

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA | PROFILE 2021

MIGRATION
GOVERNANCE
INDICATORS



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REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA | PROFILE 2021

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE INDICATORS



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



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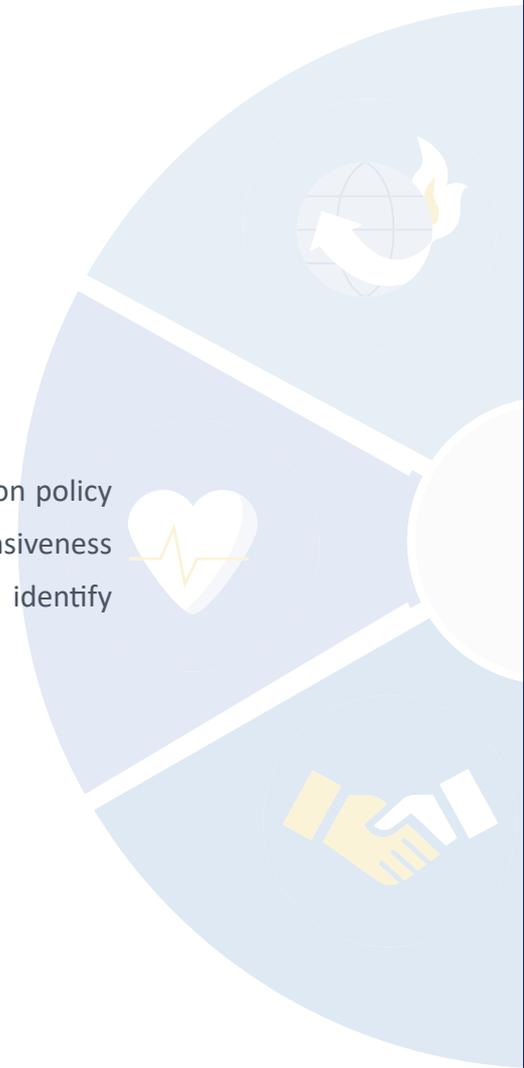
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OBJECTIVE

The MGI aims to support well-managed migration policy by helping countries assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures and identify priorities on the way forward.



The MGI can be used to spark a discussion with governments and other relevant stakeholders in the country on existing migration policy structures. It can help assess whether these structures, which have often been in place for several years, still address the main challenges and opportunities of today's reality.

INTRODUCTION

This is an era of unprecedented mobility, and the need to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility is becoming increasingly relevant.¹ The need to face the challenges and to maximize the opportunities that this mobility brings has been recognized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and development. Migration is integrated in a number of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, such as ending modern slavery and addressing the vulnerability of migrant workers. However, the central reference to migration in the SDGs is target 10.7 on facilitating “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”.²

The incorporation of target 10.7 into the 2030 Agenda created the need to define “planned and well-managed migration policies”. This is why, in 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). This Framework offers a concise view of an ideal approach that allows a State to determine what it might need to govern migration well and in a way that suits its circumstances.³ The Framework was welcomed by IOM Member States in the same year.

In an effort to operationalize the MiGOF, IOM worked with Economist Impact to develop the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI), a standard set of approximately 90 indicators to assist countries in assessing their migration policies and advance the conversation on what well-governed migration might look like in practice.

The MGI helps countries identify good practices as well as areas with potential for further development and can offer insights on the policy levers that countries can use to develop their migration governance structures. However, the MGI recognizes that all countries have different realities, challenges and opportunities that relate to migration. Therefore, the MGI does not rank countries on the design or implementation of their migration policies.

Finally, the MGI does not measure migration policy outcomes or institutional effectiveness. Instead, it takes stock of the migration-related policies in place and operates as a benchmarking framework that provides insights on policy measures that countries might want to consider as they progress towards good migration governance.

This country profile presents a summary of the well-developed areas of the migration governance structures of the Republic of Liberia (hereinafter referred to as Liberia), as well as the areas with potential for further development, as assessed by the MGI.⁴

The MGI Liberia country profile was reviewed, finalized and validated with the support and collaboration of the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme country office.

¹ IOM Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, Seventeenth Session (S/17/4 of 29 September 2015), Article 2.

² IOM Council, 106th Session, Migration Governance Framework (C/106/40 of 4 November 2015), page 1, footnote 1. Available at <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-40-Migration-Governance-Framework.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The MGI initiative is a policy-benchmarking programme led by IOM and implemented with the support of Economist Impact. Funding is provided by IOM Member States.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

MiGOF

The IOM MiGOF sets out the essential elements to support planned and well-managed migration. It seeks to present, in a consolidated, coherent and comprehensive way, a set of three principles and three objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, orderly, and benefits migrants and society.

At the basis of

PRINCIPLES

1. **Adherence** to international standards and fulfilment of migrants' rights.
2. **Formulates** policy using evidence and "whole-of-government" approach.
3. **Engages** with partners to address migration and related issues.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Advance** the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society.
2. **Effectively** address the mobility dimensions of crises.
3. **Ensure** that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

MGI

WHAT IT IS



A set of indicators that offers insights on policy levers that countries can use to strengthen their migration governance structures



A tool that identifies good practices and areas that could be further developed



A consultative process that advances dialogues on migration governance by clarifying what "well-governed migration" might look like in the context of SDG target 10.7

Which supports the measurement of

WHAT IT IS NOT



Not a ranking of countries



Not assessing impacts of policies



Not prescriptive



TARGET 10.7

"Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and **well-managed migration policies.**"



KEY

FINDINGS

The MGI is composed of around 90 indicators grouped under the 6 different dimensions of migration governance that draw upon the MiGOF categories:



MIGRANTS'
RIGHTS
PAGE 12

Indicators in this domain look at the extent to which migrants have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. It also looks at family reunification, access to work, and access to residency and citizenship. The international conventions signed and ratified are also included.



WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT
APPROACH
PAGE 14

Indicators in this area assess countries' institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks related to migration policies. This area also looks at the existence of national migration strategies that are in line with development objectives and overseas development efforts, as well as institutional transparency and coherence in relation to migration management.



PARTNERSHIPS
PAGE 16

This category focuses on countries' efforts to cooperate on migration-related issues with other States and with relevant non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations and the private sector.



WELL-BEING
OF MIGRANTS
PAGE 18

Indicators in this area assess countries' policies on the recognition of migrants' educational and professional qualifications, provisions regulating student migration and the existence of bilateral labour agreements between countries. Aspects of diaspora engagement in the country of origin and migrant remittances are also under this domain.



MOBILITY DIMENSION
OF CRISES
PAGE 20

This category looks at the type and level of preparedness of countries when they are faced with mobility dimensions of crises. The questions look at the processes in place for nationals and non-nationals both during and after disasters, including if humanitarian assistance is equally available to migrants as it is to citizens.



SAFE, ORDERLY
AND REGULAR
MIGRATION
PAGE 22

This area looks at countries' approach to migration management in terms of border control and enforcement policies, admission criteria for migrants, preparedness and resilience in the case of significant and unexpected migration flows, as well as the fight against trafficking in persons.



1

ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND FULFILMENT OF MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

1.1. International conventions ratified

Table 1. Signature and ratification of international conventions

Convention name	Ratified (Year)
International Labour Organization (ILO) Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	No
United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the Refugee Convention), 1951	Yes (1964)
United Nations conventions on statelessness, 1954 and 1961	Yes (1964, 2004)
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	No
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989	Yes (1993)
United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990	No
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	Yes (2004)

1.2. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Migrants with a regular status and emergency displaced migrants⁵ have the same access as citizens to Government-funded health services in Liberia. These migrants can receive certain medicines and essential health-care services, free of charge. The health-care system operates through a payment-upon-service system, where patients, most of whom are uninsured, are required to pay before consultation, hospital admission or treatment.

Migrants with a regular status have the same access as citizens to Government-funded education. In Liberia, basic education (namely, lower 1–6 grades and upper 7–9 grades) is provided free of charge, with fees only levied for tertiary education, as outlined in the Education Reform Act (2011). One of the key principles of the Education Reform Act is “equal access to educational opportunities and facilities for all citizens and residents [including migrants] to the extent of available resources”. It also lists one of the key functions of the Ministry of Education as providing quality education to all citizens and residents (migrants included), without discrimination.

Employed and self-employed migrants registered at the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation have access to the Employment Injury Scheme and the National Pension Scheme. Individuals can register via their employers or through voluntary contributions, as outlined in the National Social Security and

⁵ What Liberia considers as emergency displaced migrants are individuals who have either entered into Liberian territory from bordering countries or migrated internally within Liberia as a result of an abrupt crisis or emergency.

Welfare Corporation Act (2017). The Decent Work Act (2015) establishes that all persons who work or seek to work in Liberia are entitled to enjoy and exercise the rights and protections conferred by the act, regardless of their immigrant or temporary resident status. These provisions include access to old-age and cumulative service pensions, retirement packages, compensation for injury that leads to disability or death, maternity and parental leave, and paid sick leave, among others.

As outlined in the Aliens and Nationality Law (1974), individuals applying for admission to enter or for extension to remain in Liberia for a period of up to a year may bring their spouses or unmarried minor children if they are engaged in business or practice professions or vocations, or if they are professionals or skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled workers with contracts of employment.

1.3. Areas with potential for further development

The National Social Security and Welfare Corporation Act supports a reciprocal agreement to ensure portability of social security benefits with the government of another country having a similar social security scheme, with the aim to strengthen and protect the rights of insured persons and their families who intend to seek employment abroad. However, Liberia does not have agreements with other countries for the implementation of this provision yet.

The Decent Work Act establishes that employers shall not employ migrant workers unless they possess an employment permit issued by the Ministry of Labour, and that such a permit will be issued only if the Minister of Labour determines that there is no suitably qualified Liberian available to carry out the work as per the list of the National Bureau of Employment. Migrants must obtain a visa to live in Liberia before obtaining an employment permit. The Aliens and Nationality Law requires migrant workers to obtain the approval of the Minister of Justice and pay an authorization fee to change employment.

The maximum validity period of a resident permit is one year, but as of December 2021, the Government is in the process of updating legislation and instituting a resident permit that is valid for five years.

To be eligible for naturalization, migrants must be of “Negro descent”, continuously and lawfully reside in Liberia for at least two years, and renounce other nationalities, as outlined in the Aliens and Nationality Law.

Liberia does not have a policy or strategy to combat hate crimes, violence, xenophobia or discrimination against migrants. However, the Constitution (1986) provides that all persons, irrespective of ethnic background, race, sex, creed, place of origin or political opinion, are entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual that the Constitution guarantees. Moreover, the Decent Work Act prohibits discrimination at the workplace and provides for equal treatment of migrant workers in the same terms and conditions of employment as for nationals. Additionally, the Labor Law (1986) prohibits “any Liberian employee or employer to utter or direct any abusive language to or against any alien or his agents which reflects on his or her race”.



2

FORMULATES POLICY USING EVIDENCE AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

2.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Liberia's Diaspora Affairs Unit (DAU), under the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs and the Minister of State without Portfolio, was established in 2010 and has been active since 2015. The DAU is responsible for engaging the diaspora in Liberia's social, economic, and political growth and development. On 10 October 2016, the DAU drafted a Diaspora Engagement Policy to implement the Diaspora Engagement Program. As of December 2021, the Policy is at the stage of validation, and it seeks to facilitate the contribution of resources by the diaspora community to the health, education and public sectors of Liberia for the purposes of economic growth and development. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also engages with the diaspora as it is responsible for the protection of nationals abroad and has promoted the registration of the diaspora community. For instance, the Ministry of State without Portfolio has designated a Director to oversee the work with Liberian committees that are set up by the Diaspora Engagement Program in Canada, China, Ethiopia, Ghana and the United States of America.

Clear information about the process and requirements for obtaining a visa on arrival as well as the Aliens and Nationality Law (1974) are easily accessible online on the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) website as well as via Liberian embassies abroad.

The Liberia National Population and Housing Census includes questions on migration.⁶ The latest census, carried out in 2008 by the Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, included questions pertaining to birthplace, citizenship and length of residence. The 2008 Census Final Results report contains a section on international migration and immigrant stock, which presents data on the distribution of the foreign-born population disaggregated by country of birth, age, sex, duration of residence, and citizenship.

2.2. Areas with potential for further development

Liberia does not have an interministerial coordination mechanism on migration. Nonetheless, under the lead of the LIS, the National Migration Policy Taskforce – an interministerial coordination body that was established in 2012 and supported by the United Nations Development Programme – developed a draft National Policy on Migration in 2013.⁷ The Taskforce also includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Liberia National Police, National Investment Commission, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

There is no national migration strategy in Liberia; however, the Government is developing a new migration policy as of December 2021 under the leadership of the LIS and the newly reactivated National Migration Policy Taskforce. The new policy is expected to incorporate most of the contents of the previous draft National Policy on Migration. While much of the content in the previous draft remains relevant to the current situation pertaining to migration in Liberia, most of the information will be updated based on lessons learned, concerns and experiences in migration governance, and to reflect existing realities. Furthermore, the United Nations system in Liberia established a country-based United Nations Network on Migration for Liberia in August 2021 to “facilitate effective, timely and coordinated UN system-wide support to Liberia on the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”.⁸

⁶ The census is typically carried out every 10 years in Liberia. The Government is preparing to conduct a census in 2022.

⁷ The draft policy included measures regarding the development of procedures for nationals of member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to obtain ECOWAS residence cards or residence permits; the creation of different types of work permits; authorization for foreign workers to freely change employers; implementation of a modern automated border management information system; and revision and amendment of the Aliens and Nationality Law.

⁸ The United Nations established a Network on Migration to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to member States. In carrying out its mandate, the Network will prioritize the rights and well-being of migrants and their communities of destination, origin and transit.

There are limited efforts to enhance vertical policy coherence on migration in Liberia. Nonetheless, as part of the development of the previous draft National Policy on Migration and the new migration policy, local authorities have been involved on an ad hoc basis to contribute information, experience and concerns relating to migration governance.

Liberia does not regularly collect and publish migration-related data. Neither the Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services nor the LIS regularly collects or publishes migration data.

3

ENGAGES WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS
MIGRATION AND RELATED ISSUES

3.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Liberia is a member of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa – a regional consultative process to encourage member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to discuss common migration issues. It is also a member of the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (the Rabat Process), which brings together the European Commission, ECOWAS, and countries from Central, West and North Africa to tackle migration-related questions. Furthermore, Liberia is a member of the Pan-African Forum on Migration, engaging African Union member States, African Union regional economic communities, regional consultative processes in Africa, United Nations agencies, and intergovernmental organizations to discuss issues affecting migration governance in Africa and to shape and inform policy development as well as share experiences. Liberia is one of the member States of the United Nations that endorsed the Global Compact for Migration at an Intergovernmental Conference held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 10–11 December 2018.

Arrangements for intraregional mobility have been achieved through Liberia's implementation of the Treaty of ECOWAS (1975), which contains provisions for the free movement of people between member States. Implementation of the Treaty led to the establishment of a common passport in 2000 – the ECOWAS ePassport – which is the most widely used document for intraregional travel. Liberia also implements agreements promoting labour mobility – namely, the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (1979). Liberia implements the Protocol, which states that a citizen of a State within ECOWAS who possesses a valid travel document may enter and remain in another ECOWAS member State for up to 90 days without a visa.

Liberia is also a member of the Mano River Union (MRU), initially established between Liberia and Sierra Leone by the Mano River Declaration (1973), with Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire joining the MRU in 1980 and 2008, respectively. The MRU aims to promote political, economic and social ties among its member States, involving transboundary matters, including border communities and shared natural resources.

Liberia negotiates bilaterally on migration issues with Côte d'Ivoire – one of the main countries of origin for migrants in Liberia. Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire have a Joint Commission⁹ which focuses on cross-border security, technical vocational education, sanitation and urban development, agriculture, maritime delimitation and energy. The countries hold regular border security meetings which bring together security experts from both countries to find solutions to challenges along the shared border. Furthermore, there are policy actors' dialogue meetings between Liberian and Ivorian security, civil society groups, youth groups, and cross-border traders to facilitate the joint discussion and information-sharing exercise on the security situation on the shared border. These meetings have strengthened coordination between the two countries, especially among border security officers, regarding cross-border transactions.

Liberia formally engages members of the diaspora in agenda-setting and the formulation of development policy. For example, the draft Diaspora Engagement Policy was developed by the Diaspora Affairs Unit, following a series of consultative events involving diaspora communities in Ethiopia, Ghana and the United States. The draft Policy includes measures for the engagement of the diaspora – namely, the development of an institutional framework with the establishment of a National Diaspora Advisory Council, composed of government officials and representatives of diaspora organizations; the reduction of barriers to engagement through expansion of the use of town hall consultative meetings and cultural events in

⁹ More information is available at www.mofa.gov.lr/public2/2press.php?news_id=2771&related=7&pg=sp.

countries with large concentrations of the Liberian diaspora; and granting businesses owned by people in the diaspora preferential access to public procurement opportunities in order to increase investments and remittance flows. Additionally, between 2005 and 2009, Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission engaged with diaspora members during its investigation of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law. The diaspora unit is run by a Director designated by the Minister of State without Portfolio.

3.2. Areas with potential for further development

Liberia engages civil society organizations (CSOs) in migration-related issues, but mostly on an ad hoc basis through projects led by international organizations. For example, CSOs – such as Women in Cross-border Trade in Maryland County – were engaged in meetings held in 2018 and 2019 as part of the Cross-border Cooperation Project between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia for Sustainable Peace and Social Cohesion, which was conducted by the United Nations Development Programme and IOM and lasted 18 months. CSOs and community stakeholders are also engaged in the development process of the new draft national migration policy as of December 2021.

Liberia does not engage the private sector in agenda-setting or the implementation of migration-related issues. Private sector actors were also not involved in the development of the draft national migration policy.



4

ADVANCES THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY

4.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Liberia has a national assessment for monitoring the labour market demand for immigrants. All employers are required to hire employees from the “lists of qualified Liberian workmen and employees maintained by the Ministry of Labor and Labor Agents”, as outlined in the Labor Law (1986), with migrants being hired only when there are no Liberians capable of performing the role. The Ministry of Labour’s National Bureau of Employment establishes and maintains this list of employable and qualified Liberian persons. In practice, work permits are not denied on these grounds.

Liberia has a visa category to attract specific labour skills – namely, teaching skills. The Aliens and Nationality Law (1974) describes three work-related admissions: teacher, self-employed and employed. According to the Law, for admission as a teacher, the institution employing the migrant shall guarantee to the Minister of Justice that it will give sufficient compensation for personal maintenance and sufficient funds for repatriation.¹⁰ The Labor Law and the Decent Work Act (2015) allow for gratis work permits for migrants coming to the country to perform charitable skilled functions, such as teachers, doctors and nurses. These migrants obtain gratis work permits that enable them to gain equal access to the labour market in Liberia as citizens and residents.

Liberia’s National Gender Policy (2009) and its Employment Policy (2009) include measures to promote gender equality in the labour force, which also apply to migrants even if they are not specifically mentioned. The National Gender Policy mentions certain actions to be undertaken, including enacting and enforcing laws against gender discrimination in the labour market and in hiring, training and benefits; and launching legislative and administrative reforms to give women equal rights as men to economic resources such as land and other forms of property, finance, employment and appropriate working conditions. The Employment Policy aims at gender equality by setting strategic actions such as developing government monitoring and reporting on gender and employment, as well as identifying structural inequalities and introducing specific measures to address these.

International students in Liberia can work during their course of study, as established by the Aliens and Nationality Law. The Decent Work Act also provides for gratis work permits for international students, allowing them to work while living and studying in Liberia.

The Decent Work Act contains measures promoting the ethical recruitment of migrant workers. It provides that migrants shall have the same basic provisions as citizens regarding contracts of employment, and that during the recruitment process, foreign workers must be provided with information on the nature of their employment and working conditions in a language they can understand. The Act also provides for equal treatment of migrant workers and establishes that any provision of a contract of employment that discriminates against a foreign worker shall be cancelled. These regulations are enforced with the assistance and involvement of the tripartite labour institutions, which include the Government of Liberia, the Liberia Labour Congress and the Liberia Chamber of Commerce.

4.2. Areas with potential for further development

In 2010, the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) and the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organization, conducted the country’s first and only Labour Force Survey (LFS), which was initially planned,

¹⁰ The regular work permit is equally still applicable for teachers.

by law, to be conducted every five years. The LFS aimed to determine the size and composition of the labour force, covering questions on education and training, economic activity, employment, informal employment, unemployment and underemployment, usual activity, and other employment-related issues. The 2010 LFS included questions about nationality, although the 2011 report on the LFS does not contain data disaggregated by nationality. Prior to this, in 2007, the LISGIS conducted a Quarterly Establishments Survey (QES) which provided time-series data on the levels, trends and patterns of labour market indicators associated with the formal sector; however, it did not cover data on migration. The Ministry of Labour is engaging the International Labour Organization and other international development partners in discussions on the possibility of conducting another LFS as of December 2021.

Neither the QES nor the LFS gathers data on the labour market supply or on the effects of emigration on the domestic labour market.

International students can access university education in Liberia if they obtain a student visa, but they pay higher fees than citizens. Neither the Aliens and Nationality Law nor the Labor Law contains provisions allowing international students to work in Liberia after graduation. International students must follow the usual procedures of applying for a work permit to access employment.

Liberia does not actively promote the creation of formal remittance schemes. The Financial Sector Development Implementation Plan (FSDIP) (2016),¹¹ produced by the Central Bank of Liberia with the technical assistance of the World Bank Group, addresses remittances by highlighting the necessity of modernization of payment systems and digitalization of financial services, developing cross-border mobile payments capacity to support remittances and trade, and reassessing the remittance market against the General Principles for International Remittances Services (2007). One of the pillars of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2020–2024) – digital financial services – aims to establish initiatives to digitize remittances and facilitate digital termination of inward international remittances.¹² In 2000, the Central Bank of Liberia amended its regulations on remittances to allow the termination of inward remittances into mobile money accounts/wallets. In this regard, Lonestar Cell MTN and TipMe Liberia obtained approval to conduct remittances with direct termination into the beneficiaries' wallets/accounts.

¹¹ More information is available at www.firstinitiative.org/node/741.

¹² Inward remittances refer to the transfer of funds from a foreign jurisdiction to a person or an entity in Liberia.



5

EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSES THE MOBILITY DIMENSIONS OF CRISES

5.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) is responsible for the management and coordination of disaster response in Liberia, and it implements all legal and institutional frameworks to reduce national and local community vulnerabilities and disaster risks within the context of sustainable development.

Liberia makes exceptions to immigration procedures for refugees, as established by the Refugee Act (1993), and has also made exceptions on an ad hoc basis for other migrants whose respective countries of origin are experiencing crisis. The Refugee Act states that no proceedings shall be instituted or continued against any person or family member regarding their unlawful entry or presence in Liberia until a decision on their application for refugee status has been made and such person has exhausted the right of appeal. Furthermore, the Liberia Immigration Service has adapted measures to accommodate women and children in crisis. For example, it was flexible about visa overstays in times of health crises or political upheavals, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the violence prior to, during and after the recent presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire.

5.2. Areas with potential for further development

Liberia does not have a strategy with specific measures to aid migrants during crisis and post-crisis situations. While the National Disaster Management Policy (NDMP, 2012) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Strategy of Liberia (2020–2030), developed by the NDMA, guide national efforts to proactively prevent and manage disaster risks in order to minimize loss and damage through a whole-of-society approach, they do not specifically address migrants. Some of the key provisions and expected outcomes of the Strategy include, among others, an effective and coordinated response to disasters at both national and local levels, strengthened and effective seasonal planning to improve readiness for response, and reduced suffering among the affected communities by addressing immediate and life-saving needs, with special focus on the most vulnerable groups, based on the risk analysis. The Strategy also aims for the development of sectorial response plans and the identification of key gaps in the humanitarian system, and it provides an effective forum for collaboration between the Government and aid agencies in responding to emergencies caused by disasters.

Liberia has communication systems in place to provide the public with information on the evolving nature of crises, but these do not take into consideration the needs of migrants. An early-warning system was established in 2017 by the Environmental Protection Agency to collect and deliver weather information from 11 automatic weather stations across the territory. The information collected is transmitted by radio and the National Meteorological Centre website, which was established at the time of the development of the early-warning system. The country also has the Liberia Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN) – a conflict early-warning system maintained by the Liberia Peacebuilding Office. The LERN platform serves primarily as an archive of conflict and peacebuilding data, but individuals can receive alerts by mobile phone and/or email by registering on the LERN website.

Liberia does not have a national disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions for preventing and addressing displacement as a result of disasters. Its NDMP recognizes the challenges associated with a sudden influx of refugees and internally displaced people but does not address the displacement impacts of disasters.

Liberia does not have strategies in place to address migratory movements caused by the adverse effects of climate change. The NDMP recognizes environmental degradation as a type of disaster and that populations are displaced due to climate change, but its actions do not focus on the migration linked to this degradation. Instead, it focuses on the urban and rural planning needed to mitigate the impact of this degradation. The *National Policy and Response Strategy on Climate Change (2018)* recognizes involuntary migration due to climate change but does not include measures to address it. It also focuses on urban and rural planning to achieve sustainability in urbanization and settlement developments to adapt to the climate. The National Environmental Action Plan for 2019–2023, developed in 2019 by the Environmental Protection Agency, addresses displacement and resettlement and proposes the development of an Environmental and Social Management Framework, a Resettlement Policy Framework, and resettlement legislation specifically tailored to the Liberian context. However, it does not address migration associated with environmental degradation and climate change. The proposed policy framework seeks to ensure that a sound and realistic environmental and social impact assessment is implemented and approved in regard to development initiatives that may result in displacement and resettlement of individuals and communities.

Liberia's draft Multi-Hazard Contingency Plan (MHCP), developed by the NDMA in 2018, contains measures to manage large-scale population movements in times of crisis. The draft MHCP considers the likelihood and potential outcomes of, and required responses to, the six most common and dangerous crises possible in Liberia – flooding, fires, coastal erosion, epidemics, storms and conflict – and considers large-scale population movements as part of this. Risk profiles for flooding and windstorms include estimates of the potential number of people internally displaced by the events. The response plan for flooding, designed to satisfy the immediate needs of affected persons, establishes objectives for preparedness in terms of shelter and non-food items. The draft MHCP aims for the development of local-level plans for the creation of shelters following a flood, fire or sea erosion event displacing people, which should operate for the first month following the disaster, while considering the capacities of local and national-level actors. According to the draft MHCP, during the first quarter of 2018, the NDMA was to complete planning for 5 shelter sites each for fire and erosion events, and 10 shelter sites for flooding. However, due to funding constraints, this has not yet been done as of December 2021. As such, victims of disasters are temporarily sheltered in public buildings such as schools and religious facilities.



6

ENSURES THAT MIGRATION TAKES PLACE IN A SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MANNER

6.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Liberia Immigration Service (LIS), under the Ministry of Justice, is the lead agency responsible for coordinating the implementation of migration policy as well as border control and security. The Ministry of Justice, through the LIS, is also responsible for overseeing the administration of the Aliens and Nationality Law (1974), which safeguards and protects the air, land, and sea borders of Liberia against the irregular entry of migrants, especially in relation to their admission, residency, deportation and naturalization. The Liberia Immigration Service Act (2015) further establishes that the LIS shall enforce laws and regulations relating to immigration, citizenship, naturalization and connected matters. The remit of the LIS includes guarding and protecting borders and boundaries against irregular entry; managing air, land, sea and other border posts; admitting travellers; assisting government agencies to conduct background checks and vetting of international travellers; issuing resident and other permits; monitoring and regulating the movement of migrants entering and residing in Liberia; and countering migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.

Liberian border staff are regularly trained in migration-related issues by the Government and international partners. According to the Liberia Immigration Service Act, a person is eligible to become an immigration officer if they have successfully undertaken a basic immigration course at the Liberia Immigration Service Academy and Training School, or an equivalent institution. The Government of Liberia, with the support of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, also offered immigration officers regular training in fraud detection, border management, Economic Community of West African States Protocols, and HIV/AIDS and Ebola awareness, among other topics, between 2015 and 2016. International governments have provided training to border staff as well. For example, in 2017 and 2021, Egypt funded training in counter-terrorism and transnational organized crimes, border security, and management; and China provided training in investigative techniques, intelligence gathering, report writing and border crimes. Furthermore, training has been provided by international partners on an ad hoc basis. For example, in 2019, officers, including border security, received a three-week training under the joint programme of the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,¹³ with the aim of supporting the Government to enhance critical justice and security sector reforms and improve the delivery of justice, security and protection services. In 2015, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and IOM trained 25 officers in intense border screening with the aim of protecting borders against the recurrence of Ebola and other infectious diseases. In addition to this, 296,736 travellers, migrants, vulnerable communities, cross-border women, and community volunteers from border communities, including 17 official and 2 unofficial points of entry, were reached through community engagement and inter-county/district coordination awareness campaigns against the spread of COVID-19 as of December 2021.

The act to ban trafficking in persons within the Republic of Liberia (or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2005) prohibits and establishes penalties for trafficking, and it institutes monetary restitution for survivors for the costs of medical and psychological treatment; physical and occupational therapy and rehabilitation; transportation; temporary housing; lost income; attorney's fees; and emotional distress, pain and suffering. The Government of Liberia's Second National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) for the period 2019–2024, which is implemented by the National Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce (headed by the Ministry of Labour), follows the Action Plan (2013–2019). The latter aimed to respond to the objectives of the Government's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018) – the country's national development plan – and to make activity against trafficking more resilient to shocks. Developed by the Ministry of Labour, the NAPTIP identifies several challenges relating to trafficking, including inadequate

¹³ More information is available at www.ohchr.org/en/countries/technical-cooperation/partnership.

border security/migration structures; prevalent domestic trafficking; and gaps in public awareness, services for victims and budgetary support. The NAPTIP sets measurable objectives in four areas: prevention of trafficking (including the provision of awareness campaigns and training programmes for migration and law enforcement personnel); protection of victims of trafficking (through provision of shelter, non-food items, and medical and legal aid, along with detection of victims through a hotline and website); prosecution of traffickers (with a focus on training and strengthening relevant enforcement agencies as well as regular review of legal instruments); and collaborations between Liberian agencies and international partners. The NAPTIP establishes the empowerment of women as a guiding principle. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act was initially amended in 2012. In August 2021, the Act was further amended by the Legislature and forwarded to the President of Liberia for approval and printing in handbills.

Liberian legislation contains measures to combat migrant labour exploitation. The Decent Work Act (2015) prohibits forced labour and sexual harassment, sets a minimum wage, and establishes the employer's duty to secure the safety, health and welfare of employees. The Act states that migrants are entitled to enjoy all its provisions. The act to ban trafficking in persons within the Republic of Liberia prohibits and establishes penalties for trafficking for the purposes of exploitation – meaning, among other things, keeping a person in slavery; subjecting a person to practices like slavery; compelling or causing a person to provide forced labour or services; and keeping a person in a state of servitude, including sexual servitude.

6.2. Areas with potential for further development

Liberia does not have a system in place to monitor visa overstays. The LIS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs operate a Migration Information and Data Analysis System – a software that enables them to collect, process and record migrants' information – but they are not able to monitor visa overstays.

Liberia does not have a policy to ensure that migrant detention is used only as a measure of last resort. Under the Aliens and Nationality Law, migrants who do not possess visas and seek entry as residents must be held in detention, or on parole or bail until the case is examined.

There is no formal government programme or policy that facilitates the reintegration of returning migrants. However, such measures existed after the 1999–2003 Civil War and were carried out by the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission – a government entity established by the Refugee Act (1993) and which is responsible for ensuring the welfare of all refugees and displaced persons in Liberia regardless of nationality. For example, the National Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy (2004) outlines actions to support the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced persons, refugees and ex-combatants, although there is no evidence of their implementation.

While there are no formal governmental programmes focused on attracting nationals who have migrated from Liberia, returning migrants who have lived abroad for two or more years are eligible for a duty waiver on specific items – mainly on their used personnel effects.

Liberia does not have policies or procedures in place for the timely identification of migrants in vulnerable situations, or for tracing and identifying missing migrants, although certain agencies with anti-trafficking responsibilities conduct limited activity in this area. The Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce, which was established in 2005, has standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide its work, and these briefly mention the identification of victims of trafficking. These SOPs charge the Taskforce with sharing information among agencies to identify victims, monitoring any misuse of commercial transport for the purposes of trafficking in persons, and providing training for lawyers, social and health workers, medical practitioners and others, involving the identification of victims. Furthermore, the SOPs charge the Ministry of Health (also a member of the Taskforce) with “monitoring all regions of Liberia with the purpose of identifying victims of trafficking”.



PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

This annex summarizes key national COVID-19 policy responses in Liberia from a migration governance perspective. It is based on 12 questions that were added to the standard Migration Governance Indicators (MGI)¹ assessment in the country in order to effectively assess national migration governance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



All migrants, regardless of status, have the same access as citizens to COVID-19-related health services. Regarding COVID-19 testing, the only distinction made by the National Public Health Institute of Liberia is between non-travellers and incoming and outgoing travellers, with only non-travellers being eligible for a free test.² Liberia commenced vaccinations against COVID-19 in April 2021,³ with the first vaccination groups including front-line health workers, members of the Legislature, individuals aged 60 and above, and people with comorbidities.⁴ Migrants are not excluded from vaccinations.



Migrants have the same access as nationals to social security support measures offered in the context of COVID-19. The COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme, aimed at tackling food insecurity triggered by the pandemic, does not exclude migrants from its beneficiaries.⁵ Migrants are also not excluded from the Ministry of Education and the World Food Programme's provision of take-home rations for schoolchildren and their families during school closures.^{6,7}



The Liberia Immigration Service adopted measures to extend visas during the COVID-19 crisis, granting visa extensions and taking a flexible approach to visa overstays during the pandemic. This is still in place as of December 2021.⁸

¹ More information is available at www.migrationdataportal.org/overviews/mgi#0.

² National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL), Republic of Liberia COVID-19 Testing Protocol for Travelers. 18 June 2021. Available at www.nphil.gov.lr/index.php/covid-19-travel-guidance/.

³ World Health Organization, Liberia launches vaccination against COVID-19. 1 April 2021. Available at www.afro.who.int/news/liberia-launches-vaccination-against-covid-19.

⁴ Ministry of Health, COVID-19 vaccines launch. 2 April 2021. Available at <https://moh.gov.lr/press-release/2021/covax-vaccines-launch/>.

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in Liberia: Effects, policy responses and long-term implications (Rome, 2020). Available at www.fao.org/3/cb2114en/CB2114EN.pdf.

⁶ World Food Programme (WFP), Liberia: Country brief (April–July 2020). Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000119822.pdf>.

⁷ WFP, Liberia: Country brief (January 2021). Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP%20Liberia%20Country%20Brief%2C%20January%202021.pdf>.

⁸ Liberia Immigration Service (LIS), Protecting Liberia's borders with professionalism. Available at <http://lis.gov.lr/>.



PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Information and data related to COVID-19 are shared by the Ministry of Health and the Public Health Institute only in English. The information available concerns COVID-19 case numbers, symptoms, prevention, treatment and surveillance actions.^{9,10,11}



Liberia introduced measures to facilitate the continued flow of remittances during the COVID-19 pandemic. In December 2019, the Government suspended the remittances split policy whereby 25 per cent of inward remittances received by commercial banks are converted to Liberian dollars, and this policy has remained suspended during COVID-19.¹² The suspension of the policy remains enforced as of December 2021. The Central Bank of Liberia also amended regulations to support the introduction of digital credit and the digital transfer of remittances, allowing transfers to be deposited directly into mobile wallets or bank accounts, as opposed to being paid out in cash, since August 2020.¹³



There are no measures in place to support the return and reintegration of nationals and residents who may be stranded abroad as a result of COVID-19. However, IOM, in collaboration with the Government, has supported Liberian nationals stranded abroad on two instances – with Liberians among a group of 114 migrants evacuated by air from Algeria in August 2020, and a group of 13 migrants who received food aid and medical support from the Organization in May 2020 as well as support for registering for repatriation.^{14,15}

⁹ Ministry of Health, Coronavirus (COVID-19) situational reports. Available at <http://moh.gov.lr/documents/reports/covid-19-reports/>.

¹⁰ NPHIL, About corona virus: COVID-19. Available at www.nphil.gov.lr/index.php/about-covid-19/.

¹¹ NPHIL, COVID-19 situation reports. Available at www.nphil.gov.lr/index.php/covid-19-situation-report/.

¹² World Bank, *The COVID-19 Crisis in Liberia: Projected Impact and Policy Options for a Robust Recovery* (Monrovia, 2020). Available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34271/Liberia-Economic-Update-The-COVID-19-Crisis-in-Liberia-Projected-Impact-and-Policy-Options-for-a-Robust-Recovery.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>.

¹³ *Daily Observer*, MTN Liberia launches international remittances direct to mobile money accounts. 4 August 2020. Available at <https://allafrica.com/stories/202008050346.html>.

¹⁴ IOM, 114 Ivorians, Guineans, Liberian migrants return home from Algeria amid COVID-19 with IOM assistance. 1 September 2020. Available at www.iom.int/news/114-ivorians-guineans-liberian-migrants-return-home-algeria-amid-covid-19-iom-assistance.

¹⁵ IOM, IOM supports migrants stranded on Cote d'Ivoire–Ghana border; border officials trained and equipped amid COVID-19 crisis. 12 May 2020. Available at www.iom.int/news/iom-supports-migrants-stranded-cote-divoire-ghana-border-border-officials-trained-and-equipped.





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ANNEXES

MiGOF: Migration Governance Framework¹⁴

In an attempt to define the concept of “well-managed migration policies”, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) devised a Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which was welcomed by the IOM Council in November 2015. For the purposes of the Migration Governance Framework, IOM defines governance as “the traditions and institutions by which authority on migration, mobility and nationality in a country is exercised, including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies in these areas”.

The Framework sets out the essential elements of “good migration governance” – 3 principles and 3 objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, safe and orderly, and that it provides benefits for migrants and societies.¹⁵ IOM’s view is that a migration system promotes migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society:

When it:

- (i) Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants’ rights;
- (ii) Formulates policy using evidence and a “whole-of-government” approach;
- (iii) Engages with partners to address migration and related issues.

As it seeks to:

- (i) Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
- (ii) Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises;
- (iii) Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

The MiGOF does NOT create new standards or norms. In drafting the Framework, IOM relied on its expertise and analytical work, as well as on existing commitments, non-binding declarations and statements. It does NOT address global migration governance that is the international architecture for dealing with issues related to migration and human mobility. Instead, the focus is on the governance and management of migration from the point of view of the State as the primary actor. It does NOT propose one model for all States. The Framework presents a “high road” or ideal version of migration governance, to which States can aspire.

The MiGOF is based on the understanding that, as the primary actor in migration, mobility and nationality affairs, a State retains the sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in its territory and under what conditions, within the framework of international law. Other actors – citizens, migrants, international organizations, the private sector, unions, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, religious organizations and academia – contribute to migration governance through their interaction with States and each other.

¹⁴ IOM Council, Migration Governance Framework, 106th Session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015). Available at <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-40-Migration-Governance-Framework.pdf>.

¹⁵ Migration Governance Framework infosheet (2016). Available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-governance-framework>.

The MGI process



1 Launch of the MGI process

The first step of the process is to explain what the MGI entails to key government officials, in order to ensure full understanding of the project and complete buy-in.



2 Data collection

The second step of the process is to start the collection and analysis of data, based on about 90 indicators grounded in the 6 dimensions of the MiGOF. A migration governance profile based on the analysis of the findings is then drafted and shared with the government counterparts.



3 Interministerial consultation

The third step of the process is to convene an interministerial consultation where all relevant ministries and other stakeholders discuss the good practices and main areas that could be developed further as identified in the draft migration governance profile, as well as priorities on the way forward. It is also an opportunity for them to comment and provide suggestions on the draft profile.

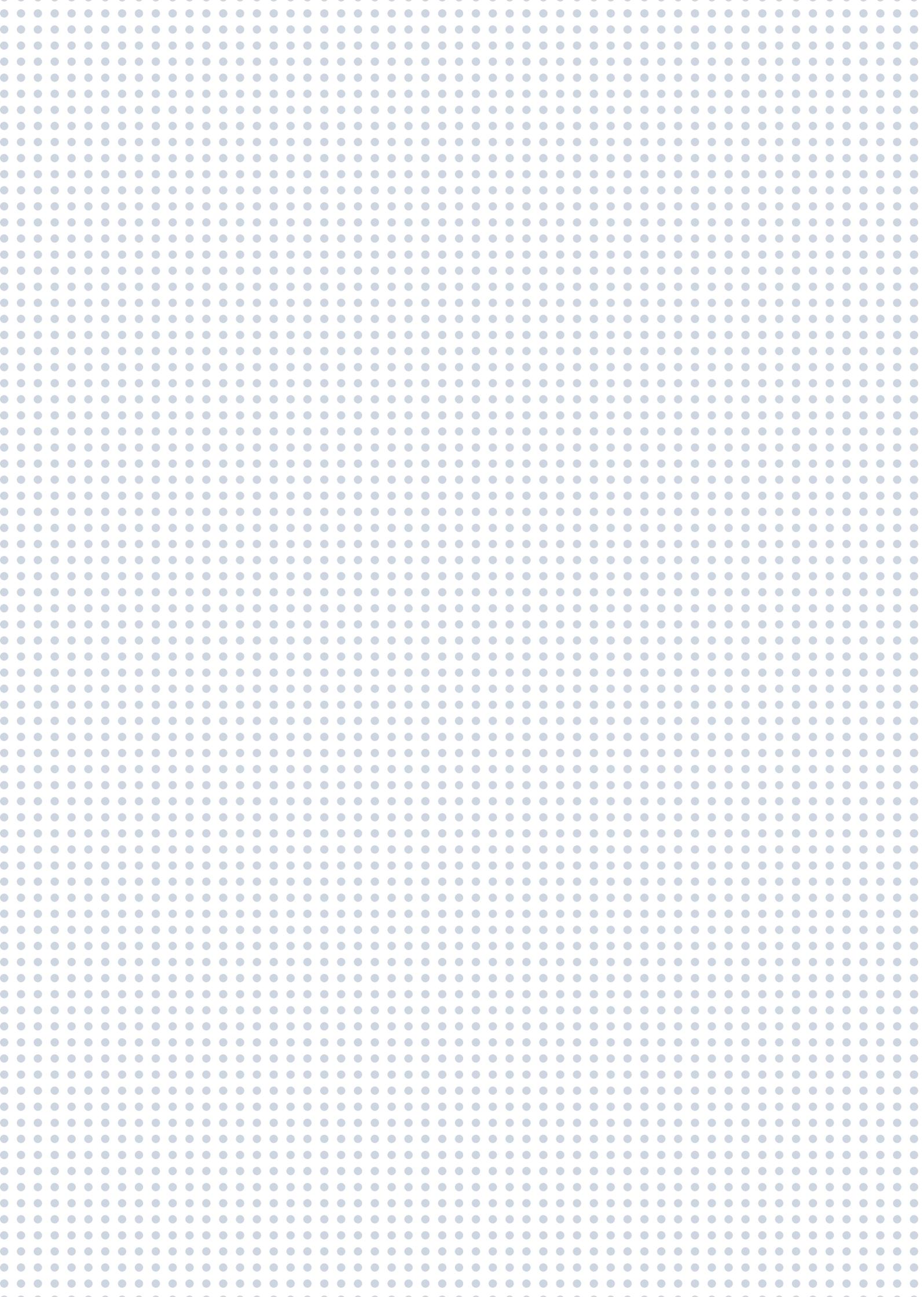


4 Publication of the report on the Global Migration Data Portal

After the migration governance profiles are finalized and vetted by government counterparts, they are published on the Global Migration Data Portal¹⁶ and uploaded on the IOM Publications Platform.¹⁷

¹⁶ You can find the profiles at <https://migrationdataportal.org/overviews/mgi#0>.

¹⁷ Please see <https://publications.iom.int/>.





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