IOM Panama Administrative Centre (PAC)

And

IOM Country Office in Panama

STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2020

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INTRODUCTION

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.

Migration is inevitable, necessary and desirable. Migration is not a problem to be solved but a reality to be managed. The growing interest in migration and the imperative of optimizing the benefits of this phenomenon and mitigating its negative aspects have resulted in the significant growth of interest in and demand for IOM’s programmes, advice and leadership in this field.

The Administration recognizes the need to continue improving efficiencies in order to optimize the efficient use of limited resources and adopted measures to contain costs and develop effectiveness, one of them was the delocalization of a number of administrative functions in Administrative Centres in Manila and Panama.

Since its opening in 2007, the Panama Administrative Centre (PAC) has taken on a number of responsibilities to support member states in the western hemisphere and worldwide. The services it provides include human resources, training, health and medical insurance, legal, accounting and finance, information, technology and communications, security and emergency and post crisis support.

IOM Panama is not only recognized as Administrative Centre but also as a Country Office for carrying out main projects related to visa applications centres, prevention of violence against women, prevention of trafficking in persons and human security. The Country Office will continue support the
Government of Panama in areas of migration policy, strengthening the local capacities of emergency response institution and interacting with UN agencies to complement and address the migration gaps identified in the vulnerable communities.

Panama was chosen as a location for decentralization of administrative services due to the benefits it offers in terms of financial viability, security, infrastructure, language, education and location. This 5-year Strategic Plan intends to act as a management tool to assess and anticipate the ever-changing environment, as well help streamline services in the region. A vision, mission and multiple strategic objectives are outlined in the Strategic Plan to guide the IOM Panama over the coming years.

I would like to thank all IOM staff based in Panama for their valuable contribution to this exercise and support and guidance of Office of Director General, Regional Office of Central America, North America and the Caribbean and IOM Country Office in Colombia to guide the preparation of this strategic plan.

I hereby endorse the strategic plan for IOM Panama and know I can count with you to achieve a successful implementation.

William SWING
Director General of IOM
1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Creation of PAC

In order to maintain effective and efficient management of resources while responding to the Organization’s growing needs, the Administration looked for various measures to improve efficiency and manage growth.

The decentralization process started more than fourteen years ago and is still expanding into new approaches. The Administration established first the administrative support centre in Manila (MAC) in order to strengthen IOM’s ability to deliver core services within existing budget constraints. A number of administrative functions including accounting, treasury management, budgeting, human resources and information technology (IT), among others, have been transferred to the lower cost environment of the Manila Administrative Centre (MAC).

Based on the success of and experience gained with MAC, the Administration proposed to establish another global Administrative Support Centre in a low cost location in the Western Hemisphere in order to:

- Further enhance IOM’s cost-efficiency and responsiveness;
- Allow the Organization to better focus on strategic growth;
- Diversify and broaden the range of global opportunities;
- Provide around-the-clock administrative support to all Missions worldwide.

In spring 2006 Member States took note of the documents on IOM’s delocalization and invited the administration to submit proposals for the establishment of the western hemisphere Administrative Centre in Panama (PAC), in the context of the Program and Budget for 2007.

Identified gaps and needs of an administrative nature for the western hemisphere were:
• Administration and finance;
• IT development;
• Human resources (including career development);
• Procurement;
• Staff development and learning;
• Staff security;
• Occupational health.

Functions that could either be delocalized or established in an administrative support centre in the Panama were:

- Accounting control – a central facility to perform checklists of mission accounts and quality control of financial transactions;
- Accounting for special programmes in the region;
- Human resources support for staff in the region;
- Verification and settlement of airline invoices from the region;
- Information technology hub for possible disaster recovery facility and to provide timely support to Regional and National Offices;
- Staff development and learning activities for the region;
- Projects/funds tracking specific to the region;
- Public information and outreach;
- Regional focal point for internal audit.

1.1. Why Establish a Strategic Plan for PAC?

PAC needs a management tool for assessing the current environment, anticipating and responding appropriately to changes in the environment, envisioning the future and increasing effectiveness within the organization.
A strategic plan also serves as a framework for making decisions, providing a common goal for staff, providing a basis for more detailed planning, and allowing PAC to clarify what services are offered to motivate their staff and encourage them to work synergistically.

The strategic plan is foreseeing two main results:

- Ensuring coherence with the strategies and actions developed by IOM at all levels.
- Ensuring that IOM’s work is in accordance with member countries priorities.

1.3. Process for Strategy Formulation

PAC has a Management Team (MT) composed of the Head of PAC, Units, Programs and Projects. It meets twice a month in order to coordinate actions and keep informed about the progress of activities. The Management Team considered the formulation of a strategic plan as a priority; therefore two sessions were organized in the second semester of 2014 facilitated by IOM expert in planning, research and evaluation. The analysis of the Panamanian context, key stakeholders, and SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of PAC and IOM Country Office were the basis for the discussion, through the working groups and plenary multi-discipline teams. The key elements of a strategic plan, such as Mission and Vision for PAC and key strategic issues, were identified. A strategic map that includes objectives, indicators and activities was developed.

A draft of the strategic plan was circulated with Headquarters and Regional Office in San José for review and comments. After that it was submitted to the Office of Director General for his endorsement and approval prior to its global dissemination across IOM.

Panama has a privileged geographical location, one of the main reasons to set up an Administrative Centre in Panama on 2007. PAC has been providing support services to IOM Country Offices in the Americas, Caribbean, Africa and other parts of the world include human resources, training, health and medical insurance, legal, accounting and finance, information, technology and communications, security and emergency and post crisis support. The IOM Country Office of Panama, functioning within
PAC, has existing working relationships with Panamanian government entities, international organizations, UN agencies and other actors. The Head of PAC is also the Chief of Mission for the Country Office in Panama. The IOM Country Office of Panama is providing technical cooperation on several migration issues such as: border management, human security, prevention of violence against women, counter trafficking, emergency and post crisis support and others; and align itself to the IOM regional strategic plan for Central America and the Caribbean region. The IOM Country Office participated in the UNDAF preparation for Panama by adopting the UNDAF objectives. UNDAF Panama 2016-2020 has three strategic areas: a) Integrated Policies for Equity and Inclusion; b) Governance, Dialogue and Social Participation; c) Environmental Sustainability and Inclusive Growth.

The strategic planning pursues two fundamental objectives:

- Strengthening the administrative support centre’s (PAC) capacity to provide timely and efficient assistance to IOM Country Offices and Regional Offices.
- Developing IOM’s cooperative activities in the field of migration and ensuring IOM capacity to implement programs and provide technical cooperation on migration issues to the Panamanian Government and key stakeholders in the country.

2. CONTEXT

2.1. Panama Context

This part will provide an overview about the context in Panama making it a favourable country for the establishment of PAC:

- **Political stability.** The Republic of Panama is an independent and sovereign State with three main branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. There are three independent organizations whose responsibilities are clearly defined in the Political Constitution: the Comptroller General of the Republic has the obligation to oversee public funds; the Electoral Tribunal has to guarantee freedom, honesty and effectiveness of the popular vote; and the Public Ministry oversees the interests of the State and its municipalities.
Panama's economy is based primarily on a well-developed services sector that accounts for nearly 80% of its GDP. Services include the Panama Canal, banking, the Colón Free Trade Zone, insurance, container ports, flagship registry, medical and health, as well as other businesses. The country's industry includes, manufacturing of aircraft spare parts, cement, drinks, adhesives, and textiles. Additionally Panama’s leading exports are bananas, shrimp, sugar, coffee, and clothing.

Overall infrastructure. One of the main infrastructures for international trade is the Panama Canal, 77.1-kilometres in length, connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Expansion of the canal is ongoing, with a third wider lane of locks currently due to open in 2016, increasing the capacity of the canal for maritime circulation.

The Panama Canal Railway Company (PCRC) is a revitalized railway system providing an efficient intermodal link between the Pacific and Atlantic ports which complements the existing transportation infrastructure hub provided by the Canal, the Colon Free Trade Zone, the port terminals, highways and airports. This railway system also provides a passenger service that allows travellers to enjoy a journey through the lush jungles of Panama flanking the scenic Panama Canal.

Panama has several main roads, the Pan American Highway being the most important. It runs from Paso Canoas, on the border with Costa Rica to the town of Yaviza in the Province of Darién.

Panama's first subway was inaugurated on April 5, 2014. The Panama Metro is a metropolitan rapid transit railway in Panama City. This new transport system is trying to overcome the traffic jams problems in the city. The approximated cost of the project was $1.8 billion dollars.
• Tocumen International Airport, considered today as one of the most important airports in Latin America, is the major airport in Panama and serves as hub for many international airlines. It is possible to find a flight to Panama, from most major international cities, with relative ease. This airport is the main hub for connections between the two Americas and the rest of the world.

• **Education and language:** The literacy rate of the country is approximately 88%. The official Panama language is Spanish, which is widely spoken by most of the population. About 14% of the population speaks English language and various schools are teaching in English.

### 2.2. Specific Conditions for International Organizations in Panama

• **Presence of an important number of International corporations and United Nations Agencies.** The government of Panama offers office facilities for very convenient prices that have encouraged international organizations to establish their regional offices in Panama, including: The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Program (WFP), International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Organization of American States, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

• **Full privileges and immunities:** The Government of Panama offers excellent conditions to the International Organizations operating in Panama through the certificates issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. IOM enjoys full privileges and immunities, benefiting from full exemption of taxes including 7% VAT for goods purchases, services and fuel for official vehicles and international staff. The Salaries for both national and international staff are exempt from taxation.

### 2.3. Activities of Country Office in Panama

The IOM Country Office in Panama has been executing projects in the following areas:
• Emergency assistance program for asylum seekers and people looking for international protection in the province of Darien.
• Community development, income generation initiatives and working with vulnerable youth in Darien.
• Technical cooperation with national institutions by providing capacity-building services and technical advice for combatting human trafficking in Panama.
• Improving migration management of the flows of indigenous labourers who migrate to Costa Rica.
• Capacity strengthening of government institutions to develop improved public policies on labour migration and border management.
• Prevention of violence against women.

3. PAC AND PANAMA COUNTRY OFFICE STRATEGY

Since its creation, PAC has had professional and highly experienced staff members who have effectively implemented IOM rules and procedures. It is necessary to define a new approach for the Administrative Centre (PAC) to preserve its important role as reviewer and inspector of compliance with IOM’s standard. The IOM Country Office is implementing projects and programmes in coordination with donors and counterparts.

3.1. Vision

To be a service centre of excellence, providing timely advice and support in resource management and operations and being a strategic partner of the Panamanian Government for the protection of migrants’ rights.
3.2. **Mission**

To provide excellent services to our global customers, donors and counterparts through motivated and committed professionals and specialists offering high-quality and timely advice; ensuring continuity, efficiency and transparency of IOM’s operations in order to maintain the credibility of IOM’s work and commitment to migrants’ wellbeing and rights.

A slogan was developed, taking into account the reasons for PAC’s establishment and its history.

**Slogan:** “Professional Advice to Clients”

3.3. **Strategic Objectives**

The strategy includes a set of objectives that reflect the PAC’s value proposition to the organization for the next 5 years, as well as another set of objectives regarding PAC’s management that need to be strengthened and the resources needed to reach the value proposition objectives.

3.3.1. **Strategic Objectives – Value Proposition**

3.3.1.1. **Learning Resources Hub**

**Objective:**

To install a learning resources hub in Panama aimed at fulfilling the staff development needs in fields required to improve IOM staff’s capacities to develop projects and manage resources.

**Strategies:**

- Provide, in coordination with IOM personnel globally, technical, administrative and professional training to IOM staff in order to expand their knowledge and to facilitate successful achievement of their functional duties and responsibilities.
• Conduct an evaluation of the training needs of IOM staff in the region in coordination with field offices. Additionally to carry out efforts to consolidate and concentrate training funds and resources in order to maximize impact, optimize their usage and reduce duplication.
• Facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices among IOM missions incorporating not only IOM staff but also external experts, partners and counterparts.
• Promote training of trainers as an effective strategy to expand and replicate knowledge to IOM staff who cannot attend courses available outside of their mission country.

*Indicators:*

✓ Number of training sessions conducted annually.
✓ Number of people trained and monitored each year.

### 3.3.1.2. Procurement and Logistics Hub:

**Objective:**
To establish a procurement and logistics hub (goods, services and tickets) in Panama to cover the needs of global customers, whilst ensuring transparency and efficiency in resources management.

**Strategies:**

- Provide goods, services and airlines tickets for IOM, donors, counterparts and beneficiaries.
- Provide logistics, goods and service-purchasing support to IOM country missions; taking advantage of the stock availability and low prices as well as the storage, packaging and air and sea transportation options available in Panama.
- To promote the signing of Corporate Agreements with companies that provide preferential conditions for the purchase of airline tickets for the movement of migrants and IOM staff, and assistance at the airport.

*Indicators:*

✓ Number of purchases made by PAC for the Country Offices.
✓ Number of corporate agreements and contracts signed with preferential conditions for the provision of goods and services.

3.3.1.3. Institutional Knowledge Transfer

Objective:
To generate processes that promote the transfer of institutional knowledge in order to facilitate the implementation of projects, and the application of procedures, rules and regulations established by IOM, donors and counterparts.

Strategy:
- Development of tools and mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of best practices and lessons learned related to the application of policies, rules, regulations and strategies between Country Offices, Regional Offices, Headquarters, Manila Administrative Centre and PAC. This should help avoid duplication of efforts and streamline operations and processes used in the different IOM offices.

Indicators:
✓ Number of meetings / activities held in order to promote the exchange of institutional experiences and knowledge.
✓ Number of webinar sessions dedicated to the exchange of experiences and information flow among the PAC units and Country Offices.

3.3.1.4. Information Management

Objective:
To strengthen PAC’s Information Management (IM) capacity to assist missions with projects involving the management of electronic records, software development, and the implementation of software solutions to support mission operations and emergencies.
**Strategy:**

- By providing expertise, guidance and support in the information management field, and assisting the Country Offices and Regional Offices in the implementation of projects that require the management of information and the development of software solutions.

**Indicators:**

- Number of cases / requests that include the implementation of projects or services involving an information management component.

### 3.3.1.5. IT Infrastructure Hub

**Objective:**

To strengthen the IT hub in Panama to provide added value services to the missions, such as electronic messaging, information security and disaster recovery.

**Strategies:**

- Extend PAC’s offering of corporate services by providing messaging exchange and security active directory to the missions in the region.
- Provide disaster recovery and business continuity planning services to the missions in the region.
- Provide support for the Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan for offices in the field.

**Indicators:**

- Number of missions hosting business continuity planning/disaster recovery services in Panama.
- Number of missions hosting security active directory/messaging exchange services in Panama.
3.3.1.6. Technical Cooperation on Migration Issues

Objective:

To provide technical support on migration issues to the Government of Panama, in alliance with international organizations, civil society and private sector.

Strategies:

- IOM has actively participated in the preparation of the United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF) 2015-2020 for Panama. IOM inputs were focused on migration policy and sustainable environment projects.
- To develop a migration profile, in coordination with National Migration Services and the Ministry of Labour and Workforce Development, aimed at identifying the current migration situation in Panama and to provide technical support in the establishment of a comprehensive migration policy for the country.
- Interaction with Government of Panama, civil society and international organizations to implement projects for the prevention of violence against women, human trafficking and promote human security.

Indicators:

✓ Migration profile of Panama.
✓ Number of projects executed in Panama.

3.3.2. Strategic Objectives – Management

3.3.2.1. Visibility of PAC

Objective:

To improve visibility of PAC through promotion of the services provision and ways to access them.
**Strategy:**

- Establishment of a communication strategy aimed at positioning PAC as a hub for learning resources, logistics, procurement, office support and advisory for IOM missions.
- Update the PAC organogram or organizational chart, as well as the terms of reference of each unit and scope of the service.

**Indicators:**

☑ Number of requests made to each PAC unit and number of satisfactory responses to users.
☑ Terms of reference of each PAC unit and PAC organizational chart updated.

### 3.3.2.2. Strategic Partners

**Objective:**

To consolidate relationships between IOM and its strategic partners including Government of Panama authorities, international organizations, UN agencies and the private sector.

**Strategy:**

- IOM should actively participate in activities, programs and projects to comply with the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

**Indicators:**

☑ Number of meetings and forums, in Panama, in which IOM participates as facilitator and/or speaker.
☑ Number of meetings organized by UN to which IOM is invited (UNCT, UNDAF, OMT).
3.3.3. **Strategic Objectives – Resources**

3.3.3.1. **Strengthen the Capacities of PAC Staff**

*Objective:*
To strengthen the capacity and knowledge of PAC staff in order to provide better and timely services to the field offices.

*Strategies:*
- Provide PAC staff with technical and managerial training to expand their knowledge, assist the field offices to successfully achieve their objectives, and promote the sharing of lessons learned and best practices.
- Build and maintain good relationships with the UN in order to share financial or material resources for training activities.
- Sign cooperation agreements with universities and other private educational institutions aimed at developing partnerships to facilitate the access of IOM staff to training in languages, resources management, and project development and implementation.

*Indicators:*
✔ Number of PAC staff members trained in communication skills, resource management, and project development and implementation.

3.3.3.2. **Financial Sustainability of PAC**

*Objective:*
To manage financial resources to ensure the sustainability of PAC as an Administrative Centre and as a Country Office.
**Strategies:**

- Raise enough resources from IOM’s administrative budget and operational support income to cover the core structure in PAC.
- Raise enough resources from projects to maintain program area and cover staff, offices and operational cost but also to cover the needs of PAC units not covered by the administrative budget or operational support income.
- Raise additional miscellaneous income to meet contingencies or special requirements not covered by the budget.

**Indicators:**

- ✓ Yearly budget allocation from administrative budget and operational support income.
- ✓ Project budgets approved by the financial division to ensure staff, office and operational coverage.
DIAGRAM OF PAC STRATEGIC MAP (2015 – 2020)

Professional Advice to Clients

**Vision**
To be a service center of excellence, providing timely advice and support in resource management and operations and being a strategic partner of the Panamanian Government for the protection of migrants’ rights.

**Mission**
To provide excellent services to our global customers, donors and counterparts through motivated and committed professionals and specialists offering high-quality and timely advice to ensure continuity, efficiency and transparency of IOM’s operations in order to maintain credibility on IOM’s work and commitment to migrants’ wellbeing and rights.

**Value Proposition**
- To establish a procurement and logistics hub
- To generate processes of institutional knowledge
- To install a learning resources hub in Panama
- To strengthen capacities in management of electronic record and software development
- To strengthen the IT hub in Panama to provide value-added services
- Technical Cooperation on Migration Issues to the government of Panama

**Management**
- To improve visibility of PAC through service provision
- To consolidate relationship between IOM and its strategic partners

**Resources**
- To strength the PAC staff capacities and knowledge
- To manage Financial Resource to ensure sustainability of PAC
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