

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA | PROFILE 2023

MIGRATION
GOVERNANCE
INDICATORS



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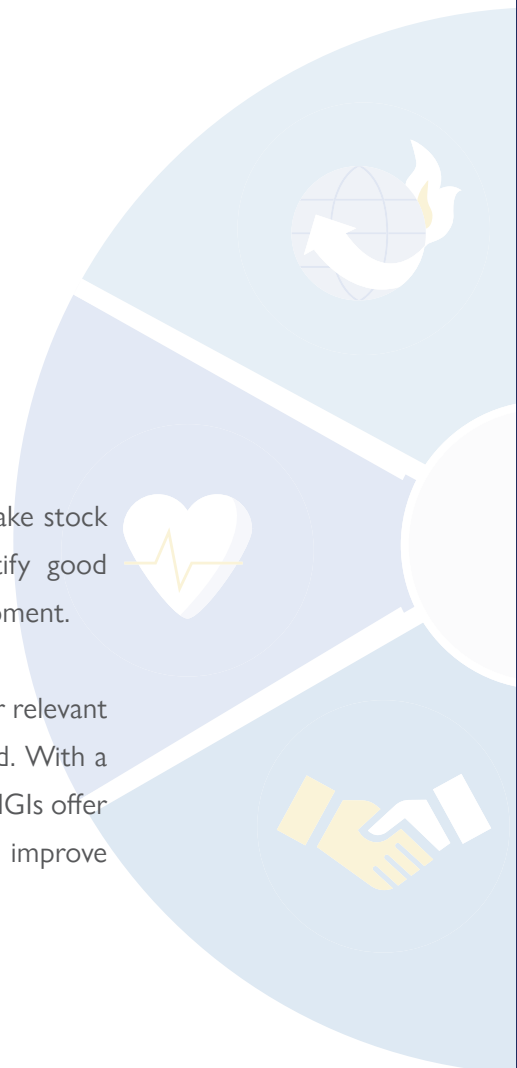
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OBJECTIVES

The MGIs aim to help governments, upon request, take stock of their migration policies and strategies to identify good practices and areas with potential for further development.

The MGIs open dialogues with governments and other relevant stakeholders to identify priorities on the way forward. With a focus on government ownership of the process, the MGIs offer support at the national and local levels to gradually improve migration management systems.



INTRODUCTION

“ Migration has been part of the human experience throughout history, and we recognize that it is a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development in our globalized world, and that these positive impacts can be optimized by improving migration governance.¹

The need to maximize the opportunities and to face the challenges that mobility brings has been recognized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. 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 Governance² Framework (MiGOF). This Framework³ 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. That same year, IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs), a standard set of almost 100 indicators that help States assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures.

The indicators constitute a starting point to engage governments in a consultative process that allows them to identify areas that are well developed and others that would benefit from further development, and most importantly priorities that are in line with the specific challenges and opportunities that a given country is facing.

The MGIs are characterized by three main fundamental attributes:

1. The MGI process is a **voluntary** exercise: The MGIs are conducted in countries that have requested to be part of the process.
2. The MGIs are **sensitive to national specificities**: The MGIs recognize the different challenges and opportunities of each context, and therefore, do not propose a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather aim to spark a discussion on what well-governed migration can mean.
3. The MGIs constitute a **process**: The MGI process is not a static tool to collect data on countries’ migration frameworks. It is rather the first step of a dynamic exercise that can enable governments to identify areas of their migration policy in need of further development, or that could benefit from capacity-building.

The MGIs recognize that all countries have different realities, challenges and opportunities in relation to migration. Therefore, the MGIs do not rank countries on the design or implementation of their migration policies.

Finally, the MGIs do not measure migration policy outcomes or institutional effectiveness. Instead, they take stock of the migration-related policies in place and operate as a benchmarking framework that provides insights on policy measures that countries can consider as they further progress towards good migration governance.

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs is grateful to the members of the Technical Working Group that was established to support the implementation of the MGIs nationally and the development of the MGI Botswana Profile. Furthermore, the Ministry extends its gratitude to IOM for the financial and valuable technical support provided during the implementation and development of this report.

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

¹ United Nations, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (A/RES/73/195 of 11 January 2019), paragraph 8.

² “Migration governance” refers to the system of institutions, legal frameworks, mechanisms, and practices aimed at regulating migration and protecting migrants. It is used almost synonymously with the term “migration management”, although the latter is also sometimes used to refer to the narrow act of regulating cross-border movement at the State level.

³ IOM Council, *Migration Governance Framework*, 106th Session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015), page 1, footnote 1.

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

IOM's 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 and orderly, and benefits migrants and society.

At the basis of

PRINCIPLES

1. **Adhere** to international standards and fulfil migrants' rights.
2. **Formulate** policy using evidence and a whole-of-government approach.
3. **Engage** 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.



MGIs

WHAT THEY ARE

-  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 and the Global Compact for Migration implementation*

Which support the measurement of

WHAT THEY ARE NOT

-  Not a ranking of countries
-  Not an assessment of policy impacts
-  Not prescriptive



Note: "The Global Compact is framed in a way consistent with target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in which Member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration."

The MGIs consist of almost 100 indicators grouped under the six different dimensions of migration governance that draw upon the MiGOF categories:



MIGRANTS'
RIGHTS
PAGE 18

Indicators in this domain look at the extent to which migrants have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. They look 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 21

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 23

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



WELL-BEING
OF MIGRANTS
PAGE 25

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 27

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 in relation to disasters and climate change, including if humanitarian assistance is equally available to migrants as it is to citizens.



SAFE, ORDERLY AND
REGULAR MIGRATION
PAGE 30

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.



SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Migrants' rights

In Botswana, migrants with residence or work permits are authorized to pursue family reunification, and all migrants are eligible to apply for permanent residency if they meet the requirements outlined in the Immigration Act (2011).

Migrants have access to health care, education and social protection, although under different terms compared to citizens. The country has comprehensive provisions aimed at addressing xenophobia, violence and discrimination directed towards migrants.

The Botswana diaspora can engage in national elections through the process of registering and voting at Botswana's diplomatic missions and other designated places abroad. This provision outlined in Section 5(3) of the Electoral Act (1968) was amended in 2023.

Whole-of-government approach

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship, under the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, is responsible for designing and coordinating the implementation of an overall migration policy in the country, as well as implementing and administering the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act (1998).

In 2017, the Government initiated the process to develop a National Migration Policy, focusing on four pillars of migration management: migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration, and forced migration. The envisaged policy is yet to be adopted.

Statistics Botswana is responsible for collecting and disseminating official statistics in the country. They include migration data from the Population and Housing Census (PHC), including the latest PHC conducted in 2022, and the Demographic and Quarterly Multi-Topic Surveys. Two units within Statistics Botswana compile migration-related statistics: the Tourism Statistics Unit tracks international arrivals and departures statistics, while the Labour Statistics Unit utilizes the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Work Permit Application system to gather data.

Partnerships

Botswana is part of the regional consultative process and the interregional consultative forum on migration, namely the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa and the Pan-African Forum on Migration. The Government has also entered into memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and bilateral platforms with other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, such as Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Botswana ratified the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005) in 2005. Citizens of most SADC countries can enter Botswana without a visa due to bilateral and other regional arrangements, such as the MOU signed with Namibia in 2023 to introduce the use of national identity cards by citizens of both countries to travel between the two territories. Botswana has a work permit that it issues to grant all migrant workers access to its labour market. Furthermore, the country engages with civil society organizations, the private sector and members of the diaspora in addressing migration-related issues, albeit on a limited basis.

Botswana adopted the SADC Labour Migration Policy Framework (2014) and implements the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan 2020–2025 (2020). The country has a cooperation agreement with Cuba, which was renewed in May 2020 and is fully operational as of August 2023, focusing on collaboration in the health sector through the secondment of Cuban doctors to Botswana.⁵ It also has a teacher-exchange agreement with Seychelles, which is being implemented as of August 2023.⁶

Well-being of migrants

Statistics Botswana collects data on the labour market, disaggregated by migration status and sex. However, Botswana does not have a centralized labour market assessment of the demand for migrant workers or the effects of emigrants on the domestic labour market. Nonetheless, the country has developed and updates a list of professions for which skills are scarce, including paying a scarce skills allowance to attract eligible professionals in the country since 2008.

International students who hold study permits in Botswana are granted access to university education with an international fee.⁷ The Immigration Act requires international students to obtain a residence permit with conditions attached to allow them to study in Botswana.

Botswana accredits foreign qualifications for most professions through the Botswana Qualifications Authority, created under the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act (2013).

Mobility dimension of crises

Botswana is a party to the SADC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2015) and has a disaster management framework made up of the National Policy on Disaster Management (1996), the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2013–2018 (2013) and the National Disaster Risk Management Plan (2009). In practical terms, Botswana considers the unique vulnerabilities encountered by migrants and may grant exceptions in cases where their home country is undergoing crises. However, Botswana's current disaster management framework does not include explicit provisions for assisting migrants.

Statistics Botswana publishes reports that contain statistics on various types of natural disasters, including floods, earthquakes, droughts and veldt fires. The latest publication is the *Botswana Environment Statistics: Climate Change Digest – March 2022* (2023).

Safe, orderly and regular migration

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship, under the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, and other agencies such as Botswana Defence Force are responsible for integrated border control and security. Border staff receive regular training in emerging issues such as trafficking in persons, as well as from stakeholders like the University of Botswana.

The Government maintains a web page containing detailed information on immigration and civil registration, including visa types, and it has been implementing an e-visa system since 2021.

The Government also implements criminal sanctions for human trafficking, as per the Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act of 2024. Information on counter-trafficking activities is collected and published annually. The country does not have formal cooperation agreements to prevent and counter the smuggling of migrants.

⁵ For more information on the cooperation agreement, read this [press release](#) from Cuba's Representative Office Abroad.

⁶ For more information on the agreement, read this [press release](#) from the Office of the President of the Republic of Seychelles.

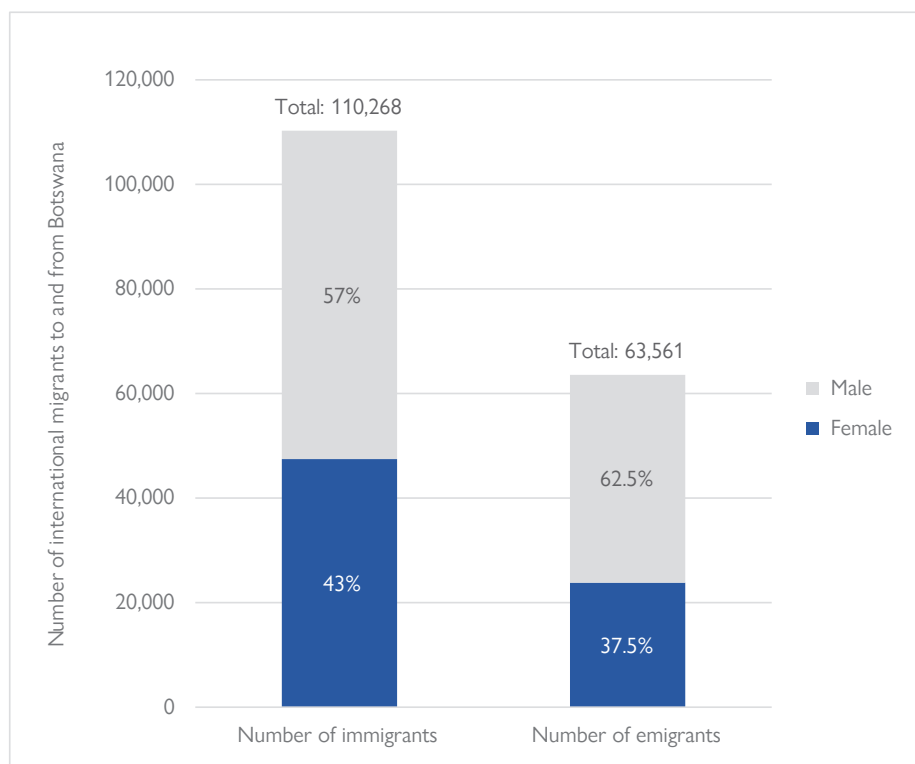
⁷ The international fee is usually higher than what nationals are required to pay.



CONTEXT

Immigration to Botswana has increased over the last decade, reaching a total of 110,268 people in 2020, representing 4.6 per cent of the country's total population.⁸ The distribution of immigrants by sex shows that 43 per cent are female and 57 per cent are male (see Figure 1). Similar to its immigration data, Botswana has experienced increasing emigration in recent decades, with emigration numbers reaching 63,561 people in 2020, or 2.6 per cent of its total population (2.4 million), according to data estimates by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).⁹ Disaggregated data indicate that the share of male emigrants (62.5%) in 2020 is higher than the share of females (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. International migration to and from Botswana (at midyear 2020), by sex



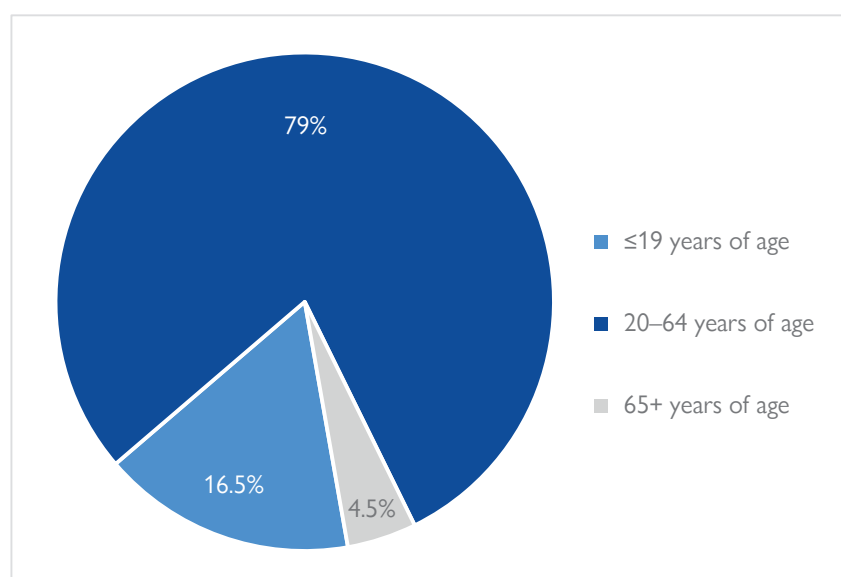
Source: DESA, *International Migrant Stock 2020* (2020).

A comparison of immigration and emigration figures shows that the estimated net migration in Botswana in 2022 is 1,800 migrants. In addition, data from the World Bank show that personal remittances received in Botswana accounted for 0.3 per cent of its GDP in 2022.¹⁰ Finally, Figure 2 shows that the majority of immigrants in 2020 were 20–64 years old (79%), followed by people who were 19 years old and younger (16.5%).

⁸ Visit the [Migration Data Portal](#) for more information.

⁹ See footnote 8.

¹⁰ See footnote 8.

Figure 2. Distribution of immigrants by age group (at midyear 2020)

Source: Migration Data Portal (2020).

Internal migration in Botswana

According to the *Botswana Demographic Survey Report of 2017* (2018): “Internal Migration refers to movements within the country, across administrative district ... Further, migrant is a person who changes his or her usual place of residence by crossing an administrative boundary and residing in a new area for a specified period of time.”

Botswana has a population of around 2.5 million (2024 estimations from the Population and Housing Census in 2022), so internal migration within its borders is not as important as migration into its territory.

Historically, Botswana has experienced internal migration after the discovery of diamonds in the late 1960s. Movement from rural to urban areas dominates the pattern of internal migration, mainly for economic, education, employment, business and family reunification reasons. Although climate change is not the biggest driver of internal migration in Botswana, the country still experiences unpredictable rainfall patterns and frequent droughts, which lead to the erosion of resources available for socioeconomic growth.

The Botswana Demographic Survey Report of 2017 indicates that the highest net in-migration was noticed in 6 out of the 16 local authorities by then and that the population aged 15 to 39 tends to migrate more than the other age groups.

However, urbanization has strained infrastructure and led to the growth of informal settlements. To address this, the Government has implemented urban planning policies such as the Urban Development Master Plans.¹¹ Overall, internal migration in Botswana has reshaped the economic landscape by driving urban growth.¹²

¹¹ As of August 2023, these are not available online.

¹² The Government of Botswana signified its intention to undertake a local MGI assessment during the financial year 2024/2025 to develop a baseline of local migration governance in Botswana, which will help inform sectoral and local policies.



KEY

FINDINGS



1

ADHERE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND FULFIL 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 (1969)
United Nations conventions on statelessness, 1954 and 1961	No
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	No
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989	Yes (1995)
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990	No

1.2. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

According to the Immigration Act (2011), all migrants are eligible to apply for permanent residency. An important criterion for permanent residency qualification under Section 28 of the Act includes residing lawfully in the country for at least five consecutive years, regardless of the nature of the visa or permit.¹³ In addition, Sections 2A and 2B of the Immigration (Amendment) Act (2017) permit the Minister to waive this five-year period for migrants considered to be of benefit to the country, and such people may be granted permanent residence without having to meet the standard requirements.¹⁴

All migrants granted a residence or work permit have the opportunity to benefit from family reunification, provided they meet the criteria set out in the Immigration Act. The Act permits family reunification for a spouse or a child below 18 years of age, or for the elderly parent or grandparent of a permit holder, given that said holder of the residence or work permit has committed to supporting their stay while in Botswana (Section 23(8)). In addition, in practice, there is an administrative arrangement to cover the provision of family reunification for persons over the age of 18 years but not more than 25 years who have associations with Botswana, based on their merits.

In accordance with Section 13 of the Citizenship Act (1998), migrants may acquire citizenship by naturalization if they have been resident for periods amounting in aggregate to not less than 10 years. A critical condition is that prior to the application for citizenship by naturalization, the applicant should have been resident in

¹³ According to the Immigration Act (2011): "Where the Minister [of Home Affairs] is satisfied that a non-citizen who has resided lawfully in Botswana for at least five years – (a) is of good character; (b) has made significant contributions of benefit to Botswana; (c) is of good standing in society; or (d) has sufficient means to support himself or herself, the Minister may in the prescribed form, confer on such person the status of permanent residence subject to such conditions as the Minister considers necessary, exempting the person from the requirement of applying for a residence permit."

¹⁴ The waiver is provided for in the Immigration (Amendment) Act of 2017, Sections 2A and 2B.

the country for a continuous period of 12 months. Other conditions include the applicant being of good character, having sufficient knowledge of the Setswana language (the Minister may make an exemption for this under exceptional circumstances) and having the intention to reside in Botswana. In exceptional cases, Section 10 of the Citizenship Act indicates that the President can authorize granting of citizenship to any person who has rendered distinguished services to Botswana regardless of how long they have lived in the country.

As per Section 5(3) of the 1997 amendment to the Electoral Act (1968), the inclusive democratic process ensures that every citizen, regardless of their geographical location, has the right to participate in general elections. This means that the Batswana diaspora retains the right to vote in general elections. However, Batswana diaspora members can only vote in person at Botswana's diplomatic missions or other designated places abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs keeps records of Batswana living abroad through its diplomatic missions. To update the diaspora records, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides information through its website, press releases, and social media platforms¹⁵ to Batswana living abroad and advises them to register with the nearest Botswana mission or the Ministry headquarters. In addition, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) maintains records of Batswana citizens through the national voters' registration. However, since voter registration is voluntary, not all citizens in the diaspora are necessarily included in the IEC register.

Botswana has comprehensive provisions aimed at addressing hate crimes, violence, xenophobia and discriminatory practices targeting everyone, including migrants within its borders. The Constitution (1966) in Section 15(1) prohibits general discrimination. Furthermore, the Penal Code (1964) in Sections 92 and 94 states that uttering any words or publishing any writing expressing or showing hatred, ridicule, or contempt against any person or group of persons because of their tribe, race, place of origin, colour, creed or sex is an offence punishable by law.

1.3. Areas with potential for further development

In Botswana, migrants can apply and have access to all levels of education. The Government subsidizes school fees for all students under a "cost sharing" principle as provided for under the Revised Guidelines of 2008 on the Implementation of Cost-Sharing in Education.¹⁶ Prior to being admitted to schools, migrants must meet certain requirements pertaining to factors such as age, academic qualifications (in their respective countries of origin) being equivalent to the level at which they wish to enrol in Botswana and also having relevant permits. Migrants, especially those who wish to enrol in a graduate programme and have obtained their first degree outside Botswana, must apply to the Botswana Qualifications Authority for an evaluation of their qualifications in order to determine whether they are at the required level.

Migrants have access to all levels of the public health system in Botswana, for which they must provide proof of identity at all health facilities. Botswana's Essential Health Service Package (EHSP) and the Integrated Health Service Plan (IHSP) provide for access at a stipulated nominal fee whenever migrants acquire services. The Government has provided waivers to help special migrant populations:

- (a) Migrant children (aged 5–16 years) are charged half the consultation and admission fees.¹⁷
- (b) Health services for children (0–59 months), maternal health services, antiretroviral therapy and treatment of all diseases of public health importance as may be determined by the Minister of Health are provided free of charge for non-citizens.¹⁸

¹⁵ More information on the [registration of Batswana living and travelling abroad](#) is available on the website of the Government of Botswana.

¹⁶ See the [2008 Revised Guidelines for the Implementation of Cost Sharing in Education](#) to know more.

¹⁷ A "savingram" is a piece of administrative correspondence sent typically by mail.

¹⁸ Diseases of public health importance include, but are not limited to, tuberculosis, malaria and sexually transmitted diseases.

- (c) Refugees at designated refugee camps such as Dukwi, non-citizen prisoners and those in police custody pending trial are exempted from paying all medical fees.
- (d) Non-citizens admitted for life-threatening medical emergency services who are unable to pay are provided with medical services and discharged, while efforts to collect payment are made post-treatment.
- (e) Victims of trafficking in persons and children accompanying them are provided with free medical services, including psychosocial support.¹⁹

Migrants in Botswana have access to social welfare services, which are means-tested and reserved for “deserving residents”,²⁰ such as the Destitute Persons Programme.²¹ Migrants who can also benefit from welfare services are victims of trafficking²² and victims of smuggling.²³ Additionally, children irrespective of their nationalities can access social welfare services as children in need of protection.²⁴ However, Botswana operates a universal social welfare system (non-contributory old-age pension) that covers only citizens of Botswana by birth and naturalization.

It is possible for migrants to change jobs. As per Sections 22 and 23 of the Immigration Act, in order to access employment, migrants must obtain a work permit, which is issued by the Immigrants Selection Board. Work permits are issued under a condition of service attached to specific named employers and a condition of non-transferability; thus, migrants on work permits cannot change jobs without obtaining a new permit. To change jobs, migrants must inform the Department of Labour and Social Security. To obtain a new permit, the applicant (holder of the work permit) should cancel their initial work permit prior to being engaged with another employer and thereafter commence a new process of applying for a new work permit under a different employer. Either of the parties involved may cancel a work permit (i.e. even the employer with whom employment is being terminated may initiate the procedure of cancelling the work permit issued under their name). The complexity of this procedure is apparent in the intricate steps that migrants need to take when changing jobs.

A provision in the Trade Act (2019) reserves certain trade activities for citizens of Botswana or companies that are wholly owned by citizens. Section 17 of the Trade Act empowers the Minister responsible for trade and industry to determine that only citizens or companies wholly owned by citizens shall be entitled to (a) operate a reserved trade or business in such areas in the country or from such premises or (b) engage in specific types of business. However, a joint venture of a medium or large enterprise between a citizen and a non-citizen may be issued a trading licence if the citizen of Botswana has a minimum beneficial ownership of 51 per cent, subject to the approval of the Minister.

¹⁹ See Section 15(1) of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2014).

²⁰ “Deserving” in this context means having a need or a certain level of need that qualifies one for a particular social programme, regardless of nationality, which will be assessed by a social worker to confirm that the residents have a need.

²¹ The Destitute Persons Programme is managed according to the Revised National Policy on Destitute Persons (2002), and it is a social assistance programme that is means-tested, and specifically targets poor and destitute individuals without assets, persons with mental or physical disabilities, minor children without family support, and those who are rendered helpless as a result of natural disasters or temporary hardships. The Programme aims at improving the living conditions of the very poor, and beneficiaries receive a food basket and cash monthly.

²² See the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2014).

²³ See the Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act (2018).

²⁴ See the Children’s Act (2009).



2

FORMULATE POLICY USING EVIDENCE AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

2.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs is tasked with providing the essential services of labour administration, civil registration and migration management. The Ministry through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship is responsible for designing and coordinating the implementation of an overall migration policy for Botswana. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship implements two pieces of legislation – the Citizenship Act (1998) and the Immigration Act (2011) – and is responsible for administering the immigration and civil registry affairs of the country, including registration of births and deaths; facilitating the movement of people; issuance of passports, visas and residence permits; and border control and management.

The Immigration Act (2011) makes provision for the establishment of the Immigrants Selection Board, which issues permits. The Board consists of, inter alia, a representative of the Director of Immigration and Citizenship, who shall be the Secretary, and a representative of the Commissioner of Labour. The Act also provides for immigration procedures at ports of entry, including applications, the processing of permits (such as residence, work and visitors' permits) and the employment of migrants in Botswana. The Act also provides for the establishment of ports of entry and exit, the treatment of prohibited and undesirable immigrants and their deportation, and immigration offences.

Botswana has a clear and transparent set of rules and regulations pertaining to migration. Its primary immigration statute is available on various websites, including that of the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre. The Government also maintains a web page with detailed information on immigration and civil registration, which includes general information on immigration and where to access services, application processes, eligibility and requirements for work and residence permits, and other various visas.²⁵ The information is available in English.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for coordinating efforts to engage the country's diaspora population, mostly through the network of Botswana's diplomatic missions. The missions maintain regular contact, but there are no formal structures in place to engage the diaspora. As of the date of drafting this report, the Ministry is engaging the diaspora in an ongoing diaspora-mapping exercise intended to inform the development of a diaspora engagement policy.

Botswana collects and publishes data on migration. The Population and Housing Census, including that of 2011 and 2022, had a dedicated module with migration-related questions. It covered some questions such as citizenship, how citizenship was acquired, the length of continuous residence in Botswana and the mother's usual place of residence at birth (whether in or outside Botswana). Chapter 12 of *Population and Housing Census 2011: Analytical Report*, published by Statistics Botswana (2014), focuses on migration and includes data on lifetime migration by district, net migration by district, and migration rate by gender, age, marital status and religion. As of August 2023, Statistics Botswana is processing and working on publishing data on migration as collected during the Population and Housing Census of 2022.

Statistics Botswana publishes the Botswana Demographic Survey Report (BDS), the latest of which is the 2017 BDS. The 2017 BDS included information on internal migration, net migration, migration and marital status, migration and religion, migration and age, migration and school attendance, international migration,

²⁵ See the Government of Botswana's web page on [immigration and civil registration](#) to know more.

immigrants by sex, and immigrants by sex and age. The *Quarterly Multi-Topic Survey: Labour Force Module* is published on an annual basis and includes data disaggregated by industry, citizenship and sex. The latest report is for Quarter 3 of 2023.

2.2. Areas with potential for further development

There is no established coordination mechanism to formally engage the Department of Gender Affairs, under the Ministry of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture, in agenda-setting and the resolution of migration-related issues. The Department implements the National Policy on Gender and Development (2015) with the long-term goal of reducing inequalities in the opportunities and outcomes of social, economic, political, cultural and legal development for both women and men. As of August 2023, the Policy is under review, to incorporate issues such as migration.

As of August 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is developing the National Diaspora Engagement Policy with support from IOM. The activities conducted include a diaspora-mapping exercise in three sample countries – namely the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa – to inform key elements of the policy.²⁶

In 2017, the Government initiated the development of the National Migration Policy, focusing on four pillars of migration management: migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration, and forced migration. IOM supports the development of this Policy, which includes labour migration components and aims at improving migration governance, coordinating existing migration-related legislation and policies, and ensuring the protection of migrant populations. As of August 2023, the draft National Migration Policy is being updated for validation.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship collects and reports migration data from its permits systems and ports of entry to Statistics Botswana. However, there is no established coordination mechanism in place to compile and harmonize migration data collected by different government agencies, and there is no central repository of migration data in the country.

²⁶ The National Diaspora Engagement Policy aims to strengthen dialogue and opportunities for Botswana in the diaspora through collaboration, partnership and community development, as well as to facilitate efforts to maintain an integrated database of Botswana overseas and provide them assistance on safety and security matters abroad.



3

ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS MIGRATION AND RELATED ISSUES

3.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Botswana participates in continental and regional consultative processes. The country is a member of the Pan-African Forum on Migration, a continental consultative process for African Union member States and regional economic communities, along with other important actors in African migration and mobility governance issues.²⁷ Under the Southern African Development Community (SADC),²⁸ Botswana is a part of the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa, established in 2000 through a regional consultative forum to enhance inter-State cooperation and improve migration governance.

Botswana ratified the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005). As a way of domesticating this Protocol, Botswana extended visa exemptions to most SADC countries and signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with other SADC countries on the free movement of persons, such as the one with Namibia signed in 2023 to introduce the use of a national identity card by citizens of both countries to travel between the two territories, as well as to transform some of its borders such as Tlokweng, Mamuno and Ramokgwebana into one-stop border posts. Botswana is party to several SADC agreements broadly covering migration, such as the Labour Migration Action Plan 2020–2025 (2020), which seeks to protect and guarantee equal rights and access to decent and productive work for migrant workers; the International Labour Organization–SADC Decent Work Programme 2013–2019 (2013); the Protocol on Employment and Labour (2014); and the SADC Labour Migration Policy Framework (2014). However, these agreements are yet to come into force, pending the required ratification thresholds. At the African Union level, Botswana has neither signed nor ratified the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018).

The Government of Botswana has MOUs with some SADC countries relating to migration. As part of the South Africa–Botswana Bi-National Commission, the countries have signed an MOU on migration. In 2021, Botswana signed an MOU with Zambia on the establishment of a one-stop border post relating to the Kazungula Bridge between the two countries, to enable trade facilitation and ease of movement of people throughout the SADC region and beyond. In addition, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa signed the MOU on the Development and Management of the Trans Kalahari Corridor in November 2003 to improve the flow of commercial traffic between the three countries.²⁹

The Government of Botswana has a number of bilateral platforms with its neighbours and other African countries, which focus on cooperation on a range of issues such as defence, public security, trade, education, health, transport and communication, and migration. Botswana has established joint permanent commissions (JPCs) with all neighbouring countries. Three of these JPCs have been elevated to binational commissions (BNCs) (South Africa, Zimbabwe³⁰ and Namibia³¹) chaired by Heads of State. There are several MOUs

²⁷ The member States and areas of the [Pan-African Forum on Migration](#) are Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

²⁸ The member States of the [Southern African Development Community](#) are Angola, Botswana, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

²⁹ The Memorandum of Understanding on the Development and Management of the Trans Kalahari Corridor aims at facilitating the movement of goods and persons along the corridor by simplifying and harmonizing the requirements and controls that govern them, to reduce transportation costs and transit times. The three countries agreed on a single customs administrative document and a simplified approach that streamlines transit transactions, replacing customs procedures that could involve up to 10 documents for each country.

³⁰ Read more on the binational commission in this [press release](#) from Zimbabwe's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

³¹ Read more on the binational commission in this [article](#) from *The Brief*.

entered into under these commissions, which have strengthened cooperation in, among others, legal matters, defence and police cooperation, immigration, and training. The BNC between Botswana and Zimbabwe aims to promote cooperation through bilateral agreements and entered its third session in 2022. During this session, the two countries signed an MOU on child protection, which aims to protect minors or children on the move between their territories from all forms of exploitation and violence, and also ensures access to essential services such as health care.

3.2. Areas with potential for further development

Botswana has adopted the SADC Labour Migration Policy Framework and implemented the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan. However, the modalities of promoting regional labour mobility are yet to be agreed upon. Botswana has also signed the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, which aims to eliminate visa requirements and facilitate movement within the region. Botswana implements the regional protocol on labour mobility, allowing SADC citizens to travel within its territory without visas. Furthermore, Botswana issues gratis visas to all persons issued with work and residence permits. Botswana's efforts primarily focus on general mobility rather than specific labour migration protocols.

Botswana engages with civil society organizations in agenda-setting and the implementation of migration-related policies on an irregular basis. The Government works with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the human trafficking victim referral pathway, which includes the provision of shelter, medical care and other services. In 2022, the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations was engaged by the Government to compile the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration reports. The Botswana Federation of Trade Unions, the Botswana Federation of Public Private and Parastatal Sector Unions, Business Botswana, and the Directorate of Public Service Management are part of the tripartite High Level Consultative Council (HLCC) chaired by the President, and the Sub-High Level Consultative Council (Sub-HLCC) chaired by the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs.³² The HLCC meets biannually, while the Sub-HLCC meets quarterly. Additionally, the draft National Migration Policy includes as a proposed intervention the exploration of “opportunities for greater cooperation with non-government organizations and civil society to provide assistance to trafficked and/or smuggled persons”. It also proposes that, in the implementation of the policy, “the Government of Botswana promotes partnerships with various stakeholders, including governments, civil society, NGOs, international organizations and the private sector”.

The private sector participates in agenda-setting and the implementation of migration-related policies on an ad hoc basis. Business Botswana participates in the HLCC and Sub-HLCC as part of a tripartite partnership. This provides an avenue for the private sector to offer insights on matters relating to migration, employment, ease of doing business, and reviewing immigration laws, visas and permits, with the aim of creating flexible laws to attract investors and skilled workers to Botswana. The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs engages and consults the private sector through Business Botswana with a view to seeking inputs regarding national development and labour migration issues.

The country engages members of the diaspora and expatriate communities in agenda-setting and the implementation of development policy on an ad hoc basis. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is generally responsible for coordinating efforts to engage with the country's diaspora population, but it does not have a specific department with this mandate and is currently in the process of developing a diaspora engagement policy. The Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) encourages investment and expansion, including from diaspora members, and works to improve the investment climate by advocating policies that create sustainable job opportunities. BITC operates Brand Botswana, which has launched the Active Global Citizens campaign, called #lamMotswana, aimed primarily at Botswana living abroad to actively promote and safeguard the country's image.³³

³² Through these platforms, there are consultations on issues related to migration, employment and the ease of doing business, as well as visas, permits and immigration laws.

³³ The Active Global Citizens campaign is targeted at Botswana who are living abroad. The goal of the programme is to educate others on the country, its people and its traditions.



4

ADVANCE THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY

4.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Botswana publishes quarterly data on the labour market, disaggregated by migration status and sex. The Quarterly Multi-Topic Survey (QMTS) report includes a module that records formal employment by industry and provides data points disaggregated by occupation, citizenship, age and sex. The data include information on average earnings, estimated formal-sector employment and the percentage of estimated formal-sector employment. Though the QMTS reports employment data disaggregated by citizenship, it is limited to formal employment; informal employment is not disaggregated.

International students who are granted access to tertiary education study in Botswana at an international fee.³⁴ The Immigration Act (2011) requires international students to obtain a residence permit with conditions attached to allow them to study in Botswana. An extension of stay may be granted, or their permit may be extended, taking into consideration conditions such as whether the applicant has been convicted of any offence punishable by imprisonment, has been convicted before and the court in which the case was heard recommended that the permit be cancelled or not, or has violated any condition attached to their initial permit or not as per Section 30 of the Immigration Act.

The Tertiary Education Act (1999) regulates tertiary education in Botswana and establishes the Tertiary Education Council, but it does not provide for different approaches for national and international students. In addition, international students have to pay an administration fee, with those from Africa paying less than those from elsewhere.

The Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) accredits foreign qualifications for most professions. BQA was created under the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act (2013). BQA maintains the framework under which foreign qualifications are accredited: the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF) (2016).³⁵ The BQA (National Credit and Qualifications Framework) Regulations (2016) guides users in the implementation of the NCQF, and BQA has an NCQF classification system with three categories: fields of learning, subfields and domains of learning.³⁶

Botswana signed bilateral labour agreements with other countries, such as with South Africa in 1973, primarily to provide labour for South African mines. As of August 2023, the agreement is still in effect. The Department of Occupational Health and Safety under the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs oversees and coordinates the activities of this agreement. The Department deploys an Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Attaché to the Botswana Consulate General in Johannesburg, South Africa. The OSH Attaché is in charge of assisting Botswana who work in mines or have previously worked in South African mines with concerns regarding workers' compensation, specifically issues related to social benefits, compensation for occupational injuries and diseases, and general welfare.³⁷ Botswana and Cuba also have a cooperation agreement that was renewed in May 2020 and is fully operational as of August 2023, with a focus on collaborating in the health sector

³⁴ The international fee is usually higher than what nationals are required to pay.

³⁵ The National Credit and Qualifications Framework's primary goals are to provide quality-assured, nationally and internationally recognized qualifications, to establish pathways for the progression of the education and training qualification, and to increase coherence between education and training output and the needs of the labour market.

³⁶ The fields of learning are the broadest combinations of learning outcomes with coherent alignment, while subfields are subcategories of the fields of learning. The domains of learning are the most specific and detailed combinations of learning outcomes. The 14 fields are as follows: (a) agriculture and nature conservation; (b) business, commerce and management studies; (c) culture, arts and crafts; (d) education and training; (e) generic skills; (f) health and social services; (g) humanities and social science; (h) information and communications technology; (i) law and security; (j) manufacturing, engineering and technology; (k) mining; (l) natural, mathematical and life sciences; (m) physical planning and construction; and (n) services.

³⁷ This refers to the Agreement relating to the Establishment of an Office for a Botswana Government Labour Representative in the Republic of South Africa, Botswana Citizens in the Republic of South Africa and the Movement of Such Persons across the International Border.

through the secondment of Cuban doctors to Botswana. Furthermore, Botswana has a teacher-exchange agreement with Seychelles, which was signed in 2015 and is being implemented as of August 2023.

4.2. Areas with potential for further development

There is no centralized labour market assessment of the demand for migrant workers in Botswana. However, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, established by the Human Resource Development Council Act (2013) to spearhead the monitoring of the labour market in Botswana, created the Labour Market Observatory Committee to observe labour market trends and operationalize the Labour Market Information System. This active labour market policy instrument collects, analyses, monitors and captures labour market information such as labour indicators, labour demand and supply forecasts, and any other labour market data.³⁸ The country has developed and constantly updates a list of professions for which skills are scarce.³⁹ In order to attract scarce professionals, the Government has paid a scarce skills allowance for eligible professionals since 2008.

The work permit is the general permit given to all eligible workers in Botswana. The country issues exemption certificates to attract specific labour skills. The list of scarce skills that the country has developed is considered when granting employment or work visas and permits.

Although Botswana does not have specific measures in place to promote gender equality for migrants in the labour force, general provisions addressing workplace discrimination apply equally to citizens and migrants. The 2010 amendment to the Employment Act (1982) stipulates the prohibited grounds for discrimination in the workplace, including gender, sexual orientation, health status, disability, place of origin, tribe, social origin, colour, creed, marital status and race. Additionally, the country has a National Policy on Gender and Development (2015), with the goal to reduce inequalities in opportunities and outcomes for both women and men.

Botswana does not have explicit measures or mechanisms to protect the rights of its nationals working abroad. However, the 23 missions that the country established around the world provide services to Botswana who are working abroad, with a focus on consular requirements. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its diplomatic missions provides assistance to Botswana in the diaspora, including the processing of applications for passports and emergency travel documents, the provision of national identity cards (*Omang*), the replacement of birth certificates, the provision of police clearance certificates, the processing of documents for the repatriation of deceased Botswana and the authentication of documents issued by the Government of Botswana.

There are no formal remittance schemes in place in the country. The Bank of Botswana developed the National Payments System Vision and Strategy 2020–2024, which highlights the crucial elements of Botswana's future National Payments System and outlines key strategic actions for its implementation. In addition, the Botswana Financial Inclusion Roadmap and Strategy 2015–2021 (2015), published by FinMark Trust, recommends evaluating the costs of domestic and international remittances and collaborating with cross-border remittance providers as possible interventions to enhance financial inclusion.⁴⁰

³⁸ The types of data that the Labour Market Information System processes are labour market conditions data; information on the overall structure and condition of the labour market, including its demographic composition and trends in employment and unemployment; industry-specific data; wages and skill requirements and other occupational characteristics of workers and jobs; labour market projections providing a picture of future employment; and job openings based on assumptions about economic growth. It also examines the flows of workers into and out of employment, the levels of job creation, expansion, contraction, information on individual jobseekers, and programme information on individuals in workforce training and education, as well as on training resources, training institutions and financial assistance. Thus, while there is a national assessment for monitoring the labour market demand, there is no express monitoring of the labour market demand for immigrants.

³⁹ The list includes, for example, engineers, medical doctors, dentists, pharmacy technicians and laboratory scientists.

⁴⁰ The Botswana Financial Inclusion Roadmap and Strategy lays out the national priorities for the enhancement of financial inclusion in Botswana, in order to help improve citizens' welfare and support national objectives. It proposes six priorities: developing the payment ecosystem, facilitating low-cost savings, developing accessible risk mitigation products, improving the working of the credit market, consumer protection and empowerment, and national coordination. Preparation of the document was announced by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning in the [February 2015 budget speech](#), and a working group consisting of government, private-sector and civil society representatives was set up to govern the process.

5

EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE MOBILITY DIMENSIONS OF CRISES

5.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Statistics Botswana publishes reports that contain statistics on various types of natural disasters, including floods. These reports are reliable and up to date, and include information on the occurrences, statistics and trends analysis of natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, droughts and veldt fires. Recent publications include the *Botswana Environment Statistics: Climate Change Digest – March 2022 (2023)*, which contains statistics on persons displaced by disasters. These reports inform policy decisions, particularly regarding prevention and response measures in vulnerable areas.

The Government of Botswana participates in two regional frameworks that include specific provisions for internal or cross-border movements in the context of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters. The country is an active participant in the Southern African Development Community Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2015)⁴¹ and is implementing it through existing climate change policies and strategies.⁴² Botswana is also a signatory of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) (2009).⁴³

While Botswana does not have a travel advisory service, it has issued ad hoc travel advisories to its citizens for specific regions and countries, such as South Africa and Eswatini. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Department of Protocol and Consular Services as well as missions abroad advise Botswana travellers to register with the nearest Botswana mission to keep abreast of current development issues in their home country. During the COVID-19 pandemic, travel advisories were issued regarding entry requirements and safety precautions when visiting other countries or returning to Botswana.

5.2. Areas with potential for further development

Botswana has limited specific measures to aid migrants during times of crisis. The country does not have legislation for disaster management but rather uses the Emergency Powers Act (1966) to declare emergencies. The National Disaster Management Office, housed at the Office of the President and

⁴¹ The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (CCSAP) is intended to build resilience, and climate-proof all SADC protocols, policies and strategies, in particular the Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development (2014), whose overall objective is to promote the sustainable use and transboundary management of the environment; the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030 (2020), which provides a guiding framework for the implementation of SADC's regional integration and developmental agenda and programmes for the period 2020–2030; the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015–2063 (2015), which seeks to promote regional integration and industrialization; the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (2012), with the objective of establishing a strategic framework to guide the development of seamless, cost-effective transboundary infrastructure; and the Regional Agricultural Policy (2014), whose purpose is to define common agreed objectives and measures to guide, promote and support actions at the regional and national levels in the agricultural sector of the SADC member States, in contribution to regional integration. The SADC CCSAP also complements the SADC Regional Green Economy Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Development (2015), whose objective is to facilitate a balanced and accelerated attainment of the agreed goals, anchoring on the three pillars of sustainable development, namely environmental sustainability, economic well-being and social equity. The SADC CCSAP is structured to be a 25-year strategic document with 5-year review planning cycles, and it considers science, knowledge and practice; local ownership; capacity-building; a balanced approach to adaptation and mitigation; alignment and integration; gender mainstreaming; communication, advocacy and awareness-raising; and parity as its guiding principles.

⁴² The existing climate change policies in strategies in Botswana are the Botswana Climate Change Policy (2021), the National Adaptation Plan Framework for Botswana (2020) and the National Climate Change Strategy for Botswana (2018).

⁴³ "The objectives of [the Kampala] Convention are to:

- (a) Promote and strengthen regional and national measures to prevent or mitigate, prohibit and eliminate root causes of internal displacement as well as provide for durable solutions;
- (b) Establish a legal framework for preventing internal displacement, and protecting and assisting internally displaced persons in Africa;
- (c) Establish a legal framework for solidarity, cooperation, promotion of durable solutions and mutual support between the States Parties in order to combat displacement and address its consequences;
- (d) Provide for the obligations and responsibilities of States Parties, with respect to the prevention of internal displacement and protection of, and assistance to, internally displaced persons;
- (e) Provide for the respective obligations, responsibilities and roles of armed groups, non-state actors and other relevant actors, including civil society organizations, with respect to the prevention of internal displacement and protection of, and assistance to, internally displaced persons."

created in 1998 to monitor and coordinate the response to any rapid-onset disasters in the country, is liaising with the Attorney General to start the process of developing disaster risk management legislation as of August 2023.⁴⁴ The National Policy on Disaster Management (1996), which is under review, is the foundation of Botswana's disaster management framework, but it does not address internal displacement or the displacement impacts of disasters.⁴⁵

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2013–2018 (2013) is limited to specific provisions for preventing and addressing internal displacement or the displacement impacts of disasters. Although the strategy acknowledges the effects that may be induced by natural disasters or other circumstances in other countries, it does not propose any actions to address the challenges that may arise as a result of the potential influx of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers. Statistics Botswana's publications containing statistics on persons displaced by disasters do not disaggregate data based on migration status.

Botswana's environmental and climate change policies and strategies do not include human mobility considerations. The Botswana Climate Change Policy (2021) references human mobility under the "Land use and land use allocation" section, citing the migration of human settlements due to climate change-related conflicts. The National Adaptation Plan Framework for Botswana (2020) does not address human mobility. Likewise, the National Climate Change Strategy for Botswana (2018) does not mention migration, mobility, displacement or movement of populations on account of climate change.

There are no specific provisions for managing large-scale population movements during times of crisis in Botswana in the country's disaster management protocols – namely the National Policy on Disaster Management (1996), the National Disaster Risk Management Plan (2009) (NDRMP) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2013–2018. Neither do any of these protocols address the management of such movements.

Disaster communications systems or management tools in Botswana do not take into account the specific vulnerabilities of migrants. The country has used local languages such as Setswana and Kalanga in the past, as well as English, but foreign languages are not used to cater to migrants. The NDRMP provides for the establishment of communications systems to disseminate information on the changing nature of crises. It states that the following channels will assist in disseminating disaster-related information and establishing communication with stakeholders: mass messaging systems (SMSs sent to all the cellular phone users in the country), radio and television, print media, official websites, departments equipped with communications devices (UHF and VHF radios), community gatherings and meetings. However, the Plan does not reference the languages in which information will be made available. Moreover, Botswana is not a State party to the United Nations Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations (1998).

Botswana does not have specific provisions for making exceptions to the immigration procedures for migrants whose country of origin is experiencing a crisis. Nonetheless, such provisions are offered to refugees and asylum-seekers as per the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act (1968). Refugee status determination is conducted by the Refugee Advisory Committee, which prepares a recommendation for consideration and determination by the Minister of Justice. In practice, there have been ad hoc immigration measures to accommodate migrants whose home country has experienced a crisis;

⁴⁴ However, the National Disaster Management Office faces multiple challenges, which include lack of specific legislation to support the implementation of disaster risk reduction, inadequate resources and lack of capacity to encourage the active participation of multiple sectors, lack of active participation by all sectors, and lack of monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure the active participation of local-level partners. The disaster management cycle is not followed systematically in Botswana since only relief is provided and the response is reactive and not proactive.

⁴⁵ The National Policy on Disaster Management aims to, among other things, create a framework that facilitates the preparation of plans and legislation for the effective implementation of disaster management in Botswana, outline the responsibilities of different personnel at different levels in the implementation of the disaster management programme, and ensure that the disaster management policy is consistent with policies from other sectors and the objectives of the National Development Plan (2017).

for instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Botswana allowed migrants to stay in the country beyond the allowable period as per Section 19 of the Immigration Act (2011). Those who were found to have overstayed in the country were not subjected to any charges emanating from violations in relation to the Immigration Act.



6

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

6.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs has established the Department of Immigration and Citizenship as the government agency responsible for integrated border control and security under the Immigration Act (2011). The agency works with other essential national security services such as the Botswana Police Service and the Botswana Defence Force. The latter is responsible for safeguarding the territorial integrity of the country according to the Botswana Defence Force Act (1977, last amended in 2018). The Botswana Police Service operates under the regulation of the Police Act (1978, last amended in 2018), which authorizes its deployment throughout the country to prevent and detect crime, protect life and property, and undertake other duties. A coordination mechanism exists for the various institutions tasked with integrated border control and security. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship organizes regular monthly and quarterly meetings with border management agencies to guarantee effective and coordinated border governance. Meetings may also be called on an urgent basis, depending on the circumstances. Issues discussed at meetings include, but are not limited to, customs, health, immigration and security.

Botswana border staff receive training on a regular basis in border management. For instance, they have been receiving training in human trafficking prevention and detection from IOM and the then Ministry of Defence, Justice and Security since 2014, to enhance the capacity of the country's immigration service to deal with emerging transnational organized crime as well as address its capacity constraints in migration management and passport control. The Japan International Cooperation Agency provided training to border officials at the One-Stop Border Post in Kazungula to enhance customs operations. Immigration officers have also received training in languages, such as Chinese and French, from the University of Botswana.

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs maintains a web page that provides detailed information on immigration, civil registration and labour administrative issues in English.⁴⁶ The page offers general information on immigration and visa application processes, as well as the eligibility and requirements for various visa types. For each visa type, the page lists the eligibility criteria, the application process, the duration of the application, the required documents, the pricing and information on how to access government assistance services to support the application process.

Botswana has also established an e-visa system that enables foreign visitors to apply for visas online before arrival. The Government introduced e-Visa Botswana in 2021, which allows foreign visitors to apply for a Botswana visa online in addition to Botswana's diplomatic missions.⁴⁷ Once approved, the applicant receives the e-visa to their email address, and they must carry a physical copy when they travel to the country. The private sector, represented by organizations such as the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre and Business Botswana, was involved in the process of digitizing the visa application system.

Botswana has measures in place to attract nationals who have migrated from the country. In 2019, the country implemented the Blue Card system, which allows Botswana by birth or descent who have renounced their citizenship to apply to retain their right to unlimited entry, and to stay, live and work in the country. Nonetheless, Blue Card holders are not eligible to receive a national identification document (*Omang*) or a Botswana passport, so they are not entitled to certain rights such as the right to vote. With effect from April 2022, dual citizenship is allowed in Botswana. Separately, the draft National Migration Policy highlights

⁴⁶ See the Government of Botswana's web page on [immigration and civil registration](#) to know more.

⁴⁷ Visit [e-Visa Botswana](#) to know more.

interventions to promote and facilitate the return of skilled emigrants through “brain gain” initiatives, but there are no details on their implementation.

The then Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs in conjunction with the then Ministry of Defence, Justice and Security, with support and contributions from IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Botswana Red Cross Society, Childline and other civil society groups, developed a comprehensive National Referral Mechanism for unaccompanied/separated children and stranded migrants. The stages in the Mechanism are as follows: (a) initial interviews for status determination (profiling); (b) referral for service provision to either social workers, the police, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, refugee camps, the Red Cross or other civil society organizations; and (c) determination and provision of immediate, medium-term or long-term needs, including, but not limited to, safe and secure shelter, clothing, food, medical care and psychosocial assistance, along with facilitating the regularization of stay and legal assistance.

Detention is a last resort for Botswana’s immigration and border control officers. Alternative mechanisms to detention include referrals for service provision to social workers, health-care facilities, the police to verify security concerns, and centres such as SOS Children’s Villages or refugee camps where medium- and long-term needs such as food, clothing and shelter are provided. If a migrant is a child or needs health care, they are referred to the relevant department or health-care facility before detention is considered. However, the Immigration Act allows for the detention of a person suspected of being a prohibited immigrant for a period not exceeding 14 days for inquiry purposes, which may be extended with authority from the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs. As an alternative to detention, the Minister may accept surety through an amount of money paid as a bond (Section 43). The 14-day period is intended to allow the Government to prepare for the provision of repatriation services.

The Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act of 2024 establishes criminal sanctions for human trafficking and sets up the Human Trafficking (Prohibition) Committee under the Ministry of Justice. The Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, includes representatives from government agencies and civil society stakeholders. The Committee meets regularly to operationalize the country’s anti-human trafficking agenda and coordinate the Government’s anti-trafficking efforts. The Act also provides for mechanisms to support victims of human trafficking.⁴⁸ Botswana’s Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan 2023–2028 (2023) is aligned with key national and subnational frameworks⁴⁹ and considers the 4P paradigm (prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships) approach to combating human trafficking.⁵⁰ The country is currently working on developing a new five-year action plan covering the years from 2023 to 2028.

The country collects comprehensive information about its efforts in combating trafficking, which encompasses the number of trafficking cases completed by the courts, ongoing investigations, prosecutions linked to trafficking, and the number of victims of trafficking. These data are annually updated and published. The most recent report on trafficking in persons was released in June 2023.⁵¹

⁴⁸ This includes stating referral pathways for child and adult victims of trafficking, with a requirement for the Human Trafficking (Prohibition) Committee and the responsible minister to formulate plans for the provision of appropriate services for victims of trafficking and the children accompanying them, which include return to or departure from Botswana, resettlement, reintegration, shelter, psychosocial support, medical assistance and legal assistance. However, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act does not provide gender-specific interventions.

⁴⁹ These include the National Development Plan 11 (NDP 11), Botswana’s Sustainable Development Goals Roadmap and Vision 2036.

⁵⁰ This 4P paradigm is the United Nation’s approach to addressing human trafficking.

⁵¹ The Government collects data on trafficking in persons and, on agreement, reports the national data on trafficking in persons to the United States Department of State for publication. This publication is used for awareness-raising and many activities related to combating trafficking in persons. See the *Trafficking in Persons Report for 2019 and 2023*.

6.2. Areas with potential for further development

Botswana has general measures in place to combat labour exploitation, which apply to migrants but are not specific to them. The Constitution of 1966 states that no person shall be held in slavery or servitude or required to perform forced labour (Section 6), while the Employment Act (1982, last amended in 2010) as well as the National Employment Policy (2021) prohibit forced labour. Nevertheless, they do not mention nationality and are not targeted at migrants. In 2021, the country initiated a dialogue between the Government and the private sector⁵² to develop a labour migration policy, leading to the conclusion that the Government should develop an integrated labour administration policy. As of August 2023, the Government of Botswana has sought technical support from the International Labour Organization, which has initiated the process of engaging consultants to develop the integrated policy. This policy will include chapters on labour migration and labour inspection, among others.

Botswana does not have formal cooperation arrangements or bilateral agreements with other countries to prevent or counter the smuggling of migrants. However, the country participates in regional and consultative processes intended to prevent or counter transnational organized crimes, including trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. Botswana is a member of the Southern Africa Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation⁵³ at the regional level and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)⁵⁴ at the continental level. Through these processes, the country collaborates with other countries in the Southern African Development Community and beyond to address transnational organized crimes, including tracking and identifying missing persons, trafficking and smuggling.

⁵² The private-sector representatives included Business Botswana and workers' unions, such as the Botswana Public Employees Union.

⁵³ Visit the website of the [Southern Africa Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation](#) to know more.

⁵⁴ Visit INTERPOL's web page on [Botswana](#) to know more.

After the MGI assessment

IOM would like to thank the Government of Botswana for its engagement in this process. IOM hopes that the results of this assessment can feed into the Government's strengthening of its migration governance. After an MGI assessment, the following are recommended:



The MGI report can be used to inform policy work with the support of IOM (if desired).



The findings can feed into capacity-building activities, which may connect to other IOM initiatives.



A follow-up assessment can be conducted after three years to verify progress.



Governments can exchange best practices and innovative solutions with other governments that have conducted the MGI process.



KEY

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* All hyperlinks were working at the time of writing this report.

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ANNEX

The MGI process



1

Launch of the MGI process

The first step of the process is to explain what the MGIs entail 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 100 indicators grounded in the six 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 [Migration Data Portal](#) and the [IOM Publications Platform](#).



www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi

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