

GUIDELINE 7: Establish coordination agreements in advance to leverage strengths and foster trust

States, private sector actors, international organizations, and civil society often work with fewer resources than required. Each of these stakeholders has unique skills, resources, and strengths. Working together to build partnerships, entering into agreements, and establishing routine coordination improves collective responses towards migrants, and prevents duplication of efforts. Such arrangements are best entered into before the next conflict or natural disaster, when stakeholders have the opportunity to anticipate challenges and leverage unique skills and strengths. Joint planning and coordination maximizes resources, improves the effectiveness of responses, and fosters trust between stakeholders. Involving migrants and civil society, who have first-hand knowledge of the specific needs and challenges faced by migrants, can improve the effectiveness of efforts to protect migrants in countries experiencing crises, including at the local, national, regional, or international levels.

These arrangements may relate to a range of activities relevant to the needs of migrants during the emergency phase and its aftermath—from collection of data to information sharing, consular services to identity assessments, awareness-raising to strategic communication plans, provision of humanitarian relief and services to referral systems, capacity-building to evacuation and reintegration assistance, and much more. This may include coordination and information sharing among anti-trafficking experts and humanitarian assistance providers to ensure screening for trafficking and referral to appropriate services. Additionally, by developing systems to identify refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons, States can better ensure that these persons are appropriately referred to the available refugee and other protection mechanisms.

Stakeholders can often arrange in advance key services and resources that will be in high demand when a crisis hits, including transportation, shelter, food, health care, and timely and accurate information. Establishing and maintaining clear channels of communication between consular posts and relevant agencies of the host State is important. Such channels of communication could prove critical during crisis situations.

Sample Practices

- *Pre-arranged agreements among stakeholders, such as agreements between States and international organizations for identity verification, shared use of assets, family tracing, and deployment of experts and humanitarian personnel.*
- *Multi-stakeholder agreements for relocation and evacuation that set out roles and responsibilities of partners and provide guidance on allocation of costs.*
- *Cross-border cooperation on crisis preparedness, taking into account particular needs of migrants, especially at a local level for communities that straddle borders.*
- *Reciprocal consular assistance and representation agreements to address gaps in situations where States do not have a diplomatic or consular presence in a country or have limited capacity.*