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and Integration Fund



European Reintegration Network



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

EUROPEAN REINTEGRATION NETWORK (ERIN) SPECIFIC ACTION PROGRAM BRIEFING NOTE

SRI LANKA (Also available in Tamil and Sinhala)

**Post-arrival and reintegration assistance to Sri Lankan Nationals
returning from Austria, Australia, 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 is a joint return and reintegration project that runs from 1ST June 2016 to end of 31ST 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 from 2012 to 2014 and ERIN project which was implemented from June 2014 to May 2016.

The European Commission (European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) funds 90 per cent of ERIN Specific Action Program, as well as the eighteen participating ERIN partner countries (i.e. Austria, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom).

The program is implemented by nineteen ERIN Partner Institutions: Ministry of Interior- Austria, Department Of Immigration and Border Protection- Australia, Federal Immigration Office and Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers- Belgium, Ministry of Foreign Affairs- Denmark, Finnish Immigration Service- Finland, French Immigration and Integration Office- France, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees- Germany, Ministry of Public Order and citizen Protection-Greece, Ministry of Interior- Italy, Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs- Luxembourg, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security- Malta, Repatriation and Departure Service – Netherlands, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration- Norway, General Inspectorate for Immigration- Romania, Integration of Immigrants Migration Board- Spain, Swedish Migration Agency- Sweden, State Secretariat for Migration- Switzerland and the UK Home Office – Immigration Enforcement; and the selected local service providers in the ERIN countries of return.

2. IOM MISSION STATEMENT

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM was established in 1951 to help governments to manage migration and to assist migrants in the migration process. Today, with 481 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.

IOM also 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.

3. PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

The potential returnees will be informed by the respective ERIN Partner Institutions (EPIs) of the ERIN Specific Action Program services that are available for them upon return. The counsellor will identify the type of assistance to be provided depending on the applicant profile and needs identified in the information counselling. Each EPI has counsellors operating in the reception centres and (administrative) detention centres and provides pre-departure counselling to the potential returnees residing in the centres. 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.

Special emphasis should be given to the below mentioned information:

- Provide the IOM contact details to the returnee before departure.
- Define as much as possible the reintegration package before departure, or inform the applicant of the type and quantity of reintegration grants he/she should expect.
- Those nationals choosing to return voluntarily will be incentivized through larger reintegration packages than those returned non-voluntarily.
- IOM will assist non-voluntary returnees once they have been formally admitted and entered into Sri Lanka.
- It is encouraged for you to translate your medical documents and/ or educational and training certificates before your return, in the language of your country of return, or (if not possible), into English. This will help you to register in your local institutions and to facilitate your medical follow up.
- 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 country of return for post-arrival reintegration assistance.
- Return assistance will be provided by the EPI, while IOM will provide required reintegration assistance upon arrival that will enable the returnees to build up their lives independently.
- Information counselling meetings.
- Social, economic and psychosocial considerations must be factored in when envisaging the return of potentially vulnerable individuals, such as women, children and the elderly or single parents with small children.

Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC) can be assisted on a case by case basis according to the following general parameters:

1. IOM will:

- a) Confirm the identity of the legal guardians in both the host country and the country of origin (or in a third country, where applicable and subject to the legal requirements of the third country);
- b) Confirm that the Best Interests Determination (BID) process has concluded that it is in the best interest of the UMC to return, and;
- c) Confirm that a family assessment by IOM has been completed.

2. IOM's assistance will be determined by the outcome of the BID process and the confirmed willingness of the child to return.

3. Due to the inherent vulnerability of UMC, and the interest of the Organization in maintaining the highest standards of protection and assistance, IOM will in general adhere to UNICEF's policy positions on child protection.

4. Prior to facilitating the AVRR of an UMC, IOM will:

- a) Receive letters of confirmation from the legal guardians in both the host country and the country of origin confirming that the return to the country of origin is in the child's best interest.

b) Conduct a family assessment to 1) confirm the identity of the parents or legal guardians and that they are willing and able to care for the child until he/she reached the age of 18 years, and 2) to determine the feasibility of assistance by IOM.

Non-Voluntary returns:

- IOM can assist non-voluntary returnees who are admitted in their country of origin, as long as sending/host countries have a bilateral agreement with the Government of Sri Lanka. IOM will request the confirmation that the government in the country of origin provides its consent per sending country before engaging in assisting such returnees.
- IOM in Sri Lanka supports program such as ERIN Specific Action Program with reintegration assistance for returnees, if such assistance is considered appropriate by the sending and receiving States, and only once the process of return has been concluded. However, the availability of IOM post arrival assistance cannot be a determining factor for the forced return process to take place.
- IOM Sri Lanka does not provide airport arrival support to non-voluntary returnees.

4. IOM IN SRI LANKA:

Over the past 10 years, IOM Sri Lanka has been engaged in supporting Voluntary Sri Lankan migrants with reintegration services. More than 5000 Sri Lankan returnees from Europe, Australia, Africa and Asia have received assistance from IOM. Many of these returnees are either failed asylum seekers or irregular/stranded migrants who were in need of a wide range of services.

With its network of experienced staff and sub-offices located in the Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka and in Colombo, IOM has been able to cater to the returnees with up-to-date information, regular reception of returnees in the field level and provide reintegration solution through orientation, business development and creation of self-employment in the form of small scale business development, vocational training and job referrals.

In providing to the requests received by the government partners, IOM host country missions and from the returning migrants themselves, IOM proposes to implement effective return and sustainable reintegration program which will foresee and provide comprehensive solutions to the issues faced by returnees at each stage in return and reintegration.

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

ERIN WEBSITE:
<http://erin-iom.belgium.iom.int>
ERIN IOM POINT OF CONTACT: SRI LANKA
Mr Priyantha Kulathunge
Program Manager
Available from Monday to Friday from 08:30 hrs to 17:00 hrs
(Sri Lankan time which is GMT+ 5.30)

Email: MKULATUNGE@iom.int

Phone: +94 11 5325 310; Fax: +94 11 5325 302

Address:

International Organization for Migration
62, Greenpath, Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha,
Colombo-3, Sri Lanka

5. ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION PROGRAM AVRR SERVICES PROVIDED BY IOM IN SRI LANKA:

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 (UMC).

Upon screening, evaluation, and approval from the ERIN Partner Institution, as well as a further identification of needs done by IOM post-return; the following services are available for ERIN Specific Action Program beneficiaries on a case by case basis:

CASE BY CASE AIRPORT ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE

- Meet and greet upon arrival¹
- Onwards transportation assistance: Upon your request, IOM 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
- Temporary Accommodation for a minimum of one week

REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE:

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...
- **Wage subsidy allowance** to encourage employment: IOM Sri Lanka 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.
- **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.

¹ Meet and greet upon arrival is only provided to voluntary returnees upon request

- **Temporary accommodation** to respond to immediate material needs.
- **Medical costs** coverage (medication, consultations) to enable you access to healthcare upon return.
- **Costs of education and schooling for children**, and any required vaccinations and medical care.
- **Legal/administrative costs** coverage to enable you to register yourself locally.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND REFERRALS:

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

- National, regional, and local services (governmental, non-governmental, private sector.)
- local employment initiatives
- micro-financial organisations
- enrolment to schools and educational institutions
- educational and vocational training
- specialised medical assistance
- psycho-social assistance: IOM Sri Lanka staff is trained in this field by a specialised consultant
- local social network
- legal advice

6. SRI LANKA COUNTRY INFORMATION

MEDICAL CARE

Sri Lanka's network of healthcare institutions is largely run by the state and the private sector. The government provides free healthcare for the public at all state hospitals.

Sri Lanka has also achieved remarkable standards in its health outcome focusing on communicable diseases, in improving maternal and child health by eliminating vaccine preventable diseases.

With a rise in the aged population consequent to the increase in life expectancy, there is a rising trend in the incidence of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, renal diseases, and cancer.

Health resource flows have increased in recent years and have been able to sustain the health infrastructure that has been developed over time. The health authorities have identified, the major health problems as;

- Inequities in the provision of health services and health needs of the elderly and disabled;
- Increased incidence of non-communicable diseases, suicides, substance abuse and malnutrition.

The Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition still faces a challenge in providing required infrastructures for health facilities in the Northern Province after the end of the war.

Information about these diseases and an update with the situation in the country has being made available on the official website of the Ministry of Health www.health.gov.lk, Epidemiology Unit www.epid.gov.lk.

Health Facilities

State owned hospitals are located in every city and major towns and are equipped with modern equipment to provide a range of medical facilities. Services provided here are generally free of charge. However, the major free health facilities in the country are congested and the patients' occupancy rates in most public hospitals are over 100%. There are also many private hospitals within Colombo and major cities in all provinces that are equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment, providing high quality but expensive medical care.

Unlike, in an economically rich country where a large part of the private health expenditure is borne by health insurances, in Sri Lanka, private health expenditure is almost entirely borne by users except in situations where private companies insure their staff.

For a list of state-owned, private hospitals and clinics in Colombo city please visit: <http://www.lankalinksystems.com/directory/newsinfo/healthinfo.htm>

HOUSING

The demand for housing has increased with population growth and urbanization. The supply of housing continued to increase with active involvement of the private sector and improvement in the provision of finances for housing.

The National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) provides assistance to families by means of allocation of land, providing finances etc. NHDA is responsible for the implementation of key state sector housing programs. The government housing finance institutions were strengthened to deliver housing credit facilities to low-income families using their EPF (Employment Provident Fund) balance as security. Concessionary loan schemes were further expanded for the benefit of Sri Lankan workers returning from overseas.

Furthermore, there are also a number of large-scale private sector initiated housing, township and condominium development projects. An alternative option is also to rent/ lease houses though the prices vary widely depending on the location of the house.

With land becoming scarce in Colombo the popularity of high-rise apartments soared until 2006. High-rise apartments were initially concentrated mostly in the Colombo 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 regions. They tend to have higher rents than housing in the area due to all kinds of conveniences and services within the apartment complexes. However, as of recently high rise apartments are available in the greater Colombo area and in some principal towns away from the Colombo district for outright purchase and for modest rents.

Following the end of the 25 years of civil conflict, there is a significant progress in the real estate market.

For more details please visit:

www.nhda.lk

http://www.lanka.info/Sri_Lanka/realestate/index.jsp

EMPLOYEMENT

The number of employed persons increased marginally by 0.1 per cent to 8.424 million in 2014 compared to 8.418 million during the previous year. This increase was mainly observed in increases in employment in Industry and Services sectors, supported by the expansion in these two sectors. Nevertheless, the number employed in the Agriculture sector declined in 2014 due to the setback in the sector as a result of adverse weather conditions which prevailed during the most part of the year. Accordingly, the share of the number employed in the Agriculture sector declined to 28.5 per cent.

MICRO-BUSINESS

To start-up a small business, the owner should be aware of the following procedures:

- a) Businesses must be registered with the local authority. Environmental approvals must also be received. Owners must obtain a business registration at their nearest Divisional Secretariat. Registration costs approximately LKR 1,000.00. A separate business license - renewable annually - must also be obtained from the Provincial Council, Municipal Council or Pradeshiya Saba. The cost for this varies according to the nature of the business concerned.
- b) The owner of the business has to pay a nominal amount as tax tri-monthly to the local authority on the basis of monthly turnover of the business. If the business is related to an industry that makes noise or ejects gas or vapor, an approval from the environment authority is necessary. If the business is related to food or beverages (for example a bakery, snack bar, restaurant or pastry shop), a certificate from the Public Health Inspector is a necessity.

There are special credit schemes for micro enterprises. For more information please visit, www.microfinance.lk.

Apart from the above programs a number of intergovernmental and international non- governmental organizations provide support and financial assistance as well as required training for potential entrepreneurs and small scale business set-up.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The present educational system of Sri Lanka derives from the British educational system, which was introduced by the British colonial masters in the 19th century. The British colonial government established colleges for boys and girls separately. These colleges consisted of Primary Schools, Lower Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools.

In 1938, the education in Government schools was made free-of-charge as a consequence of the Universal Franchise granted in 1931. Subsequently many government schools called Maha Vidyalayas were established in all parts of the country. The medium of education of Maha Vidyalaya's is generally either Sinhala or Tamil and education to this day is free-of-charge.

Sri Lanka's education structure is divided into five parts: primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, collegiate and tertiary. Primary education lasts six years (grades 1-5) and at the end of this period, students in both private and public schools can choose to write an exam called the Scholarship exam. This exam allows students with exceptional skills to move on to better schools in the district or out of the district. After primary education, the junior secondary education lasts for 4 years (grades 6-9). According to the Sri Lankan law, it is compulsory that all children go to school until grade 9 (age 14) at which point they can choose to continue further or opt out and engage in a job. However, the Ministry of Education strongly advises all students to continue with their studies at least until the G.C.E. Ordinary Level in order to obtain a suitable job, later on. During this period, the students go through senior secondary education for 2 years (grades 10-11) to sit for the G.C.E Ordinary Level examination. The students must pass this examination to go on with collegiate education. Collegiate education lasts for 2 years (grades 12-13) at the end of this, there is another examination called the G.C.E. Advance Level. On successful completion of this exam, students can go on to pursuing tertiary education (University and beyond).

1. Primary & Secondary Education

Sri Lanka's population is highly educated with a literacy rate of 91.3%. Sri Lanka has one of the highest literacy rates of South Asia. This can mainly be attributed to the free education system. The Ministry of Education administers all government primary and secondary schools where education is free. The medium of instruction is mainly Sinhala and/or Tamil along with a few schools, located mainly in Colombo and Kandy, that teach in English medium.

There are also a number of private schools in Sri Lanka, due to the emergence of the upper-middle class families. Many of the private schools have access to better facilities than state run schools. The students in these schools have to pay a monthly fee and the amount varies according to the popularity of the school.

There has been a considerable increase in the number of international schools in the principal cities in and out of the Colombo district that are not only restricted to the expatriate community, but to anyone with the ability and willingness to incur the costs. In addition to costs, international schools are different in terms of: Student population: Co-ed schools; Curriculum: Edexcel General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary, Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A2) Level examinations. Preparation for Cambridge Examinations is also offered by a few schools on request.

These schools are not regulated by the Ministry of Education as they follow the British curriculum.

A student who wishes to join schools in Sri Lanka after schooling abroad can enter the appropriate grade in either government, private or international schools provided they have a copy of their 'leaving certificate' (indicating the last grade passed) from the school attended last and the birth certificate along with the application. Exceptions are possible if documents are not present depending on the case. However, getting admitted to a popular state or private school in populated districts like Colombo or Kandy during mid-term can be a difficult task.

2. Tertiary education

University education in Sri Lanka is free of charge. The state university system is highly competitive, hence, only the top students from each district are guaranteed the chances of having tertiary

education. As a result, most students who are not granted admission go abroad to pursue their studies at foreign universities or enrol themselves in degree awarding, state-funded or private, institutes in Sri Lanka. Students who fail to qualify for university entrance can also engage in higher education as external students of state universities or at the Open University of Sri Lanka. There are also vocational technical colleges which specialize in mechanical and electronic subjects. There are currently 15 major state funded universities in Sri Lanka. In recent years with changes to the University Act, institutes have been given permission to grant their own degrees, the most prominent is the government owned Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology.

Sri Lankan students who graduated through any international curriculum are generally required to complete their local A/L examination to enter local universities although exceptions are often made. Admission to the universities is very competitive and is based on the aggregate (Z score) obtained by each student. These basic degree programs are also covered by the government free education system and some students are entitled for a grant under “Mahapola Scholarship Program” (on a merit basis).

The universities conduct a number of postgraduate diploma and certificate programs, but are not covered by the government free education system. These programs are open to all students. If a student who has studied abroad wishes to follow a postgraduate/diploma or certificate program he/she should furnish relevant documents such as certified copies of detailed educational certificates. There are external degrees, diplomas and post-graduate courses conducted by several other institutions. Admission criteria for these institutions vary and programs are usually advertised in the newspapers. The Open University of Sri Lanka conducts distant education programs (also not covered under the government free education system) including basic degree programs that are also open for students who studied abroad. There is no age barrier to follow the courses in the Open University of Sri Lanka.

There are a number of government technical colleges in different districts. They conduct vocational training programs, diploma programs and certificate courses. The Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission administers a number of public sector institutions such as the Department of Education and Training, Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Council and National Institute of Technical Education. A large number of private sector institutions are also providing vocational training facilities. The target group is generally diverse and consists of unemployed youth, rural men and women and school leavers.

For more details please visit:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_and_colleges_in_Sri_Lanka

<http://www.moe.gov.lk/>

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.

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ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION DONORS

The program is funded by the European Commission (European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) as well as the eighteen participating ERIN Partner Countries:

ERIN SPECIFIC ACTION PROGRAM Partner Countries and Institutions	
Countries	Institutions
Austria	Ministry of Interior
Australia	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
Belgium	Federal Immigration Office
	Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
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	Home Office – Immigration Enforcement