

IOM GMDAC Migration Data Survey

Report for MOLDOVA

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Acronyms

APIS	Advance Passenger Information System
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
BDR	Bureau for Diaspora Relations
BoP	Balance of Payments
BMA	Bureau for Migration and Asylum
CCTHB	Center on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CLA	Congress of Local Authorities
DCHRSD	Directorate for Coordination on Human Rights and Social Dialogue
EMP	Extended Migration Profile
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GIBP	General Inspectorate of Border Police
GIP	General Inspectorate of Police
GMDAC	Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (IOM)
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
GGG	Generations and Gender Survey
HBS	Household Budget Survey
IDNP	Identification Number of Person
IISBP	Integrated Information System of the Border Police
IISPM	Integrated Information System on Population and Migration
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JGRA	Joint Group for Risk Analysis
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MECR	Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
MFAEI	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
MHLSP	Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection
MITC	Ministry of Information Technology and Communications
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NBM	National Bank of Moldova
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCCHT	National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking
NEA	National Employment Agency
NSIH	National Social Insurance House
PHC	Population and Housing Census
PSA	Public Services Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGV	Visa Management Information System
SIAMMA	Integrated Automated Information System Migration and Asylum
SRP	State Register of Population
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

The Republic of Moldova experiences among the highest level of labour and youth emigration as well as an important impact of human trafficking within the country. With probably more than one million Moldovan citizens living abroad, the problem linked to the diaspora and returning migrants is also high on the political agenda.

The government of Moldova has undertaken intensive activities and developed a National Strategy on Migration and Asylum for the period 2011-2020 that is currently being updated for the current decade. Moldova has a well-developed institutional framework in the area of migration management and policies. Among the numerous Ministries and agencies dealing with international migrations and migrants, the Ministry of Internal Affairs occupies a leading position with departments responsible for border controls (GIBP), and for migration and asylum (BMA) and the Police enforcing the migration law and fighting against trafficking and smuggling of persons. The State Chancellery includes the Public Services Agency (PSA) that manages the State Register of Population (SRP) where both authorized emigrations and return immigrations of Moldovan citizens are registered as well as the presence of foreign migrants authorized to reside temporally or permanently in the country. Moldova is well advanced concerning the use of new technologies for e-governance and for providing public service and the development of MConnect, an Interoperability Governmental Platform facilitating exchange of data among all national authorities.

The provision of statistical migration data is under the responsibility of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) whose mandate includes the coordination and management of statistical activities and the dissemination of official statistical figures. The main statistical tools that are the population and housing census – the last dated from 2014 whereas a new one is in preparation - and both the Labour Force Survey and Household Budget Survey provide detailed information concerning migrants and the population with foreign origin residing in Moldova. The main challenge faced by NBS was the recent adoption of the new definition of the usual place of residence with consequence that a bit less than one million of Moldovan citizens living abroad most of their time were excluded from the count resulting in a significant drop of the total population figure, a news followed by multiple reactions among stakeholders and in the media.

The most innovative initiative in terms of migration data collection in Moldova is the use of border crossing data through a closer cooperation between the GIBP and NBS with the support of UNFPA and IOM. The methodology already proposed in the first Extended Migration Profile (2013) produced with the support of IOM is worth to be disseminated worldwide as an effective way for identifying international migrants on the base of common border control procedures. Other operational information systems are managed by the GIBP, PSA, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MHLSP), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MCER) and the National Bank of Moldova (NBM), whereas BMA holds several databases covering different procedures linked to migration. Nevertheless, the latter are not centralized at individual level in an integrated migration information system, an option that is highly recommended.

The assessment of the migration statistical data provided by NBS slightly contrasts with the positive statements mentioned here above. Being the official provider of statistical data in Moldova, NBS should reinforce its leadership position to ensure the availability, consistency, reliability, and international comparability of data related to international migration. To comply with international recommendations, still some improvements are needed as NBS does not benefit concretely from the development of new integrated information systems developed by several Ministries that might provide useful information on migrants. In addition to traditional activities and their specific statistical tools that are censuses and surveys, NBS should intensify the use of administrative databases for producing migration data. Therefore, the inter-institutional coordination should be strengthened by defining a national coordination mechanism for the production of migration statistics. Yet, most institutions and stakeholders do not see enough the relevance of migration data, even for supporting the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum. This particularly does not favour data sharing and complicates data production. NBS aims at developing an Integrated Information System on Population and Migration (IISPM) to provide complex and timely statistical data on population, internal, and international migration disaggregated on several dimensions at the local and national level. This will require more financial investment in the form of hiring more statisticians and having the equipment and competence to innovate in new fields of investigation.

This report put forward a set of recommendations to improve the current situation. Among others, it emphasizes a clear need for more coordination and concrete steps forwards for improving the migration indicators under the frameworks of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And, last but not least, it recommends to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Moldovan emigrants and foreigners in Moldova through specific indicators to be developed by NBS in close cooperation with other institutions.

1. Introduction

This report presents and assesses the current migration data collection in the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as Moldova). For political reasons, it does not consider the territory and the population of Transnistria on the east bank of the river Dniester.

This report is part of the IOM GMDAC Project ‘Migration Data Survey’ that aims at better understanding how countries worldwide are meeting a range of different migration data challenges. With migration data in the global spotlight thanks to processes such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and others, the project aims to provide a comprehensive picture of how “migration data systems” work in practice at the national level. The objective is to explore how far countries are making progress in improving migration data and understand practical challenges facing national statistical institutes and other national stakeholders, the impact of frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and GCM, use of innovative methodologies and new sources of migration data, and more.

The project covering six countries was undertaken by a team of three international consultants on migration statistics composed by Michel Poulain (Team Leader), Giambattista Cantisani and Anna Taeko Fernandez. The consultants worked under the supervision of Frank Laczko and Elisa Mosler Vidal (respectively Director and Research and Data Officer of IOM GMDAC) and in close consultation with the officers of IOM missions in the involved countries (Ghenadie Cretu, Senior Program Coordinator / Analyst, and Vitalie Varzari, Senior Program Assistant, in the case of Moldova).

The six country reports are mainly based on a series of virtual interviews and email exchanges with relevant national institutions, research centres, IOM country offices, and other international organisations offices represented in these countries. The mapping of the institutions dealing with international migration and related statistical data collected, produced, analysed, and/or disseminated was done through information gathered through the interviews and desktop research of documents and publications available at national and international level and in consultation with the IOM country offices.

All contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

2. Background

In the past decade, the Government of Moldova has undertaken intensive activities in relation to migration legislation and policy development due to an increasing awareness of the importance of migration management. This is reported in the Moldova’s EMP¹ and confirmed during the interviews

¹ A first Migration Profile was published in 2008, with six more editions following. Thereafter Moldova was the first country to prepare an Extended Migration Profile whose reference of the first and the more recent versions are as followed:

- Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Moldova, published in 2012, 312 pages, link <https://publications.iom.int/books/extended-migration-profile-republic-moldova>

conducted. The most relevant migration-related topics in Moldova are labour migration abroad, primarily in the Russian Federation and Italy; youth migration, including for academic purposes; trafficking in human beings (THB); and the diaspora settled abroad. Table 1 provides the latest key population and migration statistics for Moldova.

Table 1: Key population and migration statistics

Total population in 2020 ⁽¹⁾	4,000,000
Number of foreign citizens in Moldova in 2020 ⁽²⁾	104,400
Of which	
Percentage of total population	2.6%
Percentage of women	59.1%
Ukraine	42,400
Russian Federation	40,000
Kazakhstan	4,400
Italy	3,200
Belarus	2,100
Number of refugees in 2020 ⁽³⁾	400
Number of Moldovan emigrants abroad in 2020 ⁽²⁾	1,159,400
Of which	
Percentage of women	52.2%
Russian Federation	294,200
Romania	285,400
Italy	194,500
Ukraine	152,200
United States of America	45,700

1. Source: UNDESA. The value significantly differs from the resident population computed by NBS through the population registration (i.e., 3,542,700 for the 1st January 2019) and the usual residence population recalculated by NBS applying the international definition (i.e. 2,640,400 as provisional value for the 1st July 2020) available at NBS Statbank, link <https://statistica.gov.md/category.php?l=en&idc=103&>.
2. Source: UNDESA, International Migrant Stock 2020, available at www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock. The figures are estimates and in particular for the main countries of immigration/emigration may widely differ from other sources due to the dual citizenship and other factors.
3. Source: UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder, available at www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics

This was developed in collaboration and with the participation of multiple institutional stakeholders across different levels, including commissions, committees, and working groups with different coordinators. The main legislative and strategical provisions related to migration in Moldova are the following:

- The Law on the Regime of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova (LP 200/2010);
- The National Strategy on Migration and Asylum for 2011-2020;

• Extended Migration Profile (EMP) of the Republic of Moldova for 2010–2015, published in 2018, 172 pages, link <https://publications.iom.int/books/extended-migration-profile-republic-moldova-2010-2015>.

- The Law on the Integration of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova (LP 274/2011);
- The List of Indicators and the Template of the Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Moldova (GD 634/2012);
- The Action Plan Republic of Moldova - European Union in the field of visa liberalization for the Moldovan citizens (approved by Government Decision no. 130 of 24 February 2012);
- The National Employment Strategy for 2017-2021 (GD. 1473/2016);
- The Action Plan for 2017-2020 on the (re)integration of Moldovan citizens returning from abroad (GD 724/2017);
- The Mechanism for coordinating the state policy in the field of diaspora, migration and development (GD 725/2017);
- The concept of the Integrated Automated Information System Migration and Asylum (SIIAMA) (GD 1401/2007);
- The Integrated Border Management Strategy for 2018-2023 (GD 1101/2018);
- The National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2018-2023 (GD 461/2018);
- The Law on the Promotion of Employment and Unemployment Insurance (LP 105/2018);
- The National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" (GD 377/2020);
- The National Strategy on Migration and Asylum for 2020-2030 (under development);
- The National Strategy "Diaspora 2025".

There are two particular provisions that establish the Moldovan Statistical System: The National Strategy for the Development of the Statistical System of the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2020 (GD 1451/2016); and The Law on Official Statistics (LP 93/2017).

Moldova has also established bilateral agreements in the areas of labour migration, social security, and readmission of nationals with multiple series of EU Member States. It has also signed agreements regarding employment with the Russian Federation, Israel, and Qatar, and about the readmission of nationals with Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine.

3. Governance of migration data collection

Moldova has multiple stakeholders involved in some capacity with the production, collection, analysis, and reporting of international migration data. This section lists these stakeholders and describes their involvement with migration data based on the information collected from the interviews and desktop research:

- The **National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)** is the central administrative authority in charge of planning, coordinating and managing the national statistical activities according to provisions reported in the previous section.
- Four departments within the **Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA)**:
 - 1) The **Department for Migration and Asylum Policy** is responsible for elaborating and coordinating migration policies.
 - 2) The **General Inspectorate of Border Police (GIBP)** manages the development and implementation of the integrated border management and the fight against transnational

crimes (illegal migration, THB, falsification of travel documents among others). It is also responsible for the identification of offences related to illegal staying in the border zone and the issuance of visas at the border in emergency cases.

- 3) The **Bureau for Migration and Asylum (BMA)** is responsible for developing and implementing national policies in the field of migration and asylum, managing the phenomenon of migration by admitting and documenting foreigners with identity documents, recognizing refugee and stateless status, providing humanitarian protection, coordinating the integration process of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova. BMA is responsible of the control of the legality of the foreigners' stay on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, of the public custody and the proper application of the removal and restrictive measures and procedures related to migration. For example, it grants the right of temporary / permanent residence and, it issues residence permits to foreigners for work purposes, to investors and entrepreneurs, for studies, for family reunification and manages asylum system of foreigners. It is also responsible for managing the return of Moldovans from abroad, including their readmission, reintegration, and applications under bilateral readmission agreements. In addition, BMA leads the conception and development of the Integrated Automated Information System Migration and Asylum (SIIAMA, see below) and the subsequent EMPs by coordinating the collection, exchange, elaboration, and analysis of data and the required technical meetings and consultations for that endeavour. BMA works closely with central and local government authorities, NGOs, and international organisations.
- 4) The **General Inspectorate of Police (GIP)** enforces migration law and fights the trafficking and smuggling of persons. Concerning the latter, the **Center on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (CCTHB)** investigates and monitors THB cases. It also takes over THB and related crimes over cases from non-specialized authorities.

- Four entities within **State Chancellery**:

- 1) The **Public Services Agency (PSA)** (formerly State Information Resource Centre "Registry"), determined by the Government Decision no. 314/2017 under the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications. Basically, the "Registry" was reorganized by transformation into a public institution.² PSA provides a wide range of public services, on the principle of "one-stop shop", namely in the following areas:
 - The registration and evidence of the population (see below for details);
 - The registration and licensing of legal units; and
 - The registration of real estate and rights thereon.
- 2) The **Bureau for Diaspora Relations (BDR)** assists and mobilizes the Moldovan diaspora through the coordination of policies, events, and programmes with the goal to establish and maintain a continuous dialogue with the diaspora communities.
- 3) The **Directorate for Coordination on Human Rights and Social Dialogue (DCHRSD)** is the Permanent Secretariat of a national committee for combating THB.
- 4) The **E-Governance Agency** was created in 2010 in the process to streamline the use of information technology in governance, increase the data exchange between public service

² At the same time, PSA absorbed the state enterprise "State Registration Chamber", the state enterprise "Cadastre", the administrative authority "Civil Status Service" subordinated to the Ministry of Justice and the administrative authority "Licensing Chamber" subordinated to the Ministry of Economy "Licensing Chamber".

providers, and bring the public administration closer to the Moldovan citizens. The most relevant projects implemented under this framework are the following ones:

- The **Interoperability Governmental Platform MConnect** obliges the exchange of data among national authorities to increase the efficiency and quality of the delivery of public services. Through this platform, public authorities exchange data in real time without requesting it from citizens and the business environment in the form of certificates and reports. MConnect allows for exchange of data in web services, meaning that it does not store data but allows for exchanges in real time between all the national authorities' IT systems. In addition, it connects IT systems developed in different times and allows institutions that do not have IT systems to access it.
 - The **e-Visa service** allows foreigners to apply for Moldovan visas online. This was an important contribution for the tourism sector and the business environment of the Country as well as the consular missions abroad because of the facilitation of the procedures and easier access to Moldova.
 - The **Unique Public Services Portal** is a platform functioning as an electronic catalogue about the public services that the Moldovan authorities provide to citizens and businesses. The main purpose of this platform is to offer brief, correct, accessible, and complete information on the public services available in Moldova.
- The **Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MHLSP)** is responsible for developing bilateral agreements with foreign countries on protection of migrant workers. It also, monitors private agencies for employment abroad, prevents family violence and THB, and supports the reintegration of returning migrants to the labour force. The key departments within the MHLSP for carrying out these responsibilities are the following:
 - 1) The **National Employment Agency (NEA)** plays an important role because it runs the **Section for Overseas Employment (SOE)** which provides information on employment opportunities abroad according to the signed bilateral agreements. It also supports the return and reintegration of Moldovans working abroad by offering information on available jobs and professional training courses. In addition, NEA also supports migrants in Moldova who are seeking employment or access to public services. The **Labour Market Observatory (LMO)** generates and analyses statistical data and identify forecasts and trends also on labour migration.
 - 2) Other services of this ministry intervene on the protection of victims of trafficking and gender issues in cooperation with other national services.
 - The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI)** is responsible for issuing visas to foreigners and providing services to Moldovans abroad.
 - The **Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MECR)** supports returnees and Moldovans migrating for study purposes, participates in activities relevant for migration and local development programmes, and prevents the trafficking of human beings by informing the students about the risks of irregular migration.
 - The **National Social Insurance House (NSIH)** is the central administrative authority managing the state's social policies aimed at guaranteeing the social rights of citizens and the provision of public social benefits. NSIH has implemented the provisions of international agreements in the field of social security with fourteen European countries such as Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia and Belarus in

order to facilitate the payment of pensions from these countries. Therefore, NSIH may inform about the provisions of social benefits under international agreements in the field of social security.

- The **Congress of Local Authorities (CLA)** is a local government association that was created to strengthen the relationships between the local authorities to safeguard and promote the ideals and the principles established in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Currently, this organization links about 800 out of 898 administrative-territorial units across Moldova. CLA strongly supports local governments in mainstreaming migration in local development plans through setting migration focal points, undertaking the counts of emigrants abroad, and involving the diaspora.
- The **National Bank of Moldova (NBM)**, for the role on the impact of migrants' remittances in the Moldovan economy.

The main national entities responsible for the coordination of migration are the following:

- The **Commission for Coordination of Migration Activities** (or Commission for Coordination of Certain Activities Related to Migration Process) is a permanent government advisory body established in February 2010 that MoIA chairs. It coordinates on behalf of public authorities' different activities regarding migration and ensures a close cooperation between the national institutions, NGOs and international organisations with competencies on migration management.
- The **Inter-Ministerial Committee on Diaspora, Migration and Development** coordinates the development and implementation of the state policies related to the diaspora, migration, and development.
- The **Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Diaspora, Migration and Development** is an entity linked to the committee above but with responsibilities at the technical level.
- The **National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking (NCCHT)** is chaired by MFAEI with the Directorate for Coordination on Human Rights and Social Dialogue (DCHRSD) acting as Permanent Secretariat. It is comprised of several ministries (MHLSP and MoIA), ministerial agencies (e.g., CCTHB), and other entities, such as the General Prosecutor's Office, the National Penitentiary Administration, or the Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia. Thirty-five territorial commissions depending from ministries and other central administrative authorities with competences in the field of preventing and combating THB coordinate and monitor the antitrafficking activities at the local level. NCCHT requests information and collects data from several national institutions involved in preventing and combating human trafficking and prepares relevant national and international reports on this basis. The NCCHT is also in charge of developing the 2030 Strategy to End Human Trafficking.
- The **Joint Group for Risk Analysis (JGRA)** was established at the national and regional level in order to develop analytical products and assess the risks of illegal migration at Moldovan borders.
- The **Technical Working Group (TWG) for the Extended Migration Profile (EMP)** was created in 2010 as part of the IOM Project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU–Moldova Mobility Partnership.' It coordinates the activities related to the development of the EMP. It is coordinated by the BMA and composed by MHLSP, MFAEI, NBS and other agencies.

At the international level, there is the **UN Country Team Migration Task Force (UNCT MTF)** that comprises all relevant UN agencies directly working or involved with international migration in Moldova. This task force mainly serves as a platform for the engagement of international and national institutions and NGOs, and has the goal of ensuring an integrated approach and involvement of the society as a whole in migration management. It also aims at strengthening data sharing and preventing the duplication of efforts and activities funded by the international stakeholders.

4. Data sources and production of statistics

4.1 Statistical data sources

The **National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)** undertakes the production of migration statistics within the yearly statistical work programme, which is financed from the state budget. The NBS' Population and Migration Statistics Division produces statistics on international migration based on its own statistical operations and administrative data received from three institutions: the General Inspectorate of Border Police (GIBP), the Public Services Agency (PSA), and the Bureau for Migration and Asylum (BMA). NBS prepares and implements its main statistical operations with the support of international organizations, such as the European Commission, UNFPA, IOM, ILO, the World Bank, and other bilateral cooperation agencies.

The decennial Population and Housing Census, the quarterly/yearly Labour Force Survey, and the quarterly/yearly Household Budget Survey are the main sources providing data about international migration. These sources provide data about the composition, characteristics, and attitudes of the population, including some migration-related information. Additional operations from the last few years consist of the elaboration of new estimates of the yearly international migration flows and the population stocks for the intercensal years.

a. Population and Housing Census (PHC)³

The PHC is currently the only source of data in Moldova regarding the composition of the resident permanent population (*de jure* population) by demographic and socio-economic characteristics and spatial distribution. Moldova was the first former Soviet Union republic to undertake the population census covering also the housing, in line with internationally recommended practices, with questions also focusing on the living conditions and the funds used for building the dwellings and houses. The last PHC was carried out in May 2014 and accounted that 329,100 Moldovans were abroad. Concerning international migration, this census collected information on the following:

- Country of birth
- Country of citizenship
- Previous place of residence
- Periods of residence abroad longer than one year
- Number of years lived in Moldova

³ Link to the 2014 Population and Housing Census in the NBS Statbank:
<https://statistica.gov.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=479&>

- People temporarily abroad at moment of census
- Reason for staying abroad
- Time of emigration or movement abroad

b. Labour Force Survey (LFS)⁴

NBS undertakes LFS quarterly on continuous basis. The LFS covers household members with habitual residence on the territory of Moldova for a period of 12 months. Household members are also considered persons who have left the housing for a long period (over 12 months), if they still maintain family ties with the household, such as students and workers abroad, inmates and arrested people and hospitalized people. In these cases, data are collected by interviewing their relatives or other members of the household.

Therefore, the Moldovan LFS collects information on recent emigration of household members who moved abroad within the last 12 months for work or looking for a job. This provides the opportunity to estimate some tendencies (not the exact numbers) on the flows and stocks of emigrants abroad and their characteristics. This would not include the cases of entire households that have emigrated.

In 2008 and 2012, NBS attached specific modules in the LFS to better understand labour migration abroad. The data collected allowed for assessing the extent of labour migration out of the country, describing their demographic and socio-economic characteristics, understanding the reasons and methods for migrating, their legal status and problems abroad, and their employment and social protection conditions, among others. For the 2012 survey, the sample size was of 12,000 households and the threshold for identifying emigrants was changed from 12 to 24 months. The investigation covered all members of households aged 15-64 years, including current migrants, returned migrants, and potential migrants through the use of three different questionnaires. These modules of the regular LFS were proposed by the then Ministry of Labour and implemented in the frameworks of projects funded by the EU and UN and with the assistance of ILO.

c. Household Budget Survey (HBS)⁵

HBS allows for determining the population's level of life through collecting data on their incomes, expenses, consumption, living conditions, and other indicators from a multi aspect perspective. Similar to LFS, HBS targets all members of the selected households, including those who are abroad temporarily or permanently, keep ties with their household, and contribute totally or partially to the household budget. For these household members abroad, HBS collects information on the reason and duration of absence, the country of destination, and the sending of remittances and goods. In the case of HBS, there is no comparison of the estimates of Moldovan emigrants with the data of other organizations, although NBS declared that they have the possibility of doing so.

⁴ Link to the LFS in the NBS Statbank: <https://statistica.gov.md/category.php?l=en&idc=107&>.

⁵ Link to the Living standard of the population in the NBS Statbank: <https://statistica.gov.md/category.php?l=en&idc=445>.

d. New estimates of the international migration and population structure⁶

NBS' most important recent developments are (i) the new determination of international migration flows for the years 2014-2017⁷ and then 2018 based on the analysis of individual data on the state border crossings provided by the border authority; and (ii) the adoption of the internationally-recommended concept of place of usual residence for the population estimates for the intercensal years. These estimates refer to the population with usual residence on the territory of Moldova by sex, age and country of citizenship, based on the results of the PHC 2014 and the live births, deaths and international migrations occurred or estimated every year. NBS disseminated these new population estimates on 11 July 2019 for the period 2014-2018 and updated until 2020.

e. Moldovan population abroad

Despite the relevance and frequent request within the Country, NBS or other national agencies do not elaborate official statistics or estimates on the Moldova population abroad. NBS considers that a difficult exercise, due to the frequent acquisition of second citizenship by Moldovans abroad, particularly in countries such as Romania and Bulgaria, as well as Russian Federation and Ukraine. Another challenge is related to the lack of border crossing data on entries and exists through the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border (see Sub-section 4.2 below for more information on the issue). Furthermore, NBS does not plan on using the data from destination countries because of a lack of commitment in this area and the need to develop bilateral agreements with receiving countries.

f. Generations and Gender Survey (GGS)

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) launched in 2020 the implementation of the GGS⁸--the most complex, longitudinal demographic survey in Moldova based on a total of about 20,000 respondents across the country. It is supposed to be repeated every three years. This survey is conducted by UNFPA in partnership with multiple actors, i.e. MHLSP (in particular a department responsible of gender aspects), NBS, the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) and a consultancy company called Magenta for the fieldwork, and with the financial support of MHLSP, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and UNFPA. NBS hired Magenta and provided the sample, while UNFPA did the mapping/listing. The survey was launched in the field in January 2020 and was completed in August-October 2020.

The GGS will provide disaggregated statistical data on the main demographic processes in the country, also including the response to COVID-19 and the short-term consequences of the pandemic on Moldovan society. Based on the GGS results, rights-based policy scenarios in addressing demographic issues will be developed, covering infertility prevention, intention of having children, number of desired children, population ageing and life expectancy, and migration. Some of the migration questions in the

⁶ Link to the Population and demographic processes in the NBS Statbank:

<https://statistica.gov.md/category.php?!=en&idc=103&>

⁷ *International Migration Estimates for the Republic of Moldova 2014-17. Methodology and preliminary analysis*, NBS-UNFPA

⁸ Generations and Gender Survey is a global survey, which has already been conducted in 24 countries.

GGs questionnaire cover the intention to migrate, the county of birth and where people are living. The big sample allows for disaggregation by variables such as regions, disability, income, and sex.

g. Other operations

In the last twenty years, other projects related to migration, particularly a series of sample surveys and studies, were implemented by research centres, NGOs and international organisations in Moldova and abroad, normally with the funding of international entities. A main qualitative research on the **specific needs of children and elderly left behind by labour emigrants at local community level** was undertaken in 2010/2011 in the framework of projects implemented by IOM (funded by the EU) and the State University of Moldova (funded by the Czech Development Agency) and with the support of also the then Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and UNFPA.⁹ This series also included a **study on children and elderly left behind in Moldova and Georgia** implemented in 2011-2013 by UNU-MERIT¹⁰ in order to assess the impact of wide-scale migration on some of most vulnerable groups left behind by migrating caretakers and the economic, psychological, social and institutional effects on these population categories.

One of the surveys above allowed **an extensive exercise on identifying and mapping migrants from their local communities**. The databases/registers established at local level and its continuous updating could serve as an instrument for establishing a running communication with community members abroad and contain information on migrants' profiles, including circular migrants, also for feeding a national database on diaspora mapping to be elaborated by the Bureau for Diaspora Relations and IOM and used in the Local Volunteering Return Programme. Furthermore, the series of surveys and studies includes **four exercises of mapping of the Moldovan Diaspora**, in the Russian Federation (results issued in 2013), in Italy, Portugal, France and the United Kingdom (2013), in Germany, United Kingdom, Israel, Italy, Portugal and Russian Federation (2017) and in Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Israel and Spain as well as Moldova (2020)¹¹. The four studies were undertaken by IOM with the collaboration and funding of other entities and the involvement of international and/or national consultants.

⁹ *Specific Needs of Children and Elderly Left Behind as a Consequence of Migration*, prepared by Cheianu-Andrei, Diana, Rodica Gramma, Stela Milicenco, Valentina Pritcan, Virginia Rusnac, and Dorin Vaculovschi, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection, and Family of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau, 2011, available at link <https://sociopolis.md/uploads/0/images/large/110-necesit-cop-virst-en.pdf>.

¹⁰ *The impact of migration on children left behind in Moldova*, prepared by Jennifer Waidler, Michaela Vanore, Melissa Siegel and Franziska Gassmann, United Nations University, Maastricht Economic and social Research institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT), UNU-MERIT Working Paper Series #2013-043, available at link <https://migration.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/the-impact-of-migration-on-children-left-behind-in-moldova.html>. Other outputs from this study are available at <https://migration.unu.edu/search/moldova>.

¹¹ The first three IOM studies identified by Moldovan Diaspora Mapping Series I to III are available at link <https://moldova.iom.int/publications>. The outcomes of the fourth study were integrated in the publication *Profile and Current Challenges of Moldovan Migrant Workers. Main Findings*, IOM, 2020, which combined the results of the sociological study *Labour migration of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova* and of the study *IOM's rapid assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on welfare of Moldovan migrants: addressing vulnerabilities, expectations and strategies to overcome the crises*

4.2 Administrative data sources

The administrative systems more relevant for international migration and the related phenomena may be summarised as follows:

- a. The **Integrated Information System of the Border Police (IISBP)** is an administrative system that collects, processes, stocks, updates, and analyses data on individuals' border crossings and their means of transportation. It encompasses also the overseeing of events happening at the green border (segments of the borders outside of the border crossing points) and making the collected information available for competent public authorities and other entities. The exchange mostly involves data aggregated in tables and individual records with a selection of variable, the latter for NBS through exchange of files. IISBP allows for an efficient and effective integrated state border management system. This ensures and strengthens the cooperation between national systems, and international ones on a case-by-case basis. IISBP data includes the surname, name, date of birth, passport number, citizenship, and Personal Identification Number of the international travellers. A challenge to the quality of the IISBP data is related to the lack of border crossing data on entries and exists through the large (453.4 km) Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. The issue is due to the lack of Moldovan border control authorities at the outer Moldovan-Ukrainian border check points and no joint control at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border crossing posts in place yet. It should be noted, however, that for the execution of the conditionalities of Phase II of the Action Plan Moldova - European Union in the field of visa liberalization for the Moldovan citizens, BMA established a mechanism for recording foreigners entering/leaving Moldova through the Transnistrian region. Although the registration is voluntary, 6 BMA offices opened for this purpose have allowed for 5 years to increase the number of records from 5-6 thousand to over 70 thousand registrations per year. That activity should not be confused with the work of the Border Police. The Transnistrian region is recognized/considered by the Republic of Moldova and the international community as part of the country, thus, the 6 "evidence points" located on the administrative delimitation line with the Transnistrian region are not entitled to carry out control activities, granting the right of access or refusal to enter territory. At the same time, the data obtained do not fully reflect the reality, because the country's authorities do not have information and mechanisms for obtaining information on the stock of foreigners in the Transnistrian region, which does not circulate in other regions of Moldova. Currently, measures on implementation of the **Advance Passenger Information System (APIS)** are being taken at national level.
- b. The Bureau for Migration and Asylum (BMA) collects data on permanent and temporary foreigners for labour and other purposes, on recognition of international protection and other purposes, coordinated the integration activities for foreigners, prevention and combating irregular migration, and returns and readmissions of nationals. BMA has **several separate databases with data covering the different procedures** (e.g., the visas, residence permits, asylum applications as well as the work permits since 2018¹²). These databases are not centralised in a unique database on individual basis. Every foreigner is entered in the databases with an ID-number given at the time of the visa request, at border gate by GIBP or by accessing to the BMA procedures. Some foreigners have more than one ID-number which may pose problems in the exploitation and linkage of data. Mechanisms are

¹² BMA also holds a system with the invitations delivered to receive an entry visa for work purpose.

currently being worked on to address this issue. More cooperation in particular between BMA, GIBP and PSA would allow for cleaning the databases and ensuring the unicity of ID-numbers, even in the cases of renewals of passports. It is important to develop information systems for the more efficient use of administrative data available to the authorities. There are some protocols of mutual access at individual level between BMA and GIBP, but currently there is limited interconnectivity. For the visa delivery, there exist a connection between the databases of BAM and those of the relevant services of MoIA and MFAEI. BMA collects and generates disaggregated statistics on asylum applicants, recognized refugees, beneficiaries of humanitarian protection, applicants for stateless status and recognized stateless persons. BMA processes only the data on the stateless people recognized through a statelessness determination procedure (since 10 February 2012) following Moldova's accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The total number of stateless persons including those documented before 2012 is available only in the State Register of Population managed by PSA.

According to the above, BMA databases provide data on the following topics:

- Permanent and temporary immigrants and visitors by sex, citizenship, and purpose of arrival (including work, business, seasonal work, cross-border work, other work categories stipulated by bilateral agreements, family reunification, study and other) mainly based on the residence and work permits. Data on first granted and renewed residence permits are also provided to NBS on quarterly basis;
 - Asylum seekers, refugees and other beneficiaries of humanitarian protection by country of origin, sex and age group;
 - Irregular migrants and foreigners submitted to measures of enforcement of immigration laws (e.g., expelled foreigners, foreigners with revoked or refused right to stay, foreigners declared undesirable and foreigners taken into public custody) and foreigners on whom was disposed the measure of return on the territory of Moldova by selected variables;
 - Moldovan readmitted returnees and repatriates by country of origin, sex and other variables.
- c. The Public Services Agency (PSA) holds the **State Register of Population (SRP)**, which represents a unique system for recording and updating data within the Automated Information System SRP or, as the case may be, in the manual file of persons. SRP is an information resource that contains data about the citizens of Moldova (both those living in the Country and those who have been authorized to emigrate, for the latter with reference to the domicile abroad), the foreigners residing in the Country and the persons who have been granted the status of stateless persons, refugees or another form of protection provided by the normative framework. SPR provides the following data:
- The vital and administrative events of persons (births, deaths, marriages, divorces, changes of name and/or surname, adoptions, recognitions/establishments of paternity);
 - The identity documents from the National Passport System;
 - The persons registered at home and/or temporary residence, as well as deregistered;
 - The persons who have acquired or lost the citizenship of Moldova;
 - The citizens authorised for emigration;
 - The repatriation of citizens;
 - The persons without the issuance of identity documents from the National Passport System.

In Moldova, the principle of state identification of registration objects provides that each individual, being the object of identification, is assigned an index - the state identification number of the individual, specified according to international usage as an abbreviation of the English phrase "Identification Number of Person" (IDNP). To increase the security of identification, the objects are further characterized by the mass of personal data. The content and structure of personal data may change in accordance with the legislation, but the IDNP will remain unchanged. The IDNP and a certain volume of data of the physical person are kept permanently.

The number of international emigrants is significantly underestimated because most of them did not deregister in the SRP as they want to keep their link with Moldova. Personal information is available according to different variables, including the personal characteristics, personal data of relatives, the identification documents and the reason of migration.

The PSA website disseminates on a monthly basis several statistical tables concerning the population residing in Moldova by residence status, age groups, gender and country of citizenship.

- d. Different services of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MHLSP) operate the registration of migration-relevant data and the elaboration and analysis of statistics.
- Among the most important systems, the National Employment Agency (NEA) manages a database called **Automated Information System Workforce Migration Records** with data on Moldovans employed abroad in the framework of bilateral agreements and migrants in Moldova receiving public services. NEA also manages the **Labour Market Information System** database, which covers citizens returning from abroad under national programmes. A new version of this database is being created. These two databases depend on the involved migrants registering themselves with NEA.
 - These two databases allow for the production of statistics on Moldovan workers going abroad disaggregated by country of destination, gender, age group, education level, living environment, intermediary (i.e. private agency, bilateral agreements or other), sector of employment. It also includes data on Moldovan workers returning from abroad disaggregated by country of destination, age group, gender, education level, living environment, employment record, categories of problems detected, professions required and other variables. These data are used to analyse and monitor migration policies and develop information and reports – from time to time, annually and as needed/requested – to be provided to other institutions.
 - Until 2018, NEA was responsible for granting and extending the right to employment to foreigners and so manage the work permissions. The Agency currently holds systems on some foreigners in Moldova who seek employment, obtain a job, receive accommodation in subordinate social institutions and fall under the social protection system. The data are available according to the country of origin of the involved immigrants and several socio-demographic variables.
 - The Labour Market Observatory (LMO) generates and analyses statistical data relevant for migration.
- e. The **Educational Information System** of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MECR) covers these two categories of students, although partially:

- The Moldovan students going abroad, just for some cases such academic exchanges and because the government is adopting a limit of international students that can study in local universities, and
 - The foreign students studying in Moldova in the framework of bilateral exchanges.
- f. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) contributes to the sharing of information on migration and related aspects mainly through two means:
- The data on the Moldovans abroad that is collected through the diplomatic missions and consular offices, but without the distinction of the period of stay. This represents the basis of statistics by country of destination published for instance in the EMP; and
 - The data on the visas that MFAEI granted to foreigners through the Visa Management Information System (SIGV) developed together with BMA. SIGV is an electronical database that is useful to identify and count the visa overstayers, and those who might be at high risk of overstaying. MFAEI produces some statistics on visa issuances, and the EMP is an example.
- g. The Bureau for Diaspora Relations (BDR) also holds a database and other sources on Moldovans abroad. These sources are updated with information from different stakeholders: directly by emigrants via the BDR website, the NEA on the Moldovans workers employed abroad under bilateral agreements or through private agencies and the Moldovans returning from abroad, the consulates of MFAEI, the different associations of Moldovans abroad, and activities of the same Bureau. For the future, BDR plans to pay attention to the counts or estimates of Moldovans living abroad available from the statistical operations such as the population censuses.
- h. Among other national stakeholders, the Congress of Local Authorities (CLA) and the 898 first level administrative territorial units (cities/towns, sectors and communes) need evidence-based data for mainstreaming migration in local development and planning processes, elaborating local policy documents and taking decisions, possibly with the involvement of the diaspora, as well as foreigners with a permanent residence permit, members of mixed families, etc. Therefore, in addition to the possible use of existing data, CLA undertakes some online data collection on Moldovans emigrants who left the local units through the self-compilation questionnaires on CLA's website or the adhesion to the Facebook page of the local government associations. CLA complements its database with offline data integration from institutions of around 200 local units. Data collection exercises at the local level like CLA's face difficulties for covering all the cases due to the reticence of respondents. The proportion of emigrants registered is often around 20% only.
- i. The National Social Insurance House (NSIH) also collects marginal data related to migration, primarily related to the social benefits of Moldovan emigrants under social security agreements with selected foreign countries and on the amounts of social benefits transferred to the territory of the other contracting states (i.e. the pensions paid from Moldova to Moldovans abroad). These statistics are presented on regular basis to the BMA, in accordance with the Action Plan on implementing the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum (2011-2020), as well as to many other ministerial agencies.
- j. Concerning the trafficking of human beings, data are collected and made available by different national institutions/entities, with the following modalities:

- First of all, the Center for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (CCTHB) and the General Prosecutor's Office collect information on the revealed crimes, persons who have committed crimes, accusations submissions, and referral of the criminal cases to the court and successive steps. CCTHB itself records information on the topics above according to a ministerial order and afterwards regularly updates that in a central database of the ministry (System Information Database). The operator responsible for updating the database further records there all the successive information related to a case such as the initial/final decisions by the court;
 - Furthermore, also GIBP collects data on the occurrence of the cases of trafficking of human beings within the operations against irregular migration;
 - MHLSP collects data on the personal characteristics, the type and modality of exploitation and the assistance, services and protection of victims of trafficking;
 - BMA collects marginal data on the assisted provided to trafficked migrants;
 - Finally, MECR collects data on the prevention of trafficking, given the charge on schools, colleges and universities;
 - As anticipated in a previous section, the Directorate for Coordination on Human Rights and Social Dialogue (DCHRSD) of the State Chancellery in the function of Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking (NCCHT) centralizes all data relating to trafficking of human beings (see below). Most data collected is aggregated data, except some cases with individual data for the purposes of the international reports. The NCCHT receives some support from organizations such as IOM for assessing data. This committee previously initiated drafting an Electronic Program for Collecting Statistical Data for facilitating the data collection and analysis. However, this has not taken its final shape due to a shortage of financial resources. Therefore, the operation of data elaboration and reporting continue with many manual steps.
- k.** The National Bank of Moldova (NBM) compiles data on personal remittances from the Balance of Payments (BoP) framework. The concept of remittances is larger than the financial flows generated by migration, but it is assumed that the processes related to migration have a big impact on it. NBM collects many data on international transaction for the BoP compilation. Based on the International Transaction Reporting System (ITRS), the data on money transfers from abroad in favour of individuals is published on monthly basis. Personal remittances are a supplementary BoP item. Data is published quarterly in the analytical comments to BoP.
- l.** All the relevant ministries and central authorities responsible for tracing and collecting data on migration are involved in the development and revision of the data included in the Integrated Automated Information System Migration and Asylum (SIAMA) that BMA manages. With the help of the TWG, BMA is updating the EMP by considering a list of Indicators on the basis of official statistical and administrative data. This annual report proposes a detailed analysis of the migration phenomenon and process in Moldova.

Finally, the administrative sources are used by NBS, also with recently introduced practices, as from the following paragraphs.

- m.** Until 2018, NBS produced and disseminated migration statistics based on administrative sources only using data provided by the authorities responsible for the official registration of immigrants

and emigrants, i.e. PSA (e.g., for the Moldovan citizens asking ‘authorized emigration’ long-term residence abroad), BMA (e.g., for the foreign nationals, stateless persons and asylum seekers) and GIBP (for the arrivals of foreigners and the departures of nationals). These data in the forms of aggregated tables with data on flows of immigrants (for foreigners only), repatriates (i.e. Moldovan nationals and other people with connection or previous residence in Moldova) and emigrants (for Moldovans only) by some combinations of variables such age, sex, marital status, level of education, country of citizenship, country of origin/destination or purpose of arrival/departure). These statistics follows the series of old definitions adopted by NBS in accordance with the data sources reported above¹³.

- n. In 2018, NBS obtained anonymized individual data from GIBP regarding the crossing of the state borders of individuals, both those who leave and enter the country in 2013-2017 and later for 2018-2019. GIBP’s individual data records include information on a reference ID, date of birth, sex, date of movement (in/out) and citizenship. Based on the available data, and with the technical and financial support of UNFPA Moldova and the Swiss Cooperation, NBS started estimating the yearly flow statistics on immigrants and emigrants by sex and age adapting towards international definitions/requirements¹⁴. According to these definitions, the immigrant/emigrant status for the reference year (January 1, year X) can be determined only one year after the end of the reference year (e.g., the number of immigrants and emigrants for 2019 can be estimated only after the end of 2020). Despite the lack of information on the socio-economic characteristics of migrants and their places of origin/destination, this new computation of the yearly migration flows in Moldova was considered useful and well recognised as innovation and for the positive impact, including the monitoring of phenomenon of migration in the context of global processes.
- o. The data on international migration and, more specifically the net international migration flow from the exercise above, were subsequently used to estimate the yearly statistics of population with usual residence by sex and age for the years 2014-2018. The process was further implemented to estimate the population data for 2019-2020. The need to calculate the population using the notion

¹³ The definitions applying in such cases are the following:

- Migration - territorial movement of persons, accompanied by change of residence.
- Immigrant - foreign citizen or stateless person who has obtained the right to settle down permanently or temporarily in the Republic of Moldova.
- Emigrant - Moldovan national who has left abroad to settle down permanently or temporarily in another state.
- Repatriate - Moldovan national and / or the person who was born in Moldova and his/her followers, and the person who previously lived continuously in the country for at least 10 years and has the right to settle down permanently in the Republic of Moldova under the law.

¹⁴ In the UN recommendations the habitual residence is defined as the place where the person has lived (or usually spends his/her daily rest period) mainly in the last 12 months regardless of temporary absences (for recreation, vacation, visits to relatives and friends, business, medical treatment, religious pilgrimages, etc.). For the term “mainly” in the context of the Republic of Moldova, the threshold of “at least 9 cumulative months in the last 12 months” before the reference moment (January 1) was applied. Therefore, the definitions of immigrants and emigrants adopted by NBS are the following:

- **Immigrant:** a person that entered in Moldova and lived in the Country for at least 9 months cumulatively in the next 12 months after living abroad for at least 9 months in the previous 12 months.
- **Emigrant:** a person that left the Moldova, lived abroad for at least 9 months cumulatively in the next 12 months, after living in Country for at least 9 months in the previous 12 months.

of usual residence according to international requirements¹⁵ lies in the United Nations member status of Moldova and the Association Agreement between the Country and the European Union (art. 41-43) of 2014¹⁶. Population data disaggregated at national and sub-national level are essential to promote inclusive development policies and leave no one behind, as provided by the Sustainable Development Agenda. The calculation of these series of population statistics encompassed a revision of demographic indicators for the period 2014-2018.

4.3 Integrated data sources

There are two initiatives that are proposing integrated data related to international migration collected from different institutions.

- a. The BMA's **Integrated Automated Information System Migration and Asylum (SIAMA)** is a system conceived for centralising data on international migration from different governmental institutions¹⁷. SIAMA's objective is to integrate information resources from different public authorities, ensure the monitoring of migration flows and stocks, prepare and release analytical and statistical outputs, and empower public authorities to take decisions. The users of data on migration and asylum may include civil society organisations, international organisations and research centres. The data integration in SIAMA is conceived through the transfer of aggregated data and, in some cases, by direct linkage of databases. The statistical tables elaborated in agreement between the involved institutions are stored in an information system based on reciprocal exchange of data in a bilateral profile. The data exchange of SIAMA components is partially done through the MConnect interoperability platform presented hereunder.
- b. In 2020, NBS initiated the development of an **Integrated Information System on Population and Migration (IISPM)** that will provide complex and timely statistical data on population, internal, and international migration disaggregated on several dimensions and at local and national level. This system aims to capitalize the contents of the national registers by integrating data on different topics: population, vital events, demographic characteristics, and migration and mobility of persons existing in administrative data sources assessed as relevant and qualitative enough for the production of official statistics. In the medium and long term, IISPM will make possible the

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on European demographic statistics, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1260&from=ET>

¹⁶ It obliges the National Statistical System "to respect the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the UN, taking into account the EU acquis in the field of statistics, by aligning statistical methodologies with UN and European norms and standards".

¹⁷ According to past consultations, SIAMA should include information available from systems such as the following: a subsystem Migration and Asylum of BMA including databases on immigration, asylum, repatriations, invitations and contraventions; the SRP (PSA and the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications - MITC); the State Register of Legal Units (MITC in cooperation with Ministry of Justice); the Integrated Information System of Law Enforcement (Ministry of Justice); the Civil Registry Services (MITC and Ministry of Justice); the Integrated Medical Information System (Ministry of Health); the Educational Information System (MCER); the Information System of Labour Market (NEA); the Integrated Information System of Border Guard Service (SIISG); the Integrated Information System of MFAEI (MFAEI Consular Registry); and the Integrated Customs Information System ASYCUDA (Custom Service of the Ministry of Finance).

subsequent transition from a traditional population census to a census based on combined methods (population census and partial pre-completion of registers) and then hopefully to a census entirely based on administrative sources. This would be a qualitative leap in the development and modernization of national statistics and reduce the burden on respondents and the costs and time required for implementing censuses. IISMP is currently at the drafting the concept paper on the information system. Apart from the national entities, this initiative is being implemented during the period 2020-2022 mainly through the collaboration of UNFPA and with the financial support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. Under the MConnect programme, the E-Governance Agency is working on developing an IT system allowing NBS to directly obtain individual data from other institutions. In this project that will be finished in 2021, NBS will be able to collect data from other institutions to estimate the population *de facto* living in Moldova and international migration flows.

5. Data dissemination and use for policy development

The dissemination of the main migration statistics by the Moldovan entities is as follows:

- The GIBP uses the IISBP for generating statistical information and outputs on border crossings that contribute to attain the evaluation of efficiency of activities carried out by the institution and for the providing data and statistical reports to national partner institutions and international organisations on the basis of cooperation agreements.
- BMA publishes statistics on immigration, asylum, irregular migration and repatriation in Moldova for policy use based on its separate databases and SIIAMA. Since 2013, BMA developed and updated the EMP which provides both statistical data on migration made available by all national entities and a detailed analysis of the migratory trends, the impact of migration, the migration management framework, the main findings and the policy implications and recommendations. Some BMA statistics are available at website <http://bma.gov.md/en/documente/statistici>. The latest EMP (for 2010-2015, issued in 2018) is available at IOM website (https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/emp_moldova_2010_2015.pdf). In fact, currently the EMP is prepared every three years, while a Statistical Compendium of the EMP on yearly basis (last Statistical Compendium 2017-2019, published in 2020, is available in Romanian at http://bma.gov.md/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/atasamente/comunicate/cs_al_pme_2017-2019_ed_2020.pdf).
- On the other hand, PSA publishes recent statistics on persons residing in Moldova by different variables and citizens going abroad for permanent residence by country of destination available from the registration on continuous basis in the State Population Register through its Internet website (<http://asp.gov.md/en/node/1700>).
- As from a previous section, the MHLSP's NEA elaborates statistics and reports on the Moldovan workers employed abroad under bilateral agreements or through private agencies, the Moldovan workers returning from abroad and the foreign workers or foreigners seeking employment in Moldova. These outputs are provided within the MHLSP and to institutions and entities such as BDR and projects on migration and local development. Besides, some of these outputs are published from time to time in various information bulletins and annually in the NEA Activity Report, two

means made available (in Moldovan only) at NEA official webpage (www.anofm.md/en/documents/60). Despite the limitations of the contents of its own database, through the programme 'Diaspora can manage at home' and the external sources BDR attempts to involve the diaspora in the Moldovan national development.

- NBS publishes the yearly tables on some categories of citizens and foreigners, the international migration flows and the population stocks by the available characteristics computed on the basis of statistical and administrative systems and possibly after specific elaborations in the Statistical Yearbook, through specific outputs and on the NBS website (<https://statistica.gov.md/category.php?!=en&idc=103&>). Concerning the Population Census and Housing of 2014, NBS set a specific Internet application that allows creating personalized tables on population, households and housings and offers the map representation of data until the county level (<https://statistica.gov.md/pageview.php?!=en&idc=479>). NBS participates in the migration data collection undertaken by international organizations such as UNSD, UNECE, EUROSTAT and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), sometimes providing a partial number of tables, according to the availability of national statistics. Furthermore, NBS provides aggregated data to academic research centres.
- CCTHB is the main institution for dissemination in the field of THB and related areas, with the elaboration of a series of regular and occasional outputs on the activities of combating cross-border crime, THB and irregular migration. These outputs and the data of the other national institutions reported above are mainly used by NCCHT. In fact, the Permanent Secretariat of NCCHT establishes informative notes and half-yearly and yearly reports on the implementation of the policy for preventing and combating THB, the identification and referral of victims of trafficking, the measures taken to support, protect, reintegrate and repatriate the victims, the criminal proceedings and the programming of future activities. Furthermore, these reports are considered for the updating of the national strategy in this field. In addition, NCCHT provides specific reports and data to the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), UNDOC, the US Department of State and other international entities for their evaluation and reporting activities. Upon request, sometimes the data to international organisations are provided in terms of individual, anonymised data records. Among other, a third-round evaluation report published by GRETA in December 2020 focused on access to justice and effective remedies for victims of THB. Most the national and international reports referred above are available at NCCHT website, <http://www.antitrafic.gov.md/?l=en>. Finally, some information on the THB and related crimes is disseminated by the media and NGOs.
- Many outputs and data on the trafficking of human beings provided by different national institutions as well as other data on the enforcement of immigration laws made available by other services are used by the Joint Group for Risk Analysis (JGRA) in its configuration at national and regional level. The JGRA develops analytical products and quarterly, half-yearly and annual reports that cover the assessment on combating the cross-border crime, the trafficking and the illegal migration in Moldova.
- NSIH shares data on migration in the field of social security through quarterly, half-yearly and annual reports and press releases. The public outputs are disseminated through the official webpage of NSIH.

- In the framework of the e-governance initiative, the academic researchers can access to public data in the form of aggregated figures.

The migration statistics produced regularly or occasionally by the different national institutions are used for making decisions to establish strategic objectives, developing and monitoring migration policies and revising the normative frameworks relevant for the sector. Among the cases reported in the consultations for the preparation of this report, GIBP mainly referred about the provision of *ad hoc* data (upon request) for defining situational pictures of the various types of migration-related risks and crimes useful for influencing the decision-making and allowing to focus efforts in vulnerable areas or directions. MHLSP mainly referred to the use of their data for establishing/revising treaties and mechanisms regulating labour migration and for taking emergency measures, for example in the context of COVID-19. Furthermore, NBS reported about the use of the own statistics for developing migration policies and envisages that the new yearly estimations on international migration also based on the use of individual data records from the border crossing may give better elements to policy makers for establishing migration policies and increasing the positive socio-economic impact of migration in the short/medium-term. For amending and developing normative acts and establishing procedures for regulating migration processes, BMA uses its own data as well as the data and studies available from of other national agencies and other entities.

6. Global Compact for Migration and Sustainable Development Goals

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)

In June 2020, the Moldovan Government confirmed the interest in preparing and conducting the first Voluntary National Review Report on the Implementation of the GCM for January 2019 to June 2020. The Department for Migration and Asylum Policy and BMA of MoIA and other national services, with the support of IOM Moldova, developed the GCM report that is containing not only the information on the implementation of migration policies by the national institutions involved but also their own objectives to achieve the GCM objectives related to their mandate.

In particular, BMA mentioned the possibility of implementing 10 objectives and submitted data on:

- Collection and use of accurate and disaggregated data for evidence-based policies;
- Improving the availability and flexibility of routes for regulated migration;
- Facilitating fair and ethical employment and ensuring safe conditions for decent work;
- Applying detention in the context of migration only as a measure of last resort and advancing alternative methods;
- Improving the protection of consular assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle (partially);
- Providing access to basic services for migrants;
- Empowering migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion (partially);
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions towards migration;
- Cooperation in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission as well as sustainable reintegration (except for their reintegration);

- Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regulated migration.

Among other, GIBP provides figures for five of the twenty-three GCM objectives:

- 1. Collection and use of accurate and disaggregated data to serve evidence-based policies;
- 9. Consolidation of the transnational response to counteract illegal trafficking in migrants;
- 10. Preventing, combating and eradicating trafficking in human beings in the context of international migration;
- 11. Border management in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner;
- 23. Consolidation of international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regulated migration.

Other Moldovan institutions providing data to MoIA and IOM Moldova are MHLSP, MECR, NBS, BMA, and PSA. MHLSP and MECR sent data to report on objective 3 and 5: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration, and enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration. NBS, BMA and PSA are involved in achieving the objective 1: focusing on the migration data collection. The work of the single institutions towards the fulfilment of most the CGM objectives is carried out with the support of IOM or other international organisations. The voluntary report on the implementation of the GCM was discussed and validated during a meeting of the Commission for the Coordination in the field of Migration and Asylum.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Moldova, with support of UNDP, adopted a national policy agenda aligned with the SDGs that includes two thirds of the internationally set SDG targets. This agenda also assigns key and partner institutions to the implementation of each SDG. According to this agenda, the State Chancellery under the Prime Minister, with the support of UNDP, is responsible for ensuring strategic coordination and cooperation among agencies for reporting on the SDGs. NBS was assigned to lead, collect, and clean data from other agencies for the SDG indicators.

Three of the stakeholders interviewed (NBS, MHLSP, MoIA) reported being involved in the implementation of this agenda and the SDGs, but it was unclear what type of data they report, to who, and how often they do so. Most agencies responded that they share data with international agencies frequently, and some of that data might be used for SDG reporting. Most agencies further stated that they were unsure whether they participated on data related to SDGs because their data is publicly available on their website and any agency in need for data can directly acquire it from their website.

Moldova currently reports on some of the ten migration-relevant SDG indicators (Table 2). The indicator 10.7.1¹⁸ about recruitment costs is the only one that Moldova does not cover. Many institutions provide data using multiple data sources. One particular data source to highlight is the use of GGS data to track the SDGs. The IISPM and the project for strengthening the National Statistical System (NSS) is and will help to track progress in the achievement of the SDGs.

¹⁸ Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in country of destination

Table 2: Summary of the data availability of the migration-relevant SDG indicators in Moldova

Indicator	Tier	Disaggregation	Type	Data source	M&E
3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution	I	A: By specialties/occupations, districts, medians, sex (for the latter only for doctors)	Global adjusted	ANSP	MHLSP
4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	I	A: total	Global	Global DB	MoF
8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	I	A: Total by accident types, sex, economic activities M: Migration status, occupations	Global adjusted	NBS	MHLSP
8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining)	I	A: Total	National proxy	MHLSP, CNSM, CNPM	MHLSP
10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted	I	A: Total M: Type of service providers; instrument used for payment /receipt of remittances	Global	World Bank, National Bank	MoEc
16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	I	Available: Total, sexes, adults, children, areas of residence, countries of exploitation, forms of exploitation	Global adjusted	GIP/MoIA	MHLSP
17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP	I	A: Total	Global adjusted	National Bank	NBM
17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	III	A: available, partially, missing	National proxy	NBS	State Chancellery

Source: NBS

7. Building data capacity

More frequent and easier data exchanges between countries is the most important need for NBS to have more reliable migration data. Concluding bilateral agreements would help to improve the collection, analysis, and use of migration data, in particular to understand more about the emigrant population. However, the presence of dual citizenship in Moldova significantly reduces the feasibility of this potential.

NBS staff of the Population and Migration Statistics Division and the Census Division frequently participates in training courses in the field of population statistics, demography and migration statistics. This includes the courses for periods of two weeks regularly organized by UNFPA with the involvement

of lecturers from research centres and the courses organised by the Czech Republic Embassy in Chisinau. In addition, three members of NBS staff attended master studies in the areas of Population Economics and Demography, where a module was dedicated to the study of migration processes and methods and means of measuring them. These consolidated efforts contributed to strengthening the NBS's capacity in collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating data on population and international migration (further see under the section on international cooperation). However, it would be always useful to deploy an international technical assistance to NBS for the development of the methodology and implementation of innovative instruments in measuring the phenomenon of international migration from Moldova. An experience exchange with another national statistical office would also be welcome.

NBS considers necessary to explain to the holders of administrative sources such as BMA and PSA and data users such as MHLSP and BDR the meaning of basic concepts and internationally recommended notions, the difference between them and the notions used at national level, the steps necessary for the increasing the harmonization of statistics and/or how decision makers should/could use migration data. This could be implemented through a combination of awareness activities and training of practical skills. NBS has experience in the organization of training course for data users (basic statistical literacy), but rather for other areas than migration statistics. NBS requires methodological support to advance and make sustainable the data exchange with the GIBP, to make best and regular use of border crossing data for estimating international migration and population with usual residence.

Among the other national stakeholders, GIBP would like to strengthen the capability to collect, manage, analyse or use data through the implementation of new projects composed by external assistance and exchange of experiences and best practices in the domain with counterpart foreign institutions. The implementation of the APIS would be a priority for capacity building. Additional support is needed for the modernization and further development of the Integrated Information System of the Border Police (IISBP) in order to strengthen the institutional capacities in processing and analysing the involved data. MHLSP received some capacity building on migration data and the SDGs, but this stakeholder limitedly manage data. Within MHLSP, NEA had no experience of sharing knowledge or practices on migration data with foreign institutions and so requires some measures in this direction. On the other hand, the NBM was involved in international initiatives of capacity building for data collection, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a certain reduction and the starting of courses online.

IOM, UNFPA, other international organisations and bilateral cooperation agencies operating in Moldova are committed to supporting NBS and other national partners in strengthening the capacities of collecting, analysing and disseminating relevant population and migration data, as in the cases of the implementation of the GGS, improvement of population and migration statistics and the development of the IISPM described above.

8. International cooperation

Moldova continues to benefit from solid foreign assistance related to migration. In the last ten years, many projects related to migration were implemented with foreign support in the last ten years, many of them under the EU–Moldova Mobility Partnership.

NBS actively participates in working groups and other initiatives at the international level on migration statistics to exchange good practices. These mainly include the Joint UNECE / EUROSTAT Work Session and the UN Expert Group on International Migration set by UNSD in 2017 with the main purposes of revising the UN recommendations on international migration statistics of 1998.

For the development of NBS and NSS, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and UNFPA Moldova will provide the necessary support to align national statistics with international practices and improve the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. This project is helping to establish the **Strategy for the Development of the National Statistical System**, which will support its transformation into an efficient, register-based, and user-oriented system. It also increased the availability of data to track the progress of the SDGs.

In addition, UNFPA and the Swiss Cooperation are jointly providing support to NBS on the development of population and migration statistics (*Project Improving Institutional Capacity of the National Bureau of Statistics*, for implementation in 2020-2021). Among its successive objectives, this project aims at developing the capacity and technical means of NBS in using administrative data sources for estimating population and migration data according to modern techniques.

There are multiple other projects on migration and local development implemented in collaboration with IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, and other international partners. The international community is actively working with Moldovan institutions to establish national committees on migration, and develop specific data collection exercises, such as the GGS. It is also supporting the cleaning of some registers between GIBP, BMA and PSA, and the needs of local communities for mapping their migrants abroad. Institutions such as GIBP envisage external assistance and experience exchange in the domain with counterpart foreign institutions, by implementing new projects and taking over international best practices in the field.

There are also several international cooperation initiatives focusing on or encompassing the collection or exchange of data in the areas of border crossing, irregular migration, and combating the trafficking of human beings. These involve international organisations and other countries such as Romania, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. For some topics such as preventing and combating trafficking of human beings the participation of the Moldovan institutions belonging to the NCCHT varies according to the purposes the regional and international events.

Lastly, the exchange of data with other countries and with abroad is also carried out under certain conditions, namely when establishing bilateral dialogues on the migratory flows between states.

9. Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the main Moldovan stakeholders differently, as detailed hereafter.

COVID-19 delayed three-months delayed NBS' annual data production on international migration, primarily because it received GIBP individual data necessary for the reports almost three months later than scheduled. NBS has not produced any data on international migration flows for the year 2020, and on the impact of the COVID on these flows. In terms of impact of COVID-19 on the data collection relevant for migration, the pandemic mainly affected the first GGS, as the survey consortium launched the fieldwork in January 2020. Following a suspension period, the survey was resumed in August 2020, through a data collection process in a new format following COVID-19 protection measures and the recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO). In fact, the survey fieldworkers were trained online in July 2020 by an expert in public health from the National Agency for Public Health on how to use the protective equipment and how to collect data during the pandemic period. Then they received COVID-19 protection equipment sets, which include face masks, gloves and disinfectant, and followed undertaking the data collection according to new guidelines on collecting data during pandemic, including the administration of questionnaires outside the dwellings and the respect of the recommendations of WHO and of the Extraordinary Public Health Commission. The survey data collection was integrated with a new module of questions related to COVID-19, which will allow to assess the COVID-19 impact through a comparative analysis of the situation in society before and after the outbreak of the pandemic.

GIBP authorities and its partner institutions, such as MHLSP and BMA, had to expand its responsibilities to collect health information from international travellers to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing if required. All international travellers, including returning Moldovan migrants, have been required to submit this form. While this could have been an opportunity to better track returning migrants, the health data registered upon arrival has not had a significant impact on the collection of the border crossing data.

COVID-19 did not impact BMA's operations, primarily because most of them are available online. For example, migrants are allowed to manage their resident permits through an online portal, without needing to physically go to a BMA office. BMA also extended the expiration of some foreigners' residence permit types during the pandemic.

According to NEA, the number of persons returning home has grown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Informal workers abroad have been particularly vulnerable because they are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits from their host countries. Unlimited and live access to GIBP data could have assisted NEA with estimating the number of people with urgent need of assistance. This would have been informed decision makers when developing recovery measures.

Given that people who have lost their jobs were paid an unemployment benefit for the state of emergency period, a new demand for statistics on the number of beneficiaries, including migrants, appeared. A collaboration between MHLSP, BMA and GIBP would allow to follow-up somehow the people affected by COVID-19.

Among international organisations operating in Moldova, IOM is supporting, in partnership with other organisations such as UNDP and the World Bank, the emergency response of Moldovan institutions through the production of up-to-date data and analysis on the numbers and profiles of the returning

migrants and families affected by the loss of remittances using rapid surveying solutions. The main initiatives are represented by the following:

- A rapid field assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the Moldovan migrants' wellbeing in 10 destination countries, for approaching the migrants' vulnerabilities, expectations and coping strategies. This initiative was executed in April-May 2020;
- A study on the mobility-driven impact of COVID-19, for understanding the numbers and profiles of the returning migrants as well as the specific vulnerabilities of groups in Moldova affected by the decrease of remittances and for offering measures and opportunities for the involved people. This was undertaken mainly in the summer 2020;
- An assessment of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the returnees and remittance dependent families in Moldova.

On the other hand, UNFPA produced and launched two analyses on the impact of COVID-19 on young people, focusing on youth participation and mental well-being. A socio-economic impact assessment on COVID, developed with UNDP, was conducted with relevant authorities. An assessment of COVID through the National Transfer Accounts was presented to development partners. Data from these two initiatives cannot be disaggregated by migration status.

10.Future outlook

NBS foresees to fully complete, improve, and harmonise at the international level the process of estimating the number of people with habitual residence and those moving to/from the country with all the necessary disaggregation, particularly at the lowest territorial level. The migration distribution in territorial profile will allow for the calculation of the population with habitual residence up to the lowest level territorial-administrative unit, improving the monitoring and evaluation state policies at local level.

NBS further projects to access administrative data easier. NBS has developed a set of documents and measures to be able to access individual data records from GIBP's border crossing data through MConnect once it is fully implemented and operational. NBS also plans to adapt the investigation through the LFS and HBS on all members of the selected households who are absent for a long period of time (over one year), if they keep family links with their households. In addition, NBS intends to work on removing legislative and administrative/bureaucratic impediments regarding personal data protection in order to ensure the unlimited access to anonymised administrative data needed to produce official statistics. In this regard, NBS is planning to challenge in court the refusal of the National Center for Personal Data Protection to notify the NBS's right to process personal data for statistical purposes. NBS intends to advance the cooperation with GIBP and PSA on the use of administrative data sources (respectively border crossing data and resident population data) for estimating the number of international migrants, and the usually resident population.

GIBP's future plans are increasing the performance of the systems used in data collection, and reducing the time of recording and receiving any data related to migration. This will require a rigorous and professional training of border guards, as well as constant innovation of GIBP's institutional infrastructure, given the new technologies for localization. Therefore, the Border Police is looking

forward to modernizing its techniques and equipment, including further developing its integrated information system of border crossings, so as to inter alia to improve the quality and use of the border crossing data for estimating international migration, and enhance its data production/collection and sharing system and capacity. The development of the APIS also represents a priority. However, these two plans do not seem feasible in the near future due to the lack of IT support, requiring substantial donor/material, methodological and technical support.

Given its functions, **BMA** will improve disaggregated, clear and comparable statistics in the field of migration. To this end, it is necessary to modernize and continuously develop SIIAMA, strengthen material and technical capacities, innovate the infrastructure, ensure interoperability between different information systems both within the MoIA and with other CPAs. The development of the automated system of integrated information will allow the creation of the "Electronic Register of Aliens". This register will allow both the modernization of the services offered to migrants and their family members, but it will also be an identified IT solution which will have immediate benefits and impact on the activity of the BMA in the part related to the formation and possession of statistical data. Other public institutions (ministries, other related public authorities) will have access to the system to update the data in the "Electronic Register of Foreigners". The new integrated BMA system will fully cover the information needs of all partners, which would allow for accurate migration data.

MHSLP considers that approach towards migration data needs to be contextualized and adapted to the case of Moldova. The dual citizenship of many migrants, the failure to declare the purpose of departure, the absence of border control with Transnistria are some of the specific challenges of the Moldovan case, and these should be included in the way migration data is collected and understood.

The **NEA** service within the MHSLP projects changes in data creation because the new provisions of Chapter VII "*Labour emigration of the citizens of Moldova*" of the Law 105/2018 on the promotion of employment and unemployment insurance will come into force in 2021. NEA will begin to collect data on intermediation contracts signed between potential emigrants and private agencies. This will change its automated information system, and thus its data, because coordinating cooperation agreements between private agencies and foreign beneficiaries will not be needed. Furthermore, with the support of the World Bank, NEA will split the Labour Market Information System in two separate systems: the NEA's Information Management System, and the Labour Market Observatory Information Services.

NCSI plans to optimize work processes by strengthening the role of online communication and electronic data exchange with competent institutions in other states. NCSI's main challenge is to improve the communication and information exchange of documents necessary for the provision of social benefits in electronic format. Opportunities depend on the will of the contracting parties to each social security agreement as well as on the understanding that effective cooperation at the level of the competent institutions positively influences the well-being of migrant workers—which are the beneficiaries of social benefits.

As the NCCHT's Permanent Secretariat, the **DCHRSD's** priority is to establish an Electronic Program for Collecting Statistical Data that would facilitate the collection, elaboration, and analysis of data on trafficking of human beings.

11. Assessment and recommendations

11.1. National Bureau of Statistics

NBS faces several challenges to fulfil its mandate of producing and disseminating statistical figures on various topics related to international migration.

- a. Not all the NBS's migration statistics are produced and disseminated according to the UN Recommendations on International Migration Statistics of 1998 or considering the wish of Moldovan authorities to fulfil the EU's *acquis* and the 2008 EU Regulation on the collection of migration statistics.
- b. More specifically, the few figures that NBS publishes on international migration do not fully apply the definitions of migrants stated by the UN Recommendations and other international requirements.
- c. Traditionally in Moldova, international migration statistics were obtained from the census and migration-related questions included in various yearly surveys. Unfortunately, the last census was done in 2014 and the surveys are limited in sample size and, therefore, do not always capture international migration movements.
- d. NBS uses limited amount of data obtained from administrative databases and therefore receives aggregated data from the Public Service Agency (PSA), the Bureau of Migration and Asylum (BMA), the National Bank of Moldova (NBM), and more recently individual data records from the General Inspectorate of Border Police (GIBP). Currently, the data of the PSA's State Register of Population (SRP) does not capture the extent of international (and internal) migration phenomenon, due to the lack of a mechanism for incentivising the registration/de-registration of residence/domicile.
- e. The use of individual data on border crossing already stimulated in the framework of the first Extended Migration Profile in 2013 and effective since 2015 is a step forward for the production of statistics on international migration flows according to UN Recommendations. UNFPA and IOM have been supporting the implementation of this new methodology. However, if the relationship between NBS and the GIBP continues to present some friction, this will not be fully implemented. GIBP does not transfer all data variables with NBS, which impedes the linkage of GIBP data with NBS databases, such as the SPR and the traditional NBS operations.
- f. In recent years, another of NBS's main concern was the adoption of the new definition of the population with usual residence in the country and the impact of the latter on annual population estimates both at national and territorial levels. Until 2019, Moldovan citizens, temporarily staying abroad, but having a permanent residence in Moldova (i.e. they did not de-register themselves administratively) were counted among the *de jure* population of Moldova. These new population estimates produced in 2019 were done by revising the 2014 census data and updating the figures on the base of data on border crossing received from GIBP and analysed with the support of UNFPA. It consists of a real improvement in agreement with the internationally recommended definition. The revision of the population figure at national level resulted in a drop of about 900.000 people.

- g. NBS is developing the Integrated Information System on Population and Migration (IISPM) to provide complex and timely statistical data on population, internal, and international migration disaggregated on several dimensions at the local and national level.
- h. At this moment, statistical data disseminated on the NBS website in its databank seems to be more a puzzle of data obtained from different data sources. Moreover, it shows some contradicting numbers and few explanations are provided in the metadata explaining this point.
- i. NBS exchanges data with international organizations, such as IOM, UNHCR and UNDP. However, there are contradictions and problems in some cases as for the reporting of stateless people to UNHCR (many stateless live in Transnistria and therefore are not reported to UNHCR). The exchange of data with other countries is also carried out under certain conditions, but NBS does not regularly exchange aggregated or individual data on migration with other countries. Moreover, NBS is under pressure from international institutions about the overestimation of Moldovan emigrants.

Recommendations

- i. As the official provider of statistical data in Moldova, **NBS should reinforce its leadership position** to ensure the availability, consistency, reliability, and international comparability of data related to international migration.
- ii. **NBS should increase the usage of administrative databases.** In addition to traditional activities and their specific statistical tools that are censuses and surveys, the use of administrative databases is necessary for producing migration data. This will require a financial investment in the form of hiring more statisticians and having the equipment and competence to innovate in new fields of investigation.
- iii. In addition, **NBS should improve its cooperation with other institutions**, particularly with GIBP, PSA and BMA. Invoking data protection and privacy rules cannot be an obstacle to obtain individual data that are essential to produce the requested international migration statistics. Privacy cannot be raised as an excuse not to share data.
- iv. PSA's SRP system needs to be reformed, so as to improve the accuracy and relevance of data on registration/de-registration of residence/domicile; this will allow an enhanced estimation of international migration, based on administrative data. Technical, financial, and methodological support needs to be sought to this end, in particular from specialised UN agencies, such as IOM.
- v. NBS took the good initiative of producing **data on the population with usual residence on the territory of Moldova following international recommendations**. The recently produced national population estimates should be more largely disseminated with a special attention to explain the fall of the revised figures.
- vi. **The issue of producing revised population estimates at local level is still unresolved** as the GIBP is not able to provide border crossing data including the previous or next place of residence in Moldova for international migrants. The point should be carefully investigated considering the policy support for regional development. Technical, financial, and methodological support needs to be sought, in particular from specialised UN agencies, such as IOM, to enhance: i) exchange of data between NBS, PSA and GIBP; ii) the GIBP data system and human capacity to produce/extract and provide to NBS the required data.

- vii. Labour emigration is seen as a key policy issue in Moldova and many policies have been developed to manage the situation, but reliable statistical data are missing to provide effective policy support. For these reasons, **NBS should exchange and receive statistical data with receiving countries** (by country of birth preferably and not by country of citizenship) and develop the necessary bilateral agreements for that cooperation.
- viii. Another initiative **to improve the accuracy of estimations of Moldovan emigrants** is the improvement of migration data collected through the LFS, HBS and Generations and Gender Survey (GGS). The linkage of data from these three surveys with information extracted from administrative data sources would further support this estimation.
- ix. Nowadays several estimations circulate in the media on the number of Moldovan citizens living abroad that are quite different. Policymakers need to know the number of Moldovan emigrants to improve and assess the National Migration Strategy. Accordingly, **NBS should devote some energy to confront the different figures and propose a unique estimate** in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Bureau of Diaspora Relations and the diaspora organizations.
- x. **NBS should be attentive to make available detailed metadata to explain the specificity of the data collected and the concepts used.** The dissemination of these data is essential in a way that will be easily understandable by the general public and useable for policy support by various stakeholders.
- xi. More generally, **NBS requires support to improve its efficacy following its strategic development plans.** Therefore, NBS needs an international technical assistance more specifically for the development of *ad hoc* methodologies requested for using administrative databases and for the implementation of innovative instruments, especially for better measuring the emigration abroad.

11.2. Inter-institutional coordination

There is a lack of cooperation and data sharing among national institutions dealing with in some capacity with international migration.

A close cooperation among institutions acting in the field of international migration is a prerequisite for the provision of integrated statistical data. The latter should be considered as a key objective aiming to provide efficient policy support for national stakeholders.

There is a perceived lack of interest in migration data from the side of policymakers. The limited resources and people dealing with the provision of migration data suggest that such data is not a key priority in Moldova.

- a. Moldova promoted a wide adhesion by the national services to modern means for developing, updating and consulting administrative databases. The interoperability of the platform MConnect facilitates data exchange between institutions and easy access for citizens to their own data. Such innovations are worth to be advertised in other countries.
- b. Several projects are ongoing to develop integrated tools: Integrated Information System of the Border Police (IISBP), the Automated Information System Workforce Migration Records and the Labour Market Information System under the National Employment Agency (NEA), the Educational

Information System, the Integrated Automated Information System Migration and Asylum (SIIAMA), and the Integrated Information System on Population and Migration (IISPM). Nevertheless, there exists a limited cooperation between these initiatives as the inter-institutional collaboration in Moldova witnesses some jealousy in terms of mandate, ownership, and power. SIIAMA, while overall being a concept of an efficient and comprehensive mechanism for inter-institutional data exchange, was not yet fully operationalised / implemented at the level of a number of agencies. A review of its implementation status needs to be carried out, a roadmap proposed for full implementation with the required adjustments/up-dates, and technical, financial, and methodological support needs to be sought, in particular from specialised UN agencies, such as IOM.

- c. More specifically, most institutions and stakeholders do not see the relevance of migration data, even for supporting the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum. This particularly does not favour data sharing and complicates data production.
- d. Another factor that supports this lack of cooperation for data sharing is that only NBS has the mandate on producing statistical data. Accordingly, the other institutions consider that they do not have any responsibility or obligation to share their own data, or to link them with databases from other institutions.
- e. The collection of data to answer to the international requests for the GCM and SDG indicators is not seen as a priority in Moldova. There is a lack of a clear coordination particularly around the SDGs. NBS is supposed to lead it, but there is no clear coordination about who should collect and send data. Moreover, the question of the need for these SDG indicators at national level is not addressed.

Recommendations

- i. **The government approach** when defining the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum should be revisited involving the concrete implication on all institutions concerned.
- ii. **The inter-institutional coordination** should be strengthened by defining a national coordination mechanism for all matters related to international migration, and more specifically for the production of migration statistics.
- iii. **The development of an Integrated Migration Information System** that would centralize data on individual basis for both foreign immigrants and Moldovan emigrants is highly recommended. Such integrated database would cover the different procedures for foreign immigrants (e.g., visas, border crossing, residence permits, asylum procedures, naturalisation) and for Moldovan emigrants (search for a job abroad, deregistration, border crossing, registration in consulates, repatriation procedures, and need for support). SIIAMA needs to be reviewed and re-assessed towards eventual full implementation, as a comprehensive mechanism for inter-agency data exchange and data integration.
- iv. As far as the **production of statistical data** is concerned, NBS' full implementation of the IISPM is highly recommended. This tool would capitalize the contents of data collected by NBS through censuses and surveys and data gathered by NBS from the different administrative databases and integrated tools related to international migration. Such instrument would be the key element for

the production of reliable official migration statistics and a more efficient preparation and implementation of statistical operations (e.g., a possible register-based census in the long term).

- v. A **close cooperation with NBS within the Technical Working Group for the Extended Migration Profile (EMP)** is a priority with a special attention (i) to update the content of statistical tables proposed by SIIAMA, (ii) to avoid duplication and inconsistencies with similar data produced by NBS and (iii) to ensure that the responsibility and the dissemination of statistical data remain under the main control of NBS. Wider coverage of GCM/SDG indicators, as well as a general improvement of statistical data, could be included in forthcoming editions of the EMP.
- vi. The **collaboration with IOM and other international organisations** at both Governmental and NBS levels could be improved. Such collaboration might help addressing current problems related to the management of international migration especially in the EMP. It would support the development of innovative methods for data collection, including assessment of the data produced through the use of administrative data sources. A closer collaboration would bring the possibility for Moldova to learn about good practices in data collection that are working in other countries. Also, it might contribute to gather *ad hoc* funding for innovations and experiences that would be developed and thereafter advertised abroad.
- vii. There exists a clear need for more coordination and concrete steps forwards for improving the **migration indicators and follow-up and review under the GCM and SDG frameworks**. Therefore, a better explanation of the role of GCM/SDG indicators delivered to national stakeholders will be welcome as this represents a relevant condition, not only for fulfilling the international requests, but also for influencing internal policy development.
- viii. **A wider coverage of GCM data/SDG indicators, as well as a general improvement of statistical data**, could be included in forthcoming editions of the EMP.
- ix. **The impact of COVID-19 on Moldovan emigrants and foreigners in Moldova** should be assessed by all administrations involved and followed through specific indicators developed by NBS in close cooperation with other institutions.
- x. Considering the need to explain to the holders of administrative data sources such as BMA and PSA and data users such as MHLSP and BDR the meaning of basic concepts and international recommendations for migration statistics, we suggest that NBS will implement a combination of **awareness activities and training courses** for both data managers and data users in the field of migration related data.
- xi. Identification and data collection on the **diaspora of Moldovan emigrants** initiated by CLA at local community level, should be encouraged by using diverse sources of information including through new info-technologies of communication. It is also important to better estimate their number and profile as well as their economic impact beyond remittances, using new methodologies¹⁹, such a Big Data, or the use of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology²⁰ to assess the impact of COVID on the returning migrants and communities of return.

¹⁹ *Contributions and Counting: Guidance on Measuring the Economic Impact of your Diaspora beyond Remittances*, IOM, 2020, available at link <https://publications.iom.int/books/contributions-and-counting-guidance-measuring-economic-impact-your-diaspora-beyond-remittances>.

²⁰ Available at link <https://dtm.iom.int>.

- xii. Several institutions **collecting data on human trafficking** should join their effort and exchange their data to build an integrated database. The initiative launched by NCCHT to develop an Electronic Program for Collecting Statistical Data for facilitating the data collection and analysis should be further supported by IOM.

List of stakeholders and contacts

Name	Institution/entity	Title
Aurelia Spataru	NBS	Deputy Director
Natalia Bargan	NBS	Head of the Population and Migration Statistics Directorate
Valentina Istrati	NBS	Census Department
Nina Cesnocova	NBS	Demographic Statistics Section
Elena Coliujco	BMA	Workforce Specialist
Liudmila Ispravnic	PSA	Deputy Head of the Passport Directorate
Natalia Lomanovschi	PSA	Deputy Head of the Directorate for Statistics, Evaluation and Examination of Cases, DG for Civil Status
Mircea Andronic	PSA	IT staff
Victor Morari	MoIA IT Service	Head of the Development and E-Government Department
Olga Tumuru	E-Governance Agency	Head of Data Exchange and Interoperability Service
Sergiu Bedros	E-Governance Agency	Head of the Platform Products Management Department
Anna Gherganova	MHLSP	Head of Occupational Policy and Migration Regulation
Anastasia Zaharia	MHLSP	Senior Consultant Directorate for Employment Policy and Migration Regulation
Dorina Gusan	MHLSP	Chief of Labour Market Observatory
Lilia Plugaru	MHLSP, NEA	Head of the Department for the Implementation of Employment Policies
Marcela Ganea	MHLSP, NEA	Head of Monitoring Department
Cristina Denita	MECR	Head of the Lifelong Learning Service
Emilia Cebotari	CCTHB	Head of the Directorate for Coordination in the Field of Human Rights and Social Dialogue
Diana Comerzan	CCTHB	Main Consultant on Legal Issues in Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
Vitalie Psenicinii	CCTHB	Chief of the Evidence and Decision-making Department
Alexandru Olari	CCTHB	Head of Section no. 2
Adrian Man	CCTHB	Head of Section no. 3
Iulia Saenco	NSIH	Head of the General Directorate for International Relations
Angela Moraru	NBM	Head of Balance of Payments Compilation Department
Ion Veverita	NBM	Director of the Reporting and Statistics Department
Nadejda Zubco	DRB	Deputy Director

Irina Luncasu	CLA	Project Coordinator
Olga Gaugaz	Academy of Sciences of Moldova	Vice Director of the National Institute for Economic Research
Natalia Plugaru	UNFPA	Assistant Representative
Eduard Mihalas	UNFPA	Programme Analyst
Sergiu Gaina	UNHCR	Senior Protection Associate, Focal Point for Moldova
Lars Lonnback	IOM Moldova	Head of Office
Ghenadie Cretu	IOM Moldova	Program Coordinator/Analyst, Migration and Development
Vitalie Verzari	IOM Moldova	Senior Project Assistant, Migration and Development