



English summary
of Fafo-rapport 2021:05

Immigrant workers from third countries

Immigrant workers from third countries— knowledge summary

It is expected that in the years ahead, Norway will have a greater need to recruit labour from countries outside the EU/EEA. The purpose of this knowledge summary is to identify publications (mostly scientific publications) that may provide insight into the factors that are important for attracting qualified workers. By this we mean knowledge of what factors affect workers' choice of countries, what factors are significant for choosing to remain in the country long term, and what comparable countries have done to attract qualified workers.

In this knowledge summary we have identified 23 articles and three reports. The articles have both qualitative and quantitative design, and two of the articles are knowledge summaries.

Our results show that at an overall level, a number of different factors affect choice of country. Career opportunities is one of several factors. Factors that stand out as particularly relevant for Norway are the significance of language, social network, and the degree to which the migrants are familiar with the country. It is fairly well documented that non-English-speaking countries face greater challenges in attracting qualified workers than do English-speaking countries. For Norway, there are also other factors aside from language that make it challenging to compete in attracting qualified workers from overseas. These are for instance the compressed wage structure, high taxes, and policy for work immigration.

The factors considered significant for whether the qualified workers will remain in the country are many of the same ones that are important for deciding to emigrate to the country in the first place. These include the potential work immigrants' accumulated knowledge about the country, language, career opportunities, family, friends and social network, and the spouse's opportunities in the Norwegian labour market. The effort made by companies to welcome new work immigrants is also highlighted as a significant factor for whether the qualified worker decides to stay.

When it comes to the measures set in place by comparable countries, several articles show that opportunities for permanent residence and family reunion are important for attracting workers to stay long term.

A challenge that is highlighted is that qualified workers from third countries experience being overqualified for the jobs they get. It is possible that there will be a lower risk for this in Norway, because the requirement that the third country nationals qualification must be relevant for the position. Measures to help work

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immigrants learn the language well may possibly have the effect of keeping the foreign workers for longer, as well as helping them use their expertise and avoiding so-called “brain waste”.

As expected, there is little knowledge on the reasons for choosing to immigrate to and stay in Norway in particular. We have identified a few articles that explicitly address Norwegian conditions. Opportunities and limitations in Norwegian working life to attract qualified workers from countries outside the EEA will be addressed in greater depth and responded to via questionnaires and qualitative interviews in Part 2 of our project.

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