



# IOM STRATEGY FOR the Republic of Azerbaijan (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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<b>Official name</b>	The Republic of Azerbaijan
<b>Capital</b>	Baku city
<b>Official language</b>	Azerbaijani
<b>Government</b>	Presidential Republic
<b>State boundaries</b>	Borders: Iran (765 km); Türkiye (15 km) on the south; Russian Federation (390 km) on the north; Georgia (480 km) on the north-west; Armenia (1,007 km) on the west. Length of Caspian Sea in Azerbaijan sector - 456 km.
<b>Total area</b>	86, 600, 000 sq. km (land: 82,629 sq.km, water basins: 3971 sq.km)

*“Migration is a global reality that is best managed through international cooperation.”*

*By António Vitorino, IOM Director General*

*“We can’t deter people fleeing for their lives. They will come. The choice we have is how well we manage their arrival, and how humanely.”*

*Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General*

*“Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family”*

*Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary General*



## FOREWORD

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We are delighted to present the Strategy of the IOM Mission in Azerbaijan to you. This Strategy is a key tool in clearly articulating trends and challenges and how IOM will work with governments, migrant communities, and our main 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 address adverse migration drivers. 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 is aligned with IOM's Strategic Results Framework (SRF). The SRF provides a roadmap for the implementation of IOM's Strategic Vision, anchored in the 2030 Agenda and the GCM, by identifying institutional results and indicators to facilitate reporting on IOM's broad range of work in a coherent, comparative manner. In this way, IOM aims to measure progress towards its strategic objectives and to strengthen accountability to Member States and other stakeholders.

This Strategy highlights the current and future migration trends in Azerbaijan and sets out the context in which IOM carries out its activities. It outlines the challenges and opportunities relating to migration in Azerbaijan 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 GCM, and the establishment of a Country 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 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 supporting 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 the Republic of Azerbaijan and joining efforts in fostering migration for the benefit of all.

Vladimir Gjorgjiev  
IOM Mission in Azerbaijan, Chief

Manfred Profazi  
IOM Regional Director

## ACRONYMS

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API	Advanced Passenger Information
CA	Central Asia
CCA	Common Country Analysis
EU	European Union
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HRDDP	Human Rights Due Diligence Policy
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IBM	Integrated Border Management
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MC	Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan
MGI	Migration Governance Indicator
M-MPTF	Migration Multi-Partnership Trust Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PIU	Passenger Information Unit
PNR	Passenger Name Records
SBS	State Border Service
SCC	State Customs Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEEECA	South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
SMS	State Migration Service
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees
UNNM	United Nations Network on Migration
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan
WCO	World Customs Organization

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. About IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the UN's leading agency and intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, working closely with various stakeholders - migrants and the Member States - to promote humane, safe, and orderly migration. It does so by providing services and consultation 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 175 Member States, offices in over 590 field locations and more than 18,000 staff - 90 per cent of IOM's staff being deployed in the field. In South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia region IOM has 19 Missions. Azerbaijan operates in three offices with a total team of 127 personnel.

As recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, human mobility is inseparable from sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and the commitment to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind – will not be achieved without considering migration. Additionally, the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) 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 the 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 Secretariat of the UN Network on Migration. It sets out the 'direction of travel' for IOM, is forward-looking and encourages 'joined-up thinking'. The future direction of IOM is anchored in the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda and the GCM. 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.

## 1.2. IOM in the Republic of Azerbaijan

The IOM Mission in Azerbaijan started its operations in January 1996. On 8 December 1999, IOM and the Republic of Azerbaijan signed the Cooperation Agreement, which established the legal basis for further cooperation vis-à-vis the Organization's mandate. Following the ratification of the Cooperation Agreement by the Parliament (*Milli Majlis*) of Azerbaijan on 8 February 2000, the Council of IOM accepted Azerbaijan as a Member State on 7 June 2001 at its 81<sup>st</sup> Session in Geneva.

Through 25 years of operation, the Mission has implemented an advanced range of priority issues in Azerbaijan under its different activity priorities. The list of programmes, and initiatives was not limited to migration management, integrated border management, migrant protection and assistance, legal remedies and human rights, migration health, building resilience, crisis response, and ecological water resources, but went beyond these areas as well.

Azerbaijan is voted in favour of the adoption of the GCM and volunteered in submitting the report during the Regional Review in 2020, as well as co-chaired one of the roundtables of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) on May 2022 also in its capacity of "GCM Champion" country.



Following the IOM's Strategic Vision, the Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the IOM Strategic Results Framework contemplated other aspects at the regional level and set guidelines for the country strategy development process. The Regional Strategy caught up with the momentum when communities have been globally impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of climate change, as well as military conflict in borders and the neighbouring regions, including the war in Ukraine, which resulted in the massive flow of displaced civilians. The impact of described global and regional fluctuations is foreseen to last through the decade.

Therefore, the Country Strategy of the IOM Mission in Azerbaijan has mainly conserved the vision of the Regional Strategy in consideration of the local context in Azerbaijan. The Country Strategy will support the Mission to achieve its mandate in Azerbaijan and ultimately leverage the potential of migration through key guiding principles defined in international frameworks. It intends to bring 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.



The IOM Mission in Azerbaijan is one of 19 missions in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and operates in three offices with a team of 127 personnel (including nationals working under consultancy contracts). Over the past 25 years, IOM contributed to migration management and governance in Azerbaijan through various initiatives, including updating the Migration Profile of Azerbaijan, which -with data from 2013 to 2021- gives a broad overview of migration trends in Azerbaijan.

Moreover, IOM provided assistance in the development, improvement and implementation of migration and border management systems, legislation and administrative mechanisms that enhance migration management while at the same time supporting migrants in ways that meet their protection needs with gender- and age-sensitive and empowering approach. The mission supported the reforms in introducing the Integrated Border Management system and performed a supportive role during the establishment of the State Migration Service. In close coordination with State Customs Committee and State Border Service, IOM contributed to baseline work on strengthening Advanced Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) in Azerbaijan in compliance with the international standards set by ICAO, IATA, WCO and continues its support on creating the right conditions to set up a Passenger Information Unit (PIU) in the future. IOM's involvement in Azerbaijan covers the return, readmission and reintegration of migrants, and its role gained utmost importance after the signature of the Readmission Agreement with the EU and the adoption of voluntary return programs.

In Azerbaijan, IOM is close to achieving the operationalization of the electronic Readmission Case Management System (eRCMS), and IOM developed a unified virtual platform that facilitates and standardizes the readmission process. IOM continues to assist migrants returning voluntarily from/to Azerbaijan and supporting their reintegration into their societies. Additional actions are taken for enhancing the socio-economic benefits of remittances through the digitalization of the remittance transfer process in Azerbaijan.

Concurrently, through community development projects aimed at improving infrastructure, provision of clean water, education support, and microfinance assistance, IOM, in rural areas of Azerbaijan helped reduce poverty, create employment, and enhance access to services, which resulted in the mitigation of rural-urban migration. IOM continuously provides capacity-building support through targeted interventions to Government agencies, NGOs and press/media associations in combating trafficking in persons. Since 2015 IOM has assisted more than 2,500 victims and potential victims of trafficking, particularly children, women, and migrant workers in the country. In addition to providing resettlement assistance for UNHCR-recognized refugees, displaced persons, or individuals officially identified by third countries for humanitarian resettlement, IOM is also running the Canadian Visa Application Centre in Azerbaijan.

In recent years, IOM Azerbaijan's portfolio expanded to also address the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19, which recognised even more acutely the importance of well-defined healthcare systems that include migrants, irrespective of their migration status. In the early stage of the pandemic, IOM Azerbaijan intervened with a quick response to emerging conditions and ensured immediate support to vulnerable migrants, which was not limited to in-kind assistance, referral to medical services and access to vaccines.

IOM also targeted drawbacks in contingency plans for stranded migrants and the survival of families left behind, as well as addressing vulnerabilities to the exploitation of migrants fleeing military conflicts -including in Azerbaijan and Ukraine. IOM has launched a special initiative for reducing the vulnerabilities of Ukrainian nationals to any form of exploitation.

Under the leadership of the State Migration Service, IOM Azerbaijan supported the establishment of a Regional Training Centre on Migration in Azerbaijan. The mission also contributed to the development of Azerbaijan Migration Strategy; the development of a gender-sensitive diaspora mapping inclusive of an assessment of current remittance flows to/from Azerbaijan.

The programmes targeting the well-being of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are also an essential element of IOM Azerbaijan's intervention in the country. For 25 years, IOM Azerbaijan, in close cooperation with relevant government and non-government stakeholders, contributed to the enhancement of emergency preparedness plans and humanitarian response. The interventions aimed to contribute to minimizing the social impact of conflict in and around Karabakh and ensure a durable solution for sustaining the resilience of conflict-affected populations through livelihood programmes.



Restoration works with the use of horizontal drilling rig in the kahriz located in Aghdam district

IOM continues the revitalization of *kahrizes* – traditional water supply systems with the ultimate target of contributing to the rural development of IDP communities in Azerbaijan's regions. In the future IOM aims to take place in regional environmental programs on adaptation to climate change impacts with a focus on adverse drivers of migration.

The myriad of migration-related programming in Azerbaijan led the Government to express interest in, and ultimately becoming, a GCM "Championship country" for the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM. This role includes generating key insights, lessons learned and positive practices that can be shared in dedicated space with other

Member State. To that end, the Government of Azerbaijan was proactive in the lead up to, as well as participation in the 2020 regional review of the GCM, as well as in the International Migration Review Forum -the dedicated review of the implementation of GCM. Azerbaijan also made a number of pledges ahead of the IMRF, in addition to a financial contribution to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF) as a sign of recognition of the importance that migration takes in the emerging International Agenda. To support the Government's efforts, Azerbaijan has an established United Nations Migration Network (UNNM) at the national level, which maximises the collective expertise and capacity of the UN system to provide guidance and support to Member States and partners in advancing the GCM

### 1.3. Vision statement

The strategic vision of IOM Azerbaijan is grounded on the priorities identified in the IOM's global and regional strategies. The vision foresees a coherent action by the IOM in the role of UN-related organizations to maximize the positive results driven by its mandate. IOM Azerbaijan will continue promoting the application of relevant international and regional norms and standards relating to migration and the protection of the human rights of migrants; it will act as a source of ideas, tools, reliable data and

information, analysis, and policy guidance on migration issues, while ensuring that migration is harnessed and recognised as a tool for sustainable development.

As a member of the UN Country Team, IOM contributes to the design, development and implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2021-2025. The UNSDCF 2021-2025 defines key priorities<sup>1</sup> for the whole UN and the Government to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The IOM Azerbaijan Country Strategy is complimented by the Progress Plan, which is a living document guiding the UNNM Azerbaijan in joint programming by defining key interlinkages between the UNSDCF and the GCM. It is a guiding tool through planning the adaptive activities defined in the current Strategy.

IOM supports the Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) in promoting equity of access to health care for migrants by World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution 70 on "Promoting the health of refugees and migrants"; and the government's commitment towards the GCM including the pledge made for the International Migration Review Forum to ensure migrants' have access to vaccinations against COVID-19 regardless of their migration status.



Within PAR project, more than 40 young people were assisted to start their business

Migration is and will stay firmly on the national and UN agenda for development, especially considering the socio-economic impacts of, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the impact of the war in Ukraine which has had repercussions on countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

IOM Azerbaijan will ensure a 360-degree approach to further support the Government of Azerbaijan in its activities directed at ensuring the rights and well-being of all migrants and their communities of destination, origin, and transit. The adaptive activities under each priority defined in the current Strategy will be planned in a way to avoid duplication within the UN system and maximize efficiency through complementarity and partnership.

With this strategy and enhancing the effectiveness of the Mission to implement evidence- and results-based programming on these priorities through partnerships and cooperation, IOM Azerbaijan takes a significant step forward to support migration management in Azerbaijan by following a tailored approach within its mandate and taking into account the Strategic directions defined by the Government of Azerbaijan in the (draft) National Migration Strategy to achieve meaningful and sustainable results. The steps of IOM in Azerbaijan will be guided by paramount principles of the Global Compact which are: people-centred; international cooperation, national sovereignty, rule of law and due process, sustainable development, human rights, gender-responsive, child-responsive, whole of government and whole of society approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Priority Area 1: Inclusive Growth that Reduces Vulnerability and Builds Resilience; Priority Area 2: Stronger Institutions for Better Public and Social Services Delivery; Priority Area 3: Protecting the Environment and Addressing Climate Change; and, Priority Area 4: A Gender-Equitable Society that Empowers Women and Girls

## CONTEXT ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Migration trends

The Republic of Azerbaijan is a democratic, secular and unitary state. According to the constitution, power in the country is divided into legislative power, which belongs to the National Assembly (Milli Mejlis), executive power, which is exercised by the president, and legal power, which belongs to the courts.

In 2021, 10,119,100 people lived in Azerbaijan of which 52.9 per cent reside in urban areas and 47.1 per cent in rural areas. The proportion of the population of Azerbaijan by sex is evenly divided, where 49.9 per cent are male, and 50.1 per cent are female. Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic country currently and as a result of its historical background. Migration in Azerbaijan is strongly oriented toward short-term and temporary stay and its focus is largely on family-related migration (about 52%) and to a lesser extent focused on employment (23%), business (6.5%) and education (about 13%).<sup>2</sup>

According to IOM's World Migration Report 2022<sup>3</sup>, Azerbaijan hosts over two hundred and fifty thousand foreign citizens and there are over one million Azerbaijan citizens living abroad. Migration affects Azerbaijan and its communities in very different and sometimes unpredictable ways.

Mobility is the strongest between neighbouring countries, with particular emphasis on Türkiye, the Russian Federation and Georgia. Arab Peninsula and South Asian countries also considerably contribute to general mobility and short-term migration. The most important countries of origin for short-term stays are the Russian Federation and Georgia in the first place, further followed by Türkiye, Ukraine and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Kazakhstan stands out and, together with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, has shown a growing increase in arrivals, especially in 2018, which was only interrupted by the pandemic. From the wider neighbourhood, Ukraine, among the top five, stands out with a relatively high number of entries

Migration into Azerbaijan has been largely characterised by tourism more broadly, with business-related tourism taking up a greater share. This can be attributed to the policy interventions designed to attract and strengthen tourism, which have been elaborated to promote foreign investment programmes and opportunities. Azerbaijan's Law "On tourism", a tourist is considered a person who stays in the country for no more than 90 days.

Migration to and from Azerbaijan related to Education purposes has also seen increases. The rise in the number of international students is to be expected, resulting from the framework of the "State Programme for the education of young people at prestigious higher education institutions of foreign countries for 2022-2026".

Azerbaijan's geographic location ensures its strategic role in ongoing dialogue for regional, and transregional transportation programs. Participation of Azerbaijan in the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) Euro-Asian transport corridors, including East-West, North-South, South-West, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars and others pass through Azerbaijan and will continue to have a relevant implication on migration flow

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.azstat.org/portal/tblInfo/TblInfoList.do;JSESSIONID=C421390F9A0F338C4C0C79346315CD45#>

<sup>3</sup> <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>

in and through Azerbaijan.

The recently launched “Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026” sets a strong commitment to improving social and economic sustainability in the future. The social and economic achievements of this plan will also have migration implications on the country.

Taking into consideration the historical background of mobility in the region, Azerbaijan has a considerably high number of nationals who were born abroad. In light of this, Azerbaijan’s policy on migrant stock data was designed to consider nationals based on citizenship, not a place of birth.

The Migration Code (MC) of Azerbaijan refers to an international migrant as a foreigner or stateless person, who extends his or her temporary stay and who fits the definition of a short-term migrant, or as a foreigner or stateless person who is holding a temporary or permanent residence permit (PRP), which is granted after at least two years of temporary residence permits (TRP). Thus, the latter description of the term would fall under the international definition of a long-term migrant. In addition, the Code provides for a legal definition of the term migrant worker who is a natural entity and therefore also falls under the definition of the long-term migrant.

## 2.2. Migration Management Policy

Azerbaijan directs its migration policy to ensure the rights and freedoms of migrants, simplify migration legislation and all types of services, create favourable conditions for migrants, respond to changing labour market needs, combat irregular migration and human trafficking, intensify international cooperation and partnership, adopt a reliable database, among other initiatives. Noting Azerbaijan’s ambitious economic plans and aspiration for continued economic growth, it is expected that internal and international migration will continue to be an important factor to consider for the coming decades. Rising prosperity and a stable economic situation promoted Azerbaijan to an upper-middle-income country in 2008, making it an even more attractive destination for immigration, but also empowering national to migrate abroad.

Evidence from the last fifteen years shows that the first National Migration Programme, which was adopted in 2006 to address the multifaceted aspects of international migration and associated challenges, was successful in implementing measures aimed at promoting safe and orderly migration. The primary concern of this programme was aimed at reducing irregular situations of the migrant population including internally displaced persons and refugees; and the programme also looked at ways of managing migration flows with a focus on migrants with temporary status in the country.

In March 2007, the State Migration Service (SMS) of the Republic of Azerbaijan was established by Decree № 560 of the President of the Republic. The SMS is a central executive body with the status of a law enforcement body, which implements the state policy in the field of migration, the competences defined by the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the management and regulation of migration processes.

With the adoption of the GCM in 2018 and with Azerbaijan opting to become a GCM Champion country, the SMS, on behalf of the government of Azerbaijan, has made a number of pledges in line with the GCM guiding principles in the lead up to the 2022 IMRF. At the same event, it delivered strong messages on upholding the rights of migrants, and examples of national policies to this end.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected migration flows globally, and Azerbaijan too witnessed a significant reduction in both directions resulting from the associated travel restrictions. However, we can observe that while the flows were significantly lower, the trends remained the same as in previous years. And,

already in 2021, migration to and from Azerbaijan has been slowly picking up again.

Azerbaijan has an active conflict zone within its internationally recognized borders, and this has a critical impact on the migration context of the country both in terms of internal and cross-border human mobility. Following the armed conflict in 2020 the Government held consultations on the development of a strategy and policy for returning IDPs called “The Great Return” to the regained areas within Karabakh and East Zangezur economic regions. International case studies are being examined and duly considered to ensure effective and sustainable policies and programming are applied.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In line with IOM Strategic Vision 2019–2023<sup>4</sup> as well as IOM Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia<sup>5</sup>, the IOM Mission in Azerbaijan determines the below directions as strategic priorities for the next four years:

**Table 1.** Strategic Priorities for IOM in Azerbaijan by 2025

<b>Strategic priority 1.</b>	<b>Resilience</b>	Empower migrants and communities to strengthen their resilience in situations of vulnerability
<b>Strategic Priority 2.</b>	<b>Mobility</b>	Advance positive, sustainable and innovative development outcomes
<b>Strategic Priority 3.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	Strengthen cooperative development and implementation of evidence-based and inclusive migration governance

### 3.1. Priority I: Resilience

Empowerment of people and communities in vulnerable situations is recognized as the most effective way of reducing vulnerabilities and, thereafter, ensuring resilience to any newly emerging vulnerability risks. This approach, grounded on previous experiences and good practices, will guide IOM's resilience programming over the next years. IOM will continue providing protection, as well as rehabilitation and social integration assistance for those vulnerable or who have been subjected to violence, exploitation and abuse, particularly youth, women and children, including but not limited to victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings. The target beneficiaries of IOM's interventions are usually people in a vulnerable situation which includes returning migrants, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, victims of trafficking and exploitation and others IOM activities will consider vulnerability screening outputs and respective analysis to define the beneficiary scope and ensure the correct targeting in assistance.

Support to internally displaced persons will remain on the agenda, and is in line with the national priorities set by the GoA for the coming decade. It requires complex planning and coordination to ensure dignified and sustainable reintegration of IDPs, through promoting durable solutions to ensure their safety and sustainable livelihoods. This includes supporting vocational training and education to provide IDPs greater opportunities to enter employment or pursue entrepreneurialism or self-employment, allowing people to become productive members of their respective communities. In addition, IOM will support access to justice, support addressing housing, land and property disputes, and contribute to ensuring access to documentation -all in close cooperation with the relevant government institutions.

Preparedness in migration emergencies in the humanitarian context necessitates humane and people-centred approaches which focus on lifesaving and rehabilitation. Similar preparedness needs to consider both cross-border and internal displacements, which contain great vulnerability risk for those who are on the move. IOM is committed to the idea that good preparedness for migration emergencies should be properly recognized and advanced.

Furthermore, strengthening cooperation and coordination through the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and good practices between government institutions, the international community and civil society creates the opportunity for sustaining the well-being of vulnerable people and their inclusion in state protection programs.

<sup>4</sup> IOM Strategic Vision 2019–2023: Setting a Course for IOM (Geneva, 2019)

<https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/110/C-110-INF-1%20-%20IOM%20Strategic%20Vision.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> IOM Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2021

<https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/SEEECA-Regional-Strategy-2020-2024.pdf>

In addition, the Organization will preserve gender responsiveness and child sensitivity as guiding principles in its assistance and protection programs.

Access to basic services, the labour market, and social protection systems is essential for ensuring the resilience of migrants and other groups in vulnerable situations. Therefore, IOM promotes safe labour migration practices for all migrants and skill building, including support to training opportunities to facilitate the matching of supply and demand for specific skills. Migrant training programs, such as pre-departure and post-arrival orientation, and the Migrant Resource Centres, are well-recognized tools for skill building.

IOM recognizes the importance of facilitation and strengthening capacities of relevant institutions as another approach to strengthening resilience, and IOM is committed to facilitating the development of policies and programs that will serve the interests of migrants and society, as well as vulnerable groups and provide effective protection and assistance to migrants and their families in the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in 2020 revealed the necessity of developing and practising proper emergency preparedness plans covering multi-sectoral approaches – healthcare, security, climate crises, peace and stabilization. The programming portfolio of IOM will strive to contribute to the Government's emergency preparedness in defined sectors.

### 3.2. Priority 2: Mobility

IOM is committed to the idea that well-managed migration is of benefit to all communities, both origin and destination. In Azerbaijan, the same language is prevailing in communications with all relevant partners.

IOM will extend support to the Government of Azerbaijan in the development and effective implementation of a people-centred migration policy, in particular through the development of a migrant integration strategy in line with Azerbaijan's international commitments and national priorities. In this regard, IOM Azerbaijan strives to support migrants and thus facilitate their contributions to sustainable development. A similar outcome has been reflected in Azerbaijan's pledge submitted in the lead up to the IMRF in May 2022 which resulted in the formal establishment of the Migrants' Council. The Council was established to mainstream the GCM, drawing on contributions and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders, especially migrants, in line with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches outlined in the GCM Guiding Principles. IOM considers the importance of fostering the role of the Migrants Council in Azerbaijan and further achieving a considerable level of participation of migrants in decision-making.

Skills partnership, diaspora mapping and engagement, as well as integration and social cohesion, are areas of work which IOM will continue working on. At the same time, intergovernmental discussions on bilateral and regional labour and social protection agreements that would guarantee human development and the protection of the rights of migrants are complementary areas to ensure the full contribution of migrants to sustainable development.

Ethical recruitment and strategic pre-departure communication tools will be promoted to encourage informed decision-making by potential migrants. It is foreseen to affect proper migration plans and effective use of remittances towards livelihood purposes, as well as increasing savings and sustainable investment. An integrated and inter-thematic approach to reintegration is also essential - since facilitated return and reintegration of migrants can help to advance the well-being of migrants and their society.

IOM's will ensure its activities will also include strengthening social protection measures, and support investments in programmes that accelerate States' fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals with the aim of eliminating the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin, including through inclusive resilience and disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as creating and maintaining peaceful and inclusive societies with effective, accountable and transparent institutions. This will include provision of humanitarian assistance and protection for people



fleeing war and military conflict, including but not limited to IDPs.

IOM in Azerbaijan will continue advocating for the elimination of all forms of discrimination, also by providing citizens with access to objective, evidence-based, clear information about the benefits and challenges of migration, with a view to dispelling misleading narratives that generate negative perceptions of migrants.

IOM will support access to healthcare services thereby reducing health inequities for migrants. Moreover, the mission aims to enhance the recovery of migrants from socio-economic consequences driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. The inclusion of migrants regardless of migratory status in the national vaccination program against COVID-19 is already on the discussion agenda of the Government and it creates a baseline for further advocacy and partnership that focus on increasing health coverage. The ultimate objective of the advocacy is specifically, aiming for universal health coverage, ensuring equitable access to health care and promoting financial risk protection for migrants regardless of their migratory status.

All the aforementioned approaches contribute to harnessing the development potential of migration in countries of destination and countries of origin, which is in line with Azerbaijan's statements at and reporting on the GCM and the IMRF.

### 3.3. Priority 3: Governance

IOM is committed to supporting the government in further enhancing its migration governance priorities by overcoming the challenges and reaping the benefits associated to human mobility. IOM will support the advancement of existing policies, strategies and action plans, and update and or develop new ones as may be required. Proactive migration policies and programmes have crucial importance.

Migration is recognised as an accelerator for sustainable development, and in Azerbaijan migration has been widely discussed during the development of the UNSDCF and its related Common Country Analysis. The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) triggered discussions on the vulnerabilities of migrants and the necessity of including the phenomenon in policy formulation in Azerbaijan. The priority areas defined through the UNSDCF embrace the linkages and relevance with migration governance in Azerbaijan.

IOM, also in its capacity as GCM Coordinator, will continue supporting government and non-state actors in achieving effective mainstreaming of migration in policy development. Return, readmission, reintegration, addressing irregular migration, strengthening border management, countering transnational crimes including trafficking in human beings, diaspora engagement and facilitation of remittances, as well as global partnership and cooperation is a non-exhaustive list of areas where IOM will continue to assume an advisory and support role in policy consultations.

It is also worth stressing that Azerbaijan recognizes the importance of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches in policy formulation, and it was reflected by the Government during the International Migration Review Forum, both in pledges and multi-stakeholder consultations, where the stakeholders voiced their ambitions and purposes in taking an active part not only in policy formulation - but also in implementation.

Migration health policy and governance have been elaborated in discussions and consultations, which took place during COVID-19 emergency planning. IOM provided, and will continue to provide, advisory support for policy change regarding migration health and continues to take a course of direct assistance to migrants and migrant families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the thematic area of Immigration and Border Management (IBM) the IOM Mission in Azerbaijan has 20-plus years of cooperation experience with the Government. Currently, the IOM mission in Azerbaijan takes

an advisory role and helps to strengthen frameworks, systems and capacities. Immigration and border management focuses on areas such as document security and identity management, safe use of biometrics and digitalization, data management, risk analysis systems and passenger data exchange (through tools such as Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record) in line with data protection standards.

IOM in Azerbaijan strives to enhance border security by strengthening the capacities of border and customs officials through, facilitating the implementation of readmission agreements, promoting regular pathways, and advocating for alternatives to immigration detention. For this purpose, IOM will support the government to optimize institutional arrangements and procedures, train relevant staff, ensure effective and sensitive information management and build border infrastructure. Ultimately, IOM seeks to ensure that Azerbaijan has up-to-date, human rights- and gender-sensitive integrated border management strategies in place.

In line with the government commitment to “ensure that any detention in the context of international migration follows due process, is non-arbitrary, is based on law, necessity, proportionality and individual assessments, is carried out by authorized officials and is for the shortest possible period of time, irrespective of whether detention occurs at the moment of entry, in transit or in proceedings of return, and regardless of the type of place where the detention occurs”<sup>6</sup>, IOM will work with the GoA to prioritize non-custodial alternatives to detention that are in line with international law, and to take a human rights-based approach to any detention of migrants.

IOM will also support the Migration Governance Indicator (MGI)<sup>7</sup> assessment in Azerbaijan. The MGI aims to advance dialogues on migration governance by clarifying what “well-governed migration” might look like. The process will include the collection of information on the status of migration governance at the national level and the design of their migration policies.

More broadly, and in line with the Government’s role as a GCM Champion country, IOM will continue to promote and support the participation of the GoA in relevant platforms, fora and mechanisms in where it may showcase its expertise and experience, but also learn from others on addressing migration challenges, and capitalising on migration as a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development in our globalized world.

### 3.4. Cross-cutting issues

Migration is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, which requires mainstreaming given its crosscutting and interdependent nature. In all its interventions IOM will be guided by the following guiding principles of the GCM: people-centred; international cooperation, national sovereignty, rule of law and due process, sustainable development, human rights, gender-responsive, child-responsive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

In its support to the GoA and relevant partners and stakeholders, IOM will be guided by the purposes and principles of Charter of the United Nations and the other multiple frameworks on which the GCM rests. These include but are not limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;<sup>8</sup> the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;<sup>9</sup> core international human rights treaties;<sup>10</sup> the United Nations

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<sup>6</sup> §29, United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/195

<sup>7</sup> <https://gmdac.iom.int/migration-governance-indicators>

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>9</sup> Resolution 2200 A (XXI).

<sup>10</sup> International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and

Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,<sup>11</sup> and others.

IOM will also ensure due consideration of the frameworks applicable in humanitarian contexts such as Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP); Conflict Sensitivity and do-no-harm approaches; Humanitarian Development and Peace Nexus (HDPN), and others.

Protection and assistance of the migrants as well as keeping migrants' rights and well-being at the centre during every stage of their migration journey is an indispensable part of Human rights under this Strategy. Advancing gender mainstreaming within IOM interventions is grounded in the following instruments, but not limited to: IOM Migration Governance Framework; IOM Gender Equality Policy (2015); IOM Gender Marker; UN System-wide Action Plan (UNSWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2012); UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP).

IOM's programme targeting livelihood and integration support for people affected by conflict consider strict reporting guidance on cross-cutting areas enlisted above on humanitarian response. In line with the humanitarian themes, IOM strives for maximum provision of protection and psychological services with high sensitivity.

In correlation with that, IOM recognizes and takes strict preventative measures against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and sexual harassment (SH) by IOM personnel, emphasizing it as severe misconduct driven by gender inequality and imbalances of power. Standards of conduct on PSEA and SH communication tools and education materials are promoted among IOM personnel, implementing partners, stakeholders, as well as beneficiaries and communities. The relevant provisions are considered inherent parts of bilateral and multilateral agreements and documents signed by IOM. IOM also developed a complaint mechanism to intervene with any misconduct of that nature.

Environmental sensitivity and sustainability are cross-cutting issues in program development and management. It is also prioritized in the UNSDCF and environmental degradation is observed as an adverse driver for migration in Azerbaijan and the surrounding region. IOM Azerbaijan, in close partnership with other UN Agencies, is engaged in the development of programmes to improve climate change adaptation and resilience of local communities in the face of environmental degradation. IOM Azerbaijan aims to continue to address water shortages and other effects of climate change which are among some of the key drivers of migration at the local and national levels.

Within its programme portfolio, IOM continues to promote and advocate for environmental protection and resilience. IOM will continue its support to the GoA in restoring and expanding the *kahrizes* which are traditional underground water systems which provide drinking and irrigation water in and around regained territories of Karabakh. The aim is to diminish the vulnerabilities of returning IDPs driven by the climate change effects. Environmental sensitivity and sustainability are cross-cutting issues in programme development and management, as also prioritized in of the UNSDCF and is mostly observed adverse driver for migration in Azerbaijan and the close region. IOM Azerbaijan, in close partnership with other UN Agencies, is engaged in the development of programmes to improve climate change adaptation and resilience of local communities in the face of environmental degradations. IOM Azerbaijan aims to continue to address water shortages and other effects of climate change which are amongst some of the key drivers of migration at the local and national level.

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Members of Their Families, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2225, No. 39574.

### 3.5 Partnership and cooperation

The above-mentioned areas of intervention would not produce sustainable enhancement without effective partnership and coordination. The support the Government of Azerbaijan to introduce effective, coherent and inclusive migration management policies based on evidence, ‘whole-of-government’ and ‘whole-of-society’ approaches and human rights-centred principles in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNSDCF 2021- 2025, UNNM Azerbaijan progress plan, the GCM, and state-led priorities and processes. IOM will continue to maintain strong partnerships with the government, donors, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, and other stakeholders mainly through initiatives supporting policymaking, research, capacity building, and skills development.

In line with the targeted priority areas, IOM will continue partnering with the **Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan**, which leads the strategic development of the country’s migration policy, including approving legislation and the passing of decrees, as well as matters in matters concerning foreign affairs. **The Cabinet of Ministers**, in the capacity of general coordination body with the Government agencies, continue to be at the top of IOM’s partnership circle. **The State Migration Service** will stay as a key partner for IOM in the role of the entity responsible for migration management in the country. It works towards the prevention of irregular migration and improves migration management procedures and structures, including return migration to better harness the developmental benefits migration can bring to the country. The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** will be coordinated all activities under the IOM mandate and within its contractual issues. The **State Border Service and State Customs Committee** will stay IOM’s partner in border management-related projects as it ensures control over Azerbaijan’s borders, registers and verifies foreign nationals and stateless persons at border checkpoints and registers their entrance, combats irregular migration, such as migrant smuggling. Considering its migration-related responsibilities, the **Ministry of Internal Affairs** will be coordinated the interventions related to issues of combating irregular migration and human trafficking and protection of victims, including registration of foreign nationals and stateless persons.

As the **Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population** manages the national labour market, develops and implements policies on migrant workers and regulates labour market quotas for migrant workers its role as one of the key partners will remain.

On programmes related to migration health, environment, human rights, women and children rights, and IDPs, IOM will respectively continue cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Resources and Ecology, the Ombudsperson’s Office, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, and the State Committee for affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.

Success depends very much on their will to implement policies and on network cooperation on grounds of “a **whole-of-government” approach**. In certain policy areas, this also includes continuous cooperation with civil society organisations, the media and academia. Coordinating bodies and working groups have been convened to, among other things, encourage cross-sectoral and public participation in migration management in Azerbaijan.

## INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 4.1. Policy capacity

IOM Azerbaijan has a proven track record of assisting the government in policy analysis and providing them with tools, including policy-relevant research and reports, to create more comprehensive sustainable development strategies. With offices across the world and accumulated institutional knowledge and best practices from different regions and countries, in the next four years, IOM will continue working closely with the government and other partners to further enhance policies in Azerbaijan in line with international standards and human rights

### 4.2. Knowledge management, Research and Data collection

A clear understanding of the current policy and legislative landscapes relating to migration management and regulation, through the collection and analysis of evidence and data is necessary to deliver results-based programming. In Azerbaijan IOM continuously supports the assessment and analysis of migration issues which also contributes to the increased knowledge of IOM staff. IOM has an extensive network of national and international experts and strong connections with academia. As a leading agency on migration, IOM has established itself as a primary source of migration data and evidence for governments, donors, NGOs, media and other development actors. Collecting evidence, enhancing the understanding of migration-related issues and assistance to the government of Azerbaijan vis-a-vis international frameworks such as the SDGs and GCM continues to be a priority until 2025.

IOM will also prioritize the development of long-term programmes based on the evidence when working with the donor community to ensure the strategic comprehensive and lasting effect of interventions. The ongoing process of the establishment of the Regional Training Centre on Migration is one positive example.

Staff training and other methods of continuous learning will prevail in the future resource management policy of the Mission. The action's to be taken towards achieving the abovementioned Mission statement should be well aligned with IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development. The Strategy applies to all Missions in terms of building the organizational and institutional skills enabling IOM's own operational, case-management and all other data to be used to support the evidence base on migration and sustainability.

IOM continuously supports enhancing data collection and analysis skills for program partners and stakeholders as well. At the same time, regular training for IOM personnel as well as data collection for monitoring purposes increases the role and scope of results-based management.

As a key component of both results-based management and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation help 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 Azerbaijan will emphasize monitoring and evaluation activities through dedicated funding and staff capacitation as an essential part of all interventions to enable a more robust assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, impact, and sustainability of its projects, programmes, strategies and policies.

IOM activities and achievements need to be always well-reflected and showcased to the public. This affects not only IOM's ability to present its achievements and be transparent- but also the opportunity to fundraise and inform the donor community about the needs and areas for potential program interventions.

In the future, IOM will establish stronger connections with donors and update them regularly on recent developments, results achieved within projects and expertise accumulated. IOM will also dedicate financial and human resources to establishing a stronger presence on popular social media platforms to directly

communicate with the broader public and raise awareness on migration-related issues.

#### 4.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

IOM Mission in Azerbaijan strives to achieve results-based program management and the role of proper monitoring and evaluation is critical in this context. IOM advocates for effective budgeting, monitoring and evaluation through project development and ensures to provide accountability. In that regard, the increased capacities of personnel and additional technical support will be continued to achieve effective project progress.

## THE WAY FORWARD

IOM Azerbaijan will continue providing support to the Government of Azerbaijan, UNCT and UNNM in the facilitation and availability of regular migration channels, prevention of irregular migration, development of protection systems to reduce vulnerabilities, use of development perspectives of migration, institutional development, and awareness-raising on migration and capacity-building on various migration issues and will work in line with the UNSDCF 2021-2025.

## ANNEXES

1. Annex 1. UNSDCF 2021-2025
2. Annex 2. UNNM Azerbaijan Terms of Reference
3. Annex 3. Progress Plan of UNNM Azerbaijan
4. Annex 4. IOM SEECA Regional Strategy
5. Annex 5. Socio-Economic Development Strategy of AR 2022-2026
6. Annex 6. IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development