

Compilers-Manual-EGRIS

Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)

2020-10-30

Contents

1 International Coordination

1.1 Mainstreaming Displacement Statistics

1.1.1 Introduction

11. The numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have increased rapidly in recent years. Moreover, almost every country in the world is affected by forced displacement either as a source, point of transit, or host of refugees, asylum seekers or IDPs, making forced displacement a global phenomenon. However, developing countries are disproportionately affected by forced displacement, and there is a growing consensus that greater international cooperation is required to assist host countries and affected host communities.
12. This manual is concerned with forced displacement, people who are forcibly displaced from their homes either by disaster or by conflict. These displaced people include those who cross an international border (refugees and related populations covered by the IRRS), and those who remain in the country from which they were displaced (Internally Displaced Persons covered by IRIS). Recent global estimates suggest that the majority of displaced people are displaced within the borders of their own countries (IDMC 2019).
13. The scale of the problem is growing, although it is difficult to obtain a global estimate for all types of displaced people as the mandates of the various international agencies providing estimates do not cover the universe of displaced people. The Institute of Migration tells us that “*by the end of 2017, 68.5 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide due to persecution, conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations. This is almost double the number of forcibly displaced people recorded in 1997¹. The IoM goes on to say that “By the end of 2017, the world was hosting 25.4 million refugees. During 2017 alone, some 2.7 million people became newly displaced to another country, double the amount in 2016”.*
14. Using another more recent source for internal displacements, rather than for refugees seeking protection in another country, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimated that in 2018 “*there were 28 million new internal displacements associated with conflict and disasters across 148 countries and territories were recorded in 2018, with nine countries each accounting for more than a million*”. It should be noted that there were more displacements associated with natural disasters (17.2 million), than with conflict (10.8 million).
15. Forced displacement has gained prominence on the international agenda. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016, recognizes the unprecedented level of human mobility and acknowledges the shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants through international cooperation (United Nations,

¹Ibid para 94

2016). It also reaffirms the intention of Member States to realize the full potential of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for refugees and migrants. Specifically, under the Sustainable Development Goal 10 to reduce inequality within and between countries, a key target is “to facilitate the orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.” The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants explicitly recognizes the needs of refugees, IDPs and migrants in the pursuit of this target.

16. With the growing prominence of forced displacement internationally, there is increasing interest at national and international levels in statistics on refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and refugee related populations, including complete, accurate, timely and internationally comparable estimates of the numbers of people displaced. Estimates of these populations are increasingly relevant for official statistics, which need to take account of forcibly displaced populations in a consistent manner. Incomplete or inadequate statistics on displaced populations undermine the estimation of population stocks, which in turn affects other statistics, particularly those measured in per capita terms.
17. Much of the available data on refugees and IDPs is not generated as official statistics produced by the statistical systems of national governments but arise from operational data that is collected by a variety of actors in response to a national emergency. This is data collected for the purpose of supporting displaced people, rather than for statistical purposes. Displacement contexts can pose specific challenges to NSOs, as collecting data during conflict or disaster can be challenging and impose obstacles which go beyond the usual planning for a new statistical series.
18. Given this, particular attention should be paid to coordination between the various partners operating in a country and national authorities. In emergency situations some humanitarian data is processed by international partners to become international estimates and, these estimates need to conform with the standards set for official statistics in order to be recognised as international statistics. Therefore, at the international level, a distinction should also be made between global estimates such as those published by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, which draw on various statistics and data sources, and any international statistics which are produced in line with recommendations in the IRRS/IRIS, in accordance the quality standards set for UN and other international agencies , or published by any future custodian of IDP and refugee statistics.
19. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators accepted the proposal of EGRIS members to recommend disaggregation by forced displacement categories for 12 priority SDG indicators, as well as further broken down by age and sex whenever possible.² In order to ensure availability of minimum quality statistics on refugees and IDPs, it is recommended that national statistics providers include statistics on these priority indicators in the reporting plans for the 2030 Agenda.

1.2 Coordination of International Partners

20. Some statistical series, particularly those used for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs, have been allocated an international custodian agency³, usually a UN agency. This custodian agency, promotes adherence to international statistical principles for the thematic area under its control; it collects and publishes national official statistics and potentially anonymised micro-data; and provides technical support and capacity-building to NSOs and/or other national bodies responsible for the production of official statistics as part of the NSS.
21. While UNHCR is generally accepted as the custodian agency for refugee statistics, the IRIS does not make recommendations on a specific custodian, although it outlines the role and responsibilities of any future custodian. It envisages that a custodian for IDP statistics could be appointed in the future to compiling international IDP statistics through a questionnaire, follow-up, validation, global publication and re-assessment of data collection processes.

²Source IRRS: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/9315869/KS-GQ-18-004-EN-N.pdf/d331c9cc-1091-43c2-b589-2c250bccc281> - page 125.

³Output system is considered as a dissemination system (data portal, platform, database etc.) which is offered to external/end users of the statistical information/products.

22. International coordination is important to prevent duplication, fill existing gaps, and to develop national capacity.

Phase References and Links

- Principles Governing International Statistical Activities: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/acsub-public/principles_stat_activities.htm

UN Quality standards for international statistics: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/unsystem/Documents-March2017/UNSystem-2017-3-QAF.pdf>

2 Specify needs

‘This phase is triggered when a need for new statistics is identified, or feedback about current statistics initiates a review. It includes all activities associated with engaging customers to identify their detailed statistical needs, proposing high level solution options and preparing business cases to meet these needs. In this phase the organisation: identifies the need for the statistics; confirms, in more detail, the statistical needs of the stakeholders; establishes the high level objectives of the statistical outputs; identifies the relevant concepts and variables for which data are required; checks the extent to which current data sources can meet these needs; prepares the business case to get approval to produce the statistics’ (UNECE, 2013)

22. A comprehensive approach to understanding and specifying statistical needs will help to make national statistical systems meet users’ needs, or in the case of a new statistical series potential users’ needs. The development of a roadmap for statistical development can be guided by several tools and guidelines developed by PARIS21 based at OECD. *Figure 1.1: Tools available to support establishing a business case* shows the sub-processes set out the GSBPM and indicates where tools are available for establishing a business case. These are discussed below.

Figure 1.1: Tools available to support establishing a business case

23. Advocacy from regional and international authorities can play a crucial part in raising the priority given to refugee and IDP statistics by governments, planning authorities and chief statisticians. Effective advocacy includes explicitly documenting and specifying the unaddressed needs, targeting a group within the national statistical system that can effect change, proposing a detailed business case for closing the data gap, and using hard evidence as a basis for the business case. Joint approaches in strengthening national statistical systems, whether regional or international, have often been more effective than individual national efforts in capacity building and fundraising for emerging areas of official statistics, such as refugee and IDP statistics.
24. As the international statistical system derives its input from national statistical systems, establishing a business case for a new statistical series requires substantial planning and co-ordination at national and international levels alike. Nationally, the production of refugee and IDP statistics can require several ministries, departments or agencies to cooperate with the national statistics office (NSO) to make the resulting statistics fit for purpose and relevant to users (Eurostat, 2018).

2.1 Identify the Needs of Users and Potential Users

“1.1 - This sub-process includes the initial investigation and identification of what statistics are needed and what is needed of the statistics.” (UNECE, 2013)

25. The IRRS and IRIS recommendations propose a list of basic data tabulations (IRRS Chapter 3 and IRIS Chapter 5) and indicators (IRRS Chapter 5 and IRIS Chapter 4) to be produced at the national level. These recommendations serve as the core set of official statistics in the displacement domain which includes refugee and related persons; and internally displaced persons. However, a country’s range of statistics will vary, depending on the national policy priorities and the reporting requirements of regional international users, and the capacity of the National Statistical System and what statistics are possible to produce with a reasonable effort

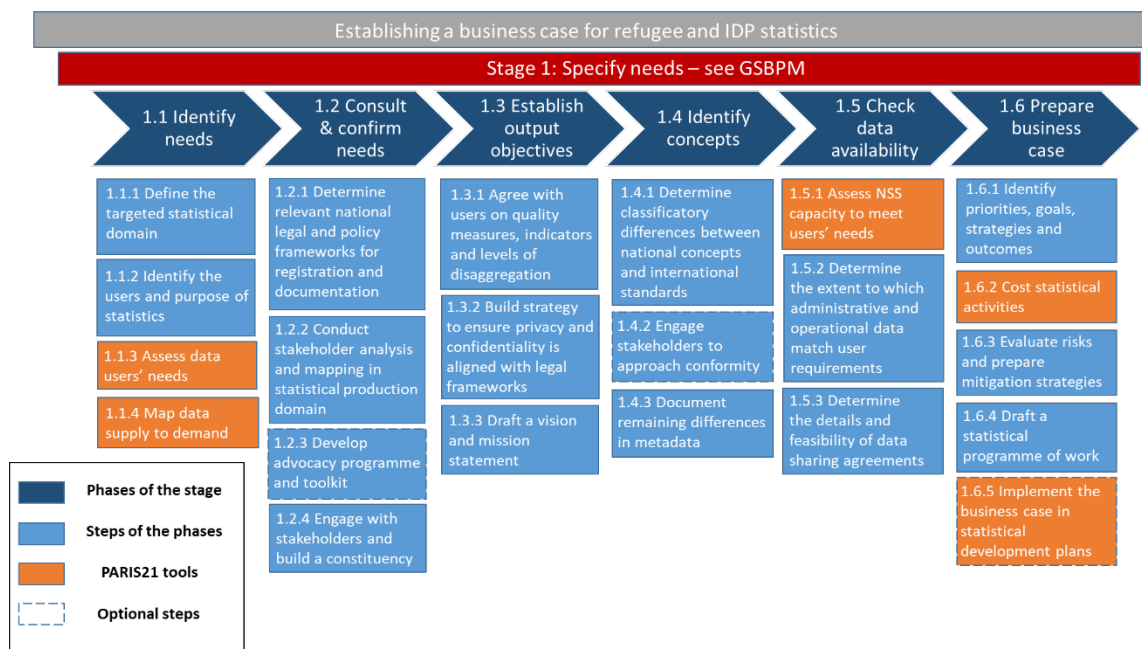


Figure 1: A screenshot of a computer Description automatically generated

26. In respect of international reporting obligations, it should be noted that the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators accepted the proposal of EGRIS members to recommend disaggregation by forced displacement categories for 12 priority SDG indicators, as well by age and sex whenever possible.⁴ In order to ensure availability of minimum quality statistics on refugees and IDPs, it is recommended that national statistics providers include statistics on these priority indicators in the reporting plans for the 2030 Agenda. However, governments should not feel limited to this priority list, and data collection on additional indicators is encouraged (IRIS, paragraph 130).
27. There are several potential users of statistics on displaced persons, including governments and national authorities, local authorities, international organisations, civil society, NGOs, researchers/academia, the media and the general public. They have different needs and priorities, requiring statistics for different purposes:
- for administrative purposes,
 - for policymaking,
 - for monitoring the implementation of policies,
 - for evaluating policies,
 - to facilitate the allocation of resources,
 - to enable regional/international comparison,
 - to enable comparisons with the wider population,
 - to assess progress towards durable solutions or integration with host communities,

⁴Ibid para 94

- to inform the general public and enhance public debate.
28. Identifying important “needs gaps” and users’ priorities requires research. Which can involve a mixed-methods approach, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. A useful source of information on the needs of both displaced people and the agencies supporting them may be provided by needs assessments undertaken by or on behalf of operational agencies supporting refugees and IDPs. Needs assessments not only inform humanitarian partners but can inform those considering the data needs of those supporting the displaced. The UNHCR Needs Assessment Handbook provides guidance on their conduct (see also Phase 4 references *Phase Links and Examples of Training Manuals and Data Collection Advice*). These needs assessments were promoted by the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and established “commitments for aid organizations and donors to work together efficiently, transparently, and harmoniously in order to better deliver protection and assistance to the millions of people facing emergency needs. One of these commitments calls for the improvement of needs assessments, notably by:
1. Providing a single, comprehensive, cross-sectoral, methodologically sound, and impartial overall assessment of needs for each crisis to inform strategic decisions;
 2. Coordinating and streamlining data collection to ensure compatibility, quality and comparability, and avoid over-assessment and duplication;
 3. sharing needs assessment data in a timely manner, with the appropriate mitigation of protection and privacy risks; and
 4. Prioritizing humanitarian response across sectors based on evidence established by the analysis.⁵”

Figure 1.2: Data gaps

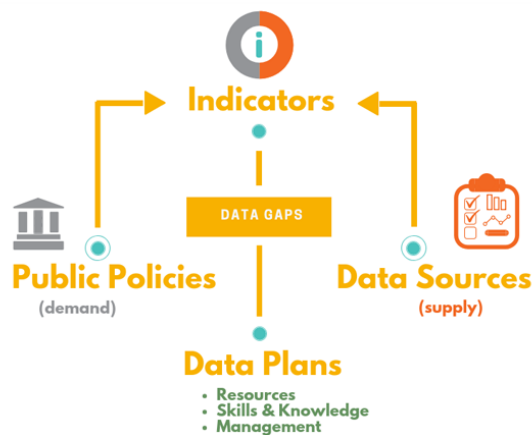


Figure 2: A screenshot of a cell phone Description automatically generated

29. PARIS21 has developed the Advanced Data Planning Tool (ADAPT)⁶ for NSOs to adapt their data production processes to meet the data needs of users. It is a consultative tool, which brings data stakeholders together to identify data gaps, and define requirements within an established monitoring indicator framework such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator framework or the basic statistics proposed by the IRIS and IRRS (see also the Sustainable Development Goal indicators website⁷.)

⁵Source IRRS: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/9315869/KS-GQ-18-004-EN-N.pdf/d331c9cc-1091-43c2-b589-2c250bccc281> - page 125.

⁶Output system is considered as a dissemination system (data portal, platform, database etc.) which is offered to external/end users of the statistical information/products.

⁷<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>

30. The results of ADAPT can contribute to the development of statistical plans, such as National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs), and processes to strengthen the coordination of statistical planning at the national level. ADAPT offers three different options to identify indicators affiliated to a given statistical framework or specified topic, applicable to refugee and IDP statistics. Further details and an explanation of this tool can be found in PART III of the document (paragraph 739). Based on the information provided, the ADAPT tool can produce two main reports on the status of refugee and IDP statistics and identifies any data gaps at national level. The first report is able to summarise the status of refugee and IDP statistics in respect of the relevant national requirements, which could be based on the IRRS or IRIS tabulation indicator frameworks, or a national defined requirement. The second report presents the status of refugee and IDP statistics as a general domain of statistical production, considering all indicators that require a relevant disaggregation variable.

2.2 Consult and Confirm Needs

“1.2 - This sub-process focuses on consulting with the stakeholders and confirming in detail the needs for the statistics.” (UNECE, 2013)

31. National collaboration platforms, for example targeted workshops or thematic conferences, and regional fora can be an opportunity to engage with the identified strategic stakeholders and promote the need for refugee and IDP statistics. Connecting the topics with policy priorities at international and national levels can attract the attendance of high-level political representatives and help to gain government support.
32. Many countries are mandated by their statistics law to set out a statistical work programme, an example of this is Turkstat whose Official Statistics Programme is based on the Statistics Law of Turkey No 5429. Many other countries have statistical development plans such as the NSDS described below.
33. National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs) provide a framework for structuring support and developing statistical capacity in the national statistical system. These multi-annual strategies aim at mainstreaming sectors into the national statistical system (NSS), engaging with other data producers and coordinating the entire NSS, responding to data challenges, and building statistical capacity across the “the statistical value chain” (PARIS21, 2018). An NSDS can be an integral part of national ownership over statistical development, and secure funding at national and international level.
34. The implementation of refugee and IDP statistics in these statistical development plans, which cover all parts of official statistics, can be useful for mainstreaming these statistics into a wider national planning process and improving cooperation with the data producers involved. This is particularly important with displacement statistics as data is likely to be held by many agencies including non-traditional sources and the humanitarian sector.
35. The NSDS should be firmly linked to national development plans and involve several different sectors. Refugee and IDP statistics could be considered a sector. The identification of targeted sectors varies from country to country depending on national priorities and administrative structures. Usually, sectoral strategies correspond to line ministries, government departments or agencies with separate and well-defined areas of concern, mandate and budget. However, most countries do not have a corresponding government ministry or agency responsible for monitoring forced migration or displacement, and the level political sensitivity within these domains remains at a high level.
36. As part of the NSDS process, making the case for developing a sectoral strategy for refugee and IDP statistics is important. Traditionally in the NSDS process, technical committees are in charge of defining sectoral statistical needs, and the number of sectors involved is often constrained. Depending on its strategic importance to government, refugee and IDP statistics could face challenges in being “recognised” as a sectoral statistical area within the NSDS process and may require specific advocacy and the allocation of a lead government Ministry, Department or Agency.
37. Depending on whether the country has developed a NSDS or not, the mid-term evaluation or a new phase of the NSDS can be the right moment for integrating a new sectoral strategy related to refugee

and IDP statistics. Integration of refugee and IDP statistics into the NSDS should occur at all stages of the design and implementation phases. The process of developing a sectoral strategy for refugee and IDP statistics involves the following steps:

2.2.1 Establishing a Sector Statistics Committee for Displacement Statistics

38. Sector Statistics Committees (SSC) are responsible for defining and confirming the statistical needs for sectors. The Refugee and IDP Statistics Committee should be constituted by those leading of the sector at the request of the NSO, and a sector Coordinator should be designated. A large number of departments, ministries and agencies could be involved, including migration authorities, social development ministries, urban planning authorities, rural development authorities, and the humanitarian sector. Experience shows that five active members are the ideal number for the committee, but the Sector Statistics Committee should involve actors from the wider data ecosystem and goes beyond the traditional boundaries of the NSS, to humanitarian agencies including UNHCR and OCHA.
39. The responsibilities of a potential Refugee and IDP Statistics Committee would be similar to those of other sectors, including: a) proposing a vision for refugee and IDP statistics for approval, b) prioritising statistical activities over the lifespan of the Sectoral Strategy for the Development of Statistics, c) identifying major agencies currently collecting relevant statistics for refugees and IDPs, d) preparing an inventory of existent current data systems in existence operated by stakeholders, e) identifying major data needs related to the sector, f) developing strategic actions, including organisational and HR development, IT strategy, dissemination policy and other areas.
40. The role of the NSO is important for statistics coordination and to ensure that the potential data sources relevant for refugee and displacement statistics are able to be used, and that data confidentiality is adequately protected under the relevant statistics law.
41. The sector statistics design team should consist of staff from several ministries (e.g. Interior and External Relations Ministries, Migration agency) to ensure commitment and assurance of staff time through a more formal process, including memoranda of understanding between the agencies and participating ministries. As NSSs are not always able to capture forced migration and displacement within officially produced data sources, data may be needed from non-traditional data producing institutions, such as civil society and humanitarian agencies.

2.2.2 Using operational data from humanitarian agencies for official statistics

42. Where there is insufficient data from government sources for statistical purposes, operational data from humanitarian agencies present a possible resource for establishing or augmenting a new statistical series for refugee and IDP statistics. Operational data are produced during regular activities of humanitarian agencies are intended for internal use in planning operations only and do not usually meet the standards set for official statistics, before use they should be carefully assessed using a national or international statistical data (e.g. UN Statistics *Quality Assurance Framework quality assessment tool*).
43. The quality of any operational data identified for use in a new statistical series should be assessed focusing on standardisation, coverage, accuracy and confidentiality. Ultimately, the statistical authority (e.g. NSO, line ministry, specialised statistical unit within NSS) in charge will determine the usefulness of operational data as input for the new statistical series after assessing crucial quality issues and negotiating data sharing agreements (see IRRS, Chapter 6 pp 136-140).
44. One source of operational data is the IASC Common Operational Datasets, are developed and endorsed by the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) and disseminated by OCHA. These are Common Operational Data sets (CODs) and fundamental operational datasets (FODs) used in humanitarian emergencies to support technical standards, improve the quality of data, and strengthen interoperability. In the IASC Common Operational Datasets there are three levels of accountability: Guardian, Sponsor and Source. For more information see the IASC Guidelines on Common Operational Datasets in Disaster Preparedness and Response.

45. The Protection Information Management for Quality Protection Outcomes (PIM) Initiative⁸ is a collaborative project, bringing together UN, NGO, and other protection and IM partners working to respond to protection needs in situations of displacement. The objective of PIM is to provide quality data and information on people in displacement situations in a safe, reliable, and meaningful way. Data on refugees and IDPs can be extremely sensitive and confidentiality and data protection are of paramount importance. Data collection should be consistent with national legislation on data protection and international obligations related to privacy. Data protection considerations may limit the access of statisticians to information in administrative systems, unless national laws establish the right of access to administrative data for statistical purposes. This project identifies three different roles for the use of PIM data;
1. **Guardian:** OCHA is the “Guardian” of the agreed upon datasets and will facilitate the distribution of the “best” available common operational and fundamental datasets in emergencies while managing forums for updates and distribution communication. If OCHA is unable to provide this service in a specific country, a suitable substitute Guardian should be identified by Humanitarian Country Teams or equivalent decision-making body during contingency planning. Quality assurance for compliance with minimum format and data characteristics in datasets will be conducted by OCHA, or the substitute Guardian, prior to distribution. This will include assigning a common GLIDE number to be associated with the dataset after the onset of a natural disaster⁹.
 2. **Sponsor:** Each dataset has a designated “Sponsor” who is responsible for identifying and liaising with relevant “Sources” to analyse, collate, clean and achieve consensus around a specific operational dataset. If possible dataset Sponsors will proactively identify and collate information prior to emergencies in the data preparedness phase in support of the contingency planning process. If this is not possible, Sponsors will be identified in relation to their specific dataset early in the emergency and will assume responsibilities related to their thematic dataset. OCHA will maintain lists of dataset Sponsors at the country and global levels and coordinate between data Sponsors.
 3. **Source:** Each dataset will have designated source(s) or owner(s), such as: national authority/agency, Cluster, NGO, UN agency, International Organization, International Red Cross/Red Crescent that agrees to be fully responsible for the development, maintenance and metadata associated with a dataset and control distribution restrictions.
46. In many countries where governments have limited capacity to register refugees, the UNHCR collects administrative data on asylum seekers and refugees on behalf of governments. Part III of this manual includes an example of the data sharing Agreement on the Transfer of Personal Data of Refugees and Asylum-seekers to governments under certain conditions (see Part III *UNHCR Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding*). They acknowledge the importance of registration as a protection tool and expect States to take responsibility for registration as quickly as possible. The sharing of data needs to be “*subject to the data protection safeguards as contained in UNHCR’s Policy on the Protection of Persons of Concern*”¹⁰. The agreement allows for the ‘compiling statistical data’ among the allowable purposes for personal data transfer. Data may not be transferred to a third party except with the prior written authorisation of UNHCR and/or the consent of the data subject (the refugee or displaced person). Any third party must conform with the conditions set out in the UNHCR data sharing agreement. In the case of refugees, the data may not be shared with the refugee’s country of origin, except under the circumstances of voluntary repatriation under the auspices of UNHCR with the consent of the individual refugee.
47. The minimum set of indicators identified in the IRRS and IRIS recommendations should be considered as the core statistics to monitor internal and international displacement and for reporting to the global statistical system. However, it is recognised that most countries will not reach this minimum initially, and that time will be needed to build the capacity to produce these.

⁸Source: PARIS21 NSDS guidelines on data dissemination: <https://nsdsguidelines.paris21.org/node/796>

⁹<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2018/ECECESSTAT20182.pdf> - page 8.

¹⁰<https://nsdsguidelines.paris21.org/node/796>

2.3 Establish Output Objectives

“This sub-process identifies the statistical outputs that are required to meet the user needs identified in the previous sub-processes.” (UNECE, 2013)

48. Once a need has been established, the practicalities of developing the statistical series will have to be defined. Establishing the practicalities include the agreement of users on the suitability of and quality measures for the proposed statistical outputs, and the recommendation of indicators and levels of disaggregation. Furthermore, this sub-process can be used to address any special concerns of refugees and IDP through the statistical series that could be relevant in the national context (trauma, sensitivity, confidentiality, migrating children etc.).
49. There are inherent potential risks of producing displacement statistics, as data use would include politically sensitive issues such as refugee support, population displacement, integration, disaster response and crossing borders. Any data collection effort in these domains needs to observe people’s rights to consent, privacy, security and ownership, and consider legal frameworks relating to confidentiality, which are both likely to be constraints when defining the output objectives.

2.4 Identify Concepts

”This sub-process clarifies the required concepts to be measured by the business process from the point of view of the user

.” (UNECE, 2013)

50. An internationally agreed refugee and related persons classification was agreed in the IRRS 2018 (see Chapter 3) and a similar classification for IDPs is set out in IRIS 2020 (see Chapter 3). When referring to the refugee population within a given country, the IRRS include persons who are “primarily classified in legal terms by their claim to refugee status, or their descent from those with or seeking international protection” (IRRS, 2018). There are three major categories; a) Persons in need of international protection which includes refugees, asylum seekers and others granted temporary or subsidiary forms of protection; b) Persons with a refugee background which includes naturalized former refugees, the children and other family members of refugees, and c) Persons returned from abroad after seeking international protection. (see IRRS Figure 3.1 page 30).
51. For IDPs and related populations there are four major categories; a) Persons who have displacement-related protection needs (subdivided into IDPs in locations of displacement, IDPs in location of return, and IDPs in other settlement locations); b) IDP-related populations who are the children born after displacement to at least one IDP parent; c) Other non-displaced family members of IDPs; and d) Those who have overcome key displacement-related vulnerabilities. (See IRIS Figure 3.1 page 26).
52. From the point of view of the statistics users, nationally and internationally, classificatory differences between national laws and international recommendations may be identified. These differences may reflect the specific needs of data users. If the concepts do not align, the stakeholder should agree on a process to approach conformity, and any remaining differences need to clearly be identified in the accompanying metadata.

Classificatory differences mainly may arise due to differences in national legislation and it may be required to add the reasons for granting asylum. The reference metadata for a new statistical series on refugee statistics should pay special attention to describing and defining these differences to achieve international comparability of refugee statistics. The structure of the reference metadata should follow established statistical standards, such as Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX)¹¹.

2.5 Check Data Availability

“This sub-process checks whether current data sources could meet user requirements, and the conditions under which they would be available, including any restrictions on their use.” (UNECE,

¹¹Source: https://paris21.org/sites/default/files/datapresentation_norway.pdf - page 61.