**IOM Migration Data Strategy**

Draft

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# **Introduction**

Migration is a complex phenomenon, the focus of enormous political and media attention and all too frequently misunderstood or misinterpreted. The international community is in need of a reliable and nuanced evidence base that reflects the rich complexity of contemporary migration and informs public opinion, and policies and practice on migration as well as in development, humanitarian and other related fields.

States have consistently identified availability of timely, accessible, reliable, disaggregated and comparable migration data as key for effective migration management and good migration governance. The need for such data is reflected in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which calls for collection and utilization of “accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies” in its first Objective. The need for reliable migration data is further referenced throughout the GCM text, including for “effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of commitments over time.”

Similarly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) highlights the importance of quality and timely disaggregated data to guide decision-making and help measure progress. There are several direct references to migration in the 2030 Agenda, including Target 10.7, which calls for states to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. Furthermore, migration is a cross-cutting theme across the 2030 Agenda, and its motto to “leave no one behind” is a clear call for sustainable development to be inclusive, including for migrants. SDG target 17.18 calls for data to be disaggregated by migratory status, while many other targets require stronger migration data in order to give effect to their indicators.

Data also features prominently in other key international frameworks with strong links to migration, for example the Global Compact on Refugees, the New Urban Agenda, the Agenda for Humanity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

As the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, and given its place within the UN system, the onus is on IOM to mobilize the international community to build up a strong evidence base on migration and promote its systematic use to guide policy and action. Furthermore, IOM and the UN system at large are themselves in need of high-quality data for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their programmes and policy advice. IOM’s ability to effectively serve migrants, its Member States and support its fellow UN agencies as well as other partners, depends on its access to reliable migration data and the ability to analyse and effectively use it to inform its own work.

Consequently, the IOM Director General has identified migration data as one of the priority issues for IOM and committed to strengthening the Organization’s engagement in this area, including through its role as Coordinator and secretariat of the UN Network on Migration (the Network) and through strategic partnerships. A comprehensive IOM strategy on migration data, developed as part of broader organizational strategic planning, intends to give a clear focus and purpose to IOM’s engagement on migration data.

# **Migration Data Strategy in the Institutional Landscape**

The Migration Data Strategy (MDS) comes at a key time for IOM, on the back of a broad institutional thrust towards a more planned and purposeful approach to fulfillment its responsibilities towards IOM Member States, migrants and the international community at large as part of the UN system, including through its role within the UN Network on Migration. Its development is in sync with the strategic impetus of the UN system– a UN data strategy is being designed to foster individual and collective strength of UN system entities in this area.

The MDS seeks to support the implementation of relevant international frameworks and their monitoring and reporting, including the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Migration, the Agenda for Humanity, Grand Bargain, as well as frameworks relevant to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for coordination of humanitarian response. To this end, the MDS aims to cover within its scope all data that reflect the rich complexity of variables that characterize the movement of people today.

For the purposes of this document, therefore, “migration data” refers to all types of data that would support the development of comprehensive, coherent and forward-looking migration policies and programming, as well as contribute to informed public discourse on migration. This includes data concerning different forms of population movement, including short and long-term, forced and voluntary, cross-border and internal, as well as data concerning characteristics of movement and those on the move, reasons for and impacts of migration.[[1]](#footnote-1) The MDS also seeks to cover the full data lifecycle, including collection, storage, analysis and use, including for policy advice, programme planning, design and implementation, as well as research and dissemination.

IOM’s engagement on migration data is guided by the principles enshrined in the IOM Constitution, [[2]](#footnote-2) the Charter of the United Nations and other international agreements and frameworks the Organization subscribes to. This includes the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, which places protection at the centre of humanitarian action and has specific provisions to guide data and information collection, sharing and management. Overall, respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants is central to all of IOM’s work, including on migration data. Therefore, commitments to data protection, including data security, ensuring individual privacy and protection from harm are key tenets of the MDS. The MDS is guided by and seeks to further embed the IOM Migration Data Governance Policy and the IOM Data Protection Principles, as well as other relevant internal guidance such as IOM’s Principles for Humanitarian Action and its rights-based approach to programming, to ensure responsible data management within IOM.

The MDS is one of several thematic strategies being developed by IOM within the framework of the Strategic Vision and as vehicles for its realization. The Strategic Vision highlights the need “to consolidate IOM’s data across the Organization, and to ensure greater quality, consistency and comparability of data sets,” and calls for a “greater focus on quality output, rather than quantity”. The MDS has been designed to meet these challenges and to support the three priorities identified in the Strategic Vision: **resilience, mobility and governance.**

The **resilience** pillar upholds IOM’s commitment to strengthen the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, in particular the link between humanitarian action and migration governance. It calls for a better understanding of the drivers of displacement, such as climate change, instability and poverty; of the populations who are displaced or at risk of displacement; and of their needs for assistance. It also calls for effective responses to their situation. Data is essential to establish the circumstances surrounding the movement of people, identify those who have moved, offer appropriate assistance and formulate appropriate longer-term responses. Furthermore, data underpins early-warning, preparedness and disaster-risk reduction, as highlighted in several international instruments. The Sendai Framework, for instance, highlights the importance of open data exchange and dissemination of disaggregated data. Similarly, the Agenda for Humanity points to the essential value of data as a basis for joint priority setting and anticipatory action by development and humanitarian partners.

The **mobility** pillar supports the development of policies and action to enable safe, regular and orderly migration against a background of changing migratory dynamics. Migration data and analysis are indispensable for this. As the movements of people within and between countries continue to grow in number and diversity, mapping them requires more accurate, timely and comprehensive data collection systems. In addition, the increasing complexity of migration makes it clear that evidence is more than just numbers and underscores the importance of analysis to support a richer understanding of migration. This is essential to inform and facilitate the development of comprehensive and coherent migration policies, and to address public misconceptions about migration. To support states wishing to respond effectively to the shifting dynamics of migration, IOM needs to champion data collection and analysis that reflects the complexity of the movement of people.

Finally, the **governance** pillar highlights the broader need for comprehensive national and inter-governmental cooperation mechanisms covering all aspects of migration and to enable coordinated action among actors at the national, regional and global levels, particularly when such action flows out of commitments such as the 2030 Agenda or the GCM. Here also, data is an essential pre-requisite to enable stakeholders to identify patterns and trends in migration, to map common lines of action and to track progress towards agreed goals and targets. The importance of credible data for the development of evidence-based policies and good migration governance is highlighted in the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) and underscored in the Global Compact for Migration as well as in the Capacity Building Mechanism managed by the UN Migration Network.

In addition to consistency with the logic of the MiGOF, the MDS is also consistent with IOM’s Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), Humanitarian Policy (PHA) and Crisis Response Strategy. Further, the MDS is relevant to the institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development, which guides IOM’s approach to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other relevant multilateral development frameworks, and calls for improved collection and use of migration data for evidence-based policies. The MDS also seeks to align with IOM’s new Internal Governance Framework (IGF), which outlines the essential requirements for a modern and fit-for-purpose internal governance system. The MDS proposes to build on and synergize with IGF implementation to strengthen migration data governance across the Organization.

# **Migration Data – State of Play**

## **The Migration Data Landscape – challenges and opportunities**

Many efforts have been made over the years by states, the UN and the international community at large to enhance the migration evidence base. Today, many countries have the technology and skills to track entries and exits across their borders with a high degree of accuracy and to gather other data on the movement of people, as well as the means and willingness to share these. In some regions, great advances have been made in harmonizing and sharing migration data, often with the support of regional UN Commissions, such as the UNECE, and regional organizations. Eurostat collects and collates statistical information on third-country nationals (non-EU citizens, including stateless persons) entering, residing and working in the European Union Member States or applying for international protection. The OECD publishes detail of mobility patterns experienced by or affecting its Member States. At the global level, UNDESA produces regular estimates of the global migrant population through its figures on international migrant stocks. Many international organizations have established data collection and dissemination mechanisms on specific aspects of human mobility, for example the World Bank’s remittance database, UNHCR’s refugee statistics and ILO’s labour migration statistics. IOM contributes to these efforts, amongst others, by collecting and sharing data on a number of migration areas, including on internal displacement through its Displacement Tracking Matrix, data on missing migrants, migrant health and many more.[[3]](#footnote-3) IOM also prioritizes promoting collaboration and ensuring that available migration data and their analysis are easily accessible. For example, the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) presents data on human trafficking contributed by organizations from around the world, while the Global Migration Data Portal pulls together from different sources quality data on all aspects of migration.

Despite these efforts, data on the movement of people are still incomplete and fragmented. There are, first, gaps with respect to basic migration statistics. For example, while data on international migrant stocks exists, data on international migration flows is much more patchy.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Secondly, relatively little data are available on many significant aspects of migration, especially globally. Irregular migration is a particular challenge as it usually takes place with the aim of avoiding detection. This makes reliable assessment of such migration, as well as trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling, challenging. Obtaining migration data in situations of conflict and instability is also fraught with difficulty.

Further, there are significant data lacunae with respect to topics which require integrating data from different sectors, such as migrant health, return migration, migrant integration and social cohesion, as well as drivers and impacts of migration. This also concerns many aspects of the relationship between migration and sustainable development.

Next, there is lack of timely data on the movement of people. Although timeliness of data is a long-standing issue, and is not limited to the migration sphere, it has become more acute with the growing speed and complexity of migratory flows, increased political sensitivities and public attention.

Finally, the GCM and the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda and several other key international frameworks entail new reporting requirements for Member States. While the methodologies to measure many of the migration-related SDG indicators have not yet been finalized, it is likely that many states will struggle to produce appropriate data sets, with a large burden of effort falling on National Statistical Offices (NSOs) that may not be well-equipped to deal with migration data. There are similar challenges around monitoring the progress of GCM implementation, and of other migration-relevant agreements.

There are a number of underlying reasons for the difficulties states and other stakeholders have with respect to migration data. Insufficient capacity is a key challenge. Although most primary data are collected at the national level, many countries do not have the resources or technical capabilities to do so in a systematic way. For example, they may be able to collect only a limited number of data elements. Or the problem may lie with the collection and aggregation of data from several sources. Lack of intragovernmental coordination and of systematic sharing of data collected by different parts of governments is a common issue.

Lack of comparability and interoperability of migration data collected by different actors is another major challenge. There continue to be inconsistencies with respect to key migration and mobility-related terminology and definitions. This, together with differing national priorities and legislation, means that migration data collected by different governments are often not comparable. Comparability and interoperability challenges also stand in the way of integrating data collected by states and those produced by other stakeholders. In addition, as political sensitivities loom large, states may be reluctant to share the data on the movement of people they do have, and migrant privacy considerations are critical.

Last but not least, it is important to keep in mind that evidence is more than data and includes understanding and clear communication of what is behind the numbers. Quality analysis of migration data, be it at the national, regional or global level, is therefore critical, but also fraught with challenges. There are methodological questions, for example, how to use data produced by different types of actors (e.g. governmental and non-governmental) and different types of data (e.g. censuses, surveys, administrative data and new sources of data) in an integrated and meaningful way.

Although these challenges are long standing, they can be overcome through consistent and concerted efforts. Two sets of key developments bring opportunities to do so and to improve the status quo on migration data – one on the political and one on the technological front.

Importantly, there is an indication that there is political will among states to work together towards better production, analysis and sharing of migration data. That reliable data, including those specifically relating to the movement of people, feature in a number of key international frameworks is a clear signal that states see building a quality migration evidence base as a priority.

At the same time, there has been great progress on the technological front, which has significant potential for migration data. The volume and nature of digital information available is growing at an unprecedented rate. This is coupled with the use of technology to develop new methods for data production and analysis. New sources of data can be an important complement to traditional data sources. These can be used to gather data on particular aspects of mobility and help address specific data gaps. In addition, big data and new sources of data more broadly can provide more timely information. While new data sources and technology offer many opportunities, they also come with challenges and complexities. These include ethical and privacy considerations; concerns about reliability and integrity; problems of accessibility and cost; continuity and sustainability (in view of the fast-changing nature of the space, data and actors involved); as well as lack of standards and frameworks to govern the use of new data sources. The UN system has already recognized the need for and initiated work on guidelines for the use of big data and other new data sources.

## **IOM and Migration Data**

IOM’s existing engagement on migration data is strong, as the Organization collects, analyses and uses data for a range of purposes. Over the years, much effort has gone into the deepening of IOM’s engagement on migration data, both to inform programme design and delivery and to contribute to the migration evidence base. Concretely, IOM collects and/or manages data across multiple areas and is well-placed to provide a 360-degree analysis of migration, providing insights that complement traditional statistical data. IOM has in place data protection and data governance policies, and works continuously to improve its data systems and applications. IOM has a Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) in Berlin, which undertakes a range of initiatives with the aim of enhancing migration data and analysis, and promoting their effective use.

The Organization also actively cooperates with external partners on data collection, analysis and research at global, regional and country levels. This includes IOM’s extensive engagement on and contribution to the collection and analysis of migration data for humanitarian action. IOM’s data work is an integral part of its contribution to coordinated inter-agency efforts to ensure more efficient provision of assistance and protection to affected populations, which the Organization delivers through its role in the IASC and the cluster system, the country-level humanitarian architecture and different Grand Bargain workstreams.

These achievements would not have been possible in the absence of several distinct comparative advantages. These include IOM’s field presence and its relationship of trust with Member States; IOM’s broad understanding of migration and its technical expertise in this field; IOM’s direct access to and communication with a wide range of beneficiaries and its mandate within the UN system and, more specifically, its role within the UN Network on Migration.

These undeniable strengths are, however, tempered to some extent by some organizational features and working methods that are not conducive to systematic, coherent and strategic engagement on migration data. Many of the migration data-related challenges IOM has stem from wider systemic issues, such as projectization, lack of core/predictable funding, decentralization and lack of strategic prioritization. The wide range of data IOM uses and processes, as well as the vast scope and diversity of IOM’s data-related engagement (e.g. operational use, research and analysis, partner capacity-building) add to the scale of the challenge.

Despite these challenges, as a key migration data stakeholder in its own right and as the Coordinator and secretariat of the UN Network on Migration (the Network), IOM is in a unique position to mobilize the international community and to lead initiatives to improve the migration evidence base for good migration governance in support of sustainable development and effective humanitarian action. This can be done by providing support to states, civil society (including migrant/diaspora-led organizations) and other actors through its footprint of over 400 offices worldwide. The Network also presents an opportunity for greater collaboration and coherence within the UN system on migration data, and make the most of technological advances and innovations.

The MDS paves the way for IOM to leverage these opportunities, to address the existing weaknesses and to focus different aspects of IOM’s migration data engagement on a common set of priorities.

**Strategic Objectives**

Three Strategic Objectives are identified for IOM to guide its engagement on migration data. Two of the objectives focus on the support IOM can provide to the international community. The third objective is focused on improving the way IOM and the rest of the UN system use migration data for policy and programmatic excellence. While each has a specific purpose, they are designed to complement each other and, taken in concert, offer a vision for IOM’s migration data-related activities. For each Strategic Objective, action-oriented components have been developed, mapping out specific lines of action that will lead to its realization.

1. Strengthen the global evidence base on migration

*Vision: IOM is a key player in the international community’s efforts to broaden and strengthen the evidence base on migration. This is essential to foster good migration governance and support the implementation and monitoring of a range of international frameworks in migration, development, humanitarian and other related fields, notably the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Migration, the Agenda for Humanity and Grand Bargain, as well as frameworks relevant to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).* *IOM does this by increasing availability of and access to migration data, helping address migration data gaps, supporting follow-up of relevant global processes, championing data protection and data innovation, and acting as a convener for migration data actors. These efforts are to be undertaken in the context of the UN Migration Network and in concert with wider data-related UN and other interagency efforts, including in the humanitarian field.*

**Key components**

*In partnership with the UN Migration Network, the IASC, and other relevant stakeholders:*

* **IOM actively supports global-level efforts to increase the availability of, access to and responsible use of migration data** for evidence-based policy formulation; programme planning and governance of migration; and balanced public discourse on migration. This includes:
  + Undertaking efforts to ensure availability of data covering all facets of migration, including data that are related to the migration-development and humanitarian nexus, as well as data drawn from other adjoining policy domains, such as employment, health and climate change;
  + Promoting data protection for collection and use of all migration data;
  + Promoting and disseminating quality analysis of the available migration data and its use for policy and action; and
  + Facilitating effective and responsible sharing of migration data among governments and other stakeholders, including by supporting the development and application of relevant standards and safeguards in accordance with international law.
* **IOM leads specific initiatives to fill selected migration data gaps at the global level** by:
  + Supporting the development, coordination and application of approaches to capture, analyse and disseminate data to help address specific data gaps;
  + Pioneering novel solutions to address data gaps through use of new data sources and developing methods of data collection and analysis, including methodologies for integrating traditional and other sources of data for quality analysis, as well as dissemination and communication of findings; and

* + Contributing IOM data, including operational data, to help address specific migration data gaps where relevant.
* **IOM leads coordinated global-level humanitarian initiatives to increase the availability of and access to credible data** that support evidence-based humanitarian assistance to persons in need by:
  + Strengthening development of methods and approaches to more effectively identify needs of displaced populations, in close coordination with relevant partners; and
  + Pioneering innovative solutions to increase efficiency in humanitarian delivery through ethical use of data science and predictive analysis.
* **IOM supports global efforts for the** **follow-up and review of the implementation of relevant international frameworks**, in particular the 2030 Agenda, the GCM, the Agenda for Humanity and the Commitments to the Grand Bargain by:
  + Supporting the development of new monitoring and evaluation methodologies, including with respect to relevant SDG indicators;
  + Collecting, sharing and analysing disaggregated data to support the monitoring of the above frameworks, including by contributing global internal displacement data; and
  + Supporting existing cooperation efforts on these issues as well as global processes dedicated to follow-up and review of relevant frameworks.
* **IOM promotes innovation with respect to migration data collection, management, sharing and analysis** by**:**
  + Investigating new data sources and technologies, including but not limited to big data, that can enhance understanding of migrants’ needs and migration, patterns and outcomes;
  + Promoting the development and application of dedicated quality and ethical standards and safeguards for the use and sharing of such data in accordance with international law;
  + Raising awareness about and encouraging knowledge-sharing on migration data innovation, taking account of existing and emerging applications of big data in the field of migration, development and humanitarian action; and
* Experimenting with the development of migration scenarios, drawing on diverse data sources, cross-validated against major socio-economic and political indicators.
* **IOM engages in dialogue and knowledge exchange** **on migration data** **and acts as a convener** for relevant actors by:
  + Engaging with relevant existing expert bodies and platforms on migration data, such as the Expert Group on Migration Statistics and the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRIS), as well as sector-specific groups such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement Working Group on Data and Knowledge (DKWG) and the IASC; and
  + Launching migration data conversations and facilitating cooperation among migration stakeholders, including states, the UN and other entities, including academia, civil society, the private sector and others.

1. Develop capacity of states and other relevant partners to enhance the national, regional and global migration evidence base

*Vision: Working with partners, IOM undertakes comprehensive capacity development activities to enhance collection, analysis and use of quality migration data. These efforts have a two-fold focus: addressing country-specific needs for migration data to inform national policy and action, and strengthening the regional and global evidence-base, both by ensuring better availability of national migration data and by promoting its international comparability and sharing. Therefore, initiatives under this Objective also underpin Objective 1. To this end, IOM also supports interstate cooperation on migration data and capacity development efforts led by others. These efforts are undertaken in synergy with the national and regional capacity-development support provided by the UN Network on Migration and the wider UN-system.*

**Key components**

*In partnership with the UN Migration Network and other relevant stakeholders:*

* **IOM develops and implements capacity development initiatives** **on migration data** for states and other key stakeholders (including international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector) by:
  + Enhancing collection, storage, accessibility, analysis, dissemination and use of migration data from all available sources, including administrative sources;
* Ensuring adherence to international definitions and standards on migration data methodologies;

Facilitating disaggregation of migration data by gender, age and other key characteristics to support the principle of leaving no-one behind;

* + Enhancing national information management capabilities by providing and supporting the use of necessary information and communications technology (ICT) systems;
  + Building safeguards into migration data systems and processes to ensure data protection;
  + Promoting comprehensive use and analysis of migration data to address country-specific needs; this can include efforts to assess the impacts of migration policy and inform action across the development and humanitarian sectors, including to improve preparedness and planning;
  + Promoting inclusion of sectoral data for a more comprehensive migration evidence base, by facilitating coordination on data collection, sharing and use among all relevant government entities with a role in migration governance, and by promoting disaggregation of data across sectors by migratory status;
  + Facilitating use of migration data to monitor, evaluate and report on national-level implementation of global commitments, including the GCM and the 2030 Agenda, the IASC and the Grand Bargain process;
  + Promoting identification and use of new sources of data, including big data, to better understand migration patterns and characteristics, and use these in conjunction with data from traditional sources; and
  + Where relevant, sharing with states and partners IOM data collection models, methods and capacities and supporting sustainable use of IOM tools.
* **IOM supports interstate dialogue and cooperation on migration data through relevant regional and inter-regional bodies and cooperation platforms,** for example regional organizations, Regional Consultative Processes on Migration and the new UN Regional Collaboration Platforms (UNRCPs), to improve migration data collection, management, sharing, and use, promote harmonization of data, and facilitate exchange of good practices.

* **IOM builds synergies between its capacity development efforts on data with those of others in the UN system, including DESA,** and integrates them into relevant UN-wide undertakings, including within UN Country Teams and Humanitarian Country Teams, the capacity building mechanism of the UN Migration Network, and the inter-agency work undertaken in the framework of the Grand Bargain process.

1. Enhance use of migration data for IOM and UN-wide programming and policy advice

*Vision: IOM makes intelligent use of migration data, including those gathered through its operations, to create evidence-based, anticipatory programming and to offer sound policy advice to its Member States and other stakeholders. IOM strengthens and upgrades its institutional data systems to enable sound knowledge management and to foster a culture of learning. IOM works closely with UN partners to create UN-wide awareness of the need for migration data, to promote cooperation in this field and to encourage migration data exchange and use, including to inform communication about migration.*

**Key components:**

In partnership with the UN system, in particular the UN Country Teams and Humanitarian Country Teams, the UNRCPs and the UN Migration Network, as well as with the IASC and other stakeholders:

* **IOM collects migration data, including as part of its operational activities, undertakes their quality analysis in the context of the broader migration evidence base, and puts them to effective use,** including by:
  + Ensuring that migration data and its analysis are systemically applied in its programme development, implementation and evaluation in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts;
  + Developing evidence-based policy advice in diverse areas of migration governance, development and humanitarian areas;
  + Identifying emerging trends and issues in migration and developing informed responses to them; and
  + Responsibly disseminating migration data and communicating their analysis, including through policy-dialogues, awareness-raising efforts, research and publications, to inform, clarify complex issues and dispel misperceptions.
* **IOM champions the collection, management, analysis and consistent use of quality migration data to inform migration, humanitarian, development and other relevant policy and programming, across the UN system,** including by:
  + Promoting greater sharing and interoperability of migration data collected by different agencies in both development and humanitarian contexts, and efforts to increase system efficiencies. In particular:
  + Contributing to the UN Country and Humanitarian Country Team and country-level cluster system efforts to coordinate data collection, sharing and analysis;
  + Encouraging consistent use of migration data to inform and strengthen joint programming, as well as inter-agency disaster-risk reduction and crisis-preparedness efforts, including to disaster-induced displacement and public health emergencies; and
  + Championing access to and use of quality data through IOM and interagency platforms for coordination and implementation of humanitarian action, particularly in internal displacement contexts and to inform longer-term programming, transition and recovery processes.
  + Spearheading interagency efforts for responsible data collection and use to ensure protection of, as well as effective and ethical management of, migration data, including with respect to new sources of data;
  + Promoting interagency coordination on migration data-related terminology, collection and analysis methodologies, including in support of the implementation and monitoring of relevant international frameworks;
  + Further contributing to the UN-wide migration policy expertise to provide sound and evidence-based advice for good migration governance; and
  + Using strategic communications, including the Network’s, other UN system and IASC mechanisms and communication channels, to disseminate reliable evidence on migration and support informed and balanced public discourse.
* **IOM supports the objectives of the UN Migration Network’s data workstream**, playing a key role in migration-related global and regional knowledge management initiatives to improve the availability of migration data, as well as to mobilise, pool and share relevant migration data expertise.

# **Recommendations**

Theserecommendations are proposed to support the achievement of all three objectives.

* **Strengthen and consolidate IOM’s migration data systems** 
  + Maintain and further develop IOM’s data collection assets to ensure robust data collection, storage and management;[[5]](#footnote-5)
  + Ensure systematic application of data protection principles, strengthen data security, including cybersecurity, and promote responsible data management.
* **Mobilise the international community to address migration data gaps**
  + Pioneer new cooperative approaches to produce migration flow estimates by enhancing availability, comparability and sharing of relevant administrative data, producing and identifying new complementary sources of flow data and developing data integration methodologies;
  + Through the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC), produce estimates of the prevalence of trafficking and exploitation of migrants and establish a global measurement framework for estimating the prevalence of trafficking for forced labour; and
  + Support the development of approaches to measure the impacts of migration policy and programming in different contexts.
* **Further IOM’s role as a key provider of global IDP data**
  + In accordance with the Grand Bargain process, promote more effective inter-agency approaches to collection and analysis of IDP data for needs assessment purposes, and ensure integration of relevant datasets into the Displacement Tracking Matrix’ scope of work; and
  + Champion the use of data in multi-stakeholder disaster-reduction coordination platforms and wider disaster risk preparedness, reduction and response efforts, including to help anticipate factors that might trigger or affect the displacement of people.
* **Promote responsible migration data sharing, analysis and communication**
  + Undertake and communicate more policy-relevant analysis of migration data from different sources to contribute to a better understanding of different aspects of migration, including the drivers, types and impacts of migration, and its linkages with development, humanitarian and other related fields;
  + Further strengthen the Global Migration Data Portal as IOM’s key tool to use and contextualise migration data to communicate complex issues to the public, policymakers and others;
  + Further develop the World Migration Report (WMR) as IOM’s flagship publication for disseminating quality analysis of migration data and its use for policy and action; and
  + Use strategic communications, including the Network’s, other UN system and IASC mechanisms and communication channels, to disseminate reliable analysis and evidence on migration to support informed and balanced public discourse.
* **Mobilize efforts to deliver comprehensive capacity-development support on migration data** 
  + Support National Statistical Offices (NSOs), National Disaster Management authorities, line ministries, and other government actors to acquire skills, knowledge and expertise to collect, analyse and disseminate quality, timely, disaggregated and comparable migration data, in close cooperation with partners;
  + Promote adherence to international definitions and standards on migration data methodologies as well as building safeguards into migration data systems and processes to ensure data protection;
  + Facilitate the use of migration data to address country-specific needs, including by supporting relevant intra-governmental coordination mechanisms and development of Migration Profiles, as well as enabling states to use results of the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) assessments to appraise and improve their migration policies;
  + Leverage the capacity of state-led regional migration data analysis and research initiatives, for example migration observatories, to support capacity development efforts; and
  + Ensure cooperation with regional and inter-regional bodies working on data capacity development, for example regional organizations, Regional Consultative Processes on Migration and the new UN Regional Collaboration Platforms (UNRCPs), including through strategic secondments and staff exchanges.
* **Support the use of migration data in monitoring of and reporting on implementation of international frameworks relevant to migration,** in particular the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Migration, the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain
  + Assist states in the collection and analysis of data for monitoring progress towards the implementation of migration-related SDG targets;
  + Further strengthen joint efforts  [with UN DESA and OECD](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/sdg/index_10_7_2.asp) towards measuring indicator 10.7.2 and advancing methodologies to monitor target 8.7; and
  + Support efforts to develop common approaches to GCM follow-up and review and to ensure availability of relevant migration data, in particular through the UN Migration Network.
* **Pioneer exploration of new data sources and use of innovative methodologies**
  + Proactively contribute to international efforts to develop standards for the ethical use of big data and other new sources of data, and investigate how to harness its potential to develop insights into migration trends;
  + Explore data from diverse sources, including but not limited to big data, that can contribute to a better understanding of migration, including its drivers and impacts; and
  + Use future-focused methodologies to develop anticipatory programming and forward-looking policy advice.
* **Foster dialogue and cooperation on migration data with all relevant actors**
  + Support interstate cooperation on migration data through relevant regional and inter-regional bodies, for example regional organizations and Regional Consultative Processes on migration, to facilitate experience exchange, promote greater comparability of data and development of common approaches to data collection and analysis;
  + Further strengthen cooperative platforms and data hubs such as the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC), and support the development of and coordination between global and regional platforms and databases on migration;
  + Provide a regular global platform for a wide range of migration stakeholders to exchange ideas and experiences by further developing the International Forum for Migration Statistics (IFMS), organized with UN DESA and the OECD; and
  + Ensure systematic engagement with and contribute to the relevant expert bodies and interagency platforms on migration data, such as the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics and the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRIS), as well as with sector-specific groups with relevance to migration data and analysis such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement Working Group on Data and Knowledge (DKWG) and the IASC.
* **Strengthen use of migration data for programming and policy advice across sectors in IOM and the UN**
  + Ensure strong feedback loops between data and IOM’s programme design and development of policy advice;
  + Encourage consistent use of migration data to inform joint UN programming onmigration, humanitarian, development and other relevant sectors, including by contributing data to country- and regional-level assessments and other tools to inform interventions, such as Common Country Analysis (CCAs), Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP); and
  + Contribute to the UN Migration Network’s efforts to support GCM implementation by taking the lead on migration-relevant knowledge management across the UN, including through the Network, to strengthen migration data literacy across the system, including at national and regional levels.

# **Empowering IOM**

This section identifies areas where further strengthening is needed to ensure IOM’s ability to implement the MDS, based on identified organizational strengths and weaknesses. It includes broad proposals that would support the realisation of all strategic objectives and will be accompanied by an internal annex containing specific, more granular recommendations. These proposals address the broad areas of internal governance, capacity (staff and institutional), learning and technical infrastructure, as well as resourcing. Many of these recommendations are linked to outputs of the data Task Forces.

Priority areas identified in this section reflect wider organizational needs. In particular, they echo many of the key areas of institutional investment highlighted in the IOM Strategic Vision. Therefore, efforts towards addressing these needs will be taken forward as part of overall institutional strengthening, both contributing to and building on key organization-wide initiatives, notably the application of the Internal Governance Framework.

## Internal Governance

The importance of strengthening internal governance in IOM is highlighted in the IOM Strategic Vision. To ensure IOM is well placed to deliver on its data-related aspirations and realize its potential in this area, there is a need to strengthen migration data governance in IOM. This will help address fragmentation resulting from decentralization and projectization, as well as identify and reflect new roles stemming from IOM’s new responsibilities within the UN system. It presents a forward-looking perspective and identifies functions that are needed to implement the recommendations contained in this document. This should be done in the context of the application of the IOM Migration Data Governance Policy and as part of and in concert with wider organizational efforts carried out in the framework of the IGF.

In particular, this includes recommendations to:

* Clarify, streamline and consolidate, where appropriate, data-related functions and roles across the Organization, as well as lines of accountability and reporting across different units and geographies with these functions in line with the IOM Migration Data Governance Policy;
* Enhance cross-cutting migration data review, quality assurance and analysis functions in IOM at the global and regional levels. This includes:
  + Strengthening global-level functions for migration data review, quality assurance and analysis, and clarifying lines of accountability and responsibility in relation to other migration data-related functions of the Organization (at regional and country levels, as well as within different thematic pillars);
  + Updating the terms of reference of and format of the Data Steering Group to support implementation of a programme of work;
  + Standardizing and strengthening Regional Offices’ data-related scopes of work and functions to deal with, inter alia: data quality control/data harmonization; data analysis; data capacity-building for external stakeholders and IOM staff; data protection; liaison with national statistical offices in the region; support to the production of Migration Profiles; liaison with regional UN bodies with respect to data, including tracking progress on the SDGs and GCM implementation.
* Elaborating common guidelines/principles for data collection and storage, reflecting relevant international standards and applicable IOM policies; and
* Using robust review mechanisms for migration data shared externally, including to ensure high standards of data protection and other principles of responsible data management, and consistently and clearly communicating the context and scope of the data presented.

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## Capacity

The above recommendations, as well as recommended internal actions to support the overall MDS implementation, need to be underpinned by appropriate institutional and staff capacity within the Organization. IOM has extensive migration data expertise, much of it sectoral and housed in different parts of the Organization. There is a need to continuously nurture and support further development of this expertise and promote cross-fertilization and exchange across the different thematic areas and units. It is also important to address existing capacity needs and those related to the identified strategic priorities. This includes boosting IOM data analysis capacity as well as skills and expertise for data innovation. While strengthening data-related capacity is needed across IOM, it is important to do so in the right places, ensuring that functions and responsibilities are matched with adequate skills and expertise.

In particular, this includes recommendations to:

* Strengthen institutional capacity for data review, quality assurance and analysis at the global and regional levels in line with the assigned functions and responsibilities, as specified in the IGF, including by filling in expertise and skill gaps;
* Review relevant unit and staff position TORs to ensure inclusion of corresponding data competencies (as part of the IGF process);
* Develop staff training focused on data analysis and the ability to leverage operational data to improve programming and policy advice, including aspects related to quantitative analysis and data innovation;
* Increase data literacy among a wide strata of IOM staff;
* Enhance the ability of IOM staff to deliver data capacity development trainings to governments, UN partners, media and other stakeholders;

## Learning and innovation

Strengthening systematic and seamless linkages between data and programmes, as well as policy advice, requires investing in a culture of sharing, learning and innovation. There is a need to facilitate internal exchange and expand the space to reflect on project experiences, both positive and negative. Gathering and managing migration data knowledge within the Organization is an important element of this, as are the avenues for communication and exchange among relevant staff. IOM’s internal efforts in this area need to be linked with relevant initiatives of the UN Network and the wider UN system.

In particular, this includes recommendations to:

* Reinforce systematic use of relevant migration data and analysis in project development and formulation of policy advice, including through review and updating of relevant internal guidance materials;
* Facilitate staff access to migration data and analysis relevant to project proposals and policy;
* Promote synergies among different migration data collection mechanisms in the Organization;
* Support knowledge management initiatives related to migration data within IOM, including relevant communities of practice.

## Technical Infrastructure

IOM needs to ensure its technical infrastructure (tools and processes) supports coherent migration data collection, storage, analysis and use, as well as the use of new technologies and sources of data recommended in this document. To this end, there is a need to ensure that the ongoing process of ICT infrastructure development and update incorporates MDS requirements.

In particular, this includes recommendations to:

* Identify technical requirements associated with MDS recommendations and ensure their inclusion in IOM’s ICT update, including regional and country office infrastructure improvements and security capacities;
* Develop data and business intelligence capability, including a data warehouse.

## Sustainable Resourcing

There is a need for much more predictable funding to support the implementation of the MDS and overall for IOM to bring coherence, continuity and a forward-looking approach to its migration data activities. Resources will be needed to strengthen IOM institutionally and to reinforce essential systemic functions related to migration data, as outlined in this section on “Empowering IOM”. There will also be a need for predictable funding to provide systematic institutional support to major IOM initiatives on migration data, including more recent, innovative undertakings, and to take forward the strategic recommendations more generally.

In an ever-changing migration data landscape and in view of the growing demand for data-related activities from Member States, investment is needed to ensure that IOM remains flexible, responsive and ahead of the curve when it comes to migration data.

1. This includes personal data, that is, information that can be used to identify a person. Specific provisions apply to that area of data. See IOM’s glossary [here](https://www.iom.int/glossary-migration-2019) which contains definitions for commonly used terms in migration. Note also that there are various [statistical definitions](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/BG-4a-Migration-Handbook-E.pdf) relating to migration, for example from the United Nations Statistical Commission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. IOM’s Constitution and numerous Council documents stipulate that a rights-based approach and the protection of the rights of migrants are central to IOM’s work. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For an overview of the migration data IOM collects and makes available, please see <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/iom-data-overview> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Currently, only 45 countries submit data on migrant flows to the United Nations, while the production of annually updated, comparable datasets on migratory movements is limited to Member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. IOM collects migration data on a vast array of issues, much of it as part of its programmes and operations in [↑](#footnote-ref-5)