



## Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme in Uganda

### Context

Uganda has one of the world's fastest growing and youngest populations, with almost half of its people aged under 15 and nearly 80% under 30. Limited livelihood options drive a significant number of young people into labour migration. The Government of Uganda estimates that more than 24,000 Ugandans leave the country annually in search of employment in the Middle East. While measures and frameworks are in place to promote safe labour migration, many migrants continue to be recruited through deceptive means and irregular channels, potentially exposing them to risks in the host country, such as unacceptable living or working conditions.

Uganda is a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, and Africa's main host country, with about 1.7 million refugees and asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2023). The country has progressive policies to support the integration of those who have fled their homes, but the continuous influx of refugees to Uganda has challenged refugee response capacities in recent years. Uganda also registers considerable internal migration, due to factors such as natural disasters and climate change, and also as a result of poverty and limited opportunities, which increases migrants' vulnerability to instances of trafficking in human beings (THB).

### Better Migration Management Horn of Africa



Project name	Better Migration Management Programme
Political partner in Uganda	Coordination Office for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (COPTIP)
Duration	April 2016 to September 2025
Partner countries	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda
Implementing partners in Uganda	British Council, 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.

Uganda has taken steps to counter THB, including ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) in 2005 and adoption of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (PTIP) Act in 2009, which has served as a model for other countries. The implementation of the PTIP Act is overseen by the Coordination Office for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (COPTIP) under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), in cooperation

Implemented by

with the National Task Force on Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (“National Task Force”). The latter is constituted by relevant ministries, government departments and agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), as well as United Nations and international organisations and programmes.

Despite significant progress towards promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration, Uganda faces challenges in establishing and implementing a comprehensive legal and policy framework for migration. The Better Migration Management (BMM) programme accompanies the Government of Uganda in developing and improving national migration policies and frameworks and in contributing to regional migration governance.

### BMM’s approach and activities

The objective of BMM is to enable national authorities and institutions to facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration and to effectively address and reduce THB and the smuggling of migrants (SoM) within and from the Horn of Africa region using a human rights-based approach. Activities are implemented in three components: migration governance, strengthening effective institutions to address THB and SoM, and the protection of vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking.

BMM focuses on consolidating a regional, holistic and sustainable approach to migration management. Through alignment and cooperation with other projects and international initiatives, BMM’s national and implementing partners work towards building synergies in pursuit of the programme’s objective.

### Migration Governance

BMM supports the MoIA in finalising the National Migration Policy and in operating the National Trafficking in Persons Database with the aim of enhancing the identification, protection and referral of victims of trafficking. The programme also supports COPTIP in reviewing the National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (NAP) 2019–2024 and in coordinating anti-trafficking activities at district level. BMM works with local governments, CSOs and COPTIP to enhance community engagement in decision-making processes.

BMM gives technical support to the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) under the Office of the Prime Minister to facilitate partnership and dialogue on migration related issues in Uganda. This includes support to the development of the Uganda National Action Plan to Implement the Global Compact for Migration.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), BMM contributes to disseminating the revised Employment (Recruitment of



Family reunification: Children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and need special protection according to best of interest mechanisms. (©GIZ/Onen)

Ugandan Migrant Workers) Regulations 2021. It further assists the Government of Uganda in reviewing the PTIP Act and other legislation to ensure it is consistent with the UNTOC and in exploring opportunities for ratifying protocols supplementing the UNTOC, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

### Effective Institutions to Address Trafficking and Smuggling

BMM improves the effectiveness of institutions in implementing migration policies and legislation, amongst others by strengthening inter-institutional cooperation on THB and SoM between first responders, law enforcement agencies, the prosecution services and the judiciary. To this end, BMM supports the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for investigating and prosecuting cases of THB under supervision of a multi-agency task force.

Furthermore, the programme provides targeted and needs-based training for first responders, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judicial officers, and supports the protection and participation of victim-witnesses in investigations and court proceedings.

BMM continues to promote the mainstreaming of training on investigating THB and SoM into the curricula of police training institutions to enhance law enforcement officers’ capacity to properly manage cases, including the protection and referral of presumed and identified victims and preparation of cases for prosecution. BMM further facilitates training for criminal justice practitioners and supports specialised anti-trafficking units in tackling transnational organised crime. BMM works with the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC), COPTIP and CSOs to develop a needs-based training curriculum on THB and SoM for border

officials with the Immigration Training Academy and to implement integrated border management training.

Furthermore, BMM cooperates with the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the MGLSD in addressing migrants' rights and in monitoring, reporting, and following up on human rights violations against migrants.

At the regional level, BMM brings together multi-agency task forces from various BMM partner countries to assess, promote and reinforce cross-border, regional, and international cooperation and it assists partner countries in investigations, including in the area of labour migration to Gulf countries.

BMM accompanied the establishment of a regional working group of national human rights institutions and supports them in developing solutions and recommendations to protect migrants' rights and inform knowledge management and decision-making processes.

## Protection

BMM strengthens referral systems through which vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking receive assistance and services, including shelter, legal aid, and medical and psychosocial support. To this end, the programme facilitates the implementation of the National Referral Guidelines

for Management of Victims of Trafficking (NRG) in all Uganda's regions. Since January 2021, approximately 6,500 victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants have benefited from the referral system.

BMM continues to partner with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons - Uganda (CATIP-U), and the regional CSO network from BMM partner countries as a platform to exchange on protection and assistance services. BMM provides trainings to the CSOs and the network to strengthen their services and referral systems and to develop policy recommendations. BMM also works with the Government of Uganda and CSOs on mental health and psychosocial support.

As part of its protection portfolio, BMM is involved in enhancing the referral of migrants, victims of trafficking and returnees to socio-economic initiatives. With the involvement of the private sector, the programme supports the implementation of the Remediation Guidelines for Vulnerable Migrants and CSO- and government-led platforms that coordinate and enhance referrals.

Moreover, BMM assists COPTIP in performing its mandate to raise awareness on safe migration, including by supporting efforts to finalise a national communication strategy and in implementing proven awareness raising measures, with a focus on the most at-risk districts and border communities.

## Results of BMM (April 2016 – September 2022)

**2,133** representatives of government departments supported in improving the coordinated management of migration and strengthening national migration policies, legislation and cross-border cooperation

**50** capacity building measures for **969** governmental and non-governmental actors implemented for investigation and prosecution of human trafficking, integrated border management, and the referral of migrants to services



**35 million** individuals potentially reached through public awareness-raising activities on human trafficking and migrant rights

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**Project** Better Migration Management Programme Rue de la Charité 33 / Liefdadigheidsstraat 33 1210 Bruxelles/Brussels, Belgique/België

**Contact** Marina Mdaihli, Programme Director  
E-mail: [Marina.Mdaihli@giz.de](mailto:Marina.Mdaihli@giz.de)  
[GIZ website](#)  
[Promoting safe and regular migration in the Horn of Africa](#)  
[Phase II EUTF website](#)  
[Phase I EUTF website](#)

**Contact** BMM Office Uganda, Simone Macbeth Forbes  
[Simone.Macbeth@giz.de](mailto:Simone.Macbeth@giz.de)

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