

IOM MIGRATION DATA STRATEGY IN BRIEF

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

BACKGROUND

Quality, accessible, disaggregated, reliable and timely data are essential to inform policies, action and public opinion. The importance of data is well recognized and highlighted in multiple international frameworks, and the critical need for it is felt starkly in times of crisis, as the global COVID-19 pandemic has once again demonstrated. In today's complex and fast-changing environment, harnessing the power of data is key for sound policy and decision-making.

CONTEXT

IOM is in a unique position to mobilize the international community to help unlock the potential of data for stronger migration governance outcomes and positive impacts for migrants and societies. IOM has developed a comprehensive strategy – the Migration Data Strategy (MDS) – to frame, focus and further amplify its existing strong engagement on data towards this goal. The MDS seeks to leverage key strengths of IOM: its extensive global footprint, its deep understanding of the movement of people globally, relationship of trust with Member States and direct engagement with a wide range of beneficiaries, as well as its mandate within the United Nations system, most notably, as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration.

The Migration Data Strategy is part of broader organizational strategic planning: it is designed within the framework of the IOM Strategic Vision and is a crucial element to support its realization. It is also aligned with the data strategy of the Secretary-General, which aims to foster the individual and collective strengths of United Nations system entities.

This strategy covers within its scope all data that reflect the rich complexity characterizing movement of people today. It is guided by the IOM Constitution, the Charter of the United Nations and other international agreements and frameworks to which IOM 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 the Migration Data Strategy.

DATA VISION

A key IOM goal is to improve 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 by relevant stakeholders on their actions in support of relevant international frameworks. The Migration Data Strategy maps out a path for IOM to reach this goal and identifies three strategic objectives 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 objective has a specific focus, the three objectives are complementary; taken together, they offer a vision for IOM migration data-related activities.

DATA ACTION

The 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 around principled and responsible approaches to data, cooperation and innovation. 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. Where relevant, these efforts will be undertaken 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.

The Director General identified implementation of the MDS as a priority, including in the context of the COVID-19 response. Implementation of this strategy will support other immediate IOM priorities, such as its engagement with the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Internal Displacement, by ensuring IOM can leverage its capacity to further enhance data and evidence on internal displacement for more effective and informed policy and action. Targeted initiatives can be used to spearhead MDS implementation in these and other priority areas, for example to better capture data on migratory flows or to launch a comprehensive migration data capacity development programme.

IOM needs to be strengthened further if it is to be able to pursue these actions and realize the objectives of the Strategy. Internal governance, staff and institutional capacity, technical infrastructure and sustainable resourcing require critical attention. The Migration Data Strategy proposes several specific steps to achieve improvements 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. Efforts to address them will need to be taken forward together with and 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.

