Assessment of National Migration Data in Mauritius

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Assessment of National Migration Data in Mauritius

Commissioned by the International Organization for Migration

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Acronyms

CSO	civil society organization
EDB	Economic Development Board
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	key informant interview
MIDSA	Ministerial Dialogue for Southern Africa
MTWG	National Migration Data Technical Working Group
NMSC	National Migration and Development Steering Committee
PIO	Passport and Immigration Office
PMO	Prime Minister's Office

Executive Summary

There is a growing need for data to guide decision-making. *Migration in Mauritius: A Country Profile 2013* acknowledges that Mauritius is a country of both origin and destination for international migration that is challenged by inadequate data to elaborate migration policy that is capable of informing socioeconomic development. One challenge is the limited availability of reliable, disaggregated and comparable data to inform the design, development and evaluation of migration policies, which affects efforts to provide services for different groups of people in the country.

To address these challenges, IOM, in coordination with government stakeholders in Mauritius, initiated the assessment of national migration data to contribute to more evidence-based management strategies and policies to address mixed-migration challenges in the country. The assessment was conducted using a combination of methods, including a desk review of the literature, open-ended questionnaires, key informant interviews, stakeholder consultations and a workshop.

The findings from the assessment include the following:

(a)   Data collection and analysis in the area of migration is largely based on data collected in the form of responses to census questions on place of current usual residence and place of usual residence five years prior.

(b)   International migration data is collected from records of permits, which are of various types, including permanent residence permits and occupation permits.

(c)   Other types of data collected are those collected at border control points, including data contained in passports, and which are used to inform residence permits.

(d)   The administrative databases that compile information on residence and occupation permits are thus valuable sources of various statistics on international migration.

The migration data assessment exercise notes good practices in Mauritius that can be replicated in other countries. These include: (a) putting sufficient questions in the census questionnaire; (b) dedicating a whole monograph to the analysis of migration issues from the 2011 census; and (c) establishing two information desks in 2017 and 2018 to provide information about the various services available in Mauritius to migrants from Rodrigues Island.

The assessment shows that there is a wealth of data collected and stored in Mauritius. However, some issues were noted with respect to the dissemination of data, as well as the harmonization of data, including the absence of a harmonization mechanism.

The frequency of the national census, conducted every 10 years, and the limited detailed statistics on Mauritians living abroad and their contributions to national development were among the gaps identified in migration data in Mauritius.

With a view to enhancing migration data management in the Republic of Mauritius, the following measures are recommended:

(a)   Improve the quality and reliability of data collected from existing data sources and explore new data sources, including big data, by bringing the private sector (which could include private agencies engaged in labour migration) on board the system.

(b)   Create a National Migration Data Technical Working Group to support continuous and consistent revision of the national Migration Profile exercise, preferably every three or five years.

(c)   The National Migration and Development Steering Committee should implement a migration data management strategy that includes creating an inventory of migration data sources for the identification and evaluation of all existing administrative data on migration.

(d)   Explore the enhancement of the "Info Highway" through the use of open-access online software for data-sharing and networking based on an agreed-upon common architecture, and of national and international standards for migration data-mining, a flexible, open-source database, and data-sharing software.

(e)   Promote consistent development and inclusion of standard, internationally comparable migration modules in surveys, such as those in the census, as well as the labour force survey.

(f)   Statistics Mauritius should put on its agendas for discussion the following: (i) scenarios for the possible future use of administrative data in the production of official statistics, (ii) requirements with regard to an adequate legislative framework and (iii) the development of methods to ensure safe and proper use of migration data.

1. Introduction

1.1   Background

Among the major issues pertaining to migration management in Southern Africa is the limited availability of reliable, disaggregated and comparable data to inform the design, development and evaluation of migration policies.[1] There is growing interest, specifically at the State level, in strengthening data availability in member States of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). There is little data disaggregated by age, sex or country of origin, let alone according to more specific information such as education level or access to services. In addition, even where data is available, it is often fragmented and disconnected, and not shared between stakeholders. The lack of and disintegration of data hampers efforts to provide services for different groups of people in the country. The international community included migration-relevant targets in the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and adopted the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact for Refugees in 2018. This need stems from the recommendations of the Ministerial Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA) held in Eswatini in September 2017, encouraging member States to "build capacities to collect and analyse migration data to strengthen evidence-based policymaking".

In Mauritius, analysis of migration is based on data collected through the 2011 census questions on place of current usual residence and place of usual residence five years prior. While analysis of internal migration takes into account movements between municipal wards and village council areas, analysis of international migration considers change of place of usual residence to another country. Between 2006 and 2011, 94,218 (8.1% of the total population aged five years and over) changed their place of residence to a different area within the country, compared to 25,000 (2.1%) of the population who reported that they were living abroad in 2006.

International migration data is collected from records of issued permits, which are of various types, including permanent residence permits and occupation permits. Other types of data collected are those collected at border control points, including data contained passports, and these are used to inform residence permits. The administrative databases that compile information on permits are thus valuable sources of various statistics on international migration.

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1   Details are available in the Terms of Reference.

The Government of Mauritius established the National Migration and Development Steering Committee (NMSC) to increase coherence at the institutional and policy levels. This was followed by the development of the National Migration and Development Policy 2018, which includes strengthening the role of the NMSC to ensure increased coordination among government agencies towards the achievement of its goals, exchanging data on a regular basis and creating coherence and synergies among various institutions. However, the NMSC operates at the policy level, with limited technical involvement.

While migration data is relatively available in Mauritius, it is difficult to compare data collected by different institutions, hence the need for data harmonization. IOM has supported the assessment of national migration data in Mauritius to support evidence-based management strategies and policies to address the challenges presented by mixed migration.

1.2   Objectives of the assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to contribute to evidence-based management strategies and policies to address migration data harmonization challenges and provide actionable recommendations. Specifically, the assessment is aimed at:

(a)   Reviewing the existing migration data landscape in Mauritius;
(b)   Identifying gaps in migration data, the causes of such gaps, and the steps or actions necessary to assist Mauritius to obtain needed data;
(c)   Analysing in-depth collection and storage of data, the type of data collected, how it is stored, the frequency of such data collection, and for how long the data is collected;
(d)   Proposing implementable recommendations regarding the improvement of data collection, analysis and dissemination systems.

1.3   Methodological approach to the assessment

This assessment is carried out through a combination of methods (methodological triangulation), including a desk review, open-ended questions, key informant interviews (KIIs) and a stakeholder consultation workshop.

Desk review. A review of the literature was undertaken to collect data and information from existing policies, strategies and surveys, as well as previous study reports, to identify existing definitions of migration, various sources of migration

data in Mauritius, migration stakeholders, priority data collected, data fragmentation, migration data gaps and causes of these gaps, and how gaps can be addressed to ensure a systematic migration data system.

Open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to be administered, via email, among key migration data stakeholders in Mauritius, with support from IOM and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). It allowed for the collection of information on the nature and types of data collected by the respondents' institutions; the legal and policy framework governing migration; available data sources; innovations in migration data management; migration data analysis, dissemination and use; inter-agency coordination of migration data; and the national migration data strategy in Mauritius. The respondents to the questionnaire are members of the NMSC and are purposively selected with the help of the PMO due to their involvement in migration data.

Semi-structured interviews. Virtual and in-person interviews are conducted with key informants purposively selected from among migration data stakeholders – specifically those institutions that form part of the NMSC. Thirteen institutions (Table 1) participated in the study and gave an in-depth understanding of migration data collection, storage and dissemination, as well as the existing gaps in migration data, and how these gaps could be addressed.

Table 1. Institutions which participated in the assessment of migration data

No.	Institution	Rationale for selecting the institution
1.	Economic Development Board (EDB)	EDB has data on the number of permits issued under two categories (occupation permit and residence permit).
2.	Bank of Mauritius	The Bank of Mauritius regularly collects data and publishes remittance statistics.
3.	Prime Minister's Office (PMO)	The PMO coordinates with institutions that collect migration data.
4.	Prime Minister's Office – Information Technology Department	The Information Technology Department of the PMO is the custodian of the latest information on Mauritian citizens, including civil data such as surname, first name, date of birth, gender, marital status and address, as well as their ID photographs.
5.	Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity – Social Integration Division	The ministry provides a range of services through the National Pensions Scheme, the National Savings Fund and the National Solidarity Fund – all of which cover migrants.
6.	Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development	The ministry provides funds needed for migration data collection, analysis and reporting.

No.	Institution	Rationale for selecting the institution
7.	Statistics Mauritius	Statistics Mauritius is the national statistics office and collects migration data through census and household surveys.
8.	The Commission for Social Security (Rodrigues Island)	The commission deals with data on employment, labour and industrial relations, protection, trade and commerce, vulnerable persons and migrant workers, and social aid and assistance for migrant workers on Rodrigues Island.
9.	Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training	The ministry is responsible for the collection of data on the number of vacancies and placements made by private recruitment agencies on a quarterly basis under the Recruitment of Workers Act of 1993. It is also responsible for keeping data on the number of work permits issued to foreign citizens and foreigners exempted from work permits.
10.	The Police Department	The Police Department enforces the law of the land, and police officers get to interact with migrants from time to time.
11.	Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology	The ministry keeps data on students moving out of the country to pursue studies and/or undergo training abroad and foreign students coming to the country to study at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
12.	Passport and Immigration Office (PIO)	The PIO collects data on passengers coming to or leaving Mauritius.
13.	IOM Mauritius	IOM is the agency conducting the assessment.

Face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with selected institutions to get an in-depth understanding of migration issues in Mauritius. These institutions include the PMO, Statistics Mauritius, IOM, the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, and the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training.

1.4   Data analysis

The desk review analysed the existing or current scenario as regards migration data collection, available data sources, migration data storage, migration data analysis, migration data stakeholders, migration data gaps and their causes, and how the gaps can be addressed. Based on the data collected from the questionnaire and KIIs, themes were identified for the purpose of analysis. The themes also provided an insight into the different components of the assessment.

Audio-recorded qualitative data obtained from the KIIs was transcribed using intelligent verbatim transcription and encoded in Microsoft Word. It was then analysed using thematic and content analysis techniques.

1.5   Limitations and mitigation measures

The exercise was subject to some limitations, to which appropriate measures were taken to mitigate their effects:

(a)   The closure of borders due to COVID-19 delayed the planned face-to-face interviews and stakeholder workshop, which was meant to promote stakeholder ownership of the process, as well as the sustainability of the initiatives proposed in the recommendations. This was addressed by the flexibility of IOM in approving a revised timeline for the assessment.

(b)   The response rates to the survey questionnaire and interviews were low. The consultant used the face-to-face interviews and the stakeholder workshop to gather as much information as possible from stakeholders.

2. Key assessment findings

The migration data assessment identified several good practices, gaps and challenges with respect to migration data management. The report also explores solutions to identified gaps. Physical stakeholder consultations were conducted from 16–19 November 2021 in Port Louis, Mauritius, in addition to the virtual stakeholder engagements conducted earlier. This chapter presents a summary of the discussions and recommendations.

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for Mauritius to have timely, quality, reliable and disaggregated data to support policies and facilitate national development while achieving broader development goals related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact for Migration, MIDSA recommendations and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, among others.

2.1 Migration data collection and analysis

2.1.1 Sources of migration statistics
Population census. The main source of migration data in Mauritius is the population census, which collects individual migrants' data, including sex, age, country of origin, education, disability, occupation, employment status and economic sector.

Sample surveys. The Government of Mauritius collects data on migrant workers through the Survey of Employment, Earnings and Hours of Work in Large Establishments, with such data disaggregated by sex and average monthly wage.

Border data collection system. Migration data is collected by the Passport and Immigration Office (PIO). The PIO is a branch of the Mauritius Police Force and works under the guidance of the PMO, as well as the Commissioner of Police. The PIO is the sole authority in Mauritius empowered to provide passport and immigration services.

Residence permits. The administrative databases that compile information on permits are valuable sources of various statistics on international migration due to their ample coverage, the limited costs entailed and the availability of data in an electronic format. In Mauritius, the PIO has been delegated by the PMO to issue residence permits to foreigners.

Occupational permits. The occupational permit is a combined work and residence permit that allows non-nationals to reside and work in Mauritius. It is issued under three specific categories: (a) investor, (b) professional and (c) self-employed. Migration data relates to the number of occupational permits issued over a period of time, disaggregated by sex, sector and occupation.

Work permits. A work permit is a legal document authorizing a person, under certain conditions, to take up employment in Mauritius. The Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act 1973 stipulates that "a non-citizen shall not engage in any occupation in Mauritius for reward or profit or be employed in Mauritius unless there is in force in relation to him a valid permit, and he engages in the occupation or is employed in accordance with any condition which may be specified in the permit". The act also stipulates that "no person shall have a non-citizen in his employment in Mauritius without there being in force a valid permit in relation to that employment".

2.1.2   Existing good practices in migration data sources in Mauritius

Sufficient questions in the census questionnaire. The 2011 census questionnaire included a schedule of questions that were used to identify certain categories of migrants. While some countries have only two to three questions on migration in their census questionnaires, Mauritius included 11 questions on migration in its 2011 census questionnaire.

Migration data analysis. Mauritius produced a monograph dedicated to the analysis of migration data from the 2011 census.

Information and support desks. Mauritius established two information and support desks on Rodrigues Island in 2017 and 2018 to provide information about the various services, such as housing, available in Mauritius to migrants from Rodrigues.

2.1.3   Gaps and challenges in migration data sources in Mauritius

The following gaps and challenges with respect to migration data sources in Mauritius are identified:

(a)   **Frequency of the national census.** In Mauritius, the census is too infrequent, conducted only every 10 years.

(b)   **Limited emigration statistics.** There are limited statistics on Mauritians living abroad and their contributions to national development. The Government of Mauritius does not follow up on emigrants beyond the port of disembarkation. The establishment of the Mauritian Diaspora Scheme to incentivize members of the Mauritian Diaspora to return to Mauritius

and serve the country is a step in the right direction. Interventions to build the capacity of the Government to strengthen linkages with the Mauritian diaspora have been implemented and include a pilot mapping and profiling exercise of the Mauritian diaspora conducted in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom in 2020.

(c)   **Ineffective transfer of administrative data from their sources to Statistics Mauritius for further analysis and dissemination.** Different institutions collecting migration data do not forward it to Statistics Mauritius for analysis and dissemination. This limits analysis, as each institution concentrates on selected variables of its interest. This implies that a lot of data is collected but is not analysed to inform policy and decision-making.

(d)   **Limited control of administrative data before statistical use.** Potential administrative data sources to be harnessed include data from private and public electronic services, including credit card transactions, travel data from electronic passenger tickets and international migration data from electronic passports. Steps should be taken to improve administrative data and ensure access to administrative data by Statistics Mauritius.

(e)   **Limited collection and analysis of international migration data.** At the administrative level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade distributes the minimum migration data collection/gathering template to embassies.

2.2   Migration data storage and data-processing

Data collection in Mauritius is conducted by different institutions, as guided by different laws. Most of the migration data in Mauritius is stored in soft copy on websites and in databases. Each of the institutions collecting migration data posts it on its website. The different migration data management systems include the Central Population Database (available at https://ih.govmu.org/) and databases for residence permit data, border control data and travellers' data.

2.2.1   Best practice in migration data management: Digitalized data collection and management systems

The Republic of Mauritius has been recognized as an example for the African region in terms of e-Government development (https://publicadministration. un.org/en/Research/UN-e-Government-Surveys) and is also ranked among the top 50 countries on the World Bank Open Data website. The country developed the Digital Government Transformation Strategy 2018–2022, spearheaded by the Central Informatics Bureau.

2.3   Migration data-sharing and dissemination

Platforms like Info Highway, E-Licensing (i.e. the NELS Platform) and MauPass enable migration data-sharing in Mauritius. As argued by one respondent:

> "To date, the Ministry has successfully implemented hundreds of data-sharing requests and e-Services. Many of these data-sharing requests have as data source the CPD (Central Population Database)."

Another stakeholder recommended a central harmonized database for migration data and suggested the following:

> "Provide a single central repository for citizens' information for the Government and its departments and agencies for retrieving citizens' data through the Info Highway."

The Info Highway provides for sharing of data among government agencies and is designed as the service platform that allows multiple government agencies to share data with other agencies via the Government's e-Services. During one of the interviews, a member of the NMSC had this to say:

> "In case an institution requires a data set that it does not own, it may request for the same through the PMO, which will liaise with the institution holding the data and, if permissible, will share the data."

Inter-agency sharing of migration data has been noted. The data compiled is disseminated on a regular or as-needed basis, through publications, webinars, social media, statistical abstracts, blogs and websites. Strategies to ensure confidentiality of such data include ascertaining that microdata is not released to the public, all microdata is anonymized before releasing to the public and that the provisions of the Data Protection Act (foremost of which is not to disclose information) are respected.

2.4   Dissemination and utilization of migration data

Despite possessing a well-developed national statistics system, Mauritius lacks reliable and detailed statistics in the field of international migration. A more in-depth use and analysis of the available data sources and a better use of the administrative databases may undoubtedly help to reduce this data gap.

Performance on various migration indicators should be disseminated through various channels, including ministry websites, social media and public libraries. This could also serve as a mechanism for both internal and external accountability. Dissemination will also encourage greater use of migration statistics for progress reports and will allow more effective governance. Systematic dissemination of migration statistics and information will need to be mainstreamed as part of national reporting, monitoring and evaluation. The websites of ministries and of Statistics Mauritius will be key tools for monitoring dissemination efforts. These should be complemented by public launches of key documents and outreach efforts to media, the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Some administrative data are being produced on demand, but raw data still remains in the custody of the institutions that collect it. No systematic, consistent and harmonized data supply system for official use exists. The absence of a standard template for data collection for official use has also been noted.

The accuracy of the administrative data should be carefully checked to avoid double counts. For instance, the records of foreigners who died during their stay in Mauritius or who already left the country must be deleted. Similarly, it is important to clean and adjust migration data (including the removal of duplicate records) before disaggregation and further analysis.

2.5   Migration data management: policy and legal frameworks

A legal framework regulating the use of sensitive migration data, including microdata, is indispensable. The legal framework in Mauritius should be strengthened to allow Statistics Mauritius to access and utilize administrative data. Mauritius developed the National Migration and Development Policy in 2018, which sets out the strategic vision of the Government in dealing with challenges and opportunities related to migration in a holistic and proactive manner. In addition, a Migration Profile for Mauritius was developed in 2013. The legal framework related to migration includes the Non-Citizens' Employment Restriction Act (Act 15 of 1970) and the Immigration Act (Act 13 of 1970).

In addition, the National Migration and Development Policy provides for the establishment of a Diaspora Affairs Bureau under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, as well as "Diaspora Desks" in diplomatic missions abroad. Despite these arrangements, there is no dedicated institution responsible for implementing emigration policy. In order to support nationals residing abroad, the Government should increase representation with the necessary facilities in identified countries where significant numbers of Mauritians have emigrated.

2.6   Coordination mechanism for migration

Coordination on the subject of migration among government entities in Mauritius is facilitated by the NMSC, which is chaired by the PMO. Established in 2015, the committee is composed of representatives from relevant ministries, other governmental entities and IOM. It has established a solid partnership framework and meets on a regular basis to ensure coordination among its members on migration matters. As noted:

> "This cooperative inter-agency structure includes all relevant stakeholders to promote a consolidated and comprehensive approach to migration management."

The committee was instrumental to the development of the National Migration and Development Policy, approved by the Government in 2018. With a view to engaging the diaspora, the Government has launched the Mauritius Diaspora Scheme in 2015 under the purview of the Economic Development Board (EDB). The scheme aims to attract Mauritian investors and skilled professionals living abroad back to Mauritius to participate in economic development. In fact, Mauritius formally engages with CSOs, the private sector and members of the diasporas in migration agenda-setting. As stated by one key informant:

> "The EDB, through the Mauritius Diaspora Scheme, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade formally and informally engages with members of the diaspora and diaspora associations through Mauritian diplomatic missions abroad and other promotional activities."
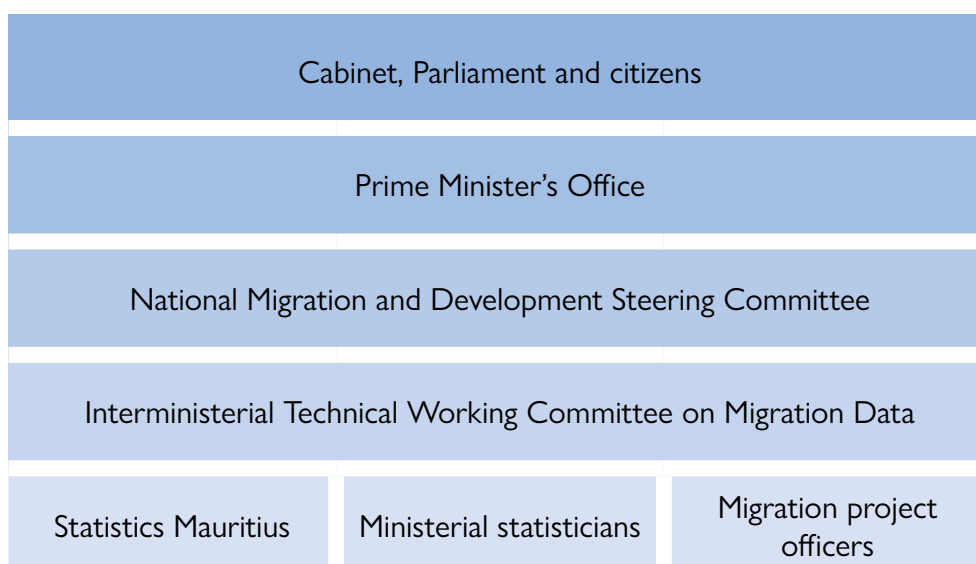
2.6.1   Coordination gap: Limited stakeholder involvement in migration data collection systems

The lack of involvement of academia, research institutions and the private sector in the NMSC limits the in-depth analysis of migration data issues in the country.

2.6.2   Best practice in coordination: Establishment of the NMSC

The establishment of the NMSC will be an essential step towards increased coherence at both institutional and policy levels. Figure 1 shows the proposed institutional architecture, which includes the NMSC, for migration data management in Mauritius.

Figure 1. Proposed institutional architecture for migration data management in Mauritius

Cabinet, Parliament and citizens		
Prime Minister's Office		
National Migration and Development Steering Committee		
Interministerial Technical Working Committee on Migration Data		
Statistics Mauritius	Ministerial statisticians	Migration project officers

The roles and responsibilities of the main migration stakeholders are outlined below:

National Migration and Development Steering Committee. An oversight function for migration is played by the NMSC, which is chaired by the PMO. It is expected to examine the recommendations of the National Migration Data Technical Working Group (MTWG), make decisions on system implementation issues, and advise the National Assembly and Cabinet, which are potential users of the key outputs of the migration database.

National Migration Data Technical Working Group. The MTWG is established to ensure improved coordination across ministries and with non-State partners in the collection of migration data. The Migration Technical Working Committee (MTWC), chaired by the Director of Statistics Mauritius, would play the role of the apex committee for the national migration data management system. The

MTWC comprises statistics officers from various ministries and advises on technical issues related to the national migration database and the national migration data management system. Members of the MTWC will include representatives of ministries, departments and other public agencies, the private sector and civil society.

Statistics Mauritius. According to the Statistics Act No. 38 of 2000, Statistics Mauritius shall constitute the central statistical authority and repository of all official statistics produced in Mauritius. Statistics Mauritius coordinates the statistical activities of all producers of official statistics, including public sector agencies, to ensure that approved statistical standards and procedures are applied; ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are used to enhance harmonization and comparability of statistics; and minimize unnecessary overlapping and duplication in the collection and publication of statistical information. The authority also collaborates with ministries and departments of the Government in the collection, compilation, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical information. As a working arrangement, staff of the statistical cadre are currently posted in line ministries.

Sector institutions. Ministries, departments and agencies are both the main producers and users of the bulk of administrative data that concern migration. Most of the migration indicators are produced by line ministries.

Private sector, CSOs and citizens. Predominantly users of migration information, these stakeholders provide regular feedback on performance results and service delivery in regard to migration indicators. Some of these partners include commercial banks, operators in the telecommunications sector, money changers and CSOs promoting human rights, among others. They can be potential sources of migration data, including microdata, and are critical partners in big data.

3. Addressing Migration Data Gaps in Mauritius

The harmonized migration database will need to be integrated into the National Statistical System (NSS). Statistics Mauritius coordinates the NSS and leads the implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics to produce the required data for the harmonized migration database. The role of Statistics Mauritius, as established in Statistics Act No. 38 of 2000, ranges from managing its own census and survey programme, to providing guidance for line ministries on international indicator standards and data collection methodologies, as well as sampling and subsequent data quality assurance.

The PMO and Statistics Mauritius will need to work closely together and with line ministries to ensure that:

(a)   Migration statistics indicators are quality-assured and made official before ministries share data through the harmonized database.

(b)   Reliable and timely data is available for reporting.

(c)   Migration data is validated and signed off, and any issues that may arise are addressed effectively.

Together with the relevant line ministries, Statistics Mauritius needs to play a key role in facilitating, reporting and signing off on actual migration data reported in a standard reporting template. It should lead in the organization of data validation meetings during the preparation of annual progress reports. Statistics Mauritius shall also provide support to line ministries in statistical capacity development. The migration data management system should be supported by a migration data management strategy that should cover the following broad areas:

(a)   Objectives and scope;

(b)   Data production unit;

(c)   Data quality and validation mechanisms;

(d)   Data-sharing and management arrangements;

(e)   Data storage system;

(f)   Generation of standard reports;

(g)   User access and dissemination.

The creation of a harmonized database for migration data and a national migration data management system, through the Info Highway platform (an electronic management information system for migration indicators), should be considered to facilitate reporting and ease access to information for all stakeholders. This would furthermore help to ensure improved availability, timeliness, integration and interoperability of migration information across the public sector. Statistics Mauritius should take the lead in this process, in partnership with the PMO and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology. A tailor-made migration data dashboard should also be developed within the Info Highway system and be available online to enable decision makers and other stakeholders to monitor the status of various indicators of migration in the country. Table 2 provides a checklist that could be used for the development of a migration database and migration management system.

Table 2. Checklist for the development of a harmonized database and migration data management system

No.	Checklist question	Yes	No
1.	Has a migration data management strategy been developed?		
2.	Does the template identify the responsible migration data collection institution, programme or responsible entity?		
3.	Is the data frequency included?		
4.	Does the template include type of data (e.g. administrative, survey or census)?		
5.	Is migration data entered in the monitoring template validated by the relevant ministry and/or Statistics Mauritius?		
6.	Is the necessary migration data to monitor progress through the template available and is the relevant ministry and/or Statistics Mauritius on time to complete the template?		
7.	Is there a system in place to routinely share migration data collected with the ministerial focal person?		

4.   Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1   Conclusion

This assessment contributes to evidence-based management strategies and policies to address mixed-migration challenges in Mauritius. The assessment further maps existing migration data, identifies gaps in migration data capacities, as well as recommending actions in Mauritius.

Mauritius has established mechanisms for migration data collection and sharing through the NMSC, with representatives from all government institutions that collect migration data. There are systems and databases in place to ease data access and facilitate data-sharing. The creation of the Central Informatics Bureau, which spearheads the implementation of the Digital Government Transformation Strategy 2018–2022, is a step towards improved access to data. The existence of different migration data management systems, such as the central population database, the residence permit database, the border control database and the travellers' database, eases migration data storage. Platforms like the Info Highway, E-Licensing (NELS Platform) and MauPass have enabled migration data-sharing in Mauritius. It is therefore important that all these platforms and databases are harmonized to form a one-stop centre for data on migration.

4.2   Recommended training and technical assistance

Within the wider National Statistics System, the capacity of officers of Statistics Mauritius will need to be built with respect to:

(a)   Establishing a whole-of-government national migration data management strategy;

(b)   Overall management and coordination of the national harmonized migration database;

(c)   Workflow management and detailed data management through the application of migration data reference sheets;

(d)   Managing migration indicator databases;

(e)   Migration indicator design and selection;

(f)   Identifying data sources, determining their format and availability, and planning and coordinating to access these sources;

(g)   Development of sector statistics strategies for migration;

(h)   Data collection, quality assurance and storage;

(i)   Data management, data-cleaning and consistency checks;

(j)   Calculating indicator actuals, triangulating data and interpreting the results;

(k)   Reporting and disseminating information.

4.3   Recommended actions

It is recommended that a national action plan for migration statistics be established and a sustainable national migration system be built through the Info Highway space. The national action plan for migration statistics in Mauritius should include the following actions:

(a)   Improve quality and reliability of data collected from existing data sources and explore new data sources, including big data, by the private sector on board the system. The private sector could include private recruitment agencies engaged in labour export.

(b)   Within the national migration governance structure and in conjunction with Statistics Mauritius, support the creation and coordination of the MTWG to support the continuous annual revision of the national Migration Profile exercise and migration policymaking. The members of the MTWG should be composed of a network of focal persons seconded by Statistics Mauritius in all ministries, departments and other public agencies. The MTWG should be responsible for coordinating migration data-sharing and developing standard guidelines for harmonized migration data practices, including data gathering, analysis, dissemination and capacity-building across government departments.

(c)   The NMSC should implement a migration data management strategy that includes an inventory of migration data sources, and the identification and evaluation of all existing administrative data on migration.

(d)   In the context of COVID-19 lessons learned, explore the enhancement of the Info Highway through the use of open-access online software for data-sharing and networking through an agreed-upon common architecture, as well as national and international standards for migration data mining, flexible open-source databases and data-sharing software.

(e)   Promote the consistent development and inclusion of standard, internationally comparable migration modules in statistical surveys, similar to the one included in the census. Engage expert advisers to support the development of harmonized migration modules for household surveys, as well as standard templates for administrative data collection and data analysis tools to maximize the use of already-identified migration variables from the existing data sets.

(f)   Statistics Mauritius should put scenarios for possible future use of administrative data in the production of official statistics on its agenda for discussion, which include requirements regarding an adequate legislative framework and development of methods to ensure safe and proper use of migration data.

(g)   The Migration Profile should be updated every five years by the MTWG, coordinated by Statistics Mauritius.

Annexes

Annex A. Institutions Collecting Migration Data

No.	Institution	Migration data collected	Data source	Assessment and observations
1.	Statistics Mauritius	• Migrants' sex, age and country of origin • Employed migrants' sex, education, employment status, country of origin, economic activity, occupation category and average monthly wage • Foreign workers' sex, age, type of occupation and sector • Employment of non-citizens and their earnings	• Censuses and surveys, such as the Survey of Employment, Earnings and Hours of work in Large Establishments	• There are limited questions on migration in surveys. • There is limited information on international emigration and return of Mauritians.
2.	Passport and Immigration Office	• Data pertaining to passengers coming in and out of Mauritius (for citizens and non-citizens) • Data related to occupation permits/residence permits issued to non-citizens • Data on visas issued	• Border checkpoint surveys • Administrative records on occupation permits, residence permits, spouses of foreign citizens, foreign students and permanent residence permits	• Data is shared with authorized institutions. • There is limited analysis of data. • There is a lack of a migration database. • The system is interconnected with the border management system.

No.	Institution	Migration data collected	Data source	Assessment and observations
3.	Economic Development Board (EDB)	• Number of permits issued by category (occupation permit and residence permit) • Data disaggregated by permit category, age, gender, country of origin (nationality), place of residence, and sector of economic activity or employment • Number of active permits, profession, salary and duration of permit validity • Contact details: residential address, email address, phone number and passport number	• Administrative records	• Data is used for policy decision at the time of budget proposal. • Data is for use prior to conducting investment and export promotion missions by the EDB and the concerned ministry. • Data is used for presentation at workshops and seminars in and outside the country.
4.	Ministry of Education	• Data on students moving out to study in tertiary education, including field of study and country of destination • Students studying or undergoing training abroad • Students coming in the country to study at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels	• Administrative data records	• There is limited coordination with other institutions.
5.	Ministry of Labour	• Data on the number of work permits issued to non-citizens • Data on non-citizens exempted from having to apply for work permits	• Administrative data sources	• There is limited data on Mauritians working abroad. • There is limited collaboration with private institutions that collect migration data, e.g. labour-exporting agencies.
6.	Prime Minister's Office (PMO)	• The PMO does not collect data but coordinates with institutions that collect migration data.		• There is a lack of a harmonized migration database.

No.	Institution	Migration data collected	Data source	Assessment and observations
7.	Prime Minister's Office – Information Technology Department	• Latest information on Mauritian citizens, including civil data, such as surname, first name, surname at birth, date of birth, gender, marital status and address, as well as the citizen's ID photograph and signature (or thumbprints for those who cannot sign)	• Central Population Database • Info Highway (https://ih.govmu.org/) • National Authentication Framework For Mauritius (https://maupass.govmu.org/LandingPage) • Government Directory of the Republic of Mauritius (https://govmu.org/EN/Pages/default.aspx)	• Data is well-captured and easily shared among different institutions.
8.	Police Department	• Criminal data, such as offences committed	• Administrative data sources	• There is limited reporting on human trafficking. • There is a lack of real-time data on migration.
9.	Rodrigues Commission for Social Security	• Data on employment, labour and industrial relations, consumer protection, trade and commerce • Data on vulnerable persons and internal migrant workers • Social aid and assistance	• Administrative data sources	• There are limited statistics on internal labour migrants. • There is limited linkage for border-crossing data.
10.	Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Social Integration Division)	• The ministry provides a range of services through the National Pensions Scheme, the National Savings Fund and the National Solidarity Fund – all of which cover migrants.	• Administrative data sources	• There is limited timely officially published migration data on people moving on a short-, medium- or long-term basis. • The available data is not analysed or ready for use, and most of it is not official. • Lack of open and real-time data on the movement of people. • Collected and stored existing data is largely paper-based.

Annex B. Census 2011 Questions on Migration in Mauritius

P01	P10A	P10B	P10C	P10D	P11A	P11B
Person Number	**Place of residence**		**Reason for living abroad**	**Reason for staying in the Republic of Mauritius**		**Usual address 5 years ago (on 03.07.2006)**
	State if the person lived in the Republic of Mauritius continuously for the past 12 months. Y: Yes N: No If «Yes» go to P11A	State if the person intends to live in the Republic of Mauritius continuously for at least 12 months. Y: Yes N: No If «Yes» go to P11A	For Mauritian citizens who replied «No» at both P10A and P10B, state if: 1. Working abroad 2. Studying abroad 3. On medical treatment 4. Other	For non-Mauritian citizens who replied «No» at both P10A and P10B, state if: 1. Working 2. Studying 3. On medical treatment 4. Other STOP HERE if «On medical treatment» or «Other»	State if: 1. Here 2. Elsewhere in the Republic of Mauritius 3. Outside the Republic of Mauritius 4. Not born	If usual address 5 years ago is elsewhere in the Republic of Mauritius, write the person's address. If usual address 5 years ago is outside the Republic of Mauritius, write the country. If usual address 5 years ago is «Here» or «Not born», leave blank.

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2011.

Annex C. Questionnaire for Members of the National Migration and Development Steering Committee

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL MIGRATION DATA IN MAURITIUS

Introduction: The general objective of this activity is drawn from the pilot on the project, "Strengthening of Migration Data Collection and Analysis in Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe", and provides an assessment of the national migration data landscape for the Government of Mauritius. The assessment is expected to generate information on migration through data collection, collation and analysis of migration trends and patterns in Mauritius. This study is about migration data assessment in Mauritius and is intended help map existing data, identify gaps and good practices in national data capacities, and provide recommendations on how to sustainably enhance the collection, analysis and use of timely and disaggregated migration data at the country level, based on the data and knowledge gaps in the country. The ultimate goal is for countries to strengthen migration data systems and provide and use better evidence to guide decision-making for migration-related policies in the country and the region.

Consent: If you have any questions concerning the study, in respect of which you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact **Ms Tania LABOUR** (mlabour@iom.int). Completing the questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes. We thank you in advance for participating in this important study and for the information you will provide.

A. Background information
  1. What is the name of your institution?
  2. What is your name and surname?
  3. What is your position/job title in the institution?
  4. What is your email address?

B. Legal and policy framework
  5. Please provide laws and regulations that govern collection, processing, sharing and analysis of migration data.

C. Basic migration statistics
  6. Which basic statistics on migration are collected and disaggregated?

D. Data needed for the national migration policy
  7. Is migration integrated in another national development plan? If YES, please provide a link to the plan.

8. Is Mauritius part of a regional migration policy framework? If YES, please provide a link to the framework.
9. What do you consider to be the most important gaps in migration statistics in the country for policymaking?
10. Which office is responsible for coordinating data collection and compilation to assess the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level?
11. Which office is responsible for coordinating data collection and compilation for the follow-up to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration?
12. Which office is responsible for coordinating data collection and compilation for the follow-up to the Global Compact on Refugees?

E. National data migration strategy

13. Is there a national migration data strategy in your country, that is, for example, a delineation of the responsibilities of different data producers in the country? If YES, please describe where national migration data is kept.
14. Which agency is responsible for producing such a strategy?
15. Please identify the legal document(s) that describe(s) the national migration data strategy.
16. Apart from government offices, are there any efforts to collect migration statistics by private sectors or NGOs in your country? If YES, please briefly describe the statistics they collect. Please specify if statistics collected are disaggregated by age.
17. Is there a data-sharing agreement among migration data producers in your country for statistical purposes? If YES, what is the existing data-sharing agreement required by statistics legislation?
18. Does the national statistics law stipulate that the national statistics office has the right to access data? If YES, which law requires that administrative data records should be shared with the national statistics office?

F. Traditional sources of migration data

19. What are the traditional migration data sources for migration statistics in the country?
20. What information on migration is collected through traditional data sources of migration data?
21. Was a thematic report on migration produced alongside the most recent census? If YES, provide a link to the report.

G. Administrative sources of migration data

22. Please list all types of administrative sources of data administered by your office that can produce migration statistics. For each source, list the population subgroups that are specifically included or excluded (e.g. labour migrants, students and refugees).

23. Is information collected through the administrative source compiled and disseminated? If so, how often is it disseminated? Please provide the link to the publication or website.

24. Are data from the administrative source(s) under your agency integrated in one large database?

25. Are data from the administrative source(s) under your agency integrated with administrative source(s) (database) under other government institution(s)?

26. How are these administrative data disseminated and used for policymaking and public knowledge?

27. Does your unit collect primary migration data? How is primary data collected?

H. Innovation around migration data management

28. Is there any non-traditional data source used in this country to compile data related to migration? (Big data relevant to migration could include or be derived from, for example, mobile phone data, satellite imagery, online payments, social media and digital sensors. Please list them.)

29. Is there any discussion and/or agreement between different government offices about setting standards on concepts and classifications so big data can be used for policymaking on migration?

30. Are there data-sharing agreements between producers/owners of big data and the national statistics office? Please describe the existing agreement.

I. Data dissemination and communication: from data to policy

31. In what form(s) are migration data disseminated to the public?

32. Who are the targeted audience of your data?

33. Can you provide an example of how migration data informed policymaking?

J. Open data

34. Is there an open-data initiative in the country to share and disseminate data and metadata generated by national statistics office and other relevant agencies? Please provide the link to the initiative.

35. How easily can existing migration statistics be obtained from public sources (e.g. national statistics office and relevant ministries)? Are government-generated data available free of charge and easily accessible?

36. What are the strategies adopted to ensure that the confidentiality of such data is protected?

K. Interagency coordination mechanism on migration statistics

37. Is there any official body that coordinates statistical activities undertaken by various government agencies or offices in relation to migration? If YES, explain the membership composition of the body and the duties of each member.
38. How often does the body meet to discuss issues?
39. What are the issues being discussed by the coordination body?
40. Do you think the coordination body could be further enhanced? Explain why.
41. Is there an integrated database of migration statistics created under the auspices of this coordination body?
42. What is the role of the national statistics office in this coordination body?

L. Data exchange with other countries

43. Has your office ever contacted the statistics office of another country to obtain migration statistics? If YES, specify the type of migration data that you have obtained.
44. Does your office provide migration data to a government agency in another country? What type of migration data do you provide?
45. If there was a data platform with migration stock data from all countries, would it be helpful?

Annex D. Key Informant Interview Guide

**ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL MIGRATION DATA IN MAURITIUS
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Introduction: IOM is supporting the assessment of national migration data landscape for the Government of Mauritius. The assessment is expected to generate information on migration through data collection, collation and analysis of migration trends and patterns in Mauritius. This assessment will map existing data, identify gaps and good practices in national data capacities and provide recommendations on how to sustainably enhance the collection, analysis and use of timely and disaggregated migration data at the country level. The ultimate goal of the assessment is to strengthen migration data systems and provide and use better evidence to guide decision-making for migration-related policies in Mauritius.

Consent: You have been identified as a key stakeholder in migration data in Mauritius. We request for your time to respond to some questions related to the assessment. The data collected will be used only for purposes of the assessment. If you have any questions concerning the assessment or if you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact **Ms Tania LABOUR** (mlabour@iom.int). Thank you for participating in this important study.

A. Background information

1. What is the name of your institution?
2. What is your name and surname?
3. What is your position/job title in the institution?
4. What is your email address?

B. Data collection and storage

5. What basic data on migration is collected?
6. How is migration data collected, processed and disseminated?
7. Is data from the administrative source(s) integrated into one large database? If YES, what is that database called and who is responsible for it?
8. How accessible is migration data to prospective users?
9. What documents contain migration data for Mauritius? Can these be shared?

C. Causes of migration gaps and measures to bridge the gaps

10. Is there a national migration data strategy in Mauritius, that is, for example, a delineation of responsibilities of different data producers in the country? If YES, please describe where national migration data is kept.

11. Which agency is responsible for producing such a strategy?

D. Recommendations

12. What are your recommendations for improving data collection, analysis and data linkages?

13. What can be done to harmonize migration data collection and storage?

ANNEX E. Attendees at the Country Consultation with Stakeholders for the Migration Data Assessment

Attendee	Ministry/Department
R. Sookun	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
G. Strammer	European Union
Y. Munbodh	Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
S.M. Surat*	Ministry of Labour, Human Resources Development and Training
J. Atwebembeire	Consultant, IOM
C. Rehaut	Economic Development Board
G. Pavaday*	Info Highway
K. Torul	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
R. Mawlaboccus	Ministry of Health and Wellness
D. Brigemohane	Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Other attendees	
H. Betchoo*	
Training Unit staff members	Ministry of Labour, Human Resources Development and Training

Note: * Online/virtual attendees

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