

## Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF)

### Overview

The Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) is an analytical and planning framework used to formulate the way in which IOM supports its Member States and partners to better prepare for, respond to and recover from crises. It frames IOM's approach to address the diverse mobility dimensions of crises.

#### The mobility dimensions of crisis

The MCOF is based on the concept of migration crisis, a term that describes the complex and often large-scale migration flows and mobility patterns caused by a crisis which typically involve significant vulnerabilities for individuals and affected communities and generate acute and longer-term migration management challenges. A migration crisis may be sudden or slow in onset, can have natural or man-made causes, and can take place internally or across borders. Most crises – including conflicts, armed violence, disasters, epidemics, pandemics, severe economic downturns or other types – have mobility dimensions, including:

- People move, or require support to move, to get out of harm's way
- Specific protection needs of displaced populations, or who are trapped or stranded
- Challenges to the achievement of durable solutions for populations who return home, relocate or integrate into local communities
- Impacts on communities accommodating the sudden and/or large influx of displaced or returning populations
- Disruption of nomadic routes or seasonal labour cycles among other mobility practices
- Potential heightening of protection risks including exploitation and trafficking

IOM uniquely applies its mobility lens and expertise to save lives and to address the wide-ranging and far-reaching impacts of population movements or altered migration patterns on individuals and communities.

While the MCOF sits with DOE, the Framework is Organization-wide and draws on IOM's humanitarian, peacebuilding, transition, recovery and development activities as well as migration management services.

### Key Points

- The MCOF outlines IOM's comprehensive, inclusive and holistic response to the mobility dimensions of crisis, which is a key component of good migration governance and contributor to sustainable development. All IOM planning, analyses and activities undertaken in crisis or at-risk contexts should be in line with MCOF.
- As an analytical and planning framework, the MCOF is used to formulate the way in which IOM supports its Member States and partners to better analyze, prepare for, respond to and recover from migration crises.
- The Framework is based on international humanitarian and human rights law, and humanitarian principles. States are responsible for protecting and assisting crisis-affected persons on their territory. Using the MCOF, IOM supports States to fulfill this responsibility, upon their request and with their consent.
- The MCOF advances IOM's humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN) approach, promoting integrated coordination, programming and financing across activities and actors in the humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and migration management fields to reduce needs, vulnerabilities and risks and build resilient and peaceful communities.
- The 2021 MCOF addendum reinforces the essence and aspirations of the 2012 Framework, while ensuring the MCOF remains fit for purpose.

## Description

The MCOF was welcomed by the IOM Council in 2012, and an Addendum was finalized in 2021 and will be shared with Member States in 2022. The MCOF supports Objective 2 of the [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#): to effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises and contributes to IOM's Strategic Vision 2019 to 2023. Work undertaken under the MCOF contributes across all four objectives outlined in the Strategic Results Framework (SRF), and specifically supports the operationalization of the HDPN, a cross-cutting issue in the SRF. Beyond its internal use, the IOM Council encourages IOM Member States to use MCOF, giving MCOF additional importance for IOM in the areas of technical assistance and advocacy.

The MCOF anchors IOM's approach to crisis. It sets out the overall basis for policy level work, and guides IOM's other crisis-related policies, frameworks or tools that are developed to strengthen specific aspects of IOM's response. As a Council document welcomed by Member States, the Framework is useful in presenting and justifying IOM's comprehensive approach to crises. It is sufficiently non-prescriptive to tailor implementation modalities to local contexts and needs, supporting context analysis, planning, coordination, partnerships, resource mobilization and integrated programming.

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The MCOF reaffirms IOM's commitment to putting **people at the centre** of its response; promoting resilience as a way of upholding their dignity and fostering empowerment and participation in the decisions that affect their lives; and re-establishing or creating the conditions for communities to recover from crisis and co-exist peacefully. It highlights [IOM's accountability to the people it serves](#), ensuring quality and responsive programming in line with the evolving needs of affected populations and communities.

The five **cross-cutting issues** ensure that IOM programming is evidence-based, equitable, accountable and responsible. All work under the MCOF Sectors of Assistance should take into account when, how and to what extent various activities incorporate each of the cross-cutting issues: Protection mainstreaming, Gender equality, Law and policy, Disaster risk / climate change and Data and evidence.

The 15 inter-connected **sectors of assistance** were updated in 2021 to reflect IOM's current roles and responsibilities, operational capacities and priorities, align with IOM's internal strategic and key global Frameworks, including the operationalization of the HDPN and ensure relevance to inter-agency and governmental coordination, spanning analysis, planning and coordination.

Activities under the MCOF sectors of assistance should consider and proactively engage and contribute to the **response systems** that are active in local contexts. Participation in these frameworks and processes, and IOM's contributions to them, support a stronger joined-up approach to crisis, with internal IOM and joint assessments and analyses being key entry points.

IOM is a highly operational actor, working directly with those impacted by crises. IOM recognizes that local contexts and relationships continuously evolve and require tailored and responsive programming that aligns with the HDPN. IOM promotes and integrates the following **operational modalities**, as appropriate, across its sectors of assistance: Participation and empowerment, Conflict sensitivity, Integrated programming, Collaboration, Localization and Cash-based interventions.

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## References and Tools

### Council Resolution 1243

Council Resolution 1243 CI was adopted by the Council at its 523rd meeting on 27 November 2012. It welcomes IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework; requests the Director General to apply the MCOF in implementing IOM's activities and to report to the IOM Council on a regular basis on the application of the Framework; and encourages Member States to utilize the MCOF to enhance their own preparedness and response capacity, with support from IOM.

### Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MC/2355)

This Council document describes the migration crisis concept and the Operational Framework which is intended to improve and systematize the way in which the Organization supports its Member States and partners to better respond to the assistance and protection needs of crisis-affected populations.

### 2021 Addendum

The 2021 Addendum stays true to the essence and aspirations of MC/2355, reaffirming the fundamentals of the MCOF, but updating the sectors of assistance, and introduces operating modalities and cross-cutting issues, enabling IOM to use the MCOF to adapt to international developments since 2012 and to remain fit-for-purpose.

## Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

The Operational Framework is intended to help IOM to improve and systematize the way in which the Organization supports its Member States and partners to better respond to the assistance and protection needs of crisis-affected populations. Ultimately, the MCOF helps crisis-affected populations to better access their fundamental rights to protection and assistance.

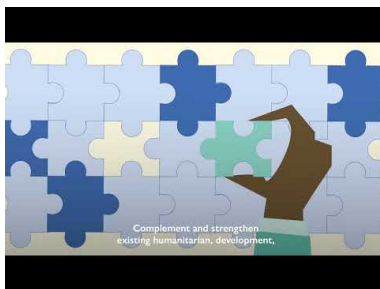
- a) Improve and systematize IOM's response to migration crises by bringing together its different sectors of assistance within a pragmatic and evolving approach, while upholding human rights and humanitarian principles and promoting longer-term development goals;
- b) Help crisis-affected populations, including displaced persons and international migrants stranded in crisis situations in their destination/transit countries, to better access their fundamental rights to protection and assistance through IOM support to States;
- c) Respond to the often unaddressed migration dimensions of a crisis, by complementing existing humanitarian systems as well as other systems addressing peace and security, and development issues;
- d) Build on IOM's partnerships with States, international organizations and other relevant actors in the fields of humanitarian response, migration, peace and security, and development.

The MCOF provides the basis for contextual analysis and strategic planning. It provides the overarching considerations and approaches for IOM's crisis response but continues to be sufficiently non-prescriptive and flexible so that IOM can tailor its response.

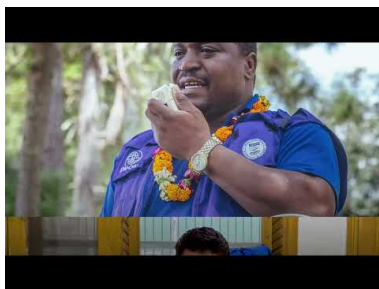
## Links

- [IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework \(MCOF\)](#)
- [MCOF Webpage](#)
- [MCOF SharePoint Site](#)
- [HDPN-MCOF Workspace](#)
- [MCOF Training on ILearn](#)
- [MCOF Training on Ecampus](#)
- [Essentials of Migration Management 2.0 E-Learning Course: Mobility Dimensions of Crisis](#)

## Media



[MCOF Presentation](#)



[MCOF in Practice](#)

## References and Tools

- [Council Resolution 1243](#)
- [Migration Crisis Operational Framework MC/2355 \(EN\)](#)
- [Migration Crisis Operational Framework MC/2355 \(ES\)](#)
- [Migration Crisis Operational Framework MC/2355 \(FR\)](#)
- [MCOF Addendum 2021 S/30/INF/1 \(EN\)](#)
- [MCOF Addendum 2021 S/30/INF/1 \(ES\)](#)
- [MCOF Addendum 2021 S/30/INF/1 \(FR\)](#)

## Other Entries in this Topic

- [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#)
- [Accountability to Affected Populations \(AAP\)](#)

## Contacts

For more information, please contact the MCOF Team at [mcof@iom.int](mailto:mcof@iom.int).

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