



## Migration Governance Insights:

## Informing People-centred Migration Policies

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How is migration governed across the world? What are the key trends? What are the insights to help governments develop policies and systems that promote safe, orderly and regular migration, and to harness its potential? This publication addresses these questions based on Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) data from 100 national and 69 local-level assessments, carried out between 2016 and 2023. It also showcases examples of migration policy responses in different contexts, emphasizing potential complementarities across different policy areas and highlighting the central role played by local governments in shaping people-centred migration policies.

To deliver on the promise of migration, while supporting the world’s most vulnerable, IOM developed a transformative strategic plan with three goals: saving lives and protecting people on the move, driving solutions to displacement, and facilitating pathways for regular migration. To contribute to the operationalization of these goals, the migration policy priorities of Member States – identified through the MGI consultative process – are used to inform the selection of policy enablers. Stemming from IOM’s direct engagement with governments, these enablers cut across all aspects of migration governance and facilitate the achievement of IOM strategic goals.

This publication is structured around three policy goals that echo IOM’s strategic priorities, as well as three policy enablers, i.e. the elements that underpin the development of sound policies. These are further broken down into 13 key policy areas. The three goals and three enablers are as follows:



**Saving lives and protecting people:** policies to reduce vulnerabilities.

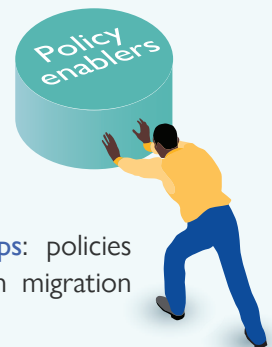
**Addressing climate-related mobility and displacement:** policies to tackle climate-induced migration and its consequences.

**Facilitating pathways for labour migration:** policies to promote labour mobility and decent work.

**Empowering migrants:** policies to promote rights and equality of opportunities.

**Promoting migration policy coherence:** policies informed by data and enabled by solid institutions.

**Building relevant partnerships:** policies to include all stakeholders in migration governance.



The MGI evidence from across the world points to the importance of three key approaches to good migration governance:

- A whole-of-government perspective based on a strong institutional framework is essential.
- Meaningful local government engagement is pivotal to people-centred migration policies and systems.
- A whole-of-society approach is critical to drive solutions to migration challenges, including through effective partnerships at the local, national and international levels.

# GOALS

1

## Saving lives and protecting people

POLICIES	HIGHLIGHTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Combating human trafficking and countering migrant smuggling	<p>Even though most countries have a strategy to combat human trafficking, <b>less than 40 per cent</b> publish information on counter-trafficking activities.</p> <p>More than half of countries have formal cooperation agreements to prevent and counter smuggling. These are often part of agreements covering a wider range of migration-related topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish dedicated institutions to compile and harmonize data on human trafficking and smuggling.</li><li>• Account for age, gender and other intersecting factors when designing policies to assist and protect victims of trafficking and smuggling.</li><li>• Establish local coordination mechanisms to monitor the implementation of national and international anti-trafficking and smuggling policy and legal frameworks.</li></ul>
Tracing and identifying missing migrants	<p><b>Only 11 per cent</b> of countries implement measures to trace and identify missing migrants within their territories. Measures are more often found in countries that formally engage with civil society organizations (CSOs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish clear procedures enabling families to report disappearances from their countries of residence.</li><li>• Strengthen regional collaboration to prevent migrant disappearances.</li><li>• Foster partnerships with civil society actors and key stakeholders to implement coordinated search initiatives.</li></ul>

2

## Addressing climate-related mobility and displacement

POLICIES	HIGHLIGHTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Enabling comprehensive climate mobility solutions	<p><b>Only 22 per cent</b> of countries include human mobility considerations in their environmental and climate change policies. These countries also tend to integrate displacement considerations into their development strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align human mobility and environmental and climate change policy frameworks.</li><li>• Strengthen regional collaboration on climate mobility.</li><li>• Develop adaptation strategies through participatory approaches that involve relevant stakeholders, including local actors.</li></ul>
Addressing the displacement impacts of disasters	<p><b>About one third</b> of countries have developed a disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions on displacement. These provisions are more often found in countries with formal horizontal coordination mechanisms on migration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate displacement considerations into disaster preparedness strategies.</li><li>• Plan for the relocation of populations at risk, ensuring that the basic needs of the potentially displaced will be covered.</li><li>• Set up early warning systems, designate pre-identified evacuation sites and facilitate access to information on assistance.</li></ul>

3

## Facilitating pathways for labour migration

POLICIES	HIGHLIGHTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Promoting labour mobility	<p><b>Only 18 per cent</b> of countries implement labour immigration programmes. These programmes are more often found in countries that formally engage with the private sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop labour immigration programmes to expand pathways for admission and permanent residence.</li><li>• Establish labour mobility agreements to promote pathways for temporary labour migration.</li><li>• Partner with the private sector to foster labour mobility programmes.</li></ul>
Protecting migrant workers	<p><b>Less than one third</b> of countries have developed measures to promote the ethical recruitment of migrant workers. About 1 in every 4 have mechanisms to protect the rights of their nationals working abroad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor and regulate recruitment agencies to ensure fair contracts for migrants.</li><li>• Appoint labour attachés in destination countries to attend to employment-related matters.</li><li>• Facilitate migrant workers' access to information about their rights.</li></ul>

# ENABLERS

1

## Empowering migrants

POLICIES	HIGHLIGHTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Guaranteeing migrants' access to basic services	Half of the countries have measures to grant access to government-funded health services to all migrants. Access to education is granted to all migrants more often in countries that formally engage with CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the clarity of laws regulating access and inform migrants about their rights.</li> <li>Develop tailored policies specifically designed to facilitate access to basic services for all migrants.</li> <li>Offer administrative alternatives to facilitate access for migrants with irregular status.</li> </ul>
Combating discrimination against migrants	Less than one third of countries implement specific measures to combat migrant discrimination. Some include non-discrimination principles in their migration policies, while others cover migrant-related issues in broader anti-discrimination laws.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate efforts to eliminate migrant discrimination across sectors and levels of government.</li> <li>Establish clear mechanisms empowering migrants to report discriminatory acts by civil servants or public authorities.</li> <li>Support migrants' access to social services and conduct awareness-raising campaigns to fight xenophobia.</li> </ul>
Promoting the empowerment of migrant women	Only 23 per cent of countries have a gender-responsive migration strategy. Those strategies are more often found in countries that coordinate migration policies across levels of government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align migration and gender-equality policy frameworks at all levels of government.</li> <li>Establish dedicated institutions to oversee and operationalize measures for gender equality and women's empowerment.</li> <li>Promote migrant women's social and labour force participation and foster gender equality in the workforce.</li> </ul>

2

## Promoting migration policy coherence

POLICIES	HIGHLIGHTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Increasing the availability of high-quality migration data	Most countries incorporate migration-related questions into national censuses, yet less than half regularly collect and publish sex-disaggregated migration data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish dedicated institutions to collect migration data beyond the census.</li> <li>Implement coordination mechanisms to harmonize disaggregated data on migration gathered by diverse institutions, including local governments.</li> <li>Strengthen mechanisms for collecting migration data at the local level.</li> </ul>
Strengthening migration policy coherence	About 4 in every 10 countries have a national migration strategy defined in a public document. The strategy is more often aligned with development policies in countries with formal horizontal coordination mechanisms on migration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define a comprehensive migration strategy in a programmatic document aligned with international frameworks.</li> <li>Formalize horizontal coordination mechanisms on migration, specifying meeting frequency and involved institutions.</li> <li>Enhance vertical coherence in migration policies through the alignment of local-level and national migration strategies.</li> </ul>

3

## Building relevant partnerships

POLICIES	HIGHLIGHTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Enhancing partnerships with civil society and the private sector	Around 40 per cent of countries formally engage CSOs, and only 25 per cent formally engage with the private sector in agenda-setting and the implementation of migration-related programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalize active engagement with CSOs and other key stakeholders through consultation mechanisms on migration.</li> <li>Involve CSOs and the private sector as implementation and monitoring partners of migration policies and programmes.</li> <li>Cooperate with the private sector to facilitate the integration of migrants in the labour market.</li> </ul>
Harnessing the contributions of the diaspora	Around one third of countries formally engage with their diaspora. These countries also tend to have measures to assist nationals abroad in times of crises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalize the representation of diaspora members in national decision-making bodies.</li> <li>Establish a dedicated institution to coordinate engagement and involve diaspora members in the formulation of a diaspora engagement policy.</li> <li>Develop programmes and regular forums to facilitate the contributions of diasporas to their respective countries of origin.</li> </ul>

The MGI programme is IOM’s flagship initiative on migration governance. Established in 2016, the MGI process has become a powerful tool to advance evidence-based and people-centred migration policies. When informed by high-quality, timely and reliable data, these policies can effectively serve to facilitate pathways for regular migration, drive solutions to displacement and ultimately save lives. To date, **MGI assessments have been rolled out in 110 countries and 95 local jurisdictions**, demonstrating a truly global footprint and establishing the process as the largest source of data on migration governance globally. In addition to its extensive coverage at both the national and local levels, the MGI programme is a unique data source to inform the development of people-centred migration policies that support good migration governance:

- (a) **Alignment with key international frameworks** – the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the MGI programme, and in target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”;<sup>1</sup>
- (b) **Comprehensive methodology** – with 99 questions that explore the legislation, policies, institutions and coordination mechanisms related to migration across a wide range of policy areas;
- (c) **Consultative process** – which supports a stronger evidence base and government ownership, linking MGI assessments to action (e.g. policy and action plan development, identification of capacity gaps, resource mobilization and allocation, and reporting on achievements).<sup>2</sup>

This report features over 100 selected examples of policy responses in different contexts, from both national and local levels. These examples originate from over 50 countries and 15 local authorities, providing a diverse and comprehensive overview of how migration is governed worldwide.



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Source: Authors’ own elaboration based on MGI data.

<sup>1</sup> A detailed analysis of global, regional and thematic trends that emerge from MGI data in relation to each of the 23 Global Compact for Migration objectives can be found in *Migration Governance Indicators Data and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: A Baseline Report*.

<sup>2</sup> Selected instances in which the MGIs have been instrumental in strengthening migration frameworks through the development of new policies and laws as well as action plans can be found in *The Migration Governance Indicators Success Stories 2023*.