

MIEUX Case Study COMESA (2012-2016)

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ICMPD



How to read this case study?

MIEUX Thematic Areas



Migration and
Development



Legal Migration
and Mobility



Irregular Migration
and Trafficking in
Human Beings



International Protection
and Asylum Policy



Horizontal
Interventions

Ten features of good practice in MIEUX Actions

- 1 There should be ownership on the part of the partner country
- 2 Actions should provide an opportunity to be innovative in their context
- 3 Actions should be able to be replicated
- 4 Actions should provide tangible results
- 5 Actions should be endorsed at a high level
- 6 Actions should be integrated into existing priorities
- 7 Actions should be based on the highest levels of experience
- 8 Actions should complement and be in synergy with other initiatives
- 9 Actions should provide EU added value
- 10 Actions should act as a catalyst for the acquisition of knowledge through the exchange of experiences

DATA SHARING AT REGIONAL LEVEL

COMESA (2012-2016)

MIEUX was approached after the 8th Meeting of COMESA Chief Immigration Officers in 2012 to undertake an Action focusing on strengthening migration data collection, analysis and information sharing as well as beginning the process of documenting existing migration data for use at national and regional levels for policy making and migration issues.

Context

Formed in December 1994, COMESA's main aim is to achieve economic prosperity through the regional integration of its (current) 21 MS. At the 8th Meeting of COMESA Chief Immigration Officers and 5th Meeting of COMESA Ministers Responsible for Immigration in Lusaka in October 2012, it was decided that COMESA MS should strengthen migration data collection, analysis and information sharing, as well as beginning the process of documenting existing migration data for use at national and regional levels for policy making and migration issues. MIEUX, which supported the organisation of the Immigration Officers meeting, and was already collaborating with the COMESA Secretariat, was approached to provide the necessary capacity building support to implement these decisions, especially by investing in the capacity building of the National Focal Points for Migration issues.

Action Design

The Action for COMESA was designed to include a number of different topics and activities. It included support to celebrate the 8th Meeting of COMESA Chief Immigration Officers and 5th Meeting of COMESA Ministers Responsible for Immigration, and to implement subsequent decisions through capacity building on THB and migration data collec-

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MIEUX
FEATURES



tion, as well as remote support to update a background paper on the Harmonisation of National Laws with the COMESA Model Law on Immigration.

1. The Action involved a number of experts for the different activities. For the component on migration data, public officials from Hungary, Italy and Malta were deployed. For the component on THB, an ICMPD internal expert was combined with an expert from Lithuania.
2. In order to implement the recommendations from the ministerial meeting, a migration data questionnaire was sent to all COMESA MS to document what were the existing data sources relied on by them, and to identify gaps in available migration data. It covered five subtopics: resident population (stock data); immigration flows (flow data); emigration flows (flow data); nationals abroad (stock data); and residence permits (stock and flow data). The responses received identified what data was available as well as providing recommendations on how to improve data collection and sharing within the region for the purpose of policy formulation. The exercise in itself, and the report, raised awareness of the importance of data availability for policy making purposes among COMESA MS.
3. The experts on migration data presented how data collection frameworks are set up in their respective countries, and the legal frameworks that exist in order to ensure that data is shared and analysed regularly. Data sharing at EU level was also presented, as well as how to tackle the various challenges of sharing migration data between countries, and how to ensure that harmonious definitions of migration phenomena facilitate the production of data and statistics.

Practices

- **Taking a regional approach:** This Action promoted collaboration and synergies among COMESA MS as well as highlighting efforts at State level that could be replicated and amplified at regional level. The MIEUX Action was an opportunity for the COMESA region to jointly reflect on various issues in the areas of data management, THB and legal harmonisation, and to reach an agreement on how to move forward in order to address current challenges.
- **Complementarity and synergy:** This Action complemented COMESA's active engagement in the Africa-EU Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership, which has boosted the COMESA focus on countering THB. The COMESA Secretariat and a number of its MS participated in the Africa-EU Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership technical meeting on criminal investigation, prosecution, and victim and witness protection among African and European countries relating to human trafficking, and the capacity building under the MIEUX action fed directly into these meetings.

- **Combining capacity building with task force meetings and ministerial meetings:** This enabled the results achieved under the capacity building component to be directly translated into policy measures at regional level. This is in line with the findings from the ACP-EU Migration Action Programme's final report.¹

Impact

- During the Action, the dissemination of the questionnaire was a very practical exercise that demanded the engagement of the various countries, and produced concrete results that could be translated into recommendations.
- A set of concepts that should be commonly defined in the COMESA region for the purpose of improving data sharing, namely, "*usual resident population*", "*immigrants*", "*emigrants*", "*citizenship*", "*nationals*", "*country of birth*", "*purpose of arrival*", "*purpose of departure*", and "*refugees*". It was also decided which data should be collected and shared, and how it should be disaggregated (for instance: persons having acquired citizenship by age, sex, country of birth, citizenship, etc.). The COMESA MS proposed that a legal framework be put in place for the sharing of this data.

Lessons Learnt

- The report on the results of the migration metadata survey provided a detailed overview of COMESA MS capacities to collect, analyse and document the production of migration statistics, as well as the current level of data sharing between the COMESA MS. The findings aimed to stimulate discussions on data harmonisation and data sharing, as both could bring significant improvements for migration statistics. High quality data could facilitate the formulation of comprehensive policy frameworks and strategies on migration at national and regional levels, even more so in the context of implementing the SDG targets and GCM Objectives in the future.
- Data sharing can only take place after a process of individual and institutional change has taken place. Capacity building and dialogue are needed to achieve a change in mind-set that will lead to sharing migration data across different departments and institutions at national and regional levels. A strong legal framework, as observed by the partner authorities involved in this Action, is therefore needed in order to improve data sharing among countries.

¹ L. Harley et al (2019) "*Implementing ACP-EU Cooperation on Migration and Development A collection of good practices and lessons learned from the ACP-EU Migration Action*", P. 134, Available at: https://www.acpeumigrationaction.iom.int/sites/default/files/acp_eu_migration_action_final_publication_web_small_final.pdf. [Accessed 26 August 2020].



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Since launching operations in 2009, the Migration EU expertise (MIEUX) Initiative has provided space to request capacity development activities and EU expertise, allowing the sharing of knowledge and practices between peers working in institutions in and outside of Europe.

The adoption of the Global Compact on Migration and the creation of the UN Network on Migration coincided with MIEUX's ten-year anniversary. To mark the occasion, MIEUX undertook a comprehensive analysis of its achievements, methodologies and practices.

By delving into MIEUX's portfolio of over 100 interventions, this series of case studies intend to offer a glimpse of the broad range of tools, methodologies and approaches that can inspire or be used by governments and migration and development practitioners to advance a cooperative and sustainable international architecture of migration.