



MIGRATION GOVERNANCE INSIGHTS ON REGULAR PATHWAYS

Delivering on the Promise of Migration



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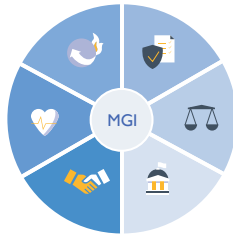
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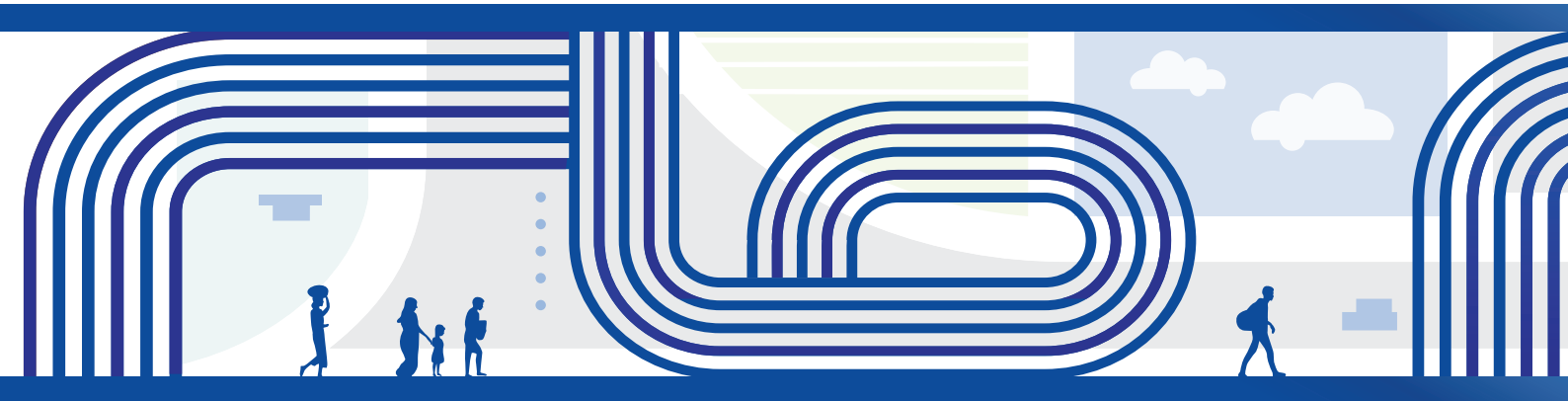
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“The evidence shows overwhelmingly that long-term, regular pathways will better protect migrant rights, they will better enable governments to plan for and manage movements in an orderly way, and they will support economic development in the countries that the migrants are coming from, as well as the countries that migrants are going to. Now, ultimately, it is up to all of you, it’s up to you as governments to create the policies that will enable those regular pathways.”

Amy E. Pope, IOM Director General



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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES AND TEXT BOX.....	vii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	4
III. CORE FINDINGS	12
1. Establish governance frameworks for regular pathways for migration.....	13
1.1. Measures to facilitate education mobility	13
1.2. Measures to facilitate labour mobility	16
1.3. Measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons.....	19
1.4. Measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons	22
2. Expand pathway-specific governance frameworks through scaling mechanisms	27
2.1. Strengthen the institutional capacity of migration governance.....	27
2.2. Promote clear and transparent rules and regulations.....	30
3. Enhance the benefits of migration through implementation mechanisms.....	36
3.1. Amplify the benefits of labour mobility in destination countries.....	36
3.2. Facilitate diaspora contributions to countries of origin.....	38
3.3. Support the reintegration of returned nationals	41
IV. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD	45
ANNEXES.....	47
A1. Methodology.....	47
A2. List and geographical distribution of MGI-assessed countries and local authorities covered.....	50
A3. Secondary (external) variables.....	53
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Number of internationally mobile students globally (2012–2021).....	14
Figure 2.	Countries with measures to facilitate education mobility.....	15
Figure 3.	Percentage of countries with provisions promoting the transition of international students into the labour market.....	15
Figure 4.	Percentage of countries with measures facilitating postgraduation employment (by assessment of demand for migrant workers).....	16
Figure 5.	Countries with measures to facilitate labour mobility.....	18
Figure 6.	Percentage of countries with skills-based criteria in their visa policies	18
Figure 7.	Percentage of countries with programmes to manage labour immigration (by engagement with the private sector).....	19
Figure 8.	Family-related migration to OECD countries (2013–2022).....	19
Figure 9.	Countries with measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons	21
Figure 10.	Percentage of countries with measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons (by existence of agreements on the portability of social security entitlements).....	22
Figure 11.	Number of forcibly displaced people in millions globally (2013–2023).....	23
Figure 12.	Countries with measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons.....	24
Figure 13.	Percentage of countries with measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons (by existence of vertical coordination mechanisms on migration)	25
Figure 14.	Countries with institutions to coordinate the implementation of migration policies.....	28
Figure 15.	Percentage of countries with formal bilateral labour agreements (by existence of institutions coordinating implementation).....	29
Figure 16.	Does the country have dedicated institutions for integrated border control? (by frequency of border-staff training).....	30
Figure 17.	Countries providing clear and transparent information on migration rules and regulations.....	31
Figure 18.	Provision of clear and transparent information (in countries with selected measures to facilitate labour mobility).....	31
Figure 19.	Can visas be obtained before arrival? (by type of process)	34
Figure 20.	Share of international migrant workers (out of total workers) (by existence of a programme to manage labour immigration).....	37

Figure 21. Age dependency ratio in primarily destination countries (by participation in regional agreements on labour mobility)	38
Figure 22. Percentage of countries actively promoting the creation of formal remittance schemes (by existence of dedicated policies on emigration)	39
Figure 23. Personal remittances received in 2022 (percentage of GDP)	40
Figure 24. Personal remittances received in 2022: combination of emigration policies and diaspora engagement	41
Figure 25. Percentage of countries with dedicated programmes or policies on migrant reintegration	42

LIST OF TABLES AND TEXT BOX

Table 1. Number of migrant workers worldwide (2013–2019)	17
Table 2. Number of MGI-assessed countries over total number of countries, per United Nations region	52
Text box 1. Selected examples: making information accessible to migrants	32



In Brazil, the “interiorization” strategy, which operates with the support of IOM and other United Nations agencies, helps refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela get a fresh start. This voluntary relocation programme, part of Operation Welcome, offers a lifeline and fosters integration by helping people find new job opportunities or reunite with family. More than 100,000 people have been relocated to over 930 cities in the last five years. © IOM 2023/Gema CORTÉS

I. INTRODUCTION

Regular pathways are essential to realizing the promise of migration and addressing global challenges. Too often migration is viewed as a problem, yet it holds key benefits for individuals, communities and countries alike. In the context of increasing conflicts and economic uncertainty, the scale of the opportunities that human mobility offers as well as the costs of not adequately addressing it are rising. The benefits of well-managed migration are wide-ranging, from helping address climate change and filling labour shortages to managing demographic transitions. **To deliver on the promise of migration,** people must have more and better opportunities to migrate regularly, safely, with dignity and for their own benefit, as well as that of origin and destination societies – in other words, **focus must turn to improving regular migration pathways.**

These pathways may be related to education, labour, family, or humanitarian or other reasons for migration. They may take a variety of shapes and forms, ranging from national legal frameworks allowing student migrants to work, to local pilot projects related to private refugee sponsorship. It is crucial, not only to establish new pathways, but also to expand existing ones and enhance them to amplify their developmental impacts.

However, while regular pathways are known to be key components of good migration governance and are recognized in global-level frameworks such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, not enough is known about how effective pathways can look in practice, and how to ensure they harness the potential of migration. To build evidence-based governance frameworks for regular pathways, more information is needed to guide the way. What kind of regular migration pathways are available? Which policy factors or other enablers support effective pathways? Who should ideally participate in developing pathways? How can local authorities be involved? Encouragingly, there is no need to start from scratch; countries around the world have developed and refined different regular migration pathways from which others can learn.

This publication provides insights into what regular migration pathways look like around the world, assessing implementation mechanisms and intervention efforts by various stakeholders. It showcases real-world examples of policies and programmes across a range of migration contexts and, where possible, illustrates how regular pathways can benefit migrants and non-migrants alike. The analysis is based on data from the Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs), IOM's flagship initiative on migration governance, covering 100 countries and 69 cities to assess trends on how countries establish, expand and enhance regular migration pathways. It also draws on secondary data where relevant.

This publication focuses on regular pathways for four different purposes – those related to **study, work, family and humanitarian reasons** – providing insights into interventions throughout the migration continuum. It is structured around three objectives to harness the potential of migration through regular pathways:



It also explores how different enabling factors can support effective and impactful pathways – for example, basing policymaking on data, and different types of international cooperation.

Realizing the full potential of migration requires designing tailored policies, strengthening institutional and legislative frameworks, and fostering transformative partnerships. All of these tenets of effective migration governance converge in the implementation of regular pathways. The insights presented in this report serve as a starting point to inform concrete policy dialogue to diversify opportunities for safe, orderly and regular migration – and to kick-start urgent action on this.



Maury Bracho, from Merida, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, migrated to Chile in 2017 to continue practising as a medical professional. © IOM 2022/Gema CORTÉS

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Motivation and vision

Human mobility is expected to grow – in size and complexity – in the years ahead. This will happen in tandem with far-reaching and fast-intensifying technological, geopolitical and environmental global transformations, from demographic change and growing digital interconnectivity, to more geopolitical conflicts and disasters, and climate change (McAuliffe and Oucho, 2024; Acostamadiedo et al., 2020). The scale of the opportunities that human mobility offers as well as the costs of not effectively managing it are rising.

The benefits of well-managed migration can be enormous, accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their transformative promise to leave no one behind, boosting growth and innovation, supporting productive labour markets, managing demographic transitions, enabling adaptation to climate change and providing safety to those who need it. But these benefits are not by any means a given.

The options currently available for regular migration are insufficient given the complexity and dynamism of human mobility. They can also be unequally distributed; regular pathways for those from developing countries have diminished, while those for individuals from developed countries have grown (McAuliffe and Oucho, 2024). This can come at a heavy cost, in terms of lost lives, human suffering, and missed opportunities for individuals and societies. Across the whole spectrum of migration, from forced to voluntary, new perspectives and approaches are needed. For example, many policies tend to focus on short-term outcomes rather than long-term ones, and initiatives are required to help policymakers and the public understand that entering, staying in, working in and returning to different countries can bring positive outcomes. Opportunities to change migration governance converge around one key topic: **regular migration pathways**.

Regular migration pathways is defined as “[m]igration schemes, programmes or other migration options that allow eligible persons to migrate regularly for various purposes to a concerned country of destination based on conditions and for a duration defined by such country” (IOM, 2019a:175).

Essentially, *regular migration pathways* enable people to move into, enter, stay in, exit or re-enter a given State in ways that are authorized by the law of that State and international agreements to which it is a party.

Regular migration pathways are defined by legal, policy and regulatory frameworks set out by States, including **destination, transit or origin countries**, at the local, national, bilateral, regional or global level. They are put into practice through a **broad range of interconnected implementation mechanisms and interventions throughout the migration continuum**. These include, inter alia, documentation and legal identity services, visa systems, vulnerability screening and programmes to address protection needs, health and social services, ethical recruitment processes, skills training and recognition, integration services, and return and reintegration support. Together, they form an infrastructure that can be used flexibly according to the needs of different contexts.

Regular pathways, a key lever to bring about real progress, are central to IOM's vision to deliver on the promise of migration – in other words, to help realize the full potential of migration while supporting the world's most vulnerable. Regular pathways can help save migrants' lives, protect their rights, address vulnerabilities and reduce protection risks. They can give individuals alternatives to situations of violence, vulnerability, exploitation and abuse that may arise by travelling along irregular migration routes or engaging with smuggling and trafficking networks. By offering comprehensive governance frameworks¹ to enter and remain in countries, regular pathways boost migrants' access to services, improving health, education and inclusion outcomes. Often, such pathways allow engagement in training, education or employment, in turn advancing integration and enabling migrants to benefit socially and economically.

Not only are regular pathways positive for migrants themselves, but they also carry important positive knock-on effects for countries and communities of origin and destination. Reducing migration barriers is associated with large economic gains (Clemens, 2011); managed well, human mobility can be a bedrock for sustainable development and progress. However, many of the development benefits of migration often touted – for example, the “triple win” dynamic, a virtuous cycle where migrants and communities of origin and destination simultaneously benefit from migration – are most evident through regular migration. Associated evidence, such as that expected increases in migration will boost global GDP by 2 per cent by 2050 due to more efficient allocation of labour, and that migration has an overall positive effect on long-term national economic growth (IMF, 2020; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017), is usually related to regular migration.

Why is this? By offering safe and legal ways to access decent employment, migration can, for example, help fill labour shortages, boost innovation and entrepreneurship, and promote trade. These benefits are not limited to labour-related pathways, as all regular migration pathways enable migrants to boost destination economies through increased demand and other mechanisms. For example, in 2022, fiscal contributions of Venezuelan migrants and refugees to Colombia reached USD 529.1 million (KAS et al., 2024). Furthermore, it was estimated that increasing the intake of Australia's refugee and humanitarian programme from 18,750 to 44,000 would boost the economy by AUD 37.7 billion, increase demand for goods and services by AUD 18.2 billion, and sustain on average an additional 35,000 jobs, with impacts increasing over time as more refugees enter the labour force (Gardener and Costello, 2019). Regular migrants also contribute to public finance by paying income and other taxes. Furthermore, through improved educational and employment opportunities, upskilling, higher remittance-sending potential and knowledge transfer, regular pathways empower migrants to be stronger development agents in their home communities.

Evidence suggests that curtailing some pathways can coincide with higher irregular migration (Almasri, 2023; see also: Hendow et al., 2024). Nevertheless, regular pathways are not a panacea and do not directly remedy any migration-related challenges. The effectiveness of pathways varies, and their impacts on migration movements themselves, which are influenced by many other factors aside from policy inputs, are hard to measure and may be mixed or even minimal (Martín et al., 2015). For example, evidence suggests that regular pathways may dampen irregular migration when combined with large border enforcement efforts and addressing destination employer incentives (Clemens and Gough, 2018), and strict border enforcement can reduce irregular migration if combined with significant increases in regular pathways, including visa channels (Soto Nishimura and Czaika, 2022).

¹ This publication defines *migration governance* as in the IOM *Glossary on Migration* (2019a:138).

This shows that multiple policy levers should be used simultaneously as individual policy mechanisms are likely to be insufficient (Triandafyllidou et al., 2019). Overall, while effective regular pathways alone do not necessarily put a stop to migration-related challenges, what is clear is that the wider benefits of migration cannot be achieved without them.

The real question becomes: how? There are many elements of governance that countries may use to develop regular migration pathways, from legal and regulatory frameworks that apply across a country to short-term policy initiatives implemented at the local level. Many of these can be based on existing frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, international law, other international agreements such as the Global Compact on Refugees, and regional agreements and frameworks. Pathways are increasingly recognized at the global level; Objective 5 of the Global Compact for Migration calls to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration. Today there are many opportunities – for example, increasing the involvement of actors from the private sector – that open up possibilities for new types of pathways to be established.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, countries can develop regular migration pathways that build on insights from past efforts and are adapted to fit their context. While countries around the world have developed and refined migration pathways, it can be difficult to learn from such efforts due to a lack of compiled information. Quality data from individual countries often exist on specific regular pathways; however, it is not easy to compare efforts across countries and regions. This publication aims to address this, by providing insights into what regular migration pathways can look like based on real-world examples collected through the MGIs, identifying interventions by governments and other stakeholders to offer fresh insights into establishing, expanding and enhancing pathways.

Framework

To develop wide-ranging approaches and action on regular migration pathways, it is important to have a common understanding of their potential scope and possible measures. **Taken together, three objectives and several enablers described below offer a comprehensive way to explore regular migration pathways.**

There are many criteria to develop regular pathways – such as by category of eligible person, duration of migration, level of governance, and stage of the migration process at which the pathway can be accessed. These criteria are not mutually exclusive; while this report refers to different pathway criteria to show their full range, it focuses on countries' regular migration pathways based on one major criteria – **purpose for migration**. This approach enables a people-centred understanding of pathways, as it delves into the reasons behind the mobility patterns of people on the move. Moreover, it facilitates a direct alignment with international frameworks, such as the Global Compact for Migration, as pathway-specific governance frameworks can be directly linked to their objectives and associated actions.

Following a series of core principles can help ensure that regular pathways are effective and benefit all. Regular pathways should be **people-centred** to promote the safety and well-being of all migrants and members of communities in countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as **rights-based** to uphold international law and prevent discrimination, exploitation, abuse and other rights violations. Regular pathways should be **accessible**, ensuring equal access for all who meet the necessary requirements and criteria, and **sustainable** to enable migration to contribute to lasting positive development impact in countries of origin and destination. Finally, they should be **safe**, establishing opportunities for individuals to migrate in ways that ensure their safety and well-being.

To harness the potential of migration through regular pathways, three overarching **objectives** must be met:

- 1 Establish new pathways.** Put simply, new pathways are needed to expand and diversify opportunities for safe, orderly and regular migration. Governments' legal, policy and regulatory frameworks can define regular pathways for migration of different purposes and develop diverse interventions around these. This could entail anything from allowing access to education for international students, to establishing a defined labour migration programme or dedicated visa categories for family reunification or movement from countries in crisis.
- 2 Expand and implement existing regular pathways.** Existing regular pathways must be reviewed continuously to take full advantage of them and ensure that they are as effective in practice as possible. This requires maintaining the integrity of pathways, for example, through full transparency of rules and requirements, and strengthening the institutional capacity of migration governance systems that underpin them. This may also include increasing some pathways' flexibility by adapting criteria to new caseloads or scaling up parts of them.
- 3 Enhance all regular pathways for better impact.** Regular pathways can amplify the development benefits of migration for migrants and communities alike. These can be refined to do so, for example, by taking measures to ensure people who migrate do not fall into situations of violence, exploitation or abuse, or to facilitate fair and ethical recruitment. This may include addressing migrants' vulnerabilities and protection needs, boosting skills recognition, facilitating diaspora engagement and, where necessary, ensuring reintegration services are sustainable.

A set of conditions, together constituting an enabling environment, need to be in place to help facilitate functional and impactful regular pathways. **Key enablers** of regular pathways may include data and research, including through consultation or use of evidence to inform regular pathways, which should be based on knowledge of what drives people to move. Effective pathway procedures can reduce burdens on asylum and other migration-related systems, contributing to stronger public confidence that migration is well managed, in turn supporting more positive attitudes to migration. Public attitudes and debates around migration strongly influence possibilities to change migration governance (MPF, 2022); public consultation and awareness-raising are key components of building pathways as well. Functioning national governance systems supported by adequate political will and capacity also support regular pathways – for example, through having coordination mechanisms for policymakers to help boost policy coherence.

In addition, international cooperation is essential to creating strong bilateral, multilateral, regional and global regular pathways, as is working through broad-based partnerships. Many actors are relevant to migration policy, including migrants, diasporas, municipal governments, local communities, civil society, academia, the private sector, policymakers and trade unions. Embracing diverse forms of cooperation through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches – for example, through structured government engagement with the private sector – can support more effective and sustainable regular pathways.

Regular pathways by purpose

Four categories of regular migration pathways are listed by purpose below. These are not exhaustive; there are others – for example, related to investment, entrepreneurship or trade, through cross-border mobility to access marketplaces in neighbouring countries. Individuals' profiles and the complexity of migration dynamics around the world mean that reasons to migrate may be mixed. Decisions to migrate are often complex and multifactorial, regardless of which legal category migrants fall into (Aksoy and Poutvaara, 2019; Czaika et al., 2021). Migration often involves a combination of different motivations. For example, mixed migration flows often see that those migrating for labour and humanitarian reasons do so together, and the distinction between voluntary and forced migration is increasingly blurred (Nishimura and Czaika, 2022). Migration for one reason may affect migration for another – for example, family-related migration flows are partly driven by labour migration (OECD, 2017).

This can affect the take-up and use of regular migration pathways; pathways broadly reflect reasons for migration and may overlap. For example, reuniting a person with international protection needs with a member of their family in another country, or bringing together education and labour migration through skills mobility partnerships show how pathways can cross each other. Many migrants switch between statuses granted by pathways intended for different purposes, depending on the options available – for example, entering a country through one pathway and changing to another. Some countries build flexibility into their pathways, allowing for transitions not only between pathways and multiple purposes for them but also from irregularity to regularity. For example, some countries allow in-country applications for residence permits, and others offer regularization because of personal circumstance changes such as the formation of a family (Hendow et al., 2024). While this analysis focuses on the four pathways below, given the complexity of migration drivers, it also underlines the need for regular pathways to remain flexible and continuously adapt (ibid.).



Pathways for education facilitate the movement of persons to access education, including options for academic mobility, such as through bilateral and multilateral agreements that facilitate academic exchange.

The entry, stay, exit and return of international students represent a significant and growing pathway, reflecting broader trends in globalization, knowledge exchange and labour mobility. By 2021, the global count of international students had surged to 6.4 million, a stark increase from just 2 million at the turn of the millennium (UIS, n.d.). This trend not only mirrors the expanding scope of global education but also underscores the strategic importance that countries place on attracting international students. Beyond the immediate benefits to education systems and cultural exchange, the focus on these students as potential skilled migrants reflects a keen interest in harnessing global talent. Policymakers are increasingly focused on crafting policies that facilitate the integration of international students into their host countries' labour markets, recognizing the long-term benefits in fostering innovation, economic development and strengthening global ties. This dynamic interplay between international education and migration highlights the critical role of international students in global mobility.

Education pathways offer opportunities for people to study in another country, by allowing eligible persons to migrate to a country regularly for the purpose of studying, based on conditions and for a duration defined by the government. These pathways offer students wider education and training options, expanded career opportunities after graduation, and a chance to experience other cultures. Student migration may be seen as a type of knowledge

migration, as through their movements, migrants “are bearers of expansion, diffusion, and circulation of knowledge, carried forward later as highly skilled professionals contributing to the labour markets” where they work (Raghuram, 2013; see also: Alves and King, 2022). The effects of this can be positive for destination countries. For example, in the United Kingdom, international students have had a positive economic impact linked to the tuition fees they pay and money they spend, as export earnings attributable to higher education were GBP 19.5 billion in 2020 (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018; Cuibus and Walsh, 2024). Demographic changes, with some regions experiencing a youth bulge, may increase demand for education pathways in the future.



Pathways for labour facilitate the movement of persons for the purpose of employment.

In 2019, the global workforce included approximately 169 million migrant workers (ILO, 2021), with a significant concentration in high-income regions. This demographic is crucial for sustaining key economic sectors, particularly the service industry, which employs the majority of migrant workers, including a significant number of women in the care economy. Despite the gender disparity, with women making up around 41.5 per cent (ibid.) of this workforce, their participation is vital for the global labour market. Establishing regular pathways for migration is critical in leveraging these dynamics, as it facilitates the regular and orderly flow of migrants, ensuring their rights and integration into labour markets.

Regular pathways support not only the economic aspirations of migrants but also the needs of host countries. The movement of persons for the purpose of employment is key to filling labour shortages in destination countries. Labour shortages will increase in ageing economies with a shrinking working population, and high shortages can cost businesses more than USD 1 trillion a year (Harnoss et al., 2022). There are already significant skills gaps around the world, for example, related to the green transition and health care (MPF, 2022; Fujisawa and Colombo, 2009). Migrant workers are central to global value chains (GVCs), support growth and innovation in receiving economies, and tend to benefit public finance (Mosler Vidal, 2023; OECD and ILO, 2018; Liebig and Mo, 2013; Hunt, 2010). Furthermore, businesses set up by migrant entrepreneurs often create employment opportunities for others. As economies and labour markets grow still more complex and globalized, regular pathways for labour, supported by effective global labour supply and demand matching, will be key to sustaining growth.



Pathways for family facilitate movement, including for (a) family reunification of spouse, parent, children or other relatives after initial migration; (b) family formation or new marriage of a migrant with a permanent resident or citizen; or (c) family accompanying a family member entering at the same time as primary migrant.

Gathering comprehensive data on global family-related migration is notably challenging due to the varied capacity of countries to collect and share such information, especially in developing regions. However, consistent data are available within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) area. In 2022, OECD countries received 6.1 million

permanent-type migrants, a 26 per cent increase from 2021, with family-related migration accounting for 40 per cent of these movements (OECD, 2023).²

Regular pathways for family, whether these allow family members to accompany a primary migrant or enable family reunification or formation, promote the right to family life and, where applicable, the best interests of the child. Migration often causes the separation of families; thus, family-related migration is crucial to protecting family life and unity, a fundamental human right (United Nations Network on Migration, 2021). Family-related pathways can support primary migrants' long-term social and economic integration and can benefit destination countries in various ways. As primary migrants' spouses tend to have similar educational characteristics, in practice family-related migration can amplify the skills contributions of labour migration (OECD, 2017). These dynamics can interact with pathways for labour. Since migrants whose spouses work are more likely to stay in host countries, allowing the employment of accompanying family can be important for migrant retention, and limiting family-related migration can dampen a country's success in attracting the migrants it wishes to attract (ibid.).



Pathways related to humanitarian factors provide for entry and stay in a State in order to address humanitarian or protection needs, whether through the asylum system or other pathways for the admission or stay of persons with protection needs, such as in situations of human trafficking or abuse, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, or as a result of serious or chronic health conditions.

Conflicts, natural disasters and other crises have dramatically increased the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide. As of the end of 2023, data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that there were approximately 117.3 million forcibly displaced individuals globally.³ Additionally, there were millions of asylum-seekers, individuals who are seeking international protection but whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined.

As conflict, violence and disasters exacerbate around the world, it is key that affected populations and those facing persecution or other threats to life are protected through the application of international human rights law, including refugee resettlement. Furthermore, pathways for humanitarian migration can sometimes help avoid migrants undertaking irregular, long and dangerous migration journeys (United Nations Network on Migration, 2021). Often countries' existing asylum processes cannot accommodate increasing numbers of arrivals needing protection, and these need to be complemented by other pathways (Clemens, 2022; Triandafyllidou et al., 2019). Such pathways provide important additional or complementary ways for individuals to access protection as well as options towards long-term sustainable solutions, ideally eventually leading to durable solutions, such as resettlement (OECD and UNHCR, 2018).

To unleash the potential of migration for a better future and deliver on its promise, there is a need to increase and improve opportunities for people to move in a regular way. This report aims to show how this can be done through regular migration pathways.

² These figures include new migrant entries as well as those who have had a change of residence status from temporary to permanent in a year. Data for 2022 are estimates based on preliminary data from two thirds of OECD countries.

³ See also: McAuliffe and Oucho, 2024.



In March 2015, IOM Somalia's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (M&E) and Public Information Unit (PIU) visited several IOM-run projects in Puntland, including a monitoring trip to projects that are run by the Immigration and Border Management Unit (IBM) and the Migration for Development in Africa Unit (MIDA).
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III. CORE FINDINGS



1. Establish governance frameworks for regular pathways for migration

While most countries and regions around the world offer some existing regular migration pathways, it is clear that to fully harness the benefits of migration, new pathways are needed. These should be forward-looking and evidence-based, responding to fast-evolving migration dynamics. Establishing these requires coherent policy, advocacy and legal efforts, strong international and regional dialogue, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Over the last years, there have been increasing examples of innovation within pathways, sometimes taking the form of pilot projects to test new approaches. For example, Global Skill Partnerships bring together actors from across sectors to craft pathways that combine different purposes for migration – education and employment (Clemens et al., 2019; Clemens, 2015). While to date, few of these programmes have been transformed into wider large-scale migration policy (Hooper, 2019), there is scope to do so, and focus must turn to the sustainability of such efforts. This is present in some cases, for example, in the sponsorship

for Ukrainians in the United States of America through the Uniting for Ukraine programme, later facilitating pathways for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans (Benton et al., 2024). To create pathways that are sustainable, they must be firmly based on realities on the ground. This requires working together across sectors, involving employers, trade unions, civil society, academia and migrants themselves when designing and implementing policies.

This section explores insights into establishing new regular pathways for education, employment, family and humanitarian reasons. While pathways for different purposes are explored separately, it is important for countries to work towards aligning these where relevant and possible; different pathways can support each other or sometimes even blend to achieve shared outcomes. Some new pathways take advantage of these synergies – for example, Skills Mobility Partnerships invest in vocational training to improve migrants' skills, help destination countries fill labour shortages and contribute to development in origin countries (EMN and OECD, 2022).

1.1. Measures to facilitate education mobility

This section seeks to answer the following questions:



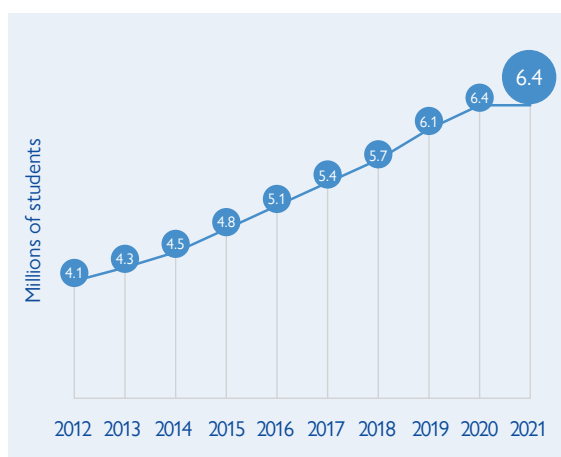
- What are recent trends in the mobility of international students, and what barriers do they often encounter?
- What can countries do to facilitate international student mobility?
- Can regular pathways have more than one purpose, and how can an enabling policy environment foster stronger connections between them?

Millions of individuals are actively seeking educational opportunities abroad. In 2021, there were over 6 million internationally mobile tertiary students around the world,⁴ reflecting a consistent upward trend over the past decade

(Figure 1). These students can regularly move to, enter and stay in their desired destination country due to governance frameworks designed to facilitate their educational aspirations under specified conditions and durations. Studying in a

⁴ This represents almost 3 per cent of the total number of tertiary students worldwide (UNESCO, 2022).

Figure 1. Number of internationally mobile students globally (2012–2021)



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2023 data (UIS, n.d.).

country besides their own offers individuals the chance to immerse themselves in diverse learning environments and engage in cultural exchange, potentially leading to skills alignment that benefits both origin and destination countries. To amplify the benefits of student mobility for migrants and communities, countries should address the barriers that prevent international students from accessing tertiary education.

Admission barriers for international students often stem from specific provisions within a country's governance framework.⁵ These may include higher tuition fees for international students, quotas limiting their numbers, or restrictions on studying certain disciplines. In addition to efforts to address these barriers, countries can work to increase clarity in application procedures and eligibility criteria for international students to ensure compliance with academic standards. Clear visa regulations outlining available visa types and residency conditions can also complement these measures.

Dedicated legislation and policies focusing on tertiary education, along with specialized institutions to oversee their implementation, can help address the barriers often faced by international students. For example, in Ecuador, while education up to the secondary level is governed by the Organic Law on Intercultural Education (2011), specific provisions on tertiary education are outlined in the Organic Law on Higher Education (2010). The latter Law was amended in 2020 to expand the principle of equal opportunities to benefit migrants.⁶ Moreover, the Council of Higher Education is a dedicated institution to regulate the tertiary education system in Ecuador. In 2019, the Council issued the Regulations Governing Degrees and Diplomas Obtained at Foreign Institutions,⁷ together with requirements and procedures for the registration of foreign qualifications. These regulations included a fast-track recognition mechanism, relaxed formal requirements and improved online processing.

Globally, less than a quarter of countries have established measures to facilitate entry and stay for international students, granting them equal education opportunities as domestic students (Figure 2).

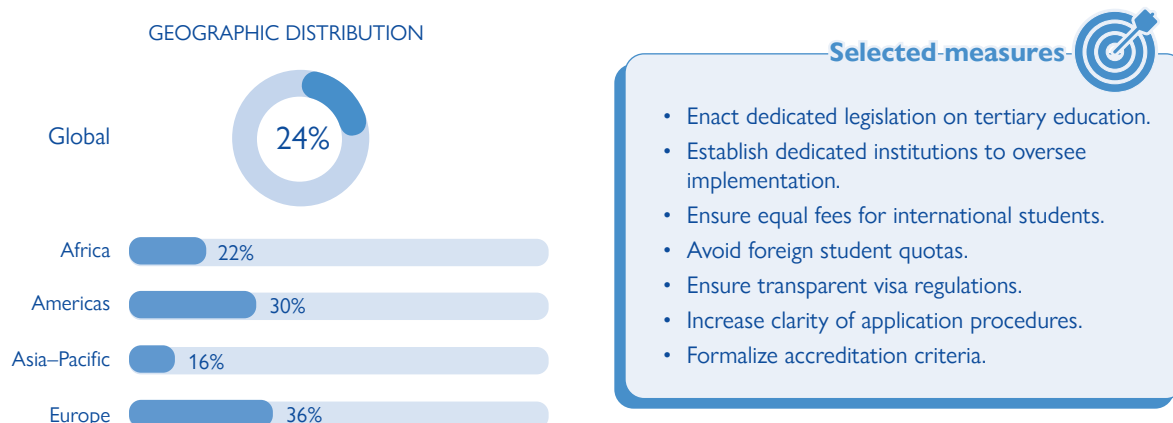
Regular pathways for migration can have multiple, often intersecting purposes. While allowing international students to work during their studies can address short-term labour shortages and diversify the workforce of the host country, part-time employment can provide international students with crucial financial support, promote their integration into the local community and enrich their educational experience. Moreover, it may enhance their employability by fostering skill acquisition, potentially motivating them to explore longer-term pathways for the purpose of employment.

⁵ Other barriers, such as language barriers, may exist independently of governance frameworks and are inherent to the country itself. Countries should address these through policies aimed at providing targeted support, such as offering language courses for certain international students.

⁶ This also includes Ecuadorians abroad or returnees.

⁷ See Resolution No. RPC-SO-42-777-2019.

Figure 2. Countries with measures to facilitate education mobility



Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

According to MGI data, 30 per cent of assessed countries have provisions allowing international students to work during their studies, while only 13 per cent have measures facilitating postgraduation employment (Figure 3). For example, in Germany, foreign nationals who have completed a course of study in the country are granted a temporary residence permit for up to 18 months to search for a job relevant to their studies.⁸

Figure 3. Percentage of countries with provisions promoting the transition of international students into the labour market



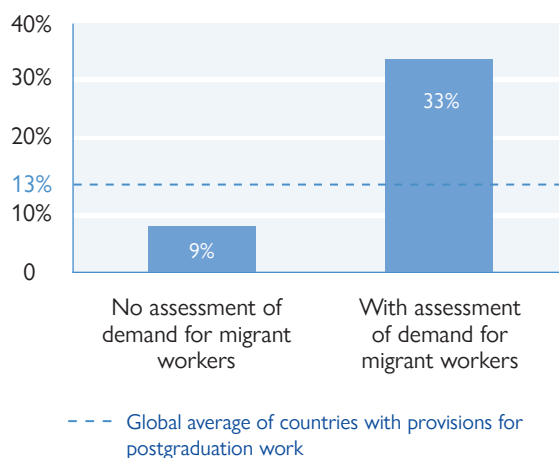
Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

Evidence-based decision-making is crucial in shaping education pathways – for example, by developing policies based on a thorough understanding of the educational needs and aspirations of migrants as well as origin and destination countries’ priorities, a comprehensive understanding of the labour market supported by evidence is key for developing policies that facilitate the transition of international students into the workforce. According to MGI data, countries that regularly monitor the labour market demand for migrant workers tend to have schemes allowing international students to work in the country after graduation at a higher rate than those without such labour market assessments (Figure 4).

⁸ See the Residence Act (AufenthG) (2008), Section 20, modified by Articles 3 and 20 of the *Skilled Immigration Act (Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Fachkräfteeinwanderung)* (2023), which also introduces a job search opportunity card, starting in June 2024.

Figure 4. Percentage of countries with measures facilitating postgraduation employment (by assessment of demand for migrant workers)



Notes: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to examine the relationship between the two binary variables, revealing a statistically significant association at the 5 per cent level (p value = 0.012).

Source: MGI database (2023).

In focus



International cooperation, including through regional agreements, can play a significant role in shaping regular pathways for education. One way that these agreements can facilitate the mobility of students across borders is through common qualification frameworks. For example, the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF), adopted in 2010, provides a common reference framework for comparing and aligning qualifications across SADC member States, facilitating the recognition of qualifications, promoting cultural exchange and enhancing educational opportunities.

1.2. Measures to facilitate labour mobility

This section seeks to answer the following questions:



- What are recent trends in the mobility of migrant workers, and what barriers do they often encounter?
- What can countries do to facilitate migrant employment?
- How can employment pathways attract skill-specific migrants, and how can multisectoral engagement help do this?

In 2019, there were approximately 169 million migrant workers around the world,⁹ with many living in high-income destinations (ILO, 2021) (Table 1). These made up approximately 69 per cent of the world's international migrant population of working age (ibid.).¹⁰

As seen above, labour migration can benefit migrants themselves as well as the destination and origin.¹¹ To make the most of these benefits,

countries should develop flexible and gender-responsive labour mobility schemes in accordance with labour market needs and skills supply, and address barriers that prevent prospective and current migrants from accessing employment. Such schemes should be firmly rooted in a rights-based approach, adhering to the set of basic principles in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990).

⁹ According to ILO (2021), 58.5 per cent of migrant workers were men, while 41.5 per cent were women.

¹⁰ While the term *migrant workers* usually refers to those admitted to a country for the purpose of employment, it may also mean any international migrant who is employed, unemployed or seeking employment in their country of residence (ILO, 2015).

¹¹ See Section 3.2 for more information on migrant contributions to the country of origin through remittances.

Table 1. Number of migrant workers worldwide (2013–2019)

Year	Migrants workers (millions)	Migrant workers as a share of all workers
2013	150	4.4%
2017	164	4.7%
2019	169	4.9%

Source: ILO *Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers* (2021).

Several issues can limit effective labour migration pathways. Migrants may face restrictions accessing employment. For example, they may not be eligible to apply to certain jobs from abroad, or they may need to pass a minimum income threshold, which may be difficult to meet in their occupation. Once in employment, migrant workers may face rights abuses or different types of exploitation, such as withholding of wages or poor working conditions. It can be expensive or burdensome for employers to hire migrant workers. To address these and other barriers, countries should work towards building comprehensive and flexible labour migration governance frameworks, complemented by sector- or skill-specific programmes.

Many countries use a combination of national regulations and agreements with other countries to manage labour migration. For example, as a member of the European Union, Ireland is party to regional agreements through which nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland (and their spouses, civil partners and dependants) have the right to work in Ireland without a work permit. Furthermore, protection applicants (such as asylum-seekers)

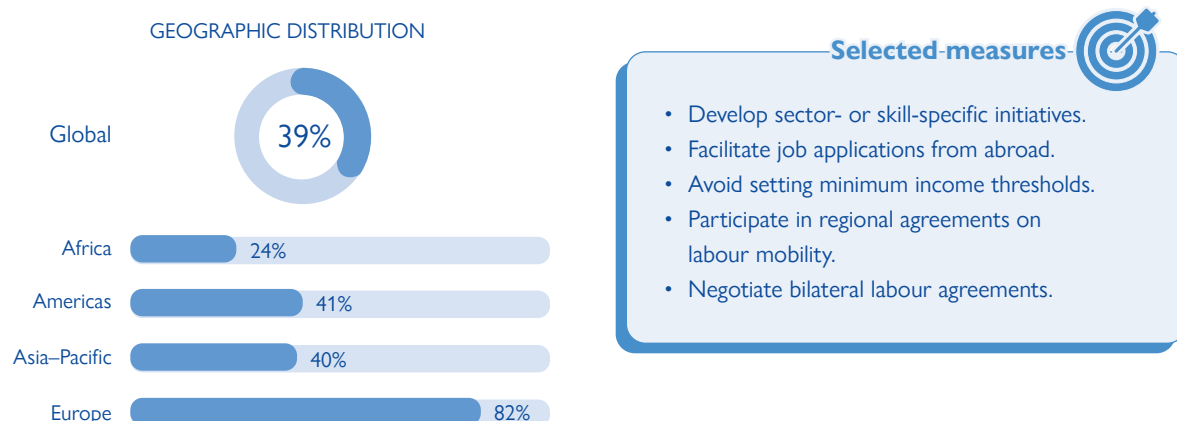
and international students with permission to remain in Ireland do not need work permits after a labour market access permission is granted by the Department of Justice. Ireland has a 2019 memorandum of understanding on migration with the United Kingdom so that Irish and British citizens can reside in either country with access to employment. The Government of Ireland’s national Employment Permits Act 2003 (2003), valid as of 2024, provides for nine different types of employment permits. They focus on skills and labour shortages, managed through critical skills and ineligible occupations lists, which are subject to twice-yearly review guided by labour market research and in consultation with research bodies, government ministries and the public.

According to MGI data, just under 40 per cent of countries worldwide have established measures to facilitate labour migration, making available sufficient and effective routes for migrant workers and addressing admission barriers (Figure 5).¹² These countries grant foreign residents equal access to employment as nationals, including through defined programmes for managing labour immigration; and cooperate with other countries to promote labour mobility, including through regional agreements or formal bilateral labour agreements.

Labour migration is complex, and needs for pathways may differ depending on the sector involved and migrant workers’ profiles – labour markets need to remain flexible. Often it is beneficial to have industry- or skill-specific procedures to facilitate labour migration where it is needed the most. To ensure that migrant workers can best contribute to destination countries through employment pathways, their skills, qualifications and experience must also be carefully considered.

¹² The percentage of countries facilitating labour mobility is based on a composite of various indicators grouped into two main categories: national regulations and international agreements. For more information, see the [Methodology](#).

Figure 5. Countries with measures to facilitate labour mobility



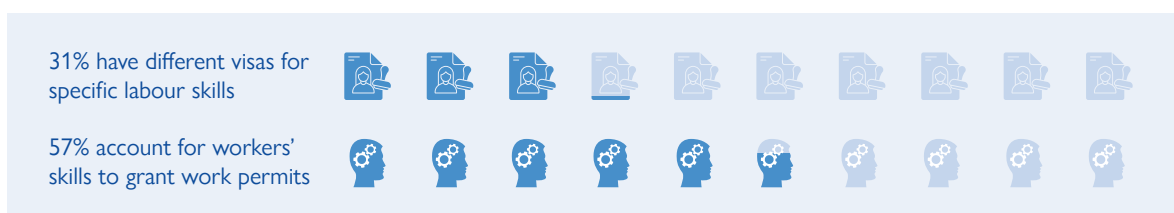
Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

Globally, 31 per cent of countries have different types of visas to attract migrants with specific labour skills (Figure 6). For example, Rwanda manages the Skilled Workers Programme, the Skilled Workers in Occupations in Demand Programme and the Employer Sponsored Skilled Workers Programme – aiming to minimize administrative barriers to employing skilled migrants – and offers 22 sector-specific

permits. Moreover, 57 per cent of countries account for migrant workers’ skills when deciding to grant work permits or work visas. For example, Thailand’s Smart Visa programme prioritizes workers with experience in targeted industries, including smart electronics, agriculture and biotechnology, automation and robotics, environmental management, and renewable energy.

Figure 6. Percentage of countries with skills-based criteria in their visa policies



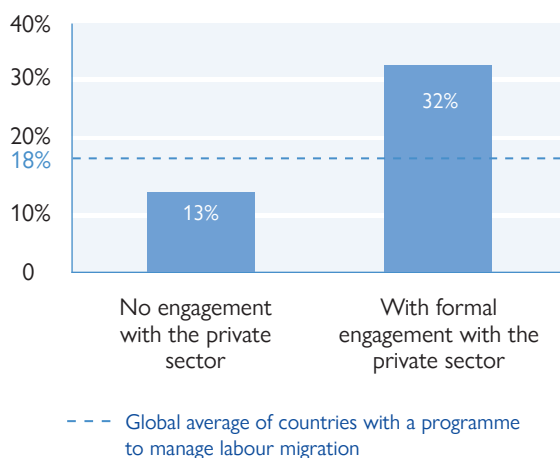
Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

Broad-based stakeholder engagement is particularly key in shaping sustainable employment pathways, enabling countries to undertake better identification of skills gaps and tackle skills and labour shortages. Structured engagement with actors outside of government, in particular with employers and workers, can encourage countries to establish defined programmes for managing labour migration. According to MGI data, countries with formal engagement with the private sector in agenda-setting and the

implementation of migration-related policies tend to have defined programmes for managing labour immigration into the country more often than those without this type of engagement (Figure 7). Engaging with diaspora members can also be linked to increased migrant worker protection; countries that formally engage members of their diaspora in development policies are more likely to have mechanisms to protect the rights of their workers abroad than those that do not (IOM, 2024a).

Figure 7. Percentage of countries with programmes to manage labour immigration (by engagement with the private sector)



Notes: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to examine the relationship between the two binary variables, revealing a statistically significant association at the 10 per cent level (p-value = 0.067).

Source: MGI database (2023).

In focus



The regional Caribbean Community (CARICOM) free movement of skills policy, set under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), enables CARICOM nationals to apply as skilled nationals, allowing them to work in any member State. The framework accounts for migrant workers' skills and capabilities; preferential treatment is attributed to teachers, university graduates, musicians, media workers, sportspeople and artists, among others. The CARICOM Qualifications Framework also helps support this by facilitating mutual recognition of certification.

1.3. Measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons

This section seeks to answer the following questions:



- What are the main barriers faced by those migrating for family reasons?
- What can countries do to facilitate international mobility for family reasons?
- How can international cooperation shape family-related migration pathways?

Global data quantifying migration primarily for family reasons remain scarce. Despite a decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic, family-related migration continues to represent the largest category of permanent-type migration into OECD countries. In 2022, almost 2.2 million people migrating for family reasons, including accompanying family members, arrived in OECD countries, accounting for approximately 40 per cent of permanent-type migration flows (OECD, 2023) (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Family-related migration to OECD countries (2013–2022)



Note: Data cover new, permanent-type migrants, including family members accompanying migrant workers. Included are only countries for which standardized data are available. Data for 2022 are estimates based on preliminary data covering about two thirds of OECD countries.

Source: OECD, 2023.

Enabling families to stay together through the process of migration is fundamental to upholding the right to family life, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). It can also be essential to safeguarding the rights of children, as highlighted particularly under Article 10 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which mandates States to handle applications for the purpose of family reunification in a “positive, humane and expeditious manner”. Furthermore, Article 44 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families obliges States to take “appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the unity of the families of migrant workers”.

Pathways for family-related migration yield positive outcomes for both families and destination countries. Among refugees, research shows that family separation can serve as a major source of stress, with potential impacts on mental health (Beaton et al., 2018), suggesting that policies that support the reunion of refugee families have the potential to boost well-being and minimize psychological distress (Walther et al., 2019:10). Moreover, an OECD study (2019) indicates that delays in family reunification may negatively impact the capacity of migrants to integrate in the destination countries in the long term, particularly affecting the earning and language acquisition of spouses and the overall integration of children. Despite this evidence, families often face barriers to remaining together through migration. Restrictions based on the migration status of the primary migrant represent one of the primary barriers to family reunification. In some countries, family reunification is available only to citizens¹³ and migrants with permanent residency, which can often be obtained after many years.

In these cases, family members of migrant workers or others holding temporary residence permits cannot access the pathways. Similarly, some countries have enacted specific provisions for family reunification only for those with refugee status or other specific types of visas.

Limitations on which family members can access migration pathways are also common. In many countries, pathways are available only to the spouses and dependent children (under 18 years of age) of principal migrants. However, some countries have taken steps to extend provisions to include partners in a marriage-like relationship or de facto partners. Others adopt a more inclusive approach, accommodating all dependent immediate family relatives, such as the parents or adult children of the primary migrant. For example, Peru allows reunification for spouses, de facto partners, and the dependent children up to 28 years old and parents of the principal migrant.¹⁴ Similarly, the Republic of Moldova offers pathways for dependent parents and partners with whom migrants have children,¹⁵ while in 2021, Mauritius removed the age restriction (of 24 years) on children accessing family reunification, basing access on financial dependency rather than age.¹⁶

Pathways for family reunification often depend on the income or resources of the principal migrant, including requirements for housing or financial sufficiency, such as setting minimum income thresholds. Other barriers, like language proficiency and pre-entry tests, are also often used in family-related migration policies. While such requirements are intended to enhance the integration capacity of reuniting migrants, research suggests there is no evidence that such restrictive measures support better migrant integration (Strik et al., 2013).

¹³ These include migrants who have obtained citizenship through naturalization.

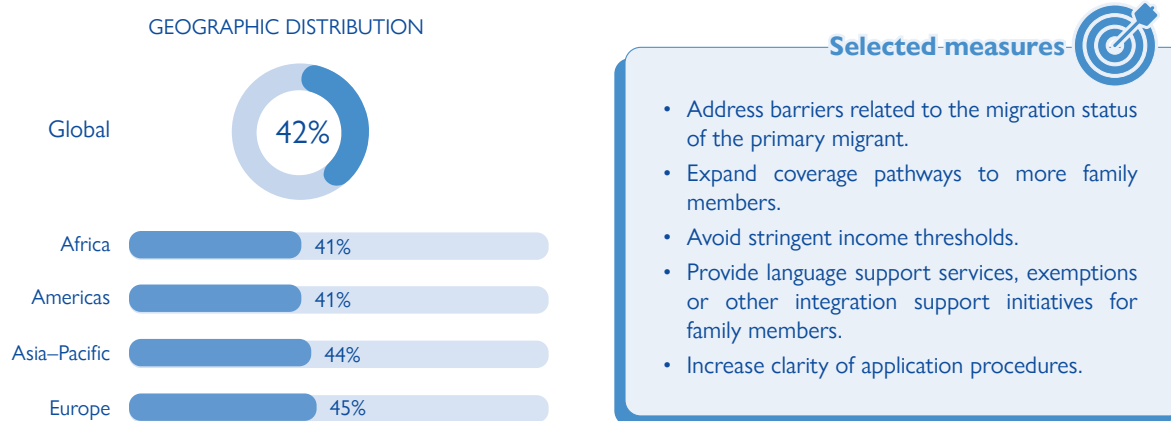
¹⁴ Article 38 of the Government of Peru’s Law and Regulations on Migration, Legislative Decree No. 1350, Supreme Decree 007-2017-IN (2017) outlines the family members who are able to access family reunification.

¹⁵ Article 19 of Law No. 200 on Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova (2010) regulates family reunification.

¹⁶ See the Mauritius National Assembly’s Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, No. 15 of 2021.

Most countries worldwide have implemented measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons to varying extents. While 42 per cent of MGI-assessed countries allow family reunification for migrants in all visa and residency categories (Figure 9), over half (53%) restrict family reunification to specific visa or residency categories.

Figure 9. Countries with measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons



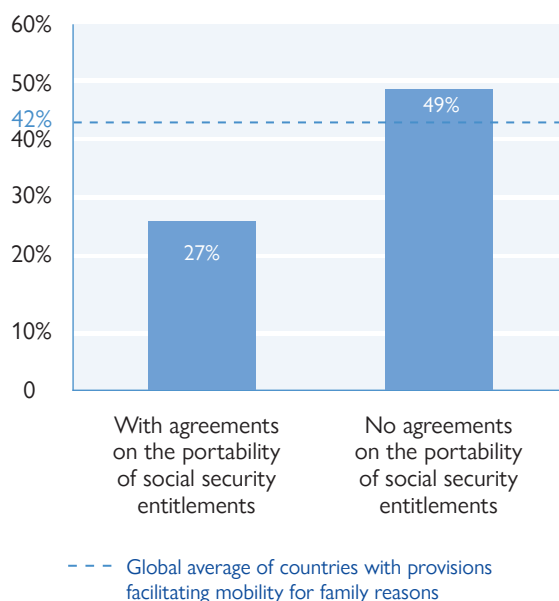
Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

International cooperation and dialogue are essential for promoting effective regular migration pathways, including those for family reasons, in line with international law and frameworks. Objective 5 of the Global Compact for Migration, on enhancing the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, includes a call to facilitate access to procedures for family reunification by reviewing applicable requirements, such as income, language proficiency and access to social security. International agreements on the portability of social security benefits reflect a commitment among participating countries to support migrant welfare and integration. This type of cooperation can create an enabling environment for specific measures to promote the realization

of the right to family life. MGI data show that measures allowing family reunification for migrants in all residency categories are more often found in countries that have international agreements on the portability of social security entitlements, compared to countries without such agreements (Figure 10). For example, Azerbaijan allows the family of foreigners with a temporary residence permit to access temporary residence. Azerbaijan also has many bilateral agreements with other countries regarding old-age pensions and social security entitlements, including Georgia (1993), the Republic of Moldova (1997), Ukraine (1997) and Uzbekistan (1996), granting migrants access to social security on an equal standing as citizens of the respective countries.

Figure 10. Percentage of countries with measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons (by existence of agreements on the portability of social security entitlements)



Notes: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to examine the relationship between the two binary variables, revealing a statistically significant association at the 5 per cent level (p-value = 0.049).

Source: MGI database (2023).



In 2021, Panama's National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family established the Protection Council in the Darién Gap to identify and provide complementary protection to vulnerable children and adolescents. Additionally, in 2022, Law No. 285 created the System of Guarantees and Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents. The Law reorganizes relevant government institutions and facilitates the implementation of related policies. The system applies to all children and adolescents, regardless of their country of origin, and to Panamanian nationals abroad.

1.4. Measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons

This section seeks to answer the following questions:

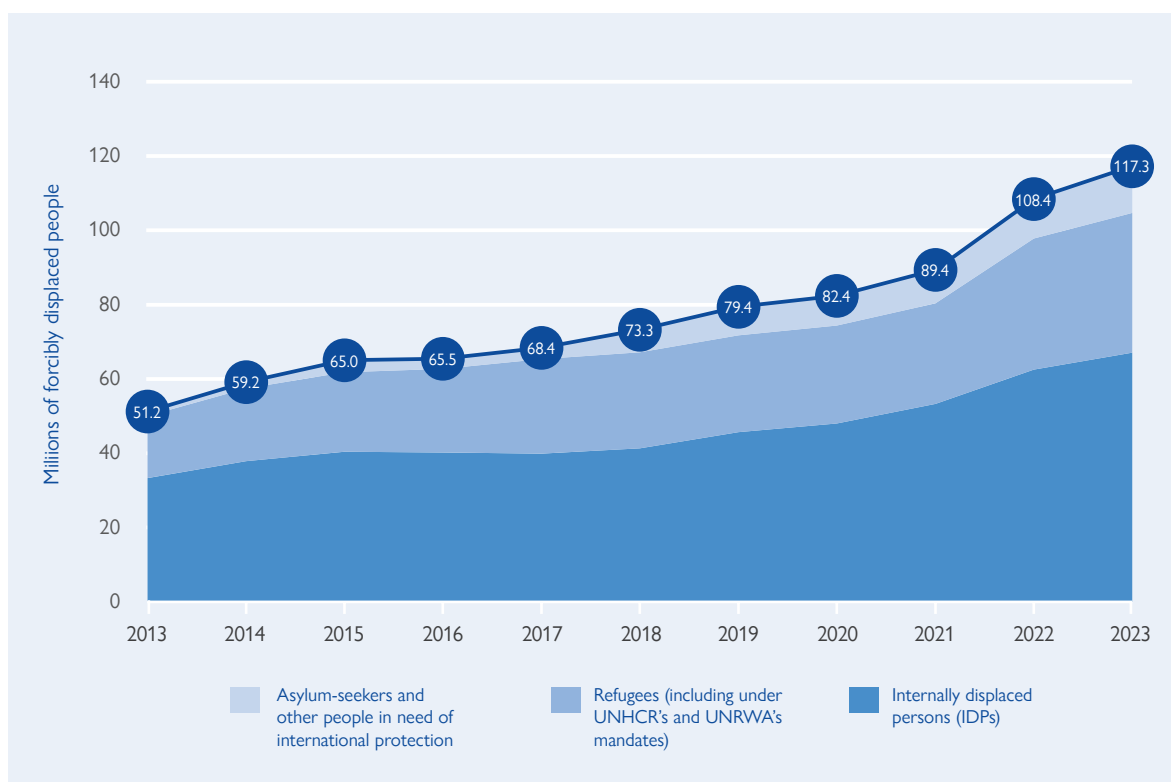


- What are the main barriers faced by cross-border forcibly displaced individuals in accessing humanitarian migration pathways?
- What can countries do to facilitate the admission and protection of migrants with humanitarian needs?
- How can policy coherence shape humanitarian migration pathways?

Millions of individuals are being compelled to migrate due to conflicts or disaster-induced crises, a trend that has significantly increased in recent years. As of the end of 2023, there were around 117.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, more than double the amount registered 10 years prior (51.2 million). These figures include refugees, internally displaced

persons (IDPs) and asylum-seekers (Figure 11). While IDPs who have been forced to leave their homes but remain within their country's borders represent the largest group among the forcibly displaced, the share of individuals forced to move across borders increased from slightly over one third (34.9%) of all forcibly displaced in 2013 to almost half of them (42.4%) in 2022.

Figure 11. Number of forcibly displaced people in millions globally (2013–2023)



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from UNHCR (2024) and IDMC (n.d.).

Cross-border forcibly displaced individuals seek and may be granted entry and stay in a State's territory to address humanitarian or protection needs under specific conditions and time frames. To prevent individuals on the move from encountering violence, exploitation or abuse, countries should prioritize facilitating their admission and ensuring their protection, including by granting proper documentation and legal identity services, establishing special humanitarian residence categories, and/or developing temporary humanitarian admission and protection programmes. Over 140 States have ratified either the 1951 Refugee Convention or the supplementary 1967 Protocol, which establish the principles of non-refoulement and basic minimum standards for the treatment of refugees.

Lacking proof of legal identity can pose a significant barrier for migrants in need of protection. In many instances, the inability to establish the identity of

an international protection applicant can result in a negative asylum decision (EMN, 2017). Prioritizing accessible documentation and legal identity services is key for the fulfilment of the rights of displaced individuals, including granting them access to basic services. For instance, in response to the increasing number of Venezuelan migrants lacking proper documentation, Brazil introduced a Provisional National Migration Registration Document (*documento provisório de registro nacional migratório*, DPRNM) in 2018, provided free of charge to asylum-seekers.¹⁷ While the asylum application is pending, DPRNM holders are considered to have regular status in Brazil and granted various rights, including to obtain an Individual Taxpayer Registration and open bank accounts. Moreover, it provides access to essential public services such as education and health care (Dokovic, 2023).

Similarly, establishing special residence categories can be a valuable tool for countries to protect

¹⁷ An updated DPRNM with enhanced security measures was then rolled out in 2020. See the Government of Brazil's Decree No. 9.277 (2018) and Ordinance No. 11.264 (2020).

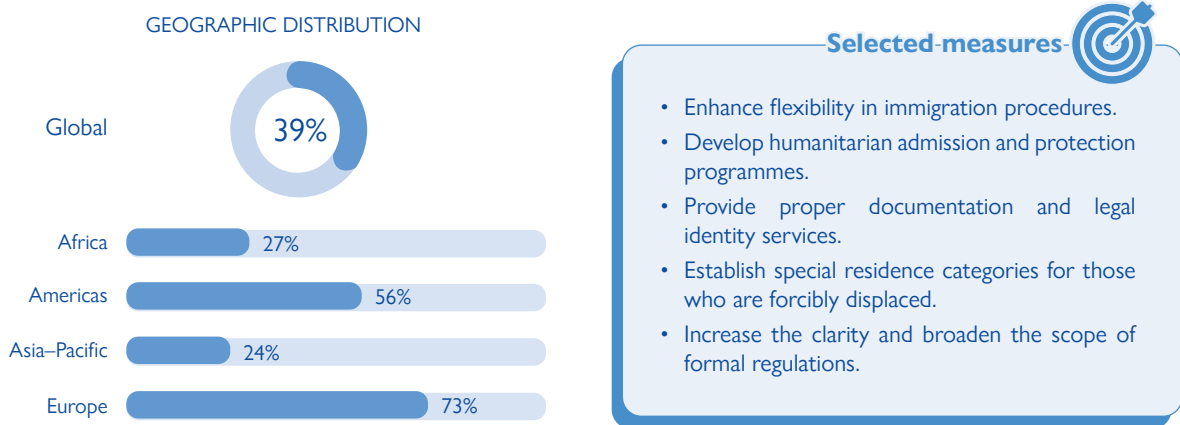
and integrate forcibly displaced individuals through regularization. For instance, in 2021, Colombia adopted the Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants. It is comprised of the Unique Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, to identify Venezuelan nationals seeking access to temporary protection measures; and the Temporary Protection Permit, to authorize Venezuelan migrants to remain in Colombia with regular status and to engage in any legal activity or occupation during the validity period.¹⁸

Dedicated legislation can recognize temporary frameworks to provide humanitarian assistance and protect the rights of forcibly displaced individuals. For instance, in Albania, Law No. 10 on Asylum (2021) mandates the provision of temporary protection to those fleeing war or similar crises of violence or conflict in their origin countries, where their protection cannot be guaranteed.¹⁹ The rights of individuals under temporary protection include receiving basic housing, accessing health care, pursuing

pre-university education under the same conditions as Albanian citizens, working and accessing professional training, and receiving legal aid provided by the State. Moreover, countries have the potential to increase clarity and expand the scope of existing regulations to effectively address the protection needs of migrants. For example, in 2021, Ecuador amended its Organic Law on Human Mobility (2017) to broaden the definition of individuals eligible for protection for humanitarian reasons to include victims of human trafficking and those affected by natural or environmental disasters (Article 58).

According to MGI data, 39 per cent of countries have established measures to facilitate admission and grant temporary protection to people compelled to migrate across borders due to conflicts or crises (Figure 12). These countries address the needs of forcibly displaced individuals and prioritize their protection, including by developing flexible immigration and regularization procedures.²⁰

Figure 12. Countries with measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons



Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

A whole-of-government approach that enables policy coherence is needed to shape effective regular migration pathways, including those designed for humanitarian purposes. This involves coordinating migration legislation, policies and

programmes across various policy areas and government levels to provide individuals with alternatives to situations of violence, vulnerability, exploitation and abuse.

¹⁸ See the Government of Colombia's Decree No. 216 for the temporary protection statute for Venezuelan migrants (2021).

¹⁹ According to Article 82, temporary protection is initially granted for one year and can be extended in six-month increments for up to three years.

²⁰ While refugee resettlement and complementary pathways are also considered regular migration pathways, the MGI methodology does not separately ask countries about these.

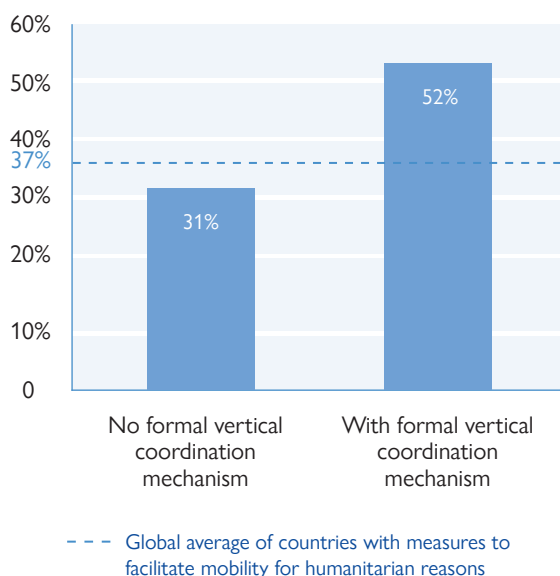
Regarding displacement due to disasters, environmental degradation and climate change, horizontal policy coherence entails coordinating policies across both migration and environmental policy sectors. This type of coordination can lead to improved measures to mitigate the impact of disasters. For example, governments that enhance policy coherence through formal interministerial coordination tend to incorporate displacement provisions into their disaster risk reduction strategies at a higher rate than those lacking such coordination mechanisms (IOM, 2024a).

Similarly, coordination across different levels of government can streamline policy design and implementation. For instance, in the municipality of Manaus, Brazil, local authorities collaborate with the Federal Government on initiatives to facilitate the reception and integration of migrant populations and refugees. As part of the federal programme Operation Welcome, since 2021, the municipality of Manaus has implemented

the Signalled Job Vacancy Programme (*Programa Vaga de Emprego Sinalizada*, PVES), which connects migrants and refugees with companies seeking to recruit, facilitating their integration into the city (IOM, 2021a).

According to MGI data, measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons are more often found in countries that make formal efforts to enhance the vertical coherence of their migration policies (Figure 13). One of these countries is the Philippines, where such coordination occurs through the Committee on Migration and Development (CMD). The CMD coordinates local, regional and national actors, including major stakeholders in the region, such as State universities and civil society organizations. Moreover, in 2021, the Philippines enacted the Revised Rules and Regulations for the Issuance of Employment Permits to Foreign Nationals, which exempts refugees and stateless individuals from obtaining Alien Employment Permits to access employment opportunities.

Figure 13. Percentage of countries with measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons (by existence of vertical coordination mechanisms on migration)



Notes: Based on MGI data from 97 countries.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to examine the relationship between the two binary variables, revealing a one-sided statistically significant association at the 10 per cent level (one-sided p-value = 0.052).

Source: MGI database (2023).

In focus

Regular pathways for humanitarian purposes can also include private or community sponsorship programmes. For instance, in Canada, the *Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR)* programme allows private groups to sponsor eligible individuals or families recognized as refugees under Canada's refugee and humanitarian programme. Privately sponsored refugees are approved by Canadian visa officers outside of Canada, while sponsoring groups commit to providing refugees with settlement assistance and material and financial support for the sponsorship period – typically up to one year from their arrival date in Canada.



Refugees who have been selected to be resettled in Canada attend a series of predeparture orientation sessions in Beirut, Lebanon. © IOM 2023/Ashley Yoojung HA

2. Expand pathway-specific governance frameworks through scaling mechanisms

While new regular pathways are essential, taking advantage of existing pathways to ensure that they function as effectively as possible in practice also offers key opportunities. This can be more politically realistic and/or budget-friendly for policy actors than establishing new pathways. This often requires identifying inefficiencies, developing the capacities of key stakeholders to organize and implement different processes, scaling these up where possible, and ensuring overall that there are clear, transparent, non-discriminatory, and timely admission and stay processes.

Although they may have the best intentions, many existing pathways face design-related, operational or other challenges limiting their effectiveness. Some pathways may have too few places for potential migrants, may be limited to specific geographic areas or select population

groups, and may not reach their intended scale or outcomes. For example, efforts must be made to ensure pathways are equitable; sometimes they are reserved only for highly skilled migrants (Hashimoto, 2021). Effective implementation can also be held back by limited capacity or awareness of implementing partners. For example, pathways for labour between Southern Mediterranean countries and the European Union are complicated by many European Union companies – in particular, small and medium-sized enterprises, not being aware of existing pathways, not having enough resources to hire abroad or overestimating the costs of doing so (Alcidi et al., 2019).

This section explores insights related to regular pathways across purposes, focusing on two specific ways that they can be expanded: supporting institutional capacity and promoting clear and transparent rules and regulations.

2.1. Strengthen the institutional capacity of migration governance

Do countries with measures to facilitate mobility for diverse purposes have institutions coordinating the implementation of migration policy?

The capacity of governments to consistently produce effective, efficient, sustainable and coherent policies depends on the institutions, mechanisms and processes used to manage and coordinate policy design and implementation (OECD, 2023). Globally, close to two thirds (64%) of MGI-assessed countries have dedicated institutions coordinating the implementation of migration policy (Figure 14, panel A). In Azerbaijan, for example, the State Migration Service, established in 2007, serves as the central executive body responsible for implementing migration legislation and State policy in migration, and overseeing the management and regulation of migration processes. To further strengthen

policy coherence, dedicated institutions for coordinating the implementation of migration policy should be complemented by formal mechanisms to coordinate migration issues at the national level, across different ministries, and at regular intervals.

In practice, however, it is common for countries to task the same institution with both responsibilities of coordinating the design and implementation of policies and conducting regular interministerial coordination. In Costa Rica, the National Migration Council, established in 1952, serves as the advisory body responsible for recommending migration policies and implementation measures to the executive power, as well as the key national platform for regular inter-institutional coordination on migration.

Whether through dedicated institutions with clearly differentiated mandates or more comprehensive institutions, strengthening governments' institutional capacity to coordinate the design and implementation of migration policies can serve as a scaling mechanism to expand established measures to facilitate mobility across different purposes.

According to MGI data, while 79 per cent of countries with measures to facilitate mobility for humanitarian reasons have institutions coordinating the implementation of migration policies, one third of countries with measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons lack such institutions (Figure 14, panel B).

Figure 14. Countries with institutions to coordinate the implementation of migration policies



Note: Based on MGI data from 92 countries.

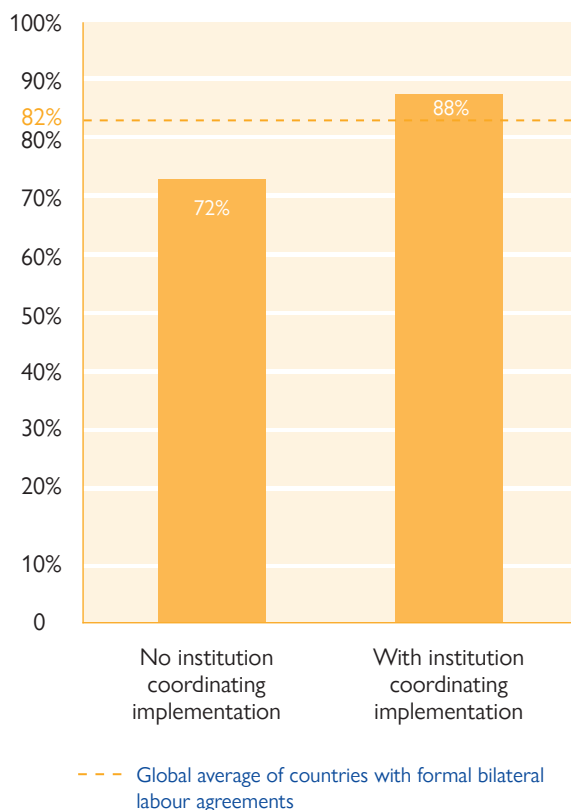
Source: MGI database (2023).

Can institutions coordinating the implementation of migration policies scale up existing measures to facilitate labour mobility?

Institutional capacity is a key element of migration governance. For instance, in the area of labour migration, robust institutions are crucial for developing a coordinated and sustainable strategy for managing worker movement across borders, including through international cooperation. According to MGI data, bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) are more often found in countries with institutions coordinating the design and implementation of migration policies (Figure 15). One such country is Chile, where

the Migration Policy Council, established in 2014, serves as a multisectoral body to advise the executive branch of the Government on the implementation of the National Migration and Aliens Policy, ensuring its relevance through regular updates and refinement of its content and definitions. Chile has also enabled BLAs with Argentina (1994), Canada (1997) and Spain (1990), prioritizing the improvement of working conditions, protection of workers' rights and facilitation of labour mobility. These agreements are integral components of the country's broader strategy to foster cooperation, enhance standards and optimize outcomes for all stakeholders involved in labour migration.

Figure 15. Percentage of countries with formal bilateral labour agreements (by existence of institutions coordinating implementation)



Notes: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to examine the relationship between the two binary variables, revealing a statistically significant association at the 10 per cent level (p-value = 0.064).

Source: MGI database (2023).

Do countries with dedicated institutions for integrated border control enhance the institutional and human capacity of border management on a regular basis?

Migration policies and border management are inherently linked as migration policies determine the rules and regulations governing the movement of people across borders, while border management implements and enforces these policies. Robust institutional and human capacities of border management are essential

for the smooth implementation of migration policies.²¹

To increase the long-term resilience and dynamism of border governance systems, once countries have addressed immediate staff training needs, they can prioritize efforts aimed at ensuring that border management agencies receive ongoing support in the form of sharing modern methods, technologies and intelligence to enhance the harmonization, efficiency and effectiveness of their systems.

While most (87%) MGI-assessed countries worldwide have dedicated institutions tasked with integrated border control and security, only 42 per cent regularly train border staff (Figure 16). In countries without such institutions, border staff receive training at most on an ad hoc basis. In Indonesia, the National Border Management Agency (Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan, BNPP) regularly conducts training for officers, including those serving at land border crossings. Capacity-building is also conducted through activities such as Technical Guidance (*Bimtek*) related to intelligence training cooperation with the Indonesian National Police Headquarters, extending to communities in border areas. Additionally, Indonesia's Immigration Polytechnic offers students annual training in languages, technology, martial arts and cultural aspects, under the auspices of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights.

Strengthening the institutional and human capacities of border management actors continues to be a focus at the global and regional levels. For instance, capacity-building was identified as an important component of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP).²²

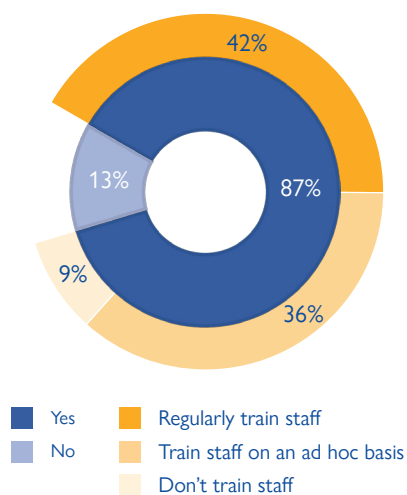
As migration trends continue to evolve alongside rapid technological advancements, the reinforcement of institutional and human capacities in border management remains crucial. By investing in training, infrastructure and

²¹ Improving States' capacities for better migration governance is also highlighted as a recommendation in the Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration to the General Assembly, cf. General Assembly, Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, A/71/728, 3 February 2017, p. 24.

²² More information can be found on the African Union website.

resources, countries can better address emerging challenges and provide safer and more orderly alternatives through regular pathways. Furthermore, enhanced institutional and human capacity of border management can benefit migrants by enhancing safety during crossings, preventing exploitation and facilitating resource allocation of support services for those who need them.

Figure 16. Does the country have dedicated institutions for integrated border control? (by frequency of border-staff training)



Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

In focus



The African Capacity-building Centre (ACBC)

To address the needs of several African IOM member States, IOM established the African Capacity-building Centre (ACBC) in Moshi, United Republic of Tanzania, in 2009. Since its inception, the ACBC has been committed to providing technical support to different stakeholders across various aspects of migration management, emphasizing the importance of regular pathways in ensuring safe and orderly migration. It offers training programmes in different areas such as integrated border management, document authentication, interviewing techniques and other pertinent migration management topics. Moreover, the ACBC serves as a key hub for implementing the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS), IOM's proprietary border management information system.

2.2. Promote clear and transparent rules and regulations

Do countries with measures to facilitate mobility for diverse purposes provide clear, transparent and accurate information?

Prospective migrants often see foreign destinations as riskier than their origin countries if information about the destination is unavailable or difficult to obtain (Roca Paz and Uebelmesser, 2021). To make informed decisions, people need clear and comprehensive information. Moreover, the lack of knowledge about existing mechanisms that allow for regular migration can create or reproduce vulnerabilities among migrants, leading to irregular or unsafe migration.²³

Globally, more efforts are needed to make information clear and accessible to potential migrants. While most MGI countries have an official website outlining visa and residence options, this information is often presented exclusively in one or two languages, and the instructions on application procedures are frequently not user-friendly. Moreover, slightly over half (54%) of countries provide clear, regularly updated information about migration rules and regulations in a way that is easy to consult and understand (Figure 17, panel A). Such information can cover specific details on country-specific immigration laws and policies, requirements for work and residence permits and application procedures, as well as costs and living conditions.

²³ See Objective 3 of the Global Compact for Migration on the IOM website.

Providing timely, clear and accurate information is key to ensuring that existing migration pathways are accessible to more people. It is crucial that countries with established pathways effectively communicate how prospective migrants can utilize these opportunities. However, only half of MGI countries with measures to facilitate mobility for family reasons provide clear information about these pathways. Additionally, around one third of MGI countries facilitating education or labour mobility, as well as those facilitating the mobility of cross-border

forcibly displaced populations, could enhance their information provision (Figure 17, panel B). For instance, the Government of Canada publishes detailed information about how to migrate into the country through available pathways, such as family sponsorships, skilled workers programmes, self-employment and applying for refugee status.²⁵ In addition, it provides the option to explore immigration programmes by answering a one-minute survey on the intended purpose of the stay and the potential migrant's basic characteristics, such as age and work experience.²⁶

Figure 17. Countries providing clear and transparent information on migration rules and regulations

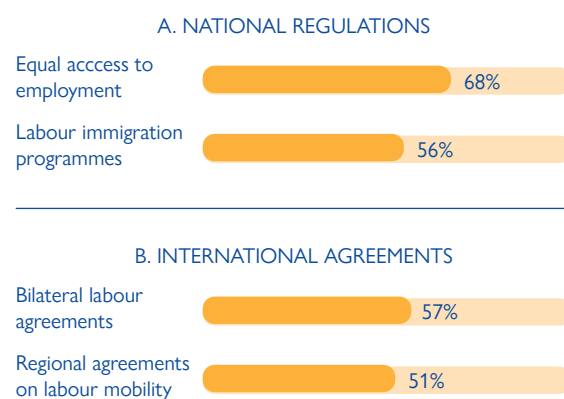


Note: Based on MGI data from 92 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

Similarly, countries with specific measures promoting labour mobility could enhance information provision. For instance, only half (51%) of MGI countries with regional labour mobility agreements provide clear information about migration processes (Figure 18). An example can be found in Chile, where the National Migration Service website includes specific guidelines for requirements and immigration procedures, covering family reunification, humanitarian reasons, and students and seasonal workers, among others. For instance, it has developed dedicated guidance for the special residence permit for nationals from Southern Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur, MERCOSUR) member States, explaining the requirements and process step by step.²⁴

Figure 18. Provision of clear and transparent information (in countries with selected measures to facilitate labour mobility)



Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

²⁴ More information is available on the National Migration Service of Chile's page on the special residence permit for nationals from MERCOSUR.

²⁵ More information is available on the Government of Canada's page on immigration.

²⁶ More information is available on the Government of Canada's page on immigration programmes.

What measures have been implemented to make information accessible to migrants?

Pre-departure and post-arrival information programmes can be established by both origin and destination communities. Evidence shows that national and local governments, in coordination with key stakeholders such as

international organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations, have made related efforts in this regard. In particular, local governments play a central role in ensuring that migrants are informed about their rights and aware of the support available to them (IOM, 2024a) by serving as primary in-person information providers (see Text box 1).

Text box 1. Selected examples: making information accessible to migrants

Information hubs (ventanillas), municipal migrant centres or single-desk migrant offices provide in-person information, advice and referrals about procedures and services for migrants around the world. For example, in Central America and Mexico, there are more than 30 information hubs coordinated by local and national authorities and supported by IOM.^a Other examples are found in South America, such as the Immigrants' Referral and Assistance Centre (Centro de Referência e Atendimento para Imigrantes, CRAI) in the city of São Paulo, Brazil; the Migrant House (Casa do Migrante)^b in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil; and the Referral and Orientation Centre for Migrant Persons in Montevideo, Uruguay.^c Similarly, these types of services are found in Africa, such as the Migrants' Help Desk^d in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Beyond the provision of information, these spaces can also serve as integration centres. For example, the Integral Support Space (Espacio de Apoyo Integral) in Tulcan, Ecuador, offers cultural workshops, psychosocial support and legal guidance to all migrants. The initiative is implemented by the local government in cooperation with civil society as well as international organizations (Castro, 2021).

Welcome/orientation tools, such as booklets and leaflets, are non-interactive sources of information used by governments to provide easily readable and digestible information. For example, in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the General Directorate of Communities published the guidance document titled *¡Hola, soy migrante!* ("Hello, I am a migrant!") in 2020 (Buenos Aires City Government, 2020). The document provides information on access to health, work, education and housing for migrants in the city. Similarly, at the national level in Mexico, the Government published the Charter of Rights of Migrant Women (Inmujeres, 2018), which offers guidance to migrant women living in Mexico about their rights.

The **Safe Mobility initiative** in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Guatemala and provides free information on regular migration pathways primarily to the United States, serving as a preliminary screening and referral mechanism. IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are implementing partners. The initiative has distinct eligibility rules in each country, and applicants register online through the *Movilidad Segura* website. For example, in Costa Rica, the Safe Mobility programme is available for Haitians and Venezuelans who have been in Costa Rica prior to June 2023. The final decision on entering the United States is made by the United States national authorities.^e

Notes: ^a More information about the [information hubs](#) is available on the IOM website.

^b More information about the [Migrant House](#) is available on the website of Scalabrinianas.

^c More information about the [Referral and Orientation Centre for Migrant Persons](#) is available on the website of the government of Municipality B in Montevideo.

^d More information is available on the [Migrants' Help Desk](#) web page.

^e More information is available on the [Safe Mobility initiative](#) website.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on MGI data (2023) and available information online.

Facilitating migrants' access to information requires a people-centred approach to ensure responsiveness to migrants' needs. For instance, a study conducted by IOM (2023a) in the Republic of Moldova, specifically in Balti and Cahul, revealed that despite the presence of Information Centres for Refugees, survey respondents in both municipalities mainly relied on information shared through messaging apps and word of mouth from family and friends. A significant portion of respondents expressed the need for more information in Ukrainian. It is clear that to ensure information accessibility for migrants, it should be provided free of charge, available in multiple languages, easy to find and simple to share. Additionally, information should be clear and accurate, adapting to varying levels of literacy and accessibility (IOM, 2023b).

What policies can be implemented to improve timely admission and stay processes?

Digitalization has emerged as an approach to improve the efficiency of visa application procedures by streamlining and automating many of the administrative tasks involved. Digital platforms can reduce processing times, for instance, by eliminating the time used in scheduling appointments, receiving applicants in person and manually inputting data into visa systems. In addition, they save transportation costs for potential migrants and provide them with real-time updates on the status of their applications, thereby improving transparency and communication.²⁷

Despite the benefits of online visa services, few countries worldwide have developed online application processes. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' *E-Government Survey 2022* (2022), applying for a visa is among the

least-offered online services by governments, alongside paying fines, making declarations to the police, registering motor vehicles and submitting a change of address. According to MGI data, most countries worldwide use a mixed online and paper-based process, while only 16 per cent have developed fully online processes (Figure 19). Among those with online visa application platforms, the majority have developed e-visas that typically allow for short-term visits to the country, such as tourism or business visas. Only a few countries have developed systems beyond those supporting short-term visits, such as the e-Visa application system in Albania,²⁸ which allows for an entirely web-based application process, including for both short-stay and long-stay visas. The latter includes visas for study purposes, family reunification and employment, among others. Similar systems are found in Botswana,²⁹ Colombia³⁰ and Zambia.³¹

The *E-Government Survey 2022* shows overall improvement in e-government development,³² though there is a lack of adequate attention to inclusive design. More e-services should be developed to enable their use by as many people as possible, including vulnerable groups and disadvantaged populations. Addressing this requires proactive engagement with diverse communities to tailor e-services to their respective needs. However, the survey shows that only a limited number of countries have conducted recent online consultations involving groups in vulnerable situations, such as the youth, persons with disabilities and migrants. Moreover, even fewer incorporated public feedback into policy decisions affecting these groups. As governments advance in their digitalization journeys, particularly in relation to migration services, it becomes crucial to prioritize inclusion and accessibility to ensure that regular pathways are accessible to all groups and minimize the risk of further marginalizing vulnerable populations.

²⁷ See more benefits of the e-visa in this [2015 World Bank blog](#) and in this [2023 article on the growing trend of digital visa systems](#) from visaindex.com.

²⁸ More information is available on the website of Albania's [e-Visa application system](#).

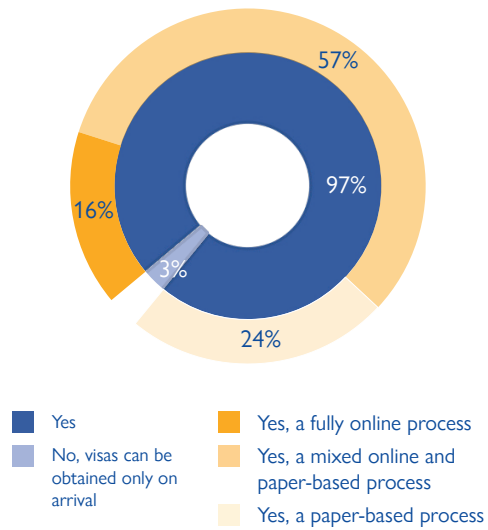
²⁹ More information is available on the website of [e-Visa Botswana](#).

³⁰ More information is available on the Cancillería web pages on the [visa](#) and [visa application](#).

³¹ More information is available on the website of the [Zambia Immigration Department e-Services](#).

³² This is evidenced by the rise in the average of the *E-Government Development Index* (EGDI) from 0.5988 in 2020 to 0.6102 in 2022. The EGDI consists of the weighted average of three independent component indices: the Online Services Index (OSI), the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII) and the Human Capital Index (HCI).

Figure 19. Can visas be obtained before arrival? (by type of process)



Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).



Visa digitalization in Europe

In June 2023, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament provisionally agreed on rules to digitalize the visa application procedure in the Schengen Area. The purpose is to create a European Union visa application platform, a single website that will forward applicants to the relevant national visa systems. Through the website, applicants will be able to enter data, upload electronic copies of supporting documents and pay visa fees. An in-person appearance will be required only for first-time applicants, individuals with expired biometric data and those with a new travel document. The digital visa will replace the visa stickers with a cryptographically signed barcode. The platform is expected to start operating in 2028.*

* More information is available in this [2023 press release on digitalising the visa procedure](#) from the Council of the European Union and this [2023 article on the Schengen visa digitalization](#) from the European Commission.



Loharano is a project launched by IOM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Madagascar, to engage the Malagasy diaspora in the country's economic development. Nine young Malagasy volunteers from the diaspora were selected to implement actions relating to community development in five municipalities, in the fields of education, IT, livestock, languages and crafts. © IOM 2019/Natalie OREN

3. Enhance the benefits of migration through implementation mechanisms

Enhancing regular migration pathways involves amplifying the positive impacts they have on migrants and host and origin communities alike. This requires anything from supporting the recognition of qualifications, the transferability of social benefits and migrant skills development to lowering the costs of migrants' financial transfers and promoting the transfer of diaspora and returnee knowledge.³³ Initiatives that are implemented by and bring together different actors, for example, countries of origin and destination as well as migrants, may be especially sustainable in these efforts.

Some regular pathways already directly or indirectly support migration's development impacts, for example, by raising awareness of migrants' rights through pre-departure orientation or providing access to health-care services. However, much can be done to further augment the benefits of migration. For example, while migrants' contributions are greater when they can work at a level

matching their experience, many do not; addressing this by improving the recognition of qualifications decreases skills wastage and attracts skilled migrants (Hawthorne, 2002). Diasporas support origin communities through skills and technology transfer, trade, and entrepreneurship; and financial remittances often bring educational, health and other benefits. While these are approximately three times the volume of official development assistance, high costs limit their impact; if the cost of remittances decreased by 5 percentage points, an extra USD 6.88 billion could be sent to households in low- or middle-income countries (LMICs) each year (Mosler Vidal, 2023).³⁴

This section explores insights related to regular pathways across purposes, focusing on three aspects that can be enhanced to maximize development impacts: supporting the benefits of labour mobility, facilitating diaspora members' contributions and improving reintegration support.

3.1. Amplify the benefits of labour mobility in destination countries

Key findings from this section



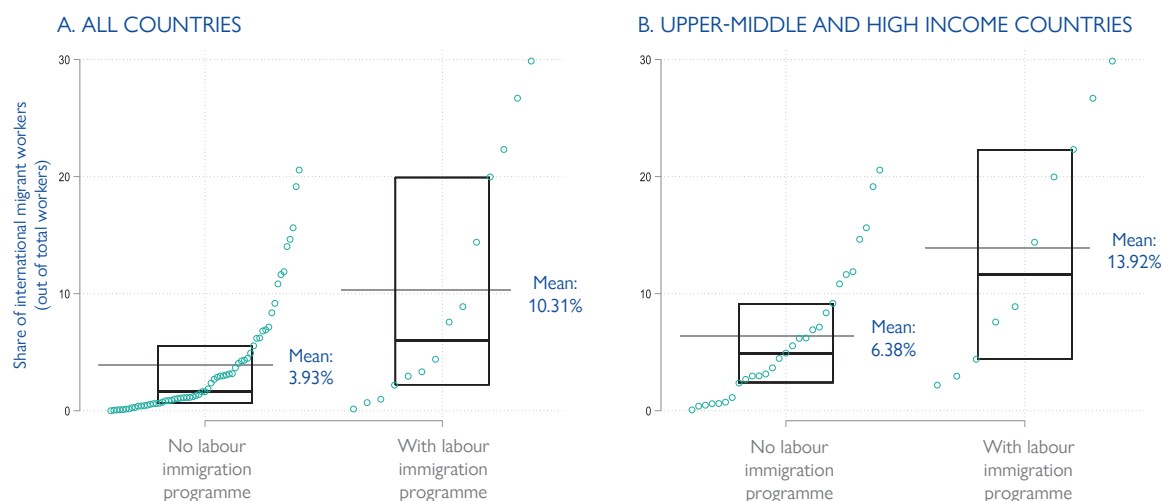
- Countries with programmes to manage labour migration have, on average, higher shares of regular international workers.
- This positive association remains significant even when focusing solely on countries with similarly attractive economies.
- Among primarily destination countries, those participating in regional agreements on labour mobility have lower average levels of age dependency ratio.

Empirical evidence suggests a positive association between higher shares of skilled foreign workers and increased numbers of patent applications, and more generally between migration and entrepreneurship (Bosetti et al., 2015; Center for American Entrepreneurship, n.d.). When the native labour force is not able to meet the labour market needs, international workers and graduates can serve as a valuable source of talent (Koenings et al., 2021). Diversity in the labour market not only addresses immediate concerns such as skills shortages but can also help address longer-term challenges like demographic shifts.

³³ For more information on possible diaspora policies, see: Schöfberger, 2024.

³⁴ See also IOM's *Data Insights into Belgium's Remittance Landscape: Trends and Drivers* (forthcoming).

Figure 20. Share of international migrant workers (out of total workers) (by existence of a programme to manage labour immigration)



Notes: In panel A: Based on MGI data from 77 countries. A two-sample t-test with equal variances was conducted to examine the relationship between both variables, revealing a statistically significant positive association at the 1 per cent significance level ($p = 0.000$).

In panel B: Based on MGI data from 39 countries. For the subset of countries with upper-middle and high income levels according to the World Bank database (2022), a two-sample t-test with equal variances was conducted, revealing a statistically significant positive association at the 1 per cent significance level ($p = 0.006$).

Source: MGI database (2023), World Bank database (2022) and ILO (multiple years).

Dedicated programmes to manage labour migration provide a structured framework for the movement of workers, promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. These programmes can serve to address labour supply shortages in destination countries while ensuring transparency and fairness in the recruitment process (IOM, 2024a). In essence, providing clear guidelines for both employers and migrants helps reduce the transaction costs associated with accessing the labour market, thereby facilitating entry. According to MGI data, countries that have established dedicated programmes to manage labour migration have, on average, higher shares of regular foreign-born workers (Figure 20, panel A).³⁵

Economic conditions of destination countries also play a crucial role in the decision-making processes of prospective migrants. While higher income levels can be a driver for international migrants, the existence of dedicated programmes to manage labour migration can further enhance

the attractiveness of destinations. To illustrate, the positive association between having these programmes and higher shares of regular international migrant workers remains significant even when focusing solely on countries with similarly attractive economic characteristics, such as those with upper-middle and high income levels (Figure 20, panel B).³⁶ This suggests that countries' policies can be key factors influencing migration decision-making, underlining the potential impacts that regular pathways can have.

Many countries complement national regulations with international cooperation agreements to manage labour migration. Regional agreements, including those promoting free movement regimes, can play a key role in facilitating labour mobility in a regional context. An example of such an agreement is the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) free movement of skills policy mentioned in Section 1.2, which enables CARICOM nationals to apply as skilled nationals, allowing them to work in any other member

³⁵ Similar results have been found for countries that have established measures facilitating postgraduation employment.

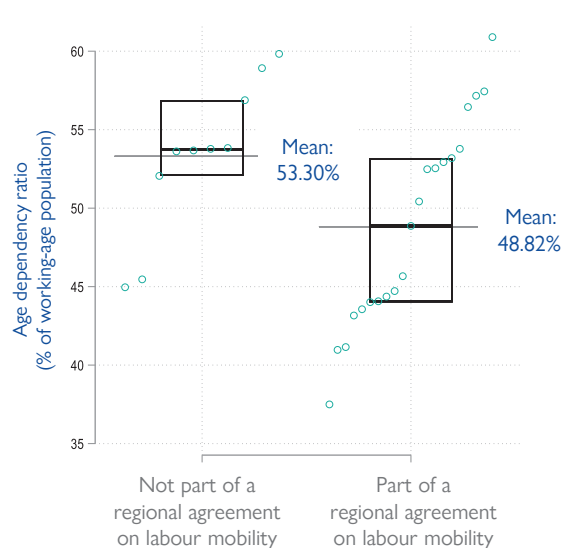
³⁶ Income levels are defined according to World Bank classification, and four income groups have been identified: low, lower middle, upper middle and high. For more information, see Annex A3 on secondary (external) variables.

State. Other examples include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (1979), which facilitates the regional mobility of citizens within West Africa; and the agreement on residence for nationals of the States party to MERCOSUR (2009), enabling migrants to work in another member State on equal terms as nationals (IOM, 2024a).

Regional collaboration can also be a useful tool to promote economic resilience and social stability in the long run. Demographic changes, particularly shifts in population age structures, significantly influence societal dynamics and economic growth. A key indicator for assessing these changes is the age dependency ratio.³⁷ A higher age dependency ratio places added pressure on the working-age group to support dependants, potentially impacting productivity, straining social welfare systems and hindering economic growth. This is particularly relevant for several primarily destination countries with more favourable economic conditions.

In more developed economies, improvements in health care typically lead not only to lower mortality rates but also to increased investment in human capital. This investment, in turn, tends to result in declining fertility rates, affecting the age distribution of these countries (Fumagalli et al., 2024). When examining primarily destination countries, evidence suggests that those engaging in regional agreements to promote labour mobility tend to have lower average age dependency ratios (Figure 21). While further research is needed to delve into how this is affected by factors like the demographic composition of countries before the agreements, or the existence of policies to promote migrant integration, these findings provide valuable insights into how facilitating regional labour mobility could help mitigate the impacts of demographic shifts, helping find a path towards enhanced economic stability and social cohesion.

Figure 21. Age dependency ratio in primarily destination countries (by participation in regional agreements on labour mobility)



Notes: Based on MGI data from 31 countries. A two-sample t-test with equal variances was conducted to examine the relationship between both variables, revealing a statistically significant negative association at the 10 per cent significance level ($p = 0.063$).

Source: MGI database (2023) and World Bank database (2022).

3.2. Facilitate diaspora contributions to countries of origin

Key findings from this section



- Countries with policies on emigration tend to promote formal remittance schemes.
- On average, countries that formally engage with their diasporas experience higher inflows of remittances.
- Even higher average levels of personal remittance inflows are observed in countries with both emigration policies and formal diaspora engagement.

³⁷ It measures the proportion of dependent individuals, such as children and the elderly, relative to the working-age population.

Establishing dedicated policies on emigration signifies a proactive approach to managing migration when countries primarily experience outward migration flows. Moreover, actively engaging all segments of society and fostering collaboration among origin and destination countries, including diaspora members abroad, can further support effective and sustainable pathways for regular migration. As individuals move across borders, they bring along valuable knowledge, skills and resources that can significantly benefit their countries of origin.

Establishing effective mechanisms to engage with nationals residing abroad is essential to leveraging the developmental contributions of diaspora members. Through formal collaboration, diasporas can also shape national frameworks. For example, in Ireland, the Irish Abroad Unit³⁸ actively sought the contributions of the global Irish community between 2019 and 2020 to inform the development of *Ireland's Diaspora Strategy 2020–2025* (2020). The Strategy prioritizes building economic links with the diaspora, including by supporting the creation of regional business forums to foster trade and investment.

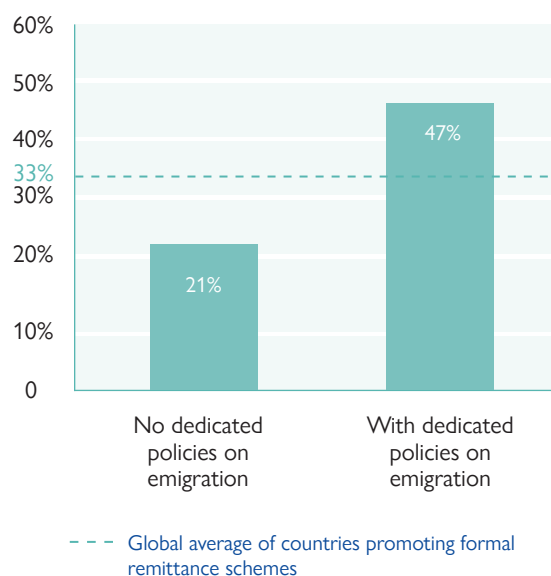
Diasporas can also bring key support in addressing societal and humanitarian challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, diasporas mobilized transnational responses to support migrant communities globally and provided innovative solutions and aid within their communities, demonstrating their capacity for transnational interventions and crisis response.³⁹

Remittances play a crucial role in channelling the benefits of migration back to countries of origin. Nationals residing abroad can act as development agents and provide essential financial support to their families, thus contributing to the local economies of their home countries.

Facilitating diaspora contributions through remittances requires strong institutional frameworks to support the formalization of

remittance processes. This, in turn, enhances transparency, security and efficiency in financial transactions. Active efforts to promote the creation of formal remittance schemes are more often found in countries that already have dedicated policies on emigration (Figure 22). One of these countries is Cabo Verde, where the National Emigration and Development Strategy (2014) identifies facilitating and attracting remittances as a key area for intervention. Moreover, the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development (2022–2026) recognizes the importance of remittances to the stability of the country's economy and seeks to enhance their developmental impacts. The Government has introduced a Special Emigrant Account (*Conta Especial do Emigrante*) with subsidized interest rates, aiming to reduce the costs associated with remittance transfers.⁴⁰

Figure 22. Percentage of countries actively promoting the creation of formal remittance schemes (by existence of dedicated policies on emigration)



Notes: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to examine the relationship between the two binary variables, revealing a statistically significant association at the 1 per cent level (p-value = 0.001).

Source: MGI database (2023).

³⁸ This Unit is part of Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs.

³⁹ For specific examples, see: IOM, 2020.

⁴⁰ A Cabo Verdean emigrant is defined as an individual born in Cabo Verde, who may or may not hold Cabo Verdean nationality, provided they can demonstrate permanent residence abroad.

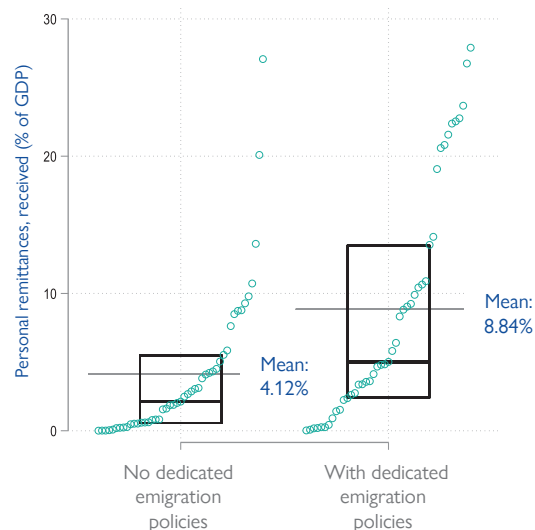
Strong institutional frameworks and broad-based partnerships can also serve to amplify tangible policy outcomes. Dedicated policies can serve as a signalling mechanism for the level of security and transparency of international financial transactions. This, in turn, can boost the confidence and trust of migrants, potentially leading to increased remittance flows. Countries with specific national policies on emigration tend to have, on average, higher levels of remittance inflows, compared to countries without such policies (Figure 23, panel A). Moreover, diaspora members abroad may feel more connected and invested in their home countries when they are actively involved in policymaking processes or initiatives. This may translate into higher levels of financial support sent back to their communities of origin. On average, higher levels of remittance inflows are observed in countries where the government formally engages members of diaspora and expatriate communities in agenda-setting and the implementation of development policy, compared to those lacking such engagement mechanisms (Figure 23, panel B). This also shows how, particularly when enhancing regular pathways, countries of origin are active stakeholders.

Countries can complement dedicated policies with more targeted formal mechanisms to engage their diasporas, strengthening the bonds with them and facilitating their contributions. This proactive approach is essential for amplifying the developmental impacts of remittances.

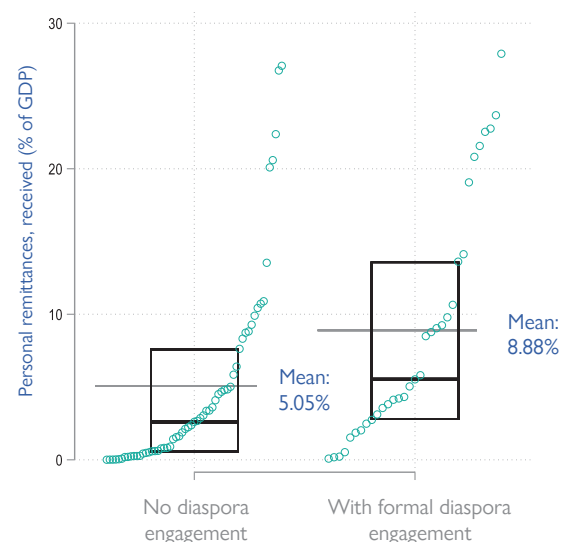
On average, countries that combine dedicated policies on emigration with formal diaspora engagement received personal remittances equivalent to 12.9 per cent of their GDP in 2022, more than three times the amount received by countries lacking both measures (Figure 24). While further research is needed to explore how these findings may be affected by factors such as net migration, income and diaspora size, they offer valuable insights and mark an initial step towards a deeper understanding of the complementarities between policies.

Figure 23. Personal remittances received in 2022 (percentage of GDP)

A. BY EXISTENCE OF DEDICATED POLICIES ON EMIGRATION



B. BY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE DIASPORA



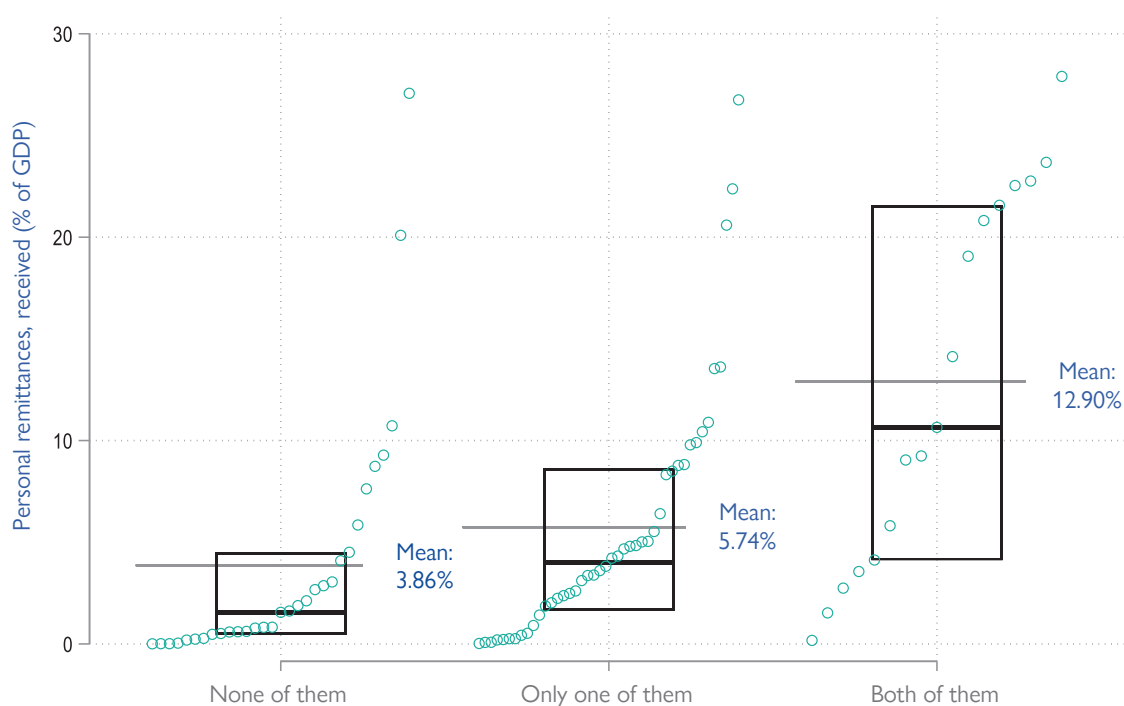
Notes: Based on MGI data from 92 countries.

In panel A: A two-sample t-test with equal variances was conducted to examine the relationship between the two variables, revealing a statistically significant association at the 1 per cent level (p-value = 0.001).

In panel B: A two-sample t-test with equal variances was conducted to examine the relationship between the two variables, revealing a statistically significant association at the 5 per cent level (p-value = 0.016).

Source: MGI database (2023) and World Bank database (2022).

Figure 24. Personal remittances received in 2022: combination of emigration policies and diaspora engagement



Notes: Based on MGI data from 92 countries.

Countries were categorized into three groups based on whether they have emigration policies and formally engage with their diasporas: Group 1 (none of them), Group 2 (only one of them) and Group 3 (both of them).

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted, revealing a statistically significant difference at the 1 per cent level (p-value = 0.000).

Bonferroni post hoc tests indicated significant differences in mean remittances received between countries from Group 3 and countries from Group 2 (p-value = 0.000) and Group 1 (p-value = 0.001).

Bartlett's test for equal variances showed no significant deviation from homogeneity (p-value = 0.080).

Source: MGI database (2023) and World Bank database (2022).

3.3. Support the reintegration of returned nationals

Key findings from this section

- While many countries focus on return policies, reintegration is often forgotten.
- Reintegration programmes have the potential to boost local economies.
- Reintegration and development efforts can be blended for greater impact.

For many, return migration is part of the migration continuum; around 25 per cent of global migratory movements between 2000 and 2015 were estimated to be return migration (Azose and Raftery, 2018). Return takes place on a spectrum, from voluntary to involuntary (Newland, 2017), and migrants may return to

an origin community for a variety of reasons, including having achieved migration-related goals, wanting to return to contribute or as a result of negative migration experiences.

Reintegration is a multidimensional concept (Bilgili et al., 2018) and includes social, economic, legal and other dimensions. While return migrants are heterogeneous and have different needs, IOM considers reintegration to be sustainable when “returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers” (IOM, 2019a:211).

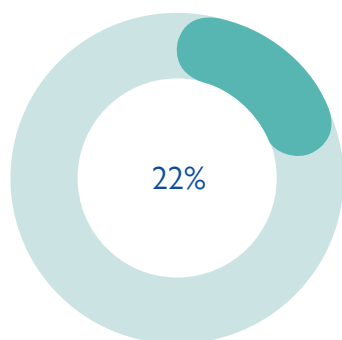
Reintegration assistance is a key component of the regular pathways architecture that covers the full migration continuum. Return and reintegration are also linked to circular

and temporary migration, where migrant workers on short contracts may return to origin communities (Wickramasekara, 2019). Therefore, enhancing pathways to amplify their positive impacts requires exploring how reintegration programmes and policies can best serve migrants and communities alike.

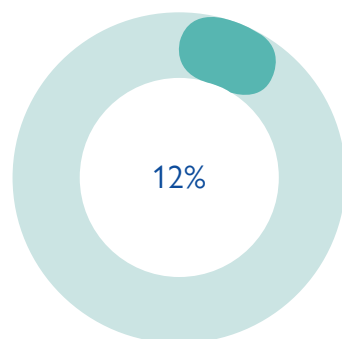
While many countries have increasingly focused on return policies, reintegration is often forgotten. MGI data show that only 22 out of 100 countries have a formal government programme or dedicated policy that focuses on facilitating the reintegration of returning nationals (see Figure 25). Furthermore, only 12 per cent of countries promote the sustainable reintegration of migrants in the aftermath of a crisis.

Figure 25. Percentage of countries with dedicated programmes or policies on migrant reintegration

A. REINTEGRATION OF RETURNING NATIONALS



B. POST-CRISIS REINTEGRATION



Note: Based on MGI data from 100 countries.

Source: MGI database (2023).

What could be the impact of effective reintegration frameworks?

The focus of many reintegration programmes to date has been economic – for example, helping return migrants set up new businesses in their home communities or helping them otherwise re-enter local labour markets. These approaches can have numerous benefits, such as helping address specific labour shortages, facilitating the transfer of migrants’ skills learned abroad and leveraging migrants’ financial capital to stimulate investment (Wickramasekara, 2019). Community members may also be employed by returnees’ new businesses established with the help of grants (Le Coz and Sohst, 2023). Some programmes tackle known challenges in this area – for example, returnees’ skills not matching local needs, or the fact that those who are forcibly returned may face special difficulties (Cassarino, 2004). For example, Cabo Verde grants some returnees tax exemptions, provides credit to start-ups of nationals living in Portugal, and supports the businesses of those who intend to return or have recently returned from France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Portugal. Furthermore, border officials, the Ministry of Family and Social Inclusion, and the National Institute of Social Security are involved in the reintegration of those returning non-voluntarily, to ensure access to psychological and other types of support (Government of Cabo Verde, 2014a). Overall, however, poor data in this area means it is difficult to understand the impact of such policies and programmes.

Some reintegration interventions target local communities as well as returnees, blending reintegration and development efforts for greater impact. For example, some projects include aid for the local community to minimize any tension between returnees and local residents; Swiss development authorities complement returnees’ reintegration packages with initiatives to bring running water and other structural improvements to the villages they return to (OECD, 2020). Some projects also refer returnees to local actors, including government agencies and non-governmental

organizations, to better embed their reintegration into longer-term local processes (Sohst and Le Coz, 2022). Smooth reintegration can be hampered by conflict; in these cases, reintegration policies can support social cohesion by addressing the needs of returnees and local communities together – for example, by ensuring equal access to natural resources.

Interventions that use a whole-of-government approach can be more sustainable. For example, in Senegal, governments at different levels are involved in sustainable rural reintegration, training returning and prospective migrants in agribusiness as well as encouraging returnees and migrants to engage in agriculture and agribusiness investment schemes – linking

the needs of returnees with those of local communities to address food insecurity (FAO and Samuel Hall, 2023). Involving migrant communities also supports efforts' sustainability, as does collaboration between origin and destination countries. Finally, twinning capacity-building with reintegration assistance can enhance their positive effects, strengthening governments' and others' abilities to better support all members of a community. For example, the European Union-funded *Programme Gouvernance Stratégie Migration Tunisienne* (ProGreS) supported Tunisia's national reintegration mechanism and provided related technical assistance, training and tools to the Government (Le Coz and Sohst, 2023).



Service centres in Georgia provide information, counselling and referral services addressing the specific needs of the local inhabitants, including returnees. © IOM 2022/Beyond Borders Media

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

While evolving migration trends become more complex, migration governance today has several new opportunities available. It has also become clear that investing in development policies alone will not address migration dynamics; these often counter-intuitively increase migration flows. This underlines that dedicated migration policies are needed. At this vital juncture, regular pathways emerge as a key lever to better governing migration and helping it benefit all.

With a view to understanding what the above could concretely mean, this publication provides insights into what regular migration pathways look like around the world. Analysis of MGI data shows that we are far from starting from scratch; many countries have extensive experience establishing, expanding and enhancing regular pathways for employment, education, family, humanitarian and other reasons. Several key findings emerge from this analysis.

First, regular migration pathways require concurrent action at different levels – specifically, strong governance frameworks coupled with targeted technical measures. Effective pathways consist of no single measure but rather a cohesive architecture of them. This often includes dedicated legislation and policies that operate at the regional or national level, and several operational programmes, projects and mechanisms that may be time-bound or occur at the subnational levels. These levels of action complement each other; one without the other would be less likely to produce strong results.

Second, broad and meaningful stakeholder engagement strengthens all aspects of regular pathways. Across topics, from labour migration to reintegration and humanitarian entry, structured engagement with actors outside government, including migrants, diaspora members, employers and workers, helped countries establish stronger pathways, often with greater positive effects. Similarly, regional collaboration and consultation with local communities increase the chances of pathways serving a range of actors.

Third, continuously ensuring that regular pathways remain flexible and fit for purpose boosts effectiveness. Some countries make provisions for many different types of migrants, including those from specific industries or temporary migrants; others make efforts to cater to migrants that may cross categories; and others actively foster connections among different types of pathways. Pathways must be adaptable and continuously monitored to inform improvements and meet the changing needs of migrants and communities alike.

Still, the action needed to establish sustainable and effective pathways goes beyond the steps outlined in this report. Better data on migration – in terms of quality, reliability and timeliness – are needed to strengthen the evidence base of regular pathways and guide policymakers on what may work best in specific contexts. Effective coordination structures for policymakers, vertically across governance levels and horizontally across thematic interests, are needed to support dialogue and action across pathway types. Furthermore, action on pathways should include public consultation and awareness-raising to facilitate their adoption and effective implementation.

To help do all of the above, IOM can leverage its global footprint, broad mandate and operations to assist Member States and other actors through its thought leadership, convening power and role as the global go-to partner, with the necessary resources, skills, partnerships and capacity to deliver practical solutions.

Responding to complex migration dynamics requires equally complex, multi-stakeholder efforts. Several factors – from strong technical expertise on migration around the world to several global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact for Migration and others – mean that today, establishing these efforts is entirely possible. There must be more and better opportunities for people to migrate regularly, and in ways that benefit them as well as origin and destination communities; this can be done through regular migration pathways. This publication aims to inspire dialogue and action on pathways around the world and by different stakeholders, all of whom have potential roles to play in improving migration governance for all.

ANNEXES

A1. Methodology

Migration Governance Indicators data collection

The Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs) is IOM's flagship programme designed to assist governments in evaluating the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures. This involves taking stock of their migration policies and identifying well-developed areas and areas with potential for further development in the governance of migration. Consisting of 99 questions, the MGI data collection framework assesses migration governance in a process that is voluntary, consultative and sensitive to local contexts.⁴¹

MGI questions inquire about the existence of policies, institutions and coordination mechanisms relevant to various facets of migration governance. Answers to MGI questions are categorized for straightforward interpretation (i.e. yes, partially or no), with clear guidance for data collectors regarding which answer applies in different cases. Generally, an affirmative answer implies that a policy, institution or coordination mechanism is well developed (meaning that it formally exists – backed up by legislation or a formal agreement), is consistently applied (meaning its provisions are implemented in practice) and is regularly updated (IOM, 2022a). The categorical answer to each MGI question is supported by a detailed narrative justification describing the rationale behind the chosen response.⁴² These justifications aim to capture the challenges and opportunities concerning migration that are specific to each participating country.

MGI data collection consists of a thorough desk review of migration-related legislation, policies, institutions and coordination mechanisms, supplemented by interviews with local experts and government representatives. These data undergo multiple stages of revision by IOM in consultation with participating governments to make sure that procedural and institutional aspects of migration governance are reflected. This process is designed to help governments familiarize themselves with the information, facilitating its potential use in policy development.

Data analysis approach

This publication is structured around three objectives to harness the potential of migration through regular pathways, as outlined in IOM internal documents. This framework builds upon the *IOM Strategic Plan 2024–2028* (2024), breaking down the strategic priority of facilitating pathways for regular migration. The analysis of each of these objectives is based on MGI data from 100 countries and 69 local authorities that voluntarily conducted an MGI assessment between 2016 and 2023.⁴³

⁴¹ More information about the MGI process is available on the [Migration Data Portal](#).

⁴² The provided justifications are substantiated by corresponding references that cite relevant legislation, policies, action plans, government websites, internal documents and expert interviews, among other sources.

⁴³ For the full list of the 100 countries and 69 local authorities, refer to [Annex A2](#).

A systematic evaluation was conducted to align relevant questions from the MGI framework to IOM's purpose-based typology of regular pathways. This approach led to the categorization of regular pathways into four distinct purposes: education, labour, family and humanitarian reasons.

Section 1 aims to identify the specific measures that countries have put in place to facilitate mobility across the four identified types of pathways. A qualitative content analysis method was employed to identify instances where legal, policy, regulatory and other frameworks were established to address admission barriers. Countries were then grouped based on the existence of governance frameworks with specific measures to facilitate mobility for each purpose.

The MGI methodology provides comprehensive coverage when evaluating the existence of labour policies, encompassing programmes for managing labour migration, measures to provide foreign residents equal access to employment as nationals, and participation in regional and bilateral agreements. To streamline the analysis, these policies were categorized into two broad groups: national regulations and international agreements. A country is considered to have measures in place to facilitate labour mobility when specific measures are evident across both of these groups.

Following the identification of countries with established governance frameworks to facilitate mobility for each purpose, the analysis incorporated specific policy enablers to illustrate how these conditions can facilitate effective regular pathways or foster stronger connections between them. This relationship was evaluated by analysing how the distribution of countries with specific measures to facilitate mobility varied when categorized based on the presence or absence of selected policy enablers.

Section 2 delves into scaling mechanisms aimed at expanding pathway-specific governance frameworks. It offers insights into regular pathways across purposes, with a specific focus on two mechanisms: enhancing the clarity and transparency of migration rules and regulations, and strengthening the capacity of institutional migration frameworks. These are considered necessary conditions for establishing regular migration pathways that are accessible to prospective migrants and are supported by sufficient capabilities of implementing actors. The descriptive analysis provides an overview of the prevalence of these scaling mechanisms when countries are categorized based on whether they have measures in place to facilitate mobility for each type of pathway. Additionally, this section offers selected examples from both national and local levels of how countries make information accessible to migrants and reinforce the capacities of key stakeholders. The inclusion of these examples in the report serves to illustrate the practices employed by governments in diverse contexts and geographies.⁴⁴

Section 3 assesses the potential benefits of regular pathways for migrants, destination countries and countries of origin. By analysing both primary MGI data and secondary (external) data,⁴⁵ it evaluates how the distribution of proxy measures for selected policy outcomes changes when grouping countries based on the presence or absence of specific measures to facilitate mobility or selected policy enablers. Standard statistical tests were employed based on the data's characteristics to evaluate non-random associations between variables or to determine significant differences between means across groups.

Limitations

MGI data reflect information at the time of completion of the respective assessments, and comparisons over time fall beyond the scope of this analysis. From 2020, the MGI team has conducted follow-up assessments aimed at showing the progress that countries have achieved in migration governance since

⁴⁴ Throughout the report, over 45 selected policy examples from both national and local levels have been included. These examples originate from over 25 countries and 8 local authorities, providing a diverse and comprehensive overview of how migration is governed worldwide.

⁴⁵ See [Annex A3](#) for a description of the external data used in the analysis.

their first MGI assessment. As of May 2024, follow-up national-level data are available for a total of 24 countries.⁴⁶ The primary source of policy examples is government-validated MGI reports. Since the information within these reports is bound to the date of data collection, a supplementary desk review was carried out to ascertain that relevant policies, institutions or coordination mechanisms remain active as of the date of drafting this report. This review is constrained by the availability of online data; information gathered at the time of data collection may not reflect recent updates in legislation.

To investigate the relationships between specific policy measures, enablers, or outcomes, percentages or measures of central tendency, such as the arithmetic mean, have been compared across different data groupings. Despite the use of standard statistical tests to identify significant relationships or differences between variables, only correlation and not causation is established. The tests do not conclusively demonstrate that one variable directly causes changes in another. The graphs and associated texts in this report never imply a causal relationship between variables.

While the MGI process provides a comprehensive methodology to examine whether countries have established robust migration governance frameworks, it offers limited insights into policy implementation. Policymakers and stakeholders seeking to effectively harness the full potential of migration should complement an MGI assessment with additional tools specifically designed for evaluating the practical implementation and assessing the impact of these policies. [Section 3](#) offers valuable insights and marks an initial step towards a deeper understanding of the complementarities between policies, enablers and outcomes. Yet further research is needed to explore omitted factors that may be driving selected results.

⁴⁶ To date, no follow-up assessment has been conducted at the local level.

A2. List and geographical distribution of MGI-assessed countries and local authorities covered

 Albania	 Cambodia	 Dominican Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Boca Chica</i> • <i>San Cristóbal</i>
 Angola	 Cameroon	 Ecuador <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cuenca</i> • <i>Manta</i> • <i>Quito</i> • <i>Tulcán</i>
 Argentina <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Buenos Aires</i> • <i>Quilmes</i> 	 Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Montréal</i> 	 El Salvador <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ilobasco</i> • <i>La Palma</i>
 Armenia	 Central African Republic	 Eswatini
 Azerbaijan	 Chad	 Ethiopia
 Bahrain	 Chile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Arica</i> • <i>Santiago</i> 	 Fiji
 Bangladesh	 Colombia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Barranquilla</i> • <i>Bucaramanga</i> • <i>Cúcuta</i> • <i>Medellín</i> • <i>Villa del Rosario</i> 	 Gambia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kanifing</i>
 Belize	 Comoros	 Georgia* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tbilisi</i>
 Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	 Costa Rica <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Coto Brus</i> • <i>Desamparados</i> • <i>Heredia</i> • <i>La Cruz</i> • <i>San José</i> • <i>Upala</i> 	 Germany
 Botswana	 Côte d'Ivoire	 Ghana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accra</i>
 Brazil <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foz do Iguaçu</i> • <i>Manaus</i> • <i>Rio de Janeiro</i> • <i>São Paulo</i> 	 Democratic Republic of the Congo	 Grenada
 Burkina Faso	 Djibouti	
 Cabo Verde	 Dominica	

* Did not participate at the national level.

 Guatemala <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cuilco</i> • <i>San Marcos</i> • <i>Tacaná</i> 	 Madagascar	 Palau
 Guinea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kankan</i> 	 Malawi	 Panama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>La Chorrera</i>
 Guinea-Bissau	 Mali	 Papua New Guinea
 Guyana	 Marshall Islands	 Paraguay
 Haiti	 Mauritania	 Peru <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>La Cruz</i> • <i>Lima</i>
 Honduras <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Omoa</i> 	 Mauritius	 Philippines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Albay</i>
 Iraq	 Mexico <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chihuahua</i> • <i>Durango</i> • <i>Guanajuato</i> • <i>Guerrero</i> • <i>Mexico City</i> • <i>Michoacán</i> • <i>Nuevo León</i> • <i>Oaxaca</i> • <i>Tabasco</i> • <i>Tamaulipas</i> • <i>Zacatecas</i> 	 Portugal
 Ireland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dublin</i> 	 Mongolia	 Republic of Korea
 Italy	 Montenegro	 Republic of Moldova <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bălți</i> • <i>Cahul</i>
 Jamaica	 Morocco	 Rwanda
 Kazakhstan	 Namibia	 Saint Lucia
 Kenya <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mombasa</i> • <i>Nairobi</i> 	 Nepal	 Senegal
 Kuwait	 Nicaragua	 Serbia
 Kyrgyzstan	 Niger	 Seychelles
 Lesotho	 Nigeria	 Sierra Leone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bo</i> • <i>Freetown</i> • <i>Kenema</i> • <i>Makeni</i>
 Liberia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monrovia</i> 	 North Macedonia	 South Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Johannesburg</i>


















 Spain* • <i>La Laguna</i> • <i>Málaga</i>	 Timor-Leste	 Uruguay • <i>Montevideo</i>
 Sri Lanka	 Trinidad and Tobago	 Uzbekistan
 Suriname	 Tuvalu	 Vanuatu
 Sweden	 Türkiye	 Zambia
 Tajikistan	 Uganda	 Zimbabwe • <i>Beitbridge</i> • <i>Harare</i> • <i>Mutare</i> • <i>Plumtree</i>
 Thailand	 Ukraine	

Table 2. Number of MGI-assessed countries over total number of countries, per United Nations region

	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Total
MGI-assessed countries	37	27	19	11	6	100
United Nations members	54	35	47	43	14	193

Notes: Classification is based on the [United Nations Statistics Division's geographical regions](#).

Countries currently implementing national assessments (including follow-up assessments): Barbados, Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Nepal, Serbia, Slovenia and Tunisia.

Countries currently implementing local assessments: Brazil, Chad, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Indonesia, Liberia, Malawi, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay.

A3. Secondary (external) variables

Age dependency ratio

Age dependency ratio is the ratio of dependants (people younger than 15 or older than 64) to the working-age population (those aged 15–64). Data are shown as the proportion of dependants per 100 working-age population.

Data were available for 100 MGI countries and correspond to the year 2022. The mean value of the sample is 60.52.

Data were obtained from the data set “*Age dependency ratio (% of working-age population)*”, from the World Bank.

Personal remittances, received

Personal remittances comprise personal transfers and compensation of employees. *Personal transfers* consist of all current transfers in cash or in kind made or received by resident households to or from non-resident households. Personal transfers thus include all current transfers between resident and non-resident individuals. *Compensation of employees* refers to the income of border, seasonal and other short-term workers who are employed in an economy where they are not resident and of residents employed by non-resident entities. Data are the sum of two items defined in the sixth edition of the International Monetary Fund’s *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual* (2009): personal transfers and compensation of employees.

Data were available for 95 MGI countries and correspond to the year 2022. The mean value of the sample is 6.77.

Data were obtained from the data set “*Personal remittances, received (% of GDP)*”, from the World Bank.

Share of international (regular) migrant workers

The share was computed by dividing the total stock of foreign-born workers by the total stock of workers, including both native and foreign-born individuals.

Data were available for 79 MGI countries and span various years. The mean value of the sample is 6.14.

Data were obtained from the data set “*Employment by sex, age and place of birth (thousands) – Annual*”, from the International Labour Organization.

World Bank income levels

The World Bank’s income classifications split countries into four categories – low, lower middle, upper middle and high income – determined by the country’s gross national income (GNI) per capita. The GNI thresholds between income groups have changed over time based on World Bank definitions.

Data were available for 100 MGI countries and correspond to the year 2022. In the sample, countries are distributed as follows: low income (15%), lower-middle income (34%), upper-middle income (36%) and high income (15%).

Data were obtained from the data set “*World Bank country and lending groups*”, from the World Bank.

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