REACH Moldova 2024 Refugee Population Profiling Assessment– Methodology Note

Objective of the methodology note

This methodology note covers all additions and adjustments to the methodology of the Refugee Population Profiling Assessment as described in the Terms of Reference (ToR), which were made during the assessment process.

The focus of this methodology note is on Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the methodology as described in the ToR, in which databases were triangulated and key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in settlements identified as outliers, as well as the methodology for arriving at the final estimates of the number of refugees from Ukraine living in each settlement in Moldova. Due to the need to have all the necessary databases and understand their scope and limitations in depth before determining the methodology for triangulating them in Phase 1, the final methodology was not described in detail in the ToR. Similarly, the methodology for estimating the refugee population in Moldova was determined once all the KII data was collected and analysed.

This methodology note covers the following:

- The methodology for the sampling of settlements for conducting key informant interviews through the triangulation of databases.
- The methodology for estimating the total number of refugees from Ukraine currently living in the settlements sampled for KIIs.
- The methodology for estimating the total number of refugees from Ukraine currently living in the settlements that were not sampled for KIIs.
- The general limitations of the methodology and final estimates.

CONTENTS

List of Acronyms

ACC:	Master database comprised of all refugee accommodation-related databases
AM:	Master database comprised of Area Monitoring and RAC Monitoring databases
CDA:	*Centrul de Drept al Avocatilor* (Law Centre of Advocates)
CRS:	Catholic Relief Services
DGASPF:	*Direcția Generală Asistență Socială și Protecție a Familiei* (General Directorate for Social Assistance and Family Protection)
IGM:	General Inspectorate for Migration in Moldova
IOM:	International Organisation for Migration
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KI:	Key Informant
KII:	Key Informant Interview
MPCA:	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC:	Norwegian Refugee Council
RAC:	Refugee Accommodation Centre
RAIS:	Refugee Assistance Information System
TCN:	Third-Country National
ToR:	Terms of Reference
TP:	Temporary Protection
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP:	World Food Programme

Geographical Classifications

Region:	For this assessment, there are five regions in Moldova: North, Centre, South, Chișinău, and the Transnistrian region. Officially, there are three regions – North, Centre and South – but due to the high prevalence of refugees in the city, the Municipality of Chișinău was extracted from the Centre region in the framework of this assessment and became a territorial region unit itself, and the Transnistrian region was included as a separate region on its own.
Raion:	Level 1 territorial-administrative unit. There are 35 raions in Moldova, including those in the Transnistrian region.
Municipality:	Level 1 territorial-administrative unit. Chișinău and Bălți are municipalities at the Admin 1 level due to being the biggest cities in Moldova. Within these municipalities, there are Admin 2-level cities of Chișinău and Bălți.
Settlement:	Level 2 territorial-administrative unit. It should be noted that 'settlement' is not officially recognised as a formal administrative unit, but rather, is a term selected by REACH to enable more granular data and differentiate between urban and rural settlements at a level below that of raions. In practice, settlements can be classified as villages (*sate*), communes (*comune*), cities (*orașe*), or municipalities (*municipii*), and these terms are often used interchangeably. There are 980 administrative level 2 units in Moldova, which includes the 81 settlements situated within the Transnistrian region.

	The settlements in the Transnistrian region, divided over 5 raions, will be covered in Phase 1 during the database triangulation process.
Raional capital:	The administrative capital of each raion in Moldova. It is at Level 2 territorial-administrative unit.

Key Definitions

Deduplication:	Deduplication in this research implies that duplicate records of the same individual refugee will be removed.
Outdated:	Outdated in this research implies that a database possesses data that no longer accurately reflects the current situation in a settlement.
Connectivity:	Connectivity in this research is referred to when settlements are connected by one or more main roads. Main roads in Moldova are the National roads, which can be divided into two categories. These are the ones that are named, starting with either 'M' or 'R'. The 'M' stands for magistral roads, serving as connections between neighbouring countries Romania and Ukraine. The 'R' stands for republican roads, which are roads that serve as a connection between cities within Moldova.[1]
Proximity:	When the term 'proximity' is mentioned in this research in the context of locations, it means that it is close and in the vicinity of a border or another settlement. The exact definition of when something is 'in proximity to' is determined and explained case by case.
Deflation:	In this research, deflation is often used in the context of deflated databases. This refers to a database that reports a number of refugees in a settlement that is lower than in reality. This can be due to people living in the settlement but not registered there.
Inflation:	The word inflation is typically used in this research to refer to inflated databases. This refers to a database that reports a number of refugees in a settlement that is higher than in reality. This can be due to high transit, or people registered but not living in the settlement.
Overrepresented:	Refugees registered in an official database in the settlement but not living in that particular settlement.
Underrepresented:	Refugees living in the settlement but are not registered in any existing official databases.
Phase 1:	The phase in the methodology of this assessment that pertains to the triangulation of databases on refugees in Moldova.
Phase 2:	The phase in the methodology of this assessment pertains to the conduct of key informant interviews in settlements identified as outliers from the database triangulation.
Trend:	A trend in this research is a pattern based on gained understanding from conducted interviews and consultations, that impact one or more databases and offers an explanation on why this implies decreased reliability of a database for a specific settlement, applied only to sampled settlements.
Type:	All non-sampled settlements are linked to a type, ranking from most to least dominant types. These types are inspired by the detected trends in the sampled settlements and determine when which database is deemed to have the highest reliability.

[1] Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. LAW No. 509 from 22-06-1995 on roads. LP509/1995 (legis.md).

OVERVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

General and specific objectives and research questions

General and specific objectives

The general objectives of the assessment are as follows:

- To inform efficient planning, adequate resource allocation and prioritisation of the refugee response in Moldova by providing more accurate, up-to-date and updatable estimates of the total number and geographic distribution of refugees from Ukraine that are currently residing in Moldova,[2] and shed light on gaps in coverage and marginalised communities not accounted for in existing databases.
- To gain insights into their demographic profile, particularly of underserved segments of the refugee population, and identify where gaps remain in addressing the needs of this population according to the level of coverage of existing assistance nets and their self-perceived needs.

The specific objectives of the assessment are as follows:

1. Provide more accurate, up-to-date and updatable estimates of the total number of refugees from Ukraine that are currently residing in Moldova.
2. Provide the geographic distribution at the settlement level of refugees from Ukraine who are currently residing in Moldova.
3. Identify gaps in coverage of refugees from Ukraine who are currently residing in Moldova in existing official databases and understand the factors behind these gaps.
4. Gain an understanding of the demographic profile of refugees from Ukraine who are currently residing in Moldova.
5. Identify and holistically assess the self-perceived needs of refugees from Ukraine who are currently residing in Moldova and their preferred sectors of assistance to inform the prioritisation of needs within the humanitarian response through a participatory approach.

Due to the assessment methodology being divided into three phases: database triangulation, key informant interviews and a self-perceived needs individual survey, each phase was designed to address different specific objectives. This methodology note describes the methodology of Phases 1 and 2 in the assessment which were aimed at addressing the **first, second and third specific objectives.**

Research questions

1. What is the total number and geographic distribution of refugees from Ukraine that are currently residing in Moldova?
2. What are the characteristics of refugees from Ukraine that are currently residing in Moldova which are likely to be underrepresented and overrepresented in existing official databases and what factors contribute to this underrepresentation/overrepresentation?
3. What is the demographic profile of refugees from Ukraine who are currently residing in Moldova (gender, age, nationality, legal status, employment status, length of stay in Moldova, number of people with disabilities)?
4. What are the self-perceived needs of refugees from Ukraine that are currently residing in Moldova?

[2] Throughout this Methodology Note, the use of the terms 'refugees' and 'refugees from Ukraine' refers to all people displaced from Ukraine following the escalation of the conflict in February 2022, including third-country nationals (TCNs).

5. What types of assistance would refugees from Ukraine who are currently residing in Moldova like to receive from humanitarian actors in priority to address their self-perceived needs?

This methodology note describes the methodology of Phases 1 and 2 in the assessment which were aimed at addressing the **first and second research questions.**

Scope and coverage of the assessment

The population of interest includes all refugees, including third-country nationals (TCNs) who have been displaced from Ukraine to Moldova following the escalation of hostilities on 24 February 2022 and are currently residing in Moldova. This encompasses refugees living in private housing, being hosted by Moldovan families or relatives, and those residing in accredited or non-accredited collective centres. Additionally, all members of this displaced population were included regardless of their legal status in Moldova. As such, members of this population who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (TP), are asylum seekers, have the status of refugee or humanitarian protection, have permanent or temporary residence permits, have received Moldovan citizenship, or have no legal status at all were included within the scope of this assessment.

The geographical scope of this assessment is nationwide Moldova, including the Transnistrian region. However, the region of Transnistria was excluded from consideration in the triangulation of databases to identify settlements in which KIIs would be conducted due to operational constraints preventing data collection from being done in this region. After the triangulation, 57 settlements across Moldova were sampled for the second phase of the assessment in which KIIs were conducted to fill information gaps in existing official databases on refugees. Map 1 (see Page 9) shows the locations of the settlements in which KIIs were conducted.

The unit of measurement for Phases 1 and 2 of this assessment is at the settlement level as data on refugees shared by third parties was at the settlement level, and KIs were asked to provide information on the settlement they were scoped for.

Changes in research objectives

The objective of providing updatable estimates of the total number of refugees from Ukraine currently residing in Moldova was determined to not be feasible within the scope of this assessment after data collection and analysis were conducted. This is due to the multitude of overlapping factors that influence the influx and movement patterns of refugees in each settlement in Moldova, making clear and consistent patterns difficult to identify and quantify. As such, projecting the population of refugees from Ukraine in each settlement would be very difficult and would require a different methodology that could better capture such movement patterns over time. Additionally, due to changes in the eligibility criteria for beneficiaries of one of the main databases used to produce the estimates in this assessment – the Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) beneficiary database – as of June 2024, the coverage of this database of the total population of refugees from Ukraine in Moldova has been significantly changed. As such, it would result in inconsistencies in the data if an updated database of MPCA beneficiaries were used to update the estimates.

Therefore, Specific Objective 1 was modified to: Provide more accurate and up-to-date estimates of the total number of refugees from Ukraine that are currently residing in Moldova.

Summary of settlement estimation steps

This section summarises the main steps in the methodology of this assessment taken to arrive at the final estimates of the number of refugees from Ukraine living in each of the 980 settlements in Moldova. Each step is explained in detail throughout the rest of this methodology note, with the use of examples, tables, and visual aids.

Phase 1: Database triangulation

To be able to determine information gaps to conduct KIIs in, databases were gathered and triangulated. To do this, four master databases were created by combining the databases gathered from partners. These master databases were then cross-checked and triangulated against each other to determine information gaps. Due to the new eligibility criteria that required MPCA beneficiaries to have legal status in Moldova, – of which TP has the greatest coverage of refugees from Ukraine but not all TP beneficiaries are eligible for or interested in receiving MPCA cash assistance – the **TP database from IGM was used as the primary database** in the triangulation process, which is explained step by step in the 'Database Triangulation' section.

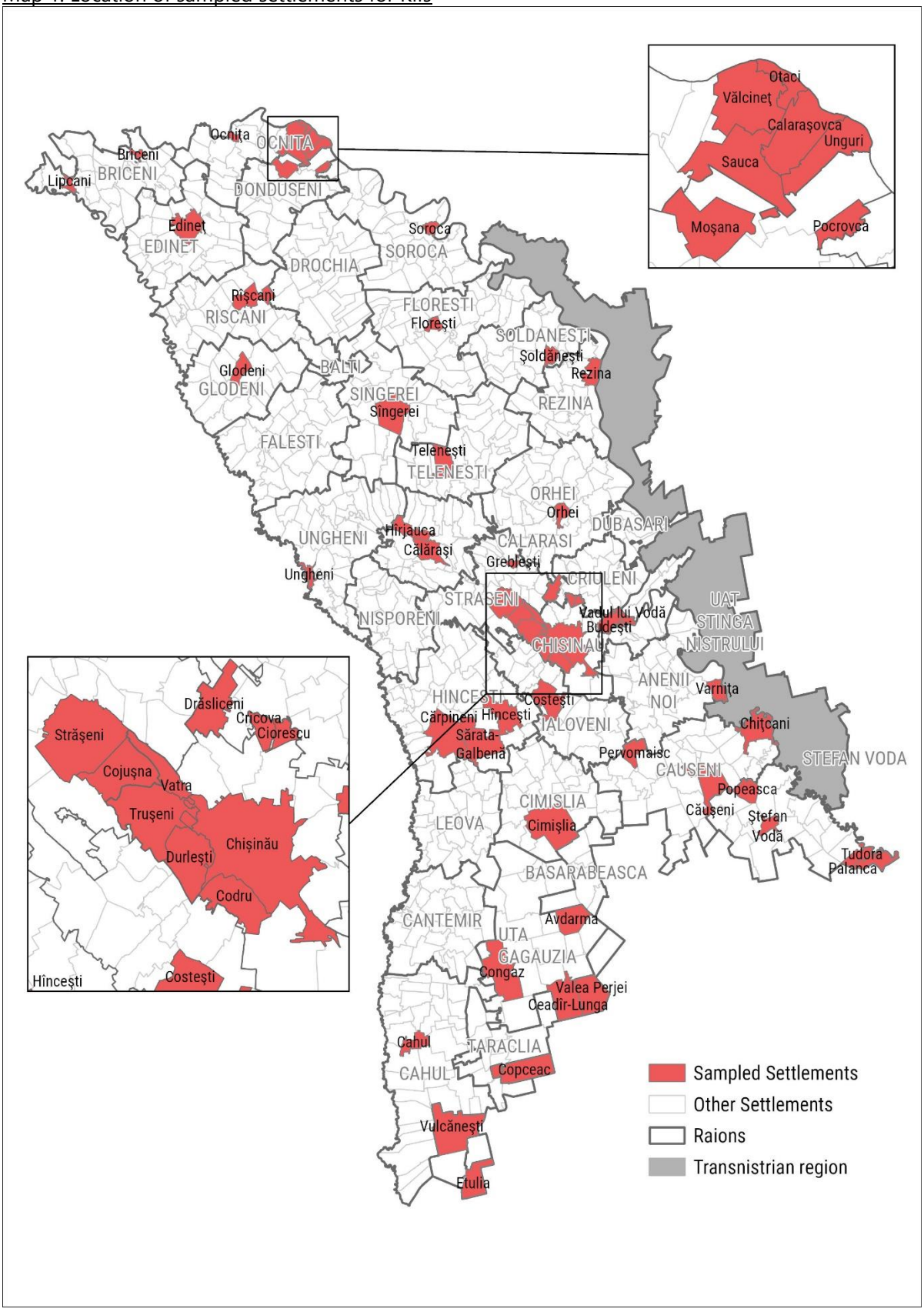
Phase 2.1: Key informant interviews and estimates of sampled settlements

After concluding the triangulation process, 57 settlements were selected, where KIIs were conducted. After gathering all the data, trends were created that matched these sampled settlements and helped to understand how the KII data related to the data compiled in the main databases. This assisted in the process of defining the final estimates for sampled settlements, as well as assigning types to non-sampled settlements.

Phase 2.2: Extrapolation of KII findings to non-sampled settlements

In the extrapolation step, all remaining settlements were reviewed, and with the assistance of trends detected in the KII process, and from additional consultations, all non-sampled settlements were assigned a type, which was then connected to the most reliable database on the number of refugees per type. Due to the similar methodology to the KII research, for the settlements with low movement patterns and no strong trends that could decrease the reliability of databases, the **AM database** was considered the most reliable, despite the data being collected in December 2023. Regarding the bigger settlements with higher movement patterns, often the **MPCA database** was considered the most reliable, as it was assessed to be the most up-to-date database of the master databases. Regarding the Transnistrian region, the **TP database** was assessed to have the best coverage and accuracy on a settlement level, hence this database was considered the most reliable. More details on the reliability levels of each extrapolation type and argumentation can be found in the 'Phase 2.2' section of this document.

Map 1: Location of sampled settlements for KIIs



PHASE 1: DATABASE TRIANGULATION

Triangulation of existing databases on refugees in Moldova was the first phase in the methodology of this assessment. This section describes how this was done to identify settlements in Moldova in which there was a large information gap on the actual number of refugees from Ukraine living there.

Databases

Existing databases with residence information on refugees from Ukraine currently living in Moldova at a settlement level of granularity were gathered from official sources including the government and international humanitarian organisations in Moldova. The following databases were used in this phase of the assessment:

A. The General Inspectorate of Migration's (IGM) database of beneficiaries of TP in Moldova.
B. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) database of beneficiaries of multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) in Moldova.
C. The International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) database of beneficiaries of MPCA in the Transnistrian region. (not mentioned in ToR)
D. REACH Initiative's Area Monitoring database.
E. Acted and UNHCR's Refugee Accommodation Centre (RAC) Monitoring database.
F. IOM's database of cash-for-rent beneficiaries in Moldova. (not mentioned in ToR)
G. Acted's database of cash-for-rent beneficiaries in Moldova. (not mentioned in ToR)
H. Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) database of cash-for-rent beneficiaries in Moldova. (not mentioned in ToR)
I. CRS' database of cash-for-host beneficiaries in Moldova.
J. World Food Programme's (WFP) database of cash-for-host beneficiaries in Moldova.

As mentioned in the ToR, IGM's database of refugees from Ukraine with permanent and temporary residency was originally planned to be included in the triangulation of databases. However, from the database of refugees from Ukraine with permanent residency, it could not be determined which Ukrainians had come to Moldova due to the escalation of the conflict in February 2022, so it was not used in the triangulation.

Table 1 describes in detail each database and its limitations, which were determined through initial information gathering from partners that shared the databases.

Table 1: Description of data sources and limitations

Index	Source	Dataset	Last updated	Total # individuals	Granularity level	Geographic and population coverage	Limitations
A	IGM	TP beneficiaries	2024-03-26	40,220	Individual	TP beneficiaries nationwide	Registration bias: Only includes refugees that have registered for and received TP in Moldova. Accuracy: Since September 2023, refugees could submit a self-declaration of their residence address as proof of residence in their TP application. Therefore, there is a risk of inaccuracy due to falsified residence information. Additionally, after receipt of TP, the beneficiaries' addresses of residence in Moldova are rarely updated or verified except by self-declaration of the beneficiaries, creating a risk of out-of-date residency data considering the frequent movements of refugees within the country. Since new regulations rolled out for TP in 2024 removed the limit of a maximum of 45 days that beneficiaries of TP could remain outside of Moldova each year, refugees that may have left Moldova and moved to other countries since the implementation of this regulation would remain in the TP database, creating a risk of overrepresentation of refugees in this database that are no longer living in Moldova.
B	UNHCR	MPCA beneficiaries	2024-04-12	34,856	Settlement	MPCA beneficiaries nationwide	Eligibility criteria: Since 2024, refugees must have secured legal status in Moldova (within two months of arriving in the country for new arrivals) to continue receiving MPCA.[3] Additionally, as of May 2024, beneficiaries must fulfil one of the following criteria to be eligible: family headed by a single

[3] Refugee Cash Assistance Updates in - UNHCR Moldova (5 December 2023).

							parent; family headed by a child (below 18);[4] family with an unaccompanied or separated child; family headed by an older person (above 60); family with one or more persons with specific needs, including a person with a disability, pregnant women, person with a serious medical condition, woman at risk, person with legal and physical protection needs, or LGBTQI+ person. New refugees arriving in Moldova will receive two months of initial cash assistance based on vulnerability criteria. Following this period, it is necessary to secure legal status—temporary protection, refugee status, humanitarian protection, stateless status, or a residence permit (temporary or permanent).[5] Registration bias: The list of beneficiaries of the MPCA programme is not an exhaustive enumeration of the refugee population in Moldova as it only includes refugees who registered to receive assistance. Thus, figures for the refugee population may be underestimated. Duplicates: Although the fingerprint system for registration to MPCA has proven effective in preventing duplication of the count of refugees within the country, it does not account for potential beneficiaries who may have been crossing the border from Ukraine. As a result, the cash beneficiaries' figures for settlements close to the border are expected to be inflated, which could pose operational challenges when attempting to identify and sample the appropriate number of households in those locations. Due to the border with Ukraine in the Transnistrian region being officially closed

[4] Children should be accompanied by an appointed caregiver/legal guardian. Frequently asked questions about cash assistance - UNHCR Moldova. (consulted on 12 August 2024)

[5] Frequently asked questions about cash assistance - UNHCR Moldova (consulted on 12 August 2024). Since the triangulation of databases was conducted in April 2024, UNHCR may have modified the eligibility criteria for MPCA beneficiaries.

							since February 2022, the risk of refugees regularly crossing the border to receive MPCA in the Transnistrian region is far lower than in other raions of Moldova. Deduplication of beneficiaries is done every month with IOM to ensure that refugees living in the Transnistrian region are not registered simultaneously in both IOM's and UNHCR's MPCA databases, although they can register for either organisation.
C	IOM	MPCA beneficiaries	2024-04-19	4,743	Household	MPCA beneficiaries in the Transnistrian region	Eligibility criteria: Since 2024, refugees must have secured legal status in Moldova (within two months of arriving in the country for new arrivals) to continue receiving MPCA.[6] Additionally, as of 10 July 2024, beneficiaries must fulfil one of the following criteria to be eligible: family headed by a single parent; family headed by a child (below 18);[7] family with an unaccompanied or separated child; family headed by an older person (above 60); family with one or more persons with specific needs, including a person with a disability, pregnant woman, person with a serious medical condition, woman at risk, person with legal and physical protection needs, or LGBTQI+ person. New refugees arriving in Moldova will receive two months of initial cash assistance based on vulnerability criteria. Following this period, it is necessary to secure legal status—temporary protection, refugee status, humanitarian protection, stateless status, or a residence permit (temporary or permanent).[8] IOM's MPCA programme uses the same eligibility criteria as UNHCR.

[6] Refugee Cash Assistance Updates in - UNHCR Moldova (5 December 2023).

[7] Children should be accompanied by an appointed caregiver/legal guardian. Frequently asked questions about cash assistance - UNHCR Moldova (consulted on 12 August 2024).

[8] Frequently asked questions about cash assistance - UNHCR Moldova (consulted on 12 August 2024). Since the triangulation of databases was conducted in April 2024, UNHCR may have modified the eligibility criteria for MPCA beneficiaries.

							Registration bias: The list of beneficiaries of the MPCA programme is not an exhaustive enumeration of the refugee population in Moldova as it only includes refugees who registered to receive assistance. Thus, figures for the refugee population may be underestimated. Duplicates: Due to the border with Ukraine in the Transnistrian region being officially closed since February 2022, the risk of refugees regularly crossing the border to receive MPCA in the Transnistrian region is far lower than in other raions of Moldova. Deduplication of beneficiaries is done every month with UNHCR to ensure that refugees living in Transnistria are not registered simultaneously in both IOM's and UNHCR's MPCA databases, although they can register for either organisation.
D	REACH	Area Monitoring	2023-12	7,745	Settlement	KIIs with the directors of territorial social assistance units (DGASPF). All raions except Chişinău and the Transnistrian region. Excludes refugees living in RACs.	Registration bias: DGASPF shared the number of refugees from Ukraine who came to register at the settlement's city hall. It is assumed that most refugees would register to enable their access to public services. Every member of the household is registered (including children) during the process. Respondent bias: In some cases, the authorities may have provided the number of refugees according to their knowledge rather than the number reflected in the database of the local social assistance units. As such, respondent bias may have affected the population coverage and accuracy of this database. Geographical coverage: The City Halls of Chişinău do not provide data on registered refugees. Does not include the Transnistrian region. Completeness: Expected to be underestimated according to the substantial gap in figures compared to the UNHCR cash beneficiaries listing and border monitoring.

							Recency: The last data collection was conducted in December 2023, so the data is most out of date compared to the other databases.
E	Acted and UNHCR	RAC Monitoring	2024-03-25	2,277	RAC	All refugees living in accredited RACs in all raions in Moldova, except the Transnistrian region. Data was collected on a bi-monthly basis by interviewing RAC managers and refugees through a structured Kobo tool.	Geographical coverage: This does not include RACs in the Transnistrian region.
F	IOM	Cash-for-rent beneficiaries	2024-03-06	2,343	Household	Refugees living in rented accommodation in Moldova who are registered as beneficiaries of IOM's cash-for-rent programme.	Registration bias: Only includes refugees in Moldova who have registered for and received cash-for-rent from IOM. Eligibility criteria: Beneficiaries of cash-for-rent must express a willingness to stay in Moldova for more than six months from the moment of registration and can cover their rent independently after assistance ends. As such, retired refugees or refugees with disabilities who are unable to work are usually left out from being beneficiaries of this programme. Additionally, it prioritises vulnerable members of the refugee population and people exiting from RACs. Duplicates: Through the UNHCR Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) platform, the deduplication of beneficiaries across different international non-governmental organisations' (INGO) cash-for-rent programmes is done regularly, minimising the risk of duplicated beneficiaries.

G	Acted	Cash-for-rent beneficiaries	2023-12	1,394	Household	Refugees living in rented accommodation in Moldova who are registered as beneficiaries of Acted's cash-for-rent programme.	Registration bias: Only includes refugees in Moldova who have registered for and received cash-for-rent from Acted. Eligibility criteria: Beneficiaries of cash-for-rent must express a willingness to stay in Moldova for more than six months from the moment of registration and can cover their rent independently after assistance ends. As such, retired refugees or refugees with disabilities who are unable to work are usually left out from being beneficiaries of this programme. Additionally, it prioritises vulnerable members of the refugee population and people exiting from RACs. Duplicates: Through the UNHCR RAIS platform, the deduplication of beneficiaries across different INGOs' cash-for-rent programmes is done regularly, minimising the risk of duplicated beneficiaries.
H	CRS	Cash-for-rent beneficiaries	2024-01-01	2,429	Household	Refugees living in rented accommodation in Moldova are registered as beneficiaries of CRS' cash-for-rent programme.	Registration bias: Only includes refugees in Moldova who have registered for and received cash-for-rent from CRS. Eligibility criteria: Beneficiaries of cash-for-rent must express a willingness to stay in Moldova for more than six months from the moment of registration and can cover their rent independently after assistance ends. As such, retired refugees or refugees with disabilities who are unable to work are usually left out from being beneficiaries of this programme. Additionally, it prioritises vulnerable members of the refugee population and people exiting from RACs. Duplicates: Through the UNHCR RAIS platform, the deduplication of beneficiaries across different INGOs' cash-for-rent programmes is done regularly, minimising the risk of duplicated beneficiaries.

I	CRS	Cash assistance for Moldovan households hosting refugees (cash-for-host)	2024-01-01	2,395	Household	All refugees living with Moldovan host households that registered on UAHelp.md. Covers Briceni, Chișinău, Dondușeni, Edineț, Hîncești, Ialoveni, Ocnița, Soroca and Ungheni. Beneficiaries in Edineț, Ungheni and Dondușeni may overlap with WFPs due to just handing over to them.	Registration bias: Only includes refugees living with Moldovan host households that have registered on the UAHelp.md website. Does not cover all refugees living with Moldovan households. Accuracy: A 100% door-to-door verification exercise was done in February 2024 for registered beneficiaries. Data will be updated every month for 30% of the caseload. Households will be reverified every three months through a physical verification using an update form in their system. Therefore, the risk of inaccuracy is lower. Geographical coverage: Does not cover other raions besides Briceni, Chișinău, Dondușeni, Edineț, Hîncești, Ialoveni, Ocnița, Soroca and Ungheni.
J	WFP	Cash assistance for Moldovan households hosting refugees (cash-for-host)	2023-12	12,552	Settlement	All refugees living with Moldovan host households that registered on UAHelp.md. All raions except the Transnistrian region, Hîncești, Ialoveni and Soroca.	Registration bias: Only includes refugees living with Moldovan host households that have registered on the UAHelp.md website. Does not cover all refugees living in Moldovan households. Accuracy: A 100% door-to-door verification exercise was done in February 2024 for registered beneficiaries. However, hosts and refugees are asked to update their information twice a month by SMS and it is a self-registration platform. Therefore, there is a risk of inaccuracy due to falsified residence information. Geographical coverage: Does not cover the Transnistrian region, Hîncești, Ialoveni and Soroca.

The first step in triangulation was the aggregation of the gathered databases according to their coverage of the population of interest. Databases with no overlap and a similar level of reliability were combined to form four master databases with a similar level of coverage of the population that could be easily compared during the process of triangulation.

The four master databases are comprised as follows:

1. Temporary Protection database (TP) – consists only of database A.
2. MPCA database (MPCA) – consists of databases B and C.
3. Area Monitoring and RAC database (AM) – consists of databases D and E.
4. Accommodation database (ACC) – consists of databases E, F, G, H, I, and J.

Table 2 describes the rationale and limitations of each master database.

Table 2: Master databases

Master database	Component databases	Total # individuals	Rationale and method	Limitations
TP	A	40,220	Due to the near-universal coverage of temporary protection of refugees from Ukraine (including those living in the Transnistrian region) and its higher figure compared to other databases, database A is kept on its own. Additionally, temporary protection status is an eligibility criterion for registration for several of the other databases, so there will be a high likelihood of overlap if combined with them.	Same as database A
MPCA	B, C	37,808	UNHCR's and IOM's MPCA databases cover the same cash assistance programme for refugees from Ukraine and are considered to have a very low risk of overlap due to the monthly deduplication of beneficiaries being conducted between the two organisations. Additionally, IOM's MPCA caseload covers the Transnistrian region which complements UNHCR's coverage of refugees on the right bank of the Dniester, so that the combination of	Only covers refugees from Ukraine who have applied for and are eligible for MPCA. Due to delegating the implementation of MPCA to an implementing partner in the Transnistrian region, there is a risk that the implementation of MPCA between both sides of the Dniester is not streamlined and this could result in different levels of reliability and coverage of the databases. See Table 1 for more details on the limitations of each component database.

			the two databases covers the entirety of Moldova.	
AM	D, E	8,737	REACH's Area Monitoring assessment covered refugees from Ukraine living in settlements in Moldova outside of RACs, making it complementary to and having a very low risk of overlap with the refugee data in Acted and UNHCR's RAC Monitoring database. A	Area Monitoring data is from December 2023, while RAC Monitoring data is from May 2024, creating a mismatch in the timeframe each database is representing. This creates a risk of overlap as refugees reflected in the Area Monitoring database may have moved into RACs since. However, the likelihood of this is low due to the progressive closing down of RACs across the country. As such, rather than an overlap, it is more likely that refugees are not covered in both databases as some may have left RACs in the last six months and are not accounted for in the Area Monitoring database. Additionally, the Area Monitoring database does not cover Chișinău or the Transnistrian region, so it cannot be relied on for data on refugees in these two regions.
ACC	E, F, G, H, I, J	22,237	All the databases about accommodation for refugees – cash-for-host (refugees living with host families), cash-for-rent (refugees renting accommodation), and RAC Monitoring (refugees living in RACs) – were combined. The beneficiaries registered in these databases except RAC Monitoring were all from the implementation period of August to December 2023, minimising the risk of overlap between databases as deduplication between cash-for-host beneficiaries of WFP and CRS was conducted, as well as between cash-for-rent beneficiaries of Acted, CRS and IOM.	The RAC Monitoring database is from May 2024, creating a difference of at least four months with the other databases during which beneficiaries of cash-for-host or cash-for-rent may have moved into RACs which would create an overlap. However, the likelihood of this is low due to the progressive closing down of RACs across the country. As such, rather than an overlap, it is likelier that refugees are not covered in both databases as some may have left RACs in the last four or more months and are not accounted for in databases F, G, H, I or J even if they are current beneficiaries of those programmes. Additionally, none of the databases cover the Transnistrian region. See Table 1 for more details on the limitations of each component database. The coverage of this master database is expected to be lower than the others due to

			Follow-ups with partners who shared their databases were conducted to minimise duplication. Acted's second round fell outside the period of other databases and was therefore excluded. Similarly, WFP and CRS were reported to have overlap in several raions, so in those raions, the highest number between the two databases was taken.	only covering beneficiaries of the respective programmes, of which the cash-for-rent databases in particular only cover a smaller percentage of refugees renting accommodation in Moldova due to specific eligibility criteria limiting the number of refugees that can enrol in the programme. The following groups of refugees are expected to be excluded from this master database: • Refugees living with host families that did NOT apply for the cash-for-rent programme. • Refugees living in private accommodation that are either unable to or unwilling to work; unsure regarding if they will stay longer than six months in Moldova at the time of registration for the cash-for-rent programme; don't fulfil enough vulnerability criteria to be selected for the cash-for-rent programme; or did not apply for the cash-for-rent programme. • Refugees living in formal RACs that were closing down at the time data was collected for the RAC Monitoring database. • Refugees living in informal RACs.

Determining information gaps and the final KII sample

The four master databases described in Table 2 were compared to identify settlements in Moldova where there is the greatest information gap regarding the total number of refugees from Ukraine currently living there. The comparison was made largely around the Temporary Protection database from IGM, as it was determined as the most accurate database on a settlement level that has the largest coverage of the refugee population in Moldova. The information gap is defined as large discrepancies between the number of refugees registered in the four master databases for a settlement as these are considered settlements where there is greater uncertainty and gaps in information about the total number of refugees living there.

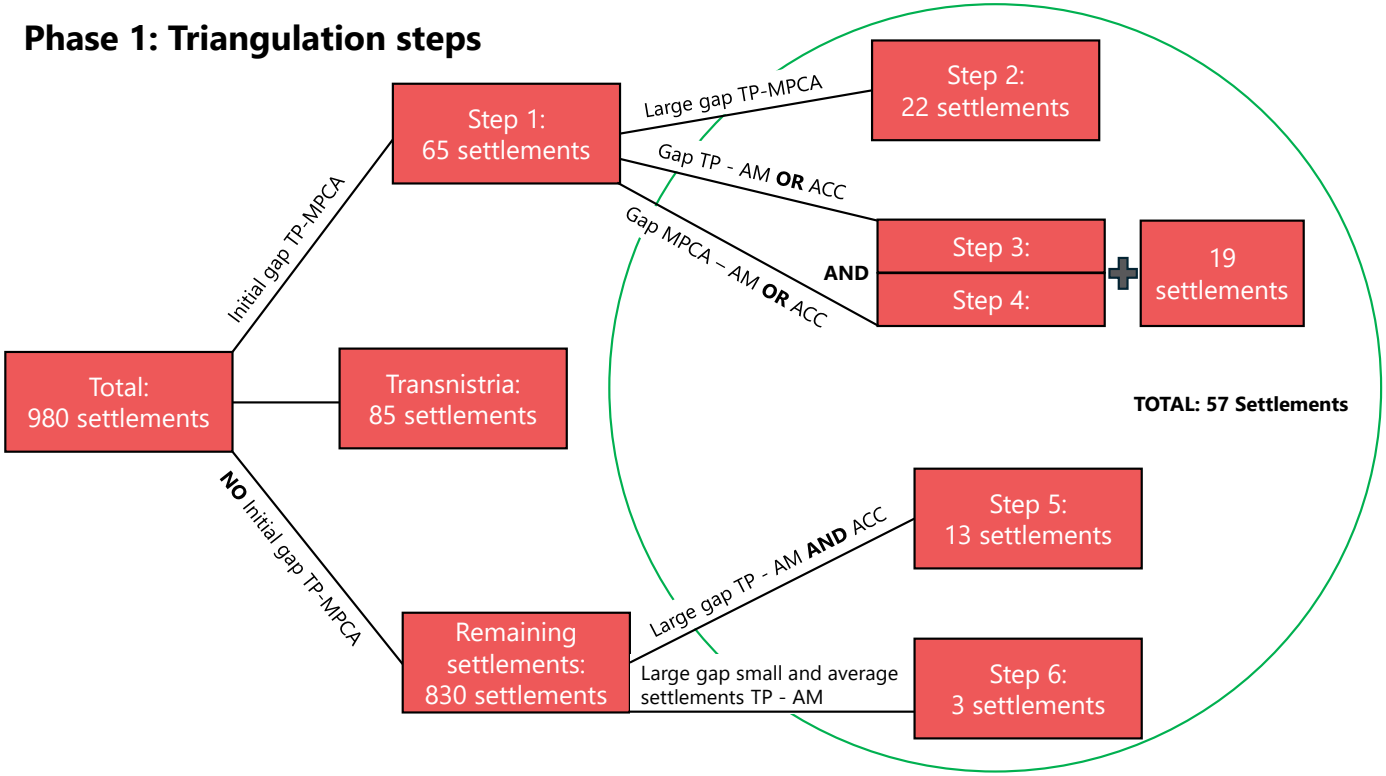
These settlements were identified according to the following steps:

Table 3: Database triangulation steps

Step	Method	Rationale	Settlements identified
1	TP and MPCA were compared. Settlements that had both more than 10 refugees' difference **and** more than 20% difference between the databases were identified.	TP and MPCA databases are the most comprehensive in terms of geographical coverage of settlements in Moldova, and therefore, were the first databases referred to. The condition of more than 10 refugees' difference was included because it was determined that 10 refugees were the minimum of settlements scoping would be considered for, to prioritise settlements with a larger population of refugees. Regarding the 20% difference, this was established as a minimum barrier after which other databases will be used to zoom in and find out why these discrepancies exist.	65
2	Of the 65 settlements identified from Step 1, those in which there was a difference of more than 25 refugees **and** more than 50% between TP and MPCA were considered as having an information gap regardless of similarities with other databases.	This step explores extreme outliers between the TP and MPCA databases which are the primary databases in this triangulation phase. Large discrepancies between the two databases were considered indicative of an important information gap, implying that KIIs needed to be conducted there to better understand the reasons behind these differences.	22
3	For settlements from Step 1 that were not flagged for extreme differences in Step 2, TP was compared with ACC and AM. If either of them had more than 10 refugees' difference **and** more than 20% difference, step 4 was applied.	This step explores the commonalities between TP, ACC, and AM. The rationale behind this is that if 3 of the 4 databases are matching, there is no information gap.	19
4	For settlements that did not meet the criteria in Step 3, MPCA was compared with ACC and AM, and if either of them had more than 10 refugees' difference, **and** more than 20% difference, this was considered as an information gap.	This step explores the commonalities between MPCA, ACC, and AM. The rationale behind this is that if 3 of the 4 databases are matching, there is no information gap.	
5	For the 830 remaining settlements that were not flagged in Step 1 and where TP and MPCA are similar, TP was compared	This step explores major discrepancies between TP and the ACC and AM databases. The rationale behind this is that legal status is required to receive MPCA. Therefore, the numbers in the TP and MPCA databases are more likely	13

	to ACC and AM, and if both had more than 25 refugees' **and** more than 30% difference from TP, this was considered as an information gap.	to be within a reasonable range of each other, compared to the numbers in the AM and ACC master databases. The purpose of this cross-checking is to identify any important information gaps that may have been missed in the earlier steps (1 to 4) due to the similarity between the TP and MPCA data.	
6	In all small and average settlements in which TP has more than 25 refugees' **and** is more than 50% larger than AM, this was considered as an information gap.	AM is an assessment conducted with a similar methodology as the KII, by using the information from databases that are mainly provided by local authorities and social workers, large discrepancies between AM and TP are still considered information gaps, regardless of the compatibility of TP and MPCA.	3
Total number of selected settlements			**57**

Figure 1: Visualisation of database triangulation steps



Based on these triangulation steps, 57 settlements across Moldova were sampled for KIIs. It is worth noting that initially, 56 settlements were sampled, but during the data collection process, an anomaly was noticed in the consolidation of the RAC monitoring database into the master databases. Several RACs had been assigned to the wrong settlements. This error has been corrected ad hoc, and the database triangulation steps were repeated on the corrected master databases. From this, an additional settlement that was not sampled before, Costești, was additionally sampled for KIIs. In addition, several settlements (Cojușna, Strășeni and Popeasca) were initially sampled but identified after the update as not meeting the initial criteria for an information gap according to the above-mentioned triangulation steps. However, since more data serves to improve the quality of our estimates, the collected data from the KIIs in those settlements was still retained and used, despite these settlements not being identified as having an important information gap.

In this assessment, the size of the settlement is determined by the highest number of refugees that are registered in the TP or MPCA databases. A settlement is considered 'small' when the number of identified refugees is between 10 and 49, 'average' when the number is between 50 and 200, and 'large' when the number is more than 200. Stratifying the settlement in different sub-categories is needed to determine the number of KIIs conducted and the scoping criteria for selecting KIs. One to three KIs were interviewed per sampled settlement depending on the size of the settlement, where more KIs will be interviewed for larger settlements and vice versa. This was because the larger the unit of observation, the smaller the reliability of the KI. Having multiple KIs per settlement thus allowed the opportunity to triangulate results and increase the validity of the information. Additionally, another reason why fewer KIs were selected for smaller settlements is the feasibility of scoping KIs from different agencies, which is more challenging in smaller settlements. Based on this, 117 KIIs were sampled across 57 settlements. Due to difficulties in finding suitable KIs, only 103 KIIs were done.

The following are the main **reasons why the target KIIs were underachieved** in some settlements:

A. Databases used to determine the number of KIIs to target in the settlement were highly inflated and did not accurately reflect the actual size of the settlement. They were usually much smaller and only a few key informants could be identified that met our scoping criteria.
B. In Chișinău, key informants who had sufficient oversight of the total population of refugees in the entire city were very difficult to identify due to the size of the city.
C. Key informants that had specific information on refugees living in settlements adjacent to Chișinău were very difficult to identify as usually these settlements were considered to be part of Chișinău city, like the sectors of Chișinău.

The final list of sampled settlements is shown below:

Table 4: List of sampled settlements with targeted and achieved KIIs

Admin 1	Admin 2	Size classification	Targeted KIIs	Achieved KIIs	Reason for underachievement (see above list)
Anenii Noi	Varnița	Average	2	2	
Briceni	Briceni	Average	2	2	
	Lipcani	Average	2	2	
Cahul	Cahul	Large	3	3	
Călărași	Hîrjauca	Small	1	1	

	Călărași	Average	2	4	
Căușeni	Chițcani	Small	1	1	
	Pervomaisc	Small	1	1	
	Căușeni	Large	3	2	A
Chișinău	Budești	Small	1	2	
	Cricova	Average	2	2	
	Vadul Lui Vodă	Average	2	2	
	Chișinău	Large	3	1	B
	Ciorescu	Average	2	2	
	Codru	Average	2	1	C
	Durlești	Large	3	0	C
	Trușeni	Average	2	1	A
	Vatra	Small	1	2	
Cimișlia	Cimișlia	Average	2	2	
Criuleni	Drăsliceni	Small	1	1	
Dondușeni	Moșana	Average	2	2	
	Pocrovca	Average	2	2	
Edineț	Edineț	Average	2	3	
Florești	Florești	Average	2	2	
Glodeni	Glodeni	Average	2	2	
Hîncești	Cărpineni	Average	2	2	
	Hîncești	Small	1	1	
	Sărata-Galbenă	Average	2	2	
Ialoveni	Costești	Average	2	2	
Ocnița	Calarașovca	Large	3	2	A
	Ocnița	Large	3	3	
	Otaci	Large	3	3	
	Sauca	Small	1	1	
	Unguri	Average	2	2	
	Vălcineț	Large	3	2	A
Orhei	Orhei	Large	3	3	
Rezina	Rezina	Large	3	1	A
Rîșcani	Rîșcani	Average	2	2	
Sîngerei	Sîngerei	Average	2	1	A
Șoldănești	Șoldănești	Small	1	0	A
Soroca	Soroca	Large	3	3	
Ștefan Vodă	Palanca	Average	2	1	A
	Popeasca	Average	2	2	
	Ștefan Vodă	Large	3	2	A
	Tudora	Average	2	2	
Strășeni	Greblești	Small	1	1	
	Cojușna	Average	2	3	
	Strășeni	Average	2	1	A
Taraclia	Valea Perjei	Small	1	1	
Telenești	Telenești	Average	2	2	
Ungheni	Ungheni	Large	3	3	

UTA Găgăuzia	Avdarma	Small	1	1	
	Ceadîr-Lunga	Large	3	2	A
	Congaz	Average	2	3	
	Copceac	Average	2	1	A
	Etulia	Average	2	1	A
	Vulcănești	Large	3	2	A

Calculating the number of refugees living in each settlement based on KIIs

To determine the total reported number of refugees from Ukraine currently living in each of the sampled settlements, the KIs were asked about the number of refugees from Ukraine that live in the settlement. Additionally, the KIs were asked about the presence of underrepresented refugees – refugees that are living in the settlement but not registered in official databases as living there – and the presence of overrepresented refugees – refugees that are registered as living in the settlement in official databases but not are not actually living there (see table 5 below for the specific questions asked). As such, the refugees from Ukraine that are underrepresented in the KIs' databases were accounted for while the overrepresented refugees were removed from the number of refugees registered in the KIs' databases. This decision was taken at the analysis stage, as it was determined based on observations by enumerators that KIs interpreted the questions on underrepresented and overrepresented refugees to be about their own databases since they were only familiar with the limitations of their own databases.

Below are the variable names in the Kobo tool for each question relevant to the above calculation.

Table 5: Variables relevant to calculating the total number of refugees living in each settlement reported by KIIs

Variable Name	Variable Label
registered_num	How many refugees from Ukraine are currently registered as living in ${locality_name}?
not_covered_ref	Are there refugees in ${locality_name} that are not covered in any existing official database of refugees?
not_in_official_database	How many refugees that are NOT registered in existing official databases are currently living in ${locality_name}?
not_registered_ref	Are there refugees that are registered in existing official databases as living in ${locality_name} that are not currently living (de facto) in this ${locality_name}?
overrepresented_ref_num	How many refugees that are overrepresented are not living in ${locality_name}?
acc_registered_num	Calculation of the total number of reported refugees living in the settlement according to each KII
kii_weighted_individual	acc_registered_num with weighting (described below)

45% of KIs responded that they were unaware of the existence of either underrepresented or overrepresented refugees in their databases. In these instances, no adjustments could be made to the original number provided of the total refugees in the settlement. In instances where KIs reported being aware of the presence of over- and underrepresented refugees in the settlement, adjustments were made as described in Table 6.

Table 6: Calculation of the total number of reported refugees

KI responses to the questionnaire					Calculation of the total number of reported refugees
The presence of underrepresented refugees in the settlement reported	The number of underrepresented refugees in the settlement provided	The presence of overrepresented refugees in the settlement reported	The number of overrepresented refugees in the settlement provided	Number of KI answers	
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	registered_num + not_in_official_database - overrepresented_ref_num
Yes	Yes	No	NA	4	registered_num +not_in_official_database
No	NA	Yes	Yes	6	registered_num - overrepresented_ref_num
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	1	registered_num
Yes	No	Yes	Yes	2	registered_num
Yes	No	Yes	No	7	registered_num (-15% +15%)
No	NA	Yes	No	5	registered_num -15%
Yes	No	No	NA	8	registered_num +15%
Yes	Yes	Don't know	NA	3	registered_num
Don't know	NA	Yes	Yes	3	registered_num
No	NA	No	NA	22	registered_num
Don't know	NA	Don't know	NA	7	registered_num
Don't know	NA	Yes	No	4	registered_num
Don't know	NA	No	NA	10	registered_num
No	NA	Don't know	NA	14	registered_num
Yes	No	Don't know	NA	5	registered_num

- If KIs reported that there were underrepresented refugees and provided a number of how many there were in the settlement, AND reported there were overrepresented refugees and provided a number of how many there were in the settlement, the total number of reported refugees was calculated by adding the number of reported underrepresented refugees to the number reported to be registered in the KI's database and subtracting the number of reported overrepresented refugees.
- If KIs reported that there were underrepresented refugees and provided a number of how many there were in the settlement, AND reported there were no overrepresented refugees, the total number of reported refugees was calculated by adding the number of reported underrepresented refugees to the number reported to be registered in the KI's database.
- If KIs reported that there were overrepresented refugees and provided a number of how many there were in the settlement, AND reported that there were no underrepresented refugees, the total number of reported refugees was calculated by subtracting the number of reported overrepresented refugees from the number reported to be registered in the KI's database.
- If KIs reported that there were underrepresented refugees and provided a number of how many there were in the settlement, AND reported there were overrepresented refugees but did not know

how many there were in the settlement, no calculation was done and the number reported to be registered in the KI's database was taken as the total number of reported refugees.

- If KIs reported that there were overrepresented refugees and provided a number of how many there were in the settlement, AND reported there were underrepresented refugees but did not know how many there were in the settlement, no calculation was done and the number reported to be registered in the KI's database was taken as the total number of reported refugees.
- If KIs reported that there were either under- OR overrepresented refugees and AND did not know if there were any in the settlement for the other, no calculation was done and the number reported to be registered in the KI's database was taken as the total number of reported refugees.
- If KIs reported that there were neither under- nor overrepresented refugees in the settlement, no calculation was done and the number reported to be registered in the KI's database was taken as the total number of reported refugees.
- If KIs reported that there were under- OR overrepresented refugees but did not provide a number, AND reported there were not any in the settlement for the other, the number is adjusted by 15%.[9]
- If KIs reported that there was under- AND overrepresentation, but did not provide a number for either, no adjustments will be made, as both adjustments of 15% equal 0.

Through this system, reported underrepresented and overrepresented refugees are added and subtracted from the number of refugees in their database only if the KI is certain regarding both. This is because if they are certain regarding one and not the other, there is a risk of greater underrepresentation or overrepresentation of the number of refugees calculated according to the KI's responses to be living in the settlement.

Once this is accounted for, this number is weighted per KII before aggregation at the settlement level. Weighting is done to give fitting value to KIIs based on the coverage and accuracy of their database, specifically relevant in settlements with more than one KII, where numbers must be aggregated. To do this, each total number of refugees living in the settlement reported by the KI is multiplied by a score determined by their responses to specific questions as described in Table 6. The two scoring sections will be explained in greater detail below.

Important to note that in some instances, where partial coverage with no overlap was confirmed between KIs, the numbers for this settlement were aggregated by summing the numbers provided by the KIs with no overlap. Nevertheless, for weighting purposes, the numbers were treated separately to give the correct strength to each KI.

Weighting in this research is applied to value KIs based on their coverage of the settlement, and accuracy of the database. This weighting is only applied in instances where there is more than one KII conducted in a settlement. The weighting is determined on four scored questions, two about the coverage and two about the accuracy of their database. To determine the coverage, the KIs' answers to the two questions are scored based on their awareness of over- and underrepresented refugees. The assumption here is that KIs who are aware of refugee groups that are living in the settlement but not registered there and are vice-versa have a better overview of the settlement. There is a chance that there might not be groups under- or overrepresented in existing databases, especially in the settlements with no detected trends, which will result in a lower score. However, as scores will not be compared across settlements, this lower score should be equally reflected in all KIs within a specific settlement.

[9] This percentage is derived from the averages excluding outliers of KIs that did provide over- and underrepresentation, and 15% was calculated to be in the vicinity of both.

The two questions regarding the accuracy of the database are to determine how up-to-date and accurate the data in their database is. One of the questions is when their database was last completely updated. The assumption is that databases that were most recently updated are more accurate. Additionally, the other scored question covers the verification method for updates to the database. Here the assumption is that in-person registration is the most accurate and online self-registration the least.

Table 7: Weighting of KII responses

Section	Criteria	Questionnaire Question	Kobo Variable Name	Answers	Scoring
Coverage	Level of oversight over the settlement regarding refugees, based on the number of underrepresented groups mentioned	What are the characteristics of the refugees that are not covered in existing databases?	ref_characteristic	9-10 groups mentioned	1
				7-8 groups mentioned	0.8
				5-6 groups mentioned	0.6
				3-4 groups mentioned	0.4
				1-2 groups mentioned	0.2
				0 groups mentioned	0
	Level of oversight over the settlement regarding refugees, based on the awareness of overrepresented refugees within official databases	Are there refugees that are registered in existing official databases as living in ${locality_name} that are not currently living (de facto) in this ${locality_name}?	not_registered_ref	Mentions there are overrepresented refugees	1
				Mentions there are no overrepresented refugees	0.8
				Does not know if there are overrepresented refugees	0.6
Accuracy	The last complete update of the database	When was the last complete update of the entire database?	last_update	Between 1 and 7 days ago (last week)	1
				Between 8 and 14 days ago (1-2 weeks)	0.9
				Between 15 and 30 days ago (2-4 weeks)	0.8
				Between 31 and 60 days ago (1-2 months)	0.7
				Between 61 and 90 days ago (2-3 months)	0.6
				Between 91 and 180 days (3-6 months)	0.4
				More than 180 days (6+ months)	0.2
				We don't update the entire database	0
	The method used for verification of the database[10]	How do you ensure that these figures are accurate and up to date?	ensure_accurate	In-person verification	1
				Phone verification	0.8
				Online self-reporting	0.6
				No verification	0

Once each KII reported number of refugees is weighted, the KII numbers per settlement are aggregated by adding them up and dividing by the total sum of the score of all the KIIs in the settlement.

[10] When more than one verification method is mentioned, the average score of these methods is taken for the weighting.

Please note that in cases where KIs only have partial coverage and can be aggregated with other KIs, the weighting procedure has an additional step. This step calculates the KI's validity score separately, then aggregates the number and takes the average of the weighting score. After this step, the aggregated Kis data can be weighed according to the standard process with the remaining KIs in that settlement.

Below are examples to illustrate how the final number of refugees living in each sampled settlement is calculated based on the KII data:

Table 9: Example 1:

Variables	KII1 Responses	KII2 Responses
registered_num	41	80
not_covered_ref	No	I don't know
not_in_official_database	NA	NA
not_registered_ref	Yes (score: 1)	Yes (score: 1)
overrepresented_ref_num	5	NA
ref_characteristic	NA (score: 0)	NA (score: 0)
last_update	between_now_and_last_week (score: 1)	between_1_and_2_months (score: 0.7)
ensure_accurate	phone_verification (score: 0.8)	phone_verification (score: 0.8)
acc_registered_num	41 (registered_num) – 5 (overrepresented_ref_num) = **36**	**80** (registered_num)
total_score	1 + 0 + 1 + 0.8 = **2.8**	1+ 0 + 0.7 + 0.8 = **2.5**
kii_weighted_individual	36 (acc_registered_num)* 2.8 (total_score) = **100.8**	80 (acc_registered_num) * 2.5 (total_score) = **200**
actual_ref_nr	(100.8 + 200) / (2.8 + 2.5) = **57**	

Table 10: Example 2:

Variables	KII1 Responses	KII2 Responses	KII3 Responses
registered_num	186	217	186
not_covered_ref	No	No	I don't know
not_in_official_database	NA	NA	NA
not_registered_ref	I don't know (score: 0.6)	I don't know (score: 0.6)	Yes (score: 1)
overrepresented_ref_num	NA	NA	NA
ref_characteristic	NA (score: 0)	NA (score: 0)	NA (score: 0)
last_update	between-_1_and_2_months (score: 0.7)	between-_2_and_3_months (score: 0.6)	between-_1_and_2_months (score: 0.7)
ensure_accurate	phone_verification (score: 0.8)	phone_verification (score: 0.8)	phone_verification (score: 0.8)
acc_registered_num	186 (registered_num)	217 (registered_num)	**186** (registered_num)

total_score	0 + 0.6 + 0.7 + 0.8 = **2.1**	0 + 0.6 + 0.6 + 0.8 = **2**	0 + 1 + 0.7 + 0.8 = **2.5**
kii_weighted_individual	186 (acc_registered_num)* 2.1 (total_score) = **390.6**	217 (acc_registered_num) * 2 (total_score) = **434**	186 (acc_registered_num)* 2.5 (total_score) = **465**
actual_ref_nr	(390.6 + 434 + 465) / (2.1 + 2 + 2.5) = **195**		

Identified trends based on KII findings

Trends in the reported number of refugees currently living in the sampled settlements were identified when comparing the findings of the KIIs with the four master databases. The trends were developed based on a similar pattern of difference in the reported number to the other databases, the responses to the questions on under- and overrepresented refugees in the databases and the movement patterns of refugees in each settlement. These trends help to explain and understand the differences between the databases and the KII numbers and why the numbers provided by the KIIs are considered reliable, what the relationship is between their number and that of other databases, and why other databases might be less reliable.

These identified trends in turn informed the estimation of the number of refugees living in the settlements that were not sampled for KIIs as the findings of the sampled settlements were extrapolated to the non-sampled settlements which had similar characteristics.

Strong trends

Regarding the trends that were detected during the analysis of the KII data, there is a distinction between strong and weak trends. While all trends decrease the reliability of databases that were gathered ahead of data collection, there is a distinction in the reliability of KII data between strong and weak trends. While weak trends do not decrease the KII information reliability, strong trends do, as the trends imply high movement patterns or a higher risk of inaccuracy of data. Therefore, strong trends present in the sampled settlement will lower the reliability by one (e.g. Instead of very high, high).

Trend 1: Proximity to Otaci border crossing

In the sampled settlements within proximity – if any part of the settlement is within a 10km radius[11] – of the border crossing into Ukraine at Otaci, very high inflation was detected in both the MPCA and TP databases compared to the data provided by KIs. The AM database is also considered out of date in these settlements due to being locations of high transit levels of refugees. Since the KII data in these settlements are comprised of a variety of sources with additional insights that enhance the reliability of the data they provide, it is considered the most reliable source.

[11] Measured using ArcGIS.

Trend 2: Connectivity to Otaci border crossing

In the sampled settlements within connectivity – within thirty minutes-drive of the border crossing[12] – to the border crossing into Ukraine at Otaci, very high inflation was detected in both the MPCA and TP databases compared to the data provided by KIs. The AM database is also considered out of date in these settlements due to being locations of high transit levels of refugees. Since the KII data in these settlements are comprised of a variety of sources with additional insights that enhance the reliability of the data they provide, it is considered the most reliable source.

Trend 3: High level of transit

In all sampled settlements in which a high level of transit of refugees from Ukraine was reported by KIIs, the figures arrived at through aggregation of the KII responses will be used as the final estimates. The AM database is not reliable since it has a higher risk of being outdated in these settlements. Similarly, due to the TP database not having a strong mechanism for updating the residency information of beneficiaries, it also has a higher risk of being outdated in these settlements.

Trend 4: MPCA enrolment centre

In settlements where enrolment centres for MPCA are located, a higher risk of inflation in the MPCA database, and by extension the TP database as well, is expected since there are reported cases of refugees registering their addresses there although they may live in other settlements. This is especially the case for such settlements that are also in proximity or have a high level of connectivity to border crossings, as there may be cases of people living on the Ukrainian side of the border travelling there to enrol for MPCA though they do not live in Moldova. As such, the figures arrived at through aggregation of the KII responses will be used as the final estimates.

Trend 5: Border connectivity

In all sampled settlements with a high connectivity to crossings at the border with Ukraine or Romania, or the administrative line with the Transnistrian region – whether connected by one or more main roads to a border crossing so that the travel distance is under 20 minutes to the border, regardless of if the settlement itself is close to the border – the figures arrived at through aggregation of the KII responses will be used as the final estimates.

In these settlements, there is a higher risk of inflation in the TP and MPCA databases, as overrepresentation was reported particularly of refugees registered in Moldova but are actually living in Ukraine. The phenomenon of Ukrainians living on the Ukrainian side of the border regularly crossing the border into Moldova to collect cash assistance was reported by several KIIs and echoed in consultations conducted after data collection. Similar inflation is expected in the TP database because a legal status in Moldova is now needed for refugees to be eligible for MPCA.

Additionally, the AM database is not reliable due to these settlements being zones of high transit, such that the AM database has a higher risk of being outdated in these settlements. Therefore, the figures from the KIIs are considered the most reliable.

[12] Measured using Google Maps. Google Maps calculates the estimated travel time between point A and B using the average speed limits along the route. How Does Google Maps Calculate Travel Time? | Techwalla. The fastest route was used to determine connectivity.

Trend 6: Connected raional capital (2 main roads or more)

Regarding sampled settlements that are raional capitals, there is a risk of inflation regarding TP and MPCA. TP as it experiences higher levels of transit and as the database is not completely updatable it accounts for more refugees than there are in reality. MPCA accounts for people registered but not living, as they can live in surrounding settlements but registered in the raional capital. For the raional capitals with greater connectivity, meaning 2 main roads or more that directly go through the city, this risk is increased. Additionally, this trend affects the reliability of KIIs, as it is an increased accuracy risk regarding the numbers that they are providing.

Trend 7: Proximity to Chișinău city

In sampled settlements within proximity of Chișinău city – within 30 minutes-drive – there is a high likelihood of deflation in the MPCA database due to cases of refugees living there but registering their addresses in Chișinău. The TP database is less likely to be deflated, but the residency information is expected to be less up-to-date than data provided by KIs and therefore, the figures arrived at through aggregation of the KII responses will be used as the final estimates when the exact number is provided by KIs. When no exact number is provided, the average of MPCA, TP and KII numbers is used as the final estimates as, according to responses of the KIIs and subsequent consultations, there is a higher risk of refugees being left out in their databases due going directly to Chișinău city for assistance and social services rather than their local social assistance department. This is done for the final estimates in Ciorescu, Trușeni and Vatra. There is no data for Chișinău municipality in the Area Monitoring database.

In Codru, the single KI interviewed is considered unreliable due to having no oversight of the number of refugees in the settlement. As such, the average of TP and MPCA is used as the final estimate.

In Budești, both KIs reported zero refugees living in the settlement and they are considered reliable. As such, zero is used as the final estimate.

In Durlești, no suitable KI was found to be interviewed. This necessitated the average between TP and MPCA being used as the final estimate.

Weak trends

For the sampled settlements, weak trends represent reliability risks for the databases that have been gathered, but this risk does not extend to the collected data from the KIIs. This means that while TP, MPCA, and AM have inflations, inaccuracies or the risk of being outdated, the KII data is minimally affected by the following trends. This is why KII data is preferred for the sampled settlements that identify with the following trends.

Trend 8: Border proximity

In all sampled settlements identified as within 10km of the border with either Ukraine or Romania, the figures arrived at through aggregation of the KII responses will be used as the final estimates. In these settlements, there is a higher risk of inflation in the TP and MPCA databases, as overrepresentation was reported particularly of refugees registered in Moldova but are actually living in Ukraine. The phenomenon of Ukrainians living on the Ukrainian side of the border regularly crossing the border into Moldova to collect cash assistance was reported by several KIIs and echoed in consultations conducted after data collection.

Similar inflation is expected in the TP database because a legal status in Moldova is now needed for refugees to be eligible for MPCA.

Additionally, the AM database is not reliable due to these settlements being zones of high transit, such that the AM database has a higher risk of being outdated in these settlements. Therefore, the figures from the KIIs are considered the most reliable.

Trend 9: Proximity to raional capital

In the sampled settlements within proximity of raional capitals there is, as a consequence of the previous trend, a high likelihood of deflation in the MPCA database due to cases of refugees living there but registering their addresses in the raional capitals. The TP database is similarly expected to be slightly deflated for this reason. As such, the figures arrived at through aggregation of the KII responses will be used as the final estimates.

Trend 10: RAC presence

Sampled settlements with a RAC in their borders that accounts for more than half of the total recorded refugees in that settlement will identify with this trend. This trend implies that RAC data is better maintained, which results in more accurate KII data. Therefore, this trend reinforces the reliability of the KII, ensuring more accurate and up-to-date information, and giving this information source priority.

Trend 11: Remaining raional capitals

In the sampled settlements that are raional capitals, there is a high likelihood of inflation in the MPCA database due to cases of refugees living in the surrounding settlements but registering their addresses in the raional capitals. The TP database is similarly expected to be inflated for this reason. As such, the figures arrived at through aggregation of the KII responses will be used as the final estimates.

Additional consultations

To confirm assumptions surrounding the above trends and fill the remaining information gaps identified after data collection, additional consultations were conducted. The topics of the consultations included Chișinău municipality and the movement patterns of refugees living in the settlements within the municipality; the Transnistrian region, the movement patterns of refugees living in the settlements within the region and their ability to access assistance and services across the region; and the TP database regarding its updatability and verification mechanism for beneficiaries of TP.

The consultations were held with humanitarian organisations operating in Moldova, with extensive experience working in Chișinău municipality or the Transnistrian region or were implementing support programmes for refugees seeking to apply for Temporary Protection were consulted to gather information on the above-mentioned topics. Below is a list of the number of consultations per topic:

Table 11: Additional consultations conducted

Consultation topic	No.	Motivation
Chișinău municipality	2	Several strong trends in Chișinău municipality were detected, which decreased the reliability of databases. This information gap was hard to fill with KIs during phase 2, who were difficult to find or did not have a database. Additionally, few individuals had full oversight of the situation of refugees in settlements surrounding Chișinău city, and no KI with full oversight over Chișinău city could be identified. Therefore, there was a lack of information on refugees in Chișinău municipality.
Transnistrian region	1	Due to REACH policy, KIIs could not be conducted in the Transnistrian region and only two databases – TP and MPCA – had data on refugees in this region. As such, the consultations were needed to inform the method of producing estimates on the number of refugees in this region.
TP database	2	Consultations were conducted to better understand and confirm our assumptions regarding the reasons why TP differed with MPCA and AM databases.

PHASE 2.2: EXTRAPOLATION OF KII FINDINGS TO NON-SAMPLED SETTLEMENTS

Extrapolation types

To determine the final estimates for each non-sampled settlement in Moldova, findings from the KIIs conducted in the sampled settlements were extrapolated to all other settlements. Through the help of the identified trends in the KIIs, types were created to determine what database is most reliable for each non-sampled settlement. Assigning the settlements to types is done priority-based, as the higher types are stronger and have priority. Therefore, settlements that fit more than one type will only be assigned to the predominant type. This means that In some instances, adjustments are made to account for over- and underrepresentation, calculated with assistance from KII information. The categorisation, database reliability, and methodology for adjusting the estimates are described below.

Type 1: Settlements sampled for KIIs

KII information is determined by accuracy and reliability as explained in table 6. When a KII has sufficient coverage, with an accurate database, the KII has priority and will be calculated to provide a total number per settlement, taking into account information on over- and underrepresentation of refugees.

1.1: KII number without adjustments

In cases where the KII interviews were deemed reliable and had a significant overview, as valued by the predetermined weighting grid in Table 6, the number produced from the KII was taken.

1.2: KII number with adjustments

KIIs done for average-sized settlements in Chișinău municipality reported the existence of refugees living there that were not registered in their database. Based on findings from the consultations and referring to the TP database, KII numbers in the sampled settlements are adjusted with an increase of 20%.

1.3: Reliability of KII number low

Based on the quality of the data received and cross-checking their information during the additional consultations, the KII data for six settlements were deemed unreliable, insufficient, or did not meet the targeted scope – Chișinău, Budești, Vatra, Codru, Șoldănești and Durlești. As such, the KII data on the number of refugees in these settlements was not used for the final estimates and these settlements were decided to be included with the non-sampled settlements.

Type 2: Transnistrian region

No field research has been conducted in the Transnistrian region by REACH, due to operational constraints. For this reason, there was no data on the Transnistrian region collected in the Area Monitoring assessment. For the Transnistrian region, two primary databases were used that had sufficient coverage over the region, TP and MPCA. MPCA is implemented by IOM in the Transnistrian region through implementing partners on the ground. This service is in cooperation with UNHCR, and monthly deduplications are conducted between the beneficiaries of both organisations to ensure minimal risk of overlap between UNHCR and IOM beneficiaries.

After understanding the Transnistrian region and both lists more comprehensively through the help of consultation sessions, both TP and MPCA appeared to have similar coverage in the Transnistrian region, on an Admin 1 (raional) level. A closer examination of coverage of both lists in Admin 2 (settlement) level revealed that the TP list had more coverage spread over smaller settlements, and MPCA beneficiaries were registered more in the bigger cities. For this reason, the decision was made to take the TP number for all settlements in the Transnistrian region without adjustments.

Type 3: Chișinău

3.1: Chișinău city

For Chișinău city, the number from the MPCA database with tailored adjustments is used as the final estimate. Although three KIs were interviewed, one gave numbers for the whole municipality, one was considered unreliable, and one was considered to have limited oversight of the entire settlement and therefore, an unreliable source for data on the total number of refugees living in Chișinău city. The MPCA database is considered more reliable than the TP database as it is more up-to-date and has a stronger verification mechanism. Adjustments are made based on an approximation of the number of people registered in Chișinău but living in the surrounding settlements (subtract 20%). This adjustment is based on consultations and detected underrepresentation in the region surrounding Chișinău city. Additionally, we subtract from MPCA refugees who do not meet the eligibility criteria for MPCA (add 5%) and/or do not want cash assistance (add 15%). As such, the final estimate is equal to the total number of refugees registered in the MPCA database.

3.2: Remaining settlements in Chișinău municipality

In all remaining non-sampled settlements (and sampled settlements deemed to have low reliability) within Chișinău municipality, the number from the TP or CRS database was used for the final estimates. Due to the higher risk of underrepresentation of the refugee population in these settlements in the MPCA database because of their proximity to Chișinău, TP is considered more reliable – although the TP database may be less up to date., additional consultations suggest that there is less movement of refugees living in the settlements surrounding Chișinău and those that are living there have been and are planning to stay for the long term. As such, the risk of TP being less up-to-date is considered lower in these settlements.

The CRS database of cash-for-host and cash-for-rent beneficiaries is considered up-to-date and considerably accurate due to the monthly in-person verification of 30% of their beneficiary caseload. Therefore, in settlements where the number of refugees in the CRS database is higher than TP, the number in the CRS database is taken as the final estimate.

Type 4: Raional capitals

In raional capitals, there is a trend of refugees who are registering but not living in that settlement. Instead, they may be living in settlements nearby, registering in the raional capital to increase their chances of receiving aid and their access to a variety of available services, as per the conducted KIIs and consultation sessions. This part pertains mainly to MPCA, which reports inflated numbers based on the raional capitals where KIIs were conducted.

Regarding the TP database, raional capitals often display higher levels of movement of refugees. As IGM does not have a strong update mechanism to guarantee high accuracy of the database, the TP database

often reports higher numbers in raional capitals than the reality. Especially in raional capitals close to a border with Ukraine or Romania, which is why in those cases TP numbers will be excluded from calculations.

As for the Area Monitoring database, the data collected stems back from December last year and is therefore less reliable, considering the high level of movement patterns. Nevertheless, the number that was reported has the lowest chance of inflation or inaccuracies and therefore will be referred to in cases when multiple trends are detected for a raional capital.

4.1: MPCA enrolment centre

From analysing the data, supported by KIIs and consultation, a trend is identified of inflation of beneficiaries in settlements with an MPCA enrolment centre. This inflation is visible in the TP and especially in the MPCA database. The extent to which these databases are inflated is anomalous per settlement and cannot be accounted for with a standardised adjustment for the trend. While the AM database has slightly outdated numbers, it does not have the same risks of inflation and is therefore chosen for these settlements.

4.2: Raional capitals in proximity to the border with Ukraine or Romania or administrative line with the Transnistrian region

From analysing the data, for raional capitals in proximity to the border or administrative line with the Transnistrian region, a similar risk of inflation is detected in the MPCA database, but because of a border raion, the higher movement patterns make TP numbers too inaccurate to be considered. If the MPCA data per settlement would reveal additional inflation, it would have been identified as an additional information gap in the initial triangulation process, which is why the MPCA database is preferred in this trend, with a regulated adjustment (MPCA -25%).

4.3: Raional capitals with no trends

From the KII data, there appears to be a slight inflation in the TP database due to higher movement patterns in raional capitals. Regarding the MPCA list, inflations are detected to be higher in raional capitals, as they are points where services can be collected, so there is an incentive to be registered there. Average is taken because the actual number is projected to be somewhere between the MPCA and TP numbers with the adjustments, due to differing limitations in both databases. This is why after the adjustments (MPCA minus 25%, TP minus 10%), the average of both databases is taken.

Type 5: Average-sized settlements

Average settlements appear to have more accuracy in the MPCA database, as there are fewer patterns and trends of inflation, or deflation as is visible from the KII data. As the MPCA database is the most updated and verified, it is prioritised in average-sized settlements.

5.1: Average-sized settlements in proximity to the border with Ukraine

In average-sized settlements within proximity and having high connectivity to the Ukrainian border, the TP and MPCA databases have the same risks of inflation and inaccuracies as previously explained. To decrease the chances of inflated numbers, the number from the AM database is taken.

5.2: Average-sized settlements with no trends

For average-sized settlements that did not match any strong identified trends, the MPCA database was identified as the most accurate database. As there was a small chance of inflation and deflation, no adjustments were made.

Type 6: Small settlements

The majority of admin 2-level settlements in Moldova are small, rural villages, which means less than 50 refugees in both the TP and MPCA databases. From KIIs and additional consultations, a pattern was detected of more vulnerable refugees who tend to be less mobile and in these smaller settlements. Considering that the AM methodology exhibited fewer inaccuracies than the TP and MPCA databases for small settlements, and refugee numbers have likely not changed considerably since this assessment was conducted, the number from the AM database is prioritised for these types of settlements.

6.1: Small settlements in proximity to the border with Ukraine or Romania or the administrative line with the Transnistrian region

The settlements close to the border or administrative line with the Transnistrian region are more likely to have more trends, such as movement patterns and inflated databases. This affects the accuracy of TP and MPCA. Additionally, the chances of AM being outdated are higher. Nevertheless, as AM uses a similar methodology to KII, so even though due to high movement patterns the refugees might not be the same, there is still a high likelihood of a similar number of refugees that live there currently.

6.2: Small settlements in proximity to raional capitals

As there is a pattern of refugees registered to raional capitals when they actually live in settlements near the raional capital, those small settlements are often deflated. This means that if settlements are within 15 minutes by car of a raional capital, the highest number in between AM, TP and MPCA is taken.

Due to the size and availability of services, there are a few adjustments to the proximity for this rule:

- Căușeni (20 min)
- Bălți (25 min)
- Chișinău (30 min)

6.3: Small settlements in which zero refugees are registered in the AM database

This type of settlement takes the most reliable databases out of three reliable databases for this type of settlement. It accounts for the settlements that have no refugees reported in the AM database, but since that research was concluded there might have moved people there, which is why the adjustment. Specific rules for when to take which database are further shown in Table 13.

6.4: Small settlements in which the difference between AM and TP databases is more than 10

This type of settlement has a relatively large difference between two main databases. Nevertheless, the difference is mitigated by taking the closest number to the MPCA number, so that 2 databases still have similar numbers for that settlement. This mitigation measure and the fact that these settlements have limited movement patterns, and no strong trends increases the reliability level.

6.5: Small settlements with no trends

From the KII data, for all sampled small settlements that did not have dominant trends, a number between the number from the AM and TP database was reported. Additionally, smaller settlements reported lower levels of movement patterns. Therefore, the limitation of AM being outdated is less relevant in small settlements. Therefore, the AM database is prioritised in small settlements

Reliability level of estimates

A reliability level is given for the estimates of the number of refugees from Ukraine living in each settlement due to varying levels of reliability of the data sources used to determine the estimates and expected limitations in the accuracy of the estimates. The ranges vary from very high, where the estimates are determined highly accurate, to low, where the number is more of an indication than an accurate estimation.

The reliability levels are categorised as follows in Table 12. The reliability levels assigned to each type of settlement and the rationale behind it are explained in Table 13.

Table 12: Description of reliability levels

Reliability level	Score	Number of settlements	Description	Explanation
Very High	1	14	This reliability level refers to a very high confidence level, and the number is cross-referenced from at least one additional source.	Expect comprehensive coverage of refugees in the settlement, verified by multiple sources.
High	0.9	768	The source that is used is reliable and the number provided is accurate within small ranges.	Estimates are highly reliable with a potential error margin.
Medium High	0.8	12	The number is based on a database that is accurate for the trend and settlement and doesn't alternate too much from other reliable sources.	Data aligns well with other credible sources, showing minimal discrepancies
Medium	0.7	164	The number provided would fall between ranges but is affected by trends and other circumstances.	Estimates are reasonably reliable but may be influenced by external factors and trends.
Medium Low	0.6	21	The number is linked to a database with a medium validity and cannot be crosschecked through an alternative source.	Confidence in data is moderate; cross-referencing is limited, making verification challenging.
Low	0.5	1	A database is used with a low validity, without alternative data in a region with high trends.	Numbers are indicative but may have significant inaccuracies due to low data validity.

Table 13: Type of settlement and reliability of estimates

Type	Name	Database used	Number of settlements	Reliability	Reliability rationale
Sampled settlements					
Type 1: KIIs (57)					
1.1	**KII without adjustments**	KII	47	Customised per settlement	The reliability of the KIIs is determined on settlement level and not per type. The reliability ranges from medium low to very high, based on: *1.* Number of complete KIs (accounting for KIs with limited oversight whose responses on the number of refugees in the settlement were summed). *2.* Settlement size. *3.* Proportion of KIs that had an internal database. *4.* Type of KIs. *5.* Proportion of KIs providing exact numbers rather than estimations. *6.* Trends that may influence the reliability of the numbers. *7.* Percentage difference between the numbers provided by the KIs. *8.* Percentage difference between the KII number and the number from other databases. *9.* Certainty of the KIs regarding the presence of under- or overrepresented refugees in the

					settlement and their number, if any. Also number of groups mentioned.
1.2	**KII with adjustment**	KII +20%	4	Medium High	The reliability of this type is medium high, based on standardised adjustments that match with insights from the KIs and additional consultations. The KIs were determined high in reliability based on the accuracy of numbers provided, number of interviews, comparison of numbers, size of settlement, and presence of trends.
1.3	**KII low reliability**	Considered with non-sampled settlements	6		These sampled settlements did not produce (accurate) numbers and were decided to be included with non-sampled settlements
Non-sampled settlements					
Type 2: Transnistrian region (85)					
2.1	**Transnistrian region**	Take TP	85	Medium	While the Transnistrian region is the area where there is the biggest information gap in this research, both TP and MPCA have similar coverage and registration of refugees. This provides a cross-check between databases on the raional level. From analysing the databases and additional consultation, the coverage and accuracy of TP is determined higher and is therefore chosen, providing a medium reliability.
Type 3: Chișinău Municipality (15)					
3.1	**Chișinău city**	MPCA -15% -5% +20%	1	Low	Chișinău is exposed to the most trends that affect databases. Based on additional consultations, a database with adjustments is made. However, this is to

					indicate the total number and has a low reliability.
3.2	**Non sampled Chișinău settlements**	Take TP or Take CRS (C4R & C4H)[13]	14	Medium – Medium Low	This type of settlement has the risk of being underrepresented, with people living but not registered in the settlements. However, as AM is not reported in this area, there is less cross-validation for these settlements, which is why the reliability is medium low. The reliability for settlements in which the number from the CRS database of cash-for-host and cash-for-rent beneficiaries is used is medium because it is considered up-to-date and considerably accurate due to monthly in-person verification of 30% of their beneficiary caseload.
Type 4: Raional capitals (14)					
4.1	**Raional capitals with enrolment centres for MPCA**	Take AM	3	Medium Low	The raional capitals that have a presence of MPCA enrolment centres have an untraceable inflation in MPCA and TP and therefore use AM data. As AM was conducted a while ago and these settlement types have high levels of movement, the reliability is medium-low.
4.2	**Raional capitals close to a border (UKR, ROM) or administrative line with the Transnistrian region**	MPCA -25%	5	Medium High	Raional capitals close to the border or administrative line with the Transnistrian region have stronger trends that affect movement patterns and database inflation, which makes the number that is chosen less reliable. Nevertheless, similar patterns of inflation are detected in

[13] CRS' C4R and C4H databases' combined number of beneficiaries were chosen in 3 settlements after consultations and confirmation of their coverage and accuracy of data.

					MPCA, which is why the final number produced has a medium high reliability.
4.3	**Raional capitals without trends**	Average of: - MPCA - 25% - TP -10%	6	Medium High	The raional capitals without trends show similar patterns of movement and inflation, which has been cross-checked by identical type sampled settlements that further proved this inflation. This has a medium high reliability within a small range of accuracy.
Type 5: Average settlements (6)					
5.1	**Average settlements close to UKR**	Take AM	2	Medium Low	For average-sized settlements close to the border, AM is taken due to its similarity to the methodology of the KIIs done in this assessment. Numbers might be outdated and therefore have a medium low reliability rating.
5.2	**Average settlements without trends**	Take MPCA	4	High	For the average settlements without strong trends, reasons for the MPCA database to be inflated, deflated or inaccurate are limited. Additionally, the settlements of this type are all within +- 20% reach of the TP database.
Type 6: Small settlements (809)					
6.1	**Small settlements close to the border (UKR, ROM) or administrative line with the Transnistrian region**	Take AM	24	Medium	The settlements close to the border or administrative line with the Transnistrian region are more likely to have more trends, such as movement patterns and inflated databases. This affects the accuracy of TP and MPCA. Additionally, the chances of AM being outdated are higher. Nevertheless, as AM uses a similar methodology to KII, and small settlements still don't present strong

					trends, the number still has a medium reliability.
6.2	**Small settlements close to raional capitals**	Take the highest number between: - AM - TP - MPCA	46	Medium	The small settlements close to raional capitals risk underrepresentation across all databases. This means in this context that they are living in settlements but registered in the raional capital. For this reason, the highest number across the three databases is taken, to minimise this risk of underrepresentation. This has a medium reliability.
6.3	**Small settlements with 0 refugees in the AM**	If MPCA <= 10, take MPCA If MPCA > 10, and TP > 0 and <= 10, take TP If MPCA > 10 and TP = 0, take AM (zero) If MPCA > 10 and TP > 10, take MPCA	110	High	MPCA is more updatable and in the event of no refugees in AM, there might be refugees now considering they are in the MPCA database. In the case of more than 10 in MPCA and 0 in AM, the TP number will be looked at. The small adjustments made to the AM numbers have a high reliability.
6.4	**AM large difference with TP**	If AM >0 and the difference between AM and TP >10, the number that is closest to MPCA will be taken	8	Medium High	The type of settlements has a relatively large difference between two main databases. Nevertheless, the difference is mitigated by finding the closest number to MPCA, so that 2 databases still have similar numbers for that settlement. This mitigation measure and the fact that these settlements have limited movement patterns, and no strong

					trends give it a medium high reliability.
6.5	**Small settlements without trends**	Take AM	621	High	This type of settlement has a high validity, as AM has a similar methodology to the KIIs for this research, and is therefore more likely to produce the same results. Additionally, this type of settlement typically has lower movement patterns, which makes the numbers more likely to remain accurate. Potential outliers are also taken out by type 2.4 or 2.5 and adjusted.
Total settlements:			**980**		

Limitations of final estimates

A conservative approach was applied to determine the final estimates

The settlement-level estimates on the total number of refugees from Ukraine currently residing in Moldova should be interpreted as a conservative approach. Although data was gathered from a diverse range of sources for both the triangulation of databases and KIIs, the majority were providing data on beneficiaries of social assistance services or humanitarian programmes for refugees. Based on responses of the KIs and additional consultations, adjustments were made to the number provided by KIIs or the database number used for the estimate to account for refugees not covered in these services and programmes. However, it is unclear the actual extent to which such refugees are accounted for in the estimates. The following groups of refugees are expected to be less accurately covered in the estimates due to lack of data on them: Refugees without Temporary Protection status in Moldova and not beneficiaries of local social services or humanitarian programmes, including:

- Refugees who want to remain anonymous
- Refugees that are uncertain regarding their length of stay in Moldova
- Refugees that do not intend to stay over six months in Moldova
- Refugees that are not eligible for TP and humanitarian programmes for refugees
- Refugees that are regularly travelling between Ukraine and Moldova on a tourist visa
- Refugees who do not want humanitarian assistance

Large discrepancies between existing databases on the number of refugees in a settlement are assumed to indicate an information gap

In the sampling of settlements for KIIs, large discrepancies in the number of registered refugees between the triangulated databases were taken as an indicator of a larger information gap regarding the actual number of refugees currently living there which justified the prioritisation of conducting KIIs in those settlements to fill this gap. However, although the discrepancies between the number of refugees in the triangulated databases may be smaller than in the sampled settlements, it does not mean that their numbers

are necessarily more reliable as each database has different limitations. As such, the sampling of the settlements as those with the greatest information gap among settlements in Moldova regarding refugee numbers is based on the assumption that these databases are the most reliable existing databases regarding refugee numbers. To mitigate this limitation, databases were collected from diverse sources and the limitations of each were clarified in depth before the triangulation and sampling of settlements for the KIIs.

The accuracy of the estimates for sampled settlements depends on the quality of the KIIs

KIs were selected based on their ability to provide an accurate overview of the settlement that they were being interviewed about. To determine this, questions on the accuracy of the data they have on refugees and their perceived level of oversight of the situation in the settlement were integrated into the KII scoping and KII questionnaire to better assess the overall reliability of the information they provided. However, the reliability of the findings from the KIIs and the final estimates that were produced from the incorporation of these findings to adjust the final estimates still depended on the scoping of KIs of which not all of them had a comprehensive overview of the settlement to fill the identified information gaps. As such, though the KIs may have provided valuable information in terms of covering groups of refugees not included in the databases gathered for Phase 1 and providing an understanding of the information gaps, the findings from Phase 2 will affect the accuracy of the final estimates of the total refugee population. To mitigate this, the reliability of the findings for each sampled settlement was determined based on the reliability of the scoped KIs and the extrapolation of the KII findings to estimate the number of refugees living in the unsampled settlements was based on trends observed in several sampled settlements with high reliability of KIIs.

Some KIIs were determined to only have a partial overview of the refugees living in their settlement. In this case, the number of refugees provided by the respective KIs was either summed when it was determined that there was no overlap in their databases, or not taken into account in the aggregation of KII responses if there was a potential overlap with the databases of other KIs that have a better overview of the settlement.

Risk of inaccuracies in KIs data due to confusion around the questions regarding under- and overrepresented refugees

The survey given to KIs included questions on under- and overrepresented refugees in their database, referring to refugees living in the settlement but not registered there, or registered in the settlement but living elsewhere. During data collection, it was observed that these questions were often misinterpreted by the KIs. Many did not provide specific numbers or stated they did not know.

To address this difficulty, the enumerators were instructed to provide the KIs with the refugee figures from TP and MPCA databases for the specific settlements. This was intended to encourage the KIs to consider potential discrepancies between their own data and the official figures. However, some KIs likely ended up referencing the official-level data sources rather than their own databases when responding about under- and overrepresentation. While efforts were made to identify such cases by examining outliers and through enumerator follow-ups, it was not possible to track this with complete precision. Showing figures might also have introduced some bias by influencing the answer from respondents. This might have introduced a degree of inaccuracy or uncertainty when standardising the reported percentages of under- and overrepresentation for Kis who did not provide a specific number.

Respondent bias in the KIIs

Findings of the KIIs may be influenced by respondent bias as key informants may have provided inaccurate information from their databases or are unaware of the limitations in their overview of the total number of

refugees living in their settlement. To mitigate this, observations by enumerators were taken into account in the determination of the reliability of the KIs in addition to the type of KI, and the level of detail in their responses to the KII questions.

Additionally, there have been patterns detected based on the type of KI that has been selected. Regarding local authorities and social workers, use a database that has the same number for that settlement. For local NGOs, the likelihood of not having full coverage in the settlement is higher, as they only assist some of the refugees in that settlement. Regarding INGOs, the risk of overreporting is higher, particularly in bigger settlements with trends. This is because they have the same risk of overrepresentation as the TP and MPCA data, which is likely why the settlement was sampled in the first place. These factors are included in determining the reliability of estimates for each sampled settlement.

Estimates in the Transnistrian region rely on limited sources of data

Due to REACH policy, data collection could not be conducted in the Transnistrian region. Other INGOs have similar limitations on their ability to access the Transnistrian region, and as a result, the only databases with information on refugees in this region were TP and MPCA (from IOM). To mitigate this lack of information, an additional consultation was conducted to better understand the situation of refugees in the Transnistrian region, how they are informed about services, how they register for TP and MPCA, and their movement patterns in and out and within the region. While the additional consultation was done with a source that is considered reliable, they are not directly in the field in the Transnistrian region and could not provide a more granular understanding of the settlements in the Transnistrian region.

Chișinău municipality information gap

Regarding Chișinău municipality, certain limitations in this research affected the accuracy of the produced numbers. Firstly, the Area Monitoring assessment conducted by REACH in December 2023 did not cover this region, which decreases the ability to cross-check the numbers of refugees per settlement. Consequentially, information gaps in the triangulation phase were more easily established, and more KIIs were conducted in this region.

Additionally, KIIs and consultation sessions also pointed out the incentives for refugees to be registered in Chișinău city, creating more inaccuracy of data, especially in the MPCA database and KI databases.

Lastly, KIIs more in the vicinity of Chișinău city revealed that the borders of Chișinău city that this research considered do not align with databases and several surrounding settlements were considered suburbs as part of the city. Adjustments and additional rules were made to account for this information gap, but these could not fully cover the constraints mentioned before, hence lower reliability for settlements in this region.

Extrapolation inaccuracies based on dominant KII trends

Regarding the extrapolation of settlements, all remaining settlements that have not been sampled for KIIs are connected to a type, based on which a priority database is selected, occasionally including adjustments. The types have been created on knowledge from KIIs and consultation sessions, and settlements are assigned accordingly to the highest priority type they identify with. However, each type covers many settlements, and the database that is estimated to be most accurate per type is chosen, leaving space for inaccuracies on the settlement level. This creates ambiguity about the accuracy presented in the final estimates on the settlement level, but it should not be interpreted as a guaranteed confirmed number of refugees, even for the sampled settlements.

Coverage of the final estimates is limited by the coverage of the official databases used to calculate them

Due to the limitation on time and resources, the determination of the number of refugees from Ukraine living in each settlement in Moldova in this assessment is based on secondary sources of data rather than directly seeking out refugees and confirming their presence in each settlement. Although data was gathered from a diverse range of sources for both the triangulation of databases and KIIs, the majority were providing data on beneficiaries of social assistance services or humanitarian programmes for refugees. Therefore, refugees from Ukraine who are either not in need of and do not want social assistance services or humanitarian assistance or are unable to access or unaware of how to access social assistance services or humanitarian assistance for refugees are likely to be unaccounted for in our estimates.

To mitigate this, adjustments were made to the numbers provided by KIIs in settlements where there is confirmation by KIs regarding the existence of such refugees, and the same was done for the database numbers in the unsampled settlements when determining the final estimates. Additional consultations were also used to determine the percentage of adjustment that was appropriate and which settlements needed such adjustment.

However, since these are only estimations, the actual extent to which such refugees are accounted for in this assessment is unclear. As such, this assessment is likely more representative of refugees who want assistance from social workers or humanitarian organisations and have been able to reach out to them. In smaller settlements, this issue is less prevalent as KIs are likely to have better oversight of the entire population of refugees living there.

Despite this limitation, it was confirmed in additional consultations that refugees from Ukraine in Moldova have widespread access to information on available assistance for refugees so those who are vulnerable are very likely to be registered in at least one of the triangulated databases in this assessment, unless they want to remain anonymous or do not need support. This assessment, however, DOES NOT guarantee that all of the most vulnerable among the refugees from Ukraine currently living in Moldova are covered in these estimates.

The results only portray a snapshot of the refugee situation in Moldova at a specific time

The estimates are only a snapshot in time of the number of refugees from Ukraine in Moldova, specifically the time during which data was collected through key informant interviews in May-June 2024. Since the numbers from different databases were used to estimate the number of refugees per settlement in the extrapolation of KII findings to unsampled settlements, the mismatch in timelines of the different databases may have resulted in some inaccuracies. Overall, the data used to inform the estimates were collected between December 2023 (when the Area Monitoring data was collected) and the beginning of June 2024 (when KII data collection was completed).

To mitigate the difference in the recency of the databases used for the estimates, the AM master database was only used for the final estimates in settlements which were considered to experience lower levels of transit and refugees are expected to be staying there longer term, or in settlements where all other databases were deemed as more unreliable despite being more recent than AM.

Estimates in settlements experiencing high levels of transit of refugees may already be outdated

In settlements where refugees from Ukraine tend not to stay long-term and are only transiting through, the estimates may already be outdated due to representing only a moment in time when data was collected for

the settlement. This is particularly relevant in the extrapolation process when the final estimates rely on data that is more likely to be outdated, specifically compared to the KII data.

Settlements that match this profile typically are located close to the border with Romania and Ukraine, in connection with the major border crossing points. This knowledge is gathered from consultation sessions and KIIs. Particularly in RACs close to the border, where data is more updatable, these high levels of transit become particularly prevalent.

Reliability levels are based on the assumptions and judgement of the research team and are not based on statistical computations

The reliability levels of the settlements in which KIIs were done were determined based on clear variables in the KII questionnaire and allocation of trends, through a basic framework complemented with the analysis and judgement of the research team. Similarly, the reliability levels of the unsampled settlements were determined based on the understanding of the trends in similar settlements and the analytical judgement of the research team. As a result, no exact percentage margin of error could be determined for each reliability level. Instead, the reliability levels were assessed relative to one another and based on the level of confidence of the research team based on information available and additional consultations. This means the reliability provides a general indication, but does not have a clear quantitative measure associated with it. This pilot assessment was primarily focused on identifying key trends and information gaps regarding the existing refugee databases in Moldova, rather than providing a comprehensive, statistically robust analysis of the refugee population estimates. Future assessments should explore these findings by improving the methodology's robustness, assessing the validity of assumptions, and evaluating the reliability of estimates using more advanced statistical methods.