

**Regional Review for the Global Compact for Safe,
Orderly and Regular Migration
(UNECE Region)**

**Voluntary Contribution
Ireland**

7 November 2020

Methodology for preparing the voluntary GCM review

1. This document was prepared on the basis of an initial mapping exercise on how the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is being carried forward in Ireland at these, the early stages of development.
2. Ireland views the Regional Review for the UNECE Region as a preparatory step for the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to be held in 2022, and warmly welcomes the opportunity to both share experiences with, and learn from others. The process will also lead to a more detailed tracking of progress towards the specific objectives that will have been identified as most relevant for Ireland, for the IMRF in 2022.
3. In preparing this review, a wide range of Government Departments (and through them a number of State Agencies) were consulted with a view to determining which Departments and Agencies are responsible for the implementation of which of the GCM objectives.
4. A virtual meeting with a number of relevant stakeholders, representing civil society, employers and trade unions, was also held, primarily to raise awareness of the GCM process and to hear from stakeholders what the main priorities are.
5. It is also intended to align the GCM follow-up with Ireland's National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which is currently under review. As part of that, migration and the GCM will be a main topic in the next SDG Stakeholders Forum, to be held in the coming period.

Policy and enabling environment

6. Ireland has been a strong supporter of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and indeed played a key role in its development - notably by co-facilitating the process leading to the adoption of the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants in September 2016, as well as by contributing actively to the intergovernmental negotiations on the Compact itself.
7. Ireland's approach to migration governance, both domestically and in its international engagements, is and has been firmly rooted in the 10 guiding principles set out in Paragraph 15 of the GCM. In Ireland's domestic policy and practice, as well as in our international engagement, we strive at all times to ensure coherence with these guiding principles. Ireland does not, therefore, view the GCM as necessitating any major changes to the general thrust of Ireland's migration policy and practice.
8. As noted above, it is envisaged that the tracking of GCM implementation in Ireland will remain fully integrated with the existing mechanisms and structures (both intra-governmental and involving non-governmental stakeholders) put in place for monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda and in each of the areas and sectors concerned. As such, we see the GCM as building on already-existing processes and structures, and Government policies and implementation.
9. Gender equality and inclusion are fundamental to the Irish Government's engagement with non-governmental stakeholders on all issues. These issues will remain prioritised

in GCM follow-through, given their importance in ensuring equitable access and opportunities, and better outcomes.

Progress on GCM objectives

10. Regarding the 23 Objectives contained in the GCM, Ireland recognises that the tasks associated with addressing these Objectives cut across many Government Departments. In broad terms, the lead Government Department with responsibility for the domestic aspects of migration (both regular and irregular) and for asylum policy is the Department of Justice, while the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) is the lead Department with responsibility international engagement on migration. The Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice, and the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) meet periodically at a senior official level to share information and ensure good coordination on migration-related issues.
11. In addition to these lead Departments, other Government Departments play roles concerning, mainly, the domestic aspects of migration governance, such as the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation on issues relating to labour force needs or the Department of Education on education, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on integration matters.
12. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (previously the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment) coordinates Ireland's National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which also provides a platform – especially where the GCM intersects with the SDGs (notably targets 8.8, 10.7 and 16.2). A Senior Official Group, and an Inter Departmental Working Group on the SDGs is in place and meets regularly.
13. With specific reference to the GCM, a detailed cross-Governmental mapping exercise, involving all relevant Government Departments and State Agencies, is currently being finalised with the aim of confirming both:
 - a. which Departments and Agencies have lead and secondary responsibility for each of the Objectives and relevant sub-Objectives; and
 - b. the extent of compliance with the GCM Objectives and relevant sub-Objectives, bringing out examples of good practice where relevant.
14. At the international level, Ireland's foreign policy, *The Global Island, Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*, sets out Ireland's support for a fairer, more just, more secure and more sustainable world through our development programme, human rights policies, peacekeeping, disarmament and security policies and growing engagement with emerging global issues including climate change and migration. Important in that is the role of the European Union and United Nations in amplifying Ireland's voice and extending its influence – including in the 2021-22 period during Ireland tenure as elected member of the UN Security Council.
15. The Irish Government's development policy, *A Better World*, further commits to “follow through on the global compacts on migration and refugees to reaffirm the importance of the international refugee regime and ensure that migration is more safe, orderly and regular”. Over €100 million of Ireland's Official Development Assistance

(ODA) has been allocated to migration and development including support for refugees between 2015 and 2020 (in addition to in-country refugee costs in Ireland). Ireland is proud to provide the IOM with core funding support on an annual basis (€1m in 2020), to support its leadership role in GCM implementation.

Examples of GCM Implementation

16. In addition to the detailed work at the domestic level by the Central Statistics Office, Ireland contributes to the sub-objective “Collect data on the effects and benefits of migration, as well as the contributions of migrants and diasporas to the SDGs” under **Objective 1** through its funding support to the research work being done by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) through the South-South Migration, Inequality and Development Hub (MIDEQ). See <https://www.mideq.org/en/>.
17. Ireland’s commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals - and by extension to **Objective 2** of the GCM - is set out in the Government’s International Development Policy, *A Better World*, as noted above. With *A Better World*, Ireland has for the first time identified migration and people on the move as areas for action in our international development programme. The recent OECD DAC Peer Review of Ireland found that “Ireland has a unique approach to crises and fragility that builds on learning, including from its troubled past, and focuses on key issues such as refugees and migration, and gender.”
18. The website of the Citizens Information Bureau (www.citizensinformation.ie) has a section specifically aimed at people intending to move to Ireland, setting out clearly the processes involved, as called for in **Objective 3**. It can also be noted that information on where to seek information on employment rights/protection is printed on every employment permit issued to non-European Economic Area (EEA) workers in Ireland.
19. Ireland meets its requirements to its own citizens set out under **Objective 4**. Migrants in Ireland who do not have proof of nationality or legal identity have access to basic services such as education and health. Ireland recognises and upholds the fundamental rights of all, regardless of migratory status.
20. Regarding **Objective 5**, most migrant workers in Ireland come from the European Economic Area (EEA) and are therefore entitled to work without requiring any special permissions. Non-EEA migrant workers generally access the labour market via the Irish employment permit regime which is vacancy-led and operated through critical skilled (for in-demand occupations) and ineligible (for occupations where the evidence is that there are sufficient resources to fill vacancies from within Ireland/EEA) occupation lists. Ireland links labour market intelligence to economic migration with a twice-yearly evidenced-based review of the lists to ensure that the regime is orientated to the skills/labour needs in the economy. A fundamental review of economic migration policy was last undertaken in 2018.
21. Regarding **Objective 6**, Ireland’s *Migrant Integration Strategy* recognises the need for “labour market activation of migrants” and one overall aim of strategy is for migrants “to participate on an equal basis”. Legally, all non-EEA employment permit holders have the same employment rights and protections as Irish or EEA citizens.

22. Work is ongoing, via the GCM mapping exercise, on indicating where specific responsibilities within Government lie for the various sub-objectives under **Objective 7**. Ireland is fully committed to responding to the needs of migrants who face situations of vulnerability and to protecting their human rights, at both the domestic and international levels.
23. Regarding **Objectives 8, 9 and 10**, Ireland engages actively in the European Union's response to issues of smuggling and trafficking of migrants, including on search and rescue. Domestically, the first *National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland* was published in 2006, with the second in 2016. The goals of the Action Plan are to prevent trafficking in human beings; identify, assist and protect and support victims of trafficking in human beings; ensure an effective criminal justice response; ensure that Ireland's response to human trafficking complies with the requirements of a human rights based approach and is gender sensitive; ensure effective co-ordination and co-operation between key actors, both nationally and internationally; increase the level of knowledge of emerging trends in the trafficking of human beings; and continue to ensure an effective response to child trafficking.
24. Regarding **Objective 11**, through Garda Liaison Officers, Interpol, Europol and direct law enforcement cooperation every effort is made to establish connections with Border Management and Police teams in key countries with a view to sharing information about migration trends and specific cases. This regular communication provides an opportunity to highlight cases where migrants might be vulnerable and need protection. Furthermore, when an unaccompanied minor arrives at the border, TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency, are immediately contacted, and it will be determined from there what is in the best interest of the minor.
25. Ireland meets its requirements set out under **Objective 12**. A person that presents at the border in need of protection is provided with information on how their claim will be dealt with. Translation services are arranged as required. Citizensinformation.ie covers a range of scenarios (work/study) including for those seeking international protection, different procedures and rules depending on country of origin (EU/non-EU) and a final section with useful information about living in Ireland (taxes, health, education, customs, etc.). As noted above, when an unaccompanied minor arrives at the border, TUSLA the Child and Family Agency are immediately contacted, and it will be determined from there what is in the best interest of the minor.
26. Regarding **Objective 13**, arrest and detention in a Garda Station or prison of a person refused entry to the State is undertaken as a last resort. There is a statutory obligation to return a person refused entry permission as soon as is practicable. Most persons are returned on the same day that they are refused entry. A refusal of leave to land by the Border Management Unit is always signed off by a more senior civil servant. Any detention process is clearly explained to all migrants taking care to ensure the person understands. In circumstances where there is a language barrier, interpreter services are provided. Requests for legal or consular assistance are also promptly attended to. Utmost care is taken to protect the welfare of children encountered in all migration cases. Children are never put into facilities which may be viewed as carceral environments. Where a child is being dealt with by an immigration officer and they are not in the company of a parent/guardian the services of Ireland's child and family agency, TUSLA, are engaged, and professional child care workers take over the welfare provision for the child.

27. Ireland meets its requirements to its own citizens set out under **Objective 14**. Ireland, as an EU Member State, is covered by the EU Directive on Consular Protection, under which EU citizens abroad can seek help from an embassy/consulate of any other EU country when advice or assistance is needed outside EU territory.
28. Migrants in Ireland, regardless of status, have access to basic services, as called for in **Objective 15**. Regarding welfare payments, the supplementary welfare allowance (SWA) scheme offers a safety net within the Irish social welfare system by providing assistance to those whose means are insufficient to meet their own needs and those of their dependants. The main purpose of the scheme is to provide immediate and flexible assistance to those in need who do not qualify for payment under other State schemes. It is important to note that the habitual residence condition which applies to the weekly payments (regardless of nationality) does not apply to exceptional needs or urgent needs payments given the purpose and nature of these payments.
29. Regarding **Objective 16**, it is noteworthy that even though significant inward migration remains a relatively recent phenomenon in Ireland, the 2008 *Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management* has since led to the 2017 adoption of the *Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future*, as well as a *National Intercultural Health Strategy* and an *Intercultural Education Strategy*. Ireland's approach to supporting multiculturalism and integration in our education system was highlighted as a model of good practice in the 2018 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report.
30. Ireland recognises the importance of ensuring that public narratives on migration are based to the greatest extent possible on reality rather than on misinformation, as called for in **Objective 17**. It is for this reason that Ireland is joining IOM in establishing a *Global Migration Media Academy* (GMMA), which will provide training to media professionals globally in order to prepare them better to counter misleading and false narratives on migration. Ireland is also a member of the GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration.
31. Primary responsibility for the implementation of areas covered by **Objective 18** lie with the newly established Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
32. As noted above under Objective 2, Ireland has for the first time identified migration and people on the move as areas for action in our International Development Policy, *A Better World*, launched in 2019. This includes creating conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries, as called for in **Objective 19**. Ireland has also for several years engaged actively with other countries on our experience in working with our own diaspora, both in terms of diaspora support and of tapping into our diaspora to contribute to development in Ireland.
33. Ireland is supportive of international efforts to promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and to foster the financial inclusion of migrants (**Objective 20**).

34. Ireland has opted into a number of EU readmission agreements, including with Russia, Pakistan, Albania, Georgia amongst others. These agreements set-out standard EU wide procedures for both sides when applications are made to readmit a person to their country of origin, as called for in **Objective 21**. In the area of returns, the process leading to the making of a Deportation Order entails an individual assessment of each case including gender specific considerations of minors and the integrity of the family and other humanitarian factors amongst others. Persons who receive deportation orders may take a Judicial Review of the decision to the High Court. They may also request to have the Order revoked under the relevant legislation in the event of new or changed circumstances that were not known when the Order was made. A Deportation Order (DO) can only be made once satisfied that there is no risk to the person's life or freedom if returned to their country of origin. In terms of return and reintegration programmes, the Department of Justice engages the International Office for Migration (IOM) to operate voluntary return programmes, which assists persons to return to their countries of origin. These programmes offer assistance, including payment of flights, practical support and reintegration assistance for returnees upon arrival. This is the preferred method of seeking to return persons to their country of origin where a permission has expired or an application has been refused. Persons in such situations are first given practical support and the opportunity to opt for voluntary return before their case is considered for a Deportation Order.
35. Regarding **Objective 22**, EU/EEA countries have social security coordination systems (providing, for example, for the recognition of social security contributions paid in another country when calculating eligibility for a contributory state pension) in place and Ireland also has bilateral agreements with a number of non-EU/EEA countries. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection hosts a Migrant Consultative Forum involving voluntary sector organisations working with migrants, which meets regularly to identify and address issues specific to customers of the Department who are migrants.
36. Ireland is profoundly committed to multilateralism and strongly supports all efforts to strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration, as called for in **Objective 23**. Areas of current engagement include:
- Ireland is a Co-Chair, with Bangladesh, Benin and Mexico, of the Friends of Migration group, which brings together a number of developed and developing countries from all the world's major regions at the United Nations in New York.
 - In recognition of the additional responsibilities which have been placed upon the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, and specifically IOM's role in the follow-up and review of the GCM, Ireland has also joined (since 2019) the relatively small group of countries providing unearmarked core funding to IOM (€1 million in 2020).
 - Ireland is committed to gender equality and to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and recognises the gender-differentiated aspects of forced migration and displacement. Ireland included women with experience of displacement

and migration in preparation of its Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, launched in 2019.

Covid-19 response

37. While not specific to any particular GCM Objective, Ireland's response to the Covid-19 pandemic is indicative of the Irish Government's general approach. IOM Ireland's report into *The Irish Government's Policy Response to COVID-19*, highlights a number of good practices in Ireland during the public health emergency including:

- Access to COVID-19 public medical testing and treatment for all people who are residing in Ireland, irrespective of their migration status.
- Establishment of a Community Assessment Hub offering COVID-19 treatment and testing for the most vulnerable communities in Ireland, including migrants in an irregular situation.
- Translation of COVID-19 resources into 29 languages to help share messaging and increase awareness of measures to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Access to social welfare services in Ireland for non-EU/EEA workers who have lost employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including international students.
- Access to COVID-19 Enhanced Illness Payment for all employees (including non-EU/EEA) who are suspected of having COVID-19 and are advised to self-isolate or for those diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Automatic renewal of residence permissions and work permits to ensure people do not enter into an irregular situation.

Means of Implementation and Next Steps

38. Ireland will continue to develop synergies and communication between Government Departments and Agencies responsible for the implementation of the various Objectives of the GCM, with a view to identifying clearly which areas require greater attention.

39. As noted above, Ireland's approach to migration was already largely aligned with the vision of the GCM prior to its adoption. However, areas such as the facilitation of remittance flows would undoubtedly benefit from additional work. When the process of identifying such areas has been completed, with appropriate input from both Government and non-governmental stakeholders, including through the SDG Stakeholders Forum, this will form the basis of a clearer framework of GCM follow-through in Ireland which will in turn feed into the IMRF in 2022.

40. Regarding the areas in which Ireland would benefit from additional support in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, it should be noted that the relationship between the Government and IOM's Office in Dublin is being deepened, and a number of areas of further collaboration are being explored -

including the possible use of tools developed by IOM (notably the Migration Governance Indicators) in assessing Ireland's migration governance.

41. Ireland also welcomes the sharing of experience from other countries and regions on the GCM and looks forward to the lesson-sharing and lesson-learning opportunities which the regional review presents, as well as those presented by the Global Forum on Migration and Development.