

# IOM's COVID-19 Response in Panama

## Strategic Use of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

### INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

This document brings insights on **IOM Panama's strategic use of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)** to provide the inter-agency coordination mechanism with valuable insights to facilitate the provision of evidence-based humanitarian assistance, in the context of the humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For further information on the topic, consult the [main knowledge product](#) covering IOM Panama's experience.

During 2020, as the government of Panama closed borders to curb the spread of COVID-19, many extra-regional and extra-continental migrants, transiting from Colombia to North America, became stranded. In this context, IOM Panama coordinated with other stakeholders to provide a comprehensive response to assist beneficiaries on the ground.

### OVERVIEW OF GOOD PRACTICE

As the inter-agency mechanism in Panama attempted to gather more information about the profile of beneficiaries, **IOM found an opportunity to use the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tool to provide the humanitarian actors in place with strategic information about stranded migrants.** The tool was slightly adapted to also bring information on a weekly basis<sup>1</sup>, covering topics such as migrants' needs, donations, services, context, preferred routes and other aspects deemed important by the coordination mechanism in place.



Bajo Chiquito, Darién, Panama. © IOM 2021

<sup>1</sup> DTM. Panamá, more information [here](#).



## LESSONS LEARNED

- The team used **Google Analytics to process some of the data generated by the DTM tool**. That allowed the country office to tailor and present the information to each stakeholder according to their specific visualization needs.
- The approach made it possible to **quickly adapt situation reports and other materials** according to need in an environment of constant change and adaptation.
- Most importantly, adapting DTM allowed IOM and other humanitarian actors on the ground **to provide evidence-based humanitarian assistance**, responding more effectively to needs that were clearly identified by data.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Emergency DTM approach **requires continuous communication with the local teams to ensure agile data collection in a short period of time**. This strategy must be considered in similar initiatives.

