

IOM UK Submission to the Call for Evidence for the London Climate Resilience Review

The following submission from IOM is being provided on a voluntary basis and should not be interpreted or construed as a waiver, express or implied, of the privileges and immunities of IOM and its officials.

Introduction

- I. Founded in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. With 175 member states and presence in over 100 countries, IOM, as the UN Migration Agency, is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.
- II. The Organization works with international partners including government entities, UN and international organisations, civil society organizations, communities, and private sector to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration and to uphold the well-being and human rights of all migrants.
- III. According to Article 1 (c) of the IOM Constitution, one of the purposes and functions of the Organization is “to provide [...] advisory services on migration questions and other assistance as is in accord with the aims of the Organization”. The IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration Environment and Climate Change 2021-2030, further provides that the Organization will “step up its support to national and local governments [...] to provide migration policy advice, strengthen capacities and develop approaches that are migrant centred and inclusive, with a view to address human mobility challenges and seize opportunities related to climate and environmental changes.” The Strategy formulates three strategic objectives: to develop solutions for people to move, for people on the move and for people to stay.
- IV. IOM Country Office for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (IOM UK) is pleased to make a submission to this [Call for Evidence](#) with the note that it focuses only on questions 5, 7 and 8, as this is where IOM feels it can make valuable contributions. This submission is based on IOM’s expertise and experience on the nexus between climate change and migration, supporting and working with governments, partners and migrants.

IOM Response

Question 5: Does your organisation/business consider the impacts of extreme weather on your customers¹?

5.1 The International Organization for Migration (IOM), as the leading intergovernmental migration agency, has been working on the nexus between migration, environment and climate change for over 15 years. IOM engages in policy work and advocacy, research, capacity building, and operational activities in the area of migration, environment and climate change nexus in collaboration with IOM Member States, observers and partners.

5.2 IOM’s work aims to facilitate migration in the context of climate change adaptation and enhance the resilience of affected communities, to assist and protect affected populations and prevent to the extent possible further forced migration related to environmental factors.

¹ IOM UK interprets ‘customers’ as including the migrants we support, Member States and other partners we work with.

5.3 IOM recognises that climate change is already having an impact on human mobility patterns and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, including among people already on the move. As migration is increasingly occurring towards urban areas, cities play a crucial role in welcoming newcomers; urban migrant populations, in particular those with precarious, insecure and irregular immigration statuses and from lower-income groups can be at particular risk from the impacts of climate change. This was acknowledged in Oxford University's COMPAS report '[Building an Inclusive Green Recovery](#)' as well as the [Global Mayors Agenda on Climate and Migration](#).

5.4 The link between migrant integration, social inclusion and climate change adaptation is becoming increasingly important in IOM UK's work at the local level. The more cities are able to tackle inequalities and increase social inclusion, offering decent work opportunities and quality housing and services to newcomers as well as long-standing residents, the more migrant groups will be able to thrive in and contribute to their communities, creating resilient societies.

5.5 At IOM UK, we are working with diasporas and local authorities to come up with solutions that leverage migrants' and diasporas' skills towards the green transition in the UK as well as supporting climate action in countries of origin and heritage. At IOM we recognise that migrants and diasporas are [already driving or are part of innovative initiatives and projects](#) that contribute to climate action and positively impact the resilience of their wider community.

Question 7: What opportunities does climate adaptation and resilience in London present for the UK economy, businesses or communities? What is already working well? Please share any examples of success

7.1 While representing a significant challenge, climate change also brings opportunities for developing innovative solutions and partnerships that can accelerate progress towards climate adaptation and resilience.

7.2 Cities like London, with their diverse communities, are well placed to foster innovative and inclusive approaches to climate action by mobilising the unique connections, expertise and resources of their own resident diasporas. London can drive change by building safe and inclusive platforms for peer learning, building meaningful partnerships and exchanging best practices about ways to better support climate action in communities of residence.

7.3 Some Londoners come from countries and places which are extremely vulnerable to disasters and the negative impacts of climate and environmental change²; their knowledge and experiences can inform London's decision-making, planning and monitoring around some of the key issues affecting the city, including surface flooding. The potential for greater diaspora engagement in cities like London was already discussed during [London Climate Action Week 2023](#), at the virtual event 'Diaspora for climate action: Bridging local actors & global aspirations' organised by IOM UK.

7.4 IOM UK is also managing a global project which seeks to connect diaspora communities from climate vulnerable countries with ministries and other national and national stakeholders in countries of heritage. The [Diaspora 4 Climate Action project](#) aims to strengthen climate action in priority areas identified by governments, including green energy, water management, waste, climate finance, and biodiversity restoration. Beyond the positive impact of this project in countries of origin, supporting diaspora communities, and especially diaspora youth, across the UK to become

² See for example the Bangladeshi and Pakistani diasporas in the UK – which are among the largest globally, and have significantly contributed to the floods response in both countries in 2022.

more aware and engaged on climate action will benefit their communities of residence too. The initiative offers a platform to engage in constructive dialogue with London-based diaspora groups and, through them, connect and exchange with cities in countries of heritage, fostering peer-learning between cities and partnership on solutions.

7.5 Youth engagement is particularly important. Globally, we are already seeing strong [engagement from youth](#), including diaspora youth, on the topic of climate action. If enabling conditions are created, young diaspora members can become ambassadors within their cities and communities and contribute to greater awareness and innovation in the city they live in.

7.6 London is a city of immigrants and migrants' skills can play an important role in filling existing gaps in the labour market, which will be crucial to deliver a successful green transition. An improved understanding of skills shortages in the city – especially, in the context of the green transition - could help to inform national policy options that, for example, can facilitate employment of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who have the right skills and already residing in the UK. Building trade occupations needed in the green transition have recently been added to the [shortage occupation list](#), including ‘bricklayers and masons’, ‘roofers, roof tilers and slaters’, ‘carpenters and joiners’, ‘plasterers’ and ‘construction and building trades not elsewhere classified’. Physical scientists with expertise relevant to climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, including engineering geologists, hydrogeologists and geophysicists, are also on the list. While the current list could be further expanded - where asylum seekers’ skills already match existing requirements, their talents could be employed to achieve climate adaptation and resilience targets.

7.7 [IOM UK already works with partners](#) to bring professionals who are in displacement situations to the UK, through displacement talent pathways (see for example the UK’s [Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot](#)). New pathways for skilled migrants in priority sectors (e.g., sectors including energy and construction [urgently need](#) heat pump installers, engineers, electricians and external insulation technicians), as well as opportunities for training and upskilling through temporary circular migration, would also help to advance some of London’s climate adaptation and resilience needs. Although many of these options are the prerogative of national governments, cities can play a role in collecting evidence and contributing to building constructive narratives, which are conducive to the consideration of appropriate immigration policies in light of net zero challenges.

7.8 Finally, there is an opportunity to analyse the impact of climate change on human mobility in Greater London, to inform evidence-based climate adaptation and resilience strategies. IOM has developed several tools in this regard and has recently completed a [project in Paris](#) that included surveys and other analysis, resulting in recommendations in the areas of urban planning, employment, health, participation and inclusion, advocacy and international cooperation.

7.9 We provide below a summary of practical considerations for the Greater London Authority:

- Ensuring consultation and exchange with migrant and diaspora communities on adaptation planning, implementation and monitoring, either by integrating these groups into already existing consultative bodies; by creating a targeted advisory board which can provide needs-based expert advice; or organising thematic dialogues/exchanges that particularly seek to engage these groups and capture their perspectives
- Mobilise youth (ensuring representation of migrant and diaspora youth) to get involved in climate action activities through, for example, social media campaigns, workshops, contests, awards, and dedicated events

- Gather data and engage the private sector to better understand the skills gaps in London's labour market which act as barriers to its green transition. Work with partners to discuss opportunities for skill development and leveraging 'untapped' human capital, including newcomers and longer-term residents
- Consider analysing the impact of climate change on human mobility in London to gather specific recommendations in various areas (e.g., urban planning, employment, health, participation and inclusion, advocacy and international cooperation). This would advance progress on the city's climate resilience goals as well as on global development and migration related objectives (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals and Global Compacts on [Migration](#) and [Refugees](#)).

Question 8: What more could local and/or national government, or the Mayor, do to support efforts to prepare for more extreme weather in London?

8.1 As highlighted above, mapping labour shortages in the green economy at London level, particularly in priority areas, can provide useful data and evidence that can form the basis for discussions with the national government around how these gaps can be filled to meet the urgent needs of climate adaptation.

8.2 In the same vein, collecting data about inward and outward migration from urban areas can inform inclusive urban planning and policies, and help to ensure that these policies and plans do not end up exposing certain groups to greater climate-related risks. Increased understanding about migration flows to and from London can also help shape wider migration governance; IOM has developed a methodology to help countries and municipalities to assess their migration policies and advance the conversation on what well-governed migration might look like in practice. The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI), a set of approximately 90 indicators, offer a tool that helps to assess the comprehensiveness of local and national migration policies and align them to the Global Compact of Migration. As suggested in this contribution, well-governed migration, inclusive urban planning and urban resilience go hand in hand.

8.3 Authorities could further engage London's diverse communities in designing a resilient city. Some ideas might include establishing dialogues, platforms or advisory groups where citizens, including migrants and diasporas can input their ideas and expertise into the design and implementation of London climate resilience and extreme weather preparedness. These exchanges also offer a good opportunity to learn from communities who might already have the experience of developing or implementing climate adaptation policies and programmes in other countries.

8.4 Additionally, London authorities could expand the UN Secretary General's [Early Warnings for All](#) initiative by establishing good practices to improve migrants and asylum seekers' inclusion in disaster preparedness and response actions (e.g., access to flood early warning systems, consultations to gain locally-grounded understanding of hazards).

8.4 Finally, allocating budget to local climate initiatives which can bring different communities together (e.g., creating urban gardens that communities can work on together), would benefit both social inclusion and London's preparedness to extreme weather, while increasing its social and climate resilience.