

DRAFT NON PAPER

Prepared by the European Commission and IOM

Migration Profiles – Promoting a Common Understanding

1. Why this note ?

This note aims to promote a common understanding of what a migration profile is and to explain how this tool can contribute to policy development and greater policy coherence, including potentially the mainstreaming of migration into national development plans.

In the note we explain the background of the migration profile tool and provide classification of various types, focusing on the difference between basic and extended migration profiles. We also present the content of the proposed template and enumerate the principles that in our view should govern the production of an extended migration profile.

2. Migration Profiles: Background

Migration profiles were proposed by the European Commission in the Communication on Migration and Development in 2005. According to the text, migration profiles should *"aim to gather information on issues such as the labour market situation, unemployment rates, labour demand and supply and present or potential skill shortages by sector and occupation, skills needs in the country, skills available in the diaspora, migration flows, incoming and outgoing financial flows linked with migration, including migrant remittances, as well as relevant gender aspects and those related to minors."*¹

Originally migration profiles were conceived to meet the basic needs of the Commission: to inform programming of Community assistance in third countries in the field of migration and in the field of poverty reduction strategies. To support these purposes, the Commission proposed a basic template, which interpreted the above definition broadly, focusing on general data, with limited room for more ambitious statistical analysis. It aimed at **concise information in a standardized form**, which would **make the migratory picture of the country clear at one glance**. Those drafting the profile were expected to conduct only a limited analysis of the impact of migration on the socio-economic situation of the country. The profiles were created by or with the support of EC delegations to be included in the Country Strategy

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Migration and Development: Some concrete orientations COM (2005) 390, p. 37, annex 8

Papers (as an annex). They were initially used for ACP countries and in Western Balkans. The quality of the final products varies substantially.

IOM first tested the basic migration profile concept in 2006 in Ecuador and Senegal, and has subsequently prepared migration profiles in over 30 countries around the world.

First experiences with the migration profile were very positive and the idea of extending the scope to cover other information relevant to migration policies emerged. Parallely, the Global Approach to migration increasingly promoted cooperation on labour migration and migration and development, including the issues of brain drain, labour matching and diaspora engagement. Therefore, in 2009, the template has been changed to include more details concerning the impact of migration on the socio-economic development of the country in question, with special attention given to the labour market. This change in the template is also linked to a growing interest in how to mainstream migration into national development plans.

Types of Migration Profile

2.1 Migration Profile as a product

Standard Migration Profiles are statistical reports based on a standardized template. They bring together existing migration-related information from different sources in a structured manner, including a range of migration-related indicators and policy-relevant information. They are intended to be tools to facilitate national policy development.

To date there have been two types of the standardized templates.

The first wave of Migration Profiles has been based on a relatively concise template that included data on stocks and flows and some information related to migration policy. This type of report has been produced by the European Commission delegations in ACP countries, as well as in a few other countries of the world. The same approach has been also used by IOM in their work on country profiles in the Western Balkans and the Black Sea region.

The second wave of Migration Profiles was based on a more comprehensive template that includes, apart from standard migration data, also data related to other areas, potentially impacted by migration, like labour market, human capital, education, trade etc. This type of a template has been used in the pilot project funded by the European Commission in West and Central Africa and implemented by IOM and several of IOM-funded Migration Profiles in Latin America. This extended template is also used in the project "Building Migration Partnerships," in Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation and Central Asia, funded by the European Commission.

In both cases, the information gathered has proven to be a useful tool both for the country concerned and to the donor community, as regards information on migration in the country. Collecting information in a more structured manner helps to build a more solid background for programming and national policy making in the area of migration. Short reports are of great value in countries, where there is no collection of

migration data readily available. More elaborated reports have a clear value added where more focus is put on development policy and a better understanding of “push” and “pull” factors can trigger a direct policy response, linking migration with other policies.

During the last 5 years, migration profiles have been prepared for nearly 70 countries around the world. Inevitably, given the wide range of countries and actors involved, approaches to preparing migration profiles have varied. Standard Migration Profiles have often been produced at relatively low cost and without requiring extensive government involvement in their production. Standard Migration Profiles have also been produced without governmental involvement for the purpose of programming in the field of migration, as was the case with the Migration Profiles compiled by EC delegations in some of the ACP countries. In some cases, governments have taken the initiative to establish Standard Migration Profiles and have requested international agencies to compile these. For example, the Migration Profiles for the Black Sea Region produced by IOM were requested and endorsed by the governments participating in the Black Sea Consultative Process on Managing Migration (BSEC). Whichever approach is taken, governments value the reports and in certain instances have requested that they be updated.

2.2 Migration Profile as a process

Initial experiences with the Standard Migration Profiles have demonstrated that, while the structured collection and analysis of data and research findings are of great importance to governments, ensuring the sustainability and ownership of the Profiles often presents a significant challenge. Migration profiles can make a major contribution to policy development, policy coherence and evaluation if the templates are extended to cover all relevant areas and when the governments are involved and ideally take the responsibility for the end product. In order to obtain these objectives which for many countries will be a long-term objective, one needs to ensure that compiling and up-dating a migration profile is done in a sustainable way, part of a structural process.

As part of efforts to overcome this challenge, a pilot project was financed by the EC and implemented by IOM in ten West and Central African countries. The project tested a methodology linking the preparation of Standard Migration Profiles to a range of capacity-building and policy-development activities that aimed to improve the basis for coherent policymaking and foster country ownership. While the lessons from the project still need to be fully incorporated into practice, it has become clear that establishing Migration Profiles as a government-owned framework for data collection and analysis and as a national policy development instrument is a process that for many countries will require extensive capacity-building and government support. Creating and using Migration Profiles will have an important added value but will also be demanding in terms of resources and objectives. Although the final objective must be to enable a country to be responsible for the process and the final result, the international community will need to invest in a serious manner in the start-up phase. Governments that would choose to have a migration profile will need their assistance, both conceptually and substantially.

The Migration Profile that has a wider scope, that will be used as a policy instrument and that is produced as part of a capacity building initiative, now usually are referred to as the 'Extended Migration Profiles' (**EMP**). The Extended Migration Profile exercise should ensure that a country is able not only to collect and analyse data and create a Migration Profile report, but also to define on this basis a more coherent and comprehensive national development policy. In establishing these profiles the international community has an opportunity to support a country in to achieve a level of capacity needed to sustain a migration profile as a **national policy tool**. The capacity building would allow the given country to assume full ownership of the creation and the regular update of the reports. With the support of the international community, the existing collection methods and methods of analysis should be improved in the course of the exercise.

The more specific objectives of Extended MPs are:

- To enhance governmental knowledge about migration and its relationship to development
- To support governments in establishing or strengthening mechanisms for regular reporting on migration-related trends
- To improve the use of migration information for policy development
- To foster greater inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration with respect to data collection and policy development
- To assess the evolution of the migration impact on development and socio-economic situation
- To monitor and assess the donor interventions in the area of migration.

The added value of such an exercise is clear. For the international community, having such an instrument, with data and definitions agreed and harmonized, could be a value added in the day to day development work. For the owner countries, the ownership of the profile and the developed capacity to produce it would be an important support for evidence-based policy-making. All actors will gain a better understanding of the characteristics, size and consequences of migration for a specific country. An improved understanding of the migration situation can also help to build a more evidence-based dialogue on migration and its consequences. A regular update of the profiles will make it possible to systematically and regularly evaluate policy initiatives.

It is however important to observe that in cases where the government already has an established way of reporting on migration issues, it may still wish to engage in the extended migration profile exercise for a variety of reasons. It may wish to standardize the document in order to make it more transparent to the outside users; it can seek support for specific areas where data collection is especially challenging (e.g. data on diaspora, usually held by the countries of destination); or it can see value added in support for national policy definition.

Whatever the starting point is, the final objective is that in the long-run the country itself will be able to compose and up-date regularly the EMP. It will be for the country to organize the collection of data, analyze it and draft the actual report and that government will assume responsibility for their creation and implementation. They will

be also the end users of the reports, and they will share it with the international community. The role of the international organizations in this process will however be vital. All the relevant international organizations will need to contribute by providing the information and data they hold for the specific modules of the EMP template. In the initial stages of the conceptual development and the set-up of the working arrangements international organizations might have to play a more pro-active role.

3. What should be the content of the Extended Migration Profile template?

The EMP's reports should be compiled according to a *standardized and sufficiently comprehensive template, including core and country/theme-specific indicators*. The purpose of the template is to evaluate available information relevant to migration in a comprehensive and systematic manner. The template should not only include information on migration trends but also on the broader development and institutional context related to migration, and the labour market.

The information gathered includes e.g. numbers of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons; numbers of emigrants, skill pools in diaspora and levels of remittances. Most importantly Migration Profiles discuss the quality of the data, identify gaps in data collection and suggest further improvements. The standard template also gathers information about the institutional framework and migration and development policies in place, including the international agreements relevant to migration (labour agreements, readmission agreements etc). The Profiles provide information relevant to the migration and development discussions, focusing on labour market analysis, giving information on skill shortages by sector, profession and region, discussing the impact of e.g. trade, economic or education policies on migration, presenting policies to address brain drain or brain waste; and informing about projects and programmes on migration and development and information on who funds and implements them.

To date, most migration profiles have tended to focus only on international migration trends, but in many countries it may be important also to collect and analyse data on **internal migration** and its impact on development. It is also the case that only few migration profiles include much information about **environmental migration** given the lack of reliable data and agreed definitions. However, in the future as the effects of climate change begin to have a greater impact on migration there is likely to be a demand for more information on this subject.

Migration profiles will serve the policy development of a specific country and the core structure will allow for comparison with other countries. In order to meet possible country specific needs, additional modules could be considered.

4. The principles governing drafting an Extended Migration Profile

4.1 Voluntary basis

The EMPs are made on a voluntary basis. The process is only initiated where the country in question is interested and willing to explore possibilities of using this tool for development of national policies.

4.2 Ownership

The final objective is that the country concerned is the owner of the EMP. In close collaboration with the country concerned, the relevant organisations would provide the information and data to fill the various parts of the profile and could contribute to the financial resources to perform the capacity building exercise in the start-up. In a first phase, the countries would be asked for the support in data collection and gradually to take on the responsibility to produce Migration Profiles. International cooperation should bring tangible result - as the outcome of the exercise, the future updates should progressively become a full responsibility of the country.

4.3 Engagement with a wide range of stakeholders

The technical working groups set up to oversee the migration profile process not only facilitate but also foster coordination and policy coherence between entities inside and outside government. The consultations bring together different ministries and non-governmental actors to discuss issues relating to information sharing, capacity-building and coherent policy development related to migration.

4.4 Balance between comparability and country focus

EMP reports should be based on a standardized template, which will support the collection of comparable data, based on clear definitions. Initial review/assessment of the existing data collection and analysis mechanisms and identification of gaps will support this objective.

While ascribing to the principle of comparability, EMP should be as country specific as possible. Additional modules reflecting the particularities and interest of a given country could be added. To this end the template should be discussed with the government.

4.4 Reliability

The data collected in the template should be accurate and reliable. To this end the quality of the data collected should be discussed in the report. In the longer term, the quality of the data collection and analysis presented in the report will be periodically monitored.

4.5 Support for sustainability

The following activities have been identified as helpful in supporting the countries and the governments to achieve sustainability:

- Identifying an institution or mechanism for updating MP reports regularly;
- Targeted training and technical cooperation for the institution responsible for updating the MPs;

- The use of local research consultants to prepare the Migration Profile reports in order to strengthen local research capacity and links between research and policy communities.
- Training of national experts as regards policy definition using a Migration Profile, preferably through twinning-type projects (e.g. introduction of the Migration Profile to relevant Strategies on development);
- Training of national experts in administration and academia as regards data collection and analysis, preferably through twinning-type projects;
- Technical guidance through the creation of a Statistical Advisory Group, consisting of government experts, key academic researchers, and technical experts from international agencies.
- Developing a strategy for regular production and dissemination of the Migration Profile to ensure sustainability. This strategy may be incorporated in a broader national data management strategy where they exist (e.g. Monitoring & evaluation systems for PRSPs);
- Establishment of an inter-ministerial technical working group to supervise the implementation of the Migration Profile Process, together with a consultation mechanism to ensure that representatives of civil society and international agencies have an opportunity to contribute to the process;
- National Planning Workshops at which the draft MP reports should be presented and on the basis of which governments issue recommendations on future policy development and improved data collection;

The scale of the capacity building process depends on the situation in a given country. For some the process will require several adjustments, including a substantial investment in improving data collection. The EMP is an ambitious engagement that can only be met with the sustained cooperation of all involved actors.