Strengthening national policy frameworks

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At the structural level, focus should be on ensuring that reintegration is embedded in national migration and development strategies and relevant sectoral policies in the country of origin. This is done through the revision and upgrade of policy frameworks or through the development of reintegration-friendly policies. This is specifically relevant for countries of origin who have a significant number of returning migrants.

Supporting sustainable reintegration requires a whole-of-government approach and should be reflected throughout national and local legislation, policies and programmes. Ideally, reintegration is a component of a national migration mainstreaming process (*see box below*). However, even without a larger migration mainstreaming process, reintegration can be integrated into relevant sectoral frameworks, policies and strategies (*see Table 4.8*) at the national and local level.

Embedding reintegration within relevant policy processes aims to:

- Adopt a more comprehensive approach towards migration planning, because return migration, reintegration and development affect each other;
- Harness the benefits of sustainable reintegration for development of individuals and societies in a systematic manner, especially when there are high numbers of returnees;
- Allocate resources more efficiently to meet nationally defined priorities, including reintegration;
- Facilitate coordination among national and local actors around return and reintegration activities; and
- Implement coordinated policies and actions.

Spotlight

Migration mainstreaming is "the process of assessing the implications of migration on any action (or goals) planned in a development and poverty reduction strategy." (IOM, 2010, p. 16).

This process should include mainstreaming return and reintegration into legislation, policies and programmes at all levels. It means integrating reintegration concerns into all stages of development planning, including design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

The United Nations Joint Programme on *Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies* has developed online training material on Mainstreaming Migration into Policy Development that provides more information on this process.

Whenever possible, strategies for migration mainstreaming should be developed in partnership with key stakeholders. This can improve commitment and clarity for all involved and improve cost-efficiency via potential cost-sharing arrangements. Similarly, it is important for governments of countries of origin and for reintegration organizations to include reintegration programmes in development frameworks and strategies. Examples of these would be national development strategies or United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, national employment policies and strategies, poverty reduction strategies and comprehensive migration policies. International organizations with expertise and experience in mainstreaming migration into national or international frameworks are often well-placed to support governments in this process. The effort requires in-depth understanding of objectives and priorities of various line ministries and knowledge of sectoral policies and how they intersect with reintegration and migration management.

Successfully mainstreaming return and reintegration into national and local migration and development strategies and other relevant policies requires certain preconditions to be in place in the country of origin (*see Table 4.7 below*).

Table 4.7: Preconditions for successfully mainstreaming return and reintegration into policy frameworks

Strong high-level political support	High-level political actors should be motivated to make mainstreaming return and reintegration into the country's agenda a priority. This will assist in securing active participation by relevant national and local-level actors and sustaining the process.
National and local ownership	The government in the country of origin must be the lead actor in the mainstreaming process, so that its priorities are accounted for and the outcomes are sustainable over the long term. Whenever possible all levels of government should be involved.
Inclusive participation based on clear roles	Key stakeholders such as groups of returnees, migrant community groups, diaspora groups, civil society, academics, employers' associations and development partners need to become partners in the mainstreaming process to bring in different perspectives, new information and data, political and social support and funding. Broad

	participation supports a process that is not driven by a single government institution or a few individuals. Inclusive participation requires the respective roles and responsibilities of different actors to be clearly specified.
Shared objectives	Developing a shared understanding of objectives helps avoid divergent agendas being pursued. To establish and maintain a coherent agenda, promote a clear vision, transparency and regular dialogue between stakeholders.
Define and follow feasible time frames	Providing sufficient time for reflection, gathering of evidence and consensusbuilding will avoid unrealistic expectations and allow for flexibility and learning throughout the process.

In most contexts, all the above conditions will not be perfectly met. However, some can be advanced through the advocacy, technical expertise and capacity-building that is provided by the lead reintegration organization and its partners.

Mainstreaming efforts at the national and local levels should always follow a structured approach. Figure 4.5 below depicts a process flow for the design, implementation and monitoring of a mainstreaming plan. It can be used in contexts where return and reintegration is integrated into existing policies and strategies or in contexts where governments are currently planning (or may in the future) the development of a strategy or policy.

Figure 4.5: Step-by-step process for mainstreaming return and reintegration into migration and development strategies and policies

1. Sensitization	• Key stakeholders are brough together to discuss the purpose and objectives of the mainstreaming activity to assist the development of a proposal for the process.
2. Scoping exercise	• To identify existing return and reintegration components in sectoral policies and development planning frameworks, and to assess the associated timelines, key stakeholders, challenges and potential ways forward for structuring the process.
3. Goal setting	• To identify and prioritize goals. This process should involve all key reintegration stakeholders and reflect their feedback and priorities. If possible, it should be integrated into ongoing national development planning processes.
4. Action planning	• Involves selecting and developing programmes and projects in order to achieve the selected priorities, by defining target beneficiaries, specifying the key activities to be pursued and identifying relevant partners.
5. Implementation	• Building on the agreed action plan, the public entity in charge should develop an implementation plan and a resource mobilization strategy so that resources, decision-making, roles and responsibilities and reporting are clear.
6. Monitoring	• The plan should be continuously reviewed, updated and adapted. Any

return and reintegration policies or actions implemented but not included in the initial plan should also be integrated to track and monitor all mainstreaming activities in one document.

Potential opportunities for reintegration mainstreaming

Mainstreaming reintegration and return should not be limited to migration and development strategies but can be applied to all sectoral policies and strategies that could be relevant for national governance of return and reintegration. A selection of the key sectoral policies and their potential relevance for mainstreaming efforts is provided below:

Table 4.8: Potential mainstreaming opportunities in different sectoral policies and strategies

Sectoral Policy/Strategy	Potential mainstreaming opportunities
Labour	- Include considerations of the needs and capacities of returnees within labour policies and strategies; - Use the skills and assets of returnees for the benefit of the labour market, skills transfers schemes and the economy as a whole; - Develop or strengthen schemes to facilitate reintegration of returnees into the labour market (such as through public works programmes, skills' development); - Harmonize relevant goals and objectives stated in return and reintegration strategies with those in labour policies and strategies; - Foster inter-institutional coordination between labour market institutions and migration-related institutions and actors; - Build the capacity of Public Employment Services, VET institutes and Business Development Centres and include returnees as an eligible target group;
Education and training	- Include considerations of the needs and capacities of returnees within education policies and strategies; - Support returnees' access to education and conducive learning environments, including through recognition of certifications; - Address returnees' constraints to

Sectoral Policy/Strategy	Potential mainstreaming opportunities
	education access by developing school integration guidelines, establishing language and catch-up classes and recognizing the equivalency of diplomas obtained outside of the country of origin; • Expedite certification for school and university registration or enrolment for returning school-age children in areas of high return; • Harmonize relevant goals and objectives stated in return and reintegration strategies with those in education policies and strategies; • Foster inter-institutional coordination between education institutions and migration-related institutions and actors.
Social/Welfare	• Include considerations of the needs and capacities of returnees within social and welfare policies and strategies; • Support returnees' access to the welfare system (social housing, pensions, social allowances), and address constraints that returnees might face in obtaining personal documents required for access to welfare services (including birth, marriage, divorce certificates, passports and ID papers); • Support the development of tailored services for returnees in vulnerable situations, including through national referral mechanisms; • Foster inter-institutional coordination between social and welfare institutions and migration-related institutions and actors.
Health and wellbeing	• Include considerations of the needs and capacities of returnees within health policies and strategies; • Support returnees to have equal access to the national health-care system; • Increase the reception capacity of health facilities in localities of high return; • Establish new health facilities or provide mobile or outreach clinics in areas where returnees and local communities have challenges accessing existing health facilities; • Harmonize relevant goals and objectives stated in return and reintegration strategies with those in social policies and health strategies.

Sectoral Policy/Strategy	Potential mainstreaming opportunities
Gender and LGBTI	- Include considerations of the needs and capacities of both female and male returnees as well as for LGBTI returnees within gender and LGBTI policies and strategies; - Support relevant cross-cutting and sector-based gender issues addressed by the policy or strategy to include the specific situation and vulnerabilities faced by female and LGBTI returnees; - Reduce barriers for both male and female returnees' concerns and priorities to be included in Gender Responsive Planning, budgeting and Implementation frameworks; - Harmonize relevant goals and objectives stated in return and reintegration strategies with those in gender policies and strategies.
Environment and climate change adaptation	- Check reintegration programmes and projects are coherent with relevant national policies in the environmental sphere, such as natural resource management, landuse planning, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction; - Where relevant (for example, a large number of returnees to a specific area), incorporate reintegration into environmental policies and plans (for example, in relation to expected additional demand for natural resources; increased disaster risk); - Explore potential synergies between reintegration activities, employment strategies and environmental objectives, via "green jobs" – including those which specifically aim to preserve or restore the environment in communities of return; - Foster inter-institutional coordination between actors in the environmental sphere and actors in the migration sphere.
Business and Finance	- Review criteria for business registration, access to finance and credit take into account returnees' specific situations; - Undertake outreach to returnees on business and finance opportunities, including between the host and origin countries.