

# LOCALIZATION FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE NOTE FOR IOM'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE



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Alexander BEE

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# LOCALIZATION FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE NOTE FOR IOM'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acronyms</b>	1
<b>Executive Summary - What Does Localization Mean for IOM?</b>	3
Partnerships & Funding	4
Capacity Strengthening & Mentorship	4
Participation	4
Coordination	4
Visibility & Advocacy	4
<b>Part 1: Introduction</b>	5
Why Localization in Humanitarian Response?	6
Purpose of the Localization Framework and Guidance Note	7
What is Localization?	9
Who are the Local and National Actors?	10
Localization and the Donor Community	11
Diaspora And Localization	14
<b>Part 2: Localization Framework</b>	15
Partnerships & Funding	17
Capacity Strengthening & Mentorship	18
Participation	19
Coordination	21
Visibility & Advocacy	22
<b>Part 3: Guidance Note on Localization in Humanitarian Response</b>	24
Partnership & Funding	25
Capacity Strengthening & Mentorship	29
Participation	32
Coordination	34
Visibility & Advocacy	36
<b>Case Studies</b>	38
Indonesia LNA Preparedness Roster	38
Rapid Response Fund (RRF)	39
Mentorship Approach in Ethiopia	40
IOM Poland in the Ukraine Response	41
<b>Localization and Global Initiatives</b>	42
Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) COVID-19 NGO Allocation	42

## ACRONYMS

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to Affected Populations
<b>CBPF</b>	Country-Based Pooled Fund
<b>CCCM</b>	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
<b>CERF</b>	Central Emergency Response Fund
<b>CFM</b>	Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms
<b>CO</b>	Country Office
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DG ECHO</b>	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<b>DHRR</b>	Department of Humanitarian Response and Recovery
<b>DTM</b>	Displacement Tracking Matrix
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>ERC</b>	Emergency Relief Coordinator
<b>GB</b>	Grand Bargain
<b>HC</b>	Humanitarian Coordinator
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>HDPN</b>	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
<b>HNO</b>	Humanitarian Needs Overview
<b>HPC</b>	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>ICCT</b>	Inter-Cluster Coordination Team
<b>IEC</b>	Information, Education, and Communication
<b>INGO</b>	International non-governmental organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration

<b>IP</b>	Implementing Partner
<b>IQ</b>	Institutional Questioner
<b>JMDI</b>	UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI)
<b>LEG</b>	Office of Legal Affairs
<b>LNA</b>	Local and National Actor
<b>LRG</b>	Local and regional governments
<b>MIRAC</b>	Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MIRAC)
<b>MoU</b>	Memoranda of Understanding
<b>MSD</b>	Migration Sustainable Development
<b>NFI</b>	Non-food item
<b>NNGO</b>	National non-governmental organizations
<b>PI</b>	Public information
<b>RC</b>	Regional Coordinator
<b>RMO</b>	Resource Management Officer
<b>RO</b>	Regional Office
<b>RRF</b>	Rapid Response Fund
<b>SAG</b>	Strategic Advisory Groups
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SRF</b>	Strategic Results Framework (SRF)
<b>TRD</b>	Transition and Recovery
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>USAID</b>	The United States Agency for International Development
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WLO</b>	Women-led Organization
<b>WRO</b>	Women's Rights organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### WHAT DOES LOCALIZATION MEAN FOR IOM?



IOM has been part of the localization agenda by supporting the leadership and response capacities of local and national actors (LNAs) through its crisis response and preparedness efforts as well as its humanitarian leadership and coordination roles.

Localization presents an invaluable opportunity for IOM to strengthen its response to issues related to the mobility dimensions of crises by establishing strong and equitable partnerships with LNAs. Based on the feedback provided by IOM's country and regional offices, headquarters departments, and its

local partners as part of the consultations conducted, localization for IOM is centered around five pillars: partnerships & funding, capacity strengthening & mentorship, participation, coordination, and visibility & advocacy.

## PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDING



IOM works in partnership with LNAs and acts as an intermediary to transfer knowledge and resources to deliver rapid, timely, cost-effective, and relevant humanitarian responses in a wide range of emergency settings.

In 2022, **76 IOM country offices have implemented projects in partnership with LNAs**, where 87% of the partners were national NGOs/CSOs and 37% were government/state authorities (IQ 2022).

## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING & MENTORSHIP



IOM supports the long-term institutional and technical response capacities of LNAs through mentoring, coaching, or on the job training initiatives with the long-term goals of building resilience and local ownership and facilitating durable solutions.

**A total of 2,087 local partners were supported** with institutional and technical capacity strengthening initiatives across 71 country offices in 2022 (IQ 2022).

## PARTICIPATION



IOM encourages the systematic participation of LNAs and affected populations in IOM's program design, implementation phases, and/or overall Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HRP) process.

Through its CCCM, DTM, Shelter & Settlements, Health, WASH, Protection, and TRD programs, alongside strong AAP practices, IOM actively engages with LNAs and affected populations. **IOM's DTM operations were active in 95 countries** and the data produced was used to inform 86% of the 29 HNO/HRPs produced during the year (Global Activity Report 2022).

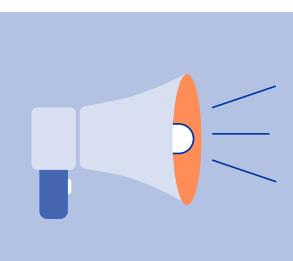
## COORDINATION



IOM actively supports greater presence, leadership, and participation of LNAs as part of its humanitarian leadership and coordination roles across a wide range of emergency settings.

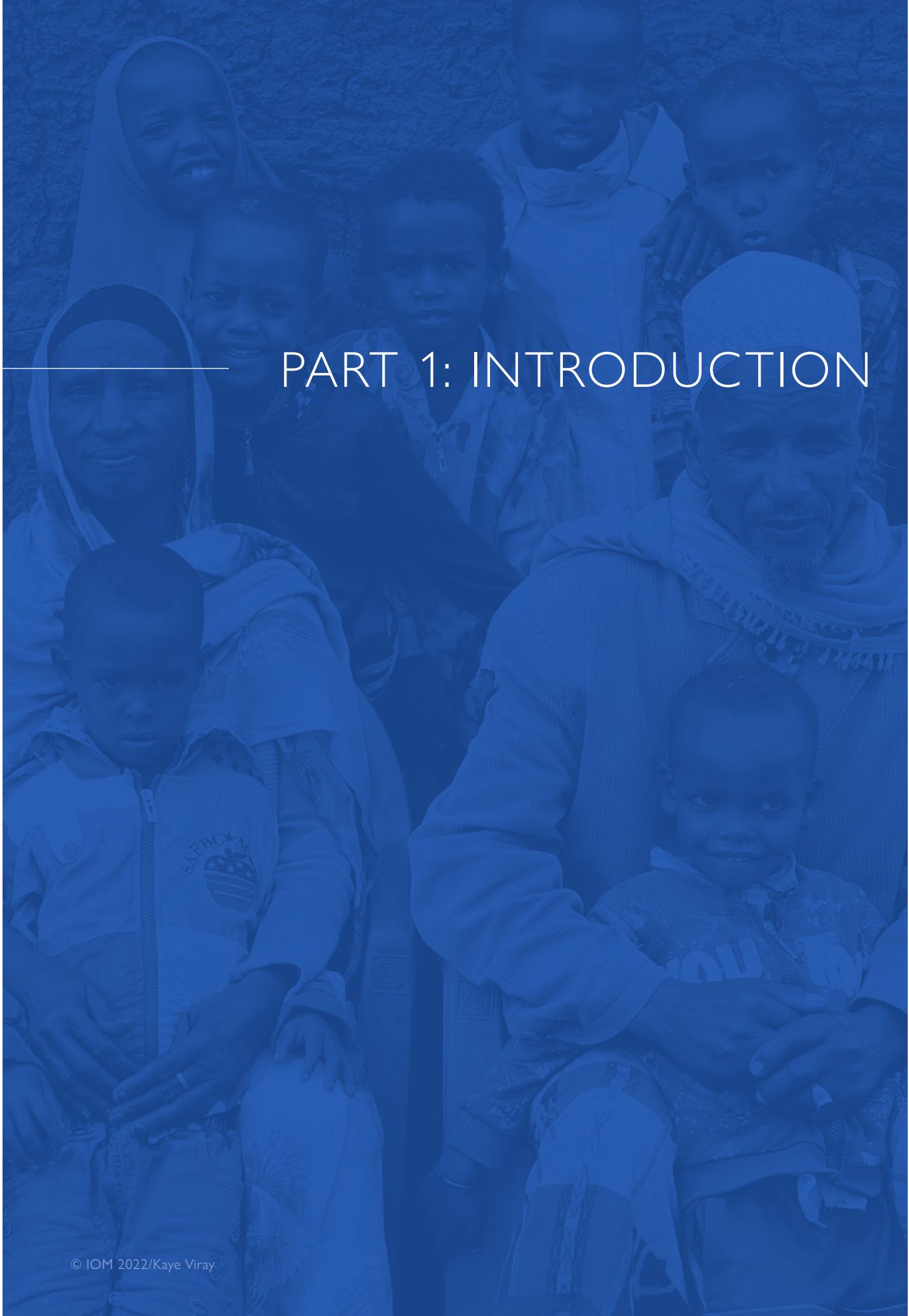
In 2022, **181 coordination mechanisms were led by IOM** in 72 countries and 41% of these structures are co-led with national NGOs, CSOs, and governmental entities (Global Activity Report 2022).

## VISIBILITY & ADVOCACY



IOM continuously works toward the greater recognition and visibility of LNAs in its humanitarian programming and advocates for more support and funding tools for local and national responders.

**IOM actively promotes recognition and visibility of LNAs through its strategic documents** such as Crises Response Plans, Migration Crisis Operational Frameworks, project proposals, and media & communications products.

A large, semi-transparent watermark image of a diverse group of children and adults, mostly young girls and boys, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are dressed in various casual clothing items like hoodies, jackets, and scarves. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

## WHY LOCALIZATION IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE?

Local and national actors (LNAs) are present before, during, and after a crisis, acting as first line responders in emergencies, with often greater access to remote and hard-to-reach locations and in-depth understanding of the local contexts.

Their expertise in providing rapid response capacities and identifying local challenges and solutions, while enabling meaningful participation with communities, make them essential partners and agents in facilitating sustainable and durable solutions that consider the long-term impact of humanitarian assistance efforts.

As the leading United Nations (UN) agency working on migration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is committed to saving lives and helping populations move out of harm's way by protecting and assisting those displaced or stranded by crisis and supporting populations and their communities to recover and rebuild toward sustainable development. IOM's crisis-related programs and activities are guided by the Migration Crisis Operational Framework, bringing together the humanitarian, peacebuilding, development, and migration management fields.

One of the key strategic enablers for an effective and efficient crisis response is localization. Working closely with local actors enhances local outreach capacity, understanding of local dynamics, and sustainability of IOM's interventions.

This document focuses on localization in IOM's humanitarian operations.<sup>1</sup> Localization in humanitarian response is complementary to, but distinct from, localization in development, migration management, and transition and recovery programming.

In the humanitarian arena, as a Grand Bargain signatory, IOM is committed to the localization agenda by encouraging humanitarian responses that *provide more support for the leadership, delivery and capacity of local responders and participation of affected communities in addressing humanitarian needs.*<sup>2</sup> IOM's strong operational footprint through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM); Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM); Shelter & Settlements; Protection; Health, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH); and Transition and Recovery (TRD) sectors in a wide range of emergency contexts provides the organization with direct front-line delivery perspectives. The organization's humanitarian leadership and coordination roles along with its unique engagement in supporting Local and National Actors (LNAs) place IOM at the center of this global trend.

Localization of humanitarian action allows for timely, cost-effective, and relevant humanitarian response with greater community acceptance, trust, and accountability, as well as pathways for transition, recovery, durable solutions, and sustainable development. It enhances local response capacities enabling communities to rapidly respond to crises and steer their own solutions.

- 1 As one component of IOM's comprehensive crisis response, humanitarian response seeks to address the immediate needs of populations affected by crisis: save lives, alleviate human suffering, and protect human dignity.
- 2 IOM's commitment to localization more broadly – i.e., beyond the humanitarian localization agenda – is reflected in the organization's endorsement of the OECD DAC Recommendation on Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN) as well as its support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, and the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

## PURPOSE OF THE LOCALIZATION FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE NOTE

The overall aim of this framework and guidance note is to support IOM HQ departments, regional offices (ROs), and country offices (COs) with the operationalization of localization commitments in humanitarian response efforts by building on existing projects, initiatives, institutional tools, guidelines, and policies.

The **framework section** outlines IOM's strategic approach to localization through five main pillars of engagement and partnership with LNAs. This is based on IOM's comparative advantages, strengths, and operational footprint in humanitarian action. It elaborates on how IOM can position itself on this global trend and how it can contribute to the localization agenda through these pillars.

This is followed by a **guidance section** that sets out recommendations, practical examples, existing policies, procedures, tools, and initiatives that could systematically enable IOM to realize its localization commitments. The document was developed through extensive consultations with IOM ROs, COs, HQ departments, and local actors that partner with IOM COs. It provides actionable guidance for COs to capitalize on IOM's comparative advantages, learning from best practices identified across other countries and field offices.

This document acknowledges that approaches to localization should be considered according to the local dynamics and contexts. Localization is about making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary, mindful of the need for conflict sensitive, conflict-informed, and do-no-harm approaches, as well as the indispensable role of international actors when present on the ground in large-scale crises.

This document is also supported by several annexes with more context and background information:

- **Annex A** outlines the findings and learnings from the consultations that led to the development of the recommendations. It provides an overview of IOM's localization activities to date, including notable successes and lessons learned, which are presented according to the Localization Framework's pillars. This annex also provides background to the recommendations in the framework and provides a richer overview of IOM's engagement with localization to date.
- **Annex B** presents institutional recommendations / advocacy points.
- **Annex C** provides an overview of the consultancy process for the development of the Localization Framework and Guidance Note.



Below are other existing internal documents and resources related to localization:

- Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance
- Global Shelter Cluster SOPs for Engaging Diaspora in the Shelter Assistance
- IOM's Diaspora Mapping Toolkit
- Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Framework
- Guidelines on Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Planning
- Integrating Migration into Urban Development Interventions: A Toolkit for International Cooperation and Development Actors
- Institutional Guidance on Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN)
- IOM's Participation in Practice: Community Based Planning Manual for Partners and forthcoming adaptation of the tool to urban contexts (MSD-TRD-Shelter ongoing MIRAC project)
- Implementing Partner Management Handbook IN 288
- IOM's Strengthening Engagement with Local Actors Toolkit
- My JMDI Toolbox on Migration and Local Development



## WHAT IS LOCALIZATION?

In the humanitarian arena, localization is defined as greater support for the leadership, response, and institutional capacities of local responders with the ultimate aim of promoting locally led responses and participation of affected communities. In practice, this means:<sup>3</sup>

**Working together with Local and National Actors (LNAs)** in equitable and meaningful partnerships, through establishing memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and partnership agreements.

**Support to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities** of LNAs.

**Strengthening systematic participation of LNAs** throughout the IOM project cycle (in particular, in the conceptualization and program design phases) and throughout the overall Humanitarian Programme Cycle.

**Ensuring greater presence, leadership, and active participation of LNAs** in coordination mechanisms where IOM is the cluster/sector/working group lead agency.

**Greater recognition and visibility of LNAs** in IOM's humanitarian assistance and protection efforts.

Localization is a central element of both the Grand Bargain and of the ongoing work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). In line with the Grand Bargain definition,<sup>4</sup> the IASC Strategic Work Plan for 2022-2024 defines localization as “enabling the meaningful engagement and leadership of local and national actors (with a special focus on women-led organisations), enhancing capacity exchange, and increasing direct funding.”

At its core, localization refers to meaningful and equitable partnerships aiming to support LNAs and communities to take a leading role in humanitarian action. This approach recognizes that local actors have unique knowledge, skills, and perspectives that

are essential to delivering effective and sustainable humanitarian assistance and protection. By supporting local actors and institutions, IOM seeks to ensure that its response is tailored to the specific needs of the people and communities it serves, and that scarce resources are used in a timely and cost-effective manner. Further, by strengthening national and local systems and capacities, IOM aims to ensure that its humanitarian interventions are linked to longer-term sustainable development processes to achieve resilience and economic growth in countries in crisis.

- 3 Localization also has different meanings depending on the context. For example, in the context of international development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “Localizing development means taking into account subnational contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda [...] It is also putting the territories and their peoples' priorities, needs and resources at the center of sustainable development.” This definition specifically targets subnational (as opposed to both national and sub-national) levels. IOM, as an agency supporting both development and humanitarian work and frameworks, applies different definitions depending on the context and situation.
- 4 Localization is a sub-objective of the overall Strategic Objective under Grand Bargain 3.0 to achieve better humanitarian outcomes for affected populations through enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, greater accountability, and strengthened partnerships, in the spirit of quid pro quo.

## WHO ARE THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS?

According to the Grand Bargain and IASC definitions, Local and National Actors (LNAs) relevant to the humanitarian localization agenda fall under two sub-categories:

- 1. Local and national non-state actors:** Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), women's rights organizations and women-led organizations (WROs/WLOs) engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country, and that are not affiliated with an international NGO.
- 2. National and sub-national state actors:** State authorities of the crisis-affected and aid recipient country engaged in relief, whether at local or national level.

As per the IASC guidelines,<sup>5</sup> this term may also pertain to other actors according to context, such as national and local authorities, local private sector, and development-focused organizations that may not define themselves as humanitarian actors *per se* but who may be contributing to humanitarian efforts due to their location and/or community connections. Below is a non-exhaustive list of other possible LNAs:<sup>6</sup>

- Grassroots groups, community-based organizations, and informal associations
- Cooperatives, livelihoods groups, professional associations, and trade unions
- Faith communities and religious institutions
- Private sector
- Journalists and media organizations
- Schools and universities
- Traditional and customary authorities
- Individuals; social networks based on geography, identity, religion, or politics; volunteer groups
- Diaspora Communities and actors

<sup>5</sup> See: [IASC Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms](#).

<sup>6</sup> IOM has also used terminology like "local and regional governments" (LRGs), "local and regional authorities" (LRAs) and "local actors," in addition to the terminology of "local and national actors" (LNAs) used here in the context of the Grand Bargain and humanitarian interventions. Refer to the IOM internal Toolkit on Strengthening Engagement with Local Actors for more information on IOM's work with various local actors across the HDPN.





## LOCALIZATION AND THE DONOR COMMUNITY

Localization is one of the top agenda items for Grand Bargain signatories and donors. An increasing number of donors and funding mechanisms – including USAID, DG ECHO, and Country-Based Pooled Funds – made commitments on the localization agenda by investing more flexibly in locally-led initiatives and supporting the institutional and response capacities of the LNAs.

*Transfer of funds (through intermediaries such as IOM), institutional and technical capacity development & mentorship, and sharing overhead costs with LNAs* are some of the top priority areas for donors. IOM can play an important role as an intermediary to partner with the donor community and realize localization commitments by transferring funds and know-how and providing mentorship to LNAs in a wide range of emergency contexts. As a projectized organization, it is important that IOM COs are aware of donor priorities and strategic objectives, some of which are outlined below.

## Country-Based Pooled Funds



CBPFs are seen as central to localization efforts in the countries where they operate, frequently acting as the main vehicle through which international donors can support local and national actors to participate in a humanitarian response. Over the years, CBPFs have progressively increased financial support to LNAs, with a total of 36 percent of all funding allocated in 2022. Important strides have also been taken in promoting LNA leadership in fund governance and in supporting the development of LNA capacities to engage with CBPFs for successful partnership. Donors continue to see CBPF localization efforts as offering real value and a way for them to meet their own localization commitments. The recently updated Global Guidelines reflect the consensus across all stakeholders regarding the importance of the CBPFs vis à vis localization, enshrining localization as a secondary aim alongside the primary purpose of saving lives.

Please refer to [Enhancing Localization through CBPFs](#)

## DG ECHO



Localization has been identified as a priority for DG ECHO in 5 main areas: (1) recognizing the value, resources, and skills of LNAs, and supporting (institutional) capacities; (2) establishing more equitable partnerships; (3) ensuring the participation of LNAs throughout the humanitarian response cycle; (4) strengthening the participation and leadership of LNAs in humanitarian coordination; and (5) facilitating access to localized financing models.

Please refer to [ECHO Localization Guidance Note](#)

## USAID



USAID focuses on four key strategies: (1) customizing policies and programs to foster locally driven development, considering each country's unique context and incorporating capacity strengthening efforts; (2) shifting power to and promoting space for local actors, including marginalized groups, to influence priorities and the design, implementation, and evaluation of outcomes; (3) directing more funding to local partners while ensuring accountability for fund use and achieving development and humanitarian results; and (4) acting as a global advocate, utilizing convening power and developing diplomacy tools to catalyze a broader shift toward locally led development.

Please refer to [USAID Localization](#)

## Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)



Localization is also one of the key strategic objectives of the CERF, managed by Emergency Relief Coordinator. Although CERF can only directly fund UN agencies, it still plays an important role in enabling humanitarian action by non-UN humanitarian organizations, including LNAs. Under the leadership of the RC/HCs, CERF allocation strategies are jointly developed by UN agencies and NGOs through their participation in Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and cluster/sector structures. CERF funding is implemented through partnerships between UN agencies and NGOs, host governments, and Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, which supports localized response and expands its reach ([CERF 2022 Annual Report](#)).

Please refer to <https://cerf.un.org/>



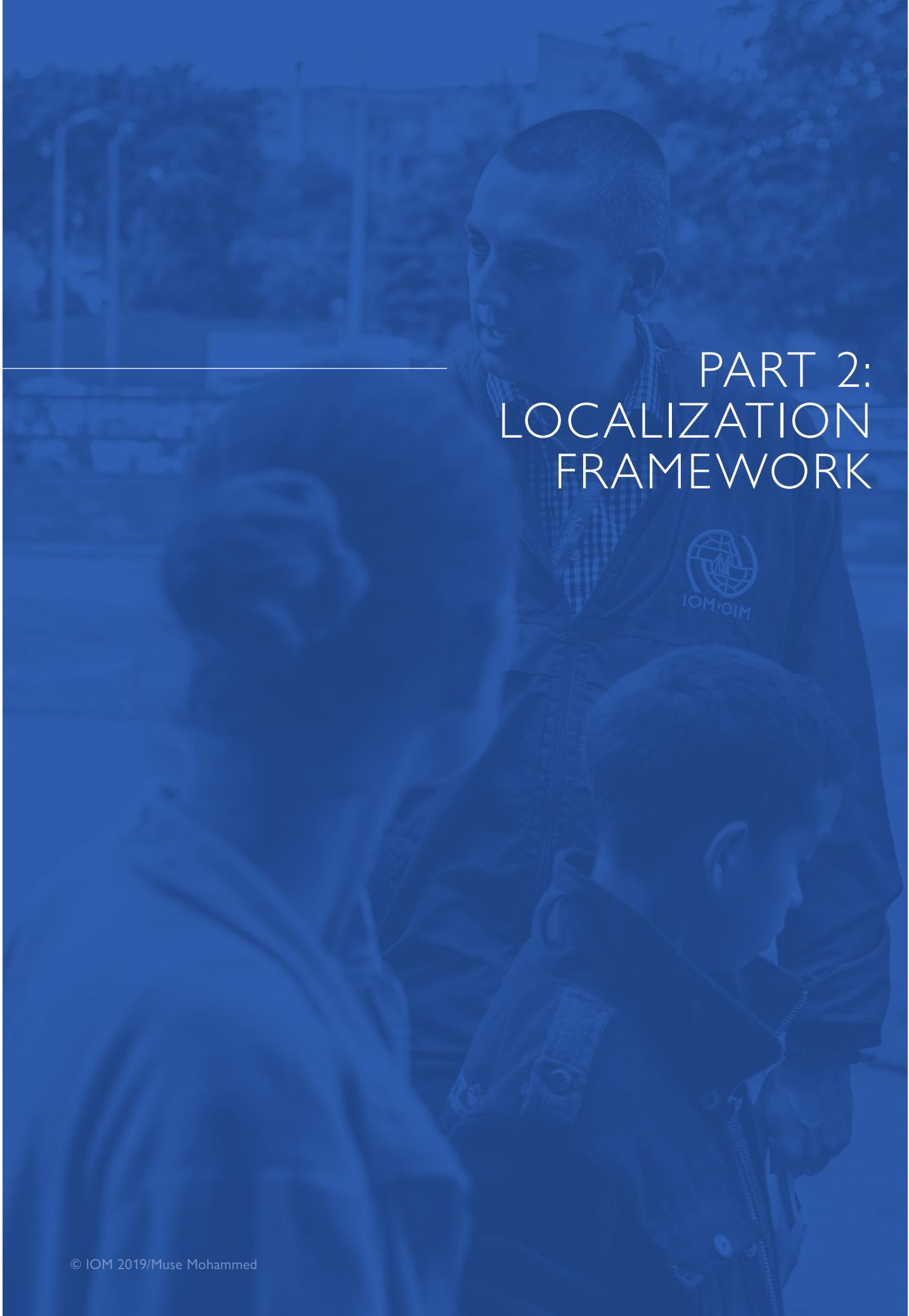
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## DIASPORA AND LOCALIZATION

Although typically thought of as international actors, many diaspora organizations contribute to humanitarian responses as LNAs in their countries of origin or heritage by working directly in the community through locally based offices or directly with community groups, CSOs, and local authorities, thus playing a critical role in the localization agenda. In many instances, diaspora organizations are operating on-the-ground responses directly (e.g. health care, education, and more), in the same way local NGOs/CSOs would.

Their strong connections to their countries of origin facilitate their communication with and support of local communities, allowing them to be first responders often active before, during, and after crises. As humanitarian actors, diasporas can bridge the disconnect between local and international responses.

For example, their ability to fundraise and mobilize resources quickly can sustain the work of local organizations, leading to a potential expansion of greater localized humanitarian actions. Diasporas are members of transnational communities and often have access to global perspectives, knowledge, and experiences they can transfer to communities in their countries of origin, thereby opening alternative pathways to strengthen local efforts, capacity, and resilience during emerging and protracted crises. They can help local organizations navigate the complex humanitarian system, connecting them to key actors, and providing tools for sustained engagement and effective coordination. Diaspora organizations can also promote the inclusion of marginalized groups through their understanding of local cultures or connection to underrepresented communities (e.g. third country nationals or migrants in countries in crisis). Moreover, they can connect with private donors in their countries of residence and advocate for causes and initiatives of interest to the private sector. Therefore, traditional humanitarian actors should capitalize on the links between diasporas and communities in their homeland to successfully shift to more localized implementation of relief efforts.



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## PART 2: LOCALIZATION FRAMEWORK

IOM is well-known for its strong field presence across a wide range of humanitarian settings and direct implementation or service delivery.<sup>7</sup>

This places IOM in a unique position when it comes to localization as a concept and in practice. Consultations conducted with COs and ROs have shown that localization presents an invaluable opportunity for the organization to effect changes related to the mobility dimensions of crises, considering its part in this global agenda through strong engagement and partnership with LNAs in its humanitarian programming. In many cases, IOM's long-term engagement with local actors prior to the onset of a crisis has allowed for quick mobilization when emergencies occur.

Based on IOM's comparative advantages, strengths, and operational footprint in humanitarian action, the following five pillars set the basis of the organization's Localization Framework:

- Partnerships & Funding
- Capacity Strengthening & Mentorship
- Participation
- Coordination
- Visibility & Advocacy

These pillars, developed in line with inter-agency priorities, represent the core axes that IOM should strengthen to promote equitable and meaningful engagement with LNAs.



<sup>7</sup> Outside of humanitarian settings - which do not lend themselves to institutional capacity strengthening or policy work with governments for reasons outlined in the section *Why localization in humanitarian response?* - IOM is often well placed to contribute to national policies, whether in relation to internal displacement or migration.

## PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDING

This pillar refers to the establishment of equal and meaningful partnerships with LNAs through signed MoUs or partnership agreements to deliver timely, rapid, and relevant humanitarian assistance and protection.



### Key Messages

- LNAs are present before, during, and after a crisis, acting as first line responders in emergencies, with greater access to locations – they offer IOM rapid response and/or scale up capacities.
- Following sudden onset emergencies, LNAs with their well-established networks, local knowledge, and response capacities can contribute to IOM's humanitarian efforts significantly.
- IOM can play a crucial role as an intermediary to transfer funds to LNAs, especially to newly established or women-led/women's rights organizations.
- IOM may also provide institutional capacity strengthening and mentorship activities. An example of this is the Rapid Response Fund in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Sudan (further details outlined in the [Case Studies](#) section).
- IOM can partner with diaspora actors and LNAs and expand partnerships beyond traditional actors for increased sustainability, diversity of expertise, and more.
- Localization is more than contracting LNAs as implementing partners (IPs). It is a complex process that involves systematically and strategically partnering with LNAs, supporting their institutional or technical capacities, and enhancing their leadership roles within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) in addition to the provision of quality funding and partnership arrangements.
- Sharing overhead/program support costs with LNAs: Overhead costs are a vital source for LNAs to invest in their institutional capacities, and IOM has internal instruction allowing COs to share overhead costs (IN/288 IP Management Handbook in IOM).
- Diaspora actors can act as a main source of funding for local organizations but can also benefit from direct funding to increase their capacity and scale-up their interventions, thus benefiting affected communities and local actors.
- Equitable risk sharing and management: Share programmatic, operational, and other risks with LNAs, especially the ones working in high-risk environments. Conduct risk assessments regularly and develop risk management/treatment plans together with the LNA.
- Utilize the [UN Partnership Portal](#) to simplify the due diligence process, partner selection, and partner engagement.
- IOM manages common pipelines across 11 countries where multisectoral emergency supplies are procured, stored, and handed over to the partners for timely, coordinated, and needs-based humanitarian assistance. Common pipelines, especially when used together with Rapid Response Fund (RRF), can act as instrumental tool for engaging LNAs and empower local actors, response, and coordination efforts by providing humanitarian relief items to local and national actors.

## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING & MENTORSHIP

Supporting long-term institutional and technical response capacities of local actors through mentoring and coaching is another important aspect of the localization agenda. This requires a collaborative approach based on covering the specific needs of LNAs, avoiding top-down or generic capacity building approaches. The term

"institutional capacity" refers to governance, core management functions, financial management, and administrative-human resources functions that contribute to LNAs' ability to deliver humanitarian aid in an effective and accountable manner.



### Key Messages

- There is strong donor interest in supporting the institutional capacities of LNAs, especially newly established NGOs and CSOs. IOM, as a projectized organization, can play a crucial role by developing projects that focus on strengthening institutional and technical capacities of LNAs.
- Country offices can invest in establishing a dedicated team to build stronger relationships and regularly engage with LNAs.
- Institutional capacity strengthening and mentorship can take on creative and innovative forms through the development of specific projects or initiatives. These could include seconding staff members or experts (HR, accounting, finance) to LNAs, on-the-job training, and support to LNAs on Program Support Unit functions (proposal writing, reporting, budgeting, etc.). Examples are available from the [Ethiopia RRF](#) or Syria Cross Border programs.
- Explicitly reference institutional capacity strengthening in proposals, budgets, and communications with donors and, if possible, charge it across all budget lines.
- If possible, seek partnership on institutional capacity strengthening with the private sector (auditing, consulting firms, etc.) or in-country NGO coordination mechanisms (e.g. NGO forums).
- Diasporas can also propel localization by boosting capacities and strengthening the skills of community-based organizations in their countries of origin, eventually shifting more leadership to local actors and institutions.
- Capacity strengthening of diaspora and knowledge gained can be disseminated throughout their transnational networks, reaching new audiences in their countries of origin and residence.

## PARTICIPATION

This pillar refers to enhancing the systematic participation of LNAs and affected populations in IOM's program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities as well as advocating for their greater role in the overall HPC.



### Key Messages

- Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) plays a crucial role in supporting effective localization by promoting local participation as a fundamental pillar of accountable action, especially through the involvement of affected communities in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of IOM's work.
- Likewise, localization strengthens the application of AAP, fostering the participation of LNAs and affected populations. The two interlinked concepts create a strong foundation for LNA participation in coordination structures, program implementation, and decision-making spaces on equal footing with international actors and other stakeholders.
- LNAs' understanding of AAP standards must be aligned with IOM, especially respecting the principles of do-no-harm, non-discrimination, and inclusivity. This can be achieved by ensuring technical capacities are strengthened and tools are available for participatory activities and Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs).
- LNAs' expertise in identifying local risks, challenges, capacities, and solutions, while enabling meaningful participation with communities, makes them essential partners and agents in facilitating sustainable durable solutions.
- Develop systems and tools to enable regular and open dialogue with LNAs throughout the program/project implementation cycle or partnership agreement timeframes, including leveraging existing coordination mechanisms at the national and/or sub-national levels such as a government-led National Working Group on Migration or similar.
- Systematic involvement of LNAs in decision making and program implementation allows IOM to understand the needs and perspectives of affected people, leading to more effective interventions. Genuine representation relies on LNAs who are trusted by and truly represent the communities they serve. This can be achieved through systematic implementation of AAP mechanisms such as community consultations and CFMs that engage the community in identifying, selecting, and keeping LNAs accountable. By fostering participation, representation, and accountability, IOM builds trust with and promotes space for LNAs and affected populations to actively address their challenges and those of the broader communities.

## Key Messages

- Engaging LNAs in an equitable conversation around programming and partnership allows IOM to learn from LNAs and fosters partnerships that are mutually beneficial.
- Engaging LNAs in IOM risk assessment mechanisms (e.g. risk identification at project design stage, risk assessment at CO level) can also contribute to more equitable risk-sharing between donors, IOM, and local partners, and to heighten awareness of the resources needed to implement risk mitigation actions for the achievement of common humanitarian objectives.
- IOM's DTM activities present a great opportunity to enhance LNA participation in both the overall HPC (multisectoral needs assessments, HNOs, HRPs, or response plans) and IOM's crises response activities.
- Depending on the context, conflict sensitivities, and operational data needs, DTM data can be collected from key informants, who are themselves local actors, such as mayors, district-level authorities, or other actors with credible and verifiable data on the area and populations targeted.
- Similarly, where feasible and when the conditions of engagement with authorities permit, efforts should be considered to strengthen national data collection, analysis, and information management capacities to facilitate the inclusion of crisis-affected populations into national systems and promote sustainability.
- It is necessary to emphasize that partnership goes beyond consulting and informing LNAs and requires true co-design, co-implementation, and co-evaluation. Where timelines allow, engaging with LNAs when it comes to planning interventions and projects (such as through the community-based planning approach) allows for locally driven solutions adapted to the community's particular needs. IOM's [Participation in Practice: Community Based Planning Manual](#) document highlights practical tools and examples.
- If relevant, ensure that participation is accessible to diaspora LNAs, but note that diaspora are not replacements for certain local actors but can be a bridge and resource. Lean on the diaspora added value when serving hard-to-reach communities.

## COORDINATION

This pillar refers to greater presence, leadership, and participation of the LNAs in humanitarian coordination mechanisms (clusters, sectors, or working groups). IOM can actively promote the presence, participation, and leadership of LNAs, especially in IOM-led cluster/sector/working group mechanisms. Please refer to IASC guidance on [Localization in Coordination](#).

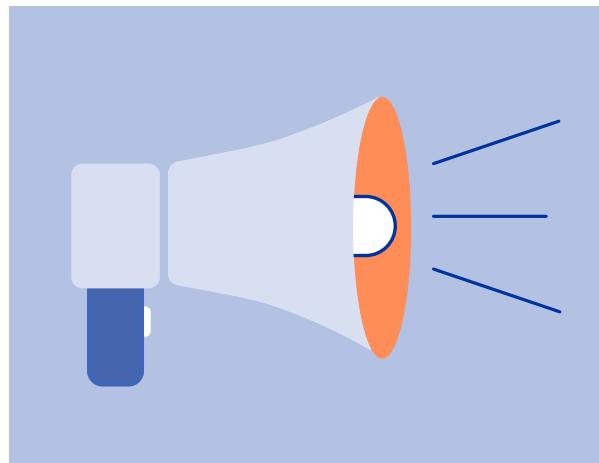


### Key Messages

- Encourage and support LNAs' active participation in cluster meetings, Strategic Advisory Groups (SAG), HPC processes, and Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT)/HCT forums.
- Actively advocate to donors for quality and direct funding opportunities for LNAs.
- Demonstrate best practices in identifying, mentoring, and advocating for leadership and funding sources for LNAs.
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms between humanitarian organizations and the government to ensure a comprehensive and effective response to the crisis.
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms between humanitarian and development actors, including national and sub-national coordination, to bring together actors with wide-ranging expertise on the context and who are representative of different segments of the population. This will facilitate greater collaboration and enable an easier transition from emergency to transition and development work.
- Promote the application of IOM's Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance to streamline coordination among diasporas, other LNAs, and institutional humanitarian actors at any stage of assistance — preparedness, response, and recovery.

## VISIBILITY & ADVOCACY

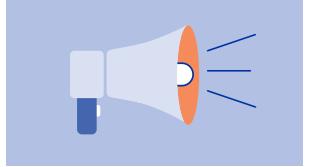
This pillar refers to recognizing the vital role and visibility of the LNAs, particularly WROs, WLOs, and CSOs, in IOM's humanitarian work. This can be achieved through the following.



### Key Messages

- Systematically highlight IOM's partnership with LNAs in all strategic planning documents: project proposals, external sitreps, flash appeals, and crisis response plans and emphasize the added value of LNAs in humanitarian programming. Stronger IOM internal reporting systems that systematically disaggregate IOM's work and partnerships with LNAs would more easily facilitate this.
- Actively communicate and advocate to donors and the broader humanitarian community on the added value of LNAs, emphasizing their role as first line responders in the onset of emergencies, with greater access to remote and hard-to-reach locations and an in-depth understanding of local contexts.
- Create public information and/or media and communications plans to ensure LNAs are systematically recognized, credited, and promoted throughout the program implementation cycle.
- Public information or media and communications products such as infographics, videos, newsletters, human interest stories, and social media updates should regularly showcase IOM's good practices regarding localization initiatives and, where possible, be co-created with and/ or validated by LNAs, especially regarding sensitive or protection-related concerns and human stories.
- If relevant include LNAs like diaspora organizations in the development of communications campaigns to ensure both the content and method of delivery are relevant to target communities.
- Leverage diaspora networks for awareness-raising efforts. Diaspora organizations are highly successful at disseminating information to local actors, including disaster risk reduction and preparedness resources. [IOM's Safer Shelters project](#) exemplified the kinds of impacts diaspora organizations can have in raising visibility of relevant IEC materials.
- Empower LNAs and encourage further engagement with IOM by demonstrating LNAs' impact through storytelling initiatives and public information products. A [2021 joint campaign](#) between IOM and Meta's Data for Good unit highlighted the wide-reaching engagement that can be obtained through the use of LNA testimonials.

## Humanitarian Response (Crisis Response and Preparedness)

CCCM	CBI	DTM	WASH	Shelter & Settlements	Health	Protection	TRD	Cross cutting themes and support functions
								AAP+PSEA+ Cross Cutting Themes
<b>Partnerships/Funding</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable and meaningful partnerships (move beyond sub-contracting or IP approaches)</li> <li>• Increased implementation through partnerships with LNAs</li> <li>• Equitable risk sharing and accountability</li> <li>• Increased quality funding: multi-year and covering overhead costs</li> </ul>	<b>Capacity/Mentorship</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in institutional capacity strengthening</li> <li>• Technical capacity strengthening: collaborative approach through mentoring and coaching</li> <li>• Inclusion of capacity strengthening as part of preparedness planning and risk treatment/management plan</li> </ul>	<b>Participation</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced systematic participation of local partners/affected populations in IOM's programme design and implementation phases</li> <li>• Increased emphasis on joint IOM and LNA approaches to AAP</li> </ul>	<b>Coordination</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater presence and participation of LNAs in coordination mechanism</li> <li>• Inclusion of LNAs in SAGs, Cluster co-Leadership, HPC, and other coordination structures</li> </ul>	<b>Visibility/Advocacy</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater recognition of LNAs, especially WLOs, WROs, and CSOs, and their role in humanitarian action</li> <li>• Promotion of good practices on localization</li> <li>• Leverage LNA networks for awareness-raising efforts and transfer of technical knowledge to local actors</li> </ul>				

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## PART 3: GUIDANCE NOTE ON LOCALIZATION IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The consultation process highlighted many recommendations and innovative approaches to localization from a wide range of IOM emergency operations. These inputs are outlined below under the five pillars as a guidance tool to facilitate the

implementation of the Localization Framework. It sets out practical examples, existing policies, procedures, tools, and initiatives that could systematically enable IOM to realize its localization commitments.

## PARTNERSHIP & FUNDING<sup>13</sup>

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### Recommendations

#### **Conduct a robust mapping of LNAs.**

- Invest time in mapping potential partners, including diaspora, and building relationships based on trust, equality, and complementarity.
- Examples of good practice include making courtesy visits to LNAs, ensuring an open-door policy for partners to visit IOM offices, and engaging in a formal mapping activity, including face-to-face meetings where possible.
- When meeting and identifying new partners, consider approaches that focus on strengthening existing capacities and complementing or expanding local response capacities, rather than replacing or replicating them.
- Inter-agency coordination structures (such as clusters, sectors, or working groups) are good entry points to identify new partners.
- Consult with cluster/sector coordinators and other partners (UN agencies or INGOs) about their experience of working with LNAs. Carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of working with the same LNAs as other UN agencies.
- The United Nations Partnership Portal (UNPP) is a great entry point for establishing successful partnerships, as well as a venue for best practices in partnership management, to support the harmonization and simplification of business processes. IOM is a member of UNPP. Use it!
- Avoid using top-down approaches as they do not allow for deeper and successful partnerships. Where existing and with the relevant capacities,

partnerships with LNAs should be prioritized over using contractors or service providers.

- Design activities together and establish communication channels for LNAs to provide open and frank feedback (regular meetings, visits, etc.).
- IOM internal systems and procedures could be highly bureaucratic and heavy for LNAs, especially for newly established, small-scale NGOs. Make sure partnership expectations are clear from the beginning (compliance, due diligence, reporting, project timelines, budget expenditure rates, etc.). Guide LNAs through the process as needed and cater to all institutional capacity needs in proposals and budget accordingly.
- Relying only on the quantity of partnerships (e.g. # of partnerships established) with LNAs does not capture the multidimensional objectives of localization. Indicators should be developed to capture the quality of partnerships with LNAs (e.g. % of indirect costs shared with LNAs, # of consultations held with LNAs to design activities, etc.).

#### **Undertake value for money assessments when working with LNAs.**

- Conduct internal discussions to evaluate the benefits and risks of establishing partnerships and implementing through LNAs. LNAs have repeatedly been noted as returning significant value for money, compared to the costs of working with an INGO partner.

<sup>13</sup> Partnerships and Funding: (1) Equal and meaningful partnerships (not only subcontractor or IPs approach); (2) Direct vs. Indirect Implementation; (3) Equal risk sharing & accountability; (4) Increased quality funding: multi-year and covering overhead costs.

- Consider the benefits of partnering with LNAs for their role in elevating community voices in the design and implementation of projects, in line with IOM's AAP commitments.
- LNAs have extensive local networks and access to remote and hard-to-reach areas; utilizing existing capacities and connections could offer quick scale up and additional response capacity to IOM emergency responses. This should be weighed against the benefits and limitations of direct implementation.
- Working with LNAs, especially developing new partnerships, is time-intensive and requires relationship building. Identify full-time dedicated staff, or at least a focal point in the existing staff structure, in COs to facilitate the localization agenda.
- Additionally, ensure presence of dedicated staff at each RO to focus on localization and partnerships, effectively manage all localization pillars, and provide necessary support to COs.

#### **Ensure diversity of LNAs.**

- Diversification of partners is important to ensure that IOM is not perceived as aligning with specific groups and demographics, especially in a conflict situation.
- Partner with diaspora actors and LNAs and expand partnerships beyond traditional actors for increased sustainability, diversity of expertise, and more.
- Engage with affected people through AAP mechanisms to ensure different groups from the population can contribute to the identification of LNAs who represent them.
- IOM should consciously reach out to organizations working with underrepresented groups – such as women-led, women rights, LGBTIQ+ organizations, and organizations of persons with disabilities – to ensure an inclusive response and avoid bias towards certain communities, tribes, ethnicities, or political groups.

#### **Equitable risk sharing.**

- Share programmatic and operational risks with LNAs, especially those working in high-risk environments.
- Conduct risks assessments regularly and develop risk management/treatment plans with LNAs, ensuring that the costs of mitigative actions are budgeted for, with a view to reducing the financial burden on LNAs.
- This also involves raising donors' awareness of the risks faced by LNAs in humanitarian contexts, advocating for resources and flexibility, and shifting from a “risk-transfer” to a “risk-sharing” mindset.
- Perform due diligence assessments of potential LNAs, including diaspora actors, to inform risk mitigation strategies.

#### **Invest in preparedness through LNAs.**

- Investing in preparedness through LNA partnerships can provide rapid and cost-effective responses to shocks.
- Foster relationships and partnerships with LNAs during peacetime and in longer-term development programming.
- Consider creating a roster/pool of pre-approved LNAs (where partnership agreements are already signed) who could respond in the case of a rapid onset of a disaster. This will reduce the time taken to contract new partners during an emergency.
- Ensure that these LNAs are collaborators in designing the preparedness and response strategy.
- Develop strategies for diaspora engagement as a preparedness activity to equip both diaspora and other actors for humanitarian action before but also during crises.
- Diaspora are consistent actors often engaged in preparedness activities that can be scaled-up or benefit from capacity strengthening (e.g. trainings), thus contributing to risk mitigation and community resilience.



**Ensure that LNAs are appropriately financed to sustain their institutional capacities (governance, administration, etc.) through resource mobilization and sharing of overhead costs.**

- Refer to IN/288 for guidance on pre-financing and sharing indirect costs with LNAs; all COs should ensure that these guidelines are well known by the RMOs, compliance, program, and partnerships teams.
- Avail localization funds to diaspora organizations, expending outreach efforts and/or applicant criterion as necessary.
- Using the risk assessment matrix approach to understand risk level and calculating pre-financing requirements provides an opportunity for IOM to create more equal partnerships with LNAs.
- Establish and invest in robust support structures for effective grants compliance, engagement strategies, and timely contracting and payments to facilitate partnership approaches.

**Identify and promote consortia that expand the involvement of LNAs.**

- Identifying existing consortia/coalitions that promote the role of LNAs can be a key entry point to financing more equitable partnerships and promoting the expertise of local actors. Some cities or communities already have their own coordination structures, and some countries have coordination mechanisms that involve national and sub-national actors for vertical coordination.
- Where no existing consortia or coalitions exist, IOM should consider encouraging existing consortia to equitably engage with LNAs or to form new consortia or coalitions.
- Identify or reach out to diaspora umbrella, regional, and global networks (e.g. iDiaspora, the Global Diaspora Confederation) as reference points and/or consider reaching out to country offices in diaspora countries of residence.

### Checklist

- Conduct a robust mapping of LNAs (including diaspora), including information on which thematic areas and geographic locations they operate in, how are they internally organized, etc.
- Cluster, sector, or working group meetings and 4Ws are good entry points to identify potential partners.
- Hold “meet and greet” IOM induction sessions with LNAs and explain IOM’s role in emergency response and preparedness programming.
- Make use of IOM’s different roles as a partner, intermediary, cluster lead agency, etc. to proactively pursue multiple avenues to identify prospective partners.
- Define country-level objectives/targets for localization in consultation with various program units, such as partnership with LNAs or supporting LNAs’ leadership in inter-agency coordination mechanisms, among others.
- Identify a localization focal point and/or dedicated staff member for localization efforts at CO level.
- Utilize UNPP to establish partnerships with local NGOs.
- Undertake a partnership assessment of LNAs to identify those who are ready to respond immediately and those who may require capacity strengthening. This assessment should provide recommendations for relevant capacity strengthening activities.
- Refer to the IOM [IP Manual](#).
- Undertake value for money assessments of LNAs to be reviewed alongside AAP considerations and other less tangible elements of partnership with LNAs.
- Share overhead costs, since IOM has an internal policy on sharing overhead costs with all its partners, including LNAs (up to 7%).
- Ensure LNAs are aware of IOM internal guidance on sharing overhead costs and are encouraged to claim it.
- Ensure that guidance on pre-financing, simplified narrative reporting, and sharing of indirect costs are available to LNAs.
- Partner with a diverse range of LNAs, including underserved or underrepresented groups.
- Check IOM flagship initiatives such as the [Rapid Response Fund](#), Women’s Participation Project, A.MI.CO Project, [Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance](#) COVID-19 relief and recovery diaspora sub-granting, and [A Model for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Contexts at Country Level: Engagement of the Ukrainian diaspora organizations – Italian Case Study](#).

## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING<sup>14</sup> & MENTORSHIP

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### Recommendations

**Adopt creative approaches to institutional capacity strengthening and mentorship.**

- Dedicate specific teams or full-time staff for capacity strengthening and mentorship.
- Develop specific programs on localization and support to the humanitarian community, similarly to how this is done in IOM COs in development contexts.
- Second IOM staff to LNAs. This could be a few days a week or on a full-time basis.
- Promote a one team approach with partner organizations.
- Consider partnerships with private sector actors, such as consulting firms or legal entities who could provide institutional capacity development.
- Consider different types of funding (seed funding for small-scale capacity strengthening and larger funding for scaling-up initiatives).

**Develop curricula for capacity strengthening & mentoring activities tailored to LNAs' needs.**

- Carry out a consultation or organizational capacity assessment to identify key gaps among potential LNAs rather than using a “cookie cutter” approach or designing training curriculum based on top-down priorities.
- Develop country/context-specific training materials and tools to enable national or sub-national partners to take forward the work more independently and sustainably and become equal partners.
- Examples of tools created specifically to bolster the skills and abilities of LNAs on migration issues:
  - › Philippines Local Government Unit (LGU) Guide on Mainstreaming International Migration and Development in Local Development Planning and Governance.

› Toolkit: Integrating the Link Between Migration, Environment, and Climate Change in Local Planning in Burkina Faso.

- Co-design an exit plan with LNAs following any partnership and capacity strengthening activities. The exit plan should focus on ensuring a reasonable hand-over period and focus on building LNA ownership.

**Conduct a learning assessment of all LNA partners.**

- Work together with LNAs to identify their key institutional and technical priorities for learning.
- Do not assume that all LNAs have limited capacity, and continually assess their development. Consider how IOM can learn from partners.
- Develop quality control tools and processes to enhance monitoring capabilities and to provide more effective technical support.
- Where possible, create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, where LNAs can learn from one another and share experiences.

**Provide guidance and training on IOM due diligence and compliance processes.**

- Work with diaspora actors to provide capacity exchange to local actors or provide capacity strengthening directly to the diaspora for their own implementation and dissemination through their networks. Such training can help smaller organizations understand what they need to do to qualify for funding.
- Frame due diligence as a capacity strengthening activity rather than just an administrative process. It could be framed as a capacity strengthening activity aimed at enhancing the chances of achieving project objectives through the effective management of identified risks, rather than an administrative process. This training should be adapted to LNA language requirements and provided in an accessible location.

<sup>14</sup> Capacity Strengthening: (1) Providing more support for long term institutional capacity strengthening; (2) Promoting technical capacity strengthening; Not top-down but collaborative approaches through mentoring and coaching; (3) Including capacity strengthening as part of preparedness planning.

- Offer constructive feedback to potential yet unsuccessful candidates to better equip them for future Calls for Proposals.
- Hold Q&A sessions for Calls for Proposals to strengthen proposals and provide live capacity strengthening.
- Consider hiring M&E consultants to help review and strengthen local partners' capacities.

**Conduct physical visits to offices and project sites to work together across all aspects of project management.**

- When contextually appropriate, conduct joint community consultations and monitoring visits to learn from LNAs about the local context and challenges. This “hands-on” approach can also further support the positioning of LNAs as trusted partners of the community and IOM.
- Multiple local partners have highlighted that physical visits and mentorship from IOM staff have been key to developing their processes and systems.

**Strengthen the capacity of local authorities.**

- As per IASC guidance, whenever possible, local or state governments should be the lead on all response and preparedness activities.
- When a gap is identified in government capacity, whether institutional or thematic, IOM should focus on strengthening government capacity rather than providing parallel services.
- IOM should also play a role in supporting national and sub-national governments to coordinate jointly and thereby develop processes, projects, and frameworks together so that national decisions reflect local/sub-national realities and priorities.

**Explicitly reference institutional capacity strengthening in proposals, budgets, and communications with donors.**

- Ensure that all emergency programming proposals and budgets include budget lines for capacity strengthening for LNAs.
- Link capacity strengthening to risk mitigation and value creation, emphasizing how the pursuit of common humanitarian objectives requires donors,

IOM, and partners to share risks and to share the costs associated with bearing those risks.

- Advocate with donors to standardize the incorporation of institutional capacity strengthening for LNAs.

**Invest in refresher trainings and training follow-ups.**

- Capacity strengthening is a process, not an event. IOM should consider investing in regular sessions as opposed to one-off trainings. As above, training sessions complemented with direct mentorship or support while LNAs apply what they learn is also a good practice.
- Refresher sessions can ensure capacity is truly embedded within LNAs and not dependent on specific staff members remaining within the LNA team.

**Set up a fund specifically for capacity strengthening/mentoring, running separately from project-based funding, to allow for deeper engagement with LNAs.**

- To overcome the challenge of short funding cycles, COs are encouraged to engage with donors to create a fund or projects that could be used for capacity strengthening activities, independent of project activities.
- Combining humanitarian and development funds is another option, as is exploring funds that can be used for any context across the HDPN. For instance, countries and cities benefiting from the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund and IOM COs are often the ones implementing, especially the support, capacity development, and policy aspects of these projects.
- The RRF is an example of such a fund, providing both capacity strengthening and implementation funds to LNAs.

**Strategically identify and promote existing local or national fora and expertise to support capacity strengthening/mentoring for LNAs.**

- COs should network with international and local actors to identify existing local consortia/fora/institutions/resource centers that can open opportunities for mentoring or capacity strengthening of LNAs, link up its partners to these bodies, and/or actively work with donors to deliver projects through these structures.

- Connect LNAs to global capacity strengthening and support initiatives and other funding opportunities on migration issues. These include, the [Global Cities Fund](#) from Mayors Migration Council; [United Cities and Local Governments](#) networking; peer exchange and training

opportunities; [Mayors Mechanism](#); and the [Call to Local Action for Migrants and Refugees](#). IOM is a global partner of all these organizations, which work across humanitarian, peace, and development contexts.

### Checklist

- Carry out periodic organizational capacity assessments with local partners to identify specific capacity strengthening needs and requests at various stages in the project cycle to track progress (refer to [IP manual](#)).
- Hold due diligence training sessions, including extensive opportunities for questions and answers.
- Schedule visits with existing and potential partners to their head offices and/or field sites with the intention of working together to ensure the success of program activities.
- Ensure the inclusion of capacity strengthening in all proposals, with dedicated budget lines.
- Engage with existing and potential donors to explore opportunities to develop a capacity strengthening fund.
- Review training activities and ensure frequent refresher sessions.
- Identify and map consortia that can engage in capacity strengthening of LNAs.
- Identify, map, and seek to support and use the services of local or national capacity resource centers.
- Work with diaspora actors to co-create and facilitate capacity exchange to local actors, benefiting their own capacity through such leadership and knowledge gain.



## PARTICIPATION<sup>16</sup>

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### Recommendations

**Create a country-level strategy for systematically engaging LNAs to inform project/program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation with considerations for contingency planning and response strategies. This strategy should be conflict sensitive and based on context analyses and humanitarian principles.**

- LNAs have a much deeper understanding of community and local dynamics in their communities; they can offer insights to minimize operational blind-spots and increase uptake, accessibility, and impact of programs.
- Identify LNAs who truly represent and are respected by the community. Engaging directly with the affected communities through AAP mechanisms such as active consultations, participatory processes, and CFMs can help identify actors with a deep sense of trust and respect from the affected population. Through this, IOM can foster meaningful collaboration involving LNAs, IOM, and the affected people.
- Make sure LNAs are involved through the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Designing a regular feedback mechanism, or ensuring regular feedback through existing coordination mechanisms, can serve to ensure LNAs' views and distinct local knowledge is systematically included into IOM's activities.
- Promote and utilize IOM's DTM at country level as a tool to enhance participation of LNAs and local communities in informing the HPC.
- Actively convey the message among IOM program teams, LNAs, and external partners on how DTM plays a crucial role in voicing the needs and priorities of the communities IOM serves and contributes to AAP.

**Ensure LNA engagement and active involvement are explicit components of CFMs and in-country AAP and risk management strategies, ensuring continued engagement with affected populations.**

- Support LNAs with capacity strengthening processes and tools to comply with IOM's AAP standards, especially in relation to non-discrimination, do-no-harm, and inclusivity.
- Ensure LNAs can act as a bridge and continuously receive affected communities' inputs through strengthening their knowledge and capacities of AAP practices. Communities' perspectives brought about by LNAs can be crucial in designing activities that respond to community needs and priorities of different groups.
- Ensure consultation with LNAs on CFM design to identify solutions and mechanisms that are sustainable at the community and local level.
- Consult and involve affected populations, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, in the design and set-up of CFMs to maximize their effectiveness and ensure they are appropriate, safe, and accessible.
- Engage LNAs in IOM risk assessments (e.g. at project design stage and at country strategic planning phase). This will ensure that IOM is not operating in a silo informed only by international actors and will contribute to a more complex understanding of prevailing risks. It will also inform the COs' risk-sharing approach; instead of solely transferring risks to LNAs, COs are expected to genuinely share risks, including the costs associated with the implementation of risk mitigation actions.
- LNAs can provide nuanced guidance on how to manage risk, especially in locations with rapidly changing security constraints or shifting political landscapes.

<sup>16</sup> Participation: (1) Enhancing the systematic participation of local partners/affected populations in IOM's program design and implementation phases; (2) Increasing the emphasis on joint IOM and LNAs on Accountability to Affected Persons (AAP).

**Carry out regular reviews of LNA engagement and seek feedback from LNAs on IOM's engagement strategy.**

- Once a strategy for LNA participation has been designed, ensure that it is regularly audited to ensure that COs are following the guidance.
- Ensure that LNA feedback is sought on the process, focusing on soliciting feedback about whether the process is participatory, whether their views are considered systematically throughout the project cycle, and what IOM could do differently to make the process more accessible and relevant.

**Foster and strengthen collaboration between diverse local stakeholders and solicit LNA guidance on diverse elements impacting IOM's programming.**

- IOM should foster collaboration between LNAs and other stakeholders in the community, such as government agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors.
- Collaboration should focus not only on emergency preparedness and response but also diverse issues that impact IOM's programming,

such as climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and other topics across the HDPN with a view toward a multi-sectoral, multi-level, and multi-nexus approach.

- This could involve convening meetings or workshops to bring together stakeholders to identify areas of collaboration and cooperation. Creating a stronger ecosystem of local actors will have a knock-on effect on participation by elevating the voices of LNAs.

**Create spaces or opportunities for sharing and learning between IOM and LNAs.**

- Discussion hubs or participation spaces can create opportunities for IOM and LNAs to exchange knowledge and enhance learning of mutual benefit, contributing toward better programming.
- Ensure that these spaces or learning hubs are accessible to LNAs. If the space is physical, make sure it can be accessed by local partners. If the space is virtual, make sure the discussions take place in the local language(s) and that interpretation is available if needed.

**Checklist**

- Design a strategy at country level that formalizes how local actors will be engaged across the project cycle, from project design to monitoring and evaluation, ensuring that it is reviewed and updated regularly.
- Carry out yearly internal reviews of communication activities to assess whether LNA guidance is being sought on a regular basis.
- Plan regular (quarterly, bi-annual, or yearly) reviews with LNAs to solicit their feedback on IOM's approach to utilizing their feedback or implement a regular feedback mechanism with LNAs to ensure regular assessment of progress.
- Create spaces or opportunities for sharing and learning between IOM and LNAs, ensuring they are accessible to local partners.

- In areas that are inaccessible to international organizations, ensure that COs are seeking input from LNAs and reviewing activities throughout the project cycle.
- Support LNAs' engagement with affected communities through AAP resources, capacity strengthening, tools, and technical support.
- Ensure participatory processes are co-developed and co-designed with LNAs to leverage their knowledge of the local context and practices (e.g. consultation of specific groups, language, protocols, etc.)
- Actively consult the community and establish open and inclusive CFMs that can help identify local actors that are trusted and respected by the community. Different groups can trust different LNAs, and participatory processes can help map important actors and potential partners.

## COORDINATION<sup>15</sup>

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### Recommendations

**Demonstrate best practices in identifying, mentoring, and advocating for leadership and funding for LNAs in countries where IOM is the cluster, sector, or working group lead agency.**

- IOM can deepen the advocacy role that it plays as the sector lead or co-lead globally (for CCCM) by creating stronger relationships with LNAs (see recommendations above under capacity strengthening and funding and partnerships), to support them in accessing more diverse funding channels through other UN agencies, donors, or bilateral opportunities.

**Strengthen coordination mechanisms between humanitarian organizations and the government to ensure a comprehensive and effective response to crisis.**

- IOM's role as cluster, working groups, and sector lead agency in various countries – notably CCCM, Shelter/NFI, and others – presents an opportunity for COs to actively create dialogue among HCT, ICCT, LNAs, and government entities.
- Setting regular update meetings between all stakeholders who are not part of the coordination architecture will create opportunities to share experiences and integrate local priorities into IOM planning.

**Review cluster, working group, or coordination structure processes for inclusion and diversity markers.**

- Ensure that the cluster membership procedures are applicable to both national and international organizations and that they ensure fairness and transparency between all members.
- Lobby for the inclusion of diversity markers at a global level across all sector coordination structures.
- Review the accessibility of clusters to LNAs. Barriers such as location, language, and timing of meetings should be reviewed with LNAs to ensure that IOM is not unintentionally imposing barriers to LNAs participating in cluster meetings.

**Invest in outreach and sensitization actions to bring more LNAs into coordination structures.**

- IOM should not assume that all LNAs are aware of the cluster system. COs should make concerted efforts (through meetings, workshops, visits, etc.) to sensitize more LNAs to the purpose and procedures of these structures. This outreach should aim to break down barriers faced by LNAs in accessing the cluster systems.
- Initiate training or information sessions for LNAs on the humanitarian architecture and coordination procedures and requirements, and ensure that all relevant documents are easily available and translated into the local language(s).
- If possible, conduct coordination meetings both in English and the local language(s). Allocate funding and staffing resources for interpreters and translators.
- Create mechanisms to address the information needs of LNAs such as diaspora liaisons who can represent diaspora organizations, and report back to them if their active presence is not always possible.
- Facilitate the participation of LNAs in coordination mechanisms using tools such as the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance and the Global Shelter Cluster's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Diaspora's Engagement in Shelter Assistance.

<sup>15</sup> Coordination: (1) Greater presence and participation of local actors in coordination mechanisms; (2) Inclusion of local partners in SAG, Cluster Co-Leadership, HPC, and other coordination structures.

### Checklist

- Organize outreach activities to LNAs to sensitize them about the clusters and encourage their attendance.
- Promote active participation and leadership of LNAs in IOM-led cluster/sector/working group mechanisms by enhancing the relevance of coordination meetings to local needs and priorities.
- Make sure cluster membership, reporting, and participation requirements are not creating barriers to the participation of LNAs.
- Cluster SAG membership should have adequate representation from LNAs.
- Hold a meeting with LNAs to review the cluster set-up and identify barriers to their access and leadership.
- If possible, encourage LNAs to be the cluster co-lead agency and develop a strategy/roadmap that could lead to a full transfer of leadership to LNAs.
- Actively advocate for funding for LNAs through the development of an advocacy strategy, donor briefings, info sessions, etc.
- Promote CBPFs among LNAs and advocate for LNAs' access to such opportunities through HCT, the United Nations Country Team, ICCT, and donors.



## VISIBILITY & ADVOCACY<sup>17</sup>

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### Recommendations

**Highlight IOM's partnership with LNAs and their role across all pillars of the localization agenda across all relevant strategic planning documents, PI products, and program/project documents in line with institutional guidelines.**

- When applying for funding, if an LNA partner has already been identified, ensure that all proposals explicitly mention the partner by name, their roles and responsibilities, and their contribution to the project objectives and outcomes.
- Systematically highlight IOM's partnership with LNAs in project proposals, external sitreps, flash appeals, crises response plans, etc. and emphasize the added value of LNAs to humanitarian programming efforts.
- Promote IOM's partnership with LNAs, success stories, videos, and innovative approaches on localization through external sitreps, human interest stories, donor updates, and all other PI products.
- Utilize localization indicators (listed below) from the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) at country level when creating projects on PRIMA. This will help reporting on IOM's Grand Bargain commitments on localization.

**1c21e** – % of all members who are local and national actors (LNAs) for IOM led clusters.

**1a12b** – % of funding transferred to local and national actors (LNAs) in humanitarian program delivery.

**1a12c** – # of partnerships agreements/MoUs established with local and national actors (LNAs) to deliver relevant, timely, and effective humanitarian response.

**Create a PI/media and communications strategy/plan to ensure LNAs are systematically recognized, credited, and promoted throughout project and program implementation.**

- LNAs provide vital information, especially in inaccessible locations, that informs IOM's planning and coordination with other actors. Cite them in IOM's analysis, sitreps, and DTM reports.
- Sensitize all staff about including LNA logos, websites, and contact information on PI products (with LNA approval).
- Raise visibility of diaspora actors' local efforts and advocacy through storytelling initiatives and PI products.

**Produce a regular newsletter or website updates on IOM's partnership with LNAs.**

- Missions that produced regular communication products (such as newsletters) were more successful in acknowledging and promoting the work of LNAs.

**Engage with LNAs and leverage their networks for more effective communications campaigns.**

- Include LNAs like diaspora organizations in the strategy/planning process to ensure that messaging is relevant and culturally appropriate.
- Partner with LNA networks to reach new audiences and disseminate information.
- Foster the transfer of technical knowledge to local communities by engaging with LNA experts such as architects, medical practitioners, etc.

<sup>17</sup> Visibility: (1) Greater recognition of local actors, especially women-led organizations and CSOs in Humanitarian Action/partnering up with IOM. (2) Promoting good practices on localization.

### Checklist

- Create a communication strategy for visibility on partnerships with LNAs to ensure that their roles in humanitarian responses are recognized and highlighted.
- Organize induction and coordination meetings between IOM PI/Program Support Units and LNAs' media communications teams.
- Include budget lines on PI and media/communications for both IOM's and local partners' budgets.
- Ensure that LNAs are named and credited in proposals to donors and for their contribution to visibility and planning processes.
- Include LNAs in visibility products, including websites, and provide links to their websites.
- Ensure permission is sought as early as possible for LNAs to use IOM logos and for IOM to use LNAs' logos.
- Be aware of local sensitivities and make sure to follow the do-no-harm principle when promoting LNAs.



## CASE STUDIES

### Indonesia LNA Preparedness Roster

After 100,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) were displaced from their homes by an earthquake in Indonesia, the response was led almost entirely by the government and CSOs with technical support from humanitarian partners. Following the earthquake and in consideration of the existing capacities of local actors to respond to recurring natural hazards, IOM Indonesia created a preparedness roster of LNAs to prepare for the onset of a disaster.

These LNAs were contracted through an MoU (or standby partnership agreement), with no immediate financial contractual requirements. The formalization of IOM's partnership with these actors ensured that they are pre-positioned in case of a sudden onset disaster that requires international assistance.

Moreover, these partnerships acknowledge that LNAs are often the first to respond with their own funds, allowing IOM to support them with the adoption of standards and best practices, and rapidly channel additional funding to their response if needed.



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## Rapid Response Fund (RRF)

The Rapid Response Fund (RRF) is a flagship project by IOM that contributes to the localization agenda.

Operational in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Sudan, the RRF aims to meet acute humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations by providing flexible, effective, and needs-based funding transfers to humanitarian actors, especially local and national front-line responders. The RRF mechanism is accompanied by capacity strengthening components where partners are provided with a wide range of on-the-job training support, including in areas such as proposal development, budgeting, and

financial management. Local partners have also benefited from staff deployments of IOM experts, as well as programmatic or technical capacity development in areas such as Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Shelter, Non-Food Items (NFI), and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) throughout the project implementation stages.

For more details, please refer to: <https://emergencymanual.iom.int/rapid-response-fund-rrf>.



## Mentorship Approach in Ethiopia

IOM Ethiopia has adopted a supportive supervision approach to partnering with LNAs. Supportive supervision entails creating a close mentorship relationship with LNAs and fostering a sense of “being in it together,” rather than defaulting to the sub-contractor approach.

IOM staff attend field activities, visit LNA offices, and provide ongoing feedback and guidance to support LNA activities. This approach has been particularly successful in fostering a sense of unity between IOM and LNA partners, as well as creating opportunities for tailored capacity strengthening for each partner. It moves away from traditional capacity building

activities delivered in a hotel or boardroom. It instead focuses on identifying specific constraints affecting each partner and provides feedback tailored to those constraints. As noted in the institutional recommendations, this process can be scaled up through the creation of a dedicated guidance note on mentorship during due diligence and implementation.



## IOM Poland in the Ukraine Response

IOM in Poland has been particularly successful in producing regular Storyteller articles for external audiences, which consistently mention partners by name and clearly credit their activities.

Examples:

<https://storyteller.iom.int/stories/gnome-sweet-home-one-displaced-womans-determination-start-over>

<https://storyteller.iom.int/stories/home-away-home-cafe-run-displaced-couple-offers-new-taste-life>

<https://storyteller.iom.int/stories/happy-place-circus-if-you-fall-we-will-catch-you>

<https://storyteller.iom.int/stories/encouraging-young-voices-break-through-rumble-war-ukraine>



## LOCALIZATION AND GLOBAL INITIATIVES



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The Emergency Relief Coordinator recently launched the “Flagship Initiative,” which will be piloted in four countries (Colombia, Niger, the Philippines, and South Sudan). This initiative aims to develop and test innovative, lean, and context-specific approaches for collective coordination and response that put people and their priorities, needs, and capacities at the center. It is expected that this initiative will gradually transform traditional humanitarian planning, coordination, and delivery methods through the creation of innovative, country-specific coordination and response solutions. The Flagship Initiative seeks to address underlying structural issues and power imbalances, promising a significant break from the norm and an opportunity for a "response reset." This initiative is particularly relevant to localization, as it seeks facilitate more efficient and context-specific coordination strategies and to provide an opportunity to redesign aid delivery mechanisms, which could potentially be more responsive to local needs and capacities.

### CENTRAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (CERF) COVID-19 NGO ALLOCATION

In June 2020, Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated USD 25 million from the [UN's Central Emergency Response Fund \(CERF\)](#) to IOM to support 24 front-line NGOs' life-saving health, water, and sanitation responses to COVID-19 in Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Libya, South Sudan, and Sudan.

This multi-country allocation was channelled to NGOs at a country level and helped address the most pressing humanitarian needs based on the in-country priorities in health (including mental health and psychosocial support), water, and sanitation outlined in the [Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19](#). There was a strong consideration for projects addressing gender equality issues and gender-based violence, as well as those supporting the needs of persons with disabilities ([CERF](#)).



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