



Irregular Migration Challenges

Irregular Migration is described as the movement of people who enter or stay in a country in ways that do not adhere to the national laws and administrative procedures of the receiving/transiting countries. At the Sixth Bali Process Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia on 23 March 2016, Ministers recognised that timely, safe and dignified returns of persons found not to be owed international protection is an important element of orderly migration.

The Bali Process Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration (TEG-RR) is a network of experts on returns and reintegration from Bali Process Member States and organisations. The TEG-RR is a mechanism through which Bali Process Members can share information on returns and reintegration, including key policy initiatives, trends, issues, and identify opportunities for cooperation and capacity building.

The Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Program



For Bali Process Member States, migration entails significant levels of both emigration and immigration, as well as transit migration. There are nearly 10 million international migrants within South-East Asia alone, 6.8 million of whom migrated from other countries within South-East Asia. Considerable income disparity in South, Central and South-East Asia, combined with political disruptions, are major factors underpinning the strong trend of people migrating from lower-income countries to higher-income countries within the subregion.¹

With the coordination and technical support of the Regional Support Office (RSO) and International Office for Migration (IOM), the Bali Process initiated the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Program (AVRR) for Bali Process Member States in 2012, the Supporting Sustainable Return Project in 2020, and the Dialogue on the Management of Irregular Migration in South-East Asia (Detention, Return and Readmission) in 2021.

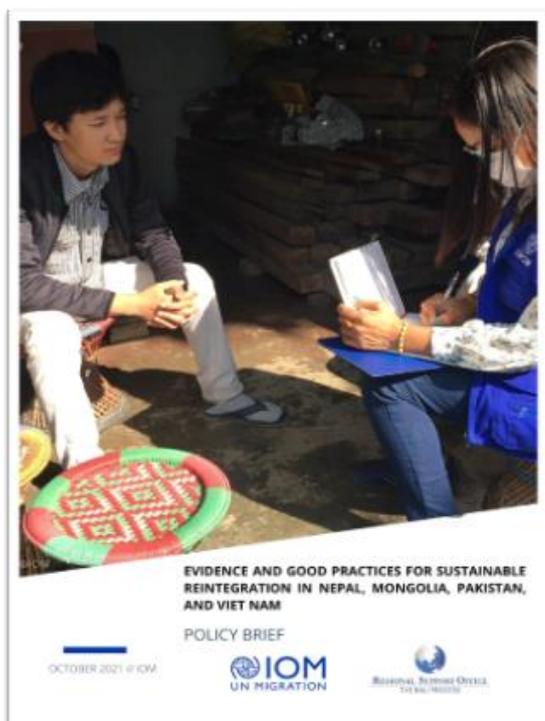
Through these initiatives, the Bali Process aims to strengthen cooperation and understanding among Bali Process Member States, particularly on managing irregular migration and developing mechanisms to assist with the sustainable returns and reintegration of migrants. Practical initiatives under these projects cover the facilitation of return and reintegration of migrants, studies of the experience of returned migrants, and creating space for policy dialogues and technical discussions on the management of irregular migration.

¹ IOM, Migration Report, 2020

Under the AVRR initiative, as of January 2022, the Bali Process supported a total of 1413 migrants from Bali Process Member States to return to their countries of origin. Notably, in 2019 -2020, there was a decrease in the number of returns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and related travel costs and restrictions. Beneficiary profiles under the AVRR Program include irregular migrants, victims of trafficking in persons, stranded migrants, rejected asylum seekers, and refugees.

In 2022, through the initiative of the Dialogue on the Management of Irregular Migration in South-East Asia project, IOM, in close coordination with the RSO, plan to conduct a study on existing practices and convene national and regional dialogues with Bali Process Member States such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia for technical discussions around return, readmission, and protection.

Past phases of Bali Process AVRR	Number of people assisted
July 2012 – June 2013	234
July 2013 – June 2014	203
April 2014 – September 2015	178
July 2015 – March 2017	127
July 2016 – March 2019	318
April 2019 – December 2020	187
January 2021 – June 2022 (as of 31/01/2022)	166
Total	1,413



In 2020-2021, under the Supporting Sustainable Return Project, IOM surveyed 120 migrants (81 men, 39 women) who received assistance under the AVRR program on their reintegration experience in four countries: Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Vietnam. The survey produced “A Policy Brief on Evidence and Good Practices for Sustainable Reintegration in Nepal, Mongolia, Pakistan and Viet Nam” drawing from the experience of returnees and implications of national policy framework. The Policy Brief introduces policy recommendations for Bali Process Members on return and reintegration and is available to Member States on request by email: info@rso.baliprocess.net.

The RSO and IOM will continue the engagement with Bali Process Member States to monitor the assisted voluntary returns under the AVRR Program and to expand support for return migration as a tool for well-managed migration.

GET IN TOUCH

The RSO is a regional mechanism that brings together relevant policy knowledge, technical expertise and operational experience from Bali Process members and other key stakeholders, to develop practical initiatives that address people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime.

The RSO stands ready to collaborate and respond to address the needs of Bali Process Member States. Please contact us by email (info@rso.baliprocess.net) or Twitter ([@baliprocessrso](https://twitter.com/baliprocessrso)) to inquire and discuss your needs or to add your details to our mailing list.

