

Guide on Organising Mobile Counselling for Migrants and Diaspora Members

Based on lessons learned from the
information days for the Georgian diaspora
in the ERGEM project

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International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

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Foreword

"Organising the information day is so important not only for the migrants but also for the government. It gives a chance to see the problems that migrants face up close."

"It's so important that you pay attention and care about the diaspora. It's very much appreciated that you care so much about the youth and children especially (...)."

Source: ICMPD, 2014b¹

Information days for Georgian migrants and diaspora members were some of the main activities in the "Enhancing the Role of Georgian Migrants at Home (ERGEM)" project, which was funded by the European Union's Thematic Programme for Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The project was implemented under the leadership of the Danish Refugee Council in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and a consortium of project partners that included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Ministry of the Interior of Poland, the Public Service Development Agency (Ministry of Justice of Georgia), the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia. The main objective of the information days held in three main destination countries for Georgian migrants, namely Germany (Berlin), Greece (Athens), and Turkey (Istanbul), was to improve the dissemination of information and provision of services by Georgian

¹ ICMPD (2014b), 'Information Days for the Georgian Diaspora. An analysis of the lessons learned from the implementation of information days in Athens/ Greece, Berlin/Germany and Istanbul/Turkey', Internal Report (Vienna: ICMPD).

institutions to migrants and diaspora members abroad regarding various issues, such as their legal status, identity and official documents, property rights, return and reintegration possibilities, as well as business and investment opportunities in Georgia. Hence, the information days aimed to complement available consular services. The events were organised and implemented by the ERGEM ICMPD project team and mobile counselling units composed of Georgian state institution representatives.

In total, nine Georgian ministries were part of the mobile counselling units and participated in the events: the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues, the Public Service Development Agency and the Public Service Hall (Ministry of Justice), the Ministry of the Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry for Labour, Social and Health Affairs was available for Skype interviews during two of the events. Hence, the information days were an excellent tool to enhance inter-institutional coordination and to deliver high-quality services and first-hand knowledge on different procedures.

An analysis of the lessons learned from the implementation of the information days showed that in addition to providing counselling to Georgian migrants and diaspora members (its main purpose), this innovative diaspora outreach tool also contributed to deepening relations between the origin country and migrants and diaspora members. Moreover, the information days enabled the government institutions to gain further knowledge on the needs and requests of Georgian migrants and diaspora members. It was also determined that the events complemented available consular services and facilitated trust-building between Georgia and Georgian migrants/diaspora members abroad.

This guide for replicating the information days as the final ERGEM project outcome takes into account the lessons learned from the implementation of the three events. It describes all steps on how to organise, implement and evaluate information days to achieve the following objectives:

- a) enhance the provision of services and information for migrants and diaspora members abroad
- b) improve the collection and analysis of information to design better policies to protect migrants and diaspora members abroad
- c) lay the groundwork for the development potential of migrants and diaspora members to be unleashed.

This publication can be used as a general guide for all governments interested in reaching out to and engaging with their migrants and diaspora members abroad.

The authors would like to genuinely thank everyone who participated in the ERGEM project, in particular those who contributed to the ERGEM information days and this publication, for their excellent cooperation and their efforts in implementing the project.

ICMPD ERGEM project team

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Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction 13

1. **A guide on the provision of information for migrants and diaspora members – what to expect?** 15
2. **How the guide was born – a short explanation** 19
3. **What is a mobile counselling programme?** 20
4. **Importance of information exchange between migrants and diaspora members and the government** 21

Section 2: Develop a Mobile Counselling Programme 27

1. **Before getting started** 31
 - a) Set up a coordination mechanism 31
 - b) Have a clear idea of the available budget 32
2. **Analysing the needs of migrants and diaspora members** 33
3. **Setting the objectives and priorities** 37
4. **Conducting a stakeholder mapping and assessing available capacities** 40
 - a) Conduct a stakeholder mapping 40
 - b) Assessing the capacities of stakeholders 42
5. **Defining the programme** 43
 - a) Develop the terms of reference for the counselling programme 43
 - b) Select the participants of the counselling unit (counsellors) 45

c)	Define local partners	46
d)	Define the elements of the counselling event	46
e)	Select the venue	51
f)	Define the counselling event time and duration	53
g)	Develop a communication plan	54
h)	Define the needed information material	57
i)	Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan	58
6.	Checklist: developing a counselling programme	61

Section 3: Implementing the Mobile Counselling Programme 63

1.	Before the counselling event	67
a)	Logistical issues	67
b)	Implementation of the communication plan for advertising the event and outreach to potential attendees	68
c)	Prepare the counsellors	71
d)	Collect information material	72
2.	During the counselling event	73
a)	On-site preparations	73
b)	Keep control over the programme	74
c)	Providing tailor-made counselling services	75
d)	Documentation of the services provided during the consultations	77
3.	After the counselling event	77
a)	Collect the fresh impressions	77
b)	Upload information online	77
c)	Communicate the success of the event	77
d)	Update the contact list	78
e)	Ensure internal knowledge management	78
4.	Checklist: implementing a counselling programme	80

Section 4: Monitoring and Evaluating the Mobile Counselling Programme 81

1.	How to measure the success of the counselling programme	85
2.	Challenges and how to deal with them	92
a)	Insufficient human resources	92
b)	Staff turnover	93
c)	Insufficient financial resources	93

d)	Lack of interest by diaspora members/migrants	94
e)	Lack of trust by diaspora members/migrants	95
3.	Checklist: monitoring and evaluating the mobile counselling programme	96
4.	Additional material and tips	97
a)	Questionnaire: migrants (example from the ERGEM project)	97
b)	Questionnaire: diaspora organisations (example from the ERGEM project)	98
c)	Questionnaire: state institutions (example from the ERGEM project)	101
d)	Debriefing guidelines	105
e)	Consultation record sheet	105
f)	Attendee headcount	106
g)	Lessons learned report: table of contents – example (adapted from the ERGEM project)	107

Section 5: Experiences from the ERGEM Project Information Days 109

1.	Information day in Athens, Greece	115
2.	Information day in Berlin, Germany	118
3.	Information day in Istanbul, Turkey	121

Use of Symbols

12



This symbol indicates that other tools and guidelines can be used to complement this section.



This symbol indicates the 'Ask yourself' section that provides questions to reflect on the process.



This symbol indicates a template which you can use after modifying and adapting it to your own needs.



This symbol indicates a checklist which helps you to go through the main steps to ensure that you have not forgotten an important item.



This symbol indicates 'food for thought', i.e. interesting examples from other countries and things to consider.



Section 1

Introduction

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. A guide on the provision of information for migrants and diaspora members – what to expect? | 15 |
| 2. How the guide was born – a short explanation | 19 |
| 3. What is a mobile counselling programme? | 20 |
| 4. Importance of information exchange between migrants and diaspora members and the government | 21 |

Section 1

Introduction

1. A guide on the provision of information for migrants and diaspora members – what to expect?

A compatriot/expatriate residing abroad is “a citizen of Georgia, who resides in other state for a long period of time, or a citizen of other state, who is of Georgian descent and/or whose native language belongs to the Georgian-Caucasian language group”.

Source: Law of Georgia on compatriots/expatriates residing abroad and diaspora organizations, 2011

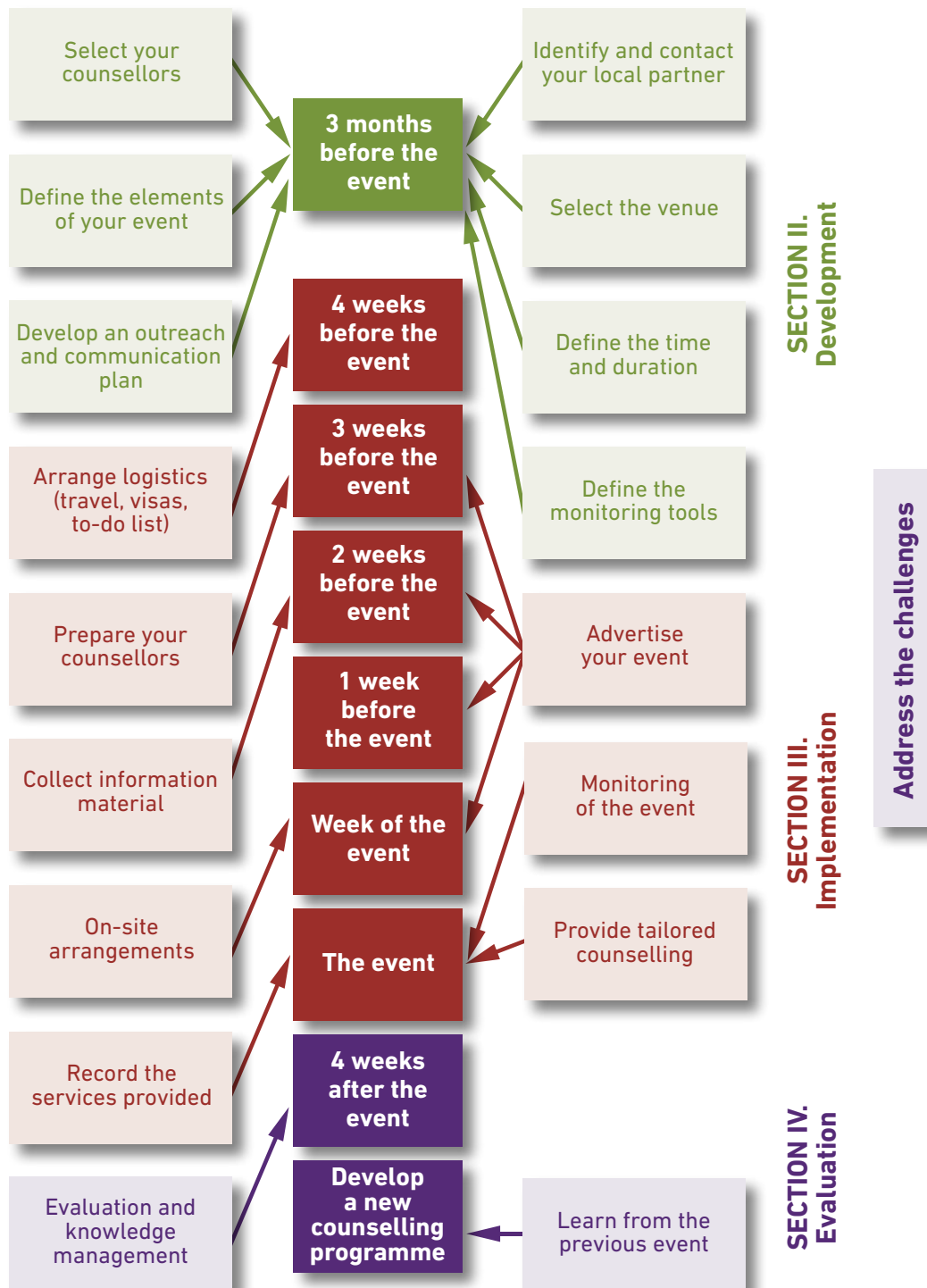
The contribution of migrants and diaspora members to the development of their countries of origin is widely acknowledged, and a number of governments have established special institutions to reach out to their migrants and diaspora communities. However, evidence of successful measures to strengthen relations between the government and these communities and to build trust, is scarce. It has also been widely acknowledged that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach. Indeed, governments have applied a number of practices. The consensus is that protecting and supporting migrants and diaspora members is an important precondition for building and maintaining relations and promoting their contributions to development processes at home.

For states that have limited consular coverage due to a lack of financial and/or human resources, it is difficult to meet the needs of migrants and diaspora members through the provision of consular protection and services only. Hence, the establishment of so-called “mobile counselling units” composed of state officials and the organisation of a mobile counselling programme in main countries of destination were identified by the ERGEM project as a means to overcome this challenge.

This user-friendly guide provides state officials who work on diaspora issues with the following tools:

1. a step-by-step tool on how to develop and implement a counselling programme for migrants and diaspora members in their destination countries
2. guidance on how to monitor and evaluate the implementation of a counselling programme
3. lessons learned from holding three information days that were piloted in the ERGEM project.

Structure of the guide and main steps in organising and holding a counselling programme event (hereafter “counselling event”):



Section II of this guide describes the main steps in **developing a mobile counselling programme** as a basis for holding a successful counselling event. The main principles of the development phase to help you establish a comprehensive counselling programme are the following:

- **Communicate!** Communication throughout the process is important. Establish contact and communicate with the consular representation and active diaspora organisations.
- **Be creative!** Think of means to attract as many migrants and diaspora members as possible: integrate cultural activities into the programme and use social media and other diverse outreach tools!
- **Know your migrants and diaspora members!** Tailor the counselling programme to the specific profile of your migrant and diaspora communities in the targeted country.
- **Be innovative!** Ensure that the composition of participating state institutions is considered each time you organise a counselling programme and consider involving private institutions and civil society actors.

Section III provides an outline of the main steps in **organising and holding a counselling event** and describes in detail what needs to be considered before, *during* and *after* holding the event. This section encourages the organisers of the mobile counselling programme to:

- **Be prepared!** Familiarise yourself with the profile of the migrant and diaspora communities in the specific country and have an overview of the main features of the legal framework in the destination country.
- **Stay organised!** Create a to-do list, including all steps to be taken, deadlines and responsible persons.
- **Be flexible!** Tailor the communication tools and information material to the profile of your migrant and diaspora communities.
- **Be approachable!** Ensure easy access for and open communication with migrants and diaspora members.
- **Be a networker!** A counselling programme should be used to establish, strengthen and maintain a dialogue between state institutions and migrants/diaspora members.

Section IV describes the **monitoring and evaluation** of the implementation of the mobile counselling programme, focusing on why monitoring and evaluation are important, what tools you can use and what challenges you as organiser of the counselling programme might encounter. During this final phase of the programme, it is important to do the following:

- **Stay active!** The follow-up is as important as the planning and implementation phase.
- **Share your knowledge!** Report your observations and lessons learned.
- **Get started again!** Include what you have learned in the development of another counselling programme.

Finally, **Section V** of the guide provides a short description of the ERGEM project as well as the most important lessons learned from the three information days held in the framework of this project.

2. How the guide was born – a short explanation

This practical guide is one of the outcomes of the ERGEM project². The project's overall objective was to contribute to strengthening the ties between Georgians abroad and Georgian institutions in order to increase migrants' and diaspora members' contributions to Georgia's economic development.

This practical guide builds directly upon the following ERGEM project activities and results:

- the study *Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey: Transnational realities and ties with Georgia* ("ERGEM case study")³
- two study visits of Georgian state institution representatives to Poland and Portugal to facilitate peer-to-peer learning on diaspora engagement and the provision of information to migrants and diaspora members
- the analysis of lessons learned from holding successful information days for Georgian migrants and diaspora members in three main countries of destination: Germany (Berlin), Greece (Athens) and Turkey (Istanbul), which were implemented in June and July 2014.

2 The ERGEM project is funded by the European Union's Thematic Programme for Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum and by Turkey. It is being implemented under the leadership of the Danish Refugee Council in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and a consortium of project partners that includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Ministry of the Interior of Poland, the Public Service Development Agency (Ministry of Justice of Georgia), the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia.

3 ICMPD (2014a), *Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey: Transnational realities and ties with Georgia* (Vienna: ICMPD), accessible at http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website_2011/ICMPD_General/News/Georgia_Study/Full_Version_web_en.pdf (English) and http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website_2011/ICMPD_General/News/Georgia_Study/Full_Version_web_GE.pdf (Georgian).

The guide aims to assist state officials in organising counselling events and achieving the following desired results that were identified based on the ERGEM case study and then reconfirmed in the analysis of lessons learned from the ERGEM information days: a) enhanced provision of services and information for Georgian migrants and diaspora members abroad, b) improved collection and analysis of information to design better policies to protect Georgian migrants and diaspora members abroad and c) unleashed development potential of migrants and diaspora members.

3. What is a mobile counselling programme?

'Institutions abroad can service the demands of the diaspora but they also need to be serviced at home.' (Diaspora Matters, 2011)

Many countries, including Georgia, have governmental support services for the migrant and diaspora communities in place. These support services are mostly provided by the government representations abroad, which are well placed to engage with migrants and diaspora members and to address their needs. In addition, some countries also have institutionalised diaspora engagement through the establishment of diaspora ministries or offices. However, these two very important institutions for diaspora engagement often work relatively separately from each other.

Ensuring widespread consular coverage and having the capacities to serve migrants and diaspora members is a challenge, especially for countries with limited financial and human resources. Mobile counselling can be the right tool to address these two challenges and to better serve and engage with migrants and diaspora members abroad. To this end, a mobile counselling unit composed of government experts from relevant institutions can be created, trained and deployed for a limited duration in a main destination country of migrants and diaspora members. The mobile counselling unit should thus be able to provide migrants and diaspora members with advice regarding a wide range of issues covering, inter alia, legal status, identity document issues, portability of social security benefits, property rights, return possibilities, as well as business and investment opportunities in the country of origin.

The underlying objective is to **provide migrants and diaspora members with relevant, timely and high-quality information that is specifically tailored to their needs.** The mobile counselling programme complements available consular services offered by government representations abroad and should bring state institutions abroad and at home working on diaspora issues closer together.

Example from the ERGEM information days

Information days were held in three main destination countries of Georgian migrants and diaspora members: Germany, Greece and Turkey. In total, 294 consultations were provided for 275 attendees by members of a delegation consisting of 10 state officials working for 9 government institutions.

Can technology replace face-to-face contacts with migrants and diaspora members?

One might argue that virtual counselling could also be a solution to complement available consular services, one which would be less costly than deploying mobile counselling units. And yes, technology allows governments to connect with migrants and diaspora members abroad much more extensively than before, as individuals around the globe are increasingly connected through social media and other networks.

However, technology is not a substitute for face-to-face contacts. This is especially the case for migrants and diaspora members who do not belong to “Generation Y”⁴ and therefore may be hard to reach through technology only. In addition, face-to-face communication has a number of advantages: messages get less misinterpreted and non-verbal cues like gestures and facial expressions facilitate a sense of personal connection and trust.



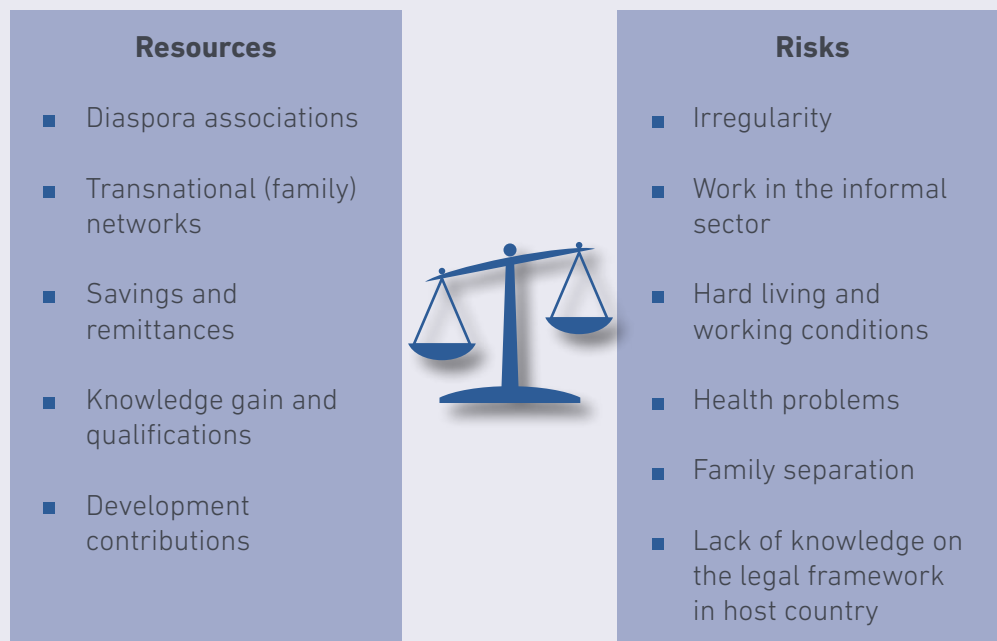
Have a look at section III.2.c where we describe the advantages of face-to-face communication.

4. Importance of information exchange between migrants and diaspora members and the government

When people move, they mostly do so to seek a better life in the form of higher income or security, improved access to education or healthcare, more prospects for their children, etc. But the potential and actual gains resulting from migration are often compromised by an increased level of vulnerability related to the stay in the new destination country. The analysis in the ERGEM case study of the situation of Georgian migrants and diaspora members in the three destination countries of Germany, Greece and Turkey identified the vulnerabilities and risks migrants and diaspora members are exposed to. The study also underlined the

⁴ Referring to those who were born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s and who grew up using different forms of media.

Human migration – resources and risks



Source: created based on ICMPD, 2014a⁵

resources migrants and diaspora members have, such as strong diaspora organisations, transnational family support networks and a better education.

Hence, diaspora policies, in order to be successful, have to address these two sides of human migration. Such policies range from safeguarding the rights of migrants and diaspora members and strengthening their ties with the origin country to promoting their contributions to socio-economic and cultural development and political engagement.⁶

Each relationship between a migrant or diaspora community and its country of origin is unique and depends on a number of factors. Hence, diaspora policies also differ. However, some central elements have been identified as fundamental for successfully engaging migrants and diaspora members in development processes as shown in the figure to the left.⁷

⁵ ICMPD, *Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey*.

⁶ Noack, M., and Wolff, V. (2014), *Enhancing diaspora engagement: Operational guidelines for South-South and triangular cooperation* (Vienna: ICMPD), http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website_2011/ICMPD_General/News/AMEDIP/Enhancing_Diaspora_Engagement_EN_Electronic.pdf.

⁷ Agunias, D.R., and Newland, K. (2012), *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development, A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries* (Geneva, Switzerland and Washington, DC: IOM and MPI), http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/Diaspora_Handbook_EN_For_Web_28May2013.pdf.

A Road Map for Diaspora Engagement

Identify goals and
capacities



Know your migrants
and diaspora members



Build trust



Mobilise stakeholders
(government, diaspora, and
civil society)



Effective engagement
of diaspora in
development

Source: IOM, MPI, 2012

Knowing the migrant and diaspora communities, including their needs, is essential. In addition, good communication and relations built on trust are a precondition for long-term partnerships between the government and migrant/diaspora communities. It is important that migrants and diaspora members feel that they are gaining value from the relationship.

Keep in mind that building trust is a process that needs time and might require long conversations and trying to get to know active and dedicated migrants and diaspora members. The provision of information and services to migrants and diaspora members is fundamental for the trust-building process.

'Countries of origin can contribute to the well-being and success of their diasporas abroad.' (Diaspora Ministerial Conference, 2013)

One way to involve, get to know and strengthen relations with migrants and diaspora members is through the organisation of a counselling programme in the destination country. These counselling programmes foster an exchange of information and benefit the migrants and diaspora members abroad, as well as the state institutions and development processes in Georgia.⁸

⁸ The benefits of counselling events as formulated on the following page are based on ICMPD (2014b), 'Information Days for the Georgian Diaspora. An analysis of the lessons learned from the information days in Athens/Greece, Berlin/Germany and Istanbul/Turkey', Internal Report (Vienna: ICMPD).

Benefits for migrants and diaspora members: enhanced provision of services and information for migrants and diaspora members abroad

- Provision of up-to-date information
- Feeling of trust and that “someone cares”
- Direct and personal contact
- Being informed about changes in the country: information and services
- Easy access also for people who do not have access to online services

‘It’s so important that you pay attention and care about the diaspora. It’s very much appreciated that you care so much about the youth and children especially, helping them to learn the Georgian language is also nice.’ (ICMPD, 2014b)

Benefits for state institutions: improved collection and analysis of information to design better policies to protect migrants and diaspora members abroad

- Evaluation of the main issues/problems of migrants and diaspora members
- Tailor-made provision of information
- Personal contact/higher reward on their work
- Improved inter-institutional cooperation
- Reduction in the provision of contradictory and/or insufficient information
- Improved design of diaspora policies
- Knowledge on migrant and diaspora communities (first-hand information)

‘Organising the information day is so important not only for the migrants but also for the government. They get a chance to see the problems that migrants face up close. Migrants, on the other side, hope that after such events, all the problems/issues that have not been resolved yet will be discussed by the Georgian government and the government will figure out how to solve them.’ (ICMPD, 2014b)

Benefits for development in the origin country: unleashed development potential of migrants and diaspora members

- Exploration of investment opportunities, e.g. in agriculture
- Specific and tailored provision of information on business opportunities
- Information about internship and exchange programmes (knowledge transfer)
- Scientific and academic exchange
- Advice on business facilitation and support programmes
- Development of concrete migrant/diaspora cooperation programmes
- Identification of development areas of common interest
- Promotion of tourism

'It made me feel like I am not alone, that somebody cares. (...) I would love to return home.' (ICMPD, 2014b)

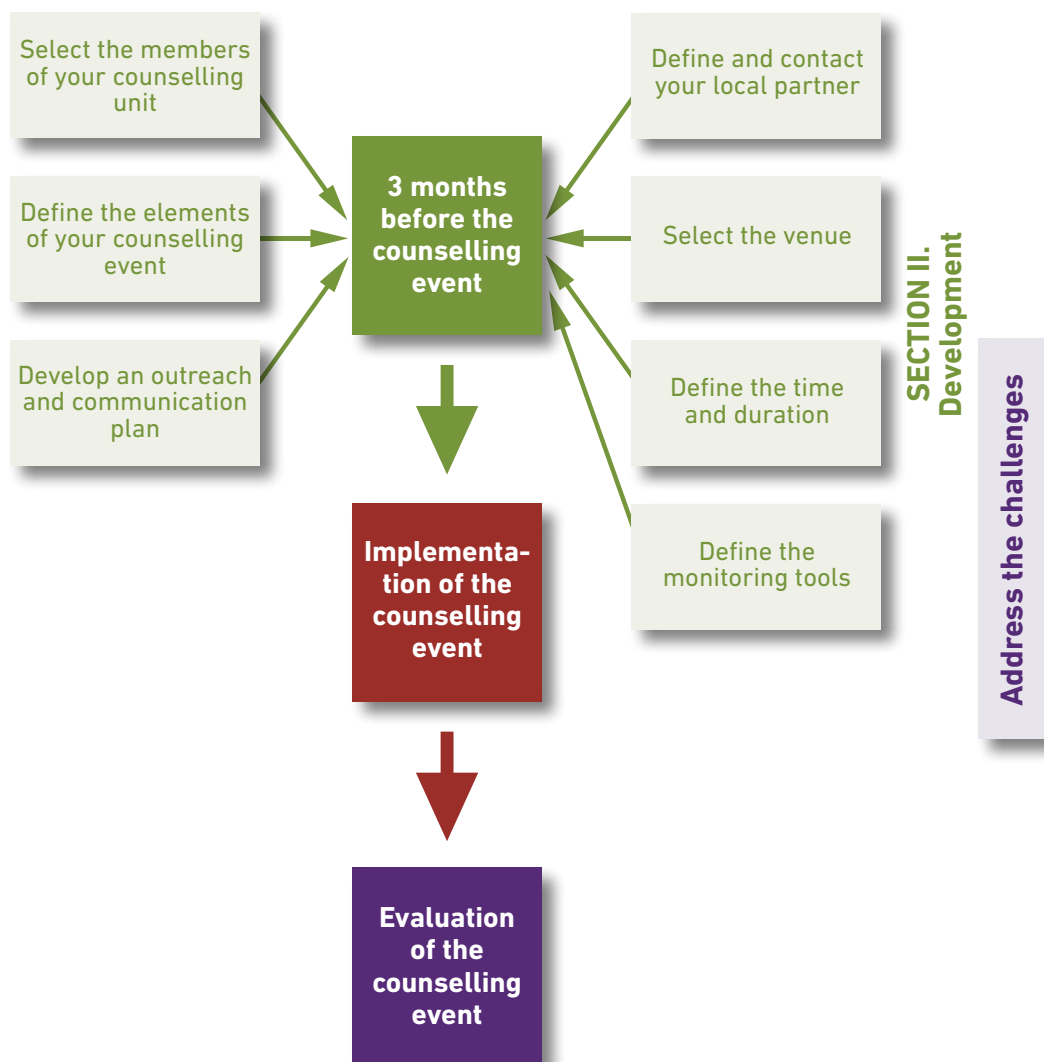
Section 2



Develop a Mobile Counselling Programme

1. Before getting started	31
2. Analysing the needs of migrants and diaspora members	33
3. Setting the objectives and priorities	37
4. Conducting a stakeholder mapping and assessing available capacities	40
5. Defining the programme	43
6. Checklist: developing a counselling programme	61

This section guides you through the main steps in developing a mobile counselling programme as a basis for a successful counselling event. In addition, the preparatory steps ensure that your programme is linked to the larger diaspora programme and contributes to policy development. Later in this section, we will look in detail at the elements of a mobile counselling programme and a counselling event. An analysis of the needs of migrant and diaspora communities, as well as a mapping of stakeholders and an assessment of their capacities, are also described in this section. These tools will help you to define a tailored counselling programme.



Section 2

Develop a Mobile Counselling Programme

1. Before getting started

The planning phase is a crucial step, and it is important to establish a coordination mechanism, including a focal point. You should create a work plan or at least a general outline with a timeline and potential division of tasks. This can help you keep an overview. Furthermore, we also recommend having a look at the available budget for the mobile counselling programme, as it will certainly influence key elements, such as the number of participating state institution representatives, the selection of the venue or the information material and visibility measures chosen.

a) Set up a coordination mechanism

As a first step, identify the **national focal point** for the organisation and implementation of the counselling programme. Naturally, this should be the state institution or agency in charge of diaspora outreach and engagement. If an adequate institution does not exist, then nominate a focal point with the appropriate responsibilities, for example, the institution supervising the consular representations abroad, i.e. the ministry of foreign affairs. The focal point for the counselling programme should drive the process and ensure a certain level of coordination.

Afterwards, the focal point identifies the state institutions that need to take part in the planning of the counselling programme as well as in the counselling programme itself. Two types of coordination mechanisms are necessary: one at the expert level and one at the policy and decision-making level.

The **coordination unit at the expert level** is the working group that plans and develops the counselling programme. The members of the working group ideally

also participate in the implementation of the counselling programme. A first task of the expert coordination unit is to agree on a *modus operandi* of the meetings. This includes the frequency of meetings and the division of tasks.

A coordination unit at the policy level is needed for steering and taking decisions as suggested by the coordination unit at the expert level. It also ensures the link between the counselling programme and the objectives at the national level. Contrary to the expert coordination unit, the policy level coordination unit meets on an *ad hoc* basis.

Example from the ERGEM information days

Experts working at the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues, the Public Service Development Agency and the Public Service Hall (Ministry of Justice), the Ministry of the Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry for Labour, Social and Health Affairs participated in the preparation meetings of the information days organised by ICMPD. These state institutions also participated in all information days. As the events were organised in the framework of the ERGEM project, ICMPD took the role of focal point.

b) Have a clear idea of the available budget

Before developing the counselling programme, ensure that you have an overview of the available resources, as it largely affects the design of the counselling programme. When you realise that some budget items which are crucial for the implementation of the counselling programme cannot be covered, think about potential external sources of funding.

A counselling programme does not necessarily have to cost a lot of money since the most costly and valuable resource – your knowledge, expertise and work time – is already covered. These are the additional budget items you need to consider: travel for participating state officials (flight tickets, per diems and/or accommodation costs), rent for the venue, refreshments for all participants and attendees, visibility material to advertise a counselling event beforehand and printing and editing costs for additional information material you might need.



There are a number of ways to keep the budget low. Have a look at section IV.2.c.



Ask yourself:

- Which are the inter-institutional coordination mechanisms (on the expert and policy level) that currently exist and can be used for developing a counselling programme?
- Which government stakeholders should participate in the coordination units?
- Who are the required policymakers with decision-making power?
- Do you have a sufficient budget? Or can you find external sources of funding?
- If not, list the options that exist for implementing a low-cost counselling programme.

2. Analysing the needs of migrants and diaspora members

The mobile counselling programme depends on the needs migrants and diaspora members have and the specific situation they face in their destination country. The migrant and diaspora profile differs depending on the labour market demands and the immigration policies in the destination country, as well as on the history and culture of the destination country. Also, already established social networks among migrants, potential migrants and diaspora members and shape the profile of migrant and diaspora communities as well as their needs.

Assessing the migrant and diaspora communities in each country is a time-consuming and costly process, especially if you start from scratch; however, it is essential to collect at least general information on them. Even if you have already completed an analysis of your migrant and diaspora communities, it always makes sense to update the information you have already collected before you organise a counselling programme.

These are the **main clusters of questions you should ask** before organising a counselling programme in a destination country:



General profile

- Demographic information (estimated number, age and gender of migrants)
- Educational background and professions
- Level of integration in the destination country (duration of stay, legal status, unemployment rate, vulnerability, discrimination, etc.)
- Specific legal framework in the destination country for immigration and residence (double citizenship, access to the labour market, integration policy, etc.)
- History and background of migration (historical migration patterns and causes for migration)
- Return migration

Ties between migrant and diaspora communities abroad and the origin country

- Diaspora associations and main areas of work
- Remittances, other economic contributions and development potential
- Cultural activities in the destination country
- Activities/business related to the promotion of the country of origin abroad (tourism agencies, restaurants, shops, art galleries, etc.)

Be aware that a large amount of information on your migrant and diaspora communities already exists. So make sure that you use publically available information.

A lot of information is collected by various state institutions; therefore, we recommend to apply a standardised way of information sharing. Institutions that might collect data on migrant and diaspora communities are: the ministry of foreign affairs (consular department); the ministry of interior (border crossings, police); the ministry of labour, social protection and employment; the statistical offices and, of course, the diaspora office.

Consulates and embassies are a rich source of information on migrant and diaspora communities. The main problem lies in the exchange of information between the consulates and the consular department of the ministry of foreign affairs and the state institution in charge of diaspora issues. Ensure that clear reporting lines for the exchange of information are established between the ministry of foreign affairs and the state institution for diaspora issues. The ministry of foreign affairs should inform the state institution for diaspora issues on a

regular basis (e.g. quarterly) on how many people approached the consulates and what needs and problems they have. In addition, the ministry of foreign affairs should also share the information received from the consulates on the main activities of diaspora associations and the 'life' (meeting points, church services, restaurants, etc.) of the migrant and diaspora communities, as this will help advertise the counselling programme at a later stage (see section III.1.b).

Before organising a counselling programme, make sure you have the following **information from the consular representations abroad**:



Consultation record

- How many consultations have been provided in a specific timeframe (i.e. three months)?
- What are the most frequently asked questions?
- Which questions are difficult for the consular staff to answer and require that they ask the appropriate authorities in the capital for the answers?

General information

- What is the profile of nationals abroad approaching the consulate?
- Which groups face the most challenges?
- Which are the most active diaspora organisations and what are their main areas of work?

Information on the destination country context

- What is the specific legal framework that applies to migrants? What are recent changes in the legal framework?
- Which gaps and provisions affect nationals abroad in a negative way?

If there is no consular representation in the country of destination where you will organise a counselling programme, we recommend using other sources for information. You may ask the consulates of other countries for their support, and you might also consider conducting a fact-finding mission. During the fact-finding mission, you can conduct detailed interviews with diaspora organisations or active migrants and diaspora representations and local NGOs.

The implementation of the counselling programme will also help you update your information on your diaspora and migrant communities abroad.



If you have decided to conduct a complete assessment of your migrant and diaspora communities or if you want to know of data sources for secondary data, then have a look at the *Enhancing Diaspora Engage-*

ment. *Operational Guidelines for South-South and Triangular Cooperation*⁹. In addition, the handbook *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development. A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries*¹⁰ will help you to understand why it is important to know your migrant and diaspora communities.

Example from the ERGEM project

Before the ERGEM information days were organised, a case study on the Georgian diaspora and migrant communities in three main countries of destination – Germany, Greece and Turkey – was carried out. It aimed to ascertain the profile of Georgian migrants and diaspora members as well as their specific needs and the challenges they face. Three fact-finding missions to the three countries with the active participation of representatives of Georgian state institutions were carried out to conduct a survey, interviews and focus group discussions with diaspora association representatives as well as a stakeholder mapping.¹¹



Ask yourself:

- Do you have a good overview of the needs and profile of your migrant and diaspora communities in the main destination country?
- Have you established a regular exchange of information with your diplomatic missions and the MFA consular department?
- Have you established an exchange of data and information with the institutions dealing with returnees?
- Are you in contact with diaspora organisations that can give you additional information?

9 Noack and Wolff, Enhancing diaspora engagement.

10 Agunias and Newland, Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development.

11 See the ERGEM case study (ICMPD, Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey) for an example of a questionnaire and a template for focus group discussions.

- Have you consulted publically available sources of information?
- Have you compiled a short (e.g. two-pager based on the main clusters of questions as presented above) information sheet on your migrant and diaspora communities in the country where you want to implement a counselling programme?

Did you know?



- Guinea is conducting a census of migrants abroad.
- Kenya is in the process of creating a database of Kenyans abroad.¹²
- The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) conducted a study called 'Diasporas on the Web: New Networks, New Methodologies' and used social media and web-based methodologies to approach the Southern African diaspora in Canada.
- In 2007, the Ministry of Senegalese Abroad initiated a long-lasting project to map their diaspora, using online registrations, consular registers and members of diaspora associations.¹³

3. Setting the objectives and priorities

After you have a good overview of the profile of migrant and diaspora communities abroad, have a look at your national framework for migrant/diaspora engagement and outreach. A national framework to engage with migrants and diaspora members normally consists of a number of strategic documents or legal texts. Moreover, consult your country's development priorities.

¹² IOM (2013), 'Diaspora Ministerial Conference. Diasporas and Development: Bridging Societies and States', Final Report (Geneva: IOM), http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/idm/workshops/IDM-2013-Diaspora-Ministerial-Conference/DMC_Final_Conference_Report.pdf.

¹³ Bacchi, A., Devillard, A., and Noack, M. (forthcoming), *A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa* (Vienna/Dakar: ICMPD/IOM).

Georgia's framework for relations with migrants and diaspora members

Dedicated institutions

- Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues, established in 2008
- Parliamentary Diaspora and Caucasus Issues Committee

Legal framework

- Law of Georgia on Compatriots Residing Abroad and Diaspora Organizations, adopted in 2011
- Charter of the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues of Georgia, which established the State Diaspora Office, 2008
- Regulation of the Parliamentary Diaspora and Caucasus Issues Committee, 2012

National strategies, resolutions and agreements

- National Migration Strategy of Georgia 2013–2015 and its Action Plan
- Resolution on Establishing the Office of State Minister of Georgia on Diaspora Issues
- Mobility Partnership Agreement
- National Human Rights Strategy of Georgia 2014–2016
- National Security Concept
- The Public Relations Strategy of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues, 2014

Example from the ERGEM project

During interviews with state officials for the ERGEM case study, the main areas for migrants and diaspora members' contribution to development in Georgia were identified and are listed below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ➤ Tourism, hospitality and service sector | ➤ Agriculture: production, marketing and packaging |
| ➤ Education | ➤ Health, in particular qualified nurses |
| ➤ Business and investments | |

Now define your main objectives for the counselling programme in a specific country based on that country's national context and your analysis of the migrant and diaspora communities. Possible objectives may include:

- establish relations with and provide consultations to migrants and diaspora members in general
- provide consultations and services to a specific target group within the migrant and diaspora communities i.e. families and youth, vulnerable migrants, elderly migrants, students, diaspora organisations, etc.
- enhance the development potential of migrants and diaspora members, i.e. in the exchange of knowledge, in business and investments, and in diaspora associations that are active in development
- strengthen the capacities of diaspora organisations that provide assistance to migrants and diaspora members in the destination country
- strengthen the capacities of diaspora organisations that promote the origin country culture in the destination country.



Ask yourself:

- What should be the main objective of your counselling programme?
- Have you consulted with other stakeholders involved in migrant/diaspora issues and your national representations abroad?

Did you know?



- Mexican consulates issue an ID card, the 'matrícula consular', to Mexican citizens living abroad. It enables these citizens (residing abroad with an undocumented or documented status) to identify themselves. Further, the Mexican government set up 'mobile consulates' to issue the matrícula in communities without a consulate.¹⁴
- Algeria has established a committee involving diaspora members to discuss the conditions in the destination country.
- Columbia offers health services to diaspora members abroad.

¹⁴ O'Neil, K. (2003), 'Consular ID Cards: Mexico and Beyond' (Washington D.C.: MPI), <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/consular-id-cards-mexico-and-beyond>.

- Nigeria has established diaspora desks in its embassies and consulates that work with diaspora committees to advocate for diaspora members' access to rights and their well-being.
- The Indian Embassy in Dubai has set up the one-stop shop Workers Resource Centre to provide counselling and information to Indians residing in the United Arab Emirates.
- The Philippine government and its diaspora council convened the 2nd Global Summit of Filipinos for its diaspora.¹⁵
- Morocco provides financial, medical and legal assistance to nationals abroad who do not have any social security coverage.¹⁶
- Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand have created migrant welfare funds to enhance the protection of their migrants and to offer services, such as pre-departure orientation seminars, emergency repatriation, and life and medical insurance.¹⁷

4. Conducting a stakeholder mapping and assessing available capacities

a) Conduct a stakeholder mapping

At home

We recommend conducting a mapping of **government stakeholders** during the planning phase of a mobile counselling programme. Although you might think that it is not really important because you know all government stakeholders, it helps to have a compiled list of actors and their profiles ready in order to take an informed decision on the relevance of each one for the counselling programme and to select specific participants for the mobile counselling unit in any given country. Remember to also think of stakeholders at the local or city level, as they can be important for migrant/diaspora relations due to their existing networks and already established trust with migrants and diaspora members.

¹⁵ IOM, Diaspora Ministerial Conference.

¹⁶ Noack and Wolff, *Enhancing diaspora engagement*.

¹⁷ Ruiz, N. G., and Agunias, D. R. (2008), 'Protecting Temporary Workers: Migrant Welfare Funds from Developing Countries', Migration and Development Brief 7 (Washington D.C.: World Bank), http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1110315015165/MD_Brief7.pdf.

Besides the key government stakeholders, you should undertake a mapping of **other stakeholders** in the origin country which could be important for the counselling programme. These might include:

- civil society organisations, as they provide information for returnees, re-integration services, education, etc.
- civil society and international organisations currently implementing projects or other activities related to migrants and diaspora members abroad
- private sector (banks, insurances and moving companies), as they provide products for migrants and diaspora members, as well as their family members
- universities and academic institutes, as they are relevant for exchange programmes and are in countries where highly qualified diaspora and migrant communities reside.

Abroad

A similar exercise should be conducted in the main destination countries. Here, the most important actors are the **diaspora organisations** which serve migrants and diaspora members, but also others, such as:

- civil society organisations, as they provide services and social or legal assistance to migrants and diaspora members and know the legal framework of the destination country (human rights, support to vulnerable groups and education)
- trade unions, as they have knowledge regarding labour rights
- other establishments abroad which have business or cultural relations to the country of origin (tourism agencies organising tours to the country of origin, national restaurants or shops, art centres or galleries, etc.)
- city or other national service offices, as they can provide information about the legal framework, venues for counselling events, etc.
- local authorities, municipalities and mayor's offices in charge of migration and integration issues, as they can provide additional information about the legal framework and information on city initiatives and/or support offered to migrants and diaspora members.

b) Assessing the capacities of stakeholders

When mapping the stakeholders, also assess their capacities. This entails the support you can expect from the stakeholders for a counselling programme.

Ask yourself if the government stakeholders are regularly involved in providing consultations and if they are familiar with issues concerning migrants and diaspora members abroad.

When mapping stakeholders and potential partners in the destination country, start with assessing the capacities of the consular representations abroad in close cooperation with the consular department within the ministry of foreign affairs. Take into account the number of staff members, the venue(s) available and the practical challenges they might face in their everyday work.

As a second step, assess the capacities of diaspora organisations in the destination country. Consider the number of permanent members of each diaspora organisation, the degree of its organisation and its activities. Also think about the composition of its membership base. Through looking at its website or through your diaspora organisation contact database, for example, you might find out whether the board consists of men or women, or of recent migrants or members of the historical diaspora. You might also find out whether or not the organisation has a permanent office or meeting space, and whether or not it organises big events for migrants and diaspora members.

Conducting a stakeholder mapping



To get an overview of the different stakeholders, develop a profile of all relevant actors.

Actor: actor's name and function

Agenda: actor's mandate and mission

Arena: field of activity

Alliances: with whom is the actor allied and connected? (established relations, regular exchange of information, etc.)

Assessment: which capacities does the actor have

Actor <i>Name and function</i>	Agenda <i>Mandate and mission</i>	Arena <i>Field of action</i>	Alliances <i>Relations with others</i>	Assessment <i>Capacities</i>
Actor 1				
Actor 2				



Ask yourself:

- Who are the stakeholders involved in migrant/diaspora issues and how are they involved? Which additional stakeholders do you need to consider?
- Which non-government stakeholders could be relevant for the counselling programme?
- Are the mapped stakeholders regularly involved in counselling?
- Are the mapped stakeholders familiar with the situation of migrant and diaspora communities abroad?
- Does the consular representation abroad have the capacities to support the counselling programme?
- What are the thematic areas where the consular representation abroad would need support?
- Do diaspora organisations exist (formally and non-formally organised)? Which activities do they carry out? How many members do they have?

5. Defining the programme

a) Develop the terms of reference for the counselling programme

The terms of reference should be developed according to the established objectives of the counselling programme and take into account the identified needs of migrants and diaspora communities abroad and the priorities of the country of origin.

Discuss your developed terms of reference with the participants of the expert coordination unit and the consular representation abroad. Also review your programme and ask yourself if there are important issues you did not sufficiently consider. Depending on your personal background (gender, education, social status, etc.), you might have given preference to some issues. For example, as a woman who did not serve in the military, you might not think about military service as an important reason for emigrating and acquiring the citizenship of the destination country and as an important issue when living outside the origin country in general. As a man, you might not give enough attention to gender-specific exploitative work relations.

It is also very important to assess potential risks that might hamper the successful implementation of the counselling programme. These risks may be abroad, such as a lack of formally organised diaspora organisations or insufficient outreach capacities of the consular representations abroad, or at home, such as challenging inter-institutional cooperation and insufficient capacities of the state institutions.



See section II.5.i for a monitoring and evaluation plan, which includes a risk log, and section IV for additional tips on how to define risks and develop mitigation strategies.

Structure: terms of reference for a counselling programme



1. Rationale and background

Describe what you would like to achieve with this specific counselling programme. Why is it needed? Also explain the context of the counselling programme, including the needs of the migrant and diaspora communities you have identified.

2. Objectives

Clearly state the counselling programme objectives.

3. Scope

Defining the scope is very important. You might have a list of the identified needs of migrant and diaspora communities, but due to budget constraints, you can only address two of them in the counselling programme. Define what is in the scope of the programme.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Define the role of the focal point and the expert as well as the political coordination unit.

5. Information sharing

Define how information before and after the counselling programme will be shared (see section III.3.e on knowledge management).

6. Milestones and work plan

Describe the main steps and deliverables, including a detailed timeline.

7. Costs

Identify any key costs such as travel, accommodation, venue rental, etc.

b) Select the participants of the counselling unit (counsellors)

Select the participants of the counselling unit (counsellors) based on the objectives of the counselling programme and the needs of the migrant and diaspora communities. Make use of your stakeholder mapping list to ensure that the selection is tailored to the specific situation of the target country.

Besides thematic considerations for selecting members of the mobile counselling unit, also take into account their expert level and gender. If you know that the majority of migrants and/or active diaspora members in a given country are women, provide the possibility to speak to female counsellors. In addition, the selection of expert-level staff instead of higher-level politicians is more appropriate for the counselling unit. However, the level does not necessarily indicate the selected persons' approachability and communication skills; therefore, you should take into account individual skills and qualifications.

Use the expert coordination unit as well as the political coordination unit as communication channels. It is also helpful to have an overview of how many working days would be needed for being part of a mobile counselling unit and a list of advantages resulting from being part of a mobile counselling unit (see section I).

Example from the ERGEM project

According to the project design, ten 'seats' were available for state institution representatives taking part in the information days. Based on the results of the ERGEM case study, state institution representatives identified seven relevant ministries/agencies which should be represented at the information days, namely the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues, the Public Service Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including the consulates), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Economy. All the mentioned ministries participated in all three information days with the exception of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs due to a lack of human resources. Instead, four representatives were available to provide consultations via a Skype conference call in Athens and Berlin. In Istanbul, the Ministry of Agriculture participated in the event due to the profile of the recent and historical diaspora community in Turkey.

It was also decided that the counsellors should be mid-level staff in order to reduce the potential barrier between them and the attendees.

c) Define local partners

Based on your mapping of stakeholders abroad, determine if one or more stakeholders could act as a local partner(s) according to their experience, activities and outreach capacities. Civil society organisations working with migrants and diaspora members, as well as diaspora organisations or other partners, might be relevant and help you make the counselling programme a success.

The benefits of partnering up with a local institution are their contacts in the destination country, which are relevant for selecting a venue, developing the cultural activities and advertising a counselling programme. It should, however, be noted that communication, in particular with diaspora organisations, is very important. They should be consulted in the planning phase of a counselling programme, as they have valuable information about the needs of the diaspora in the destination country. In addition, you should keep in mind that diaspora organisations have their own specific interests to pursue; therefore, it is important to consult and seek cooperation with more than one diaspora organisation.

The benefits for the local partner to cooperate with you are higher visibility of their activities, closer cooperation with state institutions and extended services to their members. In addition, local partners may also use the information provided to improve their own counselling services.

Example from the ERGEM project

Cooperation with diaspora organisations for the information day in Athens was very strong. The event was held in the premises of a diaspora organisation and members of the organisation assisted with logistical issues (tables, chairs, food, signs, etc.) and cultural activities as well as reaching out to migrants and diaspora members. In Berlin and Istanbul, diaspora organisations supported the team in reaching out to migrants and diaspora members. Results from a feedback survey conducted after the event showed that direct cooperation between diaspora organisations and state institutions is welcomed by both sides: all surveyed diaspora organisations expressed their willingness to cooperate, as did most of the state institutions.

d) Define the elements of the counselling event

The format and elements of a counselling event depend on the context, your objectives and the needs of the migrants and diaspora members. As regards the format, we recommend a set-up comparable to a bazaar or fair, i.e. an open space, which also can reduce the barrier between the migrants/diaspora members and state officials.

The following key elements are proposed for the general format of a counselling event.

Proposed key elements of a mobile counselling event



> Format:

A one-day information bazaar with different information stands/tables is recommended.

The following elements comprise a menu of choices from which you can pick and choose:

> Consultations by state institution representatives (counsellors):

This is the 'heart' of a mobile counselling event. Counsellors sit at tables and provide consultations for one or more attendees (e.g. a couple or a diaspora organisation representative). Counselling can take up to 80% of the event duration.

> Introductory part:

This part entails describing the purpose and format of the event. Counsellors and/or diaspora organisations can introduce themselves in a short tour-de-table.

> Cultural programme:

This gives migrant/diaspora groups in the destination country the opportunity to show their activities (dancing, singing, food of the country of origin, exhibition and/or selling of handcrafts, presentation of a book and/or an author's reading, etc.), as well as additional motivation to attend the event. The programme can include a performance by the diaspora organisations' members or by another well-known diaspora representative or invited performer from the country of origin.

> Children's programme:

This entails a small children's corner and a person who can take care of the children when parents attend consultations. A children's corner should have books and/or toys, painting and drawing material, etc.

> Informal networking:

This can be, for example, during a lunch break or after cultural activities in an informal setting. Networking can take place spontaneously or it could be planned by inviting some networking partners (e.g. business people or representatives of another country's diaspora organisation to exchange ideas or information, etc.)

➤ **Side meetings with diaspora organisations:**

These meetings enhance communication and strengthen relations with diaspora organisations that are active in the destination country. They also provide an opportunity for state representatives to learn more about their main activities, interests and needs, as well as the needs of the diaspora community, and to discuss concrete cooperation projects with them.

➤ **Tourism corner**

This provides information/presentation on tourism opportunities in the home country and is an opportunity to reach non-diaspora members.

➤ **Business and investment session:**

This is a session (round-table, networking or evening event) before or after the counselling session in which state representatives are able to meet diaspora and non-diaspora investors and entrepreneurs who want to invest in the origin country. Similarly, other development-related priorities could be presented during special sessions (development priorities related to the origin country context, academic and technical exchange of know-how, etc.).

➤ **General session on residence in the destination country**

A government representative of the destination country or an NGO working in the migration field could offer a presentation and general Q&A session on the legal status of aliens.

If you include a short introductory round before starting or during the event, keep in mind that an official introduction/speech by state officials might put up a barrier between migrants and diaspora members and state officials. In addition, remember that if the programme includes not only general counselling but also additional elements, such as an introductory session, other thematic sessions (business, tourism, etc.), a cultural activity or other activities, they have to be clearly indicated in the event programme. Since the attendees can come and go during the event, they would miss important elements of the programme if not informed in advance about the time of additional activities.

Besides the proposed information bazaar format, other forms of information and service provision by mobile counselling units can be considered. This might be a counselling week, for example. The counselling event can also be tailored to a specific priority area depending on the needs of migrants and diaspora members and your national priorities as regards migrant/diaspora outreach and engagement. Counselling could only be provided on issues related to the irregular stay of migrants (including the registration of newborns and health issues) or targeting highly skilled migrants (recognition of diplomas, knowledge exchange programmes). The event might also specifically target returnees or business

persons and investors. Also, virtual counselling might be an option where state institution representatives provide counselling via an online communication tool agreed on in advance. However, always keep in mind who you want to engage and what your objectives are.

Example from the ERGEM information days

Georgian Diaspora in Greece Information Day 1 June 2014

10:00 – 17:00	<p>Get Informed! Direct consultations with Georgian state representatives on:</p> <p>Documents, citizenship/passport, registrations, recognition of diplomas, return and reintegration, taxation, pension, tourism, information hotline 112</p> <p>Get Inspired! Exhibition and fair of jewellery crafts 'Made by Georgians'</p> <p>Get Some Fun! Children's corner with Georgian book reading, painting and getting to know Georgian ABC!</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Get Excited! Georgian dancing</p>
12:00	Official statements by the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues and the Embassy of Georgia
12:30 – 14:30	<p>Get Some Energy! Traditional Georgian food and wine</p>
15:00 – 15:30	<p>Get Amused! Georgian signing</p>

Cultural activities are very important, as they strengthen emotional ties between the origin country and migrants/diaspora members while also creating a connection between participating state institutions and migrants/diaspora members. Cultural activities are appreciated because they provide a much needed break and also provide additional motivation for people to come to the coun-

selling event. Furthermore, migrants and diaspora members in the destination country are often very proud to show that they are maintaining their culture while residing abroad.

'It was an important step in strengthening communication between the government of Georgia and our diaspora members, no matter whether they came to find out more about Georgia, or simply to celebrate their roots. (...) It makes a big difference that we are here in person, as talking to people directly allows us to build a relationship of trust.' (ICMPD, 2014b)



However, it should be noted that the organisation of cultural activities is time-consuming, as it requires research on the activities of migrants and diaspora members in the specific country and/or cultural activities related to the origin country, as well as establishing contacts with cultural associations. You will also need to take into account the size of the venue. Additionally, cultural activities could also somewhat disrupt the consultations. Take all of these points into consideration when deciding on the inclusion of cultural and other additional activities in your counselling programme.

Example from the ERGEM project

In **Berlin**, a German choir sang traditional Georgian folk songs, and a local musician played the violin. In addition, Georgia's ambassador to Germany gave a speech and a representative from the German GIZ presented their activities that are implemented together with the Georgian diaspora residing in Germany. A small children's corner with Georgian books was provided and Georgian food was served.

In **Athens**, children of different age groups and adults performed traditional Georgian songs and dances. In addition, Georgia's ambassador to Greece gave a welcome speech, as did the head of one of the most prominent Georgian diaspora organisations (alongside the ICMPD ERGEM project manager), which also hosted the information day. Moreover, handicrafts and jewellery made by members of the Georgian diaspora were displayed. In the children's corner, Georgian books were available and Georgian flag painting was organised. Georgian food was served as well.

In **Istanbul**, no official speeches or cultural activities were included due to limited space at the event's venue; however, Georgian food was served.

e) Select the venue

The **selection of the venue** plays a crucial role in determining the overall quality of the counselling event since it highly influences who attends. How consultations are carried out also depends on the type of the venue, its location and its available space. The venue could be a large, open space, which would enable all counsellors to sit alongside each other. In this case, the migrants and diaspora members attending the event could have easier access to the counsellors and all institutions could be approached in a more organised manner. However, this may create a crowded and noisy atmosphere and disturb individual consultations. While having a smaller, more closed venue with separate rooms may provide more privacy and less commotion, it would make the event more exclusive and the room more difficult to navigate for the attendees. Further, it could be challenging to find and rent such a venue if there are various information topics and a large number of counsellors involved.

When selecting the venue, keep in mind the target group you want to reach. In particular, take into account the **safety of migrants** with regard to their legal status in the country. A very exposed and advertised venue might be a reason for migrants in an irregular situation to not attend, due to a fear of police checks. Different types of venues have different advantages and disadvantages as summarised in the table below.

Venue		
Diaspora organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Easier to organise■ Can mobilise many attendees as the location is familiar for many migrants and diaspora members■ Fosters cooperation between the government and the organisation■ No or relatively low costs■ Logistical and administrative support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Could be alienating to other diaspora organisations■ Difficult to reach migrants and diaspora members from other diaspora organisations■ Does not always have (spacious) facilities

Consulate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easier to organise due to institutional hierarchy ■ Large number of people associated with the consulate ■ Location is usually known to migrants and diaspora members ■ No or low costs ■ Administrative support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More formal location; may not be possible to attract certain people who do not want to go to the consulate ■ Public attention – safety of irregular migrants ■ Not all consulates have sufficient premises for such events
Private sector (e.g. restaurant, seminar room, hotel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Neutral environment ■ Additional services such as coffee, water or a business centre might be available ■ Possibility to use logistical services on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High costs ■ Location might not be known to many migrants and diaspora members ■ Might not have enough space ■ Safety of the attendees could be an issue, in particular, of irregular migrants
Civil society institution (NGO, cultural association, etc.)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possibility to create synergies ■ Low costs ■ Depending on advance cooperation and contacts, logistical and administrative support might be available on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Might not be known to many migrants and diaspora members (trust?) ■ Could create conflict between the NGO and some diaspora organisations/ individual migrants
Municipality*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connects the community and the consulate with the municipality ■ Low costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public attention – safety of irregular migrants could be an issue ■ Depends on previous contacts with municipality

**Was not tested in the framework of the ERGEM project*

f) Define the counselling event time and duration

The time at which you hold your counselling event and its duration highly depend on the target group you want to reach. Depending on the size of the migrant and diaspora communities in a specific country or city, you will need one or more days.

The large majority of migrants and diaspora members work. Hence, you should take into account their normal working hours and days according to the sector(s) of employment. Sunday would be a suitable day in many countries, as people are neither working nor going to school usually. Therefore, inform yourself about the work and everyday life in a specific destination country before defining the date, time and duration of your counselling event.

Furthermore, also consider organising the counselling event in conjunction with an important day for your country and your migrants and diaspora members. If you organise a national diaspora day, for example, you might want to include your counselling event as part of it, as it adds visibility to both events. Check in advance if the diaspora organisations organise other events close to your defined date: it might be beneficial for you and the organisation(s) to combine the events and thus save time on preparations and have lower costs.

When defining the duration of the event, keep in mind that providing consultations can be very intense and tiring. Depending on the personal stories and problems of the migrants and diaspora members, the counsellors might be confronted with positive or negative emotions. Therefore, plan to provide consultations for a realistic length of time and encourage counsellors to take breaks when they need them. This will also keep them motivated, especially when working on a weekend.

As already described in section II.5.d on the potential elements of a counselling event, you may want to have other elements besides the provision of counselling and information. Here you can be more flexible: an evening discussion with entrepreneurs or a diaspora organisation might be suitable.

Example from the ERGEM project

The information days were held in conjunction with the Day of the Georgian Diaspora 2014. The selection of Sunday for holding the event was quite beneficial. A large number of migrants and diaspora members attended the event due to the fact that it is usually the only free day for many Georgian migrants and diaspora members employed in households and other areas of the private sector, in particular in Athens and Istanbul. In addition, one could observe that the information day in Athens was used as a 'family day' where people arrived with their kids and spent the whole day at the event. In Istanbul, a large number of attendees arrived after the church service.



g) Develop a communication plan

It is recommended to develop a communication plan when designing your counselling programme. It should include both internal and external communication objectives and tools. A communication plan defines the target group-oriented forms of communication as well as the different communication tools and channels linked to your overall vision on migrant and diaspora engagement.

Reserve sufficient time in advance to design and use the outreach and communication tools: since your counselling programme is well defined, it deserves to have as many people as possible learn of it. Therefore, someone in your expert coordination unit needs to take on this task.

External communication

Think about what you want to communicate when advertising a counselling event. These basic questions should be answered: **what** is taking place, **where** (location) and **when** is it taking place (date and time), **who** is invited and **who** is inviting. You might also want to define a key message which summarises what you want to achieve with the event and makes the event more attractive.

Using a combination of different **communication and outreach tools**, as well as cooperating with diaspora organisations and consulates in the destination country, is the main success factor for reaching out to potential attendees. You should adapt the tools to the objective(s) of your programme and the profile of the migrant and diaspora communities in the respective destination country. Take into account that different social and age groups among the migrant and diaspora population use different communication tools. In addition, the use of communication tools also depends on your available resources.

If the main objective is to attract entrepreneurs and investors who want to invest in their country of origin, a broader outreach to both relevant business institutions of the destination country and diaspora actors would be needed. If the main objective is to reach out to irregular migrants and potential returnees, the use of informal outreach tools and contacts with relevant diaspora organisations, as well as NGOs dealing with vulnerable migrants, would be more appropriate. The safety of migrants in an irregular situation who may fear being apprehended by the police or other law enforcement agencies before, during or after the event should be always taken into account, even if this hinders outreach efforts and reduces the number of attendees at the event.

For all target groups, consider three main elements when examining their communication needs:

- relevance and usefulness
- timeliness and the appropriate frequency
- use of the right tools (methods and channels).

The main communication tools and activities include:

- websites
- advertisements (newspapers or TV or radio spots, etc.)
- information material (flyers, posters, etc.)
- social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.).



To learn about the use of social media, take a look at the handbook *Using social media. A handbook for EU-funded projects*, which is available in Russian and English.¹⁸

Example from the ERGEM project

The ERGEM project team created Facebook event pages for each information day that was shared by the diaspora organisations and consulates and posted on active diaspora members' Facebook pages.



¹⁸ European Neighbourhood Info Centre (2014), Russian version accessible for download at: http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=715&id_type=9&lang_id=471; English version at: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/files/publications/Social%20Media%20Handbook%20ENG%20Final.pdf> (both accessed on 12 August 2014).

Internal communication

Internal communication is as important as external communication, especially because the organisation and implementation of a counselling programme is an inter-institutional exercise. Effective internal communication ensures the participation of stakeholders and a sense of ownership over the programme.

Knowledge management is crucial to enhance learning. Through a regular exchange of information and reporting, the information and lessons learned from the implementation of the counselling programme can be considered when designing another counselling programme. In section IV we further describe how to evaluate implemented counselling programmes and to jointly review past counselling events.

Outline: communication plan¹⁹



1. Introduction

Provide background information.

2. Communication objectives

State your overall objective, e.g. strengthen relations with migrant and diaspora communities abroad. Specific objectives should be linked to the overall objective and mirror the target group and the planned communication tools.

3. Target group(s)

Define the target group(s) of your communication activities and tools (e.g. migrants in an irregular situation, entrepreneurs, diaspora activists and diaspora academia).

4. Key messages

The key messages should be able to answer at least one of the following questions:

- What do we want the target group(s) to know?
- What perception do we want to create?
- What action do we want as a result?

5. Communication activities and tools

Give an overview of the kinds of tools (e.g. websites, Facebook and Twitter) that will be used and why.

19 Adapted from Noack and Wolff, *Enhancing diaspora engagement*.

6. Indicators of achievement

Include in your monitoring and evaluation tools (see section IV) indicators to measure the success of the applied communication tools (number of attendees, followers of the Facebook event page, etc.).

h) Define the needed information material

Example from the ERGEM project

Before the information days, two brainstorming sessions on the organisation of the information days took place. In addition, before each of the information days, preparatory meetings with all involved state representatives took place in Tbilisi.

Representatives from state institutions identified the available information material and kept an account of the material that was missing. The participants also agreed upon the types, amounts and formats of the leaflets as well as persons responsible for printing and distributing them. Meetings with ministries that were not able to participate in the information days were held and their information material was collected. All collected information material was also uploaded on USB-sticks that were then distributed during the events.



The distribution of printed information material is an important element of the counselling programme. Although face-to-face talks and direct information provision are more valuable for the attendees, printed information material might help to explain certain procedures and raise awareness of a new programme you are offering to migrants and diaspora members. Moreover, migrants and diaspora members who attend a counselling event can take the information material with them and/or give them to other people they know.

Keep in mind that not all people are used to reading such information and prefer the oral dissemination of information, or at least an explanation of information not clear to them. Other people, such as members of the historical diaspora who do not speak your native language or persons not belonging to your diaspora but interested in your country, may need your help to understand printed material as well. You should only take a limited number of copies with you and make copies at the event, if needed.

Information material can be:



- brochures about the participating institutions and their programmes targeting migrants and diaspora members
- brochures that give a description of services, processes and procedures relevant to migrants and diaspora members (passport issuance procedure, notary services abroad, available online services, foreign diploma recognition procedure, etc.)
- flyers about programmes from other state or non-state institutions which might be relevant for the target group
- brochures with general information about your country: it might be relevant for tourism promotion
- material for children (language books for example)
- banners or other visibility items from your institution (posters, key chains, pens, small notepads, videos to be shown during the event etc.).
-

When providing information material, think about:

- information that fits the target group
- information that is written in easy-to-understand language
- providing paper bags for collected information material
- environment-friendly solutions in addition to printed material (USB sticks, flyers with links to your online information, etc.).

The counselling programme also provides an opportunity for your institution to assess what material is available, their general suitability and what additional material would be needed.

i) **Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan**

You should already think about your monitoring and evaluation approach when developing your counselling programme. The results from regular monitoring and evaluation will help you adapt and update your counselling programme to ensure that it remains relevant for the target group. In addition, monitoring and evaluation should support the continuous learning process in your institution.

These are the main benefits of meaningful monitoring and evaluation:

- It contributes to the quality of the counselling programme, as it allows for corrective measures to be taken.
- It enhances ownership over the programme and accountability, as the results are measured and reported.

The design of a monitoring and evaluation plan for your overall counselling programme would be useful. The monitoring and evaluation plan includes indicators to measure the progress towards your envisaged outcome, output and milestones, and a part covering risks and assumptions.



The recommended monitoring and evaluation methods are described in section IV.

Example: monitoring and evaluation plan²⁰



Objectives: Expand consular services and information provision									
Outcome	Outputs	Indicators	Means of verification	Milestones	Risks and assumptions			Responsible body	
					Risk	Likelihood	Impact		Mitigation Strategy
1.1 Mobile counselling programme developed and implemented	1.1 Counselling events held in 4 countries (Austria, Belgium, France, UK)	1.1 A minimum of 150 consultations provided per country	1.1 Method: headcount, evaluation, survey 1.2 Method: list of website visits	1.1 By 2015, 3 counselling events and a minimum of 450 consultations have been held	Lack of capacities in the state institutions	High	High	Capacity building for state institutions participating in the mobile counselling units	Technical coordination unit (State Diaspora Office, MFA Consular Department, Consulates in the 4 countries
					Not enough resources secured to implement all activities				
1.2 Distant information provision improved	1.2 Online information updated and FAQ brochure produced	1.1 At least 80% of counselling event attendees indicated that they feel better informed 1.2 Website visits increased from 20 per day to 50 per day		1.2 By the end of 2015, at least 18,000 have visited the website					

²⁰ Adapted from Noack and Wolff, *Enhancing diaspora engagement*.

6.

Checklist: developing a counselling programme



	Yes	No
▲ Have you established coordination mechanisms at the expert and policy level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Has a focal point for the development and implementation of the counselling programme been defined?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Do you have an overview on the available budget and/or external funding secured?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Do you know the main needs of migrants and diaspora members in the destination country where you want to implement the counselling programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you established an exchange of information with your consular representation(s) abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you set the main objectives of your counselling programme for each country where it will be implemented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Do these objectives reflect the needs of the migrants and diaspora members and your national objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you mapped the stakeholders in your country and assessed their capacities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you mapped important stakeholders and potential partners in the destination country and assessed their needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Does the consular representation abroad have the capacities to support the counselling programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Do you know in which thematic areas the consular representation needs support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you selected the members of the mobile counselling unit (counsellors) in general as well as for the implementation of the programme in a specific country?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you taken into account the profile of the state institutions and of the migrant and diaspora communities in the destination country?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you defined local partners in the destination country who have the capacities to help you organise a counselling event and reach out to potential attendees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Does the duration of the counselling event allow for suitable breaks for the counsellors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Does the time and date allow you to reach out to your target group (work times, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Does your format allow for open and non-hierarchical communication between the target group and counsellors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Is the venue appropriate for the attending migrants and diaspora members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you taken into account the different interests and safety measures for migrants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you developed a communication plan and defined appropriate communication tools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▲ Have you developed an evaluation and monitoring concept?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

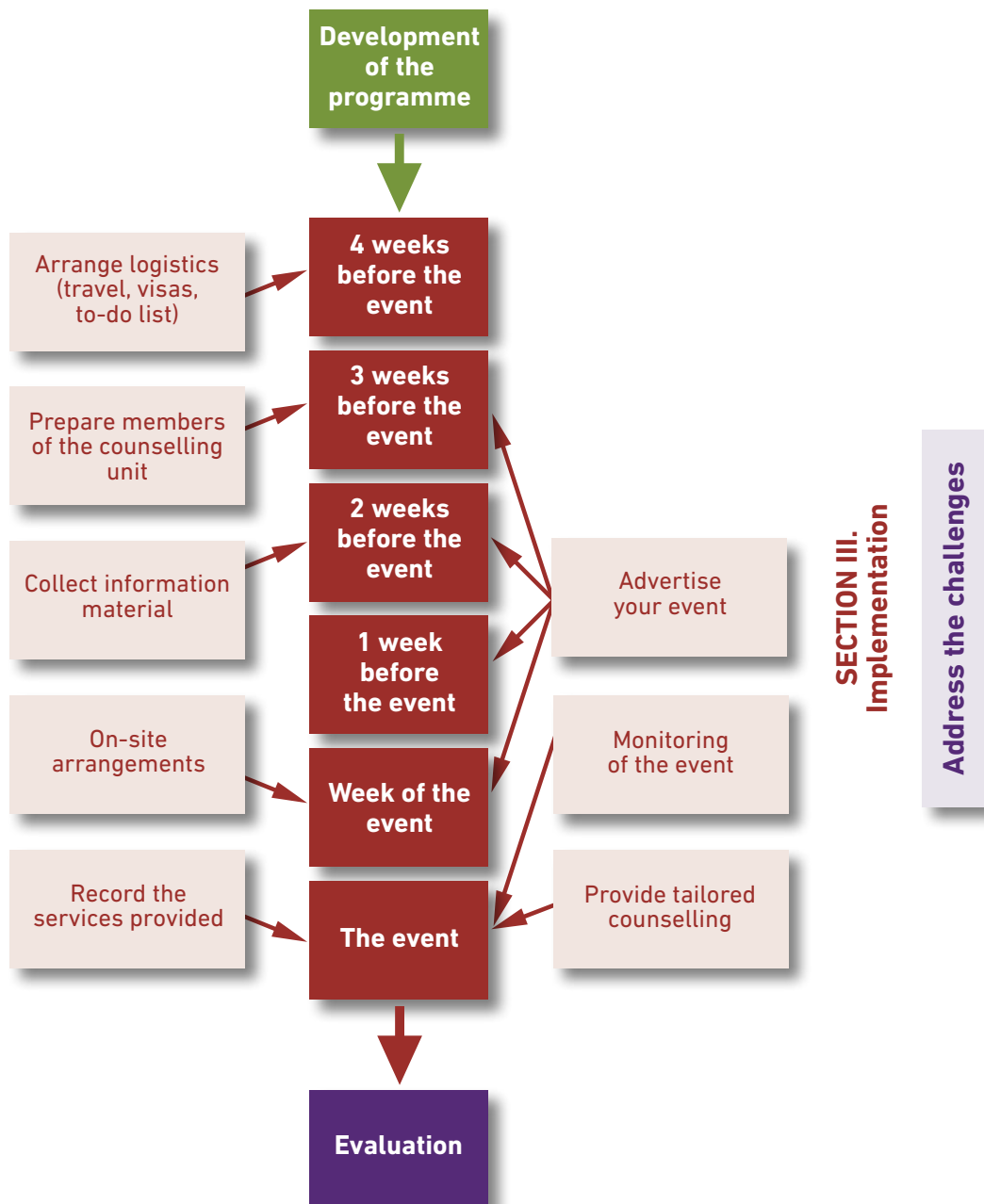
Section 3

Implementing the Mobile Counselling Programme



1. Before a counselling event	67
2. During a counselling event	73
3. After a counselling event	77
4. Checklist: implementing a counselling programme	80

This section guides you through the main steps in implementing the mobile counselling programme, describing in detail what needs to be considered *before*, *during* and *after* the counselling event. Each phase of organising an event is outlined in detail together with examples from the ERGEM project information days, which helps you get a realistic picture of the entire process. The identification of the main steps also gives you the possibility to decide what is needed for the type of counselling programme you are planning to implement, how to prepare for it and how to achieve successful results.



Section 3

Implementing the Mobile Counselling Programme

1. Before the counselling event

a) Logistical issues

After your programme is developed and the most appropriate venue for your event is identified, other logistical and administrative issues need to be considered.

Travel arrangements need to be taken care of and it is important to keep in mind the visa and passport issues of the counsellors, i.e. you need to check if the passport is valid, if there is a visa requirement for the target country, if everybody has a valid visa and the duration of a visa application. If the counsellors need a visa, make sure that the visa application procedures are followed by them; that the applications are submitted to the embassy's consular section on time (at least two weeks before the departure date) and that there is enough time for communication with the respective embassy. Visa supporting documentation, such as a note verbale or an invitation letter issued by your institution, might be needed and require preparation time, especially if signatures from supervisors or other high-ranking officials are needed.

Decide on the means of travel depending on the event location, i.e. whether you need to take the plane, bus or train. If travelling by air, please consider the following: the costs for air tickets are much lower if booked in advance and if there are more flight options available (direct flights or shorter time gap between the flights). Make sure to check the prices of air tickets, hotels and local accommodation in advance in the target country in order to estimate the budget needed. Do not forget the per diems for the counsellors, which should cover accommodation, food and local transportation.

Stay in touch with your identified local partners (consulate in the destination country, diaspora and migrant organisations, other stakeholders) in order to be informed about any possible changes in the programme, logistical and administrative preparations, etc.

In order to have a clear understanding on what needs to be done and to ensure that you do not miss anything, it is recommended to prepare a to-do list of all activities.

Event organisational to-do list



- ✓ Venue
- ✓ Travel arrangements
- ✓ Visas for the counsellors
- ✓ Per diems
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Local transportation
- ✓ Room size – ensure enough space for the consultations and cultural activities
- ✓ Signage
- ✓ Table signs
- ✓ Room for the children's corner
- ✓ Material needed for the children's corner
- ✓ Catering during the event
- ✓ Enough staff for on-site support and supervision

b) Implementation of the communication plan for advertising the event and outreach to potential attendees

A communication plan for your counselling programme as described in Section II.5.g has been established, defining the target audience, outreach and communication tools and methods. Now it is time to start implementing this plan and actively advertise your event.

Electronic communication and outreach tools

Approximately four weeks before the date of the counselling event, post an announcement about the event on relevant websites (e.g. of the involved ministries, diaspora/migrant organisations, student/youth organisations and project websites) and social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram).

- If you have a high presence of diaspora representatives on Facebook, it can be an efficient way to advertise the counselling event. Creating a Facebook event page is free of charge and easy to manage and gives you the opportunity to invite as many people as you like and share the page on other organisations' timelines.
- It is also possible to include state institutions that are in contact with diaspora communities that can send out event invitations via their mailing lists and use their professional contacts to reach out to the target audience. Creating a Facebook event page with an RSVP function and/or requesting attendance confirmation via email also enables you to measure the success of the applied communication tools.

Remember to re-post this information several times before the event in order to attract more attendees.

Example from the ERGEM project

The following community-based outreach tools were used: event flyers, posters, social networks and applications (Facebook, Viber and WhatsApp), emails, phone calls and personal networks.



Diaspora organisations served as the main agents for outreach to diaspora communities. We urged them to inform the members of their organisation, their personal acquaintances and their personal networks of the events. Diaspora organisations were contacted in each country based on their profile and level of activeness and asked to provide support in reaching out to as many migrants and diaspora members as possible in the respective countries/cities.

Printed advertising material

If your communication plan includes the development and distribution of printed material (flyers and posters), they should be ready for distribution approximately three weeks before the event. Consider the most economical way to have the material printed: you may print them in your country and send to your counterparts in the destination country, or send them electronic versions for subsequent printing and distribution. You can also develop flyers in the language of the destination country if you want to attract the local population as well. Flyers could be distributed at the consulates, diaspora organisations and other places where your migrants and diaspora members usually meet (e.g. churches, consultation centres, NGOs and cafes).

Personal contacts

Share postings on social media with your personal contacts and ask your counterparts in the destination country to do so, too! This could raise the number of persons reached.

Other tools

Your communication strategy may also include advertising the event on TV and radio and in newspapers. Think carefully about the time frame for this activity. If your budget and capacities allow, repeat the advertisements several times closer to the date of the event.

Issues to consider



- Create a Facebook event page – indicate an exact place, date and easy-to-understand description of the event. Share it with your Facebook friends, post it on the walls of migrant or diaspora community pages, post it on active diaspora member Facebook pages and ask them to share the event with their contacts.
- Make announcements on your webpage and ask other stakeholders involved to post the event on their own webpages.
- Design and print flyers – send hard copies to the consulates and diaspora contacts in the target country and ask them to disseminate flyers in public places and put them up at the premises of consulates and diaspora organisations. Consider also other places where your migrants and diaspora members often meet!
- Involve stakeholders on the ground – ask consulates and diaspora members to spread the word about the event among their personal contacts.
- Ask state institutions working closely on diaspora/migration issues to disseminate information to migrants and diaspora members about your event to their contacts in their email lists.

And now: engage with your migrant and diaspora communities!



c) Prepare the counsellors

Preparing the counsellors prior to the actual event can be done in different ways. You have already held brainstorming sessions at the beginning of the planning process where the format, content, goals and target audience of the counselling programme were defined and documented. If all or some of the counsellors differ from the expert-level group that was actively involved in the development of the programme (see Section II.1.a on setting up a coordination mechanism), you should consider informing them in detail in a preparatory session about the counselling event, its format, the venue, the information material to be distributed and the communication plan for advertising the counselling event. This session should also include information about your diaspora and migrant communities in the destination countries, including their needs and interests, which you identified during the development of the counselling programme with your main counterparts in the destination country. This will enable the counsellors to better prepare for potential topics that would be most likely asked by the migrants and diaspora members who attend the event.

Agenda for preparatory meeting:

- Provide information on the profile of the migrant and diaspora communities in the destination country.
- Update the participants and agree on the format and content of the event.
- Ensure a clear understanding of the roles of the counsellors.
- Discuss and agree on the agenda of the event.
- Discuss the type and content of information material.
- Introduce logistical issues.
- Ask if anybody has any concerns and share yours.
- Highlight the issue of safety of private belongings at the venue.



Even if the counsellors are the same members as in the expert-level group, you should still organise at least one preparatory meeting where you can briefly summarise your preparation steps, including logistics and challenges you face: some of your colleagues may have useful ideas on how to address them. Explain to the counsellors that they have the possibility to involve other colleagues from their respective institution during the event in case questions arise that they cannot answer themselves. These colleagues should also be briefed on the counselling event and be available via internet (Skype, video call or messenger) or phone.

Introduce the monitoring and evaluation process and the monitoring documentation in detail to the counsellors to ensure that the questionnaires for the attendees or the consultation record sheets are filled out by the counsellors and that they understand the purpose of the forms.

It is also important to inform the participants of their roles during the event: who is responsible for providing counselling, for collecting evaluation forms, for providing logistical and administrative support on site (directing persons to the counsellors, ensuring an internet connection, making/answering phone calls, or other business centre support, if needed), setting up the venue before the event and cleaning after the event, doing a headcount of attendees, and other issues. Make sure you mention all these issues one more time in the last briefing right before you start your event.



See section IV on monitoring and evaluation.

d) Collect information material

Having as much information as possible on the profile of the migrant and diaspora communities in the destination country gives you the opportunity to identify more specifically what kind of information material you have to develop and collect beforehand. It is beneficial to include all counsellors in collecting and developing information material.

Representing different state authorities, the counsellors, in coordination with the respective departments of their institutions, could provide information material tailor-made to the needs and interests of migrant and diaspora communities in the target country. Representatives of civil society organisations in the country where the mobile counselling programme will be implemented can use this information material after the counselling event is held to provide advice to migrants and diaspora members.

The information material should be as brief and specific as possible, answering the main needs of the respective migrant and diaspora communities. The material can include information on available services for migrants and diaspora members in the destination and origin country, official documents, return possibilities, investment climate/business opportunities, education, etc.

Consider time and resources (human and financial) for collecting, developing and printing information material as well as transporting them to the target country. Make sure that the information is readable and easy to understand. Information material can also include short information clips streamed throughout the event. The information material should be clearly displayed at the counselling event, making it easy for the attendees to take some material with them.

Example from the ERGEM project

As piloted in the ERGEM information days, all information material (information sheets, video clips, presentations, etc.) was saved on USB-sticks and distributed during the event to all attendees. Also, paper bags were handed out for carrying the information material.

The information material can also be uploaded on the websites of leading state institutions involved in the organisation of the counselling programme. This way the information material can be accessed by interested people at any time. You should also compile a list of the collected and printed information material (how many copies, title of the brochures and the name of the institution providing the material). This list will help you later evaluate how many copies were taken and which particular brochures were more or less popular, as well as help you draw conclusions.



See section IV on monitoring and evaluation for further information.

2. During the counselling event

a) On-site preparations

Make sure you have enough time for on-site preparations: we recommend that the team of the main institution organising the event arrives at least one day earlier in order to visit the facility in advance and make sure that all preparations are done as planned. Consider how to arrange the seating area for the counsellors, the waiting area for migrants and diaspora members, the place where information and other visibility material will be presented, etc.

In order to facilitate navigation at the facility, you should hang signs on the walls and put them on the counsellors' tables, indicating the topics they are covering as well as directing persons to other activities. One person could also stand ready to guide persons to the consultation tables and briefly explain to them the set-up of the programme.

Make room for the children's corner with readings and entertaining material, e.g. colouring books, crayons, face paint, toys, fairy tales and ABC books/posters. The more entertaining material you have, the happier the children are and the longer their parents stay at the event and can receive consultations undisturbed. If you organise the counselling programme in a facility which is not children-friendly (steps, big open windows, etc.), make sure you inform parents to take care of their children and appoint one person to keep an eye on the children.

In case you are considering including a cultural activity in your counselling event,

be it dancing, singing or an exhibition of arts and crafts, then you need to make sure that there is enough space at the venue and that the necessary preparations are done, e.g. the stage is set, the sound system is in place, the room is prepared for dancers, there are enough chairs for attendees or there is enough picture hangers and exhibition stands.

Example from the ERGEM project

Hanging signs on the walls and putting them on the table made it easier for the attendees of the event to quickly identify the topics of interest and direct themselves to the right tables.



One could observe that the information day in Athens was used as a 'family day' where people arrived with their children and spent the Sunday at the information day. In the children's corner, colouring material, yo-yos, Georgian books and beach balls were available and a support team member painted Georgian flags on children's faces.

In case you need Wi-Fi access at the event, e.g. for streaming an online presentation, showing a video clip or demonstrating a website or online services, we strongly recommend that you check the accessibility of internet at the venue in advance and obtain a Wi-Fi password before the event. If no Wi-Fi is available, you could also use a LAN connection.

Consider other important details to make your event pleasant and comfortable for all participants and attendees: water and plastic cups at the table, signs to the restrooms, possibility to ventilate the room, etc.

b) Keep control over the programme

Right before you start the event, organise one more briefing for the counsellors: it will help you to keep control over the programme. Inform them about changes in the programme, remind them of their roles and tasks and introduce persons who can provide any support needed (regarding the internet connection, copying of the material, etc.). Keep this briefing short and create a positive and motivating atmosphere!

Maintaining control over the programme flow is very important. You should appoint at least one person who could closely follow the planned agenda and keep track of time, e.g. when is the time for cultural activities, breaks, meals served, speeches or presentations.

Another person should also be checking that there is always someone monitoring the children's corner, monitoring how the consultations are going and, most importantly, checking how the counsellors are doing (whether they need a break, some food or water). It would be beneficial if the venue provided the possibility for additional printing, scanning and internet access in case printing additional information material is needed or in case the counsellors need to double-check some information online.

Try to be flexible: allow some ad hoc changes in the programme if it seems to be necessary. It is better to postpone the cultural activity a bit if you see that consultations are ongoing and that an interruption would not be welcomed by the attendees.

c) Providing tailor-made counselling services

As mentioned before, detailed knowledge of the needs, interests and profile of the diaspora and migrant communities can be useful for the counsellors, since it can help them prepare for the counselling event beforehand and focus on certain areas of interest. If some questions or requests go beyond the knowledge or competence of a counsellor, then the counsellor can exchange contact details with the attendee in order to provide the information later.

Example from the ERGEM project

Migrants and diaspora members indicated the significance of face-to-face contact with the counsellors. It was observed that the information provided directly to the migrants and diaspora members was absorbed faster; it was possible for them to comprehend complicated information, and they had the opportunity to ask questions and get immediate responses. The question and answer format of the event was also convenient for the migrants and diaspora members, as it turned out to be a very efficient way of getting the information they needed.

Handouts and other brief information material compiled by the counsellors in advance can serve as important information tools. Once the material is distributed during the event or presented at the tables and information stands, the event attendees have the opportunity to collect all available material and read it later at their leisure.

Different lectures and presentations can be given during the event targeting the main needs of the migrants and diaspora members. Online services can also be demonstrated during the event, e.g. how to register for a passport online, how to apply for academic degree recognition or how to apply for an SME business grant in Georgia.

It is the actual conversation and face-to-face communication with state representatives that can draw migrants to the counselling event. You might be surprised to note that although some topics of interest vary in different countries, there were a number of issues that will always need to be addressed (e.g. issues related to passports and other ID documents, citizenship issues and social guarantees). Migrants and diaspora members might also prefer attending a counselling event instead of approaching the consulate because it provides a broader spectrum of services and covers more topics.

During consultations, maintain open communication with the attendees. The counsellors should try to avoid political conversations and official speeches that would create an official atmosphere and would create a barrier between the counsellors and the attendees. Try keeping a low-profile attitude (e.g. simple and open communication and informal clothing) to facilitate more effective communication. Always remember that something that is clear to you may not be understandable for a person who spent several years abroad and is no longer familiar with developments in your country.

Things to consider



The suggestions below can be used by the counsellors for de-escalating a situation at the event:

- Listening skills: listen carefully and pay attention to details; taking notes can help you recall what was said earlier.
- Non-verbal behaviour: maintain eye-to-eye contact; smiling can make you more approachable.
- Building trust: do not interrupt; hear out a person's concern; showing empathy helps to build trust.
- Avoiding conflict: avoid conflict by refraining from raising your voice or issuing warnings; involving a third party in tense communication can help diffuse the conflict.
- If you promised to provide some specific information later after the event, do not forget to get the contact information of the person and provide the information as soon as you return to your home institution.

d) Documentation of the services provided during the consultations

It is helpful to develop a consultation record sheet indicating the consultations provided by each counsellor. It can include the number and content of consultations provided, the approximate duration of each consultation, etc.



See the consultation record sheet template in section IV.4.e.

An analysis of such data gives you the opportunity to identify the most frequently asked questions and the most often addressed topics, such as questions about citizenship, return and education. You can then use this information to improve the planning of the next counselling programme as well as create a possible time frame for future consultations and/or provide more tailored support to the consular representatives in their daily work.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to create a booklet on frequently asked questions. However, those that attend the counselling events are often not interested in taking or reading the printed information material that is provided, and it is highly unlikely that an FAQ booklet or online information would reach an appropriate number of people.

3. After the counselling event

a) Collect the fresh impressions

It is advisable to organise a debriefing with the counsellors right after the event is finalised. Even though the counsellors might not be eager to participate in the debriefing session after the long working day and/or intensive consultations, you should still organise a debriefing while the event is still fresh in their minds. Make sure that all participants understand the importance of the debriefing session and keep it short!

b) Upload information online

The information material developed for the counselling event can be uploaded on an online platform where all interested persons, including diaspora representatives, can have access to it. The homepage of one or two state institutions that led the counselling programme can serve as an online platform where links to all necessary information material that was distributed during the counselling event are accessible.

c) Communicate the success of the event

After analysing the results of the counselling event and receiving feedback from all stakeholders, you could publicise the success of the event. It can be done via

Facebook, Twitter, email, institutions' websites, TV, radio and newspapers.

Example from the ERGEM project

After successfully holding the information day, the best photos were uploaded on the Facebook page, including a thank you note and a full description of the whole event. The description and the photos were also posted on other related project websites and the ICMPD website. In addition, the information was shared on the websites of the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues and the State Commission on Migration Issues. After the completion of all three information days, two interviews on migration issues were also given on a popular radio show by the representatives of Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues.

d) Update the contact list

A counselling programme is a great opportunity for the counsellors to not only get to know migrants and diaspora members, but also to get to know each other better. Representatives of state institutions have the possibility to establish closer personal relations. The counselling programme provides a perfect opportunity for meeting diaspora representatives and exchanging information on new diaspora initiatives. This also gives you the opportunity to collect/update the contact information of diaspora representatives and receive new contact information. Collecting this information will make it easier for you to contact them for the next counselling programme and, most importantly, to keep your contact database up-to-date.

e) Ensure internal knowledge management

A permanent and regular exchange of information enhances cooperation among the state institutions. You should ensure regular inter-institutional communication and exchange different types of information, such as the profile of migrant and diaspora communities in a specific country, good practices, lessons learned from already held counselling events, the latest updates on migration-related legislation and the types of services provided by each of the institutions.

You can also share your conclusions on the questions most frequently raised by the migrants and diaspora members who attended the counselling event with the consular representations and agree on a regular update on a specific topic: this will support the consular officers in their daily work.



See for example in section IV.4.g a template for preparing a lessons learned report.



Ask yourself:

- Is the selected venue appropriate for the planned counselling event? Is it equipped with all the necessary facilities? Is there enough space? Is the location accessible? Are there security issues?
- Have you identified the target audience? What outreach and communication tools are most relevant? Have you identified the key communication agents?
- Have you identified the counsellors? Are they prepared for the information day?
- Have you developed and collected all possible information material to be shared during the event? Are all stakeholders included? Have you considered the printing of the material?
- Have you thought of the number of staff needed for the actual event?
- Have you prepared for the monitoring of the event? Are evaluation and monitoring tools in place?
- Have you considered uploading information material online?
- Have you thought of an appropriate online platform?
- What are the communication tools to be used for publicising the success of the event?
- Is there a mechanism for an inter-institutional exchange of gained experience and lessons learned in place?
- Have you updated your contact database?

4

Checklist: implementing a counselling programme



Have you included all logistical and administrative arrangements in the budget?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered travel arrangements (visa, passport and tickets), accommodation and per diems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you identified local partners for logistical and administrative preparations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you identified focal points for support in reaching out to migrant/diaspora communities in the event country?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you established a format for preparatory meetings to be held prior to the actual event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered the level of the counsellors and developed an agenda with all the issues to be discussed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you made sure that all counsellors have a clear understanding of their tasks during the event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you given several communication tips to the counsellors on how to act during the event in order to be approachable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you identified and collected all information material to be disseminated at the event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you thought of making information material available online and/or saving them on USB sticks or CDs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you developed a strategy for on-site preparations? Have you arranged the room and considered space for consultations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you prepared topical signs to place on the consultation tables as well as signs giving directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have enough time and space for a children's corner and any other activities planned (dancing, singing, exhibition, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you taken all the measures to keep control over the programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you developed tools to measure the success of your event (addressed topics, consultations, attendance, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you identified the steps to be taken after the event is held?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to make information material accessible for all interested persons, i.e. what online platform to use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you remembered to update your contact list with the people you met during the event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered a mechanism for an inter-institutional exchange of information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you identified the most frequently asked questions during the event that can be shared with the respective consulates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a plan on how to communicate the success of the event to the general public and which communication tools will be used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes **No**

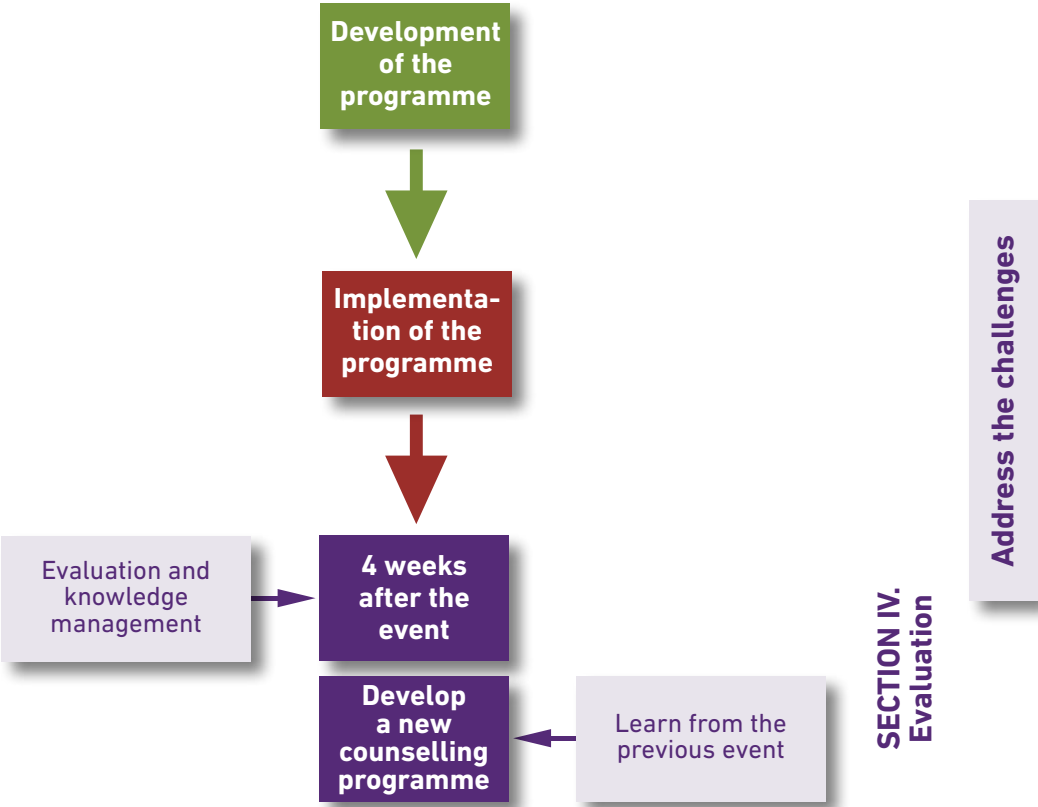
Monitoring and Evaluating the Mobile Counselling Programme

1. How to measure the success of the counselling programme	85
2. Challenges and how to deal with them	92
3. Checklist: monitoring and evaluating the mobile counselling programme	96
4. Additional material and tips	97



Section 4

This section guides you through the main steps in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the mobile counselling programme, describing in detail why monitoring and evaluation are important, what tools you can use, what areas you have to focus on and what challenges you might face. In addition, this section provides comprehensive checklists and helpful methods to conduct successful monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, you can find a compilation of the main challenges you might face when implementing a counselling event. At the end, you will find the most important templates to help you successfully monitor and evaluate your event.



Section 4

Monitoring and Evaluating the Mobile Counselling Programme

1. How to measure the success of the counselling programme

Monitoring is a process involving a systematic and routine collection of information for the purpose of assessing the progress of planned activities; therefore, it should be an integral element of the counselling event: from the organisation of the event to the holding the event and the follow-up phases. Monitoring enables you to know how and in which direction your activity is going. It ensures that all intended milestones are carried out as planned and makes you aware of any issues that require corrective actions. The information derived from monitoring can be used to point out a lack of planning or misconceptions; it can be used to suggest improvements and to change the event design for future programmes, etc. Proper monitoring makes the subsequent evaluation a lot easier. Formal reporting procedures with a timeline make monitoring more effective and help you take on necessary adjustments.



Some monitoring and evaluation templates (evaluation forms, observation chart, etc.) can be found under section 4 of this chapter. For a monitoring and evaluation plan, see II.5.i.

At the beginning, it is important to identify who will be involved and who will be responsible for the monitoring. The scope, budget and purpose of the monitoring and evaluation should also be defined at this stage. Further, monitoring questions need to be developed beforehand (see box below) and the methods for the data collection have to be determined.



Before starting the monitoring, ask yourself:

- What do we need to assess? What is the objective of the counselling event?
- What would be the best way to assess it? What tools could I use?
- Which human and financial resources are needed to conduct the monitoring?

Main clusters of questions for monitoring a counselling event:



Headcount:

- How many people attended the event?
- What were the peak times of arrival?
- What were the lowest times of arrival?
- What is the ratio of gender, age, background, etc.?

General observations and replies from questionnaires:

- What are the general observations of the implementing team and experts?
- How is the counselling received by the attendees?
- How are the additional activities, e.g. cultural activities, received by the attendees?
- Which counselling stands are the most/least popular?
- How is the general atmosphere?
- How is the set-up of the room?
- Are any ad hoc changes needed? Is it possible to respond to these ad hoc changes?
- What are the results of the evaluation forms?
- Did the event achieve its goal?
- What obstacles can be identified?
- Is the information material provided relevant? Are there any updates needed?

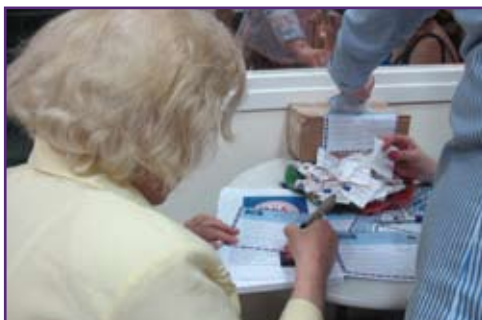
Monitoring done by counsellors directly:

- What are the questions posed by the attendees? What are the main topics of the most frequently asked questions?
- What is the duration of the counselling sessions?
- How many people sought counselling?

- Could all questions be answered by the counsellor?
- Are there any other general comments and observations?

Example from the ERGEM project

A team member was placed at the entrance of the venue in order to count the people and to determine their gender and age. The attendees had the opportunity to fill out short questionnaires, which were distributed all over the venue and which were also handed out by the counsellors. Members of attending diaspora organisations were actively encouraged to fill out the evaluation forms.



A briefing was organised before the events in order to explain the monitoring and evaluation procedure to all counsellors and answer open questions. A debriefing was organised directly after the information day in order to collect fresh and unfiltered information.

When conducting the monitoring, you should take any potential risks into account that could hinder the counsellors in achieving the programme's objectives and threaten the success of the counselling event. Therefore, all risks should not only be identified by creating a 'risk log', but also monitored and assessed thoughtfully in order to be able to devise a mitigation action for such threats, be they external or internal.

Things to consider



Tips for your risk log:

- Brainstorm with your team on potential risks (make them explicit!) that may be problematic for the counselling event.
- Write down potential risks beforehand and try to find a solution for them if they occur. This way you will significantly reduce surprises.
- Add also to the list risks identified by any of the team members at any stage during the development or implementation of the programme – it will help you to maintain institu-

tional memory and better assess your lessons learned.

- We recommend categorising your risks from highest to lowest.
- Do not forget to include the impact and probability of the risks, as well as appropriate measures for mitigating them, in your risk log.
- Do not forget to assess/revisit the potential risks during the process of monitoring and reporting.
- However, remember that it is simply impossible to identify all risks in advance.



See II.5.i for potential risks that can occur at a counselling event.

Evaluation provides an assessment of the implemented activities, their successes and shortcomings. It should be conducted once the counselling event has been held and monitoring results analysed. It provides feedback for improvement, a critical assessment of activities, as well as reflection on the activities. Evaluation can also provide best practise examples that could be used elsewhere. In the case of the counselling event, the aim of the evaluation activity is to reflect upon the impressions and observations of the primary target groups of the counselling event: migrants and diaspora members residing abroad, participating diaspora organisations and state institutions providing the counselling. Both monitoring and evaluation enable informed, evidence-based decisions on adapting the counselling programme. The best approach would be to commission independent evaluators to undertake the evaluation. But if there are only limited financial resources, the evaluation can also be done by the implementing team. In latter case, it is best to stay as neutral, objective and self-critical as possible.



Before starting the evaluation, ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of your evaluation?
- Who are you evaluating for?
- What exactly are you going to evaluate?
- How are you going to evaluate? How are you going to use the collected data?
- What will you do with your analysis?

Steps for a successful evaluation:

- Plan your evaluation in advance!
- Contemplate on your evaluation: it should not be just added on as an afterthought!
- Collect information for your evaluation, e.g. through monitoring the development and implementation process!
- Neutrally and objectively analyse/interpret your findings!
- Report your findings!



Although the monitoring and evaluation approach should be well planned, it is not intended to be fixed from the start; rather, it should be continuously reviewed and adjusted according to changes in the programme.

As mentioned before, an evaluation helps you analyse the information that was gathered during the monitoring of the event. It can especially highlight any trends or important observations. Furthermore, you should interpret the findings and make recommendations, including lessons learned, feedback and any adjustments needed. The findings should be communicated to all stakeholders involved (i.e. the institutions who provided counsellors).

The mobile counselling programme can be evaluated according to the following categories:

- organisation of the event (general impressions, set-up of the venue and format of the event, communication and outreach tools and methods)
- enhanced provision of service and information to migrants and diaspora members (level of migrants' and diaspora members' engagement information material, consultations provided, selection and capacities of the institutions that participated in the event)
- improved collection and analysis of information to design better policies to protect migrants and diaspora members abroad (specific approach to the counselling event due to the different profiles of migrant and diaspora communities, as well as the coordination and cooperation within and between state institutions)
- potential of migrant and diaspora organisations to engage in development activities (cooperation with diaspora organisations and trust-building, making use of the counselling event for addressing development opportunities).

Monitoring and evaluation can be done using the following tools:



- questionnaires
- feedback/evaluation forms
- interviews
- focus group discussions
- debriefing, i.e. collecting fresh impressions directly after the event
- general and specific observation and informal feedback received during the event, e.g. headcount of attendees
- assessment of the venue and the format of the event
- assessment of the use/distribution of the information material (→ Creating a list of all used information material will be useful to keep track of the material taken in order to figure out which brochures were the most and least popular).

The evaluation measures the programme's achievements, determines the reasons for its success and/or failure and highlights the lessons learned from the success/failure. It helps to shed a light on areas that can be improved in the future or points out best practices. But what does it tell you if some results were not achieved? In this case, it might be that the bar was set too high or that certain risks were not taken into consideration or anticipated (e.g. the counselling event was organised on a weekday when most people were working, it was organised during the holiday season when many people were not in town, it was announced on too short notice, no local partners were included or the event was not advertised enough beforehand).

Monitoring and evaluation can be a challenging undertaking.

Main monitoring and evaluation challenges:

- If no technical support staff is available to conduct the monitoring of your event, then the counsellors can also do it themselves. One way to monitor would be to take a few minutes after their counselling sessions to assess the situation and write down a) what the question/problem was, b) whether the problem could be solved or adequately addressed and c) what the duration of the counselling was.

- Keep in mind that there is also a general time constraint on the monitoring itself since it can only be done during the counselling event.
- The monitoring and evaluation tools have to be determined and prepared in advance of the counselling event.
- If there is high staff turnover, it is advisable to have simplified monitoring and evaluation documents/tools in order to brief new staff quickly and easily or allow them to go through the documents themselves.
- Also, document all changes, the most frequently asked questions and challenges for further dissemination among new staff.
- Appoint focal points in each institution who can instruct incoming staff on the monitoring and evaluation tools.

These are some helpful tools and guiding questions for a successful evaluation of a counselling programme:



Objectivity:

- Describe in objective terms what has happened.

Documentation:

- Document why and how things were executed, as well as the advantages and disadvantages, and focus on the negative and positive lessons learned.

Gap analysis:

- Do the counselling event results match the original objectives? Are the results positive and/or negative?
- Have the expected outputs been delivered?
- If there are any gaps, how can they be addressed?

Stakeholders:

- Are the stakeholders (counsellors, migrants, diaspora members) satisfied?

Identification:

- Are there any areas that can be further developed?
- What are the main lessons learned?

Effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation:

- How effective was the counselling programme? (Were the objectives achieved?)

- How efficient was the counselling programme?
- How were the results achieved?
- What does it tell us if the results were not achieved?
- Was the counselling event conducted in a timely and cost-effective way?
- What are the benefits? Is the programme sustainable?

2. Challenges and how to deal with them

While developing or starting to implement your programme, you might face different challenges related to human or institutional capacities, a lack of financial resources or communication with your migrant and diaspora communities. Below you will find some tips on how to deal with these situations. As a general rule, try to always share your concerns and difficulties with the expert working group, with experts nominated to participate in the counselling programme or with your team: brainstorming and discussions may provide some ideas on how to solve the problem(s)!

a) Insufficient human resources

Insufficient human capacities in the home country or abroad can make the organisation and implementation of a mobile counselling programme challenging. Such programmes require sufficient human resources; ideally, seven to ten counsellors would be necessary for a mid-size counselling event. The number of counsellors has to be decided based on the profile of the diaspora and migrant communities, their previously established needs and interests, the number of expected attendees and, especially, the capacities of the involved institutions. In the best-case scenario, both experts and support staff would be available – the former to provide counselling and the latter to set up the venue, provide quick, on-site support, direct the attendees, etc. These two different task areas should be taken into consideration when planning a counselling event. There is also a general time constraint on the counselling event itself since it usually lasts for a day or a few hours. Thus, it is important to have clear instructions and tasks defined and to remain open-minded and flexible for potential changes on short notice. One way to ascertain whether an event had enough counsellors and support staff is to take a few minutes after the event to assess the situation, write down how many people attended the event, how popular each information stand was, what the main questions were, what the duration of the counselling was, and, especially, whether the counsellors felt overwhelmed or not. This can all be done by the counsellors. Another recommendation for dealing with insufficient human resources is to seek support at the location of the event: diaspora members can assist in preparations before the counselling event is held and support staff of the consular representation can direct people during the event and monitor the event.

In addition, specific knowledge or certain skills might be missing for implementing a mobile counselling programme, especially in regard to the staff members of state institutions who do not have regular and direct personal contact with clients/migrants and/or diaspora members. Internal sharing of know-how for handling difficult situations and communicating with migrants and diaspora members would be an important approach to address this challenge. You should also brief all counsellors on the profile and expected needs of the attendees in order to identify difficult questions in advance. It also helps to identify colleagues who are able to provide support via phone or via Skype when difficult questions arise. In addition, it is essential to dedicate sufficient time for preparation meetings where all questions can be raised.

b) Staff turnover

High staff turnover can present additional difficulties for the organisation and implementation of a mobile counselling programme. As previously said, briefings on the counselling event are essential. In this case, it is advisable to have simplified templates and tools in order to quickly and easily brief new counsellors and allow them access to all related documents and reports. Staff turnover also results in a loss of knowledge and experience. This is why it is important to document all changes, the most frequently asked questions and challenges for potential new counsellors. Additionally, you should appoint focal points in each institution who can instruct incoming staff, share information and preferably create mechanisms of internal knowledge management. As mentioned above, proper analysis and reporting on lessons learned helps to maintain institutional memory and compensate for staff turnover.

c) Insufficient financial resources

You might have developed an excellent counselling programme but then realise that you do not have sufficient finances for its implementation or that your budget is no longer guaranteed. Below are some tips on where you can cut your expenditures and still implement a successful programme:

- Use local supporters whenever possible instead of bringing support staff from your home administration. Diaspora organisations and consular representations can help you organise your programme! In the worst-case scenario, support can also be provided by the counsellors. In this case, you need to prepare them before the counselling event, including assigning and explaining their roles to them. All necessary material and activities should be prepared beforehand, such as visibility items, printed-out questionnaire forms, the set-up of cultural activities, technical equipment, etc.
- If only a limited number of counsellors can participate in the counselling programme because of a lack of financial resources, then it might be good to appoint some experts in the home country who could provide counsel-

ling through the use of ICT tools, such as Skype, video chat or email. Make sure to assess the capacities of the consular representatives: they could also provide counselling themselves, e.g. on behalf of the ministry of foreign affairs.

- You can also save money when combining a counselling event with another event held in the destination country, e.g. an official visit of the institution or minister responsible for diaspora affairs or other state institution representatives to the destination country. Also, if a diaspora organisation organises events in the destination country, you can combine it with your counselling event if the format and agenda allow it. In this case, you can save funds allocated for communication, logistics and venue rental. But remember that you will definitely need to invest more in the planning and coordination of the event as soon as you involve other actors!
- Explore all possibilities in regard to the venue of an event: the facilities of a consular representation or premises of a diaspora organisation could be used. If these venues are not sufficient, ask other civil society organisations, including diaspora organisations of other countries, or the municipality of the city where the event takes place.
- Review your planned expenditures with regard to communication and outreach activities: you can probably skip printing material or print them in black and white instead of making coloured copies. It might be also more cost-efficient to send electronic versions to the destination country where it can be printed only if needed and if electronic communication measures are not efficient.
- Critically review your programme: which activities can you leave out and thus save money?
- Book flights or other transportation tickets as early as possible: usually in this case the tickets will be cheaper.
- Look for alternative accommodation options such as guest facilities at the consular representation. Or ask your local partners to advise you on cheaper accommodation facilities in the destination country.

d) Lack of interest by diaspora members/migrants

It might be difficult for you to reach out to and mobilise many diaspora members and migrants for the counselling programme. Some people might just not be interested in attending a counselling event, whereas others might actually be interested, but might not be sufficiently informed about the format of the event. Therefore, you should try to get migrants and diaspora members interested in the counselling programme by providing enough information about it beforehand, by explaining the concept to them, by asking for their input and feedback, and by using different kinds of outreach and communication tools. It is impor-

tant to not rely on a single outreach method, such as using just the internet. As mentioned before, some people simply have no internet access, do not have time to check internet sources very often or are not used to this communication tool. Others never read the newspaper or watch TV. Thus, it is useful to diversify your outreach by, inter alia, advertising the counselling programme on TV and in radio shows in the country of origin and especially in the destination country; running ads or articles in newspapers, if possible in diaspora newspapers; handing out flyers at popular meeting points; using posters; using Facebook, Twitter and email; and, especially, asking personal contacts to encourage friends and friends of friends to disseminate the information. By linking up with local diaspora and migrant organisations, you can also find a good partner to help you with your outreach efforts and get people interested in the event. For this purpose, it is essential to know your migrant and diaspora communities (their profile and needs) and apply a tailor-made approach.

e) Lack of trust by diaspora members/migrants

Migrants and diaspora members might not trust government representatives and might therefore also not be willing to attend your counselling event. Some members of vulnerable groups might even be opposed to consultations or generally be distrustful due to previous negative experiences. In order to build trust, it is crucial to explain the objective of the counselling programme and its advantages. A way to increase the trust of migrants and diaspora members is to highlight that no names will be collected by the counsellors, that no information will be communicated to third parties and that the counselling event will take place at a neutral location. In addition, counsellors can provide their contact details for further follow-up questions, which creates a sense of accountability. In addition, it is important to create an open, welcoming and non-threatening atmosphere for all parties involved. Asking the consular representation or embassy for detailed information on the profile, needs and wishes of the migrant and diaspora communities in the destination countries might help you address a potential lack of trust.

3

Checklist: monitoring and evaluating the mobile counselling programme



	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Monitoring:		
➤ Did you identify which monitoring and evaluation tools you want to use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Do you have all the necessary forms and documents that you will need for monitoring and evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you think about potential risks and did you create a risk log?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Do you have enough financial and human resources to conduct monitoring?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you assign the roles for the monitoring of the counselling programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you explain all monitoring and evaluation tools to the team members involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation:		
➤ Did you define the purpose of your evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you plan your evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you collect information from the monitoring that you can use for your evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you use all the information collected from the monitoring?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Do you have the assigned human resources to do the evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you describe the event and what happened objectively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you document everything that happened?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you formulate the lessons learned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Do the results of the counselling programme match the original objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you identify any gaps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you identify any areas that can be further developed for a future counselling programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you identify how the results were achieved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Did you identify the benefits of the counselling programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Additional material and tips

a) Questionnaire: migrants (example from the ERGEM project)

Air Mail
Par Avion

From: Georgian Diaspora
To: Tbilisi, Georgia

In general, this is how I feel about the information event:

I heard about the event through:

The most important information I received, was:

This important information was missing:

Such events should be organised on a regular basis:

For the next time, I suggest the following improvements:

a. Facebook b. Flyer c. Friends/ Family d. Other:

Yes No

b) Questionnaire: diaspora organisations (example from the ERGEM project)

Date of the information day:

Please complete the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate boxes, or writing your comment where appropriate. Please tick only one box for each question.



Your views are very important to us and will help us improve!

I. General

1. How would you rate the information day overall?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

2. Was the facility of the event convenient?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please suggest a better location: _____

3. Was the duration of the event convenient?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, a more appropriate duration would be: _____

4. Was the selection of the state institution representatives who participated in the event appropriate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please indicate which ministries/agencies should have participated: _____

5. Was the structure of the event, i.e. counselling session, Q&A and cultural activities, appropriate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please indicate what should be changed: _____

6. How would you rate the organisation of the information day?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

Which aspects could be improved?

7. Should such an information day be organised regularly?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ It depends – please explain below:

II. Information material

8. Did you receive any information material?

☐ Yes ☐ No → Please go to Question 11

9. How would you rate the information material with regard to the following aspects?

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Quantity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Format	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

10. Please indicate if there is any additional information material you would like to receive:

III. Event

11. How many consultations did you personally attend? (Please insert the number)

12. In your view, what were the three most important issues addressed during these consultations?

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

13. Were they addressed adequately/answered sufficiently?

☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No

14. Which important questions were not answered sufficiently or were not answered at all?

15. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the information day by ticking the respective box.

The information day.....

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
helps Georgian state institutions better understand the needs of Georgian migrants and diaspora members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helps Georgian institutions improve the provision of information and services to migrants and diaspora members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
supports your work as a representative of a diaspora organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helps diaspora organisations strengthen relations with Georgian government institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
increases the willingness of migrants and diaspora organisations to contribute to Georgia's development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Other than the points listed above, are there other issues that should be discussed/addressed?

17. Would you be willing to cooperate directly with Georgian government institutions in the organisation of such an information day in the future?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ It depends – please explain below:

Please add any other comments you would like to share with us on the info day:

Thank you!

c) Questionnaire: state institutions (example from the ERGEM project)

Date of the information day:

Please complete the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate boxes, or writing your comment where appropriate. Please tick only one box for each question.



Your views are very important to us and will help us improve!

I. General

1. How would you rate the information day overall?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

2. Was the facility of the event convenient?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please suggest a better location: _____

3. Was the duration of the event convenient?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, a more appropriate duration would be: _____

4. Was I the right person from the state institution to participate in the event?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4a. If no:

<input type="checkbox"/>	There was no reason to send a representative of my institution at all.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The representative of my institution should have been of a higher level.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There should be more representatives from my institution.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The majority of questions asked were beyond my competence.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____ _____

5. Was the structure of the event, i.e. counselling session, Q&A and cultural activities, appropriate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please indicate what should be changed:

6. How would you rate the organisation of the information day?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

Which aspects could be improved?

7. Should such an information day be organised regularly?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ It depends – please explain below:

II. Information material

8. Did you have the necessary information material to cover all asked questions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. If no, which information material was missing?

10. How would you rate the information material with regard to the following aspects?

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Quantity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Format	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:_____

11. Please indicate if there is any additional information material you would like to have next time:

III. Event

12. How many consultations did you provide? (Please insert the number)

13. From your point of view, what were the three most important questions addressed during these consultations?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

14. Were you able to answer these questions sufficiently?

☐ Yes

☐ Partly

☐ No

15. Which important questions were answered only partially or not answered at all? Why?

16. Did you need additional information from your colleagues in Tbilisi? If yes, for which questions?

17. Did you feel well prepared?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ It depends – please explain below:

18. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the information day by ticking the respective box.

The information day....

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
helps your institution better understand the needs of Georgian migrants and diaspora members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helps improve the provision of information and services to migrants and diaspora members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
supports the work of diaspora organisations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

helps your institution strengthen relations with diaspora organisations and migrants abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
increases the willingness of migrants and diaspora organisations to contribute to Georgia's development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. In your view, are there any other important effects that might be triggered by such an information day?

20. Would your institution be willing to cooperate directly with Georgian diaspora organisations in the organisation of such an information day in the future?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ It depends – please explain below:

Please add any other comments you would like to share with us on the info day:

Thank you!

d) Debriefing guidelines

1. Did you experience any difficulties during the counselling?
2. What were the most frequently asked questions?
3. How was it for you to work directly with people (in such close contact)?
4. Which positive experiences do you recollect?
5. Which negative experiences do you recollect?
6. Did you feel well prepared for the counselling?
7. Do you think it would be necessary to do training beforehand?
8. (if applicable) Did you notice any differences from previously held events?



e) Consultation record sheet

Institution:

Stand		Number of people	Issues addressed	Other comments, inter alia, duration of consultations
	Main topic (e.g. citizenship and passport)	Tally sheet		
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

f) Attendee headcount

Please count the attendees at the door and alternate after one hour. For adults, please also put down the gender and estimation of age, i.e. adolescent (teenager), adult and elderly person (over 60). For children, only put down the total number.								
Adults								
Observer	Time	Men			Women			Children
		Adolescent	Adult	Elderly	Adolescent	Adult	Elderly	
	10:00–11.00							
	11:00–12.00							
Observer		Men			Women			
		Adolescent	Adult	Elderly	Adolescent	Adult	Elderly	
	12:00–13.00							
	13:00–14.00							

g) Lessons learned report: table of contents – example (adapted from the ERGEM project)

Table of contents



Executive summary

1. Introduction

2. Main facts on the held counselling event

3. Monitoring and evaluation methodology and tools

4. Findings on:

4.1 Organisation of the event

4.1.1 General satisfaction with the event

4.1.2 Set-up of the event

4.1.3 Communication and outreach

4.2 Enhanced provision of services and information for migrants and diaspora members abroad

4.2.1 Level of migrants' and diaspora members' engagement

4.2.2 Information material

4.2.3 Provision of consultations

4.2.4 Selection and capacities of state institutions

4.3 Improved collection and analysis of information to design better policies to protect migrants and diaspora members abroad

4.3.1 Specific characteristics of migrants and diaspora members

4.3.2 Coordination within and between state institutions in the home country, and between institutions in the home country and representations abroad

4.4 Development potential of migrant and diaspora organisations

4.4.1 Cooperation with diaspora organisations

4.4.2 Making use of the counselling event for addressing the development opportunities of the home country

5. Conclusions and recommendations

6. Potential follow-up activities

7. Annexes (templates of Monitoring and evaluation tools)

Section 5

Experiences from the ERGEM Project Information Days

1. Information day in Athens, Greece 115
2. Information day in Berlin, Germany 118
3. Information day in Istanbul, Turkey 121



This section features the experiences from the three information days carried out during the ERGEM project in Athens, Berlin, and Istanbul, including the main topics that were addressed in each country. Furthermore, it includes a brief description of the best practices the project team has identified as well as a number of lessons learned to help you organise your mobile counselling programme more efficiently.

Section 5

Experiences from the ERGEM Project Information Days

The overall objective of the **'Enhancing the Role of the Georgian Emigrants at Home' (ERGEM)** project was to contribute to strengthening the ties between Georgians abroad and Georgian institutions in order to increase migrants' and diaspora members' contributions to Georgia's economic development. Specifically, it aimed to:

- enhance institutional knowledge on Georgian migrant and diaspora communities, with a focus on their needs, interests, remittances and propensity to invest
- improve the information, support and services that Georgian institutions provide migrants and diaspora members abroad
- transfer structured knowledge from diaspora representatives to Georgian business actors and pilot support services to returnees.

Collection and Analysis of the Relevant Information

Information on Georgian Migrant and Diaspora Communities

1. Collection and analysis of information on Georgian migrant and diaspora communities
2. Development of 3 case studies

Information on Business Priorities

1. Analysis of priority business sectors, remittances and investment needs
2. Identification of experienced Georgian diaspora business persons

Services to Migrants and Diaspora Members Abroad

1. Study visits
2. Development of a counselling programme
3. Information days
4. Production of the guide
5. Production of online information for Georgian emigrants and diaspora members

Services in Georgia

1. Diaspora investment model
2. Training/mentoring of business persons by Georgian diaspora business persons
3. Delivery of 20 SME grants for returning migrants in Georgia

The ERGEM project was implemented under the leadership of the Danish Refugee Council, in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, by a consortium of project partners and associated partners, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Public Service Development Agency, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, and the Ministry of the Interior of Poland. The project was funded by the European Union Thematic Programme and co-funded by the Danish Refugee Council and project partners. The project implementation started in April 2013 and ended in December 2014.

1. Information day in Athens, Greece

Figure 1: Addressed topics in Athens, Greece



Source: Wordle based on the topics of the consultations provided in Athens

'The event left me with such positive feelings. These types of information days are very important for our diaspora. A vast majority of the people we talked to were so thankful and they all underlined how important this day was for them, since they felt their country cared about them. The cultural events fit perfectly into the event and added a very deep emotional charge.' (ICMPD, 2014b)

The first ERGEM project information day was held in Athens, Greece on 1 June 2014 at the Caucasus Cultural Centre, an active and well-known Georgian diaspora organisation. The participants of the event included the ERGEM project staff from ICMPD and DRC as well as representatives from Georgian governmental institutions, namely the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues, the Public Service Development Agency and the Public Service Hall (Ministry of Justice), the Ministry of the Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Protection was available for Skype interviews during the event.



Here, it is important to note that many logistical aspects of the event were covered by the diaspora organisation, such as serving food, setting up for dancing and singing, and helping with setting up

and cleaning the venue after the event. This facilitated the preparation activities before the start of the event.

The layout of the reception room was set up one day ahead of the event. The counsellors were seated along the wall in the large reception room, allowing them to be easily approached by attending migrants and diaspora members. Each counsellor had a table with information flyers, leaflets, brochures and other handouts and visibility items (pens, post-it notes and USB sticks). Furthermore, each desk featured table tags that indicated the topics that the counsellor was responsible for. Large signs were also hung on the walls behind the counsellors, indicating their area of expertise. Some counsellors also brought their institution's banner. This made it easier for the attendees to quickly orient themselves upon arriving.



The information day included official speeches by the Georgian Ambassador, the head of the Caucasus Centre, a representative of the Diaspora Office and a representative of the Greek municipality.

In addition to consultations, the information day featured Georgian songs and dances performed by children, an

exhibition of arts and crafts, and a degustation of Georgian food.

The event in Athens, Greece, was the biggest of the three information days. More than 175 people attended the event, especially women: women constituted a majority of attendees (69%). A large number of children (12% of attendees) also attended the event, while 19% of attendees were men.

Suggested practices and lessons learned

- Make a **to-do list!** Set deadlines, delegate tasks and have a clear plan of action!
- Do not underestimate the power of **social networks** or lack thereof. Make sure to send printed flyers since some attendees do not use social networks. On the other hand, Facebook is an important tool for attracting younger migrants and diaspora members.
- Establish contacts with **diaspora organisations** and prominent migrants in the destination country prior to the information day. They can provide support with logistical issues, such as invitations, spread-



ing the word about the event, cultural entertainment, food, and most importantly, a venue.

- **Be careful when choosing the venue!** Should you hold the information day at the premises of a diaspora organisation, this may cause other competing organisations to not attend or to feel alienated; therefore, choose a venue as neutral as possible.
- During the invitation process, **make the format of the event clear!** In Athens, most people did not expect such an informal setting and it took them a little time to figure out how to proceed.
- Make sure to **personally give out evaluation forms to all parties** you need feedback from, such as diaspora organisation leaders, attendees and counsellors. You may need to track down each person and collect the completed evaluation sheets individually.
- Establish contacts with the **government representation in the destination country.** During the ERGEM project information day, Georgia's ambassador and consular staff were present during the event. They not only demonstrated their support, but also established informal contacts with migrants and diaspora members in Athens.
- Schedule the event on **a weekend** to guarantee a high number of attendees.
- Put up **signs** on the tables, walls and in hallways! This enables the attendees to quickly orient themselves upon arrival. If necessary, put a greeter near the entrance who could direct people and explain the objective of the event.
- Do not underestimate the importance of a **cultural part** in the event, such as dancing, singing, an exhibition of arts and crafts as well as a degustation of cuisine. The cultural part of the event gives it an emotional and informal atmosphere, enabling all participants to bond and have a positive experience.
- Do not forget about the children! Provide books, drawing material, visibility items, and alphabet-learning tools in their mother tongue. Make sure they have a designated space to play. Note that there should always be an adult supervising the children. **Flag painting!** In Athens, the team painted Georgian flags on all interested attendees during the information day – both children and adults.

2.

Figure 2: Addressed topics in Berlin, Germany



Source: Wordle based on the topics of the consultations provided in Berlin

'Organising the information day is so important not only for the migrants but also for the government. They get a chance to see the problems that migrants face very up close.' (ICMPD, 2014b)

The second ERGEM project information day was held in Berlin, Germany, on 22 June 2014 at the Georgian Consulate. The participants of the event included the ERGEM project team from ICMPD and DRC as well as representatives from Georgian governmental institutions, namely the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora issues, the Public Service Development Agency and the Public Service Hall (Ministry of Justice), the Ministry of the Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Protection was available for Skype interviews during the event.

The layout of the reception room was planned and set up by the project team with the support of the Georgian Consulate staff the day before the event. The counsellors were seated along the wall in the large reception room, allowing them to be easily approached by attending migrants and diaspora members. Each counsellor had a table with information flyers, leaflets, brochures and other handouts and visibility items. Furthermore, each desk featured table tags that indicated the topics that the counsellor was responsible for. This made it easier for the attendees to quickly orient themselves upon arriving.

The information day included official speeches by the Georgian Ambassador and the Diaspora Office. A representative of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) gave a presentation on its activities that are implemented with the Georgian diaspora in Germany.



In addition to consultations, the information day featured performances of Georgian traditional folk songs by a German women's choir and a violin performance as well as a degustation of Georgian food.

More than 50 people participated in the event, with a majority being female (62% female, 26% male and 12% children).

Suggested practices and lessons learned!

- When choosing a venue associated with the government, keep in mind that **the formal location may alienate many migrants** who do not want public attention drawn to them. This also very much depends on the country of destination (and the number of unregistered or vulnerable migrants).
- **Be prepared to handle many logistical issues** yourself, such as taking care of the clean-up, organising the cultural entertainment parts, etc. This is very time-consuming and takes staff members away from the event for some time.
- **Check online whether there are big events happening near your venue.** A big parade was held on the same day as the information day in Berlin. This made the arrival to the venue a lot more difficult, especially because of road blocks.
- **Make sure to establish clear and direct contact with the government representation in the target country.** Brief them on the event and the details so that they can support you with reaching out to as many migrants and diaspora members as possible.
- **Ensure that all technical equipment is set up and running** before the start of the event.
- Get in contact with **local cultural representatives**, such as choirs, restaurants, diaspora organisations, etc. In the case of the ERGEM project information day, a women's choir in Berlin volunteered to sign

at the information day, which became one of the highlights of the event.



- **Schedule the cultural events in a timely and organised manner** and stick to the schedule, making sure that they do not disrupt the consultations.
- Cooperate with the **government representation** in the destination country as closely as possible. In our case, it was the Georgian Consulate. They can support you by providing a venue, attracting many migrants and diaspora members, and providing logistical and administrative support. Their high level of involvement demonstrates their willingness to help the migrants and diaspora members in the destination country.
- Provide a designated **area for children**, equipped with books, colouring notepads and colour markers. In addition, there should be a volunteer to help manage the children's corner.
- Invite **representatives of other organisations** that work with migrants and/or diaspora members to diversify the topics covered in the consultations. In Berlin, a GIZ representative held a short presentation of the organisation's activities with Georgian migrants.
- Provide an **electronic copy** of all the information material that you have printed for the event. People usually refrain from taking printed material, therefore, it could be very beneficial to distribute **USB** sticks that have all the information material uploaded on them.
- Furthermore, provide a paper **bag** for **collecting information** material, brochures and other visibility items. This proved to be very helpful in Berlin (and later in Istanbul), as it allowed the people who attended the event to collect the information material easily.

3. Information day in Istanbul, Turkey

Figure 3: Addressed topics in Istanbul, Turkey



Source: Wordle based on the topics of the consultations provided in Istanbul

The third ERGEM project information day was held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 6 July 2014 at a Georgian restaurant in Istanbul. The participants of the event included the ERGEM project team from ICMPD and DRC as well as representatives from Georgian governmental institutions, namely the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora issues, the Public Service Development Agency and the Public Service Hall (Ministry of Justice), the Ministry of the Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Protection was not present.

The event took place at a Georgian-Turkish restaurant in the old city centre of Istanbul. The counsellors were seated in two different reception rooms, allowing them to be comfortably approached by the attending migrants and diaspora members. Each counsellor had a table with information flyers, leaflets, brochures and other handouts and visibility items. Furthermore, each desk featured table tags that indicated the topics that the counsellor was responsible for. This made it easier for the attendees to quickly orient themselves upon arriving.

This information day was attended by Georgian historical diaspora members, most of whom were male (around 50), and current Georgian labour migrants, most of whom were women (68% women and 32% men). In addition to consultations, the information day featured a degustation of Georgian food.

Suggested practices and lessons learned!

- Choosing a **neutral venue** was a beneficial decision since none of the diaspora organisations felt excluded and the venue was not associated with the government.
- **Safety first!** Keep in mind that some migrants may be vulnerable and may not be registered with the local government; therefore, they might be afraid to participate in public events.
- **Space, space, space!** Choose the venue carefully. The restaurant where the information day was held in Istanbul was not particularly small; however, it was not big enough for a cultural entertainment activity. Additional space for people to wait and socialise should be also planned.
- Choosing a **private location**, in this case a Georgian restaurant in the centre of Istanbul, enabled the team to dedicate more time to talking to the attendees and being more involved in the event since the staff at the restaurant handled serving food, as well as cleaning up and setting up the area without direct supervision.
- Invite the **consular representation** in the destination country. In the case of the ERGEM project information day, representatives from the Georgian Consulate were present throughout the entire event. This enabled migrants and diaspora members to get some answers to some pressing matters and gave the Consular staff more insight into the problems of migrants and diaspora members in Istanbul.
- Make sure to **contact the diaspora organisations** in the destination city and see if your event coincides with one of their activities. In the case of the ERGEM project information day in Istanbul, the most prominent historical diaspora organisation held an event the day before the information day (dedicated to a Turkish-Georgian poet and activist). Had the project team known about this event, a combined diaspora event could have been organised.
- Make sure that the counsellors are **well aware of the profile of the migrant and diaspora communities**. This helps you avoid confusion or surprises during the event. The consultants should be well prepared for the types of questions they will be asked.
- Do not forget to bring **scissors, tape, paper, pens and other office supplies**, especially if your event is held at a restaurant where such supplies might not be easily available.

- Make sure to be present at the venue at least two hours prior to starting the information day. This will give you **enough time** to set up the tables and signs, distribute visibility items, decorate the rooms with banners and prepare the reception area with last minute details.
- If historical diaspora members (or non-diaspora persons) are attending, make sure you bring an **interpreter**. It is highly likely that the historical diaspora members do not speak/understand the language of their country of origin. Therefore, in order to ensure smooth conversations, have at least one interpreter present.
- Serve water, and if possible, **coffee**, tea and other refreshments. It is important to keep in mind that in the summer (as was the case with the ERGEM information day) you will need a large supply of cold refreshments not only for the migrants and diaspora members who attend but for the counsellors as well!



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Guide on Organising Mobile Counselling for Migrants and Diaspora Members

Based on lessons learned from the information days for the Georgian diaspora in the ERGEM project

International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2014