

# Migration Partnership Facility (MPF)

## The Power of Partnership Approaches'

### Mapping Report



With the financial assistance  
of the European Union

## BACKGROUND

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In the face of the migratory pressures confronting the European Union (EU) over the last several decades, it has become increasingly recognised in the European migration policy discourse that there is a strong impetus for devising constructive cooperation and partnership approaches with third countries. Without such alliances, it is impossible to address and effectively manage migratory movements to foster safe, orderly and regular migration to the EU. Such partnership approaches emphasise shared responsibility and interest between interdependent origin, transit and destination countries to tackle the complex, transnational, and multifaceted challenges of migration.

It is evident that well-designed partnership approaches towards migration management can yield a triple-win – for origin countries, destination countries, and migrants themselves. Over the last several years, the EU and EU member states (MS) have forged several migration partnerships with priority partner countries at both the bilateral and multilateral levels under the Comprehensive Approach to Migration Mobility (CAMM) and the Mobility Partnerships (MPs) frameworks that were developed to guide the EU and its MS' cooperation with third countries in the area of migration and mobility. The EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum unveiled in 2020, builds on the MP and CAMM frameworks, taking into account lessons learned and proposes a renewed focus on more predictable, effective, and sustainable cooperation with third countries on migration management through partnerships based on mutual interests and objectives.

The EU-funded [Migration Partnership Facility \(MPF\)](#), implemented by ICMPD, plays an important role in supporting the implementation and operationalisation of the external dimension of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum by supporting and incubating joint initiatives between EU MS and priority partner countries. This is undertaken through financial and technical support provided by the MPF to EU MS and partner countries interested in forming tailored partnership initiatives across a range of migration-related issues. Since 2016, MPF-funded 'partnership projects' have enabled trust-building and cooperation between EU MS and partner countries and have promoted a shared understanding of complex migration challenges that necessitate a coordinated and multi-stakeholder approach to achieve shared priorities and objectives for migration management. Concretely, they have increased dialogue, cooperation, information sharing, and policy and knowledge transfer through exchanging learning, experiences, and best practices. This, in turn, has contributed (a recent evaluation of MPF II has confirmed) to strengthening migration management. Furthermore, ICMPD has consistently been at the forefront of cultivating partnerships – a commitment deeply ingrained in the organisation's mission, serving as a fundamental motivation for its establishment three decades ago. The partnership approaches developed and advanced under the MPF reflect ICMPD's overarching goal to foster an enabling environment for policy, research, knowledge exchange, dialogue, and capacity development.

# OVERVIEW OF MAPPING AND METHODOLOGY

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The Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) has played an enabling role in fostering partnerships between European Union (EU) Member States and priority partner countries to address shared migration challenges and opportunities. With a total of 56 projects funded involving 18 EU Member States and 24 partner countries, there is value in establishing a classification of partnership types and approaches employed in migration management and cooperation initiatives funded by the Facility. By analysing and categorising projects funded under the MPF, this report aims to contribute to a better understanding of the partnership typologies employed through MPF funding, gleaning valuable insights into different partnership approaches utilised in the field of migration management and cooperation.

The methodology for this mapping exercise involved establishing a typology framework with a specific focus on projects and initiatives funded under the MPF. This framework provides a basis for analysing and categorising MPF projects. The analysis took into account project objectives, activities, and outcomes to determine the most suitable partnership typology for each MPF project.

It is important to note that the typologies outlined are not meant to be rigid, finite categories. In many cases, and depending on the complexity of the project, there could be overlap with more than one partnership typology.

# PARTNERSHIP TYPOLOGIES

This section provides a description of each partnership type, including key characteristics, opportunities and challenges, strengths and weaknesses, and provides indicative examples for each partnership typology. The typologies are presented in the table below:

TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS	STRENGTHS/ OPPORTUNITIES	WEAKNESSES/ CHALLENGES	EXAMPLE OF ACTIVITIES
<b>Operational Partnerships</b>	Collaboration between countries (and institutions) to jointly manage and operate migration-related initiatives. Such partnerships have an implementation focus, emphasising practical cooperation and coordination to address operational challenges in migration management.	<p>Practical cooperation and coordination;</p> <p>High likelihood of direct results given the limited scope and focus on operational aspects of migration management and the implementation of targeted activities and operationalisation of policy and institutional frameworks;</p>	<p>Potentially short-term impact;</p> <p>Potential lack of long-term sustainability;</p> <p>Specific challenges around navigating diverse operational contexts and overcoming limitations around information sharing and exchange, particularly as it concerns sensitive operations.</p>	<p>Deployment of liaison officers;</p> <p>Sharing of real-time intelligence;</p> <p>Joint cross-border surveillance exercises and operations to address specific migration challenges (i.e., human trafficking and smuggling, organised crime, etc.)</p> <p>Procurement and transfer of border technology and equipment;</p> <p>Development of standard operating procedures.</p>
<b>Policy and Dialogue Partnerships</b>	Involves collaboration between migration actors to develop and implement migration policies and strategies. The focus is on policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and learning to address migration challenges at the policy level.	<p>Anchored around multilateral, regional, and international agreements and initiatives, strengthening cooperation in migration governance;</p> <p>Promotes the uptake of evidence-informed policies and practices;</p> <p>Enhances policy coherence and synergies, leading to enhanced coordination and collaboration;</p> <p>Enables exchange of best practices and joint policy development;</p>	<p>Risks minimal buy-in, resulting in poor policy uptake and weak implementation;</p> <p>Intended policy outcomes may not be immediate, requiring longer time horizons that are not accommodated under time-bound projects;</p> <p>Often budget associated with the dialogue is not extended to the implementation of the decisions, so they remain on paper rather than in practice</p>	<p>Policy formulation workshops to formulate and harmonise migration policies;</p> <p>Regular and sustained policy dialogues to discuss policy issues, transfer knowledge and best practices, and tackle common migration challenges;</p> <p>Development of joint migration strategies;</p> <p>Exchange programmes for policy-makers;</p>

TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS	STRENGTHS/ OPPORTUNITIES	WEAKNESSES/ CHALLENGES	EXAMPLE OF ACTIVITIES
<b>Capacity Partnerships</b>	Focus on collaboration between entities to develop and/or strengthen their capacity (soft, semi-hard, or hard <sup>1</sup> ) to effectively manage migration-related challenges. The objective is to bolster knowledge, and skills, mobilise necessary resources for effective migration management.	<p>Strengthens institutional and human resource capacity to meet migration-related challenges;</p> <p>Improved capacity for migration-related tasks and policy implementation;</p> <p>Can involve the provision and transfer of equipment and infrastructure and the deployment of technical expertise;</p>	<p>Resource-intensive and time-consuming.</p> <p>In some instances, focus heavily on classroom-based learning without addressing barriers to skills implementation such as turnover, resources, and incentives.</p> <p>Challenges in sustainability;</p>	<p>Training and capacity-building programs for border and migration management officials;</p> <p>Study visits and exchange programs to facilitate peer-to-peer learning;</p> <p>Institutional capacity needs assessments;</p>
<b>Action Research Partnerships</b>	Promotes research cooperation between academic institutions, research organisations, civil society, and policy-makers.	<p>Strengthens the evidence base, resulting in a deeper understanding of migration dynamics and trends;</p> <p>Promotes evidence-based policy and decision-making.</p> <p>Knowledge and data sharing and joint advocacy;</p> <p>Informing migration governance through research and knowledge exchange;</p>	<p>Challenges in translating research to policy;</p> <p>Potential for limited policy uptake and implementation</p> <p>Sustainability becomes a key concern when funding concludes, and in certain instances, ownership of the research products remains ambiguous;</p>	<p>Data collection and analysis;</p> <p>Development of policy briefs;</p> <p>Closed-door policy briefing meetings to share evidence-based policy recommendations ;</p> <p>Awareness raising, advocacy and communication campaigns to raise awareness on migration issues and disseminate policy-relevant research findings;</p>

1 As defined by Pearson (2011), hard capacities include resources like infrastructure, funds, buildings, IT equipment etc., which can be considered the material expression or product of capacity. Whilst semi-hard capacities entail technical skills, knowledge, organisational capacity and policy infrastructure (i.e., legislation, policies, strategies and systems) and soft capacities can be social, relational, intangible and invisible.

TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS	STRENGTHS/ OPPORTUNITIES	WEAKNESSES/ CHALLENGES	EXAMPLE OF ACTIVITIES
<b>Hybrid Partnerships</b>	Entail a combination of the elements and objectives of the different partnership types and exhibit characteristics of two or more partnerships in addressing migration challenges.	<p>Enable a comprehensive approach to be forged (combining elements of different partnerships) to address multifaceted challenges;</p> <p>Allow for adaptability and flexibility to dynamic and evolving situations, common in the migration landscape.</p> <p>Are well suited for addressing complex situations, as hybrid partnerships enable the blending of different partnership elements;</p>	<p>Hybrid partnerships can introduce complexity, given that they need to balance the objectives of the different partnership approaches;</p> <p>They require a significant investment of resources (time and funding) due to the range of activities pursued.</p> <p>Hybrid partnerships may be difficult to evaluate, given the complexity and the diverse nature of the activities involved.</p> <p>Hybrid partnerships may face coordination challenges, given that they typically involve a higher number of partners because of the varying objectives.</p>	<p>Joint exercises and operations coupled with policy dialogue;</p> <p>Implementing upstream research activities that will inform capacity-building and training initiatives;</p> <p>Labour migration initiatives that integrate capacity-building for agencies responsible for labour migration mandates with the operational facets encompassing the mobilisation of talents etc.</p>

## ANALYSIS

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The partnership mapping exercise revealed several key findings regarding the typology of partnership approaches utilised for migration management and cooperation under the MPF. In the course of this this exercise, 48 projects that were funded by the MPF at the time, were incorporated into the mapping process. These projects either received funding or have commitments for funding under the MPF. The projects were classified based on five main partnership types: (i) Operational Partnerships; (ii) Policy and Dialogue Partnerships; (iii) Capacity Partnerships; (iv) Action Research Partnerships; and (v) Hybrid Partnerships.

To put these partnership approaches to the test, the MPF hosted its inaugural partnership event in September 2023, convening EU MS, EU institutions, and former and current grantees. This event not only showcased the menu of partnership approaches captured in this mapping report but also provided valuable insights through successful examples of MPF projects employing these approaches. The analysis presented below draws from both the mapping exercise and the insights gleaned during the partnership event.

*Source: MPF Partnership Event held on 28 September 2023*



## 1. OPERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

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### Overview:

This partnership type strengthens operational cooperation and coordination among EU MS and partner countries, primarily focusing on addressing operational constraints. This involves hands-on collaboration in areas such as border management, law enforcement, and challenges such as migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and irregular migration.

### When should they be employed?

Operational partnerships are well-suited for addressing time-sensitive and limited-scope challenges that require swift operational support, cooperation, and coordination. They are particularly effective in enhancing border surveillance capabilities, responding efficiently to cross-border crimes, and fostering operational exchanges. Operational partnerships are crucial in addressing immediate operational needs and pressing issues, especially during crises, fostering effective and timely collaboration among migration management actors.

### Why is it selected?

This partnership type is chosen when there is a need for a prompt response to pressing and fluid migration-related situations and crises, necessitating bolstered operational capabilities and efficiency. In essence, operational partnerships deliver rapid and concrete results under time pressure.

### Share of MPF projects

Operational partnerships account for **21%** of MPF projects, demonstrating their significance as a time-sensitive response strategy adopted by MPF grantees. This strategic partnership approach effectively addresses urgent and evolving migration challenges through swift operational cooperation and coordination. The utilisation of this partnership typology highlights its value in providing timely and impactful solutions to shared migration challenges between EU Member States and priority partner countries.

## 2. POLICY AND DIALOGUE PARTNERSHIPS:

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### Overview:

This partnership approach primarily focuses on engendering dialogue, coordination, and knowledge exchange. It aims to drive joint policy development and formulate strategies that enhance migration cooperation between EU Member States and partner countries on shared priorities. Policy and dialogue partnerships aim to lay the necessary institutional and policy foundations, ensuring coherent and effective collaboration by aligning and harmonising migration policies and practices.

### When should they be employed?

Policy and dialogue partnerships are utilised when policy gaps are identified between cooperating migration actors, and there is a need for policy convergence and harmonisation of migration policies.



Source: MPF Partnership Event held on 28 September 2023

Often, it is the necessary precursor to forging long-term cooperation on migration management between partners.

### Why is it selected?

Policy and dialogue partnerships are selected to address policy gaps in one or more migration partners, and to build consensus and a shared understanding of migration priorities and challenges. They lay the foundation for long-term, sustained cooperation on migration issues.

### Share of MPF projects

Policy and dialogue partnerships constituted **2%** of MPF projects, representing one out of the 48 projects mapped. The relatively low share can be attributed to the challenge of packaging lengthy dialogue and negotiation processes into projects. Additionally, diverse stakeholder interests can pose significant obstacles to the smooth implementation, potentially dissuading engagement. However, sustained dialogue platforms funded under the MPF have proven effective in promoting policy and dialogue partnerships. Despite these challenges, these partnerships remain highly relevant, serving as a valuable tool for the MPF when there is a strong willingness and political commitment from EU MS and priority partner countries to jointly shape migration policies, establishing a solid basis for long-term collaboration in migration management.

### 3. CAPACITY PARTNERSHIPS:

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#### Overview:

These partnerships are designed to bolster the institutional capacity of relevant migration actors, including government agencies and various entities involved in migration management. They focus on improving technical capacities and skills, knowledge exchange and transfer, and institutional strengthening.

#### When should they be employed?

This partnership approach is employed when there is a need to augment and supplement migration actors' technical, administrative, and human resource capacities, fostering their ability to tackle shared migration challenges jointly. By building lasting capacities, these partnerships aim to achieve sustainable outcomes.

#### When is it selected?

One of the key considerations in selecting capacity partnerships is the recognition that migration actors do not possess equal levels of capacity, resources, and systems. In such cases, capacity partnerships become essential for addressing long-term capacity gaps, leveraging the knowledge and resources of actors with greater capacity to support and transfer their expertise to counterparts. Given the differences between EU MS and priority partner countries, these partnerships have allowed MS to transfer their knowledge, skills, and best practices, enabling partners to tackle shared migration challenges collectively.

*Source: MPF Partnership Event held on 28 September, 2023*



### Share of MPF projects

This partnership type comprised 33% of the total projects mapped. The substantial use of capacity partnerships under the MPF emphasises their relative importance in addressing capacity disparities among migration actors. It's important to note that this partnership type entails a considerable investment from a cost perspective, as projects within this category necessitate larger budgets due to the complexity of building sustainable capacities.

## 4. ACTION RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS:

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### Overview:

These actions aim to generate knowledge and evidence through data collection, research and studies, with the ultimate objective of informing evidence-based policies and practices in the field of migration. Action research partnerships entail collaborative efforts between academic institutions, research organisations, NGOs, and policymakers.

### When should they be employed?

This collaborative partnership approach is particularly valuable when a lack of data and knowledge gaps hinder evidence-based policy and decision-making on common objectives within the migration domain. Action research partnerships bridge evidence-based research and policy development, influencing migration-related policies and practices through policy-relevant research findings.

*Source: MPF Partnership Event held on 28 September, 2023*



### Why is it selected?

The decision to engage in an action research partnership stems from the intent to contribute significantly to evidence-based approaches in policymaking within the migration space. These partnerships promote well-informed and impactful policies and practices by bridging the gap between research and policy. Furthermore, they play an instrumental role in raising awareness about the intricate issues surrounding migration.

### Share of MPF projects

Action research partnerships accounted for **6%** of MPF projects. Despite the relatively small proportion, such partnerships can play a unique role in unpacking the complexities inherent in migration phenomena and thereby support the shaping of favourable policy outcomes. Cognisant of the potential impact of these partnerships, there exists an opportunity for the MPF to raise awareness on its funding to increase the share of action research projects within the MPF. In light of the constraints on evidence-based policymaking, fostering collaboration between academic partners and policymakers is imperative to realise impactful policies and practices that address migration challenges.

## 5. HYBRID PARTNERSHIPS:

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### Overview:

Hybrid partnerships combine elements and objectives of the different partnerships and exhibit characteristics of two or more partnerships in comprehensively addressing migration challenges. These partnerships enable the versatility to deal with complex and dynamic migration challenges comprehensively by blending elements of operational, policy and dialogue, capacity-building, and action research partnerships.

### When should they be employed?

Hybrid partnerships are particularly useful when a multifaceted approach is required to address complex and evolving migration challenges. Tailored solutions are essential in these cases, and hybrid partnerships adeptly blend the various partnership approaches based on the specific migration context, challenges, needs, and intended objectives.

### Why is it selected?

The selection of hybrid partnerships is anchored in their flexibility, allowing migration actors to navigate challenges with agility, enabling nimble responses, and thereby facilitating a comprehensive and tailored approach to addressing complex and multifaceted migration challenges.

### Share of MPF projects

Roughly **38%** of MPF projects were classified as hybrid partnerships, representing the largest share among the partnership types. These projects often encompassed skills and labour mobility partnerships, which combined elements of capacity-building, policy and dialogue, and operational



*Source: MPF Partnership Event held on 28 September 2023*

partnerships. The substantial representation of skills and labour mobility partnerships within the hybrid category underscores the complex nature of addressing labour market shortages and facilitating the mobility of skilled labour across borders. This complexity requires the application of diverse partnership approaches for comprehensive and effective outcomes.

## CONCLUSION:

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The mapping analysis of MPF projects reveals the diverse landscape of partnership approaches employed in the migration management domain. Each partnership type offers specific opportunities and challenges, with varying merits depending on the specific migration context, priorities, and objectives.

An evaluation conducted on MPF II projects corroborates a crucial finding: The MPF stands out as an effective instrument for forging and incubating partnerships across the full spectrum of migration. The evaluation highlighted that several projects funded by MPF II not only played an important role in strengthening the wider political goals of the EU but also in testing cooperation in regions where partnerships were less established. This finding demonstrates the MPF's relevance as a flexible instrument that empowers migration actors to tailor partnership approaches in response to the evolving migration landscape.

Additionally, it's important to recognise that, as a result of MPF actions, EU Member States have had the opportunity to enhance their bilateral and multilateral cooperation. While the primary focus lies in promoting migration partnerships in the external dimension, the Facility's impact has indirectly strengthened partnerships between EU MS. This is largely because actions undertaken by the MPF often require collaboration among multiple EU Member States and partner countries within a single initiative. This intra-EU cooperation not only signifies the interconnectedness of migration challenges but also demonstrates the added value of the MPF to the collective migration management agenda of the European Union.

Recognising that fostering migration partnerships is the *raison d'être* of the MPF, the Facility is committed to continuing its work of exploring and deepening its understanding of the partnership approaches utilised by its grantees. This effort will enable the MPF to scale up and refine its efforts in forging impactful partnerships that will support EU MS and partner countries in realising their shared migration objectives.