

# HUNGARY

## UKRAINIAN NATIONALS CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE

JANUARY – JUNE 2024



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	6
INTENTIONS AND REASONS TO CROSS BACK TO UKRAINE	7
TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE	10
OBLASTS (REGIONS) OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION	12
NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS UPON RETURN	13
METHODOLOGY	15

# KEY FINDINGS

## SAMPLE

112

Ukrainian respondents

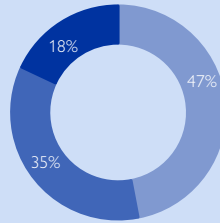


79%



21%

## INTENTIONS



■ Short-term visitors ■ Prospective returnees ■ Undecided

## TOP REASONS TO CROSS BACK



37%

Meet family members



29%

Return after visiting someone abroad



21%

Access health care



11%

Reunite with family members



8%

Collect belongings

## AVERAGE DURATION

Prospective returnees

3 months

Short-term visitors

21 months

## HOUSEHOLDS



34%

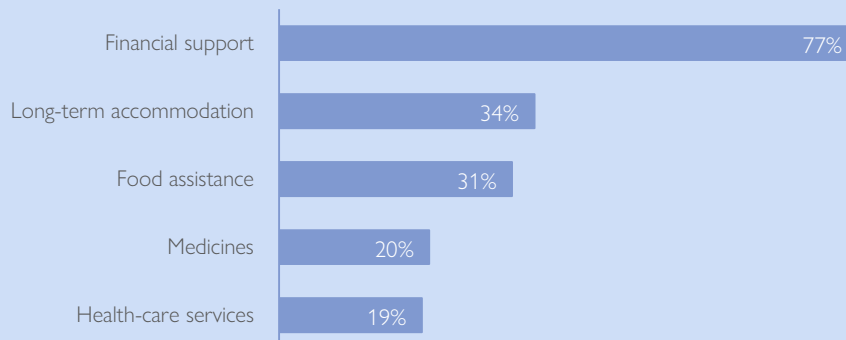
with at least one child (0-17 years old)



10%

with at least one person older than 60

## TOP NEEDS UPON ARRIVAL TO UKRAINE



(Multiple answers possible)

## DESTINATION



97%

of prospective returnees travelled to their oblast of origin



87%

of short-term visitors travelled to their oblast of origin

## ASSISTANCE



13%

of prospective returnees received assistance



62%

of short-term visitors received assistance

(Multiple answers possible)



## INTRODUCTION

This report presents evidence on Ukrainian nationals crossing back to Ukraine from Hungary between January and June 2024 (quarter one, Q1 and quarter two, Q2), distinguishing between those who aim to remain in Ukraine for longer periods (prospective returnees) and those who plan to pay a short visit (short-term visitors). Individuals planning to spend 0 to 30 days in Ukraine are categorized as “short-term visitors,” while those intending to stay longer than one month are identified as “prospective returnees.”

IOM’s DTM collected a total of 173 surveys in the first half of 2024. Within the total sample, 34 per cent (n=59) had stayed in countries other than Hungary during displacement.

In addition, 3 per cent of the sample (n=6) were Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) crossing back to Ukraine. These two groups were excluded from analysis. The remaining 112 responses – of Ukrainian respondents who had resided in Hungary – were central to this analysis.

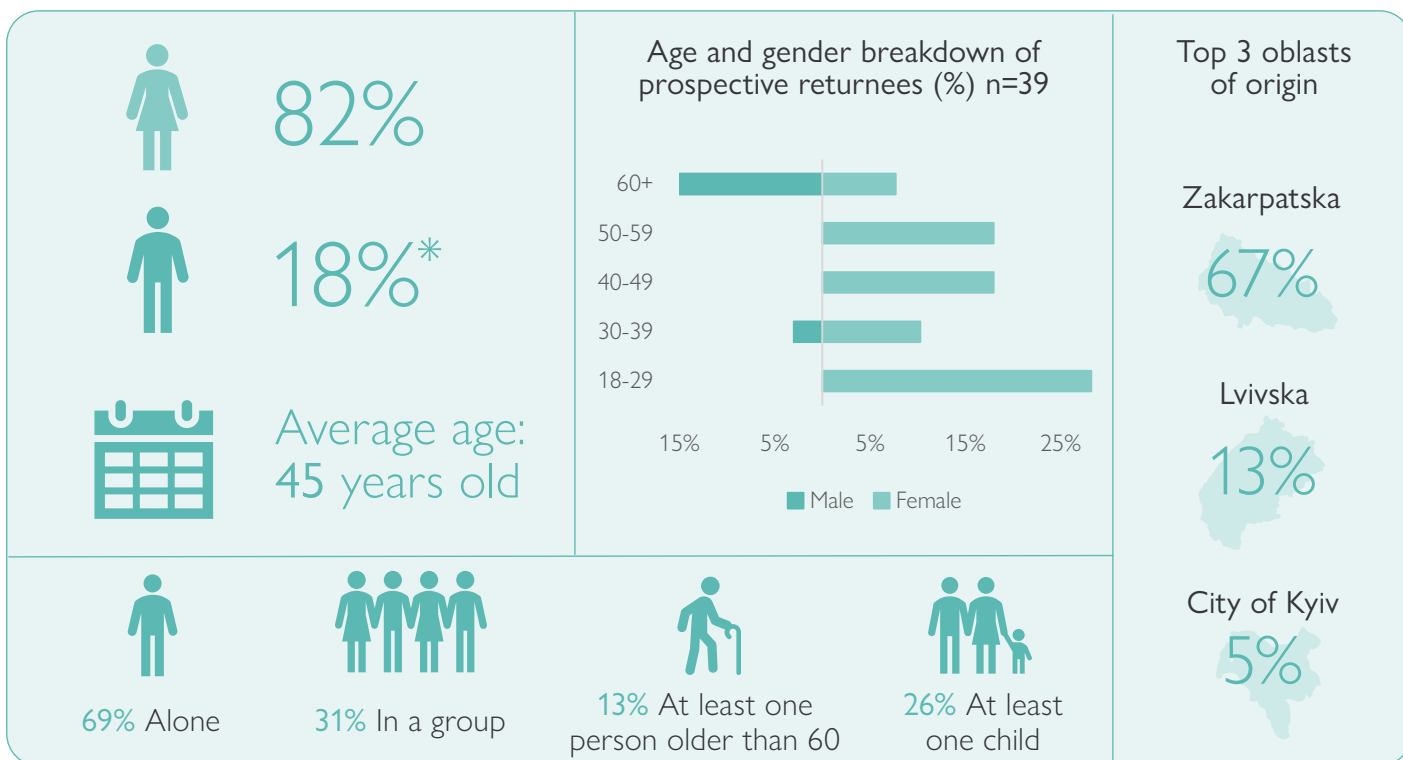
The surveys were collected in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county (62%) and Budapest (38%), with data collection locations including train stations (69%), bus stations (15%), streets (15%), and humanitarian centres (1%).



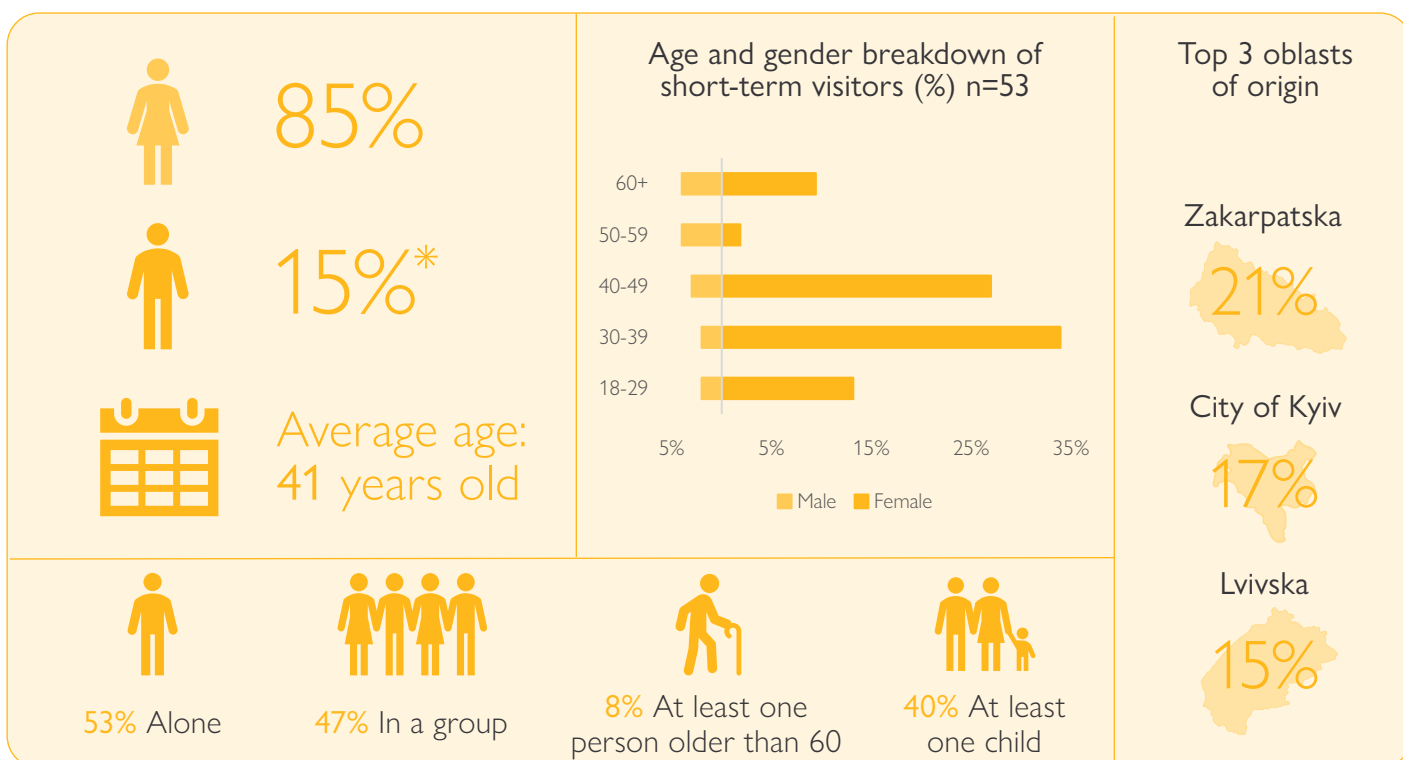
IOM staff assists a Ukrainian national at the train station in Záhony, Hungary © IOM 2024

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES (35% OF RESPONDENTS IN Q1-Q2 2024, N=39)



### SHORT-TERM VISITORS (47% OF RESPONDENTS IN Q1-Q2 2024, N=53)



\* The small proportion of men crossing back into Ukraine compared to women is likely influenced by the legal restriction on men's ability to leave Ukraine if desired. With the declaration of Martial Law across the entire country in February 2022, the Ukrainian government prohibits able-bodied men of conscription age from leaving the country.

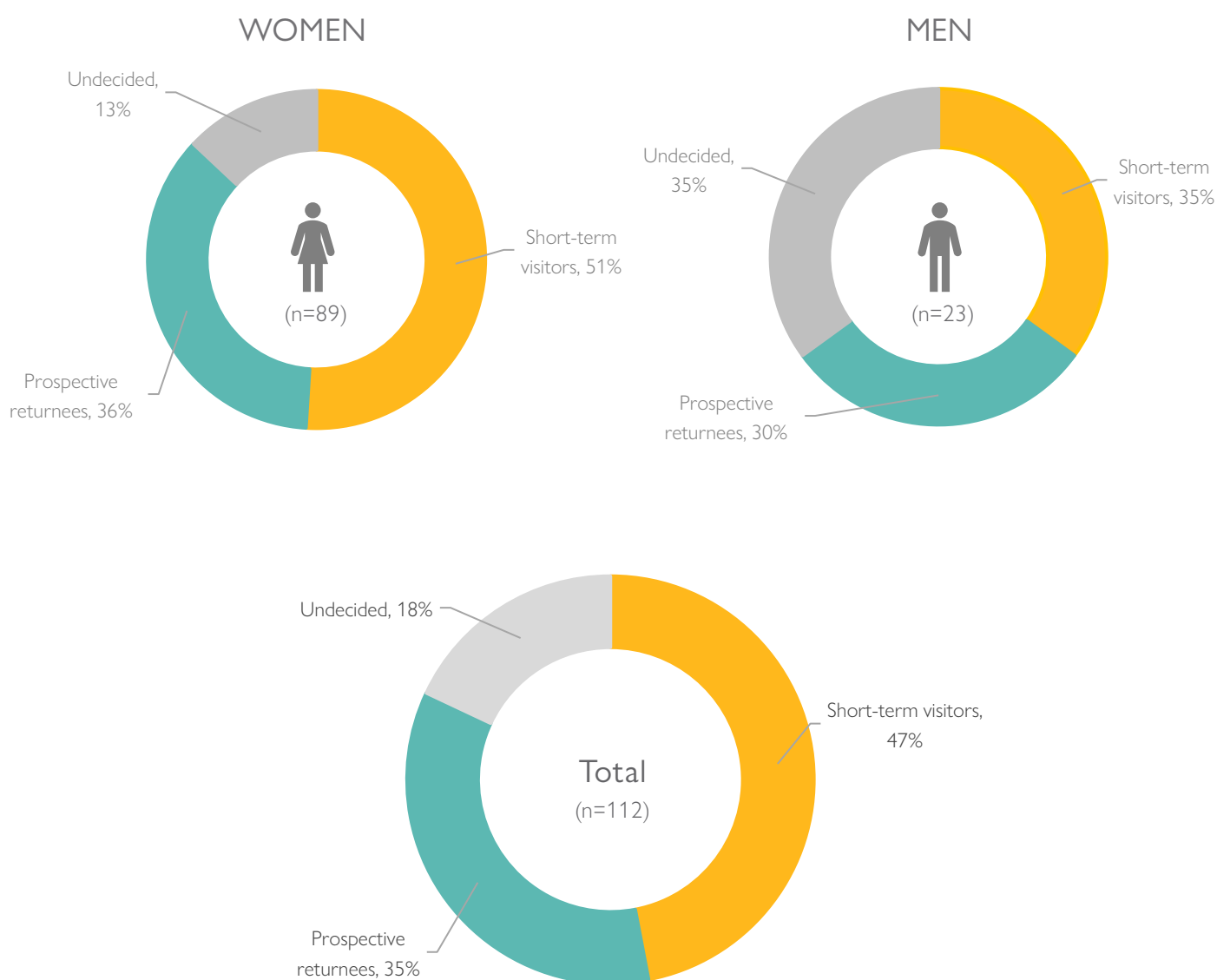
## INTENTIONS AND REASONS TO CROSS BACK TO UKRAINE

### SHORT VISIT OR PROSPECTIVE RETURN

Nearly half of the respondents (47%) were short-term visitors and 35 per cent were prospective returnees. Another 18 per cent were undecided about how long they planned to stay in Ukraine. The share of short-term visitors was higher among women (58%) than among men (35%). Over one in three female

respondents planned to stay in Ukraine for a longer time (36%), with a slightly smaller share among men (30%) planning to stay in the long-term. The percentage of those unsure about the length of their stay in Ukraine was substantially higher among men (35%) than women (13%).

Figure 1. Intentions to stay in or visit Ukraine for a short period, by gender and total (%)

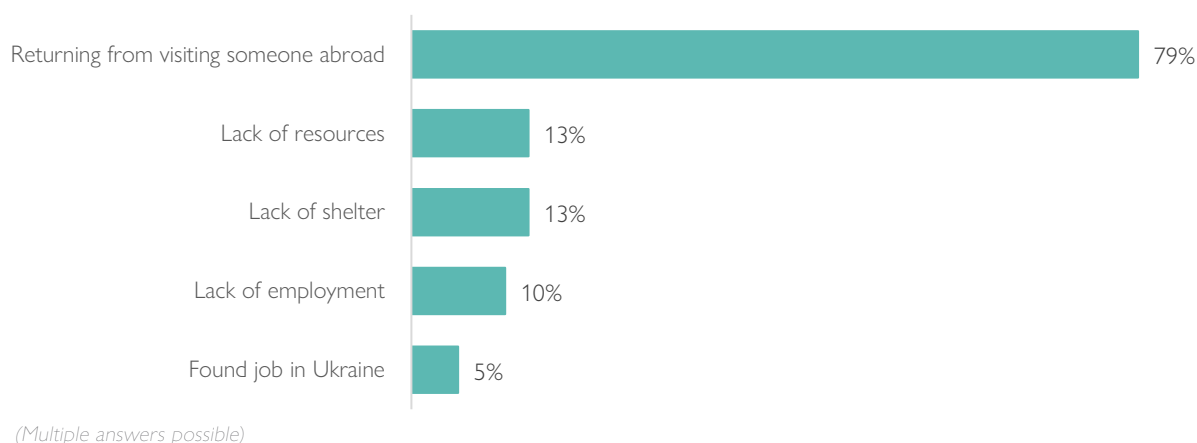


## REASONS

Among prospective returnees (n=39), the majority of respondents travelled outside of Ukraine for a short time to visit their relatives or friends residing in Hungary (79%). Among those who spent a longer time abroad, 13 per cent intended to return to Ukraine due to a lack of resources to sustain their stay in

Hungary. This was followed by those who planned to return due to the lack of accommodation (in Hungary). An additional 10 per cent returned due to lack of employment, while another 5 per cent returned as they found employment in Ukraine.

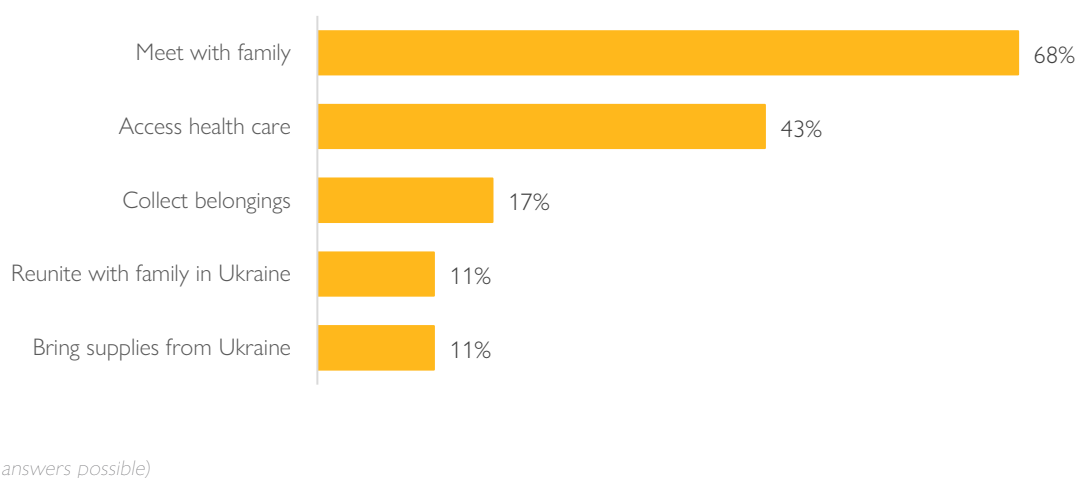
Figure 2. Top 5 reasons to stay in Ukraine, prospective returnees (%) n=39



Among short-term visitors (n=53), over two-thirds of respondents intended to go to Ukraine with the aim of meeting their family staying in Ukraine (68%). The second most frequently mentioned reason for a short visit was to access health-care

services in Ukraine (43%). To a lesser extent, other reasons included collecting belongings (17%), reuniting with family in Ukraine (11%) and bringing supplies from Ukraine (11%).

Figure 3. Top 5 reasons to do a short visit, short-term visitors (%) n=53



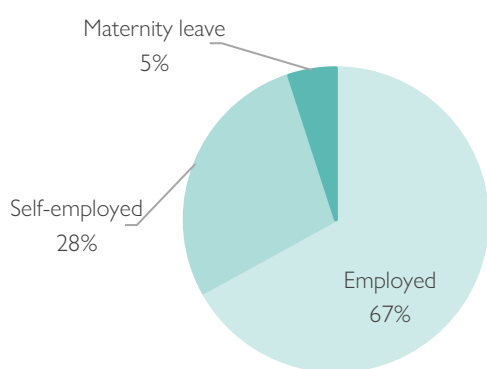


## PLANS UPON ARRIVAL

Among prospective returnees, nearly half intended to return to the previous job that they had before leaving Ukraine (46%). The share of those returning to their job was more frequent among women (53%) than men (14%). An additional 5 per cent intended to look for employment opportunities once in Ukraine. The remaining share of respondents (49%) were not planning to work upon arrival to Ukraine. Twenty-three per cent of this

group were retirees, with the share of retired returnees being higher among men (86%) than women (10%). An additional 13 per cent of prospective returnees were not planning to work due to being on parental leave, accounted for only by women (16%). The remaining share of women planned to care for their families (3%), while 10 per cent of respondents did not know or preferred not to answer to this question.

Figure 4. Employment status of prospective returnees in Hungary, among those returning to Ukraine for previous job (%) n=18



Among respondents returning for the long-term with the aim of going back to their previous jobs in Ukraine (n=18), the majority was employed (95%), while 5 per cent were on maternity leave while staying in Hungary.



Ukrainian nationals at the train station in Záhony, Hungary © IOM 2024

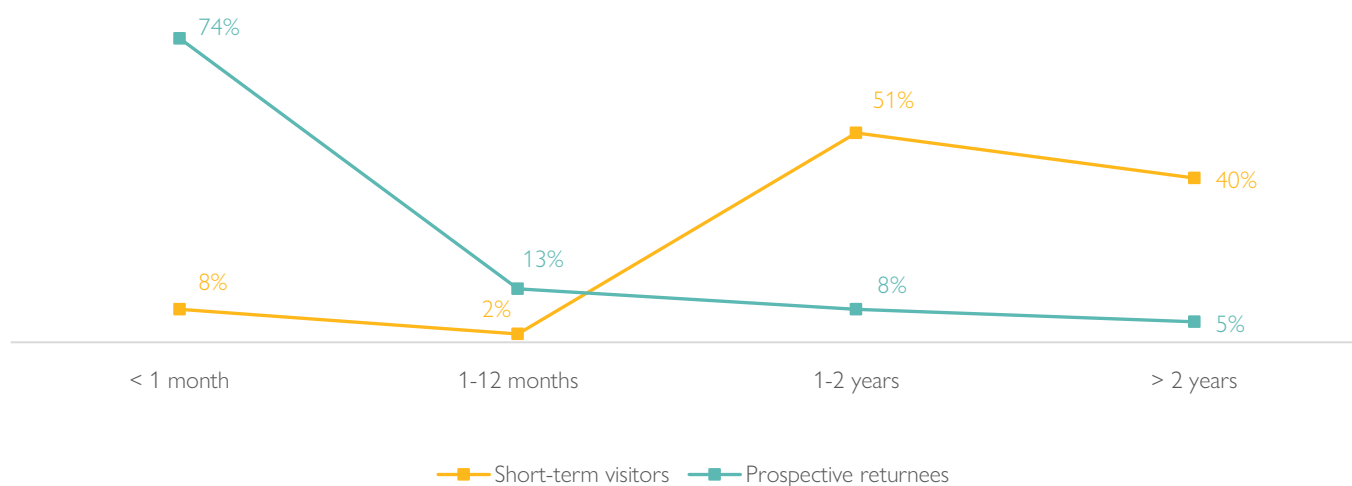
## TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE

### LENGTH OF STAY IN HUNGARY

The majority of short-term visitors crossing back to Ukraine stayed between one to two years in Hungary (51%), while another 40 per cent spent over two years in the country. On the other hand, the majority of prospective returnees (74%) stayed in Hungary only for a shorter period of time (less than a month) prior to returning to Ukraine.

The average duration of displacement for short-term visitors is 623 days (about 21 months), while the average duration of displacement for prospective returnees is 103 days (about 3 months).

Figure 5. Length of stay in Hungary, by return intention (%) n=92



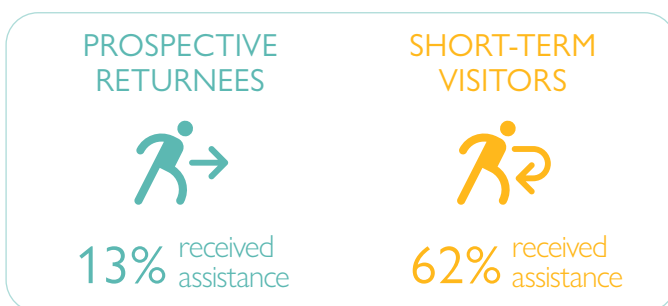
### ASSISTANCE RECEIVED

Among all respondents (n=112), nearly half received some form of humanitarian assistance while staying in Hungary (45%), whereas the majority did not receive any form of assistance (54%), and the remaining 1 per cent preferred not to disclose information. Male respondents more often reported not having received assistance (65%) compared to women (51%).

Short-term visitors more frequently mentioned having received assistance while in Hungary (62%), with 69 per cent of women and one-quarter of men (25%). Conversely, among prospective returnees, the majority did not benefit from assistance (82%), with 81 per cent of women and 86 per cent of men. A small share (13%) received assistance among them, while 5 per cent preferred not to answer.

This however does not necessarily indicate a lack of humanitarian assistance or a gap in the provision of humanitarian assistance, as none of the prospective returnees experienced difficulties in receiving assistance.

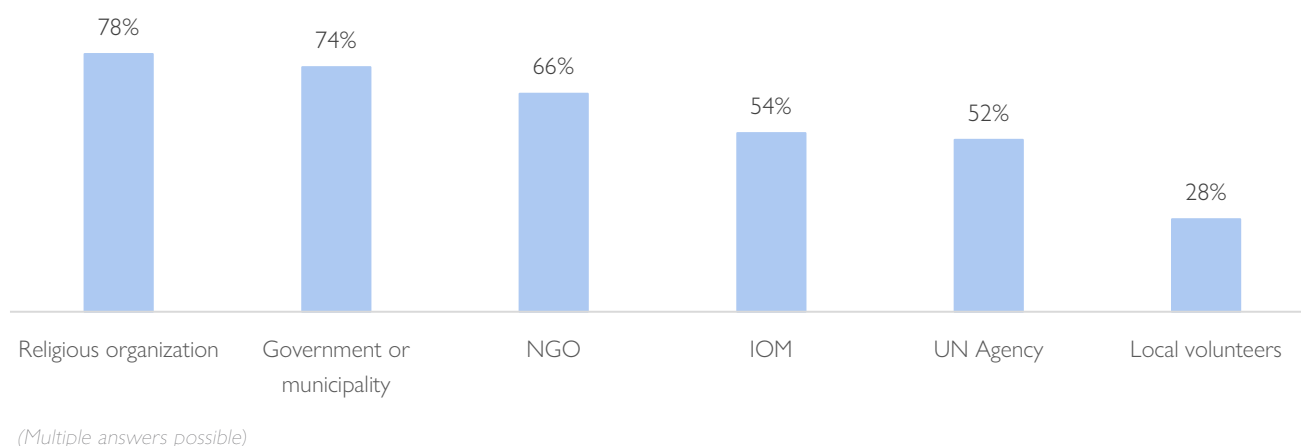
More specifically, the majority did not experience difficulties (87%), while the remaining 13 per cent did not know or preferred not to answer this question. Rather, as the majority of prospective returnees only spent a short period of time in Hungary with the aim of visiting friends and/or family or doing shopping, they might have not required humanitarian assistance, which would explain the low rate of receiving humanitarian assistance among prospective returnees.



Among the 45 per cent of respondents who received some form of humanitarian assistance, the majority benefitted from assistance provided by religious organizations (78%) or received support from the government or municipalities (74%). Two-thirds of respondents mentioned benefitting from assistance provided

by NGOs (66%), and over half of the respondents credited support from IOM (54%). An additional 52 per cent received support from other UN Agencies, while over one-quarter (28%) were aided by local volunteers.

Figure 6. Institutions from which respondents received humanitarian assistance in Hungary (%) n=112

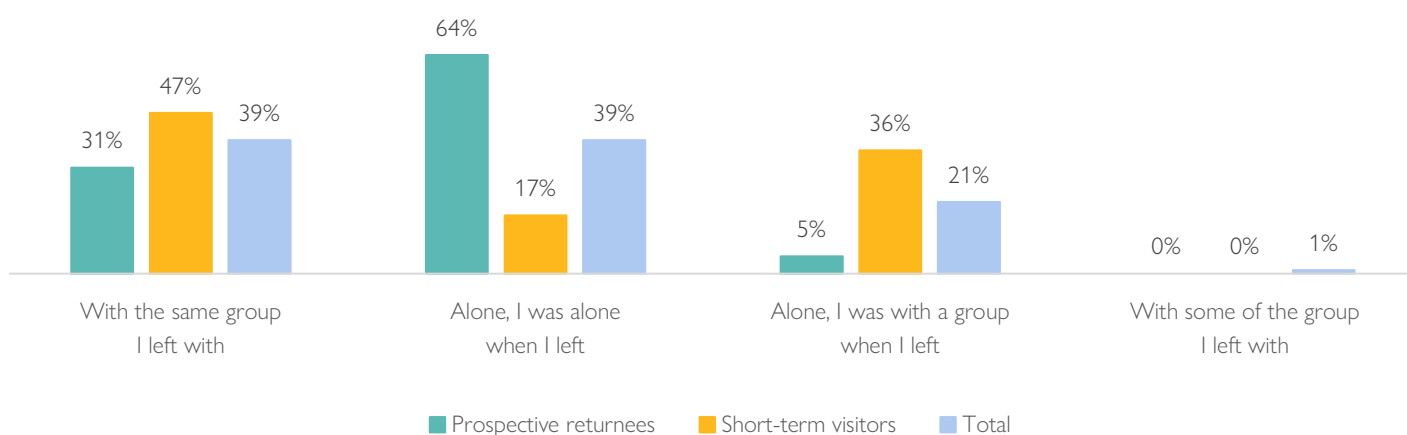


## GROUP COMPOSITION

The majority of respondents (60%) travelled alone, while 40 per cent moved in a group. Prospective returnees more frequently mentioned traveling alone, same as how they left Ukraine (64%),

while short-term visitors most often travelled with the same group with whom they left Ukraine (47%).

Figure 7. Group composition upon crossing into Ukraine, by return intention and total (%) n=112



Eight out of ten (84%) respondents travelled with children below 18 years old, and a smaller share travelled with at least one older person above the age of 60 (10%). There were no major discrepancies observed among the two groups by return intention. Among prospective returnees, 83 per cent travelled with at least one child and 13 per cent travelled with at least one older person. Among short-term visitors, 84 per cent crossed back to Ukraine with at least one child, and 8 per cent travelled with at least one older person above the age of 60.

Significant differences were found in the group composition of women and men responding to this survey while crossing back to Ukraine. Women more frequently travelled with at least one child (91%), and less often travelled with at least one older person (4%). On the other hand, men were less frequently accompanied by a child (60%), and more often had an older person, including themselves, in their group with whom they travelled back to Ukraine (30%).

## OBLASTS (REGIONS) OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

Nearly three-quarter of respondents originated from five oblasts before leaving Ukraine: Zakarpatska (39%), the city of Kyiv (12%), Kharkivska (10%), Dnipropetrovska (7%) and Lvivska (5%). Among prospective returnees a higher share originated from Zakarpatska (67%), followed by those originating from Lvivska (13%), the city of Kyiv (5%), Kharkivska (5%) and Dnipropetrovska (3%). Conversely, among short-term visitors, one in five respondents departed from Zakarpatska (21%), while other oblasts of origin included the city of Kyiv (17%), Kharkivska (15%), Dnipropetrovska (13%) and Lvivska (2%).

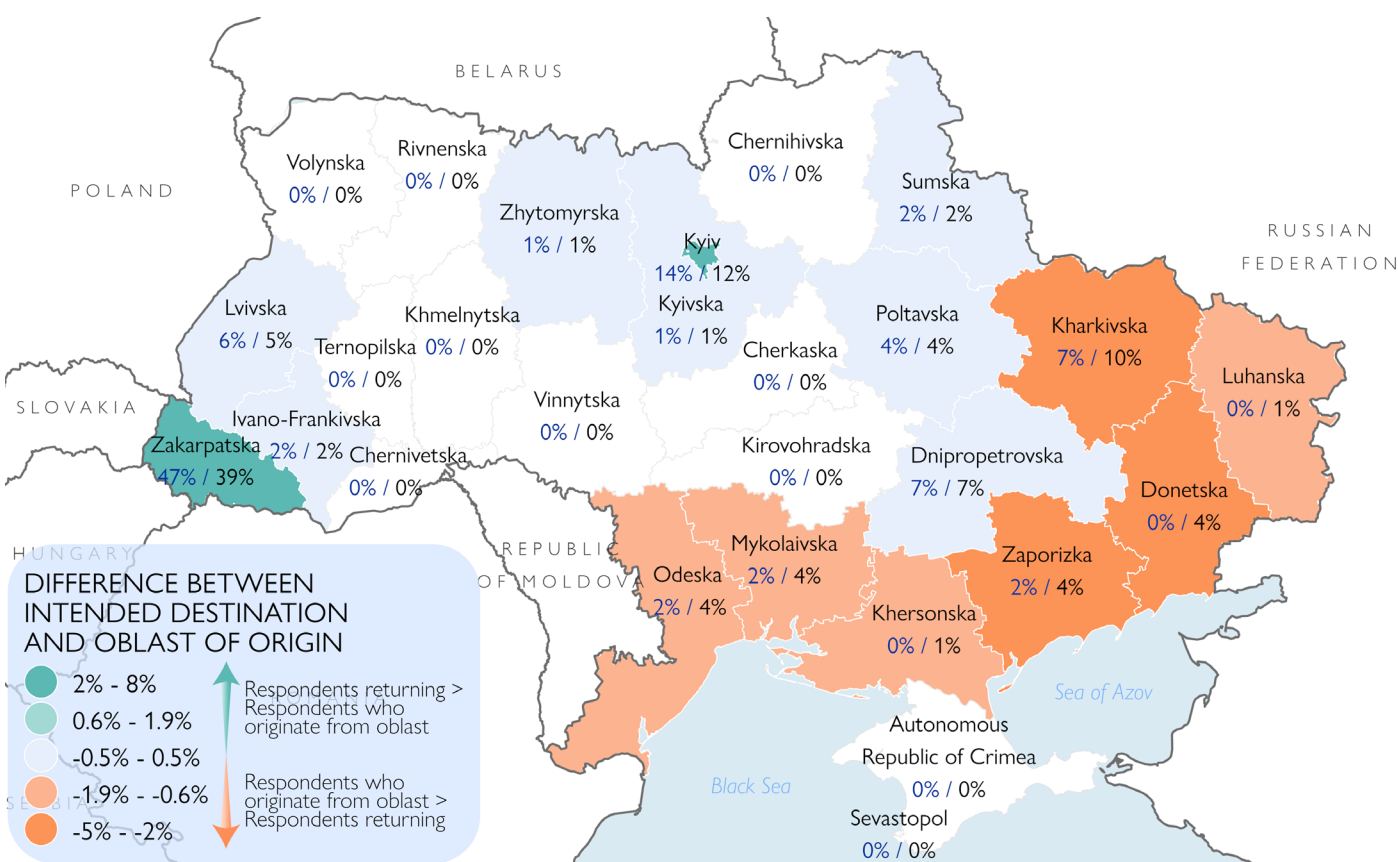
The majority of respondents were aiming to cross back to their oblast of origin (84%), while 12 per cent planned to return to a different oblast. The remaining 4 per cent of respondents were undecided about their intention. The share of those returning to a different oblast was higher among short-term visitors (11%) than prospective returnees (3%). Remarkably, among respondents who were undecided about the length of their stay in

Ukraine, a higher share aimed to return to an oblast different from their oblast of origin (30%).

The most common reasons for which respondents opted to travel to an oblast different from their oblast of origin (n=13) included: damaged property (46%), unsafe location (31%), and occupied property (8%). Another 8 per cent opted for another oblast because they planned to meet their families who had relocated. The remaining 7 per cent preferred not to answer.

Among those who were not returning to their oblast of origin, Zakarpatska (46%) and the city of Kyiv (23%) were the top two destinations, while the remaining 31 per cent preferred not to answer. Among those not returning to their initial place of origin (n=13), the only prospective returnee within this group travelled to Zakarpatska (n=1), while half of short-term visitors (50%) travelled to Zakarpatska, and 17 per cent aimed to reach the city of Kyiv.

MAP 1: OBLAST OF INTENDED DESTINATION AND OBLAST OF ORIGIN IN UKRAINE, JANUARY-JUNE 2024



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.



## NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS UPON RETURN

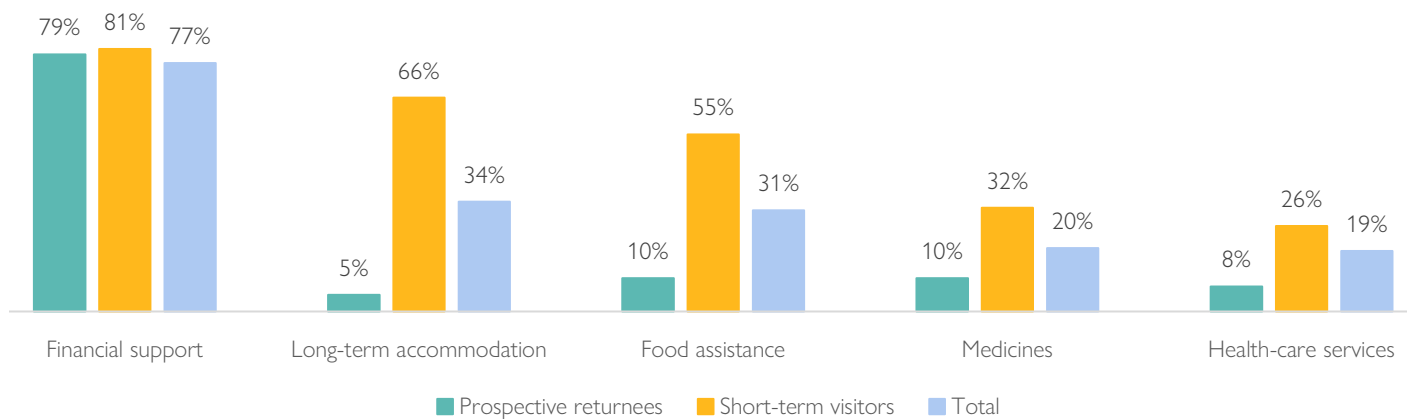
### NEEDS

The most frequently mentioned need upon arrival in Ukraine was financial support (77%), cited by 79 per cent of prospective returnees and 81 per cent of short-term visitors. Long-term accommodation was reported by over one-third of respondents (34%), followed by the need for food assistance, both being mentioned by a larger share among short-term visitors, with 66 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively. This was followed by the need for medicines (20%) and health-care services (19%), both

being cited more frequently by short-term visitors (32 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively).

The higher levels of needs amongst short-term visitors can be linked to issues that short-term visitors aim at solving during a brief visit, such as accessing health-care services, and completing additional tasks related to collecting documents and bringing supplies from Ukraine.

Figure 8. Top 5 needs upon arrival to Ukraine, by return intention (%) n=112



(Multiple answers possible)



Ukrainian nationals at the train station in Záhony, Hungary © IOM 2024

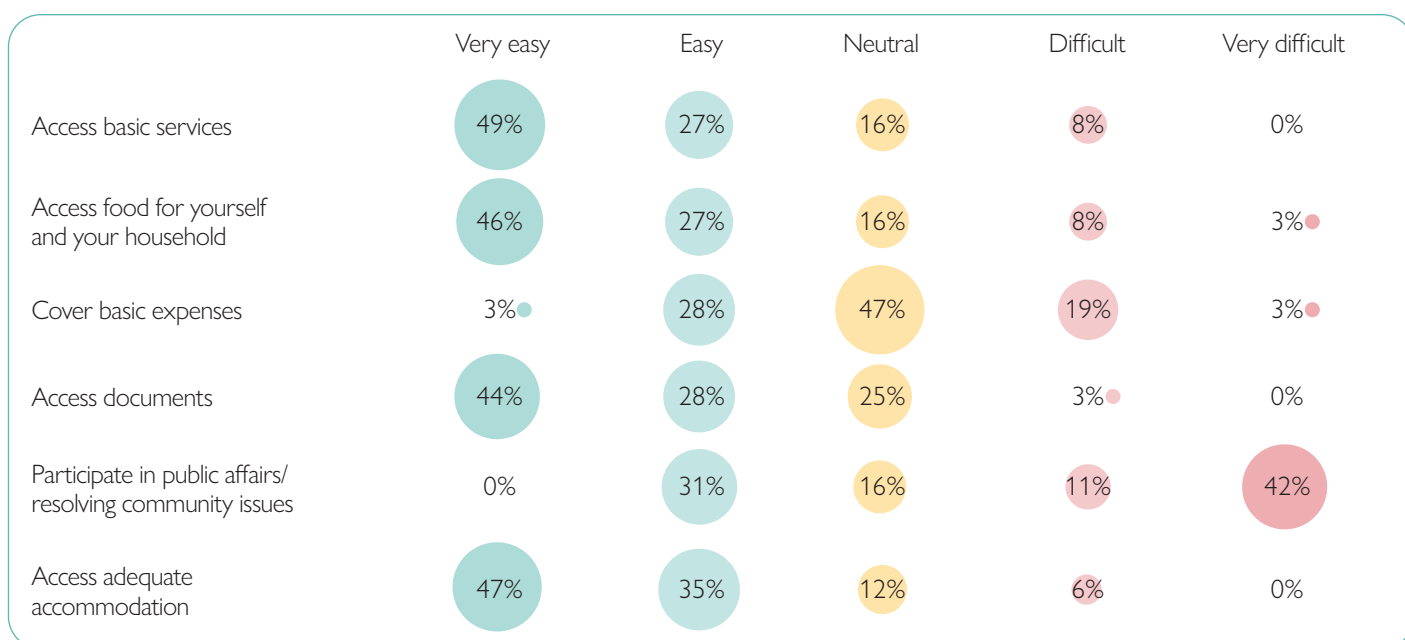
## EXPECTATIONS

Ukrainian respondents who intended to return for a longer time (prospective returnees) were asked about their expectations regarding accessibility of basic needs and services, and their ability to participate in public affairs once they arrived at their destination in Ukraine.

A large percentage of prospective returnees expected access to basic services (49%), food (46%), identity and education

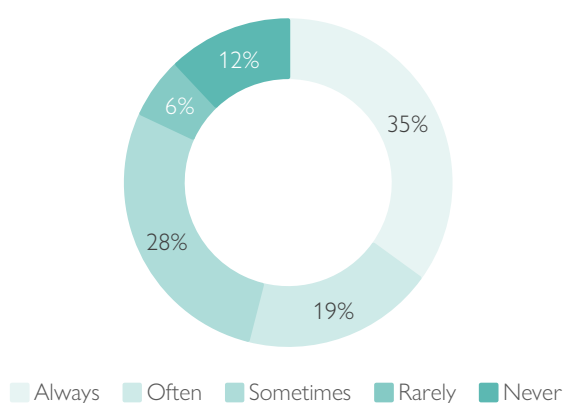
documents (44%), and accommodation (47%) would be very easy upon return. A considerable share of prospective returnees expected participating in public affairs to be very difficult (42%) upon returning to Ukraine. Covering basic expenses was expected to be neither difficult nor easy by nearly half of prospective returnees (47%), while 28 per cent expected it to be easy and 19 per cent anticipated it to be difficult to cover basic needs upon arrival to Ukraine.

Figure 9. Expectations upon arrival to destination in Ukraine among prospective returnees (%) n=37



One in three returnees aiming to stay for more than 30 days in Ukraine expected to always experience security incidents as a result of the war (35%), while 19 per cent expected to experience incidents often. An additional 28 per cent anticipated to sometimes experience incidents, while 6 per cent expected incidents to rarely happen. Overall, 12 per cent did not expect any incidents to happen.

Figure 10. Expectations on the frequency of serious security incidents as a result of the war once arrived at destination (%) n=32



## METHODOLOGY

Since March 2022, IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has been regularly surveying individuals who are crossing back to Ukraine from neighbouring countries. The aim of the survey is to improve the understanding of their profiles, displacement patterns, intentions and needs. The survey is deployed in five countries neighbouring Ukraine – Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia.

Face-to-face surveys were conducted by 3 trained enumerators deployed at selected exit points and transit locations close to the border points with Ukraine. The survey is anonymous and voluntary, administered only after obtaining consent from the respondent. Respondents can stop the survey at any time. The

questionnaire is available in Ukrainian, Russian, and English, and the preferred language is determined by the interviewee. Only fully completed surveys are included in the analysis.

The survey section dedicated to intentions was adjusted to reflect more updated understanding of the dynamics of movements from and to Ukraine. A question on “length of stay in Ukraine” measured in number of days has been added (“forever” and “does not know” were also possible). For the purpose of this report, short-term visitors are those who report the intention to stay in Ukraine for 30 days or less, while prospective returnees are those who report the intention to remain for more than 30 days or “forever” in Ukraine.

## LIMITATIONS

The sampling framework could not be based on verified figures of refugees from Ukraine exiting towards Ukraine through all land border points where the surveys took place. Such verified figures are not consistently available nor are they comparable for all neighbouring countries. The geographic spread of enumerators deployed captures a wide range of locations and modes of travel. Nevertheless, the accessibility of different transit points fluctuates and not all individuals crossing have time (10 to 20

minutes) to respond to the survey. For example, it is easier to interview persons travelling by bus and other types of group transportation than those in private vehicles who tend to be faster in transiting through BCPs. Whilst the overall sample cannot be deemed as representative, the consistency of data collection in each country and at the regional level suggests that the current sampling framework produces findings of practical value.

## DTM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The survey form was designed to capture the main displacement patterns of refugees of any nationality fleeing from Ukraine because of the war. It captures the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relative to the intended destinations and prospects in the country of displacement; it gathers information regarding a set of main needs that the respondents expressed as more pressing at the moment of the interview.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, several IOM's DTM tools were deployed in countries neighbouring Ukraine and in other countries particularly impacted by the new arrivals of refugees from Ukraine.

For more information, please consult: <https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response>

DTM is part of IOM's Global Data Institute.