IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

The development of a "General Model" for the collection, application and sharing of migration data – an emerging approach

The philosophy behind the "General Model" is that each State finds itself at a different stage of development in migration data management; level of sophistication in infrastructure, access to resources and level of commitment. For those States who are themselves (*ownership*) interested in and committed to further developing and enhancing their statistical infrastructure (*capacity building*), the "General Model" offers a flexible, proactive approach to data management.

The Model can be used for all types of migration data. In principle, the elements of the Model can be applied in different tempi and in different order. The elements of the Model are therefore not mutually exclusive nor do they represent an all or nothing approach. The Model is based on the fact that the reality of migratory trends is based on *timely*, *consistent* and *objective* data. It is also based on the fact that *producers* and *users* should be connected.

The Model is developed as the practical result of the follow-up of the workshop on Organisational Structures, Collection and Sharing of Migration-related Information held on 3-5 July 2002 in Prague. At this workshop OSCE ODIHR and IOM TCC were requested to promote the initiative of the collection and sharing of migration data in the region. In the light of this request, OSCE ODIHR and IOM TCC – and the partners Danish Immigration Service and Inter-governmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies in Europe, North America and Australia (IGC) – have developed the "General Model" for the EECA States.

Some of the main elements included in the "General Model" are:

o Establishment of a national <u>network</u> including core institutions dealing with migration data with well-defined focal points, appointed coordinating institutions and a mechanism for a fast and reliable sharing of relevant migration data.

o <u>Mapping out</u> of the existing statistical infrastructures, including uncovering what governments collect and share, where, when, why, how and by whom.

o Identifying the <u>national demand</u> for migration data at different levels – from minister-level to technicians dealing with data – and defining, as a starting point, a <u>minimum set of 5-10 aggregated, overall data indicators</u> recognised and recognizable for the country. The data being collected actively applied and shared at the national level and potentially at the regional/international level. The minimum set of data include e.g. asylum data, labour migration, data on cross-border activities and some demographic variables. <u>Documentation</u> for the data is instrumental. Therefore, a matrix with key methodological notes and definitions of the indicators is made. The institution compiling the data is the owner of the data.

o Establishment of a <u>Data Sharing Mechanism</u> on the basis of the minimum set of data and on the existing statistical infrastructure enabling the involved partners to share the agreed data in an informal, transparent and effective manner. Data is not necessarily comparable. However, the availability of some minimum standards (e.g. principles on collecting and sharing the agreed data) ensures that the data can be trusted and used among the EECA States. The sharing of data – and in general information (e.g. enquiries, requests, etc.) – is based on electronic communication (could also be based

on paper) with emphasis on an ease and direct way of communicating. The sharing of data is based on rapid exchange of the agreed data. The sharing of data is driven by the network and can gradually – according to the users need – be expanded in terms of the network, the frequency and the data indicators shared.

o   In order to further promote the follow-up events and to provide an easy and efficient access to the Data Sharing Mechanism, a homepage will be created at IOM TCC containing not only data as agreed to exchange and share but also information on statistical and legal issues of relevance for understanding and using the data.

o   At the regional level seminars are under planning. As with the activities at the national level, an important objective with the regional seminars will be to present tools and models for at effective approach to migration data management and to include elements of data training in the seminar.

o   To be used both at the national and the regional level, 15 training modules on statistics is contained in the model, including modules on 1) why is there a need for data, 2) which data indicators are relevant/needed, 3) basic concepts and categories of migrants, 4) how could data be compiled/used and 5) how could data, policy and legal issues be linked together.

o   Furthermore, it is planned to have a technical training seminar for the key-technicians on migration data from each of the EECA States, to develop a curriculum for the follow-up activities, and to arrange study tours for local data experts and migration authorities.

o   In parallel National projects are being developed supporting national needs and priorities. Since the process is ongoing these efforts and the activities in the General Model supplement each other.

The Model can easily be applied in other regional consultative processes. Evidence suggests that the engagement of external partners – typically IOs – can (often) facilitate the process. The Model has already relatively easily, within a reasonable timeframe (one year) and with modest resources created some promising results in relation to enhancing national structures (test countries have initially been Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine), revitalizing the regional cooperation and dialogue and by starting a Data Sharing Mechanism where all the EECA States are invited to take part (hosted in IOM TCC).

For further information about the "General Model", reference is made to the project proposal "CREATION OF A GENERAL MODEL FOR THE COLLECTION, APPLICATION AND SHARING OF MIGRATION-RELATED DATA" *and to TCC Coordinator Mr. Claus Folden, email: cfolden@iom.int*