



Supporting the Development of Return Counselling Capacities in Turkey (ReConnect)

Return Counselling, Capacity Building, National AVRR

Executive Summary

The ReConnect Project “Supporting the Development of Return Counselling Capacities in Turkey” aims to support the further establishment and implementation of the National Voluntary Return and Reintegration system of Turkey (NAVRR), involving all relevant actors and fostering cooperation between the national stakeholders to ensure that AVRR in Turkey is accessible through a network of professional return counsellors. In total 300 Return Counsellors from 81 Provincial Departments of Migration Management (PDMM) and Turkish Red Crescent (TÜRK KIZILAY) will be trained.

The project is funded by Switzerland’s State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is responsible for its management and implementation.

Current Context

ICMPD Turkey has been working with the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) since 2016 for the establishment of a NAVRR mechanism. As a result of long-standing consultations and background work within the framework of ICMPD projects; the National Stakeholders of the NAVRR programme were identified as DGMM, the Turkish Red Crescent, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The National Stakeholders signed a Letter of Intent on 18 June 2019 and a Cooperation Protocol on 2 September 2020, laying the foundations for the implementation of the NAVRR.

Since 2016, throughout the preceding projects, ICMPD supported the DGMM in capacity building through various wide-ranging project activities, such as workshops, consultation meeting, study visits and research support. Among others, ICMPD provided support for the development of roadmap for establishing the NAVRR mechanism in Turkey, a NAVRR strategy support paper, communication strategy support document for reaching out to migrants in Turkey and a cost analysis comparing forced return to assisted voluntary return. ICMPD conducted various researches, such as the best practices from European countries and prevalent policies in the area of return and reintegration. In addition, the ICMPD also underscored an important achievement with a field research on profiling of Afghan migrants in Turkey, to better understand the perception among Afghan irregular migrants regarding the possibility of AVR. In 5 March 2021, Turkey’s NAVR reached a milestone with the assisted voluntary return of 44 Afghan irregular migrants from Istanbul to Kabul through a pilot implementation of the national mechanism.

En route to the establishment of the NAVRR mechanism, ICMDP facilitated numerous expert consultations, experience sharing and study visits with various national and international agencies. These agencies include the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN), Belgium’s Federal Agency for Reception and Asylum (FEDASIL), The French Office for Immigration and Integration



(OFII), The UK's Voluntary Returns Service (VRS – Home Office) , the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA).

ICMPD Turkey has also been an advocate for stronger communication on NAVRR. It has assisted with the development of a NAVRR Website¹ which provides information in six languages, including Turkish, English, Farsi, Pashto, Russian and Arabic, and through which potential beneficiaries can submit online pre-applications for voluntary return. ICMPD also supported preparation of videos in each language, explaining the NAVRR programme and demonstrating the steps for the whole process of assisted voluntary return. Social media accounts² of the NAVRR were set-up to share relevant information and carry outreach activities.

Objective

The ReConnect project aims to respond to the needs of Turkey in the area of return counselling through provision of technical assistance support mainly focusing on trainings with the aim of ensuring the capacity building of the stakeholders that will be involved in the provision of return counselling.

The project will respond to the particular need of future return counsellors in Turkey for developing specific return counselling techniques and methods for them being able to guide the potential returnees with sufficient capacity towards the option of returning to their country of origin.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- Support the implementation of Turkey's NAVRR system and return policy,
- Develop the capacities of return counsellors in assisting irregular migrants with making an informed decision as to voluntary return,
- Increase the institutional capacities in the pre-return phase,
- Develop operational capacities for enabling the increase of voluntary return numbers.
Develop outreach and communication in regard of AVR throughout Turkey and increase knowledge on AVR to irregular migrants in Turkey

Beneficiaries

The beneficiary of the ReConnect project is the Directorate-General for Migration Management of Turkey (DGMM).

In addition to the DGMM, other target groups are the Provincial Departments of Migration Management (PDMM) and the Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılay).

Project Duration

The Reconnect project has a duration of 24 months and runs from 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2023.

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