

**LOCALIZATION AND
PARTNERSHIPS** IN IOM's
UKRAINE AND REGIONAL
RESPONSE 2024



CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND INTRODUCTION

The full-scale war in Ukraine entered its fourth year in 2025. The country continues to face widespread destruction and human suffering. Ongoing attacks along the frontlines and throughout the country have impacted civilian lives and essential services, exacerbating hardships from previous years. Critical infrastructure, including water, education, and healthcare, remains severely damaged, while the harsh winter has deepened vulnerabilities. As of February 2025, an estimated [3.7 million](#) people are internally displaced within Ukraine and around [6.3 million](#) have sought refuge in Europe. In total, [12.7 million](#) people in Ukraine are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, with [poverty levels rising](#) due to displacement. The crisis extends to neighbouring countries, where [2.1 million](#) refugees urgently require support, with many facing psychological distress, protection risks, and economic hardships.

In 2024, IOM reached over 2.2 million people across Ukraine and the neighbouring countries. IOM has been addressing the urgent needs of displaced persons, refugees, returnees, and host communities through a multi-sector programming approach, driven by the application of humanitarian principles. This includes life-saving aid, resilience-building, and efforts to mitigate long-term adverse impacts.

Notably, Ukraine and the region benefit from a robust network of skilled Local and National Actors (LNAs) with extensive expertise in migration and humanitarian work. Recognizing this potential, **IOM placed localization at the core of its response, making it a pivotal enabler of response efforts across Ukraine and the region.** IOM significantly increased funding transfers to LNAs since the start of the response, transferring over USD 51.2 million in funds between 2022-2024. In 2024 alone, IOM partnered with 198 LNAs (56 in Ukraine and 142




across the neighbouring countries) including NGOs, government bodies, academic institutions, and the private sector, marking a twofold increase in partnerships since the beginning of the response in 2022.

By fostering strong partnerships with LNAs, IOM's localization approach enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of its programming, supporting locally led humanitarian initiatives and enabling local ownership and leadership of the recovery process. These partnerships extended beyond service delivery, prioritizing LNA leadership and meaningful participation in programming through joint planning, shared decision-making, and mutual capacity strengthening. This approach has resulted in more tailored, context-specific, and efficient responses, ensuring greater impact and maximizing the value of invested resources.

Looking ahead, IOM remains committed to advancing the localization agenda and reinforcing its global dedication to the [Grand Bargain](#) principles. Localization for IOM is centered around five pillars - **partnerships/funding, capacity strengthening/mentorship, participation, coordination, and visibility/advocacy** - as outlined in the organization's [Localization Framework and Guidance Note](#) and the principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which advocates for more inclusive and locally driven humanitarian action. In line with these pillars, this thematic brief highlights the achievements of IOM's partners and IOM's efforts to strengthen their capacities across Ukraine and the regional response.

Building on the good practices and lessons learned in 2024, IOM aims to further enhance these efforts in 2025, fostering stronger partnerships and refining approaches to maximize impact and the sustainability of the response.

Partnerships in the Ukraine Response are formed across three interconnected areas, aligning with the priorities of the [IOM Global Strategic Plan \(2024-2026\)](#) and [IOM's Ukraine and Neighbouring Countries Strategic Response Plan \(2024 – 2026\)](#):

-  **Saving lives and protecting people on the move**
-  **Driving solutions to displacement**
-  **Facilitating pathways for regular migration**

In addition, aligned with the latest [Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan \(HNRP\)](#) and the [Regional Refugee Response Plan \(RRRP\) for 2025–2026](#), IOM fosters inclusive, context-specific, and sustainable responses with LNAs, contributing to wider UN-coordinated localization targets.



 **MOM**
ООН МІГРАЦІЯ

УКРАЇНА
БЛАГОДІЙНИЙ ФОНД
ДЖЕРЕЛО ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ

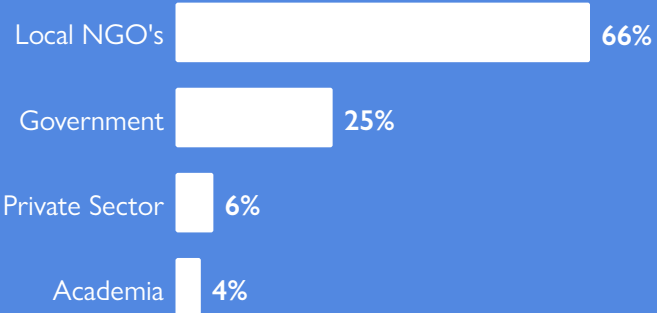
CFSR
UKRAINE
CHARITY FOUNDATION
SOURCE OF REVIVAL

ВСЯ
ГУМАНІТАРНА
ДОПОМОГА
НАДАЄТЬСЯ
БЕЗКОШТОВНО

Source of Revival (CFSR) helps families of internally displaced persons and other vulnerable categories with essential non-food items in the Kupiansk region, Ukraine © CFSR 2024

LOCALIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

198 local and national partners in 2024 (56 in Ukraine and 142 across the region)



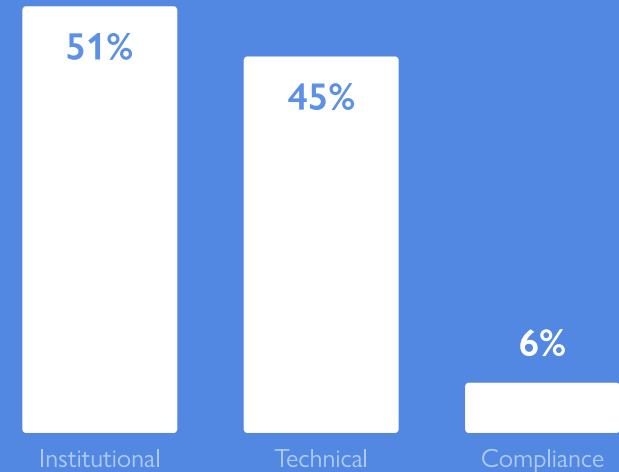
IOM Ukraine has formed 16 cooperation agreements with key ministries and built **24 oblast partnerships** to strengthen local response capacity

4% of operational funding is disbursed directly through partners across Ukraine and the region since February 2022, including:

- USD 2.7 million to women-led organizations
- USD 2 million to disability-focused organizations

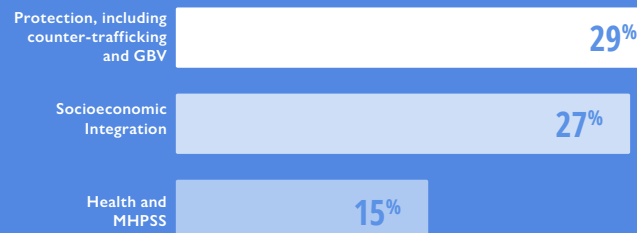


59% of partners received capacity strengthening from IOM in 2024



225 Ukrainian diaspora organizations engaged by IOM (190 in Ukraine and 35 across neighbouring countries)

TOP 3 SECTORS OF PARTNERSHIP



PILLAR 1

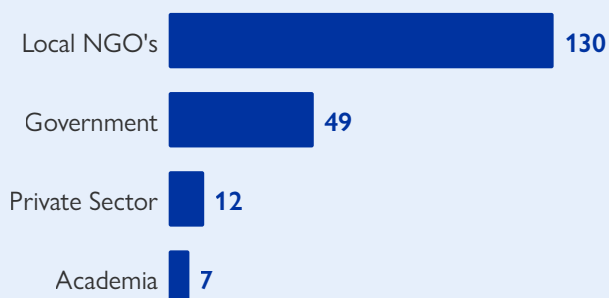
PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

PILLAR 1 PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

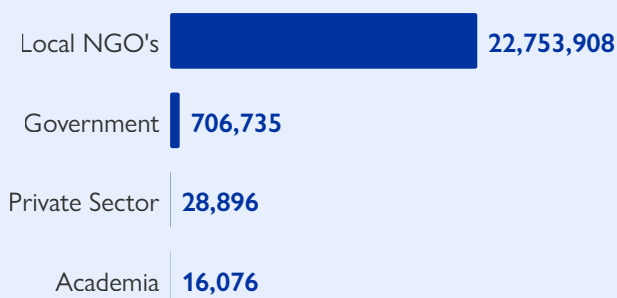
Since the onset of the full-scale war in February 2022, **IOM's partnerships with LNAs have grown significantly from 91 (in 2022) to 198 (in 2024) across Ukraine and the region.** To support these collaborations, IOM has disbursed approximately USD 51.2 million in operational funding directly to LNAs since February 2022

(USD 37.4 million in Ukraine and USD 13.8 million across neighbouring countries) and allocated significant resources to their capacity strengthening. Formal agreements were established with 83 per cent of the partnerships across Ukraine and the region.

Number of LNAs in 2024



Amount disbursed (USD) in 2024



The number of **local NGO partners** grew by 68 per cent between 2022 and 2024, reflecting IOM's continued commitment to strengthening locally led responses. These NGOs contributed invaluable local expertise, strong community connections, and extensive operational reach, ensuring that programming remained context-specific, adaptive, and impactful. Their proximity to affected populations fostered trust, credibility, and access. In 2024, civil society organizations (CSOs), including grassroots organizations, accounted for the largest share of IOM's partnerships.

Women-led and disability focused organizations

Ensuring diversity among LNAs is a key priority for IOM. Beyond traditional NGOs, IOM supports smaller grassroots organizations, helping them integrate into the broader migration agenda and establish a strong presence in the field. For instance, IOM actively partners with local organizations representing historically marginalised groups - including those focused on **women's empowerment and supporting persons with disabilities** - to ensure a comprehensive and community-driven response that does not favor any specific communities, tribes, ethnicities, or political groups.

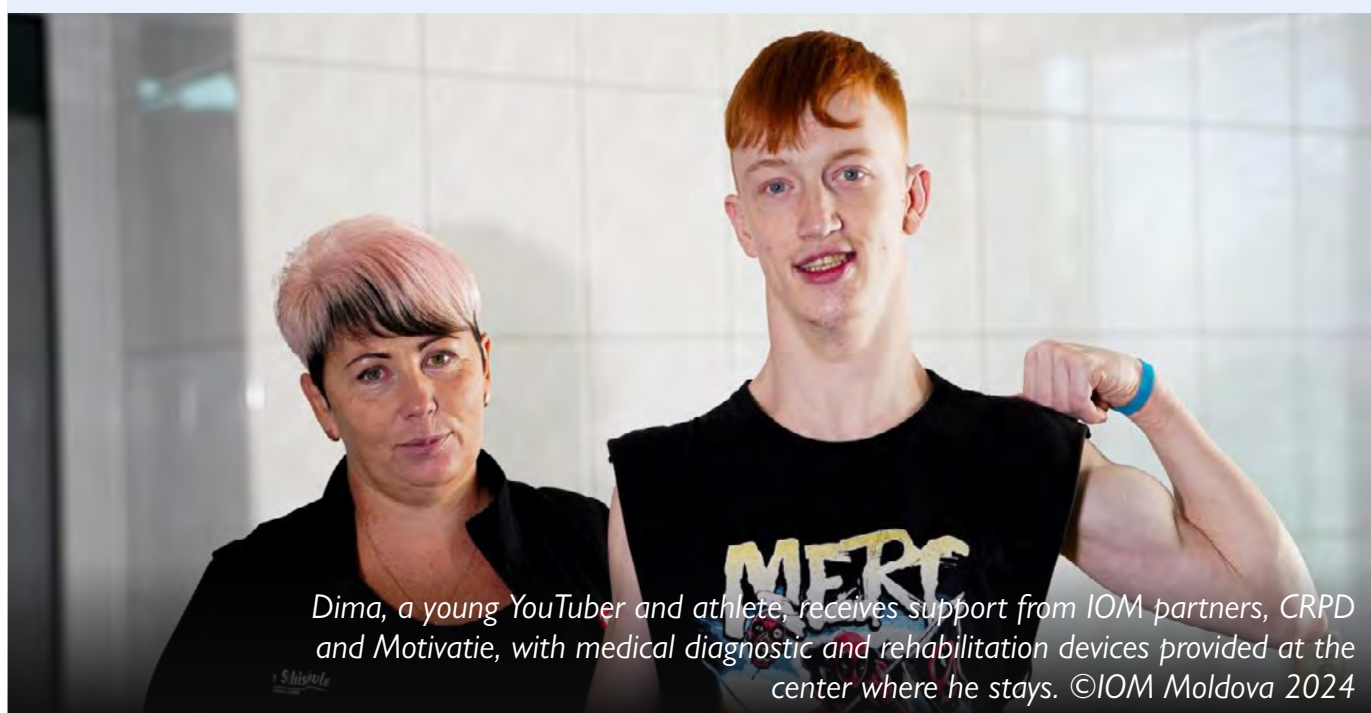
IOM in Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Moldova, Ukraine, Poland have partnered with 29 local Women-led and Women's Rights Organizations since 2022. Approximately USD 2.7 million was disbursed in grants since 2022, of which 41 per cent of these partnerships remained active in 2024. These partners amplified the voices of women, strengthened gender-responsive programming, and ensured that tailored assistance reaches the most vulnerable, including women and girls affected by displacement. In Ukraine, these organizations have primarily focused on protection, awareness-raising and outreach activities, counter-trafficking, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and women's rights and human rights violations, as well as supporting the NFI, shelter, and settlements sectors.

Similarly, across the refugee hosting countries, partnerships ensured that female refugees, who account for the largest proportion of the total refugee population, receive targeted assistance to address their specific needs, particularly in the areas of socio-economic inclusion, protection, and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

IOM across the region also partnered with 17 disability-focused organizations since the beginning of its response, with half remaining active partners in 2024. These partners have played a vital role as service providers, delivering targeted assistance and engaging in technical capacity strengthening initiatives. For example, in Moldova, ongoing partnerships with organizations such as [Motivatie](#), [Center for Rehabilitation and Counseling for Persons with Disabilities \(OSORC\)](#) and [Center for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) have been instrumental in promoting and providing participatory approaches for protection and social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Their key activities include organizational strengthening and mentorship through the [International OPD European Disability Forum](#), training on disability inclusion and communication, accessibility assessments of Reception and Accommodation Centers, legal and psychological support, adapted transportation, special dietary food, and community-based social activities.

Dima, 24-year-old Ukrainian refugee with cerebral palsy, fled Mykolaiv with his siblings and mother Iana after weeks of relentless bombing. Now, they are safely hosted at the Constructorul Health Rehabilitation / Refugee Accommodation Center in Chisinau, Moldova. *“With the great support we received, we created all the same conditions that Dima had at home in Ukraine,”* said Iana. The center, which supports people with severe disabilities, is critical for those needing specialized care. *“Having an elevator and additional facilities will greatly improve their lives and allow others to receive medical care and rehabilitation here,”* said Alexei Zlatovcen, the center’s director. In response, with the support of thorough accessibility assessments and recommendations provided by partners CRPD and Motivatie, IOM provided medical diagnostic and rehabilitation devices to the center and [is installing an elevator](#), access ramp, and adaptive rooms for people with disabilities. This collaborative support ensures safe and dignified care for displaced individuals like Dima.

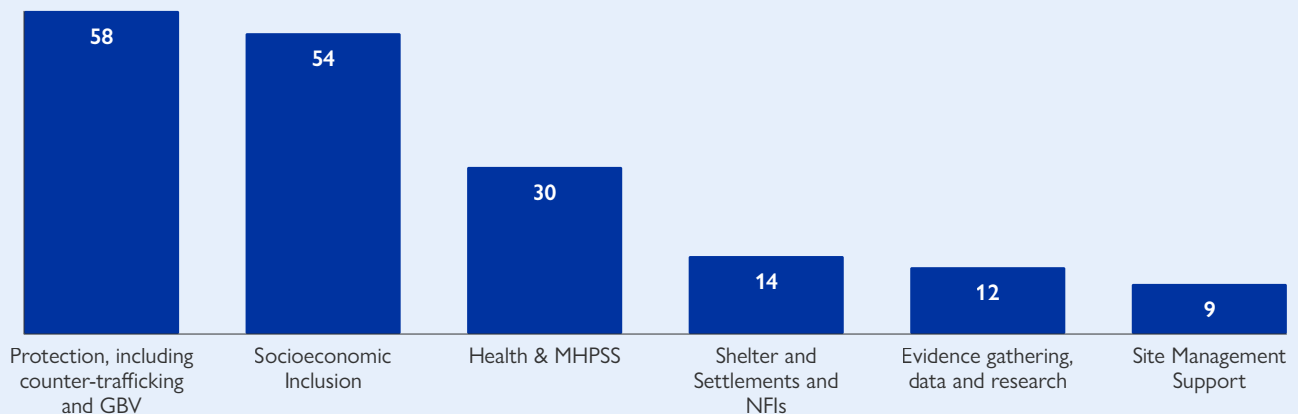
In addition, IOM in Moldova, and several refugee-hosting countries, are actively engaging with disability-focused organizations to ensure that programs across other sectors, such as cash-based assistance, can effectively address the unique barriers and needs of displaced persons with disabilities.



Dima, a young YouTuber and athlete, receives support from IOM partners, CRPD and Motivatie, with medical diagnostic and rehabilitation devices provided at the center where he stays. ©IOM Moldova 2024

PARTNERSHIPS BY SECTOR

Top sectors of partnership in 2024



The top sectors of partnerships with LNAs in 2024 were **protection (29%)**, **socio-economic inclusion (27%)**, **Health and MHPSS (15%)**, **shelter and NFIs (7%)**. These partnerships are in line with the evolution of IOM programming and the shifting needs of affected populations as evidenced through data-driven insights.

IOM collaborates with front-line actors, prioritizing early risk identification and managing context-driven service provision and referrals. This approach has fostered sustained collaboration with protection partners, reflecting the ongoing and significant demand for protection services throughout the region, as highlighted by existing data.

IOM Ukraine's June 2024 [report](#) revealed that over 50 per cent of 5,333 Ukrainians surveyed—including IDPs, non-displaced individuals, and returnees—faced potential indicators of labor exploitation, with the highest rates among men, young adults (18-24), and IDPs. Additionally, refugees across the region face similar persisting risks, including trafficking, exploitation and GBV ([UNHCR](#)). In 2024, 58 LNAs partnered with IOM to address critical protection needs, focusing on co-led awareness campaigns, legal aid, and capacity strengthening for local institutions to combat exploitation and enhance protection measures.

All-Ukrainian Coalition of NGOs Against Human Trafficking

The relationship between IOM Ukraine and the All-Ukrainian Coalition of NGOs Against Human Trafficking is a collaborative partnership rooted in the shared goals of combating trafficking and enhancing protection for vulnerable populations. IOM in Ukraine leverages the coalition's extensive network of 28 locally led NGOs with deep grassroots connections and specialized expertise in anti-trafficking initiatives. Together, they implement awareness-raising campaigns, provide critical services, and strengthen national and local capacities to address trafficking risks.

This partnership exemplifies IOM's localization approach, which prioritizes empowering local actors to lead interventions, ensuring sustainability, and fostering community-driven responses. Through joint efforts, such as the ["They Used You" campaign](#), IOM and the coalition address the evolving needs of displaced and at-risk populations while expanding access to protection services across Ukraine.

The number of LNAs in the region involved in socio-economic inclusion activities increased from 4 partners in 2022 to 46 in 2024, reflecting a significant shift in needs from emergency aid to medium- and long-term integration. This trend follows the increase in refugee numbers compared to 2023, with a notable rise in Temporary Protection (TP) registrations since May 2024 coupled with the increased trend of affected populations remaining in host countries rather than returning. Alongside this, integration

challenges were identified through [IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#) including language barriers, financial instability, long-term housing gaps, and limited access to employment opportunities. The nature of partnerships evolved to address these challenges, accordingly. LNAs have the deepest understanding of the context and the inclusion barriers within it. By collaborating with them, IOM has been able to design tailored, context-specific, social inclusion activities that best support recovery.

Co-designed initiatives with NGOs in the region

IOM Romania and [Banca Comerciala Romana \(BCR\) Social Finance](#) partnered to launch a flexible and adaptive grants programme in April 2024, designed to support small businesses owned by Ukrainian refugees and Romanian citizens employing Ukrainian refugees. This collaboration aimed to empower entrepreneurs, boost local economies, and create job opportunities for refugees across Romania. BCR Social Finance, a financial institution focused on social impact, managed the grant application process, evaluating 160 submissions with a custom-developed assessment grid to select 15 businesses for funding. IOM Romania provided hands-on support throughout the process, assisting beneficiaries with consultations, documentation, and grant facilitation. To further empower recipients, an online consultation session was held in July 2024, offering expert guidance on business plans and financial management. IOM also monitored the grants' impact, tracking business growth and ensuring alignment with recipients' plans.

The [programme's success has been highlighted through inspiring stories](#) showcasing how the grants have helped businesses thrive, foster local community development, and create meaningful employment opportunities for Ukrainian refugees. **This co-designed initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration and flexible funding in driving impactful, sustainable change.**

Similarly, IOM in Poland, in partnership with the [Batory Foundation](#), successfully implemented the Ukraine Solidarity Fund to support CSOs running collective shelters for refugees in Poland. The Batory Foundation, a leading Polish NGO focused on democracy, civil society, and human rights, served as the grant operator, managing the allocation of funds to organizations providing critical services. In 2023-2024, 15 CSOs received over 1.6 million Polish Złoty (PLN) to cover essential costs such as winter maintenance, utilities, food, and cleaning products for shelter residents. This directly benefitted over 1,500 refugees, ensuring safe housing and vital services, particularly during the winter months. The second phase of the project allocated over 2.1 million PLN to 14 CSOs. The partnership also focused on strengthening the Batory Foundation's institutional capacity, including the implementation of policies to PSEA training. Through this collaboration, a large number of local CSOs were reached, amplifying the impact of their support to vulnerable refugee populations.

The number of partnerships for NFIs and shelter, particularly in Ukraine, remained consistently high across the years, demonstrating the continued severity of the humanitarian crisis and importance of delivering assistance to meet basic needs. Ukraine accounted for 72 per cent of these partnerships in 2024, with LNAs responding to critical needs, amidst a harsh winter and continued hostility.

IOM Ukraine leveraged its extensive footprint and multisectoral operations in eastern Ukraine particularly through the NFI and WASH Common Pipeline, procuring,

transporting, prepositioning, and storing supplies for onward distribution by the network of 38 partners, of which 10 are INGOs and 28 are local and national NGOs. Notably, the pipeline program effectively prepositioned contingency stock that enabled rapid responses to partner requests within 24 to 72 hours. With 12.7 million people requiring humanitarian assistance in 2025, these efforts underscore the necessity of coordinated responses with local NGO's to ensure the continued delivery of essential goods and services.



Thanks to IOM Slovakia and partner Equita, Tetiana received an oxygen concentrator, which she couldn't have afforded otherwise. ©IOM Slovakia 2024

Leveraging local networks to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance

“Partnership with IOM is important and valuable, as it allows us to help the affected population of Ukraine not only in providing urgent aid, but also in building durable solutions to overcome the consequences of the conflict and support social stability in Ukraine.” - says Ms. Kateryna Melnykova, Deputy Head of the CSO Charitable Foundation [Source of Revival](#).

IOM partnered with the Source of Revival, **a local NGO with deep community ties in frontline areas that international organizations often struggle to reach**. The NGO's strong connections and understanding of local dynamics enabled IOM to deliver humanitarian aid, including NFIs, to the most vulnerable populations. Prioritizing individuals with limited resources, the partnership focused on those with restricted mobility and elderly individuals living alone. The Source of Revival's unique access facilitated comprehensive household surveys, ensuring aid reached those most in need in a timely and targeted manner. Additionally, Source of Revival provided home delivery assistance, transportation, and psychological support for the most vulnerable. By bridging access gaps and strengthening response efforts, this partnership demonstrates the critical role of local actors in effectively supporting communities during an escalating war.

Similarly, across critical transit points at the Polish-Belarusian border, IOM Poland partnered with [Fundacja Bezkres](#), [Egala](#), and [Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej](#) to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine. The collaboration resulted in the delivery of essential NFIs, food, clothing, and pre-medical aid to address urgent needs, along with access to ambulances and legal support. Enhanced field operations enabled better documentation and tracking of migrant movements, while regular coordination meetings among local humanitarian actors strengthened resource allocation and response efficiency. Upgrades to infrastructure, including electricity and monitoring systems in a partner warehouse, ensured secure and efficient supply management. IOM served as an intermediary between the grassroots organizations and local border authorities, fostering collaboration and building trust. These efforts laid a strong foundation for future humanitarian responses in the area.

Between 2022 and 2024, the number of IOM's partnerships with local health and MHPSS actors grew from 5 to 35. The nature of projects delivered through these partnerships reflect a shift from immediate individual assistance to long-term care, including wider community-based support and health system strengthening. [DTM data](#) collected from refugees from Ukraine, reveal persistent health and MHPSS needs, with 40 per cent of respondents citing access to medicines and health services as the main need, making it the second priority after financial needs.

Psychological impacts remain severe as shown by [DTM data in Ukraine](#), with the reported symptoms of depression as highest among IDPs (50%), followed by returnees (42%). In line with the emerging needs, specialized partners across Belarus, Moldova, Slovakia, Poland, and Romania, addressed chronic health issues, while in Ukraine, IOM expanded community support programs and trained local service providers. Efforts in Ukraine also targeted the reintegration of veterans, particularly those with disabilities, into civilian life.

Advancing context-driven health responses through LNA leadership

IOM in Moldova collaborates with the Ministry of Health under a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen inclusive healthcare for migrants, refugees, and local communities. This partnership advances migrant health policies, builds public health capacity, and aligns with national health priorities. Since 2022, IOM has donated 1.2 million USD in medical equipment to Moldova's health system, including the Oncology Institute, benefiting 3,000 Ukrainian refugees, and supported Tuberculosis treatment for third-country nationals, contributing to the successful care of six cases with Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis. IOM also launched a [breast cancer awareness campaign](#) in 2023 and 2024 in partnership with health providers across the country, reaching 600 refugee women and the wider local population to promote prevention and early detection.

In collaboration with the WHO, the Ministry of Health, and the National Health Insurance Company, IOM Moldova implements the EU4Health initiative to improve healthcare access for Ukrainian refugees. With 11 Ukrainian health mediators, the project has registered thousands of refugees with family doctors and conducted information sessions to boost service utilization. Efforts are aligned with Ministry of Health strategies to strengthen provincial hospitals and provide better care at the local level. Notably, IOM and the Ministry of Health are working to develop comprehensive migrant health policies focused on long-term sustainability, in line with the [humanitarian-development-peace nexus](#). Building on legal and cost assessments conducted by IOM Moldova, a detailed action plan is being crafted to integrate migrants into Moldova's health system. This collaboration aims to ensure equity, inclusion, and lasting impact on healthcare access and outcomes.

In Poland, the [Avalon Foundation](#) has supported people with disabilities and chronic illnesses since 2006. They provide rehabilitation services, medical and orthopedic equipment, food vouchers, and educational trips for both adults and children. Since July 2022, in collaboration with IOM Poland, the Avalon Foundation has assisted nearly 1,800 refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. *"When we first arrived in Poland, Oleksandra did not receive any physiotherapy because we didn't know where to ask for help in a new country. For someone living with disabilities, one year without physical exercise is a step backward,"* says Tetiana, mother of 12-year-old [Oleksandra](#) from Lviv, who has lower leg paralysis. They discovered the Avalon Foundation through social media. Now, Oleksandra receives physiotherapy sessions three times a week and has made friends with other children in therapy. IOM Poland aims to sustain collaborations with key health partners, such as Avalon, leveraging their healthcare expertise to address the needs of refugees.

Similarly, [Equita](#), an NGO based in Bratislava, Slovakia, provides health support to individuals who face barriers to accessing healthcare due to social exclusion, poverty, war, or other humanitarian crises. Services include health consultations, treatments, and referrals. Tetiana and her family fled Kharkiv, Ukraine, due to the war, eventually arriving at the Humanitarian Centre in Gabčíkovo, Slovakia. [Tetiana](#), struggling with frequent respiratory illnesses combined with seizures induced by the stress of losing her spouse, became dependent on medical treatment. Since January 2024, she had not been feeling well and the medical service at the Centre had closed. With vital support from its partner Equita, IOM Slovakia was able to donate Tetiana an oxygen concentrator to stabilize her health. IOM and Equita further organized joint health-awareness raising events in the Humanitarian Centre in Gabčíkovo, Skalica and Senec in early spring.



Three times per week, Oleksandra visits the Avalon Foundation to work with her physiotherapist, Barbara. © IOM Poland 2024

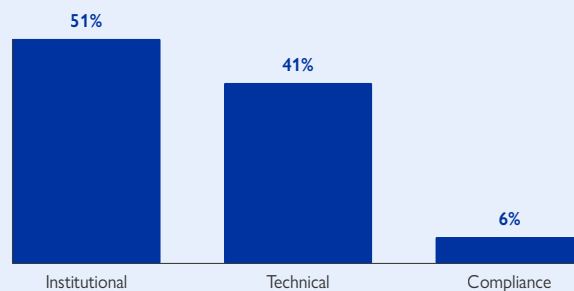
PILLAR 2

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND MENTORSHIP

PILLAR 2: CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND MENTORSHIP

As part of its commitment to the localization agenda, IOM has strengthened the capacities of LNAs to enhance operational effectiveness and promote sustainability. **In 2024, IOM supported 117 local partners across 10 country offices through capacity strengthening initiatives in technical, institutional, and compliance areas.** Key technical training areas included sector specific training (MHPSS, protection and border management) and programmatic functions such as reporting and monitoring as well as advocacy. Meanwhile, institutional capacity strengthening focused on investing in local actors' key priorities, such as financial management, enabling them to grow, become more resilient, and enhance their sustainability. Capacity strengthening of LNAs enabled them to grasp key concepts such as emergency coordination, humanitarian funding and humanitarian

Type of capacity strengthening delivered by IOM in 2024



principles, empowering their transition from aid recipients to active contributors in migration management.

Institutional capacity strengthening in Ukraine

With 15 years of experience in human rights, [‘Spring of Hope.Ukraine’](#) is a long-standing IOM partner in Ukraine. The Vinnytsia-based NGO focuses on human trafficking prevention, psychosocial adaptation of IDPs, reintegration, economic adaptation, information, psychosocial and protection assistance to vulnerable war-affected people. Alla Studilko, Head of Spring of Hope.Ukraine shares: *“This collaboration is notable not just for executing social initiatives effectively, but also for strengthening Spring of Hope.Ukraine as an organization and partner. With the assistance of IOM experts, the staff at Spring of Hope continually enhance their skills, which in turn, improves the quality of services provided. Localization, which is actively promoted by international organizations, provides both Spring of Hope.Ukraine and other partnering NGOs with the opportunity for internal growth, reaching new levels of interaction with partners and donors, gaining new experiences, and ultimately - the best possible response to socio-political challenges arising in the country.”*

In 2024 alone, IOM delivered over 630 hours of capacity strengthening activities designed to reinforce the organizations’ internal structures and ensure its adaptability in a rapidly changing environment.

These initiatives included, inter alia, mentorship, leadership training in times of uncertainty, and humanitarian-related trainings, ensuring that partners like Spring of Hope.Ukraine have the necessary knowledge to operate effectively within the humanitarian sector. Additionally, IOM provided onboarding training and strategic planning sessions, fostering collaboration and amplifying the organization’s collective impact through locally driven solutions. As part of this comprehensive support, Spring of Hope.Ukraine participated in a dedicated mentoring program, where team members honed leadership and negotiation skills, while also strengthening competencies in teamwork, emotional intelligence, and stress management.

These activities not only enhanced individual capacities but also contributed to the organization’s overall institutional growth, reinforcing its ability to navigate challenges and implement strategic, impact-driven initiatives.

By partnering closely with governments, IOM delivered tailored solutions aligned with national and local government plans. In 2024, IOM supported 49 government institutions at national, regional, and local levels to manage migration flows, deliver humanitarian assistance and recovery solutions, and build community resilience across Ukraine and the region. Of these, 22 per cent of government partners benefited from capacity strengthening initiatives. Through these efforts, IOM equips government bodies and stakeholders with the skills and resources to lead and sustain recovery initiatives. The goal is to contribute to systemic change, through fostering resilient and adaptive migration management systems that are sustainable.

Notably, IOM in Ukraine draws on 28 years of experience and established relationships with the Government of Ukraine at all levels to enhance its technical assistance role and support national and local development priorities. At the sub-national and local levels, IOM has developed

partnerships with all 24 oblasts (regions) across Ukraine, allowing for close collaboration with local authorities, oblast governors, mayors, and community leaders. This localized approach ensures that local needs and priorities are accurately identified and addressed, promoting context-sensitive solutions. This approach also fosters trust between local authorities and communities, while supporting the localization agenda by empowering local actors to take ownership of solutions.

In the Republic of Moldova, IOM's partnership with Ministry of Health is formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which strengthens IOM's role as the UN Migration Agency and Coordinator of the UN Migration Network. The MoU establishes a robust framework for future cooperation in areas such as migrants' health, travel health assistance, health promotion, and crisis-related health support.

Technical capacity strengthening

Oleksandr Krukmalov, the Project Manager at [Blagorob](#), a local NGO operating within the IOM Ukraine's Common Pipeline, shared: *"In the Kharkiv region, there are no shops, and no regular transport links to get to places where you can buy necessary goods. The IOM Common Pipeline Programme significantly increased the capacity to provide assistance in these areas. As for the evacuees, in most cases, people lost everything they had. In this case, the Common Pipeline Programme was most effective and timely. Capacity strengthening training by IOM was useful...our team learnt about the Pipeline Programme and the possibilities of transporting goods with the help of Logistics Cluster and ATLAS Logistique to deliver supplies. We deepened our knowledge on humanitarian principles and various aspects from distribution to reporting and post-distribution monitoring. Internal reporting forms were changed and improved."* Set up in collaboration with the Shelter-NFI and WASH clusters and operated by IOM in an optic of localizing humanitarian assistance, **the Common Pipeline programme has proven to be essential to enhance rapid response to emerging needs, especially in eastern and southern locations closest to the front line.**

Across the border, IOM's DTM team collected data from 16,342 Ukrainians crossing back into Ukraine ([IOM, DTM](#)). The data indicates that the majority of respondents, primarily women traveling with children, intended to stay in Ukraine for less than 30 days. The main reasons for returning included meeting family members, seeking medical treatment, obtaining or renewing documents and checking on property. This data highlights the continued pendular movements back and forth from Ukraine in the third year of the full-scale war. Families continue to be split between displacement and return – both within the country and from abroad – creating a degree of dynamism that calls for responsive and agile programming. Data also showed that Odeska region is recorded as the top oblast of return, bordering the Republic of Moldova. Against this reality, the need for strengthened border security coordination to protect refugees from Ukraine and host communities remains crucial.

IOM has supported localization efforts by **strengthening the technical capacities of border authorities** to manage migration effectively. Initiatives include modernizing central IT systems, such as Moldova's "Frontiera" and Ukraine's State Customs Service, enhancing border management processes and integration with European systems.

In Moldova, IOM provided essential equipment and training to border police, boosting preparedness for potential large-scale influxes. IOM is also strengthening and preparing cross-border operating environments for consistently protection sensitive approaches. Trainings have been delivered to border authorities in neighbouring countries such as Moldova and Poland on intercultural communication, combatting corruption, stress management, fundamental rights, identification and safe and ethical referrals of vulnerable migrants to assistance. In addition, perception surveys with border communities and ongoing community engagement and policing seek to build social cohesion and prevent conflict where communities are hosting large numbers of displaced people.

In 2024, IOM deepened engagement with the Ukrainian diaspora to support localization and recovery efforts with 225 Ukrainian diaspora organisations engaged across Ukraine and the region.

Notably, at the [2024 Ukraine Recovery Conference \(URC\)](#), the Ukrainian World Congress called for active diaspora involvement in rebuilding efforts, aligning with IOM's commitment to connecting the diaspora, host countries, and Ukraine. IOM joined five multistakeholder alliances, including the [SME and Skills Alliances](#), to engage the diaspora in reconstruction, promote qualifications recognition for returnees, and develop training programs for displaced

Ukrainians. The diaspora have strong connections with refugee communities and can deliver more context-sensitive assistance. With this, IOM has supported capacity strengthening and knowledge-sharing with diaspora agencies by enhancing their skills in areas like emergency coordination, migration policy, and development. The aim is to help diaspora agencies become active contributors to migration management and development. The knowledge gained is shared across transnational networks, broadening the impact of these efforts to new audiences in both their countries of origin and residence.

Diaspora in Czechia

IOM Czechia and [Palacký University in Olomouc \(UPOL\)](#) launched a [specialized course on post-conflict reconstruction](#) to empower 28 Ukrainian nationals living in Czechia with the skills and knowledge needed for Ukraine's future development. The curriculum provided a comprehensive blend of UPOL's academic expertise and practical insights from IOM's global experiences in similar projects. *"I have been involved in volunteer activities since my studies in Ukraine and continued in Czechia. One of the most useful skills and knowledge I have obtained has been the expertise to write and implement grants. This course was incredibly beneficial, more so than similar courses I took in Ukraine, particularly because it focused on EU-supported projects. I am now better equipped to contribute to my country's recovery,"* shared [Valerij](#), a course participant.

Looking ahead, both IOM and UPOL see the potential for expanding and continuing the programme, not only equipping more people with valuable knowledge and skills but also facilitating cooperation with participants through global projects, internships, and other means. Similar capacity strengthening initiatives directly targeting diaspora organizations and contributing to the Skills Mobility Partnership are being explored by other refugee-hosting countries.

The IOM mission in Czechia is also **leveraging the strong connections between Ukrainian diaspora and refugee communities to deliver more context-sensitive assistance**. For example, IOM delivered technical training on Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and institutional capacity strengthening sessions on financial health, debt prevention, and effective social media use for 75 individuals from Ukrainian diaspora organizations. Additionally, the mission facilitated information sessions for Ukrainian refugee communities delivered by the diaspora organization - Ukrainian Initiative - to disseminate current and accurate immigration-related information in their native language to Ukrainian refugee populations, reinforcing the critical role of diaspora in localized humanitarian action.

PILLAR 3

PARTICIPATION

PILLAR 3: PARTICIPATION

In addition to collaborating with service delivery partners, IOM has spearheaded participatory processes involving LNAs across Ukraine and the region to inform program design and throughout the project cycle. This includes the active involvement of local partners, governments, and communities, ensuring that LNAs and affected populations contribute invaluable knowledge and expertise. Their engagement ensures that IOM's interventions are contextually relevant, sustainable, and effectively address local needs.

A key mechanism for fostering local participation in the Ukraine response are the [Accountability to Affected Populations \(AAP\)](#) systems established throughout all countries involved in the response. IOM's approach to AAP, as outlined in the organization's [AAP framework](#) emphasizes transparency, responsiveness, and inclusivity. Across the response, teams are committed to integrate AAP throughout the design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation stages of projects. Several safe, confidential, efficient, and accessible Complaint and

Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) have been established, enabling affected individuals to provide feedback or lodge complaints through various channels. These include websites, direct phone lines, social media channels, office emails, information centers, face-to-face interactions, and participation in working and coordination groups involving migrant organizations. Importantly, information materials informing beneficiaries of their rights and services available to them, including CFMs (posters, leaflets, videos, social media messages, TV etc.) were adapted for different population groups, including those with disabilities, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness. Highlights in AAP during 2024 include:

- 12 dedicated AAP focal points established across the Ukraine and regional response
- 109 IOM staff were trained on AAP fundamentals
- 17 partners benefitted from AAP technical training delivered by IOM
- 78 CFMs established across Ukraine and the region

Migrant Hotlines

IOM ensures targeted, community-focused assistance by **maintaining 21 hotlines across Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia**. These hotlines not only promote safe migration practices but also serve as a critical AAP mechanism, enabling beneficiaries to provide feedback, voice concerns, and seek support regarding IOM assistance. By integrating these hotlines into a broader framework of participatory and accountability-focused approaches, IOM strengthens its commitment to ensure affected populations are involved in implementation processes through acknowledging their needs and challenges and fostering trust through transparent and responsive programming. For example, in Ukraine, IOM receives thousands of inquiries each week and significant efforts have been made to institutionalize community participation throughout its programming. Alongside the established CFM, IOM Ukraine set up a dedicated multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) website in 2023, enabling beneficiaries to rapidly check the status of disbursements, ensuring they have timely access to critical information.

In Belarus, to ensure that information about IOM's assistance reaches potential beneficiaries, IOM supports the hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking, which is maintained by its partner NGO, the [Business Women Club](#). The toll-free hotline provides information and consultations on various issues related to travel and stay abroad, such as employment, education abroad, visa issues, and useful contact information, among other areas. The hotline has also played a crucial role in referring refugees and migrants to available in-country services, including those provided by IOM. In 2024 alone, the hotline facilitated over 5,000 consultations, providing critical assistance to Ukrainians and their friends or relatives staying in Belarus, as they navigate displacement challenges.

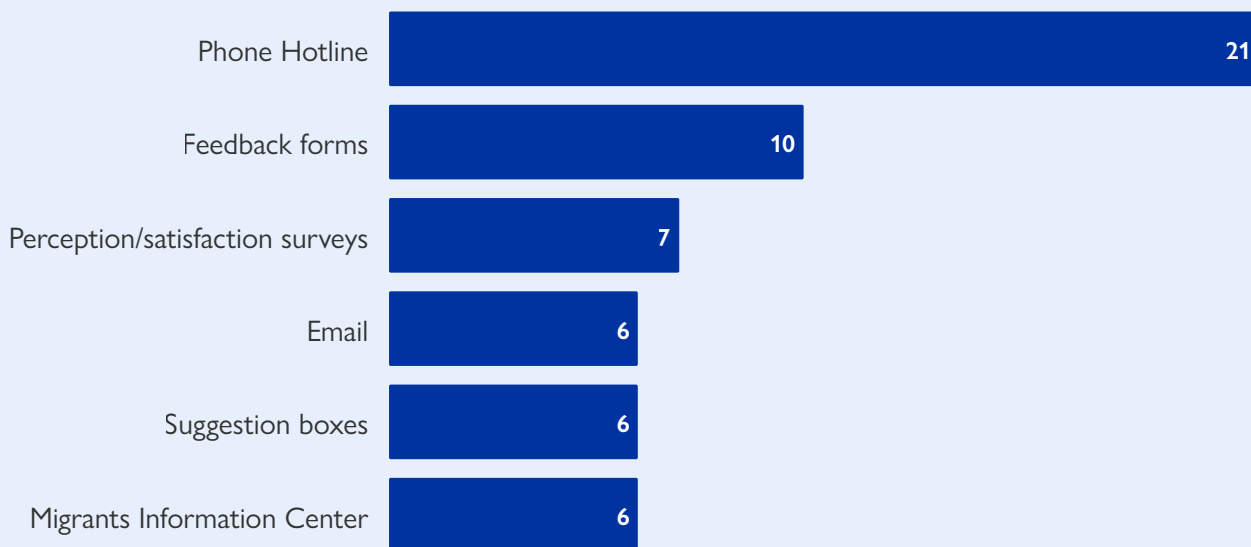


Staff from the NGO “Business Women Club” operating a hot-line and providing critical information to refugees from Ukraine. © IOM Belarus 2024

IOM Poland's AAP efforts, exemplified by the launch of the "We Hear You" complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) in May 2024, have significantly enhanced community participation in programming. The CFM, implemented across all locations where IOM Poland operates, aimed to improve accountability by providing an effective system for beneficiaries to submit feedback. Focal Points, designated in various program areas, played a crucial role in facilitating the feedback process, serving as liaisons between beneficiaries and IOM. These Focal Points received both face-to-face AAP training and online IOM institutional training, ensuring a well-informed and responsive team.

Monthly meetings were held to discuss challenges and share insights on the CFM's implementation and feedback received. Since its implementation in May 2024, 433 feedback entries were collected, with 78 per cent of submissions coming from women and 21 per cent from men. Most of the feedback (20%) focused on individual assistance, including requests for support with medical documents, medical equipment, and rehabilitation needs. Of the feedback received, 60 per cent was addressed and closed, while 17 per cent remained ongoing due to the complexity of the issues and need for additional information. Feedback led to several program adjustments, including the continuation of partnerships with LNAs for short-term accommodation and changes to community engagement activities to better reflect beneficiaries' needs. The collected feedback also highlighted the scale of demand for financial support and highlighted the necessity of flexible funding solutions, driving further improvements in IOM Poland's programming.

Top Channels for Collecting Feedback



In efforts to expand the mechanisms by which IOM fosters participation, IOM prioritizes partnerships that **empower local and national government authorities, as well as community actors, to lead resilience-building and recovery efforts**. In Ukraine and the region, these partners hold a strong understanding of local risks, challenges, and capacities, and can effectively and meaningfully engage with their local communities. IOM also ensures that planning and implementation processes remain accountable, evidence-based, and responsive to community needs. A cornerstone of this approach is **IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)**, which

has been instrumental in providing critical data and insights to guide programming efforts across Ukraine and the region. In addition to capturing the perspectives of affected populations, DTM leverages information from local actors, including municipal leaders, local authorities, and other key informants, further strengthening the response's relevance and sustainability. Lastly, IOM goes beyond involving LNAs in implementation by adopting a **community-based planning approach**, particularly in Ukraine, which is rooted in locally driven solutions. This approach emphasizes equitable collaboration through co-design, co-implementation, and co-evaluation.

Locally driven inclusion and recovery solutions

IOM's Transition and Recovery work in Ukraine has significantly contributed to enhancing local governance, improving public services, and fostering economic recovery through community-driven projects. Operating across 15 oblasts, IOM has capacitated diverse local actors to engage their communities through collective recovery efforts, including local authorities, civil society organizations, service providers, veterans, youth, and IDPs. Thematic areas of training and workshops included topics from community cohesion and recovery, veterans' reintegration, mental health and psychosocial support, and reparations for war-affected populations. Notably, **57 local action plans have been designed by selected communities (hromadas)** themselves in 2024 which outline targeted initiatives that aim to contribute to increased resilience, social cohesion, and sustainable recovery at community-level. These initiatives include equipment and rehabilitation of educational institutions, health facilities and public service centres.

For example, IOM is implementing the Hromada Reconstruction and Empowerment Facility (HREF) across 25 communities in 12 regions of Ukraine. The program focuses on mapping CSOs, facilitating CSO self-assessments, providing mentorship and capacity strengthening, and distributing small grants to over 50 CSOs. IOM has already established 25 community planning groups with 455 members, 83 per cent of whom have been trained in community-based planning, alongside 119 local leaders trained in recovery planning and data analysis. Notably, four MoUs with diaspora groups have been signed to explore co-funding opportunities. Importantly, the activities that CSOs will implement will be aligned with the ongoing community-based planning exercises, contributing to recovery documents.

Similarly in the region, community-based planning is central to IOM's approach, involving refugees and host communities in decision-making through needs assessments and feedback mechanisms. A participatory approach was at the core of IOM Romania's partnership with Bucharest Municipality to promote the social inclusion of Ukrainian and other migrant and refugee communities. Through close collaboration, a **Migrant and Refugee Inclusion Strategy** was developed, informed by extensive engagement with local actors, such as the Municipality's directorates, the General Inspectorate for Immigration, universities, civil society organizations, and migrant communities. The development of the strategy included organizing stakeholder meetings and conducting a survey to gather direct input from migrants and refugees, providing valuable insights into their needs and challenges at the local level. The process not only enhanced coordination among stakeholders but also clarified the roles and responsibilities of local service providers in the strategy and deepened their understanding of migrant priorities. In June 2024, a workshop brought together local authorities, police, and other key actors to review the draft strategy.

IOM identifies LNAs who are respected and trusted by their communities, promoting meaningful collaboration with beneficiaries through active consultations, participatory processes and CFMs. In Hungary, IOM partnered with Menedék – [Hungarian Association for Migrants](#) to support displaced Ukrainians in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, a critical border region. Menedék focused on combating isolation and promoting social cohesion and facilitated over 186 visits and events that reached 890 participants. Project beneficiaries valued the regular community-building activities facilitated by Menedék, as they provided a sense of connection and alleviated the isolation they had experienced since arriving in Hungary.

PILLAR 4

COORDINATION

PILLAR 4: COORDINATION

In 2024, 26 coordination mechanisms were led or co-led by IOM (19 in Ukraine and 7 across the region), and several of these structures are co-led with NGOs, CSOs and governmental entities. For example, under the Protection Working Group, IOM co-chairs the [Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force for the Ukraine Refugee Response](#) with UNODC, creating a comprehensive platform that integrates the expertise and operational capacities of key stakeholders, including NGOs such as [La Strada International](#). With a platform comprising 32 organizations with established presence in 24 European countries, La Strada International plays an indispensable role in shaping the task force's strategies, ensuring that anti-trafficking interventions are informed by real-time, localized insights from affected regions. This structure underscores IOM's commitment to localization by empowering grassroots actors to actively participate in the design, implementation, and monitoring of anti-trafficking measures. The task force's collaborative approach is instrumental in addressing the heightened risks of trafficking associated with war in Ukraine, aligning global frameworks with the nuanced realities of displaced populations and vulnerable groups. Through this mechanism, IOM continues to drive targeted, context-sensitive responses to combat trafficking in persons within the scope of the Ukraine response.

Notably, [DTM data](#) was used as a tool to enhance localization by ensuring that the needs and preferences of affected populations were central to humanitarian

programming. DTM continuously amended its data collection to respond to the most pressing data needs in each country. In early 2024, IOM in the region made modifications to key surveys, including the 'Survey with Refugees in the Ukraine Response Region' and 'Crossings Back to Ukraine,' to incorporate durable solutions-related and AAP indicators. This approach not only ensured that the most relevant data was gathered but also resulted in more context-sensitive and accountable humanitarian interventions in the Ukraine response region. Additionally, by integrating DTM outputs into major frameworks and mechanisms, IOM ensured that the voices and needs of displaced populations were central to the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance. Since the beginning of the response, **DTM operations were active in 9 affected countries in 2024, and the data was used to inform and provide insights that shaped several key frameworks**, including the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment that feeds into the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP), and Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), as well as informing governmental stakeholders and academic research institutions. DTM data also guided decision-making within Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) clusters and national coordination platforms, helping sectoral working groups refine interventions for shelter, protection, and livelihoods. Additionally, DTM insights supported evidence-based advocacy, enabling donors to prioritize areas with the most pressing needs.



DTM survey conducted in Ukraine by IOM staff. © IOM 2024

PILLAR 5

VISIBILITY AND ADVOCACY

PILLAR 5 VISIBILITY AND ADVOCACY

IOM is committed to recognizing and promoting the visibility of LNAs as integral partners in its programming. This dedication is embedded in IOM's strategic documents, including [Crisis Response Plans](#), [Migration Crisis Operational Frameworks](#), project proposals, media and communications materials, and progress reporting against key appeals, such as [IOM's Strategic Response Plan for Ukraine and Neighbouring countries](#) (SRP), [Regional Refugee Response Plans \(RRRPs\)](#) and [Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans](#) for Ukraine. Across its operations, IOM ensures that LNAs are prominently recognized, with visibility efforts integrated into programme design, implementation, and monitoring. These efforts are supported by dedicated

budgets and tailored strategies by communication focal points across the response.

IOM employs a variety of mechanisms to promote its LNAs recognizing their proximity to and deep understanding of affected populations. These mechanisms include visibility materials (banners, posters, brochures, branded items), joint campaigns, human interest stories, co-branded public information products, and media engagements. IOM also provides opportunities for LNAs to share their expertise through events and workshops, while field visits and media documentation to highlight the impact of their work. This approach ensures LNAs are recognized as key contributors to IOMs Ukraine and regional response.

Migrant Resource Centres

26 Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), operated by IOM in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania, serve as critical hubs for advancing migrant empowerment, protection, and inclusion. These centres are deeply embedded within the local migration and welfare ecosystem, working closely with government authorities and municipal stakeholders through formalized partnerships and coordination platforms. Initially established prior to the Ukraine war, MRCs have since scaled up their operations in collaboration with LNAs, to provide enhanced services, supporting refugees and addressing the socio-economic needs of migrants and host communities alike.

Importantly, MRCs serve as platforms for NGOs to actively contribute to the broader migration ecosystem. To ensure community-level recognition, IOM showcases its partners in MRCs and similar community spaces by displaying their leaflets and events, fostering an environment where community members can learn about and directly connect with partner organizations. By providing dedicated spaces for NGOs to operate and collaborate, hosting joint events and co-producing strategic communications that highlight the work of local partners, MRCs amplify the impact of NGOs.

For example, in Estonia, the Tallinn Migration Center—managed by the Tallinn City Municipality—integrates IOM's efforts into the national migration framework. IOM partners with the [Estonian Human Rights Centre \(EHRC\)](#) which operates within the MRC and ensures comprehensive legal assistance on employment rights and the prevention of labor exploitation. In Lithuania, IOM's Migration Information Center ("[MiCenter](#)") has become a cornerstone for collaboration in the refugee response, working alongside key partners such as Red Noses, Caritas, the Order of Malta, the Red Cross, Save the Children, the Lithuanian Refugee Council, and Artscape. In 2024 alone, IOM's MiCenter hosted activities for 12 partners, facilitating over 100 events attended by more than 1,000 participants. MRCs across several other refugee hosting countries also provide space, resources, and visibility to NGOs in a similar way.

The MRCs also serve as hubs for knowledge sharing and interaction, offering spaces for locally-led events that bring communities together and highlight collective achievements. Photo and video documentation spotlight the direct impact of locally-led activities, while creating opportunities to feature the unique stories of beneficiaries and communities.

This multifaceted approach ensures that LNAs are celebrated as essential contributors to IOM's Ukraine and regional response.

Moving forward, IOM remains committed to fostering strong partnerships, amplifying the voices of local and national actors, and adapting its strategies to meet the evolving needs of people in need. By continuing to highlight the critical contributions of partners and investing in innovative visibility and engagement efforts, IOM ensures

that the collective impact of humanitarian, development and recovery initiatives is both recognized and strengthened. Together with its partners, IOM will strive to build resilient communities and pave the way for sustainable peace in Ukraine and the region.



Laura Juodakytė, an experienced attorney who established a law firm in Lithuania, provides specialized legal services to refugees from Ukraine at IOM Lithuania's Migrant Resource Center "MiCenter". © IOM Lithuania 2024

ENHANCING FUTURE PARTNERSHIPS

To foster and sustain impactful partnerships, IOM actively seeks feedback from partners to improve both current and future collaborations. In 2024, IOM in Ukraine consulted with current, former, and potential partners to gather insights into their experiences working with IOM. Partners expressed the value of their collaborations and shared their positive experiences, while also providing suggestions for improvement.

For example, key lessons learned include streamlining reporting and due diligence processes, particularly for smaller grassroots organizations, to ease the administrative requirements and speed up processes. IOM is developing Standard Operating Procedures to simplify these processes and provide clearer guidelines, alongside enhancing onboarding training to ensure partners fully understand the requirements and expectations from the start. Partners also expressed a desire to be more involved in the project design phase. To address this, IOM will ensure mechanisms are in place to foster collaboration during project or intervention planning, such as, co-design workshops, joint planning sessions, partner involvement in advisory committees or steering groups, shared resource platforms, participatory monitoring and evaluation involving partners, stakeholder mapping and engagement plans.

A suggestion was also made for greater flexibility in funding to support partner independence and long-term sustainability. IOM aims to foster multi-year engagement, providing partners with the time and resources needed to refine their strategies and strengthen institutional capacity. In addition, advocating for sufficient resources to provide holistic support to partners will be further prioritized to support their internal systems for sustainable growth.

In refugee-hosting countries, IOM follows a similar approach, with regular feedback from partners helping to refine localization strategies. For example, in Moldova, IOM organized regular workshops throughout the year to strengthen coordination, facilitate information sharing, promote best practices, and gather feedback from NGOs working on protection. During these workshops, some NGOs requested greater flexibility in providing protection assistance, while others highlighted the need for funding to support staff welfare, which was subsequently incorporated into their contracts. Additionally, these meetings provided an opportunity to identify key issues, which IOM raised with inter-agency working groups in cases where NGOs were unable to attend. In Hungary, IOM improved its implementation partner preselection process by integrating a comprehensive risk assessment that evaluates the capacity and impact of potential partners. Through capacity strengthening workshops with partner grantees, IOM ensured that they are well-informed about the reporting and administrative requirements and are equipped to meet them, to maximize program effectiveness. Similar approaches are applied across other refugee-hosting countries, particularly those implementing grant schemes for local organizations.

Looking ahead, IOM will maintain regular consultations with partners to consistently monitor and refine its localization efforts across the five key pillars outlined in the [Localization Framework and Guidance Note](#): partnerships/funding, capacity strengthening/mentorship, participation, coordination, and visibility/advocacy. This ongoing dialogue will support continuous improvement and enhance the effectiveness of IOM's initiatives.



IOM facilitates multi-stakeholder roundtables on migrant and refugee integration in Poland, bringing together government, academia, and civil society to discuss the role, needs, and responsibilities of host communities in the integration process. @ IOM Poland 2025



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IOM AND
THE UKRAINE CRISIS RESPONSE

