

## About IOM

### Overview

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

IOM works in the four broad areas of migration management:

- Migration and development
- Facilitating migration
- Regulating migration
- Forced migration.

IOM activities that cut across these areas include the promotion of international migration law, policy debate and guidance, protection of migrants' rights, migration health and the gender dimension of migration.

### The Relationship between IOM and the United Nations

On 25 July 2016, Member States of the United Nations (UN), through the General Assembly (GA), unanimously adopted a resolution (A/RES/70/296) approving the Agreement to make IOM a Related Organization of the UN. This followed an earlier agreement on the same text by the IOM Member States on the occasion of a special IOM Council on 30 June 2016. The agreement was signed by the IOM Director General and the UN Secretary General on 19 September 2016, in the margins of the UNGA High-Level Summit on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants.

The Agreement formalizes IOM's entry into the UN system as a related organization, in order to strengthen cooperation and enhance IOM and the UN's ability to fulfill respective mandates in the interest of migrants and Member States. Through this, the UN recognizes IOM as an indispensable actor in the field of human mobility. This includes the protection of migrants and displaced people in migration-affected communities, as well as in areas of refugee resettlement and voluntary returns, and incorporates migration in country development plans.

Being part of the UN system as a related organization means that IOM has agreed to work with the UN and the other organizations of the UN system in harmony with the purposes and principles contained in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations of 1945, which serve as guiding objectives for all (e.g. for international peace and security, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, international cooperation to solve international problems, respect for human rights, etc.) while remaining a fully separate and independent organization.

### Who is a Migrant?

Migrant is an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.

IOM's view, as stated in its Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), is that a migration system promotes migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society:

When it:

- (i) Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants' rights;
- (ii) Formulates policy using evidence and a "whole-of government" approach;

(iii) Engages with partners to address migration and related issues;

As it seeks to:

- (i) Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
- (ii) Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises;
- (iii) Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

The [IOM Snapshot](#) provides a brief overview of the Organization and facts and figures relating to its structure and activities. Some key institutional highlights are also given. It is updated regularly and can be accessed on the [IOM website](#).

## Description

### Organization Structure

IOM's structure is highly decentralized. This has enabled the Organization to acquire the capacity to deliver an ever-increasing number of diverse projects at the request of its Member States.

IOM's field structure:

- **A global network of Country Offices (COs)** and sub-offices, which implement a wide range of projects addressing specific migration needs. These offices keep abreast of and analyze migration issues and emerging trends in the country in order to develop appropriate responses and contribute to regional strategy and planning. On the basis of the regional strategies, these offices develop a country strategy and a national plan of action in coordination and consultation with their respective Regional Office. Country Offices are financed predominantly by the projects implemented in the respective locations.
- **Nine Regional Offices (ROs)**, which formulate regional strategies and plans of action and provide programmatic and administrative support to the countries within their regions. These Regional Offices are in Dakar, Senegal; Nairobi, Kenya; Cairo, Egypt; Pretoria, South Africa; San José, Costa Rica; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Bangkok, Thailand; Brussels, Belgium; Vienna, Austria. The DOE RTS entry provides additional information on country coverage by each Regional Office.
- **Two Special Liaison Offices (SLOs)**, which strengthen relations with specific multilateral bodies, diplomatic missions and non-governmental organizations. These offices are located in New York, United States of America, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- **Two Administrative Centers**, which provide core support in the areas of IT and administrative services to IOM's network of offices. These offices are located in Panama City, Panama and Manila, Philippines.
- **Five Country Offices with coordinating functions** that have the additional responsibility of ensuring that migratory realities within a defined cluster of countries are taken into account in programmatic activities of the region. The Country Offices with coordinating functions are in Canberra, Australia (covering the Pacific); Rome, Italy (covering the Mediterranean); Astana, Kazakhstan (covering Central Asia); and Georgetown, Guyana (covering the Caribbean). A coordinating function for the cluster of countries in South Asia also exists in the Regional Office in Bangkok.
- **Four Country Offices with resource mobilization functions** have the additional responsibility of assisting in fundraising activities as well as providing advice on fundraising policies, priorities and procedures. These offices are located in Tokyo, Japan; Berlin, Germany; Helsinki, Finland; and Washington, D.C., United States of America.

### IOM's Role

There are mobility dimensions to most crises and IOM provides comprehensive responses to at-risk populations and communities all throughout a crisis, whether it is part of preparedness/prevention, response and/or recovery. The Department of Operations and Emergencies (DOE) oversees most of IOM's crisis-related activities, and all of those associated with emergencies. The [Migration](#)

[Crisis Operational Framework](#) (MCOF), which falls under Objective 2 of [Migration Governance Framework](#) (MiGOF), defines IOM's engagement in crisis and outlines its sectoral engagement at various points of a crisis. MCOF anchors the wide range of DOE policies, frameworks and strategies that are central to emergency response, helps bridge IOM's humanitarian and development approaches, and helps IOM to transition its humanitarian programming towards its recovery work.

## Who Can Help You?

### Regional Offices

**The DOE RTS:** The Regional Thematic Specialist (RTS) is the DOE's technical focal point based in each Regional Office. They work in close coordination with the DOE in Headquarters to ensure maximum and effective support to COs responding to emergencies. In the event that additional guidance or information on any aspect of emergency operations, COs should approach the DOE RTS for support.

### Headquarters

The Department of Operations and Emergencies (DOE) coordinates IOM's participation in humanitarian responses and provides migration services in emergencies to address the needs of individuals and uprooted communities, thereby contributing to their protection. The Department provides technical support to efforts in the field, particularly in responding to forced migration and mass population movements, including protracted internal and cross-border displacement and refugee situations. It provides strategic policy and operational recommendations, guidance on project development and implementation, and inter-agency coordination. This contributes to improving the conditions of crisis-affected populations and leads to life-saving interventions.

The DOE is made up of two divisions: I) Preparedness and Response and II) Resettlement and Movement Management.

The Director's Office coordinates among the divisions in the development of principled approaches and strategic documents, provides oversight of cross-divisional initiatives, and ensures IOM's crisis-related priorities are aptly reflected in internal and external systems and processes.

Recent and ongoing examples include IOM's support to the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative, representation in the Global Compact for Refugees and relevant input into the Global Compact for Migration, and IOM's participation in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), amongst other initiatives.

#### **DOE TERMS OF REFERENCE CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Information analysis, contingency planning and early warning systems;
2. Capacity development through staff training and a roster of qualified experts;
3. Management of stand-by agreements, acquisition and deployment of assets for preparedness and response;
4. Management of affected populations' emergency movements and operational implementation through sending, transiting and receiving hubs;
5. Provision of technical assistance to the field for needs assessment, project development and project feasibility appraisal;
6. Engagement and participation in joint, inter-agency processes – including joint trainings and tools development – and representing the Organization in relevant international fora, ensuring internal coordination and follow up;
7. Information and knowledge sharing with other departments at HQ and with the field through production and dissemination of tools, guidelines and training material (e.g. talking points, lessons learnt, best practices, fact sheets);
8. Engagement with relevant communities of professionals, including in intergovernmental, non-governmental and private sectors, and through relevant IASC bodies.

The **Preparedness and Response Division (PRD)** serves as the institutional focal point for humanitarian preparedness and

response to sudden-onset and protracted crises. Working in close coordination with other IOM departments and RTs, PRD provides technical expertise, operational support and policy guidance to IOM COs on emergency preparedness and response planning and implementation, and ensures that country offices are engaging at country, regional and global levels on relevant humanitarian programming. The Division provides support across a broad range of sectors, to ensure that IOM policies and operations are in line with those set by inter-agency humanitarian coordination frameworks, including the IASC and the Grand Bargain.

In this context, PRD also coordinates the implementation of IOM's institutional emergency procedures, supports humanitarian resource mobilization efforts, and supports global and country alignment within the humanitarian programme cycle. The Division is composed of the following units/functions: (a) Preparedness; (b) Emergency Response; (c) Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM); (d) Shelter and Settlements; (e) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); and (f) Division Support.

The **Resettlement and Movement Management Division (RMM)** directs, oversees and coordinates IOM's resettlement work and transport programmes, which include humanitarian evacuations. The Division coordinates the policy, programmatic and resource management aspects of IOM's work in these areas and provides direction, guidance and support to managers of resettlement and movement programmes. It also negotiates, oversees and maintains the Organization's global agreements with air carriers and other transport providers and is the focal point for managing movements of IOM-assisted passengers travelling by air, land or sea.

## Links

- [IOM Website](#)

## References and Tools

- [Operations and Emergencies Global Annual Report 2021](#)
- [Agreement Concerning the Relationship between the UN and IOM](#)
- [Accord sur les relations entre l'ONU et l'OIM](#)
- [Acuerdo de Relación entre las Naciones Unidas y la Organización Internacional para las Migraciones](#)
- [اتفاق بشأن العلاقة بين الأمم المتحدة والمنظمة الدولية للهجرة](#)
- [IOM and the UN System FAQs](#)

## Other Entries in this Topic

- [MICIC Guidelines](#)
- [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#)

## Contacts

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