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Better Migration Management
Horn of Africa



Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme in Somalia

General context

Somalia is a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants. According to IOM, one of the world's most dangerous and most frequented migration corridors, connecting the Horn of Africa with the Gulf States, runs through the country. Every year, tens of thousands of migrants and refugees make the hazardous journey for economic and safety-related reasons.

The United Nations (UN) estimates the number of people in need in Somalia at almost 7 million, due to extreme weather events and political instability. According to the UN, Somalia is experiencing one of the world's most challenging mass refugee movements, with around 3.2 million internally displaced people. Due to conflict, severe drought and floods, a record rate of one million people had to flee their homes in the first five months of 2023.

Around 755,000 Somali refugees and asylum seekers are living in the neighboring countries, mainly Kenya and Ethiopia, many of whom have been displaced for decades (September 2024).

Irregular migration is widespread and poses a serious challenge, often resulting in migrants being exploited en route. Somali youth, who are unemployed or working in the informal sector, are at high

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

risk of trafficking as they resort to seeking employment opportunities abroad because of family or economic pressure.

Men, women and children are trafficked from, within or to Somalia by criminal networks for forced labour, sex trafficking, torture for ransom, military support roles, direct combat and marriages to Al-Shabaab militants.

Implemented by



BMM's approach and activities

In 2016, Germany and the European Union (EU) established the Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme. Now in its third phase, the 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 using a human rights-based approach.

BMM focuses on three components: migration governance, strengthening effective institutions to address trafficking and smuggling, and protection of vulnerable migrants. Jointly implemented by British Council, CIVIPOL, GIZ, IOM and UNODC, BMM maximises the impact of activities through global expertise as well as integrated and comprehensive local solutions. GIZ provides the overall coordination towards achievement of the objective by all implementing partners.

Regionally, BMM works in coordination with the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU). In Somalia, the programme is implemented by GIZ, IOM and UNODC.

BMM staff coordinate their activities closely with those of other international organisations and projects funded by the EU and other donors in Somalia, such as EUCAP, UNSOS and ATMIS, to harness synergies and avoid duplications.

Recognising the risks to its people and challenges as a major transit route in the region, Somalia has made efforts towards improving migration governance and fighting human trafficking. The Federal Government of Somalia appointed the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Migrants' and Children's Rights (OSPE) to coordinate efforts to facilitate regular, safe and orderly migration. BMM supports the OSPE in restructuring the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) on migration by facilitating regular meetings, providing training on the whole-of-government approach and expanding migration outreach campaigns.

In a landmark move, Somalia ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) in 2024, following a roadmap developed by the Ministry of Justice with BMM's support. The programme further supports the implementation of UNTOC and the development of regulations to allow for the application of the law by practitioners.

Additionally, two technical Task Forces on Return & Reintegration and Trafficking & Smuggling with representation from the federal member states bring together government agencies to streamline the government's efforts.



Somalia ratifying UNTOC - a significant step in the fight against transnational organised crime (©UNODC)

At the operational level, the Somali Police Force has set up a specialist unit to investigate and counter trafficking in human beings.

BMM continues to support the national partners in building a governance framework for safe migration and strengthening the capacities of relevant agencies. There is a particular focus on promoting cooperation among government agencies as well as with Somalia's federal member states along the major migration routes in the north.

Migration governance

BMM continues to support the OSPE in launching a comprehensive National Migration Policy Framework, following the completion of a draft in 2024. This initiative builds on a roadmap developed in phase II and now being implemented in phase III. This also requires the transition of Task Forces into a NCM in line with the AU and IGAD regional migration frameworks, facilitating effective cooperation between all relevant agencies. With BMM's support, Terms of Reference have been developed for the NCM, establishing mandates for a whole-of-government approach to migration in Somalia, which means to integrate the collaborative efforts of all government departments and agencies.

BMM also supports the Immigration and Citizenship Agency (ICA) in Somalia to implement the new Immigration Act, as well as the Strategic Plan 2024-2028, a crucial milestone to improve migration management.

In Somaliland, the programme continues to build the capacities of the Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF) as the coordination body for a whole-of-government approach.

Effective institutions to address trafficking and smuggling

BMM is improving the quality of national and regional investigations and prosecutions of trafficking crimes through basic and specialised training and the provision of equipment to law enforcement agencies and prosecutors. The identification and referral of victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants is a particular focus. BMM will accompany the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for investigator-prosecutor cooperation on a national and regional level, and address case management and data management systems. To further enhance inter-agency cooperation, BMM facilitated a study tour of Somali border officials to visit their counterparts in Rwanda.

In cooperation with the Judicial Training Institute of Somalia, BMM trains prosecutors and the judiciary to strengthen the quality of court proceedings. For improved integrated border management, BMM has been operationalising the five Integrated Border Management Committees (IBMC) established in phase II. In addition, BMM supported the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission (SLNHRC) to develop a Complaint Management System for vulnerable migrants and set up a pool of competent trainers, who facilitate training for law enforcement agencies on the rights of migrants.



BMM partners with the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission (SLNHRC) to promote the protections of migrants' rights



Supported by BMM, the National Museum of Somalia will host a Migration Exhibition.

Protection

Under the mandate of the OSPE, BMM has partnered with the National Museum of Somalia to create a Migration Exhibition about the history of migration, Somali identity and the risks of irregular migration by showcasing the stories of the Somali diaspora around the world.

An international campaign to promote safe migration and combat human trafficking is being implemented at regional level. It focuses on communities and uses creative methods and art to raise awareness. Somali communities are often impacted by migration either through an influx of migrants or the drain of young people. BMM supports migration-affected communities to develop their own action plans to address these challenges. In Somaliland, a basic referral flowchart exists under the MMTF. It clarifies roles in identifying, registering and protecting vulnerable migrants. BMM will further disseminate the flowchart and link it to the online directory of service providers and other tools. This helps service providers to assist and protect vulnerable migrants efficiently and improves migrants' access to information about services provided.

In December 2024, the Digital Service Provider Directory (DSPD) was launched. This online platform was developed by BMM in collaboration with the SLNHRC, the Ethiopian National Partnership Coalition (NPC), the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons-Uganda (CATIP-U). The DSPD helps migrants, refugees, and vulnerable individuals on the move to access key protection services.

CSOs play a key role in providing essential services to migrants. BMM has initiated the East and Horn of Africa Anti-Trafficking (EHAAT) Network, consisting of over 100 CSOs from Somalia and the region that work with vulnerable migrants. The programme continues to build their capacities through training and cooperating, including a study tour to Nairobi, where CSOs networked, visited shelters and discussed best practices. In phase III, the focus is on building the sustainability of EHAAT.



Results of BMM (April 2016 – September 2024)



1,612 governmental and non-governmental actors were supported to strengthen coordinated migration management, national migration policies, legislation, and cross-border cooperation



63 capacity-building measures were implemented for **1,507** governmental and non-governmental actors in the areas of investigation and prosecution of trafficking, integrated border management, and the referral of migrants to services



722 stakeholders trained to improve services and access to information for vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking

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Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

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

[GIZ website](#)
[INTPA Website BMM III](#)
[Phase II EUTF website; Phase I EUTF website](#)

Contact BMM Regional Office Kenya / Somalia
Johanne.Boegel@giz.de

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