

Internal Displacement Data Strategy 2021–2025

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY AND LEADERSHIP IN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT DATA

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IOM's Role in Internal Displacement Data

IOM's support of displaced persons is rooted in the IOM Constitution (1953)¹ as a part of its broader migration mandate. In addressing the challenges of internal displacement globally, IOM is a resource for vulnerable individuals as well as States, humanitarians, development and peace actors, and civil societies, among other stakeholders. As the UN system works to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), fulfil the Secretary General's Prevention Agenda, and support the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, IOM is taking pioneering steps to ensure the global community is better equipped to address internal displacement. Towards these ends, global partnerships and initiatives such as the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP-ID) and those of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) have proven indispensable in strengthening IOM's continued progress towards more effective outcomes.

A key element of IOM's role in internal displacement contexts is providing crucial information on – and visibility to – Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) around the world. Internal displacement data is an essential indicator of a nation's overall wellbeing and resilience, and provides vital insight to guide the assistance of humanitarian, development, and peace actors as well as to support the development of well-informed, inclusive policies. Understanding the scale and characteristics of internal displacement within a country helps in the prevention, preparation and response of crises' outbreaks or escalations. By regularly monitoring and reporting on IDPs' needs, characteristics, locations and conditions, IOM's Internal Displacement data serves as a crucial bellwether for stakeholders – keeping them responsive to IDPs' needs as they evolve over time. Internal displacement data also ensures that vulnerable communities that might otherwise be overlooked are not left behind.

IOM maintains the ability to address on-the-ground operational challenges while simultaneously leading in responsible data innovation, data protection principles, and data science ethics. Building on the [IOM 2020–2025 Migration Data Strategy](#)² and the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General 2020–2021,³ IOM aims to strategically leverage internal displacement data to further humanitarian, development and peace action amid rapidly evolving human rights and humanitarian concerns related to the digital revolution.

Relatedly, IOM supports the future development of an Inter-Agency strategy specific to internal displacement data to increase efficiencies and reduce risks to affected populations. IOM also seeks to further explore the dynamics of displacement data to better anticipate advocacy on matters of assistance, protection, policies and public visibility for IDPs. As climate change threatens to greatly increase global displacement and mobility, and as the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically expanded the demands on mobility data across the world, prudence and foresight are needed to ensure data activities maintain high ethical standards and produce positive impacts for vulnerable communities.

¹ IOM Constitution available at: www.iom.int/constitution.

² IOM, 2020. *The IOM Migration Data Strategy: Informing Policy and Action on Migration, Mobility and Displacement*, available at <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/IOM-Migration-Data-Strategy.pdf>.

³ UN, 2020. "Secretary General's Data Strategy", available at: <https://www.un.org/en/content/datastrategy>.

Accordingly, IOM will continue to build upon its global footprint and wide-ranging experience to lead global conversations on the ethical collection, analysis, dissemination and application of internal displacement data. IOM will also continue to invest in collaborative field operations that are responsible, principled, consistent and reliable.

Based on the prior experience of IOM, the insights of other UN and IASC bodies, and the IOM 2020–2025 Migration Data Strategy, the Internal Displacement Data Strategy 2021 (IDDS) outlines a strategic path forward to address the expanding demands on internal displacement data, and to strengthen support to IDP communities around the world in a time of tremendous technological change.

I. Introduction

Internally Displaced Persons⁴ account for approximately 64 per cent of those forcibly displaced worldwide. A total of 55 million individuals were internally displaced at the end of 2020.⁵ IDPs often lack physical, economic and social security as they face considerable humanitarian challenges, including exacerbated health risks, acute poverty, discrimination, gender-based violence, malnutrition and a lack of socioeconomic opportunities. Persons displaced by conflict and disasters often experience prolonged periods without dignifying shelter or housing solutions, and face a future in which their children will be deprived of the benefits brought by education.

IOM is one of the largest actors addressing internal displacement both in terms of its range of engagement and caseload, and aims to address all phases of displacement response. Per the important contributions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, IOM’s engagement on internal displacement data considers early warning, preparedness and disaster risk-reduction facets. IOM is further committed to support anticipatory action and joint priority setting in the context of the Agenda for Humanity through internal displacement data.

The extensive use of IOM’s data in Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), and global IDP estimates,⁶ reflect the consistency of IOM’s displacement data coverage. In almost all cases, IOM internal displacement data is nationally endorsed – the fruit of productive partnerships with local and national actors. IOM’s data has consistently underpinned the provision of assistance and protection, as well as prevention, preparedness, national policy planning and efforts towards durable

⁴ According to OCHA’s [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#), IDPs are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.”

⁵ IDMC, Global Internal Displacement Database, available at: www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data.

⁶ Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) are released by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and set the official agenda for international humanitarian responses.

solutions by governments. Between January and December 2020 IOM provided data to inform processes affecting more than 31.5 million IDPs and 21.3 million IDP Returnees.⁷

Building on this expertise, the IDDS outlines a high-level course of action for IOM to enhance its internal displacement data operations, structured according to four strategic pillars that stem from IOM's 2020–2025 Migration Data Strategy, giving specific focus to the unique demands of internal displacement data. Each pillar includes strategic priorities.

Objective			
Over the next five years, IOM will strengthen its capacity and leadership in IDP data to enhance quality, standards, collaboration and use cases to better support IDPs in need.			
Pillar 1 Assistance and Protection Data	Pillar 2 Safeguards and Standards	Pillar 3 Data Coordination	Pillar 4 Use and Accountability
Strategic Priorities			
SP1.1 Internal Displacement Monitoring SP1.2 Data Use and Comprehensive Evidence Base SP1.3 Capacity-building and support to national institutions SP1.4 Climate-induced mobility	SP2.1 Ethics, Principles and Rights SP2.2 Data Governance, Data Protection and Data Security SP2.3 Minimum Technical Standards and Data Quality	SP3.1 Institutional Data Coordination SP3.2 Fragility, Solutions and Mobility SP3.3 Ethics Collaboration SP3.4 Thematic Partnerships	SP4.1 User Design SP4.2 Data Literacy and Capacity-Building SP4.3 Innovation SP4.4 Compliance and Impact SP4.5 Academic Output SP4.6 Flagship report

II. Background

The UN Secretary-General has proposed an ambitious data strategy for the whole of the UN system that reflects the reality that “data and analytics permeate virtually all aspects of our work in development, peace

⁷ DTM, <https://dtm.iom.int/>. An “IDP Returnee” is a person who returned to their place of habitual residence after a period of displacement.

and security, humanitarian, and human rights” efforts.⁸ The Office of the Secretary-General is therefore seeking to transform the UN system into a thoroughly “data-driven organization.”⁹

For IOM, applying a data-driven paradigm to internal displacement is a multilayered task. Internal displacement is a complex phenomenon requiring a sophisticated understanding of context-specific conditions faced by displaced populations. For humanitarian and development actors, solutions to displacement must be holistic, requiring attention to a wide range of interrelated factors that vary considerably between displacement contexts.

Data collection and analysis are already at the core of the humanitarian response cycle for internal displacement – from identifying needs, to promoting coordination, to delivering assistance, to further developing specialized services for at-risk groups. To reach the full potential of data applications for IDPs at the Humanitarian and Development Nexus, IOM must continue engaging with a full range of partners and continuously improve as new technologies and solutions mature.

Significant risks accompany the benefits of expanding IOM’s internal displacement data operations. All aspects of the collection, analysis, dissemination, and application of internal displacement data must be viewed through a *Do No Harm* and data-protection lens, and incorporate a conflict-sensitive approach. As numerous instances in the humanitarian sector and beyond have shown, the potential misuse of data – intentionally or unintentionally – can have devastating consequences.

For this reason, IOM has engaged in a range of collaborative initiatives on data ethics, data security, and data protection to ensure that the Organization proactively addresses emerging data concerns. Nonetheless, due to the ongoing escalation of risks related to data science solutions, IOM aims to nurture a proactive approach to ensure that data science initiatives and activities adhere to – and build upon – IOM’s principles.

III. Scope

For the purposes of this document, “internal displacement data” refers to all types of data that support operations, advocacy, policy and strategy on issues related to internal displacement, throughout all phases of a humanitarian crisis. Internal displacement data is also time-specific, captured between the event triggering the population displacement and the point at which internally displaced individuals have reached durable solutions to the challenges arising from their displacement.

The primary methods of collection and analysis for the data discussed in this document correspond to those in the Methodological Framework used in Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Operations for

⁸ United Nations, *Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere* (May 2020), p. 4.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 5.

Quantifying Displacement and Mobility,¹⁰ the DTM and Partners Toolkit,¹¹ and the DTM Data Dictionary.¹² The efforts of the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS) are foundational to the development of the IDDS, particularly through the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS). The High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement's work, among other initiatives, has also proven fundamental.

IV. Principles and Ethics

IOM is deeply committed to principled, ethical approach at the heart of all of its data activities. Thus, the themes of principles and ethics cut across all four pillars of the IDDS. Though data science ethics appear explicitly in several strategic priorities (most notably Section 2.1 of this document), IOM's data principles animate the design and execution of all of IOM's displacement data efforts.

Numerous documents and agreements inform IOM's approach to internal displacement data ethics. Working across humanitarian, development and peace sectors, a *Do No Harm* approach and the four humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence) guide all of IOM's work in internal displacement data. With the rise of more complex forms of artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and other advanced data science methods, a sizeable corpus of works around AI ethics has emerged with varying emphases and points of convergence, all of which maintain relevance for internal displacement going forward.¹³

More specific to internal displacement data, the IDDS is further guided by the Displacement Tracking Matrix's "Methodological Framework", IOM's Data Protection Manual,¹⁴ Harvard Signal Code's Ethical Obligations for Humanitarian Information Activities,¹⁵ the IASC's Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility;¹⁶ the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS);¹⁷ the Data Science & Ethics

¹⁰ DTM, "Methodological Framework used in Displacement Tracking Matrix Operations for Quantifying Displacement and Mobility", available at: <https://displacement.iom.int/content/methodological-framework-used-displacement-tracking-matrix-operations-quantifying>.

¹¹ DTM, "DTM and Partners Toolkit", available at: <https://displacement.iom.int/dtm-toolkit/dtm-partners-toolkit>.

¹² Internal document.

¹³ For a useful overview of this corpus, see Harvard's Berkman Klein Center's "Principled Artificial Intelligence: Mapping Consensus in Ethical and Rights-Based Approaches to Principles for AI" (2020).

¹⁴ IOM Data Protection Manual, available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-data-protection-manual>.

¹⁵ Stuart R. Campo, Caitlin N. Howarth, Nathaniel A. Raymond and Daniel P. Scarnecchia. 5/2018. *Signal Code: Ethical Obligations for Humanitarian Information Activities*, available at <https://hhi.harvard.edu/publications/signal-code-ethical-obligations-humanitarian-information>.

¹⁶ IASC, *Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action*, available at <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/operational-response/iasc-operational-guidance-data-responsibility-humanitarian-action>.

¹⁷ EGRIS, International Recommendations on IDP Statistics, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/ks-gq-20-005>.

Group's Framework on the Ethical Use of Advance Data Science Methods in the Humanitarian Sector;¹⁸ and IASC's Grand Bargain Principles for Coordinated Needs Assessment Ethos.¹⁹

All of the above documents help to frame IOM's approach to internal displacement data ethics. Drawn from this more comprehensive body of work, the IDDS highlights ten principles of particular relevance for IOM's internal displacement data activities. While this list is by no means comprehensive, it represents a distillation of some of the most prescient factors for practitioners to bear in mind as they carry out their work.

1. **Accessibility:** Internal displacement data should be readily accessible to IDPs and other stakeholders involved in humanitarian operations to the fullest extent possible, while adhering to data security, data protection, Do No Harm, conflict sensitivity and confidentiality considerations.
2. **Accountability:** Mechanisms of accountability regarding how data represents affected populations and how data is used must be rigorously implemented.
3. **Adaptability:** Internal displacement data activities must be adaptable and scalable to a wide range of dynamic contexts with due consideration for socioeconomic and political environments, population composition, geography, needs, causes and other factors.
4. **Fairness:** Bias in all of its forms and across every stage of the data management lifecycle must be proactively anticipated and mitigated.
5. **Innovation:** Internal displacement data operations should continue to draw upon new technologies and solutions, operational insights, ethics scholarship, and the experience of affected populations to develop more productive and context-relevant insights.
6. **Independence:** Use of all components, tools and methods to produce internal displacement data should not compromise operational autonomy due to any external commercial, political, military or other interests.
7. **Participation:** Data activities must be inclusive of affected population input, with diverse representation of age, gender, ability, etc. Alternative and dissenting perspectives on data processes must be documented.
8. **Protection:** Operations must ensure the centrality of data protection in their design, including data security, data minimization, informed consent and human rights precautions to mitigate the effects of potential data breaches.
9. **Quality:** Minimum technical standards must be consistently applied to all internal displacement data activities to ensure accuracy, reliability, and interoperability.
10. **Relevance:** Internal displacement data must be collected with clear objectives related to improving the conditions faced by IDPs. Potential uses of IDP data must be considered with the full crisis management cycle in mind, including immediate and longer-term data needs.

¹⁸ [Framework on the Ethical Use of Advance Data Science Methods in the Humanitarian Sector.](#)

¹⁹ [Grand Bargain Principles for Coordinated Needs Assessment Ethos.](#)

V. Strategic Pillars

The strategic pillars and priorities listed below aim to be actionable. As strategic overview, the IDDS does not reach the level of implementation steps, which are to be outlined by a separate workplan to guide further action. To work in tandem with the IOM 2020–2025 Migration Data Strategy, the time-horizon of this document covers a planning period of five years. After the first two years, IOM will conduct a midpoint review of the IDDS's implementation to ensure the quality of its execution, identify areas of success, and locate areas needing adjustments.

Pillar 1: Assistance and Protection Data

Amid growing IDP caseloads, increasing resource constraints for humanitarian responses, and the expanding prioritization of evidence-based programmes, IOM will continuously strengthen its internal displacement data services for operational and policy actors working in all phases of internal displacement.

Strategic Priority 1.1: Internal Displacement Monitoring

IOM will continue to support humanitarian, development and peacebuilding stakeholders with needs-based internal displacement data, shared at regular intervals. The ability to monitor displacement over time is essential to ensure adequate evidence for responsible policy and advocacy, and to support progress towards durable solutions. Furthermore, as the global CCCM cluster lead for natural disasters, IOM understands the indispensable value of having up-to-date and reliable data for effective coordination and prioritization of resources to address the needs of those living in displacement sites and surrounding communities. As such, IOM will continue to prioritize robust internal displacement data operations and invest in necessary resources, technologies and solutions to ensure responsible and continuous monitoring of internal displacement.

Strategic Priority 1.2: Data Use and Comprehensive Evidence Base

As the interconnectedness of humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) efforts gains more recognition, IOM aims to help provide a comprehensive evidence base for policy and action related to internal displacement. IOM will achieve this by collecting and sharing actionable data with deliberate attention to accountable use in support of internally displaced populations. Humanitarian, development, and peace actors conventionally employ diverse approaches to address displacement-related challenges but share internal displacement data as a common foundation for engagement. In recognition of the importance of this common foundation — and the influence it has in galvanizing political will for all three approaches to displacement issues — IOM intends to strengthen a principled support to HDP data needs as a cornerstone of its work in the coming years. While maintaining its expertise in rapid-onset data collection, IOM will further strengthen its production of usable data and comprehensive evidence for medium and long-term support efforts, alongside the provision of baseline data used by partners when deploying specialized surveys. Additionally, IOM will review its existing internal displacement data websites to better assist partners at different levels, including those in need of

actionable data for direct program implementation, as well as to those dedicated to global estimates, data sharing and policymaking.

Strategic Priority 1.3: Capacity-building and support to national institutions

IOM aims to produce internal displacement data rooted in the local contexts in which IOM is working. This means promoting national ownership and capacity in internal displacement data, strengthening local institutions' data competencies, and providing assistance in preparing governmental IDP statistics. With very few exceptions, all of IOM's internal displacement data goes through thorough processes of endorsement and review by local and national actors, with a view to ensure transition to national ownership when possible. In March 2020, the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics²⁰ (EGRIS), a diverse group of country and UN representatives, statisticians, and operational actors, saw its International Recommendations on IDP Statistics²¹ (IRIS) adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, setting a new standard for IDP statistics. While this document is primarily directed towards the production of national statistics, it also creates the opportunity for greater standardization and interoperability in internal displacement data more broadly. IOM has already started aligning its IDP data processes with relevant IRIS recommendations to the extent possible in a range of operations.²² IOM will continue supporting the roll out of IRIS, bridging operational data and official statistics in collaboration with National Statistical Offices, National Disaster Management Agencies, and other relevant national offices. IOM will support an approach that balances the requirements of standardization and comparability of national statistics with contextual assistance needs in humanitarian, development and peace contexts.

Strategic Priority 1.4: Climate-induced mobility

Disaster-related displacement is projected to increase in the coming years due to the impact of climate change. IOM will rise to this challenge with a focus on directing its data activities to better anticipate, understand, and address climate-related displacement. Alongside its continued efforts in conflict scenarios, IOM will also explore the relationship between climate change, mobility and conflict displacement. In the case of large-scale ecological changes to habitable areas, IOM will prioritize generating data to provide a better understanding of mobility challenges and solutions generated by slow-onset environmental change. To cope with more frequent and extreme disasters, IOM will proactively support gathering data of relevance to rapid response and resilience-building efforts, as well as to assist in responsible forecasting, in collaboration with regional bodies, national disaster risk management agencies and academia.

²⁰ [Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics](#).

²¹ [International Recommendations on IDP Statistics](#).

²² Available soon: "DTM-IRIS Compatibility and Recommendations" (internal document not yet finalized).

Pillar 2: **Safeguards and Standards**

In accordance with the principles set forward in the development of the IDDS, IOM will advocate for sector-wide minimum standards in IDP data. IOM has led efforts to prioritize minimum standards as an early adopter of data protection and data governance policies. However, as the field of data science continues to evolve at a rapid pace, it is incumbent upon IOM to continue developing a culture of preparedness and review in relation to IDP data ethics.

Strategic Priority 2.1: Ethics, Principles and Rights

Further to the principles section of this document, a rights-based approach will continue to be a core element of all of IOM's internal displacement data activities. IOM will strive for clear ethical standards in its own work and sector wide as new capabilities emerge and new risks are identified. Already, IOM has played a leading role in the development of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's Ethical Obligations for Humanitarian Information Activities and was a founding member and lead of the resulting Humanitarian Data Science and Ethics Group (DSEG). IOM also led the development of DSEG's "Framework for the Ethical Use of Advanced Data Science Methods in the Humanitarian Sector" and currently co-leads the development of IASC's Data Responsibility Working Group. IOM seeks to be a leader in compliance with these initiatives, and will establish internal mechanisms to ensure that all data science activities actively comply with IOM's principles and relevant frameworks in design and execution. IOM will place particular emphasis on ensuring that unintentional forms of bias do not creep into data activities, and will promote adherence by its partners – proactively supporting anticipation of ethical issues in data science more broadly, as well as solutions to unforeseen challenges.

Strategic Priority 2.2: Data Governance, Data Protection and Data Security

Alongside the design and execution of internal displacement data activities; the integrity, storage, management and protection of displacement data is an area of notable priority. Risks related to unauthorized data access or corruption of existing data can represent considerable challenges to the quality and efficiency of data-related operations, impacting the trust and data privacy rights of IDPs. IOM was an early adopter and pioneer in the development of data protection and data governance policies to address these concerns, including the IOM Data Protection Manual²³ and the subsequent Data Governance Policy.²⁴ In the absence of inter-agency frameworks on data governance, IOM will continue to proactively ensure that robust solutions and systems are in place to promote the orderly and safe handling of internal displacement data, prioritizing maintenance of high standards in data governance, data protection measures, and data security safeguards. IOM will also promote greater adoption and development of related measures in the sector as a whole.

²³ [IOM Data Protection Manual](#).

²⁴ Internal document.

Strategic Priority 2.3: Minimum Technical Standards and Data Quality

Minimum technical standards are essential to identifying, preventing, and mitigating a wide range of risks associated with data management initiatives. They also help shape the growth of IOM's operations, enabling consistency, transparency and comparability across IOM's displacement data efforts as well as trust within the process. IOM has taken significant steps to enhance the ongoing development of its Displacement Tracking Matrix Standards, which establishes common best practices and minimum requirements for IOM's displacement data collection operations. Similarly, IOM's review of DTM's Methodological Framework has standardized its approach to the contextualization, design, and setup of an array of IDP data collection procedures, and delineated appropriate areas for experimentation, innovation, and iteration. DTM's Data Dictionary has improved the sharing and standardization of data collection indicators, while allowing sufficient flexibility to account for diverse scenarios and purposes. IOM will continue identifying gaps in technical standards and remains committed to defining minimum baselines as a requisite to fulfill the Organization's duty of care to internally displaced populations. Additionally, IOM will build upon these advancements in technical standards in alignment with prevalent information technology solutions, such as those leveraging cloud computing, as well as building staff capacity to adhere to and monitor the implementation of technical standards as they develop further.

Pillar 3: Data Coordination

IOM will continue to support collaboration and coordination on internal displacement data. Strong collaboration leadership on internal displacement data will pay dividends for vulnerable populations and agencies alike through greater efficiency, interoperability, and overall data quality. Conversely, any fracturing of the data ecosystem could lead to critical losses in efficiency, the deterioration of internal displacement data standards, and politicization of data efforts.

Strategic Priority 3.1: Institutional Data Coordination

In humanitarian crisis operations, internal displacement data is relevant to a variety of clusters and institutional partners. In addition to its ongoing work to support Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessments (MSNAs), Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), IOM will work to establish and support more mechanisms for data coordination in areas that require particular attention, including data ethics, data security, data science, risk analysis, results sharing, innovation, and accountability for data usage. Additionally, IOM will continue updating a set of core indicators in displacement data of relevance to all clusters, relevant organizations and collective outcomes, enabling a consistent inter-institutional understanding of progress in key areas related to displacement as responses evolve.

Strategic Priority 3.2: Fragility, Solutions and Mobility

In tandem with its emphasis on producing actionable data for humanitarian assistance and protection (see SP 1.2), IOM will further support with data initiatives around fragility, solutions and mobility. Data and evidence for policy support to national stakeholders as well as development and peace actors more broadly, will require IOM to optimize its internal displacement data activities and analysis frameworks.

Through engagement and collaboration around key tools and processes such as the DTM Data Dictionary, the DTM Partners Toolkit, and Stability, Reintegration and Return Indexes, as well as the connections within the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF) and inter-agency durable solutions architecture, IOM data will support a more collaborative environment for synergies between humanitarian, development, and peace efforts. To this end, IOM will seek better use of existing data for more anticipatory, forward-looking analysis. IOM also acknowledges that protection mandates must cover increasing digital risks, such as misinformation or disinformation campaigns, which can undermine community stabilization and impede return processes. For this reason, IOM will expand its work researching the relationship between displacement and online narratives by collaborating with recognized specialists in this field.

Strategic Priority 3.3: Ethics Collaboration

Though initially started as an informal cohort, the Humanitarian Data Science & Ethics Group²⁵ (DSEG) has acted as a crucial instrument for the clarification of ethical standards in humanitarian data science activities. As more advanced data science activities become better-integrated into humanitarian efforts, IOM will continue to co-lead the DSEG as a nexus for agencies, practitioners, researchers, and other relevant actors to evaluate emerging opportunities and risks in humanitarian data science activities. IOM will seek investment in – and greater institutionalization of – DSEG to enable more regular collaboration between relevant actors on issues such as inter-agency guidance, peer-review, and best practices in data science. IOM will also work to support partnerships between DSEG and related forums for the implementation of emerging guidance such as the IASC Guidelines on Data Responsibility.

Strategic Priority 3.4: Thematic Partnerships

IOM's partnerships – which guide the data efforts of IOM toward practical applications in humanitarian decision-making – are the result of years of cultivating inter-agency collaborations with global clusters, Areas of Responsibility, and other specialist areas. To better facilitate efficiencies in assisting displaced populations through theme-specific data, IOM developed the DTM and Partners Toolkit²⁶ in 2018 jointly with relevant stakeholders. Building off this success, IOM will continue to focus on growing its partnerships to better focus its data operations. Staff exchanges and secondments to the OCHA Humanitarian Data Center in the Hague and UNICEF's Children on the Move Initiative, for example, have proven important to maintaining close coordination on issues of internal displacement data. IOM also engages in the recently established UN regional reform mechanisms including the Issue-Based Coalitions on a range of issues, as well as UN Working Groups on Knowledge Management, and SDG Data and Statistics. Finally, IOM works with a variety of partners in the UN system as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration²⁷ at the global, regional and national levels.²⁸ Continued collaboration

²⁵ Humanitarian Data Science & Ethics Group.

²⁶ The DTM and Partners Toolkit.

²⁷ UN Network on Migration.

²⁸ See <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/> for more information.

on thematic priorities through similar initiatives will be prioritized to improve the production and use of data by both IOM and partners in various clusters, Areas of Responsibility and other thematic areas.

Pillar 4: Use and Accountability

IOM aims to ensure that its data is useful to a broad audience and accountable for its impact. Publicly available internal displacement data can have a generative effect in addressing IDP needs and vulnerabilities, allowing all stakeholders, including IDPs themselves, greater opportunities to creatively assess issues, advocate and allocate resources. While making its data more widely available, IOM must also ensure that appropriate oversight and accountability exist to ensure IOM's displacement data is productive in helping support IDPs.

Strategic Priority 4.1: User Design

IOM anticipates exponential growth in the use of internal displacement data in the years ahead. To maximize the impact of displacement data, IOM will continue to improve its data accessibility, utility and presentation to make it more useable and intuitive for relevant audiences. IOM currently makes internal displacement data available through its two primary web portals, displacement.iom.int and migration.iom.int. IOM also shares data on other public UN platforms like OCHA's Humanitarian Data Exchange,²⁹ where the data is standardized in Humanitarian Exchange Language to maximize usage and interoperability. IOM will build on these endeavors to produce useful data, and expand its efforts by creating tools to allow users to view and analyse data according to their needs, including augmented data visualization tools. As emerging data techniques become more integrated into IOM's work, IOM will focus on maintaining robust annotation and metadata practices for more complex data processes to be legible to actors seeking to better understand IOM's data analysis.

Strategic Priority 4.2: Data Literacy and Capacity-Building

As data continues to increase in volume, complexity, and importance in displacement-related operations, a greater degree of data literacy will be required of humanitarian practitioners. To meet this need, IOM has already joined the Steering Committee of EGRIS to promote National Statistics Offices' (NSOs') capacity-building efforts in IDP data, and has worked to help partners' data interpretation capability through its DTM and Partners Toolkit.³⁰ Building on these initiatives and partnerships, IOM will continue strengthening data capacity-building initiatives at country level and develop further training products to expand humanitarian data literacy in response to planning, execution, and evaluation. Member States' disaster management and civil protection bodies, as well as NSOs, are vital to this process.

²⁹ [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#).

³⁰ [DTM & Partners Toolkit](#).

Strategic Priority 4.3: Innovation

The techniques and capabilities of data science are rapidly advancing, with applications in humanitarian, development, and peace efforts that are not yet fully realized. Innovative uses of data in these fields tend to be ad hoc, driven as much by opportunities in expertise and funding as by recognized needs. Through internal mechanisms (see SP 2.1), IOM will proactively seek new opportunities for innovation in its operations and analysis of internal displacement data based on IDP needs, with attention to ethical concerns. Due to its structure and emphasis on staff entrepreneurship, IOM is fertile ground for such productive innovation. Moreover, global and regional DTM teams' focus on knowledge management and systems means that innovations are easily scalable through the management structure. Thus, through careful examination of the successes and areas for growth in innovative projects, IOM will continue to pioneer new, productive, and scalable approaches to internal displacement data.

Strategic Priority 4.4: Compliance and Impact

Over the next five years, IOM aims to strengthen its compliance and impact monitoring, both in terms of IOM's adherence to its own minimum technical standards (see SP 2.3), and its accountability to affected populations. To this end, IOM will conduct regular reviews of its programs' compliance with the Displacement Tracking Matrix Standards, Methodological Framework, Data Dictionary, and IOM Data Protection Manual to discern areas for compliance growth. Additionally, IOM will invest in methods to further understand affected populations' relationship with internal displacement data in terms of access, use, and feedback. By centring affected populations' experience with displacement data, IOM aims to strengthen its results-oriented approach and better monitor how IOM's data insights are implemented from the perspective of IDPs themselves. IOM will use these insights to maximize the impact of its internal displacement data efforts for displaced populations in localized contexts and globally.

Strategic Priority 4.5: Academic Output

IOM will strive for excellence in knowledge management, with an eye to deepening its own understanding of internal displacement processes, and that of the academic community. In 2021, IOM supports the establishment of the Data Responsibility Journal Series hosted at Yale University to explore the practical challenges, risks and opportunities of working on displacement data with academic rigor. The initiative is a step in extending IOM's capacity to support knowledge production and management on emerging trends with leading academic institutions. Building on this success and other valuable academic partnerships, IOM will aim to further strengthen its support with internal displacement data and other collaborations with academia.

Strategic Priority 4.6: Flagship Report

As IOM seeks to strengthen its overall capacity and leadership in internal displacement data, the institution requires a focal point that brings together all facets of IOM's evolving internal displacement data efforts into a comprehensive whole. IOM will incrementally develop an annual flagship report to meet this need and to bring together the full range of IOM's operational data activities alongside a

review of displacement data projects, impact indicators, and an exploration of areas for attention and innovation in the coming year. IOM's internal displacement data flagship report will thus complement the work of IDMC's Global Report on Internal Displacement by offering a meta-analysis and review of the production of IDP data around the world.

VI. The Path Forward

Implementing the IDDS will be an ongoing and iterative process spanning the full five-year timespan envisioned by the document. The four pillars of the IDDS are ambitious, highly interrelated, and mutually reinforcing, meaning that progress or delay in one area can impact others designed to work synergistically. IOM will strive for balance and rigor in ensuring that all four pillars are implemented in tandem.

Likewise, the IDDS aims to be adaptable and responsive to any unforeseen significant developments in internal displacement data. An unexpected ethical risk to data operations, for instance, could considerably reorient IOM's academic endeavors, and the immediate focus on data ethics and innovation. Accounting for this, the IDDS aims only to be an adaptable structure to productively organize and responsibly expand IOM's internal displacement data efforts. As mentioned, the IDDS is a strategic overview document that does not reach the level of implementation steps.

Accordingly, and in keeping with the document's emphasis on partnerships, the IDDS will be complimented with more granular operational plans, developed in collaboration with IOM's partners around the world. The IDDS's mid-point review will also act as an opportunity for IOM and partners to ensure the aims of the IDDS are well-designed and being achieved. Working together, IOM looks forward to internal displacement data being used with greater efficiency, accountability and humanity for the benefit of displaced persons everywhere.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Internal Displacement Data Strategy 2021–2025 supports relevant inter-agency initiatives, including the Joint Inter-Sectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF), the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP-ID), the GP20 Plan of Action, the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRIS), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for coordination of humanitarian response, the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), and the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) processes.

At the policy and inter-agency level, the New Way of Working, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UN Reform, the emphasis on the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus (HDPN) and commitments toward the implementation of the Grand Bargain, call for organizational, structural and functional adaptation. This process of change is also encompassed in this strategic course of action.

For more information for the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, see dtm.iom.int.

Key publications on Internal Displacement:

- [IASC Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement \(1999\)](#).
- [IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons \(2010\)](#).
- [IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework \(2012\)](#).
- [IOM Framework for Addressing Internal Displacement \(2017\)](#).
- [EGRIS International Recommendations on IDP Statistics \(2020\)](#).

Data science ethics in humanitarian contexts:

- [Humanitarian Data Science and Ethics Group \(DSEG\)](#).
- [The Signal Code: A Human Rights Approach to Information During Crisis \(2017\)](#).
- [The Signal Code: Ethical Obligations for Humanitarian Information Activities \(2018\)](#).

International Standards:

- [International Recommendations on IDP Statistics \(2020\)](#).

Data Protection and Responsibility:

- [IOM Data Protection Manual \(2010\)](#).
- [IASC Needs Assessment Ethos \(2019\)](#).
- [IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility \(2021\)](#).

Data Strategies:

- [Data Strategy of the Secretary General 2020–2022](#).
- [IOM 2020–2025 Migration Data Strategy](#).

See also:

- [DTM, “Methodological Framework used in Displacement Tracking Matrix Operations for Quantifying Displacement and Mobility” \(2020\)](#).
- [DTM Displacement Portal](#).
- [DTM and Partners Toolkit](#).

Afterword

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcomes the launch of the report, *Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future*, by the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. IOM commends the United Nations Secretary-General’s initiative in establishing the High Level-Panel and tasking it with recommending solutions to the global internal displacement crisis.³¹

IOM is also glad to see data recognized as central to the report’s recommendations. The aspiration to develop pathways where responsible country level data coordination can guide both standards and improvements in accountability is critical. Evidence and carefully managed data support the delivery of solutions for the internal displaced. Overall, the IOM Internal Displacement Data Strategy 2021- 2025 (IDDS) objectives and strategic priorities are reflected across the report and recommendations.

Within the report’s dedicated section on Internal Displacement Data, we have identified the following synergies between the actions listed in *Recommendation 7: Strengthen the effective use of internal displacement data*, and the Strategic Pillars of the IOM Internal Displacement Data Strategy. These are:

HLP on Internal Displacement – Recommendation 7: Strengthen the effective use of internal displacement data	IOM Internal Displacement Data Strategy Corresponding Strategic Pillars and Priority Areas
Governments should recognize data and evidence as critical to the design of effective policies, operational plans and responses to internal displacement and commit to an evidence-based approach to action.	Pillar 1 Assistance and Protection Data SP1.2 Data Use and Comprehensive Evidence Base
Governments should put in place processes and systems to collect, analyse and manage internal displacement data and, when necessary, be supported with financial and technical assistance to do so.	Pillar 1 Assistance and Protection Data SP1.3 Capacity-building and Support to National Institutions
All actors should prioritize the protection of sensitive data and ensure that their operations and systems are guided by strong data protection standards.	Pillar 2 Safeguards and Standards SP2.1 Ethics, Principles and Rights SP2.2 Data Governance, Data Protection and Data Security SP2.3 Minimum Technical Standards and Data Quality
Governments should provide space for international actors to collect and analyse data necessary for their operations	-
Country-specific internal displacement data working groups should be established, led or co-led by Governments where possible, to coordinate data collection and analysis between relevant data actors and to set out a strategy that outlines the priorities of each actor at different stages of the displacement cycle.	Pillar 3 Data Coordination SP3.1 Institutional Data Coordination SP3.2 Fragility, Solutions and Mobility Pillar 4 Use and Accountability SP 4.2 Data Literacy and Capacity-Building
International donors should increase financial support to in-country data efforts as well as to global-level efforts to better understand internal displacement trends.	-

³¹ UN, 2021 High Level Panel Report: *Shining A light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future*. Available at <https://www.internaldisplacement-panel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/HLP-report-WEB.pdf>

