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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Better Migration Management  
Horn of Africa



# Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme in Djibouti

## General context

Djibouti's geographical location makes it a key transit country for migrants, which poses a challenge to the rather small country with a total population of approximately 1.1 million. In 2024, IOM recorded 435,576 migratory movements, referring to people travelling into, through or out of the country. This corresponds to a daily average of more than 1,190 movements.

Most of the migrants, mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia, head to Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East and the Gulf region. Many travel irregularly, i.e., without a visa or valid documents. This makes them vulnerable and increases their risk of economic exploitation, physical abuse or sexual assault, underscoring the need for effective protection.

The Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme, funded by the European Union (EU) and Germany, supports the Government of Djibouti in developing and improving a regionally harmonised migration management. It works in coordination with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU).

## Better Migration Management Horn of Africa



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

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

The country has made significant achievements in countering trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants. With support from BMM, the

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coastguards of Somaliland and Djibouti jointly signed an *aide memoire* on the organisation of effective maritime collaboration to address these crimes at sea and to implement appropriate protection measures for victims of trafficking. Also, an e-visa system has been set up to ensure uniform access to and approval of visas from Djibouti.

BMM is accompanying Djibouti in strengthening and consolidating these efforts and achievements as well as in improving the overall protection framework for safe migration, reforming policies and legislation, improving infrastructure and enhancing cross-border cooperation. In addition, the national referral mechanism set up with BMM support is further strengthened to provide migrants and victims of trafficking with prompt and targeted support.

### **BMM's approach and activities**

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

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

### **Migration governance**

The programme has facilitated consultative meetings in Djibouti on the signing of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and continues to train national key actors on developing the Global Compact implementation plan and periodic reviews. For the implementation of the National Migration Strategy, that was set up with support from BMM, the programme focuses on strengthening the capacity of local actors. It also helped to developing an annual roadmap for the migration strategy action plan.

BMM has supported Djibouti in operationalising the National Migration Coordination Office (NCM), which is attached to the Ministry of the Interior and responsible for coordinating all migration related activities. At the local level, coordination of migration management is overseen by the prefectures.



BMM has developed a capacity building plan for the NCM and the prefectures along with an action plan as well as a monitoring and evaluation framework. Two decrees were developed to modernise the prefectures. Furthermore, it was recommended to develop a decree for transforming the NCM into a national agency (*Agence Nationale de Coordination des Migrations*, ANCM) to facilitate better coordination. The decrees are currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Interior.

Next to this, BMM, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), is supporting Djibouti in developing a National Labour Migration Strategy and conducting capacity-building efforts.

BMM also promotes cross-border cooperation between Djibouti and Ethiopia on sustainable solutions to child migration, in particular to ensure safe repatriation and reintegration. To this end, a technical working group has been established and relevant consultations have already been held under its auspices.

### **Effective institutions to address trafficking and smuggling**

BMM is improving the effectiveness of institutions in implementing updated migration policies and legislation. The programme developed a curriculum on Investigating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in line with the international framework and with reference to human rights-based criminal justice and law enforcement approaches and responses. This includes a strong victim-centred approach. The curriculum is now embedded in the regular training curricula of the Police Academy, the Gendarmerie Academy, the *Ecole Internationale de Perfectionnement à la Pratique de la Police Judiciaire* (International School of Judicial Police Practice Improvement) and the *Ecole des Gardes-Côtes* (Coastguard College). In 2024, BMM donated equipment to the Djibouti coastguard to support search and rescue operations.



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

In addition, BMM supports the establishment of a national interagency Task Force with representatives of the police, gendarmerie, coastguard and prosecution to foster exchange and cooperation among these actors to effectively and efficiently curb trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants. The programme supports the Task Force in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to investigate and prosecute trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants. In 2024 a multi-agency simulation-based training has been implemented. In a real case-based scenario participants learn how to implement the SOPs and also to ensure the referral and protection of victims of trafficking.

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



The CNDH distributed multilingual communication tools (French, Amharic, Oromo) across all regions of Djibouti to promote the protection of migrant's rights.

In January 2025, CNDH conducted a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness about the rights of migrants and promote the complaint mechanisms. BMM also support the CNDH to engage in the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and a regional working group for human rights institutions in BMM partner countries.

## Protection

BMM contributed to the establishment of a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and corresponding guidelines to refer migrants and victims of trafficking to appropriate services according to their individual needs. The programme supported the roll-out of the NRM across the country and provided training for its operationalisation.

BMM improves the assistance and protection for vulnerable migrants by strengthening Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that provide essential services such as food, water, clothing, as well as legal, medical and psychosocial support. It has established a national network of 17 CSOs (*Réseau Meilleure Gestion Migratoire*, MGM), and is in the process of registering it with the government as key players in migration while continuing to strengthen its capacities. The members of the MGM are also part of the the East and Horn of Africa Anti-Trafficking (EHAAT) Network which today comprises more than 100 CSOs working in the Horn of Africa to enhance collaboration, knowledge-sharing and comprehensive support to migrants traveling in the region. According to a jointly established capacity development plan, the CSOs receive training on topics such as strategic planning, project management, fundraising and budgeting.

In 2024, BMM started to partner with the Red Crescent, which runs a mobile assistance unit providing bottled water, food, first aid, dignity kits, and phone call support to migrants along the southern migratory routes. So far, around 8,000 men, women and children have received assistance through this approach.



BMM supports a mobile assistance unit providing bottled water, food, first aid, dignity kits, and more to migrants along the southern migratory routes.  
©Red Crescent Djibouti



## Results of BMM (April 2016 – September 2024)



**1,419** governmental and non-governmental actors were supported to strengthen coordinated migration management, national migration policies, legislation, and cross-border cooperation



**18,900** individuals were potentially reached through awareness-raising activities on human trafficking and migrants' rights



**77** capacity-building measures were implemented for **1,163** governmental and non-governmental actors in the areas of investigation and prosecution of trafficking, integrated border management, and the referral of migrants to services



**17,200** vulnerable migrants were directly and indirectly assisted with accommodation, basic services, and medical support

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