

Preliminary results of the GMFD PfP *Informal Inquiry on Migration Profiles and Extended Migration Profiles*

Migration profiles have been established as an important tool to provide an overview on a country's migratory situation. More than 100 migration profiles have been prepared to date, ranging from statistical snapshots to more analytical reports often involving consultations among government officials and other stakeholders and more rarely including assessments on the impact of migration on development. Introduced by the European Commission in 2005 in response to the lack of evidence, the extent to which migration profiles have evolved over time into a sustainable tool contributing to greater policy coherence and more evidence-based policy making, has not yet been analysed.

The Platform for Partnerships (PfP) Call for Action "*Informal Inquiry on Migration Profiles and Extended Migration Profiles*" was launched at the GFMD 2012 Summit Working Session on the PfP held on 22 November 2012, endorsed by the Governments of Morocco and Switzerland, as Co-chairs of the ad hoc WG on Policy Coherence, Data and Research. The GFMD Support Unit disseminated the call for action by email to the GFMD focal points and is available on the GFMD website. The Informal Inquiry presents the first significant attempt to assess the impact and the use of migration profiles. The main aim of this survey is to identify elements for a more sophisticated and better utilised migration profile tool in the future and to learn more about the extent to which migration profiles have developed into a sustainable policy tool contributing to greater policy coherence and the mainstreaming of migration into development plans. So far out of 30 responses, only 15 completed questionnaires have been received and hence this analysis should be considered as preliminary only. ***However, these initial results already indicate the need for a more detailed, qualitative analysis of the impact of past MP exercises. A more in-depth evaluation on all different processes implemented worldwide would provide critical input for future MP projects.***

National Ownership of the exercise and MP report

The creation of a migration profiles should by definition¹ be the result of a government-led process to gather and analyse data on migration which can be used to support policy making and enhance policy coherence. Confirming this definition, the large majority of survey respondents indicated that the government was involved in the migration profile process (46% stated that government officials co-drafted the report, in 38% out of those cases the migration profile was requested by the government, and in 38% of cases the government appointed a national focal point). In addition, the migration profile process was funded/co-funded by the national government in 73% of cases. The

¹ There are many different types of Migration Profiles and a lack of a common understanding of what is a Migration Profile. According to the GFMD website, migration profiles are "frameworks for aggregating, in a structured and systematic manner, existing data and information from international, national and regional sources to support government policies on migration and development and improve policy coherence" (GFMD: Migration profiles: concept and methodology, <http://www.gfmd.org/en/pfp/policy-tools/migration-profiles/concept-and-methodology> (viewed on 03/04/2014)).

results also show that the international agencies have a strong role in the process since the large majority of migration profiles were developed in partnership with an international agency.

National experiences showcased at 2011 GFMD dedicated Workshops on Migration Profiles in New York, Batumi and Manila confirmed that the establishment of a technical or inter-ministerial working group was considered as crucial for the success of the migration profile process.² According to the preliminary results of this survey, in 77% of cases a technical working group was established during the migration profile process. In half of the cases, such a working group continued to function after the completion of the migration profile and serves as a national coordination mechanism on migration issues. Respondents also underlined ***the establishment of a technical working group or an inter-institutional platform as a good practice***, in particular when the working group continues to function after the completion of the profile and is responsible for updating the migration profile.

However, a high number of ***requests for clarifications on the definition of a migration profile*** and statements indicating that the respective government does not have or does not know about the existence of a migration profile were received. This might indicate either that not all relevant counterparts within the governments were included in the migration profile process or that the exercise, combined with a lack of institutional memory, does not translate into a sustainable migration policy tool.

Sustainability of the process

Strong national ownership is crucial to promote the sustainability of a MP process. According to the survey results, the migration profile ***report was being used in the majority of countries, mainly by the government***. However, the migration profile report was not being used at all in one third of the cases. The stated reasons were that a regular update is missing and that the migration profile report contained information which was not relevant for national readers as the information can be found elsewhere. While 62% were aware of planned or implemented concrete follow-up activities related to the migration profile process, 38% stated that no follow-up is planned or implemented. Concrete follow-up activities include the creation of a national database; the usage of the migration profile report as impact evaluation tool (for the national migration, asylum or refugee programme and changes in legislation) and new data collection procedures.

The relatively high share of countries where the migration profile is either not used or no follow up is planned might point to the ***lack of national ownership and involvement which may have led to a lack of practical relevance of the report***. Respondents stated that a ***regular update of the report is crucial*** as migration is a dynamic, continuously changing phenomenon. It was also suggested that the development of a migration profile should also include the development of an operational

² GFMD (2011): Summary Report for the GFMD. Migration and Development Seminar Series. Workshop on Migration Profiles: Lessons Learned, available at: http://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd_swiss11_mp_summary_report.pdf (viewed on 03/04/2014), GFMD (2011): Workshop on Migration Profiles: Developing Evidence-Based Migration and Development Policies, available at: http://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd_swiss11_batumi_summary_report.pdf (viewed on 03/04/2014).

guide for monitoring migration trends to facilitate the update of the migration profile report. Moreover, it was suggested that the migration profile process should be embedded in a larger programme, such as the development of a national migration policy or programmes. This was only the case for half of the countries evaluated in this survey.

Linking Migration Profile and Policy Making Processes

The majority of survey respondents agreed that the migration profile process was useful for policy makers for the following purposes: a) obtain evidence required for policy development and fill major data gaps, b) understand linkages between migration and development, c) promote data sharing within the country and d) improve some other aspects of migration management. However, one third replied that the answer option “obtain evidence required for policy development” was not considered applicable for evaluating the relevance of the migration profile process. This suggests that the relation between developing a MP report and the promotion of more evidence-based policy making is not clearly established and that the content of a country report may not always reflect the needs of policy makers. To address this challenge, the Migration Profile Manual “*Making the Most of the Process*” provides step-by-step guidance for government officials and project managers on how to turn a MP exercise into a practical policy-making tool and how to make the process sustainable over time.³ Survey respondents indicated that a ***more analytical approach would be needed in order to increase the relevance of a migration profile report for a country.*** The inclusion of qualitative research and an analysis of the data and information collected were suggested to make migration profiles more relevant for informing policy development processes.

The results also suggested that usually governments were not supported sufficiently in translating MP findings into the formulation of migration programmes and policies. International organisations have identified this as one of the biggest challenges and highlighted that the ***migration profile has to be embedded in a process where findings are integrated into policy-making which does not end with the finalisation of the migration profiles as a product.***⁴ In addition, the migration profile process may identify critical capacity gaps which can be addressed during or after the finalisation of the migration profile report. However, half of the survey respondents indicated that a capacity building component was not included in the process.

It was also mentioned that the ***migration profile results should be shared more consistently and broadly with other countries.*** Hence, migration profiles can allow for better knowledge and a common language in regional settings, such as inter-governmental migration dialogues or regional consultative processes. For instance, UNICEF and UN/DESA prepared a common set of indicators

³ IOM (2011): Making the Most of the Process, available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#) online at: <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/what-we-do/migration-policy-and-research/migration-research-1/migration-profiles.html> (viewed on 17/04/2014).

⁴ EUROMED (2013): EUROMED Migration III. Migration Profile Process, available at: http://www.euromed-migration.eu/uploads/tx_euromedhelper/130819_MPP_process_outline_EN_FIN.pdf (viewed on 03/04/2014), IOM (2011): Migration Profiles: Addressing Key Challenges for the Future, available at: http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/IOM_MP_keychallenges_Nov_2011_final.pdf (viewed on 06/05/2014).

for almost all countries worldwide with the aim to facilitate international comparisons and to allow policymakers to understand key differences between countries relating to population, international migration, remittances and development.⁵ The preparation of “light” migration profiles for the 50 participating states in the Prague Process follows a similar objective.⁶ More importantly, however, ***data needs to be complementary and comparable across national institutions to inform decision-making at policy level*** as stated by survey respondents. The migration profile concept can help in harmonising data collection and interpretation, finding a common language and promoting inter-institutional dialogue at both national and regional levels.

Conclusion

The preliminary results show a lack of common understanding of migration profiles, such as what they can entail and how they differ. They also suggest that the link between a migration profile exercise and the national policy-making process is not clearly established. Although the migration profile exercise in itself can be policy-relevant, for example by bringing different stakeholders together, migration profile reports are not yet seen by all respondents as an important tool to obtain evidence for policy making. The lack of planned follow-up activities also suggests that migration profiles are not yet well embedded in a national process or a larger programme. However, the results also show that migration profiles exercises have been widely appreciated because they often represent the first attempt to gather and improve existing migration data, and to initiate and promote a national dialogue and cooperation on migration. Migration profiles have the potential of becoming an extremely useful policy tool if sufficient time and resources are allocated.

⁵ The common set of indicators, produced in partnership between UNICEF and UN/DESA with inputs from the GMG, is designed to allow countries preparing Migration Profiles to have at their disposal relevant data relating to international migration, population and development for their particular country, available at <http://www.pmigdev.org/MPCSI.htm> (viewed on 03/04/2014).

⁶ The Migration profile light aims to lead to mutual understanding of the migration situation in partner states, existing migratory flows, priorities, problems and interests. Information available at <http://www.pragueprocess.eu/english/knowledge-base/migration-profile-light/> (viewed on 03/04/2014).