

IOM STRATEGY FOR KYRGYZSTAN 2022-2025



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

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Cover photo: Ak Bosogo community park opening in June 2023. The park was built within a

community initiative to combat air pollution in Bishkek. ©IOM 2023/Nikolai

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FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the strategy of the IOM Office in Kyrgyzstan. This strategy is a key tool in clearly articulating trends and challenges and how IOM will work with governments, migrant communities, and our many partners to achieve a positive impact over the course of the next five years. The strategy affirms IOM's mandate and core priorities as laid out in its Strategic Vision and related governance documents.

This strategy is anchored to the Central Asia Sub-Regional Strategy for 2021-2025, as well as the IOM's Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which further refines the global priorities and tailors them to the regional context. It lays out IOM's commitment to empower migrants and communities and to address drivers of migration. IOM is advancing positive, sustainable, and innovative development outcomes that are responsive to regional migration trends. In addition, IOM strengthens cooperative development and implementation of evidence-based and inclusive migration governance.

This strategy highlights the current and future migration trends in Kyrgyzstan and sets out the context in which IOM carries out its activities. It outlines the challenges and opportunities relating to migration in the country and identifies the strategic priorities to address them in an effort to strive towards fostering safe, orderly and regular migration.

With the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and establishment of a Country UN Network on Migration, IOM in its capacity as Network Coordinator and Secretariat, will continue to foster effective collaboration in support of the government's implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM.

We are very grateful to IOM staff –particularly at the regional and country level – for their diligent and insightful work in developing this strategy and in their commitment to its successful implementation. The strategy is particularly timely given the operational needs on the ground, with a particular emphasis on response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic and our collective commitment to *build back better*.

This strategy affirms IOM's commitment to support governments and stakeholders in upholding migrants' rights, regardless of their migration status and across all stages of the migration cycle. With this strategy, and in cooperation with our numerous and diverse partners, we will continue to respond to the needs and aspirations of migrants, building societies fit for a modern, mobile and interconnected world. IOM looks forward to strengthening its partnerships in Kyrgyzstan and joining efforts in fostering migration for the benefit of all.

Renate Held IOM Regional Director **Zeynal Hajiyev**IOM Sub-regional Coordinator for Central Asia

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- C. Governance: IOM will support the Government of Kyrgyzstan to introduce effective, coherent, and inclusive migration management policies based on evidence, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and human rights-centred principles in line with the 2030 Agenda, the GCM, UN development frameworks, and state-led national priorities and processes.
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ACRONYMS

GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MGI	Migration Governance Indicators
MIGOF	Migration Governance Framework
MPTF	Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNMN	United Nations Network on Migration

1. INTRODUCTION

ABOUT IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the UN's leading agency on migration and the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, working closely with its key stakeholders - migrants and Member States - to promote humane, safe, and orderly migration. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants from an integral and holistic perspective, including links to development, in order to maximize the benefits and opportunities of migration and reduce its challenges. Established in 1951, IOM now has more than 170 Member States, offices in over 400 field locations and more than 14,000 staff - 90 percent of IOM's staff being deployed in the field. In the South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, IOM has 19 missions. In Kyrgyzstan, IOM has its office in Bishkek and programme-office in Osh and over 14 staff.

As recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, human mobility is indivisible from sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — and the commitment to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind — will not be achieved without due consideration of migration. Additionally, the Global Compact on Migration is grounded in the 2030 Agenda and promotes the principles of having a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address this intrinsic link. This Strategy will support the Member States to achieve this, ultimately leveraging the potential of migration through a whole-of-government approach to achieve sustainable development outcomes for all. It is a direct contribution to the Decade of Action to fast-track progress for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. It brings greater coherence and development impact to IOM's activities and allows for a joined-up approach to the way the Organization designs and delivers its operations, as called for in IOM's Strategic Vision.

IOM's Strategic Vision, presented to IOM Member States in 2019, spans the period of 2019 to 2023. The Vision articulates how IOM plans to meet its new and emerging responsibilities, including IOM's mandated role as Network Coordinator. It sets out the 'direction of travel' for IOM, is forward looking and encourages 'joined up thinking'. This Strategy is aligned with the Vision, its corresponding Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, IOM's Central Asia Strategy, and the IOM Strategic Results Framework, which are anchored in the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda and the GCM.

IOM IN KYRGYZSTAN

IOM has had an active presence in Kyrgyzstan since 1997. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic became an IOM Member State in 2000, after being an observer since 1993. IOM Kyrgyzstan provides comprehensive support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan on migration issues, in regards to safe, orderly, and regular migration through human-rights based migration governance and providing effective protection and assistance to migrants. IOM Kyrgyzstan is also working on enhancing the understanding of good migration governance within the international community at large, the private sector, civil society, and other partners.

IOM Kyrgyzstan works across a variety of thematic areas, including mobility and human development, health, environment and climate change, migrant protection and assistance,



International Migrants Day press conference with the participation of the Minister of Labor, Social Protection and Migration, 18 December 2022. © IOM 2022/Askat CHYNALY

and border management. In addition, IOM Kyrgyzstan also works on community stabilization and operational movement with the focus on promoting and protecting the rights, health, and safety of migrants and their family members, mobility tracking, as well as reintegration of returned migrants.

As part of its whole-of-government approach, IOM contributes to horizontal and vertical policy coherence across different levels of the government, starting from IOM's assistance to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to develop the National Referral Mechanism for assistance to victims of trafficking (adopted in September 2019) to its most recent achievement of contributing to the development of a Concept of Migration Policy 2030¹ (adopted in May 2021).

¹ The concept demonstrates the Kyrgyz government's commitment to address the main causes of migration, leverage migration and diaspora toward socio-economic development, protect and uphold the rights of migrants, and create a safe migration environment.

2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Almost 1 million Kyrgyz migrants work abroad, therefore issues concerning migration greatly influence the socio-economic and political climate of the country. Migration provides challenges and opportunities for Kyrgyzstan: On one hand, through high informal labour migration abroad, many Kyrgyz migrants are put at risk of exploitation and human trafficking. Moreover, out-migration due to a lack of economic opportunities at home causes an outflow of manpower. Migrants also often face difficulties accessing health services and other essential social services at home and abroad. On the other hand, migration, through remittances, reduces poverty, contributes to the fiscal health of the country, serves as a channel for new skills and knowledge transfer, provides more economic and personal development opportunities, especially for women, and can serve as an adaption measure for climate change.

Although Kyrgyzstan is largely a migrant-sending country, it also serves as a destination country for migrant workers from neighbouring countries who commute across borders with their "patents" (work permit) in the southern part of the country.² Kyrgyzstan is also a destination country for international migrants from diverse backgrounds, especially students. As of 2021, there are more than 30,000 international students in Kyrgyzstan, most of them from Pakistan and India.³

A. LABOUR MIGRATION

Kyrgyzstan is a country in Central Asia with approximately 6.5 million citizens, with the total number of emigrants amounting to 775,000 in mid-2020.⁴ According to the Kyrgyz State Department on Migration, more than 50,000 people leave the country as labour migrants annually.⁵ However, the prevalence of informality in migration from Kyrgyzstan and the significant number of Kyrgyz labour migrants who have obtained citizenship in destination countries, notably the Russian Federation (therefore not classified as migrants by the Russian authorities), suggest that upwards of 1 million Kyrgyz citizens (around 40% of the country's labour force) regularly work abroad. Among them, an estimated 30 per cent work on a seasonal basis, particularly in agriculture and construction.⁶

Most Kyrgyz labour migrants work in the Russian Federation (more than 90 per cent). The second-most popular country of destination for Kyrgyz migrant workers is Kazakhstan, with more than 150,000 registered Kyrgyz nationals in 2017. The third-most popular country of destination for is Tukey, where 30,000 Kyrgyz nationals were registered in 2018.⁷

Sputnik, "Border migrants to be fined for working without a patent in Kyrgyzstan", 19 May 2021, https://ru.sputnik.kg/20210519/kyrgyzstan-prigranichnye-migranty-patent-shtraf-1052535037.html.
 Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, "The Cabinet of Ministers held a meeting on the safe stay of foreign students in the country",

³ Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, "The Cabinet of Ministers held a meeting on the safe stay of foreign students in the country", 27 December 2021, https://www.gov.kg/ru/post/s/20754-ministrler-kabinetinde-chet-eldik-studentterdin-lk-aymagynda-koopsuz-zhrs-maselesi-boyuncha-keeshme-tt.

⁴ Migration Data Portal, "Profile: Kyrgyzstan", 2020, https://www.migrationdataportal.org/international-data?i=stock_abs_&t=2020&cm49=417.

⁵ State Migration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, Joint Report on Migration in Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Tajikistan, and the Russian Federation, 2018, http://rce.kg/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Edinyj-doklad-final.pdf.

⁶ ADB and UNDP, COVID-19 in the Kyrgyz Republic: Socioeconomic and Vulnerability Impact Assessment and Policy Response, August 2020.

⁷ IOM, Extended Migration Profile 2015-2018, 2018, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/Migration-Profile-2018-in-Russian.pdf.

One of migration's most important positive impacts on Kyrgyzstan is through remittances. Kyrgyzstan is one of the world's most remittance dependent countries. The remittances that Kyrgyz migrant workers send home, amounting to USD 2.4 billion in 2020, constituted 31 per cent of the country's GDP.8 According to the National Statistics Committee, in 2019, remittances contributed to reducing the national poverty rate by 11 per cent, from 31.2 per cent to 20.1 per cent, indicating that 715,000 people rely on remittances to stay out of poverty.9 The limited level of financial literacy prevents the remittances from being used for sustainable livelihood investments. Many families that primarily use remittances to cover basic consumption needs have limited or no savings to cushion shocks triggered by an eventual fall in or the cessation of remittances. This in turn affects consumption patterns and households' capacities to meet food, health, and education needs.

Barriers to economic activities created due to the COVID-19 pandemic inevitably affected remittances sent to Kyrgyzstan. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a deterioration of the economic situation resulting in an 11 per cent poverty increase in the country. ¹⁰ 85 per cent of families receiving remittances from a family member abroad experienced a decrease in the volume of remittances received. ¹¹ According to an IOM survey of Kyrgyz migrants in the Russian Federation, 55 per cent of respondents had stopped sending remittances between April and June 2020 (the first three months of the pandemic in the Russian Federation). 31 per cent had sent remittances but at a lower amount than usual. 52 per cent of respondents also noted that their family situation had deteriorated somewhat as a result of the pandemic. 17 per cent stated that their family situation had greatly deteriorated. ¹²

Yet, in 2020, compared to 2019, official statistics from the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic (NKBR) showed only a minor decrease in the inflow of remittances and even a marginal increase. The reasons behind this are a considerable decrease in outflows in 2020 compared to 2019 and the increased usage of formal remittance transfer routes, thus previously informally transferred remittances appearing on official statistics.¹³ Therefore, the exact amount of loss of remittances due to the pandemic is difficult to capture in formal statistics.

According to official data of the National Statistics Committee, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 60,000 citizens have returned to Kyrgyzstan from abroad. Many of the returned migrants suffer from unemployment and reduced income upon return, and their return during the pandemic has put them in an even more dire situation due to a lack of employment opportunities, housing, impossibility to migrate despite their willingness to migrate again, and repayment of debts.¹⁴

Internal labour migration flows in Kyrgyzstan mainly occur from rural regions and small towns to urban centres with a developed infrastructure. 71 per cent of internal migrants move to the north of the country, especially to Bishkek, the country's capital, mainly seeking

⁸ World Bank, "Personal remittances, received (current US\$) - Kyrgyz Republic", 2020, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR. CD.DT?locations=KG.

⁹ IOM and WFP, Migration, Food Security and Nutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic, December, 2021, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/migration-food-security-and-nutrition-policy-brief-eng_0.pdf.

¹⁰ World Bank, "One Year Later in the Kyrgyz Republic's Battle Against COVID-19", 17 March 2021, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/03/17/one-year-later-in-the-kyrgyz-republic-s-battle-against-covid-19.

¹¹ IOM and UNICEF, Rapid Needs Assessment of the Challenges Facing Migrant Workers and their Families Impacted by the Covid-19 Outbreak, 2020.

 $^{^{12}}$ IOM, Kyrgyzstan: Study On The Socioeconomic Effects Of Covid-19 On Returnees, 2021, https://publications.iom.int/books/kyrgyzstan-study-socioeconomic-effects-covid-19-returnees.

¹³ IOM and WFP, Migration, Food Security and Nutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic, December, 2021, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/migration-food-security-and-nutrition-policy-brief-eng_0.pdf.
¹⁴ Ibid.

better employment opportunities.¹⁵ The highest inflow of internal migrants is observed in the Chui region, the lowest in the Naryn and Batken regions.¹⁶ Besides better economic opportunities, other reasons for internal migration are family and personal reasons (psychological discomfort, desire for change) and infrastructural issues (lack of access to quality education).¹⁷

Internal migrants' access to health and social services is hampered by the registration system "propiska", requiring internal migrants to be registered to access urban public services such as healthcare, water, education, and other various social services. To obtain the registration, the internal migrants need to regularize their residences and complete additional paperwork, which is an expensive and time-consuming process especially in the light of unsteady, seasonal, or part-time employment.

B. MIGRATION AND WOMEN

The number of female Kyrgyz migrants is increasing, and more efforts for gender equality in the area of migration is needed. By mid-2020, female migrants composed 59.6 per cent of Kyrgyzstan's international migration stock. Male migrant workers mostly work in the construction, trade, industry, and agricultural sectors. Female migrant workers are commonly employed in the service sector, the textile industry, catering, and domestic work. The sectors female migrants work in are more likely to be part of the informal employment sector, therefore they have limited access to social services and protection mechanisms. Migrant women are often facing multiple forms of discrimination and stigma, both in the country of origin and destination. Migrant women are also vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.

At the same time migration plays a role in changing the status of women in Kyrgyzstan. Many educated, financially secure, urban women migrants, take the decision to migrate for personal reasons. For them, migration provides more access to job opportunities, and also a more autonomous life by escaping gendered risks and vulnerabilities at home such as bride kidnapping. For women from less privileged backgrounds, escaping poverty and meeting family needs are main motivations for migration, and their migration is often seen as a both sudden and temporary act.²⁰ Especially in rural areas, women face unequal access to economic opportunities, including the lack of protection of their rights to ownership of land and other resources as well as limited access to financial capital thereby limiting their opportunities to fully participate in agricultural activities.²¹ Moreover, women migrants from less privileged backgrounds often become vulnerable to psychological, physical, financial, and economic violence upon their return to Kyrgyzstan due to stigmatization.²²

¹⁵ IOM, Internal Migration in Kyrgyzstan, 2018.

¹⁶ IOM, Extended Migration Profile 2015-2018, 2018, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/Migration-Profile-2018-in-Russian.pdf.

¹⁷ IOM, Internal Migration in Kyrgyzstan, 2018, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/Internal%20Migration%20 in%20Kyrgyzstan.pdf.

 ¹⁸ Migration Data Portal, "Profile: Kyrgyzstan", 2020, https://www.migrationdataportal.org/international-data?i=stock_abs_&t=2020&cm49=417.
 19 FiDH, Women and Children form Kyrgyzstan affected by migration, 2016.

²⁰ UN Women, Women and Labour Migration, Kyrgyz Repulic, October 2018, https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2020/04/gender%20in%20society%20perception%20study/gsps_migration_eng.pdf?la=en&vs=5316.

²¹ IOM and WFP, "Migration, Food Security and Nutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic", December 2021, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/migration-food-security-and-nutrition-policy-brief-eng_0.pdf.

²² UN Women, Women and Labour Migration, Kyrgyz Repulic, October 2018, https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2020/04/gender%20in%20society%20perception%20study/gsps_migration_eng.pdf?la=en&vs=5316.

C. MIGRATION AND CHILDREN

Socio-economic and psychological impact on families and children of Kyrgyz migrants is an additional issue to consider. Migrant parents often are often reluctant to take their children along due to uncertainties associated with living abroad, including the risk of unsanitary and stressful employment environments, as well as low-quality housing they are likely to face abroad. An additional factor is the impeded access to non-discriminatory health and social services as well as educational facilities for children in countries of destination.²³ Migrant parents therefore often choose to leave their children in the custody of relatives and caregivers. The 2019 assessment of the National Statistics Committee revealed that parents of more than 277,000 children were working abroad.²⁴ However, some relatives and caregivers do not have enough resources to provide the necessary care. For example, older children could be forced to perform heavy household chores or take care of younger siblings, which in turn deprives them of free time and even school time, leading to absenteeism. Although some children left behind benefit from remittances and could better enjoy their economic, social, and cultural rights, others may be at a greater risk of violence, neglect, ill-treatment and psychological, physical and sexual abuse from relatives and caregivers. Additionally, without proper registration of guardianship, children of migrants are at the risk of reduced access to educational, health, and social protection support.²⁵

D. ENGAGEMENT OF DIASPORA AND COMPATRIOTS LIVING ABROAD

There are around 200 Kyrgyz diaspora associations in over 18 countries, including various initiative groups, public organizations, national-cultural associations, foundations, and community groups. IOM Kyrgyzstan's recent mapping of the Kyrgyz diaspora, compatriots, and migrants show that the majority of migrants maintain a strong emotional, financial, and family connection with Kyrgyzstan. Diasporas and compatriots have great potential in human, financial and networking resources. Among them there are highly qualified and competent specialists who are ready to contribute to the socio-economic development of Kyrgyzstan. In this regard, the issue of establishing effective channels for mobilizing their intellectual, financial, technological capital is of particular relevance for the development of the regions of Kyrgyzstan.²⁶

Over the past few years, active steps to establish and strengthen cooperation and interaction between the national government and the Kyrgyz diasporas abroad have been observed. The National Council for Migration, Compatriots and Diasporas Abroad under the Chairperson (Toraga JK KR) and the Department of External Migration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been created, and the number of Kyrgyz diasporas, compatriot, and migrants' network is increasing. In addition, IOM Kyrgyzstan has established the Women Migrants Network consisting of women migrants, diaspora leaders and representatives, and returning women migrants to promote the needs and development priorities of women migrants. Additionally, the Mekendeshter (compatriots forum) was initiated in 2012 to further long-term interaction between various structures of the country and diaspora, compatriots, and migrants. During the past three forums in 2012, 2014, and 2016, the Government discussed with the Kyrgyz diaspora members and compatriots on opportunities for them

²³ International Federation for Human Rights (FiDH), Women and Children form Kyrgyzstan affected by migration, 2016.

²⁴ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and United Nations Children's Fund, Kyrgyzstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018 - Survey Findings Report, 2019.

²⁵ UNICEF, Analysis Of Gaps In Access To Basic Services For Children Affected By Migration In Kyrgyzstan, 2020, https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/media/6761/file/ANALYSIS%20OF%20GAPS%20IN%20ACCESS%20TO%20BASIC%20SERVICES%20FOR%20CHILDREN%20 AFFECTED%20BY%20MIGRATION%20IN%20KYRGYZSTAN.pdf.

²⁶ IOM, Mapping of the Kyrgyz Diaspora, Compatriots And Migrants Abroad, 2021, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/

²⁶ IOM, Mapping of the Kyrgyz Diaspora, Compatriots And Migrants Abroad, 2021, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files documents/Report%2520Mapping%2520of%2520Kyrgyz%2520Diaspora%2520Compatriots%2520and%2520Migrants%2520abroad %25202021_0.pdf.

to contribute to Kyrgyzstan's national development. However, despite the fact that the long-term programs of interaction between compatriots and the Government are included in the national development programmes, the practical activities for such interaction are fragmented and could be improved through better coordination

E. COUNTERING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Kyrgyzstan is a country of origin for women, men, and children subjected to trafficking in the country and abroad. In 2010, IOM initiated a survey on the prevalence of trafficking in persons in Central Asia, which revealed that at any given time there are about v. There are no official statistics on the actual number of Kyrgyz victims of trafficking (VoTs), and IOM relies on its own VoTs database, which, since 2002, has recorded 2,600 VoTs identified and referred for assistance to IOM. Main destination countries of trafficking were the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Turkey. In 2020, IOM Kyrgyzstan assisted 25 per cent more VoTs compared to 2019, with the majority of cases being forced labour. COVID-19 restrictive measures, such as closed borders and lockdowns, dramatically heightened trafficking related risks in the country because of social and economic vulnerability of people and VoTs' severely reduced access to services. Within its migrant protection and assistance programme IOM Kyrgyzstan has assisted more than 2,600 victims of trafficking from 2002 to 2020 (48 per cent female/52 per cent male, 76 VoT children), more than 1,100 migrants in vulnerable situations (40 per cent female/60 per cent male) with return, rehabilitation, humanitarian assistance and reintegration.

The country has an institutional counter trafficking framework which stems from the ratification of the Palermo Protocol and the adoption of the national counter trafficking in persons (CTIP) law in 2005. IOM contributed to the development of the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic "On National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons in the Kyrgyz Republic (NRM)," dated September 19, 2019, No. 493. The NRM introduced national criteria and standard operating procedures (SOPs) on VoT identification, referral, assistance, victim-centred approach, data protection, and confidentiality.

However, there is still potential for improvement in prosecution, protection, and prevention of trafficking in Kyrgyzstan as stated in the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2021. One of the recommendations is to establish and implement a comprehensive anti-trafficking data collection system for law enforcement and interministerial coordinative bodies.²⁷ Additionally, the report states that efforts are limited to preventing trafficking originating from Kyrgyzstan and fall short in addressing a wider range of international THB, including the situation of victims transiting in the country.

There is a lack of a decent and sustainable return and reintegration assistance program for returned migrants, especially women and children, and persons with negative migration experience. The lack of reintegration mechanisms for returned migrants negatively affects the psychological and economic condition of migrants and their families. Public opinions about migrants, especially about women and those who have negative migration experiences, are characterized by a high level of intolerance and stigmatization. Information campaigns on the role, position, needs, and positive contributions of migrants, especially from vulnerable groups, are rare. between government departments and structures.²⁸

²⁷ United States Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report: Kyrgyz Republic, 2021, https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/kyrgyz-republic/.

 $persons-report/kyrgyz-republic/. \\ ^{28}IOM, Mapping of the Kyrgyz Diaspora, Compatriots And Migrants Abroad, 2021, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/sites/g/files/documents/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/sites/g/files/documents/sites/g/files/files/documents/sites/g/files/fi$

F. IMMIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

Issues concerning immigration and border management in Kyrgyzstan are twofold: border security in terms of movements of people and goods, and humanitarian border management concerning the protection of migrants. The Government of Kyrgyzstan currently has two policy documents on border management, the National Strategy for the Creation and Implementation of an Integrated State Border Management System of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period of 2012 to 2022 and its Action Plan.

In terms of border security, IOM Kyrgyzstan contributes to the Government's capacity to manage movements through their borders and territories in line with international standards. Projects within IOM's Immigration and Border Management (IBM) thematic area envisage strengthening national identity management systems, as the Government lacks appropriate capacity and infrastructure in establishing robust and effective solutions at the borders and have trained border management officials in travel document inspection. Through its projects, IOM Kyrgyzstan supports the establishment of state-of-the-art information exchange systems, thus improving inter-agency cooperation on both sides of the border. This includes initiatives supporting the establishment of Advanced Passenger Information (API) systems, implementation of real-time data exchange between migration and border agencies as well as pre-arrival exchange of information between customs authorities. Additionally, IOM Kyrgyzstan also actively supports increasing the health security aspect of border management using IOM's comprehensive Health, Border, and Mobility Management framework.

In terms of humanitarian border management, the Government of Kyrgyzstan recognizes the need to strengthen its border management capacity given the potential risks in the region, especially due to political instability in Afghanistan followed by the rise in mobility flows and increased risk of cross-border crimes. Ensuring the peace and security of Kyrgyzstan is linked to more efficient border management capacity, more suitable infrastructure, and the enhanced capacity of relevant staff at Points of Entries (PoEs), both in regards to border management and internal peace-sustaining efforts by mitigating risks of irregular movements. It is critical to prepare a response action, in particular in the area of border management at the PoEs of Kyrgyzstan to mitigate the risks of security challenges through comprehensive capacity-building (hard and soft capacities), enhancing reporting systems for detection of cross-border criminal activities, and providing appropriate support to migrants in vulnerable situations. It is especially important to manage the risks of transnational organized crime such as smuggling of migrants (SOM) and trafficking in human beings (THB), as well as trafficking of illegal goods through Central Asia, including through Kyrgyzstan.

G. SOCIAL COHESION

Large groups of youth from ethnic, migrant, and other vulnerable communities in Kyrgyzstan are largely excluded in decision-making processes and economic opportunities, which widens social divisions and increases the risk of conflict.²⁹ Youth vulnerabilities are mainly reflected in their increased and unaddressed grievances over unemployment and unsuccessful migration experience, which can potentially contribute to the underlying drivers of radicalization processes, as seen, for example, in the violent extremism recruitment of Kyrgyz citizens

Report%2520Mapping%2520of%2520Kyrgyz%2520Diaspora%2520Compatriots%2520and%2520Migrants%2520abroad%2520201_0.pdf.

²⁹ United Nations, Peace and Conflict Analysis for Kyrgyzstan, April 2019.

by ISIL between 2010 and 2016.³⁰ At the same time, there are recent examples in which young people have actively promoted communities' resilience and solidarity, including during the first COVID-19 pandemic wave when young people actively mobilized resources at community level through grassroots and diaspora engagement, and contributed to disaster response and recovery during the cross-border conflict in Batken province. However, both crises revealed a lack of trust towards the State and State's inability to reinforce cooperation mechanisms to benefit from youth agency, in particular young migrants, in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Such conditions increased resentment among youths, pushing for radicalization and community level conflicts. Of particular concern is a regional trend where insurgent and violent extremist groups may become emboldened from the developments in Afghanistan in 2021, from where the Taliban's successes may have spill-over effects in Central Asia.

To enhance social cohesion in Kyrgyzstan, concerted efforts are needed to combat xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiments on local and national levels and to ensure international migrants' access to essential services. Kyrgyzstan also serves as a destination country for migrant workers from neighbouring countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and international students, mostly from Pakistan and India. The media has regularly reported racial discrimination against international students, including severe physical violence.³¹ The situation in Afghanistan and potential inflow of refugees has heightened xenophobic sentiments.

H. HEALTH

Migrant workers and mobile populations from Kyrgyzstan face many obstacles in accessing essential health care services in destination countries. This is mostly linked to their irregular immigration status, language barriers, a lack of migrant-inclusive health policies, and the inaccessibility of services. Such obstacles impact the well-being of migrants as well as the host communities and undermine the realisation of global health goals such as preventing, treating, and eliminating HIV, tuberculosis, COVID-19, and human influenza.

The conditions and circumstances surrounding migration often pose risks to the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of migrants, including increased vulnerabilities regarding HIV/ AIDS and tuberculosis (TB). Social disruption caused by migration, unsafe living conditions, discrimination in accessing health education and social services, and a lack of social capital can increase migrants' exposure to diseases such as HIV/AIDS and can lead to late diagnosis, poor treatment-seeking behaviour, treatment default, and potential for transmission to others. Persistent stigma and discrimination towards migrants and HIV/AIDS, including legislation enforcing mandatory testing and restrictions on movement of people living with HIV/AIDS continues to increase HIV/AIDS vulnerability among migrants. Challenges in addressing HIV/AIDS vulnerabilities among migrants and mobile populations include lack of migrant-specific data to inform decision-making, continued stigma, and discriminatory attitudes towards migrants, including limited access to services based on migratory status and/or HIV/AIDS status, lack of recognition of migrants in national HIV/AIDS strategies, and inadequate comprehensive services reaching mobile populations. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan faces a serious epidemic of TB drug resistance and has one of the highest rates of multidrugresistant TB (MDR-TB) in the world. Seasonal migration patterns among Central Asian

³⁰ IOM, The House That Was Built By, 2020, https://kyrgyzstan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1321/files/documents/FACICOM_ENG.pdf.

³¹ 24.kg, "Students from Pakistan ask the Cabinet to ensure their safety in Kyrgyzstan", 20 December 2021, https://24.kg/agent_024/217698_studentyi_izpakistana_prosyat_kabmin_obespechit_ihbezopasnost_vkyirgyizstane/.

countries, harsh living and working conditions cause treatment interruption and increase the chances that migrants develop drug-resistant forms of TB. A retrospective cross-sectional study used data extracted from the National TB Registry of Kyrgyzstan for the region of Chui (including the city of Bishkek) for 2015–2017 found that Kyrgyz migrant workers were the most highly represented group comprising 67.8 per cent of all TB key populations.³²

Internal and international migrants living in big cities are increasingly exposed to health risks associated with air pollution, as Bishkek, in the winter, ranks as one of the cities with the worst air quality in the world. According to available statistics, the most polluted areas were new settlements and the city centre, where most internal and many international migrants live. A lack of access to gas and heating systems in new settlements due to inadequate connectivity to the city's infrastructure forces migrants to use low-quality coal and other inappropriate materials like textiles or tires as fuel for residential heating, which further exacerbates air pollution and their overall health. The health consequences of air pollution include respiratory and infectious diseases such as COVID-19, heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer and can exacerbate underlying conditions.

The traditional verification of travellers' medical records and history of risk exposure and detection of symptoms, carried out at formal, international ports of entry (PoE) and departure are insufficient in the context of an intense and multi-directional human mobility, linked to formal and informal cross-border trade, transnational communities, and porous borders. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it has become more evident that the control of communicable diseases is the foundation of well-established public health measures in border management and to ensure health security. While migration and mobility are increasingly recognized as determinants of ill health and risk exposure,³³ the volume, rapidity, and ease of today's travel pose new challenges to cross-border disease control and suggest the need to adopt innovative, systemic, and multi-sectoral responses. There is a lack of comprehensive data on international migrants' access to health services in Kyrgyzstan. According to Kyrgyzstan's law, international migrants have access to essential healthcare provided by the public health system and also to private healthcare services for specialised care. Especially, migrant workers from neighbouring countries such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan may also face financial and other difficulties accessing health services. As mentioned previously, relatives of migrants, especially children, staying in Kyrgyzstan often lack access to psychosocial support as well.

I. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK

Kyrgyzstan is one of the most vulnerable countries in Central Asia in the context of climate and environmental migration, as the country's economic activities are mainly tied to natural resources. Projections suggest that the average annual temperature in Kyrgyzstan will increase by 2-3 degrees every 20 years.³⁴ The number of people migrating because of the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on their livelihoods, daily lives and health is expected to rise. About 13 per cent of respondents in a survey conducted in 2018 on internal migration mentioned nature, environment, and climate related factors behind their forced relocation to other parts of the country, meaning that out of the total

³² Kozhoyarova et al., "Who is doing worse? Retrospective cross-sectional study of TB key population treatment outcomes in Kyrgyzstan (2015-2017)", The Journal of Infection in Developing Countries, doi: 10.3855/jidc.11897.

33 World Health Assembly Resolution 61.17, Health of Migrants, 2008. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/23533/A61_R17-en.

pdf;jsessionid=031FC413F562D00C3831A2F79B2CD5A5/sequence=1

34 Climate Action Network (CAN), "What awaits the countries of Central Asia from climate change and will there be a war for water?", 30

November 2016, https://infoclimaté.org/chto-ozhidaet-strany-centralnoy-azii/.

12-13,000 internal migrants, 1,6-1,700 were forced to move for environmental and climate related reasons.³⁵ The highest rates were recorded in Issyk-Kul, Jalal-Abad and Osh regions.³⁶

Climate change- and environmental degradation-induced migrants have limited access to essential health and social service. Migration is used as an adaptation measure especially when agriculture or grazing is severely affected by environmental degradation or extreme events. Many migrants moving in the context of climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters have specific physical and mental health needs that are linked to their exposure to climate and environmental conditions. Yet, these migrants often experience significant barriers to accessing essential health and social services.

The interlinkage between migration, climate change and environment is not prevalent in Kyrgyzstan's national policies, as the issue of environmental migration is relatively new on Kyrgyzstan's agenda. Recently, the Government of the Kyrgyzstan included "climate induced migrants" in the Migration Policy Concept of the Kyrgyzstan for 2022-2030 and encourages stakeholders to deepen the understanding of the complex interactions between the environment, climate change and migration dynamics, which in turn allows to develop and implement effective policies aiming to mitigate the negative consequences of forced environmentally induced migration.

Various natural and man-made disasters such as landslides, land degradation, earthquakes, melting of glaciers, and tailing dams are putting people's lives and livelihoods at risk, influencing migration in Kyrgyzstan.

Landslides and mudslides are the most relevant natural disasters for Kyrgyzstan, in terms of frequency, damage and casualties. It is estimated that 60-70 per cent of land in Kyrgyzstan is currently degraded to varying degrees. Given that 70 per cent of farmers' income now comes from livestock production, the impact on the quality of life of Kyrgyz people is obvious. There are 5,000 districts where landslides can occur in Kyrgyzstan, and 99 per cent of all landslides occur in the country's southern regions, mostly in Osh and Jalal-Abad regions.³⁷ So far, the Government's effort to resettle residents under potential risks of natural and/ or man-made disasters have not been successful. The main reasons why residents refuse to move are insufficient funds allocated to purchase equivalent housing, unsuitable plots allocated for agricultural use, fear of losing their socio-cultural environment, and ties with the community.

In addition, Kyrgyzstan is one of the most earthquake-prone countries of Central Asia. On average, about 3,000 earthquakes per year are registered in the country, of which about ten to twenty with a magnitude greater than five in terms of destructive effects earthquakes stand out among disasters, as they can be accompanied by other natural phenomena.³⁸

Melting glaciers and consequent water scarcity has led to both cross-border and internal local conflicts and will lead to changes in economy structure (agriculture, energy) and livelihoods of the country's population. Today, some 1 million Kyrgyz citizens do not have access to safe drinking water.³⁹ At least 1,125 villages in Kyrgyzstan are still not connected

³⁵ Kaktus Media, "Portrait of an internal migrant in infographics: 44% of respondents arrived in Bishkek", 8 September 2018, https://kaktus.media/doc/379384_portret_vnytrennego_migranta_v_infografikah:_44_oproshennyh_priehali_v_bishkek.html.
36 IOM, Internal Migration in Kyrgyzstan, 2018.

³⁷ Ministry of Emergency of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Prediction of risk from radioactive and toxic tailings and dumps", Monitoring and forecast of possible activation of hazardous processes and phenomena on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021, http://ru.mes.kg/Kniga/book_rus017. html.

³⁸ Institute of Seismology NAS Kyrgyz Republic, "The history of the creation and formation of the Institute", 2022, http://www.seismo.kg/ru/component/content/article?id=14:-l-r&catid=3:2011-07-06-07-18-44.

³⁹ Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, "The Ombudsman's Institute prepared a Special Report on Clean Drinking Water", 9 January 2018, http://www.ombudsman.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=248&catid=18&lang=ru<emid=149.

to the water supply. Almost 40 per cent of the population of Kyrgyzstan drink water from aryks, rivers, canals, springs, as well as imported water. Irrigation water shortage has led to and will continue to cause agricultural products price volatility, as was the case in the fall of 2021. Currently, there are no studies and analysis on the water-related migration and relocation in Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁰

Man-made phenomena, such as tailings dams, also have a huge impact on the population's decision to relocate. Almost all the major mineral deposits and those planned for operation have encountered conflicts between residents and investors over non-compliance with environmental requirements. Locals fear that mining activities will cause great environmental damage.⁴¹ Population living near uranium tailing legacy sites are also vulnerable to various health risks.⁴²



IOM staff distributing non-food items as humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons in the Batken region, December 2022. ©IOM 2022

 $^{^{40}}$ Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNECE, and OECD, National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management, 2013, https://www.oecd.org/env/outreach/KR_NPD%20Overview.pdf.

⁴¹ Ministry of Emergency of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Prediction of risk from radioactive and toxic tailings and dumps", Monitoring and forecast of possible activation of hazardous processes and phenomena on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021, http://ru.mes.kg/Kniga/book_rus017.

⁴² The Third Pole, "Uranium mine in Kyrgyzstan spreads pollution for 53 years", 13 October 2021, https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/pollution/uranium-mine-radioactive-waste-kyrgyzstan/.

3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic priorities for Kyrgyzstan emphasise addressing existent migration challenges and are in line with global development priorities. They are based on the IOM Strategic Vision, the Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia as well as related IOM governance document, such as the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). The country strategy draws on international tools such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), in particular, Target 10.7 to "facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies" and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The strategy is also aligned with national policy documents in the area of migration, such as the "State Concept of Migration Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic 2021-2030", "National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyzstan Republic for 2018-2040", and the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyzstan "On taking measures aimed at improving the migration situation", dated January 29, 2021.

The strategy also aligns with Kyrgyzstan's UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027. All IOM Kyrgyzstan's strategic priorities and activities are in line with the Outcomes of the UNSDCF. The Country Strategy's alignment with UNSDCF is demonstrated in the Annex. The outcomes are:

 Outcome 1: By 2027, the people of the Kyrgyz Republic, particularly vulnerable groups, have enhanced resilience, strengthened capabilities, and access to decent work, resulting in full enjoyment of their rights contributing to the socio-economic development of the country.



Training of media representatives and journalists on safe migration, social integration of international migrants and gender aspects of migration, May 2023. ©IOM 2023/Rustem ILYASOV

- Outcome 2: By 2027, the well-being of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic will have improved through the further rollout of a green economy based on sustainable and healthy food systems, natural resource management, and effective migration processes, by accelerating the use of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Outcome 3: By 2027, Kyrgyzstan has started the transition to low-carbon development and risk-informed climate resilience, contributing to people's fair and equitable access to ecosystem benefits and to empowerment of vulnerable communities in the governance of natural resources and disaster prevention.
- Outcome 4: By 2027, all people in the Kyrgyz Republic enjoy the benefits of fair and accountable democratic institutions that are free from corruption and apply innovative solutions that promote respect for human rights, and strengthen peace and cohesion.

IOM will work toward achieving the following three key strategic priorities in the country:

	Strategic priority 1:		
resilience	IOM will focus on assisting migrants in vulnerable situations, their families and communities in Kyrgyzstan, building their resilience, in particular to violence, exploitation and abuse, migration-related health impacts, changes in remittance flows, as well as environmental and climate change impacts		
	Strategic priority 2:		
MOBILITY	IOM will work to build regular, safe and dignified migratory channels and leverage mobility, including the economic benefits and skills of migrants and Kyrgyz diaspora, to support sustainable development at national and community levels, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.		
	Strategic priority 3:		
GOVERNANCE	IOM will support the Government of Kyrgyzstan to introduce effective, coherent and inclusive migration management policies based on evidence, 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach and human rights-centered principles in line with the 2030 Agenda, the GCM, UN development frameworks and stateled national priorities and processes.		

IOM Kyrgyzstan will provide support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan in the following areas.

A. Resilience: IOM will focus on assisting migrants in vulnerable situations, their families and communities in Kyrgyzstan, building their resilience, in particular to violence, exploitation and abuse, migration-related health impacts, changes in remittance flows, as well as environmental and climate change impacts

IOM Kyrgyzstan will 1) address and minimize adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their homes, including climate and environmental risks, 2) protect

migrants and displacement affected populations from violence, exploitation, and abuse and uphold their rights; 3) assist the Government to leverage migration for local development; and 4) ensure that migrants, displaced persons, and communities live in equitable, inclusive societies and are able to access essential services and contribute to socio-economic development; and 5) promote social cohesion efforts in migrant communities through mitigating the risks of conflicts due to unaddressed grievances, radicalization, and violent extremism.

With these objectives in mind, IOM Kyrgyzstan will continue providing **direct assistance to migrants**, focusing on the most vulnerable, ensuring no one is left behind, conducting awareness-raising campaigns, promoting core IOM's principle at the local, national, country, and sub-regional levels, and supporting capacity-building of government stakeholders and migrants as well **increasing resilience of vulnerable migrants**. This will ensure that risk factors increasing migrant vulnerability to violence, exploitation, and abuse, including gender-based violence and migration-related health impacts, are reduced and/or mitigated. IOM will contribute to building the capacity of the Government and civil society stakeholders to provide quality, timely and gender and child sensitive protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants, including children and victims of trafficking via the National Referral Mechanisms.

Also, IOM will work with various stakeholders on respecting migrant workers' rights and actively engage in efforts to prevent exploitation and trafficking and encourage the growth of regular and safe migratory corridors through pre-departure orientation, bilateral agreements, and ethical recruitment agreements, as the Government diversifies labour migration destinations. Organized and safe recruitment and employment systems will be facilitated for migrant workers to increase their resilience to exploitation and abuse. IOM will provide a continuous support to government structures and recruitment agencies to facilitate safe, orderly, and regulated migration, so that migrants of all genders, ages, and abilities have access to protection and social services throughout the migration process.



To help the Government to attract and utilize the financial and human capital benefits of migration, IOM will encourage the use of skills and efforts of migrants towards national development and achievement of SDGs. IOM will facilitate inter-state dialogue and advocate for policy improvement to strengthen legal protection mechanisms for migrants in the countries of origin, transit, and destination, also engaging civil society organizations, diaspora, business entities and individual experts, where applicable.

IOM will deepen the understanding of the **migration, environment and climate change nexus in Kyrgyzstan**, and advocate for stronger efforts to address climate change induced migration through building community resilience, mainstreaming the nexus in national policies, and supporting governments to better facilitate voluntary relocations. As a result, Government institutions will integrate migration in climate action initiatives and/or climate action in migration initiatives and include the climate and disaster-induced migrants to national relocation plans and climate change adaptation/mitigation and disaster risk reduction strategies. IOM will work with the Government so that migrants can actively participate in environmental sustainability and minimize negative climate change impacts in the territories from which they have been relocated. IOM will also support the Government to collect data to identify the complex interrelationships between climate change, natural disasters, and citizen mobility.

IOM will contribute to creating and maintaining a multisectoral, multi-partner coordination mechanism for public health emergencies through appropriate preparedness and timely response. In terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the overall objective of the IOM COVID-19 Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan to halt further transmission of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact of the outbreak, including its social and economic impacts in coordination and partnership with relevant actors at global and national levels. This will enhance capacity of government, civil society, and communities to recover through improved social cohesion, reinforced public health and economic recovery.

In addition, IOM will promote a holistic approach in emergency response, across the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. Besides providing emergency relief when assistance is requested by the relevant authorities, IOM will provide social, political, and economic solutions to address the grievances and needs of those at risk of conflict (migrants in vulnerable situations and their families) and violence and will contribute to enhancing the capacities of governments and civil society actors to identify and address drivers of conflict. Relevant activities will include, but will not be limited to, the prevention of radicalization, recruitment of individuals to and their inspiration by violent extremist ideologies and groups through capacitating the civil society, central and local governments. Additionally, IOM will promote the inclusion of migrants to policymaking and programming of transition and recovery from conflicts and social cohesion.

The challenges of **gender inequality** in the context of migration will be reduced through tailored capacity building of migrant women and girls about women empowerment, leadership and anti-gender-based violence (GBV). IOM activities will assist Governments and civil society actors to have skills, tools, and knowledge to identify and prevent GBV through sustainable risk mitigation measures and policies and practices that promote gender equality. IOM will also ensure that gender analysis is part of project design, data collection and implementation of interventions, effectively integrate gender into preparedness for crisis, address gender-specific protection and assistance needs, and prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

IOM will also actively engage diaspora, migrants, and compatriots in the sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan through improving their financial literacy and access to financial services, including secure, efficient, and affordable remittances channels. The diaspora, migrants, and compatriots will be called to change their investment or philanthropic practices to support climate action. Additionally, IOM will continue working with the Government and relevant institutions to equip them with knowledge and skills to sustainably leverage migrants' social and economic contributions to the country's development.

B. Mobility: IOM will work to build regular, safe and dignified migratory channels and leverage mobility, including the economic benefits and skills of migrants and Kyrgyz diaspora, to support sustainable development at national and community levels, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

IOM Kyrgyzstan will contribute to building sustainable channels for regular migration and to the management of migration flows and cross-border mobility that ensures health, security and safety throughout the mobility continuum.

IOM will support the Government to have innovative, flexible, and inclusive cross-border mobility solutions in place to address their current and future skills need by working with the Government and skills providers to ensure that effective skills development and matching systems are in place to facilitate labour migration in response to labour market demand.

IOM will strive to **reduce migrants' vulnerabilities to health risks** along their migratory routes by ensuring their access to essential health services at home and abroad and through health education, immunization, portable health insurance, etc. Additionally, IOM will continue to support health and border authorities, as well as other partners, including NGOs and community-based organizations, to enhance the preparedness of Points of Entry (PoE) to respond effectively to COVID-19 pandemic and similar scenarios through targeted training, development of Standard Operating Procedures, providing technical support, collecting data and awareness raising. IOM will also strengthen the networks of health workers on migrant-inclusive health services, including HIV and TB-related services.

IOM will ensure that migrants have access to **legal identity solutions** and receive relevant support. The services include obtaining civil registration documents, accessing nationality determination services, receiving accurate and up to date immigration-related information such as stay regulations, immigration and visa procedures, and accessing consular assistance. In order to do so, IOM will capacitate relevant government entities with knowledge, skills and equipment to deliver the services and ensure that rights of migrants are protected in the process.

IOM will continue to assist and capacitate the Government of Kyrgyzstan to have knowledge, skills and resources to facilitate the safe and dignified return of migrants and ensure that migrants' immediate needs will be addressed upon their return to Kyrgyzstan. IOM will assist migrants and their families in the process of return and reintegration in terms of social, health, and economic needs.

IOM will provide its technical expertise and further assistance to cross-border management. IOM will especially focus on capacitating relevant government entities and personnel on detecting, investigating and prosecuting activities related to **trafficking in persons (TIP)**, **smuggling of migrants (SOM)**, and other transnational organized crimes. IOM will also strive to capacitate victims of trafficking and those at risk of trafficking in persons so that they are equipped with relevant prevention and protection measures. IOM will also support key stakeholders, including law enforcement and border officials, to access data and evidence to report human trafficking and smuggling networks and take active measures for further interventions to provide adequate protection for vulnerable migrants.

IOM will aim to provide technical assistance to the Government of Kyrgyzstan, facilitating elaboration of effective and sustainable mechanisms for enhancement of the governments' capacity to securely manage its borders in accordance with international standards and national legislation so that **integrated**, **non-discriminatory border management policies and systems** ensure respect of human rights, dignity and safety of those on the move including children and migrants in vulnerable situations.

IOM will support the **immigration and border management** agencies of Kyrgyzstan in their capacity to facilitate cross-border movement of bona fide passengers and goods, while at the same time preventing the entry, transit and departure of illicit travellers and commodities and countering transnational organized crime. IOM will do so through the drafting and/or implementation of national integrated border management strategies (where they exist), further development and/or implementation of the immigration and border security legal framework, support to ongoing institutional reforms, standard operating procedures, training, information management and finally, border equipment and infrastructure. IOM will specifically focus on implementing passenger data systems (API/PNR), strengthening identity management and document security, including capacities to detect document fraud, support to the implementation of readmission agreements, and promotion of cross-border trade.

C. Governance: IOM will support the Government of Kyrgyzstan to introduce effective, coherent, and inclusive migration management policies based on evidence, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and human rights-centred principles in line with the 2030 Agenda, the GCM, UN development frameworks, and state-led national priorities and processes.

IOM Kyrgyzstan will provide support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to introduce effective, coherent and inclusive migration management policies based on evidence, whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach and human rights-centred principles in line with the 2030 Agenda, the GCM and state-led priorities and processes. Moreover, IOM will continue to contribute to urban development, which takes the needs of migrant communities into account, in line with the WHO's Healthy City Vision approach.

Currently IOM is providing administrative and technical support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to develop a National Action Plan for 2021-2025 on Implementation of the State Concept of Migration Policy 2030, which is aligned with GCM, SDGs and Agenda 2030, UNMN Work Plan, UNDAF, and with migration aspirations of relevant ministries and agencies.

IOM will contribute to the Government's evidence-based policy making process by promoting the whole-of government and whole-of society coordination mechanism on migration data collection, management, and analysis. IOM will support national counterparts with capacity building, data collection and analysis in line with the objectives and priorities set in the Migration Data Strategy.⁴³ IOM will also provide technical assistance to a follow-up assessment of Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) of Kyrgyzstan to update the evidence-based migration baseline.

I IOM will contribute to strengthening the national capacities and systems for effective and comprehensive migration data collection, exchange, and analysis of the migration statistics. In this context, IOM will provide technical assistance and capacity building support to migration management stakeholders in the country towards improving the standards, practices and systems for the collection and analysis of migration statistics. IOM will also provide guidelines to the national stakeholders on the usage of the findings from the data management analysis and their recommendations transformation into concrete actions. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) can be used for data collection.

IOM will continue to support and encourage the Government to adopt more effective migration governance through mainstreaming migration in multi-sectoral policies and frameworks. In particular, IOM will support the Government to engage in, respond to, and report on international commitments such as the GCM, the SDGs and to participate in regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, including Inter-State Coordination Mechanisms (ISCMs) such as the Almaty Process, for better migration management and multi-lateral mobility agreements.

IOM will contribute to strengthening capacity of the Government and non-government stakeholders to achieve gender mainstreaming in migration governance in Kyrgyzstan through assessing inequalities and, in particular, gender-based discrimination and vulnerabilities, in order to inform policymaking, promoting and implementing women empowerment and rights-based approach in its programs and activities.



⁴³ IOM, Migration Data Strategy 2020-2025, 2020, https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/documents/iom_migration_data_strategy_revised_6.10.2020_clean.pdf.

out at the Tamchi Airport in Issyl-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, April 2023. © IOM 2023/Danil USMANOV

IOM will also combat xenophobia and negative perception of migration through the analysis and communication of migrants' contributions, counter misinformation, active awareness-raising on xenophobia and discrimination against migrants and promotion social cohesion among migrants and settled communities.

A. Cross-cutting Themes

Gender

IOM Kyrgyzstan will ensure gender mainstreaming and adopt a gender inclusive approach that is responsive to target beneficiaries' needs in all its interventions. IOM Kyrgyzstan's programmes and activities are tailored to create a comprehensive and inclusive approach where needs of beneficiaries irrespective of their sex and gender identity are equally identified, understood, and met. Activities are gender-sensitive and beneficiaries are equally assisted and protected regardless of their sex or gender identity. This also includes a gender-sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation system to support the implementation of IOM Kyrgyzstan commitments towards achieving gender equality.

Mainstreaming protection and Rights-based Approach (RBA)

IOM is mandated by its Constitution and the policy documents adopted by its Member States to contribute to the protection of migrants. This includes the IOM Guidance Note on Protection Mainstreaming in Crisis Response, the IOM Data Protection Principles, and the IOM Right-based Approach (RBA) to Programming. In line with this mandate as well as the international, regional, and national legal and normative frameworks, IOM Kyrgyzstan will continue to promote and protect the human rights of migrants and ensure that its interventions do no harm, promote non-discrimination and meaningful access, safety, dignity, participation, empowerment and accountability measures. IOM Kyrgyzstan will promote the integration of RBA into all its interventions to ensure that migrants, displaced and mobile persons are protected.



Youth

IOM Kyrgyzstan seeks to ensure that every young person in Kyrgyzstan is empowered to achieve his or her full potential and that young people's capacities, resilience, and positive contributions as agents of change are fulfilled in line with United Nations Youth Strategy 2030. IOM will continue its work closely with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, donors, and the private sector to enhance employability of the Kyrgyz and migrant youth to provide positive alternatives to irregular migration. IOM will work to increase the awareness of youth in Kyrgyzstan on the dangers of irregular migration and continue its work on advancing the social well-being of youth in their societies, advancing social cohesion, and promoting youth as ambassadors of unity and change.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment

IOM recognizes that incidents of sexual harassment (SH) in the workplace can serve as indicators of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) against beneficiaries, and vice versa, and takes a mutually reinforcing approach to tackle both forms of sexual misconduct. SEA and SH by IOM personnel and its partners and service providers are not only serious misconduct but can be violations of human rights. SEA and SH are forms of sexual violence driven by gender inequality and imbalances of power. IOM is committed to addressing SEA and SH through effective prevention, risk mitigation, and response measures at all stages of programming across all types of interventions and within all IOM offices worldwide.

IOM Kyrgyzstan is part of the UN Country-Level Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 2021-2022. To prevent SEA IOM has mandatory regular online and offline PSEA trainings.

B. Partnership and Coordination

IOM is an active member of the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in Kyrgyzstan and contributes to the UNDAF, as well as to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to be develop by 2022. IOM partners with other UN Agencies to jointly approach areas of common interest such as migration data, data on health and access to health services for migrants, migrants' rights, violent extremism, counter-trafficking, environmental migration, gender aspects of migration, remittances, and mixed migration flows. In Kyrgyzstan, IOM is collaborating with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and other participating agencies, and IOM is the convener of the national UN Network on Migration (UNMN), where IOM coordinates migration initiatives and takes a leadership role in the implementation of the GCM.

The main partners of IOM Kyrgyzstan are the following government agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Department of External Migration of MFA, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection, and Migration, Ministry of Health and Social Development, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Border Services, National Security, General Prosecutor's Office, etc.

IOM Kyrgyzstan also has long-standing cooperative agreements with a large network of 46 NGOs partners, with whom IOM works on reintegration and counter-trafficking programs as well as community stabilization and diaspora engagement activities. Additionally, IOM Kyrgyzstan will continue working with traditional donors and also venture out to collaborate with new donors, including private sector partners, to develop and implement innovative and effective projects that support migrants.

In May 2018, the Secretary-General decided to establish the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) as a collaborative community of United Nations entities coming together to ensure effective and coordinated system-wide support to Member States in the GCM implementation, where needed. In its creation, the Secretary-General gave IOM Director General Mr. António Vitorino the role of the Network's Coordinator. In Kyrgyzstan, the UNNM was established in May 2020. To ensure effective, timely, coordinated UN system-wide support in GCM implementation, IOM Kyrgyzstan facilitates the United Nations Network on Migration, its objectives and mandate among government partners, UN and donor agencies, research institutions, and academia. The UNMN was well-received by government counterparts, NGOs, and international community.

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1. Monitoring and Evaluation

As a key component of both results-based management and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation helps IOM to understand, learn from and communicate in evidence-based ways about achievements and shortcomings of interventions, thereby promoting continuous improvements, as well as accountability to donors and beneficiaries. IOM Kyrgyzstan will emphasize monitoring and evaluation activities through dedicated funding and building staff capacity as an essential part of all interventions to enable more robust assessment of its projects, programmes, strategies, and policies.

4.2. Communications & Visibility

IOM Kyrgyzstan's communications and visibility activities will ensure that migrants are included within the UN's "Leave No One Behind" agenda and will serve as platforms to amplify voices and showcase achievements and experiences of migrants. Additionally, IOM's communications and visibility activities will capacitate migrants to protect their rights and dignity throughout the migration process. IOM will also dedicate financial and human resources to establishing a stronger presence on social media platforms to directly communicate with a broader public and raise awareness on migration-related issues.

4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

IOM will be working to strengthen its evidence base on migration by improving and investing in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of accurate, reliable, and comparable data, ensuring that this data guides coherent and evidence-based policymaking as well as monitoring of the migration-related initiatives. IOM will be investing in the capacities of its staff to provide support to these processes in most effective manner, aligning its activities with priorities set in the IOM Migration Data Strategy. Additionally, IOM will ensure that the migration management authorities will benefit from the available data and reports produced by the IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) and the DTM when designing and implementing policy measures.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

By 2025, IOM will have strengthened its position as a key development actor in Kyrgyzstan, active in the field of local development, protection of the vulnerable population, and climate action. This will be accomplished through building the capacity of the staff to respond to growing challenges and the changing political and social environment, increased financial stability, improved visibility and building stronger relationships with governments, the UN System, the donor community, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders. IOM will utilize its resources to focus on achieving the identified strategic priorities and long-term objectives. By applying this approach, IOM will ensure that migration benefits all parties involved – countries of origin, transit, and destination and, above all, the migrants.

The current strategic priority is for the period from 2022-2025. It is flexible and subject to periodic review and adjustment considering new migration challenges and trends.

VII. ANNEX: Alignment of the IOM Country Strategy Document 2022-25 with UNSDCF 2023-27 in Kyrgyzstan

UNSDCF OUTCOMES	UNSDCF OUTPUTS	IOM Country Strategy	
	UNSDCF Output 1.1: National and local policies, plans, budgets, and financing mechanisms are evidence-based and aligned to respond equitably to people's needs in an inclusive, gender responsive and accountable manner.	IOM Long-term Outcome (LT OM) 3b: Migration flows and cross-border mobility are well managed, with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security and safety throughout the mobility continuum	IOM 3b. Short-Term Outcome (ST OM) 3: Government, development and humanitarian actors responsibly collect and use disaggregated data to inform mobility management systems, procedures, decisions and policies
		IOM LT OM 4a: Accurate, disaggregated evidence on human mobility is collected, shared and utilized for evidence-based policy making by governments [at the local, national, regional and global level]	IOM 4a. ST OM 1:The global evidence base on migration is strengthened and available to governments and other relevant stakeholders
			IOM 4a. ST OM 2.: Governments and relevant stakeholders responsibly collect, analyse, share and disseminate quality, timely, disaggregated and comparable migration data
		IOM LT OM 4b: Government Institutions, systems and migration policy and legal frameworks are well-coordinated, aligned with international standards, and coherent with broader development and policy planning from the global to the local level	IOM 4b. ST OM 2.: Governments mainstream migration in related policies and strategic decision-making across development, humanitarian and security/peace sectors / agendas
UNSOF Outcome I: By 2027, the people of the Kyrgyz Republic, particularly vulnerable groups, have enhanced resilience, strengthened capabilities, and access to decent work, resulting in full enjoyment of their rights contributing to the socioeconomic development of the country.	UNSDCF Output 1.2: Social services for health, education, social protection, employment, and labor are improved to provide higher quality, taking into account universal accessibility, equity, gender, shock-responsiveness, timeliness, and include mechanisms to report and respond to grievances.	IOM LT OM 2a: The adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their homes are addressed or minimized	IOM 2a. ST OM 1.: Governments and communities address, adapt and/or are resilient to crises, health emergencies, climate-related disasters and multi-hazard risks, [leading to reduced impact mobility risks and impacts]
		IOM LT OM 2b: Migrants and disaplacement affected populations, irrespective of gender, age, disabilities and legal status are protected from violence, exploitation and abuse, and their rights are upheld	IOM 2b. ST OM 2.: Governments and civil society stakeholders provide quality, timely and gender and child sensitive-protection and assistance to marginalized and/or vulnerable migrants, including children and victims of trafficking
		LT OM 3a: Sustainable channels for regular migration are efficient, innovative and responsive to current and emerging trends	IOM 3a. ST OM 2: Migrants of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversities have access to legal identity solutions, and receive relevant support to comply with visa procedures and admission, long-term stay and regularization requirements IOM 3a. ST OM 3: Migrants of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversities are able to return to their homes voluntarily, safely and in dignity
		IOM LT OM 3b: Migration flows and cross-border mobility are well managed, with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security and safety throughout the mobility continuum	IOM 3b. ST OM 2: Migrants of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversities have access to essential healthcare along migration routes and the risks that population mobility may pose to individual and public health are mitigated

	UNSDCF Output 1.1: National and local policies, plans, budgets, and financing mechanisms are evidence-based and aligned to respond equitably to people's needs in an inclusive, gender responsive and accountable manner.	IOM Long-term Outcome (LT OM) 3b: Migration flows and cross-border mobility are well managed, with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security and safety throughout the mobility continuum IOM LT OM 4a: Accurate, disaggregated evidence on human mobility is collected, shared and utilized for evidence-based policy making by governments [at the local, national, regional and global level] IOM LT OM 4b: Government Institutions, systems and migration policy and legal frameworks are well-coordinated, aligned with international standards, and	IOM 3b. Short-Term Outcome (ST OM) 3: Government, development and humanitarian actors responsibly collect and use disaggregated data to inform mobility management systems, procedures, decisions and policies IOM 4a. ST OM 1:The global evidence base on migration is strengthened and available to governments and other relevant stakeholders IOM 4a. ST OM 2.: Governments and relevant stakeholders responsibly collect, analyse, share and disseminate quality, timely, disaggregated and comparable migration data IOM 4b. ST OM 2.: Governments mainstream migration in related policies and strategic decision-making across development,
		coherent with broader development and policy planning from the global to the local level	humanitarian and security/ peace sectors / agendas IOM 2a. ST OM 1.: Governments
		IOM LT OM 2a: The adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their homes are addressed or minimized	and communities address, adapt and/or are resilient to crises, health emergencies, climate-related disasters and multi-hazard risks, [leading to reduced impact mobility risks and impacts]
UKSDCF Outcome I: By 2027, the people of the Kyrgyz Republic, particularly vulnerable groups, have enhanced resilience, strengthened capabilities, and access to decent work,	UNSDCF Output 1.2: Social services for health, education, social protection, employment, and labor are improved to provide higher quality, taking into account universal accessibility, equity, gender, shock-responsiveness, timeliness, and include mechanisms to report and respond to grievances.	IOM LT OM 2b: Migrants and disaplacement affected populations, irrespective of gender, age, disabilities and legal status are protected from violence, exploitation and abuse, and their rights are upheld	IOM 2b. ST OM 2.: Governments and civil society stakeholders provide quality, timely and gender and child sensitive-protection and assistance to marginalized and/or vulnerable migrants, including children and victims of trafficking
resulting in full enjoyment of their rights contributing to the socio-economic development of the country.		LT OM 3a: Sustainable channels for regular migration are efficient, innovative and responsive to current and emerging trends	IOM 3a. ST OM 2: Migrants of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversities have access to legal identity solutions, and receive relevant support to comply with visa procedures and admission, long-term stay and regularization requirements IOM 3a. ST OM 3: Migrants of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversities are able to return to their homes voluntarily, safely and in dignity
		IOM LT OM 3b: Migration flows and cross-border mobility are well managed, with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security and safety throughout the mobility continuum	IOM 3b. ST OM 2: Migrants of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversities have access to essential healthcare along migration routes and the risks that population mobility may pose to individual and public health are mitigated
	UNSDCF Output 1.3: The population of the Kyrgyz Republic, especially the most vulnerable, have acquired the skills and knowledge to make positive changes in the social norms of society for a more inclusive, equitable and gender-sensitive environment, and are empowered to participate in all spheres of life and to assert their rights and opportunities.	IOM LT OM 2b: Migrants and disaplacement affected populations, irrespective of gender, age, disabilities and legal status are protected from violence, exploitation and abuse, and their rights are upheld	IOM 2b. ST OM 1.: Risk factors increasing migrant vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse, including Gender-Based Violence, are reduced and/or mitigated.
			IOM 2b. ST OM 3.: Vulnerable or marginalized migrants and displacement-affected persons, including unaccompanied children and victims of trafficking, claim their rights and access to protection-related services that prioritize their safety and dignity, participation and overall empowerment
			IOM 2b. ST OM 4.: Private sector entities respect migrant workers' rights and actively engage in efforts to prevent exploitation and trafficking

	UNSDCF Output 2.1: Green economic growth is achieved through increased entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, including through the sustainable use of natural resources. UNSDCF Output 2.3: An effective system of managing migration processes is introduced to accelerate green socio-economic development. UNSDCF Output 2.4: Digital and innovative technologies are	IOM LT OM 2d: Migrants, displaced persons and communities [of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversites) live in equitable, inclusive societies and are able to access essential services and contribute to sustainable development	IOM 2d ST OM 3.: All Migrants, diaspora and compatriots living abroad and displaced persons and transnational communities contribute to sustainable development throughout the migration continuum ["diaspora and compatriots living abroad" has been added to the original outcome statement]
UNSDCF Outcome 2: By 2027, the well-being of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic will have improved through the			IOM 3a.ST OM 4: Governments
further rollout of a green economy based on sustainable and healthy food systems, natural resource management, and effective migration processes, by accelerating the use of innovation and entrepreneurship		IOM LT OM 3.a: Sustainable channels for regular migration are efficient, innovative and responsive to current and emerging trends	have innovative, flexible and inclusive cross-border mobility solutions in place to address their current and future skills needs (incl. bilateral and regional mobility agreements and protocols)
		IOM LT OM 3.b: Migration flows and cross-border mobility are well managed, with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security and safety throughout the mobility continuum	IOM 3b. ST OM 4: Integrated, non- discriminatory border management policies, strategies and systems ensure the human rights, dignity and safety and security of all those on the move, including children and vulnerable migrants
		IOM LT OM 4.b: Government Institutions, systems and migration policy and legal frameworks are well-coordinated, aligned with international standards, and coherent with broader development and policy planning from the global to the local level	IOM 4b. ST OM 1.: Governments enact migration policies and legal frameworks that support good migration governance in line with international standards
			IOM 4b. ST OM 2.: Governments mainstream migration in related policies and strategic decision-making across development, humanitarian and security/peace sectors / agendas
	UNSDCF Output 3.1 (limate policy, financing, and awareness mechanisms to support climate action are developed and implemented with the active participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels.	IOM LT OM 2a: The adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their homes are addressed or minimized	
UNSDCF Outcome 3: By 2027, Kyrgyzstan has started the transition to low-carbon development and risk-informed climate resilience, contributing to people's fair and equitable access to ecosystem benefits and to empowerment of vulnerable communities in the governance of natural resources and disaster prevention	UNSDCF Output 3.2 Policies, innovations, and seed investments to ensure inclusive access to sustainable energy solutions in underserved urban and rural areas are developed with the support of the state, and business, promoting women's leadership.		IOM 2a. ST OM 1.: Governments and communities address, adapt and/or are resilient to crises, health emergencies, climate-related disasters and multi-hazard risks, [leading to reduced impact mobility risks and impacts]
	UNSDCF Output 3.4: Capacity of disaster management systems is strengthened, and community resilience to multiple shocks is increased at all levels through effective investments, policies, mechanisms, and tools.		



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