# IOM STRATEGY FOR
# **KOSOVO**[1]
## (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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IOM UN MIGRATION

# FOREWORD

We are delighted to present the strategy of the IOM Office in Kosovo to you. This strategy is a key tool in clearly articulating trends and challenges and how IOM will work with authorities, migrant communities, and our many partners to achieve a positive impact over the course of the next four 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 in 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 Kosovo and sets out the context in which IOM carries out its activities. It outlines the challenges and opportunities relating to migration and identifies the strategic priorities to address them in an effort to strive towards fostering safe, orderly and regular migration.

This document is a key means to articulate IOM's role, objectives and impact in Kosovo, and presents a forward-looking strategy for IOM's engagement therein. It provides an overview of the current migration situation and identifies several key trends and challenges, which are expected to shape the migration landscape in the years to come. While the Strategy is intended for the 2022-2025 period, it is flexible and subject to periodic review (i.e., on annual basis) to address changing environments, including new opportunities and risks. IOM will stress complementary action and strive to implement this Strategy in close cooperation and partnership with authorities, migrants, UN Agencies and other stakeholders. With the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and establishment of a UN Network on Migration, IOM in its capacity as UN Migration Network Coordinator and Secretariat, will continue to foster effective collaboration to support the implementation of the GCM.

We are very grateful to IOM staff –particularly at the regional and local 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 authorities 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 Kosovo and joining efforts in fostering migration for the benefit of all.

Renate Held

IOM Regional Director

Anna Rostocka

IOM Chief of Mission in Kosovo

# ACRONYMS

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| CSO | Civil Society Organizations |
| EU | European Union |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Persons |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ISF | Integrated Strategic Framework |
| GCM | Global Compact for Migration |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| KAS | Kosovo Agency for Statistics |
| NAATIP | National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| PSEA | Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| RDP | Regionally Displaced Persons |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SOGIESC | Sexual Orientations, Gender Expressions and Sex Characteristics |
| SERP | Socio-Economic Recovery Plan |
| UNKT | United Nations Kosovo Team |
| UNSDCF | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework |

# CONTENTS

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. ABOUT IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the United Nations 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, to maximize the benefits and opportunities of migration and reduce its challenges. Established in 1951, IOM now has 174 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 Kosovo, IOM currently has one main and three field offices.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that migration is a powerful driver of sustainable development, for migrants and their communities. 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 for 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 to achieve this, ultimately leveraging the potential of migration through a comprehensive 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 and the IOM Strategic Results Framework, which are anchored in the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration. The strategy is also firmly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Kosovo, and Kosovo strategic priorities in the area of migration and development.

[1] All references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

## 1.2. IOM IN KOSOVO

IOM has been present in Kosovo since 1999, providing emergency support and post conflict assistance for war-affected populations during the wars in former Yugoslavia. Following the end of the conflict in 1999, IOM, together with the international community, continued to assist the population in Kosovo in rebuilding their lives and working for a better future. Until the end of 2004, IOM was heavily engaged in peace and democracy building initiatives as well as in rehabilitation of basic infrastructure networks and systems in post-conflict Kosovo. Subsequently, IOM Kosovo began to gradually move away from short-term reconstruction and focused its efforts to supporting the long-term development of Kosovo. Today, IOM covers the full spectrum of migration governance in the fields of policy, research and programmatic support. Alongside migration governance, IOM also works on programming to sustain peace and build trust between communities. Furthermore, IOM continuously monitors migration trends in Kosovo and in the wider region with a view to developing activities in emerging thematic areas.

On migration policy, IOM has been actively supporting the authorities of Kosovo and positively contributing to the expansion of data collection efforts, data analysis and thereby supporting evidence-based policy making on migration. This also includes Kosovo's recently developed "2021-2025 Strategy for Migration" and its "Action Plan", which is in line with the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration.

Since 1999, IOM Kosovo facilitated the sustainable voluntary return and reintegration of about 223,000 people of Kosovo returning to Kosovo. IOM has also been facilitating the identification, registration and referral mechanisms for assistance available to migrants in vulnerable situations. Through its Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme, IOM has enhanced the capacities of the central and local authorities to identify and facilitate the voluntary return according to the needs of internally and regionally displaced persons and refugees.[1]

The Mission was also engaged and used its expertise to support efforts of Kosovo institutions to both rehabilitate and reintegrate returning foreign fighters' families and to address specific drivers of radicalization.

To promote social inclusion and address key drivers of migration, the Mission intensively works on community stabilization programmes and interethnic dialogue between institutions, communities, civil society, and individual groups. Thus, IOM is engaged in fostering income generating opportunities for non-majority and disadvantaged communities in order to address sources of mistrust, disenfranchisement and exclusion, as a means to ensure greater social cohesion and successful integration of minority communities.[2] Furthermore, the Mission actively contributed to a more inclusive society for all communities in Kosovo, by supporting the learning and use of official languages and by fostering cooperation and joint initiatives between different youth communities to increase tolerance and bridge divides in Kosovo's society.[3]

On immigration and border management - including emergency preparedness and response, IOM supported the capacities of the "Border Police" to further address irregular migration, human and other forms of smuggling and trafficking as well as contributed to enhanced cooperation and coordination between border management services in the region.

IOM also supported Kosovo authorities in developing a fully effective, protection-sensitive entry system to address mixed migration flows.[4] Last but not least, recently IOM has been actively engaged in enhancing preparedness among the authorities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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[1]  Since 2016, the IOM facilitated the return of 466 families and provided tailor-made socio-economic support and enhanced access to public services to improve the reintegration and the sustainability of the return.

[2]  Since 2016, approximately 120 priority community development projects were funded for the benefit of the wider communities, approximately 800 start-ups and operational businesses were established and/or assisted supporting over 1,000 full-time and part-time positions, and 11 business associations/cooperatives were established/assisted to provide wider support to these businesses.

[3]  In line with these efforts, IOM also facilitated the creation of online multimedia platform for learning the Serbian and Albanian languages (the so-called VocUp). The VocUp website has reached more than 67,000 users, provided 38,000 sessions and generated 125,000 page views; while VocUp YouTube has reached more than 120,000 views and a combined 135,000 watch time minutes.

[4]  As a result of these efforts, in the period of June 2020 - March 2021 a total of 1,766 new arrivals of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were identified, registered, and accommodated.

# 2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

In terms of migration, Kosovo is primarily a place of origin and transit. Although Kosovo's economy is developing quickly[5], insufficient job opportunities and low wages constitute strong migration drivers and continue to prompt several thousands of Kosovo residents to emigrate in search of better opportunities, in particular to European Union Member States and Switzerland. Currently, regular migration through family reunification and emigration for the purpose of employment and education are prevailing trends. For the last few years, Kosovo residents have been more inclined to choose regular migration paths, which has resulted in a considerable decrease of irregular migration into the EU.[6] On the other hand, the outflow of qualified workers directly impacts the social and economic development of Kosovo.[7]

However, there is an increased need to propose regular migration pathways as well as to build Kosovo's capacities in addressing **labour migration,** specifically outmigration and skills mobility, tackling lack of skills and processing incoming migration as well. This should include policies to avoid exploitation and abuse of migrant workers, promoting circular migration, and addressing skills mismatch. While high poverty,[8] lack of employment opportunities,[9] inadequate working conditions, political instability, and poor quality of social services are some of the factors that drive individuals to migrate, migration matters a great deal for the development of the economy, society and individuals living in Kosovo. **Labour migration and interactions with Kosovo's diaspora** influence economic opportunities and generate welfare for those remaining in Kosovo through remittances which amount for approximately 19 per cent of Kosovo's GDP.[10] However, the allocation of **remittances,** in which their share of current consumption is dominant, prevents the possibility of these transfers becoming a generator of additional economic growth and acceleration of future development. Hence, strengthening the investment component from **diaspora** engagement including through innovative initiatives, and investment or skills transfer is essential.

Labour migration can also be an important development tool especially for young people due to weak absorption capacity of Kosovo's economy to generate employment opportunities to growing number of young people that will reach working age.[11] Thus, the search for employment coupled with attractiveness and labour market gaps in EU countries and Switzerland is expected to remain the dominant reason for future migration. Nevertheless, in order to increase opportunities for human development and establish regular channels in migration, there is need to develop bilateral and regional labour migration schemes and promote safe labour migration practices that facilitate the safe and regular movement of

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5   Average growth for 2021: 10.92% KAS (2021), Gross Domestic Product by expenditure and production approach, Q2 2021, Published September 20201 [accessed on 15/11/2021] https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/gross-domestic-product-by-expenditure-and-production-approach-q2-2021

6   According to EUROSTAT, 72,480 individuals from Kosovo applied for asylum in EU countries in 2015, this number dropped to 4,745 individuals in 2018 and 4,205 in 2019.

7   The departure of nearly 110,000 people in recent years from a community of 1.7 million people represents a significant demographic change. The World Bank noted that, in the mid-to-long-term, the loss of qualified workers and the shortage of skills may adversely affect competitiveness, growth and economic convergence as well as the delivery of quality public services such as health care and education.

8   According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, in 2017, about 18 percent of the population in Kosovo was living below the poverty line of Euro 1.85 per day and 5.1 percent was extremely poor, living below the extreme poverty line of Euro 1.31 per day.

9   According to yearly KAS bulletin (KAS 2021), in 2020, approx. 25.9 percent of the labour force is estimated to be unemployed. The measures of labour resources utilization, such as the labour force participation rate and employment rate, are the lowest in the Western Balkan region (38.3% and 28.1% respectively) and far lower than the average EU figures. Labour market conditions are worse for women. While women employment rates reached only 14.1 percent (for men it was 42.8 percent), in 2020, the unemployment rate was higher compared to men (32.3 versus 23. percent respectively).

10  https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=XK

11  According to KAS 2021 data, it is estimated that in the next five years, roughly 200,000 young people will reach working age, while approximately 50,000 persons will reach retirement age in the same period.

migrants while also ensuring the protection of migrants' rights.[12] On the latter, there is a need to improve regulation of international recruitment as well address capacity gaps of private and public employment agencies to facilitate fair and ethical recruitment practices to safeguard conditions for labour migrants and ensure decent work. Nevertheless, once this potential is grasped, Kosovo as a traditional place of emigration may shift in an era where it will increasingly rely on immigration to meet their own labour market needs. This is another reason why Kosovo needs an upgraded regulatory framework on international recruitment and needs to address capacity gaps of employment agencies to facilitate such movements and contribute to economic development.

While most migration flows in Kosovo are primarily economically driven, political tensions and instability, mistrust among ethnic groups, fuelled by ethno-nationalist narratives in public discourse are also acting as significant driving forces of migration and displacement. More than twenty years after the conflict in Kosovo, divisive narratives still dominate and continue to fuel mutual suspicion and mistrust between identity groups. Economic, social, cultural and political life remains identity-based, and self-motivated segregational tendencies complemented by institutionally imposed segregation, including segregation in schools and lack of harmonized use of all official languages have become the norm. In this context, and as reaffirmed by the UN Secretary General[13], building trust between communities in Kosovo is even more pertinent, and a necessary step towards lasting reconciliation and social cohesion.

Another phenomenon with importance is the issue of **radicalization and violent extremism**. Absence of positive alternatives has diminished communities' resilience to radical influences, both religious and ethnonationalist in nature. Coupled with social exclusion, corruption, and high unemployment rates, this has elevated risks of extremism and radicalization, especially among disenfranchised youth from isolated and marginalized communities. Violent extremist groups have recruited actively in the divided societies of the Western Balkans, including in Kosovo. In this manner, over the last decade, certain residents of Kosovo have become affiliated with ISIL (Da'esh). Over 300 of them are estimated to have travelled to Syrian Arab Republic to join ISIL.[14] Since 2021, 121 of them – including their children – were repatriated to Kosovo with the need of rehabilitation and community-based reintegration. The return of former associates and their families poses security challenges for the Western Balkans, but also for the EU and beyond. It is therefore crucial for the Western Balkans to ensure effective rehabilitation, resocialization and reintegration of these individuals, which addresses particular motives for departure, their profiles and individual needs. The situation of family members who return also merits specific attention.

While there is no evidence on **environmental hazards and climate change impacts** constituting a driver of migration in Kosovo, it is evident that environmental factors (such as pollution and other environmental hazards) are intimately linked with other factors, and influence migration in different ways. There is a need to analyse to what extent migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation has been integrated into existing policies, laws and strategies, to assess how the environmental factors shape different types of migration and to explore how migrants and their families can be enabled to contribute to and benefit from climate action.

Moreover, with continued returns of people of Kosovo from the European Union countries and inflow of migrants using Western Balkans migratory routes, **assisted voluntary return and reintegration** will undoubtedly remain a critical area of work in near future. With

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12  Lack of regular migration paths and measures not only hinder the developmental potential of migration, but also make migrants more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.
13  UN Action Plan for the Western Balkans: Sustaining peace through trust-building, dialogue and reconciliation.
14  European Union Institute for Security Studies (2016): Islamic radicalism in the Balkans.

regards to **reintegration support**, currently it is only partially available to returned migrants and a referral system, which is based on responding to the economic, social and psychosocial needs of returning migrants while benefiting communities of origin, is not entirely in place. There are also challenges in terms of inter-institutional cooperation and capacity gaps of the relevant institutions involved in reintegration to further advance this process.

Kosovo has also been affected by an increased inflow of migrants along the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkan Route since 2015 with the Syrian crisis and the opening of a humanitarian corridor for safe passage to the outer fringes of the European Union. In 2020, there were 3,002 registered newly arrived migrants in Kosovo out of which 1,409 applied for asylum, while in 2021 out of 1,309 registered newly arrived migrants, 491 claimed asylum. IOM set up an info-line in 2020 to provide migrants with accurate and reliable information, enabling them to make informed decisions. Furthermore, relying on EU funding, IOM supported the Kosovo authorities in establishing a first Reception and Registration Center for migrants to complement existing structures for asylum seekers, ensure access to basic services, provide protection and enhance identification of vulnerable migrants. The Centre will provide shelter to stranded migrants, who lived in squatter areas or in overcrowded apartments used by smuggling networks which put them at a high risk of exploitation and abuse.

The increased arrival of migrants stretched the emergency response capacities of national authorities and civil society and may give rise to xenophobia and tensions between migrant and host communities, particularly in communities with limited previous experience with immigration. Despite ongoing efforts, gaps remain in the collection and analysis of systematic qualitative data on migrants' vulnerability and risk factors along the Western Balkan Route, including in Kosovo, as well as on their evolving needs and vulnerabilities. Such developments will lead to an increased and avoidable vulnerability of migrants in Kosovo and will further raise the importance of migration governance and put more pressure on immigration and border management, emergency preparedness, as well as on the response and recovery measures in Kosovo.

In relation to **policy development**, despite significant improvements on policy development for migration, policy coherence and coordination must be strengthened by mainstreaming migration into other policies and strategies, especially development strategies at the local and central level. Furthermore, there are a few limitations both on quantity and comparability of administrative and statistical data due to the difference in methodologies and definitions depending on the purpose for which they are collected. More adequate data is needed for a comprehensive assessment of the nature, scope, and characteristics on migration, for comparability as well as its consequences. On **immigration and border management**, significant advancement has been achieved in developing an effective, protection-sensitive entry system for mixed migration flows. Despite this, registration and security concerns remain a challenge due to the lack of biometric equipment, reliable data and insufficient skills among institutions to identify and refer migrants, including the most vulnerable (unaccompanied and separated children and victims of trafficking or other forms of violence). Moreover, further improvement of the institutional frameworks for border management, standard operating procedures, information management and effective sharing within the region will remain key to safe, humane and development-friendly migration management. In relation to **emergency preparedness**, key actors in Kosovo need further support on risk analysis and monitoring, building scenarios and contingency plans, and testing these through simulation exercises. On the **response and recovery** key institutions need support to continue with key services during a crisis, assist migrants, displaced persons, voluntary returnees, victims of trafficking, especially those living in shelters with protective equipment and tools to protect themselves, for example against the virus and promote durable solutions to address already their precarious livelihoods.

Kosovo hosts some 15,000 internally and regionally displaced persons (IDPs and RDPs)[15] and most of them are in protracted situations, with a large share of the displacements because of the conflicts from 1999. Their access to employment opportunities, social services, infrastructure and housing remains limited. In 2019, 139 were living in 15 temporary collective shelters with poor access to water and sewage systems, electricity, waste collection, public transport and roads. Lack of documentation to prove citizenship, residence or legal tenure and a lack of sufficient land allocation by municipalities causes IDPs to reside in collective centres, informal settlements or makeshift shelters[16], as also confirmed in the implementation of IOM programmes. These vulnerabilities are expected to remain the same unless more holistic and inclusive approach is adopted to bring long-lasting solutions to their displacement. IOM has been implementing the Return and Reintegration Programme for the last 10 years funded by the EU, supporting return and reintegration, yet there are still people waiting after 20 years to be returned. In addition to broader local and regional political context, the displaced persons and families returning to Kosovo face several systemic challenges, including but not limited to accessing their rights and claiming ownership to land and property. Authorities need increased capacities to create conditions conducive to return, which also includes improving the eligibility criteria when developing social housing policies.

The current migration flow increased the complexity of the **human trafficking profile** of Kosovo. While the Criminal Code punishes **human trafficking** and the Kosovo institutions have increased their efforts to protect victims significantly as per the last Trafficking in Person Report,[17] related prosecutions and convictions remain limited.[18] Kosovo also lacks effective victim identification procedures and a robust referral and integrated system to provide shelter, reintegration services, and physiological and medical care. Most services provided to victims of human trafficking depend on NGOs that are heavily reliant on external donor funding. In 2021, there were 17 identified cases of human trafficking. Of these, seven were exploited in sex trafficking and 10 in forced labour. Furthermore, due to the pandemic, the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP) did not regularly hold meetings, and the authorities did not adopt the 2020-2024 Anti-trafficking National Strategy and Action Plan.

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[15] UNHCR Factsheet on Kosovo, 4 April 2019.

[16] Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights of displaced persons (2016): adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context on her mission to Serbia and Kosovo. P. 18.

[17] United States Department of State (2021): Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report: https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TIPR-GPA-upload-07222021.pdf.

[18] According to the US State Department TIP report 2020, while the authorities have increased their efforts to prevent trafficking, protect victims and punishes human trafficking, these efforts were insufficient to bring about compliance, identify and protect victims of trafficking, and investigate claims of forced or compulsory labour as well as sexual exploitation.

# 3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic priorities for the Mission in Kosovo are to focus on addressing local migration trends and challenges and leverage the potential of migration to achieve sustainable development outcomes for all. IOM will work toward achieving the following three key strategic priorities:

## Strategic Priority 1:

**Empower migrants and communities to strengthen their resilience in situations of vulnerability**

Under this priority area, IOM will focus its efforts around five outcomes. The first one is about **providing effective protection and assistance to migrants in vulnerable situations, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), Regionally Displaced Persons (RDP) and victims of trafficking**, easing the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and empowering them to strengthen their resilience in situation of vulnerability. On this front, IOM intends to increase public institutions and civil society stakeholders capacities and resources to provide quality, timely and gender and child sensitive-protection and assistance for the vulnerable, or those who have been subjected to violence, exploitation and abuse, by following the Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability Model and its associated programmatic framework.[19] In relation to victims of trafficking, IOM will support institutional capacities for more effective referral mechanism and promote victim-centred and rights based approach.[20] Furthermore, IOM will continue to support the capacities of relevant authorities on both the central and municipal levels as well as the capacities of civil society to provide immediate assistance, protection and long-term re-integration support for internally and regionally displaced persons and help them to integrate into society. IOM will explore and actively advocate for finding long-lasting solutions to displacement, by adopting a holistic approach and facilitating participatory processes with relevant local and central level stakeholders that account for the intentions and needs of the displaced and receiving/host communities. IOM will continue to use its expertise in the field of **prevention of violent extremism** by developing programming that addresses the contextually specific drivers of radicalization. These also help with preventing and resolving conflict-induced migration.

**The second** outcome focuses on **recovery and peaceful co-existence** to achieve integration, social inclusion and long-term peace. Given ample evidence that shows that inter-ethnic trust and cooperation is considerably increased with social interactions between members of different ethnic communities,[21] IOM will continue to promote programmes and events that are designed to promote meaningful inter-ethnic interaction and cooperation to **build trust** between ethnic groups living in Kosovo and **enhance social cohesion,** while paying special attention to mainstream gender issues in its activities. Next to enabling meaningful interaction among youth, wider communities and CSOs, the programme will also include **community stabilization programmes** that create greater access to economic

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[19]    *IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse* (Geneva, 2019), pp. 5–8. Available at www.iom.int/iom-handbook-migrant-protection-and-assistance.

[20]    International standards in the field of countering trafficking and assisting the victims will remain the benchmark for IOM engagement in this field, contributing to enhancing the rule of law and applying a victim-centred and human rights-based approach.

[21]    https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/engineering/intergroup-contact. Empirical research on inter-group contact theory indicates that, within the appropriate conditions, programmes that facilitate and encourage contact and engagement between members of different groups within a community can significantly improve participants' perceptions and attitudes towards other groups and enhance inter-group trust and cooperation.
Launching of Social Inclusion Assessment Report | International Organization for Migration (iom.int)

opportunities, social services and other conditions for minority and disadvantaged groups to stay in Kosovo (and others to return).

In parallel to the community stabilizations programmes, IOM will be actively working on **diaspora mapping and engagement** to effectively leverage diaspora contributions for development of all communities. On diaspora engagement, IOM will be designing programmes that include capacity building efforts of relevant authorities to better engage with the large and established diaspora communities of people of Kosovo living abroad to increase their contribution for development and socio-economic recovery processes. Some of the aims of the diaspora engagement programme will be to leverage remittances and diaspora engagement in trade, investment, philanthropy, skills transfer through temporary return of qualified nationals and entrepreneurship development among migrant workers and their families.

The fourth outcome will focus on **ethical recruitment** and actively engaging in efforts to prevent exploitation and trafficking. IOM will be actively promoting safe labour migration practices through the improved regulation of international recruitment as well as **facilitate fair and ethical international recruitment** with private and public employment agencies and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work, while at the same time increasing awareness on fair and ethical recruitment standards. In parallel, IOM will focus particularly on awareness-raising about trafficking for labour exploitation through early information and prevention mechanisms on trafficking in human beings to and from Kosovo and increase awareness efforts to prevent irregular migration.

Under the fifth outcome, IOM will aim to enable authorities and communities to adapt to climate change and environmental degradation, including managing multi-hazard risks. IOM will work with national stakeholders to enhance research, data collection, risk analysis and sharing of information to better understand and manage migration related to the adverse impacts of climate change. IOM will work on developing capacities to strengthen preparedness to avert, minimise and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of environmental hazards and assist internally displaced persons including those displaced as a result of the adverse effects of environmental hazards. IOM will support national efforts to strengthen efforts to find durable solutions. IOM will support efforts to enhance opportunities for regular migration pathways, including through labour mobility and leveraging financial and social remittances for climate change adaptation. IOM recognizes that improving environmental sustainability is inherently linked to the safety, security and well-being of migrants and societies and will use the available tools and resources to reduce the environmental impacts of its operations.

## Strategic Priority 2:

**Migrants, society and businesses benefit from safe orderly and regular human mobility**

Under this strategic priority area, IOM will work towards three specific outcomes. The first one is to **enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration for employment and education purposes**. To achieve this outcome, IOM will support the development of **bilateral and regional labour migration** agreements and schemes that can increase opportunities for human development by facilitating both the movement and the protection of migrant workers' rights. In addition to advocating for fair recruitment as mentioned in the previous priority, under this outcome IOM will support and facilitate matching of prospective migrants' skills in countries of origin with existing and projected labour market needs in countries of destination.

The second outcome is to increase knowledge of migrants wishing to return so that they are able to make informed decisions and to achieve the sustainable reintegration for those **migrants that voluntarily return** (mainly from EU countries to Kosovo, but also migrants returning to their counties of origin). For this purpose, IOM will advocate and support the adoption of sustainability-oriented reintegration policies and delivery of services that respond to the economic, social, psychosocial and individual needs of returning migrants while benefiting communities of origin.[22] The advancement of the regional and inter-institutional cooperation as well as the continuous development of local expertise of the relevant institutions involved in reintegration remains a priority in order to further advance this process. The sustainable reintegration of returned migrants represents the main goal of IOM interventions, which enables them to reach levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers.

For the **influx and transit of migrants** along the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkan Route, IOM will support Kosovo's Institutions to mainstream protection sensitive admission, in line with international standards. For this purpose, IOM aims to enhance institutional capacities to respond to the increased migration inflow, including for those transiting to the European Union. IOM will strengthen two-way communication with migrant populations, inclusion and respect for diversity and transparency while ensuring protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), notably through coordination with partners. IOM will also work towards strengthened integrated **border management frameworks** in line with international standards. For this purpose, IOM is expected to support the further improvement of the institutional frameworks for border management, ensuring gender mainstreaming and taking an overall integrated border management approach that also embraces search and rescue, border security, cross-border trade and customs authorities.

Strategic Priority 3:

**Strong migration governance is coherent with related policies and legal framework**

While Kosovo is strongly influenced by the drive towards EU accession processes, substantial improvement in migration governance is an important condition within the justice, freedom and security sector of the EU accession agenda. For this purpose, IOM will develop comprehensive programming to strengthen capacities of Kosovo authorities to collect adequate migration data, design sound policies and mainstream migration into development policies, streamline the legal framework as well as implement evidence-based and inclusive migration governance in line with international standards that addresses migration challenges and facilitates safe, orderly and regular migration.

IOM will continue to support the development of a road map on migration statistics in Kosovo and enhance capacities of collecting adequate migration data for evidence-based policies. IOM will work to **strengthen the systems for collection, analysis and dissemination of migration statistics** and ensure regional harmonization of such statistics, thus allowing comparison of migration trends. IOM will support authorities **to align the legal framework** that supports good migration governance with international standards as well as to **mainstream migration in other main polices** via capacity development efforts targeting central and local authorities' partners on evidence-gathering, information management and policy development. For example, IOM will support local stakeholders

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22   IOM (2019): *Reintegration Handbook*
     Available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_reintegration_handbook.pdf.

to formulate relevant legislations, policies and strategies, as appropriate, that recognize the importance of integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to adverse impacts of climate change and issues around migration. IOM will also support the local stakeholders to integrate migration challenges and opportunities in the context of climate change and environmental degradation into planning processes. Furthermore, to ensure regular and complete data collection on the vulnerabilities migrants face in Kosovo, IOM will expand ongoing Displacement Tracking Matrix initiatives, to ensure up-to-date analysis of migrant profiles, key migration drivers, experiences en route and indicators of vulnerabilities of migrants in transit.

Good migration governance is also based on effective responses to the mobility **dimensions of crises**. Concerted action will be supported to prevent and prepare for crisis and to adequately respond to them, including preparedness and response for pandemics; support migrants, displaced persons and communities affected by crises in accordance with humanitarian principles; and promote sustainable solutions to end displacement. In addition, IOM will be supporting key actors, including risk analysis and monitoring, building scenarios and contingency plans, and testing these through simulation exercises.

Finally, IOM will continue to promote programmatic efforts aimed at enhancing relations, interactions and social cohesion between migrant and host communities. In light of the inflow of migrants along the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkan route as well as the potential increase of returnees and still considerable number of IDPs, central and local authorities and communities require greater support in **addressing the potential for xenophobia and tensions between migrants, returnees and host communities** and fostering peace and social cohesion through wider partnership efforts including with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

## 3.2. PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

The United Nations Kosovo Team (UNKT) established a local United Nations **Migration Network (UNMN) in 2020** to ensure effective, timely and coordinated support to the Kosovo authorities in implementing the Global Compact for Migration and other relevant policies. The establishment of this platform in Kosovo brings together all relevant UN stakeholders to strengthen collective commitment to: (a) improving cooperation on international migration, (b) advancing the Global Compact for Migration and (c) supporting its follow-up and review. Also, the Migration Network will provide an opportunity for the IOM mission to be convener and coordinator of migration initiatives with relevant partners, which will translate into strengthened cooperation and coherence. In carrying out its objectives, the Network will also foster close collaboration with UNMIK and other existing/ and or future coordination mechanisms (including the ones on United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), United Nations Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery Plan (SERP), Human Rights and Gender Equality, among some), local coordination mechanism on migration addressing migration-related issues, actively seeking out synergies. Furthermore, as part of the UNMN workplan, a Multistakeholder Partnership for Migration is established to ensure a 360 degree, whole of society approach to migration.

This Strategy is in line with the 2021-2025 UNSDCF and the Sustainable Development Goals and will guide the Organization to build stronger partnerships within the United Nations system and beyond. Engaging with local United Nations platforms where migration can be a catalyst to development is therefore a priority for IOM, as UNKT and development

groups aim to deliver on the United Nations Secretary-General's development system reform agenda through joint action led by empowered and more accountable Resident Coordinators. To achieve the key outcomes of the strategy, the Mission will work to preserve and enhance key strategic partnerships with line ministries, central and local institutions, the United Nations System, international donors, CSOs and other stakeholders. IOM also needs to build new partnerships on inter-ethnic dialogue and interaction, counter-trafficking and labour mobility to fully deliver on the strategic priorities. For this purpose, IOM is committed to be proactive in building new and stronger partnerships with local authorities and public institutions, private companies including private and public employment agencies and with other international donors around these themes.

# 4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In consideration of the growth of the Mission, both in terms of funding and programmatic areas, it is important that in the next four years programme implementation is accompanied by a more structured and uniform approach to communication and visibility, monitoring, evaluation, knowledge management and staff development, also shifting from operations to capacity development and policy advice. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen multi-year and results-based programming, keeping an eye to cross-sectoral issues such as gender mainstreaming, human rights-based approach and environmental sustainability. IOM will ensure - together with a variety of partners – the implications for people of all ages and genders, including people with diverse sexual orientations, gender expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) throughout all migration processes. This will be undertaken by promoting gender equality, particularly through the empowerment of women; gender marker scoring; and innovative, gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive approaches, including approaches for working and communicating with people of diverse SOGIESC. This shift would allow the focus to move from activity implementation to strategic planning and advocacy, ultimately having more long-lasting and sustainable results.

Cross-cutting issues should be considered in the whole IOM Kosovo programming, from projects to the UNSDCF, through data disaggregation, careful design and implementation of activities. Through adequate capacity building, IOM Kosovo shall ensure cross-cutting issues are well understood by management and that they can translate in a concrete change in approach to planning and programming. Lastly, IOM Kosovo shall explore innovative recruitment and procurement practices promoting diversity, inclusion and environmental sustainability, while promoting the full respect of human rights in the workplace.

## 4.1. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

IOM Kosovo will work on developing the knowledge and skills of project managers and other staff members by promoting their participation in trainings, so they have the knowledge and information needed to excel in their jobs and to deliver on strategic priorities. This will entail encouraging staff to fully use modern technology and existing, free of charge tools, such as internal learning platforms, thematic briefings and peer exchanges. Through focal point networks in the Regional Office, IOM Kosovo shall seek support for trainings on project development, project and results based management, IOM Private Sector Partnership and monitoring and evaluation to promote knowledge-sharing culture across the sub-region.

IOM Kosovo will invest in strengthening 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 fosters research, guides coherent and evidence-based policymaking and well-informed public discourse, and allows for effective results-based monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of commitments over time. IOM Kosovo will work to forge stronger partnerships and collaboration with other United Nations agencies and partners on data initiatives, also through UNKT. IOM Kosovo will use capacities built and lessons learned through Displacement Tracking Matrix and will work to harmonize and systemize data collection.

## 4.2. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

IOM Kosovo will invest in improving knowledge, skills and practices in line with norms and standards in monitoring and evaluation, to enable more robust assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, impact and sustainability of its projects, programmes, strategies and policies. It will implement monitoring of the Strategy indicators on a yearly basis and develop common indicators for all projects and programmes and produce Mission-level yearly overviews of achievements. Furthermore, IOM Kosovo will continue monitoring UNSDCF outputs, activities and indicators ensuring timely reporting to donors. In line with that, IOM Kosovo will also strive to improve the project/programme evaluation by planning and budgeting for evaluation activities in the project development phase and timely developing events and donor involvement into the process.

## 4.3. COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY

IOM Kosovo will define and regularly review the strategic focus of IOM Mission's visibility together with senior staff and will define minimum visibility requirements of all programmes. It will promote a more standardized approach to visibility for all projects/programmes, which will also include factsheets, and project profiles on IOM Kosovo Mission website. Specifically, the visibility of projects will be improved by 1) properly planning and budgeting for visibility activities in the project development phase; 2) developing a visibility plan in accordance with donor requirements at the start of the project/programme, in collaboration with communication staff; 3) timely planning of visibility events, ensuring donor participation. Furthermore, IOM Kosovo's presence on social media shall be strengthened. This shall include expanding its social media tools, for instance on Twitter and LinkedIn. It will also aim to train staff on specific communication aspects, such as photography, social media, online campaigns and Instagram stories.

## 4.4. INNOVATION

IOM Kosovo will focus efforts on enabling IOM staff to innovate during project development and resource mobilization and develop and implement innovations to address migration issues. IOM Kosovo will liaise closely with the Regional Office in Vienna to develop and identify best practices and innovations, this could be from other offices in the region or globally. The office will be open to take part in innovative processes in the context of Kosovo if/when applicable and invest in developing innovative solutions and tools, such as the Smart Camp Management - a resource management application. In line with that, IOM Kosovo will also seek to engage in strategic partnerships, including Private Sector Partnerships, think tanks and research institutions.

# 5. THE WAY FORWARD

At the time of writing this Strategy IOM consulted with the main local authorities on the priorities to ensure that they are fully committed to IOM's strategic priorities and included in the next steps of strategy implementation. This will include joint efforts with partners, including the international community, to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration and to make use of the opportunities provided by it. Jointly IOM and partners will enhance capacities of authorities in having precise data and in-depth understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants at all times. IOM will also increasingly shift its focus towards longer-term solutions and regular pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration. This includes well-managed labour migration and diaspora engagement to address skills needed as a result of increasing emigration trends of young and qualified individuals. Finally, IOM will prioritize initiatives that shift from post conflict narratives to increased economic development.

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