

Guideline – Recruiting, Training and Employing Foreign Skilled Workers.

Welcome Center of the Thuringian Agency For Skilled Personnel Marketing (ThAFF)



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Background

Immigration from abroad is an important element to meet the need for skilled professionals in Thuringia – especially considering the demographic changes and its impacts on the employment and training market. Foreign vocational trainees and skilled workers can not only help manage the demand for staff; they can also enrich companies with language skills, fresh perspectives and international networks.

Aside from these prospects, increasing heterogeneity in the workforce may also create challenges. The management level is therefore faced with a need to establish an appropriate framework, so the recruitment and integration of foreign skilled workers and trainees is a success for all involved. This can be achieved best through an holistic approach which takes into account not only the company perspective but also the viewpoint of the individual as well as society as a whole.

Here are various aspects important which should be kept in mind.

This brochure provides information on legal regulations and framework conditions relevant when employing foreign trainees and skilled workers, and gives specific tips and recommendations on how to strengthen your company by recruiting and binding employees from abroad. You will also find contacts for authorities, institutions and counselling services, as well as checklists and additional links to related information sites.



Joint statement – Welcoming Culture in Thuringia

The Guideline is an addition to the quality standards for the recruitment and placement of skilled workers and trainees from abroad. These quality standards have been signed by representatives of political institutions, public employment agencies, economic and social partners as well as further institutions in Thuringia.

As the topic of employing foreign (skilled) workers depends on quite a complex and dynamic set of formal regulations and conditions, it is essential to have access to up-to-date information. The team of the ThAFF is your point of contact for all questions concerning the international professionals in Thuringia and offers you a variety of information (in German and English).

Approaching potential vocational trainees and (skilled) workers abroad

If you are considering employing (skilled) workers from abroad, you need to take into account the right of residence and the employment law. Depending on the country of origin, these laws regulate the access to the German labour market. For instance, nationals of so-called “third countries”, who are not citizens of the European Union or the European Economic Area, need a corresponding residence title to enter, live and work in Germany. In most cases, the correct residence title has to be applied for in advance at the German embassy or consulate responsible in the home country.

Important contacts for your company when searching for foreign (skilled) workers and trainees are the **“Arbeitsgeberservice”** (Employer Service) of the regional Employment Agency as well as the **International Placement Service (ZAV)** of the Federal Employment Agency. These institutions can inform you on the possibility of advertising your jobs and trainee positions EU-wide on the EURES Job Portal and they can provide information on legal regulations.

You can also find comprehensive (initial) information on the homepage of the virtual Welcome Center www.make-it-in-germany.de which offers its services for all German federal states.

Additionally, you can make use of the consultation and support the responsible **chambers** and **trade associations** offer with international recruitment projects.

When it comes to approaching foreign (skilled) workers it is to be recommended that all relevant information is available in the local language. Not only a detailed description of the (training) position is relevant – a comprehensive description of the company and working environment should be provided as well. Furthermore, you can offer links to various sources of information regarding living in Germany, and ensure your applicants are well informed of life here. You can find a list of websites which offer such information in various languages on page 10. By offering such a comprehensive info package, those interested can get a full picture of the advertised position and the (working) environment and can make an informed decision regarding an application.

We also recommend naming one person in the company, who is responsible for planning and implementing the recruitment process and who can be contacted in case of questions. It is also advisable to get in touch with the various **institutions and projects from the field of migration and integration** to make use of the existing information, consultation and support services.



Application phase and selection of candidates

Modern communication technologies enable us to make first contact and to get to know potential applicants (and – vice versa – companies) from abroad. This way the company can clarify in advance if the applicant is suitable, and the applicant can get a first impression of the company or institution.

During this phase it might be relevant to inform and advise the potential employee about the possibility of getting his or her foreign qualifications recognised in Germany. In legally regulated professions, recognition is a precondition for working in these professions. But recognition can be an advantage for all other professions as well in order to provide employers with a better understanding of the individual skills and to improve one's career prospects. Depending on the professional qualification there are different institutions in Germany responsible for the recognition process. To get a qualified consultation and to start in the right direction it is recommended to involve the **information and counselling services for recognition (IBAT)** which are funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Interested individuals can start the recognition process already from abroad.

Some aspects of working and living in Thuringia might seem incomprehensible and confusing to people from abroad. It might therefore be helpful to provide the potential employees with additional explanations regarding the German welfare system, employment regulations and taxation, as well as information on the structure and characteristics of the (dual) vocational training system, if necessary. Details on the region, cultural attractions and possible leisure activities could also be of interest to foreign professionals. This enables applicants not only to get to know the working environment but also Thuringia as a place to live in.



Preparing the move to Thuringia

In order to make the initial moving phase to Thuringia easier, it is essential to clarify before the arrival where and how the new employees will be staying (at least for the first few weeks). These first solutions do not have to be permanent at this stage – an accommodation in a temporary home or a hotel is possible as well.

The professionals and future trainees should spend the time before the move to Thuringia acquiring (basic) German language skills. It should be aimed at achieving a language level which enables the future employees or trainees to use basic communication in their new working and living environment.

If younger people from abroad want to complete vocational training in Thuringia it is important to include the vocational school in the preparation, so the orientation and integration during the theoretical part of the education is ensured as well.

Planning and organising the first days in Thuringia

During the first few days the new employees will be faced with a number of new impressions and tasks in their professional but also their private lives. It is therefore recommendable to create an initial training plan and to provide a mentor. The mentor's task is to support the new colleague during the first time and to help him/her get to know the workflows in the company.

After the arrival there are a number of visits to authorities necessary, which the new employees or trainees might need assistance with: A time-sensitive matter is the registration of residence at the local registration office (Einwohnermeldeamt) as well as the registration at the immigration office (if necessary). Furthermore, the new colleague will need an income tax card, a bank account and he/she needs to register with a health insurance fund. Possibly, a car might need to get registered and a telephone/

internet service might need to be arranged for.

A special focus should also be on the promotion of language learning: Good German skills simplify not only the professional life for the new team member, but also his/her ability to fully participate in German society. As a company or institution, you can support this by advising on language and integration courses of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, by exempting the employees from work to take part in the courses or by offering financial support.

In case of difficulties the Migration Advice Services for Adult Immigrants (MBE) as well as the Youth Migration Services (JMD) can provide guidance.



Increasing intercultural competences in the company

In order to make the recruitment of international employees and their sustainable integration into the workforce a success it is essential that the company provides the necessary preconditions. A detailed and transparent communication of the planned recruitment of international (skilled) workers increases the employees' identification with the plans and enables them to provide useful input. The employees should get to know their new colleagues' experiences and skills and should see them as an asset. Here it is interesting for them to receive information on intercultural topics before the arrival of the foreign trainees and (skilled) professionals and to increase the intercultural competence in the company as a whole. This way, a sustainable approach to diversity can be guaranteed and misunderstandings can be avoided.

There are numerous ways of how to increase intercultural competences in the workplace and they depend on the specific situation in the company. For example, intercultural aspects can be identified and experienced in seminars and training situations. Or they can be illustrated with intercultural coachings during the daily work routine. At least during the initial phase it is advisable to involve an intercultural trainer with his/her expertise when it comes to developing suitable methods and measures.

Professional integration and sustainable involvement in the corporate structure is an important part for new employees from abroad. Another key aspect is the social integration which should be aimed at: Social integration can, for example, be achieved through participation in staff activities or inclusion into local associations or clubs. As a result of this, new trainees and (skilled) workers from abroad are welcomed into the local society in Thuringia and can be retained for the company in the long term.

Further information and links

- › **Welcome Portal “Make it in Germany”** (in 13 languages) | www.make-it-in-germany.com
- › **Welcome to Germany** (German, English, Russian, Turkish)
www.bamf.de/EN/Willkommen/willkommen-node.html
 - Information regarding staying in Germany, learning German, local integration projects
 - Information & consultation, work & career, apartment search & moving, rent & tenancy law
 - Children & family, health & prevention, banks & insurance funds, associations & organisations
 - Cultural attractions, shopping & consumer protection, living in Germany
- › **General information about Germany** (in 14 languages) | www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en
- › **Right of residence and employment law:**
 - Summary of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (German, English) | www.bmi.bund.de/en
 - Employment of Foreign Workers in Germany (English) | https://con.arbeitsagentur.de/prod/apok/ct/dam/download/documents/dok_ba014306.pdf
- › **Recognition of foreign qualifications:**
 - Information portal of the German government regarding the recognition of foreign professional qualifications (in 11 languages) | www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en
 - Information portal for foreign professional qualifications (German, English) | www.bq-portal.de/en
 - Information and counselling services for recognition of the IQ network Thuringia (German) | www.iq-thueringen.de/iq-beratung/anerkennungs-und-qualifizierungsberatung

You can download this brochure as a pdf here to get direct access to the mentioned links:

Checklist

Approaching potential vocational trainees and (skilled) workers abroad

- ☐ Considering the regulations of the right of residence and the employment law (if applicable, applying for necessary residence title as soon as possible)
- ☐ Involving the public employment service
- ☐ Involving state institutions as well as chambers and associations
- ☐ Providing information in the local language
 - › Information about the company
 - › Detailed description of the working or training environment
- ☐ Designating contact persons responsible in the company
- ☐ Making contact with local institutions and projects in the field of migration and integration

Application phase and selection of candidates

- ☐ Using modern communication technology to conduct job interviews
- ☐ Consulting early on the recognition of foreign (professional) qualifications (a must for legally regulated professions)
- ☐ Involving the information and counselling services for recognition
- ☐ Sharing information on
 - › The German welfare system, employment regulations and taxation
 - › If applicable: the structure and characteristics of the (dual) vocational training system
 - › The region, cultural attractions and possible leisure activities

Preparing the move to Thuringia

- ☐ Before the arrival: clarifying the question of accommodation for the new employee
- ☐ Before the start of the training or employment: Encouraging the acquisition of German language skills
- ☐ If applicable: involving the vocational school

Planning and organising the first days in Thuringia

- ☐ Creating an initial training plan for the new employee
- ☐ Supporting with and (if necessary) accompanying to:
 - › Registration at the registration office responsible
 - › If applicable: registration at the immigration office
 - › Registration with a health insurance fund
 - › Opening a German bank account
 - › Possibly registration of a car including insurance
 - › Possibly arranging telephone/internet/broadcasting services

Increasing intercultural competences in the company

- ☐ Informing and including existing employees early on
- ☐ Increasing the intercultural competences in the company through suitable measures (advisable is an intercultural trainer)
- ☐ Strengthening the ties to the region by encouraging social integration (e.g. joint leisure activities of the workforce, involvement in local associations and clubs etc.)
- ☐ If applicable: encouraging family reunion
 - › Advising on possibilities for the spouse/partner
 - › Integration of children in schools, kindergarten etc.

Points of contact in Thuringia

- ☐ **Federal Employment Agency** | www.arbeitsagentur.de/en
 - › Employer Service of the regional Employment Agency responsible
 - › International Placement Service Erfurt
- ☐ **Local immigration office**
- ☐ **Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK)**
 - › IHK Erfurt | Arnstädter Str. 34, 99096 Erfurt | www.erfurt.ihk.de
 - › IHK Eastern Thuringia/Gera | Gaswerkstraße 23, 07546 Gera | www.gera.ihk.de
 - › IHK Southern Thuringia | Hauptstraße 33, 98529 Suhl-Mäbendorf | www.suhl.ihk.de
- ☐ **Chamber of Trades (HWK)**
 - › HWK Erfurt | Fischmarkt 13, 99084 Erfurt | www.hwk-erfurt.de
 - › HWK Eastern Thuringia | Handwerksstraße 5, 07545 Gera | www.hwk-gera.de
 - › HWK Southern Thuringia | Rosa-Luxemburg-Straße 9, 98527 Suhl | www.hwk-suedthueringen.de
- ☐ **Bauindustrieverband Hessen-Thüringen e.V.**
Blosenburgerstraße 4 | 99096 Erfurt | www.bauindustrie-mitte.de
- ☐ **IQ Netzwerk Thüringen** | www.iq-thueringen.de
 - › Information and counselling services for recognition
- ☐ **Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge** | www.bamf.de
 - › Migration Advice Services for Adult Immigrants
 - › Youth Migration Services
- ☐ **Thuringian Agency For Skilled Personnel Marketing (ThAFF)** | www.thaff-thueringen.de



Your notes

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