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# **Analysis of Household Surveys on Migration and Remittances in the Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia**

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**Analysis of Household Surveys on Migration and Remittances in the Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia**

**Prepared for UNECE by Anna Prokhorova**

**Abstract**

This paper contains an overview of household surveys on migration and remittances in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia since 2007. It analyses the methodology and questionnaires of the surveys and assesses to what extent the concepts, definitions and questions on migration and remittances used there allow producing internationally comparable data.

The report was prepared by Anna Prokhorova, UNECE consultant, in the project “Enhancing coherence and integration of economic and social statistics in support of the implementation of 2008 SNA” financed from the World Bank ECASTAT programme.

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## Introduction

1. International migration among countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia<sup>1</sup> (EECCA) is a relatively recent phenomenon, which emerged as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Migration flows between the former Soviet republics have been driven by various reasons: humanitarian migration, forced internal resettlement, and labour migration. Starting early 2000s, large flows of migrant workers headed to Russia mainly from the Central Asian countries. The flow of money transferred by labour migrants to their households in the homeland became an inseparable component of the discourse concerning migration and development. In this context, it is not surprising that an accompanying demand for remittance data emerged together with demand for better quality migration data.

2. Reliable and disaggregated statistics on migration and remittances are necessary to understand their impact on socio-economic development of both origin and destination countries in the EECCA region. Most readily available data on remittances compiled based on the balance of payments (BoP) can only inform about total amounts transferred, by country and period. They contain little or no characteristics of the flows of remittances, the senders and recipients, formality, and allocation. Due to these data gaps, development impact of migration through remittances can only be assessed at the macro-level. A deeper analysis of the consequences of migration and remittances at the micro-level requires additional data about migrants, their family members, their financial behaviour, and about money transactions which can be obtained only through sample household surveys. At the same time, BoP remittance data and household survey remittance data should be considered as complementary rather than alternative sources.

3. There have been numerous efforts in the region of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA) to collect such data by including questions on remittances in surveys that vary in periodicity, level of detail, concepts, and definitions. As a result, many lessons have been learnt on collecting data on remittances through household surveys, but the data is still either not produced regularly, not detailed enough, or not internationally comparable.

4. The **objective of this report** is to take stock of the household surveys on migration and remittances conducted in the EECCA region since 2007, analyse the methodology and the questionnaires of the surveys identifying the relevant questions on migration and remittances, and concepts and definitions used, in order to assess their usability for producing internationally comparable data with sufficient level of detail.

5. There already exists some research analysing migration and remittances household surveys in EECCA countries: two most prominent and recent ones were executed by Richard Bilborrow for the World Bank MIRPAL project in 2011<sup>2</sup>, and Olga Chudinovskikh report for the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS in 2015<sup>3</sup>. These authors aimed at taking stock of the experience in conducting such surveys in the region, although with a different

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<sup>1</sup> Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA) include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

<sup>2</sup> Richard E. Bilborrow and Mariam Lomaia. International Migration and Remittances in Developing Countries: Using Household Surveys to Improve Data Collection in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. World Bank, April 17, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Чудиновских О. С. Обобщение мирового опыта по измерению трудовой миграции на основе выборочных обследований населения. Межгосударственный статистический комитет Содружества Независимых Государств, Москва 2015.

focus. Chudinovskikh's report is a comprehensive overview of the general approaches used in the sample household surveys (primarily multipurpose household surveys) to define, measure and study labour migration in the CIS member countries as well as in the EU countries, the USA, Australia, and Canada. Regarding the CIS countries, Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine are singled out as the illustrations of best practice in collecting migration related data both in multipurpose and specialised migration surveys. The author concludes that the CIS countries rarely practice regular collection of migration data through multipurpose household surveys, no continuity observed in the migration survey questionnaires, and the data collected is not published with adequate level of detail. General recommendations of the author include to facilitate the use of multipurpose household surveys such as LFS, HBS and LSMS - for data collection both on international and internal migration on a regular basis, including cross-sectional and panel surveys<sup>4</sup>.

6. Bilsborrow and Lomaia report was targeting three main goals: (1) evaluating what is collected on international migration in existing household surveys of countries in Eastern Europe and Western Asia--the study countries--and assessing major gaps in data; (2) determining how these surveys could be adapted to provide more useful information by the addition of parsimonious modules of questions on international migration and/or remittances; and (3) and describing how specialized surveys of international migration should be designed to collect more complete data from smaller, more efficient samples of migrants, and how such surveys could be designed to collect the data needed to analyse the determinants and consequences of international migration in depth. The authors conclude that 'the pervasive problem of *most* existing data sets is their having samples of international migrants that are too small for meaningful statistical analysis, and questionnaires that do not collect much relevant data'<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, they recommend to carefully assess the sample sizes and questionnaires of existing multipurpose household surveys to determine the best options for integrating a small harmonised module on migration and remittances.

7. The objective of the present report is to follow this recommendation and conduct an updated overview of sample household surveys in the EECCA countries, both specialised and multipurpose, with a view to provide the basis for the development of a harmonized module on migration and remittances that EECCA countries which could be then integrated into an appropriate household survey to collect comparable data on the regular basis. While previous research was more focused on international migration questionnaires design, the present report will take also a closer look at the remittances-related questions in the conducted surveys.

8. Development of a harmonized module would involve the harmonization of interests of stakeholders in relation to the migration and remittances data. What are the basic requirements to these data in the EECCA region? First, it is comparability, at least within the region. Secondly, update with sufficient frequency. Thirdly, relevance for the current migration policies agenda in the countries of origin and destination, namely providing unambiguous evidence on the development impact of migration and remittances.

9. To what extent do the sample household surveys conducted in EECCA countries meet these requirements? Which of the regular household surveys could serve the basis for

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<sup>4</sup> Чудиновских О. С. Обобщение мирового опыта по измерению трудовой миграции на основе выборочных обследований населения. Межгосударственный статистический комитет Содружества Независимых Государств, Москва 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Richard E. Bilsborrow and Mariam Lomaia. International Migration and Remittances in Developing Countries: Using Household Surveys to Improve Data Collection in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. World Bank, April 17, 2011.



integration of the harmonized migration and remittances module? The present report aims to answer these two questions.

10. The report was prepared in the project “Enhancing coherence and integration of economic and social statistics in support of the implementation of 2008 SNA” financed from the World Bank ECASTAT programme.

### **Outline of the report**

11. The lack of comparability of international migration data is widely recognized. Much less is known and written about remittances data. Therefore, the report opens with a brief introduction into the methodology of remittance statistics as formulated by the International Monetary Fund and applied by EECCA countries. The first chapter further draws attention to the limitations of the available data on remittances (including its comparability) produced by countries’ national banks and explains in what way household surveys on migration and remittances can contribute to the improvement of remittance data quality and enhancing our knowledge about remittance senders and remittance impact on the receiving households.

12. The second chapter explores how remittance-related data has been collected through the household sample surveys on migration and remittances conducted in the EECCA countries between 2007-2017. While the main focus of the surveys is primarily on international migration, remittances have been in the focus of several specialized multi-country surveys covering one or a few EECCA countries. Despite the fact, that migration and remittances are quite challenging areas of research in terms of survey methodology, the countries have already worked out some solutions to cope with methodological bottlenecks.

13. The third chapter examines the survey questionnaires to find out the most common questions and issues addressed. It is pointed out that the comparability of data collected through household sample surveys conducted in the region is very limited. Frequency of conducting surveys on migration and remittances varies across the EECCA countries. Quite often, such surveys do serve the purpose of evaluating the impact of government measures and policies in the area of migration, although such assessment is not carried out on a regular basis.

14. The fourth chapter provides some illustrations of the methodological limitations and lessons learnt by EECCA countries in conducting migration and remittances surveys. These include data representativeness, sensitivity of questions, time of conducting a survey, and comparability of survey data across the countries.

15. Finally, taking stock of the described characteristics of the EECCA household surveys, a closer look is taken at the modular design approach to collecting migration and remittances data through regular household surveys, such as Labour Force Survey, Living Standards Measurement Survey, and Household Budget Survey. This last chapter outlines key criteria to be considered when selecting a survey for integration of migration and remittances module in the EECCA countries. It concludes that each type of the multipurpose household surveys has its advantages and disadvantages. What is important is that the EECCA countries have already tested more than one multipurpose survey type to collect data on migration and remittances. However, even though LFS is better designed to integrate a migration module, HBS with a focus on income, consumption and expenditures of a household should be seriously considered as an option for collecting additional data about remittances as it would allow obtaining important indicators for assessment of development impact of both migration and remittances on the receiving household’s wellbeing.

# I. Remittances statistics: international methodology and limitations of data

## A. Definition of remittances

16. As in the case of international migration statistics, the success of collecting comparable remittance data across countries starts with adoption of a common definition. The development of a standard balance of payments definition of remittances started in 2004 with involvement of the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics<sup>6</sup>. Since its inception, the IMF has been involved in developing guidelines for the compilation of consistent, sound, and timely balance of payments statistics. These guidelines were published in successive editions of the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM) since 1943. The fifth and sixth editions addressed the issue of remittances between resident and non-resident households. According to the most recent recommendations contained in the sixth edition of the BPM (BPM6), remittances (taking the perspective of the receiving country) are defined as household income from foreign economies arising mainly from the temporary or permanent movement of people to those economies (IMF 2009<sup>7</sup>):

*...Remittances include cash and noncash items that flow through formal channels, such as via electronic wire, or through informal channels, such as money or goods carried across borders. They largely consist of funds and noncash items sent or given by individuals who have migrated to a new economy and become residents there, and the net compensation of border, seasonal, or other short-term workers who are employed in an economy in which they are not resident.*

17. BPM6 also contains methodology for measuring remittances based on the balance of payments (BoP) data. A special indicator of ‘*personal remittances*’ was developed for this purpose (IMF 2009):

*“Personal remittances are defined as current and capital transfers in cash or in kind between resident households and non-resident households, plus compensation of employees, less taxes and social contributions paid by non-resident workers in the economy of employment, less transport and travel expenditures related to working abroad (paragraph 12.27). In short, this item includes all household-to-household transfers and the net earnings of non-resident workers”*

18. As seen from the above definition, remittances are mainly derived from two items in the balance of payments framework. The first one is income earned by workers in economies where they are not resident (or from non-resident employers): this item is called ‘*compensation of employees*’ in the BoP. The second one is transfers from residents of one economy to residents of another: this item is called ‘*personal transfers*’ in the BoP. Thus:

**Personal remittances = compensation of employees + personal transfers**

19. *Compensation of employees* refers to the income of border, seasonal, and other short-term workers who are employed in an economy where they are not resident and of residents employed by non-resident entities. It represents “remuneration in return for the labour input to the production process contributed by an individual in an employer-employee relationship

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<sup>6</sup> UNECE. The Impact of Globalization on National Accounts. United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual. — Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 2009. Available from: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2007/pdf/bpm6.pdf>



with the enterprise” (IMF 2009, p. 272-273). It should be noted, that the earnings of individuals from the provision of services to another economy are not included: in other words, ‘compensation of employees’ does not include ‘payment for services’. The latter is important in the context of domestic migrant workers payments which are not included under the category of ‘compensation of employees’<sup>8</sup>.

20. *Personal transfers* are defined independently of the source of income of the sending household, the relationship between the households, and the purpose for which the transfer is made. Importantly, although it is recognized that personal transfers will often originate from migrants sending resources to support their relatives in their economy of origin, personal transfers as defined in this Manual are not limited to such activity (IMF 2009, p. 273).

21. The third item included into the personal remittances indicator is ‘*capital transfers*’: transfers in which the ownership of an asset (other than cash or inventories) changes from one party to another; or which obliges one or both parties to acquire or dispose of an asset (other than cash or inventories); or where a liability is forgiven by the creditor<sup>9</sup>. Due to the differences in the countries’ approaches of compiling the data, this item is not always available (personal transfers are a standard item under current transfers, while capital transfers between households are a supplementary item in the capital account), therefore, it is not reported separately in the remittances statistics.

**Table 1**  
**Remittance concepts in the Balance of Payments Manual 6**

Total remittances and transfers to NPISHs: a+b+c+d+e+f					
Total remittances: a+b+c+d				(a) Current transfers to NPISHs	(d) Capital transfers to NPISHs
Personal remittances: a+b+c			(b) Social benefits		
(c) Personal transfers (part of current transfers)	(d) Compensation of employees less taxes, social contributions, transport, and travel	(e) Capital transfers between households			

Source: UNECE. The Impact of Globalization on National Accounts. United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2011. Available from: [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/groups/wggna/Guide\\_on\\_Impact\\_of\\_globalization\\_on\\_national\\_accounts\\_FINAL21122011.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/groups/wggna/Guide_on_Impact_of_globalization_on_national_accounts_FINAL21122011.pdf)

22. Summing up the above, the table below presents the relationship between the main remittance concepts in the BPM6. Personal transfers are a standard component of the balance of payments framework. Personal remittances, total remittances, and total remittances plus transfers to non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs) are supplementary items. This structure allows compilers to publish a variety of remittance measures without altering

<sup>8</sup> Личные переводы: методологический комментарий и информационная база. – Банк России. Доступно по ссылке: [http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/CrossBorder/method-komm\\_pr.pdf](http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/CrossBorder/method-komm_pr.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Capital Account. \_IMF. Available from: [https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2014/pdf/BPM6\\_15F.pdf](https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2014/pdf/BPM6_15F.pdf)

the central balance of payments framework (although they may need to alter their data collection to align with the most recent guidelines)<sup>10</sup>.

## B. Production and dissemination of remittances data from the balance of payments

23. National banks are the main producers of data on remittance inflows and outflows in the EECCA countries. Usually, the data is available in the open access on a bank's website. It is published on a quarterly basis, by countries of origin and destination, in US dollars. As of 2017 all EECCA countries use BOP6 for the compilation of their balance of payments, meaning that they report on 'personal remittances' as defined in the IMF manual (

24. Table 2).

25. **Table 2 Personal remittances from Russia to other CIS countries, billion US dollars**

	2014	2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	2016 Total	Q1 2017	Q2 2017
<b>CIS countries</b>	21,400	12,483	1,890	2,730	3,186	2,966	10,772	2,480	3,313
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	1 374	950	165	230	250	262	906	206	283
<b>Armenia</b>	1,752	1,159	150	224	239	213	826	170	245
<b>Belarus</b>	1,000	585	117	144	143	169	573	168	201
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	465	351	64	120	133	114	431	101	159
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	2,239	1,519	250	409	485	438	1,582	338	471
<b>Republic of Moldova</b>	1,862	915	137	175	166	186	664	170	218
<b>Tajikistan</b>	3,662	2,092	330	493	584	499	1,906	429	592
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	30	16	1	2	2	3	9	1	1
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	5,828	3,062	396	599	786	699	2,479	570	766
<b>Ukraine</b>	3,187	1,835	280	334	397	384	1,396	327	378

Source: Bank of Russia, [www.cbr.ru](http://www.cbr.ru)

26. All IMF country members report balance of payments statistics to the IMF which is collecting this data for re-dissemination purposes. Therefore, remittances data (indicators 'personal transfers' and 'compensation of employees') can be obtained from IMF database on the balance of payments which is updated on the quarterly basis<sup>11</sup>. The data on the balance of payments is available for over 190 economies including all EECCA countries. Based on the data provided by the country authorities, the IMF's Statistics Department performs certain data transformation to derive higher-level indicators or regional aggregates, and to achieve

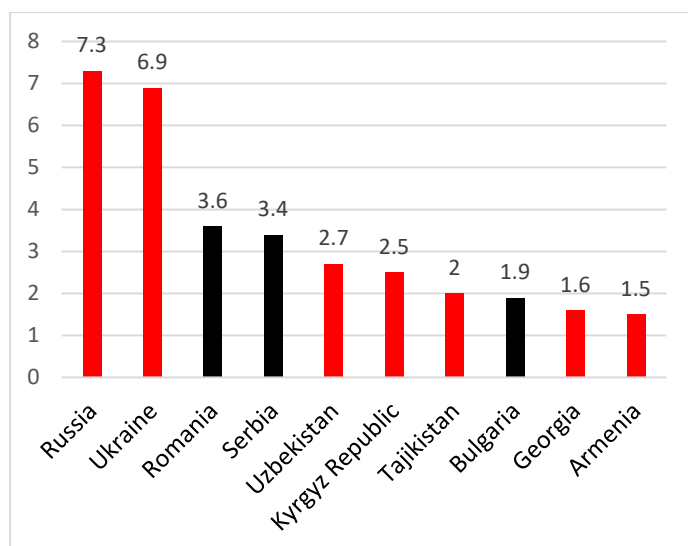
<sup>10</sup> The Impact of Globalization on National Accounts. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> BPM6: Data Reports by Economy. <http://data.imf.org/?sk=7A51304B-6426-40C0-83DD-CA473CA1FD52&sId=1409773422141>

cross-country comparability. However, the IMF publishes both the data reported by the countries and calculated by its Statistics Department<sup>12</sup>.

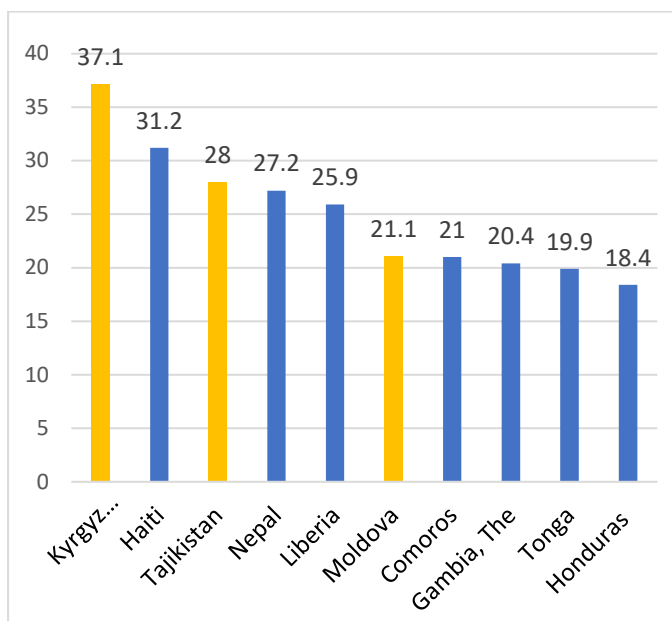
27. A major producer of remittance-related analytics based on the BoP data is the World Bank. Twice a year, in April and October, the World Bank issues ‘*Migration and Development Brief*’ where it provides an update on key developments in migration, remittance flows and related policies over the past six months. It also provides medium-term projections of remittance flows to developing countries. As for remittances data, two main indicators are employed: absolute amount of remittance flow and remittance share in a country’s GDP which reflects economy’s dependency on remittances. Although the World Bank relies on the national banks official statistics and hence, IMF data, in some cases it makes adjustments and estimations where the data is missing using the UN data on migration stocks (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Top 10 remittance-receiving countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) World Bank region, US \$ billion, 2017 projections**



<sup>12</sup> International Monetary Fund. Balance of Payments Statistics: Yearbook. 2017.

### Top-10 remittance-receiving countries in 2017, % GDP, projections



Source: World Bank Group. 2017. *Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook*. Migration and Development Brief; No. 28. (Source: International Monetary Fund; World Bank World Development Indicators; staff estimates). World Bank, Washington, DC. Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28444> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO

### C. Properties of remittances data based on the balance of payments

28. Cross-national comparability of remittances statistics produced by the national banks in accordance with the BoP6 recommendations is still questionable because the data on remittances reported by the countries are often missing, lagging, or have country-specific methodological differences. For example, the size of individual remittance transactions may often be smaller than reporting thresholds defined for banks and other financial institutions, and thus these amounts cannot be identified within the reported data. Money transfer operators (MTOs), the preferred vehicle of transfer for many migrants, may only settle net payments through the banking system, making it difficult to identify the underlying gross receipts and payments<sup>13</sup>. In addition, capturing data on remittances sent in cash, in-kind and not through official channels remains a big challenge. The national banks of the EECCA countries recognize this challenge and make efforts to improve the quality of remittance statistics by using alternative methods of collecting additional remittance-related data (Box 1) and undertaking regular bilateral comparison of remittance data (Box 2).

#### Box 1

##### Targeted individual survey of remittance senders in Russia

In 2014 and 2015 the Bank of Russia conducted targeted individual survey of remittances senders and recipients in Russia. A short questionnaire of nine questions was used, participation was voluntary. A range of questions asked included questions about target allocation of remittances, country of destination, frequency and average amount sent, duration of usage of official channels of money transfer, currency of the transfer. The final questions aimed to

<sup>13</sup> UNECE. *The Impact of Globalization on National Accounts*. United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2011.

obtain additional information about the cash remittances: “What amount of cash do you usually take with you when you visit your family?”.

The results of the targeted individual survey showed that half of the remittance senders from Russia were residents, the main countries receiving remittances from Russia are Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan; currency pattern of remittance is stable: Russian rouble (67,6%), US dollar (28,5%), Euro (3,7%); average amount in sent in roubles never exceeded 300 USD in equivalent; average amount of the transfer sent in USD is higher. Also, the results of the survey indicated that the share of respondents who use official channels of money transfer for a long time is growing. Current expenses of the family is the main target allocation of the transfer sent.

Source: Результаты анкетирования физических лиц, осуществляющих трансграничные переводы через платежные системы (по данным 2016 года). – Банк России. 2016.

29. BoP statistics on remittances generated by the national banks of the EECCA countries is, undoubtedly, an important source of quantitative data on migrants’ transfers. The statistics on remittances based on the BoP data allows tracking dynamics of remittance flows, on quarterly basis, by countries of origin and destination of transfers. It also provides data for calculating an average amount of a transfer sent through an official channel and for making projections of future trends considering the current macroeconomic situation in the countries.

30. However, BoP remittances data leaves many questions unanswered. For example, it does not allow for:

- (a) defining migrant status of a sender: long-term, short-term, or seasonal migrant worker;
- (b) learning the target allocation of the transfer and its actual spending;
- (c) estimating non-monetary remittances;
- (d) learning gender differences of remittance sending patterns;
- (e) judging about the development impact of remittances;
- (f) learning about those who benefit from remittances, etc.

*Box 2*

**Comparability of BoP remittance data in CIS countries (MIRPAL program)**

In 2012, in Kyrgyzstan, representatives of the national banks from eight CIS countries conducted bilateral comparison of cross-border transfers statistics. This initiative was realized in the framework of the World Bank MIRPAL program (Migration and Remittances Peer-Assisted Learning Network). At that moment only three countries – Armenia, Belarus, and Russia – were using methodology of BPM6, while Ukraine was about to switch to the new methodology in 2012.

The results of the comparison revealed that the countries were using the following sources of data: ITRS (all), official statistics, administrative sources (five countries), household surveys (Tajikistan, Armenia, Moldova), interviews (Russia, Kazakhstan). All countries discovered data discrepancies. Reasons of data discrepancies: respondents’ coverage (local RSPs), different thresholds for defining small amounts, different exchange rates, geographical coverage (Transnistria).

All participants underlined the increased importance of using specialized household surveys and targeted individual surveys (senders and receivers of remittances) as the most promising way of improving the quality of statistics on cross-border transfers.

Source: Об итогах работы секции конференции «Денежные переводы: точность и выгода» с участием центральных (национальных) банков СНГ. «Двусторонние сопоставления статистических данных по денежным переводам» / Г. Чолпан-Ата, Кыргызская Республика 10-11 сентября 2012 года

Available from: [http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/CrossBorder/trans\\_CIS\\_12.pdf](http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/CrossBorder/trans_CIS_12.pdf)

31. Questions like these should be addressed directly to the remittance senders and receivers. This is where household surveys supplement the existing remittance statistics with additional data. The EECCA countries have taken a serious step in improving the quality of migration and remittance data by conducting numerous household surveys. The next chapter of the report will address the experience of the EECCA countries in this area in detail.

### D. Summary

32. According to the most recent recommendations contained in the sixth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM6) of 2009, remittances (taking the perspective of the receiving country) are defined as household income from foreign economies arising mainly from the temporary or permanent movement of people to those economies.

33. Remittances are mainly derived from two items in the balance of payments framework. The first one is income earned by workers in economies where they are not resident (or from non-resident employers): this item is called '*compensation of employees*' in the BoP. The second one is transfers from residents of one economy to residents of another: this item is called '*personal transfers*' in the BoP.

34. National banks are the main producers of data on remittance inflows and outflows in the EECCA countries. Usually, the data is available in the open access on a bank's website. It is published on a quarterly basis, by countries of origin and destination, in US dollars. All IMF country members, including EECCA countries, report balance of payments statistics to the IMF which is collecting this data for re-dissemination purposes.

35. A major producer of remittance-related analysis based on the BoP data is the World Bank. Twice a year, in April and October, the World Bank issues '*Migration and Development Brief*' where it provides an update on key developments in migration, remittance flows and related policies over the past six months. It also provides medium-term projections of remittance flows to developing countries.

36. Cross-national comparability of remittances statistics produced by the national banks in accordance with the BoP6 recommendations is still questionable because the data on remittances reported by the countries are often missing, lagging, or have country-specific methodological differences. On top of that, BoP data provides no information about informal remittances, in-kind remittances, characteristics of the senders and recipients. This is where household surveys supplement the existing remittance statistics with additional data.



## II. Household surveys on migration and remittances in the EECCA countries: an overview

37. Migration and remittances household surveys are critical for obtaining information on characteristics of remittance senders and recipients, channels of transfer, spending structure of remittances and their development impact. This information is then used to develop policy recommendations, including on how to facilitate the use of these funds towards further investment opportunities and savings activities that could yield considerable benefits to the financial sector and remittance recipients.

38. Household surveys have been widely used in the EECCA region for collecting migration and remittances data. For the purposes of further analysis, it is helpful to distinguish between two types of surveys conducted in the EECCA countries between 2007-2017. First one is specialized surveys on migration and/or remittances. These can have one or several EECCA countries in the focus. Second type are regular multipurpose household surveys with either integrated module on migration and remittances or just including several questions related to migration and remittances. Next sections will look at each type of surveys, providing more details on the most recent ones which included questions on both migration and remittances.

### A. Specialized migration and remittance household surveys focused on one country

39. A specialized survey is an instrument quite often used for collecting additional in-depth information about migration and remittances in the EECCA countries. Conducting a specialised survey allows to concentrate data collection on areas and households with migrants of interest as well as include non-migrant households into the survey. This approach also provides for a longer and more detailed questionnaire compared with a migration module (although the maximum number of questions should be carefully considered not to discourage the respondents).

40. Due to high costs associated with conducting a specialised survey, the sample size and other details of the survey design are determined by the available funds. For example, several most recent specialised surveys in EECCA countries were based on a nationwide sampling. These include, among others, Ukrainian survey of 2015 under the project *Research and Policy Dialogue Initiative on Migration and Remittances in Ukraine*, and Armenian repeated cross-sectional surveys of 2015-2017 under the project *Three-Year Monitoring of the State of External Migration of the Republic of Armenia*.

41. The Ukrainian survey was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission in Ukraine, and financed by the Government of Canada. The sample included 20,951 households at the screening stage, and in-depth interviews in 838 households including 299 households without a migrant family member. A household survey did not cover the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, Lugansk oblast, Donetsk oblast and the Chernobyl-affected areas of the first and second radioactive contamination levels. The target categories of the population interviewed included: long-term migrant workers, short-term migrant workers (including seasonal migrant workers), returned migrant workers, potential international migrant workers, internal migrant workers, and

potential internal migrant workers. Additionally, households with no migrant workers were surveyed as a control group<sup>14</sup>.

42. The remittances-related questions of the Ukrainian survey provide for the comparison between remitting and non-remitting migrant households including gender, age, family status, regions of origin, intention to stay abroad. Remittances-related part of the questionnaire also distinguished between three main reasons of migrants' transfer: consumption, savings, and investment. An important finding of the survey is that 4 per cent of households without a member in labour migration still receive remittances. It was calculated that even in this case the impact of remittances is still significant (21 percent of the overall budget), having the same weight as incomes gained from private sector (20 per cent) and pensions (20 per cent)<sup>15</sup>.

43. Three Armenian migration household surveys (2015, 2016 and 2017) were commissioned by the State Committee of Science of the Republic of Armenia and implemented by Russian–Armenian (Slavonic) University. The surveys give an opportunity to assess the influence of external migration on living conditions of households; restructure the whole timetable of trips done by migrant members of households prior to the monitoring; measure migration potential of population; analyse separate survey questionnaires for returned migrants and migrants staying abroad to reveal the issues they face abroad and after arrival to Armenia, a cause–effect relationship of the phenomenon.

44. The survey specifically addressed the impact of migration through a separate section of the questionnaire 'Welfare and remittances'. The questionnaire included subjective assessment of the financial situation of the household, questions on remittances from both household members and non-household members such as other relatives and friends, questions aimed at assessing the share of remittances in total net income of the receiving household, channels of transfer, remittances allocation. Noteworthy, the questionnaire also asked about reverse transfers, that is money or goods sent to a relative or friend residing abroad<sup>16</sup>.

45. Quite frequently, the sampling units for specialised one-country migration surveys are selected in regions with high migration turnover. The table below provides some illustrations of the approaches to the selection of areas and rationale for that selection (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Ukrainian migrants survey in Ukraine and Czechia had a specific focus on the analysis of remittances. The research was divided into several tasks and many statistical methods were employed to collect data, such as semi structured in-depth interviews, diary records on daily incomes and spending of Ukrainian migrants in Czechia and survey questionnaire both in Ukraine and in Czechia. In total, 200 questionnaires in households having currently at least one member as a migrant in Czechia and 50 questionnaires in households that currently do not have any family member residing abroad were held. The authors of the research claim that the data sample is robust enough to show

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<sup>14</sup> IOM (2016). Migration as an Enabler of Development in Ukraine. A study on the nexus between development and migration-related financial flows to Ukraine. Kyiv.

development and migration-related financial flows to Ukraine. Available from:

[http://www.iom.org.ua/sites/default/files/iom\\_migration\\_as\\_an\\_enabler\\_of\\_development\\_in\\_ukraine.pdf](http://www.iom.org.ua/sites/default/files/iom_migration_as_an_enabler_of_development_in_ukraine.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> IOM (2016). Migration as an Enabler of Development in Ukraine. A study on the nexus between development and migration-related financial flows to Ukraine. Kyiv. Development and migration-related financial flows to Ukraine. - p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> State Committee of Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University. Comprehensive Survey of the Migration of the Republic of Armenia Population 2014-2017 Questionnaire. Available from: <http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2934/study-description>

the basic existing patterns and dependencies in migration from the Western Ukraine to Czechia and in remittances flowing in the opposite direction<sup>17</sup>.

**Table 3 Households sampling in selected specialised one-country migration and remittances surveys in EECCA countries**

<i>Survey</i>	<i>Sampling method</i>
<i>Ukrainian migrants survey in Ukraine and Czechia (Prague Charles University 2011-2012)</i>	Households in the sample were chosen by random sampling in particular cities in Zakarpat'ye region known for its large share of emigrants in the local population.
<i>Survey on migration and remittances in Kazakhstan (Osteuropa Institut 2011)</i>	Survey was conducted in the biggest cities – Almaty, Astana, Karaganda, and Pavlodar.
<i>Survey of Tajik migrants in Russia and Tajikistan (World Bank, MiRPAL, 2014)</i>	Moscow, St Petersburg, Moscow oblast, Tumen, Novosibirsk selected in Russia, based on the destinations data obtained from migrants' households survey in Tajikistan. In Tajikistan, the city of Dushanbe was excluded due to the low numbers of emigrants according to the 2010 Census data.

46. As a rule, specialized migration and remittances surveys are carried out in the countries of migrants' origin. However, among EECCA surveys there are a couple of examples of studies which surveyed migrants in destination countries as well. For example, in 2014 migrants' household survey was implemented in Russia and Tajikistan, with financial support of the World Bank. The Russian part of the survey on Tajik emigrants consisted of two parts: a survey of 2,000 households containing one or more Tajik immigrants, and a survey of 500 Russian households in the same areas of Russia (for comparison). The sample frame for the Russian survey was based on data from the origin survey of Tajik migrants on the Russian destinations selected in the previous 10 years, and was concentrated in the Moscow region and several other urban areas. The Tajikistan survey was designed to be nationally representative, based on interviews with probability samples of households with one or more (recent) emigrants (434 households), return migrants (255 households), or non-migrants (406 households). In the Tajikistan origin survey, data came from the proxy respondent, while in Russia the information was reported directly by the Tajik immigrant himself/herself, which is expected to be more reliable<sup>18</sup>. The questionnaires both in Tajikistan and Russia included basic questions on remittances: amount and frequency of transfers, relationship between sender and recipient. Noteworthy, the survey of Tajik and Russian households in Russia as a destination country allowed for comparison of wellbeing of migrant households with local households.

47. Besides one-time-only surveys, a panel study was carried out in Tajikistan (2011). The panel survey in Tajikistan was conducted within the framework of the project *Migration and Remittances in Central Asia: The Case of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan* in 2011. The aim was to re-interview 1,503 households surveyed in the Tajikistan Living Standards

<sup>17</sup> Strielkowski, Wadim, Glazar, Ondřej and Weyskrabová Blanka. Migration and remittances in the CEECs: a case study of Ukrainian labour migrants in Czechia. Charles University in Prague. Institute of Economic Studies. Working Paper: 19/2012.

<sup>18</sup> Bilsborow R. and Denisova Irina. 2015. Tajik emigrants in Russia and at home. Survey results. Draft report.

Measurement Survey (TLSS) in 2007 and 2009, which was administered by the World Bank and UNICEF. The survey allowed to collect a unique panel data base on migration and remittances in a developing country. Furthermore, the panel allowed analysing the medium-run consequences of the global financial crisis in 2009. The data collection in Tajikistan took place in fall 2011 in order to keep equidistance between the waves of the World Bank panel and to respect the seasonality patterns in agriculture and migration flows. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on the determinants, patterns and consequences of migration and on the prevalence and use of remittances in Tajikistan. One of the main objectives was to keep the most important questions as closely comparable as possible to the TLSS 2007 and 2009. As a result, the migration section of the questionnaire does not include remittances questions. Instead, remittances-related information is obtained through questions in the section on social assistance and transfers, similar to LSMS questionnaire<sup>19</sup>. Specialised one-country migration household surveys in destination countries – Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan – are very rare. Information about international immigrants is obtained either through a targeted individual survey or in the framework of multipurpose household surveys. For example, the most recent immigration survey in Azerbaijan – Labour Migration Survey – which took place in 2009, with the support of IOM office in Baku, was a limited field survey with some 200 migrants working in Azerbaijan. The list of potential respondents was mainly identified through a list of local and international companies which hired migrant workers in last six months. As a result, around 40 international and local companies were identified. However, only five out of 40 organizations contacted agreed to cooperate on the survey and allowed the questionnaire to be distributed among its employees. In all other cases interviews were arranged through informal contacts or by direct contacts with respondents. The questionnaire applied was composed of 215 questions grouped under 6 themes<sup>20</sup>: no questions on remittances were included into the questionnaire.

## **B. Multi-country specialised household surveys**

48. Quite often EECCA countries benefitted from participation in a multi-country specialised survey supported by an international agency and covering several countries and applying similar methodology. Such surveys yield more comparability of the collected data, assuming the same methodology and questionnaire applied in each of the participating countries. However, it is not necessarily the case of a multi-country survey due to various difficulties, including methodological ones, encountered in the process of the project implementation.

49. Several times one or several EECCA countries were included in a multi-country survey not designed for this region specifically. The advantage of such projects is that they provide for the possibility to compare EECCA countries with countries from other regions, especially in what concerns the impact of migration and remittances. Two sections below will illustrate major surveys covering only EECCA countries as well as projects where EECCA countries were surveyed alongside other popular migration destinations.

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<sup>20</sup> Labour migration to the Republic of Azerbaijan; Survey December 2008 – February 2009. Available from: [http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/azerbaijan\\_labour\\_migrant\\_survey.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/azerbaijan_labour_migrant_survey.pdf)

## 1. *Multi-country specialized surveys covering only EECCA countries*

50. Three major survey projects of such kind worth mentioning are 1) Labour, Skills and Migration in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (2013) implemented by GIZ and the World Bank, 2) *Remittances and Poverty in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan* (2006-2008) initiated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB)<sup>21</sup> and 3) *Migration Surveys on the Relationship Between Skills, Migration and Development in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova* (2006-2012) supported by the European Training Foundation (ETF).

51. In 2013, the *Labour, Skills and Migration* household surveys were conducted in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan by GIZ and the World Bank. The surveys followed the same methodology and applied common questionnaire, and were representative at the national, regional (oblast), and urban/rural level. The sample size of the *Labour, Skills and Migration* household survey in Tajikistan was 3,300 households, in Kyrgyzstan - 1,500 households and in Uzbekistan - also 1,500 households. The survey included a core questionnaire and a skills questionnaire. The core questionnaire contained modules on education, employment, migration, health expenditure, remittances, government transfers, financial services, subjective poverty, and housing conditions, as well as a complete household expenditure module. The second part of the survey, the skills questionnaire, contained detailed modules on labour and work expectations, migration and preparation for migration, language skills, and technical skill training. It is worth noting that apart from a traditional question about remittances (cash or in-kind) from an absent household member, an additional question was asked about remittances received from a non-household member or institution in the past 12 months<sup>22</sup>.

52. *Remittances and Poverty* project was implemented by the Asian Development Bank in 2006-2008. In the framework of the project two surveys were conducted in each country: a representative household survey on migration and remittances and a survey of remittance recipients. The only exception was Kazakhstan, where remittance senders were surveyed. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, the representative household survey covered 3,997 households in all parts of the country and provided information on household characteristics, welfare, migration, and remittances. Remittance recipients survey was conducted in Bishkek and Osh at the premises of four banks: in total, three hundred and six respondents were interviewed<sup>23</sup>. This survey is not representative of the country's population because the sampling method led to a disproportionately high share of urban residents in the sample. Despite that, this survey provides useful information on the composition and behaviour of senders and recipients of remittances. The survey included questions on the social and demographic profile of recipients and senders, details of money transfers, savings, business activities, and experience with the financial sector. (Spatial Disparities, p.161)<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Asian Development Bank (2008). A Study on International Migrants' Remittances in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Country Report on Remittances of International Migrants and the Financial Sector in the Kyrgyz Republic.

<sup>22</sup> Jobs, Skills, Migration, Consumption Survey. Collected June-August 2013, Tajikistan. World Bank, with GIZ support. Notes about data collection and sampling.

<sup>23</sup> Kochendorfer-Lucius, Gudrun; Pleskovic, Boris. 2009. Berlin Workshop Series 2009: Spatial Disparities and Development Policy. Berlin Workshop Series 2009. World Bank. Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2650>

<sup>24</sup> Kochendorfer-Lucius, Gudrun; Pleskovic, Boris. 2009. Berlin Workshop Series 2009: Spatial Disparities and Development Policy. Berlin Workshop Series 2009. World Bank. Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2650>



53. For the purposes of these surveys, common set of definitions was utilized. Remittances were defined ‘as money or goods sent or brought by migrants to other countries (referred to as remittance-receiving countries). In the survey of remittance senders only cash remittances were studied. Cash remittances were defined as money sent or brought by migrants to remittance-receiving countries<sup>25</sup>.

54. Another large scale multi-country migration survey project was implemented by the ETF in 2006-2012. The project studied the relationship between qualifications and labour migration. Two types of migration were in the focus of the surveys – potential migration and return migration. In total, surveys were conducted in eight countries, namely: Albania, Egypt, Moldova, and Tunisia (2006), Ukraine (September - November 2007), Georgia and Armenia (December 2011 - January 2012), and Morocco (May - July 2012). Potential migrants were defined as individuals aged 18-40 (18-50 in Armenia, Georgia, and Morocco), and return migrants as those who left the survey country aged 18 or over, lived and worked abroad continuously for at least 6 months (at least 3 months in Armenia, Georgia, and Morocco) and returned within the previous ten years<sup>26</sup>. Due to the variations in the applied definitions, not all countries’ data is comparable. However, where it is possible, comparable country reports have been published, for example, *Migration and Skills in Armenia and Georgia Comparative Report* (2007). In both countries countrywide surveys were conducted between October 2011 and January 2012 involving interviews with 8 000 respondents, both potential migrants and returned migrants. A stratified random sample based on predefined frames was obtained to ensure broad geographic representation. In Armenia, the national electricity supply company’s database of addresses was used because it had been updated in December 2011 and provided more accurate data than the national census. In Georgia, the 2002 census data was used to obtain the nationally representative sample. In case of sampling returned migrants, a snowball sampling method in addition to random sampling was used in the same geographical areas to complement the initial nationally representative sample<sup>27</sup>. It is worth mentioning that besides usual descriptive analysis of the data, the final countries comparative report also contains analysis of assumptions concerning the relationship between migration and human capital:

- (a) *Assumption 1.* Temporary/circular migration has benefits which permanent migration does not.
- (b) *Assumption 2.* The relationship between education and emigration is uncertain
- (c) *Assumption 3.* Migration has clear economic benefits for the country of origin, the country of destination and individual migrants.
- (d) *Assumption 4.* Migration leads to brain gain.
- (e) *Assumption 5.* Work experience abroad has certain benefits that are recognised in the labour market once migrants return home.
- (f) *Assumption 6.* Reintegration assistance can play a positive role in successful return.

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<sup>25</sup> Asian Development Bank (2007). A Study on International Migrants’ Remittances in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Country Report on Survey of Remittance Senders in Kazakhstan.

<sup>26</sup> Results of the Migration and Skills Surveys.

[http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Results\\_of\\_the\\_migration\\_survey\\_in\\_Albania\\_Egypt\\_Moldova\\_and\\_Tunisia](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Results_of_the_migration_survey_in_Albania_Egypt_Moldova_and_Tunisia)

<sup>27</sup> ETF (2013). Migration and Skills Comparative Report in Armenia and Georgia. Results of the 2011/12 Migration Survey on The Relationship Between Skills, Migration and Development



(g) *Assumption 7*. Increasing the portability of social rights and benefits (pension rights, health care benefits etc.) will encourage circular migration<sup>28</sup>.

55. Remittances were included in two composite indicators developed for the analysis of the data collected in the surveys: economic condition indicator and migration outcome indicator. These indicators showed how remittances impact financial and human capital of both receiving households and migrants themselves.

56. Surveys covering two countries under the same project are not numerous. Two most frequently cited include *National Public Opinion Survey on Remittances in Georgia and Azerbaijan* (2007) supported by EBRD, and the project *Migration and Remittances in Central Asia: The case of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan* (2010), funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and implemented by Osteuropa Institut Regensburg. The latter, however, combining two entirely different surveys under the same project title

## **2. Multi-country specialized surveys covering EECCA and non-EECCA countries**

57. In the past 10 years, there have also been surveys covering one EECCA country alongside with other non-EECCA states. For example, Georgia participated in the project *Development on the Move: Measuring and Optimising the Economic and Social Impacts of Migration* (2008), a joint project of Global Development Network (GDN) and Institute of Public Policy Research. Other six countries participating in the project were Colombia, Fiji, Ghana, Macedonia, and Vietnam. The objective of this initiative was to study various types of migration impact on the origin countries including impact on the economy, education, health, gender, and wider social impact. The same methodology was applied, and the same questionnaires were used which allowed for collecting comparable across countries data<sup>29</sup>. A broad definition of international migration was used in the study: it included all movements of three months or more both into and out of a country. The impact of migration was assessed going beyond remittances and considering also ideas and attitudes transmitted from abroad<sup>30</sup> which is referred to in the literature as social remittances.

58. A similar experience is to be undertaken by Tajikistan: in 2018 the country is going to participate in the multi-country survey project supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization in the United Nations and the World Bank Group, and covering also Nepal and Senegal. The survey is devoted to studying women empowerment in agriculture through the impact of remittances. The sample is targeting 2,000 households who will be interviewed on a number of issues including history of migration, current and seasonal emigration, past emigration, financing of migration, and remittances.

## **C. Other household surveys with integrated migration and remittances module or questions**

59. EECCA countries have a significant experience in using regular multipurpose household surveys for integration of modules with questions on migration and remittances. It is a less costly approach to study migration compared with conducting a specialised survey.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Development on the Move Measuring and Optimising Migration's Economic and Social Impacts Executive Summary. Laura Chappell with Ramona Angelescu-Naqvi, George Mavrotas and Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah. 2010.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Some useful variables (for example concerning households' welfare, place of residence or birth, employment status etc.) may already be collected in the survey.

60. A serious disadvantage of this approach is the limited number of questions that can be added. On top of that, the sample is designed for another purpose and it might not include an adequate number of migrants. For this reason, surveys with larger sample size are preferable as a vehicle for a migration and remittances module<sup>31</sup>. Several surveys have been used for this purpose: Labour Force Survey (LFS), Household Budget Survey (HBS) and Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS), as well as their combinations – integrated household surveys. The countries have different preferences as to the selection of a particular survey for integrating migration and remittances module or questions. The final choice is ultimately influenced by several factors and one of them is the organization providing financial and methodological support for conducting a survey. In this regard, International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank (WB) played leading roles.

61. Very detailed overview of the multipurpose surveys in CIS countries with migration and remittances questions has been done by Bilsborrow and Lomaia (2011), so the sections below include more recent examples which are selected in such a way that demonstrate the diversity of approaches to collecting migration-related data through these surveys in EECCA countries.

### 1. *Labour force surveys*

62. Among EECCA countries, only a few have collected migration and remittances data via labour force surveys.

63. Armenia was the first among EECCA countries to test ILO's Labour Migration and Mobility module (LMM) in 2006. ILO's migration module is a series of questions on labour migration including remittance-behaviour questions, which can be integrated into a household survey. The total number of questions in the module is LMM questions can be used to ask about both immigration and emigration and to collect detailed data about short and long term outgoing migration. The full module consists of over 80 questions including 13 questions on remittances asked from all sampled households, and 8 questions on remittance behaviour of a migrant asked from a return migrant.<sup>32</sup> LMM module has been piloted in several EECCA countries. Most recent LFS in Armenia (2015, 2016) do not have a separate migration module, although several questions about the absent household member are included into the household roster, as well as about the place of birth and citizenship.

64. Moldova and Ukraine also applied LMM module in Labour Force Surveys. In 2012 the same module was used in both countries in the framework of the project *Effective Governance of Labour Migration and Its Skill Dimensions* implemented by ILO and the World Bank. In Ukraine, 27,100 households were approached of which over 86 per cent responded and over 45,000 people aged 15-70 were interviewed about labour migration issues and how they personally affected their lives. In Moldova, the survey covered all

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<sup>31</sup> Bilsborrow, R. Existing survey programs and need for new survey modules on migration. Presented at UN Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening the Demographic Evidence Base for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Population Division, DESA, UN, New York October 5-6, 2015.

World Bank (2002). *Measuring Migration Using Household Surveys*. By Calogero Carletto and Alan de Brauw. Migration operational vehicle. Operational Note 2.

<sup>32</sup> Sophia Kagan, Jillian Campbell International Labour Migration Statistics: A Guide for Policymakers and Statistics Organizations in the Pacific EU/ESCAP/ILO/UNDP Project on Strengthening Capacity of Pacific Island Countries to Manage the Impact of Climate Change on Migration; ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries – Suva: ILO 2015.

regions of the country, except Transnistria, and sampled some 6,040 participating households. It reached 11,230 persons between the ages of 15-64. The surveys in Ukraine and Moldova sought answers about where workers migrate for employment, their education and qualifications, their economic activities at home and abroad, the frequency and duration of their journeys and many other aspects relevant to managing labour migration flows<sup>33</sup>.

65. From second to fourth quarter 2015, the National Statistical Committee of Belarus conducted a sample survey of households to study international labour migration. The survey was conducted simultaneously with the Labour Force Survey in the same households. For this survey, a special questionnaire was prepared for people who had previously worked abroad (return migrants) or who were working abroad at the time of the survey (short and long-term labour emigrants). Key questions concerning remittances covered migrant's income abroad, amount of remittances sent, or amount of money brought in the country of origin, and channels of money transfer.

66. LFS in Tajikistan regularly collects data about international emigrants. In 2009 and 2016, LFS in Tajikistan included a separate module to collect information from returned Tajik migrants who were present in the country at the time of the survey. The LFS 2016 also collected data about family status, education level of migrants and duration of their stay abroad – less than 6 months, 6-12 months, and over 12 months.<sup>34</sup> Migration module had no questions on remittances.

## 2. Other surveys

67. LSMS and HBS type surveys in EECCA countries also cover migration and remittances issues. More often separate questions are added to the survey questionnaire, but there also practices of integrating a separate module targeting different types of migration and categories of migrants.

68. In Tajikistan, LSMS was used twice for integrating a migration module. This initiative has been supported by the World Bank. In 2007 and 2009 a migration module was added to the survey questionnaire. The migration module consisted of two parts: part A on internal migration and Part B on international migration<sup>35</sup>. Information about remittances was collected using a question about 'money or goods received from individuals not residing in the household received in the last 12 months'<sup>36</sup> included in the section 'Transfers and social assistance'.

69. In Azerbaijan, LSMS 2011 (and LSMS 2008) contained an additional module 'Internally displaced people' consisting of 10 questions, and three questions concerning labour migration and remittances were included in the section 'household roster': respondents were asked about working abroad for more than one month, money sent to anybody in Azerbaijan during that stay abroad, and about the share of money sent through official channels. An additional question about 'money transfers/gifts from family, friends and other persons or entities (in and outside Azerbaijan)' is asked in the module 'household income' to capture transfers from an absent household member. Importantly, for the specific purposes of this survey, IDP households were oversampled to provide a clearer picture of their living

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<sup>33</sup> ILO (2012). Moldova and Ukraine: Effective Governance of Labour Migration and Its Skill Dimensions.

<sup>34</sup> Положение на рынке труда в Республике Таджикистан (Отчет, подготовленный по результатам обследования рабочей силы, проведенного с 20 июля по 20 августа 2016 года). Агентство по статистике при Президенте Республики Таджикистан. Душанбе 2017.

<sup>35</sup> [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLSMS/Resources/3358986-1181743055198/3877319-1220620169904/BINFO\\_FIN\\_E.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLSMS/Resources/3358986-1181743055198/3877319-1220620169904/BINFO_FIN_E.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Обследование уровня жизни в Таджикистане в 2009 г. Основной вопросник.

conditions and poverty level. The IDP module was developed with support of the World Bank.

70. Household budget surveys Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Moldova have also used HBS to include questions related to migration and remittances. In Moldova, Family Budget Study includes migration and remittances questions in the section on the household composition: a question on the reason of absence of a household member with ‘work abroad’ as one of the options, and a question on sources of income with one of the suggested answers being ‘money received from abroad’<sup>37</sup>.

71. Kyrgyzstan has been conducting integrated households budget and labour force surveys to collect data on economically active population working abroad since 2003. Questions on migration are included into the LFS part of the survey “Employment and Unemployment”. In Armenia, ILCS has a separate module ‘Migration’ consisting of 7 questions covering internal and international migration, reasons of return, employment while abroad and remittances. Additionally, nine questions related to transfers from an absent household member are included into the section on household income<sup>38</sup>.

72. The Integrated Household Survey (IHS) carried out by the National Statistics Office of Georgia on a quarterly basis allows for monitoring international mobility by asking respondents about reasons of changes in the household composition in the last three months: temporarily gone abroad (less than 1 year), moved permanently abroad or returned from abroad. Additionally, Part II of the questionnaire (Other household incomes, changes in financial state) has a section on ‘Parcels received/sent from/to persons who left the household (temporary or constantly)’ which asks several questions about remittances<sup>39</sup>.

## D. Summary

73. 56. Household surveys have been widely used in the EECCA region for collecting migration and remittances data. All countries have benefitted from conducting both specialised migration surveys and multipurpose household surveys with migration modules or migration and remittances questions, often with methodological and financial support of the international agencies, such as the ILO, IOM, and the World Bank.

74. Specialised migration surveys, although more costly than integrated migration modules, are quite numerous in the EECCA countries, though mainly in migration origin countries. In 2007-2017 there have been several survey projects covering more than one country of the region. Assuming, that country surveys rely on the same methodology and questionnaire, the data obtained in these surveys yields more comparability. Examples of such projects include *Remittances and Poverty in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan* (2006-2008) initiated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB)<sup>40</sup>, *Migration Surveys on the Relationship Between Skills, Migration and Development in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova* (2006-2012) supported by the European Training Foundation, and *Jobs, Skills and Migration* surveys in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan implemented by the World Bank in 2013. 58. The sample size of the nationwide specialised

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<sup>37</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova. Family Budget Study. Main Questionnaire. 2008.

<sup>38</sup> National Statistics Service of the Republic of Armenia. Integrated Living Conditions Survey Questionnaire. 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Integrated Household Survey Databases. National Statistics Office of Georgia.

<http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=meurneoba&mpid=1&lang=eng>

<sup>40</sup> Asian Development Bank (2008). A Study on International Migrants’ Remittances in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Country Report on Remittances of International Migrants and the Financial Sector in the Kyrgyz Republic.

migration household surveys varies from 1,500 to 20,000 households. The sample usually includes both migrant households and non-migrant households. Most migration surveys include questions on remittances, and in some cases the questionnaires also allow for distinguishing between remittance-receiving households and non-receiving households. Besides survey questionnaire, such projects can additionally apply in-depth interviews with open-ended questions to collect more data on migration and remittances.

75. One-country specialised household surveys are often based on samples overrepresenting areas with high migration turnover. Several examples include also projects surveying migrants' households both in the country of origin and in the destination country: Ukrainian migrants survey in Ukraine and Czechia (Prague Charles University, 2011-2012) and Survey of Tajik migrants in Russia and Tajikistan (World Bank, MiRPAL, 2014).

76. Specialised one-country migration household surveys in destination countries – Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan – are very rare. Information about international immigrants is obtained either through targeted individual surveys (for example, remittances senders surveys in Kazakhstan and Russia) or in the framework of multipurpose household surveys.

77. Multipurpose household surveys such as LFS, LSMS, and HBS are frequently used in EECCA countries to collect data about migration and remittances either through adding questions to the general questionnaire or through integrating a module. Some countries have tested ILO's Labour migration and mobility module when conducting regular LFS – Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine. Others developed their own modules.

78. Multipurpose surveys with a focus on households living conditions, expenditure and income – such as LSMS and HBS – are also actively used by EECCA countries to collect data on migration and remittances. Sometimes, integrated household surveys are used for this purpose, depending on the country's established practice of collecting statistics. General approach is to include remittance related questions to the section on household's income, and migration related questions – to household's roster. Despite this similarity in the approach across countries, the questions are formulated differently, and preference is given to different types of data, both in relation to migration and remittances, which prevents comparability of the collected data.

### III. Analysis of survey questionnaires

79. The number of questions on migration and remittances in a household survey will always vary depending on the type of the survey, with specialised surveys having longer and more detailed questionnaires. However, apart from different level of detail, migration and remittances questions pursue a set of common objectives: 1) to identify a migrant/ to map remittances; 2) investigate details of migration/remittance sending; 3) to assess the impact of migration/impact of remittances. As a rule, migration questions are asked first, and then remittance-related questions follow (Table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Sequence of questions about migration and remittances in household surveys**

Migration-related questions	Remittances-related questions
(1) Identification of a migrant	(4) Mapping remittances
(2) Investigating details of migration experience	(5) Investigating details of transfers
(3) Analysing the impact of migration	(6) Assessing the effects and impact of remittances

80. The sections below analyse migration and remittances questionnaires based on the identified objectives. Questions on migration discussed below refer only to international migration, and are asked in the countries of origin.

#### A. Migration-related questions

##### 1. Identification of a migrant

81. For identification of a migrant in a surveyed household, a specifically formulated definition of migrants is used. Key components of this definition include the duration of stay abroad and the period within which the migration took place. Surveys studied various types of migration, which are defined in the questionnaires. Comparability of data across countries depends on the common approaches to the definitions.

82. Although there exist already a formulated set of key migration related definitions, as the United Nations *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration* and IOM's *Glossary on Migration*, little unanimity is observed between countries implementing migration and remittances surveys. The analysis of the questionnaires of surveys in EECCA countries reveals a variety of approaches to the terminology related to the key types of migration. In case of specialized household surveys with a focus on one country, definitions are most likely to be different as surveys, as a rule, serve to collect specific data and the survey designers adjust definitions to the country context and specific objectives of the research. For example, in the survey conducted in Ukraine in 2014-2015, the definition of long-term international migrant worker adopted from IOM's *Glossary on Migration*<sup>41</sup> was transformed to include 9-months period of duration of stay for workers going to Russia so that it would be possible to compare the results with administrative statistics of migration collected in Russia:

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<sup>41</sup> IOM (2011). *International Migration Law. Glossary on Migration*. Available from: <https://publications.iom.int/books/international-migration-law-ndeg25-glossary-migration>



*... a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least twelve months with employment purpose (9 months and more for those working in the Russian Federation), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.*

83. In Armenian survey on return migration from 2008, the definition of *return migrant* did not distinguish between temporary and permanent emigration. Instead, the term *permanent returnees* referred to those returnees who came back to Armenia and were not planning to leave in 2008, while the term *temporary returnees* referred to those who had plans to leave again. Additionally, the definition of returned migrant specified the period of return as ‘*at least once between 2002 and 2007*’ since the research results were meant to be compared with the findings of the Nationwide Surveys on Labour Migration from Armenia in the period of 2002-2005 and 2005-2007<sup>42</sup>. Meanwhile, in Ukrainian survey on migration and remittances (2014-2015), which studied various types of migration including internal, the definition of ‘returned international migrant’ contained the indication of the period within which emigration took place as ten years and did not consider ‘temporary returnees’:

*“A person who moved for employment purposes to a country other than that of his or her usual residence during last ten years, but has returned to and is residing in Ukraine permanently – and who has no further migration intentions at the time of interview”.*

84. More harmonized approach to definitions is observed in multi-country specialized surveys conducted using the same methodology. For example, the surveys on skills, migration and development implemented by ETF as well as surveys under *Development on the Move* project applied the same definitions across participating countries, which indeed allowed easy cross-country comparison of the findings. As a rule, multi-country surveys cover mainly countries of origin. In cases, where surveys include both origin and destination countries belonging to one migration system, the results offer a unique opportunity to conduct bilateral comparison of the collected data. In this case, it is even more critical to use the common set of definitions. In this regard, a good example is Tajik survey in Russia and Tajikistan supported by the World Bank in 2014. The same definition of a Tajik migrant was applied to identify relevant respondents in both countries:

85. In Tajikistan:

*“Emigrant households are those that had at least one household member move to change his/her residence to another country for at least six continuous months between January 1, 2003 and the time of the survey (March 17-May 2, 2014) who was aged 15+ at the time of departure”*

86. In Russia:

*‘Households with one or more Tajik citizens (or former Tajik citizens but not earlier than 10 years prior to the survey in Russia at the end of 2014) living in Russia irrespective of ethnic origin, employed or not, officially registered or not, were selected. For the individual part of the questionnaire, an adult Tajik household member was randomly selected if his/her last arrival to Russia was not earlier than November 2004 (i.e., not*

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<sup>42</sup> Return Migration to Armenia in 2002-2008: a study. – Yerevan, Asoghik, 2008. Available from: [http://www.ast.am/files/Return%20Migration%20to%20Armenia%20in%202002-2008%20\(Eng\).pdf](http://www.ast.am/files/Return%20Migration%20to%20Armenia%20in%202002-2008%20(Eng).pdf)

*earlier than 10 years prior to the 2014 survey) and if he/she was not younger than 15 years old at the time of (last) arrival.'*

87. In other household surveys conducted in EECCA countries, approaches to the identification of migration experience also vary, depending on what survey is used for including migration module. For example, due to the specific frequency of LSMS, a question on migration experience limits the recall period to 3 years. In LFS, the recall period is 24 months.

*'Have you ever travelled abroad since January 1, 2006, and stay there for at least 1 month?'* (Question from Tajikistan LSMS 2009)

*'Have you in the [past 24 months/since x] or anyone who used to live in this household, left to live abroad for a year or more?'* (Question from Ukraine LFS 2012)

## **2. Investigating migration experience**

88. This part of the questionnaire is the longest and covers numerous issues associated with migration experience. Two basic initial questions concern the country of migration destination and reasons of migration. In the context of EECCA countries, labour migration is the most frequent type of migration studied. Therefore, many questions relate to various aspects of working abroad.

(a) ETF Skills and Migration surveys questionnaire, 2010

*What work did you do for the longest time abroad?*

*On average, about how many hours did you normally work per week when you were abroad?*

*Was there ever a period when you were abroad when you could not find any work?'*

(b) Household Survey on Migration in Armenia, 2014

*Did the job match his/her profession? Did the job match his/her qualification?*

89. Other aspects which are often studied include costs of migration: length of the trip to the destination country, sources of financing for the trip:

*How did you finance your first migration? (LSMS sample module 2012)*

90. Quite often, the questionnaires include questions on pre-departure training and investigate how well informed was a migrant about working opportunities abroad before leaving his home country. For example, in Tajikistan LSMS 2009, several questions refer to the pre-departure training, asking about language courses, training for practical skills improvement and computer skills training.

(a) LSMS sample module 2012

*Where did you find out information for where and how to migrate?*

(b) ETF Skills and Migration surveys questionnaire, 2010

*At the time you left, were you aware of any government programmes or companies that helped people to work abroad?*

*Did you attend any training before you went abroad specifically to prepare you for living or working abroad?*

(c) Household Survey on Migration in Armenia, 2014

*Did he/she have a preliminary arrangement/promise about work?*

91. Sensitive questions that refer to the migration experience relate to a migrant's irregular status. This issue is not frequently addressed in the surveys in EECCA countries, but several examples could be mentioned. LSMS module on migration in Tajikistan (2009) asked whether a migrant had a work permit before he found a job and whether he obtained a work permit after he found a job. Armenian survey (2014) asked about the availability of the written employment contract and whether work of a migrant was registered by a state authorized body. On top of that, the Armenian questionnaire also had a direct question concerning legal residence status of an absent migrant (Household Survey on Migration in Armenia, 2014)

*What legal residence status does he/she have in the country where he/she resides now? (mention 2 general options)*

*Citizen of the country 2. Right of residence 3. Right to work 4. Asylum seeker 5. Refugee 6. Temporary registration 7. Has no legal status 8. Other*

92. A question about written employment contract can be accompanied by questions investigating the availability of social benefits for a migrant worker such as health insurance, medical or annual leave, unemployment and injury compensation or contributions to the pension fund<sup>43</sup>.

### **3. Assessing the impact of migration**

93. This part of the questionnaire covers questions which can be addressed to return migrants and their family members left behind. When a migrant herself is asked, the aim is to compare the skills level, education, and other characteristics before and after migration. For example, ETF survey on skills, development and migration, targeting potential and return migrants in Moldova, asked a return migrant to evaluate his/her wellbeing before and after migration (ETF Skills and Migration, 2010)

*When compared to the time before you left, do you consider yourself better or worse off since your return?*

*In what way do you feel better/worse off?*

*Have your experiences abroad helped you find better work opportunities since your return?*

*Of all your experiences abroad, which have helped you most?*

*Experiences in general 2. Formal education/training 3. Skills learned at work 4. Other (specify)*

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<sup>43</sup> Moldova And Ukraine: Effective Governance of Labour Migration and Its Skill Dimensions. ILO, World Bank Group, 2012.

94. When a household member (a proxy respondent) is answering the questionnaire, he provides evaluation from the perspective of those who were left behind. Besides widely studied effect on the income level of migrants' households, other aspects of migration impact could be addressed. For example, the specialised surveys conducted in Moldova and Georgia in 2010 with support of IOM studied specific needs of children and elderly as a consequence of migration. The objectives of the research were to investigate the effects of migration on education, health condition, psychological effect on children and elderly who lack support and care of their family members as a consequence of labour migration, impact of the lack of connection between generations regarding the roles within family, impact of migration on the family's integrity (divorce and the separation of parents from children, etc.) and on the social inclusion and exclusion:

*How are children/elderly left behind by their parents/children generally perceived by other community members?*

*Before their first migration experience, are people who migrate to another country different in terms of norms, values, and attitudes from those who do not migrate?*

Source: The Effects of Migration in Moldova and Georgia on Children and Elderly Left Behind. Community Survey Questionnaire

95. Remittances received by a migrant's household serve a widely used indicator of migration impact on a households' wellbeing. Therefore, remittance-related questions are addressed both to returned migrants and their household members who benefit from remittances. The number of such questions varies, and in some cases only one question is asked to find out whether remittances are received. Some specialized surveys, as for example, the survey on return migration in Armenia (2008) did not ask about remittances. One reason for that is that the surveys was conducted before the economic crisis of 2008-2009, after which more interest to remittances emerged as dynamics of remittance inflows was used to assess the impact of the crisis on migration.

96. The link between migration and remittances received from a household member working abroad

## **B. Remittances-related questions**

97. Remittance-related questions of the questionnaire can be grouped around three main themes: 1) mapping remittances; 2) investigating details of transfer; 3) assessing the impact of remittances.

### **1. Mapping remittances**

98. Remittance mapping in a household survey is usually done by asking a question to confirm the receipt of transfers from an absent family member working abroad. No common definition is used in the surveys conducted in EECCA countries. Definitions vary in terms of form of remittances indicated (money or in-kind), and relationship with the sender. In some cases, the question is formulated so that to catch reverse transfers as people who migrate for work might receive financial support from their families in times of crisis:

(a) Moldova, HBS, 2013

*Monetary income from abroad*

(b) Household Survey on Migration in Armenia, 2014

*Please list the current sources of your H/H means of subsistence according to their importance: ...6. Earnings of HH member(s) permanently residing abroad 7. Temporary employment of H/H members abroad 8. Support from other persons abroad.*

*Has your H/H received money from abroad during the last 12 months?*

(c) Kyrgyzstan IHS, 2015

*Financial assistance from acquaintances or relatives abroad' of them from those living outside Kyrgyzstan – assess in-kind assistance in monetary terms*

(d) Georgia, Welfare Monitoring survey, 2010

*Parcels received/sent from/to persons who left the household' (temporary or constantly)*

(e) Uzbekistan, 2015

*Financial aid and gifts including food: 1) from family members who are away at another temporary job 2) from friend and relatives, who are not members of your household and live at a different address as well as other physical persons*

99. In general, the definition of remittances considering both money and in-kind remittances applied in EECCA surveys questionnaires corresponds to the definition recommended by IMF in the BPM6. At the same time, this definition may not cover all forms of financial aid/flows received by a household in the origin country. Other forms of assistance delivered by an absent member of the household may include, for example, goods for sale, direct payment for services, or a credit card left by a migrant and used by his family members at home. Additionally, the sender may not have a migrant status in the destination country<sup>44</sup>. From this perspective, the analysis of the surveys in the EECCA countries shows that the source of remittances transfer is studied more thoroughly in the recent surveys. The questionnaires often include subjective assessment of the financial situation of the household, questions on remittances from both household members and non-household members such as other relatives and friends, as well as organisations or institutions. Noteworthy, the questionnaires also often asked about reverse transfers, that is money or goods sent to relatives, friends, or organisation abroad<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Brown, Carling, Fransen & Siegel. Measuring remittances through surveys: Methodological and conceptual issues for survey designers and data analysts. Demographic Research. Volume 31, article 41, pages 1243–1274 Published 21 November 2014. Available from: <http://www.demographic-research.org/volumes/vol31/41/>

<sup>45</sup> State Committee of Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University. Comprehensive Survey of the Migration of the Republic of Armenia Population 2014-2017 Questionnaire. Available from: <http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2934/study-description>

## 2. *Investigating details of remittances*

100. Several key questions refer to the characteristics of remittance flows: channel of transfer, cost of transfer, frequency, and amounts. The aim of the question on remittance transfer channel is to find out the frequency of use of informal channels so that to estimate further informal remittances flows and remittances in cash (Armenian migration survey, 2014):

*When sending money to your H/H, which means of money transfer has been used more frequently? (Mention 3 main ones, writing their numbers)*

1. *Bank transfer (check, payment orders, deposits and so on)*
2. *Money transfer organizations (for example MoneyGram)*
3. *Post (money orders and so on)*
4. *Forwarder / courier*
5. *Was brought personally (during home visit)*
6. *Was brought by returnees*
7. *Other (please, specify)*

101. In some cases, the question makes no distinction between banks and money transfer operators (MTOs), grouping them into one optional response. However, such approach should be avoided. While banks and MTOs are certainly official channels, the results do not show that banks are little involved in remittance transactions, since majority of the population in remittance receiving countries do not have a bank account due to the low level of trust to formal financial institutions<sup>46</sup>.

(a) ADB Remittances and Poverty Country Report Kyrgyzstan 2008

*It follows from the survey data that majority of migrants (78.5%) use bank accounts and/or MTOs for money transmission—i.e., formal channels—and that a major part of remittances (78.2%) enters the country through this channel.*

(b) Impact of remittances on the households' wellbeing in Tajikistan 2010

*'Majority of households (94 per cent) receive remittances via banks, post office and MTOs, while 5 per cent receive it in cash brought by a migrant himself or a friend'*

(c) Azerbaijan LSMS 2011

*'Have you sent money to anybody in Azerbaijan during your last stay in a foreign country? What percentage of this amount was sent through Banks or money transfer organizations?'*

102. A question about the cost of transfer is not found in the EECCA survey questionnaires. The logic of introducing this question assumes that affordability of money transfer services in destination countries is an important factor for increasing the possibility

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<sup>46</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/programs/globalindex](http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/globalindex)



of remittances to perform as an additional income source for the migrants' families left behind. In EECCA region, the cost of remittances is very low already. According to a World Bank database,<sup>47</sup> the cost of sending remittances from the Russian Federation to former Soviet republics ranges between 1.1 per cent and 1.7 per cent of the transferred amount. The only lower cost corridor for sending remittances is from Saudi Arabia to Nepal (0.6 per cent).

103. A question about the frequency of remittances aims to find out to what extent this source of income can be considered stable. When a survey is being conducted during or after the economic crisis, the objective of the question on remittances is to learn about the effects of crisis on the dynamics of money transfer inflows. Another objective is to link regularity of remittance receipt with saving practices of the receiving households: when remittances are accumulated, their development potential increases.

104. Finally, there comes the sensitive question on the amount of remittances. Usually, a respondent is asked about average sum of transfer and total amount received in the past 12 months.

### ***3. Assessing the effects and the impact of remittances***

105. It is widely recognized that direct development impact of remittances is realized through increase of the income level of the receiving households. At the same time, dependence on remittances may result in negative consequences, such as lower labour market participation. Ultimately, positive outcome of the increase in income level depends on the spending structure of the household: if remittances are mostly spent on consumption, their development impact is very limited and short-term. Based on these assumptions, the impact of remittances is investigated using a question about spending structure of remittances.

106. Among EECCA countries, Moldova and Armenia have conducted specialized surveys dedicated to the impact of migration and remittances. Other examples include ADB's multi-country survey on poverty and remittances (2006-2008), and Tajikistan specialized survey on the impact of migration on households' wellbeing conducted in 2010. On top of that, many other single country surveys asked questions on remittance spending structure (Integrated Living Conditions Survey in Armenia, 2013):

*For what purpose was the transferred money used?*

*(1) For the recipient's daily consumption expenses (including expenses on health, education and other).*

*(2) In the recipient's construction or acquisition of real and movable property*

*(3) In the sender's (your) construction or acquisition of real property*

107. Unfortunately, comparison of data on spending structure collected by different surveys is problematic because the definition of 'daily consumption expenses' or 'daily basic needs' is not always clearly explained. Therefore, the conclusion drawn in the example below – that 80 percent of received amount is spent on daily basic needs – should not be interpreted as prevailing consumptive pattern of remittance use because the category of daily consumption expenses may include medicine and housing as well, i.e. categories which in other cases may be treated as investment into human capital as opposed to consumption:

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<sup>47</sup> Remittance Prices Worldwide. Available from <https://remittanceprices.worldbank.org/en>.

*Azeri remittance recipients spend approximately 80 percent of the money they receive on basic daily expenses such as food, housing, clothing, utilities, and medicine. (National Public Opinion Survey on Remittances, Azerbaijan 2007)*

108. Meanwhile, transfer from a migrant can serve a reimbursement of expenses carried by a household member in charge of the children left behind. In such case, one can hardly consider remittances as means of income increase. This issue has not received attention in EECCA surveys so far. Another important question which could be asked in migration and remittances surveys in EECCA refers to remittance management. A recent survey in Kyrgyzstan found that expenditure structure depends on the age and education level of the household's head: the older is the head of the household the more is the amount of money spent on celebrations, and the lower is the share spent on daily food requirements<sup>48</sup>. While the impact is assumed to be produced on the household in general, it does matter who makes decisions about the allocation of the transfer and how many household members are direct beneficiaries of remittances:

*Who in the household mostly receives the monetary remittances from [MIGRANT]?*

*(Elderly and Children Left Behind survey, questionnaire, Moldova and Georgia 2012)*

*How many people, including yourself, benefit from the money you receive from your family member or relative?*

*(National Public Opinion Survey on Remittances, Azerbaijan 2007)*

109. The question on the allocation of remittances is also addressed to remittance senders in targeted individual interviews. Surveys of the senders are much less frequent in EECCA destination countries. A targeted individual survey of remittance senders conducted by the Bank of Russia in 2016, indicates that the money sent is primarily meant for covering basic everyday needs of the family in the home country (62.4 per cent), four times less respondents transferred money to pay for healthcare, education, and other services (16.1 per cent), only a small share of the money was to repay a loan (3.6 per cent) and pay for the purchased goods (2.9 per cent), other motives accounted for 14.9 per cent of responses<sup>49</sup>. The survey of remittance senders in Kazakhstan conducted in 2007 under ADB's project *Poverty and Remittances in Central Asia and South Caucasus*, showed that about 80 per cent of remittances sent were meant for covering basic expenses of the receivers, while the second most popular allocation was emergency expenses (57 per cent). Finally, the third most popular answer was 'to provide luxury goods for the receiver' (46.3 per cent)<sup>50</sup>. The comparison of the results of the two surveys is problematic, since in Kazakhstan the respondents were offered to indicate several types of remittance allocation while in the Russian survey they were asked to choose only one. Moreover, the questionnaire of the Bank of Russia does not specify whose expenses and goods are paid for with money transfer – a sender's or a recipient's. In contrast, Kazakhstan survey specifically makes distinction between sender's and recipient's expenses (loans, goods, etc.) and this seems to be a more appropriate approach.

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<sup>48</sup> Muktarbek kyzy, Akylai and others (2015). Remittances and expenditure patterns of households in the Kyrgyz Republic. National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic Working Paper, No. 2. Available from [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/SSRN\\_ID2739706\\_code2511742.pdf?abstractid=2733425&mirid=1](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/SSRN_ID2739706_code2511742.pdf?abstractid=2733425&mirid=1).

<sup>49</sup> Результаты анкетирования физических лиц, осуществляющих трансграничные переводы через платежные системы (По данным 2016 года). – Банк России.

<sup>50</sup> Makhmutova, Meruert. 2007.

110. Meanwhile, the envisaged allocation of remittances is different from motives and determinants of money transfer. Understanding the determinants of remitting is essential for assessing which changes in conditions, events, or interventions could stimulate (or deter) the sending of remittances, and for crafting policies aimed at fostering remittance flows<sup>51</sup>. However, in the EECCA surveys, motives for remittance sending remain understudied so far.

### C. Summary

111. Questionnaires on migration and remittances can generally pursue the following objectives: 1) to identify a migrant or to map remittances; 2) to investigate details of migration/remittance sending; 3) to assess the impact of migration or the impact of remittances. As a rule, migration questions are asked first, and then remittance-related questions follow.

112. Little comparability of data across the migration surveys is explained by variations of key definitions used. Specialised migration surveys serve to collect specific data and the survey designers adjust definitions to the country context and specific objectives of the research. As a result, the duration of stay abroad – a key component of the international migrant definition – varies from one month to one year and more. More harmonized approach to definitions is observed in multi-country specialized surveys conducted using the same methodology, but these cases are rare.

113. Most surveys distinguish between remittances sent in cash and in-kind. While a question on formal/informal channels of transfer is a traditional one, it is recommended to distinguish also between various official channels, such as banks and MTOs to better understand financial behaviour patterns of migrants.

114. The source of remittances transfer is studied more thoroughly in the recent surveys. The questionnaires often include subjective assessment of the financial situation of the household, questions on remittances from both household members and non-household members such as other relatives and friends, as well as organisations or institutions. Noteworthy, the questionnaires also often asked about reverse transfers, that is money or goods sent to relatives, friends, or organisation abroad

115. Impact of migration is assessed with questions on a migrant's well-being before and after migration. Some questions address the wellbeing of the family members left behind. Remittances impact is generally assessed through analysis of the spending structure of the household, however, more clarity and unanimity in the definition of "everyday needs" would allow making substantive comparison of the expenditures of the receiving households in different countries. Additionally, information about motives and determinants of money transfer could be sought from the respondents.

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<sup>51</sup> Brown, Carling, Fransen & Siegel. Measuring remittances through surveys: Methodological and conceptual issues for survey designers and data analysts. *Demographic Research* volume 31, article 41, pages 1243-1274 published 21 November 2014 <http://www.demographic-research.org/Volumes/Vol31/41/> DOI: 10.4054/DemRes.2014.31.41

## IV. Limitations of the conducted surveys on migration and remittances

116. Collecting data on migration and remittances through household surveys is always challenging, both in terms of methodology and in terms of the sensitivity of the issues under study. Migration is a rare event, therefore instead of standard random sampling, alternative sampling techniques are used: 1) disproportionate sampling of high migration PSUs and 2) stratified random sampling within PSUs (two-phase sampling)<sup>52</sup>. Sources to learn about migration prevalence include expert opinions, qualitative surveys, or surveys in destination areas that contain information about the specific location from which the migrant departed<sup>53</sup>.

117. Sampling technique selected for a survey is primarily determined by the population of interest. In case potential migrants are surveyed, a country-wide random sampling can be applied. For specific categories of migrants, other techniques are used such as convenience sampling and snowball sampling.

118. Migrants of interest and the purpose of the survey (study long-term migration, study return migration, determinants and consequences of emigration, etc.) determine comparison groups and approaches to sampling of the targeted population. The sample should include households with emigrants and non-migrant households.

119. Also, survey designers should be aware of the sensitivity of several questions, such as the regular/irregular migrant status of the absent member of the household and the amount of remittances received by the family of a migrant. These and other challenges as well as the relevant solutions will be illustrated in the section below.

### A. Data representativeness

120. Representativeness of the migrant population in a household survey remains challenging both for specialised and general-purpose household surveys. Therefore, special sampling designs have been often used to ensure proper representativeness of the migrant population in the surveys in EECCA countries. For example, the Migration and Skills surveys initiated by ETF in Armenia and Georgia used random probability sampling for survey of potential migrants, and an additional snowball sampling technique for identifying respondents for return migrants survey: as a result, the returned migrant survey was not representative of all emigrants but inevitably skewed towards those present in their home country at the moment of the survey<sup>54</sup>.

121. Similar sampling strategies were adopted in the ETF surveys under the same project carried out in Albania, Egypt, Moldova, and Tunisia. Representativeness assessment of the sample showed that despite the random sampling of respondents for potential migrants' survey, more men than women were interviewed during the fieldwork due to the cultural factors and the nature of migration in these national contexts.

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<sup>52</sup> Measuring Migration Using Household Surveys. Migration Operational Vehicle Operational Note 2. By Calogero Carletto and Alan de Brauw. World Bank 2007. Available from: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMIGDEV/Resources/2838212-1237303771337/MigNote2\\_Carletto\\_de\\_Brauw\\_Measuring\\_Migration\\_Using\\_Household\\_Surveys.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMIGDEV/Resources/2838212-1237303771337/MigNote2_Carletto_de_Brauw_Measuring_Migration_Using_Household_Surveys.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Handbook on the Use of Administrative Sources and Sample Surveys to Measure International Migration in CIS Countries. UNECE, October 2016. Available from: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44114>

<sup>54</sup> Migration and Skills in Armenia and Georgia. ETF,

122. Representativeness of the data is very much determined by the sample frame applied. For nationwide sampling the census is usually used as a frame. Unfortunately, due to the slow update of the census data – once in 10 years – addresses used for the surveys fieldwork become obsolete and interviewers face closed doors. For example, in the *Integrated Survey of the Migration of the Republic of Armenia Population 2007-2013* the issue of “closed doors” emerged as a significant problem. The response rate was approximately 52 per cent. The locked houses often belonged to entire families who have migrated, either within the Republic of Armenia or overseas, thus leaving no household member residing in the domicile during the time of the interview. The sampling frame of this survey was based on the old list of databases of addresses of private households based on the results of the 2001 Population Census, which can help to explain this response rate<sup>55</sup>. One way out in such case could be to ask a limited number of questions about the emigrated household from proxy respondents – neighbours, police, etc.

123. To ensure better representativeness of households with migration experience, other sources, besides census data can be used as a sample frame. For example, the sample of the Tajik survey conducted in 2010 was based on the Integrated Household Survey of September 2009 and the Panel survey of November 2009: ‘all households with migrants were included and other households in the same enumerator area (according to the Population census 2000) were randomly sampled with the assumption that if an area has a household with migrants it is a higher chance that they have more migrants compared to other areas’. The final sample totalled 3,133 households. However, the disadvantage of such approach is that the sample is not representative for the whole Tajikistan as areas with frequent migration are overrepresented<sup>56</sup>.

124. Some unexpected factors can also negatively impact the representativeness of the survey data. For example, due to the on-going geostrategic disturbances in the southern and eastern parts of the Ukraine, a significant area of population (about 9 million or about 20 per cent of the overall population in Ukraine) was excluded from the sample and further analysis in the surveys implemented in 2014-2015. This limitation could have produced some negative impact on the overall migration profile at the whole country level in terms of total migration stock, financial flow, and countries of destination.

125. Based on the available information about the methodology of general purpose surveys with integrated modules on migration and remittances in EECCA countries, no specific sampling procedures were used. For example, the labour migration survey in Ukraine was conducted as an additional module of LFS (known in Ukraine as the Survey of Economically Active Population) based on a nation-wide representative area sample of households. The sample size totalled 27,100 households<sup>57</sup>. But even with such large sample size, the survey did not capture enough migrant households. Hence, the survey report states, “The labour migration number estimates obtained for territorial zones are generally not reliable enough and can only be used for qualitative analysis. Only data on the total number of migrant workers for the West territorial zone, where the largest number of migrant workers is found, can be used for quantitative analysis. For other territorial zones, the labour migrant number indicator value is 7–10 times less and, accordingly, insufficiently reliable.” (p.26).

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<sup>55</sup> Household Survey on Migration in Armenia, IOM, Yerevan 2014.

<sup>56</sup> The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Welfare in Tajikistan. Results from a Sample Survey in August 2010. Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

<sup>57</sup> Report on the Methodology, Organization, and Results of a Modular Sample Survey on Labour Migration in Ukraine. ILO 2013

## B. International comparability of the results

126. Common methodology and questionnaires applied in the multi-country household surveys ensure better comparability of the findings. For example, the *Development on the Move* survey project implemented in Colombia, Fiji, Ghana, Macedonia, Vietnam, and Georgia used the same questionnaire in all participating countries. Unfortunately, only one EECCA country was covered by this project. Another example of a multi-country household survey – ADB’s project ‘*Poverty and Remittances in South Caucasus and Central Asia*’ — does not provide for the comparability of the findings across all countries, since research design differed in migration origin and migration destinations.

127. Key definitions used in specialised surveys focused on one country are often country-tailored thus deviating from the international standard definitions, which makes it impossible to compare the findings of the surveys implemented in different countries even if the thematic focus was similar. Even the age criterion defined for an adult member of a household answering the questionnaire also varies across the surveys: 15+/16 +/18+/18-50/15-70 years.

128. Comparability of the results can be ensured using common migration module, as it was in the case of the EECCA countries which integrated ILO’s LMM module in their regular national household surveys.

## C. Sensitive questions

129. The issue of sensitive questions always comes up in country reports on the migration and remittances surveys. The wording of sensitive questions and their position in the questionnaire very much influence the response rate. The migrant status (regular or irregular) is one of the sensitive issues to be addressed in the migration surveys. However, some solutions have already been tested. For example, in the ETF survey on skills, development and migration, both legal and illegal returning migrants were interviewed. They were not directly asked whether they migrated legally or illegally, but the questionnaire provided some indications about this (through the questions about the reasons to return to the home country, which include answers such as “laid off by authorities” or the variable of whether someone paid social security benefits in the host country)<sup>58</sup>.

130. Questions about the amount of remittances received is also sensitive: in *Georgia on the Move* survey (2008), 33 per cent of the absent migrant households receiving remittances refused to answer and 23 per cent said they do not know how much they received. It is preferable to ask about the total amount sent for the period of 12 months rather than asking about the average amount received. Another approach is to use intervals when asking a respondent to indicate an average amount of transfer.

131. Sensitive questions with highest non-response rate in *Household Survey in Ukraine, 2014-2015*, included the following:

- (a) *Can you estimate (...) the total value of in-kind remittances received from migrant worker over last 12 months?* (59%)
- (b) *Does your HH save money out of the money your HH receives from all sources (including from abroad)?* (25.1%)
- (c) *Can you estimate the total amount of money needed to meet the above savings objectives?* (76.6%)



132. Sensitivity of the issues discussed in migration surveys may also be the reason of refusal to participate. For example, in Moldovan survey of return migrants (2011), the high number of refusals to participate was explained by two reasons: fear of being robbed (because migrants had returned with money), and fear of being approached by law enforcement agencies (when migrants had worked illegally)<sup>59</sup>.

### **D. Response rate**

133. Three Armenian migration household surveys (2015, 2016 and 2017) were commissioned by the State Committee of Science of the Republic of Armenia and implemented by Russian–Armenian (Slavonic) University. The latest survey report indicates that the percentage of the filled-out survey questionnaires was quite low. On average only 51.4 per cent out of 4,071 observations are filled out survey questionnaires. As it had been expected, the lowest indicator was registered in Yerevan, 45.6 per cent, and the highest one – in rural settlements, 56.3 per cent<sup>60</sup>.

134. Geo-strategic disturbances during the implementation of the Ukrainian surveys of 2014-2015 produced negative impact on the final response rate: 73 per cent at the screening stage. These factors together with economic recession and regulatory measures resulted in lower openness and trust among the respondents. For example, some respondents may have not reported the real migration status of their households, which, in turn, may have led to a certain underestimation of the actual number of international migrant workers<sup>61</sup>.

### **E. Summary**

135. Key limitations of household surveys on migration and remittances in EECCA countries are not unique and illustrate the general limitations of survey-taking. A better representation of migrant population in the sample surveys in EECCA countries is ensured by means of using specific sampling techniques, such as snow-ball sampling and oversampling the units with higher concentration of migrant households. However, standard probability sampling is still used for modular migration surveys conducted on the basis of multipurpose surveys and in specialised surveys covering potential migrants.

136. Sensitivity of questions related to remittances and migrant status often negatively impacts the response rate of the survey. Therefore, the relevant questions need to be carefully formulated and the time of the survey accurately chosen.

137. The survey data is not always reliable enough for quantitative analysis, even in case of nationally representative multipurpose household surveys with migration modules due to the small number of migrant households in the sample.

138. International comparability of the migration and remittances data obtained through household surveys is better in the case of multi-country specialised surveys and modular

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<sup>59</sup> ETF, World Bank (2010). *Migration and Skills: the Experience of Migrant Workers from Albania, Egypt, Moldova, and Tunisia*. By Jesús Alquézar Sabadie, Johanna Avato, Ummuhan Bardak, Francesco Panzica, and Natalia Popov.

<sup>60</sup> State Committee of Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University. *Comprehensive Survey of the Migration of the Republic of Armenia Population 2014-2017*.

<sup>61</sup> IOM (2016). *Migration as an Enabler of Development in Ukraine. A study on the nexus between development and migration-related financial flows to Ukraine*. Kyiv. Development and migration-related financial flows to Ukraine.

## Limitations of the conducted surveys on migration and remittances

surveys integrated into a multipurpose household survey, assuming the same migration module with similar definitions is applied in participating countries.

## V. Modular design approach to collecting migration and remittances data in sample surveys

139. The analysis of the experience of the EECCA countries in using multipurpose household surveys for collecting data on migration and remittances shows that three surveys have been used: Labour Force Survey (LFS), Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS), and Household Budget Survey (HBS).

140. Choosing a suitable household survey for a harmonized migration and remittances module integration requires thorough analysis of existing surveys design, in particular, sample size and questionnaire. A suitable survey can be identified using the following questions (as formulated by R. Bilsborrow<sup>62</sup>):

- (a) Is the sample size enough to catch type of migrants of interest in the country?
- (b) What other data is available that may be relevant to migration, such as the main demographic characteristics of the population, employment status, type of occupation, information about the size of wages and level of income?
- (c) Are any data already being collected in the survey that identify international migrants? E.g., country of birth, citizenship, previous residence, or key events that may trigger migration, such as [dates of] marriage/divorce, education.
- (d) Are any retrospective data collected on individuals in the household and on the household relating to migration?
- (e) Does survey allow collecting data on the situation of non-migrants in migrant households and in non-migrant households at the same time?

141. When considering adding questions not only on migration but also on remittances, another important methodological issue to be considered is the definition of the household member. Generally, the questions on remittances assume that remittances are sent to the household by an absent member who is a migrant. However, the relationship between remittance senders and remittance recipients can take various forms. For example, a non-migrant household can receive remittances, remittances can be sent by emigrated friends or distant relatives, or remittance sender is a second-generation migrant, etc. Therefore, additional criteria for selecting a suitable survey for migration and remittances module is:

- (a) Is the definition of a remittance sender wide enough to include non-household members?

142. Finally, when collecting data about remittances, the ultimate objective is to assess their development impact on the receiving household. Therefore, if the survey already gathers information on a household's income structure and expenditure structure, it would be also an advantage:

- (a) Are any data already being collected in the survey that identify the level of wellbeing of the household?

143. Generally, the development impact of remittances is measured in monetary terms, reflecting the increase of a household's income. This approach, however, is ignoring non-monetary effect on the poverty reduction evaluated through such indicators as access to the

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<sup>62</sup> Richard E. Bilsborrow and Mariam Lomaia. International Migration and Remittances in Developing Countries: Using Household Surveys to Improve Data Collection in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. World Bank, April 17, 2011.

education, water, sanitation, etc. Therefore, the link of remittances to various living conditions indicators (besides income and expenditure variables) already available in the survey will be useful for assessing the impact of remittances on the household's wellbeing. However, such assessment will require information about living conditions of a household with and without remittances and/or before and after migration of a household member.

144. Considering the above criteria concerning the sample size and questionnaire and the analysis of the surveys in EECCA countries presented earlier, the following sections will briefly evaluate the potential of the three regular surveys for integration of a harmonized module on migration and remittances.

### **A. Sample size**

145. Labour-force survey is widely recognized as the best candidate for a migration module since its sample size is large enough to capture migrant population. Additionally, LFS has a higher response rate. For example, in Armenia, monthly sample size of LFS is 649 households, the annual sample size 7,788 households, and the response rate about 92 per cent<sup>63</sup>. LSMS and HBS are usually based on smaller samples. It means that before attaching a migration module to these surveys, the sampling design should be reconsidered while keeping in mind that in case of big modifications of the sample, the cost and complexity of adding a module will be higher.

146. In the case of LFS, no transformation or augmentation of the sample is required<sup>64</sup>. In contrast, LSMS and HBS sample design might require modification for migration surveys purposes, but here some solutions have been already worked out and successfully tested. For example, areas of the country with expected high concentration of migrants could be identified and sampling rules modified to oversample those areas. In addition, two-phase sampling could be used at the last stage, to identify and oversample (households with) international migrants. Alternatively, the problem of small sample can be solved by basing the HBS sample on another, larger sample, such as LFS or Microcensus. In this case, the HBS sample should be restricted to households for which the previous survey was successfully completed, since it would be problematic to include households which have already refused to co-operate in an earlier survey. Therefore, the non-response of the sampling frame survey should be taken into account when calculating the response rate for the HBS<sup>65</sup>.

### **B. Questionnaire**

147. Most migration in the CIS region is driven by economic purposes, with search of a job being the primary reason for going abroad. Therefore, the Labour Force Survey is a logical choice for incorporating migration module. The survey has a focus on the labour market: it collects basic socio-demographic information about households, data on education and labour

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<sup>63</sup> Quality Declaration. Labour Force Survey in Armenia. <http://www.armstat.am/file/Qualitydec/eng/9.1.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> Bilsborrow and Lomaia (2012).

<sup>65</sup> Household budget surveys in the EU - Methodology and recommendations for harmonisation 2003. Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5875361/KS-BF-03-003-EN.PDF/42a95cc0-cb48-48c7-8d3a-dfc5fa265eff?version=1.0>

market participation of the respondents<sup>66</sup>. In Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine, LFS was chosen for incorporating ILO's labour migration mobility module.

148. In contrast, LSMS and HBS questionnaires have a different focus – income and expenditure of the households. In addition, these surveys measure living conditions of the households. Availability of income and consumption expenditure variables makes LSMS and HBS more suitable (than LFS) for adding remittance related questions and assessing the impact of remittances on the households' wellbeing. For example, in Tajikistan, LSMS has an integrated migration module, which includes questions about current and returned migrants, as well as a module on transfers and social assistance including questions about money and goods received from abroad and sent by an individual or organization (table 8). Additional question is also asked to identify relationship between the remittance sender and the receiving household.

**Table 5 Tajikistan LSMS 2009 questionnaire modules**

Module 1	Roster
Module 2	Migration
Module 3	Education
Module 4	Health
Module 5	Labour market
Module 6	Housing
Module 7	Transfers and social assistance
Module 8	Poverty and Food Security
Module 9	Consumption of food
Module 10	Non-food consumption
Module 11	Other income sources

Source: LSMS in Tajikistan in 2009, main questionnaire.

149. Household budget survey in EECCA countries may have different names but the objective is similar – to collect data on household consumption, expenditure, and income. In Armenia, for example, the Integrated Living Conditions Survey serves this purpose, in Belarus it is Household Sample Survey previously known as Family Budget Survey, in Kyrgyzstan - Integrated Household Budget Survey, in Moldova – Family Budget Study. The common element of all these surveys is the measurement of the household budget, while other modules of the questionnaire can be different. Many EECCA countries have used these surveys to collect additional data both on migration and on remittances with various level of detail (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

150. One of the important indicators of the impact of remittances is the structure of remittance spending. The comparability of data on this indicator remains problematic since various surveys apply different approaches for identification of 'daily consumption needs'.

<sup>66</sup> Инструментарий для модульных обследований при проведении обследования рабочей силы (рынка труда) с учетом Рекомендаций 19-й Международной конференции статистиков труда (МКСТ). Межгосударственный статистический комитет Содружества Независимых Государств. Москва 2016.

Meanwhile, HBS methodology distinguishes between twelve main divisions of consumption expenditure which could be used for identification of remittance spending structure as well<sup>67</sup>:

- (a) Food and non-alcoholic beverages
- (b) Alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and narcotics
- (c) Clothing and footwear
- (d) Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels
- (e) Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance
- (f) Health
- (g) Transport
- (h) Communication
- (i) Recreation and culture
- (j) Education
- (k) Restaurants and hotels
- (l) Miscellaneous goods and services

### **C. Definition of a household member**

151. The standard definition of a household member in LSMS is based on 12-months residency rule, and it is too narrow to learn about all relevant migration experience of household members, as some migrants linked to the household will not be considered members according to this definition. A similar problem is observed with household budget surveys: according to the HBS methodology, a person who has moved out of the household to some other place of residence with the intention to stay away for 6 months or more, will no longer be considered a member of the previous household<sup>68</sup>. In order not to lose the important data on potential remittance senders, an extended residency rule should be applied. Some recommendations developed by the World Bank in this regard include:

- (a) Fully enumerating basic information and whereabouts of the children of the household head, and potentially the spouse of the household head, even if they do not pass the strict residency rule;
- (b) Collecting basic information on any individuals related to the household head who lived in the household for at least 3-6 months and have left in the previous five years;
- (c) Some combination of the two; for example, one might only enumerate information concerning children of the household head who left in the previous five years.

152. Anyway, the ultimate choice depends on the context of the country in question and the concrete objectives of the survey.

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<sup>67</sup> Household budget surveys in the EU - Methodology and recommendations for harmonisation 2003. Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5875361/KS-BF-03-003-EN.PDF/42a95cc0-cb48-48c7-8d3a-dfc5fa265eff?version=1.0>

<sup>68</sup> Household budget surveys in the EU - Methodology and recommendations for harmonisation 2003. Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5875361/KS-BF-03-003-EN.PDF/42a95cc0-cb48-48c7-8d3a-dfc5fa265eff?version=1.0>



153. According to the accepted definition for LFS survey with integrated migration module, a former household member is identified as emigrant worker if he left the household in the past 24 months for a period of 12+ months and is currently residing abroad, including those visiting temporarily. Questions on remittances (defined as money and goods from abroad) are asked with reference to the absent household member as well as without any reference to the sender in case of non-migrant households. Therefore, remittance senders who are not relatives can be captured, however, there were no questions on the relationship with the sender and his/her motivations for sending remittances.

154. Migration module in Tajikistan LSMS 2007 included questions on remittances in relation to the absent household member residing abroad. At the same time, the LSMS questionnaire also had a module on social assistance and transfers, where a question was asked about receipt of the financial and in-kind assistance from a donor – individual or organisation. Additional questions related to the place of residence of the donor and relationship of the donor to the head of the household. Therefore, the notion of “donor” might be a useful substitution for an absent household member working abroad, although questions in relation to organization and individual donors should be asked separately (not as ‘individual/organisation’).

#### **D. Summary**

155. In principle, any of the three multipurpose surveys discussed in this report – LFS, HBS and LSMS – can be used for integration of a migration and remittances module. However, each module has its pros and cons.

156. Since most emigration in the EECCA countries is linked to employment, it is logical to use LFS for modular migration survey. Such option was already tested in Moldova, Ukraine, and Armenia, where ILO Labour mobility module was used. The sample size of LFS is larger than that of HBS or LSMS, and no additional adjustments in the sampling procedure are required.

157. Questions on remittances are more logically integrated in the HBS. Two key advantages of the HBS are (i) the questionnaire has a focus on income, consumption and expenditure making it easy to link the existing variables with remittances and migration questions and decreasing the sensitivity of remittances-related questions; (ii) the survey methodology relies on the defined classification of consumption expenditure which could be used for identification of remittance spending structure as well. Many EECCA countries also have used HBS for asking questions about migration and remittances.

158. Thematic focus of the LSMS - assessment of the level of consumption-based poverty – is relevant for measuring the development impact of migration and remittances. LSMS has a smaller sample size compared to LFS, but was successfully used for modular survey or for integrating questions on migration and remittances in Tajikistan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan.

## VI. Conclusions

159. A household sample survey is recognised in EECCA countries as an irreplaceable source of in-depth data on migration and remittances in addition to administrative sources of data. As in the case of international migration statistics, the success of collecting comparable remittance data across countries is also determined by common approaches to definitions and measurement. While national banks in EECCA countries, as of 2017, report personal remittances figures in accordance with the recommendations of the latest IMF's Balance of Payments Manual, this data provides no information about informal remittances, in-kind remittances, characteristics of the senders and recipients. In this respect, information obtained through household surveys can serve valuable supplement to the existing remittance statistics.

160. The range of household sample surveys on migration and remittances conducted in the EECCA countries in 2007-2016 includes one-country and multi-country specialized surveys, as well as multipurpose household surveys with integrated modules and/or questions on migration and remittances – LSMS, LFS, HBS. However, numerous efforts in data collection have rather contributed to the expanding the knowledge base about migration and remittances rather than improving the comparability of these data. As of today, availability of comparable survey data is limited to a couple of multi-country specialized surveys covering just a few of the EECCA countries.

161. Specialised surveys have an obvious advantage: the survey designers can develop a more detailed questionnaire on migration and remittances. When the funding of the survey project allows, several countries can be surveyed using the same questionnaire, hence providing the comparable data. On the other hand, specialised surveys have a serious administrative disadvantage – they are almost never repeated. One exception is the nationwide Armenia migration surveys project implemented three consecutive years in 2015, 2016 and 2017 within the World Bank program. Longitudinal approach is also used only occasionally: one example is Tajikistan panel survey of 2011.

162. Multipurpose household surveys cannot afford much flexibility as to the number of the questions to be included, but still there are examples of surveys which incorporate separate modules on migration and collect relevant data for some years already. The best practice examples include ILCS in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Importantly, HBS and LSMS provide for the option to ask remittance related questions from non-migrant households by adding a relevant question in the household's income section of the main survey questionnaire.

163. The choice between LFS, LSMS and HBS for integration of a harmonized migration module is not easy. On the one hand, LFS with a large sample size and labour market focused questions seems a good option. On the other hand, LSMS and HBS main questionnaires already collect information about household's incomes, expenditures and living conditions, thus providing many variables for assessing the monetary impact of remittances. Another argument supporting the choice of LSMS or HBS is that sensitive questions about remittances are likely to have higher response rate, since other income related questions already included into the survey main questionnaire.

164. When developing a harmonised module on migration and remittances to be used in EECCA countries, the following considerations emerge:

165. Collecting comparable data on migration and remittances is a two-way road that benefits and therefore, requires efforts from both migration destination and migration origin countries. So far, the contribution of destination countries – Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan –

## Conclusions

in what concerns conducting household sample surveys on international immigration and remittances has been quite limited. To facilitate their involvement, the harmonised module should envisage adaptation of the questionnaire to destination countries context.

166. Considering rather long experience of EECCA countries in gathering migration and remittance data through multipurpose household surveys, it should be acknowledged that some degree of harmonisation of approaches has been already reached: integration of remittance-related questions into the household's income section of the main questionnaire, adding questions on international migration in the household's roster, etc. Also, a harmonised approach is also observed in questions identifying details of remittance transfers: all surveys distinguish between cash and in-kind remittances, and between formal and informal channels of transfers.

167. A substantial variability of data originating from difference in the questionnaires has more than one explanation. In case of a closed question (yes/no), the wording of the question matters: for example, it concerns the period of stay abroad when an international migrant is identified in the household. Also, the recall period identified in the question is often determined by the regularity of a survey, and therefore, the design of the questions serves the objective of comparability of results with the previous survey in the same country, but not with another country survey. In case of multiple choice questions, the selection of answers influences the comparability of surveys results across countries even if the wording of questions was identical. For example, when a respondent is asked about channels of transfer, or about the spending structure of remittances received.

168. Whichever multipurpose household survey is chosen for the harmonised module integration, it should envisage the study of the following types of households: Migrant households receiving remittances, migrant households not receiving remittances, non-migrant households receiving remittances and non-migrant households not receiving remittances.

169. In most cases, remittances appear to be an issue of secondary interest for the initiators of the surveys. The only exception in the EECCA countries being the multi-country specialised project *Poverty and Remittances in Central Asia and South Caucasus* implemented by the Asian Development Bank in 2006-2008. As a result, the diversity of remittance-related questions is much lower than migration questions, and the data collected is rather limited. The harmonised module could address this gap by expanding the remittance part of the questionnaire.

153. A household survey can be also used as policy impact evaluation instrument. So far, this option was tested in the EECCA countries mainly in relation to pre-departure training measures developed by some sending countries. However, this option could be also useful for evaluating the policies of destination countries.