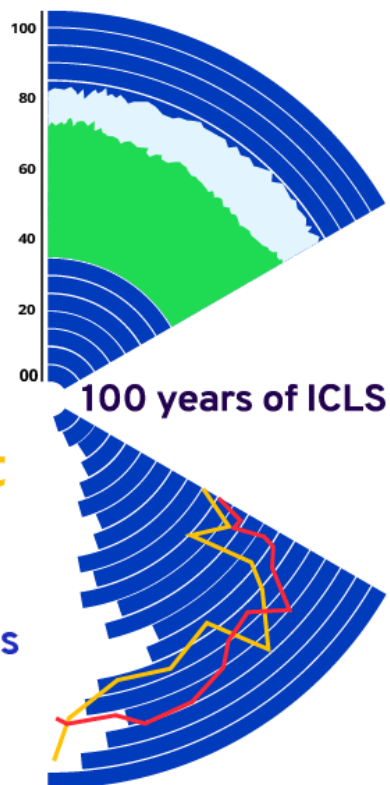




International  
Conference of  
Labour Statisticians

11-20 October 2023



# International labour migration statistics: Current situation and future work

Report I: (paras. 121-128)  
Room documents 16 and 17

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## Labour migration statistics: Current situation and future work

### ► **Statistiques des migrations de main-d'œuvre: situation actuelle et travaux à venir**

### **Estadísticas sobre la migración laboral: situación actual y labor futura**

Participants in the Conference are invited to: (a) comment on the ILO's proposal to call a meeting of the Working Group on International Labour Migration Statistics to finalize the proposed revision of the *20th ICLS Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration* for dissemination by 2025; (b) contribute to improving the availability of official national data and the quality of global estimates on international migrant workers by replying to the ILO's 2023 ILMS questionnaire; and (c) propose activities that will allow the ILO to further advance the topic.

Les participants à la Conférence sont invités à: a) donner leur avis sur la proposition de l'OIT de convoquer une réunion du groupe de travail chargé d'examiner les statistiques sur les migrations internationales de main-d'œuvre afin de finaliser la révision proposée des *Directives concernant les statistiques des migrations internationales de main-d'œuvre* approuvées par la 20<sup>e</sup> CIST en vue de leur diffusion d'ici à 2025; b) contribuer à améliorer la disponibilité des données nationales officielles et la qualité des estimations mondiales concernant les migrations internationales de main-d'œuvre en répondant au questionnaire ILMS 2023 du BIT; c) proposer des activités qui permettront au BIT de faire progresser les travaux sur cette question.

Se invita a los participantes en la Conferencia a que: a) comenten la propuesta de la OIT de convocar una reunión del Grupo de trabajo sobre estadísticas relativas a la migración laboral internacional para finalizar la revisión propuesta de las Directrices relativas a las estadísticas de la migración laboral internacional de la 20.<sup>a</sup> CIET para su difusión en 2025; b) contribuyan a mejorar la disponibilidad de datos nacionales oficiales y la calidad de las estimaciones mundiales sobre trabajadores migrantes internacionales respondiendo al cuestionario ILMS de 2023 de la OIT, y c) propongan actividades que permitan a la OIT avanzar en el tema.

# Contents

- **Background**
- **Status of national practice in ILM statistics**
  - Overview of available sources
  - Potential and actual use for ILM statistics
  - Priorities, plans and challenges
- **Revision of 20<sup>th</sup> ICLS Guidelines**
  - Overview of 20<sup>th</sup> ICLS Guidelines
  - Rationale for revision
  - Areas for updating and expansion
  - Proposed revisions and roadmap
- **Points for reflection**

## Background

- **20<sup>th</sup> ICLS in 2018**
  - Endorsed Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour mobility
  - Called on ILO in collaboration with its partners, to test the underlying conceptual framework, continue methodological work, and report on progress to the ICLS
- **2018-2023 ILO programme to test and expand the Guidelines**
  - ILO Technical working group, and participation in relevant UN expert groups
  - Documentation of country case studies and survey pilot tests with selected countries
  - Review of national practices in ILMS data sources



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# ► Status of national practice

- Room document 16
- Main findings
- Implications for needed guidance

# ILO review (2015-2023) through 4 channels

## A. Special ILO inquiry on ILMS country practices

- ▶ Population census, specialized migration surveys, administrative sources
- ▶ National plans, challenges, priorities and needs

## B. Special ILO inquiry on LFS county practices

- ▶ Dissemination of estimates by international migrant status
- ▶ Self-rated quality of estimates by international migrant status

## C. National LFS microdata repository

- ▶ Assessment of sample size & precision (RSE)

## D. Annual ILMS data and metadata submission

- ▶ ILO review of data and metadata reported through the ILMS annual questionnaire

▶ Table 1. Countries included in the ILO review, by approach and coverage rate

Region/Income group	Countries contacted	Responding countries		ILO desk review	Total countries covered	Coverage rate
		ILMS Inquiry	LFS Inquiry			
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>By region</b>						
Africa	54	31	31	4	35	65%
Americas	36	15	18	4	19	53%
Arab States	12	5	7	2	7	58%
Asia and the Pacific	39	27	25	2	29	74%
Europe and Central Asia	55	37	39	4	41	75%
<b>By income group</b>						
High income	60	38	41	7	45	75%
Upper-middle income	55	31	37	4	35	64%
Lower-middle income	53	33	30	3	36	68%
Low income	28	13	12	2	15	54%

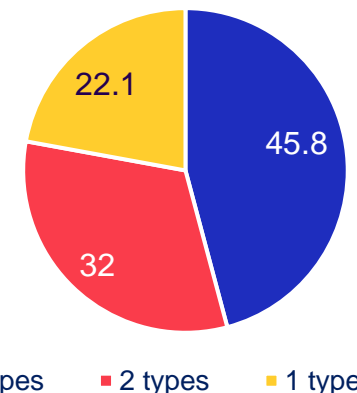
**Global country coverage 67%**

## Different availability of main ILM data sources (% of countries)

► Table 2. Share of countries by region/income group reporting different data sources, 2015-2023

Region/Income group	Number of countries covered	Population census (%)	Household surveys (%)		Population registers (%)	Border entries and/or exits (%)	Work permits (%)
			Specialized migration survey	Labour Force Survey			
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>90.8</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>66.4</b>
<b>By region</b>							
Africa	35	91.4	20.0	74.3	45.7	74.3	65.7
Americas	19	100.0	26.3	100.0	42.1	94.7	63.2
Arab States	7	57.1	0.0	85.7	71.4	42.9	42.9
Asia and the Pacific	29	89.7	10.3	75.9	41.4	69.0	65.5
Europe, Central Asia	41	95.1	17.1	100.0	65.9	48.8	73.2
<b>By income group</b>							
High income	45	95.6	15.6	100.0	60.0	55.6	75.6
Upper-middle income	35	94.3	20.0	34.3	54.3	80.0	65.7
Lower-middle income	36	91.7	19.4	77.8	44.4	63.9	58.3
Low income	15	73.3	6.7	100.0	40.0	73.3	60.0

Combined availability of main ILM data sources

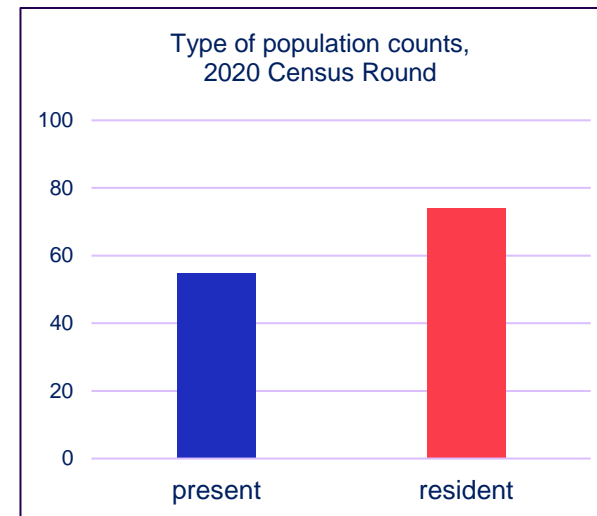


- Population census and LFS most prevalent (over 90%)
- Specialized migration surveys least available (16.8%)
- Administrative sources available in less than 2/3 of countries
- Less than half of countries have 3 main types of sources (45.8%)

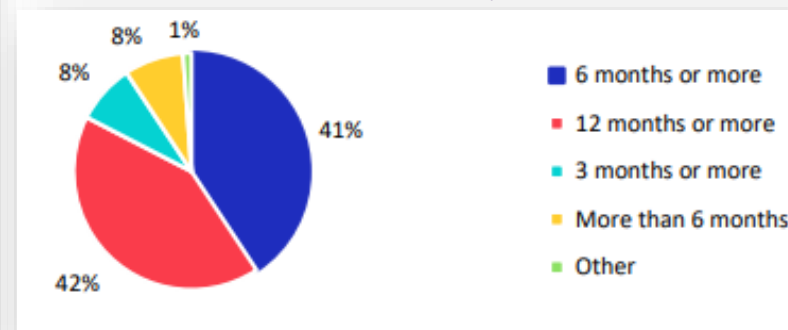
## 2020 Census round promising use for ILM statistics (n and % of countries)

► Table 4. Questions to identify international migrant workers, 2020 Census (number of countries).

Region/ Income group	Countries with census	Includes relevant questions on		Share identifying international migrant workers
		international migrants (country of birth / citizenship)	labour force status	
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>94.2</b>
<b>By region</b>				
Africa	32	32	32	100.0
Americas	19	19	18	94.7
Arab States	4	4	4	100.0
Asia and the Pacific	26	23	22	84.6
Europe and Central Asia	39	39	37	94.9
<b>By income group</b>				
High income	43	43	41	95.3
Upper-middle income	33	33	31	93.9
Lower-middle income	33	30	30	90.9
Low income	11	11	11	100.0



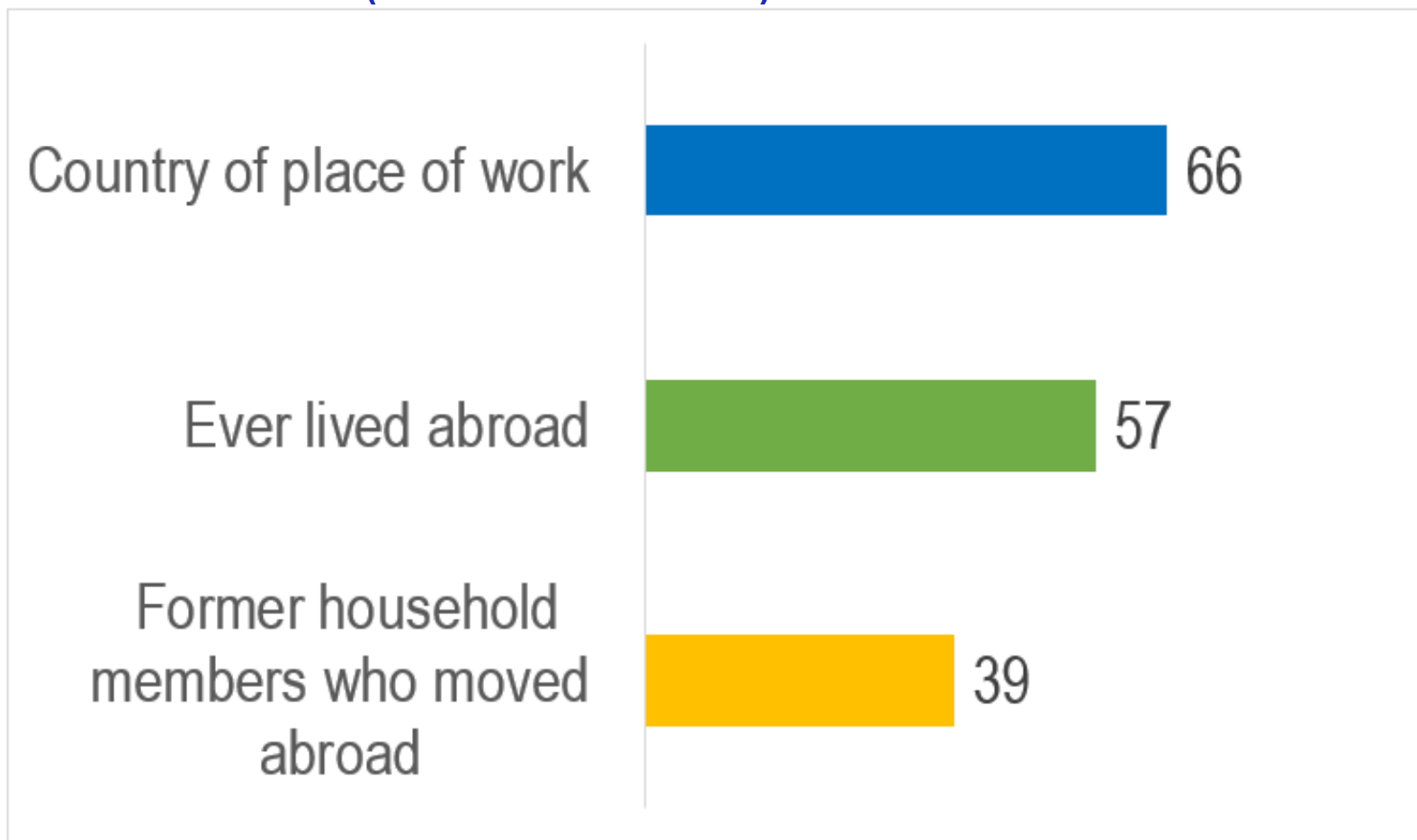
Duration threshold to define usually resident population



**2020 Population census round can  
be used by 94% of countries for  
stock and essential characteristics  
international migrant workers, with  
some comparability issues**



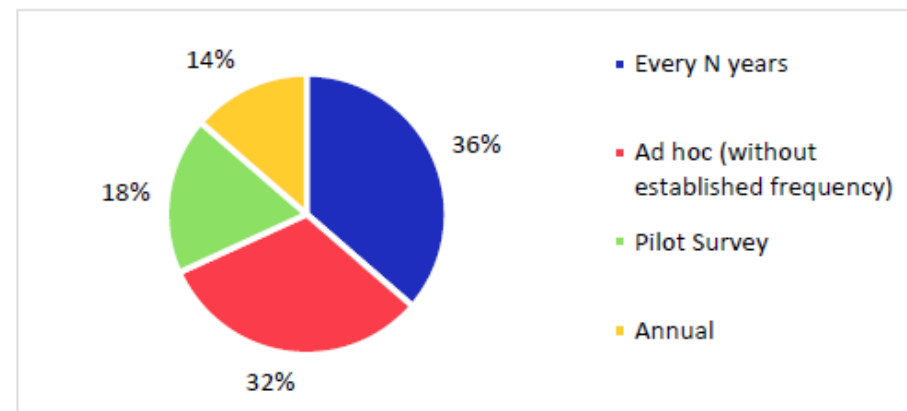
## 2020 Census use for statistics on other migrant populations of interest (n of countries)



# Specialized migration surveys for ILM statistics (n of countries)

► Figure 8. Periodicity of specialized migration surveys (% of surveys)

Region/ Income group	Countries reporting a specialized migration survey	Includes questions for	
		international migrants (country of birth/ citizenship)	Labour force status
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>By region</b>			
Africa	7	7	6
Americas	5	5	5
Arab States			
Asia and the Pacific	3	3	2
Europe and Central Asia	7	7	4
<b>By income group</b>			
High income	7	7	5
Upper-middle income	7	7	6
Lower-middle income	7	7	6
Low income	1	1	



- Very limited national implementation
- Not part of regular national data collection programmes in most countries
- Where available, most enable identification of international migrant workers

## Labour force surveys for ILM statistics (n and % of countries)

Region/Income group	Countries in LFS Inquiry	Reports LFS statistics by migrant status	% of responding countries
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>51.7</b>
<b>By region</b>			
Africa	31	18	58.1
Americas	18	8	44.4
Arab States	7	3	42.9
Asia and the Pacific	25	15	60.0
Europe and Central Asia	39	18	46.2
<b>By income group</b>			
High income	41	23	56.1
Upper-middle income	37	16	43.2
Lower-middle income	30	16	53.3
Low income	12	7	58.3

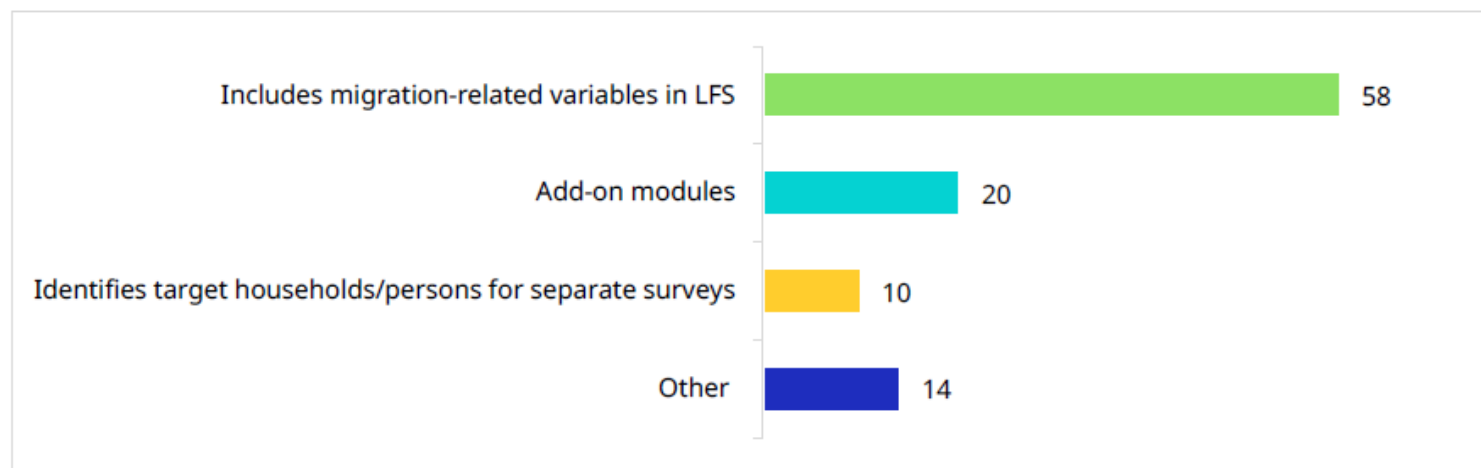
Frequency of reporting core LFS indicators by international migrant status

Region/Income group	Reports LFS statistics by migrant status	Sub-annual	Annual	Every N years	Ad-hoc
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>By region</b>					
Africa	18	3	4	2	6
Americas	8	3	2		1
Arab States	3		1		1
Asia and the Pacific	15	2	1	3	7
Europe and Central Asia	18	8	7		2
<b>By income group</b>					
High income	23	11	8		1
Upper-middle income	16	2	3	4	5
Lower-middle income	16	1	2		9
Low income	7	2	2	1	2

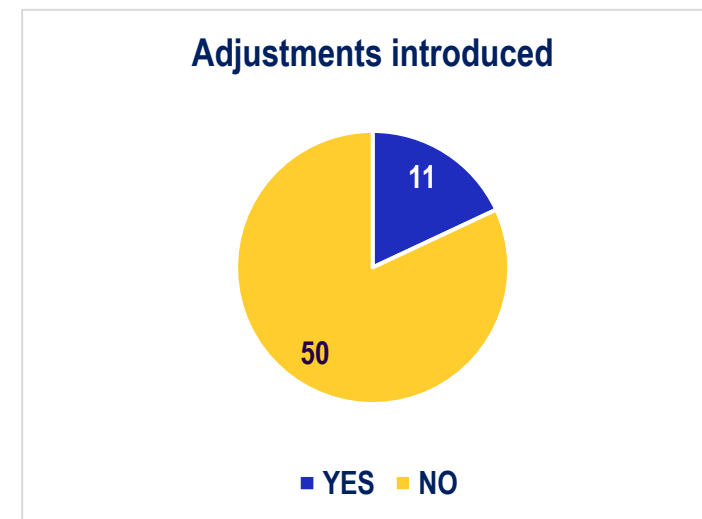
- Around half of countries (51.7%) use LFS to report key labour force statistics disaggregated by international migrant status
- Frequency of reporting is varied, mostly on annual or sub-annual basis, but an important number on ad-hoc basis

## Approach to support disaggregation of LFS indicators by migrant status (% of countries)

► Figure 10. Approaches to support disaggregation of LFS core statistics by international migrant status.



- Most common to add questions to identify international migrants directly in LFS
- Some countries add special add-on modules
- Other link LFS and administrative data



### Adjustments to LFS reported only by 11 countries

- Use of migration relevant stratification variables
- Adjustments to basic weights
- Post-stratification adjustments

## NSO self-rated quality of LFS estimates disaggregated by international migrant status(n countries)

► Table 18. Self-rated quality of core LFS indicators by migrant status (number of countries).

Region/Income group	Reports LFS statistics by migrant status	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Poor
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>By region</b>					
Africa	18	2	5	8	2
Americas	8	1	1	4	
Arab States	3	1	2		
Asia and the Pacific	15	3	2	6	1
Europe and Central Asia	18	1	7	10	
<b>By income group</b>					
High income	23	3	9	9	
Upper-middle income	16	2	1	10	1
Lower-middle income	16	2	4	6	2
Low income	7	1	3	3	

**Most countries reporting LFS estimates by international migrant status, rate the data quality as acceptable**

# ILO assessment of precision of LFS estimates disaggregated by international migrant status(n countries)

► Table 21b. Differences in precision levels for estimates of international migrants in employment by sex (number of countries, most recent LFS).

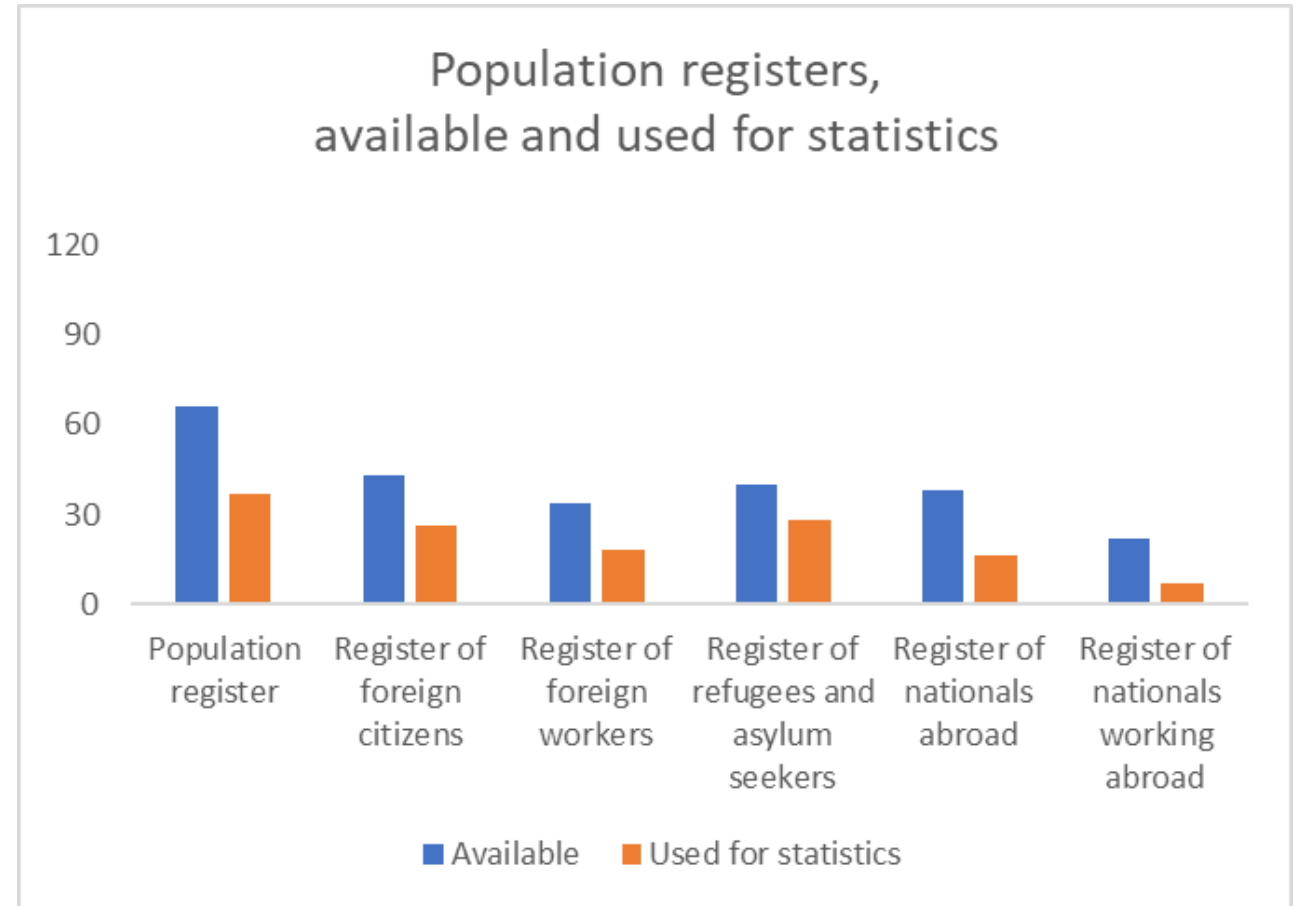
Region/Income group	RSE, estimate of international MALE migrants in employment			RSE, estimate of international FEMALE migrants in employment		
	0-20%	21-30%	>30%	0-20%	21-30%	>30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>By region</b>						
Africa	18	4	3	15	6	4
Americas	15	1		14	2	
Arab States	2	1		2		1
Asia and the Pacific	10	5	2	9	5	3
Europe and Central Asia	29	2	1	27	2	3
<b>By income group</b>						
High income	30			29		1
Upper-middle income	20	6	1	19	5	3
Lower-middle income	17	5	3	13	8	4
Low income	7	2	2	6	2	3

Note: Based on most recent LFS microdata shared by country with ILO (93 countries).

- Most can generate estimates of employed migrants by sex with <20% relative standard errors
- However, overall lower precision for estimates for women and limited scope for further disaggregation

# Population registers

Region/Income group	Number of countries covered	Population registers (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>51.9</b>
<b>By region</b>		
Africa	35	45.7
Americas	19	42.1
Arab States	7	71.4
Asia and the Pacific	29	41.4
Europe, Central Asia	41	65.9
<b>By income group</b>		
High income	45	60.0
Upper-middle income	35	54.3
Lower-middle income	36	44.4
Low income	15	40.0

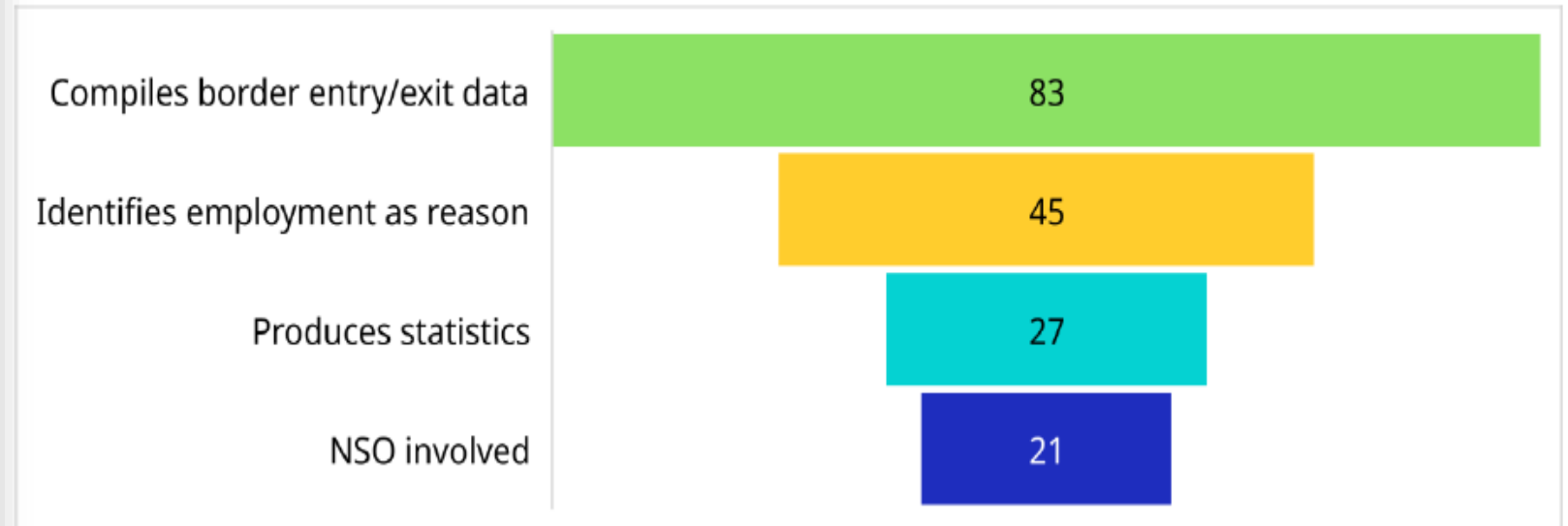


- Population registers available in slightly over half of countries, primarily Arab states and Europe
- Use for statistics lagging, for all types of registers

## Use of border records for ILM statistics –global view

Region/Income group	Number of countries covered	Border entries and/or exits (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>66.4</b>
<b>By region</b>		
Africa	35	74.3
Americas	19	94.7
Arab States	7	42.9
Asia and the Pacific	29	69.0
Europe, Central Asia	41	48.8
<b>By income group</b>		
High income	45	55.6
Upper-middle income	35	80.0
Lower-middle income	36	63.9
Low income	15	73.3

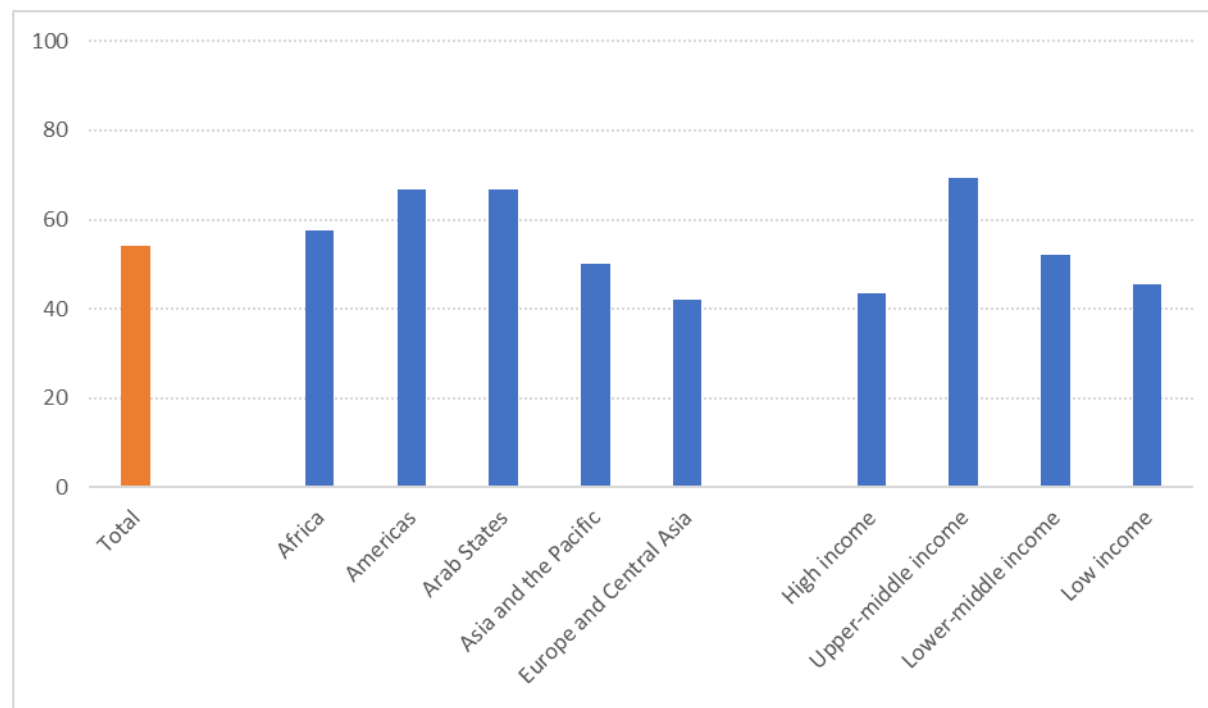
► Figure 17. Availability and use of border entry / exit data for statistics on ILM (number of countries).



- Most prevalent in Americas and Africa, but limited use for ILM statistics
- Problem starts with not identifying “employment” as purpose for arrival/departure
- When statistics are produced from border records, NSO generally involved



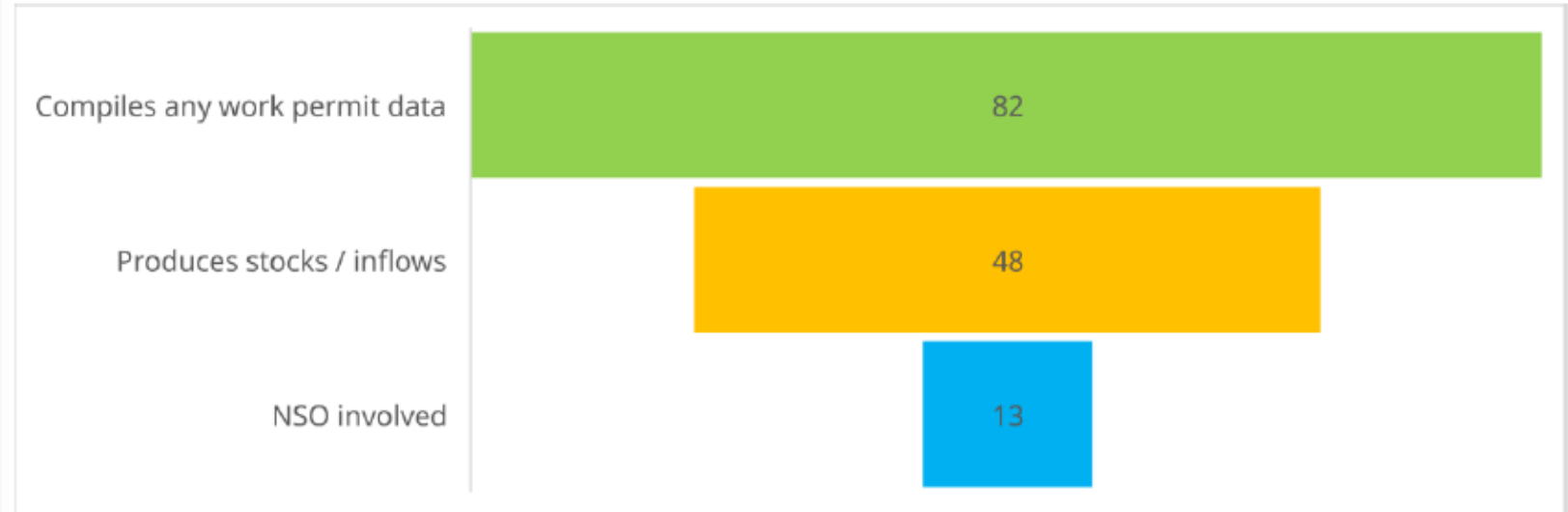
## Share of countries with border records that identify employment as purpose of entry / exit



## Use of Work permits for ILM statistics –global view

Region/Income group	Number of countries covered	Work permits (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>66.4</b>
<b>By region</b>		
Africa	35	65.7
Americas	19	63.2
Arab States	7	42.9
Asia and the Pacific	29	65.5
Europe, Central Asia	41	73.2
<b>By income group</b>		
High income	45	75.6
Upper-middle income	35	65.7
Lower-middle income	36	58.3
Low income	15	60.0

► Figure 19. Availability and use of work permit data for statistics on ILM (number of countries).



- Available particularly among high income countries
- Slightly over half of countries with work permit records use them for ILM statistics
- Very limited involvement of NSO when producing statistics

## Differences in priority topics (n of countries)

► Table 30. Groups of international migrant workers for which statistics are needed by level of priority and country income-group (number of countries)

Priority group	Income group				Total
	High income	Upper-middle income	Lower-middle income	Low income	
International migrants resident and working in country	21	23	24	9	77
Nationals living and working abroad	11	22	23	11	67
Return international migrant workers	9	15	21	9	54
Frontier workers (coming into the country)	9	8	11	5	33
Seasonal migrant workers (going abroad)	9	9	8	4	30
Frontier workers (going abroad)	7	7	11	4	29
Seasonal migrant workers (coming into the country)	8	8	6	3	25
Other short term migrant workers (coming into the country)	8	5	8	3	24
Other short term migrant workers (going to work abroad)	1	6	9	3	19

### International migrant workers

- Top for high & middle income

### Nationals working abroad

- Top for low income
- 2<sup>nd</sup> priority for middle income

### Return migrant workers

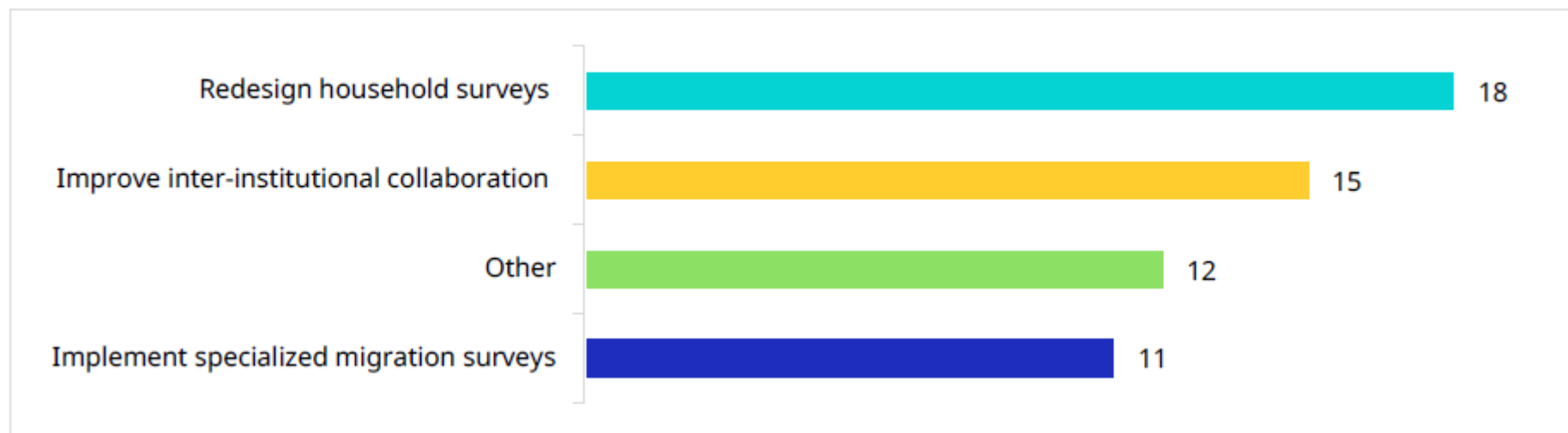
- 3<sup>rd</sup> highest priority globally

### Temporary mobility

- Top frontier workers entering country

## Plans to improve ILM statistics in next 5 years

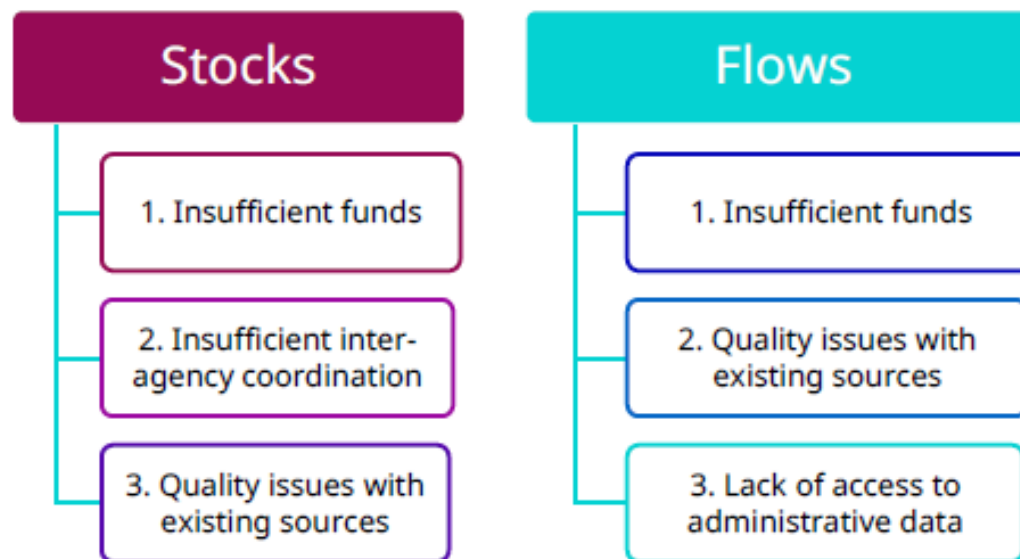
► Figure 20. Concrete plans in the next 5 years to improve official ILM statistics (number of countries)



- Focus on survey redesign or implementation of specialized migration surveys
- Next focus to improve inter-institutional collaboration
- Among other: priority to better utilize administrative sources for ILM statistics

## Top 3 challenges

► Figure 21. Top 3 challenges to improve stock and flow ILM data.



- Lack of funds is biggest challenge among all countries except high-income countries
- Quality issues is top challenge for high-income countries and 2<sup>nd</sup> top for all others
- Insufficient interagency coordination and lack of access to administrative data 3<sup>rd</sup> challenge overall

# Revision of the 20<sup>th</sup> ICLS Guidelines

- Overview of 20<sup>th</sup> ICLS Guidelines
- Rationale for revision
- Refined framework
- Revised priority groups and measures
- Expanded guidance for national data collection plans

## ► Overview 20<sup>th</sup> ICLS Guidelines on ILM statistics

- Introduced three main components
  - Each component covers all who cross international borders & have a labour attachment in destination country
  - Each component includes 2 subgroups
    - International migrant workers
      - (a) resident migrant worker
      - (b) non-resident migrant worker
    - Return international migrant workers
      - (a) who changed country of residence
      - (b) who did not change country of residence
    - For-work international migrants
      - (a) who changed country of residence;
      - (b) who did not change country of residence
- Takes as starting point the 1998 UN Recommendations for international migration statistics.
  - But expands the scope to cover groups of relevance to labour migration, who do not change country of residence, including frontier workers, seasonal migrant workers and others with short durations of stay abroad.
  - Expands interpretation of term “international migrant” vis-à-vis the 1998 UN Recommendations
  - Introduces new concept of “labour attachment” although it is not defined

# Rationale for revision (I): Findings from ongoing conceptual and measurement work

## ■ Issues with the 3 core definitions

- Problem stemming from including two sub-categories (temporary mobility and migration) under each main definition
- Raises problems of inconsistency with closely related statistical frameworks (population and labour force, which use as reference the “usually” resident population)
- Leads to double counting of particular cases (e.g. resident frontier workers which fall under subgroups (a) and (b));
- Blurs distinction of policy relevant groups;

## ■ Communication challenges

- Key terms not defined (labour migration, labour attachment)
- Common concepts shared with closely related domains used with a different meaning
  - Migrant, international migrant, international migration



## Rationale for revision (II): Developments in related statistical standards

- **International migration and mobility statistics**

- New conceptual framework for statistics of international migration and mobility (2021, UNSC)
- New indicator framework for statistics of international migration and mobility (2023, UNSC)

- **Refugee, asylum seeker, and statelessness statistics**

- New statistical recommendations covering definitions, priority data, treatment within international migration and mobility statistics, data sources, etc (2018, 2023 UNSC)

- **Trade in services statistics**

- Need for statistics on GATS Mode 4 (presence of natural persons): services traded by individuals of one [country] through their presence in the territory of another (i.e. cross-border service suppliers)
  - Common trait is that employer economic unit is not located in the country of destination
  - Nevertheless cross-border service suppliers contribute to production in country of destination

# Main objectives of proposed revision

- **Formalize framework for ILM statistics**
  - Introduce statistical definitions for key concepts: international labour mobility, labour attachment, etc
- **Improve consistency with frameworks in closely related domains**
  - International migration and mobility statistics (2021 UN Framework and 2023 Indicator set)
  - Labour force and work statistics (19<sup>th</sup> ICLS Resolution, 20<sup>th</sup> ICLS Resolution)
  - Economic statistics (trade in services statistics)
  - Refugee, asylum seeker and statelessness statistics (2018, 2023 UNSC)
- **Expand and introduce flexibility on priority groups to be measured, as per country context**
  - To reflect different ILM patterns as country of origin, transit and/or destination
  - To reflect different ILM patterns taking into account permanent and/or temporary nature of movements
- **Expand guidance to inform national programmes for ILM statistics**
  - Introduce guidance on the value of specific sources, and how to minimize measurement challenges
  - Introduce guidance on different periodicities for different priority groups, as per national context and statistical capacity
  - Introduce guidance on priority indicators, tabulation and essential disaggregation

# New concepts introduced to set the scope of ILM statistics

## Aligned with 2021 UN Framework

### 2021 UN Framework for international migration and mobility statistics

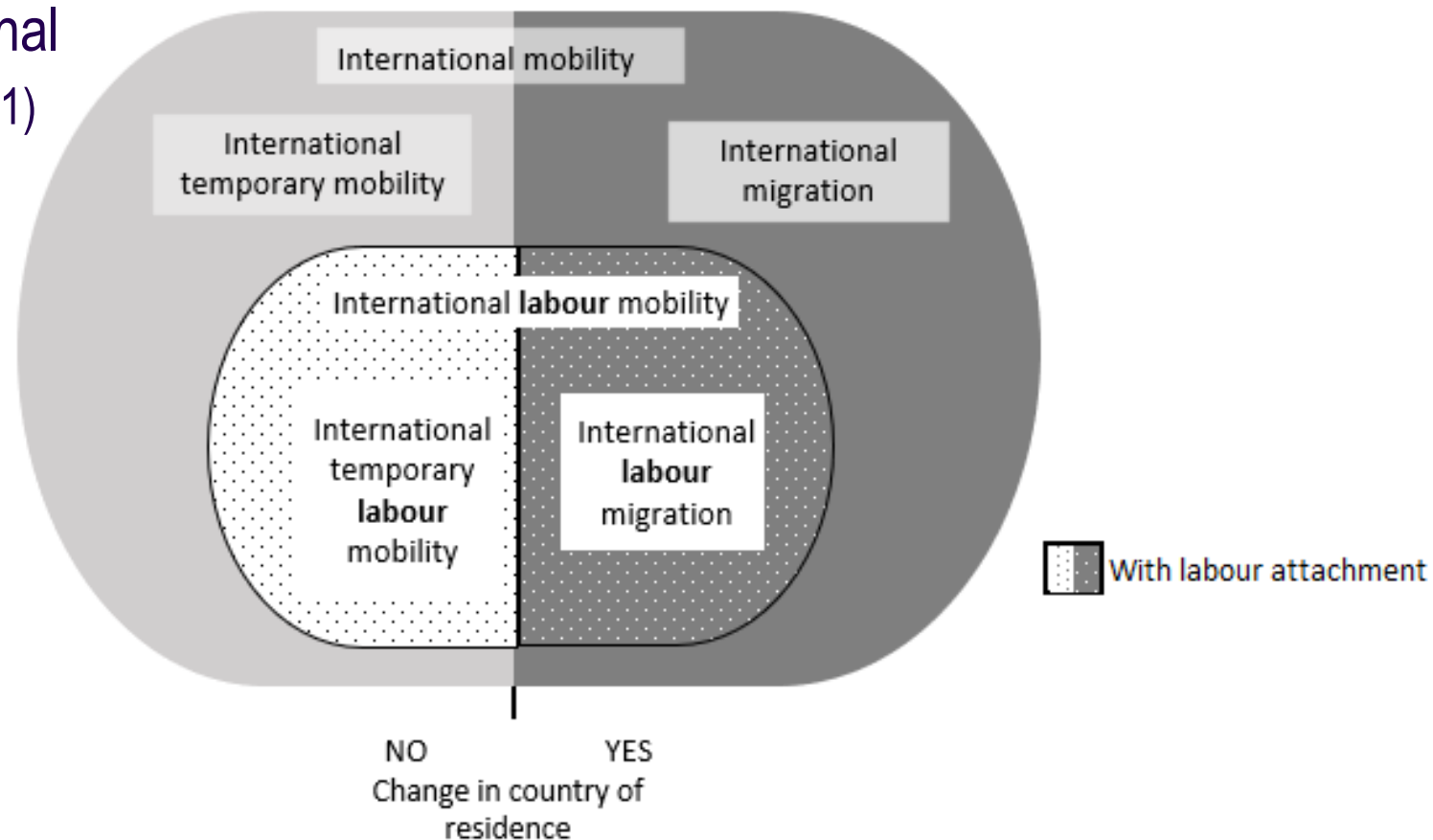
- **International mobility:** All movements that cross international borders
- **International migration:** All movements resulting in a change in the country of residence (a subset of international mobility)
- **International temporary mobility:** All movements that cross international borders that do not result in a change in the country of residence

### Proposed definitions for conceptual framework for ILM statistics

- **International labour mobility:** All movements of persons that cross international borders and involve a labour attachment in the country of destination
- **International labour migration:** All movements of persons across international borders that involve a labour attachment in the country of destination and result in a change in the country of residence
- **International temporary labour mobility:** All movements of persons that cross international borders and involve a labour attachment in the country of destination but do not result in a change in the country of residence

## Revised conceptual framework proposed

- Enables consistency with new UN conceptual framework for international migration and mobility statistics (2021)
- Maintains coherence with relevant reference populations
  - Resident population
  - Temporary non-resident population



## ► New definition for concept of labour attachment (i)

- **Labour attachment**

- Refers to engagement, or intention to engage, in the production of goods and/or the provision of services in exchange for remuneration (i.e., employment) in the country of destination.
- Extension to cover unpaid forms of work envisaged (e.g., international volunteer workers).

- Persons may have a labour attachment as part of:

- **Resident labour force:**

- Refers to residents who are counted as employed or unemployed, in line with 19<sup>th</sup> ICLS resolution

- **Non-resident labour force:** new introduced to fully cover temporary international labour mobility

- Refers to non-residents, present, who engage or intend to engage in the production and/or provision of services, in exchange for remuneration, in the country

## ► New definition of concept of labour attachment (ii)

- **Work relationship**

- Persons who cross international borders and establish a labour attachment in the country of destination may have a work relationship as independent worker or dependent worker (aligned with 20<sup>th</sup> ICLS)

- **Economic unit**

- With an economic unit resident in the country of origin, in the country of destination, or in a third country.
- To include within scope cross-border service providers, regardless of location of employer economic unit, expanded as a general feature of the framework

## Revised 9 priority groups and measures

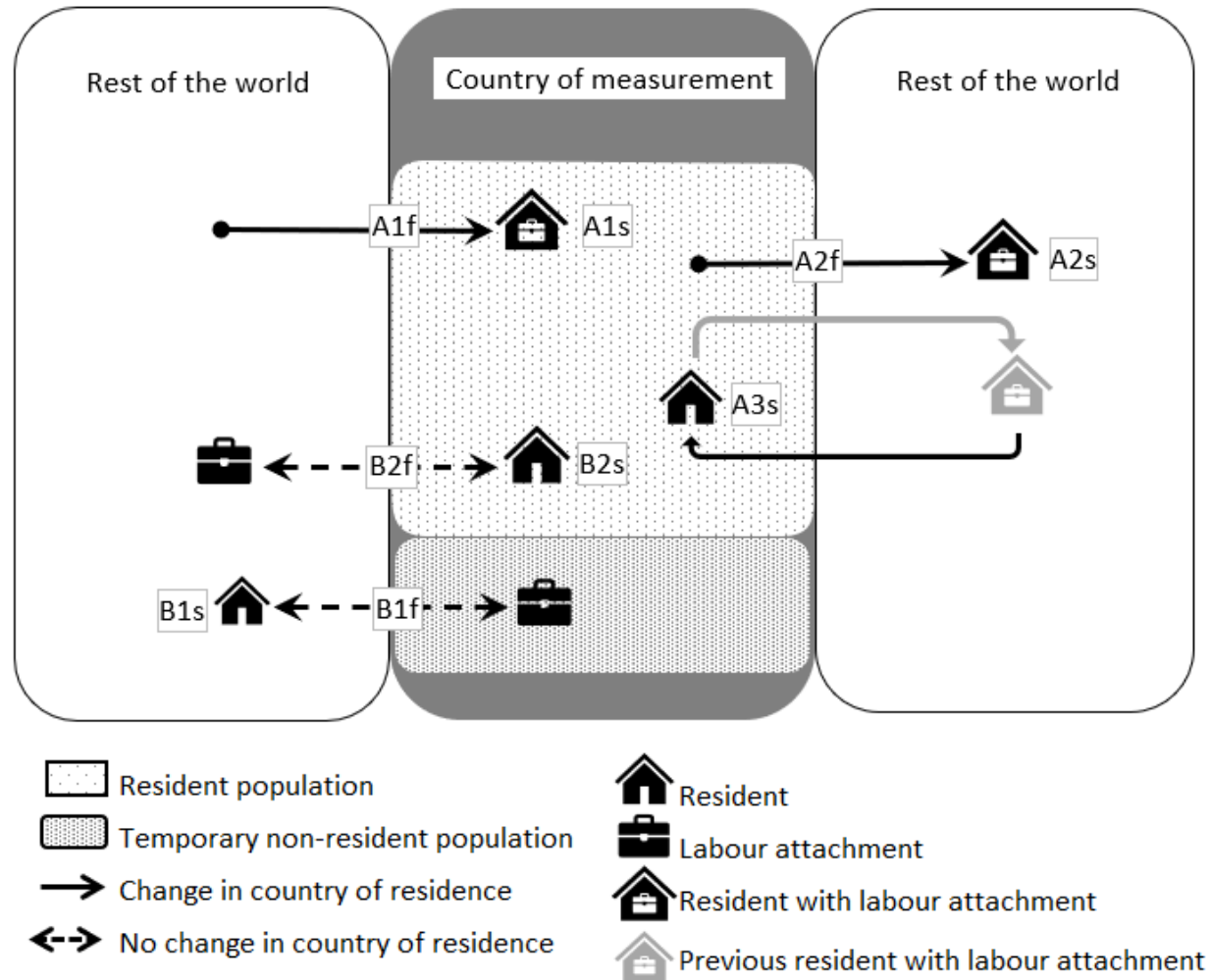
- Defined separately from a country of measurement perspective
- Enables different prioritization by countries
- Revised terminology and operational definitions, as a sub-set of the “parent” category, as defined in the UN 2021 Conceptual Framework for statistics of international migration and mobility

A. International labour migration	B. International temporary labour mobility
<b>STOCKS</b>	
A1s. Immigrant (migrant) <b>workers</b>	B1s. Non-resident <b>workers</b>
A2s. Emigrant <b>workers</b>	B2s. Residents <b>working</b> abroad
A3s. Returned international migrant <b>workers</b>	
<b>FLOWS</b>	
A1f. Inflow of <b>for-work</b> migrants	B1f. Inflow of <b>for-work</b> non-residents
A2f. Outflow of <b>for-work</b> migrants	B2f. Outflow of <b>for-work</b> residents

## Diagram of priority groups of international workers

### International worker

- proposed as general term to refer to the different priority groups





## ▶ Expanded guidance introduced

- **Measurement objectives** (expanded to include assessment of impacts and contributions of ILM to labour markets)
- **Items of data collection or compilation** (reorganized to support priority setting)
- **Core indicators and tabulations** (new emphasis on priority topics and disaggregation variables)
- **Periodicity of data collection and reporting** (new section)
- **Data sources** (new section)
- **Measurement issues** (revised to strengthen data sources section)
- **International reporting** (new section)

## ► Areas requiring further work in the Guidelines

- **Improve definitions for flow measures**
  - Consider wide differences in statistical capacity, infrastructure, resources, and mobility context
- **Formalize relevant statistical unit(s)**
  - Beyond persons
- **Address irregular migration and mobility**
- **Guidance on combination of data sources and estimation**

## ► Proposed roadmap to finalize Guidelines

- **2024 – mid 2025**
  - Through consultation with ILO technical working group on ILM statistics
    - New interested countries, IO, partners welcome
  - Wider consultation with strategic partners, as relevant
    - To integrate any further refinements stemming from ongoing work
    - UN EG Migration Statistics, preparations 2030 round of population censuses, EGRISS, etc.

## ► Points for reflection

Participants in the Conference are invited to:

- (a) comment on ILO's proposal to call a meeting of the Working Group on International Labour Migration Statistics to finalize the proposed revision of the 20th ICLS *Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration* for dissemination by 2025;
- (c) propose activities that will allow the ILO to further advance the topic.