

GUIDELINE 2: Collect and share information on migrants, subject to privacy, confidentiality, and the security and safety of migrants

To protect migrants when conflicts or natural disasters erupt, States, private sector actors, international organizations, and civil society need information about migrant populations. Aggregated data on the municipal, national, regional, and international scale of migration and the demographics of migrants, such as gender, age, and nationality, enable stakeholders to understand the nature and scope of needs in the case of a crisis. Local-level migrant community profiles help stakeholders target responses. Some stakeholders collect detailed information on the location of migrants, how to contact individual migrants, emergency and family contacts, and specific vulnerability and needs. Recruitment and placement agencies collect information on the location and situation of labor migrants they deploy to other States and can be a useful source of information.

Migrants play a key role in sharing and updating their information to enable stakeholders to contact and assist them in the event of a conflict or natural disaster. That said, migrants in an irregular immigration status in particular may have reservations about putting themselves at risk by becoming more ‘visible’ and sharing contact and other information with stakeholders, especially State authorities. Such migrants are also more likely to be highly mobile and move from one temporary residence to another. Efforts to collect and share aggregated information on migrants in an irregular situation should address these barriers. Engaging civil society can help mitigate such challenges.

In cases where States, private sector actors, international organizations, and civil society collect personal data, they should respect privacy rights and confidentiality with a view to ensuring the safety and security of the migrants (and where relevant, other stakeholders) on whom they collect and share information. In collecting and handling information containing migrants’ personal details, stakeholders need to act in accordance with applicable law and standards on individual data protection and privacy. Stakeholders should also ensure informed consent. Stakeholders can adopt clear guidelines that define the type of personal data to be collected and the ways in which such data will be handled, including circumstances in which data can be shared.

Sample Practices

- *Registration systems for citizens abroad that enable States of origin (or family, community, or civil society, where practical and appropriate) to contact migrants in the event of a crisis and provide them with information on the crisis and available assistance.*
- *Measures to encourage citizens to register, such as user-friendly, online registration systems that highlight the benefits and services that become available through registration.*
- *Host State registration systems to collect information on migrants upon arrival.*
- *Aggregated data and research on migration trends and demographics, including the purpose and routes of migration and nature and characteristics of migrants.*
- *Information on migrant community profiles, migrant networks, and focal points.*
- *Databases of migrant workers that include information on accompanying family members.*

PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT GUIDELINE 2: Collect and share information on migrants, subject to privacy, confidentiality, and the security and safety of migrants

Multiple Stakeholders

Aggregated data and research on migration trends and demographics

Aggregated information on migration trends and migrant demographics can inform preparedness and responses. Data and research could include:

- Purpose of migration;
- Routes of migration;
- Nature and characteristics of citizens leaving States of origin;
- Nature and characteristics of migrants in host States;
- Quantitative and qualitative data and analysis;
- Presence and operation of trafficking and smuggling networks.

Information on migrant community profiles and migrant and diaspora networks and focal points

Detailed information on the profiles of migrant communities, networks, and focal points can inform preparedness, including contingency planning, and facilitate outreach, communication, and targeted responses. Information to gather could include:

- Geographic distribution of migrants in host States;
- Nationality, ethnicity, and linguistic compositions of migrants in specific localities;
- Potential conditions of vulnerability, including gender, age, disability, immigration status, language capabilities, and working conditions;
- Geographic distribution, skills, and characteristics of diaspora;
- Formal and informal migrant and diaspora networks;
- Information on migrant and diaspora community leaders.

Applicable standards on data protection and privacy

Collection and use of data requires special attention to data protection and privacy, including measures regarding personal consent from those providing the data, as appropriate. Guidance on data collection and use should address issues, such as lawful collection of information, specified and legitimate purposes, consent, confidentiality, transfer to third parties, data security, retention, oversight, compliance, remedies for misuse of data, and storage of data in secure physical facilities, including if collected electronically, in encrypted files on secure servers.

Arrangements to share aggregated data on migrant populations

Sharing aggregated data can be a useful way to ensure that all stakeholders have accurate, up-to-date information on migrants, their general location, and their needs. Arrangements to share such data could include provisions on:

- The circumstances under which information will be shared;
- The format of the aggregated data to be shared (e.g., tables, maps, graphs, and narratives);
- How regularly data will be updated;
- Circumstances in which special data runs will be aggregated on demand;
- Exceptions to the sharing of aggregated data (e.g., when the numbers in a particular location are too small to allow for anonymity);
- Accepted purposes for which the aggregated data will be used.

Publicly available aggregated data

States, international organizations, and civil society collect data on migration trends, migrant demographics, and migrant communities. Making aggregated data available to all can ensure common understandings among stakeholders of the size and nature of migrant communities.

Host States

Border management systems and registration systems upon arrival

Information on migrants arriving in the State, collected through electronic or paper border management systems, may become useful for protecting migrants in the event that a conflict or natural disaster occurs. Information collected could include:

- Biographic information, such as name, date of birth, nationality, gender, and where necessary, biometric data on the migrant and accompanying family members;
- Contact details;
- Place of residence;
- Emergency contacts;
- Nature of travel;
- Duration of stay, including dates of entry and other travel details;
- Passport and visa information, including nationality and expiration dates;
- Name of employer and place(s) of employment.

States of Origin

Registration systems for citizens abroad

States of origin can use registration systems to communicate with citizens abroad and provide them with information. Systems can allow for single-entry registrations or be interactive systems that allow citizens to create personal profiles that can be updated when circumstances change. Ways to implement registration systems include:

- Through paper, in-person, or electronic systems;
- Registration prior to departure or after arrival in a host State;
- Through voluntary recommendations or mandatory obligations;
- Through overseas consular posts.

Information that could be collected include:

- Biographic information, such as name, date of birth, nationality, gender, and where necessary biometric data on the citizen and accompanying family members;
- Contact details;
- Travel details, including country, place of residence, and duration of stay;
- Emergency contacts;
- Passport and visa information, including expiration dates.

Measures to encourage citizens to register

Registration systems work when citizens traveling abroad register and keep their information updated. States can raise awareness of available registration systems and increase registration rates by:

- Designing user-friendly, simple to update, online registration systems rather than paper forms and in-person procedures;
- Limiting the extent to which personal information, including on immigration status, needs to be submitted;
- Providing information on the purposes for and importance of registration;
- Providing clear instructions (with accessible links to registration systems) on how and when to register;
- Providing clear guidance on how data and information will be protected and handled;
- Offering registered citizens benefits, including updates on risks and conditions in host States;
- Disseminating information about registration systems through websites, social media, emails, traditional media, posters in airports, and travel centers;
- Providing information about systems during pre-departure training or post-arrival orientation.

Mapping citizens abroad

A comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the number and characteristics of citizens abroad can enable States to plan and respond more effectively when a crisis hits. Mapping exercises can include:

- Collecting first-hand data from relevant agencies in host States, such as the interior ministry, immigration department, labor ministry, and census and statistics department;
- Mapping organizations, groups, and associations established by citizens abroad;
- Meeting with community leaders and groups who maintain data on citizens abroad;
- Coordinating with representatives of employers, recruiters, and placement agencies;
- Visiting worksites in host States;
- Undertaking mapping and profiling at the local level in host States.

The types of information that can be collected on citizens abroad through mapping includes:

- Full name;
- Passport, travel document, if available, or any document for purposes of identification;
- Contact details;
- Address in the host State;
- Employer details and contact;
- Address and contact details in the State of origin;
- Details of emergency contacts, including in the State of origin and in the host State;
- Social media or other platforms (whether websites, SMS, social media, applications) commonly used to access information.

Private Sector Actors

Data and databases on migrant workers

Employers, recruiters, and placement agencies in States of origin often collect data and keep databases on employees, including on employees deployed to other States. Employers in host States also collect data and keep databases on employees, including migrant workers. Much of this information is collected in the ordinary course of business activities, such as hiring, payroll services, and workplace insurance schemes. In the context of these data-collection activities, employers, recruiters, and placement agencies can gather information and documents helpful for protecting migrants. This could include:

- Biographic information, such as name, date of birth, nationality, and gender of accompanying family members;
- Identity and travel documents and visa information, including State of origin, host State, nationality, and expiration dates;
- Place of residence in host State;
- Contact information, including telephone numbers and email addresses of the employee and accompanying family members, and emergency contacts in the State of origin and host State;
- Electronic backup of documents, particularly identity documents.

International Organizations

Migration and mobility mapping

In line with their specific mandates and expertise, international organizations can support States and other stakeholders to collect and analyze data on migrants. Tools and methodologies to map migration and mobility include:

- Research on migration trends;
- Migrant registration systems;
- Migrant community profiles;
- Surveys on migrants' intended movements;
- Migration monitoring mechanisms;

- Creating local mechanisms for data collection, particularly in natural disaster-prone areas;
- Consolidating and maintaining databases on cross-border movements;
- Developing country-specific criteria and indicators to measure migrants' access to services;
- Mapping and assessing migrants' specific vulnerabilities that may affect their resilience in the face of crises, such as language and cultural barriers, immigration status, and access to social services;
- Establishing and leading national or regional, multi-stakeholder taskforces to monitor in-country and cross-border movements.

Stakeholder outreach mechanisms

In line with their specific mandates and expertise, international organizations can reach out to relevant stakeholders to share pertinent information on migrants. Ways to do this include:

- Mapping and reaching out to relevant consular posts;
- Mapping and reaching out to relevant civil society actors, including migrant associations;
- Mapping and reaching out to employers, recruiters and placement agencies, and relevant private sector industry groups and associations;
- Setting up information-sharing mechanisms;
- Creating and regularly updating contact lists.

Civil Society

Tools to encourage migrants to provide direct information

Local civil society actors that are close to migrant populations and have established relationships of trust may have more information or be well placed to gather information on migrants, in particular hidden or isolated migrants and other vulnerable groups. Activities to collect information on migrant communities include:

- Mapping less visible and other vulnerable groups, including children, migrants in an irregular immigration status, migrants in detention, and exploited workers and victims of trafficking;
- Establishing focus groups that target language and cultural minorities and isolated groups;
- Mapping migrant networks;
- Conducting door-to-door visits and other forms of grassroots outreach;
- Conducting interviews with migrant leaders, representatives, and key informants.