



Migration Facilitation: Support Services to Governments and Migrants

Introduction

Recent events heightened the perception that borders need to be better secured. Integrity of application and travel documents were questioned. Biometric applications are introduced in visa and travel documents. The threat to national borders imposed new restrictions in the application process increasing workload and greatly affecting existing government capacities and resources.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an inter-governmental body, 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 work towards effective respect of the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

1. **Requirement** – Countries highly solicited by potential immigrants face rising costs, quality and security issues. Since 9-11, there are new restrictions and greater need for security and integrity of documents. Consulates process high volumes of inquiries, unqualified candidates, and unprepared applications. Governments of select countries have shown interest in pre-consular support services in order to: (a) accommodate biometrics enrolment for visa and entry clearance applications; (b) enhance the existing capacity of government network and resources; (c) reduce the administrative workload of consular and immigration officials; (d) reduce direct client inquiries at same time improve quality of customer service and outreach; (e) free up office space in consulates / embassies devoted to counters and waiting area; (f) improve physical security of consulates and embassies and their staff, and (g) governments, especially those with limited global presence, need reliable partners to assist in their programmes.
2. **Trend** – Security of borders and integrity of travel documents will remain a priority among many governments for many years to come. To address the needs of destination countries and at the same



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time not inconvenience the traveling public, biometrics is becoming or will soon become a standard feature in all passports, visas and other travel documents. Because of the additional work and resources needed to implement this, outsourcing visa support services will become the trend. Starting with the US lead, the European governments are taking similar moves. As these main destination countries / region impose their standards, governments of countries of origin of travelers will have to toe the line in order not to disrupt the smooth flow of people to and from these countries. As more and more governments adopt the system requirements and standards, the need for migration facilitation support services will grow exponentially.

3. **Clients** – Potential clients may include: (a) federal and provincial governments; (b) offshore immigration branches; (c) embassies, consulates and high commissions; (d) private employers and recruitment agencies; (e) citizenship and immigration departments; (f) visa and technology service providers; and (g) the migrants / applicants themselves. Currently, IOM is providing migration facilitation support services to the following governments: Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, UK and USA. And to a certain extent also to the governments of Germany, Finland, Norway and Switzerland.
4. **Approaches** – Support services will be offered on behalf of one or several governments. Could be approached bilaterally, regionally (e.g. EU) or through participating in public tenders. Depending on respective programme requirements, different rules are applied for different applicant nationalities and client governments. IOM mission / office in a major emigrant or immigration country may have to set up additional sites per country.

Migration Facilitation Support Services

1. Mission

Towards a more responsive, efficient and cost-effective migration facilitation services addressing the unique individual needs of governments and migrants



2. Keys to success

- client-oriented service approach
- quick and reliable access to services
- easy to understand and transparent procedures
- professional service with integrity
- cost-effective yet innovative solutions
- option of comprehensive and integrated services
- confidentiality

3. How can IOM assist

IOM has a large network of offices worldwide and has the expertise to provide governments, migrants, and private employers with efficient and cost-effective services for organized migration programmes. By taking advantage of these services, governments or private employers will be able to make the best use of scarce resources and ensure that programme requirements are met, at the same time, provide migrants with caring services at a reasonable and transparent cost.

Specific assistance can be tailored to meet specific programme needs and can be provided during various stages of the migration process, i.e. information, pre-application, application and post-application, as well as departure and arrival. Assistance is rendered on a “fee for service and as needed” basis.

4. Services IOM can provide

The services include those that IOM can contribute to programmes of organized, regular migration, facilitating an existing process and making it easier, more efficient, more predictable and reliable for both the migrant and the governments concerned.

4.1 Promotion, information, recruitment, testing and processing

– All these phases may be independent or combined depending on the requirement of the client federal or provincial government that wish to attract immigrants or skilled migrants. Activities may include the design of information dissemination strategy, development and implementation of a promotion campaign, organization of information sessions to assist client government in recruiting candidates, facilitate recruitment process, as well as testing and processing of candidates.

4.2 Verification (of academic records and trade qualifications; work references and work re-



cords; and public legal documents) – Verification of documents with issuing authority or institution to check if the person named is indeed the person to whom the document was issued and that the details in their records match those listed on the document provided. IOM provides the best endeavours to attain information. Given however the conditions of some locations, there is no 100 per cent guarantee that IOM can obtain information required or that the information IOM receives from other parties is not flawed.

4.3 Interview – Interview of visa applicants on behalf of governments. The requesting government official will provide questions and objectives for interview prior to the schedule. IOM staff will conduct the interview in IOM premises or by telephone and submit in writing to the government official the answers to the questions provided. IOM does not make any opinion in its report. The interview is not for determination or adjudication purpose, which is a sovereign task of governments.

4.4 Logistical assistance – Governments may have to conduct interviews in a location where they do not have a presence but where IOM does. Upon request, logistical assistance can be provided to visiting officials, which may include, arranging accommodation, local transportation, interview facilities, communication lines, interpreters, appointments, briefings and, if necessary, security. IOM would normally need 30-days notice to organize this service, which would also include assistance in contacting applicants and scheduling interviews.

4.5 Health assessments – Health assessments of potential migrants are carried out at the request of governments of countries of destination. They are tailored to fulfil the national immigration legislation or requirements of these receiving governments. IOM acts as an accredited panel physician or supervises non-IOM panel physicians. Pre-departure health assessments: (a) contribute to reduce and better manage the public health impact of population mobility on receiving countries; (b) facilitate integration of migrants, through detection and cost-effective management of health conditions and provision

of medical information on migrants' health; and (c) offer an opportunity to promote health of assisted migrants. Typically health assessments include physical examination, laboratory testing, tuberculosis testing, preparation and transmission of medical documents. IOM provides treatment of malaria, intestinal parasites, certain treatable sexually transmittable diseases, directly observed therapy for tuberculosis, immunizes for vaccine-preventable conditions and offers pre- and post-test HIV counselling. IOM also performs fitness-for-travel checks and provides medical escorts if required.

4.6 DNA sample collection or testing – Obtaining blood samples or mouth swabs from applicants (or supervising / witnessing the collection) for DNA testing, ensuring integrity of the process and forwarding the specimens to a designated laboratory, while carefully managing the chain of custody procedures. Test results are sent directly to the requesting government in the destination country. For some client governments, IOM conducts the DNA testing through selected medical laboratory. DNA testing is used in the processing of family reunification cases. The service also includes scheduling appointments and follow-up with applicants.

4.7 Fingerprinting – Using digital fingerprint machine, IOM collects fingerprints from applicants on behalf of certain governments, at same time ensures chain of custody procedures are strictly adhered to.

4.8 Visa application assistance – Visa applicants may have difficulties completing visa application forms properly and understanding the strict supporting documentation requirements. Incomplete or improperly prepared visa applications can affect processing of case files and create undesirable delays and increased workloads for consular and immigration officials. IOM assistance includes review of qualifications to determine if an applicant is likely to qualify or not; translation of application forms into local language; assistance in properly completing the forms and in correctly assembling required documentation. The service ends upon submission and registration of application at the embassy /



consulate. IOM does not coach, represent or advocate the applicant during visa processing.

- 4.9 File submission** – Under agreement with client governments, IOM receives all visa applications and visa application charges on their behalf. Collected visa charges are transferred to the embassy / consulate on daily basis. IOM provides forms, information and e-visa assistance to applicants.
- 4.10 Passport / visa / document handling** – Assistance to governments with the receipt, mailing and tracking of passports and the return of passports (to applicants) with approved visas. Assistance to applicants already granted visas with the completion of required appendices, ensuring that photos submitted are to the proper specifications. Assistance also includes contacting applicants for additional required information or documentation at the request of embassies / consulates.
- 4.11 Travel assistance** – The assistance is meant to reduce the anxiety many migrants experience when travelling abroad for the first time. This is the provision of information on air travel, on-site ticketing assistance at reduced rates (IOM has signed global and local agreements with a large number of airline companies for the transport of the significant number of migrants it assists), advance notification to sponsors of travel details, assistance in completing required departure and arrival documentation (immigration and customs), assistance with airport check-in, escorting through customs and immigration, airport transit as well as arrival assistance in some countries. May also include arranging dedicated escort during the journey to facilitate the air travel for inexperienced persons.
- 4.12 Pre-departure orientation or language training** – Provision of up-to-date information and a realistic picture of what awaits the migrants in their country of destination. Orientation

helps reduce stress by providing migrants with information, basic language skills and coping mechanisms to deal with the unfamiliar and the unknown. The traditional beneficiaries of IOM's pre-departure orientation / cultural orientation are government-funded refugees and other humanitarian entrants. The programme is now also offered to other categories of migrants, e.g. skilled migrants, contract workers, and immigrants, to better prepare them to face the initial demands of adapting to a new country. Governments in the destination countries usually fund this training designed to help increase the chances for successful integration.

- 4.13 Migration information assistance / country of origin information** – Collection and provision of general country information (for requesting governments). The information will be drawn from locally available sources such as newspapers and magazines, local TV and radio, Internet as well as other sources available in the public domain. Information may also be provided to individuals wishing to know more about opportunities for employment, studying or settling abroad.
- 4.14 General facilitation and liaison** – Assistance to accommodate government or employer requests for routine liaison contact between them and potential migrants on various issues related to interview dates and processing of applications, as well as requests for delivery of travel documents, visas and air tickets.

5. Pricing and payment

Exact pricing is dependent on several variables, e.g. volumes, set-up costs, operational costs. It also varies by country (both origin and destination). Pricing is targeted at same range as typical visa fees. Depending on the users of IOM services, it could be either the client government or the applicants themselves who will bear the services fee. Payments from governments may be arranged on a monthly or quarterly basis.

