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The MGI aims to support well-managed migration policy by helping countries assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures and identify priorities on the way forward.

The MGI can be used to spark a discussion within governments, with other relevant stakeholders in the country, on their migration policy structures. It can help assess whether these structures, which have often been in place for several years, still address the main challenges and opportunities of today’s reality.
INTRODUCTION
This is an era of unprecedented mobility, and the need to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility is becoming increasingly relevant. The need to face the challenges and to maximize the opportunities that this mobility brings has been recognized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and development. Migration is integrated in a number of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, such as ending modern slavery and addressing the vulnerability of migrant workers. However, the central reference to migration in the SDGs is Target 10.7 on facilitating “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”.

The incorporation of Target 10.7 into the 2030 Agenda created the need to define “planned and well-managed migration policies”. This is why, in 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). This Framework offers a concise view of an ideal approach that allows a State to determine what it might need to govern migration well and in a way that suits its circumstances. The Framework was welcomed by IOM member States in the same year.

In an effort to operationalize the MiGOF, IOM worked with The Economist Intelligence Unit to develop the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI), a standard set of approximately 90 indicators to assist countries in assessing their migration policies and advance the conversation on what well-governed migration might look like in practice.

The MGI helps countries identify good practices as well as areas with potential for further development and can offer insights on the policy levers that countries can use to develop their migration governance structures. However, the MGI recognizes that all countries have different realities, challenges and opportunities that relate to migration. Therefore, the MGI does not rank countries on the design or implementation of their migration policies. Finally, the MGI does not measure migration policy outcomes or institutional effectiveness. Instead, it takes stock of the migration-related policies in place and operates as a benchmarking framework that offers insights on policy measures that countries might want to consider as they progress towards good migration governance.

This country profile presents a summary of the well-developed areas of the migration governance structures of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (hereinafter referred to as Timor-Leste), as well as the areas with potential for further development, as assessed by the MGI.

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1 IOM Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, seventeenth session (S/17/4 of 29 September 2015), article 2.
3 Ibid.
4 The MGI initiative is a policy-benchmarking programme led by IOM and implemented with the support of the Economist Intelligence Unit. Funding is provided by IOM’s Member States.
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

MiGOF

The IOM MiGOF sets out the essential elements to support planned and well-managed migration. It seeks to present, in a consolidated, coherent and comprehensive way, a set of three principles and three objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, orderly, and benefits migrants and society.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Adherence** to international standards and fulfillment of migrants’ rights.
2. **Formulates** policy using evidence and “whole-of-government” approach.
3. **Engages** with partners to address migration and related issues.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Advance** the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society.
2. **Effectively** address the mobility dimensions of crises.
3. **Ensure** that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

MGI

**WHAT IT IS**

- A set of indicators that offers insights on policy levers that countries can use to strengthen their migration governance structures.
- A tool that identifies good practices and areas that could be further developed.
- A consultative process that advances dialogues on migration governance by clarifying what “well-governed migration” might look like in the context of SDG Target 10.7.

**WHAT IT IS NOT**

- Not a ranking of countries
- Not assessing impacts of policies
- Not prescriptive

TARGET 10.7

“Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”
KEY FINDINGS
The MGI is composed of around 90 indicators grouped under the 6 different dimensions of migration governance that draw upon the MiGOF categories:

**Migrants’ Rights**
Indicators in this domain look at the extent to which migrants have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. It also looks at family reunification, access to work, and access to residency and citizenship. The international conventions signed and ratified are also included.

**Whole-of-Government Approach**
Indicators in this area assess countries’ institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks related to migration policies. This area also looks at the existence of national migration strategies that are in line with development objectives and overseas development efforts, as well as institutional transparency and coherence in relation to migration management.

**Partnerships**
This category focuses on countries’ efforts to cooperate on migration-related issues with other States and with relevant non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations and the private sector.

**Well-being of Migrants**
Indicators in this area assess countries’ policies regarding the recognition of migrants’ educational and professional qualifications, provisions regulating student migration and the existence of bilateral labour agreements between countries. Aspects of diaspora engagement in the country of origin and migrant remittances are also under this domain.

**Mobility Dimension of Crises**
This category looks at the type and level of preparedness of countries when they are faced with mobility dimensions of crises. The questions look at the processes in place for nationals and non-nationals both during and after disasters, including if humanitarian assistance is equally available to migrants as it is to citizens.

**Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**
This area looks at countries’ approach to migration management in terms of border control and enforcement policies, admission criteria for migrants, preparedness and resilience in the case of significant and unexpected migration flows, as well as the fight against trafficking in persons.
1.2. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Timorese citizens living abroad can exercise their right to vote in national, parliamentary and presidential elections, provided they are officially registered as voters and are in possession of a valid voter card as well as a valid passport. For the 2018 Parliamentary elections, vote centres were operational in Portugal, Australia, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea.

Access to education is restricted according to legal status but is generally available to immigrants. In order to obtain access to education, a migrant’s family must submit a request to the Ministry of Education which is then passed on to the Immigration Service. Authorisation is given on a case-by-case basis, but it is commonly granted. Access to vocational training is granted to all, with no discrimination based on nationality.

The Immigration and Asylum Law (No. 11/2017) provides for family reunification for family members of citizens, resident permit holders and refugees and does not apply to foreigners already in the country on another visa.

Access to the Universal Social Pension (SAII programme – Law No. 19/2008), which grants a pension to all Timorese above the age of 60 and to individuals above 18 with a disability, is restricted to nationals. Foreign workers contributing to the recently created social security scheme – the General Social Security Scheme (Law No. 12/2016), which provides unemployment benefits – have access to the same rights and benefits as nationals under that scheme.

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1 Vote centres must be located in the same country as the vote registration centre (generally, in consulates or embassies) and have more than 50 registered voters.
1.3. Areas with potential for further development

To access the labour market, migrants require a working visa or a residency permit. The Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment (SEPFOPE) periodically issues a list of occupations (mainly low skilled) that foreigners are not permitted to enter. Foreign workers may require additional authorization to change employer.

The Law on Immigration and Asylum (No. 11/2017) states that asylum seekers have immediate access to social protection and benefits. This law is not yet fully implemented.

There is no policy or strategy against hate crimes, violence, xenophobia and discrimination against migrants; nor does the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030 mention the issue. The country ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
2.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Immigration Service, under the Ministry of Interior, is the agency responsible for the design and coordination of immigration policy. The Ministry of Justice oversees actions against human trafficking.

On 19 May 2017, the Law on Migration and Asylum (No. 11/2017), the key domestic legislation governing immigration, was promulgated by the President of the Republic, following parliamentary approval. The law outlines the rights and obligations of immigrants; the process and conditions for obtaining different categories of visas, special stay authorization and residency, including conditions upon which these can be revoked; and provisions regarding family reunification as well as penalties that can be incurred. Moreover, the Law on Migration and Asylum regulates the conditions for refugee status determination and states the disposition against those who support irregular migration, the employment of irregular immigrants and marriages of convenience.

Efforts to improve coordination and collaboration between the Immigration Service and decentralized levels of government occur frequently in a non-formalized manner. Collaboration with decentralized levels of government (for instance, municipal authorities) mainly relates to the expansion of the Immigration Service’s activities in the regions, such as the development of new structures and buildings. The municipal police forces provide support for the identification of foreigners living in the territory and for assessing the legality of their stay (as stipulated in the Law on Migration and Asylum).

2.2. Areas with potential for further development

There is no legal framework specifically addressing emigration and no dedicated government entity or agency responsible for enacting emigration policy and diaspora activities. The SEPFOPE has a dedicated department – the Department of Overseas Employment – which facilitates and coordinates the administration of the workers’ programmes with the Republic of Korea (the Employment Permit System [EPS]) and Australia (the Pacific Labour Scheme) by providing support in language examinations and purchase of flight tickets, among other ways. Further support is provided by the labour attachés at Timor-Leste embassies in the Republic of Korea and Australia.

Few sources of migration data exist in Timor-Leste, and they are scattered among various institutions, and in some cases not regularly updated. The National Directorate of Statistics under the Ministry of Finance produces quarterly statistical indicators that include, among other data, the number of foreign arrivals at Dili Airport, disaggregated by country of origin. The Immigration Service publishes data in its annual reports on the entry and exit of foreigners, disaggregated by country of origin, month, type of visa and gender. The SEPFOPE produces the “Labour Market Outlook” with information regarding labour migration.

There is no formally accepted national migration strategy. The Immigration Service has developed a strategic document regarding migration: Transformation and Modernization 2016–2020. The plan is composed of the following pillars: border management, operational issues, administration, logistics, and training and legislation. The document has been approved internally within the Ministry of Interior but has not been submitted to the Council of Ministers as of July 2019.
3.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Timor-Leste is a member of several regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs), including the Inter-governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC). The APC was established in 1996 to provide a forum for the discussion of issues relating to population movements, including refugees, displaced or trafficked persons and migrants. The country is also a member of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. As a result of the Bali Process, Timor-Leste concluded a bilateral agreement in 2010 to prevent and combat transnational crime and build collaboration, information sharing and training between the Timorese and Indonesian police forces.

A 2013 memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Timor-Leste and Indonesia reinforced an agreement made in 2003 relating to border crossings. Furthermore, there is a trilateral agreement concerning maritime borders and security in effect between Australia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste.6

Timor-Leste has signed other MoUs: one with the Republic of Korea in 2012, and one with Australia in 2011. Both MoUs concern overseas work programmes, whereby Timorese citizens have the possibility to work in those countries for a fixed amount of time, generally in low-skilled sectors such as horticulture, tourism and fisheries.

Timor-Leste engages in bilateral consultations on migration-related issues. In 2018, the country was invited to join Australia’s Pacific Labour Scheme, building on the success of Australia’s Seasonal Worker Programme, which targeted mainly Pacific Island communities to enhance employment opportunities for low-skilled, unemployed workers, and to satisfy demand in the horticulture and tourism sectors. Additionally, bilateral discussions for visa exemptions for diplomatic and official passports are under way with Cabo Verde, the Republic of Cuba, the People’s Republic of China and the Kingdoms of Cambodia and Thailand.

The nature of government engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs) is primarily consultative; CSO technical opinions are sought on policy matters and legislation as well as for information sharing. The Government engages with CSOs to a lesser extent on policy implementation. The Inter-Agency Counter-Human Trafficking Working Group (HTWG) was created within the National Action Plan (NAP) against Human Trafficking. It is co-led by the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Prime Minister, and is composed of several government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations. The HTWG has allowed NGOs and international organizations to engage more on policy implementation.

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6 The Agreement with Australia was finalized in 2018.
3.2. Areas with potential for further development
Timor-Leste is not yet part of any multilateral labour mobility scheme. The country holds observer status in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and accession negotiations are under way. The country submitted its application for membership in 2011 and has since undertaken preparatory steps.

The Government occasionally engages with the private sector on issues of migration and mostly on a consultative basis. So far, the private sector has been consulted on policy and legislation issues, and efforts have been made to present new legislation to both the private sector and civil society. Diaspora communities are not formally engaged by the Government in agenda setting and policy development regarding migration issues.

Coordination between law enforcement agencies for the identification of human trafficking cases and the protection of victims could be strengthened.

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7 The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. More information available at https://asean.org/.
4.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas
Access to university education is granted to citizens of all nationalities. University fees for international students are approximately twice those charged to Timorese citizens.

Foreign students in Timor-Leste can apply for a work visa and be employed by local companies. In fact, article 76 of the Labour Code (Law No. 4/2012) allows all students to work, with no specification of nationality.

4.2. Areas with potential for further development
No specific mechanisms exist to protect the rights of Timorese nationals working abroad, and the Government of Timor-Leste operates on an ad hoc basis in this regard. Unless migrants file a complaint with the relevant diplomatic body, there is no system in place to ensure that their rights are protected. Once a complaint is filed, Timorese authorities will take the necessary steps to protect the nationals concerned.

There are no systematic assessments of the demand for foreign labour. The SEPOPE produces the Enterprise and Skills Survey (ESS), the most recent published in 2014, which identifies foreigners’ occupations in Timor-Leste. These data are used as a proxy to determine skills gaps in the national workforce. The information is disaggregated into eight occupational categories and has not been updated since 2014. The SEPOPE also produces the Labour Market Outlook (LMO), which presents data on foreigners’ occupations by country of origin.

The Labour Code (Law No. 4/2012) prohibits any type of gender-based and race-/colour-based discrimination in the workforce. There is no active policy or strategy that aims at ensuring gender equality for migrants, nor gender equality at large, in the labour force.

The country has no mechanisms in place to attract specific labour skills or to account for labour migrants’ skills and capabilities when deciding whether to admit them.

The process for recognizing a foreign degree is ad hoc; the Ministry of Higher Education conducts research on the institution that released the certificate and on the curriculum of the degree then makes a determination.

No specific legislation or policy has been developed to ensure ethical recruitment of immigrants.

There is no strategy to actively improve and facilitate the sending of remittances to and from Timor-Leste. So far, the Government of Timor-Leste has mainly been involved in monitoring remittance flows (inwards and outwards). Money transfer operators as well as commercial banks are required to submit quarterly reports on remittances to the Government.

The main strategic document regarding financial inclusion in the country is the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (2017–22), Migration issues or migrants’ financial inclusion do not feature explicitly as part of its action points and objectives.
5.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas
Timor-Leste has developed contingency plans to address the effects of displacement. The latest national recovery strategy, “Hamutuk Hari’i Futuru” A National Recovery Strategy (2007), was created to address the internally displaced persons (IDPs) crisis following the violence stemming from the political crisis in 2006. Its objectives include providing a variety of viable options for IDPs that allow for their return or resettlement, ensuring food security, and promoting the creation of livelihood opportunities. In addition, in 2006–07, the country approved three contingency plans, which have not been updated since: The National Disaster Contingency Plan for Conflict (addressing aspects of displacement); the National Disaster Contingency Plan for Floods; and the National Disaster Contingency Plan for Droughts.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation keeps records of nationals living abroad through its embassies and consulates around the world. Emigration data collection usually takes place at least every five years but can be more often than that; for instance, if elections occur and Timorese nationals submit their registration to the Timorese diplomatic representations in order to vote.

The most relevant ministerial departments for assisting nationals living abroad in times of crises are the National Directorate for Consular Issues and the National Directorate for Timorese Communities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation). According to the foundational law of the Ministry, the directorates coordinate and implement policies that support Timorese communities abroad, ensuring consular support to Timorese citizens abroad in emergency situations, including in cases of repatriation and evacuation, and providing them with protection and assistance.

The Law on Migration and Asylum recognizes the possibility of granting temporary residency to foreigners in “exceptional cases”, including instances of recognized national interest or humanitarian issues.

5.2. Areas with potential for further development
The relevant strategy to deal with crisis management is the National Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Policy, developed in 2008 for the period 2008–12, by the Ministry of Social Solidarity. The DRM policy has been reviewed and submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval but has not been implemented as of July 2019. The 2008 Policy makes no reference to specific provisions for assistance to migrants. In times of crisis, assistance is offered to all individuals with no discrimination on the basis of the country of origin.

There are no strategies in place for addressing migratory movements caused by environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change. The National Disaster Risk Management Policy recognizes the risk of climate change, especially given the geographical characteristics of Timor-Leste. There is no mention of measures to address migratory movements following environmental degradation and climate change. The reviewed DRM policy aims to address these issues.

There is no formal communication system during crises in Timor-Leste. Rather, public media channels remain the principal means for individuals to obtain information about the evolution of crises. The public media communicates only in Timor-Leste’s official languages (Tetum and Portuguese).

The National Development Plan (2011–30) makes no mention of displacement issues or reintegration of returning migrants. It states that, following the political crisis of 2006, most IDPs have now returned to their homes and communities, camps have been closed and payments to displaced people and petitioners have been disbursed.
6.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Agencies under the Ministry of Defence and Security are tasked with ensuring border security and control. The Maritime Patrol Unit patrols the maritime borders while the Border Patrol Unit patrols the land border with the Republic of Indonesia. Under the Ministry of Interior, the Immigration Service handles the official ports of entry and exit. Training of border staff occurs on an ad hoc basis. They are funded by donors or NGOs and usually focus on language courses, the detection of false documents and human trafficking.

Timor-Leste participates in discussion forums on countering smuggling and trafficking in persons and has engaged with other countries, although there are no formal agreements in place. Specifically, Timor-Leste is a member of the Bali Process, an RCP established in 2002 at the Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, to address practical issues related to smuggling, trafficking and related transnational crime.

6.2. Areas with potential for further development

The National Action Plan (NAP) against Human Trafficking was established by government institutions and partners to combat human trafficking through prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships. It operated over a three-year period (2016–18). The Ministry of Justice was the coordinator of NAP policy and strategic actions. Implementation partners included the wider government, NGOs and international organisations. The NAP allowed for the establishment of the Inter-Agency Counter-Human Trafficking Working Group (HTWG) to improve coordination towards the achievement of its four goals. The HTWG provided important inputs for the draft Human Trafficking Law (No. 3/2017). A new NAP for 2019 onwards has been drafted but is yet to be finalized.

In 2010, Timor-Leste developed a border management system (BMS) which aims to identify visa overstays and irregular migrants residing in the national territory. The system still needs to be made operational. Currently, visa overstays are identified by Immigration Service officials through their monitoring activities, and when individuals with expired visas address visa extension requests to the Immigration Service desk.

There is no policy or strategy to ensure that migrant detention is used only as a measure of last resort. The Migration and Asylum Law specifies that irregular migrants shall be expelled from the country, and if they remain after being notified of the expulsion decision, they may be detained and presented to a judge.

There are no specific programmes to attract nationals who have migrated abroad; nor are there plans to introduce such initiatives in the near future.

No overall strategy focusing on migrant reintegration exists yet. Yet a recent initiative targeted a specific group of emigrants. In March 2018, a partnership between the Government of Timor-Leste, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Timor-Leste, the Human Resources Development Service of the Republic of Korea (HRD Korea) and the United Nations Development Programme set up a job fair for 30 Timorese returnees from the EPS working programme in the Republic of Korea. The job fair allowed returnees to learn about available employment opportunities. In addition, the SEPFOPE, the General Directorate for Statistics and the Australian Government have initiated a study, to commence in late 2019, focusing on more than 6,000 Timorese labour migrants returning from Australia.

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8 The event was led by a centre for youth innovation, employment and entrepreneurship called Knua Juventude Fila Liman.
Information on counter-trafficking activities by the Government is not available online. Awareness and understanding of the Human Trafficking Law could be increased by making it available online in languages other than Portuguese, such as Tetum, Indonesian and English.

No formal systems for the identification of missing migrants have been developed to date; nor are there plans to develop such a system.
KEY SOURCES
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Office of the Vice Prime-minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

República Democrática de Timor-Leste Provedoria dos Direitus Humanus e Justiça
Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment (SEPFOPE)

UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)

Wigglesworth, A. and Z. Fonseca
ANNEX
In an attempt to define the concept of “well-managed migration policies”, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) devised a Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which was welcomed by the IOM Council in November 2015. For the purposes of the Migration Governance Framework, IOM defines governance as “the traditions and institutions by which authority on migration, mobility and nationality in a country is exercised, including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies in these areas”.

The Framework sets out the essential elements of “good migration governance” – 3 principles and 3 objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, safe and orderly, and that it provides benefits for migrants and societies. IOM’s view is that a migration system promotes migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society:

When it:
   (i) Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants’ rights;
   (ii) Formulates policy using evidence and a “whole-of-government” approach;
   (iii) Engages with partners to address migration and related issues;

As it seeks to:
   (i) Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
   (ii) Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises;
   (iii) Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

The MiGOF does NOT create new standards or norms. In drafting the Framework, IOM relied on its expertise and analytical work, as well as on existing commitments, non-binding declarations and statements. It does NOT address global migration governance that is the international architecture for dealing with issues related to migration and human mobility. Instead, the focus is on the governance and management of migration from the point of view of the State as the primary actor. It does NOT propose one model for all States. The Framework presents a “high road” or ideal version of migration governance, to which States can aspire.

The MiGOF is based on the understanding that, as the primary actor in migration, mobility and nationality affairs, a State retains the sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in its territory and under what conditions, within the framework of international law. Other actors – citizens, migrants, international organizations, the private sector, unions, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, religious organizations and academia – contribute to migration governance through their interaction with States and each other.
The MGI process

1. **Launch of the MGI process**
   The first step of the process is to explain what the MGI entails to key government officials, in order to ensure full understanding of the project and complete buy-in.

2. **Data collection**
   The second step of the process is to start the collection and analysis of data, based on about 90 indicators grounded in the 6 dimensions of the MiGOF. A migration governance profile based on the analysis of the findings is then drafted and shared with the government counterparts.

3. **Interministerial consultation**
   The third step of the process is to convene an interministerial consultation where all relevant ministries and other stakeholders discuss the good practices and main areas that could be developed identified in the draft migration governance profile, as well as priorities on the way forward. It is also an opportunity for them to comment and provide suggestions on the draft profile.

4. **Publication of the report on the Global Migration Data Portal**
   After the migration governance profiles are finalized and vetted by government counterparts, they are published on the Global Migration Data Portal and uploaded on IOM’s Online Bookstore.

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11 You can find the profiles at https://migrationdataportal.org/overviews/mgi/.
12 Please see https://publications.iom.int/.