

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
International Partnerships Division (IPD)
Assessment of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration

Summary of Findings per ISCM

As part of an assessment of inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs), a survey was conducted in 2019. Carried out by IOM among ISCMs, their Member States and relevant inter-governmental organizations, the survey aimed to assess ISCMs' continued relevance and contribution to migration governance at all levels (national, regional and international) and the synergies among ISCMs and with other actors. The findings of this survey were presented at the global gathering of ISCMs in 2019 and were used to develop recommendations to enhance ISCMs' engagement in migration governance.

46 States and 22 ISCMs and 3 inter-governmental organizations provided answers to the questionnaires. The results are to be found in the 2019 assessment report: Advancing a common understanding of migration governance among regions, which provides an overview on ISCMs' organization, engagements, their continued relevance and synergies with relevant actors in the area of migration management. In addition to the report, the information below is meant to outline each individual ISCM's thematic priorities, structure, impact and relevance.

Name of the Inter-state consultation mechanism (ISCM): ***Regional Conference on Migration for North and Central America (RCM or Puebla Process)***

1. Evolution of programing and thematic focus

During its 23 years of existence, the RCM has focused its efforts on three central themes: strengthen migration governance; protect the human rights of migrants, especially of those in vulnerable situations; promote appropriate linkages between migration and sustainable development.

2. Contribution to migration governance at national, (inter)regional and global levels (with examples)

National level: Member States works to achieve the ideals proposed the guidelines adopted in the RCM, each according to their possibilities and in accordance with the convenience and national legislation. The Technical Secretariat frequently sends reminders to the Member States of the commitments stated at the Vice-Ministerial Declaration and establishes a due date for countries to send inputs. Once received, it works closely with the parties involved in the different initiatives aimed at the accomplishment of commitments.

Regional level: Various declarations and guidelines concerning migration in the region have been made by the RCM Member States over its 23 years of existence. Recent examples include Guidelines on Assistance and Protection of Women in the Context of Migration (2018), Regional Guidelines for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents in the Context of Migration (2016), Guide to Effective Practices for RCM Member Countries: Protection for persons moving across borders in the context of disasters (2016), and Managua Extraordinary Declaration on Migrant Boys, Girls and Adolescents (2014).

Global level: The RCM recognizes the importance of the GCM as the global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. Its Member States are committed to strengthening the norms, principles, rules and decision-making processes that will allow for more effective international cooperation. The Special Declaration of the Regional Conference on Migration related to the GCM was adopted in the Vice-Ministerial meeting held in El Salvador in 2017.

The RCM has been recognized as one of the most effective processes for enhancing coordination on international migration, human mobility and for putting in place durable solutions and approaches, outlining the importance of protecting the rights of refugees and migrants for 23 years.

3. Salient ISCM structures

Key RCM structures include Chair, Chairmanship Troika, Meeting of Deputy Ministers, the Regional Consultation Group on Migration, the Liaison Officers Network to Combat Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking, the Liaison Officers Network for Consular Protection, Technical Secretariat and civil society dialogue. IOM provides technical cooperation and administrative support to the Technical Secretariat.

It is funded through annual fees by the Member States and in-kind contributions by the Chair-in-Office, Member States, Member Organizations and donors of the targeted projects.

It is unique in having the Reserve Fund for the Assisted Voluntary Return of Migrants in Highly Vulnerable Situations. The fund was established in 2004 as a regional mechanism to provide financial and operational support for the voluntary return of migrants in vulnerable situations and for persons requiring assistance beyond the support provided through existing programmes in each RCM member country.

4. Partnership models by the ISCM

The RCM collaborates with other countries, regional processes, international organizations, civil society and forums through information exchange, training efforts, workshops, development of documents and studies and various types of contributions. For instance, the RCM and SACM hold regular bi-regional meetings. Regional and international organizations can be granted observer status to join certain meetings. Their role is to support projects identified by each government, share information about topics of interest, provide technical assistance and formulate recommendations in specific cases. Civil society, private sector and academia are involved in various workshops and seminars held by the RCM.

The RCM has also participated in other related meetings, such as the meetings of the Committee on Migration Issues of the OAS, as well as in OAS forums related to migration. In 2018, the RCM Chair participated in the International Dialogue on Migration, “Inclusive and innovative partnerships for effective global governance of migration”, in the panel “SDGs achievement: national and regional perspectives.”

5. Added value of Membership in the given ISCM for States and Organizations (with examples)

Four MSs surveyed (Canada, Honduras, Mexico, Panama) referred to the RCM in their questionnaires. The MSs value RCM for trust-building, networking, partnerships, open dialogue on new emerging issues, capacity building and the opportunities of gaining common understandings and approaches to migration issues.

Member States highlighted the RCM regional guidelines and manuals as useful guiding tools for the development and implementation of policies on specific topics such as assistance to migrant women, children and adolescents; protection of migrants human rights in situations of verification of immigration status, detention and reception; the return of migrants and repatriation of victims of trafficking. For example, the special guidelines for the differentiated care of the migrant population has been helpful for Honduras to create care protocols.

The RCM has also facilitated Member States in implementing global initiatives on migration, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, Mexico keeps working on the Lines of Action to mainstream and regionalize the SDGs in the migration governance following the two RCM workshops in 2018.

The RCM meanwhile carries out multiple activities such as cooperation initiatives; assistance to migrant women and to children and adolescents; training workshops and seminars on migration; technical and institutional assistance for immigration and consular affairs authorities of the RCM Member States. It conducts comparative analyses with the objective of generating input for policymaking and for improving regulations on migration matters.