

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

COVID-19 Identification and Monitoring of Emerging Immigration, Consular and Visa Needs

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing travel restrictions, many migrants, including laborers, students, asylum seekers, and their families, have become stranded or are facing **situations of increased vulnerabilities**. Amongst the situations encountered by migrants, many are unable to meet legal requirements or access visa processes, and face the risk of breaking regulations and finding themselves in an irregular situation, through no fault of their own.

The provision of solutions for Member States to accommodate changes to immigration and consular procedures, safeguarding public health considerations and **measures to protect migrants – regardless of their migratory status** – is at the core of IOM's commitment to facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration.

This initiative is part of the IOM COVID-19 Response and aims to contribute to the development of **recovery programming** and the wider effort to **analyze COVID-19's impact** from both the operational and policy perspectives.

METHODOLOGY

The information gathering exercise is **identifying situations requiring immigration, consular and visa related support** around the world as a result of COVID-19. The identification and monitoring effort, currently desk- based, is categorizing **information and narrative descriptions** from official sources, established news outlets, UN agencies and other organizations about relevant developments around the world.

The typology being used for this exercise is based along three broad categories:



Identified migrant needs



Identified government needs



Identified government approaches

These categories encompass a variety of situations; from migrants' needs to access clear guidelines and instructions on changes to immigration and consular procedures, to technical gaps faced by governments implementing visa extensions, amongst others.

In addition to IOM's mapping of mobility restrictions, points of entry border closures, and legal frameworks, this complementary effort seeks to **identify issues and needs for assistance while analyzing trends** that can support Member States and further knowledge exchange.



Preliminary trends identified

- Increased flexibility for visa and permit requirements
- Provision of timely and accurate information in appropriate languages via multiple channels
- Processing assistance
- Antibody testing¹
- Inclusion of public health imperatives within immigration schemes

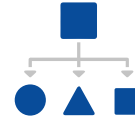
DESK-BASED INFORMATION GATHERING EXERCISE



IOM is collecting and categorizing information from official sources, established news outlets, UN agencies and other organizations about **immigration, consular and visa related** developments around the world.



The relevant information gathered is entered into a framework organized by IOM Regional Office, specifying the type of source, a summary of the situation and the Member States involved.



The information is coded according to the following, non-mutually exclusive categories:



Migrants - Identified Needs (MN)

- A. Stranded migrants
- B. Visa overstays and irregular status
- C. Cancellation of visas and permits
- D. Inability to meet visa requirements / deadlines
- E. Inability to renew visas / permits
- F. Visa expiry due to inability to travel to country of destination
- G. Other



Governments - Identified Needs (GN)

- A. Visa extensions
- B. Modifications to visa and permit requirements
- C. Provide flexible arrangements for regularization
- D. Information or guidelines for migrants stranded or in an irregular situation
- E. Processing assistance (in person or remote)
- F. Arrangements for return of stranded nationals
- G. Other



Governments - Identified Approaches (GA)

Used to identify measures taken by governments as a response to the unique immigration and consular needs caused by COVID-19. Some of these practices have served to mitigate the immediate effects of the extensive travel bans and mobility restrictions in place.



The preliminary trends identified serve to guide further information gathering and analyze current mobility patterns.



The results of this exercise can assist in the development of IOM immigration and consular solutions, as well as wider recovery programming, in support of **migrants and Member States**.

