

Concept Note:

NATIONAL SURVEY ON MOLDOVAN RETURNEES IN 2022

I. Project Rationale:

Since 24 February 2022, people have been fleeing from Ukraine to the neighboring countries, including the Republic of Moldova (MDA), because of the war in Ukraine. The war will most likely have a significant socio-economic impact on the Moldovan population in the coming periods, and the migration profile of the Republic of Moldova is expected to be a decisive factor in this regard.

According to data provided by the Moldovan General Inspectorate for Border Police (GIBP), approximately 83,658 refugees from Ukraine and Third-Country Nationals entered the Republic of Moldova from Ukraine, via border crossing points (BCPs) between the two countries. This high refugee inflow may be coupled with important movement flows of Moldovan nationals returning from abroad.

Data presented by the GIBP on Moldovan nationals entering and exiting from Ukraine to Moldova, since 24 February until 18th October 2022, indicates that Moldovans entry and exit patterns remain stable. However, the number of Moldovan returnees from Ukraine and other neighboring countries, who are remaining in Moldova after being abroad, remains uncertain as it is not officially reported.

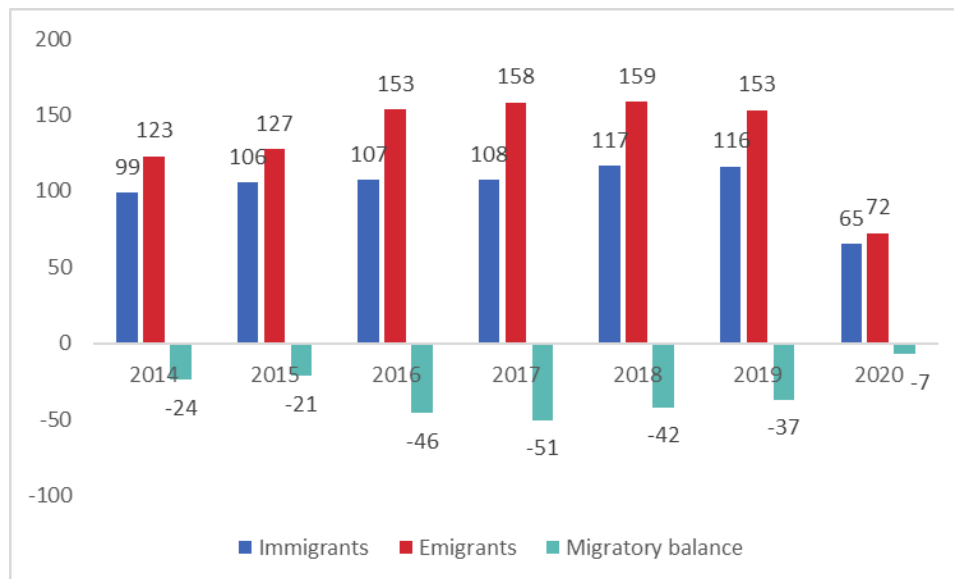
In recent years, IOM estimates that approximately 350,000 Moldovan nationals¹ have been involved in short-term labour migration abroad, among whom around 20 per cent have a precarious legal status (IOM estimations, 2020). This number constitutes over 42 per cent of the labour force in Moldova as estimated by the World Bank in 2021 ([source](#)). A significant influx in the number of returnees could shock the labour market in Moldova, increasing unemployment rates and adding strain on social security and protection systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have likely reversed the dynamics of Moldova's migration. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the Moldovan emigration has significantly decreased after 2019, passing from 153,289 emigrants² per year in 2019 to 72,372 in 2020 ([source](#)).

¹ "IOM rapid field assessment of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of the Moldovan diaspora: an evidence-base regarding migrants' coping strategies and contributions" published in 2020.

² Emigrant is considered any person who moved to a country other than that of his or her usual residence (here Republic of Moldova) for a period of at least 9 cumulative months, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. Immigrant is considered any individual who spend abroad more than a cumulative period of 9 months before cross movement and returned to Republic of Moldova to stay at least a year.

Figure 1: Immigrants, Emigrants and migratory balance, Moldovan citizens and Foreigners, 2014-2020 (thousands)



Source: [National Bureau of Statistics, 2022](#)

A decrease of emigration coupled with an increase in the rate of return of Moldovan labour migrants, may have severe effects on an already strained and vulnerable country, especially as this crisis comes in the immediate aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. The flow of remittances could substantially decrease as a principal source of disposable income, and unexpected spikes in unemployment rates due to high return rates and due to high influx of Ukrainian and Russian refugees.

There are major gaps in data on returnees, including gaps in information around their family composition, socio-economic profiles, needs and intentions. To fill those gaps IOM intends to conduct a survey with a representative sample of Moldovan returnees in order to identify their needs, intentions and the possible effects and strains on the Moldovan government and the socio-economic situation of the country. This will also enable IOM and relevant stakeholders to identify programmatic, policy and humanitarian response in an evidence-based manner.

In the current context, and in preparation of possible new scenarios, a better understanding of the current and potential internal and international movements of Moldovan citizens and residences would provide an evidence-based for more effective assistance and protection responses in the country and in the wider European region.

Results obtained are meant to support the relevant authorities of the Republic of Moldova to identify key challenges, vulnerabilities, expectations, and specific needs of Moldovan returnees in order to plan some socio-economic strategies to help this category of population.

II. Survey Objective:

The objective of this survey is to identify key challenges, vulnerabilities, expectations, specific and basic needs and intentions of Moldovan returnees to help plan socio-economic related strategies and increase preparedness and the response capacity of national and international stakeholders, in the face of the current risks Moldova is facing.

This shall contribute to capacity building and awareness of the relevant authorities of the Republic of Moldova and of the humanitarian actors through enhanced understanding of planned and possible mobility intentions and patterns of Moldova's population within and entering and exiting the country.

Based on the available funding, IOM proposes to perform a nationwide telephone survey to identify the rate of Moldovan households with returnees and corresponding socio-economic profiles, demographic information, needs, vulnerabilities and other relevant data.

In order to reach the overall objective, IOM/DTM will select a national vendor to execute the nationwide telephone survey. The selection of the national vendor/local company (Service Provider) will be in accordance with the Terms of Reference for this project.

Target Population

Moldovan households with returnees since 24 February 2022. The service provider is expected to reach a minimum of 1200 Moldovan households with returnees and complete at least 1200 questionnaires with returnees. The service provider may have to reach to a larger sample of households in order to screen households with returnees from those who don't have any. IOM is open to other methods of targeting, especially if the service provider possess credible lists of households with returnees since February 2022.

The margin of error will not exceed 3% using a 95% confidence interval. All phone numbers must have an equal probability to be selected and the sample must be chosen randomly. The service provider should include a summary of the sampling design, selection process, map of the regions reached (number of calls per region), and a summary table of the number of calls, number of rejects, number of successful calls. Finally, high quality standards applied to the data collection to provide a clean dataset from the survey.

All activities under this project, data will be collected, stored, processed, and disseminated in line with IOM data Protection Principles [IOM's Data Protection Principles](#).

Nationwide Telephone survey

Performing a random telephone survey will allow IOM to collect data and gather information on the status of households with returnees. This includes their socio-economic profile, demographic information, needs, vulnerabilities, and intentions of moving or settling.

IOM will support the systemic collection and analysis of critical information to inform and thereby strengthen the response and increase the preparedness of relevant Moldovan public authorities, national and international stakeholders to the current economic and humanitarian situation in the country.

| | December | | | | January | | | | February | | | |
|--|-----------------|---|---|---|----------------|---|---|---|-----------------|---|---|---|
| Weeks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1. Inception Period | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Inception Meeting, kick off project and discusses timeline and common understanding of project | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Drafting of inception report, within it: this is the chance to finalize the methodology, the sample, and the questionnaire. This is also the time in which the service provider shares the final documents with IOM. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Data Collection and Field Work | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Piloting the questionnaire | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Collect feedback and reflect it in the questionnaire | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Share final updated questionnaire with IOM for approval | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Training of field researchers | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Launch data collection | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Data cleaning and preparing the data file for analysis | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Data Analysis and Reporting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Tabulation of results | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Methodology and observation report | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| - Incorporate any feedback on the dataset or on the methodology and observation report | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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IOM Capacity to Address the Issues Identified

IOM has been present in the Republic of Moldova since 2001 with 40 staff members and has programmes in the entire country, including in Transnistria. In response to the recent escalation of the conflict in Ukraine and its impact on neighbouring countries, IOM scaled up its presence, especially at border areas. Additional emergency staff have been deployed and the Mission has activated DTM at three border crossing points (2 Ukraine-Moldova BCPs and 2 Moldova-Romania BCP) and at two temporary placement centres (one closer to BCP at Ukrainian border and the other in the capital city). DTM is closely coordinating its response with the GoM and the UNCT and through the inter-agency coordination system, activated since 28 February 2022.

IOM has extensive experience as a first responder in crisis situations, working through its Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) to effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises across the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus from the outset.