



OVERVIEW

As an important country of destination for migrants from neighboring countries, many migrant workers are living in Thailand in areas prone to flooding and landslide and in areas at risk of being affected by tsunamis and tropical storms. Such natural disasters are expected to happen more frequently and to be more intense as a result of the changing climate. In fact, according to the Global Climate Risk Index, Thailand ranked as the 10th most affected country in the world in 2017.

These events often overwhelm the capacities of communities to cope, resulting in injuries, loss of life and significant damage to infrastructure. Experience during crises or disasters has shown that migrants can be disproportionately affected. Migrants may require targeted assistance due to unique vulnerabilities, needs, and capacities, which can be overlooked in crisis preparedness, emergency response, and recovery.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) addresses these challenges by considering the vulnerabilities that emerge during people's migration and has developed a people-centered approach on migration, climate change and disaster preparedness. IOM's current involvement focuses on supporting the Royal Government of Thailand (RTG) to prepare for such disasters, through planning and emergency preparation, together with affected communities.

IOM PROGRAMS

The Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative aims to improve the ability of States and other stakeholders to better prepare for, respond to, and protect the lives, dignity, and rights of migrants residing in countries experiencing conflicts and natural disasters. Under this project, research was undertaken on the inclusion of migrants in response to the 2011 floods. This initiative brought a wealth of expertise and tools to ensure mobile populations are not left behind, and proposed a more inclusive approach to mobility when considering the environment and climate change.

In June 2016, IOM released of the MICIC Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflicts and Natural Disasters. The work to improve the situation of migrants in the context of crises continues through dissemination of the Guidelines, capacity building activities, research and development of operational tools.

Under **IOM Thailand's Asia Regional Migration Program** funded by the United States Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), continued focus has been placed on implementation of the MICIC Guidelines in Thailand and across the region. Activities under this program support the active capacity-building and coordination efforts of the Royal Thai Government (RTG) and governments in the region to better address migrant vulnerabilities in disaster risk management, preparedness and response plans.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

2017

- Regional Roundtable on Reducing Migrant Vulnerabilities in Times of Crisis in Southeast Asia.

2018

- Study on gaps in coordination in addressing migrants' vulnerabilities in disasters.
- Regional workshop on the Evacuation of Migrants.
- Vietnamese government study visit on Migration Crisis Operational Framework to learn from Thailand's experience.

2019

- Regional workshop on consular contingency planning: Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam to develop and maintain updated and robust consular contingency plans.
- Trainings of Trainers at provincial level to facilitate sustainable uptake of MICIC principles and methodologies at local level.
- Hosting a live evacuation simulation exercise in coordination with local government actors in a migrant community in Southern Thailand.



Different movements emerge from sudden-onset disasters (such as cyclones), which immediately displace people, or from slow-onset disasters (such as sea-level rise and drought). Taking into account mobility due to environmental changes implies that we must consider the following strategies used to adapt to climate changes:

- Migration undertaken voluntarily, for example rural to urban movement or cross-border labour migration undertaken as a form of adaptation;
- Displacement, which is a forced movement that can be internal or cross-border;
- Planned relocation of households or communities, which implies a permanent transplanting of communities and their assets in another location.

POLICY OPTIONS

HELP PEOPLE TO STAY (Minimizing forced migration)



- Enhancing livelihoods
- Extension of access to insurance
- Disaster Risk Reduction

HELP PEOPLE TO MOVE (FACILITATING MIGRATION AS ADAPTATION)



- Facilitating cross border mobility
- Facilitating remittances
- Facilitating internal mobility
- Planned relocation

HELP PEOPLE ON THE MOVE (ASSISTING PEOPLE ON THE MOVE)



- Emergency and humanitarian operations

WAY FORWARD

- ⇒ Continue to work with Royal Thai Government (RTG) counterparts to build capacities and coordination to integrate migrants in disaster preparedness and response. Future activities include hosting a live evacuation simulation exercise in coordination with local government actors in a migrant community in Southern Thailand.
- ⇒ Address the lack of available data through research on the drivers of Environmental Migration in Thailand, both internally and across borders.
- ⇒ Work with the private sector on capacity building for migrant workers on climate change adaptation in both communities of origin and destination.
- ⇒ Strengthen the resilience of communities affected by climate change through the contributions of migrants' skills and remittances to communities of origin and destination (migration corridors). IOM aims to work with neighboring countries to encourage migrants in Thailand to support their communities in facing climate change.

