



IOM Development Fund
DEVELOPING CAPACITIES IN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

“MAPPING ON IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA” 2014

Summary

“There is a growing recognition of the importance of undertaking proactive migration policies and programs in order to protect the rights and dignity of migrants as well as their families and communities. Migration Governance should be considered as a tool that can assist Central Asian Governments to further develop their economies by linking migration with development.”

The report “Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia” is a regional analysis on irregular migration flows, with a particular focus in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The report was prepared by a team of international and national experts with the active involvement of Government counterparts and support of the IOM missions in the three Central Asian countries.

The report assesses the measures currently implemented on national and regional level in regard to irregular migration trends in Central Asia and highlights policy directions for the future, referring to international experience. It also serves as an inventory of the latest available statistical data and information on recent policy developments collected from government stakeholders revealing gaps in the control of movement across border-crossing points which need to be addressed if a complete and reliable picture of migration flows is to be obtained.

The report consistently distinguishes between “regular” and “irregular” migration, adopting the distinction, which is typically not used by the governments in the region. In line with international practice, regular movement takes place when a migrant uses recognized legal channels. In contrast, irregular migration is a broader term than clandestine or illegal movement, as it does not necessarily involve conscious and premeditated breach of rules of entry, residence or employment. In fact, available studies show that many migrants out of and into Central Asia violate migration legislation due to insufficient knowledge of the rules or failure to comply by employers or intermediaries. To respond adequately to the migration flows in the region, policymakers and practitioners are advised to consider migration from a broader perspective. Migration dynamics in Central Asia are usually approached by governments through a security lens, which limits the sharing of potentially available data with external international counterparts due to country security concerns. Migration is not understood yet as a development factor, which can have a positive impact to the countries prosperity.

Most importantly, this report sets specific objectives and recommended actions to be undertaken by government agencies at all levels of the policy process stressing the need of comprehensive migration policies which will take into account the emergence of stable patterns and routes of migration into and through Central Asia as the only way to link migration with development.

The IOM Coordination Office for Central Asia in Astana, Kazakhstan had the overall management and coordination of the project. The project is funded by the IOM Development Fund (formerly the 1035 Facility), a unique global resource for eligible IOM Member States, which provides them with essential seed funding for innovative initiatives, as well as empowers Member States to develop migration management capacities.