Call for research proposals – Mediterranean Migration Routes to Europe

Over the past years, public attention has gradually turned to the experiences of migrants along the precarious Mediterranean routes to Europe. Despite the changes in the routes taken and the number of migrant arrivals in Europe, the journeys along the Central and Western Mediterranean routes continue, with migrants’ experiences of abuse, exploitation, human rights violations and even loss of life. It is therefore of continued relevance to enhance collective understandings of drivers, routes and profiles to inform targeted protection measures, safe alternatives and effective responses in all countries that are relevant to these routes.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls upon all states to implement well-managed migration policies, and facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. The first objective of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration - a global framework on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions - is about improving migration data.

To support the global processes, there are calls for stronger and more comprehensive data, analysis and actionable information to ensure that vulnerable groups, including migrants, are not “left behind”. In the context of the migration routes to Europe across the Mediterranean people migrate for a diverse range of reasons including conflict, violence, human rights violations, fragile economies, poor governance and unstable environments.

In the past years, IOM has been conducting systematic data collection in the countries on the main Mediterranean migration routes to Europe, which has a great potential to enhance collective understandings of drivers, routes of migrants and refugees, as well as the risks that they are exposed to. A more comprehensive, longitudinal and route-based approach is critical to inform coordinated, sustainable and effective responses to mixed migration flows, forced migration and labour migration on the main Mediterranean migration routes.

IOM is pleased to invite interested researchers and institutions to submit expressions of interest to conduct innovative research in partnership with IOM, based on a range of little explored primary data sources from the countries on the main Mediterranean migration routes to Europe. The primary aim of the research will be to inform policy and programming for the protection of migrants across the Mediterranean migration routes.
The research should examine migrants’ and refugees’ vulnerability to human trafficking, exploitation, violence and abuse, and contain findings and recommendations for policy and programming. At least one report will be published in partnership with IOM. Data and analysis used to produce the report may be used for academic publications, subject to an agreement with IOM.

IOM has limited funds available to cover the costs of the research and will also contribute in-kind, including through the provision of data.

Potential topics of research include:

- Protective and risk factors for vulnerability to human trafficking on the different migration routes, and during different stages of the journey
- Hotspots relevant to exploitation, violence and abuse of migrants and refugees during their journey
- Existing gaps in the counter-trafficking policies and responses – including legislative frameworks and concrete implementation - on the migration routes and in the countries of origin
- Characteristics of individuals migrating from conflict-affected countries, and their specific vulnerabilities to human trafficking, abuse, exploitation and violence

Available data for analysis are mostly quantitative and based on, but it is not limited to:

- Thematic surveys with nearly 50,000 migrants and refugees who travelled on the main migration routes to Europe in the past years. These types of surveys were used to produce the two reports mentioned in “About IOM”.
- Surveys conducted in humanitarian settings with key informants, for example on needs and issues affecting internally-displaced people.
- Data on identified victims of human trafficking which are relevant to the locations on the main Mediterranean migration routes. IOM maintains the largest database of victim case data in the world.

For more specific enquiries about data availability, please contact Eliza Galos at egalos@iom.int.

The work envisaged should include at minimum a report on situations of vulnerability faced by migrants on the Western and Central Mediterranean routes, based on a structure to be agreed
jointly by IOM and the researcher(s). The report should be focused on the responses needed to address vulnerabilities, and it should include:

1. Analysis and interpretation of IOM datasets, primarily IOM survey data with indicators of vulnerability to human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation
2. A literature review
3. A methodology section
4. Recommendations provided by IOM

The report should be finalized by February 2020 at the latest.

About IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. Established in 1951, IOM currently have 172 member states, and offices in over 100 countries.

Since the mid-1990s, IOM and its partners have provided protection and assistance to close to 100,000 men, women and children who were trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation; slavery or practices similar to slavery; servitude; or for organ removal.

IOM also collects data on human trafficking risks and associated forms of exploitation and abuse in situations of displacement, large-scale migration and in various development settings. Since 2004 the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is IOM’s main operational tool for tracking and monitoring the movements and the evolving needs of displaced populations. Published IOM reports based on DTM data with indicators of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking collected include Harrowing Journeys and Migrant Vulnerability to Human Trafficking and Exploitation. New data continued to be collected in 2018, in various locations on the Central, Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes to Europe. As a consequence, IOM has unique data to inform counter-trafficking responses, and it is the first and only organization to undertake this type of work on this scale.

IOM headquarters has the institutional responsibility to oversee policy and technical guidance and provide programmatic support to IOM missions in various practice areas, including analytics and data for evidence-based policy development and programming, countering human trafficking and protection to victims, assistance to migrants who have experienced or are vulnerable to abuse or exploitation, and protecting migrant children.
Submission Details and Selection criteria

Participants should send a concept note or an abstract (500 words maximum), along with their Curriculum Vitae(s)/information on their research team, to Eliza Galos (egalos@iom.int) no later than the 15th of July 2019. IOM has limited funds available to cover the costs of the research and will also contribute in-kind, including through the provision of data.

The proposals will be assessed on the grounds of the following criteria:

- Previously published work of the researcher or the research team,
- Relevance of the abstract or concept note to the objectives and priorities of IOM.

Please note that English will be the language of the publications, and that some of the data is available in French.