

**The IOM Project "Reconstruction, Capacity Building and Development  
through the Return of Qualified Nationals to Bosnia and Herzegovina"  
-- An Evaluation**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

In 1996 – 2001 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) executed a project "Reconstruction, Capacity Building and Development through the Return of Qualified Nationals to Bosnia and Herzegovina."

This evaluation has two overall objectives:

- \* "Assess whether objectives of the project were attained in an efficient manner"
- \* "Determine lessons learned"

There are also a number of specific purposes of the evaluation, such as the project design, relevance, sustainability, IOM's approach and gender considerations.

### The project

Under objectives, the project document stated the following:

"The *primary* goal is to strengthen the administrative and technical capacities within the public and private sectors in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska in order to facilitate the reconstruction process. Attention will be given also to self-employment projects and small-scale business in order to trigger broader development and socio-economic growth. The project will draw on the expertise of Bosnian returnees who will be recruited specifically to work on reconstruction. Their efforts will further facilitate the return and reintegration of greater numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons."

The total expenditure of the project (April 1996 – February 2001) was USD 7 821 630 for 862 returnees, resulting in a mean placement cost of USD 9 074 per returnee. Funding countries and agencies were (in order of magnitude): Japan, Germany, Sweden, USA, Netherlands, Norway, Finland, UK, UNDP and Switzerland.

Of the total amount 79,5 % were for operational costs and 20,5 % were for administrative support costs; of the latter amount IOM-HQ charged 9,5% for overhead. The major item of the operational costs was purchase of equipment which accounted for more than half of the operational costs whereas costs for national staff were the major support cost item.

### Results

IOM received 1365 "open job offers", which were announced in Europe through IOM offices, and 600 job offers for specific persons designated by employers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. IOM received a total of 2079 applications for support. IOM placed 862 persons (and their dependants): 1996-97 295 returnees; 1998 298 returnees; 1999 223 returnees; and 2000 46 returnees). Of the returnees 683 (79%) were employed and 179 (21%) were "self-employed" (business start-ups). 520 (60 %) of the returnees were men and 342 (40 %) women.

A broad majority (at least 60 %) of the returnees chose to stay not only during the subsidized period of one year. This was to be expected because most returnees (89%) were integrated into society. In addition, the median age of returnees was 42-43 and they had little to no possibility to go abroad again. The returnees complained about accommodation, job conditions and salaries. Most of them could not return to their own property in the early years of the project implementation. Only in 1998 was the legal framework for property return created. Therefore those beneficiaries of the project, who were the only ones employed in a family, did not earn enough to cover all living costs if they were obliged to pay rent. However, in the post-placement interviews they generally found the project very useful and were very satisfied with IOM's implementation.

### *Doing the right things*

Conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time the project was formulated no doubt justified its objectives. The weak administrative and technical capacities and the lack of qualified people in Bosnia and Herzegovina to fill the key positions that were crucial to the reconstruction made the project highly relevant. The large number of qualified Bosnian refugees in Europe provided an ample source for recruitment. Nevertheless, its relevance diminished because people returned anyway, the shortage gradually vanished in many sectors and skilled people in the country could not find employment.

IOM was very well positioned to act as a go-between thanks to its mandate, knowledge and organization. The relevance was further strengthened by the fact that - apart from the UN Volunteer Programme - IOM was the only member of the International Community that took upon itself to match the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and highly qualified Bosnians abroad.

IOM brought back 862 returnees during four years. Many people - perhaps 150 000 - left the country during the same period. The people who returned under the project were more experienced than the rather young people who left during the same period and the project could have an effect at the local level where sometimes one or a few returnees could make a difference, especially in the beginning of the project period. But this huge and harmful brain drain certainly puts the project in perspective.<sup>2</sup> It is a reminder of its smallness and the need to tailor a project of this kind - that by definition must have a limited scope - to the specific needs of the receiving country, i.e. needs that cannot be satisfied by in-country personnel. A focus on filling existing employment gaps that cannot otherwise be filled with local expertise also reduces resentment among people who remained in the country and are unemployed.

Refugee return and the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina are major features of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) and, hence, also primary goals of the International Community. From that standpoint, this project was relevant at the time of its inception.

In addition, OHR and the International Community have increasingly pursued a policy of *minority return* since 1998-99. While the effectiveness of such a policy is disputed, its rationale is to counter ethnic cleansing and it must be taken into regard. IOM, being a service organization with a mandate to facilitate migration, did not give any special regard to minority return. Nevertheless, the project achieved a 10 % minority return rate in each of both entities of the country.

The project design provided a number of mechanisms to ensure the capacity building, but they proved inadequate. The mechanisms to bring about the returns, however, proved to be adequate. Specifically, the identification of vacancies and candidates and the matching procedures worked.

The objective of IOM's technical co-operation is to strengthen, through active partnership, the capacity of governments and other relevant actors and IOM develops its assisted return programmes with close dialogue and interaction with interested Governments. The project design formally satisfied these requirements. However, in reality the Bosnian involvement became most limited throughout the project period and there was no other active partnership or interaction. The main reasons were that the political leaders did not co-operate with each other and did not commit themselves to change and that the authorities lacked the capacity for planning and implementation. In contrast, some host countries' involvement was perhaps greater than desirable because their involvement made the project more supply-driven and less coherent with IOM thinking.

Many qualified nationals among the Bosnian refugees returned under the general return programmes. It seems that IOM could make a difference by focusing on well-targeted, key positions for *highly qualified returnees*. In fact, the design of the project was to that effect.

Although the project was not *integrated* into wider reconstruction programmes, it was doubtful whether it would have been realistic for IOM to adopt such an approach. Specifically, difficulties of coordination and institutional prestige might have jeopardized its prospects. The project was based on the *needs* of the country and was development oriented but also considered the interests of donors and other stakeholders. Several donors earmarked their funds for returns from their own countries; in particular, the heavy German participation

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<sup>2</sup> There is no reliable statistics of the post-war brain drain, but authorities and observers agree that it has been very high and harmful to Bosnia and Herzegovina (see 3.4.3 below).

contributed to a certain supply-driven feature of the project. The design aimed at building *capacity* of the government, but the project became mainly a return-only project.

#### *Attainment of objectives*

The strengthening of “administrative and technical capacities” in a narrow sense was limited but, to some extent, this is less true if teachers’ and medical doctors’ activities are included. The success rate of the 179 self-employment projects (that is business start-ups) seems to be high. A majority of the returnees reported an expansion of their business and very few failed completely. The grant under this scheme, in contrast to a loan, met with criticism among businessmen who had stayed in the country and therefore were not eligible for the IOM support. In theory this criticism was well founded since such grants may distort competition. On the other hand, returnees had difficulties in receiving micro credits because their start-ups lacked a cash flow that was usually a condition for such a credit and they could often not offer a collateral.

862 persons returned under the project. IOM would most likely have met the target of 1000 returnees if more funds had been available. While many returnees reported that they would have come back any way, it is likely that the project allowed them to return earlier than they would have otherwise done and perhaps, to other jobs. But there was certainly a group that would not have returned without the IOM assistance. About 10 per cent of returnees in both Bosnian entities were *minority* returns.

The project document stated that “the project will facilitate the return and reintegration of 1000 qualified persons to *key positions to the reconstruction plans* of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (italics add.). About one third of the employed returnees (34 %) had qualified positions in administration or industry. Most returnees (65 %) did not work in their profession while in exile, most of them (72 %) did not receive additional qualifications abroad and many did not use their qualifications to a maximum in Bosnia and Herzegovina; i.e. very few were working in strategic fields or held other “key positions” of this kind. If, on the other hand, the jobs of certain teachers or medical doctors are regarded as “key positions”, which would be the case if such professional is the only one of his kind in a remote rural village, the outcome is more favourable. In reality, IOM used another, laxer criterion for eligibility: a four year-university degree. 76 % of the returnees had such level of education.

The returnees filled “an acute shortage of expertise available locally” during the first part of the project period to the extent that there was an acute shortage of teachers and health personnel.

The attainment of the objective of facilitating the return and integration of “greater number” of refugees and displaced persons (than the returnees themselves) is difficult to assess because this issue was not surveyed. The return of *minority* refugees could be important in this regard since they may unleash further minority returns. Yet, this was not a project objective. However, data from questionnaires suggest that the project had other catalytic effects; returnees contributed to added employment, business expansion and the passing on of knowledge to others, all of which could have multiplied effects.

#### *Sustainability*

Bosnia and Herzegovina did not acquire an institutional capacity within this project to “cover project related issues for the continuity and sustainability of programme goals”. This failing could be a direct consequence of the failure to strengthen capacities as foreseen in the document. However, there is a continued inflow of qualified Bosnians. But can this be attributed to the project? IOM does not claim that the project is sustainable in the sense that it spurred increased return of Bosnian refugees (outside the project); there are no visible signs that such effects have occurred.

If the 862 persons who returned stayed in the country and continued to fill key positions the project has an enduring effect. The documentation points at a sustainable effect in this sense. Most of returnees have remained in the country and in their jobs.

The degree of success of the self-employment projects (small businesses) must be considered a good indicator of the sustainability of these projects. Few projects had failed in the sense that the business had closed and more than half of them (63%) expanded business, even though they had to cope with the bleak economic situation and other obstacles to success.

#### *Doing things right*

The project was based on a thorough *planning*. The project document identified relevant problems and suggested logical interventions to tackle those problems. But the project document was an IOM document, not a document of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This lack of national ownership was built into the project from the beginning. There was also a general lack of clarity of what the project was all about.

The project document lacked an in-depth-analysis of the assumptions of the project, the soundness of these assumptions and, hence, the risks of the project, for instance continued ethnic tensions and political obstruction. Such a systematic analysis would have prepared IOM better for the development that followed. The project document also had “technical deficiencies”, such as lack of quantitative targets, indicators to measure progress etc.

In *implementing* the project IOM used procedures for identification of vacant positions and of recruiting candidates abroad that seem to have worked very well and IOM succeeded in matching vacancies and candidates. This was confirmed by the very positive comments by respondents. IOM implementation was characterised by flexibility. IOM adapted to the failing capacity of Bosnian authorities to take action and to co-ordinate the work. But it was difficult to establish a partnership with other agencies.

The project, which was a technical co-operation project according to the project document, was quietly transformed into mainly a return-only project. This should have been openly discussed with donors and other stakeholders. The project document contained the substance of the agreement between the various actors. Deviations should then take place only after an open discussion and in general agreement between the parties.

IOM should be highly commended for its very ambitious monitoring of the project. Monitoring and post-placement interviews were made, in principle, with each returnee on the basis of questionnaires. The answers were fed into a very valuable database, which also comprised other information. The project document, the questionnaires and the database were not, however, fully harmonised. IOM should have built the database and determined the questions investigated according to the project outline. Such harmonization would have facilitated the monitoring and evaluation. A conclusion is that the monitoring of the project should be planned when the project is formulated and be based on the project document. This will not only increase the usefulness of the monitoring. It will also force the drafters of the project to be realistic and to include parameters that can be assessed in the monitoring (and in a possible evaluation).

Donors were satisfied with the *reporting*, which contained a lot of useful information. However, the draft Final Report failed to deal with some significant matters; for example, it did not even mention the primary objective of the project, let alone its attainment, and made no mention of almost any shortcomings.

#### *Costs*

The *total cost* of the project was USD 7 821 630 for the 862 returnees and, thus, the cost per returnee, including three dependants, was USD 9 074. Is this high? It is not possible to say because we do not know the value of each returnee’s contribution to the Bosnian society. (For the sake of comparison it could be mentioned that the amount per returnee would suffice for “self-help”-reconstruction of two houses, that is accommodation for eight persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the reconstruction of one house by a constructor.)

Of interest is whether there were mechanisms for keeping costs down and ensuring that there was a genuine need for the returnees financed under the project. In this respect, it was a deficiency that the main beneficiaries of the project, the employers, had *no incentive* to turn an offer down since they had no higher cost for accepting a returnee than the cost for hiring a local person. In contrast, they received equipment as a gift that became property of the employers. The project could have been more cost-effective if there had been some incentives for employers to fill vacancies with in-country personnel first or reduce costs.

*Administrative costs* of IOM were 20,5 per cent of total costs, including over-head for headquarters in Geneva. This percentage is reasonable, in comparison with the corresponding costs of other similar organisations and in view of the burdensome work to identify vacancies and candidates that IOM carried out.

#### *Lessons learned*

*Context.* The context is central to project management (planning, implementation etc) in a post-conflict setting and very difficult to assess. That calls for care in planning and an open mind to unexpected developments. Local expertise is essential.

*Realism.* The objectives were not realistic, for example, that the self-employed returnees would “trigger a broader development and socio-economic growth”. Such an exaggeration reduces the credibility of the project and undermines future funding efforts.

*General vs. country-specific knowledge.* It is welcome that IOM systematizes and takes advantage of general knowledge (“best return practice”), but the project illustrates that it is not possible to use a blueprint for the design of a return project. It should, if possible, be elaborated upon in partnership with local authorities and adapted to the prerequisites of the country.

*Comparative advantages of IOM.* A project of this type must by definition be rather narrow in scope. The number of people who left the country during the period of the implementation of the project may have been 150 times the number of the returnees under the project. This brain drain, that IOM also serves, points at the need to focus on the comparative advantages of IOM, for example building national capacity for return and promoting the return of experts at the highest level, if possible experts who have worked in their profession abroad.

*Role of recipient Government.* The lack of national ownership was detrimental to capacity building, sustainability, planning and monitoring.

*Minority return.* The International Community has increasingly pursued a policy of minority return, its rationale being the combat of ethnical cleansing. IOM did not give any special regard to minority return in this project, though, which goes contrary to IOM policy to achieve “multiplier effects”, too. On the other hand, it can be seen as an acceptance of what was realistic in the country at the time.

*Catalytic effects.* Projects could serve as catalysts not only by encouraging more returnees but also in other ways. The impact of returnees in the work place is an example. Returnees contributed to added employment, business expansion and the passing of knowledge onto others, which in its turn could have “multiplier effects”. Contacts established by returnees in host countries could foster business.

*Linkage.* IOM has a policy to team up with other agencies in order to facilitate a comprehensive approach. In this case such linkage with other programmes was difficult to establish, e.g. housing projects could not be redirected to places from where returnees came and those projects often gave priority to vulnerable people.

*Grants.* The returnees had difficulties in receiving micro credits because their start-ups lacked cash flow, which was usually a condition for such a credit, and they could often not offer a collateral. In addition, the grants only covered part of the investment cost so the returnees who started a business had to invest money of their own. The grants had also other conditions. So, there are circumstances in which grants may be justified although they typically distort competition.

*Cost incentives.* The employers had no incentive to turn an offer down since they received equipment and other benefits without any cost in addition to the cost for hiring a local person. The project could have been more cost-effective if there had been some incentives for employers to reject a returning candidate and fill the vacancies with in-country personnel or reduce costs.

*Planning.* The project document was an IOM document, not a document of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The participation of Bosnian authorities was limited. There was also a general lack of clarity as to what the project was all about. The project document lacked an in-depth-analysis of the assumptions of the project. The use of a more systematic analysis would have improved the planning and prepared IOM better for the consequences, such as the national lack of ownership of the project.

*Project document.* The project document contains the substance of the agreement between the parties and should serve as the primary management document. The project was quietly transformed from a technical co-operation/capacity building project to a return-only project. This “transformation” was reflected in the reporting, but it was not mentioned or openly discussed between IOM and the stakeholders. A deviation from the document requires the consent of the stakeholders. If the document is unrealistic or if it is based on assumptions that prove to be faulty, the document should be revised in agreement with the concerned parties.

*Definitions.* IOM uses various terms without precise definitions. For example, in one document it claims that IOM (under the project) “...returned and placed more than 900 professional Bosnian nationals...Overall, the programme has proven to be very-cost-effective...the sustainability rate of these placements is extremely high”.



It is difficult to assess this interesting (but dubious) statement since the concepts of cost-effectiveness and sustainability are not defined.

*Implementation.* As was just described the planning was mistaken in some respects. A high degree of flexibility can counteract many planning flaws.

*Multi-annual scheme.* The project also demonstrates the advantages of a long-term (four years) project. It allowed for the built-up of an adequate organization for such a complex and labour-intensive project. It also secured continuity and adaptation to the Bosnian reality and, in the end, facilitated better use of the funds.

*Monitoring.* IOM monitoring deserves high marks. It would have been even better if the project document, the questionnaires and the database had been fully harmonised. The monitoring of the project should be planned at the time when the project is formulated and it should be based on the project document.

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## *1. Introduction*

### *1.1 Background*

From 1996 to 2001, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) executed the "Reconstruction, Capacity Building and Development through the Return of Qualified Nationals to Bosnia and Herzegovina" project. Also known as the "Return of Qualified Nationals" (RQN), this project is hereinafter referred to as the "project".

### *1.2 Mandate and purpose*

The evaluation has two "overall objectives":

- \* "Assess whether objectives of the project were attained in an efficient manner"
- \* "Determine lessons learned"

There are also a number of "specific purposes" of the evaluation; they regard the project design, relevance, sustainability, the approach of IOM and gender. Impact is not reviewed: it is early to assess it and it is very difficult to separate the impact of IOM financed activities from that of other factors. However, relevance of project objectives, sustainability and IOM's management of the project are good "intermediary criteria"; if they meet high standards it is a good indicator of impact.

The terms of reference also deal with methodology and some other matters. – The terms of reference are enclosed in Annex 1.

## 2. Methodology and material

### 2.1 Character of the evaluation

	Accountability	Learning	Knowledge dev't	Steering
Policy	X	X	(X)	-
Effectiveness	X	X	(X)	-
Efficiency	(X)	(X)	-	-

The evaluation has a rather wide scope. It treats all three *levels* on the vertical axis, with limited emphasis, though, on the efficiency (organisation, work methods and costs). Of the *purposes* (see the horizontal axis) emphasis is put on accountability and on learning. Hopefully some knowledge is also produced whereas a steering purpose is not pursued; i.e. the evaluation gives no guidance about change of existing projects and does not propose new projects.

### 2.2 Target groups

The evaluation is directed at IOM, donors and other actors in the field of migration in general and returns issues in particular. It could also be useful to authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of other post conflict countries. Hopefully, persons who are not familiar with developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina can read the report. A description of the BiH context (Sect. 3) is, however, included since it is vital to the project.

### 2.3 Methodology and design

The evaluator has not come across any previous evaluation design or evaluation criteria that could be readily used. The criteria formulated for the assessment of each of the parameters (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency etc) will be explained under the heading 'methodology' in the beginning of each section.

### 2.4 Material

#### 2.4.1 Interviews

Interviews were made with representatives of IOM-Bosnia and Herzegovina/Sarajevo, IOM-HQ/Geneva, other agencies, donors, Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities and stakeholders. For persons met see Annex 2.

#### 2.4.2 Documentation

An ample documentation has been studied in the course of the evaluation. Examples are the project document, reports by IOM (interim reports and final report), statistical material and general reports concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina and return issues. The results that were gathered from the documentation are reported in section 5.2 below.

#### 2.4.3 Post-placement interviews

IOM made post-placement interviews with the returnees. The answers were used for a database and dealt with manually as well. Each post-placement evaluation report was concluded with a comment by the post-placement interviewer. The forms and, in particular, the comments made by the interviewers have been studied by the evaluator. The results are reported in section 5.3 below. The questionnaires that were the basis for the post placement interviews are enclosed (Annex 3).

#### 2.4.4 Database

IOM built a database containing the post-placement interviews and other data. The database used in the evaluation comprised 808 persons out of the 862 persons finally returned under the project. The discrepancy is due to the fact that post placement interviews had not been made with all returnees at the time of the inception of the evaluation; the database used includes no returns after the end of year 2000. A selection of the data that have been retrieved by the evaluator from the database is reported in section 5.4 below.

#### 2.5 Activities

The work on the evaluation was carried out in the spring and summer of 2001. Visits were paid to Bosnia and Herzegovina on two occasions, in May and in July 2001, and to Geneva in August 2001. The visits gave the opportunity to discuss with IOM staff and other persons concerned. Earlier versions of this report have been subject to comments by IOM, many of which have been incorporated into the report.

### 3 Context

#### 3.1 General

Developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina were crucial not only to the rationale behind the project and to its design. They also affected the possibilities of implementation of the project. The planning of the project was based on a number of assumptions concerning developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of these assumptions turned out not to be realistic. Because of the complex situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its impact on the project the context will be described at some length.

#### 3.2 Political developments

When the peace agreement (General Framework Agreement for Peace; GFAP) was concluded in Dayton in 1995 a fairly optimistic mood prevailed and it was generally expected that the agreement would be implemented in a reasonable way over the following years. But that has not been the case. Political and ethnical tension persisted and the political obstacles to the implementation of the project were legion; a main reason was that implementation of the agreement involved redistribution of power.

The three ethnic groups have tried to maintain as much independence as possible and their own “nations”. Most observers claim that war would break out in a matter of days if the foreign troops (Sfor) were to go home. It is only in 2001 that Bosnia and Herzegovina has started turning into one state and adopted a common strategy for its future development. The political development has adversely affected the return process, in particular minority return.

#### 3.3 Socio-economic developments

The war had a devastating effect on the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was already before the war one of the lower income republics of the former Yugoslavia (SFRY). By the end of 1995, GDP had collapsed to less than USD 500 per capita, i.e. about 20 percent of its pre-war level.

The economic situation was a major obstacle to the returns and the major reason for the continuing brain drain. Low salaries and a 40-50 per cent rate of unemployment were part of the depressed economic situation, in particular in Republika Srpska. But other factors had an impact on returns, too, such as discrimination in many societal areas, lack of education opportunities and lack of housing.

The project was based on the assumption that implementation of the GFAP would be realised, and that things would gradually “normalize.” In 1996 and 1997 people still hoped that things would change for the better. But this did not come true (e.g., the standard of living did not rise, investments remained non-existent and unemployment prevailed. There were also problems with property restitution, and privatisation was slow; privatisation that actually took place only increased unemployment). The socio-economic context of the project changed from being rather optimistic in spirit at the beginning of the project period with a high propensity to return, to a more pessimistic mood. It was also part of the pattern that Bosnia and Herzegovina had a relatively high level of education and that many Bosnians in exile were highly qualified.

### 3.4 Refugees, displaced persons and returnees

#### 3.4.1 General

Out of a pre-war population of 4.3 million, more than a million people, probably 1.3 million, were internally displaced, and a further 1.2 million fled to other countries. This means that the war caused the forced displacement of some 60 per cent of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Annex 7 of GFAP states that “all refugees and displaced persons have the right freely to return to their homes of origin.... The early return of refugees and displaced persons is an important objective of the settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. The very ambitious objective of GFAP – the return of more than two million people to their *homes of origin* – is a direct response to the ethnic cleansing performed in the country. At the end of 2000, five years after the conclusion of the peace accords, probably not more than 400,000 had returned, and many of the refugees that came back from Western European countries returned to a situation of internal displacement, because they could not recover their pre-conflict homes. At the end of 2000 over 500 000 Bosnians had settled permanently abroad and 700 000 – 800 000 persons remained displaced in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The war contributed to the acceleration of migration to urban centres. Many returnees did not want to go back to rural areas, in particular skilled people whose job opportunities were more numerous in the cities.

The possibilities for the refugees to stay in the host countries and for the returnees to re-emigrate were an important part of the refugee situation. Germany that was host to most refugees granted only temporary refuge, and did not let refugees stay there. The Scandinavian countries granted the right of residence and they permitted the returnees to re-emigrate to these countries. Netherlands granted the right to residence and permitted re-emigration within one year provided that the returnee re-applied for right to residence.

The difficulties in *reclaiming property* became an increasingly important topic and perhaps the most crucial issue of the return. Annex 7 states that refugees and displaced persons “shall have the right to have restored to them their property of which they were deprived in the course of the hostilities since 1991 and to be compensated for any property that cannot be restored to them.” The implementation of this provision proved to be most cumbersome especially in Republika Srpska. By March 2001 decisions had been made on only 20 per cent of property claims, which means that 50,000 people had repossessed their property out of 250,000 submitted claims. The lack of accommodation, which had not been foreseen at the time of the planning of the project, turned out to be a main problem (that, however, was addressed by IOM).

### 3.4.2 Minority return

Minority return became a main goal for the International Community in 1998. For many organizations it almost appeared as if minority returns constituted the only indicator of success of the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was logical since the rationale behind the peace accords was the reversal of the ethnical cleansing, but it was not very realistic. In fact, in the early years of the peace process, few minority returns took place, and virtually no non-Serbs returned to Republika Srpska. The minority returns were as follows: 1996: 12,000; 1997: 34,837; 1998: 35,000; 1999: 41,000; 2000: 67,000; the minority returns continued to increase in 2001. As can be seen, significant progress was made but political obstruction, employment discrimination, poor economic situation and other obstacles to minority return remained.

### 3.4.3 Post-war brain drain

A large number of Bosnians have left Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war and the brain drain continues. According to a recent poll 62 per cent of young Bosnian people wanted to leave. The people who are most needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina are those who have the best prospects abroad.

There is no reliable statistics of the brain drain that actually has taken place, but observers agree that it has been very high and harmful to Bosnia and Herzegovina. One figure mentioned by the Federal Ministry is that 150 000 Bosnians left after the end of the war, mostly young people who had university degrees or were going to study abroad. This means a brain drain of 2500 per month; the figure must be used with caution, but observers seem to find it plausible. This figure sheds light on IOM's claim that the project helped reverse the brain drain.

### 3.5 Bosnia and Herzegovina as recipient of aid

The project meant that resources were used - on a grant basis - for the benefit of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The particularities of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina as the recipient of aid were, accordingly, an important part of the context of the project.

At the time, Bosnia and Herzegovina was the most assisted country in the world but remained politically unstable. Its political leaders did not co-operate, they did commit themselves to change and the authorities lacked the capacity for planning and implementation. For these reasons Bosnia and Herzegovina lacked ownership of aid-supported activities. Not only was there almost no single agency or organization that received funds from the Bosnian authorities. The donor community "invaded" the country with more than one hundred international organizations operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These organizations took also over policymaking and implementation.

The project was, in other words, formulated and implemented in an environment which was not conducive to Bosnian funding, policy or decision making, or other initiatives by Bosnian leaders or authorities. The result in terms of a minimal national ownership of the project must be kept in mind when it is evaluated.

## *4. Description of the project*

### 4.1 Objectives

The project document stated – under the heading ‘objectives’ – the following:  
“The *primary* goal is to strengthen the administrative and technical capacities within the public and private sectors in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska in order to facilitate the reconstruction process. Attention will be given also to self-employment projects and small-scale business in order to trigger broader development and socio-economic growth. The project will draw on the expertise of Bosnian returnees who will be recruited specifically to work on reconstruction. Their efforts will further facilitate the return and reintegration of greater numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons.”

Under the next heading of the project document, named project purposes, the following was said: “The project will facilitate the return and integration of 1000 qualified persons to key positions to the reconstruction plans of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will establish proven mechanisms to facilitate ongoing returns and reintegration of nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

(a) As we can see *technical co-operation/capacity building* was at the heart of the project (strengthening of administrative and technical capacities). The project document further on specified, “(T) he national Government will obtain the necessary assistance to ensure adequate capability to cover project related issues for the continuity and sustainability of programme goals”. This was confirmed also by the purpose of establishing “proven mechanisms.” - See 7.2 below.

(b) The self-employment projects had the objective to trigger a *broader development* and socio-economic growth. - See 7.3 below.

(c) The *return* of qualified nationals was a means to bring about reconstruction. This was confirmed for example in the first interim report where it was declared: “Essentially it is a technical co-operation program, aimed at reconstruction, with a return component.” But return as such of persons to key positions turned into the major objective in the course of the implementation of the project. This is why considerable attention will be paid to the returnees themselves. - See 7.4 below.

(d) Another objective was the *catalytic effects* of facilitating the return and reintegration of greater numbers of refugees and other effects. – See 7.5 below.

(e) It must be assumed that some donors supported the project in order to reduce the number of refugees in their countries, although not the major donor, Japan. It is telling that IOM in reports to donors made a comparison between cost per returnee and social welfare costs in host countries. We will, however, not enquire further into this issue.

## 4.2 Requirements and benefits

### 4.2.1 Regular scheme (employment)

Eligible for this scheme were highly qualified and skilled Bosnian nationals - having a degree of four years’ study - residing outside Bosnia and Herzegovina with relevant professional and occupational experience for identified jobs. Eligible employers in Bosnia and Herzegovina were private and public firms or institutions that were unable to identify relevant qualified staff on the local labour market and who operated with reduced budgets or lower profits. IOM identified and matched qualified nationals abroad and Bosnians institutions that had vacancies.

Benefits for employers were a budget supplement for each returnee employed under the project of DM 450, - per month for a period of one year; DM 7000, - for purchase of equipment related to the returnees' job; and recruitment by IOM of candidates for vacancies. Benefits for returnees were a one-year employment contract; return travel costs for the returnee and his or her dependants (excluding luggage allowance); and limited assistance with reintegration or accommodation where necessary. - The salary subsidy represented 40-50 per cent in the Federation and 60-70 per cent in Republika Srpska of the employee's salary which was equal to the salary of his colleagues.' So, the employer had to pay the difference between the subsidy and the gross salary and had also to register the employee for pension and social insurance.

#### 4.2.2 Self-employment scheme (small-scale business)

Requirements for support were foreign residency, higher level education, business description (market, budget, needs analysis etc) and, when appropriate, additional funding (returnee's own or other source) and proof of business establishment (registration, premises etc).

The total amount of benefits was the same as per regularly employed returnee. The benefits for self-employed were as follows: return travel costs; DM 7000, - for equipment or similar purpose; a budget supplement of DM 450, - per month for a period of six months; after six months DM 3500, - for equipment or similar purpose provided that the business had developed in a satisfactory way. As of October 1998 the beneficiaries also had access to a business adviser. - The self-employed persons invested themselves at least as much as they received from IOM. (as of 1999 new businesses were even forced to make a bank deposit of DEM 10 000 just for the registration of the business).

#### 4.3 Resources

The total expenditure of the project (April 1996 – February 2001) was USD 7 821 630 for 862 returnees, resulting in a mean placement cost of USD 9 074 per returnee. Funding countries were (in order of magnitude): Japan, Germany, Sweden, USA, Netherlands, Norway, Finland, UK, UNDP and Switzerland. The three main donors accounted for two thirds of the funds.

Of the total amount 79,5 per cent were operational costs and 20,5 per cent were administrative (support) costs; of the latter amount IOM-HQ charged 9,5 per cent for overhead costs. The major item of the operational costs was purchase of equipment which accounted for more than half of the operational costs whereas costs for national staff was the major support cost item.

### 5. Results

#### 5.1 Basis

In this section an account will be given of the results of the project on the basis of three sets of material that were commented upon above under 2.4: documentation; interviewers' comments and the database.

#### 5.2 Documentation

IOM received 1365 "open job offers", which were announced in Europe through IOM offices, and 600 job offers for specific persons designated by employers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. IOM received a total of 2079 applications for support. IOM placed 862 persons (and their dependants): 1996-97 295 returnees; 1998 298 returnees; 1999 223 returnees; and 2000 46 returnees). If more funds had been available still more returnees could have been placed.

Host countries of the returnees were (in order of magnitude):

Ranking	Country	Number of beneficiaries
1.	Germany	385
2.	Yugoslavia	136
3.	Sweden	104
4.	Norway	50
5.	Croatia	43
6.	Switzerland	20
7.	Austria	17
8.	Australia	15
9.	USA	14
10.	Italy	11
11.	Slovenia	10
	Others	60

Of the returnees 683 (79%) were employed. Distribution of these “regular returnees” on sectors:

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Industry	26
Education	20
Health	15
Economy	13
Law	5

179 (21%) were “self-employed” (business start-ups). There is no statistics of their sector distribution.

520 (60 %) of the returnees were men and 342 (40 %) women.

Return to the place of origin:

Federation	404 out of 694	58,2 %
Rep Srpska	73 out of 162	45,1 %
Brcko	3 out of 6	50,0 %

The total number of dependants returned with returnees was 1906, that is each returnee was accompanied by 2,2 dependants (average).

### 5.3 Manual review of post-placement interviews

#### 5.3.1 No. 1-100

These questionnaires cover placements made in the Federation during the first period of the project, that is in 1996 and 1997.

Most interviews occurred more than three months after the expiry of the subsidised period. 55 respondents were still working with the same employer or had started a business of their own or had joined another employer. Another group of a dozen persons were still employed with the same employer a month after said expiry date. These figures are not quite reliable but



generally speaking they point at a success rate of at least 60 per cent - probably higher - in the sense that returnees stayed in their positions or similar positions. About 20 persons left their positions during the subsidised period or immediately after it, which in most cases must be seen as a failure in consideration of the project's objectives. The remaining forms were difficult to interpret.

The material indicates that very few returnees held 'key positions' and that not few worked in rather modest positions or had modest businesses, for example a coffee bar. Many would have come back anyway but the support made it possible earlier than would otherwise have been the case. Word processing equipment or similar equipment dominated heavily among equipment purchased.

#### 5.3.2 Questionnaires no. 610 – 660

These 50 questionnaires cover placements made in the Federation during the last period of the project, that is in 1999 and 2000. As many as 20 of 50 respondents were self-employed.

Most of these interviews were made short time after the expiry of the subsidised period. About 30 of the 50 respondents had stayed with their employer or continued their business a short period after the expiry of said period and 3 of them had done so also 3 months after the expiry. About 10 persons had left during the subsidised period. The remaining 10 forms were not conclusive in this respect.

The material reminds of the fact that the economic situation was deteriorating and that many respondents were encountering problems to recover property. Several of them had plans to return to Western Europe although they had a job or a business.

#### 5.3.3 Questionnaires RS no. 14-156

These forms cover returns to Republika Srpska during the whole period, in contrast to all other forms, which concern only return to the Federation. Of the 50 forms examined about ten were self-employed and the rest employees. About half of the returnees had stayed longer than three months after the expiry of the subsidized year and another 20 per cent at least one month longer. Only two had left before the expiry of the year and four cases were not easy to interpret.

Most returnees were pleased with the project. Problems mentioned by various respondents were accommodation and employment conditions.

#### 5.3.4 Summary

The general picture that emerged from this illuminative material was that in their hearts people wanted to live in their country. A broad majority had chosen to stay not only during the subsidized period of one year - which was to be expected - but also after that. It must be borne in mind, though, that most returnees were of the age of 40-45 and had little possibility to go abroad again.

The returnees complained about accommodation, job conditions and salaries. There was a certain malaise building because the much-needed economic regeneration had not come about. Most of them could also not return to their own property in the early years of the project implementation. Only in 1998 was the legal framework for property return created.

Therefore those beneficiaries of the project, who were the only ones employed in a family, did not earn enough to cover all living costs if they were obliged to pay rent.

The respondents generally found the project very useful and were very satisfied with the IOM implementation of it. It could be said that it is natural for beneficiaries of a project to say so to representatives of the implementing organisation. But the comments seemed to be so strongly affirmative that most of them were likely to reflect a genuine opinion.

#### 5.4 Database

As mentioned above, the database used in the evaluation covers 808 persons out of the 862 finally returned under the project; it includes no returns after the end of year 2000.

##### *The returnees*

a. Age. Most returnees were born in the 1950's; those born in the 1960' were the second largest group and those in the 1940's were the third largest group. The median age of the returnees at the time of return was around 42 – 43.

b. Profession. Returnees represented a large number of professions. Most common were economists (17%), medical doctors (12%), professors (11%), teachers (8%), lawyers (8%) and mechanical engineers (7%). All kinds of engineers made up 154 persons (19 %) to which could be added a number of "technicians" - who had 2 years of study at university level - which made the technical profession the most frequent one.

Comment: This aspect is also touched upon under 5.2 (distribution on sectors). As was mentioned above (2.4.4) the database comprised 808 out of 862 persons.

c. National distribution. The largest group of returnees were Bosnian Muslims and Bosniacs second largest; third were Bosnian Serbs and fourth Bosnian Croats (the database used these four categories). A cross tabulation shows that the largest group not using their professional qualifications to the maximum upon return were Bosniacs (29%).

d. Dependants. A majority of returnees had dependants, three dependants being most common. Most persons (79%) returned with their family.

##### *Conditions in exile*

e. Work in exile. Most respondents (524; 65 %) did not work in their profession while in exile. There was no clear correlation between work in profession in exile and qualification used upon return.

Comment: Many diplomas were not recognized by host states, exceptions being engineers' and nurses' degrees. In Germany refugees did not have work permits (which did not hinder many of them from working in the black market, usually not in their professions). On the other hand, in Austria and Italy for example, the refugees had a right to work and they often had cleaning and other menial jobs.

f. Training. Most returnees (72%) did not receive additional qualification in exile; thus only 28% received such qualification. Apparently most refugees could not study in Western Europe. Refugees who had received added qualification often had learnt languages or acquired computer qualifications. There was no relationship between additional qualifications received in exile and qualifications used upon return.

g. Accommodation. In exile various types of accommodation were used; rented accommodation (43%) was most common.

#### *Return*

h. Reasons for return. Homesickness and employment were the reasons most commonly cited for return. There was a clear relationship between employment as reason for return and qualifications used in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Security at return was not cited as reason for return.

i. Security in return. 84% said that they felt secure in return by IOM. Most of them (68%) cited the 'workplace' as the type of security they had received.

#### *Work in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

j. Work satisfaction. Most people were satisfied with their work after return. Only 22 respondents found their work satisfaction poor. There was a positive relationship between work satisfaction and qualification used.

k. Qualifications used. 449 respondents said that they used their qualifications after return to Bosnia and Herzegovina whereas 86 said that they did not. 264 did not answer this question. Self-employed most frequently did not use their qualifications to the maximum (27%) whereas very few (5%) of lawyers did not use their qualifications.

Comment: It is not easy to know why as many as 264 respondents declined to answer this question but it is likely that many of them could not use their qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lack of adequate equipment and the unfavourable business environment were probably reasons for not using the qualifications. Many were also handicapped because their former employers in many cases had closed down their business, in particular industrial units.

l. Salary. Almost all had a regular salary and a full-time job but 132 (16 %) did not answer these questions. It is probable that they did not have a regular salary or were receiving it late, as is common in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

m. Equipment. A great majority of respondents received equipment. Very few returnees (44 persons) did not receive equipment and a very broad majority, 429 persons (67%) of those receiving equipment, found it useful or very useful. Most (86%) of employed returnees had access to the equipment provided by IOM.

Comment: The equipment became property of the employer who sometimes used it in other departments that had greater need for it.

n. Benefits for employing institution. 564 persons (94%) said that they had benefited other employees and only 39 (7%) answered in the negative. Major benefits were better organization of work (21%), increase in clients/patients (18%), "only professional of that kind" (18%) and increase in productivity (16%).

Comment: Many respondents (25 %) did not answer this question. Reasons might be that the respondent was the only employee or was self-employed but also that the respondent was not aware of possible benefits.

Transfer of knowledge. A majority (481) passed knowledge on to others.

Comment: Nearly one third did not answer this question. The reasons might be the same as those mentioned in the preceding comment.

o. Promotion. A majority of the employed returnees (398; 62 %) were upgraded in work. The frequency was roughly the same for the various ethnic groups. There was a positive relationship between being upgraded and qualifications used.

p. Work relationship.

The great majority of employees (341; 69%) found their work relationship (with their employer) normal and many found it excellent (141; 29 %). A minority (11; 22 %) found the relationship poor but as many as 149 (23 % of respondents) did not answer this question. There was a positive relationship between work relationship and qualifications used: people with a good working relationship had a higher tendency to have their qualifications used. (22) The ethnic groups had varying probability of a very good work relationship; Bosnian Serbs were less likely to have a very good work relationship.

Comment: The decline to answer (23%) may be due to a hesitation to express criticism. Serbs mostly returned from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and settled in the Republika Srpska.

q. Professional integration. A majority was integrated into the working environment (505 persons) but as many as 277 (34 %) did not answer. People who were not integrated into their working environment were less likely to have their qualifications used.

Comment: The decline to answer could depend on the wording of the question, allowing only for an answer 'yes' or 'no'.

r. Work. 439 (84%) of employed returnees had stayed with the same employer and 82 (16%) had not. 121 employees did not answer this question. After 12 months 489 respondents were working (87%). 5 respondents had left the country. As many as 248 returnees did not answer; it seems likely that many of them were not working or had left the country. 698 respondents (90%) said that they had been employed for 12 months.

Comment: This issue is also dealt with in the manual review (5.3 above).

s. Business expansion. 161 self-employed (53%) reported an "expansion in 12 months" whereas 145 did not (47%). 75 respondents affirmed, "other industries increase" whereas 188 did not. Again, the great majority did not answer the question.

Comment: The number of respondents exceeds the number of self-employed returnees. Perhaps did also some employees answer this question?

#### *Conditions in BiH*

t. Place of return. 405 persons had returned to their place of origin after six months and 346 had not. Only 57 persons did not answer this question. Of the persons who had not returned to

their place of origin 47,5% planned to return later on whereas 52,5% did not have such plans. There was no difference between place of return and use of qualifications. Bosnian Croats have the largest tendency to return to their place of origin (86%) and Bosnian Serbs a lesser tendency (33,5%). 55% of Bosnian Muslims and Bosniacs returned to their place of origin. There was no relationship between return to place of origin and tendency to pass knowledge on or work in profession in exile.

Comment: The rate of return to place of origin after twelve months (which was not included in the database) is most likely higher than after six months. Bosnian Croats constitute the smallest group of returnees and Bosniacs the largest one.

u. Personal integration. An overwhelming majority (89%) of returnees felt that they were integrated in their community.

v. Spouses. 55% of spouses were employed and 45 % not.

x. Children. As many as 69,4% of the children were normally or very well integrated in school. 117 (22%) of the children did not attend school.

Comment: The children not attending school were small or grown-up.

y. Accommodation. Less than half of the respondents (47 %) had a permanent accommodation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was no relationship between permanent accommodation and qualification used (cross tab).

Comment: Housing turned out to be the most difficult problem for returnees to solve, a major reason being the problems to have property restored. From 1999 and on more returnees had, however, a better possibility to have their property returned.

z. Integration. Most returnees (89%) were integrated into society. There were only small differences between ethnic groups; Bosnian Serbs were best integrated in their community.

Comment: Most Serbs returned from FRY to Republika Srpska (cf. comment under p. above). They were often better received than Bosniak returnees from Western Europe who mostly returned to the Federation.

aa. Return difficulties. Most returnees (77%) did not report return difficulties. The only area where returnees experienced difficulties was housing, where 138 (19%) returnees reported difficulties.

bb. Continued stay after six months. A large group, 330 persons (48%), intended to stay with the same employer, 94 persons (14%) did not know what to do, another 84 (12%) just reported that they intended to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only 20 persons (3%) expressed a wish to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Comment: About this issue see 5.3 above and item r above.

#### *IOM*

cc. IOM. By far most people had contacts with the IOM office in Sarajevo (63%). Second was Tuzla (12%).

## 6. *Doing the right things*

### 6.1 Methodology

The relevance of the project *objectives* will be assessed in two ways: coherence with the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its socio-economic conditions at the time of the formulation of the project document (6.2); and coherence with the policy of the pertinent institutions (6.3). The relevance of the *design* of the project will be assessed using three criteria: coherence with project objectives (6.4); coherence with IOM policy (6.5); and coherence with “best return practice” (6.6).

### 6.2 Needs and socio-economic conditions

The conditions of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time of the formulation of the project no doubt justified the objectives of the project. The weak administrative and technical capacities and the lack of qualified people in Bosnia and Herzegovina to fill the key positions that were crucial to the reconstruction made the relevance very high. There were also a number of vacant positions for less qualified staff that needed personnel from abroad. Examples were the health and education sectors in which there was an acute shortage of personnel. The high number of qualified Bosnian refugees in Europe provided an ample source for recruitment.

It is another matter that the relevance diminished because people returned anyway, the shortage gradually vanished in many sectors and skilled people in the country could not find employment.

IOM was very well positioned to act as a go-between thanks to its mandate, knowledge and organization. The relevance was further strengthened by the fact that - apart from the UN Volunteer Programme - IOM was the only member of the International Community that took upon itself to match the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and highly qualified Bosnians abroad. (UNV placed about 200 qualified returnees from Germany in 1997 and 1998).

IOM brought back 862 returnees during four years. Many people - perhaps 150 000 - left the country during the same period (see 3.4.3). What did then the project contribute? Did it make sense in spite of this large *brain drain*?

One answer is that the peace agreement (GFAP) stipulated the right to return, and the brain drain did not change that (see 3.4.1). It could also be said that the people who returned under the project were more experienced than the rather young people who left during the same period, and that the project could have effect at the local level where sometimes one or a few returnees could make a difference, especially at the beginning of the project period. But this huge and harmful brain drain certainly puts the project in perspective. It is a reminder of its smallness and the need of tailoring a project of this kind - that by definition must have a limited scope - to the specific needs of the receiving country, i.e. needs that cannot be satisfied by in-country personnel. A focus on key persons also reduces resentment among people who remained in the country and are unemployed. Further to this issue see 7.4.2 below. It is also a reminder of the importance of a demand driven approach; see 6.6 below.

One may also ask why there was such a low demand for qualified personnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina that highly qualified people were unemployed? It is not for this study to analyse this matter, but it seems likely that this imbalance could be indicative of some structural shortcomings, which lie beyond the sphere of the labour market alone. Obviously, this matter is central to any project that has the purpose of promoting the return of key personnel. If there is such a *structural imbalance* the prospects of a return project must be carefully studied.

### 6.3 Policy

#### (a) Bosnia and Herzegovina's official policy.

Bosnian authorities had no elaborate policy regarding the promotion of the return of qualified refugees. But the official policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time, and still to day, was to give effect to the GFAP, including the provisions in Annex 7 on refugee return (3.4.1). So, from this point of view the project was highly relevant.

#### (b) International policy

Refugee return and the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina are major features of the GFAP and, hence, also primary goals of the International Community. The focus of the project on capacity building was also very much in line with the needs analyses made by the World Bank and other institutions and donors. From this point of view there can be no doubt about the relevance of the project at the time of its inception.

Another matter is that the OHR and the International Community at large have increasingly pursued a policy of *minority return*, which has been the guiding principle since 1998-99 (3.4.2). The effectiveness of such a policy has been disputed but its rationale is the combat of ethnical cleansing. IOM, being a service organization with a mandate to facilitate migration, did not give any special regard to minority return. Nevertheless, the project achieved a 10 % minority return rate in each of the entities of the country.

### 6.4 Project objectives

Was the project's design relevant in view of its objectives? 'Yes' and 'no'. It provided for a number of mechanisms to ensure the capacity building although they proved inadequate. The mechanisms to bring about the returns, however, proved to be adequate; the identification of vacancies and candidates and the matching procedures worked very well.

There were a number of components that were not adequately taken into consideration. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, was the problem of accommodation for the returnees, which was not included in the project. Secondly, the project was not integrated into the general reconstruction schemes. Thirdly, the reclaim of property was not dealt with. Fourthly, no mention was made of gender-related concerns.

These components are easy to identify with the benefit of hindsight. The lack of accommodation was identified as a major hurdle to reintegration at an early stage of the implementation and reported as such already in the first interim report. Housing allowances (rental subsidies) were quickly introduced in order to come to grips with the accommodation problem. The integration with other schemes would certainly have been an advantage, but would have required a great degree of co-ordination, the outcome of which would have been difficult to foresee. It was not anticipated that the reclaiming of property would become such a thorny issue, and many of the returnees would probably have appreciated some help. As it was, the majority claimed their property themselves without involving IOM. Finally, it is surprising that gender-related concerns were not accounted for (see sect. 11 below).

In hindsight it seems further reasonable to say that the component of self-employed returnees could have been bigger and the number of “regulars” smaller. It became obvious in 1998-99 that the economic regeneration had been neglected in the reconstruction efforts and should have had a higher priority; the self-employed scheme fit well with that priority. The local economist who was hired to assist these returnees could have been engaged right from the beginning.

#### 6.5 IOM policy

Obviously, the project’s objectives fell within the mandate of IOM; but was the design of the project coherent with IOM policy?

The policy is clarified in various documents:

- “The objective of IOM’s technical co-operation is to strengthen, through active partnership, the capacity of governments and other relevant actors to meet their migration challenges in a comprehensive, interactive and ultimately self-reliant way” (MC/INF/240).

- “IOM develops its assisted return programmes with close dialogue and interaction with interested Governments in order to tailor and link all activities to the individual needs of countries and migrants” (MC/INF/236 that seems to be relevant here although it deals with return policy with respect to irregular migration).

The project design formally satisfied these requirements. In reality the Bosnian involvement became most limited and there was almost no active partnership or interaction of any other kind (cf. 3.5 above). The political leaders did not co-operate with each other, they did not commit themselves to change and the authorities lacked the capacity for planning and implementation. Some host countries’ involvement, on the other hand, was perhaps greater than desirable, because their involvement made the project more supply-driven than it had been intended or coherent with IOM thinking.

- “IOM will strengthen government and community capacities to integrate returnees better, for example by more effectively linking the return with development/reconstruction efforts” (MC/INF/240).

- “It is important to harmonize assisted return activities with other development and reconstruction projects” (ditto).

Thus, IOM policy is to help sustaining the effect of return and reintegration programmes. The project was, however, not linked with the reconstruction efforts, or harmonized with other projects. The project document did not underline this aspect. One exception was that IOM was to “work in close collaboration with Organizations carrying out self employment and micro enterprise projects, such as the World Bank”. This co-operation did not come about. Co-ordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina proved to be difficult, and it is doubtful whether efforts to this effect would have served their purpose.

Finally, what were IOM’s comparative advantages? There were many qualified nationals among the Bosnian refugees who were returning within the general return programmes. It seems as if IOM could make a difference if it focused on well-targeted, key positions for *highly qualified returnees*. In fact, the design of the project was to that effect.



## 6.6 Best return practice

(a) As mentioned earlier, return and reintegration programmes should be *integrated* into wider reconstruction programmes, i.e. they should not take place separately. This was confirmed by the international organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within the framework of RRTF (Reconstruction and Return Task Force) they agreed upon an 'integrated approach' for the return and reintegration. It was, however, doubtful whether it would have been realistic for IOM to adopt such an approach although IOM became a member of RRTF when it was founded in 1998. For example, linking the project to housing projects was difficult because those projects could not be redirected to places from where the returnees came; in addition, those projects often gave priority to vulnerable people.

(b) Programmes should be based on the *needs* of the country of origin, i.e. they should be demand-driven and development oriented. The project design had features of this kind, but it also considered the interests of donors and other stakeholders. Several donors earmarked their funds for returnees from their own countries; in particular, the heavy German participation contributed to a certain supply-driven feature of the project (cf. 3.4.1).

(c) Programmes should build *capacity*, and not act as return-only-programmes. The design was highly relevant in this perspective. But it was not realistic and the project became mainly a return-only project.

## 7. Attainment of objectives

### 7.1 Methodology

We will now review the attainment of the objectives as they were reproduced in section 4.1 above, on the basis of the project document and some other material.

In the documentation the return is seen only as a component of capacity building, reconstruction etc, but in reality it turned into the major objective. We will, therefore, deviate from the documents in as much as the target of returning "1000 qualified persons to key positions to the reconstruction plans" will be regarded as an objective per se. In contrast to the other objectives this one was quantified and is easy to 'operationalize'.

The objective of self-employment projects – "to trigger broader development and socio-economic growth"- is also narrowed down. We will rather look at their success rate, which will make it possible to make an assessment (see below 7.3).

### 7.2 Capacity building (technical co-operation)

#### 7.2.1 Capacity building in a proper sense

There were various specifications in the project document that indicated how the primary goal of strengthening "*the administrative and technical capacities*" would be attained:

(a) The Ministry for Refugees and Migration was assigned a key role as a national counterpart. As stressed by several interviewees, the involvement of the Ministry was, however, minimal. Nor did other authorities make any substantive effort to create or to help create a capacity in order to facilitate the return of qualified Bosnians. No authority gave priority to this type of work (see also 6.5 (a) above).

(b) The document foresaw the establishment of "proven mechanisms to facilitate ongoing returns and reintegration of nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina." The idea to help the Government to create capacity to facilitate returns was, however, not realized. IOM's efforts focused on the returns as such, for example by creating job offers, identifying candidates etc.

(c) The project also included a plan to train government counterparts (employments offices were supposed to do this), but the offices were not established and the plan was not realized, mainly because the national authorities did not give any priority to this type of work and were not prepared to commit resources to it.

(d) There were also plans to set up a Multilateral Commission with a wide mandate ("establish objectives and goals, provide program direction, monitor progress, and ensure implementation consistency and fairness"). The Commission never came into being.

(e) Finally, the document said that "Working Groups" would be established in both entities to train Government officials, coordinate and carry out day-to-day operations. The groups never came into existence.

The conclusion must be that the capacity building in a proper sense was limited.

#### 7.2.2 Capacity building in a wider sense

"Strengthening the administrative and technical capacities" could also be given a wider sense, meaning for instance the returnees' contribution to structural reform or other strategic change. Or perhaps a teacher's or medical doctor's introduction of new working methods? It is difficult to find material that gives solid information concerning this type of capacity building, but the issue comes back in the discussion of whether the returnees' filled 'key positions' (see 7.4.2 below).

#### 7.3 Self-employment projects (business start-ups)

The success rate of these 179 projects seems to be high. The majority of the returnees reported an expansion of their business and very few failed completely. Hence, this objective, so interpreted, was attained.

The grants provided under this scheme, in contrast to loans, met with criticism among businessmen who had stayed in the country and were therefore not eligible for the IOM support. In theory this criticism was well founded since such grants may distort competition. On the other hand, IOM took some contacts with micro credit organizations that were not, however, keen to grant credits to the returnees. The returnees had difficulties in receiving micro credits because their start-ups lacked cash flow that was usually a condition for such a credit, and they frequently could not offer a collateral. In addition, the grants only covered part of the investment cost, so the returnees who started a business had to invest money of their own. The grants were also conditional on the existence of premises and a business that was already in operation as well as the fulfilment of registration and other requirements (see 4.2.2 above).

#### 7.4 Return

##### 7.4.1 Returnees

The target of 1000 returnees was almost met: 862 persons returned under the project (86 % of the targeted number). IOM could most likely have met the target 100 per cent if more funds had been available.

Would the returnees have come back any way? Those from Germany, 45 per cent of returnees, would probably have done so. Germany had accepted by far the highest number of refugees and granted them only temporary refuge and no work permits. So the Bosnian returnees had to leave Germany anyway. In reality, the German funding was conditioned on IOM bringing back Bosnians from Germany. But the conditions under the project were better than the conditions offered to the returnees in general. Also a number of returnees from other countries would have returned anyway, since IOM did not provide benefits that were decisive. But the project provided the matching and many probably returned (from Germany and other countries) earlier than they would have done otherwise. There was certainly a group, though, that would not have returned without the IOM assistance.

About 10 per cent of the returnees in both entities were *minority* returns. This was not an objective of the project, but the issue deserves some attention since the International Community attached decisive importance to this goal (see 6.3.b above).

#### 7.4.2 Qualifications of the returnees

The project document said that "the project will facilitate the return and reintegration of 1000 qualified persons to *key positions to the reconstruction plans* of Bosnia and Herzegovina" (italics add.). Did the project attain this objective?

The following table sheds some light on the issue. 297 of the returnees worked in administration or industry:

	PRIVATE SECTOR	PUBLIC SECTOR
Administration (economy, law)	91	53
Industry (technology)	78	75
TOT	169	128

It can be concluded from this table that about one-third of the employed returnees held qualified positions in administration or industry. We also know - from the questionnaires - that most returnees did not work in their profession while in exile, that most of them did not receive additional qualifications abroad and that many returnees did not use their qualifications to a maximum. The conclusion must be that few of them held "key positions", i.e. working in strategic fields. If 'key position' in a wider sense is used the picture becomes another. Examples are a teacher or medical doctor who is the only qualified person in his work place and develops the working methods of the institution. There are no statistical data concerning the number of key positions in a wider sense, but it can be concluded from interviews that many of the returnees were very satisfied with their work and most likely made a contribution of this kind.

In reality, IOM used another, laxer criterion for eligibility: a 4 year-university degree. A distribution of the returnees according to their *level of education* gives the following results:

1. PhD	23
2. M Sc	41
3. 4 years' higher education	595

4. 2 years' higher education	177
5. Others, lower education	36

As can be seen, a large majority had at least 4 years' higher education (75 %). There was no discernible difference in this respect between returnees to the Federation and to Republika Srpska. The degree of qualifications needed for eligibility changed over time. In particular in the end, when the funding countries wished to have refugees going back within the project, also lower qualification levels were accepted.

Finally, did returnees fill "an acute shortage of expertise available locally"? – as it is expressed in the project document. The answer is probably 'yes' for the first part of the project period in the sense that there was an acute shortage of teachers and health personnel, and many returnees belonged to those categories. But on the other hand: why would an employer choose a local candidate for a job when the returnee would bring a salary subsidy, a grant for equipment and other benefits as well?

## 7.5 Catalytic effects

### 7.5.1 Encouraging others to return

The objective of facilitating the return and integration of a "greater number" of refugees and displaced persons (than the returnees themselves) is in line with IOM policy: "RQN projects can also help shape the economic and social environment in countries of origin by acting as a *catalyst* for others thinking of returning."

Such a catalytic effect would increase the benefits of the project but there are no statistical figures concerning the possible attainment of this objective. No question of this kind was included in the questionnaires, nor did my review of the interviewers' comments (cf. 2.4.3 above) provide any answer. I see no possibility to express a well-founded view of this matter.

The return of *minority* refugees could be important in this regard since they may unleash further minority return. For example, experts enjoying high prestige could increase confidence and, thus, encourage more minority returns. The project had no such ambition, but the IOM project to promote the return and reintegration of judges and prosecutors might have such effects.

### 7.5.2 Other effects

IOM projects could function as catalysts not only in encouraging more returnees but also in other ways. The impact of returnees upon the work place is one example. The database shows that returnees contributed to added employment, business expansion and the passing on of knowledge to others, which could have in its turn "multiplier effects". Contacts established by returnees in host countries might promote business. There is, however, no information available about such use of foreign contacts.

## 8. Sustainability

### 8.1 Methodology

Sustainability means a continuation of the benefits brought about by the project after the assistance has ceased. In other words: are the objectives of the project still being realized although the project has come to an end? In contrast to effectiveness (attainment of

objectives) sustainability concerns the situation during the years after the IOM support came to an end.

Only an environment that is *generally conducive* to return would guarantee a continued flow of highly qualified nationals back to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Obviously, it was outside the project's scope to create such an "enabling environment" in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

When we assess sustainability with respect to the objectives it must be done in view of the fact that the objectives turned out to be not fully realistic. It seems justified to make the assessment at various levels: institutional capacity (8.2); continued return of refugees (8.3); continued stay and reintegration of returnees (8.4); and continuation of business start-ups (8.5).

### 8.2 Institutional capacity

Bosnia and Herzegovina did not acquire an institutional capacity to "cover project related issues for the continuity and sustainability of programme goals", as it was stated in the project document. This is a consequence of the failure to strengthen capacities as foreseen in the document. As has been mentioned before the project document rested on an unrealistic view of the readiness of the BiH politicians or authorities to commit resources, formulate policies and otherwise engage themselves in the project. The Bosnia and Herzegovinian Governments were absent, including the former Ministry of Refugees, who was the formal Bosnian counterpart, and did not continue activities of the kind after the end of the project (cf. 3.5 above; it could be added that the UN Volunteer Scheme, UNV, did not have a counterpart either; cf. 6.2 above). There were examples, however, of local authorities that were involved.

### 8.3 Continued return

There is a continued inflow of qualified BiH citizens. But is this attributable to the project? In other words, has "the return and reintegration of greater numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons" (project document) come about thanks to the project? IOM does not claim that the project is sustainable in the sense that it has spurred an increased return of refugees (outside the project; cf. 7.5.1 above). There are no visible signs of such effects, but it cannot be excluded that such effects have taken place.

### 8.4 Continued activities of the returnees

As was pointed out (in 7.4.1 above) IOM almost met its quantitative target: "the return and reintegration of 1000 qualified persons to key positions to the reconstruction plans of Bosnia and Herzegovina"; and IOM most likely would have met this target if there had been more funds available. If the returnees stayed in the country filling in key positions the project had an enduring effect (We disregard here the fact that few did hold key positions).

The material points at a sustainable effect in this sense. Most of the returnees have remained in the country and kept their jobs. Many returnees were highly motivated to go back, for instance because they were home sick or because they could not work in their profession abroad. Many had no choice (for example the refugees in Germany). In addition, few returnees have a genuine possibility to re-emigrate (for example to Germany or Yugoslavia which together accounted for 60 per cent of all returnees).

How high is this sustainability? Only if a follow-up is made a considerable time after the expiry of the subsidized period will it be possible to assess the sustainability in this sense. Post placement evaluation visits were made in many instances three months after the expiry,

or even later on. This material indicates a sustainability rate of at least 60 per cent, probably higher.

#### 8.5 Continuation of self-employment projects (business start-ups)

The degree of success of the self-employment projects (small businesses) must be considered a good indicator of the sustainability of these projects. IOM documentation pointed at a favourable outcome. Few projects had failed in the sense that the business had closed and almost two thirds of them (63%) had expanded their business in spite of the bleak economic situation and other obstacles to expansion.

### 9. *Doing things right*

#### 9.1 Methodology

So far, we have been discussing *what* was done and achieved. It is now time to look at IOM performance: *how* were things done (efficiency)? It could be useful to separate the various steps: planning (9.2), implementation, (9.3); monitoring (9.4); and reporting (9.5). Costs are an important aspect; they will be treated in a separate section (10).

#### 9.2 Planning

The project was based on a thorough planning in as much as the project document identified relevant problems and suggested logical interventions to tackle those problems, but it is not difficult to identify weaknesses of the project document which, however, must be judged with due respect to the complicated situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time of the planning of the project.

(a) The project document was an IOM document, not a document of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees mentioned health and education as priority sectors, but otherwise its participation as well as that of other authorities was most limited. The lack of Bosnian ownership was built into the project from the beginning. Probably, IOM could not do much about it at the time if the project was to get started (cf. 3.5 above). Nor was this deficiency remedied in the course of the project's execution, even though some local authorities were involved.

(b) There was a general lack of clarity as to what the project was really about. Various objectives and purposes were mentioned; for example it is said in the summary "The project will enhance the infrastructure necessary to accommodate larger scale return". – Was it an *infrastructure* project?

(c) The project document lacked an in-depth-analysis of the assumptions of the project, the soundness of these assumptions and, hence, the risks of the project (risks for continued ethnic tensions, political obstruction, deteriorating socio-economic conditions etc). Such a systematic analysis - for example the use of a "Logical Framework Analysis" - would have prepared IOM better for the consequences, such as the Bosnian side's lack of ownership of the project, lack of property return etc.

(d) The project document contained also "technical deficiencies", such as lack of quantitative targets, indicators to measure progress, etc.

#### 9.3 Implementation

The *procedures* for identification of vacant positions and for recruiting candidates abroad worked well. The replies to the questionnaires demonstrate that IOM succeeded in matching vacancies and candidates. It seems as though IOM itself had the necessary organization and knowledge, which explains why IOM did not engage non-governmental institutions in the implementation.

IOM implementation was characterised by *flexibility*. IOM adapted to the failing capacity of Bosnian authorities to take action and to co-ordinate the work. Those who could not access their pre-war homes received a rental subsidy, which was not provided for in the planning.

It was difficult to establish a *partnership* with other agencies in the implementation stage although IOM contacted World Vision for house programmes (it had other criteria and other geographic areas; if a hospital was constructed, apartments were normally not built). IOM also looked for more stable employers, which turned out to be desirable.

The project, which was a technical co-operation project according to the project document, was quietly *transformed* into mainly a return-only project. This should have been openly discussed with the donors and other stakeholders. The project document contained the substance of the agreement between the various actors. Deviations should therefore take place only after an open discussion and by general agreement between the parties.

#### 9.4 Monitoring

IOM should be highly commended for its very ambitious monitoring of the project. Monitoring and post-placement interviews were made, in principle, with each returnee on the basis of questionnaires. The answers were fed into a very valuable database, which also comprised other information. A business adviser who was certainly very helpful for them assisted with the business start-ups.

The project document, the questionnaires and the database were not, however, fully harmonised. It would have been advisable to build the database and decide the questions according to the project document; nor was the database based on the project document. Similarly, the designers of the database did not take full advantage of the questionnaires. For example, the question regarding discrimination did not appear in the database and in some instances different wording was used so it became difficult to know whether the data were based on the questionnaires or whether they had another source. Thus, harmonization would have facilitated the monitoring and evaluation.

A conclusion is that the monitoring of the project should be planned when the project is formulated and that it should be based on the project document. This will not only increase the usefulness of the monitoring, but it will also force the drafters of the project to be realistic and to include parameters that can be assessed at the monitoring stage (and in a possible evaluation).

#### 9.5 Reporting

Donors interviewed were satisfied with the reporting by IOM: two interim reports (as of November 1997 and December 1998) were submitted. In addition, a draft final report (as of December 2000) was produced that was available to the evaluator. They all contained a lot of useful information even though some information was missing. The draft Final report failed to deal with some significant matters. For example, it did not mention the primary objective of the project, let alone its attainment, and it made no mention of almost any shortcomings.

The quiet “transformation” of the project into a return-only project (described in sect 7.2 above) was reflected in the reporting, but not pointed out or discussed. For example the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report described the project in terms of “key human resources ...to help regenerate the economy and the institutional infrastructure” and talked about “key reconstruction sectors”. But under “results” the project was treated as a return-only project; the results were described only in terms of individual returns. Also the final report has the perspective of a “return-only”-project.

## *10 Costs*

### 10.1 Methodology

It is not possible to make a comparison of costs (input) and results (output) in quantitative terms, since there are no quantitative data concerning the output in terms of capacity building, returnees’ contribution to reconstruction or other such effects. We will here only try to make a general assessment of whether the costs were reasonable.

### 10.2 Cost-effectiveness

The total cost of the project was USD 7 821 630 for the 862 returnees and, thus, the cost per returnee, including three dependants, was USD 9 074 (see 4.3 above). Is this high? It is not possible to say because we do not know the value of each returnee’s contribution to the Bosnian society.

For the sake of comparison it could be mentioned that the amount per returnee would suffice for “self-help”-reconstruction of two houses, that is accommodation for eight persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the reconstruction of one house by a constructor. IOM made two comparisons - rather dubious ones, it would seem - in its reports: the cost of the project “is in many countries much less than the cost of social welfare over a one year period” and it “undoubtedly remains a cost-effective alternative to importing expensive foreign professionals.”

More sensible than such comparisons is to ask whether there were mechanisms for keeping costs down and ensuring that there was a genuine need for the returnees being financed under the project. In this respect, it is worth noting that the main beneficiaries of the project, the employers, had *no incentive* to turn an offer down, since they had no cost by accepting a returnee in addition to the cost for hiring a local person. In contrast, they received equipment as a gift that became the property of the employer. The project could have been more cost-effective if there had been some incentives for the employers to look for in-country personnel to fill in vacancies.

### 10.3 Cost-efficiency

Administrative costs of IOM were 20,5 per cent of the total cost, including over-head for headquarters in Geneva. This percentage seems to be quite reasonable, in comparison with the corresponding costs of other similar organisations and in view of the burdensome work to identify vacancies and candidates that IOM carried out.

## *11. Lessons learned*



(a) *Context*. The context is central to project management (planning, implementation etc) in a post-conflict setting and very difficult to assess for project planners. That calls for care in planning, an open mind to unexpected developments. Local expertise is essential.

(b) *Realism*. The objectives were not realistic, for example, that the self-employed returnees would “trigger a broader development and socio-economic growth”. Another recent example is a project to provide for up to 150 experts returning during a three-year period, each of them taking not more than two months. IOM claims that the “program will assist in providing needed expertise to Bosnia thereby reversing the ‘brain drain’ created during and immediately after the war” (cf. 3.4.3 above). Such exaggerations reduce the credibility of the project and undermine future funding efforts.

(c) *General vs. country-specific knowledge*. It is welcome that IOM systematizes and takes advantage of general knowledge (“best return practice”), but the project illustrates that it is not possible to use a blueprint for the design of a return project and that it should be, if possible, elaborated upon in partnership with local authorities. General insights of the type mentioned above (6.6) must be adapted to the prerequisites of the country, for instance the particularities of a post-conflict setting.

(d) *Comparative advantages of IOM*. A project of this type must by definition be rather narrow in scope. The number of people who left the country during the period of the implementation of the project may have been 150 times the number of the returnees under the project. This brain drain, that IOM also serves, points at the need to focus on the comparative advantages of IOM, for example building national capacity for return and promoting the return of experts at the highest level, if possible experts who have worked in their profession abroad. The two new projects under-way (judiciary and TOKTBH) seem to be based on such a policy.

(e) *Role of recipient Government*. The lack of national ownership was detrimental to capacity building, sustainability, planning and monitoring.

(f) *Minority return*. The International Community has increasingly pursued a policy of minority return, its rationale being the combat of ethnical cleansing. IOM did not give any special regard to minority return in this project. On the other hand, it can be seen as an acceptance of what was realistic and the project, nevertheless, achieved a 10 per cent minority return in each of the entities. The project did not create “multiplier effects” which is contrary to IOM policy to achieve such effects, if possible. (The IOM project to promote the return and reintegration of Bosnian judges and prosecutors might have such “multiplier effects” if realized in minority areas).

(g) *Catalytic effects*. Projects could serve as catalysts not only by encouraging more returnees but also in other ways. The impact of returnees in the work place is an example. Returnees contributed to added employment, business expansion and the passing of knowledge onto others, which in its turn could have “multiplier effects”. Contacts established by returnees in host countries could foster business.

(h) *Linkage*. IOM has a policy to team up with other agencies in order to facilitate a comprehensive approach. In this case such linkage with other programmes was difficult to establish, e.g. housing projects could not be redirected to places from where returnees came and those projects often gave priority to vulnerable people.

(i) *Grants*. The returnees had difficulties in receiving micro credits because their start-ups lacked cash flow, which was usually a condition for such a credit, and they could often not offer a collateral. In addition, the grants only covered part of the investment cost so the returnees who started a business had to invest money of their own. The grants had also other conditions. The lesson learnt is that there are circumstances in which grants may be justified although they typically distort competition.

(j) *Cost incentives*. The employers had no incentive to turn an offer down since they received equipment and other benefits without any cost in addition to the cost for hiring a local person. The project could have been more cost-effective if there had been some incentives for employers to reject a returning candidate and fill the vacancies with in-country personnel or reduce costs.

(k) *Planning*. The project document was an IOM document, not a document of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The participation of Bosnian authorities was limited. There was also a general lack of clarity as to what the project was all about. The project document lacked an in-depth-analysis of the assumptions of the project and also had “technical deficiencies”. The use of a more systematic analysis would have improved the planning and prepared IOM better for the consequences, such as the national lack of ownership of the project. The new project “TOKTBH” is based on a structured approach.

(l) *Project document*. The project document contains the substance of the agreement between the parties and should serve as the primary management document. The project was quietly transformed from a technical co-operation/capacity building project to a return-only project. This “transformation” was reflected in the reporting, but it was not mentioned or openly discussed between IOM and the stakeholders. A deviation from the document requires the consent of the stakeholders. If the document is unrealistic or if it is based on assumptions that prove to be faulty, the document should be revised in agreement with the concerned parties.

(m) *Definitions*. IOM uses various terms without precise definitions. For example, in one document it claims that IOM “...returned and placed more than 900 professional Bosnian nationals...Overall, the programme has proven to be very-cost-effective...the sustainability rate of these placements is extremely high”. It is difficult to assess this interesting (but dubious) statement since the concepts of cost-effectiveness and sustainability are not defined.

(n) *Implementation*. As was just described the planning was mistaken in some respects. The lesson learnt from IOM performance in this case is that a high degree of flexibility can counteract many planning flaws.

(o) *Multi-annual scheme*. The project also demonstrates the advantages of a long-term (four years) project. It allowed for the built-up of an adequate organization for such a complex and labour-intensive project. It also secured continuity and adaptation to the Bosnian reality and, in the end, facilitated better use of the funds.

(p) *Monitoring*. IOM monitoring deserves high marks. It would have been even better if the project document, the questionnaires and the database had been fully harmonised. It would have been advisable to build the database and decide the questions according to the project document. Similarly, the designers of the database did not take full advantage of the questionnaires. The monitoring of the project should be planned at the time when the project

is formulated and it should be based on the project document. This will not only increase the usefulness of the monitoring, but it will also force the drafters of the project to be realistic and to include parameters that can be assessed by the monitoring (and in a possible evaluation).

**Annexes**

1. Terms of reference
2. Persons met
3. Questionnaires