise the Comoros, with the lowest incidence of poverty occurring on Grand Comore. Residents of Ajouan and Moheli are 8 and 6 percent more likely to be living in poverty than residents of Grand Comore.

6.2 Migration governance

Governance of Migration in the Comoros falls under various laws, including Law No. 84-108 on the Labour Code (1984); Law No. 88-025 on the conditions for entering and residing in the Comoros; Law no. 79-12 on the Comorian Code of Nationality; and Law No. 08-014 on economic citizenship. These laws together specify the conditions for living and working in the Comoros, and the conditions for gaining citizenship of the country.³⁷

Implementing the law on the conditions of entry and stay for foreigners is the responsibility of the Directorate General for Police and National Security. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is responsible for all emigration related matters. The ministry acts through its Office for Comorians Abroad which is mandated to identify Comorian emigrants and uphold their rights as citizens. However, there is no specific legislation governing emigration from the Comoros. While Comoros has ratified the majority of international conventions on migration, the implementation of these conventions is ineffective. At a national level there is also a need to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework governing migration. The Comoros does not have any agreements with other countries on the portability of social security or other benefits such as pension funds.

6.3 Policy development

Under the new framework for managing migration, the Ministry of Labour and Employment will hold overall responsibility for managing policy implementation in collaboration with a tripartite national commission on labour migration. Other important ministries and institutions that will be involved in managing the migration policy include the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the national statistical agency INSEED.

Key strategic objectives for migration policy include:

- Strengthening the legal and regulatory framework for migration;
- Strengthening migration governance;
- Strengthening the migration management system;
- Promoting the protection of human rights and social protection for migrants;
- Channelling remittances towards productive investment;
- Promoting the collection of migration data through a coherent monitoring and evaluation framework.

Gender equality for all workers, including migrants, is adopted in the National Gender Equity and Equality Policy (2007), and the National Labour Code (1984) also refers to gender equality. The Comoros is part of the European LMD system which standardises levels of education and facilitates the recognition of diplomas across all the countries that have adopted the system. However, apart from the LMD system, there are no formalised criteria for recognising qualifications obtained outside the Comoros. This has led to problems in the past as the conditions for recognising qualifications in regulated professions such as medicine sometimes vary between administrations.

6.4 Migration cooperation

³⁷ International Organization for Migration (IOM). Migration Governance Indicators: Union of the Comoros. 2021.

The Comoros is a member of the Pan-African Forum on Migration, and participates in the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa, the Migration Dialogue for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the Migration Dialogue for Indian Ocean Commission Countries.

Bilateral visa-exemption agreements have been concluded with Mauritius, Senegal, and Tunisia, and has signed a series of memorandums of understanding with Morocco, which include some focus on migrant communities in each country. However, the country has not concluded any bilateral labour agreements with other nations.

6.5 Challenges to improving mobility

Comoros does not have any bilateral labour migration agreements with other countries and has not effectively implemented the conventions and international agreements that it has ratified.

Irregular migration is common and places migrants at risk of human trafficking and the violation of their rights. The frequency of irregular migration is in part due to the lack of private employment agencies and the poorly managed public administration of international recruitment processes. The Comoros was moved from Tier 3 to the Tier 2 watchlist of the United States Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report in 2022. This means that there is recognition of significant efforts being made by the government to tackle the problem of human trafficking, but that either the number of victims of trafficking is increasing or that there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons.

The development of a national labour migration policy is necessary due to the need to meet the country's obligations in terms of protecting the rights of migrant populations and to more efficiently manage the flow of migrants to and from Comoros. There is also a need to regularise migration in order to support the socio-economic development of both Comoros and the countries of origin of foreign migrants through managing the flow of remittances, and the transfer of skills, technology, and investment.

Key areas of concern raised by stakeholders across the public and private sector focused on migrant recruitment processes, recognition of the rights of migrants and their families, recognition of professional qualifications, and access to social protection for migrants, among others.

Annexure 2

1. Background on Madagascar

Madagascar is among the poorest nations in the world, with especially high rates of poverty especially prevalent in the south of the country. The World Bank estimates that 81.6% of the population were living below the international purchasing power parity (PPP) line of \$2.15 per day.³⁸ GDP growth between 2013 - 2019 averaged 3.5%, with growth being concentrated in mining, construction, telecommunications, and financial services. COVID-19 led to a 7.1% contraction in GDP in 2020, with a rebound of 5.7% growth in 2021, and 4.2% in 2022.

2. State of the labour market

Madagascar's population was estimated at 29 611 714 in 2022. The 2018 census found that around 14 million people were of working age, and net labour force participation was estimated at 73% of the working age population, of whom 95.8% were employed.³⁹ The labour market in Madagascar is characterised by an artificially low level of unemployment, with widespread underemployment, and more than 80% of workers in 2015 had poorly paid, insecure employment.

The National Development Plan (2015 - 2019) notes that unemployment tends to increase with the level of educational attainment individuals achieve. For example, the unemployment rate for academics in 2015 was 4.9% compared to 0.5% for people without formal education. Among people who had completed a technical qualification unemployment was also relatively high at 4.5%.⁴⁰ However, people with higher levels of education are more likely to find stable employment than those with lower educational attainment.⁴¹

An ILO survey focusing on school to work transitions in 2015 found that the majority of young Malagasy people live in rural areas (76.7%), and that 63.4% are from poor households. Among respondents who were no longer in education, 1.7% had reached tertiary level education, 27.6% had attended secondary level education, 48.6% had attended primary level education, and 21.1% had less than a primary level education. Economic reasons were cited as the main reason for non-attendance of school.

The unemployment rate among young people was relatively low at 3.1%, and most young unemployed people seek jobs at elementary levels, trades, crafts, or sales. The majority of youth worked in agriculture (73.5%), services (16.5%) or industry (10%), and self-employment was also relatively common, with 31.3% of youth reporting working for themselves. Obtaining stable employment was most likely for more highly educated men in urban areas.⁴²

Many Malagasy workers are affected by resource boom and bust cycles and move between different extractive sectors in response to the extreme price changes on global commodities markets. For example, workers may move from harvesting timber to gold mining to cultivating vanilla or mining for gemstones several times throughout their working life. This is particularly relevant in the Northern parts of Madagascar where extractive industries have historically been more dominant (Zhu and Klein, 2022). Zhu and Klein (2022) find that this results in migration becoming more

³⁸ World Bank (<https://data.worldbank.org/country/madagascar>)

³⁹ UNFPA Madagascar | Résultats définitifs du troisième Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitation (RGPH 3) - TOME 1. 2021. <https://madagascar.unfpa.org/fr/publications/résultats-définitifs-du-troisième-recensement-général-de-la-population-et-de>

⁴⁰ Government of Madagascar. National Development Plan 2015 - 2019 2015:47.

⁴¹ USAID. 2020. Country Development Strategy Madagascar 2021 - 2025

⁴² ILO. 2016. Young people towards an active life: Survey on youth's transition to working life.

frequent and that the nature of labour in rural Madagascar becoming more precarious and uncertain.

In terms of internal migration, INSTAT estimates that approximately 20.8% of the population has moved between districts. Internal migration in Madagascar is driven by several factors including poverty, unemployment, and extreme weather.[1] The severe drought of 2020/2021, for example led to an increase in migration from the Androy region to the Menabe region. Migration includes both permanent and seasonal labour migration. Interventions planned to address this migrant flow focus on improving livelihood conditions in both Androy and Menabe. In Androy international donors aim to support local households in rearing livestock, focusing on goats in particular, while also improving access to water through drilling boreholes and development rainwater harvesting at a larger scale. In Menabe, donors aim to support migrants in becoming integrated into their settlement areas. Projects in Menabe focus primarily on developing peanut cultivation and rearing goats and will also include support for water access through drilling boreholes.⁴³

3. Current and future demand and supply of labour

The African Development Bank notes that the country's poorly developed industrial sector means there is an ongoing lack of demand for skilled workers.⁴⁴ The services sector contributed around 60% of GDP in 2015, but employment in the services sector is characterised by low levels of productivity and is mainly informal. Manufacturing and value addition are concentrated in the country's Export Processing Zone (EPZ) and are dominated by textile products and essential oils. While the Bank argues that Madagascar has potential for structural transformation and industrialisation, this will require an improvement in agricultural value chains and investment in industry.

The National Development Plan 2015 - 2019 includes a focus on strengthening the education and training system in Madagascar, noting the importance of developing the capacity required to enable the country to accelerate its development and to meet its commitments in terms of the sustainable development goals.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, interview highlight that the skills needs are extensive and cuts across the five priority sectors (textile, tourism, ICT and communication, building, construction and civil works, rural development), with a particular focus on strong technical skills (engineers, software engineers) and in the textile sector, skills to meet technology change. Employers also argue that aside from technical skills, there is a need for people with a combination of technical and soft skills. Aside from these priority sectors, there is also a focus on the green and blue economies (see below).

3.1 The Blue Economy

The development of the Blue Economy, or the sustainable development of ocean and freshwater resources, has been identified as a potentially important contributor to the development of the African continent and African small island states. Consequently, the Blue Economy forms part of various global agendas, including the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Integrated Maritime Strategy, the Nairobi Convention, and the Africa Blue Economy Strategy.⁴⁶ The ILO's 2019 programme document focusing on the Blue Economy in African Island States noted that the development of the Blue Economy could contribute to addressing persistent socioeconomic challenges in these nations, including poverty, unemployment, informality,

⁴³ ILO. 2022. Climate related migration in Madagascar.

⁴⁴ African Development Bank. 2017. Madagascar 2017-2021 Country Strategy Paper.

⁴⁵ Government of Madagascar. 2015. National Development Plan 2015 – 2019.

⁴⁶ ILO. Feasibility study for a maritime profession's campus in the Indian Ocean Region 2022.

a lack of social protection, environmental concerns, unplanned labour migration, food insecurity, and gender inequality.⁴⁷

Madagascar has 5600 km of coastline and an exclusive economic zone that covers more than a million square kilometres, including substantial marine and coastal resources. Sustainable tourism, commerce, and trade are important areas in which there is potential for the Blue Economy to support demand for labour in Madagascar. In terms of existing work, Madagascar has established a dedicated ministry to consolidate the development of the Blue Economy. Fishing accounted for almost 7% of GDP in 2018 and represented 6.6% of total exports in that year. Cultivating shrimp through the use of aquaculture has also been identified as a key growth area in Madagascar. In addition to these two areas, the country is investing in the development of five of its ports in support of stopping illegal fishing.

The range of sectors involved in developing the Blue Economy means that there is likely to be demand for a diversity of skills at various levels from semi-skilled workers to entrepreneurs and professionals. For example, infrastructure development will require technicians and engineers, monitoring ecosystem health and resources will require scientific expertise, regulators and lawyers will be required to control development and safeguard interests, and entrepreneurs will need to take advantage of the opportunities that investment in the Blue Economy opens up. Existing training institutions and courses offered across the countries of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) can coordinate to offer relevant training for the Blue Economy across the region.⁴⁸

4. Mismatches in labour supply and demand

There is a lack of research available that analyses the mismatch between the supply and demand for labour in Madagascar, but overall Madagascar's labour market is characterised by a lack of demand for skilled labour and an oversupply of unskilled labour. The World Bank suggests that there is potential for increased growth and employment in agriculture, tourism, apparel, textiles, and mining. However, unlocking this potential will require significant investments in these sectors and in building the infrastructure to support their expansion.⁴⁹

Respondents argue that in Madagascar there is more of a mismatch but also shortage of qualified people. This is a consequence of the state of education coupled with the non-alignment between the education and employment policy. As a result of the education system, the core foundational skills are absent. In addition, employers argued that the formal apprenticeship system is limited whilst RPL is in a pilot phase.

Employers also point to the misalignment between educational and the employment policy as “they don’t talk to each other and “we do not have data about our own labour market so young people do not know where opportunities are.” It was noted however, that a process of engagement is starting with employers and HEIs.

5. Interventions to address existing skills gaps: Government and business

⁴⁷ ILO Programme Document, 2021. ‘Blue Economy in Africa Island States for Decent Job, Prosperity and Sustainability’ <http://www.employment.gov.sc/media-centre/publications/450-blue-economy-in-african-island-states-decent-workprosperity-sustainability>

⁴⁸ ILO. Feasibility study for a maritime profession’s campus in the Indian Ocean Region 2022.

⁴⁹ World Bank. 2023. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Country Partnership Framework for Republic of Madagascar for the period FY2023 - FY2027

In terms of interventions to strengthen the skills development system, UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED) is providing support to Madagascar's Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training to establish committees led by guidance counsellors in all TVET institutions that aim to ensure the successful integration of graduates into employment or entrepreneurship.⁵⁰ Additionally, the International Finance Corporation is supporting a public private partnership to train 6000 Malagasy citizens in digital skills, including software development, cloud architecture, data engineering, and cybersecurity. This training supports Madagascar's digital transformation plan.⁵¹ USAID has also supported skills development for government officials. This has included support for basic administrative skills and the management and implementation of health information systems.⁵²

The French Development Agency is partnering with the Government of Madagascar to develop a large-scale vocational training programme for the Building and Public Works sector. The programme focuses on working together to define training needs, develop curricula, implement dual education models, and support teacher training and evaluation.⁵³ The AFD also supports the strengthening of teacher training at lower levels of education through its Apprendre programme, which works across Francophone Africa.⁵⁴

The telecommunications company, Orange, has established an "Orange Digital Centre" in Madagascar to support the development of digital technology skills. The Centre had trained 1900 learners by May 2023, of whom 60% were young women. 600 graduates had found employment following their training.⁵⁵

Aside from these initiatives, the private sector lobbied for the introduction of a skills levy fund which was implemented in 2019. Employers indicate that the fund should help in the development of skills in the medium to long term but currently challenges still exist. Whilst the education and training system is still gearing up, respondents point out that companies for example, in mining, building and construction and textile have been very active in training up their own employees as well as others through their own training centres. Aside from these private sector initiatives, there has been a significant presence from the faith-based organisations that have experience in education and training, and they have made up for the deficiencies in the public sector.

6. Migration and the recruitment of migrant labour

Madagascar is largely defined as a country of origin with interviews indicating that a significant number of Malagasy seek to emigrate to find work opportunities both in countries in the IOC and beyond. The official emigration figures (as highlighted below) do not reflect the extend of the number of Malagasy's living in the diaspora.

The Madagascan government is in the process of developing a gender sensitive, evidence based National Labour Migration Policy under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The draft labour migration policy identifies important opportunities related to a more coherently managed migration system in Madagascar. The role of the Malagasy diaspora in potentially contributing to the country's sustainable development is highlighted by the responsibilities of the

⁵⁰ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/bridging-gap-between-vocational-training-and-employment-madagascar>

⁵¹ <https://pressroom.ifc.org/all/pages/PressDetail.aspx?ID=27330>

⁵² USAID. 2020. Country Development Strategy Madagascar 2021 - 2025

⁵³ <https://www.afd.fr/en/actualites/madagascar-training-offer-gives-new-hope-building-and-public-works-companies>

⁵⁴ <https://apprendre.auf.org/pays/madagascar/>

⁵⁵ <https://actu.orange.mg/orange-madagascar-acteur-majeur-de-linclusion-numerique-et-du-developpement-des-competences-numeriques-malagasy/>

Diaspora Directorate, which aims to promote the involvement of emigrants in the political, economic, and social life of Madagascar. The 2018 General Population and Housing Census (RGPH3) found that there were 33 187 foreign individuals living in Madagascar, along with 12 712 foreign born Malagasy citizens. *Table 1* shows the most frequent countries of origin and professions for labour migration into Madagascar since 2019.

Table 1 The most frequent countries of origin and professions for labour migration to Madagascar

DMP	2019	2020	2021	
Total number	1494	453	1123	
Nationality				Position most frequently held
Chinese	18.06%	16.18%	28.09%	Manager/ Manager/ Technician/ Geologist/ Engineer
French	28.09%	27.44%	20.94%	Director/ Coordinator/ Trainer/ Manager/ Engineer
Indian	8.59%	7.84%	12.53%	Sales manager/ Storekeeper
American	3.30%	6.23%	4.55	Manager/ Teacher
Type				
Men	87.95%	61.59%	75.96%	
Woman	12.05%	38.41%	24.24%	
EDBM	2019	2020	2021	
Total number	2400	2382	2500	
Nationality				Position most frequently held
Chinese		26.36%	30.30%	Manager/ Manager/ Technician/ Geologist/ Engineer
French		26.70%	30.30%	Director/ Coordinator/ Trainer/ Manager/ Engineer
Indian		8.94%	9.09%	Sales manager/ Storekeeper
Type				
Men	94.50%	93.74%	96.97%	
Woman	5.50%	6.26%	3.03%	

The UN estimates that approximately 34 934 Malagasy nationals were living abroad in 2019, while data from the Madagascar government identifies 3130 officially registered emigrant workers. However, official data is only available from 2019 to the present. Migration for work is an aspiration among many Malagasy youth, and working abroad is viewed as a means to enable one's ability to develop professionally. There are several drivers of emigration in Madagascar, including poverty, insecurity, political crises, climate change, unemployment, and low wages. Malagasy emigrants include both skilled and unskilled workers. The main destinations for migrants are Canada, Mauritius, Seychelles, Djibouti, and the Gulf States. Unskilled workers are more likely to be women participating in domestic work, caregiving, or as au pairs and tend to migrate to Europe. Some male unskilled workers find employment on cruise liners, and both men and women participate in seasonal and informal work. Skilled workers have a wider range of destinations including France, several African nations, and the Gulf States.⁵⁶

Employers and other respondents point out that whilst the country has a lot of lower-level skilled workers (such as domestic workers who seek employment in the Gulf States) there are a growing number of very competent workers in the IT sector who could take up positions in countries such as

⁵⁶ Policy Briefing Note: The development of the national gender sensitive and evidence-based labour migration policy, Madagascar.

the Seychelles and Mauritius where shortages exist. Respondents add that Malagasy nationals are considered very hard working and have become very skilled in software development and the like.

6.1 Existing mechanisms facilitating migration

Currently immigration policy is governed by Law No. 62-006 of 1962. This law provides for two visa categories - short term non-immigrant (less than 3 months), and long stay visas (more than 3 months). Additionally, Interministerial Decree no. 8421/97, which implements Decree no. 94-652, sets out the procedures for granting visas. Professional activities by foreigners are regulated by articles 8 to 11 of this law.

Madagascar also participates in the Pan-African Forum on Migration which aims to support inter-regional cooperation on migration. Additionally, Madagascar participates in the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa, the Migration Dialogue for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States, and the Migration Dialogue for the Indian Ocean Commission Countries. These dialogues aim to strengthen cooperation and migration governance across the region through consultation and regular exchange of information, experiences, and good practices.

Within Madagascar, the National Labour Board provides a collaborative tripartite body including the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Public Services, and Social Legislation, private sector employers, and workers, which meets when the views or approval of the private sector are required to deal with specific questions, including those related to migration.⁵⁷

6.2 The need for comprehensive migration policy

The Government of Madagascar identified the need to develop a holistic migration policy that complies with international charters and treaties, and which ensures the human rights of both national and international migrants are respected. Developing such a harmonised migration policy will assist in preventing economic exploitation and human rights violations among migrants while providing tools to more effectively deal with human trafficking networks. Further, the migration policy needs to ensure alignment with national and sectoral policies, to establish a structure responsible for coordinating and managing migration and data collection on migration, and to strengthen the technical and operational capacities of all entities involved in migration management to be strengthened.

Migration is also directly relevant to other key policy areas, and migration policy needs to be harmonised with the National Labour Policy, National Employment and Vocational Training Policy, National Policy to Combat Human Trafficking, National Social Protection Policy, and the Education Sector Plan, among other strategic documents. For example, the National Labour Policy has direct links with migration policy as it promotes the strengthening of labour market institutions, the implementation of fair recruitment processes, the provision of social protection to migrant workers and their families, addressing the root causes of internal migration, developing social dialogue and cooperation on labour migration governance, and improving processes around the recognition of prior skills. There are currently no formal criteria in Madagascar for recognising foreign qualifications, and the country does not participate in any common qualification frameworks.⁵⁸

Regulating emigration and protecting the interests of Malagasy citizens abroad is the responsibility of the Interministerial Committee on Emigration. This committee was established by the Ministry of Employment, Technical Education, and Vocational Training by Order number 23993/2015. The Diaspora Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for implementing the National Policy for Engagement with the Malagasy Diaspora (2019), and is tasked with contributing to

⁵⁷ International Organization for Migration (IOM). Migration Governance Indicators: Madagascar 2021.

⁵⁸ International Organization for Migration (IOM). Migration Governance Indicators: Madagascar 2021.

development, developing a diaspora policy, and helping and protecting members of the diaspora by providing consular services and strengthened ties between foreign citizens and the government.⁵⁹ Under the new policy, revisions will also be made to Law 62-006 which establishes the organisation and control of immigration. Revisions will also need to be made to the law on free trade companies. Specific institutions and government entities that will be responsible for implementing different aspects of the new policy include: the Ministry of Labor and Employment, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Health and Vocational Training, Ministry of Industry, National Office to Combat Human Trafficking (BNLTEH), National Independent Commission on Human Rights, Labor courts, regional authorities, National Labor Council, Employers Association of Madagascar, Malagasy Workers Conference, National Social Welfare (CNAPS), National Statistics Institute (INSTAT), Economic Development Board of Madagascar (EDBM), and private employment agencies.

Resources for implementing the policy will be primarily drawn from the Government of Madagascar's internal funds, but subsidies and support from national and international partners will be sought where possible.

6.3 Key areas for policy intervention

Several key areas of migration governance are identified in the draft Labour Migration policy. These include ensuring good conditions for national and foreign workers; providing a reliable migration database to ensure the availability of accurate disaggregated data on migration; ensuring that measures to combat discrimination against migrants are implemented; and implementing measures to reduce the vulnerability of migrants to climate change. The draft also highlights the importance of managing and disseminating accurate information for migrant workers on the state of the labour market, the availability of jobs both locally and abroad, and how to safely organise migration on a legal basis. It will also be necessary to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to serve as a basis for tracking progress and evaluating achievements. Further, the importance of ensuring that workers' fundamental rights are fully respected and that they are protected from discrimination on the basis of gender, origin, race, ethnicity, or age is also critical. Finally, it is essential to develop local, regional, and international cooperation in managing professional migration. Cooperation is necessary in order to ensure the best possible standards of living for Malagasy workers in their destination countries, to provide them with sufficient protection and assistance in cases of involuntary return, and to expand economic partnerships with the countries of origin of migrant workers in Madagascar through the promotion of foreign direct investment. This includes the need to conclude bilateral labour agreements with countries that have high demand for Malagasy workers.

Currently there are no bilateral agreements or memorandums of understanding focusing on migration between Madagascar and other countries, but the Government has made efforts to finalise bilateral labour agreements with the main destination countries of Malagasy emigrants. These countries are the Comoros, Lebanon, Mauritius, and Saudi Arabia.

6.4 Challenges for improving mobility

Human trafficking is an important challenge related to migration, and Madagascar has been on the Tier 2 Watchlist of the United States Department of State's Human Trafficking report for 2021 and 2022. This means that the US State Department believes that Madagascar is taking significant steps to address human trafficking but that either the number of people trafficked increased compared to

⁵⁹ International Organization for Migration (IOM). Migration Governance Indicators: Madagascar 2021.

the previous year, or that there is a lack of evidence of increasing efforts to address human trafficking incidents from the previous year.⁶⁰

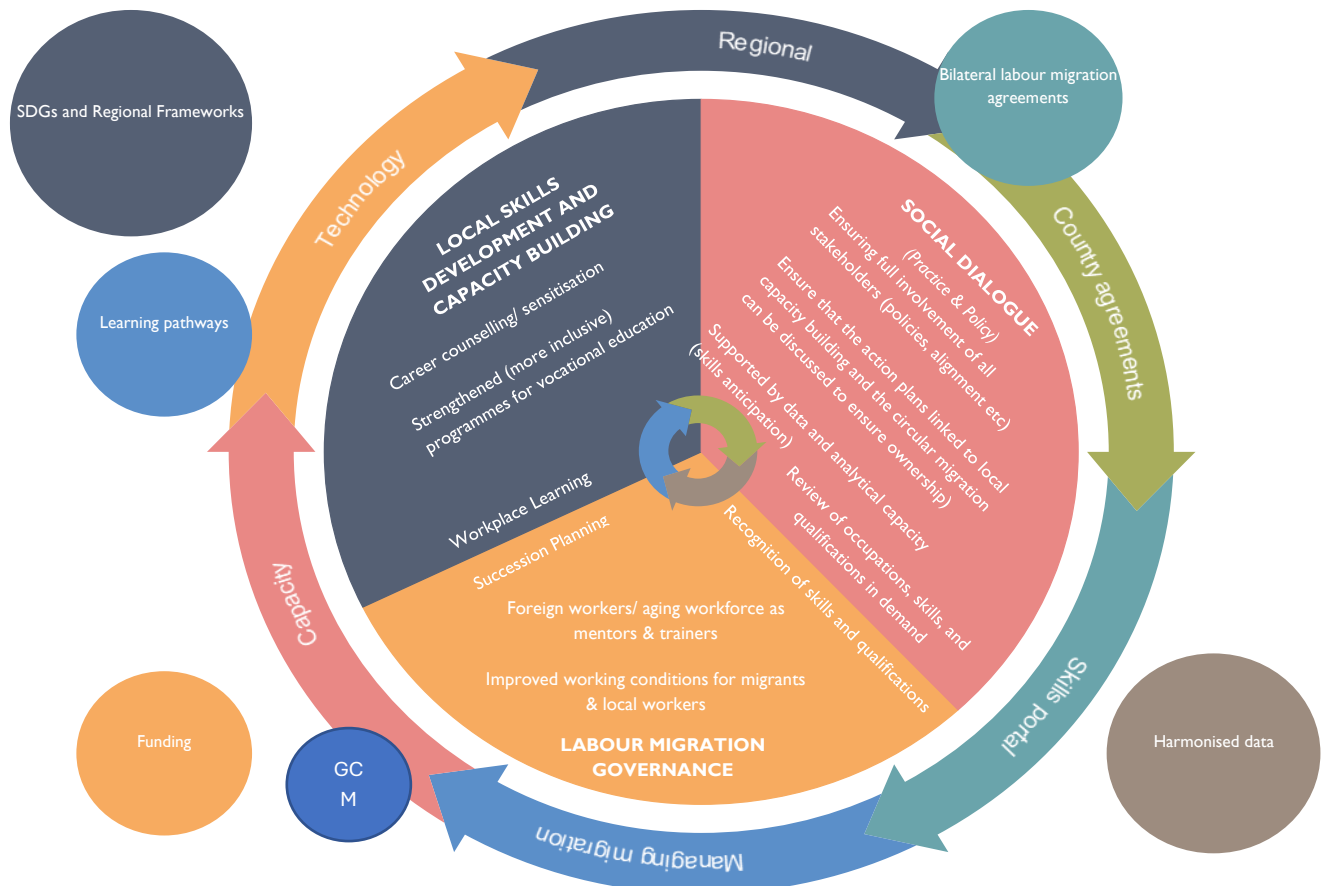
Another challenge in developing a harmonised migration policy for Madagascar is the lack of reliable disaggregated data on both immigration and emigration. An effective migration policy needs to take into account both migration within the country, and migration to and from Madagascar for any purpose, including transit and labour.

⁶⁰ United States Department of State. Trafficking in persons report. 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-006-1022-7>

Annexure 3: Mauritius Skills Mobility Framework

Implementing a gender-responsive Skills Mobility Framework

Taking into account the key assumptions – and associated interventions – the following diagram describes the core elements depicted in a Skills Mobility Framework that should support planning for dynamic current and medium to long-term skills needs' identification at all skill levels and be gender-sensitive:



The elements of this diagram are discussed in more detail in the following sections:

2. Implementing the Skills Mobility Framework in Mauritius

At a country level, three core areas of interventions have been identified with a number of cross-cutting thematic issues (e.g. gender-responsiveness, etc). The three core interventions include: local skills development and capacity building, improving labour migration governance (including discussions on circular migration programmes) and ensuring social dialogue on skills mobility.

Social Dialogue on Skills Mobility

The first area of intervention, and this is interwoven throughout the other areas of interventions that have been identified, is to work with the National Employment Advisory Committee (set up under the NEA 2017) to facilitate regular/periodic social dialogue on skill mobility so as to ensure an exchange of information between the National Employment Department (Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training) , with key employment and labour market actors (including other ministries, employers and workers organisations' representatives), as well as foreign affairs and home affairs' representatives and relevant civil society representatives. Meetings will have the objective to

discuss the actions to be taken and reach a shared understanding of how these can be implemented, the steps and milestones involved, and encourage joint decision-making, as well as defining roles and responsibilities.

Social Dialogue will also ensure that key stakeholders are able to forge a common understanding of how to enhance the efficient functioning of the labour market to achieve optimum employment, productivity and inclusive growth through skills mobility. Key interventions to give effect to this framework include:

- Ensure on-going alignment between labour market supply and demand taking into account a gender-sensitive approach and the imperatives of changing technology and other transitions related to the future of work (including with reference to the green and blue economy transitions) , by facilitating a process around skills anticipation to support planning for current and medium to long-term skills needs (including through reskilling and upskilling of the local labour force, skills transfer, efficient skills anticipation, and rapid recognition of labour shortages, as well as the prevention of deskilling and brain waste). This process should also factor in a review of occupations and qualifications in demand as well as optimization of training for job seekers, mentoring, career counselling, apprenticeship and internship programmes.
- Discuss how to improve skills recognition systems and mechanisms: including the recognition of qualifications attained elsewhere, and the recognition of skills and competencies acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning through RPL processes for local and foreign labour (including ensuring capacity in place for such assessment processes and for addressing skills gaps).
- Discuss the involvement of World of Work Actors and how to improve the formulation and implementation of Skills Shortage Listsⁱ, immigration quota systems and the utilization of such tools as labour market/vacancy testsⁱⁱ.
- Undertake a review of migrant workers actual wages and working conditions to focus on encouraging Mauritians to stay (or return) and ensure that migrant workers at all skill levels – including low-skilled – receive equal pay for work of equal value. This review is seen as an important step towards ensuring equality of treatment in terms of wages and working conditionsⁱⁱⁱ and decent work for all (national and migrant labour) especially in priority growth sectors in order to avoid a “social dumping^{iv}” effect or a “race-to-the-bottom” approach in national labour markets.
- Ensure that skills transfer schemes create a space for retiring individuals (including foreign retired artisans who would be willing to share their experience on a voluntary basis) to mentor younger people entering the labour market in order to ensure that experience is not lost to the labour market. It is imperative to taking the necessary measures to ensure that the large number of retired workers can have a positive impact in reducing the numbers of young people (between the ages of 16-25 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and who will be seeking to enter the labour market but who do not have the requisite skills (33%).
- Consider initiatives to formalise enterprises as well as workers in the informal economy to reach marginalised and vulnerable communities (including migrant workers) through contributing to increased regularization^{vi}.

Social Dialogue should be structured to allow specific economic sectors and industries to engage in relevant issues – as outlined below – through a skills mobility lens. Further, Social Dialogue could evolve as new issues emerge.

Enhancing local skills development and capacity building:

The second area of intervention is through enhancing local skills development capacity building to improve the alignment between Mauritius' labour market supply and demand of skills at all skill levels. Key activities within this intervention include:

- Review existing career counselling interventions with the aim of opening up alternate pathways for young people: this is key given that the research highlights that a key challenge in alignment is that there are insufficient enrolments in programmes where there is demand. The career counselling will be coupled with efforts to refocus and sensitise youth about the potential growth sectors and the possibilities for learning and career growth in these areas.
- Activities to strengthen programmes for vocational education – from those that absorb learners who have not completed schooling (those with basic education) to those who enter higher education programmes (such as those offered by in the Polytechnics). These efforts should focus on:
 - Review and strengthen the existing *National Apprenticeship Programme* to build the skills of young people who are NEET. These efforts should aim to ensure that society and the education system value vocational training as they value academic education such that vocational and technical education is not just viewed as an option that is only for those who have not succeeded at school. In addition, this work should include a focus on those in the informal economy and should seek to ensure that they are also able to access opportunities in sectors where there is demand.
 - Support the recognition of skills and qualifications of women and men migrant workers already present in the labour market. Improving recognition mechanisms will allow for specific labour market gaps to be addressed.
 - Strengthening of industry to government partnerships to enhance the quality of TVET and ensure that Mauritians are able to transition into different occupations within the labour market. A central element in this regard is the provision of internships: industry should therefore be encouraged to offer and provide internships that provide quality workplace experience. To ensure that these internships are relevant to the needs of the interns there is a need to provide capacity building for industry so that they are able to mentor the interns.
 - Implement interventions to support employability (e.g., problem solving, communication and digital skills and the ability to work in teams) to be integrated into these programmes with a particular focus on inclusivity, e.g., by focusing -among others- on the needs of unemployed/under-employed women who could be trained to take up positions for example, in operator positions.

Linked to the above, there will be a focus on introducing measures to promote and encourage opportunities for vocational training and professional learning to enable new entrants to access workplace skills and be work ready and to enhance current employees' employability and career progression as well as to enable succession planning.

Improving Labour Migration Governance through circular migration programmes, bilateral labour migration agreements, skills recognition, the improvement of labour migration data and other means

As the last and third area of intervention, Mauritius' Skills mobility discussions need to take into consideration a labour migration governance approach including work on bilateral labour migration agreements, temporary migration programmes (in particular, circular migration), the recognition of prior learning and improving labour migration data as well as other means such as the consideration of student, professional and trainee/apprenticeships exchange programmes.

Firstly, work could focus on the implementation of country-to-country agreements, what may be termed bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMA). The motivation for this intervention is that Mauritius faces a brain drain with Mauritians electing to go and work in a range of countries globally (particularly French speaking ones like Canada) and there is a need to reverse the trend to move towards a “brain gain” through:

Globally: create agreements that focus on BLMA commitments from countries that source talent from Mauritius (including Rodrigues Island) to support skills transfer, which links into a number of key interventions proposed in the circular migration component (discussed below).

Regionally: implement BLMA’s with targeted countries in SADC where mutually beneficial arrangements can be entered into such as the development of a regional (SADC) skills portal (which tracks skills available against labour market demand and the movement of skills), interventions to enable the recognition of the skills of individuals within the region to allow for this mobility – including enabling the recognition of qualifications of individuals who are seeking to enter Mauritius and facilitating Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to individuals that have acquired necessary qualifications and diplomas. Consideration should also be given to capacity building of stakeholders within the region to ensure the implementation of this skills mobility framework and its objectives.

Secondly, temporary^{vii} or seasonal^{viii} migration programmes (in particular recurrent ones called circular migration programmes) can contribute to ensure the effective functioning of the Mauritian labour market through on the one hand the fair and ethical recruitment of migrant labour to fill immediate skills gaps and on the other hand to ensure that migrant workers contribute to skills transfer programmes and support succession planning. The circular migration approach needs to ensure that when migrant workers return to their own countries there are Mauritians who are able to productively fulfil those jobs. Circular migration can also focus on ensuring that Mauritians who migrate to other countries return with new skills and experience to the benefit of the Mauritian labour market. In order to ensure that circular migration is not a one-way brain drain consideration should be given to conducting capacity building amongst Mauritian training institutions many of which may not have sufficient expertise in new technologies and in areas of high specialisation.

Thirdly, circular migration should take the changing demographic nature of the labour market into account^{ix} since with an aging population there will soon be large numbers of experienced individuals retiring. It is possible that this, coupled with a failure to adopt interventions to grow and develop local Mauritians as well as addressing those young people NEET, could put further pressure on the labour market in terms of available skills.

Priority interventions identified to achieve a positive outcome can include:

- Individuals from outside of Mauritius that come in with the specialised skills (not in existence in Mauritius) will be required to mentor and train Mauritians: structured workplace learning could ensure proper succession planning in companies in ways that creates a balance between recruiting migrant workers and exploring opportunities to reskill and upskill existing employees.

Fourthly, the presence of women and men migrant workers in the labour market could be coupled with improved skills recognition and validation mechanisms/processes to ensure that foreign workers have both their skills and qualifications recognised. Improving recognition of prior learning mechanisms and systems ensure an optimum utilisation of the existing labour force.

Fifthly, Mauritius Skills Mobility Framework could consider the optimum utilisation of student, professional and trainee/apprenticeships exchange programmes.

Lastly, overall interventions need to be supported by a strong labour market information system including up to date skills and labour migration sex-disaggregated data. It is noted that the success of Social Dialogue on Skills Mobility rests on access to reliable labour market data. This requires reliable and evidence-based data and a mechanism to harmonise administrative and other type of data that is produced by vocational training and education institutions, as well as various labour market institutions^x.

3. Timelines for implementation of the Mauritius Skills Mobility framework

There is an in-principle agreement from the participants at the workshop on this proposed Skills Mobility framework. This framework will be circulated amongst key Mauritian stakeholders, which will allow the Mauritius' Skills Mobility Framework to be finalised in May 2023 so that the agreed actions/activities in this Framework can be included in the budgetary process currently underway. This process will allow stakeholders to implement Social Dialogues (online or face to face) where action plans can be developed (including activities divided per economic sector and industries). If possible, at least 3 Social Dialogue (online or face to face) Meetings that support the implementation of the Skills Mobility Framework could take place in 2023. *These action plans should be consolidated and finalised by December 2023 to ensure targeted implementation from the beginning of 2024.*

Annexure 4: Seychelles Skills Mobility Framework

Seychelles Skills Mobility Framework

7th June 2024

Mahe, Republic of Seychelles

Introduction

Representatives from across Government, organized labour and business emerged from a workshop in Mahe, Seychelles on 9 May broadly endorsing the draft Seychelles Skills Mobility Framework coupled with an agreement to move ahead and begin to implement some of its core components.

The workshop organized by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) through the European Union - funded Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project, sought to bring the social partners together to validate the findings outlined in the draft Framework. The notion of drafting a framework to address skills and mobility emerged out of a request from the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (MESA).

This led to a process of engagement and interviews with a range of stakeholders in the broader skills ecosystem (government, labour, business, community-linked organisations, education and training providers and several related institutions such as the Seychelles Qualifications Authority) during 2023. Subsequent to this, the issue of the Framework and the skills mobility action plan were the subject of discussion in various workshops in the build-up to the May workshop.

At the workshop, the tripartite stakeholders, mainly from the Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC), discussed the findings of the research process which informed the drafting of the framework and agreed that the research effectively captured the existing challenges facing the Seychelles economy, subject to strengthening some areas of the research and associated problem statement. The revised Framework (outlined in section 3 and 4) encapsulates the final input and feedback from key stakeholders so that it can be adopted, and implementation can continue.

1. Towards a skills mobility framework

The research process which informed the drafting of the Framework pointed to the existing and anticipated skills shortages and provided some indication of interventions in place to mediate supply and demand. The picture which emerged is that the country will need to continue recruiting migrant workers in the short to medium term, whilst building local human resource capacity (including deepening expertise and knowledge in sectors such as the blue and green economy). In view of this, it is therefore recognized that these processes are better managed through a Skills Mobility Framework.

The aim of this Framework is to **create a balance between addressing the need for building an appropriate local skills pipeline (and both protecting local workers and preventing a brain drain), whilst recruiting migrant workers where relevant**, in a manner that ensures this is undertaken in ways that **supports fair recruitment and workplace conditions; and that supports sectors to efficiently access individuals with the requisite skills**. This Framework seeks to ensure that the positive developmental effects of improved mobility of skills benefits migrants and local workers, employers and the overall development of the economy.

The Framework was drafted factoring in the country's National Labour Migration Policy, Labour Migration Action Plan⁶¹ (and related Skills Mobility Action Plan); Vision 2033, the National Development Strategy 2024-28 and the country's Decent Work Country Programme. It should be noted that parallel to the drafting of the Seychelles Skills Mobility Framework, the country's Human Resource Development Strategy is currently being updated.

The Framework recognizes the intersection between the priorities relating to migration and those outlined in the HRD strategy, which is being refined to align to Vision 2033. In line with this Framework, these revisions will take stakeholder views into account and create a basis for many of the actions outlined within the Skills Mobility Framework. This includes: the identification of skills shortages and the implementation of different interventions to address these shortages, such as apprenticeships, other forms of access to workplace experience, building foundational and digital skills and providing more focused career guidance to promote priority sectors amongst youth. The HRD strategy also indicates the mechanisms that will be used for the on-going identification of demand coupled with measures to address this demand: this includes tripartite sector-specific skills councils that have strong private sector representation as agreed upon in the NLMP Action Plan. These sector-specific skills councils can play a role in supporting the systems to identify skills shortages and the strengthening of labour market information requirements.

2. Cross cutting principles underpinning the Framework

Three cross-cutting principles underpin and guide the realisation of the intentions of this Gender-Sensitive Skills Mobility Framework:

- *Facilitating social dialogue on skills mobility within Seychelles;*
- *Enhancing local skills development and capacity building;*
- *Strengthening labour migration governance*

Facilitating social dialogue on skills mobility

Social dialogue (within tripartite structures) is the cornerstone of this framework. Social Partners emphasized the need for more consistent conversations amongst stakeholders including government officials (policy makers), employer and trade union organisations as well as key institutions linked to the broader skills ecosystem. They emphasized the need to strengthen engagements in the Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC) and the Committee for the Employment of Non-Seychellois (CENS). Social Partners also indicated the need to include labour migration topics on the agenda of the National Consultative Committee on Employment (NCCE).

Promoting social dialogue recognises that to successfully implement this framework there is a need to find ways to encourage open conversation and build a collective approach to defining the

⁶¹ The key elements of the LMAP include Gender-responsive labour migration policies and/or strategies regulate labour migration at national level in a manner that contributes towards the effective implementation of SADC's Labour Migration Action Plan; International labour standards and national legislation on the protection of migrant workers; Bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs) across the region and with third countries; Fair recruitment and decent employment for migrant workers including regulatory legislation on Private Employment Agencies (PEAs), and strengthening of Public Employment Services *(PES) capacity; Social Security Portability of Benefits for migrant workers at the national level through the SADC Code on Social Security and the piloting of SADC Guidelines on the Portability of Social Security Benefits; Skills matching, skills profiling and recognition of qualifications of migrant workers at national and bilateral level, as well as support to SADC Qualification Framework and Labour migration statistics (indicators, module, inclusion in labour market information systems, etc.) and the support on the establishment of SADC Labour Market Observatory

problem and possible solutions. This will allow for the systematic analysis of the intersectionality between labour migration and employment/unemployment, skills development, the labour market and inclusive growth.

Enhancing local skills development and capacity building

The second cross-cutting principle focuses on the need to ensure that enhancing local skills development is integral to a migration policy. The Framework (outlined in the next section) proposes several elements to give effect to this principle with a focus on ways to understand the level of demand and shortages, developing, attracting and retaining skills in demand and support for the recognition of skills. The other dimension of this principle pertains to the need to ensure that all stakeholders have the capacity to engage in the different processes and engagements outlined in this Framework. Giving expression to this principle requires a mechanism to be in place within the country that ensures all stakeholders have the information they require about the topics under discussion and the space to internally reflect on these issues to be able to effectively engage.

Strengthen Labour Migration governance

The third principle underpinning the Framework relates to the need to ensure that there is effective governance of all labour migration policies, plans and interventions. This includes the imperative to give expression to the shared commitment to migrant workers' human and labour rights including the eradication of gender-based discrimination with the aim of moving towards gender equity. Other ways that this principle will be operationalized – and outlined in the Framework – relate to exploring bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs) and reviewing the existing Diaspora Programme.

3. Key elements of a Gender-responsive Skills Mobility Framework

The previous section outlines three cross-cutting principles which underpin, guide and support the implementation of this Framework. In giving effect to these principles, this section unpacks three core components and ten associated elements (actions) of the Framework:

Component 1. SKILLS ANTICIPATION: Addressing Labour and Skill Shortages at all Skill Levels

Element 1.1. Enhancing the identification of labour shortages or labour market needs (if possible, by economic-sector, industry and occupational-level) at all skill levels through the elaboration of lists of occupations in high demand (OHD), critical skills lists and other means.

Element 1.2 Improving skills profiling of the national workforce as well as of migrant workers through labour market information systems (LMIS), particularly through labour migration statistics (including data that is disaggregated by gender).

Element 1.3. Establishing systematic information flow between the private sector and educational institutions to address skills mismatch and better meet industry requirements and needs.

Component 2. UPSKILLING: Developing, Attracting and Retaining Skills in Demand

Element 2.1. Strengthening secondary and tertiary education systems particularly through vocational and professional training as well as technology (digital) programmes.

Element 2.2. Implementing student exchange programmes, international scholarships, and professional exchange, (e.g. trainee, mentoring, internship, apprenticeships programmes) between countries.

Element 2.3. Fostering skills transferability between migrant and national workers,

Element 2.4. Review where shortages of teachers and professors exist in relation to the secondary and tertiary education systems with a view to exploring arrangements to share resources across the region.

Element 2.5. Reviewing existing conditions of employment to ensure parity between wages paid to locals and migrants.

Component 3. PORTABILITY OF ACQUIRED SKILLS: Ensuring Skills Recognition to improve Employability

Element 3.1. Improving the portability of skills¹ (e.g. equivalence and comparability) by ensuring the recognition of foreign qualifications (diplomas, certificates) and non-formally acquired skills (e.g. job experience) through credential evaluation, mutual or bilateral skills recognition agreements, qualification frameworks, the harmonization of occupational labour standards and the recognition of prior learning systems.

Element 3.2. Promoting joint efforts to ensure that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes are coupled with reskilling and upskilling initiatives to improve the employability of national and migrant workers.

Component 1. SKILLS ANTICIPATION: Addressing labour and skill shortages at all skill levels

Element 1.1. Enhancing the identification of labour shortages or labour market needs (if possible, by economic-sector, industry and occupational-level) at all skill levels through the elaboration of lists of occupations in high demand or critical skills lists.

To give effect to this element, there is a need to *strengthen skills anticipation systems* that support planning for current and medium to long-term skills needs (with a focus on potential growth sectors considering anticipated investment aligned to the SDGs, as reflected in the SDG Investor Map).

These systems should take the Sector Skills Councils into account and explore how they can be established initially in priority sectors. As part of this, there should be a focus on developing an understanding of the workplace of the future. This includes a focus on changing technology (linked to digital advancements and requirements of the green and blue economies), where skills can be sourced and the ways in which interventions can be implemented such that they give expression to the above-mentioned principles.

Element 1.2 Improving skills profiling of the national workforce as well as of migrant workers through labour market information systems, particularly through labour migration statistics.

To develop *a reliable labour market information system* that can be used in the skills anticipation systems (outlined above) to determine immediate, medium and long-term skills needs. These skills needs should be captured through the drafting of a critical skills list, and shared in ways that help shape skills programme interventions. In taking forward the drafting of a critical skills list, stakeholders need to agree on how often they should be reviewed.

This could be supported by a national Labour Market Observatory to function such that there is up to date skills and labour migration data (collected from across government departments and the private sector) which is disaggregated in a way that takes gender into account. This evidence-based data is central to the success of social dialogue processes on skills mobility and improved labour migration governance. As such, stakeholders should agree on a plan to support capacity for analysis and effective utilization of the data.

Element 1.3. Establishing a systematic information flow between the private sector and educational institutions to address skills mismatch and better meet industry requirements and needs.

Conduct engagements with officials from key government departments (education and training, economic growth and job creation), industry and union representatives to collectively engage education and training institutions to ensure higher levels of coordination and alignment between education and vocational training centers' curriculums and the local job market. Such engagements should have a sector focus to meet immediate demand in key sectors (based on sectors identified in the HRD Plan),

As a basis for these conversations, the skills in demand that are identified (as above) should be mapped into the key emerging occupations which can then be used to inform the review of relevant qualifications and curricula.

The other action to be taken is a review of existing career counselling interventions with the aim of opening up alternate pathways for young people. This is key given that the research highlights that youth are not sensitized to the changing needs of the labour market and stakeholders suggested that there is a need to refocus and sensitise youth about the priority sectors such as construction and tourism.

Component 2. UPSKILLING: Developing, Attracting and Retaining Skills in Demand

Element 2.1. Strengthening secondary and tertiary education systems particularly through vocational and professional training as well as technology programmes.

Stakeholders need to explore how to strengthen current vocational training that supports the development of the skills sets for the future (such as digital skills and skills as the green and blue economies) as well as those required by other priority sectors.

To affect this, Seychelles training institutions will need to actively engage in exploring partnership arrangements to access programmes as well as capacity building opportunities for their lecturers. This should be preceded by a review to assess existing capacity within the institutions with regard to lecturer capacity, the standard of programmes and the extent of their alignment with labour market demands.

In terms of the building of partnerships, consideration should be given to drawing on initiatives that are unfolding at a regional level within the context of the Indian Ocean Commission's proposed regional vocational training programme. These initiatives will make it possible for institutions in Seychelles to focus on the development of their capacity in areas of specialisation, while providing students in the Seychelles wider access through partnerships with institutions that are located elsewhere in the region (for example awarding bodies).

Beyond this it was also suggested that in cases where it is not cost effective for local training providers such as Unisey to develop diploma or degree programmes, strategic partnerships with foreign training institutions are required to ensure that the necessary skills can be developed, e.g. medical doctors.

Finally, some consideration should be given to exploring what kind of support and assistance government can provide to NGOs to address the social issues that young people face to enable them to access opportunities in the labour market.

Element 2.2. Promoting and implementing student exchange programmes, international scholarships, and professional exchange, (e.g. trainee, mentoring, internship, apprenticeships programmes) between countries.

Actions to give effect to this element should focus on ensuring that young people are exposed to the workplace through quality workplace experience and other learning opportunities (both inside the country and across countries in the region and beyond). This should ensure that young people are work ready (have the needed transversal skills), gain exposure to occupations/professions in demand as well as contribute towards changing mindsets.

Where young people access this experience outside the country, this should be done with the understanding that the young people will bring these skills back to the Seychelles. Such agreements could take the form of BLMAAs that could optimize student, professional and trainee/apprenticeships/internships exchange programmes. This action should be guided by the

deliberations on BLMAs as reflected in the labour migration roadmap and should go beyond discussions with the East to also include a focus on SADC countries. In addition, as per the principles guiding this framework, such engagements should involve the tripartite partners.

Seychelles should also continue to work actively with development partners such as the IOM and ILO, that are committed to developing fair labour migration practices, while building skills and facilitating skills exchange in priority sectors aligned to the SDGs.

Element 2.3. Fostering skills transferability between migrant and national workers as well as facilitating migrant entrepreneurs.

Ensure that migrant workers contribute to skills transfer programmes and support succession planning. Key to this is finding resolution around the implementation of the Localisation plan. Building capacity across various stakeholders is key to effecting skills transfer. These include providing capacity building to Seychellois training institutions - many of which may lack sufficient expertise in new technologies and in areas of high specialization; support, both technical and financial, should be provided to SMMEs to conduct training and skills transfer, as they are unlikely to do it due to financial and capacity constraints and broadly, within companies, includes targeted interventions for HR officers and managers such that they can facilitate skills transfer while also building employer engagement and enabling change management. As part of this, the respective responsibilities of the trainee, mentor, employer and employment services in relation to localization placements should be formalized in written contracts.

Element 2.4. Review where shortages of teachers and professors exist in relation to the secondary and tertiary education systems with a view to exploring arrangements to share resources across the region.

A review of existing capacity should be conducted across educational institutions to determine supply and demand. Depending on the outcome, the Seychelles should then explore BLMA's to support mutually beneficial arrangements to encourage both the development of local resources through skills transfer arrangements and/or encourage the recruitment of foreign teachers and professors. This will require work on the formulation and effective implementation of BLMA's with targeted countries of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and within SADC.

Element 2.5. Review existing conditions of employment to ensure parity between wages paid to locals and migrants.

Social partners engage proactively to promote parity between the wages and employment conditions between Seychellois and migrant workers. Key to this activity is conducting a study of wage differentials between locals and migrant workers; build agreement on ways to communicate around the issue of skills and wages for Seychellois and migrant workers to build transparency and ensuring on-going monitoring of companies (with the aim of imposing sanction) to ensure they do not perpetuate restrictive and unfair labour practices.

A related activity (and also highlighted in the Labour Migration Action Plan is putting in place measures to ensure the fair and effective recruitment of migrant labour. To action this, the Seychelles can draw on the code of conduct for a Fair and Ethical Recruitment of Migrant Workers being finalised at the sub-regional level. At the same time, Government should continue and strengthen – through the WINS programme - to educate migrant workers about their rights whilst there should be broader engagement with workers and employers' organizations and civil society organizations to formalize

their role in assisting in the detection of rights violations and in disseminating information to migrant workers on their rights, including freedom of association.

Component 3. Ensuring Skills Recognition and Employability

Element 3.1. Improving the portability of skills⁶² (e.g. equivalence and comparability) by ensuring the recognition of foreign qualifications (diplomas, certificates) and non-formally acquired skills (e.g. job experience) through credential evaluation, mutual or bilateral skills recognition agreements, qualification frameworks, the harmonization of occupational labour standards and the recognition of prior learning systems (RPL).

Proactively promote RPL for both local (and migrant) workers to ensure the optimum utilization of existing labour. As the Seychelles Qualifications Authority reviews the existing recognition guidelines and policies, it should factor in investigating the viability of putting in place flexible mechanisms for the recognition of experience against agreed upon 'standards' rather than only qualifications (noting that the definition of standards differ from industry to industry and could include competencies, micro-credentials etc). And as part of this review process ensure social partners can input into the process.

Element 3.2. Promoting joint efforts to ensure that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes are coupled with reskilling and upskilling initiatives to improve the employability of national and migrant workers.

Upskill and reskill workers by encouraging industry to offer and provide quality workplace experience such as internships. A related activity is utilizing BLMA's with other countries either within the IOC and/or SADC to ensure young Seychellois can access internships and workplace learning opportunities to improve their access into the labour market.

Finally, stakeholders need to ensure that discussions on wages linked to recognition and pathways are referred to a relevant forum for discussion (as well as monitor any implications for skills and mobility).

4. Next Steps

This revised Skills Mobility Framework reflects not only on the key policy documents relating to migration, skills and human resource development and economic growth but factors in the discussions during various consultation and engagement processes. During the validation workshop in May 2024, stakeholders agreed on several key immediate actions (highlighted in the attached report) which should be implemented in the short term and would be discussed at the next Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC) – which had been set up to drive implementation of the Labour Migration Action Plan. It is proposed that during that meeting, stakeholders should decide whether this committee would – going forward – be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Framework. Ultimately, implementing such a framework in a coordinated and integrated way (together with other key policies) could ensure that the key sectors in the economy have the skills necessary for industrial transformation and growth leading to overall development in the country.

⁶² The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation concerning human resources development: education, training and lifelong learning, 2004 (No. 195) defines portability of skills along the following two dimensions: (a) employable skills which can be used productively in different jobs, occupations, industries; and (b) certification and recognition of skills within national and international labour markets.

ⁱ A “**Skill Shortage Lists**” or “**Critical Skills/Occupations Lists**” consist of a list of skills or occupations for which demand cannot be met locally in countries of destination. Aspiring migrant workers with skills/occupations on these lists are often given preferential treatment during visa or work permit applications to help fill this demand. Labour market information systems, including regular needs assessments, coupled with labour migration statistics and trends, provide the most up-to-date and accurate information on the occupations and skills to be included in such lists. It is important to not only include highly skilled occupations, but to also allow for semi-skilled and low-skilled occupations (e.g. jobs in the agricultural sector, construction, domestic sector, etc.). If these are not included in shortage lists, demand for these jobs could attract migrants in an irregular situation to the informal economy.”

ⁱⁱ An **immigration quota** is established by countries of destination for the purposes of limiting the entry of immigrants. It represents a quantitative restriction on the number of migrants to be admitted by the State. Immigration quotas can determine the number of migrant workers to be accepted per economic sector, industry and occupational level per an established period of time.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Working conditions** includes working time, leave entitlements, social security and occupational safety and health protection.

^{iv} A **labour market or vacancy test** takes place to establish that no national worker can be found to fill a job or position available. It involves the procedure of acquiring information about the actual labour market demand and supply situation. Such procedure should confirm the lack of eligible nationals who could be employed in that given job or position. It implies that a foreign worker may be granted a work permit for a specific employer under the condition that among the national unemployed or job seekers there are none who would meet the job requirements or show interest in taking the job. The procedure usually involves the following:

- a) An employer submits a notification of a vacancy to the National Employment Agency or Service (e.g. Public Employment Service, the Private Employment Agency or the Labour Office);
- b) The employer and/or the National Employment Agencies or Services publicly place and announce the vacancy (e.g. public employment networks, national and/or local newspapers) for at least 4 weeks;
- c) The vacancy notice must include the following information: a description of the employment; the name of the employer; the minimum monthly and/or annual remuneration; the location/s of employment; and the hours of work.
- d) The Employment Agencies or Services analyse and compare the vacancy with unemployed and job-seekers' records (qualifications, job experience, etc);
- e) If the analysis reveals an adequate number of persons meeting the requirements arising from the job description, the Employment Agencies or Services, offer the job and organize the recruitment among the unemployed and job-seekers;
- f) The Employment Agencies or Services compare the amount of remuneration proposed by the employer with the remuneration that can be obtained in the same, or similar occupation or for performance of similar type of work;
- g) If no unemployed or job seeker accepts the job offer within a determined fair period of time, the national authority issues a relevant decision.

Once the labour market or vacancy test is completed, the decision issued is passed to the employer who attaches it to an application for a foreign worker work permit.

^v The “**Race to the bottom**” approach refers to a competition among employers, companies, the state or nation attempt to undercut the competition's prices by reducing labour costs, sacrificing quality standards or worker safety (often defying regulation).

^{vi} **Migration Regularisation or Amnesty Programmes** are administrative schemes to allow migrants in an irregular or undocumented situation to apply for legal residence and work permits. They take place for economic and humanitarian reasons and they have the long-term goal of curbing irregular immigration. Arguments against state that such programs reward lawbreakers and encourage further unauthorized immigration; arguments for point to their importance in increasing tax revenues, integrating migrants and reducing their vulnerability to exploitation, formalizing the informal economy, and “wiping the slate clean” for future immigration enforcement. There are usually two categories of regularization programs: de facto or “one-shot”. De facto regularization programs automatically grant permanent residency to migrants after they have lived in a country for a certain number of years and are implemented on a rolling basis. The “one-shot” regularizations target a limited number of migrants who have specific residency and work requirements; such programs also have deadlines for applications.

^{vii} **Temporary international migrants** are defined as international migrants entering the country of labour attachment or country of destination with the intention of stay for a limited period of time which may be less or more than 12 months.

^{viii} **Seasonal migrant workers** are defined as not usual residents of the country of employment, whose work by its character is dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed during part of the year.

^{ix} The current estimates are that around 260 000 out of a population of 1,26m are on old age pension whilst the demographic trend up until 2040-2057 anticipates a decreasing population size (from its current levels of around 1,26/3m



to 990 000) with an increasing proportion of people over 60. This will have a significant impact on the available labour force.

^x **Such institutions include:** Labour Inspection Service; Labour Market Observatory; Social Security Institute; Public Employment Service; Vocational Training Institute; Occupational Safety and Health Service; Working Conditions Service. Anti-discrimination and Labour Market Integration Agencies; and Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining Bodies.