



World Migration Policy Toolkit

A set of tools and resources for policy officers working on international migration in national and multilateral contexts

Migration Research & Publications Division

Table of Contents

Introduction

Part One: How to make the most out of the World Migration Report

I. World Migration Report - Background Guide for Policy

- A. FAQs for policy officials
- B. Accessing the latest research, data and information
- C. Behind the scenes: QA processes for the World Migration Report

II. Key data on migration and migrants

- A. Global trends
- B. Regional dimensions and trends
- C. Interactive Platform

III. Cross-cutting Migration Issues

- A. Border management
- B. Displacement
- C. Gender & Youth
- D. Global migration governance
- E. Human rights
- F. Labour migration
- G. Migration and development
- H. Migration, environment and climate change
- I. Migration narratives
- J. Technology

IV. Materials for policy officers

- A. PowerPoint files on key topics
- B. Short explainer videos on migration
- C. Video presentations on migration issues
- D. Data snapshots
- E. World Migration Report Bibliography

F. Key findings from the World Migration Reports since 2018

Part Two: Migration Research & Analysis and the Policy Cycle

- V. Migration Research & Analysis produced in academia
 - A. Knowledge production in the policy cycle
 - B. Scientific publishing vs general publishing
 - C. Communication issues: talking at cross-purposes

- VI. Conducting desk-based research for policy processes
 - A. What to trust and what to discard?
 - B. How to access relevant migration outputs
 - C. How to reference sources

For modules on the **fundamentals of migration**, please see the [World Migration Educators' Toolkit](#)

Introduction

This Toolkit draws upon the extensive research and analysis in the *World Migration Report* to deliver tailored tools and resources for use by key audiences, such as policy officers working on migration.

The *World Migration Report* is the flagship publication series of the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations migration agency. The Report presents data and information on human migration together with analysis of complex and emerging migration issues. It has been in production since 2000 and is produced every 2 years. Because of its global focus, the Toolkit uses content from around the world to support policy officials regardless of their location. Just like the Report itself, this Toolkit has been peer reviewed by migration policy officials and other experts to ensure it meets the highest quality standards.

Policy Toolkit development

IOM's Migration Research Division partnered with the Graduate Institute's Global Migration Centre to develop this toolkit for policy officials, particularly on the initial phase involving gathering insights from policy officials currently working in the field of migration from around the world. The project received support from the Geneva Science-Policy Interface via its 2021 competitive funding round.

Prior to work starting on the Toolkit, the Global Migration Centre gathered insights from policy officers during September/October 2021 about their use of migration knowledge products. Policy officer respondents were asked general questions about their access to and use of such products, as well as their specific experiences with the World Migration Report series. Insights were gathered from 26 policy officers working on migration from 19 countries, including those in capitals and at Missions to the UN in Geneva. A summary of insights can be found [here](#).

We hope that this Policy Toolkit will be of great use to you and your colleagues. For more information, you can access the World Migration Report [here](#) and view the data visualization from the Report [here](#). More information about this work can be found [here](#). You can contact us via research@iom.int.

For those looking for tools and resources on the **fundamentals of migration**—the who, what, where, why, how and when of migration—we suggest you access the [Educators' Toolkit](#), which includes modules on all of these aspects, as well as several thematic modules.



Part One: How to make the most out of the World Migration Report

I. World Migration Report - Background Guide for Policy

The World Migration Report (WMR) is the Organization's flagship publication, having been produced since 2000 every two years. While most of the previous editions were focused on a single theme (e.g. migrants and cities), since the 2018 edition, the WMR has been transformed into the global reference report on migration. Of the around 200 IOM publications produced annually, the WMR consistently rates as the highest visibility and used IOM publication worldwide; it has amassed broad appeal and garners keen interest, including from member states, media, migration academics, researchers and students, other international organizations, non-government organizations, civil society actors, private sector partners as well as individuals interested in international migration.

To improve the quality and utility of the report, IOM has engaged in a process of continuous improvement since mid-2016 by deploying a range of measures and approaches:

- Informal and formal reviews/evaluations both internal and external (e.g. 2017 [MOPAN review](#) and 2020 [OIG Evaluation](#), including an IOM field survey);
- Developing and implementing a professional approach to collaboration and partnerships with leaders in the field of migration research, analysis and report-writing (e.g. gender/geographic diversity, partnership principles, clear production protocols, focus on migrants' voice, strong design);
- Extending language translations of the report to ensure all 6 UN language versions are produced, and outputs are available in official languages of developing countries (e.g. Portuguese, Swahili);
- Developing a much stronger digital presence so users are better able to access the report contents (e.g. report webpage, interactive platform, educators' toolkit, fact-checkers' toolkit);
- Entering relevant international awards to be assessed at the highest levels against comparable products (with very positive results, such as gold award in the 2021 International Annual Report Design Awards);
- Independent outreach to Member State users via the Graduate Institute to gain feedback on how the report is used and to inform this policy toolkit - available [here](#);
- Extending media outreach through global collaboration and coordination;
- Diversifying the donor base to include new philanthropic [donors](#) (i.e. Robert Bosch Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Gulbenkian Foundation).

Feedback on the World Migration Report, its interactive platform and/or this policy toolkit are very welcome, and can be sent to research@iom.int.

A. FAQs for policy officials

FAQs on the World Migration Report answer questions on a wide range of issues, including purpose, focus, production/development, priority topics, data used, QA measures, funding, copyright, digital tools, languages, donations, etc. The FAQs can be accessed [here](#).

B. Accessing the latest research, data and information

As the UN migration agency, IOM has a range of freely available resources that enable anyone interested in migration to access the latest research, data and information on the topic. Some of the key resources are outlined below.

[Key platforms and resources:](#)

The **World Migration Report webpage** provides access to the report as well as a range of other World Migration Report material, including media resources, toolkits, videos and previous editions of the report. Click [here](#) to access the webpage.

The **World Migration Report Interactive** is a digital platform that draws on the WMR series and presents the latest report edition (2022) in a visually engaging and interactive way. The microsite increases the utility and accessibility of the report's analytical content by making it possible for anyone interested in migration to interact with the data to identify key migration trends and patterns quickly and easily - and then access additional information in the full (pdf) report. Click [here](#) to access the interactive.



The **IOM Research webpage** is home to multiple resources and research products produced by, or with, the Division. These include information on research outputs such as the Migration Research Series (MRS), which focuses on policy-oriented and empirical research and analysis and links to the *International Migration* journal, IOM's independently edited scientific journal on migration issues. It also includes links to platforms such as the World Economic Forum Strategic Intelligence Platform (co-curated with IOM), content from the Migration Research and Publishing High Level Advisers - who partner with IOM Research to produce evidence-based research and analysis of international migration and displacement and Migration Research at lunchtime videos, among others. Access the webpage [here](#).

The **Migration Data Portal** aims to facilitate the understanding of migration data by making them more accessible, more visible and easier to understand. The Portal is currently available in English, French, Spanish and German. Click [here](#) to access the data portal.

The **UN Migration Network Hub** was launched on 18 March 2021 and represents the first knowledge platform and connection hub to support United Nations Member States in the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Click [here](#) to access the Hub.

The **IOM Publications Platform** contains thousands of electronic publications on migration in dozens of different languages. Almost all IOM publications are free to download. Click [here](#) to access the platform.



This list of **migration journals** worldwide provides a guide to some of the existing journals publishing migration-related research and analysis. The list is available in English, French and Spanish (access [here](#)).

Keep up with the latest updates and news from IOM

Sign up to receive [IOM Research Updates](#), including our latest research outputs, events, initiatives and collaborations. Subscribe [here](#) or email us at research@iom.int.

Follow us on twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook

Twitter: [@IOMResearch](#) | [@migration](#)

LinkedIn: [IOM Research](#)

Facebook: [IOM Publications](#)

Access the latest news from IOM, including media releases, [here](#).

C. Behind the scenes: QA processes for the World Migration Report

IOM's flagship publication, the World Migration Report, is produced to very high-quality standards to ensure that it is rigorous and that it provides readers with information and analysis on migration that is balanced, relevant and timely. This is done through several quality assurance mechanisms:

Co-editing, co-authoring and peer review:

- The World Migration Report is co-edited and co-authored with some of the leading academic and applied researchers in the world.
- All thematic chapters are peer-reviewed by IOM specialists as well as leading academic experts.
- Geographic diversity of authorship, sources, academic peer reviewers and IOM expert reviewers is a priority to ensure that the report is truly a world migration report. Gender balance is also a priority across all aspects of the report's production.

IOM research team:

- The Migration Research and Publications Division (MPRD), which produces the World Migration Report, has a small team of highly skilled and experienced researchers and consultants who work on the report. While the team is small, it is highly diverse, with members hailing from all 6 UN regions.

Author workshop:

- Prior to drafting, an author workshop is held to outline and discuss a range of quality assurance measures, including: IOM style rules, the target audiences, writing for accessibility (e.g. jargon-free language), peer review, data checking, chapter/report content, among other aspects.
- Thematic chapters that are not of sufficient quality are rejected by the IOM Editor, with due regard to feedback from the academic co-editor and IOM/academic peer reviewers.

Referencing, data checking and copy-editing:

- The World Migration Report follows strict protocol referencing, including checking all statistics, ensuring sources are reputable and using primary sources, rather than secondary sources wherever possible.
- Data is verified to the extent possible through data-checking, and all content is copy-edited prior to finalization.

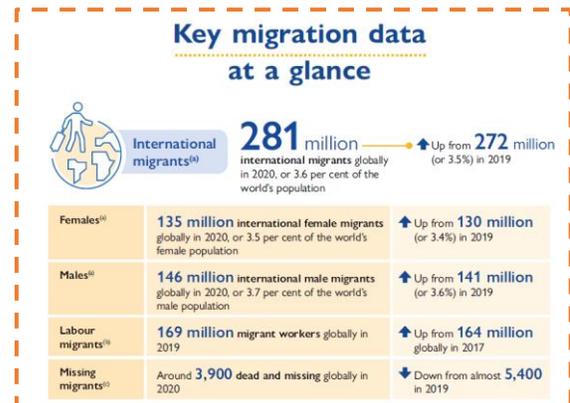
Report readability and usability:

- To ensure that the World Migration Report is engaging and readable, efforts are made to include infographics that bring the data to life as well as graphs that illustrate relationships and trends in data. The IOM Research team also works very closely with some of the leading external migration data specialists who produce some of the graphs included in the report, as well as the interactive platform.
- The report’s contents and analysis draw on a large body of work – both grey and white literature, including from the scientific community, think tanks, NGOs, governments, among others – and tries to make sense of both the latest data as well as new and emerging migration issues.

II. Key data on migration and migrants

As the global reference report on migration, the World Migration Report provides key data and information on migration and migrants both at the global level and at the regional level, according to the United Nations 6 geographic regions. These two core chapters of the report are supplemented by the Interactive Platform, which allows users to access specific regional and country-level data, such as top five destinations (and number of migrants) for every country.

The full "key migration data at a glance" infographic can be accessed [here](#).



A. Global trends

Chapter 2 of the report provides an overview of global data and trends on international migrants (stocks) and international migration (flows). It also provides a discussion of particular migrant groups – namely, migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons – as well as of international remittances. In addition, the chapter refers to the existing body of IOM programmatic data, particularly on missing migrants, assisted voluntary returns and reintegration, resettlement, and displacement tracking. While these data are generally not global or representative, they can provide insights into changes that have occurred in relevant IOM programming and operations globally.

Access the global chapter [here](#).

B. Regional dimensions and trends

Following the global overview, Chapter 3 provides a discussion of key regional dimensions of, and developments in, migration. The discussion focuses on six world regions as identified by the United Nations: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America, and Oceania. For each of these regions, the analysis includes: (a) an overview and brief discussion of key population-related statistics; and (b) succinct descriptions of “key features and developments” in migration in the region, based on a wide range of data, information and analyses, including from international organizations, researchers and analysts. To account for the diversity of migration patterns, trends and issues within each of the six regions, along with descriptive narratives of “key features and recent developments”, are presented at the subregional level.

Access the regional chapter [here](#).

C. Interactive Platform

The World Migration Report Interactive is a digital platform that draws on the report series and presents the latest report edition (2022) in a visually engaging and interactive way. The microsite increases the utility and accessibility of the report's analytical content by making it possible for anyone interested in migration to interact with the data to identify key migration trends and patterns quickly and easily - and then access additional information in the full (pdf) report. Click [here](#) to access the interactive.

The Interactive platform and the pdf version of the report have been recognized in several international awards, such as the 2021 International Annual Report Design Awards (iada), the 2021 iNOVA awards and the 2022 WSIS Prizes.



III. Cross-cutting Migration Issues

This section covers some of the major cross-cutting migration issues covered over the last three editions of the World Migration Report series, namely:

- A. Border management

- B. Displacement
- C. Gender and children/youth
- D. Global migration governance
- E. Labour migration
- F. Migrants' rights
- G. Migration and development
- H. Migration, environment and climate change
- I. Migration narratives
- J. Technology

For each of these cross-cutting issues, users will find:

- **An index based on specific sub-topics associated with each cross-cutting issue:** Sub-topics are identified in index tables with corresponding chapters and pages. Please note that:
 - Index methodology:
 - Each sub-topic may further be broken down in sub-thematic areas. When no sub-thematic areas are provided, it means that the references provided in the index are covering the aspect or key word from the thematic perspective of each specific chapter of the World Migration Report.
 - The cross-thematic indexes have been prepared through automatic searches of sub-topics. Anecdotal mentions have not been included.
 - Index coverage:
 - Indexes cover:
 - Chapters 1-3 (part I: Key data and information on migration and migrants) of World Migration Report 2022
 - Thematic chapters (part II: Complex and emerging migration issues) of the 2022, 2020 and 2018 editions.
 - Indexes do not cover:
 - Chapters 4 of the 2022, 2020 and 2018 editions focusing on migration research.
 - Appendices of chapters.
 - Chapters are hyperlinked so that users can directly access information and analysis they are interested in.
- **Deep-dive textboxes:** A textbox for a deep-dive into a specific cross-cutting issue and/or sub-topic is provided at the end of each section whenever a specific chapter of the report focuses thereon. In those cases, references to the specific chapters are not repeated into the indexes of sub-topics.

- **Textboxes with additional resources from the World Migration Report series:** Whenever relevant, additional resources building on the World Migration Report are indicated for the user.

Cross-cutting issues are only available in digital format on the World Migration Policy Toolkit webpage [here](#)

IV. Materials for policy officers

A. PowerPoint files on key topics

Powerpoint files for general use have been developed for you to download and edit, making it easier to draw upon and utilize key findings and data points from the World Migration Report. You can access PPT files on the follow topics:

[Major global transformation affecting migration and mobility](#)

[Fundamentals of migration](#)

[Global Migration Trends](#)

[Regional migration trends](#)

B. Short explainer videos on migration

These short explainer videos provide quick overviews of some of the key data and information on migration. They include information on the number of international migrants worldwide, COVID-19 impacts on mobility, international remittances, among others.

Note: The numbers/figures included in these videos were the most recent at the time of their production. These numbers may have changed with the publication of new data.

- [The COVID-19 pandemic impacts on mobility](#)
- [International migrants by sex](#)
- [The number of international migrants globally](#)
- [Supporting brighter futures: Young women and girls' migration and education](#)
- [Top destination countries in 2019](#)
- [Top countries of origin in 2019](#)
- [World Migration — How much do you know?](#)
- [How is knowledge on migration created?](#)

- [Top countries sending remittances in 2018](#)
- [Top countries receiving remittances in 2018](#)

C. Video presentations on migration issues

These video presentations contain information and analysis on a range of migration issues that are relevant for both migration policy and practice. These include presentations on topics such as digital currencies and remittances during the COVID-19 pandemic, migrant workers and labour migration systems in the context of COVID-19, migration and technology, among others.

- [World Migration Report 2022 Webinar – Migration and migrants: A global overview](#)
- [Navigating complexity with strategic intelligence with IOM Head of Research, Marie McAuliffe](#)
- [COVID-19 and the transformation of migration and mobility \(epidemiological and demographic perspectives\)](#)
- [COVID-19 and the transformation of migration and mobility \(migrant workers and labour migration systems\)](#)
- [COVID-19 and the transformation of migration and mobility \(mobility, human rights and human pathways\)](#)
- [COVID-19 and the transformation of migration and mobility \(women and labour migration\)](#)
- [Digital currency and remittances in the time of COVID-19](#)
- [Migration and technology \(migrants' perspectives\) - International Metropolis Conference 2019](#)
- [Migrants' Contributions in an era of increasing disruption and disinformation, Dr Marie McAuliffe](#)

D. Data snapshots

These data snapshots have been developed to help explain changes in migration through innovative data analysis. Drawing on the World Migration Report, they include key charts and tables from the report that provide a visual representation of some of the recent global and regional migration dynamics and changes.

- [Complexity of cross-border displacement](#)
- [Government responses to COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 impacts on air travel globally](#)
- [Do people from developed countries migrate more?](#)
- [Feminization of migration—or not?](#)
- [Where does internal displacement occur globally?](#)
- [International remittances and COVID-19](#)
- [The world's largest migration corridors](#)
- [Long-term regional migration trends](#)
- [Long-term trend in international migration](#)
- [Regional differences in COVID-19 mobility restrictions](#)

- [Top origin and destination countries](#)
- [Victims of human trafficking](#)

E. World Migration Report Bibliography

Feedback from readers, including policy officials, has shown that the bibliography from the World Migration Report is a useful resource that enables readers to easily locate relevant data, research and analysis on specific topics. The bibliography provided here can be downloaded and used to locate materials using the "find" function or "keyword" search of the document. Wherever possible, hyperlinks to references are provided in the bibliography.

- [World Migration Report 2022 consolidated bibliography](#)

F. Key findings from the World Migration Reports since 2018

These key findings summarize the main information and analysis in the World Migration Report series since the 2018 edition. Key findings from the most recent edition, the World Migration Report 2022, also contain takeaways for policy, to assist policy makers with gathering information that is relevant for their work quickly and easily.

World Migration Report 2022

[Chapter 1 - Report Overview: Technological, Geopolitical and Environmental Transformations Shaping our Migration and Mobility Futures](#)

[Chapter 2 – Migration and Migrants: A Global Overview](#)

[Chapter 3 – Migration and Migrants: Regional Dimensions and Developments](#)

[Chapter 4 – Migration Research and Analysis: Recent United Nations Contributions](#)

[Chapter 5 – The Great Disrupter: Covid-19’s Impact on Migration, Mobility and Migrants Globally](#)

[Chapter 6 - Peace and Security as Drivers of Stability, Development and Safe Migration](#)

[Chapter 7 – International Migration as a Stepladder of Opportunity: What Do the Global Data Actually Show?](#)

[Chapter 8 – Disinformation About Migration: An Age old Issue with New Tech Dimensions](#)

[Chapter 9 – Migration and the Slow-Onset Impacts of Climate Change: Taking Stock and Taking Action](#)

[Chapter 10 – Human Trafficking in Migration Pathways: Trends, Challenges and New Forms of Cooperation](#)

[Chapter 11 - Artificial Intelligence, Migration and Mobility: Implications for Policy and Practice](#)

World Migration Report 2020

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 1 – World Migration Report Overview](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 2 – Migration and Migrants: A Global Overview](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 3 – Migration and Migrants: Regional dimensions and developments](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 4 – Migration Research and Analysis](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 5 – Migrants’ contributions globally](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 6 – Migration, inclusion and social cohesion](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 7 – Migration and health](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 8 – Children and unsafe migration](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 9 – Human mobility and adaptation to environmental change](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 10 – Migrants caught in crises](#)

[World Migration Report 2020 – InfoSheet No. 11 – Global Migration Governance – Update to WMR 2018](#)

World Migration Report 2018

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 1 – World Migration Report 2018 Overview](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 2 – Migration and Migrants: A Global Overview](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 3 – Migration and Migrants: Regional Dimensions and Developments](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 4 – Migration Research and Analysis: Growth, Reach and Recent Contributions](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 - InfoSheet No. 5 – Global Migration Governance: Existing Architecture and Recent Developments](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 6 – Mobility, Migration, and Transnational Connectivity](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 7 - Understanding Migration Journeys from Migrant's Perspectives](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 8 – Media Reporting of Migrants and Migration](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 9 – Migration, violent extremism and social exclusion](#)

[World Migration Report 2018 – InfoSheet No. 10 – Migrants and cities: Stepping beyond World Migration Report 2015](#)

Part Two: Migration Research & Analysis and the Policy Cycle

In its simplest form, public policy has been defined as “anything a government chooses to do or not to do”.¹ Policymaking involves action through the setting of rules, laws, procedures, programmes, guidelines and other forms of regulation. But how do States decide on what should be regulated, and what should go into those regulations? Questions of policy settings transcend political systems (e.g. autocracies, democracies), although policymaking processes vary across different types of systems. The “raw ingredients” of policymaking include evidence (statistics and other data, research and evaluation) as well as funding, public sector capability and political dynamics.²

In migration policymaking, all ingredients are important; however, in recent years, we have seen the emphasis on political dynamics grow, sometimes regardless of, or in contrast to, the existing evidence base. It is clear, therefore, that the raw ingredients themselves are not enough to result in evidence-based policymaking, but that the following conditions are required:

1. Evidence exists and is accessible to policymakers.
2. Policymakers are motivated to use evidence.
3. Policymakers have the capacity to use evidence.
4. Policymakers and policymaking bodies have relationships that facilitate the relevance and use of evidence.³

This *World Migration Policy Toolkit* focuses primarily on point, 1 as its main objective is to draw upon the evidence set out on the World Migration Report series and other key outputs through a tailored, highly accessible resource for those working in migration policy.

V. Migration Research & Analysis produced in academia and other sectors

A. Knowledge production in the policy cycle

Not only is the political salience of migration high, and frequently fevered, but the capacity for rapidly disseminating disinformation to influence the public discourse has expanded. As the United Nations’ migration agency, IOM has an obligation to demystify the complexity and diversity of human mobility. This is reflected in IOM’s Constitution where the need for migration research is highlighted as an integral part of the Organization’s functions.”

IOM Director General, Antonio Vitorino
Foreword to the World Migration Report 2020

¹ Dye, 1972.

² Hewlett Foundation, 2018.

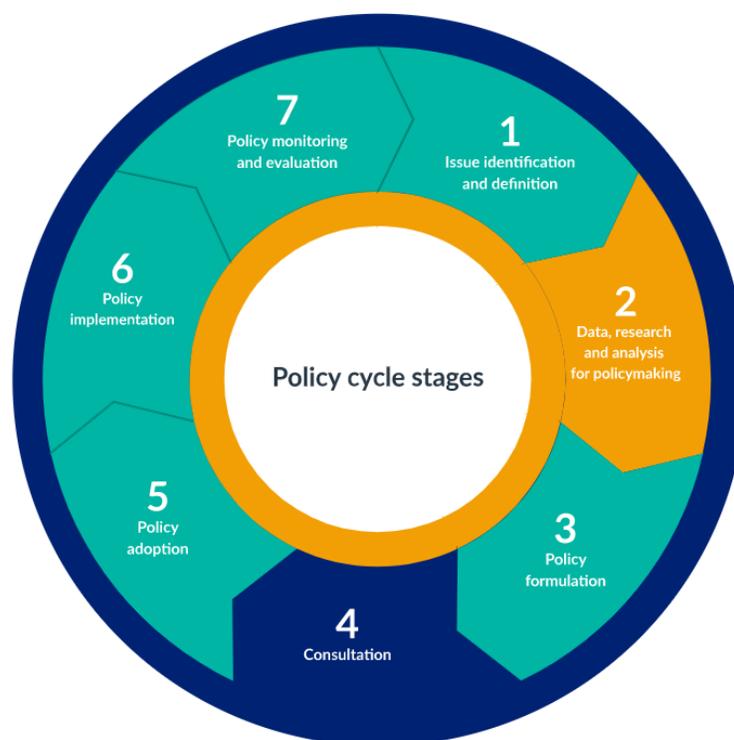
³ Hewlett Foundation, 2018.

Data, research and analysis are central to understanding migration and mobility dynamics, and to enabling evidence-based, sustainable migration policies. If policy officers do not understand what and how change is occurring in migration and mobility – both positive and negative change – it is almost impossible to craft effective and sustainable policy and operational responses.

Where does data, research and analysis fit in the policy cycle?

Policymaking is multilevel and multi-actor. It extends across various levels of governance and involves both public and private actors. These factors impact the way data and research can be used in order to produce evidence-based policies.

Sound evidence is needed at the outset. While data, research and analysis constitute a specific stage of the policy cycle - as can be seen below - they are also relevant to all stages. "Phase 2: Data, research and analysis" is the evidence-building phase that informs and shapes policy thinking; it draws on national data, global data and regional practice and reaches out to international communities of practice for ideas.



Source: IOM's Essentials of Migration Management, 2021.

The type, quality and quantity of research and analysis, including on migration, have increased dramatically over the years and so has access to such material. This results from such factors as the increase in the number and type of actors involved in the production of research and analysis,

and the increasing variety of sources, websites and databases making research and analysis available. Some research and analyses are not freely accessible: they may be published in journals that require a subscription or, if produced by governments, are often not published internal.

The various types of evidence made available via migration research present advantages and disadvantages for the policymaker. Before delving into how to assess the quality of research and analysis and how to ensure its credibility and relevance (see Assessing the credibility of research and analysis), we outline different types of research, their advantages and limitations, their producers and the sources where they can be found.

Academic research is not specifically targeted at policymakers and the texts are not necessarily solution oriented or meant to inform policy. The long format of academic articles and especially monographs and books and the extensive use of academic language is often considered a barrier to using these sources in policymaking. That said, a number of academics do work towards informing policy and notable efforts are being made both to invite academics to make contributions and to increase their capacity to produce research that is policy relevant, concise and written in non-technical language.

B. Scientific publishing vs general publishing

There are fundamental differences in the publishing processes for academic and non-academic material, and each has its strengths and weaknesses (see Table 1 below). The academic publishing system is largely focused on producing journal articles and books. This process typically involves multi-stage reviews and editorial comments involving authors, editors and reviewers. Most published academic research (“white” literature) are behind paywalls (that is, not freely accessible), and often managed by commercial publishers. In contrast, the production of research and analysis publications outside of academic publishing (“grey” literature) generally involves faster and simpler processes that are typically, although not always, characterized by more limited peer review. Contributions to the grey literature (such as research reports, working papers and government/official documents) are usually freely available.

Table 1. Strengths and weaknesses of academic and non-academic research

	Academic research (white literature)	Non-academic research (grey literature)
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality research usually ensured through peer review by experts; • Must refer to and build upon existing scientific evidence; • Built on networks of expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible to wide audiences, as usually freely available online and with less technical terminology used; • Rapid publishing processes enabling timely updates for policy deliberations; • Usually of a shorter format; • Ability to draw on expertise in academic and policy spheres.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not freely accessible, as often behind paywalls managed by commercial publishers; • Long publishing timelines due to peer review processes, not meeting policymakers' needs for rapid research and analysis, and at times using out-of-date data; • Not easily accessible to a non-expert audience as highly technical and/or theoretical, with academic terminology used; • Lengthy written outputs, particularly in the case of monographs and handbooks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varying quality due to lack of quality assurance mechanisms of certain outputs; • Possible to ignore the existing evidence base, thereby diminishing overall quality and relevance; • Certain outputs may be more focused on advocacy and policy change or driven by a political agenda.

Source: *World Migration Report 2022*, chapter 4, pp 130.

C. Migration Data, Research and Analysis: Main types of published outputs

The World Migration Report highlights in numerical terms the growing amount of migration data, research and analysis on migration (see chapter 4 of the 2018 and 2020 editions). There has been a massive increase in the production of migration knowledge products because of long-term increases in:

- international migration, as part of globalization and related transformational processes
- the relevance of migration as a public policy topic
- collection and reporting of migration-related data
- academic focus on migration
- publishing globally, including a massive increase in open publishing that is free to access and the shift toward more 'self' publishing by organizations and individuals.

The main types of published outputs on migration data, research and evidence are summarized in the table below, with key actors who produce them also highlighted. Discussion of how to assess relevance and credibility of such materials when undertaking desk-based research for policy processes is discussed below.

Type of published output	Key features	Key publishers	Key authors	Quality
Blog posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short in length (up to 800 words) - embedded links to related outputs 	Think tanks; UN agencies; advocacy NGOs; research institutes	Experts from academia, practitioners, researchers/analysts & policy orgs	Variable depending on publisher, authors & QA processes
Policy briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short in length (2-3 pages) - links to related outputs 	Think tanks; UN agencies; governments; advocacy NGOs; research institutes	Experts from academia, UN, governments, think tanks, NGOs,	Variable depending on publisher, authors & QA processes
Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - medium length (typically 4-5,000 words) - specific thematic/geographic focus 	Academia, UN agencies; governments; think tanks; advocacy NGOs; research institutes	Experts from academia, UN, governments, think tanks, NGOs,	Variable depending on publisher, authors & QA processes
Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - longer publications - reference-type reports or on a single study - topic can be specific/narrow, general/broad or multiple - usually extensive bibliography 	Think tanks; UN agencies; governments; advocacy NGOs; research institutes	Experts from academia, UN, governments, think tanks, NGOs,	Variable depending on publisher, authors & QA processes
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - substantial works (around 7,000 words) - peer reviewed - commercial (cost to buy/access) - longer-term focus, extensive analysis - substantial bibliography 	Commercial publishers (especially academic)	Primarily experts from academia and think tanks.	High due to peer review & commercial aspects
Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - substantial works (around 7,000 words), often narrow in scope - peer reviewed; high rejection rate - commercial (cost to buy/access) 	Commercial publishers (especially academic)	Primarily experts from academia.	High due to peer review, rejection rates & commercial aspects

	- longer-term focus, extensive analysis - substantial bibliography			
Datasets	- statistical datasets able to be downloaded/access for analysis; - specific variables/focus; - de-identified data; - often aggregated, not unit record data.	UN agencies; academia; NGOs; governments; tech platforms.	Not applicable	High due to curation QA processes.

Sources: World Migration Reports (2018, 2020 & 2022) and emm2.0.

D. Communication issues: talking at cross-purposes

There are inherent differences between policy and research communities, with employees often facing extremely different job roles, legal-policy frameworks and incentives structures even though they may be focusing on the same or similar topics. Terminology, for example, can stem from legal-policy frameworks (for policy officials) or conceptual/theoretical literature (for academic researchers), such that policy officers and academic researchers can be working on the same issues but end up talking at crossed purposes. Understanding incentive structures and working methods can help with bridging the divide between policy and research communities, as outlined in the summary infographics below.

Differences in incentive structures

POLICY SPHERE	RESEARCH SPHERE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem solving - Risk mitigation - Strong focus on national interest and often reflects (geo)political agendas - Reliance on “relevant” information - Classified/closed environment - [in democratic systems] Consultation and “citizen” engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the problem - Questioning assumptions - Testing and re-testing - Strong focus on personal achievement - Publish (or perish) - Importance of discipline - (open) access to information - Funding structures and biases

Differences in working methods

POLICY SPHERE

- Fast paced / time poor
- Collective / team-based
- Action-oriented delivery / negotiation & persuasion
- Emphasis on “oral tradition”
- Broad (not deep) knowledge required
- Sets parameters for operations & programming

RESEARCH SPHERE

- Slower pace
- Individual-based
- Depth of knowledge required
- Strong writing / analytical capability
- More comfortable with ambiguity & complexity (& contestability)
- Limited practical implementation of output

Opportunities: how researchers can better connect to policymakers

POLICY SPHERE

- Fast paced / time poor
- Collective / team-based
- Action-oriented delivery / negotiation & persuasion
- Emphasis on “oral tradition”
- Broad (not deep) knowledge required
- Sets parameters for operations & programming

RESEARCH SPHERE

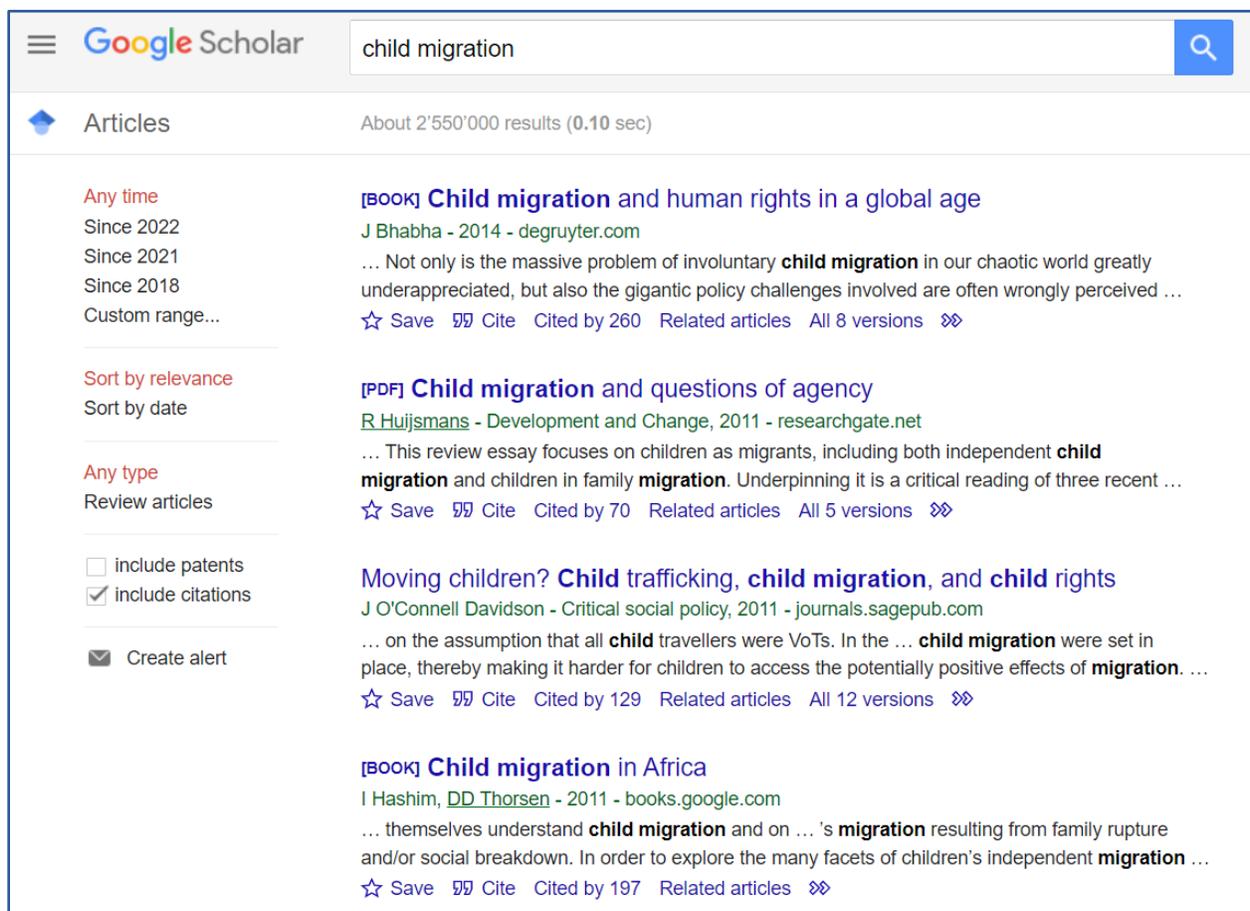
- **Produce robust research**
- Op-eds / blogs / briefs
- Quantitative component
- Dialogues – webinars
- Oral briefings
- Do research to understand policy processes and forums
- Reframe “research question” “What do we want to know?” to “What do we want to solve?”

VI. Conducting desk-based research for policy processes

A. How to access relevant migration outputs

Google Scholar (and also general Google) is the primary search engine used to identify migration research and analysis, although it will identify both materials that are freely available open access as well as materials that are behind paywalls (e.g. scientific journal articles). Information on open access directories is in the text box below. Changes in the publishing industry over time mean that Google Scholar is more likely now - compared to previous years - to list materials that are available online for free, and it is increasingly becoming a key search engine for identifying relevant evidence for policy processes.

Google Scholar provides basic information on published materials that best match the search term, including the title, author(s), year of publication, publisher, number of citations and weblink - as can be seen in the example below on "child migration". Two lines of relevant text from the output is also provided to highlight the relevance of the content.



The screenshot shows the Google Scholar search interface. At the top, the search bar contains the text "child migration" and a search icon. Below the search bar, the results are displayed under the heading "Articles" with a subtext "About 2'550'000 results (0.10 sec)". On the left side, there are filters for "Any time" (with sub-options: Since 2022, Since 2021, Since 2018, Custom range...), "Sort by relevance" (with sub-option: Sort by date), "Any type" (with sub-option: Review articles), and checkboxes for "include patents" (unchecked), "include citations" (checked), and "Create alert" (checked).

The search results list four items:

- [BOOK] Child migration and human rights in a global age**
J Bhabha - 2014 - degruyter.com
... Not only is the massive problem of involuntary **child migration** in our chaotic world greatly underappreciated, but also the gigantic policy challenges involved are often wrongly perceived ...
☆ Save 📄 Cite Cited by 260 Related articles All 8 versions 🔗
- [PDF] Child migration and questions of agency**
R Huijsmans - Development and Change, 2011 - researchgate.net
... This review essay focuses on children as migrants, including both independent **child migration** and children in family **migration**. Underpinning it is a critical reading of three recent ...
☆ Save 📄 Cite Cited by 70 Related articles All 5 versions 🔗
- Moving children? Child trafficking, child migration, and child rights**
J O'Connell Davidson - Critical social policy, 2011 - journals.sagepub.com
... on the assumption that all **child** travellers were VoTs. In the ... **child migration** were set in place, thereby making it harder for children to access the potentially positive effects of **migration**. ...
☆ Save 📄 Cite Cited by 129 Related articles All 12 versions 🔗
- [BOOK] Child migration in Africa**
I Hashim, DD Thorsen - 2011 - books.google.com
... themselves understand **child migration** and on ... 's **migration** resulting from family rupture and/or social breakdown. In order to explore the many facets of children's independent **migration** ...
☆ Save 📄 Cite Cited by 197 Related articles 🔗

There is also a wealth of information, research and analysis on IOM's [Publications Platform](#), particularly on subregions of the world that have traditionally been under-researched. The Publications Platform contains IOM publications in a total of 38 languages (including the three official languages of English, French and Spanish).

A screenshot of the search interface on the IOM Publications Platform. It features a search bar at the top with 'RESET' and 'SEARCH' buttons. Below the search bar are several filter dropdown menus: 'TYPE OF PUBLICATION', 'TOPIC', 'REGION / SUBREGION', 'COUNTRY / TERRITORY', 'YEAR', and 'PUBLICATION LANGUAGE'. Each dropdown menu currently displays '- Select -'.

The Publications Platform was launched in 2021 (replacing the IOM online Bookstore), and now features redesigned search functionality, making it easier to locate the material you need. The Platform contains almost 3,000 publications, with new titles added regularly.

Open access research directories

- [Directory of Open Access Repositories \(DOAR\)](#)
- [Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#)
- [Registry of Open Access Repositories \(ROAR\)](#)
- [CORE](#), an aggregator of open access research papers
- [BASE](#), a search engine especially for academic web resources

B. What to trust and what to discard?

To ensure the evidence used is of high quality, it is necessary to establish how credible the research and analysis is. There are several techniques to determine whether a piece of research is credible. Reputation, ranking, reviews, and number of citations are some basic indicators. Academic research is deemed credible if it is subject to peer review, published in credible academic journals and cites relevant literature. Peer review cannot guarantee credibility but can give an indication. For other types of research and analysis, credibility is judged on a case-by-case basis. Some simple questions to help determine the credibility of a source can be asked.

Assessing the credibility of outputs you access

When considering the credibility of migration knowledge products, it can be useful to consider the following:

- Who is the author and who is the publisher of the output? Is the author a published expert on the topic, and is the publisher well established?
- Is the website where the research and analysis is made available credible?
- Was the output peer reviewed? Are the research and data on which it relies properly cited?
- How were the data about migrants collected? Did the author/publisher have access to reliable information?
- What is the date of the data used (or last revised)?
- Could funding have biased the analysis?
- What are the potential perceptions of migration (or political orientations) underpinning the outputs?

Determining the answers to these key questions can assist in determining whether the migration knowledge products are credible and able to be trusted, and therefore used in policy-related work. For statistical data, it is also important to note that what may first appear to be inconsistencies in numbers, can often be explained through differences in dates (reported/collected), differences in definitions (e.g. conceptual/legal concepts) and/or differences in scope (e.g. geographic, thematic, time periods, etc).

D. How to reference sources

There are conventions related to how to reference sources used when gather evidence, particularly in academic publishing (see, for example, <https://www.scribbr.com/apa-examples/website/>). However, the key principle is to ensure that referencing is **clear** and **consistent**, and that it enables a reader to quickly find the relevant published output, as well as the part of the published output used.