

# Centres for Migration and Development - Iraq

Working together to shape migration for the benefit of all

## Background

There are more than 281 million people across the world who are living in a different country to the one in which they were born. Most of them (some 169 million) leave their country to secure a livelihood elsewhere (IOM, World Migration Report 2022). These migration flows are linked with major development potential for the countries of origin and destination countries, as well as for the migrants themselves. Safe, orderly, and regular migration can help realise these potentials and therefore make a valuable contribution to sustainable development.

## Our approach

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements the Centres for Migration and Development (ZME) in different countries on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to support people throughout the entire migration cycle. This includes supporting regular migration for work and education, regional migration, and socioeconomic reintegration. The major focus is on regular migration for work and educational purposes.

At the same time, the centres play an important role in promoting partnerships among state and civil actors in the respective countries: establishing the centres strengthens partner structures at a local level and enhances civil society. This supports the partners in governing migration in an independent and development-oriented manner.

Given that the centres bring different partners together – both private businesses and multilateral organisations or the European Union (EU) in addition to organisations from civil society – they also make a contribution in terms of improved linkage to existing services and initiatives.

This enables the potentials created by migration to be strategically exploited in favour of the migrants, the countries of origin and the destination countries.

Project name	Centres for Migration and Development (ZME)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Iraq
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
National Partner	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraq, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Kurdistan Region of Iraq
Duration	06/2023 – 05/2026

## ZME in Iraq

The German Centres for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration (GMAC) in Baghdad and Erbil first opened in 2018. They work in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) in Federal Iraq and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The GMACs offer consultations on economic opportunities in the country for Iraqi citizens who returned from abroad and for the disadvantaged local population. They also offer consultations for Iraqis interested in regular migration to Germany and within the region. Based on the consultation services which are open for all interested persons, the GMACs offer further support through their cooperation with civil society organisations, their partner ministries and other GIZ projects.



For returnees in need of reintegration assistance, possible measures include:

- Economic reintegration support through business start-up support or job placements
- Referrals into vocational training offers.
- Social reintegration support through mental health and psychosocial support offers

For persons interested in regular migration, measures include:

- Referrals to relevant partners that can support with preparatory steps, including job search and language acquisition.
- soft-skills training and migration preparation courses

On the structural level, the GMACs work closely with MoLSA of Iraq and MoLSA of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as other governmental and non-governmental actors. The aim is to strengthen the institutional capacities to support returnees and potential migrants in a target group-specific manner. These measures include training for staff and support with the development and implementation of suitable strategies.

## Success factors in Iraq

ZME builds on the achievements of the preceding Programme Migration for Development (PME) that was implemented in the period from 2017 to July 2023 in Iraq. Within this framework the GMACs succeeded in providing returning migrants and the local population with reintegration advisory services and referrals into social and economic (re)integration measures.

The GMACs strive to support the Governments of the Republic of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in their efforts to support returning migrants and persons interested in regular migration. An important milestone is the planned integration of the GMACs services into the structures of the state partners.

The dedication of the governmental partners and the close cooperation with civil society organisations and private sector actors are the foundation for jointly working towards a successful governance of migration that benefits all parties involved.

## An example from Iraq

Ahlam's return to Iraq in 2022 marked a turning point in her life, transitioning from a six-year stay in Stuttgart to becoming a successful online cosmetics entrepreneur in Baghdad. With the support of the GMAC and Heartland Alliance International (HAI), Ahlam overcame the challenges of returning and transformed her journey into a thriving business.

Guided by GMAC, Ahlam participated in a crucial business management workshop upon her return. This workshop laid the groundwork for her online cosmetics venture, realised in October 2022 with support from GMAC. At 54 years old, Ahlam, a mother of seven, sells her products online mainly through WhatsApp. She plans to expand her business with a dedicated website to embrace growth opportunities.

The comprehensive assistance by GMAC that includes training, business planning, and ongoing mentorship, has empowered women like Ahlam to become independent entrepreneurs.



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Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany  
Centres for Migration and Development (ZME) Iraq  
World Trade Center (Gulan Tower) | Erbil, (KRI)  
gmac-baghdad@giz.de  
gmac-erbil@giz.de  
www.giz.de/iraq

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