

Consolidated overview of survey results

Skills Recognition and Verification Challenges Faced by Migrant Workers in Botswana, Seychelles, and South Africa

DECEMBER 2022



International
Labour
Organization



Funded by the
European Union



Consolidated overview of survey results

Skills Recognition and Verification Challenges Faced by Migrant Workers in Botswana, Seychelles, and South Africa

DECEMBER 2022



CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1. Methodology	2
2. Skills recognition of respondents	5
3. Skills, qualifications, and employment	11
Use of skills in current roles	13
Challenges in the workplace	14
Continuation of studies	14
4. Conclusions	17

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: Respondents country of birth	2
FIGURE 2: Respondents' main skills	3
FIGURE 3: Attempted to get skills recognised	5
FIGURE 4: Where did respondents attempt to get recognition of their skills or qualifications	6
FIGURE 5: Success rate for recognition of skills or qualifications	7
FIGURE 6: Length of time taken for recognition of skills or qualifications	8
FIGURE 7: Reasons for lack of success in gaining recognition of skills or qualifications	9
FIGURE 8: Reasons for not trying to get skills or qualifications recognised	10
FIGURE 9: Sectors in which respondents were employed	12
FIGURE 10: Ways in which respondents accessed employment	13
FIGURE 11: Recognition of skills in current employment	13
FIGURE 12: Respondents desire to continue their studies	15
FIGURE 13: Skills or qualifications recognised by institutions	15
FIGURE 14: Respondents experiences of other barriers to further training or studies	16

Introduction

The Southern African Migration Management (SAMM) project is a four-year project (2020-2023) that is supported by the European Union and is designed to improve migration management in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region. The SAMM Project is a UN Multi-Agency programme composed of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

SAMM's overall objective is to improve migration management in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region guided by, and contributing to, the realisation of the 2030 Development Agenda (goals 8 and 10).



SAMM's objective is to **improve migration management** in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, as guided by the 2030 Development Agenda.

SAMM covers a range of areas, but the activities covered in this report are specifically linked to SAMM's Workplan as follows:

- Result/output 1.1.2. RECs and Member States have enhanced the portability of skills of migrant workers, including through alignment of qualifications with existing Regional Qualifications Frameworks and/or the implementation of other recognition mechanisms.
- Activity 1.4.1.1. Conduct an assessment of the skills recognition and verification challenges faced by Migrant Workers in the three RECs and existing initiative

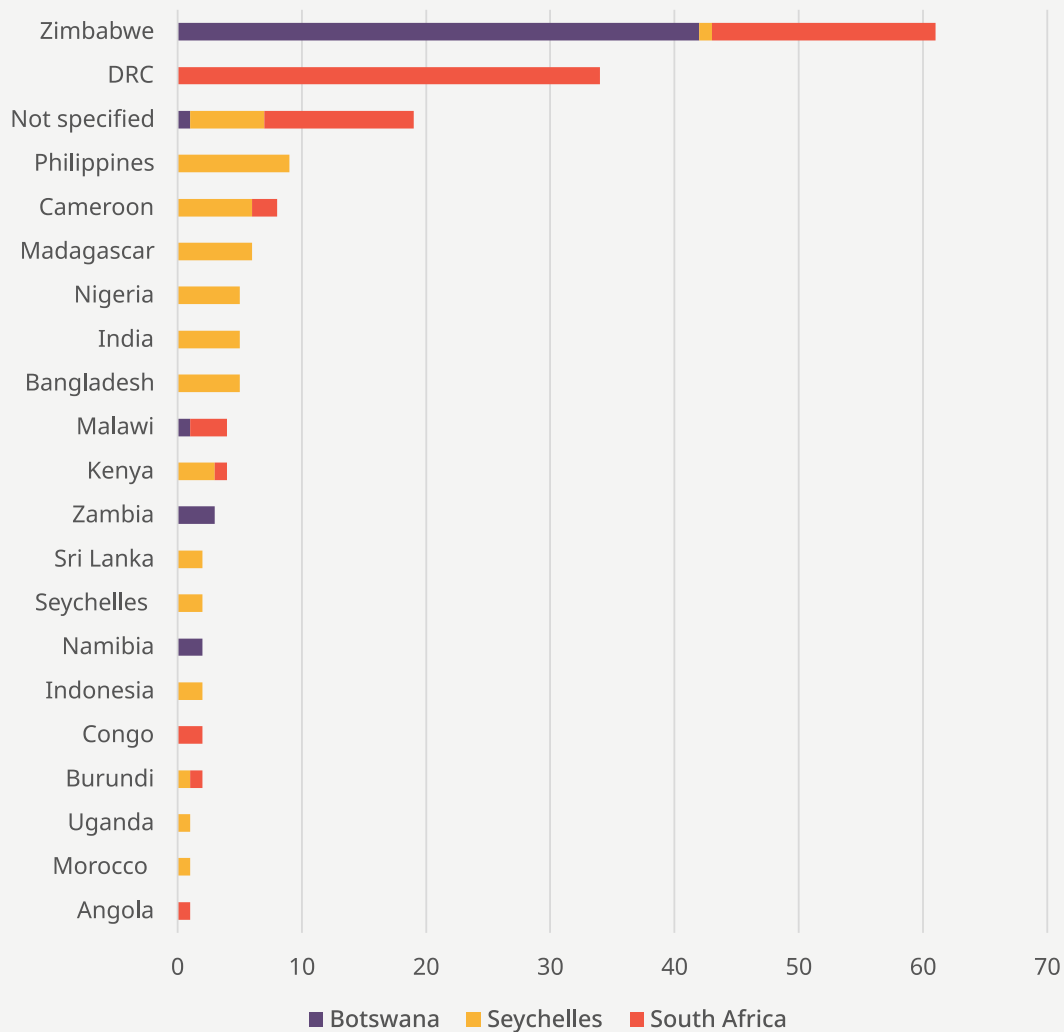
This work included an assessment of the skills recognition and verification challenges faced by migrant workers in the SADC, COMESA and IOC region through conducting a migrant workers' survey.

1. Methodology

A survey was distributed to migrants within the 3 countries. We used a range of channels to distribute the survey including working through organisations that support migrants and attending events where migrants were being convened.

A total of 178 respondents completed the survey across Botswana (49; 27.5%), Seychelles (55; 30.9%), and South Africa (74; 41.6%). Overall, 46.6% of respondents were female, and the majority of respondents across the sample were born in Zimbabwe (34.3%) or the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (19.1%). The more detailed breakdown of the countries in which respondents were born are captured in Figure 1.

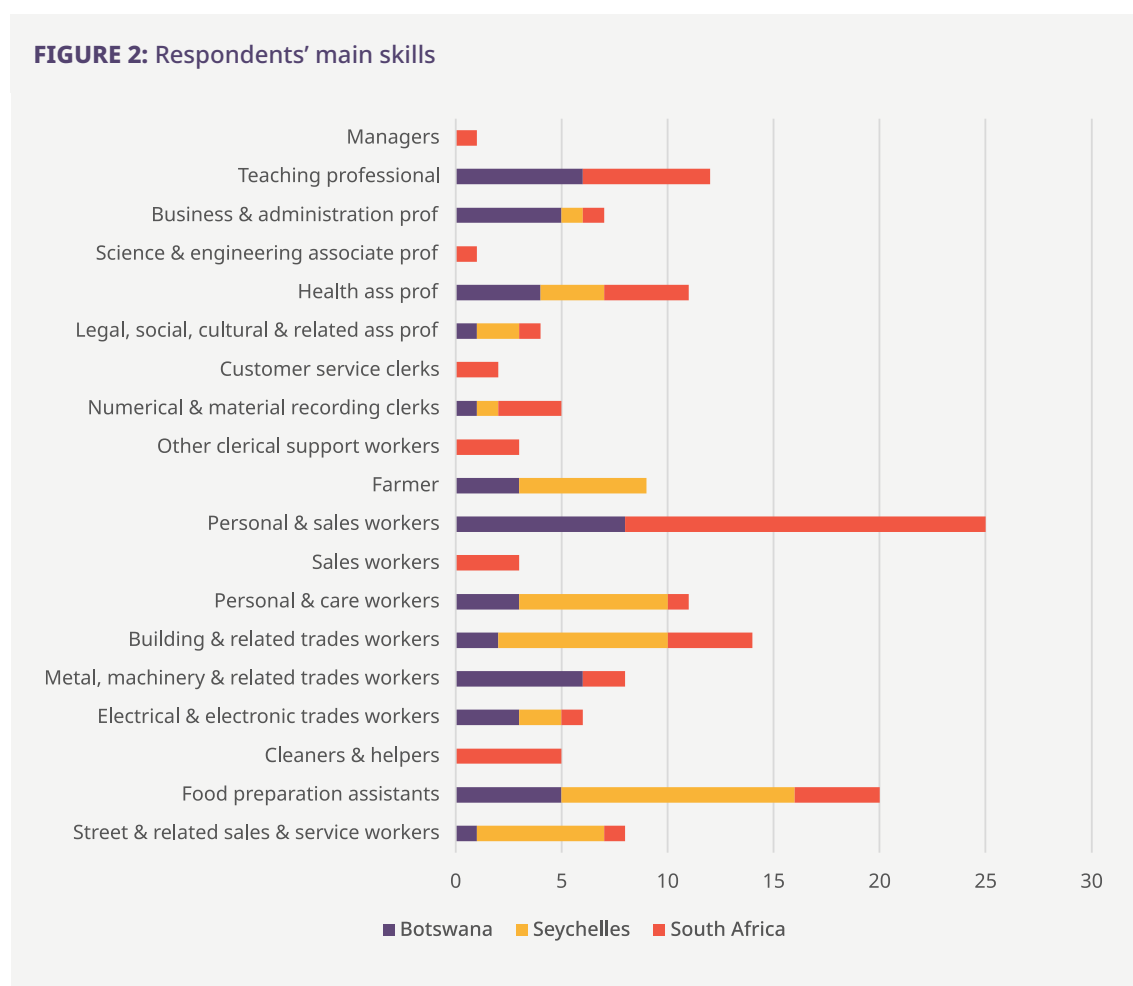
FIGURE 1: Respondents country of birth



The Seychelles hosted the greatest diversity of migrants, with respondents from 16 countries, compared to 10 countries of origin reported by respondents in South Africa, and 6 among respondents in Botswana. In Botswana, the majority of respondents were from Zimbabwe (85.7%), while in South Africa respondents from the DRC and Zimbabwe made up the majority of the sample (45.9% and 24.3% respectively). In the Seychelles, respondents from the Philippines comprised 16.4% of the sample, followed by Cameroon (10.9%), Madagascar (10.9%), Nigeria (9.1%), India (9.1%) and Bangladesh (9.1%).

Respondents were then asked to describe what they regarded as their main skills. While this was an open-ended question, responses were classified to match the skillsets described in the Standard Classification of Occupations¹. This analysis is provided in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: Respondents' main skills



¹ This classification system is used in South Africa but is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), which is **one of the main international classifications**.

As illustrated in the above, the most frequently reported skills across the sample were in the fields of personal and sales work (15.2%), food preparation (12.2%), and building and related trades (8.5%).

However, there was significant variation between the countries in which the survey was undertaken.

In South Africa, personal and sales workers comprised 28.3% of the sample, followed by teaching professionals (10%) and cleaners and helpers (8.3%).

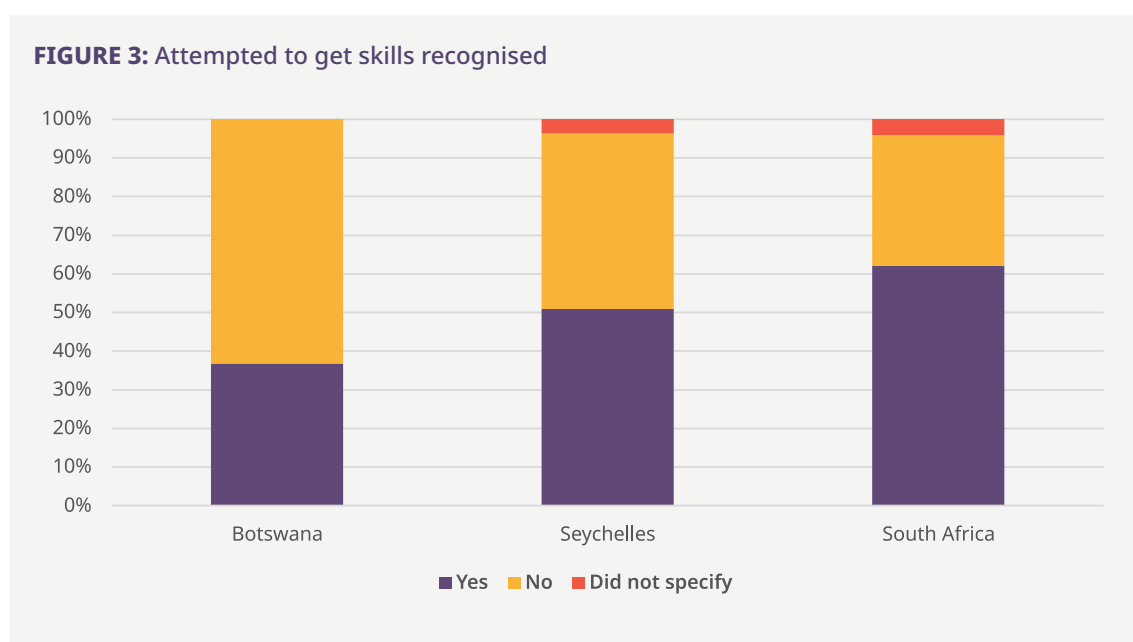
Personal and sales workers were also most frequently represented in the sample in Botswana (16.3%), with teaching professionals (12.2%), metal, machinery, and related trades (12.2%), business and administration professionals (10.2%), and food preparation assistants (10.2%) relatively equally represented.

In contrast, food preparation assistants were the highest percentage of respondents in the Seychelles (20%), followed by building and related trades workers (14.5%), personal and care workers (12.7%), farmers (10.9%), and street and related sales and service workers (10.9%). A relatively high proportion (14.5%) of the Seychelles sample did not answer this question.

2. Skills recognition of respondents

We then explored whether respondents had sought recognition for their existing qualifications and/or skills. We found that just over half (51.7%) of respondents across all three countries had attempted to get their skills officially recognised.

In terms of variation between countries, a higher percentage of respondents in South Africa (62.2%) had attempted to get their skills recognised than in the Seychelles (50.9%), or Botswana (36.7%). This is illustrated in Figure 3 below:



Of interest in terms of recognition processes, most respondents who had tried to get their skills or qualifications recognised had done so through their employers (40%), only 14 (14.7%) reported going through a qualification's authority and 18 (18.9%) did not specify how they had tried to gain recognition (Figure 4).

There was also a significant variation between countries in this regard.

In the Seychelles, 67.9% of respondents who tried to get recognition of their skills did so through their employers, in contrast to 50% of respondents in Botswana, and only 20.4% in South Africa.

Similar proportions of respondents in Botswana (22.2%) and South Africa (20.4%) reported trying to go through qualifications authorities, while 14.3% of respondents in the Seychelles attempted to use a professional body for recognition, in contrast to 5.6% of respondents in Botswana and 2% in South Africa.

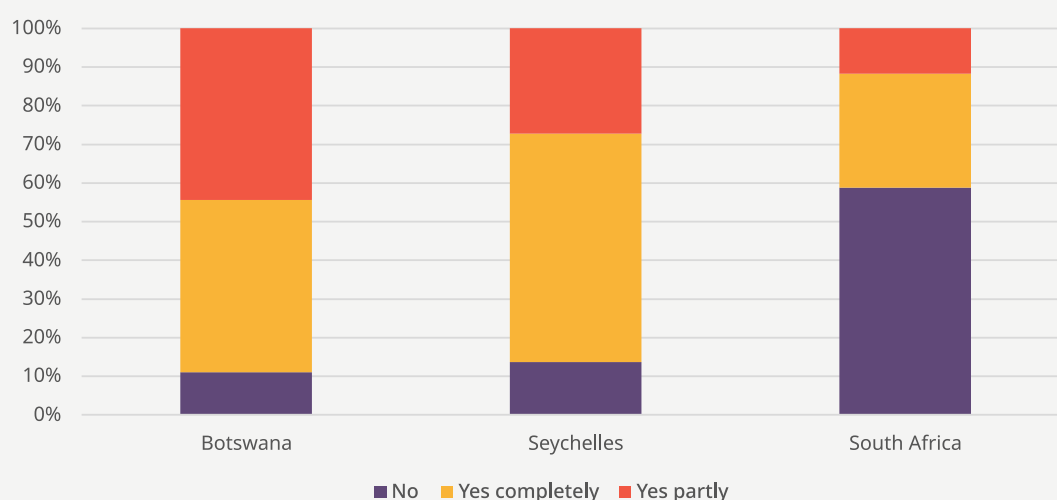
FIGURE 4: Where did respondents attempt to get recognition of their skills or qualifications

In terms of how successful respondents were in their attempts to gain recognition of their skills and qualifications, 41.9% (of those that attempted to get recognition and answered the question as to whether they were successful) reported that their skills had been formally recognised, while 24.3% reported partial recognition of their skills. When considering this data in terms of the sample as a whole we found that only 27.5% of the sample (49 respondents) reported that they had received recognition of their skills or qualifications, with 17.4% (31 respondents) reported complete recognition, and 10.1% (18 respondents) reported partial recognition.

Complete recognition of qualifications and skills was highest among respondents in the Seychelles (59.1% of those that attempted to get recognition and answered the question as to whether they were successful), with 44.4% of respondents that attempted to get recognition, and answered the question as to whether they were successful, in Botswana and 29.4% of respondents that attempted to get recognition, and answered the question as to whether they were successful, in South Africa reporting complete recognition (Figure 5).

Partial recognition of skills and qualifications was highest in Botswana (44.4% of those that attempted to get recognition and answered the question as to whether they were successful), while 27.3% of respondents that attempted to get recognition, and answered the question as to whether they were successful, in the Seychelles and 11.8% of those that attempted to get recognition, and answered the question as to whether they were successful, in South Africa reported this outcome.

58.8% of respondents that attempted to get recognition, and answered the question as to whether they were successful, in South Africa reported no recognition of their skills and qualifications.

FIGURE 5: Success rate for recognition of skills or qualifications

Respondents were asked how long the process of gaining recognition for their skills or qualifications took (Figure 6). Overall, 26 respondents (52%) reported that it had taken less than 6 months for their skills or qualifications to get partly or completely recognised. 18% of respondents reported that this process took between 6 months and 1 year; 16% reported that the process took longer than 1 year; and 14% reported that it took longer than 2 years.

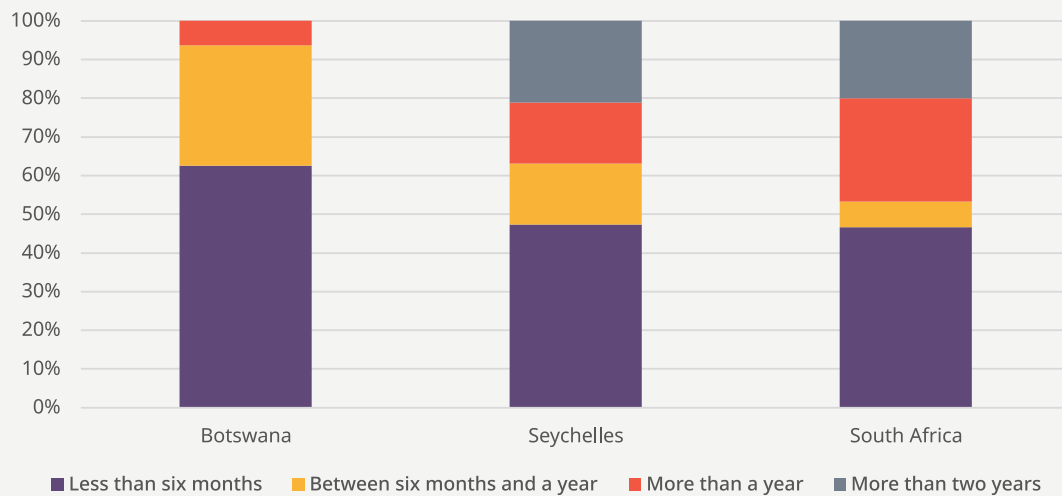
The length of time required to get recognition of skills and qualifications also varied substantially between the country samples.

In Botswana, 62.5% of respondents whose skills had been officially recognised reported that this process took less than 6 months, while 31.3% reported that the process took between 6 months and 1 year, and 1 respondent (6.3%) reported that the process took longer than a year. No respondents in Botswana reported a wait of longer than 2 years for the recognition of their skills.

Less than half of respondents in South Africa (46.7%) and the Seychelles (47.4%) reported that getting their skills or qualifications recognised took less than 6 months.

Of concern is that we found that 46.7% of respondents in South Africa reported that getting their skills recognised took longer than a year, with 26.7% taking between 1 and 2 years, and 20% taking more than two years.

A higher proportion of respondents in the Seychelles (15.8%) reported that it took between 6 months and a year to get their skills or qualifications recognised, but 36.9% reported that the process took longer than a year, with 15.8% reporting a period of between 1 and 2 years, and 21.1% reporting that it took longer than 2 years to get recognition of their skills.

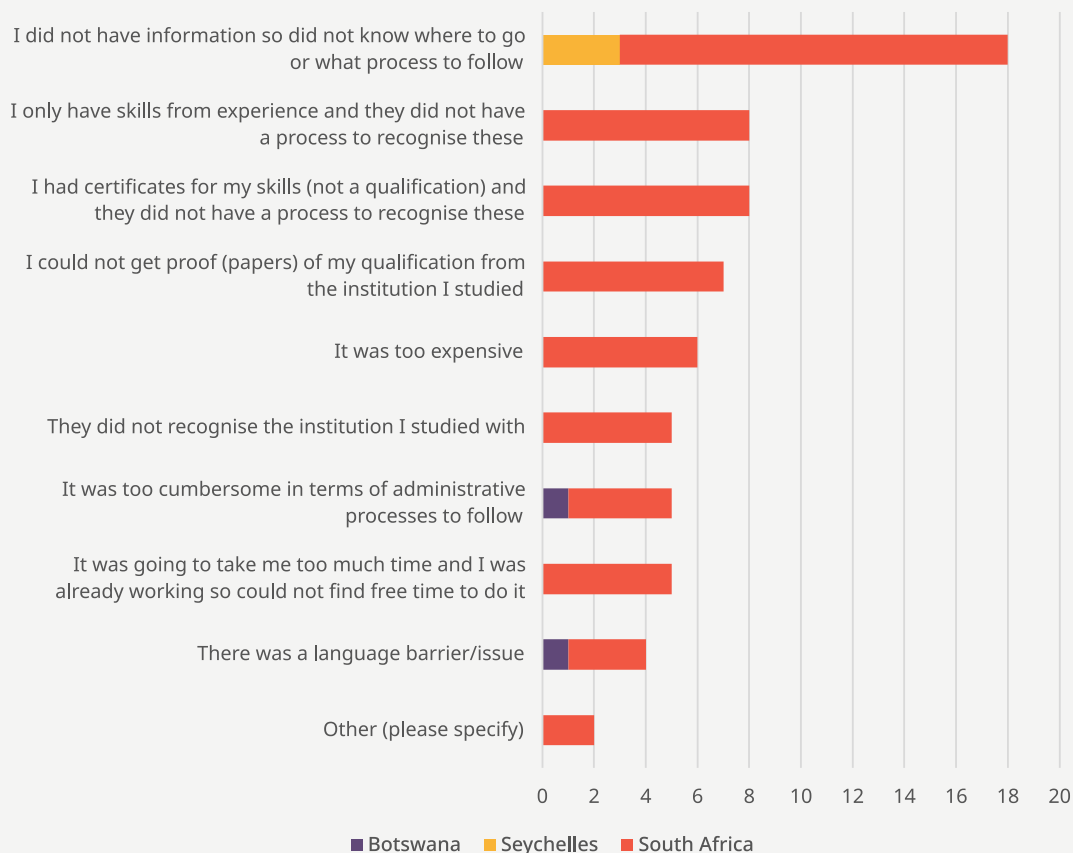
FIGURE 6: Length of time taken for recognition of skills or qualifications

Respondents who had tried but were unsuccessful in getting their skills or qualifications recognised were asked what they thought the reasons for this were (Figure 7). Very few respondents from Botswana or the Seychelles answered this question.

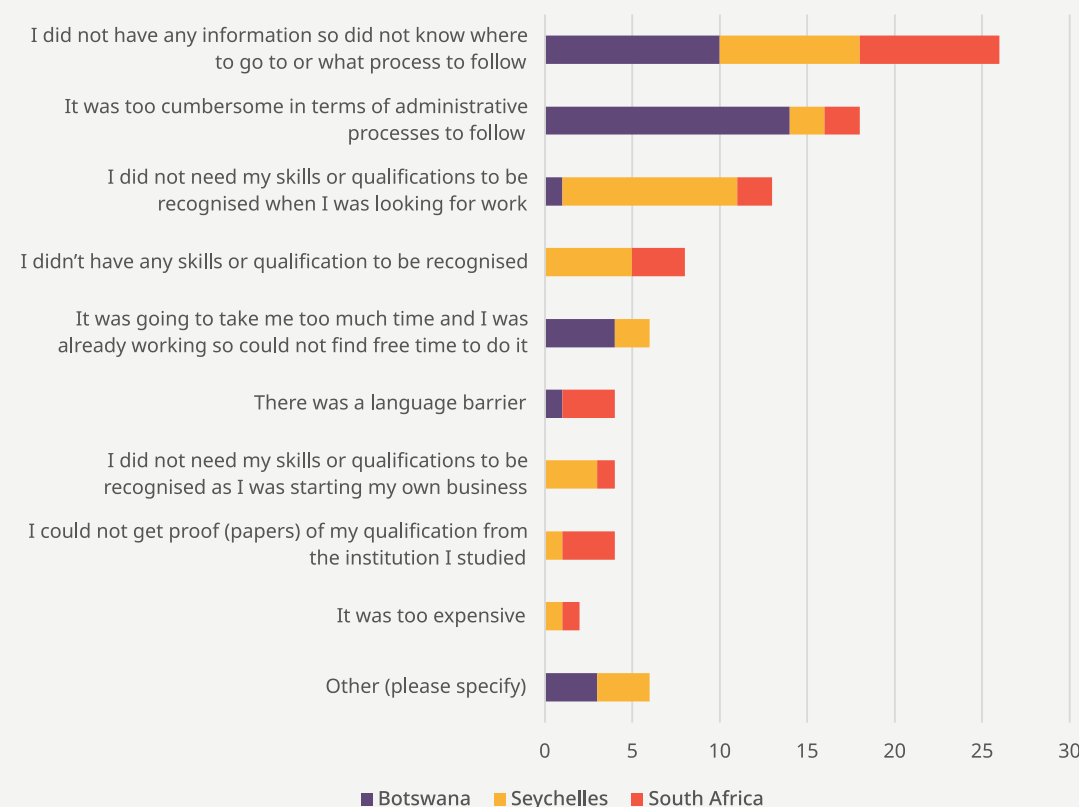
In Botswana two responses were received, identifying language barriers and cumbersome administrative processes as reasons for failing to get skills or qualifications recognised.

Three responses in the Seychelles were received, all of which identified a lack of information about how to go about getting skills recognised as a barrier to the process.

A lack of information about the skills recognition process was also the most frequently identified barrier in South Africa, with 26.5% (15 of 63) of responses including this problem. Apart from a lack of information, respondents identified the lack of a process to recognise skills gained through experience (11.8%), the lack of recognition of certificates (rather than qualifications) (11.8%), and the inability to get proof of qualifications from institutions awarding these qualifications (10.3%) as important barriers to the process of gaining recognition of their skills.

FIGURE 7: Reasons for lack of success in gaining recognition of skills or qualifications

Respondents who had not tried to get recognition of their skills or qualifications were asked why they had decided not to pursue this process. As shown in Figure 8, the most frequent reason (26; 28.6%) given by respondents across all three countries was a lack of information about how to go about getting their skills recognised. We found that 19.8% of respondents stated that the process of getting their skills or qualifications recognised was too cumbersome, while 14.3% of respondents included that they did not need to get their skills recognised when they were looking for work.

FIGURE 8: Reasons for not trying to get skills or qualifications recognised

Reasons given for not trying to get their skills recognised differed among respondents in different countries. In Botswana, the most frequent reason reported for not trying to gain recognition was the administrative burden of undertaking the process (42.4% of responses), followed by a lack of information about how to go about the process (30.3%), and a lack of free time to undertake the skills recognition process (12.1%). In contrast, in the Seychelles, the most frequent response was that individuals did not need their skills or qualifications recognised while they were looking for work (28.6%). A lack of information about the process of skills recognition was included in 22.9% of Seychelles responses, while 14.3% of responses indicated that respondents did not have skills or qualifications that need to be recognised. In South Africa, 34.8% of responses indicated a lack of information about how to get skills or qualifications recognised, while the inability to get proof of qualifications, language barriers, and not having skills that needed recognition each made up 13% of overall responses.

3. Skills, qualifications, and employment

The final section of the survey asked respondents about their current employment, the process of finding employment, and the role their skills and qualifications played in this process.

The wholesale and retail trade, and hotel and restaurant sector, was the most frequently reported area in which respondents were employed (16.2%). This was followed by personal services (12.2%), domestic work (11.5%), and education (8.8%).

As shown in Figure 9, the sectors in which respondents were employed varied between the three countries included in the survey.

In Botswana, the most frequently reported sector of employment was domestic work, with 12 respondents (25%) reporting employment in these roles. Other frequently reported sectors of employment in Botswana included: wholesale and retail trade, and hotels and restaurants (18.8%), education (14.6%), and construction (10.4%).

The most frequently reported sector of employment in the Seychelles was in personal services, with 14.6% (7 respondents) being employed in this sector. Construction (10.4%), agriculture, forestry, and fishing (10.4%), and human, health, and social work (8.3%) were the other main sectors in which respondents in the Seychelles were employed.

In contrast, 14 (26.9%) respondents in South Africa reported employment in the wholesale and retail trade, and hotel and restaurant sector, 10 (19.2%) reported employment in the personal services sector, and 6 (11.5%) reported employment in education.

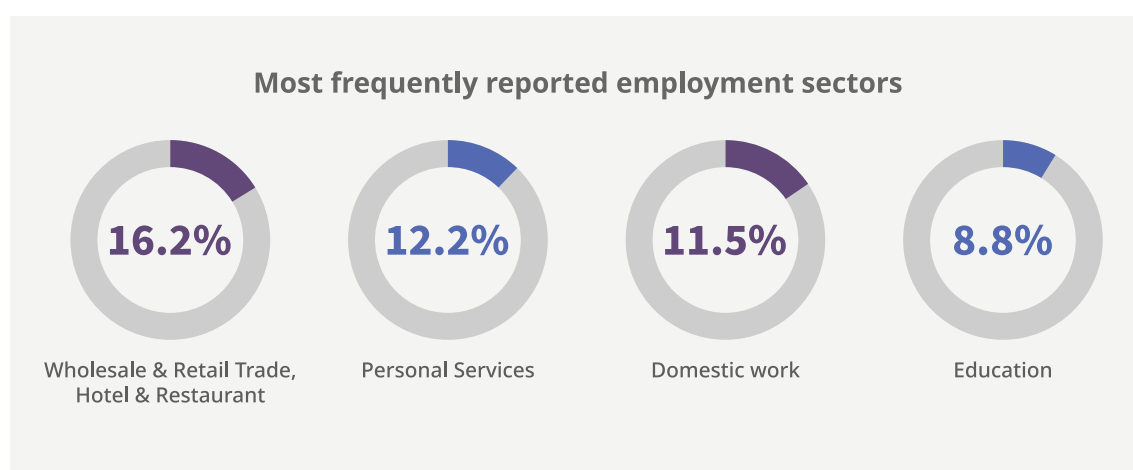
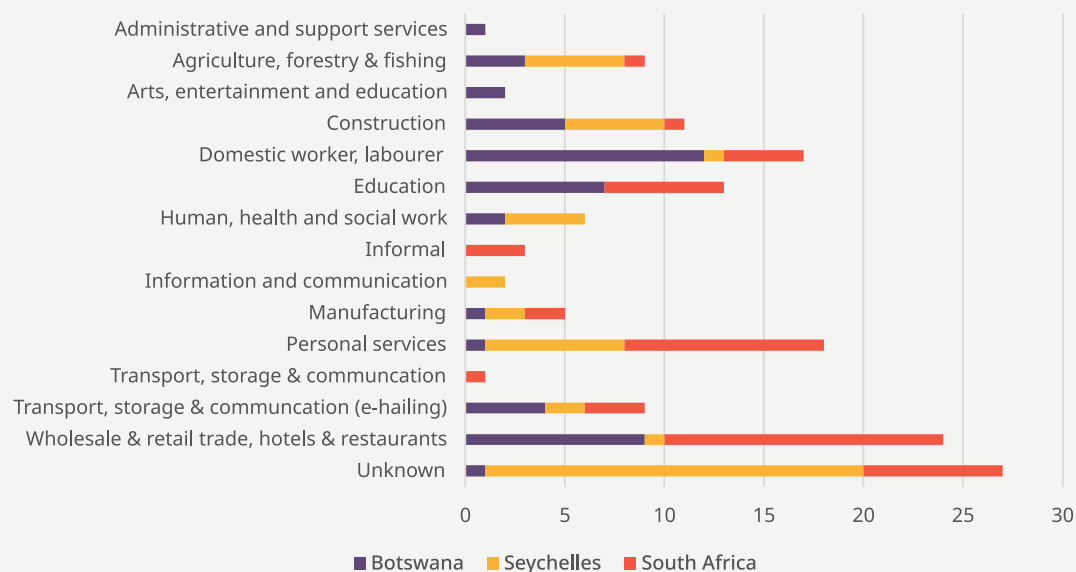


FIGURE 9: Sectors in which respondents were employed

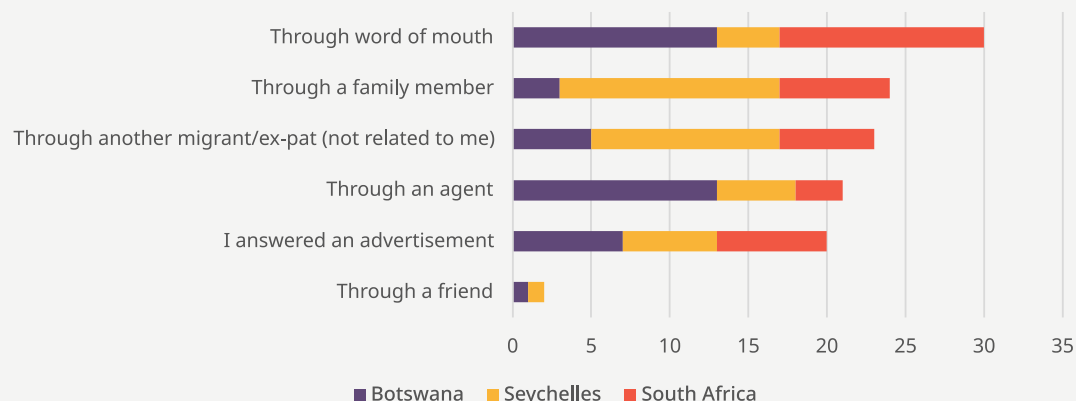
The means through which respondents were able to access employment are shown in Figure 10. Across the sample, word of mouth was the most frequently reported means of finding employment, with 30 (20.4%) of respondents finding work in this way. Relatively similar proportions of respondents found work through family members (16.3%), through other migrants (15.6%), through agents (14.3%), or by answering advertisements (13.6%).

There were significant variations in how respondents found employment between the three sampled countries.

Equal proportions of respondents in Botswana reported word of mouth and agents (26.5%) as the ways they found work, followed by answering advertisements (14.3%) and other migrants (10.2%).

In the Seychelles, family members were the most frequently reported means of finding employment (28.6%), followed by other migrants (24.5%), and answering advertisements (12.2%).

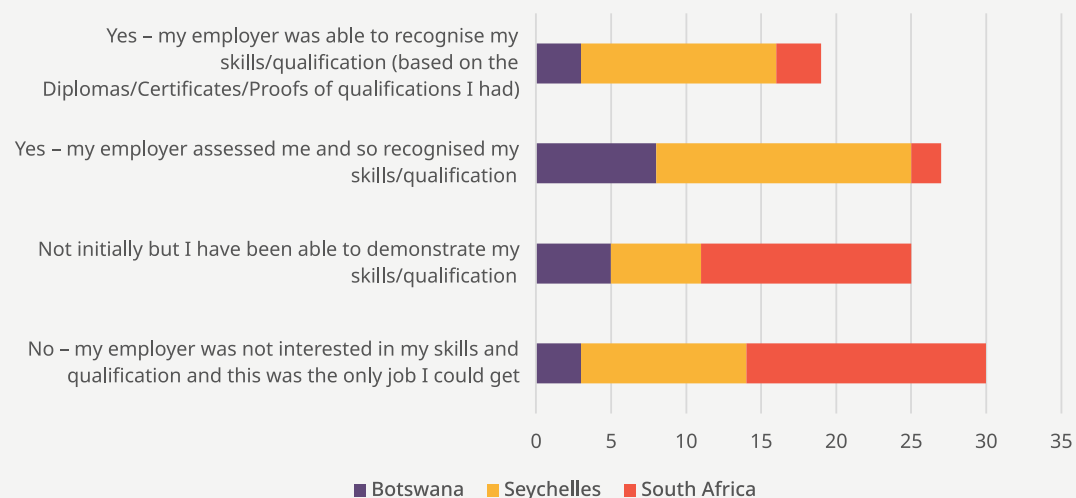
Word of mouth was the most frequent means of finding employment reported by respondents in South Africa (26.5%), while 14.3% reported finding work through a family member, and a further 14.3% found work by answering an advertisement.

FIGURE 10: Ways in which respondents accessed employment

Use of skills in current roles

Most respondents across all three countries (70.3%) reported that their skills or qualifications were recognised in some way – whether formally or informally - in their current jobs (Figure 11).

We found 27 (26.7%) reported that their employers had recognised their skills by assessing them; 25 (24.8%) reported that they had been able to demonstrate their skills during the course of their employment; and 19 (18.8%) reported that their employers had recognised their skills or qualifications on the basis of their diplomas, certificates, or other proofs of qualifications. The remaining 30% of respondents reported that their employers were not interested in their skills or qualifications.

FIGURE 11: Recognition of skills in current employment

In terms of differences between countries, the highest proportion of respondents reporting that their employers were not interested in their skills or qualifications were in South Africa (45.7%), followed by the Seychelles (23.4%), and Botswana (15.8%).

We also found that 40% of respondents in South Africa reported that their employers were not initially interested in their skills, but that they had been able to demonstrate these skills and qualifications through the course of their employment.

In Botswana, 42.1% of respondents reported recognition of their skills through assessment by their employers, while 26.3% reported being able to demonstrate their skills subsequent to being employed. Only 15.8% reported recognition of their skills or qualifications on the basis of their diplomas, certificates, or other proofs of qualification.

A similar pattern was evident among respondents in the Seychelles, where 36.2% of respondents indicated that their employers had assessed their skills, 27.7% had their skills recognised by employers on the basis of their diplomas, certificates or other proofs of qualification, and 12.8% reported being able to demonstrate their skills in the course of their employment.

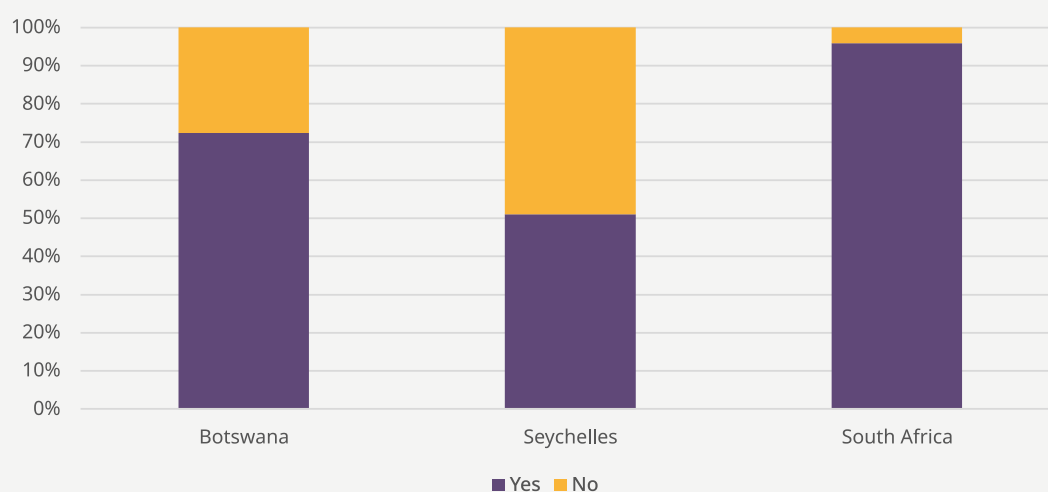
Challenges in the workplace

The majority of respondents across all three countries (57.7%) reported no challenges in their workplaces related to the recognition of their skills or qualifications. Among respondents who did report having challenges in their workplaces related to the recognition of their skills or qualifications, the highest proportion were in the Seychelles, with 10 (20.8%) respondents reporting this; 9 (18.4%) respondents in South Africa reported this type of challenge, and 6 (13.3%) respondents in Botswana reported challenges in this regard.

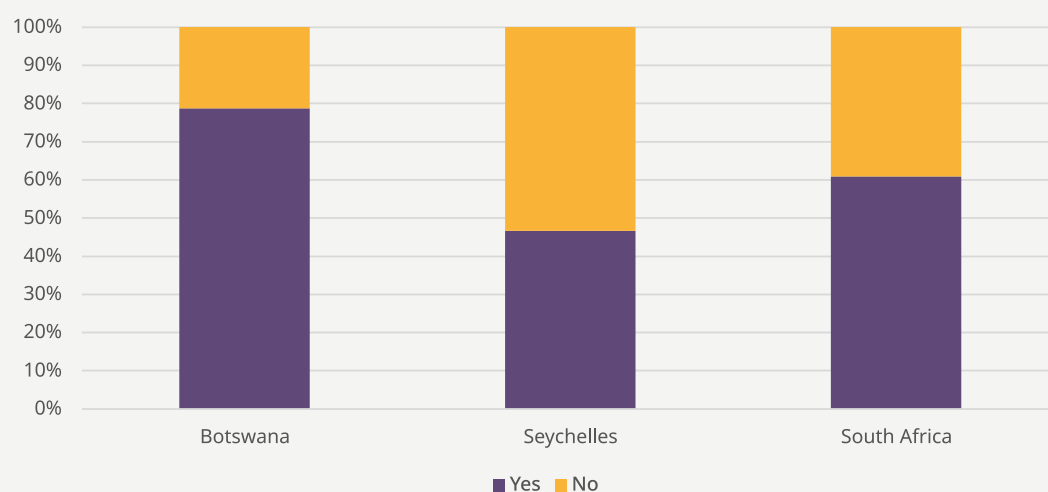
We also found that 49% of respondents in South Africa reported that they were unsure as to whether challenges they faced in the workplace were related to the recognition of their skills, while 22.9% of respondents in the Seychelles reported being unsure about this. No respondents in Botswana reported being unsure about whether challenges they faced in their workplaces were related to the recognition of their skills or qualifications.

Continuation of studies

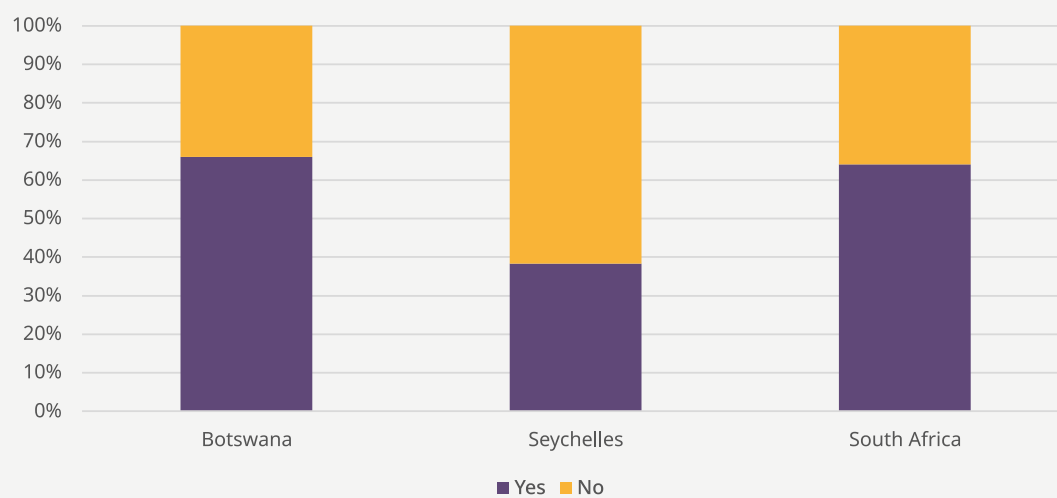
Most respondents across all three countries indicated the desire to continue their studies (73.4%). This desire was highest in South Africa, with 95.9% of respondents indicated the desire to continue studying, compared to 72.3% of respondents in Botswana, and 51.1% of respondents in the Seychelles (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12: Respondents desire to continue their studies

Among respondents who indicated the desire to study further, 62.3% of respondents across the three countries reported that the institutions where they wanted to study recognised their skills or qualifications. Recognition of skills and qualifications was highest among respondents in Botswana (78.7%), followed by South Africa (60.9%), and the Seychelles (46.7%) (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13: Skills or qualifications recognised by institutions

In terms of barriers to accessing training and further learning, 56.3% of respondents across the sample reported any barriers to furthering their studies: in Botswana, 31 (66%) of respondents indicated that they had experienced barriers to further studies, while 32 (64%) of respondents in South Africa reported such barriers. 18 (38.3%) respondents in the Seychelles reported barriers to continuing their training or studies (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14: Respondents experiences of other barriers to further training or studies

4. Conclusions

The degree to which migrants were able to access recognition of their skills and qualifications varied between the three countries surveyed, with the lowest success in attaining recognition of skills reported by respondents in South Africa where 58.8% of respondents who attempted to get their skills recognised were unable to do so, as compared to 11.1% of respondents in Botswana, and 13.6% of respondents in the Seychelles. This result may come as a surprise given that the South African qualifications framework is perhaps the most established in the region and there has been significant focus on realizing alignment for the purposes of making mobility easier in the region.

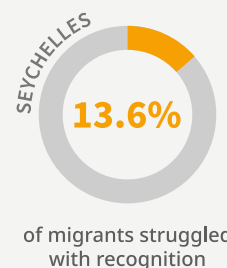
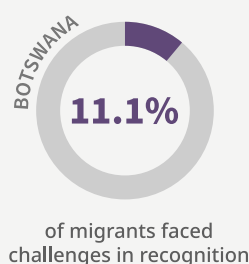
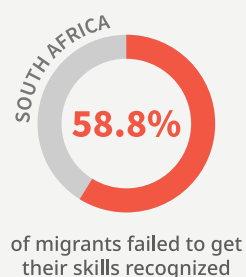
Skills recognition is not always central to the issue of employment and other factors may play more of a role in determining access.

Although data from Botswana and the Seychelles were lacking in terms of reasons behind the inability to get skills recognised, one of the main reasons cited for respondents' inability to complete the process of skills recognition was a lack of information on how to undertake the process, with 26.5% of respondents who answered this question identifying this as a barrier.

In South Africa, the other main reasons cited for the failure to get skills recognized were:

- the lack of a process through which to recognize skills gained through experience rather than formal qualifications (11.8%);
- the lack of a process to recognize certifications other than formal degrees and diplomas, such as certificates of completion (11.8%);
- and respondents' inability to access documentation from the institutions that granted them their qualifications (10.3%).

Recognition of Skills and Qualifications Among Migrants



In light of this, it is unsurprising that the most frequently attempted way of getting skills recognised was through respondents' employers and a majority of respondents (70.3%) reported that their skills or qualifications had been recognized, in some way by their employers within their current roles. We found that there were a variety of ways in which employers recognized qualifications and skills and these ranged from formal through to informal recognition processes. Where employers are familiar with the process of attaining formal skills recognition or can guide employees on how to undertake the process, getting skills recognised is probably more likely to be attempted.

Although respondents were not directly asked whether their experience of getting recognition of their skills and qualifications was related to their type of employment, we found variations in attaining skills recognition appeared to be linked to the occupations. For example, people employed as teachers or other professional roles may be required to gain recognition of their qualifications as a prerequisite for employment. The distribution of migrant workers across different professions, with varying levels of skills requirements, may also affect the degree of importance which respondents attached to getting their skills or qualifications recognised.

What is evident from this review is that skills recognition is not always central to the issue of employment and other factors may play more of a role in determining access. However, it is important to migrants particularly with respect to accessing further education. It is also evident that more information about the processes, and making them less cumbersome, encourages different role players to engage in the recognition process.



International
Labour
Organization



Funded by the
European Union