



IOM's Immigration & Border Management Programme

Facilitated Migration Services

IOM AND FACILITATED MIGRATION SERVICES

With over one billion people on the move today, more than at any other time in recorded history, migration management has moved to the forefront of many States' agendas. Facilitating more dignified, orderly and safe migration remains a key challenge. As the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, IOM and its Immigration and Border Management (IBM) Division assist States to improve their migration governance by providing efficient and cost-effective international migration services.

IOM offers a package of services which can be selected in their entirety or as stand-alone services. These operate on either a fully funded "project" basis or on a migrant funded "fee-for-service" basis at no cost to States. Service agreements are negotiated bilaterally between IOM Missions and the Visa Offices of diplomatic missions, or at the regional or global level. IOM cooperates closely with States at all times to ensure that service objectives are met on time and within the budget, with a focus on service, integrity and confidentiality.

The IOM Constitution and Member State Strategy recognize the need for IOM to provide operational assistance to States on migration matters. With more than 400 offices in over 150 countries, IOM is a unique, non-profit service delivery partner for States. Based on decades of proven experience, IOM provides many practical operational solutions that leverage the Organization's global reach and local knowledge, with innovative services and support. These help to facilitate migration by streamlining and improving processes, reducing costs, improving service standards and reducing fraud.

What follows is a general listing and brief description of the types of services IOM offers in relation to the visa application and visa issuance process.

OUR OBJECTIVE

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TO PROVIDE TAILORED OPERATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO STATES THROUGH EFFICIENT, COST EFFECTIVE AND NON-PROFIT INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SERVICES

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International Organization for Migration (IOM)



DESIGN & FIT-OUT OF VISA APPLICATION CENTRE (VAC) FACILITIES

IOM is experienced in establishing secure, convenient and migrant-friendly administrative processing centres for both high- and low-volume visa caseloads. Such centres are commonly established in modern commercial office buildings within close proximity of partner Visa Offices to facilitate efficient application and travel document logistics. Alternatively, IOM establishes smaller centres within its existing mission premises. IOM VAC premises are outfitted to international standards. Premises include separate reception and submissions counters, help desks, IT kiosks, comfortable waiting and secure back-office processing areas, automated queue management systems and visa information stands.

PROVISION OF VISA APPLICATION INFORMATION

Through its VAC operations, IOM offers visa applicants a wide range of information services via multiple channels, including in-person, online, via contact centres and text messages. Specifically, IOM 1) operates help desks to answer applicants' questions face-to-face, responds to feedback and distributes visa application forms and checklists; 2) creates dedicated websites enabling applicants to access visa-related information and forms online; 3) delivers contact centre services to respond to applicant queries by phone and email; 4) enables applicants to track the progress of their visa applications online.

VISA-RELATED HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

IOM's Migration Health Division (MHD) provides health assessments to evaluate the physical and mental health status of applicants seeking to obtain a temporary or permanent resident visa. Such health assessments are tailored to the requirements of individual States, with the most common denominator being the need to ensure that visa issuance and travel does not endanger the health of the applicant or the host population. Health assessments also benefit applicants by making them more aware of their own personal health conditions and by empowering them to take preventative or curative actions. Additionally, IOM provides many complementary travel and integration-oriented health promotion services to migrants, including treatment, counselling, health education, immunizations and medical escorts during travel.

VISA FORM-FILLING ASSISTANCE

Some visa applicants may have difficulties completing application and permit forms properly, or with understanding all visa requirements. In addition, incomplete or improperly prepared visa applications often create undesirable delays for applicants and result in increased workloads for Visa Offices. IOM assists applicants in properly completing both paper-based and online applications. The Organization also ensures applicants understand all the required supporting documentation which must be submitted with completed application or permit forms.



SKILLS AND LANGUAGE TESTING

IOM conducts skills testing for both temporary and permanent migration schemes. IOM also develops and facilitates tailored language testing programmes to ensure visa applicants have the requisite language skills for their particular visa type.

VISA APPLICATION DATA CAPTURE/TRANSFER

Through its VAC operations, IOM offers tailored software solutions to record visa application information for secure and seamless transfer into the systems of partner Visa Offices. This greatly reduces the data-entry workload of Visa Officers, enabling them to focus on visa decisions. Data can be transferred via CD or online.

VISA APPLICATION COMPLETENESS CHECKS

Through its VAC operations, IOM reviews visa applications for completeness in strict accordance with the checklists provided by partner Visa Offices. Such checks reduce administrative backlogs and speed up visa processing times.

IDENTITY CHECKS AND BIOMETRICS ENROLMENT

Through its VAC operations, IOM provides tailored biometric solutions for States to ensure proper identity management and to counter fraud. IOM provides biometric capture (facial images and fingerprints) and secure transfer to the specifications of partner Visa Offices. IOM is also able to provide customized mobile biometric solutions in support of the visa application process.

VISA APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING

Through its VAC operations, IOM creates appointment scheduling solutions which enable visa applicants to make appointments online via a dedicated website, by e-mail and/or telephone. IOM's web-based solutions enable Visa Offices to create appointment slots based on date, time and visa type and prevent applicants and visa agents from booking multiple appointments. These solutions also centralize management and oversight of the appointments process, reducing costs and eliminating queues outside diplomatic missions.

INTERVIEW FACILITATION

States may require IOM to conduct interviews with applicants on their behalf where States may have no interviewing capacity in a country. In such instances, the partner Visa Office provides IOM with the questions and objectives of the interviews. IOM contacts applicants and conducts the interviews in person, within IOM premises and submits interview transcripts to the requesting Visa Office. IOM ensures that applicants are fully informed of IOM's strictly facilitative role, noting that all visa decisions rest solely with the relevant Visa Office.



VERIFICATION SERVICES

IOM provides neutral, factual, accurate and objective verification services. The Organization bridges gaps where States may have no fraud detection capacity in a country. IOM leverages local knowledge and networks, and is able to operate where poor telecommunications may make remote verifications unfeasible or where verification-related travel may be too costly, time-consuming and/or a security risk for the requesting Visa Office. The verification levels differ, depending on immigration risk factors and the request from the Visa Office. Various verification approaches and techniques are used including: remote checks conducted via telephone; paper based checks conducted via official correspondence with issuing authorities by mail and telephone; and site visits to directly consult issuing authorities. IOM is able to verify identity and civil status documents, business and investment documents, as well as employment and education-related documents.

DNA COLLECTION TO VERIFY RELATIONSHIPS

States may utilize DNA testing to verify relationships for the purposes of visa decision-making. IOM's Migration Health Division (MHD) works closely with partner Visa Offices in implementing the time consuming administrative tasks of the process. Service support includes providing the collection site, scheduling the testing of applicants, counselling applicants on DNA testing procedures, verifying the identity of applicants, completing all lab related documentation, and ensuring proper processing, transport and delivery of DNA samples to a government-approved laboratory. Results are returned directly to the partner Visa Office. IOM ensures strict sample collection procedures at all times, through proper identity management, rigorous chain of custody procedures and the utilization of CCTV systems to counter fraud.

TRAVEL DOCUMENT EXAMINATION

Complementary to verification services, IOM also operates a Document Examination Support Centre (DESC) facility. DESC provides support to States in travel document examination as a tool to combat irregular migration, including migrant smuggling and trafficking, facilitated by the fraudulent use of travel documents. DESC is a "one-stop shop" for travel document examination and is designed to be used by frontline immigration and border control officials and travel document issuing authorities.

VISA FEE PROCESSING

Through its VAC operations, IOM partners with reputable local and international banks to provide visa fee collection, exchange, deposit and transfer services for partner Visa Offices. IOM offers multiple payment channels to visa applicants, including cash, direct deposit and credit card. Tailored invoicing and fee collection reporting are also included to the specifications of partner Visa Offices.

VISA APPLICATION TRACKING

Through its VAC operations, IOM offers a web-based solution which enables Visa Offices and visa applicants to track the status of applications throughout the application and issuance process. Additionally, visa applicants receive text messages to their mobile phones with key status updates from when the application has been submitted, through to when the visa decision has been made.



VISA DOCUMENTATION LOGISTICS & RETURN

As part of its VAC operations, IOM securely submits all completed visa applications to the local partner Visa Office on a daily basis, as per the agreed upon schedule. Applications are submitted in the uniform order required by the Visa Office and are tracked using bar code scans. Should the partner Visa Office be in a different country from where the VAC is located, IOM partners with reputable courier companies to ensure timely, secure daily deliveries via express courier. Furthermore, for the convenience of visa applicants, IOM also partners with reputable courier companies to return sealed, confidential visa decisions to applicants at their residence.

LOGISTICAL ASSISTANCE TO VISA OFFICES

IOM provides representational/logistical assistance to partner Visa Offices where they may have no full-time representation in a country or particular city. Support to visiting Visa Officers may include arranging accommodation, providing local transportation and interview facilities, liaising with the host government, organizing interpretation services, scheduling applicant interviews, application form-filling assistance, country briefings and security arrangements.

PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

At the request of States, IOM's Labour Migration and Human Development Division (LMHD), develops tailored pre-departure curricula designed to prepare approved visa applicants to adapt to the specific realities of their destination country. These courses, usually conducted as closely to departure as possible, provide participants with up-to-date, factual information, assist in developing skills needed by participants to succeed in their new environment or workplace, and explore attitudes necessary for successful adaptation and integration.

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

To reduce the anxiety many migrants experience when travelling abroad for the first time, IOM facilitates the transition by providing detailed information on air travel and offering reduced, one-way migrant fares facilitated by IOM's Operations Support Unit (OSU). This support includes assisting migrants in completing all departure and arrival documentation, assistance at the airport of departure, in transit and upon arrival, as well as flight escorts for the elderly, those with disabilities or health conditions and unaccompanied minors.

For further information please contact:

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IOM IS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT HUMANE AND ORDERLY MIGRATION BENEFITS MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY. AS AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION, IOM ACTS WITH ITS PARTNERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO: ASSIST IN MEETING THE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION, ADVANCE UNDERSTANDING OF MIGRATION ISSUES, ENCOURAGE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MIGRATION, AND WORK TOWARDS EFFECTIVE RESPECT OF THE HUMAN DIGNITY AND WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS. © IOM 2015