

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Survey on Drivers of Migration (SDM) is part of the European Union (EU) funded Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) project "Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy" (REMAP). The objective of DTM REMAP is to strengthen the evidence-based formulation and implementation of humanitarian and development policy and programming on migration and forced displacement in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Pakistan.







Through the SDM, between November 2020 and March 2021 (Round 2) the DTM team in Afghanistan interviewed 19,605 potential migrants<sup>1</sup> at informal migration hubs. The DTM Afghanistan team selected 6 provinces with high international outward migration in which to conduct data collection. The selection was based on the review of longitudinal multiyear flow monitoring data on outward migration from Islam Qala-Taybad and Zaranj-Milak border crossings to the Islamic Republic of Iran and beyond. The detailed findings of this survey will be soon published in a report (IOM, 2022). A quantitative approach was adopted to analyze the drivers of Afghan migration to Europe, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. The specific thematic areas for analysis include: socio-economic profiles, drivers and reasons for migration, travel arrangements, problems and vulnerabilities related to journey and mobility history. This summary brief, extracted from the forthcoming report, provides a background on the interviewed potential migrants. A summary of the main findings of the forthcoming report can be found in the Annex.

## II. RESPONDENT BACKGROUND

In total, 19,605 potential Afghan migrants were interviewed in the course of this study. Among them, 15,810 people stated that they intended to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran (81%), 2,404 to Turkey (12%), 715 people to Europe (4%) and 676 to Pakistan (3%). The top five reported provinces of origin were Faryab (21%), Herat (16%), Kunduz (14%), Balkh (11%) and Badghis (4%). Ninety-nine per cent of respondents were male and one per cent were female. The highest share of interviewees was male and between the ages of 16 and 24 years old (50%).

The following table presents various socio-demographic indicators by final intended destination country. On average, 48 per cent of all respondents were married. While 57 per cent of interviewees who intended to go to Pakistan and 50 per cent of those to the Islamic Republic of Iran were married, this percentage was lower among potential migrants to the EU and Turkey (35% and 35%). Similarly, fewer respondents who reported the intention to migrate to Europe and Turkey had children (31% and 30% respectively), than their compatriots who indicated that they intended to go to Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran (51% and 44% respectively).

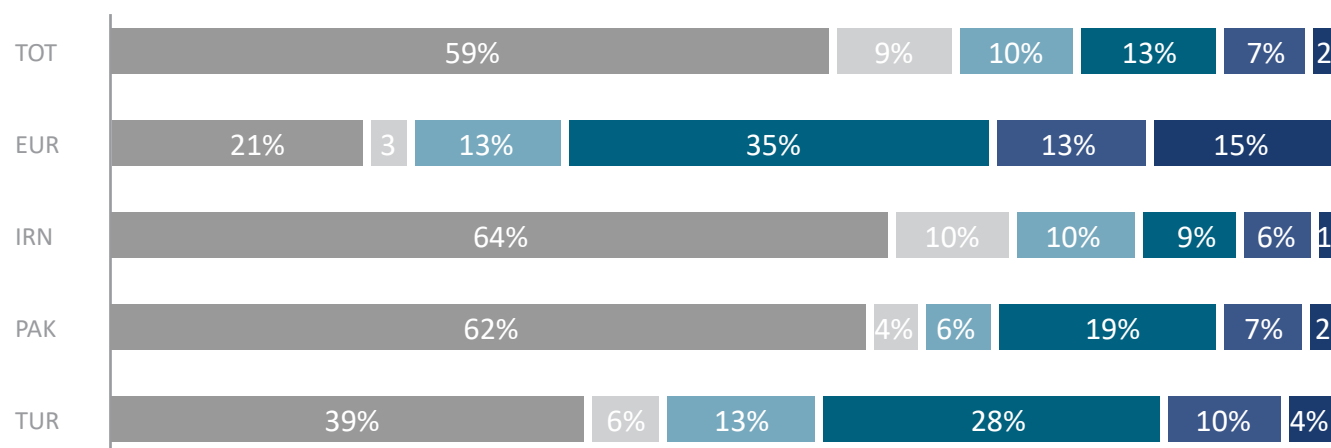
### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND (BY DESTINATION )

	 Respondents	 Married	 Have children	 Children not with them	 Average number of children	 Average number of relatives abroad
TOT	19,605	48%	42%	86%	3.4	2.0
EUR	715	35%	31%	82%	2.7	1.7
IRN	15,810	50%	44%	87%	3.4	2.1
PAK	676	57%	51%	78%	3.8	2.1
TUR	2,404	35%	30%	85%	3.3	1.4

<sup>1</sup> The research focused on potential migrants who had taken concrete measures to migrate abroad, including: finding a migration facilitator; making payments for the journey to a migration facilitator; booking travel tickets for (parts) of the migration journey; obtaining a visa to travel to transit countries.

## HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

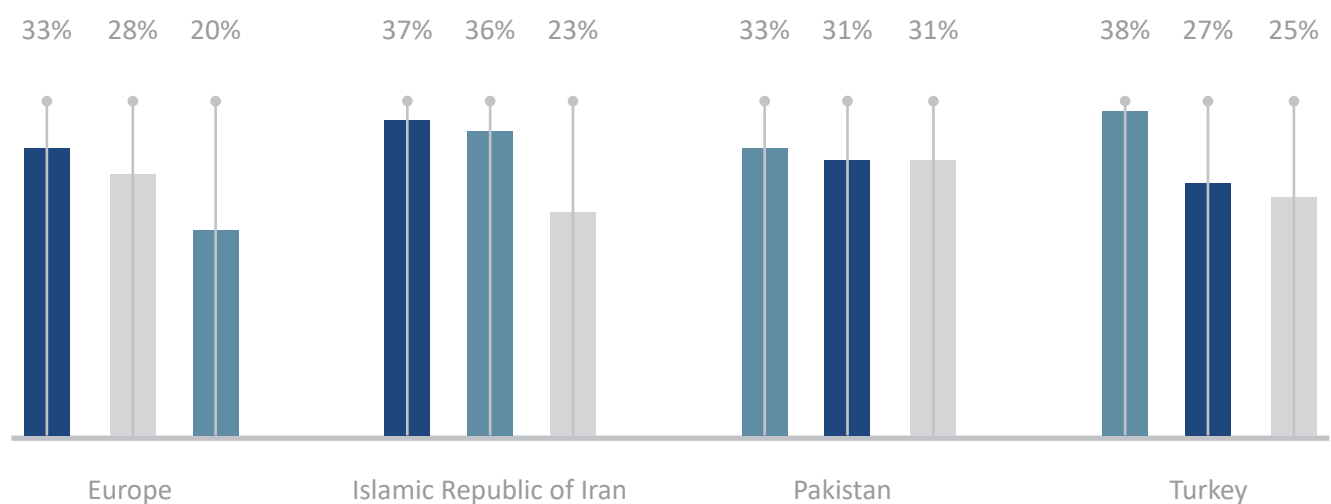
The below graph provides a detailed overview of highest educational levels by final destination country. The education level of the respondents varied significantly between different intended destinations. Sixty-four per cent and 62 per cent respectively of interviewees who reported the intention to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan had not completed any education. This percentage was lower amongst respondents who reported the intention to migrate to Europe (21%) and Turkey (39%). Fifteen per cent of Afghan nationals who were planning to migrate to Europe had completed education with a bachelor or a master's degree and 35 per cent at high school level. Those intending to go to Turkey represent the group with the second highest level of education, with four per cent who reported having a bachelor or master's degree and 28 per cent having high school as their highest educational level.



Legend:   
 No education   
 Primary education   
 Secondary education   
 High school   
 Diploma, vocational or religious   
 Bachelor and master's

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS DURING THE SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO INTERVIEWING

Respondents were asked about their employment status during the six months prior to interviewing. The following bar charts present the three most common employment categories (unemployed, daily wages and self-employed). Interviewees who were planning to migrate to Europe and the Islamic Republic of Iran were most commonly unemployed (33% and 37% respectively). Meanwhile, respondents who reported the intention to migrate to Pakistan and Turkey were most commonly earning daily wages (33% and 38% respectively).



Legend:   
 Unemployed   
 Daily wages   
 Self-employed

## DEBT, INCOME AND EXPENDITURE<sup>2</sup>

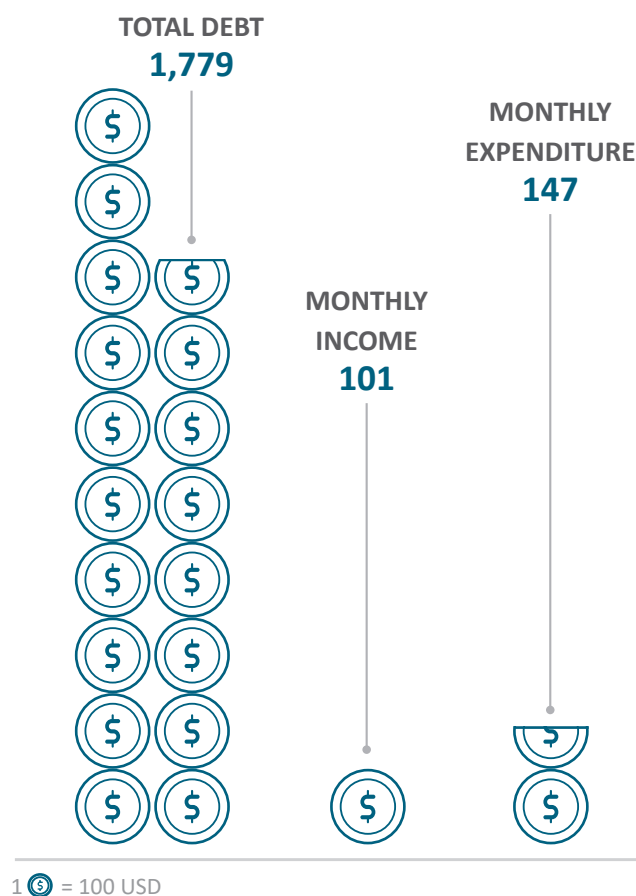
The following bar charts (where each stacked circle represents USD 100) display: i) average total accumulated debt, ii) average monthly household income and iii) average monthly household expenditure.

On average, interviewed potential migrants had a total accumulated debt of USD 1,779, a monthly household income of USD 101 and a monthly household expenditure of USD 147. Their total accumulated debt was 18 times their average monthly household income.

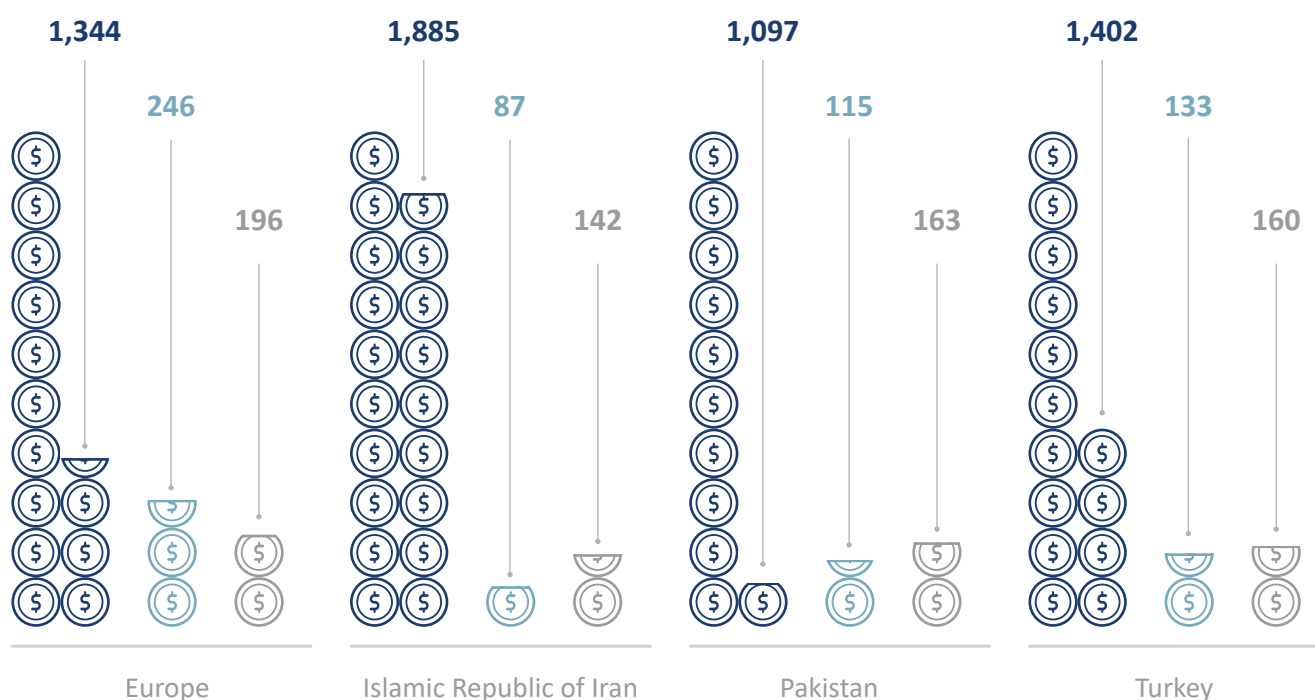
Interviewees who reported the intention to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran had the highest average accumulated level of debt, with USD 1,885; whereas those intending to migrate to Pakistan had the lowest, with USD 1,097.

Respondents who were planning to migrate to Europe had both the highest monthly household income of USD 246 and the highest monthly household expenditure of USD 196.

## GRAND TOTAL



## DEBT, INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (BY DESTINATION)



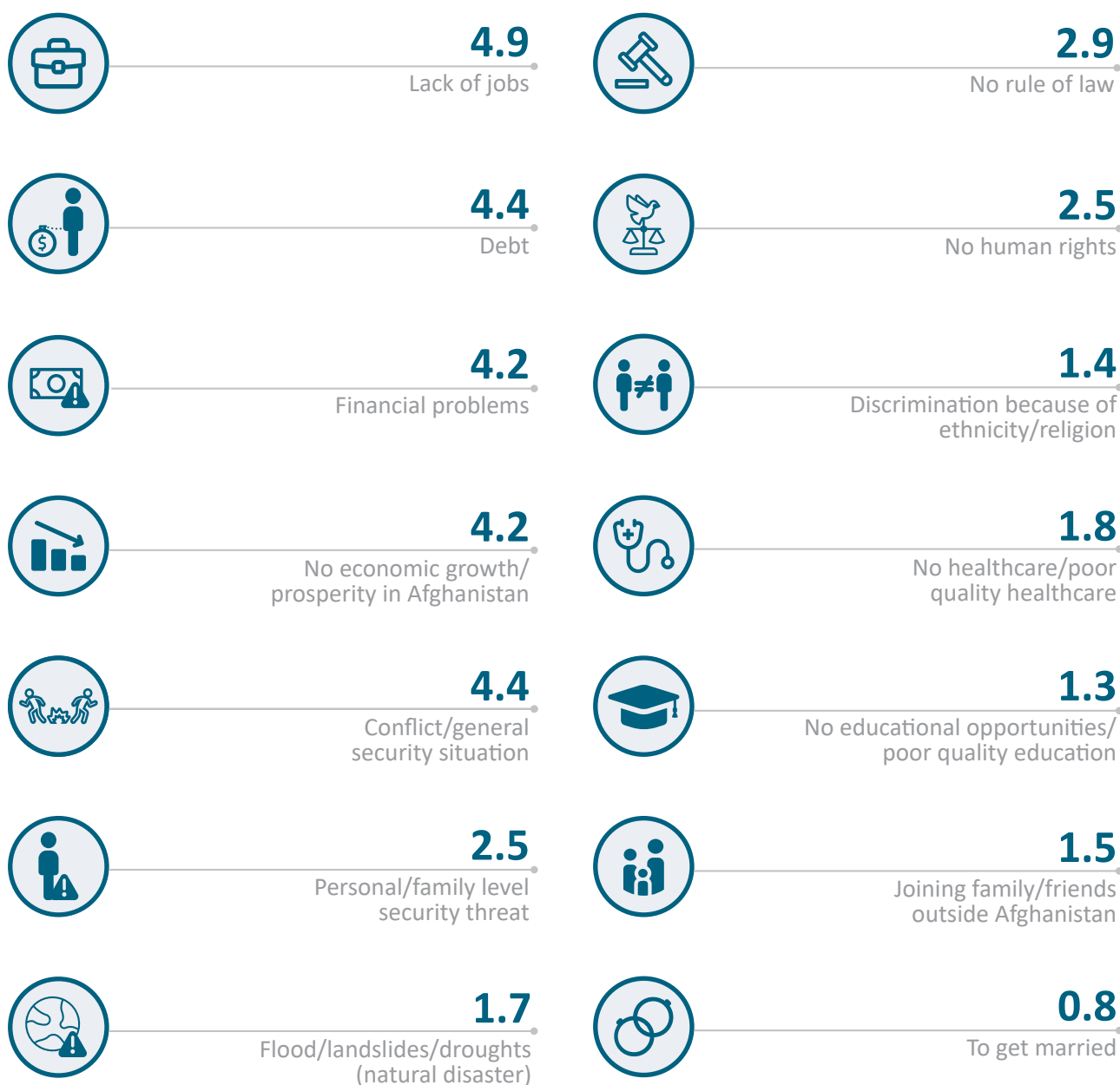
1 🪙 = 100 USD Legend: ■ Total debt ■ Monthly income ■ Monthly expenditure

<sup>2</sup> Data was originally collected in Afghan Afghani. The exchange rates was 1 AFN = 0.0129539 USD on the last day of data collection (31 March 2021)

## FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN

In the survey, respondents were also asked to rate the importance of various push factors in their decision to leave Afghanistan on a scale from zero to five (0= not applicable, 1= very unimportant, 2= unimportant, 3= slightly important, 4= important, 5= very important). On average, the factors that received the highest ratings, and were therefore of the highest significance, were: lack of jobs (4.9), debt (4.4) and conflict (4.4). Other economic factors such as financial problems and the lack of country-level economic growth also graded high at 4.2. This demonstrates that while economic factors are a significant driver of Afghan migration, the presence of armed conflict and lack of security in the country are also a major incentives to leave Afghanistan. These economic conditions are consequences of prolonged conflict in the region, with decades of fighting resulting in not only insecurity, but also, limited opportunities for stable livelihoods and limited access to services such as healthcare and education. As such, the decision to leave Afghanistan is multifactorial and intersectional, and cannot be reduced to a single variable.

0= not applicable, 1=very unimportant 2=unimportant 3=slightly important, 4=important 5=very important



## FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION TO CHOOSE A CERTAIN DESTINATION COUNTRY

Interviewees were then asked to rate the importance of various pull factors that impacted their decision to choose their intended destination on a scale from zero to five (0= not applicable, 1= very unimportant, 2= unimportant, 3= slightly important, 4= important, 5= very important). The corresponding visualisation has been disaggregated by country in order to more easily demonstrate the differences in the incentives offered by each destination as envisioned by potential migrants.

For those planning to migrate to Europe, the most important pull factors were: to look for work/find a better livelihood (4.2), followed by obtaining the nationality of the destination country (3.5) and to do actual work/earn an actual living (3.1). To obtain asylum/refugee

status (2.9) is also an important factor for respondents who reported the intention to go to Europe.

Alternatively, those intending to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey were mostly motivated by the opportunity to look for/find jobs, to do actual work/earn an actual living, or the promise of a job in the destination country. Obtaining nationality or asylum/refugee status was slightly more important for respondents who reported the intention to go to Turkey than they were for those intending to go to the Islamic Republic of Iran or Pakistan.

0=not applicable, 1=very unimportant 2=unimportant 3=slightly important, 4=important 5=very important

	To look for work/ livelihood opportunities	I was promised a job by someone in the destination	To do actual work/earn an actual living	To do business	To obtain the nationality of the destination	To obtain asylum/refugee status	To fight/be part of opposition group or government forces	To obtain education for myself	To obtain education for my children	To be with relatives who live in the destination	To join relatives who want to go to the destination	To get married
TOT	4.7	2.4	4.2	0.8	0.9	1.2	0.3	0.6	0.6	1.7	0.9	0.6
EUR	4.2	1.9	3.1	1.0	3.5	2.9	0.3	2.0	1.1	2.0	1.4	0.8
IRN	4.7	2.4	4.3	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.5	0.5	1.6	0.9	0.5
PAK	4.1	2.9	3.7	1.4	0.9	1.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	1.5	0.9	0.6
TUR	4.6	2.7	4.1	1.0	2.1	2.3	0.2	0.9	0.6	2.0	1.2	1.1

## ANNEX: III. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key finding of SDM Round 2 is that, between November 2020 and March 2021, the decisions to leave Afghanistan and to choose a destination country revolved primarily around factors related to economic conditions and conflict within the country. Years of insecurity continued to reinforce an overall lack of economic growth and vice versa. Those leaving Afghanistan, therefore, were motivated by interlinked economic and security factors. Please note that these findings might be different after the August 2021 developments in the country.

The SDM Round 2 also focused on the travel arrangements, expected risks during the migration journey and mobility history of respondents. The findings from these data show variations between potential migrants depending on their intended destination, especially in regards to differences in the planning and expectations related to closer, more circular migration to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and further, longer-term migration to Europe and Turkey.

### I.I DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES

The age demographic of interviewees skewed towards younger potential migrants, with 50 per cent of the total sample population between the ages of 16 and 24. The ages of those who reported the intention to migrate to Europe and Turkey ranged slightly younger than those intending to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. On average, ninety-nine per cent of respondents were male and one per cent were female.

Overall, 41 per cent of respondents had completed some form of education. However, the rates of education varied heavily when disaggregated by intended destination. Those who planned to migrate to Europe and Turkey saw much higher rates of education (79% and 61%, respectively).

Thirty-six per cent of all interviewed potential migrants were unemployed at the time of interviewing, while 35 per cent were earning daily wages and 24 per cent were self-employed. Respondents who reported the intention to go to Europe and the Islamic Republic of Iran faced slightly higher rates of unemployment than those intending to migrate to Pakistan or Turkey, who were most commonly working for daily wages.

On average, interviewees had a total accumulated debt of USD 1,779, a monthly household income of USD 101 and a monthly household expenditure of USD 147. The

migrant group with the highest average accumulated level of debt was that who reported the intention to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran (USD 1,885).

### I.II DRIVERS AND REASONS OF MIGRATION

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several factors as they related to their decision to leave Afghanistan on a scale from zero to five. The factors that received the highest ratings, and were therefore of the highest significance, were: lack of jobs (4.9), conflict (4.4), debt (4.4), financial problems (4.2) and a lack of country-level economic growth (4.2). This demonstrates how migration from Afghanistan is mainly fueled by economic conditions and security concerns, but that those factors are inextricably linked to one another through cause and effect.

In terms of decision-making and choice of destination, respondents cited finding a job/livelihood opportunities and doing actual work/earning an actual living across all intended destinations, earning average ratings of 4.7 and 4.2, respectively, among all respondents. Those who reported the intention to migrate to Europe and Turkey were also motivated by the possibility of obtaining their destination country's nationality or asylum/refugee status. This illustrates the divergence between longer-term, more permanent destinations and destinations more commonly associated with circular migration.

### I.III TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Most interviewees were planning to leave Afghanistan within the month of being interviewed (89%) and those who were not, were planning to leave in one to three months (9%).

When asked how long they planned to be abroad, clear differences emerged between respondents who reported the intention to go to Europe and Turkey and those intending to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Sixty per cent of respondents who were planning to go to Europe intended to stay there forever, while 41 per cent of those planning to go to Turkey intended to stay for more than three years. Fifty per cent of respondents who envisaged migrating to the Islamic Republic of Iran intended to stay there for one to three years while 44 per cent of respondents who were planning to go to Pakistan intended to stay between three months and three years.

Those planning to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey were more likely to be using a migration





facilitator<sup>3</sup> (88% and 75%) than those planning to go to Europe and Pakistan (50% and 64%) at the time of interviewing. However, this data may be due to respondents being in different stages of preparation. When those who were not using a migration facilitator at the time of interviewing were asked if they eventually planned on using one for their journey, the majority of respondents who reported the intention to go to Europe, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey said yes (92%, 72% and 91%, respectively) while only 19 per cent of those going to Pakistan said yes.

The decision to migrate was primarily an individual one, as 93 per cent of respondents reported that they had made the decision themselves. However, among female interviewees, this proportion was lowered to 66 per cent. While the majority of migration decisions were made individually, most respondents were receiving assistance on their journey from friends and family.

Estimated costs of the journey varied according to distance to the intended destination, with expected total journey costs to Europe being the highest at USD 6,024. Expected costs to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan were both under USD 300. At the time of interviewing, most respondents had not paid large shares of their migration costs; the average percentage already paid was 8 per cent.

Incurring debt was a popular method for paying for migration among all respondents (65%) as was borrowing from friends and family in Afghanistan (48%) and from a migration facilitator (25%). Interviewees who reported the intention to go to Europe were more likely to also borrow funds from friends and family in the destination (28%). In general, respondents used multiple combinations of payment methods to fund their migration journeys.

#### I.IV PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE JOURNEY

SDM Round 2 asked interviewees about their expectations regarding potential problems they might face during different stages of their migration journeys. Expectations regarding planning the journey were relatively homogenous across all respondents: the

most primary concerns were a lack of funds (85%) and incurring debt (84%).

Respondents anticipated a wide range of potential problems to be encountered en route to their destinations, most commonly reporting concerns about deportation (88%), detention (78%) and hunger/thirst (80%). High shares of interviewees also reported robbery, car crashes, death, financial extortion and a lack of shelter.

When asked about expected risks upon arrival to their destination, respondents most commonly reported fears of deportation (84%), detention (53%), a lack of jobs (46%), and racism/xenophobia (41%). Those who were planning to migrate to Europe and Turkey also reported concerns about rejection of asylum and not being able to obtain the destination country's nationality. Across all stages of the migration journey, respondents who stated the intention to migrate to Pakistan reported having concerns about the journey in lower shares as compared to respondents intending to migrate elsewhere.

#### I.V MOBILITY HISTORY

In order to further understand the extent to which previous migration experiences play a role in shaping new mobility patterns, SDM Round 2 also asked about previous migration abroad and previous displacement. Sixty-four per cent of migrants had attempted to migrate out of Afghanistan before, and 56 per cent had successfully completed the journey and returned to Afghanistan. Those who were planning to migrate to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan had most commonly already migrated to those respective countries, implying that those countries see considerable re-migration from Afghanistan. Those who reported the intention to migrate to Europe and Turkey had most commonly already experienced migrating to the Islamic Republic of Iran (68% and 65%, respectively). On average, thirty-two per cent of respondents had been internally displaced before. The average duration of displacement was 3.6 years.

## IV. REFERENCES

International Organization for Migration (2022). *Afghanistan - Survey on Drivers of Migration, Round 2*. (forthcoming)

<sup>3</sup> Migration facilitator: This term refers to anyone that is involved in the facilitation of migration services (irregular and regular) via air, land or sea routes in exchange for money. Those services can reach from consultative services for visa application and acquiring (fraudulent) documents, to transportation arrangement, to the facilitation of border crossings. The term used does not intend to neglect the differences in services and often used terms for those persons providing the migration services.

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