

Project Proposal:

ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE AND EXPOSED MIGRANTS IN NIGER (AVENIR)

Project type:	Protection and Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants (PX)
Secondary project type:	Choose secondary project type if applicable
Geographical Coverage:	Niger (Niamey and Agadez regions)
Executing agency:	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Beneficiaries:	(Inter)national stranded migrants, migrants in transit
Partner(s):	Government of Niger: Ministries of Interior, Justice, Foreign Affairs and the Promotion of Women and the Protection of Children; regional authorities in the Agadez region
Management site:	Niamey, CO, NIGER
Duration:	12 months (preferred start date: 1 August 2021)
Budget:	1,000,000 EUR

Summary

In response to the growing challenges related to the migratory dynamics in Niger, IOM Niger proposes the following intervention that seeks to respond some of the challenges that IOM has observed in Niger through working towards the following outcome:

- (i) Vulnerable migrants have access to protection and assistance services, in line with humanitarian principles and case management guidelines and standards, and have access to pre-departure and return assistance to their countries of origin

In close coordination with key Government partners, including the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IOM seeks to respond to some of the most urgent needs faced by stranded migrants in Niger while simultaneously supporting the Government in ensuring that long-term and sustainable assistance is available for migrants and other individuals in need.

Mission OIM Niger

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1. Rationale

Niger, an important country of transit, destination, and origin for migrants from West and Central Africa, faces significant development challenges. Migrants who are in transit in Niger thus often lack access to basic services, including food, water and shelter and are exposed to high risks as they traverse the Agadez region on their way to Libya and Algeria. This journey has become increasingly dangerous in recent years, partially because of the implementation of the Law 2015-36 which criminalizes irregular migration in Niger, and the increased Government patrols to enforce the law. This has forced smugglers to take more remote and dangerous routes, which exposes migrants to significant risks of abandonment and finding themselves stranded in the Sahara Desert.

In addition, the Government of Algeria has started the systematic expulsion of third-country nationals (non-Nigerien migrants) from Algeria to Niger since September 2017. Although these migrants are non-Nigerien, the Government of Algeria expels these migrants to “Point Zero”, 12 kilometres from the nearest village on the Nigerien side of the border, Assamaka. IOM provides humanitarian assistance at the border and offers the expelled migrants the possibility to partake in IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme, through which they can safely return to their country of origin. Between September 2017 and May 2021, IOM has assisted more than 40,000 expelled migrants after their expulsion from Algeria. The large majority of these migrants subsequently entered into the AVR programme.

To address these challenges, IOM established the Migration Response and Resource Mechanism (MRRM) in 2015. Through this multi-donor instrument, the MRRM, comprising several projects, has provided an integrated response to migration-related challenges coordinated with Nigerien authorities. The consistent and ongoing support has allowed for developing a robust system to ensure assistance and protection of migrants while remaining adaptable to changing migration trends in Niger. The European Union’s Joint Regional Initiative has helped meet some of the needs related to direct assistance, protection, and assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) in countries of origin. This has been complemented by several bilateral projects (including the first phase of the Italian Migration Fund), all of which have assisted almost 60,000 migrants since 2016 with direct and protection assistance, while more than 50,000 migrants with the assisted voluntary return to their country of origin.



Among these migrants are very vulnerable profiles, including victims of trafficking, unaccompanied and separated children, and sick or traumatized migrants. On average, 10% of the migrants assisted by IOM each year need an individualized case management response due to their specific vulnerability. This individualized assistance also IOM to ensure safe and dignified long term options for the beneficiaries, including referral to UNHCR to ensure that persons in need of international protection receive the necessary assistance. Continuity of care for patients with chronic conditions and support to victims of gender-based violence remains a significant challenge, as access to primary health care remains limited.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on direct assistance in the country in terms of needs, response capacity, and financial and human resources to be deployed. Although migration flows temporarily decreased between March and September 2020, the pressure on transit centres was high due to quarantine and travel restriction needs. Nevertheless, movements appear to be resuming at a pre-COVID pace, with a total of more than 5,300 third-country nationals expelled from Algeria between October 2020 and May 2021. For the most vulnerable cases (unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, victims of gender-based violence, migrants with health or mental health needs), the COVID-19 context is particularly damaging as it increases the number of people with special needs and at the same time constrains the assistance available to them (including delays in family tracing procedures or access to specialized state services). Despite significant improvements that were made by IOM through specific COVID-19 projects, the conditions in Assamaka to receive and assist large groups of migrants remain meagre. This poses particular challenges when multiple large groups arrive in the same couple of days and the groups need to be kept separated to ensure that the quarantine is completed in the correct fashion.

In addition, due to the border closures that were put in place by Governments across the world in response to the pandemic, the facilitation of voluntary returns of migrants to their country of origin became significantly more costly and complicated. At the moment when the border closure was put in place (19 March 2021), more than 2,000 non-Nigerien migrants were stranded in Niger without the means and possibility to return to their country of origin. To facilitate these movements, IOM Niger submitted a request to the Government of Niger to open a humanitarian corridor to allow for the return of stranded migrants. The request was accepted in early April 2020, and between then and the reopening of the international airport of Niamey on 1 August 2020, more than 1,300 migrants have returned to their CoO (among others Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali and Guinea-Conakry). Nevertheless, the continued closure of land borders remained a significant challenge to these return movements as the large majority of movements in the pre-COVID-19 context took place by bus. The necessity to now carry out return operations by plane, often through chartered flights specifically for these purpose by lack of commercial options, multiplied the costs of each return movement by approximately five times. In addition to this, migrants were obliged to have tested negative for COVID-19 prior to departure (approx. 50 EUR per test) and were often requested to undergo a quarantine period upon return to their country of origin.

2. Project Description

In response to these challenges, IOM Niger proposes the following intervention with the objective of **reinforcing direct, return and protection assistance for vulnerable migrants in Niger**. This objective is to be achieved through three complementary outcomes:

Outcome 1: Vulnerable migrants have access to protection and assistance services, in line with humanitarian principles and case management guidelines and standards, and have access to pre-departure and return assistance to their countries of origin

Output 1.1: Protection services and direct assistance are delivered to stranded migrants in Niger through IOM's Migrant Resource & Response Mechanism

Migrants stay in the transit centres before they return to their country of origin. While the average length of stay is between one to three weeks, many factors can prolong this, including medical needs, psychosocial support, lack of travel documents, family tracing processes (for unaccompanied minors), among others. The transit centres can be considered as the first “step” in the voluntary return process. Protection assistance is a crucial component of IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return programme.

IOM currently operates six transit centres across the country (one in Arlit, Agadez and Dirkou, three in Niamey) with a total capacity of hosting approximately 1,500 people. Migrants have access to shelter, food and water during their full stay in the transit centres. In the centres, IOM deploys specialized case workers to support the needs of most vulnerable migrants, including children, accompanied and unaccompanied, victims of trafficking, women, migrants with disabilities, LGBTQI+, GBV survivors, etc. The case workers ensure that migrants are provided with adequate protection assistance during their stay in Niger and prepare for a safe and sustainable return of the person in view of their specific needs. In addition, IOM deploys doctors and nurses in the centres, which is an essential service that has proven to be of crucial importance during the pandemic.

Migrants expelled from Algeria will receive basic assistance in Assamaka and are then transported to the Arlit transit centre if they wish to. In order to safeguard dignity of beneficiaries, IOM will also provide essential non-food items in the form of NFI kits. IOM provides standard NFI kits as well as specific kits tailored to the needs of women, children and Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMCs).

IOM will deploy health specialists and health materials in all its reception sites and transit centers in order to ensure safety of assistance, not least in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will substantially improve capacity to identify and address health care needs of migrants from their entry into Niger (including risks of contagious diseases). Simultaneously, IOM will continue strengthening the identification of vulnerable migrants including UMCs, Victims of Trafficking (VoTs), survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and other vulnerable profiles. This will make sure that vulnerable migrants are early detected, attended with priority and referred to specialized case management. In addition, IOM will ensure the provision of medical and psychosocial assistance in order to respond to (and follow up) on acute medical conditions resulting from expulsions. IOM will strengthen its capacity to prevent, identify and contain communicable diseases in transit centers. IOM will re-evaluate and improve transit center structure to make sure that the health screening, transfer and quarantine can be conducted safely. IOM will also reinforce periodic training for medical staff and strengthen preventive measures for the safety of all the staff working directly with migrants on a daily basis, including but not limited to the COVID-19 sanitary and preventative measures, as well as other transmissible diseases.

Output 1.2: Migrants receive the necessary pre-departure support and benefit from voluntary return to their country of origin

Due to the significant increase in the costs of assistance to the voluntary return of migrants to their country of origin, there is a need for additional funding for these voluntary return movements. This is mostly due to the fact that the expulsions from Algeria to Niger (which make up for the majority of the migrants assisted with assisted voluntary return) continues in large numbers. Between 2016 and 2019, 27,153 migrants were expelled from Algeria to Niger. As a result of these high numbers of expulsions, IOM Niger was the largest 'sending' mission globally with more than 16,000 migrants assisted with AVR in 2019. In 2020 alone, despite the official closure of the land border between Algeria and Niger since 19 March 2020, more than 8,000 migrants were expelled. In 2021 thus far, almost 3,000 migrants were expelled since the end of February, as expulsions were temporarily halted during the electoral period in Niger.

IOM's AVR program assists non-Nigerien migrants to return to their country of origin with dignity. This activity plays a key role in facilitating a solution for vulnerable TCNs stranded in Niger helping to prevent these often desperate and destitute individuals from being targeted for human trafficking or other forms of exploitation, abuses and violations. The proposed project will provide support to non-Nigerien migrants willing to voluntarily return to their countries of origin with transport from either Agadez or Niamey region to each migrant's country of origin by covering costs related to travel and consular services, providing escorts (especially for UMCs) and pocket money for the journey (for food

and other basic essentials whilst in transit to their country of origin). As the number of non-Nigerien migrants, notably those expelled from Algeria, requiring AVR assistance continues to grow, it is necessary for IOM to scale up the AVR program to meet migrants' needs.

Due to the complementary nature of the MRRM portfolio as described above, the funds allocated to this output will be used to contribute to the voluntary returns of migrants to their country of origin. It must be noted that it is commonplace that one movement is often funded under multiple projects (for example: tickets can be purchased under one project, while the COVID-19 tests are funded under another project). The indicators for this output will therefore reflect the total number of returns to which the project has contributed.

3. Partnerships and Coordination

With IOM's long-standing experience in areas related to assistance and protection as well as voluntary return and reintegration, IOM Niger is in an excellent position to carry out the proposed intervention. Moreover, experienced personnel with an existing network on the ground will allow the project to start implementation immediately. The management site of the proposed action will be Niamey, using also capacities of its sub offices, especially in Agadez, Arlit, Dirkou, and its presence in Assamaka.

During the last ten years, IOM has been a key player in providing assistance and protection to migrants transiting in Niger, working in close coordination with the Ministries in charge of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Women Promotion and Child Protection, Public Health as well as with regional and traditional authorities in Agadez, Niamey, Tahoua and Zinder regions. IOM also works in close collaboration with protection partners (UN, International and National Non-Governmental Organizations and civil societies).

Similarly, local authorities of Agadez region, will be highly involved in the implementation of the proposed activities. Moreover, as with past and ongoing projects, activities will be implemented jointly with the relevant local Nigerien authorities and with the Nigerien Civil Protection in order to ensure sustainability and relevance of the action. In order to ensure close collaboration, IOM will regularly exchange with relevant authorities on the progress of the project and the results achieved. Exchange meetings with relevant technical and financial partners of the Government of Niger, and in particular with the Italian Embassy in Niger will occur to share the progress of the proposed project, as well as to avoid duplication and identify potential synergies of projects in the same areas of intervention and with the same stakeholders.

Moreover, sustainability will benefit from the synergy of the proposed action with the broader implemented MRRM that focuses on coordination with national, regional and local authorities, as well as on enhancement of capacities to achieve a gradual transfer of the governance of this mechanism.

4. Monitoring

Monitoring is a critical tool for management and is therefore considerably integrated in this project. The whole project will be constantly monitored. To that regard, the Chief of Mission and the Senior Programme and Policy Liaison Officer will provide the overall supervision of the project implementation while the Project Manager will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the activities. The Project Manager for the proposed intervention will be the same as the Project Manager of the first phase of this project. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with the project proposal and the project agreement. In parallel, the Project Manager will be in charge of

strictly controlling security risks and any other external threats and developments that may affect project implementation. The donor will be regularly updated on the progress of the project through the reports that are set out in the project agreement.

5. Evaluation

No evaluation is foreseen for this project unless expressly requested by the donor.

6. Results Matrix

	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data Source and Collection Method</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Assumptions</i>
Objective: Reinforce direct assistance, return and protection for vulnerable migrants in Niger	# of migrants that have voluntarily returned to their country of origin with assistance of this project	MiMOSA, transit centre records	0	1,000 migrants assisted with voluntary return	
	# of unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking assisted	Transit centre records	0	300 unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking assisted	
Outcome 1: Vulnerable migrants have access to protection and assistance services, in line with humanitarian principles and case management guidelines and standards, and have access to pre-departure and return assistance to their countries of origin	# of migrants assisted with direct and return assistance	Transit centre records, MiMOSA	0	800 migrants assisted with return and direct assistance	Migrants in distress request and accept IOM's assistance IOM has access to remote areas where migrants are at risk of being stranded Migrants can return to their country of origin in compliance with COVID-19 protocols
Output 1.1: Protection services and direct assistance are delivered to stranded migrants in Niger	# of migrants assisted in Assamaka and Dirkou	Distribution records	0	800 migrants assisted in Assamaka and Dirkou	Migrants in distress request and accept IOM's assistance
	# of migrants receiving food, water, shelter and	Transit centre records, distribution records	0	500 migrants receiving food, water, shelter and	

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through IOM's Migrant Resource & Response Mechanism	<p>NFI assistance in IOM's transit centres</p> <p># of medical consultations held in the transit centres</p> <p># of psychosocial activities and consultations conducted in IOM's transit centres</p>	<p>Transit centre records, session records</p> <p>Transit centre records, session records</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p>	<p>NFI assistance in IOM's transit centres</p> <p>8,000 consultations held</p> <p>4,000 consultations and activities held</p>	IOM has access to remote areas where migrants are at risk of being stranded
<p>Activities that lead to Output 1.1:</p> <p>Activity 1.1.1: Procure and distribute direct assistance items to vulnerable migrants in Assamaka, Dirkou and IOM's transit centres, including shelter, food, water, and NFI-kits</p> <p>Activity 1.1.2: Provide medical assistance to migrants in IOM's transit centres</p> <p>Activity 1.1.3: Provide psychosocial assistance to migrants in IOM's transit centres</p>					<p>Migrants in distress request and accept IOM's assistance</p> <p>IOM has access to remote areas where migrants are at risk of being stranded</p>
<p>Output 1.2:</p> <p>Migrants receive the necessary pre-departure support and benefit from voluntary return to their country of origin</p>	<p># of migrants assisted with voluntary return to their country of origin</p> <p>% of migrants who benefited from voluntary return assistance that received IOM's assistance with obtaining travel documentation</p>	<p>MiMOSA</p> <p>MiMOSA</p>	<p>0</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>1,000 migrants assisted with voluntary return</p> <p>At least 60% of migrants</p>	<p>International travel remains possible throughout the project implementation period</p> <p>Countries of origin are willing to receive returning migrants</p>
<p>Activities that lead to Output 1.2:</p> <p>Activity 1.2.1: Carry out necessary pre-departure assistance and organize voluntary return to country of origin</p>					<p>International travel remains possible throughout the project implementation period</p>

	Countries of origin are willing to receive returning migrants
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7. Work Plan

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>			
		<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
1.1.1: Procure and distribute direct assistance items to vulnerable migrants in Assamaka, Dirkou and IOM's transit centres, including shelter, food, water, and NFI-kits	IOM				
1.1.2: Provide medical assistance to migrants in IOM's transit centres	IOM				
1.1.3: Provide psychosocial assistance to migrants in IOM's transit centres	IOM				
1.2.1: Carry out necessary pre-departure assistance and organize voluntary return to country of origin	IOM				

8. Budget



Project Title: ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE AND EXPOSED MIGRANTS IN NIGER (AVENIR)
 Project Type: PX
 Budget Amount Requested EUR: 1,000,000 EUR
 Project Duration: 12 months (expected start 1 August 2021)

Exchange rate

0.82

WBS	Item	Unit	Nr of Units	Unit Cost in €	%	€
A. STAFF Costs						
	<u>International Staff</u>					
	Chief of Mission	Month	12	13,530	5%	8,118.00
	Senior Programme and Policy Liaison Officer	Month	12	11,890	5%	7,134.00
	Project Manager	Month	12	10,250	5%	6,150.00
	Protection Officers	Month	12	18,040	12%	25,977.60
	Operations Officer	Month	12	9,020	12%	12,988.80
	PSU, Communication, IM	Month	7	60,680	5%	21,238.00
	RM International Staff(SRMO, FO, PLO, ICTO, HRO) and FSO	Month	7	79,130	5%	27,695.50

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	IOM Rome liaison fees	Lump Sum	1	4,000	100%	4,000.00
	<u>National Staff</u>					
	Transit Center Assistants	Month	12	18,450	16%	35,424.00
	Operations assistants	Month	12	12,366	16%	23,741.95
	Protection Assistants	Month	12	13,776	26%	42,981.12
	Project Assistant	Month	12	1,968	25%	5,904.00
	RM National Staff(Finance, HR, ICT, P&L) and LSA	Month	12	88,150	5%	52,890.00
Total Staff Costs:						274,242.97
B. OFFICE Costs						
	Office Rental, Maitenance, Insurance and Utilities	Month	12	24,858	4%	11,931.98
	Communication (phone, courier, internet)	Month	12	51,094	4%	24,525.22
	Vehicles fuel, repair and maintenance	Month	12	63,470	3%	22,849.31
	Office supplies	Month	12	2,952	4%	1,416.96
	Security costs	Lump Sum	1	129,560	4%	5,182.40
Total Office Costs:						65,905.87
Total Staff & Office Costs:						340,148.84
C. OPERATIONAL Costs						
<u>Outcome 1</u>						
Output 1.1	Act. 1.1.1: Direct Assistance	Lump Sum	1	122,090		122,090.00
Output 1.1	Act. 1.1.2: Medical assistance	Lump Sum	1	65,621		65,620.60
Output 1.1	Act. 1.1.3: Psychosocial assistance	Lump Sum	1	13,940		13,940.00

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Output 1.2	Act. 1.2.1: Pre-departure and return assistance	No. of Person	1,000	385		385,400.00
Other OPS costs	Field Monitoring missions	Lump Sum	1	4,100		4,100.00
Other OPS costs	Visibility & Communication	Lump Sum	1	3,280		3,280.00
Total Operational Costs:						594,430.60
Sub-Total A+B+C						934,579.44
IOM Overhead (7%)						65,420.56
GRAND TOTAL						1,000,000.00