

EU–Africa Upstream Skills & Mobility Pilot (USMP)

Strategic Concept — Public Overview

Prepared by Marouf Adeyemi e.V. | Geographic Focus: Benin (Pilot) | West Africa (Future)

What Is the USMP?

The EU–Africa Upstream Skills and Mobility Pilot (USMP) is a proposed policy experiment designed to test whether structured, upstream skills preparation can improve employment outcomes for African youth, reduce incentives for irregular migration, and lower integration friction and costs in EU destination countries.

It is small, testable, reversible, and ethically bounded by design.

The pilot does not request infrastructure funding. It does not assume scale. It does not pre-commit the EU or any partner government beyond the pilot phase.

The Problem

Africa's working-age population continues to grow faster than domestic job creation. EU labour markets face documented shortages in selected sectors. Irregular migration routes persist despite enforcement efforts. Post-arrival integration remains costly and uneven.

Existing EU mechanisms — Talent Partnerships, bilateral labour mobility schemes, THAMM and similar pilots — operate as programmes, not as infrastructure. They often lack origin-side capacity at scale, integrated pipelines linking training to placement, and sufficient size to generate strong policy evidence.

The USMP is designed to fill this missing upstream layer — complementing, not replacing, existing EU instruments.

What the USMP Is — and Is Not

It is:

- *A policy pilot, not a permanent system*
- *A skills, certification, and employment-preparation platform*
- *A complement to EU Talent Partnerships and bilateral schemes*
- *A testbed for evidence-based migration governance*

It is not:

- A sovereign entity, special zone, or settlement
- A migration camp
- A mandatory or exclusive pathway
- A deterrence or externalisation mechanism

Participation is **voluntary, rights-based, and non-coercive** at all stages.

Theory of Change

The USMP operates on a clear causal logic:

Upstream training + language acquisition + certification + voluntary job matching ↓ Certified skills | Language proficiency | Verifiable worker profiles | Job offers (for a minority) ↓ Legal, job-matched mobility (minority) | Local and regional employment (majority) | Faster integration | Reduced incentives for irregular migration

Only measured success justifies any future scale.

Pilot Design

- **Participants:** 100–200
- **Duration:** 18 months
- **Sectors:** Maximum two (validated through scoping study)
- **EU mobility corridors:** Maximum two
- **Languages:** One per corridor

Timeline:

- Months 0–3: Institutional validation, ethics pre-approval, labour market scoping
- Months 4–6: Participant recruitment, transparent lottery selection, employer expressions of interest
- Months 7–12: Skills and language training, midline evaluation
- Months 13–18: Job matching, limited mobility where applicable, endline evaluation and public reporting

Participant Selection and Anti-Bias Safeguards

Selection proceeds through:

1. Open public call
2. Basic eligibility screening
3. **Transparent lottery selection**
4. Full public documentation of the selection process

This prevents elite capture, political favouritism, and informal gatekeeping.

Participant Rights (Binding)

All participants are guaranteed:

- *Voluntary participation at every stage*
- *Right to withdraw without penalty*
- *No fees, debt, or financial obligation of any kind*
- *No obligation to migrate*
- *Full portability of all earned certifications*
- *Access to an independent grievance mechanism*
- *Protection aligned with ILO international labour standards*

*An **independent ombudsperson** is mandatory — not optional.*

Training, Certification, and Employment

Training includes:

- *Sector-specific technical skills*
- *CEFR-aligned language training*
- *Workplace safety and rights awareness*

Certification:

- *Digital, verifiable credentials portable across local, regional, and EU labour markets*

Employment matching:

- *Employers provide non-binding Letters of Intent*
- *Migration occurs only after confirmed job offers*
- *No job → no migration → no penalty*
- *Participants without EU placement retain certifications and access local employment*

Preventing Brain Drain

The USMP is explicitly designed to avoid brain drain:

- *Migration is a **minority outcome***
- *Skills are aligned with domestic labour demand*
- *Local employers participate in matching*
- *Target ratio (validated post-scoping): 3–4 local employment outcomes for every 1 EU migration*

Pre-Pilot Labour Market Scoping

Before training begins, a formal Labour Market Scoping Study in Benin will assess sector demand, employer landscape, wage benchmarks, and absorptive capacity. Training focus and ratios derive from this study — not from assumptions.

Evaluation Design

The preferred evaluation methodology is a **Randomised Control Trial (RCT)**, using eligible non-selected applicants as the control group. Fallback methodologies include matched comparison with existing EU programmes and historical baseline comparisons.

Evaluation partners will be drawn from independent academic institutions. Ethics approval, independent methodology design, and public reporting are mandatory requirements.

Governance

The pilot operates under a three-part governance structure:

- **Host State (Benin):** Legal jurisdiction and labour law authority
- **European Union:** Policy alignment, monitoring, financing conditionality
- **Operating Consortium:** Implementation and coordination

No legislative, judicial, or coercive powers are created under the pilot framework.

Marouf Adeyemi e.V. serves as **convenor and ethical steward** — not sole implementer. Operational delivery is envisaged through partnerships with experienced international implementers, subject to pilot co-design.

Scaling Conditions (Strictly Conditional)

Scale is considered only if all of the following are independently verified:

- $\geq 70\%$ employment outcome (local + EU combined)
- No substantiated rights violations
- Positive independent evaluation
- Net positive outcomes demonstrated for non-migrating participants

Failure triggers redesign or termination — not automatic continuation.

Indicative Budget

Category	Estimated Range
Training delivery	€400,000–550,000
Language education	€180,000–250,000

Participant support €200,000–300,000

Evaluation and ethics €120,000–180,000

Project management €120,000–160,000

Contingency €150,000–200,000

Total **€1.2–1.8 million**

Indicative cost per participant: €8,000–12,000

Contact

Marouf Adeyemi e.V. Theodor-Fontane-Allee 22, 12529 Schönefeld, Germany Email: service@maroufadeyemi.org Web: www.maroufadeyemi.org

This document is a public overview of an exploratory pilot concept. It does not constitute a funding application.