



Co-funded by the European Union



International Organization for Migration  
سازمان بین المللی مهاجرت  
د کډوالی نړیواله اداره

## EUROPEAN REINTEGRATION NETWORK (ERIN) SPECIFIC ACTION PROGRAM

### AFGHANISTAN BRIEFING NOTE

**Post-arrival and reintegration assistance to Afghan nationals returning from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.**



## **I. ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The ERIN (European Reintegration Network) Specific Action Program runs from 1<sup>ST</sup> June 2016 to end of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 and aims to implement sustainable return and reintegration of third country nationals in their country of origin, with further cooperation among participating ERIN partner countries. This Program was built on the European Reintegration Instrument (ERI), which was implemented in Afghanistan from 2012 to 2014 and the ERIN project which was implemented from June 2014 to May 2016.

The European Commission (European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Specific Action) funds the ERIN Specific Action Program with co-funding from the eighteen participating ERIN partner countries listed below. The project is implemented by the following ERIN Partner Institutions and the selected ERIN service providers in countries of returns.

- Austria – Ministry of Interior
- Belgium – Federal Immigration Office, and the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil)
- Denmark – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Finland – Finnish Immigration Service
- France – French Immigration and Integration Office
- Germany – Federal Office for Migration and Integration Office
- Greece – Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection
- Italy – Ministry of Interior
- Luxembourg – Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs
- Malta – Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security
- Netherlands – Repatriation and Departure Service
- Norway – Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
- Romania – General Inspectorate for Immigration
- Spain – Integration of Immigrants Migration Board
- Sweden – Swedish Migration Agency
- Switzerland – State Secretariat for Migration
- United Kingdom – The UK Home Office – Immigration Enforcement

## **2. IOM MISSION STATEMENT**

Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM works with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration and uphold the well-being and human rights of migrants.

Today, with 401 offices and representations across the world, and 165 Member States, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. Amongst other activities, IOM supports people all over the world in returning home and building a new life under its assisted

voluntary return and reintegration program (AVRR), an area of IOM expertise that has been developed through 30 years of experience. Since 1979, IOM's AVRR activities have grown to include more than 100 projects, helping individuals return to some 160 countries worldwide. In the past decade alone, IOM has assisted upwards of 3.5 million migrants to return voluntarily to their home countries.

The organization's local presence and partnerships are vital to ensure that the best services are offered to migrants. IOM is uniquely positioned to coordinate all stages of the return and reintegration process, be it with its own offices or with partners in countries of destination and origin. IOM's diversified activities in the field (in the areas of emergency, medical assistance, protection etc.) allow for addressing different needs of returning migrants in a comprehensive manner, for instance through the set-up of referral networks of local partners.

As an intergovernmental organization, IOM is privileged to act in the benefit of the migrants as a trusted interlocutor for countries of origin, transit and destination, reflecting their respective interests in a balanced manner.

### **3. PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION**

The potential returnees will be informed by the respective ERIN Partner Institutions of the ERIN Specific Action services that are available for them upon return to Afghanistan. The counsellor will identify the type of assistance to be provided depending on the applicant profile and needs identified in the information counselling. Each Partner Institutions has counsellors operating in the reception centres and administrative detention centres and provide pre-departure counselling to the potential returnees residing at the centres. The time of the counselling, meetings are to be arranged in advance by coordinating with the reception and administrative detention centre staff to provide participation of potential returnees. Information sheets will be available for distribution among participants. The meetings should be in informal and friendly manner and ensure the participants clearly understand the objective of the meeting and feel comfortable to ask questions.

The following information must be provided with special stress:

- Those Afghan choosing to return voluntarily will be incentivized through larger re-integration packages than those returned non-voluntarily.
- IOM will assist non-voluntary returnees once they have been formally admitted and entered into Afghanistan.
- Prior to return the target group (including voluntary and non-voluntary returnees) will be informed by the respective EPI counsellors that they can address IOM in Afghanistan for post-arrival reintegration assistance.
- Return assistance will be provided by the EPI, while IOM Afghanistan will provide required reintegration assistance upon arrival that will enable the returnees to build up their lives independently.
- Information counselling meetings can be more effective if conducted on regular basis.

- Social and economic considerations must be factored in when envisaging the return of potential vulnerable individuals, such as women, children and the elderly or single parents with small children. In such cases, reintegration in a socially and religiously conservative environment presents additional challenges.

## 4. IOM AFGHANISTAN

*IOM AFGHANISTAN CAN PROVIDE REINTEGRATION SERVICES THROUGH ITS NETWORK OF NINE OFFICES BASED IN:  
KABUL, PAKTYA, KANDAHAR, HERAT, BALKH, BADAKHSAN, NANGARHAR AND BAMYAN*

Potential returnees and ERIN Partner Institutions counsellors can directly call the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) in IOM Kabul if they have additional questions or need more information:

**IOM ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION  
Point of Contact in Afghanistan:**

**Mr. Hamid Ahmad Sarwary, Reintegration Assistant**  
**Available from Sunday to Thursday, from 08:00 to 17:00**  
**(GMT+4:30)**

Email: [HSARWARY@iom.int](mailto:HSARWARY@iom.int)  
Mobile number: : +93 (0) 771 991 414

**Address:**  
International Organization for Migration  
IOM Kabul  
Street No.3, House No.28,  
Ansari Square, Shahr-e-Naw,  
Kabul, Afghanistan

Website: <http://erin-iom.belgium.iom.int/?q=afghanistan>

### **You can also refer to the ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION AFGHANISTAN LEAFLET**

IOM has maintained presence in Afghanistan since 1992. Since the Bonn Agreement in 2002, the international community has committed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. IOM is at the forefront of this reconstruction effort with a broad range of programs which contribute to the reconstruction and population stabilization. Celebrating this year its 22nd anniversary in Afghanistan, IOM has effective operational structures in place throughout the country. Manned by some 381 international and national staff, IOM has its main office in Kabul and sub-offices in Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Herat, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Paktya.

In Afghanistan a robust and comprehensive mechanism has been developed and tested through years of successful implementation by IOM in support of reception and reintegration of Afghan nationals coming back to the country.

For IOM, programmatic and technical assistance to returnees (from reception to reintegration) remains a key strategy in ensuring humane and orderly movement of migrants and an indispensable component of a migration management approach mutually beneficial to migrants, governments and other sectors of society affected by migration. At the same time, the provision of reintegration assistance to all Afghan returnees is a key priority for the Government of Afghanistan as per its Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013 as well as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2010-2013 as it supports in a cross-cutting way all three priority areas of (i) Governance, Peace and Stability, (ii) Sustainable Livelihoods, and (iii) Basic Social Services.

**AVRR Statistics:** The total number of returnees under IOM's Afghanistan Return and Reintegration programme in 2013 was 2807 (including post-arrival assistance), IOM has assisted 1329 returnees with reintegration assistance. During 2014, IOM Afghanistan assisted a total of 2347 with arrival assistance and a total of 1474 with reintegration assistance. Total number of returnees during 2015 was 1,631, and IOM assisted 847 with reintegration assistance. In 2016, till the end of October, total number of returnees was 6,191 and IOM has assisted 874 with reintegration assistance so far. These numbers include both voluntary and forced returnees.

**Geographic coverage:** With 13 years of experience in AVRR, IOM Afghanistan has a robust and comprehensive AVRR mechanism in place, which has been developed and tested through years of successful implementation. IOM Afghanistan has approximately 381 international and national staff in its main office in Kabul and sub-offices in the provinces of Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Herat, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Paktya. Therefore, IOM Afghanistan has the capacity and experience to provide the required reintegration services, including counselling and referral of returnees in all over the country.

**Non-Voluntary returns (i.e. PARA: post-arrival reintegration assistance):** IOM Afghanistan can assist PARA cases for sending/host countries that have a bilateral agreement with the Government of Afghanistan.

**Unaccompanied migrant children (UMC):** UMCs returned voluntarily will be provided with reception assistance upon arrival. IOM will ensure that the legal guardian for UMC in Afghanistan is identified prior to its involvement in assisting UMCs with reintegration assistance.

Note that there is currently no legislation that governs the situation of UMCs after return nor are there local or international NGOs which could provide support to UMC in particular those with no family support after return. Furthermore, as there is a new government in place, we yet do not know their motion with regards to UMCs and how fast they could be developing relevant legislation and policies if they agree with the return of UMCs. As such, IOM Kabul will only be able to provide support to UMC as per IOM internal guidance notes on UMCs.

## **5. ERIN-SPECIFIC ACTION SERVICES PROVIDED BY IOM AFGHANISTAN:**

The reintegration assistance package is delivered in-kind (unless stated differently in the National Annex) and the amounts vary according to the sending country, the national reintegration grants, the

type of return, and the beneficiary profile and needs. Additional reintegration services will be provided to unaccompanied migrant children. Upon screening and evaluation from the ERIN Partner institution before departure, as well as a further identification of needs post-return; the following services are available for ERIN-SPECIFIC ACTION beneficiaries:

### **CASE BY CASE AIRPORT ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE- IOM KABUL Airport Coordination Cell**

- Meet and greet and orientation service
- Onwards transportation assistance: Upon your request, IOM Kabul can provide you with onward transportation to your final destination within the country, and charges will be covered through your reintegration grant.
- Referrals to urgent medical care for treatment continuity
- Emergency housing for a minimum of one week: *If accommodation is required, IOM Kabul will provide temporary accommodation in the IOM reception centre while you look for a durable solution. Accommodation expenses will be covered with the reintegration grant.*

### **REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE:**

Post arrival counselling will be provided by qualified IOM staff in IOM offices throughout the country. IOM counsellors will inform the returnees and their families about the reintegration possibilities **and will help them plan their reintegration strategy and how to spend their grant in the most thought through and constructive manner**, taking into account their needs and background, as well as available resources (i.e. defined grants, individual capacities, and social and economic capital).

The reintegration team is based in Kabul and coordinates the reintegration assistance provided in the sub-offices in Herat, Jalalabad, Bamyan, Mazar-i-Sharif, Faizabad, Gardez and Kandahar. The sub-offices do the monitoring in the field. If a returnee lives in a village/city where the IOM staffs do not have access to because of the UN security restrictions, then the contact has to be established through the phone. The returnee might also have to go to the office or one of the sub-offices to receive his reintegration assistance. However, within the areas that are cleared by UN, IOM can directly visit the families.

IOM staff, responsible for implementation of reintegration assistance to the returnees, provides counselling, information and guidance to the returnee. IOM staff also provides logistical assistance (such as renting a business site or purchasing goods), technical and market relevant expertise, and when necessary moral support to facilitate integration into the local society.

The reintegration grants can be used, for the following reintegration services:

#### **MICRO-BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Assistance to start, to re-launch, or to partner into a **micro-business activity** for economic autonomy and income generation: If you choose to start your own business, IOM helps you to identify a suitable

business type. The choice of business depends amongst others on your previous experience, other businesses in your area of return etc...

The Afghan economy is characterized by a high rate of unemployment and underemployment. The local industrial expertise is quite limited and macro-economic policies are not yet implemented, making the environment conducive to the emergence of a deregulated and largely informal economy.

AVRR Program participants also face many challenges in successfully and sustainably running a business in Afghanistan. Due to the unstable security situation, low income level and high unemployment of the population, it is difficult for many Program participants to market their products. As the conditions for business start-ups are more favourable in the capital city than on the countryside, many people do not return to their home villages. Far away from the places where they grew up, they often find their lack of social networks to be a sizable challenge. Furthermore, while their own living conditions are often very difficult, they also suffer from the high expectations of family members, neighbours and friends.

IOM tries to consider these relevant factors when designing and implementing its AVRR Programs. Instead of limiting the assistance of the AVRR Afghanistan Program to logistical assistance, such as renting a business site or purchasing goods, the Program also provides technical and market-relevant expertise via IOM colleagues in the country as well as moral support to facilitate the reintegration of Program participants into Afghan society. Indeed, it is apparent from beneficiary interviews that the assistance through AVRR has already provided an important foundation for the socio-economic reintegration of many Afghan returnees.

**Successful micro-business ideas:** Most returnees opt for micro business as this is the quickest way for making money to start supporting themselves and families in Afghanistan after a long absence. Returnees usually start a partnership with relatives or friends, as the reintegration grants are usually not enough to set up your own business in Afghanistan. Being part of an already existing business proves cheaper and has a better foundation that gives returnees confidence to join with a monetary share rather. In Afghanistan, business registration is mandatory.

Reintegration assistance also includes a significant self-employment component supporting returnees to establish small business start-up Programs. As a matter of fact, the development of micro-enterprises through a well-controlled system of non-cash grants has shown consistent results in ensuring sustainable reintegration for returnees faced with the need to identify immediate sources of income. It is proposed that the self-employment Programs follow the principles and guidelines outlined below: - The initial stage consists of counselling sessions (as many as needed) designed to help the returnee decide whether business start-up is a suitable form of assistance, and identify which field offers adequate potential for economic success; - The counselling process leads to the design of a business plan evaluated by IOM staff. Important factors are returnees' work experience, their familiarity with the chosen activity, the proposed form of the business Program (independently run, in partnership), viability of the Program, impact of the financial contribution, and assessment of profitability. Many returnees, while prevented from undertaking a professional activity as asylumseekers, do retain a degree of experience from years spent in Afghanistan prior to their

fleeing. Reintegration assistance aims at identifying such skills and at further developing them into successful reintegration; - Implementation of the business plan – IOM financial assistance will primarily go towards purchasing equipment that will contribute to the establishment and subsequent operation of the Program. Returnees are required to submit three quotations for each item they request assistance in purchasing. Business premises are systematically inspected prior to Program approval. No monetary transactions take place between the returnees and IOM. Instead, financial assistance goes directly to identify service providers, in relation to the assistance required through the completion and approval of the returnee's business plan.

**Wage subsidy allowance** to encourage employment: IOM Kabul can refer you through its network of partners to potential employers, and show you how to operate the relevant recruitment websites. If you get a job, your reintegration assistance will be released as a salary subsidy/salary top-up. The IOM Kabul office has supported a few returnees with the Wage Subsidy assistance in the form of a salary add-on. Usually, these returnees have specific skills or are highly skilled workers. For returnees with no formal or poor education/skills, it can be very difficult to find an official job and it might be more interesting to invest in a micro-business or partnership as it is a faster way to find a job and to earn money.

**Vocational training** enrolment to enhance skills and employability: trainings can be identified based on availability, prior work experience, education, interest, local market demand for specific skills. In cooperation with partners, IOM Kabul can offer you different vocational and educational trainings.

For the vocational training courses and on the job placement components, IOM is in contact with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD) and the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP).

A number of reliable training institutions have been identified and are frequently used by IOM; however returnees are able to choose other training institutions/courses that are conveniently located in their region of origin and within the scope of their needs and interests. The training tuition fees are paid by IOM directly to the training institution.

**Temporary accommodation** to respond to immediate material needs.

**Medical costs** coverage (medication, consultations) to enable you access to healthcare upon return. Medical consultation and assessment, if necessary, are provided by IOM's doctor. In case treatment is required, you will be referred to relevant hospitals.

**Legal/administrative costs** coverage to enable you to register yourself locally. IOM Kabul will provide you with required assistance on legal issues. For example: if you do not have any documents IOM will assist you by referring to relevant state agencies and covering the official fees occurred with your reintegration grant.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND REFERRALS:**

IOM can provide you with administrative support with, and referrals to:

- National, regional, and local services (governmental, non-governmental, charitable, ect.)
- local employment initiatives
- micro-financial organisations
- enrolment to schools and educational institutions
- educational and vocational training
- specialised medical assistance
- psycho-social assistance
- local social network
- legal advise.

## 6. CONTEXT OF RETURN MIGRATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan has experienced more than three decades of war, political upheaval and insecurity, resulting in millions of Afghans fleeing primarily to the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, but also to many other countries around the world. The first wave of return was in the early 90s: with initially up to a million Afghans returning since 2002, over 5.7 million Afghan refugees have returned home. Currently, there is on-going cross-border movement—people are coming back but also leaving Afghanistan for different purposes.

Returnees constitute 25 per cent of Afghanistan’s population, of whom an estimated 40 per cent have not fully reintegrated which can create a security issue. Un- and underemployed citizens including returnees are at risk of being potentially involved in conflicts and they have particular needs that are often overlooked in the competition for scarce resources in (post-) conflict situations. Systematic and sustained attention to providing opportunities for these target groups, their families and the communities supporting them is required so as to minimize the risks of potential conflicts that could be triggered by the competition for scarce resources. Robust reintegration efforts will help minimize such risks, thus they are vital not only for further community development but also security considerations. In many cases, while returnees face particular challenges associated with their absence from communities for certain periods of time, they need to restart their lives upon their return both socially and economically; therefore, timely reintegration livelihood assistance including vocational training is crucial. In addition to meet their immediate needs, this will enable them to contribute to the development of Afghanistan through their sustainable livelihood activities.

### **HOUSING:**

**Housing situation:** The rent of an apartment ranges from 400 USD up to 600 USD. Living expenses monthly cost up to 500 USD. The utilities like electricity and water cost not more than USD 40 per month. Depending on the consumption, costs might be higher.

**Availability of social grants for housing:** There are property dealers that can provide information regarding rental premise like for instance, house, apartment and etc.

**Ways/assistance to find accommodation:** Returnees can be provided two weeks accommodation in IOM reception center in Jungalak after their return.

**Labour market situation:** In general, the country's economy depends on the international assistance from the donors since 2002. Afghanistan is being faced with the economic crises due to the decrease in the fund from the international donors since 2014. Because of the uncertain situation in the country, companies and investors are not interested in investing in Afghanistan. The supply for employment exceeds the demand. The employment rate declines.

**Ways/assistance to find employment:** As to employment in the public sector, the civil service commission management directorate (CSMD) of Civil Service Commission and Administrative Reform announces vacant positions online: [www.afghanexperts.gov.af](http://www.afghanexperts.gov.af). In opposite to this vacant positions in the private sector are gathered on these websites: [www.acbar.org](http://www.acbar.org) and [www.jobs.af](http://www.jobs.af)

**Further education possibilities, vocational trainings:** There are public schools, owned by the government and managed under the line management of Ministry of Education, as well as some technical/vocational schools, that provide trainings.

#### **HEALTH CARE:**

Afghanistan's modern health facilities are mostly concentrated in Kabul and other large cities. The country has always had a shortage of medical facilities, particularly in rural areas. Afghans are still crossing into neighbouring Pakistan to seek basic medical services. This phenomenon is the result of higher medical standards as well as the relative ease with which Afghans can cross the Afghan-Pakistani border.

→ **For specific medical needs:** please contact the IOM Kabul if you need more specific information on the availability, accessibility and cost price of the medical treatment and medication.

#### **VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

Formal educational institutions include vocational/technical high schools, and tertiary institutions such as the Kabul Polytechnic Institute. Numerous institutions, under the overall guidance of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, also offer training courses. The Ministry of Education also has a department of vocational education which runs 41 schools providing this kind of training. Activities generally focus on mechanics, carpentry, plumbing, carpet weaving, metal work, hair dressing, tailoring, and office management.

Other organisations active in the field of vocational training are CHA (Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance), ACT (Agency for Construction Training), AGTTP (Afghan German Foundation), AFS (Agency for Farming Support), and SORVACH (Services Organisation for Rehabilitation of Vocational, Agriculture, Construction and Health).

#### **EDUCATION:**

**Educational system:** Two education systems exist in parallel in Afghanistan. Religious education is the responsibility of clerics at mosques, while the government provides free academic education at state schools. From age 7 to age 13 pupils attend primary schools where they learn the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic and their national culture. Three years of middle school follow where academic-style education continues. Students must pass an examination at the end of this phase if they wish to study further on. At secondary school students have a choice, either continuing an academic path for 3 years that could perhaps lead to university, or studying subjects such as applied agriculture, aeronautics, arts, commerce and teacher training instead. Both programs culminate in a Baccalaria examination.

**Vocational Education:** Formal educational institutions include vocational/technical high schools, and tertiary institutions such as the Kabul Polytechnic Institute. Numerous institutions, under the overall guidance of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, offer training courses. The Ministry of Education also has a department of vocational education, handling 41 schools, which provide assistance in this respect. Activities generally focus on mechanics, carpentry, plumbing, carpet weaving, metal-works, hairdressing, and tailoring and office management.

**Needed documents:** The returnee can request enrolment at the Ministry of Return and Repatriation, which then will refer the returnee to Kabul provincial education department (Marif Shahr) for the verification of the educational documents. Afterwards the returnee gets enrolled in the institutions according to the approved level of education.

**Approval and verification of foreign diplomas:** At the first stage, the documents e.g. certificates, diploma or degree should be sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry will accept these documents for verification on the condition that they already have been attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the issuing country. Afterwards the documents will be referred to the Ministry of Higher Education for the record. At the final stage the original copies verified by the ministry will be given to the holder of the documents.

**Child care:** There are some kindergarten centres financed and administered by the public entities. They provide facilities to their staff members' children for free.

#### **Disclaimer**

IOM has carried out the gathering of information with great care. IOM provides information at its best knowledge and in all conscience. Nevertheless, IOM cannot assume to be held accountable for the correctness of the information provided. Furthermore, IOM shall not be liable for any conclusions made or any results, which are drawn from the information provided by IOM.

## ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION DONORS

The program is funded by the European Commission (European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund), and co-funded by the participating Partner Countries as listed below:

<b>ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION PROGRAM PARTNER COUNTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS</b>	
<b>COUNTRIES</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS</b>
Austria	Ministry of Interior
Belgium	Federal Immigration Office
	Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil)
Denmark	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Finland	Finnish Immigration Service
France	French Immigration and Integration Office
Germany	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
Greece	Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection
Italy	Ministry of Interior
Luxembourg	Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs
Malta	Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security
Netherlands	Repatriation and Departure Service
Norway	Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
Romania	General Inspectorate for Immigration
Spain	Integration of Immigrants Migration Board
Sweden	Swedish Migration Agency
Switzerland	State Secretariat for Migration
United Kingdom	The UK Home Office – Immigration Enforcement