



METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

GENERAL POPULATION SURVEY
UKRAINE
AUGUST 2024

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Starting on 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation (RF) launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine, triggering an unprecedented humanitarian crisis across Ukraine. Since 9 March 2022, the IOM's Data and Analytics Unit began systematically conducting a representative assessment of the general population in Ukraine to gather information on displacement, mobility flows, intentions, and living conditions to inform targeted assistance to the war-affected population.

From March 2022 to January 2024, IOM Ukraine's Data and Analytics Unit has successfully carried out 17 rounds of the General Population Survey. Initially carried out every two months (R1-R12), the survey shifted to a quarterly frequency (R13 onwards). In June 2024, the survey methodology was further adapted to produce quarterly representative data at the oblast level, allowing for more localized analysis. The General Population Survey is a highly representative assessment with 2 phases. The first phase is with 40,000 randomly selected respondents providing comprehensive population data. This enables a detailed evaluation of the geographic distribution of war-affected populations across Ukraine.

The second phase consists of 4,800 follow-up interviews with IDPs, returnees, and non-displaced identified in the first phase, offering insights into displacement, returns, mobility intentions, and needs. The survey objectives are as follows:

1. To assess population stocks for current location and produce population estimates at different levels of administrative and territorial divisions within the country.
2. To analyze intentions and measure mobility flows and trajectories among population groups and locations.
3. To identify humanitarian and recovery needs, including initial insights into durable solutions and vulnerabilities related to displacement among population groups and locations, as well as elements of social cohesion.

This methodological note outlines the assessment methodology and sampling design for Round 17 of the survey and will also be applied to subsequent rounds, including Rounds 18 to 20.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The General Population Survey is a repeated cross-sectional study that asks a similar set of questions to an independent sample of respondents in each survey round using the random digit dial approach (RDD). For the initial 12 rounds, the sample was constructed with 2,000 unique and anonymous respondents aged 18 and over, who were residing in the areas/regions controlled by the Government of Ukraine. The survey results, which had an overall sampling error of 2.00% at a 95% confidence level, were extrapolated to represent the national and macro-regional levels.

The GPS sampling methodology has been revised twice. Starting June 2023 for R13-16, the sample size for the first phase was increased to 20,000 respondents per round. Starting June 2024, for R17 onwards, the survey's sample size has been further increased to 40,000 respondents per round. These adjustments aimed to enhance the precision of population estimates for internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and non-displaced persons at the oblast level, and to provide indicative estimates for these groups at the raion level.

SAMPLING

The re-designed sample methodology in the third cycle of the GPS post-June 2024 includes two main stages:

Stage 1 is a screener that was conducted with 40,000 respondents to gather preliminary information on displacement status, gender and age distribution, and geographical location. The RDD method is used to generate a random sample of 40,000 unique and anonymous respondents aged 18 and over. A random number generator created phone numbers by combining three-digit mobile phone prefixes with randomly generated seven-digit numbers, in proportion to the market share of key mobile network operators in Ukraine. Data from this stage helps form a representative sample across 23 oblasts and Kyiv city.

Stage 2 is conducted with up to 4,800 respondents identified during the screening stage to collect detailed information on the needs, socio-economic situation, mobility intentions, and household composition of the displaced population.

The sample is stratified by IDPs, returnees, and non-displaced persons, and distributed by oblast. The sample size for each group is proportional to their population size at the oblast level.

The RDD is applied again in the second stage to construct a sample, relying on the contacts and consents to re-contact those gathered within the first survey stage. It facilitates the sample frame formation and stratifies the second stage sampling by population groups (IDPs, returnees and non-displaced) at the oblast level. For information regarding the sample breakdown and sample error at both the oblast and macro-region level, kindly consult Table 1 and Table 2 located on page 3-4.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

People residing in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) or the occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts were not included in the survey. The data collected in Donetsk, Zaporizka, Luhanska, and Khersonska Oblasts are underrepresented due to limited coverage to government-controlled areas.

COLLECTION METHODS

All the interviews are conducted anonymously, with respondents providing consent before participating in the interview. Structured questionnaires and computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) techniques are used, allowing results to be directly entered into a data entry program.

DATA WEIGHING

The survey data is weighted using an oblast-level and population group weighting scheme computed based on the first phase with 40,000 responses, addressing coverage and non-response biases. Initial weights are calculated based on the probability of selection at the oblast level, considering the displacement status of each respondent (IDPs, returnees, or the general population). Subsequently, adjustments are made to account for non-response by comparing the expected and actual number of respondents in each region and group. These adjustments help ensure the results are representative while accounting for non-response biases.

POPULATION GROUPS IDENTIFICATION

The estimation of population groups by displacement status relies on theoretical concepts for analysis purposes.

1. The [IOM Glossary on Migration](#) defines **Internally Displaced Persons** (IDPs) as persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee, or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. In this study, IDPs are defined as the individuals who have been forced to flee or to leave their homes or who are staying outside their habitual residence due to the full-scale invasion in February 2022 (including all the de-facto IDPs), regardless of whether they hold registered IDP status.

2. The IOM glossary defines return as "the act or process of going back or being taken back to the point of departure". Return can occur within a country's territorial borders, or between a country of destination or transit and a country of origin.

For this study, the terms "**return**" and "**returnee**" are used to refer to all people who have returned to their habitual residence after being displaced for at least two weeks since February 2022, either from abroad or from within Ukraine. This excludes those who have returned to Ukraine from abroad but have not returned to their habitual residence.

3. The **non-displaced** population includes people residing in their habitual residence who have not left it due to the ongoing war for a period of two weeks or more, as well as people who are temporarily outside their place of habitual residence for reasons not in connection with the ongoing full-scale war.

Population groups are identified using a composite variable from reported data to determine their proportions within the surveyed population. For detailed information on how these groups are identified, please refer to Figure 1 on page 4.

POPULATION GROUPS ESTIMATION AND POPULATION BASELINE

Starting with Round 17 (August 2024), the estimation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees is based on their proportions within the surveyed population in the first stage of the survey. These proportions are then applied to a baseline derived from the national estimates provided by the UNFPA Common Operational Dataset on Population Statistics (COD-PS). To ensure accuracy, the baseline excludes people residing in the fully or partially occupied raions of Donetsk, Khersonska, Luhanska, and Zaporizka oblasts, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, since these areas are not currently under the control of the Government of Ukrainian. Specifically, the excluded raions are: Donetsk (Bakhmutskiy, Donetsk, Horlivskiy, Kalmiyskiy, Mariupolskiy, Volnovaskiy), Khersonska (Henichesk, Kakhovskiy, Skadovskiy), and Zaporizka (Berdianskiy, Melitopolskiy, Polohivskiy, Vasylivskiy). These adjustments ensure that the survey results accurately reflect the areas under Ukrainian government control.

The trend data presented in the General Population Survey from Round 17 onwards uses this refined distribution of IDPs and returnees. These results are applied retrospectively to previous rounds to standardize the baseline used across different population estimates over time, thus neutralizing the effect of differing baselines.

METHODOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENTS OVER TIME

In the initial months following the full-scale invasion, IOM Ukraine began estimating the number of displaced populations and those who had returned to their habitual residences. Over the past two years, multiple adjustments have been made to the General Population Survey (GPS) methodology to enhance the accuracy and precision of these estimates.

IDP Calculation:

In the first three rounds of the survey, the share of IDPs was calculated as a proportion of respondents present in Ukraine only, using the UNFPA COD-PS as a baseline. This baseline included the

entire population, without excluding those displaced abroad.

To improve the accuracy of estimates prior to the availability of updated COD-PS data from UNFPA, a methodology adjustment was made for Rounds 4-12. During this period, the share of IDPs was calculated as a proportion of all surveyed respondents, including those present in Ukraine and those responding from abroad.

In July 2023, UNFPA updated the estimated size of Ukraine's population, excluding refugees abroad as estimated by UNHCR. From Round 13 onwards, the estimation of IDPs has been based on their proportions within the surveyed population present in Ukraine during the first stage of the survey, using a baseline derived from the UNFPA COD-PS national estimates, excluding the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol.

Returnee Calculation:

Starting from Round 3, the survey also began estimating the number of returnees. Between Rounds 3 and 13, the share of returnees was calculated differently than for IDPs. Returnees were identified as a proportion of respondents who were in their habitual residence at the time of the survey (i.e., returnees and non-displaced persons), excluding IDPs and those temporarily in Ukraine.

This method was adopted in May 2022, coinciding with coordinated estimates of refugee figures (via the UNHCR portal) that allowed for the exclusion of those displaced abroad from the UNFPA COD-PS baseline. This adjustment aimed to provide a more accurate representation of the returnee population.

From Round 14 onwards, the share of returnees has been based on their proportions within the surveyed population during the first stage of the survey, using the most updated UNFPA COD-PS estimates at the time.

These continuous adaptations have been crucial in providing more precise and reliable estimates of the displaced populations affected by the ongoing conflict. By refining methodologies and increasing sample sizes, the GPS has been able to more accurately reflect on-the-ground realities, facilitating effective data-driven responses.



THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The General Population Survey second stage questionnaire consists of a series of structured questions covering a wide range of topics relevant to various population groups in Ukraine. The survey collects information on respondents' sociodemographic characteristics, displacement status, mobility intentions and behaviours, living conditions, access to basic services, health and well-being, livelihoods, and received assistance.

Additionally, the survey gathers unique data on displaced individuals' preferences regarding settlement options (integration, resettlement within the country, return), informing planning for durable solutions.

In each round, a modular approach is adopted to ask a thematic battery of question in order to inform effective programming. For example, the battery on displaced populations' pathways towards durable solutions is periodically asked. This battery is based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs, considering the protracted nature of displacement and return.

Lastly, regular survey implementation allows for comparative analysis over time, including data disaggregation by sex, age, individual and family vulnerabilities, and more.

LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

The exact proportion of excluded populations is unknown, and certain considerations must be made when interpreting the results. Those currently residing outside Ukraine were not interviewed due to active exclusion. Moreover, when estimating population figures, it is assumed that minors (under 18) are accompanied by their parents or guardians. The sample frame used for the survey was limited to adults with mobile phones, which could potentially introduce biases in the data. During the survey period, the functionality of phone networks across Ukraine might have varied, leading to some numbers having a higher likelihood of receiving calls than others. Furthermore, residents in areas with high infrastructure damage may be underrepresented in the sample (including mobile networks connectivity issues), potentially leading to an underestimation of their needs.

Additionally, residents in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and areas under temporary military control by the Russian Federation (Donetska, Luhanska, Khersonska, and Zaporizka Oblasts) were not included in the interviews due to lack of Ukrainian operator phone coverage.

Lastly, estimates of displaced population stocks are solely based on respondents' self-assessments regarding their location, and displacement situation. These estimates reflect the calculated value based on available population data in the country at the time of the survey implementation. Each estimate is calculated by extrapolating survey data and is within a certain margin of error as presented in Table 2 on page 4.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE ALLOCATION AND NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS PER OBLAST AND MACROREGIONS – ROUND 17

Macro-region ¹	Oblast	First stage				Second stage			
		Total interviews (Male)	Total interviews (Female)	Total interviews	Interviews share	Total interviews (Male)	Total interviews (Female)	Total interviews	Interviews share %
EAST	Dnipropetrovska	1,616	2,547	4163	10%	77	147	224	5%
	Donetska	331	486	817	2%	74	129	203	5%
	Zaporizka	481	814	1295	3%	79	146	225	5%
	Luhanska ²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SOUTH	Kharkivska ³	1,190	1,965	3,156	8%	73	152	225	5%
	Mykolaivska	518	924	1,442	4%	64	161	225	5%
	Odeska	973	1,620	2,593	6%	74	151	225	5%
	Khersonska	197	287	484	1%	69	115	184	4%
	Ivano-Frankivska	549	670	1,219	3%	75	101	176	4%
	Volynska	462	584	1,046	3%	53	82	135	3%
	Zakarpatska	352	414	766	2%	60	86	146	3%
WEST	Lvivska	1,104	1,309	2,413	6%	69	136	205	5%
	Rivnenska	474	613	1,087	3%	48	93	141	3%
	Ternopilska	384	476	860	2%	54	75	129	3%
	Chernivetska	308	438	746	2%	50	71	121	3%
	Khmelnyska	500	688	1,188	3%	58	94	152	3%
	Zhytomyrska	525	824	1,349	3%	64	133	197	4%
NORTH	Kyivska	1,239	1,733	2,972	7%	84	142	226	5%
	Sumska	495	718	1,213	3%	79	137	216	5%
	Chernihivska	514	822	1,336	3%	72	123	195	4%
	Vinnyska	664	1,013	1,677	4%	57	142	199	4%
CENTRE	Kirovohradska	460	678	1,138	3%	52	106	158	4%
	Poltavska	672	938	1,610	4%	63	115	178	4%
	Cherkaska	587	808	1,395	3%	80	88	168	4%
Kyiv	Kyiv ⁴	1,612	2,164	3,777	10%	90	133	223	5%
	Other	4	3	9	1%	0	0	0	0%
	Residence location unknown	124	127	251	1%	0	0	0	0%
Total sample		16,335	23,663	40,000	100%	1,618	2,858	4,476	100%

¹A macro-region is a territorial unit comprised of multiple oblasts (regions), as defined by the Law of Ukraine "On the Principles of State Regional Policy" (Article 1, item 2).

²Data for Luhanska Oblast have been added to the category other.

^{3,4}One respondent participating in the screener did not report gender.

TABLE 2: SAMPLE ERROR AT OBLAST AND MACRO-REGION LEVELS BY SURVEY – ROUND 17

Macro-region	First stage	Second stage	Oblast	First stage	Second stage
	CL 95%	CL 95%		CL 95%	CL 95%
EAST	1.0%	3.3%	Dnipropetrovska	1.5%	6.6%
			Donetska	3.3%	6.9%
			Zaporizka	2.7%	6.5%
			Luhanska	N/A	N/A
			Kharkivska	1.7%	6.5%
SOUTH	1.5%	3.9%	Mykolaivska	2.6%	6.5%
			Odeska	1.2%	6.5%
			Khersonska	4.5%	7.2%
			Ivano-Frankivska	2.8%	7.4%
WEST	1.0%	2.8%	Volynska	3.0%	8.4%
			Zakarpatska	3.5%	8.1%
			Lvivska	2.0%	6.8%
			Rivnenska	3.0%	8.3%
			Ternopil'ska	3.3%	8.6%
			Chernivetska	3.6%	8.9%
			Khmeln'ytska	2.8%	8.0%
			Zhytomyrska	2.7%	7.0%
NORTH	1.2%	3.4%	Kyivska	1.8%	6.5%
			Sumska	2.8%	6.7%
			Chernihivska	2.7%	7.0%
			Vinn'ytska	2.4%	7.0%
CENTRE	1.3%	3.7%	Kirovohradska	2.9%	7.8%
			Poltavska	2.4%	7.4%
			Cherkaska	2.6%	7.6%
			Kyiv	1.6%	6.6%
UKRAINE	0.5%	1.47%	UKRAINE	0.5%	1.47%

FIGURE 1: POPULATION GROUPS IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGY

