IOM ARMENIA
MISSION STRATEGY
(2022–2025)

IOM
UN MIGRATION

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.

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![IOM UN MIGRATION logo]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

IOM ARMENIA MISSION STRATEGY

(2022–2025)

FOREWORDS

I am delighted to present the strategy of the IOM Office in Armenia. This strategy is a key tool for clearly articulating the migration trends and challenges and how IOM will work with governments, migrant communities, and our many partners to achieve a positive impact over the course of the next four years. The strategy affirms IOM's mandate and core priorities, as laid out in its Strategic Vision and related governance documents.

This strategy is anchored in IOM's Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which further refines the global priorities and tailors them to the regional context. It lays out IOM's commitment to empower migrants and communities and to address drivers of migration. IOM is advancing positive, sustainable, and innovative development outcomes that are responsive to regional migration trends. In addition, IOM strengthens cooperative development and implementation of evidence-based and inclusive migration governance.

This strategy highlights the current and future migration trends in Armenia and sets out the context in which IOM carries out its activities. It outlines the challenges and opportunities related to migration in the country and identifies the strategic priorities to address them in an effort to foster safe, orderly and regular migration.

With the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and establishment of a Country Network on Migration, IOM in its capacity as Network Coordinator and Secretariat, will continue to foster effective collaboration in support of the government's implementation follow-up and review of the GCM.

This strategy is aligned with IOM's Strategic Results Framework (SRF). The SRF provides a roadmap for implementation of IOM's Strategic Vision, anchored in the 2030 Agenda and the GCM, by identifying institutional results and indicators to facilitate reporting on IOM's broad range of work in a coherent, comparative manner. In this way, IOM aims to measure progress towards its strategic objectives and to strengthen accountability to Member States and other stakeholders.

I am very grateful to IOM staff – particularly at the regional and country level – for their diligent and insightful work in developing this strategy and in their commitment to its successful implementation. The strategy is particularly timely given the operational needs on the ground, with a particular emphasis on response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic and our collective commitment to build back better.

This strategy affirms IOM's commitment to support governments and stakeholders in upholding migrants' rights, regardless of their migration status and across all

stages of the migration cycle. With this strategy, and in cooperation with our numerous and diverse partners, we will continue to respond to the needs and aspirations of migrants, building societies fit for a modern, mobile and interconnected world. IOM looks forward to strengthening its partnerships in Armenia and joining efforts in fostering migration for the benefit of all.

Manfred Profazi

Regional Director for IOM's Regional Office covering
South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

I am very pleased to introduce IOM Armenia's Mission Strategy for 2022-2025. This document serves as a valuable tool to showcase our current and planned initiatives in Armenia.

Migration and human mobility remain a central trend of the twenty-first century and one of the most topical and complex issues of our time. Armenia is a country characterized by dynamic human mobility, with almost every tenth household having a migration connection and a Diaspora of an estimated eight million people. Thus, the Armenian economy is highly dependent on remittances. Recently Armenia is becoming a country of destination or transit for third country nationals.

In 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 further heightened the complexities surrounding mobility, displacement, and resilience. The pandemic has inevitably placed migrant and displaced populations at risk, as many are facing a reduction in income and labour opportunities, especially casual workers, and daily wage earners in the informal sector.

Taking into consideration this reality, the approach of IOM Armenia acknowledges that effective migration governance and management requires strong cooperation with the Government of Armenia, other UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society actors, and the private sector. These partnerships are crucial in order to effectively address the full scope of migration issues, ranging from the drivers of migration, emergencies linked to mobility and displacement, resilience of migrants and local communities, migration governance to the longer-term impacts of migration.

Additionally, the more recent comprehensive analysis of the complex nexus of migration and development has allowed us to better understand their mutual influence. There is also a greater acceptance that migration is a multisectoral phenomenon that needs to be addressed through an integrated and holistic approach at all levels of governance.

In line with this context, IOM Armenia presents this five-year Strategy, which will serve as a blueprint for IOM's programming in the country until 2025. The strategy is guided by the IOM principle that humane, orderly, and well-managed migration benefits countries of origin, transit and destination, including migrants and society.

— Ilona Ter-Minasyan
IOM Armenia Head of Office

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
Armstat	Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia
AVRR	Assisted voluntary return and reintegration
BCP	Border crossing point
BLA	Bilateral labour agreements
BMIS	Border Management Information System
CEPA	Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Armenia
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CTS	Commodity Tracking System
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-based organization
GCM	Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoA	Government of Armenia
HIV	Human immunodeficiency viruses
HLIB	Health and Labour Inspection Body
HRDO	Human Rights Defender's Office
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILCS	Integrated Living Conditions Survey
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
IOM	International Organization for Migration

IOM CO	IOM Country Office
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISS	Integrated Social Services
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IWGTP	Inter-Agency Working Group against Trafficking in Persons
J/TIP	U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
MCOF	Migration Crisis Operational Framework
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MiGOF	Migration Governance Operational Framework
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
MoH	Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia
MRC	Migration Resource Centre
MS	Migration Service
MTAI	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia
NAP	National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NK	Nagorno Karabakh
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NSS	National Security Service of the Republic of Armenia
PGO	Prosecutor General's Office
PHSM	Public health and social measures
PSEAH	Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Sexual exploitation and abuse
SH	Sexual harassment
SOP	Standard operating procedure

TB	Tuberculosis
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMN	United Nations Migration Network
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRC	United Nations office of the Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USA	United States of America
VIC	Victim Identification Commission
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFP	World Food Programme
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. ABOUT IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the UN's leading agency on migration and the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, working closely with its key stakeholders - migrants and Member States - to promote humane, safe, and orderly migration. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants from an integral and holistic perspective, including links to development, in order to maximize the benefits and opportunities of migration and reduce its challenges. Established in 1951, IOM now has more than 170 Member States, offices in over 400 field locations and more than 14,000 staff - 90 percent of IOM's staff being deployed in the field. In the South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, IOM has 19 country offices. In Armenia, IOM has a main office and two sub-offices in Yerevan, and 18 staff.

As recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, human mobility is indivisible from sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and the commitment to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind – will not be achieved without due consideration of migration. Additionally, the Global Compact for Migration is grounded in the 2030 Agenda and promotes the principles of having a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address this intrinsic link. This Strategy will support the Member States to achieve this, ultimately leveraging the potential of migration through a whole-of-government approach to achieve sustainable development outcomes for all. It is a direct contribution to the Decade of Action to fast-track progress for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. It brings greater coherence and development impact to IOM's activities and allows for a joined-up approach to the way the Organization designs and delivers its operations, as called for in IOM's Strategic Vision.

IOM's Strategic Vision, presented to IOM Member States in 2019, spans the period of 2019 to 2023. The Vision articulates how IOM plans to meet its new and emerging responsibilities, including IOM's mandated role as Network Coordinator. It sets out the 'direction of travel' for IOM, is forward looking and encourages 'joined up thinking'. This Strategy is aligned with the Vision, its corresponding Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the IOM Strategic Results Framework, which are anchored in the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration.

1.2. IOM IN ARMENIA

IOM Armenia, one of the first UN offices in Armenia, opened in 1993, when the Republic of Armenia (RA) became an IOM Member State. IOM activities in the country are designed and implemented in line with the key documents signed with the Government of Armenia (GoA), including the Cooperation Agreement on Privileges and Immunities in 1994 and the Memorandum of Understanding in 2001 and the overall UN-Armenia framework agreements.

An advocate of strong partnerships with key stakeholders in migration nationally and internationally, IOM Armenia enjoys an excellent reputation and the trust of the Government of Armenia and partners. Since 2021, IOM has assumed the role of the Coordinator and Secretariat of the UN Network on Migration in the Republic of Armenia.

For three decades, IOM Armenia has been a key contributor to the reforms of migration policies and management in Armenia through policy advice; generation of quality evidence; extensive capacity building; technical assistance; awareness raising, and importantly, assistance to various groups of migrants.

With well-established, reliable operations and programming in Armenia, and experienced and professional staff, IOM Armenia is a competitive, result-oriented organization, committed to results-based management and value for money principles for the projects and programmes it manages. It has a sound institutional setup, with policies on data protection, ethics, rights-based approach, gender-sensitivity, values, monitoring and learning systems in place.

IOM Armenia's programming addresses a large scope of migration issues, in line with Armenia's international, regional, and bilateral agreements, and in support of Armenia's Government Program, relevant strategies, concepts and national action plans. IOM Armenia's migration management and humanitarian programmes take a multi-faceted approach to migration, in line with the Government of Armenia priorities in labour migration and human development, migration and social cohesion, assisted voluntary return and reintegration, integrated border management and counter-trafficking, towards securing sustainable and human-centred solutions. IOM Armenia is well positioned to mobilize the resources of the IOM globally to ensure rapid response to emerging country needs, including emergency response and management of compound crisis situations in Armenia.

With excellent knowledge of migration and development in Armenia, expertise in data collection and analysis, including facilitated access to a variety of data sources on migration management, as well as strong technical capacity, IOM Armenia provides strategic direction, technical advice and support to the GoA in the areas of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks of comprehensive, human rights-based and effective migration management, prevention of irregular migration, labour migration and pre-departure support, negotiations

2

IOM ARMENIA MISSION STRATEGY

(2022–2025)

of bilateral labour agreements (BLAs), assisted voluntary return and reintegration, readmission management, humanitarian border management, counter-trafficking response, migration data and management information systems, as well as COVID-19 vulnerabilities related to migration. It serves as a knowledge hub in the sector for the government, development partners, civil society and private sector.

IOM Armenia has assisted the GoA in developing and reforming its migration governance system through providing assistance to stakeholders for enhancing the relevant policy and regulatory frameworks. Specifically, IOM Armenia assisted the Government of Armenia in its border management reform by supporting expansion of the Border Management Information System to all border crossing points of the Republic of Armenia, and improvement of the security standards in Zvartnots International Airport. IOM Armenia supported the reforms in migration management, including introduction of the system of electronic passports and biometric identification cards. Recently, it supported the GoA in developing the Conceptual Framework of Migration Management. IOM provided technical assistance to the Government of Armenia in elaboration of policy and legislative frameworks to regulate labour migration, including amendments to the Law on Foreigners, Administrative Offences Code, and Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia. As a result of IOM Armenia's advocacy, Armenia became a signatory to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in 2013. IOM Armenia has consistently supported the Government of Armenia in its efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking by supporting the development of the National Plans of Action to Combat Human Trafficking; and lobbying for the ratification of the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols; and criminalization of human trafficking.

IOM Armenia has made significant contributions to the development of the institutional framework for migration governance in Armenia by developing the Work Permit Issuance System in Armenia in line with the best international standards and practices; establishing the Migration Resource Centre, which provides free consultations to potential migrants and informs returnees about the existing reintegration programmes; and facilitating the connection of the central units at the Police Headquarters and Yerevan Zvartnots Airport to the Interpol I-24/7 telecommunication database system. IOM Armenia developed knowledge products and practical toolkits to raise awareness of migration issues, challenges and support mechanisms in the country, such as the counter trafficking course, currently included in the middle and high school, as well as a university curriculum; and a toolkit for processing readmission cases in Armenia. In collaboration with UNFPA Armenia, IOM supported the Government of Armenia and the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (Armstat) in development of the SDG National Reporting Platform.

IOM Armenia has played a key role in ensuring Armenia's international presence and cooperation in migration. It supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to participate in the negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which

Armenia subsequently voted in favour of in 2018, and has since submitted two Voluntary National Progress Reviews on Implementation of GCM in 2018 and 2021. To enable a safe environment for circular migration of Armenians, IOM facilitated negotiations for bilateral labour agreements between Armenia and destination countries. In 2011-2013 IOM facilitated policy seminars on migration between Armenia and the EU, furthering the dialogue between Armenia and the EU in the context of the EU-Armenia Mobility Partnership, Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements.

2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Labour Migration

Despite macroeconomic progress and structural reforms implemented during the last decade in Armenia, growth has been weak and unevenly distributed in the country, and the increasing state debt has put pressure on the budget, hindering implementation of the national social safety nets and driving many Armenians to emigrate in search of economic opportunities elsewhere. An average of 24,000 and 10,000 people annually left Armenia in 2013–2018 and 2018–2020 respectively.[1] Among food-insecure households, remittances were found to make up over 75 % of household income. The significant share of informal employment with no provisions to make social insurance contributions, as well as the ageing population, and the high level of emigration result in pressures on the pension funds. The high rate of labour migration, particularly of youth, both temporary and permanent, continues to be a means of coping with poverty and unemployment, rated at 15%[2] and 27%[3] respectively. High unemployment is accompanied by high labour migration rates, especially in rural areas.

According to ILCS 2020, almost every tenth household had members involved in migration, mainly external, and nearly 70% were outbound migrants. The main country of destination for Armenian labour migrants continued to be the Russian Federation (72.1%), followed by other CIS countries and, to some extent, the EU countries. As of 2020, 56.6% of outbound migrants left Armenia in search of work. Among the reasons to return to Armenia, 21.3% of the returnees mentioned search of work, and 29.5% indicated absence of work in 2015-2020.[4] Approximately 40% of inactive males were not looking for work because they had just returned from working abroad or intended to leave again shortly.[5] The vast majority of emigrants (80%) are male of the active age groups (20–54).[6] Most labour migrants (up to 70%) have secondary education, and low (50%) and medium-skilled (24%) workers prevail. The linkage between education and migration is weak and the quality of acquired skills is inadequate, thus contributing to skills mismatch. The construction sector employs about 75% of Armenian migrants, followed by transport, electric and electronic engineering, agronomy, health, and education.[7] Every second migrant is employed in a private company,

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[1]   Armstat. https://armstat.am/file/article/demog_2021_7.pdf

[2]   As of October, 2021. Armstat. https://armstat.am/file/article/sv_11_21a_141.pdf

[3]   Armstat. https://armstat.am/file/article/poverty_2021_e_2..pdf

[4]   Ibid

[5]   Armstat. https://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=13

[6]   UN Common Country Analysis for the Cooperation Framework and the 2030 Agenda. May 2020.

[7]   Managing the pre-departure orientation process for Armenian labour migrants, IOM 2016

almost every fifth is engaged individually, and one of five migrants works in the public sector.[8] Migrants tend to find employment abroad prior to leaving Armenia and the process is facilitated by friends or relatives. Only one migrant out of five uses the services of an employment intermediary. Migrants intending to permanently settle abroad usually take their families to the destination countries and these are more often skilled workers.[9] Thus, as a country with a high emigration rate, where the total number of received personal remittances constitutes USD 1.3 billion, or 10.5% of the GDP (2020),[10] the Armenian economy is dependent on the fluctuating economic situation of other foreign countries, mostly the Russian Federation.

Regional disparities between the capital, Yerevan, other urban areas and rural areas persist due to limited economic activity and lack of job creation beyond the agricultural sector. Poverty headcount is the highest in urban areas outside the capital city, and in rural areas, with elevated levels of unemployment and emigration. Territorial disparities lead to migration from remote communities, as well as areas bordering with Azerbaijan. Underutilization of the economic potential of a wide spectrum of population, comprising mainly women and the youth, hampers economic development and job creation in lagging communities, and reduces the efficiency of public policy. The predominantly male migration, especially from rural areas, increases gender imbalance, as low income, poor infrastructure and unsafe working conditions create an additional burden for working women, largely responsible for unpaid care work as well. The loss of the male labour force and reduced capacity of rural communities to produce food increases the overall vulnerability of the rural households. Young people, especially from rural communities, opt for outmigration as a key mechanism to cope with unavailability of decent employment and high quality education, as well as limited access to public services.

Since 2015, Armenia committed to ensure free movement of the workforce in the common labour market of the EAEU. Remittances from migrant workers in the EAEU are the highest. For example, remittances from the Russian Federation comprised over 40% of the overall remittance inflows in 2021.[11] Armenian migrant workers are not required to obtain any authorization to work on the territory of the union, and employers are allowed to hire workers without special permission. Social insurance of migrant workers in the EAEU is offered under the same terms and conditions as for the nationals of the state of employment. Migrant workers and members of their families have the right to receive free emergency medical assistance under the same terms and conditions, as nationals of the state of employment. Their children are entitled to attend pre-school institutions and receive education. Education documents, graduate degrees and titles are directly recognized across the member states. Meanwhile, both in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, the

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8   Managing the pre-departure orientation process for Armenian labour migrants, IOM 2016.

9   Review and Needs Assessment of Readmission Management in Armenia. IOM 2014.

10   https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=AM

11   CBA. External Sector Statistics. https://www.cba.am/en/SitePages/statexternalsector.aspx

low-skilled migrant labour market has long operated in the shadows, leaving cohorts of labour migrants working in the informal sector vulnerable and unable to benefit, as they cannot obtain basic entitlements and access to necessary services, particularly health care in the host country. With low awareness of the regulations in the EAEU and host countries, Armenian labour migrants are frequently exposed to the above-mentioned vulnerabilities with frequent violations of their rights and trafficking. The exploitation and abuse of migrant workers occurs also in non-regulated sectors, such as domestic work. Other difficulties faced by Armenian migrants seeking employment in the EAEU, include the slowdown in the economic growth and political and economic instabilities. When confronted with a problem, only one of ten migrants seeks help from local authorities, the Armenian embassy, human rights organizations, or faith-based organisations (FBO). Usually, migrants' profound distrust of state bodies prevents them from turning to officials or public organizations; in addition, they may not even know any institution that would be able to help them.

The estimated eight million Diaspora of Armenians, predominantly in the Russian Federation, the US and France, is a key contributor to the economic welfare of the country. Nearly 250,000 people in Armenia rely on remittances sent by families living abroad and circular/seasonal migrants, although seasonal migration and remittances declined drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.[12] The GoA, acknowledging the significant role of the diaspora and labour migrants not only from the financial perspective but also in regards to skills and knowledge transfer, network growth, etc, has committed to increasing the impact of migration on sustainable human development in Armenia, and to supporting mass return and repatriation of Armenian nationals, while identifying the need for capacity to manage and regulate labour migration flows at the community level.

Armenia did not have a comprehensive reintegration policy until 2016. Since the 2000s, the trend of returning citizens to Armenia has been quite substantial. Between 2013–2020 there were 4,420 readmission requests received from the EU countries (over 90%) and the Russian Federation with respect to 8,640 persons.[13] However, the integration policy of the GoA did not address the issues of reintegration of returnees so far. Reintegration needs of returnees are mostly addressed by international organizations and NGOs on a project, rather than policy level. The Government of Armenia endorsement of the strategy on integration and reintegration for 2021-2031, well aligned with the guiding principles of the GCM, is pending.

Reintegration support is essential to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants into community life, by providing them with equal access to social protection and services, justice, psychosocial assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad, and financial services. One in five

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[12]   UN Common Country Analysis for the Cooperation Framework and the 2030 Agenda. May 2020.

[13]   Setting up System of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Armenia. Needs and Gaps Assessment Report. IOM 2021; http://www.migration.am/statistics?lang=hy

returnees stated their intention to go abroad again if they had such an opportunity. Furthermore, families of migrants play an important role in making the decision to emigrate and arranging the return. For migrants with chronic health problems, the family is perhaps the main source of support after the return.

Since 2019, the Department of Return and Reintegration of the Migration Service (MS) implements the GoA assistance program for sustainable reintegration of returned migrants to Armenia through two components. The forced returnees are offered a housing subsidy for 6 months, totalling nearly USD125. Large families, elderly, persons with disabilities, persons in need of urgent medical support, and unaccompanied children who have returned and are left without parental care in Armenia are prioritized. Returnees are also offered information on the mechanisms to exercise their rights, and needs-based referral support. Armenia further provides specific direct services, such as picking up returning unaccompanied minors at border crossing points, accommodating returnees in relevant institutions and accommodating adults with disabilities and the elderly in care centres and providing further care. Additional social guarantees and reintegration assistance are available to returnees from the EAEU countries related to their pension rights, recognition of qualifications, and support with employment. The eligible potential and returned migrants can get job-related advice and mediation, support for vocational guidance and retraining, and support for entrepreneurship initiatives at the local offices of the Integrated Social Services (ISS). Some of these offices operate a Migration Resource Centre (MRC), which provides information on visa procedures, legislation and employment opportunities in destination countries, and offers orientation and pre-departure training, and reintegration services upon their return.[14]

IOM provides re/up-skilling opportunities to returned Armenian migrants and those planning to emigrate, as well as designs talent development and retention strategies to engage the Armenian diaspora in community-based economic activities. IOM and the UN Country Team enhance capacities of institutions, support policy design and implementation, promoting inclusive, gender-responsive and effective employment, an active labour market and labour migration policies under UNSDCF for 2021–2025. IOM interventions have focused on protection of labour rights. IOM also contributed to the UNCT efforts supporting the improved rural livelihoods in communities heavily affected by migration, mitigating internal and external migration risks, and engaging the Armenian diaspora to boost investments in green economy and women's economic opportunities. IOM and UNCT contributed to making labour migration safe, orderly, and regular.

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[14] Guide for Reintegration of Returnees in Armenia. IOM 2020.

Access to Employment for Migrants and Refugees

A relatively new group of migrants are third country nationals, for whom Armenia has recently become either a country of destination or transit. Most of them are engaged in informal employment. The Government of Armenia started issuing work permits to foreigners from January 2019, and during 2020 about 870 permits were issued to nationals of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ukraine, Georgia, Philippines, USA and other countries[15] Nearly 16,650 foreigners had valid residence status in Armenia in 2020, of which 5,000 were temporary (up to one year); about 7,500 were permanent (up to five years) and over 4,150 were special (up to 10 years). More than half of the migrants with a temporary residency status are students, and almost one in five is employed. Almost one third of migrants with temporary status is Indian, typically a student (85%). Every second permanent migrant is a Russian national.[16]

Enhanced protection of the labour rights of foreign nationals requires comprehensive reforms, that would also include strengthening of a transparent, easy to use, timely and responsive system for the issuance of work permits. Towards this end, the GoA prioritizes digitizing and streamlining the system of issuing work permits and residency cards to foreign citizens in Armenia.[17] With the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Armenia (CEPA) entering into force on 1 March, 2021, the GoA gains the EU support for further improving the regulatory framework of international protection; protection of the rights of admitted persons and their integration; and national capacities in migration management, document security, and migration information systems. This cooperation may also facilitate circular migration for the benefit of development.

IOM is the main development partner of the government, supporting its efforts aimed at enhancing the national capacities in protection of human rights of migrants in Armenia. IOM supported the development of the work permit system compliant with best international standards, as well as the improvement of labour market regulations for foreign workers in Armenia.

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[15] UN Common Country Analysis for the Cooperation Framework and the 2030 Agenda. May 2020.

[16] Rapid needs assessment: COVID-19 Related Vulnerabilities among Migrants in Armenia. IOM 2020.

[17] Program of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (2021-2026). https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4737.pdf

2.2. SECURITY OUTLOOK

The GoA recognized terrorism and transnational organized crime, irregular migration and human trafficking as threats to the security of the country.[18] The recent trend of increasing illicit border crossings of migrants, for whom Armenia is becoming either an attractive country of destination or transit is also of concern. Almost 70 cases of illicit crossing of the state border were detected in 2019.[19] The GoA is committed to enhancing border security, integrated and humanitarian border management and crisis response, prevention of illicit border crossings and irregular migration.[20] In the last five years, the GoA has addressed border security and integrated border management challenges by reforming border management institutions, modernizing technology and providing training. Supported by IOM, but also other actors such as EIB, the EU, UNDP and ICMPD, the GoA modernized border crossing points BCPs, improved the procedures, upgraded infrastructure and equipment, and enhanced relevant capacities. The GoA continues to focus on challenges, such as identity management systems, issuance of biometric passports, infrastructure and equipment of BCPs, flexible visa policies and efficient procedures.[21]

Armenia's longest borders with neighbouring Turkey and Azerbaijan remain closed as of early 2022. Land borders remain the most vulnerable, as the difficulty of effective policing leaves them open to irregular crossing. The country has two airports with operational international BCPs in Yerevan and Gyumri, four BCPs with Georgia located on highways and the railroad in the North, and a BCP on its 45 km border with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the South. The uncertainties related to delimitation and demarcation of the borders is an emerging key challenge for the security of the country since the secession of hostilities following the outbreak of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in September 2020. Rule of law, human rights, democracy, as well as the peacebuilding process are the key dimensions to be considered and respected in this major process involving border management, migration and displacement of populations in affected communities, as reported by the Ombudsman.[22] Furthermore, the outbreak of the conflict left over 90,000 people displaced. As of February 2021, the majority of these people have returned to NK, and those who remain (approximately 35,000 people) are expected to stay for a longer term, which increases their vulnerability.[23]

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[18] National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia. 2020.

[19] Setting up System of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Armenia. Needs and Gaps Assessment Report. IOM 2021.

[20] Conceptual Framework of the Republic of Armenia for the State Management of Migration.
     https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=155100

[21] 2017-2021 Action Plan for Ensuring Border Security and Integrated State Border Management of the Republic of Armenia.
     https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=155100

[22] Republic of Armenia human Rights Defender. Yerevan, November, 2021.
     https://ombuds.am/images/files/4f4d3319548889e2900530457ae24bad.pdf

[23] Economic Resilience Assessment (ERA) Report on economic/livelihood challenges of refugee like population and host communities affected by the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. September 2021.
     https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/reach-armenia-economic-resilience-assessment-era-report-economiclivelihood-challenges

Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to -restart peace talks to address tensions over the conflict and borders in early April 2022 in Brussels at rare talks mediated by the European Council President Charles Michel. The leaders of the countries agreed to engage in a bilateral border delimitation process.[24]

The sanctions against the Russian Federation since February 24, 2022 will affect remittance flows in two ways: First, the number of transfers will likely decrease in correlation with the sharp downturn in the Russian economy. Second, the value of remaining transfers will decrease due to exchange rate shifts between the rouble and dram. The overall downturn in remittances is likely to be significant for the Armenian economy, leading to decreased household spending – a substantial contributor to GDP growth in recent years – and will disproportionately impact already vulnerable populations that rely on the migrant work from family members. The conflict has sparked an exodus from the Russian Federation, with thousands of Russians left for Armenia and other nearby countries. Smaller numbers of Belarusians are also reportedly relocating abroad. While precise numbers are hard to come by, the estimates based on the Migration Service data and data received from the mobile phone operators allowed to estimate that the total number of the citizens of Ukraine, Russian Federation and Belarus present in Armenia in May – June 2022 was around 35, 000.

Effective border management requires further improvement of the country's identity management systems, effective SOPs for BCPs and capacity building for staff. Specifically, the Border Guard Troops of National Security Service training programme requires further expansion to provide more comprehensive humanitarian border management knowledge and skills. Furthermore, Armenia lacks special accommodation centres for irregular migrants compliant with the established international standards. There are only fledgling assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes for migrants to return to their countries of origin. Towards this end, the GOA plans to build a new temporary accommodation centre for up to 100 asylum seekers.[25]

Under the CEPA, the GoA is engaged with the EU in dialogue and cooperation on issues including organization, training, best practices and other operational measures in the areas of border-management, migration-information systems and document security.

IOM, UNDP and UNODC have expanded their border response operations to strengthen effective border management and facilitate cross border cooperation, trade, and mobility as well as to promote more humane and orderly migration management with enhanced regional connectivity, as outlined in the UNSDCF 2021-2025.[26] IOM has supported the GoA's border management reform and strengthened its capacities in the field of humanitarian border management through enhanced pre-service and in-service training of

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[24] https://www.dw.com/en/armenia-azerbaijan-agree-to-peace-talks-two-years-after-nagorno-karabakh-fighting/a-61388096

[25] Measures to Ensure the Implementation of the Government's 2019-2023 Activity Plan.

[26] United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Armenia (2021-2025), https://armenia.un.org/en/135999-united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-2021-2025

the Border Guard Troops. This included developing new gender-responsive curricula, compliant with the EU Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding and strengthening their capacities to respond to bigger influx. IOM also supported the GoA efforts in identity management, both developing the general terms and conditions and facilitating a contract for biometric passports and national ID Cards for a tender dossier in line with ICAO and ISO standards. Additionally, IOM Armenia assisted the expansion of the Border Management Information System (BMIS) to all border crossing points and facilitated the connection of several central units at the Police Headquarters and Yerevan Zvartnots Airport to the Interpol I-24/7 telecommunication database system.

2.3. SOCIAL OUTLOOK

Armenia safeguards the access of migrants and refugees to social services. However, this access can be limited due to locally stretched capacities, language, cultural, and administrative barriers, as well as the lack of awareness of the rights and services amongst the asylum seekers, refugees and displaced populations, IDPs and returnees. Vulnerability of migrants further increases due to gender, age, socioeconomic, and family status, health conditions and other situations they face in Armenia. More than 1,510 persons sought asylum and 1,470 persons were granted refugee status in Armenia in 2010-2020, mostly ethnic Armenians, and nationals of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Ukraine, Turkey, Islamic Republic of Iran, Yemen, and Cuba. Since the early insurgency of the Syrian crisis in 2011, many Syrians fled the country and moved to Armenia. Nearly 500 of them also held citizenship of Armenia, while 19,500 displaced persons were granted Armenian citizenship through a simplified procedure. In addition, since 12 August 2020, more than 2,000 Lebanese Armenians came from Lebanon after the explosion at the port of Beirut. These groups face challenges typical for refugees, such as finding housing, social support, decent employment, effective access to quality health services, education and integration at large.

The population displaced from Nagorno Karabakh after the outbreak of the conflict in September 2020 and having found refuge in Armenia, mostly relies on the state-provided assistance, as well as on temporary, seasonal or daily paid jobs, agricultural/farming activities, or labour migration. They are often staying in rented apartments and bear the additional burden of house rental costs. The displaced population face challenges, such as covering basic livelihood needs, ensuring proper dietary diversity for children, and having to save on healthcare costs. The displaced population seek jobs or income-generating activities more actively, than during the first months of displacement, and rely on the ISS assistance in their job-finding attempts. However, ISS often lacks relevant capacities and resources; inter-agency collaboration is weak, and the proper mechanisms for evidence-based decision-making that affects the efficiency and quality of their services are absent.

Trafficking in Persons

Armenia is considered primarily an origin and transit country, and is increasingly recognized as a country of destination. Armenians are vulnerable to exploitation, forced labour and sex trafficking in countries such as the Russian Federation, the UAE, and Turkey. Armenians are also vulnerable while seeking employment. Some children are vulnerable to labour trafficking, and those staying in childcare institutions remain highly exposed to labour and sex trafficking. Women from Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation working in Armenian nightclubs are vulnerable to sex trafficking. Some Iranian and Indian migrants seeking employment in the informal sector are exploited in forced labour. According to the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report by the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor

and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP), Armenia ranks Tier 2, with human traffickers exploiting domestic and foreign victims in Armenia, as well as exploiting victims from Armenia abroad over the past five years.[27]

In 2018-2020, the Government of Armenia investigated 36 cases, including 27 forced labour cases and 7 sex trafficking cases; prosecuted seven defendants for forced labour and/or sex trafficking. In these years courts convicted only one sex trafficker, and have not issued a forced labour conviction since 2014. However, it is likely that the issue is more widespread, than revealed by official statistics. The GoA introduced a manual for local police on monitoring risky businesses and interviewing vulnerable communities. However, the law enforcement agencies did not proactively pursue investigations and relied on victims to self-identify. The law enforcement procedures lack victim-centred approaches, and local investigators in remote areas lack the skills to properly interview victims, resulting in inadmissible evidence and dropped prosecutions. The regulatory reform in 2021 improved child-sensitivity of the procedures, however, gender-sensitivity remains a concern. Currently, the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) is reviewing regulations and procedures to reveal challenges for effective investigation of trafficking cases. The Police Academy and Justice Academy offer training on trafficking for patrol officers, police, investigators, prosecutors, and judges. The GoA did not conduct any international investigations or extraditions in 2018-2020. Prosecution of trafficking cases involving the Russian Federation and Turkey remains limited.

On protection measures, the Victim Identification Commission (VIC), comprised of national and local government bodies, NGOs, and international organizations, is mandated to officially recognize victims based on pre-identification stage effort since late-2015. The GoA identified 26 victims of trafficking 2018-2020, including 23 victims of forced labour and 4 victims of sex trafficking. Every third victim was a foreigner (from India, Tajikistan, Islamic Republic of Iran), every third was female and one of three victims was a child. While the 2014 Law on Identification and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking and Exploitation regulates identification, referral and assistance to victims, the 2019 amendments to the law essentially extended and improved the above-mentioned scope. The GoA improved protocols for screening to identify victims, however, practices of self-identification continue to prevail and screening the vulnerable populations for trafficking is inconsistent. The GoA provides temporary shelter, emergency medical services, and psychological aid to potential trafficking victims during the pre-identification stage. Civil society continues to report that the referral procedures function well, and they have positive cooperation with the Government of Armenia. The GoA doubled the budget allocated for victim protection programmes and services in 2020, covering costs for the UMCOR-run shelter and accommodation, legal, medical, and psycho-social support and financial aid to victims. Though the GoA provides vocational training to victims, civil society is the major provider of

27   J/TIP. https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/armenia.

reintegration and long-term support services. Accommodation and foster families for children remain key challenges. In 2020, the GoA allocated funds for facilitation of repatriation of victims. Foreign victims employed in the formal sector are entitled to receiving a permanent residence permit. Law enforcement officers in remote areas lack the capacity to inform victims of their rights to protection or assistance duly. The GoA lacks a formal victim-witness protection program and effective practices are scarce.

At the policy level, Armenia adopted a new National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking (NAP) for 2019-2021 in mid-2020. The Anti-trafficking Ministerial Council and the IWGTP monitor and carry out anti-trafficking efforts, including awareness raising on trafficking. The mandate of HLIB, which conducts labour inspections, does not enable the agency to inspect informal or illegal employers. The Police and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) operate a 24/7 hotline for trafficking, and the Ombudsman operates a hotline for human rights-related issues, including trafficking. The GoA, under CEPA, has a commitment to enhance the instruments to combat networks of smugglers and traffickers, and to strengthen protection for victims of trafficking in the framework of relevant international instruments. IOM provides support to returning victims of trafficking, addressing their needs in legal, material or medical aid, study or vocational training, temporary accommodation.

IOM advocated for criminalizing human trafficking in Armenia and ratification of the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols. Trafficking was criminalized in 2003, when Article 132. Trafficking in or exploitation of human beings, was added to the RA Criminal Code, with further amendments made in 2006 to align the definition with the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol.[28] IOM Armenia supported the GoA in its effort to develop the NAPs. IOM further supported integration of the trafficking course in the curricula of high and middle school in Armenia, delivered training for the teachers of all schools in the country to teach the counter-trafficking course, and provided relevant education resources to all schools. IOM also supported development of a manual for university students to enhance the pre-service training of the school teachers.

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[28] McAdam, M. (2016). Needs Assessment: Counter-trafficking Response in the Republic of Armenia. International Organization for Migration (IOM). https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/counter_trafficking_armenia_en.pdf

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)

The cases of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) from Armenia are few. Armenian migration policy does not propose any comprehensive scheme for AVRR of foreign nationals from Armenia. Additionally, the institutional setting and capacities for an AVRR scheme and interagency coordination and cooperation are relatively weak. There is no comprehensive legal framework to facilitate the scheme, the structural funding available is very limited and civil society capacities are nascent. Notably, no adequate accommodation system that could host potential returnees exists and cooperation with some countries of origin remains concerning.[29] Overall, the GoA is in the process of establishing a National Voluntary Return Mechanism. IOM, Migration Service and partners have been working on strengthening the AVRR mechanism in Armenia through the provision of technical support to develop the legislative framework, operational capacity and SOPs.

As of March 2022, Armenia has readmission agreements with 20 countries: 15 EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden), and Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Switzerland. Almost all the agreements are fully operational, as the GoA has signed the protocols on the implementation of Readmission Agreements. Without abolishing the bilateral agreements signed with the EU member states, Armenia and the EU signed a Readmission Agreement in 2013, enabling fully reciprocal instruments for the forced or voluntary return of own and third country nationals, accelerated procedures and transit, as well as human rights safeguards and arrangements. The EU and Armenia committed to ensuring the full implementation of the agreement under CEPA, the admission rules and rights and status of persons admitted, fair treatment and integration of lawfully residing non-nationals, education and training and measures against racism and xenophobia.[30] The regulatory and institutional frameworks in Armenia ensure the effective implementation of the readmission agreements. However, the country has limited capacity and resources to adequately accommodate and facilitate the return of third-country nationals. Nearly 60% of the readmission requests received from the EU countries and the Russian Federation in 2012-2019 took place in 2018-2019 alone.[31] The principal source countries of forced return are Germany and France.

IOM advocates for the development and implementation of bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation frameworks and agreements, including readmission agreements, ensuring that return and readmission of migrants to their own country is safe and dignified. IOM has supported returning migrants and their families through the creation of sustainable

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[29] Setting up System of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Armenia. Needs and Gaps Assessment Report. IOM 2021

[30] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017JC0037

[31] Setting up System of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Armenia. Needs and Gaps Assessment Report. IOM 2021.

income-generation opportunities and facilitated access to additional financial resources for enterprise development. In 2021 IOM provided microbusiness, job placement, housing, and medical assistance for reintegration and sustainable return to nearly 400 returned migrants. Moreover, IOM supported the MLSA to establish MRCs and a Mobile MRC to increase awareness of potential migrants and returnees in the remote communities of Armenia on challenges they may face, and available opportunities for assistance. Recently, IOM supported the GoA to launch the development of a mechanism on voluntary return from Armenia. Additionally, IOM and UNHCR assisted the GoA to finalize the Comprehensive Integration Strategy for Displaced Persons and Returnees and IOM is supporting the GoA in establishing the Centre of Integration of Migrants. IOM mapped the professional diaspora representatives,[32] exposed international best practices for diaspora engagement[33] and piloted a mechanism enabling effective engagement of investment and potential, knowledge and skills of the diaspora in Tavush province bordering with Azerbaijan. Based on this evidence, as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration in the Republic of Armenia, IOM Armenia, in close cooperation with UNDP and UNECE, has initiated an assessment of the potential of the Armenian diaspora in accelerating the implementation of SDGs in agriculture, tourism, science and education, as well as promoting the diaspora's financial investment in these sectors prioritised by the GoA. The initiative aligns with the UN Secretary General's Call for a Decade of Actions, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which considers the diaspora and remittances from migrant workers a key contribution to inclusive growth and sustainable development.[34]

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[32] International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2021. Skills Mapping through Big Data. A Case Study of Armenian Diaspora in the United States of America and France. IOM, Armenia
https://publications.iom.int/books/skills-mapping-through-big-data-case-study-armenian-diaspora-united-states-america-and-0

[33] International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2021. Global Best Practices in Diaspora Engagement: Lessons for Armenia. IOM, Armenia
https://publications.iom.int/books/global-best-practices-diaspora-engagement-lessons-armenia

[34] Addis Ababa Action Agenda. (2015). United Nations
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2051&menu=35

2.4. ENVIRONMENTAL OUTLOOK

Rapid urbanization and industrialization have exacerbated the impacts of a range of environmental challenges, including climate change, deforestation, environmental degradation and pollution, desertification, and water scarcity. Accelerated urbanization has reduced biodiversity, aggravated environmental degradation and reduced agricultural land and water filtration surfaces, placing additional stress on food and water security. Climate change impacts will accentuate environmental degradation in vulnerable ecosystems, including the Lake Sevan and Hrazdan, as well as the Sevan, Akhuryan, Arpa, Vorotan and Debed river basins, and are likely to compound underlying causes of vulnerability, especially for those already facing social inequalities because of their gender, age, class, or disability. Migration – in its different forms - is and will continue to be shaped by climate impacts and environmental degradation.[35]

Climate change affecting the productivity of ecosystems and more frequent natural disasters are worsening the coping capacity of the country and becoming one of the root causes of out-migration of rural population. Reduced agricultural productivity, adverse climatic events such as droughts and pests that result in crop losses are among the general causes of emigration. At the household level, the linkages between food security, climate and migration are quite strong.

The Government's Programme for 2021-2026 places sustainability at the heart of its development efforts. The programme promotes sustainable environmental and natural resource management and building of liveable cities. Priority is given to the prevention of environmental pollution and the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources. However, migration has limited integration into the climate change policy framework.

The disaster-induced displacement rate is lower in Armenia, compared to other causes. Where migrants and refugees do move into urban and peri-urban areas, they can be exposed to new climatic and environmental stressors, and if they have limited access to public services and amenities, it can increase their vulnerability to the impacts of these stressors. People can be "trapped" in environmentally fragile areas and unable to move, lacking the resources or opportunities for migration.[36] At the same time, when enabling conditions are present, migration can support climate change adaptation and build climate resilience.[37]

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[35] Making Mobility Work for Adaptation to Environmental Changes: Results from the MECLEP global research: https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/making-mobility-work-adaptation-environmental-changes-results-meclep-global-research.

[36] Foresight 2011 Migration and Global Environmental Change Future Challenges and Opportunities. Final Project Report. The Government Office for Science, London.

[37] World Migration Report 2020 – Chapter 9 Human Mobility and Adaptation to Environmental Change. https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2020-chapter-9.

It is also important to understand how climate change affects women and men differently, and how it can exacerbate inequalities and vulnerabilities. Such effects were noted in the ADB's 2019 Country Gender Assessment for Armenia, where due to the increasing migration of male family members, women are assuming a greater workload for agriculture production as the sector becomes more prone to disaster risks, putting women at the forefront of dealing with disaster impacts on agriculture production.[38]

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[38]   Asian Development Bank, 2019 Armenia Country Gender Assessment,
        https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/546716/armenia-country-gender-assessment-2019.pdf

2.5.   HEALTH OUTLOOK

Health problems remain an important driver for irregular migration from Armenia, especially to the EU and the Russian Federation.[39] The prohibitive cost of healthcare is both a reason to migrate and an inhibitor of reintegration upon return, as Armenian patients financed nearly 80 per cent of healthcare costs as out-of-pocket spending in 2020.[40] Migration for medical purposes remains an essential contributor to the asylum applications from Armenia to the EU. In 2020, about 1,875 Armenian citizens applied for asylum in the EU.[41]

The GoA extended access the primary health care and emergency health services available to its citizens and to all foreigners, including irregular migrants, in the country. However, foreigners, except asylum seekers and refugees, need to pay for services. Also, linguistic and cultural barriers exist for migrants and refugees to access these services.[42] Returning migrants are not recognized as a disadvantaged group eligible to state-guaranteed free medical care and services, yet primary healthcare is essentially funded by the state. Many returnees and their family members with chronic medical conditions cannot afford healthcare services in Armenia; quite often they do not seek services due to financial issues, and face difficulties with procuring medications. Generally, they are highly dependent on the support of their families.[43]

High exposure to HIV or TB remains a key health challenge among Armenian labour migrants, as they have inconsistent knowledge about HIV transmission, do not consider themselves at risk for HIV or TB infection, engage in risky behaviour in destination countries, and are reluctant to undergo HIV testing or TB screening. Nearly 70 per cent of HIV cases registered in Armenia in 2013-2017 were among Armenian migrants returning and their partners.[44]

UNAIDS and IOM address these challenges, exacerbated by compound crises in 2020-2021, through awareness raising and social media campaigns on HIV, TB, and COVID-19, reaching up to 60,000 persons per month, as well as by providing hygiene supplies and MHPSS to migrants, refugees and displaced people. A significant achievement registered was Armenia reaching the UNAIDS target of 75-83-88 for all ages (75-85-93 for women from 15 and older), compared to the baseline of 67-67-85.[45]

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[39]   Setting up System of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Armenia. Needs and Gaps Assessment Report. IOM 2021.

[40]   NIH. https://nih.am/am/national_account_reports/157/am

[41]   https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA__custom_2034851/default/table?lang=en

[42]   Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Outbreak in Armenian Communities. 2020.

[43]   Assessment of Health Related Factors Affecting Reintegration of Migrants in Armenia, IOM 2014.

[44]   Migrant Health Survey on Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV and Health Services Response for Migrants, IOM, 2018. See also, Biological and Behavioural Surveillance Surveys on Labour Migrants in Rural and Urban Communities of Armenia, IOM, 2019.

[45]   UN Country Team in Armenia Country Results Report 2020.
       https://armenia.un.org/index.php/en/127455-un-country-team-armenia-country-results-report-2020

2.6. COVID-19

As of 1 February 2022, Armenia registered over 374,878 cases of COVID-19, and ranks among the top 20 countries by the number of deaths per million population (2,900).[46] The World Health Organization (WHO) indicates Armenia as the 139th among 196 countries with the number of persons fully vaccinated per 100 population (26.3)[47] and 49th among 52 countries in WHO/Europe region that officially report vaccination data to WHO.[48] In light of the WHO and MoH's recommendations, the GoA has taken various public health and social measures (PHSM) to prevent and mitigate the effects of COVID-19. The government response to COVID-19 aims to contain and reduce the spreading of the virus and provide health care services to patients who developed the disease.

The Armenian economy, which is highly dependent on remittances generated mainly by labour migration and the diaspora, suffered substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The consumption-based economic growth, high level of consumer credits, high concentration of low-skilled employees in low productivity sectors, reduction of remittances from migrant workers and the restrictions on international tourism increase the economy's vulnerability to external shocks and intensify the socio-economic magnitude of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. The government-led COVID-19 measures, including the lockdown and other travel restrictions disrupted the most critical value chains and traditional ways of doing business in Armenia, thus causing closure of businesses and rapid loss of jobs in highly affected sectors, such as hospitality, tourism, customer service, manufacturing, and agriculture. The excess in labour supply, caused by the closed borders for migrant workers, and considerable reduction in economic activity resulted in higher rates of unemployment and decline in average wages. Many households, especially the precariat, are at greater risk of poverty and disproportionately exposed groups such as informal workers, those being furloughed, migrants and people depending on remittances are experiencing diminishing income security. Migrants reported financial difficulties both for themselves and for their communities. The majority of households in rural communities that have received income from labour migration reported significant income losses (nearly 40%) after the spread of the pandemic.[49]

Refugees and migrants in Armenia tend to live in conditions that increase their vulnerability to COVID-19, which includes overcrowded living and working conditions, physical and mental stress and deprivation due to the lack of housing, food and clean water, often with no support from family in their home countries. Unable to pay the rent, many migrants have to move from individual to communal settings, while migrant reception shelters are crowded. Migrants face barriers to accessing healthcare services, including language, updated

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46   Data as of March 1, 2022. https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries

47   https://covid19.who.int/table

48   https://worldhealthorg.shinyapps.io/EURO_COVID-19_vaccine_monitor

49   COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan. UN in Armenia. September 2020.

information, legal, administrative and financial problems in the COVID-19 setting. Foreign students, in addition to these common issues, face challenges related to online classes, tuition fees, residence rights and legal status.[50]

As the GoA attempted to mitigate the effect of the pandemic and address the needs of the people, there is little direct evidence that migrant-specific vulnerability has been thoroughly considered, hence targeted measures to comprehensively address this issue have not yet been developed. Migrants and their community members reported limited contact with the government or NGOs and their services in relation to COVID-19. Many migrants, who lost jobs were employed without a formal contract, and therefore, did not qualify for the support of the Government of Armenia. While some were in touch with embassies and local and international organizations, there were many who remained in the shadow, especially irregular migrants, who are inevitably hard to reach and have no possibility of support, other than from members of their own community (e.g., some support was provided by restaurants founded by Indians). While information about COVID-19, awareness and prevention programmes and news have been widely circulated in Armenia via different online platforms, only a few sources have provided information in English and other languages accessible to migrants. There are very few local and grassroots organizations, especially in the provinces, that have the necessary knowledge, sensitivity and overall capacity to address the emerging needs of irregular migrants and refugees during the pandemic, most of whom are beyond their reach and radar. Based on the vulnerabilities, direct assistance, including accommodation and medical assistance, food and hygiene items were provided by IOM Armenia to vulnerable groups of migrants in Armenia, including migrant workers, foreign students, undocumented migrants, rejected asylum seekers. IOM developed a registration system to identify beneficiaries for services, to improve their access to state and non-state programs through iMigrant portal. IOM CO supported the virtual exchange of lessons learned, best practices and innovative methods of treatment of COVID-19 between Armenian and diaspora doctors since the first weeks of the outbreak of the pandemic. IOM Armenia provided about 2500 PPEs to local communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the displaced population.

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[50] Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Outbreak in Armenian Communities. 2020

2.7.   DATA MANAGEMENT

There are significant gaps in migration data management in Armenia. Migration statistics are not comprehensive and at times lacks accuracy. Data collection on exits and returns is incomplete. Data gaps hinder development of evidence-based, effective and inclusive migration policies. Compliance reporting on migration statistics is not in place. There are essential gaps in migration management data capacities, needed for streamlining data collection, analysis and exchange between agencies involved in migration management, based on a common priority set of migration indicators. The administrative information source for migration in Armenia is the State Population Register, which does not fully reflect the data on population movements, given the fact that people mostly do not inform the Police about their movements, and hence, are left out of the migration statistics. Data collected by the Migration Service and the NSS Border Troops are not well coordinated and synchronized.[51] The BMIS, the primary system for information management at borders, is reliable and technically advanced.[52] Residence status and other migration variables related to victims of human trafficking are not duly reported, and data collection remains essentially decentralized. Statistical data on criminal cases is collected by the Police and the PGO. MLSA collects data on victims that received support through the NRM and by NGOs. The data is further transferred to the Inter-Agency Council. However, the scope of data collection remains limited, and the data quality assurance framework is not in place. NGOs lack the capacity to consolidate and analyse the data they collect, and research on trafficking remains limited.[53] Labour migration statistics, especially data on migrants in Armenia is incomplete. The Migration Service issues work permits since January 2022,[54] under a new system that integrates different databases. Data on the number of permits granted is disaggregated by sex, age and country of citizenship. However, the existing data does not allow producing statistics on seasonal migration, the rights of Armenian labour migrants and recruitment. The lack of data on Armenian student mobility does not enable linking migrants for educational purposes with the labour market.[55] Though the Armenian diaspora has been a substantial supporter of the sustainable economic development of Armenia for many years through business networking and skills transfer, the data on diaspora investment is not collected systematically. The available data on the Armenian Diaspora is fragmented, making it difficult to gain an overview of the financial engagement of the Armenian diaspora and its potential for development. Data on the use of remittances is not collected systematically.

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[51]   Setting up System of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Armenia. Needs and Gaps Assessment Report. IOM 2021.

[52]   Humanitarian Border Management: Armenia. Needs and Gaps Assessment Report. IOM 2016.

[53]   Needs Assessment: Counter-trafficking Response in the Republic of Armenia. IOM 2016.

[54]   Previously issued by the State Employment Agency of MLSA.

[55]   UN Common Country Analysis for the Cooperation Framework and the 2030 Agenda. May 2020.

In 2019, the Migration Service published the first Extended Migration Profile for 2013-2016, and updated it annually. The GoA, supported by the UNCT, prioritized migration and development related SDG targets for Armenia, identified the gaps of national migration data and data sources vis-a-vis the SDG monitoring needs, and developed indicators to measure the SDG commitments, including indicators on labour rights, diaspora contributions to development, return migration, and other migration topics that are linked to sustainable development. The GoA prioritized five migration and development related SDG targets, including 4.b, 8.8 10.7, 17.16 and 17.18. The indicators are reported publicly on Armenia's SDG National Reporting Platform,[56] created with IOM support and maintained by Armstat.

The United Nations in Armenia supports the GoA in strengthening data capacities and evidence-based policy making, including development of capacity to track people on the move, migrant stocks and flows, as committed under UNSDCF.

IOM conducted the first comprehensive nationwide household survey on migration among nearly 7,900 households, addressing internal and external movements, scopes of immigration and emigration, return, as well as migrants' savings and remittances and migration's development effect on population and households.[57] IOM supported Armstat to produce the Migration Annual Snapshot. IOM also supported MS and to prepare the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on compliance and implementation of Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and mobilized support to the preparation of the second VNR. IOM supported Armstat, the country's librarian of the progress towards the SDGs, to develop "Migration data in the context of the 2030 Agenda" Report, providing analyses of migration data gaps, offering tailored recommendations to improve migration data collection and management in Armenia, and setting a sustainable monitoring mechanism to track the progress towards achieving SDGs in the area of migration and development.

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[56] https://sdg.armstat.am

[57] http://un.am/up/library/Household_survey_eng.pdf

3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

3.1. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

IOM Armenia's Mission Strategy 2022-2025 is an integrated and multi-sectoral approach, guided by IOM's overall objective to address migration trends and challenges in line with regional, national and international frameworks. It aligns with the IOM Strategic Vision,[58] the IOM Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2020–2024,[59] and related IOM governance documents, such as the Migration Governance Operational Framework[60] (MiGOF) and the Migration Crisis Operational Framework[61] (MCOF). The strategy draws on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular, target 10.7: *"facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies,"* and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). Armenia voted in favour of GCM in 2018 and is active in its implementation, follow-up and review processes. IOM Armenia's strategic objectives have been developed upon the Government of Armenia's GCM Voluntary National Reports submission to the Regional Review of the GCM in the United Nations Economic Commissioner for Europe (UNECE), with the support of IOM Armenia.[62] Reference documents include the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The strategy aligns also with the UNSDCF, as IOM Armenia facilitates streamlining migration within the UNSDCF to guide a more coordinated action for migration management, in line with the Global Compact on Migration and the Agenda 2030.

IOM Armenia's strategic objectives are in line with the Government of Armenia priorities in labour migration and human development, migration and social cohesion, assisted voluntary return and reintegration, integrated border management and counter-trafficking, towards securing sustainable and human-centred solutions, outlined in the Program of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (2021-2026).[63] IOM Armenia's ongoing and planned interventions for 2022-2025 fall under IOM's strategic response and will be supported by an integrated and multi-sectoral approach. Its crisis response is built around three pillars of intervention: linking humanitarian assistance with development in an effort to end needs by reducing risks and vulnerability with the collaboration, coordination and coherence between humanitarian and development actors designated as 'New Way of Working' and Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. The strategy focuses on multifaceted approaches

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[58] https://www.iom.int/strategy#:~:text=The%20three%20main%20pillars%20of,which%20can%20be%20found%20below

[59] https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/documents/south-eastern_europe_eastern_europe_and_central_asia_regional_strategy_2020-2024_6nov20_v05.pdf

[60] https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-RES-1310%20MIGOF.pdf

[61] https://emergencymanual.iom.int/entry/17002/migration-crisis-operational-framework-mcof

[62] https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Armenia_Voluntary%20GCM%20Survey%20Report.pdf

[63] https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4737.pdf

to delivering humanitarian support; community stabilization; livelihoods; and early recovery programming.

IOM Armenia's Mission Strategy also aligns with Armenia's United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025. All IOM Armenia's strategic priorities and activities are in line with the following outcomes of the UNSDCF:

- Outcome 2: People benefit from a progressively universal, inclusive, and shock-responsive social protection system across the lifecycle.
- Outcome 3: People exercise their talents and skills, benefitting from age-appropriate, life-long learning, inclusive and quality education in an enabling and safe environment.
- Outcome 4: People, communities and regions benefit from equitable economic opportunities, decent work and sustainable livelihoods, enabled through competitiveness and inclusive green growth.
- Outcome 6. People benefit from effective and accountable governance systems and institutions that safeguard human rights and uphold the rule of law, and a public administration that ensures effective and human centered service delivery for all.
- Outcome 7: People benefit from evidence-based, human-centric, and SDG-aligned policies supported by diversified sources of financing, innovation, and partnerships for sustainable development for all.

IOM Armenia will periodically monitor, review and adjust this four-year strategy to respond to changing dynamics, government priorities and emerging issues, in close cooperation with the Government of Armenia, international development partners, migrants, civil society, the UN, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

IOM Armenia will work towards achieving the following the four key strategic priorities of the Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia:

RESILIENCE STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1&2	Empower migrants and communities to strengthen their resilience in situations of vulnerability, in particular, their ability to prevent, mitigate and adapt to risks without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights. Address drivers of migration, including adverse effects, such as environmental and climate change impacts, instability, poverty and exploitation.
MOBILITY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3	Advance positive, sustainable and innovative development outcomes that are responsive to skill shortages, return dynamic, environmental and climate change impacts, and other emergent regional migration trends.
GOVERNANCE STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4	Strengthen cooperative development and implementation of evidence-based and inclusive migration governance that addresses migration challenges, leverages opportunities and facilitates safe, orderly and regular migration.

3.2. RESILIENCE

Strategic priority 1:

Empower migrants and communities to strengthen their resilience in situations of vulnerability, and address drivers of migration including environmental and climate change impacts

Protection and Assistance to Migrants and Combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants

IOM will support the facilitation of safe and efficient crossings of borders, addressing transnational organized crimes, such as migrant trafficking and smuggling, and protection of the rights of migrants during the entire mobility continuum. IOM's response entails enhancement of capacities of border and law enforcement agencies towards protection-sensitive and humanitarian border management, updating knowledge on migrant smuggling trends, as well as technical and expert assistance in policy development. IOM will also continue to support inter-agency cooperation and information sharing between law enforcement agencies. To this end, IOM will continue supporting the effective operation of the Interagency Council against Trafficking and the Counter-trafficking Working Group and will enhance their capacities to implement monitoring of assistance and protection of victims of trafficking. In order to empower migrants and communities to strengthen their resilience in situations of vulnerability, IOM provides protection assistance for those vulnerable, or who have been subjected, to violence, exploitation and abuse, in line with the overall programmatic framework of IOM globally. To this end, IOM will also extend partnerships to raise awareness on trafficking and smuggling of migrants among migrants, youth, local communities as well as employers in Armenia. IOM will strengthen cooperation and dialogue in the area of combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants through supporting exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices engaging the government, international community and civil society. IOM will provide support to the National Referral Mechanism in order to identify, protect and assist trafficked persons, and prosecute traffickers, and will support the Health and Labour Inspection body to fulfil its function of identifying victims. International standards in the field of countering trafficking and assisting the victims will remain the benchmark for IOM engagement in this field, contributing to enhancing the rule of law and applying a victim-centred and human rights-based approach. IOM will promote the non-discrimination principle and advocate to ensure that adults and children of all genders have equal access to assistance and protection programmes. Hence, IOM will support counter-trafficking stakeholders in Armenia to ensure that the services available to victims of trafficking are inclusive and gender-sensitive. IOM will contribute towards enhancing data strategy to inform policies for combating trafficking, particularly focusing on child protection, especially unaccompanied migrant children, in line with the IOM mandate to protect migrant children and their needs on the

ground. In particular, IOM will provide services to migrant children and work with the Government of Armenia to better mainstream child migrants into the national child protection system.

Migrants' Access to Healthcare Services

To address health risks and vulnerabilities, IOM Armenia will assist the GoA and development partners to improve the access of migrants to health services, including migrants residing in rural communities. IOM will also support the GoA to prevent migration motivated mainly by the aim to access health services abroad and streamline access to quality medical services in countries other than Armenia. This will be achieved through health promotion and provision of technical assistance and capacity building to mainstream migration health into public health approaches of the GoA using evidenced-informed programmes and policies. IOM will also provide direct health care assistance to crisis-affected populations and migrants in vulnerable situations. To promote a migrant-inclusive health approach, IOM will also directly assist beneficiaries under migration health, resettlement, readmission and reintegration schemes. To ensure safe and healthy cross-border movement of migrants and returnees, prevent transmission of HIV, TB and STIs and other diseases, as well as enhance the continuum of care throughout the migration cycle, IOM will continue leveraging professional expertise with long-term partnership with the National Center for Infectious Diseases, National Institute of Health and UNAIDS facilitating access of migrants to health screening, treatment and coordinating health and social support. It will also extend its engagement with social media to raise awareness of migrants, women and local communities on health and migration nexus.

Return and Reintegration Assistance to Migrants

The assisted return of migrants from host countries to Armenia, and from Armenia to their countries of origin remains an urgent need that is operationally and politically significant, and IOM Armenia will provide return and reintegration assistance to migrants, and will support the GoA to develop a sustainable and gender-responsive mechanism utilizing digital power and innovative tools to facilitate AVRR of migrants from Armenia to their countries of origin, including by providing policy advice and supporting regulatory reform, facilitating partnerships, enhancing reintegration services, introducing SOPs and strengthening technical capacities. IOM will further facilitate inter-agency cooperation on return by engaging key AVRR stakeholders in the government and civil society, supporting the exchange of information, and sharing best practices, challenges and specific cases. IOM Armenia is committed to an integrated approach to address the needs of individual returnees, as well as their communities, in a mutually beneficial way while responding to structural factors,

and embedding post-arrival and reintegration support and assisted voluntary return into a common framework. IOM will enhance the capacities of migrants to make an informed decision and take ownership of the voluntary return process through outreach, awareness-raising and counselling on return and reintegration assistance. The sustainable reintegration of migrants will remain the main goal of IOM interventions when supporting returnees in Armenia, so that returnees can reach levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with migration drivers. Interventions will aim to reduce vulnerabilities associated with migration, utilizing the Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability Model for the design of projects.[64] IOM will also support the GoA to develop and introduce a clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the reintegration support to identify the drivers of success and emerging challenges migrants and local communities may face.

Responses to Environmental, Climate Change and Compound Crisis Impacts

IOM will work with line ministries, municipalities, UNCT, civil society, academia, private sector and communities, to better understand the nexus between migration, environment and climate change; to promote evidence-based and people-centred programmes and policies aimed at strengthening resilience, and responding to environmental and climate change impacts; to contribute to the stabilization of affected communities; and to unlock the adaptive impacts of migration for resilience of migrants, their families and communities. IOM will provide technical support, assist capacity development and foster cross-sectoral collaboration among stakeholders to help develop innovative interventions that harness different human mobility pathways and their consequences, as part of resilience-building. IOM Armenia will strive to rollout IOM's global data-gathering and analysis methodologies to enhance the programming of the GoA and development community, as well as programmes bridging relief with development efforts, in line with the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. In this effort, IOM will focus on the needs identified by local communities and ensure accountability to the crisis-affected local communities and populations. IOM will work with the GoA to ensure that no one is left behind during the efforts of climate adaptation of the economy. IOM Armenia will promote responsiveness of the GoA to the wide-ranging impacts of these efforts on the lives and livelihoods of women and men across the affected communities. On one hand, the changes will create new income and investment opportunities in clean energy, sustainable building and renovation, sustainable mobility, circular economy and climate-resilient agriculture. IOM will support the GoA to integrate the needs of migrants into policy development and programming across sectors, enhance access of migrants to green financing, skilling, entrepreneurship development, public amenities and services, capacity development,

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[64]   IOM Handbook on protection and assistance for migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse available here:
        https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/avm_handbook.pdf

institutions and markets. On the other hand, workers in regions dependent on extractive activities (such as Syunik, Vayots Dzor, and Lori provinces), and resource-intensive sectors (such as textiles, construction, plastic), need support to adjust to changes. IOM Armenia will engage with the GoA to strengthen social protection measures and increase opportunities for reskilling the workforce, of which migrants constitute a significant proportion. Such initiatives will also pay special attention to people living in vulnerable ecosystems (e.g., mountains, river basins, and Lake Sevan, semi-arid or arid areas), employed in vulnerable jobs (e.g., farmworkers, landless families, etc.), employed in the informal sector in urban areas as well as persons staying behind. IOM will continue to build the capacity of partners in the government, development partners and civil society to ensure that IDPs, displaced populations and affected communities are protected from, and resilient to, the causes of displacement, such as violent conflicts, gross violations of human rights, natural and anthropogenic hazards. In this effort IOM will focus on integrating recovery initiatives from early on in the response, bridging the gap between humanitarian, climate change, crisis response and development programmes. IOM Armenia addresses the consequences of conflict in and over Nagorno Karabakh, including crisis-induced displacement, through humanitarian relief operations in Armenia. IOM will assist in enhancing the capacity of the GoA, civil society and communities to transition from emergency to recovery by adopting integrated approaches to social cohesion and economic recovery. IOM will support the GoA, communities and migrants to leverage remittances and diaspora funding for financing planned climate action, skills-building and entrepreneurship development among migrant workers to enable them to support resilience of small urban communities and the green economy, and income generation opportunities for women staying behind to increase their resilience.

3.3. MOBILITY

Strategic priority 2:

Advance positive, sustainable and innovative development outcomes that are responsive to skill shortages, return dynamic, and other emergent migration trends.

Safe Labour Migration Policies and Practices

Recognizing the far-reaching potential of labour migration, both before and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM will facilitate the development of policies and programmes that are in the interest of migrants and society, providing effective protection and assistance to migrant workers and their families, and generating safe, regular and efficient recruitment systems for employment abroad. In line with the global skills partnership launched by ILO, IOM, UNESCO, IOE, and ITUC, and supported by IOM Regional Office in Vienna, IOM Armenia is developing tools that address the increasing structural shortage of labour in some communities versus the structural excess of labour in others. IOM will enhance migrants' contributions to sustainable development processes through skills partnerships and diaspora mapping and engagement, as well as efforts in integration and social cohesion. IOM will support the development and implementation of bilateral labour agreements between Armenia and destination countries that can increase opportunities for human development by facilitating movement and protecting migrants' rights. IOM will focus on specific labour migration corridors, such as that between Armenia and the EAEU countries, as well as the growing labour mobility from Armenia towards the EU as key areas of interest and support. IOM will support labour migration programmes and policies that facilitate alignment of training programmes and matching of skills of prospective migrants in Armenia with labour market needs and with both existing and projected employer demand in countries of destination. In this effort IOM will focus on engaging migration authorities and other stakeholders to promote the creation of alternative and safe pathways for labour migration. IOM promotes ethical recruitment and strategic pre-departure communication tools that raise awareness of workers about the risks and realities of labour migration, encourage prospective migrants to make informed decisions regarding migration plans and the use of remittances towards their livelihood objectives, including increasing savings and investments. In this effort, IOM will engage new partners and effective instruments of communication, such as social media. To harness the development potential of migration, IOM will empower migrants and Armenian diaspora communities to contribute to Armenia's sustainable development through trade, skills transfer and philanthropy, in close collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs. IOM supports the implementation of the United Nations Youth Strategy and will assist the Government of Armenia, civil society and the private sector to strengthen efforts towards decent work for young people by focusing on evidence-based, scalable, participatory and innovative

solutions and partnerships. IOM will address the gaps and challenges that migrants face in informal employment in Armenia by promoting safe labour migration practices and supporting GoA to improve the regulations on recruitment, introduce evidence-informed policies and effective safeguards to protect migrant workers and enhance the rule of law through formalization of employment practice across the country. IOM will build on the organization's achievements, its strong capacities and the reputation of a knowledge hub in the sector and will continue to enhance Armenia's ability to govern labour migration and leverage the benefits of global mobility as well as significantly scaling up of livelihoods and sustainable development of the communities.

Responses to Health Inequities for Migrants

IOM will invest in developing innovative solutions and tools to support healthcare delivery, as well as continuity of care for migrants and their families in foreign countries and returning migrants in Armenia, focusing on measures to prevent transmission of HIV and protect women. IOM will support the governments and other actors to engage in policy development and cross-border cooperation on health. IOM will continually contribute towards reducing health inequities for migrants by advocating for migrant-inclusive health policies that focus on increasing health coverage, ensuring equitable access to healthcare for migrants in vulnerable and/or irregular situations to improve their health conditions, protect their right to health, and mitigate public health risks in Armenia, through advocacy, implementation, research and partnerships.

3.4. GOVERNANCE

Strategic priority 3:

Strengthen cooperative development and implementation of evidence- based and inclusive migration governance that addresses migration challenges and leverages opportunities, in order to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.

Policy Coherence and Coordination

IOM Armenia has adhered to a whole-of-society approach throughout its work, and has increasingly strengthened partnerships with the GoA, UN agencies, and other development partners in Armenia, civil society and academia and the private sector. As a key partner for GoA, IOM Armenia will continue supporting to the implementation of the government's commitment to increase the impact of migration on sustainable human development in Armenia through advocating for mainstreaming migration into its policies and strategies at the local and national levels, while leveraging migration as an accelerator for the achievement of the SDGs. To enhance policy coherence and coordination, IOM Armenia will contribute to policy development; develop the relevant capacity of key decision-makers, including MS, line ministries, HRDO, Health and Labour Inspection Body, Interagency Council Against Trafficking, Counter-Trafficking WG, Unified Social Services, LGs and regional governments; and generate comprehensive evidence. It will also provide knowledge and technical support to the government, civil society and the private sector to raise the awareness of the nexus between climate change and migration, in order to better link migration, the environment and the climate change, and to integrate migration in key environmental and climate change policies and programming at the local and national levels. IOM Armenia will also advance the recommendations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Task Force on Displacement, by developing capacities of relevant actors.

IOM will also enable the GoA and civil society to fulfil the strategic priorities of the Conceptual Framework for Migration Management and implement the pending 2021-2031 Strategy of the Migration Policy of the Republic of Armenia on Regulation of Integration and Reintegration Issues, if endorsed by GoA. IOM will strengthen cooperation with the MFA, MoH, MTAI and MES to contribute to the human mobility work programme under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

IOM Armenia will facilitate streamlining migration further within the UNSDCF, focusing on strengthening the newly initiated United Nations Migration Network (UNMN) to guide a more coordinated action for migration management, in line with the Global Compact for Migration; and the Agenda 2030. It has assumed a strong advisory role, and as such, will

support the development and implementation of national migration strategies, in line with international best standards, especially regarding return and reintegration, which is of particular interest to Armenia.

Migration Data Management

To overcome the challenges of fragmented data from mixed migratory routes and improve evidence-based programming, IOM will continue promoting and facilitating the collection and use of accurate, complete, consistent, timely and valid data on migrants' vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking. This effort will contribute to risk-based prevention efforts, enhanced migrant protection and disruption of transnational organized crime. IOM will remain the development community's champion in strengthening Armenia's capacities to collect data on migration situations and strengthening systems for collection and management of high-quality and up-to-date data on border management, labour migration and work permit schemes, education and health migration, readmission and AVRR, as well as engagement of diaspora and use of remittances. IOM will also support the GoA efforts for integration of various administrative registers related to migration management (such as, the Population Register, BMIS, etc.) to increase coherence and consistency of data, and efficiency of migration management at large. IOM will contribute to further streamlining regular household surveys implemented by Armstat (e.g., ILCS and LFS) with international best practices and up-to-date methodologies for collection of migration data. IOM will support Armstat to develop and introduce a migration statistics compliance framework in line with the national quality assurance framework.

IOM will also strengthen the capacity of the GoA to analyze national and regional migration trends and feed the analysis into evidence-based migration policies and action plans at the local, national and regional levels. To fulfil the commitments on UNSDCF, IOM will continue supporting Armstat on SDG monitoring and enhancing the national indicator framework enabling tracking the progress towards migration national priority targets. In these efforts IOM will engage in, respond to, and report on international frameworks such as the GCM, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Immigration Border Management

IOM will continue its efforts towards strengthening immigration and border management frameworks, systems and capacities in Armenia. Following an integrated border management approach, IOM will support GoA to strengthen document security and identity management, including by promoting the safe use of biometrics and digitization efforts; data management and systems, such as risk analysis and passenger data exchange (through tools

such as Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record); interagency and international cooperation related to border management with due respect to data protection; border security, including airport security; and supporting the implementation of readmission agreements by promoting regularization and alternatives to immigration detention. IOM will particularly support the development and implementation of human rights-sensitive and gender-responsive integrated border management strategies, institutional optimization, and improvement of procedures, as well as deliver training for border guards and enhance information management and border infrastructure.

3.5. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

IOM Armenia follows a people-centred and participatory approach that is gender - and child-sensitive in all its activities, while emphasizing a holistic, decentralized and personalized, approach specifically to integration and reintegration assistance. It is committed to supporting governments and partners in upholding the human rights of migrants, regardless of their migration status, across all stages of the migration cycle and preventing violence and violations of human rights, especially in the healthcare sector, while endeavouring to eliminate all forms of discrimination against migrants and their families. IOM Armenia understands that persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups. It is further recognized that a person's sex, gender, and age shape every stage of the migration experience, whether forced, voluntary or somewhere in between. The roles, expectations, relationships and power dynamics associated with one's gender significantly affect all aspects of the migration process. It is therefore crucial to understand how gender interacts with migration and to respond accordingly. Given the gender-specific nature of migration, the following are central to the work of IOM Armenia: advocating for equal rights under the law in employment and mobility; addressing discriminatory migration practices; understanding how gender affects the type of migration undertaken; responding to how gender influences access to social services; economic growth, capacities, risks and vulnerabilities; promoting institutional reform; ensuring diversity and inclusiveness in consultations and participation in activities; and addressing how migration influences gender roles and relations. IOM Armenia is particularly committed to strengthening the capacity of the civil society in generating innovative and creative approaches to awareness raising and service delivery.

IOM recognizes that incidents of sexual harassment (SH) in the workplace can serve as indicators of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) against beneficiaries, and vice versa, and takes a mutually reinforcing approach to tackle both forms of sexual misconduct. SEA and SH by IOM personnel and its partners and service providers are not only serious misconduct but can be violations of human rights. SEA and SH are forms of sexual violence driven by gender inequality and imbalances of power. IOM is committed to addressing SEA and SH through effective prevention, risk mitigation, and response measures at all stages of programming across all types of interventions and within all IOM offices worldwide. IOM Armenia conducts regular mandatory training on IOM's standards of conduct and PSEAH and ensures that PSEAH key messages/information, communication and education materials are continuously shared with IOM personnel, partners, beneficiaries and communities. IOM Armenia integrates measures to protect beneficiaries from SEA across its interventions throughout the programme cycle, and raises beneficiary awareness on SEA, prohibited behaviours of IOM and humanitarian personnel, and how to report SEA. Safe and accessible feedback and complaint mechanisms are established, including mechanisms capable of

receiving sensitive complaints of SEA and referral pathways are in place to connect survivors to assistance. IOM Armenia is committed to support collective efforts to address SEA and is an active member of the UN Inter-Agency PSEA Coordination Group in Armenia and contributes to the implementation of the interagency PSEA Network Action Plan.

3.6. PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

IOM Armenia has been an active member of the UN coordination mechanism in the country led by UNRC and is committed to the delivery of interventions as 'One UN'. IOM participates as a standing member within the UNSDCF. In accordance with the "2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator"[65] and under the coordination of the Resident Coordinator's Office, IOM participates in all four UN Result Groups on UNSDCF and on the task force on Partnerships and Development Finance. Further, IOM acts as chair and secretariat for the newly formed UNMN, a focus for better coordination and leadership for joint UN efforts to address migration-related issues and needs. IOM and UNHCR also collaborate on specific joint projects within Armenia and strive to expand this cooperation over the coming years.

IOM Armenia will support the GoA in implementation of its commitment to stepping up the dialogue and cooperation with the EU on migration, asylum and border management with a comprehensive approach, paying attention to regular migration and to cooperation aimed at tackling irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking in human beings as well as efficiently implementing the readmission agreement under CEPA. Similarly, it will seek emergent opportunities to enhance policies, practices and protocols of regular labour migration, and to protect the rights of the migrants and returnees under the EAEU Agreement.

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[65]   https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/PartnershipAccelerator

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND DATA

With the continued growth of IOM, its entry into the UN system and role in global strategic frameworks, continuously addressing data and knowledge management in IOM is now more urgent than ever. In November 2020, IOM adopted a new Migration Data Strategy 2020-2025[66] to serve as a framework and guidance for IOM's action to improve own and Member States capacities to produce evidence-based policies, implementation, monitoring and reporting on relevant international frameworks. IOM Armenia is committed to promoting data and knowledge management and will invest in the collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate, reliable, disaggregated and comparable data; as well as ensuring that this data fosters production of statistics compliant with UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics,[67] research and knowledge products, guides coherent and evidence-based policymaking and well-informed public discourse, and allows for effective monitoring and evaluation of actions over time. IOM Armenia will build on the IOM Migration Data Strategy and use capacities built and lessons learned through IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre,[68] the DTM and the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative.[69] It will also build IOM Armenia staff capacities through access to training opportunities and sharing of good practices and lessons learned, and equip its office with the migration data analysis and policy support instruments needed to support UN and government partners to mainstream migration in the relevant frameworks, in line with the vision in the Global Compact for Migration to establish a Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub. IOM will also enhance capacities of the government partners, such as MS and Armstat, in data collection and statistics management.

4.2. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Globally, IOM continues to invest in improving monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) to better assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, impact, and sustainability of its projects, programmes, strategies and policies. IOM Armenia will strengthen knowledge and skills on MEL amongst staff, increase numbers of dedicated MEL staff and resources, consistently apply MEL policies and promote more joined-up, collaborative and innovative

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66   https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-migration-data-strategy-brief-informing-policy-and-action-migration-mobility-and
67   https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fp-new-e.pdf
68   https://gmdac.iom.int/
69   https://www.ctdatacollabourative.org

approaches to MEL in line with emerging good practice and the need to support the United Nations system in its reforms towards a more streamlined organization. IOM Armenia is committed to continuously work towards streamlining and integrating MEL systems across programs to ensure that data is effectively used for sharing knowledge, learning and best practices. IOM Armenia will continue building on MEL results to provide evidence-based findings in both the humanitarian response and the migration management response.

4.3. INNOVATION

IOM Armenia will continue developing innovative technologies to enhance its operational capacity in challenging situations. IOM Armenia will apply the organization-wide innovative tools to support programming, project design and implementation, and resource mobilization, taking into consideration the changing donor priority and stakeholder landscape in the field of migration in Armenia. It will engage closely with other field offices to identify, develop, and communicate best practices and innovations.

Acknowledging that the development of Armenia-Diaspora collaboration is a key priority of GoA;[70] recognizing that tapping into the intellectual potential, knowledge, skills, and professional networks of the Armenian diaspora can significantly contribute to the economic and social modernization of Armenia and its transformation into a knowledge and innovation-based economy,[71] IOM Armenia presently is developing an institutional approach for diaspora engagement. To support sustainable development and resilience-building in Armenia, it will also support complementary initiatives in the country regarding diaspora engagement through, e.g., financial investments and business partnerships, social remittances, and skills and expertise transfer, as well as the (temporary) return of qualified nationals. It will support the GoA in identifying and mapping the Diaspora's social and economic potential globally through policy advice; targeted methodologies to generate robust evidence; capacity building; and inventory of innovative solutions and tools. Specifically, it will support the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs in implementation of its relevant initiatives and in the operation of the newly-established 'Repatriation and Integration Centre'.[72]

Finally, building upon the positive experience of working with private stakeholders, IOM Armenia will reinforce the existing partnerships, in line with the IOM Private Sector Partnership Strategy. It will further explore new ones both with the private sector and academia in emerging areas, such as the linkages between food security, climate change and migration, access of foreign migrants to formal employment in Armenia, and social cohesion.

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70   Program of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (2021-2026). https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4737.pdf

71   UN Common Country Analysis for the Cooperation Framework and the 2030 Agenda. May 2020.

72   National Voluntary Review Republic of Armenia (Global Compact for Migration/GCM) Border Management.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

In Armenia, IOM's response is based on continued engagement with the national, provincial, and local governments, national and international partners, and direct engagement with migrants and local communities. IOM takes a comprehensive approach towards programming. This contextualized approach considers the need for adaptable interventions and coordination with a range of various stakeholders. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, its flexible and innovative approach allows IOM to continue responding to the needs of migrants, refugees, the host communities as well as national and local authorities. Moreover, as Armenia is becoming a country of destination and transit, IOM's work acknowledges differentiated needs and priorities, the rapidly changing context, and the ability of IOM to successfully transition back and forth between phases as required. This approach also recognizes potential future needs with regards to early recovery, climate action, and development programming. In synthesizing common programming elements, IOM ensures that cross-cutting issues are mainstreamed. The programming is integrated with relevant international frameworks across the areas of migrant protection and labour migration, immigration and border management, humanitarian assistance and resettlement. Moreover, the programming will consistently address the migration, environment and climate change nexus, based on research and data on migrant presence, needs, and flows.

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