EGRISS Statelessness Subgroup Meeting to Finalize the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS) – Meeting Report

Contents

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the meeting to finalize the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS), which was held on 20th-22nd June 2022 in Copenhagen, ahead of its final submission to the 54th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2023. This report is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of all the discussions held during the meeting but rather to consolidate the substantive points of agreement, draw attention to the momentum established, and highlight how the recommendations progressed during the event.

The meeting to finalize the IROSS built upon progress made so far since 2019, including the initial expert group meeting held in Bangkok, the development of the initial draft IROSS by group members, the informal (2020) and official (2021) expansion of EGRISS' mandate to include the development of statelessness statistics recommendations, and the submission of a technical report to the UNSC in March 2022, where the subgroup received guidance concerning the finalization of the report. The meeting aimed to achieve the following:

- Address the feedback received from the UNSC and country representatives, including:
    - Determine how to operationalize the statistical framework.
    - Determine how data sources and other techniques should be used to measure stateless populations.
    - Examine capacity development needs and outline how statistical coordination to produce statelessness statistics can be improved.
- Agree on a joint workplan to finalize the draft and generate strong buy-in from subgroup members to support the process.

Key points from presentations

During four plenary sessions, panelists shared important insights and learning that helped to inform the meeting deliberations. These included points concerning the legal definition of statelessness, data opportunities and challenges (at global and national level), and the broader statistical environment within which the IROSS is being developed. A summary of these points is included in a table in Appendix 1.

Main outcomes

The meeting to finalize the IROSS was well attended by 34 in-person and 6-online participants, consisting of 15 country representatives and 11 institutional partners (see Appendix 2 for full list of participants).

Attendees actively engaged in proceedings and delivered insightful presentations reflecting the importance of collecting statelessness data, thereby demonstrating the relevance of the topic and their continued commitment to the development of the recommendations. During the meeting, many colleagues echoed the sentiment that good progress on the statistical recommendations had been achieved. However, concerns were raised about the timeline to complete the draft ahead of its final submission to the UNSC in March 2023. In response to these concerns, a group of dedicated volunteers offered to revise specific portions of the draft to support the EGRISS Secretariat in finalizing the recommendations in time.

Arranged thematically, the following sections will present areas of agreement and highlight points of consideration to be addressed in the final draft.

Policy related outcomes

During the meeting, consensus was established regarding the use of the recommendations to develop policies that support stateless populations, with due consideration of different political and capacity contexts. In particular, colleagues emphasized the importance of using these data to pursue solution-oriented policies to obtain citizenship for stateless persons. Additionally, subgroup members articulated that policy objectives should provide avenues to secure equal access to essential services for stateless persons, e.g., education and healthcare. Some attendees highlighted that several political environments may not be as conducive to achieving these goals and emphasized that this must be recognized in the recommendations.

Statelessness statistical framework

Participants discussed the complexity of the current framework and emphasized the importance of using exclusionary definitions and clear language to articulate who is included in/excluded from the framework. Additionally, participants agreed that the framework should clearly acknowledge the stateless populations that fall into different identified groups and that the framework should ensure those of undetermined nationality remain clearly distinguished from undocumented persons in statistically measurable ways. Further crucial points of agreement concerning revisions to the framework included: 1) the need to clarify the government's role in recognizing stateless persons; 2) defining stateless as is specified in the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons[1]; 3) the maintenance of categories divided by foreign and native-born, which is consistent with the Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration [2]; 4) the need to address in/outflows of different population groups; and 5) the importance of exclusionary definitions of population categories within the framework to support data collection activities.

Due to the depiction of the framework, some participants perceived that the categories followed a hierarchical structure reflecting data collection priorities; thus, some suggested that the category 'stateless-related populations' should be considered a lesser priority in lower resource settings and/or only recommended if policy-relevant in a given context. However, due to the importance of capturing continued vulnerabilities experienced by populations no longer considered legally stateless, meeting

[1] UN General Assembly, Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 28 September 1954, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 360, p. 117, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3840.html
[2] United Nations Statistic Division, 1998. Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. United Nations.

participants agreed that the category should be kept even if not a 'core' group (different colors were used to reflect this). In addition, colleagues suggested that 'stateless-related populations' should be further defined by clarifying the components that make up the category, namely "descended from stateless," "previously stateless," and "those residing in a household with at least one stateless person".

Based on this discussion, the framework was revised during the meeting. The following diagram summarizes the result of these changes.
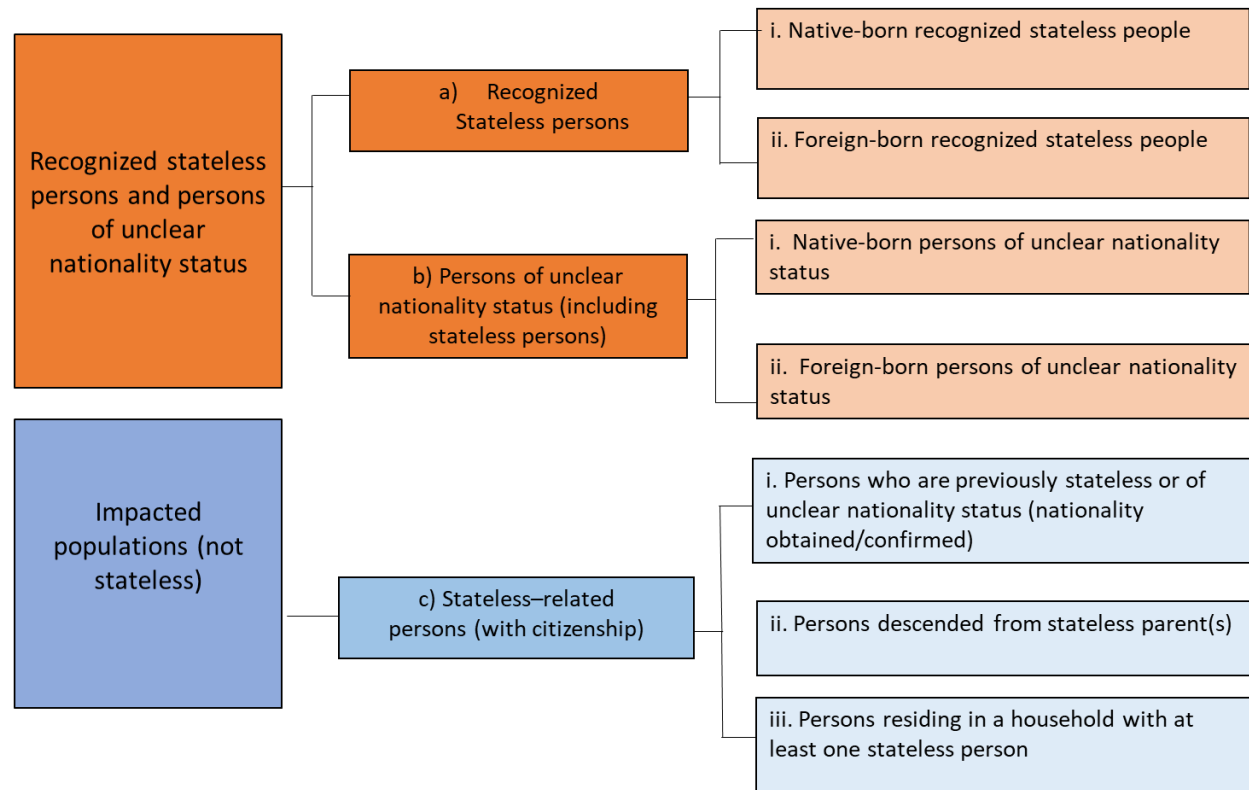
However, during the final plenary session, two key remaining concerns were raised regarding the draft statistical framework, namely 1) that it fails to capture persons who are stateless due to gaps in nationality laws, and 2) that the perceived hierarchy between *a* and *b* groups should be minimized/eradicated as stateless persons fall into both groups, all of which needs to be clearly recognized in the IROSS. Whilst meeting participants agreed on the need to address both points, there was not enough time to do so during the meeting. Additional guidance received after the meeting further emphasized the need for the stateless-related category to be mutually exclusive for data collection purposes. Appendix 3 includes an attempt by the EGRISS Secretariat to address these points and additional details of consistency within the diagram – feedback from group members is welcomed and encouraged.

Data sources

Participants reflected on data collection opportunities with due consideration of available data sources and existing capacity. During these discussions, a data source matrix was collectively developed to show how different (traditional and non-traditional) data sources could be used to produce statelessness statistics to capture more substantive and far-reaching discussions (see below).

	Comprehensive coverage?	Proof of citizenship	Real or perceived links to other country (as nationally defined)
Population census	High likelihood. (dependent on trust)	Yes, but sensitivities	Maybe
Surveys - probabilistic	Not on its own – requires (proxy) frame construction. Could be constructed from census/registers or non-traditional data.	Yes, but sensitivities	Likely
Surveys – non probabilistic	Maybe – if strong networks. Usual caveats around methodological robustness apply.	Yes, but sensitivities	Likely
Population registers (provided country has a comprehensive pop register)	High likelihood	Yes	Maybe (e.g. if links based on own or parental country of birth or migration)
Sectoral admin registers	Only if services provided to non-citizens – and even then only users	Maybe	Maybe
Non-traditional data	Maybe (if population small)	Unlikely	Maybe

Overall, participants agreed that the data source recommendations must be adapted to align with the revised framework and emphasized that it should focus on statelessness-specific recommendations, as opposed to general recommendations on the use of data sources. Participants discussed the critical importance of the IROSS addressing data quality considerations e.g., securing good response rates. In addition, colleagues stressed the significance of establishing trust through the role of advocacy/community sensitization by collaborating with community leaders to ensure processes remain mindful of contextual sensitivities and facilitate engagement in data collection activities. Furthermore, attendees outlined the benefits of collaborating with legal experts in the development of accurate data collection tools due to the specificities of relevant nationality laws. Moreover, participants collectively emphasized the responsibility of stakeholders to provide assurances and develop decisive data protection guidelines to ensure stateless populations are not persecuted by governments if they engage in statistical data collection activities. Concerning non-traditional data sources, participants emphasized the role of NSOs to conduct quality assessments required to make use of non-traditional data sources as part of official statistics production. Additionally, from the perspective of national coordination, this group discussed big data and, in this regard, emphasized the need for strong political support and involvement of international/specialist organizations.

Given the scope of the recommendations, some participants expressed concerns regarding data collection capacities in their specific country context. However, while considering this important point, the group collectively agreed on the importance of drafting aspirational recommendations that are mindful of different contextual needs and offer clear guidance to strengthen country capacities.

Additional guidance received from the UNSC & other identified gaps

Groups shared important points to consider when addressing the guidance received from the UNSC to revise the IROSS and other identified gaps. These insights will help inform the further development of the draft.

Statistical coordination

Firstly, the national coordination group emphasized the importance of collaboration and proposed the establishment of a national steering committee, consisting of government agencies, national statistical systems, and other data partners, to evaluate methodologies, prevent duplication, support advocacy efforts, and facilitate the approval of policy amendments. Additionally, alongside an established national legal framework, the group suggested that the national steering committee should be responsible for identifying working synergies and supporting coordination efforts through the development of good data infrastructure, innovative data protection and data sharing mechanisms. In addition, they proposed the development of an advisory council that includes other relevant stakeholders (e.g. NGOs and religious leaders) to advise on data collection efforts and the identification of a national champion who can advocate for statelessness statistics within government and other stakeholder groups. Lastly, this group assigned the responsibility of data handling procedures and the harmonization of collected data to a technical working group comprised of a national coordination interagency committee.

Capacity development

The capacity development group proposed the development of meaningful, contextually sensitive trainings that elaborate on standard practices concerning data integration, data governance and protection, and the role of advocacy. These trainings would be targeted toward NSOs and other stakeholdersolders as a potential mechanism to strengthen working knowledge. As statelessness is concretely linked to larger statistical processes (e.g., CRVS and census), the group indicated that trainings should also capitalize on this overlap and include dedicated statelessness statistics modules for different data sources. In addition, the group suggested that this connection could serve as an avenue to harness NSOs workflow and further advocate for improved statelessness statistics. However, the group noted that stakeholders should be mindful of political sensitivities that may arise as a result of spotlighting statelessness data. Furthermore, the group indicated that capacity development initiatives should go beyond NSOs and target partners of statistical systems and national officers of international organizations to facilitate collaborative efforts.

Measuring characteristics

Firstly, the group suggested that the recommendations on measuring characteristics of stateless populations should be developed with the assumption that the population group has already been identified and that relevant data protection guidelines are in operation. Following this, the group concurred that characteristics data should focus on resolving statelessness, preventing new cases, and protecting existing stateless populations. However, they recommended that countries should identify their own priorities and use that to develop strategies concerning data collection approaches and which characteristics should be measured. Regardless of specific contextual priorities, the group highlighted the minimum characteristics that should be addressed, which included age, gender, and birthplace. The group further elaborated on the specific characteristics that should be collected based on policy objectives e.g., socioeconomic status, health, migration history, and family history.

Participants stressed the importance of considering the available country resources to collect characteristic variables. In addition, the group suggested that characteristics data should capture the situational factors that caused statelessness in different country contexts e.g., discriminatory laws. Meeting participates added to the discussion with additional reflections on capturing the flows into/out

of stateless populations and the inclusion of socioeconomic data as a core characteristic variable due to the rationale it provides governments to address statelessness.

Data modelling and integration

The modelling group highlighted the innovative ways modelling and data integration techniques can supplement data collected through traditional data sources, with due consideration of ethical implications. In particular, the group suggested that modelling should only be considered as an alternative, complementary approach and, if successful, help to justify the use of traditional data sources to conduct more extensive analyses. To illustrate the usefulness of data modelling approaches, the group suggested that modelling techniques may be used for demographic projections between data collection periods and thus advise policies. In addition, the group discussed the opportunity to label results as 'experimental' rather than 'official' statistics to allow for more flexibility in publication, highlighted the capacity development needs to support national leadership in developing these data, and discussed how standard questions should be incorporated into surveys to capture more information about stateless populations. To increase the use of data modelling techniques and support capacity development needs, the group emphasized the importance of establishing strong collaborative networks and gaining support from NSOs, governments, and international institutions.

Meeting conclusions

The meeting concluded with the group collectively outlining and agreeing on the next steps and the timeline to complete the IROSS (see below).

Particular attention was drawn to the global consultation scheduled for a minimum period of one month in October 2022 and the possibility to develop a French translation of the draft recommendations, courtesy of STATAFRIC, to enable francophone countries to participate in the review. Given the tight timeline and the wealth of expertise/experience in the group, dedicated subgroup members volunteered to revise/develop specific portions of the IROSS draft during July-August, as listed in the table (Appendix

4). The Secretariat confirmed its leadership of finalizing the consolidated draft during September to ensure it is ready for the global consultation in October. Overall, during the meeting, significant progress was made to finalize the recommendations as was highlighted by several group members.

The EGRISS Secretariat would like to kindly thank subgroup 4 members and the dedicated volunteers for actively engaging in pertinent discussions that facilitated the progression of the recommendations. Moving forward, we wish to harness the momentum established during the meeting to collectively finalize the IROSS.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Table Summarizing Key Points from Presentations

Appendix 2: IROSS Meeting Participant List

Appendix 3: Revised Statistical Framework on Statelessness (post-meeting)

Appendix 4: IROSS Completion Volunteer Table

Appendix 1: Table Summarizing Key Points from Presentations

Presenter	Topic	Key Points
The global picture		
Radha Govil	Stateless and the need for better data	A stateless person is someone not considered a national by any State and most do not possess proof of citizenship. Significant variety in nationality laws exist, creating challenges for a common way to precisely define this population. Quality data can play an important role in progressing policy and finding solutions.
Tarek Abou Chabake	The current state of global statelessness statistics	It is important to have high-quality trusted data sources available. Some challenges include exclusionary data collection, inconsistent standards and definitions, no data points, and a lack of socioeconomic data. Importantly, most of the world's stateless persons are 'in situ' stateless (i.e. are not refugees or IDPs).
Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen	The global statistical environment and how the IROSS fits	IROSS should be informed by and demonstrate clear linkages with the current statistical environment and other relevant frameworks. Importantly, recommendations on statelessness statistics are already included in CRVS, census, migration and refugee statistical frameworks/recommendations.
IROSS development so far		
Natalia Baal	Overview of IROSS progress and current proposed statistical framework	Much progress has already been made on the IROSS development; we now have to gather energy for the final push to finalize the draft ready for the UNSC in 2023. Some concerns with the current framework and draft exist that need to be addressed as a priority during this meeting.
Data sources and other techniques		
Sanjarbek Melikhujaev	Pilot population census to collect data on stateless populations in **Uzbekistan**	Population census includes foreign citizens and stateless persons. No formal documentation required to participate in censuses.
Kra Ko Fie Didier Laurent	Collecting data on stateless populations in **Cote d'Ivoire**	Emphasized the capacity development needs required to support statelessness data collection efforts.
Helge Brunborg	Data on stateless populations in **Norway**	Discussed the Nordic model of population registration and how assigned national IDs facilitate statelessness data collection.
Sohail Jehangir	Population registration in **Pakistan**	Invited Pakistani residents to partake in population registration but witnessed a low registration rate.
Sebastian Steinmuller	Data modelling and integration	Emphasized the importance of collaborating with stateless communities to refine modelling techniques.

| Examples of data impact and progress		
Marizza B. Grande	**Philippines** national plan and mechanism to end statelessness	The Philippines has put in place a legal framework for the protection of stateless persons.
Andres Felipe Copete	Measurement of migration with Administrative Registries in **Colombia**	The Colombian government has sought to prevent Venezuelan children from being stateless through several decrees and laws.
Renice Bunde	Survey on the socioeconomic status of the Shona community in **Kenya**	The results of this Shona survey have supported the recognition of the Shona community by Kenyan citizens.

Appendix 2: IROSS Meeting Participant List

EGRISS Statelessness Subgroup Members/Meeting Participants			
Renice Bunde	Assistant Manager, Population Statistician	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics	in person
Mohammed Duraidi	Director	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)	in person
Helge Brunborg	Senior Researcher	Statistics Norway	in person
Rachael Rester Tsaurai	Statistician: Vital Statistics	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency	in person
Andrés Felipe Copete	Expert on Migration Statistics	National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Colombia	in person
Sok Kosal	Deputy Director General	National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia	in person
Tran Khanh	Statistician	General Statistics Office, Vietnam	in person
Sohail Jehangir	Director General	National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Pakistan	in person
Marizza B. Grande	Officer-in-Charge, Assistant National Statistician	Philippine Statistics Authority	in person
Alejandra Ríos	Deputy Director General of Government Development, Analysis and Indicators	National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), Mexico	in person
Chirawat Poonsab	Statistician	National Statistical Office, Thailand	in person
Lamiaa Mohsen Mohamed Elgebaly	Statistician at Population Statistics and Census Sector	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Egypt	in person
Nobuko Mizoguchi	Chief of Training and Statistical Development Branch, International Programs Area of the Population Division	U.S. Census Bureau	in person
Leila Ben Ali	Head of Statistics Division, STATAFRIC	African Union	in person
Samson Bel-Aude Nougbodohoue	Statistician, STATAFRIC	African Union	in person
Jan Beise	Statistics and Monitoring Specialist	UNICEF	in person
Tanja Sejersen	Statistician	UN ESCAP	in person
Leandre Foster Ngogang Wandji	Statistician	UN ECA	in person
Marwan Khawaja	Chief of Demographic and Social Statistics	UN ESCWA	in person
Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen	Inter-regional adviser	UN Statistics Division/DESA	in person
Giulia Tshilumba	Protection Officer	IOM	in person
Radha Govil	Snr Legal Of (Statelessness)	UNHCR	in person
Gert Bruininkx	Statelessness Officer	UNHCR	in person
Tarek Abou Chabake	Chief Statistician	UNHCR	in person
Sadiq Kwesi Boateng	Senior Statistics and Data Analysis Officer	UNHCR	in person
Sebastian Steinmuller	Statistics and Data Analysis Officer	UNHCR/Interagency Group on Statelessness Estimation	in person

Felix Schmieding	Senior Statistician	World Bank - UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement	in person
Sanjarbek Melikhujaev	Head of the Statistical Department of Namangan Region	State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics	virtual
Kra Ko Fie Didier Laurent	Demographer	National Statistics Institute, Cote d'Ivoire	virtual
Giampaolo Lanzieri	Senior Expert - Deputy Head of Unit	Eurostat	virtual
Piotr Juchno	Team Lead - Migrant integration, administration of immigration and asylum	Eurostat	virtual
Emi Suzuki	Demographer	World Bank	virtual
EGRISS Secretariat & support staff			
Mary Strode	Statelessness Statistics Consultant	EGRISS Secretariat	virtual
Natalia Baal	Head of Secretariat	EGRISS Secretariat	in person
Carolina Ferrari	Assistant Statistics and Data Analysis Officer	EGRISS Secretariat	in person
Charis Sijuwade	Assistant Statistics and Data Analysis Officer	EGRISS Secretariat	in person
Fabiana Pineda	Statistics Coordination Intern	EGRISS Secretariat	in person
Andres Rasmussen	Associate Project Officer, Global Data Service	UNHCR	in person
Petra Kaps	Data & Economics Analysis Intern	World Bank - UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement	in person
Sharon Chivhiwa Makunura	Data Science Intern	UNHCR	in person

Appendix 3: Revised Statistical Framework (post-meeting)

This revised framework, proposed by the Secretariat, aims to account for the questions raised during the meeting for which there was no time to address collectively. Additionally, it aims to address feedback received in response to the initial meeting report and attend to a few details of consistency. Reactions are welcome and encouraged.
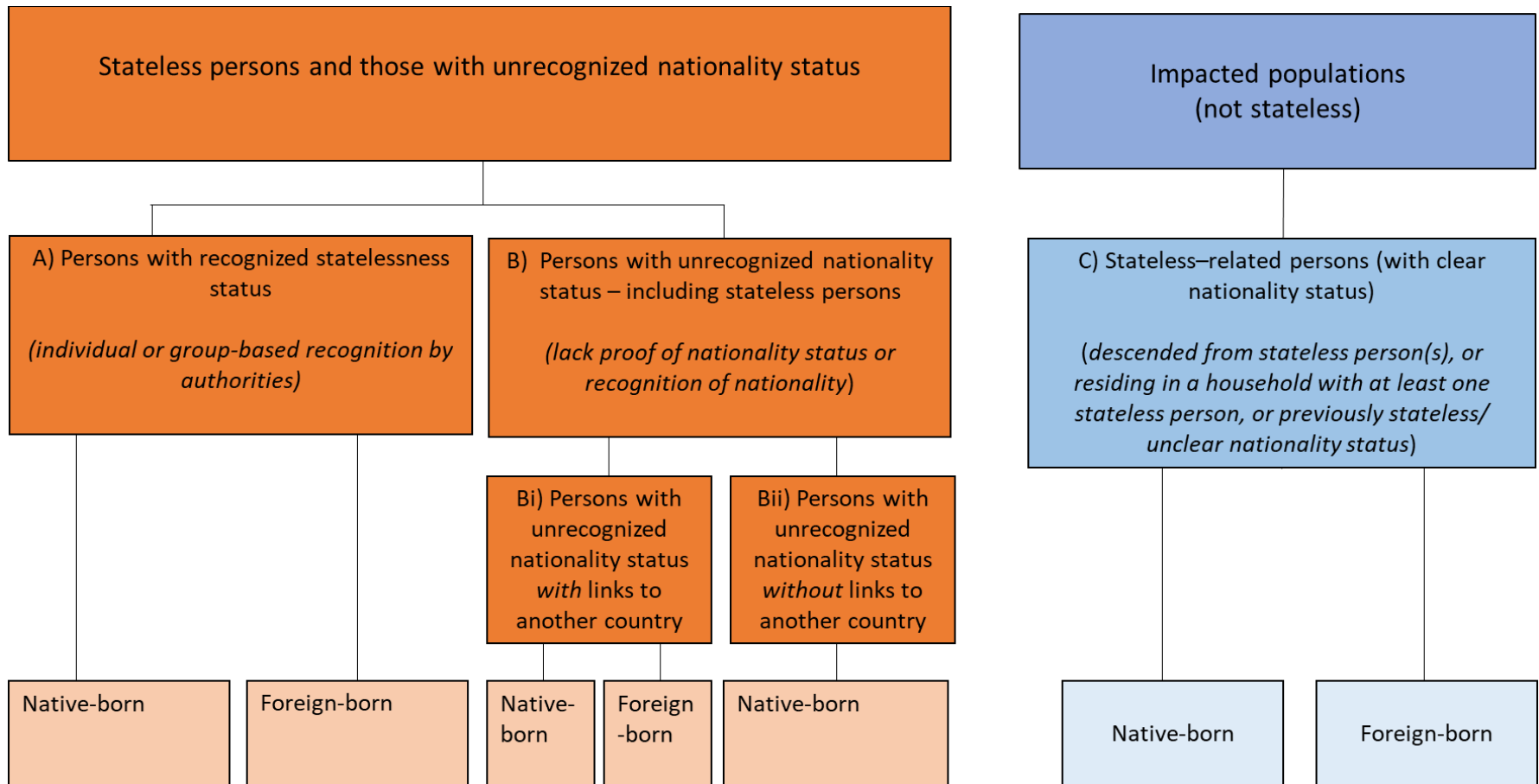
Appendix 4: IROSS Completion Volunteer Table

Meeting participants are welcome to react the below and further volunteers are welcome. The Secretariat will reach out to volunteers in July to discuss the work required in more detail. Virtual group meetings will also be organized to facilitate engagement of group members at key stages of this process.

What?	Who?	When?
Consolidate meeting report/summary of discussions	EGRISS Secretariat/ Rapporteurs	June-July
Revise IROSS draft based on meeting outcomes: 1) Refine statistical framework and apply to draft IROSS based on meeting discussions 2) Add sub-section to clarify who is not included within the framework (similar to IRIS) 3) Add box on citizenship/nationality definition (more than footnote needed) and apply consistently across the draft 4) Refined data source chapter (admin, census, survey) 5) Add new section on non-traditional data sources 6) New section on data modelling & integration 7) Strengthen chapter on measuring characteristics 8) Enhance coordination 9) Capacity development recommendations 10) Data protection and do no harm principles should be reflected throughout 11) Ensure explicit connection to other frameworks/recommendations (in intro & elsewhere)	1) EGRISS Secretariat 2) UNHCR/DIP (Radha/Gert) 3) EGRISS Secretariat 4) JDC (Felix - overall) with support from US (Nobuko - on census), UNICEF (Jan - on surveys), and possibly others. 5) UNHCR (Kwesi) and STATAFRIC (Samson) with support from UNESCAP(Tanja) and UNSD (Vibeke Nielsen) 6) IGSE/UNHCR (Sebastian) 7) TBD 8) UNESCAP (Petra) and World Bank (Emi) 9) US (Nobuko)and UNSD (Vibeke) 10) EGRISS Secretariat/UNHCR (need to identify focal point) 11) EGRISS Secretariat	Jul-Aug
General edit/narrative review for consistency, reduce repetition, avoid non-statelessness-specific recommendations, take out case studies (use elsewhere)	EGRISS Secretariat	Sep
Subgroup review of revised draft (in parallel to global consultation)	All	Oct

Translation into French	STATAFRIC	Sep-Oct
Global consultation	EGRISS Secretariat (with UNSD)	Oct
Addressing input from global consultation	EGRISS Secretariat (in consultation with group members)	Nov-Jan