

1. How do/es the country/ies on which your organisation is working define “gender responsiveness”?

Since its establishment in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has grown significantly in terms of staff, budget, and scope of activities. Today, IOM, the United Nations Migration Agency, is an institution of extraordinary scope and delivery, and is recognized as the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration. It works closely with governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental partners. With 172 member states, 8 states holding observer status, more than 480 offices in over 100 countries (making it one of the UN agencies with the largest global presence), an annual budget of 1.8 billion USD (of which 93% are voluntary contributions from IOM Member States) and 11,000 staff (of whom less than 1% is based in the headquarters), IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all.

In addition, to adhering to all the international instruments on gender equality, back in November 1995 IOM Council (which is comprised of the representatives of the IOM Member States) adopted the [Staff and Programme Policies on Gender Issues](#) (MC/1853 from 7 November 1995). The document reflects the consensus reached by the MSs on the need to mainstream gender in IOM staffing and programmatic activities. It is based on the premises that:

- women constitute a substantial proportion of migrants;
- migrant women are exposed to specific risks and discrimination which warrant special considerations;
- the needs of migrant women have not been sufficiently taken into account in migration related policies and programmes.

Compliance with the policy means that IOM is responsible for:

- improving awareness and understanding - within IOM as well as outside - of the conditions and needs specific to migrant women;
- ensuring equal access to IOM projects and services so that migrant women can fully participate in and benefit from them;
- designing and implementing migrant women-specific projects and services, where and when appropriate.

In November 2015, IOM Council adopted [Gender Equality Policy for 2015–2019](#), which states that “IOM will not meet its objective of safe, humane and orderly migration for all unless gender equality is taken into account. Indeed, gender equality is central to the causes and consequences of migration, and thus to effective organizational responses”.

Experience within and outside IOM and the United Nations system has demonstrated that the key drivers for promoting gender equality are: senior manager leadership and accountability; integration of a gender perspective in strategic planning processes;

adequate resources and capacity; a common understanding of gender mainstreaming; and an organizational structure that supports gender mainstreaming.

The fact that in 2017, the IOM MSs supported the introduction and roll-out of the IOM Gender Marker as the compulsory element of the institutional project development and implementation process confirmed the IOM MSs commitment in mainstreaming gender in the area of migration management. In addition, IOM pioneered the collection of gender segregated data on migrants in the framework of its Displace Tracking Matrix programme (DTM).

In practice, the extent and understanding of the policies and actions deriving from the commitments associated with the implementation of those instruments differs from country to country. This condition the difference in understanding “gender responsiveness” and the ways to provide for it in national and institutional policies. IOM MSs are generally positive and implement the gender responsive practices into national migrants’ protection mechanisms through its migrant protection related programme activities, mainstream gender in migration and border management capacity building, gender equality is in the heart of programmatic activities on supporting the labor migration and integration. At the same time, it depends on the level of awareness and political acceptance in the country to which extent the national institutions are ready for implementation of the gender responsive practices. In some countries, IOM is working on e.g. enhancing the human resources management systems of the border management agencies, in others it is only conducting the initial awareness raising on the importance of mainstreaming gender and integrating gender responsive elements into national migrant protection practices.

In those cases, when IOM gets to work on drafting the new or amending the existing migration and border management related legislation, usually it manages to streamline the clauses to integrate the gender responsive practices into those documents.

- 2. Please provide information on any existing or forthcoming good practices or initiatives of gender-responsive migration legislation, policies or practices in the country/ies your organisation is working on. (Should you provide information on legislation or policy, kindly submit the original text, accompanied by an English translation if it is in a language other than the six official UN languages.)**

Migration Management Strategy of the Republic of Albania
Migration Management Strategy of Azerbaijan

- 3. Please indicate any challenges and/or obstacles in the implementation of gender-responsive migration legislation and/or policies?**

- unequal gender representation in the migration management related professional sector;

- low level of awareness on the issue leading to limited understanding of the necessity to mainstream gender thus resulting on low priority on national or institutional levels;
- misperceptions and stereotypes surrounding the discourse on gender equality and traditional views on the role of men and women deeply imbedded into most religions and local cultures and traditions;
- influence of those beliefs and stereotypes on the corporate culture of the national institutions;
- lack of understanding, knowledge and experience in mainstreaming gender-responsive migration legislation, policies and practices.

4. Based on the experience accumulated with these interventions so far; as well as the lessons learned, what would have to be done differently to maximise the gender responsive impact of these interventions?

Readiness of the countries to mainstream gender responsive policies and practices is usually proportional to the overall readiness and interest to mainstream gender equality. Often it is conditioned by external commitments and any regional integration processes that may be in place.

Supported by its MSs, IOM has developed extraordinary efforts to mainstream gender within the organization as well as in its programmatic activities. At the same time, the success of mainstreaming gender in technical assistance and capacity building depends on the political will and the readiness of the national institutions for change.

For the organizations working on enhancing the national capacity in this area it would be important to identify the incentives for the national governments and institutions to streamline gender responsive interventions. These might be (but not limited to):

- universal human rights protection and gender equality related commitments;
- adherence to any other international or regional commitments (incorporating or by extension requiring gender mainstreaming) which the country or the national institution is motivated to implement due to various (including political) reasons;
- political incentives (e.g. EU, NATO or other regional integrational processes);
- donor funding conditioned by the extent of reforms in this area (International Monetary fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), European Union (EU), others);
- regional integration processes (EU or NATO integration processes incorporate gender mainstreaming as one of the preconditions);
- active participation in any thematic regional platforms that might be used for generating the peer pressure and political will to “perform not worse than the other peers”;

- incentives generating political will from within the country (e.g. upcoming elections), etc.

Taking into consideration those incentives and understanding that the chances to generate the political will for necessary reforms from inside the country are usually much lower, international community could focus more on advocating for gender mainstreaming and incorporation of gender responsive policies and practices. For that reason, the international community – using the examples from other countries – might demonstrate how by means of integrating the gender responsive policies and practices they increase their national and institutional migration management capacity. The following ideas might be considered to advance all the advocative efforts: advocacy by IOM leadership (already ongoing), the use of all the available international and regional platforms, involvement of reputable experts, etc.

The role of leadership and the need for reforming institutional corporate management and communication culture should not be underestimated.

5. What support could other stakeholders (other than governments) provide to make migration policies, legislation, and practices more gender responsive?

Other international and regional originations, academia and NGOs could contribute in several ways:

- by joining advocacy efforts to generate the national and institutional political will for reforms;
- by coordinating and performing in a coherent manner including in terms of communicating the coherent messages;
- by raising awareness and generating, generating interest and enhancing the national and institutional capacity for reforms;
- by providing technical assistance to national governments and institutions in amending the national legal frameworks, processes and procedures (this would also include education and training, provision of platforms for experience exchange, etc.).