



# IOM Afghanistan

## Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA) Programme



Given the need for qualified Afghans to participate in ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in Afghanistan, the Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA) programme aims at bridging human resource gaps in Afghanistan's public sectors by facilitating efficient, sustainable returns of skilled Afghans. Qualified Afghans residing outside of Afghanistan are identified, and voluntarily returned and placed into key positions that support the strengthening of the public sector. In doing so, returned Afghan experts contribute to reconstruction, capacity building and development in Afghanistan, in partnership with the Afghan government.

Maximizing the positive relationship between migration and development has long been a strategic focus of IOM's work. In an era of unprecedented levels of human mobility, the need to develop a fuller understanding of the linkages between migration and development is particularly urgent, as is the need to act in practical ways to enhance the benefits that migration can bring to development.

IOM approaches the linkages between migration and development from the perspective that international migration, if properly managed, can contribute to the growth and prosperity of countries of origin and of destination, as well as benefiting migrants themselves. It therefore tries to harness the development potential

of migration for the benefit of both individual migrants and societies.

In response to continuous conflict, which has severely damaged Afghanistan's infrastructure, economy and productive capacities, IOM started its return of qualified national activities in Afghanistan in 1999.

Following the formation of the Afghan Interim Administration and the declaration of its priorities for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan at the Tokyo Conference in 2001, as well as the country's appeal for international assistance to recover the expertise of qualified Afghans living abroad and to engage them in the reconstruction process, IOM started the "Return of Qualified Afghans" (RQA) programme

in December 2001. RQA aims to maximize the contributions of Afghan expatriates living outside the country for the development of Afghanistan.

The RQA programme focuses on the return of qualified\* Afghan nationals worldwide, who are motivated to contribute their skills for the benefit of the reconstruction process on a short- or long-term basis\*\*.

As of 2014, IOM has recruited and assisted the return more than 1,482 Afghan experts from 31 countries through different RQA components. These skilled returnees have worked in 24 ministries and other government institutions, NGOs, international organizations and private sector agencies operating in Afghanistan.

\* Under the auspices of RQA, the term qualified was applied to those Afghans who have graduated from university and presented the programme with proof of their academic credentials.

\*\* Permanent return was encouraged but was not obligatory.

# Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA)

## Temporary Return Of Qualified Nationals Project (TRQN)

Through the third phase of the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) project, IOM contributes to the development and implementation of national development policies and strategies in Afghanistan by engaging Afghans living overseas in improving the capacity of governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Facilitating the temporary return of highly-skilled professionals effectively contributes to the development of Afghanistan by supporting the transfer of knowledge between diaspora experts and target Afghan institutions. Through TRQN, capacity building needs are matched with the qualifications of Afghans residing in participating third countries.

During the previous phases of TRQN, which began in 2006, IOM facilitated 190 temporary return assignments to Afghanistan.

Upon the request of the Afghan Government and based on the positive experiences with the previous phases of TRQN, IOM began implementation of the third phase of the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals project in March 2013, with funding support from the Government of the Netherlands. The third phase of TRQN will run until the end of November 2015.

TRQN III focuses on a limited number of priority sectors in Afghanistan identified by IOM and its government partners. The current priority sectors are education (including vocational training), health and infrastructure. The average duration of the temporary return assignments is three months.



*A TRQN participant supervising a construction project in Kabul*

## Return Assistance to Qualified Afghans from Iran (RAQA)

The Return Assistance to Qualified Afghans from Iran (RAQA) project aims at bridging human resource gaps in Afghanistan's public sectors. RAQA is being implemented from April 2013 through December 2014, with funding support from the Government of Japan.

Through RAQA, qualified Afghans residing in Iran are identified, returned and placed into key jobs that support the strengthening of the public sector. The returned Afghan experts contribute to reconstruction, capacity building and development efforts in Afghanistan, working in coordination with participating Afghan government institutions.

Previous phases of RAQA facilitated the return of 450 qualified Afghans from Iran.

## RQA by the Numbers, from 2002 through 31 August 2014

1,482	Afghan experts returned to Afghanistan with IOM's assistance
31	Number of countries experts have returned from
24	Number of Afghan ministries where experts have been placed
50	Number of government offices/institutions where experts have been placed
96	Number of NGOs, international and other organizations (including private sector) where experts have been placed
236	Number of female experts returned
28	Number of provinces where experts have been placed

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