



Codebook: Central Asia Migration Tracker (CAMT)

This document describes the Central Asia Migration Tracker (CAMT), an original dataset of migration flows compiled by the Oxus Society for Central Asian Affairs. The tracker was launched in December 2020. Ardasher Khashimov served as the principal investigator and the original research team consisted of Aruuke Uran Kyzy, Zhibek Aisarina, Kymbat Nuranova, and Raushan Zhandayeva. The tracker consists of [a dataset of migration](#) flows, a corresponding [descriptive report](#), and [an interactive map](#), which can be used to map the geographic and spatial patterns of migration from the region in recent years.

The Central Asia Migration Tracker (CAPT) describes and categorizes migration from each of the five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019. The tracker serves as an important resource on patterns of regional migration and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis according to the methodology outlined herein. While the current tracker is limited to four years, the Oxus Society aims to expand the data historically, while continuing to include new annual data and adding more destination countries, with regular reports published throughout the year.

CAMT focuses on long-term migration - defined as trips of 6 months and longer - for the purposes of work, study, or residence; short-term employment, study programs, or tourist trips were thus excluded from the dataset. Because Russia remains the main destination for migrants from Central Asia, availability of Russian data informed the limitations of data from the rest of the receiving states included in this study. The restructuring of Russia's migration system in 2015 meant data was limited to the period between 2016 and 2019. Countries that have detailed work, study, and residence migration data for the 2016-2019 period - the United States, Canada, the European Union, South Korea, and Japan - were included in CAMT. Other countries that are known to have large Central

Asian diasporas - namely China and Turkey - were excluded due to the unavailability of migration data.

The project team considered three levels of the intent to migrate - applying for a visa/permit, receiving a visa/permit, and making the actual trip. Because data on issued visas was the most available and comprehensive and due to other considerations, the project team used issued visas as a proxy for the intent to migrate.¹

Sources

CAMT is based on official migration statistics published by the receiving states. Data was taken from the following sources:

Migration Destination	Source - Work, Study, Residence Data	Source - Asylum Data
U.S.	U.S. Department of State	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Canada	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada	
Russia	Ministry of Internal Affairs	
EU	Eurostat	
Japan	Ministry of Justice	
South Korea	Korean Statistical Information Service	

Categorization of Visas

The project team included a number of different types of visa under each of the three categories of interest - work, study and residence.

¹ Applying for a visa doesn't always mean an intent to leave the country. In Tajikistan, for example, people often apply for the U.S. Diversity Lottery (also known as the green card lottery) because of social pressure.

Russia

Data on issued visas/permits was categorized into the following categories:

- Work. Includes data on “Registered with migration authorities based on the purpose of entrance: Work” (“Количество фактов постановки на миграционный учет по целям въезда: Работа”). Project team excluded “Private” (“Частная”) visas/permits because these are not meant for remunerated activities, even though they are often abused for illegal work.
- Study. Includes data on “Registered with migration authorities based on the purpose of entrance: Study” (“Количество фактов постановки на миграционный учет по целям въезда: Учеба”).
- Residence. Includes data on “Decisions made about issuance of residence permits” (“Принято решений о выдаче Вида на Жительство”) and “Made Decisions on Issuance of Temporary Residence Permit” (“Принято Решений о Выдаче Разрешений на Временное Проживание”).

United States

Data on issued visas/permits was categorized into the following categories:

- Work. Includes data on H visas (“Work”) and L visas (“Intra-Company Transfer”). The project team excluded A visas (“Diplomats & Foreign Government Workers”), B-1 visas (“Visa for Business Visits”), D visas (“Crew Members”), G visas (“International Organization Workers”), I visas (“Visa for journalists”), and P visas (“Sportspersons, Performers, Entertainers, and Coaching Teams”) as temporary visits, and EB visas (“Employer-Based Immigration”) due to unavailability of the data on the USCIS website. Fortunately, there’s an annual quota of 140,000 EB visas and the number of Central Asian recipients is likely to be negligible.
- Study. Includes data on F visas (“Academic Student”) and M visas (“Vocational Student”). The project team excluded J visas (“Exchange Visitor”) and Q visas (“Visa for Cultural Exchange Program”) as temporary visits.
- Residency. Includes data on Immediate Relative Immigrant visas, Special Immigrant visas, Family Preference Immigrant visas, Employment Preference Immigrant visas, Diversity

Lottery Immigrant visas, K visas (“Fiance/Spouse of a U.S. Citizen”), and V visas (“Family Unity”).

Canada

Data on issued visas/permits was categorized into the following:

- Work. Includes data on International Mobility and Temporary Foreign Worker (because TFWP permits are valid up to 1-year) programs.
- Study. Includes data on study permits.
- Residency. Includes residency permits issued through the Atlantic Immigration Pilot, Canadian Experience, Caregiver, Skilled Trade, and Skilled Worker programs, Business and Provincial Nominee programs, and Sponsored Family and Protected Person programs.

Japan

Data on issued visas/permits was categorized into the following categories:

- Work. Includes data on visas for Professors, Artists, Journalists, Highly skilled professionals 1A, Highly skilled professionals 1B, Highly skilled professionals 1C, Highly skilled professionals 2, Business managers, Legal/accounting services, Medical services, Instructors, Engineering/specialists in humanities/international services, Intra-company transferees, Nursing care, Entertainers, Skilled labor, Specified skilled worker 1, Specified skilled worker 2. Project team excluded Technical Intern Training, Internship, Amateur Sport Player, and other Designated Activities visas as temporary.
- Study. Includes data on Researcher, Training, International Student, and Student Dependents visas.
- Residency. Includes data on visas for Permanent residents, Dependents of Japanese nationals, Children of Japanese nationals, Dependents of permanent residents, Long-term residents, Special permanent residents.

South Korea

Data on issued visas/permits was categorized into the following categories:

- Work. Includes data on visas for Job seeking, Intra-company transferees, Seaman employment, Professors, Foreign language instructors, Technology instructors, Specialty occupations, Particular occupations, Unskilled employment, Residence reporters, Industrial Trainees, General Trainees, and Employment after Industrial Training. Project team excluded Temporary News Coverage, Short-Term Business, Short-Term Employment, Investors, Trade and Business
- Study. Includes data on visas for Study and Research.
- Residency. Includes data on visas for Residency, Visiting and Joining Family, Overseas Koreans, Dependent family, Permanent residency, and Marriage immigration.

European Union

Data on issued visas/permits was categorized into the following categories:

- Work. Includes data on Remuneration Activities permits.
- Study. Includes data on Education permits.
- Residency. Includes data on Family Reasons permits.

Data Limitations

The project team recognizes that the tracker does not represent a complete picture of migration in Central Asia. By focusing on official long-term migration gleaned from clear-cut visa categories, CAMT doesn't account for informal activities and unofficial migration, e.g. students engaging in remunerated activities instead of studying or migrants staying past visa expiration date, both of which are substantial issues when tracking migration to Russia. CAMT also relies on clear and cohesive migration policy and consistent data collection by migration authorities. Tracking migration to Russia, for example, can be difficult, with the country's inconsistent migration policy and shifts between different agencies when it comes to handling the migration data. Academics and analysts using the tracker should be aware that it is by no means comprehensive, but is intended to demonstrate patterns of migration throughout the region.

The tracker will be updated annually as the new annual data from destination countries becomes available. Research assistants will raise concerns over data reliability or category assignment with the project director as appropriate.