

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.*