



**Expert Group Meeting and Capacity-building Workshop:
Strengthening the evidence base on migration in North and Central Asia:
data, gender, and remittances (Version: 26 February 2024)**

4-5 June 2024
UN Plaza, Almaty, Kazakhstan

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

In 2018, United Nations Member States adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) which recognized that safe, orderly and regular migration works for all when it takes place in a well-informed, planned and consensual manner. The Global Compact is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and it builds upon the recognition that “migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses.

The GCM echoes the call of the 2030 Agenda for data, monitoring and accountability and for strengthening the means of implementation and revitalization of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG17).

In follow-up to the first Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the Global Compact in 2021, ESCAP is implementing a project on “Strengthening national capacities for evidence-based policymaking to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in North and Central Asia”. Funded by the Russian Federation, one of the project’s objectives is to build capacities of Governments and key stakeholders to strengthen the production and dissemination of high quality, comparable and sex-disaggregated and publicly available data and information on migration. Moreover, the project aims to foster evidence-based dialogue on migration issues and to develop policy solutions which support safe, orderly and regular migration and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The following countries are target countries for this project: North and Central Asia, in particular: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. ESCAP collected information on how countries collect data on international migration and will provide capacity-building in this regard.

International migration is an important feature of economies and societies of North and Central Asia. In 2020, there were almost 18 million international migrants residing in North and Central Asia, and over 21 million migrants from the subregion were residing outside their countries of birth. Although the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises had a negative impact on migration, the Russian Federation, followed by Kazakhstan remain preferred destinations for migrants from North and Central Asia, particularly Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Most migrants migrate to take up work. In many cases, migrants also bring their families, making migration patterns more complex.

Remittances are a crucial source of income to many countries in North and Central Asia, making some of them among the most remittance-dependent countries in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. In 2022, remittances accounted for 50.9 per cent of GDP in Tajikistan, 29.5 per cent in Uzbekistan, and 20.8 per cent in Kyrgyzstan. The contribution of remittances to poverty reduction is well documented in research. Remittances to these countries originate mainly from the Russian Federation, making it an important country of remittance outflows in the Asia-Pacific region.

Nearly half of all migrants from North and Central Asia are women. Many women migrate directly to work abroad, while others migrate as family members. Migrant women often take up more vulnerable jobs such as domestic work. When women migrate as family members, their legal status on the country of destination is often unclear. Migration of men without families also affect women who are left behind. Therefore, the gender implications of migration are manifold and need further study.

An expert group meeting cum-capacity-building meeting was held 18 and 19 April 2023 in Almaty¹, Kazakhstan, where migration data availability and data collection methodologies were discussed. The meetings also identified pertinent topics related to migration in North and Central Asia that require in-depth studies. Participants identified gender, remittances and their costs as well as migration governance and emerging migration trends as key areas that require further research and discussion. Desk studies on some of these topics are currently under way under the guidance of ESCAP. Preliminary results of these studies will be presented at the meeting.

Modality of the meeting

The meeting will be conducted primarily in-person with the possibility of some presentations being made virtually. The meeting will take place in three parts:

1. Expert meeting with presentations and plenary discussions.
2. Capacity-building session on collection and analysis on data on migration.
3. Policy dialogues on policies to implement the Global Compact on Migration in target countries.

Participants are invited to make presentations and make ad-hoc interventions from the floor. Details on requested presentations will follow.

The meeting website can be accessed at: <https://unescap.org/events/2024/expert-group-meeting-and-capacity-building-workshop-strengthening-evidence-base>.

Date and venue of the meeting

The meeting is scheduled to take place 4-5 June in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The meeting will take place at the UN Plaza. The address of the venue is: UN Plaza; 303, Baizakov Street A15G7T0, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

¹ More details on that meeting can be accessed at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/strengthening-national-capacities-evidence-based-policy-making-implement-global-compact>.

Purpose of the meeting

The meeting has three purposes:

- Discuss research papers on migration in North and Central Asia, particularly gender aspects of migration, remittances and their costs;
- Provide capacity-building on migration data collection methodologies; and
- Facilitate policy dialogues on migration in North and Central Asia among Governments and migration experts.

Expected outcomes

It is expected that after the meeting, country focal points and partners will have:

- Attained better knowledge of methodologies on the collection of migration data;
- Enhanced their understanding of evidence-based policies on migration to implement the GCM; and
- Provided feedback to ongoing studies on remittances and remittance costs in North and Central Asia, as well as gender aspects of migration in North and Central Asia.

Participants

National focal points on migration from project target countries nominated by Governments of North and Central Asia to ESCAP will participate in the meeting. Representatives of civil society, academia/research institutions and United Nations entities working in North and Central Asia will also attend and support the meeting.

Language of the meeting

The meeting will be conducted in English and Russian with simultaneous interpretation provided.

Documents prepared for the meeting (see also the meeting website)

[Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (A/RES/70/1)

[Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020](#) (ST/ESCAP/2801)

[Report of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (ESCAP/GCM/2021/3)

[Report of the Secretary-General: Migration Statistics](#) (E/CN.3/2021/11)

[Recommendations on Statistics on International Migration](#) (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/58/Rev.1)

[Handbook on the Use of Administrative Sources and Sample Surveys to Measure International Migration in CIS Countries](#) (ECE/CES/STAT/2016/2) (for the Russian version, see: <https://bit.ly/3qJo5zd>)

[Statistics on International Migration A Practical Guide for Countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#) (ECE/2011) (for the Russian version, see: <https://bit.ly/3clqS9f>)

Remittances and remittance costs in North and Central Asia (draft working paper)

Gender aspects of international migration in North and Central Asia (draft working paper)