

## **Study Report**

# **FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A 2<sup>ND</sup> TRACK OF THE MOBILISE TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

## **Netherlands Country Focus**

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The MOBILISE project aims at launching a scalable and institutionally entrenched circular talent development program between the Netherlands and Tunisia, Egypt and Ethiopia for the strengthening of climate-smart agriculture. The project, which specifically targets the agricultural sector, seeks to meet the demands of the labor market in the participating countries by involving partners from the public and private sector while developing cooperation with local higher educational institutions.

MOBILISE, July 202

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AFVA	Agence de la Formation et de la Vulgarisation Agricole (Tunisia)
CAO	Collectieve Arbeidsovereenkomst (Collective Labour Agreement)
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
GVVA	Gecombineerde Vergunning Verblijf en Arbeid (Single Permit for Residence and Work)
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HBO	Hoger Beroepsonderwijs (Higher Professional Education)
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IND	Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (Immigration and Naturalisation Service)
KvK	Kamer van Koophandel (Dutch Chamber of Commerce)
MPF	Migration Partnership Facility
MSM	Maastricht School of Management
MVV	Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf (Provisional Residence Permit)
MBO	Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (Secondary Vocational Education)
RVO	Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland (Netherlands Enterprise Agency)
TWV	Tewerkstellingsvergunning (Work Permit)
UWV	Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen (Employee Insurance Agency)
WO	Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (University Education)
WEP	Work Experience Placement

## 1 Introduction

The ‘MOBILISE: Circular Talent Development for Climate-Smart Agriculture’ project (2023–2027) is a four-year initiative funded by the European Commission through the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), with ICMPD as the donor agency. It is implemented by Maastricht University – Maastricht School of Management (UM-MSM) in collaboration with Aeres University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, alongside academic and institutional partners from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Tunisia. The project aims to establish a scalable, institutionally embedded circular talent development system that supports climate-smart agriculture in both the Netherlands and the participating countries. It does so by piloting talent mobility schemes designed to meet the needs of European employers while contributing to skills development and employment prospects in countries of origin.

A first scoping study conducted in 2023 helped design the initial pilot program, which targeted students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Tunisia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Based on the experience and lessons learned from this first phase, a second feasibility study is now being undertaken to explore the possibility of a new mobility track targeting skilled workers—particularly recent graduates or employees of local companies—who could meet labour demand in the Dutch horticulture sector.

This feasibility study, conducted in the Netherlands, specifically focuses on the **legal and administrative framework for entry and employment**, and on the **demand and preferences of Dutch employers** regarding different categories of migrant workers. It is part of a broader assessment across the four project countries: while the studies in Tunisia, Egypt, and Ethiopia concentrate on participant profiles, recruitment, training, and return, the Dutch component is primarily concerned with the viability and coherence of legal migration pathways and employer engagement.

This report begins with a summary of the methodology, followed by an analysis of the relevant Dutch legal framework—including visa types and work permit procedures—which helps define the three main categories of potential candidates. It then presents key findings from interviews with Dutch companies, focusing on their openness to hosting different profiles and the challenges they face in recruiting qualified staff. The report concludes with recommendations to guide the design of the second mobility pilot from the Dutch perspective.

## 2 Methodology

The Dutch feasibility study focuses on assessing the legal, operational, and labour market conditions necessary to implement a new mobility track targeting skilled workers in the horticulture sector. To guide the study across all participating countries, a common research matrix was developed. This matrix structured the analysis around four key areas: labour market needs, participant profiles, legal and regulatory frameworks, and operational considerations. The Dutch component of the study focuses primarily on issues relevant to the country of destination, namely: legal pathways for entry and work, employer interest in alternative target groups, and operational conditions for hosting candidates, such as timing and logistical feasibility.

### 2.1 Target groups and prioritization

The analysis was structured around three potential target populations:

- I. **Current employees** of horticulture companies (locally or internationally owned);
- II. **Fresh graduates**, who obtained a higher education diploma within the last two years;
- III. **Graduates who completed their studies more than two years ago.**

This categorization is directly informed by Dutch immigration regulations, which impose different conditions for each group.

The group of **current employees in the horticulture sector** was given the highest priority, as their participation is directly linked to employer needs and offers strong prospects for return and skills reintegration. **Fresh graduates** are considered relevant due to their qualifications and relatively flexible legal pathway. The **third group**, graduates more than two years out of education, is lower priority due to more restrictive permit requirements and higher risks related to retention and overstaying.

### 2.2 Data collection

The legal analysis was conducted primarily through desk research, consulting official Dutch government sources including the websites of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV). Additional clarification on specific visa and work permit procedures was obtained through direct correspondence with UWV officials.

Insights were also drawn from the practical experience of the first two pilot intakes, which involved 71 trainees from Tunisia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. These trainees travelled to the Netherlands for three-month placements using short-stay Schengen visas and short-term work permits (*TWV voor stagiaires*). This practical experience helped to clarify

key administrative steps, timelines, and common bottlenecks that are also relevant for the second track.

To complement the legal and procedural analysis, qualitative data on employer engagement was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted by Maastricht School of Management (MSM). A total of 13 companies (out of 20 approached) participated in phone interviews. These companies were previously involved in the first pilot program and were asked to reflect on their experience and indicate whether they would be willing and interested to host other categories of participants (e.g. graduates or employees, rather than enrolled students). While the small sample limits broader generalisation, it provides useful, experience-based feedback from employers already familiar with the program.

### 2.3 Methodological limitations

It should be noted that the sample of companies interviewed is limited in comparison to the total pool of over 200 companies approached during the last two years of the project. Most of these companies declined to host trainees, with the main reason being the timing of the program, which coincided with the summer period. This suggests that a more flexible program, not tied to the academic calendar, could potentially attract broader interest and increase employer participation.

Finally, while this study did not explore in detail the availability of housing throughout the year, it is worth noting that many accommodations used in the past were holiday facilities, which are likely to have greater availability and lower prices outside the peak summer season. This may provide an operational advantage for future mobility programs scheduled at different times of the year.



### 3 Legal and administrative framework

A first fundamental criterium for the selection of the appropriate legal pathway, for non-EU/EEA or non-Swiss national, is the duration of employment and residence in the Netherlands. The Dutch immigration system differentiates between stays of 90 days or less and those exceeding 90 days, with each category governed by different permits, procedures, and authorities.

In general, employment lasting **up to 90 days** requires a **work permit (TWV)** and a separate **short-stay visa**. In contrast, employment for **more than 90 days** typically falls under the **Single Permit (GVVA)** system, which combines residence and work authorization in one application. TWV application is managed by the Dutch Employee Insurance Agency (*Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen* – **UWV**) UWV, whereas GVVA is managed by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (*Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst* – **IND**).

There are some specific situations in which a work permit or a combined work and residence permit is not required for employment in the Netherlands (see annex D). However, none of these exceptions appear applicable to our potential target groups.

#### 3.1 Mobility period up to 90 days

##### 3.1.1 Visa

For mobility periods of up to 90 days, the appropriate legal entry route is the **short-stay Schengen visa**. This is the same visa type – short-term study and research – currently used by participants (foreign students) in the first mobility pilot of the MOBILISE project. The visa must be applied for by the participants themselves in their country of origin, with application fees generally ranging between €130 and €150, depending on local VFS service charges.

Experience from the first two pilot cohorts has shown that strong coordination and hands-on support from the project team were key to ensuring a smooth process and a 100% success rate in visa issuance. This included the preparation of standardised application documents for all candidates, as well as the organization of group appointments at VFS offices. These were facilitated through direct engagement by the project coordination team with Dutch embassies and consular services.

Given the average processing time of 30 to 45 days, and the additional time often required to secure group appointments, the visa application process should ideally begin at least two and a half months prior to the planned date of departure.

A **potential risk** in this procedure concerns applicants who are neither employed nor enrolled in an educational institution in their home country at the time of application. These profiles may be assessed as higher-risk by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which could result in visa refusals, regardless of their enrolment in the MOBILISE short

program with possession of a formal invitation letter from Aeres. In such cases, applicants may be required to demonstrate sufficient financial means through recent bank statements or similar documentation. This concern should be informally discussed with the Ministry to assess the actual likelihood of approval for such profiles and to identify possible mitigation strategies for future rounds.

### 3.1.2 Work permit

For traineeships lasting less than 90 days, the applicable legal framework remains the *Tewerkstellingsvergunning* (TWV), as currently applied to student participants in the first pilot program. The TWV is a short-term work permit issued by the Dutch Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and is designed to ensure that the employer complies with national labour market and immigration regulations when hiring non-EU/EEA nationals.

The TWV must be requested by the Dutch employer, who is responsible for submitting the application online through the UWV portal. There are no application fees charged to the employer. The permit is mandatory when the employee does not already hold a Dutch residence permit and will be residing in the Netherlands for a short period, typically less than 90 days.

While the legal structure of the TWV is uniform, the application procedure and requirements vary depending on the worker's status and the nature of the work. Within the framework of our project, three distinct categories of workers — and by extension, three types of TWV — are relevant. These categories have shaped the definition of the three target populations referenced earlier in this document.

#### 3.1.2.1 TWV for Intern (stagiaire)

The *Werkvergunning stagiaire* is the TWV category currently used in the first MOBILISE mobility pilot. It applies to students enrolled in an educational program abroad who come to the Netherlands for an internship.

In addition to this student category, a related pathway exists for recent graduates: the **Work Experience Placement (WEP)**, or *Werkvergunning werkervaringsplek*. This permit may be requested for candidates who obtained a **higher professional or academic degree no more than two years prior to the application**. The WEP follows the same procedure and conditions as the student internship TWV, including documentation requirements – see Annex C for full details about conditions and documents to be submitted.

However, the UWV has clarified that the WEP is limited to graduates of higher education institutions, specifically those holding at least an HBO (higher professional education) or WO (university) degree. This requirement would appear to exclude graduates of the *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur* (BTS) offered by the AVFA in Tunisia, which is currently compared to an MBO diploma.

An additional requirement is the submission of a diploma copy with a certified translation into Dutch or English. While it is not specified whether a legally validated copy is needed, this step involves more formal preparation than the simple proof of enrolment used for student interns.

### 3.1.2.2 TWV for Practitioner (*praktikant*)

The ***Werkvergunning praktikant*** is a second TWV category that may apply to non-EU/EEA or Swiss nationals coming to the Netherlands to gain work experience. It is intended **for employees who remain under contract with a foreign employer** and have completed basic vocational training. This permit can be granted from VMBO level upwards, making it accessible to those holding MBO, HBO, or WO diplomas.

To qualify, the candidate must demonstrate relevant foundational training or experience. This can be shown through a CV or an employer's statement confirming sufficient professional background aligned with the proposed placement. The application must clearly establish that the employee is coming temporarily to acquire knowledge and experience for the benefit of the foreign employer and is not occupying a regular job role – see Annex A for full details about conditions and documents to be submitted.

A key distinction of this TWV type is the **salary requirement**: unlike the *Stagiaire/ WEP* categories, where 50% of the minimum wage for a 21-year-old is sufficient, the *praktikant* must receive a salary that aligns with Dutch market standards for the role and level of experience.

The application must also include a cooperation agreement between the Dutch and foreign employers, as well as a learning curriculum provided by the Dutch host organization, similar to a traineeship plan, to demonstrate the educational component of the placement.

It is important to note that an additional condition applies to this group. Due to donor regulations, EU-funded contributions from the project may not be used to support intra-company mobility. This includes: a) any mobility between branches or subsidiaries of the same company (e.g. between an African office and a Dutch office of the same entity), and b) any mobility that leads to the participant returning to their previous position within the same company, regardless of which host organisation was involved during the EU placement. As a result, all costs associated with the mobility—such as visa processing, travel, and accommodation—must be covered either by the participants themselves, their host companies in the Netherlands, or their companies of origin.

There is also some uncertainty regarding the eligibility of training and facilitation costs in the Netherlands for participants under this category. Based on donor feedback, such costs may be eligible under EU funding, but only with clear justification and on a case-by-case basis. Eligibility depends on demonstrating the added value of supporting

employed participants in line with the project's objectives and the results of the feasibility study.

### 3.1.2.3 TWV for Seasonal worker (*seizoensarbeider*)

If a non-EU participant does not fall under any of the previous categories—i.e. is not an enrolled student, a recent HBO/WO graduate, or an employee of a foreign company—the only potentially applicable TWV may be the **Werkvergunning seizoensarbeider**, which is limited to employment in the agricultural and horticultural sectors.

A key condition for this permit is the obligation for the Dutch employer to **demonstrate that no suitable candidate could be found within the EU/EEA or Switzerland**. The employer must actively search for at least three months prior to submitting the TWV application. During this period, the vacancy must be officially reported to the UWV, and this report must be submitted at least five weeks before applying for the permit.

When applying, the Dutch employer must provide documentation and justification of the recruitment efforts undertaken during the search period. Additionally, the employer must offer employment under terms consistent with applicable collective labor agreements or the Dutch legal wage for the worker's age category. Further details on eligibility criteria and required documents can be found in Annex B.

## 3.2 Mobility period longer than 90 days

When a non-EU participant stays in the Netherlands for more than 90 days, they are required to obtain a **single permit** (*Gecombineerde Vergunning Verblijf en Arbeid*, or **GVVA**), which combines both **residence and work authorization**. In most cases, this also necessitates a provisional residence permit (*Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf*, or **MVV**)—a long-stay visa sticker (Type D) placed in the applicant's passport. The MVV allows entry into the Netherlands for the purpose of collecting the residence permit and remains valid for multiple entries during the waiting period. While some nationalities are exempt from the MVV requirement, such exemptions do not apply to the target groups of this project.

The GVVA application must be submitted to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), which consults the UWV to assess whether the proposed employment complies with Dutch labour market regulations. Although applicants may, in theory, apply from abroad, the IND strongly recommends that the Dutch employer submit the application. The employer must act as the sponsor and submit a combined application for the MVV and GVVA by post. To be eligible, the employer must also be registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce and ensure that appropriate housing is arranged for the incoming worker.

By hiring a non-EU employee, the employer automatically assumes the role of **sponsor**. They may also choose to become a *recognised sponsor* with the IND, which allows for a

simplified and faster online application process with fewer documentation requirements. However, this status involves additional obligations and carries a high registration fee (€2,432 for small companies and €4,866 for large ones).<sup>1</sup>

### 3.2.1 Types of single permits and key conditions

The GVVA offers similar categories to the TWV for short stays, including:

- Work experience following (foreign) HBO/WO graduation (valid up to 1 year);
- Apprentice-style employment (praktikant, valid up to 24 weeks);
- Seasonal labour in agriculture or horticulture (valid up to 24 weeks);
- General paid employment (valid up to 1 year).

The core conditions for each category largely mirror those required for the TWV (see section 5.1.2).

For both seasonal and general paid employment, the employer must demonstrate that a suitable candidate could not be found within the Netherlands or EU/EEA and must report the vacancy to UWV at least three months prior to the application. For apprenticeship and seasonal labor permits, salaries must be aligned with market standards and/or the applicable collective labor agreement.

Nonetheless, some **key distinctions** set the GVVA apart from the TWV:

- The application fee is generally €405, except for seasonal labor permits, which cost €243.
- Processing times are up to 60 days for most permits, and up to 90 days for seasonal labor.
- Unlike the TWV, GVVA applications require the legalization and certified translation of foreign documents into Dutch, English, French, or German.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ind.nl/en/obligations-of-sponsor-and-recognised-sponsor>

## 4 Interest and engagement by Dutch companies

The engagement of Dutch horticulture companies is pivotal for shaping the second mobility program, which aims to extend beyond students to include skilled workers and employees from partner countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, and Tunisia. To assess this interest, formal interviews were conducted with 13 companies, focusing on recruitment challenges, willingness to host participants from new target groups, and preferred conditions for internships. These interviews were complemented by informal discussions held during in-person evaluation visits at the end of the first mobility intake, which provided further insights into company expectations, operational constraints, and experiences with the first group of trainees.

### 4.1 Interest for international recruitment

The interviews revealed a mixed picture regarding recruitment challenges and company needs. Five out of the thirteen companies reported significant difficulties in recruiting highly qualified staff, especially for specialized horticultural roles. These difficulties were linked to a general tightness of the Dutch labour market and a shortage of candidates with horticulture-specific expertise. One company emphasized that it is particularly challenging to find candidates with the right technical background, while another highlighted the difficulty of offering roles that are sufficiently challenging to retain HBO-level graduates.

In contrast, four companies stated that they do not face recruitment problems, either because they focus on vocational (MBO-level) profiles or because they have stable staffing levels. The remaining four companies expressed mixed or neutral views, acknowledging occasional shortages but without seeing recruitment as a persistent issue.

Most companies traditionally recruit seasonal workers or trainees from within the European Union, particularly from Eastern Europe and Ukraine. For many of them, the MOBILISE pilot was their first experience hosting trainees from outside the EU, as recruiting from third countries is often perceived as complex due to permit requirements and administrative hurdles.

### 4.2 New pilot with African companies' employees

During the interviews, companies were asked whether they would be interested in participating in a new pilot involving employees from African partner companies (Egypt, Ethiopia, Tunisia). Such placements would likely require paying a full salary and would probably be limited to a shorter period—around one month—since employers in the countries of origin are generally unwilling to release their staff for longer mobility periods.

The feedback from Dutch companies revealed a mixed level of interest, with most responses showing caution or conditional willingness rather than firm commitment. While a few companies expressed clear enthusiasm and openness, the majority indicated they would need more details on the program structure, participant qualifications, and logistical arrangements before making a decision. A recurring concern was that a one-month placement is too short to justify the considerable effort required for onboarding and supervision, and does not allow participants enough time to adapt, develop practical skills, or contribute effectively.

Interest levels can be summarized as follows: approximately **25% of companies were positive, 33% were negative, and 42% were conditional or uncertain**. The conditional responses suggest that interest could increase if key concerns—such as the short duration, alignment of participant skills with tasks, and administrative requirements—are adequately addressed.

Some companies questioned the added value of hosting mid-career professionals for a short period compared to students, who are seen as a longer-term investment in future talent. While students typically gain hands-on learning experiences, experienced professionals may find the tasks offered too basic or operational, creating a mismatch in expectations. This issue underscores the importance of carefully defining the participant profile and ensuring that tasks are tailored to the skills and experience of the participants.

During the scoping phase, the project also engaged with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), which recently launched the Career Connect pilot. This program supports the temporary placement of young Moroccan professionals (aged 18–35) in Dutch companies under the *Werkvergunning praktikant* framework. At the time of consultation, no placements had yet been realised. RVO confirmed that the main obstacle is the limited interest from Dutch companies, who are generally reluctant to invest in short-term placements unless they know the candidate or can see some form of return—whether in an existing partnership or in future collaboration. The few promising leads involve Dutch firms that already cooperate with Moroccan partners and are more inclined to host participants with whom they have a prior relationship or in whom they see strategic value.

### 4.3 Preferred timing, duration, and tasks

Companies expressed a clear preference for internships lasting at least three months. A longer period is seen as necessary to allow participants to adapt to the work environment, acquire relevant practical skills, and make a meaningful contribution. The first month of any placement was described as particularly resource-heavy due to the supervision and training required. Shorter placements, such as one-month exchanges, were generally regarded as ineffective, both in terms of learning outcomes for participants and operational benefits for the host company.



However, extending internships beyond three months introduces additional legal and administrative challenges. Stays longer than 90 days require the **GVVA (single permit)**, which combines a work and residence permit but is unfamiliar to most companies and perceived as more time-consuming and costly compared to the short-term TWV used in the first MOBILISE pilot. As with the TWV, companies would require strong support from the project team to navigate this process successfully.

Timing is another key factor influencing company engagement. The first mobility pilot was tied to the July–September period due to the academic calendar in partner countries. Many companies declined participation during these months, citing reduced production levels in July and August or limited staff availability due to holidays. Academic supervision was also constrained, as many trainers and supervisors were on leave. Companies suggested that spring or autumn placements would be more suitable, offering greater operational capacity and possibly better housing options. While housing availability outside the summer remains to be confirmed, off-season periods may offer both cost advantages and increased flexibility for accommodation.

Feedback from the first two intakes also showed that some students expected managerial or supervisory tasks, whereas most roles in horticulture are practical and hands-on. This mismatch is likely to remain relevant in the second pilot and needs to be addressed through careful participant selection and expectation management.



#### 4.4 Summary of pros and cons for target populations

Target Population	Pros (for Dutch Employers)	Cons (for Dutch Employers)
<b>Current employees of horticulture companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have direct industry experience, requiring less basic training.</li> <li>• Likely to contribute relevant, job-ready skills.</li> <li>• Can open direct opportunities of cooperation with companies of origin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited availability (usually <math>\leq 1</math> month), too short for meaningful ROI.</li> <li>• Employers must pay full salary for short stays.</li> <li>• Apprenticeship tasks must match the employee's qualification level.</li> </ul>
<b>Fresh graduates (<math>\leq 2</math> years post-graduation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to students – company can draw upon experience of first pilot.</li> <li>• Seen as an investment in future talent – and potentially employable in the long term.</li> <li>• Pay at least 50% of minimum salary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited hands-on experience can require resource-intensive training.</li> <li>• Since already graduated, may have higher expectations than students in terms of tasks and qualified work.</li> </ul>
<b>Graduates (<math>&gt; 2</math> years post-graduation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially bring more professional experience and more maturity.</li> <li>• Can fill more advanced roles if aligned with company needs.</li> <li>• Probably highly motivated to develop skills and find qualified employment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older age is not guarantee of more hands-on experience and better preparation for the work in the Netherlands.</li> <li>• Stricter work permit requirements: salary in line with the market and obligation for the Dutch employer to demonstrate that no suitable candidate could be found within the EU/EEA or Switzerland.</li> </ul>

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

If the project aims to develop and pilot a second mobility program targeting skilled professionals or participants already active in the job market, two key aspects must be carefully considered: the Dutch legal framework for temporary migration and employment, and the level of interest and engagement of Dutch companies in hosting participants under these conditions.

The current Dutch work permit framework identifies different categories of applicants, each with specific procedures and criteria. However, most existing categories—such as asylum seeker, knowledge migrant, or specialist—are not relevant to the target groups of this project. Three categories seem most applicable to young professionals from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Tunisia who are not students: **Apprenticeship (Praktikant), Work Experience Placement (WEP), and Seasonal Worker permits**. Each category corresponds to a different target population.

### 5.1 Duration

Work permit categories and criteria are almost the same for shorter (<90 days) or longer (>90 days) stays. The main differences relate to the procedures and the requirement for a **residence permit** in the case of longer stays.

Aspect	Short-term (<90 days)	Long-term (>90 days)
<b>Main Permit</b>	<b>TWV</b> (Work Permit)	<b>GVVA</b> (Single Permit: work + residence)
Authority	UWV (Employee Insurance Agency)	IND (Immigration and Naturalisation Service) with UWV advice
Residence permit	Schengen Visa (Type C) – applied separately	MVV (Provisional Residence Permit, Type D) – combined with GVVA
Processing Time	Approx. 2–4 weeks	Up to 60 days (90 days for seasonal work)
Cost	No TWV fee for employer; visa costs €130–€150 (candidate)	€405 (€243 for seasonal work), borne by the employer
Document Requirements	Standard documents (traineeship agreement, proof of enrolment/diploma)	Legalized and certified translations of diplomas, contracts, and other documents (Dutch/English/French/German)
Additional Obligations		Dutch company has additional obligations as applicant sponsor; recognized sponsor status is preferred, but not mandatory

Short-term permits remain less demanding for employers and can build on the project's experience and networks from the first two mobility intakes. However, feedback from companies highlights that the first month of any traineeship requires significant investment in supervision and training. Internships longer than three months would

therefore offer a better return on investment (ROI) for companies. It remains to be assessed whether GVVA applications for longer stays are evaluated more strictly than TWV applications.

Targeting professionals rather than students could also provide more flexibility in the **timing of mobility**, which may help engage companies that were unavailable during the summer period due to staff holidays or reduced production. This flexibility, however, might be limited for employees of African companies, whose availability will depend on their own production cycles.

## 5.2 Work permit categories

### Apprenticeship (*Praktikant*)

- Applicable for employees of horticulture companies from foreign countries, aged 18+ with at least basic vocational training.
- Requires a “learning agreement” between the Dutch employer and the company of origin, which the project can coordinate.
- Employers must pay market-level salaries, implying higher costs than for student interns.
- Housing remains the employer’s responsibility, although the project can assist with arrangements; costs could be charged to participants given that they receive full salaries.
- Travel-related costs (visa-processing, flights, local travel) cannot be funded by the project and must be covered either by the participants themselves, their host companies in the Netherlands, or their companies of origin.
- Concerns were raised about the **short duration** ( $\leq 4$  weeks) typically permitted by companies of origin, which many Dutch companies consider too brief to justify onboarding efforts.
- The level of tasks available for trainees may also be unsuitable for experienced professionals, making this option more viable for larger or technologically advanced companies.
- This arrangement may be of particular interest to Dutch companies with branches or partners in Ethiopia, Tunisia, or Egypt, as it offers a structured mechanism to upskill their own staff within the Netherlands.

### Work Experience Placement (WEP)

- Applies to **fresh graduates ( $\leq 2$  years)** holding at least an HBO or WO degree (excluding MBO-level graduates such as those from Tunisia’s AFVA institutes).
- Conditions are similar to the **TWV stagiaire** used for student participants, including a minimum income of 50% of the standard wage for a 21-year-old.

- While this option is financially attractive to companies, the salary may not cover private housing, requiring either company-provided accommodation or project support.
- The project and companies can leverage the experience and procedures established during the first two mobility intakes.
- It remains to be verified whether authorities (UWV and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) would impose stricter checks on WEP and visa applications, as these graduates may be considered at higher risk of overstaying.

### Seasonal Worker Permit

- Suitable for participants who are **neither currently employed nor graduated within the last 2 years**.
- Requires compliance with full market wages.
- Employers must first attempt to recruit within the EU/EEA or Switzerland for at least three months before applying for this permit.
- This process is lengthy and unattractive to most companies, which tend to rely on seasonal workers from within Europe (including Ukraine).
- For these reasons, the seasonal worker permit is the **least favorable option** for a second mobility pilot.

### 5.3 Additional recommendations for project coordination

- Focus on **one type of work permit** per intake to simplify coordination and avoid over-complicating administrative procedures.
- Provide **comprehensive support to Dutch companies** during the application process, including standardized documents and close guidance.
- **Assist participants in preparing documents** for both work and residence permits to ensure clarity and consistency.
- Maintain **direct communication with UWV and IND** to streamline application handling.
- Provide or coordinate **housing solutions**, unless focusing exclusively on companies offering accommodation.
- Consider **mobility periods outside the summer months**, such as spring or autumn, to increase company availability and housing options.
- **Maintain a batch-based approach**, organizing participants into groups for each intake. While individual agreements will be made with host companies, coordination and logistical support can only be realistically provided if participants are grouped. Individual placements outside of these groups would significantly reduce the level of project support and may require the

development of a separate remote or online support package to ensure adequate guidance and follow-up.

## Annexes

### A. Werkvergunning praktikant

<https://www.uvw.nl/nl/werkvergunning/praktikant>

#### A.1 Conditions for work permit apprenticeship

In addition to the general terms and conditions, the following conditions apply when applying for **a work permit for a trainee**:

- The employee is 18 years or older.
- The employee is employed by a foreign employer.
- The employee has completed vocational basic training.
- The employee comes to gain knowledge and experience in order to improve the foreign company.
- The employee comes to the Netherlands temporarily to learn and does not hold a normal position.
- The employee's salary is in line with the market. This means that the salary is normal for the work that the employee will do with this knowledge and experience.
- The employer arranges a safe and clean place for the foreign employee to live.

#### A.2 Apply for a work permit for trainees

The employer sends the following with the application for the work permit:

- A copy of the cooperation agreement between a Dutch and foreign employer with the signature of the employer in the Netherlands or an explanation.
- An employee's resume without a (recognizable) passport photo.
- A statement in which the foreign employer indicates that the employee will return to the employee's company after the (temporary) work.
- A statement from the Dutch employer that the employee does not hold a normal position.
- A curriculum.

##### A.1.1 Curriculum

The curriculum that the employer sends with the TWV application consists of the following:

- What work does the employee do?
- What are the learning objectives?
- What guidance does the employee receive?
- Why it is important for the foreign employee's company that the employee gets this experience.

## B. Werkvergunning seizoenarbeider

<https://www.uvw.nl/nl/werkvergunning/seizoenarbeid-land-tuinbouw>

### B.1 Search within EU/EEA or Switzerland first

Before the employer applies for a **work permit for the seasonal worker**, the employer must first try to find a suitable candidate in the EU/EEA or Switzerland for at least 3 months. Suitable candidates are job seekers who are allowed to work in the Netherlands without a work permit:

- Job seekers who have the nationality of a country within the EU/EEA or Switzerland.
- Job seekers from outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland, who have a residence permit with the text 'Work freely permitted. Work permit (TWV) not required'.

During the period of at least 3 months that the employer is looking for a suitable candidate in the EU/EEA or Switzerland, the employer reports the vacancy to UWV. The employer reports this vacancy at least 5 weeks before the application for the work permit. This can be done via the [Employer Service Point \(werk.nl\)](#). Or [place the vacancy yourself on werk.nl](#). In this way, the employer investigates whether there are job seekers registered with UWV who are suitable to fill the vacancy.

### B.2 Terms and Conditions

If after 3 months no suitable candidate has been found, the employer applies for a work permit for a seasonal worker from outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland. The following conditions apply:

- The seasonal worker works in the agricultural and horticultural sector.
- The seasonal worker is 18 years or older.
- The employer arranges a clean and safe place to live.
- The employer complies with the employment conditions.

### B.3 Apply for a seasonal worker work permit

When applying for a work permit, the employer must submit 4 documents:

- The draft employment contract.
- A copy of diplomas, certificates or CV if the employer requests these documents in the vacancy.
- Documents showing that the employer has first searched for a candidate in the EU/EEA or Switzerland for at least 3 months.
- Explanation of the selection procedure for searching for a candidate in the EU/EEA or Switzerland.

## C. Werkvergunning werkervaringsplek

<https://www.uvw.nl/nl/werkvergunning/stage>

### C.1 Conditions for work permit work experience placement

The following conditions apply to a TWV for a work experience placement (WEP):

- The intern is 18 years or older.
- The WEP does not replace a regular job.
- The intern obtained a higher professional education/university degree no more than 2 years ago.
- The intern's income is at least 50% of the minimum wage for a 21-year-old. [View the minimum wage amounts](#) on [uwv.nl](https://www.uvw.nl).
- The employer arranges a safe and clean place for the intern to live.

### C.2 Which documents to send

The employer sends the following with the application for the work permit:

- a copy of the internship agreement including the internship allowance and a signature by or on behalf of the employer
- Proof of enrolment in the foreign course or a copy of the diploma obtained (with translation into Dutch or English).
- If the intern has just graduated: an internship plan that includes the educational objectives and learning components.



## D. Situations where a work permit or a work and residence permit is not required

<https://www.uvw.nl/en/employers/work-permits>

- [Ukrainian refugees who meet certain criteria](#)
- individuals whose passports or residence permits prove they have an unrestricted right to work in the Netherlands ('arbeid is vrij toegestaan')
- [asylum seekers or refugees who have been granted a residence permit and a volunteer permit](#)
- asylum seekers who have been granted a residence permit and therefore have an unrestricted right to work in the Netherlands
- self-employed individuals who have been granted a residence permit (as long as their work activities only relate to the business they are running)
- entrepreneurs who have been granted a [residence permit for a start-up business](#)
- employees coming to the Netherlands for very short-term work activities such as meetings or concert performances
- [highly skilled workers](#) ('kennismigranten') who have been granted a residence permit
- highly educated workers ('hoogopgeleide werknemers') who have been granted an [EU blue card](#)
- individuals who fall under the [International scheme for specialist knowledge or skills](#) ('Regeling Internationale Handel')
- employees who have been granted [a residence permit for intra-company transfers](#) ('overplaatsing binnen een onderneming')
- employees working for an employer in the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland who will temporarily be sent on a work assignment to the Netherlands as a [posted worker](#)
- [students required to work 32 hours a week as part of their study programme at the Academy of Architecture](#) ('Academie voor Bouwkunst')

## E. Residence permit for seasonal work

<https://ind.nl/en/residence-permits/work/residence-permit-for-seasonal-work#what-is-seasonal-work->

A residence permit for seasonal work is only required for seasonal workers from outside the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. The permit is a single permit for both residency and work (in Dutch: gecombineerde vergunning voor verblijf en arbeid or GVA). This means that the IND must always ask the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) for a recommendation.

### 5.4 Employer: sponsor or recognised sponsor

Your employer in the Netherlands is your sponsor. The IND can also [recognise your employer as a sponsor](#). Recognition is not required for the seasonal work residence permit.

### 5.5 Requirements

These are the requirements for a residence permit for seasonal work:

- You meet the [requirements that apply to everyone](#).
- You will be working as a seasonal worker in agriculture or horticulture for no more than 24 weeks.
- You meet the [income requirements](#).
- You have not been in the Netherlands illegally in the 3 years before your application.
- You will work for a Dutch company or organisation. Or for the Dutch branch of a foreign company.
- Your employer's company or organisation is registered in the Commercial Register of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (in Dutch: *Kamer van Koophandel* or KvK). This only applies if this registration is compulsory under the Commercial Register Act 2007 (in Dutch: *Handelsregisterwet* 2007).
- Your employer has first looked for an employee in the Netherlands and the [EU/EEA member states](#). The employer has reported a vacancy for this purpose to an employer's service point of the Employee Insurance Agency (in Dutch: *Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen* or UWV).
- Your employer will pay the standard wage that applies under the collective labour agreement (CAO) for this organisation or company.
- Your employer arranges proper housing for you.

## F. Income requirements for single permit

Required amounts per residence permit. The applicant's income should at least be equal to the required amount for the residence permit they are applying for.

### Application for a residence permit for work-study (intern or trainee)

These amounts apply from January 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025.

#### Practitioner

Gross monthly SV salary excluding holiday pay	€2,191.80
Gross monthly SV salary with holiday pay	€2,367.14

#### Intern

Gross monthly SV salary excluding holiday pay	€1,095.90
Gross monthly SV salary with holiday pay	€1,183.57

Is an internship allowance mentioned in the internship agreement? Then this internship allowance may be included.

### Application for a residence permit for paid employment or seasonal work

These amounts apply from January 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025.

Gross monthly SV salary excluding holiday pay	€2,191.80
Gross monthly SV salary with holiday pay	€2,367.14

Sv-loon is the social insurance wage. This is the gross wage on which the social insurance premiums (for unemployment, illness and disability) and wage tax are calculated. The sv-loon is on your pay slip.

Source: <https://ind.nl/nl/inkomenseisen-normbedragen>