Better Migration Management in the Horn of Africa

Context and objective

Crises and natural disasters in and around the Horn of Africa have led some ten million people in the region to leave their homes, four million of whom are seeking refuge or asylum chiefly in neighbouring states (UN, 2019). These people’s needs are not being adequately addressed. The countries in this region have limited capacity and infrastructure for ensuring that cross-border migration takes place in an orderly and humane fashion. As a result, smuggling of migrants and human trafficking are widespread. Tackling these criminal networks requires cooperation between the countries of origin, transit, and destination throughout the region. The Better Migration Management (BMM) programme therefore supporting the development of a responsible approach to migration management in the region and in individual countries, an approach that guarantees the protection of migrants and other vulnerable groups as well as adherence to international obligations.

In 2016, the European Union and Germany established BMM to improve migration management in the Horn of Africa. It aims to curb the trafficking and smuggling of migrants within and from the region and strengthens the rights of migrants to protection. Activities have been implemented in four interlinked areas: Policy harmonisation and regional cooperation, capacity building, protection, and awareness raising.

Achievements

BMM’s work has focused on of inter-institutional coordination on migration, the development of migration policies, and the domestication of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its protocols. BMM supported consultative meetings in Djibouti, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda on the signing of the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”. The project improved cross-border cooperation by facilitating six regional conferences and eight bilateral meeting platforms, each with a specific topic, that provided participants with opportunities to identify cooperation approaches and joint solution. For example, Ethiopia and Sudan have increased their cooperation to enhance the situation of Ethiopian seasonal workers. Due to a lack of regulations they are vulnerable to be exploited and mistreated. BMM supported the implementation of a comprehensive action plan aiming at improving services at the border and promoting legal migration. It also established a certified university course on migration at the Kenya Institute of Migration Studies targeted at officers from migration related governmental departments in the region.

BMM strengthened the capacities of government officials and representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) through training, study trips, and thematic workshops to increase safe and legal migration. Participants were trained on the investigation and prosecution of trafficking and smuggling cases, the identification and assistance of victims of trafficking and vulnerable

Results of phase 1 (2016-2019)

- 174,600 migrants, potential migrants, and host community members involved in outreach activities
- 16,600 government and civil society representatives engaged in workshops, trainings, or other events. 60 government institutions and 40 civil society actors supported
- 232 capacity building measures for 5,224 government and civil society representatives implemented
- 18,200 vulnerable migrants assisted. Thereof, 9,249 vulnerable migrants provided with accommodation, basic services and counselling. 6,759 migrants supported by mobile health units
migrants, integrated border management, and the identification of forged documents. In Kenya, BMM supported the Directorate of Criminal Investigations’ Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Unit (AHTCPU) on improving the capacity of the police to effectively respond to, investigate and prosecute cases of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. The project also installed the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) at border posts in Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan and trained staff in its use, and in Djibouti it set up an e-visa system.

BMM has supported state and non-state service providers to enhance their medical and psychosocial care for migrants, child protection services, and shelters for victims of trafficking. The project mapped and vetted migrant services of more than 300 providers across the region. BMM developed a Victim Case Management System (VCMS) in the region to improve the documentation of human trafficking. It also facilitated the regional “Forum to Promote Safe and Fair Migration” with around 40 civil society organisations and led to the development of Principles of Practice, a guide to workshops and training. BMM also cooperated closely with the Human Rights Commissions in Kenya and Djibouti.

Framework

BMM is an example of cooperation between the European Commission and Germany. It is being implemented by a partnership of European and international agencies. The project has been designed and is being implemented in cooperation with the eight partner countries, the African Union (AU), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Horn of Africa.

What next?
The objective of the second phase of BMM (2019-2022) is to further improve the human-rights-based management of safe, orderly, and regular migration and to assist national authorities in the fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. Migrants should be better protected against violence, abuse, and exploitation. The focus will be on consolidating a regional, holistic approach to migration management and on ensuring its sustainability beyond the duration of the BMM project.