



Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster Annual Retreat, Switzerland - © IOM

IOM-CSO Partnerships: Advancing Migration for the Benefit of All

Overview of the State of Cooperation Between IOM and CSOs

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.

IOM and civil society organizations (CSOs) cooperate on a broad range of migration issues at global, regional, national and local levels. **IOM CSO partners include:**

- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Advocacy groups;
- Migrants' organizations;
- Trade unions and/ or professional associations;
- Media organizations;
- Research institutes and universities; and
- Philanthropic foundations.

IOM is committed to sustained and mutually beneficial interaction with CSOs that builds on synergies in policy and operational areas of migration for the benefit of all. CSOs often have strong ties to the communities in which they work, an aspect which complements and enhances the impact of IOM efforts in the field of migration. Where CSOs are national or local in nature, IOM-CSO cooperation can contribute to the local ownership and sustainability of IOM programming.

Over 1,600² CSOs work with IOM on the **design and implementation of projects** covering a host of activities, including: research, awareness-raising, advocacy, training and national capacity enhancement, migrant assistance, including health care provision, and other forms of service delivery in humanitarian, early recovery and development settings the world over.

¹ There were 49 CSO Observers as of 1 October 2012, plus several intergovernmental organizations with Observer Status.

² This estimate is based on the findings of the 2012 IOM-CSO Global Inventory.





Refugee Camp Committee with IOM and CSO partners, Thailand - © IOM

CSOs are further welcome to apply for Observer status at the **IOM Council**, which is accorded in line with standard eligibility criteria. This status enables them to participate at the **annual Council sessions**, which convene migration policymakers from the 146 IOM Member States, 13 Observer States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations with Observer status.¹ The annual intersessional workshops and Council sessions of the **IOM International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)** present further opportunities for CSOs to participate in policy dialogues with IOM Member States, UN agencies, inter-governmental and international organizations.

Additionally, IOM is involved with the state-led **Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)**, which has developed a distinct civil society program—Civil Society Days, that IOM participates in together with CSOs.

Further, as part of the **UN Country Team**, IOM is involved in the **Cluster Approach and other initiatives by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** to improve humanitarian assistance, which benefit from close cooperation with CSOs.

To facilitate sustained reflection on how to improve these various means of IOM-CSO interaction and cooperation, IOM hosts **annual and regional consultations with CSOs**.

Mandate to Engage with CSOs

IOM engagement with civil society is guided by several key documents among them:

1. IOM Constitution³

The Preamble of the IOM Constitution recognizes “...the need to promote the cooperation of States and international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, for research and consultation on migration issues, not only with regard to the migration process but also the specific situation and needs of the migrant as an individual human being”.

The Preamble further states that “...there should be close cooperation and coordination among [the same stakeholders], on migration and refugee matters.”

Article 2 of the IOM Constitution specifies that “In carrying out its functions, the Organization shall co-operate closely

³ Constitution of 19 October 1953 of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (former designation of the International Organization for Migration) including the amendments adopted on 20 May 1987 and which entered into force on 14 November 1989.

⁴ 2007 IOM Strategy Document, MC/INF/287.

with international organizations, governmental and non-governmental concerned with migration, refugees and human resources in order, *inter alia*, to facilitate the co-ordination of international activities in these fields. Such co-operation shall be carried out in mutual respect of the competences of the organizations concerned.”

2. The 2007 IOM Strategy Document⁴

The 2007 IOM Strategy Document identifies the primary goal of IOM as being the facilitation of humane and orderly responses to international migration, and outlines the key activities to be undertaken in achieving this goal.

In the area of enhancing national capacity and cooperation, these activities include, among others: research, technical cooperation and operational assistance to States, intergovernmental and **non-governmental organizations**, as well as other stakeholders.⁵

3. The 2010 IOM Strategy Review⁶

The 2010 IOM Strategy Review document highlights the

growing and significant role of IOM in promoting **multi-stakeholder cooperation** on migration issues.

The Strategy Review document further emphasizes the need for formal and informal interaction between IOM and civil society at national, bilateral, regional, and global levels.

4. IOM Policy Documents

Over the years, the IOM Council has endorsed several policy documents on specific aspects of IOM engagement with civil society, including:

1. IOM Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (1996);⁷
2. IOM Partnerships with Non-Governmental Organizations in Managing Migration (2002);⁸
3. Criteria for Admitting Non-Governmental Organizations as Observers to the IOM Council (2010).⁹

These three policy documents further outline modalities of partnership and cooperation between IOM and NGOs.



Benghazi Evacuation with IOM, Mercy Corps, and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Libya - © IOM

⁵ Point 3, 2007 IOM Strategy Document, MC/INF/287.

⁶ Paragraph 79 of Part IV of the 2010 Review of the IOM Strategy, MC/INF/302 Ninety-Ninth Session, stipulates that cooperation – inter-State and multi-stakeholder cooperation – is fundamental to realizing the objective of migration that is safe, orderly and humane. In this context, IOM’s ability to bring together – formally and informally, at the national, regional and global levels – States, partner institutions and a wide range of civil society entities (e.g., advocacy groups, service providers, research institutes) is of growing and critical significance.

⁷ MC/INF 231, 4 November 1996.

⁸ MC/INF 253, 1 November 2002.

⁹ MC/INF 300, 4 November 2010.

Strategic Objectives for the Way Forward

IOM holds the view that in a world ever on the move, **more can be achieved for migrants and societies alike by working collaboratively rather than individually.** Additional complementarities between IOM and CSO work and enhanced impact of individual and collective actions can be achieved through greater IOM-CSO dialogue, resource pooling and joint action.

To this end, the Organization has **three strategic objectives** with regard to enhancing its engagement with CSOs:

1. **Take stock of existing partnerships with CSOs:** By creating and maintaining a repository of information on IOM-CSO partnerships, IOM seeks to better inform future engagement with CSOs.
2. **Develop platforms, such as the annual and regional IOM-CSO consultations, for two-way exchanges between IOM and CSOs:** IOM holds the view that sustained dialogue facilitates the identification of joint priorities, the exchange of good practices and the strengthening of synergies between IOM and civil society.
3. **Empower CSOs to have a greater voice in the Organization:** Through regular communication with CSOs on policy and operational issues, IOM seeks to ensure that partners are well informed and can therefore more effectively engage with IOM at the global, regional and national levels.

Points of IOM Contact for CSOs

The **International Partnerships Division (IPD)** of the IOM Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships (ICP) is, *inter alia*, the institutional entry point at IOM headquarters for directing queries, information and invitations to the relevant IOM unit/ department/ mission.

The operational and thematic areas of priority for CSOs interfacing at HQ are covered by:

The **Department of Migration Management (DMM)**, which is concerned with “mainstream” migration sectors, including labour and facilitated migration, migration and development, counter-trafficking, assisted voluntary return, migration health and capacity building in migration management.

The **Department of Operations and Emergencies (DOE)**, which is responsible for overseeing IOM’s activities related to resettlement, movement, logistics, preparedness and response in migration crises and humanitarian emergencies through recovery and transitional settings.

The **Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships (ICP)**, which is responsible for supporting and coordinating IOM’s relations with governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the media; forum activities including the IDM, RCPs, IOM Council meetings; as well as communications and public information functions. The Media and Communications Division (MCD) in ICP plays a key role in providing a regular flow of information and visibility to CSO partners in the field and providing information to civil society. In addition, IOM’s International Migration Law (IML) Unit provides training and capacity building on international migration law for government officials, CSOs, international governmental organizations and IOM staff.

CSOs are also welcome to directly contact the IOM missions in their respective countries/regions of operation. For more information on the global network of IOM regional, special liaison and country offices, please consult: <http://www.iom.int/cms/where-we-work>

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