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Better Migration Management
Horn of Africa



Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme in Djibouti

General context

Djibouti's population stands at nearly 1.1 million, some 13% of whom are migrants. Due to its strategic location between East Africa and the Gulf States, Djibouti is a key transit country for migration movements across the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. In December 2023, 29,636 movements into, through or out of Djibouti were observed, representing a daily average of 956 movements, according to IOM. Most of the migrants, mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia, head to Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East and the Gulf region. In recent years, Djibouti has been facing an influx of people displaced by drought.

Many migrants travel irregularly, i.e., without a visa or valid documents. This makes them vulnerable and increases their risk of economic exploitation, physical abuse or sexual assault. More than 45 per cent of migrants are women and more than 22 per cent are minors, which underscores the need for effective protection of migrants.

The Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme supports the Government of Djibouti in developing and improving national migration policies and frameworks and in contributing to regional migration governance.

Better Migration Management Horn of Africa



Project name	Better Migration Management Programme
Political Partner in Djibouti	Ministry of Interior
Duration	April 2016 to September 2025
Partner countries	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda
Implementing Partners in Djibouti	CIVIPOL, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). GIZ heads the implementing partnership.

It works in close coordination with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU).

Djibouti follows a whole-of-government approach for the coordination of migration, integrating the collaborative inter-institutional efforts of governmental bodies to coordinate migration management.

Implemented by



The country has made significant achievements in countering trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants. With support from BMM, the coastguards of Somaliland and Djibouti jointly signed an *aide memoire* on the organisation of effective maritime collaboration to address these crimes at sea and to implement appropriate protection measures for victims of trafficking. Also, an e-visa system has been set up to ensure uniform access to and approval of visas from Djibouti. Furthermore, a Migration Information and Data Analysis System has been put in place to simplify entry procedures, analyse migration trends, detect crime and improve migrant support. BMM is accompanying Djibouti to strengthen and consolidate these efforts and achievements and to improve the overall protection framework for safe migration, to reform policies and legislation, improve infrastructure and enhance cross-border cooperation. In addition, the national referral mechanism set up with BMM support is to be further strengthened to provide migrants and victims of human trafficking with prompt and targeted support.

BMM's approach and activities

The BMM Programme aims to enable national authorities and institutions to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and to effectively address and reduce trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants within and from the Horn of Africa region by applying a human rights-based approach. Activities are implemented in three complementary components: migration governance, strengthening effective institutions to address trafficking and smuggling and protection.

In Djibouti, BMM works in partnership with the Ministry of Interior. The programme focuses on consolidating an integrated national and regional approach to migration management and on ensuring sustainability. BMM staff coordinates their activities closely with those of other international organisations and projects funded by the EU and other donors in Djibouti to harness synergies and avoid duplications.

Migration governance

The programme has facilitated consultative meetings in Djibouti on the signing of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and continues to train national key actors on developing the Global Compact implementation plan and periodic reviews. For safer migration across borders, BMM supported the Ministry of Labour in the development of the national labour migration strategy.

In the current phase, the programme focuses on strengthening the capacity of local actors to better manage the implementation of the national



migration strategy. BMM has supported Djibouti to operationalise the National Migration Coordination Office. Attached to the Ministry of the Interior, it is composed of an inter-ministerial committee, which is responsible to define national priorities in terms of migration and to coordinate all the activities initiated in the field of migration.

The project further strengthens the prefectures that oversee the coordination of migration management within and between their respective sub regions. In addition, local coordination committees will be established. Next to this, stakeholders will continue to be trained on integrated migration governance by applying the whole- of-government approach with a newly developed gamified methodology.

BMM also promotes cross-border cooperation between Djibouti and Ethiopia on sustainable solutions to child migration, in particular to ensure safe repatriation and reintegration. Also, cooperation between national law enforcement agencies and prosecutors on trafficking and smuggling cases is strengthened. BMM has advised the Government of Djibouti on how to transpose the two protocols of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) into national law: the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol and the Protocol of Trafficking in Persons.

Effective institutions to address trafficking and smuggling

BMM is improving the effectiveness of institutions in implementing updated migration policies and legislation. The programme developed a curriculum on Investigating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in line with the international framework and with reference to human rights-based criminal justice and law enforcement approaches and responses. This includes a strong victim-centred approach. The curriculum has been mainstreamed across institutions and is now embedded in the regular training curricula of the Police Academy, the Gendarmerie Academy, the *Ecole Internationale de Perfectionnement à la Pratique de la Police Judiciaire* (International School of Judicial Police Practice Improvement) and the *Ecole des Gardes-Côtes* (Coastguard College).

Further training are provided to first responders and Judicial Police Officers who are often on the front line in the fight of trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants. The training focuses on practical ability to identify and refer trafficked persons and vulnerable migrants and initiate investigations in accordance with standard procedures on investigation and prosecution.

Also, Djibouti joined forces with neighbouring Ethiopia to set up a joint investigative team to combat human trafficking across their border.

In addition, BMM supported the establishment of a national interagency Task Force with representatives of the police, gendarmerie, coastguard and prosecution to foster exchange and cooperation among these actors to effectively and efficiently curb trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants.

In addition, a specialised unit to counter these crimes has been created within the office of the *Procureur de la République* (Public Prosecutor). BMM continues to support the Task Force in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of standard operating procedures to investigate and prosecute trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants.

Furthermore, the programme provided training to first responders and immigration/border officials which serve as a foundation to support the integrated border management committee to facilitate safe and legal migration and will continue to support in that sense.

Also, BMM continues to support Djibouti's *Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme*, CNDH (National Human Rights Commission), in protecting and promoting human rights of migrants and implementing an effective complaint mechanism. In the regions Tadjourah, Dikhil, Arta, Ali- Sabieh and Obock information centres have been established, serving as one-stop-centres that provide information and exchange on human rights and migration. They centres also offer referral services for vulnerable cases and record, monitor and follow-up on violations of human rights. Migrants can submit complaints to the centres.

Furthermore, the programme supports the engagement of CNDH in the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions. A working group for human rights institutions in BMM partner countries was initiated to develop sustainable solutions for the protection of migrant rights in the region.

Protection

BMM strengthens the assistance and protection for vulnerable migrants. It partners with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that provide essential services such as food, water, clothing, as well as legal, medical and psychosocial support. The programme promoted the set-up of the East and Horn of Africa Anti-Trafficking (EHAAT) network of around 100 CSOs working in the Horn of Africa to enhance collaboration, knowledge-sharing and comprehensive support to migrants traveling in the region. CSOs from Djibouti regularly participate in the Regional CSO Forum for Safe and Fair Migration. According to a jointly established capacity development plan, the CSOs receive training on topics such as strategic planning, project management, fundraising and budgeting.

With support from BMM, the Ministry of Health opened a medical clinic in the Migration Response Centre in Obock to provide adequate medical and psychosocial assistance, accommodation and counselling to migrants.

BMM contributed to the establishment of a National Referral Mechanism and corresponding guidelines to refer migrants to appropriate services according to their individual needs. The programme supported the operationalisation of the system as well as its roll-out across the regions of Djibouti and Djibouti City.

Furthermore, information material has been produced to familiarise first responders with the referral structure. So far, about 3,000 stakeholders have been trained and more than 1,000 people in need have been referred.

Next to this, BMM aims to develop sustainable solutions for migrants, together with the Djiboutian Government, engaging private, public and civil society actors in multi-stakeholder dialogues on vocational training and job opportunities.



Cross-border exchange to protect migrant children: Representatives from Ethiopia and Djibouti join forces to improve the protection and sustainable reintegration of vulnerable migrant children. ©IOM



Results of BMM (April 2016 – September 2023)



1,241 representatives of governmental departments supported in improving the coordinated management of migration and strengthening national migration policies, legislation and cross-border cooperation.



18,900 individuals potentially reached through public awareness-raising activities on human trafficking and migrant rights.



61 capacity building measures for **951** governmental and non-governmental actors implemented in the field of investigation and prosecution of human trafficking, integrated border management and the referral of migrants to services.



7,300 vulnerable migrants directly and indirectly assisted through the provision of accommodation, basic services and medical support.

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