

USE CASE

E

SOURCES OF OPERATIONAL DATA FROM HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS



POLAND.

Refugees from Ukraine queue outside the national stadium in Warsaw to receive a Polish social security number in 2022.

© UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa

This is Use Case E from the *Compiler's Manual on Forced Displacement Statistics*. The Use Case describes the range of operational data sources from humanitarian organisations that can be used in the production of official statistics on displaced populations.

The *Compiler's Manual* is aimed primarily at technical personnel in National Statistical Systems who want to include displaced populations – refugees and / or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) – in official statistics. Each Use Case discusses a different scenario relevant to producing official statistics on refugees and IDPs, with a focus on the elements of statistical production cycles that are specific to refugee and IDP contexts. Spotlight examples of good practice in the production of refugee and IDP statistics are interwoven throughout the Use Case.

The Compiler's Manual and its individual Use Cases are intended to be a 'living document' which will be amended and extended as the body of expertise and knowledge develops worldwide.

Note: Paragraph numbering is per the complete version of the Compilers Manual.

The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics

The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics is a UN Statistical Commission mandated, multi-stakeholder group that works with National Statistical Offices, international organizations and civil society to develop and support implementation of international standards and guidance to improve official statistics on forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

The Compilers' Manual

The Compilers' Manual offers clear operational instructions on producing official statistics on refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and related populations. It complements the content of the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics and the International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics by providing hands on guidance.

Access the complete version of the Compilers' Manual'

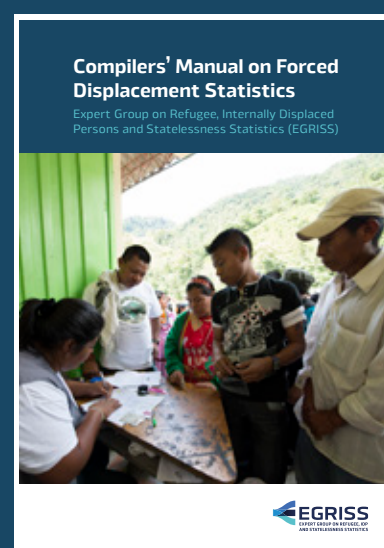


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Operational data – general background

4

I Operational data – general background

- 186.** This section provides a brief overview of major data sources maintained by humanitarian organizations, which may be useful to inform and complement government official statistics on refugees and IDPs.
- 187.** Operational data are produced during regular activities of humanitarian agencies and are often intended primarily for internal or inter-agency use. In some contexts, operational data can be the most reliable and timely statistics available on refugees or IDPs, while in others they can be a valuable source for data linking or for comparison and triangulation with official statistics. It is therefore recommended that government statistical producers keep a good overview of the operational data available in their country.
- 188.** Operational data are often not collected with statistical purposes in mind, so there can be no default expectation that operational data meet the standards set for official statistics. Before any use within the realm of official statistics, they should be carefully assessed using a national or international statistical data assessment tool, such as the UN Statistics Quality Assurance Framework¹, focusing on standardisation, coverage, accuracy and confidentiality. Ultimately, the statistical authority in charge (e.g. NSO, line ministry, specialised statistical unit within NSS) will need to determine the usefulness of operational data for official statistical production. If the integration of operational data into government official statistics is deemed appropriate and feasible then data sharing agreements with humanitarian agencies will be needed.
- 189.** The factors to consider around the use of operational data and possible data linking are identical to those for administrative sources in Use Case D and so are not repeated here. This reflects the fact that many operational data sources are administrative registers in nature. The statistical analysis would necessarily be limited to the geographical and population scope of the relevant humanitarian agency, or could contribute to a fuller picture of stocks and flows provided care is taken to understand and address potential overlap between sources.
- 190.** The following tables provide a brief overview of the different types of operational data sources available, and how they can be accessed.

1 [United Nations National Quality Assurance Frameworks Manual for Official Statistics.](#)

Table E.1: Primary data sources – Administrative registers of individuals or households

Organisation	Data source	Data content	How to access
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	proGres	In many countries where governments have limited capacity to register refugees, the UNHCR collects administrative data on asylum seekers and refugees on behalf of governments. The data can be a key source of both population data (e.g. aggregate numbers, age, sex and disability disaggregation, location) and socio-economic data (e.g. microdata on income, consumption, skills, health status, economic activity) or used to establish a sampling frame for surveys. UNHCR's Population, Registration and Identity Management Eco-System (PRIMES) contains a data tool (proGres) that uses registration data to generate reports, statistics and trends analysis based on global aggregate data.	There is no public access to UNHCR's registration database. Depending on country-level circumstances, data access may be negotiated through a data sharing agreement, which includes clear data protection safeguards consistent with privacy and data protection principles set out in UNHCR's Data Protection policy . ProGres v4 has the functionality to grant access to partners, including host governments.

Table E.2: Primary data sources – Survey data

Organisation	Data source	Data content	How to access
International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), often based on surveys of key informants and/or households.	DTM is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route. The DTM provides mobility tracking (numbers, locations and cross-sectorial needs of observed populations); flow monitoring at key transit points to identify scale and direction of flows and reasons for movement; and surveys to gather specific information through sampling from the population of interest, covering topics such as return intention, displacement solutions, community perception, and other thematic areas.	Data, reports and background information available on DTM's website .
Various humanitarian organizations (including UNHCR, JIPS, etc.)	Various household surveys	Humanitarian organizations carry out a variety of different household surveys.	UNHCR's Microdata Library provides access to microdata from many of the surveys run by the organization and its partners. All listed datasets include comprehensive metadata and supporting documents such as survey questionnaires and analytical reports.

Table E.3: Data Portals for accessing other operational data and secondary analytics

In addition to the online portals already listed in table E.2 for primary data sources (administrative databases and surveys) Table E.3 lists portals that provide additional insights into secondary datasets, aggregate statistics and analytical outputs produced and maintained by humanitarian agencies.

Organisation maintaining the portal	Portal	Data content
UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Common Operational Datasets (CODs)	The CODs are authoritative reference datasets needed to support operations and decision-making for all actors in a humanitarian response. CODs are 'best available' datasets that ensure consistency and simplify the discovery and exchange of key data. CODs include data on administrative boundaries and the names of places, as well as the best available data on the numbers and (where possible) characteristics of displaced people.
UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)	The HDX is a tool for accessing a broad variety of humanitarian datasets. HDX provides access to data from multiple organisations on the numbers and (where possible) characteristics of displaced people, including but not limited to the CODs. It is searchable by location and organisation and includes a visualisation tool. HDX is managed by OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data .
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Refugee Data Finder (RDF)	The refugee data finder website contains information about forcibly displaced populations spanning more than 70 years of statistical activities. It covers displaced populations and their demographics. The database also reflects the different types of solutions for displaced populations such as repatriation or resettlement. It includes data from UNHCR's annual statistical activities, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Operational Data Portal	Inter-agency coordination portal showing operational information about selected current emergencies.
World Bank – UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC)	Literature Review Database	The JDC publishes a monthly literature review update, highlighting recent publications, academic scholarship, and thought leadership on issues related to forced displacement which can be found in the Forced Displacement Literature Review Database.
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)	Global Internal Displacement Database	Aggregates data from multiple sources to publish statistics on stocks and flows of internal displacement. The statistics are based on research, data management, analysis and validation. Where available, it draws on national government data but it also utilises data from many other institutions, in a prioritised list, including local authorities, the UN and other international organisations, civil society organisations, research institutions, national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, the private sector, media and affected populations. It uses new methods of monitoring displacement, including the use of satellite imagery, natural language processing and machine-learning, to identify new incidents of displacement and triangulate data.
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Migration Data Portal	The Portal aims to serve as a unique access point to timely, comprehensive migration statistics and reliable information about migration data globally.