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► Exploring the potential for skills partnerships on migration in West Africa and Sahel

Aomar Ibourk




Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



EUROPEAN UNION



FMM West Africa
Support to Free Movement of Persons & Migration in West Africa



Exploring the potential for skills partnerships on migration in West Africa and Sahel

2020

Aomar Ibourk

International Labour Office
Skills and Employability Branch
Employment Policy Department

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First edition 2020

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ISBN: 978-92-2-032056-3 (print)

978-92-2-032055-6 (web pdf)

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Printed in Geneva, Switzerland

Foreword

In an ever-changing world of increasing globalization and technological change, the acquisition and development of the skills needed for today's and tomorrow's jobs is a major challenge. Thus, many countries are making the strengthening of their technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems a priority in order to meet the challenge of matching skills supply and demand. In addition to responding to this challenge, responding quickly and effectively to skills needs requires strengthening the transition of young people to the world of work, lifelong learning for all, and also recognizing the potential contribution of migration. Migration that is fair and beneficial to countries of origin, transit and destination, and that contributes to increasing the available pool of skills, is demand-driven and accompanied by investments in skills development and recognition for the benefit of migrant workers and local populations.

On 9 December 2018 in Marrakech, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (UNGA, 2019) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The pact is based on international conventions, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) international labour standards on the promotion of decent work and labour migration. Objective 18 of the Pact is devoted to investing in skills development and facilitating the mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences. It calls on Member States to “build global skills partnerships among countries that strengthen the training capacities of national authorities and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and trade unions, and foster skills development of workers in countries of origin and migrants in countries of destination with a view to preparing trainees for employability in the labour markets of participating countries” (*ibid.*, pp. 25–26).

Following this agreement, the ILO, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Organization for Employers, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and UNESCO, launched the Global Skills Partnership for Migration¹ to support skills development and recognition through partnerships between countries, along migration corridors and in selected regions, through knowledge sharing and technical assistance. While most international cooperation activities on the free movement of people focus on highly skilled people, the Global Partnership for Skills and Migration pays particular attention to low-skilled and semi-skilled migrants.

West Africa and the Sahel regions are characterized by the highest incidence of low- and semi-skilled migration on the African continent. In order to ensure a context-sensitive design for West Africa and a genuine anchoring of the Global Partnership at the national and regional levels, the ILO conducted a subregional study covering ten countries.

This subregional report covers Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. It provides relevant background information on existing skills systems and policies, migration flows and patterns, links between training and migration policies, and collaboration on skills anticipation, development and recognition between the selected countries. In addition, it explores potential areas for the establishment of partnerships for the anticipation, development and recognition of the skills of migrant workers and local populations.

This report was prepared as a basis for discussion for the workshop "Tripartite Consultations on Skills and Migration Partnerships" held in Abuja from 11–13 September 2019, organized in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and with the support of the projects "SKILL-UP", funded by the Government of Norway (ILO, 2019), and "FMM – Support to the Free

¹ For more information on the Partnership, see https://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=EDMSP1_230224.

Movement of People and Migration in West Africa", funded by the European Union and ECOWAS². The aim was to support preparatory activities for the workshop to enable the tripartite constituents, representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations of the countries concerned to i) provide comments on the subregional study; and ii) identify, define and plan the implementation of initial actions to facilitate the establishment of partnerships for skills and migration between governments, employers' and workers' organizations, training institutions and public employment services or national statistical institutes of the countries of origin and destination of migrants.

The workshop "Tripartite Consultations on Skills and Migration Partnerships" produced 11 ideas for partnerships between different countries and action plans for the implementation of partnership initiatives, some of which are currently being developed (ILO, 2019).

This report was written by Aomar Ibourk, and synthesizes the findings of the national reports written by: Camille Campaoré (Burkina Faso), Soro Dognimon (Côte d'Ivoire), John Amankrah (Ghana), Simon Barussaud (Mali), Stéphane Reuse (Niger), Benadeth N. Ezekoye (Nigeria), Seynabou Niasse (Senegal), Djy Djimoko Nubadumbay (Chad) and Ba Nabine Mocktar Sangbana (Togo). The Mauritania report was written by Aomar Ibourk.

This publication was produced by the ILO under the technical supervision of Christine Hofmann and Ilca Webster and with the technical support of Mergim Jahiu, Helen Kirsch, Henri Ebelin and Sophia Schoderer.

We acknowledge the comments of Aurelia Segatti and Kenza Dimechkie of the ILO, Olivier Pieume of UNESCO and Vassiliy Yuzhanin of IOM. Janet Neubecker proofread the English version of the report and Annette Brandstätter formatted it.

We hope that, in addition to serving as a technical basis for dialogue between the countries concerned, this report will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges of development, strengthening and recognition of skills in the context of migration in West Africa.

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² The Free Movement on Migration, West Africa project is funded by the EU and ECOWAS. More information is available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_459581.pdf.

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List of Acronyms

AGEFOP	National Agency for Vocational Training
AU	African Union
CAMES	African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education
CAN	Andean Community
CATO	Workers' Organization of West Africa
CEDEAO	Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CGSS	General Convention on Social Security
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNET	National Council for Technical Education
CNPS	National Social Security Fund
CNQP	Nigerian Professional Qualifications Framework
CSOS	Civil society organizations
CSP	Socio-professional category
DAHS	Directorate of Humanitarian and Social Affairs
DECST	Directorate of Education, Culture, Science and Technology
DGJEOSC	Directorate of Gender, Youth, Employment and Civil Society Organizations
DNFP	National Directorate of Vocational Training
DPSE	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMIS	Labour market information system
EMOP	Modular Household Survey
ENSESI	National Survey on the Employment Situation and the Informal Sector
FAP-FTP	Autonomous Fund for the Promotion of Technical and Vocational Training
FTP	Technical and vocational training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEC	Commonwealth of Independent States
ILO	International Labour Organization (ILO)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INAP-FTP	National Institute for the Promotion of Technical and Vocational Training
IOE	International Organization of Employers
IOM	International Organization for Migration

ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
MEFPTIC	Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training and Information and Communication Technologies
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
MIDWA	Migration Dialogue for West Africa
NCTE	National Council for Technical Education
NEQAO	National Observatory of Jobs and Professional Qualifications
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTIC	New information and communication technologies
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
ONEF	National Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training
ONS	National Statistical Office
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAPS-EFTP	TVET Sector Policy Support Programme
PGDE	Application management platform
PPP	Public-private partnership
RGPH	General Population and Housing Census
RGPHAE	General Census of Population and Housing, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
ROME	Operational directory of trades and jobs
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
VAE	Validation of acquired experience
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union

Introduction

In September 2016, Heads of State adopted the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants at the United Nations General Assembly. The Declaration aimed to ensure equitable migration for all and to strengthen the global governance of migration through the development of a Global Compact for Migration and a Global Compact for Refugees, which was subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 2018 in Marrakech.

The Pact is based on international conventions, including the ILO's international labour standards on the promotion of decent work and labour migration. To this end, Objective 18 of the Pact aims to invest in skills development and to facilitate the mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences. It calls on Member States to “build global skills partnerships among countries that strengthen the training capacities of national authorities and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and trade unions, and foster skills development of workers in countries of origin and migrants in countries of destination with a view to preparing trainees for employability in the labour markets of participating countries” (UNGA, 2018, pp. 25–26).

Therefore, the ILO, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Organization for Employers (IOE), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and UNESCO, launched the Global Skills Partnership³ to support the development of partnerships between countries, along migration corridors and in selected regions, through knowledge sharing and technical assistance. Most international cooperation activities on the free movement of people concern highly skilled people. The Global Skills Partnership pays particular attention to low-skilled and semi-skilled migrants who make up a significant share of migration flows on the African continent, and who face constraints that hamper their mobility in regional labour markets. The first difficulty they face is the lack of recognition of acquired skills which can constitute an obstacle to mobility or lead to a loss of skills. In addition, restrictive immigration opportunities and the lack of work permits and visas for low- and medium-skilled occupations can hamper opportunities for regular migration. Finally, the lack of legal protection resulting from unregulated and often temporary employment makes semi-skilled and low-skilled workers more vulnerable to exploitation.

The highest incidence of low- and semi-skilled migration on the African continent is in the West, Central and Sahel Africa regions. Sectors such as construction, mining and services attract semi-skilled migrants, most of whom have completed secondary education or vocational training. Low-skilled migrants, with at most a basic level of education, work mainly in agriculture, domestic services, or participate in informal cross-border trade.

This subregional mapping study covers Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo and provides relevant background information on: i) skills development systems; ii) migration flows and patterns; iii) existing collaboration in skills identification; iv) the state of play in skills recognition; and v) potential areas for new partnerships. The aim is to guide policy proposals in terms of effective management of this type of migration. Effective management should involve all stakeholders, including governments and ministries, TVET agencies, migration agencies, employment services, training providers, statistical offices, and employers', workers' and civil society organizations. The forms of partnership involvement will be explored at different points in the analysis, including:

³ For more information on the partnership, see https://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=EDMSP1_230224.

- Analysis of existing data on regional migration, their spatial distribution in the country and their socio-professional characteristics;
- Comparative examination of labour supply and demand by occupation and sector, skills shortages and the main sectors in which migrants work;
- Review and assessment of the state of implementation of existing regional cooperation frameworks for the management of labour migration such as the 2003 ECOWAS Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications and other relevant instruments;
- Review of legislation relating to the free movement of persons in the ECOWAS region, in particular for technical and professional skills;
- Review of past, existing or planned activities involving at least two governments in the subregion in the areas of TVET, and recognition of competencies;
- Evaluation of the compatibility of systems for the identification, training and recognition of skills; and
- Identification of options to improve the compatibility of the above subregional systems in selected professions and sectors.

1. Literature review

1.1. Concepts and definitions

According to the guidelines of the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, the term "international labour migration" refers, inter alia, to the following three concepts: i) international migrant workers; ii) international migrants for work; and iii) returning international migrant workers. International labour migration may include international labour mobility, such as temporary or short-term movements of persons between countries for employment purposes in the context of the free movement of workers within regional economic communities.

International labour migration is an increasing political priority, and there is a need to respond equitably to the interests of countries of origin and destination, as well as to the interests of migrant workers, national workers and employers. To be effective, policies must be based on sound evidence, including the number of migrant workers involved, their characteristics and employment patterns. It is also important to design and implement solid labour market information systems, including in-depth research to identify and anticipate labour market skills needs, and to put in place processes for the recognition of qualifications, in particular for low- and medium-skilled migrant workers, in order to facilitate their integration into the labour market in destination countries.

With respect to the term "competencies", it is important to note that there is no uniform definition. Competence is defined by the International Labour Office as the ability to perform the tasks and functions of a given job. In many countries, competencies are defined in terms of occupational skills and/or educational levels. Therefore, there is no single methodology for analysing skills needs in the labour market. However, the experience of the main destination countries at EU level has demonstrated the usefulness and relevance of a holistic approach, combining qualitative analysis (e.g. case studies, focus group discussions) and the use of quantitative data (surveys, skills assessments, model-based projections).

Another concept relevant to international labour migration is the management of jobs and skills forecasting. In principle, it involves identifying and anticipating the skills needed for the smooth running of an economy. In several countries, both sending and receiving, methods for identifying and anticipating skills are either non-existent or limited in scope, often due to the unavailability of data or expertise required for such exchanges. Moreover, the dynamic nature of labour markets resulting from economic globalization and the existence of a large informal sector make the exercise of identifying and anticipating skills, both those who emigrate and those who return, even more difficult for the overseeing bodies.

Identification, planning and forecasting exercises must take the transferability of skills into account. This term is concomitantly linked to the term "labour mobility", both between occupations and between countries, and implies that skills are verifiable and easily identifiable. There are two aspects to the transferability of skills:

1. The provision of information on skills and qualifications that can be used as inputs in various sectors and occupations.
2. The validation and recognition of skills by the stakeholders concerned at national and international levels.

When the skill transferability is ensured and combined with the presence of credible skill information, then one can assume skills portability (ILO, 2007).

1.2. Migration and development in host countries

International migration has become an integral part of global development agendas. When well-managed, labour migration can be a vehicle for development, a finding supported by most existing studies and empirical evidence. In countries of destination, the economic effects of immigration are generally positive (OECD/ILO, 2018). For example, the contribution of migrants to global GDP, being around 10 per cent, is slightly less than three times their share of the world's population, standing at around 3.4 per cent in 2015, and almost double what they would have produced in their country of origin (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016).

In developed countries, the arrival of foreign labour generally constitutes a lever for growth, since the populations of high-income countries are ageing. Even when the host country is developing, immigrants can contribute through the multiple channels provided by the role of immigrants in host societies. An OECD/ILO report (2018) covering Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Rwanda and South Africa, shows how immigrants contribute as workers, consumers, entrepreneurs, etc., to the economic development of host countries.

Immigration can have a positive impact on the **overall income of the native-born**. An increase in the supply of labour in a sector with constant demand pushes down wages, reduces production costs and results in productivity gains. When immigration relates with the volume in a given occupation, changes in labour productivity are able to have a positive effect on the value added, and with all else being equal, could therefore impact the GDP per capita. For example, data indicates that the immigrant contribution to the value added is often similar to their share in employment – it is higher in Côte d'Ivoire (2008) and Rwanda (2012). In this respect generally, the impact of immigration is limited and negligible in the sampled countries (ibid.).

Immigration can also contribute to the development of local labour markets through consumption.

Immigrants are often of working age and therefore have generally higher incomes and expenditure cycles than the host population's average, including dependents (OECD/European Union, 2015, pp. 37–51). As consumers, immigrants also contribute to increasing demand for both foreign and domestic goods and services. This affects prices, production levels, as well as the trade balance by adding to the versatility of trade and the transfer of knowledge along previously unknown supply chains. Immigrants have more links with manufacturers in their countries of origin and, as a result, it is easier for them to import consumer goods. At the same time, they can transfer supply chain knowledge to natives. Generally, communities with the highest concentration of immigrants in the working-age population show an increase in the employment-to-population ratio. This increase leads to growth in the labour force and, consequently, an increase in GDP per capita (OECD/ILO, 2018).

The immigrant contribution to development also affects human capital. Through their level of skills and knowledge, immigrants contribute to increasing human capital and disseminating knowledge. However, the OECD/ILO report indicates that human capital, measured only in years of education, is lower for immigrants than for native-born workers, except in Rwanda and South Africa. Nevertheless, this contribution to human capital stock could be enhanced if immigrants were allowed access to certain public services, such as education, training, health and social housing, in their countries of destination. While education and health care are available at all levels for all immigrants, including irregular immigrants, health insurance is only available for regular immigrants in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, while social housing is not available for immigrants in all four countries (see box 1 and OECD/ILO, 2018).

Box 1. Irregular migration

This report defines irregular migration as movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of countries of origin, transit and host countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries, it is the entry, stay or work without the necessary authorization or documentation required by immigration regulations. From the point of view of the country of origin, irregularity is, for example, when a person crosses an international border without a valid passport or travel document or does not meet the administrative requirements for leaving the country.

There is, however, a tendency to limit the use of the term "illegal migration" to cases of smuggling of migrants and human trafficking. A coherent approach to irregular migrants seems to be lacking in the ECOWAS region. The national legislation of all countries penalizes irregular stay and its facilitation, although in practice the approach to irregular migration and stay differs. In Benin, Cape Verde and Ghana, persons who have entered or remained in the country irregularly are fined, while in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo they are fined and imprisoned. In Sierra Leone, a prison sentence, but no fine, awaits irregular migrants. The maximum length of imprisonment is also very different, ranging from 15 days in Niger to two years in Senegal and up to five years in Côte d'Ivoire.

A better recognition of skills and qualifications will enhance the contribution of immigrants to human capital.⁴ In the business world, immigrants can create employment opportunities and foster innovation and technological change. In Rwanda and South Africa, immigrants are more likely to be employers than natives. In South Africa, the proportion of native being employers tends to be higher if they live in an area with a high immigrant density. There are other forms of relationships between immigrants and entrepreneurs. In Ghana, Nigerian support for local entrepreneurship seems to be common. Ghanaians benefit from Nigerian skills and capital, and Nigerians take equity stakes in the business. Thus, immigrants can influence the likelihood of native people to become entrepreneurs (Duleep, Jaeger and Regets, 2012; Fairlie and Meyer, 2003). Immigrants also contribute, through the banking system, to promoting investment in host countries' financial development.

Through these different roles, immigrants can help stimulate economic growth in destination countries and thus promote development. In this regard, public policies can play a key role in enhancing the contribution of immigration to the development of destination countries. International legal instruments hold their rightful place in this scheme, through their contribution towards better management and integration of immigration policies.

⁴ In South Africa, most foreign degrees and diplomas are recognized by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA); for some professions, applicants for "essential skills visas" or "permanent residence permits" are referred to professional associations recognized by the Department of Home Affairs. Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have similar accreditation processes for foreign credentials.

1.3. International legal instruments for migration management and integration

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of different initiatives calling for increased cooperation and broader dialogue on the management of international migration in a multilateral framework. A multilateral approach to free movement should and could both ensure co-operation between states and help monitor the socio-economic changes that free movement can bring about. According to Pécoud and de Guchteneire (2007), there are two possible ways to develop such an approach. One would be to establish a "migration management regime" (Gosh, 2007). A second option would be to engage in multilateral cooperation on issues acceptable to a majority of states and allow free movement to develop gradually.

In the context of increased regionalization and a fragmented multilateral system, the regional level has emerged as a multilateral layer of governance. This is the case in Africa, where the members of the regional communities manage regional migration issues within the framework of agreements, conventions or treaties between member countries. The example of ECOWAS is very illustrative, where about 8 million migrants move within the region, accounting for just over 80 per cent of total emigration (see table 5; UNDESA, 2015). In this region, legislation on intra-regional free movement has often been influenced by: i) economic developments and national political agendas; ii) the denial of partial sovereignty transfer to regional bodies; iii) the increased focus on (extra-regional) migration flows from West Africa to Europe; and iv) external actors' roles in the formulation and implementation of regional migration policies (Kabbanji, 2017). Concrete results do exist, such as visa exemptions for travel up to 90 days, however, various obstacles still hinder the proper implementation of the "Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment": the failure to ratify phases II and III, the multiplicity of official checkpoints, the slowness of administrative formalities, the introduction of false fees and gratuities at checkpoints, etc. (Kabbanji, 2017).

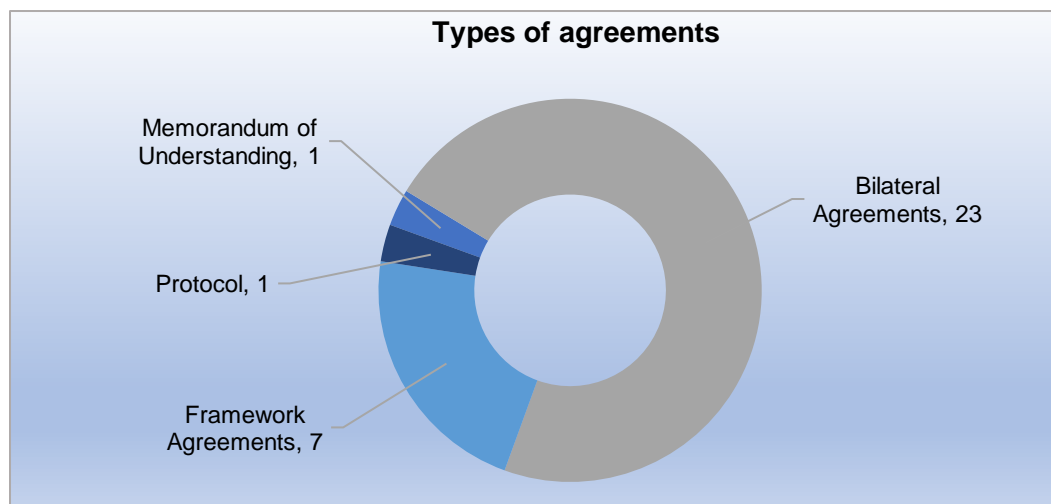
Migration movements within ECOWAS, considering all difficulties in implementing migration management legislation, are impressive when compared to those of the Gulf countries. Of particular interest is the fact that, despite favourable political, economic and social conditions and the effective removal of obstacles to free movement, intra-regional migration between the Gulf countries remains low. MERCOSUR, CAN and the CIS are also comparable regions, although their identity and/or common regional history have strengthened their regional migration management.

Bilateral agreements are among the most effective measures in the governance of labour migration, especially since they promote migrant rights and sometimes guarantee social benefits for immigrants upon return to their country of origin (Holzmann, Koettl and Chernetsky, 2005; Holzmann, 2016).

The trend towards developing migration-focused agreements reached its peak in Africa in the period 2005–09, during the decade of bilateral agreements for the Global South. These agreements had a wide range of objectives: worker admission, assisted voluntary return, integration, migration and development, combating irregular migration, readmission (framework agreements) and regulation of labour migration flows

In order to obtain good practices in the management and integration of foreign labour resulting from these agreements, Monterisi (2014) conducted a mapping study covering 32 agreements to identify information on such practices in different African countries (see figure 1).

Figure 1 : Types of agreements concluded with and between African countries



Sources: Monterisi (2014), *agreements with and between African countries*.

The research was based on signed agreements that are freely available or available on request, and adopted two separate (albeit interrelated) tools for benchmarking the scope (breadth) and quality (depth) of the agreements. The first set of criteria assessed the extent of thematic coverage from the ILO Model Agreement on Temporary and Permanent Labour Migration, including Refugees and Displaced Persons (1949).⁵ The second assessed the agreements on the basis of 18 criteria of good practice in labour migration governance and migrant worker protection, drawn from international standards and in consultation with ILO experts.⁶

Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. gives an idea of the extent of thematic coverage from the aforementioned 1949 ILO Model Agreement on Temporary and Permanent Labour Migration, including Refugees and Displaced Persons. It shows that the 32 agreements studied converge only on three themes, namely: remittances (27/32); methods of collaboration (31/32); and final provisions (32/32). Moreover, in the subregion, only Burkina Faso and Nigeria ratified this agreement.

⁵ ILO: *Model Agreement on Temporary and Permanent Labour Migration [Annex]*, in *Migration for Employment Convention (Revised)*, 1949 (No. 97). See also *ILO Recommendation concerning Migration for Employment (Revised)*, 1949 (No. 86).

⁶ This approach has inherent limitations because it does not adequately assess the effectiveness of the agreements in terms of actual implementation. Good practice on paper does not automatically translate into good implementation. There was also a notable lack of information on monitoring and implementation in the concerned countries.

Table 1 : Themes of the ILO Model Convention of 1949

Article	Description	Cover	Article	Description	Cover
1	Exchange of information	15/32	16	Dispute Resolution	5/32
2	Measures against misleading propaganda	2/32	17	Equality of treatment	19/32
3	Administrative formalities	8/32	19	Supply of foodstuffs	0
4	Validity of documents	1/32	20	Housing conditions	0
5	Migration conditions and criteria	15/32	21	Social Security	4/32
6	Recruitment Organization	21/32	22	Employment contracts	9/32
7	Selection Exams	6/32	23	Changing jobs	0
8	Information and assistance to migrants	12/32	24	Employment stability	2/32
9	Education and vocational training	11/32	25	Removal provisions	0
10	Trainee exchange	3/32			
11	Terms and conditions of transport	1/32	26	Return trip	8/32
12	Travel and maintenance costs	8/32	27	Double taxation	4/32
13	Transfer of funds	27/32	28	Methods of Collaboration	31/32
15	Control of living and working conditions	6/32	29	Final provisions	32/32

Source: ILO: *Model Agreement on Temporary and Permanent Labour Migration [Annex]*, in *Migration for Employment Convention (Revised)*, 1949 (No. 97). See also *ILO Recommendation concerning Migration for Employment (Revised)*, 1949 (No. 86).

Table 2 gives an idea on the adoption of good practices in labour migration governance and migrant worker protection in the 32 agreements analysed by Monterisi (ibid.). **Only one third of the bilateral agreements analysed are concerned with access to skills development, containing provisions on technical and vocational education and training.**

None of the bilateral agreements contain provisions on the recognition of migrants' skills and qualifications, which means that destination countries on the continent are not taking advantage of existing human resources.

Table 2 : Coverage of good practices of the 32 agreements

Good practice description	Agreements	Good practice description	Agreements
Exchange of relevant information between the country of origin and the country of destination on labour migration, and provision of relevant information to migrant workers	19	Provision for development human resources and skills development	11
Evidence of normative foundations and respect for the rights of migrants	16	Concrete implementation, monitoring and evaluation procedures	30
Specific reference to equal treatment of migrant workers, non-discrimination and/or protection of migrants' rights	17	Provisions for the recognition of skills and qualifications in the country of destination	0
Provisions to protect migrant workers against irregular recruitment practices, both in the country of origin and in the country of destination	30	Social dialogue involving relevant stakeholders outside government: employers in the country of origin and the country of destination, workers, civil society organizations	0
Addressing gender concerns and the concerns of vulnerable migrant workers, especially those not covered by labour legislation in the country of destination	0	-	

Source: Monterisi (2014).

1.4. The management and integration of migration in ECOWAS: Recognition of qualifications

Furthermore, ECOWAS Member States signed in Dakar, in 1979, the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment⁷ to allow the free movement of their citizens within the ECOWAS region. While the right of entry of Community citizens under the residence card is granted by Phases I and II of the Protocol, the latter has not yet activated the right of establishment for enterprises.⁸

Now that labour migration is the dominant migration flow in the ECOWAS region, its management has become a necessity for development. Most ECOWAS countries, with the exception of Guinea and Togo, either have policies and/or strategies on migration, or at least plan to develop one of the two.

⁷ Available at <https://www.uneca.org/pages/ecowas-free-movement-persons>.

⁸ The Protocol stipulates that the right of Community citizens to enter, reside and establish businesses in the Member States is to be granted for a transitional period of fifteen years in three phases. Phase I eliminated the requirement for Community citizens to obtain a visa for stays of up to 90 days in ECOWAS Member States. Phase II regulated the right of Community citizens to reside in the territory of the Community for the purpose of seeking and taking up paid employment. Phase III aims to facilitate the creation of enterprises through the right of Community citizens to carry out economic activities in other ECOWAS Member States. Phase II is finalized.

However, very few countries see foreign workers as an indispensable element in meeting the needs of the national labour market (Devillard, Bacchi and Noack, 2016). This is often reflected in labour legislation, where formalities and conditions in most countries lack precision and clarity when it comes to the immigration process (residence permits, visa issuance, renewal). Some national labour codes do guarantee equal treatment of native and migrant workers regarding their rights and obligations (e.g. Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo).

The scope of labour migration within ECOWAS includes temporary, seasonal and permanent migration, as well as short-term cross-border movements. Seasonal migration is common in the agropastoral region of the Sahel, while most immigrants in ECOWAS work in the trade and agriculture sectors. The vast majority of immigrants work in informal low-skilled jobs, limiting their opportunity to regularize their immigration status. An exception to this is Côte d'Ivoire, where, since 2007, ECOWAS nationals are no longer required to have a resident permit. In most other countries, working in the informal sector does not give access to a residence permit.

While migrants within ECOWAS tend to have low levels of education, and highly skilled migrants mainly move outside the region to developed countries, highly skilled individuals still migrate within ECOWAS, for example, Beninese teachers may migrate to Gabon and Togolese teachers to Nigeria and Ghana. However, given the broad occupational trends, characterized by the dominance of low-skilled workers and the availability of reserve labour, meeting the needs of the domestic labour market does not necessarily require foreign labour in many countries. An exception can be observed in Ghana's draft national migration policy, accounting for the oil industry's foreign labour needs.

The non-recognition, non-compatibility and non-comparability of skills, qualifications and experience across national borders are perceived as the main obstacles to good labour migration governance by regional actors. Nevertheless, many past and present experiences provide a solid basis on which mechanisms to enable ECOWAS states to develop systems for the recognition of qualifications and skills in both higher education and TVET can be designed. Three conventions on the recognition of higher education qualifications have been adopted, at either the continental or subregional level, but outside the regional economic community: i) the Arusha/Addis Ababa Convention in 2014; ii) the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States in 1978; and iii) the Convention on the Status and Organization of the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) in 1972. Recently, ECOWAS concluded its own General Convention on the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas, Certificates and other Academic Qualifications in the Member States in 2003 (see section 5 for more details).

ECOWAS education and training systems have made overall progress in harmonization with most significant improvements seen in the area of higher education. In Africa, only the SADC (Southern African Development Community) has adopted a Regional Qualification Framework that encompasses all levels of education and training, including TVET. Specifically for TVET, though high on government agendas, not all ECOWAS Member States have adopted a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Nevertheless, there are sectoral frameworks and initiatives to make existing NQFs more operational. This is the case of a UNESCO-ECOWAS initiative where focal points on NQF issues have been designated. In addition, few Member States have established quality assurance agencies with separate accreditation committees for certificates and diplomas issued outside the CAMES network. Nevertheless, the recognition of qualifications and skills remains a challenge, and despite possessing a certain skill level, many migrants find themselves unemployed or under-employed.

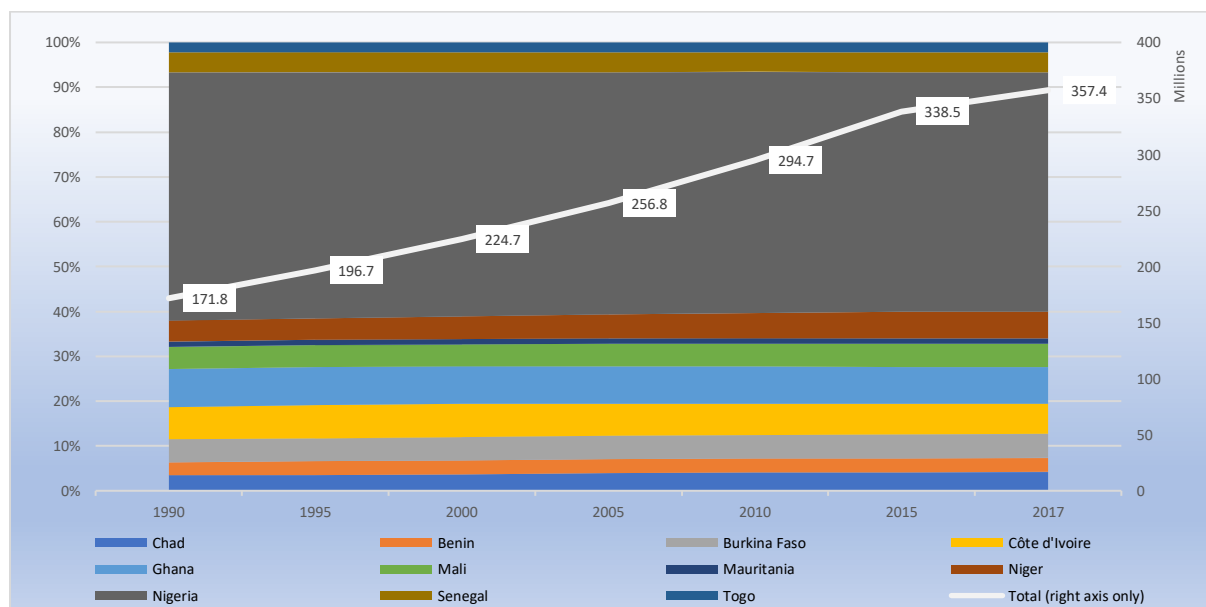
2. Socio-economic context of the subregion

The geographical scope of this study is mainly composed of West African countries and one Central African country, Chad. The latter country has long been characterized by frequent climate disturbances and political instability, making it a popular point of entry for migrants and refugees into the West African bloc. Chad is a place of high transit due to its geographical position, functioning as a crossroads for migration, particularly the routes from southern Africa to the Maghreb (and Europe), and from West Africa to the Middle East. The territory hosts many refugees from Nigeria and the Sahel region, particularly Niger and Mali,⁹ and labour migrants, particularly since 2000, with the beginning of the oil era.

West Africa is far from being a homogeneous space and is rich in a variety of cultures and languages.¹⁰ Endowed with diverse natural resources and extremely varied economic and political contexts, it follows that this region has equally complex migration patterns and frameworks.

In 2017, the population of the study area was estimated at 357.4 million, with an average annual growth rate of around 4.4 per cent between 2000–2017, the result of a general improvement in health marked by a decline in infant mortality and a high fertility rate. The region has the highest population concentration on the continent, ahead of East Africa, with about three out of every ten Africans living in the region (see figure 2). United Nations projections indicate that this trend is set to continue: the region's population is expected to reach 387 million by 2020 and 630 million by 2040, more than a third of Africa's population.

Figure 2 : Total population at mid-year in millions (right axis), and distribution (left axis)



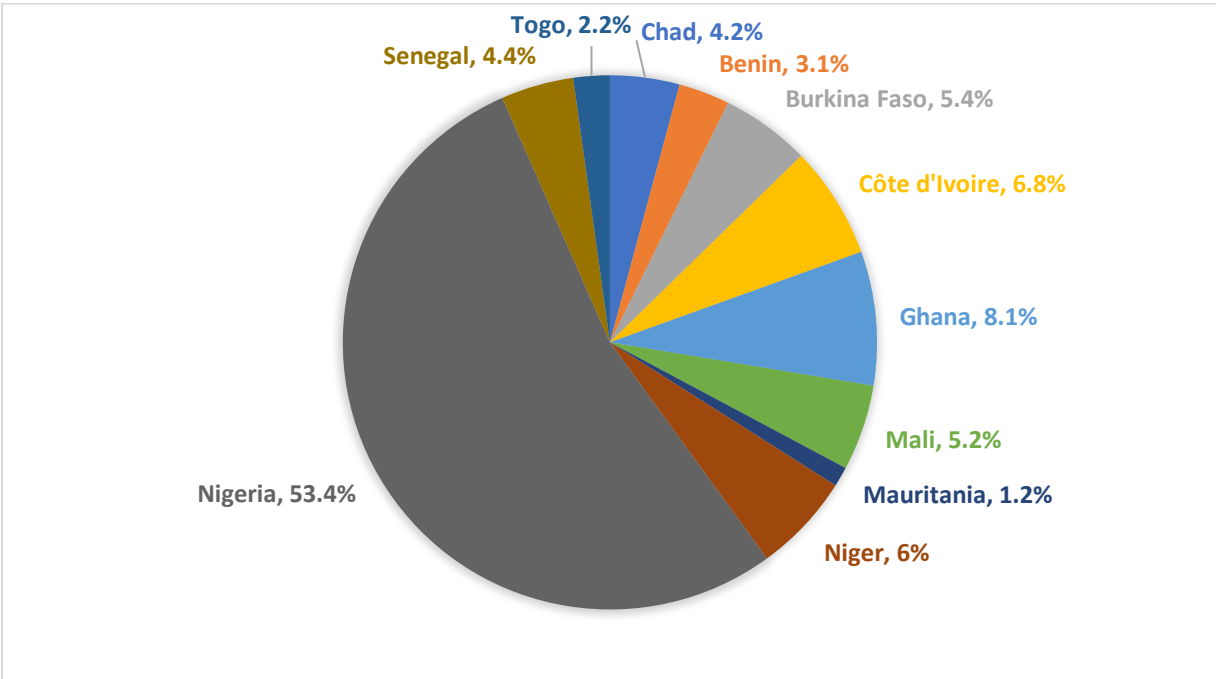
Source: UNDESA, 2019a.

⁹ Chad is now one of the countries hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa (about 500,000) after Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia. For more information, see the UNHCR website available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/chad>.

¹⁰ The region, divided along colonial lines, is generally composed of two distinct linguistic blocks, namely English-speaking and French-speaking regions.

The regional population distribution among countries remained virtually unchanged between 1990–2017, with mostly equal growth rates. In 2017, more than half of the region's population, 190.9 million according to United Nations estimates, was located in Nigeria, while Mauritania, on the other hand, accounted for only about 1.2 per cent of the region's population, with around 4.4 million inhabitants. While Nigeria represents 53 per cent of the population (see figure 3), no other country exceeds 10 per cent of the region's population. Even Ghana, which is second, is home to only 8.1 per cent (28.8 million) of the region's total population.

Figure 3 : Population distribution of the region in 2017

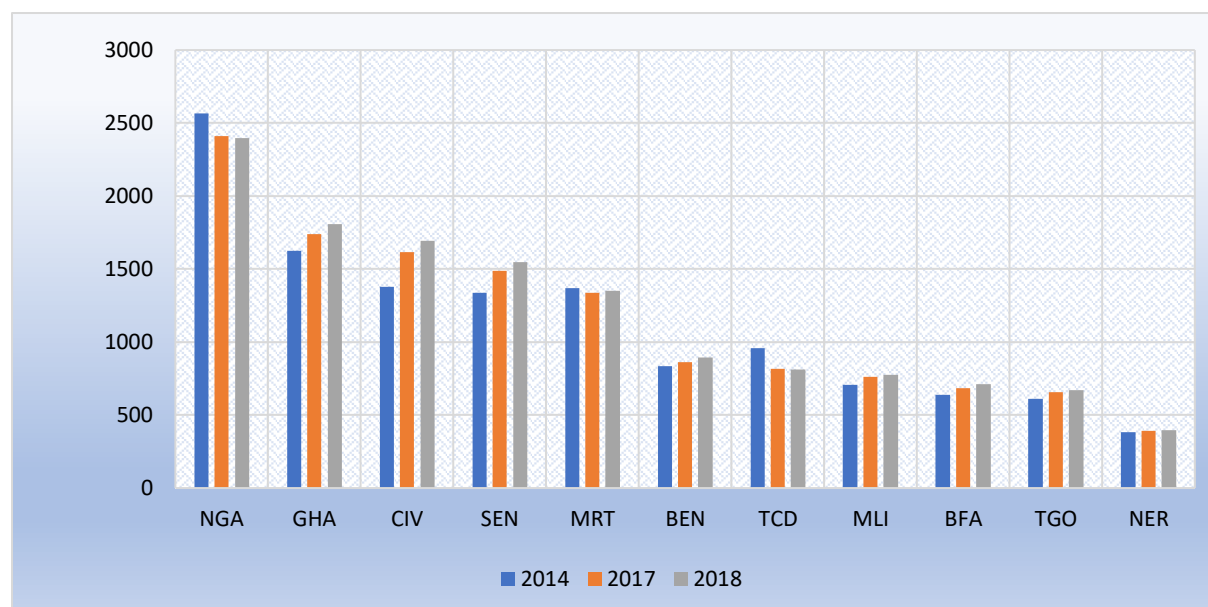


Source: UNDESA, 2019a.

In terms of levels of development as expressed by income per capita (GDP/capita), the region is composed mainly of low- and lower-middle-income countries. According to the World Bank's 2019 classification, five of the 11 countries surveyed are classified as lower-middle-income, being Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal. The other six countries, Chad, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Togo, are classified as low-income or worse, with GDP per capita in 2018 ranging from US\$896 (Benin) to US\$398 (Niger). The economic growth in the subregion over the past decade is impressive and varied across all countries. However, since 2015, growth has declined in most of the studied countries, excluding Burkina Faso, Ghana, and, to a lesser extent, Senegal.

Figures 4 and 5 present more GDP data in the subregion by country.

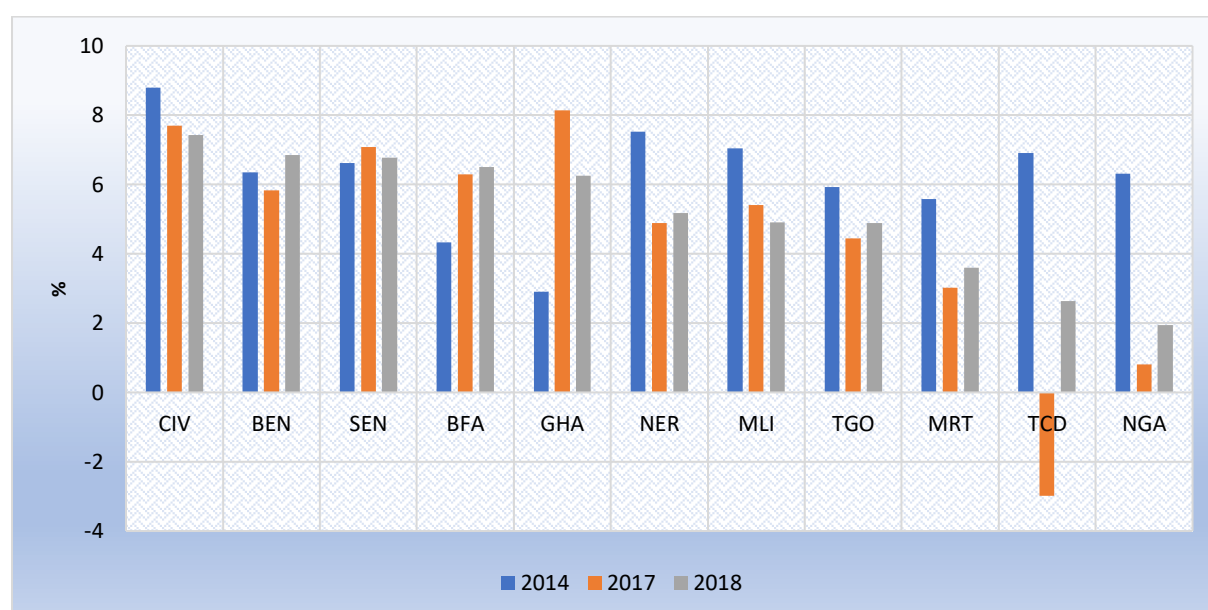
Figure 4 : GDP per capita in the subregion by country, 2014–18 (in US\$)



Note: BEN: Benin; BFA: Burkina Faso; CIV: Côte d'Ivoire; GHA: Ghana; MLI: Mali; MRT: Mauritania; NGA: Nigeria; NER: Niger; SEN: Senegal; TCD: Chad; TGO: Togo.

Source: World Bank, 2019.

Figure 5 : Real GDP growth in the subregion by country, 2014–18 (per cent)



Note: BEN: Benin; BFA: Burkina Faso; CIV: Côte d'Ivoire; GHA: Ghana; MLI: Mali; MRT: Mauritania; NGA: Nigeria; NER: Niger; SEN: Senegal; TCD: Chad; TGO: Togo.

Source: World Bank, 2019.

Seven countries recorded growth of at least 5 per cent in 2017 and 2018, and five of them (Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Mali, Niger and Senegal) experienced this rate of growth since 2014; agriculture being a contributing factor. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that political stability in Côte d'Ivoire since 2011 has renewed the dynamism of the private sector and services sector (2019 IMF

data). Public investment, particularly in infrastructure, also contributed to this development. In Niger, the performance of the oil sector is often cited as a large contribution to the country's economic growth rate. Increased investment in infrastructure and the mining sector, as well as exports of zirconia, groundnuts and phosphate, partly explain the growth recorded in Senegal. In Nigeria, real GDP growth was estimated at 1.9 per cent in 2018, reflecting a recovery in services and industry, particularly in mining, utilities and manufacturing. In Chad, real GDP grew by about 2.8 per cent in 2018, following a contraction of 3.8 per cent in 2017, due to the renegotiation of a loan debt by Glencore Corporation's (an oil enterprise) in early 2018¹¹ and significant external financing (AfDB, 2019).

The sometimes spectacular economic growth in the subregion has increased many indicators for development, yet there is little improvement in the access to decent employment. In the majority of cases, this is due to various structural factors including informal sector dominance, low remuneration of agricultural work, inadequate supply and demand structures, internal conflicts, political instability and a lack of labour market information (El-Aynaoui and Ibourk, 2016).

Table 3 presents data on the proportion of a country's working-age population that is employed and the unemployment rates in the countries included in this study. In Mauritania, the low unemployment rates, not exceeding the 10.3 per cent threshold, are misleading as they discount the high rates of informal employment, underemployment and youth unemployment. Nor does data reflect the long-term structural effects of high population growth and informality in job creation. The latter prevents enterprises from reaching a size that would create productivity gains and higher growth.

Table 3 : Access to employment in the subregion by country, 2018

	Employment-to-population ratio	Unemployment rate (%)
Benin	69.7	2.1
Burkina Faso	62.6	6.1
Chad	69.7	2.2
Côte d'Ivoire	55.9	2.5
Ghana	63.0	6.7
Mali	64.2	9.6
Mauritania	41.5	10.3
Niger	78.5	0.3
Nigeria	51.9	6.0
Senegal	43.4	6.5
Togo	76.4	1.7

Source: World Bank, 2019.

¹¹ Chad and the Glencore Corporation signed an agreement in February 2018 to restructure an oil-backed loan of over US\$1 billion. The agreement extends the term of the loan from 2022 to 2030, reduces the interest rate, and adds a two-year grace period for repayment of the principal.

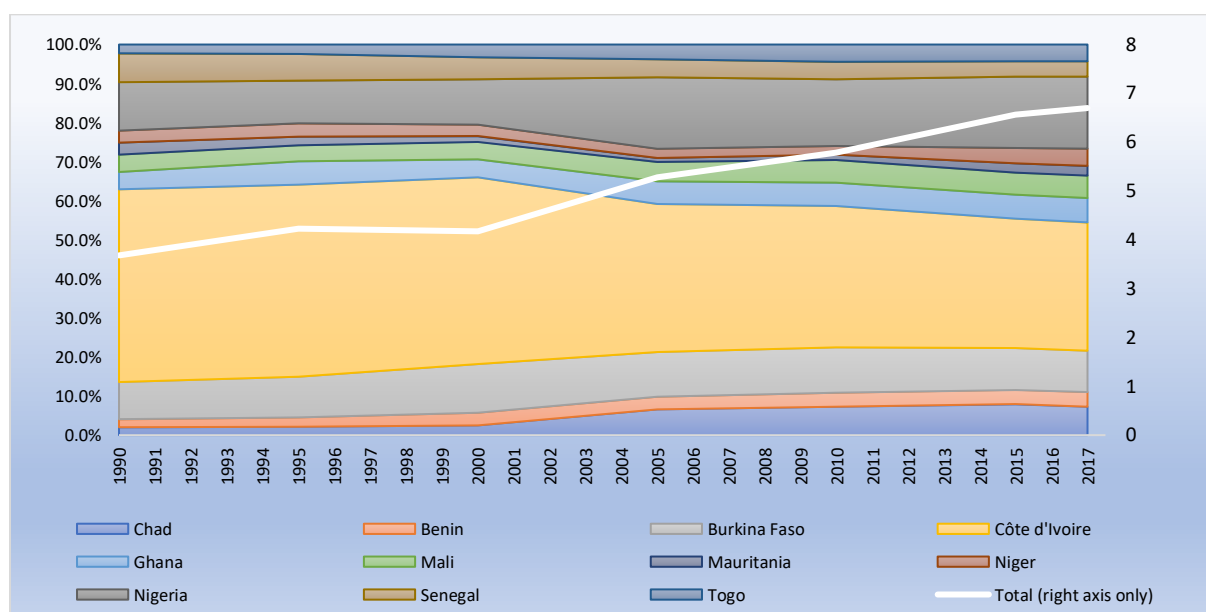
3. Trends and patterns of intra-regional labour migration

This section aims to trace labour migration trends and patterns in the subregion using the country analyses to identify employment or at least job searching as the primary motivation. Escaping conflict and seeking a better living environment is clearly another motivation. An analysis of existing regional migration data and its spatial distribution in receiving countries were used to map the trends and patterns. It also presents the socio-economic characteristics of migrants, including gender, age, education and/or skill level, and occupational sectors.

3.1. Evolution, quantity and typology of migration in the subregion

In 2017, the international migrant stock in the subregion was estimated at 6.7 million. Over half (51.2 per cent) of the migrants were located in only two countries, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Concerning the evolution of migration, following a growth rate of 14.7 per cent during the 1990s, international migration experienced a remarkable increase between 2000–2017, from a measured population of 4.2 to 6.7 million migrants, a growth rate of over 60 per cent (see figures 6 and 7).

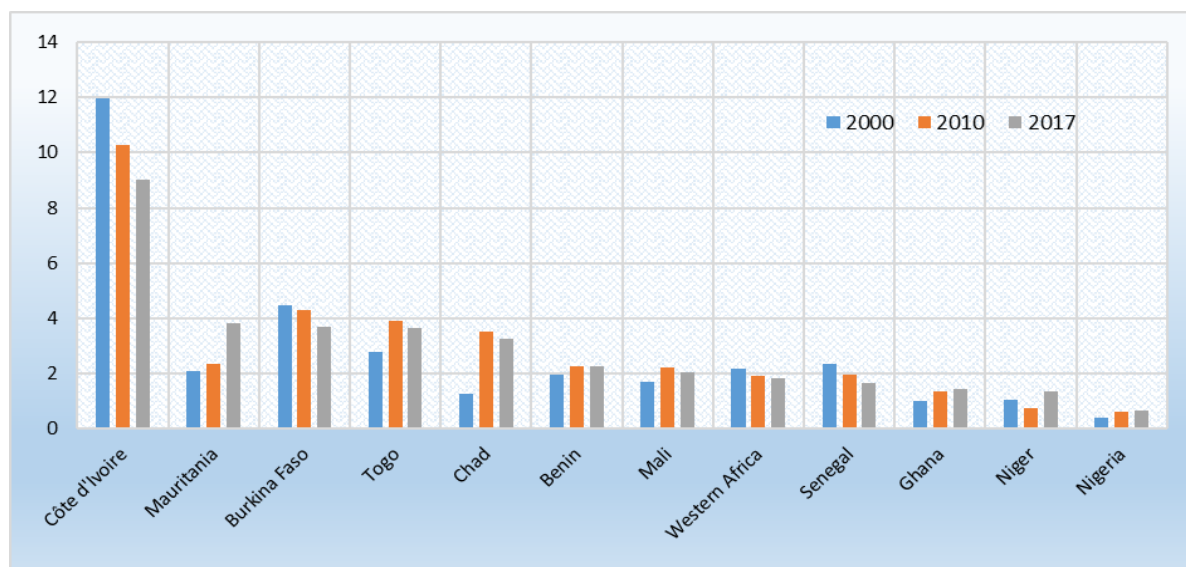
Figure 6 : Evolution of the stock of international migrants in the subregion, 1990–2017 (in millions)



Source: UNDESA, 2019b.

In relation to the country's total population, UNDESA data reveal the quantity of the international migrant stock in the total population is the highest in Côte d'Ivoire but has been declining since 2000. Côte d'Ivoire abolished the residence permit as an immigration requirement for ECOWAS nationals in 2007. In the other countries surveyed, the portion of international migrants barely exceeded 4 per cent in 2017. Indeed, for most of these countries in 2017, the foreign population accounted for only about 2 per cent of the total population.

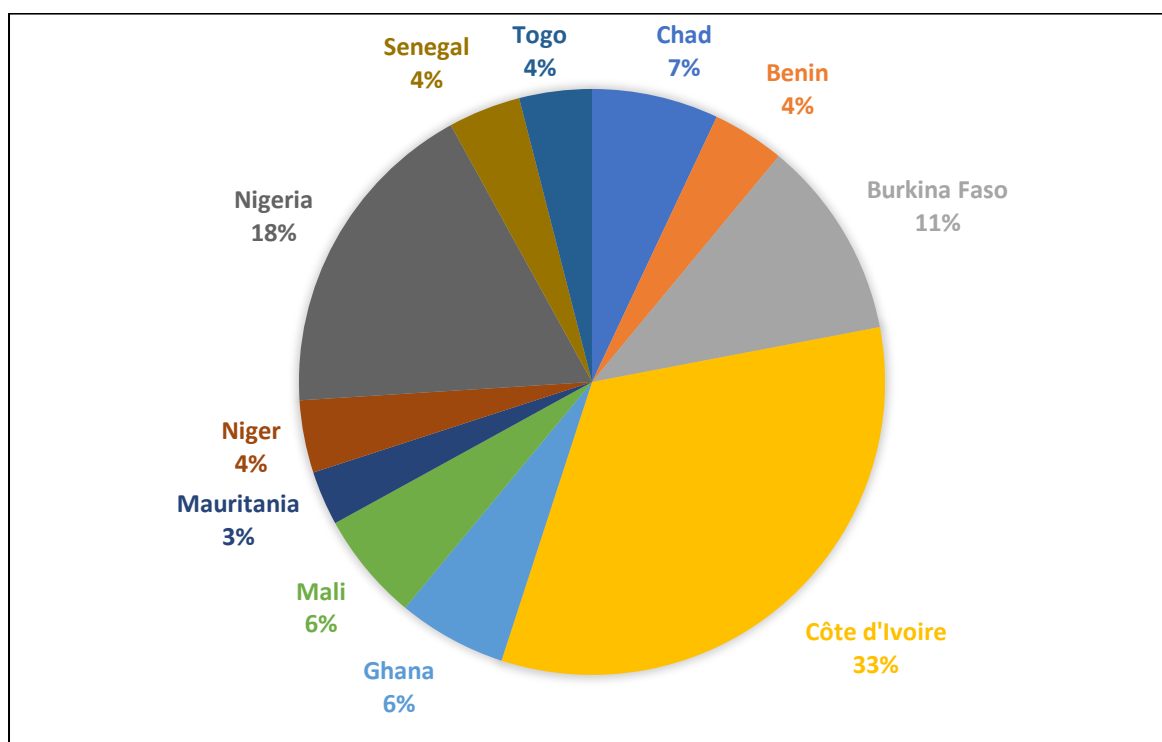
Figure 7 : Stock of international migrants as a percentage of total population



Source: UNDESA, 2019b.

In 2017, one third of the international migrant stock in the subregion was in Côte d'Ivoire, 2.2 million migrants according to UN estimates. Nigeria, which most recently accounted for 18.4 per cent of the subregional migrant stock, with 1.2 million, increased its share from 12.4 per cent in 1990 to about 18.3 per cent in 2015. Conversely, Côte d'Ivoire's representation has steadily fallen from 49.3 per cent in 1990 down to 33.1 per cent in 2015. Mauritania accounts for only about 2.5 per cent of the subregion's migrant stock, or some 168 000 persons (see figure 8).

Figure 8 : Distribution of the stock of international migrants in the subregion, 2017 (per cent)



Source: UNDESA, 2019b.

Mauritania, while representing only a small percentage of the international migrant stock, is one of the main destinations for the 740,385 refugees and asylum-seekers in the subregion. Of this total, Mauritania is home to 77,891 refugees/asylum seekers, mainly Malians in the Mberra camp, which represent 46 per cent of the total population of foreigners living in Mauritania. Chad remains the subregion's leading host country for refugees and asylum-seekers, with approximately 442,400 persons, while Niger has approximately 124,900 persons. For the rest of the coastal subregion, there has been a reduction in large-scale refugee movements that were once widespread in all West Africa, thanks to the end of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the political tensions in Côte d'Ivoire. However, many refugees and asylum-seekers from Central Africa and Mali continue to move into the subregion, particularly to the states along the coast. It should be noted that these refugees also contribute to the active labour force (Boateng, 2012). Estimated figures for refugees and asylum seekers are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 : Estimated stock of refugees (including asylum seekers)

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Benin	657	2 317	3 977	5 558	7 139	708
Burkina Faso	355	521	686	609	531	34 160
Chad	-	100	17 692	275 412	347 939	422 438
Côte d'Ivoire	136 381	297 908	120 691	41 627	26 218	2 842
Ghana	4 102	83 200	12 991	53 537	13 828	19 265
Mali	13 411	17 916	8 412	11 233	13 558	16 257
Mauritania	60 000	34 394	350	632	26 717	77 891
Niger	792	27 622	58	301	314	124 827
Nigeria	3 571	8 118	7 270	9 019	8 747	1 781
Senegal	58 113	66 769	22 715	23 341	22 849	17 511
Togo	3 477	10 876	12 223	9 287	14 051	22 705
Total	280 859	549 741	207 065	430 556	481 891	740 385

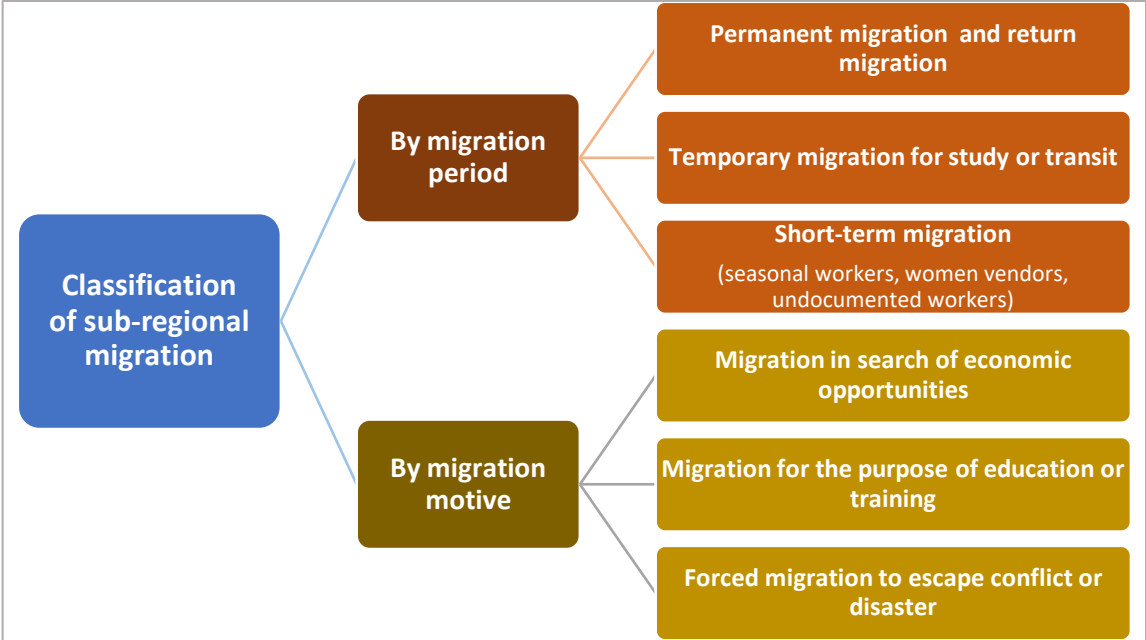
Source: UNDESA, 2019b.

Regarding typology, the analysis categorizes migration along two primary dimensions, time and motivation. The temporal categories of intra-regional migration are divided into three typologies. The first includes permanent migration and return migration. Permanent migration is mainly present in ECOWAS countries, with nationals having taken advantage of the Protocol on Free Movement to resettle permanently or stay in another member state for relatively longer periods. The second typology includes educational and transitional migration. For such movements, the duration of the stay may exceed one year. The third and final typology includes migration of seasonal workers, temporary cross-border workers, women traders, professionals and illegal workers (Awumbila et al., 2014), and usually concerns movements of shorter duration.

Concerning migrant motivations, this analysis distinguishes three categories. The first is the search for economic opportunities, such as employment, trade or other. The second is the pursuit of education or training, and the third is the desire to escape and avoid conflict in the search for a safer living environment. In this sense, it should be noted that large-scale refugee movements are widespread in the subregion (Ogata, 2005; Boateng, 2012).

To these two primary dimensions a third dimension can be added, namely, irregular migration. Although ECOWAS is a zone of free movement, a large number of border crossings are irregular (Benattia et al., 2015).

Figure 9 : Migration typology in the subregion



Source: Prepared by the author.

Another important feature of contemporary migration patterns is that movements are essentially intra-regional. The degree of intra-regional migration within this subregion is about 75 per cent and is among the highest in Africa. In addition to permanent migration, intra-regional patterns of circular or seasonal labour migration are historically common (Anarfi et al., 2003). This is not always the case, as in Chad, whose subregion accounts for only 1.2 per cent of total foreign influx but the country represents an important transit point, hosting mainly Central and East African communities that expand the stocks of refugees and asylum-seekers in the subregion. Tables 5 and 6 present data on migrant inflows to and from the subregion and the main destination of emigrants, respectively.

3.2. Spatial organization of foreigners

According to data from the 11 countries studied, the areas most affected by immigration generally include major and capital cities, the centres of economic activity and capitals. In principle, such locations offer more employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. These migration hotspots appear in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou in Mauritania, Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, and Lagos in Nigeria, among many others. Immigration also concerns regions and areas where agricultural activity flourishes. Migration outside Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, is concentrated in the forest areas of Bas-Sassandra (17.9 per cent) and the Montagnes region (14.6 per cent), that together host most of the country's agriculture. A similar case is Sikasso in Mali, the most active agricultural area, known for the cultivation of cotton, one of the country's main exports.

Table 5 : Distribution of migrant inflows to and from the subregion by country of origin, 2015

	Host country										
	Benin	Burkina Faso	Chad	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Nigeria	Senegal	Togo
Benin	..	4 178	..	54 068	16 551	4 035	551	17 908	351 985	3 487	71 438
Burkina Faso	9 948	..	..	1 294 323	57 733	23 922	..	19 323	..	..	13 601
Chad	699	..	..	..	15	..	51	756	29 175	..	713
Côte d'Ivoire	13 742	540 779	..	..	30 359	20 144	462	1 419	..	2 715	5 746
Ghana	10 211	32 217	..	42 749	..	18 561	206	1 680	222 377	1 724	46 794
Mali	1 290	43 815	..	356 019	4 949	..	104 491	94 640	160 967	32 930	8 122
Mauritania	..	..	..	7 997	13	17 189	..	..	..	51 490	145
Niger	75 775	12 757	3 115	49 783	5 826	3 819	150	..	112 733	1 633	65 529
Nigeria	44 603	5170	2 977	38 917	67 629	11 840	..	73 179	..	819	31 974
Senegal	..	4 033	..	18 994	72	5 501	17 630	1 150	..	..	1 008
Togo	48 118	15 393	..	50 328	87 494	6 653	144	9 702	147 698	1 613	..
Sub-region	204 386	658 342	6 092	1 913 178	270 641	111 664	123 685	219 757	1 024 935	96 411	245 070
Sub-regional share	83,3 %	93,4 %	1,2 %	87,9 %	67,7 %	30,6 %	74,3 %	86,9 %	85,5 %	36,6 %	88,5 %
Total entries	245 399	704 676	516 968	2 175 399	399 471	365 145	166 552	252 998	1 199 115	263 242	276 844

Source: UNDESA, 2015.

Table 6 : Main destinations of emigrants from the subregion by country of origin, 2015

Benin		Burkina Faso		Chad		Côte d'Ivoire	
Nigeria	351 985	Côte d'Ivoire	1 294 323	Sudan	74 514	Burkina Faso	540 779
Togo	71 438	Ghana	57 733	Cameroon	72 077	France	91 484
Côte d'Ivoire	54 068	Mali	23 922	Nigeria	29 175	Liberia	38 041
Gabon	33 794	Niger	19 323	Congo	10 565	Ghana	30 359
France	20 765	Togo	13 601	Central African Republic	10 029	Italy	25 555
Niger	17 908	Italy	11 657	France	7 545	Mali	20 144
West Africa	524 876	West Africa	1 419 721	West Africa	31 798	West Africa	661 448
World	608 559	World	1 451 286	World	226 437	World	841 241
Ghana		Mali		Mauritania		Niger	
Nigeria	222 377	Côte d'Ivoire	356 019	Senegal	51 490	Nigeria	112 733
United States	153 393	Nigeria	160 967	France	18 073	Benin	75 775
United Kingdom	108 102	Mauritania	104 491	Mali	17 189	Togo	65 529
Togo	46 794	Niger	94 640	Spain	8 532	Côte d'Ivoire	49 783
Italy	46 548	France	76 855	Côte d'Ivoire	7 997	Burkina Faso	12 757
Côte d'Ivoire	42 749	Guinea	52 433	The Gambia	3 257	Cameroon	10 741
West Africa	386 464	West Africa	872 165	West Africa	82 134	West Africa	328 604
World	826 994	World	1 057 333	World	118 570	World	353 698

Nigeria		Senegal		Togo			
United States	273 095	France	119 898	Nigeria	147 698		
United Kingdom	199 216	The Gambia	118 452	Ghana	87 494		
Cameroon	108 697	Italy	84 815	Côte d'Ivoire	50 328		
Niger	73 179	Spain	49 461	Benin	48 118		
Ghana	67 629	United States	40 295	France	24 171		
Italy	56 259	Gabon	19 746	Burkina Faso	15 393		
West Africa	282 780	West Africa	182 613	West Africa	368 130		
World	1 180 589	World	544 791	World	438 492		

Source: UNDESA, 2019b.

In some countries, foreigners are located in refugee camp areas closer to urban centres. In Mauritania, the high proportion of foreigners in the wilaya of Hodh Chargui (57.2 per cent) is mainly due to the presence of a Malian refugee camp.

Areas with a high foreigner density may also be transit points for migrants planning to reach other target destinations, normally attracting large numbers of migrants, such as Nouadhibou in Mauritania, which functions as the economic capital. In addition, some high-density migration areas coexist with extraction, exploitation and processing sites for raw materials, as in the case of Agadem, Niger or Inchiri, Mauritania. Table 7 presents the high-density immigration areas or regions in each country.

Table 7 : High-density immigration areas or regions by country

Country	Areas/regions of concentration of immigrants
Burkina Faso	Centre, Centre-West, Centre-East, Mouhoun Loop, Hauts-Bassins, South-West and North
Chad	South on the Central African border, East on the Sudanese border and West on the shores of Lake Chad
Côte d'Ivoire	Abidjan, Bas-Sassandra, Montagnes and Sassandra-Marahoué regions
Ghana	Accra
Mali	Bamako, Sikasso, Kayes, Ségou, Koulikoro
Mauritania	Hodh Chargui, Nouakchott, Dakhlett, Nouadhibou, Inchiri
Niger	Niamey, Tillabéry, Tahoua, Diffa
Nigeria	Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Port Harcourt
Senegal	Dakar, Ziguinchor, Kolda
Togo	Greater Lomé, Savannah region, Maritime region, Plateaux region

Source: 2020 Country reports in the Reference section.

3.3. Characteristics of migrants in the subregion

3.3.1 Distribution of migrants by age and gender

Analysis of data on the distribution of migrants in the subregion by age and gender reveals two focal characteristics of migrant populations: i) a dominance of males with increased feminization; and ii) a dominance of youth within the working-age migrant population.

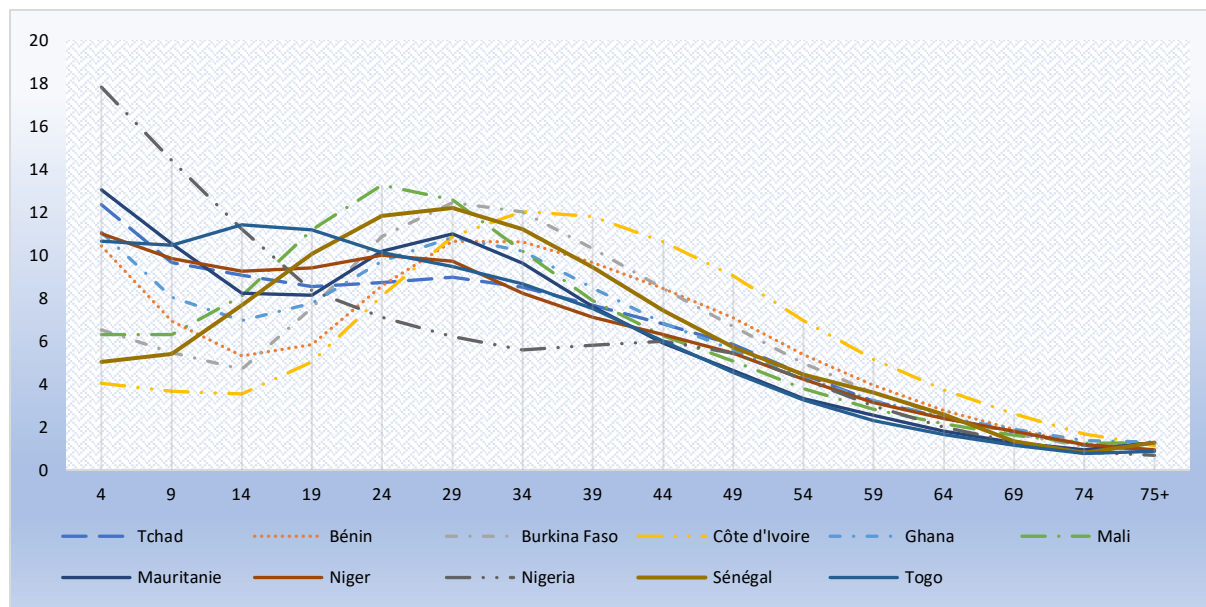
The first characteristic is that the subregional migrant population is male dominated, accounting for 53.3 per cent of total migrants in 2015. However, trends in the gender distribution indicate that female migrants are increasingly involved and are contributing more and more to both formal and informal wage employment (Awumbila et al., 2014). Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger already have a relatively high rate of feminization in the migrant workforce.

For the second characteristic, data provided by UNDESA reveals that most migrants belong to the working-age group (15–60 years). This group constitutes a varying majority between nations from 54 per cent in Nigeria to 83 per cent in Côte d'Ivoire. By gender, about 53 per cent of male migrants in Nigeria are of working-age, and 81 per cent in Côte d'Ivoire. This is an indicator for the main cause of migration in the subregion, namely the search for livelihood. The data provides only an overall picture,

making it difficult to state the ages of migrants accurately (see figure 10 UNDESA data on the distribution of migrants in the subregion by age group below).

A significant proportion of migrants are children or adolescents under 15 years, ranging from 11 per cent in Côte d'Ivoire to 43 per cent in Nigeria. This can be explained by the increased feminization of migrants and the importance of family migration. It is also an indicator for a growing quantity of pupils and students in migrant populations.

Figure 10 : Distribution of migrants in the subregion by age group, 2015 (per cent)



Source: UNDESA, 2015.

3.3.2. Migrants' education, qualifications and occupations

Analysis of data on the educational attainment of migrants shows that the majority has low to very low levels of education (see Table 8). A possible explanation is the low literacy and high dropout rates in the subregion. For example, 54 per cent of all international immigrants living in Burkina Faso have no education. For international immigrants arriving in the last five years the rate is 67.7 per cent without education. Even in Ghana, which has a large number of student migrants, nearly 36 per cent of economically active foreigners in 2010 had no education. Only 11.2 per cent had a primary level and 40 per cent a secondary level education.

There is clear difference in the educational attainment of immigrants in Ghana compared to native Ghanaians. The aforementioned proportion of immigrants who never attended school was 36 per cent compared to 23.8 per cent for Ghanaians. There is, however, little difference between immigrants and native Ghanaians in post-secondary education, 3.8 per cent compared to 3.6 per cent, respectively, and even less difference between those with business, vocational or technical skills, 1.8 per cent compared to 1.7 per cent, respectively. In addition, international migrants settled in Mali have low levels of education but sought-after technical skills (see the 2020 Mali country study in references).

Table 8 : Educational attainment of established migrants by country

Country/source	Description
Burkina Faso (MEF-INSD, RGPH 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54.2% of lifetime international immigrants have no level of education, 26.1% have primary school, 15.5% have secondary school and 3.8% have higher education. • 67.7% of recent international immigrants have no level of education, 18.5% have a primary school education, 8.4% have completed secondary school, and 4.3% have a higher education. • Women are the least educated, with 72.2 per cent without a level of education compared to 63.8 per cent of men.
Côte d'Ivoire (ENSESI 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74.3% of international immigrants have no level, 16.5% have an elementary level, 8.2% have reached secondary school, and very few have reached higher and technical secondary school. • The same trends are observed by gender.
Ghana ¹² (RGHP 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% of active international immigrants have no level of education, 11.2% have elementary school, 13.8% have secondary school and 7.4% have higher education.
Mali (EMOP 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59.9% of international immigrants have no level of education, 20% have elementary school, 8.7% have secondary school and 11.4% have higher education.
Mauritania ¹³ (RGHP 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54.9 per cent of international immigrants have no level, 17.5 per cent have a Koranic education, 16.3 per cent have an elementary level and 7.1 per cent have reached secondary school. • International immigrants with technical and vocational education account for only 0.4%, and those with higher education account for 2.7%.
Niger (country study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the lack of precise indicators, the level of education of the majority of international migrants is very low, as is the general level of education of Nigeriens. • Between 18 and 43 per cent of nationals from other ECOWAS countries have no level of education.
Nigeria (country study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of migrants settled in Nigeria have a low level of education.
Senegal (RGPHAE 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54.2% of international immigrants have no level of education, 15.3% have primary school, 14.6% have secondary school and 10.9% have higher education.
Togo (RGPH 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54.9% of lifetime international immigrants have an elementary level, 27.6% have only reached junior high school and only 10.4% have reached senior high school. • The same trends are observed by gender.

Note: A lifetime immigrant is a person whose area of residence at the census or survey date differs from his area of birth.

Source: Multiple sources.

With regard to occupations, intra-regional migration is mainly motivated by economic reasons despite the flow of refugees and students. For example, in Burkina Faso, 49.9 per cent of international immigrants are employed, 24.4 per cent are in education or training, 13 per cent are homeworkers, with the remaining 10.2 per cent being inactive. As for recent international migrants, 58 per cent are employed, with men predominating (66.1 per cent) compared to women (48.6 per cent).

¹² Data for Ghana refer to the labour force.

¹³ Mauritania figures do not include refugees.

Seasonal labour migration is associated with the agro-ecological zone of the Sahel and its relatively short rainy season, alternating between the forests and the transitional agro-ecological zones (Adepoju, 2007 and 2010). Short-term migration also includes temporary cross-border workers, female traders and domestic workers, professionals and illegal workers. From time to time, labour migration responds to various natural resource discoveries and the implementation of growth plans leading to large infrastructure investments.

A small number of migrants are employed in the formal sector, while most migrants work in agriculture, construction and informal services. It is difficult to compare the sectors in which migrants are strongly present, however, analysis of the country studies reveals that in most countries migrants tend to work informally as traders, artisans, farmers or domestic help.

In Niger, international migrants are most commonly found in agriculture (39.9 per cent), in trades and services (30.9 per cent), as well as in handicrafts (22 per cent), notably artisanal gold panning. These three sectors also have a relatively low share of native workers. Examples of established migrant populations are Nigerians in the sale of spare parts and Burkina Faso in vegetable production. The sale of fuel at service stations and certain transport companies was frequently done by Malians and Mauritians. Sectors that employ a highly educated workforce include new technologies (ICT, etc.), construction, mining and quarrying for specific tasks, as well as humanitarian organizations and NGOs.

In Senegal, foreigners represent only a small part of the country's population but play an important economic role. Migrants from the Gulf of Guinea (mainly Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Togo), tend to be more skilled (IOM, 2016).

In Nigeria, West African migrant workers are mainly in the construction industry (tiling, plumbing, welding and manufacturing), along with other professions or trades characterized by a strong presence of foreign labour. These are the roofing trade (migrants from Chad), security (migrants from Niger), sewing (migrants from Mali and Senegal) and domestic help (migrants from Togo). The Banana and Snake Islands in Lagos were built mainly by migrant workers from Togo and Benin. Table 9 confirms that the vast majority of migrant workers in the subregion are in low-skilled jobs in the informal sector.

In conclusion, the analysis of intra-regional labour migration trends and patterns highlights the following points:

- The trend is toward continued growth of the international migrant population, from 4.2 million in 2000 to some 6.6 million in 2015 and 6.7 million in 2017.
- The subregion's migratory movements are among the highest in the whole of Africa, where 75 per cent of migrants stay within the subregion.
- The majority of migrants are motivated by economic reasons, with the country analysis indicating employment and the search thereof as the main motivations. Escaping conflicts and seeking a safer living environment is also a profound motivation for migration.
- There is a dominance of young migrants within the working-age migrant population, accompanied by an increased feminization of the migrant population.
- The educational and technical-vocational qualifications and occupations of migrants indicate that the majority have a relatively low- to very- low-level of education.
- High density areas of immigration are generally large cities, as centres of economic activity, capitals, refugee camps and traditional transit points.

Table 9 : Main sectors and occupations of migrant workers

Country	Occupation of immigrants	Devillard et al. (2016)	Occupation of emigrants
Benin		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade and catering • Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly skilled "intellectual" jobs (Gabon, education sector) • Low- and medium-skilled jobs in the city • Trade, fisheries (Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire), agriculture • Medical sector
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and Public Works with the Togolese, Beninese and Ghanaians • Catering with Senegalese and Togolese people • Service in bars/bars and hotels with Togolese and Ivorians • Prostitution with Nigerian women • Trade with Malians • Mining with the Ghanaians, especially during the mining boom in the early 2000s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Trade and crafts (in urban areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural occupations: farmers, farm labourers and labourers, animal husbandry and hunting (50.3%) • Commerce, shopkeepers, salespeople and mechanics (25.8%) • Hotels and restaurants (14.6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries • Industry, services and trade • Education 	
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled and unskilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers (41%) • Service and sales workers • Craftsmen and related workers (15%) • Managers and managers (3.5%) • Elementary occupations (8.6%) • Professionals (5.4%) • Plant and machine operators (4.9%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors • Wholesale and retail trade • Repair of motor vehicles • Informal sector, independent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail trade and sales • Construction and agriculture • Mechanical, electrical and carpentry • Medical sector
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extractive activities • Commerce • Construction • Catering and hotel business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade, agriculture, fisheries, industry (Côte d'Ivoire) • Livestock (Algeria, Libya) • Manual work (France)

Country	Occupation of immigrants	Devillard et al. (2015)	Occupation of emigrants
Mauritania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing • Construction and services • Private education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy sector • Construction • Domestic work and hotels • Trade and entrepreneurship 	
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTP, with many workers of Togolese and Beninese origin • Bar-restaurants and hotels and domestic staff, with many Togolese and Beninese workers • Guarding, with many Burkinabés and Malians • Private education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal trade • Medical sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture (neighbouring countries) • Industry, Commerce, Hotels and Health (OECD)
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining and quarrying • Manufacturing and construction (tiling, plumbing, welding and manufacturing) • Retail trade, services (domestic help, water supply, repair of motorcycles and motor vehicles), sewing, recreation and arts • Safety area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit and vegetable trade, transport (Guineans) • Sale of painted articles (Malian) • More skilled jobs (Ivorians, Beninese and Togolese) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, real estate, distribution (OECD)
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity of hotels, bars and restaurants • Fruit and vegetable trade and transport (Guinean migrants) • Sale of painted articles (Malian women) • Kola nut industry (Malian men) • Manufacturing Branches • Other services • Manufacture of food products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal sector 	
Togo		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors • Wholesale and retail trade • Repair of motor vehicles • Informal sector, independent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and health

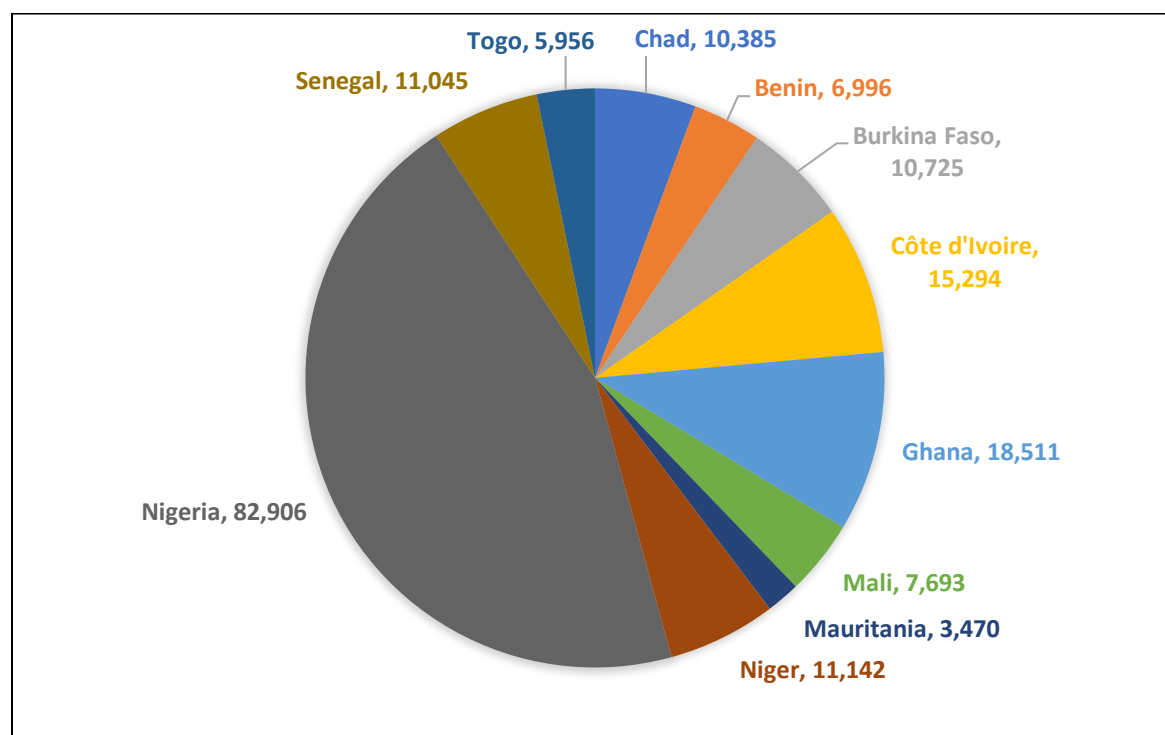
Sources: Country Reports 2020 and Devillard et al. (2015).

4. Job supply and demand: State of play and the place of foreign workers in the subregion

4.1. Total job supply and demand

According to World Bank data (2017), the employed labour force in the subregion reached 184,123,614 in 2017, representing an employment ratio of about 51.52 per cent, of which 49.3 per cent are women. Nigeria is the largest employment pool, with nearly 83 million jobs, the majority of which are vulnerable. Nigeria's vulnerable employment rate was 78.5 per cent in 2017, which is very close to the rate for the whole subregion at 78.6 per cent, 24 per cent of which are unpaid family jobs. This reveals the dominance of own-account informal employment in all vulnerable jobs (Table 10). This rate hides disparities in vulnerable employment among the subregion, ranging from a minimum of 65.3 per cent in Senegal to a maximum of 93.1 per cent in Chad.

Figure 11 : Distribution of total employment in the subregion by country, 2017 (in thousands)



Source: World Bank data in World Development Indicators, 2017.

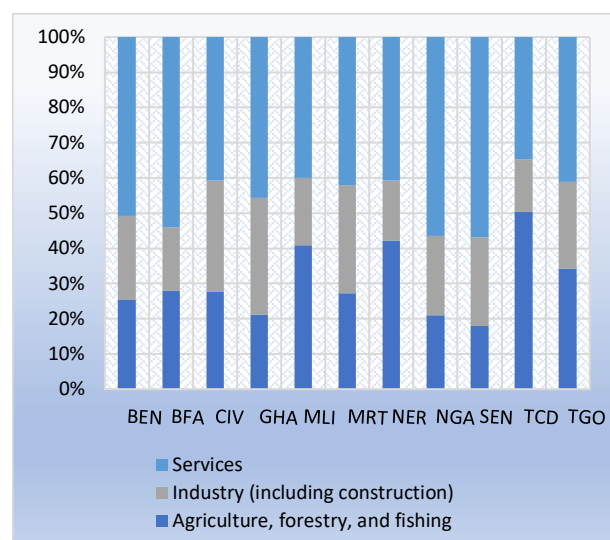
The primary sector provided over 43 per cent of the 184.12 million jobs in the subregion in 2017, though its importance continues to vary from country to country. Agriculture is the main provider of employment in Chad (81 per cent), Niger (76 per cent), Mali (66 per cent), Mauritania (56 per cent), Côte d'Ivoire (48 per cent) and Benin (42 per cent). Its supply of employment is highest in Chad, where it accounts for 81.7 per cent of total employment, equal to 8.5 million jobs. In the case of Nigeria, agriculture accounts for about 37 per cent of the country's labour force, contributing nearly 30.5 million jobs, a much higher volume than in other countries.

Despite the current dominance of the primary sector, its share in economic growth and employment has declined over the years, mainly in favour of services. This is seen in Ghana, where the role of agriculture has declined from 34.3 per cent of GDP and 56 per cent of employment in 2007, to 18.3 per cent and 34.3 per cent in 2017, respectively. As the leading supply of employment in five countries

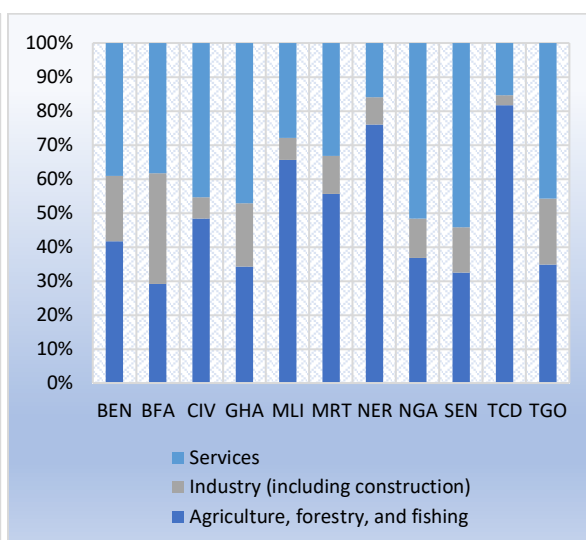
(Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Senegal and Burkina Faso), the services sector provided 80.6 million jobs in the entire subregion in 2017, with more than half of these jobs concentrated in Nigeria (43 million). In Burkina Faso, the services sector accounted for about 55 per cent of GDP in 2017 and represented 38 per cent of the employed labour force. The sector was mainly driven by non-market services, which contributed 20.9 per cent of the economy's overall value added in 2016. In Côte d'Ivoire, the third largest tertiary employment pool in the subregion, the services sector provided 7 million jobs in 2017, mainly in the informal sector. Formal employment in services was dominated by wholesale and retail trade (30 per cent), private education (5 per cent), transport services, investment, real estate and construction, hotels and restaurants, and financial services.

Figure 12 : Sectoral distribution of GDP and employment by country in the subregion, 2017

Sectoral distribution of GDP



Sectoral distribution of jobs



Note: BEN: Benin; BFA: Burkina Faso; CIV: Côte d'Ivoire; GHA: Ghana; MLI: Mali; MRT: Mauritania; NGA: Nigeria; NER: Niger; SEN: Senegal; TCD: Chad; TGO: Togo.

Source: World Bank data, 2019.

Industrial employment in the subregion represented 23.5 million jobs in 2017. Burkina Faso was the most industrial economy, accounting for nearly 33 per cent of total employment in 2017, or 3.5 million jobs. The latter are mainly concentrated in extraction and construction. These two industries also made up the bulk of the secondary sector in most of the subregion with resource discoveries giving a boost to employment in extractive activities and construction. Construction remains a potential vector of employment if the countries of the subregion succeed in reducing infrastructure weaknesses at both national and transnational levels.

The manufacturing industry was limited to light processing of primary products and consumer goods production. The development programmes and strategies of West African nations continue to aspire to transform and diversify manufacturing to bring new jobs in light industries.

On the labour demand side, the country studies show that low educational attainment is the most common characteristic of the employed labour force. The unemployment rate of this population was consistently the lowest in the subregion, with the exception of Mauritania and Togo, where the advantage shifted to applicants with at least an intermediate education. Unemployment was highest among young people with higher education, except in Senegal where the rate is about 6.8 per cent, the lowest in the subregion.

Table 10 : Overview of employment supply and demand in the subregion, 2017

	Employment/ population ratio	Employment (millions)								Partici- pation rate (%)	Unemploy- ment rate (%)
		Total	Informal (%)	Vulnerable	Family	Women	Agriculture	Industries	Services		
Benin	69.58	7.00	94.5 (2011)	6.16	1.12	3.78	2.92	1.35	2.73	72.0	2.2
Burkina Faso	62.76	10.72	92 (PEFOP. 2016)	9.29	4.36	5.14	3.13	3.50	4.10	68.1	6.0
Chad	69.71	10.39	-	9.67	2.78	4.73	8.49	0.32	1.58	71.4	2.2
Côte d'Ivoire	55.92	15.29	87.7 (2016)	11.11	2.11	5.63	7.41	0.96	6.93	58.2	2.5
Ghana	63.05	18.51	83.2 (2015)	12.81	1.75	8.71	6.34	3.45	8.72	69.0	6.6
Mali	64.31	7.69	90.1 (2016)	6.91	2.17	5.05	5.06	0.49	2.15	72.9	9.4
Mauritania	41.51	3.47	86.5 (ENS. 2013)	1.84	0.31	0.54	1.93	0.38	1.15	47.4	10.3
Niger	78.54	11.14	86.4 (2011)	9.93	3.14	7.24	8.48	0.90	1.77	80.2	0.3
Nigeria	51.90	82.91	-	65.07	13.14	44.53	30.52	9.59	42.80	55.2	6.0
Senegal	43.40	11.05	90.4 (2015)	7.21	2.59	2.56	3.59	1.47	5.98	47.8	6.4
Togo	76.51	5.96	-	4.62	1.51	2.91	2.08	1.15	2.73	79.0	1.7
Total	51.52	184.12	-	144.64	35.26	90.81	79.94	23.54	80.64	-	-

Source: World Bank, 2017.

Table 11 : Overview of employment demand by level of education in the subregion, 2017

	Unemployment rate			Unemployment rate ratio			Participation rate			Activity rate ratio		
	Basic	Intermediary	Advanced	Basic	Intermediary	Advanced	Basic	Intermediary	Advanced	Basic	Intermediary	Advanced
Benin (2011)	2.46	6.05	12.10	0.93	2.29	4.57	78.01	45.07	66.17	1.09	0.63	0.92
Burkina Faso (2014)	6.02	7.87	11.49	0.93	1.21	1.77	58.63	45.96	58.22	0.89	0.70	0.89
Chad	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Côte d'Ivoire (2016)	4.29	5.74	11.72	1.65	2.21	4.51	51.81	52.88	62.90	0.86	0.88	1.04
Ghana (2015)	6.11	14.22	7.09	0.90	2.09	1.04	70.13	69.45	83.89	1.01	1.00	1.21
Mali (2016)	2.12	13.21	18.52	0.22	1.36	1.90	47.14	65.63	79.49	0.76	1.06	1.28
Mauritania (2012)	17.46	11.50	13.87	1.77	1.17	1.41	37.16	38.50	70.26	0.85	0.88	1.61
Niger (2014)	1.55	3.51	7.29	4.80	10.89	22.65	69.09	41.82	68.85	0.94	0.57	0.94
Nigeria (2016)	6.33	11.54	13.69	1.01	1.85	2.19	60.66	69.43	74.31	0.81	0.93	1.00
Senegal (2015)	8.40	11.20	17.83	1.24	1.66	2.64	43.31	34.67	56.32	0.95	0.76	1.24
Togo (2015)	6.34	1.88	8.23	3.75	1.11	4.86	83.19	75.14	64.48	1.52	1.37	1.18

Source: World Bank, 2017.

These indicators highlight the difficulties of integrating young jobseekers into the labour markets of the countries of the subregion. This is all the more worrying since participation rates are relatively high (Table 10), population growth is persistent and the majority of jobs are in vulnerable and informal employment. Table 11 shows an overview of employment demand by level of education.

4.2. Skills shortages in the countries studied: sources and sectors concerned

4.2.1. Sources and sectors affected by quantitative and/or qualitative shortages

According to economic theory, labour shortages and surpluses are a permanent feature of decentralized labour markets. Skills shortages occur when employers are unable to recruit qualified workers in a given occupation.

There are two types of skills shortages: quantitative and qualitative. The first refers to the lack of labour with the skills needed to work in a given trade or occupation. The second refers to the lack of specific skills sought by the employer. Generally, the latter type of shortage is more difficult to identify, due in part to the unavailability of data.

Despite the absence or weakness of labour market information systems in the majority of the countries studied, several reports and studies conducted in recent years on specific sectors, as well as interviews conducted with various stakeholders, have identified significant quantitative skills shortages in many trades. Thus, according to the ILO country studies (see list of 2020 country studies in the References section) there is a need for skilled or semi-skilled labour for various occupations in agriculture and agribusiness (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, Chad), the industrial sector (Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo) and the tertiary sector (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria) (see table 12).

The factors that may explain these quantitative shortages are many and varied; common causes among the different countries deserve to be highlighted here. The lack of certain training courses or the inability of the training system to produce enough labour with the necessary skills to meet labour demand continues to lead to shortages in several sectors. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, conventional TVET does not train agricultural and livestock technicians; this task is left to the training centres sponsored by the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock. For a country where almost 50 per cent of employment is concentrated in the agricultural sector, the 3,000 learners currently being trained in these centres are not enough to meet the sector's needs. Similarly, in Togo, shortages occur primarily in industry, particularly in the mining sector; until 2018, vocational training opportunities for the mining sector did not exist.

Other problems related to the quality of the courses offered and their inadequate responsiveness to labour market demands also contribute to the lack of qualified personnel in the subregion.

These examples refer to the lack of TVET financing in most of the countries studied, which results in an insufficient number of people trained. This may also be a symptom of the low level of education of the population, which limits access to technical and vocational training structures for a variety of reasons. There is also disinterest in practical training when it is seen as a spill-over from those who have failed in general education, further contributing to low participation rates in TVET and its inability to meet the demands for skilled manpower in certain sectors. In addition to problems of access to and low participation in training – combined with low capacity of labour market information systems – another factor is the lack of employer knowledge or acceptance of qualifications for specific occupations. In Burkina Faso, for example, the non-recognition by employers of diplomas issued by TVET training centres is noted as one of the main causes of skilled labour shortages in their sectors.

Apart from the problems associated with TVET provision, and the limits imposed on its role in meeting the skills needs of various sectors, the quantitative shortages of skilled and semi-skilled labour can also be explained by a lack of public interest in certain occupations. In Côte d'Ivoire, garbage collection and management occupations are perceived as having little value and are struggling to attract a sufficient workforce. In Niger, trades and services, such as the hotel and restaurant industries, suffer from labour shortages due to cultural and religious reasons, while in other sectors such as construction, job abandonment is a recurrent phenomenon due to poor/difficult employment conditions and inadequate remuneration.

With regard to qualitative skills shortages, the same factors mentioned above apply. Despite the difficulty in obtaining relevant and complete information on these more specific issues, some problems emerged as recurrent across the country studies in the subregion. One of these is that some vocational streams have not been able to develop their skills in relation to the new economic environment, resulting in training lacking relevance to labour market needs.

In Nigeria, for example, it is pointed out that computer skills are frequently missing among those applying for professional positions (11.8 per cent). In Côte d'Ivoire, training in automotive mechanics and electrical trades has not kept pace with the latest models of vehicles equipped with electronic and digital engines, which logically translates into qualitative shortages in these sectors. Once again, these examples clearly demonstrate the difficulties linked to the low level of TVET financing, which rarely has the necessary equipment or the commitment of the private sector to contribute to the design of training modules and the implementation of workplace training through internships or apprenticeships. This is in contrast to the informal sector, where informal or traditional apprenticeships remain the main mode of training.

4.2.2. Link between skills shortages and migration

As mentioned above, information on skills shortages at the national level is limited. Moreover, even where some data exist, it is not necessarily linked to employer needs, TVET strategies or migration management. In Mauritania, for example, there is evidence that the content of sectoral studies on labour shortages is often unknown or ignored by training and migration policy-makers. As a result, structured policies and measures for identifying and anticipating skills are rarely observed. Faced with the lack of information, potential migrants make their own analysis of the situation through their information networks with a view to seizing opportunities. Employers, for their part, often use migrant workers to fill needs not met by the local labour force for the reasons outlined above, but are also motivated by a number of other factors, which are explained below. In general, therefore, it is difficult using existing available data to measure comprehensively how the hiring of migrant workers compensates for a lack of skilled labour in the labour market.

In sectors where TVET has not been developed, and where these deficits have resulted in quantitative skills shortages at the local level, employers in the countries studied often rely on foreign labour to meet their needs. This is the case in Burkina Faso in the formal construction sector, for example, where the country has long lagged behind its neighbours, Ghana, Togo and Benin, in terms of professional qualifications. Moreover, since the trades of structural work (masonry) and finishing work (tiling, painting, etc.) are considered degrading and painful, labour shortages are partially filled by migrant workers.

Table 12 : Skills shortages in the studied countries, by type

Country	Quantitative shortages	Qualitative shortages	Quantitative and qualitative shortages
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trades in the mining sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and construction trades
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welding • Electricity and industrial refrigeration trades • Agriculture • Maintenance of biomedical equipment • Bakery and confectionery trades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and construction trades • Auto mechanics and electricity • Crafts and trades • Domestic work • Hotel / catering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers and handling of heavy-duty machinery • IT and telecom • Technical occupations in mining, oil and gas • Renewable energies • Agro-industry • Textile, design • Deep-sea fishing • Tourism • Waste management/environmental management
Chad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural, livestock, forestry and fishing 		
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupations in the health sector • Occupations in the education sector • University teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafts and Trades • Commercial professions • Handling of heavy machinery or industrial equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronics • Electrical trades • Professions in the NICT sector • Hospitality and tourism sector • Energy, oil and gas
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Crafts and trades • Service sector trades • Trades in the commerce sector • Industrial occupations 		
Mauritania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and construction trades • Industrial occupations • Tertiary sector 		

Country	Quantitative shortages	Qualitative shortages	Quantitative and qualitative shortages
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary sector • Building and construction trades • Commercial professions 		
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professions in the NICT sector • Hairdressing and fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer skills • Plant technicians and operators 	
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, agri-food and seafood; mining and fertilizers; energy • Industrial, assembly and processing sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management in construction works • Insurance techniques and compatibility of reinsurance in the financial services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professions in the air, sea and rail transport infrastructure and logistics sector
Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupations in the industrial sector • Boiler making professions 		

Source: Country reports 2020

In Mauritania, a statistical analysis of work permits (valid until the end of December 2018) revealed that nearly two-thirds (64.5 per cent) of all migrants working with a valid work permit were employed in sectors with labour shortages. It was also noted, with regard to qualitative skills shortages, that migrant workers sometimes fill a gap in expertise at the national level. In Togo, for example, Ghanaian skilled labour is in high demand for the production of architectural roofing in tiles or sheet metal for residential buildings in Lomé.

There is also evidence that migrant workers fill certain jobs which are not always justified by skills shortages at the national level. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, businesses promoters may choose to hire a migrant because it is cheaper, or the fact that migrants are more accepting of difficult working conditions and hard work. In Togo's crafts-related services sector, the contribution of migrants is often not a response to skills shortages, but rather linked to other areas of labour market activity in which nationals have little presence. This is the case of retail sales in hardware, canvas or clothing, second-hand clothes, tools and used equipment from industrialized countries.

Broadly speaking, the overview of the analysis of labour supply and demand in the surveyed countries in the subregion reveals the following salient points:

- There is a dominance of migrant workers in the primary and tertiary sectors, especially low-skilled services such as retail trade. In the secondary sector, migrant employment is mainly in extraction and construction.
- There is a generally high demand for employment, very likely due to the impressive rates of demographic growth, indicating greater demand in the future.
- Labour demand is high for vulnerable and/or informal employment.
- In-flows of foreign workers are motivated mainly by employment, or at least the search for it. Most of these migrants are searching for low-skilled work in sectors which may not face substantial labour shortages, such as agriculture, trade and construction.
- The lack of employment and career development, especially for the highly educated, as well as poor working conditions in the subregion, are often determining factors in the displacement of the highly skilled population.

In conclusion, the analysis conducted in this section on labour supply and demand in the subregion indicates:

- A high contribution of women and youth to employment, as well as a high prevalence of vulnerable employment (78.5 per cent of employment in the subregion).
- A dominance of agriculture and low value-added services (such as retail trade) and a strong contribution of the agriculture and services sectors to job creation in the subregion.
- A continued decline in the share of the primary sector in growth and employment over the years in favour of services.
- Low levels of education of the employed labour force.
- A labour market that fails to provide decent jobs for the growing number of young job seekers.
- The presence of imbalances, especially qualitative ones.
- Labour shortages are present in the subregion and are likely to persist in the absence of an effective system for identifying and anticipating occupations and skills in most countries, while the training capacity of some countries is far from being able to provide dynamic responses to the continual variations in needs (see section 7).

5. Legal, policy and regional cooperation frameworks: State of play and implementation

5.1. Multilateral frameworks on migration and its governance: UN and ILO Conventions

A review of adherence to multilateral frameworks on migration and its governance in the subregion shows that only two countries, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, have ratified the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97). In addition to Burkina Faso, only Benin and Togo have ratified the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). In contrast, seven out of 11 countries have ratified the UN's International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990. These three Conventions provide a multilateral framework for the protection of migrant workers and guiding principles for labour migration policy at all stages of the migration process, including measures to regulate migratory movements.

In addition to the specific instruments for the protection of migrant workers, the ILO fundamental Conventions provide a broader framework and broader rights that includes all workers including migrants.¹⁴ In fact, the ILO fundamental Conventions are widely ratified by the States of the subregion.¹⁵ However, these States are struggling to integrate the principles of these conventions into national legislation, and to monitor labour and employment policies at the regional level in order to comply with ILO reporting obligations.

5.2. Intra-regional policy frameworks

5.2.1. ECOWAS Treaty and protocols on free movement

The legal framework provided by the 1979 Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment, and the additional protocols thereto, allows ECOWAS citizens to enter, reside and establish economic activities in the territory of other Member States. Adopted in 1980, the protocol provides for the progressive implementation of these rights in three phases (see Table 14):

- I. **Entry phase:** The right of visa-free entry.
- II. **Residence phase:** The Additional Protocol (A/SP.1/7/86) grants Community citizens the right to "reside in other Member States in order to seek and take up paid employment" (Article 2) in accordance with the legal and administrative provisions governing the employment of national workers. It also establishes the principle of equality of treatment between migrant workers and nationals as regards, in particular, job security, access to training and education and access to social, cultural and health services. It also offers protection to migrant workers and their families against mass expulsion and sets out the conditions for individual expulsion.
- III. **Establishment phase:** The Additional Protocol (A/SP. 2/5/90) grants Community citizens the right to take up, establish, manage and pursue economic activities under the same legislative conditions as nationals of the host Member State. It also protects migrant workers against confiscation or expropriation of capital and property on the basis of discrimination.

¹⁴ The rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, the prohibition of forced and child labour and non-discrimination in employment and occupation are widely considered essential to protect the human rights of migrants.

¹⁵ A number of general policy documents refer to the standards enshrined in ILO instruments and the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Table 13 : Ratification of international instruments for the protection of migrant workers

	Benin	Burkina Faso	Chad	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Nigeria	Senegal	Togo
ILO – Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)		1961							1960		
UN – Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	1962	1980	1981	1961	1963	1973	1987	1961	1967	1963	1962
OHCHR – Refugee Protocol, 1967	1970	1980	1981	1970	1963	1973	1987	1970	1968	1967	1969
ILO – Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	1980	1977									1983
UN – Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	1990	1990	1990	1991	1990	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1990
UN – Convention on Migrant Workers, 1990		2003			2000	2003	2007	2009	2009	1999	
UN – Trafficking in Persons Protocol, 2000	2004	2002	2009	2012	2012	2002	2005	2004	2001	2003	2009
UN – Protocol on the Smuggling of Migrants, 2000	2004	2002			2012	2002	2005	2009	2001	2003	2010

Sources: ILO Conventions, UNDESA 2019b.

Table 14 : Status of ratification of the ECOWAS protocols on free movement of persons and goods

	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Benin	√		
Burkina Faso	√		
Côte d'Ivoire	√		
Ghana	√	√	√
Mali	√		
Niger	√		
Nigeria	√		
Senegal	√		
Togo	√	√	√

Source: Awumbila et al., 2014.

The additional Protocols attach particular importance to labour migration governance issues, especially those relating to labour supply and demand, monitoring and sharing of labour market information, harmonization of employment and labour policies, prevention of employment of irregular migrants and removal of administrative and legal obstacles. Actions undertaken for the implementation of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols are summarized in table 15.

Table 15 : Some actions undertaken for the implementation of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols, 2013

	Abolition of visa and entry requirements for stays of up to 90 days	Introduction of the ECOWAS travel certificate ¹⁶	Introduction of the ECOWAS passport ¹⁷
Benin	√	X	√
Burkina Faso	√	√	
Côte d'Ivoire	√	X	√
Ghana	√	√	√
Mali	√	X	
Niger	√	√	√
Nigeria	√	√	√
Senegal	√	X	√
Togo	√	X	√

¹⁶ The travel certificate is a travel document instituted by ECOWAS that allows citizens of Member States to move freely and is intended for citizens who do not have a passport and who want to make a short trip within ECOWAS. It is valid for one year.

¹⁷ The ECOWAS passport introduced in December 2000 is intended to replace national passports. Obtaining it allows longer stays while avoiding repeated procedures and formalities.

Source: Awumbila et al., 2014.

The Protocols on free movement offer few details on workers' rights. They do not establish uniform standards for the respect of the fundamental rights of migrant workers, but rely mainly on national legislation of the individual Member States to determine the conditions under which migrants can work. The protocols also do not provide for mechanisms to monitor implementation or to provide remedies to migrant workers in case of violations of their rights.

5.2.2. Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 1993

This revised Treaty¹⁸ was signed in Cotonou in July 1993 and reaffirms the creation of ECOWAS, establishing it as the sole economic community for the West African region. This important treaty takes into account the rights of ECOWAS citizens, including migrants, as outlined in Article 59.¹⁹

1. Citizens of the Community shall have the right of entry, residence and establishment and Member States undertake to recognize these rights of Community citizens in their territories in accordance with the provisions of the Protocols relating thereto.
2. Member States undertake to adopt all appropriate measures to ensure that Community citizens enjoy fully the rights referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article.
3. Member States undertake to adopt, at national level, all measures necessary for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Article.

The revised Treaty further commits Member States to strengthening cooperation and harmonizing employment policies and programmes and "encouraging the exchange of skilled manpower" (Chapter XI, Article 60). It also calls on Member States to harmonize labour and social security legislation (Article 61)²⁰ and to set up mechanisms for consultation with socio-economic organizations (Article 82).²¹ However, a listing of fundamental labour rights is still lacking and little mention is made of monitoring mechanisms.

Despite these shortcomings, it should be noted that the Protocols adopted on free movement, and the Articles of the Revised Treaty provide a solid basis for establishing free movement and are widely recognized as best practice for international cooperation on labour migration. However, progress in the implementation of these protocols has been slow and uneven. So far, only the right of entry has been fully implemented. Ensuring adequate conditions for intra-regional mobility in West Africa in favour of migrants remains a major challenge for ECOWAS.

5.2.3. Treaty on the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), 1994

Under Article 91 of the Treaty of 10 January 1994, WAEMU members reaffirm the right of free movement of nationals of member countries. The only limitations to this right are those justified on grounds of "public policy, public security and public health".²²

Article 92 of the Treaty allows nationals, companies and firms and legal persons, identified in accordance with the law of a Member State, to enjoy the right of establishment throughout the

¹⁸It was signed by the Heads of State from: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The full text of the treaty is available at: <https://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Revised-treaty.pdf>.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 36

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 36–37.

²¹ Ibid., p. 45.

²² The treaty is available at: http://www.uemoa.int/en/system/files/fichier_article/traitrevisuemoa.pdf.

territory of the Union. The Union also adopted the Directive of 16 December 2005 on the reduction of checkpoints on the Union's interstate highways.

5.2.4. Recommendations of the OAU-UNHCR Symposium on Refugees and Forced Population Displacement in Africa, 1994²³

The document addresses the crisis of refugees and displaced persons in Africa, making 34 recommendations. The recommendations are divided into ten main sections: i) root causes of refugee flows and other forced population displacements; ii) 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; iii) protection of refugees in Africa; iv) material assistance to refugees; v) internally displaced persons; vi) solutions to refugee problems; vii) other populations in need of protection and humanitarian assistance; viii) emergency preparedness and response; ix) relief and humanitarian assistance to sustain economic stability; and x) institutional aspects.

5.2.5. Protocol on Education and Training A/P. 3/1/03, 2003²⁴

This protocol commits ECOWAS Member States to cooperate in the fields of education and training in order to implement:

- An effective system of liaison between Member States for the Union as a whole, as well as the collection and exchange of information and data on the present and projected education and training needs of the region.
- Mechanisms and institutions that will produce the technical, research and management frameworks needed to facilitate access to information while mobilizing the resources of Member States.
- Comparable education and training policies, strategies and systems adapted to the needs of Member States within a co-operative framework and involving the private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders in education and training.
- High quality, cost-effective postgraduate speciality programmes in all fields for Member States.
- Policies, strategies and programmes to promote the study and application of science, technology, computer programming and research and development.
- Facilities to reduce and eliminate the constraints which prevent Member State nationals from having access to a good education and from taking advantage of training opportunities, both men and women alike.
- A fund called "ECOWAS Education and Training Fund" to support cooperation in the field of education and training.
- Specialized centres and centres of excellence in the subregion, where programmes will be jointly developed and delivered to ensure the quality of education, training and research in the region.

Article 4 of the Protocol covering cooperation underlines the importance of implementing coherent, comparable, harmonized and standardized policies through regional cooperation and mutual assistance mechanisms. This commitment covers, inter alia, the following aspects:

- Improving the quality and adaptation of education and training to the development process.

²³ These recommendations are available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/excom/exconc/3ae68c614/recommendations-oauunhcr-commemorative-symposium-refugees-forced-population.html>.

²⁴ The Protocol is available at: <http://fawe.org/girlsadvocacy/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ECOWAS-Protocol-on-Education-and-Training.pdf>.

- Harmonizing admission criteria for higher education and vocational training institutions, as well as procedures for the recognition of qualifications.
- Developing and producing teaching materials through Member State collaboration.
- Conducting research to establish comparability, equivalence and standardization in education and training systems.

Article 20 of the Protocol also states that it will enter into force provisionally upon signature, which is the date on which the signatory Member States and the Executive Secretariat begin its implementation. The Protocol has only made limited progress, due in part to infrastructural insufficiencies and low capacity to collect data on skills needs and share knowledge at the national level (see section 7).

With regard to education and training policies, strategies and systems, the section on development and recognition systems indicates the comparability of certain aspects, the existence of practices for the recognition of prior learning and the existence of embryonic co-operative frameworks bringing together the private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders in education and training.

Within this Protocol framework, progress has been noted in the medical sector including: i) the revision and finalization of the harmonized general medicine curriculum in the ECOWAS space; ii) the development of consensual criteria for accreditation of the general medicine curriculum in the ECOWAS subregion; iii) the preparation of harmonized general medicine curricula in English, French and Portuguese; and iv) the preparation of harmonized codes of ethics for doctors, dental surgeons, nurses and midwives.

5.2.6. Intra-regional migration policies

The Common Approach to Migration was adopted in 2008 by the Conference of Heads of State at the 33rd ECOWAS Summit (ECOWAS, 2008).²⁵ This approach is the main general framework on migration of the ECOWAS Commission, and has the objective of establishing a link between migration and development, as well as minimizing the negative impacts of migration. The document sets out six main principles.

1. The **free movement of persons** is one of the fundamental priorities of the integration policy of ECOWAS Member States.
2. **Legal migration** to other ECOWAS Member States is a vector of development.
3. The **fight against human trafficking** and humanitarian assistance is a priority.
4. Intra-migration strategies should focus on **harmonization of migration policies**.
5. **Protection of the rights** of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees should be upheld; and
6. Recognition of the **gender dimension of migration policies** should be reflected in intra-regional strategies.

With regard to mobility and the protection of the rights of migrant workers, the Common Approach is limited to reaffirming the commitment to implement the protocols on free movement, promoting the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants and Members of Their Families and formulating an active integration policy. With regard to freedom of movement, it further provides:

²⁵ This document was commissioned following the adoption by the African Union, in 2006, of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa. However, the recommended strategies for labour migration policies within the African Union's migration policy framework are largely absent from the Common Approach.

- Modalities for the implementation of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment.
- Operationalization of the Regional Cross-Border Cooperation Fund.
- The definition of a regional spatial planning strategy.

Concerning the management of regular migration in the subregion, it provides for:

- The implementation of pilot experiments at national and regional levels.
- Facilitating access of students from the region to African and other universities, institutes and *grandes écoles*, as well as their return migration at the end of their studies.
- Broadening the range of university and technical courses offered, taking into account the needs of the labour market.
- The creation or strengthening of centres of excellence, and entrepreneurship training and business development support structures.
- Strengthening the dialogue framework between host and transit countries.
- Capacity building in migration management.

With regard to the coherence of migration policies, it provides for: i) the establishment of a system for monitoring migration and migration policies; and ii) policy coherence on migration and development. One of the outcomes of the Common Approach was the development of a framework and action plan on gender and migration.²⁶ The main areas of intervention focus on addressing gaps in data on women's migration, awareness-raising and training in gender-sensitive approaches to migration and the integration of a gender perspective into migration policies.

To date, progress in implementing the Common Approach has been limited, partly due to a lack of awareness and ownership of the document at national levels. Also, the approach is hampered by the lack of strategic vision and comprehensiveness in its action plans, but above all by the lack of coordination and cooperation regarding its implementation in the absence of funds and monitoring mechanisms.

The following are specific action plans or policies linked to migration and ECOWAS.

5.2.6.1. ECOWAS Labour and Employment Policy, 2009

The integration of this policy within national migration policies is due to the fact that this is a regional rather than a national employment policy. It is aimed at harmonizing and coordinating employment policies and programmes so that the movement of labour contributes optimally to the transactional efficiency of each of the regional markets.

The policy calls for the identification and resolution of labour market problems, stressing that it is imperative for ECOWAS to create partnerships between governments, trade unions, employers' organizations and NGOs to facilitate a wide range of activities. Established in a context of crisis and job losses, the policy was the outcome of the 2nd Conference of ECOWAS Ministers of Labour and Employment on the Validation of ECOWAS Labour Policy, held in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 6–9 April 2009.

ECOWAS has recognized that regional labour policy faces several challenges, including:

²⁶ The Plan was adopted by the Ministries of Gender Equality and Women's Affairs in June 2011. The document is still under revision and is considered a draft, available at: https://www.ccdg.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/Plan-of-Action_Gender-and-Migration.pdf.

- Lack of relevant employment data in the region.
- Non-generalization of the ratification of the eight ILO fundamental Conventions.
- The need for compliance with labour monitoring and reporting obligations.
- Widespread poverty, unemployment, high incidence of migration, trafficking in human beings, and child labour.
- Inadequate national labour legislation and policies in Member States, as well as weak labour institutions, poor collective bargaining structures and poor implementation of effective workplace policies.
- Harmonization, coordination, use and implementation challenges inherent in a regional common labour policy aimed at stimulating economic growth and development through the full participation of stakeholders.

5.2.6.2. Strategic Action Plan for ECOWAS Labour Policy, 2009

As a complement to the ECOWAS Labour and Employment Policy, this plan focuses on five main areas of action or intervention, namely: i) the promotion of international standards; ii) decent work; iii) social welfare for all; iv) social dialogue and tripartism; and v) regional integration.

5.2.6.3. ECOWAS Plan of Action for Youth Employment, 2013–18

This plan, adopted in December 2012, identifies the promotion of intra-regional mobility as a priority area. Its implementation, though still in its early stages, will be pursued through:

- Development of certificate equivalency frameworks.
- Studies to generate better understanding of the situation of young migrant workers and cross-border traders.
- Strengthening labour market information systems in the subregion.
- Strengthening the employability of young people through education and vocational training.

5.2.6.4. ECOWAS Migration Strategy, 2018–28

This regional migration strategy covers a wide range of intervention pillars, including those mentioned above. Through this strategy, in addition, ECOWAS has reaffirmed the importance of the full implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in order to encourage the mobility of skills, labour and talents essential to fill capacity gaps in the region. A mixed migration strategy²⁷ would complement the ECOWAS Migration Strategy for 2018–28 (MIDWA).

5.2.7. General Convention on Social Security (CGSS)

This Convention was proposed in 1993 in the context of the adoption of the revised Treaty. It was only adopted in 2004 and has never been ratified in sufficient numbers to enter into force. In 2011, the process was relaunched with the creation of a technical working group and an update taking into account changes in national social security systems since the initial text was drafted, such as privatization (ILO and ECOWAS, 2019). The CGSS was then adopted by the Ministries of Labour and Social Protection in December 2012. In 2013, it was adopted by the Conference of Heads of State as an Additional Act to the revised ECOWAS treaty, making it a binding instrument that does not require

²⁷ According to IOM (2010), the main characteristics of mixed migratory flows are the irregular nature and multiplicity of the factors causing such movements, as well as the differentiation of the needs and profiles of the persons concerned.

ratification by Member States.²⁸ The Convention covers all workers who are nationals of ECOWAS Member States and have acquired social security rights during their stay in a Member State, as well as their family members. The CGSS also guarantees the portability of migrant workers' benefits, the accumulation of rights acquired through periods of employment or contribution periods if necessary, and the export of benefits abroad.

The next step is to set up a Committee of Experts on Social Security, as provided for in the Convention (Article 44), to examine administrative questions relating to the interpretation of the Convention, to draft model administrative documents and to prepare information to make migrant workers aware of their rights and procedures so that they can benefit from them.

5.2.8. Policy on the recognition of skills and harmonization of qualifications

The ECOWAS Convention on the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas, Certificates and other Qualifications in Member States was adopted in 2003 to increase the mobility of students, teachers and other skilled workers (ECOWAS, 2002). The Convention commits Member States to recognize the validity or equivalence of diplomas and certificates of equal academic value and commits them to provide training and education in accordance with international standards, while taking into account the regional context.

Faced with difficulties in its implementation, mainly due to language barriers and variations in education and training systems, the ECOWAS Commission launched a feasibility study on the implementation of the Convention in 2009. The study focused on the problems of poor funding, access and quality, as well as the diversity of education systems in terms of admission requirements and the level of certification examinations, but also the inconsistency of academic calendars and the inadequacy of education and training to the needs and aspirations of Member States. On the other hand, the study notes the uniformity of the cumulative number of years required to complete courses throughout the education systems of the Member States. The results of this study were presented at a meeting of regional and international experts in education and training in 2011, who agreed on the need for a system of recognition of all diplomas issued within ECOWAS to facilitate student mobility and the exchange of teachers and researchers. On the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of the study, an ad hoc committee was set up to guide the implementation process of the said system of recognition of diplomas. A second follow-up study is planned to develop, with the support of the African Development Bank, benchmarks for the recognition of diplomas by Member States.

Progress has also been made in the implementation of mutual recognition of qualifications and harmonization of curricula to encourage the mobility of professionals in the health sector, under the aegis of the West African Health Organization of ECOWAS (2015).

In addition, many past and present experiences provide a solid basis for designing mechanisms to develop systems for the recognition of qualifications in higher education and TVET. Two sub-Saharan conventions on the recognition of higher education have been adopted in the past, either at the regional or subregional level, but outside the regional economic communities. The Addis Convention is discussed below.

²⁸ The full text of the CGSS Convention is available at: https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?jsessionid=Ynnk7Orv5C1WRhaDQXC2SynagMeT_3JDFbo2skCn7B8by7mSSOrsl-1463413688?id=55335.

At the request of ECOWAS Member States, the "Abuja Process" was initiated in 2009 by the ECOWAS Commission, UNESCO and UNDP.²⁹ This led to the launch in 2010 of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the revitalization of TVET in the ECOWAS subregion. Among other things, this task force was set up to provide technical support in drafting a workplan for the establishment of national frameworks and a regional qualification framework for ECOWAS countries. The task force produced a technical output in 2011 (ibid.) on the development of national and regional qualification frameworks for the ECOWAS subregion. In particular, it proposes an analysis, guidelines and a roadmap for future interventions in this area, and was endorsed by ECOWAS experts and Ministers of Education in Abuja in October 2012. In 2018, UNESCO and ECOWAS decided to reinvigorate the 2012 guidelines and asked 15 Ministers in charge of TVET to designate national focal points for qualification frameworks in their countries. These 15 focal points now constitute the network of national experts in the subregion responsible for working to strengthen and sustain these frameworks. This group of experts has carried out several activities since then and is currently developing a workplan for the period 2019–20.

5.2.9. Arusha/Addis Ababa Convention

The African Union Commission and UNESCO revised the Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States (1981), and it is now known as the Addis Ababa Convention (12 December 2014). The Convention provides the legal means to promote the mobility of learners and workers and to strengthen intra-African cooperation in education, training and research for higher education. Since 1981, when the Ministers of Education first met, the Convention has been ratified by only 21 African States. A revised 2014 version has now been ratified by only seven African countries.

5.2.10. African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES)

CAMES was created in 1968 by Heads of State of the Malagasy African Union for higher education, meeting in Niamey.³⁰ Currently there are 19 countries participating in CAMES,³¹ the French-speaking countries of Africa and the Indian Ocean. An agreement was signed in Lomé, Togo, to establish the recognition of qualifications in higher education, with all qualifications issued by their institutions automatically becoming valid or equivalent in the territory of each of them. The agreement also recognizes the validity or equivalence of qualifications based on an assessment of study content, teaching methods, standards and quality assurance arrangements.

The CAMES agreement focused on establishing the following:

- Ongoing and permanent scientific and cultural cooperation between the Parties to the Agreement.
- Standardization of curricula and recruitment levels in higher education and research institutions.
- Monitoring the coordination of higher education systems and ensuring that scientific information is collected and disseminated to institutions.
- Four quality assurance programmes to support the above actions.

²⁹ The collaboration between UNESCO, ECOWAS and UNDP is further elaborated in their publication on regional qualification frameworks, see UNESCO, 2016; and UNESCO, ECOWAS and UNDP, 2013.

³⁰ CAMES can be seen as a follow-up to the Conference of Ministers of Education held in Paris in 1966 which decided to carry out an in-depth review of the structures and teaching of African and Malagasy universities.

³¹ Currently, 19 countries are members of CAMES: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo.

5.2.11. Bilateral Agreements

In addition to these multilateral and regional conventions, there are also bilateral conventions on the social protection of migrant workers. Examples of relevant bilateral agreements that have been signed and ratified can be found in the Appendix.

5.3. National policy and institutional frameworks vs. freedom of movement and right to work

5.3.1. Benin

The main text on the rights of migrant workers in Benin is the Constitution of the Republic of Benin (Act No. 90-32 of 11 December 1990). Under this Act, foreigners enjoy the same rights and freedoms as Beninese citizens.

In addition to the Constitution, the provisions of Act No. 65-17 on the Dahomey Nationality Code of 23 June 1965 define the conditions for obtaining naturalization in Benin.

Act No. 86-012 on the regime for foreigners in Benin and Order No. 218 establishing the residence card in Benin specify the conditions for permits and regulate entry to the country, which is conditional on obtaining a residence visa.³² This law distinguishes between immigrants and tourists, who must obtain either a tourist or residence visa depending on the duration of their stay. Order No. 213/MISAT/DC/DGPN/DRGST/SE of 3 November 1992, establishing the residence card in Benin and specifying the conditions for its issuance, provides for a brown residence card known as an "ECOWAS resident", issued only to citizens of the Community.

Act No. 98-004, 27 January 1998 of the Benin Labour Code states that its provisions apply without discrimination to all workers and that foreigners are required to obtain a work permit in order to take up employment.

Act No. 98-019 of 21 March 2003 on the Social Security Code establishes the principle of equal treatment in social security matters for all workers subject to the provisions of the Labour Code, without distinction as to sex, race, nationality or origin, when they are employed principally on the national territory. Freedom of association is also guaranteed to all foreigners residing in Benin.

5.3.2. Burkina Faso

Since its independence, the country has signed and ratified several treaties and conventions on migration in order to comply with international standards. These include agreements at the international, regional and subregional levels, as well as laws and regulations at the national level.

In addition to international, regional and subregional conventions, Burkina Faso has adopted several texts and laws at the national level on the protection of migrants. These are:

- The Constitution.
- Ordinance No. 84-49 of 4 August 1984. Stipulates that any person wishing to leave Burkina Faso must have a passport with an exit visa, a pass admitted by the country of destination, and a transport ticket (return journey) or a repatriation bond.

³² All foreigners wishing to stay in Benin must, within the first three months of their stay, obtain a permit from the national authority.

- Circular 95-0095/MAT/DGPN/DSE/DCM. Anyone wishing to enter Burkina Faso must hold a travel document bearing a Burkina Faso visa, have a return transport ticket or a deposit or be exempt from a repatriation bond.
- The A/SP Protocol 1/5/79 ratified on 6 April 1982, relative to the free movement of persons and the right of residence, covers the conditions of establishment of foreigners in Burkina Faso.
- Law No. 208 of 19 June 2008 of the Labour Code stipulates the conditions of access to work for foreigners which states that there must be no discrimination in access to work, and further specifies that an employment contract be concluded before any worker moves to Burkina Faso.

The Government of Burkina Faso also has a National Migration Strategy (2016–25) with an Action Plan (2016–2018) whose vision is the same as that of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), namely that "safe and orderly migration is beneficial to the whole society".

The need for skills recognition is more evident in sectors with a high prevalence of formal employment. A diploma is a guarantee of the knowledge acquired and can justify applying for a given job. For jobs in the informal sector, which characterizes the majority of the labour market, the recognition of skills is not systematic. Apart from self-employment initiatives, access to informal employment is most often gained through personal or family relationships or direct recourse to the employer.

5.3.3. Côte d'Ivoire

The main legal texts governing labour law in Côte d'Ivoire are: (i) the Constitution; (ii) the Labour Code No. 2015-532 of 20 July 2015; (iii) implementing decrees; (iv) the interprofessional collective agreement of 20 July 1977; and (v) establishment agreements. All these texts guarantee free access to the labour market for migrants and non-nationals (article 11.1 of the Labour Code); though some restrictions on non-nationals apply.

First of all, civil service jobs are reserved exclusively for nationals. Also, authorities may take measures to protect their citizens through a policy of "*Ivoirisation*" of managers.³³ Texts relating to this regulation impose visas linked to the employment contract of foreigners and the payment of fees to the State by the hiring employer. Accordingly, any job vacancy in a private company must be the subject of a call for applications for one month, sanctioned by a wide dissemination through communication channels. If, at the end of this period, a candidate of Ivorian nationality cannot be found to meet the required skills criteria, a non-national which meets the criteria may be recruited. In view of the limited resources and the low capacity for monitoring recruitment activity, it is not certain that the recruitment of non-nationals always complies with this provision.

Moreover, the exclusive right of ownership of land is reserved for nationals only. Voted unanimously by the deputies of the National Assembly, the Rural Land Code (Act No. 98-750 of 23 December 1998) has three main objectives: (i) recognize customary authorities as legal holders of customary land rights; (ii) establish individual private ownership as a principle of land tenure; and (iii) reserve ownership of land to the State, public authorities and nationals.

Aside from these restrictions, migrant workers freely engage in own-account employment in the informal private sector. These migrant workers have the same rights as nationals after employment; enjoy the same salary and classification; and have the right to contribute to social security and receive a retirement pension. In the event of injustice, migrant workers may use the services of the Labour

³³ This approach is reflected in Decree No. 96-287 of 3 April 1996 on the introduction of the employment contract visa, and Order No. 1437 of 19 February 2004 amending Order No. 4880 of 21 April 1999, on the regulation of recruitment and visa fees for the employment contracts of non-national staff.

Inspectorate and the Labour Court on the same basis as national workers. Because of the non-political and non-denominational nature of workers' trade unions, immigrant workers can join them and have their rights defended in the same way as a national worker.

Finally, since Côte d'Ivoire has a system of recognition of non-formal qualifications that is still new and little known, holders of non-formal skills, whether migrants or nationals, own-account workers or salaried workers, still have difficulty getting them recognized.

5.3.4. Ghana

While Ghana's immigration and investment laws are favourable to migrants, at the same time they reserve certain sectors of the labour market for Ghanaians. In particular, Article 27 of Ghana's Investment Promotion Act 2013 (Act 865) prohibits foreigners from engaging in activities reserved for Ghanaians, while the Immigration Services Act 2000 (Act 573) regulates the stay and employment of foreigners with a view to protecting the employment of Ghanaians. In addition, the Minerals and Mining Act 2006 (Act 703, Section 83a) also reserves artisanal and small-scale mining to Ghanaian citizens and makes it illegal for foreign nationals to engage in any small-scale mining activity, known as *galamsey* in Ghana. Despite these laws, there are immigrants employed in activities reserved for Ghanaians.

As the main employer in Ghana, the Government has been concerned with recognizing skills in certain sectors and occupations. Indeed, the need for the recognition of qualifications is at the heart of government concerns and has figured prominently in national development efforts.

In the informal sector, professional and employers' associations have played a key role in the recognition of skills in the Ghanaian labour market. For example, the Ghana Beauticians and Hairdressers Association (GBHA), in collaboration with the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI), organizes an annual awarding of certificates of competence for apprentices within the National TVET Qualification Framework. In addition, employers and professional associations, in collaboration with the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET), are working towards the adoption of a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) scheme in the context of the new TVET Qualifications Framework.

5.3.5. Mali

Since 2014, the country has had a National Migration Policy adopted by the Council of Ministers. The aim is to make migration a real asset for the country's development. This objective is based on eight strategic lines of action: (i) protection and security of migrants and members of their families; (ii) the establishment of appropriate management mechanisms to better organize migration; (iii) support for better reintegration of returning migrants; (iv) development of the human (social, cultural, technical), economic and financial capital of migrants; (v) strengthening the capacities of migrants' organizations and civil society; (vi) strategically positioning Mali as a West African crossroads for dialogue and consultation on migration; (vii) improving knowledge about migration; and (viii) adapting the conditions of residence and settlement of foreigners in Mali.

This institutional framework also addresses the issue of refugees, which have equal access to health care, training and the labour market. The National Employment Promotion Agency offers equal access to its services to foreign residents wishing to find employment in Mali. In addition, it recognizes the importance of the migration dimension and has set itself the following objectives: (i) to improve labour market intermediation and information mechanisms by ensuring that the specific needs of migrant populations are taken into account; (ii) to improve the vocational training system to ensure a more adequate response to the demand for labour on the national and also the international market; and

(iii) to support a system for the reintegration and reinsertion of migrants with a view to maximizing the benefits of migration both for the societies of origin and destination and for the migrant workers themselves.

The Malian education system is also accessible to foreign nationals through the actions of homogenization of higher education set up by CAMES. There are no quotas for international students in training institutions in Mali, and access conditions are the same for nationals and immigrants.

5.3.6. Mauritania

Mauritania was a member of ECOWAS until 1989, and had therefore ratified the ECOWAS treaty on the free movement of persons and the right of residence. Since 2000, Mauritania has no longer been an ECOWAS Member and therefore no longer allows free movement of nationals of Member States. However, it has concluded bilateral agreements with Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal to allow nationals of these countries to enter Mauritania for 90 days without a visa. After 90 days, all foreigners must apply for a residence permit. Following a bilateral agreement signed between Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania in March 2014, Ivorians are now exempt from the residence permit requirement. Senegalese migrants are required to pay an entry fee, as are Mauritians entering Senegal.

Labour migration is governed by the 1974 collective bargaining agreement and Acts No. 2004-017 and No. 2009-224, which respectively set out the working conditions for foreigners and the requirement for work permits for foreigners. Under Act No. 2009-224, foreigners need a work permit which can only be issued if no Mauritanian can perform the function for which the foreigner is hired. A residence permit is a prerequisite for obtaining a work permit.

Thus, Mauritania does not currently have a comprehensive law dealing with the specificities of labour migration beyond administrative matters. Rather, it sees labour migration as an opportunity for the country and is developing a holistic strategy for it. Mauritania has a high unemployment rate, and this has resulted in policies that protect Mauritians' access to the local labour market. A new administrative procedure, the green license, is required for foreigners wishing to work in the public transport sector, including taxis. It effectively tries to restore priority to Mauritians in a sector heavily dominated by foreigners (mainly Senegalese).

5.3.7. Niger

In Niger, there is no comprehensive national framework covering labour immigration. The various legal texts governing employment and migration are essentially embedded in Niger's Labour Code, revised by Decree No. 2017-682/PRN/MET/PS. Under this framework, all foreign workers with a contract are required to obtain a work permit (visa) before entering the country, and employment arrangements must be undertaken by the employer with the National Employment Agency (ANPE).

The National Agency for Promotion and Development is responsible for issuance of work permits which are conditional on the absence of corresponding national competences, in accordance with article 48 of the Labour Code published in 2012. In practice, however, its role is more oriented to the registration of foreigners rather than to carrying out selection. Niger's legislation contains no specific provisions with respect to ECOWAS nationals. In practice, the administration issues an ECOWAS residence permit for one year, renewable automatically.

The Government has signed specific agreements with certain countries that include provisions for entry, duration of stay and residence (which may take precedence over national laws). These include

bilateral agreements with Algeria, Burkina Faso, France, Ghana, Libya, Mali, Morocco and Tunisia. The ECOWAS Protocol on Freedom of Movement applies to all ECOWAS citizens.

Two important laws have also been enacted in recent years: (i) Ordinance No. 2012-86, promulgated in 2010, on combating trafficking in persons; and (ii) Law No. 2015-36, adopted on 26 May 2015, against the smuggling of migrants (the first of its kind within ECOWAS).

5.3.8. Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the few West African countries to have ratified a national policy on migration. There is therefore a law in force that provides the legal framework for migrant workers. The Federal Executive Council of Nigeria has approved the National Migration Policy and the National Labour Policy. The National Migration Policy derives its legitimacy from the National Labour Policy, and addresses a variety of issues relating to labour, labour migration and international labour migration.

Immigration to Nigeria is governed by the Immigration Act of 1963 (Chapter 171), which focuses on national security, admission rules and deportation procedures. Following the 2008 ECOWAS Common Approach to Migration, Nigeria approved a National Migration Policy which was ratified by the Federal Executive Council in May 2015.

Among other things, the new migration policy gives more rights to migrants by clearly establishing residence rights and better addressing trafficking and smuggling activities. Residence rules are defined by administrative practices that were aimed to fill a gap in the 1963 Immigration Act. Residence in Nigeria distinguishes between ECOWAS citizens, who are entitled to the ECOWAS residence card, and other foreigners, who can apply for a combined residence/work permit.

In addition to the National Migration Policy, the Federal Ministry of Labour developed and adopted a new Labour Migration Policy in 2014. This policy, on the one hand, aims at creating equality between Nigerian nationals and migrants, and on the other hand, seeks to protect the rights of migrants by encouraging them to enter the formal labour market where their rights can be protected.

5.3.9. Senegal

Access to the national labour market in Senegal is governed by the 1997 Labour Code. It states that the General Directorate of Labour and Social Security of the Ministry of the Civil Service, Labour, Social Dialogue and Professional Organization must approve employment contracts that include the establishment of the worker outside his or her place of habitual residence. Article L. 224 provides for the possibility of adopting secondary legislation to "prohibit or limit the employment of foreigners for specific professions or levels of professional qualification" in order to guarantee the full employment of the national workforce. The Labour Code also guarantees equal treatment between foreigners and nationals.

Act No. 71-10 of 25 January 1971 covers the conditions of entry, residence and establishment of foreigners. Its implementing decree states that admission is subject to the issuance of a visa and a guarantee of return. Senegalese legislation does not align with the ECOWAS Protocol and there are no provisions on the status of nationals of ECOWAS Member States or on the status of long-term residents. There are also no provisions on the period of validity of the residence permit.

Apart from Act No. 71-10, Senegal has focused on emigration. The main objective is to include issues related to the Senegalese diaspora in the country's development plans, namely, in accordance with the latest national strategic plan drawn up in 2014 (Plan Sénégal émergent). The country has, however, officially launched the process of defining a migration policy framework, at a workshop held in Dakar in July 2015. Senegal's National Migration Policy (PNMS) was technically validated in March 2018.

5.3.10. Togo

To date, Togo does not have a national policy on migration. However, a national strategy and a national plan of action on labour migration are being developed by the Ministry of Civil Service, Labour and Administrative Reform through the Directorate General of Employment and various partners.

Togo has a law from October 1992 which, in accordance with fundamental human rights, established a framework for migration law (articles 22 and 23), including freedom of movement throughout its territory (under the conditions defined by local custom), and addresses the protection of foreigners in a situation of regular immigration. Also, Article 47 of Act No. 2006-010 of 13 December 2006 of the Labour Code refers to the need for legal immigration in the area of employment.

5.3.11. *Conclusions on national policy and institutional frameworks vs. freedom of movement and right to work*

In conclusion, a review of the adherence to multilateral frameworks on migration and its governance in the subregion shows:

- There has been broad ratification of the ILO fundamental Conventions by the Member States of the subregion.
- Countries of the subregion are struggling to integrate the principles of these broader international instruments into national legislation.
- There is weak compliance in the subregion with ILO reporting obligations and thus monitoring of labour and employment policies at the regional level.
- Generalization of adherence to ECOWAS regional frameworks remains a challenge. The ratification of protocols on the right of residence and the right of establishment is struggling to become generalized.
- The implementation of the Common Approach to Migration has only achieved limited progress.
- Many countries have no national migration policy, and policy frameworks are heterogeneous.
- There is weak adherence to uniform practices for the identification and anticipation of skills needs.
- Member States are experiencing difficulties in the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas, Certificates and other Academic Qualifications in Member States, adopted in 2003.

6. Programmes and actions developed by ECOWAS Member States to facilitate the management of migration

In order to facilitate the management of migration flows, ECOWAS member countries have put in place several programmes and actions addressing the different aspects of migration. These include the organization of meetings between immigration services, dialogue on migration and the free movement of persons, initiatives to establish migration policies, and the development of the ECOWAS plan of action for the collection of data and analysis of statistics (2017–2019). These and other activities are presented below.

6.1. Policies and legislation

Heads of immigration services meetings

Meetings of heads of immigration services have been held annually since 2007. They bring together representatives of the Ministries of Immigration and the Interior to serve as platforms for dialogue and coordination for the implementation of the protocols on free movement from the perspective of immigration and border management.

Rabat Process activities

The Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process) was launched in 2006. This process brings together 26 African nations and 29 European nations with Algeria and Libya acting as observer countries, as well as the European Commission and ECOWAS.³⁴ After more than ten years, the process is still ongoing where the latest strategic framework (the Rome Declaration and Programme) was adopted at the fourth session of the Conference in 2014.³⁵ The Declaration aimed to harmonize migration and development as well as prevention and treatment of irregular migration and related offences.

Activities to develop migration policies

The country studies confirm the initiation of several actions to establish national policies or policy frameworks for migration, including intra-regional flows. Burkina Faso is a good example in this regard.

Activities of the Directorate for the Free Movement of Persons

Established in 2008, the ECOWAS Directorate of Free Movement of Persons is responsible for the implementation of the protocols on free movement and the Common Approach to Migration. Currently, its focuses on the first phase of the aforementioned protocols concerning the right of entry, and therefore deals mainly with border management issues. It is tasked to lead the adoption of the Additional Act to simplify entry and residency administrative procedures in the Member States. It also has the task of leading the development of a regional migration policy, with support from the African Development Bank. Within the framework of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) mechanism, assistance was provided to six countries upon request for the development of national migration policies.

In its training and awareness-raising activities, the Directorate devotes a large majority of its modules to homogeneous border management, and also delivers modules on migrant workers' rights.

³⁴ For more information on the Rabat Process, see: <https://www.rabat-process.org/en>.

³⁵ For more information on the Rome Declaration and Programme, see: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ICP/RCP/2018/euroafrican/EN_Stocktaking-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-Rome-Programme.pdf

Activities of the Directorate of Humanitarian and Social Affairs (DHA)

ECOWAS-DHA, mainly its Social Affairs Division, deals with labour migration activities focused on the coordination of social security systems and harmonization of certain aspects of labour legislation. The Directorate led the process of revision and adoption of the General Convention on Social Security from 2011–13, with technical support from UNDP. A study on the current harmonization of labour law is being conducted with the support of ILO to draft harmonization proposals.

ECOWAS Plan of Action for the Collection and Analysis of Statistics in the Field of Migration, 2017–2019

This action plan has five main objectives for ECOWAS:

1. Contribute to the adoption of new practices, common statistical methods and harmonization with international standards on migration data.
2. Contribute to an evidence-based decision-making process through regular information exchange and enhanced coordination among migration data actors.
3. Increase policy relevance of statistical reports by improving the quality of the migration data management process.
4. Make ECOWAS migration statistics available for wider use.
5. Contribute to the development of a comprehensive legal and policy framework in the field of migration data.

6.2. Dialogue and collaboration

Activities of the Tripartite Social Dialogue Forum

The ECOWAS Tripartite Social Dialogue Forum was established in 2011 as part of the implementation of the ECOWAS Labour and Employment Policy (2009). As such, ordinary sessions of the General Assembly have been held annually since 2011, serving to discuss relevant ECOWAS policy developments and regional issues. Among the main activities and outcomes of the Forum are the following: i) the validation of a draft regional charter on tripartite social dialogue (March 2011); ii) the adoption of a three-year action plan (2011–13) and an annual action plan for 2014; iii) the revision and validation of the terms of reference for consultant recruitment to harmonize labour legislation in ECOWAS (March 2012); and iv) the review and validation of the General Convention on Social Security, the Plan of Action for Youth Employment and the Plan of Action against Child Labour (October 2012), which were adopted in the ECOWAS meeting of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in December 2012.

Activities of the dialogue on migration and mobility

The Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership provides the framework for dialogue and cooperation on migration issues between the EU and all African states. The partnership was launched in 2007 and a four-year action plan was adopted in 2014.

Activities of the migration dialogue for West Africa

The Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA), established in 2001, is in the early stages of a revitalization. In July 2012, ECOWAS, supported by IOM and the Government of Switzerland, held a meeting to re-launch the process, during which the institutional framework of the process was re-defined and priority areas for discussion for the near future were identified.³⁶ The MIDWA forum has

³⁶ These priority areas are: collection and management of migration data, the creation of national migration policy frameworks and the establishment of migration governance frameworks.

now been meeting annually since 2015 and has recently focused on mixed migration. It should be noted that membership of the process is limited to ECOWAS Member States.

6.3. Youth, education and gender

Activities of the Directorate for Gender, Youth, Employment and Civil Society Organizations (DGJEOSC)

Through its Gender Equality Division, WD-GEOSC is leading the process of developing the Framework and Action Plan for Gender Equality and Migration. Its Youth, Sports and Employment Division is responsible for implementing the Youth Employment Action Plan, promoting intra-regional labour mobility and encouraging the development of a regional labour market information system.

Activities of the Directorate of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (DECST)

DECST activities include the harmonization of education and training systems in accordance with the General Convention on the Recognition of Equivalence of Certificates. The Directorate has already undertaken a feasibility study on the establishment of a regional and national qualification framework in 2012. The Education Division is also active through its roadmap for the revitalization of technical and vocational education in ECOWAS.

Establishment of specialized centres and centres of excellence in the subregion under Protocol A/P. 3/1/03 on education and training, adopted in Dakar on 31 January 2003

According to this Protocol, Member States plan to create centres to establish reliable regional education and training institutions in specialized fields to increase the number of qualified people in the subregion. These specialized centres and centres of excellence are programmes jointly developed to ensure a quality of education, training and research. Several specialized centres exist, such as the following National Centres for agriculture: dry grains in Senegal, rice in Mali, roots and tubers in Ghana, etc. These agricultural centres are also centres of excellence in the subregion. In 2017, two university centres of excellence for African students were created in Senegal. The first centre teaches maternal and child health, while the second teaches mathematics, computer science, and information and communication technology.

7. Systems for the identification, development and recognition of skills: what compatibility?

After taking stock of the implementation of existing frameworks, with respect to regional cooperation and the freedom of movement within ECOWAS (especially with respect to technical and vocational skills), this section will describe both the systems for identifying and anticipating skills needs, and the systems for developing and recognizing skills in the studied countries.

7.1. Systems for identifying and anticipating skills needs

7.1.1. *Institutions in charge and their roles*

A review of the country studies reveals major shortcomings in national systems for identifying and anticipating skills needs, despite most having dedicated structures for these very purposes. For example, in Burkina Faso, there is the National Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training (ONEF) which is under the Ministry in charge of Employment and Vocational Training, and in Côte d'Ivoire, there is the General Inspectorate and the Youth Employment Agency.

In Ghana, a range of actors are called upon to carry out this mission, however with inadequate governance. These include policy-makers and technical advisers from relevant ministries and institutions,³⁷ and experts and technicians working in the field of TVET, as well as workers' and employers' organizations.

In Mali, the process of identifying and anticipating skills needs is carried out at several levels, according to the principles of TVET decentralization in place since the early 2000s. Several agencies of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) are responsible for making the link between vocational training and the skills needs of the labour market. These MEFP agencies regularly update their statistics and also commissioned prospective cross-cutting or sectoral studies of the labour market's skills needs. ONEF is the most important advisory body providing decision-makers with research using reliable and regularly updated labour market information at both national and regional levels.

In Mauritania, the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training and Information and Communication Technologies (MEFPTIC), with its various structures, is in charge of the employment and training system, in particular the identification and anticipation of skills needs and availability. The National Institute for the Promotion of Technical and Vocational Training (INAP-FTP) also plays an important role, particularly in matching the supply and demand of training and in the identification and analysis of skills needs. The National Statistical Office (NSO) provides statistical data.

In Senegal, though the national system is scattered and uncoordinated, project objectives have been set up to establish a Labour Market Information System (LMIS), and a National Observatory of Jobs and Professional Qualifications (ONEQP); however, their implementation has been slow. Another project aims to develop an Operational Directory of Jobs and Occupations (ROME), launched in 2003.

In Chad, the tripartite National Committee for Education and Training in Relation to Employment (NCETRE) was established by Presidential Decrees Nos 765, 766 and 767, PR/93 of 31 December 1993.

³⁷ Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Migration Quota Committee, Scholarship Secretariat, National Development Planning Commission, Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

It is responsible for compliance with strategy objectives and the creation of education and training policies and programmes.

As for Togo, it should be noted that the anticipation of skills needs, monitoring and evaluation are not yet explicitly established as institutional prerogatives. Today, it is core to Togo's TVET strategy. However, there have been institutions or programmes that played such roles in the past, as is the case of the National Employment Agency.

A summary of actions taken by responsible institutions for identifying and anticipating competences is presented in Table 16.

7.1.2. Quantitative and qualitative mechanisms for identifying and anticipating skills needs

In the subregion, the identification and anticipation of skills is generally done through quantitative and qualitative surveys and studies. The studies can be general, spatial or sectoral. While some countries can attest to the regularity of their implementation, others do so sporadically.

One key factor for effective anticipation and identification of skills is demand-driven training; however, this practice is not widespread due to a weak skills development sector, a lack of employer and/or stakeholder involvement, and the labour market's informal nature. Another key factor are policies and strategies for development and employment, which are often based on scenarios and generally track sectoral trends in the supply and demand of skills. Intermediation agencies also contribute a forward-looking view of skills needs.

In Burkina Faso, studies have focused on the identification and anticipation of skills, most of which have been carried out by ONEF with the support of technical partners since its creation in 2001. Recent ONEF studies include the following topics: i) job opportunities in the Centre-East region of Burkina Faso, with the support of IOM and the Belgian Development Cooperation (2018); ii) the national survey on the workforce in the formal public and private sectors (2018); iii) labour demand job offers from 2013–18; and iv) vocational training school graduates of the Ministry of Youth training centres and their integration into the labour market. With regard to foreign labour, no aspect of the migration strategy is explicitly dedicated to developing the skills of migrant populations.

In Côte d'Ivoire, skills anticipation is most often carried out through quantitative and qualitative research, for example, the public Youth Employment Agency does so through collaboration with employment counsellors in private companies. This activity consists of networking with private firms, taking stock of their current activities and human resources. Following an assessment of the company's own forecast, a comprehensive proposal of employee profiles is made and job descriptions are drawn up. The National Agency for Vocational Training (AGEFOP) carries out sectoral research, education and training forums, and future conferences or job-fairs bringing together trainers, employers and graduates. At the conclusion of such activities, profiles of activity branches, training references, training programmes and/or curricula are drawn up.

In Ghana, research on labour markets, employers, the labour force, and monitoring studies related to skills needs are carried out to match labour supply and demand. The introduction of skills-based training can be an effective mechanism for skills anticipation. Another mechanism is the identification and assessment of skills anticipation in sectors with high demand potential, namely ICT, construction, oil and gas, hotels and tourism, horticulture and livestock.

Table 16 : Missions of the institutions responsible for identifying and anticipating competences

Country	Institutions in charge	Main missions
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training (ONEF), institutionally attached to the Ministry in charge of Employment and Vocational Training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an effective information system on employment, training and youth, at national and regional level. To assist in the implementation of a training development policy providing identification of training needs and the forecasting of jobs and qualifications. To assist in decision-making, to contribute to the definition, evaluation and improvement of employment policy measures and social dialogue
Chad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Committee for Education and Training in Relation to Employment, with tripartite membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring compliance with the objectives of the Employment Strategy Formulating policies and programmes in the field of education and training in relation to employment
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Inspectorate Youth Employment Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospecting companies To take stock of the activities and human resources present according to the work stations
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-makers Technical advisers of the ministries and institutions concerned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting regular labour market surveys, employer surveys, labour force surveys, tracking studies and other tools related to quantitative and qualitative methods Analyse and translate data from foresight exercises into appropriate policies and planning
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, mainly ONEF and ANPE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regularly updated statistical bases Conducting prospective studies of a cross-cutting or sectoral nature on the skills needs of the labour market
Mauritania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MEFPTIC/Employment Directorate INAP-FTP National Statistical Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create favourable conditions for employment to be taken into account as a cross-cutting national priority in all sectoral policies and programmes. Develop a real synergy between the activities of the different administrative structures in charge of design and monitoring on the one hand, and the operational structures in charge of implementation on the other. Rationalizing public resources for employment promotion Orienting the content of technical and vocational training more towards the real needs of private sector operators

Country	Institutions in charge	Main missions
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Observatory on Employment and Training • Ministry of Vocational and Technical Education (MEP-T) through its Directorate of Statistics and Information Technology (Direction des statistiques et de l'informatique) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting surveys and sectoral studies to identify and anticipate skills • To set up a prospective map of TVET in order to improve the management and steering of the TVET system.
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Identification and Anticipation in Nigeria is a multi-agency programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulating skills development • Collecting, processing, analysing and deploying labour market information to support policy formulation and strategic planning • Conduct research on the economic and social problems of the country
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered and uncoordinated system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project to set up a Labour Market Information System (EMIS), a National Observatory of Jobs and Professional Qualifications (ONEQP) • Project to develop an Operational Directory of Trades and Jobs (ROME), launched in 2003
Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Employment Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the development of national employment policy • Establish a reliable database on employment and manpower in Togo, drawing on all existing databases in other departments or agencies.

Source: 2020 Country reports in the Reference section.

In Mali, the identification and anticipation of skills is done at both national and local levels. The National Observatory of Employment and Vocational Training (ONEF) provides regular data and carries out diagnostic studies on employment, training and professional integration of young people. The skills identification and anticipation system is also based on modular annual household surveys and other surveys, including the study on the employability of young people leaving TVET and the skills needs of the formal private sector. In addition, the National Employment Promotion Agency is undertaking studies on the local employment of development opportunities. These studies have made it possible to: i) identify training needs and appropriate training channels; ii) highlight channels that generate employment and income in communities; and iii) propose concrete solutions to promote local employment and stabilize rural exodus and youth emigration.

In Mauritania, the Directorate of Employment carries out research using data from the National Statistical Office and conducts their own surveys on employment and occupational integration. The Directorate forecasts the evolution of the labour market. INAP-FTP also works to balance the labour market through: i) identification and analysis of the skills needs; ii) the development of training programmes; iii) pedagogical support for training institutions; and iv) the management of the FAP-FTP. It should be noted that these structures lack coordination and the means for the production and dissemination of reliable information which is indispensable to identifying future skills needs by profession or trade.

In Niger, identification and anticipation tools are based on two methods, surveys and sectoral studies. The National Observatory on Employment and Training has carried out a number of surveys and sectoral studies on technical and vocational training, professional integration of TVET and higher education graduates, and their employment in enterprises. However, these studies have many limitations: they are intermittent, cover only the formal sector, and are carried out among small samples of enterprises. Geographically, these studies are focused only on certain regions or cities of the country, where extrapolations are made to give a rough idea of the nation as a whole.

In Nigeria, the identification and anticipation of skills is a multi-agency programme. These agencies are independently engaged in data collection, design and implementation of skills development programmes and in monitoring the implementation of TVET programmes. The National Manpower Board is the dedicated body for collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating labour market information to support policy formulation and strategic planning. Some international agencies such as ILO, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNDP, and the World Bank have also established partnerships with different national agencies to provide information on identifying and anticipating skills for the labour market. Unsurprisingly, there is a proliferation of skills intervention programmes throughout the country.

In Senegal, several initiatives focus on anticipating the skills needs of the labour market. Strategically, the government has set up a National Vocational and Technical Training Consultation Commission, a Partnership Commission on Training Programmes and a Partnership Certification Commission to ensure effectiveness of the partnership's governance of the TVET system. A flagship experience from the Ministry in charge of the Civil Service, which has set up a Job Application Management Platform (PGDE) that makes it possible to better identify the applicants' skills and adapt them to the needs of its administration. Apart from this, it can be said that there is no system of anticipation and identification of skills in Senegal. Instead, several initiatives by different bodies remain scattered and uncoordinated. Thus, the information system in place does not allow for proper skills identification and anticipation.

In Chad, the informal sector is a major challenge in the exercise of identification and anticipation of skills needs. It appears that improved support for better governance of the labour market is necessary to overcome inherent dysfunctions and conflicts of interest.

This overview of the subregion's quantitative and qualitative methods for identifying and anticipating skills has revealed two important incompatibilities for their development. The first is the absence of standardized labour and skills observatories, and a national coordinating committee for managing a national labour market information system. The country-by-country diversity of labour market information sources reduces the standardization of concepts and methods on both the supply and demand side of skills identification. Cohesion remains essential for the transition from a national to a larger regional system. Data is mostly, if not only, beneficial if aggregated through comparable methods in order to properly define fundamental concepts, definitions, collection methods and indicator analysis. The diversity of information sources also highlights the problem of national coordination in information systems.

The second incompatibility is the lack of statistical data, where regular and timely information presentation has proven extremely valuable for jobseekers, employers and policy-makers alike. A sustained and comprehensive body of data could feed a functional region-wide labour market information system giving better visibility on emerging local, national and regional concerns. Without this base of knowledge, it is very difficult to make any forecast adjustments in the labour market or undertake effective responses to adjust training and education efforts to the needs of the market.

7.2. Skills development systems

Vocational training in the subregion is provided by public and private centres and institutions. In Burkina Faso, private centres account for 84 per cent of all vocational training centres. In Côte d'Ivoire, private centres are nearly 92 per cent (680 centres, compared to 62 public centres). Often, the public centres are under supervision of a main body in charge of the vocational training system, in addition to other centres specific to their Ministry.

Despite the significant presence of the private sector, financing of a skills development system is mainly done by the State, and to a lesser extent by international development institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through public-private partnerships (PPPs). Employers' and workers' organizations are involved in the governance of TVET in principle through committees. They are also involved through on-the-job and apprenticeship training. Their involvement is, however, often limited by weak private sector dynamism, the lack of an institutional framework, or low representation.

The supply of TVET is spatially disparate in its distribution, favouring of large cities and concentrated in the larger urban areas. These urban TVET centres are very diversified in training programmes and courses. There are three types of vocational training:

- Formal: technical education is provided by public or private structures with officially recognized diplomas.
- Non-formal: vocational training organized outside the state-recognized circuit.
- Informal: vocational training including traditional learning and on-the-job training.
- Qualifications are managed under two schemes. The first concerns non-formal or informal qualifications acquired either after a period of training or from a prior learning assessment, while the second scheme, concerns formal qualifications. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the most common formal qualifications in the subregion.

Table 17 : Levels of formal qualifications in the subregion

Country	Levels of qualification
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Basic Qualification (CQB) • Certificate of Professional Qualification (CQP) • Certificate of Professional Qualification (BQP) • Professional Technician Certificate (BPT) • Advanced Professional Technician Certificate (BPTS)
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Professional Qualification (CQP) • Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (CAP), three years after grade 5 • Brevet d'études professionnelles (BEP), two years after the third-year class • Technician's certificate (BT), three years after the third-year class • Professional certificate (BP), CAP with professional experience • Technical baccalaureate (bac), three years after the third-year class • Higher Technician's Certificate (BTS), two years after the baccalaureate
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National competence 1 • National competence 2 • National Certificate 1 • National Certificate 2 • Higher National Diploma (HND) • Bachelor's degree (professional/technology) • Master's degree (professional/technology) – Master's degree in technically oriented research • Doctorate (professional/technology)
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal TVET certificate • Non-formal TVET certificate
Mauritania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Competence • Certificate of professional competence • Technician's certificate • Higher technician's certificate • Technical education certificate • Technical Baccalaureate
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Basic Qualification • Average Certificate of Qualification • Certificate of Professional Qualification • Attestation • CAP diploma "elementary skilled worker" qualification • Vocational or technical baccalaureate diploma "medium-level skilled worker" qualification • Brevet d'études professionnelles (BEP) (vocational training certificate) • Specialization diplomas

Country	Levels of qualification
Nigeria ³⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1: Beginner or unskilled employees • Level 2: Employees with basic skills • Level 3: Semi-skilled operators or employees • Level 4: Technicians, skilled employees and supervisors • Level 5: Technical and Junior Management Positions • Level 6: Engineers and senior managers
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Professional Competence (CAP) • Certificate of Professional Competence • Brevet d'études professionnelles (BEP) (vocational training certificate) • Professional certificate • Technician's certificate • Higher technician's certificate
Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplomas and professional titles (doctorate, doctorate, engineer) awarded on behalf of the State • Certificates of professional qualification drawn up within the framework of professional branches (CAP or CFA) • Post-baccalaureate or university diplomas awarded by public or private training institutions

Source: 2020 Country Reports in the Reference section.

7.3. Skills recognition systems

In the subregion, the need for skills recognition is more evident in formal employment sectors. A diploma is a guarantee of acquired knowledge and can justify applying for a given job. This is the case in competitive state-organized examinations, in recruitment through counselling and guidance services, and in tests organized by NGOs and development projects. The informal sector characterizes the economy of the subregion, where recognition of skills is not systematic. Apart from self-employment initiatives, access to informal employment is most often through direct recourse to an employer or personal or family relations. Employers have no problem accepting certificates recognized or issued by accredited institutions. Despite the qualification, the reputation of some training institutes or schools may be sufficient to achieve a recognition of skills by an employer. The country of graduation may intrinsically justify a claim to certain competencies in the same way. The challenge remains in employer recognition of informal and non-formal training and TVET programmes. This problem affects a worker's mobility if their employer does not make use of formal training procedures. Also workers with non-formal training have little access to information on the processes for granting equivalences.

In Burkina Faso, there is no overarching system to recognize any informally acquired skills. An alternative already in place, however, are the prior learning assessment exams. Workers can apply for nationally organized examinations to validate prior learning experience (VAE). Passing these exams is often sanctioned by recognized certificates. However, some occupations without skills standards are not subject to official assessment. Including these occupations in prior learning assessments could be

³⁸ The National Qualification System has six levels of qualification that correspond directly to the different certification levels in the Nigerian TVET system, namely Vocational Examinations 1, 2, and 3 (Pre-vocational), as well as the National, Higher National and Postgraduate Diplomas.

a step towards standardizing the employment system. It should be noted that professional certification in Burkina Faso is based on 11 standards (occupation, skills and qualification standards).

Côte d'Ivoire has put in place institutions, methodological tools and, most importantly, forged partnerships with other countries and foreign institutions to deal with the issue of recognition of competencies. At the national level, the qualification recognition system is mainly focused on the formal sector. Holders of non-formal certificates, whether migrants, non-migrants, own-account workers or employees, still face difficulties in being recognized. However, the State's inclusion of informally acquired skills, known as the "valorization of prior learning", is possible only with three years of experience. Foreign qualifications and quality assurance are taken into account by the government during the granting of equivalence. These elements are: the subjects learned, the marks obtained, and the coefficients assigned to the subjects.

In Ghana, the systems for skills recognition are classified as informal, semi-formal and formal. The formal system involves a number of government agencies functioning either on their own or in collaboration with any of the following: a professional association, an NGO, a faith-based organization, a private agency or a service provider. Informal recognition takes place where a master craftsman issues a written note, declaration or certificate to the graduate apprentice. In such a situation, the apprentice's skills are recognized only by those who know the master. Skills can also be recognized informally through family lineage and by shrine priests, traditional chiefs, pastors, families and friends. The skills of graduate apprentices are also recognized in a semi-formal way when recognition is done through a collaborative effort between business and professional associations. Semi-formal recognition may happen through exhibitions, trade shows and trade fairs, or done by clients and through competitions. With the advent of the new TVET Qualification Framework, it is possible to obtain recognition for informally acquired skills. Employers and professional associations are working to adopt prior learning assessments and recognition under the new TVET qualifications framework. A national framework for quality assurance is currently being developed.

In Mali, the need for recognition is mainly felt in formal employment. The gaps in skill recognition are much less pronounced in informal employment because a certificate or diploma is not necessarily part of the recruitment criteria. Informal employers rely heavily on their interpersonal networks to hire employees or to test a candidate's knowledge and ability. The DPSE also has initiatives to recognize informally acquired skills. The national Public Service Directorate governs quality assurance, and is based in principle on a training reference framework. However, the profusion of private training centres makes it difficult for the National Directorate for Vocational Training (DNFP) to monitor activities and to ensure compliance between the content of the training provided and the training reference framework.

In Mauritania's informal labour market the need for skills recognition is not strongly felt by the majority of companies. A telling example is the recruitment of family labour, which is present in small informal enterprises. The recognition system of qualifications and training is the responsibility of the Directorate of Examinations and concerns TVET institutions officially recognized by the State and qualified as "formal". It is expected to be finalized following the pilot testing of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) system planned for the short term. However, there is currently no system for the recognition of informally acquired skills. The only qualifications issued are certificates specific to the structures that issue them. This situation is problematic in the field of non-formal training, which, despite the acquisition of skills, offers only very limited social and economic recognition.

In Niger, a formal training recognition system and an evaluation process for professional certifications and experience are under consideration. These processes are not yet effective, with certificates of apprenticeship training rarely recognized. Furthermore, there is currently no recognition system for

informally acquired skills. Currently, the TVET system and its components (public, para-public, private) are subject to regular internal and external evaluations. Professional certification, for its part, is based on three references (trades, skills and certification). It is organized by the National Commission for Vocational Certifications and TVET Diplomas and Titles. Vocational diplomas and titles as well as state-recognized vocational certificates are listed in the National Vocational Qualification Framework.

Nigeria is a certificate-conscious country. For TVET certificates obtained from Nigerian institutions, the National Council for Technical Education (NCTE) is the overseeing body for a programme's accreditation. The NCTE accreditation process is supposed to ensure quality assurance of any programme in terms of learning resources, delivery and evaluation. Once a programme is accredited by the NCTE, employers normally accept it, but for TVET training obtained outside the formal school system, the NCTE has developed the Nigerian Qualifications Framework (NQF), which structures the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). The NQF was created to harmonize certificates obtained from various TVET institutions with competencies acquired inside and outside the school system. The NQF clearly indicates what the learner should know or be able to do, whether the learning took place in the classroom, workplace, home, community/informal or non-formal settings. The framework also indicates the comparability of different qualifications.

In Senegal, diplomas or professional qualifications are obtained, in whole or in part, through school and university courses, apprenticeships, continuing vocational training or the validation of prior learning. Formal competencies are recognized in principle. In order for workers to have their skills recognized and validated, authorities have introduced the validation of prior experience (VAE) certification. It is a way of obtaining professional qualifications and diplomas in the same way as the initial training pathway. Titles and diplomas are listed, classified and published in accordance with the national classification system. A Quality Assurance Desk has been set up which is responsible for establishing quality norms and standards for the accreditation by vocational training institutions, the approval of training courses in response to market needs, and the definition of qualification procedures for these courses.

Chad has the National Directorate which organizes secondary and higher education examinations and competitive examinations, under the supervision of the Ministries of Higher Education and National Education. But apart from these two government bodies, there is no framework for the certification of qualifications.

The Togolese skill recognition system is not yet able to recognize professional skills outside of the formal qualifications and certificates. However, in order to work in the formal sector, returnees, immigrants or exiles must present their professional qualifications and certificates periodically for approval by an ad hoc national commission of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

In conclusion, the review of the subregion's skills recognition systems shows an uneven acknowledgement of skills at all levels. The training cycles are characterized by discrepancies in duration and level of education, and should be harmonized for the benefit all ECOWAS Member States. The prerequisites for university education, TVET, and pedagogical training are crucial to achieve this vital harmony across the subregion.

The lack of qualification frameworks in several countries, despite the categorization of certificates (basic, intermediate and advanced), shows the need for equivalency measures. To achieve this, the coordination of institutional procedures between the Ministries of Education must be established.

In summary, this review of the systems for the identification, anticipation, training and recognition of skills reveals the following:

- A diverse supply of training programmes (public/private), accreditation systems, training levels, and labour market demand responses.

- A strong disparity in spatial distribution in favour of urban areas.
- A distinction of three families of vocational training:
 - Formal: technical education provided by public or private structures with officially recognized qualifications.
 - Non-formal: vocational training organized outside the state-recognized circuit.
 - Informal: vocational training including traditional apprenticeship and on-the-job training.
- A distinction of three levels of qualifications: basic, intermediate at skilled level, and advanced levels of technicians, professionals or master levels.
- An obvious need for skills recognition in sectors with a dominance of formal employment.
- A non-systematic recognition of informal skills.
- A major challenge in the recognition by employers of non-formal and informal skills including those acquired through TVET programmes.
- The potential of transferring experiences and good practices based on the recognition of skills acquired through experience.

8. Recommendations for improving labour migration management and systems for skills development, recognition, identification and anticipation

8.1. Action points to be addressed in relation to skills and migration

In light of the comparative descriptions in the previous sections on migration management issues, and the performance of systems for the development, recognition, identification and anticipation of skills, this section identifies 13 points for action to strengthen the labour market for migrants and host populations in the different countries in the subregion. These actions are grouped around three dimensions: i) interventions to improve migration management, such as the implementation of Phases I and II of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Workers and support to migrants through access to labour market information and vocational guidance; ii) interventions to strengthen recognition and/or harmonization of formal qualifications and informally acquired skills, and iii) cross-cutting interventions, such as enhanced collaboration with the private sector.

Action 1: Generalize Phases I and II of the Protocol on Free Movement at ECOWAS level

Mauritania and Chad are not part of ECOWAS. A partnership framework is therefore needed to include these two countries towards convergence with the ECOWAS framework. The ratification of Phases I and II of the Protocol on Free Movement should be generalized and applied to Mauritania and Chad. While some progress has been made in the implementation of Phase I, as outlined above, there are ongoing concerns about unauthorized migration and sometimes conflicting national laws on trade and immigration resulting in abrogate implementation of the second and the third Phases of the Protocol. These two Phases concern the regulation of residence and establishment, which are directly related to the need for skills recognition. Certain liberal or own-account activities also require such recognition, where the lack of implementation has led to freedom of residence and establishment in ECOWAS states.

Action 2: Work towards implementation of the Common Approach to Migration

The ratification of treaties and conventions, deficiencies, obstacles and challenges at the intra-regional and national levels have not been sufficient for effective implementation. The ECOWAS Common Approach to Migration (2008) could provide an actionable framework, providing guidance on strategic priorities and promoting effective migration management in the subregion. This framework builds upon the following six principles:

- free movement of people in the subregion;
- promotion of legal (regulated) migration as an integral part of the development process;
- the prevention of human trafficking;
- harmonization of migration policies;
- protection of migrants' rights, as well as the rights of asylum seekers and refugees; and
- recognition of the role of gender in migration.

These are general principles that align with the need to strengthen the compatibility of systems for the identification, development and recognition of skills. The feasibility study of the Common Approach proposed action on two essential points (ibid.):

- harmonization of education in pre-university and pre-vocational training cycles with regard to duration of study and requirements to access university and vocational education; and
- harmonization of qualifications through standards of delivery and equivalence.

Action 3: Establish harmonized and comparable information systems

There is a general lack of data on labour migration, in particular on the number of migrant workers in each country and their sectors of activity. Information systems are inadequate and unintegrated without any intra-regional coherence. A harmonization of classifications of occupations, skills, training programmes, qualifications, sectors and sub-sectors is increasingly vital for an effective common labour market where actors are comparable and identifiable via standardized characteristics.

The lack of reliable labour market data is one of the main challenges emerging from this study. All countries in the subregion have a national statistical service which collects migration data during population and housing censuses. However, the great diversity in the census questions and time references, and irregularities in scheduling reduce their reliability as sources of migration data. In addition, the definition of the term “migrant” and other labour migration concepts are not standardized; harmonizing definitions and concepts of labour migration, such as the Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2018, could help to fill some of the knowledge gaps. Additionally, it is still necessary to assess migratory flows such as seasonal, pastoral and cross-border movements.

Thus, regional labour market integration can be facilitated by creating a region-wide system publishing the labour demand in each country. The system will only function if workers are free to apply for foreign jobs.

Action 4: Put in place national employment policies

Most countries have employment policies or regulations governing employment issues. The development and synchronization of national labour policies to guide labour markets is important and necessary to give direction to employment and labour issues in the subregion. These employment policies must take into account migration issues to ensure coherence between employment and migration policies. In addition, the countries concerned should promote skills development policies that integrate migrant workers. Confusion and lack of information on legal procedures concerning migrant labour must be addressed in order to move forward with this action.

Action 5: Strengthen coordination

Strengthening coordination at the national level is seen as a necessity by many countries who are setting up administrative bodies to manage migration and development issues and identify skills needs. Collaboration is essential to effectively coordinate between countries and other important stakeholders when dealing with labour and migration issues. While coordination mechanisms exist for some aspects of migration, efforts to manage labour migration remain isolated, mostly because of deficient labour information systems. Such systems must offer regular and accurate data as a prerequisite for effective coordination, requiring a general and guiding framework for coordination at national and regional levels. Coordination through information systems also requires reliable mechanisms for the exchange and sharing of labour market and migration information among the various stakeholders, including with training providers and trainees.

On another front, coordination can focus on migration laws and policies. This coordination should ensure, inter alia, the integration of emerging skills needs information into national labour and migration policies. An example is the facilitation of access, through terms and conditions, to occupations where demand is mainly from foreigners. Another example is the development of new institutional mechanisms for the exchange of information on labour migration collected by countries of origin, while ensuring a linkage with information collected by countries of destination.

Action 6: Harmonize national migration laws and policies with international and intra-regional frameworks

Despite the adoption of the protocols and their subsequent ratification, the country studies confirm that full implementation of these protocols is hampered by differences and a lack of harmonization of national migration laws and policies with international and intra-regional frameworks, including the ECOWAS Protocols to facilitate intra-regional labour migration. While countries in the subregion have national labour legislation that ratifies the principles and standards of these protocols, treaties and conventions, state practice is not always in line with their mandates. For example, discrimination in favour of nationals in access to employment in Mauritania or Côte d'Ivoire undermines the objectives of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement, and the international human rights treaties. This challenges the usefulness of skills recognition of jeopardizes access to employment.

Furthermore, the information available in the country studies indicates that only a few nations have developed or are in the process of: i) developing their national migration policies; ii) incorporating information on migration flows relevant to ECOWAS; and iii) facilitating intra-regional mobility with migrant profiles; such is the case in Ghana, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Few countries take labour market information into account when developing their migration policy. The challenge is not to develop national migration policies, but policies that are coherent and can be harmonized with others.

Action 7: Harmonize education and qualifications

This action and Action 8 below stem from the recommendations of the feasibility study on the application of the Common Approach to Migration in the ECOWAS space. It is true that the establishment of a regional qualification framework does not require the existence of national qualification frameworks in each country. However, the transferability of skills across the subregion can be facilitated by harmonizing qualifications and education. There is a need to link all national qualifications to a regional framework, starting with the establishment of a referencing system that equates national qualification systems to a desired regional framework.

Experience has shown that the transition to a regional framework is more efficient, simpler and faster when national actors demonstrate some experience with qualification frameworks through the establishment of their own national framework. If a National Qualifications Framework is established in the first instance, it should be accompanied by a National Qualifications Directory. The latter contains all qualifications currently awarded in the countries and possibly in the region.³⁹ The establishment of such a comprehensive register involves discussions with social partners and, possibly, a new perspective on occupational standards and training programmes.

Action 8: Quality assurance

Another issue at the heart of skills recognition and harmonization concerns the quality assurance of training, education, their certification and the conditions and standards for their delivery and equivalence in the ECOWAS subregion. To achieve better compatibility of systems for the development and recognition of skills, it is necessary to have identical or at least comparable levels of qualification. In the context of skills portability, quality assurance plays an important role in building confidence between countries and their respective systems, thus facilitating the mutual recognition of qualifications.

Quality assurance is often concerned with higher education and TVET, but it should include transition levels, especially the final year of secondary and lower secondary education. The most common approach is a systematic review of curricula and educational institutions to ensure that acceptable standards of education (e.g. related to the recruitment of teachers and trainers, curricula design and

³⁹ This can mean several thousand qualifications, which may take several years to develop and must be maintained on a permanent basis.

sufficient infrastructure) are maintained. Although there are several ways of doing this, quality assurance by external committees is desirable in the regional context.

Quality assurance should, among other things, comply with the following:

- Be based on clear quality indicators relating to the desired aspects.
- Be established in a transparent manner, as the publication of minimum standards and benchmarks may be useful in this regard.
- Be periodic in order to ensure monitoring and evaluation, including the publication of reports.
- Be established in conjunction with a management information system, for medium and long-term needs.
- Constitute a tool for institutional and human capacity building.

Action 9: Integrate the informal economy through good practices

Informality should be addressed in two ways, by supporting transitions to formality and recognising prior learning (RPL). The majority of employment in the subregion is informal, where self-employed and low-skilled workers constitute the main workforce. It is therefore difficult to talk about skills portability for a group of workers who have only trained on the job and don't possess a qualification. Informal workers can easily become penalized de facto with an absence of official documents, regardless of their skill level.

There are, however, some good practices in the subregion for the validation and recognition of prior learning. In Burkina Faso, workers, including migrants, can apply for assessments at the national level. Success with these tests is accompanied by a certificate recognized at the training institution's level. This is a practice that needs to be customized to meet the requirements for intra-regional skills recognition. An element of development would be to standardize the validation assessments intra-regionally. Another element would be a regional repository of occupational standards that would be subject to formal and regular evaluation.

However, an existing challenge that countries face is the logistics needed for the assessments of a large number of applicants. The involvement of the private sector and other stakeholders is paramount. Also, the logistics in question are obviously costly, as staff needs to be trained (in particular assessors) before the assessment process can be fully organized.

Action 10: Develop regional model occupational standards that will be subject to official and regular evaluation

A directory that associates skills, missions, activities with occupations is vital to the labour economy. This directory would make it possible to identify the scope of activities of each occupation. Keeping such a directory at the national and regional level is very useful for RPL, especially since workers, including migrant workers, are likely to masters skills linked to several occupations depending on the level of expertise. It is also useful for ensuring the harmonization of standards for the awarding of qualifications within ECOWAS.

Action 11: Involve the private sector and other stakeholders

An inclusive approach is necessary to meet the needs of the market. Private sector participation remains limited in the subregion and generally addresses cross-cutting aspects of the TVET system. To this end, it is important to establish relevant and regular consultation between the various public and private actors. The lack of institutionalized consultation is a major obstacle in achieving a formalized definition of public-private partnerships (PPP) in the field of skills development, and to clarifying each actor's responsibility.

This is also important for the recognition of prior learning, as some of the assessors must be practitioners in the sector. In addition, some candidates may be examined on the job if a partnership framework is in place, which reduces cost. The issue is that RPL processes can be costly depending on the assessment method, the level of qualification sought, and the assessment materials required.

Therefore, and in order to enhance the portability of skills and to implement the measures discussed in this report, social partners at the national, and regional level will need to strengthen their capacities through targeted training and coaching.

Action 12: Create structures for mutual recognition, certification and information sharing

Mutual agreements are useful instruments to address recognition and certification issues, as they allow the parties concerned to standardize the conditions for recognition, certification and access to certain occupations in a more flexible way. However, this practice may result in over-diversification within the region, diverging from any common recognition, certification or employability at the regional level. One solution would be to set up local or national structures that ensure immediate mutual coordination while being connected to umbrella structures at the regional level. This would require the creation of a framework for convergence of bilateral arrangements outside the framework of regional agreements.

Action 13: Promote access to information and orientation for migrant workers

This action point aims to promote awareness among migrant workers in the subregion through the provision of pre-departure and post-arrival information. The objective is to enable potential as well as established migrants to improve the success of their migration and reduce the risks of exploitation, human trafficking and unfair labour practices. An example of these actions was the 2017 ITUC-Africa/WTO/ECOWAS workshop held to explore the role of trade unions and civil society organizations in promoting the ECOWAS programme on free movement, migration and the UN Global Compact on Migration. Another example is the MADE platform, connected to global civil society to promote public policies for the welfare and protection of migrants.

8.2. Concrete avenues for partnerships for skills and migration



The above list of actions requires the attention of policy-makers in the area of skills and labour migration. These actions underline the importance of increased collaboration between the different countries of the subregion and their actors in the labour market (e.g. public institutions, employers' organizations and workers' organizations). Current bi- or multilateral agreements between these actors seem to represent a priority path to achieve the stated objectives of improving the management of migration, and systems of development, recognition, identification and skill anticipation. To better serve subregional skills development and migration, the five-pronged approach presented below involves the establishment of partnerships for:



- Information, guidance and counselling of migrant workers.
- Identification, anticipation and matching of skills supply and demand.
- Skills development in the country of origin and/or destination.
- Mutual recognition and/or harmonization of qualifications.
- Recognition of prior learning.

Concrete avenues based on this five-pronged approach could be developed, as well as action plans to illustrate the crucial steps to be taken when implementing a common partnership strategy in the context of the countries of the subregion, and the specific needs identified through this study.




Table 18 is a collection of “partnership cards” depicting ideas for skills partnerships developed at a tripartite workshop which took place in Abuja, in September 2019.



Table 18 : Partnership Cards




Description				
Title :	Harmonisation of training programs in agriculture, construction and metal construction in Burkina Faso and Mali		<div>Mali, Burkina Faso</div> <div></div>	
Beneficiaries :	Migrant workers from both countries, state parties, employers' and workers' organisations			
Duration :	3 years (2020-2022)			
Actors :	States, employer and worker organisations in the sectors concerned			
Summary :	The purpose of this bilateral agreement between Burkina Faso and Mali is to harmonize the content of the training programs mentioned below. It will also allow the sharing of experiences and good practices between the two countries while facilitating the socio-professional integration of migrants.			
Action plan				
1.) Elaboration and signature of the partnership agreement	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	2 months	
2.) Literature review (documentation research)	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	2 months	
3.) Meeting / framing workshop	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	2 months	
4.) Preparation of draft training and certification standards and training programs	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	6 months	
Long term plan				
1.) Consultation workshop, validation of training and certification standards and training programs (national level)	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	3 months	
2.) Workshop for the validation of frameworks and programmes in both countries	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	2 months	
3.) Adoption of the standards and programmes by the competent authorities of the two countries	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	1 month	
4.) 3rd year, training of trainers in the use of reference materials and programs in both countries	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	3 months	
5.) Experimentation and implementation of reference materials and programs	State parties	Social partners, professionals, vocational training centres	6 months	




Description				
Title :	Recognition and validation of prior learning (RPL) for priority occupations		<div>Mauritania, Senegal</div> <div></div>	
Beneficiaries :	Migrants from 2 countries			
Duration :	5 years			
Actors :	The ministry of foreign affairs, ministers responsible for vocational training, training centres, and enterprises in both countries			
Summary :	<div><div>-</div>Development of occupational, competency and assessment standards</div> <div><div>-</div>Financing of enterprises to upgrade equipment and training of tutors</div>			
Action plan				
1. Advocacy and awareness-raising of the authorities	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour; TFP	months	
2. Implementation of RPL mechanisms	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour; TFP	months	
3. Elaboration of texts organising the RPL	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour; TFP	6 months	
Long term plan				
1. Identify priority occupations	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour; TFP	3 months	
2. Drafting of occupational, competency and assessment standards	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, vocational training centres	6 months	
3. Training of tutors	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour	6 months	
4. Upgrading of workshops	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners	6 months	
5. Implementation of programmes	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, vocational training centres	6 months	
6. Monitoring of implementation	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour	3 months	
7. Organisation of the first certifications	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, vocational training centres	6 months	
8. Evaluation	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour	3 months	


Description				
Title :	Recognition of titles and diplomas	Mauritania, Senegal		
Beneficiaries :	Migrants from two countries	 		
Duration :	5 years			
Actors :	The ministry of foreign affairs, ministers responsible for vocational training, training centres, employers, workers and TFPs			
Summary :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development of training standards- Drawing up of the lists of titles and diplomas			
Action plan				
Establishment of a common framework for the recognition of qualifications				
1. Advocacy and awareness-raising of the authorities	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	3 months	
2. Mapping of titles and diplomas	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	6 months	
3. Validation of the maps of the two countries	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	3 months	
4. Development of equivalence table of titles and diplomas	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	4 months	
5. Public validation of the documents drawn up	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	3 months	
Long term plan				
1. Extension and ownership	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	6 months	
2. Evaluation of agreements	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	3 months	
3. Updating of agreements	Ministries in charge of vocational training	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP	3 months	



Description				
Title :	Labour Market Information		<div>Ivory Coast, Ghana</div> <div></div>	
Beneficiaries :	Government, employers' organizations, migrant workers			
Duration :	2020-2022			
Actors :	Actors from both beneficiary states and TFPs			
Summary :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Create a partnership for the exchange of labour market information for migrant workers.- Set up a committee to write the TOR.- Develop collection tools and sign agreements between data management structures.- Types of information to generate → information on migrants' skills, job offers, sectors			
Long term plan				
Final objective :	To set up a database on job offers and promising sectors in both countries			
1. Establishment of a tripartite committee of the two countries	Government of Ivory Coast Government of Ghana	Government, Employers, Workers of both countries	31.12.2019	
2. Define the working schedule of the committee	President of the national committee	Government, Employers, Workers of both countries	01.01.2020	
3. Preparation of draft TOR by country	President of the national committee	Government, Employers, Workers of both countries	28.02.2020	
4. Organisation of information sessions with other stakeholders in each country	President of the national committee	Government, Employers, Workers of both countries, migrant associations, consulates and NGOs	15.03.2020	
5. Workshop to validate the common project TOR	President of the national committee	Government, Employers, Workers of both countries, TFP	30.03.2020	
Long term plan				
1. Conduct a study on supply, demand and employment in the two countries	Government of Ivory Coast Government of Ghana	N.A.	N.A.	
2. Organize a validation workshop for the study	Government of Ivory Coast Government of Ghana	N.A.	N.A.	
3. Establishment of a joint information structure	Government of Ivory Coast Government of Ghana	N.A.	N.A.	



Description				
Title :	Skills mapping and development		<div>Togo, Ghana</div> <div></div>	
Beneficiaries :	Migrant workers, job seekers and employers, training institutions, policy makers and curriculum developers			
Duration :	24 months			
Actors :	Ministry of labour, bureau of statistics, ministry of education, ministry of finance, trade unions, employers’ associations			
Summary :	The two countries have agreed to collaborate on skills mapping and development to their mutual benefit. This will help in providing relevant skills training and reduce mismatch among migrant workers.			
Action plan				
Final objective	Facilitate migrants’ insertion into the labour market in both countries			
1. Identification of the areas where mapping can be carried out	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	4 months	
2. Technical labour committee	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	2 months	
3. Realization of a mapping study	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	4 months	
4. Sharing of the results of the mapping study	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	3 months	
5. Training of migrants in the identified skill areas	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	6 months	
Longterm plan				
1. Establish a labour market information data base	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	1 year	
2. Exchange program (study)	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	2 years	
3. Harmonization of training standards and diplomas	Togo and Ghana	Government, employers, workers	2 years	




Description				
Title :	Harmonization of Certification & Standards		<div>Nigeria, Ghana, Togo</div> <div></div>	
Beneficiaries :	Migrant workers, job seekers, employers, training providers, policy makers, and curriculum developers			
Duration :	N.A.			
Actors :	Ministries of labour, bureau of statistics, ministries of education, ministry of finance and planning and trade unions and employers associations			
Summary :	The three countries have agreed to collaborate on harmonization of certifications and standards to facilitate portability of skills between the three countries. This will boost the confidence of employers in hiring migrant workers and better integration of migrant workers in the workforce.			
Action plan				
Final objective	Facilitation of easy portability of skills between Ghana and Nigeria			
1. Organize trilateral consultations on harmonization of certificates	Government, Employers, and Workers of all countries involved and ILO; GIZ; Development partners	ILO /GIZ/ IOM/ UNESCO and other development partners	3 months	
2. Establish tripartite technical working groups on harmonization of certificates	Government, Employers, and Workers of all countries involved and ILO; GIZ; Development partners	ILO /GIZ/ IOM/ UNESCO and other development partners	3 months	
3. Conduct needs assessment / baseline studies	Consultant / Experts	The technical committee	3 months	
4. Develop trilateral policies / MOUs on harmonization of certificates	Policy makers of the three countries	The technical committee	9 months	
5. Curriculum review /harmonization	Consultants / experts / policy makers	The technical committee	3 months	
Long term plan				
1. Implementation of skills development programs	Various governments of the three countries	Employer and Government	3-year intervals	
2. Monitoring and Evaluation	Tripartite and social partners	Development partners	Regular	
3. Policy review	Policy makers	Government	Every 5 years	

Description				
Title :	MOU on Labour Market Information		<div>Ghana, Nigeria</div> <div></div>	
Beneficiaries :	Migrant workers from both countries of origin and destination			
Duration :	3 years			
Actors :	Ministry of labour, of both countries, social partners, employers’ associations, and labour unions, ministry of interior and foreign affairs			
Summary :	Establishment of a Labour Market Information System (labour sector) to exchange information on skills shortages in Nigeria and Ghana that could be filled by migrants from both countries			
Action plan				
Final objective	The overall goal of this MOU is to promote skills partnerships and utilization of skills for better management of organized labour migration between Ghana and Nigeria			
1. Organize bilateral consultations between the 2 countries on development of data collection templates	Government, Employers, and Workers of all countries involved and ILO; GIZ; Development partners	ILO /GIZ/ IOM/ UNESCO and other development partners	3 months	
2. Establish a web-portal to automate the data collection and dissemination	Government, Employers, and Workers of all countries involved and ILO; GIZ; Development partners	ILO /GIZ/ IOM/ UNESCO and other development partners	3 months	
3. Conduct needs assessment / baseline studies	Consultant / Experts	The technical committee	3 months	
4. Develop trilateral policies / MOUs on harmonization of certificates	Policy makers of the three countries	The technical committee	9 months	
5. Curriculum review /harmonization	Consultants / experts / policy makers	The technical committee	3 months	
Long term plan				
1. Implementation of skills development programs	Various governments of the three countries	Employer and Government	3-year intervals	
2. Monitoring and Evaluation	Tripartite and social partners	Development partners	Regular	
3. Policy review	Policy makers	Government	Every 5 years	

Description				
Title :	Information and orientation of migrants: Creation of a service within the observatory on the employment and training specifically devoted to migrant workers			<div>Ivory Coast, Senegal, Burkina Faso</div> <div></div>
Beneficiaries :	Migrant workers from both countries			
Duration :	2020-2022			
Actors :	States, employers, workers, TFPs			
Summary :	Define the terms of reference of the agreement; Establish a consultation timetable; Sign a Memorandum of Understanding; Set up a reception, information and orientation structure; L/P to the competent authorities; Raise awareness among migrants ; Enforce migrants' rights The new service within the observatory should be a tool for collecting and processing information on the labour market, migrants' skills and capacity building mechanisms. Decision-making tool at the disposal of tripartite parties. Methods of implementation: Semi-annual meeting of the bodies/ two observatories to validate the data			
Objectif final	The observatory on the employment and training of migrants is operational			
1. Consultation between the three countries	Ivory Coast	Ministries concerned, TFPs, Trade Unions, CSOs, NGOs, Employers, IOM, ILO	1 st trimester	
2. Validation of the steering tools	Ivory Coast	Ministries concerned, TFPs, Trade Unions, CSOs, NGOs, Employers, IOM, ILO	1 st trimester	
3. Installation of country observatories	Ivory Coast	Country representatives	2 nd trimester	
4. Installation of the sub-regional observatory	Ivory Coast	Country representatives	3 rd trimester	
5. Sub-regional action plan	Ivory Coast	Country representatives	4 th trimester	
Plan à long terme (années suivantes)				
1. Awareness-raising among beneficiaries		Observatory	1 st trimester	
2. Advocacy to the competent authorities		Observatory	1 st trimester	
3. Collection of information / Inventory (Mapping of migrants)		Observatory	2 nd trimester	
4. Processing and dissemination of information to the services		Observatory	2 nd trimester	
5. Reception, information and advice		Observatory	2 nd trimester	
6. Monitoring and periodic evaluations		Observatory	Throughout the process	

Description				
Title :	Setting up a platform (database) of information on skills needs between CNP Mali and CNP Togo			Mauretania, Mali  
Beneficiaries :	Migrants from both countries			
Duration :	1 year			
Actors :	CNP-Mali, CNP-Togo			
Summary :	Create a platform at the level of each employers' organization. This platform will be powered by member companies. This platform will make it possible to know the skills needs by sector of activity at the level of each country. This information will be made available to the national observatories in charge of immigration.			
Action plan				
Operational database				
1. Signing of a memorandum of understanding	CNP-Mali et CNP-Togo			3 months
2. Preparatory meeting	The two employers' organisations	ONEF, the central unions		3 days
3. Elaboration of TOR and validation	The two employers' organisations	ONEF, the central unions		1 month
4. Search for funding	The two employers' organisations	ILO, ICMPD, IOM, GIZ		3 months
Long term plan				
1. Launch of the call for tender	The two employers' organisations			1 month
2. Contract/ consultation	The two employers' organisations	Consultants, TFP		5 days
3. Realisation and validation	The two employers' organisations	ONEF, the central unions, TFP		2 months
4. Training of administrators and collection agents	Consultant, the two employers' organisations			3 days
5. Collection and feeding of the database	The collection agents, the two Organisations, the consultant	Member companies		1 month
6. Production and dissemination of statistics	The two employers' organisations	ONEF, the central unions, TFP		1 month
7. Evaluation	The two employers' organisations	ONEF, the central unions, TFP		

Description			
Title :	Information on the skills of migrants	Togo et Mali  	
Beneficiaries :	Enterprises from both countries		
Duration :	3 years		
Actors :	Employers' organisations, ministries of employment, training (governments)		
Summary :	Trade reference sharing / Monitoring system for migrants / Platform whose mission is to disseminate job offers and migrants' existing skills		
Action plan			
Migrants from both countries will have information on employment opportunities and companies will have information on migrants' skills			
1. Elaboration and validation of TOR	Employers /Technical Centres CNPM, UNPM, Cent	Migrant associations/ TFP/ Government	months
2. Selection of a consultant / development of the platform	Technical consultant	Consultant, TFP	3 months
3. Validation of the results of the consultant's work	Technical consultant	Consultant, TFP, Government	2 months
4. Awareness-raising among migrants and information collection	Technical consultant	Associations of nationals, TFP, IOM, Government	3 months
5. Launching of the platform	Technical consultant	Associations of nationals, TFP, IOM	2 months
Long term plan			
1. Update	Technical committee (2 countries)	Migrant associations, IOM	2 years
2. Monitoring and evaluation (study)	Technical committee (2 countries)	Consultants, TFP	1 month
3. Validation workshop	Technical committee	Consultant, TFP	1 month

Description				
Title :	Validation of prior learning, mutual recognition of qualifications and skills development for a common mechanism between Togo, Mali and Burkina Faso		<div>Togo, Mali, Burkina Faso</div> <div></div>	
Beneficiaries :	Migrant workers from the three countries			
Duration :	4 years renewable			
Actors :	The social partners of the three countries The three states and the technical and financial partners			
Summary :	This agreement, which initially brought together three countries, can be opened up to others and aims to facilitate the integration of workers from the area in question. This can be done through mutual recognition of qualifications, RPL and the development of skills related to the needs of the destination country.			
Action plan				
Final objective :	To facilitate the socio-professional integration of migrant workers from Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo in the three countries			
1. Set up a tripartite committee in the three countries, in charge of the project	Government, Employers, Workers	Migrants' organisations, local authorities, chambers of trades, training centres		2 months
2. Elaboration of the TOR for the diagnostic study	Government, Employers, Workers	Migrants' organisations, local authorities, chambers of trades, training centres		1 month
3. Carry out a diagnostic study	Government, Employers, Workers	Migrants' organisations, local authorities, chambers of trades, training centres		1 months
4. Validate in each country the diagnostic study	Government, Employers, Workers	Migrants' organisations, local authorities, chambers of trades, training centres		1 month
5. Formulate and validate the project at the scale of the three countries (regional workshop)	Government, Employers, Workers, TFP	Migrants' organisations, local authorities, chambers of trades, training centres		4 months
Long term plan				
1. Seek funding	Government, Employers, Workers	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP		1 month
2. Mobilise beneficiaries	Government, Employers, Workers	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP		3 months
3. Search for implementing partners	Government, Employers, Workers	Social partners, Ministry of Employment/Labour/Public Service; TFP		3 months
4. Implement a mechanism for the evaluation and recognition of qualifications	Government, Employers, Workers	Idem		
5. Develop RPL instruments	Government, Employers, Workers	Idem		
6. Implement training courses	Government, Employers, Workers	idem		

Conclusions

This subregional mapping study attempted to provide an exploratory analysis on the potential for forming skills partnerships on migration within the subregion covering Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Emphasis was placed on skills systems, migration flows and patterns, the possible convergence in skills anticipation, development and recognition between the selected countries, and potential areas for new partnerships.

With regard to intra-regional labour migration trends and patterns, the study highlighted a continued growth in the stock of international migrants, from 4.2 million in 2000 to 6.7 million in 2017. One-third of this stock was in Côte d'Ivoire, or 2.2 million migrants according to UN estimates for 2017. The majority of migrants in the subregion move for economic reasons, while the country analysis indicates employment or at least its quest as the main motivation. It goes without saying that escaping conflict and seeking a better living environment is another motivation. Indeed, estimates of the stock of refugees, including asylum seekers, show that about one in ten migrants are refugees, with Chad hosting more than half of them.

An attempt to categorize migration in the subregion according to a time scale makes it possible to distinguish three types. The first includes permanent migration and long-term return migration. The second includes migration for study purposes and transitional migration, where the duration of stay may exceed one year. A third type, of shorter duration, includes seasonal labour migration, temporary cross-border workers, women traders, professionals and illegal workers (Awumbila et al., 2014).

In addition to these classifications, analysis of contemporary migration patterns in the subregion indicates that movements are mainly intra-regional. The degree of intra-regional migration, with about 75 per cent of the subregion's international migrants remaining in another country within the subregion, is among the highest in Africa. Thus, data on the age and gender distribution of migrants point to increased feminization, in addition to a dominance of youth in the working-age population. Furthermore, data on educational attainment, educational and vocational qualifications and occupations of migrants indicate that the majority have a low level of education.

With regard to the spatial organization of foreigners in the subregion, according to data from the country studies, the regions most affected by migratory inflows generally include major cities, centres of economic activity and capitals. In principle, these regions offer more employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Immigration also affects regions and areas where agricultural activity flourishes, and in other countries, international migrants are concentrated in refugee camps. Another classification of centres of concentration of international migrants is that of transit. Traditional points of transit normally attract a significant number of migrants. Regions with sites or activities for the extraction, exploitation and processing of raw materials also attract large numbers of migrants.

The study attempted to provide a comparative examination of labour supply and demand by occupation and sector, depending on data availability. This included a review of labour shortages in the selected countries and the main sectors in which migrants work. Findings showed a dominance of vulnerable employment, 78.5 per cent of total employment in the subregion as a whole, and a decline in growth and employment in the primary sector in favour of a rise in services. Analysis of the employed labour force of the subregion showed that between 35 and 75 per cent of migrant workers depending on the country had not attained primary education levels.

Under the supply and demand conditions outlined in the study, the labour market in the subregion is unable to absorb the growing number of young jobseekers. This is all the more worrying given the high participation rates, persistent population growth and the fact that the majority of jobs are in vulnerable and informal employment. The country studies indicate that the causes of labour shortages are as numerous as they are diverse, including the mismatch between training provided and the skills requirements of the labour market; the poor quality of training and the non-existence of certain types

of training; the arduousness of work; jobs for which qualifications exist but which are poorly known; and the lack of interest in training, especially among nationals in certain low-valued jobs such as domestic work, or waste collection and management. The country studies confirm that there is a need to improve the quality of the training provided to young jobseekers.

In addition to labour market and migration profiles, the study examined legal frameworks, policies and regional cooperation on migration and its governance. The review of adherence to multilateral frameworks on migration and its governance in the subregion shows that the ILO core conventions are widely ratified by the States of the subregion, though there are challenges to incorporate the principles of these Conventions into national legislation, to comply with ILO reporting obligations, and thus to monitor employment policies at the regional level. Moreover, the review of accession to ECOWAS regional frameworks indicates that the protocols on the right of residence and the right of establishment are only slowly being implemented. Progress in the implementation of the Common Approach to Migration launched in 2008 has also been limited.

The ECOWAS Convention on the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas, Certificates and other Academic Qualifications in Member States, adopted in 2003, is also facing implementation difficulties due to language barriers, the absence of national migration policy in many countries and heterogeneous reference frameworks. Added to these challenges is the fact that national systems usually have weak or no systems supporting the identification and anticipation of skill needs. Despite the inadequacy of mechanisms for collecting and disseminating information aimed at formulating better training and skills development policies – as well as labour market policies – the countries of the subregion often possess the necessary administrative structures for identifying and anticipating skill needs. This reveals that, despite the existence of such structures, the subregion still suffers from a lack of harmonization and coordination to generate solid data on skills shortages and needs.

A review of the state of play in the subregion on skills development systems, revealed that labour supply is marked by a strong disparity in spatial distribution in favour of large cities. Training is concentrated in the large urban centres, and is very diversified in terms of streams and available training programmes. Three types of skills development were identified:

- Formal technical and vocational education and training provided by public or private structures awarding officially recognized qualifications;
- Non-formal: technical and vocational education and training organised outside the state-recognized circuit; and
- Informal: vocational training including traditional/informal apprenticeships and on-the-job training.

Formal qualifications are focused around an initial level for basic qualifications; an intermediate level for vocational qualifications; and an advanced level for higher qualifications at technician and professional level, including master's and doctoral degrees.

The need for skills recognition in the subregion is more evident in sectors with a high prevalence of formal employment. Employers easily accept certificates recognized and/or issued by an accredited institution. The reputation of some training institutes or schools may be sufficient to recognize the worker's skills. In the informal economy that hosts the majority of jobs in the subregion, however, skills recognition is not systematic, and challenges remain in obtaining recognition by employers for skills acquired through informal and non-formal programmes.

In light of this context of skills development and recognition systems in the region, and the high prevalence of labour migration, the study identified options for improving the compatibility of skills and migration policies and systems at national and regional level. These include:

1. Generalizing and mainstreaming Phases I and II of the ECOWAS Treaty;

2. Continuing the implementation of the Common Approach to Migration;
3. Improving the management of border crossings (which constitute barriers to free movement);
4. Harmonizing national migration laws and policies with international and intra-regional frameworks;
5. Establishing national employment and migration policies;
6. Promoting transitions to formality for informal economy workers;
7. Involving the private sector and other stakeholders in the above harmonization processes;
8. Developing regional model occupational standards;
9. Harmonizing education and qualifications recognition while practicing quality assurance;
10. Creating effective institutions for mutual recognition, certification and information sharing; and
11. Establishing harmonized and comparable information systems and support access to information and guidance for migration workers.

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2020 ILO country studies on the potential for skills partnerships on migration

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Burkina Faso

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration en Côte d'Ivoire

Country study on the potential for skills partnerships on migration in Ghana

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Mali

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration en Mauritanie

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Niger

Country study on the potential for skills partnerships on migration in Nigeria

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Sénégal

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Tchad

Etude de pays sur le potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Togo

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Annex : Bilateral conventions on social protection

Bilateral convention Benin/countries of the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral Agreement on the Prevention, Suppression and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, between Benin, Nigeria and Congo Brazzaville, 2009. • Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs, Trade and Immigration Matters between the Governments of Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Togo.
Bilateral conventions Burkina Faso/countries in the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on the Conditions of Engagement and Employment of Voltaic Workers in Côte d'Ivoire, 1960. • Bilateral Convention on Manpower Management between Burkina Faso and Mali, 1969. • Cooperation Agreement Côte d'Ivoire-Burkina Faso, 2013, to combat cross-border trafficking.
Bilateral conventions Côte d'Ivoire/countries in the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on the Conditions of Engagement and Employment of Voltaic Workers in Côte d'Ivoire, 1960. • Cooperation Agreement Côte d'Ivoire-Mali, 2002, and Côte d'Ivoire-Burkina Faso, 2013, to combat cross-border trafficking. • Existing agreements with Mauritania and Chad for the abolition of visa requirements.
Bilateral convention Ghana/countries in the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on the Movement of Persons and Goods between Mali and Ghana, 31 August 1977. • Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs, Trade and Immigration Matters between the Governments of Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Togo.
Bilateral conventions Mali/countries of the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on Establishment and Movement of Persons between Mali and Mauritania, 25 July 1963. • Bilateral Convention on Manpower Management between Burkina Faso and Mali, 1969. • Convention on Establishment and Movement of Persons between Mali and Niger, 22 April 1964. • Convention of Establishment between Mali and Mauritania, 23 July 1973. • Agreement on the Movement of Persons and Goods between Mali and Ghana, 31 August 1977. • Cooperation Agreement Côte d'Ivoire-Mali, 2002, to combat cross-border trafficking.
Bilateral conventions Mauritania/countries of the region

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on Establishment and Movement of Persons between Mali and Mauritania, 25 July 1963. • Convention on cooperation and mutual assistance in the field of administration with Mali, 1987. • Agreement between Senegal and Mauritania on the Movement of Persons and Goods, 22 April 1992. • Agreement between Senegal and Mauritania on the employment and residence in Senegal of Mauritanian workers and Senegalese workers in Mauritania, 8 October 1972. • Convention of Establishment between Mali and Mauritania, 23 July 1973.
Bilateral conventions Niger/countries in the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of Understanding (delimitation of borders, movement of people, cooperation between border authorities) between Niger and Upper Volta, 23 June 1964. • Convention on Establishment and Movement of Persons between Mali and Niger, 22 April 1964.
Bilateral conventions Nigeria/countries in the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral Agreement on the Prevention, Suppression and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, between Benin, Nigeria and Congo Brazzaville, 2009. • Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs, Trade and Immigration Matters between the Governments of Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Togo.
Bilateral conventions Senegal/countries in the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement between Senegal and Mauritania on the Movement of Persons and Goods, 22 April 1992. • Agreement between Senegal and Mauritania on the employment and residence in Senegal of Mauritanian workers and Senegalese workers in Mauritania, 8 October 1972.
Bilateral convention Togo/countries of the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing agreements with Mauritania and Chad for the abolition of visa requirements. • Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs, Trade and Immigration Matters between the Governments of Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Togo.

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