The project Mig-ressources “Migration and Return, Resources for Development” is a programme focused on the profile of migrant as a potential agent of development and aiming at creating favourable investment conditions in Italy and Morocco for expatriates to invest at home, either through temporary or virtual returns programmes, targeted investments of remittances or through the creation of trans-national networks of firms, migrants’ associations and public administrations in both countries.

Carried out by IOM MRF Rome and IOM Rabat, in cooperation with the Italian Research Centre CERFE, the Rabat-based CERED (Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches Démographiques) and the Hassan II Foundation, it has been financed by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs – Italian Cooperation.

Knowing that the average Moroccan migrant leaves his country with a good level of qualifications, but that is rarely employed in Italy at a level proportionate to his skills, the project aims at reversing this process, by favouring either a better integration in the host society or an effective socio-economic development of the origin country through the targeted investment of migrants’ remittances, the improvement of social and technological transfers or even the return, which can be actual or virtual.

The migrants’ original skills and qualifications, enriched by the migratory experience and the potential investment capacity of their remittances, represent a key factor of development, in particular when they match Italian priorities. In this regard the project meets the efforts of the Italian Government in improving the role of migrants as actors directly involved in the socio-economic development of the country.

Project staff is composed by representatives of IOM, CERED and CERFE and by consultants selected amongst researchers and trainers of national and international level.

OBJECTIVES:

Mig-ressources wishes to:

- Create a more favourable environment for the qualified migration between Italy and Morocco.
- Create the conditions for a successful integration and adequate professional insertion of potential Moroccan migrants, before their departure, and of Moroccan immigrants already residing in Italy and underemployed with respect to their qualifications.
- Identify qualifying return paths, either virtual or real (temporary or permanent), for Moroccan immigrants residing in Italy to contribute to local development and intensified cooperation between the two countries.
- Find all the means to improve a better use of migrants’ remittances for the economic and social development of Morocco.
- Collect data about the geographical distribution of the Moroccan Diaspora in the Italian territory aiming at making the decentralised cooperation between Italy and Morocco more effective.

HOW TO DO IT?

The first step was to complete a research on the international experiences on these issues and on migration dynamics in order to get specific knowledge on:

- good practices of professional insertion and good practices in the return paths;
- migration potential of Morocco with regard to Italy;
- social and professional integration opportunities in Italy;
- the best means which could be used in order to develop remittances and social investments of migrants.

30 potential qualified migrants in Morocco have been selected, trained and assisted to get access to professional insertion and to social integration in Italy and supported in their efforts to find in Italy an employment adequate to their skills, able to avoid brain drain or brain waste, in a possible circular migration contest.

Similar trainings were carried out in Italy, where 80 people were selected: qualified migrants already living in Italy who already had planned a return /investment /co-development project.

The selected beneficiaries were involved in training, sensitization, and support activities, in Italy and in Morocco, in order to assist them in the implementation of their projects (either involving investments, or enterprise creation, or not for profit cooperation).
In Morocco beneficiaries attended 105 hours of training provided by 30 trainers/experts, while in Italy the training was organized in 67 hours, and it was provided by 19 trainers and experts.

The Italian training was organized in Turin and in Rome, and beneficiaries were split in different groups on the basis of their specific interests and return project (enterprise creation, cooperation projects, reinstalation, investments) and have followed, after the common start up of training, specific curricular paths.

All the beneficiaries, in Italy and in Morocco, have eventually attended a final 2 days workshop in Casablanca aiming at giving them the opportunity to meet each other and to offer to 14 MREs Representatives (the association of Moroccans Living Abroad) the opportunity to meet representatives of:

- Political and institutional representatives of Morocco;
- Representatives of the economic and social sectors of Morocco;
- Italian economic environment in Morocco.

Furthermore in the last months of the project the beneficiaries in Italy have benefited from an assessment of their project ideas carried out by the Hassan II Foundation Economic pole and 5 of them have met an expert of Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation Office, in order to plan cooperation opportunities and identify possible funds.

Together with the course, IOM and its partners finalised the preparation of specific guidelines, explaining:

- how to carry out a programme aiming at supporting integration and professional insertion of migrants in Italy;
- how to carry out a programme aiming at supporting actual or virtual return projects finalised to improve the local development of Morocco.

At the moment, as a result of the training session and the projects' development, about 40 projects are assisted by IOM and by partners involved, in order to try to start implementing it during 2008. At the same time, beneficiaries of Casablanca’s training sessions are being helped in finding an internship in Italy.

**Final International Conference**

The project will be concluded by an international conference to be held in Morocco where all activities, lessons learned and products will be presented and discussed among international experts, representatives from Italy and Morocco, stakeholders and institution representatives.

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**THE WEBSITE: WWW.MIGRATIONRETOURS.ORG**

The partners of the project published a specific website: a communication, a networking and a consultation tool, where to find a list of associations a database on integration opportunities in Italy and professional opportunities for migrants return (actual or virtual).

The website hosted an electronic conference between the beneficiaries of the project and 3 newsletters have been published on a dedicated webpage.

**THE RESEARCH**

A thorough research about factors facilitating and hindering migration potential for development was carried out during the 2006 – 2007:

- About 250 texts have been consulted and about 100 official national and international statistics (World Bank, OECD, Eurostat, National statistical institutions) or specific survey reports have been analysed
- 300 specialised internet sites have been consulted and 120 individual biographies have been collected

All these data have permitted to identify 7 constitutive rules and 39 indicators of what has been defined the Migratory Circle and its 80 hampering factors and 92 facilitating factors.

These same factors have been later on validated by 112 witness (national and local governments’ representatives, job centres and labour market services’ officers, NGOs and migrant associations members, banks and money transfer representatives, trade unions or enterprises associations members) who have been interviewed in 2007 and have confirmed the relevance of 153 factors.

**OPERATIONAL NETWORKING**

About 300 meetings aiming at identifying the possible beneficiaries and the possible cooperation with different interlocutors have been set up either in Italy or in Morocco.

More than 60 associations and associations networks of MREs (Moroccans living abroad) in Italy have been contacted.

Thanks to this networking activity it has been possible to build up a repertoire of over 90 references of subjects potentially interested in supporting migration or return projects of Moroccan beneficiaries (through the offer of internships, enterprises incubators, administrative and financial assistance, mentorship and coaching, etc.).

A second repertoire of all agencies operating in the migration field either in Italy or in Morocco was prepared, with a list of about 100 subjects with a relevant role in the field of migration between Italy and Morocco.