

USE CASE

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## COORDINATING AND PLANNING REFUGEE AND IDP STATISTICS IN NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEMS



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**This is Use Case G from the *Compiler's Manual on Forced Displacement Statistics*. The Use Case describes the key points to consider when coordinating refugee and IDP statistics in national statistical systems.**

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.*

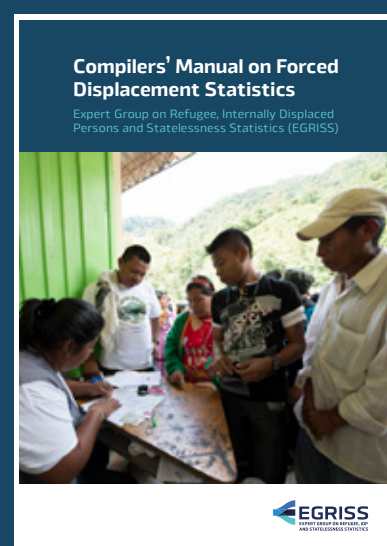
## **The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics**

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'**



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## Coordinating and planning refugee and IDP statistics – general background

**209.** This manual, through the preceding Use Cases, provides guidance for producing statistics on refugees and IDPs within the National Statistical System of a country, and also provides some pointers for potential synergies between “traditional” data sources in official statistics and data sources from humanitarian agencies as well as non-traditional data sources. While each individual source is valuable, greater value can be derived from taking a holistic approach to refugee and IDP statistics across the national statistical system, and coordinating across government and more widely to ensure that the needs of users are understood and met in the fullest way possible.

## Anchoring coordination in relevant statistical planning processes

**210.** In essence, coordinating refugee and IDP statistics is no different from coordinating on any other area of official statistics. It should be conceptualized and anchored within the relevant statistical planning processes in each country, such as sectoral statistical strategies<sup>1</sup> and/or the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS),<sup>2</sup> both of which provide frameworks for assessing data needs, structuring support, enhancing coordination and developing statistical capacity in the national statistical system.

**211.** In practice to date, refugees and IDPs have tended not to be thought of as a statistical sector in their own right, so can be overlooked in such planning processes. Whether a sectoral statistical strategy or an NSDS should be the main tool for coordinating and enhancing official statistics on refugees and IDPs, will depend on circumstances in a given country. In some cases, a combination of both planning tools (or a sequenced approach) may be appropriate, provided overlap can be avoided.

### Coordinating refugee and IDP statistics via an NSDS

**212.** Planning the coordination and enhancement of displacement statistics via a chapter within the NSDS has various advantages over a sectoral statistical strategy. Firstly, one can capitalize on the buy-in and broad-based consultative nature of the wider NSDS process. Secondly, the comprehensive nature of an NSDS does justice to the often cross-cutting nature of refugee and IDP statistical production, which in a national statistical system may draw heavily on broader statistical products such as population censuses and nationwide surveys. An NSDS can be a strong catalyst of national ownership in statistical production, and secure funding at national and international level.

**213.** However, a key drawback of coordinating and planning refugee and IDP statistics via an NSDS is that not all countries have a current NSDS, and even if they do the opportunities for introducing a new sector into the national statistical planning process only occur in rare intervals. The mid-term evaluation or a new phase of the NSDS can be the right moment for integrating a new sector related to refugee and IDP statistics. Integration of refugee and IDP statistics into the NSDS should occur at all stages of the design and implementation phases.

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<sup>1</sup> [Sectoral strategies for the development of statistics](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Guidelines for National Strategy for the Development of Statistics](#)

## Coordinating refugee and IDP statistics via a sectoral statistical strategy

- 214.** Planning the coordination and enhancement of refugee and IDP statistics via a sectoral statistical strategy, either as a sector in their own right or as part of another sector (e.g. migration statistics), also has its advantages. A sectoral statistical strategy may be the instrument of choice where an NSDS is not available or not currently under review, or where the production of refugee and IDP statistics occurs in a smaller set of entities within the National Statistical System that do not usually partake very actively in the wider NSDS process. The stand-alone nature of a sectoral statistical strategy may also be more appropriate where the relevant leads in the National Statistical System wish to engage comprehensively with government-external stakeholders that may not routinely engage in the wider NSDS process (e.g. humanitarian organizations).

## Key steps in coordinating and enhancing refugee and IDP statistics

- 215.** Irrespective of whether the coordination and enhancement of refugee and IDP statistics is anchored and conceptualized in a sectoral statistical strategy or an NSDS, or both, the steps of the planning process are similar. The following discussion offers some pointers that are specific to refugee and IDP statistics along these steps but doesn't intend to provide a comprehensive manual for statistical strategy development<sup>3</sup>.

### Identifying a forum for key stakeholders to discuss displacement statistics

- 216.** A first stage in coordinating refugee and / or IDP statistics is to establish a forum where displacement statistics can be discussed and prioritised actions agreed. While official statistics should be the primary focus in this forum, and its governance and leadership should be government-led, relevant government-external data producers may also be invited to join the forum.
- 217.** In some countries, it will be possible to expand an established forum to include displacement statistics. This may be done through expansion of the scope of a forum for discussing migration statistics, where one exists. If this is the case, the terms of reference of the group can be expanded to include displacement statistics and it is likely to be necessary and appropriate to invite a few new members to the group, to represent the wider displacement statistics community.
- 218.** If there is no existing group that is suitable to cover displacement statistics then it may be necessary to establish a new statistics committee. Sector Statistics Committees (SSC) are responsible for defining and confirming the statistical needs for sectors. A Refugee and IDP Statistics Committee should be constituted by those leading the sector at the request of the NSO, and a sector Coordinator should be designated. All relevant departments, ministries and agencies could be involved, including migration authorities, social development ministries, urban planning authorities, rural development authorities, and the humanitarian sector. Experience shows that five active members are the ideal number for the committee, but the Sector Statistics Committee should involve actors

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**3** [Guidelines for National Strategy for the Development of Statistics](#)

from the wider data ecosystem and goes beyond the traditional boundaries of the NSS, to humanitarian agencies including UNHCR and UN OCHA.

**219.** The responsibilities of the discussion group, whether an existing forum or new committee, would be similar to those of other statistical sectors, including:

- proposing a vision and strategic objectives for refugee and IDP statistics;
- identifying entities currently collecting relevant statistics for refugees and IDPs;
- preparing an inventory of existing current data systems;
- identifying major data needs related to the sector;
- foster institutional partnerships in the statistical sector
- develop and prioritise action plans, including technical but also organisational (HR development, IT strategy) and communications-related actions.

## Understanding users' needs

**220.** There are many potential users of statistics on displaced persons, including governments and national authorities, local authorities, international organisations, civil society, NGOs, researchers/academia, the media and the general public. They have different needs and priorities, requiring statistics for different purposes:

- for administrative purposes,
- for policymaking,
- for monitoring the implementation of policies,
- for evaluating policies,
- to facilitate the allocation of resources,
- to enable regional/international comparison,
- to enable comparisons with the wider population,
- to assess progress towards durable solutions or integration with host communities,
- to inform the general public and enhance public debate.

**221.** It is important to identify the key groups of users to engage in the relevant country context, whose needs will drive the development of these statistics. Some of these groups will already be accessible through existing statistical networks and activities, but others may be new – such as displaced population support groups. Identifying important “needs gaps” requires research, but wider needs assessments undertaken by or on behalf of operational agencies supporting refugees and IDPs can be a rich source of information on the data needs of those supporting the displaced.

**222.** PARIS21 has developed the Advanced Data Planning Tool<sup>4</sup> (ADAPT) for NSOs to adapt their data production processes to meet the data needs of users. It is a consultative tool, which brings data stakeholders together to identify data gaps, and define requirements within an established monitoring indicator framework such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator framework or the basic statistics proposed by the IRIS and IRRS (see also the Sustainable Development Goal indicators website.)

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**4** [Paris21 Advanced Data Planning Tool](#)

- 223.** The results of ADAPT can contribute to the development of statistical plans and processes to strengthen the coordination of statistical planning at the national level. Based on the information provided, the ADAPT tool can produce two main reports on the status of refugee and IDP statistics and identify any data gaps at national level. The first report is able to summarise the status of refugee and IDP statistics in respect of the relevant national requirements, which could be based on the IRRS or IRIS tabulation indicator frameworks, or a national defined requirement. The second report presents the status of refugee and IDP statistics as a general domain of statistical production, considering all indicators that require a relevant disaggregation variable.
- 224.** National collaboration platforms, for example targeted workshops or thematic conferences, and regional fora can be an opportunity to engage with the identified strategic stakeholders and promote the need for refugee and IDP statistics. Connecting the topics with policy priorities at international and national levels can attract the attendance of high-level political representatives and help to gain government support.
- 225.** The tools developed as part of the Grand Bargain<sup>5</sup> work stream on needs assessments provides a useful framework for considering the roles involved in developing useful and useable statistics and includes question prompts for understanding user needs<sup>6</sup>. This is included in Annex 3.

## Identifying existing and potential data sources

- 226.** It is unlikely that any individual team or organization has a complete understanding of data production on refugees and IDPs, either within the NSS or more widely across international partners. As such, a comprehensive mapping of the existing and potential sources that might contribute data on displaced populations, and their strengths and weaknesses, is essential. It will require input from a range of groups and can be one of the first key tasks of the discussion forum. It may also suggest previously unidentified organisations that should be invited to join the discussion forum.
- 227.** As part of this exercise, it is important to establish what relevant questions are already asked in official statistics surveys; what data on displaced populations could be available from administrative sources, operational data and new technologies; and where possible (although not essential at this stage) the legal basis for sharing any of these data. Use Cases D, E and F in this manual can support this exercise, providing information on possible sources of administrative data, operational data and non-traditional data respectively.
- 228.** Table G.1 provides a very high-level guide to the different categories of data source that can be used to produce statistics on displaced populations, the key things to consider around each source and which Use Case to refer to for further information. Ideally this manual would provide comprehensive guidance on which source is optimal for producing different types of statistics but in practice this varies depending on the country context and the existing statistical landscape.

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**5** The Grand Bargain was launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016 and is an agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organisations who have committed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

**6** The tools are available on the [website for Workstream 5](#)

**Table G.1: Guide to the different categories of data source that can be used to produce statistics on displaced populations**

Source	Use Case	What the source can provide	Key considerations
Census	A	<p>Accurate statistics on stocks of refugees and IDPs, analysis of their characteristics, some socioeconomic indicators and comparisons with the wider population. Census data can help understand flows, through collecting data about a person's previous locations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides the benchmark of the whole resident population so it is important that displaced people are included in census data collection.</li> <li>- The infrequency of censuses and the time lag before data become available can impact on the relevance of the data but can be used to compare with and adjust other more frequent data sources.</li> <li>- Good coverage of displaced people in the census increases its value as a sampling frame for subsequent household surveys.</li> <li>- Competing priorities for space in the census questionnaire can make it challenging to include all the relevant questions necessary for accurate identification of displaced populations</li> </ul>
Existing general household survey	B, C	<p>Important data source for measuring the characteristics and living conditions of displaced populations and socioeconomic indicators.</p> <p>Unlikely to be a primary means of measuring stocks, unless good coverage can be achieved, but may be suited as a source to validate or update stock estimates from other sources. Will not capture flows effectively.</p> <p>Examples include labour force surveys, demographic and health surveys, multiple indicator cluster surveys, integrated living conditions surveys, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relatively low cost to include displaced populations in pre-existing statistical landscape.</li> <li>- Captures equivalent measures for displaced population, ensuring comparability with other groups in the wider population.</li> <li>- Need to ensure the sample frame provides good coverage of displaced populations.</li> <li>- Can be logistically challenging to adapt existing surveys to reach displaced populations effectively.</li> <li>- Displaced populations are usually a small proportion of overall population, so oversampling of the displaced population may be required to support the desired level of analysis.</li> </ul>
Specific refugee or IDP survey	B, C	<p>Detailed coverage of relevant socio-economic indicators to assess needs, integration and progress. potential to collect broader and deeper information</p>	<p>A dedicated survey provides the opportunity to collect broader and deeper information, capturing topics that meet users' needs and are most relevant to displaced populations.</p> <p>Survey can be designed to meet the challenges of identifying and reaching displaced populations, ensuring accurate coverage.</p> <p>Relatively high costs associated with running a dedicated survey, especially if repeating the survey to monitor changes over time.</p>

Government administrative data	D	Potential source of information for measuring both the stock of displaced populations and the flows, showing the direction of displacement trends, and potentially for developing sampling frames. Can contribute to socioeconomic indicators, for example through employment, education and health registers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administrative data can be more timely than other sources.</li> <li>- Data linking (across administrative sources or with surveys or census) increases the potential value of administrative data, enabling them to become part of a rich source of regular official statistics.</li> <li>- Administrative registers may not include displaced populations (particularly refugees) or will often fail to identify them effectively (including IDPs, unless there are IDP-specific registers) without adjustments to the registers, so good dialogue with data owners is essential.</li> <li>- Usually have to use existing systems that have not been designed with statistics in mind, so quality can be a concern. Setting up new systems is expensive.</li> <li>- Unlikely to provide indicators of needs or progress towards durable solutions.</li> </ul>
Operational data	E	Stocks and flows and potentially socioeconomic indicators such as employment, education, health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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.</li> <li>- Operational data are produced during regular activities of humanitarian agencies and are often intended primarily for internal or inter-agency use. Not designed for use as official statistics, so data quality needs to be carefully evaluated and may mean that the sources are not suitable to be used.</li> </ul>
Non-traditional data sources	F	Indicators that support understanding of stocks or flows or that aid effective sampling and enumeration for surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can fill gaps in understanding and provide creative solutions to statistical challenges, for example to help understand rapid changes after large disruptive events.</li> <li>- Unlikely to be a source of regular, accurate official statistics in their own right.</li> <li>- Data quality and completeness can be unknown.</li> <li>- Data are often owned by private companies and their use depends on negotiating access, potentially with a cost attached.</li> </ul>

## Developing and prioritizing action plans to improve data availability

**229.** The production of refugee and IDP statistics often requires the combination of data from several data producers within the national statistical system, including line ministries, government departments and agencies, and civil society. National statistical systems differ in their level of centralization and the effort needed to foster consultation and collaboration between statistical producers varies accordingly but it is important that the statistical programme of work is developed jointly by the statistical producers.

**230.** The Use Cases in this manual provide guidance on improving the availability of statistics on displaced populations through census, surveys, administrative data, operational data from international organisations and non-traditional data sources. Other points to note include:

- Identify opportunities to co-ordinate and harmonise the approach to refugees and IDPs across existing NSO-led household surveys, and census.
- Establish the legal framework for accessing other data sources and where appropriate engage owners of data sources that are potentially useful (administrative / operational / academic / other data) – for data access, and potentially to propose improvements to make the sources more useful in future.
- Consider partnerships with non-traditional data sources such as data science firms, telecommunication companies, and other service providers to share data and/or help develop applications to extract data.
- Develop a business case, if required, for new data sources.

## Disseminating statistics and seeking feedback

**231.** The key objective of coordinating refugee and IDP statistics is to improve the availability of statistics to meet user needs – and this can only be achieved fully through the dissemination of statistics. As set out in the Use Cases in this manual, it is important to ensure that displaced populations are represented in standard disaggregations, produce thematic reports and visualisations and engage users to seek feedback.

**232.** It is also worth noting that dissemination involves both publishing statistics and the promotion of the statistical products to help them reach the widest possible audience, for example through social media and attending relevant conferences and public debates. There are many sources of information<sup>7</sup> to support effective dissemination of statistics.

**233.** It is important to consider how statistics can be shared with the refugee communities themselves. This feedback loop is significant: as well as meeting the needs of a key user community it demonstrates what the survey is for and encourages future engagement and participation.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, [Eurostat Social Media Guidelines](#) and [UNECE Recommendations for Promoting, Measuring and Communicating the Value of Official Statistics](#)



## 📍 CASE STUDY: COORDINATION OF IDP STATISTICS IN SOMALIA

A combination of conflict and natural disasters has displaced over 2.4 million Somalis, including 549,000 in 2021 alone, exacerbating the impact of poverty. The government published a four-year national durable solutions strategy in 2021, intended to address the causes and impacts of the country's internal displacement crisis. To support this agenda, Somalia is progressing towards increasing its capacities on national statistics and analysis on displacement.

The Somalia National Bureau of Statistics (SNBS) is leading development of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics. In 2021 the SNBS requested support from EGRISS to improve the availability and robustness of data on IDPs. The aim is to increase the visibility of internal displacement and contribute to evidence-based public policy.

JIPS has been providing technical support on behalf of EGRISS. A first step was to conduct a mapping exercise of existing relevant data sources on IDPs in Somalia, both from government and humanitarian sources.

In parallel, in 2022 a workshop was held that brought together different actors from SNBS, other government entities and international actors working with IDP data in Somalia. The aims of the meeting were to develop a shared understanding of the requirements IRIS sets out for the production of official IDP statistics; continue mapping the existing data ecosystem on internal displacement in Somalia; and to discuss how the international community can best support government-owned statistics on internal displacement.

A key outcome of the meeting and the data mapping was a common understanding of the limitations of operational data sources for official statistics and the need to integrate IDP identification in national household surveys run by the SNBS.

Based on this common understanding an IDP Statistics Sector Plan has been drafted. National policy documents such as the National Development Plan and the National Durable Solutions Strategy have been used as guides, as well as international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals. The plan covers coordination, legal and statistical frameworks, capacity building and a costed implementation plan. Key objectives of the plan will be the establishment of an IDP sampling frame and integration of IDP identification in major household surveys. This will facilitate regular production of both estimates of the number of IDPs and regular socio-economic statistics on IDPs.

JIPS on behalf of EGRISS will continue leading on building capacity, including coordinating a workshop with Government actors to raise awareness around the IRIS and identify opportunities for potential government-led data sources to support official statistics; and to continue technical meetings with the SNBS to provide technical support on the upcoming data collection exercises.