Through its technical cooperation on migration (TCM) activities, IOM supports and assists in the development and implementation of projects and programmes focusing on strengthening the capacity of governments, and at times NGOs and other actors, to more effectively manage migration. Technical cooperation projects address core concerns of migration governance such as policy, legal framework and operational systems, and extend into areas linking migration and development, particularly activities to help ameliorate root causes of economically-induced migration. In strengthening capacities, IOM seeks to complement and enhance national, bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation efforts, and to enable and expand dialogue, planning and practical cooperation among affected governments on the migration continuum. The goal of IOM in the field of technical cooperation is to strengthen, through active partnership, the capacity of governments and other relevant actors to meet their migration challenges in a comprehensive, cooperative and ultimately self-reliant manner.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, 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
- Work towards effective respect of the human dignity and well-being of migrants.
Why the Emphasis on Improved Migration Management?

Migration management is becoming an increasingly complex area of governance, inextricably linked to issues of economic and social development, human rights, security, stability and regional cooperation. The ability to address migration issues comprehensively and cooperatively is today a fundamental requirement for responsible national governance, effective international relations and full participation in international or regional institutions.

The challenges facing governments are complex and include: reducing irregular migration, promoting the rights of migrants, protecting the most vulnerable, reducing economic pressures that influence outward migration, and directing regular migration towards strategic national goals. A particularly urgent challenge is that of dismantling transnational criminal networks engaged in the smuggling of migrants, as defined by the Palermo Protocols.

While the prevailing view is that migration has, in the main, been a positive force for development in both countries of origin and destination, unregulated migration can have social, financial and political costs for the individual, society and governments alike. Some countries may experience more negative than positive effects, particularly where there is a debilitating loss of national talent in certain sectors.

Effective migration management is thus increasingly a matter of effective joint management among states – identifying, shaping and working towards the achievement of shared goals. Yet, while all states have a strong interest in better-managed systems, their goals may be quite divergent. For some, a primary goal may be to facilitate the free movement of their nationals abroad for work and family reunification; for others, the principal goal may be to limit this movement where it takes place outside normal channels. Equally important are the variant capacities to manage migration. Even the best-articulated national policies and operational systems can be significantly limited by differences and limitations in other states’ systems.

Comprehensive, transparent and coherent approaches to the management of migration, involving all countries along the migration continuum, can help minimize the negative impact of migration and preserve its integrity as a natural social process. IOM is increasingly called upon to help governments reach those shared goals and, in partnership, to devise workable approaches. IOM’s technical cooperation activities help concerned states and other actors build both the means and ends of that cooperation.

Mandate and Goal

IOM is mandated by its Constitution to undertake technical cooperation to build government capacity in migration management. The goal of IOM in the field of technical cooperation is:

To strengthen, through active partnership, the capacity of governments and other relevant actors to meet their migration challenges in a comprehensive, cooperative and ultimately self-reliant manner.

TCM Areas of Work

The goals of governments and other actors in migration management change over time in nature and in priority. IOM endeavours to quickly respond and direct its technical cooperation activities and resources towards new areas of emphasis and, through discussion and analysis with key actors and counterparts, contributes to shaping and re-shaping migration management agendas. The activities pursued under this approach have changed in recent times in response to emerging national and regional needs, and are continuously evolving to meet new migration challenges on the international level. Current priorities include: harmonization of national policies and practices internally and within regional contexts towards common international norms; reduction of irregular migration and smuggling; improved management of regular migration; strengthening of the protection of human rights of migrants; and enhancement of international cooperation.

The IOM technical cooperation approach to meeting these goals can be summarized under the following five areas of TCM activity.

1. POLICY, LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK REVIEW AND UPDATING

IOM assists governments and other agencies that seek to review and update their policy, legal and administrative frameworks in response to increasingly complex migration scenarios, and in light of the heightened need for cooperative approaches to managing migration.

IOM’s approach is often multi-ministerial in nature, and can focus on a specific problematic migration issue or the broad range of framework issues underpinning overall migration management.

These programmes and projects aim to achieve, in partnership with host governments, the development of laws, regulations, policies and management structures based on international best practices and specific national needs. Often these initiatives are coupled with complementary actions in the area of training and operational system improvements.

Example: The Comparative Study of Migration Legislation and Practice for the Irish Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform supports the Department’s efforts in developing comprehensive immigration legislation and procedures by drawing lessons from the experience of other countries.

The study addresses the following issues: visas and other pre-entry clearance systems, entry controls, enforcement measures, residence permits, labour immigration systems, immigration for study and research, administrative structures, integration, mechanisms for review of immigration decisions, and nationality matters.
2. IMPROVEMENT OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS

IOM TCM activities contribute to improved operational systems that underpin and enable effective migration management. These can include travel document issuance systems, data systems related to migration, and border management technologies. Some of these projects will utilize IOM’s inter-governmental character to enable development of joint or complementary systems in two or more countries sharing a common migration space. Wherever possible, activities in this area are interwoven with policy and legal frameworks, training and human resource development, and other major areas of TCM emphasis.

Example: IOM assists the Government of Ecuador in modernizing the Ecuadorian passport and improving the national issuance system. The resulting machine-readable Ecuadorian passport will have enhanced security features. In addition to producing and issuing the new passport, the project seeks to enhance the integrity of the issuance process across the various national issuance and registration points in order to reduce the incidence of document fraud. In an anticipated future phase, the project is to be extended to Ecuadorian consulates in countries with a high number of Ecuadorian nationals.

Example: In Georgia, IOM works with the government in establishing a computerized system of traveller and document inspection at international checkpoints. The programme of work assists the government in establishing and maintaining the central data structure, in rolling out the system to air, land and sea borders, in upgrading software and hardware, and in designing and delivering the complementing staff training components.

3. TRAINING AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

A primary strategy in IOM programming is the strengthening of the human resource base for migration management. As such, TCM projects often put strong emphasis on the development and provision of training and human resource development activities, and the strengthening of national capacities to develop and deliver training programmes for migration officials.

These training and human resource development actions serve both developed and developing countries, with a stronger emphasis on countries with limited resources to invest in such initiatives. These initiatives may be carried out either within the framework of broad capacity strengthening programmes, or as stand-alone actions focusing on specific migration concerns.

Example: IOM supports a partnership to provide certificate level training in international migration policy and management for officials from selected IOM Member States in southern Africa. The course focuses on:

a) the causes, nature and implications of movements within and outside the region,
b) international, regional and national legislation and regulatory frameworks, and,
c) the legal parameters for sound decision-making.

The programme also provides a forum for the interchange and sharing of ideas between government officials, other specialists and entities with an interest in migration, including trade unions, NGOs, legal experts and migrant organizations.

4. ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS OF HIGH MIGRATION PRESSURE

TCM activities in this area address root causes of economically forced migration by enhancing the ability of governments and other key actors in the migration field to focus development actions more strategically on origin country migration dynamics. Projects in this area are defined by actions to foster economic opportunity in areas with high rates of forced economic out-migration through such activities as establishment of micro-enterprises, employment enhancement and community development programmes, and by enabling related assessment and planning exercises.

Example: The Government of Tunisia-IOM project – Pilot Actions to Promote Development in Regions of High Emigration in Tunisia (PROCHE) – supports the Government’s efforts to promote economic development in a high migrant-producing region through the creation of sustainable employment possibilities. The activities take advantage of existing local talent and create employment through micro-enterprise and other development actions. Another key strategy is to encourage investment from foreign-resident nationals and non-nationals alike.

5. INCREASED JOINT PLANNING AND ACTION

Through these activities, IOM plays a substantive support role to the bilateral and multilateral initiatives geared towards creating broader consensus on migration practices, standards and systems, and greater similarity among states in their capacities to manage migration.

Understanding that measures for migration management cooperation among states are often best pursued under the direct leadership of the concerned countries, IOM helps countries engaged in this process to develop and further their shared agendas. The facilitation role in these cases can evolve to include specific direct project action in areas of common agreement.

Example: The Bali Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime resulted from recognition of the need for a multilateral approach to addressing transnational crime in the Asia-Pacific region. IOM acts to assist the ongoing work of the Conference in a number of ways, including supporting the efforts of two working groups set up to establish a mechanism for continued improvement and strengthening of governance in addressing the issues of smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings and related transnational crime in the region.
Future Direction of IOM Technical Cooperation

IOM envisages that the clear trend towards growth, diversity and partnership in IOM technical cooperation activities will continue into the foreseeable future, particularly in the following areas:

• An expanded role for TCM in least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, to assist these governments in building internationally standard capacities in migration management, to strengthen dialogue among these countries and between them and the more developed countries, and to address root causes of economic migration;

• Increasing the strategic focus on building migration management capacities in countries experiencing significant challenges in handling large numbers of transiting or returned migrants;

• Expanded partnership with the European Commission in assisting in the articulation and implementation of the European Union’s approach to migration concerns, particularly as pertains to increased cooperation with third countries in the area of migration;

• Expanded partnership with other regional institutions by assisting in the articulation and implementation of their approach to migration concerns, particularly institutions with significant membership of developing countries, as pertains to increasing the positive impact of migration on countries of origin and enhancing cooperation with all concerned countries in the area of migration;

• A growing emphasis on human rights and migration, and the role of technical cooperation in enhancing the capacity of governmental and non-governmental actors to better protect the rights of vulnerable migrants;

• Increased emphasis on TCM activities to assist countries in ratifying the Palermo Protocol on Smuggling of Migrants, and in enacting measures consistent with its intent;

• Continued attention to migration and security, as part of the general heightening of security issues on the migration agenda, within a broad and balanced context, covering such areas as the modernization of travel documents and improving security checks at border points; and,

• Encouraging and supporting more flexible and functional groupings/clusters of countries to build common agendas and strengthen networks, regardless of immediate geographic proximity.

The mission of the IOM Technical Cooperation on Migration Service is:

To effectively support and enhance the IOM approach to technical cooperation by providing leadership in overall strategy, priority and standard setting, and by providing support to all levels of the Organization in the areas of responsibility of the Service

The IOM TCM Approach

Assists governments in enhancing their capacity towards the following goals ...

• Harmonization of national and regional policy and practice towards common international norms
• Reduction of irregular migration and smuggling
• Improved management of regular migration
• Strengthened protection of migrants’ human rights
• Expanded international cooperation

By addressing the following needs ...

• Policy, legal and administrative framework review and updating
• Improved operational systems related to migration management
• Enhanced knowledge and skills in the migration sector
• Economic and community development in areas of high migration pressure
• Increased joint planning and action

Through the provision and facilitation of ...

• Technical assistance in assessing and implementing migration management initiatives
• Project design and management services
• Training and human resource development programmes for migration staff
• Transfer and exchange of qualified human resources and experts
• Regional forums and technical meetings