

INFORMATION NOTE ON MIGRATION PROFILES

Introduction

The 2009 GFMD in Athens recommended the further development of 'Migration Profiles' as a comprehensive data and information tool for coherent migration and development policy making, and to report on progress at the 2010 GFMD. The Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data and Research held a follow-up seminar in June/July 2010 in Vienna during which interested governments and relevant international bodies identified a number of key issues regarding the purpose, process and advantages of preparing Migration Profiles. The Working Group was requested, *inter alia*, to support efforts in developing guidelines for the elaboration of Migration Profiles and to ensure that interested governments and organisations can report on progress at the 2010 GFMD meeting in Mexico.¹ The main purpose of this note is to briefly explain what a country migration profile is, and how this instrument can be applied more systematically in the future in those countries interested in using this tool.

Objectives of Migration Profiles

Since 2006, more than 70 country-Migration Profiles have been implemented, in both developing and developed countries, and Migration Profiles have continued to attract widespread government attention since the GFMD meeting in 2009.

The migration profile concept has evolved from being initially a short statistical report, into a more elaborate process and tool to promote policy coherence, and an evidence-based approach to policy-making, involving a range of different stakeholders ranging from government ministries, civil society actors and international organizations.

The paper explains the process of preparing a Migration Profile and the ways in which the migration profile can be a country-owned tool to enhance coherence between migration and development policies.

What is a Migration Profile?

Data on migration are often scattered between different ministries, and also between countries of origin and destination, making it sometimes difficult to develop a coherent policy approach to migration and development. **Migration Profiles provide a framework for bringing together, in a structured manner, existing information from different sources, and offer a comprehensive tool to identify and develop strategies to address data and policy development needs.**

Migration Profiles were first proposed as a tool by the European Commission in annex 8 to the EC 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.*"²

¹ The issue of Migration Profiles will be addressed in the context of the Roundtable Session 3.1 on 'Assessing the impact of migration on economic and social development, and addressing its cause-effect relationship. Migration Profiles will also be discussed in the working session on the Platform for Partnerships (PfP).

² 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.

Originally Migration Profiles were conceived as an instrument to gather and provide concise information in a standardized form, which would make the migratory picture of the country clear at one glance. More recently, there has been a move away from preparing short statistical reports towards preparing what is now called “Extended Migration Profiles”. The difference lies in **methodology, consultation, and ownership**.

Extended Migration Profiles tend to **cover a wider range of issues** relevant to migration and development, such as labour market conditions, income levels, human development indicators, migrants’ access to rights, “brain drain”, health, diasporas, education, trade and other factors related to the impact of migration on the development of the concerned countries. A key tool to facilitate the compiling of a MP report is a standardized template. Whilst the template should adhere to internationally accepted definitions and terminology, it should be considered a **flexible information tool** which should be tailored to the priorities of the country concerned.

A further distinctive feature of Extended Migration Profiles is the emphasis on establishing a **consultative process**. The migration profile is prepared in full consultation with a wide range of actors and stakeholders inside and outside of government. The technical working groups and other consultation mechanisms set up to oversee the migration profile process not only facilitate, but also **foster coordination and policy coherence** between migration and development actors 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.

Migration Profiles are **owned by governments** and it is they who define the priorities, objectives and scope (template) of a country profile. International agencies support the process.

Migration Profiles **serve both the countries of origin and the receiving countries**. For countries of origin Extended Migration Profiles can be beneficial as it allows them to have more substantial information about migration phenomena and also about the development and other impacts migration (policy) has on their country, including on their labour markets. Very often such data are not available to countries of origin since such information exists in the receiving countries only. In the mid- to long-term, receiving countries are interested in knowing more about migrant pools in source countries, and Extended Migration Profiles could thus help better organize labour migration, both in terms of skill pools, but also brain-drain prevention. Receiving countries should also be attentive to brain-waste (over-skilling) issues, which can be attenuated by informed policy decisions. Labour matching is thus a key element here.

Migration Profiles - A sustained process of activity

Migration Profiles reports should be regularly updated. The elaboration of migration profiles is a sustained process of activity that assesses the present and longer-term impact of migration on development. The frequency of updates depends on available budgets and resources. In some cases there will be a need for **capacity building** so that the necessary data and analysis for the report can be maintained and improved. The updates should also **reflect policy changes** that take into account the findings and recommendations of the initial report. In order to render Migration Profiles efficient as a policy tool, they therefore need to be updated on a regular basis, e.g. every second or third year. The Migration Profile is a dynamic tool which should be regarded as a process through which governments can improve coherence between migration and development policies, and make these policies more effective on the basis of improved data and evidence.

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(Drafted by IOM in conjunction with the Working Group coordinator)