TOOL 10 | Improving the quality of migration data

Leverage existing data tools

Ensure that all available sources of migration data are used and that existing data collection tools collect as much meaningful migration data as possible.

Optimize data processes

Migration data is often scattered between government agencies, making it difficult to gain an accurate overview of the situation and trends. In accordance with data protection principles, governments should enact data integration methods to share data from different sources.

Consult data collected by other actors

Governments should consult data collected by other actors, such as academia, civil society or international organizations, to strengthen the data capacity on a variety of migration topics.

Six-step process

Integrate migration into local and national planning

Integrating migration into local and national development planning can help improve migration data. Such action would render migration data collection more of a political priority and would help mobilize resources for migration data capacity-building.

Tap into non-traditional data sources

Innovative sources such as big data can greatly increase understanding of migration phenomena. For example, while it is generally difficult to find accurate data on migration flows in emergencies and post-disaster situations, call records from mobile phone networks can be used to track population movements.

TOOL 11 | Migration data capacity building activities

Create local, national or regional data action plans that set out priorities and strategies to improve the availability and quality of migration data. Where relevant, these plans should be fully integrated with local or national action plans for statistics.

Work towards creating legal and institutional frameworks for statistics that proactively support the development of best practice legislation, standards, policies and procedures for migration data based on international recommendations.[30]

Strengthen cooperation and coordination between national statistical offices, ministries, national human rights institutions and other organizations that produce migration data to harmonize migration data concepts based on international recommendations and improve data sharing and integration mechanisms.

Expand migration data collection in areas that are lacking and help advance the creation of concepts, methodologies and data quality assurance frameworks in these areas.

Organize workshops or consultations with government representatives and other practitioners to build capacity and share best practices on migration data. These workshops can be thematically based (for example, irregular migration or human trafficking) or focus on specific policy sectors.

30. As per "Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration" (ILO, 2018) available at www.ilo.org and "Recommendations on statistics of international migration" (UNDESA, 1998) available at https://unstats.un.org.

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Six-step process

Leverage innovative sources for increased understanding of migration. For example, tools such as U-Report (https://ureport.in) facilitate feedback in real time directly from migrant children and youth.

Develop and strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships across government, academia, civil society, private sector and others involved in the production and use of migration data, at the local, national, regional and international levels. This should also include collaboration with key migration partner countries to facilitate exchanges on migration statistics in areas such as recruitment and migrant labour rights. For example, in March 2020, UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR and OECD launched the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move.[31]

Create or contribute to open data or data sharing initiatives aimed at lowering information costs, making migration data available to a range of different stakeholders and developing the evidence base for migration policymaking and programming.

Mobilize resources for migration data capacity-building. This could mean seeking resources as part of development assistance available for statistics, as well as under any financing available through migration-specific development assistance.

Engage with relevant international agencies to improve migration data capacity through specific tools, such as with the IOM on developing and updating Migration Profiles.

31. UNICEF, "Lack of quality data compounds risks facing millions of refugee and migrant children" (New York, 2020).

Consult best practice examples of migration data capacity-building on the global knowledge platform created by the GCM.

Consult guidance on migration data capacity-building and best practice examples available on IOM's Global Migration Data Portal (www.migrationdataportal.org). This portal provides information on international data sources for migration and standardized international-level migration indicators.

Participate in regional and international dialogues on migration data. Growing international interest in and attention to improving migration data presents an important opportunity for governments to share experiences with others and improve their own migration data practices. Governments should take part in relevant forums such as the International Forum on Migration Statistics jointly organized by the IOM, UN DESA and the OECD, as well as follow the developments of the UN Network on Migration.

Participate in regional and international dialogues on development data. There is a strong call in the international community to start a development data revolution. Governments should join this effort to build momentum for improved migration data.

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Six-step process