

Phase 1: Planning the Movement

Overview

Identifying the need for a movement operation:

IOM should only undertake movement operations when the need is identified and a specific request is made by the government (host government, government of the migrant's country of origin, or government of the country where migrants are transiting through).

Moreover, it is also important to also ensure that the potential beneficiaries of the movement operations, whether in country or across borders, are willing to receive movement assistance and that their participation in the operation is voluntary.

For movements carried out within a single country (e.g., IDP relocations, evacuations within the country, transport assistance to stranded returnees), the need can be identified through discussions with humanitarian community through **Humanitarian Country Team and/or the inter-cluster working group** in coordination with the Government.

Planning the movement:

The following activities should be conducted by IOM movement staff when providing travel assistance to ensure safe transport:

- Mapping of transport facilities and evaluation of distances and duration of journey, including breakdowns of each leg of the movement.
- Monitoring and constantly updating information on road and/or runway conditions.
- Assessing and updating information concerning the existence of potential security threats e.g. bridges, narrow roads, tunnels and other sensitive passageways, possible presence of mines, presence of armed actors, weather conditions, etc.
- Assessing conditions at intended final destinations to ensure that these locations are safe for arrival.
- Assessing means of communication (access to mobile phone networks, use of VHF or HF radios, or satellite phones) and determining the best means of ensuring constant communication throughout a movement.
- Identifying and mapping health facilities (and their capacity in case of emergency) that exist within the itineraries, thus establishing a referral system in case of need.
- Assessing the adequacy (technical and legal) of the transportation used (e.g., trucks, buses, aircraft, boats, trains etc.) for the task they need to perform.
- Ensuring that the appropriate vehicle insurance is in place for all vehicles engaged in movement activities.
- Setting up adequate procedures to verify vehicle maintenance status and ensure that the relevant equipment and preparedness measures are in place.
- Providing instructions, guidelines and training to drivers to enhance their capacity and obtain their support for operation procedures (e.g. respect for speed limits, instructions concerning night time driving, prohibition of alcohol etc.).
- Developing and ensuring the availability of manifests of passengers travelling.
- Ensuring constant communication between operations staff and partners, including information on health related events that may occur during movement, to allow for appropriate corrective action.
- Assessing procedures, guidelines and instructions on a regular basis to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate.

Taking climate into consideration

Climatic seasonal variations and its impact on road or runway conditions and visibility should also be taken into consideration when planning movements. It is necessary to know which months correspond to the rainy and dry seasons. Consulting local experts and

analyzing historical data on flooding, landslides, drought and other natural disasters and how these disasters impact transportation is important when planning movement operations.

Identifying the modes of transportation to be used:

Once the beneficiary caseload has been identified (e.g. IDPs, refugee, and migrants), operations staff should determine the best mode of transportation to be used: air, ground, water. In many cases, a combination of different modes of transportation is used.

Air Movement

IOM has extensive experience in moving migrants by air in both emergency and non-emergency settings. In emergency operations, it is important to ensure that conditions are in place to ensure safe and organized movement by air.

These include:

- 1) **The landing site is safe for use:** Ideally, the landing site is a well-equipped airport. If this is not the case, operations staff should be aware of the conditions of the airstrip (e.g. length and width of airstrip, material the airstrip is made from, size of parking area). The airline or charter service is responsible for gathering this information and making the final decision on the safety of the landing site. However, it could be useful for operations staff to share this information with the airline or charter service, if available. In some cases, where the Logistics Cluster is active, the cluster may have information on the conditions of airports, road networks and other logistics infrastructure.
- 2) **Authorization for movement is obtained:** All formalities to obtain the needed authorization for departure, transit and arrival should be negotiated in advance. For air movements, fly over and landing permits should be negotiated by the airline or charter company. Nevertheless, it is important that movement/operations staff follow up with service providers to ensure that the movement can take place without resistance from the Government or armed actors.
- 3) **Movement team and necessary materials are in place:** The operations team handling the arrival and departure of the flight must be at the landing site at least three to four hours before the estimated time of arrival or departure. The team must ensure that all the needed equipment is in place for loading and offloading the plane and must be in contact with the relevant stakeholders controlling the airstrip to ensure that the aircraft can arrive and depart on schedule. For departure, medical and/or operations escorts, should be present and ready to carry out their responsibilities as planned.

Commercial Flights vs. Chartered Flights

The decision to use commercial flights or chartered flights depends greatly on the specific situation and is contingent on several factors including: the number of people that need to be moved, how fast the movement needs to take place, whether commercial flights are available and whether it is more cost effective to use one or the other.

Commercial Flights: In the event that the Country Office chooses to use commercial flights for movement, information on movements via commercial airlines can be accessed on the Resettlement and Movement Management (RMM) Portal on the intranet. Note that procedures and guidelines are accessible on the portal without needing to create an account.

Charter Flights: In the event that a country office decides to charter flights, arrangements should be made in close coordination with RMM, and the Humanitarian Evacuation Cell (HEC).

Ground and Water Movement: IOM's movement operations utilizing ground and water transportation has been increasing in recent years. Similar to air movements, a number of conditions should be in place to ensure safe movement by ground and water.

These conditions include:

- 1) **Safe arrival, transit or departure areas:** Movement staff should be aware of the conditions of the departure, transit, and arrival areas. These could be sea ports, transit centers, collective centers or other facilities. This information will help determine the type of vessel that can be used and additional support that may be needed to ensure safe movements. If the Logistics Cluster is

active, the cluster may be able to provide updated information on the conditions of road networks and sea ports.

Though no standards are in place to determine the number of transits/breaks needed for one movement, it is suggested that one stop every three to four hours is considered. Length of each leg of the trip should take into consideration the vulnerabilities of the population being moved (e.g. the special needs of children, elderly and pregnant women), and the conditions along the travel route (e.g. security, access to services etc.)

2) **Authorization for movement is obtained:** Similar to air movements, all formalities to obtain the needed authorization for arrival, transit and departure should be negotiated in advance. In natural disaster situations this authorization should be obtained from the relevant government authorities. In conflict situations, it is essential to coordinate with the relevant access working groups and authorities to ensure that movement can take place without resistance from the government or armed actors.

3) **Movement team and necessary materials are in place:** The operations team handling the movement must be onsite about three to four hours in advance, prior to the estimated time of departure. Note the number of hours that the team should be onsite in advance will vary depending on the operations. The team must ensure that all the needed equipment is in place for loading and offloading the vessels and must be in contact with the relevant stakeholders to ensure timely departure. The use of medical and operations escorts should be taken into consideration and integrated into the overall movement plan. More information on medical and operations escorts is available in the departure entry.

4) **Partners providing food, health, protection and water and sanitation support:** Provisions should be made to ensure that the population being transported has sufficient access to food, water, and health and sanitation services. These can be provided directly by IOM or through partners. All arrangements to ensure these services are available throughout the movement should be finalized prior to the movement start date. Though no minimum standards for emergency services during movements exist, operations staff could refer to Sphere Minimum Standards as a baseline and develop agreed upon minimum standards with partners using Sphere as a guide.

5) **Communications:** It is important to ensure that there is regular communication with the group travelling. Modes of communication will vary depending on the routes being used. Cellular phones, radios or satellite phones can be utilized depending on the situation.

6) **Backup vehicles:** Particularly for long journeys over land, where it may be difficult to immediately send replacement vehicles in the event that one vehicle in the convoy breaks down, the operations team should consider including a backup vehicle in the convoy that can be used to replace any vehicle that breaks down in the middle of an operation

Key Considerations

Insurance and other Legal Agreements

Contracts are always required for chartered or hired transport. Standard templates for air charter, ferry charter and ground movement have been developed by the Office of Legal Affairs (LEG). Templates are available on the [LEG SharePoint](#). Note that these templates stipulate that the required insurance should be provided by the service provider for the entire duration that the agreement is in place.

It is important to always refer to the [LEG SharePoint](#) to ensure that the most up to date template is being used.

For more information on legal agreements contact the Legal Affairs Office (leg@iom.int).

Vulnerable groups, identifying and addressing their specific needs:

The Internal Guidance Note on Protection Considerations for Planning and Implementing Humanitarian Evacuations, in the reference section, contains more detailed guidance on how to address the specific needs of vulnerable individuals and groups. While the guidance note was developed for international humanitarian evacuations for migrants caught in armed conflict, the protection considerations are the same for all movements. Please refer to this document for more detailed information. the Guidance Note is available in the *Guidance Documents and Tools for Transport Assistance* entry. Below are a few highlights for easy reference:

Beneficiaries of a movement operation should not be seen as a homogeneous entity because some individuals and groups might be more at risk than others.

Operations staff should ensure that the specific needs of vulnerable caseloads are identified and that these needs are taken into consideration at all phases of the movement operation. To the extent possible, operations staff should prioritize moving the most vulnerable caseloads first. A tool for vulnerability analysis is available in the Protection Mainstreaming chapter that can guide operational staff in identifying the most vulnerable individuals or groups while taking into account the context and operational considerations of the movement.

Considerations for individuals with health concerns: When beneficiaries have specific health needs or significant health conditions (e.g., physically injured, mental health concerns, pregnant women, elderly individuals), it is important to ensure that IOM staff (Health and Operations) or partners with health expertise are notified and engaged at all phases of the operation (planning, pre-departure, departure, transit and arrival). It is important to ensure that the specific needs and/or medical equipment needed during the movement of vulnerable beneficiaries are taken into consideration and that specialized staff are available to provide assistance at any point in the operation and where necessary, facilitate any referral process that may be required or handover to the receiving health facility or a responsible family member.

Considerations for Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASCs): Unaccompanied and separated children should not board any transportation assets in the same manner as adults. If unaccompanied (not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other adult that by law or custom is responsible for them) and separated children (separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregivers but not necessarily from other adults) are identified and are in need of movement assistance, special measures need to be arranged in compliance with international standards and in line with the child's best interest. This could potentially be done with the support of other humanitarian actors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNICEF.

Identification and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking and Smuggled Migrants: If there are identified cases or suspicions of trafficking in persons and/or exploitation, immediately refer the case to the IOM Counter-Trafficking (CT) focal point in the country so that further identification and onward assistance (as needed) can be provided in coordination with the mandated authorities. If there is no CT focal point in country, the Regional Thematic Specialist (RTS) of the Migrant Assistance Division (MAD) in the Regional Office should be contacted for support.

Safety and Security:

In all movement operations, it is important to ensure that the appropriate safety and security measures are in place (for instance, the necessary security clearances for the movement are granted). For movements by water, life jackets for all passengers should be available. For movements over land, it is preferred to have baggage and passengers transported in separate vehicles. Vehicles transporting passengers should have seats or sufficient space to transport people without injury and first aid kits should be available in each vehicle.

Luggage:

One of the most challenging aspects in movement operations is the transport of beneficiary luggage. In many situations, the amount of luggage being transported requires substantial logistic support with beneficiaries often trying to move with large items such as beds, tables and chairs or appliances. It is very important that movement staff clearly inform passengers of the baggage allowances and the limitations in IOM's ability to move large items.

It is recommended that a fixed number of luggage and maximum weight per individual is agreed upon by IOM operations staff. The same measure should be set for all beneficiaries of a single movement operation regardless of mode of transport. This ensures consistency and common messaging that people are given priority over luggage.

Beneficiaries should also be made aware that IOM is not liable for damages, loss of baggage or assets left behind.

Operations staff should also work with the relevant authorities to establish a systematic manner of recording and managing luggage left behind.

In the event that the movement involves crossing state borders, movement operations teams should consider working with authorities or other relevant stakeholders to establish a screening process to reduce the risk of transporting illegal items across State borders.

Information Management:

For air movements, all information on the operation should be documented through the Migrant Management and Operational Systems Application (MiMOSA), the global application used by IOM to record biographic and demographic information of movement activities. Country Offices should consult with RMM on the process of using MiMOSA to record humanitarian air operations.

For ground and water movements, it is recommended that information gathered through the manifest are consolidated in a spreadsheet or database depending on the information management capacity of the Country Office. This will enable the Country Office to effectively manage, monitor and report on achievements in movement operations. A sample movement tracking sheet for ground and water movements is provided in the reference section below. This can be modified by the Country Office to suit its needs. In addition to manifests that contain information on the people provided with movement assistance, it is also recommended that a master list of the overall caseload is created so that movement staff has a better understanding of the overall situation and can plan and prioritize accordingly. This master list should contain information on all the individuals that would potentially be provided with movement assistance. As the information may come from several sources it is important that data received from other sources is consistent with the minimum requirements of the operations team so that all data can be consolidated in a single master list.

For example:

IOM may be providing evacuation assistance for migrants fleeing conflict by crossing into a third country. In addition to the migrants that have already arrived in the third country and have already been identified by IOM for assistance, new caseloads may arrive and referrals from Governments and other partners could also be provided.

It is important that operations staff consolidate this information in a single master list, so that movements can be planned efficiently and individuals in need of assistance do not 'fall through the cracks.' For large movement operations, it is recommended that a database is set up to effectively manage this information.

Maintaining an updated master list will facilitate planning who should be moved first. Common priority categories include: medical cases, pregnant or lactating women, disabled individuals, elderly individuals, large families or single-headed families, unaccompanied and separated children, but other priority criteria might depend on the context and circumstances migrants are confronted with, in addition to operational considerations such as the possession of valid travel documentation and readiness to travel. The Internal Guidance Note on Protection Considerations for Planning and Implementing International Humanitarian Evacuations provides detailed information on who should be evacuated first and the non-discrimination principle. Please refer to this document for more information.

The management of information on movements should always take into consideration the data protection principles outlined in the IOM Data Protection Manual. Careful adherence to these principles should be observed particularly with regard to managing personal data gathered through beneficiary consent forms and movement manifests. The IOM Data Protection Manual is available [online](#) and in the and in the *Guidance Documents and Tools for Transport Assistance* entry.



Coordination

At the planning stage, it is important to establish a coordination structure to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are engaged, able to share information and carry out their respective responsibilities. Stakeholders include: representatives from the host government, representatives from governments of the country of origin of migrants, sectoral partners (e.g. Health, WASH, and Protection partners), the potential beneficiaries and affected communities.

In conflict situations, coordination with non-state actors to ensure access and transport permits is also essential. This coordination should be carried out in close collaboration with the Humanitarian Country Team. OCHA plays a vital role in coordinating humanitarian partners' efforts to gain access.

Coordination within the Country Office is also important. For example, in situations where a Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) programme is active, DTM teams may further augment the capacity of operations teams in completing manifests for movements as the methodology is similar to registration activities. The information on movements can also complement the data being gathered through DTM and can be reported in DTM products. Moreover, particularly for international movements, it is essential that the Country Office engages with other IOM Offices if the itinerary of the movement involves transit or arrival in countries with IOM presence. Along the same lines, it is important to ensure that the relevant Regional Offices are informed and regularly updated on international movement operations.

Lessons Learned / Best Practice

Tools and guidance documents that have been developed and used in different movement operations are available in the [Guidance Documents and Tools for Transport Assistance](#) entry.

Links

- [Sphere Minimum Standards](#)
- [IOM Templates for Agreements](#)
- [Data Protection Manual](#)

- [RMM Portal](#)

Other Entries in this Topic

- [Guidance Documents and Tools for Transport Assistance](#)
- [Phase 2: Pre-Departure \(Transport Assistance\)](#)
- [Phase 3: Departure \(Transport Assistance\)](#)
- [Phase 3.1: Transit \(Transport Assistance\)](#)
- [Phase 4: Arrival \(Transport Assistance\)](#)

Contacts

For more information on movements by air and for additional guidance on use of the operations templates provided in this chapter contact the Resettlement and Movement Management (RRM): RMM@iom.int.

For more information on movements by land and water contact the Preparedness and Response Division (PRD): prdcare@iom.int.

For guidance on protection issues contact the Department of Operations and Emergencies (DOE) Protection team: DOEProtection@iom.int.

For information on pre-departure health checks and other health related concerns contact the Migration Health Division (MHD): mhddpt@iom.int.

For more information on legal agreements and beneficiary consent contact the Legal Department: LEG@iom.int.

Document last updated: Oct 2022