STJÓRNMÁL
& 
STJÓRNSÝSLA

# Outsourcing Migration Governance: Nordic States and the Financing of the International Organization for Migration

**Svanhildur Þorvaldsdóttir,** Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Iceland

## Abstract

When do states like Iceland finance international organizations (IOs) to carry out tasks that could, in principle, be handled domestically? This paper addresses this question through an analysis of Nordic states' financing of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) between 1993 and 2024. While existing literature emphasizes donor states seeking influence over IO agendas or how donors balance strategic vs norm-driven considerations in multilateral aid giving, less attention has been paid to the use of IOs as substitutes for, or complements to, national administrative capacity. To investigate this dimension, the paper draws on an original dataset constructed from systematically coded IOM financial reports, including material obtained through archival requests. The analysis shows that Nordic states overwhelmingly rely on project-based funding with a significant share directed toward operational tasks such as assisted return that are important to national governments. Data shows that the Nordic countries differ significantly, both in terms of the number of projects and geographical distribution of funding. Iceland is distinct as it almost exclusively finances domestic projects compared to the more mixed portfolios of the other Nordics. This outsourcing of administrative capacity does not appear to be purely temporary, as demonstrated by a case study of Iceland, which delegates core migration administration to IOM. These patterns reveal that even high-capacity and norm-driven donors use IOM for domestic projects. The study contributes to

Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration Vol. 21, Issue 2 (83-104)
2025 Contact: Svanhildur Þorvaldsdóttir, sthorvalds@hi.is
Article first published online December 16th 2025 on http://www.stjornmalogstjornsysla.is
Publisher: Institute of Public Administration and Politics, Gimli, Sæmundargötu 10, 102 Reykjavík, Iceland

Stjórnmál & stjórnsýsla 2. tbl. 21. árg. 2025 (83-104) Fræðigreinar
2025 Tengiliður: Svanhildur Þorvaldsdóttir, sthorvalds@hi.is
Vefbirting 16. desember 2025. Birtist á vefnum http://www.stjornmalogstjornsysla.is
Útgefandi: Stofnun stjórnsýslufræða og stjórnmála, Gimli, Sæmundargötu 10, 102 Reykjavík

DOI: https://doi.org/10.13177/irpa.a.2025.21.2.1

scholarship on IO financing by demonstrating how international organizations can serve as instruments of domestic governance and showing how this can play out in high-capacity states like Iceland.

**Keywords:** International Organization for Migration (IOM); Nordic states; international organization financing.

## Introduction

Iceland, in 2013, was the final Nordic state to join the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Since then, the IOM office in Finland has managed key projects for the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration, notably to assist with voluntary return and integration of quota refugees (IOM Finland). Unlike the other Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden—that finance both IOM projects with a national migration dimension as well as projects with an international humanitarian or development dimension, Iceland has only financed a limited set of projects that otherwise would be considered state bureaucracy tasks.

This raises the question of why donor states, i.e. states that contribute funds to international organizations (IOs), finance projects or programmes by IOs within their own countries, especially for tasks that could be executed by national administrations. The traditional literature on IO financing (Goetz & Patz 2017), including recent work on the various kinds of restrictions that donors place on IO funding (Reinsberg et al. 2024), assumes that donors seek to influence or control IOs through their funding (Thorvaldsdottir 2017) or that they contribute to IOs as either instrumental or norm-driven (i.e. altruistic) contributors—that is, donors who give with or without strategic considerations of their own (Alesina & Dollar 2000; Peter Viggo Jakobsen 2017). However, these considerations of either influence and control or altruism and instrumentalism are rarely used in the context of financing an IO for national projects executed in donor countries themselves. Research on IOM financing has shown that some countries, especially in South America, have been using IOM for large-scale national infrastructure projects (Patz & Thorvaldsdottir 2020), suggesting that IOM may be used by countries for purposes beyond international aid delivery. And the Icelandic case detailed in this contribution indicates that this phenomenon is considerably more complex than explained so far in the literature on IO financing.

In this contribution, we therefore study Nordic financing of the International Organization for Migration from 1993 until 2024, in particular the differentiation between projects with a domestic and an international dimension. Based on a largely inductive research design, we analyze a dataset of 2178 projects financed by the five Nordic countries to identify the mix of motivations driving their financing of IOM work. We argue that Nordic states use IOM not only as an international aid channel but also as a substitute or complement to domestic capacity, especially in migration management. For the case of Iceland, we demonstrate how IOM replaces state capacity using IOM documents and websites as well as contractual documents between IOM and the Icelandic government.

We conclude that future research on the resourcing of IOs needs to consider state capacity beyond a traditional development discourse as a key function of IO activities financed by donor states within their own borders, while research on Icelandic public administration should consider how the Icelandic government uses UN and other international agencies as temporary or permanent international administrative support that complements national capacities.

## 1. Financing international organizations: state motivations and domestic outsourcing

### 1.1 State motivations and the financing of IOs

Research on the financing of international organizations has evolved considerably over the past decades (Goetz & Patz 2019). This literature has largely focused on voluntary contributions to IOs, that is to say, contributions beyond those that are assessed by the organization as compulsory membership dues. This is because voluntary contributions have grown significantly as a share of IO financing in the last two decades and now constitute, e.g., around 80% of the funding to the UN system (Baumann & Haug 2024). While some focus on the type of funding, such as the earmarking of voluntary contributions, which happens when donors attach restrictions of some kind on how their donation can be spent by the IO (Reinsberg et al. 2024), others focus on decision-making and governance modes (Graham 2019). A subset of the literature looks specifically at donor motivations to choose specific funds (Reinsberg et al 2017), their goal to influence IO decision making through financing (Thorvaldsdottir 2017; Thorvaldsdottir et al. 2022), their intention to hide their "dirty work" by using multilateral aid channels (Dreher et al. 2022) or to balance between instrumental and altruistic, i.e. strategic vs nonstrategic, goals (Jakobsen 2017).

A key interest in recent years has been on the use of voluntary funding, mostly earmarked, and how it affects IO performance (Heinzel et al. 2023). One central claim of this literature is that donors use funding as a control mechanism over IOs' work (cf. Graham 2017), while finding that heavier earmarking undermines performance (Reinsberg & Siauwijaya 2024). Others show that donors may have a financial self-interest in providing funding, for example when money returns via IO procurements (Hunangfu et al. 2023). In a similar but much more straightforward direction, some states provide funding for implementation of projects within their own countries (Patz & Thorvaldsdottir 2020). Those "local resources" where programme countries (co-)finance domestic projects by international organizations are not the majority of funding (Baumann & Haug 2025) but are still non-negligeable in overall IO finances. Some donors even use IOs for outright domestic spending, not just co-funding, suggesting that some IOs have qualities or capacities that national administrations consider stronger than national administrative actors. Overall, this literature suggests that a variety of state motivations beyond joining IOs and then paying assessed contributions as membership fees exist.

### 1.2 Outsourcing of domestic tasks to IOs

While outsourcing of administrative tasks to private and non-governmental organizations is a long-standing topic of (national) public administration studies, at least since the emergence of new public management (cf. Greve 2001), the contractualization of national administrative tasks to international organizations has not been fully conceptualized or theorized yet. Global governance by contracts—that is, when governing agencies, like development agencies in donor countries or sometimes UN agencies, contract out project implementation or service provision abroad to corporations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—was, however, flagged as a key emergent issue well before earmarking in IO financing was on the agenda (Cooley 2010). The contracting out of bilateral international aid to international governmental or non-governmental organization (Dietrich 2016) is, however, less surprising than the outsourcing of domestic tasks to multilateral actors. In this paper we focus on a subset of this latter type of outsourcing—namely, the financing of projects in which IOM carries out functions that could, in principle, be performed by domestic administrations.

This dynamic is most likely to emerge when it comes to national administrative tasks with a cross-border dimension, where IOs can substitute for, or complement, state capacity by offering economies of scale through their global networks and expert authority because they work on particular cross-border or transnational topics that state bureaucracies do not focus on. In some cases, an IO's perceived neutrality or legitimacy may also play a role.

When institutional or relational capacity is limited, delegation to external actors, such as IOs, may be a matter of necessity. IOs can act as substitutes that deliver services more reliably, more efficiently, or in ways that a state lacks the infrastructure or legitimacy and trust to do itself. This is particularly salient in low-capacity developing countries, post-conflict situations, or other situations where state capacity is either diminished or low. It is therefore unsurprising that this is where the majority of the theoretical development of outsourcing to IOs emerges (Zimmermann 2013; Ciorciari & Krasner 2018; Rich 2023). At the same time, even in cases where state capacity is not obviously lacking, governments may still choose to fund IOs for the delivery of services or the implementation of policy. This suggests that the explanatory scope of (material) capacity must be complemented by other mechanisms.

One such mechanism is cost efficiency, especially where IOs can achieve economies of scale (cf. Abbott & Snidal 1998). For smaller states or for relatively narrow policy areas, the fixed costs of building a dedicated domestic apparatus may be high, while IOs can offer programmatic or operational infrastructures that already exist or can be extended 'on demand'. This may be particularly likely in cases where the task is not permanent but still regularly recurring, such as return and reintegration of migrants, biometric identification, or specialized refugee services.[1] In such cases, the outsourcing of implementation to IOs is not only a response to capacity constraints but a rational cost-benefit calculation. For politically sensitive tasks, this calculation extends beyond administrative costs to include the benefit of reduced political exposure, where the IO

serves as a buffer against public scrutiny. States in need of such services will choose nationally-oriented projects.

A related mechanism concerns multi-country or joint initiatives, where IOs function as collective platforms (cf. Reinsberg et al. 2015). Rather than duplicating efforts across states, IOs provide a structure through which governments can coordinate, pool risks, and implement programs collectively—often more efficiently than through bilateral agreements or unilateral actions (Hooghe & Marks 2015). While our data cannot directly measure cost savings or pooling, the prevalence of European and global projects among Nordic contributions is consistent with this efficiency logic.

Beyond capacity substitution and efficiency, institutional path dependence, political insulation and legitimacy are all plausible alternative explanations for domestic funding. Path dependence may help explain why governments may persist in channeling tasks through IOs even when a more cost-effective domestic alternative may eventually exist. Additionally, delegation for political insulation can be understood in more than one way: governments may delegate controversial tasks to reduce public political costs (blame-shifting) (cf. Dreher et al. 2022), or to mitigate administrative risk, leveraging the IO's neutrality and legitimacy (cf. Barnett & Finnemore 2004) to shield the domestic bureaucracy from procedural errors and legal challenge.

The following empirical analysis is largely limited to exploring the two primary, financially-observable motives—administrative efficiency/capacity substitution and normative commitment. However, the case study of Iceland will also discuss the extent to which patterns observed offer indirect support for these alternative political and institutional motives.

To guide the analysis of the original dataset presented below, we establish two main empirical expectations based on the literature. First, if Nordic financing is indeed driven by a commitment to norms, we would expect to see a greater share of contributions that have a more global character, or at least that are less focused on domestic tasks. Second, if financing is rather driven by capacity substitution and administrative efficiency, the data should reveal a greater share of contributions to more nationally-oriented tasks. In addition, if the composition of the contributions shifts from a rather domestic orientation to a more international one over time, that might suggest that the Nordics were using the IOM for temporary capacity substitution rather than as a permanent replacement of domestic administrative tasks, while discovering its capacity to implement norm-driven international projects.

## 2. Migration policy and IOM financing in historical perspective

Migration policy provides an especially suitable domain for studying domestic and global dynamics at the same time, since its transnational character increases the likelihood that states view IOs as useful partners for coordination, information pooling, and service provision. Migration is a permanent phenomenon, but conflicts and crises may amplify flows, making it a pertinent case for long-term and short-term delegation of tasks to IOs specialized in migration-related activities.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is one of the largest agencies of the UN system, which it joined in 2016. Largely dependent on earmarked voluntary funding, it is a prime case to study donor motivations to provide funding to IOs. The USA and the EU have been found to use funding to focus the agency's approaches on resettlement and on return (Lebon-McGregor & Micinski 2021), mainly favoring the interests of Western states in global migration management (Georgi 2010).

At the same time, it is an agency that is known to be used by some donors to finance domestic projects that are implemented through the organization, notably a number of South American countries (Patz & Thorvaldsdottir 2020). This suggests that some states use the agency to supplement national administrative capacities or because it has legitimacy that state actors in those countries do not possess. Historically, IOM's predecessor, the International Committee for European Migration (ICEM) was used by the Greek state to organize migration services for emigrating Greek citizens "until a specialized state agency was organized and was able to take over ICEM operations" (Tourgeli 2022, p. 33). This indicates how an international agency like IOM can be financed by state institutions to take over national tasks with a transborder dimension for a limited period of time, such a transition period during which states set up national capacities if the task delegated is expected to be more long-term.

Today and historically, IOM is seen to have migration-related expert authority and logistical capabilities at a global scale that national governments rely on (Bradley 2024). From its early beginnings as a transport-focused agency, IOM has cultivated a reputation as a flexible, nimble, and cost-effective implementer that can operate in challenging environments more quickly and directly than many other international organizations. Its financing model, heavily based on projectization, has further reinforced this orientation by making the organization responsive to donor contracting (Bradley 2024; Patz & Thorvaldsdottir 2020). Unlike organizations such as UNHCR, which rely on networks of implementing partners, IOM typically executes its projects directly, drawing on a globally dispersed staff presence and longstanding logistical arrangements such as its airline agreements that enable it to move people efficiently and at lower cost than individual states could achieve (Patz & Thorvaldsdottir 2020; Bradley 2024).

This logistical expertise has become a source of authority in itself. Scholars argue that IOM has successfully framed its operational orientation as a form of expert authority in migration governance, with logistics functioning as both a practical capability and a legitimating discourse (Bradley 2024). In practice, states contract IOM not only to facilitate outward migration, as in its early decades, but also to prevent irregular arrivals, support returns, or manage data collection on migration flows (Bradley 2024). Its ability to deploy globally at speed, coupled with a reputation for technical expertise, helps explain why even high-capacity states may choose to rely on IOM to carry out tasks they could in principle perform themselves. At the same time, scholars emphasize that these very activities are politically contested: IOM's role in returns, border enforcement, and migration control has been criticized for reinforcing restrictive agendas and undermining migrant rights (Bradley 2024; Brachet 2016; Hirsch & Doig 2018).

Thus, IOM's logistical expertise, flexible funding structure, and ability to operate at scale make it an analytically suitable organization for empirical exploration. Indeed, IOM operates in a policy domain where governments are most likely to seek external assistance for core tasks. Furthermore, the organization's heavy reliance on projectized, voluntary financing means it inherently offers high-capacity donors the flexibility to use their contributions to precisely define the task being contracted out and its desired geographic scope, both short and long-term. This structure allows us to more clearly observe the types of administrative delegation observed in the data to explore whether the composition of their contributions reflect an administrative efficiency logic or rather a more norm-driven logic.

## 3. The dataset: Nordic financing of IOM from 1993 until 2024

The Nordic states offer a particularly instructive case because their high administrative capacity should, in principle, reduce the need for capacity substitution, making any reliance on IOs for domestic functions more counter-intuitive. In addition, these governments are often portrayed as altruistic, norm-driven donors (cf. Alesina & Dollar 2000; Berthélemy 2006). Examining the composition of their contributions therefore allows us to probe the expectations outlined above, whether their funding choices indeed appear to be motivated by universalist commitments, or whether they too rely heavily on targeted financing that reflects domestic policy goals.

For the purpose of this analysis, all official IOM Financial Reports from 1993 until 2024 were collected transformed into two financial datasets, one on Nordic contributions to the administrative budget of the organization ("assessed contributions") and one with project-level data ("voluntary contributions") reported by IOM in the annexes to the financial reports. Financial reports from 1999-2024 were downloaded from the IOM website, reports for IOM and its predecessor organizations from 1953 until 1998 were received from IOM in digital formats after a request for access to documents to IOM archives in July and August 2018. General financial data (e.g. on revenues and assessed contributions) can be extracted continuously over the entire time period while project-level data is only available consistently since 1993, i.e. around the time (1994) that IOM became a fully projectized organization (Patz & Thorvaldsdottir 2020). To our knowledge, this is the first time that these financial reports have been systematically coded into structured datasets for such an extended time period.

Project-level data for voluntary contributions was extracted from the reports using Google Gemini 2.5 Pro.[2] The resulting dataset was filtered for Nordic contributions (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden), supplemented with data extracted for Icelandic Red Cross contributions (see section 5). The data was manually checked against the original reports, and, where necessary, was corrected by a research assistant. The resulting voluntary funding dataset includes a total of 2178 lines with data on individual projects, in addition to data on unearmarked (i.e. core) contributions and assessed contributions.

Checking the data also included confirming the information extracted by the LLM

on the country/countries or region/s of implementation of projects. This information was either directly mentioned in project description or needed to be inferred from project titles or researched online. In the final analysis, a project was considered "domestic" if the country or region of implementation included the Nordics, given that IOM Finland was tasked with implementing projects for multiple Nordic countries. Note that this means that projects that are located in multiple countries are coded as "domestic" if one of the countries of implementation is a Nordic country. There are 14 observations in the data where the donor and country of implementation both Nordic but not the same country; 13 of those had Finland as the implementer but were for projects related migrants in the donor country, and one is a Danish-funded voluntary return project of refugees from Norway. Implementation of projects within Europe or outside Europe was then identified either by country or regional markers.[3]

## 4. Nordic donorship to IOM: Functional outsourcing in high-capacity states

### 4.1 Quantitative perspectives on Nordic contributions to IOM

The following table and figure provide a first glance at the scope and composition of Nordic project funding to IOM over the past three decades, from 1993 until 2024. Looking at the volume and timing of project-level contributions by donor (Table 1), Sweden and Norway stand out as the largest Nordic funders in terms of number of projects, with 753 and 678 projects respectively, followed by Denmark (348) and Finland (369). Iceland has contributed only 30 projects since it began financing IOM projects in 1998. The table also shows the average number of projects per year, underscoring that Sweden and Norway have consistently funded a higher number of projects compared to their Nordic neighbors.

**Table 1:** Summary of IOM Projects by Donor, 1993-2024

| Donor | Total Projects | Mean Projects / Year | First Year | Last Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DENMARK | 348 | 4.46 | 1993 | 2024 |
| FINLAND | 369 | 4.61 | 1993 | 2024 |
| ICELAND | 30 | 1.36 | 1998 | 2024 |
| NORWAY | 678 | 7.79 | 1993 | 2024 |
| SWEDEN | 753 | 8.96 | 1993 | 2024 |

Note: These figures do not include administrative (assessed) contributions or unearmarked contributions.

Disaggregated by the geographic location of projects—domestic, European, and global—and plotted over time, the stacked bar chart in Figure 1 highlights three important features: First, global projects account for the largest share of Nordic funding, visible in the predominance of dark blue across all donors. This is especially the case for Sweden and Norway. Second, there is substantial cross-donor variation in the distribution of projects. In addition to funding the largest number of global projects, Norway and

Sweden also have the greatest number of European projects, although Sweden's European projects have gotten fewer in the last decade. Finally, domestic projects are present across all Nordic donors and clearly grow in number in recent years while representing a comparatively modest share of overall project portfolios. Iceland is markedly different from the other countries, only funding a limited number of exclusively domestic projects since it became a member of the organization in 2013.

At first glance, the large share of global projects appears to support the notion that Nordic financing is driven by a commitment to international norms (i.e. more altruistic); however, the consistent appearance and growth of European and domestic projects significantly complicates this image by demonstrating a simultaneous, more strategic focus on meeting national administrative needs and priorities.

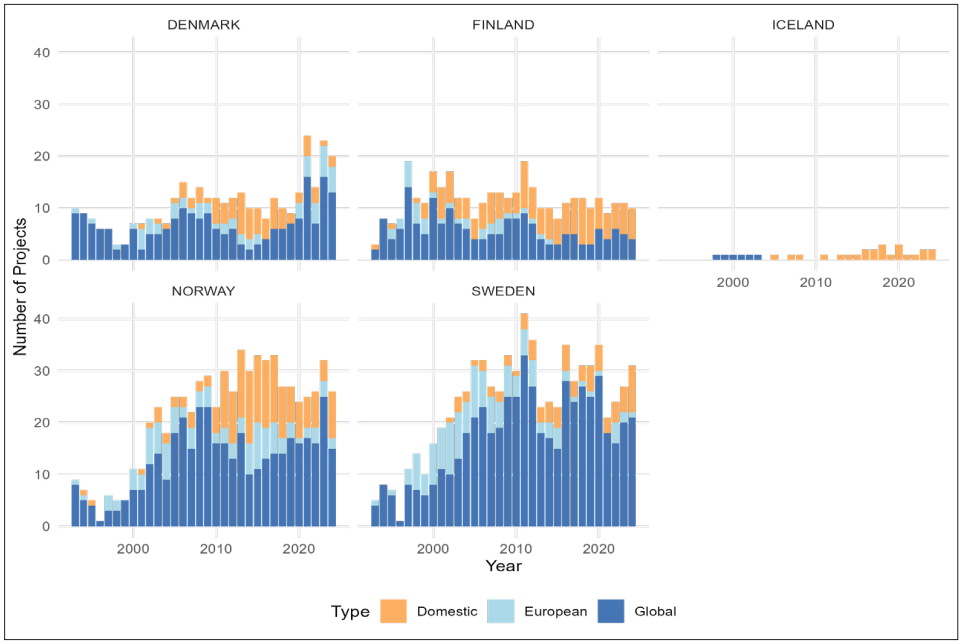


**Figure 1.** Number of IOM Projects by Nordic Donor and Type, 1993-2024

Looking at the number of projects is helpful because it indicates the breadth of a state's engagement with an IO and the frequency of their interactions, but it does not fully capture the scale or intensity of the commitment; therefore, we must also examine the amount of funding to determine the actual financial weight and substantive priority assigned to those projects. Figure 2 therefore plots the contributions (in million US-Dollars) by each individual Nordic state to the IOM, again broken down by type of project (domestic, European, or global). The assessed contributions for each country are included in the plot for reference. They are not only a tiny share of the overall contributions of all five countries to the organization, but also a small share of the overall assessed contributions to the organization from all member states. Sweden, at just under 2% of

the overall assessed budget, has the highest share of assessed contributions and Iceland has the lowest, ranging from 0.02% to 0.04%.

Similarly, the project funding by the Nordics is a small percentage of the overall operational commitments of the IOM: the average share is 0.85% and the maximum share that the Nordics have contributed to the operational budget IOM is when Sweden provided 2.7% of the total in 2016. This underscores that the Nordics' contributions to the organization are less important for strategic influence within IOM and instead suggests that the Nordics rather use the agency to achieve national policy goals.

The trajectories over time reveal both cross-national similarities and interesting variation. All five states increased their contributions substantially over the period. Norway and Sweden are, again, the largest donors in absolute terms. Denmark and Finland show steady though smaller growth, and Iceland only contributes at the margins. Project-based voluntary contributions dominate the totals, with sharp increases in the 2010s, while assessed contributions remain a small fraction throughout.

While the general upward trajectory is clear across these five donors, the composition of the contributions reveals an important distinction across the Nordics between domestic, European, and global spending. Domestic funding streams—where Nordic governments contract IOM to carry out activities within their own territories—constitute a significant, but non-majority share. The only exception is Iceland.

Finland, Norway, Iceland, and Sweden consistently spend on domestic projects, suggesting that, if they are engaged in capacity substitution, that this is not purely a temporary solution. In Denmark, spending on domestic projects decreases quite a bit after 2015 but appears again in 2024, suggesting a somewhat different approach from the others.

By contrast, European projects constitute a considerably smaller share over the overall financing, although this does vary a bit by donor, and shifts after the start of the war in Ukraine, when both Norway and Denmark contribute large sums to IOM projects in and around Ukraine. This finding is interesting given research that shows that refugee and migration crises in Europe tend to attract more funding from European donors than comparable crises in other regions (Thorvaldsdottir, Patz & Goetz 2022).

Global projects outside Europe receive the largest share of donations in many years. A qualitative assessment of project descriptions indicates that Nordic states use the global presence of IOM to implement humanitarian projects, at scales that may go beyond permanent national capacities. This supports the image of the Nordics as more altruistic donors, although European and national interests still play a relevant role.

The data thus highlight both the overall rise in Nordic contributions and the geographically differentiated logics of engagement: domestic projects likely motivated primarily by capacity considerations, European projects tied to political salience and proximity, and global projects reflecting broader international commitments.

This differentiated structure strongly suggests that the Nordic states pursue a layered donation strategy, supporting the expectation that a significant share of financing is driven by nationally-oriented instrumental motives rather than just altruism.

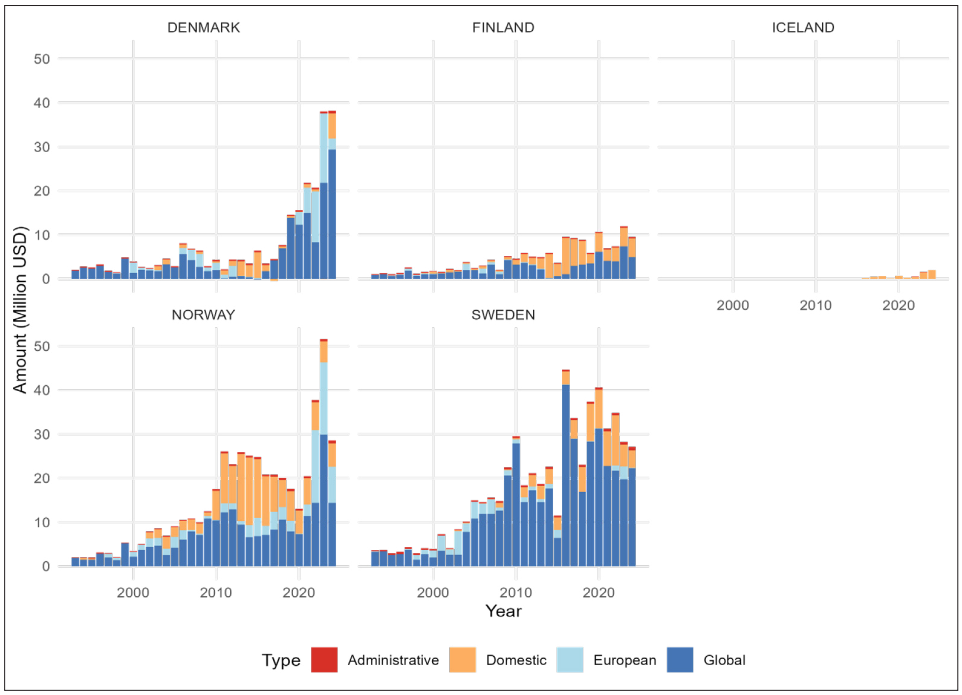


**Figure 2.** Nordic Contributions to IOM by Administrative (assessed) Contributions, Domestic (within Nordics), European, and International Project Spending, 1993-2024

Taken together, the Nordic contributions to IOM reveal both shared patterns and important distinctions. Across the region, assessed contributions remain marginal compared to project funding, confirming that Nordic states use IOM primarily as an implementing agency rather than as a forum for general support. Yet the distribution of projects highlights notable differences: Sweden and Norway have emerged as the largest donors in both volume and diversity of projects, Denmark and Finland display steadier but more modest engagement, while Iceland's contributions are almost entirely domestic. This variation underscores that even within a region often portrayed as homogeneous, the logics of capacity substitution and efficiency can play out differently depending on donor size, administrative traditions, and political priorities.

### 4.2 Qualitative perspectives: the types of projects financed by Nordic countries

Out of 2178 projects supported by Nordic states from 1993 until 2024, excluding unearmarked support, 210 include the term "voluntary return", both for domestic projects where this refers to self-deportation from one of the Nordic countries but also for projects outside Europe (e.g., "Support for voluntary return and monitoring of migration flows in the Niger" financed by Denmark in 2024) and 276 include a reference to "trafficking" in human beings (e.g., "Prevention of trafficking in persons and other pro-

tection risks of conflict-affected people in situations of vulnerability of all genders and ages in Ukraine and neighbouring countries" financed by Sweden in 2023), indicating that these are key areas of specialization for IOM. Sixty-six projects refer to "internally displaced" persons (e.g., "Direct assistance for internally displaced persons and stranded migrants in Libya" financed by Norway in 2016) while 149 projects contain a reference to "refugee[s]" (e.g., "Resettlement of quota refugees to Iceland" in 2019, see below). This underscores that IOM's role also relates to work that traditionally may be associated with UNHCR. At the same time, IOM also executes less obvious projects such as "Forging a greener peace in the Hirshabelle state of Somalia" (Denmark 2024) or "Building inclusive and peaceful communities in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao through advancing women's socioeconomic participation" (Norway 2021).

Overall, IOM is used for a variety of domestic and international tasks, some for which it is highly specialized or can operate at scale, others where it may be a convenient project implementer for Nordic countries. Most domestic projects relate to assistance for voluntary return and reintegration or relate to transporting refugees to one of the Nordic states. This frequent appearance of voluntary return projects—an often politically sensitive domestic function—suggests that capacity substitution is not merely about achieving basic administrative efficiency but may also be about utilizing IOM as a channel for outsourcing politically contentious operational tasks.

Taken together, these patterns highlight both commonalities and differences across the Nordic donors: while all rely heavily on earmarked project funding rather than assessed contributions, Sweden and Norway dominate in volume and diversity, Denmark and Finland show steadier but more modest engagement, and Iceland contributes almost exclusively to domestic projects. This variation underscores that the logics of capacity substitution and efficiency play out differently across the region, even among states often portrayed as a coherent donor group. In the following subsection, we turn to Iceland as a particularly clear case where capacity substitution is most visible.

## 5. Outsourcing domestic tasks: the Icelandic case

By letter of 9 July 2013, sent from the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, Iceland requested to join the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2013a, MC/2384). This request was granted by the IOM Council at its 530th meeting on 26 November 2013 (IOM 2013b, Resolution No. 1252). A search in Icelandic news and Althingi debates around this time period reveal no visible public debate around Iceland joining the organization. The low public profile of these financial arrangements, combined with the mostly non-controversial administrative nature of the tasks being outsourced (e.g., transport and information), suggests the process operates somewhat outside of general political or public scrutiny, unlike the involuntary departures managed by the police and the Directorate of Immigration, which have often drawn considerable attention and criticism.

However, the ministry of Social Affairs had already started to outsource refugee-related services two years before Iceland joined IOM, in line with the broader practice to

outsource social services to private and non-profit service providers that started in the 1990s and reached 25% of the social affairs ministry's budget by the mid-2000s (Kristmundsson 2009, p.260-1). The potential of IOM membership was mentioned in a report by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as early as 2007 (Utanríkisráðuneytið 2007) and the Directorate of Immigration flagged the potential of asylum seekers working with the IOM on voluntary repatriation in a comment to Alþingi during the revision of the Act On Foreigners No. 96/2002. It noted that, by collaborating with IOM, repatriation could take place without any involvement of Icelandic authorities at all (Útlendingastofnun). This mention of state involvement not being needed is consistent with both an administrative efficiency motive (offloading complex logistics) and a political distancing motive (reducing direct government accountability for sensitive operations).

Compared to the other Nordic states, Iceland's financial engagement with IOM is modest in scale, but its pattern of contributions is distinctive, both in terms of the number of projects financed by Iceland (Figure 1) and the amount of financing (Figure 2). To get a better sense of Iceland's contributions, Figure 3 plots Iceland's contributions to IOM by type of project or expense: administrative (or assessed contributions), voluntary return, resettlement and family reunification, and other. IOM reports do not give a specific project description for the "other" projects, but at least some are clearly expenses related to quota refugee resettlement Iceland. Apart from 2024, where there

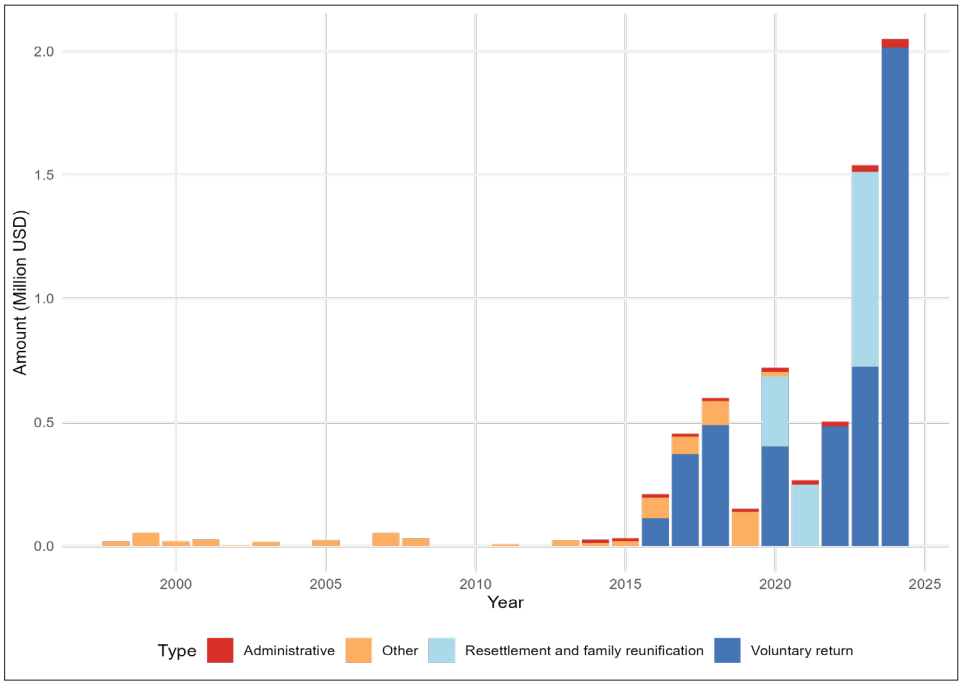


**Figure 3.** Iceland's Contributions to IOM, both Administrative (assessed) and Project-Based

are two distinct projects on voluntary return, each color on the bar chart represents a single project, while the dark red represents Icelandic limited assessed contributions to the administrative budget of IOM.

It is important to note that many of these projects, such as those related to resettlement and family reunification, represent logistical and administrative functions rather than politically sensitive return operations. This distinction is key, as funding for these non-controversial services points to a more functional motive of capacity substitution.

Interestingly, the data collected from IOM financial reports indicates that Iceland already contributed to IOM's work financially before officially joining the organization. From 1998 until 2003, Iceland paid a total of $138,393 for "Reimbursable transportation and other costs", with the peak at over $50,000 in 1999. By the end of September that year, IOM had supported 25 persons from Kosovo to return home from Iceland (IOM 1999). In 2005, 2007 and 2008, the Icelandic Red Cross financed a total of $107,988 for "Movements from Europe to Iceland" and in 2011, two years before joining the organization, Iceland started financing projects entitled the "Resettlement of quota refugees to Iceland" via IOM, something it continued to do each year (though no payments recorded in 2012) until and including 2020 (when just a residual amount was paid). According to OECD (2021, p.7),

> "The [Icelandic] Ministry of Social Affairs receives quota refugees in cooperation with the United Nations Refugee Agency, local authorities in Iceland and the Red Cross in Iceland. IOM, the International Migration Organization, administers the migration of refugees to the country at the request of the government and cultural orientation is provided to the refugees before arriving in the country."

While past research has acknowledged the cooperation between the Icelandic government, the Red Cross and the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR), IOM's services were not in focus (Ragnarsdottir 2020, p.1-2). According to DAC reporting, there was a multi-year project agreement (2011-2019) between the Icelandic government and IOM, for IOM to

> "provide its services to all persons admitted for quota resettlement to Iceland as requested by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security. IOM undertakes to carry out 'Fitness to Travel' health assessments, the transportation services as well as other services related to refugee resettlement as required by the Ministry and agreed upon by IOM." (IATI d-portal, n.d.a)

Recent research has shown that outsourcing of pre-departure orientation trainings for refugees is done by various countries, who use IOM's services in countries such as Tur-

key before resettling Syrian refugees or train refugees before arriving in Finland (Welfens 2025).

In recent years, Iceland has entered into shorter-term contracts with the IOM for resettlement and family reunification (one for the period 2020-2022 and one for 2022-2024). These no longer specifically mention quota refugees but rather mention durable solutions for beneficiaries of international protection (IATI d-portal, n.d.b,c).

According to a handbook from the Directorate of Labour, the contract supporting family reunification was not renewed in 2025 (Vinnumálastofnun 2025) and there is, indeed, no record of a contract between the Ministry of Welfare and the IOM after 2024, only between the Directorate of Immigration and the IOM for voluntary returns. Since IOM is also used by the other Nordics for transportation and pre-arrival cultural orientation purposes, this suggests that it is not only the lack of capacity in a micro-state such as Iceland that is driving this contracting out of services, but perhaps rather the comparative advantage of an IO specializing in this type of temporary activity that can be discontinued as happened in Iceland after 2024.

What is also notable is that the refugee resettlement project was managed and implemented by IOM Finland (IATI, n.d.), not by a separate IOM Iceland office. IOM Finland has been providing services to various Nordic and Baltic governments over the past decades. It was established in 1993 as IOM's Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic states (IOM Finland 2018, p.14). In 2018, its role was to implement "a wide range of migration-related activities in Finland, Sweden and Iceland, and provide administrative and management support to IOM offices in Denmark and Estonia" (IOM Finland 2018, p.4). Beyond resettling refugees to Iceland, IOM started a pilot project in 2016 for "Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)" of migrants (IOM Finland 2018, p.27), which was initially financed at $112,111 and was still operational in 2024 when the Directorate of Immigration (DI) contracted IOM services worth almost $1.3 million (our data). From 2016 until 2024, a total of $4.6 million was disbursed for AVRR from Iceland to IOM Finland (our data). IOM Finland has extensive expertise in organizing the return of migrants and is considered part of and complementary to the deportation regime in Finland (Könönen 2025).

In a mapping of return programmes in 27 European countries, Iceland was found to be among the European countries that makes almost exclusive use of IOM, similar to Nordic countries such as Finland and or Sweden (all coordinated by IOM Finland). Norway is among the countries mostly working with state agencies while Denmark mostly delegates the task to NGOs (Fuchs 2025, p. 8). According to an interview, Iceland pays between €2700 to €4200 per returnee upon arrival through IOM (Fuchs 2025, p.12), while contractually the amount foreseen for the period 2020-23 was between €300-€1,000 (IOM 2020, p.7 [project proposal]). The collaboration between Iceland and IOM Finland is based on multi-year project contracts signed by the Directorate of Immigration. Before 2016, no assisted return programme existed in Iceland (IOM 2020, p.4 [project proposal]), likely due to the fact that the Directorate of Immigration did not have

authorization to support voluntary returns, which went exclusively through the police (Útlendingastofnun 2016), until Act No. 80/2016, Foreign Nationals Act, was enacted. The contract for the project duration from 1 August 2020 until 31 July 2023 (three years) was signed at $1.209 million (IOM 2020), while the contract from 1 May 2024 until 30 April 2026 (two years) was signed at a total of $4.704 million (IOM 2024). This almost tripling of the annual levels highlights increased efforts by the Icelandic government to return migrants, perhaps most visibly seen with regard to Venezuelan asylum seekers, or an enlargement of the services provided by IOM Finland. From August 2016 until September 2019, a total 202 persons from 29 countries were assisted to return (IOM 2020, p.2 [project proposal]).

Since IOM does not have an office in Iceland, staff is either travelling to Iceland or communicates with (potential) returnees via phone or online. It also collaborates with the Directorate of Immigration and the Iceland Red Cross or the police as "project partners". The division of labor between these four project partners is clearly specified in the project description (IOM 2020, pp. 7-8 [project proposal]), with IOM focusing on information services, travel arrangements, and post-arrival payments, while IDI receives applications and confirms eligibility and the Red Cross or the policy make migrants aware of IOM AVRR services. According to the 2020 project budget, 300 people were to be transported across three years.[4] However, since the period of analysis for this study concludes in 2024, the precise current role of the Red Cross within the renewed AVRR project structure is not discernible from the financial data.

Analyzing these data, there is no indication that the Icelandic government intends to phase out IOM's service provision—so this collaboration represents more than a start-up collaboration to give the Directorate of Immigration time to set up their own capacities to perform this function. Outsourcing the task of return information, transport, and payment makes use of the economies of scale of having the regional office in Finland deal with the growing but relatively low number of cases without additional costs for a distinct government unit or a separate IOM Iceland office, saving on overheads and using IOMs European and global transport and payment network. All of these services could be executed by national state institutions or actors such as the Red Cross, but after more than a decade of IOM membership the Iceland government seems content with the services provided.

Despite this growing investment in IOM services, Iceland has not made use of IOM for its humanitarian or development work like other Nordic countries have done, except for the period where IOM transported refugees to Iceland in collaboration with UNHCR (and, arguably, for family reunification in 2020, 2021, and 2023). Icelandic exceptionalism in this regard may be linked to very specific foreign policy priorities that do not emphasize the international refugee or migration organizations (Utanríkisráðuneytið 2024) or because other multilateral organizations provide more legitimacy, expert authority or scale for the purposes of Iceland's multilateral aid spending, while other Nordic countries use part of their broader multilateral aid portfolios by enlisting IOM as an operational agency and not just as a transport and migration information agency.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has examined how the Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland—finance the IOM, and what their funding patterns reveal about broader state motivations for outsourcing tasks to international organizations. Drawing on newly coded financial data from IOM reports between 1993 and 2024, the paper has traced both aggregate trends in Nordic contributions over time and the more detailed composition of projects, concluding with a case study of Iceland.

Two central findings stand out. First, while Nordic states are often portrayed as altruistic or norm-driven donors, the composition of their IOM portfolios reveals a more complex picture. Global projects indeed account for the largest share of contributions, consistent with expectations in the literature about internationalist commitments of the Nordics. Yet European and domestic projects are far from absent, and their presence illustrates that IOs are used not only for international aid or crisis response but also for substituting or supplementing state capacity in migration management and potentially for managing the political risk of sensitive operations. This finding complicates standard accounts of Nordic altruism, showing instead a layered donor logic where universalist commitments coexist with more instrumental uses of IOM to meet internal administrative needs or provide political cover.

Second, the five Nordics differ more than is often assumed. Sweden and Norway stand out as the largest funders, with portfolios spanning domestic, European, and global activities. Denmark and Finland contribute at lower volumes but still with diversified portfolios. Iceland, by contrast, finances almost exclusively domestic migration tasks, relying heavily on IOM Finland to manage assisted voluntary return and refugee resettlement. The Icelandic case underscores most clearly how even high-capacity states may use IOM as a transborder service provider, not out of necessity in a developmental sense but because of economies of scale or administrative convenience and potentially for the structural benefit of outsourcing politically sensitive tasks such as Assisted Voluntary Return. The lack of a discernible shift from away from domestic financing over time suggests that IOM is not being used purely for temporary capacity substitution.

These findings have several broader implications. First, they suggest that research on IO financing should pay more attention to domestic outsourcing through multilateral channels. The literature has largely concentrated on donor influence in shaping IO agendas or on the balance between altruism and instrumentalism in development aid. Yet the Icelandic case, in particular, demonstrates that IO financing can also be a way of contracting out national administrative tasks—sometimes for extended periods rather than transitional phases. Second, the Nordic comparison shows that high administrative capacity does not eliminate the demand for IO services. Rather, it highlights how delegation to IOs can be part of a broader governance strategy in which states balance efficiency, political expediency, and legitimacy. Notably, the variation among the Nordics in service provision for AVRR (Fuchs 2025) underscores that it is not the case that the IOM has such a comparative advantage in the provision of these services that it would not make sense to organize these programs in any other way; rather, states are actively

choosing to use an external actor rather than develop domestic capacity. Finally, the analysis reinforces the need to consider variation among seemingly similar donors: Nordic states are often grouped together as a collective model of altruistic multilateralism, but their IOM financing patterns point to distinct national logics and practices.

A few limitations of this study should be noted. First, the measurement of domestic, European, and global projects is not always clear-cut. Many projects straddle categories, involve multiple geographic sites, or are defined by IOM in ways that do not map neatly onto donor intentions. Our classification based on IOM's financial reports and project titles therefore provides a reasonable approximation but cannot capture all nuances. Second, the analysis is limited to the Nordic countries. This regional focus allows for meaningful comparison among donors with similar reputations and institutional capacity, but it also raises questions about generalizability. Other donors may approach IOM differently, although it is clear from the reports that large countries also use IOM services in this way. Finally, the study relies on IOM's own financial reports, which, while the most comprehensive source available, are administrative documents and provide little insight into the political negotiations and motivations behind specific projects. These limitations underscore the importance of complementing financial analysis with other methods, such as interviews, archival work, or comparative studies of additional donors, in future research.

In sum, Nordic financing of IOM illustrates how state motivations for IO funding extend beyond controlling multilateral agendas or signaling international solidarity. They also encompass pragmatic calculations of cost-efficiency, administrative convenience, and potentially political insulation, even in high-capacity states. Migration policy—with its transnational character and domestic political sensitivities—provides a particularly revealing arena for observing these dynamics. Future research should therefore not only track how IOs are resourced at the global level but also examine how they are used as extensions of domestic administrations. In this way, the Nordics, and especially Iceland, offer an instructive case for understanding the blurred boundary between international aid and the buying of state capacity.

## Endnotes

1 Pandemic and large-scale emergency response capabilities or investments in time-limited research experiments that exceed even the capacity of larger states (e.g., at CERN) are other examples where investment in scale can matter.

2 The prompts for the LLM used were variations of the following: "I need a database with all member states donors' contributions to IOM in [year] with data from Appendix [number] of this financial report. The result should be a csv file with four columns: "donor", "project/programme title", "implementation country/region", "amount (in USD)". Please extract the data and write it out."

3 Turkey was not included as a European country because it had a significant role in the management of the Syria crisis.

4 The contract document for 2024-26 (IOM 2024) obtained by the researchers do not include the detailed project description.

## References

Abbott, K. W., and Snidal, D. (1998). "Why states act through formal international organizations", *Journal of conflict resolution* 42(1), 3-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027980420010

Alesina, A., and Dollar, D. (2000). "Who gives foreign aid to whom and why?", *Journal of economic growth* 5(1), 33-63. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009874203400

Barnett, M., and Finnemore, M. (2004). *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*. Cornell University Press.

Baumann, M.-O., and Haug, S. (2024). *Financing the United Nations: Status quo, challenges and reform options*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Baumann, M.-O. and Haug, S. (2025). "Embracing universality: Toward the future of United Nations development work", *International Studies Perspectives* 26(2), pp.188-208. https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekae021

Berthélemy, J. C. (2006). "Bilateral donors' interest vs. recipients' development motives in aid allocation: do all donors behave the same?", *Review of Development Economics* 10(2), 179-194. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9361.2006.00311.x

Brachet, J. (2016). "Policing the desert: The IOM in Libya beyond war and peace", *Antipode* 48(2), 272-292. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12176

Bradley, M. (2024). "'We're an Organization that *Does Stuff*': The International Organization for Migration, Logistics and Expert Authority in Migration Governance", *Geopolitics* 30(4), pp.1680-1709. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2024.2318589

Ciorciari, J. D., and Krasner, S. D. (2018). "Contracting Out, Legitimacy, and State Building", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 12(4), 484–505. https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2018.1499198

Cooley, A. (2010) "Outsourcing authority: how project contracts transform global governance networks", in D.D. Avant, M. Finnemore, and S.K. Sell (eds.) *Who Governs the Globe?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Studies in International Relations), pp. 238–265.

Dietrich, S. (2016). "Donor political economies and the pursuit of aid effectiveness", *International Organization* 70(1), pp.65-102. doi:10.1017/S0020818315000302

Dreher, A., Lang, V., Rosendorff, B.P. and Vreeland, J.R. (2022). "Bilateral or multilateral? International financial flows and the dirty-work hypothesis", *The Journal of Politics* 84(4), pp.1932-1946. https://doi.org/10.1086/718356

Fuchs, L.M. (2025). "Assisted return programmes across Europe–Mapping an increasingly obscure landscape", *International Migration* 63(3), e70032. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.70032

Georgi, F. (2010). "For the benefit of some: The International Organization for Migration and its global migration management." In *The politics of international migration management* (pp. 45-72). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Goetz, K.H. and Patz, R. (2017). "Resourcing international organizations: Resource diversification, organizational differentiation, and administrative governance", *Global Policy* 8, pp.5-14. https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12468

Graham, E.R. (2017). "Follow the money: How trends in financing are changing governance at international organizations", *Global Policy* 8, pp.15-25. https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12450

Greve, C. (2001). "New avenues for contracting out and implications for a theoretical framework", *Public Performance & Management Review* pp.270-284. https://doi.org/10.2307/3381089

Heinzel, M., Cormier, B. and Reinsberg, B. (2023). "Earmarked funding and the control–performance trade-off in international development organizations", *International Organization* 77(2), pp.475-495. doi:10.1017/S0020818323000085

Hirsch, A. L., and Doig, C. (2018). "Outsourcing control: the International Organization for Migration in Indonesia", *The International Journal of Human Rights* 22(5), 681–708. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1417261

Hooghe, L., and Marks, G. (2015). "Delegation and pooling in international organizations", *The Review of International Organizations* 10(3), 305-328. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-014-9194-4

Huangfu, W., Li, T. and Wu, X. (2023). "A Multilateral Donation that Boomerangs Home: Analysing the Donor State Advantage in UN Procurement", *The Journal of Development Studies* 59(2), pp.170-187. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2022.2128776

Jakobsen, P.V. (2017). "The United Nations and the Nordic four: Cautious sceptics, committed believers, cost–benefit calculators", in P. Nedergaard and A. Wivel (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of Scandinavian politics* (pp. 281-293). Routledge.

Könönen, J. (2025). "'Fear of small numbers': assemblages of power in the deportation regime in Finland", *Citizenship Studies* pp.1-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2025.2548720

Kristmundsson, Ó.H. (2009). "The changing relationship between the government and the nonprofit sector in Iceland", *Stjórnmál & Stjórnsýsla* 5(2), pp.249-266. ttps://doi.org/10.13177/irpa.a.2009.5.2.3

Lebon-McGregor, E. and Micinski, N. (2021). "The changing landscape of multilateral financing and global migration governance", in T. de Lange, W. Maas, A. Schrauwen (eds.), *Money matters in migration: Policy, participation, and citizenship* (pp. 19-27). Cambridge University Press.

Patz, R. and Thorvaldsdottir, S. (2020). "Drivers of expenditure allocation in the IOM: Refugees, donors, and international bureaucracy", in M. Geiger and A. Pécoud (eds.), *The International Organization for Migration: The new 'UN migration agency'in critical perspective* (pp. 75-98). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Ragnarsdóttir, Hanna (2020). "Refugee families in Iceland: Opportunities and challenges in schools and society", *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being* 15(sup2), 1764294. https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2020.1764294

Reinsberg, B., Michaelowa, K., and Eichenauer, V. Z. (2015). "The rise of multi-bi aid and the proliferation of trust funds", in B. Arvin and B. Lew (eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of Foreign Aid* (pp. 527-554). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Reinsberg, B., Michaelowa, K. and Knack, S. (2017). "Which donors, which funds? Bilateral donors' choice of multilateral funds at the World Bank", *International Organization* 71(4), pp.767-802. doi:10.1017/S0020818317000340

Reinsberg, B., Heinzel, M. and Siauwijaya, C. (2024). "Tracking earmarked funding to international organizations: Introducing the earmarked funding dataset", *The Review of International Organizations* pp.1-27. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-024-09548-1

Reinsberg, B., and Siauwijaya, C. (2024). "Does earmarked funding affect the performance of international organisations?", *Global Policy* 15(1), 23-39. https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.13270

Rich, J. A. J. (2023). "Outsourcing Bureaucracy to Evade Accountability: How Public Servants Build Shadow State Capacity", *American Political Science Review* 117(3), 835–850. doi:10.1017/S0003055422000892

Thorvaldsdottir, S. (2017). *Not with a bang, but a whisper: how states influence the United Nations*. Doctoral Thesis.

Thorvaldsdottir, S., Patz, R. and Goetz, K.H. (2022). "Mandate or donors? Explaining the UNHCR's country-level expenditures from 1967 to 2016," *Political Studies* 70(2), pp.443-464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720974330

Tourgeli, G. (2022). "Migration policies and development doctrine in Greece", in M. Damilakou and Y.G.S. Papadopoulos (eds.), *Migration and Development in Southern Europe and South America* (1st ed.). Routledge, pp. 27-41.

IATI d-portal (n.d.a). "Cooperation as Regards Services for Quota and Family Reunification Resettlement". http://d-portal.org/savi/?aid=XM-DAC-47066-RE.0263

IATI d-portal (n.d.b). "Cooperation as Regards Services for Quota and Family Reunification Resettlement". https://d-portal.iatistandard.org/ctrack.html?publisher=XM-DAC-47066#view=act&aid=XM-DAC-47066-RE.0450

IATI d-portal (n.d.c). "Cooperation as Regards Services for Quota and Family Reunification Resettlement". https://d-portal.iatistandard.org/ctrack.html?publisher=XM-DAC-47066#view=act&aid=XM-DAC-47066-RE.0510

OECD (2021). "Iceland. In-donor refugee costs in ODA". https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/topics/policy-issue-focus/in-donor-refugee-costs-in-oda/oda-in-donor-refugee-costs-iceland.pdf

Utanríkisráðuneytið (2007). "Mannréttindi í íslenskri utanríkisstefnu". https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/utanrikisraduneyti-media/media/Utgafa/Mannrettindi_i_islenskri_utanrikisstefnu.pdf

Utanríkisráðuneytið (2024). "Stefnumið í fjölþjóðlegri þróunarsamvinnu". https://www.stjornarradid.is/library/04-Raduneytin/Utanrikisraduneytid/Throunarsamvinna/2024_Uppf%c3%a6r%c3%b0%20stefnumi%c3%b0%20%c3%ad%20fj%c3%b6l%c3%bej%c3%b3%c3%b0legri%20%c3%ber%c3%b3unarsamvinnu_edit%20j%c3%bal%c3%ad%202024.pdf

Útlendingastofnun (2010). Letter to Nefndasvið Alþingis, dated May 5, 2010 regarding Umsögn Útlendingastofnunar, á bls. 173 um frumvarp til breytinga á lögum um útlendinga nr. 96/2002 (hælismál), þskj. 892 – 507. mál. https://www.althingi.is/altext/erindi/138/138-1985.pdf

Útlendingastofnun (2016). Letter to Alþingi, dated May 10, 2016 regarding Athugasemdir við frumvarp til laga um útlendinga. https://www.althingi.is/altext/erindi/145/145-1499.pdf

Vinnumálastofnun (2025). "Handbók um móttöku og þjónustu við flóttafólk: Verklag í samræmdri móttöku flóttafólks". https://wp.mcc.is/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/handbok-um-mottoku-og-thjonustu-vid-flottafolk_agust-2025.pdf

Welfens, N. (2025). "Unpacking 'expectation management': the International Organization for Migration's pre-departure orientation for resettling refugees", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* pp.1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2025.2474616

Zimmermann, A. M. (2013). "State as chimera: aid, parallel institutions, and state power", *Comparative Politics* 45(3), 335-356. https://doi.org/10.5129/001041512X13815255434979

## IOM documents

IOM Finland (n.d.). Why does migration to Iceland matter? https://finland.iom.int/blogs/why-does-migration-iceland-matter

IOM Finland (2018). IOM Finland – 25 years. A quarter century of dignified, orderly and safe migration for the benefit of all. https://finland.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1656/files/documents/IOM-Finland-25-years-publication.pdf

IOM (1999). IOM Assisted Return to Kosovo - Statistical Update No. 65, 28 September 1999, https://reliefweb.int/report/albania/iom-assisted-return-kosovo-statistical-update-no-65

IOM (2013a) Application by the Republic of Iceland for membership in the Organization, IOM document MC/2384, 25 September 2013.

IOM (2013b) Admission of the Republic of Iceland as a Member of the Organization, Resolution No. 1252, Adopted by the Council at its 530th meeting on 26 November 2013.

IOM (2020). Agreement between The Icelandic Directorate of Immigration and The International Organization for Migration (IOM) on Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Support to Migrants in Iceland (AVRR-ICE), FI10/2020/DON/1001.

IOM (2024). Agreement between Icelandic Directorate of Immigration and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Support to Migrants in Iceland (AVRR-IS), FI10/2024/DON/1006.