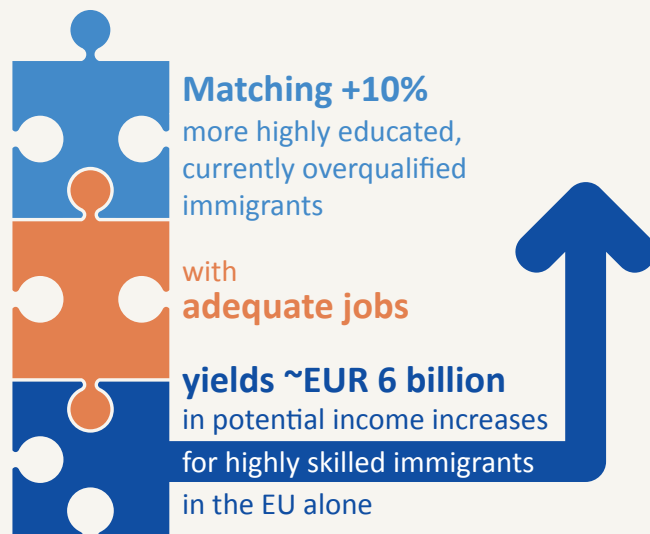# More than numbers: the value of migration data.

Migration data are gaining traction on the international development agenda, as both experts and states increasingly recognize the critical role that data play in improving migration governance. However, there is limited clarity on how to prioritize strategic investments in data. The corresponding value (e.g., economic, social, humanitarian, political) for migration outcomes is often unknown. Unless decision makers are presented with a clear value case, current efforts to improve migration data will not be translated into action.

WHAT IS THE VALUE AT STAKE?
One selected example:

Matching +10% more highly educated, currently overqualified immigrants

with **adequate jobs**

yields ~EUR 6 billion in potential income increases for highly skilled immigrants in the EU alone

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Frank Laczko *(IOM´s GMDAC, Berlin)*

MAKING THE VALUE CASE IS ESSENTIAL FOR TARGETED INVESTMENT

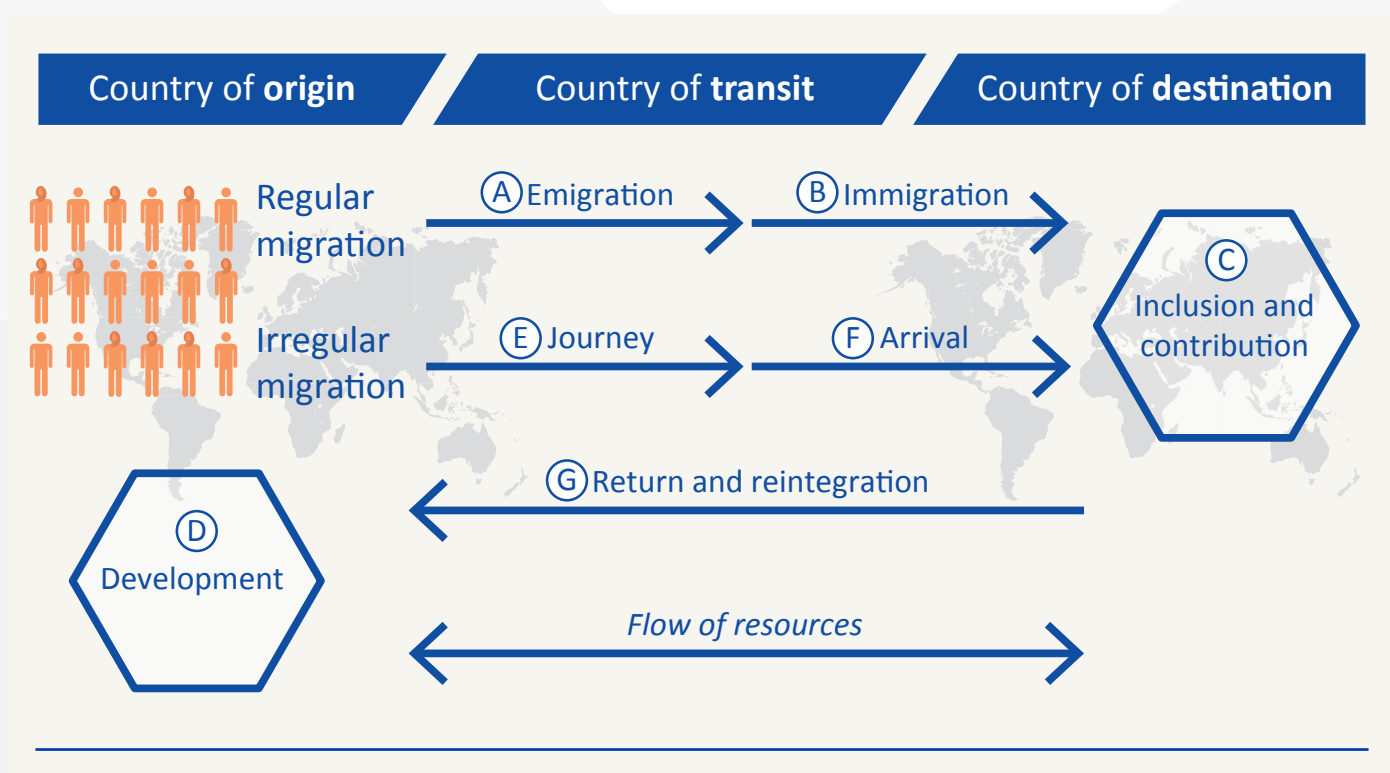*While there is general consensus on the importance of migration data, the value at stake is often unknown*

Value

What is the **value that investments in data can bring** to improve migration outcomes?

Investment

How should **investments be prioritized** to achieve specific outcomes?

CAPTURING VALUE REQUIRES RELEVANT, HIGH-QUALITY DATA

Relevant, accurate, timely and complete data enable policymakers to achieve desired outcomes

Reliable data provide policymakers with transparency about the status quo and potential future developments, thereby supporting prioritization and decision-making. They enable the development of policies and implementation of actions tailored to specific circumstances and needs. Measurement of results allows for adjustment of policies over time to achieve better outcomes.

THERE IS VALUE THROUGHOUT THE MIGRATION CYCLE

Data have the potential to unlock value for migrants and countries (of origin, transit and destination) along at least seven core dimensions of migration

Country of **origin** — Country of **transit** — Country of **destination**

Regular migration

(A) Emigration → (B) Immigration →

(C) Inclusion and contribution

Irregular migration

(E) Journey → (F) Arrival →

(G) Return and reintegration

(D) Development

Flow of resources

INVESTING IN DATA PAYS OFF FOR MIGRANTS AND COUNTRIES ALIKE

There is a lot of value at stake (e.g., economic, social, humanitarian, political), along seven core dimensions of migration

SELECTED EXAMPLES

	What is the potential value at stake?	How can data help capture this value?
A Emigration	• Around USD 3–6bn reduction in recruitment cost for labour migrants in Arab Gulf states (for each reduction in recruitment cost equivalent to one month of migrants' average wage)	Uncover the extent of recruitment cost directly faced by migrants, and how they can be minimized: • Create transparency on magnitude of recruitment cost by country of origin and destination • Identify most vulnerable migrant groups
B Immigration	• Filling labour market gaps by identifying and incentivizing target groups abroad (e.g., Australia increased the number of jobs filled by employer sponsored migrants by approximately 14% each year from 2005 to 2015)	Support targeted immigration initiatives to close domestic labour market shortages: • Identify target immigrant profile based on domestic labour market needs • Create understanding of where potential target groups are located and what incentives are effective
C Inclusion and contri-bution	• 15–20 percentage point increase in immigrants' employment rates by identifying language gaps early on and providing targeted access to language classes locally • Around 10% higher incomes (for every additional year of schooling) by identifying education gaps and targeting education efforts accordingly • Around EUR 6bn in income increases for highly educated migrants in the EU alone through data-driven matching of qualifications and jobs	Support better language, education and employment outcomes for migrants: • Map supply and demand for language-learning resources, target offering and measure effectiveness of interventions • Identify and match demand and supply for specific qualifications
D Development	• Around USD 15–20bn in remittance increases to developing countries (equivalent to 15–20% of 2016 official development assistance from OECD countries) by providing diaspora with transparency concerning cheaper money transfer options	Enable increased remittance volumes: • Map remittance flows from various migrant groups in different destination countries • Identify barriers to remittances (e.g., fees and access to financial services) • Create transparency for migrants on most cost-effective means of transferring remittances
E Journey	• Three times more cases of human trafficking identified (enabling support to ~250,000 victims) through better detection based on data analysis and corresponding interventions • Around 3,000 additional missing migrants identified each year (and their families assisted to come to closure)	Prevent human trafficking and facilitate identification of missing migrants: • Uncover incidence of human trafficking by route, trafficking practices and types of victims to facilitate detection and prevention • Increase identification rates of missing migrants (e.g., through real-time tracking of migrant flows, analysis of rescue efforts)
F Arrival	• Identification of duplicate registrations using biometric data	Enable definite identification and registration: • Identify duplicates by matching multiple data sets based on biometric data
G Return and reintegration[1]	• Increased success of return (voluntary and forced) and reintegration efforts through better data on origin of migrants, migrant needs and conditions in origin countries	Inform return and reintegration policies: • Create transparency on efficacy of voluntary versus forced return, and reasons for success/ failure • Measure efficacy of reintegration support on inclusion outcomes and sustainability of returns

1 Regular return included in "Development"

NEXT STEPS

Targeted initiatives on all levels can enable countries to take a value perspective on migration and to prioritize data needs and investments accordingly

Global level: Establishing a **global data-to-value hub** could (1) consolidate and improve know-how on sizing and capturing the value that data can contribute as well as (2) support countries in prioritizing the data that are most relevant to them. A user-friendly platform would allow countries to self-assess where the biggest value lies for them, to identify which data priorities are most critical and to draw on best practice examples from others.

Key benefits include:

- Acceleration of migration data agenda through effective global support to countries

- Better development and dissemination of the capabilities to develop and implement effective migration data strategies

Regional level: The establishment of more and better **regional migration data hubs** could facilitate data exchange and create transparency regarding potential value and developments (including annual reports).

Key benefits include:

- Improved intraregional cooperation and data sharing, enabling better understanding of value potential and mutual benefits originating from migration

- Stronger evidence-base and analysis to support policy decisions for achieving better migration outcomes at regional and national levels

Country level: Countries to develop **value-driven migration data strategies** that start from where the most potential lies. This enables effective decisions on which data to collect, analyse and use.

Key benefits include:

- Identification of high-priority data gaps (i.e., with significant potential to improve outcomes)

- Buy-in from government and donors through articulation of clear investment case for data

- Better capture and articulation of the economic, social, humanitarian and political potential of migration.

REPORT TO BE RELEASED IN JANUARY 2018
IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) will release a report on the value of migration data in January 2018, outlining a vision for how data can enable value capture in migration (including illustrative tool)

IOM's GMDAC

In response to growing calls for better data on migration, and better use and presentation of migration data, IOM has created the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC).

Located in Berlin, Germany, the Centre aims to provide authoritative and timely analysis of data on global migration issues as a global hub for data and statistics on migration. The Data Bulletin is prepared by GMDAC.

Analytic support for this issue of the Data Bulletin was provided by McKinsey & Company.

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