

West Africa region. Nigeria has also experienced an increasing number of migrants returning back, mainly from Libya and transit countries.

Despite the challenging environment that characterises migration management in Nigeria due to its crosscutting nature and lack of effective coordination across sectors, EU support successfully pioneered an advanced multi-layered governance framework in the field. The government of Nigeria has made commendable efforts to develop policies and legislation to establish migration management structures and counter human rights violations that affect mobility, such as trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. The EU has been supporting Nigeria to reignite the focus on the National Migration Policy which is the centrepiece of the national migration framework. Drawing from the latter, the five (5) standing committees established to coordinate the policy at sectoral level, namely on return and reintegration, labour migration, migration data management, diaspora engagement as well as border management, have been steadily contributing to the implementation of the National Migration Action Plan. The activities of these committees are being coordinated by the Technical Working Group on Migration (TWG) which in turn provides recommendations to the Ministerial Committee, the highest level of coordination of migration in the country. A number of other comprehensive policies have also been adopted in the past few years, such as the 2014 National Policy on Labour Migration to strengthen the legal and policy framework for organised labour migration in and from Nigeria; the 2019 National Border Management Strategy; the 2021 National Diaspora Policy that provides a framework for diaspora engagement for development; as well as the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking (2022-2026) to address existing trafficking trends through multifaceted and multi-stakeholder approaches. Furthermore, Nigeria follows Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) detailing the roles and responsibilities of key agencies in return, readmission and reintegration while a set of Guidelines on a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the protection and assistance to trafficked persons is also in place. Migration governance is also promising at state level, with twenty two (23) state governments having established Migration for Development Schemes and/or Taskforces against Human Trafficking. Nigeria can boast a vibrant and dynamic civil society in the field of migration, active in all thematic areas and levels of governance.

In the past years Nigeria has also benefitted from regional programmes and initiatives which support free movement and migration in West Africa and has established a powerful voice within ECOWAS structures on migration. The ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy was inspired by the Nigerian National Migration policy and Nigeria takes credit for it. Nigeria has ratified and domesticated several international instruments, and signed bilateral agreements on international cooperation with some transit and destination countries to address transnational crimes. Following the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), Nigeria showed commitment to implementing the compact and strengthening the capacity of its governance structures as well as putting in place a localised GCM as a migration management and governance tool.

Nigeria is the recipient of generous support from individual EU MS and other foreign donors, notably in the area of the fight against irregular migration. The latter has also been pursued within the scope of Nigeria-Frontex practical cooperation since 2011. Nigeria has also been a priority country for EU support on legal migration opportunities in selected EU MS through pilot mobility, knowledge transfer and capacity-building schemes which yielded limited but positive results. At political level, the Nigerian Government and the EU have been holding discussions since 2016 with the aim of concluding an agreement which addresses the issues of return and readmission. EU MS have showed great solidarity since negotiations resumed in 2022. Additional efforts and a further political push are needed to see an agreement concluded and implemented in the near future.

The Action is embedded with National Frameworks including the Migration Policy and Federal Government of Nigeria priorities and regional priorities, and in particular the National Development Plan (2021-2025) as well as ECOWAS frameworks on free movement, migration and transnational crime. The Action will support better migration governance and management, as part of a more coordinated, holistic, and structured approach to migration, one of the aims of the NDICI-Global Europe. The action will also reinforce the goals and support the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), of which Nigeria is a priority and champion country. The action is also aligned with and expected to contribute to the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Action Plan for Nigeria, the EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration, the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Being 2021-2025 and the EU action plan against migrant smuggling. In line with the ongoing negotiations on an EU-Nigeria readmission agreement as well as consistently manifested needs and requests from the government for further support on sustainable reintegration of returnees, the Action will seek to strengthen cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration, including