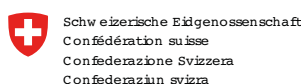


Checklist for Transfer Arrangements

EU-FRANK Tool 15

The EU-FRANK project is co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

Led by Sweden. In partnership and consultation with:



Introduction to this tool

This tool has been developed within the framework of the EU-FRANK project in 2018-2019 with funding from the European Asylum Migration and Integration Fund. Information presented in this tool is by no means exhaustive, but represents a compilation of guidance and practical tips. The objective has been to support EU Member States in their operational work with resettlement. For more information about this project, visit www.eu-frank.eu.

What is the purpose of this tool?

The main objective of this tool is to identify the most important steps and activities that may take place when preparing and implementing transfer of refugees within a resettlement program. The checklist highlights key aspects to be taken into consideration when planning travel arrangements – from issuance of travel documents to the welcoming procedures at the destination airport.

Why was it created?

Organizing the transfer of large groups of refugees can be a challenging process. This tool has been created in order to guide States in defining or improving their operational procedures and to make sure the most important elements are duly addressed. Moreover, this checklist will help guide Member States in their discussions with the IOM as the main implementing partner in making travel arrangements for

resettlement according to article 1 of its Constitution (Article 1 b)): “to concern itself with the organized transfer of refugees, displaced person and other individuals in need of international migration support for whom arrangements may be made between the organization and States concerned, including those states undertaking to receive them”.

Who should use this tool?

This checklist is primarily intended to support national resettlement officers who are planning the transfer of resettled refugees, either in coordination with the IOM or with a national agency. It can be considered useful for officers who are involved with resettlement for the first time and who could benefit from additional guidance, as well as for experienced officers who could use it as a reminder of what they must consider in their work.

Checklist for Transfer arrangements

1. Travel documents			
Status	Step	Task/action required	Additional information
	Travel Permit (TP) issuance , if and where needed for internal movements in the country of first asylum	Liaise with the IOM/UNHCR in departure and/or destination countries to obtain information on procedures requested by the authorities in host countries (particular attention must be paid to the timing and duration of the TP)	<p>The key stakeholders in host countries are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/national authorities • IOM • UNHCR <p>Host governments define the procedures, the roles of key stakeholders, and the time frames to obtain TPs, which are often laid down in agreements with the UNHCR/IOM.</p>
	Visa issuance	<p>Liaise with national embassies or diplomatic missions in host countries.</p> <p>Check with the national embassy regarding their capacity and preferred schedule for visa issuance (number of cases/persons per day, preferably taking into account beneficiaries' places of residence and linked cases in the caseload). Liaise with the IOM to set travel arrangements when the IOM acts as the implementing partner dealing with the logistical/operational support.</p> <p>Verify and adjust the composition of cases compared to information in the RRFs and refugees' documentary evidence of changes that may have occurred (such as newborn, married, or deceased family members)</p> <p>It is most likely that in these cases the embassy/consulate will need an official update of the list of beneficiaries.</p> <p>Further documentation that may be required by the embassy/consulate include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • birth certificate for newborn babies (and an updated RRF by the UNHCR) • divorce certificate • international certificate of vaccination • DNA test <p>National security checks may be conducted and can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fingerprinting • screening of names in national and international database (after verifying whether personal data reported on RRFs match with refugees' IDs) • social media checks 	<p>EEA Resettlement countries generally require entry visas for travel and transit. If refugees hold no valid passports, Member State authorities can issue one-time Laissez Passer (LP) or emergency passports, or even ask for ICRC travel documents (the UNHCR and/or IOM can assist in obtaining this document depending on how it is arranged in the specific country context).</p> <p>If the applicant does not possess a valid passport, it should be clarified with the national consulate which documents and information should be used to apply for a visa (e.g. expired passport, national ID, UNHCR refugee attestation). This is important to assure that all different partners use the same data (the IOM when booking flight tickets, the UNHCR/IOM when requesting exit or in-country travel permits, and embassies when delivering visas).</p> <p>The IOM can facilitate visa processing procedures and the filling of visa forms, and may also facilitate temporary permission-to-stay documents (such as those needed for transit in an Evacuation Transit Centre (ETC)). If a refugee transits from the country of first asylum via an airport of a third country on the way to the country of final destination, transit visas are waived for all refugees and migrants travelling under IOM auspices. The IOM movement staff will process the Transit Visa Waiver (TVW).</p>

1. Travel documents			
Status	Step	Task/action required	Additional information
	Exit Permit issuance	<p>Liaise in a timely manner with the UNHCR/IOM to allow them to start the exit permit processes according to host country authorities' requests (e.g. the GSO in Lebanon, the DGMM in Turkey, the DRA in Kenya, etc.).</p> <p>Through collaboration with the UNHCR/IOM, prepare all documents needed (Advance Booking Notification (ABN) and official travel documents such as national entry visas or LP).</p>	<p>Every context has different protocols for obtaining such exit permits, and this process might take from 3 days up to 3 months. In some cases a fee must be paid, while in other cases the exit permit is delivered free of charge. In some contexts official travel documents are required, in others not. The procedures should preferably be initiated as soon as the resettlement decision is made in order to minimize the waiting time before departure.</p>
	Travel arrangements (frequently managed by IOM)	<p>Select the exact travel dates in agreement with relevant national actors and stakeholders in the field as well as with the IOM according to airline availability, the validity of exit permits/ travel documents, and arrival windows for resettlement countries.</p> <p>Liaise with the IOM when it acts as the implementing partner dealing with logistical/ operational support in order to set travel arrangements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparing costs between charter and commercial flights and determining the best available option and most direct routing taking into account transit requirements where needed. • checking the availability of flights (both international and domestic). • booking in advance as early as possible, especially for larger groups, including seats for operational/medical escorts (when needed) and synchronizing their travel with the beneficiaries. • informing the airline company about any special needs (oxygen on board, wheelchair, stretchers); travel for refugees with medical conditions takes longer to organize and a medical escort is mandatory. • checking airline luggage restrictions policies to avoid problems with check-in on domestic flights (the same check is recommended in case of over land travel in terms of extra bus capacity). • arranging accommodation prior to international travel for non-urban refugees living in camp settings or far away from the departure point. <p>Continuously update and amend the list of refugees, their personal details, and itineraries (taking into account withdrawals or no-shows). Share with main stakeholders (e.g. the immigration office, airport police, and reception partners) all significant information including the ABN (Advance Booking Notification) provided by the IOM with a tentative schedule to confirm the best routing and the travel details (hours, flight number, departure and destination airports, medical travel requirement, etc.).</p>	<p>The IOM holds standing agreements with airlines and charter companies that can facilitate in providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negotiated fares with flexible conditions • special group fares • reduced or no cancellation fees • enhanced baggage allowances • special assistance to passengers <p>The IOM's policy on operational escorts outlines that operational escorts are needed when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of refugees travelling together is significant; • travelers do not speak international languages, are not literate, or have physical or mental constraints; • the journey is particularly long or complex, involves transit stops, or has long transit waits; • travelers have specific individual needs (for example, unaccompanied minors, single elderly persons, etc.). <p>International airlines may have different regulations than domestic airlines. If carry-on bags are too big, this might cause them to be classified as extra bags, which usually carries an extra charge.</p> <p>Check with the UNHCR/IOM regarding the reason behind last-minute withdrawals/no-shows (in any phase of the process).</p>

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Status	Step	Task/action required	Additional information
	National entry visas/LP delivery	<p>Ensure that the IOM or UNHCR receives the travel documents and any other necessary documentation from the embassies.</p> <p>Troubleshoot if there are any discrepancies or issues in coordination with the UNHCR or IOM officers and/or the embassy (depending on existing agreements with the host and resettlement countries).</p>	<p>In urgent or emergency cases or otherwise when an embassy is unavailable, some MS allow personal delivery of LPs through DHL.</p>
	Pre-embarkation briefing on travel procedures (generally part of the PDO sessions but carried out in any case for all beneficiaries traveling under IOM auspices)	<p>Carry out information sessions as close to the departure date as possible. This can be delivered by the IOM as a standard procedure.</p> <p>Provide refugees with practical information about the travel and manage anxiety for first-time travelers.</p> <p>Liaise with the IOM regarding airline luggage restrictions and other requirements for domestic transport after arrival (such as number of buses needed, etc.)</p>	<p>The IOM pre-embarkation briefings cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routings, check-in, in-flight, transit, and arrival procedures • operational and medical escorts' tasks • relevant recommendations including traveling with children, tips on how to behave on board an aircraft, how to prepare and pack luggage, what to pack in the carry-on, how to dress comfortably for the journey, and the use of in-flight facilities. <p>By attending to the details around domestic travel upon arrival in the resettlement country as early as possible, the IOM can inform the refugees about the entire travel process.</p>
	Assistance at the departure and transit airports (generally carried out by the IOM)	<p>Prepare all required departure documentation for the refugees (departure immigration and customs forms) and hand out travel documents and boarding passes for every segment of the trip.</p> <p>Help refugees through airport security, check-in, baggage handling, and boarding procedures (supporting with interpretation if needed).</p>	<p>IOM dedicated staff have airside access to all major airports globally, and this kind of support is particularly needed for hands-on guidance of groups and for immediate troubleshooting in the event of any incident occurring en-route (cancelled flights, missed connecting flight/train/bus, or issues at check-in with travel documents). Rebooking the refugees according to their original routing is fundamental so as not to disrupt arrival procedures already in place at the final destination.</p> <p>IOM staff stay at the airport until the flight takes off and subsequently inform colleagues at the sending, transit, and destination offices that the flight has departed.</p> <p>In some transit airports, the IOM has secured specific designated lounges for IOM passengers or special medical cases. Access to the airport medical facility can also be facilitated.</p> <p>For some itineraries, issuance of boarding passes may be required in-transit.</p>

2. Health Assessment			
Status	Step	Task/action required	Additional information
	<p>Pre-departure health assessments and medical screenings (organized directly by MS or by the IOM depending on existing agreements)</p>	<p>Check whether a travel permit is needed to let refugees come and go from their places of stay/camps. Liaise with the UNHCR/IOM when necessary to obtain the permit.</p> <p>When internal movements are too complicated, an overnight stay until departure can be foreseen for the whole group while health assessments or screenings take place (keeping in mind the security advice from embassies/UNHCR/IOM).</p> <p>Inform the main stakeholders about the results of health assessments, for instance, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • handing over medical clearance of the accepted refugees to the national competent authorities (e.g. Ministry of Health). • liaising with the national reception authorities and/or with professionals working for the municipalities or reception centers to check the arrangements for the accommodation. • identifying the need for medical escorts accompanying refugees during travel to the final destination and consequently facilitate visa issuance for them through the national embassy. 	<p>Health assessments are mainly provided by the IOM and can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC screening by chest X-ray • Urine test <p>Useful information to be shared with the national reception authorities can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabilities; • Mental health conditions (trauma, vulnerabilities, etc.); • Need of medical escorts during travel; • Need of ambulance for transfer of serious medical cases • Pregnancies to follow-up in order to ensure that beneficiaries can travel safely <p>Based on the result of the health assessment (or where medical conditions are already known), the IOM can perform a Pre-Departure Medical Screening (PDMS) to follow up on their status before departure.</p> <p>When needed, a medical escort can be assigned to provide support during the travel. The IOM's policy on medical escorts ensures that when moving vulnerable persons such as disabled persons or serious medical cases, special support includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of medical and operational escorts • arranging wheelchairs and additional seats in the aircraft • arranging an on-board oxygen supply • arranging stretchers • arranging access to medical facilities in transit • arranging transportation by ambulance to/from the aircraft • getting advance clearance for the medical case on board of the aircraft by the airline's medical department.
	<p>Fit to travel assessment (usually carried out by the IOM)</p>	<p>A pre-embarkation medical check is recommended 24–72 hours before departure. This is required by the IOM and is done for all cases they assist with. The check aims at assessing whether refugees are fit to travel and do not pose any health threat to other passengers on the aircraft or to persons encountered during transit or immediately upon arrival in the resettlement country.</p>	<p>If during these sessions the health of a refugee has deteriorated or new issues arise, referral to the resettlement country's competent authorities is needed to decide whether to perform more or new tests and/or assign an escort.</p> <p>Emergency treatment is prescribed if needed at this point, and treatment for intestinal parasites or malaria (which generally occurs close to departure) is given to ensure that the passenger is as healthy and as comfortable as possible or for stabilization purposes.</p>

3. Upon arrival			
Status	Step	Task/action required	Additional information
	Welcoming refugees at the airport in the resettlement country (usually carried out by national resettlement officers and/or municipalities' representatives together with IOM staff)	<p>Meet and gather the refugees at the arrival gate and accompany them to the waiting room (when available) or to the arrival hall.</p> <p>Verify the number of refugees who have arrived and communicate the arrival confirmation to relevant partners.</p> <p>Brief the refugees about the procedures that will be carried out until they reach their final destination.</p> <p>Facilitate access to the airport for reception workers who will be accompanying the refugees to their final destination (private apartment or collective reception center).</p> <p>If medical problems arise, refer patients to medical professionals at the airport or in the municipality (call an ambulance if needed).</p>	<p>Coordinate with the IOM, UNHCR, and competent national authorities regarding logistical issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distribution of food and beverages; • babysitting while adults go through administrative procedures; • interpreters for each language spoken by beneficiaries (matching the number, language, and gender balance with the group's specific needs) to ease the official arrival procedures. <p>If medical or logistical problems delay the passenger's (and his/her family's) onward journey, the IOM in coordination with national authorities finds accommodation, organizes transport to/from the hotel and catering, and makes new travel arrangements.</p>
	Refugee status	Grant status to resettled refugees by involving the competent national authorities.	<p>Formalities around the granting of refugee status (such as applications) may be processed during selection missions (together with the decision regarding eligibility for the resettlement program), upon arrival at the airport, or at a later stage. This process may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fingerprinting • taking identity photos • collecting personal data • signing official forms <p>The issuance of refugee status can be done immediately upon arrival or at a later stage.</p>
	Travel assistance to final destination (managed by national authorities' representatives and reception workers, generally supported by IOM staff)	<p>Go through airport security and immigration control providing interpretation if required. Provide refugees with assistance to their final destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help with check-in on their onward domestic flight, accompany them to the departure gate, and assist until boarding; • retrieve luggage and reroute it when needed; • meet reception workers and accompany refugees to the bus/car/train station from where there will be onward transport over land to venues of arrival procedures, collective reception centers, or private housing provided by municipalities. 	To ensure continuity of care, as per IOM policies, escorts usually go to the final destination and sign handover forms with the receiving party.