

William's Update

Remittances

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Abstract

This report provides a review of available remittance datasets and literature. The analysis identifies the World Bank as the primary data source, offering both cost of remittances data (detailed, corridor-level) and remittance flows data (aggregate, less frequent updates). Key findings indicate that remittance datasets are generally limited in scope and quality, with bilateral flows being estimated rather than directly observed. The report evaluates supplementary sources including RemitScope. A literature review categorizes relevant research by geographic focus and methodological approach. The report concludes that while the World Bank provides the most comprehensive global coverage, data access remains challenging and researchers often rely on estimated rather than actual transaction data.

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1 Introduction

Remittance datasets are generally limited in scope and quality. This report presents the best available datasets and summarizes key literature on remittance measurement. Most research focuses on the effects of remittances rather than forecasting flows. There are two main types of datasets: cost of remittances (detailed, corridor-level) and actual remittance flows (often less accurate and updated infrequently). The World Bank provides the primary source for both, with most other datasets derived from their data. Remitscope is also worth mentioning as a potential dataset, given its completeness. More details can be found in the [Remitscope section](#).

2 Best Dataset: World Bank

2.1 Cost of Remittances Dataset

This is a more comprehensive dataset. Please see the [sample dataset](#) where we can observe source and destination countries.

We can also observe the firm, payment instrument (bank transfer, cash, etc.), and speed.

There are many different methodologies with regards to remittances. For an overview, please see the [World Bank's resources page](#).

The World Bank aims to establish *unified standards and maintain public data availability*. See [certified national and regional databases](#). There are issues with their data request site; I have submitted several requests without receiving instructions. The dataset should be available at: [World Bank Remittance Prices Dataset](#).

2.2 Remittances Sent Dataset

The following fields are available:

-
- ☐ Average transaction cost of sending remittances from a specific country (%)
 - ☐ Average transaction cost of sending remittances to a specific country (%)
 - ☒ Personal remittances, paid (current US\$)
 - ☐ Personal remittances, received (% of GDP)
 - ☐ Personal remittances, received (current US\$)

Figure 1: Available Fields for Remittances Sent Dataset

Bilateral remittance flows are not directly observable; only aggregate data is available. The corridor-level dataset is released infrequently. According to the literature:

Additionally, the World Bank also publishes estimates on bilateral remittance flows. The basis for bilateral remittances estimates are weighted migrant stock data, the weighted income of migrants based on the per capita income in the country of destination, and the weighted income in the origin country of the migrant (Ratha and Shaw, 2007: 43).

The main dataset is available at: [World Bank Development Indicators - Personal Remittances](#). See limitations at the [metadata page](#).

Because direct measurement (tracking actual transactions) is often incomplete, they use a mix of methods: direct reporting when possible and estimates/models to fill in gaps.

2.2.1 Derivative Datasets

1. [Migration Data Portal](#)
2. [UNCTAD Statistics - US Remittances](#)
3. [Migration Policy Institute - Global Remittances Guide](#)
 - [Total Remittance Inflows and Outflows \(1980-Present\)](#)
 - [Remittance Trends Over Time](#)
 - [Bilateral Remittance Flows](#)
4. [World Bank - Personal Remittances Received](#)
5. [Asian Development Bank - Remittances Data](#)

2.3 Remitscope

Consider [RemitScope](#) as an additional resource. See the [guide](#) for usage. RemitScope aggregates data from various sources, including bilateral flows, but these are not always easily accessible.

RemitSCOPE brings together data from secondary sources, that are usually scattered in different organisations and agencies, as well as collecting data through primary research and directly from market operators and regulators.

Currently, RemitScope covers Africa and Latin America. Asia is coming soon.

| Africa | Latin America | Asia |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Region overview | Region overview | Release coming soon |
| Themes | Themes | |
| Indexes | Indexes | |
| Country Profiles | Country Profiles | |
| Remittance Market Insights | Remittance Market Insights | |

Figure 2: RemitScope Regional Coverage

See the [RemitSCOPE Thematic Dashboards Overview](#):

| | Indicator Name | Source * - RemitSCOPE calculations based on source | Dashboard | Country Profile |
|------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| Remittance Flows | World Bank remittance inflows / outflows | WB Remittance annual inflow / outflow data (latest) | Remittances - Inflows / Outflows + Country | x |
| | Remittance inflows growth rate (World Bank) | WB Remittance annual inflow / outflow data (latest) | Remittances - Inflows / Outflows + Country | x |
| | Remittance inflows / outflows as a % of GDP | WB Remittance annual inflow / outflow data (latest) | Remittances - Inflows / Outflows + Country | x |
| | Population's dependence on remittances | Afrobarometer survey 2018 (and other sources) | Remittances - Inflows + Country | |
| | Informal remittance inflows estimate | RemitSCOPE compiled from multiple sources / varying years | Remittances - Inflows + Country | |
| | Estimated remittance inflows / outflows | World Bank Bilateral Remittance Matrix (estimates) 2021 | Remittances - Inflows / Outflows + Corridor | x |
| | Central Bank remittance inflows / outflows | RemitSCOPE compiled from multiple Central Banks - annualised | Remittances - Inflows / Outflows + Country & Corridor | x |

Figure 3: RemitSCOPE Dataset Overview

RemitScope provides visualization tools; data scraping may be required for analysis.

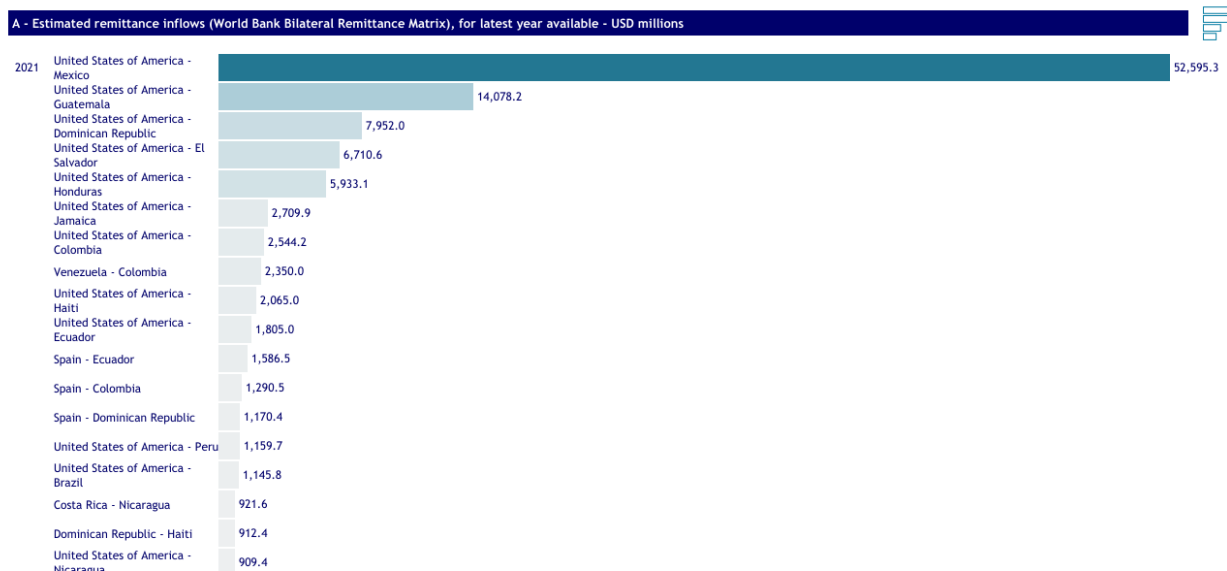


Figure 4: RemitScope Example Visualization

Explore more at [RemitScope Latin America Themes](#).

2.4 Canadian International Development Platform: CIDP

The [CIDP Remittances Explorer](#) uses World Bank datasets to create interactive remittance data visualizations. The dataset is available for download from the project repository: [CIDP Remittances Data](#)

2.5 Additional Data Sources

- [SDGs Today Remittances Dataset](#) - Sustainable Development Goals tracking platform for remittance data

2.6 Data Request Status

2.7 World Bank

I have submitted a data request through the [World Bank's data download portal](#) for the most current and comprehensive remittance datasets.

2.8 Wise & Remitly

I contacted Remitly and Wise to request data access. Wise denied our request:

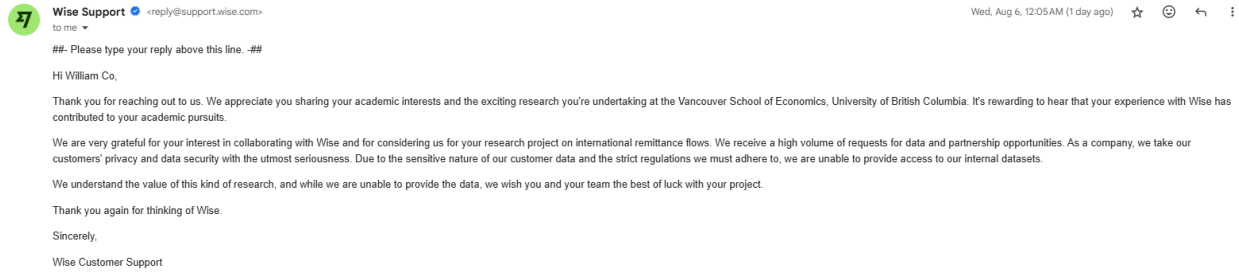


Figure 5: Wise Data Request Rejection

3 Literature Review

3.1 High Relevance

3.1.1 Country/Region Case Studies

3.1.1.1 The Propensity to Remit: Macro and Micro Factors Driving Remittances to Central America and the Caribbean

Authors: Hussein Bidawi, Paola Aliperti F. Domingues, Chiara Fratto, Nicole Laframboise

Publication Date: 2022

Comment: Promising paper (we have corridor-level data (Remitscope)) for Latin American countries.

3.1.1.2 Macroeconomic Determinants of Remittance Flows to Sub-Saharan Africa

Authors: Deodat E. Adenutsi, Christian R. K. Ahortor

Publication Date: 2021

Comment: Focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.1.1.3 Determinants and Macroeconomic Impact of Remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa

Authors: Raju J Singh, Kyung-woo Lee, Markus Haacker

Publication Date: 2009

Comment: IMF paper, slightly older.

3.1.1.4 Determinants of Remittances: Evidence From Tonga

Author: Huidan Lin

Publication Date: 2011

Comment: Focuses on Tonga.

3.1.1.5 Macroeconomic Determinants of Remittances: Evidence from India

Author: Poonam Gupta

Publication Date: 2005

Comment: Relevant but dated.

3.1.2 Defying the Odds: Remittances Held Up During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Working Paper: [IMF Working Paper](#)

Authors: Saad Quayyum, Kangni Kpodar, Montfort Mlachila, Vigninou Gammadigbe

Publication Date: 2021

Comment: Uses COVID-19 as a “shock” to analyze remittances.

3.1.3 Remittances and Vulnerability in Developing Countries: Results from a New Dataset on Remittances from Italy

Authors: Andrea Presbitero, Nikola Spatafora, Giulia Bettin

Publication Date: 2014

Comment: Focuses on Italy.

3.1.4 What Explains Remittance Fees? Panel Evidence

Authors: Thorsten Beck, Mathilde Janfils, Kangni R Kpodar

Publication Date: 2022

Comment: IMF paper on remittance fees.

3.1.5 Monetary Policy and Remittance Flows in Latin America and the Caribbean

Publication Date: 2022

Comment: Examines monetary policy and remittance flows in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3.2 Medium Relevance

3.2.1 Determinants of International Remittance Inflow in Asia-Pacific Middle-Income Countries

Authors: Naoyuki Yoshino, Farhad Taghizadeh-Hesary, Miyu Otsuka

Publication Date: 2020

Comment: Directly relevant, but not as academically reputable as high relevance papers.

3.2.2 Migrant Remittances

Author: Dean Yang

Publication Date: 2011

Comment: Highly regarded, but dated.

3.2.3 Are Remittances Insurance? Evidence from Rainfall Shocks in the Philippines

Authors: Dean Yang, HwaJung Choi

Publication Date: 2007

Comment: Uses rainfall shocks to analyze remittance determinants.

3.2.4 Remittance Behaviours Among Recent Immigrants in Canada

Publication Date: 2011

Comment: Statistics Canada paper on remittance behaviour in Canada.

3.2.5 Migrant Remittances: Alternative Money Transfer Channels

Authors: Martina Metzger, Tim Riedler, Jennifer Pédussel Wu

Publication Date: 2019

Comment: Explores remittance transfer channels.

3.2.6 Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond

Editors: Dilip Ratha, Jeffrey H. Cohen, Ibrahim Sirkeci

Publication Date: 2012

Comment: World Bank book, somewhat dated.

3.3 Low Relevance

3.3.1 International Migration, Remittances, and Household Investment: Evidence from Philippine Migrants' Exchange Rate Shocks

Author: Dean Yang

Publication Date: 2006

Comment: Relevant but old; analyzes currency appreciation as a determinant of remittances.

4 Appendix

Additional datasets used in academic research can be found at: - [ICPSR - Remittances Studies](#) - [Harvard Dataverse - Remittances Dataset](#) - [Harvard Dataverse - Additional Remittances Dataset](#)