

# PROTECTING DATA IS PROTECTING PEOPLE



## Four questions and answers about data protection and information hubs

IOM considers that data protection is fundamental to support its operations, as it is key to the respect of human dignity and the right to privacy of individuals. In the framework of January 28, International Data Protection Day, IOM, from the Western Hemisphere Program, shares with the Information Hubs on Migration of the region four key questions and answers on the subject.

### QUESTION 1: What is personal data?

Personal data refers to any information relating to an identified or identifiable data subject that is recorded electronically or on paper. It can include biographical data, biometric and genetic data, reference data, real estate, images and recordings, and personal and verification documents.

### QUESTION 2: What is data protection?

Data protection is the systematic application of a set of institutional, technical and physical actions that preserve the right to privacy regarding the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal data.

### QUESTION 3: Why is data protection important for the Information Hubs on Migration?

Data protection derives from the right to privacy, which has been recognized worldwide as a fundamental human right enshrined in international conventions, particularly in [article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and [article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#).

The information hubs of the Western Hemisphere Program offer services and information to migrants. As part of this process, the hubs carry out data management processes that require special attention, since it involves collecting data from beneficiaries and, for the monitoring of cases, personal data that require special treatment in accordance with regulations at national and international levels must be recorded. Data protection is about protecting the personal data of each person; therefore, protecting data means protecting people.

#### QUESTION 4: How is data protected?

Data protection is achieved through ethical and responsible data management in compliance with national and international data protection legislation. Some ethical considerations are:

1. Respect the privacy and dignity of data subjects.
2. Guarantee data security and non-discrimination of individuals.
3. Protect the confidentiality of personal data.
4. Prevent unauthorized disclosure and inappropriate use of personal data.
5. Always secure the informed consent of the beneficiaries before starting data collection.



In addition, IOM works under its data protection principles:

- ▶ Lawful and fair data collection
- ▶ Specific and legitimate purpose
- ▶ Data quality
- ▶ Informed consent
- ▶ Data transfer
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Access and transparency
- ▶ Data security
- ▶ Retention of personal data
- ▶ Application of the principles
- ▶ Personal data ownership
- ▶ Oversight, compliance and internal remedies
- ▶ Consideration of exceptions



For more information on the data protection principles see:  
<https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-data-protection-manual>

