



# Reintegration realities: post-return challenges and experiences across countries

## Budapest Process knowledge product

### NOTE

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# Introduction



What does it actually look like when someone returns home after years abroad, often with little money, no formal recognition of skills acquired, and a community that may see their return as failure? This paper sets out to answer that question, drawing on fieldwork, a broad range of project documents, assessment, policy papers and the testimonies of returnees across Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan.

Reintegration is a word that appears frequently in migration policy documents, it is treated as a process with a beginning and an end, at times operationally considered as a box that can be ticked once a returnee has received a small grant or attended a training session. This paper challenges that framing, aligning with conceptualisations of reintegration as a multi-dimensional process that extends beyond short term assistance, requiring sustained coordination across actors and interventions operating at the individual, community, and structural levels. The same guidance stresses that sustainable reintegration depends on ‘solid partnerships’ and coordinated policies and practices, which is exactly where many systems struggle.<sup>1</sup> In practice, assistance that focuses narrowly on individuals is not set up to generate community-level or structural effects, which limits durability and makes outcomes uneven across places and groups.<sup>2</sup> Reintegration, as the evidence from the three countries analysed in this paper (Bangladesh, Iraq, Pakistan), is neither linear nor predictable: it is shaped by the functioning of local labour markets, the fragmentation of institutional support, and the deeply human pressures of stigma, family expectations, debt, and the need to rebuild dignity after a journey that did not go as planned.

Developed under the auspices of the Budapest Process Thematic Working Group on Return and Reintegration, this paper is a direct outcome of the conclusions of the 2025 Thematic Working Group Meeting<sup>3</sup> and the Return Migration Workshop.<sup>4</sup> The paper aims to deepen understanding of the challenges surrounding sustainable reintegration and to identify practical approaches for achieving more positive reintegration outcomes.

The analysis presented here: “Reintegration realities: post-return challenges and experiences across countries” was originally developed as part of a broader knowledge product titled: **‘Reintegration is Complicated: frameworks and outcomes in the Silk Routes Region’** produced under the Budapest Process and its Thematic Working Group on Return and Reintegration. That wider report maps institutional landscapes of Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan, traces policy frameworks, and examines how reintegration is defined and delivered in practice. Much of the gaps that emerge across the three countries are directly reflected in the Budapest Process Call for Action 2025 – 2030<sup>5</sup>, accompanying the 2024 Ministerial Declaration<sup>6</sup>, which prioritises the strengthening of first-line support and referral mechanisms, database formation, and the inclusion of returnees in local development programmes. This chapter sits at the broader knowledge product’s analytical heart: it is where the structural analysis meets lived experience, and where recurring patterns of inequality and systemic fragility crystallise into concrete challenges returnees face upon return. Four dimensions are explored and narrate reintegration realities and post-return challenges and experiences and structure the main subsequent sections: labour market reintegration, institutional interactions and referral mechanisms, social and psychosocial

dimensions, and service provision and state capacity. Taken together, they paint a picture of a process that is fundamentally complicated, not because of any individual failure, but because the systems designed to support returnees have rarely been adjusted to their actual needs. Reintegration is, above all, a process not a project.

# Labour market reintegration

For most returnees, the labour market is the first and most pressing challenge after return, being able to secure stable income is what determines whether debts (accumulated through their migration journey) can be repaid, families supported, and dignity restored. Across Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan, returnees encounter a set of recurring structural and social barriers that shape their labour market reintegration. Five common dimensions capture how returning migrants navigate work, livelihood and socio-economic recovery after return. Reintegrating into the labour market is crucial for the returnee to maintain and extend their socio-economic gains achieved through migration, especially for those who returned from the Gulf countries.<sup>7</sup> However, as shown in the dimensions below, it is noted that reintegration is constrained not by the willingness or capacity of returnees, but by the deep structural and social limitations of the economies in which they return.

## Unemployment, informality and reliance on networks

- ▶ **Perception of nepotism and informality dominate access to jobs, making reintegration dependant on family or political connections**

Across the three countries, reintegration into the labour market is shaped by structural weakness including **high unemployment, informality**, lack of job-matching platforms, but also by personal and social dynamics such as stigma, reliance on networks, or mismatched skills.<sup>8</sup> Overall, many returnees are either unemployed or in precarious work situations upon return. This is due to a number of challenges, one being the reliance on nepotism in securing employment. Formal employment remains weak, and returnees' access to work is shaped less by qualifications than by connections. Employment is typically informal and mediated by family or community members rather than open recruitment systems. In Iraq, such dynamic is called nepotism (*wasta*), which is the reliance on kinship or political ties. There has also been a lot of competition in the labour market from foreign workers, as well as internally displaced persons and Syrian refugees, particularly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), contributing to downward pressure on salaries.

*'We are in a country where certificate and education do not work, only 'wasta' and personal connections work. I know illiterate people in the best positions with a very good salary just because they have connections. The reason behind people leaving the country is this injustice.'*

- Female returnee, Sulaymaniyah

## Skills mismatch and lack of qualifications

- ▶ **Skills mismatch is persistent: returnees often gain skills abroad that are either not recognised or have little demand locally**

Reliance on personal connections often allows individuals without formal qualifications to access better positions, while returnees struggle to secure even basic jobs. Across the three countries, skills mismatch emerged repeatedly, particularly between skills acquired abroad and those recognised or demanded locally. Many returnees described how their credentials from Europe or the Gulf held little domestic value, and employers rarely assess skills formally.<sup>9</sup> Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) can help address this recognition gap through referrals; for example, in Pakistan they refer individuals to skills providing institutions and trade testing centres, as well as vocational training institutions. Without such recognition, however, their migration experience remains difficult to translate into stable employment, undermining the potential for returning migrants to transfer and build upon what they gained abroad. In some cases, the dire need to survive and provide for their families forced them to take on jobs outside their field of work. For many others, it was the lack of qualifications that was a barrier to their reintegration into the labour market.

*'I studied up to grade 6 only... Many don't want to give me a job'*

- RAISE project respondent, Bangladesh

## Entrepreneurship and access to capital

- **Entrepreneurship aspirations are high, with many returnees preferring to start small businesses, yet they lack capital and face financial barriers**

Self-employment often emerges as a strategy of default rather than preference, adopted in response to barriers in accessing formal employment and the need for quick income upon return. Returnees often have a strong aspiration to start small businesses as a way to recover agency after return, yet this aspiration frequently meets the barrier of limited financing. For many this was a desire due to companies being unfair, paying little salaries, little commission, and with long working hours. In all three contexts, accessing capital, loans, and any SME schemes exist, but either is limited, or difficult to secure, due to bureaucratic procedures, and requiring conditions most returnees cannot meet. Hence, this ambition to rebuild through business thus often remains aspirational rather than attainable.<sup>10</sup> Where they are active, the MRCs play a role in narrowing this gap, not by providing capital directly, but by referring returnees toward available loan and SME schemes and business support services, and pairing these referrals with counselling.

*'Jobs are tied to degrees, and that's not applicable to our case. So, the only option left is money to be able to open a business. I have applied for a support allowance since I'm divorced, but I've been waiting for a year in vain'*

- Female returnee, Baghdad

*'Returnees are very much interested in loan services, because they want to do small-scale businesses, like tailoring, sewing, homestead farming, grocery business, and cattle and poultry farming.'*

- RAISE project respondent, Bangladesh

## Debt and financial pressure

- ▶ **Debt burdens from migration journeys or failed employment abroad compound the urgency to find income quickly, often forcing returnees into low-quality work**

Migration journey costs place returnees under considerable financial strain. Many returning migrants across all contexts prioritise debt repayment over investment or training. This urgency often makes people accept precarious or short-term employment simply to provide and stabilise income for their families. Others return home after selling everything to migrate, with nothing left, and are forced to live with their parents or relatives. This debt burden from migration journeys or failed employment abroad also plays a vital role in delaying their reintegration, and for others makes them consider remigrating.

## Gendered barriers and stigma

- ▶ **Gendered barriers remain acute, as women returnees especially in Bangladesh, face stigma and fewer viable labour market options**

Women face distinct challenges upon return. Labour force participation among women remains among the lowest globally, below 20% in Iraq and Pakistan, and 13% in Bangladesh, and social expectation further limits their access to decent work. Many female returnees face stigma linked to migration itself, particularly those returning from domestic or care work, and the opportunities for skilling, credit or entrepreneurship are rarely designed around women's needs.

# Institutional interactions and referral mechanisms



Engaging with institutions is extremely important for shaping the reintegration experience of returnees, especially in understanding with whom they interact and for what. Returnees seek support from both governmental and non-governmental institutions to access a variety of services, from employment opportunities, vocational training, or financial support to restart their lives. Across the three contexts, returnees' encounters with institutions reveal a shared pattern: rather than engaging with one coherent system, they navigate fragmented pathways of assistance where information, eligibility, and follow-up varies widely. Four institutional themes describe these realities, and show that institutional interactions remain fragmented and transactional rather than systematic. Most returnees engage with institutions to seek immediate cash or training, and not as part of a long-term reintegration framework.<sup>11</sup> However, governments are aware of these gaps and have started to strengthen coordination and data sharing through digital referral tools and public-private programmes recognised in the BP Roadmap on Return and Reintegration.<sup>12</sup>

## Awareness and information gaps

### ► **Awareness gaps and lack of information: most returnees do not know about formal programmes, and outreach relies heavily on informal networks**

Most returnees remain unaware of formal reintegration programmes. In all three countries, outreach depends on personal or community networks rather than institutional communication.<sup>13</sup> In Bangladesh, surveys under the RAISE project<sup>14</sup> showed that word-of-mouth among migrants is the primary source of programme information. Many returnees across the three contexts lack information or awareness of services and programmes offered to returnees, this further complicates their reintegration. This lack of awareness reflects limited institutional outreach and weak visibility of formal programmes, rather than an absence of services per se. This low visibility of government channels and organisations efforts in all the reintegration programmes creates the impression that 'nothing exists', which reinforces the reliance on informal sources and personal networks. An example from Iraq is the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which is an important step towards systemising support for returnees; however, despite being described as a key framework for returnee support, it was often unknown to those who could benefit from it, and many of the returnees who have registered with the local governorate offices were likely enrolled in the NRM without necessarily knowing it. One concrete response to this gap is the network of MRCs. In Iraq, the MRCs in Baghdad, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah show significant potential to reach returnees and potential migrants through sustained community outreach and awareness-raising efforts. In Pakistan, the information gap is addressed at the point of arrival through Airport Reception Desks operated by the MRCs, which receive returnees and provide information on available services, referral pathways, and reintegration support as they enter the country. Cooperation between MRC counsellors in counties of return and return counsellors in European countries offers a further important avenue to explore, particularly for strengthening information-

sharing, continuity of support, and referral pathways across the return and reintegration process. As a central component of the reintegration systems in Iraq and Pakistan, the MRCs support a longer-term approach, following cases beyond the initial referral stage and maintaining continued engagement with returnees throughout the reintegration process.

*'I saw on Instagram, it was written that if you are someone who returned from Europe, you may complete this form and I completed it. Then from the governorate they called me, and I went and registered my details, after that Rwanga called me.'*

- Male returnee, Sulaymaniyah

## Bureaucratic barriers and limited follow-up

- ▶ **Bureaucratic barriers persist: requirements like guarantor, excessive paperwork, or long delays and lack of follow up**

Administrative requirements frequently discourage engagement. For many returnees it was difficult to access training programmes or employment services, across all countries, facing bureaucratic obstacles, long delays, and lack of follow-up, leading them to feel frustrated and become financially instable. Upon return, they try to reach out to government and non-government organisations seeking financial assistance, and in many cases fail to do. For example, in Iraq to apply for a loan they need to provide a guarantor as a condition, and this is very difficult for many to secure, especially for those disconnected from the local community after having lived for many years abroad. This leads to returnees relying instead on family and friends' networks for financial assistance or seeking alternative livelihood opportunities. Many other returnees across the three contexts also experience lack of follow-up when reaching out to institutions for support. These bureaucratic barriers, coupled with long processing times and lack of follow-up contribute to this perception that engaging with institutions yields limited value and results, and instead focus on personal networks.

## Fragmented responsibilities and weak coordination

- ▶ **Fragmentation and lack of coordination across ministries and NGOs, meaning returnees face a lottery system of support.**

Reintegration support is usually spread across multiple ministries and aid organisations, and returnees experience a 'lottery system' of assistance as services depend less on need than on which project or department happens to cover this area. This fragmentation is visible in the coexistence of national welfare boards, donor-funded centres, and local NGOs operating without shared case-management tools. Even when referral mechanisms exist on paper, they are still in their early stages and are not yet institutionalised into mainstream public service delivery, hence why returnees almost always lack awareness of their availability. Even within the same country, such as Iraq for example, coordination between the NRM in Federal Iraq and the KRI remains limited. The reliance of NRM on MRCs and support they provide is also limited and needs to be further strengthened for the benefit of returnees. Additionally, most reintegration support is provided largely through project-based and external funding, with limited integration into a cohesive

national framework; and often almost always many of these projects overlap in the types of programmes or services they provide, focusing on specific areas of reintegration, and overlooking the bigger picture and challenges returnees go through. Having a stronger coordination scheme across governments and aid organisations will not only reduce duplication and inefficiency, but also ensure that support is needs-based rather than project-driven. The development priority is to build connected, responsible and rights-based national systems that provide for the full scope of socio-economic needs of returnees.

### **Informal networks as default referral channels**

- ▶ **Informal networks substitute for formal systems: word of mouth and family ties remain the primary channels for accessing opportunities.**

Where formal systems falter, informal ones fill the gap; hence beyond information gaps, informal networks actively function as substitute referral systems where formal institutional pathways are difficult to access. Family members, friends, migrants and returnees themselves function as self-organised referral chains, informing each other where to find aid, training, or loans. This informal way of communication may bridge short-term gaps, but tends to produce inequality, as those with strong networks access help and support more often, while isolated and stigmatised individuals remain excluded. For example, in Bangladesh and provinces in Pakistan, as well as Iraq such interpersonal networks effectively substitute for official ones.

# Social and psychosocial dimensions



Having examined how returnees navigate institutional systems and access formal assistance, the next dimension shifts to the social and psychosocial spheres. Reintegration is never purely economic, although economic reintegration plays a crucial role in returnees post-return realities, securing a stable living. It is also about belonging, dignity, and the ability to rebuild social ties. Across the three countries, returnees describe their experiences of coming home as a negotiation between family acceptance, community perception, and the strain of starting over after migration. Four dimensions stand out as decisive for social and psychosocial reintegration.

## Stigma and perception of failure

- ▶ **Stigma and perceptions of failure: returnees who could not secure legal status or return without savings are often labelled as having failed. In some context it is stronger for women who face both gender discrimination and social exclusion**

Returnees who return empty handed or after an unsuccessful migration journey often face judgment from their communities. Across all contexts it was evident that those who failed to secure a legal status abroad or lost savings on the journey are commonly labelled as having failed, and this stigma is especially severe for women migrants. In Bangladesh, social stigma remains a major barrier, especially for women; female returnees face isolation, earn far less than men, and some avoid going back to their villages altogether due to hostile reception, choosing to remain in cities instead. A cross-cutting theme was also that social expectations can have greater impact on reintegration prospects than the economic loss itself.

## Community acceptance and social networks

- ▶ **Community acceptance is decisive: families and communities can either act as safety nets or as barriers, as acceptance eases reintegration**

While stigma captures how returnees are perceived and labelled, community acceptance determines the practical consequences of these perceptions for everyday support and access to resources. Family and community acceptance play a decisive role in whether returnees feel back home or permanently excluded. Communities with strong social networks and access to resources can provide support and protection, while a weak community will pose a risk for both returnees and the community as a whole.<sup>15</sup> Returnees experiences in this sphere varied, some felt welcome and others encountered criticism, and as mentioned above stigma. In Iraq for example, those who spent extended periods abroad, felt alienated and struggled to reconnect with their communities, others felt welcome and happy to be back with their families. The context is explained in a way that those who did not manage to obtain legal status abroad or citizenship have failed, and this causes returnees to feel judged and unsupported by their communities, therefore hindering their reintegration.

*'The worst thing was people's words, relatives and friends, they would tell me why did you return from Europe, from that good place, people are paying money to reach Europe, and you return from there. They don't know what's going on in Europe.'*

- Male returnee, Sulaymaniyah

## Psychosocial well-being

- ▶ **Psychosocial burdens are widespread: feelings of regret, guilt, shame, especially among deportees, and have long-term effect on well-being**

Emotional and psychological distress is a common theme across returnee groups. Feelings of guilt, regret, and shame, especially among those who had to borrow money to migrate, or those who had to be forcibly returned, limited their self-confidence and motivation to re-engage in work or training. Many returnees returned with these feelings and did access psychosocial support, notably through Migrant Resource Centres<sup>16</sup>; however, such support remains largely project-based, uneven in coverage, and rarely embedded in long-term public health or social service systems, despite its importance for sustainable reintegration.

## Housing, education, and documentation barriers

- ▶ **Housing and school: those who sold their homes often return to unstable housing arrangements, seek a place with relatives, and adds pressure on family relations. Reintegrating children born abroad can also be challenging.**

Housing stability is a persistent concern, where many returnees sold their homes or land to finance their migration journeys, and upon return depend on their families and relatives for accommodation. Another issue was education; parents struggle to enrol their children who were born or schooled abroad and speak different languages. This was evident in Iraq, and this interrupts learning and sometimes pushes families to re-migrate, as without adequate income, most cannot afford private schools, and for foreign born children, it might be extremely difficult to enrol in public schools.

Another persistent barrier is the issue of documentation, birth registration, lost identity papers, lack of proper documentation, which limits access to education, public services and social protection.

Overall, social reintegration is both an individual and collective process, and returnees regain stability only when economic, social and psychosocial needs are addressed together, and when communities see returnees as assets rather than as failures. However, efforts now are under way in the Silk Routes region, from Bangladesh's UN MPTF programmes<sup>17</sup> to the local awareness campaigns in Iraq and Pakistan, and they point toward a more inclusive model, addressing all barriers returnees face, from health to housing and education.

# Service provision and state capacity challenges



Looking across Bangladesh, Iraq, and Pakistan, some clear patterns emerge that underline the difficulties returnees face in their reintegration. A first and recurring issue is the **fragmentation of service delivery**. Each country has projects for returnees, often donor-funded or led by international organisations, but these programmes operate in parallel rather than in sync with national development systems. That is why many returnees move through a patchwork of offers rather than a pathway: some counselling here, a small grant there, and then a hard stop when the projects end. This isn't just the case across these countries, the EU also acknowledges the same bottlenecks and is trying to standardise the process, in response.

A second, related pattern is limited state service capacity. In all three settings, reintegration is heavily dependent on projects rather than budgeted government functions: funds come from international partners. This produces again short-termism where projects start and stop with donor cycles, leaving no sustainable system. Third, there are context-specific constraints that further shape reintegration outcomes. Iraq's reintegration is also burdened by conflict, housing, uneven basic services, and returnees are rebuilding their lives in many places, but also in some that data still class as severe conditions. Pakistan's constraints are more structural, and Bangladesh is more exposed to climate shocks.

Finally, across all three countries, there is a heavy reliance on social networks, and that is what exposes formal systems, as thin, family and community ties can open many doors, to economic reintegration and financial support, to labour market integration, to housing, and so on, and lack of these ties (and stigma for some) can lead to the closure of these doors.

# Key Takeaways



When we take a step back, it becomes clear that everyday barriers returnees face are not random, they align with three structural dimensions: labour market functioning, institutional pathways and social environments, with few cross-cutting pressures that re-occur.

- ▶ **Labour market functioning:** high unemployment, nepotism and informality make access to jobs depend on family or political connections; persistent skills mismatch means skills gained abroad are either not recognised or have little demand locally; and while entrepreneurship aspirations are high, credit and financial constraints make it difficult. Adding to this migration-related debt burdens, many returnees accept low-quality, precarious work just to service loans.
- ▶ **Institutional pathways:** Awareness gaps mean eligible people don't find programmes; bureaucratic hurdles (guarantors, paperwork, slow follow-up) deter those who do; and fragmentation across ministries and NGOs turns support into a lottery. Informal networks then substitute for public systems, which is effective for the well-connected, and exclusionary for everyone else. The structural message: without a working referral backbone and shared case-management/monitoring, individual grants never add up to a system.
- ▶ **Social environment:** Stigma and 'failed migration' narratives lower confidence and job search, gendered barriers are sharper, and family dynamics matter both as safety nets and sites of pressure. Housing instability (selling assets pre-departure, returning to overcrowded homes) and children's school re-entry multiply stress. These are not soft add-ons: social acceptance (or the lack of it) is a binding constraint on economic and institutional reintegration.

What we have seen so far is that reintegration is not a linear success story, it is an uneven process marked by progress, setbacks and constant negotiations between returnees, their families, institutions and the wider community.

**What is working well?** In all three countries, there has been progress in recognising reintegration as more than just an individual challenge. The recent Budapest Process workshop on Return Migration (on understanding how to translate the 2024 Ministerial Documents into a revised Roadmap on Return and Reintegration and how to better understand the needs of Silk Routes Countries) in Istanbul in November 2025 confirms this shift, as all three countries reported concrete **progress in formalising reintegration within national policy and institutional structures**, moving beyond ad hoc assistance toward more system-based approaches. In Iraq for example, some of the findings reflect the government's policy priority in areas such as strengthening the referral system, making it central tool for reintegration services, including immediate psychosocial referral upon registration and expansion of airport-based reception, to increase the quality of services provided. The MRCs across Baghdad, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah serve as frontline delivery points for returnee support, providing counselling, referrals, and reintegration services from within national institutions and as integrated part of the national reintegration system. Beyond counselling, the MRCs also connect returnees to access financial, livelihood, and entrepreneurship support, such as referrals to government business-incubation services, showing how the centres link returnees to economic

reintegration rather than information alone. Work is also ongoing toward a unified national strategy and strengthened cooperation between the Federal Government and Kurdistan Regional Government. In other contexts, one sees that community networks remain powerful drivers of reintegration. The idea of accepting and welcoming international partners to implement projects in the respective countries is an indicator of their willingness to enhance the reintegration experience for the returnees. Across all three countries, the BP workshop underscored that **collaboration with international partners has been most effective where it supports national ownership**, especially in areas such as data systems, case management, and policy operationalisation, rather than substituting for state functions. Operationally, and as reflected in the broader Budapest Process knowledge product upon which this paper is based, what works across contexts looks very similar: a referral-led model that starts before return and hands off into national services after the first 6–12 months; skills assessment/RPL tied to local demand, not generic training; credit plus coaching for self-employment (not cash only); and community-based components that target stigma, women’s access, and family needs (including housing and schooling). In Pakistan, the MRCs show how this model can be extended beyond a few central offices: alongside the established centres, they have invested in mass media and community outreach at district level, running information sessions and working with local civil society organisations to reach migrants and returnees in their own communities. Across contexts, where any one of these pieces is missing, the same patterns reappear and result in uneven outcomes.

**What can be improved?** The main challenges remain structural. Services are fragmented, often donor-driven, and not always aligned with national development frameworks. Participants in the Budapest Process workshop consistently stressed that fragmentation persists not because of lack of initiatives, but because reintegration services remain insufficiently embedded in national budgets, social protection systems, and inter-ministerial coordination frameworks. Short project cycles mean support ends before reintegration stabilises. Skills gained abroad are rarely recognised, producing labour market mismatches. This was echoed particularly by Iraq and Pakistan, where officials highlighted the growing mismatch between skills acquired abroad and weak domestic labour markets. Stigma, especially for deportees and female returnees, continues to undermine social reintegration. In short, evidence from all three countries shows how these challenges translate into uneven outcomes: while certain **individual-level support mechanisms** (skills training, psychosocial counselling, livelihood grants) have yielded positive results, these gains are often undermined when referral systems are weak, institutional responsibilities overlap, or **community-level reintegration** is neglected. In the end, what these findings show is simple: reintegration is never a straight line, never one-size fits all, it is complicated, and only by accepting that complexity can policy and practice begin to match the realities returnees face.

**Recommendations and moving forward:** drawing from the findings of this study and the discussions held during the BP workshop on Return Migration in Istanbul in November 2025, they confirm the need for:

- **Stronger referral systems case-management systems** that begin before return, integrate airport reception with post-return follow-up, and link reintegration services with mainstream social protection and employment structures, including pre-return profiling, counselling and information provision where feasible, to allow reintegration planning to start before arrival rather than reactively after return.
- **Greater investment in community-based and psychosocial initiatives that reduce stigma** and strengthen acceptance, especially for women and deportees, including support for local NGOs and frontline staff.

- **Alignment of reintegration programming with national development and budgetary frameworks**, reducing reliance on short-term donor cycles and ensuring sustainability beyond individual projects, especially as return numbers are expected to rise. Aligning reintegration with labour market strategies, SME development, and diaspora engagement policies was seen as essential to move beyond ad hoc responses.
- **Improved inter-agency data sharing and digitalisation**, enabling common registration, profiling and monitoring across ministries and service providers while respecting data protection and national competencies.

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