

IOM GUATEMALA

COUNTRY STRATEGY

2023-2025



IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
National Office
Guatemala city
Guatemala
Email: iomguatemala@iom.int
Website: <https://nortedecentroamerica.iom.int/es>

Cover photo: IOM staff in Guatemala © María Renée San José, IOM Guatemala, 2022.

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2023. IOM Strategy for Guatemala (2023–2025). IOM Guatemala.

Graphic design: Jonathan Mazariegos, IOM Guatemala.

The publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

The publication has been issued without IOM Publications Unit (PUB) approval for adherence to IOM's brand and style standards.

This publication was issued without IOM Research Unit (RES) endorsement.

This publication was issued without official transmission by TRS Unit.

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2023-2025**

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ACRONYMS

AMN	National Migration Authority
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
CONAMIGUA	Consejo Nacional de Atención al Migrante de Guatemala / National Council of Migrant Protection
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CONRED	Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres / National Coordination Mechanism for the Reduction of Disasters
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GEMIG	Naciones Unidas Grupo Especializado en Migración / United Nation's specialized group on migration
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IGM	Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración / Guatemalan Migration Institute
MRC / CAPMiRs	Centro de Atención a Personas Migrantes y Refugiadas / Migrant Resource Centers
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGI	Migration Governance Indicators
NMP	National Migration Policy
NCA	Northern Central America
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SRF	Strategic Results Framework

ACRONYMS

SOSEP	Secretaria de Obras Sociales de la Esposa del Presidente de la Republica de Guatemala / Social Works Secretariat of the President's Wife
SBS	Secretaria de Bienestar Social / Social Welfare Secretary
SVET	Secretaria contra la Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas / Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDRR	United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USA	United States of America

FOREWORD BY THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Human mobility has a long historical precedence in Guatemala and the Central American region.

Over the past years, the United Nations (UN) system and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in particular, have been working in close collaboration with the Government of Guatemala in order to strengthen the governance of migration, address the root causes of migration which are not orderly, safe and regular, and provide assistance, protection and sustainable reintegration opportunities to vulnerable migrants and returnees across the country.

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive and contextualized approach, I strongly believe that a joined-up and system-wide approach which tackles all socio-economic dimensions of migration will foster longer-term sustainable development solutions.

As such, I am sure that this document, which constitutes IOM's medium and long-term strategic framework in Guatemala, will allow the Organization and the UN, the Government, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders, to work together in order to cohesively and inclusively plan and respond to the emerging migration opportunities and challenges in the country.

The priorities listed in this document support the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020-2025), the National Development Plan (K'atun Our Guatemala 2032), and the corresponding National Development Priorities identified in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At the subregional level, addressing the root causes of migration which are not safe, orderly or regular is also a priority for the UN system. The UN Secretary General has, in this sense, endorsed the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and the south-southeast of Mexico, developed by the UN system along with the Governments of the four countries, under the leadership of the Economic Commission for Latin America. In 2022 the Executive Committee of the United Nations chaired by the Secretary General, has approved Guatemala as the pilot country. A CDP Promoter Council has been created under the leadership of the Government (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Secretary of Planning and Programming of the Presidency – SEGEPLAN by its initials in English) and the United Nations (Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative) in Guatemala. The priorities approved by the Government of Guatemala covers five main strategic priorities, namely: 1) Human Mobility; 2) Climate Change and Environment; as well as three areas in economic development: 3) White Stamp for local producers; 4) Strengthening of Value Chains in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); and 5) Prosperity Walls (development in bordering locations). In this context, IOM's leadership will be a steppingstone to the success of the CDP.

The IOM Guatemala country strategy (2023-2025) will enable the Organization to reaffirm its engagement in supporting and accelerating Guatemala's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and thus contributing to the socio-economic development of the country.



José Miguel Barreto
UN Resident Coordinator

FOREWORD BY IOM CHIEF OF MISSION

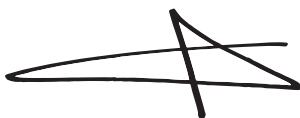
It is my pleasure to present the IOM Guatemala strategy for 2023-2025. This strategy is aligned with Guatemala's national development priorities as well as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and is the result of extensive consultations with Government institutions, members of the civil society, UN agencies as well as with IOM staff across the globe.

This document draws from the long-standing partnership between the Government of Guatemala and the International Organization for Migration, and the past and current alliances that IOM has been able to establish in order to respond to the challenges and harvest the opportunities brought by migration in the country.

Due to its geographical position, Guatemala is located on one of the most important migration corridors in the world and is a country of origin, transit, destination and return of migrants. In 2022, more than 94,000 Guatemalan migrants apprehended in Mexico and the USA were returned to the country while it is believed that more than 300 migrants leave the country on a daily basis looking for opportunities. Over the past few years, the profile of migrants transiting through Guatemala also has become more diversified with the number of extra continental migrants – mainly from Africa and Asia – transiting through Central America, increasing from just over 1,100 in 2014 to over 9,100 in 2019. This new pattern combined with long-existing migration trends, requires a thorough understanding of the profiles and protection needs of migrants as well as a capacity to adapt to the constantly changing context and competing priorities.

It is my hope that this strategy, which is aligned with IOM's Strategic Vision and the Regional Strategy for Central America, North America and the Caribbean (2020-2024) will provide IOM with the tools to efficiently support the Government of Guatemala to manage migration as well as to establish harmonious and long-standing partnerships that will help us reach our sustainable development goals, whilst leaving no one behind.

I would like to wish you all a good reading and to sincerely thank all the people who have been part of this process.



Stéphanie DAVIOT
Chief Of Mission
IOM Guatemala

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT IOM

Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM is part of the United Nations system, as a related organization. IOM supports migrants across the world, developing effective responses to the shifting dynamics of migration and, as such, is a key source of advice on migration policy and practice. The organization works in emergency situations, developing the resilience of all people on the move, and particularly those in situations of vulnerability, as well as building capacity within governments to manage all forms and impacts of mobility. The Organization is guided by the principles enshrined in the [Charter of the United Nations](#), including upholding human rights for all. Respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants remains paramount.

As recognized in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), human mobility is inextricably linked with sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and the commitment to leave no one behind – will not be achieved without due consideration of migration, which is articulated in the SDG 10.7¹. This country strategy aims to support the Government of Guatemala to achieve this, ultimately by leveraging the potential of migration through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to achieve sustainable development outcomes for all. It will additionally directly contribute to the implementation of the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\)](#), which is anchored in the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Allowing for a joined-up approach to the way IOM designs and delivers its operations and ensuring a greater coherence and development impacts of its activities is indeed the cornerstone of the organization's Strategic Vision (2019-2023), which articulates how IOM plans to meet its emerging responsibilities. This document is thus aligned with the Organization's Strategic Vision and its corresponding Regional Strategy for Central America, North America and the Caribbean (2022-2024), as well as with the country's United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020-2025) and the Guatemalan government's "National Development Plan K'atun 2032".

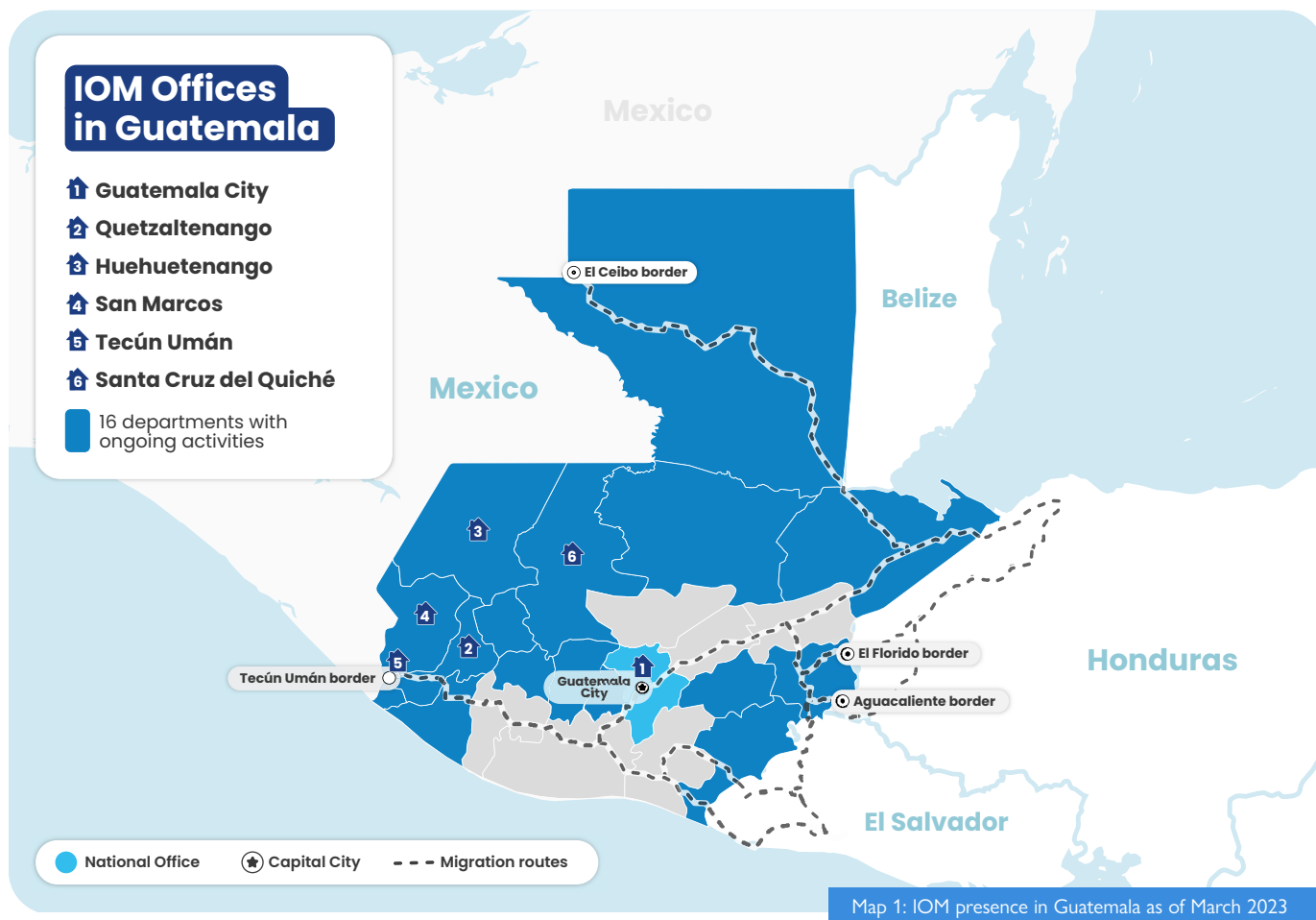
IOM IN GUATEMALA

Whilst Guatemala became a member state of IOM in 1980, the Organization established its presence in the country in 1988 through an official Cooperation Agreement. Historically, IOM first provided assistance to the Government for the resettlement of (predominantly indigenous Mayan) populations that had been displaced as a result of the civil war. Due to its geographical position and national development and security context, Guatemala has progressively become an important origin, transit, destination and return country for migrants, many of whom find themselves in irregular situations during their journey. As a result of the scale, significance and impacts of migration in the country, IOM currently provides comprehensive support in a large programming portfolio, ranging from the provision of assistance and protection services to migrants in vulnerable situations, to addressing the root causes of migration, building institutional capacities to ensure effective migration governance at the national and local levels and supporting the collection, analysis and dissemination of migration data for evidence-based decision making.

IOM's mission in Guatemala has over 160 staff members, operates from its main country office in Guatemala City as well as from its five sub-offices across the country (Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Santa Cruz del Quiché, Tecún Umán and Quetzaltenango). IOM has personnel located in the various departments (including in Peten, Izabal and Chiquimula), at reception centers, shelters as well as in the recently established Migration Resource

¹ "facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies".

Centers (MRCs) across the country². IOM Guatemala operates under the umbrella of the IOM Regional Office for Central America, North America and the Caribbean, which is located in San Jose, Costa Rica, and covers 24 countries. The Regional Office oversees and provides programmatic support to the IOM missions in the region, formulates regional policies and guides their implementation. The IOM Guatemala mission also works closely with the IOM mission in El Salvador, which oversees the coordination of cross-regional projects in the Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras sub-region.



In line with the development priorities identified in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the Government’s National Development Plan, and in collaboration with government, UN, NGOs and civil society at the national and local levels, IOM works in the following seven thematic areas to respond to the country’s migration challenges and opportunities: 1) responding to emergency and protection needs of the most vulnerable migrants and crisis-affected populations (including IDPs), 2) providing processing and transportation support services to vulnerable migrants and refugees 3) strengthening disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response, 4) facilitating the sustainable reintegration of migrants, 5) addressing the roots causes of migration, 6) building institutional capacities to ensure effective migration governance, 7) collecting, analyzing and using migration data for evidence-based responses and policy-making.

VISION STATEMENT

Over the next three years (2023-2025), IOM, as a trusted and key actor in the field of human mobility, will strengthen its comprehensive support to the Government of Guatemala in order to address the emerging challenges and opportunities in terms of migration, and ultimately improve the psycho-social, social and economic well-being of migrants, their families and their communities.

² In Guatemala, the MRCs were established in coordination with UNHCR and UNICEF and are called “Centro de Atención a Personas Migrantes y Refugiadas” (CAPMiR).

MIGRATION AND POLITICAL OUTLOOK

MIGRATION TRENDS

Migration in Northern Central America – comprised of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – has long been a characteristic of the region. Prior to the 1970s, individuals from these three countries mainly moved within the subregion or to other countries in Central America and Mexico. However, since the 1970s, growing insecurity mainly in Guatemala and El Salvador began to change human mobility dynamics, with large numbers of individuals and groups migrating out of the region and heading primarily towards Northern America.

Over the past 30 years, a combination of both push and pull factors have been driving an increasing number of individuals to migrate to the United States of America (USA), which has, by far, been the major country of destination of migrants from these three countries. The search for better economic opportunities, education opportunities, the attractiveness of labor markets as well as family reunification are the most common pull factors influencing the choice of individuals to migrate. In addition, a consistent lack of economic opportunities and decent work, non-inclusive economic growth, low and/or stagnant wages, poverty and inequality, weak institutions and corruption in Guatemala have been pushing individuals to migrate. In fact, the GDP per capita in the USA is, on average, more than ten times higher than the one in Guatemala³. In addition, it is estimated that more than 71% of workers in Guatemala are engaged in informal employment, with a far smaller proportion of women participating in formal employment⁴. Violence, threats of violence and insecurity also play a role in the decision to migrate and often occur in the form of generalized community-level violence, gang and drug violence, as well as Gender-Based Violence, which in many instances may disproportionately affect certain socio-demographic groups including women, girls and minority groups. Finally, natural disasters and slow-onset climate and environmental degradation are also increasingly contributing to further migration within and outside the sub-region, as well as to internal displacements. In 2021, 339,000 individuals were internally displaced in Guatemala because of natural hazards in the subregion⁵.

As a result, since 1990, the number of Guatemalans living outside their country of origin has increased nearly tenfold, from just under 350,000 to 2.9 million in 2021⁶. In the same year, Guatemala received more than USD 15 billion in the form of remittances from abroad, representing approximately 18% of the GDP⁷. Whilst some bilateral labor mobility schemes offering employment opportunities in northern American countries have increased in the past decade (especially those related to the temporary movement of migrant workers), access to regular pathways to migrate to the US and other key destination countries remain limited for migrants from Northern Central America⁸. A significant percentage of these mechanisms (45%) are focused on the productive sectors requiring low-skilled migrant labor, such as the primary and secondary sectors that include activities like agriculture and construction, and are driven by the demand for foreign labor from the USA and Canada⁹. Given the challenges identified with respect to the use of these mechanisms by migrant workers and employers (including the payment of fees, the lack of accessible and reliable information on procedures, the complexity of the migratory processes), many migrant workers still use irregular or alternative means to work abroad.

As such, the majority migrate through irregular channels, often obliged to journey thousands of kilometers by land, through Mexico, up to the Mexican/US border. Movements of migrants travelling individually and in groups have increased in numbers and frequency since 2018 and have repeatedly included high proportions of

³ The World Bank, 2020.

⁴ The National Statistics Institute of Guatemala, 2022.

⁵ The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2021.

⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, 2021.

⁷ The World Bank, 2021.

⁸ Mechanisms for labor migration in MesoAmerica: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, IOM 2021.

⁹ In the region, the mechanism that has the largest number of beneficiaries is the H-2A Visa Program of the Government of the USA.

family units, women and unaccompanied and separated children, many in situations of vulnerability. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a decrease in this migration trend, as it prompted governments in the region to impose stringent border closures, increase movement restrictions and tighten security along the migration routes. However, the pre-pandemic migration trends have picked-up again and in 2022 alone, a total of 493,329 encounters of migrants from North and Central America were recorded on the south-west US border, with 44% of these being Guatemalan. The sharp increase in irregular crossings by Caribbean, South-American and extra-continental migrants is also worth mentioning, reaching record levels in 2021, representing serious risks and threats to their physical integrity and human rights¹⁰.

In order to avoid detection by government officials in transiting countries, migrants traveling irregularly often take dangerous routes and forms of transportation. Land journeys are expensive, and migrants usually rely on networks of (local) intermediaries, or smugglers, which are often linked to forms of organized crime. Throughout their migration journey, migrants are exposed to risks of exploitation, violence, extortion, human trafficking, gender-based violence, kidnapping and forced recruitment into organized criminal groups. Many individuals, unfortunately, never reach their final destination, as there are many reported deaths and disappearances on these routes. Since 2014, a total of 1,993 migrant deaths and disappearances were recorded by IOM's Missing Migrants Project in Central America (including 790 at the US/Mexico border), with a record high of 383 deaths/disappearances in 2022 alone¹¹.

Migrants often also do not have the necessary resources to continue or finish their migration journey and become stranded in transit countries (including in Guatemala and Mexico). In recent years, a new migration modality has been observed, with large groups of migrants travelling on foot from Northern Central America countries towards the United States, a form of transportation commonly referred to as "migrant caravans"¹². These large population groups not only consist in a high number of individual adults but also family units and unaccompanied and separated children.

Many of those that have been apprehended in Mexico and the United States stem from these "migrant caravans". Since 2016, apprehensions of nationals of the NCA countries recorded at the south-west US border have in fact consistently exceeded those of Mexican nationals. Since the start of the pandemic, out of the 583,593 Guatemalans apprehended at the above-mentioned border, 60% were detained through Title 42 of the US pandemic era policy¹³. Based on health-related concerns, this gives border patrol agents the authority to swiftly expel migrants trying to enter the US instead of allowing them to seek asylum within the country, as had been the policy (Title 8) before the pandemic. Although the Biden administration has said that it would return to pre-pandemic Title 8 enforcement practices, this does not necessarily mean that migrants would be allowed to enter and remain in the country. Many migrants would need to wait in Mexico until their asylum claims can be decided.

These apprehensions at the US and Mexican borders have, consequently, resulted in a gradual increase in returnees arriving back to Guatemala. More than 300,000 migrants were returned from Mexico (57%) and the US (42%) back to Guatemala between 2019 and 2022, with approximately 30% (corresponding to 94,204 individuals) tracked in 2022 alone. Most of the returning migrants were men (63%), followed by women (16%), boys (12%) and girls (9%)¹⁴. The majority return through the El Ceibo border point with Mexico in a very vulnerable situation and are hosted in the various short-term government-run reception centers across the country. Often returning to difficult living conditions, facing increased risks of stigma and discrimination, without access to comprehensive (psycho-social, social and economic) durable solutions at the structural, community and individual levels, many may be motivated to leave again in the future¹⁵.

10 Recent migration trends in the Americas, IOM, June 2022.

11 [The Americas | Missing Migrants Project \(iom.int\)](https://www.iom.int/en/missing-migrants-project)

12 <https://infounitnca.iom.int/en/emergency-response/caravans/caravan-january-2021/>

13 Not all migrants who are apprehended at the south-west US border are irregular migrants, as many may have claims to asylum or other legal forms of entry into the US

14 Information Unit for Northern Central American Countries, IOM, <https://infounitnca.iom.int/en/>

15 "Understanding the adverse drivers and implications of migration from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras: a comprehensive analysis building on the report "Complex motivations and costs of Central American migration".

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES, MIGRATION FRAMEWORKS AND INITIATIVES AT THE REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL

At the regional level

At the continental and regional level, several governmental frameworks and initiatives (also applicable for Guatemala), have been developed and acknowledge the need for an inclusive approach to address migration dynamics in the Americas. The [Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#) (June 2022) builds on internationally adopted principles and instruments, including the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Within this non-binding declaration, countries across the region (including Guatemala) recognize the urgent need to work collaboratively to protect the dignity, life and human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status. The declaration is seen as a fundamental step towards effectively managing migratory movements in the region. In addition, Guatemala was selected to chair the high level intra-government working group on promoting sustainable return and reintegration, in which IOM Guatemala plays a key role.

The [Regional Conference on Migration \(RCM\)](#) or Puebla Process's multilateral mechanism for coordinating policies and actions relating to migration in eleven member states (including Guatemala) provides for a space for dialogue and information exchange between governments. Similarly, IOM supports the [Central American Commission of Migration Directors \(OCAM\)](#), which was instituted in 1990 following the request of the Central American presidents in the framework of the [Central American Economic Action Plan of the Central American Integration System \(SICA\)](#). On migration, one of the oldest but most significant achievements of SICA is the free movement of its people through the CA-4 Agreement between Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, which has allowed the reduction of customs and migration controls facilitating transit for citizens. Finally, within the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south, south-east of Mexico, the ultimate goal is the achievement of the SDG 10.7 for orderly safe and regular migration. The CDP is developed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in coordination with UNCTs of the four countries along with Resident Coordinators. At the regional level, IOM and UNHCR co-lead Pillar 4 on the comprehensive management of the migration cycle whilst also contributing to other pillars. In 2022, Guatemala was selected as the pilot country to implement the CDP.

In the field of labor migration, it is important to note that Guatemala has some of the oldest bilateral labor migration agreements with both Canada and the USA. Every year, Guatemala sends thousands of migrant workers to North America through, mainly, the [H-2A and H-2B visas program](#), the [Temporary Foreign Worker Program](#) (TFWP), to temporarily work in the agricultural, construction and other service sectors. Whilst these pathways to regulate labor migration are important elements in the national and regional migration governance structures, there are still challenges regarding their capacity to respond to migratory flows, so that the changing needs of labor markets are addressed, and the protection of migrant workers is ensured¹⁶.

At the national level

The Guatemalan government officially launched a Comprehensive Development Plan in 2014, which sets out long-term development goals to accelerate economic growth in the country. The [2032 K'atun National Development Plan](#) established national priorities and provides for subsequent policy development, budget allocation and monitoring of key results. The SDGs are reflected in the ten priorities of K'atun¹⁷, to which IOM leverages its mandate on migration in order to contribute towards the achievement of these national priorities. More specifically, IOM supports the government of Guatemala in the development of its national migration governance frameworks, including by ensuring the implementation and regular follow-up of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the establishment of a National Migration Policy. The [Migration Governance Indicators \(MGI\)](#) were, in this regard, used to assist Guatemala in operationalizing the GCM by using a standard set of indicators which are being applied by the Guatemalan Migration Institute at the national and decentralized

¹⁶ Mechanisms, for labor migration in Meso America: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, IOM, 2021.

¹⁷ Poverty reduction and social protection, access to health services, employment and investment, access to water and management of natural resources education, economic value of natural resources, food and nutrition security, institutional strengthening, security and justice, territorial planning and comprehensive tax reform.

levels¹⁸. Ultimately, this will ensure that the country’s Migration Code and the National Migration Policy will be operationalized country-wide. The country released its first [Migration Governance Indicators \(MGI\)](#) report in 2018, which has been updated in 2022.

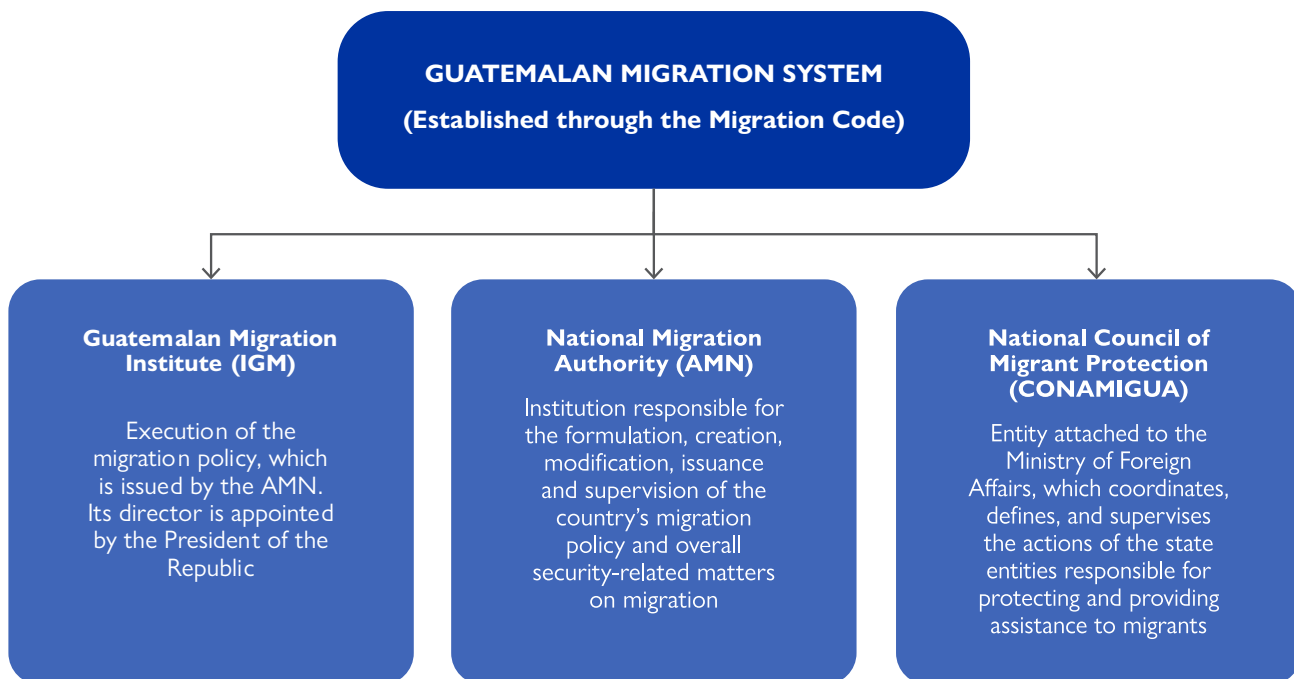
In parallel, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020-2025), which supports and accelerates Guatemala’s progress towards achieving the SDGs, demonstrates the joint commitment of the UN in the country to migration management, with a dedicated outcome on migration governance under the “strong institutions” pillar and by mainstreaming migration across the other four pillars¹⁹.

In complement to the UNSDCF and in order to comprehensively and cohesively respond to the most critical humanitarian needs of the Guatemalan population, IOM will also align its interventions under the Resilience pillar with the Humanitarian Country Team’s [Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\)](#). IOM actively participates in the Humanitarian Country Team and currently co-leads the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster.

Within the framework of the United Nations System, IOM currently provides technical support and fosters dialogue on migration among partners by co-leading and coordinating the Specialized Group on Migration (GEMIG) with UNHCR and UNICEF, which regroups all UN agencies and the IGM as the governmental counterpart. In addition, in 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended a tripartite agreement with IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR to enable for a comprehensive and inclusive approach in responding to the migration opportunities and challenges in the country. Finally, in 2023, IOM aims to activate the UN Network on Migration to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide and strategic support to the Government of Guatemala in its implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM.

Partnerships and coordination

At the national level, in 2016, a new [Migration Code \(Decree 44-2016\)](#) was adopted and defines the Guatemalan migration system, which is composed of three sets of state institutions that oversee the entry and exit of both Guatemalans and foreigners to the country, as well as the transit and permanence of foreigners on its territory.



¹⁸ The latest Migration Governance Profile for Guatemala stems from 2018.

¹⁹ The UN cooperation framework concentrates its efforts on supporting the country in five key areas: a) economic development, b) social development, c) strong institutions, d) peace, security and justice, e) environment.

To capitalize on these institutional migration-related gains made over the past years, continued engagement with the above-mentioned key government stakeholders will be needed to consolidate systems and support structures that have been established. In particular, IOM is currently supporting the IGM in the formulation and development of the country's first National Migration Policy (NMP). The objective of this framework will be to guide the Government's actions on migration issues in general, but also in the implementation of its commitments under the Global Compact for Migration and the exercise of its competencies as established by the Migration Code and the National Migration Authority.

In order to facilitate an institutional dialogue on migration governance between the national and decentralized levels, IOM works in close collaboration with several municipalities to better include the local and departmental level perspectives in the formulation of migration and development policies. Over the past years, significant progress has been made in terms of positioning migration issues on the agenda of local governments. This is particularly true in the department of San Marcos (bordering with Mexico), where the local government approved the Municipal Public Policy on Migration in 2021.

In order to contribute to responding to the most urgent humanitarian and protection needs of returning migrants, IOM provides material and technical support to the IGM-managed reception centers located in key strategic locations across the country, including at the IOM-constructed reception center for populations returned via Air in Guatemala city and the one in Tecun Uman, which IOM is currently constructing, as well as at the rehabilitated Aurora airport reception center (*Sala de Bienvenida para familias y niñas, niños y adolescentes en el aeropuerto de la Aurora*). Similarly, IOM supports the Social Welfare Secretariat of the Presidency who manage the reception shelters for unaccompanied returning migrant children (*Casa Nuestras Raíces Ciudad de Guatemala*).

Recognizing that the sustainable reintegration of migrants is a key priority of the Government, IOM has been engaging with the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Education at the national and decentralized levels in order to provide sustainable livelihood and employment opportunities to returnees as well as tailored education programs for youth. The formalization of agreements between the municipalities and both Ministries as well as the creation and/or strengthening of public/private partnerships will contribute to more sustainable interventions and long-term benefits for the targeted communities at a whole. In complement, IOM works in collaboration with the different municipalities who lead the planning and execution of sustainable reintegration policies and links these to critical social, psycho-social and economic success factors at the individual, community and structural levels.

As Guatemala is exposed to multiple natural hazards, IOM works in collaboration with the National Coordination Mechanism for the Reduction of Disasters (CONRED) as well as with the Social Works Secretariat of the President's Wife (SOSEP), the UN (including UNDRR and OCHA) and the relevant municipalities on all disaster preparedness, response and disaster risk reduction initiatives. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources leads Guatemala's institutional efforts on addressing climate change and contributes to compliance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Action through its [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#) released in 2015 and updated in 2021. IOM currently supports the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in order to increase the understanding and awareness of the interaction between climate change and human mobility.

Whilst an estimated 2.9 million Guatemalans currently residing in the USA, IOM supports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate greater Diaspora engagement and empower them to contribute to sustainable development in the country²⁰. Collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also spans the topic of remittances through the conduct of a national survey on remittances²¹, facilitating consular services for Guatemalans abroad and sensitization initiatives for targeted communities on potential regular labor migration pathways, which is one of the key migration governance related priorities of the Government. This topic is also advanced through

²⁰ Engagement of the diasporas of Central America and Mexico: opportunities and challenges, IOM, 2021.

²¹ The report will be published in 2023.

collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and through IOM's active participation and engagement in the technical working group on labor migration. A first national-level mapping of the recruitment agencies in the country was, in this sense, conducted by IOM, and will be used as the basis to promote interventions related to the ethical recruitment and the protection of migrant worker rights.

In addition to its continued collaboration with governmental counterparts, IOM works with relevant UN agencies (including, among others, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, WHO and UNFPA), civil society organizations at the local levels (such as the *Casa del Migrante*, the national Red Cross) as well as private sector partners to ensure a whole-of-society approach and thus maximize the durable development impacts of its interventions. Through its community-based approach, IOM collaborates with over 45 local civil society organizations in strategic municipalities across the country to contribute to addressing the specific causes of irregular migration. As these vary between communities and population groups, the Organization recognizes that, based on a comprehensive understanding of the affected communities, local civil society organizations with strong community linkages and local expertise are best placed to implement activities. Similarly, these organizations are systematically included in the municipal-level migration governance initiatives to promote greater protection, assistance, and/or sustainable reintegration of migrants.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

OPPORTUNITIES

Migration governance: The whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach used in the development of the National Migration Policy demonstrates that Guatemala has been striving for greater vertical and horizontal migration policy coherence. The forthcoming validation and implementation of the NMP will be an opportunity for the country to strengthen its contribution towards the achievement of the GCM goals. Similarly, at the UNCT level and through the activation of the UN Network on Migration, IOM will continue to leverage its mandate and role as Secretariat to ensure an effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to the Government in an effort to maximize the benefits of migration and address its challenges.

Commitment to regional cooperation: Guatemala is a leader and active participant in the different regional forums and platforms which enhance cross-border and regional collaboration on migration. As one of the participating and signing member states of LA Declaration on Migration and Protection (June 2022), Guatemala is now leading the high-level Working Group on Return and Reintegration which involves the participation of the neighboring member state representatives. The engagement of the Government in these initiatives, including in the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP), demonstrates its commitment and creates an opportunity for IOM to support Guatemala in the implementation of the priorities set out in the LA Declaration.

Private sector engagement: In line with its institutional strategy, IOM will build on its current achievements to continue exploring and strengthening employment-based solutions in areas of return as well as in areas of high outward migration, benefiting all those in the targeted community (not just migrants and returnees), through the creation of public-private partnerships in order to invest in job creation, job insertion, continuous skills development and training²².

Civil society engagement: Guatemala's civil society organizations play a vital role in the social and economic development of the country, especially at the local levels. IOM will seek to further strengthen its collaboration and partnerships with CSOs (including community development associations, women's and youth groups etc.) and local NGOs (Case del Migrante, the Guatemalan Red Cross) who have strong local community linkages and local expertise in the areas of high outward migration, in an effort to comprehensively address context-specific migration challenges and opportunities.

Political outlooks: In July 2021, the Biden Administration released a new Collaborative Migration Management Strategy intended to build a regional framework for safe, orderly, and human migration in North and Central America. In addition, the US also released a new longer-term Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America, which focuses on an area-based approach to improve the underlying causes that push Central Americans to migrate. IOM will continue its engagement with the US, as its main donor in Guatemala, to ensure its alignment, to the extent possible, in terms of strategies and priorities.

Migration data: IOM aims to be the main source of credible information on migration data for all its partners and relevant stakeholders. It will continue to support the Government in reinforcing the evidence base on migration through capacitating relevant governmental institutions and other partners on the collection, data, analysis and dissemination of migration data. At the institutional level, IOM will also aim to build on the strong positioning of the DTM at the global level to expand its DTM operations and build a body of evidence related to transit migration in order to guide and inform programming.

²² IOM's Private sector engagement strategy (2023-2027)

CHALLENGES

Political context: In addition to potential security concerns and political instability, the Presidential elections planned in June 2023 will likely bring a shift in the government structure at the different levels (national and decentralized) and institutions. This will likely have an impact on the organizational structure of the migration-related institutional bodies (including the IGM, the AMN and the CONAMIGUA) and will have to be taken into consideration for IOM's programming.

Insecurity: even though the Government's justice sector made commendable efforts to implement reforms aimed at better tackling organized crime and violence, crime and perception of insecurity remains high. Migrants are often more vulnerable to risks of violence, especially whilst in transit through the country, as they may resort to the use of local intermediaries, or smugglers, who are sometimes linked to other forms of organized crime.

Migration trends: Adverse conditions, including economic instability and insecurity at the national level and in the neighboring countries, climate change and disasters, as well as various pull factors, will continue to drive different types of migration. Migrants apprehended in Mexico and in the US will continue to return in mostly vulnerable conditions and will require humanitarian and reception assistance as well as more durable reintegration assistance, whilst (mainly irregular) transiting migrants and disaster-affect IDPs will require access to humanitarian assistance, protection services and information.

Climate change, environmental degradation and disasters: Climate change and natural disasters are directly impacting the livelihoods of many rural households, as crop losses and storms are driving already poor families further into poverty. As they can no longer meet their subsistence needs, many are obliged to migrate. Although there is a lack of data, research and planning around the link between climate change and human mobility in Guatemala, IOM will continue its efforts in supporting the government at the national and decentralized levels in addressing climate-induced displacements.

Ensuring sustainability: IOM recognizes that achieving sustainable migration development outcomes requires a holistic and needs based approach at the individual, community and structural levels. Programs will thus be developed, implemented and adapted using continuous assessment and learning to understand the migration context and build on existing initiatives. Establishing strong partnerships during all program phases will be fundamental in order to ensure that key migration stakeholders take ownership of the approach.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In response to the national migration dynamics, to the development priorities of the Government of Guatemala and in line with the objectives of the IOM regional strategy for the Central and North America (2020-2024), the GCM, the 2030 Agenda, and in alignment with the UNSDCF (2020-2025) in the coming three years, IOM in Guatemala will contribute to the achievement of 11 strategic outcomes that have been clustered under the three pillars of IOM's Strategic Vision – resilience, mobility and governance.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

MIGRANTS AND THEIR HOST COMMUNITIES ACROSS GUATEMALA ARE EMPOWERED AND RESILIENT

The different types of migration dynamics in the country, including transit migration, return migration, environmental-induced mobility, internal displacements and the resulting vulnerable situations migrants may find themselves in, requires IOM in Guatemala to adopt tailored and comprehensive responses to meet the humanitarian and protection needs of these different population groups. Under outcome 1.1 and 1.2, basic assistance, protection services and information sharing will be provided in coordination with relevant government counterparts²³, with UN partners and CSOs at the different returnee reception centers (including the ones for unaccompanied and separated children), at the Migration Resources Centers²⁴ located in key transit migration areas (Tecun Uman, Peten, Huehuetenango, Izabal, Chiquimula and Quetzaltenango) as well as through mobile rapid response teams that will aim to reach vulnerable migrants and communities in hard-to-reach areas.

In an effort to empower²⁵ and strengthen the resilience²⁶ of migrants in vulnerable situations, under outcomes 1.3 and 1.4 of this Objective, IOM will focus on overcoming obstacles to local sustainable reintegration by contributing to identifying the root drivers of migration and subsequently enhancing access to basic services, to education, to livelihood and decent work opportunities. Recognizing that the challenges of migration often fall on the communities that lack the resources to resolve them, IOM will use an area-based community development approach in a manner that builds social cohesion between migrants and host communities, in order to support local authorities in developing inclusive community action plans outlining common priorities for socio-economic development in areas of high emigration and return areas.

Finally, under outcome 1.5 of this objective, IOM will focus on expanding the evidence-based on climate and environmental migration trends and will support relevant governmental counterparts in mainstreaming migration in key environmental, climate change and disaster preparedness policies and plans and preparing for global processes such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties.

OUTCOME 1.1: HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OF MIGRANTS (INCLUDING TRANSITING AND RETURNEES) AND OTHER CRISIS-AFFECTED POPULATIONS ARE ADDRESSED.

Under this outcome, focus will be put on expanding and reinforcing IOM and partners' geographical coverage to reach increasing numbers of migrants in vulnerable situations and other crisis-affected populations in need of humanitarian assistance (including IDPs). Specific focus will be put on identifying and addressing the risks faced by women, girls, children and minority groups. This will be done through strengthened collaboration with national partners (IGM, SBS, SOSEP, SVET, CONRED, among others) at the different types of protection centers (reception centers, shelters for unaccompanied and separated children), with the UN (UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, among others), the Guatemalan Red Cross, NGOs and CSOs (*Casa del Migrante*), as well as through the IOM-coordinated Migration Resource Centers and its rapid response teams.

²³ IGM, Secretaria de Bienestar Social, Secretaria de Obras Sociales de la Esposa del Presidente de la Republica de Guatemala, CONRED, Secretaria contra la Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas, the different municipalities at the decentralized levels

²⁴ The Migration Resource Centres (CAPMiRs) will serve as points of reference where people in need will have access to responsible local authorities as well as community leaders and relevant humanitarian partners, to receive information on the services available to them and ways to regularize migratory status, and will be provided with humanitarian assistance, protection and referral services

²⁵ For the purpose of this document, empowerment is defined as a process through which women and men in vulnerable situations increase their access to knowledge (social dimension), resources (economic dimension) and decision-making power (political dimension) in order to reach a level of control over their own environment.

²⁶ IOM defines resilience as the ability to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively when faced with a wide range of risks (IOM Strategic Vision 2019-2023)



Target population groups: *transiting migrants and returnees in vulnerable situations, internally displaced persons*

The following list of non-exhaustive activities will be conducted:

- Provide direct humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants and other crisis-affected populations in key locations (including Non-Food Items kits, shelter, medical care, Mental Health and Psycho Social Support, food and water, humanitarian transport, AVR)
- Collaborate with and reinforce capacities of national and local actors to respond to the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants and other crisis-affected populations.
- Coordinate the implementation of comprehensive humanitarian responses with relevant partners, in crisis-affected locations (including and based on needs, in border areas).
- Support partners in the refurbishment and / or rehabilitation and equipment of migrant protection, accommodation and reception centers across the country

OUTCOME 1.2: MIGRANT PROTECTION RISKS ARE IDENTIFIED AND CORRESPONDING RESPONSES ARE STRENGTHENED .

Under this outcome, and in complementarity with the activities conducted under the first outcome, IOM in Guatemala will develop and implement a comprehensive and inclusive Protection strategy that will guide its interventions. Focus will be put on understanding the underlying vulnerabilities of migrants, enhancing the protection knowledge and skills of its partners (including on protection mainstreaming, PSEA, PFA, prevention and response to GBV, child protection, legal assistance and counselling on civil documentation, counter-trafficking principles and best practices) and strengthening IOM and partners' capacities to provide tailored protection services at the different locations mentioned above.



Target population groups: *migrants in vulnerable situations, including unaccompanied and/or separated children, victims of violence, abuse and exploitation, victims of trafficking, and survivors of GBV, persons with disabilities.*

The following list of non-exhaustive activities will be conducted:

- Strengthen protection monitoring (assessments, surveys, focus group discussions) to identify trends, vulnerabilities and emerging needs.
- Strengthen inter-sectoral protection mechanisms for vulnerable migrants.
- Establish and/or strengthen referral mechanisms and support national, local NGOs, civil society, government partners and other key protection actors to deliver timely and needs-based protection services.
- Protect and defend the fulfillment of migrants' rights and support advocacy efforts
- Strengthen the provision of Individual Protection Assistance and case management to persons with specific needs identified through protection monitoring and other assessments.
- Strengthen access to information for migrants, including through the development of protection-focused information, education and communication materials (IEC) and the organization of awareness-campaigns.
- Reinforce mechanisms and tools to ensure Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

OUTCOME 1.3: THE SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS IS ENHANCED THROUGH IMPROVED ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES.

Significant number of factors influence the degree to which migrants are sustainably reintegrated into their communities. In terms of access to basic services, IOM will work with the Ministry of Health at the national and decentralized levels to ensure that people on the move have equal access to health facilities and services. In line with the objectives outlined in its global MHPSS strategy and in order to address the psycho-social well-being of migrants, IOM will work with its partners to ensure the provision of tailored MHPSS services to migrants at the individual and community levels. In complementarity, IOM will build on its vast experience and its collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Education and various private sector partners to strengthen the provision of tailored education and livelihood / economic opportunities to migrants, returnees and host communities. Ultimately, IOM will work with its various partners to ensure the development and implementation of contextualized, comprehensive and sustainable reintegration approaches which address the psycho-social, economic and social needs of migrants and their host communities.



Target population groups:
migrants, returnees and host communities

- Enhance access to quality and equitable health services, including MHPSS services.
- Enhance access to education opportunities (including through curricula development, training of trainers and scholarship programs) for returnees and other vulnerable migrants.
- In partnership with private sector and local partners, build-on and develop sustainable livelihood/economic opportunities including entrepreneurship assistance, small-business support, financial inclusion, digital readiness, women's economic empowerment, vocational training and job placement services.

OUTCOME 1.4: INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS PROMOTED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN AND RETURN.

IOM recognizes that the specific causes of irregular migration vary between communities and population groups, and that it is therefore essential to understand the causes in each context in order to develop appropriate responses. Based on robust research and analysis of root causes of migration, IOM will build on its experience and aim to strengthen and develop partnerships with local CSOs who have strong community linkages and local expertise to implement activities in three specific domains²⁷. In addition, focus will be put on working with the local governing structures and other pertinent partners in pre-selected municipalities to develop inclusive local-level development action plans which will respond to jointly identified priorities and contribute to sustainable development. This will be done through the creation of and support to multi-stakeholder coordination platforms at the local level, through the strengthening of public-private partnerships at the local levels and through working with the IGM to strengthen the regulatory and institutional frameworks in the areas of prevention, protection and sustainable reintegration. Focus will be put on prioritizing state responsibility to lead the planning and execution of local socio-economic development plans, including reintegration policies, which will benefit migrants and their communities as a whole.



Target population groups: *migrants, returnees, local communities, local governing structures, local civil society organizations*

²⁷ In the framework of the on-going IOM/USAID "Addressing the Root Causes of Irregular Migration" project, IOM has been able to establish partnerships with over 40 local CSOs in areas of high emigration. The partners implement activities that contribute to the three following domains 1) Economic prosperity, equality, and stability, 2) governance and quality of life, 3) citizen security, rights and reconciliation.

RESILIENCE

Partners: IGM, municipalities, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, private sector partners, CSOs

- Develop partnerships with and capacitate local partners (CSOs, grassroots groups, private sector and local leaders) to advance local solutions and address the identified drivers of irregular migration.
- Build capacities of local government to address positive and negative impacts of migration on receiving communities.
- Address host community and migrants’ collective socio-economic needs through the development and implementation of area-based and community-led initiatives, including tailored reintegration policies

OUTCOME 1.5: PATTERNS OF HUMAN MOBILITY IN CONTEXTS OF DISASTERS, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ARE IDENTIFIED AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSES ARE DEVELOPED

Preventing and addressing climate and environmentally-induced displacements is critical for Guatemala. In order to increase the understanding and awareness of the interaction between climate change and human mobility, IOM will first of all focus on expanding the evidence-base through research on climate and environmental migration trends. In addition, a reinforced approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) beyond short-term interventions may also be needed, with attention to mainstreaming migration into relevant policies as well as DRR/contingency plans at the national and decentralized levels.

Whilst the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and the National Action Plan on Climate Change (PANCC) do not make reference to the interaction between climate change and human mobility, the 2019 National Adaptation Plan includes a dedicated chapter on human mobility which identifies concrete objectives in terms of capacities, evidence and policy mainstreaming. IOM will thus continue to work with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources at the strategic level and will reinforce its collaboration with CONRED at the municipality level for the development of contingency plans which make reference to migration.

Partners: Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, CONRED, municipalities

- Increase understanding and awareness of the interaction between climate change and human mobility through context-specific research
- Support the government and partners at the national and decentralized levels to mainstream and include the impacts of climate change / environmental degradation / disasters in relevant policies and contingency plans.
- Develop and implement joint adaptation measures as well as response plans in areas with highest risks for climate-induced migration and in disaster-struck communities.

Objective 1 aligns with:

GCM

- 2. Adverse drivers
- 5. Regular pathways
- 6. Decent work
- 7. Reduce vulnerabilities
- 8. Save lives
- 15. Basic services
- 16. Inclusion and social cohesion
- 18. Skills recognition

IOM REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- 1. Strengthen disaster preparedness and response
- 2. Encourage inclusive socio-economic development
- 3. Facilitate sustainable reintegration
- 4. Adaptation to disasters and climate change
- 5. Accessible and equitable quality health
- 7. Respect, protection and fulfillment of rights

UNSDCF

- Pillar 1: Economic Development
- Pillar 2: Social development
- Pillar 3: Strong institutions
- Pillar 4: Peace, security and justice
- Pillar 5: Environment

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

MIGRANTS AND GUATEMALA BENEFIT FROM SAFE, REGULAR AND ORDERLY FORMS OF MIGRATION

In order to contribute to safe, regular and orderly forms of migration, in the framework of this strategic objective, IOM will first of all continue facilitating the dignified and safe transportation of vulnerable migrants and refugees through its various AVR, resettlement and family reunification programs.

Under Outcome 2.2, IOM will enhance its immigration and border governance support to the Government of Guatemala through the strengthening of institutional capacity to effectively and efficiently manage borders, through the improvement of their Border Information Management System at jointly identified priority Points of Entry, and through exploring ways to expand its support in the field of identity management by realizing the full potential of digital registration and identification.

IOM will support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in further engaging the diaspora to contribute to the sustainable development of their country. Recognizing the important role that remittances play in contributing to the Guatemalan economy²⁸, under outcome 2.3, based on the results of the national survey on remittances, IOM will also aim to strengthen the government's capacity to develop and implement new policies and mechanisms that will improve remittance services to migrants. This will be done through the coordination mechanism on remittances and investments led by the IGM. Considering the Government's engagement in promoting legal labor migration programs for its citizens, IOM will strengthen its collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and the IGM in order to expand access to safe, innovative and flexible labor migration programs.

OUTCOME 2.1: REGULAR PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS THROUGH RESETTLEMENT, FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN IS PROMOTED.

Building on its comparative advantage, IOM will work in close collaboration with various key partners to continue providing resettlement, assisted voluntary return and reunification services to vulnerable migrants and refugees. These movement services will be done in line with IOM's principles, rules and procedures, under conditions that are respectful of human dignity whilst continuing to ensure the well-being of migrants and refugees. Beyond transportation, IOM provides a range of health and integration support integral to the movement process, including case management and facilitating selection missions, pre-migration health activities and medical escorts during travel, provision of information and orientation about the destination country prior to departure as well as (re)integration assistance upon arrival.



Target population groups:
vulnerable migrants and refugees

The following list of activities will be conducted:

- Provide processing and transportation support services to refugees in the framework of the United States Refugee Admissions Program and other resettlement programs.

28 In 2021, Guatemala received more than 15 billion USD for family remittances from abroad, which represents an increase of 35% on the previous year and represents approximately 15% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

MOBILITY

- Provide assisted voluntary return services to vulnerable stranded migrants in Guatemala who have expressed their informed wish to return to their countries of origin.
- Provide family reunification services for parents and children that have been separated (including for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation) during their migration journey or upon arrival in the USA²⁹.

OUTCOME 2.2: THE GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED CAPACITY TO FACILITATE REGULAR MIGRATION AND PREVENT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES AT ITS BORDERS.

In an effort to more effectively monitor individuals entering and exiting a given territory and in line with the Government's priorities and IOM's Immigration and Border Governance Strategy 2022-2027, support will be provided to improve Guatemala's Border Information Management System. A potential solution could be the installation of the IOM's Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) at jointly-identified key Points of Entries across the country. In order to realize the full potential of digital registration and identification, IOM will work with relevant partners to facilitate access to cross-border regular migration and facilitate access to legal identity for Guatemalan nationals. IOM will also build on the support provided to the General Directorate of the Consular and Migratory Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to streamline the civil registration process for Guatemalans living abroad and will assess the possibility to develop well-administered and timely e-visa entry schemes.

In addition to the lack of implementation at the decentralized levels, the Government's current Public Policy against Trafficking in Persons (2012-2024) is limited in terms of identifying the links between trafficking in persons and other crimes affecting migrants. In the framework of the Regional Coalition against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (CORETT), IOM will support the government in revising its Policy against Trafficking in Persons and its Policy on countering migrant smuggling, which will both be coherent with the priorities of the National Migration Policy and which will link protection, law enforcement and regularization efforts as effective means to counter transnational crimes. Efforts will also be put on capacitating Police, border, immigration officials, Prosecutors and the local networks of the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (SVET) in the different departments of the country in the identification, prevention and response to human trafficking, as well as on the identification and referral of vulnerable migrants, including those who have been subjected to violence, extortion or abuse at smugglers' hands.



Target population groups:
vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking.

Partners: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Police, Border and Immigration officials, IGM, SVET*

The following list of activities will be conducted:

- Contribute to the Government's efforts to reinforce its Immigration and Border Governance (IBG) interventions, including through capacity-building on various IBG topics, through the improvement of its border information management system, through facilitating access to regular cross-border migration, through support in the field of identity management and access to legal identity
- Implement actions related to health, border and mobility management in contexts of public health threats
- Strengthen institutional capacities, including Guatemala's immigration officials and border police, to prevent and prosecute trafficking in persons, migrant smuggling in line with IOM's protection principles
- Foster integrated border management initiatives to reinforce cooperation within and between relevant border agencies as well as with other countries in the region to combat transnational crime more effectively

²⁹ The family reunification program provides processing, documentation and transportation services for its beneficiaries.

OUTCOME 2.3: ACCESS TO REGULAR PATHWAYS FOR MIGRATION ARE INCREASED AND FLEXIBLE LABOR MOBILITY SCHEMES ARE DEVELOPED.

In an effort to promote changes in the knowledge and attitudes of (potential) migrants regarding the risks of irregular migration and increasing access to information on legal and safe labor migration pathways as well as on the availability of reintegration opportunities, IOM will build on its experience (through the “Piensalo 2 Veces”, the “Pregunta Apunta Verifica” and the “Pale Verite” communication campaigns for example) to support the Government at the national and decentralized levels in developing and implementing contextualized and targeted communication and awareness strategies. IOM will capitalize on existing structures and initiatives (the CAPMiRs in key transit locations, the Community Development Councils (COMUDE), the information centers at the municipality level) to reach (transit) migrants, migrant and host communities as well as returnees.

IOM aims to empower the diaspora as agents of transformative and inclusive economic growth, including by working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor to support, for example, the temporary return of qualified nationals, with a view of filling critical gaps in key sectors of Guatemala’s economy and engaging them either remotely or for private sector development. In addition, IOM will aim to work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, migrants, migrants’ associations and financial institutions to maximize the development impact of remittances through encouraging policy dialogue and the sharing of good practices between countries, the development of policies and mechanisms that will improve remittance services to migrants, and through the implementation of innovative pilot initiatives that aim to inform the diaspora on small-scale remittance investment opportunities in Guatemala.

Finally, IOM will aim to support the Ministry of Labor through the recently established inter-institutional coordination forum regrouping the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the IGM, and ILO, as well as the General Employment Directorate of the Ministry, in order to strengthen labor migration management. This will be done through, among other interventions, the donation of equipment and training. Focus will also be put on enhancing the understanding and application of the IOM ethical recruitment standards by labor recruiters, employers and state actors with a focus on human and labor rights promotion and application.³⁰ Bilateral and regional agreements for (temporary) labor migration³¹ will be furthered strengthened to address the current identified challenges for migrant workers and employers, and new circular labor mobility schemes with countries such as Canada and Spain will be pursued.



Target population groups: migrants, returnees, host communities.

Partners: Municipalities, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ILO.

The following list of activities will be implemented:

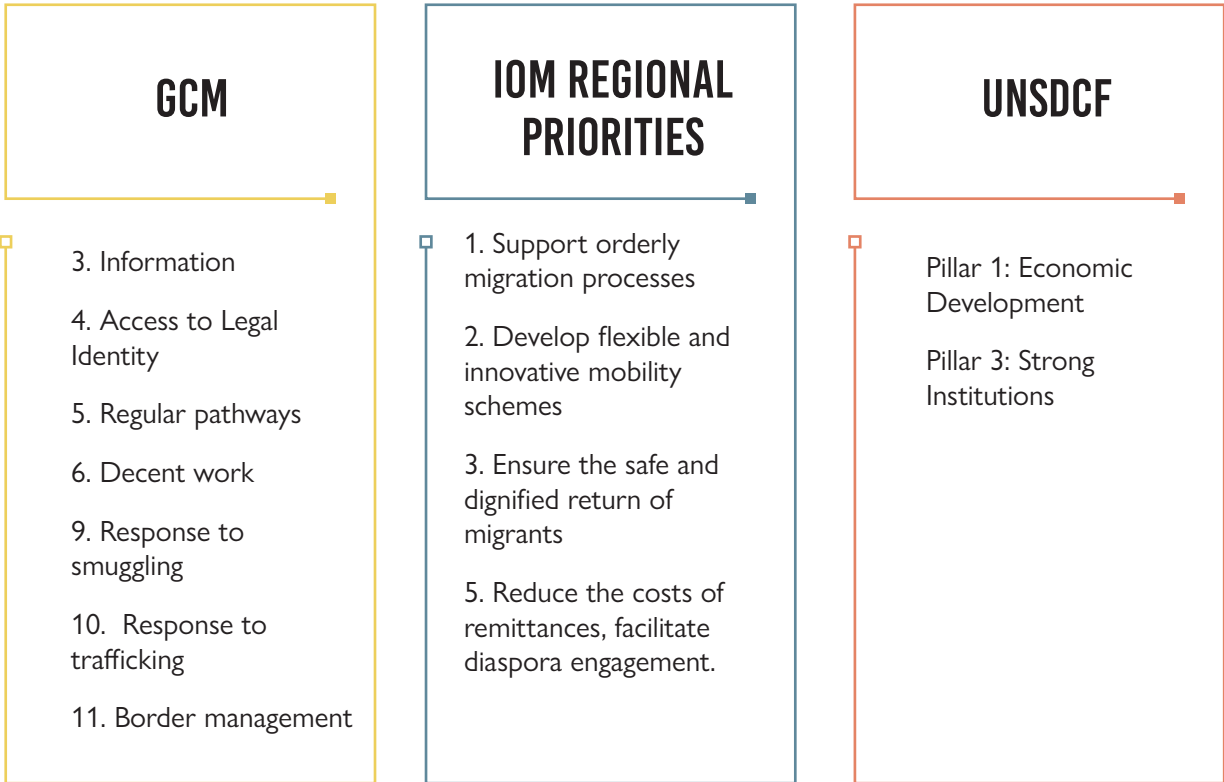
- Enhance access to information on the risks of irregular migration and access to legal labor migration pathways for (potential) migrants and returnees in Guatemala.
- Work in collaboration with relevant partners to engage the diaspora and enhance the impact of remittances on sustainable development.

³⁰ IOM’s IRIS Standard is a set of global principles that define ethical recruitment

³¹ As the principal channel for temporary employment in the United States, the H-2 seasonal programs for agricultural (H-2A) and nonagricultural (H-2B) workers allow U.S. employers to recruit noncitizens for short periods. In FY 2021, however, only about 10,000 H-2 visas were issued to Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans combined—a significant contrast to the 311,000 issued to Mexican nationals.

- Strengthen the application of ethical recruitment standards through enhancing the understanding and application of ethical recruitment principles with public and private recruitment agencies and other key stakeholders, and through strengthening collaboration with private employers (including the chamber of commerce)
- Promote and develop safe and flexible labor migration schemes.

Objective 2 aligns with:



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT AND WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY APPROACH ENHANCES MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN GUATEMALA.

Significant milestones in terms of migration governance have been achieved at the global, regional and national levels. The 2016 Migration Code defines the Guatemalan migration system and has resulted in the creation of several institutional bodies (the IGM, the AMN and the CONAMIGUA) with clearly defined migration roles and responsibilities. Over the coming years, continued engagement with these institutions will be needed in order to consolidate migration systems and support structures that have been established at the various administrative levels. Following the Government's request, IOM is supporting the inclusive and cohesive development process of the National Migration Policy (NMP) and will build the capacities of relevant partners to ensure that this framework is operationalized country-wide. The activation of the UN Network on Migration, the creation and/or strengthening of collaboration and dialogue platforms on migration and the Government's participation in relevant regional migration processes and initiatives will further contribute to the implementation of the GCM. Under the last outcome of this objective, IOM will continue to prioritize the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality migration data which will inform programming and policy making.

OUTCOME 3.1: THE NATIONAL MIGRATION POLICY (NMP) IS DEVELOPED AND OPERATIONALIZED AT ALL LEVELS IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS MIGRATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE COUNTRY.

IOM has been supporting the IGM, who is leading and coordinating the development process of the new National Migration Policy since 2021. Through the participation and engagement of over 150 state and non-state actors, the country's migration challenges and opportunities that will need to be addressed as well as the four strategic objectives of the Policy, were jointly identified³². The NMP will be finalized by the first quarter of 2023. Once the Policy is officially validated by the Government, IOM will support the IGM in its dissemination across the country and in the development of a M&E system that will facilitate the systematic review of the Policy's implementation at the national and local levels. Recognizing the need to better include the local perspectives in the formulation and implementation of migration policies, IOM will aim to build on its experience to work with the municipalities in order to strengthen local capacities in addressing migration challenges and opportunities³³. This will be done through applying the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) methodology at the municipality levels, building capacities of the relevant partners in migration governance related topics and ultimately supporting them in developing municipal-level migration plans that will contribute to the implementation of the NMP.

Partners: IGM, AMN, municipalities

The following list of activities will be conducted:

- Provide policy and strategic guidance on migration issues in general and for the development and implementation of the NMP in particular.
- Capacitate relevant government institutions at the national and decentralized levels to ensure the NMP is operational and accessible across the country.

³² The four strategic objectives are as follows: 1) Human rights and vulnerable population groups, 2) Sustainable local (re)integration, 3) Integrated Border Management and migration assistance,

⁴ Migration and development

³³ IOM supported the Municipality of San Marco in developing a municipal migration policy as well as a plan to facilitate the integration of migrants in the local community.

OUTCOME 3.2: THE ROLE OF GUATEMALA IN MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IS ENHANCED AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL THROUGH ITS PARTICIPATION IN RELEVANT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MIGRATION PROCESSES, FORUMS AND INITIATIVES.

At the national level, in an effort to contribute to the implementation of the GCM, IOM aims to take a leading role in effectively coordinating UN engagement on migration issues at the country-level through the activation of the UN Network on Migration and through co-leading the Specialized Group on Migration (GEMIG) at the technical level. At the decentralized levels and in complementarity with the planned actions under Outcome 3.1, IOM will strengthen existing local migration networks which regroup a wide range of state and non-state actors in order to facilitate dialogue on migration, ensure coordination with the municipalities and plan joint responses (*Mesas Técnicas locales / municipales sobre la migración*). At the regional level, IOM will continue supporting the Government's participation in relevant migration forums and initiatives, such as the Regional Conference on Migration, and support its leading role in coordinating the LA Declaration high-level intra-governmental working group on sustainable return and reintegration.

Partners: *Members of the UN Network on Migration and the GEMIG, municipalities, neighboring and regional governmental counterparts*

The following list of activities will be conducted:

- Effectively coordinate UN engagement on migration at the country level in order to contribute to the implementation of the GCM
- Facilitate dialogue, information exchange and collaboration among institutions, civil society and private sector partners at the national and decentralized levels.
- Support Guatemala's participation in relevant national, regional and global migration processes, initiatives and coordination forums

OUTCOME 3.3: MIGRATION ACTORS IN GUATEMALA AND THE REGION RELY ON HIGH-QUALITY MIGRATION DATA AND ANALYSIS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED RESPONSE AND POLICY-MAKING.

In line with the Organization's Migration data strategy, IOM will continue providing needs-based technical support to various government entities to collect, produce and disseminate migration-related data. Support ranges from improving the IGM's information management system which collects data on the numbers and profiles of returnees, creating a case management system for the Secretaria de Bienestar Social who host and provide assistance to returned unaccompanied children, and supporting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consulates in establishing an information management system to harmonize the civil registration process for Guatemalans living abroad. In addition, IOM in Guatemala will aim to further consolidate its Information Management Unit in order to expand its research and analysis capacities. Focus will for example be put on strengthening the evidence base on root causes of irregular migration, understanding the impacts of migration on women and girls and producing detailed information products on the socio-economic profiles of returnees. Finally, IOM will aim to expand its DTM operations in order to collect data on the number, profiles and vulnerabilities of migrants at key transit points across the country. All information products are shared with relevant partners and are systematically published on IOM's Information Unit for Northern Central American countries: <https://infounitnca.iom.int/> .

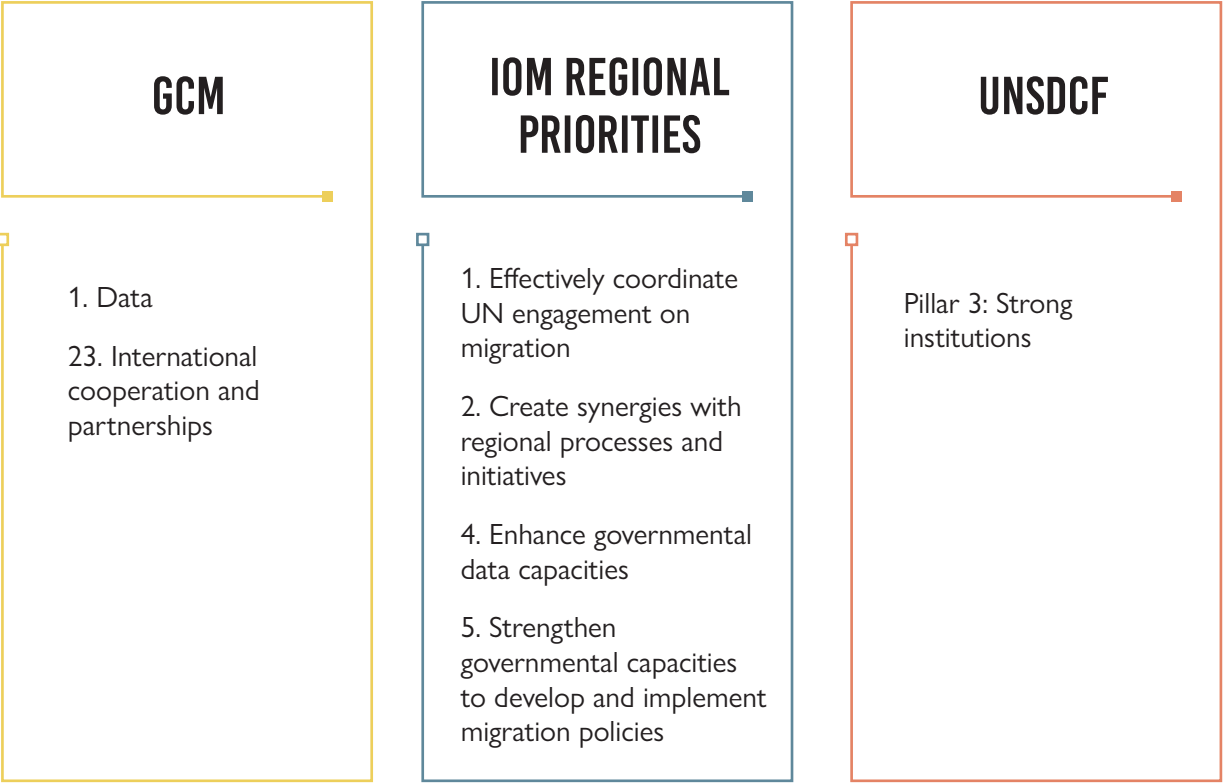
GOVERNANCE

Partners: IGM, SBS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The following list of activities will be conducted:

- Continue collecting, analyzing and sharing migration data and expand IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix operations to build a body of evidence on migration flows, migration profiles, vulnerabilities and needs.
- Support and strengthen government entities’ capacity in migration-related data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Promote cross-border and regional coordination on migration data sharing, data protection and sharing of best practices.

Objective 3 aligns with:

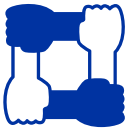


CROSS-CUTTING THEMES



CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

It is undeniable that during migration and displacement, people on the move are exposed to increased levels of vulnerability as well as protection risks. IOM follows the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) definition of protection³⁴ and is guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including upholding human rights for all. As such, IOM in Guatemala will continue to support the Government to follow through on their responsibilities to respect, uphold and promote the rights of migrants within its territory. Whilst protection will be mainstreamed throughout all of its interventions³⁵, IOM will specifically aim to address and mitigate protection threats and vulnerabilities of migrants through activities including providing protection services, combatting trafficking and smuggling, preventing and responding to risks of violence (including GBV), abuse and exploitation, fostering respect for human and labour right of migrants and ensuring ethical recruitment of labor migrants etc. Preventing and addressing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by staff and the Organization's implementing partners are vital protection considerations that IOM will continue to integrate into all its operations.



GENDER, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Considering the gendered migration dynamics in Guatemala, IOM gives due consideration to the different forms of abuse, challenges, opportunities, remuneration, and levels of access to services that men and women experience. These experiences also vary across and within specific population groups in the country. Indigenous Mayan communities for example, who suffer discrimination, socio-economic exclusion, and relative disadvantage across all sectors, make up a significant portion of irregular migration in Guatemala. Similarly, women and girls, and especially indigenous women and girls also face discrimination, exclusion, and structural disadvantage. Youth, who also make up a disproportionate share of irregular migrants (including returnees) are especially vulnerable to violence, recruitment by criminal groups and unemployment. Finally, individuals with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), as well as persons with disabilities and elderly will also be included in IOM's programming. As such, the following topics are central to IOM's work in Guatemala: understanding how gender influences access to social services, economic growth, capacities, risks and vulnerabilities, ensuring diversity and inclusiveness in assessments and participation in activities, understanding how gender affects the types of migration undertaken, combatting discriminatory migration practices and addressing how migration influences gender roles and relations.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

IOM Guatemala recognizes that climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation are present realities in Guatemala which will continue to generate internal displacements as well as outward migration in the coming years. In addition to supporting the Government in including and mainstreaming the effects of climate change on human mobility into national and decentralized disasters risk reduction plans as well as other relevant policies, specific programs to provide assistance and protection to populations affected by climate change and disasters will be implemented with the objectives of responding to their emergency needs, enhancing their resilience and ultimately seeking durable solutions.

³⁴ "...all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, International Refugee Law"

³⁵ The principle of do no harm, prioritizing safety and dignity, enabling meaningful access, promoting accountability to affected populations, disability inclusion and fostering participation and empowerment are mainstreamed across all of IOM's sectors of intervention.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Taking the Country Strategy as a working basis, IOM will take steps to consolidate its programmatic portfolio around the strategic objectives identified in this document and maximize the use of human resources. Communication channels for the sharing of resources internally will be improved and the culture of information exchange between different project staff will be strengthened. Taking regular stock of the mission's progress on its strategic objectives will promote the creation of a forward-looking common vision and comprehensive approach and will improve the overall performance and accountability of the organization.



INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

In complementarity with the objective of optimizing the organizational structure at country-level, IOM aims to strengthen its in-house capacities in order to be able to act and be perceived as the national reference organization on all migration-related issues. This will include investing in thematic external and internal trainings for staff, increasing collaboration with thematic specialists at the regional office and at headquarters, establishing collaborations with think tanks / universities and creating in-house expertise in different areas of migration.



GEOGRAPHICAL PRESENCE ACROSS THE COUNTRY

In an effort to address the different migration challenges and opportunities at the local levels, IOM aims to build on its current programming to further expand its geographical presence across the country. This will be done through establishing and reinforcing the CAPMiRs located in key migration transit areas, reinforcing operational presence at the different reception shelters, as well as with key stakeholders

providing assistance and protection to migrants. Synergies and complementarities between the different on-going projects will be sought in order to maximize the resources available and facilitate joint and localized planning and programming, including with other UN partners.



COMMUNICATIONS, M&E AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

IOM will strengthen its institutional capacity to project its vision and work to relevant audiences through the development and implementation of a communication strategy and through contribution and participation in the UN-level communication and advocacy working group. This will include using and optimizing media and communication tools such as video, photography, press briefing notes, in order to produce and disseminate strong and impactful migrant-centered content. Ensuring that IOM's partners (including UN agencies, donors, CSOs, local NGOs, governmental counterparts, the communities it serves) and the communities it serves have an increased understanding of its mandate and actions in Guatemala will also be a central aspect of its communications strategy.

In addition, and building on this Country Strategy, IOM will develop and implement its associated Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and an annual Action Plan, which will assist the Organization in establishing a common narrative about what it is trying to achieve and will help communicate more effectively about IOM's external impact. The SRF will also help streamline reporting processes against the various frameworks that guide IOM's work.

The above will help with donor relations and resource mobilization. Being able to tell a story powerfully, and to show impact-oriented results, demonstrating that we are making a difference, can influence funding opportunities. IOM will thus continue to engage current and potential new donors and discuss possibilities to mobilize resources for multi-year programming around the high-level objectives of the Country Strategy.

WAY FORWARD

This Strategy was developed as a living tool for IOM in Guatemala to continue supporting the efforts of the Government in leveraging migration for sustainable development, whilst at the same contributing to measurable outcomes in terms of empowering migrants and their host communities across the country, strengthening safe, regular and orderly forms of migration and enhancing migration governance through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

This Country Strategy articulates how IOM in Guatemala plans to meet its new and emerging responsibilities, sets out its “direction of travel” for the next three years, is forward looking and encourages “joint thinking”. Responding to the migration opportunities and challenges in the country, IOM will support the Government and will work with its partners in order to contribute to the eleven outcomes under the three strategic objectives, namely resilience, mobility and governance. Whilst the Strategy will guide IOM’s programming for the next three years and is aligned to the country’s UNSDCF (Other UNDAF) timeframe, IOM will review the Strategy as necessary in order to reflect potential new circumstances, new national development priorities and migration dynamics in the country and the region.





International Organization for Migration
Guatemala

Website: www.iom.int