

# IOM MIGRATION DATA STRATEGY

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Informing Policy and Action on Migration,  
Mobility and Displacement 2020 | 2025



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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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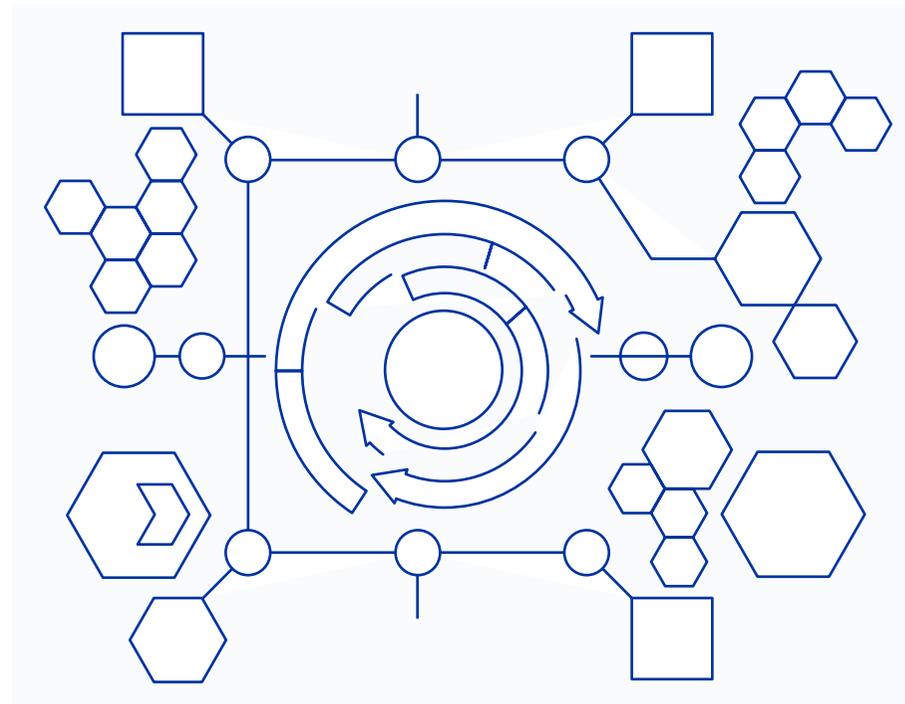
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data are the lifeblood of decision-making. The importance of quality, accessible, disaggregated, reliable and timely data to inform policies, action and public opinion is well recognized and highlighted in multiple international frameworks. Times of crisis bring an acute awareness of the essential need for such data while starkly revealing gaps and deficiencies in existing data systems. It is necessary to capitalize on this awareness, build on experiences and leverage new technologies to strengthen the evidence base that policymakers, practitioners and the public need to understand and navigate the complex and fast-changing environment. Doing this will help to: anticipate changes and reduce risks; prepare, protect and respond in a timely and effective manner; and inform strategies and long-term planning to support good governance and help achieve a safer, more sustainable and more equitable future.

As a key data stakeholder in its own right and as the coordinator and secretariat of the United Nations Network on Migration, IOM is in a unique position to help reach these goals with respect to data on the movement of people. **To frame, focus and further amplify its existing strong engagement on data, IOM has developed a comprehensive strategy: the Migration Data Strategy (MDS).** This MDS is part of broader organizational strategic planning and is aligned with the data strategy of the Secretary-General, which is designed to foster the individual and collective strengths of United Nations system entities.

As in all IOM undertakings, the MDS and its implementation are guided by the IOM Constitution, the Charter of the United Nations and other international agreements and frameworks to which the Organization subscribes. This includes commitments to data protection, and to ethical



and responsible approaches to data throughout their life cycle. Further, as migration is a cross-cutting and transboundary issue, partnerships across constituencies and governance sectors are at the heart of IOM work on data.

Within its scope, the MDS covers all data that reflect the rich complexity characterizing movement of people today. It maps out a path for IOM to reach the goal of improving the evidence base for good migration governance in support of sustainable development, effective humanitarian action and peaceful societies, and to support implementation, monitoring and reporting on relevant international frameworks.

The MDS addresses two interconnected aspects of this goal. On the one hand, IOM has an important role in mobilizing the international community and leading specific initiatives to build a strong evidence base on migration and promote its systematic use to guide policy and action. And, on the other hand, the ability of IOM to effectively serve migrants and Member States and to support fellow United Nations agencies and other partners depends on its access to reliable data and the capacity to analyse and use such data to inform its work. These are captured in the three strategic objectives identified to guide IOM engagement on data, namely to:

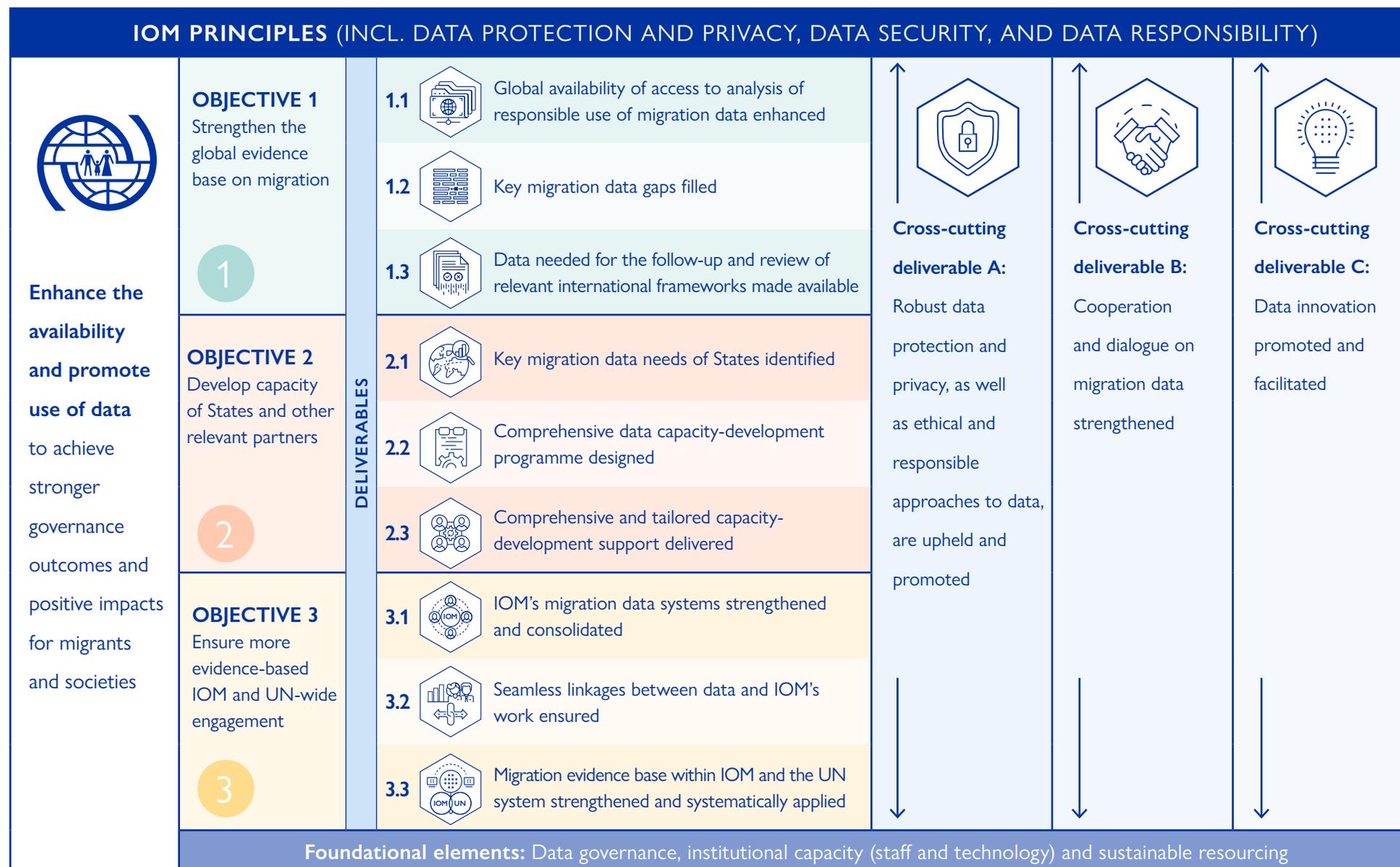
1. Strengthen the global evidence base on migration;
2. Develop capacity of States and other relevant partners to enhance the national, regional and global migration evidence base;
3. Ensure more evidence-based IOM- and United Nations system-wide programming, operations, policy advice and communications.

While each has a specific focus, the three objectives complement each other; taken together, they offer a vision for IOM migration data-related activities. This MDS sets out several deliverables for each objective, as well as deliverables that cut across the three objectives, further tying them together and supporting coherence of action. In addition, an indicative list of interventions is proposed, mapping out steps that will support implementation of the strategy. To the extent possible, these interventions build on existing partnerships and work IOM has already undertaken.

At the same time, IOM needs to be strengthened further if it is to be able to pursue these interventions and realize the MDS objectives. Internal governance, staff and institutional capacity, technical infrastructure and sustainable resourcing are key areas that require attention. This MDS proposes several specific steps to achieve improvement in each area.

These priority areas reflect wider organizational needs and echo many of the key areas of required institutional investment highlighted in the IOM Strategic Vision. It is foreseen that efforts to address them will need to be taken forward as part of overall institutional strengthening, thus contributing to and building on key Organization-wide initiatives, such as the Internal Governance Framework and IOM budget reform.

# IOM MIGRATION DATA STRATEGY – AN OVERVIEW

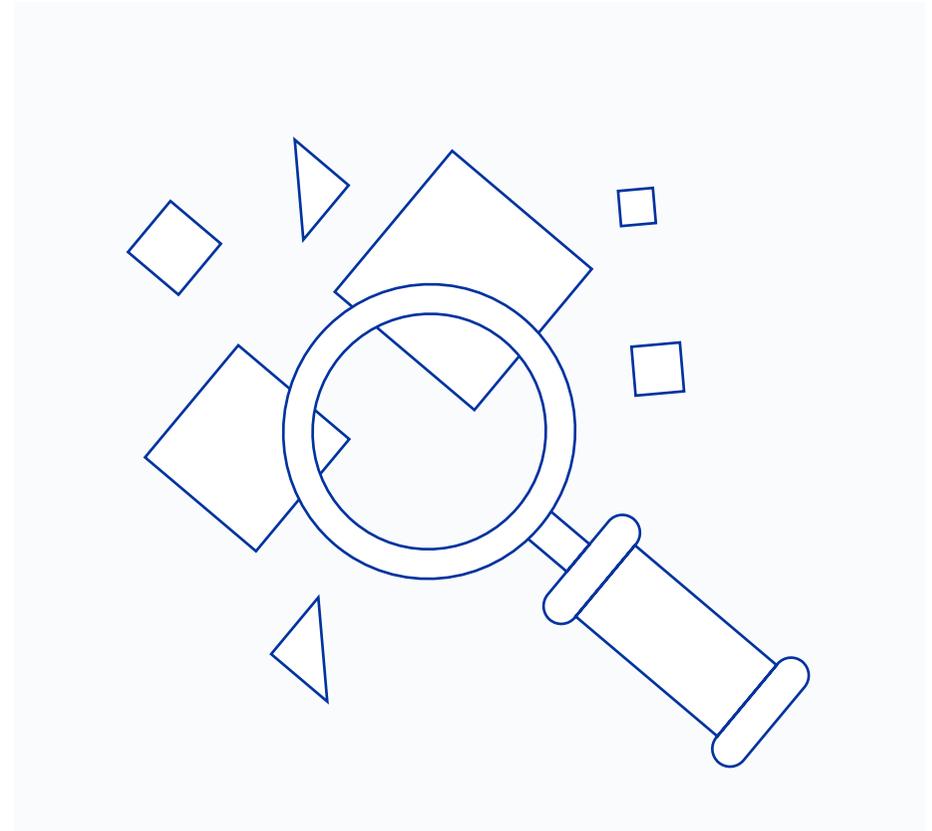


# INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex phenomenon – it is the focus of significant political and media attention, and is all too frequently misunderstood or misinterpreted. The international community is in need of a reliable and nuanced evidence base that reflects the rich complexity and fast-paced dynamics of the movement of people and which informs policies, practices and public opinion on migration, as well as in development, humanitarian and other related fields.

States have consistently identified availability of timely, accessible, reliable, disaggregated and comparable data as being 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, 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 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including for “effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of commitments over time.”<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the Transforming our World: 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 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 10.7, which calls for States to cooperate internationally to: “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through



the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.” Further, human mobility is a theme that cuts across the 2030 Agenda, and the motto to “leave no one behind” is a clear call for sustainable development to be inclusive, including for migrants and other mobile populations. 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.<sup>2</sup>

1 United Nations, [Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), adopted on 19 December 2018 (A/RES/73/195).

2 United Nations, [Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted on 25 September 2015 (A/RES/70/1).

Data also feature 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 2015–2030.

The key importance of data and their quality analysis for decision-making is revealed clearly in crisis situations. Crises also tend to highlight gaps in the available evidence base and the need to innovate and develop existing data systems.

As the leading intergovernmental organization in migration, and given its place within the United Nations system, the onus is on IOM to mobilize the international community to build a stronger evidence base on migration and promote its systematic use to guide policy and action. Furthermore, IOM and the wider United Nations system are themselves in need of high-quality data for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their programmes, operations and policy advice. The ability of IOM to effectively serve migrants and Member States and to support its fellow United Nations agencies and other partners depends on its access to reliable migration data and the ability to analyse and use such data to inform its work.

Consequently, the IOM Director General has identified migration data as one of the priority issues for IOM and has committed to strengthening the Organization's engagement in this area, including through its role as coordinator and secretariat of the United Nations Network on Migration<sup>3</sup> and through strategic partnerships.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/>.

This comprehensive IOM strategy on migration data, the Migration Data Strategy (MDS) – developed as part of broader organizational strategic planning, intends to give a clear focus and purpose to IOM engagement with respect to migration data.

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# THE MIGRATION DATA STRATEGY IN THE INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

MIGRATION DATA  
STATE OF PLAY

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO  
MIGRATION DATA

EMPOWERING IOM



# THE MIGRATION DATA STRATEGY IN THE INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

This MDS comes at a key time for IOM, on the back of a broad institutional thrust towards a more planned and purposeful approach to fulfilment of IOM responsibilities towards Member States, migrants and the international community as part of the United Nations system, including through its role within the United Nations Network on Migration. Development of the MDS is in synchronization with the strategic impetus of the United Nations system. A United Nations data strategy was recently developed to foster the individual and collective strength of United Nations system entities in this area.<sup>4</sup>

## SCOPE

The MDS seeks to support the implementation of relevant international frameworks and their follow-up and review, including the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain, as well as frameworks relevant to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for coordination of humanitarian response. The MDS therefore aims to cover within its scope all data that reflect the rich complexity characterizing the movement of people today.

For the purposes of this document, “migration data” refers to all types of data that support the development of comprehensive, coherent and

forward-looking migration policies and programming, as well as those that contribute to informed public discourse on migration. This includes data on different forms of population movement, whether short or long term, forced or voluntary and cross-border or internal, as well as data concerning characteristics of movement and those on the move, and the reasons for and impacts of migration.<sup>5</sup> This scope is without prejudice to the mandates of other United Nations system entities and other relevant stakeholders, and takes into account their data engagement. The MDS also seeks to cover the full data life cycle, including collection, storage, analysis and use for policy advice, programme planning, design and implementation, and research and dissemination.

## PRINCIPLES

IOM engagement on migration data is guided by the IOM Constitution,<sup>6</sup> the Charter of the United Nations and other international agreements and frameworks to which the Organization subscribes. This includes the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action,<sup>7</sup> which places protection at the centre of humanitarian action and has specific provisions to guide data and information collection, sharing and management.

Respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants is central to all IOM work, including that on data. Therefore, ensuring individual privacy

4 United Nations, *Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere: With Insight, Impact and Integrity* (New York, 2020).

5 This also includes personal data, that is, information that can be used to identify a person. Specific provisions apply to this type of data. See the *Glossary on Migration* (IOM, Geneva, 2019), which contains definitions for commonly used terms in migration. Note also that there are various statistical definitions in the draft *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses* (United Nations, New York, 2017) relating to migration.

6 The IOM *Constitution and Basic Texts* (IOM, Geneva, 2017) and numerous Council documents stipulate that a rights-based approach and the protection of the rights of migrants are central to IOM work.

7 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Policy: Protection in Humanitarian Action* (2016).

and protection from harm expressed in commitments to data protection, and to ethical and responsible approaches to data throughout the life cycle, including data security, are key tenets of the MDS. Another key principle underpinning IOM work of direct relevance to the MDS is recognition of and respect for the agency of migrants and other IOM beneficiaries. Furthermore, IOM commitment to gender equality, inclusion and respect for diversity, including age, sex, gender identity, race, education, disability and more,<sup>8</sup> guides the MDS to ensure IOM work with data supports these principles and is free of bias.

The MDS is also guided by and seeks to further embed the IOM Migration Data Governance Policy<sup>9</sup> and the IOM Data Protection Principles,<sup>10</sup> as well as other relevant internal guidance such as the IOM Principles for Humanitarian Action<sup>11</sup> and its rights-based approach to programming, to ensure principled and responsible data management within IOM.

## THE IOM STRATEGIC VISION AND MIGRATION DATA STRATEGY

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”.<sup>12</sup> The MDS seeks to meet these challenges and to support the priorities identified in the Strategic Vision across its three pillars of resilience, mobility and governance.

The resilience pillar upholds IOM commitment to strengthening the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, in particular the link between humanitarian action and migration governance. Data are an essential tool in this context. They are needed for better understanding of: the drivers of displacement, such as climate change, instability and poverty; the populations who are displaced or at risk of displacement; and the needs for assistance to populations, as well as for effective responses to their situations. Data also underpin early warning, preparedness and disaster risk reduction, as highlighted in several international instruments.<sup>13</sup>

Data and analysis are equally relevant to the mobility pillar, which highlights the need for greater agility in today’s fast-paced environment. They support the development of policies and action to enable safe, regular and orderly migration against a background of changing migratory dynamics. As the movements of people within and among countries continue to grow and diversify, mapping them requires more accurate, timely and comprehensive data. Equally, there is a need for data analysis that reflects the increasing complexity to inform the development of comprehensive and coherent

8 The IOM deep commitment to gender equality, inclusion and respect for diversity underpins its varied engagement, as well as the management of its workforce. IOM has subscribed to and is an active participant in a range of relevant initiatives, including the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the *System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity*. IOM has endorsed the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Settings, and is an active member of the IASC Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

9 IOM, *Migration Governance Policy* (Instruction IN/253) (Geneva, 2017).

10 IOM, Data protection principles. In: *IOM Data Protection Manual*, Part I (Geneva, 2010).

11 IOM, *IOM’s Humanitarian Policy – Principles for Humanitarian Action* (C/106/CRP/20) (Geneva, 2015).

12 IOM, *IOM Strategic Vision: 2019–2023: Setting a Course for IOM* (C/110/INF/1) (Geneva, 2019).

13 For example, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 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.

migration policies, and to address misconceptions about migration. Data analysis needs to be unbiased, gender sensitive and reflect the diversity of people on the move, including in terms of age, sex, gender identity, disability, race, education and more, as appropriate, while placing these characteristics in the relevant social, economic and cultural context.

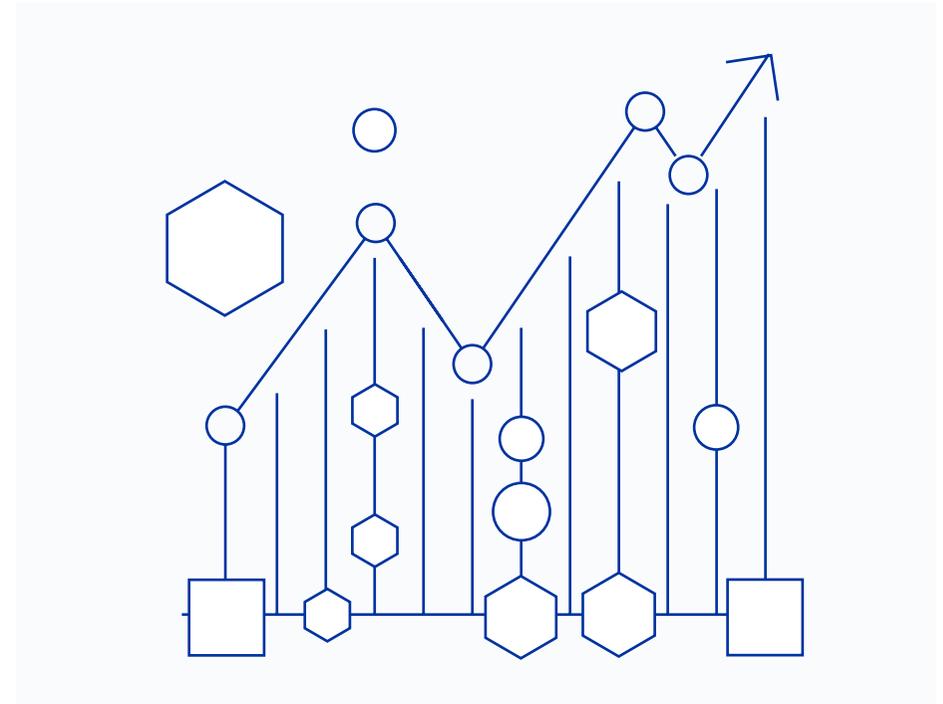
The governance pillar highlights the broader need for national and intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms covering all aspects of migration to enable coordinated action among actors at the national, regional and global levels, particularly when such action flows out of commitments such as the 2030 Agenda or the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Here also, data are essential prerequisites 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 MIGRATION DATA STRATEGY AND OTHER KEY IOM FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES

The importance of credible data for the development of evidence-based policies and good migration governance is highlighted in the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF)<sup>14</sup> and underscored in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as well as in the capacity-building mechanism managed by the United Nations Network on Migration.

In addition to consistency with the logic of the MiGOF, the MDS is also consistent with the IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework<sup>15</sup> and IOM's Humanitarian Policy. Further, the MDS is directly relevant to the

Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development,<sup>16</sup> which guides the IOM 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 the IOM Internal Governance Framework (IGF),<sup>17</sup> 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.



14 IOM, *Migration Governance Framework* (C/106/40) (Geneva, 2015).

15 IOM, *IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework* (MC/2355) (Geneva, 2012).

16 IOM, *IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development* (Geneva, 2020).

17 IOM, *Update on the Application of the Internal Governance Framework*, Annex I (S/25/INF/1) (Geneva, 2019).

THE MIGRATION  
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## MIGRATION DATA – STATE OF PLAY

States, the United Nations and the international community have made many efforts over the years to enhance the migration evidence base. Many countries now 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. Some regions have made great advances in harmonizing and sharing migration data, often with the support of regional United Nations commissions and regional organizations. Eurostat collects and collates statistical information on third-country nationals (non-European Union citizens, including stateless persons) entering, residing and working in the European Union member States or applying for international protection. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publishes details of mobility patterns experienced by or affecting its member States. At the global level, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) produces regular official estimates of the global international 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 remittance database, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refugee statistics and the International Labour Organization labour migration statistics. IOM actively contributes to these efforts by collecting and sharing data on migration matters, such as internal displacement, human trafficking, missing migrants, migrant health, migration governance and many more.<sup>18</sup> IOM also champions collaboration and leads efforts to make migration data from different sources available and their analysis easily accessible.



### MIGRATION DATA LANDSCAPE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite these efforts, data on the movement of people are still incomplete and fragmented. First, there are gaps with respect to basic migration statistics. For example, while data on international migrant stocks exist, data on international migration flows are more patchy.<sup>19</sup>

Second, 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 human trafficking and migrant smuggling, particularly challenging. Obtaining migration data in situations of conflict and instability is also fraught with difficulty.

<sup>18</sup> For an overview of the migration data IOM collects and makes available, see the [IOM data overview](#).

<sup>19</sup> Currently, only 45 countries submit data on migrant flows to the United Nations, while the production of annually updated, comparable data sets on migratory movements is limited to member States of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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

Next, there is a 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. Availability of timely data is especially critical when fast changes occur and urgent action is required, for example in crisis situations.

Finally, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda and several other key international frameworks entail follow-up and review requirements for Member States, which will depend on some form of reporting. 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), which may not be well equipped to deal with migration data. There are similar challenges around tracking the progress of implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and other migration-relevant agreements.

There are several 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 systematic sharing of data collected by different parts of governments is a common issue.

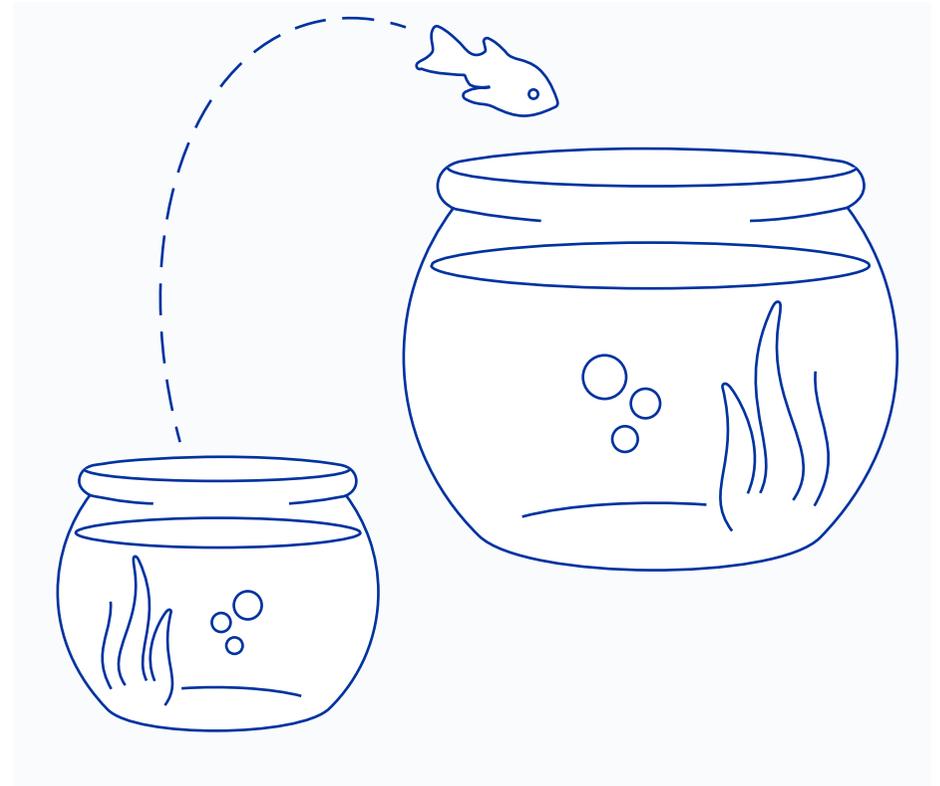
Lack of comparability and interoperability of migration data collected by different actors is another major challenge. There continue to be differences, and often inconsistencies, with respect to key migration and mobility-related terminology and definitions. This, together with differing national priorities 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 their data on the movement of people, and migrant privacy considerations are critical.

**Finally, it is important to keep in mind that evidence is more than data and that it includes understanding and clear communication of what is behind the numbers. Quality analysis of data, be it at the national, regional or global level, is therefore critical, but also fraught with challenges.** There are methodological questions such as how to use the data produced by different types of actors (e.g. governmental and non-governmental) and the 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 also to improve the status quo on migration data: one on the political front 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 data on the movement of people. The volume and nature of digital information available are 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 are an important complement to traditional data sources, and more can be done to make systematic use of them. 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 can provide timely information. Yet, 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); and lack of standards and frameworks to govern the use of new data sources. The United Nations system has recognized the need for and initiated work on guidelines for the use of big data and other new data sources, as well as related use of artificial intelligence.

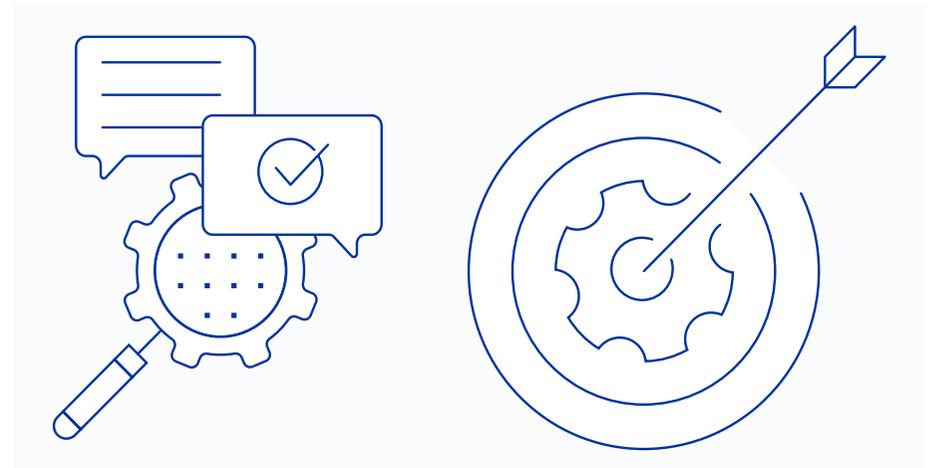


## IOM AND MIGRATION DATA

IOM engagement on migration data is strong, as the Organization collects, reports, analyses and uses data for a range of purposes.<sup>20</sup> Over the years, much effort has gone into the deepening of IOM engagement on migration data, to inform programme design and delivery, and also to contribute to the migration evidence base. IOM collects and/or manages data across multiple areas and is well placed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the movement of people, providing insights that complement traditional statistical data.

IOM has developed a data governance policy and works continuously to improve its data systems and applications. It has pioneered efforts to ensure data protection within the United Nations system, and was the first organization to establish institutional guidance for protection of personal data – the IOM Data Protection Principles. As a member of the United Nations Privacy Policy Group, IOM actively contributed to the development of the United Nations Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles.<sup>21</sup> It is also an observer to the Global Privacy Assembly, the international forum for privacy and data protection authorities from around the world.

The IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre in Berlin undertakes a range of initiatives with the aim of enhancing migration data and analysis and promoting their effective use. This includes the global Migration Data



Portal,<sup>22</sup> which compiles quality data on all aspects of migration. It facilitates access to and use of different migration data and communicates complex migration issues to the public, policymakers and others. IOM has also established regional data platforms to support evidence-based engagement on migration at the regional level.

The Organization commits to providing reliable data that reflect the complexity and diversity of human mobility and which are rigorous and accessible. This is further realized through the IOM flagship publication, the *World Migration Report*, which plays a key role in disseminating quality analysis of migration data and their use for policy and action, and helps to debunk misinformation.<sup>23</sup>

20 IOM collects data on a vast array of issues, much of it as part of its programmes and operations. Some of this information is publicly available, while other data are collected for internal use only. In all cases, data collection and management adhere to the IOM Migration Data Governance Policy. In cases where IOM processes beneficiaries' personal data, this is done in full respect of the IOM Data Protection Principles. In line with these principles, only anonymized data may be made publicly available. In no case would personal data be made publicly available if the beneficiary has not consented to it.

21 United Nations System, *Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles*, adopted by the UN High-Level Committee on Management at its 36th Meeting on 11 October 2018.

22 [https://migrationdataportal.org/?t=2019&i=stock\\_abs\\_](https://migrationdataportal.org/?t=2019&i=stock_abs_)

23 IOM, *World Migration Report 2020* (Geneva, 2019).

IOM actively cooperates with and facilitates cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders on data collection, analysis and research at global, regional and country levels. Together with UN DESA and OECD, IOM has established a global platform for regular dialogue and exchange among diverse stakeholders with the aim of improving migration statistics – the International Forum for Migration Statistics,<sup>24</sup> which is held biennially. There are also ongoing efforts to mobilize migration data expertise and promote dialogue at the regional level.

IOM work on data 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. IOM is actively engaged in and contributes to the collection and analysis of data for humanitarian action through its Displacement Tracking Matrix,<sup>25</sup> which is the major IOM primary dedicated data-collection mechanism. It tracks displacement and related population needs, and provides critical information to decision makers and responders in order to enhance the international community's understanding of mobility dynamics and undertake better informed response strategies. This mechanism also collects data for longer-term programming, informing transition and recovery processes in contexts of displacement.<sup>26</sup>

Another notable example of an IOM data initiative with partnerships at its core is the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC),<sup>27</sup> which is the first global inter-agency data hub on human trafficking. It presents harmonized data contributed by organizations from around the world, including data on human trafficking collected by IOM through its programmes. CTDC uses modern technology to break down information-sharing barriers and equip the counter-trafficking community with up-to-date reliable data on human trafficking.

IOM has been increasingly leveraging its operational data to inform its own and other stakeholders' interventions to uphold the human rights of mobile populations, promote well-being of migrants and societies, and support well-managed migration. CTDC illustrates the efforts IOM has been making over the years to strengthen the analysis of its operational data, link them with other relevant available data whenever possible and make this information accessible, in full respect of data protection and privacy considerations. Migration health is another area in which IOM has a large amount of data. Many of these data are collected through migrant health assessments,<sup>28</sup> which IOM conducts around the world. Although the primary data cannot be shared externally, IOM regularly publishes results of findings based on analysis of these data. This analysis provides insights into the health status of assessed populations and, more broadly, the linkages between health and mobility, which help to inform policies and practice and, ultimately, contribute to improved health and well-being of

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24 [www.iom.int/ifms/](http://www.iom.int/ifms/).

25 <https://dtm.iom.int/>.

26 In addition, IOM is using the Displacement Tracking Matrix to collect data on mobility at the country, regional and global levels, as well as, increasingly, to collect data on a range of themes, including human trafficking and smuggling, environmental migration, rapid assessment of public health risk of disease outbreaks, labour migration and border management.

27 [www.ctdatacollaborative.org/](http://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/).

28 Migrant health assessments consist of a medical examination to assess a migrant's health status and to provide medical clearance for work or residency based on conditions defined by the destination country and/or employer.

people and communities affected by migration. The IOM Migration Health Research Portal<sup>29</sup> serves as a repository for these analytical materials and as a platform for connecting research experts working on migration health.

IOM also helps to address lack of data on other aspects of migration. For example, through its Missing Migrants Project,<sup>30</sup> IOM tracks information on migrants who have died or gone missing during international migration. The data collected through this project are used to inform SDG indicator 10.7.3<sup>31</sup> on migrant deaths and disappearances. Ensuring better recording of numbers of deaths and disappearances of people on the move is key to informing a holistic response to reduce numbers of migrant deaths.

Close cooperation with States is at the heart of IOM work on data, including through provision of technical assistance and capacity-development support. The Organization has been stepping up such support (usually delivered in partnership with other United Nations agencies, regional organizations or other relevant bodies) to governments to collect, manage and disseminate data on migration, thereby providing a basis for sound policymaking and decision-making. Support provided by IOM to governments and other

relevant stakeholders to develop and update country and regional migration profiles<sup>32</sup> is part of this effort. IOM also offers a range of specific tools that States can use to improve migration data collection and management. These include the Migration Information and Data Analysis System,<sup>33</sup> which is a high-quality border management information system developed by IOM for States to collect, process and record information for identification of travellers, data collection and analysis.<sup>34</sup> Another notable example is the Migration Governance Indicators.<sup>35</sup> This is a needs-assessment tool that helps States identify the strengths and weaknesses of their migration policies and contributes to better understanding of national and local migration governance worldwide. It can also be used to inform the creation of a baseline to track and report progress towards achieving SDG indicator 10.7.2,<sup>36</sup> for which IOM serves as a co-custodian with UN DESA, as well as for other migration-related SDG targets and indicators.

These achievements would not have been possible in the absence of several distinct comparative advantages. These include: IOM field presence and its relationship of trust with Member States; IOM deep understanding of migration globally and its technical expertise in this field;<sup>37</sup> and IOM

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29 <https://migrationhealthresearch.iom.int/>.

30 <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>.

31 "Number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination" ([https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review\\_Eng.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review_Eng.pdf)).

32 A migration profile is an analysis of available accurate and disaggregated data on some or all migration-relevant aspects of a country's national context, prepared in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, which can be used to enhance policy coherence, evidence-based policymaking on migration and the mainstreaming of migration into development plans.

33 IOM, *MIDAS, Migration Information and Data Analysis System, A Comprehensive and Affordable Border Management Information System* (Geneva).

34 All Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) activities are designed as partnerships with States to identify needs, determine priority areas, and shape and deliver capacity-building interventions. States have full and exclusive ownership of any data recorded by MIDAS. IOM does not have access or rights to access the data.

35 <https://gmdac.iom.int/migration-governance-indicators>

36 "Number of countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people" ([www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/technical/Policy%20Brief\\_10.7.2.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/technical/Policy%20Brief_10.7.2.pdf)).

37 IOM understanding of migration relates to operations, programmes, policy, research and data analysis carried out around the world. There is no other organization that has demonstrated capacity in all these areas.

direct access to and communication with a wide range of beneficiaries and its mandate within the United Nations system and, more specifically, its role within the United Nations Network on Migration.

However, these undeniable strengths are 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 data-related engagement (e.g. operational use, research and analysis, and 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 United Nations Network on Migration, 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 on Migration also presents an opportunity for greater collaboration and coherence within the United Nations system on migration data and for making the most of technological advances and innovations.

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

THE MIGRATION  
DATA STRATEGY IN  
THE INSTITUTIONAL  
LANDSCAPE

MIGRATION DATA  
STATE OF PLAY

———— STRATEGIC APPROACH TO  
MIGRATION DATA

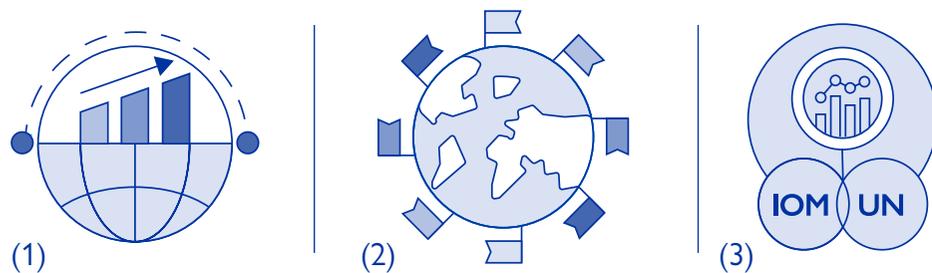
EMPOWERING IOM



## STRATEGIC APPROACH TO MIGRATION DATA

An IOM goal is to enhance the availability of and promote use of data to achieve stronger governance outcomes and positive impacts for migrants and societies. As migration cuts across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus and is relevant to multiple policy domains, this goal encompasses engagement across these pillars. Migration is also a transboundary issue and needs to be addressed at multiple levels – local, national, regional and international. Therefore, IOM pursues its goal by engaging across sectors and at multiple governance levels. The whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, as well as partnerships, are and will continue to be at the heart of IOM work on data. This includes promoting bilateral, regional and international cooperation among States, multi-stakeholder partnerships with the United Nations and other organizations, and non-State actors, including migrants and migrant groups, civil society, the private sector and academia.

Three strategic objectives are identified for IOM to guide its engagement on data towards the overall goal: (1) strengthen the global evidence base on migration; (2) develop capacity of States and other relevant partners to enhance the national, regional and global migration evidence base; and (3) ensure more evidence-based IOM- and United Nations system-wide programming, operations, policy advice and communications.



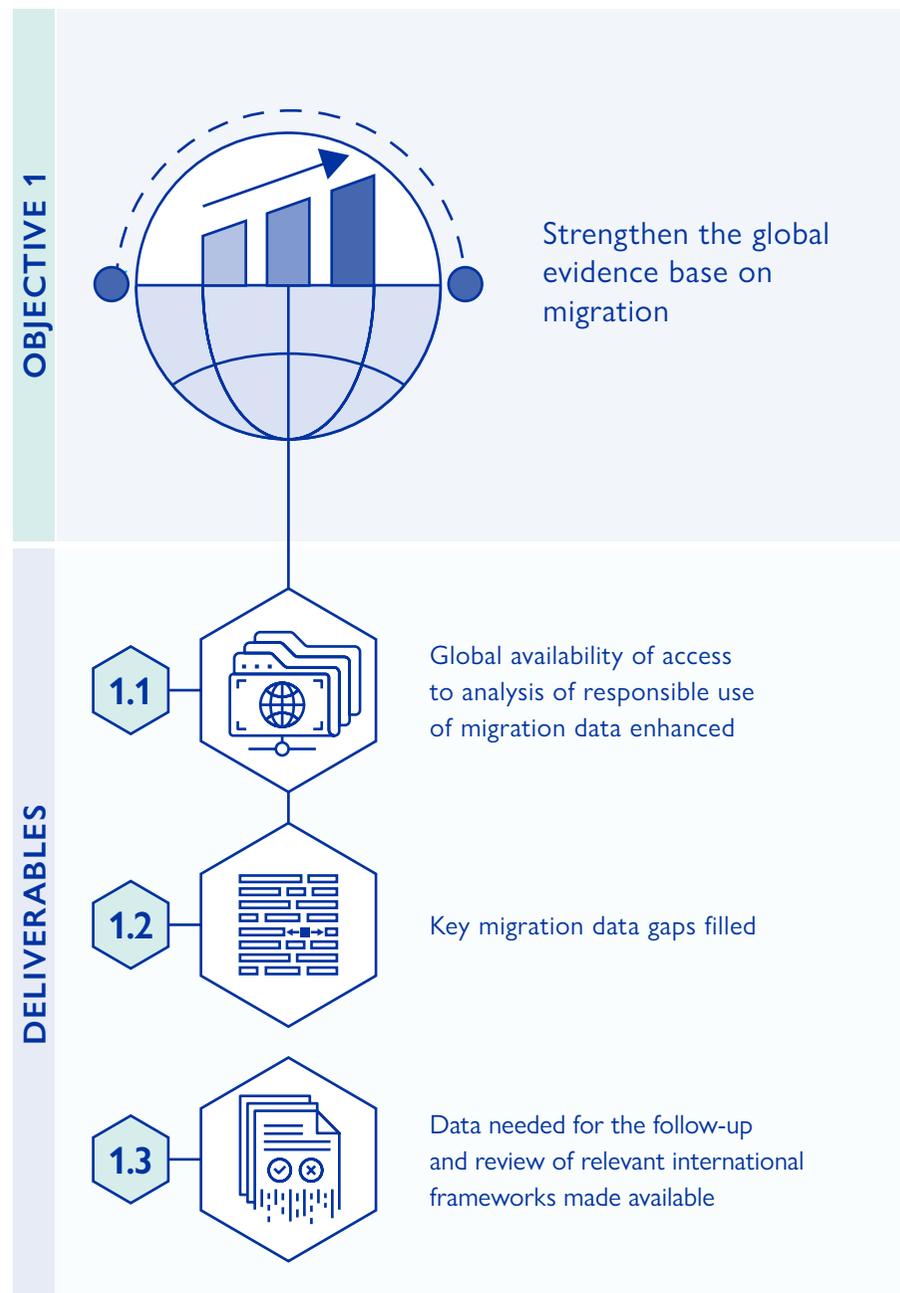
The first two objectives focus on the support IOM can provide to the international community. The third objective is focused on improving the way IOM and the rest of the United Nations system use migration data for policy, programmatic and operational excellence. While each has a specific focus, the three objectives complement each other, and, taken together, offer a vision for IOM migration data-related activities.

For each strategic objective, several deliverables and action-oriented components have been identified, mapping out specific lines of action that will lead to realization of the objective. Three of the deliverables cut across all three strategic objectives.

The proposed list of interventions is indicative rather than exhaustive, and implementation is subject to resource availability. The list draws, as much as possible, on ongoing initiatives, existing tools and partnerships to ensure that, in implementing the MDS, IOM builds on the work that has already been done and maximizes the value of its existing data assets.

## OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen the global evidence base on migration

IOM will seek to effectively leverage its role as a key contributor in the international community's efforts to broaden and strengthen the evidence base on the movement of people at the global level. This will be done 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 Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain, as well as frameworks relevant to the IASC. IOM will pursue this objective by increasing the availability of and access to migration data and its quality gender and diversity-sensitive analysis, helping address 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 will be undertaken, where relevant, in the context of the United Nations Network on Migration and in concert with wider data-related United Nations efforts, and other inter-agency efforts, including in the humanitarian field.



## Key deliverables and interventions



**1.1 IOM will actively support global-level efforts to increase the availability of, access to, analysis of and responsible use of migration data** for evidence-based policy formulation and implementation, programming and operational response, and balanced public discourse on migration.

- Promote integration of data from different sectors to enhance availability of and access to robust 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.
- Promote coordination on migration data-related terminology, collection and analysis methodologies, including to achieve greater data interoperability.
- Facilitate effective and responsible sharing of migration data among governments and other stakeholders, including by supporting the development and application of relevant tools, standards and safeguards in accordance with international law.
- Facilitate quality analysis and strategic communication of migration data from different sources in order to contribute to a better understanding of and an informed gender and diversity-sensitive discourse on the nature, drivers and impacts of the movement of people, as well as linkages with development, humanitarian and other related fields. This should include clear communication regarding the relevance, quality

and limitations of various data used in analysis. In addition to IOM tools and initiatives, this can be achieved by drawing on and using, where relevant, the United Nations Network on Migration and other United Nations and IASC mechanisms and communication channels.



**1.2 IOM will mobilize the international community to fill migration data gaps** to address existing and emerging needs, including to ensure availability of more timely and robust data to support effective migration management, address drivers of irregular and unsafe migration, ensure

protection of the human rights of people on the move, help reduce and address vulnerabilities linked to the movement of people, inform humanitarian and development assistance, and promote positive impacts of migration.

The following interventions will support this deliverable:

- Leverage the IOM role as a key provider of global internally displaced person (IDP) data and statistics to promote, in accordance with the Grand Bargain process and in support of the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics,<sup>38</sup> coordination with States, among agencies and with other relevant stakeholders for more effective and ethical collection and analysis of IDP data, to strengthen the development and application of methods to effectively identify and address relevant needs, and to inform policy and action to resolve displacement situations.
- Continue to build a broad-based cooperation platform to equip the counter-trafficking community with up-to-date reliable data on human

38 Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics, *Internal Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS)* (2020).

trafficking and exploitation for targeted counter-trafficking responses, including in crisis situations. Relevant measures include facilitating a cooperative effort to disseminate international standards for victim of trafficking administrative data and establishing a global statistical measurement framework for estimating the prevalence of trafficking for forced labour.

- 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.



1.3 IOM will support global efforts for the follow-up and review of the implementation of relevant international frameworks, in particular the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Agenda for Humanity and the commitments of the Grand Bargain.

The following interventions will support this deliverable:

- Collect, share and analyse data disaggregated by key dimensions as relevant,<sup>39</sup> such as age, sex, gender identity, disability, race, education and migratory status, to support monitoring of the above frameworks, including by:

- Further enhancing data collection to inform SDG indicator 10.7.3, “Number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination.”<sup>40</sup>

- Support the development of new monitoring and evaluation methodologies, including with respect to relevant SDG targets and indicators. This can be achieved by:

- Further strengthening joint efforts with UN DESA, OECD and other relevant partners towards measuring indicator 10.7.2, “Number of countries with well-managed migration policies”;

- Further strengthening joint efforts with the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to advance methodologies to monitor SDG target 8.7 on eradicating forced labour, ending modern slavery and human trafficking, and securing the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and related targets, notably SDG target 16.2 on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.<sup>41</sup>

- Support efforts to develop common approaches to Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration follow-up and review and to ensure availability of relevant migration data, in particular through the United Nations Network on Migration, including by ensuring synergies with and building on the joint efforts to support monitoring of relevant SDG targets and indicators.

39 Data disaggregation is essential for developing nuanced and well-informed policies and action. It is needed to facilitate inclusivity and uphold the key principle of the 2030 Agenda that “no one will be left behind”. There is some variation in the main disaggregation dimensions highlighted in different reference documents, and a recognition that these should be context-specific. SDG target 17.18 includes the following disaggregation dimensions: “income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national context”. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in its Objective 1, “Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies”, lists “sex, age, migration status and other characteristics relevant in national contexts”.

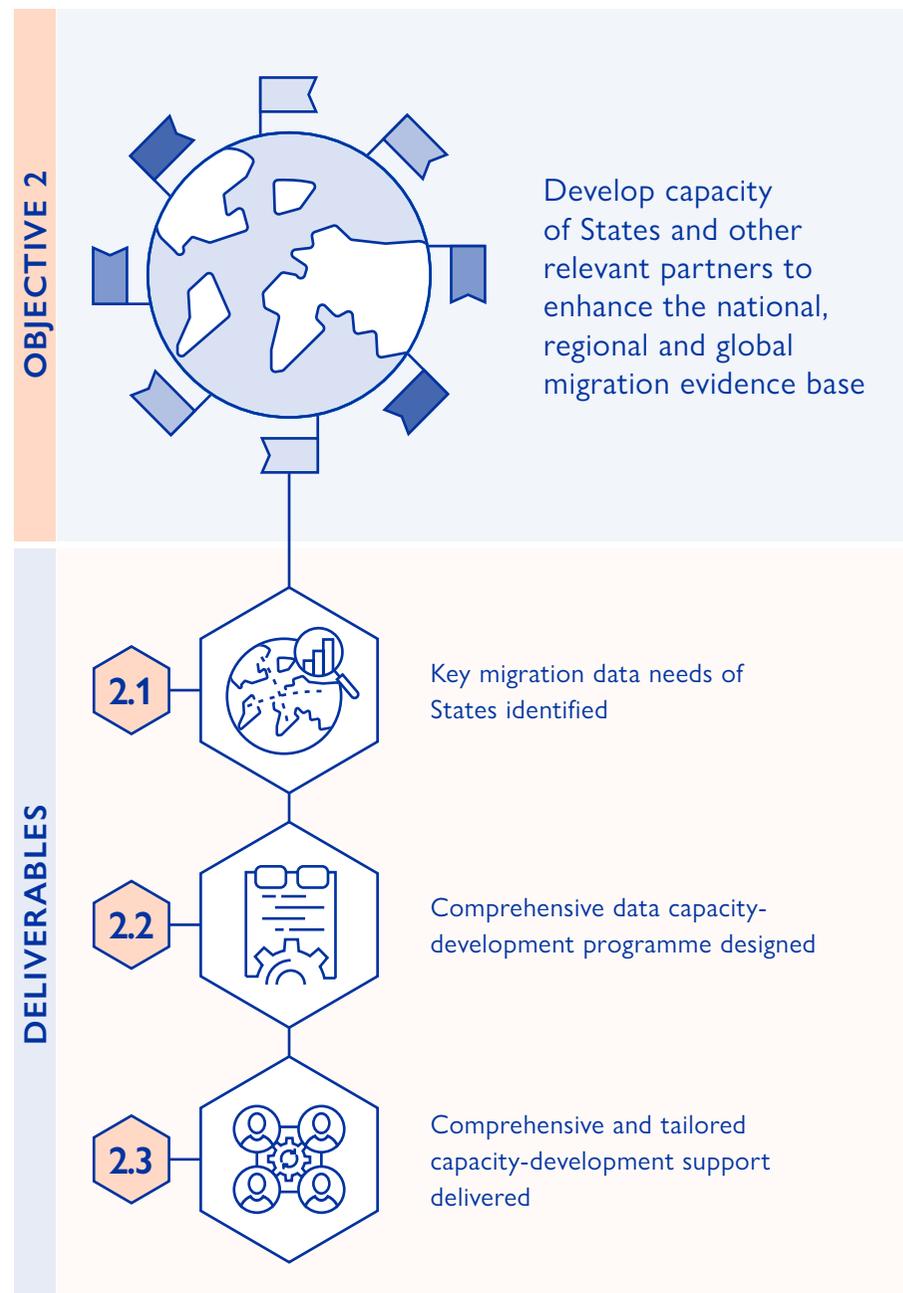
40 Data collected through the IOM Missing Migrants Project are used to measure this indicator, and IOM is the custodian agency for this indicator.

41 [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review\\_Eng.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review_Eng.pdf)

## OBJECTIVE 2: Develop capacity of States and other relevant partners to enhance the national, regional and global migration evidence base

In collaboration with relevant partners, IOM will undertake comprehensive capacity-development activities to enhance collection, analysis and use of quality migration data. These efforts will help address country-specific needs for migration data to inform national policy and action. They will also aim to strengthen the regional and global evidence base, by ensuring better availability of national migration data and by promoting international comparability of data and data sharing. Therefore, initiatives under this objective also underpin those of objective 1. In this regard, IOM will combine delivery of technical support with facilitation of cooperation within and among States, and with other relevant stakeholders, as well as support relevant capacity-development initiatives led by others.

Capacity-development focused on migration data will be delivered as a targeted intervention and as part of other IOM capacity-development efforts. These efforts will be undertaken consistent (or in conjunction) with the national and regional capacity-development support provided by the United Nations Network on Migration and the broader United Nations system.



## Key deliverables and interventions



**2.1 IOM will support States in identifying key data needs and developing data plans** reflecting national and regional priorities as well as relevant global commitments, including with respect to:

- Informing the development of comprehensive and coherent migration policies and their effective implementation, as well as assessing impacts of policy.
- Informing effective action on migration and across development and humanitarian sectors.
- Ensuring data privacy and protection.
- Implementing and monitoring of commitments under the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and other relevant global and regional frameworks.



**2.2 IOM will develop a comprehensive capacity-development programme on migration data for interested States and other key stakeholders,** to acquire skills, knowledge and expertise to collect, analyse, share and disseminate quality, timely, disaggregated

and comparable migration data, as well as to strengthen institutional capacities for management of migration data in full respect of data protection and privacy. This will include capacity-development efforts to:

- Facilitate use of international definitions, standards and methodologies as well as application of good practices with respect to data relevant to population movements and mobile populations, including in support of data harmonization. This would include applying recognized data-collection models, methods and tools in support of the above.
- Ensure data protection by building safeguards into relevant data systems and processes.
- Facilitate collection of data disaggregated by key dimensions as relevant, such as age, sex, gender identity, disability, race, education and migratory status to provide better understanding of migrants' situations and to support the principle of leaving no one behind.
- Enable integrated cross-sectoral approaches to data collection, sharing and use, as well as leveraging new data sources, such as big data, for a more comprehensive migration evidence base at the national level to provide a broader understanding of patterns and characteristics of population movements, and address identified data needs and gaps. This requires putting in place mechanisms for systematic coordination among relevant government entities with a role in migration governance, as well as with relevant United Nations and non-governmental stakeholders.
- Facilitate responsible data sharing among States and with other relevant stakeholders, including at the regional and international levels.
- Strategically communicate and disseminate available data and their analysis, targeting various users to enhance relevance and impact, as well as inform public discourse on migration.

- Enhance national and regional information management capabilities by providing context-specific support to enable the use of necessary information and communications technology (ICT) systems.



**2.3 IOM will deliver capacity-development support based on its comprehensive programme and tailored to the needs of relevant stakeholders and in partnership with relevant actors.** At their request, support will be provided to States, NSOs, national disaster management authorities,

line ministries, other government actors and relevant stakeholders, including international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. The support will be delivered at local, national and regional levels through targeted interventions, and as part of other IOM capacity-development initiatives and those of its partners.

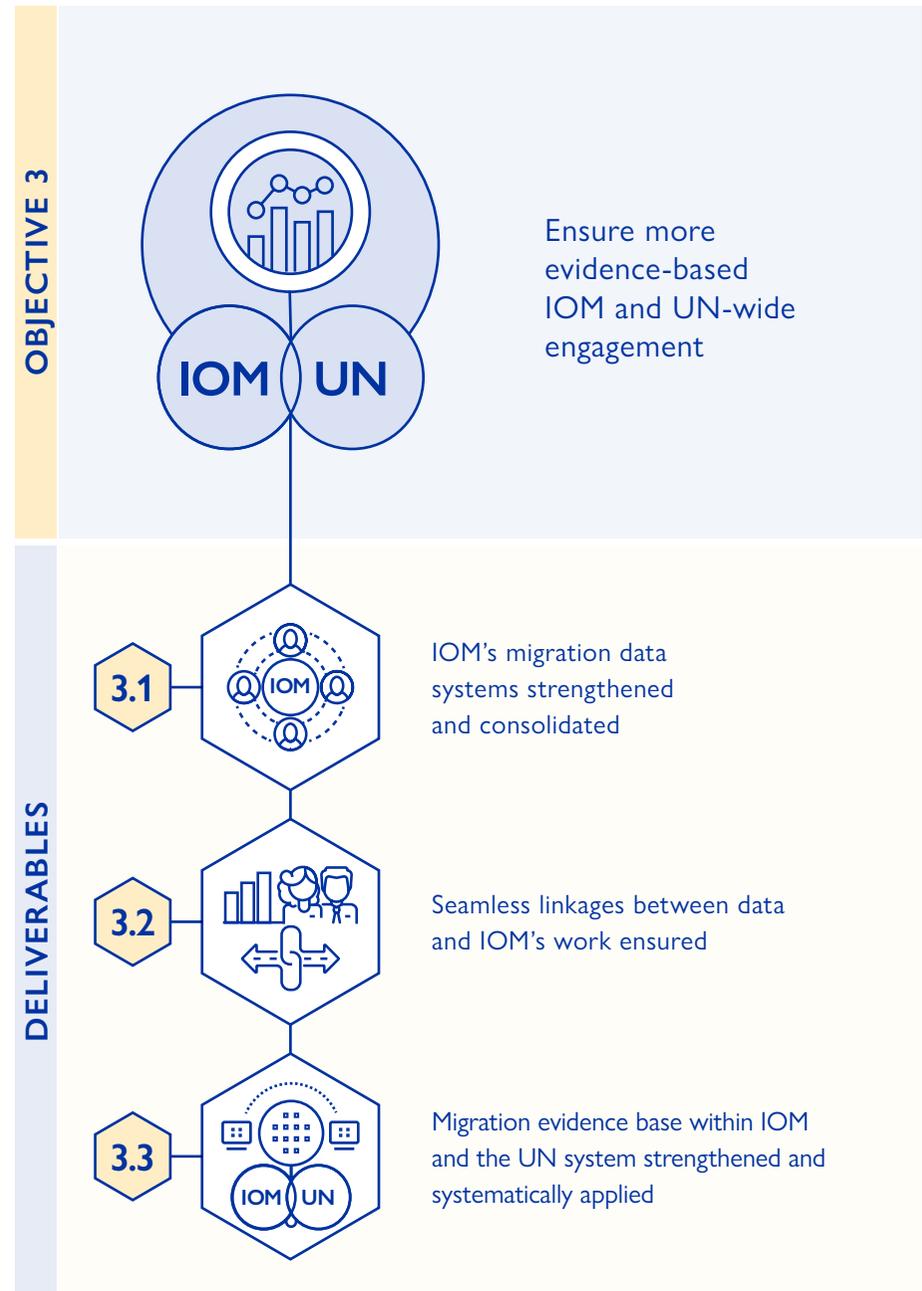
The following interventions will support this deliverable:

- Deliver in-person and online data training and capacity-development workshops for relevant stakeholders.
- Promote systematic inclusion of a data component in other capacity-development initiatives implemented by IOM.
- Build synergies with capacity-development efforts of others in the United Nations system, including by promoting integration of a migration data capacity-development component in relevant United Nations system-wide undertakings, such as those carried out within United Nations country teams and humanitarian country teams, the United Nations regional collaboration platforms (UNRCPs), the capacity-building mechanism of the United Nations Network on Migration and the inter-agency work undertaken in the framework of the Grand Bargain process.

- Leverage the capacity of State-led regional and interregional bodies and initiatives, including regional organizations and regional consultative processes on migration, as well as migration data analysis and research initiatives, for example migration observatories, to support capacity-development efforts and facilitate inter-State cooperation and experience sharing on migration data.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure more evidence-based IOM- and United Nations system-wide programming, operations, policy advice and communications**

IOM will step up its efforts to leverage all available data sources, including data gathered through its operations, for evidence-based, unbiased, responsible and anticipatory action to more effectively help the people IOM serves, and to offer support and sound policy advice to its Member States and other stakeholders in fulfilment of its mandate. IOM will enhance its systems and processes to ensure that data underpin IOM work wherever possible and to strengthen feedback loops among data and IOM programmes, operations, policy and communications. This will include enhancing IOM institutional data systems to enable sound information and knowledge management and to foster a culture of learning. In doing so, IOM will work closely with United Nations partners in support of system-wide strategic priorities related to data, promoting cooperation on migration data and encouraging their exchange and use.



## Key deliverables and interventions



3.1 IOM will strengthen and consolidate its migration data systems, including those that are part of its operational activities, and further enhance their relevance and usability.

The following interventions will support this deliverable:

- Maintain and further develop IOM data-collection assets to ensure robust data collection, storage and management.
- Ensure systematic application of data protection principles, strengthen data security, including cybersecurity, and promote responsible data management.
- Design data ecosystems enabling systematic data disaggregation as relevant by age, sex, gender identity, disability, race, education and migratory status and other key aspects to support unbiased and targeted action.
- Promote synergies, cross-fertilization and alignment, as applicable, among different migration data-collection mechanisms in the Organization.
- Ensure quality gender and diversity-sensitive analysis of the data collected by IOM, including within the context of the broader migration evidence base, and enhance access to the results of this analysis within IOM and beyond, as appropriate, and in full respect of data protection principles and ethical considerations.



3.2 IOM will foster an institutional culture of sharing and learning to strengthen seamless linkages between data and its work, ensuring that migration data and their analysis are systemically applied. This concerns migration data produced by IOM as well as other relevant data. IOM

internal efforts will be linked with relevant initiatives of the United Nations Network on Migration and those of the wider United Nations system.

The following interventions will support this deliverable:

- Reinforce systematic use of migration data and results of their analysis in formulation of IOM policy advice, communications, programme development, implementation and evaluation in humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts, including by:
  - Integrating data and commitment to evidence-informed policy, action and communications in relevant institutional strategic documents;
  - Updating and disseminating relevant internal guidance materials;
  - Cultivating skills needed to make effective and responsible use of data across IOM;
  - Facilitating access of IOM staff to migration data and analysis relevant to their work.
- Support knowledge management initiatives related to migration data within IOM, including relevant communities of practice.



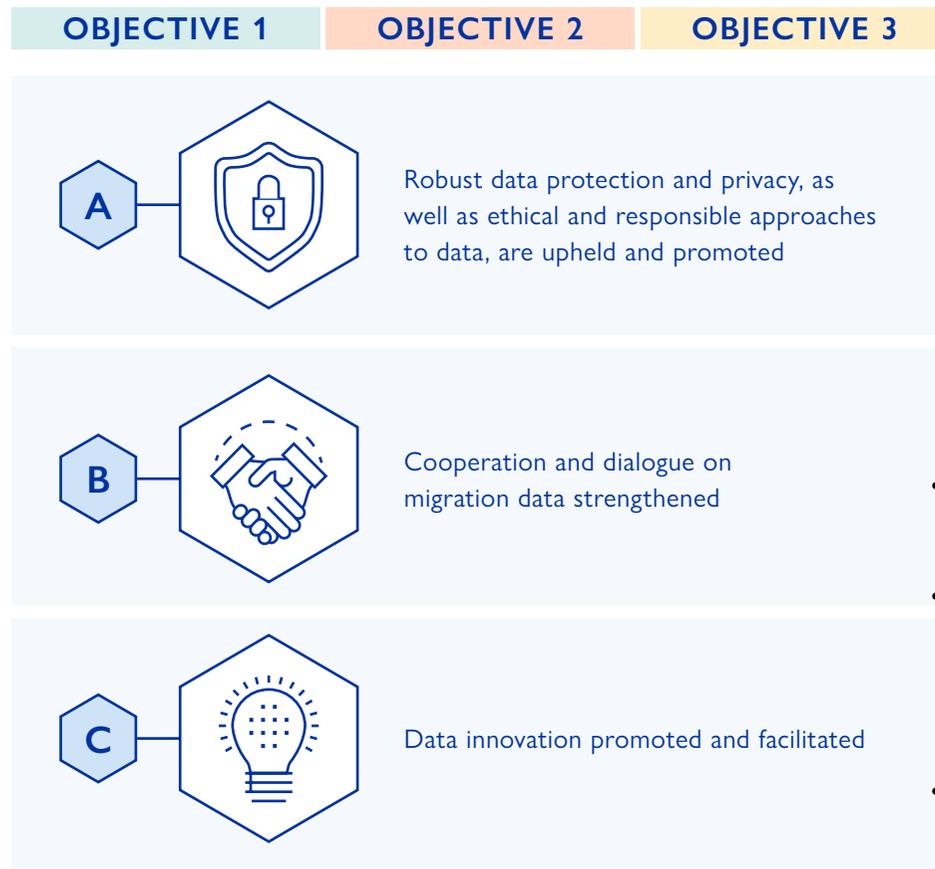
**3.3 IOM will promote the strengthening and systematic use of the migration evidence base within the United Nations system** to inform policy, action and communications across sectors. This will be done within the framework and in support of United Nations system-wide efforts to place data at the heart of work and to maximize the strategic value of United Nations system data assets.

The following interventions will support this deliverable:

- **Play a key role in advancing the objectives of the United Nations Network on Migration’s data workstream**, in particular with respect to migration-related global and regional knowledge management initiatives to improve the availability of migration data, as well as to mobilize, pool and share relevant migration data expertise within the United Nations system.
- **Ensure systematic engagement with and contribute to the relevant expert bodies on migration data**, such as the United Nations Expert Group on Migration Statistics and the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics, 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 and the IASC.
- **Promote greater sharing of data relevant to the movement of people collected by different United Nations agencies to increase system efficiencies across the development–humanitarian continuum**, including by:
  - Strengthening migration data literacy across the United Nations system, including at national and regional levels, as well as to support implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain;
  - Facilitating use of migration data to inform joint United Nations programming and coordinated inter-agency action in migration, humanitarian, development and other relevant sectors, including by championing access to and use of quality data through IOM and inter-agency platforms, and by contributing data to country- and regional-level assessments and other tools to inform interventions, such as common country analyses, humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans.
- **Further contribute to United Nations system-wide migration policy expertise** to provide sound and evidence-based advice for good migration governance.
- **Provide the United Nations**, including the United Nations Network on Migration and the IASC communication mechanisms, **with available evidence on the movement of people** to facilitate dissemination and to support informed and balanced public discourse on migration.

## CROSS-CUTTING DELIVERABLES

The deliverables below are relevant to all three strategic objectives. IOM will pursue them and proposed actions in partnership with its Member States, the United Nations Network on Migration, the IASC and other stakeholders, as appropriate.



A. IOM will uphold and advocate for robust data protection and privacy throughout the data life cycle as well as for ethical and responsible approaches to data.

The following interventions will support this deliverable:

- Ensure consistent application of available guidance on ensuring data privacy, data protection and data ethics in IOM work,<sup>42</sup> including by:
  - Ensuring that institutional data governance structures and processes support respect of these principles;
  - Providing relevant training to IOM staff;
  - Putting in place reasonable and appropriate technical and organizational safeguards;
  - Developing tools to support compliance with these principles and embed them in all aspects of IOM work.
- Support the development of and fostering compliance with relevant frameworks, including as part of inter-agency efforts.
- Spearhead inter-agency efforts for responsible data collection, management and use to ensure protection, as well as effective and ethical management, of migration data, including with respect to new sources of data.
- Integrate data protection, privacy and ethics throughout the migration cycle as a key element of data-related capacity-development support provided to States and other stakeholders.

<sup>42</sup> The IOM Migration Data Governance Policy and the IOM Data Protection Principles are the key IOM frameworks. There are also several tools produced by the United Nations, including the *Data Privacy, Ethics and Protection: Guidance Note on Big Data for Achievement of the 2030 Agenda* (United Nations Development Group), which sets out general guidance on data privacy, data protection and data ethics for the United Nations Development Group concerning the use of big data, and the United Nations *Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles*.



**B. IOM will foster cooperation and dialogue on migration data** among States, with international and regional organizations, migrants and migrant groups, diasporas, the private sector, academia and other relevant stakeholders at local, national, regional and global levels to: improve migration data collection, management, sharing and use; promote harmonization of data; and facilitate exchange of good practices.

The following IOM interventions will support this deliverable:

- Promote whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to migration data throughout the life cycle, including by facilitating cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement and knowledge exchange at local and national levels.
- Promote bilateral, regional, interregional and global cooperation and knowledge exchange on migration data among States, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships with the United Nations and other organizations, and non-State actors, including by:
- Integrating measures to support such cooperation in relevant capacity-development efforts;
- Launching migration data conversations and fostering dialogue, including by continuing to provide a regular global platform for exchange of ideas and experiences among a wide range of relevant stakeholders;

- Supporting relevant regional and interregional bodies to engage effectively on migration data, for example regional organizations, regional consultative processes on migration and UNRCs;
- Further strengthening cooperative data platforms and data hubs and supporting coordination among global and regional platforms and databases on migration to facilitate knowledge exchange, including through the United Nations Network on Migration.



**C. IOM will promote innovation with respect to migration data collection, management, sharing and analysis<sup>43</sup>** to enhance understanding of the drivers of migration, migration patterns and impacts, and migrants' needs, in support of forward-looking policies and effective action.

The following IOM interventions will support this deliverable:

- Investigate new data sources and technologies, such as big data, and pioneer novel methods of data analysis, including methodologies for integrating new data solutions with complementary data sources for quality analysis, as well as dissemination and communication of findings.
- Promote 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.

<sup>43</sup> This will be carried out in synergy with the efforts of the United Nations system outlined in the *System-wide Roadmap for Innovating UN Data and Statistics* (CEB/2020/1 – Segment 2) (United Nations System, 2020), prepared by the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System.

- Raise awareness about and encourage knowledge-sharing on migration data innovation, taking account of existing and emerging applications of big data in migration, development and humanitarian action.
- Facilitate innovation in migration data through provision of capacity-development support to States and other actors.
- Ensure that IOM governance systems and processes as well as technical infrastructure support data innovation.
- Experiment with the development of migration scenarios, drawing on diverse data sources, cross-validated against major socioeconomic and political indicators.
- Pioneer new solutions in ethical use of data science and predictive analysis to increase efficiency in humanitarian delivery and action along the development–humanitarian continuum.

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## EMPOWERING IOM

This section identifies areas where further strengthening is needed to ensure IOM can implement the MDS, based on identified organizational strengths and weaknesses. It includes broad proposals that would support the realization of all strategic objectives. These proposals address the areas of internal governance, capacity (staff and institutional), learning and technical infrastructure, and resourcing. They build on the deliberations of several data task forces, which were set up within the IOM Data Steering Group<sup>44</sup> to identify measures to enhance quality and consistency of IOM migration data throughout the life cycle and to feed into the MDS. These proposals also take into account and build on relevant United Nations system data initiatives, in particular the above-mentioned data strategy of the Secretary-General.

Priority areas identified in this section reflect wider organizational needs and echo many of the key areas of required institutional investment highlighted in the IOM Strategic Vision. Therefore, efforts towards addressing these needs will be taken forward as part of overall institutional strengthening, thus contributing to and building on key Organization-wide initiatives, notably application of the IGF.



### STRENGTHEN 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 new IOM responsibilities within the United Nations system. An important aspect of this effort is to identify functions that are needed to implement the recommendations contained in this document. This should be done in the context of applying the IOM Migration Data Governance Policy and as part of and in concert with wider organizational efforts being pursued in the IGF.

In particular, this includes the need 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, including:
  - Strengthening global-level functions for migration data review, quality assurance and analysis, and clarifying lines of accountability and responsibility in relation to migration data-related functions of the Organization (at regional and country levels, as well as within different thematic pillars);
  - Updating the terms of reference and format of the internal IOM Data Steering Group to support implementation of a programme of work;

<sup>44</sup> The IOM Data Steering Group is an Organization-wide, internal information exchange and coordination body.

- o Standardizing and strengthening IOM regional offices' data-related scopes of work and functions to deal with, for example: data quality control/data harmonization; data analysis; data capacity-building for external stakeholders and IOM staff; data protection; liaison with regional United Nations bodies with respect to data, including tracking progress on SDGs and implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; support for liaison with NSOs in the region; and support for the production of migration profiles.
- Elaborate common guidelines/principles for data collection, management, storage and use, including ethical and quality standards for new sources of data,<sup>45</sup> reflecting relevant international standards and applicable IOM policies.
- Use robust review mechanisms for migration data shared externally, including ensuring high standards of data protection and responsible data management, and consistently and clearly communicate the context and scope of the data presented.



## DEVELOP CAPACITY

The above recommendations and accompanying internal actions to support overall implementation of this MDS 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 critical to address existing capacity needs as well as 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 the need to:

- Strengthen institutional capacity for data review, quality assurance and analysis at the global, regional and country levels in line with assigned functions and responsibilities, as specified in the IGF, including by addressing expertise and skill gaps.
- Review relevant unit and staff position terms of reference to ensure inclusion of required data competencies (consistent with the IGF).
- Develop and standardize, as appropriate, specialist job profiles, building on corresponding efforts within the broader United Nations system.
- Develop staff training focused on data analysis, communication 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 diverse segments of IOM staff.
- Enhance the ability of IOM staff to deliver data capacity-development training to governments, United Nations partners, media and other stakeholders.

<sup>45</sup> These efforts will be undertaken in line with the work under way within the United Nations system in the context of the *Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere: With Insight, Impact and Integrity*, and the *System-wide Roadmap for Innovating UN Data and Statistics*.



## ENHANCE TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

IOM needs to ensure its technical infrastructure and data governance processes support coherent migration data collection, storage, analysis and use, as well as the use of new technologies and sources of data recommended in this document. There is therefore a need to ensure that the ongoing improvement and updating of the ICT data infrastructure incorporate MDS requirements.

In particular, this includes the need to:

- Identify technical requirements associated with the MDS recommendations and ensure their inclusion in IOM ICT strategic planning, including regional and country office infrastructure improvements and strengthening of cybersecurity capacities.
- Further develop and align IOM data-collection tools, including to support collection of data through the use of mobile devices.
- Enhance data management solutions in IOM to facilitate accessibility and availability of data collected by IOM for analysis, including through creation of data lakes while ensuring high standards of cybersecurity and data protection.
- Develop data and business intelligence capabilities to strengthen data analytics and reporting, including to enhance IOM capacity to use new data sources and innovative data analysis methodologies (e.g. predictive analytics and artificial intelligence) to support evidence-based decision-making.



## ENSURE SUSTAINABLE RESOURCING

There is a need for much more predictable funding to support 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. There will also be a need for predictable funding to provide systematic support to major IOM initiatives on migration data, including the latest innovative undertakings, and to advance with respect to the strategic objectives more generally. This is to be considered, potentially, in the context of IOM budget reform discussions.

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.

