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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Better Migration Management  
Horn of Africa



# Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme in the Horn of Africa

## General context

The countries in the Horn of Africa region are the main places of origin and transit but are also a destination for people on the move. There are some 6.6 million migrants in the region (IOM, 2024). Migration is largely circular, driven by seasonal work.

The number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the broader East and Horn of Africa region has reached around 27 million, including over 11 million IDPs in Sudan, 4.3 million in Ethiopia and nearly 3.9 million in Somalia (UNHCR, 2025). Conflict, drought, and natural disasters continue to drive displacement.

Most of the people on the move remain within the region. In 2024, 45 % of all international migrants worldwide lived in their region of origin.

Many migrants travel irregularly, that is, without a visa or valid papers, usually out of necessity. In addition, they often lack economic means and have no access to justice. This makes them particularly vulnerable to being trafficked, seeking offers from smugglers or falling into the hands of other criminal networks. Human trafficking is one of the world's most profitable illegal industries,



Project name	Better Migration Management Programme
Partner Countries	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda (Phase I and II: + Sudan)
Volume	EUR 122 mio. (EUR 105 mio. EU / EUR 17 mio. BMZ)
Duration	April 2016 to September 2025
Implementing Partners	British Council, CIVIPOL, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Expertise France and the Italian Department of Public Security were also implementing partners in phase I. GIZ heads the implementing partnership.

generating an estimated \$240 billion annually, according to the International Labour Organization.

Efforts to promote safe and legal migration, combat trafficking and smuggling, and support vulnerable migrants are hampered by gaps in policy, legislation, infrastructure, national and cross-border cooperation and knowledge.

Implemented by



## BMM's approach and activities

The Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme, funded by the European Union (EU) and the German Government, was established in 2016 to respond to needs identified by the African Member States of the Khartoum Process. The process is a regional dialogue for collaboration on migration between the EU, its Member States and countries of origin, transit and destination in the wider Horn of Africa region, with an initial focus on addressing trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants.

BMM aims to enable national authorities and institutions to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and 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 carried out under three complementary components: migration governance, strengthening effective institutions to address trafficking and smuggling and protection for vulnerable migrants.

Jointly implemented by the British Council, CIVIPOL, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, IOM and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), BMM maximises the impact of activities through global expertise and integrated and comprehensive local solutions. Phase III focuses on consolidating a regional, holistic approach to migration management and on ensuring its sustainability beyond the duration of the programme.

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

## Migration governance

BMM supports national governments in developing and improving national migration policies and frameworks to manage migration at a regional, national and local level. In Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, it has helped to establish and strengthen National Coordination Mechanisms (NCMs). These inter-institutional bodies include representatives from the ministries concerned (Justice, Interior Affairs, Health, Education, Labour, Social Services, etc.), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local communities dealing with migration issues. They act in a similar way to task forces to jointly develop, evaluate and coordinate appropriate measures at the national and sub-national level. This coordinated approach is a prerequisite for successful migration management which includes the reform of rule-of-law institutions to enable them to counter trafficking in human beings and reinforce support structures for the sustainable protection of vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking.

The programme supports the NCMs in three areas: developing action plans and strategies, collecting data to analyse migration trends and determine the required response, as well as

identifying and responding to training needs.

BMM also assists governments in developing national legislation and policies on migration in line with relevant international conventions, such as the United Nations Convention Against Trans-national Organized Crime (UNTOC), to which all BMM partner countries have now acceded.

Support is provided, in particular, for legislation on countering trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants and for regulation of the foreign recruitment sector to prevent companies from hiring people for precarious or exploitative jobs abroad, especially in the Gulf states.

Furthermore, BMM promotes cross-border cooperation to develop joint solutions, structures and procedures. Djibouti and Ethiopia closely collaborate on the protection of child migrants, and three bilateral joint investigation teams were established between Djibouti and Ethiopia, Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as Kenya and Uganda to improve counter-human trafficking efforts.

## Effective institutions to address trafficking and smuggling

BMM improves the effectiveness of institutions that implement migration policies and legislation, for example, by increasing the quality of national and cross-border cooperation between law enforcement, judicial and other governmental and non-governmental actors in coordination with other regional initiatives and in line with international obligations and standards. This includes developing and implementing curricula for universities and law enforcement training institutions and providing training materials to improve the quality of the investigation and prosecution of trafficking and smuggling cases. In Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda BMM designed training courses were embedded into the regular curricula of a total of 14 national law enforcement training institutions.



BMM provides training to improve the investigation and prosecution of trafficking in human beings. (©CIVIPOL)

BMM also promotes the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to serve as a practical step-by-step guide for investigation and prosecution, including cooperation between different actors, such as police and prosecutors. At the same time, the programme increases the capacities of first responders from the police, CSOs, border authorities and immigration services to identify victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants and refer them to relevant protection and assistance services. To this end, National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs) have been introduced and/or strengthened. NRMs facilitate close coordination between first responders and service providers both of the government and the civil society, such as social workers, child protection officers and safe houses for women, to ensure the safety of victims from the early stages of the investigation through to the end of the trial.

BMM is conducting for example multi-agency simulation-based training. It brings together key government stakeholders responsible for counter-trafficking and migration management, including law enforcement officers, prosecutors, immigration officials, and labour officers, alongside civil society actors.

In 2024, Ethiopian Law Enforcement Services have successfully cracked down on illegal employment practices, arresting 49 agency owners facilitating illegal labour recruitment. The operation was bolstered by training provided by BMM and the ROCK (Regional Operational Centre in support of the Khartoum Process) Programme. Also, across all participating countries, law enforcement agencies referred 253 trafficking survivors to protection services.

Furthermore, BMM supports National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and other oversight bodies in fulfilling their mandate to monitor, report, address and follow up on human rights violations and other exploitative abuses of victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants. The programme assists in developing and improving Complaint Management Systems, provides training and facilitates regional exchange between the NHRIs. 257 cases of human rights violations against migrants were reported and followed up on by the NHRIs in Djibouti, Kenya, Somaliland, and Uganda.

## Protection

BMM enhances assistance and protection for victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants at the local, national and regional level. It partners with CSOs, who are often the first responders to the needs of migrants, providing shelter, medical and psychosocial care, child protection, counselling, etc. The programme promoted the establishment of the Regional CSO Forum to Promote Safe and Fair Migration. Towards more ownership and sustainability, the involved, now more than 100 CSOs from the BMM partner countries created the East & Horn of Africa Anti-Trafficking Network (EHAAT). Implementing their organisational sustainability roadmap, EHAAT now also has a hosting organisation, a communication and a resources mobilisation strategy, allowing them to become organisationally self-sufficient.

BMM continues to provide training to strengthen their capacities, cooperation as well as their role within the NRMs, to direct migrants in need more efficiently and effectively to appropriate protection facilities and services.

In 2024, the Digital Service Provider Directory (DSPD) was launched. This online platform was developed by BMM in collaboration with the Ethiopian National Partnership Coalition (NPC), the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission (SLNHRC) and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons - Uganda (UCATIP). The DSPD helps migrants, refugees, and vulnerable individuals on the move to access key services. The DSPD lists more than 400 service providers in the region, offering support and assistance ranging from medical care to legal aid, education, shelter, and more.

The programme also helped both governmental and civil society partners in developing and implementing awareness raising campaigns on the risks of human trafficking, for example in the transport sector in Kenya and in primary and secondary schools as well as universities in Uganda and along migration hotspots, which have increased trafficking-related interceptions and helpline calls.

To empower victims of trafficking and other vulnerable migrants with sustainable socio-economic solutions, BMM cooperated with the *Deutsche Sparkassenstiftung* that conducted a Micro Business Games training to strengthen financial and entrepreneurial skills. 310 participants from all over the region benefitted from this activity.



In cooperation with the Red Crescent Djibouti, BMM provides first aid, bottled water, dry high-energy food, psychosocial support, etc. to migrants in Djibouti. (©Red Crescent)



## BMM results (April 2016 - September 2024)



**28,315** governmental and non-governmental actors were supported to strengthen coordinated migration management, national migration policies, legislation, and cross-border cooperation



> **61,000** vulnerable migrants were directly and indirectly assisted with accommodation, basic services and medical support.



**800** capacity building measures were implemented for **16,613** governmental and non-governmental actors in the areas of investigation and prosecution of trafficking, integrated border management, and the referral of migrants to services.



> **62 million** million individuals were potentially reached through awareness-raising activities on human trafficking and migrants' rights.

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