POLICY PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING VISA PROCESSING

◉ IOM UN MIGRATION

As international migration and human mobility are taking place at a higher rate than ever before, governments resort to various instruments to maintain costeffective migration and border management. Visa policy is a key component of this. With the majority of the world's population still requiring visas to travel to other countries, processing the increasing volumes of visa applications has become a significant part of migration and border management.

In order to cope with this increased challenge, consular authorities are increasingly choosing to outsource the administrative aspects of application processing. While outsourcing offers States advantages, including cost savings, expanded territorial coverage, and enhanced capacity to process the evergrowing volume of visa applications, the exclusively commercial nature of this outsourcing of sensitive public tasks warrants greater consideration.

OUTSOURCED TASKS INCLUDE:

- Information Services
- Visa Form-Filling Assistance
- Visa Application Collection
- Completeness Checks
- Fee Collection and Transfer
- Appointment Scheduling
- Biometrics Enrollment
- Document Logistics
- Application Tracking
- Document Verification
- Reporting & Data Analytics

ELEMENTS OF SOUND POLICY PRINCIPLES IN OUTSOURCING VISA RELATED TASKS

HIGH SERVICE STANDARDS

The service standards set out by national authorities should include non-discriminatory and dignified treatment of all applicants. Applicants should not have to purchase additional services to receive high- quality and timely assistance.

TRANSPARENT FEES

Service fees, including those for additional services, are transparent, reasonable and justified based on open-book pricing principles. The total amount of service fees should not exceed the visa fee.

ACCURATE INFORMATION

Applicants receive accurate information about their rights and obligations throughout the visa application procedure, including the appeal procedure.

STRONG MONITORING

Consistently and effectively monitor the performance of external service providers, which includes frequent unannounced audits and the use of feedback from applicants. Service providers should systematically inform the consulate of complaints received from applicants and the actions taken.

PUBLIC GOOD

Because visa processing is an important public good, its outsourcing should be based on non-profit, equitable, and migrant-centric principles. States should seek to avoid the privatization and commodification of visa processing tasks.

ATTENTION TO VULNERABLE MIGRANTS

All staff involved in the visa application process must pay special attention vulnerable applicants with specific needs, such as women, unaccompanied minors, elderly applicants and those from marginalized communities.

ACCESS TO CONSULATES

All applicants should have the possibility of applying directly at their consulates and be informed of this option.

TRANSPARENT COOPERATION

National authorities publish up-to-date lists of service providers, including details on outsourced locations.

PROTECTING PERSONAL DATA & PRIVACY

National authorities should ensure that service providers adhere to the highest standards of privacy and data protection.

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.