Overview

With a population of 2 million, The Gambia is one of Africa's smallest countries. Despite its size, migration plays a significant role in Gambian society. Overseas remittances of an estimated 90,000 Gambians living abroad account for over 20 per cent of the country's GDP, while rural-to-urban migration has led to increasing urbanization. In recent years, the pursuit for socioeconomic advancement—especially among the youth—has driven many to undertake irregular migration with the aim of reaching Europe. Over 8,498 Gambians arrived in Europe in 2017, with many others in Africa along the Central Mediterranean Route now opting for voluntary return.

Having established an operational presence in 2001, IOM The Gambia officially became a country office in July 2017 and implements an extensive range of programs. It works closely with the Government of The Gambia to strengthen migration governance through national coordination frameworks and evidence-based policy design, particularly through research and collection and analysis of data to inform policymaking. IOM has also provided technical assistance to the Government in developing its first national migration policy. Operationally, IOM facilitates the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants, placing a particular emphasis on the protection of vulnerable migrants. Between January 2017 and October 2018, more than 3,700 Gambian returnees have been assisted. IOM also works with local partners to raise awareness among potential migrants about risks of and alternatives to irregular migration and promotes diaspora engagement to contribute to economic development through knowledge and skills transfer. As a whole, IOM supports the Government of The Gambia and national and local partners to build their capacities to protect migrants, promote their rights and better manage migration.
Migrant Protection and Assistance

EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration: The Gambia
Donor: EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)

A regional initiative in 26 countries across Africa, the Joint Initiative aims to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants in The Gambia and to work closely with the Government to strengthen the governance of migration.

Africa Regional Migration Programme
Donor: US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)

A regional project implemented in West and Central Africa, the project aims to build the capacities of state and nonstate actors to provide assistance to vulnerable migrants.

Immigration and Border Management

Enhancing collective capacity for managing borders and for protecting border communities: The Gambia and Senegal
Donor: The Government of Japan

The project facilitates cooperation between the Governments of The Gambia and Senegal to work jointly to address security challenges along their common borders.

Labour Mobility and Human Development

Safety, Support and Solutions in the Central Mediterranean Route
Donor: UK Department for International Development (DfID)

The project aims to enhance the capacities of government officials, civil society organizations and nongovernment organizations for migrant protection and the development of livelihood and income-generation alternatives.

Bridging together youth, diaspora and local authorities for an integrated approach to promote employment and address irregular migration in The Gambia, Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau
Donor: Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)

The overall project objective is to promote safe migration and create alternatives to the irregular migration of youth by fostering employment in communities of origin.

Migration Health

United Kingdom Pre-Departure Tuberculosis Detection Programme (UKTB)

The programme provides migration support service to the United Kingdom through pre-departure tuberculosis screening, as well as anti-fraud measures, such as DNA testing and bio-sampling.