

GFMD Business Mechanism

Business committee on THE NEED FOR GLOBAL SKILLS MOBILITY

Concept Note

What does the skills mobility committee hope to accomplish?

Despite widespread agreement among economists and business leaders on the benefits of international skills mobility, increasing populism and xenophobia distort the public discourse on migration in many countries. This creates a political environment where it is challenging to advance policies that lower barriers to the efficient and predictable movement of workers. In this context, business must explain how well-managed migration can complement and create opportunities for native workers – a win-win scenario.

To this end, the committee will discuss strategies for:

- Partnering with governments to advance skills mobility; and,
- Crafting an honest and compelling business narrative on skills mobility that resonates with governments and skeptical publics.

Outcomes from the discussions will guide the skills mobility aspects of our report to the GFMD and our inputs to the consultations on the global migration compact.

How do we define global skills mobility?

Global skills mobility refers to the movement of workers of all skills levels for employment opportunities, including intra-company transfers, international recruits, and local hires. We will examine and discuss policies that govern mobility, including visa/work permit categories and processes and frameworks for recognizing foreign skills and qualifications. We propose a broad definition that aligns with the governments' framing of the issue so that we can provide relevant contributions to the government discourse.

What did we say about global skills mobility in our position paper?

[The Business Case for Migration](#) presented 4 recommendations that relate to skills mobility. These can serve as the starting point for our discussion:

1. Governments should administer immigration systems that account for labor market demands and modern business practices. In devising reforms, they should actively consult employers who are best-suited to understand the economic impact of policies.
2. Systems should feature a robust and flexible visa framework to spur innovation, fill skills gaps, and promote development. Visa categories should reflect and adapt to the evolving workplace.

3. Immigration processes should be accessible and transparent. There should be clearly defined visa/work permit categories and objective eligibility criteria.
4. Systems should be efficient and coherent, with timely and predictable processes. Immigration agencies must consistently apply laws and should consider trusted employer programs.

What have governments said about skills mobility?

Three documents outline government thinking on skills mobility. Our contributions to the GFMD and consultations on the global migration compact should take these into account:

- The [2017 GFMD concept note](#) outlines government priorities for the current GFMD program. In the area of skills mobility, they structure discussions around the theme of *Raising the Global Talent Pool – Harnessing the Potential of the Private Sector for Global Skills Partnerships* (see GFMD Roundtable 3.1). Here, they expect to:

Share positive examples and experiences of skill creation and mobility as well as [identify] aspects of these initiatives that may be suitable for possible designs of global skill partnerships.

The concept note also envisions conversations around ensuring coherent policies across all areas impacting migration in order to “*shape adequate legal migration framework conditions on national and international levels.*” (See GFMD Roundtable 1.1)

- The UN’s [New York Declaration](#) committed governments to negotiate a global migration compact and identifies well-managed migration and expanded legal pathways as areas that could be addressed by the compact. It also highlights the promotion of labour mobility and the recognition of foreign qualifications, education and skills as potential elements. Notably, the UN plans to hold consultations around these topics, as outlined in the [final draft of the modalities resolution](#) for the compact.
- The [Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration](#) is another document that could influence the content of the global migration compact. Two of its recommendations closely relate to skills mobility:
 - Recommendation 5: Strengthen the architecture to govern labour mobility
 - Recommendation 6: Improve access to information and visa facilitation