

## Labour force, Employment and Unemployment – First quarter 2021

### Introduction

1. This issue of Economic and Social Indicators (ESI) presents a set of estimates of labour force, employment and unemployment for the first quarter of 2021, based on the results of the Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey (CMPHS) from January to March 2021. The estimates refer to the **Mauritian population aged 16 years and above**.
2. Following the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, data was collected through telephone interviews during the months of May, June, and July with the assistance of the World Bank. The phone survey has continued since then (September, October and December of 2020 and from January to March 2021).
3. Annual estimates of labour force including foreign workers, derived after integrating data from the CMPHS with other data sources, are given at Annex 3.

### Key figures

	Q1 2020 <sup>1</sup>	December 2020	Q1 2021	Change	
				Q1 2020 to Q1 2021	December 2020 to Q1 2021
Population (aged 16+)	999,800	1,004,900	1,004,600	+4,800	-300
Labour Force (Economically active)	590,900	599,400	534,400	-56,500	-65,000
<i>Of which Employment</i>	<i>550,400</i>	<i>538,000</i>	<i>481,900</i>	<i>-68,500</i>	<i>-56,100</i>
<i>Unemployment</i>	<i>40,500</i>	<i>61,400</i>	<i>52,500</i>	<i>+12,000</i>	<i>-8,900</i>
Outside Labour Force (Economically inactive)	408,900	405,500	470,200	+61,300	+64,700
Activity rate (%)	59.1	59.6	53.2	-5.9	-6.4
Unemployment rate (%)	6.9	10.2	9.8	+2.9	-0.4
Youth unemployment	17,300	18,600	18,600	+1,300	-
Youth unemployment rate (%)	23.5	25.1	31.5	+8.0	+6.4

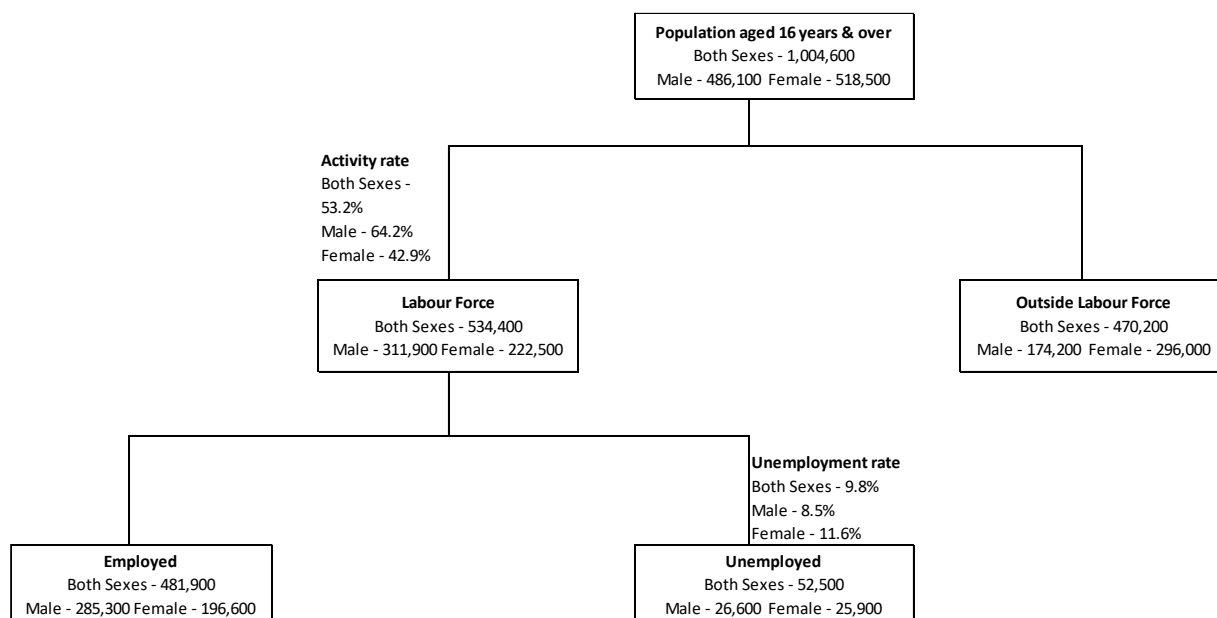
<sup>1</sup> Revised

Note: The net change in employment level in the above table is equal to “Employment creations minus employment losses” during the period under reference.

## Labour market overview, first quarter 2021

4. Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, the labour force has declined by 56,500. Employment went down by 68,500 and unemployment was up by 12,000. The number of persons outside labour force increased by 61,300 during the same period.
5. Compared to December 2020, labour force decreased by 65,000 with decreases of 56,100 and 8,900 in employment and unemployment respectively. The number of persons outside labour force increased by 64,700 during the same period.
6. The decrease in employment in the first quarter of 2021 compared to December 2020 is partly due to seasonality (employment level usually higher in December) and to a decrease in employment in March 2021 following the second lockdown as from 10 March 2021.
7. The increase in the number of persons considered to be outside the labour force is explained by the fact that many individuals, mainly self-employed persons, could not work in March 2021 due to the lockdown. According to international classification, since these individuals were not looking for work during the lockdown, they are classified as (temporarily) 'inactive' and not as 'unemployed'. Although they were classified as inactive, they received the support provided by Government under the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme. With the end of the lockdown, the number of inactive persons is expected to decrease to its normal level.

Chart 1: The Labour Market, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021



## Labour force participation

	Q1 2020 <sup>1</sup>	December 2020	Q1 2021	Change	
				Q1 2020 to Q1 2021	December 2020 to Q1 2021
Activity rate (%)					
Both sexes	59.1	59.6	53.2	-5.9	-6.4
Male	71.6	73.1	64.2	-7.4	-8.9
Female	47.2	46.9	42.9	-4.3	-4.0

<sup>1</sup> Revised

- The activity rate for first quarter 2021 declined by 5.9 percentage points to 53.2% compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020. The male activity rate decreased by 7.4 percentage points to 64.2% and the female activity rate decreased by 4.3 percentage points to 42.9%.
- Compared to December 2020, the activity rate decreased by 6.4 percentage points. The male activity rate decreased by 8.9 percentage points and the female activity rate by 4.0 percentage points.

## Employment

	Q1 2020 <sup>1</sup>	December 2020	Q1 2021	Change	
				Q1 2020 to Q1 2021	December 2020 to Q1 2021
Both sexes	550,400	538,000	481,900	-68,500	-56,100
Male	331,200	327,300	285,300	-45,900	-42,000
Female	219,200	210,700	196,600	-22,600	-14,100

<sup>1</sup> Revised

- From first quarter 2020 to first quarter 2021, employment decreased by 68,500 to 481,900; male employment decreased by 45,900 and female employment decreased by 22,600.
- Compared to December 2020, employment decreased by 56,100; male employment decreased by 42,000 and female employment decreased by 14,100.

## Unemployment

	Q1 2020 <sup>1</sup>	December 2020	Q1 2021	Change	
				Q1 2020 to Q1 2021	December 2020 to Q1 2021
Both sexes	40,500	61,400	52,500	+12,000	-8,900
Male	17,100	30,000	26,600	+9,500	-3,400
Female	23,400	31,400	25,900	+2,500	-5,500
Unemployment rate (%)					
Both sexes	6.9	10.2	9.8	+2.9	-0.4
Male	4.9	8.4	8.5	+3.6	+0.1
Female	9.6	13.0	11.6	+2.0	-1.4

<sup>1</sup> Revised

### ***1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020 to 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021***

12. From first quarter 2020 to first quarter 2021, the number of unemployed persons increased by 12,000. Male unemployment increased by 9,500 and female unemployment by 2,500.
13. The unemployment rate increased by 2.9 percentage points from 6.9% in first quarter 2020 to 9.8% in first quarter 2021. Male unemployment rate was up by 3.6 percentage points to reach 8.5%, and female unemployment by 2.0 percentage points to 11.6%.

### ***December 2020 to 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021***

14. When compared to December 2020, the total number of unemployed persons decreased by 8,900, with decreases of 3,400 among males and 5,500 among females.
15. Total unemployment rate decreased by 0.4 percentage point from 10.2% in December 2020 to 9.8% in the first quarter of 2021. Male unemployment rate went up by 0.1 percentage point from 8.4% to 8.5%, while female unemployment rate decreased by 1.4 percentage points from 13.0% to 11.6%.

## Unemployment of the youth aged 16-24 years

	Q1 2020 <sup>1</sup>	December 2020	Q1 2021	Change	
				Q1 2020 to Q1 2021	December 2020 to Q1 2021
Both sexes	17,300	18,600	18,600	+1,300	-
Male	9,000	8,100	8,900	-100	+800
Female	8,300	10,500	9,700	+1,400	-800
Youth unemployment rate (%)					
Both sexes	23.5	25.1	31.5	+8.0	+6.4
Male	22.6	19.9	29.0	+6.4	+9.1
Female	24.6	31.3	34.2	+9.6	+2.9

<sup>1</sup> Revised

16. At the first quarter of 2021, unemployed youth aged 16 to 24 years was estimated at 18,600 (8,900 males and 9,700 females) compared to 17,300 (9,000 males and 8,300 females) at the first quarter of 2020. Compared to December 2020 youth unemployment remained unchanged.
17. The youth unemployment rate increased in the first quarter of 2021 to 31.5% from 23.5% in the corresponding quarter of 2020. During the same period, the rate for young men increased by 6.4 percentage points to 29.0%, and that for young women increased by 9.6 percentage points to 34.2%.
18. Compared to December 2020, the youth unemployment rate increased from 25.1% to 31.5%, with an increase of 9.1 percentage points for young men compared to an increase of 2.9 percentage points for young women.

### *Characteristics of the unemployed as at first quarter 2021*

19. The main characteristics of the unemployed as at first quarter 2021 were as follows:
  - (i). The 52,500 unemployed comprised 26,600 males (51%) and 25,900 females (49%).
  - (ii). Around 26,300 (50%) of the unemployed were married; females (51%) and males (49%).
  - (iii). Some 33,200 (63%) of the unemployed did not have the Cambridge School Certificate (SC) or equivalent and among them, 8,200 had not even passed the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) or equivalent.
  - (iv). Around 35,100 (67%) had been looking for work for up to one year and the remaining 17,400 (33%) for more than one year.

- (v). About 40,300 (77%) had working experience and 12,200 (23%) were looking for a first job.
- (vi). Around 28,400 (54%) were registered at the Employment Service Information Centre.
- (vii). There were 6,700 (13%) young persons aged 16 to 24 years, not yet married and looking for a first job. Some 2,500 possessed a qualification below SC.
- (viii). 14,400 or 27% of the unemployed were heads of households.
- (ix). 15,100 (29%) lived in households with no employed persons.

### **Population outside Labour Force**

- 20. The number of persons aged 16 years and over, not forming part of the labour force (inactive population) was estimated at 470,200 at the first quarter of 2021 compared to 405,500 in December 2020 and 408,900 in the first quarter of 2020.
- 21. The population outside labour force comprised 174,200 males and 296,000 females. Among males, around 43% were retired/old persons and 25% were students. Among females, 48% were homemakers, 22% were retired/old persons and 15% were students.

### **Reliability of the Labour Force estimates**

- 22. The estimates in this publication are based on the results of a sample survey and are thus subject to sample variability. Standard errors (SE) and coefficient of variation (CV) give an indication of this variability. The standard error of the estimates and the coefficient of variation (SE/estimate) are given in the table that follows.
- 23. Standard errors for the first quarter of 2021 are slightly higher due a lower response rate.

Estimated labour force, employment and unemployment by sex, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021

Both Sexes

		Estimates	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)
Labour force				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	590,900	10,600	1.8
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	534,400	16,300	3.1
Employment				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	550,400	10,100	1.8
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	481,900	15,700	3.3
Unemployment				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	40,500	2,600	6.4
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	52,500	5,400	10.3
Unemployment rate, %				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	6.9	0.4	5.8
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	9.8	1.0	10.2
Activity rate, %				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	59.1	0.6	1.0
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	53.2	1.1	2.1

Male

		Estimates	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)
Labour force				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	348,300	7,000	2.0
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	311,900	9,400	3.0
Employment				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	331,200	6,700	2.0
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	285,300	8,900	3.1
Unemployment				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	17,100	1,900	11.1
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	26,600	3,400	12.8
Unemployment rate, %				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	4.9	0.5	10.2
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	8.5	1.0	11.8
Activity rate, %				
	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	71.6	0.8	1.1
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	64.2	1.3	2.0

<sup>1</sup> Revised

<sup>2</sup> Provisional

## Female

		<b>Estimates</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Coefficient of Variation (%)</b>
Labour force	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	242,600	5,600	2.3
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	222,500	9,400	4.2
Employment	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	219,200	5,400	2.5
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	196,600	9,400	4.8
Unemployment	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	23,400	1,900	8.1
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	25,900	3,200	12.4
Unemployment rate, %	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	9.6	0.8	8.3
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	11.6	1.4	12.1
Activity rate, %	2020 Q1 <sup>1</sup>	47.2	0.8	1.7
	2021 Q1 <sup>2</sup>	42.9	1.4	3.3

<sup>1</sup> Revised

<sup>2</sup> Provisional

### Reliability of estimates

High reliability	Less than 7.5
Medium reliability	7.5 - 15.0
Low reliability	Greater than 15.0



The following tables together with the web version of this publication can be downloaded from Statistics Mauritius website at

[https://statsmauritius.govmu.org/Pages/Statistics/By\\_Subject/Labour/SB\\_labour.aspx](https://statsmauritius.govmu.org/Pages/Statistics/By_Subject/Labour/SB_labour.aspx)

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## **NOTES**

### **Release of Labour Force data**

Labour Force statistics are compiled and published in the “Economic and Social Indicators” in March, June, September and December according to an advance calendar posted on the website of Statistics Mauritius (<http://statsmauritius.govmu.org>). This issue provides data for the first quarter 2021 compared to the same quarter a year ago.

### **The CMPHS Survey methodology**

#### **Data collection**

Following the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, the face to face interviews of household members have been replaced by telephone interviews.

#### **Frequency of data collection**

As from 2005, data collection is carried out monthly except in 2020 after the COVID-19 outbreak of in March 2020, it was carried out only in May, June, July, September, October and December 2020.

The reference week is the second week of the survey month so that quarterly estimates can be published within the quarter following the reference quarter, as required by the IMF Special Data Dissemination System (SDDS) to which the country has graduated on 28 February 2012.

#### **Scope and coverage of collection**

All private Mauritian households in the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues are covered.

#### **Sampling method**

A Stratified two-stage sampling design is used. At the first stage, Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) are selected in proportion to square root of the total number of households in the geographical district and at the second stage a fixed number of households is selected from each selected PSU.

Prior to 2005, the first stage stratification factors were urban, semi urban and rural geographical locations. As from 2005, the Relative Development Index (RDI) is used as the spatial stratification factor. This index is based on 12 variables encompassing housing and living conditions, literacy and education, and employment derived from the 2011 Housing and Population Census to rank PSUs. A set of RDIs for administrative regions has been published in the series "Economic and Social Indicators" - Issue No. 977.

The second stage stratification criteria are community, household size and average monthly expenditure of the household.

## **Sample size**

From 1999 to 2003, around 6,500 households were covered each year. In 2004, the sample was increased to 8,640 so that reliable quarterly estimates of labour force, employment and unemployment could be worked out. As from 2005, the sample for the year has been further increased to 11,280. Furthermore, in order to measure quarterly changes, 50% of the households sampled in a quarter are re-interviewed in the following quarter; for example, 50% of the households sampled in the first quarter of 2005 have been re-interviewed in the second quarter of 2005.

## **Questionnaire**

The CMPHS questionnaire comprises three modules: (a) a basic module common to all rounds of the survey covering the general characteristics of the population (b) a second module covering labour force with in-depth investigation and a core set of questions which are kept constant at all rounds of the survey and (c) a third module grouping other topics of interest but investigated in less details.

## **Estimation and reliability of results**

Estimates worked out from household survey data are inevitably subject to sampling variability since they are based on information collected from only a sample of households rather than from all households. Standard errors and coefficient of variation for the main labour force estimates are given in this report.

## **Definitions**

### **Household**

A household is defined as either a person living on his/her own or a group of two or more persons, who may or may not be related, but who live together and make common provision for food and other essentials for living.

### **Employment**

Employed population consists of Mauritians aged 16 years and above who have worked for pay, profit or family gain for at least one hour during the reference week of a month. It includes those who are temporarily absent from work for reasons such as leave with pay, leave without pay and temporary disorganisation of work (bad weather, break down of equipment, lack of order, etc.).

It is to be noted that as from year 2007, labour force estimates are based on population aged 16 years and above, following the amendment to the Labour Act in December 2006 whereby the minimum legal working age is 16 years, and the subsequent recommendation by the ILO to be in line with the amended Labour Act.

### **Unemployment**

Unemployed population comprises all Mauritians aged 16 years and above who are not working but who are looking for work and are available for work during the reference period.

### **Labour force**

Labour force or active population is made up of employed and unemployed population.

### **Unemployment rate**

Unemployment rate is the ratio (%) of unemployment to labour force.

### **Outside the Labour Force (previously known as inactive population)**

Outside the labour force includes all Mauritians aged 16 years and above, not forming part of the labour force for reasons such as attendance at educational institutions, engagement in household duties, retirement, old age and infirmity/disablement.

### **Activity rate**

Activity rate is the ratio (%) of labour force to population aged 16 years and above.

### **Employer**

An employer is a person who operates his/her own business or trade and hires one or more employees

### **Own account worker**

An Own account worker is a person who operates his/her own business or trade but does not hire employees. He/She may be working alone or with the help of contributing family workers.

### **Employee**

An Employee is a person who works for pay for someone else, even in a temporary capacity.

### **Apprentice**

An Apprentice is a person being trained for a job or trade. He/She may be paid or may receive some pocket money; a paid apprentice is considered as an employee.

### **Contributing family worker**

A Contributing family worker is a person who works without pay in an enterprise operated by a family member.

### **Educational attainment**

*Primary:* comprises persons who have studied up to a “Standard” between Standard 1 and the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) or equivalent.

*Secondary:* comprises persons who have studied up to a “Form” between Form 1 and the Higher School Certificate (HSC) or equivalent.

*Tertiary:* comprises persons who in addition to their secondary educational certificates (SC and HSC or equivalent) also possess either a certificate/diploma (which is above the HSC but below a first degree) or a degree.

## Annual labour force estimates based on data from different data sources, 2012 - 2020

	Labour force			Employment				Unemployment <sup>1</sup>	
	Mauritians aged 16+	Foreign workers	Total	in large establishments	outside large establishments	Total	of whom Mauritians	Number	Rate
	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(%)
<b>Both sexes</b>									
2012	556.3	24.0	<b>580.3</b>	311.5	224.2	<b>535.7</b>	511.7	44.6	8.0
2013	571.2	26.3	<b>597.5</b>	312.5	239.5	<b>552.0</b>	525.7	45.5	8.0
2014	575.7	28.3	<b>604.0</b>	313.5	245.7	<b>559.2</b>	530.9	44.8	7.8
2015	584.6	28.3	<b>612.9</b>	314.1	252.5	<b>566.6</b>	538.3	46.3	7.9
2016	581.0	28.6	<b>609.6</b>	314.2	253.0	<b>567.2</b>	538.6	42.4	7.3
2017	586.9	28.4	<b>615.3</b>	316.9	256.6	<b>573.5</b>	545.1	41.8	7.1
2018	583.8	29.4	<b>613.2</b>	320.0	253.1	<b>573.1</b>	543.7	40.1	6.9
2019 <sup>2</sup>	591.0	30.9	<b>621.9</b>	325.2	257.0	<b>582.2</b>	551.3	39.7	6.7
2020 <sup>3</sup>	570.1	31.8	<b>601.9</b>	326.5	223.2	<b>549.7</b>	517.9	52.2	9.2
<b>Male</b>									
2012	346.9	14.2	<b>361.1</b>	198.3	144.7	<b>343.0</b>	328.8	18.1	5.2
2013	350.4	16.5	<b>366.9</b>	199.1	149.2	<b>348.3</b>	331.8	18.6	5.3
2014	352.8	18.3	<b>371.1</b>	199.3	152.4	<b>351.7</b>	333.4	19.4	5.5
2015	353.3	18.6	<b>371.9</b>	198.5	153.9	<b>352.4</b>	333.8	19.5	5.5
2016	353.6	19.3	<b>372.9</b>	198.6	157.4	<b>356.0</b>	336.7	16.9	4.8
2017	356.6	20.0	<b>376.6</b>	194.8	164.6	<b>359.4</b>	339.4	17.2	4.8
2018	352.8	21.3	<b>374.1</b>	196.0	161.4	<b>357.4</b>	336.1	16.7	4.7
2019 <sup>2</sup>	354.7	24.7	<b>379.4</b>	200.1	163.7	<b>363.8</b>	339.1	15.6	4.4
2020 <sup>3</sup>	336.6	24.9	<b>361.5</b>	199.2	136.0	<b>335.2</b>	310.3	26.3	7.8
<b>Female</b>									
2012	209.4	9.8	<b>219.2</b>	113.2	79.5	<b>192.7</b>	182.9	26.5	12.7
2013	220.8	9.8	<b>230.6</b>	113.4	90.3	<b>203.7</b>	193.9	26.9	12.2
2014	222.9	10.0	<b>232.9</b>	114.2	93.3	<b>207.5</b>	197.5	25.4	11.4
2015	231.3	9.7	<b>241.0</b>	115.6	98.6	<b>214.2</b>	204.5	26.8	11.6
2016	227.4	9.3	<b>236.7</b>	115.6	95.6	<b>211.2</b>	201.9	25.5	11.2
2017	230.3	8.4	<b>238.7</b>	122.1	92.0	<b>214.1</b>	205.7	24.6	10.7
2018	231.0	8.1	<b>239.1</b>	124.0	91.7	<b>215.7</b>	207.6	23.4	10.1
2019 <sup>2</sup>	236.3	6.2	<b>242.5</b>	125.1	93.3	<b>218.4</b>	212.2	24.1	10.2
2020 <sup>3</sup>	233.5	6.9	<b>240.4</b>	127.3	87.2	<b>214.5</b>	207.6	25.9	11.1

<sup>1</sup> Unemployment figures and rate refer to Mauritians

<sup>2</sup> Revised

<sup>3</sup> Provisional

**Note:**

1. The above figures have been worked out in order to give a set of comparable labour force estimates obtained from different sources. Users are cautioned in the use of these figures given that there are differences related to the reference period, coverage and methodology. The different sources from which these estimates have been obtained are as follows:

- i CMPHS for Mauritian labour force estimates which are subject to sampling variability as mentioned at Annex 1.
- ii The Annual Survey of Employment and Earnings (SEE) carried out in March of each year. Employment figures refer to jobs in large establishments employing 10 or more persons and include both Mauritians and foreign workers.
- iii Employment in 'other than large' establishments has been estimated after reconciling data from CMPHS, SEE and administrative sources.