Established in early 2018, the Regional Data Hub (RDH) for East and Horn of Africa aims to support evidence-based, strategic and policy-level discussion on migration through a combination of initiatives. The RDH aims to enhance the availability of migration related data and promote its dissemination in the region to achieve stronger governance outcomes and positive impacts for migrants and societies as a whole. The RDH strategy is structured along four pillars, in line with the IOM’s Migration Data Strategy.

At the regional level, the RDH aims to enhance technical coordination, harmonize the different data collection activities and foster a multi-layered analysis of mixed migration movements, trends and characteristics across the region. Progressively, the RDH has become a technical hub able to provide information management services to countries in the region for programming, analysis and data management support. Through a combination of IOM data collection methodologies, research initiatives, and continuous and active engagement with National Statistical Offices (NSOs), key line Ministries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the RDH aims to fill in the existing gaps in strengthening the regional evidence base on migration. This contribution will, in turn, help improve policy-making programming and coordination between all the stakeholders involved.

In 2020, the RDH revamped its website. The new design features interactive data visualizations of the various migration data sources, as well as facilitates querying the RDH library to access regular publications, briefings, and information management products.
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)
The DTM in the EHoA region is currently active in eight countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania), and its methodology includes four main components (mobility tracking, flow monitoring, registrations, and surveys). The Flow Monitoring (FM) component is operational in all the countries, and the current regional network of 62 Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) established at key areas of high mobility aims to track cross-border movement trends in the region. Read more

Migration Response Centres (MRCs)
The MRCs facilitate the identification of migrants in vulnerable situations and ensure that they receive appropriate, immediate and short-term support, including direct assistance (for instance shelter, counselling support, medical care and assisted voluntary return) and referrals to government entities and service providers. To facilitate assistance and service provision to migrants, data is collected upon registration at the MRCs. In 2020, the RDH developed a new software application, the MRC Information System (MRCIS) to better address the data management needs of these facilities. Read more

Missing Migrant Project (MMP)
The MMP tracks incidents involving migrants who have died or gone missing in the process of migration towards an international destination. In 2020, a total of 52 deaths and disappearances were recorded in the EHoA region, and mainly involved returning migrants from the Arab Peninsula to the Horn of Africa. Most incidences were attributed to drowning or dehydration. Read more

COVID-19 Tracking and Analysis
To better understand how COVID-19 affects global mobility, IOM has developed a global mobility database to map and gather data on the locations, status and different restrictions at Points of Entry (PoEs). In the EHoA region, the status of over 300 PoEs (airports, land border crossings, blue border crossings and internal transit points) across nine countries are regularly monitored at the regional level. Similarly, the impact of COVID-19 on migrants along the Eastern Corridor has been assessed monthly, with updates provided on COVID-19 operational measures and quarantine measures in place. This analysis supports regional advocacy and awareness-raising efforts by tracking migration trends in the area and shedding light on the various protection risks faced by the migrant populations stranded and/or on the move along the Eastern Corridor. In addition, COVID-19-specific indicators have been added to the standardized DTM tools in order to collect information mainly on COVID-19 awareness and perception, prevention measures undertaken, and challenges encountered since the onset of the pandemic. Latest COVID-19 analytical products

Returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Migration to the Middle East tends to be temporary, meaning that most migrants return to Ethiopia after a few years abroad. In the last five years, following the regularization of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia labour market, returns have mainly been involuntary. Since May 2017, IOM has been electronically registering Ethiopian returnees arriving at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa. IOM also provides travel support and other assistance to the most vulnerable migrants. Between May 2017 and December 2020, IOM has registered 345,741 return movements. Read more

Over 3,600 quantitative surveys and 66 in-depth, qualitative interviews conducted with 15-29 year old Ethiopian migrants in Obock, Djibouti and Bossaso, Puntland.

Over 50 Key Informant interviews conducted with Southern Route experts in origin, destination and transit countries along the route.

Read more
Eastern Route Research
In late 2019 and early 2020, IOM conducted over 3,600 quantitative surveys and 66 in-depth interviews with young (15–29 years old), Ethiopian migrants travelling towards the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Interviews were conducted in Obock, Djibouti and Bossaso, Puntland, the Horn’s main gateways to the Arab Peninsula. A third research phase will be conducted in communities of high emigration in Ethiopia in early 2021. The research explores the drivers of migration and the profiles of migrants along this route, as well as the nexus between decision-making, migrant expectations, risk perception and experienced realities.

Southern Route Research
While other migration routes in the region have received significant international attention in recent months, the Southern Corridor remains largely understudied although it is one of the most dangerous and challenging migration routes on the continent. The RDH is currently addressing this gap through a Southern Route Scoping Research project that will create a foundational understanding of the migration dynamics and migrant characteristics of Ethiopians and Somalis along this corridor, through in-depth key informant interviews at origin, transit and destination communities, thereby creating a baseline of data to conduct further in-depth research.

Region on the Move Reports
The mid-year and yearly editions have been the flagship publication of the IOM Regional Office for the EHoA since 2017. These reports provide an in-depth overview of the main population movement trends in the region, as the EHoA continues to exhibit high mobility patterns, both internally (within countries) and across national borders. Migration in the region is triggered by a combination of persistent insecurity and conflict, harsh climatic conditions, public health emergencies, socioeconomic drivers, and more traditional seasonal and livelihood factors. As such, population trends in the EHoA are mixed, multidirectional, and intra- and extra- regional, thus requiring multilayered tools to investigate them.

IMPACT Study
IMPACT is a study to evaluate how the assistance provided under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative Programme for Migrant Protection and Reintegration (EU-IOM JI) promotes the sustainable reintegration of the returning migrants, with a particular focus on Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. It is the first impact evaluation conducted on a large-scale reintegration programme implemented by IOM. It builds on the MEASURE Project, under which IOM developed the Reintegration Sustainability Score in an effort to monitor and evaluate IOM’s Integrated Approach to Reintegration. The study implementation started in October 2020 following the approval of a Methodological Report.

Technical hub
The RDH has become a technical hub able to provide information management services to countries in the region for programming, analysis and data management support. These services include: software development, technical support (database, GIS, tool creation, data analysis, and product packaging), data quality checks, and harmonization of methodologies and practices. Additionally, a Regional Data Warehouse (RDW) has been established since 2019 to store and record the vast amount of migration data collected in the region, foster analysis across different data sources through the harmonization of indicators and facilitate data management, sharing and consolidation.

MRC Information System (MRCIS)
Development of a new software application to better address the data management needs of the MRCs

Returning Migrant Registration System
Creation of a registration and certification application for the National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA) in Somalia to issue registration certificates to returning migrants, which can be used to access services from government authorities

Migrant Management Operational Systems Application (MiMOSA)
Technical and strategic support on the usage of MiMOSA, definitions of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), training of end-users and focal points, customization of MiMOSA forms to capture project-specific data, and creation of custom reports to extract data based on specific reporting requirements
The RDH, in close support with the missions and IOM’s Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), has launched multiple capacity building development initiatives to strengthen the capacity of governments and National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to collect, analyze and disseminate migration statistics and knowledge and therefore support evidence-based migration policies. Support is being provided to establish Technical Working Groups (TWGs) on migration data to facilitate the establishment of a national migration data governance framework and data sharing protocols across governmental agencies.

At the regional level, IOM is highly engaged in providing technical support to the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) to enhance the production, harmonization and comparability of migration data among Member States. This includes the support to formalize the establishment of a regional TWG on migration data, consolidate strategic priorities for migration data through a five-year strategy and produce a statistical yearbook on the state of migration in the region. IOM in cooperation with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is also co-hosting the 2nd IGAD Scientific Conference on Migration and Displacement on “Human Mobility in the Context of COVID-19”, planned in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 22-24 February 2021.

An online migration data course in coordination with IOM’s GMDAC and E-campus to enhance migration data production and dissemination for more informed policymaking will be launched at the beginning of 2021. This course aims to build knowledge of key concepts, definitions, and migration data sources, as well as awareness of the best practices in migration data development initiatives in the region. It targets policy and technical representatives of the ministry, departments and agencies (MDAs) and NSOs engaged in migration data production and dissemination.

Partnerships
The RDH is engaged in shaping multiple strategic partnerships, conducting joint analysis exercises and acting as a convening forum to promote discussion and dissemination around an evidence-based migration narrative, themes being investigated include migrant protection risks, climate-induced migration and forced movement trends.