



EU-PASSWORLD

WIDENING COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS LINKED TO
COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Enhancing Access to Third-Country Solutions: Best Practices and Key Recommendations for Identification, Referral, and Matching

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[EU-PASSWORLD: Widening Complementary Pathways Linked to Community Sponsorship in Europe](#) (EU-PASSWORLD), is a three-year project co-funded by the European Union (EU) Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The project aims to strengthen the connections between community sponsorship (CS) and complementary pathways (CPs) for refugee admission, while exploring ways to increase the number of refugees admitted through these pathways. Implemented from 2022 to 2024 by a consortium of 11 state, civil society, and faith-based partners, the project includes practical action to expand labour and education pathways in three EU Member States: Belgium, Ireland, and Italy.

Within this framework, the **EU-PASSWORLD Working Group on Identification, Referral, and Matching (WG)** was established under EU-PASSWORLD's "fostering community engagement" strand. This element of the project seeks to systematise practices related to identification, referral, and matching (IRM) linked to sponsorship, thereby facilitating the project's practical activities in the three countries and contributing to the broader knowledge base for CPs. The WG is coordinated and led by [ICMC Europe](#) and the [Share Network](#), with Alessia Perricone serving as the Working Group Coordinator. It collaborates closely with lead EU-PASSWORLD partner Caritas Italiana, and [RefugePoint](#), an expert field organisation contracted as technical advisor and a core member of the WG.

The content and conclusions of this report do not necessarily reflect the positions of the organisations and expert stakeholders involved in the WG, but rather aim to contribute to discussions on scaling viable and protection-oriented pathways for refugee admission to Europe.

What is ICMC Europe?

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) provides assistance and protection to vulnerable people on the move, and advocates for sustainable solutions for refugees and migrants. ICMC Europe supports newcomers and the communities that welcome them by fostering partnerships between European and national institutions, civil society organisations, and community and faith-based groups.

What is the Share Network?

Established by ICMC Europe, the Share Network fosters the creation of safe pathways to protection, and builds European capacity to welcome and include newcomers. This inclusive multi-stakeholder network provides a platform for mutual exchange and learning for local, regional, national, and EU-level actors working on migrant and refugee inclusion and safe pathways for refugees. Share connects local initiatives, facilitates the exchange of best practices, and raises the voice of communities to inspire action and policy change.

Authors and Editors

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List of Acronyms

- **3CS** – Third Country Solutions
- **ABAAD** - Resource Centre for Gender Equality
- **AMIF** – Asylum Migration and Integration Fund
- **AUF** – Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie
- **BVOR** – Blended Visa Office-Referral Program
- **CLDH** - Lebanese Centre for Human Rights
- **CS** – Community Sponsorship
- **CSGs** – Community Sponsorship Groups
- **CP** – Complementary Pathway
- **CoA** – Country of Asylum
- **CoO** – Country of Origin
- **CSI** - Community Sponsorship Program Ireland
- **CSO** – Civil Society Organisation
- **CRRF** - Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
- **CSS** – Community Sponsorship Scheme (UK)
- **DAAD** – German Academic Exchange Service
- **DTMP** – Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot
- **EC** - European Commission
- **EMPP** – Economic Mobility Pilot Project
- **EP** – Education Pathway
- **ELC** – Eligibility Criteria
- **ETD** - Emergency Travel Document
- **EU** – European Union
- **EUAA** - European Union Asylum Agency
- **FCEI** – Federazione Delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia
- **FEP** – Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante
- **FR** – Family Reunification
- **GAR** – Government-Assisted Refugee
- **GCR** - Global Compact on Refugees
- **HAP** – Humanitarian Admission Program
- **HC** – Humanitarian Corridor
- **HE** - Humanitarian Evacuation
- **HIRES** – Refugee Employment-linked Sponsorship programme
- **HV** – Humanitarian Visa
- **ICMC** – International Catholic Migration Commission
- **ICRC** - International Committee of the Red Cross
- **INGO** - International Non-Governmental Organisation
- **IO** – International Organisation
- **IOM** – International Organization for Migration
- **I&R** – Identification and Referral
- **IRAP** – International Refugee Assistance Project
- **IRC** – International Rescue Committee
- **IRCC** – Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
- **IRM** – Identification, Referral, and Matching
- **IRPP** – Irish Refugee Protection Programme
- **JAS** – Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program
- **LfA** – Leadership for Africa
- **LfS** - Leadership for Syria
- **LP** – Labour Pathway
- **MSF** - Medecins Sans Frontieres
- **NeST** – New Start in Team
- **NGO** - Non-Governmental Organisation
- **OSUN** – Open Society University Network
- **PS** – Private Sponsorship
- **PSR** – Private Sponsorship of Refugees
- **RC** – Receiving Country
- **RP** – RefugePoint
- **RSD** - Refugee Status Determination
- **RST** – Resettlement
- **SAH** - Sponsorship Agreement Holder
- **SRP** – Student Refugee Program
- **TBB** – Talent Beyond Boundaries
- **TD** - Travel Document
- **TRSN** - Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN)
- **UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- **UNIBO** – University of Bologna
- **UNICORE** – University Corridors for Refugees in Italy
- **UNIV'R** – University Corridors for Refugees in France
- **UNRWA** – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
- **UWC** – University World College
- **WG** – Working Group
- **WUSC** – World University Service for Canada

Chapter 1: Background and Introduction

A. Third-Country Solutions and Community Sponsorship in the Global and European Union Agenda

In the last decade, expanding complementary pathways (CPs) has been at the centre of debates on the international refugee protection regime. Particularly since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis¹, increased attention has been dedicated to strengthening durable solutions for refugees through expanded CPs, that are additional and complementary to traditional resettlement (RST). The goals are to diversify safe and legal channels of entry for refugees, and increase the number of individuals in need of protection admitted to third countries. RST and CPs are collectively defined as third-country solutions (3CS)².

States' commitments to enhance and operationalise responsibility-sharing in refugee responses are reflected in several soft law documents adopted at regional and global level. In the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*³ and its *Annex I: Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework*⁴, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2016, States committed to promoting and expanding both RST and CPs⁵. In late 2018, all 193 UN Member States signed the *Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)*⁶, which highlighted the need to make CPs both more accessible and more systematically available as a complementary measure to RST⁷. The GCR was succeeded by UNHCR's 2019 *Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways*⁸, and its 2022 successor *Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030*⁹, which aim to grow RST, foster CPs, and promote integration linked to increased involvement of civil society¹⁰.

Similarly, the European Union (EU) and its Member States have recognised the need to strengthen RST and CPs. The 2016 proposal of the European Commission (EC) for a *Regulation establishing a Union Resettlement Framework*¹¹, followed by that for a *New Pact on Migration and Asylum* in 2020, led to the 2024 adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum by Member States which - among the other objectives - intends to strengthen an effective system of solidarity and responsibilities and embed migration in international partnerships, including through the promotion of legal pathways¹². Additionally, the EC had previously

issued a 2020 *Recommendation on Legal Pathways to Protection in the EU*, calling for the promotion of "humanitarian admission models and other CPs as an additional means of admission to expand the number of places offered through safe and legal pathways, in addition to resettlement"¹³ while supporting the design and implementation of several Member States' programmes in this area via the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)¹⁴.

At the same time, significant attention has been paid to exploring the role of community sponsorship (CS), which involves activities by individuals, communities, and associations in support of refugee admission programmes. In this regard, the GCR promotes a "multi-stakeholder and partnership approach" to empower admission programmes, involving refugees and host communities, humanitarian and development organisations, regional and local authorities, networks of cities and municipalities, civil society and faith-based organisations, academia, and the private sector, in close cooperation with national authorities¹⁵. Similarly, the EC has highlighted how CS schemes in their various forms have played a key role across 3CS by increasing the number of refugees admitted, via both RST and CPs, providing financial, practical, and moral support for refugee reception, and fostering a well-rounded societal integration process.¹⁶

B. Role of the EU-PASSWORLD Working Group

While broader policy frameworks and principles are crucial for scaling 3CS and CS programs, their success relies heavily on their effective practical implementation. Central to this are the operational mechanisms that stakeholders in both countries of asylum (CoAs) and receiving countries (RCs) engage with, and central to these are processes for identification, referral, and matching (IRM).

IRM processes encompass all activities and tools that facilitate 1) identification of individuals who may be eligible for a solution/programme, including outreach, pre-screening, and compilation of case dossiers; 2) referral of eligible individuals to actor(s) responsible for selection, including activities to advise, assist,

¹ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, "Expanding Solution for Refugees: Complementary Pathways of Admission to Europe, Strategic Assessment", The European Resettlement Network, Brussels, 2018, p. 5.

²The term third-country solutions (3CS), will be used to refer to all "pathways for refugees to relocate from a State in which they have sought protection (host country) to a third State (receiving country)", encompassing "the full range of pathways including resettlement and the various complementary pathways for admission of refugees", UNHCR, "Three Years Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways", UNHCR, Geneva, 2019, p. 5.

³United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), "New York Declaration, GA Res 71/1, UN GAOR, 71st Sess, UN Doc A/Res/71/1", UNGA, New York, 2017.

⁴*Ibidem*, Annex I, "Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework", see reference in ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, *supra* note 1, p. 5.

⁵*Ibidem*, "The New York Declaration", *supra* note 3, paras. 77-79; *Ibidem*, Annex I, par. 14.

⁶United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), "Global Compact on Refugees", UNGA, New York, 2018.

⁷*Ibidem*, paras 90-96.

⁸UNHCR, *supra* note 2.; see also Tamara Woods, "The Role of 'Complementary Pathways' in Refugee Protection", Kaldor Center for International Refugee Law, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2020, p. 8.

⁹UNHCR, "Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030, The Next Phase of the Three Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (2019-2021)", UNHCR, Geneva, 2022.

¹⁰UNHCR, *supra* note 2, p. 6.

¹¹ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, *supra* note 1, p. 5.

¹²European Commission Website, "Pact on Migration and Asylum, A common EU system to manage migration", 21 May 2024, online: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en#timeline-and-main-achievements

¹³European Commission, "Recommendation of 23.9.2020 on Legal Pathways to Protection in the EU: Promoting Resettlement, Humanitarian Admission and Other Complementary Pathways", EU Commission, Brussels, 2020, par. 23.

¹⁴European Commission, "Implementing Decision of 23.11.2022 on the financing of components of the Thematic Facility under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and adoption of the Work Programme for 2023, 2024 and 2025", EU Commission, Brussels, 2022.

¹⁵UNGA, *supra* note 6, paras. 33-44; see also reference in ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, *supra* note 1, p. 5.

¹⁶EU Commission Recommendation, *supra* note 13, paras. 26-28.

and coach individuals to access referral processes; 3) linking individuals with entities that can support their integration in RCs. These tasks require, in turn, a variety of core activities such as building partnerships, developing tools, and the logistical planning of interventions. IRM involves a wide range of stakeholders, including non-governmental (NGOs) and intergovernmental organisations (IOs), the private sector, academia, employers, refugee communities, and national authorities. IRM mechanisms are often complex, are necessarily tailored to the context of each location and program, and ultimately are essential to ensure efficient refugee access to 3CS.

The challenges of IRM cannot be overstated. UNHCR's Three-Year Strategy highlights numerous legal, administrative, and practical barriers that refugees face in accessing pathways, including restrictive eligibility criteria, extensive financial and documentation requirements, limited access to embassies, challenges in obtaining exit permits, and insufficient information for refugees on pathways that might be available to them¹⁷. Furthermore, some pathways may lack the necessary safeguards to address refugees' unique protection needs. These challenges are integral to the IRM process.

The EU-PASSWORLD Working Group on Identification, Referral, and Matching (WG) was established to examine IRM practices, successes, and challenges across 3CS. It explored how successful models could be applied across programmes, and identified ways to streamline procedures and improve access. The present study

summarises the WG's outcomes and findings, and in addressing these issues seeks to answer four key questions:

1. What are the IRM activities taking place in the context of 3CS linked to CS, and how do they impact practical implementation?
2. What models, best practices, and key challenges can be identified in these activities?
3. To what extent can successful approaches and models be applied across different pathways?
4. What key recommendations would help to streamline procedures and scale viable pathways?

This study involved a desk review of literature on 3CS and CS, research and mapping of existing models and schemes, as well as surveys, interviews, and discussions with stakeholders, and draws on exchanges and reflections with IRM experts during WG meetings, EU-PASSWORLD technical visits, workshops, and roundtables. These various fora provided valuable insights, serving as essential research tools and shedding light on issues that have, until now, been somewhat overlooked. All WG meetings and technical visits were conducted under Chatham House rules, meaning that while this paper captures the key points and recommendations discussed, specific attributions are not provided unless explicitly noted.

Chapter 2: Identification, Referral, and Matching in the Context of Third-Country Solutions

To provide a framework for the WG's analysis and this study, this chapter offers an overview of 3CS, including key definitions, the rationale and legal basis for admission, examples of existing programmes at both EU and global level, and the role of CS. It also addresses key definitions, processes, and stages of IRM.

A. Systematising Third-Country Solutions and the Role of Community Sponsorship

In its *Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways*, UNHCR defines 3CS as "pathways for refugees to relocate from a State in which they have sought protection (host country) to a third State (receiving country)"¹⁸. 3CS include both RST and CPs: the former is a "traditional" durable solution¹⁹, characterised by "the selection and transfer of refugees from a host country to a resettlement country that has agreed to admit them with permanent residence status"²⁰, while CPs are "safe and regulated avenues that complement refugee resettlement, allowing refugees to be admitted to a country where their international protection needs can be met while they work

towards a sustainable and lasting solution"²¹.

Given their multifaceted nature, and the crossover among both solutions and the legal frameworks used to implement them, a clear-cut categorisation of 3CS is not straightforward. UNHCR systematised 3CS as²²:

1. Qualifications and skills-based solutions

Admission is based on specific educational qualifications, professional skills or work experience. Examples include Labour Pathways (LPs) – 'Labour Mobility Opportunities', and Education Pathways (EPs) – 'Education Mobility Opportunities'.

2. Needs-based solutions (or humanitarian pathways)

Admission is based on specific vulnerabilities. Examples include "Traditional" Resettlement (RST), Humanitarian Visas (HVs), Humanitarian Corridors (HCs), and Humanitarian Admission Programs (HAPs).

¹⁷ICMC UNHCR, *supra* note 2, p. 9.

¹⁸UNHCR, *supra* note 2, p. 7; UNHCR, "Complementary Pathways for Admission of Refugees to Third Countries: Key Considerations", UNHCR, Geneva, 2019, p. 6.

¹⁹Together with local integration and voluntary repatriation, see UNHCR, "Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern, Core Group on Durable Solutions", UNHCR, Geneva, 2003, pp. 5-6.

²⁰*Ibidem.*; UNHCR, "The Resettlement Handbook", UNHCR, Geneva, 2011, p. 3.

²¹UNHCR, *supra* note 2, p. 7; see also T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 7.

²²UNHCR Website, "Complementary Pathways for Admission to Third-Countries", online: <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/complementary-pathways>

3. Right/relationship-based solutions

Admission is based on a family link between an individual in a CoA, and a person legally residing in an RC. Examples include Family Reunification (FR) Procedures – ‘Right-based FR’ (often limited by States to nuclear family) – and programmes for extended family members – ‘Extended FR’.

4. Private sponsorship (or named sponsorship) pathways

Admission is often based on individuals, groups of individuals, or organisations naming a specific beneficiary to enter and stay in an RC, and providing emotional, social, and/or settlement support²³. Examples include private sponsorship programmes (PS).

5. Hybrid pathways

Admission is based on regulated programmes that encompass a mixture of the above options. Examples include humanitarian and/or PS pathways established to respond to specific refugee vulnerabilities or goals, such as family reunification or education and labour opportunities²⁴.

CPs are characterised by a number of common aims, principles, and modalities, which must be delicately balanced in order to ensure their sustainability:

- CPs aim to increase the number of individuals in need of protection who are admitted to third countries.
- Ideally, CPs are designed to uphold the principles of additionality and complementarity to RST, thereby strengthening the international protection regime rather than substituting any aspect of it²⁵.
- CP admission criteria may vary based on specific eligibility requirements established by legal frameworks and/or *ad hoc* migration programs²⁶.
- CPs rely on a diverse range of entry channels and visa streams, reflecting the immigration policies of each RC alongside the core goal of providing durable solutions.
- To recover from trauma and achieve self-reliance, individuals admitted via CPs may require similar settlement support as that provided for resettled refugees (highlighting the links to CS).

• CPs involve a multitude of “actors and interests”²⁷, simultaneously targeting individuals in displacement-related contexts, and necessitating “operational adjustments”²⁸ to ensure meaningful access.

• CPs-related eligibility might involve requirements, including “refugees qualifications and available community support”, which might not be strictly linked to international protection needs²⁹.

CS encompasses a wide range of models, and is characterised by its adaptability. It can be broadly defined as a public-private partnership between State authorities, who facilitate legal admission for persons in need of international protection, and private or community actors, who provide financial, social and/or emotional support to settle and integrate them in their local communities³⁰.

There are two broad ways to conceive of CS³¹: as

A. A standalone pathway in which sponsors nominate (name) an individual and support his/her/their entry and stay in the RC, described above as Private Sponsorship (PS or ‘Named Sponsorship’)³². PS has historically played a key and consistent role in different types of admission programmes implemented by some States, including FR, and labour and education opportunities.

B. An integration support tool, in which civil society plays a central role in relation to integration, by providing financial, practical, and emotional support to newcomers for a defined period of time. In the latter, sponsors do not name beneficiaries through a formal application, and identification, referral, and selection is rather undertaken by UNHCR, local and international NGOs, or other actors.

While sponsorship has not developed into PS as a standalone legal pathway in the EU, there are many examples of CS models that underpin European RST, HAPs, HCs, and other CPs that admit persons in need of international protection.

The precise structure of CS pathways “can vary greatly, depending on who is responsible for nominating refugees for sponsorship (whether governments, individuals or community groups) and the level of financial or other support provided by government in addition to that provided by sponsors”³³.

²³UNHCR Website, “Private Sponsorship Pathways”, online: <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/complementary-pathways/private-sponsorship-pathways#:~:text=Private%20sponsorship%20programmes%20allow%20individuals,communities%20to%20directly%20support%20refugees.>

²⁴Hybrid pathways are analysed through the lens of other solutions, as they are programmes designed to implement mixed elements of other pathways.

²⁵T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 7.

²⁶*Ibidem*, p. 3.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 4. Woods listed the primary and subsidiary objectives of CPs: “to meet the international protection needs of people whose lives and freedoms are at risk; to provide durable solutions to refugees who find themselves in first CoAs without access to other durable solutions such as return or resettlement; to achieve self-reliance for refugees by allowing them to re-establish themselves and pursue their own goals and livelihoods; and to promote responsibility-sharing among states in the protection of refugees”, as well as “fostering positive public attitudes to refugees amongst host states and communities, by promoting integration and emphasising refugees’ skills, experiences and family relationships; addressing domestic labour and skills shortages in destinations countries;

promoting broader access to safe, regular and orderly migration; and enhancing equitability in access to international study and work opportunities”, *ibid.*

²⁸UNHCR, *supra* note 2, p. 7.

²⁹T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 3.

³⁰Nikolas Faith Tan, “A Study on The Potential for Introducing a Community Sponsorship Program for Refugees in Sweden”, UNHCR, Geneva, 2020, p. 6; T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 11; see also ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, “Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement”, European Resettlement Network (ERN+), Brussels, 2017.

³¹Judith Kumin, “Welcoming Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union”, Migration Policy Institute Europe, Brussels, 2015, p.3.

³²Michelle Manks, Mehrangiz Monsef and Dana Wagner, “Sponsorship in the Context of Complementary Pathways”, University of Ottawa, Refuge-Hub, Ottawa, 2022, pp. 2,3; see also N. Faith Tan, *supra* note 30, pp. 3,4.

³³T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 11.

Figure 1: The Role of Community Sponsorship Within Third-country Solutions³⁴

Resettlement	Complementary Pathways	
Resettlement Schemes	Humanitarian Corridors	Labour Pathways
	Humanitarian Visas	Family Reunification
	Education Pathways	Private/Named Sponsorship
	Humanitarian Admission Programs	
Community Sponsorship Integration, Economic, Emotional Support from Civil Society (Individuals, Groups of Individuals, NGOs, and CSOs)		

B. Identification, Referral, and Matching Within Third-Country Solutions: Key Definitions, Processes and Phases

The previous section systematised 3CS by categorising the various solutions based on the nature and type of admission, and highlighted overlapping aspects that make defining and systematising these solutions complex³⁵. As previously, the success of 3CS programmes relies heavily on the effective operationalisation of IRM processes. These processes are critical to ensuring **practical accessibility** to pathways for refugees, and involve a wide range of activities and stakeholders who play essential roles in pursuit of this outcome. This section addresses the key definitions, processes, and phases of IRM, focusing both on common features, and the differences and complexities that arise according to the varying operational contexts in which IRM processes are implemented.

I. Identification, Referral, and Matching: Key Definitions and Process Overview

Eligibility Criteria

All 3CS apply eligibility criteria (ELC) to determine the suitability of beneficiaries for a specific pathway or programme. ELC can originate from a range of sources: legal frameworks (such as FR and HVs), protocols and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between implementing organisations and national authorities (such as HCs), State pledges (including traditional RST³⁶ and HAPs), or tailored rules designed for specific programmes

(including PS schemes, HAPs, EPs, and LPs).

ELC vary depending on the type of pathway or programme and the immigration policies of RCs. ELC can include, amongst others:

- Profiles and legal status of potential beneficiaries in the CoA, targeting specific vulnerabilities as well as groups of refugees and other individuals in need of protection.
- Profiles of potential sponsors in the RC, which may include refugees, citizens, permanent residents, or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.
- Availability of required documentation, such as passports, diplomas, degrees, language certificates, birth and marriage certificates, and more, depending on the pathway.
- Nationalities of beneficiaries and/or potential sponsors, around which some programmes are specifically designed.
- Willingness and ability of sponsors to nominate and/or support potential beneficiaries (as in many CS programmes)³⁷.
- Ability to submit nominations and/or applications within specified timeframes.

Identification, Referral, and Matching

ELC are closely linked to IRM as they represent the framework in which IRM approaches and tools are developed. In this regard, when assessing pathway ELC and developing IRM it is crucial to consider the operational environment and, where necessary, apply 'operational adjustments' that facilitate refugee access to solutions³⁸.

IRM Within Third-Country Solution Processes

Identification encompasses activities to identify beneficiaries who may be eligible for a programme or pathway. Depending on programme design, identification of eligible cases may be conducted by actors including family members, UNHCR or other UN agencies, IOs, NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs), refugee-led organisations, and national authorities. Identification may be undertaken via outreach to engage directly with refugee communities (in person or remotely), and through partnerships with actors with a presence in specific refugee contexts (both in the Country of Asylum (CoA) and/or the Country of Origin (CoO)³⁹).

³⁴See also Share Network website, "Community Sponsorship in Context", online: <https://www.share-network.eu/community-sponsorship>. (Humanitarian) Evacuations (HEs) to third countries will not be addressed in this study, as they are not considered part of 3CS. HEs are designed to move quickly and to ensure the security of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants at high risk in CoAs or CoOs, by moving them to other countries, where their situation, status, and any pursuable 3CS can be thoroughly evaluated. The designated country could be a transit country (in these cases HEs have been developed as Emergency Transit Mechanisms - ETMs), or a country where beneficiaries can pursue a durable solution. Such schemes have been implemented by humanitarian organisations, in partnership with national authorities, and sometimes in collaboration with CSOs. Selection is based on a high level of vulnerability and imminent risk. Some HEs (such as that implemented from Libya to Italy) can be considered a hybrid of HEs and HCs, characterised by a sponsorship component and where transfer could lead to a potential durable solution for beneficiaries. -Operations of this type, however, are considered as emergency and exceptional measures, that do not involve an in-depth assessment of cases, and aim to redistribute refugees and asylum seekers trapped in life-threatening situations. See Caritas Italiana, "Oltre il Mare: Primo Rapporto sui Corridoi Umanitari in Italia e Altre Vie Legali e Sicure di Ingresso", Caritas Italiana, Roma, 2019, pp. 39-40; UNHCR Website, "Evacuation flights from Libya to Italy bring hope for vulnerable asylum seekers", Geneva, 2021; Medecins Sans Frontieres

(MSF), "Out of Libya - Opening Safe Pathways for Vulnerable Migrants Stuck in Libya", MSF, Geneva, 2022, pp. 13-22.

³⁵T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 8.

³⁶The UNHCR RST Handbook defines precise and objective vulnerability criteria to identify potential beneficiaries for RST. These criteria are combined with requirements established by RCs, which can vary from country to country and year to year, according to the nationality of beneficiaries, and/or specific protection needs and risks, see UNHCR "Resettlement Handbook", *supra* note 20, pp. 234-296.

³⁷For instance in many CS programmes, a beneficiary can be otherwise eligible but not qualify due to a lack of a sponsor to nominate them, or the inability of the sponsor to meet the criteria for sponsorship support.

³⁸UNHCR, *supra* note 2, p. 7.

³⁹Although the majority of programmes target people displaced, in some cases, for instance in certain HAPs, people identified and referred are still in their CoOs, where an emergency is ongoing.

Different levels of assessment are integral to the identification phase: pre-selection of cases involving profiling and screening, as well as more in-depth assessments that lead to final referrals of case profiles to the actors responsible for selection. These types of assessment can be conducted by the same or different actors.

Referrals involve directing identified individuals to the appropriate actor responsible for further assessment and selection. They can be categorised according to the actor(s) responsible for the final submission:

Referrals involve directing identified individuals to the appropriate actor responsible for further assessment and selection. They can be categorised according to the actor(s) responsible for the final submission:

A. Self-referrals: Individuals apply directly to those responsible for selection, where programmes permit. Self-referral may originate in three main ways:

I. Direct self-referrals: Applications are submitted directly by an individual, family member, or community sponsor. The IRM process begins with the application, followed by screening and assessment by the selecting authority.

Example: traditional right-based FR procedures, where a family member residing in the RC directly applies to national authorities for their family member to join them.

II. Supported self-referrals: Applications are submitted by potential beneficiaries, family members, or community sponsors, while UNHCR or other mandated organisations provide tailored support interventions, such as outreach, data collection, pre-screening, logistical assistance, and case management.

Example: EP University Corridors for Refugees in Italy (UNICORE), in which individuals apply through a common online platform that universities can access directly to select candidates, while UNHCR operations in CoAs support beneficiaries according to individual needs⁴⁰.

III. Mediated self-referrals: Potential beneficiaries flag their profiles to an implementing organisation acting as a 'bridge' to those responsible for selection.

Example: LP programmes implemented by Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), in which candidates can upload profiles to the online platform 'The Talent Catalog', and TBB screens

profiles and connects beneficiaries and employers with specific recruitment needs.

B. External referrals (or third party-based referrals): Actors mandated to identify and refer suitable candidates, such as UNHCR, other IOs, NGOs, CSOs, or national authorities, develop referral pathways via which they pre-select, assess, and submit dossiers or requests to the entity responsible for final selection. Often, these actors establish formal or informal partnerships with others who can flag potentially eligible cases⁴¹.

Examples: HAPs and HCs in which national authorities or implementing NGOs respectively rely on both specialised and mainstream partners to identify, screen, and refer cases.

C. Internal referrals: The body responsible for final selection creates internal channels to identify, assess, and select suitable candidates (in addition to other identification and referral channels)

Examples: HCs and HAPs in which implementing NGOs and national authorities respectively rely on specialised and mainstream partners alongside their own field teams/representatives.

D. Mixed referrals: Programmes employing a combination of self-referrals and external referrals.

Example: Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP), a Canadian labour mobility programme using self-referral and third party-based referral systems providing beneficiaries with the option to apply directly or through a non-State partner⁴².

Matching activities ensure that individuals departing on CPs are paired with the most suitable receiving entity, including individuals, organisations, or communities providing varying levels of support for reception and integration, depending on the requirements the RC has established for a particular pathway or programme. Matching can be defined as "a systemised process that determines the placement of refugees, with sponsors, host communities, employers (depending on the programme type) by taking into account the specific attributes, needs, and preferences of refugees, in conjunction with the capacities and preferences of sponsors or receiving communities⁴³". Matching can be implemented in different modalities and support various 3CS, including placement with employers and educational institutions in the context of LPs and EPs, respectively, or connecting displaced individuals with community sponsorship groups in CS programmes that are willing to provide them with social, financial,

⁴⁰UNICORE is a EP established in 2019 via an MoU signed between Italian national authorities, universities, and implementing partners; it involved a total of 41 Italian universities, UNHCR, Italian national authorities, Caritas Italiana, Diaconia Valdese, Centro Astalli, Miles for Migrants, and other partners; CoAs for UNICORE are Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe; see UNHCR Italia, UNICORE Website, online: <https://universitycorridors.unhcr.it/>.

⁴¹Such partnerships often involve service providers, including medical, legal and social assistance, and rights-based organisations, as well as embassies themselves, undertaking community outreach and information sharing activities of the responsible organisations, working with communities; prior agreements are usually signed between the responsible organisation, States, and partners trusted to ensure operational integrity, information sharing, and compliance with protection and solutions strategies, see UNHCR Website "UNHCR-NGO, Toolkit for Practical Cooperation on Resettlement: 1. Operational Activities - Identification and Referral of Refugees in Need of Resettlement: Definitions and

FAQs", June 2015, online: <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/unhcr-ngo-toolkit-practical-cooperation-resettlement-1-operational-activities-1>.

⁴²Government of Canada Website, "Immigrate through the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot: How the pilot works" online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/economic-mobility-pathways-pilot/immigrate.html>. The EMPP is a RST-based labour mobility programme aiming to resettle refugees to Canada from several CoAs. The programme is implemented through different channels, both at the federal and regional level, including a "provincial nomination program (PNP)" that enables provinces and regions to create their own streams in relation to immigration channels, targeted groups, and meeting their labour needs.

⁴³Craig Damian Smith with Emma Ugolini, "Why Matching Matters: Improving Outcomes in Refugee Sponsorship and Complementary Pathways", Migration Policy Institute Europe, Brussels, 2023, p. 3.

and/or emotional support⁴⁴. Matching can be closely linked to CS, and can be implemented by national authorities, NGOs, and CSOs, either 'by hand' (on a case-by-case basis), or using digital tools, such as online platforms⁴⁵. Matching is usually implemented after identification and referral, especially when CS is used as a support and integration tool. PS programmes based on a naming system, however, integrate matching with identification and referral, so sponsors can nominate specific individuals.

Pre-departure preparation is an integral part of IRM, with associated activities conducted both individually and collectively, from the outreach and identification phases until the point of departure. Before and during selection, on-site orientation and counselling and individual interviews address the needs, motivations and expectations of beneficiaries, as well as the advantages and possible challenges of accessing a particular pathway. During the pre-departure stage, orientation addresses departure procedures, and integration pathways, social and cultural environments, legal status, available support services, rights and duties, specific vulnerabilities, and language courses in RCs⁴⁶.

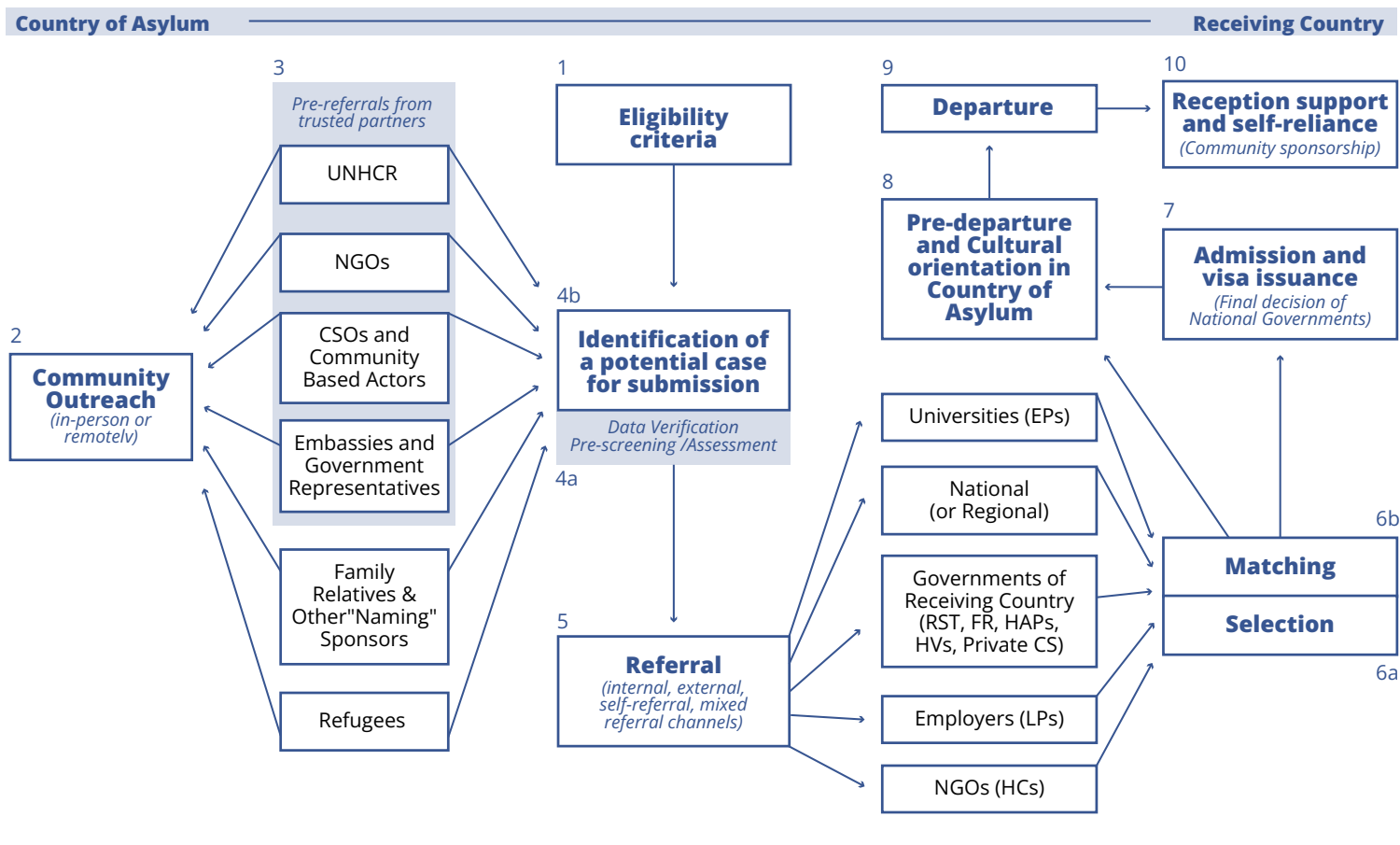
Actors responsible for **selection** vary based on programme goals and structure, and can include NGOs (as in HCs), education

institutions (as in EPs), employers (as in LPs), national authorities of the RC (as in HAPs, HVs, PS and RST-based programs), or even by accredited organisations (as in some PS schemes). In all cases, national authorities retain final authority over decisions on final approval, visa issuance, and admission for beneficiaries.

As above, 3CS rely on both mainstream and specialised actors for **IRM processes**, including UNHCR and/or NGOs and CSOs, as well as individuals, family members and refugee-communities. Nevertheless, IRM also aim to allow individuals and families to navigate and access solutions autonomously, in particular current EPs, LPs and rights-based FR programmes; in some cases, assistance is made available from UNHCR and/or other mandated actors according to individual needs. Additionally, IRM may incorporate elements that assess the support needs of individual refugees, alongside available supporting capacity in the RC - including of community sponsors - to strengthen their integration and self-reliance in the RC.

Although IRM processes share common features (see Figure 2), they may vary according to both operational context and programme design. IRM processes may additionally not always be implemented consecutively, and may be conducted by the same or different actors, working in partnership with one another.

Figure 2: IRM Within Third-Country Solution Processes



⁴⁴Roberto Cortinovis, "Approaches to Matching in Sponsorship and Complementary Pathways for Refugees and Other People in Need of International Protection, Fact Sheet", Migration Policy Institute Europe, Brussels, 2024, p. 1.

⁴⁵Ibidem

⁴⁶See Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (FEP), "Best Practice Report: Identification, Referral, Matching & Pre-Departure Preparation in the Humanitarian Corridor Programme", Share Network, Brussels, 2023, pp. 6,7; Marco Borraccetti, Mariateresa Veltri, "Evaluation Report of the University Corridors for Refugees (UNI.CO.RE) Program in Italy (2019-2023)", EU-PASSWORLD, 2023, p. 29, 37-39; Susan Fratzke, Lena Kainz, "Preparing for the Unknown: Designing Effective Predeparture Orientation for Resettling Refugees", Migration Policy Institute Europe, Brussels, 2019, p. 2.

II. Overlapping and Influencing Factors in Identification, Referral and Matching

While 3CS share common features, they do not follow a 'one size fits all' approach, as each operational context is influenced by various factors. These include State immigration policies, the degree of flexibility in ELC and IRM approaches and tools, the capacity and role of implementing actors in the field, and the concentration of refugee communities in urban areas or camps in which access to services may be limited. Additionally, the presence of embassies or government representatives of RCs in the field can vary based on the security situation. These factors, among many others, affect IRM processes, including for example outreach activities, establishing partnerships, and making use of digital tools such as online platforms, dedicated email accounts, chatbots, and referral forms.

III. Scoping Identification, Referral and Matching: Key Considerations

IRM should be understood as a complex and highly individualised array of activities that ensure refugee access to available

pathways. Each case may require multiple tailored interventions, implemented from the beginning to the end of the process.

A narrow application of ELC, whether formal or informal⁴⁷, can obstruct access to a solution. Limited access to rights and services in CoAs might limit the acquisition of eligibility requirements. Furthermore, complex and lengthy decision-making processes can affect outcomes. These complexities require a high degree of flexibility in assisting beneficiaries, including expanded and diverse partnerships, individual case advocacy with decision-makers, and investments in managing information and expectations. Processes related to 3CS are often not yet adequately adjusted to the specific needs of individual refugees, instead tending to focus overly on the interests of other stakeholders involved. Achieving a more equitable balance between multi-stakeholder and refugee-centred approaches is crucial, and contextualising and defining IRM is therefore essential to developing more streamlined and protection-focused solutions, based on a shared understanding of the challenges and good practices in IRM implementation. The next chapter explores IRM models, best practices, and tools developed across 3CS and various operational contexts.

Chapter 3: Identification, Referral, and Matching in Practice: Comparing Best Practices and Approaches

This chapter focuses on selected successful practices related to IRM, at both EU and global level. As this study cannot encompass all experiences of the numerous programmes and pathways that have been effectively implemented in various RCs and CoAs, it instead conducts a more in-depth analysis of selected examples across 3CS that provide a comprehensive view of the challenges and successes encountered during implementation.

A. Identification, Referral and Matching (IRM) in the Context of Skills-based and Qualifications-based Solutions: Education and Labour Mobility Opportunities⁴⁸

I. Contextualising IRM in Education and Labour Mobility Opportunities

The growing interest in education (EPs) and labour (LPs) mobility opportunities has introduced complexities regarding their sustainable and scalable implementation, prompting the establishment of multi-stakeholder initiatives, forums, and networks, at both global and regional levels, aimed at establishing minimum standards, enhancing coordination, and exploring ways

to adapt entry requirements to the realities of complex refugee settings⁴⁹.

According to UNHCR, "employment pathways, otherwise known as labour mobility opportunities, are any programmes that facilitate the movement of persons in need of international protection to a safe third country for the purpose of employment, while also having their protection needs met. Candidates' eligibility for programmes is assessed based on their professional qualifications and experience⁵⁰". Similarly, "education pathways are programmes, including scholarships, that facilitate the movement of persons in need of international protection to a safe third country for the purpose of higher education, while also having their protection needs met⁵¹". EPs might present sponsorship schemes in which academic institutions, NGOs and civil society support scholarship fees, language training, accommodation, integration and mentoring support, through direct funding or fundraising initiatives⁵². EPs and LPs are implemented via different types of pathways, in some cases as tailored programmes, and in others as pathways embedded in other solutions, such as HCs and PS.

⁴⁷Formal ELC are related to assessed vulnerability, refugee status, nationality, or standardised application processes requiring documentation that refugees cannot provide; informal ELC involve, for example, family size in relation to the availability of housing arranged by sponsors in the RC.

⁴⁸The topics and analyses presented here are the result of the research and mapping exercise conducted by the author, and insights from experts and stakeholders involved in the EU-PASSWORLD Working Group (meetings 1, 2, 3), and subsequent discussions at both EU-PASSWORLD events and other multi-stakeholder initiatives. Presentations and insights on this topic have been delivered by RefugePoint, ICMC Europe, TBB, Pathways International, UNHCR France, UNHCR Italy, UNHCR Mozambique, UNHCR Libya, UNHCR Kenya, UNHCR Belgium and Luxembourg, AUF, Pictou County Partnership, UNIBO, University of La Sapienza, University of Galway, University of KU Leuven, UWG, INTERSOS, WUSC, DAAD, OSUN, Caritas Italia, FEDASIL, IRC, TRSN, and UNICORE's students, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg.

⁴⁹The Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility and the Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways are multi-stakeholder global initiatives to share practices and challenges, encourage the active participation of refugee representatives, and streamline sustainable and protection-oriented solutions; see Government of Canada Website, "Global Task Force on Refugee

Labour Mobility", online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/corporate-initiatives/global-task-force-refugee-labour-mobility.html>; Global Task Force on Third-Country Education Pathways Website, online: <https://edpathways.org/>. In addition, the constant exchange of practices and challenges by actors implementing programmes represents an integral part of NGO and refugee-led initiatives, such as the Share Network and the Third Country Solutions Identification and Referral Network (TIRN), as well as AMIF-funded projects during the implementation and monitoring of activities. It is achieved through approaches including thematic WGs, Roundtables, and Advisory Boards, for instance those within EU-PASSWORLD.

⁵⁰UNHCR Website, "Employer Pathways", online: <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/complementary-pathways/employment-pathways#:~:text=Employment%20pathways%2C%20otherwise%20known%20as,having%20their%20protection%20needs%20met>.

⁵¹UNHCR Website, "Education Pathways", online: <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/complementary-pathways/education-pathways#:~:text=Complementary%20education%20pathways%20are%20programmes,having%20their%20protection%20needs%20met>.

⁵²T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 12.

The complexities of refugee contexts present a number of challenges for access to EPs and LPs by refugees and other displaced individuals. These include difficulties in accessing information, lack of experience with online applications and digital tools, narrow eligibility criteria, and stringent skill evaluations. Additional barriers include language differences, unavailable supporting documents, poor internet connectivity in rural and isolated areas, costs, and logistical issues. In this regard, IRM practices aim at levelling the playing field by facilitating access through adaptations, exemptions and concessions, including in terms of documentation and processes.

Within this context, IRM processes are shaped around several key principles: namely, upholding additionality and complementarity to RST (taking into consideration the many skilled individuals displaced in CoAs do not have often access to education and labour rights and are ineligible for humanitarian pathways); ensuring equitable access; empowering beneficiaries to achieve autonomy and self-reliance in accessing and navigating labour and education opportunities; and aligning the interests of employers and educational institutions with a refugee-centred approach⁵³.

II. IRM Within Education and Labour Mobility Opportunities

Eligibility and Access

Integrating Holistic Protection and Self-Reliance in Countries of Asylum as Preconditions for Labour and Education Mobility:

IRM activities are closely tied to eligibility and access, ensuring that candidates are genuinely positioned to apply. The approaches analysed below demonstrate that when IRM are integrated into an holistic protection and self-reliance framework, access is significantly enhanced.

This integrated approach is a core element of EPs and LPs, which both provide a comprehensive and interlinked set of activities - refugee status determination (RSD), RST programmes, education, healthcare, livelihoods, legal assistance, and general protection services - providing refugees with the necessary means to live in the CoA, even where a durable solution is not available. In practice, a holistic approach can also link these activities with wider 3CS programming: protection and RST activities and actors in CoAs, for example, might have complementary functions related to the identification of potential beneficiaries of EPs and LPs, while collaboration between IOs such as UNHCR and implementing partners working in local education and labour

sectors - including for development and local integration purposes - can also serve as a preliminary stage to access EPs and LPs. More in general, promoting self-reliance, represents an important identification and access tool, which helps refugees acquire required documentation and develop employment and educational skills. Further expanding and strengthening this approach requires investment of resources and the establishment of new partnerships and cooperation frameworks.

Established, integrated cooperation networks also facilitate programme outreach efforts, via both community-based initiatives and remote channels, ensuring a wider geographical coverage of areas in which refugee populations live.

Examples of Protection and Self-Reliance Activities as Key Preconditions of LPs

In Kenya, Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) has been developed in a context where implementing actors and their partners have created a holistic framework of protection activities. RefugePoint (RP), which implements labour mobility alongside a pre-existing RST program as one of the lead EMPP partners⁵⁴, has established stable activities in both camps and urban areas, focusing on protection, legal and healthcare support, livelihoods, and assessments for 3CS. This has been achieved also through partnerships with other organisations involved in similar and complementary areas, including education and humanitarian assistance⁵⁵. Although further partnerships are required, this framework laid the groundwork for EMPP implementation, enabling the identification and referral of numerous cases eligible for the programme. Similarly, in the UK's Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP)⁵⁶, lead organisation Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) collaborates with field-based organisations in CoAs such as Lebanon and Jordan. To disseminate programme information and support independent access by potential beneficiaries, these partners conduct both general and targeted outreach campaigns, including awareness-raising initiatives and in-person information sessions.

Examples of Protection and Self-Reliance Activities as Key Preconditions of EPs

EPs such as the Student Refugee Program (SRP)⁵⁷ in Canada (implemented through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSR)⁵⁸), and the Leadership for Africa Program (LFA) and Leadership for Syria (LFS) in Germany⁵⁹, are also embedded

⁵³In addition to inputs provided by TBB, RP, and other implementing actors during the WG meetings, see also Nour Moussa, Olivier Sterck, "Skilled Worker Visas for Refugees: An Evaluation of the UK's Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP)", Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, Oxford, 2024, p. 18, Box 1; T. Wood, *supra* note 8, pp. 18, 19.

⁵⁴There are several partner organisations implementing EMPP in different CoAs: TalentLift, Talent Beyond Boundaries, Jumpstart Refugee Talent, RefugePoint, HIAS, FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance, International Rescue Committee, World University Service of Canada, see Government of Canada Website, "Immigrate through the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot: How to apply", online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/economic-mobility-pathways-pilot/immigrate/apply.html>.

⁵⁵Actors implementing EMPP in Kenya, such as RefugePoint (RP), work in partnership with organisations active in education (such as WUSC and Windle Trust), legal support, livelihood, health care (such as HIAS and IRC), and protection (such as UNHCR).

⁵⁶The DTMP is a tailored LP programme launched in 2021, and extended to 2023, with the aim of admitting approximately 200 skilled talents from any nationality (both refugees and displaced

persons, as well as their families), to the UK from Lebanon and Jordan, and now extended to other locations (such as Afghanistan and Pakistan). The DTMP focused on the non-health sector, and has been recently extended via a Health Care Pilot. See Talent Beyond Boundaries Website, "The UK's Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot", online: <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/blog/introducing-the-uk-displaced-talent-mobility-pilot>.

⁵⁷WUSC Website, "Student Refugee Program", online: <https://srp.wusc.ca/about/>. The SRP is a RST and PS based program, implemented through the PSR.

⁵⁸Government of Canada Website, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program", online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program/section-2.html>.

⁵⁹See DAAD Website, "Leadership for Africa", online: <https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/what-we-do/sustainable-development/funding-programmes/funding-programmes-for-students-a-z/leadership-for-africa/>; DAAD Website, "Leadership for Syria", online: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www2.daad.de/medien/microsites/the-other-one-percent/poster_-daad_-leadership_for_syria_pia_schauerte.pdf.

in a comprehensive framework of protection and self-reliance activities. Taking place within livelihoods and protection programmes, and implemented by international and national organisations in partnership with UNHCR, these activities include EP outreach and identification via community-based initiatives in camps and urban areas, social media, and local universities.

Bridging Programs: Alongside general self-reliance, livelihoods and protection frameworks, more individually tailored activities may be required. In EPs, displaced students may need to become eligible by completing additional academic preparation at various levels, improving their language skills, or obtaining official certificates and/or credentials. Similarly, and though some LP candidates possess the specific qualifications or specialised work experience (hard skills), and soft and transferable skills that qualify them for a programme, employers sometimes develop bespoke training programmes for those who do not, in order to meet recruitment needs in specific sectors.

The bridging approach is applied more broadly in CoAs, which in many cases have increasing RST needs compounded by limited access to labour and education opportunities and rights for refugees. Multi-stakeholder approaches, that include both the private sector and others active in CoA education and labour sectors, have led to the development of bridging or upskilling programmes, providing potential EP and LP refugee beneficiaries with opportunities to participate in upskilling and vocational training, preparatory courses, and language training.

Upskilling programs have been developed in different modalities, adjusted to programme structures. In LPs, for example, 'train to hire' programmes build specific skills required to access programmes, while 'train to move' programmes train beneficiaries who have already been recruited, prior to their move to the RC. These initiatives have become a key feature of EP and LP programmes, simplifying and streamlining processes by leveraging existing programmes and structures in CoAs that were initially developed for other pathways or local communities. They serve as an important tool for identification, and broaden access to opportunities and capacity to meet ELC across a wider range of beneficiary cohorts (including highly qualified individuals, those in need of upskilling, and those with high potential). Recent discussions in this context have focused on the long-term goal of creating talent 'pipelines', that can be both locally deployed for the benefit of CoAs and create wider eligibility for both EPs or LPs, depending on programme requirements.

Bridging/Upskilling Programme Practices in EPs

The Open Society University Network (OSUN) runs bridging programmes for both refugees and host communities, in collaboration with academic institutions, which aim to prepare students for higher education programs both in the CoAs and

in other third-countries. The Refugee Higher Education Access Program⁶⁰, implemented in several CoAs⁶¹ offers preparatory upskilling, academic and advanced writing, and critical thinking courses, including accredited courses, and specific pathway application and pathway preparation courses.

Bridging/Upskilling Programme Practices in LPs

Recent LPs in Italy⁶² have facilitated training in the IT sector for workers in Uganda, in partnership with corporate partners and NGOs, as well as upskilling training for refugees in Egypt and Jordan within the jewellery sector, working alongside employers and academies. Additionally, training programmes for refugees and local communities in Egypt's shipbuilding sector have been organised in collaboration with a job agency and faith-based association. UN agencies and Italian authorities are also coordinating efforts to incorporate refugees into existing training programmes being implemented across Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Refugee-led Initiatives: It is also important to note that refugee-led initiatives working in CoAs and within refugee communities can significantly enhance candidate ownership of navigating EPs and LPs, and foster a better understanding of refugee contexts amongst programme partners.

Refugee-led Initiatives

The Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN)⁶³ is a refugee-led initiative founded in 2019 with the support of UNHCR. One of its goals is to provide strategic support to refugees and organisations around the world to enhance practical access to EPs. Dedicated teams of refugees operate at various levels - local, regional, and global - implementing peer-to-peer mentorship programmes for potential beneficiaries. TRSN also collaborates with national, regional, and international stakeholders, playing a key role in advocacy efforts.

Skills Evaluation and Levelled Opportunities: While a well-rounded set of activities and bridging programmes represent important identification and access tools, and enable individuals to meet hard skills requirements, eligibility should be evaluated more broadly. To facilitate wider access, ELC could encompass aspects such as soft and transferable skills, motivation, and potential. This approach does not mean to lower the competency threshold, but rather to evaluate skills and capacities holistically.

Additionally, ELC could be designed to better fit programme goals and operational contexts. In contexts where access to education is very limited, for example, EPs might usefully offer undergraduate degrees or secondary school diplomas alongside Master's programmes, and/or compound qualifications with other skills, for instance related to sport. Similarly, LPs might target

⁶⁰See OSUN Website, "Call for Participation: Refugee Higher Education Access Curriculum Development", online: <https://opensocietyuniversitynetwork.org/resources/call-for-participation-refugee-higher-education-access-curriculum-development>.

⁶¹Notably Kenya, Jordan, Bangladesh, and parts of Eastern Africa.

⁶²The Law 5 May 2023 No 50, establishing the so-called Decreto Flussi, introduced an annual quota for refugee workers and foresaw the possibility of including refugees who have completed required

accredited professional training and socio-linguistic courses that would enable them to work and reside in Italy, notably refugees from North, West and Central Africa, and Latin America (quota of 250 individuals). The programme is under implementation, and this information is the outcome of the discussion with lead organisations.

⁶³Tertiary Refugee Student Network, "Tertiary Refugee Student Network, Report 2020", UNHCR, Geneva, 2021.

less specialised and entry level positions, alongside specific and/or highly qualified roles, broadening employer engagement to target these types of opportunities, and responding to labour market needs. Individuals recruited for LPs might benefit from a gradual upskilling process after arrival, progressively escalating their position in the RC's job market, and building their capacity to integrate into their working environment and wider society. These approaches can coexist where programmes take a strategic approach, and several practices have shown that ELC are progressively adapting to diverse contexts and profiles.

Skills Evaluation and/or Levelled Opportunities Practices in LPs

In Italy, in the framework of the Humanitarian Corridors (HCs) from Pakistan⁶⁴ Caritas Italiana and its partners developed a hybrid model that integrates job opportunities into the HC framework. Although HCs are humanitarian programmes in which vulnerabilities are the basis of the intervention, the skills of some beneficiaries have been evaluated, together with employers throughout the territory, in order to improve their integration. During selection, beneficiaries were evaluated not only for their formal qualifications, but also for their motivation and soft skills. Employers considered a range of positions with different skills profiles, including highly skilled/qualified (such as in the engineering sector) and positions requiring previous working experience as well as soft and transferable skills (such as in the tailoring sector). Caritas and its partners provided opportunities for beneficiaries to attend language courses led by dedicated instructors, including access to a learning platform through a corporate partnership. Beneficiaries also received pre-arrival career coaching, from a dedicated team of HR experts, to help them navigate the labour market more effectively after arrival. These courses enabled an in-depth evaluation of candidates, including aspects such as their participation levels, teamwork skills, and soft and transversal competencies.

The Canadian Refugee Employment-linked Sponsorship programme (HIRES)⁶⁵, launched by World University Service Canada (WUSC) in 2019 under the PSR, facilitates labour mobility of young refugees in Kenya and Malawi. The programme focuses on entry level positions, targeting talents that can potentially integrate into the job market according to employer needs and priorities. Eligibility was based on the possession of a secondary

school diploma and the evaluation of soft skills⁶⁶, followed by a post-arrival vocational training programme in Canadian colleges before accessing the labour market. From 2023, this pilot transitioned to the EMPP, under the programme's economic stream, where eligibility is based on one year's work experience and intermediate level English language skills. Selected individuals are now attending a short 'train to hire' program in CoAs⁶⁷.

The program Displaced Talent for Europe (DT4E), led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in partnership with TBB, national authorities and other partners, implements labour opportunities for displaced talents in different sectors in several RCs⁶⁸. For what regards in particular the healthcare pathway developed in Belgium⁶⁹, selected and admitted individuals receive post-arrival vocational and language training, and are progressively introduced to the role for which they have been recruited through a series of gradual steps, including according to the language level progressively achieved.

Skills Evaluation and/or Levelled Opportunities Practices in EPs

In the French UNIV'R programme⁷⁰ students' qualifications are assessed together with individual motivation, and both are crucial considerations within the selection process. The Italian UNICORE programme introduced a motivational questionnaire, developed by UNHCR, universities, and NGOs involved in EPs, to obtain structured information on individual motivation and long-term intentions from candidates during interviews.

In some programs, a holistic evaluation of skills is compounded by the expansion of opportunities to different contexts and cohorts: initiatives such as Pagelle in Tasca in Italy⁷¹ and the UWC Refugee Initiative⁷² involve medium and high-school programs, targeting minor and youth refugees, where selection criteria are based on the motivation and commitment of the children interviewed, combined with their attendance records in available educational activities within the CoA.

Additionally, recent initiatives envisage the possibility to compound academic qualifications with other skills. In this regard, UNHCR Italy, in collaboration with UNHCR Country Operations, relevant Universities and sport-related organisations, intends to implement the University Corridors for Refugees in Relation

⁶⁴In this case, labour opportunities have been implemented within the context and design of an HC. HCs from Pakistan to Italy, begun in 2021, following the seizure of power by the Taliban in Afghanistan. The MoU (The Afghan Protocol), signed by national authorities and six organisations (FCEI, Waldesian Board, Community of Sant'Egidio, Arci, CEI, Caritas Italiana), allowed for Italy to admit, through humanitarian flights, 1.200 Afghan nationals at high risk who had found refuge in Pakistan and Iran, see Federazione Delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia (FCEI) Website, "Mediterranean Hope, Humanitarian Corridors", online: <https://www.mediterraneanhope.com/en/humanitarian-corridors/>. The description of HCs in Italy from Pakistan is the outcome of inputs provided by implementing actors during EU-PASSWORLD WG meetings 1 and in subsequent discussions and feedback provided by implementing actors in several EU-PASSWORLD events and Roundtables; see also Irene de Lorenzo-Caceres Cantero, "Corridoi Lavorativi: How Caritas Italiana is Using an Existing Humanitarian Corridor to Pilot a Labour Pathway to Italy", Pathways International, Ottawa, 2024.

⁶⁵WUSC-EUMC Website, "Every Vacancy an Opportunity Learnings from the WUSC HIRES Pilot", 2024, online: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ju4jBTX1uv_ft0hWsozwWj2GwYMMwckC/view.

⁶⁶In addition, as a sponsorship scheme, the absence of available durable solutions also had to be assessed.

⁶⁷This information is the outcome of inputs by WUSC colleagues during an EU-PASSWORLD Roundtable on "Creating Synergies Between Education and Labour Pathways", Paris, 2024. See also WUSC-EUMC Website, "Enabling refugee youth to immigrate and fill vacancies in Canada is heartwarming and good for business", online: <https://wusc.ca/hires/>.

⁶⁸DT4E is a EU AMIF funded project launched in 2021 connecting displaced talents from Lebanon and Jordan with employers in several RCs, including Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, and UK, as well as France and Slovakia (from DT4E 2.0), see IOM Belgium and Luxembourg Website, "Displaced Talents For Europe (DT4E)", online: <https://belgium.iom.int/displaced-talent-europe-dt4e>.

⁶⁹IOM Belgium and Luxembourg Website, *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰UNIV'R is an EP established in 2021; refugees can apply for UNIV'R from any CoA, see UNHCR Website, "UNIV'R UNHCR's Help Portal for Trinidad and Tobago", online: <https://help.unhcr.org/trinidadandtobago/resettlement-and-alternative-pathways-to-safety-and-opportunity/univr-project-university-corridor-to-france/>.

⁷¹Pagelle in Tasca is a multi-stakeholder EP project established through a MoU, between the Italian authorities, implementing organisations INTERSOS and UNHCR, and other partners in the RC (including the Municipality and Diocesi of Turin, schools, and CSOs, see UNHCR Italia Website, "Pagelle in Tasca: Canali di Studio per Minori Rifugiati", online: <https://www.unhcr.org/it/cosa-facciamo/istruzione/istruzione-primaria-e-secondaria/pagella-in-tasca-canali-di-studio-per-minori-rifugiati/>.

⁷²The UWC Refugee Initiative offers opportunities through its colleges in several countries, through both in-country solutions (including for IDPs) and EPs. See UWC, The UWC Refugee Initiative, "Empowering Young Refugees and Internally Displaced Youth to Become Tomorrow's Changemakers", online: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kkpHlEqCtw1Y07XQ6TYewDNLGcQNRa9M/view>, pp. 8-9.

to Sport. This initiative, not implemented yet, foresees the opportunity to provide scholarships for dual career programmes (academic and sports-related) to student refugees who demonstrate strong motivation and involvement in sports at a high or medium level, or who are affiliated with a sports team in CoAs. These scholarships would target students with a high school diploma seeking to enrol in a bachelor's degree programme, aiming at linking education and sport as tools of inclusion and integration⁷³.

Documentation and Case Processing: Access to LPs and EPs is also contingent on reasonable processing and entry times as well as the availability of required documentation, including those proving academic and/or work qualifications, language qualifications/ability, and identity documents. Beneficiaries should respect as much as possible the expected starting times, following a job or a scholarship offer in the RC. Nevertheless, many refugees face challenges in obtaining documentation due to financial constraints, the loss of documents during their displacement, or an inability to seek assistance from their CoO for documents issuance and renewal. In some cases, embassies may not even be present in CoAs. To address these barriers, and better meet the needs of stakeholders such as employers and academic institutions, it is essential to consider adopting both faster procedures and alternative methods of evaluation, including within exit and entry procedures. In this regard, the involvement of embassies and national authorities can facilitate expedited and safer procedures.

Practices for Flexible Approaches to Documentation and Case Processing in LPs

In the UK's DTMP, TBB's advocacy has contributed to making entry requirements more flexible. The assignment of focal points for visa applications and employment permits has expedited processing times and facilitated more flexible solutions, such as accepting alternative proofs of identity when official documentation is unavailable (including expired documents or attestations from co-workers). The programme also accommodates delays, such as when a candidate is waiting for a document to be issued or about to conclude work experience, and allows for language accreditation through alternative modalities. Continued engagement with national authorities has enabled shorter waiting periods for the acquisition of visas and registration of candidates with the UK Home Office, aided by a recently

opened ad-hoc registration desk. Efforts are also ongoing to expand partnerships with accredited institutions so as to facilitate the acquisition of language certificates.

Practices for Flexible Approaches to Documentation and Case Processing in EPs

In programmes such as UNIV'R and UNICORE, when official certificates cannot be provided, language skills are evaluated during interviews, and alternative proofs of identity are considered. In addition, the involvement and coordination of embassies and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, both in the CoA and RC, facilitate exit and visa application procedures through exemptions and the acceptance of alternative documents⁷⁴.

A more flexible approach to entry requirements has been implemented under the EU-PASSWORLD Scholarships Programme in Ireland⁷⁵, including accepting minimum scores on the Duolingo application in place of language certificates, and accepting any identity document, including those which have expired.

Displacement Status and Visa Streams: The type of pathway and legal framework chosen is closely related to IRM in relation to the displacement status required in the CoA and the adopted visa streams. Although visa streams⁷⁶ are not the focus of this study, it is worth mentioning that, in order to expand access, eligibility could involve different types of displacement status, including both refugees and persons in need of other forms of protection. This approach could be augmented by establishing different visa streams within the same programme so as to provide different options. Additionally, beneficiaries should be able to prove their displacement situation and undergo an evaluation of their profiles: this can involve a RSD procedure, UNHCR registration, or other types of protection assessments, conducted by UNHCR and/or other mandated organisations with expertise that ensures the integrity of the process. In some programmes, referral letters from a trusted partner assessing the need for protection are accepted.

Displacement Status Practices in EPs and LPs

Within EPs, the pilot EU-PASSWORLD Scholarships Programme in Ireland targets UNHCR registered refugees, as well as asylum seekers and beneficiaries of complementary or temporary protection⁷⁷. Within LPs, the Canadian EMPP targets both refugees and other displaced persons, as well as established different

⁷³This initiative would be part of the UNHCR Sport Strategy 2022-2026, which - among the other objectives - would aim at expanding EPs for athletes refugees, see UNHCR Website, "UNHCR Sport Strategy 2022-2026, More Than a Game", 2022, online: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/our-partners/sport-partners/unhcr-sport-strategy-2022-2026>, pp. 34-36. An overall description of this initiative has been provided by UNHCR Italy, during the Webinar COSME Project on 13 November 2024.

⁷⁴Notably, within UNICORE, student beneficiaries have been exempted from payment of visa fees, the requirement to present health insurance, and presenting an airline ticket during visa applications; Laissez-Passer are also issued in cases where it is not possible to receive a Convention Travel Document (TD) or Emergency Travel Documents (ETD) issued by ICRC, see M. Borraccetti, M. Veltri, supra note 46, p. 40. Also within UNIV'R, embassies, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are involved in facilitating exit and visa procedures.

⁷⁵The EU-PASSWORLD Programme in Ireland, implemented by NGOs and universities in partnership with national authorities, offers accepted candidates the opportunity to attend a one-year Master's programme in a range of subject areas, in Ireland by 2024, in three main universities: University of Galway (2 places), University College Dublin (2 places) and University College Cork (1 place); the pilot involves Uganda as a CoA, and candidates of all nationalities. See UNHCR Opportunities Website, "EU-PASSWORLD Scholarship Programme: Education Pathway to Ireland", online: <https://services.unhcr.org/opportunities/education-opportunities/eu-passworld-scholarship-programme-education-pathway-ireland>.

⁷⁶Two main visa streams are currently used: permanent residence permits via RST schemes (often in addition to RST quotas), and/or existing working visa streams, primarily utilised in most EU programmes. While RST-based admissions provide a permanent solution before departure for those accepted, they require long screening and assessment processes that in some cases have resulted in a rejection of admission, even though individuals had been offered a job contract or scholarship. Existing skills-based migration channels, on the other hand, offer advantages including freeing up needs-based slots for the most vulnerable, incorporating many talented displaced individuals in need of protection (upholding complementarity), and having shorter processing times that are better-suited for labour and education-related processes. To foresee long term solutions, the use of medium to long term visas (such as the Skilled Worker Route used in the UK for the DTMP, with a duration of five years) could lead to more permanent solutions. In addition, or alternatively, labour market integration is a key aspect of implementing this objective: vocational, language, and soft skills training, as well as traineeship opportunities, are necessary steps to create sustainable solutions in the future. Labour and education opportunities are also implemented via other entry arrangements, such as the HCs from Pakistan to Italy in which beneficiaries are admitted through HVs (as for all HCs), thus acquiring refugee status on arrival in the RC. In addition, some more recent programmes implement other types of arrangements from the identification phase: in the EU-PASSWORLD Scholarship Programme in Belgium, for instance, candidates may be admitted via student visas or HVs, while those who are considered prima facie refugees undergo an RSD process in the CoA.

⁷⁷UNHCR Opportunities Website, supra note 75.

immigration streams⁷⁸.

Profiles' Evaluation Practices in EPs and LPs

Within LPs, Canada's EMPP to Canada accepts alternative documents, including a positive RSD determination provided by UNHCR or The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), proof of being recorded as a 'person of concern' by these agencies, proof of having been granted a temporary protection status, or - as a final alternative - a letter from a trusted partner (such as TBB) assessing the need for protection⁷⁹.

IRM Structures

IRM Approaches: IRM approaches to implementing LPs and EPs vary according to programmes' legal framework, IRM tools developed, and the role played by implementing organisations.

IRM Approaches and Tools in EPs

A. "Online Platform"

In this model, beneficiaries apply directly to the programme (self-referral). This is the case in the UNICORE and UNIV'R programmes⁸⁰, in which the main IRM tools are joint online application platforms, created by UNHCR, that candidates can access to create a personal profile and upload relevant documents such as certificates, CVs, and motivational letters. The platform lists the Master's programmes of participating universities, allowing refugees to apply directly and to more than one programme. Universities then access these applications via the online platform in order to complete screening and selection. Additionally, UNHCR staff and partner NGOs in CoAs support outreach and community-based initiatives, as well as administrative and logistical requirements such as the provision of laptops and internet access for interviews, and assistance with travel documents and visas. This model has been developed mainly within EPs that use existing immigration channels.

B. "Private Sponsorship"

In this system, non-State partners are tasked with identifying, referring, and matching potential beneficiaries. IRM activities for Canada's Student Refugee Programme (SRP) are managed by WUSC, which is responsible for outreach and identification in CoAs, coordination with UNHCR and other UN agencies, selection, and matching with universities. WUSC acts as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) within Canada's SRP programme, granting WUSC Local Committees the authority to directly sponsor (name) refugee beneficiaries. This model has been developed

mainly within EPs using PS programs based on RST schemes.

C. "Hybrid"

In this model, beneficiaries submit self-referrals, and a supervising organisation acts as an intermediary between students and universities. An example is the Leadership for Africa (LfA) programme in Germany, implemented by DAAD, in which applicants submit their materials through an online portal, and DAAD provides counselling and support throughout the application process. DAAD is also responsible for eligibility checks and pre-selection interviews, which are conducted by committees of university professors and embassy representatives. When needed, UNHCR or local offices of mandated NGOs provide support during the application process, while universities retain the final authority for student selection. Similarly, in UWC's Refugee Initiative, UWC National Committees composed of alumni and volunteers, are responsible for identifying, selecting, and matching students with UWC Colleges. This model has been developed mainly within EPs using existing immigration channels.

IRM Approaches and Tools in LPs

A. "Talent Catalog"⁸¹

A 'mediated' self-referral system implemented by TBB across various programmes⁸², this model involves teams located in both CoAs and RCs, working alongside their partners. The core IRM tool developed by TBB is *The Talent Catalog*, an online platform accessible via a dedicated website and app, available even with low internet connectivity. Candidates can independently create profiles and gradually upload relevant information and certificates. In addition, TBB's partners in CoAs work with beneficiaries to access registration links and support them in the application process. Employers in RCs who need to fill job positions submit job descriptions to TBB, which provides employers with a shortlist of eligible candidates from *The Talent Catalog*, after conducting screenings and eligibility checks through intake interviews. In this case, TBB connects displaced skilled individuals and employers through *The Catalog* by conducting matching with employers, while the recruitment process remains employer-led and follows traditional recruitment practices. Recent programmes like the DT4E, implemented by IOM, TBB, and other partners, has applied this model, while further expanding partnerships and employer engagement in RCs⁸³. This model has been mainly developed through LPs using existing immigration channels.

B. "Case Management"

Implemented by RefugePoint within the EMPP in Kenya, this approach offers applicants individualised support to navigate

⁷⁸See Government of Canada Website, *supra* note 54.

⁷⁹Talent Beyond Boundaries Website, "Eligibility for the EMPP", online: <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/empp-canada-pathway>.

⁸⁰Notably, UNIV'R has streamlined the process by introducing a UNHCR Kobo Platform, replacing the previous email-based system.

⁸¹The present model is the outcome of the information and presentation provided by the TBB, in the Middle East and UK during EU-PASSWORLD WG meetings 1, 2, 3. Additional information has been acquired in, N. Moussa, O.Sterck, *supra* note 53. See also TBB Website, "The Talent Catalog", online: <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/talentcatalog>.

⁸²Implementing actor TBB, runs established programmes in other RCs, including Australia (the Skilled Refugee Pilot Labour Agreement), Canada (EMPP), UK (DTMP), to which refugees and displaced people can apply from CoAs including Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Malaysia, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Kenya, Pakistan. Prospects for expansion include the U.S., Portugal, Ireland, and Belgium; see also N. Moussa, O. Sterck, *supra* note 53, p. 22, Figure 1.

⁸³See IOM Belgium and Luxembourg Website, *supra* note 68. Notably, while employers share a job description, DT4E provides a shortlist of candidates displaced in Lebanon and Jordan from the TBB's Talent Catalog. Additionally, DT4E implementing partners facilitate the recruitment process remotely (including through video interview, tests, etc...) which remains employer-led, see IOM Belgium and Luxembourg Website, "DT4E Employer Information Sheet", online: <chrome-extension://efajdnbmnnnibpcjpcgiclfndmkaj/https://belgium.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11286/files/documents/2024-11/eng-pg1.pdf>.

the application and immigration processes⁸⁴. Identification is carried out through a broad range of protection and self-reliance activities, followed by several screenings, CV preparation, formal referrals to employers, interview facilitation, immigration application, and exit processing. Matching activities are conducted through partnerships with employers, economic and development organisations, and other partners in Canada. Various tools have been developed to streamline IRM. For instance *Pictou County Partnership* created a Candidate Pipeline Tracking system to map candidate profiles and process flows, an Employment Document Review system for employers to submit documentation, and a Candidate Application Form to monitor programme eligibility and follow-up. This model has been developed through LPs using different immigration streams, in this case RST-related.

C. “Private Sponsorship”

In this system, community groups (or groups of workplace teams) can hire and sponsor (name) skilled individuals in CoAs, while non-State partners are responsible for managing IRM, including identifying a talent pool, connecting identified individuals with employers with occupational shortages, and coordinating the interview and recruitment process. In the Canadian HIRES program, when embedded in the PRS framework, workplace teams could sponsor recruited refugees, while lead implementing organisation WUSC was responsible for identification, referral, matching with employers, vetting and preparation of candidates, interview and immigration coordination, as well as post-arrival guidance⁸⁵. Currently, HIRES has switched from the PRS framework to economic immigration channels under the EMPP, with WUSC maintaining a similar role. This model has mainly been developed in LPs using different immigration streams - both PS programmes based on RST schemes and existing immigration channels.

D. “Labour Opportunities Through Humanitarian Corridors”

Developed by Caritas Italiana and its partners⁸⁶ during the implementation of the HCs of Afghan nationals displaced from Pakistan to Italy, this approach integrates labour mobility opportunities within the HC framework. HCs are typically implemented in challenging and dynamic contexts, allowing organisations to create various IRM routes (both internal and external) through NGOs, CSOs, families, companies, and other non-State actors. Candidates are selected for the HC based on vulnerability criteria, and their skills and work experience are also included in each case dossier. A specialised team in Italy focused on human resources and the job market, conducting in-depth online interviews with beneficiaries and providing training courses and career coaching. Although in this case employer engagement occurs after selection based primarily on humanitarian needs, beneficiary skills are evaluated in partnership with employers throughout the territory, in order to improve the integration process. This model has been developed mainly embedded within HCs.

Within LPs, two key models have emerged. The first is developed

through HCs, and utilises labour opportunities to promote better integration within local communities. In this model, employer engagement is more related to improving matching for skilled candidates that have been identified and selected for the HC primarily on the basis of vulnerability, while responding to labour market needs. The second model uses labour opportunities as a condition for entry. Although this model has been developed using different pathways, including those based on existing economic immigration streams and PS through RST schemes, employer engagement and related IRM activities aim to create conditions for skilled displaced candidates to apply for a job position and be recruited by employers with labour shortages. Both models have heavily contributed to building the foundational structures required to expand labour opportunities in RCs.

Implementing the IRM approaches described above depends on the development of specific tools, and on the role played by implementing organisations. Nevertheless, the above analysis demonstrates how IRM practices and tools can be mixed and applied across different pathways and legal frameworks.

Technology and the Way Forward: In both LPs and EPs, IRM approaches have been shaped according to programme design and related requirements. Although programmes are progressively aiming to harmonise processes, there is still a diverse range of practices (and necessarily always will be). In this regard, further investment in technology and tools combined with a gradual standardisation of procedures, academic recognition, and related documentation will simplify applications and improve candidate ownership of the process. Potential approaches here include the use of new or existing centralised online platforms at the country or regional level that might be adjusted to EPs and LPs. For LPs a new Labour Migration Platform has been launched in the EU with the goal of enhancing the operationalisation of labour mobility initiatives⁸⁷, while for EPs existing platforms, such as the Erasmus application portal⁸⁸, could be used as a model. This approach would not only streamline procedures, but also offer the possibility of redirecting cases to the most suitable available solution or programme, thus serving as a cross-referral tool. Such tools could additionally be supported by data sharing agreements among implementing partners and with beneficiaries.

Pre-departure Preparation: Pre-departure preparation activities are a crucial aspect of IRM, starting with outreach, and identification, and proceeding throughout the selection and pre-departure stages. Addressing with candidates the challenges and successes of accessing EPs and LPs, as well as their needs, expectations, and aspects regarding arrival, integration, and post-arrival services and support responds to the needs of beneficiaries, stakeholders, and sponsors (when present), raising awareness and building mutual trust. Almost all programmes have developed robust individual and collective pre-departure orientation and preparation activities, conducted before and after selection and in coordination with relevant stakeholders in the RCs.

⁸⁴As above, The EMPP is based on both a self-referral and a third-party-based referral system, and several visa streams.

⁸⁵WUSC-EUMC Website, *supra* note 67.

⁸⁶The main implementing actors for this hybrid pilot are Caritas Italiana, with the NGO Pangea and Consorzio Comunitas.

⁸⁷See European Commission Website, *supra* note 12. See also the European Commission Website, “Labour Migration Platform”, online: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/labour-migration-platform_en.

⁸⁸European Commission Website, “Erasmus Portal”, online: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/it>.

Pre-departure Orientation and Preparation in EPs and LPs

Within the EP UNICORE, pre-departure preparation activities start before the application call, through onsite orientation and counselling sessions⁸⁹. Further, selection interviews with universities further explore the motivation, needs, and expectations of candidates⁹⁰. Following selection, candidates undergo orientation sessions with Caritas Italiana, UNHCR, and Diaconia Valdese, focusing on support services, welfare benefits, legal and integration pathways, candidate needs, and rights and duties. Orientation takes place via individual meetings, online sessions, leaflets, and videos⁹¹. Moreover, since the third edition of UNICORE, online Italian courses have been introduced in collaboration with several universities, in order that beneficiaries can start familiarising themselves with the language prior to departure⁹².

IRM and Coordination Approaches

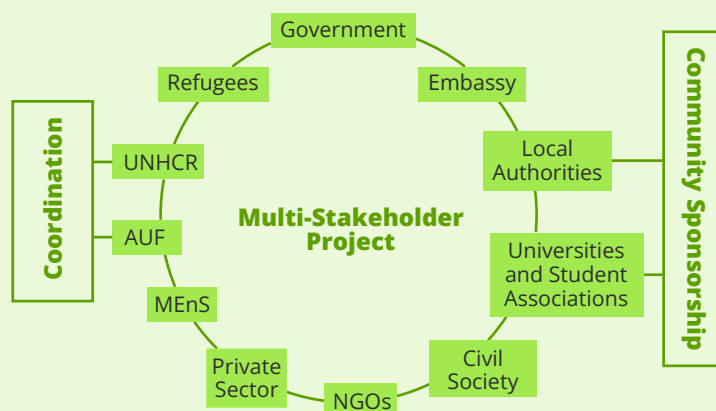
Multi Stakeholder Partnerships for Coordination: To holistically address all aspects related to IRM implementation, EP and LP programmes are based on multi-stakeholder frameworks, in which actors in CoAs and RCs assume different and complementary roles to create a continuum for the whole process. As above, meeting ELC and addressing access barriers in CoAs involve numerous interventions that can make the process quite challenging, at all stages. This approach would benefit from expanded partnerships and increased governmental support, as well as more strategic thinking about ways to delegate tasks among partners, including tasks that can be performed remotely, in order to create a 'conveyor belt' of sorts, for the entire process. This model can facilitate the division of tasks, streamline procedures and costs, and enable effective supervision of processes, and the coordination provided in some programmes by leading organisations or dedicated Working Groups represent significant assets for streamlining IRM activities, addressing access barriers, improving matching, and ultimately providing 'bridges' between CoAs and RCs.

Coordination Approaches to Streamline IRM in EPs

In EPs, several programmes are coordinated by one or more actors present in both CoAs and RCs. UNIV'R in France is based on a multi-stakeholder partnership in which universities are responsible for selection and administrative support, national authorities coordinate departures and provide funding, and NGOs, local authorities, and students support refugees on a daily basis (including through housing, social services, and peer-to-peer integration). Additionally, UNHCR and partner NGOs present in both CoAs and RCs undertake identification, coordination,

and advocacy, as well as assisting outreach and logistics, while authorities in CoAs and RCs organise exit and admission processes and visas in collaboration with the coordinating actors. L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and UNHCR supervise implementation, including connecting students and universities, providing assistance, conducting advocacy, strategising programme funding, and expanding partnerships, supported by the MEnS university network.

Figure 3: Example of Multi Stakeholder Approach Within UNIV'R⁹³



Similarly, UNICORE is based on a multi-stakeholder structure (although there are currently no formalised coordination arrangements). Here, UNHCR local offices and NGO partners are responsible for outreach and identification via community-based initiatives and the institutional involvement of governmental offices, logistical and administrative support for the application process, and coordination of pre-departure activities, while the UNHCR office in the RC, universities, and local partners supervise and coordinate post-arrival activities, reception, and integration⁹⁴.

In other contexts, IRM are streamlined through a multi-stakeholder structure led by actors engaged at the front and back ends of the pathway, both in CoAs and RCs. WUSC plays a key supervisory role in the implementation of SRP both in CoAs and in Canada, conducting outreach and identification, pre-selecting students, sponsoring them, and matching them with universities. DAAD and its national and regional teams have established partnerships, created online tools, networked with universities, created integration programmes⁹⁵, and contributed directly to the identification and pre-selection of cases in the LfA and LfS programmes. A similar role is played by UWC within its The Refugee Initiative, in which UWC National Committees composed of alumni and volunteers in CoAs are responsible for identifying, selecting, and matching students with UWC Colleges worldwide.

⁸⁹M. Borraccetti, M. Veltri, *supra* note 46, p. 29.

⁹⁰A motivational questionnaire was developed by UNHCR, universities, and CSOs involved in EPs to obtain information from candidates during interviews, including on their motivation, aspirations, and long-term intentions.

⁹¹M. Borraccetti, M. Veltri, *supra* note 46, p. 38.

⁹²Including the University for foreigners of Siena, University of Perugia and University of Notre-Dame, *ibidem*, p. 37.

⁹³The content of the present figure has been presented by UNHCR France during the EU-PASSWORLD

WG meetings 2 and 3.

⁹⁴M. Borraccetti, M. Veltri, *supra* note 46, p. 10.

⁹⁵DAAD established these programmes to facilitate the integration of students across all phases of their educational journey, including entrance, preparation, study, and career prospects. Support mechanisms include initial consultation sessions, testing, language and preparatory courses, and mentoring. Universities in Germany interested to implement these programs for international students can apply and adhere, see DAAD Website, "How DAAD is Helping", online: <https://www.daad.de/en/information-services-for-higher-education-institutions/expertise-on-subjects-countries-regions/refugees-at-higher-education-institutions/how-the-daad-is-helping/>.

Coordination Approaches to Streamline IRM in LPs

Within the DTMP in the UK, the coordinating role of TBB and its teams based in both RCs and CoAs has led to the creation of a comprehensive IRM system via the establishment of *The Talent Catalog*, an approach that has been replicated in other programmes. TBB not only connects candidates with employers, but also further streamlines IRM and establishes more sustainable integration by progressively expanding its partnership network with settlement organisations, service providers, and national authorities.

In the absence of a central coordinating organisation, coordination can be facilitated through multi-stakeholder task forces. The recent development of LPs in Italy has prompted leading organisations including UNHCR, Pathways International, TBB, Caritas Italiana, and the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) to establish a Multi-Stakeholder Working Group, facilitated in close collaboration with the Italian government. The aim of this group is to enhance coordination among stakeholders and jointly work on programme design and operationalisation. The Working Group comprises representatives from national authorities, faith-based and civil society organizations, employers, and academia. Together they address several thematic areas, including ELC, employer engagement, identification, pre-departure and travel logistics, training programs, housing, visa streams, family reunification, resourcing, matching, and welcome and integration approaches.

IRM Linked to CS: Multi-stakeholder models vary according to programme structure, and the varying involvement and roles of partners including national governments, local administrations, employers, universities, students, NGOs and CSOs. As above, in all programmes this diverse range of actors cover different but complementary roles, creating a meaningful post-arrival integration framework for beneficiaries. Although integration approaches are not the focus of this study, it is worth mentioning that some experiences developed innovative ways to link labour and education opportunities to a stronger civil society involvement and CS. In these cases, IRM practices have been structured accordingly.

IRM Linked to CS in EPs

A unique model is implemented in Canada through the SRP, based on named sponsorship. While IRM are conducted and supervised by WUSC, universities, academic institutions and students sponsor refugee students holistically by selecting candidates, naming them to be admitted, and providing integration and social support, notably through WUSC Local Committees, composed by students, faculty members, and staff. Support is provided through different initiatives, including levies (which are added to students annual

fees and deducted from faculty members and staff payrolls), fundraising initiatives (dinners, coffee houses, and bake sales), and a variety of in-kind support by administrative bodies, including tuition, textbooks, accommodation, and meal waivers. This system fosters a sense of ownership among students and institutions, ensuring that programmes can continue even during times of reduced resources. This model has been partially implemented in other, more recent programmes, including for example the EU-PASSWORLD Scholarships Program in Ireland, in which CS groups formed by students, faculty, and volunteers apply to the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP)⁹⁶ to provide holistic support for beneficiaries. Although the SRP uses sponsorship as a pathway (through Canada's PSR programme), while Ireland's EP uses sponsorship as a welcome and integration support tool, these examples demonstrate how matching and CS approaches can be adjusted for implementation across pathways.

In other programmes, although IRM and selection are not directly related to sponsorship, integration and settlement are more closely linked to CS, through a stronger civil society involvement. In the UNICORE programme, NGOs, academic bodies, and local communities are involved in settlement support, including accommodation, peer-to-peer support, and legal, medical, and psychological assistance⁹⁷. Additionally, initiatives such as the University Corridors for Refugees related to Sport in Italy, although as yet not implemented, envisage increasing the connection between IRM and CS, by linking tertiary education with sports team affiliation, in relation to both ELC and social inclusion after arrival⁹⁸.

IRM Linked to CS in LPs

In the case of labour opportunities implemented within the HCs to Italy from Pakistan, led by Caritas Italiana, selection is primarily based on vulnerabilities and matching is strictly linked to CS, notably to those faith-based and civil society organizations involved in reception activities throughout the territory (in the case of Caritas, these local entities are called Caritas Diocesane). Although all HCs are characterised by a strong CS component as an integration tool during the matching phase, by connecting skilled beneficiaries with local employers for a better integration outcome this hybrid experiment has successfully added an additional matching element. This is a further example of how matching can be linked to CS.

III. Key Takeaways

LPs and EPs have progressively expanded their capacities, drawing on lessons learned from previous experiences. The multi-stakeholder approaches employed during programme design have facilitated the division of tasks in innovative ways, leading to enhanced IRM. Expanding partnerships has supported

⁹⁶The IRPP admitted 4100 individuals to Ireland under various schemes, including the traditional UNHCR-led RST program, HAP, and RST schemes based on CS; see Government of Ireland Website, "Irish Refugee Protection Programme", online: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ede36-irish-refugee-protection-programme/>.

⁹⁷Academic institutions fund scholarships and living allowances, while integration and settlement support is provided in partnership with local authorities, NGOs, and academic bodies; notably, each university establishes agreements with local partners (regional companies or regional study bodies, municipalities, NGOs, voluntary associations, foundations, bank foundations, and business

associations) to offer specific support services and benefits to improve integration for refugee students, M. Borraccetti, M. Veltri, *supra* note 46, p. 11.

⁹⁸In addition, recent projects such as COSME "Towards A European Model of Community Sponsorship for Refugees: Access, Reception and Integration" in Italy, aim to support these types of initiatives; online: <https://www.cosmeproject.eu/>.

the development of upskilling programmes in CoAs, improving accessibility. Alternative or complementary methods for evaluating skills, qualification thresholds, and proof of identity have streamlined procedures in challenging contexts. Additionally, IRM tools have been developed and adopted in new programmes, while CS models have sometimes been blended to inspire new approaches. Efforts to expand pathways continue, focusing on making them more sustainable and scalable. This includes considerations for funding strategies⁹⁹, entry arrangements, the standardisation of ELC and procedures, sustainable integration, private sector engagement to enhance support, and technology to create more streamlined IRM tools. Although further partnerships and governmental support are needed to improve funding, flexibility, and the delegation of tasks, progress to date demonstrates how it is possible to adapt to immigration policy requirements.

B. Identification, Referral and Matching in the Context of Needs-based Solutions: Traditional Resettlement, Humanitarian Visas, Humanitarian Corridors, and Humanitarian Admission Programs.

I. Contextualising IRM Within Needs-Based Solutions

Needs-based solutions target vulnerable individuals who are displaced and at high risk. Alongside traditional RST, they aim to expand admissions, both in terms of numbers (additionality) and types of vulnerabilities (complementarity), in order to meet increasing and compelling protection needs. Due to the emergency contexts in which they operate, and the capacity required to support and integrate the individuals they admit, IRM and CS have been implemented via diverse and innovative modalities. Challenges include delays in decision-making and departure processes, difficulties obtaining documentation and accessing embassies, building operating procedures and infrastructures in new operational contexts, and logistical complexities. This section is dedicated to analysing the successes and challenges of IRM and CS practices implemented in the context of needs-based pathways. Given the diversity of programme structures, the different solutions will be analysed separately.

II. Traditional Resettlement (RST)

Traditional RST involves State-led admissions, based on annual pledges, which offer a permanent solution for refugees who are

in particularly vulnerable situations in CoAs, such as those with medical and legal and physical protection needs, women and girls at risk, those in need of family reunification, children at risk, and those lacking foreseeable durable solutions¹⁰⁰. Traditional RST presents different IRM processes, depending on the actors involved and many other factors. RST is embedded within well-established frameworks and ELC, and is led at a global level by UNHCR. UNHCR and/or other selected NGOs (based on their specific expertise and, often, accreditation in a certain RST country) are mandated to identify, assess, and select eligible cases for submission.

Traditional RST is based on external referrals, with UNHCR and NGOs engaged in different ways. In some programmes, UNHCR refers to RC national authorities via internal channels for assessment and submission, while partner NGOs support UNHCR by completing RST forms and conducting RST interviews with refugees (with final submissions lodged by UNHCR). In other cases, partner NGOs organise initial referral and identification systems, and refer cases to UNHCR for further assessment. NGOs can also make direct referrals, assessing cases and submitting them to the RC¹⁰¹. It is worth mentioning that investment in the capacity building of specialised NGOs active in human rights would be beneficial for addressing increasing needs by enhancing capacity¹⁰².

III. Humanitarian Visas (HVs)

HVs represent a standalone, needs-based pathway based on domestic and/or regional legislation¹⁰³, with visas issued by States on a discretionary, case-by-case basis, to individuals in need of protection who present compelling protection needs that cannot be addressed in the CoA. Nevertheless, HVs are primarily used to facilitate access to other pathways, particularly HCs and extended FR¹⁰⁴, and recently also to EPs and emergency evacuations¹⁰⁵. For this reason, best practices in IRM concerning HVs are analysed via examples from HCs.



⁹⁹For further reflections on this topic, see Tihomir Sabchev, Irene de Lorenzo-Cáceres Cantero, Hannah Gregory, "Financing Complementary Education Pathways for Refugees: Existing Approaches and Opportunities for Growth", University of Ottawa-Refugee Hub, Ottawa, 2023.

¹⁰⁰UNHCR, "The Resettlement Handbook", *supra* note 20, pp. 234-296.

¹⁰¹UNHCR Website, "UNHCR-NGO Toolkit", *supra* note 41.

¹⁰²A good practice of versatile IRM channels within traditional RST is the recent expansion of RST referrals from NGOs within the U.S. Refugee Admissions Programme (USRAP). The initiative was launched by the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), in partnership with the Equitable Resettlement Access Consortium (ERAC), composed by NGOs working in a variety of protection areas, including LGBTQI+, and which were willing and had the expertise to identify, refer, and submit cases for RST to the U.S. government. See U.S. Department of State Website, "Report to Congress on Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2025", 2024, online: <https://www.state.gov/report-to-congress-on-proposed-refugee-admissions-for-fiscal-year-2025/#intro>. See also Matthieu Tardis, "Developing Safe and Legal Pathways for LGBTQI+ Refugees: An Overview of the Situation in France, Germany, and Italy", *Synergies Migrations*, Paris, 2024, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰³EU Member States can implement legislation regulating HVs, according to Articles 19 and 25 of "EU Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code)". For a detailed analysis of the interaction between regional and domestic legislation in the EU, see, Ulla Iben Jensen, "Humanitarian Visas: Option or Obligation?", European Parliament, European Union, Brussels, 2014, online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/226741/Session_2_-_Study_Humanitarian_visas.pdf; see also ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, "Feasibility Study, Towards a Private Sponsorship Model in France", The European Resettlement Network, Brussels, 2018, p. 10. Types of HVs have been utilised, for instance, in Switzerland, Italy, France, and the USA.

¹⁰⁴UNHCR, "Key Considerations", *supra* note 18, p. 9.

¹⁰⁵For what regards EPs, as above (*supra* note 76), in the EU-PASSWORLD Scholarship Programme in Belgium students are admitted also through HVs; for what regards emergency evacuations see Salomè Archain, Olga Cardini, "Visti Umanitari e Accesso al Diritto d'asilo. La Tutela dei Richiedenti Asilo Afghani Prima e Dopo la Caduta di Kabul", *Scienza e Pace*, ISSN 2039-1749, 2021, pp. 111-146.

IV. Humanitarian Corridors (HCs)¹⁰⁶ - Case Studies of HCs From Lebanon to France¹⁰⁷ and Italy¹⁰⁸ and HCs to Italy for Afghans displaced in Pakistan and Iran¹⁰⁹

IRM Approaches

Diversified IRM Channels: HCs are based on internal and external identification and referral routes, established through a widespread and diversified network of formal and informal actors. To ensure both geographical inclusivity and process integrity, participating actors are selected according to their operational experience and presence in CoAs. Implementing actors have significantly invested in capacity building, developing of clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and providing periodic training for their staff in areas such as RSD and protection thresholds. This approach is particularly important for CoAs in which registration with UNHCR is at risk of suspension by national authorities, or where specific categories are not recognised as persons in need of international protection, such as LGBTQI+ persons persecuted for their orientation or gender identity. Both decrease the number of people in need of protection that could fall under the UNHCR mandate, and be identified. Additionally, as seen in both LPs and EPs, partnerships developed with organisations specialised in protection activities and services create a holistic protection belt throughout the entire process, including those not finally selected for admission.

Multi-Stakeholder Practices to Enhance IRM

Within HCs from Lebanon to France (*HCs to France*), a field team works with international and local partners that can be classified in two categories: mainstream partners, such as international and local institutions, NGOs, and associations involved in service provision (such as MSF, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH), Resource Centre for Gender Equality (ABAAD), Metanoia, Anti-Racist Movement); and specialised partners, including international NGOs and associations specialised in RST and CPs (such as UNHCR and the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)). Similarly, IRM channels in HCs from Lebanon to Italy (*HCs to Italy*) are developed via specialised international and local partnerships, alongside organisations, associations, religious communities, and/or self-organised groups of individuals who can submit requests

to the lead organisation¹¹⁰. In both cases, partnerships established with service providers guarantee access to basic rights in the CoA.

Procedures and Tools: Mainstream and specialised partners identify and refer cases (send requests) to the organisation responsible for selection, which is usually also responsible for establishing internal IRM channels. Referrals are generally based on dossier submission after data verification and pre-screening. The tools developed to facilitate these processes vary according to local data collection contexts (including emergency situations).

Adjustable Procedures and Tools in HCs

In HCs to France, cases in Lebanon are identified and referred through a shared database (referral list) that collects key beneficiary data, in order to evaluate if potential beneficiaries meet ELC *prima facie*. Data collection follow-up takes place through face-to-face meetings, e-mail correspondence, and phone calls, between the HC team and its partners. Specialised partners, such as IRAP, implement their own internal identification and screening tools, including a chatbot on Facebook and Telegram¹¹¹, to allow potential beneficiaries to self-refer if they are not registered with any other organisations. Cases that have been identified and referred are further assessed by implementing organisations responsible for selection, via in-person interviews, phone calls, and home visits¹¹², as well as regular monitoring sessions.

IRM Linked to Community Sponsorship

Eligibility and Selection: HCs are implemented in EU countries mainly by faith-based organisations, working in partnership with NGOs and IOs to address protection needs and risks for displaced individuals, in CoAs where RST needs are higher than available quotas. Partner national authorities facilitate the admission process¹¹³. In this context, additionality, complementarity and inclusivity are key implementation principles¹¹⁴. Although HC Protocols (or MoUs) vary a great deal, ELC are broader than traditional RST, and identification and selection are based on vulnerabilities and risks, combined with matching criteria such as reception conditions and individual integration capacity¹¹⁵. This structured approach to IRM in the context of CS, involving a broad set of stakeholders and creative and flexible approaches

¹⁰⁶The analysis of these case studies is the outcome of the discussion presentation delivered by implementing actors during the EU-PASSWORLD WG meeting 1 and subsequent discussions. Presentations on this topic have been delivered by FEP, FCEI, Caritas Italiana, Pangea, Consorzio Communitas. In addition, the analyses are drawn from presentations and discussion with implementing organisations during the "Roundtable on Identification, Referral, and Matching & Pre-Departure Preparation, within the Framework of Resettlement, Complementary Pathways and Community Sponsorship: Focus on Lebanon", hosted by the Share Network in January 2023, as well as the report issued by FEP (FEP, "Best Practices Report"), *supra* note 46. When the inputs provided during the WG meetings and roundtable are also presented by the FEP Report, the latter is referenced.

¹⁰⁷HCs to France from Lebanon were established via two Protocols, in 2017 and 2021, between four implementing organisations: the Protestant Federation of France, the French Community of Sant'Egidio, the French Bishops' Conference, Caritas France, and the Protestant Mutual Aid Federation, in partnership with French national authorities. See The Humanitarian Corridors Project, "The Humanitarian Corridors Handbook: Implementation Procedures for Their Extension a European Scale", The Humanitarian Corridors, 2016, p. 66.

¹⁰⁸The HCs' Protocol to Italy from Lebanon was signed in 2015 (and renewed in 2017 and 2021) through an MoU ("Opening of Humanitarian Corridors") between the Italian national authorities and three main implementing organisations: the Community of Sant'Egidio, Federation of Italian Evangelical Churches (FCEI), Waldensian Church. Other MoUs establishing HCs to Italy have since been signed, involving individuals displaced in Lebanon, Ethiopia, Niger, Jordan, and Turkey, *ibidem*.

¹⁰⁹See FCEI Website and I. de Lorenzo-Caceres Cantero, *supra* notes 64.

¹¹⁰With actors both specialised in RST and social, legal and humanitarian assistance (including UNHCR, and Metanoia, ICRC, UNRWA, IOM). See also The Humanitarian Corridors Handbook, *supra* note 107, p. 20.

¹¹¹The chat-box asks a series of questions and collects biodata; depending on the answers, the person will be referred to the screening team or to the legal information webpage.

¹¹²FEP, "Best Practices Report", *supra* note 46, p. 4.

¹¹³*ibid.*, pp. 19-64. Successful HCs have been established in Italy, France, Belgium, and Andorra, see Claire Higgins, "Safe Journeys and Sound Policy: Expanding Protected Entry for Refugees", Kaldor Center for International Refugee Law, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2019, pp. 6, 16.

¹¹⁴See reference in FEP, "Best Practices Report", *supra* note 46, p. 3.

¹¹⁵Including those with medical and/or mental health needs, unaccompanied minors, children and woman at risk, disabled persons, single parent households, the elderly, as well as those with family/relatives, see The Humanitarian Corridors Handbook, *supra* note 107, pp. 12, 12; The Handbook, cites the European Directive 2013/33 of 26 June 2013, Chapter IV, "Provisions in Favour of Vulnerable Persons", Art. 21, at p. 23.

to identification, ensures effective protection responses to emergency refugee situations. Nevertheless, this approach should ensure that the principles of equal access and non-discrimination are upheld in IRM processes, and specify clear SOPs detailing in which circumstances and under which IRM ELC beneficiaries are selected.

Flexible Approaches in IRM

The HCs to France cover vulnerable persons falling under the Refugee Convention and its Protocol (refugees), combined with reception criteria (such as case size and medical cases), criteria agreed with French national authorities (such as nationality, or the family/individual case type), and exclusion criteria (such as polygamy or early marriage)¹¹⁶.

Similarly, the MoU signed to implement the HCs to Italy from Lebanon targets protection needs and risks falling under the refugee definition, as well as other persons in need of protection on humanitarian grounds. By agreement with the Italian national authorities, this includes single women, LGBTQI+, and survivors of gender-based violence. Selection is closely linked to matching and CS, and profile assessments are evaluated by weighing aspects including labour and education prospects, integration perspectives, family dynamics, and risks of secondary movement (in the latter both the sponsor and beneficiary profiles are considered).

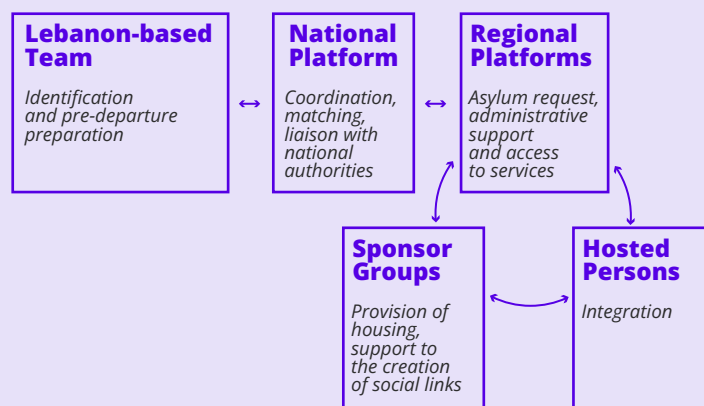
Additionally, the involvement of civil society actors creates space and capacity to develop innovative strategies. In HCs to Italy for Afghans from Pakistan and Iran, for example, implementing organisation FCEI identified 70 Afghan women cyclists displaced in Iran through an Italian sport journalist, who were then selected and matched with a cycling association in Italy.

Multi-Level Coordination and Matching Strategies: As above, within HCs matching is closely linked to - and starts with - the identification and referral phases. Considering the needs of both beneficiaries and sponsors, alongside the reception and support available in the RC, is also part of the selection process. HCs have developed a unique matching and sponsorship model, implementing a multi-level coordination system involving teams in CoAs and RCs, and involving associations, community sponsors, and faith-based organisations to ensure effective matching and holistic support and supervision. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that closer collaboration with organisations and associations specialised in human rights-related areas, both in CoAs and RCs, can significantly streamline IRM¹¹⁷ and enhance coordination between activities in CoAs and RCs. The CS structure established within HCs is unique, and can act as a model for other pathways.

Coordination and Matching Strategies

The staff teams implementing HCs to France work with beneficiaries in Lebanon to collect information during selection interviews, and match beneficiaries with reception sponsors. They use matching criteria such as case size, biodata, specific needs, gender identity, and sexual orientation¹¹⁸. Matching is carried out by HC teams in Lebanon, in coordination with reception teams in France that are distributed at national and regional level. Reception teams are coordinated by regional platforms tasked with mobilising sponsor groups ("*collectifs d'accueil*"), and strengthening and coordinating community networks, while the national platform gathers sponsor pledges¹¹⁹. Sponsors welcome and support beneficiaries both financially and administratively, as well as in terms of housing and integration, until they receive their refugee status and related social benefits¹²⁰. HCs to Italy have established a similar coordination system between the field and the reception teams, via a national coordination platform.

Figure 4: Example of Multi Stakeholder Approach Within HCs in France¹²¹



Reception systems can vary. HCs to France are based on an "unconditional reception model", in which only basic beneficiary information is shared beforehand with sponsor groups, to preserve privacy and foster a non-discriminatory matching process. HCs in Italy have mostly implemented a "professional reception" system, with organisations, associations and communities with specific experience in hosting refugees. There is no standardised model, and sponsorship is in general implemented through the mobilisation of CSOs, associations, faith-based organisations, and local authorities, providing integration, housing, legal, and social support. In both cases, implementing organisations are enhancing partnerships with specialised human rights organisations and actors to better adapt reception to beneficiaries' specific needs and requirements¹²².

¹¹⁶FEP, "Best Practices Report", *supra* note 46, pp. 3, 4.

¹¹⁷For instance LGBTQI+ rights organisations; see M. Tardis, *supra* note 102, pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁸FEP, "Best Practices Report", *supra* note 46, p. 5.

¹¹⁹C. Damian Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, p. 17.

¹²⁰*ibidem*, p. 6.

¹²¹Figure 4 was provided and presented by FEP during the EU-PASSWORLD WG meeting 1.

¹²²See M. Tardis, *supra* note 102.

Coordination Across Programmes: Strong coordination across the implementing actors of HCs in CoAs helps to streamline matching across programmes. For instance, beneficiaries identified as eligible for one HC, but deemed more suitable for another based on matching criteria, could be referred to the relevant organisation for further evaluation, where appropriate. This approach additionally fosters successful matching outcomes.

Pre-Departure Orientation: Pre-departure preparation is also a vital part of successful matching and sponsorship in HCs. This process is coordinated between teams in both CoAs and in RCs.

Pre-Departure Orientation in HCs

Within both HCs to France and Italy, pre-departure orientation is delivered both individually and collectively. It begins during the assessment and matching process, where the perspectives of sponsors and beneficiaries are evaluated alongside one another. Home visits and video calls with sponsors prepare them for arrival and address their questions and expectations¹²³. Collective sponsor preparation is conducted through podcasts, training, and group sessions, often using an Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approach¹²⁴, and online meetings that include social workers and cultural mediators from trusted partners. The latter often play a role in identification and referral processes, and serve as a bridge between sponsors and beneficiaries. Beneficiaries receive detailed information on the programme, departure, asylum applications, and administrative steps, and have the opportunity to share their questions, fears, and expectations. Further, cultural mediators participate in online meetings between beneficiaries and sponsors, and remain available for any follow-up before departure.

Entry Arrangements

HC beneficiaries arrive through HVs, namely Type-D visas, issued according to the provisions of Article 25 of EC Regulation 810/2009 (the Schengen Visa Code), which grants Schengen countries the ability to issue HVs valid for their territory¹²⁵. Normally, HVs allow expedited asylum procedures¹²⁶, which usually lead to long-term solutions. Nevertheless, administrative processes can present complexities: beneficiaries must be prepared to submit an asylum application upon arrival, and can face pre-departure challenges

linked to a lack of legal residency in the CoA. In these cases, close cooperation with legal service providers and representatives of national authorities in both the CoA and RC can facilitate advocacy and further cooperation.

Administrative Support in HCs

Within HCs to France, lead organisation FEP, together with partners specialised in legal assistance, advocate for solutions to administrative setbacks. Assistance includes paying required fees, enabling access to proofs of identity, and preparing beneficiaries to submit their asylum applications upon arrival¹²⁷.

V. Humanitarian Admission Programs (HAPs)¹²⁸

Eligibility and Access

Flexible Design: While HCs are primarily implemented by NGOs and faith-based organisations, HAPs are State-led admission programmes led by national authorities. HAPs have increased in several EU countries from 2013 in response to the Syrian crisis, with the goal of temporarily relocating persons in situations of large-scale displacement for the duration of the risk¹²⁹. Although many States preferred to admit individuals through RST schemes, others opted for HAPs¹³⁰. According to the EC guidance, HAPs should uphold additionality and complementarity in relation to RST, and involve admissions based on general protection and FR schemes, including through “family-based sponsorship”¹³¹. The replication of this pathway derives from the unique flexibility it affords to programme design¹³², creating a model that is adaptable to different contexts in terms of ELC and specific programme goals (protection and/or FR-related), IRM mechanisms, and sponsorship models. Such flexibility led some States to create both national and regional programmes with bespoke rules and selection criteria. In Germany, for example, Section 23 (1 and 2) of the Residence Act enables HAPs to be established at both the Federal (Federal HAPs) and Länder - regional (Länder HAPs) levels (Länder must be authorised by the Federal Ministry of Interior before establishing HAPs)¹³³.

Expanded Eligibility: Typically, HAPs are designed for a specific emergency and target family members who cannot pursue right-based FR, and individuals in need of protection (not only refugees)

¹²³FEP, “Best Practices Report”, *supra* note 46, pp. 6, 7.

¹²⁴*Ibid.* p. 7.

¹²⁵See The Humanitarian Corridors Handbook, *supra* note 107, p. 16; see also FCEI Website, *supra* note 64.

¹²⁶In contrast to other programmes in which legal status is determined prior to arrival, UNHCR, “Key Considerations”, *supra* note 18, p. 9.

¹²⁷See also FEP, “Best Practices Report”, *supra* note 46, p. 7.

¹²⁸The analysis of best practices in HAPs is the outcome of research conducted by the author, and the presentations delivered by relevant experts and stakeholders during EU-PASSWORLD WG meetings 1 and 4, and the subsequent discussions. Presentations on this topic have been delivered by Irish national authorities (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth), NASC Ireland, UNHCR Turkey, Länder authorities (Senate Department of Labour, Social Affairs, Equality, Integration, Diversity, and Antidiscrimination, Berlin), and the European Commission (Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs).

¹²⁹Nathalie Welfens, Julia Lehmann, Marie Wagner, “Towards a Global Resettlement Alliance”, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Berlin, 2021, p. 28.

¹³⁰There are several underlying reasons for their emergence, including the advocacy of family members already residing in the RC and that of RC civil society actors, opportunities to establish a quicker procedure compared to RST with more flexible programme design, the expression of solidarity they represent toward countries as Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, in which people are experiencing traumatic humanitarian situations; see ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, “Humanitarian Admission Programmes, Expanding and Increasing Pathways to Protection”, The European Resettlement Network, Brussels, 2018, pp. 8-10 and 12-13.

¹³¹In the Recommendation of 23.9.2020, the EU Commission invited States to implement HAPs also “for cases falling outside the scope of the Family Reunification Directive”, EU Recommendation, *supra* note 13, par. 31; see also N. Welfens, J. Lehmann, M. Wagner, *supra* note 126, pp. 6, 8.

¹³²UNHCR, “Key Considerations”, *supra* note 18, p. 8, and ICMC Europe, IOM, UNHCR, *supra* note 130, p. 12.

¹³³In this framework, 15 German Länder have established and implemented HAPs for Iraqis, Syrians, and Afghans with family links in their territories, Janne Grote, Maria Bitterwolf, Tatjana Baraulina, “Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Germany. Focus Study by the German National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN)”, Working Paper 68, Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg, 2016, p. 6; see also UNHCR, “Resettlement Handbook, Country Chapter, Germany”, UNHCR, 2018 (revised version), p. 2.

who meet RST criteria and beyond. Such schemes apply more holistic protection criteria, making them adjustable to specific contexts - in other words, both the emergency situation and the programme's protection goals shape eligibility.

Expanded Eligibility: Typically, HAPs are designed for a specific emergency and target family members who cannot pursue right-based FR, and individuals in need of protection (not only refugees) who meet RST criteria and beyond. Such schemes apply more holistic protection criteria, making them adjustable to specific contexts - in other words, both the emergency situation and the programme's protection goals shape eligibility.

Flexible Eligibility

The Irish Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Afghans¹³⁴, implemented within the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP)¹³⁵, targeted beneficiaries who fell under UNHCR RST criteria, as well as family members and individuals at risk due to their roles in Afghanistan before 2021. This cohort included human rights activists, jurists, politicians, journalists, and those who worked in social and cultural sectors such as sports, academia, and education. In Germany, the three Federal HAPs for Syrians¹³⁶ targeted three different cohorts, such as persons with family ties in Germany, general humanitarian reasons, and the ability to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria after the conflict¹³⁷. Interestingly, Länder HAPs have progressively expanded their scope to include broader protection needs. For instance, the Länder of Berlin established an additional HAP for Syrians displaced in Lebanon, targeting individuals not meeting RST criteria as well as individuals meeting RST criteria but not resettled due to limited places. In addition to (extended or nuclear) family reunification, the Berlin programme aimed to assist individuals with medical needs, survivors of violence and torture, women, children and youth, and LGBTQI+ persons.

IRM Structures

IRM Routes and Tools: The EU Asylum, Migration & Integration Fund (AMIF) 2021-2027¹³⁸, which governs the funding of HAPs (in addition to RST) for States willing to pledge places, stipulates that States can both establish internal referral pathways and request referrals from trusted actors, including the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA), UNHCR and/or other relevant IOs, third-country nationals, stateless individuals, and beneficiaries of international or subsidiary protection residing on their territory¹³⁹. According to this framework, HAPs can be based on: A. Third-party

referrals (dossier-based); and/or B. Self-referrals (requests from beneficiaries, families, and other individuals); and/or C. Internal referrals (requests from national authorities' representatives). Diversified IRM routes and tools have been created and combined to identify as many people at risk as possible, while also ensuring reliable data verification and assessment procedures.

Diversified and Trustable IRM Routes

Within the Irish Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Afghans, national authorities mandated formal and informal trusted partners well positioned to identify persons at risk. These included Irish and international NGOs, the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA), Members of the Irish Parliament, and families and friends of beneficiaries (external referrals). Typically, screening and assessment were performed by specialised actors that submitted referrals to Irish authorities for approval. The main tools developed to implement this process were dossiers, referral forms, and online and in-person meetings.

The three Federal HAPs in Germany implemented a hybrid model. In the first HAP, beneficiaries were required to apply to the programme, while UNHCR and Caritas Lebanon were tasked with registering and assessing profiles. Additionally, German diplomatic missions could propose dossiers and lists of candidates to the German authorities, creating a mix of self and external referrals. The second and third HAPs were primarily based on external referrals, with UNHCR, together with the Federal Länder and in specific cases, other national governmental bodies (such as the Ministry of Interior), responsible for identifying, pre-selecting, verifying data, and conducting in-person interviews, then submitting cases to the German authorities¹⁴⁰ (proposal/dossier-based selection)¹⁴¹. The Länder Private Sponsorship Admission Programmes were fully implemented by German Länder, and mainly based on self-referrals owing to their PS component, in which family members (extended in certain cases to other private sponsors¹⁴²) expressed their interest in sponsoring one or more beneficiaries, either directly to the authorities or through dedicated hotlines, while subsequent assessment and final selection was carried out by authorities of the receiving Land.

Innovative Role of CSOs: IRM are often led by UNHCR, NGOs, and national authority bodies, which have the expertise and capacity to establish data verification and/or assessment procedures. Nonetheless, as seen for HCs, in contexts where the presence of national authorities or IOs is absent or restricted, civil society can play a key role in streamlining IRM, especially when supervised

¹³⁴Irish Refugee Council Website, "Information Note: Afghanistan Humanitarian Admission Programme", online: <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/information-note-afghanistan-humanitarian-admission-programme/>; see also UNHCR Ireland Help Portal, "Afghan Admission Program Information", online: <https://help.unhcr.org/ireland/afghan-admission-programme-information/>.

¹³⁵See IRPP, *supra* note 96.

¹³⁶The first Federal HAP involved Syria, and the CoAs Lebanon, and Jordan, while the second and the third added Egypt and Libya. Additionally, in 2013 the German government established a special Admission Procedure for Afghan Local Staff, admitting more than 2.000 individuals (beneficiaries and their families) at risk of persecution due to having worked for German public bodies and agencies operating *in loco*, J. Grote, M. Bitterwolf, T. Baraulina, *supra* note 133, pp. 5,6.

¹³⁷Cohorts' priority varied according to the HAP: as Grote, Bitterwolf and Baraulina noted "in HAP Syria 1 top priority was assigned to humanitarian reasons, the second priority were (family) ties in Germany and the third priority was the individual ability "to make a special contribution to the reconstruction of

the country of origin after the conflict has ended", e. g. by improving existing qualifications during the stay in Germany. The top priority for HAP Syria 2 and 3 were (family) ties in Germany, humanitarian criteria came second and the ability to contribute to reconstruction third", *ibidem*, p. 25.

¹³⁸Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

¹³⁹*Ibidem*, Art. 2 (5).

¹⁴⁰J. Grote, M. Bitterwolf, T. Baraulina, *supra* note 133, Tables 2 and 5, pp.16, 20.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, Table 8, p. 23. In addition, the organisation of travel and health check was performed by IOM when cases were identified by UNHCR; for the other cases they were organised by beneficiaries independently, *ibid.*, Table 5, p. 20.

¹⁴²For instance, North-Rhine Westphalia and Berlin (at a later stage), *ibid.*, p. 41.

by structures such as coordination units or hubs that connect activities in more volatile RC contexts with CoAs.

CSOs Involvement

In the recent Humanitarian Federal Admission Programme for Afghanistan¹⁴³ Germany, launched in 2022, IRM are implemented by authorised CSOs, designated by national authorities as possessing “specific knowledge of those eligible for admission as well as about conditions in Afghanistan”¹⁴⁴. In this case, CSOs are better positioned due to continued field presence, unlike IOs. CSOs conduct outreach, pre-screening, screening, data verification, and referrals to German national authorities that conclude final selection (external referrals). To streamline and monitor activities, a Civil Society Coordination Unit was created and funded by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior. The Unit has been playing a strategic role in coordinating information-sharing and advocacy between CSOs and national authorities, as well as other supporting organisations wishing to participate in the programme¹⁴⁵.

IRM and CS Models

In HAPs, CS can represent an integral part of IRM. HAPs have implemented CS models that are not based on naming systems, as well as schemes partly based on naming (PS), notably when nuclear or extended family members send requests to competent authorities and commit to sponsoring their relatives. In other cases, although CS was not a criterion for selection, it became a requirement for eligibility during matching with community sponsors. In this regard, CS has been implemented through various experimental approaches, in which national authorities, family members, and civil society have been involved at different levels to ensure the best possible integration and support for beneficiaries.

Sponsorship Approaches

CS: The Irish Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Afghans was complemented by the Community Sponsorship Program (CSI)¹⁴⁶, with the CSI implementing the HAP during the matching phase. Although the CSI is designed to admit resettled persons, it has also been utilised to support beneficiaries of HAPs (in addition to RST slots). Final selection was based on a matching system, in which proposed beneficiaries were identified by a CS Group composed of individuals, groups, and family members who had submitted Community Sponsorship Applications containing settlement plans. Following final approval, visa waivers and travel arrangements were funded by the Irish authorities. This

innovative approach addressed possible challenges including the ongoing accommodation crisis in the RC, which may have otherwise negatively impacted both available places and relevant immigration policy frameworks.

PS: As above, Länder HAPs were primarily based on PS, with sponsors (family members or other private sponsors) flagging requests to Länder authorities and signing a declaration of commitment. Interestingly, in certain Länder programs, authorities decided to share the financial burden with sponsors by excluding certain costs from the declaration of commitment, such as medical expenses. Additionally, in some cases the duration of the declaration could be varied on a discretionary basis, or even fully waived by authorities after a certain period¹⁴⁷.

Mixed: Within the German Federal HAPs, both national authorities, civil society, and municipalities provided settlement support, including housing, healthcare, subsistence allowances, language classes, and integration activities¹⁴⁸. Nevertheless, when the dossier was proposed by Land authorities and/or when selection was related to family ties, a declaration of commitment from the sponsors (family or third parties) was required, effectively implementing PS¹⁴⁹.

Flexible Administrative Arrangements: It is worth mentioning that in emergency contexts, accessibility is also linked to the necessity of adjusting administrative procedures. Notably, when the presence of IOs and embassies is hindered, alternative methods for performing exit procedures and visa issuance are necessary to ensure departure and final admission. HAPs implemented flexible solutions in this regard that could also be applied in other contexts and pathways.

Flexible Administrative Arrangements

In the German Humanitarian Federal Admission Programme for Afghanistan, visa processes were conducted in a transit country, such as Pakistan, where a German mission present in the field could complete visa processes. German national authorities have commissioned a service provider to assist refugees with the process of leaving Afghanistan.

In Länder HAPs, authorities adopted flexible procedures regarding required documentation, providing beneficiaries who could demonstrate their identity, with Travel Documents where valid passports were not available¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴³Government of Germany Website, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community Federal Foreign Office, “The Federal Admission Program for Afghanistan”, online: <https://www.bundesaufnahmeprogrammafghanistan.de/bundesaufnahme-en#:~:text=During%20the%20last%20few%20months,to%20be%20admitted%20to%20Germany>

¹⁴⁴Involves CSOs are those that work/have worked with German authorities during ongoing and previous evacuations, or which have implemented civil society projects and have direct knowledge of the Afghan civil society “tissue”, *ibid*.

¹⁴⁵See Civil Society Coordination Unit Website, online: <https://www.koordinierungsstelle.org>. See also further comments on successes and challenges of CSOs’ role in Janina Lehmann and Natalie Welfens, “Germany’s Federal Admissions Program for People from Afghanistan. The Role of Civil Society in Policy Making and Implementation”, Refugee Law Initiative, School of Advanced Studies-University of London,

9 October 2024, online: <https://rii.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2024/10/09/germanys-federal-admissions-program-for-people-from-afghanistan-the-role-of-civil-society-in-policy-making-and-implementation/>.

¹⁴⁶Government of Ireland Website, “Community Sponsorship Ireland”, online: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ccf2a-community-sponsorship-ireland/>

¹⁴⁷J. Grote, M. Bitterwolf, T. Baraulina, *supra* note 133, p. 41.

¹⁴⁸*Ibidem*, p. 49.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid*

C. Identification, Referral, and Matching in the Context of Rights/Relationship-Based Solutions and Sponsorship Pathways¹⁵¹: Family Reunification, Standalone Private Sponsorship Pathways, and Community Sponsorship-based RST Schemes.

I. Contextualising IRM Within Rights/Relationship-Based Solutions and Sponsorship Pathways

Rights/relationship-based solutions represent the main pathway for admission in the EU and globally, grounded in the right to family unity under international refugee and human rights law¹⁵². Family reunion is operationalised in two ways: traditional FR, which is usually regulated through a separate rights-based pathway and legislation¹⁵³, and FR integrated into other pathways, including RST, HAPs, HVs and PS programmes. Although nuclear family may be more likely to access traditional FR (as reunion is ensured as a legal right), and extended family to use other pathways (not based on a legal right of admission)¹⁵⁴, practices vary depending on legislation in place at national and regional level, the interpretation of 'family' enshrined in hard and soft law as applied by the judicial *praxis*¹⁵⁵, and the need to reunify families in emergency contexts. Challenges experienced in the implementation of FR as a rights-based pathway include long decision-making processes, strict ELC, high evidentiary standards to prove family links, as well as sponsors' insufficient income and living space, among others. To overcome these barriers, FR procedures often require numerous, tailored interventions and case management activities in order to ensure access.

As above, sponsorship pathways are characterised by the involvement of civil society actors (sponsors) that support admissions in different modalities. Private Sponsorship (PS) is based on a naming system, where private actors, including family members, refugee diaspora, and CSOs, can identify, refer, and name specific individuals to be admitted to the RC, and commit to supporting them. In some contexts, PS schemes represent important admission tools that serve wider programme goals, most importantly, family reunion, but also education and labour opportunities. Additionally, in some specific cases mixed models such as HAPs (see above) have involved a PS component, notably where family reunion is involved. Community Sponsorship (CS) involves civil society in the matching phase, and serves as a support and integration tool. It can be implemented via pathways such as HCs and EPs (non-State led admissions), as well as RST-based schemes (State-led admissions)¹⁵⁶ in which

civil society shares responsibility for supporting admissions with national authorities. Sponsorship "can provide a standalone complementary pathway – separate to resettlement and with its own, dedicated annual quotas – thereby making protection available to new groups of refugees...and [tapping] into private resources that allow governments to expand their resettlement commitments"¹⁵⁷. These programmes have expanded in recent years, and the increased interest and engagement of institutional and non-institutional actors in the refugee cause and humanitarian crises via sponsorship have contributed to changing the way in which RST is perceived. This might also lead to better social cohesion and opportunities for refugees to integrate into the social tissue¹⁵⁸. Concern has been expressed about possible downsides, in particular the risk of undermining the international protection system and the right to asylum, the tendency of States to gradually forfeit their pledges or resources' allocation related to RST, and the impact of naming systems (where present) on the principle of equal access and non-discrimination¹⁵⁹. In this regard, upholding the principle of additionality represents a red line that preserves the international protection regime and the principle of equal access.

In this context, the next section analyses IRM practices related to FR through the different pathways used, in addition IRM related to PS (partially analysed above in relation to education and labour mobility), as PS in several contexts represents one of the main solutions through which FR is achieved. The section concludes with a focus on IRM practices related to RST schemes based on CS¹⁶⁰.



Credit: RefugePoint - ©Aya Garcia/RefugePoint

¹⁵¹The practices and models described here are the outcomes of analysis and research by the author, as well as inputs and presentations provided by implementing actors during EU-PASSWORLD WG meetings 1 and 4, and subsequent discussions with experts and stakeholders. Presentations on this topic have been delivered by IRAP, UNHCR Iraq, the Mennonite Central Committee, the European Commission (Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs), Irish national authorities (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth), and NASC.

¹⁵²T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 11; UNHCR, "Key Considerations", *supra* note 18, p. 10; see UNHCR, "Background Note for the Agenda Item: Family Reunification in The Context of Resettlement and Integration, Protecting the Family: Challenges in Implementing Policy in the Resettlement Context", Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, UNHCR, Geneva, 2001, pp. 1-2; see also Frances Nicholson, "The 'Essential Right' to Family Unity of Refugees and Others in Need of International Protection in the Context of Family Reunification", UNHCR, Geneva, 2018.

¹⁵³In the EU context, the main legal instrument is Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the Right to Family Reunification.

¹⁵⁴UNHCR, "Key Considerations", *supra* note 18, p. 10.

¹⁵⁵In this regard, extended family may also include people who are emotionally or financially dependent on the beneficiary with whom they are reuniting. For what regards the definition of 'family' and dependency link see UNHCR, "Background Note", paras. 10-27 and F. Nicholson, pp. 34-36, *supra* note 152.

¹⁵⁶Some of the successful models implemented at the EU and global level are described in the present study, although many other schemes have been launched in several countries worldwide.

¹⁵⁷T. Woods, *supra* note 8, p. 11.

¹⁵⁸See also C. D. Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹See additional reflections in N. Faith Tan, *supra* note 30.

¹⁶⁰In this case civil society is involved in RST admissions to expand admission slots. RST schemes are separate from Traditional RST (implemented entirely by national authorities). RST schemes based on CS are hybrid pathways that combine State-led, needs-based solutions with community support.

II. Family Reunification (FR) and Standalone Private Sponsorship Pathways (PS)

Interpretation of Family, Proof of Evidence, and Other Administrative Barriers: Similar to other 3CS, access and IRM are impacted by eligibility. The interpretation of 'family' is a crucial element that varies according to contexts, cultures, and legal systems¹⁶¹. Additionally, proof of evidence required to demonstrate family links should be adaptable to different systems and contexts. As in other pathway programmes, the loss of documents and/or the absence of embassies in CoAs means passports, identity documents, and other certificates may be unavailable. Additionally, refugees, by definition, are not in a position to seek the support of their own country to acquire or renew documents. In this regard, interpretations of 'family' and proof of evidence should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the context, barriers, and legal systems.

Adaptability in the Application of ELC

In the Federal HAP for Afghanistan in Germany, individuals are admitted with their immediate family members (spouses and children), same-sex partners, and others with whom they had a special dependency link¹⁶². This approach shows an extensive interpretation of family, and allows for alternative means of evidence in cases where documents to prove the tie are unavailable (for instance, same-sex couples in Afghanistan face persecution and are not recognized).

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Programme (PSR) in Canada¹⁶³ allows for flexibility in interpreting who can be considered a family member, including those with a dependency tie. In this regard, named sponsorship can facilitate the reunification of individuals at high risk, such as LGBTQIA+ persons: while evidence can be provided through alternative documents, two individuals who are unable to declare their relationship can be individually nominated and then reunited in the RC.

Within the Family Reunification Project for the Central Mediterranean (The FR Project)¹⁶⁴, implementing actors in both CoAs and RCs, specialised in legal affairs and protection, advocated with national authorities for expanded accessibility. Where a dependency link could not be demonstrated by identity documents, alternative means such as DNA tests were used, while advocacy continued to explore alternative, less invasive evidentiary methods. Additionally, when embassies were absent or located in another CoA, alternative methods for performing exit procedures and issuing visas were agreed.

Successful Approaches to Streamlining IRM: To streamline IRM procedures, programmes have developed various practices and tools to enhance outreach and accessibility. Depending on capacity, operational context, and programme structure, some of these approaches could be adjusted across pathways.

Streamlining IRM Within FR

IRM Channels and Coordination: As above, multi-level channels developed by HAPs, through both specialised and mainstream partners and with CSOs involvement, have streamlined IRM practices and improved the reliability of referrals. This is particularly important in volatile contexts where the presence of organisations and staff may be limited or they may be absent. Also The FR Project was based on strong coordination among partners: UNHCR in CoAs was tasked with developing robust outreach and identification channels with internal units, local and international NGOs, and embassies; meanwhile, IRAP, following UNHCR referrals, assisted beneficiaries in the reunification process through its pool of lawyers located in various RCs.

Holistic Assistance to Beneficiaries: Within The FR Project, beneficiaries were supported throughout the entire process by IRAP and UNHCR staff. By addressing protection needs and advocating for flexible procedures, including in cases of negative decisions, this holistic approach allowed for effective assistance. In some instances, negative decisions were challenged by IRAP lawyers on the grounds of human rights standards and principles.

Tools: Within The FR Project, UNHCR staff in CoAs developed a database to collect data and monitor the case flow of identified cases. This enabled staff to evaluate the status of individual cases, track interventions, address protection needs, and assess FR options, at any stage of the process, including redirecting cases to other appropriate pathways. Additionally, a general database was created to collate information on cases from all CoAs in which the project operated. To protect data and privacy, UNHCR experts from each operation could access the database only for the cases they assisted. In other cases not covered by The FR Project, specialised staff created additional tools to streamline identification and referrals. For instance, UNHCR Iraq developed specific screening forms (called 'Kobo' forms) to pre-assess profiles, before proceeding with more in-depth assessments and support when needed. These forms allow for easy data filtering and identification of eligible cases, facilitating effective advice and support for beneficiaries and managing their expectations. This tool has proven useful for identifying alternative pathway opportunities for beneficiaries who are ineligible for right-based FR. To enhance identification and mitigate the risk of false expectations, specialised partners have also invested in capacity building for colleagues, embassies, NGOs, and in community-based activities (in-person and via the media).

Process Digitalization: In the EU, the EC monitors the implementation of the EU's FR Directive, and has successfully advocated for Member States to implement digitalization of FR processes to streamline procedures (several have done so)¹⁶⁵. Such tools can improve access to FR and refugee ownership of traditional FR applications.

¹⁶¹For what regards the definition of family and the dependency link see UNHCR, "Background Note", paras. 10-27 and F. Nicholson, pp. 34-36, *supra* note 152.

¹⁶²Government of Germany Website, *supra* note 143.

¹⁶³Government of Canada Website, *supra* note 58.

¹⁶⁴The FR Project was implemented by UNHCR, IRAP, and RefugePoint from 2019 to 2022, with the goal of improving access to FR at European and global level.

¹⁶⁵See for instance in Portugal, Schengen News, "New Immigration Laws Aim to Streamline Processes for Family Reunification in Portugal", 15 January 2024, online: https://schengen.news/new-immigration-laws-aim-to-streamline-processes-for-family-reunification-in-portugal/#google_vignette

IRM Structures and Programmes

Diversified Solutions: As above, a clear-cut categorisation of FR is not always straightforward. Depending on the context and the protection needs of beneficiaries, extended and nuclear family members may be admitted through different solutions, especially when eligibility criteria for rights-based FR are not met. In this regard, diversified 3CS and IRM practices have been utilised to provide more meaningful and holistic access to family unity.

Diversified 3CS and IRM Practices to Achieve FR

A. FR and HAPs: As above, HAPs have often combined vulnerability criteria with family ties in RCs. All HAPs (including Federal and Länder HAPs in Germany, and the HAPs for Afghans in Ireland and Germany) have included both nuclear and extended family members where right-based FR could not be pursued. IRM have been implemented in various ways, including self-referrals and both internal and external referrals, often in combination. Nevertheless, the FR component has primarily been addressed through PS, which requires family members to commit to supporting the relatives that are admitted.

B. FR and HVs: In some cases, such as Switzerland, France, and Italy, where family ties are compounded by dire protection needs that preclude traditional FR, due to decision-making processes that are incompatible with ongoing risks in CoAs, HVs have been used¹⁶⁶. Typically, identification and referrals to authorities are based on internal or external referrals from international and local NGOs and UN agencies.

C. FR, RST and/or PS Schemes: Some countries have primarily adopted RST and PS schemes. In Canada, nuclear FR is usually achieved through traditional RST (part of RST quotas), notably the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR)¹⁶⁷ programme in which refugees are identified and referred by UNHCR (external referrals). Refugee family members might be admitted also through blended programs, such as the Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR)¹⁶⁸ and the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)¹⁶⁹, where beneficiaries are identified and referred by UNHCR (external referrals) or sponsors (notably through Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and Constituents Groups) respectively, with community sponsors playing a key role in settlement support during the matching phase. Extended FR is typically implemented through the PSR¹⁷⁰. Named sponsorship allows private actors, including family members legally residing in Canada, to apply for the admission of beneficiaries. Naming is carried out by different groups:

- (i) Groups of 5, composed of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents;
- (ii) Community sponsors, such as NGOs and community faith-based associations;
- (iii) Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), which are humanitarian organisations and CSOs that have signed an agreement with the Canadian government to assume responsibility for sponsored beneficiaries, including through Constituents Groups that SAHs can authorise to sponsor refugees¹⁷¹.

All beneficiaries must be recognized refugees. In this regard, when sponsorship is carried out by SAHs (and their Constituents Groups), IRM are entirely self-managed, as the latter possess sufficient expertise to ensure proper assessment and process integrity, while in the case of the Group of 5 and Community Sponsors, IRM are mediated by implementing actors with the necessary expertise to assess profiles (e.g., UNHCR and other mandated organisations).

D. FR and Tailored Programmes: In some cases, vulnerabilities connected to family ties are the primary focus of programmes. In 2021, Ireland implemented the Afghan Admission Program¹⁷², a tailored programme targeting both extended and nuclear family members who could not pursue right-based FR. In this case, outreach was based on an open online call, with information disseminated via diaspora networks such as the Afghan Council of Ireland. IRM relied on self-referrals and a naming system, allowing family members to apply for a maximum of four relatives, with their commitment to support their relatives (including with housing and travel costs) as a requisite for selection.

E. Right-based FR: Right-based FR is typically implemented through self-referrals, where sponsors and beneficiaries apply directly to national authorities via an FR application. As a rights-based solution, each country establishes rules and ELC. In the EU, FR is regulated by the EU FR Directive 86/2003¹⁷³, which addresses the reunion of nuclear family members, and provides the opportunity (but not the obligation) for States to establish discretionary and more favourable conditions for extended family members. In this regard, The FR Project addressed both nuclear and extended family reunification in several CoAs and RCs. The primary goal was to improve access to traditional FR, mediated by legal assistance, although other potential options including HVs and RST were evaluated by implementing actors on a case-by-case basis.

¹⁶⁶In exceptional circumstances, FR was achieved also through humanitarian evacuations (HEs), for instance the HE from Libya to Italy in 2021.

¹⁶⁷Government of Canada Website, "Government-Assisted Refugee Program Refugee Resettlement in Canada", online: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/gar_en.pdf.

¹⁶⁸Government of Canada Website, "Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) Program", online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/sponsor-refugee/private-sponsorship-program/blended-visa-office-program.html>

¹⁶⁹Government of Canada Website, "Joint Assistance Program" online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/sponsor-refugee/private-sponsorship-program/joint-assistance-program.html>

¹⁷⁰The PSR is a PS scheme, based on RST admission additional to annual quotas, utilised for various admission purposes including FR, and labour and education opportunities.

¹⁷¹Sponsors (and co-sponsors) are usually faith-based organisations and volunteers who do not know the sponsored refugees, and/or persons who themselves came as refugees and name either family members left behind or people from the same national and/or ethnic background who remain at risk in CoAs. See UNHCR Canada Help Portal, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees", online: <https://help.unhcr.org/canada/private-sponsorship-of-refugees/>.

¹⁷²Government of Ireland, Department of Justice Website, "Afghan Admission Program", online: <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/the-afghan-admission-programme-information-page/#assessing>. The programme targeted Afghan nationals living in Afghanistan, or who had fled to Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, or Tajikistan before 1 August 2021.

¹⁷³The nuclear family encompasses spouses and minor children, while extended family can include the "direct ascending line" of the beneficiary or his/her spouse, and other dependent relatives such as adult unmarried children, unmarried partners, parents, and siblings; European Commission, Family Reunification Directive, *supra* note 153, Art. 4.

IRM and Sponsorship

FR programmes are usually characterised by a strong PS component, as family members are required to provide comprehensive support. Nevertheless, to enhance the integration process, some programmes involved other actors, such as national authorities and civil society, to complement efforts of family members. In other cases, legal frameworks lowered the eligibility threshold for sponsors of refugees.

Sponsorship Practices Within FR Solutions

Programme-related: In Canada, the opportunity to implement nuclear FR through traditional RST enables sharing of economic and integration support between government and family members. Additionally, the PSR programme provides the opportunity for various actors, including faith-based organisations, NGOs, CSOs, diaspora communities, to apply for admission and support beneficiaries alongside family members. Further, in the context of HAPs, Länder discretion in designing programmes has, in some cases, led to a division of responsibilities between sponsors and authorities, for example by excluding certain costs (such as medical expenses) from declarations of commitment, or reducing, modifying, and/or completely waiving the support obligation¹⁷⁴.

Legal Framework: At the legislative level, the EU FR Directive establishes more favourable conditions for refugee sponsors, stating that they should not be required to prove their ability to provide accommodation, insurance, and stable resources when they apply within three months after the granting of refugee status¹⁷⁵. EU Member States have transposed the Directive into domestic legislation. In this regard, within the FR Project, strong advocacy has been conducted to adjust legislation in order to reflect the realities of refugee contexts.

III. Community Sponsorship-Based RST Schemes

Identification, Referral, and Matching Approaches

To preserve the goals of the international protection system, many RST pathways based on sponsorship uphold the principle of additionality, or using sponsorship to expand RST and achieve complementary objectives. As previously, PS pathways, typically based on named sponsorship (as in the PSR in Canada), establish mixed IRM channels via which beneficiaries may be identified and referred directly either by organisations as SAHs, as well as family members or groups of individuals (for the latter, UNHCR may be mandated to perform RSD and RST assessments). Within CS-based RST schemes not based on PS, many programmes utilise external referrals (dossier-based) performed by UNHCR

and/or other specialised organisations, which identify, pre-select, and assess profiles meeting RST vulnerability criteria to submit to national authorities in RCs. Community sponsors provide, then, support during the matching phase, without the ability to name beneficiaries. In other, blended programmes, cases may be identified and referred by UNHCR, with sponsors identifying the beneficiaries they intend to support during the matching phase¹⁷⁶.

In general, matching activities can be administered by national authorities and/or civil society entities, using different modalities and tools such as case-by-case evaluations and digital platforms¹⁷⁷. To improve outcomes, sensitive matching often entails consideration of the capacity, needs, and expectations of both beneficiaries and sponsors¹⁷⁸. In addition, the multi-stakeholder and bottom-up approaches developed in some programmes are based on strong cooperation between national and local authorities, specialised settlement organisations, and CSOs, which aim to create sustainable models that foster beneficiary integration and self-reliance¹⁷⁹. In several instances, the establishment of coordination bodies has helped streamline matching activities and improve mutual trust between beneficiaries and sponsors.

Matching Linked to CS Models in RST-Based Schemes

In Germany, the New Start in a Team Community Sponsorship Programme (NesT)¹⁸⁰ is an RST scheme that complements annual quotas, launched by German national authorities in 2019¹⁸¹ and implemented in partnership with CSOs. While individuals are resettled following identification and referrals conducted by UNHCR and selected by national authorities, matching activities are carried out by the national government in partnership with community sponsors. Sponsors, chosen 'by hand' by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)¹⁸² from applications submitted by institutions, associations, or groups of private individuals, provide integration support for one year and cover accommodation costs for two years, using funding amounts tied to the social housing rental rate (this aspect helps refugees to maintain the same accommodation when sponsorship support ends). Sponsor groups, known as mentors, are typically engaged in local community initiatives and campaigns supported by CSOs (including faith-based organisations), aimed at welcoming and integrating refugees while raising awareness of their needs within the community. A coordination unit, the Civil Society Contact Point (ZKS), composed of organisations active in CS, is responsible for outreach, screening, training, matching, and monitoring. Although the programme faced several barriers, including in relation to housing criteria, delayed processing and exit procedures, and burdensome matching process, NesT is one of the first emerging programmes based on CS in Europe¹⁸³.

¹⁷⁴J. Grote, M. Bitterwolf, T. Baraulina, *supra* note 133, p. 41.

¹⁷⁵EU Commission, Family Reunification Directive, *supra* note 153, Art. 12.

¹⁷⁶In Canada, the RST-based scheme Blended Visa Office-Referral program (BVOR), additional to annual quotas, is based on external identification and referrals - dossiers based - conducted by UNHCR in CoAs. Although sponsors do not name beneficiaries directly, during the matching phase they have the possibility to select refugees from a record of profiles managed by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, administered by civil society and settlement organisations, C. Damian Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, pp. 4, 5, 17; see also Government of Canada Website, *supra* note 168.

¹⁷⁷R. Cortinovis, *supra* note 44, p. 1.

¹⁷⁸C. Damian Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, p. 9.

¹⁷⁹*Ibidem.*, p. 9

¹⁸⁰UNHCR, BAMF, "NesT, Working Together to Help Refugees - Brochure", online: https://resettlement.de/wp-content/uploads/nest_broschuere_quadatisch_auflage_EN_v03.pdf.

¹⁸¹NesT was piloted from 2019 to 2022, to become a permanent program from 2023.

¹⁸²C. Damian Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, p. 17

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

In the Auzolana Community Sponsorship Programme in the Basque Country (Spain)¹⁸⁴ individuals were identified by UNHCR and selected by national authorities. Matching was implemented through an integrated and multi-level partnership of institutional and non-institutional actors. National authorities provided programme resources until refugees arrived, while the Basque regional government supported families for two years, and funded part-time social workers employed by CSOs. CSOs were also responsible for providing housing and access to a bank account. Additionally, groups of volunteers supported refugees in their daily lives, receiving training and support from local CSOs and municipalities. This bottom-up approach allowed refugees to access a diverse network of supporting individuals and organisations, engage fully in the integration process, and move toward achieving self-reliance¹⁸⁵. A Monitoring Committee and Local Coordination Panels were tasked with optimising responses by coordinating and monitoring activities throughout the territory¹⁸⁶. As a result of this experience, similar CS models have been extended to the Autonomous Communities of Valencia and Navarra¹⁸⁷. A comparable approach has been adopted within the Community Sponsorship Scheme (CSS) in the UK¹⁸⁸.

It is here also worth mentioning the Community Sponsorship Initiative (CSI) in Ireland¹⁸⁹, implemented by the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) in partnership with CSOs operating in various regions. The Irish programme has been implemented in two ways: within the 'traditional' CSI, in which refugees are identified and selected in the same manner as in traditional RST. Once admitted, they are supported by CS groups that commit to providing housing and integration for up to two years. In this

case, sponsors cannot identify and nominate specific individuals. In the second approach, CSI has maintained additionality and been used to implement the HAPs for Afghans in the matching phase, admitting proposed beneficiaries through CS groups and enhancing capacity. In both cases CS groups must formally register, undergo training, and complete a settlement plan. Although national authorities lead matching activities through case-by-case evaluations, to enhance coordination at both the national and regional levels, a supervising body coordinates activities between interested sponsors and national authorities. In addition, during matching the programme paid particular attention to combining and evaluating the needs and characteristics of refugees together with the capacity and resources of sponsors¹⁹⁰.

In some programs, civil society has mainly led matching linked to CS. This is the case in the U.S Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans¹⁹¹, a RST scheme launched in 2021 to address the need for evacuations from Afghanistan by national authorities and a coalition of partner organisations¹⁹². Notably, a Community Sponsorship Hub leads matching through vetting, training, and certifying community-led initiatives (sponsor circles composed by communities) to give initial support, and co-sponsorship groups to provide subsequent settlement services through a counselling process with newcomers. This approach addresses the needs and capacity of both sponsors and beneficiaries¹⁹³. Matching tools includes 'hand matching' through online meetings, social media, existing social networks, and algorithmic matching processes, as well as digital matching through the online Welcome Connect Platform¹⁹⁴.



Credit: RefugeePoint - ©Aya Garcia/RefugePoint

¹⁸⁴It is a regional RST-based program implemented in 2018 by the Basque Region, Spain, notably in the cities of Bilbao, Donostia, and Vitoria, and in partnership with Spanish national authorities, UNHCR, and CSOs such as Caritas, Euskadi, Ellacuría Foundation; see Global Compact on Refugees website, "The Community-based Refugee Sponsorship Program (CRSP) in Spain (Basque Country)", online: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/community-based-refugee-sponsorship-spain-basque-country#:~:text=Since%202018%2C%20Spain%20has%20set,resetled%20in%20March%202019.>

¹⁸⁵Instrategies, "Auzolana II Pilot Community Sponsorship Experience, Evaluation Report", Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia Central Publications Service of the Basque Government, Donostia-San Sebastian, 2021, p. 20.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷Share Network website, "Regional Governments Piloting Community Sponsorship Programmes, Evaluating the Basque Country Programme (2019-2021)", online: <https://www.share-network.eu/articles-and-resources/story1>.

¹⁸⁸The programme was designed when the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children' Resettlement Schemes were expanded to respond to increasing RST needs caused by the Syrian crisis. The CSS was established in partnership with UNHCR and IOM, with CSOs, local authorities, individuals, and charities. Cases are matched with sponsors after receiving approval

by both the UK Home Office and local authorities, to foster beneficiary integration as far as possible, and monitored by partners. Sponsors' settlement plan includes housing, settlement, and integration support (including welcoming, cultural orientation, support to access health and social services, and to navigate the labour market). Matching is coordinated by Reset, an organisation founded by the UK Home Office in partnership with CSOs, that acts as a mediator between sponsors and authorities; see N. Faith Tan, *supra* note 30, p. 12; see also Global Compact on Refugees Website, "UK Community Sponsorship Schemes", online: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/uk-community-sponsorship-scheme>.

¹⁸⁹Government of Ireland Website, *supra* note 146.

¹⁹⁰C. Damian Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, pp. 6, 18.

¹⁹¹U.S Department Website, "Launch of the Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans", 25 October 2021, online: <https://www.state.gov/launch-of-the-sponsor-circle-program-for-afghans/>.

¹⁹²See Sponsor Circles Website, online: <https://www.sponsorcircles.org/>.

¹⁹³C. Damian Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, pp. 8,9.

¹⁹⁴*Ibidem*

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Way Forward

This study addresses practices developed during the implementation of Identification, Referral, and Matching (IRM) activities, linked (when present) to CS models, across both different 3CS and different operational contexts. IRM serves as the primary access point to 3CS, encompassing a variety of interconnected issues such as ELC, outreach, capacity building, IRM-related channels, and partnerships in CoAs and RCs. It also involves stakeholders, specific tools and technologies, case management, tailored interventions, matching processes, and CS models.

The purpose of the EU-PASSWORLD Working Group (WG) on Identification, Referral, and Matching (IRM) and this study is to facilitate the exchange of good practices regarding IRM across 3CS, and to understand how and in what situations these approaches have been, and can be, adapted to other pathways and operational contexts. The ultimate goal is to streamline procedures, overcome barriers, and scale up solutions. For example, centralised tools and technology used to facilitate IRM in one context could be replicated elsewhere, while screening forms used by specialist staff in CoAs, which provide a holistic overview of available pathways, could be adapted for other contexts. Similarly, centralised databases might serve as replicable models for other labour mobility programmes or educational mobility initiatives.

Diversified IRM routes, and partnerships involving not only specialist partners but also civil society actors with close ties to refugee communities, are increasingly being introduced across solutions. These partnerships are tailored to specific contexts, with coordination bodies established to oversee IRM implementation. This includes supervising identification and referrals in the field, and managing matching and CS processes in RCs. Multi-level partnerships have also been developed that share responsibilities across CoAs and RCs, which has helped to facilitate practical

access to 3CS. For instance, bridging programmes in CoAs are designed to enhance access to both employment pathways and labour mobility programmes.

A broader interpretation of qualifications and skills within certain programmes has inspired new initiatives, expanding the scope of action. These include more flexible approaches to evaluating documentary evidence, such as identity documents and skills validation, while exit procedures have also been adapted based on these innovations. Multi-stakeholder, bottom-up approaches are being progressively implemented across 3CS, aiming to enhance capacity, divide tasks, and create efficient and sustainable CS models.

In conclusion, while each programme or pathway has distinct characteristics based on programme goals, immigration channels, and the specific operational contexts in which programmes are implemented, many tools and practices can be applied across different settings. While this is not universally true, the similarities and differences between programmes can be evaluated, and tools and practices adapted accordingly. This study highlights significant progress in these areas, although numerous challenges remain, particularly for fostering beneficiary self-reliance, and improving access through increased investment in field-level activities and operational adjustments. The EU-PASSWORLD WG aimed to shed light on both the successes and challenges of implementation, and to reflect on how, when, and where these approaches can be applied across 3CS to enhance access and streamline processes.

The next section will focus on Key Recommendations, drawn from the valuable insights gathered during the WG. This study seeks to make a meaningful and innovative contribution to the ongoing discourse on 3CS, with the aim of advancing both understanding and implementation of best practices.



Key Recommendations on Identification, Referral, and Matching in the Context of Third-Country Solutions

Common Recommendations

Additionality: 3CS should uphold the principle of additionality to traditional RST, increasing the numbers of people accessing solutions, while maintaining a focus on ensuring equality of access.

Complementarity: 3CS should also embrace complementarity to RST, including both refugees and other individuals in need of protection.

Investment in Operationalisation: Capacity building and investment in CoAs should be prioritised to the same extent as partnerships, programme design, and policymaking in RCs, so as to better adjust to the refugee context and overcome common barriers.

Balancing Refugee-Centred and Multi-Stakeholder Approaches: A balance between multi-stakeholder and refugee-centred approaches is essential to improving refugee access and self-reliance. To make required operational adjustments and ensure protection-oriented solutions, stakeholders must understand and consider the complexities faced by both beneficiaries and implementing actors in the field.

Capacity Building of Decision-Makers and Stakeholders: Capacity building for stakeholders and decision-makers, through field visits and training, is vital for fostering a better understanding of the refugee context and how to address challenges through operational adjustments (where necessary). In addition, multi-stakeholder working groups or task forces established during the programme design phase should involve authorities from both CoAs and RCs, to ensure efficient procedural development and implementation.

Capacity Building of Implementing Actors: Strengthening capacity building with local and international partners, and community-based actors in areas such as programme design and eligibility (including vulnerability, skills, and qualifications) enhances the IRM process and helps mitigate fraud.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Monitoring and evaluation during implementation provide important channels via which to gather feedback from beneficiaries, sponsors, and other stakeholders, integrate it into programme design, and improve programme outcomes.

Involvement of Beneficiaries and Experts: Involving beneficiaries, refugee-led organisations, and experts during the design of programmes, IRM practices, and M&E helps identify and overcome barriers.

Multi-Stakeholder and Multi-Partnership Approaches: Meeting ELC and addressing barriers present in CoAs involves numerous interventions that can make all stages of the process quite challenging. In this regard, expanded partnerships and

governmental support are needed, in addition to strategic thinking on ways to delegate tasks among partners to create a 'conveyor belt' of sorts (including tasks that could be performed remotely). A multi-stakeholder and multi-partnership approach enables the streamlining of procedures, sharing of costs, and division of tasks, leading to more effective implementation. Further, greater engagement with the private sector is essential for scalability, not only in terms of funding but also to streamline processes.

General Coordination: The coordination of activities and actors in both CoAs and RCs is crucial to achieving a seamless implementing system. In this regard, coordination systems established in some programmes by leading and supervising organisations and/or by dedicated Working Groups or Task Forces, represent significant assets for streamlining IRM activities, addressing common barriers, and acting as a bridge between CoAs and RCs.

Coordination Across Implementing Actors in CoAs: Coordination among implementing actors in CoAs can improve IRM across programmes. For example, beneficiaries deemed eligible for one programme but better suited to another could be referred to an appropriate organisation, including for matching¹⁹⁵. Such practices could be supported by data sharing agreements.

Increased Advocacy: Increased investment in advocacy helps bridge the gap between practitioners and decision-makers, removing bottlenecks and barriers.

Refugee-Led Initiatives: Refugee-led initiatives active in CoAs and RCs enhance candidates' ownership, provide valuable insights into the refugee context, facilitate the sharing of practices and challenges, encourage refugee participation, and foster sustainable and protection-focused solutions.

Expectation Management: Managing beneficiary expectations through proper counselling from outreach to final matching, via in-person meetings, hotlines, and community mobilisers, is essential to streamlining IRM. In this regard, exhaustive information on programme access and processes, eligibility requirements, visa streams, and entry/stay conditions in the RC, as well as possible challenges during the process, facilitates more effective IRM implementation. This is achieved in terms of several perspectives: it enables beneficiaries to take informed decisions and prepare themselves to access and navigate 3CS, requesting support when needed; it fosters a sense of trust and ownership; it helps to address potential challenges, even in case of negative outcomes or ineligibility; it fosters meaningful matching and integration outcomes.

Administrative Processes: Visa and admission processes should uphold the principles of access to asylum and non-refoulement. In cases where beneficiaries are required to travel to a third country for visa applications, flexible procedures should be guaranteed to ensure their admission to RCs¹⁹⁶. Involving government representatives from both CoAs and RCs can help streamline

¹⁹⁵For instance, within HCs from Lebanon to France and Italy.

¹⁹⁶For instance, if diplomatic missions can enter the CoO/CoA for a short period, the application can be conducted by relevant authorities; as an alternative, an embassy of a trusted third country can act as

a proxy for the RC and proceed with the same or similar procedure; where neither of previous options are available, the beneficiary should be transferred to a transit country and approach the relevant RC's embassy there.

departure and entry procedures. In addition, the assignment of focal points and ad-hoc registration desks for visa applications, permits, and post-arrival registration can expedite procedures.

Outreach: Outreach through both in-person and remote community-based initiatives, involving experts from implementing organisations, as well as refugee communities and refugee-led organisations, improves the quality and quantity of IRM and enhances beneficiary ownership of the process.

Common Screening Tools: Using common screening tools for holistic data collection in CoAs enables cross-referral and supports a unified approach across 3CS.

Matching Activities: Linking identification and referral to sensitive and evidence-based matching¹⁹⁷ processes that consider the needs, expectations, capacity, and characteristics of both refugees and sponsors, allows adaptation to different contexts, optimise programme capacity¹⁹⁸, and strengthens long-term integration outcomes (especially when CS is involved). In addition, enhancing coordination between field and reception actors in CoAs and RCs, such as through coordination units and focal points, and expanding partnerships with NGOs with specific expertise¹⁹⁹, CSOs, refugee-led organisations, and the private sector, can improve matching outcomes²⁰⁰. Depending on programme design, matching approaches may involve digital platforms and/or case-by-case matching. They might also be based on a professional or unconditional reception model (especially when CS is involved), and be streamlined through online platforms and meetings, training, counselling sessions, and questionnaires. In this regard, clear SOPs and guidelines should regulate objective matching criteria and data processing²⁰¹, while maintaining equal access and non-discrimination.

Pre-Departure Preparation: Individual and collective pre-departure preparation conducted from the outreach, identification and selection phases until pre-arrival, represents a vital part of successful IRM. It can take place through on-site orientation and counselling sessions, motivational questionnaires during interviews, in-person and online meetings, language training, distribution of leaflets and videos. In addition, coordination between field and reception teams in RCs and CoAs, through online meetings, training, counselling sessions and questionnaires, is more responsive to the needs of beneficiaries, stakeholders, and sponsors (where present), thereby improving awareness and building mutual trust.

Skills and Qualifications-Based Pathways

Integrating Holistic Protection and Self-Reliance in Countries of Asylum as Preconditions for Labour and Education Mobility: IRM activities are closely tied to eligibility and access, and ensure

that candidates are genuinely positioned to apply. When IRM are integrated within a holistic protection and self-reliance framework, access is significantly enhanced by helping refugees to acquire key employment and educational skills, and required documentation. This holistic approach can link 3CS programming with protection, livelihoods, local integration, and resilience, implemented by numerous IOs and NGOs with both separate and common goals, and enhance partnerships in CoAs. Further expanding and strengthening this approach requires investment of resources and the establishment of new partnerships and cooperation frameworks.

Bridging/Upskilling Programmes: In LPs and EPs, displaced talents may need to undergo additional preparation, at various levels, to increase their language skills, obtain official certificates/credentials, and demonstrate eligibility. Bridging programmes, such as upskilling courses and preparatory, vocational, and language training, serve as important tools for both access and identification, providing opportunities for different cohorts of beneficiaries to demonstrate eligibility. Additionally, leveraging existing programmes and structures in CoAs, initially developed for other pathways, local citizens and/or displaced people, helps simplify and streamline processes.

Skills Evaluation: Eligibility requirements should be evaluated more holistically, encompassing soft and transferable skills, motivation, and potential. Evaluation of these identified aspects should be then accompanied by adequate training.

Levelled Opportunities: In certain contexts, is it appropriate to consider the opportunity to 'level' eligibility requirements. EPs might usefully offer undergraduate degrees or secondary school diplomas, for example, alongside Master's programmes; similarly, labour opportunities might target entry-level and less specialised roles alongside specific and/or highly qualified positions, and provide a gradual upskilling process from arrival. These approaches could coexist, taking into consideration the contexts in which they are implemented and the levels of access to labour and education opportunities and rights in CoAs.

Proof of Evidence and Supporting Documents: Alternatives to traditional identity documents and certificates should be accepted as proof of identity in contexts where documentation is unavailable due to circumstances beyond beneficiaries' control²⁰². These might include expired identity documents and language or work experience accreditation through alternative modalities (such as attestations from co-workers); additionally, when a language certificate cannot be acquired or the operational context makes it challenging to access a language test in terms of costs and logistics, language skills could be tested via different modalities such as language-based online applications, and/or during interviews.

¹⁹⁷R. Cortinovis, *supra* note 44, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸For instance, by not formalising informal selection criteria, and taking advantage of changing programme capacity: as an example, in programmes where housing availability in the RC is an obstacle, larger families can be referred to at the point appropriate housing capacity becomes available.

¹⁹⁹For instance, closer cooperation both in CoAs and RCs with human rights organisations and actors involved in specific human rights areas (such as women and gender rights or LGBTQI+ person) can

improve and streamline IRM, in terms of identification as well as reception outcomes, see also M. Tardis, *supra* note 98.

²⁰⁰C. Damian Smith with E. Ugolini, *supra* note 43, p. 16.

²⁰¹See also *ibidem*, pp. 7, 14.

²⁰²Including the absence of relevant embassies and/or the impossibility of refugees claiming support from her/his CoO; and/or because certain documents (such as for same sex relationships) do not exist in the CoO/CoA.

Investment in Technology and Procedure Standardisation:

Although programmes are progressively aiming to harmonise processes, a diverse range of practices are in use and always will be. To simplify applications and improve candidate ownership of the process, stakeholders are focusing on further investment in technology and tools, using new and existing centralised platforms at the country or regional level, combined with a gradual standardisation of procedures, eligibility requirements, and related documentation. The use of 'friendly' IRM tools, including offline options, can improve equality of access, and individual beneficiary access to and ownership of the process. In addition, the presence of implementing actors and partners in the field can help to support the process, where needed. This approach could not only help to streamline procedures, but also create possibilities to redirect a case that is ineligible for one pathway to the most suitable available solution or programme, thus serving as a cross-referral tool. Such tools could be supported by trusted partners through data sharing agreements, and clear SOPs should regulate the use of personal data for transparency and integrity purposes.

Settlement Support: Increased investment in settlement support is crucial, as refugees may face trauma similar to resettled individuals, necessitating mental health, psychosocial, housing, financial, and community orientation and navigation support, alongside other assistance. Multi-stakeholder cooperation in providing these services supports long-term sustainability, both with or without CS involvement.

Eligible Categories: To expand access and uphold, as far as possible, the principles of additionality and complementarity, eligibility should be expanded to target both refugees, and other displaced beneficiaries who can demonstrate a need for an alternative form of protection. Additionally, forced displacement and protection related assessments should be available for completion via a range of document types, and via different organisations with sufficient expertise and capacity to process integrity.

Visa Streams: Visa streams should align with the type(s) of 3CS being implemented, and offer realistic opportunities for long-term stability in the RC. In non-resettlement cases, existing visa streams could be used to preserve resettlement slots for the most vulnerable, ideally with medium or long term visas providing adequate time for beneficiaries to find sustainable solutions. Alternatively and in complement, labour integration represents a key approach for providing stability: vocational, language, and soft skills training, as well as traineeship opportunities, are crucial steps to creating sustainable future solutions. In resettlement-based admissions, additionality should be preserved where a sponsorship element is present²⁰³.

Needs-Based Solutions

Holistic Protection Belt in CoAs: Partnerships developed with service providers ensure beneficiaries receive comprehensive protection throughout the entire process, including for those not selected for final admission. This is particularly important in emergency contexts. In addition, the work of lead organisations and partners specialised in legal assistance can overcome administrative setbacks, especially in contexts where beneficiaries do not have access to legal residence.

Multiple IRM Routes: Establishing multi-level IRM routes involving mainstream and specialised partners plays a crucial role in scaling identification and referral processes in emergency situations. To improve integrity, data verification and assessments can be further delegated to actors responsible for selection, and to other specialised partners. Additionally, investment in capacity building of specialised NGOs active in human rights and CSOs might be beneficial, both to address increasing needs and enhance capacity.

Flexible IRM Routes: Linking identification and selection to flexible matching²⁰⁴ can improve IRM practices, by allowing adaptation to different contexts and optimising programme capacity. This is especially true in volatile contexts, where both formal and informal channels are used and implementing organisations might be absent. Nevertheless, clear SOPs should outline criteria for selecting beneficiaries, while maintaining equal access and non-discrimination.

CSOs: In addition, collaborating with CSOs in CoAs, and having links in volatile contexts, improve access and support IRM, particularly where international organisations (IOs) or government representatives are absent.

Coordination Units: Coordination units act as bridges between activities in CoAs and RCs, streamlining IRM processes among stakeholders, enhancing sponsor capacity, and advising decision-makers on programme design.

Right/Relationship-Based solutions and Sponsorship Pathways²⁰⁵

Family Definition: The concept of 'family' should include dependency, and be interpreted with respect to cultural and social differences (while maintaining protection and human rights standards)²⁰⁶. Opportunities to provide eligibility proofs via alternative evidentiary means, referenced above, are relevant to proving family links²⁰⁷, including for example DNA tests, photos, or witnesses.

²⁰³Often, entry arrangements used in needs-based, rights-based, and PS 3CS ensure either a permanent or long-term stay (the latter may be temporary, but renewable for the duration of a crisis). Depending on the context, especially within the EU, skills/qualifications-based solutions often utilise existing migration streams, valid for the duration of the programme in which beneficiaries are engaged.

²⁰⁴For instance, by not formalising informal selection criteria, and taking advantage of changing programme capacity: as an example, in a programme in which housing availability in the RC represents an obstacle, larger families can be referred to at points when housing capacity becomes available.

²⁰⁵Sponsorship Pathways are often hybrid, as they are utilised to combine vulnerability with other goals, including community support, FR, and education and labour opportunities. Recommendations related to sponsorship pathways are therefore presented as overall recommendations, and those for specific 3CS.

²⁰⁶Notably in the context of FR related programmes, both for nuclear and extended FR, and the different 3CS that implement family unity.

²⁰⁷This is particularly important in contexts where certain categories are at high risk, such as LGBTQIA+ persons, and unable to declare or officially prove their relationship.

Expanding IRM Routes: Strong coordination among implementing actors and partners - including internal units, international and local NGOs, embassies, and UNHCR offices - in developing robust outreach and identification channels which can also involve data verification and pre-screening, improves the quantity and quality of referrals.

Named Sponsorship: Named sponsorship can facilitate the reunification of individuals at high risk, in contexts where relevant documentation is not recognised or does not exist. While evidence can be provided through alternative documents, two individuals who are unable to declare their relationship can be individually nominated by two different sponsors and then reunited in the RC²⁰⁸.

Process Digitalisation: The digitisation of processes in pathways involving self-referrals could improve beneficiary access to and ownership of the process²⁰⁹.

Common Screening Tools and Diversified Solutions: A diverse range of 3CS and IRM practices have been used to provide more

meaningful and holistic access to family unity, including right-based FR, HAPs, HVs, PS Schemes, and tailored FR programmes. Diversified solutions help overcome barriers. Given the variety of pathways that involve family reunion options, the use of common screening tools for holistic data collection in CoAs enables cross-referral, and supports a unified approach across rights/relationship-based solutions.

Matching and Bottom-up Approach: A bottom-up approach to community sponsor engagement in RCs, supported by a strong network of reception teams, enhances matching and expands capacity to welcome refugees.

Sponsorship Efforts: Where sponsorship is a prerequisite for admission, national authorities should ensure the pathway sustainability and encourage civil society involvement by sharing costs with sponsors. This also includes reducing or shifting financial burdens after a defined period, within named sponsorship programmes that complement vulnerability criteria with goals such as family reunion, and education or labour mobility²¹⁰.

²⁰⁸For instance, in the case of same sex relationships.

²⁰⁹Notably in rights-based FR.

²¹⁰For instance, in HAPs, PS programmes, or CS-based RST schemes.

Annexes

Annex I: Mapping of third-country solutions²¹¹

Programme	Third-Country Solution	Receiving Country	Additionality	Eligibility Goals ²¹²	Named Sponsorship	Community Sponsorship	Identification (I) Referral (R) and Matching (M) Actors	Actor Responsible for Selection
Afghan Admission Program	Tailored HAP	Ireland	Yes	FR	Yes	No	IRM: Family Members + Diaspora Orgs (open call)	Irish Government
Blended Visa Office-Referral Program (BVOR)	Community Sponsorship-based RST Scheme (blended)	Canada	Yes	Humanitarian Needs + FR + Community Support	No	Yes	I&R: UNHCR M: Sponsors through Specialised Sponsorship Orgs	Canadian Government
Community Sponsorship Program (CSI)	Community Sponsorship-based RST Schemes	Ireland	Authorities committed to additionality	Humanitarian Needs	No	Yes	I&R: UNHCR M: Irish Government + CS Groups (with beneficiaries)	Irish Government
Community-based Refugee Sponsorship Program (CRSP)	Community Sponsorship-based RST Scheme	Spain (Basque Region)	No	Humanitarian Needs	No	Yes	I&R: UNHCR M: Central and Regional Governments + CS Groups (with beneficiaries)	Spanish Government
Displacement Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP)	LP	UK	Yes	Labour Opportunities	No	No	&R: TBB + Beneficiaries (The Talent Catalog) M: Beneficiaries + Employers + TBB (connecting them)	TBB (screening and eligibility) + Employers (final selection)
Displaced Talents for Europe (DT4E)	LP	Several RCs	Yes	Labour Opportunities	No	No ²¹³	I&R: Implementing Orgs + Beneficiaries (The Talent Catalog) M: Beneficiaries + Employers + Implementing Orgs (connecting them)	Implementing Orgs (screening, eligibility and employer engagement) + Employers (final selection)
Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP)	LP	Canada	Yes	Labour Opportunities (Multiple Visa Streams)	No	No	I&R: Implementing Orgs + Beneficiaries ²¹⁴ M: Implementing Orgs connecting beneficiaries + employers ²¹⁵	Canadian Government + Employers
EU-PASSWORLD Scholarships Programme in Ireland	EP	Ireland	Yes	Education Opportunities + Community Support	No	Yes	I&R: Beneficiaries M: CS Groups (through the CSI/IRPP)	Universities
Family Reunification Project for the Central Mediterranean	Right-based FR ²¹⁶	Several RCs	Yes	FR	Yes	No	I: Family Members + UNHCR + IRAP R: Family Members + IRAP M: Family Members	Receiving Countries' Authorities
Federal Admission Programme for Afghanistan	HAP	Germany	Yes	FR + Humanitarian Needs	No	No	IRM: CSOs	German Government

²¹¹The mapping involves several 3CS programmes, not all of them.

²¹²All beneficiaries of 3CS are displaced persons, in need of different types of protection. The term humanitarian needs will therefore refer to programs that base eligibility on dire vulnerabilities or situations of high risk, in some cases, compounding them with other goals, such as FR, labour and education opportunities, and/or community support.

²¹³Although DT4E is not purely based on CS, in Belgium for instance employers are required to cover certain costs, in particular: fixed costs such as administrative costs (as single permit, visa D, and registration at municipality), flight ticket, salary according to national legislation, as well as variable/optional costs such as temporary housing (up to 3 months), language and

additional technical training, see IOM Website, "DT4E Employer FAQs", online: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnpbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://belgium.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1286/files/documents/2024-11/dt4e-2.0-employer-faq.pdf>.

²¹⁴Beneficiaries can apply directly or through a trusted partner (implementing organisations).

²¹⁵Implementing organisations connect beneficiaries and employers (through different partnerships) independently from the migration stream utilised (either based on RST or existing economic migration stream).

²¹⁶RST and HVs to achieve family reunion were evaluated case-by-case when right-based FR was not pursuable.

Programme	Third-Country Solution	Receiving Country	Additionality	Eligibility Goals	Named Sponsorship	Community Sponsorship	Identification (I) Referral (R) and Matching (M) Actors	Actor Responsible for Selection
Federal Humanitarian Admission Programs for Syrians	HAP	Germany	Yes	FR + Humanitarian Needs	No (yes for FR component)	No (sometimes civil society was involved)	I&R: UNHCR, NGOs in CoAs; Government Representatives; Länders M: Family Members in case of FR ²¹⁷	German Government
Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR)	Traditional RST	Canada	No	Humanitarian Needs + FR	No	No	&R: UNHCR M: — ²¹⁸	Canadian Government
Refugee Employment-linked Sponsorship Programme (HIRES)	LP within PS (Before) Migration Stream (under EMPP currently)	Canada	Yes	Labour Opportunities	Yes (Before) No (Currently)	Yes (before) No (currently)	PS Scheme (Before) IRM: WUSC + Workplace Teams Migration Stream (Currently) I&R: WUSC M: Beneficiaries + Employers + WUSC (connecting them)	WUSC (screening and eligibility) + Employers (selection)
Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Afghans	HAP	Ireland	Yes	Humanitarian Needs + FR + Community Support	No	Yes	I&R: Trusted Partners M: Irish Government + CS Groups (with beneficiaries) including family members (through the CSI/IRPP) ²¹⁹	Irish Government
Humanitarian Corridors From Lebanon	HC	Italy	Yes	Humanitarian Needs	No	Yes	I&R: Implementing Orgs + Mainstream and Specialised Partners M: Implementing Orgs (with beneficiaries and sponsors) - specialised reception model	Implementing Orgs
Humanitarian Corridors From Lebanon	HC	France	Yes	Humanitarian Needs	No	Yes	I&R: Implementing Orgs + Mainstream and Specialised Partners M: Implementing Orgs (with beneficiaries and sponsors) - unconditional reception model	Implementing Orgs
Humanitarian Corridors From Pakistan and Iran	HC	Italy	Yes	Humanitarian Needs + Labour Opportunities	No	Yes	I&R: Implementing Orgs + Mainstream and Specialised Partners M: Implementing Orgs (with beneficiaries)	Implementing Orgs
Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program (JAS)	Community Sponsorship-based RST Scheme (blended)	Canada	No	Humanitarian Needs + FR + Community Support	Yes	Yes	I&R: UNHCR + SAHs (including through constituent groups) M: SAHs + Constituent Groups	Canadian Government
Länder Private Sponsorship HAPs	HAP	Germany (Länders)	Yes	FR + Humanitarian Needs	Yes	No	IRM: Länder authorities + Family Members/Sponsors	Länders' Authorities
Leadership for Africa (LfA) and Leadership for Syria (Lfs)	EPs	Germany	Yes	Education Opportunities	No	No	IRM: Beneficiaries + DAAD	Universities

²¹⁷When FR was not involved, beneficiaries were assisted by the national government with the contribution of civil society.

²¹⁸Matching is not particularly relevant as the program is part of traditional RST; when family reunion is involved, family members reunite with the person admitted.

²¹⁹As mentioned the CSI has been used to implement the Irish Afghan Humanitarian Assistance Programme during the matching and reception phase.

Programme	Third-Country Solution	Receiving Country	Additionality	Eligibility Goals	Named Sponsorship	Community Sponsorship	Identification (I) Referral (R) and Matching (M) Actors	Actor Responsible for Selection
LP (under Law 5 May 2023 No 50)	LP	Italy	Yes	Labour Opportunities	No	No	I&R: Implementing Orgs M: Beneficiaries + Employers (connected by implementing orgs)	Employers
Private Sponsorship of Refugees Programme (PSR)	PS Scheme	Canada	Yes	Humanitarian Needs + FR + Education + Labour + Community Support	Yes	Yes	I&R: Groups of 5 + Community Sponsors (UNHCR assessment) + SAHs M: Groups of 5 + Community Sponsors + SAHs (or constituent groups)	SAHs + Canadian Government
Student Refugee Program (SPR)	PS Scheme (under PSR)	Canada	Yes	Education Opportunities + Humanitarian Needs + Community Support	Yes	Yes	IRM: WUSC + WUSC Local Committees	WUSC ²²⁰ + Universities
The Community Sponsorship Scheme (CSS)	Community Sponsorship-based RST Scheme	UK	Yes	Humanitarian Needs + Community Support	No	Yes	I&R: UNHCR M: UK Government + sponsors (with beneficiaries)	UK Government
The New Start in Team Program (NesT)	Community Sponsorship-based RST Scheme	Germany	Yes	Humanitarian Needs + Community Support	No	Yes	I&R: UNHCR M: German Government + sponsors (with beneficiaries)	German Government
University Corridors for Refugees in Italy (UNICORE)	EP	Italy	Yes	Education Opportunities	No	Yes	IRM: Beneficiaries	Universities
University Corridors for Refugees in France (UNIVR)	EP	France	Yes	Education Opportunities	No	No	IIRM: Beneficiaries (AUF and UNHCR coordinating and supporting)	Universities
The UWC Refugee Initiative	EP	Several RC	Yes	Education Opportunities	No	No	IRM: Beneficiaries + UWC Committees	UWC Colleges

²²⁰As mentioned, WUSC is a SAH.

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