



IOM's recommendations for resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes

Providing essential support to States resettling refugees and other humanitarian entrants is a **fundamental purpose of IOM** and its largest ongoing activity since its establishment in 1951. IOM assists its Member States in carrying out a variety of resettlement and other humanitarian admission schemes, many of which are well-established programmes, while some are ad hoc responses to specific forced migration crises.

IOM believes the most successful resettlement programs provide not only much needed international protection for the most vulnerable but also provide a path to successful integration into new societies. IOM works closely with governments, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), non-government organizations and other partners, such as e.g. airlines, to enable resettlement.

Based on the organization's experience and expertise in facilitating resettlement, IOM proposes the following **operational model for resettlement** to participating European and Associated states: (1) Facilitation of selection missions and visa processing; (2) pre-departure health assessments; (3) pre-departure orientation; (4) movement management; and (5) post-arrival reception and integration.

1. Facilitation of selection missions and visa processing

IOM assists governments by providing selection authorities with the logistical and operational assistance to successfully carry out the interview and selection process. IOM can also provide, where necessary, logistical and operational assistance for the visa processing by relevant authorities. It may include any or all of the following elements:

- Scheduling refugee appointments on the request of the relevant authorities
- Transportation of refugees from their place of habitual residence to the place where the selection mission/visa processing will be carried out
- Accommodation for refugees during selection missions/visa processing procedures
- Scheduling and supervising interpreters, security guards and child care services
- Providing on-site assistance during selection missions, including arranging interview rooms, technical equipment, catering for the refugees,...
- Providing assistance during visa processing with copying/printing, ID pictures, courier and document service,...
- Accommodation and transportation arrangements for the interview teams if and when necessary

2. Pre-departure health assessments



Health assessments in the context of refugee resettlement constitute one of IOM's most established activities. Refugees are a particularly vulnerable population, with health profiles that vary according to the displacement experience, pre-existing health conditions and epidemiological profiles, among other factors. Pre-departure health assessments and related activities, including travel health assistance, ensure that refugees **are fit to travel and meet the requirements of the resettlement country.**

Health assessments of refugees admitted for resettlement to third countries are funded and carried out at the request of resettlement countries such as **Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States and others.** Health assessment protocols are based on the legislation and/or best practices of resettlement country governments, and are performed prior to a refugee's departure for resettlement.

Pre-departure refugee health assessments are intended to ensure that people travel in a safe and dignified manner, are fit to travel, receive appropriate assistance when required, and do not pose a hazard to other travelers or receiving communities.

As **standard health activities** for any resettlement scheme, IOM suggests to carry out a medical history and physical exam, specific follow-up/referrals for individual cases which are diagnosed with a specific medical condition, pregnancy or are symptomatic of TB or other significant medical conditions; pre-departure treatment and stabilization where needed and pre-embarkation fitness to travel checks (24-48 hours before departure).

Individuals in need of travel health assistance (e.g. wheelchairs, supplemental oxygen, medical escorts, etc.) during transportation are identified at the time of the health assessment to ensure that they travel safely and without undue hardship to themselves or to other travelers, and to avoid in-flight medical emergencies or flight deviations.

Specific provisions to the health assessment protocol (e.g. additional diagnostics, presumptive treatment, immunizations) are made upon request of resettlement countries in order to ensure safe travel, to facilitate proper follow-up of medical cases after arrival and to facilitate the integration of refugees into their receiving communities. Health assessments are increasingly recognized as an important tool for public health promotion and prevention in the pre-departure resettlement phase.

3. Pre-departure orientation

IOM strongly recommends including **pre-departure orientation** sessions in order to provide practical information on the destination country and to give beneficiaries a chance to reflect upon their upcoming resettlement, raise questions regarding the integration process, and express any concerns they may have. Often this is the only chance many refugees have to ask the questions they have in a non-threatening, open environment. Without good preparation, drop outs and no shows will be considerable which has cost implications.



IOM has **dedicated PDO trainers across the world** who speak the language of the refugees and are keenly aware of the specific refugee situations; these bi-cultural trainers share a profound understanding and can relate to refugees' specific concerns. Pre-departure orientation goes far beyond simply sharing information about the receiving country; it also addresses the psychosocial wellbeing of refugees, taking into account the social, anthropological, cultural and psychological aspects of resettlement. As such, IOM believes it is vital to develop courses that are holistic, address the wide range of concerns of participants, and place emphasis on cultural adaptation, inter-generational communication, gender equality, changing family dynamics and other challenges. IOM believes pre-departure orientation is an integral component of successful resettlement and is most effective when linked closely to reception and integration actors in the country of resettlement.

IOM's training methodology is based on a **learner-centered, interactive, participatory approach** designed to increase participant's retention of new information. Custom-made sessions assist refugees of all ages to develop realistic expectations and prepare them for their initial resettlement period. Multi-lingual, multi ethnic trainers are well positioned to assist refugees anticipate integration challenges and help guide them through the integration process. Trainers can include previously resettled refugees, as they may be intimately familiar with both cultures, and serve as credible role models who have successfully navigated the often unfamiliar, complex political, social and cultural norms of new countries.

In **2016** more than **30 PDO programs** (targeting both resettlement or relocation beneficiaries and non-resettlement cases) were implemented by IOM. A total of **71,325** individuals of whom 60,272 were refugees, asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection, were provided with training, up from approx. 41,500 in 2015 (+70%). A vast majority (84%) of the beneficiaries were refugees, asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection, while the remaining participants (16%) were either migrant workers, family reunification cases, immigrants and/or students. Gender breakdown remains consistent at 56% male, 44% female. In 2016 a number of new overseas pre-departure training programs were added, including Cambodia, Finland, Iceland, Italy, and Korea. Currently IOM provides pre-departure orientation to refugees bound for resettlement to some 16 different countries as well as to beneficiaries of international protection bound to over 20 countries in the European Economic Area within the context of the relocation.

IOM recommends that the pre-departure orientation is carried out over a **period of minimum three days** and allows for sufficient time for the beneficiaries to address their concerns, worries and expectations. IOM furthermore recommends that the **group size** does not exceed 20-25 beneficiaries, as this would have negative effects on their learning experience.

In recent years, there have been a number of innovative approaches in the resettlement process to strengthen the linkages between overseas and domestic orientation. These include



the preparation of **cultural profiles** of new refugee populations designed to help resettlement stakeholders better understand and plan for potential integration challenges. These innovative approaches should be considered in the resettlement process as well.

Increasingly, IOM focuses on **improving refugees' prospects for labour market integration**, and dedicates a significant portion of the pre-departure orientation to building their confidence, preparing them for interviews, identifying transferable skills, as well as inculcating a desire on the part of refugees to pursue both language training and vocational skills training after arrival.

Managing the expectations of both refugees, and governments undertaking to receive them, requires close consultation with all stakeholders. While the majority of IOM's work takes place in countries of first asylum, IOM sees the need for strong, **informed partnerships between pre-departure programmes and reception/integration actors** and actively works to promote and strengthen these linkages.

4. Travel phase

IOM's movement and travel operations ensure that beneficiaries of resettlement are transported smoothly from their location to their final destination in the country of resettlement.

Movement support by IOM can include all or some of the following as relevant:

- Obtaining travel documents if relevant and needed, including exit permits and entry visas in cooperation with other responsible actors such as UNHCR and government authorities
- Pre-embarkation briefing: prepares refugees for their flight, including what to expect at the airport, inflight, while in transit, and upon arrival in country of destination. The briefings also address safety, customs and immigration formalities, as well as how to plan their travel with children. IOM offers these briefings as close to departure as possible in order to ease the process and help first-time travellers feel less anxious and more prepared for the journey.
- Transportation to and passenger handling at embarkation airports: assisted check-in, help with customs and immigration formalities, etc.
- Arrangement of air/train/bus tickets: reduced fares, preferential baggage allowances, selected routings, etc.
- Provision of operational/medical escorts: help for passengers with special needs, monitoring and attending to medical requirements en route, liaison with flight staff and other authorities, etc.
- Assistance in transit if relevant: direction to connecting flights, booking adjustments, etc.



- Arrival assistance: meeting and assisting the refugees on arrival, notification and handover to reception authorities, etc.

5. Post-arrival Reception and Integration phase

Post-arrival reception assistance:

Arrangements for the reception of resettled refugees currently **differ from country to country** and can involve a number of different stakeholders from central government agencies to local, regional and city authorities as well as civil society organizations.

In many contexts, combinations of some or all of these **actors work in partnership** to deliver appropriate reception conditions for resettled refugees. In each country, the actors involved plan reception arrangements for resettled refugees prior to their arrival, which is a process known as reception planning. Reception can be provided in central facilities but can also be built on a model of direct reception by local authorities and municipalities. Certain NGOs, such as the Red Cross, have also extensive experience in arranging reception accommodation for newcomers.

Two other specific considerations to make when planning for the reception of resettlement beneficiaries are the need for **interpreters and referral to health and medical facilities** in the case of vulnerable and/or medical cases.

It is advisable that **multi-stakeholder meetings** are set up to work out the reception plan for the beneficiaries of resettlement. This will allow each of the stakeholders in the process to understand the timelines involved and plan the arrival of beneficiaries accordingly.

IOM's experience with resettlement and relocation programmes in Europe as well as coordinator of the European Resettlement Network, resulted in a wealth of experience and a wide network of relevant partners and contacts. **IOM is ready to assist the relevant authorities** in organizing multi-stakeholder meetings to bring all the relevant stakeholders around the table. IOM can assist Member States which are new to the resettlement process with exchange visits and contacts with relevant reception actors.

Integration of beneficiaries of international protection:

Integration refers to the process of migrants and refugees **settling into a new community, country and society**. Although much debated, it is commonly understood to be a long-term, two-way process of change. It involves both refugees/migrants and receiving societies, within which refugees and migrants adapt to their new surroundings and move towards independence and self-sufficiency, while receiving societies create the welcoming and equitable conditions that enable this process to take place. Integration is commonly understood as a process that takes place at the individual, local and national level.



Most Member States have **integration programmes in place**, be it in the form of **mainstreamed or specialized services** for new arrivals, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, students etc. In countries that do not have experience with resettlement, it is advisable that beneficiaries are as soon as possible mainstreamed into relevant integration programmes.

Labour market inclusion is a key area of socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees which enables their self-reliance and empowerment, as well as fosters the expansion of newcomers' networks in the receiving community. Recognition of the value of skills and competences of the beneficiaries of international protection needs to be sufficiently prioritized in the support measures for these persons.

Ensuring early **job-matching** for beneficiaries of international protection in the labour markets of the EU Member States would imply improving validation of skills and competences along the whole spectrum of assistance. Current structures and procedures in place for the reception of asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection do not always take into account their potential contribution as workers at all skill levels, and do not enable early skill recognition and their application on the labour market.

Member States should **harmonize the status granted** to the persons with international protection, **and the rights and entitlements** resulting from it. Difficulties in the decision-making process for the potential beneficiaries can result from being offered to be resettled to countries that provide different conditions during the reception phase and, above all, a different set of rights and responsibilities, upon receiving protection status. The same rights and entitlements will also likely reduce potential secondary movements.

IOM supports effective **mainstreaming of immigrant integration support measures** in a wide range of relevant policy areas, such as employment and education, civic and political participation, urban management, as well as help support inclusion of vulnerable groups: trafficked persons, unaccompanied migrants, women, the elderly and others.

Additional attention should be paid to supporting the needs and the role of **various levels of governance** as integration on the local level and coordination between national and local authorities are important to ensure sustainability of integration efforts.

IOM believes that resettlement should not only provide protection but also foster **full participation and integration** of the beneficiaries into their new societies.

IOM has expertise and experience as a coordinator of the European Resettlement Network working, in close collaboration with ICMC and UNHCR, with integration practices developed in different EU Member States for resettled refugees **including on housing, education, volunteering** and can **provide advice, support and good practice examples** at the request of the EU Member States.