



NORWAY

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY



Norway Overview

Resettlement programme since: ad hoc from 1945, refugees since 1970's, annual quota since 1980's	Selection Missions: Yes	Dossier Submissions: Yes - 175 persons
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Resettlement Admission Targets for 2013:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions :	1,120
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	1,120

Regional Allocations for 2013:

Africa	500 persons
Asia and Pacific:	200 persons
Middle East and North Africa	0 persons
Europe:	150 persons
Americas (from the unallocated quota):	75 persons
Other (medical, emergency and remaining unallocated slots)	195 persons

Sub-quota features: (note 60% of all refugees should be female)

Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:	2012 Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	75 unallocated slots, mostly dossier basis submissions via HQ, Nairobi and Beirut HUBs
Medical cases	20 unallocated slots, (counting only person with medical need), submissions via HQ, Nairobi and Beirut HUBs
Women at risk cases	Women-at-risk cases are given priority
Unaccompanied children	No specific quota.
Family Reunion (within programme)	No specific quota
Other, (converted places)	In addition to target of 1120 resettlement slots, Norway is converting some places for alternative use, such as funding of UNHCR resettlement staff. In 2012 Norway allocated NOK 6,5 million for this purpose.

1. Resettlement Policy

1.1 Description of the country's resettlement policy

Norway recognizes and supports resettlement as an important instrument of international protection and as a durable solution to the plight of refugees.

Norway offers resettlement opportunities within annual quotas. The size of the annual quota is set by the Parliament following proposals made by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security allocates the annual quota taking into account the advice of UNHCR and Norwegian government agencies, notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the **Norwegian Directorate of Immigration**, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, and the **Directorate of Integration and Diversity**. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity resettle refugees within this quota in close cooperation with UNHCR.

Sub quotas are allocated to specific refugee groups taking into account:

- UNHCR's assessment of resettlement needs;
- possibilities for multinational efforts to solve refugee situations;
- possibilities for strategic effects, i.e. solutions or improved premises for refugees who are not offered resettlement;
- experienced cooperation with UNHCR country offices, including capabilities to submit cases that meet Norwegian resettlement criteria;
- municipalities' abilities to provide services that address specific needs of refugee groups, and
- municipalities' evaluation of settlement and integration results.

The resettlement programme operates in close cooperation with UNHCR. Norway gives priority to referrals made by UNHCR.

Norway may also convert a number of quota places in order to release funding for alternative resettlement projects. Norway has shared experience and best practices with emerging resettlement countries through twinning projects. Furthermore, Norway has been funding projects for Women at risk in Latin America and the secondment of Norwegian personnel to UNHCR. Other measures that strengthen UNHCR's capacity to submit cases for resettlement can be considered. Norway cooperates and consults with UNHCR before deciding how to make these dispositions.

The resettlement places available on annual quotas may be applied flexibly within three-year periods according to further procedures given by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. This allows for advance use of quota places from the following year within three-year periods. If annual ceilings are not reached, unused places may be transferred to the following year. The current flexible period runs from 2013 to 2015.

1.2 Ministries and Departments responsible for resettlement policy

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security allocates the quota through consultations with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the basis of information, judgments, and suggestions made by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration after consultations with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity.

1.3 Process for deciding the annual resettlement quota and its composition, including the timelines for the process

The process leading to the decision of the following year's resettlement quota starts in the spring. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity share resettlement experiences from the previous year and the first six months of the current year with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. This report includes an evaluation of:

- experienced cooperation with UNHCR country offices, including capabilities to submit cases that meet the Norwegian criteria for recognition of refugee status and the Norwegian resettlement criteria;
- experiences with settlement and introductory programme for refugee groups;

- a recommendation of whether these groups should be offered continued resettlement;
- a judgment of needs for health services, specifically for medical cases.

Thereafter, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity invite NGO's to present their views on which refugee groups they think should be offered resettlement. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration shares a report with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Simultaneously, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration suggests the allocation of next year's quota, after consultations with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security follows up the reports and suggestions above with consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and UNHCR. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security shares a preliminary allocation of next year's quota with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration by the 15th of October. This enables the two directorates to start planning next year's resettlement process. Finally, by the 15th of December, the Parliament decides the state budget, including the total size of next year's quota. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security decides the allocation of the quota. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration immediately notifies UNHCR.

2. Criteria for Recognition of Refugee Status Eligibility and Asylum

2.1 National legislation defining refugee status eligibility

In accordance with the law of 2008 nr 35 concerning the entry of foreign nationals into the Kingdom and their presence in the realm paragraph 28, a foreign national who is in the realm or at the Norwegian border shall upon application be recognized as a refugee if the foreign national:

- a) has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.¹ Or,
- b) is at risk of being subjected to the death sentence, torture, or other inhuman or degrading acts or punishment upon return to his/her home country.

Status determination is based on the criteria presented above and in accordance with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration's asylum-practice regarding the specific country in question.

2.2 Additional criteria

Norway will primarily only accept cases for resettlement where the applicant is in need of international protection as stated above. However, additional criteria are also taken into consideration when assessing resettlement cases, such as for example Norway's participation in broader strategic resettlement programs.

In exceptional circumstances Norway will also accept applicants solely on the basis of strong humanitarian considerations, for example where a refugee has an accompanying family member of a different nationality without protection needs.

¹ The reader will note that wording from the refugee convention has been incorporated into Norwegian national legislation. This applies to both §§ 28 and 31 of the law of 2008 nr 35 (the Immigration act).

3. Criteria for Resettlement

3.1 Refugee Resettlement Eligibility Criteria

Norway gives priority to cases referred by UNHCR. Cases referred by the following agents may also be considered:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- international criminal courts with which Norway has witness resettlement agreements;
- Norwegian PEN, where the applicant will be part of the Cities of Refuge Network; or
- Norwegian NGO's with presence in areas where UNHCR is not represented or does not have a mandate to refer the person for resettlement.

3.2 Admissibility Criteria

S/he must meet the criteria in accordance with the law of 2008 nr 35 (the Immigration act) paragraph 28. Relevant points are the refugee's reason for leaving his/her country of origin, possible risks if the refugee returns to his/her country of origin and the security situation in the first country of asylum. UNHCR's evaluation of the refugee claim forms the basis for these considerations.

When assessing the protection needs of cases submitted for resettlement we will primarily only accept cases that would have been granted refugee status if they were to seek asylum from within Norway. They are also subject to the same credibility assessments as applicants seeking protection in Norway.

S/he must be in need of resettlement: Prospects for other durable solutions should be considered in the short term as well as in a longer perspective.

Exclusion: Where the exclusion clauses as incorporated in the law of 2008 nr 35 paragraph 31 apply, resettlement shall, as a rule, not be offered. Exclusion will be considered if there are serious reasons for considering that the foreign national:

- (a) has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity, as defined in the international instruments drawn up to make provision in respect of such crimes;
- (b) has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his admission to that country as a refugee; or
- (c) has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

National security: The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration cooperates with the Norwegian Police Security Service. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration may consult the Norwegian Police Security Service with cases that might raise national security concerns. Norway will not accept persons who may constitute a threat to national security.

If a case concerns fundamental national interests or might affect Norway's foreign relations, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration has a duty to report to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

Behaviour: Persons of known criminal behaviour or heavy drug users will, as a rule, not be offered resettlement.

Settlement services: The settlement services' ability to settle quota refugees will be affected by the refugees' needs and individual municipalities might sometimes have trouble offering adequate services for those being resettled. This might therefore have to be taken into account when considering resettlement for individuals with special needs.

Female profile: Norway gives priority to Women at Risk Cases. A substantial proportion of available resettlement places are reserved for women and girls.

Other: The ability of individual municipalities to receive refugees with certain profiles, for example unaccompanied minors, medical cases or single refugees, may vary. Therefore the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration will provide UNHCR with specific requests in accordance to the capacities of the municipalities.

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

4.1 Resettlement allocations including sub-quotas

The main quota (around 850 places) is allocated to a number of refugee situations where selection missions are carried out.

As well, Norway has three other sub-quotas: medical cases, emergency cases, and the unallocated sub-quota. Norway has 20 places available each year allocated to medical cases. (See Section 8.1 for more information.) The quota for cases with emergency priority has varied between 75 and 80 places between 2008 and 2013. (For further information see section 7.) Since 2009 the unallocated sub-quota is set at 175 places.

4.2 Processing priorities

Norway applies a strengthened gender focus. A substantial proportion of the quota is reserved for women and girls.

Housing capacities are often limited for single refugees due to lack of a sufficient number of smaller apartments in the municipalities, and because a relatively large number of the asylum seekers coming to Norway are single males. As a consequence, single refugees, particularly males, who have been accepted after seeking asylum in Norway, at times have to wait for prolonged periods in reception centers before settlement.

In order to balance these housing problems with the resettlement priority to women at risk, we can only resettle a limited number of single males.

4.3 Non-UNHCR allocations, and the role of referral organizations

Norway gives priority to UNHCR referrals, and does not have allocated sub-quotas for non-UNHCR referrals. Non-UNHCR referrals are processed under the unallocated quota.

There is a formal limitation to referrals from NGO's. The requirement is that UNHCR is not present in the area or does not have a mandate to refer the case for resettlement. The NGO must have a presence in the area.

Norway may accept cases referred by Norwegian PEN where the applicant will take part in the Cities of Refuge Network. These cases can be accepted independently of whether UNHCR has presence or mandate in the country.

The number of acceptances of NGO referrals cannot exceed 15% of the unallocated sub-quota.

5. Submission and Processing via Dossier Selection

5.1 Dossier submission policies

Norway accepts referrals for resettlement on dossier basis to all our sub quotas. Preferably though, the resettlement candidates are interviewed. Therefore, Norway conducts interviews in a majority of the cases referred under the specific quotas for nationality groups. The interviews are conducted during resettlement missions (see separate section). In practical terms, dossier cases tend therefore to be accepted on the emergency, medical and unallocated quotas.

5.2 Case documentation

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration requests that all identity documents in the refugees' possession are scanned and included in the referral. To obtain status as a refugee, the identity of persons included in the case has to be documented. In the absence of documentation, the identity given by the refugee to UNHCR is deemed to be correct.

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration needs to be provided with detailed material facts of the case, as well as both inclusion and exclusion evaluations. Medical cases must be supplemented with a typed medical assessment form (MAF).

5.3 Routing of submissions

Submissions should be made directly to the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration at resettlement@udi.no.

5.4 Processing times

From reception of dossier to decision:

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration makes the decisions in normal or urgent resettlement priority cases within three weeks from referral. For emergency cases the decision is taken within 48 hours. If the case includes foreign policy concerns or issues relating to national security, the case will be subject to political scrutiny and the decision will depend on involvement from the ministerial level of government. UNHCR is informed about all decisions by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration.

From decision to departure:

All accepted refugees are given an entry visa to Norway valid for six months. Within this time frame (for normal and urgent priority cases), receiving municipalities will decide when they are ready to receive the refugees. Travel requests are sent to IOM based on information given from the receiving municipality in each case. The average time from decision to departure is 3-4 months.

In emergency cases, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, finds a receiving municipality for the refugees within 48 hours of the decision to accept the case. As soon as the receiving municipality has been identified, the travel request is sent for departure as soon as possible.

5.5 Recourses, appeals

There is no right of appeal regarding the decision to grant or deny entry permit for cases processed under the quota for refugees. Status determination for quota refugees may be appealed to the Immigration Appeals Board.

5.6 Other details regarding dossier submissions

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration notifies UNHCR about the decisions. The Norwegian Foreign Service mission in the country of asylum is informed about accepted cases. Through a copy of the travel request to IOM, the Norwegian Foreign Service mission is instructed to issue emergency travel documents and visas.

6. Submissions and Processing via In Country Selection

6.1 Selection mission policies

Selection missions normally include officers from both the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity. The delegations are lead by an officer from the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration.

UNHCR submits cases on dossier for consideration prior to the actual mission, for pre-screening purposes. The delegation conducts interviews on the basis of the pre-screening. Some cases might be rejected already during pre-screening, and some cases might be accepted on dossier basis.

The refugees usually undergo two separate interviews, one with an officer from each directorate. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration will focus on the need for protection and verification of identity, while the Directorate of Integration and Diversity will focus on topics such as language skills and education. The interview conducted by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration is used for assessing the case, while the interview conducted by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity is used to help the municipalities in preparing for the arrival of the refugees.

All decisions are made by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration after concluding the mission. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity provides advice to the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration regarding the capacity municipalities have for receiving particular caseloads, for instance persons in need of medical care. Receiving capacity in Norway may therefore influence the selection of the individual cases. The final results from the mission are conveyed to UNHCR, who then presents the decisions to the refugees.

When the decisions have been made, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity makes settlement arrangements with Norwegian municipalities for each family unit accepted for resettlement to Norway. The municipalities then prepare practicalities for receiving the refugees. When they are ready, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration is notified through the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration issues the travel request to IOM.

6.2 Case documentation

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration requests that all identity documents in the refugees' possession are scanned and included in the referral. To obtain status as refugee, the identity of persons included in the case has to be documented. In the absence of documentation the identity given by the refugee to UNHCR is deemed to be correct. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration needs to be provided with detailed material facts of the case, as well as both inclusion and exclusion evaluations. Medical cases must be supplemented with a typed medical assessment form (MAF). The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration furthermore requests all refugees to present identity documents during the interview.

6.3 Routing of submissions

Submissions should be made directly to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration at resettlement@udi.no.

6.4 Processing times

From reception of cases to selection missions:

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration requests UNHCR to refer all the cases at least four weeks before the delegation conducting the selection mission departs from Norway. A pre-screening process is initiated, resulting in a list of cases selected for interviews. Some cases might be rejected in the pre-screening phase. The list of cases accepted for interviews is finalized before departure from Norway. The exact dates for exchange of the lists are agreed upon with UNHCR prior to each mission.

From selection mission to decision:

Decisions are finalized and permits are given within three weeks after the selection mission has been completed. Some cases may, however, be pending longer due to the need for further documentation or if there are issues concerning national security and/or foreign

policy. If the case includes foreign policy concerns or issues relating to national security, the case will be subject to political scrutiny and the decision will depend on involvement from the ministerial level of government. UNHCR is informed about all decisions by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration.

From decision to departure:

All accepted cases are given an entry permit to Norway valid for six months. Within this time frame (for normal and urgent priority cases), receiving municipalities will decide when they are ready to receive the refugees. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration sends travel request to IOM based on information given from the receiving municipality in each case. The average time from decision to departure is 3-4 months. Given that selected refugees are settled throughout Norway in numerous municipalities and the municipalities decide when they can receive them within the time span of 6 months, they travel to Norway in smaller groups.

Due to difficulties that may occur with exit arrangements or formalities in the country of asylum, departure is sometimes prolonged. The entry permit may be extended beyond six months under such rare circumstances.

Cases selected through selection missions, may also be processed as emergency cases and according to the emergency procedures for such cases. Although the case has not been flagged as an emergency case by UNHCR, the delegation may decide to process the case as such if emergency protection or medical needs are detected during the interview.

6.5 Recourses, appeals

There is no right of appeal regarding the decision to grant or deny entry permit for cases processed under the quota for refugees. Status determination for quota refugees may be appealed to the Immigration Appeals Board.

6.6 Other details regarding selection missions

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration notifies UNHCR about the decisions. The Norwegian Foreign Service mission in the country of asylum is informed about accepted cases and is, through a copy of the travel request to IOM, instructed to issue emergency travel documents and visas.

The refugees who have been accepted participate in a cultural orientation programme about Norway before departure. IOM Oslo is contracted by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity to hold the course in the country of asylum. Bicultural trainers, who live in Norway, are used for the training. The course is held for both adults and children above the age of 8, and the duration of the course is 3-4 days.

7. Emergency Cases/Urgent Cases

7.1 Policies for receiving emergency and/or urgent case submissions

Norway offers accelerated processing in situations where a refugee's life or freedom depends on emergency resettlement. Refugees may be considered for emergency resettlement when they for example face immediate threats of deportation, immediate physical threat to security or undue detention. No geographical or national limitations apply to this category. Emergency referrals are a specific sub-quota. If the case is flagged under another sub-quota before a selection mission, it may nevertheless be processed under the emergency sub quota if emergency protection or emergency medical needs are detected during the interview.

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration has similar processing policies for urgent and for normal cases. Both dossier cases and cases submitted before resettlement missions may have normal or urgent priority.

7.2 Case documentation for emergency cases

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration requests that all identity documents in the refugees' possession are scanned and included in the referral. To obtain status as a refugee, the identity of persons included in the case has to be documented. In the absence of documentation, the identity given by the refugee to UNHCR is deemed to be correct. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration needs to be provided with detailed material facts of the case, as well as both inclusion and exclusion evaluations. Medical cases must be supplemented with a typed medical assessment form (MAF).

If the case is processed during a selection mission, we furthermore request all refugees to present identity documents during the interview.

7.3 Routing of submissions for emergency and/or urgent cases

Submissions should be made directly to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration at resettlement@udi.no.

7.4 Processing times for emergency cases

From reception of dossier to decision:

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration gives emergency cases the highest processing priority of all applications for resettlement, and decisions are made within 48 hours. If the case includes foreign policy concern or issues relating to national security, the case must be subject to political scrutiny and the decision will depend on involvement from the Ministerial level of government. UNHCR will be informed about this, and the directorate will ask UNHCR whether UNHCR would like Norway to continue with processing the case or withdraw the case. UNHCR is informed about all decisions made by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration.

From decision to departure:

The Directorate of Integration and Diversity gives settlement of emergency cases the highest processing priority of all settlement cases. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity will make an agreement with a receiving municipality within 48 hours after the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration has made a positive decision. As soon as the receiving municipality has been identified, the travel request is sent for departure as soon as possible.

7.5 Processing times for urgent cases

Processing time for urgent cases is similar to processing time for normal cases.

From reception of dossier to decision:

For resettlement cases with both urgent and normal priority, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration makes decisions within three weeks from referral. If the case includes foreign policy concerns or issues relating to national security, the case will be subject to political scrutiny and the decision will depend on involvement from the Ministerial level of government. UNHCR is informed about all decisions by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration.

From decision to departure:

All accepted cases are given an entry permit to Norway valid for six months. Within this time frame (for normal and urgent priority cases), receiving municipalities will decide when they are ready to receive the refugees. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration sends a travel request to IOM based on information given from the receiving municipality in each case. The average time from decision to departure is 3-4 months.

7.6 Special considerations regarding emergency and/or urgent cases

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration notifies UNHCR about the decisions. The Norwegian Foreign Service mission in the country of asylum is informed about accepted cases and is, through a copy of the travel request to IOM, instructed to issue emergency travel documents and visas.

UNHCR should specify whether medical or security issues form the reason for emergency priority. If the reason is medical, the refugee with medical needs will be allocated under the medical quota. Family members included in the case will be allocated under the emergency quota.

8. Special Categories/Special Needs

8.1 Sub-quotas dedicated to specific needs cases

Norway has a sub quota for refugees with medical needs (twenty-or-more). For these cases, the resettlement criteria that are outlined under chapter 3 are applied. Furthermore, Norway applies exactly the same criteria as those outlined under 4.1.1 in the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook when assessing the severity of the health condition and possible improvement after resettlement. In order for refugees with medical needs to be considered they must have good prospects of recovery after receiving medical treatment in Norway. Available medical services in Norway are examined before decisions are made. The case will usually be rejected if required special treatment is not available. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration cooperates closely with Oslo University Hospital regarding the capacity of the Norwegian health service, the individual's prospects after treatment in Norway etc.

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration has a continuous dialogue with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, whereby the former receives information about the capacities of Norwegian municipalities to settle refugees with health problems. An acceptance depends on whether the Directorate of Integration and Diversity can make an agreement with a municipality to settle the case. The receiving municipality will have to decide whether it can offer sufficient follow-up.

It is crucial that UNHCR submits a complete, transparent, and recently updated typed medical report in all referrals concerning refugees with special needs.

8.2 Procedures for submission and selection

Submissions should be made directly to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration at resettlement@udi.no.

9. Medical Requirements

9.1 Screening procedures, including costs

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration may request that UNHCR provides a medical examination before a decision is made, if the result of the examination is crucial for the decision. The examination must result in a complete and transparent typed medical report. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration will not cover these costs.

9.2 Health criteria and exclusion factors

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration has a continuous dialogue with a medical adviser at Oslo University Hospital, whereby the directorate is advised about the Norwegian health service capacity to treat a given medical problem.

As mentioned under 8.1, the case will usually be rejected if required special treatment is not available. Availability of health services varies. At times there are capacity problems within the fields of psychology and psychiatry. As a consequence, it is often not possible to provide sufficient services that would be advisable for traumatized refugees.

Apart from this, there are no specific health criteria.

9.3 Counselling provided

The Directorate of Integration and Diversity will forward essential information about a refugee's health to the municipal health service for follow-up. Necessary counselling will be provided. It is prescribed by law that every refugee must take a tuberculosis test within one week of arrival to Norway.

9.4 Pre-departure treatment, including costs

If active tuberculosis is discovered, the refugee will have to be treated before departure. Other conditions that makes the refugee unfit to travel will be treated if travel cannot be suspended until s/he is fit to travel. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration will cover these costs.

9.5 Pre-departure examination procedures

IOM may be requested to conduct medical examinations before departure for refugees who have been accepted for resettlement. The purpose is to prepare the municipal health service and secure that relevant follow-up can be provided. These examinations may be requested for selected cases or for groups. They may encompass specific or general examinations. If Norway considers a request for examinations for a group, IOM will be asked to give a price estimate in advance.

10. Orientation (pre-departure)

10.1 Pre-departure orientation sessions

The Cultural Orientation Programme provides pre-departure cultural orientation (CO) classes for refugees accepted for resettlement to Norway. IOM Oslo, in close coordination with IOM offices in countries where refugees are temporarily residing, organizes training for selected target groups of refugees, aged 8 years and above, on the practicalities of life in Norway. The primary objective of the programme is to promote smoother integration of refugees into the Norwegian society. It prepares them for the initial adjustment period after arrival in Norway, addressing unrealistic expectations, and limiting the culture shock. Classes are conducted in the refugees' own language. The use of the refugees' own language as the language of instruction maximizes effective learning.

The cultural orientation programme also provides the receiving Norwegian municipalities with relevant and current information about the refugees and their situation prior to their arrival in Norway. The information to municipalities is provided through Country Information Seminars and Country Profiles.

Bi-cultural trainers

The pedagogical base of the CO programme is the bi-cultural trainer. A bi-cultural trainer is a person who has an origin or background similar to the refugee group in question and who also has a solid background from and living experience in Norway. He or she speaks the language of the CO participants thus eliminating the need for an interpreter. Similar ethnic and immigrant/refugee background and ability to speak the same language as the refugees facilitates creation of trusting and open atmosphere in the class room. Bi-cultural trainers also act as a role model for refugees as the bi-cultural trainer him/herself has gone successfully through an integration process in Norway, learned the language and has also managed to professionally establish him/herself in Norway.

10.2 Duration, location and funding of sessions

Each course consists of 20 hours of intensive CO training given over period of 4 days for adults aged 15 and above. Children aged 8 to 14 years receive 2 days, a total of 10 hours, of CO training. The programme is funded by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). It is implemented by IOM Oslo in close partnership with Directorate of Integration and Diversity, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, IOM and UNHCR offices in the training site countries.

11. Travel

11.1 Travel booking procedures

Norway is a donor to IOM, and makes use of its services. IOM arranges travel for refugees accepted for resettlement in Norway under the quota as well as for persons accepted for family reunification with refugees in Norway.

The entry permit granted to a refugee when accepting the case, is valid for six months in normal and urgent cases. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration refers the case to the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, who is responsible for making an agreement with a municipality that will settle the refugee. Within the six-month period, the municipality decides when to receive the refugee. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity then reports this information to the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration. The latter then submits a travel request to the IOM office in the country of residence, asking for booking according to a period of possible arrival. This period is regulated by the entry visa and when the settling municipality can receive the refugee. A copy of the travel request is submitted to the Norwegian Foreign Service mission in the country of residence, with an instruction to issue emergency travel document (*laissez passers*) and visa. A copy is also submitted to UNHCR.

IOM will report to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration with an Advanced Booking Notification (ABN) that shows ports of transit and times of departures and arrivals. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration will notify the receiving municipality about arrival time.

The same procedure is followed in emergency cases. When submitting the travel request, we will also notify IOM and the Foreign Service Mission that the case has emergency priority.

11.2 Payment

Norway has a framework agreement with IOM Oslo. The agreement prescribes the cooperation between IOM and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration regarding travel and medical examinations in the context of resettlement, family reunification and repatriation of refugees. Travel for all refugees who have been accepted under the annual quota is handled by IOM. IOM's expenses are paid for by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration in accordance with this agreement. The refugees do not have any travelling expenses when coming to Norway.

Travel for persons who have been granted family reunification with refugees in Norway will also be arranged for the family in accordance with the IOM agreement. Travel is cost-free provided an application is sent to the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and if certain requirements are met. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration will not refund expenses if travel arrangements have been made independently.

11.3 Travel documents issued

The Norwegian Foreign Service mission issues emergency travel documents (*laissez passers*) and visas to refugees before departure.

12. Status on Arrival and the Path to Citizenship

12.1 Immigration status on arrival in Norway

When cases are accepted on dossier basis, the refugee receives an entry permit with residence and work permit that is valid for one year. Shortly after arrival the refugee receives a status decision that gives the refugee a residence and work permit valid for three years from the date of registration with the Norwegian police.

Refugees that are accepted on the basis of the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration's resettlement missions receive a status decision that gives the refugee a residence and work permit valid for three years issued prior to his/her entry to Norway.

12.2 Documentation issued, including travel documents

The Norwegian police issue a registration card after police registration. The refugee is also given a national identity number.

When applying for resettlement, the person also implicitly applies for a travel document. If the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration grants refugee status, a travel document is then also granted. The travel document is (usually) valid for the same length of time as the residence and work permit.

An applicant may in some cases be granted resettlement without receiving refugee status, but based on strong humanitarian considerations instead. In such cases, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration will issue an immigrants' passport if the applicant's relationship to his/her country of origin is such that the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to apply for a national passport, and there are no reasons for denying such a document.

12.3 Process for regularization of status, including requirements and timeframes

As stated above a refugee accepted for resettlement is given a three year residence and work permit.

After three years of residence in Norway, the foreign national has, upon application, the right to be granted permanent residency if the following requirements are met:

- (a) The foreign national has not spent more than seven months outside Norway for the last three years he/she has resided in Norway.
- (b) The foreign national is still eligible for the status that formed the basis for the original residence permit (for resettlement purposes it means that *the applicant must still be considered to be a refugee in need of protection/ residence based on humanitarian considerations*)
- (c) The foreign national has not committed acts that could initiate expulsion according to Norwegian law
- (d) The foreign national has completed mandatory Norwegian language training

12.4 Documents issued to children born after arrival but before naturalization of their parents

Children born after their parents' arrival and before their naturalization will be issued with a registration card, a national identity number and a travel document, if their parents have received refugee status/ residence based on humanitarian considerations.

12.5 Details on the requirements, costs and timelines for citizenship

Any person has a right, upon application, to Norwegian nationality if the applicant at the time the administrative decision is made:

- (a) has provided documentary evidence of or otherwise clearly established his or her identity;

- (b) has reached the age of 12;
- (c) is and will remain a resident of the realm;
- (d) fulfils the conditions for permanent residence;
- (e) has spent a total of seven years in the realm during the last ten years, with residence or work permits of at least one year's duration, residence during one or more application-processing periods to be included in the seven-year period;
- (f) satisfies the requirement regarding Norwegian language training;
- (g) has not been sentenced to a penalty or special criminal sanction;
- (h) satisfies the requirement regarding release from another nationality.

The applicant is not entitled to Norwegian nationality if this is contrary to the interests of national security or to foreign policy considerations.

The application for nationality shall be accompanied by a comprehensive certificate of good conduct issued by the police. The said certificate shall also show any offences for which the applicant has been charged or indicted.

The person applying for Norwegian citizenship must, as a rule, renounce his/her former citizenship. However, exemptions may be granted if the fee for renouncing former citizenship is unreasonably expensive, the process takes an unreasonable length of time or the applicant, for reasons of security, should not contact the authorities of his/her home country.

There are separate rules for children under the age of 18 applying for citizenship. They can be granted citizenship if the father or mother of the child has already acquired Norwegian citizenship, or if the father or mother is applying for citizenship at the same time as the child. The rules for children as bi-person do not apply to children who are married or registered partners. The child needs to have at least two years of legal residence on permits each granted for at least 1 year.

It is possible to submit an individual application for citizenship for a child above the age of 12. The person with the custody rights (usually the mother and/or the father) has to submit the application on behalf of the child. The child needs to have at least five years of legal residence within the last seven years, on permits each granted for at least 1 year. Apart from that the general requirements apply.

The processing fee for applications for citizenship is presently 2500 NOK.

13. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

13.1 Overview of services

Settlement of refugees in municipalities is managed by the **Directorate of Integration and Diversity**. There are six regional settlement offices that select areas of settlement in about 300 of 430 municipalities in Norway.

The number of places available in municipalities is determined by the number of positive responses received from local authorities to the requests for settlement submitted by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity. The main goal for settlement of refugees in Norway is that the refugee is to be self-reliant as soon as possible. Usually, refugees from one ethnic group are settled in the same or in neighbouring municipalities in order to develop networks, reduce isolation and make it feasible for municipalities to develop better programmes for larger groups of refugees.

Municipalities sometimes specify which groups of refugees they would like to accommodate, based on origin and/or family composition. Although the decision to accommodate refugees is voluntary, once an agreement to accept a group for resettlement is made, the Government holds municipalities responsible for integration.

The municipalities provide the same services to immigrants and refugees as the rest of the population. These services include health, education, housing, vocational training, and employment.

13.2 Reception, Orientation, and Integration

The municipalities are the principal actors in satisfying the goal of settlement, and they receive integration subsidies from the state for settlement and integration of refugees during the five initial years after a refugee has been settled.

The integration subsidy is the most important measure to achieve rapid and good settlement. When the settlement of refugees is confirmed, the municipality will receive an integration subsidy of NOK 616 800 for an adult to provide for benefits (housing, education, healthcare and welfare) over a five-year integration period from 2013. For single adults the subsidy is 666 800 and for children under 18 years old it is NOK 596 800 in 2013.

Upon arrival, refugees are received by municipal officials and are immediately accompanied to an arranged home or apartment.

The **Introduction Programme** for new immigrants applies to refugees and family members reunited with them, in addition to persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds and family members reunited with them. The individual's right and obligation under the Introductory Act only apply to immigrants who require basic qualifications. Women participate on an equal footing with men.

The aim of the programme, which will be adapted to individual needs and abilities, is to provide basic skills in the Norwegian language, as well as insight into the Norwegian society and to prepare for participation in working life and/or further education. Participation in the programme is both a right and an obligation for persons between 18 and 55 years within the target groups.

13.3 Financial Assistance

Refugees receive an economic benefit of NOK 170 490 per annum in 2013 from the municipality for attending the programme. As a part of the introduction programme, the refugees have the right and the duty to attend 550 hours of language training and 50 hours of social and cultural studies. The municipalities receive a subsidy of up to NOK 119 100 over a period of three years from 2013 for each refugee with a right and a duty to participate in language training

13.4 Education

Schooling is mandatory for children between 6 and 16 years of age in Norway. In addition, youths between the ages of 16 and 19 have the right to further education. There are no school fees for primary and secondary schools in Norway. The same applies to most colleges and universities.

Municipalities have collaborated with NGOs on projects to increase social integration, such as the project Refugee Guide, which is made possible by cooperation between the Red Cross and the municipality. Norwegian volunteers serve as 'guides' in the community, providing information and social contact with the Norwegian population. This project has had positive reports from refugees who, with the help of 'guides', were able to make friends and contacts more easily, both important for social integration.

13.5 Role of NGOs

Norwegian NGO's have no legally established responsibilities in integration of refugees. Many NGO's do, however, contribute voluntarily in the integration process.

14. Family Reunification of Refugees

14.1 Legislation regarding rights and restrictions to family reunification

There is a distinction between **close family members** and **other family members**. Close family members are entitled to family reunification if the requirements are met. Other family members may be granted family reunification.

The same requirements need to be met regardless of whether the person living in Norway is a resettled refugee or if s/he has been granted asylum after an application from within Norway.

A) Close Family Members

Norway includes the following persons in the group regarded as close family members. These persons are entitled to family reunification if the requirements are met:

1. Those that are married to, or who are the cohabitant, or registered partner of a refugee living in Norway

The main requirements that apply to **married couples** and **registered partners**:

- Both are over the age of 18.
- The marriage must be valid in the applicant's home country and in Norway.
- Marriage by proxy, marriage when one of the parties is below the age of 18, and a marriage where one of the parties were already married to another, is not valid in Norway, even if the marriage is valid in the applicant's home country.
- If the spouse has been married to another person from his/her home country, and this person has been granted a family immigration permit to Norway, documentation from the authorities in the home country must be submitted that states that the marriage is dissolved.
- The application may be refused if it appears most likely that the main purpose of contracting the marriage has been to establish a basis for residence in the realm for the applicant.
- Further conditions as set in § 40 of the Immigration Act.

Requirements that apply to **cohabitants**:

- Both are over the age of 18.
- Neither of them is married to other people.
- They have already lived together for at least two years. Cohabitation time while married to someone else does not count. If they have lived together in Norway, the applicant must have had legal residence in Norway during the time they have lived together. If they have or are expecting a child together, the requirement for two years' cohabitation does not apply.
- The refugee is intending to continue living in Norway.

2. Children with one or two parents living in Norway

Requirements of the **parents**:

- Both parents live in Norway and have legal residence here; or
- One of the parents lives in Norway and has sole parental responsibility; or
- One of the parents lives in Norway and the other parent has agreed to let the child move to Norway (if they have joint parental responsibility);

- If the applicant is an adopted child, the Norwegian Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs must have agreed to the adoption before the child enters Norway;
- Further conditions as set in § 41 of the Immigration Act.

3. Parents whose children under the age of 18 live in Norway.

- If the child is a Norwegian citizen, the applicant must live with the child on a permanent basis and have parental responsibility for him/her. If the applicant is married to or cohabitate with the child's other parent, the applicant must apply for family immigration with his/her spouse or cohabitant, not with the child.
- If the child has Norwegian citizenship and has lived in another country in which the applicant has had access rights and the child moves to Norway to live with the other parent, the applicant can be granted a residence permit in order to continue visiting the child.
- If the applicant is using his/her access rights to his/her child living in Norway with his/her other parent, the applicant will be entitled to family reunification if s/he has lived in Norway and held a residence permit for the past year.
- Siblings can also apply for family reunification with the child if s/he has refugee status in Norway.

4. Fiancé

An applicant who is going to marry a refugee living in Norway may receive a residence permit to enter Norway in order to marry (fiancé permit). The permit is valid for six months, and the applicant must get married within the period for which the permit is valid. After marriage, it is possible to apply for family immigration with the refugee.

Further conditions are set out in § 48 of the Immigration Act and in § 9-5 of the Immigration Regulations.

B) Other family members:

Norway includes the following persons in the group regarded as other family members. These persons may be granted family reunification:

1. Single parents over the age of 60 without close family members in home country.

Requirements of the **parent**:

S/he cannot have a spouse, cohabitant, parent, child, grandchild, or great-grandchild in the home country. Son or daughter in Norway must be over the age of 18.

2. A child between 18 and 21 of age without a spouse or cohabitant, who has previously stayed in Norway for a prolonged period.

3. A child over the age of 18 without a spouse or cohabitant, who remains or will remain in their home country while the rest of his/her family are granted residence in Norway.

Requirements of the **child**:

The applicant must be a dependent child aged 18 or older who is to continue to be part of his/her parents' household. It is a condition that the child does not have a spouse or cohabitant. Another condition is that either:

- the child concerned is or will otherwise remain in the country of origin with no parents or siblings who are aged 18 or older or married, or;
- it is substantiated that for medical reasons, the child is completely dependent on personal care provided by parents living in Norway.

4. A foster child under the age of 18

Requirements of the **child**:

Valid documentation must be submitted that proves that the child is and has been part of the household of the person residing in Norway. Parental responsibility must have been transferred to the foster parents in accordance with the legislation of the country of origin. The Norwegian child welfare authorities must approve the foster home.

5. A full sibling under the age of 18

Requirements of the **sibling**:

The sibling must be a full sibling under the age of 18 with no parents and no other carer in the country of origin or the country in which he or she is staying. It is also a condition that the person resident in Norway is suited to be a carer. A statement in this respect shall be provided by the child welfare service in the municipality in which the sponsor is resident.

Apart from these categories, applications will also be considered on **strong humanitarian grounds**.

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

a) Requirement as to means of subsistence and accommodation

As a general rule, all applicants must document that they fulfil the requirement in regards to future income in a family immigration case, *the requirement in regards to any earlier income, and the requirement that the sponsor must not have received financial support or qualification benefit under the Social Services Act.*

A refugee's spouse, cohabitant, or child are exempted from these requirements when the application for family immigration is launched within one year from the time the refugee received his/her first residence permit in Norway, unless the applicant has been prevented from submitting an application at an earlier time because of factors beyond the applicant's control.

b) Requirement for the sponsor to have worked or studied in Norway for four years

This condition does not apply when the marriage has been entered into or the parties have conceived children before the time of the sponsor's entry into the realm. Neither does the condition apply when the parties have entered into marriage or conceived children in Norway while both had a residence permit.

c) It is a condition that the applicant document his/her identity with a valid passport from the country of origin, and that the applicant provide information in order to establish his/her identity.

Family members of a refugee may be exempted from the requirement to provide a valid passport if it is deemed that the applicant for safety reasons or other reasons can not reasonably be expected to contact the authorities in the country of origin.

14.2 Status of family members on arrival

The refugee's spouse or cohabitant and children who meet the conditions are entitled to a residence permit as a refugee unless:

- the applicant is the refugee's spouse or cohabitant and their family life was established after the refugee left the country in which the refugee risks persecution, or
- the applicant has a different nationality than the refugee, or
- the applicant does not wish to have refugee status, or
- there are other special grounds to refuse a residence permit.

14.3 Resettlement quotas

Family reunification cases are not counted within the Norwegian resettlement quotas.

14.4. Routing of submissions

Applications shall be submitted to the nearest Norwegian Embassy or the Embassy assigned to handle applications for the country in question. UNHCR is requested to assist in this process where necessary.

As of February 2011, all applicants can register the application online on the following website: <https://selfservice.udi.no/>. Supporting documents must be delivered to the relevant embassy or consulate.

14.5 Case documentation

Which documentation must be enclosed, depends on the permit that is applied for. Furthermore, requirements may vary over time.

More information about procedures and requirements for documentation is found on the web page below: <http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/>

14.6 Processing time

Updated information about case processing times can be found online:

<http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Oversiktsider/Case-processing-times/Case-processing-times-for-family-immigration/>

14.7 Entitlements for family members

IOM assists the travellers during transit at international airports. The Norwegian People's Aid assists if the traveller is connecting domestically from the Oslo airport.

The Norwegian government can cover expenses for a refugee's spouse, cohabitant, or child who has been granted family reunification. See <http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/> for more information. Processing times varies.

The work permit is valid for one year from registration with the Norwegian police.

15. References/Resources

The **Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security**: www.regjeringen.no - See Ministry of Justice and Public Security / Migration Department

The **Norwegian Directorate of Immigration**: www.udi.no

The **Directorate of Integration and Diversity**: www.imdi.no

Norway's Official Websites Abroad: www.norway.info

Act of 15 May 2008 on the entry of foreign nationals into the Kingdom of Norway and their stay in the realm (**Immigration Act**): www.regjeringen.no – See Ministry of Justice and Public Security / Selected topics / Immigration